



Message from the Chief Executive

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CIH/HDN “How to...mainstream equality and reflect diversity” briefing

We are delighted to have been involved with the CIH in producing the most recent “how to” guide kindly sponsored by Places for People. For years, it’s been a given that equality has to be “mainstreamed” but what does this actually mean in practice? A look through the joint “how to” guide - http://www.cih.org/publication-free/display/vpathDCR/templatedata/cih/publication-free/data/How_to_mainstream_equality_and_reflect_diversity provides some valuable pointers...including the need for E&D to be integrated into the strategic plans and vision and values of organisations; that organisations need to be regularly reviewing and developing smarter ways of collecting and analysing the data they collect; that the importance of sharing best practice and learning from others cannot be over-estimated; and that self-assessment, accreditation frameworks and peer reviews can all play a huge part in developing, shaping and mainstreaming equality and diversity.

“Accreditation frameworks” and “peer reviews”

As part of our support for mainstreaming equality and diversity and the approaches outlined in the “how to guide” above, we will be launching some regional Diversity Network Accreditation (DNA) events in the New Year during which we hope to invite different colleagues from organisations who have recently commissioned DNA assessments to come along and share their experiences and the outcomes from these accreditation processes.

With regard to “peer reviews” as referenced in the “how to guide”, we are delighted that we have helped firmly establish the Midlands Equalities Forum as the most recent of the network of regional E&D practitioner groups that we support across England. Our role in facilitating such gatherings is a really practical way in which HDN supports the equality and diversity agenda in the sector, whether through “mainstreaming” or simply just by just being there to provide basic information and encouragement to individuals and organisations who want to know more or just simply want to be pointed in the right direction in terms of guidance and advice.

The Business Case for Diversity in Governance

HDN, in partnership with Akxa Homes, are holding an event from 10.00 to 13.00 on Tuesday 4th March 2014 in Manchester exploring the business case for a diverse Board. The event will share the learning and experience from Akxa and draw on research from

outside of the sector. Places are only £20+VAT each for HDN members but are limited to two per organisation and on a first come first served basis. Places for non-members are £60+VAT each.

The Impact of Welfare Reform

The evidence on the impact of Welfare Reform continues to build. I'd like to bring to your attention a couple of reports that have been published recently:

'What Price Independent Lives?' by Habinteg (available here : <http://www.habinteg.org.uk/main.cfm?type=WHATPRICEINDEPENDENCE&objectid=2833>)

Real Life Reform – The second report is available here: http://www.lyha.co.uk/documents/Real_Life_Reform_Report_2_Dec_2013.pdf and follow the projects on Twitter for updates and future reports @RealLifeReform.

Board Members Mentoring Programme – National roll out discussions

Building on the success of our current pilot mentoring programme for Board members we are later this month having discussions with the National Housing Federation which should lead to the development and roll out during 2014/15 of a mentoring programme for both current and potential Board members of social housing providers across England. A range of different governance related issues have dominated headlines in recent months across the housing sector and we will be actively seeking sponsoring organisations keen to work with the NHF and HDN to provide focussed personal development support to both current board members and potential board members and also to provide applied learning on key topics which will help to directly improve governance. Through this programme of support we will also be seeking to enhance the diversity of the pool of potential board members for the sector. To emphasise the extent of our partnership with the NHF, David Orr, Chief Executive of the NHF, has agreed to attend the final session of the pilot programme being hosted on 10 January 2014 at the offices of Thrive Homes where he will hear from Board member mentees of their experiences of this 6 month programme and present their completion certificates.

I do very much hope that you will bring this particular initiative to the attention of your Chief Executive and those responsible for governance. If you would like to contact me to find out more, than do please email me at Clifton@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk


Community cohesion research

We are currently working with the Centre for Learning and Economic Strategies (CLES) on a really interesting community cohesion project. The first part involved a focus group discussion with our colleagues at the 10 December South and South West Equality Forum hosted by Southwark Council in London. The final part of the project will be a survey monkey to be sent out to a much wider audience later this month/early next month -so do look out for this. We anticipate that either Inside Housing or 24 housing will publish the findings.

Festive greetings

Finally, my personal thanks to all of those organisations and individuals who have supported us during 2013 and we look forward to your support again next year. From all of us at HDN have a brilliant festive break!

