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NEW PURPOSE-BUILT HOUSING SCHEME FOR DEAF SIGN LANGUAGE USERS, OPENS IN NEW FOREST

A new purpose-built housing scheme for deaf sign language users has been opened in the New Forest. The property, the only one of its kind in Hampshire, was developed by First Atlantic Housing, part of the First Wessex Housing Group, in partnership with Hampshire County Council's Adult Services Department and New Forest District Council.

The property is home to three deaf sign language users, who each have individual bedrooms and bathrooms, and share a communal kitchen, lounge and utility room. The scheme is managed by Glyn Ltd, who provides specialist care and support for the residents.

Maggie Woolley, former presenter of BBC's See Hear! television programme, officially opened the property at 200 Everton Road, Hordle, near Lymington, assisted by First Atlantic Housing Board Member Anthony Boyle, and Pauline Winder from Hampshire County Council's Adult Deaf Services Team.

Phil Raybould, Chair of First Atlantic Housing, said: "It has been a privilege to be involved with this scheme, which has given our residents the opportunity to live independently in the community. We have worked very closely throughout the project with Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council and Glyn Ltd, and this partnership approach has resulted in a high quality development, which is purpose-built to meet the needs of our residents."

Funding for the project was provided by First Wessex Housing Group. The scheme architect

was Kenn Scaddan Associates; Employer's Agent was Rund Partnership Ltd and the contractors, Exbury Homes.

Pauline Winder, manager of Hampshire County Council's Adult Deaf Services Team, added:

This scheme gives a much needed resource for young deaf sign language users with additional disabilities, as previously deaf people would have had to leave Hampshire to get the support that they need. Now through partnership with First Atlantic Housing and Glyn Ltd, we have been able to develop a specialist independent unit which supports these three young people, enabling them to have their own tenancy and move towards more independent living, taking responsibility for their own care and decisions. It has been extremely awarding to see how much the three residents are enjoying living in this purpose built home, close to their families and supported by people who can communicate in BSL.

The scheme is one of several operated by Glyn Homes in Hampshire, enabling people with a range of disabilities to live independently, with the benefit of 24-hour care and support when required. Fred Hayward, of Glyn Ltd explained:

"Seven years ago we attended a meeting at Lymington Social Services, the purpose, to discuss the possibility of providing a home for people who are deaf. This would be the first in Hampshire. Most of the people involved seven years ago are still involved today. Thanks to everyone's dedication and belief in this home it is now a success and home to 3 happy people.

During this time we have learnt a tremendous amount of knowledge about deaf culture. We look forward to our continued good relationship working with First Atlantic Housing, Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council."

-ENDS-



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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, Thames Valley and Oxford.

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