



## 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 Executives

We are delighted to join HDN - and to be part of this community of professionals who are committed to embedding and maintaining equality and diversity practice and culture. Now more than ever, E&D is a priority we need at the top of all our agendas; as housing associations, partners and communities are facing unprecedented challenge and turbulence. We are committed to continuing the great work that Clifton Robinson and our dedicated team have achieved here at HDN.

We want to ensure that however much your world of work is changing, you are still well-supported to achieve workforce and leadership diversity, a deep understanding of customers' assets and needs, and fairness and equality across your communities – so that your organisations can deliver better performance, more relevant provision and greater impact.

We are both really looking forward to meeting with you in the coming weeks and months – and hope to see many of you at June's CIH conference in Manchester. We are especially keen to understand your current experience and challenges in delivering E&D work; and to work with you to find the right solutions, which build equality and diversity into the DNA of our organisations and inspire and empower fairness, respect and genuine prosperity across our communities.

### **Allocations policy favouring workers ruled unlawful**

A recent ruling against Ealing Council found that their policy of reserving properties that became available to let for “Working Households” and “Model Tenants” was unlawful. There is a good overview of the case and the issues involved on the Nearly Legal website [here](#)

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## Lifetime tenancies Equality Impact Assessment

The government recently published their equalities impact assessment of lifetime tenancies. You can read the report [here](#)

## Opportunities with Housing Diversity Network

HDN is currently recruiting for a Training and Consultancy Manager to help us further develop our training and consultancy offer, more details are available on our website [here](#)

We will also be advertising in the near future for someone to coordinate our membership and mentoring activity in London and the South East – watch out for further details.



## The Impact Of Equality, Diversity, And Inclusion (EDI) Practice In The Housing Sector

The report from the work that CLES has undertaken with HDN, Places for People, Akxa and Cestria is now available from the HDN website [here](#)

The report outlines the current policy context for housing associations and their EDI practice, before evaluating the social value of a number of initiatives and areas of work for the organisations involved.

It also presents some key observations for housing providers to consider when maximising social value through equality, diversity and inclusion practice. There is more detail in the report but the key factors identified are:

- Creating an underlying culture that supports EDI is essential to delivering EDI-related social value outcomes
- Understanding the specific needs and barriers of specific demographics
- Articulating the wider economic and fiscal benefits of EDI practice creates a stronger case for EDI
- Taking a holistic, systems approach to tackling barriers
- Develop partnership approaches with wider organisations that benefit from EDI activities
- Being flexible in support
- Ensuring consistency of approach and personal relationships is important

## Welcome WDH!

We're delighted that we have another new member this month with Wakefield and District Housing joining us.

## Applications for HDN Mentoring Programme Open

A reminder that applications for our mentoring programme are open now, with a deadline of **17<sup>th</sup> June**. more information is available [here](#)

Best wishes



**Sallie Bridgen**

Chief Executive



**Alison Burns**

Chief Executive

## Quick Links

### E & D NEWS

Peers step up Housing Bill pressure

Survey reveals tenants' rent cut concerns

Under-23s barred from buying Starter Homes

Human rights watchdog to review welfare reforms

Bill change 'could increase council home sales further'

Multiple defeats for government on Starter Homes

Peers reject 'homes fit for habitation' change

# Equality & Diversity News

## [Peers step up Housing Bill pressure](#)

*Inside Housing, 1<sup>st</sup> April*

Peers from across the political spectrum will join forces this month to water down key measures in the Housing and Planning Bill. Peers are set to extend the Starter Homes 20% discount period and allow councils freedom to set levels locally. Lifetime tenancies would also be preserved, or replaced with 10-year tenancies rather than the currently proposed five. Pay to Stay income thresholds would be pushed up, with the policy made voluntary for councils.

## [Survey reveals tenants' rent cut concerns](#)

*4th April, Inside Housing*

More than half of social tenants to answer a survey were concerned about a reduction in services from their landlord as a result of the 1% annual social rent cut. The research found 56% of tenants are concerned about reduced services, of which 8% are “extremely concerned”. The remaining 44% of tenants said they were “not at all concerned”. Previous Inside Housing research also found that 72% of a survey of 129 housing association chief executives said there would be cuts or closures of non-core services.

## [Under-23s barred from buying Starter Homes](#)

*5<sup>th</sup> April, Inside Housing*

An amendment to the Housing and Planning Bill means the individuals under the age of 23 will not be able to access Starter Homes; these are typically available with a 20% discount. The definition of a qualifying first time buyer has been changed to reflect this, with the term now covering a person who is at least 23 years old and who has not reached the age of 40.



