The Wallich is a Welsh homelessness charity that operates under three core objectives: getting people off the streets; keeping people off the streets; and creating opportunities for people.

Running more than 70 diverse projects, across 19 local authorities, The Wallich works with more than 6,000 people every year across Wales.

This document uses the Terms of Reference set out for the Inquiry as themes, outlining main points related to them below. Our points relating to these themes come from a wide range of members of staff at The Wallich, based on our years of experience operating in Wales.

The effectiveness of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act in preventing rough sleeping

The Wallich supports what seems to be the consensus view: the Housing (Wales) Act has shown success in some areas and for some groups of people, but there are significant gaps where more work needs to be done.

Broadly speaking, our evidence suggests that if a person has a connection to a particular area, and is considered 'priority' in terms of need, the Housing (Wales) Act can work well, and tends to be successful in terms of prevention - although this does vary across different Local Authorities (which was highlighted by the recently published report from the office of the Auditor General, which investigated how increasing homelessness demand was managed across Wales) (1).

When it comes to more complex cases, individuals who do not have priority status, or people without a local connection, support and prevention can be far less consistent. Similarly, the lack of support for single people is a significant issue.

The diversity in how the Housing (Wales) Act is being implemented across Wales – which was also highlighted in the Auditor General's - is evident in the responses of our members of staff. Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC), for example, is cited as being pro-active in trying to both prevent homelessness and support people who are experiencing it. The Council have recently expanded their outreach team, which works alongside The Wallich's Rough Sleeper Intervention Team (RSIT). As is the case in many Local Authorities, however, there is a shortage of appropriate, affordable, good quality housing. The WCBC's local lettings team continuously work to identify private landlords with whom they can collaborate, but this is a long process.

A barrier that exists here is the reluctance of some landlords to offer properties to some tenants, as an inability to manage accommodation might compromise a tenancy. WCBC's tenancy support tends to be reactive instead of pre-emptive, and better communication between the organisations involved is needed. Better communication, both across organisations and to service users, was an important part of the Auditor General's report.

In Bridgend, the Housing (Wales) Act's removal of priority need status from prison leavers has had particularly noticeable repercussions, with rough sleepers deliberately committing offences to go back to prison where, as they see it, they have a roof over their heads. This change might also be contributing to the increase in rough sleepers, which is dealt with in a subsequent section of this document.

Members of Wallich staff from Newport commented on the fact that the changes in the Housing (Wales) Act seem to rely on people being aware of their rights and what is available to them when they are threatened with homelessness. Unless they have already engaged with services, they might not know what can be done for them and what they can expect, which often leads to people not attending for help and advice until it is too late, if they seek support at all. This links to need for the more robust communication mentioned by our members of staff in Wrexham.

What is more, Housing Options staff sometimes make decisions too quickly, particularly when it comes to issues of vulnerability and priority need. Wallich staff working in the Prisoner Release Empowerment Project have often looked further into medication use and mental or physical health issues and have subsequently had decisions made by Local Authorities overturned.

Individuals in Newport sometimes receive the standard letter confirming that they are not considered as having priority need, and feel that the Council stops engaging with them at this point. This, in turn, dissuades them from making the effort to engage or seek further support. Again, confusion about what 'priority' status does and doesn't mean is a communication issue. This lack of engagement can then lead to prejudice further down the line, where someone is seen as a 'lost cause', so to speak. Finally, in Newport, there is also a lack of the accommodation that would be needed to genuinely address the issue of homelessness, even at the prevention level. This comes up consistently, from our teams across the country.

The inclusion of private rented sector housing stock as an option for Local Authorities to discharge their duties into does increase supply, however, the resourcing of how this accommodation is accessed and maximised could be improved. The Wallich operate bond boards that enable homeless people to overcome some of the related financial barriers to such accommodation. However, we feel the expansion of such services to include social lettings type services could significantly increase the number of people being accommodated.

