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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.

NEWSLETTER 2 - 2019



I am very pleased to announce the appointment of our new Chair, Marie Li Mow Ching. Marie, who is currently a member of our Board, has extensive experience as a non-executive director in the housing, health and healthcare regulatory sectors. The Board look forward to working with her to ensure we deliver against our current strategic plan and shaping our future strategy beyond 2020.

We are pleased to be one of the first 80 housing associations to sign up to the 'Together with Tenants' initiative from the National Housing Federation. We regularly seek feedback and input from our customers/tenants through annual surveys, regional fora, an annual customer conference and face to face engagement with our staff. We look forward to testing out the proposals and sharing findings and feedback which we will be taking forward jointly with customers at our Operations Board.

Each year we ask our staff what they think about working for Advance. The results are usually very positive but we wanted that measured and verified externally so we took the decision to seek re-accreditation from Investors in People.

Our housing and support teams have been working together to provide a new, seamless service for customers with mental health conditions in Cornwall. I had the great pleasure of meeting colleagues at the Cornwall Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust in February, There was a real sense of collaboration and a commitment to making this model of housing and support work for people who are reintegrating into the community after a hospital stay. We are also keen to replicate this model in other areas of the country.

Shared ownership for people with long-term disabilities is another scheme we are proud of and continue to promote. HOLD provides an opportunity for an often under-represented group to enter the housing market. We are pleased to have helped more than 600 people part own their own homes since the scheme began in 1997.

I hope you enjoy our latest update.



Julie Layton, Chief Executive

LATEST NEWS



Advance appoints new Chair

We are delighted to announce that Marie Li Mow Ching has been appointed as the new Chair of Advance from 1st April, 2019 after current Chair, Melba Wilson steps down.

Marie was appointed to the Advance Board in September 2017. She has extensive experience as a non-executive director in the housing, health and healthcare regulatory sectors. She has had a successful career in central government overseeing the delivery of large scale regeneration, housing and economic development projects by arm's length delivery bodies ensuring robust governance, sound financial management and business administration of publicly funded programmes. [Read more.](#)



Investors in People - Silver

We are delighted to have been accredited at Silver level against the Investors in People Standard.

Investors in People is the international standard for people management, defining what it takes to lead, support and manage people effectively to achieve sustainable results. [Read more](#)



Protection from cyber crime

Advance has recently been successful in achieving Cyber Essentials re-accreditation. This is a Government-backed, industry-supported scheme to help us protect ourselves against common online threats such as phishing, hacking and password guessing.

The Cyber Essentials scheme helps us to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data stored on devices which connect to the Internet. Such as desktop and laptop PCs, tablets and smartphones, and all types of server and networking equipment.

HOUSING AND SUPPORT



New mental health housing and support service

Advance held a celebration event in February to mark the opening of a new scheme of 6, 1-bed flats in Camborne, Cornwall for customers with mental health conditions. We heard from staff, customers and family members about how important this new scheme, with Advance support, will be for customers moving out of a hospital setting back into the community. [Read more.](#)

EMPLOYMENT



Supporting customers' self-development

The Advance Employment Team has been awarded an Innovation grant to deliver employment skills and self-development training internally to Housing & Support staff. They in turn, will deliver training to their customers to support them to access employment, training or education related activity e.g. paid employment,

voluntary work, work placements, apprenticeships, work related training or educational qualifications. This project is aligned to the priorities of the APPG for Housing and Employment, which has been launched to tackle employment needs of social housing tenants.



Connecting Communities job fair

As part of the [Connecting Communities](#) initiative, our Employment Team held a Job Fair in Solihull at the end of March. In partnership with the Shaw Trust, we provided job seekers with opportunities to meet recruitment teams from local businesses. Information on training courses and apprenticeship schemes was also shared with the more than 100 visitors who attended.