Best wishes



Clifton Robinson, Chief Executive HDN

For further information on any of the above, please email me at Clifton@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk

To follow the view of the HDN Chair, please visit the Chair's Blog on www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk

Quick Links

E&D NEWS

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Equality & Diversity News.

Housing associations can't represent communities, attract employees or provide great services without embracing diversity.

The Guardian, 18th November 2013

Residency test for allocations would be illegal, lawyers warn

Inside Housing, 30th October 2013

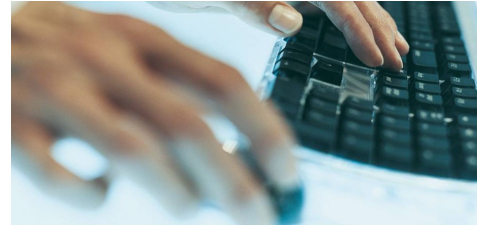
A proposed residency test for social housing allocation would be illegal under EU and discrimination legislation, lawyers have warned. In a Communities and Local Government consultation, the government has proposed 'strongly encouraging' local authorities to adopt a two year residency test for allocating housing. But the Housing Law Practitioners Association said the need to house EU citizens, Travellers, asylum seekers and out-of-area homeless applicants would make this provision illegal. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/legal/residency-test-for-allocations-would-be-illegal-lawyers-warn/6529269.article>

DWP issues 'urgent bulletin' about bedroom tax tribunal decisions

Inside Housing, 31st October 2013

The Department for Work and Pensions has issued an 'urgent bulletin' calling on councils to notify it about any tribunal decisions relating to the bedroom tax. In a sign the DWP is growing increasingly concerned about tribunals upholding tenant appeals, the department has issued a request for information. It says this is needed as the DWP may appeal against decisions even if councils have chosen not to. A series of tribunal rulings, including four in Fife, Scotland, found councils have incorrectly applied the bedroom tax using information from landlords.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/legal/dwp->



[issues-urgent-bulletin-about-bedroom-tax-tribunal-decisions/6529316.article](#)

Londoners housed outside capital doubles

Inside Housing, 1st November 2013

London boroughs have more than doubled the number of homeless families they are placing outside the capital as a result of the soaring costs of private rented accommodation. Unpublished documents by London Councils, seen by Inside Housing, reveal that in the past 12 months to June, 789 households have been housed in 69 local authority areas as far flung as Manchester, Birmingham, Swansea and Accrington. In the first quarter of 2012/13 just 113 people were placed outside London. But figures for the first quarter of 2013/14 show this figure rocketed 129 per cent to 259. Karen Buck, Labour MP for Westminster North, said: 'This suggests the crisis of affordability is rippling out across the outer boroughs. It is hard to see how local authorities can avoid this trend accelerating rapidly [when the overall benefit cap hits].

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/tenancies/londoners-housed-outside-capital-doubles/6529299.article>

Single mothers lose benefits cap legal battle

The Guardian, 5th November 2013

Iain Duncan Smith's new capping regulations were deemed by some to be 'too parsimonious' but were not illegal, senior judges have ruled. Lawyers acting for three families affected by the cap had argued that it unlawfully discriminates against children and women, particularly those affected by domestic violence. But two high court judges dismissed the claim for a judicial review, ruling that although the cap may be seen by some to be "too parsimonious" it was consistent with a

[Westminster criticised over disabled children](#)

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"broad political concept of fairness" outlined by the secretary of state for work and pensions.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/nov/05/benefits-cap-high-court-rejects-challenge>

Funding cuts place charity in jeopardy

Inside Housing, 14th November 2013

Domestic violence victims in Tameside could soon have no option except to leave their home, due to a funding crisis at a charity that installs safe rooms and new locks. Family Support Charity has been given a reprieve by social landlord New Charter Housing Trust which has incorporated it into the group, but the service remains at risk as a result of council cuts and a key grant coming to an end. Tameside Council has not committed to funding the charity beyond 2013/14, which is also the final year of a £96,000 grant spread over three years from charity Tameside Trust. Installing security measures typically costs about £500 per home, according to NCHT. Relocating a victim costs about £2,000 to £3,000.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/funding-cuts-place-charity-in-jeopardy/6529488.article>

