



annual review

2023



“
...the work we do has never felt more relevant or more needed.
 Chris Hampson, Chief Executive



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Welcome to our Annual Review

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Look Ahead's 2023 Annual Review, the year in which we mark our 50th anniversary.

As well as looking back over the last twelve months, we will also be sharing a number of our '50 Stories', stories from our customers, staff and partners, both current and former. To introduce you to this year's review, I thought I would share mine.

"I first came across Look Ahead whilst working with people experiencing rough sleeping in Westminster in the late 1990s – Look Ahead was one of the organisations we referred individuals to. Never would I ever have imagined I would end up leading the organisation. But a few short years later, I joined the organisation as Head of Policy and Strategy and the rest, as they say, is history.

I became Chief Executive in 2015 – a huge privilege and responsibility, and one I never take for granted. Some things have changed a lot since those early days – some things not so much. Our roots are still proudly in homelessness and we still support people with these experiences all across London, including in Westminster, where I started all those many moons ago.

welcome

But we have grown to do a lot more – mental health, learning disabilities, young people. And over the last five years, our services have become more specialist – supporting individuals with really complex, high acuity needs. Whether this be supporting a person with complex learning and physical disabilities to live in the community after 20 years in hospital or providing a community-based alternative to psychiatric admission, our work is going deeper into social care. And partnerships with the NHS and joint-working with clinicians are very much the norm, rather than the exception, across all our services.

What do I like about Look Ahead? It's a cliché but for me, it's the people, and seeing the difference they all make to those that need our support the most. I've always felt Look Ahead has a very unique culture – it's retained its family feel despite being almost three times the size of the organisation I joined.

I'm proud of a huge amount of things Look Ahead has achieved over the last 50 years. It's had an impact on many thousands of lives over the years, my own including. What I'm particularly proud of now is that at a time when a lot of organisations are exiting the supported housing market, we are digging in – delivering more services, becoming more specialist, really bridging the gap between health, social care and housing.

I've been here myself close to 25 years, almost half Look Ahead's history and these are challenging times no doubt; high inflation, cost-of-living pressures, public services and finances under pressure and ever-increasing demand. However, for me, the work we do has never felt more relevant or more needed. There's still much to do."

I hope you enjoy looking back over our history as well as looking forward to our future. A huge thank you, as always, to our staff, volunteers, partners, and funders. We would not be the Look Ahead we are today without you.

Chris Hampson
Chief Executive

Look Ahead at a glance

G1/V1

rating from social housing regulator

108

supported and unsupported services

22

CQC services

37

local authorities

4,599

customers supported

£79.3 million

group turnover

Figures within this annual review are based on the 2022/23 financial year.



who
we
are

About Look Ahead

Look Ahead is a specialist social care provider, providing supported housing and social care services for people with a range of needs in local communities.

We provide integrated housing, support and care services for four main groups: individuals with mental health needs, learning disabilities, young people and people who have experienced

homelessness, including those who face multiple disadvantage, a history of rough sleeping, and survivors of domestic abuse.

We deliver supported living services, which work with people who have low-medium or high needs and who typically require support for no more than two- five years to move on to independence. We also provide care services that support individuals living with multiple and complex needs who have far greater levels of support needs and may require care in the community for ten or more years.

In 2023, we worked with our staff and customers to refresh our mission, vision, and values. They are fundamental to our organisation, shaping and underpinning everything we do.

Our vision

Building better lives through social care and housing in local communities.

Our mission

We co-design and deliver services that offer innovative social care solutions and support people to thrive.

Our values

We are **caring** and **compassionate**.

We are **inclusive** and **trusted**.

We focus on **excellence** and **innovation**.

We work in **partnership** and are **one team**.

where we work

LONDON



SOUTH EAST ENGLAND



 **mental health**

 **young people
and care leavers**

 **learning disabilities**

 **homelessness
and complex needs**

 **unsupported**

 **NUMBER OF SERVICES**

celebrating

50 years

of Look Ahead



1970s

1973

Look Ahead (Beacon Hostels) is founded by Mary Jones, a retired civil servant to provide good-quality, inexpensive accommodation to single people on low incomes.

1974

Look Ahead affiliates to the National Federation of Housing Associations.

1975

Look Ahead is registered with the Housing Corporation.

1976

Look Ahead acquired its first property, Victoria Hostel in the heart of Westminster.



Opening of Victoria Hostel; Inset: Mary Jones

1977

Aldgate Hostel in Dock Street opened. A former seaman's mission, it was our first supported housing service, accommodating 184 people.

1978

Bayswater Hostel opened, our second hostel in Westminster, offering 55 bedspaces.



