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Cartrefi
Cymunedol



Community
Housing

Cymru



New Era for Wales – Party Manifestos Launched

Inside this issue



Funding boost for
Moneyline Cymru
p1



A strategic
approach to
Housing Benefit
reforms p3



Were you on board?
Read about the
tour...p5/6

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Funding boost for Moneyline Cymru



Community Housing Cymru has been awarded a £248,000 grant from the Big Lottery to fund a money advice service which will complement the existing services of Moneyline Cymru.

The funding will enable CHC to provide a money advisor for each of the five Moneyline Cymru outlets plus a supervising money adviser over a period of three years. The funding will also support people who have received the advice services of Moneyline Cymru to become mentors and play a role in helping to plan and deliver a programme of community based workshops.

Approximately half of the people seeking loans from Moneyline Cymru will be unable to do so due to affordability issues. Without money advice, customers might resort to high interest or even illegal money lenders.

Paul Langley, Senior Money Adviser said: 'Moneyline Cymru's services are open to anyone who needs them, not just tenants of housing associations. A large number of the people who come into Moneyline Cymru are either private tenants or homeowners who have been excluded from mainstream financial services for reasons ranging from poor credit ratings to basic literacy issues. We will now be able to offer money advice to all of these people, particularly those told that they are unable to afford to take on a loan.'

Nick Bennett, Group Chief Executive of CHC said: 'We are delighted that the Big Lottery Fund has chosen to support this project. Through Moneyline Cymru, the money advice service will be targeting those who are most vulnerable to high interest and illegal money lenders. The funding will enable us to continue to work with the Illegal Money Lending Unit to tackle illegal money lending and with credit unions and Citizens Advice to provide a range of financial services to financially excluded people.'

Clare Williams
Financial Inclusion Officer

New Editor

As you saw in the last edition of Cartref, Phillipa Knowles has handed the editor's red pen over to me and I have to say I'm really looking forward to the challenge.

The financial year of 2011/12 presents many challenges for the sector, but along with the challenges there are also numerous opportunities as we look towards working with the new administration at the Welsh Assembly.

With the help of the CHC team, we'll keep you fully up to date with news from the sector in Wales and further afield but in the meantime, we'd like to hear your views about Cartref and have set up a short survey to capture your thoughts.

Please take five minutes to log onto www.surveymonkey.com/s/CBMM69K to tell us what you like about it, what you'd like to see included that isn't at present or what you'd change if you were given the chance - this is your opportunity to influence the look of future Cartref issues and we'd really appreciate your time.



If there are any issues regarding Cartref which you would like to discuss with me in person, please contact me on 029 2055 7414.

Edwina O'Hart
Communications Manager

Make a difference – Come on Board!

CHC's Come on Board scheme, in collaboration with Tai Pawb, is going from strength to strength with the appointment of five successful candidates in the last six months.

We are attracting a high calibre of applicants with a variety of skills and are widely promoting the scheme.

One member contacted us to reiterate 'how pleased (we were) with the calibre of the people that came forward from the Come on Board database. It has been really helpful for us.'

We are still looking for more members to sign up to the scheme and to promote the scheme in their offices, newsletters and so on. We are planning to add further benefits to the scheme, for example, providing initial board member training for applicants. This would ensure that applicants are fully aware of what a board member's role is and what is expected of them, and would also decrease the necessary induction period.

We are keen to increase diversity on HA boards and to ensure that all community groups are represented at board level, and so we urge you to use 'Come on Board' to recruit your new board members and to help us to promote the scheme as widely as possible.



By using the Come on Board scheme, you will decrease administration time and will have a ready-made set of board member applications when you inform us that you are recruiting.

We would like to expand the scheme to include board members who have finished their term on one HA board but would like to join another – if you have any ex board members who would be happy to be put forward to join another board, please send their details through to us at CHC so that we can add them to our growing database. We would also be interested in hearing from your unsuccessful board member applicants as we may be able to find another suitable HA board for them.

If you would like further information about the scheme, please contact Bethan or visit the Come on Board section on our website.

Bethan Samuel
Communications Officer



Housing Benefit Reforms - Developing a Strategic Approach to Supporting Tenants

CHC recently hosted two regional events to assist the sector to develop a strategic approach to supporting tenants who will be adversely affected by Housing Benefit Reforms.

The events, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, presented a unique opportunity for the sector to:

- Develop innovative solutions to support tenants facing housing benefit cuts.
- Ensure there is a strategic approach to supporting tenants which promotes consistency but is flexible enough to reflect individual circumstances.
- Learn about the outcomes from the recent Local Authority events on Housing Benefit Reforms.
- Maximise understanding about the PR campaign and how this can help the sector target and raise awareness about the reforms amongst tenants.
- Think about how they can help tenants to help themselves by engaging them in community regeneration projects.

The events are also being supported by Shelter Cymru and the Local Authority Homelessness Network.

Communications Campaign

A postcard campaign to inform housing association tenants about the impact of the changes to their housing benefit is also underway.

Members had the option of using generic postcards, with Citizen Advice and Shelter Cymru contact details, or personalised postcards with member logo and contact details if they had the capacity in-house to field the enquiries. Almost 100,000 postcards, which have been funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, have been distributed to members to date.

The sector's campaign was launched in conjunction with a Wales wide campaign, executed by Shelter Cymru and WAG, and includes radio, newspaper and bus adverts. These adverts, along with postcards for local authority and private tenants, carry the same branding as the housing association material, with the postcards for private tenants being distributed with the help of Citizens advice and Welsh Job Centres.

We are delighted with this integrated approach and that all tenants, be they private, housing association or local authority, will receive consistent messages with regards to the changes to their housing benefit.

**Amanda Oliver, Head of Policy and Research and
Edwina O'Hart, Communications Manager.**

Embracing Change

2009/10 Global Accounts published

The latest Global Accounts publication for the 2009/10 financial year will shortly be published electronically and distributed to members ahead of the official launch at May's Resources Conference.

This is the fourth report on the financial performance of the social housing sector in Wales, co-produced by CHC and the Welsh Assembly Government.

This year's publication again reflects the continued hard work undertaken by the sector in collaboration with WAG. Taking in to account the widespread economic uncertainty across all public service organisations, it is pleasing to note that key social housing objectives continue to be met, namely:

- Achieving quality housing.
- Developing housing policy, legislation and regulation.
- Enabling people to live independent lives.
- Increasing the supply and choice of housing.
- Tackling homelessness.
- Regeneration.

Housing associations in Wales have delivered positive housing, care and regeneration outcomes throughout the recession, and CHC's group structure with Care & Repair Cymru and the Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales (CREW) will encourage even more collaborative working in these areas.

With challenging times and further economic cuts ahead, innovative ways of increasing volume of housing finance in order to build more affordable homes and to assist financially excluded people needs careful consideration.

The picture shows a sector which is resilient and sound despite the difficult conditions that it has faced and continues to face. The Welsh Economic Research Unit (WERU) study, commissioned by CHC, found that through joint working the One Wales target of 6,500 affordable homes has been met and the implementation of most of the recommendations in the Essex review have been achieved.

