

Home!



Creating a Better Wales for All



2021 Senedd Election Manifesto

#HereForHomes

Home.

“Stay home!” is a phrase we have heard again and again during the pandemic.

Never before have our homes taken such prominence; many of us spent so much time within them and so many aspects of our lives revolved around them.

‘Home’ has never meant more.

Somewhere safe, comfortable and secure to weather the storm of the pandemic. Somewhere adaptable to our changing needs. Somewhere connected to our work, education, public services - and to each other.

Every election matters. But this election is about defining Wales’ path out of the challenges that the pandemic has posed to every one of us. Its result has the potential to plot a course to prosperity and health for the next generation. Amidst the incredible hardship, caused by COVID-19, there is an opportunity to take a fresh look at old challenges, to raise our ambitions and to come back stronger.

Where we live has never been more important to how we live. The big challenges to our climate, to our economy and to address the inequality that exists in our society are still there. In some cases the pandemic has made the challenge even greater and the need to find solutions even more urgent. This is serious.

And there is much that we can do, together.

We have a vision that Wales is a place where good housing is a basic right for all. Good housing, with the right support where it is needed, is crucial for every person, or family, whatever their circumstances.

Making this a reality will require focused and determined partnership in every part of Wales. We have been grateful, therefore, for the input of nearly 100 colleagues from external organisations, working alongside hundreds of colleagues from housing associations to explore the challenges and develop the ideas for change reflected in this document.

We know that ideas are nothing without practical, thought-through plans; and the leadership and drive to make it happen. We want to play our part. Next year, we will publish our accompanying Action Plan for Government document. This will set out the detailed actions we believe are necessary to put these ideas into practice and to foster a recovery that prioritises a decent and affordable home as the starting point for successful lives and successful places.

We all need somewhere to call home. Now is the time to make it happen.

Stuart Ropke, Chief Executive, Community Housing Cymru

Our ideas for change

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The challenges we set out in this manifesto are not new. But the combined impact of global events, such as climate change, an ageing population, our changing relationship with Europe and the pandemic have the potential to amplify inequality, hit the poorest hardest and set us back rather than forward.

Our collective mission is to provide good quality, affordable homes in communities across Wales. Yet we deliver far more than bricks and mortar alone and we want to work with communities and partners to increase our collective impact.

Through our investment in new and existing homes, we help strengthen local economies: providing jobs and supporting local supply chains. And through work across our businesses and our homes, we strive to be a low carbon sector - reducing our impact on the environment and actively seeking opportunities to reduce energy bills.

Through providing accessible and supported housing, aids and adaptations, and housing-related support, we help offer people genuine choice about where they live and help them to remain as independent as possible if their needs change, close to the people and places that matter most. And our members, who provide registered social care services, including residential and nursing care, offer high-quality, person-centred care when people are unable to remain in their own homes.

We are serious about change. As private organisations, that exist for public good, we are in it for the long term. We will bring our assets, people and funding to bear in a partnership with the new Welsh Government and local public services to support the changes we set out in this document.

To do this we need the next Welsh Government to take bold action in the following areas:



1. Invest for future generations

We know that the next Government of Wales will have difficult trade-offs to make. We will need a balanced investment programme that makes every pound work hard to provide an economic boost, as well as benefiting the health and wellbeing of the whole nation and future generations.

Capital investment should be prioritised and measured according to the impact it can have on future generations to support a shift to an economy that is founded on wellbeing principles. This should include the following priority spend areas for the next government:

- A 5-year, £1.5bn investment programme of 20,000 new energy efficient social homes.
- A 10-year, £4bn stimulus package, backed by a mix of public and private funding, to retrofit social homes by 2030.

Despite the efforts of many, organisations often miss the opportunity to collaborate. This is often attributed to the overwhelming challenge of ‘today’, the constant need to ‘fire-fight’ problems, risk aversion and culture - helped along by rigid, competitive and time-limited funding and commissioning arrangement which can leave limited time to develop sustainable partnerships.

Longer term funding certainty would give housing associations the ability to plan, invest, take risks and build partnerships. We would like to see:

- A 5-year social housing grant programme.¹
- Continuation of the existing 5-year social rent settlement, with affordability at its heart.
- A 4-year inflation linked indicative funding settlement to support the activities that prevent homelessness, through the Housing Support Grant.²

We know that resources are under strain and that the COVID -19 crisis means the next government must respond to the very immediate public health and economic crisis. This will inevitably tip the balance of spend even further towards reactive and acute interventions. We must use the next Senedd term to reverse this shift.

