

# Gas safety first

A campaigning group led by staff from **Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH)** has achieved **national recognition** by **winning a major award** twice.



KNH Gas surveyor Paul Goodwin and Stacey Rodgers of the Dominic Rodgers Trust with Michael MacIntyre



A Stevenage Homes warning poster

TENTH ISSUE!

# ALMOs in ACTION

 National Federation of ALMOs  
    
 championing better homes and communities

**The Kirklees Carbon Monoxide Awareness Group (KCOAG) has now scooped the award for 'Best Gas Safety Initiative' at the annual CORGI awards for the second year running. The awards recognise those who have made a significant contribution to gas safety.**

Paul Goodwin, a Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH) gas surveyor, accepted the second award on behalf of KCOAG at a ceremony in September hosted by comedian Michael MacIntyre.

KCOAG member Stacey Rodgers lost her son Dominic to carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning four years ago. She said: "I've been working to raise awareness about the dangers of this deadly gas. The group has done so much to help spread the message about CO and how to prevent it, and it's really great that our hard work has been recognised. We've got even more planned for the next 12 months and I'm hopeful that we can help make sure Kirklees doesn't have any more victims."

KCOAG was formed in 2006 to raise awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide and to encourage people to have their appliances regularly serviced. Group members include Stacey and staff from KNH, Sadeh Lok Housing Association and Kirklees Council, as well as gas industry specialists from CORGI, United Utilities and PH Jones.

"Increasingly, our estates are mixed communities of owners and social renters, often living next door to each other in flats, terraced or semi-detached properties," says KNH Director of Investment Noel Chambers. "Therefore spending time and effort promoting gas safety across the wider community is part of our core business. We believe that promoting gas safety to everyone is a key part of KNH's role."

KCOAG's work to date has included a major bus advertising campaign, community events and fundraising. In 2007 the group was visited by Health & Safety Minister Lord McKenzie.

Elsewhere, Homes for Haringey is amongst those ALMOs now getting tough on tenants who persistently refuse entry to engineers carrying out annual gas safety checks.

By law, ALMOs and similar housing landlords must inspect the gas equipment within homes once a year but some tenants repeatedly

ignore appointments or refuse entry. Working in partnership with Haringey Council, Homes for Haringey has now begun seeking court orders to force entry into such homes.

The first enforcement took place in late August. Police officers attended, alongside a Homes for Haringey tenancy management officer, a representative of gas contractor Oakray, a carpenter and environmental service officers.

Homes for Haringey Executive Director Bob Watts says: "Most tenants know a potentially life-saving free gas safety check makes sense and let us get on with our job. The few who don't are putting themselves and their neighbours at risk. Getting warrants to force these tenants to let us in will ensure that every council tenant's home is up to the gas safety standard required by law."

Meanwhile, Hertfordshire ALMO Stevenage Homes has begun posting bright yellow warning posters on the front doors of properties whose tenants persistently refuse entry to gas safety engineers. These warn: "Your household may be in danger! You must contact Stevenage Homes IMMEDIATELY." As part of a campaign which also includes telephone calls, letters and visits to persuade householders to allow entry, the scheme has resulted in reducing the number of outstanding CP12 certificates from 280 to 25 in just four months. The ALMO has also begun seeking court orders to gain access.



A Homes for Haringey gas safety warrant enforcement



Masks on display at the second Homes for Haringey International Day

# Hello

and welcome to the autumn 2008 edition of **ALMOs In Action**.

We find it a little hard to believe, but this is the tenth edition!

Since the first appeared in 2006, we have worked hard to ensure that every issue provides a compelling mix of readable stories and genuinely useful information. We hope you have been inspired by some of the stories presented within our pages and we have also striven to paint a true picture of the ALMO solution as a dynamic and forward-thinking movement. Enjoy issue 10 and ask yourself: where will the ALMO movement be by the time issue 20 appears?



NFA Chair Dennis Rees

## The NFA Awards 2009

Following the outstanding success of last year's event, we are delighted to announce that the third annual NFA Awards will be taking place in April 2009. The awards are designed to recognise and celebrate the hard work and achievements of ALMOs across the country.

Eight individual awards are available for entry:

- Most Outstanding Resident
- ALMO Team Member of the Year
- Best Use of Communication
- Most Innovative Project
- Best Community Initiative
- Most Effective Partnership Project
- Board Member of the Year
- Most Outstanding Young Person of the Year

The latter, to recognise the achievements of those aged 16 to 25, is a brand new category for 2009.

