

**Community  
Housing  
Cymru**



# **Quarterly Progress Report: 2019–2022 Corporate Plan**

**March – June 2019**



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# Welcome

**This is the first progress report for 2019/2020.**

**As we're in the first three months of our 2019-2022 Corporate Plan, we're really keen to show how we've made progress on the areas you told us were important to you. A significant area of work for us has been the Affordable Housing Review, and we're looking forward to seeing the Minister's response to the recommendations on 9<sup>th</sup> July.**

We've continued to lobby and influence on your behalf, and a full media report which shows how we've been influencing the media agenda is also included.

We're here to support you to be brilliant, and to meet our vision to make good housing a basic right for all. To help you prepare for the future, we've spent time this quarter planning our popular conferences including HR & L&D, Annual and One Big. We've also been developing Alcemi, a series of business transformation workshops.

If you have any questions on the information in this progress report, please don't hesitate to get in touch. In the meantime we will continue to influence, connect, support and inform – so you can continue to invest in communities and improve lives.

Thanks,

## March – June 2019 at a glance



We worked closely with members to influence the recommendations of the **Affordable Housing Review** ahead of the publication of the final report in May.

- » We launched a report alongside Public Health Wales and the Building Research Establishment, which shows that poor quality housing costs the NHS in Wales more than £95m per year in treatment costs.
- » Significant progress has been made towards securing our six Universal Credit asks. In April, UC work allowances increased by £1,000, meaning that people in work who have children or limited capability for work (or their partners) will benefit.

- » We have been working with Welsh Government to design the guidance and framework for the new Housing Support Grant, which will replace Supporting People and some elements of homelessness prevention funding from April 2020.



We launched a **Primary Fire Authority Scheme** with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and twenty-one members have joined already.

- » A consultation on the revised Development Plans Manual has been launched, and we will work with members as we prepare a sector response.
- » We ran six successful training courses, and planned three conferences including our first Low Carbon Conference.



**Housing Jobs Wales**, a partnership between Charity Job Finder and CHC, has had a successful start with 50% of members advertising roles during the free trial period.

- » We held elections for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of our newly formed Strategic Delivery Groups. Each group held their first meeting and discussed priorities for their work plan in line with our **new Corporate Plan (2019-2022)**.
- » Three new members of staff, Terryanne O'Connell, Angharad Young and Josh Rousen, joined the team.

### Key | Our Themes:

- 1 Influencing our members' operating environment
- 2 Equipping members for the future
- 3 Running a great member organisation
- 4 Telling our sector's story

## Affordable Housing Review 1 2

Our work on the Affordable Housing Review has continued apace over the last three months. Throughout April we worked closely with members to influence the final recommendations of the Review ahead of the publication of the final report in May.

The final report made 22 key recommendations, alongside a number of more detailed recommendations and commentary on the provision of affordable housing, and our work since has focused on influencing Welsh Government's response to these recommendations.

The Minister for Housing & Local Government will respond to the panel's recommendations in a statement to the Senedd on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

You can [read our in-depth briefing on the Review here](#).



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## Universal Credit 1 2

April saw the implementation of one of our Six Asks on Universal Credit. The work allowances for households with children and claimants or partners who have limited capability for work increased by £1,000 per year, improving the system for those in work. However, Universal Credit remains unfit for purpose, continuing to lead to a doubling in average rent arrears for tenants compared to Housing Benefit.

Significant progress has been made towards securing further asks, including data sharing between the DWP and housing associations during managed migration. We have held a number of positive meetings with DWP officials this quarter, and are looking forward to testing managed migration during the planned pilot in Harrogate from July.

We continue to focus on wider welfare reform issues, including the benefit freeze, and have held a number of meetings with MPs from government and opposition parties to set out the need to end the freeze in April 2020, and for benefits to catch up with the rises in inflation and wages.

Outside of our work to improve welfare policy, this quarter we have supported members with the rent shortfall due to be created by the inability for Universal Credit to adapt to a 53 week rent year.

We are pleased to have secured a commitment from the DWP to assess the calculations used to convert weekly costs into the monthly payment for future years, and are working with UK and Welsh Governments to ensure support for tenants affected this financial year.

## Supported Housing 1 2

Supported housing is undergoing significant change, with new methods of support in place such as Housing First to tackle homelessness and new technology to support older people to stay in their own homes. We have been working with Welsh Government to design the guidance and framework for the new Housing Support Grant, which will replace Supporting People and some elements of homelessness prevention funding from April 2020.

This quarter has seen numerous public engagement events, in addition to CHC's influence on Welsh Government's steering group, leading to draft proposals that place a much greater emphasis on person centred support and the prevention of homelessness. These changes could open up increased funding for tenancy and pre-tenancy support, leading to increased tenancy sustainment.

## Housing Management 1 2

Housing management was a top priority for us this quarter, with the launch of the new Housing Management Strategic Delivery Group. This Group will focus on sector issues including affordability, tenancy sustainment and the Renting Homes (Wales) Act.

