



## Quick Links

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## Message from the Chief Executive

### More than ever to do!

A scan through this briefing – from the Resolution Foundation’s analysis of the higher rates of unemployment, greater number of barriers to work and lower pay impacting on ethnic minorities in comparison to their white counterparts, to the Report dealing with Homes and Ageing in England through to the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission publication of its annual State of the Nation Report - highlights the inescapable fact that, as we start 2016, there are just as many challenges to overcome as there were 10 or 20 years ago if we really are to move towards becoming a more equal and inclusive society.

This e-briefing also highlights the latest updates on a range of other issues that colleagues who agree with the vision of living and working in a more equal and inclusive society and workplace will want to be scanning through:

- *Life-time tenancies*
- *Pay-to-stay*
- *Social tenants housing benefit caps*
- *The impact of HB cuts*
- *Impact of Bedroom Tax*
- *Impact of Universal Credit rent arrears*



HDN is totally committed to support member organisations work through these and other challenges faced by the sector whether through the provision of specialist briefings, special events/conferences or specific training through our own associates or partner agencies.

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## South West Regional Forum Conference – New Regional E&D Practitioners Group Launch Event

On 25 February, we hope to be putting into action some of the key messages outlined above. One of our partner organisations, the NHF, will be hosting in their city centre office in Bristol next month a special joint conference event involving local council members of an organisation known as South West Councils (SWC) who have been responsible for pushing forward the HR and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion agendas in local authorities based in the South West, and members of the group that HDN has been supporting for a number of years, the South & South West Equality Practitioners Group.

We plan to hold a special event next month which we hope will lead to the creation of a new E&D forum that will not only bring together housing and local authority colleagues together but will help give the group a much tighter geographical focus than was possible with the previous South & South West Group which had a membership ranging from Cornwall to London!

We have worked hard to find a range of speakers and themes that would appeal to both housing and local authority colleagues and we can confirm we will have the following speakers and topics:

### **Sarah Whelan, Project Engagement Manager, Equality & Human Rights Commission**

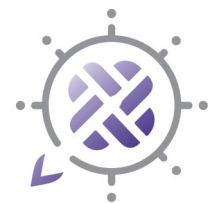
*Sarah heads the Commission's Preventing and tackling homophobic and transgendered hate crimes project. She will provide an overview of the project and will focus on the involvement of Stonewall Housing in the project which examined the link between housing and hate crime as experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.*

### **Dr. Omar Khan, Director of the Runnymede Trust** who will focus on "Ethnic inequalities in Britain".

*The Runnymede Trust has an international reputation as a research and policy organisation. Omar will give an overview of the Trust's work on financial inclusion, employment and the Budget before then sharing with us the Trust's recent housing data research report which ranks all local authorities in England and Wales by ethnic inequalities, including housing inequalities.*

### **Juliet Hancock, HDN Associate**

*Juliet will share her experience of delivering HDN's Staff Mentoring Programme in the South West and why the new HDN South West Board Mentoring Programme to be launched in 2016 is needed more than ever by housing associations, ALMOs and local authorities facing unprecedented challenges.*



**SOUTH WEST COUNCILS**

For further information (including costs) please email [info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)

## **Gender Pay-Gap- Latest Update and why it is likely soon to impact on your organisation!**

The Government conceded an amendment to the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 Act (new section 147), which requires regulations under section 78 of the Equality Act 2010 to be made within 12 months of the Act coming into force. The Act received Royal Assent on 26 March 2015. This means that from Spring 2016, employers with 250 or more employees will have to publish gender pay gap information on an annual basis.

The Government carried out a consultation exercise (which closed on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2015) during which they invited the views of employers on a number of related issues including the following:

- The impact that the requirement to publish this information will have on closing the gender pay gap?
- Using which measures, showing the differences in the pay of male and female employees, is it possible to calculate from existing data and systems?
- The suggested frequency of publication
- An assessment of the anticipated costs of complying with the regulations
- Is the threshold, currently set at 250 or more employees, reasonable?
- What support is required to enable employers to implement the regulations?

In terms of when all of this will kick-in, the consultation document states:

*‘Although we expect the required regulations to be made during the first half of 2016, we propose that commencement of the regulations should be delayed for an appropriate period to give businesses an opportunity to prepare for implementation.’*

The precise details of what will be required by employers will become clearer once the Government has published the results of the consultation *‘in the winter.’* We will of course keep you updated via this e-briefing.

