



Coventry **HOMEFINDER**

Letting you choose

27 September 2007

Coventry Homefinder offers improved services and more choice.

On the 28th September people looking for housing association accommodation will benefit from a new service called Coventry Homefinder. Coventry Homefinder will offer customers greater choice when it comes to finding a new home.

The new service is being launched under the banner of Coventry Homefinder. The new service involves 11 housing associations in the city who have teamed up with Coventry City Council and advice agencies to create the new service.

Properties will be advertised in a weekly property list and on the Internet. The internet site can be found at www.coventryhomefinder.com. People looking for accommodation can express their interest in the property they want by phone, text message or on the Internet.

All those currently on the partners' waiting lists are being transferred onto the new register, there are currently nearly 12,000 applicants registered with the new service. Coventry Homefinder are now writing to all those on their register to send them their new registration details and a booklet "Your GUIDE to Coventry Homefinder" detailing how the service works.

Before the new service, people looking for housing were required to join the council's housing list and also apply separately to each Housing Association in the city. Coventry Homefinder will simplify the process by creating a single application route for all available property in the city and people will be able to choose the property they want to live in.

New applicants can register online. If they do not have access to the internet they can register at public libraries.

Councillor Gary Ridley (Climate Change, Housing and Sustainability) said: "The old service was out of date and very time-consuming and confusing for customers. We have delivered the improved service by working in partnership with housing associations and the voluntary sector. Coventry Homefinder will allow people to have a real say in choosing their new home."

Richard Monk, on behalf of Whitefriars Housing Group said: "It has taken a lot of hard work to develop the new service but our customers are telling us that they want more choice and Coventry Homefinder will deliver more choice and many other benefits to new as well as existing customers."

Michael Gilday, a community representative on the Partnership Board said "I have been impressed with the way the service has been developed. I am very pleased to have represented Advice Services Coventry in developing the new service. Coventry Homefinder puts the power in the customer's hands by letting customers choose. At the moment people looking for accommodation are often disappointed in the property they are offered, as they have limited involvement in choosing the property they want"

Ends

For further information please contact:

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Notes for editors:

1. **Coventry Homefinder** is a partnership between Coventry City Council, Whitefriars Housing Group, Midland Heart Housing Association, Orbit Housing Association, Jephson Housing Association, Mercian Housing Association, Ashram Housing Association, Guinness Trust, ASRA Midlands Housing Association, Housing 21, Starley Housing Co-operative, Nehemiah Housing Association and Advice Services Coventry.
2. The Housing Associations in the partnership have 23,000 homes in the City.
3. The partnership is supported by Coventry Partnership and has been funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.
4. **The Coventry Partnership** brings together agencies across the city, building on the existing good links between organisations in the public, voluntary and business sectors.

More than 30 partner organisations work together to find new ways to improve the lives of people who live or work in Coventry, with particular emphasis on helping those neighbourhoods and communities with priority needs.

For further information about the Coventry Partnership, visit

www.coventrypartnership.com

5. **The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund** (NRF) aims to enable England's most deprived local authorities, in collaboration with their Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in our case the Coventry Partnership, to improve services, narrowing the gap between deprived areas and the rest of the country; Coventry has had NRF since 2001 and has already benefited from £22.5 million worth of NRF. Coventry is entering its third phase and has been granted a further £10.6 million between 2006 and 2008

Background information

The Government published a report in May 2006 "Monitoring the Longer Term impact of Choice Based Lettings". This report found that a choice based approach to lettings leads to more sustainable lettings, generally improves customer satisfaction and tends to reduce ethnic segregation. The report can be found at www.communities.gov.uk