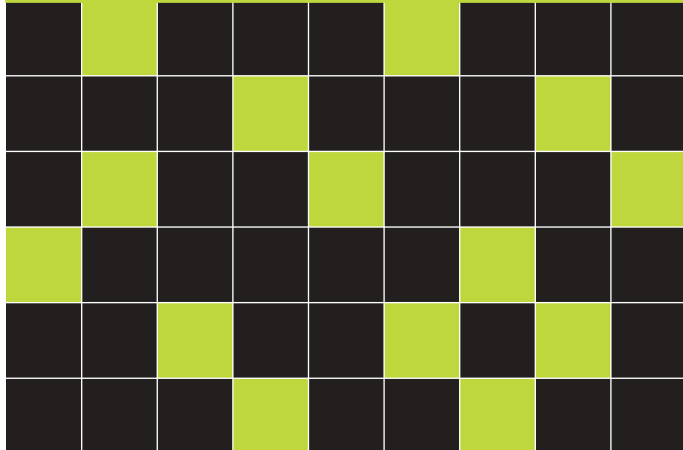


Win £50 vouchers  
from the shop of your choice. See page 2 for details

Working together to provide solutions



# WHITEFRIARS CUSTOMER REPORT 2003

▣ What you get for your rent ▣



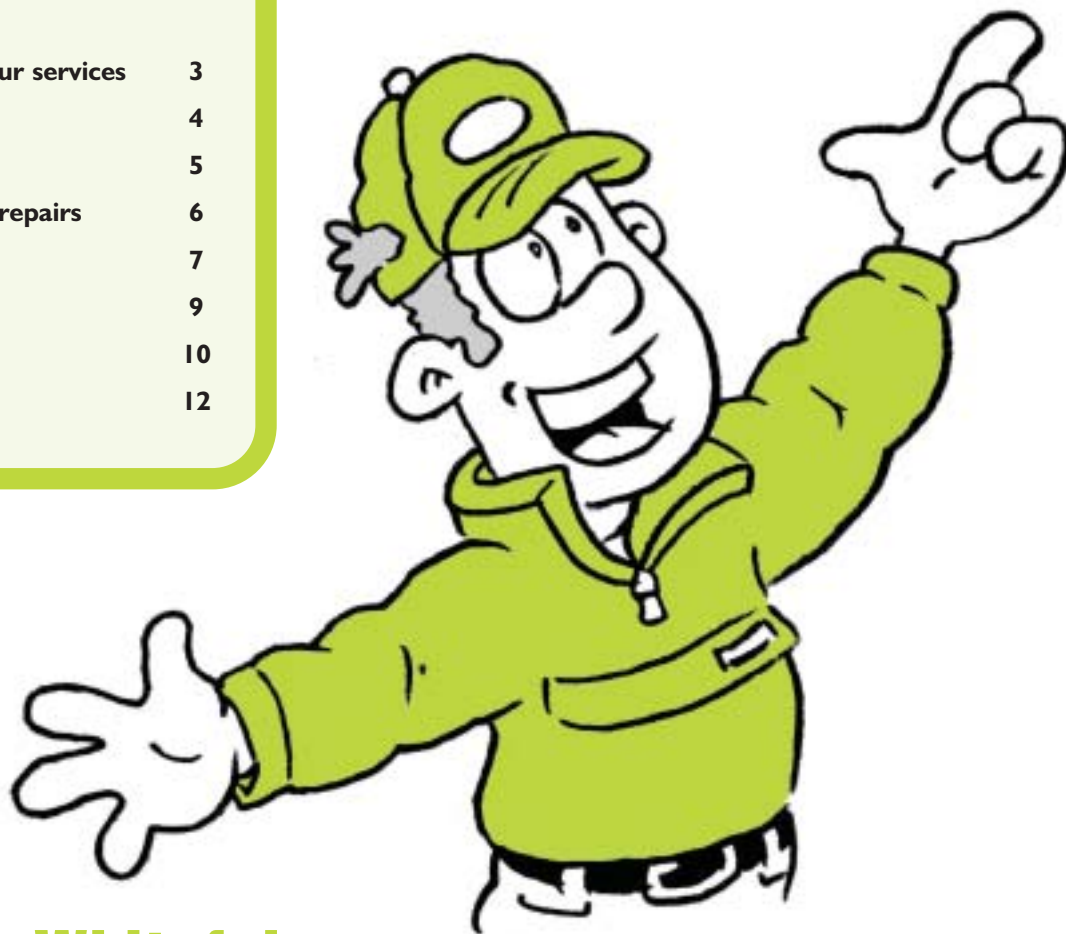
Whitefriars  
HOUSING GROUP



business for neighbourhoods

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## Welcome to Whitefriars



**Welcome to Whitefriars Housing Group's third annual report. It covers the period April 2002 to March 2003.**

We have focussed on three main issues - what you get for your rent, our services and people and their neighbourhoods. Throughout we have highlighted some of the main areas of improvement during the year.

As you will see, this year we have taken a different approach. Throughout the booklet you will see various quizzes and puzzles. Write down the one answer to each brainteaser on the reply-paid postcard that came with this report, and send it back to us, free of charge, by Friday November 28th.

We will select at random one postcard with the correct answers, and the lucky winner will receive £50 of vouchers from a high street shop/DIY store of their choice.

We hope that you enjoy this annual report and find the information and facts of interest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Howard Farrand'.

**Howard Farrand,**  
Chief Executive of Whitefriars Housing Group



**IMPROVED**

**We will complete our kitchen and bathroom improvements a year ahead of schedule.**

## **Delivering value for money - our services**

We aim to keep our promises and provide, through our employees and contractors, a range of good quality, value for money services.

In particular, we aim to:

- ▶ Provide homes of a decent quality and standard
- ▶ Let homes and keep them let
- ▶ Develop and maintain Whitefriars' services

### **Decent homes**

We believe that we are well on the way to delivering homes of a good standard. We are on target to complete both our window replacement programme and kitchen and bathroom replacement programme a year before we promised to do so.

These and other works mean that more than £95 million has now been invested in our homes. This compares with £18 million that the council was able to invest over the last three years of its ownership of the housing stock. In addition, the day-to-day repair service continues to improve.

### **Letting homes**

In letting homes and keeping them let, we have again made improvements. On average it now takes us less time to re-let our properties. This means homes are empty for shorter periods, and that people in need are housed more quickly. We have also started to look at the standards of repair and decoration when we re-let our properties and how we can achieve better results within existing budgets.

