



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

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2021

Welcome to our Autumn update. Since our last update in the Summer we have been in
Advance. We published our [Financial Statements 2020/21](#) which give a detailed overview
in the year.



We also published our [Customer Report 2020/21](#) which serves as a reminder of the challenges
throughout the year and the amazing response of colleagues, customers and others. We
maintained our services, responded to the needs of our customers and protected the
the organisation.

Most recently I have been incredibly encouraged by the colleague take-up of the vaccine and now booster
jabs alongside flu jabs. The pandemic is very much still a focus of our attention and we are certainly a
while away from things returning to a new normal.

In the meantime, we continue to follow all Government guidance and advice, share information on
our [website](#) and do all we can to make sure we keep everyone safe. With safety in mind we are looking
forward to supporting [Safeguarding Adults Week](#) 15-21st November and will be sharing resources and
information throughout to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding.

As an organisation we will continue to change and adapt to make sure we are delivering the high-quality
homes and services our customers deserve and campaigning on the issues that impact their lives.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Layton', written in a cursive style.

Julie Layton, Chief Executive

LATEST NEWS



Sinead McHugh-Hicks Blog

"Joining an organisation in the middle of a global pandemic was daunting and challenging – but what I have seen in the care and support provided by Advance has really inspired me."

As part of the Future of Social Care series of members' thoughts and views [Learning Disability England](#) published a blog by Sinead McHugh-Hicks, Executive Director of Support, which poses the question: "Whose social care is it anyway?" [Read more](#)



Learning Disability & Autism Award Finalist

We were incredibly pleased and proud to be a finalist at the [Learning Disability & Autism Awards 2021](#) in the Best Supported Housing category. We look forward to the announcement of the finalists on 29th October.

We have won a previously for our service in Cornwall and have been shortlisted for various other categories in previous years. To be Finalist is a great achievement and recognition of both the variety and quality of the housing options Advance provide to people with Learning Disabilities and Autism. [Read more](#)



Government Strategies on Disability and Autism

Over the summer we were pleased to see the Government publish two significant strategies. Firstly, the [National Disability Strategy](#) - which aims to improve the lives of the 14.1 million people living in the UK with a disability. It is pleasing to see the strategy was the result of broad engagement with individuals with lived experiences as well as the views of organisations representing people with disabilities. We welcome the strategy and hope it leads to lasting change.

Secondly, was the strategy aimed at improving the lives of people with Autism. The strategy sets out six key areas in which to make improvements for autistic people. As an organisation we are already focused on several of the areas including supporting positive transitions to adulthood, tackling health inequalities and providing the right homes and support in the community. [Read more](#)



Starts at Home Day 2021

To show our support for [Starts at Home Day 2021](#), Advance's Executive Director of Housing, Ian Gilders wrote a blog explaining why supported housing has never been more important.

[Click here](#) to read it.

Starts at Home Day is a day when housing associations up and down the country celebrate supported housing and the positive impact it makes on thousands of lives. This day of action is cent to the Starts at Home campaign, which has a simple but important aim – to ensure that people who need extra support will always have a safe home that meets their needs. [Read more](#)

CUSTOMER FOCUS



Customer Collective

The Advance Customer Collective met on Friday 1st October. They invited staff from Property Services to join them to discuss gas safety and the actions Advance takes as a landlord. Customers challenged us on how we can continue improving the service, particularly in the information they receive.

Other recent sessions have covered a range of topics, including how we train our Support staff and how we respond to incidents anti-social behaviour. In November the Collective will be marking [Safeguarding Adults Week](#) by talking about how we can all work together to keep people safe.

The Customer Collective meets on the first Friday of every month with activities and topics chosen by customers. You can find out more about the Collectives and how to join the monthly meetings [here](#)



Increased independence through shared ownership

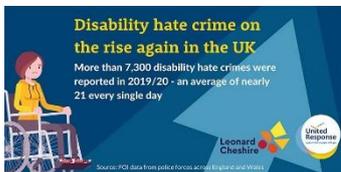
We are incredibly proud of our shared-ownership scheme HOLD which enables people with long-term disabilities to part own a share in their own home. There are many positive stories - [Sophie's story](#) one stands out. Learn more about HOLD [here](#).



