



## Quick Links

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## Message from the Chief Executive

### Important changes at HDN to improve Member Support!

As part of our commitment to improving member support, from April, we are introducing *Regional Membership Co-ordinators*. These are the same HDN staff/Associates who deliver our regional staff mentoring programme and the idea is that from April, they will become the key points of contact for both members and non members in their regions, telling them more about what services are available from HDN including events, training and new products such as mentoring for tenants and board members. You will receive details of the key contact for your organisation with your renewal information, but if you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch.

### Staff Mentoring – Signing-off this year's programme in style!

We now have a date, (2 July) and a venue, (Fazeley Studios, Birmingham) for our Annual Conference which will sign-off this year's classes. We have a range of speakers including our keynote speaker, Carol Matthews, Chief Executive of the Riverside Housing Group. Also speaking will be three current Mentors who will be talking about the benefits their organisations have got from supporting staff to participate on the mentoring programme - in some cases for many years.

If your organisation has not previously participated in the staff mentoring programme (and some of our members have not accessed mentoring) and would like to find out more by attending our free conference or simply want to find out more information about next year's programme then please email us at [mentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:mentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)

### Governance & Diversity Event

On 4 March, we held our first "Business Case for Diversity in Governance: How to Get it Right" event in Manchester. Some 20 delegates attended including Board members, Board chairs, governance managers, compliance managers and E&D Inclusion managers/officers. We had some really good feedback from the event which centred on the governance journey of a North West based housing organisation as told by their Board Chair and Chief Executive combined with some relevant research data and good practice around increasing board diversity.



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We are really keen to run a similar half day in different regions so if you would be interested in attending such an event (£20 per place for HDN Members and £60 for non Members) please email [Carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:Carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk) and, subject to sufficient demand we will hopefully run a similar event late Spring/Summer.

### “Train the Equality and Diversity Trainer”

Following excellent feedback from delegates who last year attended our “Train the E&D Trainer” sessions in the North East and the North West, we intend to run more of these sessions elsewhere, including London and the South West where interest has already been expressed. One strong theme in the feedback from delegates who have attended this training was that with training budgets still very much under pressure, HDN’s “Train the E&D Trainer” sessions really did equip them better to deliver in-house training to colleagues.

If you would like more information on the programme, including costs as well as feedback from delegates who have attended previous training, please email [Carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:Carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk).

### DNA congratulations to Wythenshawe Community Housing Group

We were delighted to present our Diversity Network Accreditation (DNA) Award to Wythenshawe Community Housing. For those not aware of this accreditation, DNA goes beyond assessing how organisations deal with equality and diversity and drills into whether organisations have effective leadership and processes in place to achieve positive outcomes for colleagues, partners and customers.

Chair of the WCHG Board Cllr Eddy Newman said, “I’m delighted that Wythenshawe Community Housing Group has been awarded this recognition as it demonstrates that we are fully committed to Equality and Diversity and that is embedded throughout the organisation.”

Group Chief Executive of Wythenshawe Community Housing Group Nigel Wilson said, “I would like to thank all the hard work of our colleagues in achieving this accreditation and we will continue to work very closely with the Housing Diversity Network to help build on this success and find ways we can continue to improve in the future.”



### HDN & CIH 2014 E&D Conference – The Future for Equality and Diversity

We’ve recently met with CIH colleagues to start planning for our joint E&D Conference. We have a date and venue for your diaries (14 October at the CIH’s London offices). One of our themes will be around getting the main political parties to come and tell us what they would do around issues of inclusion, equality and diversity should they win the 2015 General Election. There is scope for you to influence the conference agenda so if you have any particular issues/themes you would like to throw into our conference planning discussions then feel free to email me direct at [Clifton@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:Clifton@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk) Can’t of course make any promises on this but would be great to hear any themes you would like us to think about including.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clifton".

**Clifton Robinson, Chief Executive HDN**

For further information on any of the above, please email me at [Clifton@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:Clifton@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)

To follow the view of the HDN Chair, please visit the Chair’s Blog on [www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](http://www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)

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### E&D NEWS

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## Equality & Diversity News.