### **Investing in neighbourhoods and people**

We are taking a wider view of the issues that contribute to keeping homes occupied and in demand. We know that we must invest in people and their neighbourhoods and are developing services that aim to do this. Some of the ways in which this is already happening appear on pages 4 and 5.

We know, however, that some neighbourhoods have a range of problems that put people off wanting to live there. Where these problems exist, we have had to take some difficult decisions to demolish properties and, instead, plan a mix of new homes that people do want to live in. Some areas may be left as open spaces to improve the environment, or developed to provide facilities for the community.

This is happening, in partnership with residents and other organisations, in a number of areas in the city, including the New Deal For Communities area (Wood End, Henley Green and Manor Farm), Hillfields, Foleshill and Stoke Heath.

Currently we are identifying land in other areas of the city where new homes could be built. We will be building our first new homes in 2003/4. We have also recently purchased 41 existing properties to add to our range of homes.

At all times we take care to develop, maintain and improve our service. This can be through building new homes, spotting opportunities to reduce costs or improve efficiency, or responding to new needs.

Overall we believe, and have been told by a substantial number of tenants, that we have improved as an organisation. However, we recognise that improvement is an ongoing process, and that in some areas we may not have got it right.

One of the best ways for us to identify this is through your involvement. Recently, through the unique Springboard consultation event, and through Home magazine, we have been asking you about how you want to influence our service monitoring and delivery. This is all part of improving our services as we listen to you and act upon your comments and suggestions.

On the following pages we have set out some of our achievements.

**IMPROVED**

**More than 200 tenants attended our Springboard consultation event.**

## Listening to you

Improving our arrangements for involving tenants and responding to their views on our services is a priority for us.

### In the last 12 months we have:

- ▶ Organised Tenant Board Member elections for both the North and the South of the city in which a total of 14 candidates stood for election.
- ▶ Appointed a team to support and develop tenant groups and implement other ways of involving you that are agreed through consultation.
- ▶ Worked with 28 residents groups to look at their constitutions and how we can work with and support them in future.
- ▶ Run Springboard 03:
  - ▷ to consult with you on proposals to increase tenant involvement in the day-to-day issues and management of Whitefriars.
  - ▷ to find out what tenants attending Springboard thought of our services.
- ▶ Undertaken consultation with tenants through a questionnaire reply card inserted into the latest HOME magazine.

