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18/06/2025

Dear Chairman,

Consultation: Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the above consultation. We are responding in the context of one of the ambitions of *the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050* strategy to protect the sustainability of communities where Welsh is a natural community language. An important part of doing that is to enable and facilitate Welsh speakers to continue living in these communities.

The Integrated Impact Assessment in the Explanatory Memorandum recognises that homelessness has negative and traumatic effects on an individual, with wider community, cultural and linguistic implications, particularly for Welsh-speaking communities. It is noted that homelessness can lead to displacement, which can disrupt predominantly Welsh-speaking communities. We therefore welcome the intention of Section 6 of the Bill to amend the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to impose a duty on local authorities to secure accommodation for people with a local connection to Wales. This could reduce the risk of displacing Welsh speakers from their communities. By giving them the opportunity to stay in their local area, it is more likely that they will be able to continue to use the Welsh language in their daily life and that this will contribute to the viability of the Welsh language in the area.

One aspect of Section 6 on which we wish to know more is subsections (8) and (9) which relate to prisoners. They state a duty to provide accommodation when a prisoner is released. It is not clear, however, whether the duty applies if the individual does not have a local connection to Wales. Our concern, should the duty apply in a case where there was no local connection, is that non-Welsh speakers with no connection to Wales could be eligible for accommodation in Welsh-speaking communities, which could affect the viability

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of the Welsh language in those areas. We would be grateful for clarification on this issue and whether this was considered in the Integrated Impact Assessment.

In its report, [*Empowering Communities Strengthening the Welsh Language*](#), the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities recommended that local authorities and planning authorities should consider whether models can be developed, in relation to the allocation of social housing, where the Welsh language could be a positive consideration. The Government responded by saying that all local authorities in Wales, when deciding on their specific schemes, must have regard to Welsh Government guidance, Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness. The Government committed to amending the guidance to ensure that it is in line with the *Cymraeg 2050* objectives. It also said it would provide further guidance to registered social landlords on taking the Welsh language into account when letting social housing. We support this commitment and call on the Government to include in the Bill the principle that the Welsh language is a positive consideration in the allocation of social housing.

Section 12 (2) sets out an intention to amend the Housing Act 2014 to empower the Welsh Ministers by regulation to specify circumstances “(e) that are or are not to be treated as special circumstances connecting a person to an area.” The Government should use that power to determine the ability to speak Welsh in those circumstances, in the case of areas or communities with a higher density of Welsh speakers.

Yours sincerely,

Efa Gruffudd Jones
Welsh Language Commissioner



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