

Advance Together

August 2019 Issue No. 5



Welcome

Welcome to Advance Together! To help make this newsletter, Theresa from Oxfordshire was our Guest Editor, helping to decide what should go in the newsletter and how it should look. Here she is to introduce herself...



MEET THE EDITOR

Theresa works 1 day a week in the Witney office and enjoys doing the gardening there. In her spare time she likes to play pool, and is about to go on holiday to Tenerife where she plans to do lots of walking!

If you'd like to help edit a future issue let us know at:
customerengagement@advanceuk.org or call us on **0333 012 4307**

Contents

Advance News	4
Advance Operations Board	5
Useful Information and Advice	9
Upcoming Events	10
Your Creations	11
Puzzles	12

Our values



Advance News



CAMPAIGN SUCCESS!

We are delighted that the Department of Work and Pensions have announced new arrangements for people with disabilities (and others) who receive Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI).

Following a campaign supported by Advance, Minister Will Quince announced that people with disabilities (and others) will now be able to transfer this support to their new property when moving home, rather than having to repay the loan and reapply.

SMI is the help offered by government to owner-occupiers in times of need. It is paid as a loan if they receive certain benefits, to help them to stay in their own homes.

TOGETHER WITH TENANTS



We have signed up as an 'early adopter' of the National Housing Federation's 'together with tenants' campaign.

The new project will help create new, stronger relationships between tenants, residents and housing associations.

Working with the customers on the Operations Board, we will be testing the proposals, sharing our experiences and giving feedback on the project. We will also share more information with you as the project develops.

A NEW TRUSTEE FOR LEARNING DISABILITY ENGLAND

We are delighted to announce that Debbie Neill, Director of Support Services, has been appointed a trustee for Learning Disability England.

Debbie joined Advance in 2015 and offers a wealth of experience gained from more than 20 years working in health and social care.

Debbie said: "I have always had a strong interest in ensuring people are able to access community services regardless of their ability. I am delighted to have been appointed as a trustee".



We need you!



WHAT IS THE OPERATIONS BOARD?

The Operations Board is a group where customers work together with senior managers and directors to make our services better for everyone.

The group meets 4 times a year to talk about what's happening at Advance, what's working well, and where we can make improvements.

We know that it's not been clear to everybody what the Operations Board does or how it makes a difference. To help change this we're looking for new members, and a new name!

WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR GROUP TO BE CALLED?

The Operations Board is a place for you to have your voice heard.

We understand that the name doesn't make it clear what the group does, or who it is - so the group want to have a new name!

This group is your group, to represent you and other customers, so we want to hear your ideas for names!

Send your ideas to:
customerengagement@advanceuk.org
or

Customer Engagement
Advance
2 Witan Way
Witney
OX28 6NJ



COULD YOU JOIN THE OPERATIONS BOARD?

Are you looking for new opportunities to get involved?

Would you like to be part of making customers' voices heard?

Do you care about making sure that you and others receive good quality services?

Then we're looking for you!

If you'd like to find out more about being a part of the Operations Board, email customerengagement@advanceuk.org or call 0333 012 4307 and ask for Rachel Fox.

You will need to be able to get to the meetings, but we can pay your travel expenses.



Information & Advice

ADVANCE COLLECTIVE

In June the Advance Collective met in Hackney. The Collective gives customers a chance to voice their opinions and have their say in how Advance services are run.

In the morning we talked about why being active is good for everyone, some of the things that can make that hard and how we can overcome them.

Led by Adam (Co-Chair of the Collective), we practiced a relaxation exercise, using all of our senses while enjoying some delicious fruit.

People shared the activities they do and the support they get (and want!) to be active. We also talked about what it means to be included, and why it's important to people.

We finished off the day with a craft activity where people made some great self portraits!

The next Collective will be in Truro (Cornwall) on 3rd September, we're looking forward to seeing local customers there!



MYADVANCE IS A HIT AT THE CUSTOMER CONFERENCE

MyAdvance, the new way you can choose to access your tenant account online, was on display at the Customer Conference.

Everyone really enjoyed the demonstrations, with lots of people signing up for their accounts on the spot!

Tenants, their families and staff could all have a look at what MyAdvance offers, and how it lets you choose the way you contact us.

Theresa, who has signed up, told us, "It was easy to sign up, and it's really handy having everything in one place".

A parent who has used MyAdvance with her son said, "for checking the rent statements, it works a treat".

Find the portal on our website www.advanceuk.org by clicking the 'MyAdvance' button.



CUSTOMER CONFERENCE 2019

The Customer Conference 2019 took place at the Winchester Science Centre, on the 18th June, with a great time had by all.

Julie Layton (Chief Executive) welcomed everyone and talked about all the things that have been achieved in the last year. Then Andy and Steve (Advance customers who are also trustees of My Life My Choice) spoke about self advocacy and how we can all use it to help us live the lives we choose.