Through these consultation activities tenants approved a number of key proposals in our Customer Involvement Strategy. As a result we have:

- ▶ Formed a tenants' editorial panel for HOME magazine, from volunteers at Springboard. The intention is for those tenants to edit the publication.
- ▶ Set up with interested tenants a Tenant Auditor Project enabling tenants to directly audit the quality and consistency of our services.
- ▶ Started to form a new tenants' representative 'Forum' so that tenants can influence decisions on service issues. This has involved working with tenants at a series of 'away days'.

- ▶ Used the survey of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic tenants to identify residents who want to be involved and how they want this to happen.
- ▶ Agreed to undertake a comprehensive tenant survey next year to check progress on involving tenants and other service issues .

### We have also:

- ▶ Worked and consulted with tenants to introduce regeneration schemes in Hillfields, Stoke Heath, Guild and Pridmore and the New Deal areas. As in other locations, residents are playing an important role in the Stoke Heath steering group by working with us and others to develop proposals for the area.
- ▶ Developed the award winning 'Gardens in the Sky' initiative with residents and partners.
- ▶ Acted on feedback you have given us as we implement the home improvement programme.
- ▶ Involved residents in service reviews such as those on lettings and tenant involvement.
- ▶ Consulted residents on proposals to change the way we deliver services at a local level.

As well as taking steps to improve the ways in which we involve you, we have also invested in training our employees to provide better standards of service. Your involvement in feeding back your experiences of service delivery will help us decide how this investment is making a difference and where we still have problems.



### PUZZLE 1

What was the name of the tenant conference we held to consult with you on proposals to increase tenant involvement within Whitefriars? Write this word on the reply-paid postcard.

**IMPROVED**

**We have helped more than 280 people into employment through our Training and Development Agency.**

## More than housing

Whitefriars is about more than property, it's about people. We believe in creating neighbourhoods that work, and have developed a range of services that go beyond the traditional landlord role.

### In the last 12 months we have:

- ▶ Developed 'Supporting People' schemes for tenants who need extra help, through our own teams and with other support providers throughout the city, such as Coventry Mind and Coventry Cyrenians.
- ▶ Provided homes for nine young people leaving care as part of a scheme to help them set up their first home and learn skills necessary to look after a tenancy.
- ▶ Continued to implement our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) action plan. We recruited a BAME Development Officer using Government funding, and we have made real progress in developing contacts within various communities. We have now completed a major survey of our BAME tenants, and we are also looking at their language and translation needs.
- ▶ Started three pilot neighbourhood improvement projects (NIP). These are schemes that seek to make sure that residents are involved in designing packages of environmental improvements for the benefit of their area.
- ▶ Offered training and employment prospects to tenants through our award-winning Training and Development Agency in partnership with Wates Construction and Lovell. We have also worked with 100 school children from our estates on construction projects. The schools have also benefited from work done by Wates apprentices.
- ▶ Worked with Wates Construction and Lovell to take on seven apprentices to work on the Whitefriars refurbishment programme.
- ▶ Enabled 10 Agency trainees to help refurbish community flats and centres whilst learning new skills, so communities are benefiting as well as individuals.
- ▶ Supported local groups with funds and funding advice, and tried to help new groups get going to represent the interests of their area.
- ▶ Helped organise events to develop a greater sense of community in some areas, such as Stoke Heath, Ernsford Grange and Willenhall, as well as bringing people together in events like the annual garden competition and the Springboard event.
- ▶ Introduced a discount card for residents. The 'Splash' card gives tenants a range of discounts from shops and service providers - good for tenants and good for local business.
- ▶ Promoted very competitive terms for Home and Contents insurance.

### PUZZLE 2

Which word cannot be found in the word puzzle? Write this word on the reply-paid postcard.

