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**Using national milestones and indicators to measure our nation’s progress**

**A joint response by CIH Cymru, Shelter Cymru and Tai Pawb (Back the Bill coalition)**

**Introduction**

The Well-being of Generations (Wales) Act 2015, has been (and will continue) playing a pivotal role in ensuring services consider, plan and implement changes that will both benefit and improve the lives of future generations. With any kind of legislation of this size and scope, underpinning it with tangible ways to measure progress can be both a means of celebrating success and opening opportunities for positive scrutiny.

We welcome this opportunity to respond to the consultation on the shape and focus of national milestones that reflect progress in meeting the aims of the Well-being of Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This response represents the views of our Back the Bill coalition, which represents the activity of CIH Cymru, Shelter Cymru and Tai Pawb in seeking to progress the right to adequate housing into Welsh law – and more broadly a right-based approach to housing across policy.

Our response as follows is focussed on our specific work around progressing a right to adequate housing and the aspects of this consultation most relevant to our membership, service provision and focus as organisations.

***Question 14. We would also welcome your views on any further gaps you feel the COVID-19 pandemic may have highlighted in the way we measure progress towards our well-being goals?***

**The milestones and housing**

In relation to housing the milestones currently cover a number of important elements:

* Homes that are free from hazards
* Homes at risk of flooding
* Homes that achieve energy performance measures
* Progress towards making homes more environmentally friendly
* Homelessness prevention activity

Reflecting on both these and the wider narrative provided in ‘Well-being of Wales: 2021’ – providing an up-to-date snapshot of progress towards the achievement of the 7 well-being goals there are considerable gaps in evidence around people’s housing circumstances.

For example, the latest report tends to reflect heavily on housing costs in relation to poverty, deprivation etc. which, whilst clearly important, fails to capture a holistic view of housing circumstances. Whilst we recognise that different stages of this type of progress reporting will naturally capture or emphasise certain elements over others, we believe that without a more holistic view of housing being consistently covered, there is a risk, opportunities to truly measure progress in relation to the well-being goals will be missed.

**Creating a holistic view of housing circumstances**

We strongly agree that the elements currently included as milestones are important considerations when we think about the adequacy of someone’s home. But with these milestones representing the sum of those directly linked to housing, there is a risk that other important factors could be missed as we reflect on progress in this area including:

* Legal security of tenure for households and more generally housing (in)security
* A cross-tenure understanding of housing affordability and its impacts
* The cultural adequacy of existing and new homes
* Availability of services and other key infrastructure (such as telecommunications).

A Bill for the right to adequate housing would create a legislative framework to help address and measure progress against some of these key issues further:

**Homelessness:** ensuring we build on some of the measures taken during the COVID-19 crisis, including maximising investment in social housing and support

**Security of tenure:** strengthening the position of Welsh Government in its rights-based approach, better balancing the rights of tenants to live in security with those of private landlords

**Accessible housing:** ensuring proper consideration of disabled people’s rights in a housing context, giving them a voice to have those rights recognised and, if needed, enforced

**Black, Asian and minority ethnic people, young people and other minority or disadvantaged groups’ access to affordable housing:** where local authorities would need to consider the needs of particularly disadvantaged groups in the development of local strategies and the supply of affordable homes

**Resource:** will push housing up the policy priority list and in turn ensure increased focus of resource and investment, tackling the chronic under-supply of housing as well as support services

**The pandemic’s impact on ‘home’**

It is also important to consider the ways in which the pandemic may have impacted people’s view of what matters when they think about their home and their future housing circumstances. For example, in CIH Cymru’s recent research conducted through its Tyfu Tai Cymru project focussing on ‘rightsizing’ and specifically how people who are either under-occupying or overcrowding could be supported to move home should they wish, tenants fed back that access to outdoor space, engaging with their local community and being close to networks of family members/friends were key consideration in addition to things like rent affordability in thinking about their housing needs both now and in the future.

More broadly we’re acutely aware that the pandemic and its conditions on daily life imposed as a result will have had (and still be having) a varying impact for better and worse on the lives of many people and households. For people with access to secure, safe and affordable housing, the experience of living under restrictions, working from home, possibly self-isolating and coping with the potential impact of illness during this time will have been a reasonably positive one. For others, such as people without employment or in in-secure/uncertain forms of work, people escaping domestic abuse and/or violence and people at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness – the conditions of the pandemic have likely made their circumstances much worse.

**Conclusion**

We recognise that the milestones have been in place for some time and cemented through consultation during that period. We believe that the combination of the pandemic (and the need to mitigate its impacts) and a new programme for government serve as a basis to reflect and review how the milestones work in practice and if they effectively measure what should matter to individuals, organisations and local/national government. We hope that this response acts as a starting point to consider how the milestones and the broader measurement of the Future Well-being of Generations (Wales) Act 2015 can be refined to more fully build a picture of progress in ensuring everyone can access a safe and affordable place to call home.

Lastly, we are pleased that as a coalition we have recently commissioned Alma economics to undertake a cost benefit analysis of the right to adequate housing. The research will focus on two phases, the first will set out a contemporary overview of how enshrining the right has been achieved to one extent or another in other nations and the second will outline the options for its incorporation in Wales and provide additional evidence around how this could impact the sustainability and effectiveness of other key public services and the overall well-being of people in Wales. We look forward to sharing the results of this work in summer 2022.