The study also found that housing associations contributed £698m to the Welsh economy, an increase of £202m from the previous year. The amount spent on regeneration projects was an estimated £386m, and CHC members supported 1,160 more jobs than the previous year – that figure now stands at 4,900 direct jobs in the Welsh economy and 10,800 more indirectly via partnership suppliers.

With an increasing need for affordable homes, we need to position ourselves adequately to sustain the sector's endeavour and further evolve through innovation and collaborative working. By doing so, the sector can continue to deliver housing, care and regeneration solutions for communities throughout Wales, underpinned by the sound stewardship of available resources.

Key points for 2009/10:

- The sector now owns and manages 127,418 homes. Over 4,500 homes were brought into the sector in 2010 and of these 50% were transferred from LSVTs and 50% were new homes.
- Housing property cost totals £3.9bn and is backed by grants of £2.4bn.
- Debt increased by £158m – 14%.
- Turnover increased by £88m – 20%.
- Operating surplus increased by £14m – 17%.

The report is available on CHC's website.

Bethan Samuel
Communications Officer

Assembly candidates face facts



Over 1,200 people across Wales had the opportunity to quiz prospective Assembly candidates last month at twenty two ‘Are you onboard?’ events.

The events, to give a stronger voice to housing, care and regeneration in the run up to the Welsh Assembly Elections next month, were the first hustings events for many candidates as part of their election campaign with the CHC group being the only organisation in Wales to hold an event in each local authority area. Each event used the CHC group manifesto to highlight messages around housing, care and regeneration – but with a real local feel.

The events saw experts give hard-hitting evidence on why the spotlight on housing, care and regeneration is so important at a time when Wales is confronted with the most challenging budget settlement since devolution began. Local residents and service users also spoke to demonstrate to candidates the benefits that local services provided and how they’d impacted on their lives.

“I’m 47 and until recently I was living with my father who’s in his 70s. I wanted to live independently and with support from Scope, Reach and Charter, I was able to get housing in Newport which is an area central to my life.”

Wheelchair-bound Steven

In total a third of the Cabinet, a quarter of sitting Assembly Members and fifty two other prospective candidates attended the 22 hustings events across Wales. Many of the events had similar threads including; how to increase the supply of affordable homes at a time when the Welsh Assembly Government’s capital budget is being cut and social housing grant is shrinking, the importance of working closely with health to prevent hospital admissions and for those in hospital to allow quick discharge, helping save millions of pounds to the National Health Service, helping people get onto the housing ladder and doing more with the new housing law making powers.

What the candidates heard:

Presentations concentrated on the work local housing, care and regeneration organisations carried out in the area, the problems and challenges they faced and how they felt the new Assembly Government could help deliver the action points laid out in the sector’s manifesto.

Candidates were presented with hard hitting facts and figures as to why housing, care and regeneration projects should be a priority for the next administration, and how by investing in these areas, savings could be made across the board around other social agendas. Local housing waiting lists featured at every event and candidates heard how demand outweighed supply in every single county.

There are 4,300 households waiting for affordable homes in Pembrokeshire and almost 4,000 homes on the social housing register in RCT.

In terms of regeneration, candidates heard that in 2009/10, Welsh housing associations spent an estimated £386m on regeneration activities and provided nearly 15,000 jobs directly and indirectly, with 80% of regeneration spend retained in Wales.

Cartrefi Conwy have invested £8.5m in social properties in Conwy including 406 boilers and 3,300 new doors.

Innovative initiatives such as Moneyline Cymru were also highlighted to candidates who learned that over the last year, Moneyline have provided loans to over 4,000 customers who couldn’t access mainstream credit and who may have resorted to high interest door step lenders or loan sharks.

Links were made between housing and care and candidates heard that for every £1 spent on Care & Repair services, £7.50 was saved from health and social services budgets, and that the new Assembly should look to the social housing sector to deliver additional services for the elderly population.

There are three million people in Wales, with one out of five being over 65, and half of all UK babies born today will reach 100 years of age.

What the candidates said:

Prospective candidates welcomed the opportunity to attend a local hustings event with many using it as a knowledge building exercise and an opportunity to forge relationships with local organisations.

Carwyn Jones, Labour, said that in the history of the Welsh Assembly Government, housing has never been so important.

Dr Dai Lloyd of Plaid Cymru noted that under the Plaid Deputy Housing and Regeneration Minister, Jocelyn Davies, the One Wales Government's target of creating 6,500 additional affordable homes in this Assembly term has been reached. He also said that the irrefutable link between housing and health must not be ignored.

Owen Meredith, Welsh Conservative candidate said: "We need to work with local businesses and entrepreneurs to support them to grow and create jobs. Only then can we create the enterprising economy we need, which will bring with it the prosperity and services to be able to make a positive change in these other areas."

Peter Black of the Liberal Democrats felt that there was a lot of work to be done, particularly around the empty homes agenda. The Welsh Liberal Democrats feel that bringing these properties back into use with a Wales-wide Empty Homes Programme will help provide homes to those in need.



What the local residents said:

Local case studies proved very powerful in getting messages across to prospective candidates. Most events had at least one tenant or service user tell their personal story.

Bron Afon Tenant Sue (pictured above) speaking about fuel poverty: "The insulation provided by the housing association will save me hundreds of pounds every year and means my children won't go without."

"I'll be married for 58 years and thanks to Care & Repair I can stay in my own home" says Mrs Thomas from Caerphilly

On supporting people Gwalia tenant Ray, told the Cardiff hustings: "When I realised the people at Gwalia wanted to help me in achieving my goals it motivated me to help myself too."

Newydd tenant Lyn Bond says being a board member gave her confidence: "We need to continue to involve tenants for a sustainable community."

So while the tour of Wales is over, the hard work is yet to begin. Regardless of the outcome on 5 May, we want to be sure that housing, care and regeneration are a priority for the next administration and look forward to a productive working relationship with them over the coming months and years.



Peter Black is on board



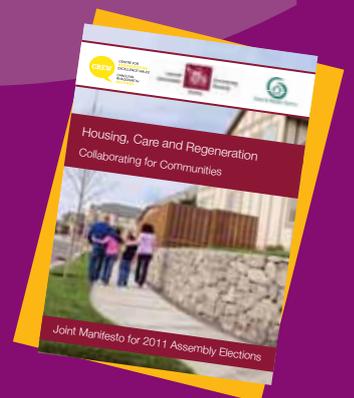
Carwyn Jones is on board



Simon Thomas is on board



Mark Isherwood is on board



Good Governance has never been so important...

This was the overwhelming message at this year's Governance Conference, which for the first time included themed workshops for Governance staff as well as Board Members mixed with high quality speakers and practical sessions focused around effective board performance.

Hugh Thomas, Chair of the Regulatory Board, set the scene and outlined the key challenges for boards in steering their organisations through the tough times that lie ahead.

These were echoed by Neil Wooding (PSMW) and Radoika Miljevic (Campbell Tickell) who delivered hard hitting messages around the importance of innovation and continuous improvement as key drivers for success.

Patricia McCabe (Central Consultancy) discussed the contribution of the high performing board and Stephanie Bamford (Central Consultancy) gave a lively and humorous session on the power and importance of the Company Secretary in achieving good governance.