Top: Aldgate Hostel; Below: Bayswater Hostel

1980s



Clockwise from top: Mary Jones House; Opening of Princess Beatrice House; Victoria Stark; Mary Jones' retirement

1981

Victoria Stark joins Look Ahead as Organising Secretary.

1982

Mary Jones Court, named after Look Ahead's founder, opened in Tower Hamlets, providing self-contained accommodation for "single people with few belongings".

1984

Princess Beatrice House, a hostel for 210 people in Earl's Court, was opened by the Duchess of Kent, on a former hospital site.

1990s

1991

Look Ahead's first mental health service opened, in partnership with the Department of Health.

1993

Prince Charles opened Look Ahead's new Gateway Foyer – the first-purpose built foyer in the UK, for 116 young people aged 16-25 in South London.

1995

Look Ahead's first learning disabilities services opened, providing supported living for 19 customers in Newham and six in Kensington.

Queen Elizabeth II visited Kean Street service in Westminster.

1999

Frogmore Court opened in Maidenhead, providing 24-hour accommodation-based support to young people aged 16-25.



Queen Elizabeth II visits Kean Street

2000s

2003

The government launched 'Supporting People', which funded organisations like Look Ahead to deliver housing-related support for people.

Victoria Stark, Look Ahead's Chief Executive was awarded a CBE for services to homeless people in London.

2004

Look Ahead built and opened Summerfield House in Barking and Dagenham. The service supported young mothers and was commended for its innovative design.

2006

Victoria Hostel piloted the Reconnections Service, supporting hundreds of people with experience of rough sleeping to reconnect back to their area of origin and support network.

2008

Look Ahead launched its Apprenticeship Scheme, combining on-the-job experience with study for a formal qualification.

Look Ahead partnered with the Jamie Oliver Foundation's 'Fifteen' project, offering young customers an opportunity to train and work within the hospitality industry.

2010s



The Crisis House staff team

2011

Look Ahead acquired a mental health charity called Living Space, based in Hackney. This was assimilated into Look Ahead and is now our Clarence Road and Felstead Street services.

Look Ahead redeveloped our Flying Angel service in Newham, providing services for people with learning disabilities and mental health needs, affordable homes for local people and ten purpose-built artist studios.

Look Ahead opened its first Crisis House in Tower Hamlets. Delivered in partnership with ELFT, it offers an alternative to in-patient admissions and hospital step-down support.

2012

The last of our large hostels closed – as part of our programme to move to smaller, specialist services.

2014

Look Ahead opened Tabard Court, a forensic mental health service in East London. It has become known as a flagship service for forensic community-based services.

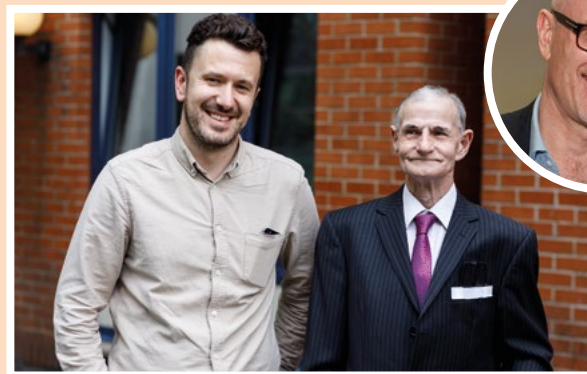
2015

Chris Hampson, who joined Look Ahead in 2000, becomes the organisation's second Chief Executive.

2016

Look Ahead's Women in Leadership award was launched, supporting female staff to develop within the support, care and housing sector.

Look Ahead began providing services at Edward Alsop Court, a 79 bed service in Westminster for homeless older men with alcohol dependency, mental health and physical health needs.



A staff member (left) and customer (right); Inset: Chris Hampson



The Choir with No Name

Look Ahead expanded its services across Kent, where we now deliver mental health, learning disability, young people, homelessness and domestic abuse services.

2017

Look Ahead opened our first service in Buckinghamshire, supporting young people in Milton Keynes.

2018

Look Ahead began working closely with the Choir with No Name, whose membership includes people with experiences of homelessness and exclusion. Many of our customers are regular participants.

2019

Look Ahead launched its Rising Star award, offering up to £5,000 in career development funding to staff showing passion and promise in the early stages of their careers.

Look Ahead opened Dunheved Road, our first exclusively Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) service in Bromley.

2020s

2020

Look Ahead expands our disability services into Essex and Kent, acquiring Kingswood Care Services Limited and Proactive Developments (Blythson Limited).