To coincide with the NFA AGM, the 2009 awards will be held on 1 April. The final deadline for entry is 5pm on 31st January (due to the time restrictions this is non-negotiable).

As usual, entries will be judged by an independent panel and the winners will receive a special NFA certificate and trophy, as well as media exposure.

# NFA update

Twenty-two ALMOs have now pre-qualified for new build social housing grant and the last remaining ALMOs, Lambeth Living and Tower Hamlets Homes, went live in July. Meanwhile some admirable inspection results saw Homes for Islington upgraded to three stars, with excellent prospects, on re-inspection, while South Tyneside Homes achieved two stars, enabling it to access Decent Homes funding.

Both Aire Valley Homes Leeds and 2010 Rotherham were awarded two stars on re-inspection, while Poole Housing Partnership confirmed its three stars on re-inspection, receiving glowing praise from the Audit Commission:

"Poole Housing Partnership has continued to raise the bar for excellent performance. There are very few social housing providers who cannot learn from the example set here." (Kieran Colgan, Audit Commission Lead Housing Inspector for the South West)

Many congratulations go to all these successful ALMOs.

The Housing and Regeneration Act received Royal Assent before the summer recess with a last minute change by the government to include cross domain regulation without the need for further primary regulation. The NFA had been very active in lobbying on the Bill and achieved all its key objectives. A special edition of ALMOs In Action examining the Act was published in September.

In July the NFA Board and Executive Steering Group members met Sir Bob Kerslake, Chief Executive Designate of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), in order to discuss the implications for ALMOs of the HCA taking over management of the Decent Homes and new build programmes in December.

Further detailed work will be required over the coming months preparing for the application of regulation to local authorities and ALMOs. Discussions have already taken place with the Chair and Chief Executive Designate of the Tenant Services Authority. The NFA will be concerned to ensure that residents are fully involved in setting the standards that all social housing organisations will be expected to deliver and in fostering an aspiration to deliver the excellent services and tenant empowerment that have been key features of the ALMO movement.

Former Housing Minister Caroline Flint attended the July meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group which discussed the future of the ALMO sector. The NFA argued that there are a number of key areas that would enhance the delivery of government priorities and ensure that ALMOs are given the tools they need to continue improving the lives of the residents they serve. These include:

- Addressing the defects within the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system and implementing self-financing in order to provide a stable financial regime to facilitate long term planning.
- Continued funding after 2011 in order to complete the Decent Homes Programme.
- A fair and equitable tax regime and a level playing field in helping to deliver new affordable housing.
- Longer term management contracts and clear commitments to tenants on the future management of their homes.

The joint Treasury and Communities and Local Government (CLG) Review of Council Housing Finance, due to report next spring, will have very significant consequences for the ALMO sector and its long-term future. Various working groups, featuring NFA and ALMO representatives, have been examining the options. The NFA has attended the first bi-lateral meeting with CLG and has produced a position paper on the key issues which can be found on the NFA website. The NFA believes the review should focus on:

- Ensuring that council housing is properly funded and that all tenants' rents are spent on council housing services.
- Allowing two and three star ALMOs to pilot self-financing.
- Making the current subsidy system more stable and less complex.

The NFA also considers the current investment in Decent Homes must be sustained long term, not wasted, and that there should be greater local control of rents and services. The government is concerned to ensure that residents have sufficient opportunities to be involved in the review process and it has produced "facilitator packs" to help any council or ALMO who wants to run a consultation exercise with their tenants on the issues relating to the review. The pack contains background information on the review, as well as a tenant questionnaire and information for use with focus group discussions. These have been sent electronically to all ALMOs and are available on the NFA website.

A major NFA conference in London on 6 November, considered how ALMOs are responding to the changing agenda including access to new build, the establishment of the Homes and Communities Agency and its impact on Decent Homes and other programmes, as well as the application of Tenant Services Authority regulation to the ALMO sector. Governance seminars for Board members will take place in London on 3 December and in York on 11 December. A meeting of the all party parliamentary group will discuss the subsidy review on 9 December.

# Building a strong foundation

Young people are rarely out of the headlines these days, and, sadly, sometimes it's for the wrong reasons. Here at **Keepmoat**, through our Foundation we aim to **recognise and support the positive contribution many young people can – and want – to make to society.**



David Blunt, CEO

**The Foundation was set up nearly three years ago after a decision was made to change the company's approach to charitable donations.**

"Keepmoat has a history of giving to charitable and other good causes," says Steve Howe, Executive Advisor to the Keepmoat Foundation. "But in 2006 the directors decided they wanted to do more. That meant focusing our effort in some way – finding a way to target donations so they reached the best projects. It was all about giving the system of donating more structure."

