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Message from the Chief Executive

HDN & CIH Equality & Diversity Conference, 14th October 2014, London

Our annual equality and diversity conference, run in partnership with CIH, will be held on 14th October 2014. This year the conference takes as its theme 'the future for equality and diversity'. We will hear from a panel of influential groups about what they want to see from a political and policy point of view from whoever is in government after the next election. We will hear about the challenges that the sector and profession as a whole face, how individual organisations see their E&D work developing in the future and from a 'Rising Star' about innovative ways to deliver equality and diversity. The afternoon sessions will include workshops with a more practical focus around key topics of interest for the sector such as Governance, safeguarding and social value. If you would like to attend please get in touch and we will send you booking details when they are available.

2014 Mentoring Conference

On 2 July we held one of our most successful mentoring conferences ever. Over 150 delegates attended the Conference which, as in recent years, we held in Birmingham. Amongst the many highlights was a fantastic opening keynote address from Carol Matthews, Group Chief Executive at Riverside Housing and a Mentor on the Programme over a number of years. We also had insightful presentations from Mentors from Golden Gates HA, Network HA and Axiom HA focusing on organisational benefits from sending staff over the years on to the Mentoring Programme. We also heard from dozens of Mentees from across the country on what difference the programme had made to them since last September. The Conference generated the most amount of Twitter activity than any other HDN event so in terms of profile raising we are obviously very pleased with the impact the Conference made and it goes without saying that we are hugely



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grateful to all of these colleagues who attended and contributed on the day!

A collection of the Tweets from the conference are included in the link below:

https://storify.com/HDN_UK/hdn-mentoring-conference-2014

We are now well into the process of finalising applications for our 2014/15 programme and most of our regions are now full. As with last year we are seeing the programme go from strength to strength and with this comes the challenge of sourcing Mentors. If you are interested in being a Mentor on the programme or know someone that might be, please ask them to get in touch.



HDN Membership 2014/15 including new Members

We are delighted that we still have a membership base of over 100 organisations and this year are pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing
- New Charter
- North Lincolnshire Homes
- South Yorkshire Housing Association
- Circle Housing
- SHAL Housing
- Riverside

Early days but we have now started to have conversations with individual members around the services available from HDN, what we can do better and also what new ideas we can look at trying. These conversations with your HDN Membership and Mentoring Associate or via myself will increase as we go through 2014.

Board Mentoring: Sponsorship

More encouraging news to report back since last month's briefing. We are delighted that Circle Housing has agreed to become our first ever National Sponsor for our Board Mentoring Programme. Their sponsorship will help provide us with some of the core set-up funding we need for the Programme.

For similar reasons, we are equally delighted that the following organisations have now also confirmed that they will become Regional Sponsors:



- Thrive Homes
- Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust
- Regenda Housing
- First Ark
- Your Housing

Enhancing Life Chances

Board Mentoring: Promoting Diversity!

One key aspect of the Programme I'd like to highlight is its potential to increase the diversity of board members across the sector. We aim to promote diversity across the sector by encouraging organisations to send not just some of their existing board members on the Programme but also potential Board members as well as members of staff who have an interest in governance and would welcome the opportunity to become future board members in other organisations. For more information about the Programme and to register interest, please do not hesitate to contact us at boardmentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk

TPAS National Awards 2014

Now in my 4th year as a TPAS Awards judge and was delighted to be at the National Awards Finals last week in Kenilworth. It was fantastic to see so many HDN member organisations at the Awards event either as national or regional winners!! So, huge congratulations to:

Stockport Homes
Curo
Regenda
Circle Housing Wherry
Wythenshawe Community Housing Group
Community Gateway HA
New Charter Housing Group
Tower Hamlet Homes
Gentoo

Special mention for Tower Hamlet Homes who made a little history by being the first organisation to win the "Excellence in Equality and Diversity Award" for the third year running! Their E&D Lead is James Caspell, who was also recently judged to be Inside Housing's "Rising Star 2014". James has kindly accepted the invitation to contribute to our August e-briefing so worth looking out for it next month!



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

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Equality & Diversity News

Drop in allocations to BME households

Inside Housing, 20th June 2014

The proportion of new social housing lets going to black and minority ethnic households in England has dropped by nearly a quarter since June 2012. Data analysis on lettings collected by the Communities and Local Government department and a survey of 25 of the largest housing associations both show the same trend. Lets to BME households dropped from 17.3 per cent of total lets in June 2012 to 13.2 per cent in December 2013, while lets to white households rose from 75.2 to 82.3 per cent over the same period.

