

## **WLGA ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20**

### **Purpose**

1. To present the WLGA's Annual Report 2019-20.

### **Background**

1. The Covid-19 crisis has dominated the WLGA's work for the last 6 months and indeed most of this calendar year. It is difficult therefore not to focus on the crisis, even though this annual report covers the period from June 2019 through to the end of October 2020.
2. The WLGA's leadership changed during the autumn of 2019-20, with Cllr Andrew Morgan elected WLGA Leader, replacing Cllr Debbie Wilcox when she was elevated to the House of Lords as Baroness Wilcox of Newport. Baroness Wilcox's leadership laid firm foundations for the WLGA and helped recast a relationship with Welsh Government focused on partnership and mutual respect. Baroness Wilcox continues to work closely with the WLGA and LGA in championing localism and local government in Parliamentary debate and representations to the UK Government.
3. WLGA activity during 2019-20 was focused around its core priorities and notably the negotiations around the Local Government Settlement, preparatory planning for Brexit and engagement around regional reform as the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill was introduced in the Senedd. There were several significant achievements and progress during 2019-20, not least the negotiation of the best local government settlement in over a decade. However, the impact of some of the worst winter floods in a generation on communities and authorities dominated the last quarter of 2020.
4. The challenges of flooding were followed by the outbreak of Covid-19, which represents the biggest global crisis for generations. The challenges it presents to local government, the people and communities of Wales are immense and relentless.
5. With the onset of autumn, there is no sign of any respite and the forthcoming winter is full of challenges for local government and public services in Wales. It seems clear that this global pandemic is going to be with us for some time to come and increasing infection rates resulting in further local lockdowns create more unease and uncertainty, making planning with any certainty difficult.
6. Local government services are needed now more than ever before, and the WLGA has realigned itself, both its structure and work programme, to support the local government response to the coronavirus pandemic. Throughout this period, the WLGA

has worked tirelessly in support of local councils as they provide essential services to their communities and the people they serve. The WLGA is founded on the belief that public services should be delivered through a democratic framework of local accountability and the conviction that local government is best placed to make decisions about how local services are organised, delivered and managed. This has never been more evident than during this crisis.

7. All 22 councils across Wales continue to work heroically to deliver core public services to their communities. They have demonstrated that they are rooted in their communities and that they understand and are responsive to the needs of the people they serve. Whether in creating education hubs for the vulnerable or the children of key workers at the start of the pandemic, sustaining free school meals services, supporting vulnerable adults through the shielding scheme, supporting their local economies through the small businesses grant or setting up contact tracing systems in partnership with health boards, they have performed and delivered magnificently. Whatever the need, whatever the challenge, local government has risen and successfully delivered.
8. The WLGA has in turn supported all 22 local authorities in their efforts and looked to add value wherever possible in support of local government. The aim of the Association is always to promote, protect, support and advance local government and its associate members. That role has never been more important than it is now and will be in the coming months.
9. The WLGA's Annual Report for 2019-20 is included in **Annex A**.

## **Recommendations**

- 2. Members are recommended to note the WLGA's Annual Report 2019-20.**

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## Annex A

# WLGA Annual Report 2019-20



## Introduction

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WLGA activity during 2019-20 was focused around its core priorities and notably the negotiations around the Local Government Settlement, preparatory planning for Brexit and engagement around regional reform as the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill was introduced in the Senedd. There were several significant achievements and progress during 2019-20, not least the negotiation of the best local government settlement in over a decade. However, the impact of some of the worst winter floods in a generation on communities and authorities dominated the last quarter of 2020.

The challenges of flooding were followed by the outbreak of Covid-19, which represents the biggest global crisis for generations. The challenges it presents to local government, the people and communities of Wales are immense and relentless.

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Local government services are needed now more than ever before, and the WLGA has realigned itself, both its structure and work programme, to support the local government response to the coronavirus pandemic. Throughout this period, the WLGA has worked tirelessly in support of local councils as they provide essential services to their communities and the people they serve. The WLGA is founded on the belief that public services should be delivered through a democratic framework of local accountability and the conviction that local government is best placed to make decisions about how local services are organised, delivered and managed. This has never been more evident than during this crisis.

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The WLGA has in turn supported all 22 local authorities in their efforts and looked to add value wherever possible in support of local government. The aim of the Association is always to promote, protect, support and advance local government and its associate members. That role has never been more important than it is now and will be in the coming months.

## **Summary – the past 14 months in numbers**

1. We have **responded to or submitted evidence to 50 Welsh Government consultations, Senedd Committee or Parliamentary Inquiries**.
2. We have championed, defended and promoted the cause of local government in the media, **responding to over 280 press enquiries and issuing 55 press releases**. We have **gained over 1,100 twitter followers** over the past 14 months (with a total Twitter following of over 9,600) and our most popular tweet received 42,557 impressions and 76 retweets.
3. We have sought to widen our engagement with members across Wales' 22 local authorities and our Associate Member Authorities:
  - We have delivered **25 training and coaching sessions** in local authorities to **140 members this year**, all with positive feedback. **45 further councillors participated in our highly acclaimed Leadership Academy programme** for elected members delivered in partnership with the LGA and Academi Wales;
  - Through the WLGA's formal meetings and our various cabinet member and other lead member networks, we have **engaged a further 300 executive, non-executive members and champions in WLGA business** during the year, providing an opportunity to shape WLGA priorities and facilitating engagement between members and Welsh Government Ministers.

