SOCIAL HOUSING
Newsletter of the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH)
Summer-Autumn 2019

ICSH National Social Housing Conference 2019
Community Housing Awards 2019
Innovation, Change and Delivery
Regulation and Legislation Update
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation and Legislation Update</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation, Change and Delivery Across the Sector</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuilding Ireland Updates</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICSH National Social Housing Conference 2019</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICSH Biennial Community Housing Awards 2019</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Feature</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICSH News and Events</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Overseas</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High quality social housing should not be overlooked

Feedback from the recent ICSH Allianz Community Housing Awards in Wexford, hosted by TV presenter Brendan Courtney, signalled overwhelming recognition of the high quality of new social housing developments being provided in both urban and rural areas. The highest ever number of entries and winners by housing associations (AHBs) and local authorities showcased housing developments and communities in which we would all be proud to live. Comprising individual projects, mixed developments, regeneration and the many mainstream collaboration initiatives between local authorities and AHBs, it was clear to everyone at the awards presentation how taxpayers’ money, channelled through Rebuilding Ireland, as well as AHBs own finances is being successfully deployed.

Dr Donal McManus, CEO, Irish Council for Social Housing

But not just that, satisfied tenants speaking about their social rented home providing new life opportunities and a sense of wellbeing, whilst living in receptive local communities are very positive outcomes to hear and witness. This is becoming more the norm. The challenge for all of us in the social housing sector is to continue to keep building on the increased level of social housing delivery and make an even bigger impact on housing need and homelessness.

Social housing shifting to shaping the housing system

It is apparent that we should now be talking up, similar to what is happening throughout the EU, that social housing can now help to ‘shape’ the housing market, and not just viewing social housing as solely market failure. This market failure notion of social housing is becoming outdated especially throughout Europe where the EU representative body, Housing Europe, in its recent publication on the State of Housing in the EU, indicated that more and more households are having problems in accessing housing that is affordable. This includes both households that have traditionally targeted social housing to meet their housing need as well those intermediate households caught between traditional social housing eligibility and full home ownership.

This certainly is an area of housing need in which a number of AHBs feel they could use their transferable experience to deliver and manage affordable and cost rental housing, particularly in urban areas. The EU has a role in this respect by allowing member states to define by themselves where Governments need to intervene in the housing market, taking account of changing housing needs, which a ‘private’ housing market is neither focused on, nor cannot reach.

The other area that social housing providers are increasingly conscious of is their role in contributing to climate action targets in relation to reductions in carbon and greenhouse gas emissions. What is clear is that many of the new energy efficient innovations in the EU tend to be piloted and led from the front by social housing sectors (which has the benefit of scale and co-ordination) and then often mirrored in the private sector. AHBs in the social housing sector, especially those managing older or less energy efficient housing in Ireland, can certainly play a strong role in this area to prolong their housing stock for many more generations. Social housing is for the long-term.

Staff of Focus Housing Association and architects C.J. Falconer & Associates were delighted to receive the overall winner award at the Irish Council for Social Housing Community Housing Awards 2019, sponsored by Allianz, in the Clayton Whites Hotel Wexford on October 10th. Their residential apartment development at St John’s Lane, Dublin 8 provides 31 units of permanent housing for families and individuals who were formerly homeless. Producer and broadcaster, Brendan Courtney, whose recent documentary work has had a particular focus on housing, was delighted to present the awards to this year’s deserving winners. Picture: Arthur Carron
Regulation and Legislation Update

Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Bill 2019

The recently published Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) provides for the establishment of the independent Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (the Regulator) and assigns the following functions to it:

- the registration of AHBs;
- setting standards for AHBs, subject to the approval of the Minister;
- monitoring and assessing compliance by AHBs with the standards prepared by the Regulator;
- undertaking investigations into AHBs;
- the cancellation of registration of AHBs where appropriate; and
- the right to seek court orders to protect the assets of AHBs in certain circumstances.
- an appeals system for AHBs against certain decisions of the Approved Housing Bodies Regulator.

The Regulation Office (as part of the Housing Agency) announced that it is reviewing the voluntary regulatory assessment cycle on foot of the publication of the Bill and will subsequently issue guidance on how the revised assessment will impact on AHBs. The ICSH have been consulting with and briefing members on various aspects of the provisions in the bill since its publication. This is the first time Housing Associations (AHBs) have been subject to such substantial legislative reform. The sector has worked closely with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) for some time to prepare for a smooth transition to a statutory regulator and looks forward to the enactment of legislation that will put the sector on a strong footing in terms of oversight. The ICSH is working with the DHPLG highlighting areas such as the need for proportionality, given the diversity within the sector.

Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019

The Government has passed the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019, which changes some aspects of the obligations of housing associations under the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).

Changes to laws for ending a tenancy – effective from 4th June

- Change to notice of termination where landlord intends to sell: a landlord must enter into a contract for sale within nine months of the termination date and must offer to re-let the property to the tenant if it becomes available for let within the following 12 months.
- Change to notice of termination where landlord intends to substantially refurbish the dwelling: the landlord must provide certification by a registered professional that the works would pose a threat to the health and safety of the occupants of the dwelling concerned, would require vacation of the property and would take at least three weeks to complete. The landlord must offer the property back to the original tenant on completion of the works.
- Remedial notice of termination: Landlords and tenants do not have to start over again when issuing a new notice under certain conditions. If the notice is invalid due to a defect, an Adjudicator/Tribunal can allow the original notice to be remedied by serving a remedial notice within 28 days of issuing a determination order.

