

Cross Party Group on Housing

Wednesday 13 September 2017, 13:00 – 14:00

Sir Alexander Fleming Room (CR3), Scottish Parliament, Holyrood

Minute of the Meeting	
	<p>Members Present</p> <p>Andy Wightman, MSP Ilene Campbell, TIS (Secretariat) Caroline Elgar, SAL Ashley Campbell, CIH Shona Mitchell, SFHA Tony Kelly, TPAS Grant Carson, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living</p> <p>Ben Macpherson, MSP Susan Morris, TIS Alistair Cameron SCHA Annie Mauger, CIH Gordon Nelson, Federation of Master Builders Gavin Yates, Homeless Action</p> <p>Graeme Simpson, MSP Steven Stolson, RICS Stephen Young, Young Art Work Gavin Dick, National Landlords Association</p>
1.	<p>In Attendance: Non-members/Guests</p> <p>Fiona Selkirk, Audit Scotland Olivia Lindsay, Housing Options Scotland Pamela Munro, Guide Dogs Scotland</p> <p>Patrick McKay, Turning Point Dianne Theakstone, Thomas Pocklington Trust Ciaran McDonald, Andy Wightman MSP Office</p>
2.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Andy Wightman MSP opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Ilene Campbell, TIS noted apologies had been received from: Katy Dickson, Scottish Land & Estates; Alistair Hackland, Hackland & Dore Architects; Susan Napier, Susan Napier Consulting Ltd; Beth Reid, Crisis; Janice Stevenson, LGBT Youth Scotland; Pete White, Positive Prison; Jennifer Kennedy, Homes for Scotland; Steven Turner, Salvation Army; Iain McCaskey, Building Engineering Services.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting: 19 April 2017</p> <p>Ilene Campbell advised that a correction to the minute had been submitted by email, noting that the Homes for Scotland representative attending the meeting was Tammy Andrews.</p> <p>There were no matters arising and the minutes were approved.</p>

4.	Annual General Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Housing Minutes of previous minute	Annual General Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Housing Andy Wightman MSP requested nominations for Convenor and Vice Convenor: Convenor: Ben McPherson MSP proposed Andy Wightman MSP and Stephen Young MSP seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and Andy was duly re-elected. Vice Convenor: Andy Wightman MSP proposed Ben McPherson MSP and Stephen Young MSP seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and Ben was duly elected. Secretariat: Andy Wightman MSP explained the group required a secretariat and that TIS had been in this role for last 4 years. Ben McPherson MSP proposed TIS for the role of secretariat and Andy Wightman MSP seconded. There were no other nominations and TIS were duly re-elected. Andy confirmed that following this AGM the return would be sent to the clerks within the specified 30 days.
5.	Solutions to Vulnerability in Housing. Presentations and Discussions	Andy Wightman MSP noted the topic for today was solutions to vulnerability in housing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick McKay from Turning Point Scotland • Ashley Campbell from the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland • Diane Theakston from the Thomas Pocklington Trust. Patrick McKay delivered a presentation on how his organisation have adopted the Housing First Model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning Point Scotland (TPS) operates across 20 Local Authority areas and began using the Housing First (HF) model in 2011. • HF works with the group of people who traditionally failed in mainstream homeless service – people with real complex and chronic issues. • Basically, the model takes rough sleepers with no ‘housing readiness’ and gives them a house. • The project started with 3 tenancies and are now up to 40 tenancies. In that time, there has only been 1

