



Time to deliver the right homes in the right places

A manifesto from those delivering the services

Housing Futures Cymru are a policy advisory panel made up of new/young members that have a stake in the future of the housing profession in Wales, set up and supported by CIH Cymru.

The Housing Futures Cymru Panel fully support the need to incorporate the right to adequate housing into Welsh law. We have a housing crisis in Wales; where numbers of new build truly affordable homes are not meeting demand, housing choice is no longer available and the days of home security seem to be a distant memory. The fear is that this crisis is slowly becoming 'too hard' to fix - we can't let this happen.

In order to meet the commitment that the Right to Housing will create, Housing Futures Cymru asks that all party manifestos make a real commitment to **increase social housing supply across Wales and deliver the right homes in the right places.**

To achieve this how we currently fund, deliver and assess demand of Social Housing has to change - it's time for action!



Commit the right level of funding

There is a demand for a significant increase in homes across Wales over the next 5 years, only 2,485 affordable homes were built on average annually from 2016 to 2019 (Inside Housing 2020). Research tells us that:

- **At least 3,500 affordable homes needed YEARLY across Wales for the next 5 years (StatsWales2020) However we would argue that the delivery needs to go further than this to seriously address the housing crisis and provide a home that truly meets everyone's needs.**
- A 2018 survey shows that at least 60,569 households were on housing waiting lists. (Gov.wales2020)

We must remember the fact that estimates of housing need are just that - 'estimates' - they aren't meant to be used as targets in themselves. So whilst they're a useful indicator, the onus must lie with the next Welsh Government to be much more ambitious, and that starts with funding.

We are asking that all Manifestos commit to:

- **Increase the level of future grant funding to support the demand and ensure it is nationally and regionally prioritised effectively to meet social housing need and takes into account any cost implications of new housing standards.**



Finally deliver the right homes in the right places

Despite the key recommendations in the 2019 Affordable Housing Supply review, local demand still isn't being met; Demand projections are some 2,000 homes higher than current build estimates (Statistics for Wales 2019). The most recent Welsh Government Report into Housing Need states that 6,200 - 8,300 additional housing units will be required annually between 2019-2024. The Affordable Housing Review has commented on the poor quality of data at national and local levels and advised that this needs to be improved. The panel argue that local knowledge is deemed vital for the delivery of the RIGHT homes in the RIGHT places.

We are asking that all Manifestos commit to:

- **Align services to meet local housing demand, utilising good quality local knowledge and statistics**
- **Implement clear and appropriate Local Housing Market Assessment's (LHMA's) across Wales to understand current demands and ensure Local Development Plans's link with LHMA results.**
- **Ensure Local Authorities enforce a consistent and firm approach to Section 106 schemes to deliver an increased percentage of social housing on each new development.**



Commit to the right investment to bring empty properties back into use

There are 27,000 long-term empty private sector residential properties in Wales - this is just part of the picture. Welsh Government need to make a commitment to resource bringing these empty homes back into use as effectively as possible. Tyfu Tai Cymru (part of CIH Cymru) research in this area found that:

- **Only 14% of local authorities responses stated their approach to empty homes included a strategy and action plan. (TTC, 2020)**
- **Further work surveying local authority housing professionals in Wales by Tyfu Tai Cymru found that workload pressures, lack of access to expertise were significant barriers to delivering the service**

The Senedd believes that the Welsh Government can support local authorities to bring empty properties back into use. The Empty Properties report from the the Senedd's Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee published in 2019 titled 'Empty properties' and lists a number of recommendations. We support these recommendations however, we feel that there must be a commitment to provide investment in Local Authority Empty Homes services in order to break down the barriers to bringing empty properties back into use.

We are asking that all Manifestos commit to:

- **Increasing revenue and capital funding to deliver and improve the empty homes service in line with the 2019 Empty Properties report.**



Enable the RIGHT support services to END rough sleeping

In the 2019 national rough sleeper count, it was estimated that 405 people were sleeping rough across Wales - this is 405 people too many. We now see these stats are not a complete picture of the real amount of people suffering sleeping rough on our streets. (GovWales2019)

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, that homelessness is an issue we can resolve, and there could be an end in sight if we work together and take a proactive longer-term approach. The pandemic produced a swift reaction, and forced the necessity of additional funding and partnership working that helped get people off the streets, however despite the current Welsh Government commitment is "no one need return to the street" a recent BBC report highlighted that by August 101 people had returned to the streets. (BBC2020) We need a long term strategy driven by a further strong commitment from Welsh Government.

To ensure we do not throw away the successes of the pandemic, the RIGHT support and services need to be invested in on a long-term basis to support people to sustain their tenancies. Be it a 'Housing First' or 'Rapid Rehousing' approach, preventing homelessness should be key for our Welsh Government, and support the wellbeing of our current and future generations.

We are asking that all Manifestos commit to:

- **Increasing resource for this area of work in both revenue and capital terms, with a long term commitment made to funding levels to allow services to really make a plan for the future.**
- **To ensure support services are enhanced and available for those who require them in terms of pre tenancy engagement and tenancy sustainability support.**



Links:

www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/welsh-government-pumps-extra-24m-into-affordable-housing-as-building-target-deadline-looms-65100#:~:text=An%20average%20of%202%2C485%20affordable,the%20target%20to%20be%20reached.

<https://gov.wales/estimates-housing-need-2019-based>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/ndf-explanatory-note-housing-need.pdf>

<https://senedd.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld12797/cr-ld12797%20-e.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/national-rough-sleeper-count-november-2019>

<https://statswales.gov.wales/v/14kO>

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-54888766

