

DIN their words

Clare Budden

CEO of ClwydAlyn

Clare tells us how her organisation, which has more than 6,800 homes across North Wales, has embraced its DIN membership in its first year as a member.



ClwydAlyn



How did you originally hear about DIN and why did you join?

When Ian worked in a previous role, I took part in one of his programmes that took us to places like Adidas and Nissan. At the time, nobody else was really doing that. I felt really inspired about picking things up from other sectors that could also be applied to our sector.

When Ian started DIN, there wasn't an overwhelming desire to join from the then exec team at ClwydAlyn but in time, I had some new exec team members, and there was a massive enthusiasm to learn and be innovative. At the same time, there were some changes at the head of service level too and they wanted to help the organisation grow positively.

Who has attended DIN events and experiences from your organisation so far?

One of the great things about DIN is that the membership covers everyone in your organisation. So far it has been mainly execs and heads of service and we also have future talent and board members that have attended events and experiences too.

The CEO network is great and I attend the economic briefings. We've attended people and culture events and people who are aspiring leaders have gone to some of the leadership sessions, plus we have engaged a lot with AI, data and digital, which are key areas for us.

Have you used any specific DIN learning that has had an impact on your priorities as a business?

We have massively moved on in our digital and data work and people have seen or heard things through DIN that have inspired them (or calmed them down a bit). There is a good balance in what we are hearing, and so that has helped us reflect on where we were as an organisation and form our own perspective.

We're looking at our operating model for the future and we'll use the tools and techniques we are learning via DIN to shape it. Sometimes people 'big up' what they are doing and you can worry that you're going to get left behind, so DIN is great as a reference point to help with the reality.



What are the blockages and catalysts for change at Clwydalyn?

Many of our residents are older people and there's a risk that we go at the pace of what we perceive their appetite to be. We need to get better at getting the future residents' voice into our thinking.

We are increasingly becoming concerned about the legal changes that have happened around compliance and safety and damp and mould. It's becoming an expensive administrative burden because of the regulatory responsibility on how to report and record it and we're having to grow staff numbers in areas that make no difference to tenants.

We need to get better at technology that can do these things, so it's more cost effective and efficient and then we can spend that money on what matters to tenants, such as improving their homes.

What would you say to an organisation thinking of joining DIN?

DIN gives you an opportunity to improve your business, deal with things coming over the horizon, and also improve things that matter to you and your board.

The mix of in-person and online events is a good balance. People get to go to organisations and buildings they would not normally get to go to and with online events, you can easily drop in.

The stuff shared is from such a wide range of areas. We've found it to be really good value for money. You have only got to engage with a few things for your organisation to get value from it.