As the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, Look Ahead delivered emergency hotel accommodation in Croydon and Waterloo to help people off the streets through the GLA's 'Everyone In' programme.

We celebrated the efforts of our frontline workforce through our 'Social Care Heroes' campaign, who continued to deliver services throughout lockdowns and beyond.



A customer outside one of our homelessness services in Tower Hamlets; Inset: A Look Ahead staff member during the COVID-19 pandemic



Members of our Customer Experience Team; Inset: Baroness Mary Watkins of Tavistock



2021

Look Ahead's four staff networks are launched in line with our commitment to a fully inclusive workplace; LGBT+, DisAbility, Gender Equality and Cultural Diversity.

Baroness Mary Watkins of Tavistock, joins Look Ahead as the new Chair of our Board.

Look Ahead is awarded Silver Status by the Inclusive Employer Standard in recognition of our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

2022

Look Ahead launched 'Love Your Home', providing grants and support to improve local service environments. Over 30 services benefitted in the first year.

Look Ahead partnered with The Felix Project to open a social food hub, which offers free weekly meals and food parcels to customers in Tower Hamlets.

Look Ahead opened Pelham Road, a specialist supported living service for adults with complex learning disabilities and autism in Kent.

2023

Look Ahead launched research on young people's experiences of mental health crisis, calling for more specialist provision. It was conducted by Care Research, funded by Wates and launched in the House of Lords.

Look Ahead partnered with Carbon Neutral Britain to offset our carbon emissions; we are now carbon-neutral.

Look Ahead reported a gender pay gap of 0%.

Look Ahead celebrated its 50th anniversary.



Customers having fun at our 2022 Customer Celebration Event; Inset: A customer and staff member in our RBKC learning disabilities service

50
Stories

jack's story

“

My goals for the future are to live more independently and to move in with my fiancée. I'm nearly there. I just can't wait.

Jack

Jack lives at Look Ahead's Oakview service in Hertfordshire, which provides a supported living setting for people with learning disabilities. Jack is a keen DJ and has used his time with Look Ahead to take his passion further. Look Ahead are developing more services like Oakview that support young people with learning disabilities transition into adulthood.

"I have been living at Oakview for four years. I moved here after leaving residential college and I've always loved living here. Staff have supported me in so many ways to become more independent. I have my own flat, which is nice, and I keep it clean and tidy, but there's also spaces where we all get together, do activities, and spend time together. It's a good mix.

The support workers here are always there for me, but they don't put much pressure on me. We agree on my development goals, and then work on them together, which is fantastic. I can do most of the things I need to do by myself now. My support workers support me with managing my money, help me with shopping, and teach me how to cook for myself. I love cooking with my air fryer. I used to be more reliant on the staff, but I've improved step-by-step, and I think

I am going to be ready to move on to a more independent placement quite soon.

I've got paid work now as well, working at my local café. I have a lot of fun serving people there, and I work at a record store twice a week too.

I enjoy being at the record store because music is my passion. I've actually been DJing since I was 16 years old. Through Look Ahead I get the chance to perform at lots of events. I DJ at other customers' birthdays, as well as at our Christmas and Halloween parties and the organisation's big



customer event. In June this year I even got to spin my tracks at Look Ahead's 50th Anniversary Celebration Event at the House of St Barnabas – it was great to be on the same decks that so many professional and famous DJs have played on.

A goal of mine is to have a career as a professional DJ. My support workers have been helping to find gigs at local pubs and I've even got my own business cards made. My goals for the future are to live more independently and to move in with my fiancée. I'm nearly there. I just can't wait.





In summary

As well as our 50th anniversary year, 2023 has been a busy and fast-moving year for Look Ahead.

It has been a challenging year for social care providers – with rising inflation, energy costs and the cost of living having a significant impact. As local authorities have come under pressure, we have worked with them to develop new services and adapt existing ones to ensure people in their communities are still supported.

Here are some of our 2022/23 highlights from our services, customers, people, and properties.

Our services

As a social care organisation, over 2022/23 we delivered a variety of services for people with a wide range of needs; our focus being on supporting people with mental health needs, learning disabilities and homelessness and complex needs. We continue to support people from young adulthood onwards – from young people and those leaving care to older people, often within our residential services.

summary of the year 2022/23

35
mental health services

26
learning disability and
autism services

21
homelessness and complex
needs services

18
young people and care
leavers services

Learning disabilities and autism

We have continued to develop services that meet specialist, and often complex social care needs. In November 2022, we opened a new specialist supported living service in Kent for people with a learning disability, autism, and related complex needs. The service contains five individual flats and offers bespoke, 24/7 support to people, who may before have only been accommodated within hospital or secure residential environments.