The first meeting of the Housing Management SDG included discussions on reducing evictions and reforming routes to repossession. This followed April's announcement of Welsh Government's intention to end no fault evictions in the PRS, affecting the use of ASTs by housing associations.

The SDG developed proposals to reduce evictions, end evictions into homelessness and create a tenancy model that would be fit for the future. CHC is taking this forward with Welsh Government and partners to ensure that housing associations are well resourced to further increase tenancy sustainment, whilst securing a tenancy system that enables housing associations to keep their communities safe.



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## Building and Tenant Safety 1 2 3

**Following the launch of the Welsh Government's Building Safety Expert Group's recommendations in March, we have been working hard to highlight the excellent work of housing associations in keeping their tenants safe.**

Taking this further, we have continued work towards a safety transparency offer, co-produced between housing associations and Welsh Government, which will further cement the sector's place at the forefront of tenant safety.

We have continued to support members in reacting to new information regarding the safety of their buildings, ensuring solid communication between housing associations, Welsh Government and UK Government.

We have launched our co-ordinated partnership [Primary Fire Authority Scheme with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service \(SWFRS\)](#), which provides members with a further service as part of the 2019/20 Member Offer. The first Working Group meeting will take place shortly, and 21 members across Wales have joined the Scheme to date. CHC will continue to work closely with members and SWFRS to improve consistency and clarity in fire safety advice.

## Planning, Development and Retrofit 1 2

We await Welsh Government's response following a consultation that examined Local Development Plan housing requirements. We are also expecting comment from Welsh Government in regards to the Wales Audit Office study, which recently found that complex systems and a lack of resource are limiting the effectiveness of Local Authority planning services. Our CHC/POSW Working Group continues to explore ways to improve working between housing associations and Local Planning Authorities. A consultation on the revised Development Plans Manual has been launched, and we will work with members as we prepare a sector response. A consultation on the draft National Development Framework is also expected this year.

Following recommendations in the Affordable Housing Review, Welsh Government are developing a strategy around Modern Methods of Construction. The strategy has implications for work beyond the current Innovative Housing Programme, and CHC is engaging members across the sector to inform the strategy.

An independent advisory group will soon publish their report on residential decarbonisation retrofit. The recommendations and underpinning research will be explored at CHC's [Low Carbon Conference](#) on 18<sup>th</sup> July. Recommendations will cover aspects such as energy efficiency standards, the continuation of WHQS and the role of tenants. CHC has been working closely with Welsh Government and the sector, both as part of the group and outside of it, to ensure that our members' views are reflected in the recommendations. Further engagement opportunities will follow the report's publication.



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## Conferences and Events 2 3

**You may have noticed that it has been a little quiet on the events front here at CHC - but rest assured, I haven't been kidnapped or been sunning myself on a tropical island! I have been developing Alcemi, our series of business transformation workshops due to launch in September. More information on Alcemi is [here](#).**

I have also been pulling together a dynamic programme for our **HR & L&D Conference** which will be taking place on **26<sup>th</sup> September at the Marriott Hotel**. The conference theme this year is *'It's all about our people'*, and we have gathered a breadth of speakers from organisations outside housing to share their experience of implementing initiatives to address the changing nature of business, and ensure positive outcomes.

[Click here to view the full programme and secure your place.](#)



There is still time to book onto CHC's **Finance Conference** taking place at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, over the 11/12th July. Sessions include:

- » Trevor Williams, former Chief Economist at Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking, will share his thoughts on the economic picture across the UK and will try to decipher what leaving Europe means to the UK and Wales.
- » Rhodri ab Owen, Head of Monitoring at Positif, will give his views on the current political landscape for Wales and the UK, looking at the First Minister's first six months in power and what is on the horizon for the Welsh and UK Governments.
- » Lynn Pamment, Chair of the Affordable Housing Review panel, will outline key findings from the Review and its impact on the social housing sector in Wales
- » Sam Coniff, multi award winning serial social entrepreneur, will guide delegates through surviving workplace disruption and the world

[Click here to view the full programme and secure your place.](#)

There's also still spaces available at our **Low Carbon conference**, taking place at the **Copthorne Hotel in Cardiff**. The purpose of the conference is to discuss and explore the direction set by Welsh Government, give the sector opportunity to share best practice and to help housing associations progress their thinking and implementation – wherever in the process of decarbonisation they are currently.

[Click here to book your place.](#) A full programme of speakers and sessions can be seen [here](#).

