



annual review 2022





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welcome

2021/22 at a glance

G1 V1

rating from social housing regulator

121

services

22

CQC services, all rated good

37

local authorities

5886

customers supported

£77.53m

group turnover

The last year has continued to present both challenges and opportunities as we move slowly beyond the peak of the pandemic and begin to learn to live with the legacy it has left behind.

Demand for our services is higher than ever yet significant challenges remain – funding, recruitment and retention and the increasing needs of the people we support. Global events – Brexit, international conflict, the mental health repercussions of the pandemic, and the spiralling cost of living – are all having a significant impact.

So for me, Look Ahead's role as a supported housing provider has never felt so important. Optimism, pragmatism, resilience and creativity has continued to characterise our response over the last year, whilst partnerships, integration and co-production have continued to be at the forefront of our service design and delivery.

Integrated health, social care and housing services are now very much the norm at Look Ahead – and we know that working with the NHS and emerging Integrated Care Systems is integral to delivering better services for all in this shifting landscape.

Whilst the political, policy and funding environment remains in flux, we will continue to campaign that social care and in particular supported housing must remain high on the government's agenda – and funding mandate. Those we support deserve nothing less.

Chris Hampson
Chief Executive

It is my pleasure to join Chris in welcoming you to Look Ahead's 2022 Annual Review – a look back at the year 2021/22 and a special one for me, having joined Look Ahead's Board as Chair in July 2021.

It has been a fascinating first year, getting to know Look Ahead's services, staff and customers, as well as my board colleagues. I am pleased to see so many of the services that have impressed me during my first few months within this review, and of course customers like Raf, who was part of my selection panel, gaining so much from their time with Look Ahead.

And with my own background in health – I began my career as a registered nurse – it is encouraging to see so many services being developed and delivered in partnership with NHS colleagues. It was one of the many things that attracted me to this organisation, and it is clear that the outcomes of this integration are unequivocally positive.

I would like to end by extending my sincerest thanks to all Look Ahead staff and partners, who help make our vision a reality for those most in need within our communities.

Baroness Mary Watkins
of Tavistock
Chair



Look Ahead is a specialist housing association and provider of tailor-made care, support and accommodation services.

We support thousands of people across London and the South East with a diverse range of needs, helping them to make individual choices, achieve goals, and take control of their own lives. As part of the Look Ahead Group we also own two learning disability services – Blythson Limited in Kent, and Kingswood Care Services Limited in Essex.

With the right support, we know that our customers can realise their dreams and aspirations. Our customers are experts by experience; by encouraging individuals to identify and develop their own unique skills and abilities, we can support them to bring about positive change in their own lives and those of the people around them.

Who do we work with?

With nearly 50 years' social care experience under our belt, we are experts through both practice and understanding.

Today, we are proud to be the trusted partner of over 37 local authorities and health trusts, providing specialist support and care services for around 6000 people every year with a wide range of needs, including:

- **Mental health**
- **Learning disabilities**
- **Homelessness and complex needs**
- **Young people and care leavers**

Whether it's working with someone to achieve a positive change or providing specialist care, Look Ahead's experienced and passionate teams are committed to delivering high quality services across social care, health and housing that support independence.

Our mission

Working with people to make choices, achieve goals and take control of their lives through high quality care, support and housing.

Our values

- **excellence**
- **aspiration**
- **partnership**
- **trust**

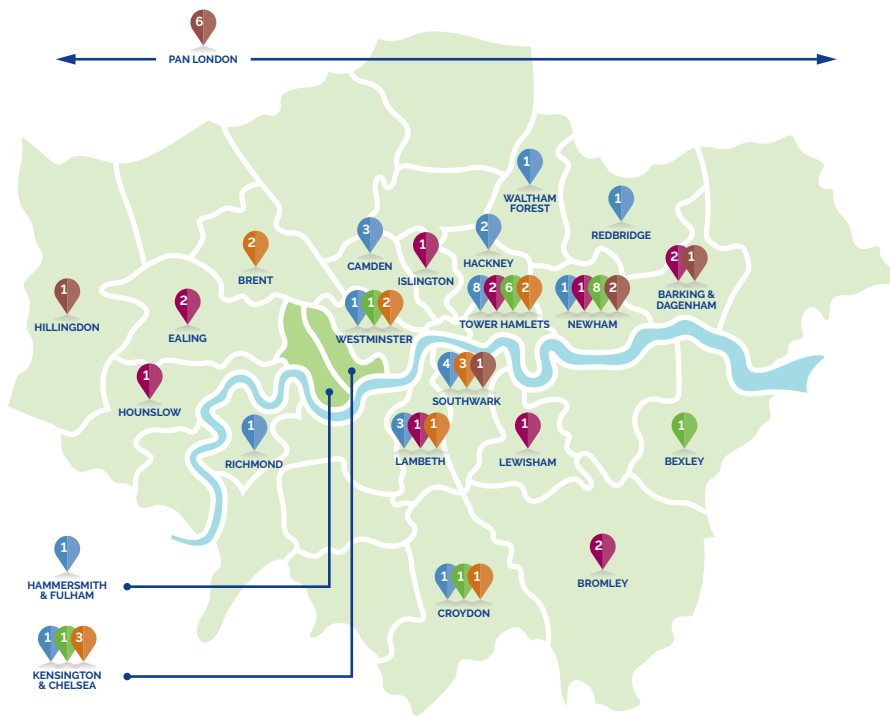


who
we are

where we work

LONDON

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND



					
mental health	young people AND CARE LEAVERS	learning disabilities AND AUTISM	homelessness AND COMPLEX NEEDS	housing services	NUMBER OF SERVICES

mental health

Recovery, innovative integration with health services and value for money have continued to characterise our growing mental health provision over the last year.

