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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.



Welcome to our last newsletter of 2019. We hope you have had a successful year and look forward to 2020 with a renewed sense of optimism? At Advance we are coming to the end of our three-year strategic plan and are currently developing our strategy for 2020-23. We would welcome your views to help shape it. Please take five minutes to complete our short survey [here](#). We look forward to launching the new strategy in Spring 2020 and will be looking to build on our success over the last three years.

We are in changing times and will be looking to the new Government for policy change and investment to enable us to invest in housing and support services to meet our customers' needs. We are looking for clarity on several issues including Brexit and, of course, a Social Care Green Paper.

But we look to the future with optimism. We will keep working with others to develop services that meet customer needs. We will focus on ensuring good outcomes and great quality services as well as keeping the safety, health and well-being of our customers and staff as paramount.

With very best wishes for 2020.

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

Julie Layton, Chief Executive

NEWSLETTER 5 - 2019

LATEST NEWS



Tell us what you think

We would be very grateful if you could spare five minutes to complete a short survey to share what you think of Advance and our services. The feedback will help us shape our future strategy, which is currently in development and will launch next year. Your views are important to us, thank you.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MZK6ZRK>



A day in the life

Senior Housing Officer, Sasha Macaffer was featured in 24Housing magazine in October for a 'day in the life' feature. Sasha describes a busy and varied day which can range from taking meter readings and assessing a flat before new tenants move in to training new staff, discussing plans for debt management and addressing safeguarding issues. All in a day's work for Sasha which she has been doing since she joined Advance from University 15 years ago. [Read more](#)



SUMMARY

The state of health care and adult social care in England 2018/19

 StateofCare

Our response to CQC state of care report

Our Chief Executive, Julie Layton responded to the recent CQC [State of Care 2018/19](#) report. She said: "Reading the responses can make the heart sing and sink in almost equal measure. While it is heartening to hear that most care is good quality and improving slightly. It is sad to yet again be reading about the challenges people face in accessing the right care and that often that care comes too late." [Read more](#)



Smaller housing association conference

Our Director of Housing, Ian Gilders attended the smaller housing association conference last week and took part in a panel debate on the [NHF initiative, Together with Tenants](#). Ian talked about how trust and customer experience for Housing Associations (especially small or specialist HA's) is about more than good service – it is also about

their voice and empowerment and that's why the principles of Together with Tenants (TwT) are so important. [Read more](#)



Learning Disability Work Week

At Advance we encourage customers who want to volunteer with us as it helps to build their confidence and skills in the work place so that they can progress to paid employment.

We have a number of customers with learning disabilities both in paid employment and as volunteers at our different offices across England. [Read more](#)



Learning Disability Today event

We exhibited at the recent Learning Disability Today conference and held a workshop on personalised technology and how it can support customers to achieve their goals and ambitions. A group of customers from our Hackney outreach service were on hand to help us engage with the audience and share their thoughts on what technology can do to help them. [Read more](#)

HOUSING



Raising the Bar III

The shared ownership team attended the [Raising the Bar III](#) conference at the University of Birmingham organised by PMLD link. We were able to share news and information about how HOLD can help people with long-term disabilities access shared ownership through the open housing market.



Transition event at Bath College

This is the second year we were invited to exhibit at an event for young people with additional needs transitioning into adult services. We were able to let them know that shared ownership, through the HOLD scheme, is a real possibility for their sons and daughters in the future. [Read more](#)



HOLD (home ownership for people with long term disabilities)

We are keen to spread the word about how flexible HOLD (home ownership for people with long term disabilities) can be as a route into shared ownership. Please get in touch if you would like our friendly home ownership team to present to your organisation or meet to chat about how the scheme works. Please contact them at homeownership@advanceuk.org or, call 03333 012 4307.

SUPPORT



20 years of excellent support

We have been providing support to customers for 20 years in Boston, Lincolnshire. They recently celebrated with a party to mark the milestone as well as celebrating an overall 'Good' rating for their recent CQC inspection. The customers were involved in planning the celebrations and decided on a fun day to try and raise money to buy some new garden furniture for their communal garden. [Read more.](#)

CUSTOMER FOCUS



Annual Christmas card winner

Each year we invite our customers to send in their art work and one is chosen by our panel to have their work on the front cover of our corporate Christmas cards. This year's winner is Adam from Lincolnshire. We love his hand drawn design.



National Safeguarding Adults Week

Staff again supported the National Safeguarding Adults Week in November. We held our own learning event during the week with a focus on health and safety and came away with a number of pledges to do things differently in light of what we have learned.

Two of the themes for the week were particularly relevant to our customers. Self neglect and transforming care. We have also supported a number of people out of long-stay units into living in the community. It can be done but takes the right attitude the right funding, and the right agencies working together on a housing and support solution for that individual. [Read more](#)



Gayle knows the importance of self-care

In order to encourage Gayle to live a healthier life, her mum bought her a Fitbit. She can monitor how many steps she does each day and celebrate when she reaches her daily target of 2000. She recently went to seaside for the weekend with her parents and did plenty of walking – reaching 10,000 steps on one day! [Read more](#)



Peer review project

We have launched a new project to give customers more choice in how they tell us about their experiences. A peer review is an opportunity to speak, and give feedback, to another customer who has been trained in

active listening and advocacy. When a reviewer visits a service the customers can speak to them confidentially in a group or 1:1.



Tenant inspectors pilot

We are introducing a new project - 'tenant Inspectors' which will give customers who receive housing services from us a new way to give feedback on the repairs, cleaning and gardening services they receive. Tenant Inspectors will visit our properties and check work that repairs have been done properly. They will report back to us, telling us where work has been done well and where things need to be improved. In November our first group of volunteers got together to start their training, and they're looking forward to beginning their visits. We are trialling this project in Leicester City and Gloucestershire, and hope to launch it across the country next year.

USEFUL LINKS

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 \(NHF\)](#)

DIARY DATES



Looking ahead

- 13 Feb - Learning Disability England [annual conference](#)
- 19-20 June, 2020 - exhibiting at [National Autism Show](#)

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