



Denbighshire County Council

Supporting People/Homelessness Prevention Plan

2018/19

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1. Introduction

Homelessness means being without a safe and secure place to live. This includes things like 'sofa-surfing', living in unsuitable/unsafe accommodation, accessing emergency beds, and sleeping rough. For many, it means facing a number of difficult and traumatic experiences. Homelessness, or risk of homelessness, can happen for a thousand different reasons – and can affect anyone, at any time.

Supporting People is a Welsh Government Programme, funding support for people 16+ who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We aim to prevent homelessness wherever possible, working with the community and our partners to identify and tackle its causes, and empower people to live as independently as possible. In Denbighshire we have a range of projects, supporting over 1,000 people at any one time.¹ With statutory homelessness (previously known as Housing Solutions), we're part of the **Denbighshire Homelessness Prevention Team**.

Our Vision: **Safety, security, and good quality of life for all**

Our Mission Statement: *We will work together to deliver quality support, empowering people to live independently and avoid homelessness*

Our Principles:

- ➔ Early intervention and prevention
- ➔ Person-centred and asset-based support
- ➔ Transparency, and equality of access
- ➔ Outcomes focus
- ➔ Continued learning and development

Our support is always person-centered, but could include help with things like:

- **Budgeting, including accessing money advice**
- **Achieving safety and security**
- **Developing life skills**
- **Accessing other helpful services and opportunities**

This Plan gives an overview of our priorities and plans for 2018/19 - why we're doing what we're doing, and what this means for the people it affects.

¹ Excluding alarm services, of which there are 1,192 units

Supporting People/Homelessness Prevention plays a vital role in the delivery of key support legislation:

- **The Housing (Wales) Act 2014**, and **Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** have brought about real changes to the ways people are supported. Early intervention and prevention, and empowerment of people to achieve independence are central to both Acts.
- The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** means that plans must be sustainable and increase wellbeing. This also means a prevention focus, looking at short and long-term needs, and partnership working.
- **The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015** highlights the importance of early intervention to prevent victims of this kind of violence and abuse becoming homeless in the first place, and also wherever possible to support them to stay in their own homes.
- **The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016** means some new rights and responsibilities for tenants and landlords - so it's important that people can access good advice and support where needed.

We also support the delivery of other national and local plans and agendas, such as:

- **Denbighshire plans and guidance**, including Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2017-22; the Wellbeing Plan 2014-2018, the Supporting Independence in Denbighshire agenda; the Housing Strategy, and the Care and Support at Home Strategic Plan.
- **National plans and guidance**, including the Supporting People Grant Guidance, the Regional Strategic Plan, and the Ten Year Homelessness Plan for Wales 2009-2019.
- **Commissioning guidance/agendas**, including the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit, and the North Wales Mental Health Supported Housing Commissioning Statement.
- **Equality and diversity**, including Denbighshire's Strategic Equality Plan, and the Welsh Language Standards. We also contribute to the 2025 movement, with its aim of ending avoidable health inequalities in North Wales by the year 2025.
- Other developments, research, and strategies in key areas such as **Health, Social Care, and Criminal Justice**.
- We also represent North Wales Supporting People at **regional groups** such as the National Rough Sleeper Working Group, North Wales Area Planning Board Delivery Group, and Supporting People National Advisory Board.

2. People's stories

'Ben'

Ben became alcohol dependent when his marriage ended, he felt **alone and bewildered**, pushing away colleagues and friends. His **health was deteriorating**, and **unpaid bills** were stacking up, unopened, hidden away. The mortgage hadn't been paid for 6 months. With the help of his CAIS Support Worker, working closely with the Substance Misuse Service, Ben completed a home detox. He got help to **address his health issues**, and began to **sort out his finances**. His Support Worker was also able to help Ben's family to **understand his issues**, and ways he could lead a **healthier and safer lifestyle**. He began rebuilding his **relationship with family**, as well as his **self-worth**. Ben began contributing to a self-help group. His **confidence growing**, he was able to slowly begin going **back to work** as a builder. He also regularly visits the library, **enjoying the alone time and quietness he'd once hated**.