**A United Nations report on the UK has concluded that we are facing a critical situation in terms of availability, affordability and access to adequate housing.**

*The Guardian, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

### **Youth homelessness rises 57% since financial crisis**

*Inside Housing, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014*

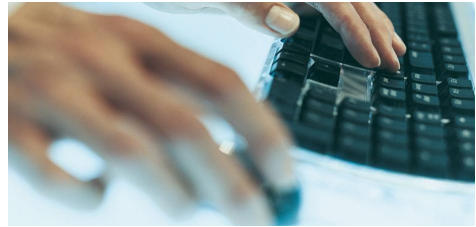
Homelessness among young people has risen 57 per cent since the start of the financial crisis, according to Citizens Advice. Figures published by the charity show the number of people aged 17 to 24 years approaching Citizens Advice because they are homeless rose 57 per cent from 2007/08 to 2012/13. There was also a 39 per cent increase in threatened homelessness, a 49 per cent increase in problems for young people with terms and conditions of employment and a 10 per cent increase in problems with pay in employment. Gillian Guy, chief executive of Citizens Advice, said: 'Not only are nearly 1 million young people out of work, but increasing numbers of them are also unable to put a roof over their head. The shocking state of our housing stock means social housing is severely limited while private renting is simply unaffordable for people on low incomes or out of work.'

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/youth-homelessness-rises-57-since-financial-crisis/7001873.article>

### **NHF calls for overhaul of universal credit payment rules**

*Inside Housing, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014*

The National Housing Federation has called for an overhaul of universal credit switch-back rules in the wake of concerns from landlords. Under the flagship government scheme, several benefits are rolled into a single, monthly payment direct to tenants. If tenants fall two months behind with their



rent, however, landlords can apply to the Department for Work and Pensions for an alternative payment arrangement (APA). However, landlords applying for APAs in four 'pathfinder' areas in the north west of England have become increasingly frustrated at delays in getting the DWP to switch the payment of benefit to landlords. They claim the process sometimes takes weeks, during which time tenants build up further rent arrears.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/regulation/nhf-calls-for-overhaul-of-universal-credit-payment-rules/7001881.article>

### **Flood cover bill excludes social tenants**

*Inside Housing, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014*

Social tenants face exclusion from a national programme of affordable flood insurance, despite calls for an amendment to legislation passing through parliament. The Water Bill, presently in the House of Lords, will introduce 'Flood Re' - a government-backed insurance pooling scheme for high-risk properties - in summer 2015. But property industry leaders called for an amendment, after industry bodies warned social homes will not be eligible for protection under the present drafting of the bill. No relevant amendments were tabled at the second reading of the bill in the House of Lords despite calls to do so.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/repairs/flood-cover-bill-excludes-social-tenants/7001884.article>

### **Scotland pledges to meet full cost of bedroom tax**

*Inside Housing, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014*

Scotland has pledged to meet the full cost of the bedroom tax by finding an extra £15 million for housing benefit support. The additional money would bring the total amount of help available for the cuts to housing benefit up to £50 million, which would cover the whole cost of the bedroom tax, according to analysis by charity Shelter Scotland. The Scottish Government

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has already committed to funding the maximum amount of discretionary housing payment allowed by the Department for Work and Pensions.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/scotland-pledges-to-meet-full-cost-of-bedroom-tax/7001933.article>

### **UN report on the UK housing crisis is a wake-up call for us all**

*The Guardian, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

A United Nations report on the UK has concluded that we are facing a critical situation in terms of availability, affordability and access to adequate housing. The report signals long-term challenges for the UK's housing and welfare systems. It amounts to a damning indictment of the crisis in our housing system. The report rightly commends the UK for "its history of ensuring that low- and middle-income households have access to adequate housing and have been protected from insecure tenure forms and poor housing conditions", adding that our policies and practices have served as inspiration around the world but the right to an adequate standard of living is intended to be "progressive".