## [Human rights watchdog to review welfare reforms](#)

*7<sup>th</sup> April, Inside Housing*

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) will commission an assessment to determine how welfare changes have “affected equality of opportunity and the human rights of people who share certain protected characteristics”. The Welfare Reform and Work Act, which gained Royal Assent in March, reduces the annual total household benefits cap from £26,000 to £20,000 (£23,000 in London). In an impact assessment of the legislation last June, the government admitted that six in 10 people (59%) hit by the benefit cap are likely to be female, lone, single parents. It also found “certain ethnic minorities that tend to have a higher proportion of large families are more likely to be affected” by the welfare reform.

## [Bill change 'could increase council home sales further'](#)

*8<sup>th</sup> April, Inside House*

A government amendment to the Housing and Planning Bill tabled this week states that ministers will demand a sum from a local authority based upon the value of their vacant “higher”-value stock. This, if passed by parliament, will replace a phrase in the bill which says this sum is based on the value of “high”-value stock. The change in wording has been seen as significant because it allows a more subjective measure of which council homes should be sold off. It therefore could increase the quantity of council homes sold off, housing experts have said. The current version of the bill allows the secretary of state to define ‘high-value’ in regulations. However, another government amendment tabled this week states the government will be able to “use any category of housing that the secretary of state considers appropriate as a comparator.

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### E & D NEWS

1% of tenants take up the Right to Buy

House prices rise 7.6%

Expert panel calls for homelessness duty

Government extends fixed-term tenancies for disabled

TPAS: Pay to Stay is 'aspiration tax'

Allocations policy favouring workers ruled unlawful

Greater Manchester could seek devolved powers over homelessness

### [Multiple defeats for government on Starter Homes](#)

11<sup>th</sup> April, *Inside Housing*

The House of Lords voted to give local councils the power to set the threshold of Starter Homes locally and also passed an amendment to introduce a 20-year discount period for the product, in further amendments to the Housing and Planning Bill. Peers also changed the bill to insert a period of 20 years where a chunk of the 20% discount must be repaid if the property is sold. The percentage repaid will be reduced by 5% each year.

### [Peers reject 'homes fit for habitation' change](#)

12<sup>th</sup> April, *Inside Housing*

The House of Lords has rejected an amendment to the Housing and Planning Bill which would have placed a new duty on landlords to ensure homes are fit for human habitation. The amendment, would have amended the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to place a duty on landlords to ensure homes are fit for human habitation and that they remain so during a tenancy. It would also have given tenants the power to obtain a civil injunction to force landlords to carry out necessary works. It was argued that the current system ensures stringent checks are carried out on properties, and that the proposals would have placed unnecessary stress and potential cost on tenants.

### [1% of tenants take up the Right to Buy](#)

15<sup>th</sup> April, *Inside Housing*

Less than 1% of the housing association tenants offered the chance to purchase their home under a pilot of the Right to Buy have so far made a formal application to buy; this equates to 443 tenants out of the 48,000 included in the pilot. The design of the pilot, with a ten year residency criteria and some homes exempt has influenced these figures, however in many cases tenants who expressed an interest in purchasing were simply unable to afford the purchase.

### [House prices rise 7.6%](#)

12<sup>th</sup> April, *Inside Housing*

House prices rose 7.6% across the UK to a national average of £284,000 over the year to February 2016, with a strong growth in London, the East and the South East. Figures from the Office for National Statistics House Price Index, released today, showed annual inflation of 8.2% in England, 2.8% in Wales, -0.8% in Scotland and 2.4% in Northern Ireland. Excluding London and the South East, house prices rose by 5% over the year to February 2016, down from 5.1% in the year to January 2016. The figures also showed that in February 2016, prices paid by first-time buyers were 8% higher on average than in February 2015.

### [Expert panel calls for homelessness duty](#)

25<sup>th</sup> April, *Inside Housing*

A panel of experts which includes Crisis, Kensington & Chelsea Council, Shelter and the National Housing Federation has officially published its recommendations calling for the government to introduce new duties on councils to prevent homelessness. This would establish a new legal duty on councils to prevent anyone approaching the council from becoming homeless. In doing this, councils would disregard priority need status, local connection, or whether the applicant was 'intentionally' or 'unintentionally' homeless.

