



Wherry
Housing Association

Residents' review 2007



Providing local services



When Circle Anglia was established two years ago, we promised you that you would continue to receive local services delivered by local staff.

Everyone at Wherry has been working hard to achieve that and to tackle the key local priorities you identified during our recent Have Your Say consultation.

One of the issues you highlighted was anti-social behaviour and this review includes a special feature on what we're doing to tackle the problem. It's not just a Wherry priority. Circle Anglia has signed up to the Government's Respect initiative to combat anti-social behaviour and ensure our communities are places where people want to live.

We have also strengthened our Neighbourhood Teams so that when things go wrong you have a local member of staff to turn to – someone who understands your area and knows how to get you the best help available.

Listening to what you want and need is very important to us.

For example, residents who took part in last year's annual review survey told us the top items they wanted to see in this year's review were: what we've done to improve your homes (89%), how to contact staff (88%), how we're performing on issues like repairs and rents (85%), overall achievements during the year (80%) and what we've done to improve communities (73%).

You will find those items and many more in this review.

Mark Jones Managing Director

Key achievements

NORWICH EVENING NEWS



Percy Clarke (left) and Daniel Whiting won Hero category in Wherry's 2006 Community Spirit Awards. Ten year-old Daniel went to the aid of a classmate having an epileptic fit.

Working with residents to provide a wide range of community facilities, ranging from events for older people and school holiday activities, through to our Community Spirit Awards, which celebrate local neighbourhood heroes of all ages.

Introducing a number of initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour and working with residents to address key local priorities.

Launching Friends of Wherry to help us maximise the amount of feedback we get from residents on how we can improve our services. About 800 people have now enrolled – that's one in seven residents – and are taking part in initiatives such as surveys, discussions and our recently launched programme of estate inspections.

Spending £2,743,374 improving your homes. This includes spending £508,414 on planned maintenance and decorating external and communal areas. 85% of our properties now meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. AMS has also appointed a second Tenant Liaison Officer to help residents facing major works.

Andrew and Kathy Shave are thrilled with their new shared ownership home in Cross Green. Andrew says he always wanted to stay in the village he grew up in so was delighted to hear of the affordable housing development; "The house is excellent. It is spacious, light and airy and the children Laura, Kyle and James (pictured) are very happy here".



150

residents have benefited from a new kitchen during the last year

Looking at different ways to improve our repairs systems, including holding workshops to get resident feedback and inviting residents to meet contractors. Appointments are now being offered on routine repairs and we call residents after repairs have been carried out to check the quality of the work.

Carrying out tenancy audits to make sure that people are not living in our properties without our permission.