Six out of 7 pensioners will die before reaching care cap, says Labour

Inside Housing, 15th November 2013

Pensioners could end up paying £150,000 for their residential care before the government's new cap on care costs kicks in, research suggests. Figures compiled by Labour show older people will pay more than double the amount the government claimed. Jeremy Hunt, the health secretary, announced the cap of £72,000 earlier this year, saying it would ensure older people would not have to sell their homes in order to pay for their care. But Labour's analysis showed six out of seven older people will have died before they reach that cap. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/6-out-of-7-pensioners-will-die-before-reaching-care-cap-says-labour/6529537.article>

Possession orders rise 20 per cent in Northern Ireland

Inside Housing, 15th November 2013

The number of possession orders granted in Northern Ireland has risen by 20 per cent in a year, figures released reveal. The Northern Ireland Court Service showed 677 orders for possession were granted between July and September – a rise of 115 on the same period last year. Northern Irish advice charity the Housing Rights Service said the figures left it 'concerned' about delays setting up a task force to tackle the problem. Nicola McCrudden, HRS policy manager, said: 'Northern Ireland is still feeling the pain of debt and repossession. 'There are too many people living with the threat of homelessness because they can no longer afford their mortgage commitment'.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/legal/possession-orders-rise-20-per-cent-in-northern-ireland/6529534.article>

Four ways to promote diversity and equality at work

The Guardian, 18th November 2013

Housing associations can't represent communities, attract employees or provide great services without embracing diversity. Equality and diversity has never been more important as businesses try to attract and retain talented people to work for them and deliver the best services to their customers. Four areas which housing associations can focus on are: leadership from senior staff members on diversity initiatives, understand and respond to the needs of different customer groups, raise awareness of diversity and equality issues across the workforce, and draw on the expertise of organisations working to promote equality and diversity. <http://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2013/nov/18/diversity-equality-business-tips?CMP>

Westminster criticised over disabled children

Inside Housing, 22nd November 2013

Westminster Council has been criticised for moving homeless children with disabilities and special educational needs to areas on the outskirts of the capital. Opponents say

the council has risked the mental well-being of several vulnerable children, who have been left commuting long distances to school after being placed in temporary accommodation outside their home borough.

Correspondence between Karen Buck, MP for Westminster North, and the council suggests there have been at least 10 cases where vulnerable children have been moved into temporary housing out of the borough. A spokesperson for Westminster Council said: 'Some children will be eligible for financial support for transport to school, with priority given to those that are in need of temporary accommodation.' <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/westminster-criticised-over-disabled-children/6529606.article>

Landlords will be 'required to co-operate' with homelessness duty

Inside Housing, 22nd November 2013

Social landlords will be required to co-operate with local authorities in helping prevent homelessness under new legislation in Wales. The Housing Bill, which was introduced to the Welsh National Assembly this month, will create a new statutory duty for local authorities to prevent homelessness if passed. The bill's focus on prevention is likely to see increased investment in supporting people budgets, Mr Inkson said. It will also allow local authorities to house those at risk of homelessness in the private rented sector, rather than just social homes. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/landlords-will-be-required-to-co-operate-with-homelessness-duty/6529644.article>

Workers fail to report abuse

Inside Housing, 22nd November 2013

Housing workers are failing on a 'massive' scale to report instances of tenant harm or abuse to councils, research suggests. Analysis due to be published next year by safeguarding adults consultant Imogen Parry reveals housing staff were responsible for 3,000 referrals - when a report of alleged abuse or neglect leads to an adult protection investigation or assessment - per year between 2010 and 2012. This is just 0.04 per cent of the 8 million adults living in social housing. Ms Parry concluded there was a 'massive under-reporting' of 'safeguarding' instances. She compared her analysis of experimental NHS statistics for referrals with Department of Health research published in 2007 suggesting 4 per cent of older people are abused every year. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/workers-fail-to-report-abuse/6529610.article>

