CCHPR Director’s Report for the year to March 2017

Professor Michael Oxley
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Introduction

This report outlines the wide range of research and dissemination activities that CCHPR has engaged in over the period from April 2016 to March 2017. Staff changes are summarised and the report gives examples of new and on-going projects. The impact of completed research and our ambitions for the future are highlighted. This is an illustrative rather than a comprehensive account of everything that CCHPR has done during the year. More information on all our work is available on our website at http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk.

Staff changes

A restructuring, involving the loss of three part-time support posts and the creation of a new CCHPR administrator position, has allowed us to streamline our administrative support. I am very pleased that Pamela Lee became our new CCHPR research centre administrator in March 2017. Our research assistant, Charlotte Hamilton, left us in January 2017 to take up a new post at the University of Essex and I wish Charlotte every success in her new post. CCHPR has welcomed Kathryn Muir as a new research assistant. Kathryn’s skills and enthusiasm will add to our capacity to undertake a range of new projects.

New projects

The projects started since April 2016 demonstrate the diversity of our topics and methods. As with our previous work, the common theme running through them all is the potential for significant impact on policy and practice. Several projects have been undertaken with external partners and, in several cases, the research projects have been short and consequently the final reports are already available.

Cambridge City Council and Oxford City Council commissioned an assessment of student housing demand and supply to inform planning policy, with regard to the provision of student accommodation and its impact upon housing need within the two cities. The report on student housing supply and demand in Cambridge has been published and as a result changes have been made to the Cambridge Local Plan.

The Council of Mortgage Lenders commissioned research on shared ownership. The aim of the study was to improve mortgage lenders’ understanding of shared ownership and to help firms evaluate their appetite to support shared ownership in the light of the government’s aspirations for the tenure. The final report: ‘Shared Ownership: Ugly Sister or Cinderella? The role of mortgage lenders in growing the shared ownership market’ was published in October 2016. It makes recommendations for government, regulators, lenders and other stakeholders.

The Social Mobility Commission (SMC) commissioned CCHPR to undertake research that focused on the relationship between parental background and young people’s access to homeownership. This research formed part of SMC’s role as an advocate for social mobility in the UK and informed its 2016 State of the Nation report to Parliament. The SMC report
based on the research was published in March 2017. It showed that the number of first time
buyers relying on the 'Bank of Mum and Dad' has hit a historic high. Drawing on
governmental and housing market data, it examined the recent pattern of parental help for
first-time buyers. The research also included trends and projections of such parental help.

Community Housing Cymru and the Welsh Local Government Association commissioned
CCHPR to undertake a study into viable housing models for single people only entitled
to the housing benefit shared accommodation rate. The report, which was published in
May 2016, explored the potential for shared housing to moderate the impact of cuts in
housing benefits for young people in social housing.

Commonweal Housing is currently funding research on shared housing for non-resident
parents, looking at the housing needs and views of non-resident parents who live in, or have
considered living in, shared housing. Very little is known about the suitability of shared
housing for non-resident parents. The research aims to examine evidence of the need for
shared housing solutions for non-resident parents and to identify possible housing solutions,
as well as the key challenges in developing such housing, and suggest ways in which they
might be tackled.

Research commissioned by Shelter will explore how landlords manage their portfolios
and make decisions on buying and selling stock. It seeks to understand how landlords
manage their businesses, how this might affect tenants and how this might change in the
future.

The Welsh Government has recently commissioned CCHPR to undertake research into fees
charged by letting agents across Wales. The aim is to broaden understanding on what
constitutes a ‘fee’ or a ‘charge’ and the levels at which these are levied. It will explore the
potential impact on letting agents, landlords, tenants, and the private rented sector as a
whole, if these fees were to be banned.

We have also undertaken a project with Places for People to explore new ways of tackling
housing affordability and supply in the UK. A seminar at which this work will be
discussed is to be held at Jesus College Cambridge in May 2017.

There are several projects where research started in the last year has been completed and
publication is pending. These include:

- Research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, supported by Shelter, was
  commissioned in order to understand the causes of evictions and forced moves. It
  is due to be published in June 2017.

- Lloyds Bank Group commissioned a project exploring the role of SME investment
  in the private rented sector. It aims to raise the profile of this part of the PRS,
  adding to the understanding of its impact and informing policy discussion.

Pioneering work on local income estimates to inform housing policy has continued. We are
exploring further applications of the techniques we have developed, in the light of
subsequent policy changes and the needs of policy makers and practitioners.
CCHPR continues to provide expert advice to the Regulatory Arm of the UK Statistics Authority in its review of the adequacy of UK housing statistics.

