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# Understanding Local Authority Funding for Learning Disability Housing Support Across Wales

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# Understanding Local Authority Funding for Learning Disability Housing Support Across Wales

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The logo for Cadenza, featuring the word "cadenza" in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font.

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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## **Glossary**

<b>Acronym/Key word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
HSG	Housing Support Grant
HWA	Housing Wales Act 2014
IQ	Intelligence Quota
LA	Local Authority
LD	Learning Disability
LDiff	Learning Difficulties
RCC	Regional Collaborative Committee
RDC	Regional Development Coordinator
RSG	Revenue Support Grant
SL	Supported Living
SPIN	Supporting People Information Network
SPNAB	Supporting People National Advisory Board
SPP	Supporting People Plan
SPPG	Supporting People Programme Grant
SSWBA	Social Services & Wellbeing Act 2015
THB	Transitional Housing Benefit
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association
WG	Welsh Government

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## **1. Introduction/Background**

- 1.1 The Cadenza Partnership was appointed by Welsh Government (WG) to develop an understanding of the nature and scope of current local authority funding for learning disability housing support.
- 1.2 Against a background of national policy reviews, local detailed lines of enquiry and continued pressures of austerity, WG sought to understand the landscape in which Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) funding is delivered in the area of housing related support for those with a learning disability. The Programme and its funding have attracted comment since inception and it is widely believed that its interpretation and application is at best, inconsistent and at worst, being re-directed to support underfunded care activity which is ineligible.
- 1.3 Welsh Government wants to ensure that the guidance it offers to local authorities to achieve the desired outcomes for Supporting People is both clear and enabling for users of services and providers alike.
- 1.4 SPPG will be superseded by the introduction of a new Housing Support Grant (HSG) which is an important early intervention grant programme which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.
- 1.5 The HSG will come into being in April 2020 following the Welsh Government's Flexible Funding Programme aimed at bringing together a number of grants, strengthening the ability of local authorities and their partners to deliver preventative services and to allow local authorities greater flexibility in how funding is spent. The new HSG encompasses Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement grants.
- 1.6 This document will use the terms SPPG and HSG interchangeably and for the purpose of this review they are considered the same.

## **Policy Context**

- 1.7 Learning Disability (LD) Housing Support is primarily funded through the Supporting People Programme (SPP) which came into being in 2003. There have been long-standing questions about the Programme's design and evaluation of its delivery has raised further questions about the consistency and impact of its application. The Supporting People Programme (SPP) supports more than 60,000 people each year to live as independently as they can. It funds a variety of services to help a wide range of marginalised people at risk of housing crisis, including people at risk of homelessness; families fleeing domestic abuse; people dealing with mental or physical health problems, or learning disabilities; ex-service personnel; care leavers; and older people in need of support. Support for people with a Learning Disability is by far the largest area of spend accounting for around 25% of the total pot (Table 1).
- 1.8 Supporting People (SP) services play a crucial role in preventing homelessness in Wales, enabling people to manage their own lives and live confidently in safe, secure homes. By providing high quality support to vulnerable people, SP services often aim to help avoid hospitalisation and homelessness, minimise the need for high cost interventions and reduce pressure on statutory services such as health, social care and the criminal justice system. In 2017, the Welsh Government announced it would protect the Supporting People Programme in cash terms for two years.
- 1.9 In 2010, Professor Sir Mansel Aylward of Public Health Wales led a review of the programme, which resulted in 25 recommendations being made<sup>1</sup>. Following the 'Aylward Review' there was a shift from two separate funding streams (Supporting People Revenue Grant and Supporting People Grant) to one unified grant named the Supporting People Programme Grant. Over the course of 2011/12, Welsh Government, in collaboration with key partners (including Cymorth Cymru)

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<sup>1</sup> The Supporting People Programme in Wales: Final report on a Review commissioned by Jocelyn Davies AM, Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Welsh Assembly Government (2010)

developed guidance on the new structure of SPPG to provide practical advice and information to practitioners in this area<sup>2</sup> .

- 1.10 Following the 'Aylward Review' a Supporting People National Advisory Board (SPNAB) with Regional Collaborative Committees (RCCs) (aligned with the existing health board footprints) was established to support planning and spend in each region. The RCCs are multi-agency and aligned to the strategic partnership arrangements established through the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA 2014).
- 1.11 'Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action' (2011) makes clear the Welsh Government's view that Social Services and its partners must transform the way in which services are delivered, collaborating across sectors better and ensuring a genuine citizen focus, rather than retrenchment in which individual organisations minimise existing provision to reduce cost, with obvious implications for service quality.
- 1.12 The SSWBA 2014 places statutory responsibility on local government and its partners to further develop services which focus on keeping people as independent as possible and reducing or preventing the requirement for targeted services, and, in particular, moving out of long term and institutional care. The ultimate aims are to improve outcomes for individuals whilst at the same time ensuring long term sustainability of social services in Wales.
- 1.13 There are clear prevention duties under the act that mandate local authorities to maximise the use of prevention strategies and resources that either stop or slow progression towards the need for statutory social care. There are clear synergies between the prevention duties under the SSWBA 2014 and the aims of the Supporting People Programme.
- 1.14 In the draft WG budget of December 2018, it was announced that there were plans to merge the Supporting People Programme Grant into the more general Revenue Support Grant for local authorities. The aim was to give local authorities greater flexibility in the deployment of resources against local priorities although the merger

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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government, Supporting People Programme Grant Guidance-Wales, June 2013

of both funding streams has not occurred to date. The move prompted concerns from the sector in respect of the loss of protection of this area of funding.

