

First Wessex Care and Support teams rally round to look after our elderly and vulnerable residents as freezing weather grips Britain

Care and Support teams at First Wessex have been on full alert since the cold weather gripped south east England on Tuesday evening.

Staff who work to support elderly and vulnerable residents living in First Wessex properties across Hampshire have been working longer hours and even sleeping at the schemes to make sure that the service provided to our residents has not been affected.

Support Advisors have also collected prescriptions and brought in essential supplies which have been greatly received by all. Mr Parfitt, a resident of Maunsell House in Eastleigh was extremely pleased when staff went out to collect extra supplies for him: "I am very grateful to the staff at Maunsell House for looking after us all these past few days. My wife came out of hospital yesterday and knowing that I didn't have to worry about going out to buy essential food was a great weight off my mind."

Staff have also been cooking extra meals for residents and visiting residents in supported homes who don't usually have regular care visits but are vulnerable to ensure that they have enough food, extra hot drinks and warm clothing to get them through the cold snap.

Erica Grimes, Support Team Leader, Older Persons Services adds:

"I've rarely experienced such examples of a team pulling together. Staff have walked to schemes when they couldn't drive to them, slept in schemes, taking food to vulnerable people, checking medication levels and going to chemists to pick up prescriptions. Scheme assistants who live nearby have also helped us make sure that residents are okay and we've all kept our phones on regardless of whether we were supposed to be working or not so we would be available to support the staff member on call. This week has undoubtedly been an astonishing team effort but we have also received incredible support from husbands, partners and families who have helped out by driving and taking food to people."

Pat Fowler, Head of Older Persons Services at First Wessex said: "Staff really have gone above and beyond the call of duty this week. Their dedication has been incredibly impressive and in many instances they have put their own wellbeing aside in order to make sure that the older community stay safe and warm in these

difficult conditions. It's crucial during circumstances like those of this week that we don't forget it is often the older community to can be deeply affected."

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Notes to Editors

First Wessex manages around 17,000 affordable homes primarily in Hampshire and with some activity in Surrey. www.firstwessex.org

The group comprises Atlantic Housing Limited, First Atlantic Housing, Pavilion Housing Association, Portsmouth Housing Association, Fernhill Care Limited and Wessex Property Limited.

Portsmouth Housing Association: provides homes in Portsmouth, Fareham, Gosport and Havant. It also provides a wide range of community regeneration services across South East Hampshire.

Atlantic Housing and First Atlantic Housing: provide a full range of affordable housing including rented, supported, shared ownership and key worker housing. A large support portfolio includes housing for older people, extra-care housing, dementia care housing, housing for people with learning disabilities, people recovering from mental illness and some specialist accommodation. They cover a geographic area spanning Eastleigh, Southampton, Winchester and the New Forest.

Pavilion Housing Association: the largest provider of housing association homes for rent in the Aldershot, Farnborough, Ash and Farnham areas.

Fernhill Care: provides care services for tenants of First Wessex Housing Group and other landlords and for individuals in the community with support needs. It specialises in domiciliary, extra- and dementia care.

Wessex Property Limited: the group's in-house repairs and maintenance organisation.