



HDN News **P.1**

E&D News and Publications **P.3**

## HDN News

A slight change to the ebriefing this month. We've included the message from the Chief Executives in the email so it's easier to read straight away and then the links to further news, resources and publications are in this document.

### Upcoming Events

#### **North East Diversity Network - Unconscious Bias**

April 2017, date and venue TBC

#### **Midlands Diversity Network - Community Cohesion**

April 2017, date and venue TBC

#### **Train the E&D Trainer**

16th May 2017 - Horton Housing, Bradford, 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)

### HDN Website - Careers Page

Check out our website for the latest jobs with Orbit Group, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, Knightstone Housing, Isos Housing and many more.

<http://www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk/jobs>

**Best wishes**

**The HDN Team**

**CIPD** | People Management  
Awards 2016

**Winner**

# Equality & Diversity News and Publications



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

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

### [Diversifying Diversity - the next Board frontier](#)

Who would have imagined that nearly a decade after the global financial crisis of 2008 we would still be amidst a global slowdown and that the UK, in particular, would be on a journey to exit the European Union?

According to World Bank data, global growth has slowed significantly and coincided with stagnation in global trade. Latest figures show it at its lowest since 2013. Not even the predictions of top business leaders and economists around a meteoric rise of the BRIC economies have come to pass. At the time of writing, the effect of the EU referendum has perhaps not been as dramatic as was forecast on 24 June 2016, There has certainly been no slowdown in appointments at executive level. With the Brexit process likely to take another two and half years before it is realised, it seems that companies and organisations are operating as “business as usual”, but are they ensuring that their organisations are ready for the impact when it happens?

### [BME career progression 'could add £24bn a year to UK economy'](#)

Helping black and minority ethnic (BME) people to progress in their careers at the same rate as their white counterparts could add £24bn to UK economy each year, a government-backed review has found.

The report into race in the workplace found recruitment processes, a tendency by managers to promote people similar to themselves and, in some cases, outright discrimination had all held back workers from BME backgrounds.

## Disability

### [Work and Pensions Committee report – the Disability Employment Gap](#)

6<sup>th</sup> February 2017

The House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee published their report on the disability employment gap in February 2017. The report noted that “Recent years have seen an increase in the number of disabled people in work, but too many disabled people are still being left behind in the labour market,” along with a series of recommendations.

## Age

### [Opinion: Only L&D can save us from the demographic time bomb](#)

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017

The working population is ageing. There are already 9.4 million people in employment over the age of 50 in the UK – equivalent to over 30 per cent of the workforce. The vast majority of this group will leave work permanently by age 62, taking their skills and experiences with them. There is a lack of young people to fill vacancies, and they all need to learn their jobs and gain experience.

### [National funding needed for older people in sheltered housing](#)

4<sup>th</sup> January - Inside Housing

Local government leaders have called for a two-pronged approach to the funding of sheltered housing.

In a recently published report the Local Government Association’s housing commission said the Local Housing Allowance cap is “not sufficient” to meet the higher rents charged in supported housing.

The commission said older people in sheltered housing should receive payments from a nationally administered fund, whereas vulnerable people with support needs should partly be supported by grant funding from their local council.

The government recently announced a top-up fund would be given to councils to cover any costs for supported housing tenants above the Local Housing Allowance rate. However, no further detail has been published on the amount of the fund or how it will be allocated.

## [Creating homes that people would like to live in rather than have to live in: Is there a role for occupational therapists in the design of housing?](#)

30<sup>th</sup> of January- Housing LIN

This Housing LIN Viewpoint no 85 explores the unique skill set that Occupational Therapists can bring to ensure that homes are accessible and adaptable to the changing needs of residents as they age. It highlights how first-hand experience of working with end users to find effective solutions can inform and complement the design and specifications of new build, refurbishments, and adaptations.

## [Government calls for a million more older people in work by 2022](#)

6<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Employers should increase the number of older people in the UK workforce by one million over the next five years to combat age bias, the Government's Business Champion for Older Workers will announce today. To address the widening skills gap, tackle age bias in work and enable people to stay in work longer, every UK employer should increase the number of workers aged 50-69 in the UK by 12 per cent by 2022. The target is aimed at supporting older people who want the same range of options and opportunities as younger colleagues, and to be recognised for their experience and expertise. In recognising the skills older people bring to the workplace, employers will benefit from the breadth and depth of their knowledge.

## [IFS: price rises create 'lucky half'](#)

5<sup>th</sup> January - BBC news

Younger generations will inherit much more money than their predecessors - but the amounts they get will be very unequal, according to new research. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) says the wealth of the older generation has grown by 45% over just ten years. As a result, more of that money than ever before will get passed on. But those likely to benefit the most are those who are already well off, or who already benefit from high incomes, the independent think-tank said.

According to the research, the richest half of elderly households hold 90% of the wealth, largely as a result of increasing home ownership and rising house prices. Hence a "lucky" half of the following generation will inherit the vast majority of that wealth, to the detriment of the other half.