- 1.15 Support for people with LD is largely linked to accommodation-based projects (tenure-based) and anecdotal evidence from stakeholders to date suggests that Social Services rely on SP funding to support this client group, beyond housing related support, as a solution to addressing care budget deficits.
- 1.16 Funding challenges have also been compounded by challenges of legacy funding distribution where levels of SPPG funding have been heavily influenced by how proactive local authorities were during the 'maximisation of the pot' exercise of Transitional Housing Benefit in 2002 (the mechanism through which SP funding was initially assessed and set). Further challenges exist in relation to the contrast of needs in rural and urban areas. As a consequence, there has been a long-standing call for redistribution of funding – using a new formula to help redistribute funds to geographical areas of greatest need. However, it is important to emphasise that redistribution is not within the scope of this review. WG has commissioned another bespoke piece of work to assist with determining how to manage distribution of funding.
- 1.17 The Auditor General for Wales is currently undertaking an examination of how local authorities strategically commission their learning disability services. The work is focussing on how commissioning contributes to improved outcomes and well-being for citizens. Necessarily this will look to link to the longer-term outcomes sought under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and both preventative and outcomes-based paths advanced by the Future Generations Commissioner.
- 1.18 Multiple reviews undertaken by WG have highlighted issues with the eligibility of support for people with learning disabilities and differences in the level of support provided. These reviews have identified that some of the support funded through the SP Programme for people with learning disabilities was ineligible against the criteria set by Welsh Government, as it was not housing-related support. From the Welsh Government's perspective, this resulted in the risk that Programme funding,

designed to address housing-related support needs, is being used instead to subsidise health and social care activity.<sup>3 4 5 6</sup>

**Table 1: Distribution of Supporting People Programme expenditure in 2016-17 – local authority allocations**

<b>Areas of greatest expenditure Cost per unit (£s)</b>	<b>Overall unit number</b>	<b>Total Overall spent per unit category number1 (£ millions)</b>	<b>Cost per unit</b>	<b>Overall Percentage of funding</b>
People with learning disabilities	2,847	30.57	10,739	25
Generic floating support to prevent homelessness	4,933	15.94	3,232	13
People with mental health issues	2,327	13.78	5,922	11
Young people with support needs (16-24)	1,523	13.16	8,641	11
People over 55 years of age with support needs (exclusive of alarm services)	15,666	11.65	743	9
Women experiencing domestic abuse	1,201	9.04	7,530	7
Other categories (total)	29,146	29.46	1,011	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,643</b>	<b>123.69</b>	<b>2,060</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Wales Audit Office analysis of data supplied by the Welsh Government, 2017

<sup>3</sup> National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee The Welsh Government's Supporting People Programme, May 2018

<sup>4</sup> Auditor General for Wales, The Welsh Government's Supporting People Programme, August 2017

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government Design for Governance, 2013

<sup>6</sup> Welsh Government, Independent Review of the Supporting People Programme Transition Year (2014)

## **Research Scope**

1.19 The scope of the research included reviewing:

- how support to people with LD is currently being assessed, delivered and funded within local authorities;
- the extent to which local approaches sit within nationally prescribed SPPG guidelines; and
- where intervention from WG might be most usefully made to both ensure greater consistency of approach and understand the risks to continuity of service received by people with LD.

1.20 The following key questions were to be answered through this research project:

1. How is LD housing support structured in Local Authorities across Wales?
2. How is the funding source, within a LA, determined (i.e. what are the criteria for support to be funded by the various sources)?
3. What type of support/activity is funded?
4. Is the support fixed (linked to accommodation) or floating (linked to the individual)?
5. What is the total level of LD housing support funding within each LA across all sources? How much of this funding is provided to those individuals to which the LA has a statutory duty as a result of their LD?
6. What are the levels of LD housing support funding across Wales?
7. What are the differences (and reasons for those differences) in the level of LD housing support funding across local authorities?
8. Has there been any change in funding levels since the implementation of the Aylward Review?

## **2. Methodology**

2.1 In order to answer the questions highlighted above this project used a multi-method approach. The methods used to undertake the research were:

- (a) Desktop review of consultation exercises already undertaken by WG
- (b) Quantitative data collection across local authorities in Wales, and review of that data
- (c) Qualitative interviews and workshops with local authorities in Wales

### **Desktop review of consultation exercises**

2.2 WG carried out a engagement exercise with stakeholders from SP and social care teams across the 22 authority areas between January and September 2019. Engagement exercises were also carried out with:

- (a) Regional Collaborative Committees (RCCs)
- (b) Regional Development Coordinators (RDCs)
- (c) Supporting People National Advisory Board (SPNAB)
- (d) Supporting People Information Network (SPIN)
- (e) Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
- (f) Provider representatives.

2.3 The consultation exercise focussed on :

- understanding how Local Authorities approach the provision of housing support for those with LD, including both the commissioning and delivery of support across different types of tenure;
- understanding the views of stakeholders in relation to how housing support for those with LD should be funded in the context of the new HSG; and,
- helping identify the key issues and risks that need to be taken in to consideration when making a decision around future funding.

- 2.4 Responses from the exercises were systematically analysed, coded and indexed according to emerging and prevalent themes. The findings from this desktop exercise assisted with the design of the questionnaire used during semi-structured interviews with LAs (see 2.12). The questions arising from the analysis included:
- (i) Where there has been a reduction in funding levels – has the impact been measured for service providers and service users?
  - (ii) Is there an opportunity to allocate SPPG funding that supports supported living services to the RSG and keep a dedicated amount in the HSG for floating support?
  - (iii) Does a floating support model need to be generic, learning disability focussed or focussed on vulnerable adults (as in Torfaen) that includes people with LD? What's the rationale for deciding – is it based on a cost/impact analysis?
  - (iv) Why are there inconsistencies about what is understood by 'statutory' and 'non-statutory'. Different threshold criteria are used by social care teams for assessing a duty? However, provisions in both the HWA 2014 and SSWBA 2014 both have statutory prevention duties which challenge the traditional concept of 'eligibility'. If funding is transferred from HSG to RSG are there concerns about the lack of a ring fence and funding being prioritised for 'statutory' cases only – losing a focus on prevention?
  - (v) Would reallocation of funds from HSG to RSG have any positive or negative impact on any redistribution settlement – driving protectionist practices or revenue maximisation decision-making?
  - (vi) Can a phased approach, bespoke governance or statutory guidance or review mechanisms alleviate any anxieties over proposed changes?

