



Inspect us

Join our tenant inspector scheme

We recently launched our new Tenant Inspection Scheme.

Group work

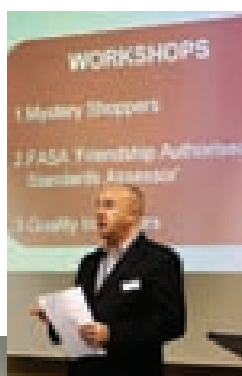
From the start, we have worked alongside our customers to develop face to face inspection of our services. Seeing things from the customers' point of view helps us ensure that the things most important to them always get looked at.

Right: William Carter, Head of Housing Management. Below: Margaret Fairbrother and John Leniston at the launch day.

Something for everyone

There are three ways you can help: as a Mystery Shopper; as a Friendship Authorised Standards Assessor (FASA); and as a Quality Inspector. You will get full training and support and we will publish the inspection results so everyone can see what you think of us.

See inside for more!



Key Customer Conference
Thursday October 1st!
Call 0121 212 8663 to book your place!
Don't miss it!

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Centre pages

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Puzzle time

Enquiries 9am – 5pm weekdays:

0121 506 2800 (West Midlands) ▲ 0845 608 8110 (East Midlands)

enquiries@fch.org.uk ▲ www.fch.org.uk

Repairs 8am – 5pm weekdays (emergency any time) 0800 279 2101



Gardener of the Year



You don't even need a garden to take part!

It's back for a second year! Our 2009 Gardener of the Year competition returns with categories from 'best garden' to 'best indoor plant'.

All Friendship customers, including leaseholders, tenants and care and support service users can enter, whatever your age! It's free to take part and there's a fantastic prize list.

How do I enter?

Just fill in and send us our easy-to-complete entry form. If you can't find the one we sent with this edition of Streets Ahead, just call us or visit www.fch.org.uk. Send us your entry together with no more than three photos. **Entries are open now** and must be returned to us by September 30th.

You can enter any or all of the categories, but only once in each category.

The judges will short list from the photographs and entry forms, with final judging to take place in October.

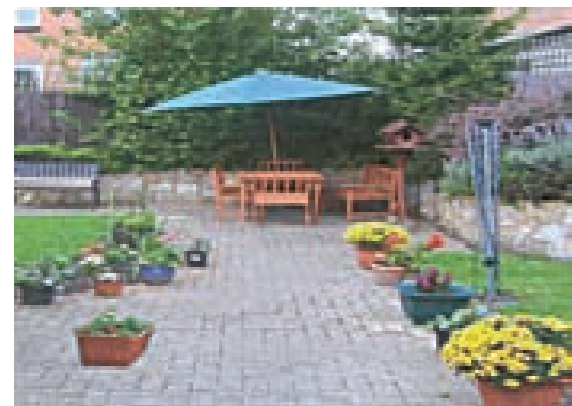
What are the categories?

- ▲ **Friendship Gardener of the Year**
(First Prize £50, runners-up prize £15)
- ▲ **Best tub or planter** (£25, £10)
- ▲ **Best small garden** (£25, £10)
- ▲ **Best front garden** £25, £10)
- ▲ **Best back garden** (£25, £10)
- ▲ **Best window box or hanging basket**
(£25, £10)
- ▲ **Best indoor plant**
(£25, £10)

Who are the judges?

- ▲ Helen Bexley, Partnership Contracts Manager;
- ▲ David Feiven, Communications Manager;
- ▲ Caroline Hincks, Senior Housing Officer; and
- ▲ Les Woolf, Friendship tenant.

The judges decisions are final. Judges will not enter into any correspondence about their decisions.



Right: age is no barrier. Our Gardener of the Year competition is open to young and old alike. Left: nor is disability. Last year's competition was won by learning disability service users at Hobson Road residential care home.



Readers' Lives

Our Reader's picture this issue is from Friendship tenant Les Woolf. A keen gardener, Les told us how to make a wildlife stack.



Stack three or four pallets (double slatted ones are best). Then simply fill each level with hamster straw, fistfuls of grass, a few airbricks, drinking straws, plastic bottles with the tops cut off, old flower pots, boxes with pebbles in, egg boxes etc.