Rebalance spend away from crisis to long term prevention over the next Senedd term. To support this work, Welsh Government should:

- Make transparent its progress towards this aim and hold itself to account via the Public Accounts Committee.
- Identify transition funds that are necessary to support the shift to a preventative approach. This should include a 3-year transition fund to transform the way we alleviate homelessness based on rapid rehousing and Housing First.

Using our people and assets to scale and add pace to our work is crucial in responding to the economic and social challenges we face. We would like to see the new Welsh Government take the following actions.

Bring pace and certainty to the development process. To support this, Welsh Government should:

- Provide additional support to local authorities to invest in services that enable economic activity and investment, such as planning.
- Make transparent surplus public land that is suitable for housing and scale up the disposal of that land for housing development, taking into account the social value during sale.

1. Invest for future generations

We will play our part to invest for the future

We will be responsible developers, delivering high quality homes across all tenures that are affordable and accessible to local people, with the responsive, flexible support that enables people to improve and maintain their health, independence and wellbeing in their local community.

We will invest locally. We will use our procurement processes to support local businesses and focus on the value created by what we spend, and not just the cost. We will aim to increase the amount we spend in Wales from 85p to 90p in every pound by the end of the next Senedd term.



Ty Solar, Coastal Housing and Western Solar

We will build strong local supply chains to make existing homes energy efficient, by working with education and training providers, Welsh based small businesses and social enterprises.

We will make public money go further by matching every £1 invested in building new social housing. Housing associations are private businesses that exist for public good. This position means that we have been able to leverage £3bn of private investment to spend in Wales. We plan to increase this investment by a further billion over the course of the next Senedd³.



3. www.chcymru.org.uk/uploads/general/2439_CHC_Global_Accounts_2019_v4.pdf



2. Shared action for shared challenges

We know that resources are under pressure and that statutory services are stretched and responding to crises. We can help. Better join-up with community partners, such as housing associations, could provide support at a much earlier stage, preventing an escalation to crisis point, keeping people in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

But we know that the current system isn't designed to support this on the ground. Competing performance management regimes, centres of accountability and appetite for risk and partnership helps to create an environment which can make it more difficult for professionals to share insight and information, take decisions and collaborate. **We would like to see the next Welsh Government take the following actions:**

Improve systems, partnerships and processes to make it easier to work together on the issues that determine our chances of living well. Welsh Government should prioritise action to bridge the implementation gap between high level strategy and delivery so that partners and public services can better work together to deliver services and share information to improve the wider determinants of health. This should include a review of existing partnership and delivery arrangements and shared performance measures. New arrangements should also better reflect the role that long term non statutory partners, such as housing associations, can make to the delivery of shared aims.

A right to adequate housing, supported by the resources and tools to deliver it. A right to a home would represent a clear commitment from the next government to ending the housing crisis. We want to work with the next government to understand how such a right could be implemented and delivered.

Homelessness is a public service issue which requires concerted and coordinated effort from across the public sector and their partners. **The next government should implement the recommendations of the Homelessness Action Group** to end homelessness in Wales.

We will play our part to deliver against these shared challenges

We will continue our work to end homelessness from social housing by continuing to invest in trauma-informed approaches, to strengthen our local partnerships and to challenge our processes and culture.



United Welsh

We will continue to widen access to social housing as a solution to homelessness and inequality.

We will ensure our homes are affordable. We will publish local rent policies, developed with tenants and partners with affordability and value for money at their heart and be held to account against them.

We will invest time and resources into building community trust and engagement, creating space for genuine participation in decision making for our tenants and communities.

We will promote digital inclusion, building on good practice to boost skills, support to use digital services, and access to equipment and infrastructure.

We will work in partnership to take action against shared challenges. We know that simply being around the table isn't enough. As organisations rooted in place and communities we will bring our resources, assets and local insight to bear to mobilise efforts to make a positive difference to place and people.



Hafod Coach – digital training





3. Places that people want to live

Local lockdowns have given many of us a more acute sense of the place we live, its geographical boundaries and the public services and businesses that operate locally.

