



CHC Housing Directors Network notes

Date: 24/01/17

Venue: Taff Housing Association, Cardiff

Attendance:

Organisation	Name
1. Bron Afon Community Housing	Ian Simpson
2. Cardiff Community housing Association	Matt Thomas
3. Charter Housing	Stephen Evans
4. Charter Housing & Derwen Cymru	Scott Sanders
5. Community Housing Cymru	Carly Dix
6. Community Housing Cymru	Hugh Russell
7. Cynon Taf Community Housing Group	Kevin Barry
8. First Choice Housing Association	Donna Lloyd-Williams
9. Hafod Housing Association	Richard McQuillan
10. Melin Homes	Justin Wigmore
11. Merthyr Valleys Homes	Victoria Slade
12. Monmouthshire Housing Association	Michele Morgan
13. Newport City Homes	Sharon Wilkins
14. Newydd Housing	Joanne Carter
15. Pobl Group	Andrew Vye
16. Rhondda HA	Luke Takeuchi
17. Tai Ceredigion	Eleri Jenkins
18. Trivallis	Bob Granville
19. United Welsh	Elaine Elkington
20. United Welsh	Sue Robinson
21. Wales & West Housing	Steve Porter

Apologies:

Organisation	Name
Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd	Enid Roberts
Cartrefi Conwy	Claire Shiland
Coastal Housing Group	Serena Jones
Derwen Cymru	Ian Bell
Monmouthshire Housing Association	David Morris
NPT Homes	Claire Maimone
Taff Housing Association	Hayley Selway
Tai Ceredigion	Neil Moffatt



Introduction:

Scott Sanders welcomed attendees, particularly those new to Wales, and explained that the theme of the day would be an examination of Welsh Government activity of interest to the network.

Under 35s:

Steve Evans gave an update on the issues raised in the first meeting of the Welsh Government working group (see minutes of this group for details).

Hugh Russell gave an update on the work coming from this network to collect data on the number of under 35s likely to be impacted by welfare reform:

- Initial plans to get trial of data collection survey underway have been slowed down following issues with LA data storage
- Agreed to trial with the HAs on the group (Charter, Melin, Bron Afon) ASAP
- Couple of areas for amendment on the form were highlighted (space for info on LAs turning people away, provide room for respondents to add in data they have collected which would be of interest).

Ian Simpson gave an update on Bron Afon's pilot of allocations/ support options for under 35s, which will run until the end of March (see slides for more information)/

Discussion followed, key points of which included:

- No additional resources have gone into Bron Afon's pilot
- Steve Porter noted that Wales and West have a theoretically financially successful model – 5 bed HMO in Grangetown. They'll make enough from this to cover the housing management. Working on the property currently to run it later. Cardiff supporting with the capital cost.
- Standards and development – need flexibility (issue addressed by WG later)
- Expectation management – Anna Whalen has been working with LAs on the positive pathway, which will help to ensure young people move into appropriate accommodation (see <http://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/services-and-support/homelessness/youth-homelessness/?lang=en>)
- Branding of YP-specific housing – are we looking at this? Offer has to be 'more than accommodation' – Suggestion of linking with university housing teams; United Welsh are looking to move into this shared housing model.
- Key worker accommodation is also something to consider – Elaine Elkington: hospitals are interested in making this kind of housing work
- Pobl – have 4,000 student properties
- Andrew Vye noted that reconfiguring supported accommodation for this audience is an area for investigation.



Homelessness Cooperation:

Hugh Russell introduced the group to the annual review process formulated by the Welsh Government's Homelessness Cooperation group (on which also sit Aidan Ackerman of MWA, Hayley Selway of Taff, Andrew Myatt of Tai Calon, and Nick Read of Gwalia). Discussion of the form to be used for these reviews followed. Ian Simpson, who had previously been part of the group, provided some insight into how we had reached this point and the constructive intent of the process.

Hugh noted that one pilot review had taken place (Swansea and Gwalia, with positive results) and that a second was due to take place shortly thereafter (Torfaen and Bron Afon), with a likely introduction of the review process as part of the Welsh Government's amended LA Homelessness Guidance document this summer.

Hugh updated the group on the progress of the response to Shelter Cymru's recent report. The group noted their dissatisfaction with the blanket approach to isolated examples of poor practice, though it was conceded that there are clearly some areas which could be improved.

Welsh Government Update

Kath Palmer – Deputy Director of the Homes and Places Division of Welsh Government

Kath introduced herself as being responsible for housing supply, housing standards, vibrant and viable places. Key points from her presentation:

Kath noted that the pact with CHC and WLGA informs her department's approach and gave background to the department's structure (which she said she'll circulate).