## **Quantitative Data Collection**

- 2.5 The data collection exercise gathered the key financial information required to answer the research questions through a data collection tool issued to each local authority in Wales. The data collection tool was co-designed with input from two representative Treasurers identified by the WG project review team. This ensured the collection tool was practical, pragmatic and meaningful and that it facilitated collection of appropriate financial data. The tool requested data on local authority spend across social care and SPPG for service delivery for people with LD.
- 2.6 The data collection tool was then issued to LAs for completion and return by a pre-arranged deadline. 18 out of 22 LAs returned completed or part completed data sets in the time allocated for this review.
- 2.7 Not all participating LAs were able to complete information for social care spend for the financial year 2018/19. Therefore, to ensure consistent comparisons between SPPG and social care spend the analysis process focussed on spend during 2017/18.
- 2.8 Social care spend data provided by stakeholders was validated (and gaps filled) by analysing the Social Services Revenue Outturn Expenditure Data Sets compiled on StatsWales. These provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure of each LA by client group<sup>7</sup>.
- 2.9 All returns provided SPPG spend data from at least 2014/15 onwards.
- 2.10 Welsh Government's Local Authority Registers of People with a Learning Disability data set was used to calculate social care spend on a per person basis by each LA<sup>8</sup>.
- 2.11 WG collects information on the number of people entered on the register of people with a learning disability at 31 March each year from local authority social services departments. This is broken down by place of residence and age band. There are limitations with this data as people may choose not to be added to LA registers. There will also be some people on the registers who do not receive any care and support from local authorities and there will be others who receive care and support

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<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government - Social Services Revenue Outturn Expenditure by Client Group (StatsWales 2018)

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government - Persons with learning disabilities by local authority, service and age range (StatsWales 2018)

but are not on the registers. Therefore, the analysis provides indicative findings only.

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

- 2.12 To support the quantitative data collection exercise, qualitative information was required to help understand the data collected and understand the criteria of choosing funding sources and reasons for current and historical levels of funding. This was undertaken through semi-structured telephone interviews (the research tools can be found in Annex A). The questionnaire used during the interviews as a basis for discussion was co-designed between the researchers and the WG project team overseeing the review, prior to the issue of the quantitative tool. The questions were sent to LAs for consideration prior to interview with instructions that individuals nominated for interview were able to represent the views of the whole LA – not constituent sections i.e. Finance, Supporting People or Social Care teams.
- 2.13 A total of 14 telephone interviews were carried out in the time available for this research. Some LAs included more than one interviewee – taking the total number of interviewees to 16. Those interviewed included:
- i. 9 SP and/or Housing Leads
  - ii. 2 with commissioning responsibilities across both SP and social care
  - iii. 4 social care leads
  - iv. 1 finance lead
- 2.14 Annex B provides a list of local authorities who participated in this research.

### **3. Findings**

- 3.1 This section outlines the key findings from the methods outlined in Section 2 (Methodology).
- 3.2 The qualitative findings from the interviews along with the quantitative analysis of the data sets are presented alongside one another in this chapter.
- 3.3 This chapter is organised according to the major themes that emerged from the research:

#### **Consultation exercises undertaken by Welsh Government**

- 3.4 A desktop analysis of consultation exercises already undertaken by Welsh Government highlighted a disparity in respect of LA commissioning practices following the introduction of WG, Supporting People Programme Grant Guidance- Wales, June 2013.
- 3.5 Many LAs had already begun to change their approach to commissioning of LD services in response to the introduction of new guidance in 2013 – with 16 out of 18 LA returns reflecting a reduction in LD spend. Changes were varied (with some common themes) and included:
  - i. Many local authorities reported that they significantly reduced their SP spend on LD services over the past 3-4 years.
  - ii. Changes had already taken effect in some local authority areas to fund supported living services exclusively via social care funding (from the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) pot) with SPPG funding being redirected to floating support models – either generic (accessible to all client groups) or specialist LD models, or a combination of both.
  - iii. The experience for service providers was that some local authorities had maintained existing funding levels for supported living schemes whilst for other service providers there was an overall reduction in funding following an SPPG eligibility review.
  - iv. Some LAs introduced new, or reduced existing, caps placed on SPPG unit costs within supported living schemes. In these scenarios – the decision to

keep SPPG funding as part of a commissioning plan for supported living services continued.

- v. Some LAs introduced new local SPPG tariff levels and revised bandings for commissioning housing related support needs.

### **Financial Data**

- 3.6 The overall (both SP and social care) mean per person spend for LD (Table 2) is £33,902 across the 18 LAs where data is available. The median is £30,619. There are notable outliers including Merthyr Tydfil who spend an average of £62,287 per person and Newport who spend an average of £22,798 per person.

**Table 2: Local Authority Expenditure (SPPG & Social Care) on Learning Disabilities 2017/18**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>No of people registered as LD (aged 16-64)</b>	<b>Total LA spend on LD</b>	<b>Total SPPG dedicated spend on LD</b>	<b>SPPG % of total LD spend?</b>	<b>Total Social Care spend on LD</b>	<b>Social Care % of total LD Spend</b>	<b>Average of total spend pp</b>	<b>Average of SPPG spend pp</b>
<b>Anglesey</b>	322	£11,076,030	£493,030	4.5%	£10,583,000	95.5%	£34,398	£1,531
<b>Blaenau Gwent</b>	365	£10,834,498	£95,498	0.9%	£10,739,000	99.1%	£29,684	£262
<b>Bridgend</b>	492	N/A	N/A	N/A	£21,045,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Caerphilly</b>	803	£24,517,992	£1,115,992	4.6%	£23,402,000	95.4%	£30,533	£1,390
<b>Cardiff</b>	1,403	£42,357,167	£2,227,167	5.3%	£40,130,000	96.7%	£30,190	£1,587
<b>Carmarthenshire</b>	1,203	£36,835,000	£1,325,000	3.6%	£35,510,000	96.4%	£30,619	£1,101
<b>Ceredigion</b>	421	£13,830,000	£701,000	5.1%	£13,129,000	94.9%	£32,850	£1,665
<b>Conwy</b>	633	£21,885,402	£2,200,402	10.1%	£19,685,000	89.9%	£34,574	£3,476
<b>Denbighshire</b>	604	£19,719,078	£1,053,078	5.3%	£18,666,000	94.7%	£32,648	£1,744
<b>Flintshire</b>	909	£24,863,560	£1,138,560	4.6%	£23,725,000	95.4%	£27,353	£1,253
<b>Gwynedd</b>	699	£21,040,822	£1,917,822	9.1%	£19,123,000	90.9%	£30,101	£2,744

