

Update...



keeping partners in touch with Devon & Cornwall Housing

Customer service open days in Cornwall

Penwith Housing Association (PHA) is hosting open days in Cornwall showcasing to the community their customer service and resident involvement.



The first at St John's Hall, Penzance in November was so successful that more are being planned including one at Lemon Quay in Truro.

The open days provide an opportunity for tenant representatives, staff and contractors to come together and demonstrate to visitors the strength of the organisation's service through building successful partnerships.

In Penzance, four contractors had stands exhibiting what they do for PHA: Ocean Group (basic home maintenance), Mears (external decoration), ROK and Connaught who carry out the bulk of the ongoing multi-million pound 'Decent Homes' work to PHA's homes.

Another feature of the open days is also the explanation of the new Peninsula Tenants Committee and its sub-groups. "This has the aim of showing the variety of services and partnerships we have for the benefit of our residents and how they play a central role in their delivery,"

said Andy Moore, PHA Chief Executive.

"We look forward to hosting Truro and aim to steadily build a strong portfolio throughout Cornwall."

For Gill Barnes of Marazion, chair of the committee's customer services group, it was also "a most enjoyable day".

She said, "All the displays were fantastic and it was good to see the tenants meet and react positively with the staff. That was the purpose – to bring the Peninsula Tenants Committee customer services group into the limelight and show they are here to help. Everyone I spoke to said how friendly it was."



Customers pictured at St. John's Hall, Penzance

Update...

Further expansion expected for Devonport

Great news, DCHA's planning application for phase 1 of the Devonport regeneration programme with Plymouth City Council has been granted approval. The Bullring and the north side of Ker Street in Plymouth will be developed into 62 units comprising 30 affordable homes and 32 open market properties.

Conservation area consent was granted for the demolition of the 'Bullring' with a start date of April 2008.



The work on the new housing is expected to start in August 2008.

Tony Franklin, Devon & Cornwall Housing Association (DCHA) Business Investment Manager said, "We are delighted how this scheme has progressed from concept to gaining planning consent in just 10 months. This exceptional achievement is due to the teamwork of our partners: Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership, Plymouth City Council, Midas Homes, architects – Lacey Hickie Caley (LHC) and civil engineers – Pell Frischmann."

Teamwork brings success in Bodmin

An application for 37 dwellings, 24 open market properties and 13 affordable homes in Rhind Street, Bodmin has met with planning approval in just six months.

DCHA has now also agreed with North Cornwall District Council a

package of additional funding that will increase the affordable provision by six shared equity units, bringing the affordable provision on the site up to 50%. The affordable rented properties will be managed by PHA, on behalf of DCHA.

Tony Franklin said, "Like Devonport, this outstanding performance is due to the commitment and teamwork of our partners: North Cornwall District Council, Midas Homes and architects - LHC."



Update...



receives official recognition

Call24Hour, which provides round-the-clock cover to over 9,500 people, has been awarded official recognition from the Telecare Services Association (TSA) for achieving compliance with their code of practice for social alarm services.

The TSA is the national body that sets the standard for telecare services.

As a joint venture partnership company, owned by Tor Homes and Plymouth City Council, Call24Hour provides a range of

services aimed primarily at social and community protection. Call24Hour's customer-base stretches as far as Plymouth, north Devon, Exeter and Honiton.

Call24Hour can be used by anyone of any age who may feel vulnerable or at risk in their own home.

By simply pressing the button on a Call24Hour telephone or a pendant, the caller is immediately connected to a member of staff. Computer screens in front of staff automatically display the name and address of the caller, their doctor's details, medical history, names of relatives or other contacts and key holders.

With a direct line into the ambulance service, the organisation works closely with

social services, professional carers, wardens and home carers.

The range of equipment available has developed to include smoke detectors, flood detectors, fall detectors and temperature extreme detectors.

Howard Toplis, Tor Homes Chief Executive says, *"Tor Homes and Call24Hour are really pleased to have the seal of approval from the TSA. This clearly demonstrates the quality of service provided to all our 9,500 customers."*



Plymouth Warm Start

Thanks to a successful funding bid to ScottishPower Energy Peoples' Trust from April new residents moving into DCHA homes in Plymouth will get face-to-face advice from an energy expert about using their heating systems. The Plymouth Warm Start project will be run in partnership with Westcountry Energy Action and will also see the piloting of energy performance assessments of all DCHA void Plymouth properties.

Faster delivery for Disabled Facilities Grants

Penwith Housing Association (PHA) has developed a winning strategy for tracking the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). Provided by the local council, the grants help disabled people finance the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living there.

To provide accessible homes PHA works in partnership with members including: Penwith District Council, West Cornwall Care & Repair, Cornwall County Council's Adult Social Care plus Children, Young People & Families.

The aim of this partnership is to streamline the delivery of the DFG works in the west of Cornwall.

Update...

Leading the way

Our new resident steering group is going to be leading the way in participation across group structures. Residents from PHA, Tor Homes and DCHA will be working together in a high-level panel to plan and steer our involvement work right across Devon & Cornwall Housing group.

In the first year the residents' work includes:

- overseeing development of our new group-wide involvement register
- reviewing and improving our resident-related group strategies
- coordinating a jointly-agreed group resident involvement training programme
- providing an overall steer and direction for resident communications, including our newsletters and websites.

Importantly, all this work is in addition to PHA, Tor Homes and DCHA already having resident members on the group parent board.

