



Press release

Ref: GCH

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‘Unprecedented’ result for Gloucester City Homes in Customer Service Excellence Award

Gloucester City Homes is delighted to announce that it has achieved the prestigious Customer Services Excellence Award following a recent inspection of its services.

The company achieved full compliance in all 57 elements of the inspection along with nine compliance plus awards, described by the inspectors as ‘an unprecedented achievement.’ The compliance plus awards demonstrate that services in those nine areas exceed the standards set and are examples of national best practice.

Gloucester City Homes is the first organisation to achieve full compliance with CSE Assessment Services who completed the inspection. GCH is also the first 2 star Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and only the second ALMO in the country to gain the award.

During the inspection, GCH services were assessed against the five criteria of the Customer Services Excellence Standard, which are:

1. Customer insight
2. Culture of the organisation
3. Information and access
4. Delivery
5. Timeliness and quality of service

The inspection was a rigorous process, during which the inspectors met with tenants and potential tenants, senior managers from Gloucester City Council and strategic partners and agencies. They also inspected GCH’s estates, interviewed staff and reviewed evidence and performance information.

Examples from the nine service areas in which GCH was awarded compliance plus awards include:

- The Telling Tales Story book containing more than 50 stories from the past by sheltered housing scheme residents
- GCH's wide range of consultation work with customers
- The contribution of staff in delivering customer focused services at all levels throughout the organisation with staff 'going the extra mile' to deliver services
- GCH's recruitment process which places customer focus at the forefront
- The exceptional range of information provided for customers, in particular the Tenant Times newsletter and the GCH website www.gloscityhomes.co.uk
- Visits made to customers a month after they move into a new home to follow up on their needs to sustain a tenancy
- The appearance of GCH's estates and the pride of tenants in their community
- Coordinated working arrangements with partners, Lovell and Morrison, ensuring quality of service to customers
- GCH's open and honest approach to performance and tackling issues that arise, including the 'You said, we did' feedback to customers.

In announcing the result CSE Assessment Services stated:

'We are particularly delighted to highlight that you are the first organisation to go through the assessment process with CSE Assessment Services who are fully compliant with the standard. This means your service is meeting, or in the areas of compliance plus, exceeding all the requirements of the Customer Services Excellence criteria. This is an indication of great commitment and an excellent service from the members of staff involved in your service, many congratulations.'

GCH Chief Executive Ashley Green says:

'This is a fantastic and significant achievement and one in which our tenants, staff and board can be mightily proud. This places Gloucester City Homes as one of the best social housing agencies in the country in terms of customer excellence.'

ENDS

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Notes to editors:

Gloucester City Homes is a 2 star Arms Length Management Company, which provides housing management services to 4900 homes in Gloucester on behalf of the City Council. The company is carrying out a £40 million improvement programme to bring customers' homes to the Decent Homes Standard. Since Gloucester City Homes was created in 2005 it has:

- Achieved a 2* rating (Good service) from the Audit Commission in June 2007
- Secured £39.6 million in Decent Homes funding to meet the Government's Decent Homes standard and completed improvements to over 1200 homes in the City.
- Become the first housing provider in the County to achieve a Gold standard for its supporting people services
- Achieved Investors in People Accreditation for performance management of our staff
- Achieved ISO 9001 for Quality Management systems, re-accredited again on the 9th March 2009 following re-inspection
- Achieved "managing for others" status with the Housing Corporation
- Achieved Investment Partner status with the Housing Corporation
- Implemented a programme of training for staff to achieve the Institute of Customer Service Awards