The event also saw the launch of the draft Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations and delegates had the opportunity to meet and hear from Darshan Matharoo, the new Head of Regulation at WAG.

The event proved to be a resounding success and judging by the excellent feedback we've had, board members and governance officers went away with lots of food for thought.

Amanda Oliver
Head of Policy and Research

Tenants needed for advisory panel



The Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Tenants Federation are currently recruiting four Housing Association (including stock transfer) tenants to be appointed to the Tenants Advisory Panel to the Regulatory Board for Wales.

Tenants Advisory Panel members will be part of a key group who will ensure that there is a strong tenant and service user perspective into the new regulatory regime for Housing Associations based in Wales, one of the key recent reforms in Welsh social housing.

One housing association tenant member is sought from the Mid Wales area, one from North Wales and two from Associations based in South West Wales. The closing date for applications is Tuesday 3 May 2011.

For full information on the Tenants Advisory Panel and how to apply please visit <http://www.tapwales.org.uk/> or contact the Welsh Tenants Federation on 01685 723922.

A look at party manifestos for the upcoming



Welsh Assembly Elections

Following the 'yes' vote in the referendum on direct law-making powers for the assembly in March, the upcoming election is arguably the most important one that Wales has seen since devolution.

The Community Housing Cymru group has been engaging with political parties in the lead up to May's elections by driving home three key messages:

- Increasing and improving affordable housing in Wales through social housing investment.
- Regeneration activities which can tackle poverty and create jobs and training opportunities.
- Continued action for delivering care and support.

Effective joint working with the Assembly Government over the past three years has seen, in particular, the One Wales target of building at least 6,500 new affordable homes being achieved, a new regulatory framework and £95m of Strategic Capital Investment funding for housing. However, WAG's latest budget confirmed a cut of around 30% in social housing grant for 2011/12 and further cuts in subsequent years.

We believe the social housing sector can lead the way to ensure we are delivering the appropriate services for the people of Wales during these austere times and therefore it is vital that our members continue to provide mutual solutions for affordable housing, care and regeneration across Wales.

With this in mind, we have been eagerly awaiting the launch of the political party manifestos. All four of the main parties in Wales have now published their election manifestos outlining their proposals for the next Assembly term. Here are some of the main commitments from the party manifestos under the three headings of our manifesto:

Increasing and improving affordable housing in Wales through social housing investment - actions to increase and improve affordable housing

Each of the four manifestos made reference to the creation of more affordable homes. Here is just a selection of some of the main commitments from the manifestos:

Plaid Cymru

- Create at least 6,500 new affordable homes in Wales over the next Assembly term.
- We will introduce a revised rent benchmarking regime which protects standards, is transparent and robust, and ensures fairer rents.



Labour

- We will increase the supply of new affordable, energy efficient homes through Social Housing Grant together with accessing innovative forms of finance such as the Welsh Housing Partnership and housing bonds.
- Introduce a new Empty Properties initiative.

Liberal Democrats

- Bringing empty properties back into use with a Wales-wide Empty Homes Programme.
- Protecting any new social rented housing from being sold under the Right-to-Buy scheme for a minimum of twenty five years in areas where this is needed.

Conservatives

- Build More Homes - target to build at least 10,000 more affordable homes by 2015.
- Publish an affordable homes strategy which will also tackle the problem of empty homes. The strategy will be monitored by a sector-led working group on housing delivery.

Regeneration activities which can tackle poverty and create jobs and training opportunities

Plaid Cymru

- We will support socially responsible finance initiatives to help prevent people getting into unmanageable debt and to manage debt better.
- We will ensure housing providers maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and identify where further improvements can be made, including low-carbon housing.

Labour

- Securing a further £1.2 billion to deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for all council and housing association tenants across Wales.
- Invest a further £50 million in the Arbed programme to increase the energy performance of our existing homes and help combat fuel poverty.

Liberal Democrats

- Delivering an additional 12,000 warmer homes by doubling the money available for tackling fuel poverty.
- Ensuring that people eligible for the Green Deal are offered information on that programme and that people who are either highly fuel poor or living in off-gas areas are the focus of Welsh Government fuel poverty programmes.

Conservatives

- Encourage housing stock transfer as a means to improve the quality of social housing, empower tenants and deliver Sustainable Community Regeneration.
- Focus the home insulation scheme on older, harder to insulate homes.

Continued action for delivering care and support

Plaid Cymru

- Plaid Cymru in Government will protect the Supporting People budget and we will implement the conclusions of the independent Aylward review.
- Plaid Cymru will support older people to stay independent in their homes through the Extra Care schemes, Care & Repair programmes and the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme.

Labour

- Supporting the development of interest-free Property Appreciation Loans to allow low income homeowners to borrow to improve their properties.
- Build on our ten-year Homelessness Plan and continue to invest in vulnerable people - whether they are young people leaving care, older people who are becoming frail, or people who are experiencing mental ill health - to avert homelessness, to have and keep in their homes.

Liberal Democrats

- Establishing a Welsh Home Improvement Lending Agency with charitable status to facilitate equity release loans to enable home owners, in conjunction with Care & Repair agencies, to access capital to carry out adaptations and repairs to their home.
- Extending the use of shared budgeting and collaborative working between the NHS and Social Services in order to reduce 'bed blocking'.

Conservatives

- Examine the case for moving the Deputy Minister for Housing to the Department of Health and Social Services.
- Develop the 'Centres for Independent Living' model within Wales by working with local authorities and the third sector. These centres promote and deliver independent living, advocacy, peer support and advice.

This is CHC's synopsis outlining just some of the commitments from the party manifestos. We would encourage all readers to take a detailed look at each of the parties' manifesto proposals before the Welsh Assembly Elections on 5 May.

Shea Jones

Political Research and Information Officer

Golwg ar fanifestos y pleidiau ar gyfer yr etholiadau i



Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

Yn dilyn y bleidlais 'ie' yn y refferendwm ar bwerau deddfu uniongyrchol i'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol ym mis Mawrth, medrid dadlau mai'r etholiadau ym mis Mai yw'r rhai pwysicaf a welodd Cymru ers datganoli.

Bu grwp Cartrefi Cymunedol yn cysylltu gyda'r pleidiau gwleidyddol yn y cyfnod cyn yr etholiadau drwy bwysleisio tair neges allweddol:

- Cynyddu nifer a gwella tai fforddiadwy yng Nghymru drwy fuddsoddiad tai cymdeithasol
- Gweithgareddau adfywio a all fynd i'r afael â thlodi a chreu swyddi a chyfleoedd hyfforddiant
- Parhau i weithredu dros gyflwyno gofal a chefnogaeth.

Mae cydweithio effeithiol gyda Llywodraeth y Cynulliad dros y tair blynedd ddiwethaf wedi gweld, yn arbennig, gyflawni targed Cymru'n Un o adeiladu o leiaf 6,500 o gartrefi fforddiadwy newydd, fframwaith rheoleiddio newydd a £95m o gyllid Buddsoddiad Cyfalaf Strategol ar gyfer tai. Fodd bynnag, cadarnhaodd cyllideb ddiweddaraf Llywodraeth y Cynulliad ostyngiad o tua 30% mewn grant tai cymdeithasol ar gyfer 2011/12 a gostyngiadau pellach mewn blynyddoedd dilynol.