Jonathan Broad, chair of the Devon & Cornwall Housing Trust board said, *"This initiative really puts residents like me at the heart of our decision-making, and makes sure that we are gaining efficiencies, innovation and inspiration right across our group structure."*

New chair for Devon & Cornwall Housing Trust

Jonathan Broad has recently been appointed as the new chair of Devon & Cornwall Housing Trust.

Jonathan is a tenant of Devon & Cornwall Housing Association (DCHA) and lives in Barnstaple. He has played an active part in the work of the group for a number of years and is the first tenant to be elected as chair of the Trust.

Jonathan says, *"I became involved in the work of the DCH group because I wanted other people to have the same opportunity that DCH had given*



me, the opportunity to live in a decent home and know that my views were listened to and acted on. I will do my best to ensure that Devon & Cornwall Housing Trust continues to listen to the views of tenants and lives up to its vision for better homes, better places and better lives."

Looking ahead

The group's lively new publication *Looking ahead 2008-12* clearly explain the aims and objectives of the group and our future plans.

Let us know if you would like a copy.



PHA has developed a successful strategy tracking the delivery of the grants keeping delays to a minimum.

It is so successful that other members are now following suit. Reports can be generated highlighting specific areas where potential delays may occur. Cornwall Social Services have expressed strong interest and want to see the system introduced throughout the county.

Frank Lashbrook, PHA Technical Services Manager says, "The aim is to get grants delivered as soon as possible. Clients are always in desperate need of the approved works, and achieving them quicker really improves their lives."

We link the DFG work with our decent homes programme and while we are doing the one, we will go in and complete the decent homes work at the same time for speed, efficiency and minimum disruption."

Devon Care & Repair shows strong performance

Devon's performance is stronger than all of its regional competitors, according to the latest supporting people benchmarking information. Devon outperforms the south west and national average for independent living. This is for the percentage of service users maintaining independent living and the number of service users dealt with during the period. The region is second in the country in the number of customers with work completed or receiving substantial advice.

As well as Devon's success, Plymouth and Cornwall Care & Repair agencies have recently been awarded the Quality Mark from Foundations, the national co-ordinating body for home improvement agencies. Both Plymouth and Cornwall achieved this with good results.



Handyperson scheme – first to be trialled by Teignbridge Council

Teignbridge Council has also become the first authority in the area to trial a property maintenance partnership using the Devon Care & Repair Handyperson Scheme.

Councillor Alan Connett, leader of Teignbridge Council, says, "We very much hope that the partnership will bring a high quality of work to Teignbridge owned property, including many public buildings and facilities, ensuring quality repairs at lower costs."



The partnership will deliver quick, efficient repairs to homes in the area using the handyperson scheme and fits perfectly into the council's repair and maintenance business.

Diane Aspinall, social enterprise manager at Devon and Cornwall Housing Association, says, "This three month trial is an ideal opportunity for us to raise our profile and widen the scope of our work by providing Teignbridge Council with a handyperson minor maintenance service for some of their public buildings.

We look forward to the possibility of working with other district councils in Cornwall and Devon on similar projects in the future."



Update...

Energy efficiency is top of the agenda

All PHA, Tor Homes and DCHA new tenants will soon receive an **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)** for the property they have been offered as part of an EU directive coming into force later this year. The certificate will be provided to the tenants when the offer is made. Applicants will therefore know the energy performance of the property before making a decision.

To look at the practicalities of the new certificates, Tor Homes was selected to take part in the government's pilot programme. We surveyed over 600 homes and through a cloning process produced EPCs for over 1,000 homes.

John Taylor, Maintenance Planning and Construction Manager says, "This has provided really useful information to Tor Homes and to the rest of the group on how the programme will work when it comes into force."

The surveys looked at all aspects of energy efficiency within the property including insulation, water and space heating and control. Copies of the surveys were sent to each tenant whose home was inspected.

The findings from the surveys have been fed back to the government and a report on the national programme is awaited.



Partnership South West, the development consortium led by DCHA, has exceeded all expectations, with a great performance in delivering new homes. Over the last two years we spent £70m, providing 1,850 new homes (400 more than planned).

This is really good news for so many people needing affordable homes in our region. The Housing Corporation has recognised our performance by awarding the partnership £31m to provide over 900 homes in the first 18 months of the new programme.



The modern methods of construction partnership Advantage South West (ASW) goes from strength to strength, selling timber frames to RSLs in Partnership South West and beyond. And, ASW's product procurement club is also making great progress.

Procurement Manager, Neil Biddiscombe says, "ASW has identified key product groups

that we want to target: bathrooms, kitchens, heating systems, doors and windows, electrical heating and new technologies. Our delivery programme will take account of resident participation, contract regulations and of course value for money. We are expecting contract savings of almost 4% – a really substantial sum on major works."



Working closely with Supporting People

DCHA has been working closely with the Supporting People team in Plymouth, winning a new contract for helping young people. The project involved bringing together two existing schemes (one previously managed by another organisation). The new service creates a joined-up approach, with one scheme providing high levels of support and one offering move-on homes.

Kathy Keegans, DCHA's Director of Supported Housing Services says, "Crucially, we worked hard to involve young people currently receiving our services, finding out what they wanted. We used this to shape the service to their needs and develop proposals for improvements."



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Would you like to know more about our work? We will be happy to supply other information such as annual accounts and the business plan - contact: Malcolm Tester on 01392 814422 or email malcolm.testers@dcha.co.uk

Devon & Cornwall Housing Trust is a registered charity.

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