A customer at our new Waltham Forest Mental Health Service

Over the last year we have continued to provide services at every point of the mental health pathway. We remain one of the largest providers of integrated mental health support across London and the South East, opening new services over the last year in Waltham Forest, Camden and Islington.

Integration with health is central to our service models and approach. We deliver a wide range of services in partnership with the NHS – from our hospital discharge and community-based rehabilitation services (see page 9) to our crisis houses, forensic step-down and medication management schemes.

Over the last year, we have delivered 34 specialist mental health services, across 18 local authorities and seven Integrated Care Systems, supporting over 1400 people.

We work directly with NHS clinicians within our services, from psychiatrists to home treatment, rehabilitation, and outreach teams to occupational therapists. The result is fully integrated care and more seamless support for people experiencing a wide range of mental health needs, alongside improved customer outcomes and reduced costs. We also directly employ psychotherapists and counsellors across our services, providing valuable therapeutic support to our customers and staff.

As a landlord, we have continued to invest in our own buildings, developing properties that meet the needs of customers, health partners and commissioners alike. We have this year also commissioned research into mental health crisis care for young people, which we hope will inform future service development and commissioning strategy for this group.

A customer at our Rehabilitation House in Tower Hamlets



preventative
 hospital discharge
 crisis houses
 medication management
 forensic rehabilitation
 community-based support models
 floating support
 supported housing

Alongside our NHS partners, Laurence manages our Hospital Discharge and Community Service in North London.

"Our integrated Hospital Discharge and Community Support Service was initially piloted as part of the Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust's (C&I's) COVID-19 recovery and resilience programme.

Laurence's story

Camden and Islington Hospital Discharge



The service was designed to help people return to the community more quickly and successfully by supporting patients who were ready to leave inpatient wards but who face other, non-medical, barriers to being discharged. We know that being able to return home or to a comfortable place of safety is fundamental to an individual's ongoing recovery.

Patients are referred to us, and we work with them on the ward to try and overcome the barriers to discharge. This might be related to housing, access to social care packages or longer-term support, documentation, benefit claims or immigration.

Our team consisting of three Assistant Practitioners and a manager, are based at the Highgate Mental Health Centre, sharing an office and systems directly with clinicians. Building clinical confidence and a shared team culture has been key.

We have supported in repatriating individuals back all over the world – Europe, Asia, the US. This process can look different for different people. Earlier this year, staff supported two individuals to return to Japan, accompanying them on their journey, finding family and linking them into health services and support networks back home. Patients can also access our Hardship Fund, which can help them overcome financial barriers to rebuilding their lives outside of hospital.

Many people go onto receive support from our follow-up Camden and Islington Floating Support Service. This offers a seven days per week, and out-of-hours medication support service, helping to resolve tenancy, social or other issues before they escalate, thereby reducing hospital emergency readmissions.

We are really proud of the outcomes we have achieved in partnership with C&I. In the last 18 months, we have worked with 437 patients, only 6% have experienced readmission and none have had a tenancy breakdown. By expediting discharge we have reduced bed blocking, made significant savings for the NHS and improved the experience of people coming out – and crucially staying out – of hospital."

Hilda's story

Tower Hamlets Rehabilitation House

Hilda manages our 12-bed Rehabilitation House in Tower Hamlets, the only service of its kind in the borough.

"Operating as a mental health rehabilitation ward within the community, we provide supported accommodation, clinical input and therapeutic support to people leaving hospital – all the things we know are so important for an individual's long-term recovery.

The service subcontracts East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) and we work together at every stage of a customer's journey. From joint assessment to weekly whole team meetings with our consultant psychiatrist, occupational therapist and Community Mental Health Trust (CMHT) manager and fortnightly clinically-led reflective practice. The partnership with the NHS is what makes this service different – and so effective.

People usually come to us from hospital and many have long histories of institutionalisation. There is rarely just one issue they come to us with. Many individuals have experienced family or relationship breakdown, some will have drug or alcohol issues, nearly all have limited to no independent living skills.

At admission, we identify rehabilitation goals with each customer. The clinical team then designs interventions and our team help to implement these. We get to know our customers extremely well - we look at medication, triggers, stressors, every interaction - building a whole picture with our clinical colleagues.

Another important part of our work is supporting people to get out and about, back into their communities, into real life. Customers receive a weekly personalisation fund they can use for activities that they plan with their support worker. We try and provide our customers with structure; so many of them have lived without this for so long.

We work with each customer and the clinical team to jointly plan move-on. Customers may move to our lower support services on the same site, or we'll support them to access our follow-on floating support scheme.



Our main aim is to support people's rehabilitation and recovery, to help them to become stable and learn new skills and behaviours that will support their long-term recovery.

People have been institutionalised for so long. People come to us 'stuck' - we help them to get out and start living again. Giving individuals hope for the future is a big part of what we do."



homelessness and complex needs

Delivering innovative, trauma-informed services in partnership has been key to our approach this year.



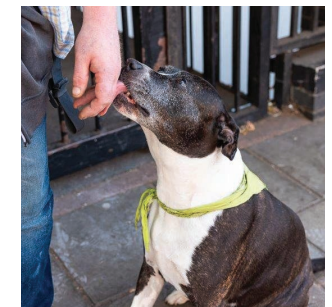
The last twelve months have been as busy as ever for our homelessness services. Earlier this year, the doors closed on the second of our Greater London Authority (GLA)-funded Covid recovery hotels, which we opened during the pandemic to help as many people most at risk to get off the streets. We are proud that we supported over 300 people at this critical time.