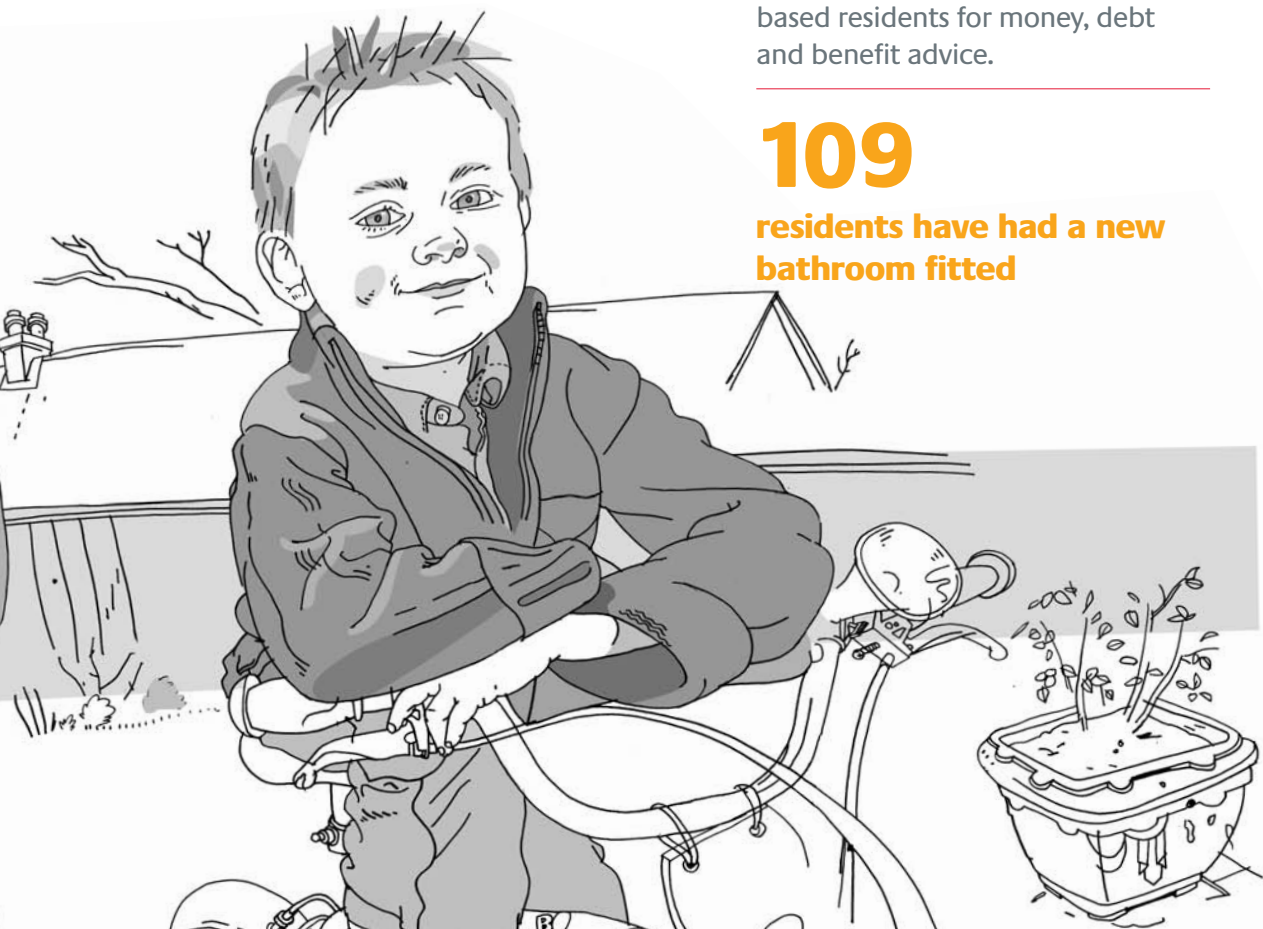
Strengthening our Neighbourhood Teams to ensure that you receive high-quality and responsive local services delivered by local staff. As well as making staff more visible and increasing resident involvement, we've also published direct contact details for key staff so that you can get in touch with them more easily.

Asking you for information about yourselves, to improve our understanding of your needs to try to ensure our services meet them – we aim to survey all residents by April 2008.

Introducing a money advisor to work with our tenants. We also have an agreement with Norwich & District Citizens Advice Bureau so that we can refer Norfolk based residents for money, debt and benefit advice.

109

residents have had a new bathroom fitted



Facts and figures

The figures below have been included in line with guidelines from the Housing Corporation and the National Housing Federation*.

Voids and lettings performance

Average re-let time in days	26
Number of units vacant and available to let	54
Dwellings vacant and available for let	0.6%
Number of units vacant but unavailable to let	24
Dwellings vacant and not available for let	0.5%

Rent collection

Rent collected	99.2%
Current tenant arrears at year end	5.8%

Resident satisfaction with repairs

Satisfaction with the last repair	93.4%
-----------------------------------	-------

Reactive repairs

Number of emergency repairs notified	1,806
Number of urgent repairs notified	3,746
Number of routine repairs notified	4,113
Emergency repairs completed within target	98.0%
Urgent repairs completed within target	94.3%
Routine repairs completed within target	97.6%
Number of homes with a valid gas safety certificate	3,521
Homes with a valid gas safety certificate	97.8%

Decent Homes Standard and SAP (energy efficiency) rating

Average SAP rating	67
Homes failing Decent Homes Standard	14.8%

Who we house – lettings in the last year

White British	95.6%
White Irish	0.4%
White other	0.9%
Mixed	0.8%
Asian	0.7%
Black	0.6%
Chinese or other	0.2%
Chose not to say	0.8%
Total	100%

Lettings to residents with a disability

Percentage of lettings	21.8%
------------------------	-------

* The figures above are correct as at 31 March 2007.

