

## Annual Report 2015/16

*'Housing is such a fundamental issue impacting on people's wellbeing and quality of life and it is most obvious when you don't have it, so the absence of decent, affordable housing is a real barrier to social justice.'* (David Mullins)

The Housing and Communities Research Group is part of the School of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Birmingham. Housing and Communities is an important arena for current policy and practice challenges in relation to housing policy, welfare reform, austerity, homelessness, housing supply shortages, financial inclusion, Localism and the role of third sector in service delivery. Research and knowledge transfer on these topics plays a key role in the University's civic engagement agenda.

### Feedback after our recent conference with HC21 on the Future of Social Housing at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham included the following comments:

*'I think you have done an extraordinary job in bringing together the likes of us with the traditional housing people – and that is to be valued'* (Nic Bliss, Confederation of Cooperative Housing)

*'I very much enjoyed the conference you organised the other week and was wondering if it is possible to access slides from the speakers. I would be particularly interested in the slides from your own presentation, which I (and others) thought was an excellent introduction and summary of the positions on this topic.'* (Professor Peter Somerville, University of Lincoln)

*'I greatly enjoyed the workshop session with Peter, Neville and Mike and we had some excellent engagement from the participants. Please do keep me posted on progress following the conference and if there are any future events or initiatives I can assist with, I would be very happy to do so.'* (Councillor John Cotton, Birmingham City Council)

*'Great conference yesterday!'* (Rashid Ikram, Strategy and Research Team, Birmingham City Council).

*'I Just wanted to congratulate you and your team/partners on an excellent event yesterday. I feel I've had my information top up for the year! Who needs to go to Manchester?'* (Jean Templeton, Chief Executive, St Basils)

Presentations from the Conference can be downloaded at <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/social-policy/departments/social-policy-social-work/news-and-events/2016/06/06-06-2016-future-of-social-housing.aspx>



## People

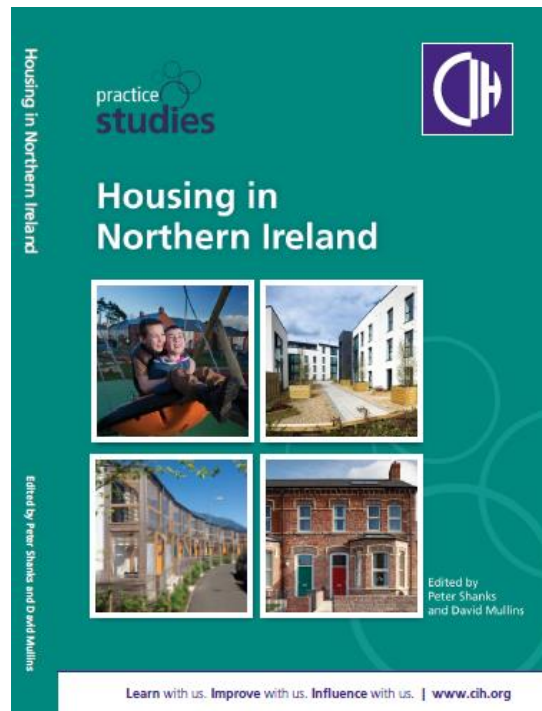
This year has seen further progress for the **Housing and Communities as Research Group** as a Social Policy Research Group. We now carry out a range of research, consultancy, teaching and knowledge transfer activities focusing on social and community-led housing and the private rented sector. In June 2016 we held a major conference on the Future of Social Housing at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham. The Group now has five active core staff, five honorary fellows, six PhD candidates and nine BA Social Policy (Housing and Communities pathway) undergraduates. There were two doctorates awarded this year to Dr Ben Pattison (Growth of private rented sector in Birmingham) and Dr Gerard van Bortel, Delft University (housing associations regeneration networks in Birmingham and Groningen) and two new PhD starts Bingzi He (cooperative housing in China) and Simone Hellenen (youth homelessness in Birmingham)