## [Shared ownership out of reach for most young London singles](#)

4<sup>th</sup> January - Inside Housing

Most of London's shared ownership schemes are unaffordable for young people wanting to live alone, according to research by a major consumer rights organisation. Research by Which? showed that while such schemes are generally intended for first-time buyers, average minimum shares in Greater London are not in line with average salaries for young people.

Looking at 214 shared ownership studios or one-bedroom homes, Which? found that 76% of these properties are unaffordable to under-30s, who earn on average £27,900 but would require £37,300 to afford repayments. In central London, none of the 28 studios or one-bedroom properties in Zone 1 that Which? looked at was affordable for the average under-30, while the figure for Zone 2 was only 10%. A report in October last year by the Council of Mortgage Lenders found that the average income of first-time buyer shared owners, who make up 90% of shared homeowners, in 2015/16 was £45,000 in London and £24,000-£34,000 in the rest of the UK.

The government shifted almost all its affordable homes budget to providing shared ownership as opposed to low-cost rent in 2015, before a partial U-turn in the Autumn Statement in November.

## [MPs launch enquiry into housing for older people](#)

2<sup>nd</sup> February – Inside Housing

The inquiry will look at whether there is enough housing in England for older people and if it is suitable for their needs. It comes at a time when councils are facing huge pressure on adult social care budgets.

Clive Betts, chair of the Communities and Local Government Committee, said: "Many pensioners may be interested in downsizing, but many are

restricted from doing so by a lack of suitable options. As a committee we want to examine what government and local authorities can do to help expand housing supply for older people and ensure pensioners can live independent and fulfilling lives.” The committee is seeking evidence which must be submitted by 24 March. It will look at how adequate older people’s housing currently is, planning policy, whether more housing designed for older people could help address England’s wider housing needs, and whether a national strategy for older people’s housing is needed.

### [Older people to get help to downsize and free up family homes](#)

*6<sup>th</sup> February – The Guardian*

Theresa May’s government will use its flagship housing strategy to make it easier for older people to move into smaller homes, which could free up larger properties for families. A policy to incentivise more good-quality, new-build sheltered accommodation will be included in a white paper, which also aims to break the dominance of a limited number of large housebuilders. Councils, housing associations and smaller developers will be encouraged to build more as the government sets out how it plans to meet a target of 1m new homes by 2020. Gavin Barwell, the housing minister, admitted that the white paper would include something on incentives for older people to sell big family homes. A spokesman for the Department for Communities and Local Government insisted it was not about pushing anyone out of their home, but providing more options.

### [Children spending too long in temporary accommodation, say Shelter Scotland](#)

*9<sup>th</sup> February – Inside Housing*

Families with children in Scotland are spending too long in temporary accommodation, risking their health and well-being, a report from Shelter Scotland has concluded. Families are spending longer periods of time in temporary accommodation, with an average stay of 24 weeks compared with 18 weeks in 2014.

Nearly a third of families spent more than six months in temporary accommodation, according to the research based on Freedom of Information Act responses from 30 Scottish councils. The charity said that the median time spent in temporary accommodation by families with children has increased by almost 20% in the past two years to more than 20 weeks.

Analysis also showed that 13% of families with children were in temporary accommodation for longer than a year compared to 11% of households without children. Recent Scottish Government statistics revealed that in September last year the number of homeless children in temporary accommodation had risen by 17% on the previous year to 5,751.

### [Does living in a retirement village extend life expectancy? The case of Whiteley Village](#)

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

The report shows that there is strong statistical evidence that female residents, in particular, receive a substantial boost to their longevity when compared to the wider population - at one point in time reaching close to five years - and concludes that retirement villages (or their equivalents) could help in the Government’s aim to reduce mortality inequalities experienced in lower socio-economic groups.

### [Report calls for Welsh pensioner homes budget](#)

*17<sup>th</sup> February, Inside Housing*

Wales needs a special budget to encourage building homes for older people to help cope with the country’s ageing population, a report claims. The report, published this week, highlights the findings of an expert group commissioned in December 2015 by the Welsh Government to make housing policy proposals for accommodating Wales’ ageing population, with the number of over-65s predicted to rise 39% by 2039. It urges lawmakers, local authorities and house builders to start targeting investment in homes for older people to help curb spiralling NHS and social care costs. Among the proposals is “a budget specifically designed to incentivise homes for older people”

## [Neighbourhoods of the Future - Better homes for older adults](#)

27<sup>th</sup> of February, Housing Lin

This paper examines the so-called housing 'crisis' facing the next generation of older adults, and explores the role that technology can play in rethinking the outlook for ageing populations.

## Homelessness

### [40% of homeless people from ethnic minorities](#)

Research by Centrepoin shows that 5,030 black and minority ethnic households were categorised as homeless between July and September 2016. After the number of minority ethnic group peaked in 2003, it more than halved from then until 2010. Unfortunately, since 2010 it has increased rapidly, resulting in black and minority ethnic people making up 40% of homeless.

