

# Putting good homes at the core of the post-Covid recovery plan

A discussion paper by Homes for All Cymru  
for the Cross Party Housing Group

July 2020

Homes for All Cymru brings together key housing organisations in Wales and aims to maximise the contribution housing makes to the health and well being of communities.

The group provides a united voice on a range of housing issues and has recently agreed a housing manifesto that illustrates members' combined concerns and how improvements can be made to the lives of people in housing need. This is the second manifesto that the group has presented.

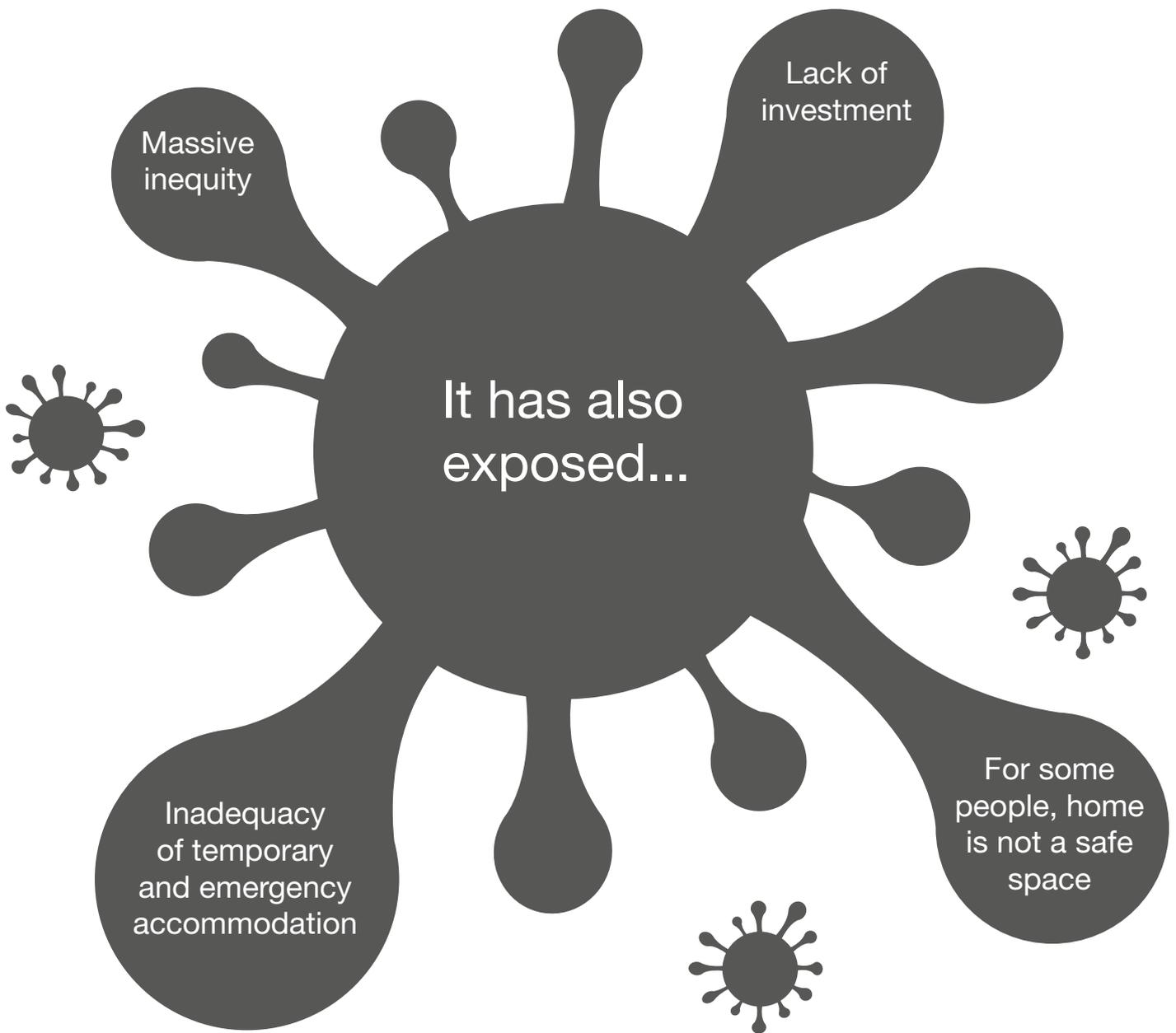
The group provides representation at the Third Sector Partnership Council and provides evidence to the Welsh Government and the Cross Party Housing Group.