The importance of quality accommodation has also been a focus. We were pleased to launch our first pan-London Housing First service, in partnership with Network Homes, funded by the GLA's Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme, working with the highest priority individuals referred to us by community navigators directly from the streets.

Health has continued to be a primary focus for us. Onsite GP clinics and domiciliary care, close working with the Homeless Health Team and our new partnership with Intuitive Recovery, providing peer mentoring around substance misuse, have all brought health-related support directly to our customers' doors.

And as demand has continued to rise, we have continued to develop new and innovative service models that reflect the needs of our customers and commissioners. Our new East London Apartments and Serenity Café for survivors of domestic abuse, both characterised by their trauma-informed approaches, stand testament to that.

Whilst our growing number of in-house therapists have also strengthened the therapeutic nature of our service delivery. Their work varies depending on the nature of the service, but typically includes one-to-one sessions with staff and customers, facilitating reflective practice or complex case discussions, or embedding principles of Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE).



hostels
floating support and outreach
supported housing
domestic abuse services
domiciliary care
older people's services
assessment centres housing first
women's services
community intervention

Richard manages our East London Apartments (ELA) service in Tower Hamlets. Opened in April 2021, it is funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities through the GLA's Next Steps programme.

"ELA provides accommodation and support to 31 of London's most vulnerable individuals with complex multiple needs and histories of exclusion.

The service is based on Housing First principles – we have invested in the refurbishment of the building and the development of a highly-trained staff team to provide a very different type of psychologically-informed service.

Support is both psychologically and trauma-informed and we work extensively with partner agencies. An East London NHS Foundation Trust psychologist provides essential therapeutic input. We worked with one woman who had 18 different agencies involved in her support. Our role was to tailor support to exactly what she needed – there is no one-size-fits-all.

We don't believe in repeating what hasn't worked before; trying something new or creative can often prove the turning point for an individual. One of the unique aspects of the service is our Neighbourhood Manager, a specialist post, seconded from the local authority's Safer Neighbourhoods Team for a four-year period, based exclusively at the service. The role supports residents to recognise and fulfil their responsibilities as local citizens, leading to a reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), incidents and contact with criminal justice.

We are still early in our journey here at ELA – change for this group doesn't happen overnight – but the outcomes we have seen so far are encouraging.

We've supported Ian, 65, who is alcohol-dependent, has a long history of institutionalisation and extremely challenging, aggressive behaviour. Prior to ELA, Ian has never sustained a supported housing placement for longer than four months, having been evicted from multiple services.

Ian is now engaging with RESET drug services, participating in a six-week detox pre-entry course, taking medication for his health conditions and receiving support from Adult Social Care. His behaviour has significantly improved, and he has now sustained his tenancy for more than a year – his longest, most successful placement in over 40 years."

Richard's story

East London Apartments,
Tower Hamlets





Donna's story

Kent Domestic Abuse Services



Donna works across our Kent domestic abuse services, which includes emergency refuges, Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) support and community-based support. This year, we opened our first peer-led community facility, the Serenity Café in the region.

"Domestic abuse is quite a big part of my own life and background; I have lived in a refuge myself with my children years ago. Today I work to support other women experiencing what I myself have been through. I've been on both sides of the door; it makes it easier for me to understand where people are coming from and offer the support they need.

I was really pleased to play a part in the launch of Look Ahead's Serenity Café. It's a very different type of service and not one I've seen before. Look Ahead crowd-funded the project and raised over £4,000 to help kickstart the initiative.

The focus in domestic abuse services has often been about helping someone who has reached crisis point and fled their home, unable to take any more. The priority quite rightly is to get them into a refuge quickly, to offer safety and

security. But when the immediate threat has passed, women often feel isolated, overwhelmed and lonely. Unsure how to rebuild their life or connect with other people.

At Look Ahead we wanted to do more than support in a crisis – we wanted to give ongoing support. At the Serenity Café, survivors can meet and enjoy a cuppa and a chat, access specialist advice from our domestic abuse specialist and be signposted to employment, legal and financial advice. Women can also take part in wellbeing activities such as yoga and dancing, try something new and crucially, speak to others who have had similar experiences.

I know personally how important peer-to-peer support can be; survivors realise they are not on their own and there is someone who has also been there, who understands what they have experienced. Lasting friendships are often formed in these difficult times. So the connection element is really important.

The café is a place where people can begin to rebuild their lives, gaining strength from the support of other survivors. We hope to open more cafes in other areas in the future."



learning disabilities and autism

Health partnerships and bespoke property development has been key to supporting individuals with learning disabilities and complex needs to leave hospital settings and return to living in their local communities.



Over the last twelve months, we have continued to reshape our learning disabilities provision by growing our higher acuity bespoke services, enabling us to support individuals with complex needs.

In addition to our supported living, day support and floating support services, we have continued to develop our bespoke care packages for individuals with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs and behaviours that challenge. We also have several CQC regulated services, all of which are rated 'Good', a testament to our highly trained and dedicated staff teams.

These placements have been secured through former Transforming Care programmes, positive behaviour support frameworks, and enhanced supported living placements across Kent, Hertfordshire, and East London.