### [Homelessness Reduction Bill passes final stage in the Commons](#)

27<sup>th</sup> January - *Inside Housing*

The Homelessness Reduction Bill has passed its final stage in the Commons and will now head to the House of Lords. The bill passed through both the report stage and third reading in the Commons, with cross-party support and government backing. It will now pass to the House of Lords, before receiving Royal Assent and becoming legislation.

The bill seeks to prevent homelessness by placing extra duties on councils to intervene at an earlier stage with households who are at risk of homelessness, provide more detailed advice on housing options for those at risk of homelessness and make it easier for applicants to appeal a decision against them.

### [Rough sleeping soars by 16% in a year](#)

25<sup>th</sup> January - *Inside Housing*

The number of people sleeping rough on the streets has soared by 16% over the past year, the latest government figures reveal. There were an estimated 4,134 rough sleepers on one night in autumn 2016, a 16% increase from the 3,569 people counted in 2015, according to Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) figures published today.

Across the country, excluding London, the numbers

have jumped by 21%. In London there was a more modest 3% rise. The number of rough sleepers has more than doubled since 2010, when there were 1,768 people on the streets. Out of the rough sleepers in London who were given an assessment for their support needs, 46% had mental health needs and 43% had problems with alcohol. Inside Housing's Cathy at 50 campaign calls on the government to commit to ending rough sleeping over time, with a commitment to halve it by 2020.

### [Bristol launches 'spectrum of activity' to tackle homelessness](#)

25<sup>th</sup> January – *The Guardian*

Housing crisis is first focus of Labour mayor's new 'City Office', which aims to bring together agencies to target key issues. Tackling homelessness is one of the priorities for Marvin Rees, and the first focus of his newly minted "City Office", which is designed to bring together agencies and prominent figures to target key issues. Last month's official rough sleeper count found 74 people on the streets, but the city council accepts the actual figure is bound to be higher than that.

Outreach workers for the homelessness charity St Mungo's work with more than 1,000 people in Bristol a year. The number of women who are homeless has risen slightly in Bristol to just under 25%.

The city is now looking at how other agencies involved in mental health, substance abuse issues, debt advice, money management and relationship reconciliation can work as one. For Rees the important thing is to "deal with the deeper structural issues around the housing crisis in Bristol."

### [Councils could provide homelessness prevention support beyond 56 days](#)

20<sup>th</sup> January - *Inside Housing*

Councils could be required to work with households to prevent them becoming homeless beyond the 56-day time period set out in the Homelessness Reduction Bill, under an amendment planned by the government.

During a parliamentary debate on the bill on Wednesday, the homelessness minister Marcus Jones said the government plans to table an amendment that will require a council to keep supporting a household who has stayed in the same property to prevent homelessness even if 56 days have passed. The bill has already extended a council's prevention duty from 28 to 56 days.

Mr Jones said the amendment would address a concern raised by some charities “that there may be cases where the 56-day prevention duty period has run out but the household is unfortunately still at risk of homelessness”.

### [Wales gets £7.8 million to prevent homelessness](#)

*11<sup>th</sup> January - Inside Housing*

The Welsh Government has announced £7.8m for its Homelessness Prevention Programme for 2017/18. The grant will support local authorities and third sector organisations to deliver frontline services to prevent homelessness, through the provision of night shelters, hostels, outreach work, mediation and bond schemes as well as providing a network of advice services.

The funding comes as part of the implementation of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. It includes £2.8m of transitional funding, provided to local authorities to support this implementation. Councils have been awarded £5m a year, plus transitional funding, for three years, since 2015-16.

Carl Sargeant, cabinet secretary for communities and children, said: “Providing people with a safe, warm and secure home remains a key priority. Local authorities have made a positive start in implementing the legislation we introduced last year to help everyone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

### [Trio of London boroughs back rental scheme for homeless](#)

*6<sup>th</sup> February – Inside Housing*

Croydon, Lambeth and Westminster have backed a new £45m partnership to buy homes to rent to homeless people. Between them the councils have lent £45m to fund manager Resonance and homelessness charity St Mungo’s for the second Real Lettings Property Fund, (RLPF2), which aims to buy homes to let to homeless individuals and families across London.

The fund follows on from an initial scheme launched in 2013 which saw £57m invested over two years. Croydon Council was an investor in the original Real Lettings Property Fund, and has returned as an investor in the second fund, while Lambeth and Westminster are new investors.

### [Prevention duties defended despite Welsh rough sleeping rise](#)

*13<sup>th</sup> February – Inside Housing*

New homelessness prevention duties in Wales have been defended amid a sharp rise in rough sleeping, with the sector suggesting the policy has simply resulted in more accurate statistics. The number of rough sleepers counted in Wales rose 72% to 141 in 2016, according to figures published this month, with peaks in Cardiff and Wrexham. The figures follow the introduction of a new homelessness prevention programme and grant in 2015. Prevention duties place a responsibility on councils to intervene early with households at risk of homelessness, and are partly designed to reduce rough sleeping. A similar programme has recently passed through the House of Commons in England.

