

# SPECTRUM

## matters

Summer 2009

## Medina Resident Wins Regional Tenant of the Year Award

Medina Housing Association resident, Ian Capon, has been named as regional Tenant of the Year at the Connecting People awards hosted by TPAS (the Tenant Participation Advisory Service), and Southern Housing magazine. The awards celebrate tenants and people who have made a difference to their communities.

Ian said "I was very proud to be shortlisted for the award, and to actually win was amazing. By getting involved with Medina I have been able to influence services and improve life for other residents." Ian received the award because he has spent many years involved with tenant participation at Medina and community activities across the Island.



Pictured: Yasmin White (MHA), Ian Capon (Resident) and Simon Underwood of Wates Living Space at the Award Ceremony

## It's Good to Talk

Spectrum Housing Group was one of 27 Organisations chosen by the Tenants Services Authority (TSA) to host a trailblazer event that kick started the National Conversation.

Residents were able to input into the conversation through a series of questions, the answers to which were then fed directly to the TSA.

The second phase of the TSA's National Conversation started on 9 June and will run until 8 September 2009. This phase is to help the TSA fine-tune the standards it has drawn up for social housing landlords. These draft standards are based on the feedback from the National Conversation that took place in the first quarter of the year.

Pat Bowman, resident said: "The event proved useful in opening the debate about the TSA and where their focus should be in terms of assessing priorities for housing associations. I think that their approach i.e. talking directly with residents is

excellent and I hope that realistic standards will be set that reflect our part in the National Conversation. It is up to us as residents to make sure that the TSA keep their promises, so we need more residents to help those of us who are already involved."

Spectrum's trailblazer event was attended by observers from four other housing associations to enable them to watch and learn, so that they in turn could replicate the format at their own events.

The National Conversation is the largest-ever consultation with tenants of social housing in England, offering tenants a unique chance to have their say on what they think of their landlords, the services they offer and the areas of service that are most important to get right.

The Conversation will ensure tenants' views are central to the development of the TSA's new standards framework.

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**Spectrum**  
housing group 

## Source set to provide around 2,500 homes over the next 3 years



Source has secured £87million of grant funding in 2009 to provide over 1,600 homes, with a further 900 homes in the pipeline, based on strategic sites that will be developed over the next three years.

This figure includes a £37.5 million package for 1,000 homes across Dorset and Wiltshire following a recent deal with Persimmon and a £9.7 million package that will provide 293 new affordable homes in Yeovil working with Barratt Homes.

The funds have been committed as part of a model which incorporates an advance payment to help fund site infrastructure works undertaken by the developer. The deal was one of the first to be funded in this way and came just prior to guidance being released by the HCA.

Colin Molton, Regional Director of the HCA in the South West, said: "We recognise that present housing market conditions are very challenging for many of our commercial development partners. As a consequence, we are keen to ensure we do all we can to help continue the provision of affordable homes. This funding will help considerably. The partnership between the HCA, Persimmon, Barratt Homes and Source will act as an exemplar for other projects throughout the South West." For further information please visit [www.source-development.co.uk](http://www.source-development.co.uk).

## Signposting the Way to Satisfaction



Residents in Poole are very satisfied with their repairs service – that's according to a customer satisfaction survey carried out by Poole Housing Partnership (PHP).

The research was undertaken by Priority Research to gauge satisfaction levels amongst PHP's residents and included findings from across the housing management and maintenance spectrum of services provided by the company.

Signpost Services carries out the responsive, planned and electrical works to PHP's 5,500 homes.

The repairs service was ranked as the most important issue amongst respondents and they were asked to rate items such as the attitude of workers, mess, being kept informed, quality of work, and time taken. All of the results came back with over 90% satisfaction rates and all

exceeded industry benchmarks. Stuart Brookes, Divisional Director of Signpost Services said, "We are absolutely delighted with the results which have improved year on year. By working closely with PHP's residents and staff we do aim to provide an excellent service. However, we can't rest on our laurels and there are areas we can improve still further in the future"

Signpost Services is a bronze award winner in the Considerate Constructors Scheme for its electrical contract on the Safe as Houses initiative.

Bill Shaw, Head of Best Value and Performance at PHP, added "It is clear from the survey that residents concur that repairs and maintenance is the most important service that we supply.

## Getting Better All the Time.....

Our partners like working with us and want to do more of it – that's according to a recent stakeholder perception study carried out by Consultants, Campbell Tickell.

However, our partners want to know more about our strategic direction, community involvement work and promotion of equality and diversity strategies.

The perception study was carried out in March 2009 amongst a number of Spectrum's partners with the purpose of finding out how Spectrum is perceived externally and what we need to do to get better.

The findings from this survey, combined with a recent internal communications survey and STATUS results, will form the

basis of a Group-wide Communication strategy to take Spectrum forward over the next 3 years.

