

Our ref: NB/TN/mm

Date: 27 October 2021

John Griffiths MS  
Chair Local Government and Housing Committee  
Welsh Parliament

**By email only:**  
**John.Griffiths@senedd.wales**

Dear John

### **Homelessness Reviewed: an open door to positive change**

The [Public Services Ombudsman \(Wales\) Act 2019](#) empowers me to undertake an investigation on my own initiative, investigating a matter beyond its impact on an individual and without having to wait for a complaint. I am delighted to share with you my first report of an investigation undertaken on my own initiative "[Homelessness Reviewed: an open door to positive change](#)", published on 6 October 2021, which focuses on the administration of the homelessness assessment and review process by local authorities in Wales.

Those facing homelessness are amongst the most vulnerable people in society. It is essential that they have a voice and that their lived experiences shape the ongoing improvement of the public services they are entitled to. The investigation focused on three local authority homelessness services, and found unacceptable delays in the review process, inadequate processes, poor communication and vulnerable people being offered unsuitable accommodation, as issues of serious concern.

The challenges of increasing homelessness have been widely recognised by bodies in Wales, including the Welsh Government and third sector organisations. With a consistent increase in demand for accommodation for those classed as homeless and in priority need, local authorities have a critical role in preventing homelessness as well as supporting people who have found themselves homeless.

The report contains several recommendations for the three local authorities investigated and highlights aspects of good practice with regard to homelessness assessments. It invites the other 19 local authorities in Wales to consider the wider learning opportunities for improvement from the report and consider any learning points from the recommendations that would improve their service provision.

I also asked Welsh Government to consider several aspects of housing and homelessness legislation, guidance and documentation, the post-review appeal process, and opportunities for improving and standardising the homelessness service across Wales.

I would be grateful if the Local Government and Housing Committee would note the report and its findings. I would also like to offer to attend a future meeting, should the Committee wish to discuss the evidence and recommendations in the report further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Bennett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Nick Bennett**  
**Ombudsman**

Copy: Clerk to the Local Government and Housing Committee, Senedd  
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