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Message from the Chief Executive

Maintaining core values in responding to “game-changer” Budget

It's been very interesting to note how a number of our sector leaders as well as the Regulator are responding to the rent increase proposals in the Budget. Whilst one or two of our leaders have already publically stated what others are considering as a possible option (namely that they will end the development of new homes for social and affordable rent), other leaders have decided to send out a very different public response. Their response has been all about rising to this latest challenge, acknowledging the tough choices that have to be made, but at the same time remaining true to their founding principles and “values” (mirroring the “Wake Up to Values” pilot a number of our members have recently worked on) by guaranteeing to maintain a level of affordable rented housing.

David Montague, Chief Executive of one of our members, summed up L&Q's approach in this way:

“On 8 July, our world changed. But for L&Q, some things remain the same. Our ambition. Our commitment. Our determination. We are, and will always be, a charitable housing association. Our mission will always be to create places where people want to live. And our vision to ensure that everyone has a safe, warm, quality affordable home.”

Perhaps the biggest challenge we now face is to remain true to our founding values whilst meeting the massive challenges placed on us.

Relevance of Board Mentoring to this “game-changer”

Julian Ashby, Chair of the HCA Regulation Committee has given the following message to what the Budget rent change proposal:

“As a regulator, we have welcomed the way many providers have begun to respond to the challenge and the speed with which they have grasped the scale of the potential changes required. However, we are keen that the boards of all providers give the strategic leadership needed to make what will be difficult trade-offs.”

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Our board mentoring programme is designed to help empower boards provide the “strategic leadership” referred to by the Regulator. On 11 and 18 September, we are teaming up with DAC Beachcroft LLP, a commercial law firm who work with housing associations across the country to facilitate programme sessions in Manchester and London respectively. As well as looking at the impact of unconscious bias when making decisions as a board member the key message across various presentations from a range of lawyers and governance experts will be around exploring how board members can make more informed decisions and choices by understanding the importance of diversity in all areas of governance, within the current Budget affected climate.

We are keen to attract company secretaries, chief executives, senior executives and of course board members – so please email boardmentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk or ring us on 01484 652606 to find out more.

Board Mentoring 2016

As part of taking the wider Programme forward in 2016, we are holding free 2 hour launch events for the North, North West, South West and London & Home Counties during September and October. Please visit our website for further details - <http://www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk/events>



Women in Social Housing 2015

These awards, now in their 3rd year celebrate the fantastic achievement of women across the housing sector. Congratulations to all those who have been short-listed and good luck at the Awards Event to be held on 22 October at the Deansgate Hilton in Manchester...especially to all those HDN members!!

BMENational and Human City Institute Research Project

An important research project between BMENational and the Human City Institute has just been published. In an age of mergers and ever-larger housing associations catering for more and more people in housing need, it makes a strong case on why an expansion of the BME housing sector is crucial.

Key findings include:

1. Confirmation that BME communities continue to experience disproportionate housing need and are still more likely to be homeless and living in poor or overcrowded housing and that
2. BME housing organisations are needed more than ever to continue to make a significant contribution to meeting the housing, care, support and health needs of both BME communities as well those of new migrants, “as these are not adequately met by mainstream social landlords”

A summary of the key findings can be downloaded from the HDN website [here](#). The full report will be available from the BME National website in September.

HDN/CIH E&D Conference 2015

Housing Diversity Network and CIH are holding their annual equality and diversity conference on the 8th October 2015 in London. Following last year's sell out event, this year we are exploring how organisations can meet the challenges set in the Leadership and Diversity Commission report.

In the morning we will hear from Terrie Alafat, Chief Executive, CIH and Jon Prashar, Group Head of Diversity Marketing, Places for People Group on the work of the Commission and how it will be taken forward. We will also hear from the Equality and Human Rights Commission on their priorities and the implications for the housing sector, the Confederation of British Industry about the business case for equality and diversity as well as Tamsin Stirling on the importance of diversity for governance.

The afternoon will consist of practical workshops that will be of interest to housing providers and provide advice and tips on how organisations can achieve some of the challenges set in the Presidential Commission report. Workshops on getting buy-in for the business case for equality and diversity, how to use mentoring to enhance diversity and how to develop inclusive leadership will ensure that some of the good practice that is going on in the sector is shared.