B	U	T	E	A	C	H	E	R	H	I	X
O	U	M	O	E	I	T	Z	M	L	R	N
F	E	I	C	D	C	N	E	U	A	E	U
E	K	L	L	Z	D	L	X	V	R	N	R
N	Q	K	J	D	Y	M	U	K	E	E	S
A	W	B	N	E	E	S	L	Q	N	D	E
J	S	C	J	X	Q	R	U	O	I	R	Y
Y	R	A	T	E	R	C	E	S	M	A	O
D	P	L	U	M	B	E	R	W	R	G	T
Y	D	T	C	E	T	I	H	C	R	A	W
R	K	L	T	R	H	G	I	E	L	C	Z
U	E	L	E	C	T	R	I	C	I	A	N

### Words to find

- 3 letters: **VET**  
 5 letters: **MINER, NURSE**  
 7 letters: **TEACHER, BUILDER, PLUMBER, PAINTER**  
 8 letters: **GARDENER**  
 9 letters: **ARCHITECT, SECRETARY**  
 11 letters: **ELECTRICIAN**



**IMPROVED**

**We have spent on average  
£1million per week on  
improvements to your homes.**



## **Delivering improvements and repairs**

During the past three years, at any one time, over 500 trades people have been employed to improve your properties.

### **In the last 12 months we have:**

- ▶ Fitted nearly 6,000 new kitchens and bathrooms. Our kitchen and bathroom improvement programme will now be completed ahead of schedule in 2005.
- ▶ Remained on target to complete the fitting of uPVC windows in all homes by 2004 and extended the time period available for you to choose whether to upgrade your windows from single to double glazing. This is where uPVC had been fitted before the Whitefriars programme started.
- ▶ Reduced the installation time and increased the efficiency of bathroom and kitchen fittings, with increasing focus on improving the processes for the customer. This has been achieved through careful contract monitoring and use of multi-skilled teams of workers.
- ▶ More than doubled the amount of money we said that we'd spend on adaptations for disabled tenants - we spent more than £800,000. We have also continued to employ our own occupational therapist to help assess what adaptations are needed.
- ▶ Continued to employ a range of contracting partners including CBS Construction - a predominantly Afro-Caribbean company, in order to help reflect the diverse communities in which we work.
- ▶ Worked even closer with our repair contractor to ensure that performance continues to improve - on average 95% of emergency repairs and 90% of urgent and routine repairs were completed on time.
- ▶ Introduced a plan of improvements to the way in which the Local Housing repair teams work. This will be implemented during 2003/4 and aims to improve service responsiveness and quality.
- ▶ Included all of our sheltered housing for older people in a programme to improve communal gardens.
- ▶ Improved quality and quantity of security measures and refurbishments in communal areas.



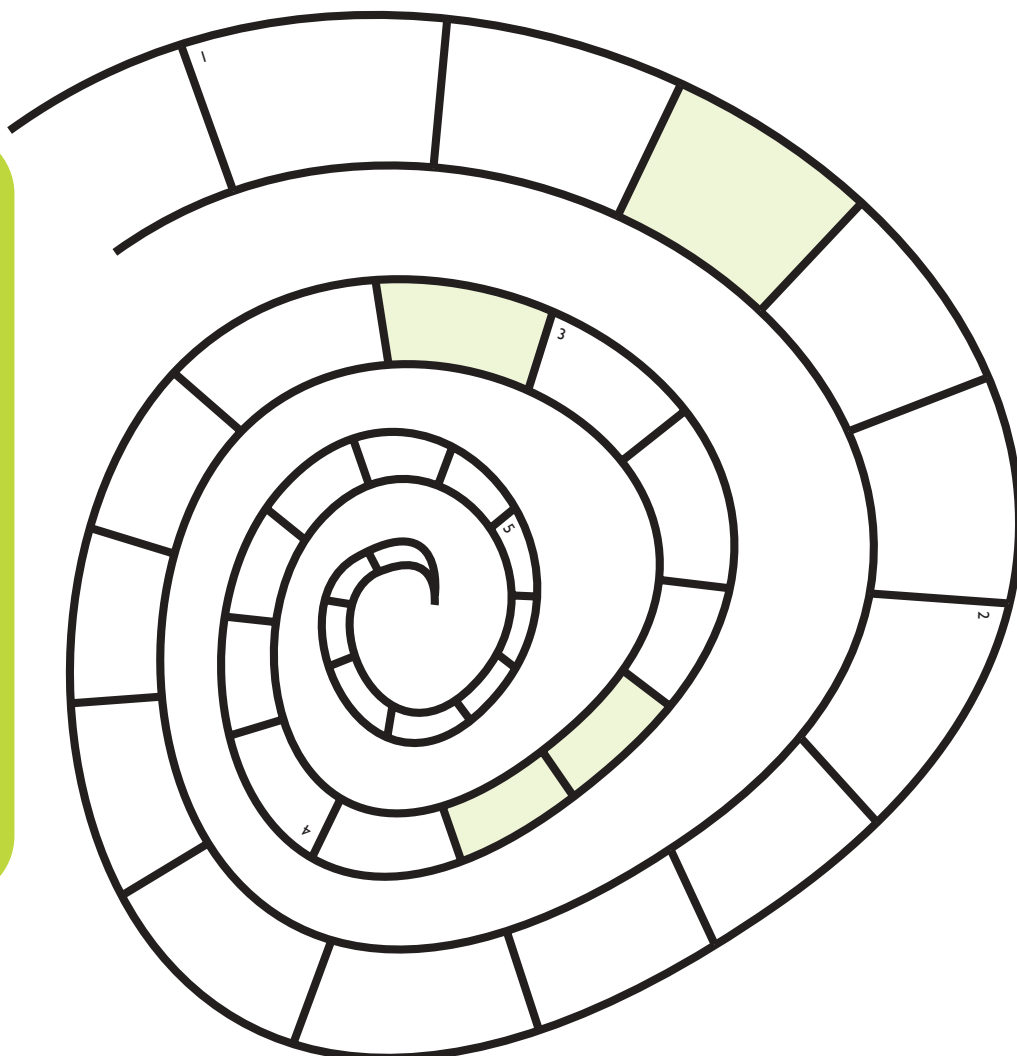
We obtained a grant for £180k to fund a range of community safety initiatives.

