

New postal service to help housing organisations go green

The social housing sector could save up to 58% on mail delivery costs and significantly reduce its carbon footprint with a brand new Postal Services deal launched by Procurement for Housing (PfH).

PfH's market research showed that housing organisations send an average of 194 letters per day, each spending in the region of £40,856 per year on the stationery, printing, collecting, processing and postal costs all involved in sending mail. As a whole the sector spends over £139 million per year on mailings.

Research indicated that there was little awareness in the sector of the true total cost of sending mail via 'traditional' routes and there was a lack of understanding about other mail options now available through advancements in technology and process.

PfH's Postal Services Agreement will help housing organisations reduce their environmental impact by decreasing their transport requirements. This is done through electronic mail, a service which uses email to transmit documents for the greatest part of their journey before they are printed, folded, enveloped, addressed and sorted at the supplier's plant, ready for final delivery.

This electronic mail service eliminates the hidden costs associated with mail production, printers, toner, stationery and franking – providing an alternative to traditional postal collections. Housing providers reduce their postal costs and increase their control over spend on mail. Staff can concentrate on their core activities rather than collating mailings.

Housing organisations using the Postal Services Agreement can make up to 58% savings on the true cost of sending one letter by using PfH's electronic mail service.

Significant savings are also available on traditional mailings, with PfH's prices 40% less than normal franked 1st class deliveries and 13% less than normal franked 2nd class deliveries.

Three suppliers have been appointed to the Agreement – Infish in partnership with hybrid mail specialist DeskDirect Global, Royal Mail and TNT Post. Royal Mail and TNT offer traditional mail services such as local and national collections, mail sorting options and secure deliveries through the Agreement. All three suppliers offer electronic mail options, enabling users to send documents straight from their desktop. Infish, in partnership with DeskDirect Global will enable housing organisations to create all types of mail items including statement, bulk and one-off letters, and full colour marketing materials by using specialist document composition software.

Julie Craig, Director of PfH said: *"Sustainability is an increasingly important consideration for social landlords. We want to provide housing organisations with clear ways in which they can reduce their impact on the environment through procurement. The Postal Services Agreement presents the sector with an opportunity to reduce their postal costs AND meet their green objectives. Sustainability and efficiency – you can buy it!"*

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Editor's Notes:

What does the Postal Services Agreement offer?

Members have several options for sending letters if they sign up to the Agreement:

- Continue using the 'traditional' route through Royal Mail or TNT Post
- Use the 'traditional' route for daily letters and send out large monthly / quarterly runs through the electronic mail
- Use the 'traditional' route for large monthly / quarterly runs and use the electronic desktop mail for the letters sent out on a daily basis

What are the benefits of the Agreement?

Electronic Mail Service

- Up to 58% cost savings
- Reduced Carbon footprint
- Increased speed to market ensuring tight deadlines are met
- Eliminates the hidden costs of printing, collecting, enclosing, and processing mail
- There are no stationery costs, printer costs, stamping, franking or obsolescence costs
- Reduced overall postal costs
- Staff can concentrate on their core activities
- Consistency of corporate image using predefined templates
- Control of spend on mail
- Provides greater control with a tracking and audit trail
- Electronic archival of copies releases storage space
- Improved efficiency and productivity
- Inkfish, in partnership with DeskDirect Global will enable housing organisations to create all types of mail items including statement, bulk and one-off letters, and full colour brochures by using specialist document composition software. They can then send them for printing, processing and delivery via a secure online portal which allows them to track their order from printing to delivery.

PfH realise that sending electronic mail may be a large cultural change to many organisations. To assist in this process, PfH have ensured that the three suppliers will all provide training and support throughout the initial process. All three suppliers also offer a dedicated PfH account manager and telephone contact number for free assistance throughout the length of the contract. This is available to any member of staff.

Traditional Mail Service

- Over 40% cost savings on normal franked 1st class deliveries and 13% cost savings on normal franked 2nd class deliveries
- Flexible collection times
- Full local Account Manager & dedicated Customer service support
- Daily collections provided as well as ad-hoc collections
- Credit account not prepay
- With TNT Post there is day definite delivery - Day 1 for Day 3 delivery
- With TNT Post there is no franking or stamping required which means there is more time to prepare the mail
- Royal Mail offers a comprehensive range of services including: Transportation, Secure collection and delivery, Screening, Warehousing, Site & facilities management

Who are the Suppliers?

