



Press release

For immediate release

Ref: GCH

8th April 2010

Gloucester City Homes slash Rent Arrears!

Gloucester City Homes has slashed council rent arrears for the fourth year running and they are now at the lowest ever figure in the City.

In 2009-2010, Gloucester City Homes had to collect £16.02 million in Council rents and at the 31st March, arrears stood at just £203,000 which represents just 1.27% of what was due. By comparison, in 2000, rent arrears were £505,000 against a collectable rent of £13.04 million. Over the last 5 years, since GCH took over the management of Council Housing on behalf of the Council, arrears have fallen year on year to this lowest ever figure.

In comparison with other housing providers, Gloucester City Homes are a top performer and one of the best in the country.

Samantha Chambers, Income Manager for GCH

“These figures are exceptional and I am so proud of my team for their commitment, hard work and dedication. This is not just about collecting rents. It is about making sure our tenants have early support to ensure they get the right benefits and advice. We also incentivise payments by holding prize draws as well taking decisive action where necessary. What is also significant is that we have halved evictions from 13 to 6 in the last year showing that we are supporting our tenants through excellent management2

Ashley Green, Chief Executive for GCH said

“Sam and her team have done a magnificent job. I also want to sincerely thank our tenants as well. Many of our customers are on low incomes and need support. They have worked with us to ensure they get the right level of help and advice. They make payments diligently and responsibly which is fantastic. We have also worked closely in partnership with the Council’s welfare benefits team and as a result have brought in over £100,000 in additional benefits for this year alone which is great news for everyone.

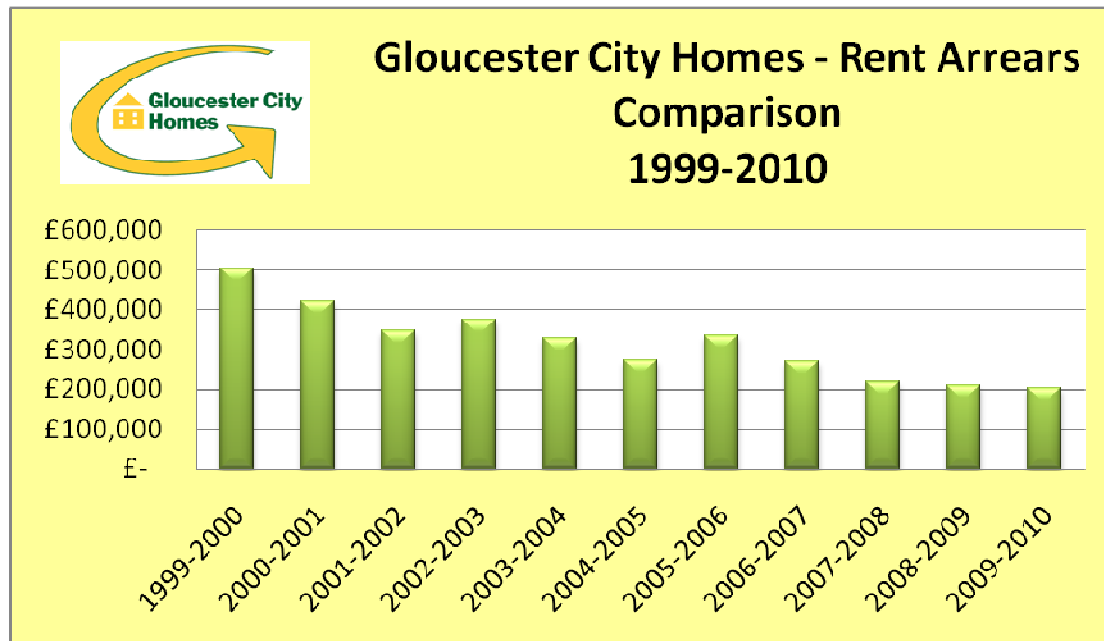
He went on to say:

“GCH is a leader in rent collection nationally and receive many visits from other housing providers to find out what we do so well. It is a team approach and everyone gets involved at GCH on monthly basis through our blitz days to collect rents. The extra rent collected makes a difference to our tenants as we invest this back into our services for the benefit of everyone”

Andrew Harley, Chair of the Kingsholm Tenants Group and a leading tenant advocate in the City for more than 30 years said:

“I take my hat off to GCH for this excellent performance and it just goes to show that both the tenant’s and Council decision to place the management of council housing with Gloucester City Homes was a good decision for everyone. This is very good news that arrears have fallen so well. In this day and age, it is so easy to get into financial difficulties and any tenant having difficulties should contact GCH for help and advice”

The following graph shows our continued success:



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 4800 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 2500 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 Gold Accreditation for performance management of our staff
- Achieved ISO 9001 for Quality Management systems, re-accredited again in March 2010 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 and Special Recognition Award in October 2009
- Achieved the Equalities Framework Award April 2009

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