'Jane'

Jane lost her accommodation following an **illegal eviction**. At first she moved in with her mum, but this was in an extra care scheme, so wasn't an option for the long term. She ended up **feeling she had no other choice** than to move back in with her ex-wife. Jane is transgender, but circumstances with her ex-wife meant she had to dress as a male – **seriously impacting on her mental health**. Jane hurried to find her own accommodation, and moved into a property on a short lease, in a **poor state of disrepair**. She had come into contact with the Homelessness Prevention Team, and been offered support, but felt she **could not face going into temporary homeless accommodation** with her teenage son – who, having severe epilepsy and a learning disability, was dependent on Jane for his care. Jane's story shows how **homelessness can affect anyone**, and shines a light on some of the difficulties and barriers people can face in their journeys to prevent and resolve their homelessness – as well as the **importance of early intervention**. The Homelessness Prevention Team will continue to work with Jane to find more suitable accommodation for her and her son, **where they can achieve better quality of life**.

'Tim'

Tim was **staying in a leaky tent**. He'd been **coerced into illegal activity** in lieu of rent, and **fled violence** when he refused to continue.

He was scared of being found, reluctant to give too much away – so he found it difficult to access the help he needed.

Tim's Outreach Worker recognised there were issues not only around violence, but **modern day slavery**. Tim accessed advice from the Police Modern Day Slavery Unit. His **fears of being found were alleviated**, and he agreed for his Outreach Worker to involve the Police.

Once there was a crime number, it was much **easier for Tim to access the help he needed**. He also had much more **peace of mind** in speaking to services. He began accessing the emergency beds project, where his dog was also able to stay in a sheltered area.

3. Our Five Strategic Priorities

The DCC Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021

Tackling homelessness through **early intervention, prevention, and providing quality accommodation and support** is central to our priorities. We've worked closely with our partners in developing the Denbighshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-21, which sets out in detail all of Denbighshire's priorities and plans for tackling homelessness. The vision of the Strategy is simple: **To end homelessness in Denbighshire**

Tackling Poverty

We know **homelessness and poverty will often go hand in hand**. We are a Tackling Poverty programme, partnered with Communities First, Families First, and Flying Start - we have a shared goal of **tackling the causes and effects of poverty**. Exploring opportunities through groups including the Corporate Anti-Poverty Group, and Tackling Poverty Strategic and Operational Groups, we'll continue to work together to reduce duplication and strengthen our support.

Citizen Involvement

The people we support must have their voices heard, and be able to shape how services develop. We are currently developing a Citizen Involvement Policy, detailing how involvement will be at the heart of all of our priorities and developments.

The sustainability of housing related support

We face a number of **current and future challenges** in keeping our support affordable and effective, including **public spending cuts and welfare reform**. We must work together to be creative and resourceful, and make sure our approach is **needs-led for both the short and long-term**. We must also play a role in campaigning for policy reform and developments, to make sure support continues to be available wherever needed.

Joint-Commissioning/Collaboration

In recent years we've joint-commissioned/collaborated with other North Wales Supporting People Teams, the Tackling Poverty Programmes, and with Children's Services and Youth Justice. Doing this is important as it means we're able to **pool knowledge and skills, and reduce duplication** across our services – meaning our support is more effective and efficient. We'll continue to explore opportunities, including developing pilot regional projects. We'll also support the priorities of the Regional Strategic Plan.

4. Shaping our services

We look at a range of information to identify need and demand, and develop our services. This includes:

The views of citizens – These are welcomed throughout the year, with our Service User Involvement Officer working closely with projects to make sure that people have their voices heard, and can play an active role in shaping the support they receive.

The Homelessness Prevention Day

Every year we put on a 'Homelessness Prevention day' – an opportunity for the people we support, our projects and partners to gather together to talk about what matters to them, and contribute to what this Plan looks like.

The views of our other partners – Including the projects we fund, and other agencies we work with.

Consultation – Including as part of service reviews and decommissioning decisions, and consultation on each annual Supporting People Plan.

Information from our Single Pathway Team – Who coordinate all support referrals, ensuring equality of access to the right support.

Project monitoring and reviews – All of our projects are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure service quality - to identify any areas for improvement, and learn from good practice.

Other information - Including Outcomes & Housing Solutions data, the population assessment, and other studies/reports.