Payday loans to be capped by government

Inside Housing, 25th November 2013

The cost of payday loans will be capped by the government in new legislation aimed at stopping companies charging huge rates of interest. The level of the cap is yet to be announced and will be set by new industry regulator the Financial Conduct Authority. The cap will be included in the Banking Reform Bill, which is currently progressing through the House of Lords. Speaking on the BBC, chancellor George Osborne said: 'It will not just be an interest rate cap. 'You've got to cap the overall cost of credit.' The government says there is 'growing evidence' in support of the move and has pointed to the 4 per cent monthly interest rate limit set in Australia. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/home/payday-loans-to-be-capped-by-government/6529657.article>

SNP: Independent Scotland 'would remove housing benefit from universal credit'

Inside Housing, 26th November 2013

An independent Scotland would remove housing benefit from universal credit and maintain direct payments to landlords, an SNP white paper has said. Setting out its independence blueprint, the party said it would reverse the most 'damaging' welfare reforms and also committed to stopping the further roll out of disability benefits changes planned by the Department for Work and Pensions. The white paper pledged to maintain housing benefit as a separate payment in any longer-term reform and added that it would restore the ability of claimants to receive individual support, rather than single household payments. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/home/snp-independent-scotland-would-remove-housing-benefit-from-universal-credit/6529677.article>

Government to tighten housing benefit rules for new migrants

Inside Housing, 27th November 2013

David Cameron has announced migrants will not be entitled to housing benefit immediately upon arriving in the UK. The prime minister made the pledge as part of a series of measures to crack down on 'benefit tourism'. Transitional controls limiting Bulgarian and Romanian workers accessing the UK's labour market expire at the end of the year. Mr Cameron, in an article in the Financial Times, said: 'We are changing the rules so that no one can come to this country and expect to get out-of-work benefits immediately.' He said that the previous Labour government's decision not to delay the dropping of restrictions from nine new EU member states in 2004 was a 'monumental mistake'. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/home/government-to-tighten-housing-benefit-rules-for-new-migrants/6529689.article>

PUBLICATIONS

[Strong Foundations: Building better dialogue between tenants and landlords](#)

[Visualisation and analysis of poverty, housing and care data](#)

[Real London Lives](#)

[Debt problems with payday loans more than doubles in one year](#)

[Moor or less: Moorings on London's waterways](#)

Publications

The majority of London's housing association tenants are in work, but still require housing benefit to pay their rent, research has revealed.

Centre for Housing and G15, November 2013

Strong Foundations: Building better dialogue between tenants and landlords

LGiU (Local Government Intelligence Unit), November 2013

New research by LGiU, and supported by Mears Group, calls for councils and housing associations to rethink their relationships with their tenants and engage in meaningful conversations with them. The report welcomes that 60 per cent of councils and housing associations raised their spend on tenant engagement in 2013/14 compared with the previous year - showing that tenant engagement is a growing priority.

<http://www.lgiu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Strong-Foundations.pdf>

Visualisation and analysis of poverty, housing and care data

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, November 2013

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has produced visualisation of recent data relating to poverty, housing and care. The data includes analysis of the reasons for homelessness in different areas of the UK, pensioner poverty rate, wealth by region, and low pay by demographic indicators.

<http://data.jrf.org.uk/>

Real London Lives

Centre for Housing and G15, November 2013

The majority of London's housing association tenants are in work, but still require housing benefit to pay their rent, research has revealed. The Real London Lives project, launched by the G15 group of London's largest housing associations, shows just 21 per cent of tenants are unemployed. However, 60 per cent require housing benefit to pay all or part of their rent the research, by

the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York, has found. The initial interviews have also revealed that while 25 per cent of tenants find keeping up with their bills 'a real struggle', this rises to 43 per cent of those who have had benefits reduced since April.

http://www.reallondonlives.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/RLL_G15_FINAL.pdf

Debt problems with payday loans more than doubles in one year

Citizens' Advice Bureau, November 2013

Nearly two thirds of payday loans were granted without proper checks being made on whether the borrower could afford to repay, research has shown. A 12-month survey by the Citizens Advice Bureau, which tracked more than 4,000 loans from more than 100 lenders, showed 61 per cent were granted without checks on the customers' ability to repay. The CAB research also showed three out of four borrowers found it difficult to repay their loan, and in 84 per cent of cases lenders broke their promise to freeze interest and charges for those who say they are struggling. Seventy per cent put customers under pressure to extend the loan, with 94 per cent not checking whether this extension could be repaid and 62 per cent not explaining the risks. http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/export/index/sitehelp/press_20121126

