

# Attendance

<b>MEETING</b>	F496 Technical Services Forum
<b>DATE</b>	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2015, 10:00am
<b>VENUE</b>	Media Resource Centre, Llandrindod Wells

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Jobtitle</b>
1.	Asbri	Keith Warren	
2.	Coastal Housing	Gareth Davies	Director of Development
3.	Community Housing Cymru	Shea Jones	Energy and Sustainability Officer
4.	Constructing Excellence Wales	Paul Jennings	
5.	CT Cantref	Andrew Thomas	Property Services Manager
6.	CT Cantref	Hefin Jones	Technical Officer
7.	Cynon Taf Community Housing Group	Kelly Dufield	
8.	Dwr Cymru	Dave Norris	
9.	Grwp Cynefin	R Bryn Davies	Development Manager
10.	Hendre Group Ltd	Cadwgan Thomas	Head of Development
11.	Hendre Group Ltd	Kate Rees	Project Manager
12.	Hendre Group Ltd	Paul Mantle	Head of Maintenance Services
13.	Melin Homes	Lee Pickett	Head of Construction
14.	Melin Homes	Lyndon Griffiths	Technical Manager
15.	Mid Wales HA Ltd	Geraint Roberts	Development Officer
16.	Mid Wales HA Ltd	Phil Hoskins	Development Coordinator

**Community Housing Cymru Group Members:**

**Aelodau Grŵp Cartrefi Cymunedol Cymru:**



17.	Monmouthshire Housing Association	Andrew Knill	Asset Manager
18.	Newport City Homes	Ian Carter	Programme Manager, Property Investment
19.	Newport City Homes	Tom McEwan	Senior Asset Surveyor
20.	RCT Homes	Andrew Freeguard	Development and New Business Manager
21.	Tai Ceredigion Cyf	Colin Downham	Assistant Director of Assets
22.	United Welsh	Luke Mitchell	Head of Property
23.	Voluntas	Dylan Chipp	
24.	Watersafe	Gareth Harris	

# Apologies

NAME	ORGANISATION
John Littlewood	Cardiff Metropolitan University
Andrew Moucher	First Choice HA
Richard Hallett	Linc Cymru

**Please note that the date of the next technical services has been changed. The Forum was due to be held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September, but will now be held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November due to first date being fairly near CHC's One Big Housing Conference.**

## **Actions from notes of the last meeting:**

- Development Quality Requirements-consultation due for a 3 month period-provisional dates of June, July, August. CHC sat on the review group as well as a wide range of representatives. The recommendations put forward following the meetings of the review group have been accepted in principle by

the Minister but this consultation offers an opportunity to submit comments to Welsh Government. CHC will be responding to the consultation.

- Social Housing Grant-Welsh Government is planning to organise 3 workshops across Wales to discuss SHG applications, general compliance issues, procurement, etc. CHC has been approached to potentially help with agreeing dates, venues, etc.
- Members should have received a letter from Welsh Government regarding the Introduction of Compliance Policies on the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) arising from the Altair report
- CHC has approached Welsh Government and is awaiting official WG lines in relation to 'Building information Modelling' and concerns outlined regarding the code for sustainable homes being phased out in England and whether Welsh Government has considered the impacts of this on RSLs in Wales building to the code in terms of registrations for the code, assessing the code, etc.
- Energy Supply company-CHC has been liaising with 'Our Power', who are a newly set up licensed energy supply company primarily based in Scotland working with RSLs and other partners. There seems to be a growing appetite between CHCs members to intervene directly in the energy market and this Our Power model could be a great fit for members. They have confirmed funding from a range of sources (including the Scottish Government). Our Power has agreed to come to Wales and hold an event with CHC members to explore the potential of setting up a base in Wales following requests from CHC and several members who are aware of the model. A provisional date of September has been agreed.
- BIM4Housing conference-BIM4Housing is holding a conference in Cardiff on 16th June at the Future Inn, Cardiff. If you would like to attend the event in June, please see the link below for more details.  
<http://cesw.org.uk/events/book?eventid=58> Furthermore, CHC has been asked if a sector representative would like to join the BIM4Housing Group (the next meeting is likely to take place in London on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015). If you would be interested in representing CHC on the group, then please email [shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk](mailto:shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk)
- CHC is running a range of training courses aimed at technical staff, non-technical staff and tenants, in relation to new guidance on understanding moisture risks and understanding damp. Please email [shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk](mailto:shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk) for more information.
- CHC has submitted representatives for the sector to the Design out Crime Group in Wales. This is an opportunity to feed in issues around Secured by Design to the police force and others. CHC is represented by Gareth Davies from Coastal Housing and Nigel Sinnett from Pembrokeshire. There are still inconsistencies in SBD. What is the form of appeal? Please send through any concerns you have in relation to Secured by Design through to

[gareth.davies@coastalhousing.co.uk](mailto:gareth.davies@coastalhousing.co.uk) and [nigel.sinnett@pembs-ha.co.uk](mailto:nigel.sinnett@pembs-ha.co.uk) so that any issues can be fed into the meetings of the Design out Crime Group.

- Several RSL's are now working with Alabare to help deliver projects and homes for Veterans in Wales. There is still an opportunity to work with Alabare and other partners and funding could potentially still be available. Please email [shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk](mailto:shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk) for more information.

