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Message from the Chief Executive

The end of equalities...or a new beginning?

From time to time, we have conversations with colleagues – often (though not always) linked to the various E&D Practitioner Networks we support across the country - who voice concerns over what increasingly looks and feels like the diminishing influence of the equalities agenda within their organisations, sometimes across the sector and often even within society as a whole.

A number of colleagues have indicated that since the General Election they now fear the worse as far as the equalities agenda is concerned. Call me an eternal optimist (or worse!) if you will, but I do think there are grounds for believing that all is by no means lost as far as the future of E&D is concerned!

Almost unnoticed since last month's General Election has been a decision to form a new and potentially hugely influential select committee – the Committee for Women and Equalities. For some time now of course we have had a ministerial portfolio for women and equalities but, until this month, there has never been a dedicated mechanism – let alone a select committee - actually scrutinising the work of the ministers responsible for women and equalities.

What might the impact of all of this be?

Given the high profile of the Public Accounts Select Committee chaired by Margaret Hodge M.P, there is no reason why over the next couple of years the new Women and Equalities Select Committee could not, for example:

- Initiate enquiries into the extent to which austerity is impacting more on certain groups in society than others and whether any specific remedial action is required to lessen the worse impacts
- Look into the impact welfare reforms are having on people with disabilities
- Examine the diversity of boards across a range of sectors including housing

HDN will keep a close eye on the work of this new select committee as well as re-energising our relationship with the Equality & Human Rights Commission. We will keep members posted on developments on both fronts.

HDN Briefings

Throughout the year HDN produce briefings on topics of interest to our members. So far this year we have produced the following briefings and guides:

- **Governance & Diversity:** Why it matters and practical steps to increase diversity
- The **Public Sector Equality Duty and Housing Associations** – an update on legal developments and guide to the duty for housing providers
- **Akerman-Livingstone v. Aster Communities Ltd** – A briefing on the recent case which has implications for housing providers.

I hope you find these useful for you and colleagues. These briefings and other resources can be found on the HDN website - <http://www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk/factsheet>

Staff Mentoring Conference

On 3 June, we held our largest ever Staff Mentoring Conference in Birmingham. Terrie Alafat, the new CEO at the Chartered Institute of Housing was our keynote speaker in what many delegates who had attended before felt was our best ever mentoring conference. A special thank you to Jon Prashar from Places for People who will be stepping down after chairing every HDN staff mentoring conference since 2008!



We are now actively recruiting for the 2015/16 mentoring programme so if you would like to find out more (and remember that access to the staff mentoring programme is a free HDN membership benefit), please ring Kam Urwin our Mentoring Manager on 01484 652606 or email us at mentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk

CIH Presidential Commission on Leadership and Diversity

If you are attending the CIH Conference in Manchester later this month, please look out for/join us for two events highlighting the results of the work the Commission has been engaged with over the past year. Please contact me or my colleague, Andrew Petrie, if you want further details. Both Andrew and I will be at the CIH Conference and it would be great if you were able to meet up with us to give us any feedback on the work we are doing and, just as importantly, give us any ideas on new areas of work in the field of equalities that you think we could usefully engage with.

Board Mentoring

During this month and in July, we will be working in partnership with CHC (the Wales equivalent of the NHF) to see if there is appetite for board mentoring in Wales. We will also be holding 2 hour briefing sessions between July and September across England to assess the regional appetite for extending the Programme to the Midlands, the South West and the North East. Please get in touch at boardmentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk to register a place/find out more.

Best wishes



Clifton Robinson, Chief Executive HDN

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

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E & D NEWS

[Only 2 homes built to replace the 863 sold off under Right To Buy in Greater Manchester](#)

[Housing crisis will halve number of young homeowners in 5 years](#)

[Government to fast-track landlord migrant checks](#)

[Supreme Court rules on intentional homelessness](#)

[Housing benefit cuts for U21s would be disastrous for young people](#)

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[Housing association launches specialised training for staff](#)

[Housing regulators should monitor diversity](#)

Equality & Diversity News

[Only 2 homes built to replace the 863 sold off under Right To Buy in Greater Manchester](#)

The independent, 28th May

Shelter have published data which show that the Government's aim to replace houses sold under the Right To Buy with affordable accommodation has failed. Since 2012, 863 homes in GM have been sold under the scheme, only to be replaced by a pair of semi-detached homes in Wigan. Nationally, the picture is also bleak, with a replacement rate of just 1 in 10. The crisis is exacerbated because discounts under Right To Buy mean there are a lack of funds to construct new homes.

[Housing crisis will halve number of young homeowners in 5 years](#)

The Guardian, 22nd May

Shelter has warned that just 20% of 25-34 year olds will be on the property ladder in 2020, compared with 60% 10 years ago. In numbers terms, home ownership amongst this group has fallen by a third, from 1.8 million to 1.2 million in the last decade, and is forecast to fall to 616,000 by the end of the next parliament. Correspondingly, there has been a rise in young adults living with parents, and renters in this group are forecast to rise from 675,000 in 2004 to 2.3 million by 2020.

[Government to fast-track landlord migrant checks](#)

Inside Housing, 21st May

As part of wider measures to tackle illegal immigration, landlords could be forced to check that their tenants are in the UK legally. This would represent a nationwide rollout of a West Midlands pilot. The policy will apply to private landlords and housing associations, whilst hostels, care homes and student accommodation are exempt. There



are worries that this could exacerbate the UK's homelessness problem.

