# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Commencement of section 75(3), Housing (Wales) Act 2014** |
| **DATE** | **02 December 2019** |
| **BY** | **Julie James AM, Minister for Housing and Local Government** |

Today (2nd December 2019) we will be commencing section 75(3) of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 via The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (Commencement Order No. 10) Order 2019.

This particular subsection will provide additional safeguards to certain households that have become homeless and where the Local Authority have assessed them to be intentionally homeless.

This will mean that local authorities will now have a duty to secure accommodation for households with pregnant women, children and certain young people who have become homeless intentionally.

This will provide greater security for vulnerable households and additional help for some of our young people and care leavers, in line with our commitment to have due regard to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We are currently undertaking a comprehensive review and revision of the Code of Guidance, in collaboration with stakeholders across the sector, which will result in a new, accessible, more policy driven document which will clearly set out, up front, the Welsh Government policy approach and the legal position. It will also provide practical guidance to support frontline staff to deliver a quality service to households across Wales; supporting them to get the right support at the earliest opportunity. Whilst the new code is being developed, to support the implementation of section 75(3) we will publish interim guidance for local authorities.

While the numbers being found intentionally homeless are much lower than they were before the change of legislation (201 in 2017/18 down from 605 in 2013/14)), the concept of intentionality remains contentious and in many ways is a legacy of an exclusive approach to supporting people in need that we are moving away from. This additional provision supports our strategic approach and helps to ensure some of our most vulnerable citizens are provided with the additional help they may need in order to help them find and retain suitable accommodation.

In October I published the new strategic policy statement in which I outlined the key principles to tackling homelessness in Wales:

* The earliest preventions are most effective and most cost effective and should always be the interventions of first choice.
* Tackling and preventing homelessness is a public services matter – rather than a ‘housing matter’.
* All services should place the individual at the centre and work together in a trauma informed way.
* The duties in Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 should be the last line of defence – not the first - and all services should work to the spirit not simply the letter of the law.
* Policy, service delivery and practice should be informed and shaped in a co productive manner and by those with lived experience.

Section 75(3) also reinforces our focus on providing individualised support to help people off the streets and into long term, sustainable accommodation.

The interim guidance to support implementation can be found at the following link:

[https://gov.wales/allocation-accommodation-and-homelessness-guidance-local-authorities](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fallocation-accommodation-and-homelessness-guidance-local-authorities&data=02%7C01%7CSarah.Bonwick1%40gov.wales%7Cfc8e772f35ba4083eb3208d773fdf85b%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637105406931414436&sdata=yOZ2BtEBuxUxznq9fHJ12Cz70w05jXB4b6k3DUObxbM%3D&reserved=0)