## Local Leadership, Freedom and Flexibility

*Councils are respected, empowered and have the freedom and flexibility to respond to local needs*

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2019-20
Champion the role of councillors and council leaders, promote and defend the reputation of local government and drive positive opinion and recognition of councils and their contribution with national partners and with the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The WLGA, through the leadership, has been prominent and integral in the COVID-19 response. Political dialogue and engagement has been extensive and is not replicated elsewhere in the UK.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ The Leader engages regularly with Cabinet and Ministers.</li><li>◦ Senior Spokespersons hold weekly bilaterals with Ministers and stakeholders, including unions.</li><li>◦ Leaders have been meeting weekly with Ministers throughout the pandemic.</li></ul></li><li>• Through its activities, in particular engagement with the media and the Senedd, the WLGA has championed and promoted the critical front-line response and role of local government during COVID-19.</li><li>• The WLGA has participated in 4 Senedd COVID 19 Inquiry sessions, evidencing the significant impact on council finances, service delivery and communities but also demonstrating how councils have been relied upon and have led a flexible and innovative front-line response to the crisis.</li><li>• We have collated and promoted '<a href="#">good council practice</a>' during COVID-19 via the WLGA website, publishing over 50 case studies and sharing learning through cabinet member and officer networks.</li><li>• We have produced a draft Senedd Manifesto for 2021 and engaged with Members of the Senedd to influence party political priorities around local democracy and local government.</li><li>• We have championed, defended and promoted the cause of local government in the media, responding to over 280 press enquiries and issuing 55 press releases. We</li></ul>

	<p>have gained over 1,100 twitter followers over the past 14 months (with a total Twitter following of over 9,600) and our most popular tweet received 42,557 impressions and 76 retweets.</p>
<p>Campaign on behalf of local government to influence the Welsh Government and the Senedd, to secure flexibilities and powers ensuring councils discretion and flexibility in determining local or regional priorities, services and governance arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been extensive liaison between Welsh Government, local authorities and professional groups in the rapid drafting or input into emergency coronavirus regulations or guidance and the 21 day reviews of regulations. There has also been engagement with Ministers and civil servants to ensure clarity and local discretion around COVID 19 funding streams.</li> <li>• We worked with lawyers in local government to help shape the Welsh Government's emergency Coronavirus meeting regulations, which relaxed requirements on authorities, introduced flexibility in digital meetings and remote attendance and relaxed timings of AGMs and the '6 month rule' for members.</li> <li>• Through its lobbying around the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, the WLGA has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ resisted prescription and promoted flexibility and building on good practice;</li> <li>○ promoted the track-record of council collaboration, supported voluntary CJC's but has rejected the concept of mandation;</li> <li>○ secured some concessions and amendments in the Bill, including 'job sharing' and extended family absence provisions for councillors and removal of contentious chief executive performance management arrangements;</li> <li>○ undertaken initial work with professional groups to co-produce CJC regulations and wider Bill guidance in advance to ensure local government input and influence.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We responded to the WG consultation on <i>A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales</i>, calling for funds to be devolved to</li> </ul>

	local authorities working together regionally (and to the Welsh Affairs Committee on the Shared Prosperity Fund).
Promote collaborative local public service reform and ensure that the governance of regional services is democratically accountable and, wherever possible, streamlined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting mutual aid and a collective local government and partnership response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>Publication of Review of Strategic Partnerships (jointly with WG) which concluded no new partnerships should be set up without considering whether existing partnerships could deliver new functions and partnerships should be transparent and accountable.</li> <li>Ongoing member task and finish group One Voice Wales considering partnership working, asset transfers and place-based planning with community and town councils (progress impacted by COVID 19).</li> <li>Prior to lockdown WCVA, One Voice Wales and WLGA agreed a <a href="#">joint working protocol</a>, which has included the sharing of resources and knowledge in relation to <a href="#">volunteering</a> to support local working arrangements and partnership working including facilitating joint LA/CVC network and a webinar to share good practices.</li> </ul>
Develop and coordinate a new sector-led improvement and support programme, with an emphasis around digital, innovation and transformation, supporting good governance, coordinating peer support and a programme of peer challenge and review and provision of intensive corporate or service support to those authorities in most need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline sector-led improvement proposal and improvement grant agreed with Welsh Government (£800k, though progress and grant envelope impacted by COVID-19 and pro-rata expected in late 2020-21).</li> <li>Recruitment and appointment of Chief Digital Officer for Local Government (commencing November 2020).</li> <li>Co-production of draft Welsh Government guidance around proposed new duties of self-assessment and panel assessment.</li> <li>Provision of advice and improvement support to several authorities facing corporate or service challenges.</li> <li>Working with LGA in developing and promoting peer challenge offer, including participation in the first corporate peer challenge in Wales (in Pembrokeshire) for 5 years.</li> <li>Facilitated good practice exchange through the transformation network, including the annual Service Transformation</li> </ul>

