

First Wessex backs Federation campaign to promote vital services in the South East

EMBARGO: 00.01hrs, Monday 16 November 2009

First Wessex is backing the National Housing Federation's South East Supported Housing Month campaign, promoting the vital work of its services in Hampshire.

The first ever South East Supported Housing Month is launched today (Monday 16 November), with housing associations, service providers and local authorities joining forces with the National Housing Federation to shout out about the work that they do.

Hundreds of organisations throughout the South East work hard every day to help over 136,000 of the most vulnerable members of our communities enjoy independent and fulfilled lives. Between them they provide more than 2,700 services and last year over £189m was spent on housing support services in the region.

Crucial services provided range from foyers for young people, temporary accommodation for families, refuges from domestic violence and sheltered and extra care housing for older or disabled people. With recent changes to the way funding is allocated for these services, it's more important than ever that those that hold the purse strings are aware of the impact they are making. In fact, research from the Department for Communities and Local Government shows that every pound spent on Supporting People saves £2.12 on other public services.

The campaign runs up until 11 December and will see Councillors, MPs and other regional decision makers from agencies such as Government Office, the South East England Development Agency, Police and Primary Care Trusts, invited to take a first-hand look at these services in action, with visits to schemes and invitations to see presentations and meet staff and service users. So far more than 70 events are taking place throughout the region, including:

An event to celebrate the recently completed refurbishment of the LIFE House at 106 Alexandra Road in Farnborough, organised by First Wessex.

Earlier this year the house, which offers accommodation, support and access to independent living for young mothers and mothers-to-be was in need of substantial repair.

Now unrecognisable, the house has been extensively refurbished thanks to a fantastic working partnership between First Wessex Property Services, LIFE and Pavilion Housing Association (now First Wessex Aldershot).

The event will take place from 12.30pm on Thursday 26th November 2009 at 106 Alexandra Road. After an official opening a buffet lunch will be provided, followed by the opportunity to see the refurbished areas and an exhibition of the project in progress.

Coordinated by the National Housing Federation (South), the campaign comes after an announcement last year, which gives Local Authorities much more freedom to decide how they use 'Supporting People' grants. The removal of the ring-fence is

aimed at giving councils the chance to be innovative in how they commission and provide services for vulnerable people.

Raife West, Chair of the National Housing Federation's South East Supported Housing Forum commented: "South East Supported Housing Month (16 November - 11 December) is an excellent opportunity for providers to join forces in the south east and highlight the contribution supported housing and support services make in the region. It will help to demonstrate the money that is being saved to other public services, as outlined in CLG's Capgemini report.

With the removal of the ring fence around Supporting People funding, it is vitally important that commissioners, MPs, stakeholders and Councillors are fully aware of the contribution that the sector is making in supporting and improving the lives of so many individuals in communities throughout the region."

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To find out about other events taking place during South East Supported Housing Month, please [visit our webpage](#).

For information about the campaign, please contact Peter Jones, National Housing Federation Communications Officer (South)

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For information about the local events listed above, please contact Ursula Tavender, PR & Communications Executive, First Wessex

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Notes for Editors

1. SOURCE: Capgemini UK plc: 'Research into the financial benefits of the Supporting People Programme' (CLG 2009).
2. South East Supported Housing Month is being organised by a broad mix of supported housing and floating support services providers, with coordination and other assistance from the National Housing Federation's South Regional Office. It is aimed at being a representative and inclusive sector-wide initiative.
3. The South East Supported Housing Forum is one of the National Housing Federation's Regional Interest Groups. It helps promote working partnerships between housing associations, managing agents and Supporting People Administrative Authorities.
4. The National Housing Federation represents 1,200 independent, not-for-profit housing associations in England and is the voice of affordable housing. Together, our members provide over two million affordable homes and community services for around five million people. For further information see www.housing.org.uk
5. iN business for neighbourhoods is a long-term project launched by the National Housing Federation and its members as a major initiative to raise the profile of, and promote, the neighbourhood work of housing associations. For further information see www.iNbiz.org