		<p>eviction. The fears around ASB have not arisen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model works because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate housing and support – don't stop working with people if they breach tenancy conditions • Wherever they are they will find you – explore all services to make contact • Fidelity – is very important • SST is fundamental – guarantee for tenant with TP providing full wrap around service • No need to demonstrate you are clean of substance. Research (2012 Heriot Watt) showed that breaking the cycle is more effective to stop use than insisting they must be 'clean' • Influence of direct lived experience <p>Patrick concluded by advising that the next challenge for the initiative is establishing how to scale up the HF model, and they are working as part of national networks to work out how to do this in a Scottish way.</p> <p>Ashley Campbell presented findings from recent CIH research undertaken in partnership with Scottish Government looking at the impact of UK Government cap on Universal Credit at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for the social rented sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LHA – based on cheapest 30% of rented sector within each area. • The cap will affect 2 main groups – those in supported housing as rents are much higher than mainstream housing and thus exceed LHA, and young people under 35 who are only eligible for the costs of shared accommodation. • Indigo Housing Research Team were commissioned to identify the potential extent of the problem. • Research involved 50 social landlords across Scotland – there is a general awareness of proposals but limited knowledge of the local impact – what the changes will mean for them as a landlord. • There is no shared accommodation model in the social rented sector – there is research into sharing in private rented sector but no experience of sharing in social rented sector. • The research highlights significant concerns, impact is potentially large and landlords should begin thinking about this before 2019.
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Diane Theakston shared details of the newly published Housing Guide for People with Sight Loss:

- New online housing guide for visually impaired people
- The research used a co-production approach – most intensive form of user involvement possible.
- User – led research: drive it, undertake it and disseminate it. As one of the key co-producer, Diane shared her story as a totally blind person with various experiences in a range of different housing tenures.
- The research begun by speaking to visually impaired users to establish if there was a need for such a guide – discovered lots of people experiencing the same issues and struggling to find information as it is so scattered and inaccessible.
- The research identified that the range of issues affecting people is large and varied – led to a huge guide that can be tailored to suit personal circumstances with links to aids and adaptations, advice services, domestic violence etc.
- Accessibility was identified as another big issue – there are different types of voice software so the guide needed to adapt to each of these.
- The guide is a tool – which should be used alongside housing options advice and other services that offer advice.

Diane advised that she is looking for ideas about how it can be embedded in housing options practice and how guides such as this one are maintained long term – identifying funding etc.

Andy thanked speakers and invited questions and discussion. The following points were noted:

- There are lots of opportunities in the transfer of powers to Scotland to influence the Social security bill presented at parliament.
- We need to be realistic about how much DHP can be used to mitigate this and for how long it continues. Future LHA rates could move, which might make the gap bigger.
- Concern that Housing First might be diluted as it is adopted as a consequence of the support costs involved.
- The support costs for Housing First are currently around £200k per annum which compares favourably against supported accommodation. A lot of other costs are diminished by having a house.
- Landlords are moving people into cheaper areas to discharge their duty – so Glasgow Local Housing Allowance rate covers the rent in neighbouring authorities.
- There are concerns about affordability in the PRS – and extension of LHA into SRS is likely to impact.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to visual disabilities, there is a crossover with disabilities more generally – affordability; access to advice and finding options. There is a need for housing options to capture visual loss as early as possible to ensure they are passed on through joined up services. Guide dogs need route training so moving to a new house takes a lot of time and effort. • There are 650 people registered as needing homes that meet the needs of their disability, and there is a need for the Scottish Government to think about these people when developing new homes. • Choice-based letting systems generally are a barrier to access for disabled people, and Glasgow’s CHR fails accessibility standards for disabled people.
6.	Applications for Membership of the Cross Party Group on Housing	Andy Wightman MSP advised that Freya Lees, Director, North Star Consulting & Research – had requested membership of the group. Membership was approved.
7.	AOCB	<p>Andy Wightman MSP advised that members are requested to submit topics for discussion one week in advance of the meeting to Jill Miller, TIS, email jmiller@tis.org.uk to allow the Convenor to allocate time within the meeting schedule.</p> <p>Items suggested for the next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the new tenancy agreements in the private rented sector. Deadline is just over 2 months away but no one has seen it yet – need to think about the impact. • New model tenancy agreements would be a good topic if they are released by then. <p>Andy Wightman MSP requested that new topics for 2018 be considered and that any ideas are forwarded to TIS or himself.</p>
8.	Dates of Next Meeting	Wednesday 13 th December 2017