### **Tower Hamlets Homes – DNA success!**

Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) has become only the second ALMO nationally to be awarded our Diversity Network Accreditation (DNA) - for its excellent practice in delivering equality and diversity.

THH received the prestigious award from the Housing Diversity Network (HDN) – in recognition of its work to provide accessible, inclusive and fair service for all.

As part of a detailed assessment HDN reviewed how well THH promotes, monitors and evaluates equality and diversity within the organisation. There were also site visits and one-to-one interviews with staff, residents and partners of THH. The HDN assessors said: *‘THH has a lot of exemplary work going on, and have shown great innovation and leadership on equality and diversity’.*



It was an absolute pleasure for me to present the DNA plaque to THH’s Chair and some 20 staff and customers as it was very clear that even after enjoying 4 consecutive annual TPAS E&D Award victories, obtaining the DNA was considered a huge achievement by Tower Hamlet Homes -so well done THH!

## **Stonewall Top 100 Index**

Stonewall's Top 100 index has just been published and we are delighted to see that of the 7 housing organisations represented no fewer than 6 of them are HDN members. So well done to the following member organisations for their fantastic achievement:

- \* *B3Living*
- \* *Circle Group*
- \* *Riverside Group*
- \* *Tower Hamlets Homes*
- \* *London & Quadrant Housing Trust*
- \* *Your Homes Newcastle*

## **NHF Board Members Conference 5 February, London**

The NHF have invited HDN to speak at their Board Members conference to discuss our National Board Mentoring Programme. It will be my last major conference speaking engagement before I retire at the end of April and I am delighted that I will be sharing the platform with two board member participants from the 2015 programme, Virginia De La Hamayde (Riverside Group Board Member) and Damian Roche (Regional Housing Director, Accent Group).

Do come along if you can to see what impact the 2015 Programme had on this Board Mentor and Board Mentee respectively and why we are convinced that current and potential board members across the country need support more than ever in the light of the unprecedented challenges they now face. Applications are open for the 2016 programme so if you would like more information please contact HDN on 01484 652606 or email us at [boardmentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk](mailto:boardmentoring@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk)

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Social Housing - Policy and Practice Thinkpiece**

In partnership with CLES, we have recently prepared a publication on equality, diversity and inclusion as part of a wider piece of work that is being undertaken this year. The publication is available to HDN members from the following link - [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Social Housing - Policy and Practice](#)

Please note that other recent publications for HDN members are also available on our website:

[HDN & CLES Community Cohesion Report \(2014\)](#)

[HDN Governance & Diversity \(2015\)](#)

[Akerman-Livingstone v. Aster Communities Briefing \(2015\)](#)

[Practical Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty for Housing Providers \(2015\)](#)

[Human Rights Act & Housing \(2015\)](#)

Best wishes



**Clifton Robinson**  
**Chief Executive**

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# Equality & Diversity News

Please note, to access articles from **Inside Housing** you will need a valid subscription.

[Concern over social tenant HB cap](#)  
26<sup>th</sup> of November, Inside Housing

Sector figures have raised concerns over George Osborne's move to cap housing benefit for new social tenants in line with Local Housing Allowance (LHA). The chancellor's announcement yesterday sparked expectations that some housing associations may have to build smaller homes and triggered warnings that the move could hit vulnerable single people. Under the changes, single people under 35 without children will be restricted to the same amount of housing benefit private tenants can claim for a room in a shared house. Terrie Alafat, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Housing, said: "This change will make it very difficult in many areas for single people under 35 to find a home in the social or private rented sector."

[Lewis: Changes will allow poorest to buy](#)  
26<sup>th</sup> of November, Inside Housing

George Osborne announced a doubling of affordable housing investment to £4bn from 2018, with the vast majority directed towards discounted homes to buy. The Housing Minister Brandon Lewis, has claimed that the new government policies will allow households on the lowest incomes to buy a home, after a massive switch of state funding from sub-market rent to sale. However research by homelessness charity Shelter this summer showed Starter Homes would be unaffordable to those on low incomes in almost all areas. Combining the policy, which offers homes at a 20% discount, with Help to Buy would make it accessible to more people, but it is not clear if lenders would be happy to offer mortgages on this basis.