One of the many striking images during the pandemic is that of deserted town centres and communities. Existing challenges to the success of town centres, ranging from changing demographics to deprivation and the evolution of businesses during this time have not gone away and the early loss of jobs in retail, hospitality and manufacturing all pose a threat to towns as we know them.

The next Welsh Government should develop an overarching and enabling strategy for town centres which have homes at their heart, empowering local communities to take decisions about how to maximise this opportunity. This should include greater flexibility within the planning process to allow local places to be agile in their response to changing demand and consumer habits, encourage experimentation in the use of empty properties, reduce the fragmentation of funding streams and ensure local authorities are resourced to bring strategic challenge and local expertise at the right level to these discussions.

The pandemic has also taught us that the space (both indoors and out), layout and connectivity of our homes has a big bearing on our ability to adapt to changing circumstances, be that health or economic.

At a time when accessing health services, speaking to family and friends, working or accessing education all takes place online, a fast and reliable internet connection is a non negotiable.

The next Welsh Government should put in place measures to end digital exclusion. This should include upgrading requirements for all new homes to include digital connectivity as standard, alongside investment in digital infrastructure and skills support to ensure that all can access the internet as a key public service.

Housing associations help to support people to remain independent in their own homes by providing support services and adapting the home itself. And if a person's needs change, we must ensure high-quality support and care which gives the individual choice and agency. But **the social care and support system requires urgent reform and investment so that it is driven by value, rather than cost, and has the resources needed to deliver improved outcomes for citizen users, the workforce and social value to communities.**

As a priority, the Welsh Government **must increase social care funding** for local authorities to ensure:

- Fees cover the real cost of delivering high quality, person-centred care
- All care workers in Wales are paid at least the Real Living Wage
- Care workers have progression opportunities and pay differentials, based on qualifications, skills and responsibilities.

We will create places people want to live

We will make every contact count, sharing our local knowledge and insight with partners to ensure that services work for individuals. This will include working with those who are tasked with planning for prosperity and preventing homelessness.



Linc Cymru

We maximise the impact that town centre living can make to bring greater prosperity, health and connection to our towns.

We will become a low carbon sector by taking action across all of our activity to reduce our carbon footprint and actively seeking opportunities to positively tackle the climate emergency. This will include scaling environmentally responsible construction and energy generation alongside work to decarbonise our existing housing stock. We will explore how we can best make our progress against these ambitions as transparent as possible.

We will use our people, community spaces and buildings to support local groups and places and make services more sustainable, renewable and accessible. We know that the pressure on charitable and community groups has never been higher at a time when their services have never been needed more.



Newydd

The case for change.

Reducing poverty is the starting point for prosperous, healthy and connected people and places

This is serious! Why must we act now.

Despite concerted efforts, poverty levels remain stubbornly high: Wales has consistently had the highest levels of poverty across the UK for over a century.⁴

The West Wales and the Valleys region is one of the poorest in the whole of Europe and productivity in Wales is the lowest in the UK.⁵

Increasing jobs alone is not enough. Of the 420,000 working age adults living in poverty in Wales, 60% live in households where at least one adult is in work.⁶

COVID-19 threatens to accelerate and compound the challenges our towns face.

- Only Cardiff is predicted to grow its working age population over the next 15 years ⁷
- Six Welsh towns can be found in top twenty towns with the lowest social wellbeing ⁸
- Three Welsh towns feature in the twenty places with the highest levels of social isolation⁹
- Ten of the twenty towns across the UK with the highest levels of absolute deprivation are in Wales¹⁰

We are serious about playing our part

Good housing can stimulate and extend economic activity locally. For every 1 person employed full time by a housing association, another 1.5 good quality jobs are supported elsewhere in the economy.¹¹

Building 20,000 social homes will:

- Support over 7,000 jobs and 3,000 training opportunities across Wales
- Produce almost £2bn of economic output
- In 2018/19, housing associations invested £4 million to provide training for their tenants, with 8,000 people receiving employability and skills development¹²



4 www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-48259327

5 www.pwc.co.uk/economic-services/ukeyo/ukeyo-november-2019-regional-productivity.pdf

6 www.bevanfoundation.org/commentary/making-work-a-route-out-of-poverty/

7 Community Housing Cymru & Savills, Housing Horizons: Establishing the Challenge, 2017

8 Centre for Towns, The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on our towns and cities, 2020

9 Ibid

10 Ibid

11 www.chcymru.org.uk/uploads/general/2018_Economic_Impact_of_Welsh_HA_sector_Report_FINAL.pdf

12 www.chcymru.org.uk/uploads/general/2018_Economic_Impact_of_Welsh_HA_sector_Report_FINAL.pdf

Our health is determined by where we live and how we live

This is serious! Why must we act now.

