

PRESS RELEASE

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Buying consortium members represent over 25% of English Housing Association market

Properties owned and managed by members of collective buying consortium - Procurement for Housing - have topped the half million mark, giving the initiative unrivalled purchasing power just 4 months after its official launch.

Members of the group buying scheme – a joint venture between the National Housing Federation, the Chartered Institute of Housing and performance improvement body HouseMark – own a combined volume of over 600,000 properties, corresponding to one quarter of England's Housing Association market. With over 70 members; including 18 of the UK's largest Housing Associations, the consortium is growing rapidly, signing up 2 - 4 new members each week.

The growing list of members will strengthen the initiative further, leading to greater buying capacity and better deals being negotiated in existing product areas. Offers on new product areas include Mobile Phones, Photocopiers, Material for Repairs, Financial Services and IT Hardware, giving members further choice and lower prices in the forthcoming months.

Julie Craig, Procurement for Housing Director, says: *'In our first 4 months of operation we have exceeded our 12 month target in terms of market share, which is great news for our members. The reaction from housing organisations has been incredibly positive and we're now focusing on responding to member feedback and developing new deals.'*

Earlier this year, ODPM endorsed Procurement for Housing's collective purchasing approach as part of its submission to the Gershon review of Whitehall efficiency. The government's fourth spending review went on to identify collective procurement as a key driver in delivering the chancellor's efficiency targets.

The Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE), a new framework designed to help housing associations assess the efficiency of housing services, recommends that providers explore the collective procurement of commodities in order to achieve value for money in delivering services that benefit users.

Procurement for Housing launched in March 2004 following a highly successful two-year pilot which revealed that up to 75 per cent discounts could be achieved through collective tendering for goods and services. Ultimately, the scheme enables members to release resources for investment in front line services. Membership is open to all UK Housing Associations, ALMOs, LSVTs and Local Authorities, and fees are kept to a minimum. HouseMark members qualify for free membership.

The consortium now offers a range of deals on a national basis, including: Land Line telephony, Office Supplies, Print Management and Energy.

www.procurementforhousing.co.uk

**For media enquiries, interview opportunities or images, please contact: Andrew Clough,
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Note to Editors:

PfH Stand at NHF Conference

Between 22 – 24 September, Procurement for Housing will have a joint stand with HouseMark at the National Housing Federation Annual Conference and Social Housing Exhibition, International Convention Centre, Birmingham (stands A27 & A28). Ken Spencer, Chief Executive of CEL - Procurement for Housing delivery contactor - will speak at the Conference on Wed 22 September at 4pm.

More Details: <http://www.housing.org.uk>

Opening Times: 22 Sept: 1 – 8.30pm; 23 Sept: 8.45am – 7pm; 24 Sept: 9am – 12noon

Social Housing Sector Spend

Currently, the country's social housing organisations spend around £300 million a year on commodity goods and services. Procurement for Housing estimates that annual savings of up to £40 million could be achieved if only half of the nation's 2,000 plus social housing organisations join the scheme.

Even greater savings could be possible if the sector is willing to collaborate on the procurement of refurbishment and repairs. For example, next year, housing associations are set to spend no less than £5 billion on housing repairs. Procurement for Housing estimates that collective purchasing could cut 30 per cent from the materials bill. Releasing resources on this scale will transform the impact that social housing organisations could have on the neighbourhoods that they serve.

PfH Membership

Any social housing organisation can become a member of Procurement for Housing by paying a small refundable fee based on the number of housing units they manage. The fee is rebateable against purchases made through the scheme.

Management of PfH

Procurement for Housing (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 National Housing Federation - and the Chartered Institute of Housing. Further information can be obtained by visiting the website at www.procurementforhousing.co.uk

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