In Wrexham 27 people were counted sleeping on the streets, a rate of 4.5 per 10,000 population. However, Shirley Jones, housing options lead at Wrexham Council, told Inside Housing the Welsh Government’s homelessness prevention grant had been a positive, allowing the appointment of a rough sleeper outreach worker. However, Jennie Bibbings, campaigns manager at Shelter Cymru, said the sector could not “just say it’s better counting”. “The number of rough sleepers has gone up 63% in the last year according to our figures,” she added. The Homelessness Prevention Bill has cross-party support in England and will come to the House of Lords later this month.

### [Homeless women are even more vulnerable than homeless men](#)

*14<sup>th</sup> February – The Guardian*

Rough sleeping has doubled in the past five years, with increasing numbers of women: women who are often existing or expectant mothers, fleeing violence, or who have disabilities or health problems. Homeless women are even more vulnerable on the street than men. Research by Crisis, the homelessness charity, found 58% of women sleeping rough had been intimidated or threatened with violence and force in the past 12 months compared to 42% of men. Channel 4’s Dispatches programme, Undercover: Britain’s Homeless Scandal, has put local councils to the test, after claims that they are unable to cope and are wrongly turning women away. In many instances, according to the programme, women have been turned away without being fully assessed or prevented from

making a homeless application – despite presenting with mental health issues, learning difficulties or fleeing domestic abuse. The Dispatches programme estimates that there are a total of 68,000 women in temporary accommodation, emergency shelters and sleeping on the streets. The most recent quarterly statistics published by the government in September 2016 recorded 74,630 households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2016. This marks the 21st quarterly increase in the seasonally-adjusted number of households in temporary accommodation.

### [Statistics watchdog warns government over homelessness figures](#)

*22<sup>nd</sup> February – The Guardian*

UK Statistics Authority tells Department for Communities and Local Government to stop using potentially misleading data. The government's official statistics body has told the Department for Communities and Local Government to stop using potentially misleading figures for homelessness, and said it would monitor its future statements on the issue. The intervention by the UK Statistics Authority came after the DCLG claimed in a series of press briefings late last year that homelessness was at less than half its 2003 peak. The briefings did not make clear that this only referred to the statutory definition of homelessness – a relatively narrow meaning which only includes people local authorities are obliged to assist – and does not take into account those given assistance under homelessness prevention and relief schemes. UK Statistics Authority regulatory team will now monitor the issue. The authority had warned the DCLG in late 2015 that using the statutory homelessness statistics without the broader context of more local authority intervention was “potentially misleading”.

### [Peers back homelessness reduction bill](#)

*27<sup>th</sup> February – Inside Housing*

Peers have backed the Homelessness Reduction Bill but used the debate last Friday to set out concerns over the effect of wider government policy on housing. In the second reading peers voted through the bill but several expressed doubts over whether £61m of funding announced by the government for councils over two years would cover the full costs of the extra responsibilities they will face from the bill.

Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Oly Greender questioned the accuracy of the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) rough sleeping figures, which have previously been criticised by the UK Statistics Authority.

## Low Income

### [Housing benefit claimants increasingly shut out of private rental market](#)

*21<sup>st</sup> January – The Guardian*

It used to be “No blacks, no Irish, no dogs”, now it's “No DSS, no pets, no children”. According to Shelter rising rents and shrinking wages mean that being in work is no longer a guarantee you won't need help with housing costs. However if individuals do receive this help for Shelter “it's guaranteed that you will be openly discriminated against.” Between December 2015 and February 2016, members of Digs, a Hackney-based private renter information and campaign group, carried out a mystery shopper survey of 50 local estate agents to see how many letting agents had properties that would accept tenants claiming housing benefit. It found there was just one studio flat. So why do landlords refuse? A government survey of landlords from 2011 found the most common reasons were disturbances or anti-social behaviour (19%), expected payment delays (17%), unpaid rent (16%) and damage (16%). In the face of such discrimination Shelter has developed a guide on convincing a landlord to rent to you. It says local councils may keep lists of private landlords who accept tenants on housing benefit, and that some websites such as SpareRoom allow you to select a “DSS OK” filter. There is also a website called Dssmove that connects tenants with agents and landlords “that say yes to DSS”.

### [Universal Credit to be paid more regularly in Scotland](#)

*13<sup>th</sup> January - Inside Housing*

The Scottish Government plans to use its new social security powers for the first time to make Universal Credit payments more regular, it has announced today. The UK government agreed to devolve social security powers to the Scottish Government last year. This includes new flexibilities around Universal Credit payments, but no control over whether to scrap the benefit. New Universal Credit applicants who live in areas where a digital claiming service has been set up by

the UK government will be given the option of twice-monthly payments instead of the current monthly payment system, once new regulations are brought into force. The changes will also affect existing claimants once they are migrated to a new system. The Scottish Government previously announced it would allow social sector tenants to pay their rent directly to their landlords from their Universal Credit payment. This will now be extended to the private rented sector. A social security bill is due to be introduced to the Scottish Parliament this year and the government has pledged to set up a social security agency to manage the administration of benefits.

