

# News round-up

February 2022



Chartered  
Institute of  
Housing  
Cymru

## Welcome from the panel

*Hello there and welcome to the first CIH Housing Futures Cymru newsletter. We're starting this up so we can let the sector know what we're up to as a group and get the conversation flowing. For those that don't know, we are CIH Cymru's policy advisory panel and we are made up of new and young members within housing. We are a group of individuals who collectively want to make a difference and positively impact the future of the housing profession in Wales. In this opening edition you will get to meet the panel, find out about a survey we're running for frontline housing professionals, and an opinion piece on the Renting Homes Wales Act implementation. So please take five minutes, make a paned / brew, and read on. Thanks for reading.*

**Gareth Leech**, chair of Housing Futures Cymru panel



## Meet the panel

As this is the first newsletter, we thought it would be useful for you to meet the panel and get to know the faces behind the names:

### **Gareth Leech,**

CIH Housing Futures Cymru panel chair & innovate project lead at Cartrefi Conwy



#### **Tell us about what drives and motivates you?**

I am driven to make a positive difference and get the best out of people. I like to challenge assumptions to see if there are better ways of doing things, and I think I am a good 'critical friend' who gives honest and constructive feedback. Plus I like to make people smile with an array of puns and dad jokes.

#### **Tell us a surprising fact about you?**

I once went hang gliding over Rio De Janeiro and it was a Brazil-liant experience.

### **Richard Bartram,**

CIH Housing Futures Cymru panel member & homeless prevention officer at Conwy CBC



#### **How long have you been with Conwy County Borough Council?**

Coming up to 4 years in January 2022, and 3 years in my current role as a homeless prevention officer.

#### **What is the best advice you've ever received?**

To treat people how I'd like to be treated.

#### **Tell us a surprising or fun fact about you?**

I once wore a dress following a dare from a mystery celebrity, hoping to get her number, but failed miserably....and I didn't even get to keep the dress.

**Grant Prosser,**

CIH Housing Futures Cymru panel member & development delivery manager at Wales & West Housing



**What is the best advice you've ever received?**

Don't be scared to make a mistake.

**What do you love most about what you do?**

The variation of the role in development and the impact you can make in people's lives.

**Rowjee Kaur,**

CIH Housing Futures Cymru panel member & lettings officer at Cadwyn Housing Association



**How long have you been with Cadwyn ?**

Coming up to 3 years in February 2022.

**What do you love most about what you do?**

I love meeting such a diverse range of tenants, hearing their stories and the best part - offering them their forever homes - it doesn't get more rewarding than that.

**Charlotte Whitney,**

CIH Housing Futures Cymru panel member & group executive business manager at Hafod



**Why did you join Hafod Housing Association?**

I joined Hafod as I believe in the focus on the customer journey. Systems, processes and bureaucracy from policy, commissioning and social levels should not impact someone's ability to achieve and have a safe and stable home with the care and support required. I am a huge believer in integrated services and asset-based approaches and Hafod have the tools, ambition and drive to deliver these.

**What is the best advice you've ever received?**

You have two ears and one mouth. Seek to understand, hear what you are listening to and work collaboratively to reach solutions. Do with not to.

**Ruth Davies,**

CIH Housing Futures Cymru panel vice-chair & supported housing team manager at Pobl Group

