



Message from the Chief Executive

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Inside Housing Leadership Diversity Survey

A few days before our “*Mentoring for board members in turbulent times*” presentation to the 2016 NHF Board Members’ Conference, Inside Housing sought my opinion on some early findings from their extensive survey on diversity. The results reveal that, as a sector, we have a huge distance to travel if our boards and leadership can be said to even reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. For further information please visit the following [link](#).

NHF Board Members’ 2016 Conference

“The work carried out by a board is crucial to the success of an organisation. There will be tough decisions ahead about what direction to take and what opportunities to seize and setting the right strategic course will be the key to making sure associations not only survive, but thrive.”

The above words were from David Orr welcoming delegates to the NHF Board Members’ Conference held in London on 5/6 February. I believe that David’s reference to the importance of boards is crucial and whole-heartedly agree with his view that more than ever in these challenging times, organisations need to be supporting both their staff and board members through the type of mentoring support programmes that we offer at HDN.

Special thanks to David for his personal commitment in supporting us as a Mentor over the past few years on our Staff Mentoring Programme (no surprise that all of his Mentees over the years have benefited hugely from having him as a Mentor!) and also the personal and



organisational support he and the Federation have given our National Board Mentoring Programme.

Huge personal thanks to conference delegates (not surprisingly mainly board members!) who came to our “*Mentoring for board members in turbulent times*” sub-plenary. My 2015 board mentor and board mentee co-presenters, Damian Roche (Accent Group) and Virginia De La Hamayde (Riverside) were brilliant! Massive thanks also to Kam Urwin (Mentoring Manager) and Juliet Hancock (Mentoring Associate) for their invaluable support throughout the conference. We are now totally committed to building on the interest by running another board mentoring programme from April 2016 and we are currently taking applications. Please visit the following [link](#) to obtain additional information.

Changes to HDN “Membership Offer”

As with any other organisation that is serious about making sure we “not only survive, but thrive” (to quote David Orr again), we need to regularly review what we offer to our members and make changes where necessary after due consultation and feedback. We will be sending out further information of the proposed changes to our membership offer shortly, but in summary it will involve two strands:

1. Additional support around our “training offer”

We are very aware that with rent reduction and other challenges, training budgets are under pressure as never before and that equality, diversity and inclusion training will inevitably be hit. We want to support you by offering you the opportunity to maximise the impact of your limited training budgets in a number of ways including:

- Providing access to free training resources (including some free standard EDI training, free video and audio resources and free e-learning).
- Offering places to our members on our “Train the E&D Trainer” sessions for £20 a place (to cover cost of lunch and materials) instead of our normal £200 charge.

2. Changing our “mentoring offer”

The change we are considering here would allow our members to still have the same overall number of free staff mentoring places but they would be free to allocate those places between our traditional *staff mentoring programme* and a new *manager mentoring programme*. The manager mentoring programme would be intended for more senior staff who (like mentees on the staff mentoring programme) would be matched with mentors from other organisations.

London Diversity Group

I was delighted to attend my final meeting before retirement of the LDG which met recently on 9 February at the offices of AmicusHorizon in Croydon. A really well attended meeting, great presentation from our hosts, lots of really good debate and some incredibly positive and constructive feedback when I outlined our revised membership proposals above.



Amicus Horizon 12 February Case Study – Kate Dodsworth, Executive Director, People and Strategy, Amicus Horizon

On the Road With AmicusHorizon

One of the most rewarding things we do at HDN is to get out on the road and visit members. CEO Clifton Robinson was delighted to get an invite to AmicusHorizon's Staff Diversity Group on 12 February. AmicusHorizon have been on a positive journey to improve diversity at all levels. Using the recent CIH 10 by 20 challenges as a framework they're looking at staff engagement, recruitment and progression to make sure they achieve a diverse talent from entry level roles right through to Boards and Committees. Kate Dodsworth, Executive Director of People and Strategy said, 'Clifton joined us for our meeting and gave really valuable feedback on our new diversity strategy. This was a real boost to colleagues who've worked so hard to develop it'.



Best wishes

Clifton Robinson
Chief Executive

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[Call for national task force on retirement housing](#)

Equality & Diversity News



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

[Long waits for disabled people on housing lists says charity](#)

29th December 2015, BBC News

There has been a marked increase in waiting times for disabled people looking for accessible local authority housing. The Leonard Cheshire charity says the number of those waiting for a home has risen by 7% in the last five years, with some on the list for up to 12 years. The government says it plans to build 8,000 homes for disabled and elderly people in England, but campaigners say far more are needed.