More information is available from the following link - [Conference Details](#)

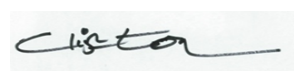
The event promises to be of real interest and practical benefit and I very much look forward to seeing you there.

Immigration Bill/ "Right to Rent" – Our concerns!

A "Right to Rent" scheme in which landlords check the immigration status of tenants and which is being piloted in the West Midlands, will be extended across the country. Under the scheme, landlords will be obliged to see evidence of a person's right to remain in the UK by examining the passport or biometric residence permit. Landlords who fail to check the immigration status of a tenant could be fined or imprisoned for up to 5 years.

We at HDN share the concerns of colleagues from a range of organisations including Race Equality Foundation, Migrant Rights Network, BME National and the Discrimination Law Association. There simply is no evidence that the Right to Rent policy will result in achieving its aims with regard to undocumented migrants or lead to an improved private rented housing sector. We know that there is already high levels of discrimination in many sections of the private rented housing sector and, at worst, the proposed new checks will create an environment where tenants who look or sound "foreign" will be routinely subject to discrimination by private landlords and letting agents.

We are definitely concerned that these checks will add to the general anti-immigrant atmosphere in the UK and will damage race relations. At the very least, HDN will be joining other similar minded organisations in asking the Government to review the findings of the Right to Rent pilot in the West Midlands and consult with landlords, tenants and the voluntary sector before it increases the penalties for failing to carry out checks.



Clifton Robinson
Chief Executive

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Equality & Diversity News

[Housebuilders switch focus from first time to 'last time' buyers](#)

The Financial Times, 31st Jul 2015

Figures from the National House Building Council have shown that the construction of housing designed for older people has rocketed in the first half of 2015, with more properties already built than in the whole of 2014. It is likely that this will be a trend, as developers look to profit from our rapidly ageing population. However, it may also allow younger buyers access to family homes which are currently occupied by older residents who have limited suitable alternative accommodation.

[Circle housing goes to pride](#)

24dash.com, 24th July 2015

Staff from Circle Housing took part in London Pride parade recently. This was a very visible display by an organisation that takes equality and diversity very seriously, having risen from 244th to 32nd on Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index over the last two years. The Diversity and Inclusion Team is also very active, and puts on a programme of events, called the 'Big Conversation', whilst Circle also has five staff network groups which are: LGBT, BAME, Gender, Ability & Wellbeing and Carers.

[Pay to stay 'likely to be tapered'](#)

Inside Housing, 22nd July 2015

Social tenants who earn marginally above the new 'pay to stay' threshold will not be hit by sudden increases in their rent. Rather it is likely that the government will taper the rent increases, so that a family that is earning just above the threshold (£40,000 in London, £30,000 elsewhere) will not immediately start paying the market rate for their property. However limited details have been revealed about the policy by the Department for Communities and Local Government.



[Cameron vows to tackle 'segregated housing estates'](#)

Inside Housing, 20th July 2015

David Cameron has outlined plans to tackle the issue of 'segregated social housing estates' in a move to tackle extremism. He announced that the government will do more to promote integration and avoid the development of estates which are predominantly housing a particular ethnicity or religion.

[Council moves to ensure affordable housing contributions](#)

Inside Housing, 20th July 2015

Islington council is looking to introduce changes to the scrutiny of viability assessments in housing developments. This is in response to cases where developers who have paid above market rate for land have used viability assessments to justify a smaller proportion of affordable construction on a site. The major change will see existing use value plus a premium used as a method of calculating land value, rather than market value. It is hoped that this will allow Islington council to meet their target for 50% of future housing development to be affordable.

[Lifetime tenancies 'only for those in long-term high need'](#)

Inside Housing, 20th Jul 2015

The government have announced a review of lifetime tenancies during the latest Budget in order to increase efficiency in terms of use of stock and to enable fairness. Although there has been no further detail from the government, Natalie Elphicke who has co-authored a review of council housing has outlined plans for three new tenancy types. These are lifetime tenancies for those with high housing requirements, such as mentally ill or extreme old age; 15 year fixed term tenancies for those with a higher level of need, such as carers; and 5 year review and renew tenancies for everyone else.

