

Housing Information Group: minutes of meeting

Wednesday 28 September 2022 – 10:30-13:00

Attendees		
Angela	Bowen	Carmarthenshire County Council
Scott	Armstrong	Welsh Government
Rebecca	Askew	Welsh Government
Avril	Roberts	CLA Cymru
Nikola	Bowers	Office for National Statistics
Amy	Carter	Welsh Government
Catherine	May	Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru
Stephen	Chamberlain	Welsh Government
David	Rowlands	Tai Pawb
Karen	Deehan	Welsh Government
Holly	Flynn	Welsh Government
Raelle	Fontenot	Welsh Government
Hayley	Randal	Data Unit Wales
Louise	Huxtable	Welsh Government
Janine	Edwards	Denbighshire County Council
Jasmine	Harris	Crisis
Jenny	Murphy	Newport City Homes
Jim	McKirdle	Welsh Local Government Association
John	Wickenden	Housemark
Cathy	Johnson	Welsh Government
Lowri	Wyn Morton	Gwynedd Council
Manon	Roberts	Wales NHS
Chloe	Massey	Office for National Statistics
Becca	McEwan	Welsh Government
Rossana	Palma	Welsh Government
Simon	Prothero	Welsh Government
Regina	Taylor	Bro Afon Community Housing
Sam	Rees	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Sarah	Hosken-Jones	Housemark
Lee	Thomas	Welsh Government
Joanna	Valentine	Welsh Government
Tanya	Wigfall	Welsh Government
Tony	Wilkins	Office for National Statistics
Gerald	Williams	Office for National Statistics

Presenters		
Amelia	John	Welsh Government (Chair)
Sue	Leake	Welsh Government
Gerald	Williamson	Office for National Statistics
Andy	O'Rourke	Welsh Government
Sara	James	Welsh Government
Amy	Carter	Welsh Government
Bob	Smith	Cardiff University
Rhiannon	Jones	Welsh Government
Rachel	Bowen	Welsh Government
Minute takers		
Marcela	Csikosova	Welsh Government
James	Falkner	Welsh Government
Apologies		
Jennie	Bibbings	Shelter Cymru
Hannah	Browne Gott	Welsh Government
Samantha	Collins	Welsh Government
Ryan	David	Welsh Government
Matthew	Dicks	Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru
Stuart	Fitzgerald	Welsh Government
Mark	Harris	Home Builders Federation Ltd
Nigel	Hollet	CLA Cymru
Chantal	Jordan	Carmarthenshire County Council
Catherine	May	Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru
Fraser	McAuley	CLA Cymru
Liam	Richards	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Paul	Robinson	Welsh Government
Nia	Roblin	United Welsh Housing Association
Sarah	Scotcher	Community Housing Cymru Group
Kirsty	Wells	Housemark
Emma	Williams	Welsh Government

1	Welcome and Introduction	Amelia John, Welsh Government
	AJ welcome participants to the meeting and made introductory remarks, noting the pressures of the cost of living crisis and the impact on people in Wales in general and the potential impact on homelessness. There are a lot of different pressures in the accommodation system. Whilst there is anecdotal evidence that landlords are leaving the rental market the data WG have (from Rent Smart Wales) doesn't suggest this. Anyone that has any hard evidence or data are asked to get in touch.	Action: Members to advise AJ if they have evidence of landlords leaving the rental market.
2	Housing Stats and Research update paper	Amelia John and Sue Leake, Welsh Government
	Highlighting recent statistical releases:	