[http://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2014/feb/07/un-report-housing-crisis-raquel-rolnik?CMP=new\\_1194](http://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2014/feb/07/un-report-housing-crisis-raquel-rolnik?CMP=new_1194)

### **Welsh spend on home improvements for disabled falls**

*Inside Housing, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

Expenditure on grants to help disabled people improve their homes has fallen by nearly 20 per cent in six years, figures have revealed. Private sector renewal activity statistics, published by Welsh Government, revealed expenditure on disabled facilities grants fell to £32.7 million in 2013. This was a drop from just under £40 million in 2007. Disabled facility grants are provided by councils to install ramps for wheelchairs, provide additional bathing facilities, widen doors and other necessary changes to the homes of disabled people. Peter Black, housing spokesperson for the Welsh Liberal Democrats, said waiting times for these repairs were at up to 18 months in one local authority, and nine in others.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/welsh-spend-on-home-improvements-for-disabled-falls/7002173.article>

### **Big Lottery Fund grants cash for homelessness services**

*Inside Housing, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

Housing associations and charities have been awarded £112 million from the Big Lottery Fund to help people with multiple problems including homelessness and mental health issues. The grants of up to £10 million each to 12 areas around England aim to promote co-ordinated services and end a 'revolving door of care' faced by vulnerable people who are currently passed 'from pillar to post' in and out of hospitals and prisons. The grants of between £5,492,000 and £9,949,958, which last for eight years, were given to organisations including the Single Homelessness Project, Plus Dane, and Framework Housing Association.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/big-lottery-fund-grants-cash-for-homelessness-services/7002172.article>

### **Same Sex Marriage Bill passed in Scottish Parliament**

*Equality and Diversity Forum, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

On 4 February 2014, the Scottish Parliament voted overwhelmingly to pass the Same Sex Marriage Bill. In his announcement of the news, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Alex Neil said 'This is a historic moment for equality in Scotland. I am proud that the Scottish Parliament has taken this progressive and hugely important decision in favour of equal rights in our country'. A consultation in 2011 invited views on the possible introduction of same sex marriage.

<http://www.edf.org.uk/blog/?p=31580>

### **Dementia care: what should housing providers offer?**

*The Guardian, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

One in three people aged over 65 will die with dementia, and it is thought that more than 60% of all care home residents aged over 65 have a form of the condition. Dementia is one of the main causes of



cardiovascular disease and stroke. Regrettably, however, many social housing providers have still not got to grips with the fact that older people underpin their businesses and, for many, make up over half of their residents. Here are some steps that should be taken for better care:

- Train staff in helping people with dementia
- Design dementia-friendly homes
- Explore assistive technology
- Develop a dementia strategy
- Appoint a dementia champion
- Join a local dementia action alliance

<http://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2014/feb/18/dementia-care-social-housing-services-older-people>

### **Freud to break bedroom tax pledge**

*Inside Housing, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

Lord David Freud has backtracked on his pledge to protect vulnerable and disabled people from the bedroom tax, new government guidance has confirmed. Currently, supported housing is classified as 'exempt accommodation' and not included in the bedroom tax, benefit cap or universal credit. But identical accommodation does not count as exempt if the landlord is a council or not the provider of care. New DWP guidance issued in February has dashed housing providers' hopes that more supported housing will be protected from the bedroom tax. A summary of the guidance by a housing organisation involved in the talks with the DWP, states: 'It looks like there will be no additional protection from the spare room subsidy [bedroom tax] beyond the current definition of exempt accommodation.'

