



Quick Links

PRACTITIONER GROUPS

[North West Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners](#)

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

[North East Equality & Diversity Network](#)

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

[Midlands Equalities Forum](#)

[London Diversity Group](#)

Message from the Chief Executive

Reasons to be cheerful?

Without doubt this is a very challenging time for the sector. David Orr, writing in last month's 24Housing in response to the Summer Budget said:

"...I am fundamentally an optimist and I see no reason to stop being one...As ever, I am confident we will rise to the challenge."

Is this confidence justified? From what I have seen recently, it probably is. At HDN we have run a staff mentoring programme for the sector for over ten years now. Last year we passed the milestone of the 1000th person going through the programme. This year we expected a rise in the number of applications but were amazed when we received over 250 applications, an increase of around 50% on last year.

One of the key challenges this gave us was to find the same number of suitable mentors. All of the mentors on our programme give their time voluntarily, the success of the programme depends on a huge amount of generosity and goodwill. Also, our mentors always work with someone from a different organisation and so it is often another housing provider that gets some of the benefit. We know from experience that many of our mentors come back year after year and they tell us that two of key reasons for this are that they get a lot from the experience themselves but also they feel they are giving something back to the sector.

However, we also knew from conversations with some mentors that they were unable to commit to the programme this year because of the pressures they were facing in their own organisation, which is entirely understandable.

We were therefore faced with the challenge of identifying nearly 150 suitable mentors for our programme. We went out to our existing mentors, our members and our networks and the response we received was incredible. We have now identified enough mentors and actually have others who have offered their time.

Message from the Chief Executive **P.1**

Equality & Diversity News **P.4**

Publications **P.7**

Practitioner Groups **P.8**

Upcoming Events **P.8**

Everyone at HDN would like to say a massive thank you to all those who have offered help and who contribute to the success of the programme. To each and every mentor we are truly grateful for your support. It is testament to the sector also that in these most difficult of times, people are willing to take time to work towards the good of the sector as a whole.

So, from where we stand at HDN, I think it provides not just 1,2 or 3 but over 250 reasons to be cheerful.

Feedback from September HDN Board Mentoring Launch Events in South West and North England

On 9 and 10 September, Knightstone HA and Cestria Housing hosted board mentoring launch events in the South West and North England respectively. Guest speakers included Lisa Pickard, Chief Executive of Leeds & Yorkshire HA and a mentor on the current Board Mentoring Programme and Charlotte Paxton, Head of Supported Housing at Viridian Housing and a mentee on the Programme. Both were invited to share their personal and organisational insights on the Programme to date.



Some 30 board members and officers attended the two events and, as well as being given the opportunity to shape a new board mentoring programme in their region for 2016, they took advantage of the opportunity to reflect on the “unprecedented challenges” the sector currently faces.

Interestingly, although operating at opposite ends of the country, the outlook and mood of delegates was remarkably upbeat. Yes, no-one under-estimated the scale of the current challenges faced by the sector but there were real grounds for optimism on so many fronts- particularly when it came to how best to respond to these challenges. Delegates were invited to review the core components of the current Board Mentoring Programme – finance, excellence in governance, value for money, diversity in decision making and risk & opportunity – and to then identify new elements that next year’s Programme should usefully incorporate so as to equip board members to more effectively respond to the challenges of 2016 and beyond.

Sponsorship Support for National Board Mentoring Programme 2016

We currently have around a dozen organisations supporting us as sponsors for the current 2015 Board Mentoring Programme. Following feedback from a range of organisations during the various launch events we have held across the country and in Wales this summer, we have introduced changes to make it easier and more affordable for organisations to sponsor our National Board Mentoring Programme.

If you would like more information or would like an informal initial chat please either ring me on 07985 486633 or email Boardmentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk

“Values” Project Update

Earlier in the summer, I referenced the above project which a number of our member organisations had been actively piloting. We believe that more than ever (particularly post Summer Budget 2015), it is essential that the housing sector does not lose sight of its founding “values”. I recently had the opportunity to speak to one of the organisations involved – South West based SHAL Housing – and John Shipley, their Operations Director (People). Quite simply, I was keen to find out from him what he had got from the pilot and he was happy for me to share his response which included:

“It has made me think more about stuff that I once did instinctively...particularly about the decisions I make. Are my decisions always in line with the values of the organisation I work for?”

“It has made me far more conscious about asking about why is my organisation here? What are we trying to achieve? What are our values?”

*“I only expected this project to impact on my professional life...very surprised at how it has also impacted (positively) on my personal life...values clearly apply as much **outside** the office as **inside** the office!”*

“I can’t honestly say I learnt lots of new things...but the biggest change has been that it has caused me to think more about what I do and why I do it”

To find out more and how to get involved in the Wake up to Values Project, please contact us at info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk or ring Juliet Hancock, HDN Associate, on 07768 567548.