Changes to the RTB registration system

The Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019 provides for the annual registration of tenancies and also creates a new fee structure for annual registration, which will cost €20 for the registration of Approved Housing Body tenancies. (€85 composite fee for 10 tenancies in the one building registered together). It is expected that annual registration will begin in Q1 2020 and will be supported by the introduction of a new tenancy management system, called RTB360. The legislation has given new investigations and sanctions powers to empower the RTB to proactively regulate non-registration of tenancies, possible breaches of the RPZ rules and possible abuse of notices of termination grounds.

New CAS Forms Available

The DHPLG has issued a circular that includes new forms for all Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) projects and additional technical and cost guidance for the provision of housing for people with a disability.

This new Circular provides further information, in particular, on foot of guidance sought by the HSE on the application procedures and selection of Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) to provide CAS funded housing, as well as guidance on scale, new build approaches, adapting existing dwellings, location, value for money and fire safety provisions. All of these are key to ensuring that appropriate homes in the community can be developed and provided for people to live independently.
P&A/CALF Funding - New Provisions

The DHPLG requested the Housing Agency to carry out a review of the P&A-CALF in 2018. The purpose was to review the assumptions in the financial assessment model, the financial assessment approach used to determine the level of funding for projects and the current policy and process associated with P&A-CALF. Following the review, the DHPLG changed to a Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR) financial assessment model for determining the level of funding per project. A number of other changes also followed the review including that the P&A payment indexation is changed to the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP); an element of funding for communal facilities is now permitted; as well as application process changes and revised standards assumptions.

The changes are documented through updated guidance and forms on the Housing Agency website and the ICSH has revised its Financial Model (which is available to members) to meet the requirements of the recent changes.

Housing Agency Procurement Unit Service

The ICSH advise members who are thinking about developing or are already in the process but who may not have comprehensive in-house technical expertise, to consider using the assistance of the Housing Agency for this purpose. The Housing Agency Procurement Unit has worked with many AHBs to date offering assistance with the procurement of consultancy teams for their specific need and circumstance.

They are keen to notify members of their services and these include carrying out feasibility studies for AHBs on potential sites, which have included Capital Appraisals and Cost Estimates for submission to the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government through their respective Local Authority.

It has been their experience that a procurement process tailored to the specific needs of the particular AHB has generally resulted in positive outcomes. Apart from the preparation of the recommended documentation, they will also coordinate the assessment of tenders, issue responses to successful and unsuccessful tenders and advise the specific AHB on appointments, all in accordance with best procurement practice and Capital Works Management Framework guidelines. They remain available to the AHB through the project for advise or guidance on both the consultants and works contractors contracts.

For further details please contact Norman Jackson, Senior Procurement & Projects Advisor at norman.jackson@housingagency.ie

Register of Beneficial Owners

The EU Anti Money Laundering (AML) Beneficial Ownership of corporate entities Regulations 2016 obliged all relevant entities to obtain and hold information on their beneficial owners and to enter that information onto an internal beneficial ownership register which it must keep and maintain.

There are also new AML Regulations, the European Union [Anti-Money Laundering: Beneficial Ownership of Corporate Entities] Regulations 2019 which establish a Central Register. In addition to keeping the internal beneficial ownership register, charities which are companies will now need to file their beneficial ownership information in the Central Register.

The new regulations apply to companies, and any charities that are registered as companies with the Companies Registration Office must comply with the regulations.

The Central Register is being administered in Ireland by the Companies Registration Office under a separate registrar called the Registrar of Beneficial Ownership (RBO). The RBO began to accept on-line filings from 29th JULY 2019. Companies have until 22nd November 2019 to file their RBO data.

For more information go to www.rbo.gov.ie
Innovation, Change and Delivery Across the Sector

Social Housing Development in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh

Donal McManus, Irish Council of Social Housing CEO and the Mayor’s representative Cllr. Michael Looney launched a new development of social housing at Cuan Barra, Kilmore, Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh in September 2019 by the housing body Coiste Tithe Uibh Laoire Teo. The development comprises three additional houses providing long-term accommodation for older people. Cork County Council is the sanctioning authority for the project and assisted in securing funding from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and supporting its development through the Capital Assistance Scheme. The newly completed houses, built by Droumleigh Construction Bantry, bring the total to six units providing long-term accommodation within the Cuan Barra complex. This integrated development contributes significantly to the further development and life of this important Gaeltacht area.

Clúid - Sustainable Social Housing for Kerry

Clúid Housing, in partnership with Kerry County Council, Rebuilding Ireland and Kerry-based Thermohouse welcomed Minister for Housing Eoghan Murphy to one of Ireland’s largest sustainable social housing developments. Announcing the commencement of the second stage of construction at the site in July this year, Thermohouse is delivering turnkey, rapid-build, energy-efficient houses at the Sruthan na Saili development in Derreen, Killarney.