If you have any views or comments about the type of information you would like to receive, please contact Tina Partridge at Spectrum on 01258 484884 or by email: [tina.partridge@spectrumhousing.co.uk](mailto:tina.partridge@spectrumhousing.co.uk).

## Edward May Court Residents Become Silver Surfers

Sheltered Housing residents in Kinson, Dorset, have recently benefited from a brand new IT room at their scheme. The residents unanimously voted to transform their disused communal bathroom into an IT facility.



Pictured: Enid Harvey, Chair of the Westward Residents' Panel with Resident, Mona Haywood

Thanks to funding from Age Concern's Bright Ideas, they were awarded £1,000 to pay for computers, printers and webcams.

Residents can book their time to use the facilities and there is a charge of £1 an hour to help cover costs. Each flat has its own password so that personal details can be kept secure.

Connaughts revamped the bathroom for free following a programme of recently installed brand new kitchens throughout the scheme.

Resident Mona Haywood says, "I know nothing about computers but I'm looking forward to getting started and surfing the web even at my age. My daughter-in-law uses a computer so she will be the first for me to email; and I can't wait to start ordering my groceries online."

## Cracking the Crunch - Smart-Start Plus Package Aims to Get Home Ownership Sales Moving in the Right Direction

Spectrum's Get Move-In Team is pioneering a new 'Smart-Start Plus Package' to get home ownership sales moving in the right direction.

The package aims to boost sales and offer peace of mind to those buying including\*:

- Giving buyers up to 3% towards their deposit
- Mortgage and rent payment protection in the event of long-term illness or redundancy
- Protection against a drop in the value of the Property

\*Terms and conditions apply



Pictured Left to right: Maureen Robinson (Spectrum Housing Group) Rob Webber (Spectrum Housing Group), Cllr Jill Cleary (New Forest District Council), Lynda Price (Western Challenge Housing Association) at the official opening of Kempthorne House, Lymington.

The scheme has involved liaison with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) who are keen to ensure that people still have access to shared ownership.

Jitinder Takhar, Group Development Director, says "The Smart-Start Plus Package is an innovative approach to boost the shared ownership market which is struggling a bit in the current economic climate. We are committed to providing shared ownership as part of our development portfolio so we want it to succeed and we're willing to give new ideas a try."

The first airing of the initiative was at a scheme in Lymington, New Forest where Spectrum has just completed 21 apartments. 18 out of the 21 were reserved on the first weekend, showing the positive impact that the Smart-Start Plus Package is having.

Just a few weeks later at the official opening only one shared ownership apartment remained.

If you want to know more about shared ownership visit [www.getmove-in.com](http://www.getmove-in.com) or contact the Get Move-In Team.

## New Homes and a New Library Open in Plymstock

Twenty-seven homes and a new library in Plymstock were officially opened in May by the Leader of Plymouth City Council – Cllr Vivien Pengelly.



The new scheme called The Orchard and Plymstock Library has been developed by Spectrum Housing Group with funding from the Housing Corporation (now Homes and Communities Agency), Plymouth City Council and the Group's private funders.

The total cost of the scheme is just over £4million and has provided a mix of housing and a new library. Eight apartments provide supported housing managed by Caretime, nine apartments are for rent and ten apartments have been made available on a shared ownership basis (part rent-part buy). For further information please visit [www.spectrumhousing.co.uk](http://www.spectrumhousing.co.uk).

## It's a Learning Curve

Spectrum Housing Group's bespoke Management & Leadership Development Programme called 'Steps 4 Success' for its staff has recently been recognised and supported by the Institute of Leadership Management (ILM). Staff completing the programme receive an ILM professional qualification.

By being an ILM approved centre for training, Spectrum is able to custom-build its management programme to the needs of the Organisation whilst ensuring that staff receive an internationally recognised professional qualification.

## Recognition for High Achievers

Spectrum Housing Group employees have been recognised for their achievements and outstanding contributions at a recent Employee Awards Event held in Bournemouth.

The categories included:

- Team Award
- Customer Focus Award
- Contribution to the Community Award
- Innovation and Improvement Award
- Employee of the Year Award

There was also recognition for those staff that had obtained professional qualifications, management qualifications and retirement awards.

Wayne Morris, Chief Executive of Spectrum Housing Group, said "It isn't that often that we have the opportunity to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our staff. It has been an incredibly busy year at Spectrum and within our subsidiaries. All our staff have made a real contribution to taking the organisation forward in what is a very difficult economic climate."

Nominations for the awards are sought from

staff, and the winners are announced at the Awards ceremony.

