

SSP 46

Ymgynghoriad ar flaenoriaethau'r Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Thai ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd

Consultation on the Local Government and Housing Committee's priorities for the Sixth Senedd

Ymateb gan: Anabledd Cymru

Response from: Disability Wales

Priorities for Local Government and Housing Committee – Disability Wales Response

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Who are Disability Wales?

Disability Wales/Anabledd Cymru is the national association of disabled peoples organisations in Wales striving to achieve the rights and equality of all disabled people.

Disability Wales promotes the adoption and implementation of the Social Model of Disability, which identifies that it is environmental, organisational, and attitudinal barriers that disable people and prevent their full participation in society not their medical conditions or impairments.

Introduction

This response is informed by our manifesto “Bring Us Our Rights: Disabled People’s Manifesto”. This manifesto was informed by around 230 contributions from disabled people across Wales, gathered via 9 focus groups, a survey and multiple semi-structured interviews.

We thank the Local Government and Housing committee for the opportunity to comment on their priorities moving forward. We look forward to working together to create a more equal Wales.

Priority One: Creating Accessible Homes

Disabled people have told us about having to live in terrible conditions, without access to the right adaptations that they need. This is something that has been repeated to us from people living in social housing, privately rented housing and from disabled people who own their homes.

There is a postcode lottery when it comes to accessible housing in Wales. This is because housing standards vary between local authorities and therefore disabled people are having to choose between living close

to their support systems and getting access to the support that they need to live independent lives.

Article 28 of the UNCRDP, “Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection”, gives disabled people the right to proper living conditions that are continuous updated to suite their requirements. Article 19 “Living independently and being included in the community” gives disabled people the right to live in any area that they choose and participate in their local community. Currently, neither of these are being met in Wales.

Disabled people in Wales are being let down by the current housing system. Disabled people require accessible social housing, and services to enable these homes to be updated. Disabled people require access to services to help update their homes, even in cases where they own their homes and cannot afford to make the adaptations.

Disability Wales recommends:

- The creation of accessibility standards for social housing in Wales, created in co-production with disabled people and their organisations.
- Pushing for the Welsh Government to work with local authorities and organisations to ensure compliance with these standards.
- The provision of Disability Equality Training given to all support staff. This must include specific training on working with non-verbal disabled people and alternative methods of communication.
- Centring the experiences of marginalised groups in discussions about the provision of housing.

Priority Two: Supporting Local Government and the UNCRDP

Local Government plays a key role in the promotion of disability equality and independent living in Wales. Now that the Welsh Government has committed to the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Disabled People into Welsh law, as it will have wide ranging policy implications, it will be vital that local government is supported during the implementation of this.

We have also heard from disabled people across Wales who have had negative experiences with local government, including attitudes of staff, priorities of local authorities and issues with consistent services. It is vital that local authorities understand disability equality and that wherever you are in Wales, you can expect to receive equal treatment.

Key priorities:

- Using the UNCRDP as a framework to scrutinise policy put forward by the Welsh Government
- Working to ensure that services provided are at an equal quality across Wales
- Supporting local government during the implementation of the UNCRDP in Wales and helping to ensure that they have the support that they require.

Conclusion

There is significant need for reform to housing in Wales and many people in Wales are having to live in substandard conditions, away from support services and loved ones, as a result. Disability Wales believes that one person in Wales living in poor quality housing is too many people and that we must work towards a future where everyone has the right to a safe home. Local Government will likely need a lot of support moving into the future, the genuine incorporation of the UNCRDP will involve multiple levels of government to effectively work together and this will take significant effort. However, we look forward to working with the committee to achieve a Wales where everyone, no matter their background, has a safe home to return to.