Moor or less: Moorings on London's waterways

The London Assembly environment committee, November 2013

Ten thousand Londoners have been driven to live on boats by soaring rents in the capital, a report has claimed. Extra moorings are needed on the city's vast network of canals to support the rise in water dwelling residents, the London Assembly environment committee report concludes. While exact figures are difficult to quantify, a snapshot survey in 2011 found 626 boats moored in London, compared to 957 in 2013. There are now 4,000 permanently moored and 1,000 temporarily moored residential boats in the capital. Figures from a 2011 suggest an average of two residents per boat. The report says people are choosing to live on boats as a more affordable option, in the face of rising rents and house prices. <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Moorings%20report%20agreement%20draft%20FINAL.pdf>

DNA: Diversity Network Accreditation

Do you feel that equality and diversity is important? Do you want people to know your organisation has a fantastic track record of knowing your customers?

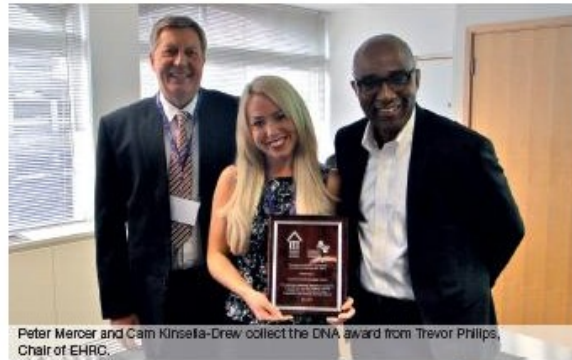
If you want an accreditation that is uncomplicated, un-intrusive yet comprehensive you need the **Diversity Network Accreditation**.

We all want to improve our customer's lives, by delivering excellence through genuine partnerships. HDN have developed a forward thinking and outcome based accreditation model, preparing you for significant change and future success.

The accreditation is assessed by HDN Associates and moderated by a sub group of multi-skilled professionals, consisting of practitioners in housing and employment, members of the HDN Board and staff.

It encompasses the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Guidance, the CIH Equality Charter and also considers the opportunity to address new inequalities, new vulnerable groups and more holistic thinking to complement community needs and strategies.

For more information, to find out about the business case and community impact, please contact our office and we will be happy to help: info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk or 0870 143 2732 www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk



Peter Meroar and Cam Kinsele-Drew collect the DNA award from Trevor Philips, Chair of EHRC.



DIVERSITY
NETWORK
ACCREDITATION

... access to work supporting vulnerable people ... welfare reform ... customer profiling ... worklessness ... engaging with hard to reach customers ...



National Housing Diversity Network Accreditation (DNA)

We all want to improve our customers lives, through genuine partnerships, by delivering excellence. HDN have developed a forward thinking and outcome based accreditation model, preparing you for significant change and future success.

Contact us now to find out more about DNA.

www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk

0870 143 2732 dna@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk





2014 Diversity Calendar

If you would like a copy of our 2014 Diversity Calendar, produced in partnership with Places for People, please email info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk.

Practitioner Group Updates

If you or any of your colleagues are interested in joining any of the groups, please contact carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk. As a practitioner you are welcome to attend any of the meetings and be added to all 5 email groups.

Dates for the next meetings are:

North West Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

The next meeting is still to be confirmed.

Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum

The next meeting will be held on the **23rd January 2014** at Incommunities, Shipley.

North East Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

The next meeting is still to be confirmed.

South & South West Equality & Diversity Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **5th March 2014**, venue to be confirmed.

Midlands Equalities Forum

The next meeting is still to be confirmed.

Upcoming Events

- [**HDN Workshop with Aksa Homes - The Business Case for Diversity: Good Governance**](#)
4th March 2014, Manchester

For further information on the above events please contact carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk.



The Housing Diversity Network's Equality & Diversity Briefings are produced in association with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). For further information on CLES please visit their website at www.cles.org.uk, contact Matthew Jackson on 0161 233 1928 or email Matthewjackson@cles.org.uk