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/freud-to-break-bedroom-tax-pledge/7002329.article>

### **DWP: Housing benefit will be sanctioned**

*Inside Housing, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

Part-time workers judged to be doing too little to find full-time work face having their benefit for housing costs sanctioned by the government for the first time under universal credit. Under the present system housing benefit is paid direct to landlords and

sanctions can only be applied to out-of-work benefits, such as jobseeker's allowance or employment support allowance. Landlords, already concerned by the prospect of universal credit being paid directly to tenants, have been lobbying the government to exempt the housing element of the single payment from sanctions in all circumstances. However, the Department for Work and Pensions has confirmed to *Inside Housing* that under the government's flagship welfare reform, where a tenant is working less than 35 hours a week at minimum wage and is not eligible for JSA or ESA, the housing element can be sanctioned instead. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/dwp-housing-benefit-will-be-sanctioned/7002330.article>

### **Liability for race discrimination**

*Makbool Javaid via CIPD, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

Under discrimination law, an employer is liable for discriminatory acts committed by its employees in the course of their employment against co-workers or contract workers. An employer is also liable for anything done by an 'agent' acting with the employer's authority. In law, an agent is someone given permission to act on the employer's behalf in matters involving third parties. Depending on the circumstances, an agent could be a consultant, a recruitment agency, a contractor, and so on, dealing with other people as the employer's representative or acting in the employer's interests. These issues came up in a recent case, *Kemeh v Ministry of Defence*, in which the Court of Appeal had to consider whether an employer could be liable for the discriminatory act of a subcontractor's employee. The Court of Appeal rejected his appeal. <http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2014/02/28/liability-for-race-discrimination.aspx>

### **Illegal worker allowed sexual harassment claim**

*Kate Barker via CIPD, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014*

An employee without a UK work permit will have her discrimination case heard by an employment tribunal. Employees who are

working under illegal employment contracts, for example, working without a necessary work permit or without paying tax, cannot bring unfair dismissal claims if their employment is terminated. However, a recent case shows that the position is not so straightforward in relation to discrimination claims. In *Wijesundera v Heathrow 3PL Logistics*, the EAT has held that a Sri Lankan employee who did not have a work permit and who was, therefore, working illegally in the UK may be able to succeed in her claims of sexual harassment against her employer. <http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2014/02/27/illegal-worker-allowed-sexual-harassment-claim.aspx>

### **Sexual orientation linked to loss of pension entitlement**

*Laurence O'Neill via CIPD, 28th February 2014*

Same sex couple barred from benefitting from partner's long service record. A recent case, *Innospec v Walker* has dealt with whether an employee's same sex partner had the right to receive a survivor's benefit under an employer's occupational pension scheme. The EAT had to decide whether it amounted to unlawful discrimination for the employer to pay a civil partner less than it would pay to the wife of an employee under the scheme. The EAT found that pensions, including survivor's benefits, amounted to deferred pay. Just as women could not claim equal pay for the period prior to the equal pay legislation coming into force, civil partners could not claim equal treatment for the period prior to the Civil Partnership Act 2004 coming into force.

<http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2014/02/25/sexual-orientation-linked-to-loss-of-pension-entitlement.aspx>

### **Tribunal decides caste is covered by race discrimination**

*Paul Mander via CIPD, 28th February 2014*

Statute changes not due until 2015 but law is already moving in this direction. There has been a debate in recent years over the extent to which caste is a protected characteristic

under the Equality Act 2010. A recent employment tribunal case, *Tirkey v Chandok*, has supported the view that caste discrimination should fall within the definition of 'race' as set out in the Act. Under the Act, an individual is protected against certain types of discrimination and on the grounds of specific protected characteristics. While caste is not currently one of the protected characteristics, it has been argued that it falls within the definition of race.

<http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2014/02/03/tribunal-decides-caste-is-covered-by-race-discrimination.aspx>

### **Scottish Housing Bill 'erodes tenants rights' warns charity**

*Inside Housing, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014*

Tenants' rights will be 'significantly eroded' by a package of measures contained in the Scottish Housing Bill, a homelessness charity has warned. Homeless Action Scotland criticised the bill, currently being considered by the Scottish Government, for downgrading legal procedures protecting social tenants threatened with eviction. It also said there was an 'unreasonable increase in the powers landlords have to put applications for housing on hold', and said social landlords should not be allowed to take age into account when allocating housing. Previously, landlords had been prevented from considering the age of tenants due to equality legislation. The aim is to allow landlords to designate areas of blocks of housing to certain groups, such as adults over 50.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/scottish-housing-bill-erodes-tenants-rights-warns-charity/7002389.article>