## What has Covid-19 shown us about the importance of a good home?

Covid-19 has starkly demonstrated the centrality of a good home to:

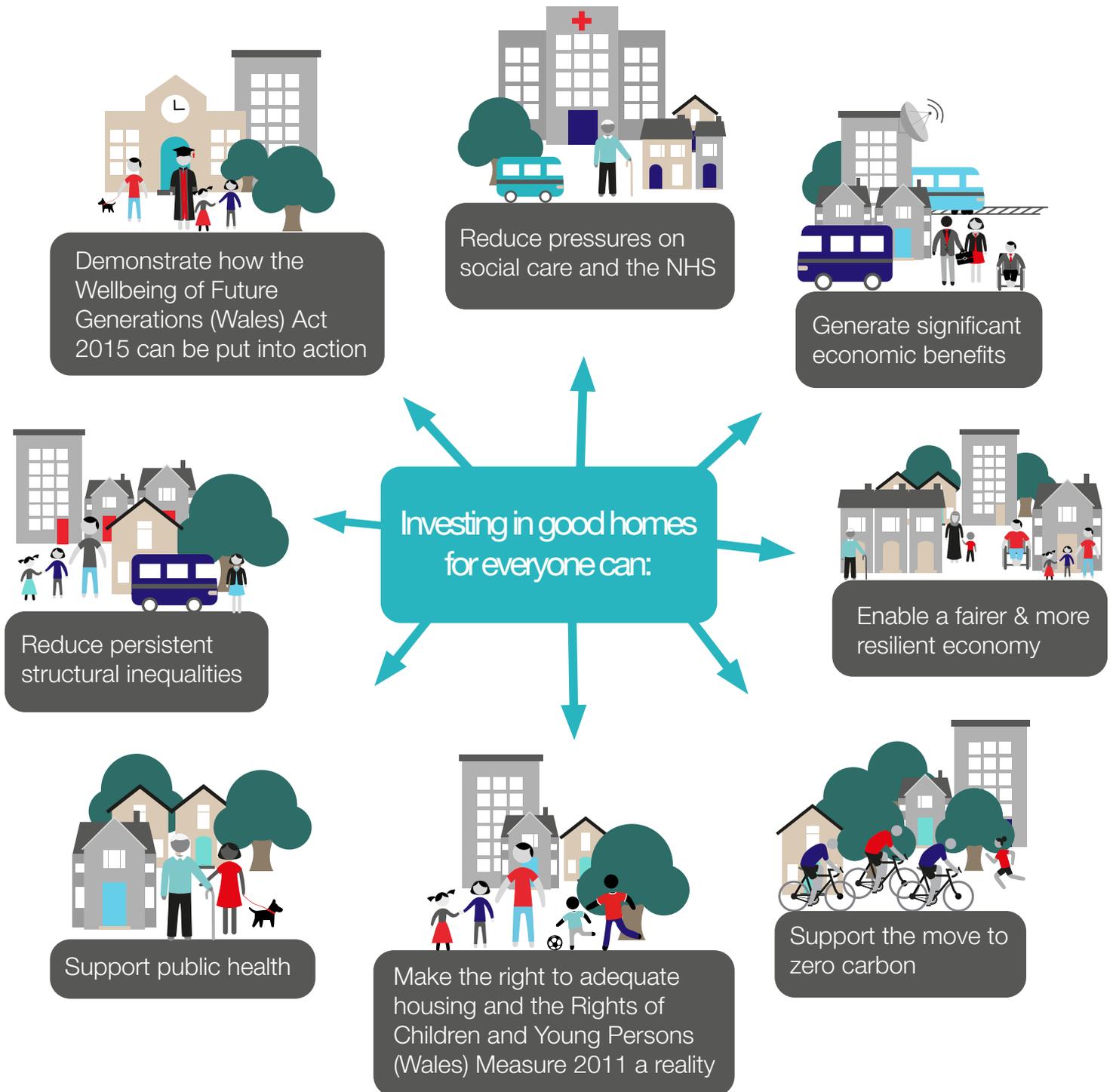
- public health
- physical & mental well-being
- the ability to work from home & home school children
- the ability of children & young people to learn, develop, socialise and connect with others



The crisis has exposed massive inequity between households & communities when it comes to good homes, e.g. homelessness, overcrowding, flats with no access to gardens. It has shown how, for some people, home is not a safe space - domestic homicides have increased since lockdown and some children and young people are at risk of violence and abuse at home. The inadequacy of temporary and emergency accommodation compared with homes is clear and there is lack of investment in sufficient social housing and repair/upgrade of existing homes of all tenures.