Credwn y gall y sector tai cymdeithasol arwain y ffordd i sicrhau ein bod yn darparu'r gwasanaethau priodol ar gyfer pobl Cymru yn ystod yr amserau hyn o gyni ac felly mae'n hollbwysig fod ein haelodau'n parhau i ddarparu datrysiadau cydfuddiannol ar gyfer tai fforddiadwy, gofal ac adfywio ledled Cymru.

Gyda hyn dan sylw, buom yn disgwyl yn eiddgar am lansiad maniffestos y pleidiau gwleidyddol. Mae pob un o'r prif bleidiau yng Nghymru bellach wedi cyhoeddi eu maniffesto ar gyfer yr etholiad yn amlinellu eu cynigion ar gyfer tymor nesaf y Cynulliad. Dyma rai o'r prif ymrwymadau o fanifestos y pleidiau dan dri phennawd ein maniffesto:

Cynyddu a gwella tai fforddiadwy yng Nghymru drwy fuddsoddiad mewn tai cymdeithasol – camau gweithredu i gynyddu a gwella tai fforddiadwy

Cyfeiriodd pob un o'r pedwar maniffesto at greu mwy o gartrefi fforddiadwy. Dyma ddetholiad o rai o'r prif ymrwymadau o'u manifestos.

Plaid Cymru

- Creu o leiaf 6,500 o gartrefi fforddiadwy newydd yng Nghymru dros dymor nesaf y Cynulliad
- Cyflwyno trefn ddiwygiedig ar gyfer meincnodi rhenti sy'n diogelu safonau, yn dryloyw a chadarn ac yn sicrhau rhenti tecach.



Llafur

- Cynyddu'r cyflenwad o gartrefi fforddiadwy newydd sy'n effeithiol o ran ynni drwy Grant Tai Cymdeithasol ynghyd â defnyddio dulliau blaengar o gyllid megis Partneriaeth Tai Cymru a bondiau tai.
- Cyflwyno cynllun newydd Anheddau Gwag.

Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol

- Dod ag anheddau gwag yn ôl i ddefnydd gyda Rhaglen Cartrefi Gwag ar draws Cymru.
- Diogelu unrhyw dai rhent cymdeithasol newydd rhag cael eu gwerthu dan y cynllun Hawl i Brynu am o leiaf 25 mlynedd mewn ardaloedd lle mae angen hyn.

Ceidwadwyr

- Adeiladu mwy o gartefi – targed i adeiladu o leiaf 10,000 yn fwy o gartrefi fforddiadwy erbyn 2015.
- Cyhoeddi strategaeth cartrefi fforddiadwy fydd hefyd yn mynd i'r afael â phroblemau cartrefi gwag. Caiff y strategaeth ei monitro gan weithgor dan arweiniad y sector ar gyflenwi tai.

Gweithgareddau adfywio a all fynd i'r afael â thlodi a chreu swyddi a chyfleoedd hyfforddiant

Plaid Cymru

- Cefnogi cynlluniau cyllid cymdeithasol-gyfrifol i helpu atal pobl rhag mynd i ddyled anhylaw ac i reoli dyled yn well.
- Sicrhau fod darparwyr tai yn cynnal Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru ac yn dynodi lle meddir gwneud gwelliannau pellach, yn cynnwys tai carbon-isel.

Llafur

- Sicrhau £1.2 biliwn arall i sicrhau Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru ar gyfer pob tenant cyngor a chymdeithas tai ledled Cymru.
- Buddsoddi £50 miliwn arall yn rhaglen Arbed i gynyddu perfformiad ynni cartrefi presennol a helpu i fynd i'r afael â thlodi tanwydd.

Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol

- Darparu 12,000 ychwanegol o gartrefi cynhesach drwy ddyblu'r swm o arian sydd ar gael ar gyfer mynd i'r afael â thlodi tanwydd.
- Sicrhau fod pobl sy'n cymwys am y Ddêl Werdd yn cael cynnig gwybodaeth ar y rhaglen honno ac mai pobl sydd un ai mewn tlodi tanwydd mawr neu'n byw mewn ardaloedd heb fod ar y brif bibell nwy yw ffocws rhaglenni tlodi tanwydd Llywodraeth Cymru.

Ceidwadwyr

- Annog trosglwyddo stoc tai fel dull o wella ansawdd tai cymdeithasol, grymuso tenantiaid a sicrhau adfywiad cymunedol cynaliadwy
- Canolbwyntio'r cynllun insiwleiddio cartrefi ar gartrefi hŷn, anos eu hinsiwleiddio.

Gweithredu parhaus i ddarparu gofal a chymorth

Plaid Cymru

- Bydd Plaid Cymru mewn llywodraeth yn diogelu'r gyllideb Cefnogi Pobl ac yn gweithredu casgliadau adolygiad annibynnol Aylward.
- Bydd Plaid Cymru yn cefnogi pobl hŷn i aros yn annibynnol yn eu cartrefi drwy'r cynlluniau Gofal Ychwanegol, rhaglenni Gofal a Thrwsio a'r Rhaglen Addasiadau Brys.

Llafur

- Cefnogi datblygu Benthyciadau Arbrisiant Eiddo i alluogi perchnogion cartrefi ar incwm isel i fenthycia i wella eu cartrefi.
- Adeiladu ar y Cynllun Digartrefedd deng mlynedd a pharhau i fuddsoddi mewn pobl agored i niwed – p'un ai'n bobl ifanc yn gadael gofal, pobl hŷn sy'n dod yn llesg neu bobl sy'n profi afiechyd meddwl – er mwyn osgoi digartrefedd, i gael aros yn eu cartrefi.

Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol

- Sefydlu Asiantaeth Benthycia Gwella Cartrefi Cymru gyda statws elusenol i hwyluso benthyciadau rhyddhau ecwiti i alluogi perchnogion cartrefi, mewn cysylltiad ag asiantaethau Gofal a Thrwsio, i gael mynediad i gyfalaf i wneud addasiadau ac atgyweiriadau i'w cartrefi.
- Ymestyn y defnydd o gyllidebu ar y cyd a chydweithio rhwng y Gwasanaeth Iechyd Gwladol a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol er mwyn gostwng 'blocio gwelyau'.

Ceidwadwyr

- Edrych ar yr achos dros symud y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Dai i'r Adran Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol.
- Datblygu'r model 'Canolfannau Byw Annibynnol' o fewn Cymru drwy weithio gydag awdurdodau lleol a'r trydydd sector. Mae'r canolfannau hyn yn hyrwyddo a darparu byw annibynnol, eiriolaeth, cefnogaeth cymheiriaid a chyngor.

Dyma grynodedd Cartrefi Cymunedol yn amlinellu rhai o'r ymrwymadau o fanifestos y pleidiau. Byddem yn annog pob darlennwr i gymryd golwg fanwl ar bob un o gynigion manifestos y pleidiau cyn yr etholiadau i Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru ar 5 Mai.

