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### PRACTITIONER GROUPS

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[North East Equality & Diversity Network](#)

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

[Midlands Equalities Forum](#)

[London Diversity Group](#)

## Message from the Chief Executive

### Welcome to new Members – AmicusHorizon and Black Country Housing Group

#### Year-end activity surge!!

Apologies for not getting this month's e-briefing out earlier- partly due to us focusing on renewal membership activity and partly because of the number of different initiatives taking place this month!

#### CIH Presidential Commission on Diversity in Leadership

On 13 March, I took part in a Breakfast Roundtable meeting in London which provided an opportunity for HDN and a number of senior staff from various housing providers to meet with CIH President, Steve Stride and one of his Diversity Commissioners, to discuss some of the early key findings and recommendations in the Commission's forthcoming report.

Very pleasing that a number of HDN members – Network Group, Circle, Poplar HARCA – were present at the meeting and all working with us to try to positively influence the shape and impact of the Commission's forthcoming report. Our thanks again to E&D Practitioner Group colleagues and individual member organisations who helped us submit a really comprehensive piece of evidence to the Commission last year.

#### HouseProud – North West Launch

On 17 March, I attended the North West Launch of HouseProud hosted by The Lesbian &



Gay Foundation at their Manchester office. Colleagues may remember that we featured HouseProud in one of our e-briefings last year following a meeting I had with Stonewall Housing and the Chair of HouseProud. Essentially HouseProud was set up by a group of large London based housing providers keen to support LGBT staff working in housing along with promoting best practice on LGBT issues.

Well done especially to Tara Kelly from Northwards Housing supported by Peter Donegan from Equity Housing for taking the initiative and promoting HouseProud in the North West.

I confirmed at the Launch that HDN would be pleased to support organisations and/or regional E&D Practitioner Groups wanting to explore establishing HouseProud in their regions. If this is something you would like to discuss with us then do please email either [andrew@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:andrew@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk) or myself at [clifton@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:clifton@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)



### Diversity Network Accreditation (DNA)

It's very pleasing to be able to report that we are currently supporting a number of organisations through our DNA accreditation. We will name the organisations successfully completing the accreditation in our April e-briefing but I wanted to take this opportunity to share the following comment made by one of our DNA Assessors in relation to one of the organisations currently going through the process as it typifies the approach on equality, diversity and inclusion that many (though by no means all!) across the sector are increasingly adopting:

*“Many activities and strategies being delivered are not reflected in their Equality Plan – they are simply the way that xx is going about its business. The evidence demonstrated how equality is being “hard wired” into the DNA of an organisation.”*

**“Wake Up To Values” project** – “Values are like roots. If you know your roots, you will know your values. People get lost if they lose their roots”

Earlier in March, I attended the final session of the Wake Up To Values project event hosted by Circle Housing. Alongside, the energy, the humour and the real commitment of participants, I thought the sheer range in seniority of the participants – from CEO to officers – and the way they all bonded was both impressive and unexpected!! Well done to the organisations taking part: Gentoo, Cestria, Curo, SHAL and Welwyn Hatfield.

By popular demand, a follow-up event is taking place on 6/7 July to be hosted by Cestria Homes and we will be liaising with our colleagues from the North East E&D Practitioners Group to look at staging a wider event that those interested in finding out more about the Wake Up To Values project could attend. The project will also hopefully be showcased at the NHF conference in September.

To find out more/refresh your memory about this innovative project, please click [here](#)

### National Advisory Group on Board Mentoring

We met with this Group as recently as 19th March. Great to report back to this Group (which along with the HDN Board is charged with holding the strategic vision for the national board mentoring programme) that we now have established the 2015 Programme in 3 regional hubs – Leeds/Yorkshire, the North West and London/Home Counties. Our vision is to maintain the Programme across 2016 and beyond and for that we need your help - whether through, sponsorship, providing mentors, providing mentees, providing venues or expert facilitators/presenters. Speaking of “facilitators/presenters”, a real bonus has been the involvement of the HCA in committing to providing their support where requested to the first programme sessions across all three regional hubs. This programme really does provide the opportunity for the sector to “shape and control its governance destiny” which was the theme of the plenary session that Elspeth Mackenzie (CEO, Thrive Homes) and I presented on when closing last month's NHF Board Members Conference in London.

If you think your organisation can support us in making this national board mentoring programme really sustainable beyond 2015 do please ring me for a chat on 07985 486633 or better still drop me a line at [boardmentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:boardmentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)

## **EHRC- New Business Plan Projects for 2015/16**

Just when its former Chair, Trevor Phillips, has been in the newspapers and TV with his excellent “Ten Things About Race That Are True But We Can’t Say”, the EHRC is pushing forward with some major new projects for 2015/16:

The first project is to address pay gaps in relation to gender, race and disability. The EHRC will be drawing on existing research to set out its analysis of the factors contributing to pay gaps, sectors where unequal pay is a particular problem (wait to see if the housing sector will be amongst those sectors identified for investigation) and will look at the effectiveness of existing interventions. The EHRC hopes that this project will provide it with a basis for developing a strategic approach to tackling pay gaps in the future. It also hopes as a result of this project to improve the guidance it provides for employers on equal pay.