In line with our growth strategy we are also planning to open a number of services that support younger people with learning disabilities to live as independently as possible in their

transition to adulthood. This could be young people leaving home for the first time or they could be coming from residential settings.

We are preparing to open two new services of this nature in Kent and Newham in Autumn 2023.

Young people and care leavers

Young people are supported across all of our services and we have also continued to deliver 18 services specifically for young people with a range of needs including those with care experience and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Our priority this year has been on future service development; including preparing for forthcoming Ofsted regulations, launching services for young people experiencing mental health crisis and services for young people with learning disabilities who are transitioning to independent living.

Homelessness and complex needs

We continue to offer a wide range of services for people experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantages from assessment centres to hostels and floating support, as well as services for individuals experiencing or escaping from domestic abuse.

Physical as well as mental health continues to be high on the agenda for these services and the support we offer, in the context of these individuals typically experiencing much poorer health outcomes.



In Westminster, our Edward Alsop Court service introduced ten new health beds. These beds offer temporary accommodation for people who are being discharged from hospital or who have severe health issues who would otherwise find themselves rough sleeping. This initiative marks a further expansion of the service's collaboration with key NHS, local authority, and other public and voluntary sector partners.

Whilst in Kensington and Chelsea, we opened a new assessment centre, Heaney Hub, which offers short-stay accommodation to seven people with experiences of homelessness as we assess their needs and move them into longer-term accommodation more fitting to their needs.

To find out more about the impact of this service, see Kevin's Story on page 30.

Mental health

Every year we support thousands of people experiencing mental health needs in services that span the mental health pathway; from crisis houses to hospital discharge, forensic step-down to medication support, and registered care to supported housing, and floating support.

The increased pressure on the NHS means that our services are more vital than ever. Much of our work is about keeping people away from hospital and in the community, and we are increasingly working directly with Integrated Care Systems across London and the South East to design and deliver services that meet local healthcare needs.

In Newham this year, we have worked with local health partners and the local authority to significantly expand available provision for local people with high and complex needs, enabling

individuals to return from expensive out of borough mental health placements.

We have also been undertaking research in the mental health field thanks to funding from our partners, the Wates Family Enterprise Trust (WFET). In January, we published a report with Care Research examining the demand for housing-related support models for young people in mental health crisis. We are now taking this to the next phase with partners MAC-UK, a clinically-led mental health charity working with young people, to develop a new model for accommodation-based services. To read more about the research and findings, please read Tim's story on page 28.

In the coming year we'll be launching a number of services including expanding the number of community-based crisis house and hospital step-down beds we offer through reconfiguring properties we own to meet commissioners' needs.



Our customers

Look Ahead customers have continued to be at the very heart of what we do. Providing our customers with quality homes, and tailored support, as well as opportunities to develop and grow has continued to be key to our approach over the last year.

86%
customers are satisfied
or very satisfied with
Look Ahead

91%
customers are satisfied
or very satisfied with the
choice and control they
have with Look Ahead

90%
customers are satisfied or
very satisfied that Look
Ahead listens to, respects,
and encourages them

Here are some of our customer highlights:

Our co-production programme

A focus on ensuring that our customers are empowered to help co-design and produce services is fundamental to the way we work at Look Ahead. We offer customers a range of opportunities to help develop our services, as well as their own personal skills and experiences. This includes:

- Recruiting our staff
- Auditing our services through our Quality Checkers programme
- Training staff through our Experts by Experience programme
- Supporting others using their own lived experience as Peer Support Volunteers

Customer committees

Chaired by members of Look Ahead's Board, our scrutiny committees, the Tenant and Landlord Panel and Customer Care and Support Forum are now firmly embedded in the organisation. They ensure that customers can contribute to organisational discussion and scrutiny at the highest level.

In the last year we have also launched our Customer Incidents Panel, co-chaired by a customer representative, which looks at incidents and ensures wider learning is captured and shared across the organisation.

Celebrating customer achievements

This year we celebrated the achievements of our customers at our Customer Celebration, which took place at the Museum of London. Customers enjoyed workshops, performances, and our ever-popular customer awards, celebrating those who have achieved and contributed so much despite difficult circumstances.





Our people

Our people continue to be what makes Look Ahead the organisation it is.

1,307
staff

463
bank staff

357
training courses available
to staff

0%
gender pay gap

Developing new customer service standards

We have developed our new customer service standards. These will help ensure we are delivering customer services that meet people's needs and expectations, ensuring we are customer-focused, solution-focused, joined-up, and go the extra mile. Over the next 12 months we'll be working with customers across the organisation to embed and monitor performance against these standards.

