

Gloucester City Homes Achievements 2013 - 2014



Gloucester City Homes Achievements 2013-2014



Gloucester City Homes Headline Achievements for 2013-2014

Our Awards and Accolades

- In March 2014, **we were re-accredited with the Customer Service Excellence Award**. We have secured 4 further compliance plus award. **GCH now holds a record 33 compliance pluses**, more than any company in the Country.

The inspector said:

“Gloucester City Homes has again made significant improvements to an already excellent service. The continued accreditation to the Customer Service Excellence is well deserved. As one satisfied tenant remarked “They are always there for you.”



- We were finalists in three categories at the TPAS Connecting People Awards 2014**; Excellence in Youth Involvement; Excellence in Annual Reports; and Tenant of the Year.



Matson Youth Forum members



Maggie Day



Young people who took part in the Youth Annual Report, with Chris Isaac

- In March 2014, **we were re-accredited with the ISO 9001 award**.

The inspector said:-

“Within this organisation there is a very clear and very strong commitment to the vision of an organisation that delivers services to the public in housing and social living spaces. The shifting legislative framework is continually monitored and the aim is to deliver services that are in the top quartile when compared against similar organisations nationally.

There is a deep respect for the stakeholders in all their various guises: local authority, tenants, residents, national government, the board of directors, and the general population of the City of Gloucester."

- Our Neighbourhood Services Team **were finalists in the Housing Heroes Awards 2013**; in the "Frontline Housing Team of the Year" category.
- Our Board **were finalists in the 24 Housing Awards** in the "**Board of the Year**" category. Below are some of our Board members and staff before the awards ceremony



GCH Board with CE, Ashley Green and Head of Policy and Governance, Paul Masters

- **We won the "Best Customer Service" category** and were finalists in the "**Best Community Event of the Year**" category at the **Believe in Gloucester Awards 2013**.



Kelly Jordan, Customer Services Co-ordinator

Our Performance

- Our Tenant Scrutiny Panel established from December 2011 as part of our Co-regulatory arrangements completed its second review, covering the Anti-social Behaviour service. **The report, which is of a very high standard, was presented to GCH managers, and their recommendations reviewed and endorsed.** The Tenant Scrutiny Panel continues to scrutinise our performance on a monthly and quarterly basis, and our Delivery Plan progress quarterly.
- GCH has made excellent progress in **supporting independent living**. In 2005-2006, it took 17 months to upgrade a disabled, vulnerable and older resident's home with a major medical adaptation, as examples installing stair lifts, wet room, walk-in shower, and mobility standard kitchens. In 2005-2006, it took 57 weeks to upgrade a home with a minor medical adaptation, as examples grab rails, stair rails, ramps, dropped kerb. Over the last 8 years, GCH has spent over £5.3 million on upgrading 2,270 disabled, vulnerable and older resident's homes to support independent living. In 2013-2014, it now takes GCH with our partners just a little over 5 weeks to complete a major adaptation and 9 days to complete a minor adaptation.

- Our work on Welfare Reform in terms of supporting our tenants and providing welfare benefits and debt advice, alongside advice has resulted in some really excellent outcomes for tenants. For example, **Gloucester Law Centre has secured over £450,000 additional income for our tenants** through lump sum and weekly benefits by co-locating at GCH for 2 ½ days a week and seeing over 385 tenants on a surgery basis, with over 250 securing successful outcomes. Our work with **Civica's Welfare Rights Team have brought in an additional £154,000 in benefit income** to support our customers and referred 162 people for Welfare Rights Advice.
- Arrears at the end of March were £244,759, which is just £1.31% of the rent debit occurring this year and despite an increased debit of £ 1.3 million to over £18.5 million and additional £385,000 to collect due to the Welfare Benefit Reform changes. **This places GCH in top quartile for rent arrears and one of the best in class.**
- **Our Arrears Blitz days** continue to provide excellent results to drive down rent arrears with cross working by all our teams. **We collected £63,440 in 2013-14** and in excess of **£1million** since they were launched in 2006
- Working with our repairs partner Lovell Respond, we have **maintained very high repairs performance and customer satisfaction** as follows:
 - ✓ Emergency repairs completed in target continue to meet 100%
 - ✓ Urgent repairs completed in target is over 99%
 - ✓ Routine repairs completed in target are over 98%
 - ✓ 96.8% of our customers think the repair service is excellent or good.
- The **time taken to re-let empty homes was just 14 days**, making us a top-performing organisation. Since 2007 we have reduced the re-let time from over 36 days and reduced both annual void costs and the average cost of each void by over a half.
- The number of lettings managed by the team totalled 387 and the satisfaction level with this element of the service from our new tenants – **93.80% satisfied (49.60% excellent, 44.20% good)**
- Our **performance for answering customer enquiries at first point of contact was 95%** against a target of 90%.
- **100% of our complaints** we received during the year were responded to within our target of 5 working days.
- **Home Safety checks** including gas servicing, carbon monoxide and electrical safety have been maintained at 100%

For the seventh year running the staff at Gloucester City Homes **celebrated National Customer Service Week** during the first week in October to raise the profile of customer service throughout the company. We organised the following activities:

- ✓ Fun and games were had with the customers visiting our reception at Railway House.
- ✓ Daily prizes were given for guessing how many sweets were in a jar, best suggestion of the day and puzzles and picture colouring were available for children to take part.

- ✓ A daily prize draw for customers telephoning into the contact centre and through electronic mail.
- ✓ Quizzes linked to customer services



Mr and Mrs Webb



GCH Customer Services Team

Our Work in the Community



Priory Place opening

- On 17th November 2013 we opened **Priory Place** for those who are homeless. Working with Gloucester City Council (GCC) we secured £35k of section 106 funding and used capital investment funding to sympathetically refurbish this property in partnership with GCC and in doing so creating a high quality five room shared accommodation for those who are homeless. Priory Place now provides **interim homeless accommodation for ex offenders**. During their three month stay our Homeless Support Officer provides tailored supported and referrals to specialists to ensure their time spent with us is positive providing a real opportunity to focus on their future.
- **We hold customer knowledge on over 93% of our tenants** so that we can shape and tailor services on our customers' behalf. This means we have a good understanding of customers' individual needs when we visit them and are able to provide services tailored to their needs.
- **Our Housing Officers carried out 3,245 home visits to customers**, including **558** introductory tenancy visits and **137** Mutual exchange visits.

- Our **Anti-social Behaviour service** has achieved very high levels of **satisfaction with 100% of residents** satisfied with the way their complaint was handled; this was with over 380 cases.
- We **temporarily housed 72 households** within Caridas House and **14 households** within the dispersed properties, while their homeless applications were being assessed by Gloucester City Council.
- Over the past year we have spent **over £5.4 million on external and internal home improvements** carrying out:
 - ✓ 71 New Kitchens
 - ✓ 71 New Bathrooms
 - ✓ 41 Electrical Rewires
 - ✓ 143 Central Heating Upgrades
 - ✓ 528 New Doors and Windows
 - ✓ 298 Medical Adaptations



New front door at Breinton Way



Mrs Barnett in her new kitchen at Pickwick Close

- **Customer satisfaction levels** on our planned improvement programmes **exceed 98%.**
- **We have completed the installation of External Wall Insulation to 50 homes** in the Hucclecote area. This work will preserve the fabric of the non-traditional stock we manage and maintain whilst also improve the energy efficiency of these properties, to help reduce our customer's fuel bills. These properties have also received new roofs, fascias, gutters, doors and windows where required.



*Miss Lord celebrating the first handover in the
External Wall Insulation programme in
Horton*

- **We have completed a number of internal communal area improvements** such as:
 - ✓ 38 blocks have received new internal communal flooring
 - ✓ 17 blocks in Matson have been painted internally
- **We have also completed a number of external communal area improvements** such as:
 - ✓ Kingsholm – Installing new notice boards in various areas of Kingsholm following consultation with the Kingsholm TCC
 - ✓ Matson – Installing new external bins in various locations as agreed with the Matson TCC to minimise littering of both rubbish and cigarettes
 - ✓ Podsmead – Upgraded the fencing around Shakespeare Ave to chain-link fencing following consultation with the Podsmead resident group



Before and after – improved fencing at Shakespeare Avenue, Podsmead

- ✓ Garnalls Road, Matson – Installed new bow-top fencing to the front elevation of all properties
- ✓ St Peters Road, Matson – Installed new bow-top fencing to front elevation of all properties
- ✓ Podsmead – Created additional car parking spaces at Hathaway Close following consultation with the tenants



Improved parking at Hathaway Close, Podsmead

- ✓ Barton Street / India Road – We improved the external landscape and the level of security to access the building by installing a new key fob entry system
 - ✓ Fountain Square – We improved the scheme extending the external in conjunction with the car park barrier to stop visitors misusing the car park area
 - ✓ St Pauls Court – we resurfaced the car park area and improved the layout of the bin store area as requested by the residents
 - ✓ We externally painted 854 houses and blocks to help preserve the external fabric, to help drive down the cost of the responsive repairs budget
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- **We delivered a highly successful Community Conference** “Celebrating Successful Communities” in October 2013 at Kingsholm Rugby Club. This all day event offered learning taster sessions for attendees at our community conference including cake decorating and healthy food activities. We also offered health & wellbeing activities such as dancing demonstrations and sessions, hand massages & nutritional advice.



Celebrating Successful Communities Event at Kingsholm Rugby

- We continue to work alongside Tenant and Residents groups to **support and deliver a range of Community Pride /Fun days across the city and local community events throughout the year**, events including:-
 - ✓ Podsmead Fun Day (Big Local Launch) It's a Knockout Competition,
 - ✓ TETRA Pensioners Party; The event was successful with 80 attendees who enjoyed food, entertainment, raffle and Christmas carols by the youngsters from Tredworth Junior School
 - ✓ Halloween and New Year's party at the Venture.
 - ✓ Barton & Tredworth Cultural Fayre
 - ✓ Christmas Event in Matson; we supported the Redwell Centre in their Christmas Scenes event by providing a Victorian style tearoom for participants. We served refreshments to nearly 700 people.
 - ✓ Intergenerational working with youths and sheltered schemes for Gloucester's first Youth Arts Festival



A selection of Community Events held throughout the year

- We supported the street Athletics event in Podsmead alongside Linford Christie with local youths competing and then going on to run at the finals in Manchester.



Linford Christie, centre, with GCH and Lovell staff left, and runners, right, at the Street Athletic Event in Podsmead

- We were a **main sponsor and supporter of the annual Gloucester Gay Pride event** in June 2013. Our Chief Executive Ashley Green spoke at the event, and our Anti-social Behaviour team provided advice and support on Hate Crime and Domestic Violence issues.
- **We offered a Shine Coffee morning** to let people know what learning opportunities are available through GCH and other learning providers including Adult Education & Prospects.

