



Message from the Chief Executive

Review of 2014

Looking back it's been a great year for HDN with continuing improvement in the services we know members value as well as the introduction of new and exciting initiatives. Some of the highlights for me include:

- **Increased and more pro-active contact with our members** to make sure that they are kept aware of all services and programmes they are able to access.
- **Presentations to our Diversity Network Accreditation (DNA) Award winners** over the year including Broadacres HA, Wythenshawe Community Housing Group, Coast & Country and Pendleton Together (part of Together Housing Group).
- **We worked with our partners CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies) to produce a report on Community Cohesion and Resilience** – acknowledging the role and contribution of housing providers. Hugely grateful in particular to our colleagues from the South and South West Region Equality Forum who acted as a focus group as well as to all those organisations who sent in examples of good practice. Look out in the New Year as Inside Housing are still keen to publish!
- In March our **joint event in Manchester with Aksa Homes (part of New Charter HA) on The Business Case for Governance in Diversity** was really well received.



Launch of our Board Mentoring programme in September at the NHF Annual Conference in Birmingham. This followed endorsement from David Orr, National Housing Federation,



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PRACTITIONER GROUPS

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[Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum](#)

[North East Equality & Diversity Network](#)

[South & South West Equality & Diversity Forum](#)

[Midlands Equalities Forum](#)



and was made possible with the support of our sponsors Circle Housing Group, Thrive Homes, Regenda Housing Group, First Ark, Yorkshire Housing, Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, Leeds and Yorkshire Housing, Your Housing and Together Housing.

- **HDN's Staff Mentoring programme going from strength to strength** with nearly 200 mentees on the programme for 2014/15.
- In September, we **responded formally to the CIH Presidential Commission on Leadership & Diversity** by not only submitting our own formal response but also by including as part of it feedback from the 6 regional E&D Practitioner Networks we currently work with. I met Steve Stride, the current President of the CIH in London earlier this month and can confirm that he was seriously impressed with both the quality and the comprehensive nature of our "combined response" so a huge thanks to all those organisations and colleagues who contributed.
- Just a couple of months ago last October, we **held our most successful ever annual joint HDN/CIH E&D Conference** in London with Grainia Long, CEO at the CIH till early next year as one of several key speakers.
- Also in October, we **linked up with "HouseProud"** which aims to bring together housing associations across London and the South East to share best practice for supporting LGBT residents and staff. We are supporting moves to ensure that HouseProud can move up north to share its experiences with colleagues from organisations beyond London and the South East!

Diversity Network Accreditation

If you want an independent external assessment of how you are doing as an organisation with regard to equality and diversity then our Diversity Network Accreditation is an effective way of doing so. It can inform organisational actions plans, identify strengths and areas for development and help to prioritise actions. The assessment can be done in a timescale to suit your organisation and can be completed in just a couple of months.



Eleven housing organisations have achieved accreditation so far with several more currently part way through or about to go through the assessment. If you'd like to know more then do get in touch and we'd be happy to discuss.

South West Councils...an announcement

Following recent meetings between HDN and South West Councils aimed at building our profile in the South West, SW Councils recently issued the following announcement:



South West Councils is delighted to welcome Housing Diversity Network as their newest Associate Member organisation. SW Councils has core membership of the 41 Local Authorities in the South West. We exist to support public sector and not for profit organisations and in particular we provide specialist HR and training support as well as supporting the sharing of best practice and information across organisations. As members of SW Councils, HDN will be able to access our specialist support at a discount and receive HR advice and we are currently in discussion with HDN about how we might work together to bring all HDN members access to some of the services and benefits we offer as well as give our local authorities and other member organisations access to the valuable work of HDN. We will be putting articles in our member newsletter from time to time to raise awareness about HDN and the issues of concern to its members.

As a taster of what SW Councils membership brings we are offering all HDN member organisations the same discounts as we would our members for two of our forthcoming events:



Courage in Leadership Feb 27, 2015 11:00 to 12:30 Taunton

Mark Rogers - Chief Executive, Birmingham City Council

A motivational and inspirational session highlighting the qualities and characteristics of courageous leadership as well as the environment in which courageous leadership will flourish. The speaker will describe the challenges and outcomes of when he had to demonstrate courage within his own organisations.