The second project will examine the state of access to civil justice, exploring how recent changes to legal aid, tribunal fees and the funding of the advice sector have affected the right to a fair trial and access to civil justice for people sharing particular protected characteristics. This project will also assess the availability of sufficient good quality advice and redress on equality and human rights issues.

The final key project will assess the relationship between attitudes, values and behaviours. This project will initially look at current insights on prejudiced attitudes towards groups sharing particular protected characteristics before then going on to examine how attitudes and values influence behaviours, and how far regulating behaviour can engender changes in attitudes. The EHRC hopes ultimately that this project will help inform its future approach to developing interventions that will be effective in preventing and responding to unlawful discrimination, harassment and identity-based violence.

We think these projects are hugely relevant to the sector and we hope we can arrange that the EHRC to bring these projects directly to the attention of the sector in much the same way as they have worked with us in previous years when highlighting other major projects e.g. their Formal Enquiry into Disability Related Harassment.

### **A chance to work for HDN!**

We are currently advertising for a Mentoring Coordinator to support our staff and board mentoring programmes. More details can be found [here](#) and please circulate to anyone who may be interested.

### **Governance & Diversity Briefing**

This month we have included a link to a new briefing for HDN members on Governance and Diversity with the ebriefing. We hope this will be of use to members when undertaking work in this area, it includes an outline of why it is so important as well as practical examples of the approach taken by different housing providers. As always, if you think there is a topic you would like to see us cover in more depth do please get in touch.

Best wishes



### **Clifton Robinson, Chief Executive HDN**

To follow the view of the HDN Chair, please click [here](#) to visit the Chair’s Blog.

## Quick Links

### E & D NEWS

[Government figures 'mask rise in homelessness'](#)

[Law proposes removing eviction protection for PRS tenants](#)

[Bedroom tax court ruling blow for separated parents](#)

[Ministers dismiss seaside town's plan to slash housing benefit](#)

[Tory homes gift pledge 'could spook investors'](#)

[Private sector joins criticism of possible housing survey cuts](#)

[HCA invites bids for £120m care specialist housing fund](#)

[Delayed ASB injunctions to come into force](#)

## Equality & Diversity News



[Government figures 'mask rise in homelessness'](#)

*Inside Housing, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

The Homelessness Monitor, funded by Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), reported a 9% rise in local authority homelessness cases to 280,000 in 2013/14. The rise was concealed by councils increasingly offering help through 'prevention and relief' in place of formal homelessness applications. The study also found that welfare reforms such as sanctions and the benefit cap were major concerns for homeless people, with just one in ten local authority homelessness managers believing that the impacts of welfare reform had 'run their course'.

[Law proposes removing eviction protection for PRS tenants](#)

*Inside Housing, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

The Welsh Assembly has introduced new legislation, which will remove the protection from eviction in the first six months of a new tenancy. The Renting Homes (Wales) Bill, which aims to simplify the rental process, has been badged as 'one of the most significant pieces of legislation this Assembly' by the Welsh Government. It will replace existing rental legislation, and introduce just two types of tenancy. The move was strongly criticised by homelessness and advice charities in advance of the bill's publication.

[Bedroom tax court ruling blow for separated parents](#)

*Inside Housing, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

A mother whose son lives with her part time has lost an upper-tier tribunal against the bedroom tax, in a blow to

separated parents. A first-tier tribunal allowed the mother's appeal and ruled she should have her benefit restored. However after an appeal by the council and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) late last month, an upper-tier tribunal overturned the initial ruling. Giles Peaker, a partner at Anthony Gold Solicitors, said that the decision had "put an end to bedroom tax appeals based on the "part-time" residence of a child with shared care".

[Ministers dismiss seaside town's plan to slash housing benefit](#)

*Inside Housing, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

The government has rejected Blackpool Council's request to be allowed to withhold housing benefit by 30% to landlords renting out poor quality housing. The council estimates that reducing a bad landlord's LHA payment by 30% would incentivise them to make improvements to their property. Despite this a DWP spokesperson said there were 'no plans to change the existing system'.

[Tory homes gift pledge 'could spook investors'](#)

*Inside Housing, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

Investors could be driven away from the sector if the Conservatives push ahead with plans to "gift" housing association homes to tenants, after an unconfirmed proposal to allow tenants who have been in work for a year to acquire their home for free was floated in Tory-friendly newspapers. The proposal sparked immediate outcry from the sector, with David Orr, chief executive of the National Housing Federation (NHF), branding it "genuinely stupid".