Shine courses for 2014 have included;-

- ✓ Basic IT
- ✓ Sewing and clothing alteration
- ✓ Growing Vegetables
- ✓ Baby & Toddler First Aid
- ✓ Learning through Play.



Students on the Shine Learning Academy Basic IT course at GLIC

- Our **Multi-agency Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Patrol Van** in partnership with Project Solace, Gloucester City Council and Gloucester Police aiming to provide an immediate response to incidents of ASB, allowing a multi-agency approach to dealing with ASB and providing members of the public with access to a variety of agencies to address the problem they are experiencing.

- **We have raised £1,311.49** for Sue Ryder, our chosen charity of the year.
- We held another **highly successful Annual Garden Competition** during the summer. The award ceremony held in Blackfriars drew over 100 guests and proved to be very popular.



Garden Competition Award Ceremony at Blackfriars with the Mayor and Sheriff



Mr McKenzie and Mrs Firkin, The Lampreys



Mrs Bell, Matson



Pupils at Calton Junior School

- GCH's annual Community Awards were once again presented at our Community Conference by the Chair of the Board Tim Dare and CE, Ashley Green.

Awards were presented to:-

- **Good Neighbour Award** – Nadine Smith
- **Young Person of the Year** – Cory Palfrey
- **Volunteer of the Year** – Carmel Webb who sadly passed away in late 2013
- **Community Learner** – David Evans
- **Best Community Project or Event** – two awards were presented this year one to Jerry Jenkinson (Official recognition and naming of White City) and one to Veronica Lee (work with Cain's Stars)



Volunteer of the Year, the late Carmel Webb



Young Person of the Year, Cory Palfrey



Community Learner, David Evans



Best Community Project or Event, Jerry Jenkinson

- We have continued the long tradition of providing entertainment to the tenants of sheltered schemes. In December **we put on a show titled 'Home Front'** at St Barnabas Church Hall comprising sketches, songs and dancing themed around the Second World War. The cast included tenants with Barry as our Director and other tenants singing solos. 73 older people attended and enjoyed a sit down meal and the show, the feedback was incredibly positive.



Home Front show at St Barnabas Church Hall

- Our **Junior Warden Scheme continues its success**. Since the new intake of recruits in September we have worked closely with partners such as the Police, Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and The Venture to provide activities including:-
 - ✓ Traffic speed awareness
 - ✓ Road Safety, etc.
 - ✓ Estate inspections; these have identified issues which have been reported using the My Landlord App.
 - ✓ ASB, Fearless and Crime stoppers training,
 - ✓ Recycling awareness
 - ✓ History about Gloucester by meeting the Mayor
 - ✓ Making bird feeders; working with All Paths Lead to the Hill project worker, Nicola Simpson
 - ✓ Energy Saving
 - ✓ Gloucester City Museum visit
 - ✓ Junior wardens 5th birthday party, hosted by Cool Kidz Crew at Robinswood School.



Big Tidy at Podsmead



Traffic speed awareness



Junior Wardens 5th birthday, with the Mayor



Treddeners Patrol Tree Planting

- Our **Estate Services team** carried out garden maintenance for **270 tenants**, and removed over **208 tonnes of fly-tipped rubbish and other waste from communal areas**. They completed 5,187 jobs on the estates including the upkeep of blocks and estates.



Andy Rose, Estate Services Worker



Seasonable Estate Services Worker Ian Wildgoose

- We continued to **employ four people with learning disabilities within our Estate Services Team** for the first half of the year. Working with Home Farms Trust, PLUSS and the DWP, this is an innovative and outstanding example of their contribution to supporting employment opportunities, building partnerships and meeting GCH's commitment to equality and diversity. In October the four people left and went into further employment elsewhere with glowing references for their hard work and commitment.



Handylink launch – the team with Andrew Harley and Maggie day

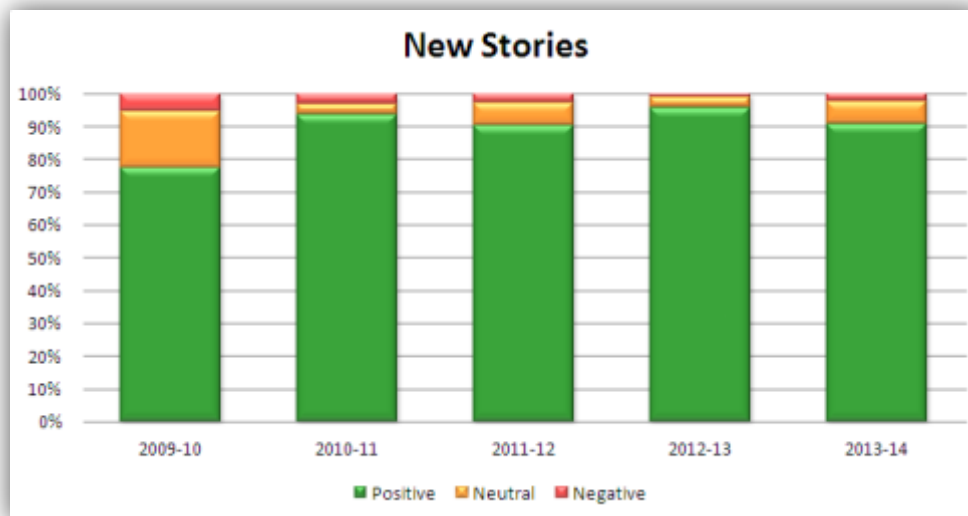
- On 29th January 2014 we **launched our first Social Enterprise, Handylink** that offers a range of minor home repairs and gardening services for our tenants, private customers including businesses providing a versatile and efficient service at an affordable price.

Our Work on Value for Money

- We have made **efficiency savings of £916,000** for 2013-2014 and have secured overall efficiency **savings of £15.46 million** between 2007 and 2014. These savings have arisen from the following initiatives:
 - ✓ We reduced the time taken to re-let empty homes to 14 days; this has resulted in comparative rent-loss savings of £142,000 for the year, compared with 2005/6.
 - ✓ Our work with Gloucester Law centre has secured over £450,000 additional income for our tenants through lump sum and weekly benefits by co-locating at GCH for 2 ½ days a week and seeing over 385 tenants on a surgery basis, with over 250 securing successful outcomes.
 - ✓ Our work with Civica's Welfare Rights Team have brought in an additional £154,000 in benefit income to support our customers and referred 162 people for Welfare Rights Advice. Since 2007, we have secured £959,161 in additional income for our customers
 - ✓ Domestic and General Insulation have completed £371,550 worth of cavity wall and loft insulation to our properties.
 - ✓ The total inward investment achieved since 2007 now stands at £1,566,935 this has enabled GCH improve services and support new initiatives.

Our work in Communications, Media and IT

- We had **247 positive stories** in local and national news media; 98% of all stories were positive.



- We completed and published the **GCH Annual Report for Tenants 2012/13**. Working with our customer Publication Group, we produced a short infographic version of the report issued to all residents, a full version of the report available online plus an innovative Youth Annual Report film. We were finalists in the TPAS Awards for the Excellence in Annual Reports category.



- We launched a new customised version of the GCH Housing App for Android and iPhone, enabling tenants to report repairs and other issues to us by mobile phone. The new version of the app also enables residents to access all the latest information about our services, news and events as well as job vacancies at GCH, the Money Advice Service and information about Universal Credit.



Gloucester City Homes Key Milestones to date



March 2014	Customer Service Excellence re-accreditation with four more compliance plus achievements, making a total of 33
March 2014	Re-accredited with ISO 9001
March 2014	TPAS Connecting People Awards finalists in three categories: Excellence in Youth Involvement; Excellence in Annual Reports; and Tenant of the Year
November 2013	Believe in Gloucester Awards 2013 Winner "Best Customer Service Award" Believe in Gloucester Awards 2013 Finalist "Best Community Event of the Year"
November 2013	24 Housing Awards Finalist "Board of the Year"
June 2013	Housing Heroes Awards 2013 GCH Neighbourhood Services Team Finalist "Frontline Housing Team of the Year"
April 2013	Customer Service Excellence re-accreditation with one more compliance plus achievement, making a total of 29
March 2013	Re-accredited with Investors in People Gold Award
March 2013	British Standards Institute Quality Management System – ISO 9001:2008 Re-accredited
February 2013	Sunday Times Top 100 Company in the Non-Profit making organisation category – position 66

November 2012	Housemark Social Crime and Landlords Nuisance Group Project Solace and Gloucester City Homes Best Practice Award Winner in managing Ant-Social Behaviour
May 2012	Housing Heroes Awards 2012 GCH Finance Team – Finalist “Financial or Procurement Team of the Year” Project Solace – Finalist “Groundbreaking Service Team of the Year”
April 2012	Customer Service Excellence re-accreditation with a further four compliance plus achievements, making a total of 28
March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% completion of Decent Homes Programme • British Standards Institute Quality Management System – ISO 9001:2008 Re-accredited
February 2012	TPAS Awards 2012 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorothy Smith – Vice Chair of Board nominated as a finalist in the category: “Tenant of the Year” • ASB Pantomime in Podsmead – Winner of the “Excellence in Youth Involvement”
November 2011	GCH relocates to newly refurbished premises at Railway House, providing easier access for residents whilst making significant savings
September 2011	The Council’s ‘Housing Futures’ Options review is completed, with approval of the recommendations of Customer Forum and GCH to develop the CoCo stock transfer model
July 2011	4000 th home improved under Decent Homes Programme
May 2011	Housing Heroes Awards 2011 Chief Executive is a finalist “Inspirational Leader of the Year”
April 2011	TPAS Awards 2011 Central Regional Final Patrick O'Donahue – shortlisted “Young Tenant of the Year” award Youth Wardens - shortlisted “Best Practice in Youth Involvement” award
March 2011	British Standards Institute Quality Management System – ISO 9001:2008 Re-accredited
March 2011	Customer Service Excellence re-accreditation with a further eight compliance plus achievements, making a total of 24
December 2010	The Times Top 100 companies – “1Star” recognition

December 2010	Audit Commission Report: GCH are assessed as a 3 star excellent organisation with Excellent Prospects for Improvement
October 2010	GCH wins the Communicator of the Year – Citizen and Echo Business Awards 2010
July 2010	Mo Norman NFA Most Outstanding Resident award
May 2010	GCH Customer Services Team shortlisted for the Front line Service Team of the Year at the Housing Excellence Awards 2010 and the Customer Services Award at the CIH Housing Heroes Awards 2010
May 2010	Achieve 5 A Grades for the delivery of Sheltered Housing Services under the Quality Assessment Framework
April 2010	Customer Service Excellence re-accreditation and a further 6 compliance plus achievements
March 2010	Investors in People Accredited with Gold Award Status placing GCH as an employer of choice and in the top 1% of companies in the Country in terms of our status for performance, investing in our employees and securing service outcomes for our Residents
March 2010	The Times Top 100 companies – “one to watch” recognition
September 2009	GCH receives a special recognition award for Customer Services Excellence as a result of 9 compliance plus achievements
July 2009	Mike Groom achieves TPAS Tenant of the Year Award
March 2009	The first company to be accredited against the achieving level of the new Equality Framework
March 2009	Customer Service Excellence Award and the first company to achieve all 57 compliances to the standard; and achieve 9 compliance plus achievements
June 2008	Housing Corporation Accreditation as Investment Partner
October 2007	Housing Corporation Accreditation to Manage for others
June 2007	Audit Commission Inspection 2*(Good) Service with promising prospects for improvement releasing £39.6 million to deliver Decent Homes and Community Improvements
December 2006	British Standards Institute Quality Management System – ISO 9001 accredited
November 2006	Investors in People Accredited
October 2006	Supporting People Gold Award
December 2005	Chartered Institute of Services Founder Council Member
December 2005	GCH Ltd goes live on the 12 th December 2005 and locates to Southgate House, Gloucester