Shea Jones

Swyddog Ymchwil a Gwybodaeth Wleidyddol

PR Update



National Eisteddfod 2011

Fresh from the 'Are you on board?' tour of Wales, the Communications team at CHC are looking ahead to the summer months and planning the group's presence at the National Eisteddfod, which will be held in Wrexham. If you are interested in joining us on a stand from 30 July – 6 August, please contact Edwina or Beth.



Social Media

We are now fully functioning on social media sites to complement and enhance website content. Follow us on twitter [@chcymru](#) for up to the minute tweets from conferences and to hear about ongoing projects and policy updates.

You can also 'like' us on Facebook by searching for **Community Housing Cymru**. The Facebook site contains links to relevant news articles from the printed and online media along with photos and video clips from events we've attended.

The policy team at CHC will also soon be blogging... watch this space for further details.

Action Camp

Has your organisation signed up for Action camp yet? Action Camp is a three day camping event for people throughout Wales which introduces participants to some of the major issues facing our communities and planet in a fun and engaging way.

A number of our members took part in Action Camp last year and this year and organisers want to ensure that this year is bigger and better than before. We're asking members to sign up as soon as possible as Action Camp organisers want to attract match funding - ensuring more young people in Wales get the chance to take part.

The impact of these camps is far reaching and CHC have negotiated a member rate of £139 per person – to include all accommodation (tents), all food, an ASDAN short course award for all attendees, activity pass for all onsite facilities and various training models to address many of the key themes your organisation is targeting, including youth engagement, financial inclusion, active volunteering, time banking, child poverty, healthy living, education and ESDGC (education for sustainable development and global citizenship).

The £139 fee also includes entry into the Participate Programme – a programme designed to extend the education and learning for attendees before and after the camp. Members of the PR Network will be taking part in the camp in July to learn about what it takes to be an active citizen.

Edwina O'Hart
Communications Manager

Assembly Watch

“For men may come and men may go, but I go on forever.” Rhodri Morgan



These words were some of Rhodri Morgan’s last words in the chamber to mark the end of the Assembly’s third term and his retirement as an Assembly member, referring to the fact that politicians come and go but that the National Assembly for Wales ‘will go on forever and continue to develop and grow to serve the people of Wales’.

Having been described as the ‘Father of Devolution’, Rhodri Morgan became the first political leader to lead a law-making Welsh government in 500 years. Referring to the different policies between the Welsh and the UK Labour Party after he famously promised ‘clear red water’ between Cardiff and London, in his final speech as First Minister in 2009, Mr. Morgan called for the Welsh Assembly to take the next step on the road to Devolution.

This next step was taken in March this year when Wales’ constitutional relationship with the rest of the United Kingdom further developed as Wales voted ‘Yes’ in the referendum on primary law-making powers for the Assembly. The vote means that the National Assembly will be able to make laws on subjects in all of the 20 areas for which it has powers, without first needing the UK Parliament’s agreement. Although the Housing LCO had already devolved a wide range of competence over housing to Wales, the referendum result now means that we have powers over all housing matters in Wales.

These developments have introduced quasi-federal features to the UK constitution and debate as to whether these changes represent the conclusion of a process or the start of a new one heightened in March in the lead up to the referendum and beyond.

Already, the debate has moved on. UK Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg was interviewed in Cardiff the morning after the referendum vote and, referring to the next step in the Welsh devolution process, stated it ‘was about looking at the fiscal powers of the Assembly and making it responsible for raising at least some of the money it spends’.

Furthermore, in a statement to the Senedd in March regarding the Barnett formula (which determines the size of the Welsh block grant), First Minister Carwyn Jones stated that ‘The referendum has now been held and it has been won. We will therefore be looking for an early start to substantive talks with the UK Government on the final Holtham report.’ However, any further fiscal change is unlikely to be rapid. The First Minister has previously stated that tax variance would require consent through another referendum. Furthermore, the Conservative coalition at Westminster has said that any change to the funding formula must await sorting out the deficit in the British budget. Of course, the outcome of the May election and the balance between the parties may have a big impact on this.

Assembly and Welsh Assembly Government News

In the last edition of *Cartref I* touched on what has been achieved in the Welsh social housing sector in the Assembly’s third term (2007-2011), and the bilingual supplement in this edition takes a look ahead at what has been outlined in the political parties’ election manifestos. Here are just some of the key developments that have occurred in and out of the chamber in the lead up to the end of the third term of the Assembly.

An update on measures

Both the Housing measure and the Domestic Fire Safety Measure have been passed by a majority of Assembly Members in plenary. Sprinklers will be compulsory in all new homes as the law will apply to residences including dwelling houses, flats, residential care homes, educational residential accommodation and houses in multiple occupation. The Housing measure will provide Welsh Ministers with a broad range of intervention and enforcement powers that are essential to strengthen the regulation of RSLs and the measure makes provision to support the more effective delivery of affordable housing in Wales as it includes the right of local authorities for a direction to suspend the Right to Buy in areas of housing pressure.

Arbed 2

£37 million of funding has been announced for phase 2 of the Arbed scheme. Backed with £29 million from the European Regional Development Fund, the programme will be delivered in partnership with Local Authorities and Housing Associations in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government will now consult with partners and identify the schemes that will be delivered under the programme in early 2012.

Phase 1 of Arbed ended on 31 March 2011 and WAG will be producing information about the delivery of Arbed, including information such as what technologies have been used effectively in the scheme and what training opportunities there have been. This information is due to be published soon. Watch this space.

i2i Can-do Toolkit

The Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Jocelyn Davies AM, has launched the report looking at what has been achieved through the i2i Can-do Toolkit project. The report on the first two years of the project shows that 1,183 training opportunities have been created by the 20 organisations that have adopted the model. (The report estimates that if the model was adopted right across the public sector, 4,000 job and training opportunities would be provided in Wales every year.)

In plenary on 15 February, Conservative AM Mark Isherwood noted the huge benefits that can be gained through sustainable procurement methods, but stated that this is just the tip of the iceberg and that 'in order to maximise the potential, all registered social landlords should have access to the right skills and support in relation to procurement to adopt those measures across their services and activities'. Conservative AM William Graham noted that the toolkit has potential for replication outside the housing sector.

The Minister for Business and Budget, Jane Hutt AM, stated that 'we have worked hard to break down the barriers as a result of evidence, particularly from the construction sector' and confirmed that 'Our supplier qualification information database, SQUID, which standardises and simplifies the pre-qualification process, is shortly to be launched with the refreshed Sell2Wales website.'

Shea Jones

Political Research and Information Officer



At the beginning of March, CHC and the Energy Saving Trust in Wales held two local authority and housing association knowledge sharing seminars to share good practice around the latest information on current energy efficiency programmes and schemes. The events in Cardiff and St. Asaph provided information on how best to improve the energy efficiency of existing housing stock, properties being renovated, and advice on future construction work. This included information on renewable energy technologies, an update on the second phase of Arbed, information on Feed in Tariffs (FITs) as well as new scheme and funding updates.