HDN/CIH E&D Conference 2015

Our conference with the CIH on the **8th October 2015** in London will explore how organisations can take forward their work on equality and diversity and meet the challenges set in the Leadership and Diversity Commission report.

In the morning we will hear about the work of the CIH Diversity Commission as well as 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](#)

HDN Board Member Opportunity

There are vacancies coming up on HDN’s Board of Directors and we would warmly welcome applications from potential board members with the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to take us forward. Please click [here](#) for further information.

Best wishes



Clifton Robinson, Chief Executive HDN

Quick Links

E & D NEWS

[Vast social cleansing' pushes tens of thousands of families out of London](#)

[Minister reveals successful bids for fuel poverty fund](#)

[Why property firms still need to build diversity in the workplace](#)

[LGBT housing association seeks inspiration from the US](#)

[Warning over rural Starter Home Plan](#)

[Welsh planning panel gender balance plan](#)

Equality & Diversity News

['Vast social cleansing' pushes tens of thousands of families out of London](#)

The Guardian, 28th August 2015

Tens of thousands of poor families have left inner London in the past five years, creating "social cleansing on a vast scale" and leaving large parts of the capital as the preserve of the rich, figures suggest. The extent of the problem is revealed in data that shows the number of children entitled to free school meals, a widely used indicator of deprivation, has dropped by almost a third in some London boroughs since 2010. The figures show that while there has been a 3% drop in those eligible for free school meals across England, four inner London boroughs have seen a decline of 25% or more. Across inner London as a whole there was an average fall of 16%. Although there is no definite link between welfare reforms and the reduction in free school meal claimants, Sadiq Khan, the prospective London mayoral candidate who obtained the figures, said government policies were creating an increasingly segregated city.

[Minister reveals successful bids for fuel poverty fund](#)

Inside Housing, 25th August 2015

A total of 28 social landlords have successfully bid for a slice of a £5m fund to make homes cheaper to heat. Scottish housing minister Margaret Burgess said 2,000 of the country's poorest households would benefit from the £5m Home Energy Efficiency Programmes Scotland (HEEPS) for social housing providers. The scheme offers funding to housing associations and councils towards energy efficiency measures. Social landlords could bid for



up to £250,000 each and there were 63 bid submissions and work must be completed by 31st March 2016.

[Why property firms still need to build diversity in the workplace](#)

The Independent, 25th August 2015

A new survey this week from Architects' Journal and Construction News found that 85 per cent of gay men and women in the construction industry have encountered homophobic comments in the workplace in the past year. The property sector fared only slightly better in the survey, with 63 per cent of gay staff hearing homophobic remarks. Meanwhile, no construction companies and just nine property businesses made it on to a 2015 list of Britain's 100 most gay-friendly workplaces compiled by the charity Stonewall. The property groups that did appear on the list largely comprised housing associations or public-sector groups

[LGBT housing association seeks inspiration from the US](#)

Inside Housing, 25th August 2015

Bob Green, the Chief Executive of Stonewall Housing has been to America to look at examples of pioneering lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender housing projects. These schemes are based out of Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Los Angeles and it is hoped that lessons can be learned to allow some of the principles to be transferred to a UK setting. This is part of a drive by Stonewall to link their advice service and housing provision.

[Worklessness and social housing: a look behind the numbers](#)

[Evictions soar in England and Wales as benefit cuts bite](#)

[The housing association that will no longer build homes for the poor](#)

[Benefit cut 'could make thousands of vulnerable young people homeless'](#)

[Illegal immigrants to UK face eviction without court order under new laws](#)

[Warning over rural Starter Home Plan](#)

Inside Housing, 24th August 2015

There are concerns that the extension of the Starter Homes programme to rural exception sites could lead to new homes being sold on the market, rather than remaining as affordable housing for local people. It was previously announced by the DCLG that the Starter Homes scheme would not apply to rural exception sites – sites for affordable housing development where housing would not usually be acceptable due to planning constraints. However, the Starter Homes scheme will now be promoted on rural exception sites to boost productivity and will replace affordable housing on many sites.

[Welsh planning panel gender balance plan](#)

Inside Housing, 19th August 2015

The Welsh Government is consulting on proposals aimed at ensuring gender balance on new strategic planning panels. The panels, introduced under the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, will be responsible for devising plans for housing and infrastructure which cut across a number of planning authorities. As part of the Welsh Government's push to increase the proportion of women in decision-making roles, one proposal would give Welsh ministers the power to intervene if panels failed to achieve set minimum percentages of men and women among their membership.

[Worklessness and social housing: a look behind the numbers](#)

The Guardian, 18th August 2015

Over half (52%) of working age people who reside in social housing are not working. However, we need to look beyond the headline figures and consider that this stock houses vulnerable people. The reality is that 40% of working age people in social housing can be considered economically inactive, some are carers, other sick or disabled. This leaves just 10% as unemployed. The report estimates 1.1 million social renters could be helped into work, but warns against the use of a one size fits all approach in achieving this.