**Action agreed:** WHQS compliance tool-attendees at the forum expressed interest in CHC setting up a task and finish group to prepare a template for a WHQS compliance policy, a WHQS compliance certificate for re-lets and to work out the best way for the sector to work together to provide WG with the 'independent verification' requirement. Nigel Sinnett has offered to chair the group but if you would like to chair, or express interest in attending the group then please email [shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk](mailto:shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk)

**Action agreed:** Energy supply company-it was asked whether we can bring members together before the September meeting to get an idea of interest/scale/our calls. CHC to co-ordinate.

**Action agreed:** CHC has started using yammer which is an enterprise social network. The decision has been made for CHC to start using yammer with the sector as an external networking page. You will receive an email from CHC asking you to sign up to a yammer named the "technical services forum" page. When you sign up, CHC will approve your use of the "technical services forum" page and you will be able to share knowledge and discuss issues/opportunities with colleagues from around the RSL sector on this yammer site.

**Action agreed:** CHC's next One Big Housing conference will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> of October-the conference will again cover development, asset management and maintenance topics along with housing management and a range of other areas of work. If you have any ideas or would like to suggest certain speakers/topics for the conference, then please email [shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk](mailto:shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk)

### **1. Mark George, faithful+gould, scape- asset management, surveying and design services framework**

First trading in 2006, scape offers a full suite of single supplier frameworks that deliver measurable time, cost and quality benefits into construction, refurbishment and maintenance projects. Owned by six local authorities, scape optimises the benefits of public and private sector collaboration. Its effective across all sectors. See the core services slide for more information. The frameworks are quick and easy to use, and fully OJEU compliant. The framework is open to any public sector organisation (see the slides) or project with 50% or more public sector funding.

They have a community benefits programme- scape successes to date-£178.82m generated for local economy \* calculation taken from the SROI network. Scape framework has been set up on the back of NEC due to the collaboration, cost certainty and programme benefits that this form of contract brings.

Faithful+Gould's supply chain cover a number of disciplines including: • building services engineering • structural engineering services • architecture • building surveying • asset management • other services. New supply chain partners are regularly added with all new sub-consultants having to pass Scape's sub-consultancy assessment process prior to approval > 80% of their tier 2 supply chain are SME's. Clients can request the use of their preferred consultants who will in turn be invited to join the tier 2 supply chain.

View the slides for more information on specific housing services, the housing supply chain, fees and contact details.

## **2. RCT homes**

### **1. Affordable Housing Solutions Framework**

RCT Homes have launched an innovative funding model (affordable housing solutions framework) for the delivery of affordable homes. The framework has been developed by regeneration specialist Bellerophon BPL and can be accessed in Wales via Porthcwlis, a development company owned by RCT Homes. More information can be seen here:

<http://www.rcthomes.co.uk/main.cfm?type=NI&objectid=2863>

The first joint venture project will provide a total of 189 properties across three sites, 132 of which will be available at affordable rents and social rents without grant funding. The RCT Homes / Porthcwlis framework has the potential to be an important tool, not just for RCT Homes, but for other housing providers too and the RCT Homes / Porthcwlis framework can benefit other RSLs in the sector.

The model brings together what is known as a limited liability partnership and brings together developers, landowners, contractors, housing providers and investors who put their resources into a joint venture. The partners agree to accept a longer term equity investment that will grow and may be realised over a longer period (instead of trying to make a quick, short-term cash profit). The housing provider manages the homes as it would if it owned them outright being responsible for rents, letting, management and maintenance. The partners jointly own the LLP based on percentage shares agreed at the outset and over time partners can sell their shares to each other or other investors.

The first Porthcwlis project brings together three sites: one at Bryn Awelon in Cwmbach and two at the International Sports Village in Cardiff Bay where rents are considerably higher. Taken together, the developments have been able to attract £19 million in funding from M&G, one of the UK's biggest investment institutions.

## 2. RCT Homes Development Framework (Datblygu Cymru)

A framework to deliver RCT Homes immediate pipeline of new homes (around 300 units and not funded by the above) and deliver their medium term development strategy of 750 new homes. RCT Homes considered project procurement for each scheme - through OJEU or traditional procurement - to be inefficient and more benefit could be derived through one large OJEU procurement exercise, creating a development framework that would deliver their immediate and medium term programmes and that could be accessed by other RSLs.

RCT Homes talked to potential partner RSLs and enquired if they would consider utilising their framework and would they be happy to be nominated as part of the OJEU Notice. Nine other RSL's confirmed that they would be happy to be nominated in the notice. They had a meet the buyer event in January and around 40 contractors attended. The contractor feedback convinced RCT Homes to adopt a Lot structure with 8 contractors to be appointed per lot. There are 4 lots with contract values:

- Up to 650k
- 650k to £2m
- £2m to £5m
- £5m plus

RCT Homes then had a PQQ event which concluded in April. It's a 4 year framework and includes new build, mixed use, commercial, regeneration, etc. It doesn't cover planned repairs and maintenance. Any RSL can use their own processes and standard documentation if they access the framework for mini-bids e.g. their own TR & T requirements, consultation/contract processes, etc. RCT Homes are just interested in maintaining information on the volume of work and when the project is complete but don't want to hinder any of the projects process. The framework has an estimated value of in excess of £50m. RCT Homes have about £20-£25m to procure over the next 5 years. There is potential for a JCT option, NEC, etc.