Details of all our projects started in 2016 and 2017 can be found on our website, which is regularly updated:

- [http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Projects/Start-Year/2016](http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Projects/Start-Year/2016)
- [http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Projects/Start-Year/2017](http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Projects/Start-Year/2017)

**Other publications**

We have completed a series of publications during the year, including the final report from our ESRC funded project on the role of housing and housing providers in tackling poverty experienced by young people in the UK. The funding from the ESRC, with the support of the Public Policy Institute for Wales, was part of their ‘What Works’ in Tackling Poverty programme. The mixture of quantitative and qualitative work included literature reviews, data analysis using the longitudinal Understanding Society Study (USS) and case studies of projects across the UK which explore the different ways in which housing providers work with young people at risk of poverty. The research identified the processes by which many projects run by housing providers have the potential to prevent or alleviate poverty amongst young people by improving personal skills, employability, confidence and the ability to maintain independent living.

There have been a series of publications from a large research project which has been analysing the public health outcomes of the Cambridgeshire Time Credits Project in Wisbech. Funded by the National Institute for Health Research, this research project is a collaboration between CCHPR and the Cambridge Institute for Public Health (CIPH). The research examined the potential for time credits to tackle social exclusion, loneliness and deprivation and assessed the extent to which they can reduce health inequalities.

Dr Gemma Burgess co-edited a book chapter based on earlier research on planning gain: Delivering planning obligations – are agreements successfully delivered? which can be found in Planning gain: providing infrastructure and housing in (Eds.) Crook, A. and Whitehead, C. (2016) Wiley Blackwell.

CHPR Departmental Fellow Peter Williams has co-authored the latest UK Housing Review, published by the Chartered Institute of Housing. The 2017, and 25th anniversary, edition of the UK Housing Review features over 200 charts and tables on housing data. Commentary chapters include analysis of recent trends in UK housing markets and in housing needs, as well as of housing provision and public expenditure and the government’s current plans. There are also chapters on the consequences of Brexit, housing in Europe, the effects of welfare reform across the UK, and a reflection by Steve Wilcox on issues arising during the twenty-five years of the Review.
Other ongoing projects

Two projects for the National House Building Council are examining aspects of social changes and the implications for new housing. A research project on downsizing and moving in later life is exploring why older households move in later life and why they choose either new build housing or existing stock. It considers what the house building sector can learn from their experience. Another project on multi-generational living is examining the scale and nature of multi-generational living in England to explore the opportunities this presents to the house building sector.

Information about other current projects is available from our website: http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Projects/CurrentProjects and a full list of reports on projects completed by CCHPR is available at: http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Publications/Reports.

Publications

During the year, we continued to publish research findings in academic and practice journals including Housing Studies, Housing Finance International, Social Inclusion, Survey Review and Qualitative Market Research. For details of CCHPR publications please see: http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Publications.

Conferences, presentations and impact

CCHPR staff have given presentations arising from research projects at several national and international conferences, including the Housing Studies Association, York (Anna Clarke and Kathryn Muir) and the European Network for Housing Research, Belfast (Charlotte Hamilton). In August 2016, Gemma Burgess presented a paper on Public health outcomes of complex community interventions: community volunteering and Time Credits in the UK at the International Annual Public Health Conference, Kuching, Malaysia, and, in April 2017, Michael Oxley gave a keynote address at the Social Housing in Contemporary Europe Conference in Bolzen-Bolzano, Italy.

A bespoke practitioner engagement event to both present and discuss the findings from our ESRC research on housing and youth poverty was held in London in November 2016.

Further examples of impact activities targeted at practitioner, policy and general audiences are listed below:

Gemma Burgess:

- Policy seminar to local public health practitioners, Cambridge, August 2016.

Chihiro Udagawa:


Anna Clarke:

- The role of housing and housing providers in tackling poverty experienced by young people in the UK, Leeds Centre for Interdisciplinary Childhood and Youth Research Conference - Child and Youth Poverty: Concepts, Contexts and Consequences, Leeds, September 2016.


- Developing a viable housing model for those entitled only to access the shared accommodation rate? Invited plenary speaker, Wales Housing Research Conference, Cardiff, December 2016.

Anna has also spoken to various journalists, including BBC Radio 4 and the BBC World Service, about housing policy, shared ownership and homelessness, and has been quoted in the International Business Times: [http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/bedroom-tax-worth-its-human-cost-1581327](http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/bedroom-tax-worth-its-human-cost-1581327).

She has also written on homelessness for the Department of Land Economy Blog (https://medium.com/discover-land-economy/research-in-search-of-a-better-understanding-of-homelessness-among-young-people-in-the-uk-e96e71a73ba7) and on shared housing for the Welsh Housing Quarterly (http://www.whq.org.uk/the-magazine/issue/104/a-problem-shared/).

Michael Oxley:

- How can research benefit housing policy? Cambridge Centre for Science and Policy Workshop on Cambridgeshire housing policy, September 2016.


**European funding success**

In June and July 2016, CCHPR hosted a visit by Sónia Alves, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal. She worked with us on preparing a Marie Curie Fellowship application on internationally comparative aspects of planning, affordable housing and segregation. The application was successful and Sónia will join us for two years from October 2017 to work on the project, which will involve case studies in Copenhagen, London and Lisbon, and reflections on comparative methodologies.

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