A workshop was held in Doncaster in early 2007, at which Keepmoat staff met with educationalists, representatives from major charitable trusts and community foundations.

"The consensus among those attending was that focusing on young people was the way forward," explains Steve. "We set out to encourage young people to have care and concern for the place where they lived and their neighbours. By investing in a large number of young people in order to help them realise their potential, we hoped they would go on to influence their peers. We would help them do this by encouraging them to engage with learning, develop new skills and contribute something to society."

We recognised that the money should go directly to communities, and not be tied up in administration, so we decided to work with 11 community foundations in our regions of operation.

In the Foundation's first annual report, published last year, the record of achievement was impressive: 5000 lives helped, £225,000 donated and over 80 projects supported.

The Foundation's funding is divided into three streams – one dedicated to the community foundations; one aimed at strategic youth projects and another aimed at national projects such as the Outward Bound® Trust.

Keepmoat's partnership with Outward Bound® started over four years ago and, working with schools, has since helped over 700 young people from across the country to get involved in a range of activities that have helped them to acquire skills, build their confidence and support their personal development.

A typical Keepmoat Foundation and Outward Bound® Trust initiative takes 60 school children on a residential five day course, where they take part in challenging outdoor pursuits that help them understand the wider benefits of working in a team.

This scheme has received the Business in the Community Big Tick award for the second year running and has so far created 18 full-time apprenticeships within Keepmoat for youngsters who have excelled on the course.

"Keepmoat's commitment and involvement with Outward Bound has been invaluable," adds Steve Howe. "Support for this project runs throughout the organisation and the direct participation of many staff has been crucial in securing the outstanding results recorded. Outward Bound exists to give youngsters the ambition to achieve and without question we are helping them do just that through the success of this project. Keepmoat is a company that not only involves itself with communities, but places itself at the very heart of community life."

# The tenant Voice

**NFA Chair Dennis Rees**, a Derby council resident for 40 years and a longstanding champion of tenant rights, has been appointed to the board of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) by Housing Minister Iain Wright.

Due to go live in December this year, the TSA will be the first social housing regulator to center purely on the needs and aspirations of tenants. For the first time, both social housing tenants and ALMOs will have a voice at the heart of government.

The appointment is a major coup for the NFA, which earlier this year lobbied for amendments to the Housing & Regeneration Bill, including the inclusion of social housing tenants within the TSA's membership.

Dennis has actively championed tenant empowerment within social housing for over 14 years and talks both locally and nationally to tenants, local authorities and government ministers about the benefits of the ALMO option. He is a council tenant, Chair of Derby Homes and Tenant Inspection Adviser to the Audit Commission.

Dennis Rees added: "The success of ALMOs relies on one core principle: that tenants must be truly involved in decision-making about the management of their homes and this is something we have lobbied for on a national scale. As such we're delighted that the importance of the tenant voice is something that will now be carried through to the TSA."



NFA Chair Dennis Rees

## Kids in the community

Today's children are tomorrow's tenants – a lesson ALMOs around the country are increasingly taking to heart with a series of **groundbreaking initiatives** designed to engage with young people and educate them on the realities of antisocial behaviour.



Barneslai Homes Junior Warden Scheme hard at work



Derby Homes Junior Wardens visit Chaddesden Fire Station

**Bolton at Home has been working to make respect the talk of the classroom with two interactive film DVDs, produced to encourage good behaviour and promote racial equality among young people.**

Up 2 U, aimed at nine to 13 year-olds, is designed to raise awareness of the consequences antisocial behaviour can have on individuals and communities. Viewers are engaged in interactive storylines which touch on such topics as bullying, vandalism, graffiti and hoax 999 calls.

World Race, meanwhile, is aimed at nine to 11 year olds and uses quiz-style questions to promote racial equality, cultural diversity and respect for others.

Both DVDs were developed by Bolton at Home in partnership with Bolton Council's Juvenile Response Team.

More than 40 schools across Bolton now make use of the DVDs during lessons, notes Bolton At Home Chair Noel Spencer. "We're delighted with how the DVDs have been received in schools. We are committed to dealing effectively with antisocial behaviour, and this includes prevention and rehabilitation as well as enforcement." Both DVDs made key contributions to Bolton's receipt in 2007 of beacon status for preventing and tackling antisocial behaviour.