### PUZZLE 3

Write the answer to each question in the spiral puzzle, beginning the answer to clue 1 in the box numbered 1 and so on.

Complete all the clues and then, from the top, list the letters in the shaded boxes on the reply-paid postcard.

1. Famous TV chef .....  
Oliver
2. Perfume used by men
3. Slatted window coverings
4. Tool used to distribute paint
5. .... Rooms - name of an interior decoration TV programme



## Managing homes and estates

We continually strive to maintain our homes and estates to high standards.

### In the last 12 months we have:

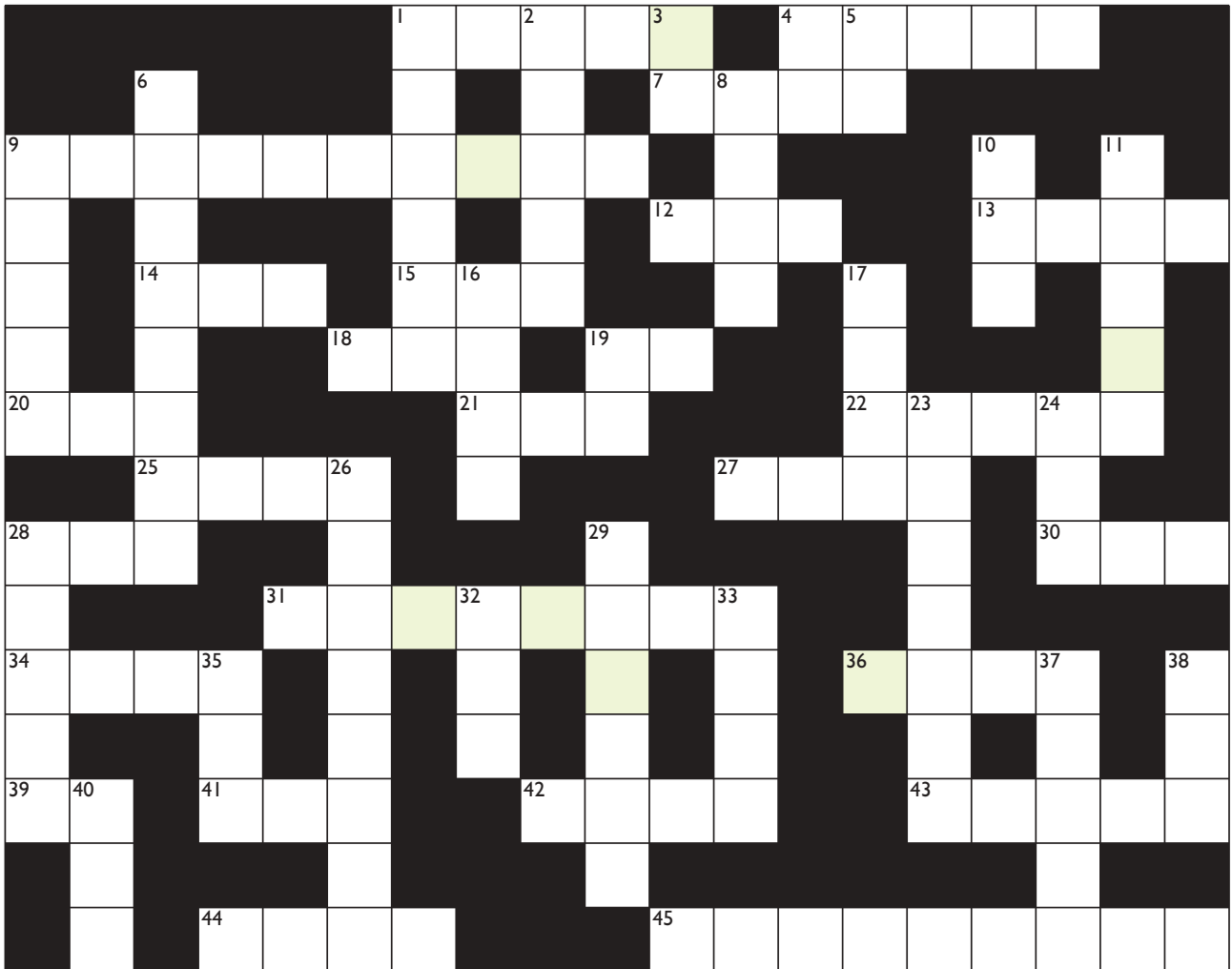
- ▶ Issued five Anti-Social Behaviour Orders against individuals for the benefit of the rest of the community.
- ▶ Issued 12 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts for young people to help enforce good behaviour. These set standards for those young people and are monitored by our own tenancy enforcement teams and the police.
- ▶ Reviewed and amended our procedures for combating racist incidents, in line with recommended best practice.
- ▶ Piloted new approaches to grounds maintenance contracts in two areas of the city in response to cost and tenant concerns over standards.
- ▶ Introduced an emergency, out-of-hours repairs reporting service, speeding up and prioritising repairs.
- ▶ Merged our two property lettings units to improve service and efficiency. We are also reviewing the way in which we let our homes, to focus on meeting housing needs and making best use of the housing stock.