We also look at potential unmet need.

Work we've done to try to determine and address unmet need has included:

- Piloting of an annual Unmet Need survey
- Reviewing the ways we map need, including looking at the effectiveness of our Needs Mapping data.
- Investigations into the need for veterans supported housing, supported housing for females with complex needs, and 'wet' provision (supportive, safe drinking environments)
- The Reconnection Guidance – ensuring there are suitable and consistent support offers for people without a 'local connection'.

There are 3 (spend plan) areas where we don't currently fund any specific projects: people with physical/sensory disabilities; people with chronic illness, and young people who are care leavers. In all cases we've made sure that people who might fall within one of these groups are able to (and do) access our other support. We monitor this throughout the year, and investigate further as needed.

✓ **The information we gather tells us that there continues to be high demand for Supporting People services.**

Some key messages from 2016/17 were:

<p>Independent accommodation is in high demand</p> <p>People are increasingly telling us they have a preference for independent accommodation, e.g. in the private rented sector - rather than supported housing. At the same time, people receiving an eviction notice has increased by 46%, from 108 to 158.</p>	<p>Demand for support remains pretty steady</p> <p>1,178 Needs Mapping forms were completed in 2016/17, compared with 1,257 the previous year.</p>	<p>We're seeing greater diversity</p> <p>16 people identified as non-white in 2015/16, compared to 42 in 2016/17. There's also been an increase in language diversity. Numbers of people identifying as a different gender than that at birth have also more than doubled (from 7 to 17), & gay and bi-sexual people both have increased by 50% (from 10 to 15).</p>	<p>Main support needs are changing, but only slightly</p> <p>People are still mostly telling us they want support around mental health, domestic abuse, generic (housing related) needs, & being a young person - however, generic (rather than domestic abuse) is now the main 'lead need' identified. Feeling safe, accommodation, & managing money remain the top 3 target outcomes people tell us they want to achieve.</p>
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✓ **We also see the importance of our alignment with statutory Homelessness, as the Homelessness Prevention Team.**

Number of households owed a full duty by Denbighshire to secure accommodation in 2016/17: 62

Number of households eligible for statutory assistance to prevent and/or relieve homelessness in 2016/17: 672
(This isn't including general advice and assistance, which was accessed by 484 people in 2016/17)

Number of people supported by commissioned housing related support services in 2016/17: 1,553

It's a good sign when there are less people receiving statutory homelessness assistance than accessing commissioned housing related support services – this shows that people are getting support to prevent crisis point. Almost a quarter of all commissioned housing related support referrals came from Statutory Homelessness Prevention Officers in 2016/17 – showing how important our alignment is in providing a whole response to homelessness.

5. Our Priority areas for Development in 2018/19

1. Young People (16-25)

We've been developing a 'positive pathway' approach since 2016, working closely with Children's Services and other partners. This has already meant significant service remodels, with some ongoing in 2018/19. We'll make sure that young people continue to be involved in shaping these developments. We'll also be working with our partners to ensure we're able to minimise the **negative** impacts of welfare reform on young people as far as possible, and will continue to support the development of house share opportunities.

2. Mental Health

We'll continue to strengthen links (e.g. by contributing to the Mental Health Planning Group) so that we can better take up opportunities for early intervention and prevention, and make sure support is accessible for people being discharged from hospital.

