

JOBS BOOST FOR PORTSMOUTH

Portsmouth's economy has received a jobs boost with the opening of a new state-of-the-art depot to maintain the homes and gardens of thousands of people across the city.

Twenty new jobs have already been created at the Wessex Property Services (WPS) depot for skilled workers including gas engineers, carpenters, electricians and gardeners – and the company is also currently recruiting for a further six staff. All the workers were recruited following a city employment fair.

The new depot, at Fitzherbert Spur, Farlington, has been set up to look after the homes of around 4,000 Portsmouth Housing Association (PHA) residents. PHA residents now have for the first time a free phone number they call over all their housing maintenance needs.

Depot workers are using the latest technology – including hand-held job-logging devices - to aid their response times to residents' calls over issues from leaking roofs to radiator problems.

WPS and PHA are part of First Wessex Housing Group, a leading provider of social housing and care support services in the south. Group technical director Tom Antrobus said: "We are delighted to be providing this new state-of-the-art improved service to PHA residents and also to be providing job opportunities to local people."

Mr Antrobus said WPS would also work with local suppliers over the depot's plant and materials needs – providing another boost for the city economy.

WPS – which also has depots at Aldershot and Eastleigh - has taken over from PHA's property services arm the job of maintaining the homes. It has

also taken over the management of maintenance contractors previously working for PHA.

The company also carries out contract building and maintenance work for a range of high-profile customers, including Hampshire police, Hampshire Autistic Society and Eastleigh Borough Council. Locally, the company has just completed a project at Havant police station and Mr Antrobus said WPS would be looking to explore more business opportunities in the city.

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Notes to Editors

First Wessex Housing Group manages around 17,000 affordable homes primarily in Hampshire and with some activity in Surrey.

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.

www.firstwessexhg.co.uk
www.atlantichousing.co.uk
www.pavilionha.co.uk
www.phagroup.org.uk

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