	<p>WG are continuing to undertake the monthly management information on homelessness accommodation and rough sleeping on a regular basis. There is also work on the development of the new national indicator on housing affordability which will be covered more comprehensively later.</p> <p>There is work carrying on in relation to the housing condition evidence programme, including working with the Welsh Housing Quality Standards team on the consultation on the proposed new housing quality standards and continuing to seek data for the housing stock analytical resource.</p>	
3	Census 2021: Current and future housing analysis plans	Gerald Williams, ONS
	<p>Overview of the Census housing topic and the data sets that ONS will be producing.</p> <p>A number of statistical bulletins will be published as part of the Housing Topic summary alongside datasets and a range of digital content and supporting quality information. Statistical bulletins will cover housing and communal establishments. An additional report on second addresses will also be published.</p> <p>The 16 data sets produced will include data on dwelling type, occupied and unoccupied housing, and the number of rooms</p> <p>Members questioned the report on second addresses, and it was clarified that the initial report would relate to households who owned second addresses. Data on the location of second addresses will be coming out in the phase two release early in 2023. The phase two release will also include the vacant property data.</p> <p>Phase 2 releases are based around multivariate data. This is where we can start comparing topics against each other and against the longitudinal data from 2011 and the different characteristics across 10 years. This allows understanding of rentals against ownership and free holds, and types of fuels that are being used.</p> <p>Some examples of the data sets that will be produced are dwelling type and the number of rooms. ONS will use admin data to support the census data to help produce these data sets.</p> <p>The different outputs are based on different personas from technical users to passive citizen user. ONS are trying to encompass outputs for everyone, so there is data and commentary as well as exploratory products and the explanatory products.</p> <p>Visualisation tools that will be available via the website will give users the option to select a specific area and see more detail about that area. Users will be able to customise the type of data, the area, and different variables and it will come up in a visualisation of the data chosen. This is to give users a more in-depth view of an area.</p>	

<p>There will also be a flexible table builder. This will allow you to select different variables and a different geography level and then compare the different variables to each other.</p> <p>Questions: In response to a question about whether it would be possible to view breakdowns of an area, for example on overcrowding, dependent on protected characteristics, TW indicated that these was a possibility these would be available in Phase 2 releases, but it is dependent on sample sizes and disclosure risk</p> <p>JE highlighted an issue with the latest 2021 Census data in some areas, including North Wales, compared with 2011 data and the implications for modelling future population and housing need. TW noted that the 2021 figures have been extensively quality assured against other data sources and that ONS will be commenting in the releases about things that ONS think might have affected the data.</p> <p>GW: There will be a recommendation in 2023 for the future of the census which will include providing more up to date population figures.</p>		
4	Ukraine: data available on Ukrainian refugees in Wales and the UK and provision of accommodation and services	Sue Leake and Andy O'Rourke, Welsh Government
<p>AO provided an overview the three main schemes available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ukraine family scheme, which is where people with family already in the UK could apply to move in with them • The Homes for Ukraine (HfU) sponsorship scheme, which is where individuals from Ukraine can come by themselves or in groups and stay with sponsors in the UK. This includes the Welsh Government Super Sponsor scheme, where the Welsh Government would accommodate people and act as a super sponsor. As of 10th June, the Super Sponsor scheme has been paused for new applications • The Visa Extension scheme, which is where Ukrainians already in the UK could apply to extend their visas. <p>Data in the public domain can be categorised in two main ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational data published by the Home Office or DLUHC for transparency purposes. This includes the number of visa applications, people who've been issued visas and arrivals to the UK. This is available at different geographies and demographic data available for this data. • Surveys from Office for National Statistics that aim to capture experiences of arrivals from the Ukraine and also of the sponsors hosting them. <p>Data for Wales is published weekly by the Home Office and includes data on the number of confirmed applications, visas issued and visa holders who arrived in the UK. This data can be broken down into the local authority level and by sponsorship route Data is not available at sub-UK geographies for the family scheme or the extension scheme at this point in time.</p>		

<p>Demographic data for the Ukraine family scheme and the sponsorship scheme combined show the most frequent type of person arriving is a working age female. However, upon breaking that down into individual sponsorship group and super sponsorship group shows that people sponsored by the Welsh Government are more likely to be male and more likely to be older.</p> <p>Other data is available through ONS surveys - there are several surveys for people who've arrived in the UK from Ukraine and also those who are sponsoring people fleeing the war. The main survey is the UK Humanitarian Response Insight Survey (UKHRIS) which captures the experiences of those who've arrived. It runs in waves, one in late April and one in mid-June, and those who took part in the first wave were recontacted as part of a follow up survey to see how their experiences have changed. Whilst some of that data is available for Wales, unfortunately the sample sizes can be quite small and so not all categories are available.</p> <p>For Wales, headline results have been published from the first two waves of the UKHRIS. It includes data for intentions to stay in the UK: around three quarters of people intend to stay in the UK, and of those, two thirds intend to stay for at least three years.</p> <p>Due to larger sample sizes, there is a lot more data for the UK as a whole. Data is available for a few other topics including how many doses of COVID-19 vaccine they've had; Employment status; Financial situation; Dependants; and of those with dependants if they are of school age. Some results from these surveys were shared (see accompanying slides),</p> <p>From the survey of sponsors analysis is available on the experiences of those hosting individuals from Ukraine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most frequently reported challenges supporting their guests to apply for benefits, followed by accessing public services and helping guests access financial services • A fairly large number of people are happy to host for the initial 6 months or even 12 months or longer, although around 5 percent said less than 6 months. <p>In response to a question about whether information on lone children is available, AO indicated that nothing was yet in the public domain currently.</p> <p>AJ commented on the amazing work being done by LAs to support Ukrainians in their area.</p>	
<p>5 Ending Homelessness Outcome Framework - overview and next steps</p>	<p>Sara James & Amy Carter, Welsh Government</p>
<p>Sarah and Amy presented on the Ending Homelessness Outcomes Framework which is linked to Welsh Government's ending homelessness action plan.</p> <p>In October 2019 WG published a Strategy to End Homelessness. At the same time Julie James MS, commissioned a Homelessness Action Group</p>	