Wales has higher levels of people who are older, in worse health, and poorer than the rest of the UK.

Your life expectancy depends on where you live in Wales. The gap in the number of years people live in good or very good health, between the most and least deprived areas in Wales, is 19 years for men and 18 years for women.

Poor housing costs the NHS. Poor housing costs the NHS in Wales £95m a year in treatment costs.

We are paying for crisis care. Only 15-20% of a nation's health and wellbeing is dependent on healthcare services and yet over 50% of the Welsh Government budget is allocated to health spending, with 74% of that spend focused on acute services.¹³

The most devastating symptom of our combined public health and housing crisis is homelessness. A third of homelessness is caused by a health problem and the mean age at death of people experiencing homelessness was 44 years for men and 42 years for women.¹⁴

Pressures on adult social care are projected to rise by around 4.1% a year in real terms. Fully funding these pressures would require an extra £1.bn by 2030/31, rising to £2.3bn from £1.3bn in 2015/16¹⁵

We are serious about playing our part

A good quality home saves the NHS money.

- Every £1 spent on improving warmth in vulnerable households could result in a £4 return on investment.¹⁶
- For every £1 spent on adaptations, prior to hospital discharge, there is a saving of £7.50 for health and social care.¹⁷
- Preventing homelessness can result in savings of around £9,266 per person, compared to allowing homelessness to persist for 12 months.¹⁸

A good quality home improves people's health¹⁹

- Home modifications result in 26% fewer injuries requiring medical treatment (caused by falls) per year.
- 39% fewer hospital admissions for cardiorespiratory conditions and injuries in those with upgraded houses
- 3.9% reduction in GP visits for respiratory conditions in Nest scheme beneficiaries (compared to a 9.8% increase in the control group)

Poor housing costs
the NHS in Wales
£95m a year



Every £1 spent on improving warmth
in vulnerable households could result
in a £4 return on investment

¹³ www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-11-29-FGC-Budget-Recommendations-ENG.pdf

¹⁴ phw.nhs.wales/files/housing-and-health-reports/a-case-for-investment-report/

¹⁵ www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-path-to-sustainability

¹⁶ phw.nhs.wales/news/poor-housing-costs-health-service-95m-per-year-new-report/

¹⁷ www.chcymru.org.uk/uploads/general/CHC-Economic-Impact-of-Affordable-Homes-ENG.pdf

¹⁸ www.chcymru.org.uk/uploads/general/CHC-Economic-Impact-of-Affordable-Homes-ENG.pdf

¹⁹ phw.nhs.wales/files/housing-and-health-reports/a-case-for-investment-report/

COVID-19 has shown us that our connections to each other, work and nature matter.

This is serious! Why must we act now.

Space in our homes is at a premium. Less than a third (31%) of people surveyed across all types of housing had a dedicated office or study space and 11% felt they didn't have enough space overall since the lockdown.²⁰

Equal access to jobs, learning and training opportunities more than ever relies on digital access. 10% of people in Wales are still not online²¹ and 17% of social housing residents are digitally excluded – an estimated 60,000 residents.²²

Digital exclusion costs people. Households, off-line, miss out on savings of £560 per year from shopping and paying bills online.²³

Digital exclusion costs the public purse. Each contact made by the public with a service deliverer, and each transaction they conduct online which was previously not done online, could save the service provider between £3 and £12 per transaction.²⁴

We are serious about playing our part

We are in it for the long term, spending money with small businesses locally. Housing associations spend 85p in every pound in Wales, and have ambitions to increase this to 90p in the pound by the end of the Senedd term.

