

Complete Agenda

CABINET

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

DATE	Tuesday, 20th April, 2021
TIME	1.00 pm
LOCATION	Virtual Meeting
CONTACT POINT	Annes Siôn 01286 679490 cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET MEMBERS

Members	
Dyfrig L. Siencyn	Leader
Dafydd Meurig	Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Craig ab Iago	Cabinet Member for Housing
Gareth Wyn Griffith	Cabinet Member for Environment
Nia Wyn Jeffreys	Cabinet Member for Corporate Support
Dilwyn Morgan	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Gareth Thomas	Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Community
Ioan Thomas	Cabinet Member for Finance
Catrin Elen Wager	Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal
Cemlyn Rees Williams	Cabinet Member for Education

AGENDA

	Item	Submitted by	Officer	Page
1	APOLOGIES			
2	DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST			
3	URGENT ITEMS			
4	MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY			
5	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 MARCH 2021			3 - 6
6	ENSURING THAT THE HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT LEADS TO THE BEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT FOR THE HOMELESS IN GWYNEDD	Cyng / Cllr. Craig ab Iago	Dafydd Gibbard	7 - 27

THE CABINET 30/03/21

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Griffith, Dilwyn Morgan, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Catrin Wager and Cemlyn Williams.

Also present-

Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 6: Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department), Mannon Trappe (Senior Safeguarding Manager, Quality Assurance and Mental Health).

Item 7: Roland Evans (Assistant Head of Culture, Economy and Community Department) and Sian Jones (Tourism, Marketing and Events Manager).

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

An apology was received from Cllr Nia Jeffreys and Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT MATTERS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2021

The Chair accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021 as a true record.

6. THE COUNCIL'S COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS PROCEDURE

The report was submitted by Cllr Dafydd Meurig

DECISION

- i. To adopt a new complaints procedure for the Council in accordance with Appendix 1.
- ii. To designate the Head of Corporate Support as the Responsible Officer.
- iii. To accept the annual reports and the Ombudsman's Annual Letter.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that there were many elements to the report. The complaints element of the Adults Department was highlighted, noting that it was standard to submit an annual complaints report. It was expressed that there were two steps for complaints, namely a local resolution and then a full investigation. It was emphasised that the department was learning lessons following each complaint and using them to improve the service. It was added that although the report focused on complaints, it also acknowledged the good work being done within the department with a specific section in the report highlighting the good comments that had been received.

The Monitoring Officer noted that the first recommendation in the report asked the Cabinet to adopt a new complaints procedure, emphasising that this procedure was specific for corporate complaints. It was expressed that the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Act 2019 introduced a statutory basis for the complaints arrangements of public service providers in Wales. It was added that the model reflected the procedure that had been adopted by the Council in 2014, and so only minor changes would need to be done. It was also reiterated that the Monitoring Officer would step back and that the Head of Corporate Support Department would be designated as the Responsible Officer.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The need for an implementation timetable was noted.
- It was expressed that the Children and Supporting Families Department had prioritised complaints. It was added that they had placed emphasis on providing information about how to complain to residents and offering a hand-holding service for residents who complained in order to give individuals full support. It was highlighted that the number of complaints in step 1 had arisen as a result of the department recording each enquiry it received. It was elaborated that the department received a quarterly comprehensive report and analysed the complaints in order to improve the service.
- The Head of Corporate Support Department noted that a reduction had been seen in complaints, but now, there was a measure in place to measure how many days it took to deal with a complaint. Furthermore, it was explained that it took approximately 7 days to deal with a complaint.
- In terms of the comment on clause 7.3 of the report on complaints in the Adults field, it was asked why action on the Ombudsman's recommendations had been delayed when the main recommendations falling on the Council were to apologise and remind staff of the importance of assessments. The officer noted that she did not have the answer and that she would investigate and inform the Chief Executive of the reasons.

- It was emphasised that the nature of some services meant that they received more complaints but that lessons were being learnt from each complaint.
- It was expressed that the positive statistics and comments were encouraging and staff were thanked for their work.

7. GWYNEDD SUSTAINABLE VISITOR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES

The report was submitted by Cllr Gareth Thomas.

DECISION

To agree to the Gwynedd Sustainable Economy Principles in draft form to commence a consultation process with the residents and businesses of Gwynedd.

