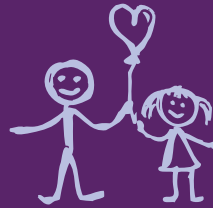
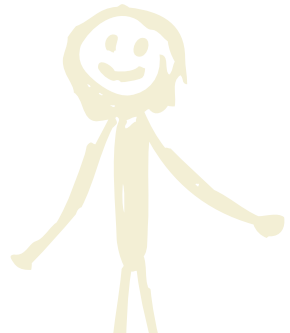
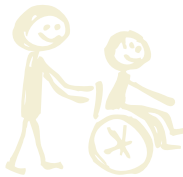
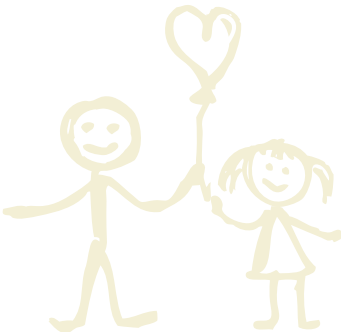
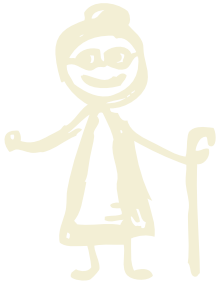
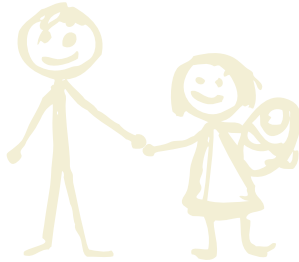
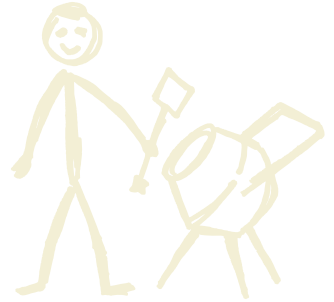
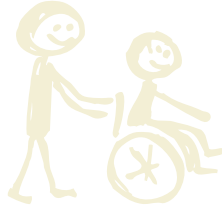
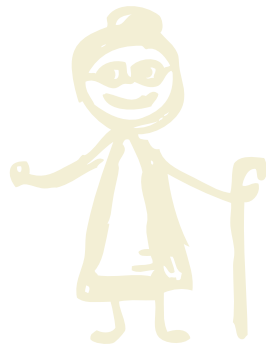


# About Social and Economic Regeneration at Southern Housing Group



Southern  
Housing  
Group



# About Southern Housing Group



**As one of southern England's largest housing associations, we own and manage 26,000 homes for more than 66,000 residents. This includes homes for rent, shared ownership, outright sale as well as sheltered schemes.**

# About Southern Housing Group

In addition to managing homes, we also invest in the people and communities where our homes are located.

Our experience has taught us that investing in people and communities is as important as building homes. This philosophy has been the bedrock of the Group's activities for more than 100 years.

Our mission is to unlock the potential of people and places. We achieve this by:

- developing high quality, affordable homes;
- improving the neighbourhoods where our residents live;
- developing a range of rent and home ownership opportunities; and
- investing in our staff, our residents and our legacy.

Over the past year we have worked with our residents, local authorities and partner organisations to invest £1.03 million in our communities.

Find out how in our 'Beyond bricks & mortar' report, available on our website.

For more information on the work of Southern Housing Group please visit [www.shgroup.org.uk](http://www.shgroup.org.uk)



# About the Social and Economic Regeneration Department (SERD)



**At Southern Housing Group we recognise the fundamental value of supporting our residents and communities alongside the provision of high quality homes and housing services.**

# About the Social and Economic Regeneration Department (SERD)

We have a team which focuses on social and economic regeneration and works in partnership to improve opportunities for residents.

Over the past year we have:

- supported 16,652 residents through a variety of projects and initiatives;
- invested a total of £1.03 million in our communities; and
- generated £1.29 from external project partners for every £1 the Group has invested ensuring projects are sustainable, cost effective and financially viable.

The lives of many residents in social housing has been significantly affected by changes to welfare and public services. Our work has, therefore, focussed more than ever on:

- supporting our residents into employment;
- tackling barriers such as limited basic skills and confidence;

- increasing fundamental knowledge of the digital world;
- supporting our more vulnerable residents to manage their budgets; and
- improving life opportunities.

