



**Contact:** Paula Littleboy  
**Title:** PA & Corporate Marketing Officer  
**Tele:** 01924 831009  
**Date:** September 2009

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Gardening project given a helping hand**

Residents at Bakers Field Court in Rotherham have been given their very own greenhouse to start growing plants and vegetables in.

Many residents at the newly built extra care scheme said that they missed gardening and would like something within the grounds of the scheme that they could be responsible for. The scheme manager's immediately set about enquiring what funding and community initiatives they could access to make this happen for residents.

They were pleasantly surprised!! The Extra Care Housing Team supported by NHS Rotherham Active in Age programme were able to secure funding from Rotherham United Football Club and Chevin Housing Association who kindly gave donations to be able to purchase a greenhouse along with slabs for the base and a path up to it. Age Concern offered help giving contacts at Voluntary Action who provided 12 environmental workers for a day on a volunteer basis to help put down the slabs and the path, along with erecting the greenhouse.

Residents have also been fundraising and managed to raise £150 which they are going to use to buy materials for a raised garden bed. Age concern have offered to help out with the garden developments with a volunteer visiting the scheme every week.

**Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhood commented** "This project has been a great success and has shown what can be achieved by multi agency working. This is an ongoing project, which will enable tenants to enjoy gardening independently, something which most have not been able to do for a long time and when complete will make a difference to many peoples lives."

**Vicky Fenton, Assistant Supported Housing Manager at Chevin Housing said** "Many people find gardening a pleasant pastime and I am really pleased that we have been able to work together to provide this facility for our residents. There is a lot of gardening expertise and enthusiasm on the scheme, so you never know where it might lead!"

***Photographed:*** *Volunteers helping out to get the new greenhouse built.*

**-Ends-**

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Chevin Housing Group**

The Chevin Housing Group was formed in 2001 following the merger of a number of associations who had been in operation from as far back as 1974. The current group consists of Chevin Housing Association Ltd, Harewood Housing Society Ltd and Synergy Housing Solutions Ltd.

The vision for the Chevin Group is, 'building a better future for people and communities'. In order to achieve this we are involved in a diverse range of activities. These include; managing and maintaining rented and leasehold homes, the development of new and refurbished homes (including rented, leasehold and sale options) and regeneration services, working in partnership with local people to enable them to play a part in the future of their neighbourhoods.

The Group operates across Yorkshire and the Humber and North Nottinghamshire, with around 6,500 rented homes in management. We also manage a further 1650 leasehold homes which include 750 private sector flats.

The Group's reinvestment programme is around £6m per annum and the Development Programme is producing around 250 new homes each year. In 2004 the Group formed the Synergy partnership which is a regional based development partnership of associations with Chevin Housing Group as the lead partner for delivery. Synergy Housing Solutions Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Chevin provides a development service to the Synergy partners.

An inspection carried out by the Audit Commission in 2006 determined that Chevin provides a good 2 star service with promising prospects for improvement. The report commented that, 'Chevin is a customer focussed organisation, which develops services based on customer feedback'.

The Group employs around 200 staff headed by the Group Chief Executive, Steve Close.