It goes out to tender in May this year with tenders to be returned during the last week of July. There will be a tender evaluation exercise in August and it will be launched September and available in October based on current timescales. It is an all Wales Framework. There is an annual registration fee of £250. RCT Homes are not procuring any works for other RSL's. RCT Homes are not fixing costs-you can determine what you want in terms of a quality / cost ratio.

### 3. Gareth Williams, the Construction Industry Training Board Cymru /Wales, Responding to potential Skills and training Challenges

CITB strategic priorities-leadership, image and recruitment, training and development, industry engagement, charitable trading, corporate services and finance

The capacity of market was noted-stuff in short supply. The Wlyfa and tidal lagoon projects were noted-they will be labour intensive and they could impact the market Schemes like this are hoovering up skilled labour –which puts up rates.

RSLs can't claim grant from CITB-only in scope levy paying companies are able to claim grant. RSLs are not levy payers but a number of sub contractors employed by RSLs may be and eligible for grant.

CITB aims to inspire a diverse range of talented people to join the construction industry, through promoting the benefits of a career in construction, providing opportunities to experience construction and an Industry-wide image and recruitment strategy. It was noted that it's still a whole male dominated industry. It was also noted that there aren't enough opportunities for women. We need to work with schools, colleges, etc and potentially organisations such as Chwarae Teg and others on this.

**Action:** CHC to contact Chwarae Teg. CITB have produced a video and are spending lots to promote this via women ambassadors-it was noted though that we need to do more. Are we getting the message wrong? CITB happy to discuss further. Welsh Bacolerette in schools-people will be taught this?

CITB work to increase the capability of the existing workforce by helping develop a competent and safe workforce, upskilling, re-skilling and conversion and promoting talent management and career development.

CITB help to enable the industry to be as efficient and effective as possible by supporting the industry to adapt to new ways of working, help businesses to grow, promoting the benefits of investing in training, encouraging greater employer ownership of skills, supporting industry sectors with bespoke solutions, and supporting clients and developing strong supply-chains

Skills forecasting document (The outlook for Wales 2015-2019) -to view the document please see here:

<https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn%20reports%202015-2019/construction-skills-network-uk-2015-2019.pdf>

### **What does this mean for construction jobs?**

This means that demand\* for some trades will be higher than others. Jobs in demand in the next five years in Wales include (If workforce remains as it is, these figures are additional numbers on top of current workforce):

- Non construction professional, technical, IT and other office-based staff – 870
- Wood trades and interior fit out – 770
- Labourers – 670
- Other construction and technical staff – 650
- Bricklayers – 550
- Painters and decorators – 390

*\*annual average recruitment forecast over the next five years*

### **What's the challenge?**

With growth returning across the country and 224,000 jobs expected to be created over the next five years, demand for construction workers is high and skills shortages are emerging. This means that need to attract, train and retain the next generation.

### **What's CITB doing to bridge the gap?**

They are working with industry and government to improve on site environments and promote construction to a wide range of people. Watch out for their Building campaign (get info on this campaign) which will see them joining up with partners to promote construction careers. They also have an oil and gas campaign and a NHS careers campaign

### **Development of new relevant qualifications (see more on the slides in terms of credits and pathways, etc)**

- Repair and Maintenance levels 2 and level 3
- Level 2 available NVQ and Technical Certificate
- Level 3 nearing completion (6 pathways)
- Level 2 suitable for new learners
- Progression for qualified main trade workers
- Flexibility and Efficiency for Repair and Maintenance work.

CITB have done work with CC Gwynedd and Neath Port Talbot-a solution is available from June. CC Gwynedd and Neath project-“development of new relevant qualifications” slide. They have invested in repair and maintenance level 2-someone who can do a bit of everything. It saves tenants having 2/3 people coming at different times. And then level 3-quite high for a craftsperson.

The Cost of brick layers going up was asked and noted!? Electricians have to achieve the level 3 framework to be able to undertake electrical work, CITB do not set these standards or requirement as Electrical and plumbing are out of their scope.

For new and current qualification electrical and plumbing offers, its worth speaking to Summit Skills.

Increasing minimum wage of apprenticeships? This could mean that RSLs take on less people and also, the NCH have cut the number of apprentices as the wage has gone up, but we also don't want to be forced out of the market by competition. There is no funding for plumbing and electrical next year?- CITB have reduced contract numbers for apprenticeship, unfortunately we have to concentrate on the core occupations that the majority of levy payers employ. In housing, plumbers and electricians are key-don't know why funding has been cut. **Action:** CHC to lobby on this.

Is Gwent college closing down due to cuts? (moving to Newport?) The decision to close provision is a college decision. Obviously CITB can not send learners to a closed facility if that is indeed the case.

Some Teachers/education is encouraging people not to go into construction. CITB has done a survey "educating the educators". CITB want to improve careers advice. They have 300 ambassadors from construction going into schools, etc. We need more effort at targeting schools as schools are missing out on practical stuff and general advice. Further education dwindling-schools keeping lots on for university. It was noted that people are coming in from Europe to work, etc-we need these skilled people, but they sometimes come in, receive training and then leave.

Apprenticeships are still all age in Wales but there is less support for over 25's. Need to hook people at an early age. The point was made that we need to extend the ages of when people can get apprenticeships-What's the current age? Have CITB rules changed? This has not changed though there is a review about to be published by Welsh Government regarding apprentices and funding which may change things.