To agree to continue discussions on a structure for the future implementation of the principles with Snowdonia National Park and any other relevant partner.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting the decision, and emphasising that the principles were in draft form, in order to begin consulting with residents and businesses. It was reiterated that the Covid-19 period had reinforced the need to create principles in the Tourism field. It was noted that the main principle was to create a Visitor Economy for the benefit and well-being of the people of Gwynedd. An explanation was given of the discussions that had been held to create the draft principles, which included workshops with members, discussions with Visit Wales and the tourism sector. It was added that further discussions would be held during the consultation period.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was expressed that this step was an important step to create a new relationship within the field.
- It was noted that this work was all important as this was such an important field for the area.
- It was explained that the principles were good and clear, but that it was essential that communities, and not just businesses, were involved in the discussion. The need for the discussions to be held with communities on the basis of the 13 highlighted areas was added, as the needs of each area would be completely different. It was emphasised that the discussions needed to be held jointly between communities and the businesses so that the dialogue was created, as well as to share experiences.
- It was expressed that a Summit would be held in the autumn, which would include businesses and communities where it would be possible to present the principles in their final form and to create actions.
- Support was shown to the principles, as there was a need to ensure that

there was benefit to the community through tourism.

- It was emphasised that each area would be a part of the discussion, and not the communities where there was a high number of tourism.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 1.35 pm

CHAIRMAN

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Date of meeting:	20 April 2021
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Cllr Craig ab Iago
Contact Officer:	Dafydd Gibbard - Head of Housing and Property Department
Title of Item:	Ensuring that the Housing Support Grant leads to the best possible support for the homeless in Gwynedd

Decision sought

The Cabinet is requested to:

- a) Support the prioritisation for using the Housing Support Grant as outlined in paragraph 36 of this report.
- b) Support in principle to continue working with external providers and offer additional specialist support services to those which are provided in-house.
- c) Note the future risk associated with the revenue grant (as with all other revenue grants) and the mitigation measure noted in paragraph 39 of this report.

Background

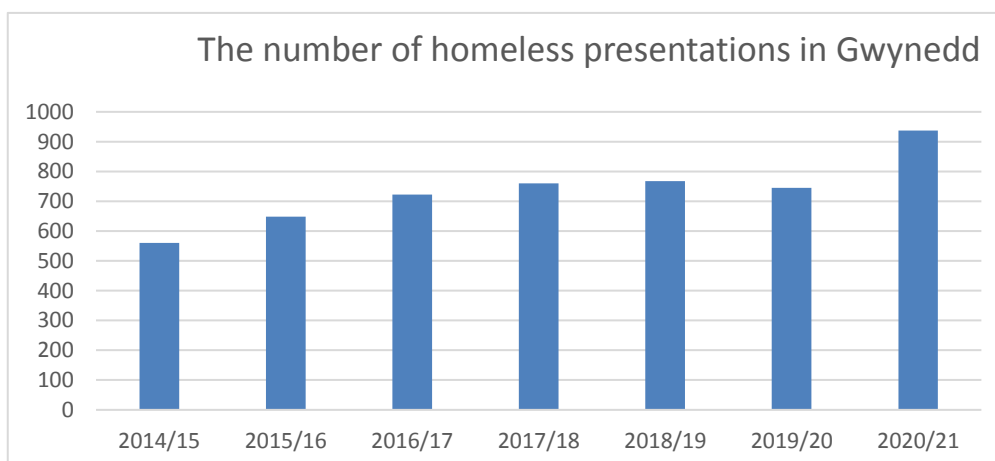
1. The Housing Support Grant is a Welsh Government funded programme (formerly Supporting People Programme), which assists over 2,000 people each year in Gwynedd to live independently. The programme provides essential support to people who face very difficult housing situations and assists some of the most vulnerable people in society to live independently in their own homes or in supported accommodation.
2. It is an early intervention programme, which helps prevent people from becoming homeless or assists homeless people to find accommodation and keep hold of it. It supports people to address problems such as debts, unemployment, tenancy management, substance misuse, domestic abuse, rough sleeping and mental health issues. The support is directed towards what people need, e.g. help to deal with mental health and/or substance misuse problems, help to improve their health and well-being, and/or help to move on to work or training opportunities, and improving their living skills in general.
3. In brief, the aim of the programme is to prevent or reduce homelessness and, without this grant, there would be a far-reaching impact on our ability as a Council to support the residents of Gwynedd to avoid homelessness and it would hinder our

ability to seek to re-home those who are unfortunate enough to find themselves homeless, as soon as possible.