(HAG) to explore and address a number of key questions to assist WG in achieving the long-term outcome of ending homelessness in Wales.

HAG was to publish reports to advise Welsh ministers on the ways we could prevent an end homelessness. Since October 2019, this group has published three reports. The main report recommended that WG should develop an Outcomes framework for ending homelessness.

HAG's work fed into WG's Ending homelessness action plan, published in November 2021. It sets out what 'good' looks like, to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and un-repeated. It also sets the importance of having an outcomes framework and being able to measure at a national level our collective progress towards the ultimate goal.

The development of this new framework is still ongoing. It sits within the context of the wider wellbeing goals for Wales.

With the current pressures on homelessness services, the framework aims to measure progress over time and understand what different levers or different actions can be taken if there is limited progress.

Collaborative and co-productive approach is taken to draw on the vast expertise that we have in the sector in Wales. A Task and Finish Group (TFG) was established at the end of 2021, to get various voices and viewpoints from the community. TFG has been meeting every 4-6 weeks to set out the approach to the outcomes' framework.

There are two outcomes' frameworks an Ending Homelessness Outcomes Framework and a Housing Support Grant (HSG) Outcomes Framework. They each incorporate– Overarching Strategic Outcomes and Underpinning Detailed Outcomes. They run in parallel so there is a consistency across them.

The HSG grant is one of WG's primary grant mechanisms to local authorities to prevent homelessness and support people to have the capability, independence, skills, and confidence to access and maintain a suitable and stable home.

There are six strategic outcomes that fall under the Overarching Strategic outcomes that were developed by the strategic Task and Finish group (TFG). (Note: Slide 4 in the presentation)

The first three strategic outcomes focus on homelessness being rare, brief, and un-repeated. The focus of time and resources should be on the first strategic outcome as it deals with prevention.

The other three strategic outcomes deal with a cross government response where public services work effectively to end homelessness, with workforce and person-centred approaches

Hence the framework does not deal only with housing and homelessness, but also with public services altogether and accountability and partnership working.

Underpinning Detailed Outcomes are derived from the strategic outcomes.

Next, we will summarise developments to date. (Note: Slide 5 of the presentation). The following outcomes and indicators are still draft form and are still being agreed and discussed.

The TFG proposed 26 detailed outcomes and 82 supporting indicators to measure the progress in the underpinning outcome areas that will feed into the six strategic areas. These are still being discussed and are therefore still in draft form.

Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS) have reviewed the 82 proposed indicators focusing on what data was currently collected, whether a proxy indicator was available, or whether data would require development

A set of workshops has been set up to discuss the findings of the analysis. Collaborative work will continue to refine the list of indicators, taking into account the need for the indicators to be valuable and useful but also be simple.

If the data sources are not currently available, revised, or new statutory collections could be considered in future years.

The aim is for the framework to be signed off by the Task and Finish Group and Ending Homelessness National Advisory Board and the minister prior to a period of formal consultation will proceed from early next year (2023) (slide 6) Supporting engagement events will be held with a wide range of stakeholders to be able to allow for discussion and feedback.

After the consultation period has passed the aim is to publish a final framework in May of next year and then implement it from October. This date might move a little, depending on various factors.

It is expected that the updates to the indicators in the Outcomes framework will be published annually.