#### [Universal Credit tenants in arrears increases to 86%](#)

*16<sup>th</sup> January – Inside Housing*

The percentage of council tenants on Universal Credit in rent arrears has increased to a “critically high” 86% over the past year, sparking “extreme concern” among councils. The National Federation of Arm’s-Length Management Organisations (NFA) and the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH), which together represent more than one million council homes in England, carried out annual research into Universal Credit claimants and found the percentage of council home tenants in receipt of Universal Credit who are in rent arrears has increased by seven percentage points – from 79% in March last year to 86%. This compares with 39% of tenants in arrears who do not receive Universal Credit. The average arrears total has also increased, from £321 to £616. The research also revealed 59% of Universal Credit claimants living in council homes have arrears that equate to more than one month’s rent.

#### [Landlords tighten up affordability criteria under lower benefit cap](#)

*3<sup>rd</sup> February – Inside Housing*

An increasing number of housing associations are making more stringent checks into the ability of new tenants to pay their rent, as the new lower benefit cap takes effect. In the first in the ‘IH Spotlight’ series of investigations, Inside Housing sent Freedom of Information Act requests and anonymous surveys to gauge the impact of the cap on benefits, which was imposed at the start of the year, of £20,000 or £23,000 in London.

Out of 34 responses, 11 housing associations said they were taking a closer look at prospective tenants’ financial circumstances before offering a letting. David Pipe, policy and practice manager at the Chartered Institute of Housing, said more landlords are building affordability checks into their lettings process. Overall, of the 203 responses, 36,591 households were affected by the lower cap, a huge jump compared with 10,855 under the previous level.

#### [Freud: one in four Universal Credit tenants arrears](#)

*8<sup>th</sup> February – Inside Housing*

Former welfare minister Lord Freud has said around one in four low-income tenants on Universal Credit are falling into rent arrears. Appearing at the Work and Pensions Committee to discuss his legacy in implementing the plan for Universal Credit, Lord Freud said that he had seen figures indicating a quarter of people on the system were in rental arrears, amid difficulties implementing the policy.

The figure is far lower than the 86% quoted by the National Federation of Arm’s-Length Management Organisations (NFA) and the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) last month. Universal Credit has been criticised for pushing vulnerable tenants into rent arrears due to the 42-day delay in processing payments. In December, East Lothian Council in Scotland said the impact on rent collection had been “severe”, with 481 of the 590 tenants who received the credit in arrears. Rent arrears jumped from £1.2m to £1.45m in three months. In defending Universal Credit, Lord Freud said that the system had forced housing associations to address their core values.

#### [Scottish ministers warn against bedroom tax ‘clawback’](#)

*20<sup>th</sup> February – Inside Housing*

Scottish ministers have urged the UK government not to cap claimants’ benefits when the Scottish Government abolishes the bedroom tax. The Scottish Government is due to abolish the bedroom tax “as soon as practically possible”. Scottish ministers are concerned that when the bedroom tax is abolished the UK government will treat this as additional income for a household and impose the cap. Angela Constance, communities, social security and equalities secretary, said the abolition of the bedroom tax should not be counted as benefit income as it will penalise households by capping their benefits overall.



The Scottish and UK governments agreed a “no clawback” principle last year when negotiating powers to be transferred to Scotland. The lower cap introduced at the end of last year caps benefit at £20,000 in Scotland. The Scottish Government has estimated the lower benefit cap affects 5,000 households in Scotland and more households are likely to reach the cap when the bedroom tax is abolished. Scottish ministers are meeting with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) officials this afternoon to discuss the issue.

### [UK government refuses Scottish government’s social security proposals](#)

22<sup>nd</sup> February – *Inside Housing*

The Scottish and UK governments are in a dispute over abolishing the bedroom tax and removing housing benefit for 18-21 year olds. As part of new social security powers being transferred to Scotland, the Scottish Government plans to abolish the bedroom tax and reinstate housing benefit for 18-21 year olds. However, the UK government has not agreed to these asks. The Scottish Government is concerned that once it abolishes the bedroom tax this will take some households over the £20,000 benefit cap and wants assurance from the UK government that households will not be “penalised”. A Department for Work and Pensions spokesperson said: “We are devolving significant new welfare powers to the Scottish Government, and we will continue to work together to ensure that devolution works for the people of Scotland and the UK.”

### [MPs launch inquiry into benefit cap](#)

23<sup>rd</sup> February – *Inside Housing*

MPs have launched an inquiry into the benefit cap and have re-opened an inquiry into Universal Credit amid growing concern over delays. The Work and Pensions Committee will look at what effect the lower benefit cap of £20,000, or £23,000 in London, has had on households since it was rolled out at the end of last year. In an in-depth investigation *Inside Housing* revealed the cap was hitting households across the country and housing associations are more likely to turn away prospective tenants who cannot afford rent because of the benefit cap. The benefit cap inquiry will investigate how effective the cap has been in incentivising people to find work or move house, any

unintended consequences, and the effect on Discretionary Housing Payments. The committee will also re-open its inquiry into Universal Credit following increasing reports of payment delays for recipients and growing rent arrears. It will look at how long people are waiting for Universal Credit claims to be processed, the impact it is having on rent arrears and the impact it is having on councils and housing associations.