Gloucester City Homes Achievements for 2013-2014

Service by Service

Standard 1: Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

Customer Service, Choice and Complaints

- In March 2014, we were re-accredited with the Customer Service Excellence Award. We have secured four further compliance plus awards. GCH now holds a record 33 compliance pluses, more than any company in the Country. The compliance plus awards demonstrate that services in those 33 areas exceed the standards set and are examples of national best practice. This builds on the initial award in 2009 when GCH received full compliance with 9 compliance plus ratings, in 2010 when we received a 15 compliance plus ratings and 24 in 2011. In 2012 we received 4 more compliance plus awards and in 2013 when we received 1 extra compliance plus award.
- Our performance for answering customer enquiries at first point of contact was 95% against a target of 90%.
- We received 73,528 telephone enquiries, 13,542 visitors and 60,723 e-mails and website contacts
- The Customer Service team completed weekly surveys on all GCH front line services and gather feedback from customers.
- 100% of the complaints we received during the year were responded to within our target of 5 working days.
- Our customer complaints review panel review all our complaint responses on a bi monthly basis to give an independent review and give recommendations when needed. This has earned us a compliance plus in the Customer Service Excellence Award.
- For the seventh year running the staff at Gloucester City Homes celebrated National Customer Service during the first week in October to raise the profile of customer service throughout the company. We organised the following activities:
 - ✓ Fun and games were had with the customers visiting our reception at Railway House.
 - ✓ Daily prizes were given for guessing how many sweets were in a jar, best suggestion of the day and puzzles and picture colouring were available for children to take part.
 - ✓ A daily prize draw for customers telephoning into the contact centre and through electronic mail.
 - ✓ Quizzes linked to customer services

Resident Involvement and Empowerment

- We offered a Shine Coffee morning to let people know what learning opportunities are available through GCH and other learning providers including Adult Education & Prospects.

Shine courses for 2014 have included:-

- ✓ Basic IT
 - ✓ Sewing and clothing alteration
 - ✓ Growing Vegetables
 - ✓ Baby & Toddler First Aid
 - ✓ Learning through Play.
- We have encouraged residents to take up the offer of external training and one resident has completed a Cooking on a Budget Course which has an attached funding availability of £500 to take it into their community.
 - We delivered a highly successful Community Conference “Celebrating Successful Communities” in October 2013 at Kingsholm Rugby Club. This all day event offered learning taster sessions for attendees at our community conference including cake decorating and healthy food activities. We also offered health & wellbeing activities such as dancing demonstrations and sessions, hand massages & nutritional advice.
 - GCH’s annual Community Awards were once again presented at our Community Conference.

Awards were presented to:-

- **Good Neighbour Award** –Nadine Smith
 - **Young Person of the Year** – Cory Palfrey
 - **Volunteer of the Year** – Carmel Webb, who sadly passed way at the end of the year
 - **Community Learner** – David Evans
 - **Community Project or Event** – two awards were presented this year one to Jerry Jenkinson (Official recognition and naming of White City) and one to Veronica Lee (work with Cain’s Stars)
- We had two finalists shortlisted for the TPAS Awards 2014; Together in Matson Youth Forum were nominated for Excellence in Youth Engagement while Maggie Day was nominated for Tenant of the Year.
 - We have delivered seven “Supporting Successful Communities” Roadshow events across the city to:-
 - ✓ Gather feedback from our residents.
 - ✓ Promote our Local Offers
 - ✓ Give residents information relevant to their areas
 - We held another highly successful Annual Garden Competition during the summer. The award ceremony held in Blackfriars drew over 100 guests and proved to be very popular.

- We continue to recruit Mystery Shoppers and new people have received training. A number of exercises to test our service delivery have taken place during the year.
- We have continued to develop five year Community Improvement plans with our residents groups.
- We carried out door to door surveys in Barnwood and Tuffley to gauge residents' views for community improvements and interest in getting involved with their local resident group.
- We have worked alongside the Property Services Team to identify local community improvements in areas with and without residents groups. This has resulted in a range of improvements including new seating, improved lighting and installation of community notice-boards.
- We supported the creation and installation of the new mural artwork in White City by local children replacing the old one made by children in the late 90's.
- We continue to work alongside Tenant and Residents groups to support and deliver a range of Community Pride /Fun days across the city and local community events throughout the year, events including:-
 - ✓ Podsmead Fun Day (Big Local Launch) It's a Knockout Competition,
 - ✓ TETRA Pensioners Party; The event was successful with 80 attendees who enjoyed food, entertainment, raffle and Christmas carols by the youngsters from Tredworth Junior School
 - ✓ Halloween and New Year's party at the Venture.
 - ✓ Barton & Tredworth Cultural Fayre
 - ✓ Christmas Event in Matson; we supported the Redwell Centre in their Christmas Scenes event by providing a Victorian style tearoom for participants. We served refreshments to nearly 700 people.
 - ✓ Intergenerational working with youths and sheltered schemes for Gloucester's first Youth Arts Festival.
- We have attended and supported approximately 200 Residents' Group and Neighbourhood Partnerships meetings throughout the year.
- We have supported and worked with partners and agencies to redesign the interior of Podsmead Big Local café, and then relaunch the premises to the community.
- We continue to support the Podsmead Big Local and have a GCH member of staff working with residents and agencies on a panel to collate and move the ideas that have been gathered from the community, to enable the one million pound lottery grant to improve the lives of residents living in Podsmead.
- We have supported and mentored a local Podsmead resident to win the TPAS Tenant of the year central region award.
- We worked with the British Heart Foundation to deliver a Health family fun day for Podsmead residents.
- We worked with the City Council and residents to enable the launch a new allotment in Willow Way.

- We supported the street Athletics event in Podsmead alongside Lindford Christie with local youths competing and then going on to run at the finals in Manchester.
- We worked with the Gloucester College “National Citizen Service” youth scheme to enable a successful fun day resulting in the redesign of an unused garden to turn it into a vegetable garden and carry out internal decorations in the Podsmead Big Local café.
- We supported families by providing healthy eating initiatives at a Pizza Hut workshop.
- We hosted the Gloucestershire & Severnside Tenants’ Network meeting at the Redwell Centre in Matson. Tenants from the Southwest continued shared good practice, ideas and continue to support each other.
- Our Junior Warden Scheme continued its success. Since the new intake of recruits in September we have worked closely with partners such as the Police, Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and The Venture to provide activities including:-
 - ✓ traffic speed awareness
 - ✓ Road Safety, etc.
 - ✓ Estate inspections; these have identified issues which have been reported using the My Landlord App.
 - ✓ ASB, Fearless and Crime stoppers training,
 - ✓ Recycling awareness
 - ✓ History about Gloucester by meeting the Mayor
 - ✓ Making bird feeders; working with All Paths Lead to the Hill project worker, Nicola Simpson
 - ✓ Energy Saving
 - ✓ Gloucester City Museum visit
 - ✓ Junior wardens 5th birthday parted, hosted by Cool Kidz Crew at Robinswood School.

The Junior Warden groups are very enthusiastic and enjoy helping to make their community a better place to live.

- We Supported the Property Services Team to deliver Your Homes Your Community Your Choice Road shows citywide.
- The team achieved Value for Money savings in excess of £11,000 during the year by a variety of means, including:
 - ✓ Continued expansion of working in partnership with Adult Education to obtain development worker and tutor services free of charge to deliver a range of training courses for our residents.
 - ✓ Extended producing our own catering at community events.
 - ✓ Sourced provision of transport at more reasonable rates and frequently at no cost to the organisation.
- We have provided a total of £5,200.00 to local community projects this year:

Organisation	Funding
Coney Hill Youth Football	£500.00
Cheer Supreme Allstars	£566.00
Grange Baptist Church	£75.00
Matson Rugby Club	£477.90
Windsor Drive YFC	£527.40
Tredworth Tigers FC	£500.00
Once Church	£500.00
TETRA	£500.00
Barry Lloyd (Entertainment)	£500.00
Gloucestershire Youth Mini Bike Project	£353.70
Freedom Kids/Wednesday Club	£500.00
FC St Leonards	£200.00

Communications and Media work to promote GCH

- We had 247 positive stories in local and national news media; 98% of all stories were positive.
- We have produced a range of publications for residents including our quarterly Tenant Times, and Improvement News.
- We completed and published the GCH Annual Report for Tenants 2012/13. Working with our customer Publication Group, we produced a short infographic version of the report issued to all residents, a full version of the report available online plus an innovative Youth Annual Report film.
- We were shortlisted for the Excellence in Annual Reports category of the TPAS Awards 2014.
- We launched a new customised version of the GCH Housing App for Android and iPhone, enabling tenants to report repairs and other issues to us by mobile phone. The new version of the app also enables residents to access all the latest information about our services, news and events as well as job vacancies at GCH, the Money Advice Service and information about Universal Credit.
- Advice and information on Universal Credit is now available on GCHTV via the Looking Local Service.
- We achieved Compliance Plus awards in the Customer Services Excellence inspection for the GCH Digital Inclusion Strategy and 'the regular publication of performance information to all tenants through Tenant Times in a format that is attractive and easy to understand.'
- We held a series of internet taster sessions for residents, via Spring Online, our Community Road shows and other community events, to promote digital inclusion.
- We achieved 92.5% resident satisfaction with communications.

Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

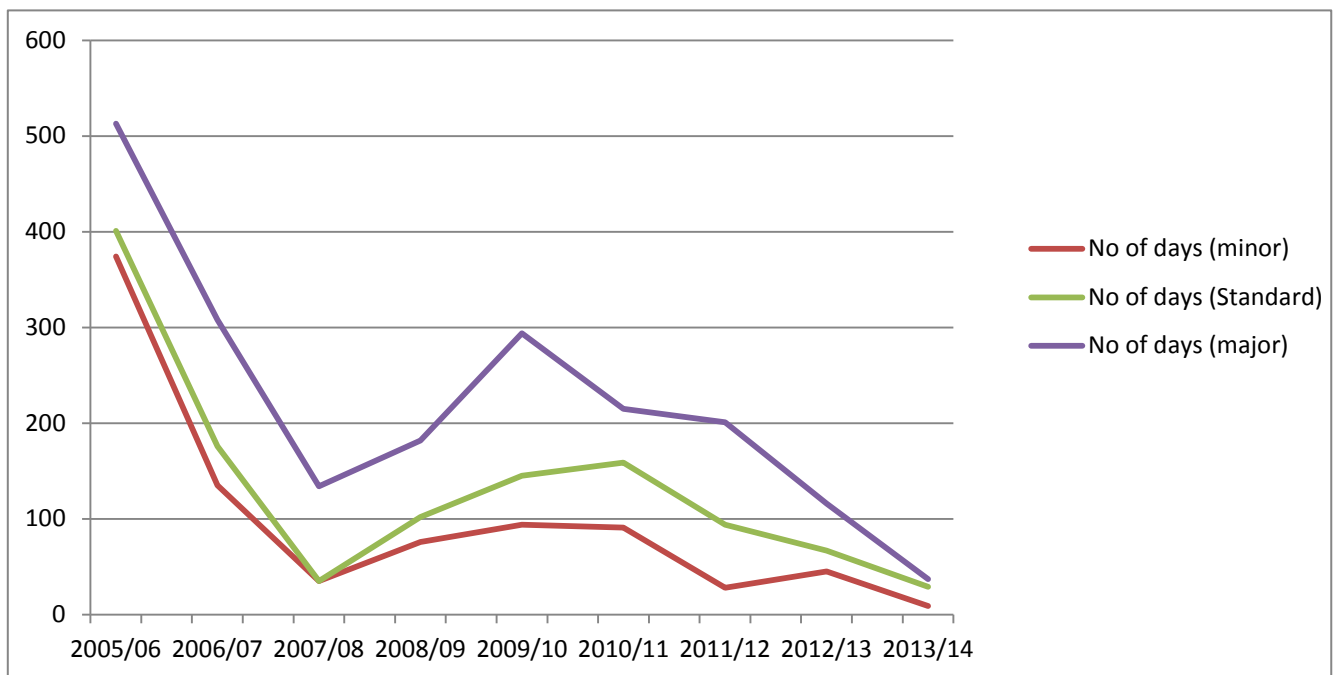
- We hold customer knowledge on over 93% of our tenants so that we can shape and tailor services on our customers' behalf. This means we have a good understanding of customers' individual needs when we visit them and are able to provide services tailored to their needs.
- In partnership with a number of organisations and agencies we are providing employment and training opportunities to residents in the most deprived parts of the City in an effort to make a sustained improvement to the long term prospects of communities.
- Our Customer and Diversity Champions share information and good practice across the organisation. They have been provided with specific training including Level 1 Sign Language training.
- We have given funding to a number of organisations providing opportunities for young people on our behalf.
- We were a main sponsor and supporter of the annual Gloucester Gay Pride event in June 2013. Our Chief Executive Ashley Green spoke at the event, and our Anti-social Behaviour team provided advice and support on Hate Crime and Domestic Violence issues.
- We have hosted a number of events for staff to both raise awareness of challenges faced in communities and to also celebrate their diversity, including:-
 - ✓ Holocaust Memorial Day
 - ✓ Chinese New Year
 - ✓ Black History Month
- Our Senior ASB Officer attends Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence (DASV) and provides feedback to GCH and residents through joint projects to raise awareness and through publicity including Tenant Times and social media. Our ASB Manager is our MARAC lead and provides feedback when necessary to staff on individual cases for support to victims etc.

Our Lifetime Homes Programme for Disabled, vulnerable and older residents

Between 2005 and 2014, we have spent £5.3 million on upgrading 2,220 homes for our older and vulnerable residents to support independent living through various major and minor medical adaptations. These will include ramps, rails, stair lifts, walk - in showers, steps and over bath showers as examples.

Most of our residents receiving our service will either be over 60 or have a disability. We have assumed a 60% reduction in falls as a result of the improvements undertaken which therefore would affect 60 residents overall.

Performance in waiting for a medical adaptation under GCH management



GCH has made excellent progress in supporting independent living.

- In 2005-2006, it took 17 months to upgrade a tenant with a disability's home with a major medical adaptation, as examples installing stair lifts, wet room, walk-in shower, and a mobility standard kitchens
- In 2005-2006, it took 57 weeks to upgrade a tenant with a disability's home with a minor medical adaptation, as examples grab rails, stair rails, ramps, dropped kerb
- In 2013-2014, it now takes GCH with our partners just a little over 5 weeks to complete a major adaptation and 9 days to compete a minor adaptation.
- Over the last 8 years, GCH has spent over £5.3 million on upgrading 2,270 vulnerable and tenants with a disability homes to support independent living.
- Our partnership with the County Council means that our medical adaptation assessments are carried out by our own in-house Occupational Therapist

Over the last 12 months, we have installed a number of walk-in showers, on demand, around the city, similar to the ones below:



Resident comments:

- Mrs Baber on the installation of her level access shower: “We are over the moon with the works completed at our property. The boys that installed it were fantastic and listened to all my concerns, making sure I was kept updated all the way through. It makes our lives so much easier, thank you.”
- Mr and Mrs Davis recently had adaptations completed at their home to enable Mr Davis to return home following triple heart bypass surgery. They were both delighted with the over bath shower, various grab rails and stair rails installed at their home.
- Mr Davis says: “Gloucester City Homes provided an amazing service. After Sarah Watts OT assessment we were contacted by EmmDee and the works were completed in one week, ready for when I returned home from hospital. We couldn’t ask for more.”
- Mrs Davis adds: “This work has helped me care for my husband since he left hospital. We are really happy with all the services GCH provides, they cannot be faulted.”

Financial savings linked to our Lifetime Homes Programme

- By having 60 fewer falls, **the savings to the NHS equate to £186,000 per annum**
- An assumption has been made that 25 residents from each of the 7 GAHLF providers are aged over 85. Based on the improvements to support independent living, it is reasonable to assume that our work delays their admission to a care home on medical grounds by 5 years. The average cost of Local Authority residential care in 2012 was £53,560 and by applying a discounted cash flow rate of 3.5%, **our savings equate to £1.21 million annually**

The total estimated savings from our work on linked to Lifetimes Homes Programme is £1.396 million per annum to both the NHS and Local Authority.

Standard 2: Home

Quality of Accommodation

- Since the completion of the Decent Homes Programme on 31st March 2012 we continued delivery of our Investment Programme 2012-2015 which forms the basis of our Asset Management Strategy and the first part of our 30 year Business Plan.
- We have continued to deliver the Investment Programme to the “Gloucester Housing Standard” which was agreed by Gloucester City Council and Customer Forum in 2006-2007, which is a higher standard of investment.
- Over the past year we have spent over £5.4 million on external and internal improvements carrying out:
 - ✓ 71 New Kitchens
 - ✓ 71 New Bathrooms
 - ✓ 41 Electrical Rewires
 - ✓ 143 Central Heating Upgrades
 - ✓ 528 New Doors and Windows
 - ✓ 298 Medical Adaptations

Home Improvement	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Total
New Kitchens	951	1209	539	235	82	160	71	3247
New bathrooms	774	1000	479	144	73	130	71	2671
Rewiring	1096	1466	658	177	51	120	41	3609
Central heating systems	571	633	529	222	36	110	143	2244
External works (New doors and windows)	200	166	889	317	117	810	528	3027
External works (walls / Chimneys / other)	0	0	0	0	8	53	50	111
Medical adaptations	218	179	137	198	136	220	298	1386
Total Improvements	3810	4653	3231	1293	503	1603	1202	16295

Property Investment Achievements 2013-2014

- Customer satisfaction levels on our planned improvement programmes exceed 98%.

Mr Kier of Matson: *“The difference is amazing! I had a choice of units, worktops and flooring and am really pleased with the black worktops. It was all done very efficiently and the workers were fantastic. I’m really pleased with the end result.”*

Mrs Barnet of Elmleaze: *“It’s smashing! I had a choice of units, worktops and flooring colours. The kitchen is so much better and easier to keep clean. It’s really lovely – they’ve done me proud!”*

Mr. A of White City: *"I am very delighted with my new door."*

Mrs. H of Matson: *"Thank you for the new doors and windows. I'm very pleased with the results. The workers were quick, polite and clean while completing the works to my property. The new doors & windows have made a real difference to my home."*

Mr. and Mrs. G of Barnwood: *"With my new heating system, I find that my home is so much warmer and easier to control the heat in each room."*

Hannah, Westgate: *"GCH kept me informed throughout the whole process and the Liaison Officer was always available for me to contact. The workers were really courteous, respectful and hardworking and I can't praise them enough. Having the new gas central heating system fitted has made such a difference to the comfort in my home. I really am over the moon with the work and the way that GCH and the contractors, EmmDee liaised with me from beginning to end."*

- We have completed the installation of External Wall Insulation to 50 homes in the Hucclecote area. This work will preserve the fabric of the non-traditional stock we manage and maintain whilst also improve the energy efficiency of these properties, to help reduce our customer's fuel bills. These properties have also received new roofs, fascias, gutters, doors and windows where required.
- We have completed a number of internal communal area improvements such as:
 - ✓ 38 blocks have received new internal communal flooring
 - ✓ 17 blocks in Matson have been painted internally
- We have also completed a number of external communal area improvements such as:
 - ✓ Kingsholm – Installing new notice boards in various areas of Kingsholm following consultation with the Kingsholm TCC
 - ✓ Matson – Installing new external bins in various locations as agreed with the Matson TCC to minimise littering of both rubbish and cigarettes
 - ✓ Podsmead – Upgraded the fencing around 47 Shakespeare Ave to chain-link fencing following consultation with the Podsmead resident group.
 - ✓ Garnalls Road, Matson – Installed new bow-top fencing to the front elevation of all properties.
 - ✓ St Peters Road, Matson – Installed new bow-top fencing to front elevation of all properties
 - ✓ Podsmead – Created additional car parking spaces at Hathaway Close following consultation with the tenants.
 - ✓ Barton Street / India Road – We improved the external landscape and the level of security to access the building by installing a new key fob entry system.

- ✓ Fountain Square – We improved the scheme extending the external in conjunction with the car park barrier to stop visitors misusing the car park area.
- ✓ St Pauls Court – we resurfaced the car park area and improved the layout of the bin store area as requested by the residents
- ✓ We externally painted 854 houses and blocks to help preserve the external fabric, to help drive down the cost of the responsive repairs budget
- We received over £374K of fully funded grant work towards the installation of loft and cavity wall insulation.
- We also completed the work to install External Wall Insulation to 53 non-traditional houses in the Matson area. All windows have been renewed and external doors replaced where necessary. Loft insulation has been upgraded and the eaves fascia/soffit and gutters/downpipes all renewed in low maintenance UPVC.



