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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.



We are looking forward to 2019 and all the opportunities and challenges that a new year brings. Like everyone we will be interested to see the impact of Brexit (while we try to make appropriate preparations for most eventualities). We look forward to the next stages of the social housing green paper and to ever more transparency of performance and increased engagement of tenants. We also welcome the NHS 10 year plan and its emphasis on improving the health and life expectancy of people with learning disabilities and continuing to speed up ease of access for mental health services.

This is our 45th year in operation. We are proud of what we have achieved so far as well as being able to thrive and grow as an organisation in the highly competitive housing, support and employment sectors. We have a wealth of experience and expertise gained over those four and a half decades which we believe positions us well for the future.

In April we enter the last year of our three year strategy and will be sharing progress from the first two years when we publish our update for 2019/20 in May. We look forward to continuing to work with you and sharing our progress against our strategy in what I hope will be another exciting year for us.

We want to ensure the information you receive from us is relevant and timely so please do take a minute to fill in our short newsletter survey and let us know what you think. Thank you.

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

Julie Layton, Chief Executive

NEWSLETTER 1 - 2019

LATEST NEWS



Disability Confident Leader

We are pleased to have achieved Leader status - the highest level in the Disability Confident programme. Our Human Resources team worked with the Disability Resource Centre and set up a focus group to ask staff with disabilities a series of questions relating to their work environment, the process through which they were employed at Advance and how their training and support needs are met.



Celebrating International Volunteer's Week

We are fortunate to have some international volunteers working with our customers in London. Adrian (on the left) is from Central America, and supports two customers in Hackney with learning difficulties. He believes it has helped him grow as a person; 'I've learnt how to be confident by myself, and to learn patience. You are living with people with disabilities so you learn how to work with them and how to handle the unexpected.' [Read more](#)



National Safeguarding Week



Advance supports Adult Safeguarding Week

A number of staff and customers took part in activities to mark the first ever [National Safeguarding Adults Week](#). Some were able to hold meetings with customers to discuss the issues raised throughout the week such as; staying safe online or financial abuse and hate crime. Others invited guest speakers in to talk about staying safe in the community.



Diversity in the workplace

Advance Chair, Melba Wilson was invited to speak at the National Housing Federation's conference on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion held in late 2018. The conference focused on how to improve policy and practice in a challenging and changing environment. Melba talks about what diversity and inclusion means at Advance. [Read more](#)



Transition from home to supported housing

We were pleased to provide an example for Learning Disability Today, of a young person we have supported to move from home into his own flat, with support. The article looks at some of the difficult issues parents face. [Read more](#)



Tell us what you think

We would love it if you could spare two minutes to complete this 7 question survey on our newsletter. Your views matter, thank you. [Read more](#)

HOUSING & SUPPORT



Osborne House rated 'Good' by CQC

We are delighted to report that our 'supported living' scheme, Osborne House in Windsor has received an overall rating of 'Good' in all categories for its recent CQC inspection. Osborne House supports eight people with a learning disability and associated needs and is staffed 24/7. The inspectors noted that: "People were valued and treated with kindness, dignity and respect. The staff team were dedicated and committed to providing support that was person-centred and promoted

people's independence as far as possible." [Read more](#)

EMPLOYMENT



Black country development

We are pleased to have been successful in getting onto the DPS framework for employment services for young people in the Black Country. We look forward to working with colleagues in 2019 to deliver even more targeted support into employment services for young people in the region.

HOUSING



New housing developments

A development in West Oxfordshire with five units of accommodation is near completion and customers with learning disabilities are set to move in shortly. We are also investigating potential sites in Oxfordshire to start a newbuild development of eight self-contained flats. Discussions are continuing in Dorset to provide both housing and support services.

A bespoke staff office/sleep-over pod was added to our facility at Albi Court in Cornwall.

To discuss future projects

contact: housing.development@advanceuk.org

SUPPORT



Banbury service rated `Good' by CQC

Our supported living service in Banbury was rated `Good' in all categories during its recent CQC inspection. The service supports nine people in a supported living setting and in their own homes. The inspectors noted, "People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives; the policies and systems at the service supported this practice."

