

## Housing Studies Association Annual Conference 2020

Housing, devolution and localities:  
Inventing a future or more of the  
same?



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# WELCOME TO THE HSA'S 'ONLINE' ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This is the second time that I've had to write this note this year. The first draft welcomed everyone to Sheffield, talked about the amazing three days that we'd curated and spoke about the various people and papers that we were lucky to hear from. Then the world shifted on its axis. COVID-19 took over and we've all been facing varying levels of uncertainty, precarity, fear, boredom, frustration depending on your personal and professional circumstances. Let's face it, it's been a rough year and it's not over yet.

The housing studies community though are a robust bunch. Just like the movie *The Day After Tomorrow* made paleo-climatologists relevant, the arrival of COVID-19, and associated measures, makes the knowledge embedded within the housing studies community integral to many of the debates at the centre of our experience, handling of and recovery from the current situation. This is part of the reason why we decided to reorganise the conference into an online event across the month of November. As we are, to varying degrees, confined and atomised we want to provide opportunities to open up, share and collaborate. Although we remain apart there has rarely been a more important time to join together.

We have been overwhelmed by the response from the housing studies community to continue with the conference in this form and we are very cautiously excited about the month ahead. The HSA's core aim is to promote housing studies and build links between housing researchers and professionals, so it is wonderful to still be able to welcome delegates from across the UK and overseas. It's also hugely gratifying to see both new and returning housing professionals and practitioners register for the events.

The challenges facing housing have only become more complex. This complexity has increased in terms of where the capacity for decision-making lies; within national governments, within devolved governments, at a regional level, or with local communities. It is also demonstrated in the widening set of issues facing both those who try and access social housing, and those who provide it. The year has also seen frustrations about entrenched structural inequalities erupt into protests, violence and political disagreements the volume of which are without precedent. These issues combine to make the design of this year's programme even more relevant now, than when we proposed it last year. It is motivated by devolution in its broadest sense, meaning the transfer of decision-making powers between actors. It is the intention of the conference to stimulate debate and discussion about where the locus of decision-making is, and where it should be for housing-related issues.

This year we are proud to have worked with a range of partners and sponsors in developing the programme. I would particularly like to thank our sponsors: the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE), the *International Journal of Housing Policy* and *Housing Studies* are supporting our plenary sessions and ECR events.

The HSA has long prided itself on providing a welcoming and supportive environment for early career researchers, something that is made all the easier by the high calibre of new researchers working on housing issues. We have been at pains to ensure the move to online does not dilute our commitment to the researchers of the future and we have made sure there are opportunities to for early-career researchers each week. We are really pleased that the Valerie Karn Prize - awarded for the best paper by an early career housing researcher - has been awarded to Lynne McMordie from Heriot-Watt University.

We look towards our 30th Anniversary as an Association in 2021 with some trepidation and you can count on a number of events being planned to mark this occasion – plans for the 2021 conference are in full flow. Our current plans are that the 2021 conference will have a physical base in Sheffield (UK) but incorporate virtual components and take place between the 14th – 16th April 2021. Fittingly for our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary the conference is entitled '*The timeliness of housing studies: Preparing for the future and learning from the past*'. We will honour the conference bursaries of those people who were awarded them this year to be eligible for next year's conference.

I am hugely grateful to my co-organiser and Vice-Chair Helen Taylor (Cardiff Metropolitan University) and to Karly Greene (Northern Ireland Housing Executive) for their partnership in curating the programme; to Lucinda Bower from the University of Sheffield for their professionalism and unshakable support; Miranda Keast for helping us translate the original conference into a digital setting and to our plenary speakers, workshop contributors, and chairs for making the conference possible.

Finally, I just want to pass on my gratitude, and that of the Executive Committee, for your continued support of the HSA. As a voluntary led organisation we are indebted to your support. Thank you, and I hope you enjoy the events.

**Phil Brown**  
**Chair, HSA.**

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## Conference organisers

Each year the conference organisation is led by members of the HSA Executive Committee with the fantastic support of professional services colleagues from the University of Sheffield. This year's conference is convened by Phil Brown, Karly Greene and Helen Taylor.

