

ARTB 02

Bil Diddymu'r Hawl i Brynu a Hawliau Cysylltiedig (Cymru)

Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill

Ymateb gan: Y Wallich

Response from: The Wallich

The Wallich

1. The Wallich is a Welsh homelessness charity that provides accommodation and support to some of the most vulnerable people in society. In 2016 we supported 5488 people across Wales.
2. We focus on offering long term solutions, looking to break the cycle of homelessness, rather than just offering short term fixes and offer a wide range of services across Wales designed to help people live happier, safer and more independent lives.

Our response

3. We fully support the general principles of the Bill.
4. At The Wallich we work with people who are homeless and we know that for many of our service users they have little or no chance of accessing timely social housing despite their need.
5. Since the scheme was introduced, 139,000 council and housing association homes have been sold¹ – resulting in a 45% reduction in housing stock.²
6. There is an increased demand on social housing and the number of available properties is declining.
7. One of the reasons that we work with the private rental sector is because it is often the only option for our service users.
8. The private rental sector allows people to move on from a hostel or other temporary accommodation much quicker than going on the waiting list for social housing.

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-39234618>

² <http://gov.wales/newsroom/housing-and-regeneration/2017/170313-proposed-new-law-to-abolish-the-right-to-buy-and-associated-rights-introduced-in-wales/?lang=en>

9. All over Wales social housing lists are oversubscribed and many people are on them for years without being about to access an appropriate property. Naturally this is not the case for all but it is an issue of concern.
10. One of our main criticisms of Right to Buy is that the properties bought under the scheme have not been replaced.
11. Building more social housing also needs to be encouraged – ending right to Buy can only be one tool in the tool box to fix the challenges faced by the social housing sector in Wales.
12. A number of local authorities which we currently work with have already suspended the scheme including Carmarthenshire, Swansea, and Anglesey. In these areas, alongside other policies including more housing building and bringing empty properties back into use, taking proactive steps has started to make a difference.
13. At The Wallich we know that abolishing the Right to Buy alone will not solve the housing crisis in Wales but it is one tool which we believe will help at a time of high demand on the sector. We therefore welcome the Welsh Government's commitment to end Right to Buy and encourage more social housing to be built to meet the growing demand.

For more information please contact Mia Rees, Public Affairs and Research Manager at The Wallich on 02920 574 776 or mia.rees@thewallich.net