	Development Days (03/04 Oct 2019) which included over 150 participants.
Encourage a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity and enhanced democratic engagement and supporting councillors' development and training through an expanded sector-led improvement programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production of COVID 19 guide for councillors and circulation of COVID-19 e-bulletin to all councillors three times per week (daily during the early period of the pandemic).</li> <li>Support and guidance to councils and councillors around remote attendance and digital meetings.</li> <li>Convened a cross party member 'diversity in democracy' working group to address barriers and promote action and improvement in diversity; launched the <a href="https://www.beacouncillor.wales/">https://www.beacouncillor.wales/</a> website with the working group report to be presented to Council in Autumn 2020. Provided support to Welsh Government's Diversity in Democracy Phase 2 plans, the national Democratic Renewal programme and supporting mentoring programmes via EYST and WEN.</li> <li>Development of the Pan UK Civility in Public Life campaign, with LGA, COSLA and NILGA, including production of the joint WLGA/LGA Councillors' Guide on Handling Intimidation.</li> <li>Extensive engagement and involvement in Welsh Government convened COVID BAME work, including participation in the BAME Advisory Group and Socio-Economic Sub Group and the audit of statues and monuments.</li> <li>Liaison with Welsh Government on development of Socio-Economic Public Sector Equality Duty, including development of guidance and resources for authorities.</li> <li>supported local authorities through the Member Development networks and continued to promote and provide member development and support to councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>awarding 3 councils with renewed Charters for Member Support and Development</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ delivering 11 workshops to 135 members, all with positive feedback.</li> <li>○ 14 confidential coaching sessions to 5 members and provision of bespoke wellbeing support to leaders during COVID-19.</li> <li>○ Delivery of 2 Leadership Academy Modules to 45 members (final module of second programme due to be delivered remotely).</li> </ul>
<p>Support authorities to effectively manage their workforce through our role as the Employers' Organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WLGA has represented local authorities at strategic meetings of the Workforce Partnership Council and Shadow Social Partnership Council, ensuring effective communications with Welsh Government Ministers and officials.</li> <li>● Meetings of the Joint Council for Wales and its Executive Committee have been facilitated to support effective social partnership working between local authorities and trade unions.</li> <li>● Provided support for the HR Directors Network.</li> <li>● Workforce advice, guidance and information has been provided regularly to all local authorities, including acting as a link to the LGA's Employment Team.</li> <li>● Schools Social Partnership Forum has been established to enable schools and local authority employer representatives to discuss schools workforce matters directly with trade unions and Welsh Government officials.</li> <li>● All of the foregoing mechanisms have been employed in a much more frequent and intense manner to support local authorities during the COVID-19 emergency.</li> </ul>
<p>Deliver a Brexit Support Programme to local authorities and continue to engage with the other local government associations and Welsh and UK Governments to ensure local government interests are heard and met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funding secured to enable network of EU Transition officers in LAs to continue (c£45K per LA), EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) support and food poverty grants.</li> <li>● Liaison with Home Office, Welsh Government, LAs and support groups over take-up of EUSS.</li> </ul>

- Work commissioned on (i) implications for Wales of a no trade deal or slim FTA between UK and EU (ii) update 'dashboards' for each LA and (iii) updated checklist.
- Monthly meetings of Local Government (EU) Preparedness Panel (joint Welsh Government and LA senior level officer group).
- Spokesperson attendance at WG's EU Advisory Group meetings.

## Finance

### *Financial reform and fair funding for local services*

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2019-20
<p>Lobby for fair and sustainable funding for local public services including evidenced pressures and new responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved the best settlement outcomes in over 12 years with an uplift of £184m (4.3%) in core grant and specific grants protected.</li> <li>• Worked with SWT and Welsh Government to reprofile £0.5bn of RSG payments and business rates relief and grant funding so that cash flow position eased and £1.6bn flowed to LAs in the first 2 weeks of April 2020.</li> <li>• Secured an additional £0.5bn worth of funding for covid-related pressures and associated income loss with SWT and Finance Sub-Group.</li> <li>• Worked with Business Wales, Welsh Government, SWT and other officer groups to deliver over 64,000 Business Support Grants worth over £770m; over 1600 Business Start Up Grants worth £4.25m.</li> <li>• Child Care Providers Grants worth £4.5m to allow all providers to reopen safely; Freelancers Grant worth £7m scheme to support the creative arts sector.</li> <li>• Ongoing discussions with Business Wales and Welsh Government on Local Lockdown Grants worth a potential £60m for business specifically impacted by the latest local lockdown restrictions.</li> <li>• Secured funding for LAs' EU transition-related work (as above).</li> <li>• Secured £2.5m for additional enforcement capacity for Covid compliance work.</li> </ul>
<p>Promote greater financial freedoms and flexibilities for councils within a longer-term financial framework and seek a commitment to permanently remove the 'voluntary' council tax cap.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued pressures on Welsh Government to address multiyear settlements.</li> <li>• Joint approach with LGA, COSLA and NILGA on medium-term financial planning.</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to work towards the transfer of specific grants into</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over £53m in specific grant funding was transferred into the settlement relating to</li> </ul>