For more information on our work with customers, please see our 2023 Customer Report.

This year we have continued to invest in recruiting, training, and developing our people, supporting them to deliver the very best possible services to our customers. Our aim is to foster a workplace where staff can 'feel at home' and develop themselves professionally as well as personally.

Best Companies marked Look Ahead as 'one to watch', highlighting our good levels of engagement

from our teams and we scored highly against other social care providers in our sector. Our staff team continues to be highly diverse in terms of age, gender, gender identity, cultural background and lived experience. We are proud our people reflect the customers we serve and our four staff diversity networks have played a significant role in pushing our inclusion agenda forward. We are committed to the Living Wage and have offered staff a range of rewards and benefits, that have been particularly valued during the cost of living crisis.



Staff development has been one of our main foundations – as well as offering over 350 training courses, staff have benefitted from the roll-out of our coaching apprenticeships, external mentoring programmes and our staff awards celebrating excellent performance in line with our values. We also awarded over £10,000 to our Women in Leadership and Rising Star Award winners, funding professional qualifications and career coaching for our two annual winners. In addition, over 40 staff have progressed internally through development or promotions, as part of our commitment to our 'growing our own' culture.

Our properties

Developing and maintaining safe, comfortable homes that meet our customers' needs has continued to be one of our key organisational priorities this year.

As a registered social landlord, we have continued to invest almost £5 million in our own buildings to ensure they provide the right living environments to keep people safe whilst optimising opportunities for independence for people with a wide range of needs. A focus for the year has been on increasing customer awareness of damp and mould, both how to prevent it, and how to report it and we'll continue to progress this work in the year ahead.

Work began this year on the redevelopment of our St Kilda's and Oaklands properties in Ealing.



Generously supported by LandAid, Segro and Property Race Day, together we are developing bespoke living environments that will provide accommodation and support to young people experiencing mental health crisis. These services should be completed by spring 2024.

£4.4 million
invested in major repairs
and maintenance

100%
compliance on fire and
gas safety

1,255
properties owned
and managed

1,195
properties managed on
behalf of another landlord

81%
customers told us our
repairs service had
improved over the last
twelve months

50
Stories

sandra's story

“

*39 customers have been
successfully discharged...
with no further readmissions
to hospital.*



Sandra

Sandra manages Look Ahead's Independent Living Medication Support Service (ILMSS) in Lambeth. This service is commissioned by South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and works with the NHS to help people with mental health needs to stay well, out of hospital and living in the community. This service highlights our integrated offer to health and social care commissioners.

"I first joined Look Ahead as a mental health support worker in Hackney. Twelve years later, I am proud to know I am playing an important role in such an innovative service providing both medication and independent living support.

Individuals are typically referred to our service from the Community Mental Health Team as they leave hospital, and we step in to help them learn how to manage their own medication. Most customers will have got used to having a nurse support them with medication, especially if they have been in hospital for an extended period of time. It takes a person time to re-adjust after being discharged, so our team step in to offer support usually for a 12-week period. Our staff provide much needed consistency and familiarity. We train people to administer

their own medication and understand any side effects. As we see them on a daily basis, we are well-placed to monitor their progress.

As a customer progresses, we can very gradually reduce the support to enable them to continue to gain independence. We may visit less or stay in touch on the phone. Without this support, it's likely that a customer could forget to take their medication, relapse, and then end up back in hospital again. But the support we offer means that people have a much greater chance of staying well in the community and avoiding the 'revolving door' of hospital admission. It's better for them – and the NHS.



In the last eight months, 39 customers have been successfully discharged from our service, with no further readmissions to hospital. The floating support side is also crucial. This provides more general support around access to benefits, development of life skills and managing appointments. All of these things help people gain and sustain independence for when we step away.

Partnerships with health like these improve the quality of services across the board as well as helping the NHS with its greatest challenges. It helps make sure that those most in need of support don't fall through the cracks."





It feels fantastic to support customers to maximise their potential, enjoy new experiences and make positive changes.

50
Stories

afehia's story

Afehia

Afehia is a Move-on Specialist Support Worker at Look Ahead's Young People Service in Milton Keynes. Here she works with young people with a variety of needs including a growing number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

"I first started my journey with Look Ahead as a temporary support worker working with young people, including those who have experienced care. I have now progressed to be a move-on specialist, where I focus on supporting our young people to move on to independent living.

Being part of a young person's journey to getting back on their feet is wonderful. It feels fantastic to support customers to maximise their potential, enjoy new experiences and make positive changes to go on to live the kinds of independent lives we would all want to lead.