[Diversity in the workplace: Two-thirds of top 100 employers for diversity are public sector](#)

[Concern over welfare payment slowdown](#)

[NHF: Build 100,000 homes for older people](#)

[NHS chief panned for 'neglecting housing role in health](#)

[Female millennials believe they can reach the top of their careers](#)

[New universal credit rules will hit 200,000 people](#)

[Private sector joins criticism of possible housing survey cuts](#)

*Inside Housing, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

Property companies and private landlords have become the latest organisations to criticise government proposals to publish key housing data less regularly. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is considering a number of options for cutting expenditure on the English Housing Survey, including publishing the data biennially instead of every year, or pausing it for one year in 2015/16. The British Property Federation criticised the proposals stating that 'any reduction in its frequency would limit understanding "at a time when flagship policies such as Help to Buy and the [removal of the] spare room subsidy are starting to impact on the market."

[HCA invites bids for £120m care specialist housing fund](#)

*Inside Housing, 17th February 2015*

The Homes and Communities Agency has opened bidding for a £120m housing fund for older people and those with disabilities or mental health problems. The pot of money, which is funded by the Department of Health but managed by the HCA, is designed to help older people and those with disabilities or mental health problems to live more independently

[Delayed ASB injunctions to come into force](#)

*Inside Housing, 18th February 2015*

New laws on anti-social behaviour, originally expected to come into force in October last year, will now be introduced on March 23, the Home Office has confirmed. The legislation will replace anti-social behaviour injunctions (ASBI) with a new 'civil injunction'. The move will give new powers to landlords to seek an injunction against anyone over 10 years old for anti-social behaviour.

[Diversity in the workplace: Two-thirds of top 100 employers for diversity are public sector](#)

*The Independent, 21st February 2015*

Two-thirds of the top 100 employers for 2015 come from the public sector, representing a massive improvement in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index. James Lawrence spokesperson for Stonewall drew attention to the rise of the public sector, "back in 2010, we had just five organizations from the housing sector and that's now more doubled from five to 12 in 2015"

[Concern over welfare payment slowdown](#)

*Inside Housing, 27th February 2015*

The amount of time landlords have been waiting to receive rent under universal credit has jumped because of government delays in processing payments. The average time between posting an APA application and receiving confirmation of payment increased from 19 days in October to 24 days in November. Delays in the processing of third-party deductions also increased from 41 days to 53 re-igniting fears that direct payment will make it harder for social landlords to collect rent.

[NHF: Build 100,000 homes for older people](#)

*Inside Housing, 27th February 2015*

Nearly eight million older homeowners anticipate having to move or adapt their property if they develop care needs, a survey has found. The National Housing Federation (NHF) found that housing associations will have to build more than 100,000 additional homes for older people in the next 15 years to meet demand. The NHF warned that a failure to build homes 'designed for later life' would result in worse 'bed-blocking bottlenecks' in the National Health Service.

[NHS chief panned for 'neglecting' housing role in health](#)

*Inside Housing, 2nd March 2015*

A former health minister has slated the chief executive of NHS England for failing to consider the role of housing in keeping people out of hospital. In response to the major report on care and housing today commissioned by think-tank Demos, Liberal Democrat Paul Burstow said the omission of the role of housing in a strategic review of the NHS, led by Simon Stevens, was 'a massive missed opportunity'. The row was prompted by the NHS Forward View, which set out how the service needs to change within the next five years in order to meet future challenges.

[Female millennials believe they can reach the top of their careers](#)

*The Telegraph, 4th March 2015*

Young British women today are more career confident and ambitious than any other generation, according to new study by PWC. The study, created to mark International Women's Day, proves that young women are keen to smash glass ceilings. The study also found that women won't just work anywhere with 83 per cent seeking employers with a strong record on diversity and equality.

[New universal credit rules will hit 200,000 people](#)

*Inside Housing, 5th March 2015*

New universal credit rules which could leave 200,000 claimants waiting six months for their benefit have sparked fresh fears over increased tenant rent arrears. The new regulations, have been described by social landlords as likely to lead to increased hardship and evictions. The change means claimants who receive an irregular income will have to plan and set aside savings for when they are not in work, as they may not be able to fall back on benefit. According to the National Housing Federation any additional delay in tenants' ability to access the right support could lead to "increasing poverty".

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## Quick Links

### PUBLICATIONS

#### [Housing and Mental Health](#)

#### [What's important to me? A Review of Choice in End of Life Care](#)

#### [Design for an Ageing Population](#)

#### [Review of Independent Living Adaptations in Wales](#)

#### [The female millennial: A new era of talent](#)

# Publications

## [Housing and Mental Health](#)

*The Labour Party, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

The Labour Party's independent taskforce's report on mental health, makes specific recommendations on housing and adds to a growing political will to give mental health equal importance to physical health. The report found that 1 in 4 British adults experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any one year, and 1 in 6 experiences this at any given time. The report recommends a number of proposals such as Housing representative on Health and Wellbeing Boards National planning guidance on mental health needs and the supply of specialist housing options for planning authorities.

