



CAPITAL VIEWS



The Chartered Institute of Housing London Branch has an elected voluntary Committee, representing members within London and striving to raise awareness of the CIH for those with an interest in housing

EXCLUSIVE

CIH Chair:
Cathy Deplessis



and manage good quality, affordable housing – against an ongoing difficult economic picture, the collapse in new starts for affordable housing and the significant rise in homelessness over the last 12 months.

The Chancellor’s announcements in the Autumn Statement while welcome are unlikely to increase significantly the flow of affordable housing in London or to stem the tide of rising homelessness. Best to keep our seatbelts fastened...

As 2011 draws to a close we say a final goodbye to the CIH, to council tenancies and to affordable housing as we have known and defined them in the past.

We also say goodbye to me in my role as Chair of the London region. I am happy to have promoted our core purpose and made a difference to housing in London.

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We welcome in 2012, the Olympics, building on Sarah Webb’s legacy, embedding the changes to the CIH governance structures, and working through what it all means for the London region as the review of resources takes place in 2012.

Examples include sitting on the CIH Governance Group that recommended changes to our previous structures and steering the review of the organisational arrangements and resourcing of the London region:

“I completely agree with the recommendations of this report. I have been completely amazed over the years at the struggle the local CIH branch has had to develop itself and change is needed now before the CIH is left to wither and die locally.”

In London, as housing professionals, we will continue to rise to the increasingly difficult challenge of maintaining and delivering what many of us see as our core purpose – to provide

“I believe London has unique problems that can only be heard and addressed with better representation nationally.”

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**MAKING SERVICES
BETTER FOR
LGBT COMMUNITY**



Cathy Deplessis

**New guidance to help improve
housing services for LGBT housing
customers**

practice. Please contact John at john.thornhill@cih.org for further information.

Bill Payne ex Metropolitan Housing Partnership, spoke about the commitment that his organisation has made to delivering services that are accessible and welcome to all.

The briefing is the result of close collaboration between the CIH and leading Stonewall Diversity Champions Gentoo, Metropolitan Housing Partnership and Knowsley Housing Trust who sponsored the work. Other key contributors were Stonewall, Stonewall Housing and the Albert Kennedy Trust.

Tim Sigsworth from the Albert Kennedy Trust, a charity that supports young LGBT people aged 16-25, provided some salutary reminders about the dangers of not providing sensitive services, of not reacting quickly enough to bullying and violence against young LGBT people – it can make quite literally the difference between life and death.

John Thornhill of the CIH who authored the briefing made a powerful business case for organisations to use the guidance to help meet the differing needs and preferences of diverse LGBT customers. We are all committed to sharing the briefing in our organisations.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5MgeJwhOgU&feature=player_embedded

John talked about building the capacity and confidence of housing organisations to be able to provide good services to LGBT customers. The CIH is creating a practice hub and is on the lookout for organisations willing to develop and share best

The Trust is on the lookout for a housing organisation that it can partner up with to provide the first direct access safe house for young LGBT people in London. So if you are interested please contact Tim Sigsworth on 0207 831 6562 begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 0207 831 6562 / tim@akt.org.uk

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The regional committee were inspired to focus on the things you said were important to you - our two aims of supporting members and influencing policy. We have received praise and thanks from you for the wide range of free events and seminars that we have put on.

Our focus on the policy priorities that you said were important - homelessness, affordable housing, overcrowding, addressing poverty, reducing empty homes, addressing anti social behaviour – has led to a full and vigorous policy

agenda where we have sought to influence policy and practice in London and elsewhere in Government.

I know that the committee is now stronger than ever – thanks to a positive working atmosphere, a rather wonderful *Come dine with me* experience (thank you Delia!) and the success of our succession planning and supportive approach to welcoming and inducting new members of the committee. We are therefore very able to meet the new challenges ahead in 2012 and beyond.



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The Trust is also promoting the 'Making a Difference' quality mark which involves young people in running some of the sessions to help services improve.

http://www.akt.org.uk/documents/AKT_Quality_Mark_Brochure.pdf

Daniel Danso of Stonewall explained how for people who are LGBT just the act of accessing services was often accompanied by a strong expectation that they would be treated less favourably.