### [Government extends fixed-term tenancies for disabled](#)

19<sup>th</sup> April, *Inside Housing*

Councils will be able to grant longer tenancies of up to 10 years to people with disabilities; the announcement came during debate on the Housing and Planning Bill, which proposes to phase out lifetime tenancies in favour of tenancies up to five years. The government will also amend councils to provide longer tenancies to cover the period where a child is in school. The bill as it stands allows lifetime tenancies to be granted in "certain circumstances" and will ensure the regulations include those who need to move or have fled homes due to domestic violence.

## Quick Links

### E & D NEWS

European Investment Bank (EIB) to invest £1bn in social housing

More than 225,000 households claiming Universal Credit

### [TPAS: Pay to Stay is 'aspiration tax'](#)

*18th April, Inside Housing*

The government's Pay to Stay policy, which has been defeated in the House of Lords is an "unfair tax on aspiration", according to The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). A joint paper by TPAS and Social Housing Under Threat (SHOUT) says the government's plans to increase rents up to market rent for social tenants with incomes of £30,000 or more (£40,000 in London) will hit people who are not well off and cause hardship. TPAS and SHOUT also argue the policy will increase welfare dependency and be difficult to administer. Amendments to the Housing and Planning Bill were seeking to raise the threshold to £50,000 in London and £40,000 elsewhere.

### [Allocations policy favouring workers ruled unlawful](#)

*22<sup>nd</sup> April, Inside Housing*

Ealing council's policy to ring-fence 20% of its lettings for people working a minimum of 24 hours a week has been found unlawful by the High Court; it was considered to indirectly discriminate against women, disabled and older people.

Figures quoted in the judgement suggest a reduction in lettings to disabled people since the scheme was implemented in 2013.

Disabled applicants made up 13.5% of those who obtained lettings in 2012 but only 10.6% of the successful applicants for 2015. The judge also found the scheme breached the European Convention on Human Rights and the Children's Act.

### [Greater Manchester could seek devolved powers over homelessness](#)

*28<sup>th</sup> April, Manchester Evening News*

Greater Manchester could seek devolved powers from the government over homelessness as concerns grow over the region's escalating rough sleeping crisis, with a ten-fold rise in rough sleeping in

Manchester since 2010. Proposals could include more flexibility over whether only people with a 'connection' to their specific local authority are deemed in priority need of accommodation, as is the case in London, as well as a Greater Manchester-wide approach to the issue and its funding.

### [European Investment Bank \(EIB\) to invest £1bn in social housing](#)

*25th April, Inside Housing*

The IEB has announced a further £1 billion investment into social housing in the UK, which will be matched by investment from The Housing Finance Corporation (THFC). The 30-year loans will be backed by government guarantee, substantially lowering the cost of borrowing and could fund 20,000 new homes. In excess of 70 housing associations have already applied for financing, which will allow for the construction of affordable housing. The first drawdown of an undisclosed amount was completed this week for Greensquare Housing Association at a long-term rate of 1.93%, 0.27% below the UK government's own funding rate. Greensquare said the funding allows it to embark on a development programme of more than 1,000 homes.

### [More than 225,000 households claiming Universal Credit](#)

*22<sup>nd</sup> April, Inside Housing*

The latest figures from the Department for Work and Pensions show 225,002 households were claiming Universal Credit as of 10 March, a 10.6% increase on the 203,392 who were claiming the previous month. Universal Credit has been gradually rolled out to different groups of people in different parts of the country since 2013, with all claimants due to be transferred to Universal Credit by 2021. The benefit combines a number of working-age benefits, including housing benefit, into one payment made direct to households in most circumstances.



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### E & D NEWS

Older people and alcohol misuse: Helping people stay in their homes

Runnymede Trust report on ethnic inequalities in London

Building companionship: how better design can combat loneliness in later life

Hospitals are not Homes: Transforming Care. Better care and support for people with learning disabilities and autism in England after Winterbourne

## Publications



### [Older people and alcohol misuse: Helping people stay in their homes](#)

This report identifies that whilst the majority of older people with drinking problems develop these in earlier life, old age itself can lead people to drink excessively in order to reduce boredom and depression or to make physical ill-health and pain more bearable. Alcohol misuse often goes undetected among older people until a crisis point is reached, which might be a fall, or when rent or mortgage payments fall into arrears. The impact at that point can be catastrophic, with loss of independence and potentially the loss of a home. It concludes that those who house, support or care for older people need to understand the triggers for alcohol misuse and to help older people remain connected, included and with a sense of purpose. Where older people have entrenched alcohol problems and complex needs, a firm but compassionate approach across agencies is required to provide support and treatment to enable them to remain in their home. With most areas of England now developing integrated health, care and housing models – a requirement of the Care Act 2014 - there has been no better time to act together to reduce alcohol harms among older people.

