

WEST MERCIA HOUSING GROUP



Whitefriars joins West Mercia Housing Group





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Whitefriars & West Mercia join forces

West Mercia Housing Group and Whitefriars Housing Group officially joined forces on 1st December 2008. West Mercia Housing Group, which is based in Bromsgrove, owns and manages homes across the West Midlands, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Whitefriars owns and manages homes across Coventry. The combined group will manage more than 24,000 homes and will be a strong regional force working with local communities.

West Mercia and Whitefriars have enjoyed a close working relationship on a number of ventures in recent years, including working together on the award-winning North Solihull Regeneration Project, and as partners in the Spectrum Development consortium. In future the greater capacity to provide more affordable homes, will regenerate communities and help to future proof the organisation.

From the beginning of this process both management teams and governing bodies have had similar high aspirations for customers. The Group has a range of complementary strengths that will ensure it is a robust and effective organisation for the long-term. Residents are at the heart of our business and will continue to be an important influence in shaping the organisation's future.



Fatima

Mino



Our Vision

“Creating places
where people
are **proud** to
live and work”

Our Values

Providing Excellent Service

- We aspire to 'excellence in customer services' and at the same time seek ways to enhance communities
- We will work to make each contact easy and trouble free and turn the ordinary into the extra-ordinary by going that 'extra mile' for you.
- We do what we say we will do, when we say we will do it. If we don't we will apologise and take whatever practical steps we can to put it right.

Acting with Integrity

- We are honest in our dealings with you. We will always strive to keep our promises.
- We will run our business in a way which is ethical and decent by doing 'the right thing'.
- We will use our resources and influence to help you and make sure our policies and practices reflect our commitment to an ethical business.

Valuing People

- We value you and will treat you with respect and understanding. We expect you to do the same when dealing with us and your neighbours.
- We see everyone as important. Even when we can't meet every request you make we will try to help. If we can't help we will explain why.
- We want to get things right first time and we will involve you whenever we can on the things that affect you.
- We listen to what you tell us and use this to help improve the services you receive.

Delivering Creative Solutions

- We will work with you and our partners in a culture of mutual respect.
- Not all issues are as simple as 'you ask, we do'. Some require more complex solutions and we will work with you and others, as far as is practical, to develop them.
- We will work with you and our partners to help find solutions which reflect your needs as individuals.

Background on West Mercia Housing Group

In 1998 the Harden and Kemble Boards established West Mercia Housing Group as the parent organisation to explore options for future growth and enhance local accountability. In October 1999, Worcestershire Housing (now Nexus Housing) joined the Group. Since its formation West Mercia has developed into a successful group of housing associations organised on a federal basis, sharing resources and expertise in order to deliver housing services and new affordable homes for a diverse range of customers.

The Group is unusual, if not unique, in its structure and operation by nature of its emphasis on local autonomy and accountability, linked with high standards of performance. The Group is a Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) Investment Partner. It is also a Homebuy Agent and is working with the HCA on mortgage rescue and other initiatives.

From its traditional housing association roots, West Mercia has enjoyed a robust financial position, with a relatively modern, well maintained housing stock spread over a wide geographic area. In recent years the Group has established a good reputation for service delivery and has worked successfully with local authorities and other partners to provide quality new affordable homes in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and the west midlands. It is also the lead partner of Spectrum Development Partnership consortium.

Harden Housing Association

Harden Housing Association has been providing social housing since 1968. Based in the heart of Birmingham, it is a founder member of the Group of which it became a subsidiary in October 1998. It works closely with its local authority partners including Birmingham, Dudley and Solihull. Harden provides a range of homes - for rent, sale and low cost home ownership and also provides management services for homes owned by others.

Nexus Housing

Worcestershire Housing Association was formed in 1974, became a Group member in 1999 and changed its name to Nexus Housing in 2003. It manages a wide diversity of stock in both the urban and rural areas of Worcestershire. It has homes in all of the Worcestershire local authority areas and provides a range of care and support services as well as general needs and low cost home ownership properties. Its new offices on the outskirts of the city are also the home of the contact centre for the Group.

Kemble Housing

St. John Kemble Hereford Housing Association was formed in 1972. It is a founder member of the Group and changed its name to Kemble Housing in July 2005. It manages diverse stock across Herefordshire, proving homes in Hereford, the County towns and rural villages. It has developed a keen awareness of the challenges of rural housing and works closely with the local authority and other agencies to strive to deliver much needed services to dispersed communities.