## Human Rights

### [Practical advice on human rights for managers](#)

31<sup>st</sup> January 2017

This guide is for managers in companies in England, Scotland and Wales who have a responsibility for human rights practices in their company. It will also help managers who have responsibility for social issues, human resources, customer and community relations and those who advise the board. This guide sets out seven steps managers should follow to help companies identify, mitigate and report on the human rights effects of their activities. It also provides advice on how companies can meet the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights - the global standard, which outlines the role of business and governments in respecting human rights.

## Gender

### [Acas and GEO guidance on gender pay gap reporting](#)

31<sup>st</sup> January 2017

Acas and the Government Equalities Office published guidance on managing gender pay gap reporting in the private and voluntary sectors in January 2017. This report followed the amendment to the law in August 2016, requiring all employers with more than 250 employees to publish information about the differences in pay between men and women. in the accommodation, although the majority – at least 51 per cent – of residents will be belong to the LGBT community, the council said.

## [Fawcett Society review – Sex Discrimination Law](#)

30<sup>th</sup> January 2017

The Fawcett Society launched a review into sex discrimination law in post-Brexit Britain in January 2017. The review will also consider current laws and how to best balance the rights of the individual with the responsibilities of the organisation.

## [Four in five managers have witnessed gender discrimination at work](#)

25<sup>th</sup> January 2017

As MPs call for a ban on sexist dress codes, research from CMI reveals that four in five managers have witnessed some form of gender discrimination in the workplace. The UK's business sector may be one of the most advanced in the world but it seems that it's still struggling with gender equality. The Chartered Management Institute (CMI), the professional body for management and leadership, has just revealed how prevalent the problem of gender bias is in corporate Britain. Fortunately, it also offers a roadmap aimed at solving the issue.

## [3 ways to improve gender diversity](#)

26<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Everyone recognises the importance of addressing gender diversity within businesses, but very few know how to do this. A lot of studies have been conducted around the current number of women in senior positions, or even the potential rewards of having a more diverse top team. But, aside from introducing controversial quotas or setting up a women's network, little is said about how to help women progress.

## [Prime Minister's plans to transform the way we tackle domestic violence and abuse](#)

17<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Theresa May has today announced plans to transform the way we think about and tackle domestic violence and abuse – one of the most widespread and heinous offences, but one where victims are often let down by the legal system.

Domestic violence and abuse shatters lives but the way we deal with it at the moment does not go far enough – with a plethora of different offences and procedures scattered across the statute book.

This lack of clarity has led to an unacceptable diversity across the country in terms of the degree of effort put in to try and tackle it. Although the prosecution of, and convictions for, such offences have started to improve in recent years, there is inconsistency in the use and effectiveness of the various law enforcement measures across the country.

## [More needs to be done to attract women to the construction industry](#)

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017

Dated perceptions of construction need to be changed to enable more women to work in the industry, says Dave Sheridan of Keepmoat.

## [Fawcett Society Briefing: Gender Pay Gap by Ethnicity in Britain](#)

6<sup>th</sup> March 2017

The Fawcett Society published a briefing on the gender pay gap by ethnicity in Britain in March 2017. The analysis revealed real inequalities, with some minority ethnic groups making strides while pay for others lags behind.

## **[LGBTIQ](#)**

### [Tower Hamlets Homes named most LGBT friendly housing organisation](#)

19<sup>th</sup> January - Inside Housing

Tower Hamlets Homes has been named the top housing sector organisation by Stonewall, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans equality charity, in its Top 100 Employers list.

The organisation came in at number 12, followed by Your Homes Newcastle, which is the second-highest performing housing organisation in the list – at number 28.

The Top 100 Employers list, created by Stonewall, is compiled from submissions to the

Workplace Equality Index, a benchmarking tool used by employers to assess their achievements and progress on LGBT equality in the workplace. The highest new entry in the sector was Wolverhampton Homes, which came in at number 63, followed by Nottingham City Homes at number 89.

#### [How IBM influenced the business world on LGBT+ diversity](#)

Claudia Brind-Woody is one of the most powerful gay women in business as a vice president at IBM and a senior advocate across many LGBT+ networks. In her role as vice president and managing director of intellectual property licensing at IBM, she has helped shape LGBT+ diversity within business, with clever HR software and mentorship programs. IBM also sponsors over 40 diversity network groups across 30 countries and has even influenced its partners to adopt more diverse working programs and create more LGBT+-friendly products and services.