The Derreen development consists of 61 two and three-bed dwellings, built using Thermohouse’s unique low energy building system. As well as being up to 60% faster than traditional construction, the houses have superior levels of airtightness, considerably reducing their heating costs. These houses are ‘nearly Zero-Energy Building’ (nZEB) compliant as mandated by the EU energy directive for new builds completed after 31 December 2020.

Castleguard Manor, Co. Louth

Tuath contracted Modern Homes Ireland (MHI) to deliver this impressive new estate of 102 A rated, energy efficient family houses in rapid time with the backing of Louth County Council and the Department of Housing. 90% of the homes were completed in Modern Homes Ireland’s (MHI) state of the art facility in Ballyjamesduff, Co Cavan before being transported to Ardee to assemble on site in just over a year. The homes are all let to tenants from Louth County Council’s housing list at an average rent of only €57 per week. The design and build of some properties were adapted to cater for the specific needs of older people and people with disabilities from the Council’s waiting list.
Fold’s Citywest Village

The development consists of 13 high quality and A3 energy rating three-bed homes provided under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan. Davy Hickey Properties were very keen on creating a sense of community, providing a large tree-clad green area for residents to enjoy.

Fold was delighted to deliver these much-needed new homes which were fully occupied by tenants in October 2019. The development is in an ideal location, which gives easy access to the city as well as a wide range of local services and amenities. Fold has many other social housing developments currently under construction in the Dublin area, and aim to continuously provide for those in need of good quality affordable housing.

Tuath Reach 5,000 Homes

Tuath have delivered over 800 homes nationwide since January 2019 bringing their total number of homes in management to over 5,000.

In July 2019 Minister Damien English officially opened 60 homes at Gainsfield, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath. The first 20 homes have been delivered, with the remaining 40 to be delivered on a phased basis throughout 2020. These high quality, A rated homes will be allocated to tenants from Meath County Council’s housing list. The second of Minister English’s visits took place at Mainear Caisleán Dubh, Slane Road, Navan, a recently completed, stand-alone development comprising of 26 new build homes. This project was constructed by Modern Homes Ireland Limited (MHI).

Minister Eoghan Murphy opened a new Carlow scheme for Tuath in September. Tuath, in partnership with Carlow County Council acquired 73 new homes at Nesselside Ltd’s Browneshill development, comprising a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses. The first phase of homes was completed in December 2018 and a further four phases through 2019. The last phase of 16 homes will be allocated in November 2019.

Focus Ireland – John’s Lane West

The Minister for Housing, Eoghan Murphy, opened Focus Ireland’s new 31 unit development at John’s Lane West, providing homes for families and individuals in the heart of Dublin city. The new development was built with the great support from the Department of Housing, Dublin City Council as well as financial support from the Housing Finance Agency and also with some assistance by generous donors to Focus Ireland.

The site at John’s Lane West was last used to provide emergency hostel beds to get people in off the streets in the Winter of 2014, but it was always the plan it would deliver homes. This development will provide 31 permanent homes for people right in the heart of the city.

Focus Housing Association took the Overall Winner Award for John’s Lane West at the ICSH Community Housing Awards 2019.
Respond - Snapshot Delivery

Respond Housing is due to complete these 50 new homes in Monaghan by November 2019. Respond currently have 1,150 homes under construction & on-site.

Second Phase of Housing at Star Garden Rosscarbery

Rosscarbery Social Housing Association officially opened its newly constructed development at Star Garden, Ceim Hill in the centre of the historic town of Rosscarbery in September 2019. The Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Christopher O’ Sullivan and Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People, Jim Daly, T.D launched the scheme comprising nine housing units, a mixture of houses and apartments providing long-term accommodation for older people.

This phase brings a total of 21 housing units in Rosscarbery Star Garden developed by Rosscarbery Housing Association. The first 11 were built in 2005. Cork County Council is the sanctioning authority and assisted in securing €2.35million funding from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, supporting its development through the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS).

Enniskerry Road Cost Rental Sod Turning

On 10th September 2019, Mr Eoghan Murphy, T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, and An Cathaoirleach of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Councillor Shay Brennan, turned the sod on the first ever Cost Rental development in the State at Enniskerry Road, Stepaside.

Respond and Tuath Housing Associations will be delivering the scheme in partnership with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council on land provided by the Housing Agency under the Land Aggregation Scheme. This first Cost Rental pilot project under Rebuilding Ireland is the result of an innovative collaboration between Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, the Housing Agency, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Respond and Tuath Housing Associations.

The overall development value of the 155 homes and the community facility is in the order of €55,000,000 (including, construction works, design fees, development levies and VAT). Tenants will pay €1,200 per month to live in the 2-bedroom Cost Rental homes delivered as part of this project. The rent of €1,200 per month, which is based on the cost of delivering and maintaining the homes, is a significant reduction when compared to market rents for 2-bedroom apartments in this location. The new homes will be delivered in 2021.
Rebuilding Ireland Updates

Social Housing Construction Status Report Q2 2019

The Social Housing Construction Status Report (Q2 2019) was published in September. The quarterly report is a compendium of live LA and AHB new-build social housing activity across the period 2016-2021. The following social housing construction programmes are represented:

- Social Housing Capital Investment Programme (SHCIP)
- Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)
- Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF)
- Public Private Partnership (PPP)

The Rebuilding Ireland targets remain a challenge, in particular in relation to new build and leasing targets. The cumulative build, lease and acquisition output is at 18,992, which is almost 40% of the 2016-2021 target. However, it is reassuring to see a year-on-year decline in the number of new HAP tenancies, which is in line with the HAP target for 2019 (16,760). Rebuilding Ireland has published a breakdown of social housing targets by local authority, which is available on the www.rebuildingireland.ie website. The 2019 national targets are as follows: Build – 6,545; acquisition – 1,325; leasing – 2,130.