How we performed



The number of repairs completed within our target times was just over 96% – an improvement on last year – and customer satisfaction stood at just over 93% at the end of March 2007.

Contact centre staff answered just under 70,600 calls between April 2006 and March 2007 – a fifth more than the previous year and 88% of all calls made. Eight out of ten calls were answered within our target of 30 seconds. A full review of the contact centre is being carried out to make sure we provide the best service we can.

88%

of cases of anti-social behaviour were resolved during the year

Despite our best efforts, we were unable to collect 6% of the rent owed to us and 16 residents were evicted for not paying their rent. We aim to reduce this rent arrears' figure to approximately 4% by the end of March 2008, with the help of initiatives like our money advice service for residents in debt.

140 cases of anti-social behaviour were reported to staff during the year. 123 were resolved, but 17 of the cases could not be because of lack of evidence.

81%

of calls made to the contact centre were resolved straight away

We received 123 complaints during the year and we responded to nine out of ten within our target of ten working days. Just over 95% of complaints were resolved straight away.

It took us an average of 26 days to re-let properties that became empty – five days longer than the target we set ourselves. The number of properties empty on a short and long-term basis was also slightly higher than planned.

Tackling anti-social behaviour



Tackling local friction caused by parking issues, carrying out door-to-door surveys and launching a Community Warden scheme are just some of the ways we've tackled anti-social behaviour (ASB) over the last year.

Wherry and other partners in Circle Anglia have also signed up to the Government's Respect initiative, which encourages local organisations to work together to tackle ASB, and launched a special website at www.circleangliarespect.org

Introducing starter tenancies is also helping us to control ASB, by providing all new residents with a 12-month trial period. During the first year new residents have to prove they are a good neighbour and can face eviction if they cause problems. But if everything goes well they become an assured resident after a year.

We have also extended our use of voluntary Good Neighbour Contracts, where residents promise not to continue nuisance behaviour such as noisy parties or ASB outside people's homes. These are not legally binding, but they can be used as evidence if the resident ends up in court because of their behaviour.

Supporting people suffering from ASB is also a key priority. That's why we've teamed up with Victim Support to provide more help to Norfolk residents experiencing ASB and worked with mediation services to help resolve some of our less serious cases.

Wherry teamed up with the local police and council in Marsham to carry out a door-to-door survey after complaints about anti-social behaviour.

Neighbourhood Officer Les Wood helped King's Yard residents to tackle anti-social behaviour issues caused by non-residents parking in Wherry spaces.



How to contact us

Wherry, which was formed in 1990 following the transfer of more than 3,000 Broadland District Council properties, manages more than 5,300 properties across Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

It is a partner in Circle Anglia, which was formed by the merger of Circle 33 Housing Group and Anglia Housing Group on 1 July 2005.

Wherry Board

Nicola Lucking (Chair)

Adrian Kiener

Nigel Rule

Grizelda Tyler

Ruth Langslow

Robert MacLeod

Terry Moralee (Resident)

Cllr Andrew Proctor (Local Authority Nominee)

Cllr Roger Foulger (Local Authority Nominee)

Customer services

Tel 0845 600 1518

(Low-cost local number)

Fax 01603 700404

Minicom 01603 703599

General issues

Write to

Wherry Housing Association

6 Central Avenue

St Andrews Business Park

Norwich NR7 0HR

Email wherry.info@circleanglia.org

Paying your rent

Tel 0870 243 6040

(Over the phone – 24-hour service)

Set up a direct debit

Tel 0870 240 2953

Talk to us about your rent account

Tel 01603 703583

Text 07736 028483

Email

wherryincometeam@circleanglia.org

Customer website

www.circleanglia.org/customers

Anti-social behaviour website

www.circleangliarespect.org