This agenda poses many challenges as well as opportunities for the social housing sector, and these seminars have helped to further equip the sector with the necessary knowledge to help address many of the social (fuel poverty), economic (green jobs) and environmental challenges (reduction in CO2 by improving the energy efficiency of housing stock), as well as opportunities that arise through the green agenda.

Looking at future opportunities and renewable energy in particular, CHC is currently looking at funding models and is in the process of setting up a Revolving Guarantee Fund (RLGF) in response to the opportunities that have arisen through the feed in tariffs scheme. The RLGF model creates a viable alternative to the 'rent a roof' model by raising money to provide a fund which guarantees against defaults on further lending from banks who then pay for the retrofit work. As FIT income pays back the loan with interest into the RLGF pot, the fund can grow sustainably to pay for further retrofit and energy efficiency projects. As a sector we need to think long term and therefore other incentives, such as the Renewable Heat Incentive, will be considered for additional funding of the fund. Long term sustainable funding for environmental measures is vital. Updated information on the progress of the RLGF will be available on CHC's website.

Shea Jones

Political Research and Information Officer

Housing Round Up



Jocelyn Davies, Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration was delighted to meet service users and staff involved with the Cardiff Foyer project.

Deputy Minister visits Cardiff Foyer project

Jocelyn Davies AM, Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration, has visited the Cardiff Foyer project which offers support, training and temporary accommodation to young people aged 16-25. The project was set up by Cardiff Community HA in 2000 in partnership with the YMCA. The people it supports are homeless or potentially homeless, and may require support, help with finding employment or training opportunities. Taff HA recently won the contract to provide support at the scheme. Of the 19 young people recently supported by the project, 17 are now working, in school or college or on a training programme. Jocelyn Davies said: 'I am delighted to have experienced first-hand the great work that is being done at the Cardiff Foyer... Projects like this are crucial for young people. They help to deal with the causes of homelessness and prevent future issues as well as dealing with the immediate problem. It is an excellent example of what be achieved when we all work together and this is why I am pleased to be supporting this project and many others like it across Wales.'

Polish Housing Society scoop Gold in Older People Awards

Penrhos Home in Pwllheli, managed by Polish Housing Society Limited, has been voted one of the UK's best at a top national awards ceremony. The 2011 National Housing for Older People Awards saw Penrhos Home scoop a Gold Award in the 'Housing with care - 100 units and over category'. Scheme manager Michal Drewenski said: 'We're delighted to win this award and be a part of such an important event. It was a great surprise to find out that we had got through to the finals and even a greater surprise to receive the Gold Award. The residents are really proud of this award... Our staff deserve congratulations and special thanks for the services they provide.' The awards were attended by more than 350 guests.

Sidney flies in for Community Action Day

Sidney the Seagull, Colwyn Bay's Football Club mascot, took a short flight along the coast to Abergele recently to join in a day of activities with local people working together to improve the environment. The Community Day was organised jointly by North Wales Police and Clwyd Alyn HA. The day included a litter pick, removal of graffiti and free fire safety checks. Clwyd Alyn used the opportunity to question residents about what they feel are the most important issues in the community. Cartrefi Conwy also took part and organised face-painting activities.



Sidney the Seagull joins local residents for the recent Community Action Day at Ffordd Gwelfryn in Belgrano Abergele recently.



(l-r) Llinos Jones, Bethan Stevens, Mair Williams and Eleri Edwards – the HR team at CCG.

Positive about disability

Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd (CCG) has been awarded the 'two ticks' Job Centre Plus award for Positive about Disability. The organisation met all five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees. Ffrancon Williams, Chief Executive, said: 'As a new organisation we are keen to develop our workforce and ensure equality of opportunities for current and prospective employees from the outset. It is part of our promise to our customers and I am delighted that we have managed to achieve this award so soon after CCG was established.' CCG took over the ownership and management of Gwynedd Council homes in April 2010 and is currently working on a £136m investment programme to upgrade those homes.



Jane Davidson, Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing meets with Steve Jones, Chief Executive of Tai Ceredigion and Llyr Edwards, Director of Property Services to view the progress of the Arbed works in Ceredigion.

Minister praises Tai Ceredigion for green energy improvements

Last week the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing Jane Davidson AM visited Tai Ceredigion and the homes undergoing major improvements under the Welsh Assembly Government Arbed scheme in Aberystwyth and the Uplands area. Tai Ceredigion is using the £674,000 of funding from the scheme to bring affordable warmth to homes which they took over from the Council at the end of 2009. Homes in these sites are having external wall insulation, new heating systems, new windows, doors and possibly balconies. Steve Jones, Chief Executive, said 'We were delighted that the Minister came to see the improvement programme in action... We will be investing £40m in the region over the next few years which will bring much needed improvement to tenant's homes, as well as giving a boost to the economic future of communities within Ceredigion.'

Cartref Interview

What was your first job?

Civil Servant - Clerical Assistant with the Inland Revenue in London.

How did you become involved in housing?

Research in the 1980s identified substantial discrimination in housing allocation and showed persistent inequalities throughout services for black and minority ethnic (BME) tenants and potential tenants. A number of housing organisations began to recruit specialist staff to help them develop their equal opportunities and 'fair housing' policies. Anchor Housing Association was one such organisation and they had advertised a Housing Adviser for Ethnic Minorities position in late 1983. At that time I was working as a Civil Servant in the Department of Health and Social Security in Birmingham. I applied and was successful in getting the job and I have never looked back since.

What do you think will be the key issues that will affect the housing sector over the coming year?

There are a number of key issues for example:

1. Demand for social housing out-strips supply - so the challenge is meeting housing need; promoting choice; creating and managing sustainable neighbourhoods.
2. Implications of the Housing Benefit reform.
3. Review of the Housing Revenue Account.

What are the challenges for Wales?

There is no doubt that there are tremendous challenges for Wales. We need more social homes of good quality and we must ensure that cuts in spending and the economic downturn do not damage services for tenants and those most vulnerable in our society. I think the key challenges for the housing sector in Wales within the current economic climate will be:

- Providing more housing of the right type and offering more choice;
- Improving homes and communities, including the energy efficiency of new and existing homes;
- Improving housing-related services and support, particularly for vulnerable people and people from minority groups; and
- Implementing the new Regulatory Framework.



Darshan Matharoo,
Head of Regulation at WAG

What opportunities do you think the new Regulatory Framework provides for WAG and the housing association sector in Wales?

Opportunities for WAG include:

- To raise the standards of services for tenants.
- To provide effective regulation that not only improves the performance and delivery of individual housing association but is critical to the credibility and wellbeing of the sector as a whole.

Opportunities for housing associations include:

- A strategic opportunity for the boards - Three key questions are probably dominating many boardrooms:
 1. How do we assure ourselves and our tenants that we are meeting the delivery outcomes?
 2. Where we are not entirely satisfied, what are we doing about it?
 3. How do we ensure we have the right skills and competencies to do this?
- An opportunity to demonstrate effective tenant/service user engagement and involvement.

If you could change one thing in housing, what would it be?

It would be to raise the standards of services for tenants through effective tenant involvement by all social landlords.