3. Education, employment and training

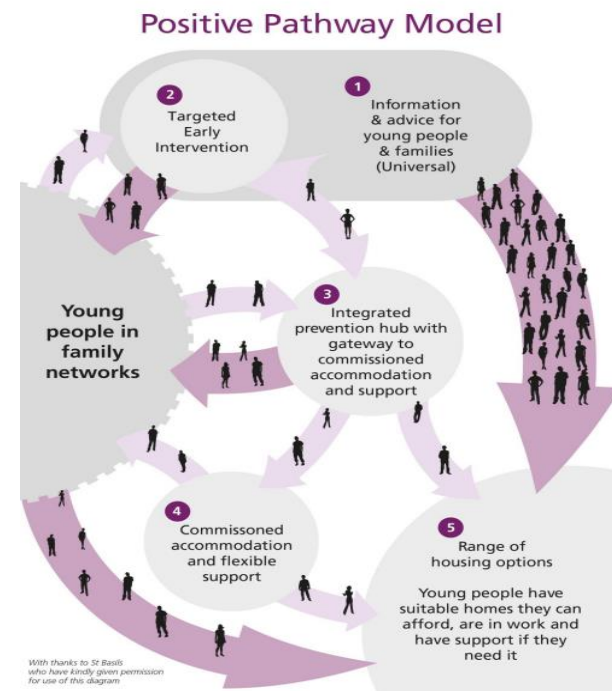
It's vital that education, employment and training is accessible for everyone - not least because it can open the door to affordable, quality accommodation. This is also a priority area for all Tackling Poverty partners, and DCC corporately. We've already developed staff training, and had qualifications included in some pilot projects. Work experience opportunities will be a key priority for us in 2018/19. Transport is also important here, so we'll be strengthening links with Community Transport, as well as supporting the delivery of corporate priorities around connected communities. Our Citizen Involvement Officer will also continue to work with projects to identify and challenge barriers in this area.

4. People with a criminal offending history

With the opening of the Wrexham Prison in 2017, along with legislative changes, we need to make sure we're geared up to supporting the resettlement of people leaving prison. We'll continue to attend the North Wales Prisoner Resettlement Steering Group, as well as take learning from the offender services research via the RCC, and monitor demand for our projects to support offenders.

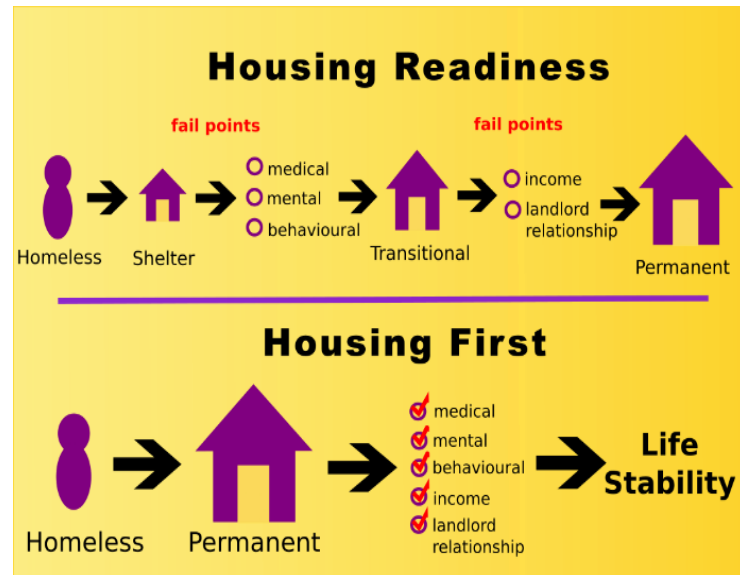
5. Supported Housing (affordability)

Supported housing can unfortunately be unaffordable for some, especially when working full-time and unable to claim full Housing Benefit. The LHA cap due in 2019, *may* offer some opportunities; however, we really don't know enough to plan around this just yet. We must shine a light on such cases, explore remodelling opportunities, and ensure people receive the right advice.



6. Rough Sleeping

'Housing First' is founded on the principle that housing is a basic human right. It means secure accommodation is provided as soon as it's available – then holistic wrap-around support is put in place. We're committed to developing Housing First; however, we've



recognised that we can't achieve this alone. We'll be exploring opportunities for joint-funding with Health and other partners, and working with suppliers to improve availability of suitable accommodation. Our aim is to have Housing First in place by the end of 2019 – but we can only do this with support and buy-in from key partners.

We'll also be working to develop a 'No First Night Out' approach, including targeted intensive support where people are at risk of spending a first night on the streets. We'll also be looking at options for developing a 'sit-up' service. We will additionally contribute to work to review day services - to ensure a best practice, consistent approach to ending rough sleeping. To support all of this work, as well as to strengthen our response to rough sleeping generally, our Outreach Team will be closely aligned with the Ty Golau (emergency beds and Hostel) project.