4. Around the end of 2019, we were pre-notified that the Government intended to reconsider this grant, and there was concern that we could be facing a cut in the amount we currently receive, namely £5.1M per year. Therefore, it was intended to prepare ourselves for having to undertake a prioritisation process to identify how to reduce the assistance we were able to offer to the homeless in Gwynedd.
5. However, the homelessness crisis that has been highlighted, and which has to some extent been made worse by Covid-19, has meant that the future of this grant has been completely changed. Rather than having to face a potential cut, we have now received an additional allocation of £1.6M per annum, and are therefore facing a completely different situation. We now have an opportunity to seek to ensure that we make the best possible use of the new funding to provide the best possible support to the homeless in Gwynedd.
6. Confirmation of this additional allocation was received in February and there was a need to present an outline spending plan to the Government within the month. This timetable meant that there was no opportunity to report to the Cabinet before submitting the proposed programme. However, the programme can be changed annually and as the clear instruction received from the Government is that we should plan for the long-term, based on this new additional budget, there will be an opportunity to amend our spending programme for 22/23, should the Cabinet wish for us to do so.
7. A report was presented to the Care Scrutiny Committee on March 18th 2021, outlining the intended direction of travel in drawing up the new spending programme. Members supported the proposal unanimously.

Homelessness in Gwynedd

8. As seen in the graph below, since the introduction of the 2014 Housing Act, which changed the definition in terms of who was eligible for homelessness support, the number of annual presentations has increased from around 550 per annum to around 750 per annum; an increase of 36%.



9. This led to substantial pressure on the Homelessness Unit in terms of its ability to offer support for individuals who are often very vulnerable and wholly dependent on Council support.
10. The biggest challenge was identifying re-homing options for these individuals, particularly suitable temporary accommodation. We know that the general lack of housing in the County, and Wales-wide, means that there is insufficient stock available to re-house a homeless person immediately. In cases where a homeless person does not have any other option, there is a statutory responsibility on the Council to offer temporary accommodation. Before the introduction of the 2014 act, the Council was able to cope by using houses that we had on lease from private Landlords for this purpose. We had around 60 houses available for that purpose at the time.
11. With the substantial increase in numbers as a result of the 2014 Act, the temporary housing stock was insufficient to meet the need and we had to make increased use of bed and breakfast accommodation to meet our statutory duty to offer emergency accommodation.
12. The current pandemic has made the situation substantially worse once more. At the beginning of the lockdown in March 2020, the Government, both sensibly and understandably, asked each Local Authority in Wales to ensure that nobody slept outside on the street. National regulations were amended overnight to ensure that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, had the ability to obtain support from their Local Authority if they were faced with homelessness.
13. The lockdown periods have had a far-reaching impact on our communities and the threat of losing employment, the strain on relationships in extended lockdown periods, the pressures on the health service and the impact on mental health, have all contributed to a substantial increase in the number of people who are faced with homelessness. The situation is continuing to develop of course, and we do not know what type of further increase we will be facing over the coming months.
14. As the above graph shows, the homelessness numbers this year have increased to being close to 950, which is a 26% increase in one year, and 71% higher than it used to be in 2014.
15. One direct side-effect of this is a situation where we now have around 94 individuals in bed and breakfast accommodation, compared with around 25 at the same time last year. We have also had to increase our stock of temporary housing and now we have around 95 in use. Our two homelessness hostels are full and a total of over 200 individuals, couples and families are in temporary accommodation in Gwynedd at present.
16. The cost of housing individuals in bed and breakfast accommodation is funded by Welsh Government during the pandemic.

17. We are facing an unprecedented situation and it is beyond our ability to meet the demand for temporary accommodation. With no sign that the situation will improve in the short-term, the situation is extremely challenging, the numbers may increase further and furthermore, the staff of the Homelessness Unit are under substantial pressure.

The Council's Response

18. Temporary accommodation, particularly in one room in a bed and breakfast, is not suitable accommodation to enable the residents of Gwynedd to live a dignified and prosperous life. Access to quality and safe accommodation is essential if individuals are to be integrated in the community, their work opportunities facilitated and for the quality of their health and well-being to be improved.

19. The Council's Housing Strategy states clearly that we do not wish to see anyone homeless in Gwynedd. In order to achieve this aim, we will of course need to ensure that we have a sufficient supply of houses available to meet the need across the county. However, we cannot ignore the fact that it is likely that we will always need to be able to offer support and emergency accommodation to those faced with homelessness.

20. Therefore, we aspire to end the overuse of bed and breakfast accommodation by providing a sufficient supply of temporary accommodation and developing our own suitable supported accommodation to be used to meet this demand. Our Housing Action Plan clearly sets out how we will achieve this and it ensures that we have a sufficient budget available to provide such a resource over coming years. With financial support from Welsh Government, we will develop over 50 bespoke "Supported Accommodation".

21. Such accommodation needs to be located in places that means that individuals do not need to be moved from their communities. Access to the support of family and friends, as well as the ability to gain easy access to familiar health and well-being services are essential when faced with the deplorable situation of homelessness. Therefore, we will seek to provide our new "Supported Accommodation" developments to correspond with the demand in each area of the county and do everything possible to avoid the need to move people to unfamiliar communities.

