

Extra £10m to support Welsh Government mission to end youth homelessness

The Welsh Government will work with partners, including local authorities, housing associations, homelessness agencies and the End Youth Homelessness Cymru Coalition, to help young people avoid crisis situations and support them into stable accommodation.

Speaking at Llamau's headquarters in Cardiff, the First Minister said:

"Too many young people are facing a future that can seem bleak, unfair and inevitable. Without a home, living a hand-to-mouth existence, being forced to move from house to house, or, worst of all, sleeping rough.

"That is why I am leading a 10-year mission to end youth homelessness in Wales.

"In Wales, we have some of the most progressive homelessness and social services legislation in the world, which has prevented 11,514 households from becoming homeless between its introduction in April 2015 and the end of June 2017.

"And yet I continue to hear of young people becoming homeless after leaving care, young people dropping out of education, young people in custody and young people with nowhere else to stay but a Bed and Breakfast. This is not good enough.

"Wales must lead the way on tackling homelessness. I want us to be bold – to take new approaches, focus on interventions that make a real difference and work with partners to help young people avoid crisis situations and support them into stable accommodation."

Frances Beecher, CEO of Llamau, said:

"We believe that we have a wonderful opportunity in Wales to deliver real change. Estimates show that every year over 7,000 young people ask for help with homelessness, but we know that many more young people don't know where to turn or who to ask for help when they become homeless.

"Today's announcement shows the Welsh Government's commitment to tackling this issue, and we look forward to working closely with them to ensure that young people who are at risk of becoming homeless are supported as soon as they need it, and to ensure that youth homelessness is a thing of the past."

Ambitious new plan to develop Wales' childcare workforce

Childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families. During this Assembly term, the Welsh Government will provide 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds for up to 48 weeks a year.

The Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan sets out the Welsh Government's vision for delivering this commitment, by developing and professionalising the childcare and play workforce and attracting the right people into the sector, ensuring they have the right skills and qualifications, and supporting new and existing business to grow.

To support childcare providers to grow and operate sustainably, the Welsh Government will prioritise support for the care sector, as outlined in the Economic Action Plan launched earlier this week, by supporting new and existing business to increase the number of childcare places on offer across Wales.

Currently, around 23,300 people work with our youngest children in childcare settings and Foundation Phase settings across Wales.

The plan's three key priorities are:

- **Prioritising support to invest in building capacity and capability across the sector**, this includes working with CWLWM and Business Wales to provide business support services to childcare businesses; provide enhanced Small Business Rate Relief for the childcare sector from April 2018 which increases relief from £12,000 to £20,500; and £100,000 over the next 3 years to support those providers participating in the early implementer pilots and those seeking to expand or start-up their business.
- **Attracting high quality recruits** by developing a recruitment framework to promote a career in childcare and play.
- **Raising standards and skills** by offering a structured training and development route based on a new suite of qualifications for the sector from September 2019, and by developing a career pathway for child-minders and home carers and working with Welsh Universities to embed competency into Early Years and Childhood degrees.

Launching the new plan, the Minister for Children and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"The provision of affordable, accessible, quality early years provision, available at the times parents need it, plays an

essential role in boosting the economy, helping parents to return to work and creating further employment opportunities within the childcare sector itself.

“Those who care for our youngest children play a vital role in helping us give our children a flying start in life. High-quality early education and childcare produces greater long-term benefits for our children and strongly influences their future life chances.

“Where the workforce is equipped with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to provide high-quality childcare and play, the effects on children can be profound, with particular benefits for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or children who are disabled or have additional learning needs.

“The plan I’m unveiling today recognises the challenges the current economic climate presents to the sector and sets out clear and tangible actions to prioritise support to build the capability and capacity of the childcare workforce and the sector to drive our ambitions forward. It also sets out a longer term vision which is ambitious, but also essential if we want to enhance the quality of care we offer our children and to fully realise the potential of this committed sector and its workforce.”

[Update on independent adviser on the ministerial code](#)

A spokesperson for the Permanent Secretary said:

“On November 23rd, the First Minister referred himself for advice under the Ministerial Code in relation to answers given to Assembly Members in 2014 and 2017. James Hamilton, who is an independent adviser to the Scottish Government on Ministerial Code issues, agreed to carry this out, and has already commenced his work.

“The terms of reference set by the First Minister to Mr Hamilton are for him to provide advice on: the allegation that I breached the Ministerial Code in relation to answers I gave to questions on 11th November 2014 and 14th November 2017.

“The Ministerial Code does not prescribe the scope, format, or conduct of the process, and it is for Mr Hamilton to determine how to act on the matter which has been referred. A secretariat has

been made available to Mr Hamilton, with appropriate safeguards to ensure due separation from the First Minister's office and the rest of the Welsh Government in relation to this process and any material submitted.

"Anyone wishing to contact Mr Hamilton's secretariat with material relevant to the terms of reference can do so via referralinvestigation@wales-uk.com. Material related to the process will be stored independently of other Welsh Government internal systems.

"Mr Hamilton's findings will be made public following the conclusion of his work."

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