[Landlords call for clarity on cap exemption](#)

7th January 2016, Inside Housing

An alliance of housing providers has warned plans to rehouse people with learning difficulties outside of hospital could be jeopardised, if the government does not confirm an exemption for vulnerable people from a new housing benefit cap. The Housing and Support Alliance (HSA) has written to housing minister Brandon Lewis to warn that new developments “will not be able to be delivered” until providers have more “certainty” about the “viability of the long-term funding position”. It adds this will have “significant consequences for large numbers of vulnerable people including, for example, many people with learning disabilities or mental health issues who will be forced to remain in inappropriate residential settings, contrary to government policy and acknowledged best practice, not to mention the wishes and needs of the people themselves”. Under changes announced in

the recent Spending Review, housing benefit for social tenants will be capped in line with Local Housing Allowance rates – the amount of benefit claimants are entitled to in the private rented sector.

[Right to Rent 'to prompt 2.6m immigration checks a year'](#)

6th January 2016, Inside Housing

Private landlords could be required to check the immigration status of 2.6 million people a year when strict new measures are introduced in England next month. Research by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), found that there were 2.6m moves within the private rented sector (PRS) in 2013/14. Under the scheme, private landlords could face a jail sentence or a fine of up to £3,000 per tenant if they fail to carry out immigration checks on prospective tenants. Charities have warned the scheme could cause them to discriminate against renting property out to immigrants, even if they have the right to live in the UK.

[Government considers new homelessness duty](#)

7th January 2016, Inside Housing

The government is set to consider imposing a new legal duty on councils to prevent people becoming homeless. Ministers plan to look at the proposals of an independent panel recommending that housing legislation is amended in England to place a “duty to prevent” on local authorities. The panel, which was organised by Crisis and includes the National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing, was set up last year to examine the legal duties owed to single homeless people. The proposed duty would require councils to prevent everyone, not just those in priority need, from becoming homeless.

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['Bedroom tax': Government loses Court of Appeal cases](#)

27th January 2016, BBC News

The Court of Appeal has ruled that the so-called bedroom tax discriminates against a domestic violence victim and the family of a disabled teenager. The ruling followed legal challenges by a woman who has a spare room in her home, and the grandparents of a 15-year-old who requires overnight care. The removal in 2013 of what the government calls the spare room subsidy cuts benefits for social housing tenants with a "spare" room. Ministers have said they will appeal. The case is now due to be decided in the Supreme Court.

[Call for national task force on retirement housing](#)

7th January 2016, Inside Housing

United for All Ages, a social enterprise which aims to bring younger and older people together, has outlined 20 ideas to "promote intergenerational equity". A number of the ideas relate to housing and care, including a suggestion of a new task force on retirement housing. Jane Ashcroft, chief executive of housing association Anchor, said: "I firmly believe the government should create a national task force of developers, ministers and local government to produce a national strategy for increasing retirement housing supply." Alex Fox, chief executive of Shared Lives Plus, a network which offers home share services, said that the scheme can address issues of loneliness among the elderly community as well as young people who are unable to afford housing.

[MPs call for action over 'unfair' DHP criteria](#)

12th January 2016, Inside Housing

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) "must address" local Discretionary Housing Payment criteria which have "unintentionally and unfairly excluded"

disabled people from financial support, a parliamentary committee has concluded. The Work and Pensions select committee report concludes time-limited Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are "inadequate protection" for people the government "did not intend" welfare reforms to affect. The report states this applies to parents or guardians who care full-time for their severely disabled grown-up children and therefore cannot work, and cannot find any suitable cheaper accommodation, and yet are currently subject to the bedroom tax.

[Lifetime tenancies remain for transferring tenants](#)

12th January 2016, Inside Housing

Local authorities will still in some cases be able to offer lifetime tenancies to existing secure tenants who have opted to move to another council home. The government's Housing and Planning Bill, which was debated in parliament at report stage, will end lifetime tenancies for all new council tenants. However, housing minister Brandon Lewis confirmed today that tenants who are asked to move by their council will be able to take their security of tenure with them. Tenants who apply to their council landlord for a transfer will also be able to have a new secure tenancy when they move in some cases. Inside Housing understands that the circumstances in which councils can allow this will be outlined in future regulations by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

[8% rise in children in temporary accommodation](#)

12th January 2016, Inside Housing

The number of children in temporary accommodation in Scotland has increased by 8%, the latest data from the Scottish Government shows. The number of households with children currently makes up 27% of the 10,567 households in temporary accommodation. Overall, the number of households in temporary accommodation increased by 2% since last year, when 10,328 households were in temporary accommodation.