22. Although this will mean that we will be able to offer temporary accommodation to an acceptable standard to those facing homelessness, accommodation alone will not meet the complex and challenging needs that are more often than not associated with homelessness. This is why the Housing Support Grant is completely essential.

23. Very often, individuals facing homelessness need support for a period in an attempt to cope with their situation. Those individuals, couples and families that do not have an option but to accept emergency accommodation from the Council very often need additional support to merely finding suitable accommodation. In many cases, they need support with matters relating to domestic abuse, alcohol dependency,

drug dependency, mental health, debts, crime, breakdown of relationships with a partner or family.

24. Therefore, providing suitable accommodation in itself will not suffice to help vulnerable homeless individuals to cope with the other challenges that can make their lives very complex.
25. The Housing Support Grant provides an annual financial resource to provide this support. This includes providing substantial financial support in order to be able to receive support from a number of external specialist providers. See Appendix A for further details on the valuable services obtained from these organisations and bodies.
26. In addition to this external support, the vast majority of the service offered to the homeless is provided by an experienced team of internal staff. The statutory elements of the work being achieved by this Team, i.e. the first point of contact for the homeless, support to prevent homelessness, carrying out a needs assessment, drawing up a housing/support plan and providing temporary accommodation where appropriate. Of course, re-housing individuals permanently in suitable accommodation is the main aim.
27. In addition to these statutory elements, the team also provides further support, which is completely essential, if they are going to help individuals to re-establish themselves or, best of all, to avoid homelessness in the first place. This support includes assistance to:
 - develop good independent living skills, such as shopping, cookery and cleaning;
 - gain confidence when managing money and budgeting
 - gain access to health and social care
 - contact other relevant organisation for support and advice
 - gain access to education, employment, training and voluntary opportunities
 - become a part of a broader community
 - complete a housing application form and contact landlords and hostels
 - prepare to move on to permanent accommodation
 - establish gas/electricity supplies
 - maintain a tenancy and avoid facing homelessness for the second time
28. The staff resource within the Homelessness Unit to support such tenancies has remained relatively consistent since the introduction of the 2014 Housing Act and so it is based on the homelessness numbers at that time. During the pandemic, we have been able to take advantage of additional Government funding to increase our support resource and this has been incredibly valuable when seeking to support our clients.
29. As a result of a 71% increase in the homelessness numbers since establishing the support team pre-2014, we now operate on a staffing scale of one support officer for approximately every 60 individuals who require support. It is not possible for one officer to support so many vulnerable individuals, resulting in individuals being

unable to cope with the complexities in their lives that prevent them from being able to identify a permanent home and consequently having to spend far too long in temporary accommodation.

30. The new Housing Support Grant money provides us with an opportunity to make good this situation. It will be possible to adjust the size of the internal support team, with the aim of having one officer supporting around 25 vulnerable individuals, rather than the current ratio of 1:60. The additional Government funding provides us with an opportunity to put appropriate support in place for the first time since 2014.

The outline spending programme

31. In order to draw up an outline spending programme, an urgent consultation was held with all external providers who are currently providing support for the homeless under the banner of the Housing Support Grant.
32. We note our intention in paragraph 19 and 20 above, as part of our Housing Action Plan, to develop over 50 Supported Accommodation units across the county. Revenue costs will be associated to these developments and so they need to be included in our outline spending programme for this Grant.
33. An opportunity was also given to the staff of the homelessness work units, which provides front-line services, to present their recommendations, specifically to increase the support that we can provide to each individual who needs our support.
34. There was also an opportunity to consult with the existing residents of our two homeless hostels and there was strong support for the intention to provide accommodation in the future which would be self-sufficient rather than having to share kitchen and bathroom facilities with other residents.
35. See Appendix B Equality Assessment which considers the intended direction of travel
36. Following a high-level prioritisation process within the time available, the following outline allocation was established:

Spending heading	Outline allocation
Extend the current partnership with external providers, including Shelter, Nacro, Cais, Gorwel and Cyfle.	£430,000
Regional Plans jointly with the other Councils in the North	£50,000
The revenue costs of the Council's new Supported Accommodation	£200,000
Improve the service being provided by the Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the direct support for the homeless (as outlined in paragraph 26 above) • Establish a 24 hour a day service and on weekends. 	£560,000

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the presence of appropriate support services in Bangor. • Increase the resource to rehabilitate homeless prisoners. • Increase the staffing capacity in our Hostels to improve opportunities for homeless individuals to be re-homed quickly. 	
<p>An unallocated amount until further feasibility work will be completed during the year.</p>	<p>£360,000</p>

37. The external providers referred to in the table above are responsible for specialist support which is specifically focused on people outside mainstream service provision. The support offered is wide ranging and includes providing emergency accommodation for people who are homeless or fleeing domestic abuse and preventing eviction by Landlords (public and private sectors). The provision is also an important element to complement the work delivered by the Homelessness Unit offering different options to provide Housing and Assistance and also tenancy support. As a result, it contributes to the delivery of the Council's duties to deliver the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

38. There is a significant and growing demand for services dealing with domestic violence, mental health, substance misuse, multiple support, financial advice and generic support throughout the County. Due to the additional investment, it will be possible to directly respond to this increased demand for housing support services. The investment will enable a significant increase in the number of vulnerable clients supported in Gwynedd, not only by improving the physical and mental health of these individuals, but also by saving money and easing the burden on the Homeless Unit and other public services (eg health, police and social services).