<b>Merthyr Tydfil</b>	224	£13,952,167	£254,167	1.8%	£13,698,000	98.2%	£62,287	£1,135
<b>Monmouthshire</b>	286	£10,625,953	£0	0%	£10,625,953	100%	£37,154	£0
<b>Neath Port Talb</b>	510	£21,803,008	£1,371,008	6.3%	£20,432,000	93.7%	£42,750	£2,688
<b>Newport</b>	802	£18,283,713	£545,713	3.0%	£17,738,000	97.0%	£22,798	£680
<b>Pembrokeshire</b>	496	£24,072,447	£772,447	3.2%	£23,300,000	96.8%	£48,533	£1,557
<b>Powys</b>	488	N/A	N/A	N/A	£27,491,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b>	1,195	N/A	N/A	N/A	£30,494,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Swansea</b>	1,057	£24,713,199	£2,843,199	11.5%	£21,870,000	88.5%	£23,380	£2,690
<b>Torfaen</b>	363	£9,309,451	£336,451	0.4%	£8,973,000	99.6%	£25,646	£927
<b>Vale of Glam</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£14,680,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Wrexham</b>	568	£19,727,472	£1,507,472	7.6%	£18,220,000	92.4%	£34,731	£2,654
<b>Total</b>	13,843	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

PP – per person    N/A – Not Available

*SPPG spend on services exclusively for people with LD*

- 3.7 The mean SPPG spend per person (Table 2) is £1,616 across the 18 Local Authorities for who data is available as part of this research. The median is at £1,390 with significant outliers ranging from an average spend of £0 in Monmouthshire (who have moved all their SPPG spend on LD to either the RSG or to generic floating support contracts) to £3,476 in Conwy. Conwy funds its LD services to the greatest extent from SPPG at 10% of the total. The spend trends reflect that the social care budget still pays for the majority of LD costs.
- 3.8 It needs to be emphasised here that not having any dedicated SPPG spend on LD does not mean that LAs do not spend any SPPG on people with LD as they maybe supported via generic contracts along with other client groups.

**Table 3: Local Authority SPPG Expenditure on Dedicated LD Service Provision**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Total SPPG spend on LD Supported Living or Adult Placement Schemes</b>	<b>Total SPPG spend on LD - specific Floating Support</b>	<b>% of FS of total SPPG LD spend</b>	<b>Total SPPG spend on other LD projects (e.g. community based support commissioned alongside home care)</b>
<b>Anglesey</b>	£457,088	£35,942	7%	£0
<b>Blaenau Gwent</b>	£26,498	£69,000	72%	£0
<b>Bridgend</b>	N/A	N/A	0%	N/A
<b>Caerphilly</b>	£1,014,409	£101,583	9%	£0
<b>Cardiff</b>	£2,227,167	£0	0%	£0
<b>Carmarthenshire</b>	£1,325,000	£0	0%	£0
<b>Ceredigion</b>	£381,000	£45,000	6%	£275,000
<b>Conwy</b>	£1,427,361	£773,041	35%	£0
<b>Denbighshire</b>	£1,046,653	£6,425	0.6%	£0
<b>Flintshire</b>	£1,138,560	£0	0%	£0
<b>Gwynedd</b>	£1,483,659	£434,163	23%	£0
<b>Merthyr Tydfil</b>	£254,167	£0	0%	N/A
<b>Monmouthshire</b>	£0	£0	0%	£0
<b>Neath Port Talbot</b>	£1,325,825	£45,183	3.3%	£0
<b>Newport</b>	£296,814.48	£180,283.48	33%	£68,615.95
<b>Pembrokeshire</b>	£758,953.95	£0	0%	£13,494.00
<b>Powys</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Swansea</b>	£2,697,501	£145,698	5%	£0
<b>Torfaen</b>	£0	£336,451	100%	N/A
<b>Vale of Glam</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Wrexham</b>	£1,507,472	£0	0%	£0

*How SPPG is currently (2017/18 figures) used for LD in LAs*

- 3.9 In the 18 LAs where data is available the majority (87%) of SPPG spend is on Supported Living or Adult Placement schemes. Six out of 18 LAs (Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Flintshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Pembrokeshire and Wrexham) SPPG is spent entirely on Supported Living or Adult Placement schemes.
- 3.10 Monmouthshire, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent have shifted the entire or majority of their spend to Floating Support models indicating different criteria are being used to determine eligible SPPG spend across all LAs who participated.
- 3.11 The vast majority (14 out of 18) of the financial returns indicate a reduced SPPG spend on LD. During interviews it was apparent that the majority of reduction was as a result of reducing spend on supported living – an acknowledgement that some previously commissioned SPPG was spent on activities that were subsequently considered ineligible.
- 3.12 It is notable however that six LAs (out of 18) highlighted that all of their SPPG spend on LD is allocated to supported living or other accommodation-based models.
- 3.13 Whilst LA social care budgets are historically and increasingly responsible for the majority of spend on LD – some are more reliant on SPPG to help fund SL services. Four LAs currently utilise between 7 and 12% of their total LD spend from the SPPG pot. For example, Swansea utilises 11.5% of its total LD spend from SP. This equates to £2,843,199 per annum.

***Changes since the introduction of Welsh Government, Supporting People Programme Grant Guidance Wales, June 2013***

- 3.14 Since the implementation of the (then) new guidance following the Aylward review – most LAs report that they reduced their SPPG expenditure on services exclusively commissioned for people with LD. A reduction of £4,695,590 of spend from 2013-14 to 2017-18 is indicated across those LAs that returned financial data (Table 4). Significant reductions include Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Anglesey, Caerphilly and Flintshire. Two LAs have increased their SPPG spend – most notably Merthyr Tydfil.