Ealing Homes has also gone back to the classroom in order to tackle the causes of antisocial behaviour. Since 2007 the ALMO has made 18 presentations to various schools across this London borough.

The presentations, delivered as part of the morning assembly, were devised in response to the Respect Agenda's focus on preventative measures.

"Schools have busy timetables," says Ealing Homes' Tim Chambers. "So we developed a short 15-minute presentation covering respect, community cohesion and enforcement, which fitted nicely into the school assembly."

The ALMO has taken a flexible approach to the presentations, consulting with schools on the sort of issues they would like included.

Other schemes are designed to engage with children outside the classroom. Derby Homes is one of several ALMOs working to establish Junior Warden Schemes to encourage children to become more involved in their communities and take pride in their environment.

A pilot scheme over the summer break provided training and activities for the Junior Warden volunteers, who have all recently completed Year 6 at junior schools in the Chaddesden area. Activities included litter picking, graffiti removal, and going round with the Derby Homes Community Watch Patrol team.

"The pilot project went very well and we're planning to have the full scheme up and running in Chaddesden by March 2009," says Community Watch Patrol Supervisor Julie Walker.

"The scheme is already having a positive influence," adds Community Safety and Engagement Officer Karen Minto. "Our aim is to give all the Junior Wardens a better understanding of the diversity of their community and pride in their environment."

Barneslai ALMO Barneslai Homes has been rolling a similar Junior Warden Scheme out across the town for the last 12 months, a scheme which has evolved from a Barneslai Homes junior impact team into a partnership junior warden approach.

Operated in partnership with local primary schools, the scheme is designed to increase young peoples' involvement with the communities around them and bridge the generation gap between young people and elderly tenants who may have experienced nuisance or antisocial behaviour. Sessions are delivered by the local Police and Fire Services, as well as Safer Neighbourhood and Impact Teams.

Junior Wardens visit elderly peoples' homes and take note of differences with their own homes, in order to gain a greater understanding of the difficulties faced by elderly tenants. Participants also complete an estate walkabout with officers and discuss such issues as graffiti, messy gardens and litter.



Senior Projects Coordinator Arron McCarthy of Bolton Council, St Ethelbert's RC Primary Deputy Headteacher Anne McCoy and pupils with the World Race DVD

## Laying the foundations

As ALMOs around the country continue their decisive shift into broad spectrum social housing providers, the first new build schemes involving ALMOs are now reaching completion.



The new bungalows

**Six brand new bungalows managed by East Durham Homes were unveiled in late September, at an opening ceremony attended by the then Minister for Housing and Planning, the Rt Hon Caroline Flint MP. Accompanied by representatives of East Durham Homes and construction firm Barratt Homes, the Minister was introduced to the new tenants and unveiled a plaque to mark the occasion.**

The site, Blackhall Rocks, now features a range of new build mixed housing. The six bungalows are designed for tenants with disabilities or other medical needs. Two original tenants have been re-housed while the other four were let through Durham Key Options, the ALMO's Choice-Based Lettings Scheme.

East Durham Homes Chief Executive Paul Tanney said: "The new bungalows are a vast improvement on what was here before and they have made a real difference to the new tenants. We hope that in the future there will be the opportunity for similar developments across the district."

High Peak Community Housing in Derbyshire also had reason to celebrate in September, with the completion of 11 affordable new homes.

The houses were built by Nottingham Community Housing Association and will be managed by High Peak Community Housing. The land, originally owned by High Peak Borough Council, has been transferred to Nottingham Community Housing Association free of charge. Each of the new properties was allocated to tenants through a choice based lettings system, Home Options, following widespread interest and a high number of bids.

Meanwhile, work has begun on the first new council homes to be built in Newcastle for decades. Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) is working in partnership with local developer Bellway to build 33 two-bed bungalows, specially designed for older and disabled people, across three sites in the city. They will be the first new council homes to be built in the city for over twenty years. Seventeen of the 33 homes will be for rent and managed

by YHN. The plans are part of a long-term strategy to meet growing demand in the city for suitable accommodation. The bungalows will allow older tenants to move into specially adapted homes close to family and friends and it is hoped that this will free up much-needed larger family accommodation, encouraging new people to move into the area.

John Lee is Chief Executive of Your Homes Newcastle. He says: "We are determined to provide a housing service that meets the needs of our tenants. This is an important pilot scheme that could provide a model for how we help council tenants stay in their local community when they become less mobile."