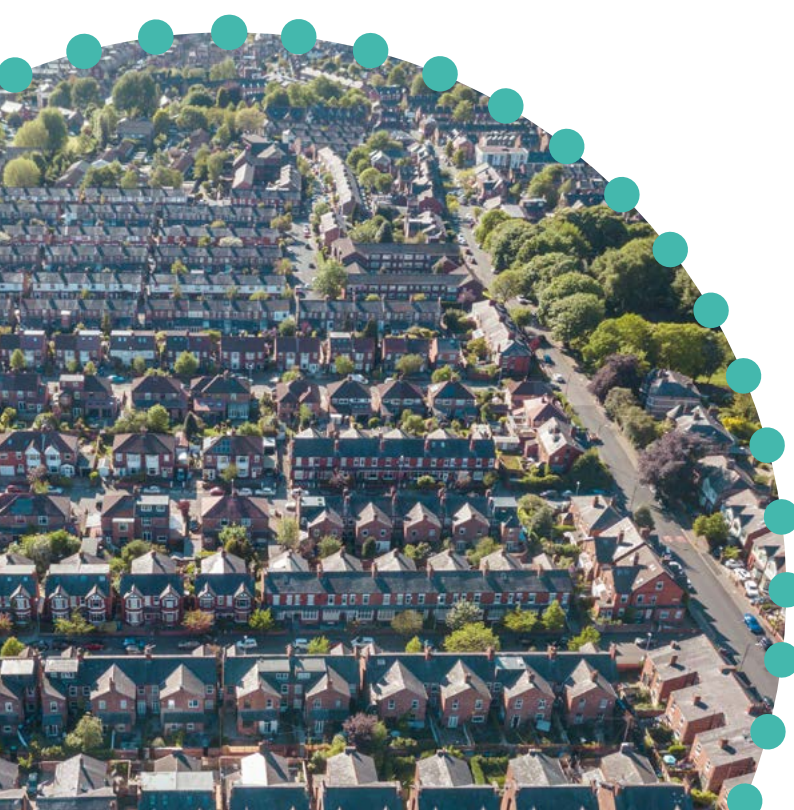


**Tell us about why you work in the housing sector.**

I joined Pobl when it was Charter. My Gran had lived in a Charter Property until she died in 2003. Living in Sheltered Accommodation gave her a new lease on life and she was even online before I was! Charter had a role to play in that and giving her a community that she needed. I'm proud of that and wanted to do the same for other people.

**What's your best advice for others?**

There's no rush. While I would say that I am an ambitious person, I'm not in a rush to get there. I want to learn all the way to make sure that when I do, I know everything I need to and can impart the right words of wisdom to others.



# Thoughts from the panel - Renting Homes Wales Act

## Renting Homes Wales - It's coming!

It was 2013, I was working as a tenant participation officer and attending my first TPAS conference. The session was on the introduction of a new type of tenancy agreement that would be used across the sector, conveying additional rights to those living in private, local authority, housing association and community housing homes. I remember immediately latching on to how much simpler this would make things in managing tenancies and how better off our residents would be. Fast forward nine years, and I'm managing Pobl's Supported Housing Team and it now feels like a boulder rushing down the hill towards me and I'm trying to soak up as much information as I can about the implications before July 15th.

This is the biggest change in housing law in decades and gives Welsh renters more protection than their other UK counterparts. From July, Tenants and Licensees will become Contract Holders - having either a Secure or Standard Contract. While this might sound pretty straight forward, this is where it gets a little muddy. Supported accommodation residents will have 'Supported Standard Contract' where the property meets the standard of supported housing, and, as the Act does not end the use of Licenses, these can still be issued. But these have a shelf life and in order to extend a license, you'll need permission from the Local Authority. In my role, I currently cover 16 local authority areas. Slightly worried I'm going to need 16 different procedures.

The protection it will offer to tenants is undeniably beneficial. Protection from no fault eviction, removal of a joint contract holder, enhanced succession rights and the introduction of the 'fitness for human habitation'. There are elements that will make things simpler for the landlord too; no need for a court order when dealing with an abandonment.

I'm sure there are a lot of us right now with project plans in development, letters flying around between partnerships and local authorities. Support and answers are trickling down to those that need it, and information and practice sharing is going to be vital for us to get this right.

When I think back to my naive self, nine years ago, I was right in some ways. This will make things easier for frontline housing management and provide greater security of tenure. We've now got the challenge of preparing for this and getting ourselves up to speed and ready to deliver. Yes, it's daunting as we all what to get it right but seek out those support networks, understand what your company is doing to plan for the changes and here's to a better way of working!

If there is anything around renting homes that you think Housing Futures Cymru should be looking at or lobbying for, please get in touch.

**Ruth Davies, vice-chair of the panel and supported housing team manager at Pobl Group.**



## Views from The Frontline Survey

In August 2021, we surveyed a number of people in housing who have tenant-facing roles. We wanted to know about how they could be supported more in their roles to help create more positive impact. What we heard was that respondents wanted to make a positive difference and support tenants, however this was sometimes hindered by lack of resources, poor communication, and general working conditions. We are now repeating the survey as we want to see how things may have changed and what we can do as a sector to improve and maximise the positive impact we can have.

You can complete the survey in English [here](#) neu yn Gymraeg [yma](#), and only takes a few minutes.

Please encourage any colleagues and contacts of yours to complete, as the more responses we get, the stronger voice we can have. We will be launching the outcomes of the survey at the upcoming TAI conference in April 2022.



## Recruitment

We are always looking out for new members of the panel so if you are interested or if there is a rising star that you know and would be a perfect fit for us, please get in touch. More details can be found on the CIH website here <https://www.cih.org/policy/housing-futures-cymru>