3.15 There are significant variances in how much LAs spend per person on LD and variances are more pronounced when separating spend between specific models e.g. floating support versus supported living.

**Table 4: LA SPPG Expenditure between 2014 to 2018**

Local Authority	SP spend on LD services 2013/14*	SP spend on LD services in 2017/18	% difference (+ OR -)
Anglesey	£905,019	£493,030	- 46%
Blaenau Gwent	£383,310	£95,498	-75%
Bridgend	N/A	N/A	N/A
Caerphilly	£1,957,388	£1,115,992	- 43%
Cardiff	£2,590,062	£2,227,167.	-14%
Carmarthenshire	£1,501,000	£1,325,000	-12%
Ceredigion	N/A	£701,000	N/A
Conwy	£2,653,207	£2,200,402	-17%
Denbighshire	£1,187,308	£1,053,078	-11%
Flintshire	£1,793,351	£1,138,560	-37%
Gwynedd	£2,275,230	£1,917,822	-16%
Merthyr Tydfil	£148,907	£254,167	+71%
Monmouthshire	£221,119	£0	-100%
Neath Port Talb	£1,718,634	£1,371,008	-20%
Newport	£1,413,766	£545,713	-61%
Pembrokeshire	£715,138	£772,447	+8%
Powys	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rhondda Cynon	N/A	N/A	N/A
Swansea	£2,998,580	£2,843,199	-5%
Torfaen	£404,531	£336,451	-17%
Vale of Glam	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wrexham	£1,805,819	£1,507,472	-17%

\* The financial year the introduction of Welsh Government, Supporting People Programme Grant Guidance Wales, June 2013 was introduced.

## Stakeholder Interviews

- 3.16 A number of key themes emerged from the LA interviews following a systematic coding and indexing exercise. These are outlined below

### *Legacy challenges*

- 3.17 Maximisation of Transitional Housing Benefit (THB): LAs who were more proactive about 'maximising the THB pot' in 2001 highlighted that the maximisation exercise heavily focussed on the deregistration of residential care homes for people with LD as many small homes no longer met the new (at the time) Care Standards in relation to space and facilities. Three LAs felt that they were at risk of 'being punished' for doing what was required of them at the time of the maximisation exercise – 'if the decision was taken to reduce LD SPPG spend now?'.  
3.18 Supported Living: There are some significant concerns amongst some LAs that any future significant or rapid changes around how SPPG can be used for supported living could have a destabilising and disproportionate effect on them compared to other LAs. The concerns are most prominent for LAs that use their entire SPPG LD budget on supported living and that a decision that provokes a rapid de-commissioning of SPPG will not leave enough time for providers or commissioners to develop alternative, affordable models. These LAs are worried about imposing unmanageable financial risks for providers and subsequently risks to existing support and accommodation arrangements for adults with LD.  
3.19 Resettlement from hospital 'hotspots': Three respondents highlighted potential legacy challenges around resettlement 'hotspots' i.e. there is a perception that historically there has been a concentration in some geographical areas more than others of people resettled from large institutional settings such as Ely or Hensol hospitals in South Wales or Bryn y Neudd in North Wales. The perception is that the geographical location of some of the historical long-stay hospitals has had a disproportionate effect on some LAs. However, the scope of this review did not allow for in-depth investigation into the impact of resettlement from long-term hospitals on particular LAs. Therefore, the perceived impact could not be substantiated.

3.20 Social Care Budgets: Two thirds of LA respondents were concerned about the impact of funding decisions on social care budgets. Rising demand and spend across all social care client groups was highlighted as leaving little or no flexibility to reallocate existing committed social care funding to Supported Living or other accommodation-based models. These concerns were compounded by uncertainty around how future re-distribution of SPPG/HSG funding is decided upon.

### *Care versus Support*

- 3.21 Statutory duty: The qualitative data analysis confirmed there are inconsistencies about what is understood by 'statutory' and 'non-statutory' intervention. Different threshold criteria are used by social care teams for assessing a 'duty'. For example, some social care teams are using IQ level (explored more in 3.22 below) as part of the assessment criteria to determine eligibility. Provisions in both the Housing Wales Act 2014 (HWA) and Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) both have statutory prevention duties which challenge the traditional concept of 'eligibility'. Twelve out of 14 respondents were concerned that if funding was transferred from HSG to RSG without at least a ring fence, that funding would be prioritised for 'statutory' cases only – losing a focus on prevention.
- 3.22 Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA 2014): Four respondents highlighted that the changes in the SSWBA 2014 make the test of statutory eligibility for statutory intervention less 'straight forward' in decision-making and requires collaboration in commissioning and planning across housing, social care and SP. For example, eligibility under the SSWBA 2014 is not determined by an illness/disability threshold (such as e.g. IQ level in the case of LD) but rather a person's ability to access willing support from family, friends or the wider community to help them if they are not able to meet that need, either— (i) alone, (ii) with the support of others willing to provide or (iii) with the assistance of services in the community to which the adult has access. The prevention duties under the Act mandate local authorities to maximise the use of strategies and resources that either stop or slow progression towards the need for statutory social care.

3.23 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (HWA 2014): The HWA (2104) Section 60 requires local housing authorities to work alongside other public authorities and voluntary sector to ensure that the service is designed to meet the needs of groups at particular risk of homelessness. Such groups include people leaving the secure estate, young people leaving care, people leaving the regular armed forces, people leaving hospital after inpatient medical treatment for mental health challenges and people receiving mental health services in the community. Two respondents highlighted that many people with LD who are supported had other co-existing challenges such as mental health or substance misuse that required cross-authority responses to prevent not only progression into more expensive, statutory care services but also to prevent homelessness and that SPPG spend on LD responds to a broader prevention agenda.

