

## Housing Information Group (HIG) Meeting 18 June 2021

Attendees		
Sarah	Laing Gibbens	Welsh Government
Keryl	Lanfear	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Cerys	Purches-Phillips	Ceredigion County Council
Sue	Leake	Welsh Government
Emma	Williams	Welsh Government
Gowan	Watkins	Welsh Government
Hannah	Browne Gott	Welsh Government
Dan	Bristow	Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP)
Matthew	Kennedy	Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru
Alun	Evans	Citizens Advice
Jenny	Murphy	Newport City Homes
Sam	Sullivan	Data Cymru
Louise	Woodfine	Public Health Wales
Mark	Harris	Home Builders Federation Ltd
Sian	Coggins	Welsh Government
Keith	Davies	Ceredigion County Council
Ryan	David	Welsh Government
Janine	Edwards	Conwy County Borough Council
Rhys	Gwilym-Taylor	Crisis
Michael	Bailey	Bron Afon
Matt	Miller	Carmarthenshire County Council
Rhiannon	Evans	Citizens Advice
Huw	Maguire	Welsh Government
Huw	Charles	Welsh Government
Lowri Wyn	Morton	Gwynedd County council
Billy	Houseman	Welsh Government
Rebeca	Jones	Gwynedd County council
Brian	Davies	Welsh Government
Chris	Roberts	Gwynedd County council
Bob	Smith	Cardiff University
Dave	Jones	Welsh Revenue Authority
Jim	McKirdle	WLGA
Sam	Rees	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Karl	Thomas	Welsh Government
Darren	Hatton	Welsh Government
Sarah	Scotcher	Community Housing Cymru

Kirsty	Wells	Housemark
Nia	Roblin	United Welsh Housing Association
Craig	McLeod	Welsh Government
Simon	White	Welsh Government
Paul	Robinson	Welsh Government
Iddon	Edwards	Welsh Government

Apologies		
Helen	Bevan-Jones	Bron Afon
Nick	Morris	Crisis
Chantal	Jordan	Carmarthenshire County Council
Angie	Bowen	Carmarthenshire County Council
Laura	Morgan	NHS Wales
Ross	Thomas	Tai Pawb

## 1. Welcome and Introduction

Amelia John (AJ), Welsh Government (WG) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. Minutes of last meeting and discussion around purpose of Group

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted. AJ introduced a discussion requesting feedback on whether the meetings are useful and how they can be improved. The following questions were discussed:

Q1. Are you getting what you want from these meetings?

Q2. Are the Frequency and duration of the meetings appropriate?

Q3. Are any organisations missing from the meetings?

The general responses were that the meetings were valuable for informing what is happening across the sector and in helping to shape thinking. The current duration and frequency of meetings were agreed to be the best option. Additionally, it was agreed that in future, prior to the meetings, prompts should be sent out to members on whether they would like to add to the agenda or present their own items.

**Action:** Secretariat to invite members to contribute to meeting agenda prior to meetings in future

## 3. New Government and their housing priorities for the term

AJ discussed the Programme for Government (PfG), [Welsh Government - Programme for Government](#). Key areas mentioned include:

- Building a stronger, greener economy
- Making Welsh cities, towns and villages better places to live and work

- Build 20,000 new low carbon social homes for rent
- Reform homelessness services
- Decarbonise more homes
- Create a Welsh Language community housing plan

The discussion following this focused on:

- Work around town centres to become places to live, work, leisure and learn in the wake of COVID.
- The Help to Buy scheme as a significant lever for good standards

#### **4. Housing Statistics and Research Update (including discussion on housing statistic outputs in 2021-22)**

Scott Clifford (SC) introduced himself as the new Head of Housing Statistics. SC presented on proposals in regards to WG data collection and statistical outputs for Housing Statistics, referencing the following document [Proposals for housing data collections and statistical outputs 2021-22 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#).

The presentation identified some key proposals outlined in the paper:

- Committed to continuing monthly management information (MI) on homelessness to continue until at least March 2022
- The Statutory homelessness collection and release for 2020-21 will be collected and published. However quarterly and headline statistics will not be requested or published
- New house build data for 2020-21 will be collected and published annually only.
- Timetable and commissioning of some data collections will take place later than previous years

Following this a key discussion focussed on the proposed changes to the frequency of the new house build data collection (changed to annual collection). Mark Harris (MH) suggested this will make it difficult to compare with previous years. Additionally it was suggested that the private sector house builders feature less and less in the statistics and they rely on this output for demonstrating the industry's contribution. Others noted the potential inability to compare housebuilding rates across the UK or made suggestions relating to potentially increasing frequency at a later date.

Jenny Murphy (JM), discussed the trade-off that may occur when we are streamlining our data collection and outputs that they maintain their robustness.

Gowan Watkins (GW), WG, mentioned only collecting what data is needed and the importance of removing duplication of data whilst improving quality.

