

# Housing Matters

## Welsh budget 2024/25

### Campaign pack



[#HousingMattersWales](https://twitter.com/HousingMattersWales)

# Introduction

## Why are we running this campaign?

In August, the First Minister described the current budgetary pressures as ‘*the toughest financial situation we have faced since devolution*’. Since then, Welsh Ministers have had to make in-year funding cuts and will soon be publishing their budget for 2024/25. Housing, local government, health, social services and education are all competing for limited funds. We need to do all we can to make the case for investment in the Housing Support Grant, to ensure that homelessness and housing support services get the resources they need.

## Budget timeline:



## What have we done so far?

During September we gathered data from homelessness and housing support services in Wales to evidence the impact of the real terms funding cut in 2023/24, as well as the likely consequences of further cuts next year. In October we analysed the data and provided a briefing for the Welsh Government to inform their internal budget discussions. We also held a roundtable with senior Welsh Government officials and a small number of support providers to highlight the incredibly difficult decisions facing services. At the start of November we sent a comprehensive [report](#) to Members of the Senedd, raised the issue at a Senedd cross party group meeting, and secured UK television [coverage](#) on the ITV News at Ten.

## What next?

Over the next few weeks we will continue to raise this issue in the media and with politicians from all parties. We will submit evidence to the Senedd Finance Committee and the Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee to aid their scrutiny of the upcoming Welsh Government budget. We will also hold an online briefing event for Members of the Senedd on 1st December, which will kick start a campaign day of action.

## How can you help?

We know from experience of winning previous campaigns that Members of the Senedd are more likely to throw their weight behind an issue if they hear from people and services within their constituency or region. That is why your voices are so powerful and could be critical as we seek to influence the budget. This campaign pack will give you the tools to do this – but if you need any further support then get in touch with us.



## What can you do to help?

### Email your Members of the Senedd

Everyone in Wales has one local Member of the Senedd and four regional Members of the Senedd - and your services probably cover multiple constituencies. Encourage your staff and people using services to email their Members of the Senedd (MSs) to highlight the need to increase the Housing Support Grant. Find out who your MSs are [here](#).

### Invite Members of the Senedd to visit your services

Invite your local and regional MSs to visit your projects. This is an opportunity for them to meet staff and people who use your services, to learn about how these services have transformed people's lives - and to hear why funding must be increased.

### Submit evidence to Senedd Committees

Senedd committees scrutinise the Welsh Government's budget, question Ministers and raise issues during budget debates. We encourage you to submit evidence to the Finance Committee and the Local Government and Housing Committee. Your evidence doesn't need to be lengthy, but should emphasise the key messages (see next page) and the likely impact on your services and people you support. Email your evidence to [SeneddFinance@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddFinance@senedd.wales) and [SeneddHousing@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddHousing@senedd.wales) before the end of November.

### Spread the word on social media

Most Members of the Senedd are on Twitter and Facebook - encourage your staff and people using services to support the campaign on social media.

- Use [#HousingMattersWales](#) hashtag in all of your tweets
- Tweet the campaign graphics (available [here](#))
- Tweet photos of your organisation and politicians supporting the campaign

### Speak to your local newspaper or radio station

Local newspapers and radio stations are a great platform to highlight the positive impact of homelessness and housing related support services on people's lives - and the importance of increasing funding. Contact local journalists and see if they want to cover this issue - let us know if you're going to appear in the media and if you want any support beforehand.

## Day of Action - 1st December

On 1st December we are holding a Housing Matters campaign day of action, which will start with an online briefing for Members of the Senedd - you can register [here](#). We are encouraging support providers to:

- Arrange service visits and meetings with your MSs
- Make your views heard on social media [#HousingMattersWales](#)

Let's make as much noise as possible in advance of the draft budget and raise awareness of the Housing Support Grant.



## Key messages

### **The Housing Support Grant is critical to ending homelessness**

The Housing Support Grant funds the vast majority of homelessness and housing related support services in Wales, including tenancy support, supported accommodation, Housing First, refuges for survivors of violence and abuse, and much more. It is absolutely critical to preventing and alleviating homelessness in Wales.

### **The Housing Support Grant reduces pressure on other services**

**Research** by Cardiff Metropolitan University has found that every £1 invested in Housing Support Grant services delivers a net saving of £1.40 to other public services, by reducing pressure on health, social services and criminal justice.

### **Services are facing increased demand and complexity**

Demand for homelessness and housing support services has never been greater:

- Over 11,000 people are in temporary accommodation
- 81% of support providers report increased demand for their services since last year
- 94% of support providers report increased complexity of support needs since last year

### **Services are facing increased costs and decreased funding**

- The cost of running services has increased by 11% since last year but the Housing Support Grant has not been increased.
- Since 2012, housing support funding has decreased by £24million in real terms.
- 75% of providers are having to subsidise services that should be fully funded by the Housing Support Grant, with over half using their reserves. This is not sustainable.

### **The lack of funding is negatively affecting service delivery**

This year's real terms funding cut has had the following impact on support providers:

- 27% of support providers have had to reduce service capacity
- 66% are having to operate waiting lists for services
- 45% of support providers have chosen not to bid for new or re-tendered contracts, as they are unable to deliver safe, high quality services for the funding available.

### **A risk of service collapse if there is no increase in funding**

There is a very real risk of service collapse if there is no increase to the HSG:

- 77% of support providers are likely to reduce service capacity,
- 40% are likely to hand back existing contracts
- 67% are likely not to bid for new or re-tendered contracts.

These concerns are echoed by our local authority colleagues who fear they will be unable to find any organisations willing to deliver the services due to insufficient funding. If you are talking to a Member of the Senedd, you should emphasise the impact that service collapse could have on people in their constituency.



## Top tips: Talking to your MSs

Here are a few simple pointers to bear in mind when approaching your local and regional Members of the Senedd:

### Contact them as early as possible

It is best to contact your Members of the Senedd as early as possible, to maximise the pressure they can put on the Welsh Government in the lead up to the budget.

### Try to meet them in person

While emails are great at communicating information, the most powerful representations are made in person. Try to encourage Members of the Senedd to visit your services and meet people using your services to understand first hand experiences. This is likely to have a lasting impact and influence the representations they make in the Senedd. You could also visit their office or advice surgeries.

### Make it personal to your services and experiences:

Communicating our key messages is important. However, sharing information about services and the experiences of people within their constituency will have a much greater impact on Members of the Senedd and increase the likelihood of them speaking up.

### Be clear about what you're asking them to do:

Your MSs will be lobbied by lots of organisations - so it's important we are clear about what we want them to do. We want them to call for an increase in the HSG by:

- Writing to the Welsh Government Finance Minister to call for an increase
- Making a speech or asking questions in the Senedd
- Highlighting this issue in Senedd Committees
- Tweeting their support using [#HousingMattersWales](#)

### Be helpful and authoritative:

Be a good source of information - MSs have to deal with a wide range of issues, so they appreciate any supporting information that helps them to make effective representations on behalf of their constituents. You are the experts in homelessness and housing support services, and they will really value your insight and any real life examples you have.

### Be persistent:

MSs 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 meet them.

### Develop positive relationships with their staff:

Staff members can be very influential and often prepare briefings and advice for their Member of the Senedd. It's worth developing good relations with staff and taking the time to explain the issues to them.

