

HO 03

Diweddariad ar bolisiau a chmau sy'n cael eu cymryd i roi terfyn ar ddigartrefedd

Update on policies and actions to end homelessness

Ymateb gan: Goleudy

Response from: Goleudy

About Goleudy Housing & Support

Goleudy has been in existence since 1975 and operates housing support services and community development initiatives across Swansea and West Wales. We actively develop new initiatives that seek to resolve the root causes of homelessness such as access to housing, poverty, poor health and social isolation. Our current initiatives include the transformation of our housing; Swansea Community Fridge and; University of Liverpool research project: Promoting Innovation in Homelessness and Mental Health Service Design.

For more information about Goleudy

Visit: www.goleudy.org

Twitter: @goleudy_tweets

Twitter: @Fridgeswansea

Goleudy Responses

1. The effectiveness of the “everyone in” approach put in place by the Welsh Government since the start of the pandemic and challenges maintaining that approach over the coming months.

This policy, as a short-term reactive measure, has been successful in reducing rough sleeping during the pandemic. We believe the policy's short-term focus has created medium term unintended consequences and longer-term issues. They include huge increases in people in bed & breakfast accommodation and other temporary accommodation units, with high instances of people returning to other forms of homeless status such as sofa surfing and rough sleeping. This caused predominantly by lack of available long term, settled accommodation that offers someone the chance to move forward, set up and establish a home.

We have found, in certain circumstances and geographical areas, the “everyone in” approach has inadvertently reduced the effectiveness of commissioned services that are available for people who are homeless. For example, the “everyone in” provision was largely rent free, requiring no contribution from person, it offered casual tenures and required no significant obligation to engage and focus on a plan to move forward. This was in direct contradiction to commissioned services that require people to pay a rent/contribution, commit to a tenure/licence/obligations, and plan to move forward. During this time Goleudy and other services found some provision was carrying voids (empty bed spaces) and operating at under capacity.

Goleudy advocates the sector pivots away from all forms of temporary accommodation and instead develop long term housing options and support models.

2. Your views on the reasons for the apparent increase in the number of people sleeping rough and what can be done to reverse it.

the best possible solution to prevent/reduce rough sleeping and harmful cycle to homelessness is to provide accessible, safe, settled accommodation that can become someone's home for the long-term. For example, Goleudy provides a long-term housing service that offers long-term accommodation alongside an effective model of support. Our Roads service is an example of this, where we offer a tenancy and onsite, long term support for as long as required. This service has successfully housed clients with long term addiction issues and minimised repeat homelessness.

Goleudy would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our ideas with the committee regarding our ambition to further expand this type of provision.

3. Your response to the Welsh Government's Ending Homelessness in Wales: a high-level action plan 2021-2026, including the timescales outlined in the plan and specific Actions within the plan that should be a priority for the Committee;

The action plan and the focus it brings is welcomed by Goleudy.

We see 3 critical issues that, if not addressed, could reduce the effectiveness of the action plan and its success.

Firstly, overcoming system obstacles that delay/thwart new housing units being brought on stream. Especially housing that best meets the needs of individuals who are at high risk of further homelessness/rough sleeping. The funding Welsh Government has provided is welcome, however, in our experience, there are significant obstacles that can stifle innovation and development. Goleudy would welcome the opportunity to develop new accommodation units and discuss our experiences further with the committee.

A second issue is the need for local authorities to be able to discharge their duty under the Housing Wales Act. This need creates a heavy reliance on temporary accommodation and reluctance at commissioning levels to repurpose temporary accommodation into long term housing. The less temporary housing available to can restrict the options a council has to meet their duty. This drives a through put and move on system that prioritises meeting the legislation rather than meeting the needs of the person. In these situations, we find people are less likely to recover from homelessness and are either stuck in temporary housing or continue to be homeless.

Goleudy is advocating a system where someone is offered accommodation that has the potential to be their long-term home, with new units being brought on stream to replenish the housing provision. This system would be an alternative to a temporary accommodation pathway that requires a person to move through a number of temporary units.

Finally, the housing support sector is facing an existential recruitment and retention crisis that is not getting the same coverage and prominence as health and social care. The sector needs to attract new staff to work in our services, see the potential for a career and have the opportunity to be paid a fair wage. The action plan could do more in this area.

Ends