

Press Release

18 August 2009

Contact: Siobhan O'Rourke

Tel: 020 8583 4431

Email: Siobhan.o'rourke@hounslowhomes.org.uk

Project Empower – Empowers disabled residents

Project Empower, a joint project between Hounslow Homes and London Borough of Hounslow, released reserves totalling £4m with £1.3m being spent on aids and adaptations for homes of tenants with disabilities.

The £1.3m from Project Empower is to be spent over a two year period: £800K in 2009/10 and £500K in 2010/11. The money will mean that applicants for adaptations like showers and stairlifts will not have to wait so long.

The selection criterion for the waiting list is based on a points system. Points are awarded to each applicant by the Housing & Community Services Occupational Therapist according to his or her individual needs. Further points are then awarded to each applicant for time spent on the waiting list. Hounslow Homes and Housing & Community Services deem this a fair and equitable system as it enables high priority applicants to be placed higher in the queue, but also ensures that all applicants move towards the top of the list.

Hounslow Homes Asset Manager Tara Agarwal said "We are very pleased that Project Empower has been able to support the 'Aids and Adaptations' work and to reduce the waiting time for those residents who need showers and stairlifts. This will help make many people's lives easier."

One resident to benefit from the project is Mrs Carol Brown. Mrs Brown of Feltham had an unfortunate accident that resulted in her being hospitalised, and has subsequently had to start using a wheelchair

Mrs Brown was worried she would be unable to return to the home she loved because of the stairs.

Luckily, Project Empower enabled Hounslow Homes and the London Borough of Hounslow to install a stairlift in her home that allowed her to be discharged from Hospital and return to her home of over 40 years.

Mrs Brown said: “The stairlift is fantastic; it is like my very own Rolls Royce, without it I could not get up and down the stairs. It allowed me to come back to my home, where all my friends are and where my son was born. It has given me my life back, I only hope others will benefit the way I have.”

Councillor Jon Hardy, Lead Member for Housing and Service Improvement said “Older people and people with special needs must have a quality housing service. We are going to provide one that meets our customers' needs, promoting dignity, giving reasonable choice and enabling independence.

“We are listening to what our residents are saying, so releasing these funds will help improve their general living environment and enhance their lives.”

Notes to Editors

- Hounslow Homes was formed in 2002 as one of the first Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) in the country. Hounslow Homes is tasked with managing the council's 16,500 homes and has delivered £120 million of refurbishment and improvement works to bring its housing stock up to the government's 'Decent Homes' standard, which took effect in 2006.
- The ALMO was awarded the highest possible three-star rating by the Audit Commission for excellent housing services in 2005.
- Services to residents include a free phone number and service, care-taking and ground maintenance