

FOCUS ON INFLUENCING



MAY 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.

Election 2017

Following the decision to call a snap General Election the policy & practice team have been busy trying to make sense of policies announced by the parties, analysing manifesto commitments and setting out the policies we think are needed to resolve the housing crisis. We have lots of interesting and useful blogs, briefings and comments:

- Webinar - [what might the general election mean for housing](#)
- A blog from Terrie Alafat for Inside Housing, [Manifesto measures can unleash council borrowing capacity](#)
- [What you need to know about housing and the general election](#)
- Our responses to the [Conservative](#), [Labour](#) and [Liberal Democrat](#) manifestos
- Listen to Melanie Rees, head of policy for CIH as she spoke about the housing crisis alongside the minister on BBC Radio 5 Live. (Mel speaks from 12:20 and 51:02)
- A blog from Faye Greaves '[what we're asking for on homelessness](#)'
- A blog from Sam Lister '[what we're asking for on welfare](#)'

Our next member opinion panel survey will focus on what the party manifestos say about

housing. If you are interested in joining the panel and completing short surveys to help us with our influencing work, you can sign up [here](#).

Other housing stories

Right to rent

A [new blog from John Perry](#) about the extension of the right to rent scheme to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants has contacted the Home Office to ask them to publish a full evaluation of the policy to demonstrate its efficacy, cost effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature before it is rolled out more widely.

Shared ownership

We have recently launched our shared ownership charter, encouraging organisations to provide the best possible customer experience when purchasing, living in and selling a shared ownership property

- [Sign up to the charter](#)
- Watch our [shared ownership webinar](#)

New publications, webinars and blogs

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

- [What you need to know about the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)
- [Shared housing options](#) - a webinar from Faye Greaves, CIH policy and practice officer and Ella Wesolowicz from Crisis



- [Future funding of supported housing](#) - a webinar
- Look out for the Knowledge Hub, coming soon a fantastic new free resource for all CIH members, initially the topics covered will be homelessness, housing management and repairs and maintenance but more will be added over the coming months.

Consultations

We have recently responded to the following consultations, you can find all our responses on [our website](#):

- Fixing our broken housing market - [housing white paper](#)
- [DWP select committee inquiry into 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:

- Sarah Davis, senior policy and practice officer took part in ongoing discussions with the Department of Health around the Better Care Fund
- Sam Lister, policy and practice officer spoke on welfare reform at our Tai conference and met with the Welsh government to discuss the impact of LHA rates on social housing
- Yoric Irving-Clarke, policy and practice research officer met with Crisis to discuss Frameworks research

- Policy & practice officers met with Julie Rugg from the University of York to discuss the research she is leading on the private rented sector
- Gavin Smart, deputy chief executive spoke at Birmingham City University
- Melanie Rees, head of policy was part of a panel posing ethical challenges for the Rising Stars finalists
- Faye Greaves, policy and practice officer spoke at a homelessness prevention seminar in Manchester
- Debbie Larnar, head of practice and Gavin Smart visited Bromford Housing Group
- Sarah attended a Centre for Ageing roundtable.

Northern Ireland

The work of the CIH Northern Ireland welfare changes and housing forum continues - it will shortly publish a report recommending realistic and achievable changes to housing and social security policy in Northern Ireland, which could help to make housing more affordable and housing provision more viable.

CIH Ireland

CIH Ireland hosted a major conference - Making the rental strategy work - in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Planning, Communities, and Local Government. The future of the Irish rental sector was debated by delegates and a wide range of speakers - Maria Bailey T.D., chair of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, told the crowd of over



100 housing industry experts from Ireland and the UK that housing associations should provide rented accommodation on a non-profit basis, in addition to traditional social housing. Find out more [here](#).

Scotland

CIH Scotland has commissioned research in partnership with the Scottish Government to assess the impact of introducing local housing allowance (LHA) caps to the social rented sector for young people in Scotland. A summary of the interim findings has been published and is available [online](#). It shows that around 21,000 single people under the age of 35 could face £22.6 million annual shortfall in rent due to the proposals. The research team are now conducting interviews with social landlords to explore options for mitigation. The final report will be published in the summer.

In the run up to the 2017 local council elections, CIH Scotland launched its 'Handle on housing' campaign featuring a [hanger](#) which members could display at their front door, encouraging them to ask five key questions of prospective canvassing candidates. This was accompanied by a [housing fact sheet](#) to help get the conversation started and a round up of each party's key housing and related [manifesto pledges](#).

CIH Scotland is currently working on responses to consultations on Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme and the Future of Energy in Scotland, and CIH Scotland members were encouraged to contribute their views by completing an online member survey. The responses to both consultations will be published on our [website](#) in due course.

Other public consultations which CIH Scotland will be responding to include a call for [evidence from the Scottish Parliament on homelessness, guidance on engaging communities in decisions relating to land](#), and [energy efficiency and conditions standards in private rented housing](#).

Wales

- CIH Cymru provided oral evidence to the Equalities, Community and Local Government committee at the Welsh Assembly on the abolition of the right to buy in Wales. In providing evidence Matt Dicks and Matt Kennedy highlighted the need to protect the supply of social housing in Wales and highlighted evidence provided by members on the local impact of the policy and modern day housing management challenges.
- CIH Cymru has once again joined the Homes for Wales coalition to support a joint, focussed campaign highlighting the need to re-look at welfare policy and ensure a well-resourced construction sector following Brexit. The coalition has jointly arranged a hustings event due to take place on May 23rd in Cardiff with spokespeople from the main parties due to appear.