- ▶ Made substantial progress to improving property turnaround times and letting standards, reducing vacant periods. This was made possible through using new inspection arrangements, speedier removal of rubbish and better contractor performance.
- ▶ Fully implemented our rechargeable repairs policy for tenants who do not show reasonable care for their home.
- ▶ Started to streamline our local office structure. This is in response to increasing levels of telephone contacts and falling numbers of personal visitors.

**IMPROVED**

**We have worked with partner agencies to support over 500 vulnerable tenants.**

**PUZZLE 4**

Solve the crossword then read down the letters in the shaded squares to find the 7-letter answer to this puzzle. Write this word on the reply-paid postcard.



**ACROSS**

- 1 Fixes (5)
- 4 What you walk down when you get married (5)
- 7 Possesses (4)
- 9 Sour fruit (10)
- 12 As well (3)
- 13 Cooker (4)
- 14 Colour (3)
- 15 Poem (3)
- 18 Anger (3)
- 19 Opposite of out (2)
- 20 Metal food container (3)
- 21 Place to sleep (3)
- 22 Homes built on top of each other (5)
- 25 Snake-like fishes (4)
- 27 Thought (4)
- 28 Make a mistake (3)
- 30 Affirmative (3)
- 31 Wardrobe (8)
- 34 Floor coverings (4)
- 36 Shade (4)
- 39 Old-fashioned word for 'you' (2)
- 41 Place to take bulky rubbish (3)
- 42 A method of cooking using water (4)
- 43 Window material (5)
- 44 Basin (4)
- 45 Long pasta (9)