Revenue Support Grant and timely financial announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>schools pressures in relation to teachers pay, pensions and other grants.</li> <li>Ongoing dialogue with WG over transfer of the remaining Sustainable Waste Management Grant into the RSG (linked to discussions on Extended Producer Responsibility).</li> </ul>
Seek greater powers for councils to explore other sources of income, including taxation and fees and charges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured local government membership on the 'Paying for Social Care' group that influences the Ministerial Programme Board.</li> <li>Working with Wales Fiscal Analysis on wider issues of fiscal devolution.</li> </ul>
Lobby the UK Government and support authorities to ensure that welfare reforms are fair on our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing work with DWP and Welsh Government on Universal Credit.</li> <li>Worked with Welsh Government on the Oversight Group to produce 'Impact of Universal Credit on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and rent arrears in Wales'.</li> </ul>

# Schools, Skills and Lifelong Learning

*National education standards delivered at a local level*

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2019-20
Supporting councils' response to COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Produced regular briefings on COVID-19 and education related issues for elected members.</li><li>Produced more detailed briefings on specific issues such as free school meals and schools re-opening to inform Leaders' discussions with Ministers.</li><li>In partnership with the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) and Welsh Government we have developed guidance documents: hub guidance and operational guidance for schools and settings for from the autumn term.</li><li>Provided written evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people to the Senedd Children, Young People and Education Committee.</li><li>Supported LAs in developing and delivering alternative free school meals provision whilst schools were closed during lock down.</li><li>Held regular bilateral and cabinet member meetings with the Education Minister to discuss COVID-19 related issues including qualifications and exams for 2020 and 2021.</li><li>Procured face coverings for all secondary pupils across Wales.</li></ul>
Ensure that local government plays a full role working with partners on the national mission to raise standards in schools and improve outcomes for learners, including the new national curriculum for Wales as it develops;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provided written and oral evidence on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill to the Senedd Children, Young People and Education Committee.</li><li>Formally agreed that we would work with a range of partners on the National Mission: The Chief Executive of the WLGA, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Education in Wales and the Head of Education for the Welsh Government signed joint letters to local authorities and schools emphasising</li></ul>

	<p>the intention to work together on this key initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged through a number of strategic groups set up with the Welsh Government, primarily the Change Board and Strategic Education Delivery Group: These have involved a number of partners from schools, colleges and higher education, local authorities (through ADEW), Estyn, the Education Workforce Council, bodies managing examinations and others.</li> <li>Participated in four initial regional events with Welsh Government to outline thinking to elected members, and seek their views. These sessions were well received, and more were to be planned, though events subsequently mean that this may have stalled temporarily.</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to support investment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme, and contribute towards refining the model;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme is a major partnership between the WLGA, local authorities and the Welsh Government.</li> <li>Band A of the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme represents a £1.4 billion investment over the five year period ended 2018/19.</li> <li>All 22 local authorities have benefitted from this major schools improvement programme, which has supported the building and refurbishment of over 150 schools and colleges.</li> <li>The programme is jointly funded by Welsh Government using a combination of capital and revenue funding. At the outset of the, programme authorities were required to provide 50% of the funding but the WLGA has lobbied successfully to reduce the local authority contribution for Band B to 35% and to increase the WG contribution to 65%.</li> <li>The WLGA has also represented local authority interests in the development of the revenue funded Mutual Investment Model (MIM) with an 81% - 19% funding split.</li> </ul>
<p>Provide support to councils in securing full flexibility and local determination for their own and schools' budgets;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WLGA has always argued for schools to be funded through the RSG and for a reduction in specific grants so as to provide</li> </ul>

	<p>as much flexibility as possible in school funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During this period the WLGA has continued to lobby the Welsh Government and Senedd on these issues and focused on the work of the <i>Children, Young People and Education Committee</i>'s inquiry into the sufficiency of school funding in Wales.</li> <li>WLGA provided evidence to the Committee in partnership with ADEW, and following the publication of its report in July 2019 has worked closely with the Committee and the Welsh Government in taking the recommendations forward.</li> <li>WLGA contributed to the Welsh Government review of school spending across Wales.</li> </ul>
<p>Work with new bodies and systems set up to manage and oversee the determination of teacher's pay and conditions in Wales;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input of regular educational and HR expertise into the devolved processes for determining teachers' pay in Wales.</li> </ul>
<p>Seek to work with and guide Welsh Government in its desire to support schools causing concern, by encouraging each part of the system - schools, local authorities and consortia – to play an appropriate role in schools making and sustaining progress;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively working with partners to expand this discussion and debate how best to identify the roles played by all involved – schools, local authorities and their regional services, and Estyn – and ensure that each partner understands the roles they play, and work together to avoid duplication of effort and wasting resources.</li> <li>In the case of schools causing concern, that partnership has begun to shift so that the school itself is involved in plans and actions to move it forward, and</li> <li>the involvement of elected members is acknowledged as a key one.</li> </ul> <p>In the case of schools causing concern, that partnership has begun to shift so that the school itself is involved in plans and actions to move it forward, and the involvement of elected members is acknowledged as a key one.</p>
<p>Contribute towards pupil wellbeing and promote it as a priority for schools and local authorities through WLGA initiatives including those relating to healthy eating and school holiday enrichment programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SHEP has helped coordinate 76 schemes and 3680 SHEP places in 21 local authorities and delivery in 3 special schools plus 1 to 1 support in 4 Local Authorities (74 learners).</li> <li>Data from 68 schemes indicates approx. 21,106 attendances over 12 days of SHEP.</li> </ul>