Discounted member rate £45 (full price £55)

SW Mediation and Conflict Management Conference March 11 2015, Taunton

Contributors including: David Liddle TMP and President of the Professional Mediators' Association; Abid Dar, Surrey County Council on approaches to internal mediation; Unison and LGA star speaker

Discounted member rate £40 (full price £99)

Diversity and Decision Making in the Housing Sector

Housing Diversity Network recently supported DAC Beachcroft and enei with events in London and Manchester and also with a survey they conducted in the housing sector. The results of this survey are contained in the report available from the link below. This contains a range of interesting insights from the 29 organisations that responded including that 45% did not believe that decision makers are fully trained to make objective assessments free from bias and 43% did not believe that their Board considered diversity and inclusion in succession planning for executive and non-executive roles and other senior or key appointments. A range of recommendations are included for how organisations can address these issues. Please contact us if you would like to know more.

[The report is available here](#)

AND FINALLY...on behalf of Board and Staff colleagues at HDN can I wish you all restful Christmas as well as thanking you for your support during 2014 which I hope will continue through 2015 and beyond!

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 [click here](#) to visit the Chair's Blog.



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E & D NEWS

Government to intervene on homelessness ruling

Jump in housing sector living wage employers

Prejudice is being privatised by equality legislation

Private tenants living in poor accommodation 'on rise'

Migrants forced to wait four years for a social home

Church leaders: Bedroom tax has 'cultural disregard' for poor

UK Gender Diversity: Women on FTSE 100 Boards Hits 22.8% as Lord Davies' 2015 Target Nears

Be open about pay gap, Labour tells business

Blog: Out of town, out of mind

Equality & Diversity News

[Government to intervene on homelessness ruling](#)

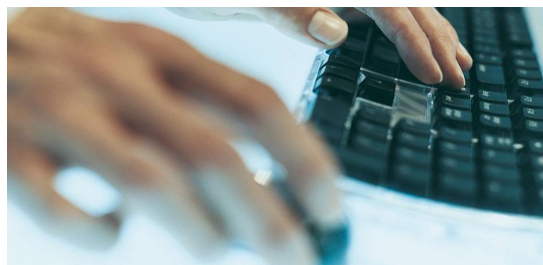
Inside Housing, 27th November 2014

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has applied to intervene in a case that has gone to the Supreme Court. An argument put forward by homelessness charities, that there are 'serious problems' with the assessment process deciding whether homeless people are prioritised for housing assistance. Evidence suggests that there are significant regional variations in how the test is applied by authorities. DCLG are likely to oppose this argument. If a homeless individual is assessed as 'vulnerable' or 'less able to fend for himself than an ordinary homeless person' they currently receive priority need for housing help under the 'Pereira test'. 2006 Government guidance is based on this assessment. According to evidence submitted by Shelter and Crisis figures collected by DCLG figures show 15.2% of all homelessness applicants helped by London boroughs were considered vulnerable in 2013/14. By contrast, 29.6% of all homelessness applicants helped in the rest of England were considered vulnerable. The Supreme Court, which sets precedence for courts in the UK, will consider rulings on 15 December.

[Jump in housing sector living wage employers](#)

Inside Housing, 6th November 2014

There has been a 50% rise in the number of social landlords and representative bodies that are accredited living wage employers. In April this year, 33 housing associations were living wage accredited. The current National Living Wage is £7.85 an hour and £9.15 an hour in London. The level was raised on Monday and accreditation is done by the Living Wage Foundation, which checks to see if organisations meet the necessary requirements. None of the G15 members are currently living wage accredited. The National Housing Federation is accredited, but the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is not.



[Prejudice is being privatised by equality legislation](#)

17th November 2014, University of Sheffield

A study by researchers at the University of Sheffield have found that minority groups legislation is viewed with widespread hostility and seen to privilege minority groups. The case study research found that the research respondents changed their public behaviour in order to comply with laws, rather than to reflect a genuine change in personal values. The research found that many people felt they were only able to voice their 'true' opinion in their own homes. Author of the report, Professor Gill Valentine, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Social Sciences said: "Equality legislation produces an expectation that the UK has a progressive and cosmopolitan public culture yet rather than prejudiced views disappearing, as a consequence of the obligation to comply, it is just changing its form. Blatant public expressions of intolerance are becoming less commonplace but privatised and discrete forms of prejudice persist. A privatisation of prejudice is taking place." This finding could explain the rise of parties anti-immigration parties such as UKIP.

