



**TAI**

**2025**



# Welcome to conference day two and CHOOSE HOUSING

**Croeso i ddiwrnod dau y gynhadledd a DEWIS TAI**

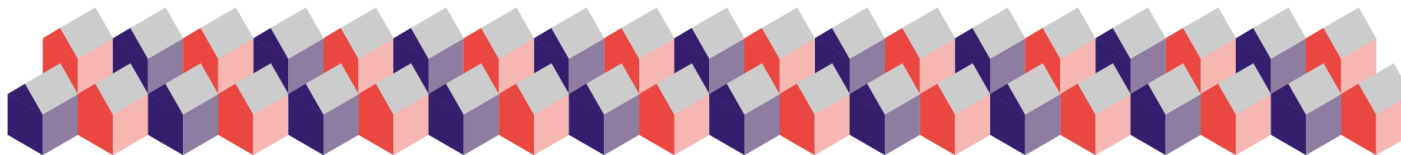


Gavin Smart  
Chief executive, CIH

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# Keynote - Smashing the glass ceiling

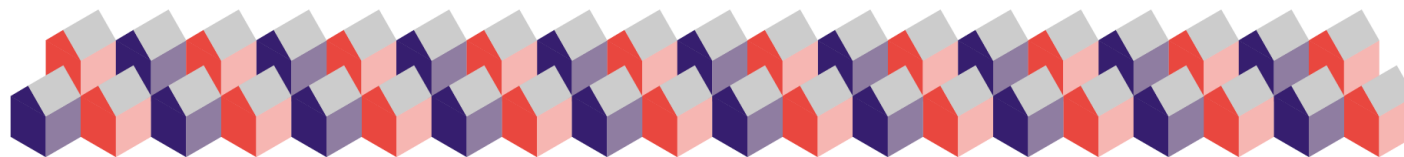
**Cyweirnod - Torri'r nenfwd gwydr**



Lucy Cohen  
**Co-founder and chief  
executive, Mazuma**



Paula Kennedy  
**Chief executive, Melin  
Homes**



The background of the entire image is a light gray surface covered with numerous small, sharp, and irregular fragments of shattered glass. These fragments are scattered across the entire frame, creating a sense of impact and destruction. The fragments vary in size and orientation, with some appearing as thin shards and others as more substantial pieces. The overall effect is one of a ceiling or barrier that has been broken apart.

*Lucy Cohen*

# Smashing the Ceilings, Breaking the Bias

## About me...

Disruptor, activist, award-winning author, and the UK's most successful female accountancy entrepreneur, Lucy is a force to be reckoned with.

Having founded a multi-million-pound company at the age of 23, Lucy now uses her significant platform and voice to advocate for the progression and equality of women in the accountancy industry.

Her unique ability to combine vulnerability with radical candour, combined with her peerless track record in business, make her a well-respected voice within the space and a true champion of progress.

## Featured by...

VOGUE

Forbes

BBC

itv

sky

THE  TIMES

COSMOPOLITAN

DAILY  
Mirror

mail Online

GRAZIA



INDEPENDENT



*Lucy Cohen*



# What is a Glass Ceiling?

The glass ceiling is an invisible barrier that prevents people from reaching top positions in their careers.

It is not a formal rule, but rather a lack of access to opportunities due to societal biases and discriminatory practices.

People may be overlooked for promotions, passed over for training opportunities, or face bias in performance reviews.

*Lucy Cohen*



*Lucy Cohen*

Things I have been asked...



*Lucy Cohen*

A group of approximately ten people, mostly men in dark suits and one woman in a grey blazer, are standing in a line in front of a large glass window. The window reflects a city skyline, including a prominent tower. The people have serious expressions. The text "Is it your Dad's company?" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Is it your Dad's company?