<p>(SHEP), as well as aspects of youth support service work;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition Skills for Life Training provided to 96 SHEP school staff.</li> <li>• 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' toolkit developed as a resource for school SHEP staff.</li> <li>• The WLGA, through Equalities Cabinet Members and with ADEW, have successfully made the case for additional local government input and greater flexibility in the use of WG's period poverty funding. The WLGA is also represented on the Deputy Minister's Period Dignity Roundtable and Taskforce in order to influence the draft Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan to address sustainability and environmental concerns (due in Autumn 2020).</li> <li>• Produced report <i>Healthy eating implications of school break times for 11 to 19-year-olds in Wales</i>.</li> <li>• Maintained termly Regional Special Diets in Schools Working Group meetings.</li> <li>• Recruited National Dietitian for Special Diets in Schools.</li> <li>• Established and maintained termly Regional Food in Schools Meetings to discuss food in schools issues and share information.</li> <li>• Continued to support and advise LAs and schools regarding healthy eating in schools and provided certificates for compliance with the regulations.</li> <li>• Supported and promoted various healthy eating initiatives and campaigns.</li> <li>• Established regular online Food in Schools meetings to discuss COVID-19 free school meals responses and recovery of the school catering service in Wales.</li> <li>• Supported LA catering services with COVID-19 related issues.</li> <li>• Worked with Welsh Government officials on introducing increased flexibilities (as a result of Covid) to the Youth Support Grant.</li> <li>• Participated on the Whole School Approach Stakeholder Group.</li> <li>• Contributed to discussions regarding themes and content for the Welsh Government's Youth Work Newsletter, and worked with LA's to submit case studies for the WLGA Covid-19 Good Practice section of the website.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represented the Youth Service on the T4CYP Early Help &amp; Enhanced Support work-stream.</li> <li>• Commissioned 3 Trauma Recovery Model courses from the Trauma Recovery Academy, contributing to a trauma informed Youth Workforce.</li> <li>• Worked with the ACE Hub on delivering ACE's training (and developing accredited modules) to the youth workforce.</li> <li>• Worked with Wales Youth Service in regard to the well-being standard in the revised Youth Work National Occupational Standards (NOS).</li> <li>• Drafted and submitted PYOG responses to Mind Over Matter and the Whole School Approach Consultations.</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to monitor and scrutinise legislation and funding in relation to children with additional learning needs (ALN).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly raised ALN funding at meetings with Welsh Government, at political and official level; engaged through the Distribution Sub Group on the transfer of post-16 specialist funding to LAs under the ALN Act; maintained regular dialogue with partners on the detail of implementation of the Act.</li> </ul>