#### [Over a third of LGBT Londoners are suffering with mental health issues](#)

*5<sup>th</sup> February 2017*

Over a third of LGBT people living in the London are suffering from mental health issues, a rate 15% higher than the general population. The above report put together by the London Assemble Health Committee found that 40% of LGBT people in the capital have experienced a form of mental health issue. It also found that one in six LGBT people have experienced a homophobic, biphobic or transphobic hate crime at some point in their life. The committee called upon specialist support to be provided to LGBT people. “Without specialist support, LGBTI people will continue to experience mental health inequality, stigma and discrimination,” the report stated. “LGBTI people need to be more directly involved in shaping services that meet their needs.” Both “generalist” and “mainstream” services need to be reformed so as health providers are better equipped to meet the needs of LGBT people. The report called for special training to begin with GP’s,

It stressed that this is the first port of call for LGBT people and they may feel uncomfortable disclosing their sexual orientation. Authors of the study have urged the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, to do more for LGBT mental health as he is in “unique” place to provide change.

#### [4 out of 5 FTSE 100 firms make no mention of trans employees](#)

Four in five FTSE 100 companies make no mention of trans employees in their employer branding, diversity and value statements, according to research by the LSE. Just 17% of FTSE 100 companies referenced transgender people after a rigorous search. This is significantly less than the number of references for LGB issues, which have become mainstream and well recognised by employers in recent years.

#### [UK’s first LGBT older person’s community planned for Manchester](#)

*16<sup>th</sup> February 2017*

The ambition to create a community aimed at older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people has been announced today by Manchester City Council. The project would be part of the city’s programme that provides high quality housing for older people, and is the first LGBT majority "Extra Care" scheme in the UK. Manchester’s older LGBT population is growing. There are more than 7,000 people in Manchester over the age of 50 that identify as LGBT and there is an expected increase of over-65s in the next two decades. A recent LGBT Foundation report, commissioned by Manchester City Council, indicated higher levels of loneliness and isolation amongst LGBT older people, experience and fear of discrimination in existing accommodation and a desire for affordable, accessible LGBT specific accommodation where they can be open about their identity in later life.

#### [UK’s first LGBT retirement home announced by Manchester City Council](#)

*23<sup>rd</sup> February – Independent*

Plans to build the UK’s first retirement home for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people have been announced by Manchester City Council.

There are currently 7,000 people over 50 that identify as LGBT, according to the authority and the number of over-65s is expected to rise in the next two decades. Heterosexual people would be welcome to stay. The new housing complex is set to be “affordable”, with specially trained staff based on site. No specific location, opening time or capacity has yet been announced.

## Race, ethnicity and nationality

### [Better Housing briefing: Universal credit and impact on black and minority ethnic communities](#)

Universal Credit (UC) is a means-tested, single payment for working age adults, delivered monthly to a single member of the household and paid in arrears (DWP, 2015a). The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) emphasises that although the tax credit cuts will no longer occur, spending within UC will be less (Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2015).

This paper updates our 2011 Welfare Reform Briefing, drawing on developments and emerging evidence since then. It specifically looks at the details of UC, The plan for its national roll-out and the potential impact on minority ethnic communities as at January 2016.

### [Workplace racism increasingly being ‘normalised’, analysis suggests](#)

*2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017*

Review of 25,000 cases of racism at work highlights complicit managers, poor D&I training and workers’ inability to speak out.

### [Racial inequality across the UK](#)

Runnymede research analyst, Farah Elahi, joined forces with the University of Manchester’s Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) to look into racial disparities in Bristol, Manchester and Barking and Dagenham.

### [CV test pits Adam against Mohamed](#)

*6<sup>th</sup> February 2017*

A BBC test pitted Adam's CV against Mohamed's. Here's what happened.

### [The McGregor-Smith Review and Government Response – Race in the Workplace](#)

*1<sup>st</sup> March 2017*

An independent review by Baroness McGregor-Smith on issues affecting black and minority ethnic (BME) groups in the workplace was published in February 2017. The Government response was published alongside the review.

## Health & Housing

### [Housing and health inequalities briefing](#)

This briefing produced by NHS Health Scotland, focuses on the role that good-quality housing can play in improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities. Housing has an important influence on health inequalities in Scotland. This is through the effects of housing costs, housing quality, fuel poverty and the role of housing in community life. Many people do not live in a home that is warm, dry and affordable. There is more work to do to ensure that housing across tenures provides a sufficient number of quality, affordable homes to meet the needs of people in Scotland.

### [BME Elders Housing and Health Promotion Project](#)

This Housing LIN Case Study no 131 focuses on a project which was undertaken and jointly funded and delivered during 2014 and 2016 by a range of Oldham partners - the Council, Housing & Care 21, Aksa (part of New Charter Group) and Oldham Housing Investment Partnership and Clinical Commissioning Group. The project worked with Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities living in Oldham to understand their current housing needs and future housing aspirations, and explored the potential to facilitate healthy lifestyle behaviour change within these communities.