Students can still obtain a level 2 or 3 technical BTEC qualification whilst at school. This is still the case. Level 2 pre and post 16 but mainly pre 16. Level 3 post 16.

### **Welsh Government Context for Community Benefits**

The delivery of added value through community benefits policy must be an integral consideration in procurement. The Welsh public sector will apply community benefits to all public sector procurements where such benefits can be realised. Apply the 'Measurement Tool' to all such contracts over £2m to capture and report outcomes to Welsh Government

### **The 'Menu' of Community Benefits**

**Recruitment and training of economically inactive people**-Apprenticeships,m Traineeships, Work experience and Internships, Graduate placements, Work trials, Voluntary work, NVQs and wider training

**Supply-chain initiatives**-Maximising opportunities for smaller /more local suppliers and contractors to compete for tenders or sub-contract or supply-chain opportunities, Retention of existing workforce, Training of existing workforce, Promotion of 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector, Prompt and fair payment initiatives

**Contribution to Education**-Work placements (school and college students), Visits to primary schools (world of work), Curriculum support, Development of qualifications

**Community Initiatives**-Donation of equipment, Donation of in-kind labour, Landscaping and building services to support /regenerate communities, Sponsorship and donations

**CITB Cymru /Wales Supporting the Delivery of Community Benefits**-Shared Apprenticeship Scheme, Pathways to Apprenticeships, Young Recruits Programme, National Skills Academy for Construction, Client Based Approach, Labour Forecasting Tool

The National Skills Academy for Construction are developing a Client-Based Approach which provides a toolkit to deliver employment, apprenticeships and training for public sector clients through their construction projects, planning policy and development control. It provides model documentation, benchmarks, case studies and practical commentary. Based on successful National Skills Academy for Construction projects, the guidance includes all necessary components to deliver apprenticeships, employment and training opportunities on any type and size of construction project. For more information on this, please email [Donna.Griffiths@citb.co.uk](mailto:Donna.Griffiths@citb.co.uk)

#### **4. Mark Adams, Constructing Excellence Wales, Improving the Visibility of future construction work- compiling a programme for RSLs**

##### **Background**

- *No Turning Back* : CEW report – October 2010  
<http://www.cewales.org.uk/cew/wp-content/uploads/No-Turning-Back.pdf>
- Construction Procurement Strategy Steering Group - February 2011
- CEW-led sub-group for local authorities programme – autumn 2011
- 'Pilot' programme August 2012

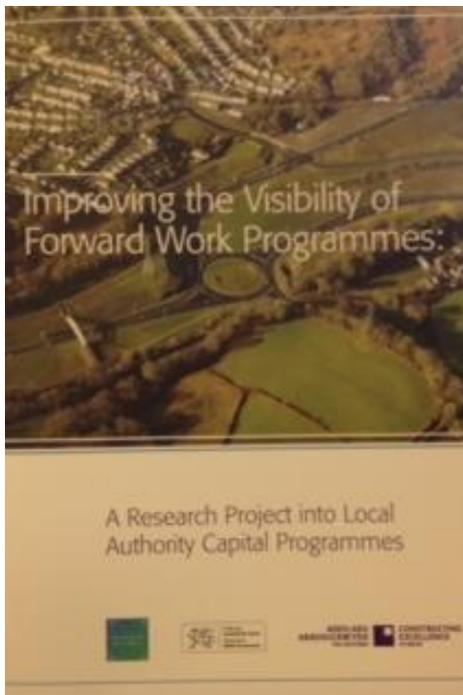
##### **Background**

Constructing Excellence Wales have been putting together an all-Wales local authority programme publication for improving the visibility of future construction work. CEW recently presented at CHC's technical services forum, at which it was agreed that CEW would work with CHC and the RSL sector to collect data for forward programmes work in a range of areas. Jane Hutt, the Minister for Finance and Government Business, has responsibility for the Wales infrastructure Investment

Plan (<http://gov.wales/funding/wiipindex/?lang=en> ) and CEW are working with Welsh Government to provide visibility to additional programmes.

For LA programmes, all 22 LA's submit their programme annually. 21 LA's now provide 3-year programme information (up from 18 last year) and 14 LAs now provide 4-year programmes (up from 8 last year). They are now on the 4th annual edition: 2015/16 – 2018/19. The supply chain has commented favourably on additional visibility. They now have future work and LA's are also finding it useful. LA's can see what neighbouring LA's are doing-potential for collaboration on procurement, etc.

Report published July 2013 and it summarised the research and set out the way forward:



### A Programme for RSLs

RSL figures have been identified as the key missing data. This is an opportunity to raise the profile of the sector. The publication will be presented in front of politicians-so we need to decide what is put in the publication. It can also be used as a lobbying tool-we need to use it to bang the drum for investment in skills and training etc.

In the discussion at the forum, 3 areas were identified for data collection from each RSL:

1. Annual spend on construction e.g. repairs and maintenance as currently reported in organisations (probably against 8-10 key headings) over a 5 year period-

15/16 onwards through to 2019/20 where possible covering any construction related spend.

2. Any new build work in whatever form. Indications of value of spend/number of units even if these numbers can't be allocated against specific years-Figures for a 10 year period if possible.