## [What's important to me? A Review of Choice in End of Life Care](#)

*The Choice in End of Life Care Programme Board, Department of Health, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

This report by the independent Choice of End of Life Care Review Programme Board identifies the issues people approaching the end of their lives are currently facing, and offers a blueprint for how greater choice in end of life care can be achieved. The report emphasises the importance of a dignified "good death" at home, and explores and acknowledges the role housing and related services play in making the home environment as suitable as possible.

## [Design for an Ageing Population](#)

*Royal Institute of British Architects, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015*

This excellent report released by RIBA provides a useful collection of resources to help built environment professions to access the relevant information they



need to create buildings and places that meet the needs of an ageing society. The report is a culmination of a vast amount of existing knowledge from experts across multiple sectors on designing the built environment for older people.

## [Review of Independent Living Adaptations in Wales](#)

*Welsh Government, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015*

This review commissioned by the Welsh Government and conducted by Shelter Cymru aims to improve the delivering and viability of adaptations in Wales for older and disabled people. The report concluded that a 'one system' approach to adaptations should be a guiding principle for policy development, moving towards a staged adoption of universal provision of adaptations without the use of long term means testing.

## [The female millennial: A new era of talent](#)

*Price, Waterhouse, Cooper, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015*

The report is based on international research with 10,105 millennial respondents from over 70 countries worldwide, 8,756 of whom were female millennials. Female millennials are becoming a larger and larger part of the global talent pool, and this report makes one thing clear, when it comes to the female millennial we're talking about a new era of female talent.



## HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with Housing Diversity Network, Orbit Housing Group, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, Curo, Mosscares Housing and many more.

## 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 will be held on the **26th May 2015**, Venue to be confirmed.

### Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum

The next meeting will be held on the **22nd April 2015**, Sheffield City Council, Sheffield

### North East Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

The next meeting will be held on the **10th June 2015**, Venue to be confirmed.

### South & South West Equality & Diversity Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **3rd June 2015**, venue to be confirmed.

### Midlands Equalities Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **4th June 2015**, Venue to be confirmed.

### London Diversity Group

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **20th May 2015**, Notting Hill Housing, London

## Upcoming Events

- [Train the E&D Trainer](#)  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2015 — Ongo, North Lincolnshire
- [HR in Housing Conference and Exhibition 2015](#)  
16<sup>th</sup> April 2015 — Inmarsat Conference Centre, London

For further information on the above events please visit the HDN website or 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 (CLÉS). For further information on CLÉS please visit their website at [www.cles.org.uk](http://www.cles.org.uk), contact Matthew Jackson on 0161 233 1928 or email [MatthewJackson@cles.org.uk](mailto:MatthewJackson@cles.org.uk)



## Free Event Places for HDN Members

The first three HDN members to book places on the events below will get their place free of charge. Just mention Housing Diversity Network when booking.

### Challenging without Confronting

Places for People in partnership with Housing Diversity Network are delighted to be able to offer you opportunities to find out more about how to challenge in a positive way and understand some of the issues behind discrimination including a focus on unconscious bias. This session will give you the opportunity to share ideas with other colleagues and take away materials you can use in your own organisation.

#### The dates for the events are:

12<sup>th</sup> May – Newcastle (city centre)

2<sup>nd</sup> September – South Rings (Bamber Bridge Lancashire).

**Cost**— the cost of a place at this event for a full days training including lunch is £35 + VAT.

### Unconscious Bias Sessions

In conjunction with Enact Solutions and Housing Diversity Network Places for People is delighted to offer an excellent opportunity to sample a variety of highly impactful experiential training tools developed to raise awareness of unconscious bias, where it comes from, its impact on day to day actions and decisions, and how it manifests within our workplaces and especially in customer interactions.

In this three hour session we will showcase two different case studies for you to see first-hand the effectiveness of these materials.

#### The dates for the events are:

1<sup>st</sup> July - Wolverton (near Milton Keynes).

7<sup>th</sup> July – Newcastle (city centre).

22<sup>nd</sup> July – South Rings (Bamber Bridge Lancashire).

There are two sessions per day these being:

9:30 – 12:30

13:00 – 16:00

**Cost**— the cost per session including refreshments is £35 + VAT.

### Bookings

To book a place on either of these events please contact Sharron Cooper on:

Email: [sharron.cooper@placesforpeople.co.uk](mailto:sharron.cooper@placesforpeople.co.uk) or telephone: 01904 650153