Sara Pedrick, Employee of the Year 2009 added, "Thanks to Spectrum for this award, it's a wonderful honour and privilege to receive it, and it just goes to show that hard work is rewarded within this organisation. Working for Spectrum has really helped me develop a career and to be named Employee of the Year really tops it all. But I couldn't have achieved anything without a great team behind me, so it's only fair they get some of the recognition too!"



Employee of the year winners from left to right: Nicola Stanford (Spectrum Housing Group), Sara Pedrick (Spectrum Housing Group) and Susan Webster (Western Challenge Housing Association)

## Worthy Waste

Maintaining over 35,000 properties across the south can create quite a lot of waste from bathroom and kitchen furniture to copper piping from heating systems. Signpost Services set itself a target of improving its environmental impact caused by waste by at least 10% through effective waste management.

It hasn't been an easy task – following consultations with waste contractors, it became apparent that the recycling market is saturated and most of what we thought was being recycled is ending up in landfill sites. This simply wasn't acceptable to Signpost Services who continued in their endeavours to find a waste contractor that could measure its recycling outputs.

Following a lengthy but worthwhile process by the Signpost Services team, it was decided to contract the waste to Commercial Recycling Ltd (CRL). Thanks to them, Signpost Services is now recycling around 82% of its waste such as paper, UPVC, cardboard, plastics, wood, hardcore, soils, lino flooring, plasterboard, electrical goods and construction waste. With recycling centres located in Signpost Services' main areas of business it means that our operatives are able to deliver their waste to these centres rather than driving it to one static site. This too is having a positive effect on the environment with a reduction in travelling.

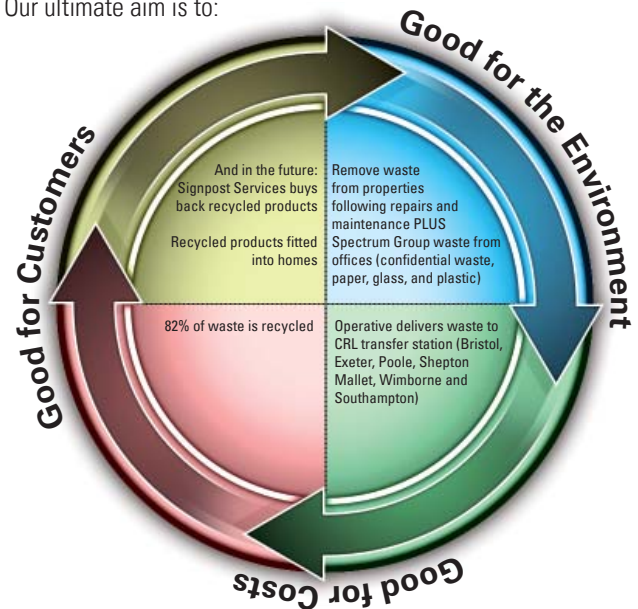
Not only is this new waste management system good for the environment, it's good for costs too with a remarkable saving per skip of 34% simply by agreeing a sum with CRL based on a

tonnage and haulage rate instead of a skip cost. This should save Signpost Services in the region of £12,000 a year.

Signpost Service will continue to measure its waste in terms of:

- Environmental Impact
- Health and Safety
- Cost

Our ultimate aim is to:



## Gift-Aid Profits Boost Care and Support

Signpost Services has gift-aided £100,000 of its annual profit to Signpost Care Partnerships to boost care and support services to residents.

For 10 years Signpost Services has positioned itself as a community investment business. Its purpose is to provide excellent repairs and maintenance services for social housing residents; whilst aiming for secure employment opportunities for local construction workers and their families.

Clive Jones, Chairman of Signpost Services, says "We are delighted to be able to positively contribute extra social value in this way as

Signpost Services aims to re-cycle its contracting profits into social housing and community investment." All remaining company profits are retained within the business and are reinvested into further service improvements for its customers.

Anne Murphy, Chair of Signpost Care Partnerships added, "We are absolutely delighted by the decision of Signpost Services to gift-aid £100,000. This contribution will make such a difference to our tenants and we owe our thanks to Signpost Services for their achievement."

## Medina Housing Still Performing to a High Standard

Medina Housing Association has kept its "Enhanced Certification Standard" set by independent organisation Quality Housing Services Ltd (QHS). Medina Housing was the first housing association in the country to receive this certification last year, and was re-audited in May.

During the recent audit, and in a series of 'mystery shopping' activities carried out over the last year, QHS staff measured Medina against some demanding targets. The key areas investigated were: Medina's repairs service, complaints handling, the telephone service, neighbourhood management and resident involvement. Medina's continued high performance in all areas means they have retained the highest level of performance certification by QHS – "Enhanced".

## Double Whammy for Signpost Services

Signpost Services has recently been awarded two awards – a gold from RoSPA at their Occupational Health and Safety Awards and an International Award from the British Safety Council.

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