[Supreme Court rules on intentional homelessness](#)

Inside Housing, 20th may

Councils will now have to consider other factors before deciding that someone is intentionally homeless. The result is that councils will have to take into account events or circumstances which take place after an applicant leaves or loses their home before they can decide if someone is intentionally homeless. This comes shortly after another ruling which will probably expand the number of people considered as vulnerable, who will therefore have priority for housing.

[Housing benefit cuts for U21s would be disastrous for young people](#)

The Guardian, 18th May

Plans have been outlined to cut housing benefit for U21s who are unemployed and claiming JSA. It is claimed this will affect the most vulnerable young people, such as care leavers with no home to return to and people who have fled domestic violence. It is estimated that the policy will save £120 million, although £115 million in costs will be incurred due to an increase in homelessness.

[Benefit cut could hit 11,400 tenants](#)

Inside Housing, 15th May

This article quantifies the impact of the proposals to remove housing benefit for young jobseekers who live in social housing. 11,449 social housing tenants would be affected, which excludes single parents who are exempt. In total, 18,402 young jobseekers are set to be affected. The removal of this benefit will also see around £69 million of annual social housing rental income under threat.

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[London council in 'social cleansing' row over bid to move tenants to Birmingham](#)

[Young, trans and homeless](#)

[West midlands housing group tackles social integration](#)

[Housing association launches specialised training for staff](#)

Runcorn and Widnes World, 14th May

A housing association in Runcorn is launching specialised training for staff to understand the experiences of lesbian, gay and transgender (LGBT) rough sleepers. Riverside is working with Stonewall Housing to deliver the training to address the specific needs and experiences that can lead to people being denied safe place to live.

[Housing regulators should monitor diversity](#)

Inside Housing, 8th May

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) presidential commission will recommend that housing regulators should take the diversity of organisations' leadership into consideration when assessing their performance. The commission comprises 10 figures from around the sector and was established to address the issue of housing's leadership being 'too old, too white and too male'. The article also details 10 key challenges which the sector must address to ensure greater diversity.

[London council in 'social cleansing' row over bid to move tenants to Birmingham](#)

The Guardian, 6th May

The Conservative led council of Wandsworth has caused controversy after it offered tenants £7,000 to relocate. They have been accused of attempted social cleansing by local residents. The policy is part of a scheme to rehouse people deemed not to need the houses they live in, particularly due to size. It is argued that more homes are needed, rather than this plan which divides communities.

[Young, trans and homeless](#)

Inside Housing, 6th May

This article argues that councils and housing associations are not meeting the needs of young transgender people, who are at greater risk of becoming homeless. Here is a significant problem with transphobic reactions, which has led to around 25% of trans people leaving their home. Provision for trans individuals in terms of social housing or temporary accommodation is not lacking, with limited understanding for personal situations and the increased risks they encounter.

[West midlands housing group tackles social integration](#)

The Guardian, 30th April

WM Housing group have moved to tackle the problem that its employees were having in connecting with customers from cultures other than their own. They have included a training programme in their sustainability strategy which aims to boost understanding of different cultures and religions; to improve the service offered to migrant communities and ensure service equality; and to tackle common misconceptions. 300 WM employees have used the programme since its launch in 2012, in addition 100 residents have also been trained, and 45 community champions appointed, with the goal to spread the diversity and inclusion message.

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E & D NEWS

[Japan: Where grassroots initiatives are growing in empty homes](#)

[Planning for healthy urban living in older age](#)

Publications

[Japan: Where grassroots initiatives are growing in empty homes](#)

Housing LIN, May 2015

This case study details how Japan is responding to having the fastest ageing society in the world, with around 32 million people over the age of 65 and over 70% of carers now aged over 60. Groups of volunteers have created 'open houses' where carers and older people can come and have a hot meal and spend time with others. These have become valuable spaces to share experiences and resolve personal problems.

[Planning for healthy urban living in older age](#)

Housing LIN, 11th May

This document outlines how we can plan our settlements promote health and well-being for an ageing population. Health inequalities have risen, reinforced by social exclusion in housing, transport and access to facilities, often experienced by the young and old alike. Built environment professionals must design age friendly homes and healthy communities for future generations of old people. These must promote healthy and active ageing, by creating barrier-free and affordable housing, accessible public spaces, and transportation that can enable people to stay independent and participate in community life.



Diversity Network Accreditation (DNA)

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

Contact us now to find out more about DNA.

www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk

01484 652 606

info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk



HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with Orbit Housing Group, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, Curo, 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 six email groups.

Dates for the next meetings are:

North West Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **16th September 2015**, venue to be confirmed.

Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **18th August 2015**, venue to be confirmed.

North East Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

The next meeting will be held on the **23rd September 2015**, venue to be confirmed.

South & South West Equality & Diversity Forum

The next meeting will be held on the **16th September 2015**, venue to be confirmed.

Midlands Equalities Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **10th September 2015**, venue to be confirmed.

London Diversity Group

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **28th September 2015**, Metropolitan, London

Upcoming Events

- [Unconscious Bias](#) - 14th July 2015, Havebury Housing, Bury St Edmunds
- [Board Mentoring Launch Event](#) - 17th July 2015, Orbit Housing Group, Stratford-upon-Avon
- [Equality Monitoring - Asking Sensitive Questions](#) 21st July 2015, Isos Housing, Newcastle upon Tyne
- [Inclusive Leadership](#) - 24th July 2015, The Sovini Group, Liverpool

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 (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