# Health and Social Care

*Ensuring good quality and sustainable social care services for the future*

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2019-20
Supporting councils' response to COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Produced regular briefings on COVID-19 and social care related issues for Elected Members.</li><li>Produced more detailed briefings on specific issues such as care homes, testing and care and support to inform Leaders' discussions with Ministers.</li><li>In partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Services in Wales (ADSS Cymru), the National Commissioning Board, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Social Care Wales (SCW) and the Welsh Government, we have developed guidance to support local authority commissioners.</li><li>Provided written and oral evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on health and social care to the Senedd Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.</li><li>Provided written evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people to the Senedd Children, Young People and Education Committee.</li><li>Responded to a rapid consultation on amendments made to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act by the Coronavirus Act.</li><li>Contributed to the Rapid Review of Care Homes undertaken by Welsh Government.</li><li>Contributed to the rapid development of COVID-19 guidance and processes, e.g. on funding, testing, PPE and care home visits.</li><li>Represented the views and shared the experiences of local authorities on how the pandemic is impacting on social care related issues with Welsh Government and partners.</li><li>Held regular bilaterals and cabinet member meetings with the Health and Social Services Minister to discuss COVID-19 related issues.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured funding for additional expenditure through the Hardship Fund for Social Care.</li> </ul>
Enable local government's input and contribution to Welsh Government's research and policy development on how best to secure long-term sustainable funding for social care services in Wales and feed into the LGA's campaigning activities to share learning and ensure consistency of core messages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WLGA Spokesperson and officers are key members in the Welsh Government Paying for Care group, established to look at the long-term and sustainable funding of social care in Wales.</li> <li>WLGA officers fed into LE Wales commissioned work to model costs associated with the potential uses of additional resources raised through a social care levy or other options currently being considered by WG.</li> <li>Provided regular updates and briefings from officers to cabinet members and spokespeople, with 'paying for care' a frequent agenda item for discussion with Ministers both in bilaterals and through the WLGA's Social Care &amp; Wellbeing Cabinet Members Network. A focused meeting was held with the Minister for Health and Social Services to facilitate a technical briefing from Welsh Government and an update on progress of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Paying for Social Care, enabling members to help influence and shape the agenda and priorities.</li> <li>Responded to the LGA's consultation on their Green Paper on Adult Social Care (the response was agreed and endorsed by WLGA Council). WLGA continues to support the work the LGA is undertaking in highlighting the critical state of social care services and in seeking UK Government commitment to developing a long-term sustainable solution for funding social care.</li> </ul>
Continue to support implementation of <i>A Healthier Wales</i> , a ten-year plan aimed at transforming and increasing the pace and scale of integration across social care and health, and including other relevant local government services such as housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued our membership of and contribution to the Transformation Board overseeing the implementation of <i>A Healthier Wales</i>.</li> <li>WLGA Spokespeople and Cabinet Members for Social Services are in regular, on-going dialogue with Welsh Government Ministers through the WLGA Social Care &amp; Wellbeing Cabinet Members Network, aimed at supporting local political leadership in taking forward the plan and transforming</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>services. They are supported by regular updates and briefings produced by officers.</li> <li>Hosted a joint seminar with the Welsh NHS Confederation focussed on how Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) have used the funding available through Welsh Government's Transformation Fund to support the development of and scale up new models of seamless health and social care and the delivery of <i>A Healthier Wales</i>.</li> <li>WLGA Spokesperson for Social Services and Health chairs the <i>Building a Healthier Wales</i> Programme Board, aiming to focus on preventative measures and addressing the wider determinants of health.</li> </ul>
<p>Work with Public Health Wales in highlighting local government's contribution to addressing the wider determinants of health through <i>Building a Healthier Wales</i> and the provision of preventative services provided by local authorities, and continue to convene Cymru Well Wales which aims to tackle the issues that contribute most towards poor health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Wellbeing and Prevention Officer has been recruited to expand capacity to provide specialist advice and support on all aspects of wellbeing and good practice and encourage an increased focus on prevention and early intervention services and their interface with health bodies and tackling health inequalities.</li> <li>Continue to work with Public Health Wales to address the wider determinants of health, with key links made and regular meetings between WLGA and PHW officers. Joint leadership is demonstrated with <i>Cymru Well Wales</i> and <i>Building a Healthier Wales</i>.</li> </ul>
<p>Support local authorities in responding to and implementing Ministerial priorities for social services, including rebalancing the care market to improve its resilience and sustainability and safely reducing the number of Looked After Children in the care of local authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had regular dialogue with Ministers and Cabinet Members through bilaterals and the Social Care &amp; Wellbeing Cabinet Members Network on a range of issues.</li> <li>WLGA facilitated a Cabinet Member learning event on issues in relation to children looked after. The event focussed on examining current research in relation to children looked after and sharing examples from LA's about what they are doing now and what services / approaches are being developed to enable sharing of good practice and learning across LA's.</li> <li>WLGA officers are part of the ADSS Project Leadership Group, which took forward a workstream examining the feasibility of rebalancing the care sector in Wales. Cabinet Members were kept informed and</li> </ul>

	<p>engaged in this work through regular updates and briefings, with specific meetings held with the project leads to help influence and shape the reports.</p>
Work closely with our social care partners and professional groups (Solace Cymru, Association of Directors of Social Services in Wales (ADSS Cymru) and Social Care Wales) to strengthen the voice of local government and to identify and highlight common issues of concern and/or improved ways of working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WLGA established a social care network group with membership from WLGA, ADSS Cymru and SOLACE to help strengthen links across organisations and partners.</li> <li>• ADSS Cymru represented at WLGA Social Care &amp; Wellbeing Cabinet Members Network.</li> <li>• Social Care Wales a key partner that is invited to provide regular updates through the Cabinet Members Network.</li> <li>• Joint submissions to consultations and inquiries as necessary to help identify and highlight common issues of concern and/or improved ways of working.</li> </ul>

# Housing and Community Safety

*Creating good quality homes and safer communities for people to live and work*

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2019-20
Supporting councils' response to COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Contributed to the rapid development of guidance covering a wide range of emerging housing and homelessness issues e.g. Managing Challenging Behaviour in Temporary Accommodation.</li><li>Provided briefings on housing and homelessness issues for elected members and officers.</li><li>Given evidence to the Senedd Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on the impacts of the pandemic on housing and homelessness.</li><li>Negotiated and agreed principles around support for social housing tenants at risk of financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.</li><li>Represented the views and shared the experiences of authorities on how the pandemic is impacting on community safety related issues to Welsh Government and partners.</li><li>Worked with local authorities, National Trading Standards and partners in highlighting the threat from scams during the pandemic.</li><li>Contributed to the development and dissemination of a guide published by the Older People's Commissioner's Office providing guidance to local authorities and partner agencies on how to protect older people from abuse during the pandemic.</li></ul>
Work with local authorities and Welsh Government in implementing relevant recommendations from the <i>Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply</i> in Wales, including supporting and enabling increased plans for building council houses across Wales and influencing the rent policy for forthcoming years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Participated in a number of workstreams established to develop detailed implementation arrangements for Affordable Housing Supply Review recommendations, including revised Social Housing Grant arrangements which will make grants available directly to local authorities to support the delivery of new homes.</li><li>Supported the establishment and operation of Council Housing Development Forum, which supports Welsh councils to build new council homes at pace and scale, which contribute</li></ul>

