

## Our impact April - September 2023

Earlier this year, we launched our new [corporate plan for 2023–24 to 2026–27](#), which sets out how we will support our members to sustain their communities while we continue to fight for the changes needed to achieve our collective vision of a Wales where good housing is a basic right for all.

As detailed in the plan, we have set four clear goals which we are confident will support our members to make the biggest difference to the people and places that they serve. These goals are:

1. [Secure the tools, funding and policy that supports good quality housing association homes.](#)
2. [Influence the policy environment so that housing associations can continue to provide homes that are affordable, and effectively support tenants facing financial hardship.](#)
3. [Promote trust in housing associations and support them to build strong partnerships locally.](#)
4. [Ensure that CHC is an agile and inclusive membership body and an exemplar employer.](#)

In this impact update, we have set out the major headlines from work that we have been doing over the past six months to progress towards achieving these goals. Where possible, each area has been mapped against the two key roles CHC plays in the housing sector: influencing on our members' behalf, and connecting them with experts, decision-makers and peers.



## **Our long term goal: secure the tools, funding and policy that supports good quality housing association homes**

### ***In the first six months of this year, we have influenced on our members' behalf to:***

- Secure a move from an unfunded 2033 target to reach EPC A in the draft WHQS, to a requirement for progress to decarbonise homes to be based on a planned and evidenced pathway from each landlord. We know that funding remains a challenge and we have obtained Welsh Government's commitment to work with the sector to develop a financing package in the future.
- Encourage a proportionate, evidence-based approach to concerns about disrepair, and, working with partners, ensure a coherent approach to supporting social landlords is taken.
- Ensure a clear understanding is developed of the extent of, and risk presented by, RAAC in social housing in Wales, working with Welsh Government and WLGA.
- See that the updated Standard Viability Model reflects increased costs and challenges to build homes in Wales.
- Working with Welsh Government, build a deeper understanding of progress against the 20,000 affordable homes target, and a pragmatic approach to removing barriers. This has included a new triage approach from the Welsh Government planning team; additional capacity to unlock sites that are stalled; and continuation of the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme grant for 2023–24.
- Share the sector's priorities for the 2024–25 Welsh Government budget through early engagement with the Senedd's Finance Committee.

### ***We have connected our members to:***

- Share learning and support housing associations' response to damp and mould through our disrepair task and finish group. This has included approaches to data, and communicating effectively with tenants via our work with TPAS Cymru. It has also informed our cross-partner approach to this issue.
- Share good practice to support good quality homes. This has included our asset management webinar series, a dedicated [disrepair website hub](#) and a decarbonisation strand at our One Big Housing conference.
- Share and discuss decarbonisation practice via a subject-specific LinkedIn group.
- Ensure you have the right advice and support via our Primary Fire Authority Scheme. This includes support in relation to guidance for walk-up flats.

### ***For the remainder of 2023–24 we will focus on:***

- Campaigning for the sector's funding priorities to Welsh Government, Members of the Senedd and political parties, to ultimately influence the 2024–25 Welsh Government budget.
- Rolling out our Board Member network, which will focus on health and safety as a priority issue.
- Building our understanding of data and assurance on disrepair, safety, and quality issues, and supporting effective assurance and reporting arrangements.
- Advocating for a sustainable funding model to ensure housing associations can invest in the decarbonisation of homes, and sharing what works to improve the energy efficiency of homes via our online programme.
- Ensuring that the implementation of WHQS 2023 is proportionate.
- Influencing the Net Zero Skills Action Plan so that it reflects the views and needs of the sector.
- Working with Welsh Government and partners to identify funding, policy and practice changes that support more social homes to be provided in Wales.



- Influencing the ongoing development of building safety legislation to ensure required activity is proportionate to the outlined risks.