39. The Welsh Government has asked each authority to plan for the long-term based on the assumption that the new level of Housing Support Grant will continue at the same level. However, as this is a revenue grant, there is a need to be aware that the grant level could reduce at some point in the future. By then, we will have appointed a number of individuals to provide the new services outlined in this report. Should the grant reduce, we will need to carry out a prioritisation exercise across the entire £6.7M programme to identify where it would have the least impact on our services. The plans outlined in this report respond directly to the situation that now faces us and is therefore unlikely to be prioritised in a cuts exercise in the future. We do not anticipate a risk therefore of having to meet redundancy costs in the future.

40. The proposed activities which will be made possible by the increase in the HSG will directly contribute to the delivery of Gwynedd Council's well-being goals, particularly for supporting people to live in quality homes in their communities. Improving the well-being of people in Gwynedd through measures to prevent homelessness underpins the department's work with partners to respond to housing needs. The 'five ways of working' as well as the general principles of the Well-being of Future

Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are integral to the use made of the HSG and the increased allocation will enable the Council to support more people to obtain suitable housing for their needs.

Conclusions

41. As a result of a 71% increase in the homelessness numbers, the Homelessness Unit cannot meet the demand for their service at present.
 42. The use of temporary accommodation in bed and breakfast accommodation is not sustainable and it does not offer accommodation of an acceptable quality to facilitate the ability of individuals, couples and families to overcome deplorable situations and we will develop suitable "supported accommodation" ourselves, aiming to wind up the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation.
 43. We will seek to provide "supported accommodation" within communities where there is demand from the county's residents, avoiding the need to move individuals to communities that are unfamiliar to them.
 44. Providing suitable accommodation in itself will not improve our homelessness situation as the vulnerable individuals who are in our care will need much better support than what we have been able to offer since 2014.
 45. Therefore, we will prioritise the additional money that will come via the Housing Support Grant in accordance with the outline allocation noted in paragraph 36 to ensure that we provide the best possible homelessness service for the residents of our county.
-

Views of the Local Member: Not a local matter

Views of the Statutory Officers:

The Monitoring Officer:

That which is proposed offers an appropriate plan for the use of the Grant noting of courses that the conditions of the financing will be relevant to the activities.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I welcome the additional funding that has been received to assist with the ongoing task of trying to tackle homelessness within Gwynedd. As the report notes, the Council has received an additional £1.6m for 2021/22, and viable schemes to use this money had to be developed in a short period of time.

The table found in paragraph 36 outlines the plans to use the £1.6m of additional funding, which appears reasonable and achievable. The report recognises the risk that exists of

redundancy costs should the grant scheme end or is curtailed, but this risk is relatively small compared to the benefit arising from the scheme, and it is a risk that the Council will be able to cope with should the grant be cut in the future.

Appendices

Appendix A - Providers funded via the current Housing Support Grant.

Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment



SUPPORTING PEOPLE UNIT

WHO CAN PROVIDE HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT SERVICES IN GWYNEDD?

A DIRECTORY OF ACCREDITED SERVICE PROVIDERS

Penrallt, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1BN
☎ 01286 682603 unedpobl@gwynedd.gov.uk

Adra (Tai) Cyfyngedig ☎: 0300 123 8084

Bangor: Tŷ Coch, Llys y Dderwen, Parc Menai, Bangor, LL57 4BL

Caernarfon: Tŷ Buddug, Unit 3, Block C, Doc Fictoria, Caernarfon, LL55 1TH

Porthmadog: Tŷ Madog, Unit 6A / 7A, Penamser Business Park, Porthmadog, LL49 9GB

Dolgellau: Swyddfa Glan Wnion, Ffordd Aran, Dolgellau, LL40 1LH

Provides homes with a support warden and emergency alarms for older people throughout Gwynedd.

Age Cymru Gwynedd & Môn, Y Cartref, Bontnewydd, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL54 7UW ☎ 01286 677711

To promote the welfare of older people in Gwynedd and Ynys Môn, by means deemed charitable. To improve the quality of life for older people and their carers.

