



**Category:** Outstanding Young Communicator

**Entrant name:** Rebecca Goodhand MCIPR

**Company:** Community Housing Cymru

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**Demonstrate your commitment to professional development and your career growth:**

My drive and determination to grow as a PR practitioner has seen me progress rapidly to senior management roles both in-house and agency side. I have been responsible for leading teams, developing successful new business pitches and managing award winning, challenging campaigns for a range of budgets and sectors.

I have grown a start-up PR agency where staff numbers trebled in size, led PR campaigns in the Middle East, and now work in my first in-house role. This has been a significant development area for me. I am using the communications skills I learnt agency-side to make a difference in a fast-paced and complex sector.

I am leading the communications for the sector's first housing policy review in a decade which involves developing a strategic integrated communications approach to ensure success.

Learning new skills and keeping on top of trends has been fundamental to my career growth. I have been a member of the CIPR for six years and regularly attend events to build my CPD points. I am working towards becoming an accredited practitioner and am on the CIPR Cymru Committee.

**Outline your work-related achievements over the last two years and how they contribute to the wider industry:**

I successfully led a number of campaigns in the Middle East - a very different cultural environment with its own challenges. As a senior manager at H+K Strategies I led a number of pitches and secured a variety of new clients.

I invested a significant amount of time helping to mentor staff members, including an Account Executive in Saudi Arabia, while line managing two people who were new to the industry.

In my current role I have already made significant changes to the way our communications is informed and implemented. I have demonstrated the value of using data to inform

communications activity by running a communications survey aimed at our members. I am now in the process of implementing positive changes based on these insights.

I was promoted within the first eight months, have gained the trust of my CEO and am involved in policy & business conversations from the outset, including complex crisis and reputation communication issues. In the first six months of revamping our communications strategy I achieved: (data over Oct-March 2017/2018 compared to same period previous year).

- 70 pieces of coverage (63% increase)
- 7,334 coverage shares on social media (compared to 477, increase of 1,437%)
- building our reputation with key journalists, ensuring we are the 'go to' organisation on housing issues in Wales (see supporting evidence)
- building our digital profile on Twitter:
  - 549,500 impressions compared to 358,000 - (50% increase)
  - 560 new followers compared to 492 - (14% increase)
  - increasing engagement by 0.4%

I have also identified new opportunities to communicate with members, including developing a series of films to explain what we do (3,126 views in first two months, compared to 494 in same period from the previous year's report style).

**Outline the biggest work-related challenge you've faced in the past two years, including details of what happened, how you overcame it and what you learnt from it:**

My biggest challenge has shown me the value of relationships, good emotional intelligence and the importance of credibility as a PR practitioner. In Dubai I was responsible for media relations around a global medical conference. The client was keen to secure lots of mainstream coverage due to internal pressures. While I am highly results driven, securing mainstream media coverage was a challenge here due to how technical the conference was. To manage expectations and ensure the client achieved a desirable outcome, I worked with her to think creatively to achieve a different set of results that would still align with her overall business objectives. We had weekly face to face meetings and agreed a new strategy with rationale and expected results based on my expert opinion.

As a PR practitioner, I wasn't able to achieve the results she originally set out, but my creativity, expertise and relationship management skills ensured honest and transparent communication while keeping my reputation as a credible consultant intact.

**A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:**

Brief

In 2015, the UK Government announced plans to cap Housing Benefit for tenants in social housing to the Local Housing Allowance rate ( rate awarded in private sector).

This would result in a 'postcode lottery', making social housing unaffordable for tenants (average of £10 extra needed per week for rent).

Our goal was to lobby the UK Government to rethink the policy before April 2019.

### Objectives

- Use an evidence based approach demonstrating the policy makes social housing unaffordable for tenants
- Demonstrate our positive role as a lobbying organisation to members
- Get the UK Government to reverse the policy

### Strategy

Use new data to place significant pressure on the UK Government to reverse its LHA Cap plans. The data would be used as a hook to:

- secure cross political support
- secure media coverage to demonstrate the impact of the policy on tenants
- show members our value as a lobbying body

### Tactics

Phase one: building support (2017)

#### Briefings:

- Supporting members with local data with tailored briefings to facilitate meetings with AMs and MPs on the issues. MPs: Wayne David, David TC Davies, Nick-Thomas Symonds, Chris Evans, Nick Smith, Jessica Morden and Gerald Jones. AM: Dawn Bowden

Phase two: gather evidence (July-September 2017)

- Secured rent samples for each broad rental market area from Welsh Government
- Report written and designed using exclusive data from Welsh Government

Phase three: External communications (October 2017)

- Press release issued
- x5 mainstream & trade journalists briefed
- Regular social media posts from CHC staff
- News story on CHC website
- Direct email communication to members

#### Phase four: communicating change (25th October 2017)

- Story on CHC website
- Email, phone calls and Yammer update to members
- Social media posts from CHC staff
- Quote to target journalists

#### Outputs

- Research document leading the narrative and showcasing the national picture
- Briefings to over 8 MPs (research mentioned during PMQs week leading up to campaign outcome)
- Briefing numerous local and national journalists (research mentioned in the best stories of the year in Inside Housing's annual round up)
- Briefing 3000 members
- 4 case studies

#### Outcomes

- Following pressure from CHC and across the sector, the Prime Minister announced that the Local Housing Allowance cap would not be applied to the social rented sector
- 10 pieces of coverage (200,000 coverage views, 1.68k social shares, 615m online readership)
- Research accepted for academic peer reviewed conference: being used to raise the issue of affordability in Wales
- 33,000 Twitter impressions (x3 more than same time previous week)
- Website views: most viewed story on CHC website with 222 views (1/4 of all website hits that day)
- Numerous calls & emails from members thanking us, including 20 comments on our member Yammer network

#### Budget

No external spend – all work in-house.