## New projects in 2015-16

Both Marie Curie Fellows have been in post this year - Dr Richard Lang (**Cooperative Capital**) Jan 2015-Jan 2017 and Dr Anita Blessing (**Reinvest**) October 2016- February 2018). Dr James Gregory has continued to work on the Webb Memorial Trust project on the **Purpose and Future of Social Housing** and secured funding from L&Q for a new project on **mixed communities**. Dr Halima Sacranie was appointed as a part time research associate and has worked on five group research and consultancy projects, leading on a **governance audit** for a local housing association. Two new honorary fellows, Jon Stevens and Jon Fitzmaurice OBE were appointed and have worked with David Mullins on projects on **resident management in retirement housing** (for HC21) and an impact acceleration project on the **legacy of empty homes community grants** (for ESRC, Nationwide, Tudor and Unity Trust). Chris Watson (Hon Fellow) and Alan Murie (Emeritus Prof) have completed a report with an 'Academic-Practitioner Partnership' on **Good Housing, Better Health** which will be promoted on HCRG website. Further focus on housing in Northern Ireland was achieved by a new project for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on **resident involvement in governance**, a new edited book on **Housing in Northern Ireland** for the Chartered Institute of Housing (Shanks and Mullins) was launched at the ENHR conference in Belfast in June 2016 and a successful ESRC studentship award for Peter Shanks (2016-20) to undertake research on housing association governance in Northern Ireland.

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/housing-research-about](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/housing-research-about)



Another new award in 2015/16 was from the West Midlands Housing Officers Group for a project on Social Lettings Agencies in the West Midlands building on our scoping work with Birmingham City on Let to Birmingham.

## Impact and Networks

The impact of our work is enhanced by the **Housing and Communities Network** which has over 200 live contacts and attracted 60 to a lunch event in June 2015 and over 150 to our ICC conference in June 2016. Both these events strengthened our links with policy and practice partners leading to several new projects. The work of the group is well represented on our website and in the **four informative newsletters** we have published throughout the academic year. Our close partnership with St Basils the Birmingham youth homelessness charity featured in a video on University research partnerships.

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/social-policy/housing-communities/publications/housing-newsletters.aspx>

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/social-policy/housing-communities/research/index.aspx>

The Group was well represented at the **European Network for Housing Research Conference in Belfast** in June 2016 with six of the group attending and paper presentations by PhD candidates Bingzi He and Bruce Moore and by Richard Lang (2) and Anita Blessing. David Mullins was re-elected to the Coordination Committee while Anita Blessing and David Mullins continue to coordinate the working group on Social Housing Institutions and Governance (with Nicky Morrison and Gerard van Bortel). Bingzi and David also attended the new researchers conference in Dublin where Bingzi received expert comments on her PhD proposal and David acted as mentor to three other new research.

Over the year David Mullins spoke at **15 events impacting on policy and practice** including the HCRG Conference, ICC Birmingham, Empty Homes Network Conference, Birmingham, National CLT Conference London, Housing Learning and Improvement (LIN) Network London, Housing Rights Conference Belfast, Intentional Communities Symposium Cardiff, Tees Valley self-help housing network, Middlesbrough, Leeds, Yorkshire and Humberside self-help housing network, Scottish Empty Homes Conference, Edinburgh and practice facing events at Salford University, Cardiff University, Amsterdam University and Ulster University.

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## Seminars

This year the group held a further **8 well-attended research seminars** and an internal event on the future of Social Housing in March to prepare for the ICC conference in June. **International visitors** included Dr KY Lau from City University Hong Kong and a six month visit is planned for Professor Man He Han from Korea in August-December 2016. Group members continue to maintain **leading roles in the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR)**. David Mullins is a Coordination Committee member and Anita Blessing and David are coordinators of the successful working group on social housing: institutions, organisations and governance. Richard Lang and David Mullins are part of a **European COST Action Consortium** bid on collaborative housing.



## Projects

The Group has secured external funding for 10 current projects as shown in the table below