#### *Commissioning*

3.24 Supporting People Programme – eligibility: Whilst there was acknowledgement amongst respondents that SPPG eligibility criteria should be adhered to in the commissioning of all service models (including supported living), six respondents questioned the idea of separating out LD when discussing eligibility from other SP service user groups. This highlights a possible inadvertent commissioning equity issue. One respondent stated:

“why only learning disabilities, what about mental health and other groups where the same logic could be applied? Apply the criteria by all means but don’t exclude a whole group from accessing SP – that’s not right”

It is worth remembering that the Supporting People Programme aims includes the provision of housing related (HRS) support to:

- helping vulnerable people live as independently as possible
- preventing problems in the first place or providing help as early as possible in order to reduce demand on other services such as health and social services
- providing help to complement the personal or medical care that some people may need

- promoting equality and reducing inequalities

3.25 There are a variety of approaches to commissioning SPPG LD services across LAs. The approaches to commissioning are also heavily influenced by which department in the LA is the budget holder for SPPG and how collaborative relationships operate between social services and housing. LAs use different systems and assumptions for people with LD to make decisions around eligibility for an SPPG funded service. These include:

- Use of local tariffs based on a set of assumptions of how many hours on average a person will require housing related support across an accommodation-based SPPG service.
- Individual assessments – that will determine levels of housing related support and social care funding required within an agreed set rate (for providers) for accommodation-based provision
- Individual assessments that lead to individual HRS packages which are capped at a locally determined ceiling level
- A complete disinvestment/significant reduction in SPPG funding for accommodation-based services such as supported living with the funding gap either part or fully met by social care.
- Just over one third of respondents (5 out of 14) acknowledged that more work is required to ensure that SPPG is spent on eligible activities but added that in relation to supported living services it was important that the assessment and monitoring process did not become a non-commensurate bureaucratic burden.

#### *Market stability*

3.26 Eight respondents highlighted market stability as a major concern in relation to future funding decisions. LAs were concerned about both the nature and speed of decisions on funding allocations from WG as these could have a potentially destabilising effect on their supported living market in particular. All respondents stated that having an acceptable lead-in time to changes was imperative so that LAs could plan and manage change as 'safely' as possible.

## *Governance*

3.27 Twelve respondents highlighted that they would prefer to strengthen governance arrangements around the use of SPPG than transfer funding to the RSG. Participants felt that improving the quality and frequency of audit processes and actions taken as a result of any challenges around ineligible spend was the most sensible route to take. Four respondents highlighted that better governance based on a sliding risk basis was a more fair and proportionate approach to take. Ideas included:

- Closer scrutiny of LAs where SPPG spend on LD has remained consistent or increased since the introduction of the (then) new guidance in 2013.
- Closer scrutiny where entire or significant majority of SPPG spend is on supported living or other accommodation-based SPPG schemes.

## *Changes since the Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG), Guidance – Wales (June 2013)*

Fifteen of the 18 LAs who provided financial data have reduced their SPPG expenditure, collectively reducing their spend by approximately £4.4m since the introduction of the SPPG Guidance in 2013 which was introduced following the Aylward Review.

Changes have included a combination of:

- Either decommissioning or part decommissioning of SPPG funding in supported living (SL) services through the introduction of revised local tariffs/caps and/or re-tendering.
- An increase in funding from social services to support supported living schemes where SPPG has been decommissioned. However, during interviews respondents highlighted that the gap in funding wasn't always replaced on a like for like basis by social services.
- Diversion of some of the funding to commission floating support models specifically for LD.

- Diversion of funding to commission generic floating support models that include support to people with learning difficulties, 'mild' learning disabilities and other vulnerable adults.
- Diversion of funding to meet supply gaps in other SPPG client group areas e.g. mental health, substance misuse.
- Diversion of funds to support adult placement schemes.
- There was one example where funding has been used to support a homecare scheme.

### *Generic contracts*

3.28 LAs are increasingly introducing generic floating support contracts that provides flexibility to provide support across a number of need areas. There are concerns amongst those LAs that have generic contracts that if LD SPPG was transferred across to the RSG that it would be difficult to extrapolate or accurately calculate what SPPG is actually spent on LD. The rationale is that generic contracts can support people with a range of co-existing needs which such as mild LD, Learning Difficulties, substance misuse and mental health challenges. However, it will not always be clear what the 'lead needs' are and therefore, calculating a settlement for the RSG would be difficult.

### *HSG versus RSG*

3.29 All but two respondents felt that transferring all or part of SPPG for LD to the RSG was the wrong thing to do for a number of reasons – including:

- How the funding would be calculated if moved – especially where significant commissioning changes had been made in recent years e.g. introduction of generic contracts.
- Many felt that they had already gone through review exercises that already 'dealt with' the question of care versus housing related support – resulting in changes to social care commissioning.

- That the impact of how a transfer to the RSG would impact on LA settlements following Welsh Government decisions around the redistribution of SPPG are not yet known.
- That without a ringfence, the money would be used for other competing agendas.
- That even with a ringfence, due to increasing social care budget challenges the threshold of service access becomes too high for people with 'mild' LD or LDiff who are currently eligible for support via SPPG.
- That the focus on prevention will be lost – which is a key element of the SPPG regulatory framework and SSWBA 2014.

It is important to highlight that two LAs felt that transferring all SPPG to the the RSG was the right thing to do as this gave LAs more flexibility over how they managed their resources.

## 4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The research questions alongside the analysis and subsequent findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data are used to draw out the conclusions below:

### **How is Learning Disability housing support structured across Wales?**

- 4.2 Learning Disability housing support is not consistent across Wales. Some local authorities are still significantly (up to 11.5% of total LD spend) dependent on SPPG to help fund supported living or adult placement schemes.
- 4.3 13% of the total SPPG spend (based on returns received) on LD funds floating support. The remainder (87%) of funds supported living or adult placement schemes. There has been a distinct effort since 2014 amongst some LAs to rationalise SPPG commissioning for LD accommodation-based services following reviews that highlighted ineligible spend. This has resulted in both a reduction in spend and/or remodelling of some services. Other LAs have developed specialised LD floating support services or generic floating services that people with LD can access – reducing the link with tenure and housing related support. Some LAs have a mixed portfolio of SPPG funded LD services whereas others solely spend on supported living and/or adult placement schemes.