## Quick Links

### PUBLICATIONS

[A Roof Over My Head: The final report of the Sustain project](#)

[The Role of Housing Associations in Reducing Poverty](#)

[Climate Change and Social Justice: An Evidence Review](#)

[Is Excessive Paperwork in Care Homes Undermining Care for Older People?](#)

## Publications

**Are older people in care homes missing out on quality time with staff because workers are preoccupied with paperwork?**

*Joseph Rowntree Foundation, February 2014*

**A Roof Over My Head: The final report of the Sustain project**

*Crisis and Shelter, February 2014*

Councils are moving homeless families into rat-infested and damp private rented sector housing, according to a new study. Research conducted by charities Crisis and Shelter showed that two thirds of people that were housed in PRS accommodation after making homelessness applications to local authorities were unhappy with their tenancies. Local authorities were given new powers to end their duties to homeless people by offering accommodation in the private sector in November 2012. But the study, which spent 19 months tracking 128 homeless people who had been rehoused in the PRS, revealed that the conditions of some private properties were so poor that some people were developing asthma and chest infections.

<http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/A%20Roof%20Over%20My%20Head%20Sustain%20Final%20Report%202014.pdf>

**The Role of Housing Associations in Reducing Poverty**

*Joseph Rowntree Foundation, February 2014*

How far do landlords' strategic and business plans explicitly account for the needs of people experiencing poverty? This report presents the findings from the first stage of a project that is exploring where poverty fits within the strategies, policies and business plans of local authorities, housing associations and private landlords. The report considers the role of housing providers in reducing poverty, reviews the policies and strategies of housing organisations in relation to the needs of households experiencing poverty, and

presents a framework for future analysis of provider strategies.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/housing-policy-poverty-full.pdf>

**Climate Change and Social Justice: An Evidence Review**

*Joseph Rowntree Foundation, February 2014*

The social justice implications of climate change in the UK are not well understood. This review draws together current research and thinking in this emerging field to support the development of socially just responses to climate change. The study explores the theory and rationale for climate justice, considers the direct and indirect impacts of climate change on UK populations and the policy and practice of adaptation to those impacts, examines aspects of UK policy to mitigate climate change by bringing down carbon emissions, identifying where the costs and benefits of these policies fall, and considers the implications of the social justice perspective for policy and practice.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/climate-change-social-justice-full.pdf>

**Is Excessive Paperwork in Care Homes Undermining Care for Older People?**

*Joseph Rowntree Foundation, February 2014*

Are older people in care homes missing out on quality time with staff because workers are preoccupied with paperwork? Care homes have to regularly complete more than 100 separate items of paperwork, often duplicating the same information, this study found. Researchers visited care homes and spoke to staff who felt they were judged more on their ability to produce paperwork than deliver care. The research recommends that the sector rethinks its priorities and makes changes to the way it deals with administration so older people can be given more compassionate, personalised care.

[http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/administration-care-homes-full\\_0.pdf](http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/administration-care-homes-full_0.pdf)



## HDN Website - Jobs Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with Colchester Borough Homes, L&Q Housing Trust, Orbit Housing Group, Muir Group Housing Association, Bernicia Group and many more <http://www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk/jobs/>

## Practitioner Group Updates

If you or any of your colleagues are interested in joining any of the groups, please contact [carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto: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 **9th April 2014**, at York Housing Association, York

### 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 **3rd June 2014** at Orbit Group, Redhill.

### Midlands Equalities Forum

The next meeting will be held on the **18th March 2014** at Worcester Community Housing, Worcester.

## Upcoming Events

- [HR in Housing Conference and Exhibition 2014 - National Housing Federation](#)  
14th May 2014, Inmarsat Conference Centre, London
- **HDN Annual Mentoring Conference 2014**  
2nd July 2014, Birmingham
- [Care and Support Conference and Exhibition 2014 - National Housing Federation](#)  
3rd July 2014, Renaissance Hotel, Manchester

For further information on the above events please contact [carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk).



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