**DOWN**

- 1 Reflective glass (6)
- 2 Sound (5)
- 3 Therefore (2)
- 4 Another word for 'a' (2)
- 5 Be (2)
- 6 Charlie Dimmock, for example (8)
- 8 Drink made from grapes (4)
- 9 A type of mortar used when tiling (5)
- 10 Young child's bed (3)
- 11 Assists (5)
- 16 Money owing (4)
- 17 Secure (4)
- 19 Self (2)
- 23 Upstairs hall (7)
- 24 Attempt (3)
- 26 Cooking pot (8)
- 28 Not late (5)
- 29 Orange vegetable (6)
- 32 Sweet bread roll (3)
- 33 Herb (4)
- 35 Took a pew (3)
- 37 Browned bread (5)
- 38 Type of fuel (3)
- 40 Body part that contains the iris (3)

**IMPROVED**

**We offer some of the cheapest rents in the area.**

## Managing rent income

Rent arrears have significantly reduced this year through a number of hard-hitting measures.

**In the last 12 months we have:**

- ▶ Started to check Housing Benefit applications through our local offices to speed processing of claims. This has resulted in these applications being processed up to 50% quicker by the Council.
- ▶ Established a training package to make staff more aware of procedures to recover rent arrears and of the help available through welfare and housing benefits.
- ▶ Increased the work with a range of agencies in the city to make people aware of the help available with paying rent.
- ▶ Continued to work with the City Council to improve Housing Benefit take-up and administration.
- ▶ Encouraged consistent rent payment through our rent reward scheme involving a quarterly prize draw.
- ▶ Provided you with the ability to pay your rent over the telephone by using Switch. A Direct Debit facility will also set up shortly.
- ▶ Looked for other ways of controlling costs of service provision and increasing value for money.



### PUZZLE 5

Fill in your answer to the below question on the reply-paid postcard.

A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4, E = 5, F = 6, G = 7, H = 8, I = 9 and J = 10

What is  $J + E - C$ ?

# Facts about us 2002/3

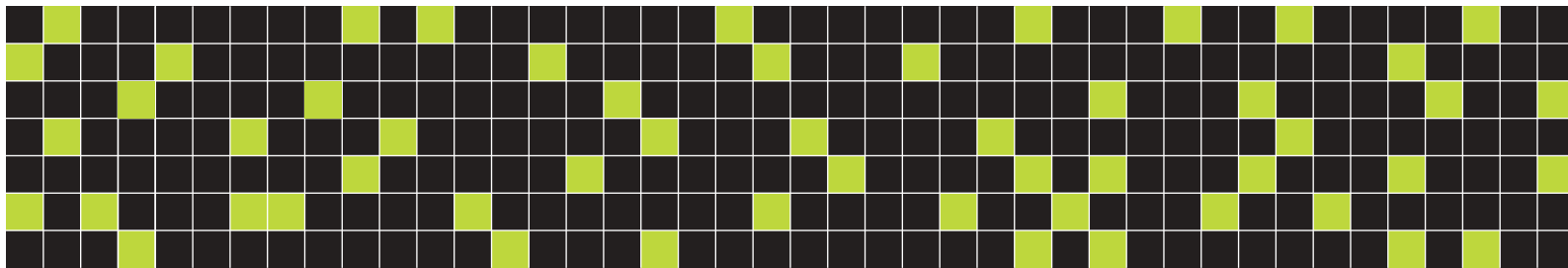
<b>Rent Collection</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Group</b>
Rent collected as a % of gross rental income	95.0	95.6	95.3
Rent arrears as a % of gross rental income	5.1	4.8	4.9
% gross rent lost due to empty homes	9.6	7.0	8.2
<b>TOTAL RENT COLLECTED</b>	<b>19.3m</b>	<b>23.1m</b>	<b>42.2m</b>

<b>Average Weekly Rents (assured tenancies)</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Average RSL rent Coventry*</b>
Bedsit	39.31	40.73	40.02	36.03
One bedroom home	41.63	43.73	42.68	41.53
Two bedroom home	43.47	47.34	45.41	46.84
Three bedroom home	45.91	48.26	47.09	47.70
Four bedroom/+ home	50.36	52.46	51.41	56.83
Weighted average	43.76	46.15	44.96	45.21