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 to support our residents in the years to come and we look forward to working in partnership with you to do that.

Working in partnership is key to delivering successful, sustainable projects. We work with our residents, local authorities, national organisations and community groups to make a positive difference in our communities.

If you are interested in finding out more about working with us please contact

[SERD@shgroup.org.uk](mailto:SERD@shgroup.org.uk)



# Community regeneration



**Supporting communities to maximise local opportunities, understand the social capital within their community and strengthen local partnerships for the benefit of residents.**

# Community regeneration

## Building sustainable communities

Our Community Regeneration Officers (CROs) work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to bring benefits and opportunities to our residents - creating sustainable communities.

For us, sustainable communities are places in which people want to live and work, now and in the future and they meet the diverse needs of current and future residents. These areas are most effective when residents take pride in them, because of the way they look, the facilities they have access to and share with the wider community and because there is a sense of a united community.

## How we do it:

CROs focus on a specific neighbourhood and work across the spectrum of social issues, assessing their impact on resident communities and devising strategies to overcome them in partnership with other stakeholders; the aim is to improve the quality of life and life opportunities of our residents.

We deliver innovative projects that act as catalysts for social change and improve the life chances of our residents. Examples include youth projects, access to computers for older members of the community, employment and training opportunities or projects to develop volunteering opportunities.

Through our work, we hope to instil residents with pride in their community and to support individuals to develop their personal aspirations.





# Financial inclusion



**Helping residents to access mainstream financial services, maximise their income, and to support those in debt to gain control of their finances and maintain their tenancy.**

# Financial inclusion

## Supporting residents

Social housing residents form a large proportion of those who are 'financially excluded' - defined as having no savings, no assets, no insurance, no access to money advice, no affordable credit, and no bank account.

Assisting residents into financial inclusion helps maximise their personal income, decreases their personal debt and offers them the opportunity for personal advancement as well as contributing to their wellbeing. Offering financial inclusion support for residents directly contributes to cutting rent arrears, reducing evictions and tenant turn-over and helping to produce settled and sustainable communities.



## How we do it

Our Financial Inclusion Team supports residents who have rent arrears and other debts or who have difficulty managing their finances.

The team provides support in a number of ways including:

- Telephone support or home visits;
- Helping to draw up financial statements;
- Advice on any benefits which the resident may be entitled to and support with applying for these;
- Making residents aware of their rights in relation to bailiffs and debt collectors;
- Referring residents to other independent advice agencies;
- Providing information on local credit union services and support in opening bank accounts;
- For residents seeking work, undertaking benefit checks and providing back-to-work calculations.

# Digital inclusion



**We recognise that addressing digital exclusion, and in particular exclusion from access to the internet, is a key way of improving life opportunities.**

# Digital inclusion

## Connecting communities

Over 40% of social housing tenants are not online; this is more acute in rural areas and among older residents. The aim of our digital inclusion programme is to get social housing residents online and using IT. We do this by supporting our residents to develop their skills and knowledge as well as improving their access to IT facilities.

## How we do it

We initially established five open access IT community centres in London, undertook a review of digital exclusion in rural areas and have begun rolling out IT provision in sheltered schemes across our whole area of operation. This has allowed residents to have a social and learning focal point within their housing estate.

Key for us is engaging with 'hard to reach' residents who have not historically accessed mainstream provision— such as libraries, high street shops etc. Intrinsic to the projects is sustainability through a strong resident-led volunteer programme called Digital Champions.

We have established a dedicated team which focuses on digital inclusion and works in partnership with key national organisations including UK Online Centres, BBC First Click, Digital Unite and Job Centre Plus as well as over 40 community organisations.

By the end of 2012 we had successfully reached more than 1,400 people.

Our digital inclusion programme was recognised as a finalist at the 2011 UK Housing Awards under the 'Supporting social and economic inclusion' category.