Applied Health Care, Ground Floor Basement, Plas Yn Dre, Plas yn Dre Street, Dolgellau, LL40 1AD

☎ 01341 421981 and Uned 6B, Llys Onnen, Parc Menai, Bangor, LL57 4DF ☎ 01248 674925

Provides domiciliary care services for the elderly with a personal touch. Day care / 24 hour residential care, night waking / sleep in. Support services and respite for people with learning disabilities.

Anheddau Cyf., 6 Llys Britannia, Parc Menai, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 4BN ☎ 01248 675910

Social care provider working throughout Gwynedd with individuals with support needs.

Antur Waunfawr, Bryn Pistyll, Waunfawr, Caernarfon, LL55 4BJ ☎ 01286 650721

Provides 24 hours support, at home, in the workplace and during Health and Well-being activities for adults with learning disabilities in Arfon.

**Bywyd Bywiog, Gwylfa, Nebo, LL54 6EE
bywydbywiog@yahoo.co.uk**

Provide accommodation and support / floating support for young people 16-21 who are homeless and adults who have difficulties with their mental health.

The individual is supported to find /maintain their tenancy, develop skills to live independently, to lead a full life and to feel happy.

CAIS, Dawn Centre, 35 – 37 Princes Dr, Colwyn Bay, LL29 8PD ☎ 01492 523690

Provides a comprehensive range of services including in-patient detoxification, residential rehabilitation, community move-ons and confidential community counselling throughout Gwynedd.

Cartrefi Cymru Co-op, 30 Dean Street, Bangor, LL571UR ☎ 01248 360004

Our purpose is to provide a specialised individual needs based personal care and support service for people to live a good life and to do the things that matter to them. We do this by providing the following services: 24 hour Supported Living, Sessional Support, Home Care and Extra Care Housing, Housing Related Support.

**Cyfle Support Services, 80 Madoc Street West,
Porthmadog, LL49 9EA ☎ 01766 513229**

cyfilesupport@btconnect.com

Provides move on supported accommodation & outreach.
Floating support with 24 hour on-call support for young people, single parents and families between 16-25 years of age in South Gwynedd.

**Grŵp Cynefin, Tŷ Silyn, Y Sgwâr, Penygroes,
Caernarfon LL54 6LY ☎ 0300 1112 122**

Providing and managing a wide range of housing including some with emergency lines. We also provide assistance for people to sustain their tenancies and live independently including Sheltered and Extra Care Housing.

GISDA, 22 / 23 Y Maes, Caernarfon LL55 2NA

☎ 01286 671153

We provide support and accommodation for homeless and vulnerable young people including young families across Gwynedd. We also have additional projects which supports and contributes to the charity's aims and objectives

Gorwel, 12 Stryd Penlan, Pwllheli, LL53 5DE

☎ 01758 703087 digartrefedd@gorwel.org

Provide and manage a wide range of supported housing schemes ranging from hostels for the homeless, shared housing and self-contained flats in Gwynedd. The provision also includes a Floating Support scheme throughout Gwynedd

Gorwel, 12 Stryd Penlan, Pwllheli, LL53 5DE

☎ 01758 703087 cydgysylltydd@gorwel.org

Floating support to those people who have multiple support needs (e.g. mental health, low level learning disability, prison leavers, frequently disengage with support provision) in Gwynedd.

Gorwel - Domestic Abuse Service ☎ 0300 1112 122

gorwel@gorwel.org

Offers refuge (women only) and floating support services for women, men and their children, who are affected by domestic abuse in Gwynedd.

Gwynedd Council Social Services:

**Arfon (reception) – Swyddfa Ardal Arfon, Penrallt,
Caernarfon, LL55 1BN ☎ 01286 682646**

**Dwyfor (reception) – Frondeg, Pwllheli ☎ 01758
613131**

**Meirionnydd (reception) – Cae Penarlag, Dolgellau,
LL40 2YB ☎ 01341 422341**

Provides support services for all service user groups throughout Gwynedd.

Gwynedd Council Housing: Tenancy Support Service

Arfon ☎ 01286 682886 / Dwyfor ☎ 01758 704030 /

Meirionnydd ☎ 01341 424336

Provides the help needed to sustain a tenancy and to live an independent life.

Hafan Cymru, 12B Ash Court, Parc Menai, Bangor, LL57 4DF ☎ 01248 671891

enquires@hafancymru.co.uk

Supported accommodation for women and their children who have experienced domestic abuse past or present.

NACRO 64-68 High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 1NR ☎ 07483 0303196

A social justice charity that provides housing related support services in Gwynedd.

North Wales Advice and Advocacy Association, 14a Ashcourt, Parc Menai, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL55 4DF ☎ 01248 670852

Provide an advice and advocacy service on matters such as civil rights, housing, day services, employment, benefits etc. for people with learning disabilities, parents, carers, service providers or anybody who believes we can help.