Keeping busy in Cornwall

People who live in one of our purpose-built supported living schemes in Cornwall have been busy over the past couple of weeks.

Support Worker, Bailey told us: "Last week we took a lovely stroll through [Cardinham Woods](#) collecting seeds and nuts. We ended up walking for longer than expected as everyone was having such a lovely time being out in the fresh air and a natural environment. After our walk we visited the small café and had some lunch with a yummy home-made raspberry lemonade! [Read more](#)



Disability Hate Crime Awareness

We were proud to raise awareness of disability hate crime online something which sadly impacts on many of our customers. 1 in 5 people with disabilities report experiencing hostile or threatening behaviour online.

We believe everybody should be able to live their lives safely and with respect from others. We work with communities to help make them safe, and with customers to be empowered to recognise and report hate crime.

We provide information about staying safe in our customer welcome packs available in the ['Customers' section of our website](#) and our teams share information with customers directly as appropriate. [Read more](#)



Last of the Summer weather

Making the most of the continuing warm weather, people we support and their support teams held BBQ parties at supported housing schemes in both Hackney and Newham.

There was plenty to eat and a great deal of fun laughter in the relaxed communal settings of the walled garden in Newham and on the roof garden in Hackney, that is lovingly cared for by customers and staff.

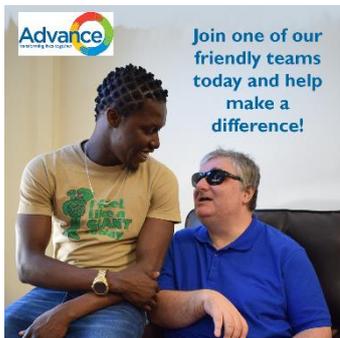
Everyone had a great time together and hope the sun continues to shine for a little longer!



COVID-19 Information & Resources

We continue to focus on ensuring that Advance communicates effectively with stakeholders about its response to the coronavirus. For the latest information please see our dedicated area on the website [here](#)

STAFF FOCUS



Working for Advance

We are always recruiting for great people to join Advance. The care and support sectors are facing a big recruitment challenge the moment. There are several support roles available and advertised on the [Jobs page](#) on our website. [Read more](#)



Black History Month

We are pleased to be supporting Black History Month 2021 to honour and celebrate Black history, heritage and culture which has so greatly contributed to our society today yet is often overlooked, misunderstood and ignored.

At Advance, we are proud to have a diverse workforce who deliver excellent care to our customers. We have also established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group which works together ensure inclusive policies and practices are embedded in the organisation. Through doing this, we hope to keep having important conversations about topics like Black History, with colleagues and in our teams, even after the month has ended. [Read more](#)



World Mental Health Day

[World Mental Health Day 2021](#), provides an important chance to raise awareness about mental health issues and spark conversations about our mental wellbeing, how we need to look after it and where to get help when struggling. The last 18 months have been incredibly challenging and we should all be extremely

proud of how far we have come and where we are today.

In keeping with World Mental Health Day, we are pleased to have renewed our commitment to and accreditation as a recognised [Mindful Employer](#) through to 2023. Established in 2004, Mindful Employer is a UK wide initiative run by Devon Partnership NHS Trust. Providing employers with easier access to professional Workplace Mental Health training, information and support, the initiative aims to help empower employers to take a lead in supporting the mental wellbeing of their staff. By signing the 'Charter for Employer Positive About Mental Health', Advant has made a public statement of our desire to support the mental health of our staff across the organisation.

World Mental Health Day's message this year is that there are **'little things we can all do to look after our mental health'**. The simplest activities are hugely important and can brighten your whole day. [Read more](#)

USEFUL LINKS

We are proud to be involved with or members of the following organisations and support the good work they do to improve the lives of customers with long-term disabilities and mental health conditions.

- [Voluntary Organisations Disability Group \(VODG\)](#)
- [Association of Mental Health Providers \(AMHP\)](#)
- [Charity Works](#)
- [Learning Disability England \(LDE\)](#)
- [National Housing Federation \(NHF\)](#)

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