SHYPP (Supported Housing for Young People Project)

SHYPP operates as a specialist part of Kemble. It works exclusively with 16-25 year olds offering emergency and medium term accommodation in supported housing projects, outreach support to young people and young parents, a 'Nightstop' emergency accommodation project and education in schools. The emphasis of the project is to provide a supportive environment for vulnerable young people in which they can develop skills for independent living.

Background on Whitefriars

Whitefriars is one of the country's most successful post transfer social housing organisations. It owns and manages approximately 18,000 homes across Coventry. It is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving people's lives and neighbourhoods as well as their homes.

Whitefriars' main purpose is to provide social rented housing in the Coventry area. It also provides a number of other services and is involved in a number of important partnership projects across the city and beyond.

Since the transfer of Coventry City Council's housing stock in September 2000, Whitefriars has consistently exceeded its targets. It has invested more than £340 million in the repair and improvement of its housing stock, ensuring that the Government's Decent Homes Standard is met ahead of schedule.

In 2004 Whitefriars established 'HomeWorks', its own repairs and maintenance organisation. HomeWorks has been fully re-engineered, uses the latest technologies, employs 160 people including 6 apprentices and delivers high levels of performance and customer satisfaction.

Working in neighbourhoods, Whitefriars is committed to the national 'in business for neighbourhoods' agenda and is a major player in the regeneration of Coventry and the provision of affordable housing.

In addition to providing homes, Whitefriars also works in partnership with local communities and other agencies to provide training and employment opportunities and support services for residents, with the aim of building sustainable communities.

WEST MERCIA HOUSING GROUP



**Roger
Griffiths**

Group
Chairman

Roger is Group Chairman of the West Mercia Housing Group.

Roger has worked in Housing since 1967 and has a wide experience at senior levels in both local authorities and housing associations. He is a board member of North Solihull (GP) Ltd; Chair and a founder member of the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group; a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, and a corporate member of the Chartered Institute of Housing.



**Howard
Farrand**

Group
Chief Executive

Howard is Group Chief Executive of the West Mercia Housing Group.

His experience spans many years and encompasses the local authority arena. He is a board member for the Housing Forum, HouseMark, North Solihull (GP) Ltd, Whitefriars Business Services Ltd, NDC and Consult CIH Ltd, a member of the West Midlands Regional Assembly, Chairman of the West Midlands NHF Regional Executive and a member of Inside Housing's editorial panel.

He is currently President of the Chartered Institute of Housing.



Pat Brandum

Deputy Group
Chief Executive

Pat is Deputy Group Chief Executive of the West Mercia Housing Group.

Pat has many years experience of housing, having worked for both local authorities and housing associations across the midlands. Pat was instrumental in establishing the original West Mercia Housing Group and since 2001, in leading it in a period of significant successes.

Pat is a member of the NHF National Council, a member and past Chair of the Regional Executive Committee. She has been a statutory appointee of the Housing Corporation. Until September 2008, Pat was Chair of Moseley and District Housing association leading that organisation into a successful merger.





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Spectrum

Spectrum Development Partnership is the development consortium comprising ten housing associations operating across the midlands.

Launched in June 2007,

Spectrum partners own and manage more than 50,000 homes across the west midlands and have an unparalleled breadth of local knowledge, management networks, specialist skills and experience in managing and delivering a diverse range of affordable housing.

Spectrum partners aim to deliver 1,000 new homes across the west midlands annually and lead the way in developing and delivering diversity and choice in quality affordable housing. The partners are committed to building successful and sustainable communities, across the region, for the long term.



Future Proofing...

Housing has never been more important, particularly in the current economic climate. We now have unprecedented issues of affordability and it is important that we lead the way in carefully managing risks while continuing to invest in both developing and sustaining our local communities.

The continued diversity of West Mercia Housing Group gives us the opportunity to work with the HCA, the TSA and our many partners to provide affordable homes and quality services for people with many varied needs and lifestyles.

Our range of complementary strengths and experience will help us to reinforce our position as a strong competitive regional housing services provider that delivers improved benefits for:

- Customers – through service delivery and choice
- Employees – through career development and employment opportunities
- Future growth – through the provision of affordable homes and more services
- Local communities – through shaping future national and local agendas.

Our vision has been based on consultation with Board members, staff and most importantly our customers. All the feedback we have received has reinforced our resolve to ensure our customers shape our business and help us to deliver excellent services, of which we can be proud.

Sustainable communities means much more than just a collection of houses and our aim is to create communities and neighbourhoods where people are proud to live. We look forward to working with you to ensure we achieve our ambitious aims.

WEST MERCIA HOUSING GROUP



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Visit our website at www.wmhousing.co.uk