North Wales Housing, 30 Dean Street, Bangor, LL57 1UR ☎: 01492 572727

[CustomerServiceMailbox@nwaha.org.uk/](mailto:CustomerServiceMailbox@nwaha.org.uk)
Supported.Housing@nwaha.org.uk

Provide and manage a wide range of supported housing schemes ranging from homeless hostels to shared houses & self-contained flats. Providing a range of support services to all service user groups in North Gwynedd. The Outreach and Resettlement team work with rough sleepers providing housing advice and support in finding and resettling into suitable accommodation. Also provide in Bangor, sheltered housing for older persons over 60, with warden service and Extra Care Housing for those aged 55+.

Seren, Uned 2 Llwyngell, Blaenau Ffestiniog. LL41 3NE ☎ 01766 832378

Provides 24 hour support for adults with learning disabilities at home, in the workplace and during leisure activities in Gwynedd.

Shelter Cymru, Beach Road, Y Felinheli, Bangor ☎ 01248 671005 yfelinheli@sheltercymru.org.uk

Provides independent advice and support services throughout Gwynedd, for tenants and homeowners threatened with homelessness.

Equality Impact Assessment

See the *How to make an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet for help to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru, for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that any changes in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely Equality Impact Assessment should be completed before a decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

I Details

I.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Housing Support Grant

I.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is used to address the growing housing crisis in Gwynedd and to eliminate inequality. The HSG contributes to achieving the Housing Action Plan's aim of:

- No one homeless in Gwynedd
- Social housing available to everyone who needs it
- Affordable homes for everyone in Gwynedd
- Gwynedd housing benefiting the environment
- Homes having a positive influence on the health and well-being of the people of Gwynedd.

The HSG is part of a Welsh Government programme which offers grants to:

- enable early intervention to support activities to prevent homelessness
- stabilise people's housing situation
- assist people who may become homeless to find and keep accommodation.

The confirmation of the allocation for the financial year 2021/22 includes an increase in the grant, and therefore it will be necessary to ensure that the management of the HSG provides the best possible support for homeless people in Gwynedd. However, it should be noted that the Housing Support Grant does not contribute to the Authority's statutory duty to prevent homelessness.

I.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Dafydd Gibbard, Head of Housing and Property

I.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

30/03/2021– first version

2) Action

2.1 Who are the partners it will be necessary to work with to undertake this assessment?

Housing and Property Department staff
Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department
Housing Associations within Gwynedd
Care Scrutiny Committee

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics?

Confirmation of the increase in the Government's allocation arrived late and therefore there was little time available to submit the revised HSG application. However, an urgent consultation was undertaken with all external providers who currently provide homelessness support under the aegis of the Housing Support Grant requesting information on potential schemes that would fit the priorities of both the Grant and the Council. This built on the results of the engagement process which took place for the development of the Housing Action Plan 2021-2026.

2.3 What was the outcome of the engagement?

- Several responses were received from a number of different providers outlining elements of the services they offered and how the money could contribute to strengthening provision.
- The suggestions received were fully considered before some aspects of current plans were confirmed and included in the Authority's spending plan.
- The exercise was also useful in identifying contingency plans and additional services which could form part of the Programme in the future.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you acting?

The plan for the revised grant is based on the evidence contained in the Gwynedd Local Housing Market Assessment. This evidence has been updated to reflect the current situation following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Levels of homelessness have been steadily increasing since 2014 but this year, the number of homeless people has risen significantly with the figure approaching 950, an increase of 26% in one year and 71% higher than it was in 2014.
- The impact of the current pandemic has clearly contributed to the deterioration in the current situation. One direct side-effect of this situation is that there are now around 94 individuals in bed and breakfast accommodation compared to around 25 at this time last year.
- We have also had to seek options to temporarily increase our housing stock and now have around 95 in use.

- Two homeless hostels in the County are also full and there are currently over 200 individuals, couples and families in temporary accommodation in Gwynedd.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be gathered?

Any gaps in the evidence will be identified during the implementation of the Programme for 2021/22 by assessing and monitoring the individual plans for any equality impact.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must duly address the impact that any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes have on people with these characteristics? You are welcome to add other characteristics if you wish.