The day took place during Learning Disability Week 2019 and we celebrated the week's theme of "Sport and Inclusion" with an inclusive movement workshop, run by Advance Hackney's drama group. Other workshops included Wellbeing, Being a Friend to the Environment, Crafts, and Getting Your Voice Heard with the Parliament Outreach Team.

We have had some great feedback from customers and their families, and everyone said it was 'Excellent' or 'Good' and they would come again.



NEW ADVANCE VIDEOS

We've made 3 brand new videos, sharing information about your rights and services.

Starring customers and staff, the videos give you more information about:

- Advance, what we do and why we do it
- Giving us your views
- Understanding your tenancy



You can watch the videos on the 'Customers' section of our website, or on our YouTube Channel: www.YouTube.com/FilmsAdvance

We would love to know what you think of the videos, and whether you've found them helpful. Let us know by emailing customerengagement@advanceuk.org or by calling on 0333 012 4307.

Information & Advice

CQC'S CITIZEN LAB

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspects our registered support schemes, to make sure that you receive a good quality service. For each scheme they give an overall rating of Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate and publish this for everyone to see.

They have launched a new website, Citizen Lab, where anybody involved with social care can give feedback and help to make sure that services are of the best quality.

You can get involved in a range of ways, including:

- Sharing your expertise, experience and thoughts
- Discussions
- Reviewing documents
- Polls
- Surveys
- Idea boards



You can find out more about the Citizen Lab project, and how you can get involved, on their website: CQC.CitizenLab.co (just .co - not .com or .co.uk!)

SATISFACTION SURVEY 2019

A big thank you to everybody who filled out their Customer Satisfaction Survey! This year even more of you told us about your experiences, which means that we can be confident that the results do show us what customers really think.

Some of the main results show that:

- 87% of you are happy with the service you get from Advance
- 87% of you would recommend our services
- People who receive both their housing and support from us are the happiest

You can read more about the results of the survey, and what we will do in response, in the Customer Report, which will be published in September.

Everyone who sent in their survey had the chance to enter our prize draw for a £25 voucher. This year's winner was Abdul!

Diminga (Service Manager) said, "Abdul was very pleased to receive his voucher, and is looking forward to spending it". Congratulations Abdul!



SHOUT

Heads Together (the mental health and wellbeing initiative started by members of the Royal Family) have launched a new project called Shout.

Shout is the UK's first free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.

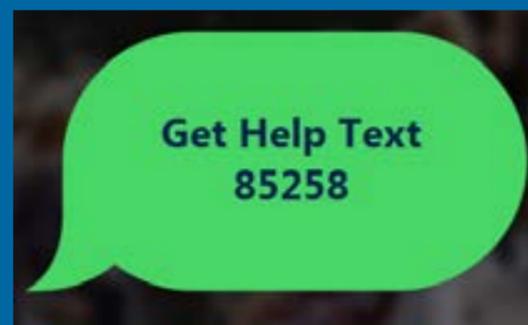
Shout is a team of trained volunteers, who are there to offer support when you need it. They take people from crisis to calm every single day.

They will work with you to address your crisis, get the right support and move forward.

You can get free and confidential support by texting 'Shout' to 85258 at any time.

You can also find information about ways to get support at www.headstogether.org.uk/get-support/

If you feel that you, or someone else, is at immediate risk of harm you should call 999.



WHO CAN I TALK TO?

It's important that you know who you can talk to if you feel that something isn't right about the service you're receiving from Advance. We want to hear from you if something is wrong, so that we can make things better. If you need to you can make a complaint by contacting Customer Services on **0333 012 4307** or customer.services@advanceuk.org. You can also talk to a member of staff, such as your Support Worker or Housing Officer.

Sometimes, if you don't feel like you can talk to a member of staff, it can be helpful to speak to someone who is also a customer and can give you advice on how to get your problem sorted.

If you would like to speak to another customer about your concerns, you can speak to Adam or Tom. They are Co-Chairs of the Advance Collective and can give you information as well as feeding back any concerns.

To get in touch with Adam or Tom you can email customerengagement@advanceuk.org or call **0333 012 4307** and ask for Customer Engagement.



Upcoming Events

Here are some date for your diary! A list of events, reports and other things that we think you might find interesting.

If we need you to come along to anything, we'll make sure you get an invitation.



AUGUST

26th - **August Bank Holiday**

SEPTEMBER

3rd - **Advance Collective - Cornwall (Truro)**

All customers in the Cornwall area have been invited to attend - we look forward to hearing your views!

