Celebrating success

This year we have continued to invest in our residents and communities and this report looks back at some of our key projects and achievements over the past twelve months. It then looks ahead at the challenges we face over the forthcoming years.

This year:

- We supported 12,340 residents through a variety of projects and initiatives.
- We invested a total of £1.4 million in our communities.
- For every £1 the Group invested, another £2.08 was brought in from project partners and external funders.
Looking ahead

Broad social and economic change will continue to present new challenges.

Our residents are facing a future of:

- welfare reforms,
- changes to housing benefit,
- greater challenges in the jobs market,
- reduced public spending (particularly in youth provision),
- increased living costs.

As a result our work will be focussed on:

- supporting residents to develop the skills to manage their money,
- identifying ways that residents can overcome financial difficulties,
- helping residents establish economic independence.

Integral to our work in all of these areas will be supporting residents’ access to the internet – a tangible and direct way of improving social and economic opportunities for individuals and communities.

Our more traditional community development work will continue to underpin this.
Future plans

With external funding reduced across the board we will aim to ensure that residents continue to have access to the support that they need. Where funding for partner organisations has also been reduced we will need to look at how we can fill the service gap. This might need to include providing more support directly to our residents through programmes such as Southern Works.

We are very well placed to do this. We have carried out a lot of work to ensure we understand the needs of our residents and how these issues will affect them.

We believe that we have the structure, skills and experience, through our social and economic regeneration department, to support our residents in the years to come.
Supporting residents with training and employment opportunities is increasingly a core element of our work. This will be a major focus for us moving forward, given the changing economic climate and the needs of our residents. This year we have launched a new in-house employment and training service called Southern Works that delivers one-to-one support to our residents.

We have also developed and delivered a number of other projects aimed at bringing our residents closer to the job market.

**Highlights**

**Southern Works**

Launched in summer 2011, Southern Works received over 200 referrals in its first three months.

Southern Works sees our team of employment advisers working with residents on a one-to-one basis to produce and support personal development plans. Each one is tailored to include the most appropriate package of support needed for that individual to help them move closer to employment.

We anticipate that the number of residents in need of support from Southern Works will continue to rise and we are therefore keen to develop and expand our network of advisers over the coming years.

**Southern Works for Terence**

*Terence, Totland, Isle of Wight*

Terence recently referred himself to Southern Works, having been unemployed since 2001. With previous experience of working in the catering industry, Terence worked closely with his employment adviser and is now undertaking an NVQ in catering at the Isle of Wight College. Through Southern Works, he was also supported to access grants which helped him with course costs and equipment.

Terence now feels confident enough to apply for work experience placements in the catering industry, and hopes to be able to apply for full-time employment next year.

Terence says of the service, “What Southern Works is doing is brilliant. They came at the right time for me. They were quick and flexible, and have really helped me”.

This year, 626 residents benefitted from our training and employment programme.
Employment & training

Apprenticeships
Over the past year, we have been working more closely with our contractors to maximise the opportunities around employment and training for our residents and have helped four residents into apprenticeships.

Working Opportunities Fund
This year the fund has helped over 30 people, offering grants of up to £500 to residents looking for a range of support into employment including: travel to interviews; tools and clothing for new jobs; and childcare support.

Help into apprenticeship for Samantha
Samantha, Group resident, Ryde, Isle of Wight

Samantha, 18, was given the opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship, working at a nursery on the Isle of Wight. As staff were paid one month in arrears, Samantha was apprehensive of the period between starting work and receiving a salary, as it would leave her struggling financially. By successfully applying for the Working Opportunities Fund, support with her travel and subsistence costs enabled her to concentrate fully on her new job without the financial worry, and gave her a greater chance to develop a new career.

“By avoiding getting into significant debt, the Fund was without a doubt a brilliant lifeline for Samantha.” (Dawn Taylor, Support Worker at Southern Housing Group).

Green Doctors
In January 2011, working in partnership with Groundwork London, we recruited and trained five Hackney residents (four from Southern Housing Group) to become energy assessors, otherwise known as Green Doctors. After training, the Green Doctors visited fellow Group residents, initially working alongside our maintenance contractor, Breyer.

Residents were given information and advice on how to reduce their fuel bills, and become more energy efficient, supplemented by the installation of measures such as draught proofing, radiator panels and power-down switches.

In total, the Doctors made 654 visits to residents’ homes, saving a combined total of 96 metric tonnes of Carbon Dioxide per year, £24,000 in monetary savings, and 4.4million litres of water per year.

Two Green Doctors obtained City & Guilds Level 3 Qualification on Energy Awareness and then progressed to full time employment with the Re:NEW Lewisham Programme.

Employment skills days
We have been working closely with East London Business Alliance (ELBA) to maximise the opportunities that come from the partnerships they have with the private sector in East London. This year unemployed Group residents were invited to skills days at Barclays, Credit Suisse and Lloyds of London.

No. of residents supported
626

Group funding
£69,723

Leverage
£121,986

Unit cost per resident (Group cost)
£111.38

Ratio
£1 : £1.75
Digital inclusion

We recognise that addressing digital exclusion – and in particular exclusion from access to the internet – is a key way of tackling a range of linked socio-economic issues. In October 2010 we established our Computers in Communities programme.