Think shelter, warmth, food safety and water if you can leave some shallow water nearby. *Don't use anything which has contained synthetic chemicals!*

Once built, leave it alone and disguise it with some old branches. After a few months undisturbed, there's no telling what might take up residence - from bees and butterflies to frogs and newts.



Above: Les Woolf's wildlife stack

Teams get tough

We are taking effective action to tackle anti-social behaviour

Sadly, with more than 3,600 homes to manage, our housing teams regularly get reports of neighbour nuisance or other anti-social behaviour.

We take each and every report very seriously. Tackling them can sometimes be a lengthy process, for example if we need to collect sufficient evidence to win in court. We also work closely with other organisations.

Court action

In Leicester, Housing Officer Camilla Boss and Support Worker Margaret Bland worked with the Police and the local council to obtain a Court Order against some very noisy neighbours. They ignored it and the noise and abuse got worse. We went back to Court and thanks to the detailed evidence, the Judge granted an injunction.

The nuisance tenants moved out and calm was restored.



Millie said: "It's great going back to the neighbourhood now. People are smiling again!"

Criminals convicted

Meanwhile in Birmingham, Housing Officer Tracey Withers is delivering our 'zero tolerance' approach to anti-social behaviour, working closely with many different organisations.



As well as accompanying the police on a raid against drug dealers in Sparkbrook recently, Tracey caught a graffiti artist red-handed and passed evidence from CCTV cameras to the police so they could take action against the offender.

Top: Camilla Boss. Left: Tracey Withers

News in brief

Could you use a bit more money?

If you would like to know more about extra money that may be available to you through welfare benefits and grants from charities, there's a great new website that can help.



Just visit www.turn2us.org.uk Even if you haven't got a computer or internet use at home, your local library should be able to help you find the turn2us site. Go on, give it a go!

Cheaper electricity and gas

Friendship has teamed up with energy supplier Ebico to offer our customers a better deal on gas and electricity.

Ebico is the UK's only not-for-profit energy supplier. Their Equigas and Equipower schemes offer fairer prices and a straightforward easy-to-understand deal, featuring:

- ▲ a single fair price regardless of payment method – this could save you a lot if you have a pre-payment meter;
- ▲ no standing charge;
- ▲ no 'deals', no frills, no fuss; and
- ▲ good customer service and support.

To find out more, visit www.ebico.co.uk or call 0800 58 7689.

Help for the hard up!

If you are struggling with debt, the Severn Trent Trust Fund could be just what you need.



First set up in 1997, the Trust is a registered charity which helps people out of poverty and debt. The Trust can help reduce or clear existing water and sewerage debt.

In certain cases the Trust can also help towards other bills or costs that you cannot afford. They can also help you get help from money advice experts. They aim to give you a fresh start and manage your budget better.

To apply, you must get your water or sewerage services from Severn Trent Water Ltd. Call 0121 355 7766 or visit www.sttf.org.uk

Inspect us more

Our new inspection programmes will keep customers and staff very busy



Our new customer inspection schemes have been created by staff and customers working together.

The schemes were launched just a couple of months ago at a day long event in Birmingham.

There are three ways you can join in.

Mystery shopping

The mystery shopping scheme has been running for two years. Mystery shoppers:

- ▲ carry out reality checks on what our services are like right now;
- ▲ report back on their experience to help us identify areas for improvement; and
- ▲ measure our services from our customers' point of view.

Mystery shoppers are fully supported and trained, and have the opportunity to meet together and compare notes every two months.

Even better, the five mystery shoppers who send in the most reports can enter a draw to win £50 of High Street shopping vouchers!

Customer Conference

Our Key Customer conference last year was so successful, we are going to have another one!

It will be on Thursday 1st October at the Beeches Conference Centre in Birmingham. All Friendship customers over the age of 16 are welcome and of course it's free.

- ▲ Fun workshops on serious issues using game show styles and drama!
- ▲ Stalls and displays with advice and freebies.
- ▲ A free hot lunch in the restaurant
- ▲ Competitions, prizes and quizzes.
- ▲ Free travel to and from the event .
- ▲ Magical lunchtime entertainment!

Look out for your personal invitation in the next few weeks!



Friendship Authorised Standards Assessors (FASA)

This is a new idea. FASA volunteers will be full trained and supported to openly inspect services.

FASAs will give a customer perspective on quality and review and recommend changes.