I am passionate about ensuring our young people are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and I do my best to make sure their voices are heard. Listening to our customers is at the heart of how we work together. We agree on manageable goals, and then support customers to achieve them. The young people themselves are my inspiration,



seeing their smiles and happiness gives me real job satisfaction.

It's been wonderful to help our customers enjoy new opportunities and activities as well. Through working with fundraising and external partners and supporters, we've been able to offer customers new experiences and opportunities they may otherwise not have had.

As well as day trips, life skills activities and courses, this year our young people have also had the opportunity to work with arts and culture organisation, the Black Sheep Collective CIC on a theatre piece entitled *I wear my decisions like a crown*. It has been brilliant to see how performing has helped improve their confidence.

Developing confidence is a big part of preparing young people for the transition to adulthood, and to move on.

It's also really important that all our young people – including those who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – feel at home too, and that their religious and cultural needs are met. We've teamed up with our local mosque and have been holding fast breaking or iftar party events during Ramadan as well as celebrating festivals like Eid.

I get so much satisfaction out of my job and seeing the confident, happy, and independent young adults that our customers become."





environmental, social governance

Environmental, Social, Governance at Look Ahead

Look Ahead is a not-for-profit business with a strong social purpose. We exist to make a lasting difference to our customers, staff, and other stakeholders. Our business model enables us to provide great services and social value to our customers whilst creating positive change for wider society.

Outside of our day-to-day operations we are doing all we can to reduce our environmental footprint and improve other aspects of our approach to Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) through embedding measurement and management into our corporate plan and priorities.

This year we've formalised our approach to measurement of ESG in adopting the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS). The SRS is a voluntary reporting framework aimed at social housing providers, covering 48 criteria across ESG considerations such as affordability, carbon emissions and energy efficiency, safety, equality, diversity and inclusion and resident voice.

In October 2023 we will publish our first ESG performance document setting out our performance against the standards in more detail, but here is a summary:

Our environmental highlights

- Our commitment to sustainability, biodiversity, waste, and environmental management is being delivered through our annual action-plan, overseen by our Asset Management Group.
- We are investing in our buildings to make them more energy-efficient as part of our annual asset management and improvement programmes going forward over the next few years.
- Look Ahead is officially carbon-neutral for 2022/23 after working with industry experts Carbon Neutral Britain (CNB), to calculate and offset our carbon by supporting CNB-verified projects, such as renewable energy infrastructure in Asia and South America.
- We have continued to build on our commitment to bio-diversity and outdoor spaces through the launch of our service awards and grants scheme, 'Love Your Home'. Over 30 services received small grants and support from corporate and internal volunteers, to enhance outdoor and community spaces through this programme. We have procured two ground works maintenance contracts where we have identified biodiversity as a high priority for social value return. We will continue to work with contractors, undertaking biodiversity assessments of our green and amenity spaces, using the biodiversity tool kit for housing providers.
- We have helped to reduce food waste across London through our continued partnership with the Felix Project, the leading charity to combat hunger and food waste across London. This year we've worked with them to set up a new social food hub in East London, offering free weekly meals and food parcels to our customers locally, who have benefitted during the current cost of living crisis.

Our social value

- As a not-for-profit social care provider, Look Ahead has a strong social purpose and we deliver tangible social impact across our 108 different services and for the thousands of customers we support every year.
- Over the last year, our partnerships and fundraising have focused on creating positive social impact for our customers and the wider communities we work in. We've received generous support for fundraising for our customer activities including raising £16,000 from our Secret Santa campaign at Christmas and to support other celebrations including Eid. We've also welcomed a range of corporate volunteering groups, hosting more than 150 volunteers to our services including teams from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, BDA Partners, chapmanbdsp and JTI.
- We recognise the social value that the arts bring to our services. Our partnership with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the OrchLab programme continued at our learning disabilities services in Newham. Thanks to funding through Disability Rights UK from Sport England as part of their Together Programme, we also expanded our "AnyBODY Can Dance" therapeutic dance programme in our learning disability and mental health services. In addition, as part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations customers took part in arts events facilitated by the Accumulate Arts charity.
- We are increasingly working with the NHS to meet demand, reduce pressures and lower costs. Our focus on delivering services 'Away from hospital and into the community' is supporting a key NHS objective, and we are proud to work with many different health trusts and Integrated Care Systems to deliver on this.
- Our research into young people experiencing mental health crisis, funded by Wates Family Enterprise Trust and conducted by Care Research, aims to make a significant contribution to a broader understanding of what young people in crisis need and to the development of public policy. We hope this both influences and informs future service development for us and other organisations, working with young people in need. See page 28 for further details about what the research told us.
- Our people are what make Look Ahead and we have a range of initiatives to help make them 'feel at home' including diversity and inclusion forums and professional development and growth. We are proud that this year we reported a 0% gender pay gap and took part in the Best Companies Survey with encouraging results. See page 18 for more details.





