

HOME is where Alfred's heart is

Securing a fair housing deal for his fellow returning servicemen after World War II has, for volunteer Alfred Chandler, turned into a vocation that now supports more than 15,000 Hounslow council home residents.

"I wanted to get involved to make a difference," Alfred, 82, says.

"I was concerned about returning servicemen getting a square deal on housing and where I am now has just been a natural progression."

During that progression, Alfred has travelled to Amsterdam, Sweden and Scotland to talk of his experience in council housing.

He has also sat on and chaired boards including the Local Residents Association,

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ALFRED CHANDLER, HOUNSLOW HOMES

the Federation of Tenants and Residents Association, and the Tenants and Residents Organisation of England, and he's currently the chair of the board of Hounslow Homes, an arms-length management organisation formed in April 2002 to manage Hounslow's 15,000 council homes.

"Now that I've become well known I get lots of phone calls from tenants wanting help," says Alfred, who also enjoys stamp collecting, growing vegetables and

chrysanthemums, and photography. "I'm in the business of solving problems."

Increasing response times to residents' calls has been the major focus of Alfred's work to date.

"Any problems raised – such as repairs – we progress on them as soon as possible and it's a very nice feeling to know you're getting things done," he says.

"We have some really good mechanisms in place now for solving problems."

His voluntary role also has involved campaigning to improve the energy efficiency of council housing, including installing adequate door and window seals, addressing insulation problems and providing central heating.

"Council homes across the borough now have central heating and seeing that result is very rewarding," he says.

"We are now working on a new energy audit of homes to assess the current situation and look to future improvements."

But there is still more work to be done.

"What I'm trying to address at the moment is the anti-social behaviour issues that are associated with council housing," he says. "There's a choice between doing something violent and destructive and not doing it. Destructive actions cost money that could be spent on improving homes."

Mr Chandler says he receives a great deal of satisfaction from working in the voluntary sector.

"Although it takes up a lot of time, and we never close because there's always something to be done, it's the successes that drive you on."



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