Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

The Fundamentals of Social Housing
Day 2
Rhodri Walters

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives

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Recap from Day 1

Homework

Paragraph on each:

- How essential is social housing in today's society?
- What impact does government have on social housing in Wales?

Croeso / Welcome

Theme for the day

Analysing the factors and legislation which impact upon the work of housing associations and how these can be addressed

Group activity 1

- PESTLE Analysis – What impacts the work of housing associations?
    - P – Political
    - E – Economic
    - S – Social
    - T – Technological
    - L- Legal
    - E – Environmental

The role of the regulator

- Registers and regulates independent housing associations throughout Wales.
- Aims to use public reports and, where appropriate, direct intervention, to protect the interests of current and future tenants, and other service users.
- Helps landlords to improve their governance, financial management and landlord services.
- Also help to ensure that housing associations can continue to attract private finance at competitive rates to build and improve affordable homes for people in housing need.

Regulation continued

- “Delivery outcomes” (standards of performance) that landlords are expected to meet.
- Detailed in the Regulatory Framework and have been agreed with the sector and Community Housing Cymru, which represents housing associations.
- The delivery outcomes provide a framework for assessment of performance and for housing associations to self-assess their own strengths and areas for improvement.
- Work is overseen by the Regulatory Board for Wales, with support from members of the Tenant Advisory Panel.

Regulatory expectations

- **Delivery outcomes:** This includes adhering to the standard of governance the RSL has adopted e.g. Community Housing Cymru's Code of Governance, and providing assurance of compliance on a 'comply or explain' basis.
- **Risk management and stress testing**: Understand the business environment they operate in and associated risks and to have in place a fully considered business plan and robust risk and control framework.
  - Boards are required to assess, manage and, where appropriate, address risks to ensure the long-term viability of their organisation. Fundamental to this approach is a combination of robust business planning assumptions combined with sensitivity/stress testing. This should include multi-variation analysis to stress test the business across the whole organisation to demonstrate the extent to which it can cope with a number of changing factors.
  - Stress testing will help underpin the Boards' understanding of where the risks lie and inform their consideration and planning for remedial action if the risks crystallise either singly or in combinations.
- **Asset and Liability registers**: Understand their housing assets, security position and associated liabilities and have access to this information quickly in decision making and risk management.

Main governance risks

- Governance & Leadership
- Risk management and stress testing
- Tenant involvement and scrutiny
- Equality and diversity including Board diversity
- Value for money
- Data Protection and security:
- Quality of self evaluation
- Horizon scanning

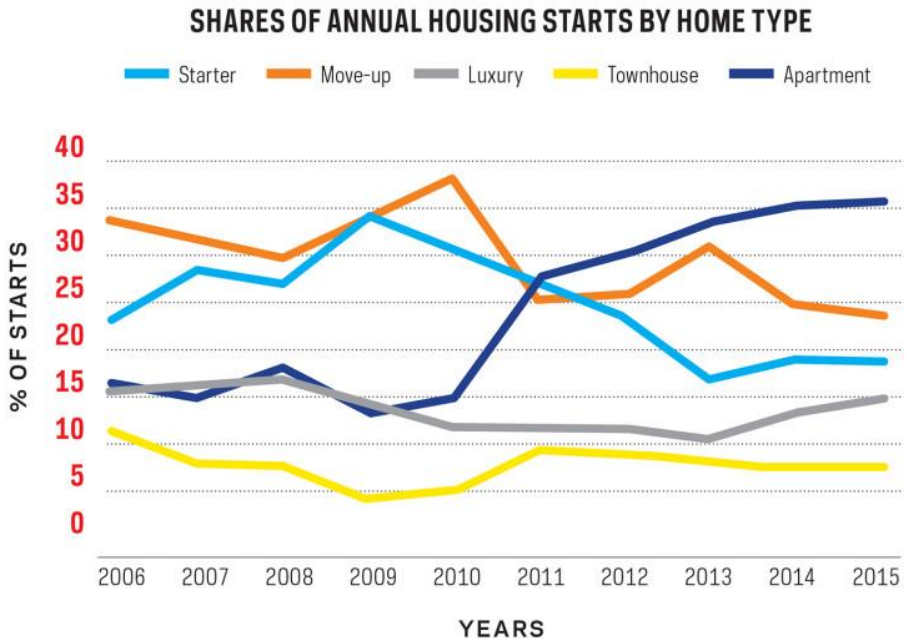
Group activity 2

- How do your roles contribute to the regulatory performance of your organisation?

Building homes

- Land
- Planning
- Design
- Building regulations
- Construction
- The market
- How is social housing different?

Building the right housing mix



Source: Home Innovation Research Labs' Annual Builder Practices Survey

Wider public policy debate

- Housing at the centre of infrastructure projects
- Housing as a solution to issues facing the NHS and Social Care
- Driver to addressing digital exclusion
- Addressing social isolation

Stock transfer

- Stock transfer is where a council transfers the ownership and management of its homes (rented and leasehold) to a Registered Social Landlord.
- The Welsh Government policy is to encourage councils to improve their housing stock to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by whatever means they consider appropriate.
- The transfer of stock to a Registered Social Landlord (housing association) is one of the available options

Group activity 3

- How do governmental factors influence the development plans of your organisation?
- Is your organisation able to build the right housing mix?
- Should social housing providers and the private sector face the same legislative frameworks?

Lunch

Guest Speaker

- Jamie Saunders
  - In-house Solicitor – Coastal Housing

Reflections on Guest Speaker

- What are the key pieces of legislation currently affecting your organisation?
  - What is their impact?
- What are the key legislative developments on the horizon?
  - What operational challenges and conflicts will future legislative changes have?
- What are the legal obligations of housing providers and tenants in relation to effective maintenance and management of tenancies?
  - what are the legal frameworks and procedures relating to challenging circumstances and adverse tenancies?

Homelessness Prevention in Wales

- In April 2015 the law on homelessness in Wales changed in a number of important ways.
- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 placed a new duty on local authorities to carry out ‘reasonable steps’ to prevent or relieve homelessness for all eligible households, greatly increasing the number of people who can be helped.
- The Act created more flexibility in the range of councils’ interventions, and also expanded the definition of ‘threatened with homelessness’ so that people are assisted when they are within 56 days of losing their home.
- Alongside the legislative changes is a Welsh Government-led drive to create a more person-centred service culture, so that people are closely involved in identifying and putting into action the solutions to their housing problems.
- The aim is to create a system that’s more effective at prevention, by intervening earlier in smarter ways to address the root causes of people’s homelessness.

Group Exercise 4

Feature on homelessness legislation

- How has the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 impacted on your organisation, your job role and your tenants?

Discussion - Reviewing the role of housing associations

- *Do you better understand some of the external factors which impact upon the work and development of housing associations?*
- *Can you identify and understand the relevance of key legislation to the work of your organisation and your role?*

Homework

- List the main factors which impact upon the work of housing associations.
- List the key legislation relating to housing providers and tenants.

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Thankyou for listening

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