Our governance

- We believe good governance is the basis for any ethical business and that it is essential to delivering high quality and safe care and support services, as well as promoting an open and honest culture in line with our values.
- This year we were pleased to retain our G1/V1 status from the Regulator of Social Housing.
- Customer representatives play a vital role in the leadership of the organisation and played a key part in our Board Strategy event in October 2022.
- You can read more about our approach to governance and other ESG matters in our ESG performance document.





The significance of this work cannot be underestimated. Helping young people experiencing a mental health crisis to recover and move on with their lives is critical.



50
Stories

tim's
story

Tim

Tim Wates is Chairman of the Wates Group. Established in 1897, it is one of the leading privately-owned construction, development, and property services companies in the UK. The Wates Family Enterprise Trust, an independent charity set up by the Wates family, have been supporting Look Ahead since 2021.

“Every year the Wates Family Enterprise Trust supports a range of non-profit organisations and charitable causes that reflect our three strategic priorities; housing, life opportunities and sustainability. I’m the lead trustee for housing for the Trust, so I have got to know Look Ahead, one of our partners in this area, well over the last couple of years.

Developing strong, ongoing relationships with a small number of charities is important to us. We often work with organisations, who might not get support from elsewhere. We might support them to invest in research or evaluating how well an existing system or model works. We are particularly interested in projects that can be scaled up, reaching as many people as possible, and those that can be a real catalyst for change.

We were delighted to support Look Ahead with a research project last year that looked at the needs and experiences of young people in mental health crisis. It’s an issue that I feel very passionate about.

The findings were stark. The authors, Care Research, found an increasing number of young people aged 16-24 are falling between the gaps of child and adult mental health services, and that A&E Departments are becoming ‘accidental hubs,’ ill-equipped to provide the care and treatment so desperately needed by this group.

The report concluded with a number of recommendations, most notably a need for alternative community crisis services for young people, based in supported housing settings away from hospital. At the report launch at the House of Lords earlier this year, the benefits were laid out for all to see; reduced pressures on NHS services already under strain, reduced costs of around 50% and crucially, better experiences for young people in a mental health crisis at one of the most pivotal points in their lives. The significance of this work cannot be underestimated. Helping young people experiencing a mental health crisis to recover and move on with their lives is critical. Without the development of

more appropriate services in suitable settings, we will undoubtedly see an even bigger national mental health crisis in the years to come.

The time for action is now. It is my hope that organisations like Look Ahead can build on this work by offering real, practical solutions that engender a real shift in how this group is supported. We’ve been impressed with Look Ahead’s on-the-ground expertise and their appetite to influence and call for change at a more systemic level around this issue.

So, we are pleased to be extending our funding to take this project to the next stage and hope to continue to open a wider conversation about integration between health, housing, and social care. I’m proud of our partnership and am looking forward to seeing how this work evolves.”

50
Stories

kevin's story

“

I'm glad I'm here, and I'm glad I'm moving myself forward. Having structure and a goal really helps.



Kevin

Kevin was one of the first customers to move into our new Heaney Hub homelessness assessment centre in Kensington and Chelsea. He has made great strides in tackling drug dependency and shares more about his journey and his hopes for the future.

“Before I came to the assessment centre. I had spent time rough sleeping. I was addicted to drugs and my entire life was focused on servicing that dependency; I didn’t care about anything but getting my next fix.

I had stayed in other hostels before, but I didn’t feel comfortable in them. They were too big and too crowded, and there was always the risk that I could get hold of drugs from other residents. I was on a terrible downward spiral, until the council helped me get here.

But, at the assessment centre, I’ve started getting my life back together again. Slowly but surely. I’m in a quiet and peaceful environment where I can take things at my own pace. The rooms are amazing, I’ve got my own kitchen and get to cook my own food, I have my own bathroom too.

Sometimes making a change is not easy, it’s really hard. I had nearly given up hope before,



but here, my outlook has changed. Here, the staff are there when I need them. They are really friendly and supportive, and I get on with everyone here.

Their support is helping me to get off drugs, I’ve been engaging with Turning Point too which has had a big impact. I keep away from the wrong crowd and the wrong part of town and have cut my usage down to a bare minimum. I’m working with the staff here in order to go further too.

