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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.

NEWSLETTER 1 - 2020

LATEST NEWS



Feedback from survey

Thank you to everyone who completed our stakeholder insight survey. Your comments and suggestions have provided useful feedback for us which will be woven into our thinking around plans for our new 3-year strategy. It was pleasing that overall satisfaction with our performance was high, with equally strong results for delivering high quality services which meet user and commissioner needs and deliver good value for money. This feedback, in addition to the comments from our Customer Partnership and Staff Representative group, The Voice, are being fed into the strategy we hope to launch in April.

CUSTOMER FOCUS



Peer review on track

Our Peer Service Reviews pilot continues to progress. In January visits took place in support services across Kent. As well as a few comments about areas needing improvement, we heard some great feedback from people about their experiences with Advance and the impact of the support they receive. When Adam (a customer trained in active listening, advocacy and safeguarding) spoke to some customers he heard that “This place inspires gratitude”, “I used to feel lonely and depressed but since I’ve been here I don’t feel that” and “I think they do a fantastic job”.

We have two volunteers waiting to be trained and plan to recruit two or three more to cover all regions in England where we provide support services.



Advance Customer Partnership

Our customers felt the name Operations Board didn't properly reflect its remit so consulted and decided to rename it the Advance Customer Partnership. Their inaugural meeting was held in December which was also a chance to welcome three new members.



Advance Collective

In December the Advance Collective met across Leicestershire to hear about customer experiences with Advance. The meetings, led by Tom and Adam (both customers at Advance), focused on feelings of community: what this looks like for them, what they'd like to see, and how we can support it. This was the first Collective in a new format, going out to customers in three different locations rather than inviting them to come to us at a particular venue. Turnout was good and we were made very welcome and spoke to lots of people who told us they wouldn't have come to a meeting away from their local area.

Feedback from the Collective was shared with the Advance Customer Partnership, who will use it to drive change and celebrate good practice.



Customer survey

Our annual customer survey will be sent out in the next couple of months. We do get a good response rate but would like to make it as accessible as possible for all customers to take part. Alongside large print and Easy Read versions our PBS team have put together a communications board that staff can use with customers, with complex needs, who don't find the survey format accessible. The board can be used as a whole or can be cut into sections, to do a bit at a time.

If the survey or the communication board is not accessible for the customer, our PBS

team will visit in person. They work with an observational checklist and speak to the customer, the staff and their family to help us better understand their experience of Advance services.



Celebrations at Mount Pleasant

This Christmas one of our customers at Mount Pleasant in Cornwall celebrated the festive season by decorating his very first tree. Mr J has been in and out of forensic mental health units but with support from Advance has settled into a one bedroom flat and his life is changing for the better. He now volunteers at a local farm and can bring home the veg he helps to grow. If Mr J is feeling anxious he finds that grooming the animals on the farm helps calm him down. Our scheme at Mount Pleasant is proving to be a fresh start in life for people who have experienced frequent long stays in mental health units. Our work with the local NHS Mental Health Trust is proving to be very positive and delivering beneficial results for our customers.

STAFF FOCUS



Staff training staff

Georgie is one of our Service Managers in Dorset. She has recently completed a trainer course on how to support people with Epilepsy (Level 3 Award Epilepsy Awareness Trainer). She already had a Level 3 Award in Education and Training certificate under her belt so is qualified to deliver a variety of training to other members of staff in the local area where she works. [Read more](#)



The Voice

At Advance we have a staff group called 'The Voice', which met recently to discuss their plans for the year. Staff

representatives from across the organisation gave feedback on our new strategy for 2020-23, to the Chief Executive who joined them for a discussion.

The group also looked at; ways departments can work better together whilst still providing a high level of service to our customers, the annual Staff Conference and the benefits of using Perks at Work www.perksatwork.com - a discount scheme for staff. As part of our recent Investors in People upgrade from bronze to silver accreditation it was noted by assessors how active this staff group are and what a benefit they bring to the organisation in getting staff ideas and opinions heard.

HOUSING



Transition event for young adults

For the second year in a row we will be exhibiting at the Transition Network event on 30th April at the National Motorcycle museum in Solihull. We will be talking about how having a long term disability is not a barrier to home ownership through the [HOLD scheme](#). The event focuses on services that provide the best future for young people with additional needs as they transition into adulthood. [Read more](#)

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](#)
- 30 April - Exhibiting at [Transition Network Event](#) - Solihull
- 19-20 June, 2020 - Exhibiting and speaking at [National Autism Show](#)

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