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INTRODUCTION

I am very pleased to open Look Ahead’s 2015 Annual Review alongside our Chairman, and it is a privilege to have been given the opportunity to lead such an exciting, vibrant and dynamic organisation. I take on an organisation that is very well positioned to meet the challenges going forward, which is a tribute to the many years of leadership under Victoria Stark. She left Look Ahead in a strong position, and a solid platform that I, and my senior management colleagues can build on for the future.

The last 12 months has continued to be a challenging time for our sector – ongoing and deep public spending cuts coupled with increasing pressures on health and social care budgets have directly impacted on our services, and on the lives of the people we support. In such an environment, we have to continually rethink how we do things. Engaging with the transformation agenda in the health and social care market has therefore been our focal point over the last 12 months, and a key future priority for me as Look Ahead’s new Chief Executive.

The benefits of integrating social care, health and housing services are clear, delivering significant cost savings and reducing pressure on already stretched resources. And we know through working with our customers that integrated delivery works, hospital admissions decline, outcomes improve and more people benefit from much more personalised support and coordinated care.

The stories in this year’s annual review demonstrate this. They highlight what can happen when we work more closely with health and social care colleagues and the real difference it can make to the most vulnerable customers’ lives – particularly those with learning disabilities, mental health or complex and forensic needs.

I would like to end by thanking Look Ahead’s staff; the 1,300 people who every day come to work and show the greatest level of compassion and dedication to the individuals we support. Their belief in our customers’ ability to move forwards with their lives is extraordinary, and frankly inspiring. The stories that follow are testament to that.

Enjoy this year’s review.

Chris Hampson
Chief Executive
LOOK AHEAD AT A GLANCE

Look Ahead Care and Support is a specialist provider of care, support and accommodation-based services across London and the South East.

32
—
LOCAL AUTHORITIES WE WORKED WITH TO DELIVER CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Over 8,000
—
CUSTOMERS ACROSS LONDON AND THE SOUTH EAST

85%
—
CUSTOMERS REPORT THAT STAFF LISTEN, RESPECT, ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THEM

83%
—
CUSTOMERS SATISFIED WITH THEIR LOOK AHEAD SERVICE

Over 1,300
—
STAFF DELIVER PERSONALISED SUPPORT AND CARE SERVICES

80%
—
CUSTOMERS SATISFIED WITH THE CHOICE AND CONTROL THEY HAVE OVER THEIR SERVICE

Photo credit: Creative commons, Doc Searls, View North, mid-day, out of Level 39 in London.
Social care. Health. Housing. The three are unequivocally linked; the impact upon one another clear but historically all too often delivered in silos; the result being uncoordinated, disjointed services that can make it difficult for individuals, especially the most vulnerable, to navigate and access the care they so often desperately need.

Over recent years there has been a clear political and policy drive to address this imbalance. Successive governments have moved closer to achieving their vision of providing a much broader mix of social care, health and housing services for individuals with the greatest of needs. And the evidence to date is clear: joint working really does work.

For individuals, integration can reduce hospital admissions, speed up discharge, reduce patient reliance upon costly public services and support the reduction of health inequalities, especially amongst the most vulnerable groups. It can also provide greater choice and control for people who may have previously had little autonomy over the ways in which they received care or support services.

For local authorities, pressure on stretched local health services can be reduced, significant health and social care savings made and more personalised, flexible care delivered across a far broader range of community settings.

Over the last 12 months, Look Ahead has continued to respond to this agenda of integrated service delivery through a number of different ways:

• Further developing our crisis and rehabilitation services that provide an alternative to hospital admission and also provide step down services that enable earlier discharge for patients who may have otherwise been kept in hospital (p.10).

• Delivering medication support services in South London, where our staff supported local residents to better manage their medication within their own homes. Designed to complement the statutory duties of the Community Mental Health Team, individuals are able to book appointments in advance based on the best time to take their medication and also benefit from six hours of holistic support over their length of engagement with the service.

• Reconfiguring our own buildings to provide ‘alternative care pathways’ for customers with high mental health needs, forensic histories or personality disorders (p.13).

• Providing transition and reablement services for individuals with complex care needs, enabling them to return to living in the community after long term hospital stays (p.14).