Social Housing Grant: additional money provided – unsure about whether all of that can be taken up. Her department are looking at interest free loans. She said that there is a lot of SHG available for the next two years, working on year after that. Over a billion available for housing supply.

European Investment Bank: She had recently met with the European Investment Bank who are keen to lend money. They noted that they would lend to HAs for retrofit of energy efficient homes. They're very keen on the low carbon agenda. Not a dealbreaker when applying to them for funding, but would strengthen bids. Very quick timescales – get it before we're out of Europe!

Rent to Own: new programme to be launched soon (working group overseeing it)

- 2 strands:
 - o Move from PRS into a house you'll buy in the future (2/3 years down the line) – so that individual has a clear intent to purchase. Person pays market rent, landlord keeps 20% of rent aside as deposit (though this stays with the house, not the buyer)
 - o Shared Ownership – Council of Mortgage Lenders want a national scheme which their lenders can sign up to – rented and shared ownership options- CML want consistent approach as per the Rent to Buy scheme.
 - o Potentially both will have grant allocated to them, details TBC, though WG preference is for loans ideally.

Innovative Design programme: Carl wants tenants to have no fuel bills and will launch a programme designed, in part, to achieve this at an event on 09/02 where speakers who've built these houses who'll talk about how they



achieved it. See event invitation attached (N.B. these have already been sent to Chief Execs and Tech Services). WG accept that this may cost more, until we can achieve economies of scale

The programme will have 2 strands:

- Funding for short term, flexible housing for e.g. the under 35s. Lower cost, 30 year lifespans. Live/Work type housing, containers, etc.
- Future generations housing – long term, sustainable, low or positive energy bills

Housing, Health and Social Care: Looking at whether we can join up with the Intermediate Care Fund Kath's department has successfully bid for £10million capital per year for rest of government.

Additional £60 million potentially for integrated solutions for Housing, Health and Social Care.

Rob Smith of Linc Cymru is chair of one of the groups working with Kath to develop this. Scott also sits on one of these.

A discussion followed:

- DQR – doesn't fit with short term housing – still being debated – energy efficiency is a key consideration.
- Query about whether container housing needs grant: unlikely, but for land, possibly
- There are planning issues which may prevent u35s' housing being built. Kath stated that overcoming these was on the to-do list. Hugh noted that CHC were drafting a report exploring land and planning concerns and offering constructive solutions.
- Kath noted a proposal that had come into her as an 'affordable PRS' scheme – combination of RSL and PRS as an interesting approach which overcomes some of the issues pure social housing would raise.
- Bob Granville asked whether an Innovation Park was planned? A 'safe space' where WG own the land, so planning isn't an issue, and multiple landlords can throw up various ideas and see how they work out. Kath suggested that a similar site at Ebbw Vale site was not a success, and that Karl wants to meet housing need ASAP, but likes the idea in principle and noted an example in Scotland
- Andrew Vye raised a concern about 'silting up' of Swansea's supported housing so using this innovation fund for '2nd stage' housing will help.
- Luke Tacheuchi raised the Valleys Taskforce – Duncan on programme board – focus on younger people's housing and key workers' accommodation – taskforce will go out and engage with people. WG aware of issues of rent – social rent higher than PRS at the tops of the valleys. JRF will examine valleys housing. Incentivising house builders to go into tops of valleys may follow and links with metro system will be key.
- VVP – WG are looking at shortening high streets – increases footfall, more space for housing
- Rent Policy – bids back early February. Report on Rents due at Xmas.
- The following question was put to Kath: How do we promote our good practice and avoid the issue of isolated poor practice leading to 'kneejerk' formation of working groups, etc.?
 - She does a Weekly Brief to Carl but often has no time to fill it in! (*not discussed at the time but presumably this is an opportunity to promote key work via Kath*)
 - Community Benefits – value wales toolkit is seen as providing brilliant evidence of good practice
 - CHC to coordinate a wider review of good practice to continually maintain awareness of good practice – Hugh will feed this back



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Charlotte Waite - Director Young People & Family Services for Solas Cymru

See attached slides for more information

ACEs lead to normalisation of inappropriate behaviour

2 Pronged approach: not just for children who experience ACEs but for adults who've experienced these as children.

Development in adolescence not so well noted in WG research as it is in childhood

Evidence that social work thresholds are too high to meet the vast majority of those in need of support – the WG work is about meeting these needs much earlier

Not about the creation of lots of specialist services, but about amplifying what we already do well and considering it from an ACE-informed agenda – as with the 'ask and act' approach to DA.