### [Councils to build specialist affordable rented homes with government cash](#)

*6<sup>th</sup> January - Inside Housing*

Councils that were awarded the largest pots of funding from the government’s Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme will spend the money largely on affordable rented homes in the supported housing sector.

Newcastle City Council was this week awarded £11.8m in funding (the largest allocation for a council) to build 449 homes. It will use £8.7m to build affordable rented homes mainly for older people and adults with learning disabilities.

The remaining £3.1m will be spent on shared ownership and rent-to-buy homes.

However, the council was not able to confirm how many homes of each tenure would be built because this has not been finalised with the Homes and Communities Agency.

### [Paying for supported housing](#)

*28<sup>th</sup> December – House of Commons library*

This briefing explains the impact of the Government's policy of requiring rent reductions, and also the application of Local Housing Allowance caps, on the supported housing sector.

It reports that the sector has argued that the measures threaten its viability. On 15 September 2016 the Government announced that LHA caps will apply in 2019/20.

## [Pregnancy & Maternity](#)

### [Women and Equalities Committee report - workplace pregnancy discrimination and Government response](#)

*26<sup>th</sup> January 2017*

The Women and Equalities Committee published its report on Pregnancy and maternity discrimination in August 2016, calling for UK women to have protections similar to those in Germany after a “shocking” increase in workplace pregnancy discrimination over the past decade.

## [Refugees & Asylum Seekers](#)

### [The shame of asylum housing of child refugees in the UK](#)

*23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017*

John Grayson, a campaigner from South Yorkshire, examines the market in asylum housing in the UK. The early months of the lives of hundreds of babies, toddlers and young child refugees have been blighted by life in privatised accommodation provided by G4S, Serco and Clearsprings and funded by taxpayers, since

2012. Now the government has extended their contracts for another two years.

### [Asylum accommodation is a disgrace](#)

*31<sup>st</sup> January 2017*

The Home Affairs Committee says the current contract system for asylum accommodation isn't working and major reforms are needed. The Committee brands the state of some asylum accommodation provided by Government contractors a "disgrace" and says it is "shameful" that very vulnerable people have been placed in these conditions.

## [Supported Housing](#)

### [LHA cap: £64m funding gap risks breaking service, providers warn](#)

*13<sup>th</sup> February – Inside Housing*

The Local Housing Allowance cap for supported housing risks “breaking” sheltered housing, three major specialist housing providers have warned.

Anchor, Hanover and Housing & Care 21 warn the proposals could result in up to a £64m annual shortfall across their services in a joint response to the government's consultation on supported housing funding. The government has proposed to fund the extra costs of supported housing through a ringfenced top-up fund administered by councils.

Research carried out by the National Housing Federation (NHF) and included in their consultation response showed the cap will have a much greater impact in parts of the North than the South. The greatest impact will be in the North East, with 96% of existing supported housing properties affected, compared with just 15% in London.

Sheltered housing should be exempt from the proposals, the three providers said, or at least be delayed until 2022 to allow for the full roll-out of Universal Credit. Providers from across the supported housing sector have warned the uncertainty surrounding the LHA cap has already halted new development and could stop future developments if implemented.

### [CIH: Delay supported housing changes for older people](#)

*14<sup>th</sup> February – Inside Housing*

Older people should be excluded from the

government's supported housing funding changes "until at least 2022", the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) has said.

In its response to the government's consultation on the future funding of supported housing, the CIH said older people in supported housing should not be included in the proposals until the full roll-out of Universal Credit has been completed to allow more time for a "proper debate" on how housing costs for older people should be managed.

The CIH also said emergency accommodation, including refuges and hostels, should be funded by a separate grant which sits outside of the supported housing funding framework.

A regional approach to the funding would be "crucial" to ensure it takes account of the difference in areas where rents are particularly low and therefore the gap between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and supported housing costs are highest.

The government has proposed councils administer a top-up fund for supported housing providers to cover the difference between LHA rates and supported housing costs. Councils will need extra money to administer this fund which should not come from the top-up fund, the CIH said.

### [Orr hits out at government supported housing proposal](#)

*21<sup>st</sup> February – Inside Housing*

The chief executive of the National Housing Federation (NHF) has hit out at a government proposal to hand supported housing funding to councils because he fears it will create geographical inequalities.

David Orr was giving evidence at a joint Work and Pensions Committee and Communities and Local Government Committee into supported housing. A government consultation into the future of supported housing funding recently closed. Major supported housing providers said applying the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cap to supported housing risked "breaking" sheltered housing and the NHF called for the government to change its proposals so the funding element via the benefits system is paid at a higher level than the LHA rate, both for supported and sheltered housing.

During the evidence session this afternoon, Mr Orr said in the future government will not pay grant to councils – instead their income will come from business tax rates and council tax. He said this could mean councils in low-value areas will struggle to fund the costs of supported housing.

### [Housing LIN Submission on the consultation on the future funding of supported housing](#)

*14<sup>th</sup> February - Housing Lin*

This paper outlines Housing LIN's response on the consultation on the future funding of supported housing.