[Private tenants living in poor accommodation 'on rise'](#)

Inside Housing, 26th November 2014

Citizens Advice has reported a 14% rise in people reporting repairs and maintenance problems between July and September this year compared to the same period last year. The charity highlighted one case where the family were evicted after they contacted environmental health because a landlord refused to treat damp. The landlord did pay for some anti-mould paint but evicted them not long after. A private members bill, the Tenancies (Reform Bill), tabled by Lib Dem MP Sarah Teather, was due to have its second reading in the House of Commons on Friday 28th November 2014. It aims at stopping 'revenge evictions' from landlords when tenants complain about the condition of their homes.

Migrants forced to wait four years for a social home

28th November 2014, Inside Housing

In a speech later today David Cameron is expected to say that further restrictions should be placed on new EU immigrants claiming welfare or accessing social housing. Migrants will be made to wait four years to get a social home. There will also be restrictions on the right to bring family members from abroad. The Conservatives would seek to enforce the legislation if they were elected at next year's General Election.

Church leaders: Bedroom tax has 'cultural disregard' for poor

18th November 2014, Inside Housing

As the Church of England's General Synod meets in Westminster for the second day today, a motion will call for senior clergy to support calls to investigate the effects of Bedroom Tax. A background paper produced by members says 'The bedroom tax voices a disregard for the intimate unfolding of the lives of the most vulnerable in a way that would never be done to the more wealthy and for this reason is unjust.' A report by the Church of England's mission and public affairs council last year criticised the policy for forcing 'people to move away from areas where they have roots and informal structures of support'.

UK Gender Diversity: Women on FTSE 100 Boards Hits 22.8% as Lord Davies' 2015 Target Nears

5th November 2014, International Business Times

FTSE 100 boards of directors are on course to meet the government's 25% target female representation, according to the Cranfield School of Management. The organisation's report revealed that the number of women on FTSE 100 boards has now reached 22.8% and 17.4% for FTSE 250 boards. Just 24 more women are needed in the FTSE 100 and 150 across the FTSE 250 in order to reach the target of 25%. The findings come after the Shadow Business Secretary Chuka Umunna said a Labour government would hold a review into ethnic diversity in British business leadership. "We cannot carry on with the situation where half of all FTSE 100 companies do not have a single non-white director and just one in 15 management positions is filled by people of colour," said Umunna.

Be open about pay gap, Labour tells business

2nd November 2014, The Independent

Labour has demanded a motion that Companies should be required by the Government to publish full details of the difference in pay between men and women before the end of this year. Three years ago, the coalition introduced a voluntary scheme for pay transparency called Think, Act, Report, but while dozens of firms have signed up to it, only four companies – Tesco, Astra Zeneca, Genesis Housing and Friends Life – have actually revealed their pay details. Under the previous Labour government, the pay gap closed by almost a third but has since widened. According to the Office for National Statistics' Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2013, the overall pay gap for full-time and part-time work rose from 19.6 to 19.7 and from 9.5 to 10.0 for full-time workers only. For overall median hourly pay, women earn on average £2.53 less per hour than men.

Blog: Out of town, out of mind

12th November 2014, Inside Housing

Lawyer Jayesh Kunwardia writes of a ruling last month at the Court of Appeal, in which Westminster council was permitted to house applicants outside their area without carrying out a detailed assessment of all the available properties nearby. This renders the statutory guidance on homelessness ineffective, and serves to escalate the number of out-of-area placements. Kunwardia's firm represented Titina Nzolameso, a homeless single mother of five. As a result of the benefit cap and a rent rise, she was evicted from her Westminster flat. She refused a home from the Council offered 50 miles away, but she refused on the grounds that her children's education would be severely disrupted. She also argued that she would lose the safety net of friends who could look after her children if she was too ill, on account of her chronic health conditions. She and her five children were made homeless after refusing the property. Kunwardia writes that Boroughs with high rents will now have free reign to 'socially cleanse' their areas of poorer residents. There are alarming trends in this direction already, with 21% of households in temporary accommodation currently living outside their local authority area, an increase of 36% on last year.

