

Housing Minister hears from rough sleepers on breakfast run

The Minister joined the rough sleeper intervention team from homelessness charity the Wallich, based at Dinas Fechan in the centre of Swansea.

The Wallich receive over £256,000 of Welsh Government funding to run Intervention teams which work to find rough sleepers, offer them support and link them to services which can help them to move off the streets. The teams work in known rough sleeping hotspots in Bridgend, Cardiff, Newport and Swansea.

Rebecca Evans said:

“It was really important to me to speak to the people who receive these services and listen to their stories, as well as the people who are delivering services to help people to get off the streets.

“For many people who have begun sleeping rough, this team is the first point of contact and can help them to find support and access services that can help them.

“In Swansea, the team operate a drop in service which can provide people with advice, information, health services and assistance with benefit claims, as well as access to phone and computer services – all things which can really make a difference.

“We are providing an additional £10m of funding to tackle homelessness in each of the next two financial years, and we are currently supporting the City and County of Swansea, working with The Wallich, to increase emergency accommodation provision locally.

“Our Rough Sleepers Action Plan is a two year plan developed with organisations working with rough sleepers and vulnerably housed people . We are working together as a sector to address the practical, emotional, physical and psychological needs of people sleeping rough and support them to reintegrate into society.

“People find themselves sleeping on the streets for a range of complex reasons, and we are committed to supporting them to find safe affordable housing, so they can achieve their full potential.”

Lindsay Cordery-Bruce, chief executive of The Wallich, said:

“The need for homelessness services is growing in demand and this has been a concerningly consistent trend in recent years. In 2017,

our rough sleepers' intervention teams increased the number of people we support by 55% compared to the previous year – working with 526 people in Swansea-alone.

“Our intervention teams are crucial in gaining the trust of rough sleepers and helping them to transition into one of our many other accommodation or learning and development projects which help people break the cycle of homelessness.

“There are people in Wales who are stuck on the streets and others across the country who are vulnerably housed; yet no two situations are the same. We have a range of innovative projects but there is more work to be done to create more choice for the people we support.

“It is a positive indicator that the Minister is taking an active interest in the work we do and the people we support. It is a positive indicator that the Welsh Government has committed more funding to support vulnerable people. And it is a positive indicator that we're seeing more sympathy towards people experiencing homelessness from the general public. This gives us, as a charity, hope that we can help people to live safer, more stable and happier lives for the long-term.”