*Completed Properties in Langley Road after cladding
and environmental improvements*

- We are currently installing External Wall Insulation onto 59 homes in the Hucclecote area. We will also be installing this insulation onto Claremont Court, this block houses 16 flats. This type of work will preserve the fabric of the non-traditional stock we manage and maintain, whilst improving the energy efficiency within the properties and help support residents with their heating and energy costs: similar schemes have saved residents around £300 per annum.

Miss Lord, Hucclecote: *"I've lived here for 24 years and I think it's amazing!
I've saved £200 on my heating bills already and that's just for the first quarter."*



External Wall Insulation in Hucclecote

- Our current painting contractor, Mitie, has completed a significant amount of work as outlined below:
- 38 blocks have received new internal communal flooring
- 18 blocks have been painted internally
- 811 properties have been completed externally



Before



After

Internal Communal Improvements at St Pauls Court

- Mitie also undertook a number of repairs to timber window frames prior to undertaking the painting work, the results of these repairs can be seen in the pictures below.



Before



After

External Communal Improvements at St Aldwyn Road

- We have also completed a number of external communal area improvements such as;
- Upgrading the timber fencing at Blakeney Close to high-level metal bow-top fence, following consultation with the residents. This fencing improves the security and appearance, whilst reducing our long term maintenance costs.



Before



After

Fencing Improvements at Blakeney Close

- Following consultation with the residents of Hathaway Close via Podsmead Tenants and Residents Group, we transformed what was a turning circle with minimal parking into several car parking spaces for our residents to use. Previously our residents had to park on the main road or block the turning circle completely.



Before



After

Improved Parking & Turning Circle at Hathaway Close

- Housing Management identified that the communal garden at Barton Street / India Road was being used as a short cut through to the main road; this also led to reports of Anti-Social behaviour.
- Following consultation with the local residents we have installed a fob system on the existing gates so only GCH residents can gain access to this area, new bow top fencing has also been installed to enclose the entrance and the paths in the communal space have been resurfaced. This is converting a neglected communal area into a functional, safe and secure space for our residents.



Communal Security Improvements at India Road

- Following consultation and input from Neighbourhood Services, Property Services and the Estate Service Worker Co-ordinator we have recently installed new fencing and double gates to enclose the existing bin store at St Pauls Court. GCH have undertaken these works to assist with preventing fly-tipping in this area. Additionally we have also resurfaced the car park at this scheme.



Improvement Works to Enclose Bin Store at St Pauls Court

- We have also undertaken number of miscellaneous installations, such as installing an automated external front door, to assist a tenant with severe mobility issues:



Improvements to accessibility in Tredworth

Repairs and Maintenance

- Working with our repairs partner Lovell Respond, we have maintained very high repairs performance and customer satisfaction as follows:
 - ✓ Emergency repairs completed in target continue to meet 100%
 - ✓ Urgent repairs completed in target is over 99%
 - ✓ Routine repairs completed in target are over 98%
 - ✓ 96.8% of our customers think the repair service is excellent or good.
- The time taken to re-let empty homes was just 14 days, making us a top-performing organisation. Since 2007 we have reduced the re-let time from over 36 days and reduced both annual void costs and the average cost of each void by over a half.

Year	Completed in Target			Voids re-let performance
	Emergency Repair	Urgent Repair	Routine Repair	
2006-2007	92.00%	93.13%	95.60%	36.10 days
2007-2008	96.93%	90.84%	91.68%	21.66 days
2008-2009	97.48%	96.43%	97.80%	20.26 days
2009-2010	99.51%	93.05%	94.63%	17.96 days
2010-2011	99.82%	98.47%	97.78%	18.73 days
2011-2012	99.85%	97.04%	96.04%	15.58 days
2012-2013	100.00%	99.41%	98.77%	16.00 days
2013-2014	100.00%	99.17%	98.70%	14.00 days

Empty Homes Costs	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
No of Empty Homes	362	443	419	348	323	326	384
Voids re-let performance	21.66	20.26	17.96	18.73	15.58	16.00	13.97
Annual Cost	£1,096,797	£1,049,754	£776,588	£508,220	£399,224	£473,216	£521,487
Cost per Home	£3,029	£2,369	£1,853	£1,460	£1,236	£1,488	£1,358

- Working with our Home Safety Partner - Lovell Respond, we have maintained our 100% annual checks of our gas appliances, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure residents stay safe in their homes.
- We completed health and safety risk assessments on all our sheltered schemes and communal areas, including emergency lighting and communal door entry systems checks.
- We renewed the communal lifts at The Dukeries, Fairfield Court and are currently renewing the lift at Marian Court.
- We have renewed over 750 square metres of tarmac and installed over 850m of fencing to improve the appearance of our estates.
- We have installed External Wall Insulation (EWI) to 50 of our non-traditional Homes in Hucclecote and Elmbridge; this will preserve the fabric of the structure and improve the energy efficiency of the properties to help reduce our customers heating bills. We also renewed all fascias, gutters, roofs, windows and doors on several of these homes as part of this work.
- We now have an Energy Performance Certificate for 1,495 of our properties.
- We have continued to upgrade roof and cavity insulation to improve the energy efficiency of our properties and completed work to 300 homes
- We completed the installation of new communal flooring to 38 of our remaining blocks of flats, this completed our city wide programme of this work which commenced in 2012/13.

Standard 3: Tenancy

Allocations & Lettings

- We let 335 properties in the year; these included 20 studio apartments, 116 one-bedroom, 124 two-bedroom, 51 three-bedroom, 4 four-bedroom and 1 5 bed room homes. Overall, we carried out 559 viewings within the Neighbourhood Services Team which is equal to 46 viewings per month. On average 11 per week.
- We had 57 properties handed back to us following tenants giving notice which required major works this means some of the elements of decent homes including Kitchen replacement, bathroom replacement, re-wiring and heating.
- We reduced the time taken to re-let empty homes to 14 days; this has resulted in comparative rent-loss savings of £142,000 for the year, compared to the 2005/2006 financial year.
- We have 8 trained Tenant Inspectors who have allotted times each week where they are available to go out and check our ready to let void properties to ensure they meet our published re-let standards on behalf of other tenants. A total of 95 properties were inspected by the Tenant Inspectors; at 28.36% of all voids this exceeded our target of 10%.
- We have been running the welcome sessions for a year and in this time we have only had one non-attendee. The sessions provide support and advice with particular attention given to the maintenance, payment of rent and Anti social behaviour. We also explain how new tenants can become with mystery shopping or how to become a block and street representative, as examples.
- Since December 2013 we have been running CAB sessions for new tenants, we have been able to secure tenants extra benefits and grants as a result of assessing their financial situation.
- The voids process has been streamlined and we have created an electronic process to add efficiency and ensure all teams throughout GCH can access through the Electronic Document Management Records System

Collecting Rents and Supporting Tenancies

- Our work on Welfare Reform in terms of supporting our tenants and providing welfare benefits and debt advice, alongside advice has resulted in some really excellent outcomes for tenants. For example, Gloucester Law centre has secured over £450,000 additional income for our tenants through lump sum and weekly benefits by co-locating at GCH for 2 ½ days a week and seeing over 385 tenants on a surgery basis, with over 250 securing successful outcomes.
- Our work with Civica's Welfare Rights Team have brought in an additional £154,161 in benefit income to support our customers and referred 162 people for Welfare Rights Advice.
- Arrears at the end of March were £244,759, which is just £1.31% of the rent debit occurring this year and despite an increased debit of £ 1.3 million to over £18.5 million and additional £385,000 to collect due to the Welfare Benefit Reform changes. **This places GCH in top quartile for rent arrears and one of the best in class.**

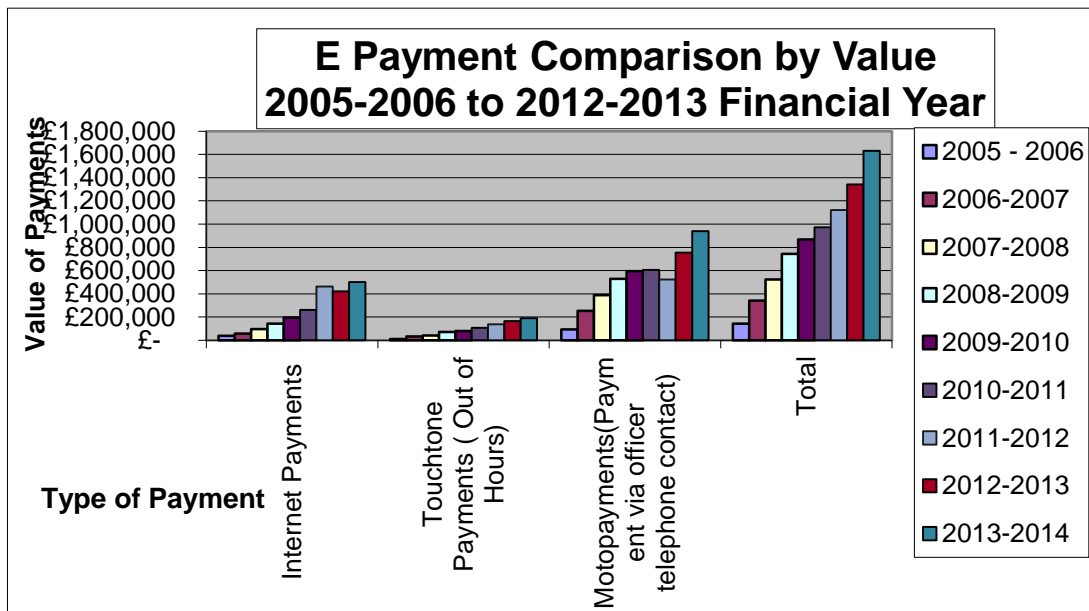
2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
2.36%	1.94%	1.44%	1.36%	1.27%	1.31%	1.13%	1.09%	1.31%

- We collected over ££56,224 of Former Tenant Arrears in 2013-2014. We have sought to minimise the write off of debt and maximise collection, and Former Tenant Arrears total just 0.51% of the annual rent debit, which is a significant reduction on the 2013-2014 figure of 0.78%.
- Rent collected as a proportion of rent due, excluding arrears brought forward has been 99.8% in 2013-2014.

Former Tenant Arrears Secondary Indicators	Year End 2012-2013	Year End 2013-2014
Former Tenant Arrears Written Off	£108,645	£93,894
Arrears Written Off as a % of the Annual Debit	0.57%	0.50%
Former Tenant Arrears	£147,792	174,857
Former Tenant Arrears as a Proportion of the Debit	0.78%	0.51%

- We have continued to support Gloucestershire Credit Union and have provided staff resources to both its Board of Directors and Committees. We have used a targeted campaign with literature and filmed adverts to raise awareness and increase membership.
- Our Arrears Blitz days continue to provide excellent results to drive down rent arrears with cross working by all our teams. We collected £63,440 in 2013-14 and in excess of £1,000,512 since they were launched in 2006.
- Tenant satisfaction with the service remains high at 100% and we have achieved 100% satisfaction with our arrears visits.