To meet the needs of these customers, we are increasingly working with Adult Social Care and colleagues from Integrated Care Systems, including NHS clinicians. We work in partnership with the people we support, families and all other stakeholders to design and deliver support, which enables people to move to greater independence in the community. Our model is to identify, secure and develop accommodation that enables people to move back to their original communities and be nearer friends and family. A number of these people have been in secure hospital-type settings for upwards of 20 years.

This year we've invested in four new properties, two of these through our learning disability subsidiaries, Kingswood Care and Proactive Development. At Look Ahead this has included Pelham Road, a new learning disabilities service for five people in Kent, and the refurbishment of a property in Hertfordshire using NHS England Transforming Care Capital Grant funding to provide a new home for Shaun, who you can read more about on page 16.

cqc provision
transforming care services
hospital to home
supported living
community-based day support
floating support



Shaun's story

Transforming Care Service,
Hertfordshire

Grace, Team Leader, talks about Shaun, 35, who came to Look Ahead after 13 years in a residential care facility.

"Some days your job seems particularly worthwhile. One such day this year was when Shaun came to live in his new Look Ahead home. Shaun has some complex needs – he lives with severe autism and sensory overload issues. Before he came to us, he had been living in a residential care facility in South Yorkshire, hundreds of miles away from his family in Hertfordshire and a round trip of several hours. He had been there for more than 13 years.

Shaun is one of the estimated 2000 people with learning disabilities in this position around the country. People that are kept in secure residential services or even hospitals because it's assumed their needs are too high to be supported in the community. I'm proud we're proving this wrong.

But it doesn't happen overnight. We worked closely with Hertfordshire County Council to move Shaun to our service. We used an NHS England grant to buy and adapt a bespoke property for him, a house he can make a home. We're helping him to learn how to cook in the kitchen and there's a small inflatable pool in his garden that he really enjoys.

Transition from residential care to his new home has been a gradual process. It's been lots of small steps. Lots of regular short meetings to establish a relationship of trust and learn his habits and needs. I went up and visited him in Yorkshire so he could get to know me. It's been important that everything is in the right place to make him feel as safe and comfortable as possible.

Shaun receives 24-7 support from two specialist support workers and we work with clinicians and other community professionals to make sure Shaun has all the support he needs. His mum is often here, which is lovely for them both. She can now just pop in, accompany him to appointments or take him to lunch. He also has far more choice in his life – from the colour of the walls in his house to the staff that support him.

Now he is here and has more consistent staff supporting him, Shaun is able to pursue his interests and hobbies more often. He now goes swimming regularly, which he loves and he is getting back to fitness, swimming over 30 lengths of a full-sized pool. He also got a car recently, so we can support him to get out and about. Tickets for football matches have been purchased and he is very excited about the start of the season with his new support team.

His mum, Alison recently told us that "in the short time Shaun has been with Look Ahead, his communication has grown – he is using words more and more each day. He is now living an active life, with the right support to try new opportunities. We are seeing his confidence steadily grow and his lovely smile far more often."

Gary lives at a supported living service for adults with mild to moderate learning disabilities in East London. He won Look Ahead's Aspiration Award at our 2021 Customer Celebration, which recognises customers who have made change possible and inspired the people around them.

"I have lived here at Mary Jones Court for 12 years. Before here, I lived in a care home in Westminster. I had some brain damage when I was born which affects my brain and how I see things.

I'm lucky that my support workers at Mary Jones help me to lead an active life. I got a job during the pandemic working at a local café which was fun. This finished and now I've applied for a Litter Picker position with Tower Hamlets Council.

I had three dreams when I moved here; to go to Disney in Florida, to go on a cruise, and to visit my idol Elvis's grave in Graceland. I've ticked the Florida dream off my list! In August I'm going on a cruise. I'm saving for my trip to Graceland which will hopefully be next year.

I love holidays, so these aren't the only places I'm going to! I'm going to Iceland and the Northern Lights in February which I'm looking forward to.

I've liked running all my life. I've been all over the world completing marathons in Israel, Spain, the USA and Canada. I raised money for the British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research at the same time.


I'm really happy that my support workers encourage me to be independent and help me fulfil my dreams.

I had a great time at the customer celebration. It was an honour to be nominated and win; I was chuffed to bits that people in the service felt I was an inspiration to them too."

Gary's story

Mary Jones Court,
Tower Hamlets





Offering compassion, empowerment and opportunities to our young people, many of whom have experienced trauma, is as integral as the practical support we provide.

young people **and care leavers**

supported housing
unaccompanied asylum-seeking children's services
assessment centres
semi-independent living (sil) placements
parent and child services
step-down services
visiting and floating support



We have continued to develop our young people and care leavers' services this past year. We currently provide a wide range of accommodation-based support, floating and visiting support services across London and the South East. This includes two end-to-end pathways in Hounslow and Milton Keynes.

We also provide a single point of access for spot purchase Semi-Independent Living (SIL) referrals, which support young people with increasingly high needs including care leavers and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and minors.

We have made mental health support a key feature of our work with young people, recognising the impact of lockdown on many of those we work with. An example is the introduction of a new therapeutic approach with Zuntold, focusing on mental health support and counselling through journaling and storytelling through a digital platform.

In December, we secured support from the Wates Family Enterprise Trust towards a research report into the gap in community provision for young people with acute mental health needs who are in crisis. We hope the results of this will help inform how services for this group are commissioned, designed and delivered in future.

Whilst LandAid, Property Race Day and SEGRO have pledged over £400,000 towards redeveloping buildings for services for young people with mental health needs in West London.