Conclusion: The factors affecting the rise in levels of rough sleeping are not fully understood (covered later in this document), however, it could be said that the prevention aspect of the Act has failed those who have since become homeless. Better data (covered next) will highlight exactly which Local Authorities (some might be from outside Wales) were involved, and how they did or didn't assist (again, assuming people presented) and whether they applied the legislation as intended. It could also be said that the main change to the Act is the focus on prevention, and therefore has no significant impact on those who were already homeless. We believe that the guidance relating to vulnerability needs revising, as currently, it's interpretation results in many who we feel are vulnerable (the majority of rough sleepers) not being considered a priority group.

The scale of rough sleeping in Wales and the adequacy of data

When it comes to homelessness of all types, there are difficulties surrounding the effective gathering of data. People might deliberately try and hide to keep themselves safe, and thus will not appear during headcounts. Different definitions of rough sleeping can also result in inconsistencies across different datasets.

Despite these challenges, we believe that gathering and analysing data can help us and other stakeholders better understand the issue of rough sleeping in Wales. The Wallich already gathers and publishes statistics collected by our five Rough Sleeper Intervention Teams (RSITs), which operate in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Bridgend and Wrexham. These teams provide humanitarian support and signposting to services, whilst recording information about the people they engage with. On our website, we publish basic data on a monthly basis, producing more detailed reports quarterly and annually. The Wallich is constantly looking to refine and update what it collects and publishes, but we believe what we publish now can provide at least a snapshot when it comes to rough sleeping in the five areas in which the RSITs operate.

For example, we can draw some broad conclusions from the data we have gathered over the past year. The number of people sleeping rough is rising in all the areas covered by the RSITs (the lowest increase is 24%, and the highest 77%). Rough sleepers tend to be male, with an average age of around 41. Over the past year, the number of brand new clients, who had not been seen by any RSIT up to this point, varies from 7% to 55% of the number of clients seen in total. This can lead us to some tentative conclusions about entrenched rough sleeping being more of an issue in some areas than others. These are the kinds of conclusions that would be better enabled by the success of the SHIN project.

The SHIN (Street Homeless Information Network) project is something The Wallich has recently embarked on with backing and financial support from Welsh Government. Taking cues from the CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) database used across London (2), the aim of SHIN is to establish a network of organisations that support and record rough sleeping data in an in-depth, consistent and continual way. This in turn enables more detailed reporting. If Local Authorities and other organisations collected the same sets of data on a regular basis, a much richer pool of numbers from across Wales would exist. This will make it easier for us to analyse the problem of rough sleeping, and to find solutions. Once this approach is fully up and running, the aim is to gather as much information from each rough sleeper regarding their cause/s of homelessness, and the barriers to being housed.

At present, the main source of data around rough sleeping and homelessness in Wales is the Welsh Government, which in collaboration with Local Authorities and service providers carries out two counts on a yearly basis: one that takes place over a two-week period, and another that takes place over one night. However, this type of monitoring presents limitations, which the Welsh Government have recognised.

Limiting the counts to two weeks and an additional night means that variations between different times of year, for example, can't be captured. Our data shows that rough sleeping drops over winter, when additional emergency accommodation is made available. Similarly, if the one-night count takes place on the same night as a large event, the numbers could be drastically affected as the perceived lucrativeness of begging could elevate rough sleeping numbers. Alternatively, police might take a tougher stance on rough sleepers because of the event, which could result in *lower* numbers. Particularly harsh weather on the night of the count is another unpredictable factor that could affect the data recorded.

Finally, the Welsh Government's definition of 'rough sleeping' could pose problems. The following is used as a definition for the one-night count: *People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting in/on or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People bedded down in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or "bashes")* (3).

This could discount people who are some distance from their beds, or rough sleepers who have not yet bedded down. While these statistics provide an idea of rough sleeping across Wales, and can highlight trends over time, a comprehensive, consistent system like SHIN could yield much better data.

Our members of staff in Newport commented that the data available around rough sleeping at the moment is inadequate: church groups who provide emergency accommodation and/or food, for example, frequently engage with rough sleepers, but do not necessarily record any data about this.