**Housing will continue to be a public health issue until everyone in Wales has a good home; it is a matter of life & death**

# Why put good homes at the core of the recovery plan?



Since lockdown, the Welsh Government has invested money and attention in one group of people who were particularly vulnerable to coronavirus: people who were sleeping on the streets, living in accommodation that was unsuitable in the context of Covid-19 or who presented as homeless during lockdown. In total, £30million has been made available: first to provide emergency accommodation and support for nearly 900 people in these situations, including those with No Recourse to Public Funds; and secondly to enable them to move to permanent homes with support where needed.

This investment and the action that has been taken on homelessness since lockdown are to be welcomed. It is a great example of focused action on part of the housing system.

# What is needed to put good homes at the core of recovery?

- **Investment** – of money, attention and people
- **A comprehensive approach** – it has to be about all homes in all tenures
- **A change in culture** – treat investing in housing genuinely as a health, economic, environmental and social investment
- **Listening** – to the experiences of people who do not have a good home and acting to address the issues raised
- **Participation** – of people with lived experience
- **System change** – removal of barriers to action & access & an approach that puts people first
- **Access to advice, advocacy and support** – so people do not lose their home
- **Improvements in data collected about housing, homes and occupants** – one way of doing this would be to replicate the approach taken by the [English Housing Survey](#)

## Joining things up:

- with reports from the Homelessness Action Group and Future Generations Commissioner
- with research such as the 'The Right to Adequate Housing in Wales Feasibility Report'
- with relevant committee reports

**Challenge** – of work in progress (such as the Review of Affordable Housing Supply) in the context of Covid-19, its impact and implications

The Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised how interconnected we are. We are not safe until all of us are safe and a good home is a vital part of being safe. This means that investment and action are needed across the whole housing system.

## What we want to see

We are calling on Members of the Senedd to be persistent and vocal champions for housing to be at the core of the post-Covid recovery plan. In practice this means:

**Ensuring the flow of capital and revenue investment in housing and regeneration is sustained during 2020/21 and that budgets are then increased in 2021/22 and subsequent financial years to reflect both housing need and the costs associated with decarbonisation of existing homes. We call for:**

- funding to support the development/acquisition of 20,000 social sector homes in the next Senedd term (excluding Help to Buy and taking into account the implementation of the recommendations of the [Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply](#))<sup>1</sup>. We estimate that this would require an investment of £1.5-£2billion over the Senedd term.
- meaningful investment within the social housing sector and work to develop models and approaches to enable decarbonisation in the private rented and owner-occupied sectors in the next Senedd term in order to implement the recommendations of the [Independent Review on Decarbonising Welsh Homes](#).
- funding for support to be increased to meet need.
- adequate funding for public services so that legislation and policy can be effectively implemented, including enforcement where needed.

### **Manifestos of all parties for the 2021 elections to:**

- prioritise investment in new social housing and in retrofitting of existing homes across tenures.
- use this investment as a stimulus for jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities and supporting Welsh supply chains.
- commit to action that will end homelessness in Wales as set out in the March 2020 report from the [Homelessness Action Group](#).
- commit to increased funding for support.

### **The right to adequate housing made a legal and practical reality in Wales by:**

- finding a way to fully incorporate the principles of the United Nations-enshrined Right to Adequate Housing into Welsh housing policy.
- taking action across tenures to ensure that everyone has access to a good home (as defined on page 2 of this document).
- ensuring that homes designated as affordable are genuinely affordable, with occupants spending no more than 30% of their income on rent/mortgage.
- rationalising/consolidating existing Welsh housing legislation to address shortcomings and improve outcomes for people.
- being open to different models and ways of meeting housing need, e.g. community-led/owned housing and intergenerational models.
- ensuring citizens have a voice in housing policy making. One mechanism could be the establishment of a national tenants' voice or union.

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on Future Need and Demand for Housing in Wales, 2015 published by Public Policy Institute Wales which provides estimates for the number of additional homes needed in the social sector of between 3,300 and 4,200 new homes per year

**Homes for All Cymru  
comprises the following organisations:**

Age Cymru  
The Bevan Foundation  
Care and Repair Cymru  
Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru  
Community Housing Cymru  
Crisis  
Cymorth Cymru  
Disability Wales  
Gypsies and Travellers Wales  
Home Builders Federation  
Housing Justice Cymru  
The National Residential Landlords Association  
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors  
Shelter Cymru  
Tai Pawb  
TPAS Cymru  
Wales Cooperative Centre  
The Wallich  
Welsh Women's Aid