This brings together our volunteer programme, community spaces and our programmes with older residents.

Highlights

Computers in Communities
This project served as the pilot to establish the Group’s volunteer programme. To date, we have recruited and trained 11 volunteers.

A lead volunteer role has been established in each of our community centres to coordinate and oversee the IT programme of activities and community involvement. Volunteers receive support through in-house training and external courses, to further develop their skills and to be able to pass these skills on to others in their community.

The experience has led to a number of volunteers securing work and all volunteers have expressed significant satisfaction with the opportunities the programme offers.

Community centre projects
Since October 2010, we have established five IT community centres in London, equipping them with computers and ‘adaptability aid kits’. This has allowed residents to have a social and learning focal point within their local community, especially targeting those who would not be able to fund their own computer or internet connection.

We worked with over 40 community partners and key national digital organisations across Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Hammersmith and Fulham. We created a ‘mobile approach’ using existing partner facilities and mobile technology to offer residents a flexible, yet tailored, approach towards training.

Award nomination
Computers in Communities was a finalist at the 2011 UK Housing Awards under the Supporting Social and Economic Inclusion category.

This year 339 residents benefitted from our Digital Inclusion work*

*The assumption is made that for every resident who benefitted from the project, 50% would see a knock-on benefit to their family or neighbours.
Digital inclusion

Sheltered schemes project
We have supported residents with equipment and training in four sheltered schemes in London, Brighton and Seaford, as well as training for a further three schemes in Hackney.

To date we have trained a total of 89 people (79 Group residents) providing our older residents with the confidence, skills and opportunities that encourage independence and integration.

The project was part-funded through the Get Digital Programme and BBC First Click.

We are currently consulting our residents in 15 sheltered schemes across our West region, from Reading through to Swindon and Portsmouth, to see how we can best support them to get online.

No. of residents supported 339*
Group funding £51,210
Leverage £97,420
Unit cost per resident (Group cost) £151
Ratio £1 : £1.90

*The assumption is made that for every resident who benefitted from the project, 50% would see a knock-on benefit to their family or neighbours.
Financial inclusion support for our residents promotes greater confidence in money management and gives them more financial stability in the future. It also contributes to cutting rent arrears, reducing the risk of evictions and helping to produce settled and sustainable communities.

By working with partner organisations we can offer training, advice and support to residents, helping them to manage their finances and maximise their income.

**Highlights**

**Community Money Advocate Training**
This training course gave residents in the London area an opportunity to learn more about money management both to help themselves and to become community advocates, passing on the knowledge to friends, family and the community.

Nineteen residents from across London have completed the course.

**Financial Inclusion Service**
This service has gained an additional adviser in the London team, as part of the Southern Works service, and all Financial Inclusion Officers are now also providing support and information on back-to-work benefits to residents seeking work.

**Credit Unions**
We have provided financial and in-kind support to a number of Credit Unions which can provide savings accounts and loans for our residents. This year we have provided funding to help develop credit unions for both Kensington and Chelsea and Surrey Councils.

**Big Lottery funding**
We have been working with housing associations and other partners on outline bids for the Big Lottery Financial Confidence Fund in a number of local authority areas, acting as lead housing organisation for the Hackney proposal.

- **No. of residents supported**: 416
- **Group funding**: £20,000
- **Leverage**: £140,000
- **Unit cost per resident (Group cost)**: £48.07
- **Ratio**: £1 : £7

**“I am more confident to advise friends, family and neighbours how to manage debts without anxiety.”**
Resident feedback from Community Money Advocate Training

**“I am more confident in talking to my creditors.”**
Resident feedback from Community Money Advocate Training

**“It will help me manage my money and budget better.”**
Resident feedback from Community Money Advocate Training

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This year **416** residents benefitted from our financial inclusion work.

We invested **£20,000** and raised funding of **£140,000**.
Youth development work

We have adapted and developed the focus of our youth engagement programme over the past twelve months in response to the changes in funding and policy around youth provision, housing and services. We intend to focus more on creating training and employment opportunities for young residents, as well as supporting personal development plans. This change of focus underpins the role that young people have in the future of their communities.

Highlights

Establishing a small business - run by young people for young people
We supported young residents to set up a social enterprise in one of our estate offices, encouraging them to get involved in community engagement work.

‘You Decide’ youth fund
The Group wide ‘You decide’ youth panel commissioned 13 projects in 2011 totalling £24,037. All projects funded went through a rigorous vetting procedure designed and developed by the young panel members. At the heart of the process was the need to ensure that young residents, from across the Group, were part of the design and development of services.

Youth ambassador programme
We recruited 14 young people to the programme which provides them with a personal and vocational development plan. The programme supports the young people to develop real work skills while enabling them to establish and manage services in their own estates and communities.

Three of the young people have gone on to further university studies. Another three are employed part time on ambassador project activities and one sits on the board of Hackney youth parliament. Following this successful pilot we have plans to roll this project out more extensively across our regions next year.