3. (Optional) Comments on what RSLs feel the need is and where funding is required. What stock are we struggling to fund? How much funding do we need? What areas are there no opportunities for funding? We bid for what's available-not always what we need? We need to link through to training opportunities. Why we should be doing more.

The idea is for this exercise to be a yearly annual return. The intention is to collate the data we receive and then circulate a draft programme/booklet. The intention is for CHC and CEW to collate information, produce a joint document for comment and present the final draft at a future technical services forum meeting before publication.

I would be grateful if you could reply with your programme attached (as outlined in point 1 above) and information on any new build plans (as outlined in point 2 above) before the end of June. Any comments you have regarding the need for new funding (as outlined in point 3 above) can be forwarded separately by the end of July.

## **5. Gareth Harris, Watersafe and Dave Norris, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, the role of Watersafe and competency and accreditation of plumbing practice**

The Water Supply Water Fittings Regulations and Byelaws:

- Aim to prevent waste, misuse, undue consumption, contamination and erroneous measurement
- They set legal requirements for the design, installation, operation and maintenance of plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances.

The Water Supply Water Fittings Regulations and Byelaws are a legal duty placed on all users, owners or occupiers and anyone who installs plumbing systems or water fittings and water-using appliances to ensure they are installed and used in accordance with these regulations and byelaws.

They are enforced by water undertakers e.g. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Severn Trent Water. Contraventions may result in enforcement action. It is a criminal offence to contravene the regulations and byelaws and offenders may face prosecution

See the slides for a picture of where the regulations apply and for examples of Contraventions e.g. Shower hoses, supply pipes and Blue water

## **Objectives of WaterSafe**

To contribute to the safety of drinking water supplies and protection of customers, by:

- Bringing together the seven existing Approved Contractors' Schemes
- Promoting good plumbing practice and compliance with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations and Scottish Water Byelaws
- Providing an easily accessible, online search facility listing approved plumbing businesses employing competent, recognised individuals
- Reducing the risk to drinking water supplies from poor plumbing practice

## **What is WaterSafe?**

- An umbrella organisation with a nationally recognisable brand, bringing together the seven existing Approved Contractors' Schemes in the plumbing sector
- 'WaterSafe' is the brand and Certification Mark of WaterSafe Installers' Scheme Ltd - a company limited by guarantee

WaterSafe are the national plumbing assurance scheme developed by all the water companies in the UK, the professional plumbing body and the two major plumbing associations. WaterSafe is also supported by the three drinking water quality regulators in the UK. Although not thought of as 'dangerous' as gas, contaminated or scalding water, from poor plumbing practices, can have a serious impact on the health and lives of people affected. This is becoming an increasing concern as plumbing systems become even more complex or incorporate recycling and/or re-use (i.e. non-drinking water) systems.

WaterSafe was therefore developed by the water companies and their partners, with the support of the regulators, to help promote competency and accreditation as a means of reducing the risk of poor plumbing practice endangering people's health and lives in their homes and places of work.

WaterSafe recognises and lists those plumbers who have attained appropriate qualifications in a plumbing discipline, have demonstrated knowledge of the Water Regulations and their competency to carry out plumbing work that complies with those Regulations. As a business they also have to meet minimum insurance levels, comply with the Customer Commitment and the conditions of membership.

Further information on the scheme is available at [https://www.watersafe.org.uk/about/why\\_use\\_an\\_approved\\_contractor/](https://www.watersafe.org.uk/about/why_use_an_approved_contractor/)

## **Where do they apply?**

These Regulations and Byelaws apply in all types of premises supplied, or to be supplied with water from a water undertaker (the legal term for a specific type of water supplier). They apply from the point where water enters the property's underground pipe (usually at the stop tap at the property boundary), to where the water is used in plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances. However they do not apply in premises which have no provision of water from the public mains supply, not even a back-up supply, and rely solely on a private borehole or well supply.

Having launched late last year WaterSafe is now keen to gain recognition in the social housing sector. Clearly there are implications for registered social landlords in maintaining and improving their housing stock whilst ensuring any works are done professionally and without risk to tenants.

The Role of WaterSafe:

- National Register of Approved Contractors
- Seven Approved Contractor Schemes
- Water company scheme or approved by SoS
- Register and maintain WaterSafemembers
- Audit
- Customer Commitment + complaints process

Membership

- NVQ2 in a recognised plumbing qualification
- Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations and Byelaws recognised qualification
- Appropriate insurance
- Scheme conditions & rules

Compliance made easy

- Use WaterSafe businesses
- Notification requirements met
- Work competed certificate gives assurance that work complies with Water Fittings Regulations and provides a legal defense

Use Approved Products

- WRAS <https://www.wras.co.uk/search/products/>
- KIWA in the UK <http://www.kiwa.co.uk/waterproducts>

Benefits for HA's:

- Save money as if you don't use an approved contractor and the job is carried out incompetently, if you are regulated or there's an issue then you have to change the fitting.

- Public health
- Meet duties under Water Fittings Regulations

### **Why use WaterSafe?**

Customers can rest assured that a WaterSafe plumbing business employs recognised, competent and qualified individuals with training and knowledge of Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations and Byelaws. A WaterSafe recognised plumber will also issue the customer with a certificate to demonstrate the work complies with the Water Regulations and Byelaws - protecting customers if they are challenged by the water company enforcing these regulations. All WaterSafe approved businesses also hold public liability insurance for added assurance. Plus, if the work is not up to the quality and standard required, our customer commitments and redress procedure requires the installer to rectify the work.