[DCLG to end guarantees scheme](#)  
30<sup>th</sup> of November, Inside Housing

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has confirmed that the £3.5bn Affordable Homes Guarantees Scheme (AHGS) will run to March and no longer. Under the programme housing associations have accessed the bond market at rates as low as 2.89%, or borrowed from the European Investment Bank (EIB) at even lower costs. Run by The Housing Finance Corporation (THFC) through its subsidiary company Affordable Housing Finance (AHF), the programme has raised more than £2bn of debt to build affordable housing, with the debt guaranteed by government. This decision follows the Autumn Statement, where the government announced a shift in housing funding towards discounted products for sale rather than rent.

[Regulator criticises councils over Traveller sites](#)  
30<sup>th</sup> of November, Inside Housing

Some Scottish councils show "little awareness" that regulatory standards for social landlords apply to Gypsy and Traveller sites, a report has found. The Scottish Housing Regulator has criticised authorities north of the border for failing to deliver on two key indicators laid out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The report, Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland – a Thematic Inquiry, said some landlords made no provision for communal facilities, with limited routine gathering and use of tenants' feedback.

[Largest hike in affordable homes stock for 19 years](#)  
2<sup>nd</sup> of December, Inside Housing

England's affordable housing stock increased by more than 66,000 homes last year – the highest rise for nearly 20 years. Statistics from the Department of Communities and Local Government today reveal there were 66,640 homes added to the affordable housing stock in



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### E & D NEWS

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2014/15 as social landlords completed their 2015/18 Affordable Homes Programme homes. This is a 55% increase on the 42,870 recorded for 2013/14 and the highest annual figure since the 74,530 recorded in 1995/96. However the numbers of new homes built for social rent continues to decrease, with 9,590 added to supply in 2014/15, down from 10,920 in 2013/14.

[\*\*Calls to protect supported housing from LHA cap\*\*](#)

*3<sup>rd</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

Ministers are facing calls to exempt supported housing from the Local Housing Allowance cap, following warnings that schemes for vulnerable people could be scrapped. Under changes announced in last week's Spending Review, housing benefit for social tenants will be capped in line with Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates – the amount of benefit claimants are entitled to in the private rented sector. The move, estimated to save £225m per year by 2020/21, is expected to hit supported housing for vulnerable, homeless, disabled and older people, which commands higher rents because it is more expensive to build and manage.

[\*\*Labour attempts to water down Pay to Stay\*\*](#)

*3<sup>rd</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

Labour MPs have tabled a series of amendments to proposed legislation in an attempt to water down the government's Pay to Stay policy. Shadow ministers are attempting to alter the government's plans to force higher-income social housing tenants to pay up to market rent. Under the proposed policy, tenants with a household income of £30,000 or more (£40,000 in London) would pay higher rents. Labour is seeking exemptions for people aged 65 years or older, carers, those in receipt of care, disabled people, people on zero-hours contracts and those with seasonal contracts

of employment. It is also seeking an exemption for people on housing benefit.

[\*\*Lifetime tenancies to be scrapped\*\*](#)

*9<sup>th</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

Lifetime tenancies in council housing will be "phased out" under a new amendment to the Housing and Planning Bill tabled by the government yesterday. Amendments to the bill mean new secure tenancies granted after the bill comes into force will be for a period of between two and five years. The changes mean the tenancy will be reviewed at the end of each term, with the potential for the tenant to be evicted. They will not apply to existing tenants. If passed on to a family member, the tenancy will be converted to a fixed term. Martyn Kingsford, honorary policy advisor at the Tenants' and Residents' Organisations of England (TAROE), said: "This government policy will change the nature of communities, increase the work load of hard-pressed housing officers and create tension between landlords and tenants."

[\*\*Watchdog takes action over 'misleading' DCLG stats\*\*](#)

*15<sup>th</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

A watchdog has stripped government homelessness figures of 'national statistics' status, branding them "potentially misleading". In a report published on Thursday, the UK Statistics Authority criticised the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) method of publishing homelessness figures for England. It called on the department to take "urgent actions, including presenting them in their proper context". The UK Statistics Authority said until the DCLG does this, the figures cannot be classed as national statistics.