Youth conference
Working in partnership with KS in Progress (a youth social enterprise) we organised Southern Housing Group’s first youth conference. Six young residents from the Group were employed to develop the content for the day as well as facilitate and deliver the event. More than 80 young residents, aged five to 25, attended the event to provide a young person’s perspective on housing.

No. of residents supported

2,078

Group funding

£86,096

Leverage

£121,963

Overall we invested

£208,059
Our community regeneration team aims to create strong strategic partnerships and empower our residents to build sustainable communities and improve their neighbourhoods.

To us, sustainable communities are places in which people want to live and work, now and in the future.

Highlights

**Kidbrooke Village (formerly the Ferrier Estate): Royal Borough of Greenwich**

The Ferrier Estate may have been one of the most deprived estates in the country, but it was also a thriving, vibrant community. Approximately 165 households from the former estate have now moved into homes within the new development. The role of our Senior Community Regeneration Officer (SCRO) is to provide valuable support to households beyond the process of moving.

Engagement with residents when they move into their new home has enabled the SCRO to identify households’ support needs and signpost to local providers and services. At the same time the support available from the Group and the opportunities for residents to get involved in the Group’s work is promoted.

**Making connections**

The former estate was home to a large number of older people. Seventy per cent of new apartments have been let to those who have lived on the Ferrier Estate since the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. Although satisfied with their high quality new homes, several older residents commented that they felt socially isolated and unaware where former neighbours and friends had been re-housed within the new development. To reduce this feeling of isolation we organised an away day aimed specifically at older people, giving residents the opportunity to interact and meet new people as well as meeting up with former neighbours and friends.

Inspired by the success of the day, three of the residents are in the process of forming a social group for older residents that offers a range of services. The SCRO is working to ensure this group has the necessary skills and resource to make it sustainable and self-financing.
Oxford Road (Reading) multi-agency meetings and community fun day 2011

The Oxford Road area in Reading is particularly challenging with high levels of deprivation and historically high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. The multi-agency meeting is a strategic partnership of over 90 community partners. It provides a focus for all of the organisations that support the Oxford Road community, ensuring services are coordinated and meet the needs of local people. Led by the Group, the various agencies planned and organised the 2011 Oxford Road Community Fun Day which was attended by nearly 1,000 local residents.

“...It was a brilliant success with so much positive energy and positive feedback, a great way to bring the community together and allow local groups to promote their services in a fun and informative way.”

Local resident commenting on the Oxford Road fun day

Vacant Lot

This Lottery funded project completed its second year with established gardening clubs set up at Amhurst Road in Hackney and York Way Court in Islington. New community gardens were successfully created at both, with the work at Amhurst Road also signalling the beginning of work to re-open the community centre. Plans for a refurbished ball court are also being developed.

Planning for the third and final year of the project is underway with Myddleton Grange in Hackney, selected as our final site.

Overall there are more than ten gardening clubs across the Group, using communal land on Southern Housing Group estates aimed at getting residents involved with the physical environment where they live.
Health and wellbeing

Activate London
This project is funded by the Big Lottery and brings a range of health and wellbeing projects to residents across London. We work in partnership with five other housing associations to deliver this project.

In the past year we have worked with 1,086 of our residents. The most high profile project was Challenge Southern in which over 200 residents from estates in our London and Thames Gateway regions took part in a sports day at Mile End Stadium, assisted by resident and Group volunteers.

Through Activate London we have supported 1,086 residents.

Community regeneration: Work in our neighbourhoods
Our impact: October 2010 - September 2011 by theme:

### October 2010 - September 2011 by theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total no of residents benefitting</th>
<th>Total Group funding</th>
<th>Unit cost per resident (Group test)</th>
<th>Total leverage</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
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Leverage means that each £1 spent on a project by the Group brought in another £2.08 from project partners and external funders for the benefit of Group residents.

### Total no of residents benefitting by theme

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<th>Theme</th>
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<td>Small grants*</td>
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<td>Youth</td>
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<td>Financial inclusion</td>
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<td>Activate London</td>
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<td>Digital inclusion</td>
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*For more information on these themes please visit www.shgroup.org.uk
**Our impact**: October 2010 - September 2011 by theme:

- **Employment & training**
- **Digital Inclusion**
- **Financial Inclusion**
- **Youth development**
- **Community regeneration**

For more information on these themes please visit [www.shgroup.org.uk](http://www.shgroup.org.uk)

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### Southern Housing Group funding and leverage by theme

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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<td>FIP*</td>
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*For more information on these themes please visit www.shgroup.org.uk*
Our impact: October 2010 - September 2011 by theme:

- **Introduction**
- **Employment & training**
- **Digital Inclusion**
- **Financial Inclusion**
- **Youth development**
- **Community regeneration**

*For more information on these themes please visit www.shgroup.org.uk*
Our impact: October 2010 - September 2011 by theme:

**Leverage by theme**

- Small grants: £1.33
- Youth: £1.42
- Financial inclusion: £7.00
- Activate London: £6.00
- Community regeneration: £4.19
- Employment and training: £1.75
- Digital inclusion: £1.86
- FIP*: £0.66

*For more information on these themes please visit www.shgroup.org.uk*