

together

HOUSING GROUP

'Better Together' Conference feedback



19th October 2011, Holmfield Mills

Making a better future together



'Better Together' Conference feedback

Residents from across the Together Housing Group met up for the second annual 'Better Together' Conference recently.

Thank you to all of you who came along and a special thank you to the residents who helped with presentations on the day:-

Pat Cocker – 'The Moving in Experience' (Twin Valley Homes / Housing Pendle)

Peter Buttree – South Kirkby Community Association (Chevin)

Jenny Clare – Performance Panel (Chevin)

All of the residents who took part in the Tenant Academy training (Pennine / Green Vale / Chevin) and who received their certificates on the day.

All of the residents who have made the 'Making a Difference' DVD (Pennine / Green Vale).



Feedback and key action points

- 1) 32 residents from across the Together Group have expressed an interest in taking part in the 'Everything you ever needed to know about housing but were afraid to ask' training course. There is great enthusiasm for joint learning opportunities.
 - Based on this positive feedback we will be rolling out this training across the whole of the Together Housing Group.
 - The resident involvement teams will be contacting other involved residents who didn't attend the Conference to gauge their interest in taking part. We are also in the process of looking at the best and most accessible venues for the training.

- 2) Since sending out their 'Making a Difference' DVD to all residents, Pennine and Green Vale have received 74 new expressions of interest from residents wanting to get involved.
 - In light of such a good response, there is scope for seeing whether residents from other organisations within the Together Group might want to put together their own DVD's. Each organisation will discuss this with their residents.
 - All Together Group residents will be able to see the DVD via a link on our websites and on Youtube.

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3) Presentations at the Conference included an update by Twin Valley Homes / Housing Pendle residents about the 'Moving In experience' and the review of the arrears process by Chevin's Performance Panel.

- The feedback from the Moving in experience review will be fed into service reviews across the Group.
- We are now approaching our involved residents to ask whether it would be a good idea to have a 'Together Panel' of residents from all of the organisations across the Group as a general discussion forum / networking group to share information and good practice.

If residents do think a Together Panel is a good idea, we'll need a name so please get your thinking caps on and let us know your thoughts!

- We will also be talking to residents about whether you think it's a good idea to set up a cross group Scrutiny panel. Scrutiny panel members would be able to mystery shop each other's services and share good practice.
- 4) We will share information about the good work that South Kirkby Community Association is doing in their area. If you would like more information, please contact Debbie Colclough, RI Coordinator at Chevin on (0114) 241 7728 or e-mail deborah.colclough@togetherhousing.co.uk
- 5) We asked you at the Conference whether you liked the format and content of the 'Annual Impact Assessments' that we produce. These documents review what 'impact' our resident involvement work has had over the previous year.

- Feedback about the content and style of the impact assessments was really positive – we are on the right lines!
- We will make sure that in the 2012 impact assessments that we also include a review of all of our 'Together' activities.

6) During the lunchtime session we asked you to tell us what you thought were the most important issues on the key services that we deliver, including rent collection, lettings, anti-social behaviour, repairs and investment. We will use this information to feed into service reviews.



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- 7) We also canvassed your opinions about the benefits of signing up for Group-wide membership of TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) rather than signing up as separate organisations. You recognised the benefits and the considerable cost savings if we organised a joint subscription.
- Based on your feedback, we are now members of TPAS. The cost to each organisation is a very reasonable £557 per year. For a full list of the benefits to residents, check out the 'membership benefits' leaflet if you have access to the internet: http://www.tpas.org.uk/FileUploads/membership_benefits_2010.pdf



- 8) This year the cost of the Conference was £20.76 per resident excluding staff and transport (£1764.25 divided by 85), compared to £43.02 per resident last year, which is a considerable cost saving. 82% of residents who completed an evaluation form thought that the Conference was good value for money.

Areas for improvement – the following items were some of the issues raised by residents on their evaluation forms:

- There were issues with the sound system – if we use this venue again, ideally the room will be fitted with a tailored sound system. Traditional roving microphones would have been a better choice than lapel microphones and we would use these in future.
- The disabled toilet came in for criticism because of the absence of adequate rails and a mirror, the toilet being 'too low' and no pull cord. The building owners may need to make the necessary adjustments.
- The disabled parking facilities were taken up by a local taxi firm, this will be raised with staff at the conference facility.

- Some Chevin residents said that the venue was too far. We will always be mindful of venue location when organising 'joint' events to ensure that residents have the least possible distance to travel.
- Some residents would have liked to have seen copies of the presentations so next time, we will have some copies on hand.
- Some residents commented that the food was 'stodgy' although on the whole it was well received. We will make sure that at similar events we always provide fresh fruit as a healthy alternative.

Overall satisfaction rating with the Conference was 4.5 out of 5, which is encouraging.

Thank you once again for coming along to the Conference and for making the day a success!



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