7. Substance misuse

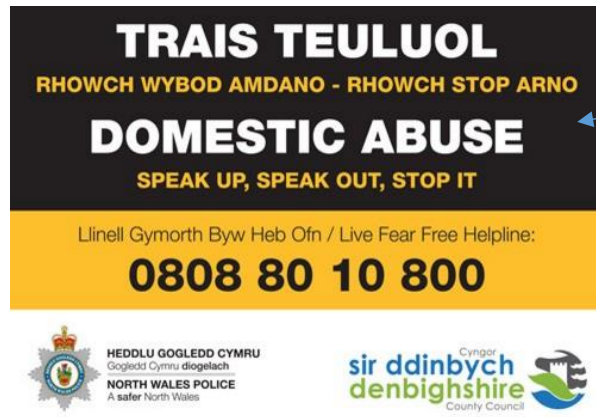
We've seen a decrease in people with substance use issues accessing our support; referrals from the Substance Misuse Service (SMS) have also fallen. Our Single Pathway will be working with SMS to make sure there are no barriers to accessing support. We'll also strengthen links through the Area Planning Board (APB) Delivery Group, as well as exploring any future funding available from the Substance Misuse Action Fund (which has funded our tenancy starter packs for the last 3 years). We'll also be further considering options for safe drinking environments – liaising with the APB, and continuing to learn from good practice, including visiting 'wet' services in other areas.

8. Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

We are developing a Complex Disabilities 'Tenancy Enabler' service, which will support people with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury, and ASD - which we'll be learning from over the coming year, to better inform us around the housing related support needs of people with ASD.

9. Domestic Abuse

We'll be making sure we're well-informed around our duties under the The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, including ensuring we and all project staff are trained up in line with the National Training Framework.



We will also be supporting the strengthening of links between the North Wales Domestic Abuse Strategic group and the RCC, including looking at joint commissioning opportunities.

← You may have seen these stickers if you've been in a Denbighshire taxi recently; we funded these back in 2016.

10. Off the shelf

We sometimes have under-spend which we can use for in-year 'off-the-shelf' projects. We've held workshops to come up with suggestions, and will continue to seek out ideas for pilot or spend-to-save projects.

11. Regional Collaborative Committee

We will continue to support the priorities of the Regional Strategic Plan. This will include supporting the development of regional working and projects, as identified by the Committee throughout the year (e.g. the regional prison leavers research in 2016/17).

12. The community support model

This kind of support (e.g. community groups) can allow people to develop their own support networks, which for many, is key to their independence. We've already piloted some community support projects, including a volunteer programme with Countryside Services, and the Denbighshire Community Podcast. Our Outreach Team also continue to support weekly group sessions for rough sleepers in the Dewi Sant Centre, made possible by funding from the ASB Tasking Group.

Over the coming year we'll be exploring further ideas for pilot projects and remodelling opportunities. We must also consider the importance of transport to enable this kind of support, so will be strengthening links with Community Transport, as well as supporting the delivery of corporate priorities around connected communities.

Rough Sleeper Group Support

Every Thursday afternoon our Outreach Team re-open the Dewi Sant day centre for an activities/drop-in session for rough sleepers. Quizzes are a firm favourite. We see the importance of peer support here, with those coming from 'outside' being welcomed by all, and feedback capturing the good spirits of the groups. It's the goal that these sessions will in future be run entirely by rough sleepers.

While we must respond to changes throughout the year, below are details of our current plans for specific funding changes and service remodels identified for 2018/19 within particular service areas.

<u>Spend Plan Area</u>	<u>Plans for 2018/19</u>
People with learning disabilities	We are developing a Complex Disabilities 'Tenancy Enabler' service, which will support people with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury, and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), which we will be learning from over the coming year. Funding to the DCC Community Living service will also continue to reduce every year, as agreed in 2013.
People 55+	The Supporting Independent Living (SIL) service was aligned with the DCC Reablement service in 2016/17, to offer a consistent and streamlined support service to people 55+ with a range of support needs. This will require further funding to enable the service to effectively support the delivery of the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
Young people	Young people's services in Denbighshire will continue to be developed and re-shaped, as part of our development of a 'Positive Pathway' model. This will include the continued remodelling of the Dyfodol project, and reviewing other young people's projects to ensure that they provide an appropriate and needs-led response to the housing related support needs of all young people in Denbighshire.
'Generic'	We are developing a proposed service remodel to commence in June 2018 – a multi-disciplinary homelessness prevention project, combining 4 separate contracts (currently covering young people's, single parents, ex-offenders, substance misuse and alcohol misuse support).
Other funding	The Supporting People Grant can't be used to fund Supporting People Staff (who administer the Grant) from 2019/20. The budget for the Team has been reduced by 46.5% since 2013, and Denbighshire County Council intend to identify other sources of funding internally, to make sure that the Grant can continue to be administered effectively. The Team will no longer be funded by the Grant by 2019/20.