Characteristics	What type of impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	The Plan has identified that 98% of people have confirmed their ethnicity as White and 2% of people were from other ethnic groups. According to the Local Housing Market Assessment, there is evidence that within the Private Rented Sector some potential tenants face discrimination because they are from an ethnic minority. The services provided by the grant will help all eligible individuals gain support according to their individual needs.
The Welsh language	Positive	Increasing the number of those benefiting from the proposed support packages may mean that more local people choose or can stay in Gwynedd. The additional investment in the Housing Support Grant will support the Council's policy to ensure that services are provided in the individual's language of choice.
Disability	Positive	There are a number of barriers for disabled children and adults in finding suitable and affordable housing, with a lack of accessible and flexible housing for adaptation. In addition, disabled people are more likely to live in poverty and experience severe deprivation than non-disabled people. The support that people with a learning disability receive from the services contributes positively to improving the individual's quality of life. It also reduces the pressure on, and complements the support from, Social Care and Health. The percentage of tenancies under threat due to mental health issues is increasing year on year. Supporting tenants to remain in their homes is an essential part of our strategy to prevent homelessness. If homelessness cannot be prevented then our temporary accommodation options will need to be further increased and more supported accommodation provided, which is costly. The extra money will contribute to ensuring that there is expertise to help these vulnerable individuals avoid losing their tenancy.
Gender	Positive	The additional investment will help more men and women generally, it is intended to have a positive impact on all genders. However, there are some specific schemes aimed at either women or men to meet their different needs, including those with some challenges which affect some with protected characteristics more than others. The additional investment will contribute to services which ensure that victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence can access the support

		they need. More women (almost 57%) receive support from services compared to men (43%).
Age	Positive	<p>The Housing Support Grant funds housing related support services for people over 16 years of age. The additional funding will increase the number of individuals who will receive services linked to the grant and this is likely to have a positive impact on their situation. Attention will be focused on two specific groups, young people (16-24) and people over 55.</p> <p>About 16% of young people (16-24) receive grant aid. They have a need for property to 'move on', training for independent living and dealing with multi-support issues which has been identified as a priority and a specific project will seek to provide support for this issue for the 16-24 age group.</p> <p>In addition, around 44% of people over 55 receive grant aid. The over 80s population is increasing with many older properties unsuitable for enabling them to live independently in their homes.</p>
Sexual orientation	none	<p>There are no individual plans relating to these features. However, individual plans will need to be monitored to identify if there are issues to be considered and if additional plans need to be commissioned.</p> <p>Regional discussions are ongoing to consider the need for Hoarding, Refuges for Men and LGBTQ projects in North Wales. Any equality assessment will be modified depending on the nature of the discussions at the RHSCG Group.</p>
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	none	
Gender reassignment	none	
Pregnancy and maternity	none	
Marriage and civil partnership	none	

3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society by advancing equality and good relations in its activities in the fields of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must duly address the way any change impacts on these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	<p>The Housing Support Grant contributes to the efforts of the Housing Action Plan to provide suitable accommodation and seek to eliminate discrimination. In addition, the Grant promotes equality of opportunity by reducing barriers which prevent people in Gwynedd from living in accommodation which meets their needs. The additional investment will raise the number of people who will benefit from the Grant.</p> <p>The Housing Assistance Grant offers partnership services aimed at reaching people in real need through promoting information about the grant and the support provided. The extra money will widen the opportunities to inform the services and look to build good relationships in consultation with people.</p>
Building good relationships	Yes	
Encouraging good relationships	Yes	

Socio-economic Duty	Yes	Evidence shows that 60% of people in Gwynedd are priced out of the housing market. The Housing Support Grant targets those facing socio-economic disadvantage through schemes to help them find and retain accommodation. The additional investment will directly contribute to increasing the number of people who will benefit from the services offered under the Grant.
----------------------------	-----	---

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

Yes. The programme helps over 2,000 people every year in Gwynedd to live independently. The additional allocation will assist Gwynedd providers and officers to increase the support available to individuals who present themselves as homeless or potentially homeless. The proposed arrangements will significantly increase the size of the in-house support team with the aim of one officer supporting around 25 vulnerable individuals rather than the current 1:60. The additional Government funding gives us the opportunity to put in place appropriate support arrangements to respond to the growing challenge in the sector.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

We do not anticipate any negative impact but we will regularly monitor the relevant plans and prepare annual reports to the Welsh Government as part of our ongoing activities.

4.3 What should be done?

Select one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	X
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	

4.4 If you continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Robust arrangements are already in place to monitor the outcomes achieved by the specific plans and services. Ongoing consultation will take place with providers to ensure that the scheme continues to assist in the delivery of services to users and to identify and mitigate any negative impacts identified by the Council or providers as a result of the additional investment.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, please explain why here.

Not applicable

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

Under the terms of the grant, Local Authorities are required to ensure that they review and monitor all Housing Support Grant related contracts. This should be arranged on a regular basis, at least annually, to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Grant, using a risk-based approach. In addition, the Council will

need to keep under constant review that the plans align with the Council's strategic aim for addressing homelessness.