[Read more](#)



Community gardening

Salih, a customer in Hackney, makes the most of what the community has to offer him. He enjoys singing with his choir on Tuesdays - Oasis and Bob Marley songs are his favourite - and volunteering at [Culpeper Community Garden](#) twice a week. Salih was introduced to the garden by his support worker. It's a beautiful communal space in Islington, which works with mental health, disability and learning difficulty organisations, as well as primary schools and excluded children.

STAFF AT ADVANCE



Amy gets qualified

Support Worker, Amy overcame a number of obstacles while studying for her NVQ Level 3. Having attended a non-mainstream school Amy left with very few qualifications but she was adamant that nothing would hold her back this time. She has dyslexia and dyspraxia so the Learning and Development team provided extra help by talking through each unit. Our ICT team supplied Amy with a tablet with special dyslexia apps installed.

Amy said, "While studying there were times I really felt

like giving up. I wanted to share my story with others to say that anything is possible with the right support."



West Oxfordshire Business Awards

We are delighted to have been shortlisted for this year's awards in the category of 'Best Employer'. Our fingers are crossed for the final announcements in February. Advance has a number of initiatives to attract the best people to work with our customers including involving customers in the recruitment process, so it's great to have this external recognition.

CUSTOMER FOCUS



What do KLOEs mean to our customers?

We wanted to know what KLOEs (key lines of enquiry) used by the CQC during inspections, mean to the people that matter most. The Advance Collective asked customers just that. What they told us will influence the way support is provided across all our services, and will help to keep customers at the heart of all we do. [Read more](#)



Celebrating Black History month

An afternoon of music and art was held in [Hackney Museum](#), inspired by the 'Roots, Rhythms and Records' exhibition in celebration of Black History Month. [Read more](#)



Healthy relationships workshop

Dorset customers attended a 'mini workshop' on Sexuality and Relationships. They enjoyed a lively discussion and were able to ask questions after a short talk by an NHS Sexual Health Advisor. The workshop was organised by support staff after consultation with customers.

Advance has been drafting, with input from customers, a sexuality and personal relationship policy. This policy will support staff to support customers who want to explore and express their own sexuality and to engage in personal relationships.



Budding artists

Two customers of Advance have been making waves in the art world! Creative Duo Hymie Aaronberg and Jerry Abraham both work with ActionSpace, a London based visual arts organisation which support artists with learning disabilities, and creates original projects to enable differently abled people to engage with the visual arts. [Read more](#)



World Mental Health Day

During World Mental Health Day, Nick now in his early 20s, looks back on a difficult time in his life. His story illustrates that early intervention and support is key for young people experiencing mental ill health.

Nick developed severe depression when he was 17 and as his behaviour at home and school deteriorated, he ended up committing a serious crime. As Nick explains, 'I felt such shame and remorse afterwards with what I had done that I was suicidal and admitted to a mental health rehabilitation unit'. Nick stayed there for a year and received intensive support to help him deal with his depression. [Read more](#)



Customer report video

Our Customer Report is now in video format. Narrated by Helen (customer and Chair of the Advance Collective), we chose to make a video version to reach more of our customers by producing a format which is more accessible to people who don't, or prefer not to, read English. It also means that the report can be shown to groups (like in house meetings) for people to enjoy and chat about together. [View here](#)



Providing the extras

A key part of supporting customers is to provide them with the opportunity to take part in activities they care about and are meaningful.

We fund some of this activity ourselves and have a full programme of customer engagement activities throughout the year. To support extras we have created a [Just Giving page](#) where anyone can raise money for a specific customer activity or an extra item that isn't

normally funded or, to just make a donation. A recent example is; in lieu of flowers a customer's family asked for donations to be given to Osborne House and they used it to purchase a bench for the garden, in his memory.

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

- 7th Time to Talk - Time to Change - [National](#)
 - 13th February - Ann Craft Trust seminar on sexual exploitation of children with learning disabilities - [Oxford](#)
 - 5th-9th March - National Apprenticeship Week - [National](#)
 - 13th-19th May - Mental Health Awareness Week - [National](#)
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