### **Keeping you safe**

Bad plumbing work may damage property and contaminate the water in homes and business premises. Poor plumbing installations also cost UK homeowners billions of pounds. According to research, 23% of UK homeowners have fallen victim to a rogue plumber and the average cost of putting a botched plumbing job right is £426. So stay safe next time you need plumbing work done and search for an approved plumbing business at [www.WaterSafe.org.uk](http://www.WaterSafe.org.uk) or call 0333 207 9030

Length of shower hose too long? An example of contravention (look at the slides)

Blue water is a big issue

There is no mandatory registration for approved plumbers now like there is for gas so watersafe are putting together a register to take to Government (its voluntary at the moment). For membership you need minimum NVQ2

RSL will be protected if they use approved contactors.

**Action:** It was asked what requires notification to the local water company? An RSL member said that it isn't common knowledge that you have to notify. Have to notify on building control side of things and to water company? Notification not enforced at moment unless something goes wrong (?) and the water company is unaware if not notified. Please see the briefing note on 'information on notification of proposed plumbing work' which is available on CHCs website.

How to decide if a contractor is approved? They are audited and other things:

Watersafe.org.uk provides an easy-to-use search facility so consumers can identify a qualified plumber employed by a company, which is a member of one of the seven Approved Contractors' Schemes:

- Only recognises and gives ‘WaterSafe Approved’ or ‘WaterSafe Recognised’ status to those business and individuals respectively which meet defined competency and regulation standards:
- NVQ Level 2 in Mechanical Engineer Services (plumbing) (6089) Recognised Water Regulations qualifications
- Appropriate Insurance
- Has audit arrangements and disciplinary procedures
- Has customer commitment and customer redress arrangements plus compliance specification for members

WIAPS – What is it? WIAPS is the Water Industry Approved Plumbers’ Scheme, it:

- Is managed by WRAS on behalf of 16 water companies
- Provides accreditation to qualified plumbers (and a number of sector workers)
- Allows Approved Plumbers to certify certain work
- Gives peace-of-mind to customers with an online directory of qualified professionals
- Allows plumber members to join WaterSafe – the UK hub for Approved Plumbing businesses

Please see the WIAPS Introduction flyer on CHC’s website for more information.

There are many other useful publications available on the WRAS Website:

<https://www.wras.co.uk/consumers/resources/publications/>

Watersafe is free to join around the whole of Wales

## **6. John Littlewood, Cardiff Met, performance testing during the construction process**

John didn’t attend on the day unfortunately, but for a copy of John’s presentation, please email [shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk](mailto:shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk)

## **Afternoon session - a choice between the following 2 break out groups:**

### **A. Dylan Chipp, Voluntas, How to improve how we collect tenant satisfaction data and how it can be used to drive service improvements**

Voluntas are a social housing specialist research provider and they provide research services to over 50 Housing Associations across the UK, including United Welsh and RCT Homes on their tenant satisfactions surveys. Luke Mitchell from United Welsh

is happy to talk to RSLs about United Welsh's experience of using Voluntas. The presentation considered the best ways to improve how you collect tenant satisfaction data, to make it a functional tool to guide service changes. They had 41,000 responsive repairs data last year.

The presentation focused on how we go about developing a tenant satisfaction survey and why we use that approach, and also looking at the tenant's satisfaction data for repairs that they collected last year across the UK to see what insight that can give you into what other organisations do and what's effective.

Please see the slides for further information, but below is some key points on what was discussed:

The Voluntas service is useful for benchmarking and for using for the regulator. It's not just about collecting data, but also about informing tenants about what's happening before work started, etc. Incentives can work to boost return rates e.g. providing shopping vouchers has increased Newport City Homes' return rates. Ask what difference does this work make to the tenant? Outcomes are key for regulation.

There is such thing as survey fatigue-you can survey too much and this can impact response rates.

Are you going deep enough into your survey to tell you how to change things- "think about your objectives" then ask the right questions to enough people, using a robust method. Distilling the answer through analysis, action the change, then evaluate and go again (see the slides for more information on this). Reporting of a repair is a common issue-are you communicating the service standards properly with your tenants?

"What's your overall satisfaction?"-there aren't many RSLs that have used that question which is surprising. You need to think about the bigger picture. You might be asking about a specific repair, but are you asking how many times they have had that particular repair done?

Customer effort-important to ask-missing in current question sets

Most surveys give 1-5 scale. Some RSLs use a Yes/No approach? If there are people in the grey area, and 'neither' is taken out, they are likely to focus on the no option and you get worse results-there might be issues from a methodological point of view as might not be yes/no- people might be sitting on the fence. Only having a Yes/no option can push people towards dissatisfaction and it limits choice.

Tenants satisfaction needs to integrate well with other data you collect e.g. your CRM (?). Don't have to ask everything in tenant satisfaction survey as you might collect elsewhere. I.D. is important.

Smaller HA's tend to do better than larger. Is geography an issue? E.g. London-worse scores due to certain reasons such as E.g. size and other stuff.

Ballpark costs for the Voluntas service? The length of the questionnaire impacts this. Telephone interviews are key for Voluntas e.g. 10 question survey-about £5 per survey. As soon as the telephone is put down, there is no analysis cost as the information goes straight onto the web.

Why do you need a repairs' satisfaction survey?