### **How is the funding source, within a Local Authority, determined (i.e. what are the criteria for support to be funded by the various sources)?**

- 4.4 The determination of funding support is not approached consistently across LAs. The range of spend of SPPG per person differs across LAs with a range of £0 in Monmouthshire to £3,476 in Conwy. Spend is impacted by both historical SPPG settlements and pace of change since the introduction of the SPPG guidance in 2013. In LAs where there isn't any commissioning of SPPG LD-specific schemes, this does not mean that SPPG is not used to support people with LD. For example, some LAs support people with LD along side other client groups through generic floating support contracts.
- 4.5 Some LAs use individual assessments to determine individual packages of support and some LAs use local tariff/cap-based approaches.

**What specific needs (within Learning Disabilities housing support more widely) are funded?**

- 4.6 Neither the quantitative or qualitative data analysis/findings provided a definitive answer to this question. However, the significant disparity of SPPG funding per person across Wales could be as a result of differing interpretations of what is eligible as well as other factors such as historical SPPG settlements, different demographic/population profiles across LAs. The analysis/findings do highlight however that there is not widespread consistency about what specific needs are/should be funded.

**What type of support/activity is funded?**

- 4.7 The feedback from all respondents was that they were confident that they were either commissioning eligible housing related support in supported living schemes or working towards it. Again, the significant disparity in spend per person across LAs suggests that this requires more scrutiny to investigate whether LAs are interpreting the eligibility criteria differently. However, it is important to note that the scope of this review (in terms of timescales and the information available) did not allow for an in-depth focus on this.

**Is the support fixed or floating?**

- 4.8 The support is mostly fixed support (87%). However, the split in floating versus fixed support significantly varies across LAs – ranging from 0-100% (see Table 3).

**What is the level of Learning Disability housing support funding within each Local Authority? How much of this funding is provided to those individuals to which the Local Authority has a statutory duty as a result of their learning disabilities?**

- 4.9 Social services will generally have a duty towards all those that live in supported living or adult placement schemes. Therefore, 86% (based on returns) of SPPG spend on LD is spent on people where LAs have assessed that they have a statutory duty to provide care. However, it is important to re-emphasise that the Housing Wales Act 2015 (HWA) and Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA 2014) both have statutory prevention duties which challenge the

traditional concept of 'eligibility'. It is technically not automatic that a person with LD (irrespective of IQ level) automatically qualifies for statutory-funded package of care from social services (see 3.21).

**What are the differences (and reasons for those differences) in the level of Learning Disability housing support funding across local authorities?**

4.10 The funding differences are outlined in Tables 2 and 3. It is possible that a number of factors that were outside the scope of this review i.e. specific population or demographic trends, pressures on local social care budgets or historical SPPG settlements may contribute to diverse levels of funding. However, other factors within scope that impact levels of funding across LAs include:

- Decommissioning of SPPG LD funding from accommodation-based support in some LAs.
- The introduction of generic and specialist LD floating support contracts in some LAs.

**Has there been any change in funding levels since the implementation of the Aylward Review?**

4.11 There have been changes in funding levels. Approximately £4.7m of expenditure has reduced on SPPG LD-specific schemes (based on returns). The overall reduction may be higher/lower– given four LAs did not return the financial data.

## 5. Options

5.1 Based on the data analysis, findings and conclusions – a number of key options are outlined below for the future funding of LD SPPG funded services with key considerations for each option. It is not the purpose of this review to provide a recommended or preferred option to WG.

### **Option 1: Do not change anything/keep the status quo and allow LAs to manage their resources flexibly around LD provision**

#### *Considerations*

- The current and historical funding arrangements in this area are complex. Deciding on fair and consistent criteria for transferring funding from SPPG/HSG to the RSG could have significantly different degrees of impacts across LA areas. This is further compounded by the variation of actions taken by LAs since the Aylward review, the various LD delivery models in LAs and also the currently unknown further impact on the redistribution review that has been commissioned by Welsh Government.
- Some LAs have clearly been more proactive than others about addressing the challenges around LD funding identified in the Aylward review. Keeping the status quo in approach to funding may simply disincentivise any/further action to address examples where eligibility for HSG/SPPG is not being strictly applied.
- Keeping the status quo with no difference in practices across the system (whether it be in local commissioning or audits of spend) may be viewed as meaning the strict application of the SPPG/HSG guidance is not required by Welsh Government.

**Option 2: Keep the status quo and allow LAs to manage their resources flexibly around LD provision but introduce a consistent national unit cap/tariff rate for people with LD living in supported living schemes.**

*Considerations*

- The considerations outlined in Option 1 above apply here too.
- Applying a national cap or tariff will not be viewed by some LAs as going far enough to address the challenges of separating assessed support with tenure.
- Some LAs have already completely disinvested SPPG from supported living schemes which reflects the diversity in thinking about what is eligible spend. Introducing a national unit cost/cap/tariff may compound current inconsistencies in thinking at a time when widespread clarity is sought across the sector on how to move forward on this issue.

**Option 3: All current SPPG funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those with LD could be transferred across to Social Services via the Revenue Support Grant.**

*Considerations*

- This would give LAs more flexibility of their overall spend plans for vulnerable people.
- In the event of transfer – without a ringfence arrangement, this could have an adverse effect on the future level of spend for people with LD given the competing spend priorities for social care commissioning.
- Extrapolating the actual SPPG/HSG spend is complex given the different commissioning arrangements in LAs e.g. generic contracts vs LD specific contracts. Generic projects provide services to a range of client groups including people with LDiff, LD, substance misuse. Many are considered to have more than one presenting issue and do not fall neatly into any one category.
- Some LAs have already been proactive in re-shaping their services in line with the Aylward Review. The calculation of the right settlement amount per

LA is complicated by the fact that some have made significant changes in their commissioning approaches to LD since Aylward. Therefore, identifying the right starting point for 'sizing the pot' is complex. For example, some LAs have already reduced spend in their SPPG/HSG for LD services. However, the savings have already been reinvested for other SPPG priorities.

- This would be viewed by some LAs as effectively excluding people with LD who have housing related support needs from SPPG/HSG commissioning.