We rounded up 2021/22 by hosting our 'Big YP Conversation'. Through a week-long programme of events, we consulted with over 100 customers, staff and commissioners to help shape our future work with young people. This feedback will inform our future strategy and help us prepare for changing regulation of our young people's services.

Ebony's story

Hounslow Young People



Ashley Walters meets customers in West London

Imran has managed our Young People's Assessment Centre in Islington since 2021.

"The service opened in 2018; it provides short-term support to young people aged between 16-21 as we work with the borough to identify longer-term options for them.

Some are care-leavers who have seen placements break down elsewhere. They might be facing challenges with issues around drugs and alcohol, mental health or family breakdown.

However, the majority are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) – around 80-90% right now. There's been a significant rise. Many young people particularly from Eritrea are placed here because of the local community in the area.

Ebony lives at our supported housing service for young people in Hounslow, West London.

"I moved to St Agnes' House when I was 17. When I moved in, I knew I wanted to live independently, but I was struggling. I think I was overwhelmed with the responsibility of looking after myself.

What I like about the service here is that the staff really listen to us, they get to know each and every one of us, and then build the support around what each person needs. For me, they've been great with supporting me to become more independent, teaching me life skills and building my confidence.

I'm an artistic person and I really enjoy singing. When I told my support worker this, they suggested that I audition for Kingdom Drama, a local drama school, co-founded by actor and musician, Ashley Walters.

When this was suggested to me, I was hesitant. However, my support worker persisted with me as she knew it would be a good opportunity for me. She inspired me to take a chance, and I'm so grateful for her encouragement.

I went to the audition and was delighted to be accepted into the school. The school doesn't just teach us about acting. It motivates us to push ourselves, work hard and take opportunities. It's about growing as an individual. This is so meaningful to me.

Recently, the service arranged for Ashley Walters to visit and speak to the residents. This was an amazing experience. He was so humble and gave us some really honest and open advice based on his own lived experiences. I felt like he really cared.

I couldn't believe how much Look Ahead staff have done to support and encourage me here. I assumed this would be just another placement. But it's been so much more than that. It's enhanced my life."



Imran's story

Islington Assessment Centre



Nearly all of our UASC have experienced trauma. Most have PTSD. Whether it's from the conflict back home they are trying to escape or the trauma of getting here. The vast majority haven't flown here. They have walked. Walk. Boat. Walk. It has taken them several months to get here; most cannot talk about what they have seen or experienced on the journey.

Our priority is to help people find their feet and settle after what they have been through. They're highly resourceful. They have travelled across the world to get here, so we recognise the skills they bring. But we also don't forget what they are likely to have experienced.

Our staff are trained in trauma-informed support – we recognise where people are coming from, why they might behave like they do. We support people to access education, training and work as well as counselling, family tracing services and other mental health

support. We also support them around relationships and sexuality – subjects that may not have been talked about back home, often due to cultural boundaries.

We help them register with health services, cook for themselves, look after their flats, meet new people and study. They are building the independent living skills and networks that will help them to prosper here. Over 75% of our young people are in college, most studying English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) locally.

My staff team is excellent. They're from all over the world just like our customers, and they focus on different areas based on what our customers need. Our 'immigration lead' is building our knowledge on legal matters whilst our Bank Support Worker from Eritrea provides staff with insight, history and context, helping us to understand the stories we hear.

And we know it makes a difference. One customer left us with a butterfly picture. He told us that when he arrived, he couldn't fly but now he is off – flying like a butterfly. Outcomes and feedback like this fuels our passion in supporting our young people here. There's not really anything better."



Providing our customers with quality support, a good place to live and opportunities to recover, develop and grow has continued to be key to our approach over the last year.

Our co-production programme has continued to go from strength to strength with customers with all types of needs and backgrounds working with us to shape and improve our services.

Our Tenant and Landlord Panel (TALP) is now three years old and continues to provide customers with an opportunity to share their feedback and ideas and influence decision-making. Chaired by a board member, TALP has involved 25 customer representatives since it began. Over the last year they have helped shape various changes across the organisation from how we provide rent statements to how we use CCTV. We have also launched our new Care and Support Forum, which going forward will influence the ways in which we support our customers across the organisation.

Customers have worked with us to select new maintenance contractors and award contracts with a multi-million pound value. They also helped shape our new contractors' code of conduct, designing customer service standards for those that visit and work in our customers' homes. In the last year, we consulted customers on our new homes plan that sets out how we will maintain, repair and make sure

our customers

86%

customers are satisfied with Look Ahead overall

92%

customers are satisfied that staff listen, respect and encourage them

91%

customers are satisfied they are treated fairly regardless of their age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, disability or religion

80%

customers are satisfied with the opportunities to get involved in their local Look Ahead service

all our customers' homes are safe and meet a reasonable state of repair, as outlined in the "Decent Homes Standard" set by the Regulator of Social Housing. This includes gas, electrical, lift, building, fire and water safety.

Customers have also continued to ensure that our staff are performing well and our services are the best they can be. From sitting on recruitment panels to participating in our team of trained quality checkers auditing services alongside staff, the reach and impact of our customers' involvement is wide. Customers are leading the way on training our staff. Our Experts by Experience (EBE) Programme is co-led by customers and staff who train support staff based on their lived experiences in areas including mental health,

domestic abuse and LGBTQ+ issues. This year we have also partnered with the Terence Higgins Trust and the Hepatitis C Trust – with their Experts by Experience Trainers delivering specialist training to our staff.