### RESEARCH ACTIVITY- 2015/16 CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS (10)

PROJECT TITLE AND FUNDER(S)	DATE OF AWARD	PEOPLE INVOLVED	DATES PROJECT LIVE
1. Marie Curie Fellowship –Cooperative Capital -EU	July 2014	Dr Richard Lang (Fellow) David Mullins (supervisor)	Jan 2015-Jan 2017
2. Marie Curie Fellowship – Reinvest - EU	April 2015	Dr Anita Blessing (Fellow) David Mullins (supervisor)	Oct 2015- Feb 2018
3. EHCGP Legacy Project - ESRC Impact Acceleration Tudor Trust, Nationwide Foundation - Unity Bank -	Various May-Sept 2015	David Mullins (PI) Dr Halima Sacranie (CI) Jon Fitzmaurice (impact) Bingzi He (PhD)	Sept 2015-Sept 2016
4. Resident Involvement in Governance – NIHE	Oct 2015	David Mullins (PI) Peter Shanks (subcontract)	Nov 2015-Dec 2016
5. Social Lettings Agencies -West Midlands Regional Housing Pot	Nov 2015	David Mullins (PI) Dr Halima Sacranie CI) Dr Ben Pattison(subcontract)	March-December 2016
6. Evidence Review on Extra Care Housing – HC21	Oct 2015	Robin Miller (PI) David Mullins (CI)	Oct-Nov 2015 (completed)
7. Governance Audit - BDHT	Dec 2015	David Mullins (PI) Dr Halima Sacranie (CI)	Jan-March 2016 (completed)
8. Ashfields Resident Management Company – HC21	Jan 2016	David Mullins (PI) Jon Stevens (Hon Adviser)	Jan-June 2016
9. Mixed Communities – L&Q	March 2016	Dr James Gregory (PI) Dr Halima Sacranie (CI) David Mullins (Delphi study)	March – December 2016
10. Future of Social Housing	July 2015	Dr James Gregory (PI) David Mullins	October 2015- July 2016



## Marie Curie Fellows

### Richard Lang – Collaborative Capital

This Marie Curie Fellowship project is a comparative study between collaborative housing sectors in England and Austria and analyses the governance capacity of different organisational forms to empower residents in their neighbourhoods and in the wider institutional environment.

Collaborative housing refers to a variety of locally-based organisational and governance models, such as Housing Cooperatives, Community Land Trusts, Self-help Housing, Community Self-build and Cohousing. On a broader scale, the research intends to deepen the inter-European dialogue and inform international debates on the new role of cooperative models in economy and society.

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/social-policy/lang-richard.aspx>

### Anita Blessing – Re-invest

The 'Reinvest' project uses comparative research across US and European settings to address the urban governance challenge of motivating investment in affordable rental housing by large financial institutions, such as banks and pension funds. While existing European studies tend to focus solely on financially incentivizing investment, the 'Reinvest' project will bring into consideration a broader range of investment drivers. It sets out to better understand how opportunities for investment in affordable rental housing connect to the internal logics and organisational structures of institutional investors. In particular, it asks how multi-level state policies help to forge these connections, and how these drivers for investment differ in US and European cities.

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/social-policy/blessing-anita.aspx>



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## Publications

### Housing and Communities Working Paper Series

Paper 1: Lang, R., Mullins, D. (2015). Bringing real localism into practice through co-operative housing governance. The role and prospects for community-led housing in England. Housing and Communities Research Group. University of Birmingham.

Paper 2: Mullins, D and Sacranie, H (2014) Evaluation of the Empty Homes Community Grants Programme – Midlands Baseline Case Studies Report, (<http://www.bshf.org/published-information/publication.cfm?lang=00&thePubID=6112D94C-D4AE-52C7-7049841769AB2EFC>)

Paper 3: Mullins, D and Sacranie, H (2015) Building a Legacy: The Impact of Empty Homes Community Grants Programme in the North East and Yorkshire and Humberside (forthcoming)

Paper 4. WP-2016 [PDF] Mullins D and Stevens J (2016) Square pegs and round holes: Forming a Resident Management Company at Ashfields.

### Housing and Communities Evidence Review Series

Mullins D (2015) Extra-Care Housing: Impacts on individual wellbeing. Evidence Review 1



### SQUARE PEGS AND ROUND HOLES

Forming a Resident Management Company at Ashfields

Baseline Report- Summary



David Mullins, Jon Stevens  
MAY 2016

## Journal articles, Books and book chapters

Shanks P. and Mullins D. eds. (2016) Housing in Northern Ireland. Chartered Institute of Housing, Practice Series. ISBN: 978-1-905018-99-4

Murie A (2016) The Right to Buy? Selling off Public and Social Housing. Policy Press

Gregory, James (2016) "How not to be an egalitarian: the politics of homeownership and property-owning democracy." *International Journal of Housing Policy* (2016): 1-20.