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[Social housing 'faces slow death' with 88,000 homes forecast to be lost by end of decade](#)

Graeme Brown, director of Shelter Scotland, said: "It is a badge of shame and extremely concerning that the number of homeless children in Scotland has risen for the second time in six months".

[Regen: PM fails to guarantee terms for returning tenants](#)

13th January 2016, Inside Housing

David Cameron has failed to give a guarantee that social tenants returning to regenerated estates will be re-housed on the same terms. At Prime Ministers Questions, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn asked the prime minister whether tenants and leaseholders would be offered homes on regenerated estates "with the same tenancy conditions as they currently have". The question followed Mr Cameron's announcement earlier this week of plans to regenerate 100 social housing estates. In response to Mr Corbyn's question, the Prime Minister said: "We're not going to be able to deal with these sink estates unless we get the agreement of tenants, unless we show how we're going to support homeowners."

[Supported housing on the brink](#)

15th January 2016, Inside Housing

Housing leaders are urgently lobbying government to protect specialist housing from a planned welfare cut, which would see mass closures of homes for the most vulnerable. Associations have put developments on hold, as anxiety grows over the government's plan to cap housing benefit for new tenants at Local Housing Allowance levels. This is often well below the cost of providing housing for older people, the mentally ill and people with disabilities and would force these schemes to close or seek wealthier tenants. The cap, first announced in the Autumn Statement, would not kick in until 2018, but would affect new tenancies granted from April this year.

[Landlords named as LGBT-friendly](#)

19th January 2016, Inside Housing

Seven social landlords have been named in a list of the top 100 employers in Britain for lesbian, gay, bi and transgender staff. B3 Living was the highest placed social landlord this year in the Stonewall Top 100 Employers list, coming fourth. The Hertfordshire-based landlord, which rose 44 places compared to last year, scored highly for having consistent policies and routes for reporting bullying in the workplace, bespoke training on LGBT issues and strong senior leadership. Josh Willacy, account manager at Stonewall, said: "In times of great change for the [housing] sector, these organisations have worked incredibly hard and are leading by example, going above and beyond to create inclusive environments for LGBT staff."

[Landlord warns of benefit cut impact on under 35s](#)

20th January 2016, Inside Housing

A specialist housing association has warned under-35s in mental health accommodation face rent deficits of almost £200 a week under a government plan. Brighton Housing Trust (BHT) shared with Inside Housing its financial modelling of the impact of capping housing benefit for social tenants, including supported housing tenants, at Local Housing Allowance rates. It revealed 70% of all its homes would be unaffordable to under 35s under the plan, as they would only qualify for the "shared room rate" – the cost of renting a room within a house. All its general needs housing in Brighton would therefore be unaffordable to under-35s by between £12 and £32 per week. In its specialist supported housing, under-35s would face a deficit of between £52.60 and £193.49 in 71 of 101 mental health units. Tenants older than 35 would also be unable to afford many of the homes, although the rental gaps were smaller. BHT also warned that the government's offer of additional Discretionary Housing Payments to plug the rental gap would be insufficient.

[Benefit cap on full-time carers for adult relatives to be scrapped](#)

26th January 2016, the Guardian

Charities hail major victory as it emerges that those who spend more than 35 hours a week caring will be exempt from the cap. The government has finally abandoned its controversial policy of imposing benefit cap penalties on full-time carers for adult relatives, two months after a court found it unlawfully discriminated against disabled people. The welfare reform minister, Lord Freud, told peers during a debate on the welfare bill on Monday that all those who spend more than 35 hours a week in a caring role would be exempt from the cap. Charities welcomed the U-turn as “a significant victory” for carers and carers’ rights.

[Supported housing wins one year rent cut exemption](#)

27th January 2016, Inside Housing

The government will exempt supported housing from the 1% social rent cut for a year. Lord David Freud wrote to interested parties to pledge “a year-long exception for all supported accommodation from the 1% rent reduction in the social rented sector”. In the letter, seen by Inside Housing, the welfare reform minister also pledged to put in place protections for supported housing tenants hit by plans to cap housing benefit in line with Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, but did not give specific details on what these would entail. The partial u-turn means that providers of supported housing are likely to be able to raise rents in line with the consumer prices index (CPI) plus 1% for a year from April, as opposed to general needs rents which will have to decrease by 1%.