The report records 1,559 schemes (or phases of the same scheme) delivering 22,139 homes. Of these 7,313 units have already been delivered during 2016, 2017, 2018 and to end Q2 2019. The AHB sector has a current pipeline of 7,350 units being delivered under the Capital Advance and Leasing Facility (CALF) construction programme and CALF turnkey as well as 1,473 homes being delivered through the Capital Assistance Scheme.

Quarterly Progress Report Homelessness

The Homelessness Quarterly Progress Report (April to June 2019) was published in September 2019. The quarterly reports provide data in relation to exits to tenancies and are based on data provided by housing authorities and are produced through the Pathway Accommodation & Support System (PASS). The latest report notes that family presentations have fallen by 5% compared to the same period in 2018 and that (to date) in 2019, 51% of families presenting to homeless services in the Dublin region were prevented from having to enter emergency accommodation.

The duration of stay data points to a pressing need to address the housing needs of single adults. And the report identifies some positive in relation to the Housing First programme. The Dublin Region Housing First Service had housed 317 homeless individuals to end Quarter 2 2019, of which 88% had successfully retained housing. And, on foot of the rollout of the Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018 – 2021, Housing First services have commenced in Cork, Limerick and Galway.
The Irish Council for Social Housing Biennial National Social Housing Conference 2019 - Innovation, Delivery & Sustainability - took place in the Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford on the 10th and 11th of October. An expert lineup of speakers from Ireland, the United States and from across the EU spoke passionately about their work, with a focus on the themes of innovation, delivery and sustainability, successful delivery and how this can be replicated and mainstreamed. Almost 350 delegates attended, bringing together key players in the housing sector from approved housing bodies, local authorities, statutory bodies, government departments, private bodies, the health services and the wider voluntary sector.

The two-day event, sponsored by AIB, had some impressive international participants, including a 20-strong delegation of affordable housing professionals from Boston. Mr Eoghan Murphy TD, Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, opened the conference and welcomed the Boston delegation. Both Minister Murphy and ICSH President Pat Doyle in their opening addresses reminded delegates that on World Homeless Day and World Mental Health Day, addressing the needs of our most vulnerable is paramount.

Over the course of two days, the Conference themes were explored during five major panel discussions and smaller parallel sessions. The sustainability focus of the conference was reflected in the numerous presentations that focused on addressing our energy challenges. Indeed, the ICSH issued a press release in advance of the conference in which it stated that ‘key low carbon housing solutions include achieving the highest energy rating possible in new build homes and embarking on a wide-scale retrofitting programme’, and that the housing association (AHB) sector is ‘ready to begin an ambitious retrofit programme of older AHB homes’. This is in line with the Government’s Climate Action Plan 2019, which envisages a ‘strategic delivery partner’ role for approved housing bodies and local authorities as part of a new delivery structure for retrofitting.

Conference sessions

Innovation & Affordability in Housing

Chaired by Robert Nicholson, Principal Officer, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, the session opened with David Duffy, Director, Property Industry Ireland. David offered the private sector perspective and food for thought on current and future housing needs, the importance of household formation, labour constraints and housing quality issues. Bronagh D’Arcy, Deputy CEO & Director of New Business & Development at Túath Housing explored Túath’s involvement in the first cost rental scheme and a recent acquisition by Túath that has led to new commercial thinking and the development of innovative financing models. Paul Kelly, Director, Real Estate Finance at AIB spoke of AIB’s support of the AHB sector and the importance of the mortgage to rent scheme and affordable housing delivery.
Sustainability in Housing

Ron van Erck, Head of International Market Development, Energiesprong opened the session, chaired by Sharon Cosgrove, CEO, Oaklee Housing. Energiesprong is a revolutionary and award-winning whole house refurbishment programme. Around 2,000 Energiesprong homes have been completed in the Netherlands, of which around 60% were renovations of existing properties and 40% new builds. Ron cautioned delegates that we need to think 30 years ahead and not rush into refurbishment that doesn’t get us where we need to be. Paddy Phelan, Manager, 3CEA (Three Counties Energy Agency) outlined his organisation’s business model - a not for profit energy agency supporting investment in the low carbon economy through people and business for economic growth. Paddy offered some very useful data and results from 3CEA’s deep retrofitting programmes. The session closed with Pat Barry, CEO, Irish Green Building Council (IGBC). The IGBC is at the heart of inputting into national policy affecting the Irish built environment and is involved in supporting large scale energy renovation projects.

