# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Draft Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 and Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015 (Amendment) Regulations 2023** |
| **DATE** | **24 October 2023** |
| **BY** | **Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change** |

At the start of the pandemic, through the ‘no one left out approach’ we took decisive action to ensure those without somewhere to live were able to access safe, self-contained accommodation not only to protect themselves but to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. I am proud of the response in Wales and immensely grateful to local authority homeless and housing support teams, together with their third and public sector partners, for their support in implementing this approach.

Our Programme for Government makes clear our commitment to fundamentally reform homelessness services to focus on prevention and rapid rehousing and earlier this month I was pleased to launch a White Paper which sets out a number of proposals which include increasing the pace at which we support people to move into permanent housing. The recent announcement to extend the Transitional Accommodation Capital Fund underpins our commitment to bring forward more homes to reduce the number of people currently living in temporary accommodation.

However, these measures will not achieve their objectives immediately. In the short term, I recognise the need to be pragmatic in response to the continuing need for temporary solutions and to secure the stock of temporary accommodation currently available to local authorities throughout Wales.

Therefore, I have today laid the [draft Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 and Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015 (Amendment) Regulations 2023](https://senedd.wales/media/pyhhry2w/sub-ld16101-e.pdf). Subject to approval by the Senedd, these regulations will ensure the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, secured by local authorities via arrangements with third party providers for homelessness purposes, does not give rise to an occupation contract under the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.

I am also publishing today our [response to the consultation](https://www.gov.wales/renting-homes-bed-and-breakfast-accommodation-used-homelessness-purposes) carried out on this proposal. This indicates strong support for the proposal, while at the same time setting out the challenging nature of the situation, as families continue to stay in forms of temporary accommodation without the security of tenure of an occupation contract. Deciding to proceed with making regulations to exempt bed and breakfast accommodation used for homelessness purposes from the scope of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 is about maintaining the availability of that accommodation to help meet the current extreme shortage of temporary accommodation.

The regulations I have laid today acknowledge that this will take time, but we commit to reviewing the continued appropriateness of the regulations in line with the development of our wider legislative reforms to end homelessness.