[\*\*Charities warn of housing benefit cut impact\*\*](#)

*15<sup>th</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

More than four in 10 young people using homelessness services face losing their

accommodation because of government benefit cuts, a survey within Homeless Link's annual Youth Homelessness report has found. The government is planning to remove housing benefit for 18 to 21-year-old jobseekers. A survey by umbrella group Homeless Link, of 158 providers of homelessness services, found that 44% of the respondents' clients were aged between 18 and 21 and were not care leavers (exempt from the policy). Housing figures have raised concerns that without access to housing benefit, many homeless young people will be unable to pay for their accommodation and would be unable to return home raising concerns regarding an increase in homelessness among young people.

### [Care provider warns of LHA cap's £23m hit](#)

*15<sup>th</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

A housing association has warned it faces losses of £23m a year from its extra care and retirement housing business if the government goes ahead with proposed welfare changes. Housing & Care 21 has warned capping housing benefit at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels would "kill off" its provision of retirement and extra care housing. It has produced preliminary financial modelling which shows it could lose £13m a year from its 3,888 rented extra care properties, and £10.5m a year from its 11,000 retirement homes if the changes go through. Housing & Care 21's modelling is the first major estimate of the impact of the changes since the LHA cap was announced by George Osborne in the Spending Review last month.

### [Nine in 10 Universal Credit tenants in arrears](#)

*17<sup>th</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

Nearly 90% of social tenants receiving Universal Credit are in rent arrears because of a seven-week wait for the first payment, a report has revealed. Exclusive research by the National Federation of ALMOs (NFA) and the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) shows tenants have fallen into "shocking" levels of arrears since the scheme started to be rolled out nationally in April last year. The survey revealed that 89% of 2,000 new Universal Credit recipients were in arrears and, of these, 34% were subject to an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) which passes rent directly to landlords after accruing more than eight weeks of arrears. It also revealed tenants were suffering financial hardship, with some landlords reporting tenants turning to loan sharks to cover their costs during the seven-week wait for the first Universal Credit payment.

### [Bedroom tax tenants fail to downsize](#)

*18<sup>th</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

Just 8% of tenants hit by the bedroom tax have moved to smaller properties, an official study commissioned by the government has found. An evaluation of the policy, published yesterday, estimated that around 45,000 tenants around Britain have downsized, which the study said was "no more than 8% of those affected". The evaluation, which was carried out in 2014, was based on surveys of 256 social landlords, housing benefit claimants and major lenders.

### [Increase in number of children in B&Bs](#)

*17<sup>th</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

The number of homeless families with children living in bed and breakfast accommodation has increased by nearly 50% in England, figures published today reveal. Statistics from the Department for Communities and Local Government show there were 3,000 families with children in B&Bs at the end of September, a rise of 45% from 2,060 the year before. Overall, 68,560 households were living in temporary accommodation – a rise of 13% compared to last year – which included 53,480 with children or pregnant women. The government has announced a £5m fund to the 25 local authorities facing the most pressure in moving people out of temporary accommodation.

### [Increase in disabled people on waiting lists](#)

*23<sup>rd</sup> of December, Inside Housing*

The number of disabled people on council housing waiting lists has increased by 17.3% in the last five years, research by charity Leonard Cheshire Disability has revealed. The charity found that one in seven people – 13.7% – on housing waiting lists in England are disabled, up from one in 11 people – 9.2% – five years ago. In 2010/11 there were 163,598 disabled people on council housing waiting lists, and this had increased to 187,597 in 2015. In contrast, the charity found that the number of people on waiting lists overall has decreased by 21% in the same period. The charity said that "thousands" of disabled and older people are "trapped in unsuitable homes" and are unable to move around freely. It is calling for councils to make it mandatory for developers to include Lifetime Homes – homes that are easily adaptable for lifetime use – in their building plans.

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[Supported housing: Understanding need and supply](#)

[Homes and Ageing in England](#)

## Publications



### [Extra care housing in Wales: A state of the nation report](#)

*2<sup>nd</sup> of December, Housing Lin*

This report by the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University for the Housing LIN, draws on the experiences of older people and the expertise of a number of sector leaders who have contributed to our understanding of the current state of extra care housing in Wales. It gives a powerful account for encouraging and facilitating new extra care housing developments in Wales.

### [Making your home dementia friendly](#)

*3<sup>rd</sup> of December, Housing Lin*

This booklet by the Alzheimer's Society will be useful for housing managers, handypersons, care & repair and housing related care and support staff in close contact with people with dementia who want to stay at home and/or relatives and friends who are supporting them. It describes some of the practical ways to create a home environment that does not become confusing or restrictive if you have dementia.