The Wallich's Carmarthenshire team commented on the nature of rural rough sleeping specifically: data collection is not as good in these areas, and as such the scale of rough sleeping in rural environments might not be fully understood. Successfully adopting the SHIN approach across Wales, and bringing in all manner of services into its scope, this problem could be mitigated.

Our Ceredigion team highlight the need for something like SHIN: one all-encompassing system, bolstered by consistent and in-depth data collection and recording.

Members of Wallich staff in Wrexham emphasise the rise in rough sleeping in their area. They do, however, refer to difficulties in accurately measuring this area, mentioning the same challenges this document has highlighted. Apparently, the two-week Welsh Government count is carried out very inconsistently across North Wales, which might result in inaccurate data from this region. Wrexham staff also mention the range of organisations and services who will be dealing with rough sleepers on a daily basis, and recording data that does not necessarily feed into a bigger database that can link these interactions. The Wallich's SHIN initiative would, we hope, allay concerns like these, and lead to much more consistent and accurate reporting.

Conclusion: Currently data is patchy and inconsistent. Understanding the causes of homelessness will better inform and improve the effectiveness of prevention work, and, understanding the barriers to rough sleepers being housed will help end and reduce the time people are forced to sleep rough. We are confident that the SHIN will effectively inform these two related areas, and give Welsh Government, Local Authorities and providers the robust data they need to drive positive change. The effectiveness of the SHIN relies on all organisations working with rough sleepers to be involved and use the system.

The causes of rough sleeping and of the apparent recent increases in rough sleeping

The causes of rough sleeping are often complex and far reaching, but interlinked. This document does not claim to provide a comprehensive list of all the causes of rough sleeping in Wales, and the increases in rough sleeping, but some contributing factors are discussed here.

To try and simplify a complex issue, consider what happens when someone loses their home (not instantly through an emergency – majority of such situations are dealt with by Local Authorities). Where someone has the ability, understanding and finances, they will more than likely secure their next accommodation with relative ease, and prevent them self from becoming homeless. For urgently required accommodation, the options could be shared house, as a lodger, back with family or friends, or a tenancy in the private rented sector or with an RSL, to name a few. The possible causes for losing the home are many, and it's safe to say that some causes are possibly preventable. Now consider someone losing their home for the same reason, but they lack either the ability (possibly due to mental health, substance misuse, reputation, learning difficulty), understanding or finances, or quite often, a combination of all three, to secure alternative accommodation prior to

their move out date. They consequently become homeless, and possibly end up sleeping rough. Therefore, the cause of their homelessness is not the reason they had to leave their previous accommodation, it's the lack of one or more of the three factors required to secure alternative accommodation; ability, understanding and/or finances.

The above is obviously a simplistic view at how people become homeless; the complexities arise when we delve deeper into why and how people's ability is impaired. Issues such as mental health and substance misuse problems may be completely unrelated to any other factors, or, they might be the result of, or a coping mechanism (respectively) from an unresolved adverse childhood experience. Therefore, the indirect causes of homelessness can originate many years previous. For the purposes of this inquiry, and considering that good work is already underway to address ACEs, we believe that focusing on the three factors; ability, understanding and finances is the most logical way to tackle the increasing levels of homelessness and rough sleeping.

So many different aspects can be covered by these three headings, for example; not having enough money will limit someone's housing options to possibly only social housing, but this, as we know is in very short supply. Consequently, someone waiting for social housing who isn't provided with emergency accommodation could end up sleeping rough. Welfare reform impacts on this even further, the true extent of which is yet to fully be felt in Wales, meaning rough sleeping levels could be set to soar.

More benefit sanctions and freezes have resulted in people missing out on welfare payments, meaning they might then struggle to make the payments they need to remain housed. The implementation of the 'Bedroom Tax' has had a disproportionately large impact in Wales.