Senior managers will use the reports from FASA to direct improvements and review performance

Quality inspectors

The quality inspectors are customers who want to get really stuck in. Their role is to carry out full inspections of a service alongside staff as part of a full service review.

Quality inspectors will be fully trained, accredited and supported and will be able to gain a Chartered Institute of Housing qualification in Inspecting Services.

We will report the results of this work to customers and staff every six months so everyone can see what progress we are making.

Top to bottom: Notice outside; Graham Birch, Andrea Lester, Gwen Rigby & Angela Stanier; Pearl McCauley, Jonathan Driffill & Jenni Beckford; Julie Garrett, Andrea Lester & Natalie Yearwood; Rosie Weaver & Jonathan Driffill.

Keep safe at home

Friendship has a legal responsibility to ensure your gas supply and any appliances we have provided are safe.

Our partners at Laker will inspect the gas supply, gas fires and heating at every rented home with a gas installation at least once a year. They will give you a copy of the certificate showing your home is up to standard, or arrange repair work if necessary. You are responsible for any appliances that you own. Please help us by keeping to the appointment time we

have agreed with you and allow the engineers access. If you need to rearrange an appointment please call us on 0800 279 2101, selecting option 3. The Gas Safety Register replaced CORGI as the official gas safety body earlier this year, and all of Laker's engineers are registered.



Remember!
All of our staff and all our contractors carry an identity card with their photograph. Please ask to see it before you let anyone in to your home - and if you have a door-chain, keep it on until you are satisfied the caller is genuine.

SIT!

Our new Service Improvement Team is driving changes

We have reorganised some of our central customer services. Our new Service Improvement Team brings together our information and involvement activities with the people responsible for developing and monitoring policy and procedures.

The team is led by Sophie Hall, our Service Improvement Manager. She is joined by Vanessa Stephens, Compliance Auditor; David Feiven, Communications Manager; Victoria Leonard, Customer Relations Manager; and Selina Bernard, Quality Administrator.



Above: Sophie Hall; Vanessa Stephens; David Feiven; Victoria Leonard & Selina Bernard

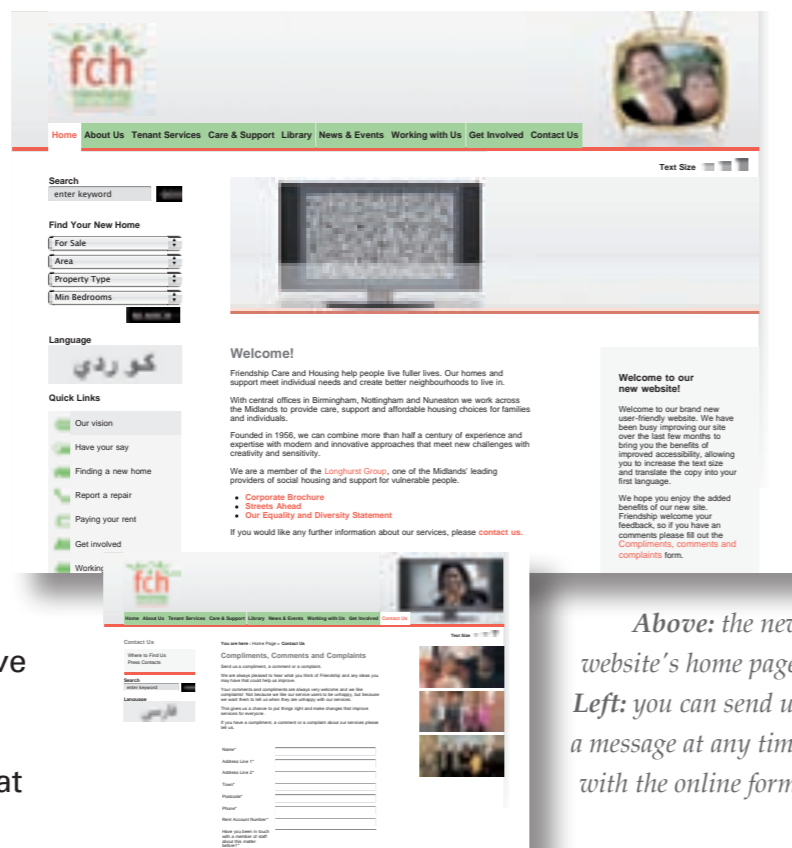
New website launches

Our new look website is packed with information

We launched our new website in July. It's still at the same place - www.fch.org.uk - but it has a great new look and feel.