New Housing Landscapes for Housing Providers

Chaired by ICSH CEO, Dr Donal McManus, the session led with a Boston perspective. Chrystal Kornegay, Executive Director of MassHousing in Boston outlined the Boston housing ecosystem and the MassHousing model, which finances the creation and preservation of affordable rental housing and affordable home mortgage loans to homebuyers. Sebastian Garnier of Housing Europe offered an overview of social, public and cooperative housing across Europe, which make up 26 million dwellings, about 11% of existing dwellings in the EU. Sebastian spoke about housing affordability and the growing social divide as well new housing delivery models, repurposing, and densification. Fiona Cormican of Clúid Housing closed the session with a focus on Clúid’s objectives for 2019-2022, focusing on sustainable mixed tenure communities, intermediate rent models, engaged resident and owner management company support.
### Strategic Direction for the Rental Sector

David Silke, Director of Research and Corporate Affairs at the Housing Agency chaired the session introducing Paul Lemass, Assistant Secretary, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. Paul spoke of the Department’s work engaging with the AHB sector on regulation and reclassification and was followed by Dr Padraic Kenna, Senior Lecturer in Law, and Director of the Centre for Housing Law NUIG who spoke on the application of EU rules to housing delivery. Dr Kenna stressed, in particular, the eligibility for social housing (and the cost rental state subsidy) to fit within the EU definition of Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI). Rosalind Carroll, Director of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) spoke of the RTB’s work, the evolving tenure mix and regulatory challenges. Dr Rory Hearne, Lecturer in Social Policy at Maynooth University closed the session addressing the concerns of ‘lifetime’ renters and long-term affordability and the historic residual role of social housing.
Parallel Sessions

The conference parallel sessions offered delegates the opportunity to engage with speakers in greater detail in their particular area of interest and this year’s sessions on housing management, a Housing First approach to homelessness, sustaining AHBs into the future and homes for life proved to be stimulating fora for discussion and debate.

Regeneration, Revitalisation and Building Neighbourhoods

The final session of the conference was chaired by Nina Murray, Principal Officer, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. Egbert de Vries of the Amsterdam Federation of Housing Associations gave a detailed appraisal of Amsterdam’s housing landscape during which he discussed issues around heritage and renewal and the need to put social issues at the core of regeneration work. John Coleman, CEO of the Land Development Agency spoke of the agency’s challenges and the need to embrace the potential benefit of the agency as a regeneration catalyst. Brendan McGinley of North and East Housing Association (NEHA) outlined NEHA’s laudable regeneration work, including the impressive Drogheda Fire Station housing scheme, and the organisation’s ambitions for the future. The session closed with reflection from Conn Murray, Former CEO Limerick City and County Council.
Focus Housing Association took the Overall Winner Award for its 31 homes in Dublin 8

Speaking at the 2019 Community Housing Awards, Dr Donal McManus, Chief Executive of the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) said: “This year has been an exceptional one for the ICSH Allianz Community Housing Awards with a record number of entries and schemes of truly outstanding quality. The ICSH is proud of this year’s winners and all of the 50 plus entrants, and would like to recognise the support of Rebuilding Ireland in the delivery of these projects. St John’s Lane was chosen as overall winner for many reasons. What stood out for judges was the high-quality design and excellent use of a very challenging site, and the delivery of 31 units of permanent housing in an area of huge demand for housing and homeless services.” Jan Mingle of Focus Housing Association said: “It was always our intention to transform the building into long-term sustainable homes, and we see this award as a powerful endorsement of our work. We’d also like to acknowledge the support of Dublin City Council and the Housing Finance Agency in bringing this project to fruition.”

The ICSH were thrilled to have producer and broadcaster, Brendan Courtney, present the Community Housing Awards 2019. Brendan’s recent documentary work has had a particular focus on housing affordability as well as the complex housing needs of older people. Brendan was delighted to present the awards to this year’s deserving winners. We would also like to thank our judges, Oliver O’Loughlin (ICSH Board), Fionnuala Rogerson (Architect), Sorcha Edwards (Housing Europe) and James Gleeson (Allianz), for selecting the winning entrants from such a competitive pool of applicants.

Alongside the overall winner, ten additional projects received awards for their excellence in housing for older people, homeless projects, housing for people with disabilities, housing for families, regeneration, most creative supply response, collaboration initiatives, community integration, housing management and achievements in community housing. The eleven category winners are:

- Housing for Older People (Small Scheme): Bandon Geriatric and Community Council
- Housing for Older People (Larger Scheme): Cork City Council and Tuath Housing, Arus Mhuire, Skehard Road, Blackrock, Cork
- Homeless Projects: Focus Housing Association, John’s Lane West, Dublin 8
- Housing for People with Disabilities: Irish Wheelchair Association, Na Fraoch, Logmore, Belmullet, Co. Mayo
- Housing for Families: Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, George’s Place
- Regeneration: Peter McVerry Trust, St Agatha’s Court, Dublin 1
- Most Creative Supply Response: Tuath Housing and Dublin City Council, Harold’s Court
- Collaboration: Cork City Council and Clúid Housing’s Leeside Apartments
- Community Integration: FoscadhHousing, Liath Bhreaga, Drogheda
- Achievement in Community Housing: Sean Kelleher and Dan Dineen of Coiste Tithe Uibh Laoire
- Housing Management: Clare County Council

The ICSH Allianz Community Housing Awards 2019 were presented to winners on October 10th at our gala dinner in Wexford. This year’s awards were the most hotly contested ever with more than 50 entries received from local authorities and housing associations across the country. Well done to all entrants, shortlisted projects and winners for delivering housing of such an exceptional standard, making differences to lives and communities all over Ireland.
Special Feature

Owners’ Management Companies

While Ireland has proportionately fewer apartment-dwellers than any other European country, comprising just 12% of the overall housing stock, things are gradually changing, with the number of apartments having grown by 85% between 2002 and 2016. In line with such demographic shifts and strategic national aims, it is essential that adequate oversight of the management of apartment complexes is provided.