JE questioned how many of the outcomes would fall onto the local authorities to have to collect and the extent to which this framework ties up with the two big population needs assessments that LAs have to do - the Population Needs Assessment for social care and the Wellbeing Assessments. Are you aligning some of those indicators with the kind of information that LAs have to collect?

In response AJ and SJ indicated there has been a lot of work done to ensure that the outcomes fit within the wellbeing goals and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act; that a lot of these outcomes suggested indicators are based on either the monthly management information, which local authorities do provide, or the statutory data collections. As local authorities are delivery partners, often they are the only way we can get data and information about how many people are presenting as homeless; particularly if information is needed broken down for different groups.

There is representation from at least two local authorities on the strategic TFG who have been contributing with their views. They are housing professionals, and they work quite closely with their data colleagues.

<p>Concerns were also expressed about how information on the indicators would be expected to be reported.</p> <p>SJ responded that there are no expectations of separate collections of data for the outcomes specifically because we would be drawing on the on the indicators identified.</p> <p>AJ: Reminding everyone of time constraints reassured that all concerns about the data collection are taken seriously, that consideration is given to the 'ask' of local authorities and others, and not over-burdening them. Plus all data that is collected</p> <p>CM questioned what opportunities are there going to be for learning from this as it is a huge piece of work? It will be important in a year's time to come back and see what lessons we have got and what is helpful and how to move along in other areas in terms of indicators.</p> <p>SJ: They would be happy to do a 'lessons learned' session. They are aware there are other outcomes frameworks being developed across the WG. Identifying what works well, what are the key features, what are the pitfalls would be great for collaboration within the WG.</p>	
<p>6 Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE) update</p>	<p>Bob Smith, Cardiff University, CaCHE</p>
<p>CaCHE is a collaborative venture between approximately ten UK universities and professional bodies, charities, WG housing and the Royal Town Planning Institute. It's been running for five years.</p> <p>The CaCHE update informs about eight new published reports or briefing papers released since the last meeting in May 2022.</p> <p>There are publications for the work CaCHE has been doing on rent control in the private rented sector. There have been two subsequent reports relating to the main report released in May. There is also a report on a retrofit project that is being done in Scotland.</p> <p>There are two further pieces of work on the research that CaCHE has done on the links between COVID and housing policy changes. One looking at developments of housing policy in relation to domestic abuse and the other looking at the resilience of institutions in the housing market. There are also papers covering ongoing research.</p> <p>All these reports can be downloaded for free from the CaCHE website.</p> <p>Some of the ongoing work, for which reports will be released soon cover an evidence review of the role of modern methods of construction/ modular construction. Also work on ethnic inequalities and housing that has involved some discussions with stakeholders in Wales. There is also work on social housing allocations that will include case studies.</p> <p>CaCHE has secured 4 years' worth of further funding for its work. CaCHE is currently looking into what their future programme should look like. So far, they have identified themes that would look at issues around design and land use planning, housing inequalities, retrofitting of housing and linking housing into the decarbonisation agenda and climate change. They would</p>	

	<p>also like to look into the development of housing data and trying to develop international research links with a view to learning from experiences in other parts of the world.</p> <p>As a part of the development of the future program, there have been talks with the Welsh knowledge exchange hub. There is also a planned meeting with a CaCHE research team in London in October.</p> <p>Finally, the Wales Housing Research Network, CaCHE and Shelter Cymru are organising the Wales Housing Research Conference 2022 on 19 December 2022. This event is free, and everyone is welcomed to attend.</p>	
7	Housing affordability measure: new national indicator	Rhiannon Jones, Welsh Government
	<p>RJ: On the 20 September there was a new national indicator page published, looking at the new housing affordability measure in Wales.</p> <p>The background to the development of the indicator can be found in the accompanying presentation.</p> <p>The measure itself looks at the percentage of households spending 30 percent or more of their income on housing costs. After some research that was carried out, and dealing with external stakeholders and WG housing policy directors, it was concluded that there is no universal measure of affordability. Thirty percent is a common benchmark that is based on assessment of rent affordability (e.g., a week's wage that goes into a month's rent).</p> <p>The data that was used is from the DWP Family Resources Survey (FRS) over the period 2011/12 to 2019/20. 2021 data could not be used, as due to the impact of COVID-19, the sample is potentially biased and there was insufficient number of responses.</p> <p>The calculated housing cost includes water and sewerage rates, mortgage interest, household rent, structural insurance cover and service charges.</p> <p>After discussion with WG's housing policy directors and a stakeholder housing group the capital repayment element of a mortgage loan and the council tax, net of any rebates, were also added.</p> <p>Gas and electric are excluded as the FRS does not include them. But within the indicator page they were put into context with an update on fuel poverty.</p> <p>Gross Income is used which includes benefits, pensions, investments, and earnings on an unequalised basis. So that is covering all sources of income from all household members. this approach is consistent with the income basis used in the local housing market assessments.</p> <p>The results of the calculations by tenure can be found on slides 7 and 8 from the accompanying presentation.</p> <p>The indicator page that has been published on the gov.wales website is highly informative, interactive, and customisable. As mentioned, this indicator does not consider gas and electric, but there is a reference to a fuel poverty estimate paper.</p>	