Wheelchair accessible housing: waiting for appropriate housing in England

Were we really all in it together? The distributional effects of the UK Coalition government's tax-benefit policy changes

Practical implications of immigration checks on new lettings

The Global Gender Gap Report 2014

The time to act is now: Fawcett's Gender Pay Gap Briefing

Deadline to the Breadline

Publications

[Wheelchair accessible housing: waiting for appropriate housing in England](#)

November 2014, Aspire

A national charity has warned that around 24,000 wheelchair users are waiting for social housing because there is a shortfall in accessible housing. Just over 5,000 wheelchair accessible homes were built in 2013 - lower than any year since 2005. The report estimates it would take six years to meet the demand of wheelchair accessible houses. The report calls for 10% of all new build properties to be wheelchair accessible, accessible homes to be made available to wheelchair users on waiting lists first and greater control over allocations for local authorities.

[Were we really all in it together? The distributional effects of the UK Coalition government's tax-benefit policy changes](#)

Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, November 2014

This analysis looks at how the changes to benefits, tax credits, pensions affect different sections of the U.K. population to different degrees. Compared to May 2010, some groups have been affected substantially more than others, including lone parent families, large families, children, and middle-aged people (at the age when many are parents). Others have benefitted, including two-earner couples, and those in their 50s and early 60s. This is a results of, for example, changes to benefits and tax credits making them less generous for the bottom and middle of the distribution; changes to Council Tax (and support) from which those in the bottom half lost but the top half gained; changes to income tax (higher personal allowances) which meant the largest gains for those in the middle, but with some income tax increases for the top 5 per cent. half.

[Practical implications of immigration checks on new lettings](#)

Chartered Institute for Housing, November 2014

The Immigration Act 2014 requires immigration checks in new lettings from 1st December 2014, initially West Midlands only but later to be rolled out nationally. Most local authority and many housing association

lettings will be exempt, but lodgers are covered by the scheme regardless of tenure. Social landlords need to be aware of the requirements both where it applies to their own lettings and to any lodgers which their tenants may have, and because of the expected impact on the private rented sector and on migrant communities.

This guidance explains what the Act will mean in practice, and includes answers to common questions and the best way to ensure that landlords are responding to the Act in an appropriate manner.

[The Global Gender Gap Report 2014](#)

The World Economic Forum, November 2014

This annual report, which started in 2006, quantifies gender-based disparities over time. Although the report recognises that the complexity of the matter means that it is difficult to measure the gap in single measures, the gap is evaluated according to four key themes: Economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, political empowerment. The report also ranks countries according to their performance in these four measures.

[The time to act is now: Fawcett's Gender Pay Gap Briefing](#)

The Fawcett Society, November 2014

The mean salary for women was 15.7% lower than for men in 2013 at 15.7%. This is the equivalent of women stopping earning on 4th November 2014: Equal Pay Day. In 2013 the gender pay gap widened for the first time in 5 years, rising by 0.9%. A woman working full-time now earns, on average, £5,000 less a year than a man. This report identifies seven key areas for tackling the pay gap. One such finding is that lifting the national minimum wage (currently £6.60 per hour) to the Living Wage (£7.65 nationally, £8.80 in London) would immediately reduce the gender pay gap by 0.8 per cent and lift the pay of nearly 1 million more women than men.

[Deadline to the Breadline](#)

November 2014, Legal and General

The report finds that the average UK households are 26 days from having no money in the event of losing their job unexpectedly. In Wales and the North East, the 'deadline to the breadline' was significantly shorter, at 11 days for both regions. One third of people reported having no savings whatsoever. Four fifths of households either agreed or strongly agreed that living costs represent a key concern over the coming year.



HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with Thirteen Group, Arawak Walton Housing, Orbit Group, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, CLES 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

Date and venue to be confirmed.

Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum

The next meeting will be held on the **27th January 2015**, at Places For People, Leeds.

North East Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

Date and venue to be confirmed.

South & South West Equality & Diversity Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **25th March 2015**, venue to be confirmed.

Midlands Equalities Forum

Date and venue to be confirmed.

Upcoming Events

- [Train The Trainer](#)—28th January 2015
- [Board Members' Conference](#) - 13 - 14 February 2015

For further information on the above events please visit the HDN website or 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