### [Runnymede Trust report on ethnic inequalities in London](#)

This research summarises ethnic inequalities as experienced across London as a whole, and within each of the capital's 32 boroughs. The report finds that ethnic inequalities are persistent and widespread, particularly in employment and housing. persistent and widespread, particularly

in employment and housing. persistent and widespread, particularly in employment and housing.

The key findings from a housing perspective are: all ethnic groups are more likely to live in overcrowded housing when compared to the White British population; all London boroughs exhibit high inequality in housing between ethnic minority populations and White British people. The percentage difference ranges from -9% to -24%; around two in five Black African (40%) and Bangladeshi (36%) people live in overcrowded housing.

### [Building companionship: how better design can combat loneliness in later life](#)

This report by Demos, supported by McCarthy & Stone, recommends that redesigning 'cities for all ages' could help prevent social disengagement. With people aged over 80 expressing that they are more than twice as likely to report feeling lonely, it found that this could be combatted through better design and age friendly environments that stimulate companionship and socialisation.

### [Hospitals are not Homes: Transforming Care. Better care and support for people with learning disabilities and autism in England after Winterbourne](#)

This booklet by The National Forum of People with Learning Disabilities and the National Valuing Families Forum sets out how to get involved in making Transforming Care for people with learning disabilities and/or autism in your area, and how to build the right services and support locally so that people do not have to go to specialist hospitals unless they really need to.

## Quick Links

### E & D NEWS

[EHRC guidance on improving board diversity](#)

[In sickness and in health - Extra Care Housing works especially well for couples](#)

[Cloisters: House of Lords Select Committee report on the Equality Act and disability](#)

## Publications



### [EHRC guidance on improving board diversity](#)

This publication aims to provide guidance for companies and executive search firms on improving the diversity of company boards within the frameworks set out by the Equality Act 2010 and the Financial Reporting Council's UK Corporate Governance Code. It outlines six key steps when making an appointment to the board:

1. Define the selection criteria in terms of measurable skills, experience, knowledge and personal qualities.
2. Reach the widest possible candidate pool by using a range of recruitment methods and positive action.
3. Provide a clear brief, including diversity targets, to your executive search firm.
4. Assess candidates against the role specification in a consistent way throughout the process. Ongoing action to improve diversity
5. Establish clear board accountability for diversity.
6. Widen diversity in your senior leadership talent pool to ensure future diversity in succession planning.

### [In sickness and in health - Extra Care Housing works especially well for couples](#)

This report is a case study in the series by Housing LIN. The Orders of St John Care Trust (OSJCT) is a large not for profit provider of care homes and extra care housing (ECH). In an effort to improve the services that are provided at OSJCT, they engaged in face to face interviews with the customers accessing these services. OSJCT found that a real benefit, one that is often understated, is that ECH keeps couples together when one of them needs care. It means that the carer can still maintain an active lifestyle, in the

knowledge that their partner is safe and supported. The report states that supporting couples enables Councils to meet their new obligations to informal carers under the Care Act 2014, it avoids unnecessary care home admission and it has obvious beneficial outcomes for couples who want to stay together.

### [Cloisters: House of Lords Select Committee report on the Equality Act and disability](#)

The House of Lords Select Committee issued a call for evidence and received and accepted 144 responses, it also heard oral evidence from 53 witnesses; this report is based on that consultation. The Committee's Report sets out some damning conclusions such as: combining disability with the other protected characteristics in the Act did not in practice benefit disabled people; the duty to make reasonable adjustments is neither well known nor well understood and there are barriers to individual people enforcing their rights under the duty; the Government's use of the 'Red Tape' challenge as a pretext for removing protection from disabled people and making changes under it increased the problems of disabled people; and there is a fundamental flaw in the equality duty.





## HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with Orbit Group, Trident Housing Association, London & Quadrant Housing Trust 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 **20<sup>th</sup> July 2016**, Your Tung Sing, Manchester

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

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **20<sup>th</sup> September 2016**, venue to be confirmed.

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

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

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

The next Forum meeting is still to be confirmed.

### **Midlands Equalities Forum**

The next Forum meeting will be held on the **1<sup>st</sup> July 2016**, Black Country Housing Group, Blackheath

### **London Diversity Group**

The next Forum meeting will be held on **8<sup>th</sup> September 2016**. Thames Valley Housing, Twickenham

## Upcoming Events

- [Train the E&D Trainer](#) - 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016, London
- [Unconscious Bias & Inclusive Management](#) - 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire

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 (CLÉS). For further information on CLÉS 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)