<p>Questions</p> <p>AJ asked how soon we can get more updated data, particularly given the cost-of-living pressures and with recovery from pandemic considerations.</p> <p>RJ responded that the indicator will be updated annually. Though there needs to be consideration of how the FRS data for 2020-2021 can be used.</p> <p>SL indicated there will be a discussion with DWP about possible issues that might arise with any of the FRS data in 2021/22 and how good that will be to be able to report on poverty in Wales. Not for that particular year, but we have also provided some boosted funding so that the sample sizes can be slightly higher in Wales in the future.</p> <p>DR noted it was really good to be able to break the data down by tenure, but asked if it was possible to break them down by equality data so you can understand by ethnicity and disability?</p> <p>RJ indicated it is possible. It had been decided that by tenure was appropriate initially, we are willing to look at what other breakdowns can be made available at a later date.</p> <p>SL noted that such analysis would be down to the sample sizes of the survey. It might be possible only to be able to look at high level ethnic minority groups, for instance.</p> <p>JE: inquired whether any thought had been given to how you break that down by a lower geographical granularity and if there is anything available at local authority level, because there are going to be vast differences between Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>RJ noted that whilst could be useful the FRS sample size is too small at the moment.</p> <p>JE: Has any thought been given to any alternative sources or work that might be useful in the future? For most of us, Wales level data is not particularly useful, apart from giving us some broad idea about what is going on in the bigger picture.</p> <p>TW: There is a lot of work going on currently in ONS, trying to look at estimates for income in smaller areas. I am a part of a Subnational Housing Analysis division, so we have a real interest in doing that. We are looking to do housing affordability at local levels as much as possible using alternative data sources</p>		
8	Fuel Poverty: update on current position, development of Fuel Poverty dashboard	Rachel Bowen, Welsh Government
	<p>RB: Welsh Government are currently preparing a more detailed analysis of the fuel poverty modelled estimates, which were published in April for the October 2021 picture. It should be published within the next two months.</p> <p>A fuel poverty dashboard is not published yet but is in a working draft stage. The draft is not yet suitable for circulation currently. The dashboard will be informative and highly interactive. RB showed some of the pages of the Dashboard and what it is intended to cover.</p>	

JE asked if it was possible to have access to some of the data behind some of the visualisations in the draft dashboard. RB invited JE to send her a direct e-mail.		
9	Close	
<p>JE: Feedback that it would be more preferable to have less on the agenda and more time to ask questions and scrutinise what is being presented.</p> <p>AJ: Welcomes the feedback, it will be reflected on.</p> <p>The next meeting will be an annual seminar scheduled on the 25 January 2023. These seminars tend to be longer, and it would be helpful to find out if colleagues would prefer a hybrid version instead of an online one only. Hybrid version will take an effort to run seamlessly, but it will be definitely considered.</p> <p>Suggestions are welcomed for a topic of this seminar. Amelia and her colleagues are to be contacted with any suggestions about what the focus of the seminar should be. Also, ideas for presentations, or offers to give a presentation at the seminar are welcomed.</p> <p>The next meeting of the Group, apart from the mentioned seminar, will be held in May 2023.</p>		<p>Action: Members to suggest topics for January HIG seminar, and contact AJ if they wish to offer a presentation</p>

Housing Information Group 28 September 2022 Summary of Action Points		
1	Members to advise AJ if they have evidence of landlords leaving the rental market.	All
2	Members to suggest topics for January HIG seminar, and contact AJ if they wish to offer a presentation	All