



promoting equality in housing
hybu cydraddoldeb ym maes tai



Good Practice Briefing

Widening access to the PRS

Over the last twenty years, the private rented sector has more than doubled in size and continues to grow rapidly. Continuous undersupply of social housing has meant that the private rented sector is increasingly being used as a longer term housing option for large numbers of diverse and vulnerable tenants – bringing with it a number of challenges as well as opportunities.

“Without a well-functioning PRS, it will be incredibly difficult to meet the housing challenges ahead of us in Wales.”



Open Doors

- Improving sector engagement

Open Doors, a partnership project managed by Tai Pawb and the Residential Landlords Association (RLA) aimed at reducing discrimination in the private rented sector, published a range of guidance over the course of its two year remit, including a guide on 'Engaging Private Sector Landlords'.

A useful tool for equipping local authorities and third sector organisations with information on how to engage both positively and proactively with PRS landlords, the guide aims to bridge the gap between landlords and tenants with the ultimate aim of helping sustain tenancies in the sector.

The guide recognises the significant and persistent barriers to meaningful engagement, including a lack of awareness of services and support and, in the most extreme cases, an



Open Doors
Drysau Agored

unwillingness to engage as a result of criminal activity among rogue landlords. There is a recognition, however, that a large majority of private landlords are in need of more support as a result of housing increasing numbers of vulnerable tenants who would have traditionally been supported in social housing. Moreover, there are issues with Local Housing Allowance (LHA), welfare reform and retaliatory evictions, compounding some of the difficulties experienced by tenants in the private rented sector.

If access is to be widened, so engagement needs to be improved.

Useful Links

[A-Z of Equality and Diversity: A guide for private landlords](#) (Open Doors)

[Challenging Discrimination: A guide for private tenants](#) (Open Doors)

[Common issues and how to overcome them: A guide for private tenants](#) (Open Doors)

[Private renting and mental health; a way forward](#) (CIH Cymru and Tai Pawb)

TOP TIPS

- **Use online engagement tools**

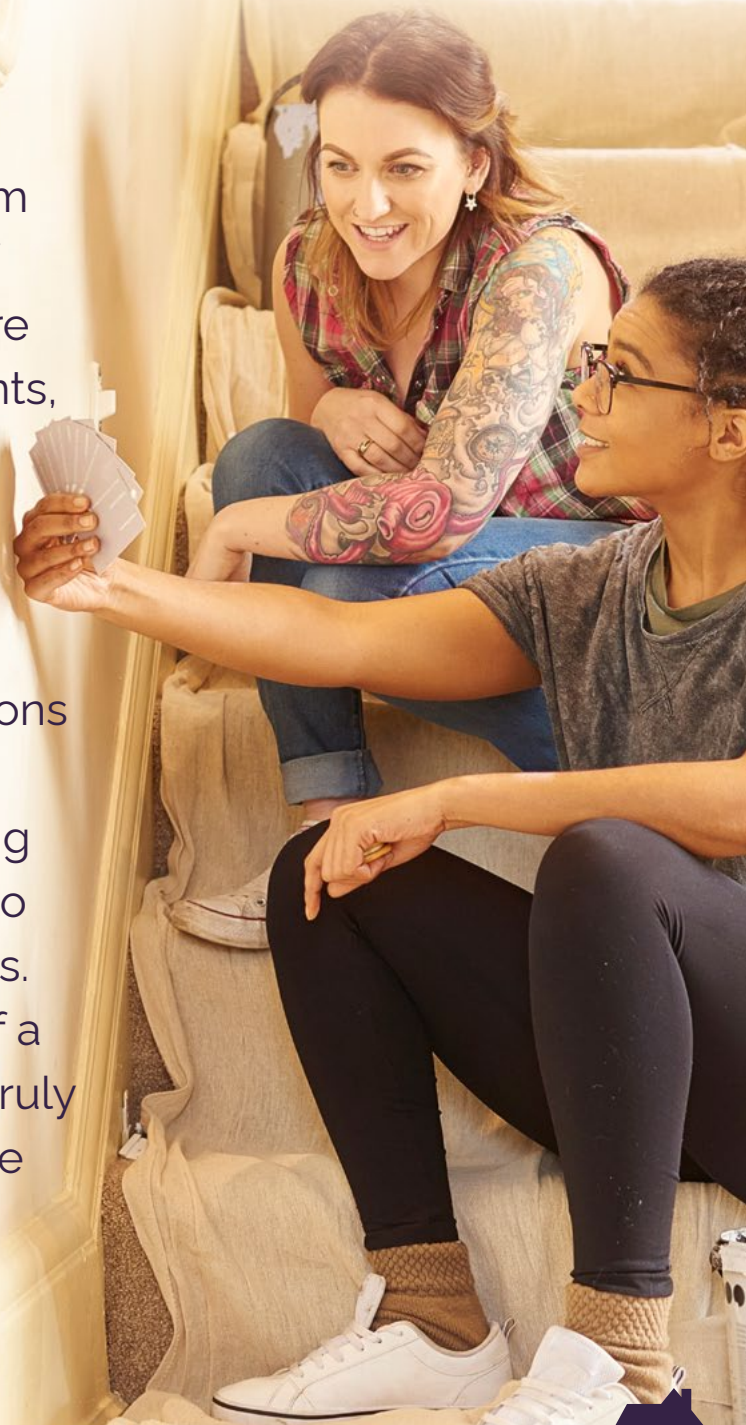
A range of online resources and materials are available on the [Open Doors](#) and [Tai Pawb](#) websites, including the online training module 'Equality and Diversity for Private Landlords'

- **Landlord Forums**

Joining your local landlord forum can help increase awareness of the support and services that are available to landlords and tenants, often with presentations from various support organisations

- **Champions model**

Open Doors adopted a 'champions model', building the skills of volunteer landlords and assisting them in supporting their peers to deal with specific tenancy issues. These models should consist of a diverse mix of backgrounds to truly represent the diversity within the private rented sector



Housing vulnerable people in the PRS - Caerphilly

Since the inception of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities have been able to discharge their homelessness duties with an offer of private rented accommodation.

In developing its response to the changing circumstances – and after a successful pilot period – Caerphilly County Borough Council launched the '[Caerphilly Keys](#)' project, following growing pressure on local private rented sector stock; issues with restrictions on allocations policy; stagnant emergency and temporary accommodation; and concerns from local landlords on 'no fault' evictions'.

The scheme, which has Rent Smart Wales status, acts as a 'needs-matching' service with the private rented sector, assisting the local authority to support some of its most vulnerable residents into accommodation.



Though not a 'leasing scheme' in its own right, the authority crucially monitors rents to ensure that they are maintained at reasonable and affordable levels for the locality, while RIA and bonds are paid on behalf of the tenant. Private properties are advertised to the authority's homelessness and prevention teams and potential tenants are then accompanied to view the accommodation.

As of September 2019, Caerphilly Keys has 45 properties as part of its scheme – a mix of one, two and three-bedroom properties – all of which have helped the council to discharge its homelessness duty, with further interest from landlords and more properties in the pipeline.

Key elements to success

- Supporting people prior to their tenancy is critical e.g. attending Universal Credit verification meetings with potential tenants who are seeking alternative pay arrangements (APA)
- Landlords and those running the scheme share a common outlook
- Caerphilly Keys has no restrictions on tenants

Useful links

[Caerphilly Keys - Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
[New Caerphilly housing initiative launched](#)