	<p>towards the overall achievement of the target of 20,000 additional affordable homes during the current Senedd term as set out in the <i>Housing Pact</i> agreed between WLGA, Welsh Government and Community Housing Cymru.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiated and agreed additional conditions for social landlords, which supported the announcement by Welsh Government of a 5 year rent policy for social housing from 2020/21 onwards.</li> </ul>
<p>Contribute to the development and implementation of an action plan on the decarbonisation of existing homes which will follow the current Welsh Government-led review, including identifying resource implications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributed as a member of the Decarbonisation of Homes in Wales Advisory Group, which submitted a report to Welsh Government on reducing carbon emissions in Welsh homes by 2050.</li> <li>• Participated as a member of the Decarbonisation of Homes Implementation Group, established by Welsh Government to take forward the recommendations of the independent review on decarbonising Welsh homes.</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to contribute to on-going work to improve building safety following the findings of the Hackitt Review and work with local authorities and other partners in implementing the findings and recommendations of the Building Safety Expert Group following Welsh Governments' response on the way forward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing to Welsh Government led review examining options around how a joint Building Safety Inspection team with multiple disciplines (Building Control, Environmental Health and FRS) could work in Wales, with associated benefits and risks.</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to highlight and support the work of local authorities in tackling and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping and ensure other services understand their contribution to the need for 'whole system support' which is required to support those at risk of homelessness and those who sleep rough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Cabinet Member learning event focussing on tackling and preventing homelessness was held in November 2019.</li> <li>• Contributed as a member of the Homeless Action Group, which produced reports and recommendations which focussed on short and longer-term actions to tackle and prevent rough sleeping, and the framework of policies and approaches needed to end homelessness in Wales.</li> <li>• Regular dialogue with Minister and Cabinet Members through bilaterals and the Housing Cabinet Members Network on a range of homelessness and other housing issues.</li> </ul>

<p>Work closely with local authorities and policing in Wales to support and enhance the coherence and planning of community safety work at local and regional levels and in addressing national strategies and priorities through their local arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributed to Welsh Government's Review of Community Safety work in Wales through membership of its Programme Board and leading a workstream.</li> <li>The WLGA jointly funds a Safer Communities Programme Manager with Policing in Wales to support the leadership role of local government and policing in supporting CSPs to be more effective.</li> <li>Established a Safer Communities Board for Wales, in partnership with Policing in Wales, which is to provides leadership, oversight and direction to a joint programme between local government and policing in Wales, involving other partners, with the aim of ensuring effective shared leadership is provided to support local partnership working that will support safe, strong and more confident communities.</li> <li>Continue to support Community Safety Officers through regular updates on community safety and related issues.</li> <li>WLGA has established a forum for Police and Crime Panel Chairs, Vice Chairs and lead officers to meet, share common issues and priorities and to provide a common voice for Panels in Wales.</li> </ul>
<p>Work with the Fire and Rescue Authorities and Welsh Government to take forward agreed actions aimed at improving their current governance, financial and performance management arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consulted with local authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and drafted a response to the White Paper on proposals for the future governance and finances of FRAs, highlighting significant concerns. Continued to engage with Welsh Government and FRAs on the way forward, including brokering agreement on potential solutions.</li> <li>Continued to facilitate the WLGA Fire and Rescue Forum as an opportunity to discuss a range of shared priorities, including fire governance, fire and building safety, and finance pressures.</li> <li>Represented the views of local government and the FRAs at national meetings such as Welsh Government's Fire and Rescue Consultative Forum and Chairs and Chiefs Meetings.</li> </ul>

# Regeneration and a Resilient Environment

*Local councils supporting inclusive growth locally, regionally and nationally and promoting a resilient environment for future generations*

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2019-20
Supporting councils' response to COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developed an ambitious Economic Stimulus proposal, outlining a community-based, local government-led post COVID-19 recovery. The £750m package covering major capital infrastructure investment has been submitted to Welsh Government and several proposals have been incorporated within the Counsel General's Reconstruction programme.</li><li>Worked with LAs to co-ordinate the reopening of Household Waste Recycling Centres following the UK-wide lockdown.</li><li>Liaised with Welsh Government, LAs and trade unions over safe working conditions for waste operatives.</li><li>Co-ordinated input from LAs into Welsh Government to inform guidance on the safe reopening of town centres ('Safer Places'), public conveniences, bars and restaurants, playgrounds and tourist attractions.</li><li>Liaised with Economic Development Teams over their contribution to administering business support grants (see Finance section for detail).</li><li>Worked with Welsh Government, LAs (ATCO) and the Confederation of Passenger Transport to provide support to bus and coach operators to sustain operations whilst passenger numbers plummeted.</li><li>Input into discussions on the post-COVID future of the bus service, including via a members' roundtable, presentations to Leaders and Chief Executives and participation on working group.</li><li>Input into Ministerial Working Group on helping recovery of Town Centres.</li><li>Input into planning of school transport arrangements to support the reopening of schools.</li><li>Produced a guide on planning for holiday home and caravan park owners seeking to apply to extend the season.</li></ul>