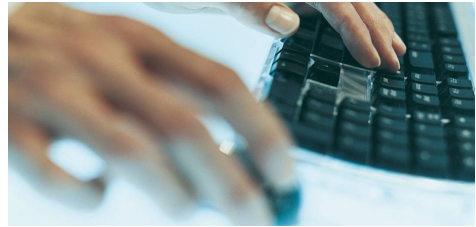
<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/tenancies/drop-in-allocations-to-bme-households/7004246.article>

CIH to set up diversity commission

Inside Housing, 26th June 2014

The Chartered Institute of Housing will set up a commission to examine ways of increasing diversity among housing's leaders. Steve Stride, president of the CIH, used his speech at the institute's annual conference in Manchester to announce a presidential commission to look into the issue. He said: 'While our workforce is diverse, this is not reflected in our leadership which remains too white, too old and too male – just look at me.' Mr. Stride said the commission will look at ways in which 'targets could be used' to solve this problem. He said: 'I intend to bring forward recommendations that have been shaped by the whole industry and informed by those that are most impacted by a lack of diversity at the top of our organisations. I hope our solutions will be embraced by a sector that has a strong history of positive change.'

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/legal/cih-to-set-up-diversity-commission/7004364.article>



Refugee lets at record low

Inside Housing, 13th June 2014

The proportion of social homes let to refugees has fallen to its lowest point on record. Analysis of the lettings data collected by the Communities and Local Government department shows that lettings to refugees have fallen from 947 in 2011 to 779 in 2012 and then 534 in 2013. This represents a drop of 44 per cent in just two years and is the lowest since the CLG department's continuous recording of lettings and social housing started in 2005. The number of lets in the last recorded month of data, December 2013, shows the lowest percentage of housing going to refugees since 2005.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/refugee-lets-at-record-low/7004139.article>

'Time bomb' warning on migrant welfare cut

Inside Housing, 13th June 2014

Loss of 'transitional protection' benefit may put migrants on streets. Sector experts are warning of a homelessness 'time bomb' as increasing numbers of European migrants lose their 'transitional protection' for housing benefit over the coming months. Thousands of people are at risk of losing their housing benefit as a result of government rule changes led by work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith which will remove housing benefit for all new EU claimants from April this year. However, many existing EU claimants are under 'transitional protection' and will continue to receive housing benefit until the next break in their claim - for example, if the person is sanctioned, moves to another area or finds work. After a break, a claimant will lose their housing benefit if they are unemployed and will only be able to claim for another six months if they have previously worked.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/finance/time-bomb-warning-on-migrant-welfare-cut/7004141.article>

One in three 'middle-agers' unable to afford current homes after retiring

Inside Housing, 2nd June 2014

One in three 40 to 50-year-olds believe they will not be able to pay their rent or mortgage once they retire, according to research by a housing association.

According to the survey, carried out for Raglan Housing, the 'middle-agers' believe their pensions, savings and investments will not be enough to keep them in their current homes. More than a quarter think they will need to move to cheaper accommodation, while 47 per cent don't know what they will do. The survey, carried out across the UK, showed 44 per cent believe there is a lack of suitable affordable retirement housing. One in four people in Britain is now aged over 55 and this figure is predicted to rise to one in three by 2030.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/one-in-three-middle-agers-unable-to-afford-current-homes-after-retiring/7003982.article>

Housing (Scotland) Bill stage 3 debate

Inside Housing, 26th June 2014

It was revealed last month that the Scottish Government has dropped a section of the Bill that would have allowed social landlords to discriminate between tenants on the basis of age. However, Andy Young, policy manager at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, said additional flexibility within allocations is needed 'to minimise the risk of failed tenancies and ensure as far as possible that communities are sustainable'. 'The Housing (Scotland) Bill was an opportunity to address this issue and it isn't too late to do so during Wednesday's debate,' he said. 'This could be done either through reinstating the original clause in the Bill to take age into account, or by allowing landlords to make an assessment of the likely impact of an individual allocation on the sustainability of the surrounding neighbourhood and community. This would be done by comparing the age group, support needs and lifestyle of an applicant versus the existing dynamic within a community or building when deciding who should receive an offer for a particular property.'<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/regulation/housing-scotland-bill-stage-3-debate-today/7004325.article>

