



Press release

Ref: GCH

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Put your rent first – advises Gloucester City Homes

Gloucester City Homes is reminding its customers of the importance of putting their rent payments first in a continuing drive to ensure that those who are experiencing difficulties in meeting their payments get the help they need as well as ensuring that arrears are reduced in the City.

The advice comes after a number of legal actions against GCH tenants for rent arrears in recent weeks and sadly, 12 tenants evicted over the previous year for non payment.

But help is available from GCH's Specialist Income Management Team, who can offer advice and support to tenants who are having problems managing their household budget. The team works in partnership with a range of advice agencies and can offer advice on rent payment methods and benefits, as well as making affordable arrangement for repayment of arrears and making referrals to other agencies for benefits and debt advice. The team can be contacted on GCH's free phone number 0800 408 2000. For customers seeking help outside office hours, a range of advice is also available online at www.gloscityhomes.co.uk

GCH Chief Executive Ashley Green says:

'We understand that many of our customers will be finding it harder to manage in the current economic downturn. It is vital that customers budget effectively to make sure that they can meet their priority bills such as their rent payments. Although we only take legal action to recover arrears if all other

efforts to find a solution have failed, we have unfortunately had no alternative but to start legal proceedings against 7 customers and take further proceedings against an additional 11 so far this year because they haven't paid their rent.

I would like to emphasise that we can offer advice and help to customers who are concerned about their rent payments and I urge them to contact us as soon as possible rather than wait until it becomes a major problem.'

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.