[Evictions soar in England and Wales as benefit cuts bite](#)

The Financial Times, 13th August 2015

The number of people being evicted by their landlords has risen sharply in the past four years, according to official statistics — a trend that housing charities blame on benefit cuts imposed by the previous coalition government. More than 43,000 households in rented housing in England and Wales were evicted by county court bailiffs in the 12 months to June, according to figures published by the Ministry of Justice, a 50% increase in the last four years and the highest level on record. The situation may well deteriorate as plans to cap household benefits at £20,000 are introduced.

[The housing association that will no longer build homes for the poor](#)

The Guardian, 7th August 2015

One of the largest housing associations in the UK last week announced it would no longer build social housing. Instead, its chief executive said, it will only build homes for sale, for rent at full market rates or for shared ownership. Furthermore, Genesis housing association, which owns and manages about 33,000 homes around London and the south-east, will consider selling or raising the rents on its existing social homes once they become vacant. There is no doubt that housing associations are operating in a difficult environment: government funding to build social homes was cut by 60% in 2010 and the impacts of welfare reforms have heavily affected their tenants. There is already talk of a number of housing associations considering de-registering as a social housing provider, paying back their grants and becoming private companies.

[Benefit cut ‘could make thousands of vulnerable young people homeless’](#)

The Guardian, 4th August 2015

Thousands of vulnerable young people could be made homeless as a result of the government’s plans to scrap housing benefit payments for jobless 18- to 21-year-olds, the YMCA has said.

However, the government argues that its plans to end entitlement to housing benefit for unemployed youngsters will remove the incentive for them to leave home and live on benefits. The policy, which would affect all new claimants after April 2017, will save £135m over four years, according to government projections set out in the budget. But the YMCA says once exempt groups are taken into account such as care-leavers, together with knock-on costs

to public services of dealing with increased homelessness among who lose support, the net savings are likely to be just £3m.

[Illegal immigrants to UK face eviction without court order under new laws](#)

The Guardian, 4th August 2015

New immigration check rules could cause landlords to “shy away” from letting homes to non-British tenants who are in the country legally, the Chartered Institute of Housing has warned. The Immigration Bill will give landlords the ability to end tenancies, sometimes without a court order, when tenants are no longer allowed legally to remain in the UK. Landlords repeatedly failing to check the status of their tenants, or who fail to remove illegal immigrants from their properties, could face up to five years in prison. The principle concern is that because checking immigration status is a complicated process, and the result could be that landlords are reluctant to let to anyone that don’t consider British to avoid having to make them.

Quick Links

E & D NEWS

[Starter homes – will they be affordable?](#)

[Safe as houses? Crime and tenure patterns](#)

[The homelessness monitor](#)

Publications

[Starter homes – will they be affordable?](#)

Shelter, 26th August 2015

The analysis from Shelter has shown that the Government's Starter Homes programme will not help people lower, or even average incomes into home ownership by 2020. For those earning the National Living Wage, they will be able to afford a Starter Home in only 2% of local authorities; for families earning average wages this is just 42%. Starter home will also be funded by replacing other forms of affordable housing such as Social Rent or Shared ownership which will exacerbate the problems. Shelter are highly critical of the policy in its current form, and advocate for current affordable housing schemes to be continued in addition to Starter Homes.

[Safe as houses? Crime and tenure patterns](#)

The Police Foundation, 20th August 2015

This report found that incidents of burglary are likely to be more frequent in areas with a concentration of private rented property, than in areas of predominantly social housing. This in part due to the capacity built up over time by social landlords through activities such as partnership work with authorities, an extensive regulatory framework, and the development of social resource.



[The homelessness monitor – Wales 2015](#)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 11th August 2015

The latest instalment in the Homeless Monitor series, which analyses the homelessness impacts of economic and recent policy developments in the UK. The 2014 Housing Act (Wales) places the emphasis onto prevention for those under threat of homelessness and relief for those already homeless. However, homelessness due to loss of tenancy increased by 20%. In addition, lower Local Housing Allowance rates are a barrier for homeless people looking to access the private rented sector in Wales.



HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with Orbit Housing Group, Curo, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, DISC 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 **1st December 2015**, venue to be confirmed.

Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum

Date and venue of next meeting to be confirmed

North East Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

The next meeting will be held on the **17th December 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 **9th September 2015**, venue to be confirmed.

London Diversity Group

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

Upcoming Events

- [Board Mentoring: Diversity of Thought](#) – 2nd October 2015, Leeds
- [Board Mentoring Briefing Session](#) – 6th October 2015, Liverpool
- [CIH/HDN E&D Conference](#) - 8th October 2015, London
- [Board Mentoring Briefing Session](#) – 14th October 2015, London

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