**Option 4: Current SPPG funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those people with LD to which the local authority has a statutory duty in relation to LD could be transferred across to social services via the RSG. Current SPPG funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those people with LD to which the local authority does not have a statutory duty will be retained within the HSG.**

#### *Considerations*

- The vast majority of SPPG/HSG funding for people with LD commissions supported living services. Therefore, the remaining amount left in the SPPG/HSG pot for LD would be very low.
- Some LAs have already been proactive in re-shaping their services in line with the Aylward Review. The calculation of the right settlement amount to move across to the RSG per LA is complicated by the fact that some have made significant changes in their commissioning approaches to LD since the Aylward Review. Therefore, identifying the right starting point for 'sizing the pot' is complex.
- Whilst the eligibility criteria for statutory social care and SPPG/HSG are different – it is perfectly feasible that an individual can be eligible for both.
- The assessment of statutory duty has changed since the inception of the SSWBA 2014 with clear duties to prevent the need for care or to slow progression towards greater statutory care. The idea that someone is

eligible for care *or* housing related support is not accurate. They can be eligible for both – even within a supported living scheme.

**Option 5: Retain LD housing support funding within SPPG/HSG but improve governance and audit arrangements.**

All current SPPG funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those with LD could be retained within the SPPG/HSG. Clear guidance should be provided (within the HSG Guidance document) that funding should only be used to provide housing support and should not be used to fund care or other statutory duties. All LAs should be required to undertake a review of LD support provided through SP/HSG within a set period and subsequent to this will be required to provide assurance to WG that HSG funding is being utilised to fund housing support activities (not care services). Welsh government may choose to carry out a review/audit to verify the outcomes.

*Considerations*

- Some LA finance and social care leads may view this as limiting flexibility of how services to vulnerable people are funded/designed/commissioned.
- Without a different approach to auditing across the system (e.g. Welsh Government/LAs/RCCs) of SPPG/HSG spend there is a risk that the questions around eligibility will continue.
- Consideration will need to be given to what leverage is used to effect change where audit findings reflect non-compliance in respect of SPPG/HSG spend eligibility. Options may include introduction of statutory guidance and/or more strict monitoring and application of grant terms and conditions – including withholding funding in cases of non-compliance.
- There may be a need for a risk-based audit approach to be undertaken over an agreed timescale (e.g. 3-5 years) where more focus/priority on supporting/auditing LAs where SPPG/HSG spend since the Aylward review has either increased, reduced only slightly, or is exclusively used for supported living and/or adult placement schemes.

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**Annex A- Research tools**

**Interview questions for LD SP review documentation**

Name?	LA?	Position?
Specific questions based on specific data from participant’s local authority.		
Question	Response	Other info
What is the historical and current rationale for the split in SP and social services, and any other funding for LD services?		
What are the criteria for support being funded by a particular source?		
Please tell us details about any change in either social care or SP funding levels in your local authority area since the implementation of the Aylward Review.		
Various suggestions (below) were made by stakeholders during engagement exercises with Welsh Government over the last year about the future funding for LD services. We would like to hear your views on those suggestions along with any further suggestions you might have.		

Question/suggestion	Response
<p>All current SP funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those with LD could be transferred across to Social Services via the Revenue Support Grant</p>	
<p>The money transferred to each social services dept could be based on its own current SP spend on LD. This will result in each local authority receiving the same level of funding for LD as they currently spend on LD through SP (redistribution work notwithstanding)? Also, how do we determine current – last financial year or last 3 financial years?</p>	
<p>The money transferred to each local authority could be based on a distribution formula. This will result in some local authorities receiving a greater or lower level of funding than they currently spend on LD through SP</p>	
<p>Current SP funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those people with LD to which the local authority has a statutory duty in relation to LD could be transferred across to social services via the RSG. Current SP funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those people with LD to which the local authority does</p>	

<p>not have a statutory duty will be retained within the HSG.</p>	
<p>Current SP funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those people through Supported Living and Adult Placement Schemes will be transferred across to Social Services via the RSG. Current SP funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those people with LD through other service models, such as floating support, could be retained within the HSG.</p>	
<p>All current SP funding which is identified as being used to provide support to those with LD could be retained within the HSG. Clear guidance should be provided (within the HSG Guidance document) that funding should only be used to provide housing support and should not be used to fund care or other statutory duties</p>	
<p>All local authorities should be required to undertake a review of LD support provided through SP/HSG within a set period and subsequent to this will be required to provide assurance to WG that HSG funding is being utilised to fund housing support activities (not care services). Welsh government may choose to carry out a review/audit to verify the outcomes.</p>	
<p>Other suggestion – please detail</p>	

Other suggestion – please detail	
Any other relevant information	

## Financial data collection tool



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

### Data collection tool for Welsh Local Authorities in respect of Learning Disability Services

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Position/Job role</b>	
<b>Local Authority</b>	

What have been the sources of Learning Disability funding within your Local Authority from 2012-2019 (please provide a breakdown by year)?

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>Total Local Authority Gross Spend on LD services</b>								
<b>Total Social Care Gross Spend on LD services</b>								
How much spent on day services?								
How much spent on supported living?								
How much spent on residential or nursing care?								
How much spent on home care?								
How much spent on other (please specify)?								
Total no. of supported living schemes?								
Total no of people living in supported living schemes?								
Total no. of residential/nursing schemes?								
Total no of people living in residential/nursing schemes?								
<b>Supported People Spend</b>								
How much spent on floating support?								
How much spent on supported living?								
How much spent on other (please specify)								

How does the Local Authority determine who is eligible for social care funding/service? (Please include whether IQ is used as an eligibility test).

How does the local authority determine who is eligible for supporting people funding/service?

Where supporting people funding and social care funding supports the same service e.g. supported living - what is the rationale for the split funding?

## **Annex B - List of participating local authorities**

### **Local Authority**

Anglesey

Blaenau Gwent

Bridgend

Caerphilly

Cardiff

Carmarthenshire

Denbighshire

Gwynedd

Merthyr Tydfil

Neath Port Talbot

Newport

Rhondda Cynon Taf

Swansea

Torfaen

Wrexham