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Message from the Chief Executive

“Threat to liberty”

Alongside 90 other organisations, university lecturers and lawyers, I signed on behalf of HDN a letter that appeared in The Times on 12 October. To access the link to the letter click [here](#), however the first couple of sentences neatly capture why so many of us are deeply concerned over the Immigration Bill.

“The Immigration Bill is a blunt tool that will fail and, worse still, contains draconian measures that will affect every single person. It will undermine the rights and civil liberties not just of those migrants here without leave but of any British citizen who is unable to immediately provide papers or who falls victim to a mistake by the authorities.”

We will continue to lobby for improvements to the Bill as well as reporting back on any critical developments as it makes its way through the legislative process.

HDN/CIH E&D Conference 2015

Our 5th annual joint E&D Conference with the CIH took place on 8 October and was hosted in the London offices of the CIH. I again had the honour of chairing the Conference and amongst the highlights for me were:



- The Q&A session that followed the opening conference plenary on the CIH Presidential Commission on Diversity in Housing. A searching and powerful discussion around how, in the light of pressures around rent reduction and Right to Buy etc., organisations can still be persuaded not to lose sight of both the commitment and the passion for the equalities agenda that is so much needed to support both customers of housing organisations and their staff.
- The address from the Confederation of British Industry’s (CBI) Head of Employment Law and Employee Relations was a real first for us in our 5 years of organising these

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conferences with the CIH. Interestingly, many in the sector are now benchmarking themselves, not with other housing organisations, but with non-housing private sector organisations. To hear first-hand how colleagues in the private sector are approaching issues around gender discrimination, pay gap and parental leave was, to say the least illuminating. One thing is for sure, no longer can the public sector automatically think it is head and shoulders above the private sector on the issue of equalities!

- The presentation from the Director of Externally Funded Programmes at the Equality and Human Rights Commission led to a wide-ranging discussion, at the end of which, the EHRC confirmed that they would re-connect with the housing sector (including through their existing links with HDN) on a range of strategic issues that would have a significant impact on the housing sector over the next 24 months. We will of course through conferences, events and e-briefings keep our members and practitioner group colleagues updated on key developments.
- Finally, I enjoyed an insightful presentation from Tamsin Stirling, an academic, housing association board chair and independent consultant who I have worked with and known for over 25 years. Not only did Tamsin demonstrate that governance issues faced by board members in Wales are no different from those in England, that more diversity on a board really does enhance the quality of decision making but also that with the impact of rent reduction and RTB we need more than ever to support our governance structures to make the best possible decisions in an incredibly challenging environment...and yes, governance support programmes such as HDN's national board mentoring programme, really had key roles to play in these difficult times!

Is Britain Fairer?

The state of equality and human rights 2015

Is Britain Fairer?, the Equality and Human Rights Commission's statutory five-yearly report on equality and human rights progress in England, Scotland and Wales, will be published on Friday 30 October.

You will be able to view the report online from that morning by visiting www.equalityhumanrights.com/IsBritainFairer.

The following will also be published alongside the full report:

- a standalone executive summary (in English, Welsh, BSL and Easy Read versions)
- the evidence which underpins the report, in the form of 10 evidence papers (which report the evidence by *domain*, or area of enquiry); 3 supporting papers (a context paper, methodology paper and technical paper, which provide the necessary background to the review); and relevant data tables.

A social media campaign will begin later this week with the hashtag #IsBritainFairer. EHRC are inviting people to join the debate by tweeting or [retweeting](#) using this hashtag, by liking or sharing posts on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#), or by blogging about *Is Britain Fairer?* with links to www.equalityhumanrights.com/IsBritainFairer.



board
mentoring
programme

National Board Mentoring Programme 2015 and 2016

As we head for the final sessions of our 2015 Programme, our thanks to those organisations who have already indicated that they will provide sponsorship support for the 2016 Programme. We are due to speak to several more organisations next month and if any organisations would like to find out more about the Programme do please either ring me on 07985 486633 or email Boardmentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk

Our thanks to NHF for giving us an opportunity at their 2016 Board Members Conference in London to share learning from this year's programme. I'm already delighted that one of our board member mentees from Riverside Group has already agreed to speak at the Conference alongside her mentor (from Accent Group) about their experience of the Programme. Do please come and support us at the NHF Board Members Conference on Friday 5 February 2016.