And our customers continue to develop their skills and confidence and move closer to employment, through our Peer Support Volunteer Programme. We train people with lived experience to deliver peer support to our customers. They provide valuable support and inspiration within our services. Whilst our new customer reward and recognition policy helps to ensure we are rewarding customers in a way they value. Shaped by customers themselves, it has a particular focus on skills development.

Finally, our annual Customer Celebration this autumn provided a great opportunity to recognise, thank and celebrate all customers who have been involved in these programmes or projects over the last year, and others at a local level. A day of activities, awards and

entertainment allowed Look Ahead to say a big thank you and brought staff, customers and partners together for a day of celebration, which was enjoyed by all after the limits on social contact over the previous two years.





“I’ve been in and out of services for the last 20 years. I’m originally from LA but I’ve been over here since after 9/11. I’m a returner – this is not my first rodeo. Most of it is a blur.

For the last three years I've been with Look Ahead – first at Hopkinson House and now at Edward Alsop. Things began to change for me here. I was tired. Getting high is hard work.

I started volunteering at Hopkinson. Staff took me into the fold. They wanted me to do well. I'm not used to being praised but people here have made me feel good about myself, boosted me up.

It grew from there. I was so hungry for this. Getting involved has been a big part of my recovery. I got my NVQ years ago and said one day I'm going to be a support worker. But this time it's different. Why? It's about the volunteering, having something structured to do. Look Ahead have offered me the right thing at exactly the right time.

Raf's story

Edward Alsop Court,
Westminster

I am a member of the Tenant and Landlord Panel and have sat alongside directors to interview new staff, even Look Ahead's new Chair. I was told 'you are one of us'. It's not lip service – it's pure.

I'm also a peer support volunteer at a homeless service in Brent. I try to emulate what I've seen good support workers do with customers. I'll walk alongside them. I won the 2021 Customer Excellence Award for what I've achieved.

What's next for me? In time I'm hoping to move on and even start work as a Bank Support Worker. It can be a long journey, there's ups and downs but it's about keeping those dreams alive. You need to step outside of your room – there's a lot more going on the other side. I'm glad I took the plunge.

You've probably heard it a million times but Look Ahead has saved my life. It's now about me and my happy ending.”



our staff

Our services are only as good as our people who deliver them. Here's how we've developed and supported them this year.

1001

permanent staff

400

bank support workers

Ensuring we attract and retain the best possible staff is vital for giving our customers the support they need. In 2022 we launched our #ManyFacesOfSupport recruitment campaign in response to the recruitment challenges facing the social care sector. The campaign aims to highlight the huge diversity of the people who work for us; different backgrounds, skills and experiences. What they share is their values and their common goal of supporting our customers towards greater independence.

Ensuring all our staff 'feel at home' at Look Ahead is a key part of our People Strategy.

We were delighted to have been awarded the Silver Inclusive Employers Standard in 2021 for our Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) work. Our staff-led network groups have played a key role in setting this agenda at Look Ahead. They provide a safe place for colleagues to support each other, discuss issues and promote inclusivity throughout the organisation and beyond. In the last year we introduced a gender diversity group in response to staff feedback, which has joined our cultural diversity, LGBTQ+ and disability networks.

Developing our staff from within remains a focus for Look Ahead. We again awarded our Women in Leadership and Rising Star Awards, which offers up to £5,000 of career development funding to each recipient to help them fulfil their leadership ambitions. We launched a level five coaching apprenticeship which has been very popular across our workforce and have continued to introduce new specialism-based training, ensuring our staff remain up-to-date with the latest developments in their fields.

We have also introduced a range of exciting new roles within our support and care teams, particularly those where we are working in partnership with the NHS. We now have a number of psychotherapist, facilitator and occupational therapists directly employed in our services, adding value for staff and customers.

We were pleased to be shortlisted for two CIH Housing 2022 Awards – for Employer of the Year and Best Talent Management Initiative for our Women in Leadership Awards. We also reintroduced our in-person Quarterly Staff Awards, where winners who had been nominated by their colleagues were able to celebrate together at regular events at our Head Office.

Staff wellbeing continues to be a high priority for us. Over the last year we have held two wellbeing weeks to provide virtual and face-to-face sessions for staff, covering various aspects of physical and mental wellbeing. We also launched a brand-new reward hub, an online platform where staff can access a range of retail discounts and wider benefits, and also recognise colleagues for a job well done.



392

training courses offered

304

staff completed induction

85%

staff satisfaction



Georgina's story

Amy Garvey House,
Kensington and Chelsea

“My background is in the arts. I have a degree in dance and aerial performance and worked as a professional dancer – in London and abroad – in films, music videos, with artists, at festivals, and on tours. I had also taught dance to young adults with learning disabilities. I really enjoyed it but kept getting turned away from support roles because of a 'lack of experience'.

My dance work disappeared overnight with the pandemic. It was stressful but it gave me the chance to reassess and think about the direction I wanted to take. I saw the Look Ahead advert and decided to have another go. This time I was successful and in January 2021 began supporting adults with learning disabilities at a service in Kensington and Chelsea.

A couple of months in, I started planning activities and some customers started to show an interest in dancing. I taught them a few moves and soon they were practising on their own. I started regular sessions and soon there was a group of eight. It's been fantastic watching customers grow. I have particularly enjoyed seeing a very shy customer gradually engage, teach us about his culture and share some moves of his own! We've now secured external funding to run therapeutic dance across eight learning disability services – this is going to have a huge impact.