For full details of all of our projects, please see our directory of services, available on the Denbighshire County Council website.

**We must be needs-led, and outcomes focussed in everything we do...
So we're reviewing and developing the ways we commission services.**

- **Multi-disciplinary/Generic Support Projects** – This means that one service can support anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness - it is flexible and needs-led, and doesn't focus on one specific area (e.g. substance use issues). We already have some generic projects in Denbighshire. This approach can mean less duplication with specialist services, and easier access to support. We're therefore considering opportunities to make our projects more flexible and needs-led, including merging contracts.
- **Payment by results** – We will be piloting a payment by results approach. This involves payments being made to projects when outcomes are achieved - this means there must be a tailored package of support, with realistic agreed outcomes, for people who might not usually be able to access supported housing because of high/complex needs.
- **Risk-based reviewing** – We're currently working towards a fully risk-based approach to our project reviewing. This means that levels of project risks inform when and how we review – i.e. where projects are assessed as lower risk, a lighter-touch review may take place, and higher risk projects would be reviewed first.
- **Mapping need and future demand** – We're working to make sure that we're gathering the right information to inform our commissioning, including reviewing our 'Needs Mapping' system, and developing information gathering within our Single Pathway (referrals) Team. We'll also be contributing to work to gather data on dementia, via our ABBA (Aros Byw Bod Adref) project.

This also includes embedding new directions for support delivery, including:

Asset (strengths) based support, and positive risk taking: maximising people's own strengths and resources, and recognising that people are experts in their own lives.

Trauma informed support: including understanding and mitigating the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and developing psychologically informed environments (PIEs).

What are PIEs?

PIEs involve helping people to understand where behaviours come from, allowing people to work more creatively and effectively. This means thinking not only about what our physical environments look like, but how we communicate, respond to challenging situations, and shape our support.

There are five key areas to consider when developing PIEs

- Developing a psychological framework
- The physical environment and social spaces
- Staff training and support
- Managing relationships
- Evaluation of outcomes

6. More people's stories

'Helen'

Helen's landlord had just issued her with an **eviction notice** – they were selling the property.

Helen had several health problems, including having suffered a stroke. A Homelessness Prevention Officer (HPO) visited Helen at home, and saw that while friends and relatives provided invaluable support, Helen's **quality of life wasn't as it should be** – not able to manage the stairs, she was basically living in her bedroom. The HPO needed to help Helen to improve her quality of life, as well as **prevent crisis point**.

The HPO contacted SARTH (the Single Access Route to Housing), and explained the situation in detail. Based on this, Helen was put into Band 1, and was soon after allocated a bungalow just up the road.

Helen sent a card to her HPO, describing in just a few words the huge difference this had made to her life.

"Thank you very much from the bottom of my heart for all your work on getting me my beautiful bungalow. You've made me very happy."

'Maria' *(This story was put together by Carly, a volunteer representative for Nacro Community Voice, and supported housing resident.)*

Maria first got in touch with Nacro when she was still in prison. It had been **one of several prison sentences**.

Maria was born intersex, and experienced a very **difficult childhood and transition to adulthood** - and had made some **destructive associations and choices**. Determined to make some changes in her life, she knew she needed some support coming out.

Coming out of prison this time was the **start of a new chapter** for Maria. With the support of Nacro and the trans charity, Unique, Maria began taking as many opportunities as she could to **improve her quality of life**. She moved into supported accommodation, and completed numerous qualifications. Maria also underwent the surgery to fully assign her sex as female.