Inkfish in partnership with DeskDirect Global

Inkfish was originally developed as a mail production centre for breakdown plan provider and parent company, Domestic & General, and is now capable of producing over 300 million pieces of mail each year for independent clients through its custom built document production facility in Coventry. All mail is processed under strict ISO27001 (data security) 14001 (environmental) and 9001 (processes) accreditations to ensure all output meets and exceeds expected service level agreements. Inkfish's experienced client service team are available to discuss all mail and postal opportunities either on site or via communication links.

www.inkfish.co.uk

DeskDirect Global is a hybrid mail specialist and business division of Australia Post. The service was developed by parent company and print software expert, PrintSoft, to cut the cost, time and environmental impact of sending mail through the post both domestically and internationally by transmitting documents electronically for the greatest part of

their journey. It was designed as a solution to the considerable inefficiencies of generating mail on desktop computers and transporting it from multiple senders, often over national borders, by road, rail, sea and air.
www.deskdirectglobal.net

Royal Mail

Royal Mail Group Ltd consists of Royal Mail, Post Office Ltd and Parcelforce worldwide. Royal Mail is the letters and packages business, covering the whole of the UK with a one-price-goes-anywhere universal service. Each working day Royal Mail collects items directly from 87,000 businesses. These items pass through its network of 70 mail centres, 8 regional distribution centres (for customer sorted mail) and 3,000 delivery offices. Royal Mail offers a comprehensive range of services ranging from mail and packet distribution, print and fulfilment, media and marketing and innovation sessions for clients at its management centre in Rugby.
www.royalmail.com

TNT Post

TNT Post UK was established in the UK in early 2003 and was one of the first companies to be granted a full seven-year license by Postcomm. Its aim in the UK is simply to provide a customer-oriented, cost effective, innovative and modern alternative postal service. TNT Post offers a service with a truly customer-focused approach, calling upon its extensive experience and the size, scale and resources of its network in the UK. TNT Post currently processes 1 in 4 mail items every night and services much of the public sector throughout the UK as a result of tenders secured.
www.tntpost.co.uk

Procurement for Housing

PfH is the only national procurement organisation dedicated to the needs of the social housing sector. Following a successful two-year pilot, the National Housing Federation, Chartered Institute of Housing and HouseMark officially launched it in March 2004. The Housing Corporation also supports PfH.

PfH has been created as an essential business tool to generate substantial savings by harnessing the collective purchasing power of housing organisations. By reducing procurement costs, organisations can reinvest resources in front-line services, decent homes and vibrant neighbourhoods.

PfH currently has over 610 Members collectively managing over 2.7 million units, making PfH's purchasing power unparalleled in the sector. The consortium provides services in the following product areas: Office Supplies; Print Management & Design Services; Communication Services (Mobiles, Landline & Data), Personal Computers; Photocopying Equipment & Services; Energy; Vehicle Leasing; Central Heating Supplies; Janitorial Supplies; Bathrooms; Knowledge Based Services - Consultancy; Residential Furniture & Furnishings; Workwear & Personal Protective Equipment; Decorating Vouchers; Domestic Appliances; Kitchens; Knowledge Based Services – Workshops; Digital TV Reception Systems and Agency Labour.

PfH Membership

Any social housing organisation (including Housing Associations, LSVTs, ALMOs, and Local Authorities) can become a Member of PfH by paying a small fee based on the number of housing units they manage. HouseMark subscribers are eligible for free Membership.

Management of PfH

PfH is managed by specialist contractor Collective Enterprises Limited (CEL) – selected following an open tendering procedure through the Official Journal of the European Union. CEL has significant experience of collective purchasing in both the public and private sectors. The quality of the contractor's work is monitored and assured by HouseMark – the performance improvement subsidiary of the Chartered Institute of Housing. Further information can be obtained by visiting the website at: www.procurementforhousing.co.uk

Book your place at PfH's 3rd Annual Conference and Exhibition

Tuesday 13 May 2008, International Convention Centre, Birmingham.

Don't miss an exclusive session: **Mail miles: How electronic 'print and post' services will reduce costs and reduce the miles that your post travels.**

The conference is open to all housing organisations including PfH Members and non-Members. To register call 01457 891 906 or email info@procurementforhousing.co.uk Book your delegate place at the Member rate of £185 / non-Member rate of £260 by emailing the PfH Team: info@procurementforhousing.co.uk

Visit <http://www.procurementforhousing.co.uk/events/annualconference.html> for details on the conference programme and regular updates on speakers and sessions.

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