### [Guide on Engaging with the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#)

*7<sup>th</sup> of December, Equality and Diversity Forum*

From local voices to global audience: Engaging with the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination is the up-to-date second edition guide to the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). It outlines what ICERD is, how it can be used in practice

to promote accountability, the roles and responsibilities it affords to governments, National Human Rights Institutions and civil society organisations, and explains civil society participation in the treaty process.

### [Runnymede Trust report on BME attitudes to immigration](#)

*7<sup>th</sup> of December, Equality and Diversity Forum*

The Runnymede Trust's "This is Still About Us. Why Ethnic Minorities see Immigration Differently", a report explores the attitudes of ethnic minorities in Britain on immigration and Europe using high-sample surveys and focus groups across several areas to explore BME opinion.

### [JRF: Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2015](#)

*7<sup>th</sup> of December, Equality and Diversity Forum*

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion is a regular, independent assessment of progress in tackling poverty and other types of disadvantage across the United Kingdom. The report, written by the New Policy Institute, uses official data from a range of sources to look at trends and patterns, allowing us to get a better understanding of the contemporary nature of poverty and exclusion.

### [Supported housing: Understanding need and supply](#)

*9<sup>th</sup> of December, Housing Lin*

This report highlights the growing shortfall in supported housing places, examines the causes, and highlights potential solutions. It estimates that there are 109,556 available places in supported housing for those of working age in 2015/16, amounting to a shortfall of 15,640 - over 14% of existing supply - and suggests that if current trends



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continue, the annual shortfall will grow to 29,053 by 2019/20 and 46,771 by 2024/25.

The report calls for government to adopt number of revenue and capital measures, including excluding housing for vulnerable people from reductions in social rents and from any Housing Benefit caps and continue Department of Health investment in supported housing.

#### [Homes and Ageing in England](#)

*10<sup>th</sup> of December, Housing Lin*

The BRE paper outlines how simple changes made to the homes of older people could save the NHS more than £600 million a year. Using data collected by the English Housing Survey, and the methodology from the earlier report, 'The Cost of Poor Housing to the NHS' opens a new window. The findings show that there are over a million homes occupied by those over 55 where there is a significant risk to health (for example, excess cold or of injury from falling on poorly designed steps, both inside and outside the home). It estimates that treating these avoidable illnesses and injuries costs the NHS over £600 million a year and offers a selection of case studies.

#### [Multi-Generational Homes: Building a Community for all Ages](#)

*17<sup>th</sup> of December, Housing Lin*

This Housing LIN Case Study no 116 features the award winning development, Castlemaine Court, in Byfleet, Surrey. Designed by Archadia architects for Crown Simmons Housing, it offers affordable, fully accessible, high-quality, multi-generational, sustainable one and two-bedroom homes for people of all ages. It was recognised earlier this year as the best designed development in the Inside Housing Top 60 developments of 2015.

#### [Scottish Government analysis of "Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland"](#)

*21<sup>st</sup> of December, Equality and Diversity Forum*

"Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland: A Comprehensive Analysis of the 2011 Census" was published by the Scottish Government, and brings together analysis previously published in three separate analytical reports to provide a comprehensive and wide ranging evidence base on Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers.

#### [Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission 'State of the Nation 2015' report](#)

*31<sup>st</sup> of December Equality and Diversity Forum*

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission have published its annual State of the Nation Report, which identifies "some signs of progress". However such signs do not go "nearly go far enough or fast enough to address the gulf between the divided Britain of the present and the One Nation Britain we aspire to become".



## HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with South Liverpool Homes, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, 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](mailto: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 **21<sup>st</sup> January 2016**, Liverpool Mutual Homes.

### **Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum**

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016**, venue to be confirmed.

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

The next meeting will be held on the **17<sup>th</sup> March 2016**, venue to be confirmed.

### **South & South West Equality & Diversity Forum**

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **25<sup>th</sup> February 2016**, see details of conference below.

### **Midlands Equalities Forum**

The next Forum meeting is still to be confirmed.

### **London Diversity Group**

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **9<sup>th</sup> February 2016**, Amicus Horizon, Surrey

## Upcoming Events

- [Board Members' Conference 2016](#) - 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> February 2016, London
- [South West E&D Forum Conference](#) - 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016, Bristol

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 (CLES). For further information on CLES 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)