



Let's keep on
Supporting People
a campaign pack for members





What is Supporting People?

The Supporting People (SP) Programme in Wales helps almost 60,000 potentially vulnerable and marginalised people per year to live independently and with dignity in their community. Over 3/4 of a million lives have been transformed through the SP Programme in Wales since 2004.

The SP Programme funds housing-related support services that a landlord (such as a housing association) or other provider such as a voluntary organisation can provide. Support means advice and help to make it easier for vulnerable people to maintain their independence in their home or to develop the skills to do so.

The SP programme is a preventative service that makes a real difference to those who benefit from it, increasing their resilience to cope with the shocks, stresses and uncertainties in their life and reducing demand on the health, social care and criminal justice systems.

We must ensure that we are highlighting the positive impact of this programme to safeguard this budget, and we need your help.

What is the campaign all about and how can you help?

The 'Let's Keep on Supporting People' campaign in Wales has been set up to raise awareness of the Supporting People programme, the people who benefit, the preventative nature of the programme and how the funding is spent. The aim of the campaign is to secure continued investment in the Supporting People Programme Grant and ensure that people who are marginalised and at risk continue to be protected.

The 'Let's Keep on Supporting People' campaign in Wales is being run by Community Housing Cymru, the membership body for housing associations in Wales, and Cymorth Cymru, the umbrella body for organisations working with marginalised and at-risk people in Wales.

Over August, the preparatory work for the next phase of the Let's Keep Supporting People campaign began in earnest.

We have already begun meeting with Assembly Members and other stakeholders. However, we know one of the most powerful ways to make the case for protecting the Supporting People (SP) budget is to invite AMs to see your services in order for them to meet with people that are using those services.

The campaign will be launching on 1st September which will be followed by an intensive six weeks of campaigning before the budget setting in October.

During this time we need you, our members, to invite politicians to see the benefits of the SP programme first hand.

The campaign will have two strands as we would also like to use this opportunity to speak to MPs about the impact of the UK Government's announcement in last year's Autumn Statement that the amount of rent covered by housing benefit in the social sector will be capped to the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate from April 2016. A one year exception for supported accommodation in the social housing sector was later announced, and we are waiting for the results of a review into the funding of supported housing by the DWP. Supported housing commands higher rents because it is more expensive to build and manage, but this type of accommodation is absolutely vital for the needs of those who use it.

So, help us spread the word! Arrange visits for both AMs and MPs to see how the Supporting People Programme and supported housing are helping people in their constituency.





Our messages are clear

AMs:

- We want to increase the Supporting People budget so that it can continue to play a fundamental part in the prevention agenda. A recent data linkage study shows that, after receiving SP services, use of A&E and GP surgeries falls to a pre-support level. In addition, studies have shown that £2.30 of savings are generated for every £1 invested.
- We need to continue to ringfence the Supporting People budget in order to avoid the collapse of services for vulnerable people. Evidence from England when the ringfence was removed shows increased homelessness and a lack of services to prevent greater problems occurring in the future. We want to continue the positive approach in Wales, and removing the ringfence would stop that.
- We are concerned that, with the threats of the LHA cap, Brexit and further Westminster austerity, there is too much uncertainty to remove a programme that clearly works.

MPs:

- The 'Let's keep on Supporting People' campaign aims to ensure that people who need extra support will always have a home that meets their needs.
- Thanks to supported housing, people can live independently, knowing that care and support is there when they need it.
- The UK Government is currently conducting a review into how supported housing is funded. It is paramount that any new funding model enables these services to continue to support the most vulnerable people and enables more new supported homes to be built.

Councillor Visits:

This year, we are also encouraging you to invite your Council leaders to local projects. We believe the following points will be worthwhile to focus on:

- The ability of Supporting People to reunite families and make a positive difference to young children, preventing and reducing the impact of adverse childhood experiences.
- The impact of Supporting People services on employment, education and training for those on the edges of society.
- The fact that Supporting People will prevent urgent demand for housing from increasing, therefore allowing the Welsh Government space to roll out the 20,000 affordable housing plan.
- The positive stories of people who have benefited from Supporting People are paramount.

- If you would like support in setting up a visit with your local Assembly Member, MP or Council leader, please contact aaron-hill@chcymru.org.uk or olivertownsend@cymorthcymru.org.uk.





Did you know?

Supporting People facts:

- In 2016/17, the SP budget was £124.4m. The budget was protected by Welsh Government following the first phase of the Let's Keep on Supporting People campaign.
- In 2015/16, 59,228 people were supported by the SP programme.
- The SP budget was cut by £10m in 2014/15.
- SP is a preventative service – preventing problems from occurring in the first place, or providing help as early as possible in order to reduce demand on other services such as health and social services.
- In the region of the Vale and Cardiff, £10m was the equivalent of the annual funding of all services for men and women at risk of domestic abuse, young people with support needs, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health issues, people with alcohol issues, people with substance misuse issues, ex-offenders and families with support needs.
- Weekly delivery of NHS services costs around £113m in Wales. £10m would therefore roughly cover the costs of running the NHS for 1.5 days.

Supported Housing facts:

- The rent for 77% of homes classed as specified accommodation (including hostels for the homeless, refuges for victims of domestic violence and suitable accommodation for those with disabilities) is over the current LHA rate in Wales and so will be affected if this type of accommodation isn't exempted from the UK Government's Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cap.
- In addition, over half of specialist accommodation for older people will be affected by the LHA cap (12,648 homes).
- There are currently 36,928 supported housing units in Wales.

