



Supporting people

At the heart of it, we're a people business and to fulfil our mission to make a positive and lasting difference to our neighbourhoods, we need to consider the needs of the diverse individuals that make up our communities in east London and Essex.



Geoff Pearce, director of development and asset management

This includes people of different ages, ethnicities, and household make-up, along with people with support needs caused by disability or homelessness.

Our passion to respond to the needs of our different residents is something that cuts across all of our services. Our work to provide care and support services is one of the best ways we can help and protect vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our communities. Our care and support is delivered in many different ways, such as supported accommodation, outreach and floating support, and programmes designed to empower individuals to improve their life and wellbeing.

Our biggest challenge over the past few years

has been to continue providing this quality support, while reducing the cost of what we do to prepare for funding cuts in the care and support sector. Despite the cuts becoming a reality, we're in a better position than most thanks to the efficiencies and savings we've already achieved. At the same time we've adapted our support services to a new, more personalised way of working that gives people more choice and control over their support.

As our supporting people services have evolved, we've become more resilient and robust, and ensured that we remain competitive without sacrificing the quality of a service which is really important to us.

Care and support schemes

We have over 80 care and support schemes providing high quality and life-changing services to over 1,800 people in east London and Essex. They provide support and accommodation for people with mental health needs and learning disabilities, also for older and young people, and women escaping domestic violence.

It is our ongoing commitment and breadth of experience in providing these services that has helped us secure new support business and keep our existing support contracts.

Our expertise and track record was instrumental in being chosen by a partnership of three local authorities in Essex to **deliver Railway Meadow**, the first dedicated supported living scheme for young parents in Essex.



To make our care business more efficient, we've taken back in-house the management of ten of our agency managed support schemes. In this way we can provide our quality housing services such as customer accounts and financial guidance, alongside our accredited support services.

We have also embraced a new way of helping our older residents re-learn some of the skills and functions they may have lost with age, illness or injury. This new approach is called reablement. We focus on helping older residents regain some of their independence with daily tasks, so they can live a more meaningful life. For example, at our Paines Brook Court scheme in Essex, we offer respite and immediate care for those who are well enough to leave hospital but need rehabilitation or support before moving on to independent living in their own home.

We won

£3.5 million

in new support contracts and tenders for existing support contracts so we can continue supporting vulnerable people.



Brian received re-ablement support at Paines Brook Court.

Brian said: "Coming here has turned my life around. After losing my leg I didn't know what was in store for me. I've got a new leg now and I've got the old me back. I've been here for over a year now and I've come a long way. I go to the hospital by myself, I go out to get groceries, the only thing left for me to do now is get a job and find permanent accommodation."

Progressing personalisation

The move towards more personalised care across the UK has given more people personal support budgets and control to choose the support they get. To respond to these changes, we developed a new personalised support product. We also trained our staff to offer our existing residents support planning that focused on giving them more choice and say in their support.

Through our new personalisation product, we now offer anyone with support needs the chance to come to us for a package that can include: personalised support planning, arranging support funding, a brokerage service to help choose a support provider, or actually delivering their support. We can provide this service to people that live around our four service hubs in Newham, Tower Hamlets and parts of Essex.

so what?
500 of our staff are providing personalised support planning and we have over 80 personalised plans in place.



Support and accommodation for young people

Central to our services for young people, we run six foyers which provide accommodation and support for around 600 people aged 16-24, who are also at risk of becoming homeless. This is a vital service as it provides a home and the chance for young people from difficult backgrounds to get back on track and make a better life for themselves.

As well as a place to live, our foyers help young people back into education and employment and address some of the underlying problems they may have via one to one support and awareness sessions.

In our experience, this is a support model that works. We have seen some fantastic results with many of our young residents going on to university or to paid employment.

Of the 408 residents that moved on last year from our foyers, 160 were in education or training and 71 were in employment.

so what?
78% of all foyer residents who moved on had successfully met all the goals in their support plan.



Board member Alec Dick cycling to raise money for First Step Foyer.

Preventing domestic violence

Providing support for people affected by domestic violence is a sensitive and vital service. We have three supported living safe houses that provide women and their children with help to rebuild their lives and move on from the trauma.

We've also received £120k funding from Comic Relief to run a programme for our foyer residents who have been affected by, or are at risk of being affected by domestic violence. The programme consists of one to one counselling and preventative education workshops. The workshops help young people identify potential violence, improve personal safety and maintain healthy relationships.

The programme funding has been extended for a further year to focus on helping young mothers understand the impact domestic violence has on their children, challenge attitudes towards the issue, and develop a willingness to change the abuse cycle.

so what?
44 young residents received support to recover from the trauma of domestic violence.

Healthy living

A key part of our people services is delivering healthy living programmes to help residents of all ages to think about their lifestyle choices and take up fun activities to keep fit and get healthy.

A few of our initiatives include:

- Our Stay Well service is offered in partnership with Newham Council, and targets older people in Newham using a network of 50 healthy living organisations across the borough. It encourages residents to take part in activities such as cooking, yoga, salsa, dancing, flower arranging and opera singing.
- Our Great Marvellous Cool Living (GMCL) programme at our First Step Foyer provides specialist mental health support to young people aged 16-24, in partnership with the NHS. In 2010 we received £75k of Comic Relief funding to run a series of life skills workshops to help residents learn new skills to enable them to live healthier and independent lives.
- Another initiative, Barking Foyer's Master Chef saw young foyer residents compete in a healthy eating competition. Residents came together over the course of a few weeks to learn about healthy eating and have their meals judged by a panel of willing participants.



Barking Foyer Master Chef winner Vivian.

so what?
49 businesses joined our Stay Well network of lunch clubs to provide nutritious meals for residents aged over 50 in Newham.