

Look Ahead people: Meet Stella

Heads-up is a newsletter created by and for Look Ahead customers, and in this section we find out more about one of our customers and the ways that Look Ahead has helped them to achieve their goals. In this issue, we're talking to former Look Ahead customer, Stella.



Stella was a customer at one of our young people's services in Barking and Dagenham for a year and recently moved out to go to university. When she first moved into the service, Stella knew that she wanted to go to university but she wasn't sure what she wanted to study or where she wanted to go.

Stella's Support Worker, Glen spoke to her about all of her different options and encouraged her to

follow her interest in accounting. Once she had made this decision, Stella went to Havering College to study a finance course to give her the qualifications she needed to study accountancy at university. With Glen's support, Stella successfully applied to university and gained a place at the University of Bedfordshire. Stella told us *'I am so grateful for Glen's help, because without him my chances of getting into university were low'*.

Stella has now been at university since September and, although she has a lot of work, she is really enjoying it. After she graduates Stella hopes to pursue a career in finance and, in the future, maybe even set up her own business.

Congratulations Stella!



At Look Ahead, we have over 70 policies and procedures which explain the way we work with customers and staff on everything from making a complaint to fire safety.

As these policies affect the way that we do things, it's important to us that we have customers involved in helping us to develop these policies and make sure that they work for all of our customers and staff.

We're always looking for customers to work with Beth, our Policy Manager to review our current policies and influence new ones. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Beth on policyresponse@lookahead.org.uk or 0207 3686 972 to find out more.



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lookahead.org.uk
Services we would be proud for our loved ones to receive

Welcome to 'Heads-up'. This customer newsletter is the place to go to find out what's going on in Look Ahead.



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Heads-Up

Look Ahead's new customer newsletter

2016 at Look Ahead

At Look Ahead we recently published our 2016 Annual Review which looks at some of the things that we have achieved over the past 12 months.

In this year's Annual Review we focused on our work transforming services, buildings and lives. To do this we spent time visiting many of our services and talking to customers and staff about their experiences.

Every customer at Look Ahead is an individual with their own story, and it is always inspiring to hear about how Look Ahead has played a part in helping you to achieve your goals.

2016 has been a busy year for us and some of the highlights included in the Annual Review were:

- Our Customer Celebration Event which saw over 150 customers come together for a day of reward, recognition and activities
- Opening a number of new, services including Hope House and Ibis House, so we can support more people in our local communities
- Introducing a new Life Skills programme for our young customers and care leavers – helping them to learn skills they will need to live independently
- Growing our Experts by Experience programme, where our customers train others based on their own real-life experiences – you can read more about this on page three.

The Annual Review is also a chance for us to show how you, our customers feel about the services you receive from us, and we are pleased to say that 86% of you told us that you were happy with your Look Ahead service.

Next year, we want this to be even higher. Have a look at the image below to find out some more about our year in numbers.

Copies of the Annual Review are available in your service or from your Support Worker. Or you can read it on the Look Ahead website lookahead.org.uk, email communications@lookahead.org.uk or call us on 0207 368 6982 and we'll pop a copy in the post to you.



Celebrating World Mental Health Day

At the beginning of September, we celebrated World Mental Health Day (WMHD) across Look Ahead.



WMHD is a special day dedicated to raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing across the world. Many of our mental health services celebrated the day, and two in particular ran events to mark the occasion.

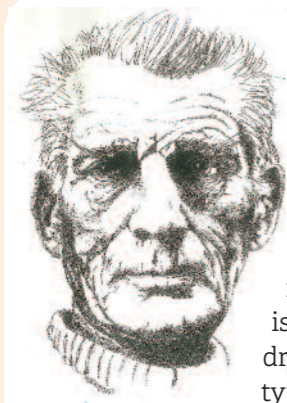
with over 100 people taking part in the event and joining in on the wide range of activities, including football, swimming and cycling. The picture below shows some of the team who helped make the event such a success.

Flourishing Minds, our mental health project for young people held a special afternoon of activities aimed at promoting wellbeing. Customers and staff were joined by street artist Marc Craig to create a special mural (above) celebrating the aims of the project and showing what mental health means to them.