Currently, under the Multi-Unit Development Act 2011 (MUD Act), all apartment blocks of more than 5 units, must have an Owners’ Management Company (OMC) in place. The OMC is the legal owner of the common areas and facilities. The OMC itself, is collectively owned by all owners of the apartments in the building. While management duties, including the maintenance and upkeep of common areas, may be contracted out by the OMC to a management agent, ultimate legal responsibility and stewardship of the common areas rests with the 5,000 to 7,000 OMCs currently in existence across Ireland.

As owners and managers of a growing number of apartments through construction and acquisition of units and in mixed tenure developments by way of Part 5 arrangements, AHBs are represented in increasing numbers of OMCs across the country, and therefore have a huge stake in their effectiveness in ensuring quality for tenants.

But just how effective are OMCs in their current form? A recent report, Owners’ Management Companies: Sustainable apartment living for Ireland, commissioned by Clúid Housing and the Housing Agency, has identified a range of issues with regard to the functioning of OMCs in Ireland. Key findings included difficulties with the collection of service charges, insufficient provision for long-term maintenance, and reliance on untrained directors. In particular, issues with service charge collection, as well as weak guidance within the MUD Act regarding the amount of money that should be invested in a sinking fund, have the potential to lead to serious ramifications in cases where funds are required. In addition, there is also the issue of inequity inherent in the potential for maintenance/refurbishment costs of common areas/facilities to be borne by future owners/users as opposed to being shared across users/owners across the period of use.

With tenant welfare, asset management and financial planning all representing key concerns for AHBs, mandatory provision of an adequate sinking fund (funding required for refurbishment/maintenance costs) is absolutely vital, to allow for access to funding as the need arises and to ensure that maintenance costs are fairly distributed.

Also of particular interest to AHBs is the issue of fire safety standards within apartment blocks and the role of OMCs in compliance with same. The legacy of self-certification, in operation until the introduction of Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2014, is evident, with a range of serious fire safety issues, including, perhaps most notably, within the Priory Hall complex in Donaghmede, Dublin, having come to light over the last decade, amongst the over 170,000 apartments developed under this system. If we are to be in a position to confidently stand over the quality and safety of our social housing stock, it is essential that OMCs are provided with the tools and powers necessary to identify and remedy such failures.

The overarching approach proposed in the report is regulation of the sector, that, amongst a wide range of actions, would include guidance to OMCs, would oblige developers prior to handover of the development to prepare Building Life Cycle Reports that, in turn, inform required sinking fund levels, would oblige OMCs to provide details of sinking fund levels as part of their annual reports, would oblige OMCs to carry out fire safety audits every five years, and would deliver mandatory training to OMC directors.

Fiona Dunkin,
Housing Policy Adviser, Clúid Housing
Housing Association Activity Report 2018

On the 15th May 2019, we launched the Housing Association Activity Report 2018. Ireland’s housing association sector provided 3,219 social homes in 2018, 38% of the national total, and took more than 4,000 households off the social housing waiting list. 54% were new build social homes provided by ICSH members to households on the social housing waiting list, 33% were acquisitions and 13% were leased. Dr. Donal McManus, ICSH Chief Executive stated: “these figures reflect the dedication of our member organisations in responding to housing need across Ireland”. Rebuilding Ireland’s 2018 construction and acquisition target for our sector was 2,460 and we exceeded this by delivering 2,805.

Housing Association Activity in 2018

- Almost 40% of new long-term social housing units were delivered by housing associations.
- AHBs increased their output from 1,312 homes in 2015 to 3,219 homes in 2018.
- 2/3 of all AHB homes in 2018 were concentrated in 9 local authority areas, reflecting the higher demand for social housing in urban areas.
- 340 homes were delivered by AHBs under the Part V mechanism.
- AHBs have delivered 6,697 homes under Rebuilding Ireland since 2016.

ICSH AGM 2019

We held our AGM 2019 in the Ashling Hotel Dublin on 19th June. Damien English TD, Minister for Housing and Urban Development launched our Annual Report 2019 and spoke about the critical role for housing associations in delivering on the 50,000 social homes committed to in Rebuilding Ireland. In particular, he stressed the need for the ICSH and our member organisations to communicate to communities, local authorities and councillors throughout the country that we are making an impact and playing a critical role in alleviating the housing crisis.

ICSH/CIH Certificate in Housing

The next delivery of the ICSH/CIH Certificate in Housing course, beginning in January 2020, is now full. Register your interest for further course deliveries by contacting Catherine@icsh.ie.
ICSH at the Oireachtas Housing Committee

Reclassification and Future Output of Approved Housing Bodies

Dr. Donal McManus, Ms Karen Murphy and Ms Tina Donaghy from the ICSH and Mr. Declan Dunne, Mr. John Hannigan and Mr. Brian O’Gorman from the Housing Alliance presented to the Joint Committee on Housing, Planning & Local Government on the issue of reclassification and future output of AHBs on 2nd July.