We are working with our tenants during the pandemic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, housing associations made over 37,000 welfare calls and 47% of these residents were supported with dedicated advice and guidance.²⁵



20 Shelter Cymru, You Gov Survey, 2020

21 National Survey for Wales 2019-20

22 National Survey for Wales 2019-20

23 gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-08/111215-digital-inclusion-economic-social-benefits-en.pdf

24 Ibid

25 Centre for Excellence in Community Investment Welsh Impact Measures, 2020

Tackling the climate emergency is a non-negotiable

This is serious!
Why must we act now.

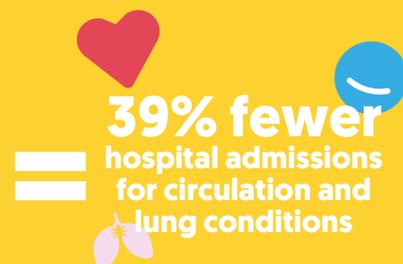
Wales has some of the oldest and least thermally efficient housing stock in the UK and Europe. 32% of the Welsh housing stock was built before 1919. ²⁶

Despite big improvements, 155,000 households still face fuel poverty in Wales. ²⁷ Fuel poverty is most prevalent in areas of low incomes and general economic depression.

We are serious 
about playing our part 

We can keep people living independently at home for longer. Upgrading homes could lead to 39% fewer hospital admissions for circulation and lung conditions.

Investing in energy efficient homes will provide a local economic boost. Refurbishing half of housing association homes in Wales, over the next term of government, would support over 12,000 jobs 3,000 training opportunities and create £2.5bn in economic output.



²⁶ gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/independent-review-on-decarbonising-welsh-homes-report.pdf

²⁷ gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2020-09/tackling-fuel-poverty-2020-to-2035.pdf



Annex A: Our ideas for change.

Invest for future generations:

1. Capital investment should be prioritised and measured according to the impact it can have on future generations

- A 5-year, £1.5bn investment programme of at least 20,000 new energy efficient social homes.
- A 10-year, £4bn stimulus package, backed by a mix of public and private funding - to retrofit social homes by 2030.

2. Longer term funding certainty including:

- A 5-year social housing grant programme.
- Continuation of the existing 5-year social rent settlement.
- A 4-year, inflation linked indicative funding settlement for the Housing Support Grant.

3. Rebalance spend away from crisis to long term prevention over the next Senedd term.

- Make transparent progress towards this aim and seek challenge via the Public Accounts Committee.
- Identify transition funds that are necessary to support the shift to a preventative approach.

4. Bring pace and certainty to the development process.

- Provide additional support to local authorities to invest in services that enable economic activity and investment, such as planning.
- Make transparent surplus public land, suitable for housing and scale up the disposal of that land for housing development taking into account the social value during sale.

Shared accountability for shared challenges

5. Improve systems, partnerships and processes to make it easier to work together on the issues that determine our chances of living well.

6. A right to adequate housing, supported by the resources and tools to deliver it.

7. Implement the recommendations of the Homelessness Action Group.

Places people want to live

8. The next Welsh Government should develop an overarching and enabling strategy for town centres which have homes at their heart.

9. Put in place measures to end digital exclusion.

10. Reform the social care sector so it is driven by value, rather than cost, and has the resources needed to deliver.

Our offer

Invest for future generations:

- 1. We will be responsible developers, delivering high quality homes across all tenures that are affordable and accessible to local people.**
- 2. We will invest locally and spend 90p in every pound in Wales by the end of the next Senedd.**
- 3. We will build strong local supply chains to make existing homes energy efficient.**
- 4. We will make public money go further by matching every £1 invested in building new social housing.**

Shared action for shared challenges

- 5. We will continue our work to end homelessness from social housing.**
- 6. We will continue to widen access to social housing as a solution to homelessness and inequality.**
- 7. We will ensure our homes are affordable.**
- 8. We will invest time and resources into building community trust and engagement.**
- 9. We will promote and support digital inclusion.**
- 10. We will work in partnership to take action against shared challenges.**

Places people want to live

- 11. We will make every contact count, sharing our local knowledge and insight with partners to ensure that services work for individuals.**
- 12. We will use our people, community spaces and buildings to support local groups and places and make services more sustainable, renewable and accessible.**
- 13. We maximise the impact that town centre living can make to bring greater prosperity, health and connection to our towns.**
- 14. We will become a low carbon sector by taking action across all of our activity to reduce our carbon footprint and actively seeking opportunities to positively tackle the climate emergency.**

**Home has never been
more important.**



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