

New projects to prevent youth homelessness announced by First Minister

Last year the First Minister announced an extra £10million to support the Welsh Government's mission to end youth homelessness in Wales by 2027. Today, he has set out how this funding will be used to identify those at risk of becoming homeless sooner and to take preventative action.

The funding includes:

- £3.7million for the Youth Support Grant to strengthen services to prevent youth homelessness and tackle its root cause
- £4.8million for an Innovation Fund to develop new housing approaches for young people, which could include support for young people leaving care
- £250,000 for targeted communications and engagement programmes: to improve awareness, understanding and take-up of the services available
- £250,000 for tenancy support work with Shelter Cymru and its existing helpline to ensure young people have better access to information, advice and support services to help them sustain tenancies

The funding also includes £1million to double the St David's Day Fund which already provides practical financial support to care leavers in their move towards adulthood and independence.

Since it launched last year it has provided 1,900 care leavers with financial support to build a home life, such as a deposit for a new home or driving lessons to access employment and education.

The £10million funding is in addition to £20million already allocated by Welsh Government for wider homelessness prevention for 2018 to 2020. The Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Rebecca Evans, will today deliver an oral statement on youth homelessness in the Senedd which will set out the programme of work to be funded in more detail.

The First Minister visited The Hangar Youth and Community Centre in Aberbargoed to meet with young people who have engaged with Caerphilly Youth Service's Engagement and Progression Framework partners to improve their life chances, including around homelessness / potential homelessness-related issues.

Ahead of the visit, the First Minister said:

"Too many young people are facing a future that can seem bleak, unfair and inevitable due to insecure housing. That's why we're committed to ending youth homelessness by 2027.

"Our approach is bold, innovative and focused on interventions that

make a real difference to the lives of young people facing homelessness – already since 2015 over 18,000 have been prevented from becoming homeless.”

The Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Rebecca Evans said:

“There are a number of complex, but often interrelated factors, which lead to young people becoming homeless. This is not just a housing issue; it is much wider than that.

“This is why earlier this year the First Minister asked me to chair a task and finish group looking at youth homelessness, which is working across government and beyond. We recognise tackling this requires a unified approach from youth services, social services, education, mental health, substance misuse, youth justice and other services.”

Cllr Philippa Marsden, Caerphilly County Borough Council’s Cabinet Member for Education and Achievement, said:

“The announcement of £10million additional investment from Welsh Government to tackle youth homelessness will improve the overall life chances of young people.

“Our Youth Services and the Engagement and Progression framework arrangements, which coordinate multi-agency support to the best effect, play a significant part in this. I welcome the Welsh Government’s target to eradicate youth homelessness by 2027 and this funding is definitely a good step in the right direction.”