## **5. GSR literature review on overcrowding**

Hannah Browne Gott (HBG), WG, presented an overview and results of the literature on overcrowding within Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities. The presentation consisted of the following sections:

- Context for the review – following COVID there were lots of questions on how cases and deaths interacted with housing circumstances (particularly overcrowding)
- Aims of the review – look into overcrowding and the impacts on different groups within ethnic minority communities. Identify the drivers of overcrowding, and whether the impacts of overcrowding were different across housing tenures.
- Methodology and sample – a systematic literature review was carried out
- Limitations – much of the limitations of the review revolved around the lack of good quality and up to date evidence relating to ethnic minority groups and overcrowding.

The discussions following this presentation focused on topics such; the importance of this research, in particular in ensuring all parts of the community are served in terms of housing needs, are we meeting their needs through social housing or are we potentially forcing members of the community into private sector. AJ mentioned the work undertaken for the consultation Race Equality Action Plan where groups from some ethnic minority communities were identified as wanting increased access to larger properties. Strong emphasis on diversity and meeting community needs.

## **6. Update on the Race Equality Action Plan; housing and accommodation**

AJ presented an update on the Race Equality Action Plan (REAP) - [Race Equality Action Plan: An Anti-racist Wales | GOV.WALES](#). Following the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the COVID pandemic highlighting the depth of inequality the government made the decision to work towards an anti-racist Wales. Focused on the need for representation from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups within all levels and embedded anti-racism. The closing date for the consultation has been extended to 15 July 2021.

Some initial feedback from the consultation suggests some members of ethnic minority communities are forced to go the Private Rented Sector (PRS) where standards are potentially more of an issue. Need to ensure standards in the PRS are improved. Additionally, there is a need to improve engagement with the ethnic minority communities in order to better inform policy development. Included in the Plan are specific goals relating to inequality faced by Gypsy Roma traveller communities.

Discussed the future for the REAP and once consultations are finished a plan will be developed, in particular the Race Disparity Unit commitment within the PfG was identified.

Once the plan has been launched more information will be reported to the members.

## **7. Bringing together housing safety regulations and improvement**

This agenda item was not covered.

## **8. Update on 2021 Census and housing outputs – paper & Q&Q**

Sue Leake (SL), WG gave an update on the 2021 Census, in particular the housing outputs.

The last meeting regarding this topic was in January where members from the ONS came to talk about the census. This agenda item provided an update on what has happened since January. The main Census had a response rate of 97 percent; within Wales all Local Authorities (LAs) exceeded a 90 percent response rate. The housing statistics team are continuing to engage with the ONS on topics such as: number of dwellings, second homes, identifying multigenerational households, overcrowding and under occupancy. It is expected that the ONS will start to release data from March 2022.

Following this the discussion focused on:

- David Jones (DJ) raised the potential issue of house owners being unable to access their property due to COVID and the impact this might have had on the Census
- AJ expressed interest in understanding the demographics of those who do not complete the Census.

## **9. Second Homes**

AJ introduced this agenda as focusing on the prevalence of second homes within certain geographies and the impacts on Welsh speaking communities. SC then proceeded with the [presentation](#) about data sources on second homes and their strengths / limitations, with a few key messages:

- There is no single definition of what a second home is
- No data source specifically aimed at understanding second home ownership
- There is a need for more data sources below Local Authority level
- A range of data are available from the Census 2011. Council tax data and the Welsh Revenue Authority Land Transaction Tax data but each have their limitations and should be used with care.

After the presentation the following discussions occurred:

- It was suggested that local intelligence was needed when considering the data available and the impact on local communities. For example, some

properties defined as second homes are located in holiday park developments, therefore should potentially be discounted from any future work concerning second homes

- Rebeca Angharad Jones (RAJ), presented on the work carried out regarding second homes by Gwynedd County Council, referencing different issues across Wales including, for instance the issue of Airbnb properties within Cardiff. The report highlighted key issues regarding data collection, not every LA keeps the data in the same formats. There is an added issue in terms of the evidencing the impact of second homes on the Welsh language.

## **10. CaCHE Update**

Bob Smith (BS), Cardiff University, Knowledge exchange associate for CaCHE provided an update on the work CaCHE are doing. CaCHE aims to produce research and evidence to inform policy and practice in housing. CaCHE has done major work on the impacts of COVID on housing policy. Interim reports have been released looking at:

- Homelessness
- Domestic abuse
- Private rented sector
- Resilience and the housing system

A number of studies are due to commence including one on social housing allocations (GB-wide) and on Ethnic inequalities in Housing. The latter was due to be focused on England and Scotland but BS would engage with the researchers to see if it could be expanded to include Wales.

Further information about the current work by CaCHE can be found at: [UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence - Housing Update, June 2021 \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales/collaborative-centre-for-housing-evidence/housing-update-june-2021).

## **11. AOB / Close**

AJ stated the next meeting will take place on the 23 September 2021.

### **Actions:**

1. Secretariat to ask members whether they would like to add to the agenda and/or present their own items.