• Establishing a Community Recovery College in East London, funded by the local Clinical Commissioning Group. The college delivered a prospectus of ten recovery-focused learning sessions for members of the local community affected by mental health difficulties. Sessions were co-produced and delivered by individuals with lived experiences of using local mental health services and supported participants to build resilience and develop tools in self-management.

• Providing opportunities for our Families and Carers Forum to help improve the quality of our learning disability services through greater partnership working.

Picture: In Brent, we support customers with sensory disabilities

Picture: Customers with learning and physical disabilities are supported to live as independently as possible.
Mental Health

Look Ahead provides 45 specialist mental health services, supporting individuals at all stages of the mental health care pathway.

Paul initially received support from Look Ahead’s Crisis House service, an integrated service delivered in close partnership with East London Foundation NHS Trust and Tower Hamlets Home Treatment Team, who manage referrals and provide clinical input.

Operating since 2010, the 10 bed service is commissioned by NHS Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group. It provides an alternative to hospital admission for the crisis, filling a gap between hospital and home for individuals experiencing signs of a crisis or relapse in their mental health.

It also provides an opportunity for those who are in hospital, well enough to leave but require a period of transition before returning home, to have a ‘step-down’ option, with support. This is a short-term service, supporting people for a maximum period of up to 21 days in the majority of cases.

Paul

I was born and raised in East London; I’ve been here all my life. I’ve received support under the Mental Health Act since I was a teenager; that’s almost twenty years now. I’ve spent a lot of time in and out of hospital.

About two years ago, when I came out of hospital after another long stay, I was referred to Crisis House. I stayed there for a week or so whilst I got back on my feet before coming here – to the Rehab service where I am now. I’ve had a lot of support but it’s reduced over time, as I’ve learnt to do more by myself.

I had a difficult time about six months after I moved in here – my mum and dad died within a few months of each other. I was very close to them – my dad was a pilot in the RAF. But staff helped me to deal with it. There was always someone to talk to, and I got through it. I’m proud that I didn’t end up back in hospital. I haven’t been back there once since I came here.

“I’m proud that I didn’t end up back in hospital. I haven’t been back there once since I came here.”

My family say I’m different now to how I was when I first came here. They tell me I’m a lot more independent - I’m trying to live a good life; keep my flat nice, pay my bills, keep myself busy. I’ve liked it here - I can have a laugh with the staff. I do things like play football with my Support Worker which I’d never really done before.

I’m moving to a new flat soon but will receive support there from a floating support scheme so I can stay on track and keep well. I’m proud of myself and how far I’ve come in the last two years; I think my mum and dad would be proud too.

Picture: Paul and his Support Worker meet weekly, often combining support sessions with his new found football hobby in the local park.
Positive impact

An external 12 month evaluation of Look Ahead’s Crisis House service found:

- Admission to Crisis House has a significant positive effect on the mental health and wellbeing of customers (indicated by therapeutic gains supported by clinical data between admission and discharge in a significant majority of cases).

- The length of stay in Crisis House compare favourably with average lengths of stay in hospital which are usually longer, an average of between 25–64 days. Customers typically stay in Crisis House for up to 21 days.

- Feedback from local health partners indicated that most individuals admitted to Crisis House would otherwise have been admitted to an acute hospital bed, or for those who moved from an acute bed to the Crisis House, they would otherwise have remained in hospital.

- As a community-based model, Crisis House offers a cost effective alternative to hospital admission that provides savings for the local health and social care economy.

“CRISIS HOUSE IS HELPING PATIENTS RECOVER, KEEPING BED OCCUPANCY LOWER, IT IS BETTER FOR EVERYONE.”
Clinician, East London

“It is a helpful service to have. It’s meeting a clear need, it’s a good alternative to hospital; without it more people would end up there.”
Community Mental Health Team staff member, East London

“CRISIS HOUSE IS LESS STIGMatisING; IT IS A BETTER ATMOSPHERE FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS THAN THE WARD. IT IS EASIER (FOR THEM) TO KEEP IN CONTACT WITH FAMILY AND CAN LEAD TO BETTER RECOVERY.”
Doctor, East London

Complex care and forensic services

Commercial Road

Commercial Road is a new Look Ahead service, providing 24 hour support to 11 high support customers with mental health and complex care needs, including substance misuse, personality disorders and forensic histories.