Universal Credit poses considerable concerns; this year, it will be rolled out across the country. In England, 50% of council tenants under the new benefit are at least one month behind on their rent and 30% are two months behind. In contrast, only 10% of council tenants on housing benefit are a month behind on their rent. Although recipients can request that payments go directly to their landlords, this is not the 'default' option. While teaching people how to manage their own money is an admirable goal, if someone has not managed their own budget for a long time, this could result in rent arrears which would in turn lead to evictions. The Universal Credit transition process is also complex and potentially confusing. For example, someone currently claiming a disability benefit might have to end said benefit claim and then reapply for the housing element of Universal Credit. The longer these applications take, the more likely it is that someone will spend time sleeping rough while waiting for an outcome.

Wallich staff consistently raise the idea of 'local connection' as posing a problem. One Project Manager said that people sleeping rough in his area were 'far less likely' to receive appropriate support if they didn't have a local connection, as opposed to those that did. While areas will pay and support people without a local connection to return to the area they are connected to in some cases, this is not always an appropriate result. If someone is fleeing violence, for example, they might prefer to sleep rough in an area they are not connected to than stay somewhere they are connected, but might be at risk.

Our frontline staff consistently suggest that rough sleeping might also be rising due to a lack of services and support specifically oriented at people with complex needs, with multiple health and mental health issues (which might include drug and alcohol issues).

A lack of affordable and social housing has also exacerbated the issue. In particular, there are a lack of one bed social housing properties for single people. When it comes to the Private Rented Sector,

landlords usually require deposits, advance rent, agency fees, and references or guarantors. In most cases, the rent costs will be much more than any Local Housing Allowance being claimed. These fees are often barriers for people already renting in the PRS, let alone people who will need support to set up and maintain a tenancy.

Once again, our members of staff from different parts of Wales have more specific comments on the causes of recent increases in rough sleeping (something they all agree has happened).

In Newport, the following causes are highlighted: an increase in the number of people sleeping rough because of relationship breakdown and/or antisocial behaviour; an inability to afford increasing rent prices; a greater number of people becoming fixed in a cycle of entrenched homelessness; a lack of awareness on the part of individuals as to their rights, and what support is available to them (mentioned earlier in this document), and the increasing reliance on the use of guarantors in the Private Rented Sector – which some people who don't have a support network might struggle to find.

Our Wrexham staff suggest that increases in the popularity of some drugs might lead to increasing numbers of people sleeping rough because of substance misuse issues. In Wrexham they have encountered recent, worsening problems associated with what is colloquially known as 'Spice', a group of synthetic cannabinoids that until recently were legal. From the experiences of our team in Wrexham, these substances are addictive to the point that they stop users from attending appointments, maintaining relationships, and making any real effort to rectify their housing situations.

Members of frontline staff in Carmarthenshire have their own perspective. They suggest that the increase in the number of people that a Local Authority has a duty to house, because of the changes in legislation, mean that cases are signposted to Floating Support services, who then need to identify private accommodation. This can take time, and the longer it takes, the more likely a period of rough sleeping can result – this is evidenced by the supply of sleeping bags and blankets that Floating Support services tend to have.

A lack of suitable and affordable accommodation is once again cited by staff in Ceredigion, who also highlight the lack of support available for people with complex needs, including mental health and substance misuse issues. The same issues with private renting come up: rental prices are increasing, and many people struggle to raise deposits and advance rents, as well as agency fees. Finally, obtaining references and guarantors can be difficult for many people, especially if they are not from a particular area. The number of temporary accommodation places in the county has also decreased in the last year, which has had an impact, particularly in the southern area of Ceredigion. There are a number of rough sleepers who have been in and out of temporary accommodation several times, and have effectively blown their chances in the eyes of the Local Authority, who label them 'unwilling to cooperate'. Willingness to provide support when a person is ready to engage with it is an important part of solving this problem.

Members of The Wallich's frontline team in Bridgend specifically point to the removal of priority status from prison leavers as raising issues in the area. Bridgend is a 'host authority', and have some funding to use at their discretion. However, once a prisoner has been assisted with two weeks' worth of temporary accommodation, they will not be able to access it again. This effectively gives someone fourteen days to find housing, which is unlikely, before they end up back on the street. Individuals in Bridgend who find themselves in this situation end up deliberately re-offending, so they return to prison. They will later leave prison, arrive on the streets, and continue this cycle. Not

all Local Authorities have access to any funding to deal with this, as host authorities do, so the situation could be even worse in those areas.