Finally our thanks to Eamon McGoldrick, Managing Director of the National Federation of ALMOs for the following endorsement:

All housing providers are facing challenging times. Board members need to step up to the plate by supporting, challenging and assisting their executive teams. Mentoring programmes, such as those run by Housing Diversity Network, can provide Board members with the tools and confidence required to undertake their roles more effectively.

E&D Practitioner Group Updates

- South & South West E&D Forum colleagues. Please look out for a special update from me at the end of October, Part of this update will confirm that, following discussions with the Chief Executive of South West Councils just last week, we will be looking to hold a special conference on 25 February 2016 in the South West (venue to be confirmed). As well as hearing from the EHRC and an expert on migration we will formally propose creating a new geographically tighter South West E&D Forum.
- Yorkshire, Humber & East Midlands E&D Forum – Following last week's meeting of this Group which was hosted at our offices in Huddersfield, I volunteered to contact the Chair of the new Women and Equalities Select Committee to share the concerns around the down-grading of the equalities agenda that has been voiced regularly at all of our practitioner groups as well as most recently at the CIH/HDN E&D Conference on 8 October. I have also formally invited the Select Committee Chair to our 25 February 2016 Conference in the South West. Will keep colleagues informed of any developments.

Well Done Calico Group!

Congratulations to HDN members the Calico Group for winning the Diverse Company Award at the National Diversity Awards recently. See the following [link](#) for their reaction and what drives their diversity activity.

Social Value Today

One of our Associates, Professor Richard Tomlins, has recently produced a paper for Housemark on the current thinking in the public and private sector on Social Value. The paper will be of interest to many of our members I'm sure and can be found [here](#).

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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[Cuts threaten flagship homelessness programme](#)

['Revealed: the widening gulf between salaries and house prices'](#)

[Scottish social landlords pledge support for refugee crisis](#)

[Cestria shows continued commitment to equality and diversity](#)

Equality & Diversity News

[Rural landowners call for Right to Buy exemption](#)

Inside Housing, 1st of September 2015

Small villages should be exempt from the Right to Buy extension to housing associations, rural landowners have said. The Country Land and Business Association (CLA), which represents owners of land and business in rural areas, warned the extension will deter rural landowners from making land available for affordable housing. It wants an exemption in rural settlements with a population of 3,000 people or less. The CLA made the call as part of its submission to a parliamentary inquiry into the viability of housing associations. It comes as the National Housing Federation (NHF) and ministers are in talks about the policy.

[Cuts threaten flagship homelessness programme](#)

Inside Housing, 2nd of September 2015

The government's removal of housing benefit for young people looks set to threaten housing associations' involvement in a flagship £40m homelessness programme. Platform for Life, a scheme announced in March to convert properties into accommodation for 18 to 24-year-olds in further education, training or work, was expected to attract interest from a substantial number of housing associations. However, the government announced in the Budget it will remove entitlement to housing support for new claims in universal



credit from unemployed 18 to 21-year-olds from April 2017, which could threaten the rental income for the Platform for Life scheme.

['Revealed: the widening gulf between salaries and house prices'](#)

The Guardian, 2nd of September 2015

The gap between income and house prices has sky-rocketed so much in the last 20 years that even in the most affordable regions of England and Wales buyers are forced to spend six times their income, a new data analysis reveals. The data shows how in every region in England and Wales there have been dramatic increases in house prices in proportion to incomes, fuelling concerns that millions will be locked out of the UK property market. In 2012-13, the last year for which complete data is available, the median house price had risen to between 6.1 times and 12.2 times median regional incomes.

[Scottish social landlords pledge support for refugee crisis](#)

Inside Housing, 4th September 2015

Scottish social landlords are set to meet next week to discuss plans to provide accommodation in response to the refugee crisis in Europe. Glasgow-based Parkhead, Queens Cross and NG Homes are among 10 associations due to meet on Tuesday to agree their collective capacity to help refugees who need temporary accommodation. A number of social landlords have already pledged homes to accommodate the refugees, Positive Action in Housing said.