Caroline Flint with the plaque

## Sheffield's got the S-Factor



Winners Nether Green Junior School with mascot Stanley Stay safe

**Talented youngsters took to the stage in the finals of the Sheffield Homes S Factor competition. Britain's largest ALMO asked local children to put their song-writing skills to the test and produce a rap or song that would raise awareness of the dangers of playing on building sites.**

Eighteen schools entered the competition, called S-Factor for 'Safety Factor', and eight

performers from five different schools appeared in the finals. The two winning acts were the Building Birds from Nether Green Junior School, who performed the Building Beware Song, and Girls with Safety Attitude, from Greenhill Primary School, who performed If You Wanna Stay Safe.

Sheffield Homes ran the event as part of its fourth annual Stay Safe in Sheffield campaign. The campaign is designed to prevent children having accidents on building sites, particularly those where the ALMO is continuing its massive £669 million Decent Homes programme.

Sheffield Homes and Decent Homes construction partners Henry Boot, Kier Sheffield, Lovell Partnerships, Keepmoat and Wates Living Space all visited schools across the city to hold interactive sessions teaching children about basic health and safety and launch the S-factor competition. S-Factor finalists were treated to lunch and entertainment before

performing their entries in front of Sheffield Homes directors and representatives from the Decent Homes programme. All the children who took part were presented with medals. The winning acts also received a special certificate and an engraved trophy.

Sheffield Homes Director of Investment Jon Lovibond was an S-Factor judge. He said: "It is always an exciting time of the year when local schools come together for the Stay Safe in Sheffield final. Each year the initiative proves to be very popular and it is a fun way to get across important safety messages to children between the age of four and 11. This year's event was bigger and better than ever before and the children were made to feel like real stars on the day. The entries, as always were very creative and it was impressive to see the imaginative costumes and dance routines that the children had clearly worked so hard to perfect."

# Everybody needs good neighbours

**Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH)** has begun asking tenants to formally agree to be good neighbours.



Resident Dawn Kirkham, one of the first people to sign up, with KNH housing officer Mohammed Saeed

behaviour - for example, by ensuring they do not annoy their neighbours or by reporting vandalism, graffiti and fly-tipping.

The agreement also sets out KNH's commitment to its tenants. This includes telling them what the organisation is doing to tackle antisocial behaviour, providing sensitive and flexible support to victims and witnesses, and helping to create

neighbourhoods that are safe, welcoming and attractive places to live.

Director of Neighbourhoods Paul Buckley explains: "The Good Neighbour, Good Landlord Agreement is really a moral agreement. We want residents to agree to look after their homes and neighbourhoods and, in turn, we will keep our side of the bargain by sorting out problems quickly and keeping people informed about what we're doing."

**KNH has developed a Good Neighbour, Good Landlord Agreement in response to the Government's Respect Standard, which requires social landlords to be more accountable to their tenants and to work with them in helping uphold standards of behaviour in their communities.**

The Good Neighbour, Good Landlord Agreement sets out ways in which tenants can support their neighbourhood by helping KNH tackle antisocial and disrespectful

# A parliamentary affair

**The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for ALMOs**, formed in 2006, now has **63 members**, representing **40 of the 69 currently established ALMOs**.

**To conclude another successful year, APPG published its Annual Report for 2007/8.**

## Highlights of its year included:

- The APPG's meeting with Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP, then Minister for Housing and Planning, in November 2007 to discuss issues important to ALMOs ahead of the Housing and Regeneration Bill.
- A joint APPG meeting with the All Party Urban Development Group on 'The Regulation of Social Housing' in December 2007. This was addressed by Professor Martin Cave. Professor Cave's report into social housing regulation shaped the Government's thinking in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the meeting allowed Professor Cave to explain how both the Housing and Communities Agency and Tenant Services Authority would work and what benefits a better regulatory system would have for tenants.
- In February 2008 an NFA/APPG tea reception was held in the Members' Dining Room of the House of Commons, sponsored by Keepmoat. Over 100 ALMO tenants and officers joined 65 Parliamentarians to celebrate the achievements of ALMOs and the APPG. The meeting was addressed by the minister responsible for ALMOs, Iain Wright MP, as well as the housing opposition spokespersons Grant Shapps MP from the Conservatives and Liberal Democrat MP Lembit Opik.