Interestingly, Bridgend has also seen an influx of clients from other areas, including Cardiff, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf and even England. These clients have no local connection, and the majority have accessed support without securing accommodation in the Bridgend area. This group mostly consists of males older than 35, and some have even come from England. As this group grows, rough sleeping numbers are likely to increase, as is it difficult to house individuals without a local connection. They are not eligible for financial support from the Local Authority, or – if they are not from Wales - initiatives like the Discretionary Assistance Fund. In previous years, before local connection rules were so strict, Local Authorities would temporarily accommodate people.

In Bridgend, we see some familiar issues arise. Specifically, increasing numbers of people with complex needs – who have been unable to find support for those needs – have led to bigger numbers of people on the streets. 'Complex needs' in this case, again, refers mainly to people with substance and/or alcohol misuse issues, and physical and mental health issues. This reinforces the need for a collaborative, multi-agency approach offering support for people in such circumstances.

A recent spate of evictions in Bridgend was mostly caused by rent arrears. This could in part be down to the loss of a genuine Floating Support service (which now operates from a hub in the town centre rather than engaging with people in their own accommodation). In the past, these services could provide budgeting advice. The fact that this service existed in the past means that these evictions were, in a way, preventable.

In Swansea, there are issues with some specialist support services. Waiting times for methadone can be as long as six months, and during this time, it is likely that people with addiction issues will continue to commit crimes to fund their habits. Individuals with severe mental health issues have been evicted from specialist supported accommodation in Swansea, and the fact that they have been evicted by a place that they expected support from leaves them downhearted and, often, without realistic options.

Issues like this make it harder for people experiencing homelessness to trust or want to engage with organisations trying to help them. A similar problem arises when someone is housed and the support provided for them stops, seeing accommodation as the end of the road, rather than part of a process. Someone who leaves the streets but doesn't build up a new support network might end up seeing their old friends, and being pulled back to their old lifestyle.

Something else that comes up across Rough Sleeper Intervention Teams is the increasing use of Public Space Protection Orders being used to prevent begging – and in some cases, rough sleeping itself – in city centres. This sometimes has the effect of preventing people who have been excluded from an area from attending appointments at Job Centres, Housing Options teams, or other organisations. Attending the appointments risks fines or jail terms. Couple this with some Local Authority Officers being too quick to label someone as 'non-cooperative', and it is easy to see why rough sleeping worsens. The chaotic lifestyles some rough sleepers have meant that asking them to attend appointments might often set people up to fail. This is why more creativity in the assessment process is needed.

Conclusion: Most of the feedback received by our services around Wales can relate the challenges our clients face to one or more of the three factors; ability, understanding and finances, but often a combination. Welfare reform presents us with a potential 'perfect storm' where rough sleeping levels could be at a very serious risk of increasing even further. Without true policy alignment between Central Government's welfare reform and Welsh Government's (and Central

Government's) related agenda's we face a very steep uphill battle that potentially undermines a lot of good work within the sector.

The effectiveness and availability of services including emergency accommodation

Most members of Wallich staff praised the availability of the services in their areas.

Bridgend is no exception, but staff there contrast The Wallich's model of providing structured support during both the day and night, with the emergency night shelter model. While it is important to offer emergency accommodation during the colder months, staff have witnessed the phenomenon of service users abusing substances during the day, knowing they had emergency accommodation to access at night. Similarly, people accessing emergency nightshelters during winter effectively 'put off' engaging with support services for the season, knowing they had safe warm accommodation each night.

Ceredigion has very effective advice and assistance services, including specific resources for rough sleepers. The nightshelter in the area is usually full.

In Carmarthenshire, however, the demand for temporary accommodation is growing to the extent that services are stretched. The amount of temporary accommodation provided has not been balanced by increases in Floating Support services to support vulnerable people who are temporarily housed.