Kibler, E, Fink, M, Lang, R, Muñoz, P (2015). Place attachment and social legitimacy: Revisiting the sustainable entrepreneurship journey. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 3, 24–29.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbvi.2015.04.001>

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/housing-research-about](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/housing-research-about)

Blessing, A. (2015). Repackaging the poor? Conceptualising neoliberal reforms of social rental housing. *Housing Studies*, 1-24.

Blessing, A. (2015). Public, Private, or In-Between? The Legitimacy of Social Enterprises in the Housing Market. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 26(1), 198-221. Gregory, J (2015) 'Engineering Compassion: The Institutional Structure of Virtue', *Journal of Social Policy*.

Gittins, T, Lang, R, Sass, M (2015). The effect of return migration driven social capital on SME internationalisation: a comparative case study of IT sector entrepreneurs in Central and Eastern Europe. *Review of Managerial Science*, 9(2), 385-409. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11846-014-0161-5>.

Hatak, I, Lang, R, Roessler, D (2015), Trust, Social Capital, and the co-ordination of relationships between the members of co-operatives: A comparison between member-focused co-operatives and third-party focused co-operatives, *Voluntas*.

Lang, R (2015) The Mobilisation of Linking Social Capital in Community-led Housing in England. In R. Andeßner, D. Greiling, M. Gmür, L. Theuvsen (Eds.), *Ressourcenmobilisierung durch Nonprofit-Organisationen. Theoretische Grundlagen, empirische Ergebnisse und Anwendungsbeispiele*. Linz: Trauner. ISBN: 9783990334485.

Mullins, D and Jones, T (2015) From 'contractors to the state' to 'protectors of public value'? Relations between non-profit housing hybrids and the state in England. *Voluntary Sector Review*. Now available as fast tracked article.

Muir, J and Mullins, D (2015) The Governance of Mandated Partnerships. The Case of Social Housing Procurement. *Housing Studies* 10.1080/02673037.

## Teaching Links

Our research continues to feed into undergraduate teaching through the BA Social Policy (Housing and Communities) Pathway degree which had its first graduate, Mark Caddick in 2016, with a further 8 students currently registered. The programme includes a second year taught module with research based learning on state, market and community drivers of housing with case studies from our recent projects which recruits well from Sociology and Geography as well as Social Policy. Integrated second year placements with local housing organisations provide exciting opportunities for students to engage with leading edge practice as evidenced by Alex Robinsons' recent newsletter article on the Youth Homeless Parliament:



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*"The most valuable insight of my experience this academic year was witnessing this group's positive impact. I was lucky to be there on the day of the YHP event. On the coach to Westminster the atmosphere was remarkable. Despite the early start to the day, all of the young people were enthusiastic and determined to participate. It was evident that the whole experience of the day had enabled them to engage both socially and academically. This was demonstrated by the connections formed with partnership organisations and also the knowledge that was displayed at the event".*

Alex Robinson 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Housing and Communities Pathway student.

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/SPSW/Housing/2016/housing-newsletter-spring-2016.pdf>

## Doctoral Research

### This years' PhD Awards

Dr Ben Pattison – *Understanding the drivers for, and policy responses to, the rapid growth of private renting in England. Has 'Generation Rent' been 'priced out'?* University of Birmingham.

<http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/6506/>

Dr Gerard van Bortel - *Networks and Fault lines. Understanding the role of housing associations in neighbourhood regeneration: a network governance perspective.* TU Delft, Netherlands. ISBN 978-94-6168-604-2 [abe.tudelft.nl](http://abe.tudelft.nl).

### Current PhD students

Steve Forrest - *Regional Planning and Housing 2003-2015.*

Bruce Moore - *Competing perspectives on the governance role of boards of English housing associations and attitudes to board payment.*

Simone Hellenen - *An exploration of what enables and constrains effective engagement with help: a longitudinal case study with young people on pathways out of homelessness.*

Bingzi He - *The Five Pillars of Collaborative Housing – exploring enactment in Chinese Cooperative Security Housing and English Community Land Trusts.*

Peter Shanks - *A study into the effect of organisational hybridity on housing association corporate governance in Northern Ireland.* (ESRC award from October 2016)



[www.birmingham.ac.uk/housing-research-about](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/housing-research-about)