Government 'in denial' about welfare reform and food bank link

Inside Housing, 2nd June 2014

The UK government is 'in denial' about the link between welfare reform and food bank use, according to a Scottish Parliament committee. In a report, members of the Scottish Parliament claimed evidence indicated the

use of food banks had increased 400 per cent in a year. It said welfare changes were a 'significant cause' of the rise in demand. The Scottish Parliament's welfare reform committee took evidence from food bank providers including the Trussell Trust and aid charities including Oxfam Scotland and the British Red Cross. Michael McMahon, Labour MSP and the convener of the committee, said: 'The UK government can no longer ignore the evidence that their welfare reforms are having a real impact on people's ability to feed themselves.'<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/regulation/government-in-denial-about-welfare-reform-and-food-bank-link/7003980.article>

Councils and charities to boycott workfare programme

Inside Housing, 3rd June 2014

Around 350 charity organisations have signed up to boycott the community work placement part of the government's workfare programme, including 13 councils and a selection of homelessness charities. The Keep Volunteering Voluntary campaign has said that 345 organisations have agreed to boycott the programme, including Your Homes Newcastle Youth Voice, Shelter, Shelter Cymru and Swansea Young Single Homeless Project. Union Unite has also signed up and, through its Unite Against Workfare campaign, has already secured agreements from several councils that they will not take workfare placements. These councils have said they will also encourage contractors to do the same.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/regulation/councils-and-charities-to-boycott-workfare-programme/7003986.article>

Tories 'should amend bedroom tax' says founder of Conservative blog

Inside Housing, 25th June 2014

The Conservative party should not impose the bedroom tax on tenants unless they turn down a suitable alternative offer of accommodation, the founder of Britain's leading Conservative blog has said. Speaking at the Chartered Institute of Housing's annual conference in Manchester, Tim Montgomerie, founder of Conservative Home, said the policy was designed to fulfil a legitimate aim but should be amended. 'The [removal of] the spare room subsidy wasn't a mistake in the sense of addressing a real problem,' he told delegates. 'But when you have a policy that is both unpopular and doesn't seem to be bringing in good savings you do have to question it. 'I think you do need to change the policy. Local authorities or social housing providers should be able to make a reasonable alternative offer to someone that other accommodation is available, and only if that is rejected, they should lose the spare room subsidy.'

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/regulation/tories-should-amend-bedroom-tax-says-founder-of-conservative-blog/7004323.article>

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[Commission predicts 3.5m children in 'absolute' poverty in 2020](#)

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['Cumulative impact' of welfare reform will increase homelessness](#)

Publications

Commission predicts 3.5m children in 'absolute' poverty in 2020

Inside Housing, June 2014

A government-appointed commission has thrown doubt over Britain's strategy to tackle child poverty. In a damning report, the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission said 3.5 million children were still expected to be in absolute poverty in 2020. In 2010, the Labour government passed the Child Poverty Act, which includes a commitment to slash the number of children living in absolute and relative child poverty by 2020. Alan Milburn, a former health secretary who chaired the commission, called the absolute child poverty target 'simply unattainable' and labelled the government's draft child poverty strategy for the next three years a 'missed opportunity'.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/commission-predicts-35m-children-in-absolute-poverty-in-2020/7004075.article>

54% increase of food bank meals given out in a year

Oxfam, Church Action on Poverty and the Trussell Trust, June 2014

The number of meals given to people in food poverty in 2013/14 has risen by 54 per cent from the previous year, according to research. Below the breadline calculates that 20.247 million meals were given to people in food poverty in 2013/14 by the three main food aid providers, Trussell Trust, Fareshare and Food Cycle. This was a 54 per cent increase on the 13.151 million given out in 2012/13. Following up the 2013 research report *Walking the Breadline*, it found that benefit sanctions, zero hour contracts and low paid jobs and energy costs are driving people to use food banks. The report's authors said food prices have soared 43.5 per cent in the past eight years, while, over the same period, the disposable income of the poorest 20 per cent fell on average by £936. http://www.trusselltrust.org/resources/documents/foodbank/6323_Below_the_Breadline_web.pdf

Study finds 'fundamental flaw' with bedroom tax

University of Cambridge, June 2014

More than half of English homes fall short of modern space standards calling into question the bedroom tax, a study from the University of Cambridge has found. According to the study, which analysed 16,000 homes in comparison to the London Housing Design guide internal space standard, English homes are the smallest by floor area in Europe and the report's authors argue that in most of the country you have to under-occupy to have an acceptable amount of living space. 'Spare bedrooms are a misconception in many homes, as the lack of space means that any extra bedrooms are needed for other uses,' said Malcolm Morgan, a PhD student in the University's Department of Engineering, who led the research. The findings were that 55 per cent of dwellings fall short of the standards based on floor space alone, and 21 per cent fall short when the number of current occupants is taken into account. Flats and small terraced houses were most commonly below the standard. Dwellings were also frequently found to be under-occupied in comparison with the number of bedrooms, which was most likely due to lack of space.