First 1000 days and adolescence are the key periods in which resilience to ACE effects can be developed

More likely to be effected in areas of poverty so ties in with anti-poverty strategies – those in social housing are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes

Shift the focus from a punitive approach to ASB to an ace response

Landlords should feel responsible and empowered to act, not just refer

ACE informed approach to homelessness cooperation (on the part of the applicant for housing)

PHW are looking to evaluate and create a tool for housing providers to ensure an ACE informed approach

Highlighting examples of ACEs being targeted by housing is an important area for work

Bridgend project still at an early, inception phase - born from an appreciation that the Family Intervention Project is not meeting the needs of those with entrenched ACE issues,

Police Innovation Fund is supporting the Bridgend project for a further 2 years

Coaching in how to develop the confidence to tackle issues when first seen is key. People need to feel equipped to do the work themselves.

4 Associations, V2C, Linc, Hafod and Wales and West, involved in the Bridgend trial. Tool is already prepared. Will be made available to people who are working across Bridgend.

ASB Steering Group Update

Victoria Slade, Housing Director at Merthyr Valleys Homes, provided an update on the Welsh Government's Anti-social Behaviour Steering Group.

2 meetings to date, one before Xmas and then on the 11th of Jan



Initial impression in the sector was that the subject had been approached rather clumsily – it was felt that the group was formed on the basis of a disproportionately low number of cases of less than satisfactory practice and ignored the good work that was being done. By the second meeting, this was significantly changed and Victoria thanked CHC for their role in this.

A subgroup was tasked with providing a method that will ensure that the sector’s best practice is shared and came up with a light-touch Peer Review process (to include stockholding LAs). There is opportunity cost here – PCC is looking into funding for this. Public Health Wales will include practitioners on peer review teams.

There’s a clear link between this agenda and that on ACEs. Peer review will apply an ACE focussed approach so it is key that we keep an eye on this work. There have been numerous cases mentioned of this ACE focussed approach already being applied (e.g. of a housing officer flagging a case of concern that doesn’t necessarily meet threshold for a POVA), but HAs just need to ensure that this is recognised.

Possibility of further Police Innovation Funding being made available. Check PCC website.

Data sharing – not always forthcoming – not always a 2-way street – Jan Fox is taking this forward

Karen Dugate of Family HA will take training through CIH.

Housing Horizons

Hugh outlined that Housing Horizons is a CHC project which is about getting the sectors view on long term ambitions of sector, understanding the perception of HA’s and an opportunity to set a vision for HA’s in 2036. The Homes for Wales campaign was successful in raising housing up the agenda and led to 20,000 target – need to build on this success.

Network name	Housing Directors
Network date	24.01.17
CHC staff member	Hugh
PEOPLE, SERVICES AND COMMUNITY: - Who will we house? - What services will we provide to our residents? - What is our offer to the community in which we operate?	We’ll house an even broader range of people: - Whole market approach - Cross subsidisation to allow social focus - Intervention will be more targeted - Balance of what we provide will ensure sustainable communities - need to be responsive to demographics, ageing population Services we provide: - More use of technology will provide the capacity to focus on more in-depth services where there is a need - Self-service based systems (intelligent, predictive) - More focus on promoting independence, resilience and health and wellbeing - Need to continue to balance commercial/social focus - Data-driven, tailored services (with variable charges?) - More specialisms for innovative models of housing e.g.



	<p>cooperative housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services need to demonstrate that HA's are the solution, about promoting independence and breaking cycles of dependency. Housing as a vehicle to be better off economically and in terms of wellbeing. Risks around diversification and how this impacts on reputation, can be seen to be too much of the private rented sector, could lead to rent reductions.
<p>WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What will the workforce look like and what skills will they need? - What will the leadership team look and behave like? 	<p>Workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fewer HAs, smaller workforce, enabled by technology - Staff focus on empowerment, coaching, more complex services. Soft skills will be more important. - Increased shared services (e.g. back office functions) - Increased mobile/home working - More experience working from evidence, so greater analytical skills, quicker to develop systems - Need for better talent/succession management - New trade skills to cope with new home building approach
<p>STATE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What will our relationship be like to the state (local and national government)? 	<p>There will be a roll back of the state in relation to HAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we respond to this? More freedom to innovate? Values unlikely to change - Greater independence, creating opportunity to improve, collaborate and increase efficiency - Greater range of services as a result