I went on to win Look Ahead's 2021 Rising Star Award, receiving £5000 towards an MA in Dance Movement Psychotherapy at Roehampton University. I want to use the knowledge I gain to expand our sessions across all types of Look Ahead services. I can't wait to see how it develops. Getting this job was a lifesaver. It didn't just change my path but completely flipped it – in the best possible way!”

look ahead



our homes

As a housing association, Look Ahead is committed to developing and delivering good quality housing, enabling individuals with a wide range of needs to live with greater independence.

1326

properties owned

1253

properties managed on behalf of another landlord

100%

Look Ahead properties with a Fire Risk Assessment



Regulation and compliance

Look Ahead has been providing homes for people in need for almost half a century. Our Group Asset Management Strategy aims to ensure that Look Ahead Group invests in and maintains its properties in line with regulations and standards. We provide safe, quality homes for our customers and tenants.

We have a strong internal focus on landlord compliance with Key Performance Indicator targets set annually in line with industry standards. We have a suite of policies and management plans covering gas, fire, water, and electrical safety as well as asbestos management and lifts.

In October, we entered new contracts to deliver decoration works, planned maintenance works, void works to empty properties and repair services to our customers. Our customers attended the contractor interviews and played a key role in assessing the contractors' responses to the interview questions. These contracts are planned to run for a minimum of five years with an option to extend for a further two years.

Zero Carbon and environmental sustainability

Over the last year, we have taken further steps towards meeting environmental requirements under the Zero Carbon Agenda. Our Board approved an outline strategy and action plan for our approach to Carbon Neutral under a broader Economic Social Governance (ESG) Strategy and we began the process of measuring the organisation's carbon footprint. A working group from across the organisation was formed and recommendations will be made to the Board in Autumn 2022.

We have continued to consider the environmental impact of everything we do. Our current activities include maintaining a full EPC database to target improvement works, planning the delivery of these works to reach EPC C rating throughout all our stock, by 2030, and ensuring that from 2022/23 all property costs for carbon neutral will be folded in the asset work. We have also worked closely with Warmfront to assess the thermal performance of the external envelope of several buildings and where appropriate improve the insulation. This has resulted in grant funding of £277,000 being awarded for insulation works to 224 properties. The carbon savings resulting from these works has been assessed as 3,752 tonnes.

100%

Look Ahead properties fully gas compliant

£5.77m

invested in property development, repairs and maintenance



Bespoke property developments

High-quality accommodation has remained core to our care and support offer, and over the last twelve months we have increasingly provided support in our own buildings which have been purchased, adapted, or developed to meet our customers' changing needs and our increasingly specialist service delivery models.

Over the last twelve months, these developments have included:

- **Pelham Road, Kent**

Over the last year, we have been converting a large family property into five self-contained flats with an onsite office. The property will deliver CQC registered supported accommodation for individuals with learning disabilities and complex needs in the Gravesend area.

- **Coulsdon Lodge, Surrey**

Following our purchase of a former care home, we were granted planning approval in December 2021 for the delivery of eight one-bedroom supported housing units with office space alongside five three-bedroom houses. Estimated completion is November 2024.

- **Bespoke adapted property, Hertfordshire**

We completed the extensive refurbishment of a bungalow we purchased in 2020 with NHS England Transforming Care Capital Grant funding. Customer Shaun (see page 16) has now made this property his home.

- **St Kilda's and Oaklands, Ealing**

In 2021/22, LandAid, Property Race Day and SEGRO pledged over £400,000 to help us transform two buildings in West London, so we can develop new therapeutic accommodation-based services for young people in mental health crisis. Development will begin this year.



Photo by CAVSOC

Over the last 12 months, our fundraising activity has focused on creating positive impact in our customers' lives. The arts, social inclusion programmes and new services and staffing models have all played a part.

fundraising and partnerships

Work with our funders and partners has enabled us to offer our customers more across our different specialisms and add value to the services we provide. This looks different in the different services we provide.

Across our Kent domestic abuse services, we received additional funding of around £250,000 from Kent County Council to fund additional staff posts including IDVAs, counsellors, step-down and children's workers.

In West London, LandAid, the property industry charity for young people, with their partners SEGRO and Property Race Day, have also continued to support us and made significant donations to help redevelop our young people's accommodation-based services. Funds and corporate volunteering support from partners such as Faithorn Farrell Timms have also helped us to transform our communal spaces and garden areas in a number of our accommodation-based services.

Further ongoing support from SEGRO, FFT and Chapmanbdsp has also allowed us to refurbish service communal areas, provide welcome toiletry sets for people arriving at our homelessness services and support customers to celebrate Eid, Christmas and other religious and cultural events. Meanwhile, our second Look Ahead Secret Santa campaign raised over £10,000 to help provide our customers and their children with a brighter festive period.

The arts have also continued to form a major component of our fundraising programme. The London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir with no Name have delivered a series of music workshops across our learning disability services in East London and homelessness services in West London. Whilst Black Sheep Collective, a theatre company, have facilitated creative drama workshops for our young customers in Milton Keynes.

Customers' wellbeing levels have also benefited. Funding from Arts Council England has enabled us to offer dance workshops in our learning disability services and also therapeutic massage and yoga at our mental health recovery centre in East London.



Photo by Stephen Ambrose

Our Lens on Life

Our Lens on Life project, in partnership with the Royal Photographic Society (RPS), delivered professional photography training to people living in our Tunbridge Wells homelessness services. Following the training, the photographers captured images in the Tunbridge Wells area using just a £20 disposable camera.

