Bristol Housing Debate

On Thursday 19th November, ACH's Communications team were lucky to attend the Festival of the Future City, a branch of the Bristol Festival of Ideas, where they watched the 'Housing and Future Cities' debate at the Watershed. The debate panel was made up of leading figures in the world of housing: Danny Dorling, Michael Edwards, Kate Macintosh, Anna Minton and Zoe Williams. The panel placed their focus on the UK housing crisis and each aimed to offer solutions to the crisis with a mixture of their own knowledge and experience, alongside a few startling facts and figures.

Guardian columnist Zoe Williams chaired the debate and hoped the discussion would bring: 'Creative thinking about possible solutions in which cities are a wonderful addition to human life.' Zoe then introduced University College London academic and author Michael Edwards who spoke about the growing inequality within UK housing and the need to fairly distribute money to lower-middle income homeowners.

Michael was followed by University of East London academic and author Anna Minton who argued that: "We no longer believe in creating high quality housing for people with lower incomes." Anna highlighted the risk of social cleansing, particularly in areas such as London, which are going through a process of 're-imaging' which needs to be changed.

Architect and social housing expert Kate Macintosh offered a solution to this risk, suggesting that a stronger emphasis needs to be put on long-term residents who need to be both consulted and respected in relation to their housing.

Oxford professor and author Danny Dorling concluded the individual discussions with a shocking statistic: ¼ million children are moved between schools in London every 2 years. He then showed how this statistic closely links with the 'epidemic of loneliness' caused by the UK housing crisis.

There is a still a lot of work to be done in the social housing sector in 2016 as this debate revealed. Watch or listen to the full debate above and let us know your thoughts!