<p>Continue to lobby for local government input into the development and implementation of Welsh Government's Economic Action Plan for Wales, bringing together regional proposals with national objectives and supporting the City Deals and Growth Bids.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint work with the Programme Offices for the four City Deal/Growth Deal regions to facilitate sharing of positions on national issues.</li> <li>Lobbying for one set of regional plans in each region, so Welsh Government's Regional Economic Frameworks are brought together with the plans of LAs in each region.</li> <li>Working with officers in all four regions as Regional Recovery Plans are developed in response to COVID-19.</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to work through the Rural Forum in championing the needs and priorities of Wales' rural communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seven meetings of the WLGA Rural Forum held and a Conference in September 2019, including meetings with a range of Ministers.</li> <li>Joint work between the Rural Forum and Aberystwyth University to develop a rural vision and Rural Recovery Plan to feed into Manifesto for 2021 Senedd elections.</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to lobby for Wales' fair share of post-EU funding and the devolution of any replacement UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies to support local authorities' regional partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in WG's Regional Investment for Wales (RIfW) group, preparing for the management of replacement EU funding.</li> <li>Input to the work by OECD on multi-level governance to inform way future funding is managed.</li> <li>Responses submitted to RIfW consultation by WG and Welsh Affairs Committee consultation on Shared Prosperity Fund.</li> </ul>
<p>Lobby to ensure that Extended Producer Responsibility, and any Deposit Return Scheme proposals, maintain local authority control over collections and revenue raised and support a major waste behaviour change public campaign</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response submitted to joint UKG/WG consultation on EPR and DRS (May 2019).</li> <li>Input to the '<i>Beyond Recycling</i>' consultation by WG on next phase of work towards zero waste.</li> <li>Working with WRAP on a major behaviour change campaign (<i>Be Mighty</i>).</li> </ul>
<p>Lobby for new ways of maintaining the highway network (including county and unadopted roads) through a long-term investment programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals for continuation of the current Highway Resurfacing programme included as part of Economic Stimulus package submitted to WG.</li> <li>£16.9m Resilient Roads Fund supported 18 schemes across 13 LAs to help mitigate impact and adapt to climate change (complemented by work with LAs on coastal erosion and flood prevention issues and necessary adaptation works).</li> <li>Joint WG/LA Task Force managed by WLGA undertook study of unadopted roads and</li> </ul>

	<p>produced report which was finalised in September 2020 for submission to Minister.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input to Task and Finish Groups on 20mph default speed limits and pavement parking bans – reports submitted for Deputy Minister.</li> <li>• Ongoing contribution to work of Active Travel (AT) Group chaired, until Sept 2020, by Deputy Minister (including work on repurposing of highways in town centres to facilitate socially distanced AT).</li> </ul>
<p>Ensure local government input to the new Transport Strategy for Wales, bringing together regional proposals with national objectives and pressing the case for existing regional transport arrangements to form the basis for any move towards Joint Transport Authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing liaison with WG over the emerging Transport Strategy.</li> <li>• Contribution to work to sustain bus and rail travel in the face of COVID, including work on reform of bus services, introduction of the Bus Emergency Scheme and involvement in work on Integrated Rapid Transport pilots.</li> <li>• Corporate Joint Committee proposals set to replace the plans for JTAs (in light of the Bus Bill not being progressed).</li> </ul>
<p>Support authorities' in promoting the resilience of ecosystems and contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions aiming for a carbon neutral public sector by 2030</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged in the Ministerial Roundtable progressing proposals for payment for ecosystem services as part of work on <i>Sustainable Farming and our Land</i>.</li> <li>• Working with WG on a Routemap for decarbonisation in the public sector and the establishment of Decarbonisation Strategy Panel.</li> <li>• Collation of good practice by LAs in relation to decarbonisation and submission of proposals for a decarbonisation support programme to Welsh Government.</li> <li>• Panel members of the WG Active Travel Board, ULEV waste vehicle project board</li> <li>• Support for LAs on Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (with associated biodiversity benefits).</li> </ul>
<p>Lobby for greater planning fee flexibility and ensure that local planning authorities have the necessary local powers and discretion around development plans to create sustainable places that reflect the needs of their communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following WLGA lobbying, WG announced a general increase of approximately 20% in fees for planning and related applications in August 2020.</li> <li>• Following lobbying for the ending of 'drop dead' dates for LDPs, Minister has issued letter clarifying that legislation is not retrospective, meaning LDPs will continue to have weight in the majority of LAs.</li> </ul>