\* Source 61: The Housing Corporation's published guide to local rents 2002

<b>General Needs Assured Tenancies</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Group</b>
Bedsits	488	772	1260
One bedroom homes	2206	2486	4692
Two bedroom homes	2563	2938	5501
Three bedroom homes	3157	2593	5750
Four bedroom/+ homes	130	195	325
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8544</b>	<b>8984</b>	<b>17528</b>

<b>Other Tenancies</b>			
Hostals and other letting arrangements	203	483	686
Supported Housing	418	442	860
<b>TOTAL HOMES IN MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>9165</b>	<b>9909</b>	<b>19074</b>
Leasehold flats	225	866	1091



**Repairs**

	North	South	Group
% emergency repairs completed in target time (1 working day)	98.8	99.0	98.9
% urgent repairs completed in target time (7 working days)	95.7	96.0	95.9
% routine repairs completed in target time (1 calendar month)	90.2	93.3	91.8
% completed by Local Housing Repairs Team (3 working days)	99.1	96.0	97.6

**Empty Homes**

	North	South	Group
Empty homes available to let	96	111	207
% of homes available to let	1.0	1.1	1.05
Empty homes not available to let	848	490	1338
% homes not available to let	9.3	4.9	7.1
Total number of empty homes	944	601	1545
% empty homes	10.3	6.1	8.1
Re-let times (weeks)	4.0	3.8	3.9

**Lettings**

	North	South	Group
Lettings	1110	1721	2831
Turnover of tenancies %	12.1	17.4	14.8



**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR LAST PUZZLE**

## PUZZLE 6

Fill in the missing word. A word will fit between each of these pairs to form two common terms. For example 'book' would fit between 'paperback' and 'shelf' to form paperback book and bookshelf.

Complete all the clues and then write the answer in the highlighted box on the reply-paid postcard.

Local	.....	Centre Customer	.....	Home
Anti	.....	Club Door	.....	Ring
Nursing	.....	Work Mobile	.....	Box
Fitted	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">.....</span>	Cupboard		

## Help in your own language:

### Punjabi

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ - बतारडी आपडी बामा टिन

### Farsi

فارسی - راهنما به زبان شما

### Urdu

اردو - آپکی اپڈاربان میں مدد

### Gujarati

ગુજરાતી - તમારી યોગ્યની આપણમાં મદદ કરો.

### Bengali

বালা - আপনার বিষয় জানায় সাহায্য পাবে

### French

Aide dans votre langue

### Français

### Hindi

हिंदी - आपकी अपनी भाषा में सहायता

### Kurdish

کوردی - هارمه تی کوردی به زمانی عیوت

### Serbo-croat

Srpsko - hrvatski - pomoć na vašem jeziku

### Albanian

Shqip - Ndihmë në gjuhën tuaj

### Arabic

اللغة العربية - فم العون مستخدما لغتك



**024 7676 7030**



**024 7676 7121**

**Emergency repairs line: 0116 242 4399**

## Contact details



9 Little Park Street

Coventry CV1 2UR

Tel: 024 7676 7000

Fax: 024 7676 7200

Email: info@whitefriarshousing.co.uk

### Other useful numbers:

Whitefriars Mediation Service 024 7663 5315

Whitefriars gas enquiries 024 7683 2934

Out of hours emergencies 0116 242 4399

Whitefriars Customer Involvement Team 024 7676 7027

Whitefriars Training and Development Agency 024 7676 7023

Gas emergencies (smell of gas) 0800 111999

Electricity emergencies 0800 056 8090

City Council including allocations and Housing Benefit 024 7683 3333

**All enquiries related to your tenancy, rents, repairs, anti-social behaviour and estate issues should be directed to your local housing office.**

**Bell Green** 7663 8201 **Spon End** 7655 5217  
7663 8202 7655 5218

**Hillfields** 7622 6471 **Stoke Aldermeer** 7644 2327  
7625 6959

**Radford** 7659 6554 **Tile Hill** 7646 1181  
7659 5940 7646 1199

**Stoke Heath** 7663 5778 **Willenhall** 7630 2507  
7663 5779 7630 4461

**Wood End** 7661 8645 **Wyken** 7663 5860  
7661 8624

**Canley** 7646 4446  
7647 4099

## Want help with this Annual Report?

If you would like a copy of this Annual Report on audio tape, in large print, or translated into another language, speak to our Communications Team on 024 7676 7029, and we'll make sure you receive a copy. We want all tenants to know what we are doing on your behalf.