- We have carried out seventeen evictions in total, although 13 of those evictions were due to the property being abandoned. The amount of rent paid by electronic means, through the Internet, Touchtone and Moto payments, has risen by over £288,707, in the last year, and transactions are now in excess of 10,000. In 2013-2014 electronic payments totalled £1,630,010 compared to just £143,258 in 2005-2006.



- We have continued to provide prize draws to customers to raise awareness and offer rewards for paying the rent on time. We have used a range of media and campaigns to raise awareness and importance of paying the rent
- We have undertaken extensive publicity to support our work to raise awareness of Welfare Benefit Reform, through our Tenant Times magazine and website and specialist including: information to raise awareness of home contents insurance, making the most of your money, avoiding loan sharks, and the true cost of borrowing money.
- We have provided the annual report to the City Council highlighting our successful management of the Evictions Appeal Panel. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel at the City Council have voted for the management of the Evictions Appeal Panel to remain with GCH.
- Our garage arrears were reduced to just £433.
- The Income Team have undertaken more than 2,255 visits this year to provide a home-based arrears service that emphasises the value of personal contact and provides customers with a secure and comfortable environment to discuss any issues with their income.



- We have undertaken a company-wide project to raise awareness of Welfare Reform linked to a new Welfare Reform Strategy, approved by Board in December. We have created literature and branding to communicate the messages in a clear and distinctive manner.
- We carried out a series of interviews on local radio to raise awareness of the impact of welfare reform. We also have provided information in the local press to support stories raising awareness of welfare reform.
- We undertook visits to all those potentially affected by the Benefit Cap in conjunction to the DWP. This was a national pilot project to establish the benefit of joint working. We worked with Barnados to visit Robinswood School and talk to parents about how Welfare Reform will affect their finances and offering advice and referrals to partner agencies.
- We have taken part in events to raise awareness of debt, poverty and welfare reform with local landlords.
- We have continued to use the Community Mapping software to map some of the changes introduced by Welfare Reform across our estates.
- The Income Team worked with Gloucester Law Centre to assist customers transferring from Disability Living Allowance to the Personal Independence payment through visits and contact.
- Training has been provided to staff across the organisation to help them understand how Welfare Reform will change the organisations approach to income recovery.

Tenancy Management

- Our Housing Officers carried out 3,245 home visits to customers of which 558 introductory tenancy visits and 137 were mutual exchange visits.
- We have carried our quarterly Estate Inspections that resulted in the following actions being completed:
 - ✓ 870 Road inspected
 - ✓ 407 Enforcement actions carried out
 - ✓ 248 Bulky items reported
 - ✓ 460 tenants with untidy gardens were notified resulting in these being brought up to standard
- The team have identified and consulted on many community improvements including:
 - ✓ Garden and resurfacing works at Parklands.
 - ✓ The cutting back of trees outside Fountain Square and The Dukeries in Westgate Street
 - ✓ The reduction of trees at the front of Broom House as they were blocking the light for residents
 - ✓ Improved security and fencing for a tenant at Winsley Road
 - ✓ Fencing works in Meadowleaze
- We have dealt with a number of challenging tenancy management issues including:
 - ✓ A tenant being emotionally abused by her husband. We were able to provide support ensuring she left the home safely and was re-housed.
- Our housing officers worked with vulnerable tenants to help them sustain their tenancies, for example:-
 - ✓ We helped a tenant who had been attacked within her home to move to a more suitable property
 - ✓ We assisted two tenants who were hoarding within their homes, we enabled them to sustain their tenancy and be able to better cope within their home in future.
 - ✓ We assisted a tenant with a move following a suicide within her home.
 - ✓ We assisted numerous tenants with properties too large for their needs to move to smaller accommodation.
 - ✓ We assisted a tenant with 8 children with a move to a larger property.

- Following consultation with residents and working alongside Property Services we have vastly improved many areas across the city. We have completed tree works in order to enable tenants to maintain their gardens effectively and improve communal areas.
- We have identified over 150 potential fraud cases that have been investigated.
- We have changed our procedure for signing up new tenants. We now hold weekly 'Welcome Sessions'; at these, all tenants signing tenancies that week come into our offices for a presentation on the terms of their tenancies; they also have photos taken for anti-fraud purposes and sign their new tenancy agreement having received all the information they need to fully understand it.



- The number of lettings managed by the team totalled 387 and the satisfaction level with this element of the service from our new tenants – 93.80% satisfied (49.60% excellent, 44.20% good)
- We completed 66 mutual exchanges and 18 tenants benefitted from the incentive to move scheme
- The number of referrals made by housing officers to a variety of agencies to help our tenants maintain their tenancy with the right level of support totalled 130
- We have referred 15 families to the Families First Support Worker for intensive support work.

Management of Leasehold and Home Ownership

- We have reviewed our charging methodology to ensure more accurate and equitable invoicing.
- Estimated service charge bills are now sent out a year in advance to all leaseholders to help with managing their service charge accounts. This is rated as a Compliance Plus by the Customer Services Excellence Assessor
- We will send out advance statements of repairs expenditure before the actual invoices are prepared in order to allow full scrutiny of the costs by Leaseholders and resolution of any queries before the final invoices are audited and prepared.
- We are now able to offer leaseholders a full range of internal major works to their properties at very competitive prices. This includes installation of gas central heating, windows, doors, kitchens and medical aids & adaptations.

- GCH will resume management of the Buildings Insurance scheme. This will allow seamless management of ground rents, service charges and insurance premiums by one officer
- We have improved the way we manage the Section 20 consultation process by providing specialist awareness training for the Home Ownership Team, Surveyors, other staff and other Social Landlords, and all new staff receive Section 20 training as part of their induction. The Leasehold service is now managed within the Property Services team, thus ensuring a more efficient service is provided to Leaseholders.
- We have continued to publicise the importance of Gas Safety Servicing and offer Leaseholders the opportunity for GCH undertake this work for them.
- We send out welcome letters and packs to Leaseholders outlining how they can contact GCH and receive a range of services.
- We have revised the communications channels with our leaseholders and we now offer quarterly surgeries where Leaseholders can make an appointment to have their queries individually resolved.
- Right to Buy applications have continued to increase during 2013 and we continue to process 100% of these within statutory targets.

Standard 4: Neighbourhood and Community

Neighbourhood Management



The launch of Handylink with Kingsholm Tenant, Andrew Harley and Westgate Tenant, Maggie Day

- On 29th January 2014 we launched our first Social Enterprise, Handylink that offers a range of minor home repairs and gardening services for our tenants, private customers including businesses providing a versatile and efficient service at an affordable price.
- **Our Estate Services team carried out garden maintenance for 270 tenants, and removed over 208 tonnes of fly-tipped rubbish and other waste from communal areas.** They completed 5,187 jobs on the estates including the upkeep of blocks and estates.
- We have carried out 8 Meet the People events in partnership with the ASB and Neighbourhood Services Teams and multi agency partners, with bespoke crime and anti social behaviour surveys relevant to local issues reported to us and our multi agency partners by our communities. Outcomes included:
 - ✓ At The Lampreys we worked with local residents and the local resident group to create a new sign/map of area to make it easier for emergency services to find properties and we also renewed bollards in the area to prevent illegal parking.
 - ✓ GCH and Project Solace are working in partnership with our multi agency partners on a Mini Moto Project after residents in The Lampreys and White City told us there was a nuisance issue. After initial works to identify and put an immediate stop to the nuisance, we set up a preventative project that will allow safe use of Mini Motos, and educate users on the consequences of riding such vehicles in an anti-social and unsafe way.
- Our Estate Services Team are now live with mobile working and have been able to receive and send emails with photos to try and improve efficiency and communication.

- Through this year's severe 85mph winter storms - the team provided sandbags to Westgate residents, when the River Severn threatened to flood the area. They also carried out several flood watches and reported these on a daily basis to help prevent further flooding. They also attended 10 incidents to clear fallen trees which fell in on our estates and provided out of hours call out during the bad weather.
- We continued to employ four people with learning disabilities within our Estate Services Team for the first half of the year. Working with Home Farms Trust, PLUSS and the DWP, this is an innovative and outstanding example of their contribution to supporting employment opportunities, building partnerships and meeting GCH's commitment to equality and diversity. In October the four people left and went into further employment elsewhere with glowing references for their hard work and commitment.
- We have provided support and assistance in collecting cardboard from designated companies local to Matson on a weekly basis. This is then recycled at the Redwell Centre and the money is put back into the community.
- We employed four people with learning disabilities within our Estate Services Team. Working with Home Farms Trust, PLUSS and the DWP, this is an innovative and outstanding example of their contribution to supporting employment opportunities, building partnerships and meeting GCH's commitment to equality and diversity.
- The team has received 95% satisfaction for the services they provide. Comments from customer include:-
 - ✓ "Thanks for the team's great work in my garden today!"
 - ✓ "I'm over the moon with the great job they've done cutting my hedge!"
 - ✓ "Thanks to the lovely men who brought sandbags to stop my house flooding."

Supported Housing

- We commenced the alarm change-over to individual life link units from the existing hard wired system in December and had finished the majority of properties in our main sheltered schemes by March. The average take up is 84% of tenants opting to have this service. This represented great team working across the wider Supported Housing team as we held meetings to explain the change and address tenants concerns.
- We are currently the only provider committed to working with Gloucestershire Supporting People to develop a 'hub and spoke' service from some of our main sheltered schemes that are particularly suited to be developed as Centres for tenants and older people in the local area and provide activities that promote health and wellbeing for older people.
- We have developed activity programmes for our 5 centres including exercise, beauty sessions and lunch clubs and trialed a range of different activities at two taster days.
- We support a really pro-active and supportive resident from Chaucer Close who provides big screen entertainment to tenants of sheltered schemes giving him some start up funding to buy equipment. This project has become an established part of life on most of our schemes offering film, music and race

afternoons and has gone on to attract significant funding. We held a successful street party at Chaucer Close bringing together tenants from Chaucer, Badger Vale Court and Duke of Beaufort Close (Housing 21).

- We continued the long tradition of providing entertainment to the tenants of sheltered schemes. In December we put on a show titled 'Home Front' at St Barnabas Church Hall comprising sketches, songs and dancing themed around the Second World War. The cast included tenants with Barry as our Director and other tenants singing solos. 73 older people attended and enjoyed a sit down meal and the show, the feedback was incredibly positive.
- We identified a software solution for Supported Housing that supports mobile working and will evolve with the service, this will enable us to complete standard forms electronically, collate performance information to a high standard and have real time data on the activities of staff.