His message to us is to make it absolutely clear to people who are LGBT when they access our services that we welcome people who are LGBT because they are visible to us. He suggested using more inclusive imagery and taking part in diverse community activities: e.g., taking part in Gay Pride Day, Black History Month, etc

Nick Maxwell of Opening Doors London talked about the work that AgeUK does with older LGBT people. This group of people is perhaps among some of the most vulnerable and isolated in our community. He described the despair of a service

user being bathed by a worker who has been told he is going to hell because he is gay! We don't want this in our society and the practice briefing offers a way of changing that terrible experience for tenants.

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/relationships-and-family/older-lesbian-gay-and-bisexual/>



John Thornhill

Lastly Clive Betts, MP, Chair of the DCLG Select Committee reminded us of how far we had come in terms of LGBT equality. His message was that there is still work to do because prejudice still exists and the practice briefing offers providers a way to ensure that they have additional tools to tackle prejudice and discrimination. Clive confirmed his commitment and willingness to intervene with his parliamentary colleagues.

Trowers and Hamlins kindly provided the wonderful location for the event resulting in some members of the audience being slightly distracted by the sight of Tower Bridge in all its glory.

Do go and read the Practice Briefing and share it with your colleagues!

CIH LONDON MEMBER AIMS HIGH

Lynda Hance

We are delighted that one of our London members, Jan Taranczuk, is standing for election as Vice President of the CIH. We cannot remember the last time a London member held such an important position in the organisation.

There will be an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to vote on this. We expect it will be held during the day on 18th January 2011. We urge you to apply for a proxy vote to make sure you get a say as we realise not many members will be able to actually attend the meeting.

There are two candidates standing in the election for Vice President; both have made a short statement:

Jan Taranczuk said: "I'm really pleased to have been shortlisted and to be involved in this exciting time of change, for both the sector and the CIH."

Paul Tennant stated: "This is a really exciting time to be involved in housing as we transform to rise to new challenges and maximise future opportunities. The CIH's role today is more important than ever and I would be delighted to support its own evolution as it responds to the changing environment."



LONDON BRANCH SURVEY RESPONSE

SURVEY REVIEW

Suzanne Barrows



Thank you to all of you who responded to our recent survey. The survey produced some interesting results which we will be using to help us to plan our work for the coming year. Some highlights from the survey were:

Events and seminar continue to be a popular benefit and we will continue to offer events at a variety of times.

The majority of people would prefer to check out the London Branch on the website so whilst we will continue to use other social media platforms we will focus more on ensuring that our web pages are up to date and relevant. The CIH has recently "soft" launched a new web-site which will make it easier for us to do this.

As you would expect the issue of charging for events provided a split response. The vast majority of people value the free events that we put on and we will continue to provide these as a core offer.

However only a small majority of people felt that they would definitely not pay to attend events and therefore we will be exploring this further over the coming year as we may be able to add additional value to you as a member by charging a small amount in some cases.

The free text box on the survey provided you with a chance to raise other issues and we had a wide range of comments ranging from comments on survey questions to specific questions about CIH. As the questionnaires were anonymous we are not able to go back to people directly in response to these but we will use future issues of Capital Views to address some of these issues. Here are a couple to start with:

One question was whether or not people are able to hire the rooms at Greys Inn Road, our London Offices, for meetings. The answer to this is yes and if you are interested you should contact the Office Manager, Pui-Shi Tsang at pui-shi.Tsang@cih.org

We were also asked about the possibility of receiving CPD credit for attending events. If you are a CIH member then you do receive these and they are credited automatically to your CPD account after the event. For further information about CPD or to access your personal account, visit the new CIH website <http://www.cih.org/> and follow directions for login and registration.

Have you heard the story about....?

A youth had just appeared in court for his anti-social behaviour and his solicitor had to explain about the restrictions to be placed on him. The Council wanted him stopped from visiting a particular area, but his representative explained that there was a shop in the middle of that estate that he visited on behalf of his mother. A bargain was struck: the youth could go straight to the shop but then leave the area immediately, without loitering. "What?" said the youth when this was explained to him.

"You mean I can't drop any crisp packets on the floor?!"

This is one of many stories gathered on a website that was created by Jan Taranczuk because he wanted to show that housing is an interesting place to work in. "I noticed that every time housing staff got together they always shared stories from their work lives, I started to collect them and then created the website www.housingstories.com

Share your favourite story with the rest of us by writing to Jan@Housingstories.com or follow the site on Twitter [@housingstories](https://twitter.com/housingstories)