[Minister rejects call for rent cut review](#)

28th January 2016, Inside Housing

The government has rejected a call from former civil service head Sir Bob Kerslake to commission an independent review of the social housing rent cut. Lord Bob Kerslake, a crossbench peer who also chairs Peabody, was one of three peers to table an amendment to the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, which would require the government to commission an independent evaluation of the four-year 1% rent cut. However, Lord David Freud, welfare reform minister, rejected the call for an independent review. The amendment, which was tabled by Sir Bob and fellow crossbenchers Lord Richard Best and Baroness Molly Meacher, was withdrawn.

[Social housing 'faces slow death' with 88,000 homes forecast to be lost by end of decade](#)

29th January 2016, The Independent

Town halls leaders have issued a bleak warning over the future of council housing in England, warning that 88,000 homes will be lost to the social housing sector by the end of the decade, forcing thousands into the hands of ‘rip-off’ private landlords. The falling number of council homes, which had already dropped from 5m in 1981 to 1.7m in 2014, will see more and more people driven into the private rental centre, leading to a £210m increase in the housing benefit bill. The LGA described the phenomenon as a shift in spending from “bricks to benefits”.

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E & D NEWS

[Silver Chic: The future of retirement housing and care](#)

[Generation Stuck Exploring the Reality of Downsizing in Later Life](#)

[House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 'The local welfare safety net Fifth Report of Session 2015-16'](#)

[Fawcett's 'Sex Equality: State of the Nation 2016 report'](#)

[Women and Equalities Committee report on transgender equality](#)

Publications



[Silver Chic: The future of retirement housing and care](#)

7th January 2016

This report sets out the findings of Anchor research, looking at the retirement housing and residential care solutions of the future. Drawing on views and experiences of 55-65 year olds, which explored their needs and preferences for retirement housing, it sets out how providers of retirement housing and residential care will need to respond to these trends, and what the future of retirement housing and residential care might look like.

[Generation Stuck Exploring the Reality of Downsizing in Later Life](#)

12th January 2016

This report explores older peoples' attitudes towards moving, the pros and cons of downsizing and provides evidence to help inform the public debate about the role of housing stock held by older people. While the demand for downsizing options is substantial, the report found there is still work to be done with raising awareness around the merits of downsizing, from releasing equity to improving physical wellbeing.

[House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 'The local welfare safety net Fifth Report of Session 2015-16'](#)

12th January 2016

The report presents the outcome of the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee's inquiry on the local welfare safety net. The report considers the opportunities localism presents for joining up services and mitigating the impacts of

reductions in entitlement, and explores the ways in which risks can be better managed.

[Fawcett's 'Sex Equality: State of the Nation 2016 report'](#)

17th January 2016

The report summarises the findings of the first stage of our poll of 8,000 people. It reveals: a 'pro-equality majority', with most people supporting equality of opportunity for women with men. Perhaps most surprisingly, that support is highest amongst men. Elsewhere, the poll also reveals that the majority of people in the UK believe that equality for women and men would be good for the economy and that many – including a high proportion of men – believe they would personally benefit from equality.

[Women and Equalities Committee report on transgender equality](#)

21st January 2016

There is still a long way to go to ensure equality for transgender people, despite welcome progress, says a report published today by the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee. The report of this new committee's first inquiry makes over 30 recommendations in a wide range of policy areas. It calls on the Government to take action to ensure full equality for trans people, emphasising the need to update existing legislation; provide better services, especially in the NHS; and improve confidence in the criminal justice system.



HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with South Liverpool Homes, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, Orbit Group 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 **20th April 2016**, venue to be confirmed.

Yorkshire and East Midlands Diversity Discussion Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **22nd March 2016**, Places for People, Sheffield.

North East Equality & Diversity Network for Housing Practitioners

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

South & South West Equality & Diversity Forum

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

Midlands Equalities Forum

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **28th April 2016**, venue to be confirmed.

London Diversity Group

The next Forum meeting is still to be confirmed.

For further information on the above events please visit the HDN website or contact carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk.



Centre for Local
Economic Strategies

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