We have also:-

- ✓ Implemented new cover arrangements across the team
- ✓ Invited the Police to our schemes to discuss security concerns
- ✓ Built a partnership with Gloucestershire College giving their students a taste of life on a sheltered scheme and providing hair and beauty treatments
- ✓ Provided work placements for school and college students
- ✓ Organised a range of competitions at Halford House including Valentine and Scary Halloween cake competitions and a Hat competition and carried out various fund raising Table Top Sales with the local community.
- ✓ Hosted the Golden Oldies music sessions in conjunction with the British Heart Foundation at Halford House
- ✓ Hosted Mobility Corner, a company providing a service for all Podsmead residents from Badger Vale Court giving advice on scooters and other aids
- ✓ We have reviewed 262 support plans
- ✓ We have supported 46 older people who are not sheltered tenants
- ✓ We have worked with SAG to consult tenants on the alarm change over, discuss the development of the service and get feedback on staff changes

Homeless & Private lettings

On 17th November 2013 we opened **Priory Place** for those who are homeless. Working with Gloucester City Council (GCC) we secured £35k of section 106 funding and used capital investment funding to sympathetically refurbish this property in partnership with GCC and in doing so creating a high quality five room shared accommodation for those who are homeless. Priory Place now provides **interim homeless accommodation for ex offenders**. During their three month stay our Homeless Support Officer provides tailored support and referrals to specialists to ensure their time spent with us is positive providing a real opportunity to focus on their future. Since the opening in December 2013 we have temporarily housed 7 residents.



The opening of Priory Place in November

- We have **significantly developed our homeless services through understanding our resident's needs**. During the last 12 months we have established our support service offering tailored support that meets the needs of individuals ensuring that their stay with us is positive.
- We temporarily housed 72 households within Caridas House and 14 households within the dispersed properties, while their homeless applications were being assessed by Gloucester City Council.
- We worked with One Church to overhaul the two lounges including decorating, providing new furniture and providing a children's play area in one and a comfortable, quiet TV room in the other.
- Working in partnership with EmmDee all the kitchens at Caridas House were completely renovated. These kitchens are now a bright pleasant place to be with new equipment and seating areas.
- We added an additional 6 self contained flats to our dispersed homeless property portfolio, giving homeless households a more secure and comfortable place to stay whilst their application is assessed.
- After obtaining approval from Gloucester City Homes Board to invest in our first owned property that will be used as a homeless hostel providing 9 beds, a suitable property has been purchased and work has started on conversion.
- We have written a full GCH and Gloucester City Council homeless service level agreement.
- We have achieved over 80% occupancy across all homeless properties.
- We have secured further funding from Gloucester City Council to enable us to develop a homeless support service that has assisted over 138 homeless households this year.

Life-link Services

- We now have 845 private sector residents using our lifelink alarm service.
- We continue to upgrade our client database to record more information about customers and their products. Including adding details of emergency contacts to enable staff to hold vital information on our customers.

- We are now using our new stock control system. This allows us to monitor stock and provide statistical analysis to help us set up a replacement programme for alarm units that have passed the manufacturer's recommended date, and to ensure that customers have the most recent equipment.
- Work has started on the changeover of alarms in all sheltered scheme properties with seven schemes already completed.

Local Area Co-operation

- We are on the executive of the **Gloucester Partnership** supporting the City Vision 2012-2022 on a multi-agency partnership linked to community based development.
- We are a member of the Countywide Chief Executives Group – the **Gloucestershire Affordable Landlords Forum (GALF)**, bringing together ALMOs and other Registered Providers operating in the county to work together on issues.
- We are a member of the **Healthy City Partnership**, which is helping to improve services for older people by providing healthy living training.
- We are a key partner of the **All Paths Lead to the Hill** project, with the Council and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, encouraging more local residents to visit and enjoy Robinswood Hill, offering opportunities to learn about its natural, geographical and historical heritage, and supporting local communities living around the Hill to take part in the practical conservation of its unique heritage.
- We sit on the **Safer Gloucester Leadership Group** which is a multi agency strategic group tackling anti-social behaviour, crime and community issues.
- We are a member of the **Community Legacy Group** a sub-group of the Gloucester Partnership which is about supporting communities to achieve successful outcomes linked to employment, health, and income deprivation.
- We are a member of the **Olympic Legacy Group** a sub-group of the Gloucester Partnership which is focused ensuring a legacy of improved health equality across all communities following the 2012 London Olympics.
- We are a member of the **Housing Health and Wellbeing Group** feeding into the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- We sit on the **Safeguarding Board** of Gloucestershire County Council working with partners to ensure that there is a collective approach to safe guarding across the County.
- We sit on the **Roots Cafe Social Enterprise Board** supporting a local social enterprise in Kingsholm.
- We are a member of the **Gloucester City Families First Strategic Group** and the Operational Delivery Group which supports the Government's Troubled Families Programme on a multi agency basis.
- We are a member of the Gloucestershire Affordable Landlords Forum **Welfare Reform Group** working with significant county wide housing providers to jointly work on and monitor the effects of welfare reform

- We support the **Gloucestershire Credit Union** with direct resources and are a collection point for our customers.
- We are a member of the **Gloucestershire Tenancy Fraud Forum (GTFF)**, which is an amalgamation of a number of different housing providers in the county working together to hold a series of events throughout Gloucestershire focusing on Tenancy Fraud.

Respect in the Community – Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

- Our Anti-social Behaviour service has achieved very high levels of satisfaction with 100% of residents satisfied with the way their complaint was handled; this was with over 380 cases.
- The Tenant Scrutiny Panel carried out a review of the ASB service and found GCH to be “well ahead of the game” stating in its report:
“Gloucester City Homes provides an excellent Anti-social Behaviour service. The ASB team is well informed on best practice and very capable of innovation, with good focus on continuous improvement.”
- In November 2013, we participated in a week long domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV) initiative, promoting awareness and supporting local events throughout the week in partnership with Safer Gloucester, following the event GCH supported at the Gloucester Docks on Valentine’s Day “One Billion Rising”.
- We have provided training to Police and our ASB residents steering group to help them understand ASB and provide tools where appropriate on how to deal with issues locally.
- We have worked in partnership with the Police and other key statutory agencies on specific operations planned to reduce and deter crime and ASB in specific hot spot areas of the City. Operations such as ‘Op Poddors’, ‘ASB Patrol Van and ‘Op Switch’.
- Our ASB service was scrutinised by the independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel with the overview stating “GCH is well ahead of the game”. The report highlights that we provide an excellent Anti-Social Behaviour service with the ASB Team being well informed on best practice and very capable of innovation, with good focus on continuous improvement.
- We worked with Gloucester Police on the launch and funding of the Just4Youth website, a website dedicated to the youth of Gloucester providing information regarding the range of activities for all ages in local areas. <http://just4youthglos.co.uk/>
- We are a member of the Gloucester City Families First Strategic Group and the Operational Delivery Group which supports the Government’s Troubled Families Programme on a multi agency basis. ASB and Neighbourhood Services teams manage two co-located Families First key workers.
- We have showcased the work of Project Solace to a high level audience of Police, housing and other key professionals in the sector, and promoted the work that our ASB team do in partnership with Solace to tackle ASB.

- GCH have regularly consulted on the ASB Reforms to the Home Office and have formed a local working group with our Safer Gloucester partners to prepare a plan and draft guidance on how to implement the new powers from November 2014. We were one of only 8 landlords from across the country to take part in the a workshop jointly run by the Home Office, Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Housing Federation to explore with practitioners the new tools and how they would work in practice.
- We are key partners of Restorative Justice (RJ) Gloucestershire and support the County's RJ Steering Group. Our ASB Team have all been trained to RJ level 3 and in August 2013 we signed up to a Memorandum of Understanding with Restorative Solutions to commit to using Restorative Approaches within Neighbourhoods to tackle ASB. In September 2013 two members of staff attended 'train the trainer' training which will allow us to provide training to any front line staff who have not been trained and roll training out to TCCs/resident groups; we had this free (normally £1400) as a result of our partnership working.
- We helped coordinate an RJ Seminar on 16th September 2013 with RJ Glos and provided a guest speaker, giving a presentation to a wide range of multi agency partners including PCC and Baroness Newlove the Government's Victims Commissioner.
- We have received significant positive press; our work has been featured in The Citizen newspaper, on ITV West News, and has received national coverage in specialist housing magazines.
- We have given presentations at national conferences and provided training to our multi-agency partners and residents to improve knowledge and consistency on tackling ASB, covering a host of remedies including holistic non-legal approaches in addition to enforcement measures available.
- We have taken part in and supported several multi-agency awareness and prevention events such as, Meet the People, Have your Say Days, Gay Pride, Junior Warden sessions, an Annual Crime Prevention Event organised by Safer Glos and many other Community Events run across the City.
- Working in partnership with Gloucester Police, Project Solace and local residents we have helped to set up the Friends of St James Park group. This exciting new scheme launched in October 2013 which aimed to reduce anti-social behaviour and give the local community ownership of St James Park in Tredworth.
- Working in partnership with Safer Gloucester, Project Solace and Gloucester Police we have taken a coordinating lead on the implementation and creation of a brand new initiative to reduce and deter mini moto crime and ASB. With funding, training and a suitable location being found in the City, we are soon to launch Gloucestershire's Mini Bike Project. A scheme for youths aged between 8 and 16 enabling them to ride their bikes safely and also educate them on the consequences and impacts on others outside of the safe area.
- We have secured commitment from key statutory Safer Gloucester partners to deliver our Multi Agency Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Patrol Van monthly. The van provides an immediate response to incidents of ASB, outside of normal

office hours, allowing a joint approach to dealing with ASB and giving members of the public access to a variety of agencies to address the problem they are experiencing. We have worked in partnership with Police and other local housing providers to secure funding for a bespoke van which will be used for future patrols and at future Community Events.

- Our input was critical in the success and implementation of Glos Tenancy Fraud Forum (GTFF). The ASB and Neighbourhood Services teams have worked closely to organise a successful in-house Tenancy Fraud Awareness week during October.
- We worked with the City Council's Environmental Protection Team to raise awareness of noise issues and how to deal with them in May 2013 as part of National Noise Action Week. Officers were out and about throughout the week, talking to residents about how they can avoid causing noise nuisance at home, in the street or out at play. We also issued a range of advice sheets via our website, Facebook and Twitter.
- We have helped residents contacting us to report ASB to set up new Neighbourhood Watch Schemes; seeing residents playing their part in helping to continue to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in their own neighbourhoods.
- We introduced a QR Code to make reporting of ASB from mobile applications more accessible.
- We have given presentations at national conferences and provided training to our multi agency partners to improve knowledge and consistence on tackling ASB covering a host remedies including holistic non legal approaches in addition to enforcement measures available.
- We have carried out successful legal sanctions for cases of serious ASB such as 6 Anti Social Behaviour Injunctions (ASBIs), 3 Anti Social Behaviour Orders, 11 possession applications including applications to end an Introductory Tenancy, 1 Dispersal Order and dealt with 10 committal applications for breach of civil enforcement orders.
- We have issued 161 warning letters, 13 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, 5 Voluntary Undertakings, 6 Good Neighbour Agreements, 10 Mediation/Restorative Justice sessions, served 16 Notice Seeking Possession notices and extended 11 Introductory Tenancies all with an aim to prevent ASB from escalating.
- We have received notice to quit from 5 perpetrating households as a direct result of investigating anti social behaviour and enforcing tenancy conditions in partnership with police and other statutory agencies.
- We have worked in partnership with Environmental Protection Team at Gloucester City Council and seen the issue of at least 9 Noise Abatement Notices which prevented the occupant of the property from causing statutory noise nuisance.
- We have prevented 6 victims of domestic abuse from fleeing violence out of the city by referring them to Gloucester City Council Sanctuary Scheme, which

provides full target hardening of a victims property including a 'Safe Room' which has a Personal Alarm fitted feeding directly into the Police for immediate attendance.