**Phil Brown** is Professor of Housing and Communities in the School of Human and Health Sciences at The University of Huddersfield. Phil is a Chartered Psychologist and has wide ranging interests which broadly revolves around understanding the housing and neighbourhood inequalities experienced by members of particular marginalised communities. Phil has research experience in fields as diverse as social inclusion, migration, homelessness, fuel poverty, energy efficiency and regeneration. His current research projects focus on two main issues namely migration and homelessness; in particular, how places can support the integration of poorer migrants and refugees and how homelessness can be tackled through new forms of delivery and system change. Phil is Chair of the Housing Studies Association and sits on the Editorial Board of Thinkhouse.

**Karly Greene** is Head of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's (NIHE) Research Department, She has overall responsibility for the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey and ensuring that the overall Research and Intelligence Programme is continually informing planning and housing policy, making sure that people impacted by government policy are central to research design. Karly joined NIHE in 2017 from Quadrangle, a London-based research consultancy, and previously held roles in Clarabridge and PwC. Her background in research, consulting and analytics spans over a decade working with organisations across the private, public and voluntary sectors. She is a specialist in large quantitative and data driven projects mainly helping organisations better utilise their data and research to inform decision making. Karly is also a Board member of NexusNI. Key research interests and recent publications are the impacts of welfare reform in NI, customer engagement, older people and housing aspirations and understanding the private rented sector in NI.

**Helen Taylor** is a lecturer in Housing Studies at Cardiff Metropolitan University. She teaches policy, research methods, and inequalities on the BSc Housing Studies and is the Programme Director for the MSc Advanced Practice (Housing). Her research interests focus on the application of philosophical questions of justice to contemporary social policy issues, namely homelessness, as well as the impact of political decision-making on issues of justice in a devolved context. She has recently completed an Academic Fellowship with the National Assembly for Wales' Research Service looking at recommendations to changing homelessness legislation in Wales from individuals with experience of rough sleeping. Helen is the Vice Chair of the Housing Studies Association and sits on the board of Cymorth Cymru and the Editorial Board of Welsh Housing Quarterly.

## ABOUT THE HSA

Regardless of whether this may be your first conference or not, it's worth spending a few moments remembering what the Housing Studies Association is and why we are here.

The 1980s and 1990s saw significant growth in housing education; in academic research into housing; and in research conducted within a range of statutory, voluntary and private sectors. Following a successful housing research seminar programme, the Housing Studies Association was established in 1991 to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among all those with interests in housing research and education. The Association has become established as the leading independent forum for the promotion of housing studies, embracing the interests of researchers and students across a broad range of organisations and academic disciplines. The HSA is a UK wide organisation with active membership throughout the country and well established international links. Our aims are:

- to promote the study of housing
- to bring together researchers, practitioners and policy makers interested in housing research and education
- to encourage the practical application of social research to the field of housing studies
- to represent the interests of those researching or teaching housing studies in higher education to funding and development organisations, and to government

Our main activities are the annual conference, the autumn lecture and our member led events. The HSA has also developed an important role in representing the views and interests of the Housing Studies community to other bodies. As well as HEFCE/REF, this includes important research funding organisations such as the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), as well as government and independent funding agencies. The HSA is a member of the Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences; it also liaises with other learned societies and with professional organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Housing. International links are also well developed, particularly with the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR).

The HSA is led by an elected committee of people who are involved in housing research and education. All members are eligible to stand for election to the committee. The committee is also able to be supported by a small number of co-opted members.

Membership of the HSA carries the option of a subscription to a number of journals at very advantageous rates, the most popular with members being the Housing Studies Journal. Members are also eligible to apply for financial bursaries for events and activities that support and promote housing research, and are encouraged to submit papers for the Valerie Karn Prize (subject to member eligibility).

