

FOCUS ON INFLUENCING



APRIL 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 two months, recent publications and the latest government announcements affecting housing.

Supply

Fixing the broken housing market – White Paper

We are continuing our work on responding to the white paper, it will be available to view on [our website](#) in early May. We carried out a survey with our Member Opinion Panel to get a sense of how members viewed the announcements in the White Paper.

Members of the panel were:

- Generally in favour of planning measures such as standardising methods for assessing housing need, ensuring all local authorities have a local plan and making it easier to find out who owns land
- Not in favour of requiring more small sites in local plans or the sub dividing of larger sites or encouraging more high density developments
- In favour of diversifying the market by setting a clear rent policy for social landlords and bespoke deals for local authorities who want to build
- Strongly in favour of family friendly tenancies of three or more years for build to rent schemes.

If you are interested in joining the panel please sign up [here](#).

Policy Advisory Committee

The Policy Advisory Committee held an additional meeting to help us with our response to the White Paper offering their help as experienced professionals.

Meeting housing need

Over the last year we have facilitated a series of roundtables for senior staff working in local authorities and housing associations, chaired by Terrie Alafat CE or Gavin Smart deputy CE. The main aim of the discussions has been to bring local authorities and housing associations together to:

- Take stock of current housing need and issues, how need is being met and partnerships/relationships in the region
- Share ideas on what's working well and possible solutions to things that are not
- Find positive ways forward to maximise the potential for, and impact of, joint working
- Discussions have been very regionally focused and varied depending on local issues. Look out for a briefing on the themes later in the spring.



Welfare reform

The gap between LHA and private rents

We have recently carried out some analysis of LHA levels and private sector rents across the country, the gap between the two is now making housing inaccessible to young people in almost every part of the country. Take a look at our [press release](#) and [Sam Lister's blog](#).

Other housing stories

New housing research centre

A research centre the Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE) is being set up with input from nine UK universities, RTPI, RICS and CIH, it will be funded by the ESRC and Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Our deputy chief executive Gavin will be Director of Communications and Knowledge Exchange for the centre. [Find out more](#).

The Crook Fellowship

Supported by the Crook Public Service Fellowships, Faye Greaves, policy and practice officer is working with the University of Sheffield on a new research project which will explore partnership working between housing associations and local authorities to prevent and tackle homelessness in England. Their work will examine how the policy landscape, financial pressures and other challenges have impacted (whether positively or negatively) on the work the organisations do together to tackle homelessness.

New publications and blogs

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

- [Sector showcase: The role of housing in effective hospital discharge, a free briefing](#)
- [Changes to starter homes represents a significant shift, a blog from David Pipe](#)
- [Understanding hoarding, a webinar](#)
- [Fixed term tenancies – how and why are they being used, a webinar](#)

Consultations

We are currently working on responses to the following consultations

- [Banning letting agent fees paid by tenants](#) – DCLG, closes 2nd June
- [Planning and affordable housing for build to rent](#) – DCLG, 1st May

We have recently responded to the following:

- The work and pensions committee inquiry into universal credit, [CIH response](#)
- The work and pensions committee inquiry into the benefit cap, our response will be available on our website once it is published on the committee's webpage.



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:

- Faye Greaves, policy and practice officer attended the launch of homeless monitor
- David Pipe, policy and practice officer and Debbie Lerner head of practice visited Curo
- Gavin Smart, deputy chief executive attended the HSA conference
- Faye discussed with Crisis how we can work together on the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Gavin met with Sajid Javid's special adviser to discuss improvements in the private rented sector
- Debbie attended a roundtable meeting to discuss enforcement of standards in the PRS
- Sarah Davis, senior policy and practice officer, Melanie Rees, head of policy and Domini Gunn, director of health and wellbeing for CIH consultancy have been involved in task and finish groups for the funding of supported housing and we now await the green paper.

Northern Ireland

The CIH Northern Ireland welfare changes and housing forum has met twice since its February launch. It has focused primarily on ways to influence NI government to help mitigate the adverse impact of welfare reform locally. Its first output will recommend realistic and achievable policy changes (since both social security and housing policy are devolved) that would help to make housing more affordable housing provision more viable.

CIH Northern Ireland continues to promote ways that members who are private landlords and letting agents can influence with CIH. We held a member policy event in February on the Department for Communities' proposals for regulatory change in the private rented sector – half of delegates were private landlords/agents. We also ran a member poll on the department's proposals – 14 per cent of members responded including those from the private sector, which helped to inform [our response](#).



Scotland

CIH Scotland has [welcomed the publication of new guidance](#) from the Scottish Government on the registration of letting agents. Working in partnership with Landlord Accreditation Scotland, CIH Scotland has developed the [LETWELL training programme](#) with the specific purpose of helping letting agents meet their new legal obligations and to help drive up standards within the sector more generally.

The two day [CIH Scotland Housing Festival](#) took place in March, and included sessions on issues such as land, planning and housing supply, social security, and the need for better links with health and social care services. The Festival also saw the launch by Minister for Local Government and Housing Kevin Stewart MSP of a new [practice guide](#) and [training toolkit](#) on tenant scrutiny, developed in partnership with CIH Scotland, HouseMark Scotland and the Scottish Government. Other launches at the event included key research findings from phase 2 of CIH Scotland's [Housing and Dementia Programme](#) entitled '[Dementia Pathways – Housing's Role](#)'; research on '[Housing Need and Aspiration: The Role of Mid Market Rent](#)', in partnership with Wheatley Group; and a report by the Scottish Public Health Network on '[Foundations for well-being: reconnecting public health and housing](#)'.

Following a successful launch in September 2016, the [date for the second annual Scottish Housing Day](#) has been announced as 21 September 2017. Developed in partnership with a range of housing sector partners including Shelter Scotland, the Tenant Participatory Advisory Service (TPAS) Scotland, the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO), the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), the Tenants Forum, Homes for Scotland and the Scottish Association of Landlords (SAL), the day aims to raise public

awareness of the latest developments in housing and the different options potentially available when deciding where to live. More information will be available on the [housing day website](#) in due course.

CIH Scotland has commissioned a [new piece of research](#), in partnership with the Scottish Government, to assess the impact on young people of the introduction of LHA caps to the social rented sector in Scotland. Findings are expected to be published by the summer.

Consultations that CIH Scotland has recently responded to are as follows: [Extending coverage of Freedom of Information regulations to RSLs; Universal Credit \(Claims and Payments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2017; Procedure of the First Tier Tribunals Housing and Property Chamber](#); and [The future of the Scottish planning system](#).

Wales

CIH Cymru has launched a campaign aimed at getting local council election candidates to focus on housing issues ahead of polling day on 4 May. The "Handle on Housing" campaign lists five key questions that voters should ask candidates on the doorstep. And it comes in the form of a handy door handle which can be hung on your front door giving you quick access to those key questions when a candidate comes knocking.