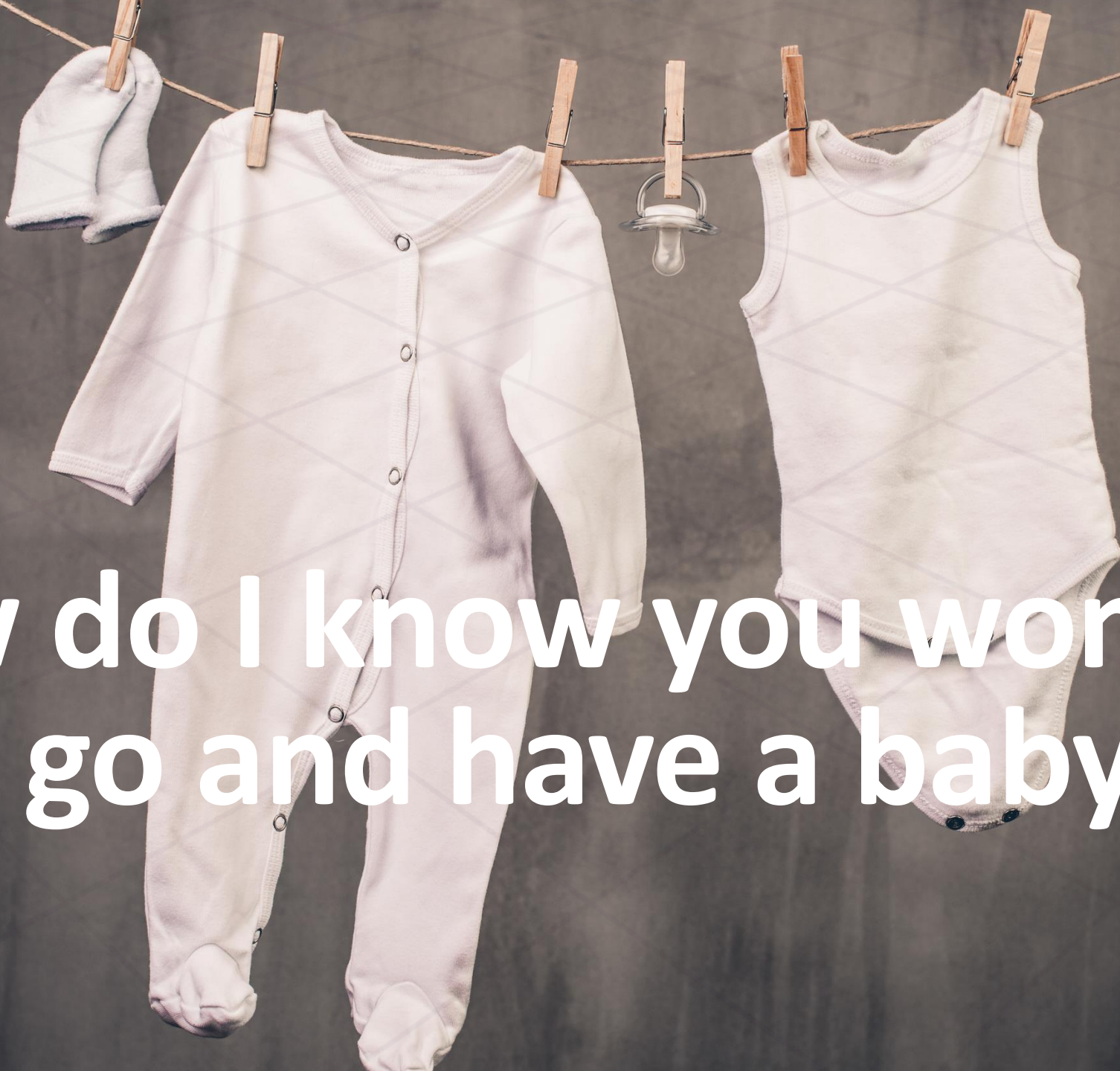
# Do you only employ women?



WOMEN  
ONLY

*Lucy Cohen*

*Lucy Cohen*



**How do I know you won't just  
go and have a baby?**



# From the accounting industry

- 94,000 UK accounting firms
- 950 over £1m revenue
- 43 run by women
- 1 woman-led firm over £3m