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[Rich ghettos: the rural housing crisis that no-one is talking about](#)

[It's now vital to break down barriers between ethnic groups](#)

London Evening Standard, 20th July 2015

London, and the wider UK are becoming increasingly diverse, which is also contributing to continued success. However, social housing remains an area where diversity has yet to be embraced, indeed many communities remain ethnically segregated. Government must look to pursue measures which ensure that estates reflect the diversity of the wider community.

[Supporting housing exemption likely](#)
[Inside Housing](#), 17th July 2015

News that supported housing is set to be granted exemption from the planned 1% rent reduction in social properties over the next four years has been met with relief from within the sector. The move will reduce the pressure on many providers, who already operate on tiny margins, and rely on charitable funding to meet their significant costs. In addition, exemptions also look likely to be granted to temporary accommodation, student accommodation, residential care and nursing homes.

[Families priced out of affordable rent](#)
[Inside Housing](#), 17th July 2015

Three bedroom houses may become unaffordable for families under the new £20,000 benefit cap announced by George Osborne. The impact will be particularly bad in parts of the south east and south west, where average weekly rents top £170+. For those in the private rented sector, every region south of the midlands, and the majority in the north will now be unaffordable.

[Welsh housing minister backs CIH diversity drive](#)

[Inside Housing](#), 6th July 2015

The Welsh housing minister, Lesley Griffiths the minister for communities and tackling poverty and leading figures in the housing and equality sector have backed the CIH drive for greater diversity in housing.

The CIH has recently launched a report which outlines 10 key challenges, which include compilation of diversity data on the board, executive team and total workforce for publication in annual reports, and for recruitment of staff to ensure that all shortlists include appropriate candidates from under-represented groups.

[Families priced out of rural areas which have become 'pensioner pockets'](#)

[The Telegraph](#), 6th July 2015

The National Housing Federation has warned that young families are being priced out of areas where they grew up, as vast areas of rural England are set to become 'pensioner pockets'. It is predicted that there will be 27 of these pockets (areas with more than 40% of households with occupants 65+ years old) in six years' time.

[Rich ghettos: the rural housing crisis that no-one is talking about](#)

[The conversation](#), 2nd July 2015

Housing in the UK countryside is becoming increasingly expensive, leading to more socially exclusive environment. The average rural home now costs 26% more than those in urban areas, as retirees, second home owners and wealthy commuters look to find a place in the country. The impact for young people and working families has been severe, as rents have risen in line with house prices, making rural property unaffordable for the masses.

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[Briefing: Disabled facilities grants 2015](#)

Publications

[Rethinking planning obligations: balancing housing numbers and affordability](#)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 23rd July 2015

Whilst need is increasing, the number of homes built through planning obligations has halved; their ability to provide homes for those on the lowest incomes has been limited by volatile markets and changes to the planning system. This report details some case studies and sets out recommendations to ensure that housing provision can be maximised.

[Homelessness prevention and relief: England 2014-15](#)

Department for Communities and Local Government, 9th July 2015

The number of cases where local authorities in England have carried out measures to prevent or relieve homelessness has risen by a third over the last five years, to more than 220,000. This does however represent a small decrease, from 228,400 in 2013/14. In 2014/15 over 205,000 cases were to aid people at risk of homelessness stay in their accommodation, whilst nearly 16,000 cases were to assist homeless people in moving into accommodation.

[Briefing: Disabled facilities grants 2015](#)

Habinteg, Released 5th July 2015

This report indicates that much of the current stock of housing is poorly prepared for elderly and disabled people. Funding for DFGs is also changing, with local authorities also now not obliged to provide additional funds over and above those from central government. It will be increasingly important for local authorities to coordinate work with health providers and cvs bodies in order to achieve positive outcome for all service users.



Diversity Network Accreditation (DNA)

We all want to improve our customers lives, through genuine partnerships, by delivering excellence. HDN has 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**](http://www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)

01484 652 606

[**info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk**](mailto:info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)



HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with Orbit Housing Group, Merlin Housing Society, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, Arches Housing 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 **20th October 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

Date and venue of next meeting 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** - 29th September 2015, Birmingham
- [Board Mentoring Launch Session](#) – 9th September 2015, South West
- **Inclusive Leadership** - 26th November 2015, London
- [Young Leaders Conference 2015](#) - 23rd September 2015, ICC, Birmingham

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