Dr McManus said that the sector was committed to developing and managing social housing in the long-term and addressing the changing needs of the population. He said that, in the 18 months since the CSO’s reclassification decision and its subsequent confirmation by EUROSTAT, there had been little concrete progress in the undertaking of a thorough review of the decision or a change management programme to reverse it. And he proposed that a working group be established to report within a six-month timeframe on a change management platform, which would work proactively towards reversing the classification decision, in co-operation with the sector, within a reasonable timeframe of 18 months to two years. This would help to set a target to take AHBs off balance sheet by Budget 2021.

The full transcript of the discussion can be read or viewed (video) on the Oireachtas website (www.oireachtas.ie).

Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Land Development Agency Bill 2019

The ICSH were invited to present to the Joint Committee on Housing, Planning & Local Government on the general scheme of the Land Development Agency Bill 2019 on 15th October. Other witnesses included Mr. Tom Dunne, Dublin Institute of Technology; Ms Orla Hegarty, assistant professor, UCD; Professor Rob Kitchin, Maynooth University and Mr John O’Connor, Mr. Jim Baneham and Ms Caitriona Lawlor of the Housing Agency.

In his statement, ICSH CEO Dr. Donal McManus said that the ability by the state to drive strategic land assembly is a strong power which will be deployed for the public good and that any interventions which drive down the cost of land for housing are to be welcomed and supported. He sounded caution, however, in relation to the proposed commercial remit of the proposed company, stating that the commercial remit of NAMA meant that the social dividend came at a commercial price. Dr McManus identified, in particular, the importance of the Land Development Agency being able to use CPO powers to acquire land for public housing that is in the ownership of other public bodies. He said that whether the agency is ‘first among equals’, in this regard, is a key issue in the Bill.

The full transcript of the discussion can be read or viewed (video) on the Oireachtas website (www.oireachtas.ie).

TopHouse Project

As part of our ongoing involvement in the EU/Erasmus funded TopHouse project, the ICSH recently held a very well attended training workshop. One of the key outputs of TopHouse is a suite of training materials on various practical issues relevant to people working in housing with support. The aim of this training is to give practitioners the tools and skills required to help them work in a person-centred way and according to the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The training is aimed at anyone working in the area of housing with support and although the UNCRPD is a foundational element of the ethos of the project, it has benefits for anyone working in housing who wants to work in a more person-centred way.

The recent training event focused on two of the modules – Effective Interviewing Skills and Professional Boundaries. A range of issues that can arise in interviewing were explored, theoretical and practical approaches to conducting interviews in a person-centred way were examined and we looked at the importance of professional boundaries and how these can be maintained.

The ICSH intends to deliver further workshops on other TopHouse modules such as safeguarding, safety planning and tools for effective assessments. All TopHouse training materials are freely available to interested parties – AHBs or local authorities – and the ICSH would be happy to provide “train the trainer” sessions for any organisation interested in making TopHouse materials part of your own in-house training.
Upcoming workshop: Compassion Fatigue

Due to demand we are holding another of our ever-popular workshops on compassion fatigue. This will take place in the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone on December 5th from 10am – 4pm.

This training is aimed at front line staff in housing and support services. It aims to provide best practice and evidence-based interventions to learners to increase awareness on burnout and self-care and manage stress more effectively. Learners will personally reflect on academic research on topics such as compassion fatigue, burnout and self-care and apply these concepts to increase their understanding of their own well-being and how to care safely when helping those who are suffering in some way.

The training will be delivered by Jennifer Reidy, a leading trainer, researcher and educator in the area of compassion fatigue as well as a social care practitioner and founder of Compassion Fatigue Ireland (www.compassionfatigueireland.com). The cost is €120 per person, including workshop materials, refreshments and lunch. Places are limited to 15 on each workshop so please contact Catherine McGillycuddy on 01 6618334 or catherine@icsh.ie to book your place.

Housing and Public Realm Training

The ICSH and Age Friendly Ireland presented a Housing and Public Realm Training Workshop for ICSH members in Local Government House, Dublin 8, courtesy of the County and City Management Association (CCMA). The well-attended event included presentations from the former County Manager of Cavan County Council Jack Keyes, on the Age-Friendly Ireland Programme, Ger Craddock, of the National Disability Authority’s Centre for Universal Design and a module on security and housing design [CPTED] delivered by an Garda Síochána.

The training provided key outcomes from the SLIOTAR (Sustainable Living Integrating Older Adults with Technological Advancements in Regeneration Limerick) Project report on age friendly housing; policy changes signalled in the Department of Housing’s recent Housing Options for an Ageing Population and the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design’s (CEUD) technical guidelines and Part M regulations.

The overall goal of the training is to foster a deeper understanding of the how the regulations and guidance relating to housing and the built environment affect older people (and what older people say matters most to them). This includes a deeper understanding of the current legislative and financial requirements relating to accessible housing and building design and an appreciation of the principals of Universal Design and Lifetime housing and how local authorities, housing associations and private developers can cater for the diverse requirements of all tenants and homeowners. It is hoped that participants will apply this knowledge in their project implementation and local policymaking as we move towards more age-friendly homes and public spaces.