In July 2008 the APPG held its AGM and examined the future of ALMOs. This meeting was addressed by Rt Hon Caroline Flint MP, then Minister for Housing and Planning, and the event was attended by a range of both parliamentarians and ALMO representatives.

# Money money money

**Financial issues loom** large in the lives of many council tenants, and **ALMOs** continue to respond to this area of **perpetual concern** with a range of services offering advice and assistance.



Director of Customer Services Judith Jones and Benefits Advisor Matthew Lerner view the new site

**St Leger Homes of Doncaster has launched [www.slhdmoneywise.co.uk](http://www.slhdmoneywise.co.uk), a new website offering information and advice on a wide range of financial issues, including benefits; how to budget; how to choose the cheapest energy supplier; and what to do when money problems occur.**

"A lot of advice is available at the touch of a button," says Customer Services Director Judith Jones. "Tenants without computers can access this information on computers at their local library."

Salix Homes residents in Central Salford now benefit from a special financial information pack put together by the ALMO and local agencies. It offers tips on how to save money, access financial services and avoid getting into unmanageable debt. Aimed at first-time tenants and vulnerable residents, the pack will help people pay their rent and set up home budgeting plans. It also contains information on opening a bank account, saving, borrowing and claiming benefits.

Head of Neighbourhood Services Sue Sutton said: "With the recent economic problems, people now have to watch what they spend and pay even closer attention to their money."

# When the sun shines

**Northwards Housing** has installed **solar panels** on ten multi-storey blocks in north Manchester, **saving over 42 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year.**



Northwards Housing solar panels

**This groundbreaking £500,000 project is one of the biggest of its kind in Britain and the ALMO is now working with the City Council's Green City Team to devise further carbon reduction and energy-saving measures.**

Chief Executive Robin Lawler said: "This is a great step forward for Northwards Housing. We are committed to the Council's objective of becoming Britain's greenest city and this scheme gives us an excellent head start."

Electricity generated by the panels will provide energy for communal areas and any extra electricity will be sold back to the National Grid. The savings and any cash made will in turn fund more energy-saving and community projects within Northwards-managed properties.

Meanwhile, Solihull Community Housing (SCH) is to extend its own solar power project across high-rise blocks in the north of the borough.

Solar panels are to be installed on the roofs of an additional 15 blocks, joining the seven high-rise blocks already fitted with the equipment in Chelmsley Wood and Kingshurst. The first seven panels will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 462 tonnes over a 25-year lifetime.

The panels are used to power daytime lighting in communal areas. Although electricity from other sources is needed to light the communal areas during parts of the day and all of the night, the panels reduce costs, carbon dioxide emissions and the use of non-renewable energy.

SCH Chief Executive Matt Cooney said: "Installing the panels has helped to protect us from the rising costs of fuel and this project is also an important part of our climate change strategy."

# News round-up

## AFTERNOON TEA WITH THE SMT

**The Senior Management Team (SMT) at London ALMO Redbridge Homes held a series of afternoon tea sessions with all staff over the summer.**

Recently appointed Chief Executive Sharon Standell introduced the initiative as an informal way for staff to air their views to management.

Sharon Standell said: "The tea parties have been well received by staff and we are now changing some of our services as a result."



CE Sharon Standell and Director of Resources Bernard Ofori-Atta listen to staff views.

## CITYWEST RESIDENTIAL

**CityWest Homes has launched a private residential lettings and property management agency.**

CityWest Homes Residential will deliver a professional lettings service to the whole of Westminster. Head of Lettings Richard Beltrán explains: "This is the first time an ALMO has launched such a service. We aim to bring the high level of service and integrity that you would expect from a high-end prestigious letting agent to all Westminster housing stock, landlords and tenants."

## TALKING TO LEEDS

**Yorkshire ALMO West North West Homes Leeds has received a special award for the way it involves tenants.**

The Quality Mark for Resident Involvement was awarded by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service after testing how well the ALMO involves residents in the design and improvement of services.

West North West Homes Leeds Chief Executive Claire Warren said: "The award validates our unshakeable commitment to increasing our customers' influence in how we deliver our services."

## NORTHWARDS KICKABOUT

Manchester ALMO Northwards Housing helped organise a special five-a-side football tournament over the summer. Around 80 local youngsters took part in the event, held to help integrate young people from all over north Manchester, encouraging friendship, healthy living and outdoor exercise.



The Warrior All Stars

Northwards has also announced sponsorship of under-12s Abraham Moss football team the Warrior All Stars. They are the only team in the country to have won the Regional Charter Standard Club of the Year award three times.