The new site was developed by the Marketing team at our parent company, the Longhurst Group. They worked with leading specialists Netconstruct. The site has been designed to be as accessible as possible, and over the next few months we will be adding new features and content.

One of Longhurst Group's aims is to make all their websites as user-friendly and useful as possible. We'd love to hear your thoughts and suggestions. There's an online form you can use to send us feedback, or you can e-mail us at enquiries@fch.org.uk



Above: the new website's home page. Left: you can send us a message at any time with the online form.

Puzzle time!

Can you find the following words in the grid below?

CUSTOMER SERVICE INSPECTION
WEBSITE GAS SAFETY ASB

X	C	O	N	F	E	C	R	C	N
G	E	S	B	Z	O	U	J	O	L
I	A	Y	A	S	C	S	I	N	L
N	W	T	B	S	A	T	N	F	A
N	S	E	C	Q	C	O	E	E	F
W	A	F	B	E	W	M	C	R	E
Z	T	A	P	S	T	E	N	E	S
A	E	S	A	G	T	R	E	N	A
G	N	E	P	S	N	I	R	C	K
I	E	T	I	S	B	E	W	E	M

Friendship matters

Friendship helps people live fuller lives.

Our homes and support meet individual needs and create better neighbourhoods to live in.

Streets Ahead is our newsletter for customers. It is published by our customer Editorial Board.

If you have any suggestions or comments, we'd love to hear them! Call us on 0121 506 2800 or send us an e-mail to enquiries@fch.org.uk



Roundabout!

What's going on at Friendship?

Congratulations to our Managing Director, Jonathan Driffill, on two recent appointments.

Jonathan recently became the Chair of B:RAP (Birmingham Race Action Partnership), and was also elected to chair Birmingham Social Housing Partnership (BSHP).



Above: Jonathan

Both organisations are central to promoting equality and fairness in the city and representing the interests of people whose voices are not always listened to. His leadership also helps Friendship's voice be heard when important decisions are made.

With fond memories, we say 'Goodbye and Good Luck' to three recent departures from Friendship. Property Services

Below: cake!



Manager **John Perkins** is now enjoying his well-deserved retirement, whilst Interim Head of Asset Management **Keston Villers** and Deputy Director of Operations **Dave Hanman** are pursuing new ventures in housing and development. Between them

they contributed more than 35 years service to Friendship. Thanks for everything!

With more than five hundred members of staff, there are always opportunities to apply for **jobs at Friendship**.

Many of our vacancies are in Care and Support. We do not always need previous experience and we invest heavily in training and developing our staff. We want to hear from passionate people who really want to help people live fuller lives.

If you or anyone you know is interested in helping us offer increased independence to vulnerable people, please call us on 0121 212 8695 or e-mail enquiries@fch.org.uk

For a different language or format, please contact us.

如果您需要其他语言或格式的帮助，请联系我们

В случае необходимости получить и формацию на другом языке или в другом формате просим связаться с нами.

Pour tout autre langue ou format, veuillez nous contacter

ہو ہر زمانیکی تر یان ہر شیوازیکی تر، نکایہ پہیوہندییمان پیوہ بکہ

کسی دیگر زبان یا شکل کے لیے برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجیے

बिसे ही उर ब्राम्हा नां तुष लक्ष्मी बिरया वरवे साङ्गे ऋत्त संपत्क वरि ।

Haddii loo baahdo luqad kale ama qaab kale loo sameeyo, fadlan nala soo xiriiir.

অন্য ভাষা অথবা তর্জমার জন্য আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন

لأى لغة أو صيغة أخرى برجاء الاتصال بنا

**You said...
...we did!**

We have been working on your suggestions.

You asked us to review our Service Standards.

These set out what you can expect from us, and cover the full range of our activities. We have fully revised them, and they were approved by our **Key Customer Panel** before we printed them. Please tell us if you want a copy.

We have had a great suggestion about **Streets Ahead**. You asked us to make it easier to provide feedback on each edition, so from now on we will send you a feedback form with every issue.

You told us that our contractors were not always wearing **shoe covers** when they entered your home.

We found that there was a safety problem with the ones the workers were given - they could be dangerously slippery on some surfaces.

Our contractors have found better ones, and they are now in use.