

# FOCUS ON INFLUENCING

July 2017



## Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of Focus on Influencing. It includes a round up of some of our influencing work from the last month, recent publications and the latest government announcements affecting housing.

## Housing stories

### Grenfell Tower tragedy

Government are currently focused on Grenfell Tower, appointing experts to take over the running of the housing department in Kensington and Chelsea, the public inquiry and further investigations into the causes. We are continuing to work with DCLG, taking part in discussions and offering advice where appropriate. Debbie Lerner our head of practice is leading on this work and we are continuing to update our [fire safety page](#), including [a recent blog](#) from Inside Housing by our chief executive Terrie Alafat calling for cross industry co-operation.

Also take a look at [our response](#) to the terms of reference consultation for the Grenfell Tower inquiry.

Our member opinion panel have recently been helping us with our response to the consultation on the terms of reference for the Grenfell Tower inquiry. The panel is a great opportunity for our members to get more involved in our work and help influence the agenda for housing. If you are interested in joining the panel and completing short surveys to help us you can [sign up here](#).

## New publications and blogs

We have published the following briefings and blogs over the last month:

- [Sector showcase – fixed term tenancies](#), a look at how organisations are using the tenancies several years after their introduction
- [What you need to know about research](#), help and guidelines if you are carrying out a research project
- [Five ways to help your tenants with the roll-out of universal credit](#)

## New Webinars

- [Supporting tenants to pay their rent](#)
- [Housing law update](#)
- [Housing first](#)

## Coming soon

Look out for a new briefing called Building Bridges which focuses on council and housing association relationships and further research into the impacts of the benefit cap.



## Influencing on the ground

Since the last edition of Focus on Influencing, we've attended a variety of meetings and events - here's a sample to give you a sense of the kind of activities we engage in on your behalf:

- Melanie Rees, head of policy spoke at the HouseMark welfare reform club meeting
- Faye Greaves, policy and practice officer spoke at the National Practitioner Support Service conference
- Sarah Davis, senior policy and practice officer attended the MoU meeting between health and housing
- Sarah attended a health and housing evidence seminar
- Sarah and Melanie attended a meeting with the RTPI to discuss the Planning for Housing network
- Faye and Niki Walton, senior policy & practice administrator visited the Place/Ladywell scheme a UKHA 2017 finalist
- Debbie Lerner, head of practice met with DCLG to discuss the Grenfell Tower tragedy
- Debbie met with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue as part of ongoing work related to fire safety.

## Consultations

### Tackling unfair practices in the leasehold market

DCLG are consulting on prohibiting the sale of new build leasehold houses, limiting ground rents and protecting leaseholders from possession orders. We will be responding to [the consultation](#), if you are interested in contributing to our response please contact [Priya Thethi](#), policy and practice officer by Friday 25 August.

### Private rented sector review

Dr Julie Rugg from York University is carrying out a review of the private rented sector funded by the Nationwide Foundation, they are asking you to tell them what the private rental market is like in your area. Find out more about the review and how to respond [here](#).

## Northern Ireland

CIH Northern Ireland launched its new publication - Impact of welfare changes on rented housing in Northern Ireland - with the All Party Group on Housing at Parliament Buildings. Chaired by Nichola Mallon MLA, the event was attended by around 40 delegates including four MLAs. The launch was covered by eight media outlets.

We have met with the Department for Communities to discuss the recommendations of the report, particularly to have local housing allowance (LHA) reviewed in light of the UK government's



plan to apply LHA rates to social housing. We will continue to meet MLAs and MPs to raise awareness of the impact of the changes.

[Read the report](#) and catch up on the launch with this [short video](#).

## Scotland

CIH Scotland has released [comments on the latest bi-annual homelessness statistics](#) published by the Scottish Government on 27 June 2017, highlighting concerns about the slowing down of progress in reducing homelessness and the substantial number of people who continue to live in temporary accommodation.

CIH Scotland has also submitted its [response](#) to a recent Scottish Government consultation on energy efficiency and conditions standards in private rented housing. In the response, CIH Scotland calls for more ambitious energy efficiency standards for private landlords but [‘with longer lead time.’](#)

CIH Scotland has also published a [‘what you need to know’](#) briefing for members on the new Scottish Social Security Bill which outlines what’s included in the new Bill and the next steps for the implementation of the newly devolved benefits.

Nominations for the [2017 CIH Scotland Excellence Awards](#) close in just over one month on 8 September 2017. There are sixteen award categories in total and the award winners will be announced at a special [Excellence Awards Dinner](#) on 27 October in Edinburgh.

## Wales

CIH Cymru [responded](#) to the publication of the Welsh Assembly’s Public Accounts Committee’s inquiry into the regulation of housing associations in Wales. CIH Cymru welcomed the focus on tenant empowerment within regulation and the role of diversification as Housing Associations sought ways to fund the delivery of further homes and housing related support services.

CIH Cymru Director Matt Dicks provided evidence to the Welsh Assembly’s Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee as it undertook a one day inquiry into fire safety in high rise blocks in Wales. In giving evidence, we highlighted the quick response of the sector in reassuring tenants and outlined the challenges faced by members in operating fire safety strategies effectively.

CIH Cymru responded to the [homelessness figures](#) for 2016/17 welcoming the increase in the amount of people having their homelessness situation resolved, but warned that planned changes to welfare benefits could undermine further progress.