In Wrexham, emergency accommodation exists, though Wallich staff raise concerns about the amount and the suitability. A nightshelter also provides temporary accommodation for males and females, but priority is given to those with a local connection. Individuals who are intoxicated or who are suspected of possessing substances will not be allowed into the shelter. Given Wrexham's current issue with substances, and in particular 'Spice', this is notable.

In accordance with Wrexham's severe weather response protocol, The Wallich provides six additional emergency spaces at the hostel. Wrexham County Borough Council are reviewing this protocol in order to ensure that it provides enough accessible accommodation if the need arises. Recently, the trigger was changed from a third night at zero degrees to a second night at zero degrees, effectively making it more likely that the severe weather plan will come into effect.

In Newport, waiting lists for accommodation are very large, and clients wait for long periods, which of course means there is a longer time in which issues can arise. The Wallich's Prisoner Release Empowerment Project is one example of a service that tries to mitigate the removal of priority status for prison leavers. However, with a lack of suitable accommodation for many in this client group, more and more return to their Local Authority as No Fixed Abode. As we have seen in other areas, clients often deliberately reoffend in order to get off the streets during an extended period of rough sleeping.

The Wallich's services – and in particular those services funded by the Supporting People grant – have been demonstrated to be broadly cost-effective in a separate exercise, published in the *Support that Saves* report (4):

Our service users back up what is effectively a cost-benefit analysis with their own qualitative praise. The following quotes come from case studies available on The Wallich's website:

- 'Without The Wallich, I would still be in my tent.' – Stevan
- 'This is the right place for me at the moment. I'm settling here and I'm doing well to combat my addiction.' – Jason
- 'I want to thank the entire staff at The Wallich for having the heart, the passion and the drive for helping the people you do.' – Peter
- 'My confidence and self-esteem has grown so much and I would recommend this placement to anyone interested in going back to work.' – Kelly, referring to The Wallich's BOSS (Building Opportunities, Skills and Success) project, which supports ex-offenders return to work

Conclusion: The fact that during the last two years' one-night counts have found a significant number of vacant emergency bed spaces, but people have still been found rough sleeping, suggests what has been on offer does not always meet everyone's needs. There is also no doubt that emergency accommodation, hostels and supported accommodation are most certainly required and do meet numerous people's needs, and without it, many more people would end up sleeping rough. Our experience suggests that there are more people sleeping on our streets with complex issues who undoubtedly need intensive supported accommodation with specialist interventions from statutory mental health and substance misuse services. However, in contrary to this, we are also seeing more people ending up on our streets who have no to very low support needs, who avoid traditional style homeless services, who simply require accommodation. In these cases, early intervention and a spend to save approach, possibly utilising the private rented sector, would be most beneficial.

The steps to prevent and tackle rough sleeping in Wales

Genuinely dealing with the issue of rough sleeping would require a range of strategies and some genuine long-term thinking and funding. One of the most striking aspects from the different parts of Wales is the lack of suitable, affordable accommodation across the country. Remedying this would be a crucial part of any tackling of rough sleeping, and homelessness of any kind.

Some members of Wallich staff highlight the need for more understanding of homelessness and related issues. In that respect, inquiries like this one are an admirable step in the right direction. However, this point also extends to an improvement in data collection and reporting (implementing The Wallich's SHIN initiative would be an important part of this). It also means that issues often linked with homelessness, like substance and alcohol misuse, and mental health issues, also need investigation.

Improving engagement by clients with their Local Authorities is also crucial. To do this, Local Authorities need to be more willing to carry out remote assessments, rather than requiring clients to come to offices they might find daunting or have already had negative experiences in. Some councils, like Cardiff, are doing this already.