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## **Our long term goal: influence the policy environment so that housing associations can continue to provide homes that are affordable, and effectively support tenants facing financial hardship**

### ***In the first six months of this year, we have influenced on our members' behalf to:***

- Raise the profile of the impact of the cost of living for tenants in Wales at a national level. This has included representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer - alongside our sister housing federations - for the creation of a social energy tariff, and providing evidence and support to Welsh ministers to amplify this call with Ofgem and UK Government.
- Develop a comprehensive analysis of the impact of a range of scenarios to inform this year's rent decision.
- Contribute to the Expert Review Panel, which has provided advice to the minister on legislative changes to end homelessness. This included securing recognition of housing associations' work to end evictions into homelessness; safeguards to avoid unintended consequences; and wider prevention and tenancy sustainment duties and tools to support a multi-agency approach to alleviating and preventing homelessness.
- Build a positive platform for engagement across partners about changes to the allocations system which reflect the views of housing associations, following our co-commissioned research with WLGA and Welsh Government.
- Demonstrate the impact of the cash-flat housing support grant settlement to Welsh Government, and provide an evidence base for the 2024–25 budget settlement, using evidence from the Housing Matters survey we ran with Cymorth Cymru.

### ***We have connected our members to:***

- Share tenant communications and engagement on rent setting, utilising TPAS Cymru as a critical friend to support continuous sharing of best practice.
- Engage with Welsh Government officials and share experiences and activities which have ensured affordability for tenants and prevented homelessness, with the aim of improving their understanding of these key areas.
- Provide opportunities to learn and share views on rapid rehousing and changes that would help to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

### ***For the remainder of 2023–24 we will focus on:***

- Securing a rent settlement for 24–25 with affordability and sustainability at its heart, and working with the sector to develop proposals for a longer term approach.
- Influencing legislative and policy proposals to ensure there is a proportionate expectation of housing associations' role in ending homelessness, accompanied by the resources to prevent homelessness - in particular, protecting investment in the Housing Support Grant.
- Publishing an updated evidence base of housing association activity to mitigate the cost of living, and campaigning for governments to mitigate financial hardship for tenants.

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## **Our long term goal: promote trust in housing associations and support them to build strong partnerships locally**

***In the first six months of this year, we have influenced on our members' behalf to:***

- Highlight the role and views of not-for-profit care providers as part of our engagement and response to the Rebalancing Care & Support consultation.
- Bolster our reach and connections within the Welsh media and sector press. Already, these enhanced relations have seen a move by trusted connections towards more accurately sharing the experiences of housing associations and their tenants.

***We have connected our members to:***

- Capture and showcase progress from housing associations in implementing Welsh Government's Race Equality Action Plan; and work with Tai Pawb to support dialogue between the Regulator and the housing sector in relation to the reporting of equality and diversity requirements within the regulatory framework.

***For the remainder of 2023–24 we will focus on:***

- Commissioning research to articulate the pressures on not-for-profit care providers and opportunities for reform.
- Continuing to strengthen relationships with Welsh media outlets and proactively identify opportunities to highlight the role that housing associations play in Welsh society.
- Reviewing and, if necessary, refreshing our key governing documents, including the code of governance.
- Campaigning for a long-term approach to meet our vision of a Wales where good housing is a basic right for all, and addressing the cumulative barriers that stand in the way of progress.

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## **Our long term goal: ensure that CHC is an agile and inclusive membership body and an exemplar employer**

### ***In the first six months of this year, we:***

- Refreshed and expanded our member services based on your views and feedback. 21 of our members contributed to our consultation, in addition to feedback from a range of members over 2022–23. Find out more about our newly enhanced service offer, and how you can get involved [here](#).
- Welcomed 142 delegates from 22 of our members to our One Big Housing Conference in July. 85% of those who provided feedback said they would attend next year.
- Ran a full programme of engagement opportunities and events for our members. This included 9 online events, 10 Strategic Delivery Group meetings, and our first Member Community meet up. Overall, colleagues and board members from all 34 of our housing associations engaged with our events in over 700 instances.
- Signed seven new [commercial partners](#) who are currently supporting the sector in Wales. Each commercial partner brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in their specialist area to support our members.
- Evolved our internal structure to better represent, and provide services to our members. We have also invested in more resources to influence on your behalf, and simplified the way we work to better allocate resources to the areas that need them.
- Began investing in our governance and are now busy delivering against our governance review action plan.

### ***Over the remainder of 2023/24 we will focus on:***

- Implementing and monitoring the impact of our new service offer for members.
- Developing our events calendar including our Annual and Governance conferences.
- Maximising the value our members receive from our commercial partnerships.
- Increasing the accessibility and visibility of our content for members.
- Delivering against our EDI strategy and Race Equality Action Plan.
- Preparing for forthcoming Welsh language standards.
- Publishing a new fee model.
- Publishing a range of research findings, including HR data and our Global Accounts.

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