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E & D NEWS

[Low-income families in private housing face large benefit shortfalls](#)

[Older people should be 'encouraged' to move out of homes to solve housing crisis](#)

[Cestria shows continued commitment to equality and diversity](#)

Dash.com, 8th of September August 2015

A North East housing association's commitment to equality and diversity has been recognised after it retained a top award from a national body set up to promote best practice around the issue. Cestria Community Housing has been reaccredited with the sought-after Leaders in Diversity award by the National Centre for Diversity following a recent assessment. The accreditation recognises Cestria's commitment to developing policies, services and practices which meet the diverse needs of its staff and customers, as well as other stakeholders.

[Low-income families in private housing face large benefit shortfalls](#)

The Guardian, 10th September 2015

More than 300,000 low-income working families face a housing benefit shortfall, leaving them in some cases hundreds of pounds behind on rent each month by 2020, as a result of government plans to freeze support. Research by housing charity Shelter predicts that 80% of working English households claiming support to help meet soaring private-sector rents will be affected by the four-year housing benefit freeze announced in July's budget. The cash shortfall will affect families living in places not traditionally associated with high rents, such as Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol, as well as expensive postcodes in London and the south-east.

[Older people should be 'encouraged' to move out of homes to solve housing crisis](#)

The Telegraph, 18th September 2015

The focus on tackling the housing shortage could be moved away from first time-buyers to older people who have paid off their mortgages, an official has suggested. There is a "real issue" with so-called last-time buyers, a mortgage sector manager at the Financial Conduct Authority reportedly told a conference. Lynda Blackwell called for a debate on the issue, the Daily Mail reported, suggesting that building more housing for retired people could encourage older people to move out of their larger homes after paying off their mortgages.

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["Inadequate" supply of housing for elderly in Wales, says report](#)

Publications

[Immigration checks 'fuelling discrimination'](#)

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, 3rd of September 2015

Private landlords are discriminating against people with foreign names and accents as a result of the government's 'Right to Rent' checks, a new report says. An evaluation of new rules forcing landlords to check the immigration status of their tenants by campaign group the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) found evidence the policy is causing discrimination and confusion among agents and landlords.

[Number of families in B&B accommodation leaps up](#)

Inside Housing, 24th of September 2015

The number of families with children being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation has leapt by a quarter, according to official statistics out today. The number of households living in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation went up 23% from 30 June 2014 to 30 June 2015 (from 4,590 to 5,630), the Department for Communities and Local Government figures show. The number of families with children in B&B accommodation increased by 25% from 2,130 on 30 June 2014 to 2,660 on 30 June 2015. Of the 2,660, 31% (830) had been in B&B style accommodation for more than six weeks, illegally.



[How do Landlords address poverty?](#)

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 16th of September 2015

Social landlords have long played a role in housing people in poverty and helping to alleviate poverty. However, rising rents, more low income households in private renting, reduced funding for house building and welfare reforms present major challenges for landlords and local authorities in England. The report explores how landlords are responding, what can be learnt from their written strategies and plans, and what happens in practice.

["Inadequate" supply of housing for elderly in Wales, says report](#)

The Centre for innovative ageing at Swansea University, 29th of September 2015

The supply of housing with care accommodation that "promotes independent and autonomous living" for older people is "inadequate", says a report published by the Public Policy Institute for Wales (PPIW). The report, "Report of recommendations: Meeting the Housing Needs of an Ageing Population in Wales", suggests that a housing strategy addressing older people's housing requirements be developed. It also encourages the Welsh Government to work towards providing affordable, "future-proofed" and "age-sustainable" housing for future generations.



HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with Orbit Housing Group, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, Curo, Colchester Borough Homes 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 **21st January 2016**, Liverpool Mutual Homes.

Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum

The next Forum meeting is still to be confirmed.

North East Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

The next meeting will be held on the **17th December 2015**, Gentoo (Office location TBC).

South & South West Equality & Diversity Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **25th February 2016**, venue to be confirmed.

Midlands Equalities Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **9th December 2015**, Fry Housing Trust, West Midlands.

London Diversity Group

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **10th November 2015**, AmicusHorizon, Surrey

Upcoming Events

- [Inclusive Leadership](#) - 26th November 2015, London
- [Equality Monitoring](#) - 8th December 2015, Manchester

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