Day of action: 1st September

On 1st September, we will be inviting all our members and providers to take part in a “day of action”. We will send briefings to the press and announce an official launch to the campaign. On this day, we need providers and others to gather with people they are supporting and share the campaign on social media, and case studies will be vital to the success of this day of action.



Campaign Boards:

You all received a ‘Let’s Keep on Supporting People’ campaign board during phase 1 of the campaign. Please use this again to spread the word and post your pictures on social media.

Case Study Checklist:

Case studies can be extremely helpful in demonstrating the impact of your SP projects and services. Case studies with a clear story and human angle are valued by journalists and are more likely to result in media coverage.

What makes a Good Case Study?

There are lots of options for a good case study, but the ones with the most impact will have a strong human interest element.

What information is needed?

- Information about the service you provide - what makes it different from other projects/services?
- The difference it is making to local people’s lives.
- How the wider community has benefited as a result.
- Any key data or statistics which prove that your project is having an impact.
- High resolution pictures.
- Details of who to contact for interviews or other enquiries

If the case study includes someone who has benefited from an SP funded project, you will also need:

- Their name, age and area in which they live. While anonymous case studies may be used in certain circumstances, the media will generally ask that they are not anonymised.
- Confirmation on whether they are happy for the case study to be published by the press, to have their photo published, to be interviewed by the press (television or radio) and to be part of the wider social media campaign. It is advisable to ask participants to sign a consent form.

What do I do with it?:

Please use your case studies to support any local media stories you run on our Day of Action. You can also share your case studies via social media – if you are using Twitter, please use the #supportingpeoplewales hashtag. This will enable us to spread the word about your involvement/project and also monitor how the campaign is going across Wales.

CHC and Cymorth also need case studies for media use. If you are happy to share one, please send it to sarah-harris@chcymru.org.uk or EmilyDonnan@CymorthCymru.org.uk with as many of the details above as possible.



How can I Get Involved?

As well as taking part in our Day of Action, here are some other ideas:

Meet Your Representative:

Invite your local AM or Councillor to visit projects funded by SP and to speak to an individual or group who has benefited from an SP funded project.

Go Social:

There are so many social media channels to help spread the word. If you're on Twitter, please use the [#supportingpeoplewales](#) hashtag (and follow [@CHCymru](#) and [@cymorthcymru](#)).

Why not make a short film about a person/group who has benefited from an SP funded project, and share via social media?

Make The Point:

Issue a press release to your local media outlet, telling the story of someone who has benefited from an SP funded project. We've drafted a template press release for you to populate with your local statistics and case studies. Alternatively, you could ask someone you have supported to write a letter to the Editor explaining their personal circumstances and how SP funding has helped them.

You could produce a local briefing with partner organisations (using key messages from the campaign) to highlight how many people are supported in your AM's constituency and the wide range of services that the grant covers locally.

- Please let us know how you are supporting the campaign and engaging with local politicians. You can do so by emailing aaron-hill@chcymru.org.uk or olivertownsend@cymorthcymru.org.uk.

Top Tips for Engaging with Politicians

The need to build strong relationships with local elected representatives has never been greater.

While we all know about the great work of the SP programme, local AMs may not. There has also been a large turnover in new politicians following the National Assembly for Wales Elections in May. Many new politicians won't be familiar with the initial campaign or, indeed, the SP funding stream. The 'Let's Keep on Supporting People' campaign is a golden opportunity to give local politicians first-hand insight into the positive impact of the SP programme.

In addition to providing a 'local' voice in the Senedd, many AMs sit on committees which make key decisions that will shape the future of services in Wales.

The following are a few simple pointers to bear in mind when approaching local politicians:

Treat them as individuals:

Find out what their political interests are and how you can help them further these.

- *Do they have an interest in a particular area associated with the Supporting People Programme?*
- *Have they previously been quoted by the media about an SP related issued?*
- *Have they asked a question or spoken in plenary about a relevant topic?*

Doing your homework will help with local engagement.



Attract attention:

Although we are working together as a sector, you are competing with lots of other organisations for attention. As an organisation delivering valuable services in your AM's constituency, you have a strong case to make about why they should be interested in what you have to say.

AMs and Councillors expect to be lobbied and to be asked to take action, whether it is making a speech or expressing support for an initiative. Use this opportunity to secure a picture of them with the campaign board and ensure that they know about the hashtag if they are on Twitter. Most will also be happy to provide a supportive quote to the local press.



Be **authoritative**:

Be a good source of information and advice – AMs and Councillors are generalists and have a lot of issues to deal with, so they appreciate having someone they can rely on for authoritative answers to their questions. If you want them to do something, be clear about how they can help. Likewise, if they ask you for your help or advice, be prepared to give it.

Be **persistent**:

AMs and Councillors are busy people and may not be able to accept your invitations due to prior diary commitments. Don't give up! Invite them to something else or try something new. Make it clear that you are keen to work with them. Bear in mind that AMs are usually only in their constituencies on Mondays and Fridays. They will be at the Senedd for the rest of the time.

Cultivate **their staff**:

AMs' staff are very influential and, if you are on good terms, they can be very helpful. They tend to work in small close-knit teams. If they think it will be of interest to an AM to do something, they are likely to bring it to their attention.



For More Information:

For more information on the 'Let's Keep on Supporting People' campaign, please contact:

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Join the conversation:

Join the conversation and help us spread the word about the campaign by using **#supportingpeoplewales**.

Follow Community Housing Cymru and Cymorth Cymru for the latest news from the campaign -
@chcymru @cymorthcymru