The majority of customers at the service were either previously living outside of their home borough in residential placements or were discharged to the service directly from local hospital wards. Look Ahead transformed one of its existing buildings for this new service, creating new self-contained accommodation. Its distinct design and monitoring systems ensures a safe environment, minimising risk whilst also promoting positive engagement and independent living.

Typically, after two years customers move on to our near step-down accommodation, offering a clear progression pathway.

Pictures: Paul believes his parents would have been proud of how far he has come.

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“CRISIS HOUSE IS LESS STIGMatisING; IT IS A BETTER ATMOSPHERE FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS THAN THE WARD. IT IS EASIER (FOR THEM) TO KEEP IN CONTACT WITH FAMILY AND CAN LEAD TO BETTER RECOVERY.”
Doctor, East London

Picture: The newly landscaped garden at Commercial Road provides a tranquil space for staff and customers to engage.
Andrew has learning disabilities, mental health needs and a history of, at times, some challenging behaviour. He has spent 12 years in hospital, the last seven in a secure unit in Essex.

Look Ahead provided a transition service to Andrew and his family, working closely with our NHS and social care colleagues to support his move into supported living in the community. Over 12 weeks, Look Ahead staff worked alongside hospital clinicians, assessing Andrew’s needs, learning about his likes, dislikes, routines and behaviours and critically building the relationships and trust that would prove so vital post-transition.

Andrew receives 24 hour one-to-one support from experienced staff, who were recruited for their compassion and ability to build rapport with Andrew, as much as for their skills and experience. The team have benefited from highly specialised training from external agencies, developed in line with Andrew’s very specific needs.

Andrew has now been living in his own three bedroom semi-detached house in Slough since March, which has been adapted for his specific needs. Staff have supported him to keep a photo diary of his daily activities, and the small but hugely significant milestones he is continuing to make as he adapts to independent living.

Picture: Liz (left) and Clare enjoy visiting Andrew in his new home.

Andrew has settled in well into his new home in Slough. It is a far more calm and peaceful environment for him. He has much more freedom and he has built a routine that is based around him and what he wants to do.

At previous placements, Andrew’s moods and behaviour were adversely impacted by those of the other patients. This had a very negative impact on his wellbeing, exacerbating the behavioural problems for which he had originally been admitted. This led to very limited access to social and community activities and it was very difficult for us as his family to cope with knowing he was living somewhere that made him so unhappy and placed so many restrictions on him.

Now that Andrew is settled into his new home, he is able to enjoy more of the day-to-day activities we take for granted. Things like shopping for his own food, going to church on Sundays, visiting the local library or weekly disco dancing at the local Mencap centre.

After having been in secure institutions for the last 15 years, it is lovely to see him having a more ‘everyday’ life. In terms of our family interaction, it is wonderful to be able to visit Andrew in his own homely surroundings and to be welcomed by him and the staff.

One of the nicest things was Andrew making us a cup of tea in his own kitchen, a very simple and lovely thing which we could not have imagined before he came to Look Ahead.

In previous settings there were often difficulties with our visits, despite being pre-planned – staff were unfamiliar with us or we couldn’t be accommodated last minute. It got to the point where we actually dreaded going, despite really wanting to spend time with Andrew. Now that Andrew is in his own home, our visits are easier to organise and are so much more enjoyable and relaxed. The staff know us and welcome us. Their commitment to helping Andrew live happily in his own home has been apparent from the start. This not only contributes to Andrew’s wellbeing, but to ours as well.
Customers at Amy Garvey House in Kensington and Chelsea enjoy one of their weekly group activities, shopping, preparing and enjoying a meal together, developing valuable living skills whilst also enjoying opportunities to socialise with their peers. 11 customers with a range of learning and physical disabilities live in purpose-built self-contained accommodation at the service. Nine of these customers have personal budgets, which they use to develop skills or engage in local community or leisure activities that promote independence.

Transforming care agenda

Look Ahead’s work with Andrew over the last two years has been part of the Department of Health’s wider strategy for people with learning disabilities or autism to be moved out of long term placements in hospital, residential homes or other inappropriate care settings. The aim is to introduce more independent living, as outlined in the ‘Transforming Care’ report published in December 2012, the government’s response to the Winterbourne View abuse scandal.