# Community centres



**Southern Housing Group owns 19 community centres across its areas of operation, most of them in London.**

# Community Centres

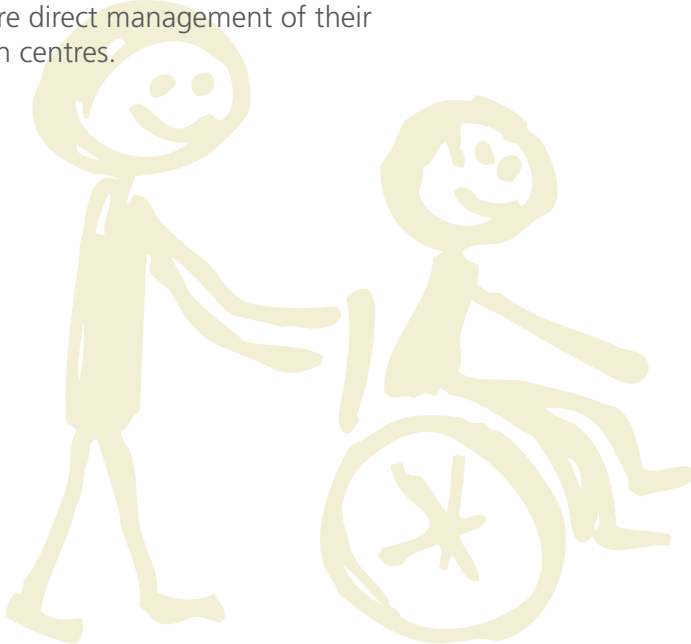
These range from a large multi-purpose recently refurbished community centre in Stamford Hill, north London to a converted flat in Durrington, West Sussex.

Through our Community Centre Co-ordinator we are able to provide an efficient and professional management service for all of our centres, making them available for community use and private hire to the local community.

Working in partnership, we aim to proactively develop projects and services relevant to local communities based in our centres, and are developing a management model to enable local people to take on more direct management of their own centres.

The Boiler House, a new community centre in Stoke Newington, North London, has been managed by residents since 2011, and we hope that other centres will be taken over in time.

For more information on our community centres please contact [SERD@shgroup.org.uk](mailto:SERD@shgroup.org.uk)



# ▶ Training and employment



**Given the changing economic climate and the needs of our residents, providing support with training and employment opportunities is increasingly a core element of our work.**

# Training and employment

## Southern Works

Southern Works is our in-house training and employment advice and guidance service for residents of Southern Housing Group aged 16 and over. The aim of the service is to support our residents to achieve paid employment or to move closer to the labour market. The project currently has five employment advisers providing a bespoke one to one service for residents.

Southern Works was set up in response to the increasingly difficult employment market being faced by our residents. Unemployment levels are high and competition for jobs is intense. Residents who claim benefits are coming under increasing pressure to find paid employment. We want to give our residents the greatest possible chance to access the type of employment they want.



## How we do it

Residents can self refer to Southern Works or be referred by staff members. An adviser will then meet with the client to conduct an assessment of the client's employment and training needs and aspirations. A bespoke plan of action is then agreed and is reviewed at regular intervals. As part of this work advisers can support clients with:

- CVs, application forms and job searching;
- interview skills, confidence building and improving motivation;
- finding work placements and voluntary experience;
- training and education opportunities;
- accessing job vacancies and apprenticeships, and;
- support to apply for funding for employment and training related activities.



# ▶ Youth development



**Our focus is working with young people to develop creative opportunities that engage them and meet their aspirations. The overall aim is to develop their knowledge and skills to improve life opportunities.**

# Youth development

## How we do it

We work in partnership with local authorities, district councils and the third sector to develop creative youth projects for our communities.

In this economic climate and recognising the disproportionate impact of this on youth unemployment, we also directly support our young residents into the jobs market with tangible job opportunities as well as a range of training and qualification options along the way.

Here are just some examples of the types of projects we organise:

## 'You Decide' youth fund

A Group-wide youth panel which commissions funding for youth projects.

## Youth ambassador programme

We recruited 14 young people to the programme providing them with a personal and vocational development plan. 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.

## Youth conference

An event organised by young residents to share their perspective on housing issues and to shape the services they receive.





Southern  
Housing  
Group



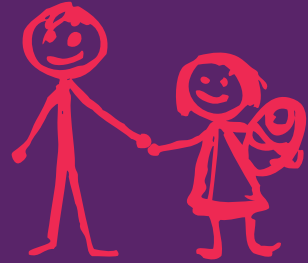
**Contact us**

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W: [www.shgroup.org.uk](http://www.shgroup.org.uk)

Southern Housing Group is a charitable housing association.  
Industrial & Provident Societies no: 30155R



Unlocking the potential  
of people and places