- We have jointly procured mobile CCTV units with Gloucestershire Constabulary and Safer Gloucester saving approx £10K.
- During March to November 2013, members of our ASB and NS team participated in a BTEC level 3 Professional Award in Community Safety Crime & Nuisance Management for Practitioners.
- We have received positive customer feedback during 2013-14 including:
 - ✓ Lydia was professional, unbiased and very supportive. Can't thank her enough for the help she gave me during this horrible time'.
 - ✓ 'My complaint was dealt with quickly and fairly. The staff team are very informative'.
 - ✓ 'Rachel was very understanding and dealt with the case in an impartial way. She has been very helpful.'
 - ✓ 'My case was handled extremely well. I would like to thank the whole team as without them I dread to think what I would have done'.
 - ✓ 'Thank you for being very helpful and making my life better'.

Standard 5: Value for Money

- We have made **efficiency savings of £916,000** for 2013-2014 and have secured overall efficiency **savings of £15.46 million** between 2007 and 2014. These savings have arisen from the following initiatives:
 - ✓ We reduced the time taken to re-let empty homes to 14 days; this has resulted in comparative rent-loss savings of £142,000 for the year, compared with 2005/6.
 - ✓ Working in partnership with Civica's Welfare Rights Team we have brought in an additional £154,161 in income for our customers. Since 2007, we have secured £959,161 in additional income for our customers
 - ✓ Domestic and General Insulation have completed £371,550 worth of cavity wall and loft insulation to our properties.
 - ✓ The total inward investment achieved since 2007 now stands at £1,566,935 this has enabled GCH improve services and support new initiatives.
 - ✓ Our work with Gloucester Law centre has secured over £450,000 additional income for our tenants through lump sum and weekly benefits by co-locating at GCH for 2 ½ days a week and seeing over 385 tenants on a surgery basis, with over 250 securing successful outcomes.
 - ✓ Our work with Civica's Welfare Rights Team have brought in an additional £154,000 in benefit income to support our customers and referred 162 people for Welfare Rights Advice.
- Our Value For Money Manager has saved £55K this year:
 - ✓ A review of the security services created a saving of £5K.
 - ✓ Procurement of a new supplier for Gas Servicing Audits will provide a saving of £4.5K

Standard 6: Governance and Financial Viability

Governance

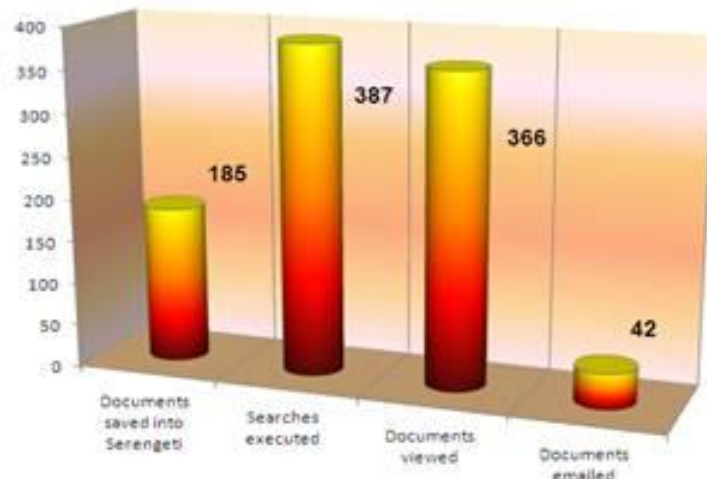
- **GCH's Board were finalists in the 24housing Awards** in November in the 'Board of the Year' category.
- Three Board away-days were held in 2013-2014 providing training, focus, and strategic leadership on a range of strategic business issues including:
 - ✓ Stock transfer
 - ✓ Code of Governance
 - ✓ Financial Modelling
 - ✓ Lean Thinking
- Our Tenant Scrutiny Panel established from December 2011 as part of our Co-regulatory arrangements completed its second review, covering the Anti-social Behaviour service. The report, which is of a very high standard, was presented to GCH managers, and their recommendations reviewed and endorsed. The Tenant Scrutiny Panel continues to scrutinise our performance on a monthly and quarterly basis, and our Delivery Plan progress quarterly.
- With the continuing provision of Netbooks to our Board, most of our Board members are 'paperless' and do not require paper meeting documents to be posted to them; the provision of Netbooks represents a saving in printing, posting and other production costs, recovering the cost of the new Netbooks over a three-year period.
- The Board Members' area of the GCH website is an online resource including meeting documents, a members' manual and training materials that continues to be well used, supporting electronic meetings and effective governance.
- Linked to the expansion of the Panel's role scrutinising performance, Customer Forum meetings moved to quarterly; with Customer Forum agreeing strategies and policies on behalf of customers, and Tenant Scrutiny Panel ensuring accountability and service improvement, we have a robust framework in place to deliver the principles of co-regulation at a local level.
- We provide the Tenant Scrutiny Panel with its own members' access area on our website, which contains details of meetings and a reference library of background information, training material, and research documents, to support the work of the Panel.
- Access to Information training was provided to all staff by the Head of Governance and Policy, ensuring they have a good awareness of Data Protection and Freedom of Information, our service standards and policy.
- Risk Management training has been provided to the Senior and Operational Management Teams, helping to embed a strong risk management approach.
- We strengthened our approach to insurance liability following an in-depth review carried out by Zurich Municipal, which has confirmed our best practice approach to estate inspections which has now been embedded; this ensures we are maintaining our residents' health and safety to the highest standards and that we are able to positively respond to insurance claims.

Developing our teams to deliver excellent services

- We have supported staff in the ongoing achievement of 10 formal qualifications.
- We have delivered a range of staff events and celebrations, including an Autumn party and another successful Staff Conference.
- We have raised £1,311.49 for Sue Ryder our chosen charity of the year thanks to the fundraising of staff throughout the year. This was linked to Health and Wellbeing days to raise aware of Back Care and Healthy Eating.
- We have recruited 11 new members of staff.
- We have appointed an additional 2 apprentices and we are working with Adult Education in providing them with QCF Level 3 in Business Administration.
- We have offered a variety of work experience opportunities including the introduction of a 2 year work placement scheme designed for Year 10 pupils; allowing them to spend 1 day a week working with us and our partners to develop their skills and experience within a business environment.
- We have supported our Community Roadshows and Customer Conference and the Gloucester Skillsfest providing Employability advice and guidance.
- Working with Nexus and other Housing Providers across the county, we have created a Foundation Degree in Housing to be run by the University of Gloucestershire from May 2014.
- We have implemented a new HR and Payroll system; moving our payroll provision in house.
- We supported the National Citizenship Service programme throughout the summer; presenting projects for them to work on, accessing their ideas in a 'Dragon's Den' format and helping them make their ideas into reality. The scheme gives those that have finished their GCSE's the opportunity to plan, manage and deliver projects within Gloucester and to also build their confidence and learn new skills. The projects completed for GCH included the refurbishment of a communal area in one of our homeless schemes and also working within Podsmead at the Café and arranging an event within the community.

Business Support and IT

- We implemented the first phase of the Serengeti Electronic Document and Records Management system (EDRMS), completed on 1st May 2013, introducing electronic document management for front line services and replacing over 9,000 physical files with electronic images.
- The system has been well received by the staff and has quickly become established as a key business system, as illustrated by the chart below which shows usage on day 1:



- Phase 2 of the EDRMS project was commenced, with a programme of workflow development to manage document centric processes and ongoing roll out across the whole of the organisation.
- We have upgraded the OpenAccounts Financial Management System to version 7 and enhanced the integration between the FMS and the Orchard Housing management system to include financial management of planned maintenance contracts.
- We have developed and published a range of Performance Dashboards that deliver real-time information to the desktop, enabling service managers to measure and monitor key activities to improve the management of contractors, optimise performance and enhance decision making. These have been highly commended by the Property Services Manager and the Director of Resources and we are committed to the further development of this highly effective management tool.
- A Geographical Information System (GIS), "Community Map", has been implemented and a range of map overlays developed to present information visually, enhancing our ability to analyse data, understand relationships, patterns and trends, and make better informed decisions.
- We have continued to support and enhance core business systems, ensuring that software is kept up to date, hardware is fit for purpose and all upgrades are planned, resourced and thoroughly tested before being released into the live business environment. Significant projects during 2013/2014 included:
 - ✓ Adapting systems to support the new business development initiatives, and the implementation of Allpay payment collection systems to

manage income from the new homeless accommodation at Priory Place, Handylink services and the forthcoming Private Sector Lease scheme.

- ✓ We have invested in mobile devices (tablets and smartphones) and introduced mobile apps that support income and tenancy management. We have also started to develop our mobile survey capability and are working with a software house to develop a new Estate Inspection app that will streamline the management of the quarterly estate inspections.
- ✓ We are managing a comprehensive programme of server and desktop software upgrades, with complex inter-dependencies, to maintain and support our core business systems.

Finance

- Our 2012-2013 Company Accounts and Audit papers were as described as “excellent” by the external auditor Baker Tilly. The Finance team were commended for their audit papers by Baker Tilly. This is the second consecutive year these compliments have been received.
- We have worked closely with HR to develop and implement a fully integrated HR and Payroll system to ensure control while providing an efficient VFM service.
- We worked closely with IT to develop EDRMS for the Finance service.
- We have continued to develop the new Financial Management Systems, increasing reporting capabilities and financial control while streamlining processes.
- We provided ongoing customised training and support for individual budget managers to maximise their budget management and controls skills, and to increase overall budgetary control.
- We successfully worked with the Property Services team to negotiate a favourable full and final settlement agreement with historical suppliers.
- We promote a positive, professional image to our stakeholders whilst ensuring value for money and robust financial controls are maintained throughout all processes.
- We have continued to work with Property Services and Lovell to strengthen financial control and the relationship between the two organisations.
- We continue to streamline all internal financial processes and enhance financial control throughout the organisation, but in particular our cash, bank and debtors processes.