**The planning for our popular [HR & L&D Conference](#), [One Big Housing Conference \(10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> October\)](#) and the [Annual Conference \(21<sup>st</sup> /22<sup>nd</sup> November\)](#) is in progress. **Book onto One Big Housing & HR & L&D now, and keep an eye out for the programmes arriving in your inbox in the summer.****



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## Training 2 3

It's been a busy first quarter delivering our reactive training. We're really grateful that our members come to us with training suggestions; because of this, we are able to cover a diverse range of topics. During the last three months we have ran courses on:

- » Introduction to Housing
- » Universal Credit in Practice
- » Universal Credit: The Problem Areas
- » Podcast Training
- » Evicting Non Secure Tenants
- » Service Charges

Following the launch of our new Governance training series, trainer Deborah Walthorne delivered a successful first **Governing Well** course. We were pleased to receive excellent feedback from our attendees from Clwyd Alyn, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd, Cynon Taf Community Housing, Tai Tarian and Trivallis. Hear what Fran Bevan, Chair of Cynon Taf Community Housing, said about her experience [here](#).

We are looking forward to delivering our other two courses: **Introduction to Governance**, for those considering becoming board members; and **New to Board**, for those who have been in the role for less than 12 months. More information on our Governance and other training courses can be [found here](#).

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## Housing Jobs Wales 1 2 4

We launched **Housing Jobs Wales** on 18th March in partnership with Charity Job Finder. It is the only website in Wales dedicated to advertising social housing jobs to encourage new skills and experience into the sector.

We've had a really successful start to the website, attracting almost 13,000 users already. 50% of members took up our offer to advertise their roles during our free trial period, which ended on 18<sup>th</sup> May. During this time we directed nearly 4,000 people to jobs, with 2,000 downloading job packs.

We are running a 'buy one get one free' offer on the site until 1st September. If you have any questions please email Edwina on [edwina-o'hart@chcymru.org.uk](mailto:edwina-o'hart@chcymru.org.uk).

## Board Member Networking Events

We ran two networking events this quarter, which were attended by 49 board members from 25 organisations. Both events heard from Vanessa Walters, Affordable Housing Supply Review Manager at the Welsh Government, about the recommendations of the independent Affordable Housing Review. **Further events** have been scheduled in for September and December.



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## Strategic Delivery Groups **1 2 3**

This quarter, we held elections for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of our newly formed [Strategic Delivery Groups](#).

Each group held their first meeting this quarter and discussed priorities for their workplan in line with our new [Corporate Plan \(2019-2022\)](#). [See our Corporate Plan film here](#).

For the first time, we also offered the opportunity to join these meetings virtually. We're in the process of seeking feedback from those of you who choose to attend online with the aim of continuing to improve your experience.



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## Communications **1 2 3**

It's been a busy quarter for the communications team at CHC. Work has included interviewing Serena Jones, Exec Operations Director at Coastal HA, Cerys Furlong, Chief Executive of Chwarae Teg, and Sophie Howe Future Generations Commissioner for Wales on topics including equality in the workplace and decarbonisation for our [Around the Houses podcast](#).

We ran a successful free trial for Housing Jobs Wales, launched our [Corporate Plan film](#) and [Member Offer](#) and launched [Alcemi](#), our transformational business workshops.

It was great to see so many members at our [Communications & External Affairs SDG](#), where we presented on This is Housing - a campaign we're working on with the HR SDG to show the benefits of working in social housing, and attract more people into the sector. We're delighted to have so many comms volunteers to support us!

We've also been supporting CHC's policy team, leading on communicating our sector response to the Independent Review of [Affordable Housing Supply panel's recommendations](#). We are now preparing for the Minister's response to the recommendations on 9<sup>th</sup> July, where we will represent our members' views.

As always, we have continued to influence the news agenda during the last three months, achieving 28 pieces of coverage across target print, broadcast and online media on topics including Universal Credit, health and decarbonisation. [You can read our latest media report here](#).



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## Weekly Round-up **1 2 3**

Our job is to keep you informed about the latest news and developments relevant to the sector. One way we do this is through the Weekly Round-up, where we also share updates on our policy work, information about our events and training and updates from third parties such as Welsh Government.

**We want to make sure our communication to you is as targeted as possible. You can manage your preferences (including language preference) by [completing this quick survey](#).**



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## Staffing update **3**

**This quarter saw three new members of staff joining the team.**

**Joshua Rousen** is our Brand and Design Creative, and will lead on all branding and visual content development.

**Angharad Young** is our Business Development Manager and will be looking to enhance and grow our commercial membership and opportunities over the coming months, as well as overseeing our conference, training and events programme.

**Terryanne O'Connell** is our Admin Assistant, and will probably be the first person you speak to or see when you call or visit our offices.

We welcomed **Hayley McNamara** back from maternity leave to her role of Policy and External Affairs Manager.

We are currently in the process of restructuring our Policy and Public Affairs teams and will provide a fuller update in the next quarter. From mid-July Aaron Hill will take up the position of Head of Policy and External Affairs, and will be joined by Rhea Stevens (from the Institute of Welsh Affairs) from September as she takes up the other Head role. Will Atkinson will be joining Hayley as Policy and External Affairs Manager and Sarah Scotcher will be taking on a new role as Policy and External Affairs Project Officer from mid-July.



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## **Our Mission**

# BRILLIANT

*That's you!*

**Our mission is to enable Welsh Housing Associations to be brilliant.**



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