Having been out of prison for six years, Maria still spends the majority of her time there - but now she's **'on the other side of the bars'**, delivering LGBT and Diversity training to the prison service and the police. Maria now has her **own home, a job she adores**, and a much **loved and valued support network**. She feels that with support, and the huge efforts she's made herself, she has **become a better person**.

'Gemma'

Gemma had to leave home at 17 when her **relationship broke down** with her mother. After a stay in temporary accommodation, Gemma moved into a young people's supported housing project run by Grwp Cynefin.

Gemma had a difficult first couple of months settling into the new environment; however, things soon began to improve. Gemma was **learning how to look after her accommodation**, understanding her rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

But more than this - her **life outlook was getting better**. Anxieties around her housing situation had made existing health issues worse, but Gemma was now **looking after her physical health**, and feeling **able to crack on with college work**. She was also completing various other courses around independent living and healthy relationships.

Feeling in a **much better place**, Gemma was able to begin exploring hobbies. She was then **successful in getting a job** at a nursery. Gemma moved into her own accommodation, equipped with the skills and tools to maintain her tenancy, and to **live a happier and healthier life**.

Jim'

*"I spent years under the stars, I got used to it. I was sleeping out in one place for quite a long time, the owners got used to me too.
I was the unpaid night watchman.*

*Drugs, drinking, they help you block things out, they distract you.
It can be hard to see a way out.*

*I've known lots of services over the years, some have been a life line. But it's hard to break out. I had a flat before, but it ended up a homeless hostel.
It was still the same life.*

*An Outreach Worker came to speak to me. At first I'd wondered what her agenda was. We spoke about Prestatyn, where I was born and bred. We talked about memories. We got on. I realised she had no agenda, she just wanted to help me.
And I was ready to bite the bullet.*

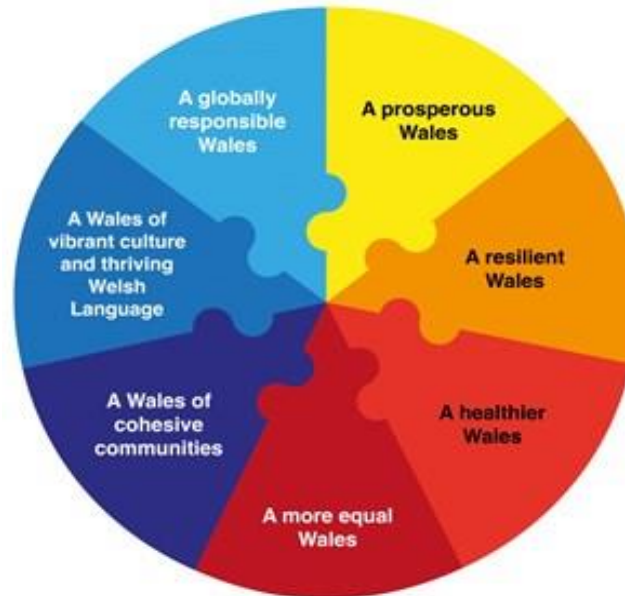
*She doesn't let me down, and I don't want to let her down. But she's also patient when I have a wobble.
There is trust, which means everything.*

*I used to sail, and I do miss seeing the world. **But I'm really enjoying the quiet life.** 'Normal' things, putting electric on the meter, going food shopping. I've even started watching soaps.*

*It's a big adjustment. It's been hard work. But my Outreach Worker's helped me with getting used to these things, being in four walls.
I feel I've a new lease on life."*

7. Wellbeing Impact Assessment (WIA)

A WIA is a tool we use to help us evaluate the impact of a new idea, policy, report or project. It helps us to consider ways to strengthen the contribution we can make to the wellbeing of future generations, looking at the 7 wellbeing goals identified in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:



A WIA for the draft Supporting People/Homelessness Prevention Plan 2018/19 was completed 18/04/2017. It scored the Plan 22 points out of 24 in terms of its sustainability, and identified that it made a positive contribution to all of the 7 wellbeing goals (with strategies identified to address any unintended negative consequences). The WIA was reviewed following the close of the Plan's formal consultation period (27/06/2017 – 22/08/2017), and no changes were required.

8. Denbighshire Supporting People Grant Spend Plan 2018/19

To be inserted once confirmed by WG.