*Lucy Cohen*



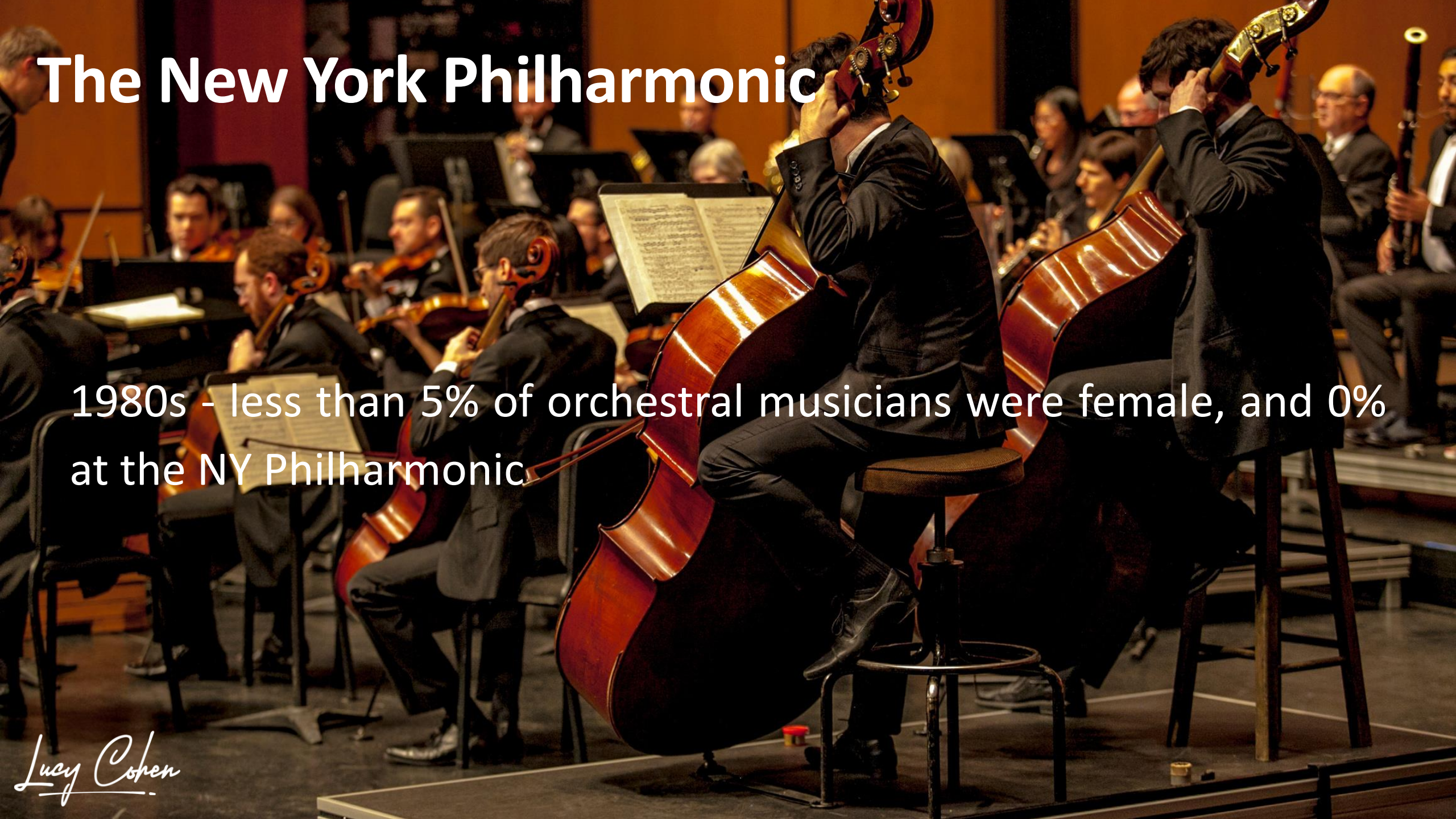


# What's the problem?

A large puzzle with a missing piece and a dark purple piece. The puzzle is composed of many white interlocking pieces. One piece is missing from the top left, and another piece is dark purple and placed in the bottom right. The background is dark purple.

- Our own biases are hard to see
- Structures have been in place for generations
- Behaviour is hard to change
- Weighed against immediate needs





# The New York Philharmonic

1980s - less than 5% of orchestral musicians were female, and 0% at the NY Philharmonic



# Blind Auditions

- The odds of a woman being hired increased by 25–46%
- In one decade went from 0% to 10% women
- And today, is almost 50/50



# Classifying Bias

## Explicit Bias

This is conscious prejudice against a specific group, often expressed through discriminatory actions or language.

**Scenario:** During a job interview, the interviewer asks a female candidate about her family plans and childcare arrangements, but does not ask the same questions of a male candidate with similar qualifications.