What has been your personal greatest achievement?

Staying true to myself in championing fairness and equality despite discrimination.

Name one thing about yourself people wouldn't know.

I was born in Uganda.

How do you relax?

I don't have a lot of time to relax but I do like going for meals with friends and I do enjoy DIY. I recently extended and completely modernised my home, installing a new kitchen, new bathrooms and loft conversion.

How would you like to be remembered?

People's lives were better for the work that I did.

Resources Conference Preview

This year's Resources Conference takes place on 19/20 May at the Metropole Hotel and promises to be an informative, engaging and motivational event for Finance, HR and IT professionals. We have already had over one hundred bookings.

Entitled 'Out of the Comfort Zone', this conference will encourage delegates to fulfill their potential and to think outside the box in these challenging times.

Main speakers include Jeff Grout, former Managing Director of the largest specialist recruitment consultancy in the world; Jim Lawless, one of the most inspiring and highly sought after speakers in Europe; and Jean Church, Managing Director of 2Win Consulting Limited. Emmanuel Aharoni will discuss gender equality and how this can become a battle in the workfield.

This session will be an interactive and fun way to end the conference and will decipher some fundamental and basic differences between the sexes.

Workshops and sub plenary sessions include:

- Employment Law Update
- Welsh Language Act - how does it apply to IT?
- Digital and financial Inclusion
- Housing Benefit reform
- Economic outlook
- Tenant profiling
- Self assessment
- Document management
- Intermediate rents
- Reconciling models for FSMD / 30 year business plan
- Pensions
- Healthy workplaces
- Microsoft Lync
- GPSVision - from happy sheet to the bottom line
- Funding retrofitting - revolving loan
- Apprentice schemes
- Impact of HR on the business
- Coaching

The conference will be sponsored by Acumus Intelligent Housing Insurance, Gwent Hospitals Contributory Fund and RBS. Book your place now if you haven't already done so!

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Exploring Innovative Solutions to Increase the Capacity of Social Housing

The Welsh Assembly Government's budget for Social Housing Grant is set to reduce by 35% to around £70m per annum at a time when other downward pressures on the economy will increase the demand for additional social housing development.

There is therefore a pressing need to examine options for increasing the provision of social housing pro rata to current levels against this reducing budget.

CHC has recently commissioned David Swallow, Strategic Delivery Consultant from Eversheds, to undertake a study to identify innovation options to increase financing capacity to support new social housing development in Wales. This study will build on the lessons learned from the previous Welsh Housing Trust exercise. This identified there was potential for increasing funding capacity to the sector through a collaborative structure which could access new capital market finance.

However, the transfer of existing tenanted social housing assets, which was a key element of that specific proposal, was not deliverable.

This is a complementary proposal with the parallel initiatives being undertaken in respect of Intermediate housing and the Welsh Housing Bond, and if successful would form part of an increased toolkit for the sector. There is currently a very strong institutional funding market seeking public sector or equivalent covenant. The RSL sector is viewed very favourably by this market and it is thought institutions may be prepared to invest in property leased to RSLs at yields which would reflect a higher capital value than currently valued for bank lending purposes. This could increase the returns available to RSL participants in the fund and/or enable lower grant levels to be achieved.

The study would examine alternative funding structures and mechanisms

by which a collaborative vehicle could act as a purchaser/commissioner (and possibly interim funder) for new social housing development. This could possibly also include projects currently in the development phase which are already part of the Social Housing Grant Programme.

CHC would oversee the project but the proposal envisages substantial time input from RSL representatives with external project management and possibly accounting/financial support. It is proposed that a small group would be set up to represent all RSLs (possibly 5-7 individuals with combined financial and property expertise) with an agreed terms of reference from the Finance Forum.

If you would like to get involved, please contact David Swallow on: DavidSwallow@eversheds.com, 0845 498 7961 or 07767 486936.

Kevin Howell
Policy and Information Officer

6 months on – have you registered?

CHC's new website has now been live for 6 months and has seen a huge increase in visitor activity. Over 500 members have registered and online bookings for training, forums, networks and conferences have increased in the last few months. 47.32% of visitors are new visitors who have never visited the site before. We are driving traffic to the website from our Twitter account (www.twitter.com/chcymru) and our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/communityhousingcymru), ensuring that we have a joined-up presence across several online platforms.

Our banners on the homepage have proved to be hugely influential – over 1,100 visitors viewed our 'Don't get bitten by loan sharks' page when our advertising banner was featured on the homepage, and over 900 people clicked through to the 'Are you on board?' page from the banner on the homepage.

We are currently promoting the 'Your Benefits' campaign on the homepage and will be monitoring website hits throughout the campaign.



If you haven't already registered, please ensure that you do so as soon as possible to enjoy all the benefits the website can offer you. You can also make use of the discussion forum to network with colleagues in between events and to share ideas and good practice and we will be setting up a number of online discussions with industry experts in the coming months.

If you have any feedback on the website or would like further information, please get in touch.

Bethan Samuel
Communications Officer

Creating a coaching culture

Over recent years many articles and research studies have indicated how important it is to create a coaching culture - but what exactly is a coaching culture and does it really make a difference?

Coaching has become more and more popular in recent years, and what used to be considered an activity limited only to senior staff is now more prominent across all sectors and increasingly becoming embedded in organisational cultures and practices.

There are lots of different ways to utilise coaching in your organisation – using external coaches to support staff and provide a forum for challenge and reflection, training managers in basic coaching skills, and developing a pool of internal coaches who can support others, but ultimately what organisations should strive for are coaching skills being used every day across all levels of the organisation as a way of bringing about behavioural and attitudinal change and developing the organisation for the future.

So if you want to work towards a coaching culture, what are you aiming for? Well, you'll know you've got a true coaching culture when:

- There are clear links between personal growth, team development and organisational learning, and equal emphasis placed on all.
- Feedback is welcomed, actively sought out and reflected on.
- Challenge and confrontation is seen as constructive and people are skilled and able to engage positively in open and honest debate.
- Leaders act as true role models, demonstrating the behaviours expected by others and creating opportunities for growth.
- People work collaboratively, sharing ideas, posing questions, identifying solutions and supporting each other to deliver excellence.
- People look for career opportunities within their own organisation before looking elsewhere.

Within this type of culture, all individuals understand the important role they play and naturally work together to achieve. There is a real cohesion amongst staff and everyone is encouraged to share ideas and learn from each other – managers create an environment where individuals are encouraged to push themselves to achieve their full potential, and these managers are recognised and rewarded for the way in which they empower and develop their teams.



Insight

So why aim for this type of culture and what benefits does it bring?

For the organisation, a coaching culture brings with it a host of business benefits, not just around enhanced communication and working relationships within the organisation, but at the bottom line. These benefits include:

- Motivated staff who are confident and capable, and fully engaged in the organisation
- Sharing of knowledge and expertise and a passion for 'learning'
- Focus on continuous improvement and innovation
- Opportunities for talented people to be fully utilised
- Improved productivity and financial performance
- Increased employee commitment and satisfaction
- Reduced short term sickness absence
- Improved retention of staff
- Improved quality, customer service and shareholder value

At a more individual level, coaching brings about increased self-awareness and confidence, along with enhanced communication, team working and problem solving skills. It also allows people to reflect, apply learning and be more focused in their goal setting. Ultimately it could be argued that working within a coaching culture contributes to overall motivation and satisfaction, promotes work-life balance and reduces stress levels.

