

Press release

Ref: GCH

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Gloucester City Homes first to achieve Equalities Framework Award

Gloucester City Homes has announced that it has become the first organisation in the Country to be assessed and accredited against the achieving level of the new Equality Framework. The framework builds on the work of the Equality Standard and responds to new thinking on equality outcomes and the new challenges that public sector organisations face today.

Within each level of the standard there are five elements:-

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce.

The new framework uses a wider definition of equality and is more aspirational than just the formal legal definitions of equality. It is about what we can do to create a fairer society and recognises that:

- equality is an issue for us all
- we don't all start from the same place
- to create a fairer society we need to recognise different needs.

GCH Chief Executive Ashley Green stated:

“I am delighted with the recognition of this award. Gloucester City Homes is about our customers and how we work to meet their needs and requirements both individually and as a community. We work with our key partners in the City and it is a testament to their excellent work also. This is a really important achievement because our tenants know that we can deliver services which are truly invaluable and improve the quality of their life. In practice, this can mean providing a walk in shower if a tenant is disabled, or providing a home visit if a customer cannot get out. We are delighted to be the first organisation to achieve this level of the new equality framework.

We have information on 82% of our tenants and they have worked with us to tell us their needs, their service standards and how we should deliver them on their behalf. This is excellent news and comes on the back of the Customer Service Excellence Award last month.”

Chair of the GCH Board Tim Dare added:

Gloucester City Homes has been a tremendous success story for our tenants and this City. We are half way through delivering a £50 million investment into the City’s 4,500 homes, we have improved outcomes for tenants in all service areas which was recognised by the Audit Commission in 2007. Now we are transforming the lives of our customers in so many ways. I am proud to be associated with a company driving improvements on behalf of our customers every single day.

Gloucester City Council Chief Executive Julian Wain commented

“I am delighted for both Gloucester City Homes and the Council. Any organisation which achieves such excellent results is good for this City. Gloucester City Homes has received deserved recognition for its work on Equalities and Diversity. This is great news and to be the first in the Country to the new standard is truly remarkable”

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
- Achieved the Customer Services Excellence Award in April 2009