- Measuring contractor/ internal KPI's
- Benchmarking against peers
- Benchmarking against rest of the business
- Monitoring end to end service delivery
- Highlighting failures in process
- Improving value for money
- Identifying cost savings
- Understanding what we do well/ not so well
- Understanding what's important to tenants

Designing questions to meet objectives

- Benchmarking – use consistent questions and consistent scales
- Know what the rest of the business ask and how
- Cover the full customer journey
- Ask the questions you know you wont score well at
- Contractor KPI's – Agree the questions..... But which questions?
- Ask about the things which matter to tenants, not just your service standards

What can you learn from our customers?

- What do other HA's ask?
- Satisfaction scores across the end to end journey for repairs
- Key drivers of overall satisfaction – what's important to tenants?

Satisfaction is highest with:

- Convenient appointments,
- Contractor attitude and cleaning,
- Meeting expectations and solving the issue.

Satisfaction is lowest with;

- Showing ID
- Calling ahead
- and follow up appointments

Key drivers of satisfaction for customer's point of view are;

- waiting time before the repair,
- communication during the work,
- and the quality of the final work.

“Closed questions show you where the fires are, open questions tell you what to do to put them out”

- High analysis effort, but greater return in terms of insight
- Use sparingly to avoid fatigue, need thoughtful response
- Should be worded to prompt actionable responses

## **Sampling**

- Sampling should also be led by your objectives
- Aim is achieve a good confidence interval for each population
- You don't need to ask everyone to get a robust answer
- Aim is achieve a good confidence interval for each 'population'

Need to think about;

- Frequency of Reporting
- How accurate does it need to be?
- Level of detail – Areas and Contractors
- How many jobs are completed in total? – Achievable?

Take Home Points

- Think about your objectives first
- Design your questions based on those objectives, taking into account what is important to your customers
- Think about objectives in sampling too but don't needlessly over sample
- Re-evaluate the impact your survey is having regularly, if it's not working change it

At Monmouthshire HA, average tenant satisfaction for internal planned maintenance work is currently 99% positive albeit their program is now very small (approx. 100 properties per year) and all work is carried out by their DLO team. Response rates

are much lower, typically around 35-40%. This has however not always been the case, when they commenced on their WHQS journey in 2008, average tenant satisfaction was only around 83%. Standing over people does help to improve return rates and satisfaction figures, however, people don't like it and therefore they always give the choice of returning via the post.

Focus on response repair, but do also do planned maintenance, cyclical (look at slides)

Important to ask questions you might not get most positive response on (see slides)

Look at trends in satisfaction scores chart on slides.

Whats most important to customers? See the slides

Look at insource and outsourced team repair statistical differences. It's worth reviewing your satisfaction questions regularly-sample size and something else impacting your results (look at later slides)

### **B. Keith Warren, Asbri, the Planning system-updates on recent changes to the planning system**

Please see the presentations slides for information on Changes to Planning and what will be the effects on development?

### **Forum members update-an opportunity for open discussions**

One association noted that they have had issues with air source heat pumps in new properties-the systems were not meeting the needs for disabled persons (the properties are on gas). A 11 year old boy was suffering from living in a cold home-the temperature wouldn't go above 18-21 degrees. The HA want to contact Welsh Government. It was noted that you need constant and controlled temperature. Looking at the possibility for Physical Adaptation Grants is an option as well (for new and existing homes). Using gas if possible was noted as an option (renewables such as air source heat pumps were noted as more useful in rural areas which were off gas and using oil, etc). Air source heat pumps were noted as hard to service

The question of whether there were design issues was also asked? If cant get temperature above-18-21 degrees then there may be issues with design as well as the air source heat pump systems.

Other RSLs noted that they have air source heat pumps and have had no problem with temperature issues. Air source heat pumps for some RSLs have resulted in the tenants having really cheap bills-you just need to get it right (installation, the system,

usage, etc). You shouldn't turn systems on and off-they are slow to heat up at times (although it was noted that the disabled tenant wasn't actually turning the system on and off). If you do turn them and off, shut and close windows, your energy bills might be much higher. People need to understand the way the property they live in works. Air source heat pumps might be covered in ice as well in winter (this has been an issue for some RSLs) which can impact their performance-some contractors have poured hot water over the external part of the system-make sure this is done safely though if you choose to do it. The HA are going to replace the systems now (they are going back to combi boiler?)

One of CHC's members is experiencing difficulties with the highways authorities process and would like to understand if this is isolated or common throughout the majority of authorities and something that we can look at as a joint issue. It is a difficult process to achieve a technical approval on a S38 for example. Once the technical approval has been gained, there is a blockage in the legal process from the authorities legal team in progressing the necessary documentation to include any easements and deed of covenants to conclude the engrossment process. This is continued through to the Making good defects process and accepting the Highways into Public maintenance which the Association could retain liability for many years and experience expensive requests from Highways in remedying defects without hope of it being adopted. Another member in the room asked whether they had thought about taking an indemnity out?

Hafod noted that the HSE are doing checks on asbestos

It was asked what is everyone doing around CDM in terms of appointments, etc?

### **A.O.B**

CHC received feedback on the structure of the technical services forum-putting maintenance and development sessions all together don't always work well. CHC are currently reviewing their forums/networks. An RSL in the room noted that we could have 1/2 meetings a year instead of 3, or more break out rooms throughout the day as well as main sessions. CHC needs to think about operational/strategic needs-get Kelly's views.