Customers recorded their experiences over the summer of 2021 with images displayed in a special exhibition at Royal Victoria Place in Tunbridge Wells over October, coinciding with World Homeless Day. The project was about turning the camera around and letting people with experiences of homelessness tell their own stories.

The London Walk

Staff from Look Ahead and Chapmanbdsp, one of our key partners, completed the London Homelessness Collective's London Walk in March, walking 10km or a full marathon, raising over £5,000 towards our homelessness services.



Look Ahead received funding from the East End Community Foundation and Arts Council England to organise dance workshops in our East London learning disability services, involving around 40 customers, many of which had sedentary lifestyles and physical health needs. The project culminated in a live performance in Tower Hamlets, a significant achievement for the customers involved.

Therapeutic Dance

The London Philharmonic Orchestra delivered a series of interactive music sessions at our Nehwam learning disability services over the last year. The use of sensory equipment and accessible instruments has enabled us to engage customers with dual diagnosis needs, limited movement and also wheelchair users.

Music Matters



Climate Warriors

We have delivered a range of projects that promote sustainable living, develop our services' green spaces and tackle climate change. A grant from Kent Community Foundation enabled us to develop five garden spaces in West Kent young people's services. Whilst our Islington young people and Southwark homelessness services have joined this climate movement through support from local grant makers such as Islington Giving, Cripplegate Foundation and United St. Saviours Charity.



governance

Senior Leadership Team

Chris Hampson
Chief Executive

Julie Blair
Executive Director of
Corporate Services

Rosa Napolitano
Executive Director of Business
Development and Innovation

Guy Robinson,
Executive Director of Operations
and Asset Management

Alex Seery,
Managing Director of Care
and Support
(until 31st May 2022)

Samantha Stewart
Executive Director of Finance

Board of Management

**Baroness Mary Watkins
of Tavistock**
*Chair – Look Ahead Group
Management Board*
*Chair – Look Ahead Investment
and Treasury Committee*
Member of the House of Lords
President – Florence Nightingale
Foundation
Vice President – War Widows
Association
Member of the Outcomes First
Group Safeguarding & Quality
Committee (formerly known as the
National Fostering Agency)

Kevin Chiweta Obi
Chairman/Founder – NIDSG
Director – Synergy Inc Ltd

Tom Dacey
*Chair – Blythson Limited (Look
Ahead subsidiary)*
*Chair – Kingswood Care Services
Limited (Look Ahead subsidiary)*
Chair – MP Living

Ellie Edwards- Scott
*Look Ahead Board Representative
for Diversity and Inclusion*
Trustee – Digital Thirst Ltd
Director – The Advisory Collective

Stephen Firn OBE
*Chair – Look Ahead Customer Care
and Support Forum*
CEO – Cygnet Healthcare (appointed
July 2022)
Non-Executive Director – Surrey
and Borders Partnership NHS
Foundation Trust

Kevin Gould
*Chair – Look Ahead Audit and
Risk Committee*
Non-Executive Director
– Queen Victoria Hospital NHS
Foundation Trust
Non-Executive Director
– Grand Union Housing Group
Trustee – Centre for Alternative
Technology Charity Ltd

Chris Hampson
Chief Executive – Look Ahead

Richard Jones CBE
*Vice Chair – Look Ahead Group
Management Board*
Chair – Nominations Committee
Chair – Shared Lives Plus Ltd
Chair – Syncora Ltd (part of the
Calico Group)
Director – Delphi Medical
Consultants Ltd, and Director
– Delphi Medical Ltd
Director – Acorn Recovery
Projects Ltd
Director – Safenet Domestic Abuse
and Support Services Ltd
Non-Executive Director – Fairoak
Housing Association
Director – RJWJ Consulting Limited

Sharon Slotnick
*Chair – Look Ahead Remuneration
Committee*
*Chair – Look Ahead Tenant and
Landlord Panel (TALP)*
London magistrate in Adult, Family,
and the Crown Courts.

Sarah Willows
*Chair – Look Ahead Investment and
Treasury Committee*
Director – Nelson Investments Ltd



thank you

Thank you to our donors and partners for their generous support over 2021/22.

- Arts Council England
- Accumulate
- ACIES Group
- Adventure and Architecture
- Amazon UK
- Assent Building Control Ltd
- Belvoir properties
- British Land
- Bouygues
- City Harvest
- Compass Wellbeing
- Computers 4 Charity
- Chapmanbdsp
- Choir with No Name
- Cripplegate Foundation
- East End Community Foundation
- East London NHS Foundation Trust
- Employee Volunteering
- Faithorn Farrell Timms LLP (FFT)
- Great London Authority (GLA)
- Islington Giving
- Kent County Council
- Kent Community Foundation
- Kent PCC
- Kent Reconnection
- Land Aid
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- London Homeless Collective
- Mayor's Covid Recovery Fund
- Milton Keynes Community Foundation
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- Paragon Building Consultancy
- Property Race Day
- Pret A Manager
- Reconnect
- Royal Photographic Society
- Royal Victoria Place
- Raigins Ltd
- Savills
- Stace LLP
- SEGRO
- SpaceHive
- Tesco
- The Felix Project
- The London Philharmonic Orchestra
- The Music Man
- United St Saviour's charity
- Wates Family Enterprise Trust
- We Work
- Zuntold



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In line with our core values – **excellence, aspiration, partnership** and **trust** –
we align ourselves with other organisations that help us to achieve our vision.

accreditations



awards



memberships and associations