The event was well attended and very well received. The ICSH will be working alongside Age Friendly Ireland over the coming months to ensure that this invaluable training reaches as wide an audience as possible across the ICSH membership.
Budget 2020

The ICSH welcomes Budget 2020’s overall package of €2.6 billion to support the social housing needs of over 27,500 households in 2020. Through the increased capital and current funding provision, 11,167 new social homes will be delivered through build, acquisition and leasing programmes.

Capital funding of €1.5 billion has been allocated for housing in 2020, a large element of which will be used to deliver over 8,500 new social homes through build and acquisition programmes. The current funding allocation of €1.1 billion will support a range of other programmes, and, in particular, the delivery of 2,631 social homes through longterm leasing by local authorities and approved housing bodies (AHBs).

Capital Advance Leasing Scheme (CALF) Seminar

More than 100 AHB members and Local authority staff attended our CALF seminar on 30th September to learn more about the changes to the Capital Advance leasing scheme.

This workshop, delivered by Hugh Coll, Head of Financial Modelling, with Altair addressed the needs of those in attendance who were familiar with delivery through CALF and those who were not. Hugh essentially walked attendees through the ICSH CALF Financial model, how to use it and how to read the outcomes. Pat Fitzpatrick, from the Housing Agency, went through elements of the CALF financial model but also concentrated on the Housing Agency’s role in the CALF financial assessment process and what they are looking for in the financial assessment.

Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) Seminar

Aidan O’Reilly, Principal Officer at the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government, provided the first input on the CAS approval process and timeline at our seminar on 25th September.

The content was relevant and interesting for both AHBs new to the scheme and those experienced in CAS. Staff from the Housing Agency procurement unit, Norman Jackson and Noelle Sweeney, provided quality information to more than 20 question from the floor, and offered insights into the service they provide to assist AHBs in the procurement process as part of developing new schemes.

The final part of the seminar was an excellent view from the ground, with Niamh Lynch (Banner Housing Association), Aoife Corcoran (Peter McVerry Trust) and Fiona Cormican (Clúid Housing) giving the audience a flavour of developing housing projects on a large- and small- scale using CAS funding and supports. Throughout the seminar, genuine dialogue was the catalyst for many who suggested measures to improve the operation of the scheme, including improved circular communication, as opposed to linear communication between the Department, local Authorities and AHBs.

Over 120 delegates attended this seminar and it is welcome that there is renewed interest and activity in accessing the Capital Assistance Scheme, which, at its peak, produced 1,000 units per year.
**Australia**

**Increase in homes by housing associations**

A study by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) found that the number of social rented homes provided by non-profit housing providers over the last decade increased by 55,470. This included the provision of new homes as well as those transferred from the public sector in stock transfer. Government owned social housing reduced by over 20,000 over the period. In total, the social housing stock owned by Government and non-profit housing providers increased by 27,401 over the ten-year period (a modest 6%), and this increase has not kept pace with growth in households. The Report also highlighted that the policy has had a gradual but steady focus on growing the community housing sector and transferring ownership. The Australian Community Housing sector has many similarities with the housing association sector in Ireland, both in terms of structure and regulation.

**European Union**

**Housing Europe outline steps European Union can play in supporting housing**

The recent 2019 Housing Europe report on The State of Housing in the EU in 2019 highlighted the continuing issue of European households paying an increasing percentage of their disposable income on housing costs. The report states that housing continues to be a structural problem that is often addressed by a patchwork of costly policy options, and is at the heart of the increasing social divide in recent years in Europe, particularly for those on low incomes living in cities. In addition, 50 million people are now affected by energy poverty and cities are at the forefront of addressing the housing challenge, with an integrated urban approach required addressing transport and sustainable policy initiatives. The report also outlined changes in housing delivery beyond bricks and mortar provision, such as supported housing and digitalisation. The Housing Europe report also points to the potential for investment in social housing being excluded from the Stability Pact.

**USA**

**Housing construction constrained in many areas and below what is needed**

A recent report from the Harvard Joint Centre for Housing Studies has found that housing construction particularly in western states has not been keeping pace with the growth in households over the last decade. It found that, although 100 homes were provided for every 100 households, this lagged behind the approach (in place since the mid-1970s) of providing 130 homes for every 100 new households formed. The difference took account of the replacement of older homes that were demolished or converted to other uses, demographic shifts in the population across markets and a natural level of vacancy required for a well-functioning housing market. It is estimated that with annual growth of 1.2 million households annually over the next decade, that 1.5 million new homes will need to be constructed each year up to 2028 to support the increase in new households and replacement of stock.

**Berlin’s new rent freeze**

The Berlin state Government agreed a new amendment to statutory provisions on rent limits that will see rents frozen for five years and capped at €9.80 per square meter for about 1.5 million homes in the city. The law also says that landlords cannot charge rents higher than the previous tenant’s rent and, should the rent be above the limit set out in a ‘rent table’, tenants can sue to have their rent lowered. However, to encourage new construction, buildings built after 2014 will be exempt, as well as (already) rent-controlled social housing. From 2022, landlords will be allowed to raise rents in line with inflation of 1.3% per year. The effectiveness of these measures will, no doubt, be monitored with interest by other states across the EU and internationally.