I want to get ready for detox and rehab, so I can come off the methadone.

One of the most amazing things about being here is that it’s saved my legs. They were so bad from where I’d been injecting heroin, but they are much better now. I never thought in a million years that I would get my legs back like this, I was afraid they would be amputated, now I have barely any wounds, and I’m hoping I won’t need any more bandages soon.

I know we can all have setbacks, and I might have more too. But it’s how you handle and respond to them that matters. At the end of the day, I’m glad I’m here, and I’m glad I’m moving myself forward. Having structure and a goal really helps.

My ambition now is to become a professional chef or be an outreach worker to give back and help other people in a similar situation. It may take a while but that’s my goal for further down the line. I’m not going backwards; I’ve come a heck of a long way.

There’s a long way for me to go, but I’m in the right place. I always thought I’d be homeless and addicted to drugs for the rest of my life. But now I feel confident that I can beat my addiction, and I can be someone.”



thank
you

Thanks...

... to all our donors and partners for their generous support over 2022/23.

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- Tower Hamlets Council
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- Wates Family Enterprise Trust (WFET)
- Zuntold

In line with our core values we align ourselves with other organisations that help us to achieve our vision.

Accreditations



Awards



Memberships and Associations



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 Group Operations

Harindra Punchihewa

*(Appointed September 2023)
Chief Financial Officer*

Samantha Stewart

*(Resigned July 2023)
Executive Director of Finance*

Nicole Njie

Executive Director of Customer Experience and Quality

Board of Management

Baroness Mary Watkins of Tavistock

Chair, Look Ahead Group Board of Management

Member of the House of Lords (Crossbench)

Board Member, NHS England

Kevin Chiweta Obi

*Managing Director, Synergy Inc.
Board Advisor, Ecosync
Chair, NIDSG*

Tom Dacey

*Chair, Proactive Development Ltd (Blythson) (Look Ahead Subsidiary)
Chair, Kingswood Care Services Ltd (Look Ahead Subsidiary)
Chair, MP Living Ltd*

Ellie Edwards-Scott

*Board Representative for Diversity and Inclusion – Look Ahead
Trustee, DigiLearning Ltd
Director, The Advisory Collective*

Stephen Firn OBE

Chair, Look Ahead Customer Care and Support Forum

Chief Executive Officer, Cygnet Health Care (since 1 October 2022)

Deputy Chair/Non-Executive Director, Surrey & Borders

Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (until 30 August 2022)

Kevin Gould

Chair, Look Ahead Audit and Risk Committee

Director, Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Director and Shareholder, Sharpthorne Services Ltd

Board member, Grand Union Housing Group

Panel member, Judicial Appointments Commission

Independent decision making body member, Bar Standards Board

Internal audit consultant, European Bank of Reconstruction & Development

Trustee, Centre for Alternative Technology

Governor, Staffordshire University

Chris Hampson

*Chief Executive, Look Ahead
Board Member and Joint Care of the Care and Support Committee, GreenSquareAccord
Board Member, NHS Confederation Mental Health Network
Board Member, VODG
Non-Executive Director, Green Square Accord
Non-Executive Director, VODG*

Richard Jones CBE

*Vice-Chair, Look Ahead Group Board of Management
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, Fair oak Housing Association*

closing remarks

Sharon Slotnick

*Chair, Look Ahead
Remuneration Committee
Chair, Look Ahead Tenant
and Landlord Panel
London magistrate in Adult,
Family, and the Crown Courts*

Sarah Willows

*Chair, Look Ahead
Investment and Treasury
Committee
Director, Storegga Earth Ltd*



It is a pleasure to contribute to Look Ahead's 2023 Annual Review – in such a significant year in the organisation's history.

During my relatively short period as Chair of the Board, I have witnessed first-hand the impact Look Ahead's services make – to customers, local communities and our staff. It is humbling to consider the impact our organisation has made over the last half century. Look Ahead will continue to make positive societal contributions in the future, as we support more people with complex needs and work increasingly closely with the NHS.

Earlier this year at our anniversary event, I had the opportunity to meet many individuals who make up Look Ahead's story – from the partners who support us, the staff who transform our vision into reality, and the customers who shape us. Look Ahead has both a long history and a bright future if we all, customers, staff and commissioners, work together to achieve our combined aims.

On behalf of our Board, 'thank you' to all those who fund, support and champion the work we do.

Baroness Mary Watkins of Tavistock

Chair

Look Ahead

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Look Ahead Care and Support Ltd, a charitable housing association registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 No. 21004. Registered with the Regulator of Social Housing No. LH0013

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