Similarly, in Wrexham, multi-agency meetings in which the various organisations that engage with rough sleepers already take place. This is good practice that could easily be shared. Likewise, in response to the issues with new psychoactive substances – including 'Spice' – a taskforce was established, as well as a database of individuals who might benefit most from access to detoxification and rehabilitation. Those involved with this taskforce admit that there is a lot of work still to be done, but positive outcomes have already been seen. Similar positive outcomes have also resulted from efforts to make support more accessible: 'crisis clinics' are held every Friday, alongside

The Wallich's two-tier drop-in service. At these clinics, members of staff from a range of organisations are present, so that different issues can be addressed at one location.

Our staff in Bridgend list the following steps to prevent rough sleeping, as well as provide more effective support to stop it becoming worse: more direct access hostels, better support for mental health and substance abuse issues, as well as an approach oriented more around Housing First. Housing First has been shown to be successful in particular with entrenched rough sleepers who have not engaged with support services for a long time.

Our teams consistently raise the idea of ongoing support for people who have just started what might be their first rented tenancy in a long time. Simply accommodating people and then seeing the job as 'done' could just be setting people up to fail – and these people will be harder to engage with if they end up returning to the streets.

This longer-term view is crucial. Once people are accommodated, they might need support to find employment or return to education. This is something The Wallich focuses on. Our Building Opportunities, Skills and Success (BOSS) project is aimed at returning ex-offenders to work, and BOSS mentors begin by working with clients in prison, before their release. Once they leave, the support continues. We've had considerable success so far, and work with organisations like Acorn and ISG to help people find work.

Similarly, there are two projects open to service users living in our supported accommodation residential projects. The Working in Sustainable Employment (WISE) project involves employability sessions and an 8-week work placement for participants to help them become work-ready. The Residents and Service Users Volunteering Programme (RSVP) involves our service users volunteering in different parts of the organisation. We have worked with Shelter Cymru and see several service users take on Peer Researcher roles with them. In several cases, Wallich clients have gone to find employment at The Wallich.

Finally, as the recent report from the Auditor General's office suggested, staff in Local Authorities need to be more innovative and offer more opportunities to engage. A concerted training programme and encouragement of creativity is needed here, as is a real shift to longer-term solutions rather than short-term fixes.

Conclusion: The following provides what we feel is a logical approach to steps for addressing rough sleeping in Wales, relating to the three factors; ability, understanding, and finances from the perspective of someone homeless or at risk of:

	Area	Details
Ability (people are able to do what is needed to avoid or resolve their homelessness)	Better help available for people to address their personal issues	Statutory mental health and substance misuse services being more accessible and understanding of people with complex needs and homeless/at risk of.
	Address underlying causes	More availability of specialist psychological services to address unresolved trauma
	Housing First	Removes the barriers to RS being housed; by service provider being the landlord or by negotiating with landlords

	Protection of Supporting People services	Ensuring support services are adequately resourced so that people can get the help they need when the need it, ultimately, breaking cycle of homelessness
	Supported Accommodation	Ensuring people in need of support have safe, stable and conducive environments to address their issues.
	Allocation Policies	Ensure allocation policies don't exclude or disadvantage rough sleepers from being housed in social housing
	Vulnerability guidance	Review guidance so that Housing Options staff prioritise vulnerable rough sleepers
Understanding (people know how and what to do to avoid or resolve their homelessness)	Advice	Better training for LA Housing Options staff and making the advice more accessible
	Educating children early	Appropriate school based education on housing, homelessness and related issues
	Data	Better data collection of the causes and barriers, all feeding back to educating people in how to avoid or end their homelessness - SHIN
Finances (people have or can access the financial resources to avoid or resolve their homelessness)	Welfare reform	Policy alignment between Central Government and WG's related policy areas to avoid RS levels rising even faster
	Private rented sector – Social lettings	Better resourcing that supports maximum accessibility and management and PR accommodation. Removal of lettings fees and more options to address barriers of guarantors etc.
	Housing First – individual budgets	More HF approaches adopted with individual budgets
	Affordability	More affordable housing developments
	Financial independence	People are given support to get back on their feet, work ready and back into employment, or, are in receipt of appropriate benefits (where work isn't an option)

	Spend to save by Local Authorities	Increased spending flexibility and willingness for early intervention to avoid development of entrenched lifestyles

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