Our Mental Health Recovery Service in Tower Hamlets also hosted a special event, looking at how good physical health can help with mental health. They had a great turn out



Thank you to everyone who took part and helped to organise these events.



Heads-up for Mark

Thank you to Mark for sending us this amazing drawing! Mark is a customer at our Hillingdon Floating Support Service and has enjoyed drawing and art ever since he was a child. Mark was a fashion designer in New York for several years, before returning to live in the UK. This impressive picture is of Samuel Beckett, a famous Irish poet and was drawn during an art class using just two different types of pencils.

If you have a piece of artwork that you would like to share in the next issue please talk to your Support Worker or email communications@lookahead.org.uk

Money Saving Tips



My name is Ron and during my time as a Look Ahead customer, one of this things I have had to manage is living on a limited income and learning how to make my money last. I know that I'm not alone in having to live on a tight budget, so I've put together a three step guide that can help you save money.

Step 1: Budget



Before you start trying to save money you need to know how much you have. The best way to do this is to keep a budget of how much money you have coming in and how much you have to spend on things like rent and service charges.

If you're not sure how to get started, your Support Worker can help you to draw up a budget.

Step 2: Start saving



Now you know how much you have to spend, it's time to start looking at how you can save money on all the time, like food and travel.

We all need to eat and one way to save money (but still eat the food you like) is to look for saver or value brands like Tesco Value or Sainsbury's Basic, which are much cheaper but often the same as branded products.

If you have kitchen and freezer space, another easy way to save money is to cook food in batches. Food becomes cheaper per portion

if you buy bigger quantities, so when you buy ingredients for a meal, buy enough to make a bigger portion and keep some of it in the freezer for another day. If you aren't a confident cook, speak to your Support Worker about including some cooking lessons in your support plan

Another big expense (especially if you live in London) is travel, but there are schemes available that offer discount fares for people with a disability, who are over 60 or on Job Seekers Allowance.

To see if you could apply for free or discounted travel in London visit www.tfl.gov.uk or speak to a member of staff at your nearest train station. Even if you can't get a discount pass, you can still save money by travelling outside of peak times. If you travel after 9:30am, and avoid travelling between 4:00pm and 7:00pm during the week you can benefit from a reduced charge.

Step 3: Have fun for less



Look Ahead's time credits scheme means that by volunteering at your service you can earn credits which you can then spend on activities like going to the cinema, visiting museums and much more. Speak to your Support Worker to find out more.

For more advice and ideas on how to save money have a look at these websites:
www.moneyaware.co.uk
www.moneysavingexpert.com

Customers help train police



At Look Ahead we believe in working with customers and using their experiences to develop better services. Here, Experts by Experience Manager **Wendy Rowley** talks about how we are working with customers to help other organisations to learn and improve how they support different people.

The Experts by Experience (EBE) programme is one of the many ways that we work with customers to help to make our services better.

As part of the programme, customers use their own experiences to train our staff on topics like substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health. This gives our staff the chance to learn about how these issues start, and the best ways to support someone else going through the same thing.

The EBE programme also gives customers doing the training the chance to learn new skills, increase their confidence and potentially gain a qualification in training. Customers are able to help break down some of the stigmas and assumptions people have about these issues, and also offer advice that may help our staff to stop someone else from getting into the same situation.

Every year the EBE team deliver training to staff all over Look Ahead and we have now expanded the programme to external organisations

as well. In October the team delivered three training sessions to members of Police Now's graduate leadership programme. These people will be the police officers of tomorrow.

The graduates were given training on issues that they are likely to come into contact with during their policing career, including gangs and substance misuse. Through our training, the graduates learnt about the reasons that people may get into these situations and how best to help them. The training helped give them a better understanding of the people behind the challenges and how to help them find the support they need.

'I didn't realise that gang members are victims, not just suspects'

The EBE team received great feedback and one graduate said 'I didn't realise that gang members are victims, not just suspects'.

If you are interested in using your experiences to train others and learn new skills, please speak to your Support Worker or email me at ExpertbyExperience@lookahead.org.uk to find out more about the Experts by Experience Team and how you can get involved.