### Who should be a member of HSA?

Anyone who is interested in housing studies can join the association and we are keen to recruit members from across the housing studies community and throughout the UK, including:

- Students of vocational housing courses or those undertaking housing related post-graduate research;
- Academics with housing research interests;
- Researchers working in non-academic environments such as local government, the social housing movement, the voluntary sector, private sector housing agencies, government offices and arms-length agencies;

- Policy makers, practitioners and decision-takers across the housing community who are interested in research and in the application of research to policy and practice

Access to all the conference events are free to HSA members. To join the HSA, visit the [membership section](#) of our website.

# PROGRAMME

## THE CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

### **Week 1: Cities and devolution** **2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

The theme of week 1 is 'Cities and Devolution'. Here we will be exploring where and how decision-making about housing takes place. The week will see our first plenary which will look at the issue of politics. Drawing on the experience of Cllr Paul Dennett, Professor Mark Stephens and Tamsin Stirling we will explore how decisions about housing are made in a political context across Scotland, Greater Manchester, and Wales, and the 'messiness' that can occur within the context of national and regional devolution.

The workshop sessions will continue these themes, looking at where regional and national devolved powers have enabled places to tackle housing and related issues differently. The context of the city will be explored as a site of power and decision-making, and both international and UK examples of this will be discussed. Sessions are united by their focus on the development and experience of policies and strategies. A number of sessions will also consider issues related to groups often marginalised from mainstream policies within this context including Gypsies and Travellers and people who are homeless.

Full details of all the sessions and abstracts in Week 1 can be found on the HSA website: <https://www.housing-studies-association.org/pages/93-week-1-cities-and-devolution>

### **Week 2: Evidence and theory** **9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

This week we focus on the theme of 'evidence and theory'. Evidence and theory are integral to the HSA and the papers in the sessions across the week will explore a number of different settings and context in which evidence has been generated and theory applied. From looking at understandings of home-making practices to building an evidence base to effectively tackle homelessness, these sessions will challenge participants to link about housing in different ways. Presenters will also share their methodological approaches which will provoke new ways of thinking about engaging in the research process with different groups of people.

This week's plenary session will explore ideas around who is involved in decision-making processes within housing both as a sector and a social movement. We will hear about different approaches to including and valuing resident voices, and practical examples to accompany this. We will also have a specially curated session by the Centre for Homelessness Impact in order to explore the generation and use of evidence in the context of homelessness research.

Full details of all the sessions and abstracts in Week 2 can be found on the HSA website: <https://www.housing-studies-association.org/pages/98-week-2-evidence-and-theory>

**Check back on the website for more details coming soon on Weeks 3 and 4!**



# PLENARY SESSIONS

**Plenary session 1**  
**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020**  
**14:00-15:30**

## Politics

Plenary 1 aims to focus on the topic of 'politics' within the context of devolution. We know that although there is great divergence between how policy is played out in national and regional devolution one of the commonalities in this decentralisation of power is the inclusion of housing policy. In this plenary session we will look at how this shift of power has enabled housing policy to develop in different areas. Speakers are drawn from across politics, policy and academia and will be reflecting on the practicalities of trying to influence change within the context of multi-level governance, and the opportunities and challenges this presents. The session will challenge and provoke at a time when the realities of devolution are being tested on a weekly basis.

The speakers are:

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**COUNCILLOR PAUL DENNETT**

Mayor of Salford City Council and Lead for Housing, Planning and Infrastructure in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

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**TAMSIN STIRLING**

Independent researcher and former Advisor to the Welsh Government

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**PROFESSOR MARK STEPHENS**

Ian McTaggart Chair in Land, Property and Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow

**Plenary Session 2**  
**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020**  
**14:00-15:30**

## **People**

Plenary 2 considers the theme of ‘people’ within devolution. One of the overt objectives of devolution is to return power, control and democracy closer to the communities and people who live in the countries and regions. The hope is that housing policy can become more tailored to the specific needs of more local and regional areas.

This plenary session will explore different models of devolving decision-making to residents and individuals who use services, as well as the issues that arise when this is not done. Speakers will share their experiences of being involved in this process, and the benefit this brings to communities and organisations. The plenary will try and distil when local engagement in decision-making has worked well and when it has been challenging.