Coaching should not be seen as a 'soft' issue – it is not just about supporting and developing individuals or showing your commitment to learning, but is a genuine tool in bringing about significant change and improvement across your business.

Organisations that are successful in their approach to developing and growing are the ones who have created an environment where coaching behaviours as means of managing, influencing and communicating with each other have become part of the everyday fabric of working life, and whilst a coaching culture cannot be created overnight, or on a whim, those organisations who take the time to invest in establishing and promoting these behaviours and practices reap the benefits and see their strategic vision realised.

If you want to find out more about coaching, and how it could benefit your organisation, contact Vikki Evans at Insight HR by email at vikki@insight-hr.co.uk or on 07725 782706.

HA in Focus: Cardiff Community Housing Association



Cardiff Community Housing Association (CCHA) was created in 1996 following a merger between Moors and Adamsdown housing associations. CCHA has over 2,600 homes across nine areas of Cardiff and provide a wide range of housing and services.

Chief Executive, Kevin Protheroe, gives an insight into the ethos of the association.

'We pride ourselves on upholding the vision of our founding organisations – to be a truly community-focused housing association.

This has been the case for over 30 years now and is epitomised by the fact that over 60% of our homes are within a 1.4mile radius of our office, our on-going commitment to community regeneration and our investment in local facilities such as community centres.

Our aim is quite simply to provide homes and communities in which people want to live.'

Community regeneration

We have a proven commitment to regenerating our existing communities and our now self-funded regeneration programme has been running for over 32 years. This brings empty homes and those that have reached the end of their useful life back into management.

These are largely terraces, some dating back to the 1860s, and we retain the traditional look by using materials and styles which mimic the local heritage but ultimately achieve the highest standards and lifecycles of new build.

This could never be described as an easy option as demolishing and rebuilding in a confined space, often in a gap sandwiched between two private properties, presents its own unique challenges – as does demolishing and rebuilding an entire terrace, working around its owner-occupiers!

Such attention to detail has been duly recognised and rewarded. Nominated three times for Cardiff Council's Built in Quality Awards and eventual winners in 2008, the scheme has delivered high quality family housing in two of the City's highest demand areas, Splott and Adamsdown. The past 12 years alone has seen the 'knock down and rebuild' of 49 homes and the redevelopment of 149 properties, delivering real results for both our communities and tenants.



This empty terrace in Adamsdown was totally refurbished and brought back into use.

We also undertake wider area regeneration projects. In 2007 we completed our award winning transformation of Trowbridge Shops. In just two years the £6 million build replaced poor quality council maisonettes, near-derelict shops and a dilapidated community centre with a site which now offers a mixture of high quality homes and flats, an attractive modern shopping parade and a brand new community centre along with a flourishing community garden.

Our biggest current commitment is the regeneration of Loudon Square in Butetown, one of the most deprived wards in Cardiff.

Once completed in 2013 it will deliver 61 homes for rent including 13 family homes built to Sustainable Code 5, a state of the art medical centre, 12 new shops and a new flexible community space.

From a social aspect, we are working with partners to deliver programmes that offer support on getting people back into work and training, drug awareness, teenage parenting and health and fitness.

One stand-out initiative is the multi-agency Safer Wales Cardiff Regeneration Project. CCHA is playing a key role, along with Safer Wales, Cardiff Women's Aid, BAWSO and Cardiff Council, in providing accommodation as part of the partnership's support of sex workers in the City.

Improving access to high quality homes

Our low-cost home ownership scheme (LCHO) and mixed tenure developments provide access to high-quality affordable homes to those who may otherwise be priced out of the market.

Prime examples include the prestigious Aquila and Galleon Way waterfront developments in Cardiff Bay.

Through the innovative use of funding we were able to self-finance the sale of 50 LCHO of these homes and provide 101 apartments for rent for local people who were at risk of being priced out of the area which is one of the City's most expensive.

Empowering our tenants

We have a strong commitment to our tenants and our Tenant Involvement Strategy is a testament to our long track-record of involving them in our work.

Development is not restricted to building homes - our tenant groups have evolved away from being formal 'committees' towards being more pro-active, focused groups.

We can now boast trained tenant inspectors who review our services, support for specific interest groups such as a Golden Club, Disability Advocacy Group and a 400 strong '100 Club' who help to comment on policies and procedures.

Its not all work for our tenants though – activities also include fun days, day trips and gardening clubs!



Youngsters enjoy a day out at one of our community fun days.

Team CCHA

In order to encourage the development of our communities we also recognise the importance of involving staff from across the organisation to connect with CCHA's vision. From an organisational point of view, our Quality Improvement Groups have improved our tenant's newsletter, organised the AGM and improved our approach to Health and Safety. From a hands-on perspective, staff have volunteered their free time to support a number of tenant and community events and projects.

We also strive to improve the working environment of our team. Our Better Balance policy and Wellness at Work initiatives aim to keep our team healthy and enable them to balance their work/life commitments, – self certified sickness absence has reduced to just 1% in the last few years.

Recognising skills and leadership requirements is also important, with our recently implemented leadership development programme and culture of continuous learning and personal development ensuring that staff remain inspired.

The future

We have some exciting times ahead including moving to a purpose built office to bring all our staff under one roof. Like our peers, we also face some real challenges, not less the reduction in Social Housing Grant and the impact of the welfare reforms. Whatever happens, we will remain true to our vision, to provide homes and communities where people want to live.

For further details about CCHA please visit www.ccha.org.uk or email info@ccha.org.uk

Kevin Protheroe
Cardiff Community Housing Association



With our help Danielle was able to move into a new apartment at a prestigious development in Cardiff Bay.

CHC Events

All courses are in Cardiff

May	Event
12	Debt Counselling, Money Management & Financial Inclusion
13	Introduction to Housing Management Law
16	Service Charges – An Introduction
17	How to get your News Story Noticed
24	Voids Management Excellence
June	
7	Advanced Minute Taking
9	Creating Successful Tenancies
21	Rent Arrears Masterclass
July	
4	Service Charges: Practicalities, Problems & Solutions
7	Managing Complaints
11	Introduction to Housing Associations
20	Repairs for Non Technical Staff
October	
3	Introduction to Housing Associations

For further information, please contact Jennifer Horton, Events Officer on 029 2055 7410, or jennifer-horton@chcymru.org.uk.

Conferences

19-20 May
Resources Conference, Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells
8-10 June
Housing Europe Conference, Cardiff Museum
14-15 July
Development and Regeneration Conference Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells
15 September
PR and Communications Conference Venue to be confirmed
6-7 October
Housing Management and Maintenance Conference Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells
24 – 25 November
Annual Conference, The Hilton Hotel, Cardiff



For further information, please contact Rhian Robinson, Events Programme Coordinator, on 029 2055 7413 or Rhian-robinson@chcymru.org.uk

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