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09613218.2014.922271#.U7PXQ_IdVf0

Families on the brink of welfare reform in London

Children Poverty Action Group, June 2014

The government should improve housing benefit allowances in London to match rent levels in the capital, according to a new report. Children Poverty Action Group's report *Families on the brink of welfare reform in London* said that welfare reform had hit London harder than any other part of the country with almost half of all benefit cap-hit households in the city. It said councils and families fear the situation is set to get worse due to a shortage of properties unaffordable to rent on housing benefit and this pool is likely to only get smaller as rents in the capital rise. http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/Families%20on%20the%20brink_welfare%20reform%20in%20London.pdf

18m people cannot afford 'adequate' housing conditions

University of Bristol, June 2014

The percentage of households falling below society's minimum living standard has more than doubled over the last three decades, research suggests. A report led by the University of Bristol, and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, reveals that 18 million people cannot afford adequate housing conditions and 12 million people are too poor to engage in common social activities. The report shows a sharp increase in the percentage of households who fall below society's minimum standard of living, from 14 per cent to 33 per cent over the last 30 years. Researchers said full-time work is not always enough to escape from poverty and called on the government to take action.

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/news/2014/june/poverty-study.html>

'Cumulative impact' of welfare reform will increase homelessness

Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, June 2014

Welfare reform will increase homelessness in Scotland, the body representing Scottish housing associations has warned. The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations has published a report warning that the cumulative impact of the bedroom tax, benefit sanctions and problems accessing finance is likely to boost homelessness levels in the country. A survey of 42 housing associations showed 26 per cent of respondents believe the increased number of downsizing requests triggered by the bedroom tax have impacted upon their ability to re-house homeless households. Around 20 per cent said homeless households had refused an offer of accommodation because of the bedroom tax. It showed that 72 per cent of housing associations reported having to assist homeless applicants with sourcing essential items, such as carpets, a cooker, a fridge or a bed, with many households refusing a home because of a lack of basic necessities.

<http://www.sfha.co.uk/sfha/news/sfha-homelessness-in-scotland-set-to-increase-as-result-of-welfare-reform>



Equality & Diversity Conference

14 October 2014, CIH London Office

This year the conference takes as its theme 'the future for equality and diversity'.

This conference will explore what the direction is for equality and diversity in the future.

We will hear from a panel of influential groups about what they want to see from a political and policy point of view from whoever is in government after the next election.

We will hear about the challenges that the sector and profession as a whole face, how individual organisations see their E&D work developing in the future and from a 'Rising Star' about innovative ways to deliver equality and diversity.

The afternoon sessions will include workshops with a more practical focus around key topics of interest for the sector such as Governance, safeguarding and social value.

For further information please contact us on

01484 652 606 or email

info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk



HDN Website - Jobs & Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with L&Q Housing Trust, Orbit Housing Group, Muir Group Housing Association 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. 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 will be held on the **7th October 2014**, venue to be confirmed.

Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum

The next meeting will be held on the **8th October 2014**, at Sheffield City Council, Sheffield

North East Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

The next meeting will be held on the **24th September 2014**, at East Durham Homes, Peterlee

South & South West Equality & Diversity Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **17th September 2014** at Aster Communities, Hampshire.

Midlands Equalities Forum

The next meeting will be held on the **30th September 2014**, venue to be confirmed.

Upcoming Events

- **London & Home Counties Board Mentoring Launch Event**
3 September 2014, London
- **Train the E&D Trainer**
22 & 23 September 2014, Ocean Housing, Cornwall
- **Equality & Diversity Conference 2014**
14 October 2014, London

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 (CLÉS). For further information on CLÉS please visit their website at www.cles.org.uk, contact Matthew Jackson on 0161 233 1928 or email Matthewjackson@cles.org.uk