



We transform the lives of people with a disability or mental health condition by providing the best quality housing, support and employment services to enable them to live the lives they choose, achieve their personal goals, feel valued and know their voices are heard.



Welcome to our new stakeholder newsletter, we hope you find it an interesting and informative read? This newsletter is aimed at organisations and individuals who are interested in what we do at Advance. If you have subscribed via our website then you may already know a bit about us. However, if this has reached you in error or you would rather unsubscribe please find a link at the bottom of this page.

As you may know we have been providing housing, support and employment services for people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions across England, for more than 40 years. Our customers are at the heart of the services we provide and we are pleased to be able bring you updates about what we have been up to and the direction of travel for the future of our organisation.

Thank you for your interest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Layton'.

Julie Layton, Chief Executive

NEWSLETTER 1 - 2018

LATEST NEWS



New Chair

At the end of 2017 we thanked Ian Green for his commitment and strong leadership during a successful period as our Chair. The Board are delighted to announce that Melba Wilson, our current Vice Chair, has taken on the role of Chair in January 2018. [Melba](#) is a vital member of Advance's Board, working hard to improve governance and to ensure the customer voice is heard. [Read more](#)



New Director of HR

Our new Director of Human Resources, [Karen Stoneham](#), joined us from Activate Learning where she was Group Head of People and Performance. [Read more](#)



New Housing Developments

We work in partnership with developers, local authorities and other partners to develop quality housing solutions for our customers. A recent example is our work to develop a supported housing scheme, [Hope House](#) in Oxford, a former derelict hostel. It has been turned into flexible accommodation with 10 flats for 15 people in total, 6 self-contained 1 bed flats, 3 - 2 bed flats and 1- 3 bed flat. We have also opened a new block of purpose built flats in Luton for customers with mental health conditions. To discuss future projects contact:

housingdevelopment@advanceuk.org



CEO appointed as Trustee

Julie Layton, Chief Executive of Advance has taken on an additional role as Trustee of the [Association of Mental Health Providers](#). Julie said: "I am delighted to have been appointed and I'm excited about the opportunity to help shape the future of the Association and the provision of mental health services." [Read more](#)



Witney MP visits Advance HQ

In early December we welcomed [Robert Courts MP](#) to our head office in Witney. We talked about what it's like to be a local and national employer as well as some of the challenges we face as a specialist housing, support and employment services provider.



Apprenticeship Week

Again in 2017 we supported National Apprenticeship Week and some of them have stayed on as permanent staff. Advance are making use of the Government's new apprenticeship Levy and offer opportunities to gain qualifications in Social Care, Management and Business Support. Our apprentices are recruited through [Lifetime Training](#).



Support expanding

We have recently secured four, large new supported living contracts in St Austell, Bournemouth and Luton. This will see us provide both support and housing services to a number of new customers with disabilities and mental health conditions. We provide a wide range of [support services](#) and if you would like to discuss this further please contact Director of Support Services, Debbie Neill debbie.neill@advanceuk.org

AWARDS & ACCOLADES



Melba wins award

In December 2017, as Vice-Chair, Melba Wilson won a Third Sector Care award for 'Beyond Governance' and was also shortlisted for the Women In Housing - 'Most Effective Board Member' category. [Read more](#)



Employment services recognised

Our Employment and Skills team have won the 'Outstanding Team of 2017' award and were also shortlisted for the 'Outstanding Innovation & Enterprise' Award at the Solihull BID Awards 2017. We are delighted that our commitment to add value back into the Solihull area through innovation, employment and our strong team ethic has been recognised. [Read more.](#)



Local employer award

Advance is in the running to be shortlisted for 'Employer of the year' award category for the annual [West Oxfordshire Business Awards](#). We are a national organisation with our headquarters based in Witney, West Oxfordshire and we employ around 50 people here. Our fingers are crossed for the shortlisting event in February and the final decision in March.

CUSTOMER FOCUS



Every vote counts

In September 2017 our customer engagement manager accompanied Nathan, an outreach customer, to Westminster for the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Learning Disabilities to talk about how to make voting more accessible. Nathan was surprised to hear that he could have someone accompany him to support him to vote. [Read more](#)



Annual Customer Report

Our annual Customer Report is designed to keep customers up to date on Advance's news with highlights of the past financial year from across our housing, support and employment services. Also included is an outline of our Strategic Plan and a summary of results from our latest customer survey. [Read more](#)



Expression through art

Artists from the weekly art group supported by the Advance Community Aspirations Team had an exhibition of their work entitled 'We Are Artists!' throughout March at the Hackney Museum and ran a workshop for Disabled Access Day on 11th March. The exhibition included sculpture, framed photographs and a huge collage of portraits and puppets by artist, Manzur.



Shared ownership

Advance was one of the first organisations in the UK to deliver shared ownership for customers with learning disabilities and mental health conditions. We are now one of the few remaining housing providers who still offer this option. Since 1997 we have helped more than 600 people with disabilities to become Shared Owners. We are very proud of the product and the difference it makes to our customers' independence and sense of well being and safety. [Read more.](#)

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Our mailing address is:

marketing@advanceuk.org