30th - **Advance Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

30th - **Advance Customer Report is published**

Find it on our website or ask a member of staff to print a copy for you

OCTOBER

9th - **Operations Board Meeting**

9th - **Yom Kippur**

10th - **World Mental Health Day**

27th - **Diwali**

31st - **Halloween**

NOVEMBER

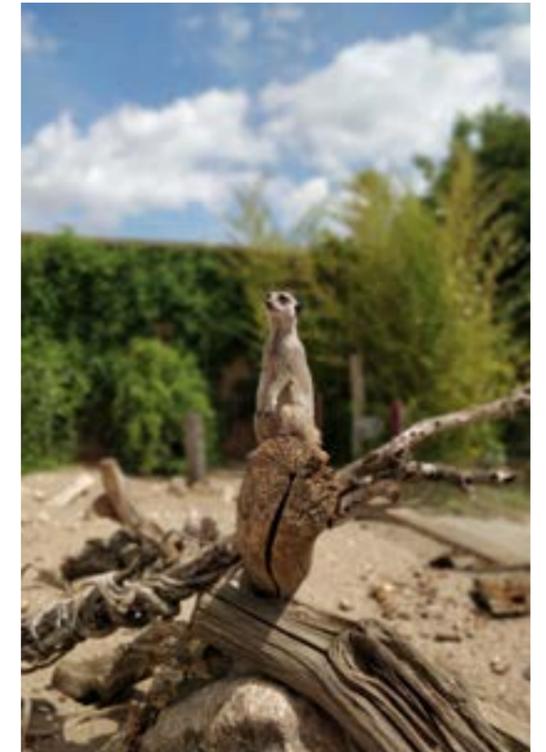
5th - **Bonfire Night**

18th - 24th - **National Safeguarding Adults Week**

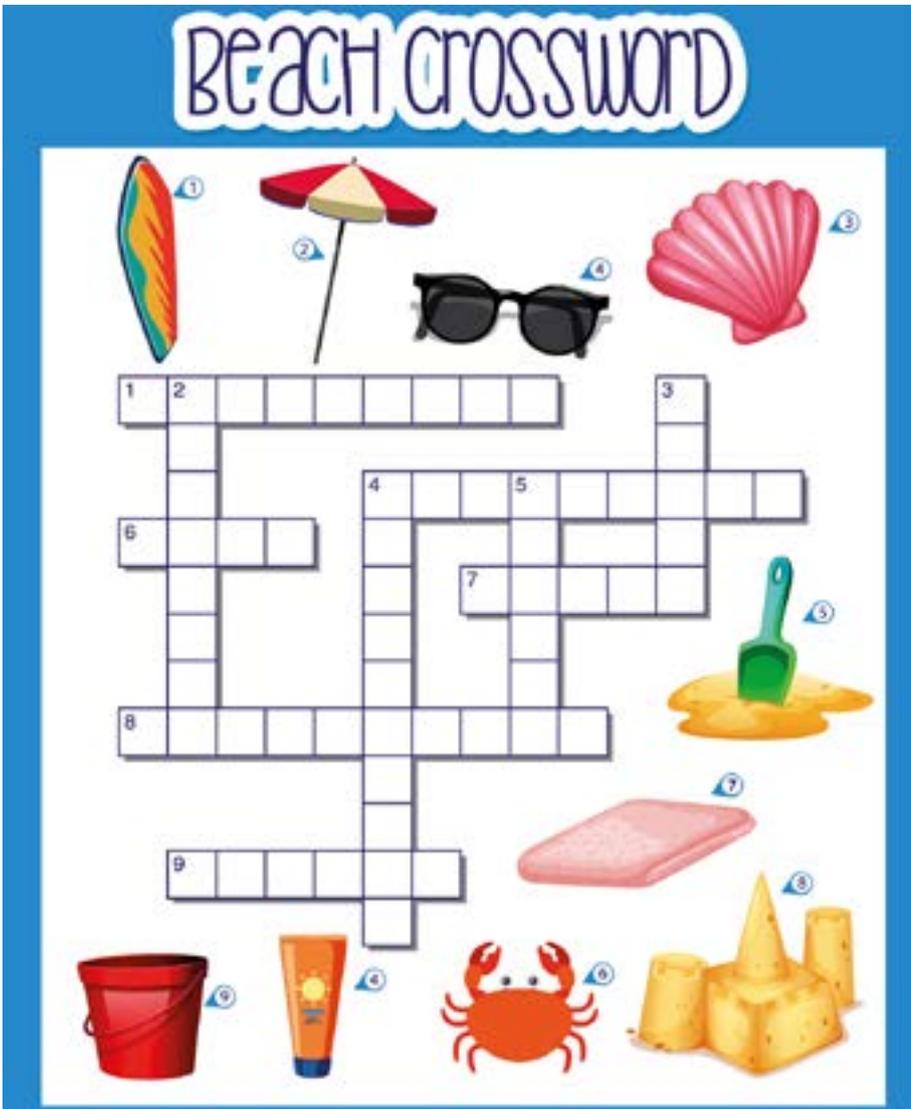
Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter pages for how we'll be marking the week, and ask your Support Worker or Housing Officer about local activity

Your Creations

Here we showcase your amazing artwork and creations! If you'd like something you've made to be featured contact customerengagement@advanceuk.org or tell a member of Advance staff. Thank you to Chris R, Chris C and Brian for your wonderful creations!



BEACH CROSSWORD



Riddle...

**What has
4 legs but
never
walks?**

A table!

Find 10 differences

