

Response to request for written Evidence – Goleudy Housing and Support Limited

Please find below Goleudy's responses to the questions posed as part of the Welsh Parliament's Local Government and Housing Committee's inquiry into Housing for Vulnerable People.

How effectively is the Welsh Government planning for the future of HSG in light of the rapid rehousing transition and the forthcoming Homelessness Bill?

Much of the White Paper's content was welcome and refreshing. The much-talked-of introduction of 'Housing First' and 'Rapid Rehousing' approaches is particularly welcome. However, these have now been discussed rather than actioned for many years. These need to be hard-wired into commissioning and matched with the provision of much-needed accommodation. We would question the extent to which local authorities (LAs) have been given sufficient guidance and 'push' by the Welsh Government (WG) to review their HSG strategies and commissioning plans to transition the focus of support onto Rapid Rehousing services. Maybe there should be targets/milestones agreed upon between WG and LAs to increase the proportion of HSG spent on supporting people in their own homes and reduce the proportion spent on 24/7 and other shared supported housing. This can only happen when accompanied by more social/affordable housing and WG issuing allocations guidance that prioritises homeless people moving rapidly into social and PRS housing ahead of others.

Current and anticipated pressures in delivering HSG-funded support services, including pressures on the workforce.

The delivery of HSG-funded support services remains under significant pressure. Financially, the impact of rising costs and the welcome move towards implementing the Real Living Wage means that project salary costs have increased substantially over recent years. Staff costs will increase again with the increase in National Insurance from April 2025. The Welsh Government's pledge to increase HSG is vital to ensuring ongoing sustainability, though the services remain precarious. Operationally, attracting and retaining staff in the support sector is an ongoing challenge, with relatively low wages and rightly high expectations of the services' quality. We expect a significant commitment from staff. This can lead to high turnover and lost knowledge. In addition, the legislative burden associated with running support services, particularly those involved with accommodation, has increased substantially over recent years. For providers of housing-related support services, the Renting Homes Wales Act requirements have brought significant additional risk and cost to the sector. The Housing Support Grant is due to increase by £21 million in 25/26 - this is welcome, although it is unclear whether most of this will be spent on the NI changes and CPI/RPI wage increases. With the consistent increases in homelessness, further funding increases will be needed to stem the flow of new people becoming homeless. We need a more significant push on prevention (without jeopardising emergency provision in the short-medium term), which will require real increases in funding in the next few years.

How much is known about service performance, including data on outcomes;

Analysing 'distance travelled' data at a population level is particularly challenging. The analysis of the IAPT system across England demonstrates this. To gain more insight into the real

difference made by services (at a population level), it would make sense to revise the outcomes framework to be less subjective, only consider service users' perceptions (not the support worker), and have a universal IT/recording system across the sector.

How effective is joint working between housing support services and public services such as health and social care and

Goleudy's experience of engagement with health and social care is good. One local authority has a good example of a purposely established multi-agency team— six nurses, one social worker, counsellors, substance misuse specialists, and mental health specialists. They work with homeless people, and it seems to work well. Could this joint working multi-agency model be replicated across Wales?

It is the case that services report that statutory agencies will relinquish responsibility for extremely vulnerable adults, leaving Goleudy with the choice of accepting someone into a service that cannot truly meet their needs or leaving them homeless. In these circumstances, we always help people, even if there is a disproportionate cost to us.

A welcome development would be jointly commissioned services, where the third sector and health services could more effectively address homeless people's psychological and medical needs. Joint working could be improved, e.g., by introducing more formal mechanisms for discussing people whose needs aren't being met. There are statutory multi-agency meetings for certain groups of people (e.g., MAPPA)—we should explore setting up statutory meetings regarding homeless people when they reach certain crisis-level situations.

Several Goleudy services feature joint work with Probation. Sometimes, they are under substantial staffing pressures, have high caseloads, and have high staff turnover, which can challenge joint work.

Many people still seem to be leaving prison without anywhere to live. They often go straight into temporary accommodation. Joint working with prisons and RSLs/Housing Options could be improved to help ex-offenders move into 'Rapid Rehousing' (with multi-agency support) straight from leaving prison (or very quickly after leaving prison). This could reduce demand for temporary accommodation and help prevent future homelessness amongst many ex-offenders. However, a multi-agency approach is needed involving the third sector, substance misuse services, job centres/training, probation, etc.

What services should be commissioned to effectively support people with complex needs in finding and keeping a home?

As alluded to in our previous answers, this segment of the client group would be more effectively served by:

- Joint health and housing-related support projects
- Links to capital funding for purpose-built housing
- Realistic commissioning and funding
- Multi-agency working that is pragmatic and led by the front-line workers
- Significant consultation with service users
- Services that have the commitment of multi-agency partners at the commissioning/ tendering stage - so that the wrap-around support is in place from day one of the service

- Services that have access to funds to open up opportunities to move into the PRS (e.g. by paying the LHA top-ups)
- Support that can be more open-ended - i.e. based on what people need, not on set timescales for withdrawing support, like 'Housing First', where support can continue for as long as required
- Services that include elements of 'purposeful activity' such as offering proper help for people to train, volunteer, learn workplace social skills and coping skills, and find work. There could be a need to help people navigate good relationships - very hard to do, but many people struggle to have good, safe, trusting and kind relationships.

The housing support community may need to accept that some people with very complex needs will find it too difficult to live alone and will need a supported environment. These people may have 'higher' needs than 'Housing First' or Rapid Rehousing and may require a mix of care and support.