“ONE OF THE NICEST THINGS WAS ANDREW MAKING US A CUP OF TEA IN HIS OWN KITCHEN.”

Liz, Andrew’s sister

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Personal budgets

Amy Garvey House

Looks at Amy Garvey House House in Kensington and Chelsea enjoy one of their weekly group activities, shopping, preparing and enjoying a meal together, developing valuable living skills whilst also enjoying opportunities to socialise with their peers. 11 customers with a range of learning and physical disabilities live in purpose-built self-contained accommodation at the service. Nine of these customers have personal budgets, which they use to develop skills or engage in local community or leisure activities that promote independence.

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Look Ahead work with young people across 15 different services in a variety of settings including foyers, supported accommodation, floating and visiting support and specialist teenage parent services.

We are increasingly delivering services for young people with complex needs for which local authorities have statutory responsibility. We recently developed a new service offer for care leavers and developed a new specialist care leavers service in Southwark.

We support young people with a wide range of diverse needs including mental health, substance misuse, gang activities, histories of abuse or trauma and family breakdown.

Picture: Look Ahead is increasingly working with young people with more complex needs.

I’ve lived here at Holly House in Bracknell for about two years. I couldn’t keep sleeping on my mum’s sofa so I came here. I’ve done loads of stuff since I’ve come here – I’ve been to Wales, on outward-bounds courses and got involved in lots of the different activities they put on here. I’ve even learnt to cook. I didn’t really know how to do that before.

But I wasn’t doing very much in terms of work before my Support Worker told me about the apprenticeship scheme with Halfords. She encouraged me to go for it; she believed I could do it and made me believe it too.

It’s been a nine week programme – we did four weeks training in a classroom in Reading, and the last five weeks in a local store – three days a week there and two days back in the classroom, doing things like maths and English and job skills. It’s been tough but I’m getting my qualifications.

“She encouraged me to go for it; she believed I could do it and made me believe it too.”

In the store, we work in the bike hut – assembling bikes that customers have bought, learning to fit window wipers and we’ve just moved on to installing audio units.

The people we work with are nice – they’re chatty and we have a laugh. It’s a good way to start to get into work – I probably wouldn’t have been able to get this experience if I hadn’t moved into Look Ahead.

I’ve now been offered a permanent part-time job in Halfords which I start next month. Phil and I were the first two apprentices the store had taken on – I’d like to think we’ve done well.

Pictures: Carl is determined to put his new-found skills to good use.

Carl
Phil

I’ve only been living here since the end of last year. I came to Holly House just after Christmas, after I had to move out of home. I’ve always been interested in cars. I was doing a mechanics course at college before but had to drop out because of stuff going on at home. So when Louise, my Support Worker, told me about the apprenticeship scheme, I thought I should give it a go. She really encouraged me to start doing something with my life.

We’ve brought some of what we’ve learnt back to Holly House. Carl and I did a bike service at an open day at another local Look Ahead service this summer – we set up a tent and did free checks for local people, fixing bikes for them and their kids.

I’ve definitely been able to use some of the skills I learnt at college – my aim now is to go back and finish my course and sometime in the future, own my own garage. That’s my lifelong goal.

I’m back on speaking terms with my family and when I’m settled I’d like to get my own place. Life’s changed a lot since I’ve come here. And for now I’m happy with where I’m heading.

EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE

Look Ahead’s Experts by Experience programme has continued to grow and develop over the last 12 months. Customers have continued to deliver training to staff members at the House of St Barnabas and students at the University of Greenwich on issues including mental health, homelessness and substance misuse.

There have been new areas added to the training offered internally to Look Ahead staff members, including insight into domestic abuse, young people, gang activity and Asperger’s Syndrome. Customers now also deliver two days of Look Ahead’s five day induction programme, sharing their insight and experience of the organisation’s mission, vision, values and ways of working, with operational staff members.

Picture: Alison has been an Experts by Experience trainer for almost a year.
Alison

I was alcohol dependent for over 15 years – some would say I was a ‘functioning alcoholic’. I had a senior logistics job in an entertainment company – alcohol was everywhere. Then I was made redundant – and it got out of control. Drink became the only solution I had.