HOUSING



Transition event for families in the Midlands

Come and see us if you are near the National Motorcycle Museum, Solihull on 16 May for the [My Family Our Needs](#) transition event. This event aims to meet the needs of young people with additional needs and those who support them, as they move into adult services. We will be exhibiting and holding workshops on [HOLD \(home ownership for people with long-term disabilities\)](#).



Together with Tenants

The National Housing Federation has published a four-point plan aimed at strengthening the relationship between housing associations and their tenants and residents. Advance is one of the first 80 housing associations to sign up as an early adopter of the plan

and will take it forward with tenants through our Operations Board. [Read more.](#)



Shared ownership for people with long term disabilities

HOLD is a scheme that enables people with long-term disabilities to part own their own homes, purchased on the open market, with support from Advance. We have helped more than 600 people to enter the housing market since 1997. We were invited to host a seminar on HOLD at the Learning Disability England annual conference in January with David Abbey of [MySafeHomes](#) and also held a webinar in March. [Read more](#)

SUPPORT



New support scheme in Poole

Young people with complex needs are set to benefit from a new purpose-built block of accessible flats in Poole. Advance are delighted to be providing the support for this new scheme. Staff will be on hand 24 hours a day, with a sleep-in and waking night service.

Woodlark House is due to be completed in May 2019 and has been delivered by Borough of Poole together with Poole Housing Partnership. [Read more](#)

STAFF AT ADVANCE



A mindful employer

Advance is now a Mindful Employer, in accordance with the initiative run by Workways, part of Devon Partnership NHS Trust. The scheme is government recommended, and means that Advance have access to resources, information and support to help staff who experience stress, anxiety, depression or other mental health conditions.

In a time where people are beginning to open up about mental health, we are proud to be involved in this important conversation, and we remain committed to being an equal opportunities employer as well as considerate and caring towards our existing staff.



Long service awards

Several staff have recently been awarded their long service awards. Wendy is a helpful member of our head office accounts team and has worked for us for 15 years. David from Kent has been a support worker for 15 years and customers and families think he's great. Mary, a deputy service manager in London is seen above with colleague Max, receiving her 10 year long-service award. Caroline, has held a variety of administrator roles at head office and she's also just celebrated 10 years working for Advance.

We try to attract the best staff at Advance to work with our customers and we love to celebrate their achievements and personal milestones.

CUSTOMER FOCUS



New Collective co-chair appointed

We're thrilled to welcome Adam (left), a customer from Loughborough, to the role of Co-Chair of the [Advance Collective](#). Seen here with Chair, Tom, Adam has taken over the role from Helen, who has successfully moved on to paid employment as a Support Worker supporting people with Learning Disabilities.

Adam enjoys volunteering, has trained as a peer advocate (among many other things!) and has already brought some great, fresh ideas.



Rowan finds his passion

"I've finally found something I have a talent for and I enjoy, so my future is brighter and now I've got a lifetime passion to focus on." Rowan, a customer from the East Midlands uses photography to focus his energy and boost his confidence. He said: "I began to receive support from Advance and it became easier for me to step outside, be around people (it took me a few months before I got used to taking photos of people) and travel to new places. [Read more](#)



Having a ball

Customers Kehinde, Clinton and Shahzaib are getting fit and having fun every week by playing football at [Arsenal Emirates Stadium](#). Getting involved in sport is a fantastic way to improve health and wellbeing, and a good way to meet other people. [Read more](#).



London photography club

A new weekly Photography and Computer Art Club has been set up in Hackney, making full use of the suite of equipment donated by our partners at [Leonard Cheshire](#). The group were excited to start things off by

creating some individual pieces of art, inspired by the theme of movement, on a creative online programme called Bomomo. [Read more](#)

USEFUL LINKS

Useful links ▶

We are proud to be 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 \(NHF\)](#)

DIARY DATES



Looking ahead

- 29 April - Sunday 5 May - National Gardening Week - [RHS](#)
- 13th-19th May - Mental Health Awareness Week - [National](#)



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