## Implicit Bias

These are unconscious attitudes that influence our perceptions and behaviors regarding certain groups.

**Scenario:** A teacher unconsciously associates leadership qualities with students who are assertive and dominant and tends to call on these students more often in class discussions.



# Keep it off the golf course...

Networking and events

Office leagues and competitions

Mentoring opportunities

*Lucy Cohen*



# Why bother?

- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams are 25% more likely to have above-average profitability. (McKinsey, 2020)
- Firms with above-average diversity produce 19% more innovation revenue. (Boston Consulting Group, 2018)
- 67% of job seekers consider workplace diversity when evaluating offers. (Glassdoor, 2020)
- Companies with 30% or more women on their boards outperformed those with fewer women by over 10% return on equity. (Credit Suisse, 2019)
- Organisations with gender-diverse leadership are 21% more likely to outperform on profitability and 27% more likely to have superior value creation. (McKinsey, 2018)





# Living Bridges

*Lucy Cohen*





*Lucy Cohen*

**Thank you**



# Keynote - Does size matter? What are we for and does merging make us better?

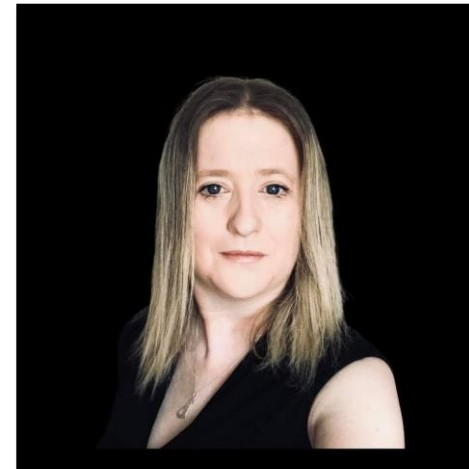
**Cyweirnod - Ydy maint o bwys? Beth yw ein pwrpas ni ac a yw uno yn ein gwneud yn well?**



Branwen Evans  
**Group director of  
sustainability and policy,  
Places for People**



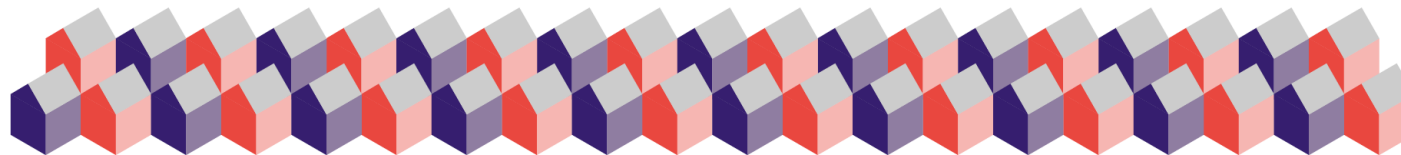
Amanda Davis  
**Chair, Valleys 2 Coast**



Shels McGuire  
**Tenant voice, Hedyn**



Matthew Dicks  
**National director of  
housing, CIH Cymru**





# Keynote - In conversation with Kriss Akabusi MBE

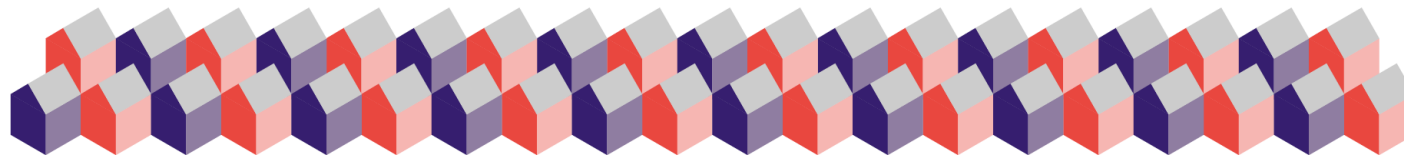
**Cyweirnod - Sgwrs gyda Kriss Akabusi MBE**



Kriss Akabusi MBE  
**British broadcaster and  
olympian**



Alison Inman  
**Chair of TPAS and past  
president, CIH**





# Closing remarks

## Sylwadau i gloi



Jonathan Morris  
Chair, CIH Cymru