The speakers are:

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**DR QUENTIN BRADLEY**

Senior Lecturer in Planning and Housing, Leeds Beckett University

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**JIM RIPLEY**

CEO, Phoenix Housing

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**ANNE RIPLEY**

Chair, Phoenix Housing

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**ROLI BARKER**

Project Manager, Fair Housing Futures / Shelter

## THE SEVENTH ANNUAL VALERIE KARN MEMORIAL PRIZE

**We are delighted to say that we have had a fantastic response to our Valerie Karn Prize this year, with a varied range of papers submitted by early-career researchers. The HSA committee extends a huge thank you and well done to everyone who applied.**

Valerie was a housing researcher of compassion and conviction. She believed in the power of research to challenge and change policy by exposing the injustices of life in urban society. She was also a passionate advocate of community engagement and action.

Valerie's interests were wide-ranging and her achievements many. One her most notable contributions was her joint authorship of *Race, Class and State Housing* (1987). Written with Jeff Henderson, this seminal work exposed the processes of institutional racism in public housing. Reviewing the book for *Critical Social Policy* in 1988, Norman Ginsberg recognised the work as "more comprehensive, sophisticated and perhaps radical in its implications than anything done before."

The prize is financed through donations made in Valerie Karn's memory from her daughter and other family and friends. The prize winner is awarded a £100 Waterstone's gift voucher and will receive support towards the professional production and dissemination of the winning paper.

All papers submitted by an early career researcher are considered for the prize, but particular preference is given to papers sharing Valerie's broad interests which include:

- Race and housing
- Housing standards and conditions
- Homelessness
- Housing management and governance
- Comparative housing research

We are pleased to announce that **the winner of the 2020 Valerie Karn Prize is Lynn McMordie** (Heriot-Watt University) for her paper titled 'Avoidance strategies: stress, appraisal and coping in hostel accommodation. Lynne McMordie has worked in a variety of roles in the voluntary and community sectors for the past 15 years. Her primary interest is in homelessness and she has developed and managed a range of services intended to prevent and address rough sleeping, including: emergency accommodation, drop-in centre and street outreach services. She has worked extensively with marginalised adults, particularly in the areas of chronic homelessness, destitution and multiple exclusion.

More recently, Lynne has conducted qualitative research on the nature and design of temporary accommodation services in Belfast, their use by those who have experience of rough sleeping, and their impact and efficacy in resolving homelessness and associated support needs.

Lynne is currently completing a PhD with the Institute for Social Policy Housing and Equalities

Research (I-SPHERE) at Heriot-Watt University, on the design, use and impacts of hostel accommodation models for homeless households in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

**Housing Studies Association**  
**Annual Conference 2021**  
*14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> April, Sheffield and online, UK*

**The timeliness of housing studies: Preparing for the future and learning from the past**

This conference explores contemporary housing and housing research through both retrospective and future-gazing analyses to ask: How should housing history inform the future of housing practice and research?

The Housing Studies Association celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> annual conference in 2021. Advances in housing theory, and methodology over this period have been substantial, however many questions persist about the supply, affordability and quality of housing. This conference examines the use of historical methods in housing studies, considering predictions about the future shape of housing in the UK (and elsewhere), whilst acknowledging the increasing spatial differentiation of housing markets and appreciating the longstanding causes of change within housing systems. We welcome papers which consider the historical context for contemporary policy, which consider the future direction of housing policies and systems, and those which offer observations on mapping policy innovation and change within housing studies.

In celebrating 30 years of Housing Studies, this conference offers an opportunity to engage in wider discussions about: the place of history within the discipline; the trajectories of social, economic and cultural change; the legacy of past policies, including (de-)regulation and (dis)investment and how these questions influence contemporary agenda setting and planning for the future. Adopting an international approach, we welcome papers that consider both single country and comparative approaches.

We hope you will be able to join us at this very special anniversary conference. More details will be available to our members in due course and at <https://www.housing-studies-association.org/>

HSA Annual Conference 2020 is kindly supported by the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence and the academic journals *Housing Studies* and the *International Journal of Housing Policy*.



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**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
Housing Policy**