I was in and out of hospital. I remember one time when I was in with chronic pancreatitis – a doctor told me straight out that the drink was going to kill me. Maybe not this drink or the next one, but it would get me, sooner or later.

After I became homeless I moved to temporary accommodation and I started receiving support from Look Ahead’s Complex Needs Floating Support Service in Hillingdon.

It’s not an overstatement to say they were my lifesaver. I was absolutely isolated, disowned by my family. Their visit every week was my only bright light – my one thing to look forward to.

They helped me get counselling, something I swore I would never do. They gave me back my confidence, some sense of normal life, and the longer I was sober, the more of the old me came back.

I’ve been part of the Experts by Experience team now since November, training staff on substance misuse, homelessness and domestic abuse – all experiences that have got me where I am today. It’s a constant reminder of how far I’ve come.

I’ve got my own flat now – my own front door, and I’ve been sober for two years. I always say my real struggle began when I got sober – when I had to start dealing with life without the drink. And Look Ahead has helped me to do that.

Picture: Alison trains Look Ahead staff members on her personal experiences of alcoholism.
I was in a relationship for 38 years, a very violent relationship for most of that time. I’d lost contact with my family, my health was very poor and I was stuck. When I finally managed to leave, I ended up homeless, right before Christmas. I stayed on people’s sofas for a while then ended up sleeping in a park in East London for a couple of weeks. I used to hide in the bushes, I was so scared.

When I first came here, I carried on hiding – this time in my room – I felt embarrassed and ashamed. It was very difficult to trust people. But staff like Stella worked with me slowly. How they treated me changed how I felt about myself. They gave me the tools so I could deal with what had happened to me differently. More than that, they gave me hope, showed me a different type of future.

I can’t believe how far I have come in the last 18 months. I started eating properly, taking care of myself and started seeing my daughters and nine grandchildren again. Keeping busy was really important to me. I wanted to learn how to make banana bread for my grandson so I did a course with a local baker and, now I’ve got a qualification. I’ve done gardening classes and for International Women’s Day, we all made a tree of life. All the residents hung their wishes on the tree, what we hoped for our futures.

One of mine is already coming true. I’ve trained as a Peer Mentor with Look Ahead and I use my experiences to help other women in a hostel in South London – helping them see there is another way. I won an award after staff nominated me. I didn’t feel I deserved it at first – when you’ve only had bad stuff happen to you, you struggle with nice things. But I am proud. I’m starting to look at support jobs with the organisation. I feel this is something I can do, something I’m good at.

I never would have thought I’d be in this position – I never thought I’d even survive. When I first came here I couldn’t speak, I’d lost my voice. Now 18 months later, it’s back and you can barely shut me up. I’m going up and up now.

Picture: Tracey with her Support Worker, Stella.
GOVERNANCE

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
Chris Hampson, Chief Executive (From January 2015)
Pat Long, Executive Director Operations
Lisa Bradley, Executive Director Finance
Paul Perkin, Director of Operations
Guy Robinson, Director of Operations
Claire Luxton, Director of Quality, Governance and Performance
Darren Palmer, Director of People
Victoria Stark, CBE (Chief Executive until January 2015)

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
Stephen Alexander, Chairman
Chairman, Immediate Media
Chairman, Dairy Crest PLC
Chairman, Rhubarb Food Design
Operating Partner, OpCapita LLP
Moira Sinclair, Deputy Chairman
Director, Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Jane Hives, Chair of Performance
Review Committee
Chartered Accountant and Consultant Trustee, The Pixel Fund

Julie Jones CBE, Chair of Customer Services Committee
Former Chief Executive, SCIE
Former Deputy Chief Executive, Westminster City Council
Co-Chair, ADASS Associates

Professor Sean Duggan
Chief Executive, Centre for Mental Health

Chris Dobson
Director, Capita

Graham Buckland
Managing Director, Barclays Corporate

Chris Richardson (resigned July 2015)
Partner, Ernst and Young LLP
Associate of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

Victoria Stark, CBE (Until January 2015)
Thank you to our customers, staff and partners who have contributed to this review, and the achievements of Look Ahead over the last year.

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