Include info I put together under agenda I put together for myself. E.g. yammer update, etc:

Possible sessions for the next technical services meeting:

- A discussion on Physical Adaptation Grants at the next meeting- WG view on PAGs and the future. **Action:** CHC to circulate report (on yammer) and get thoughts from sector on what recommendations we would like to be seen taken forward.
- Voids?

- Procurement-there are new procurement rules which effectively stop you from negotiating with an existing contractor unless you have noted the fact that you intend to do that in the earlier competitive tender. This came in on 26 February 2015. There are other changes too.
- Someone who can talk about procurement generally, that might be a better option than someone who wants to sell their framework. Iwan Jenkins at Hugh James? Procurement and working together/collaboration – what's happening and is it effective?
- WHQS update, where members are at with WHQS. A review of the whole journey perhaps?
- Warranties generally: rather than giving platform to an individual business is there anyone out there who is an expert on the market generally? What the market offers, for how much, and is it worth it? What are RSL experiences for claiming against these policies?
- Development KPI's - a sector wide response. Who's doing it? What is being collected? Is it being reported to boards? What actions are being taken towards those contractors with poorer performance than others? Are RSL's using tenders based on price only or on price and quality? How is that quality measured? Who's got an 'exemplar' KPI system that they are prepared to share? With scarce contractor resources available can we actually afford to disregard contractors on frameworks etc? How do you improve performance? Are we seeing tender increases? It is perhaps a useful one for development people to share regularly?
- What is the overall approach to VFM? How is it recorded and embedded into the organisation? Is there lots of form filling? How does the organisation define VFM (does it even do this..?) and what effect is there on practice and culture? What happens to the savings? How much focus is on £ rather than social or environmental return? Relationships with regulators and local authorities – how do these affect VFM e.g. are housing registers working, does the regulator 'get' VFM and what are their expectations (they are fairly non specific at the moment)?
- What are organisations doing to restructure services to be more efficient and meet tenant demand better – this includes more holistic delivery focusing on cause and effect and prevention not just the symptoms of issues (eg arrears)?
- Specifically, a focus on asset management and the need to develop systems to track the performance of our stock – down to individual property level. What are others doing and is it effective? What impact has it had and how broad a view of 'asset' and 'performance' are they taking (e.g. do they include housing management indicators like demand and ASB as well as specific property ones like component lifecycles and condition?)
- look this up and see if issues-raise in tech s
- <http://nationalhousingfederation.newsweaver.com/1cw55ayyul9u4wx7povlvs?email=true&a=1&p=48497331&t=22194785>
- Formpave SUDS? CHC commercial members-offered a slot previously but would they add lots of value?
- Andrew Markham-no?? attended TSF over a year ago-commercial company so no!? add value?
- External wall insulation and Cavity Wall Insulation Extraction–the unintended consequences of retrofit –invite Colin king to talk about findings from the BRE

research and invite mike and speakers from Cavity Wall Insulation Extraction event in Bargoed?

### **Re-Use and Construction Waste project**

Peter Draper, from Rounded Developments ( [info@rounded-developments.org.uk](mailto:info@rounded-developments.org.uk) ), is helping to develop a new community based initiative for HAs in Cardiff. Please contact Peter if the below content is of interest. Through Renew Wales, they are looking to develop a construction waste / re-use service for the social landlord sector. The basis of the project is similar to the Bron Afon model where waste / materials from void work, construction projects etc come to a central location where it can be sorted for Re-Use, Recycling etc. Materials that can be re-used will be fed back into the sector, but raw materials will be used for innovative product creation and the associated training opportunities. They also hope to work with larger builders merchants and building contractors to look at product development of un-used materials (a la CEW / Care and Repair project in Swansea).

With the bulk of social housing being owned by Cardiff Council there is an issue of volume for individual HAs to develop any similar projects independently, so they are looking to offer this service to all HAs in the Cardiff area. Bron Afon make it work, but they have a larger pool of properties and hence turn over. This volume will only be achieved by partnership working and they think that a new not-for-profit CIC can help to bring organisations together. It is assumed that any HA wishing to work with the project would take a seat on the board of the CIC.

In order to help with business planning for the group they are in the process of collating info on:

1. Levels of HA owned housing stock in Cardiff
2. The contact details for the person who would need to be involved in any project development of this nature.

### **Affordable Housing Land programme**

In the Draft Budget for 2015-16, the Welsh Government announced £10 million for the Affordable Housing Land programme, a new pilot scheme which will increase the supply of affordable housing in Wales by boosting the funding options available to local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to acquire land for housing developments. The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty has agreed to award the loans to successful applicants and the redeployment of the remaining allocation. Date of decision: 23 December 2014. Statement of information: The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty is being asked to approve the awarding of loans to successful applicants to the Affordable Housing Land Scheme and re-deployment of under utilised allocation in 2014-15 to the Home Improvement Loan Scheme. <http://llyw.cymru/about/cabinet/decisions/2015/jan-mar/housing/lg3984/?lang=en>

## **Sustainable Development plans**

Some RSLs are looking to develop Sustainable Development plans including their economic, environmental and sustainability policies. If you have already produced a Sustainable Development strategy or have a centralised set of templates or exemplars that you are willing to share, please feel free to share it with [shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk](mailto:shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk)