

Look Ahead people: **Meet Paul**

This is the part of the newsletter where we introduce you to an inspiring customer or staff member and tell you a little bit about what they have been doing. In this issue we are talking to Paul, an Assistant Support Worker.



Paul first joined Look Ahead on our Peer Supporter scheme, where he discovered his passion for helping others.

During his time as a peer supporter, staff were impressed with his enthusiasm and skills, and suggested that he apply to study for a NVQ

in Social Care. Although going back to the classroom was a little strange at first, Paul worked hard and successfully completed his NVQ in July 2015.

Last November, he joined the Tower Hamlets Rehab team as an Assistant Support Worker. With support from the staff team Paul was quick to settle into the role and build strong relationships with the customers he was supporting. Paul says that his favourite thing about his job is 'the reward of helping someone smile'.

In the future he plans to continue working towards becoming a Support Worker, and one day maybe even manage a service.

If you are interested in volunteering for Look Ahead you can talk to your Support Worker or send an email to feedback@lookahead.org.uk

Tell us what you think about our support planning

Look Ahead recently began a project to review our support planning process.

During this review we will be looking at how our staff support you and the ways we record it. This process is an important part in making sure that we are delivering the right support to each and every one of our customers.

To make sure that we create the best process possible, we are looking for feedback from as many customers as possible.

If you are interested in getting involved please talk to your Support Worker or email your details to quality@lookahead.org.uk

Do you want to be the next person we talk to?

Have you done something amazing that you would like to share? Are you involved in your local service?

If you would like to be the person we introduce in the next issue of Heads-up, let us know.

You can either send us an email with your details to communications@lookahead.org.uk or call us on **0207 368 6982**.



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Services we would be proud for our loved ones to receive

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

August - September 2016



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Heads-up

Look Ahead's new customer newsletter

Exciting new educational opportunities for women

Welcome to the second issue of Heads-up, the newsletter for Look Ahead customers, by Look Ahead customers.

This issue we are exploring some of the ways that customers have been working hard to improve their lives as well as focusing on some of the different opportunities and activities that have helped them to do this.

One of these exciting new opportunities is Look Ahead's new partnership with Hillcroft College in Surrey. Hillcroft College is a residential college for women that specialises in intensive, residential education for women aged 19+. Students do not need to have any formal qualifications to study at the college and they offer a variety of courses from IT for Beginners to Mindfulness and Meditation.

Earlier this summer, a group of female customers from Look Ahead's Hopetown service attended a special

open day at the college. As part of the open day customers took part in taster sessions for some of the courses available and were also given a tour of the college, to give them an idea of what it would be like to study there. The day also included a tasty picnic in the sunshine where customers could

meet the college staff and some current students.

If you are a female customer and are interested in finding out more about studying at Hillcroft College then please contact **Shallu Jain**, on **0208 399 2688** or by emailing sjain@hillcroft.ac.uk



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New mural for family room

Earlier this summer customers at Wellesley House in Windsor were excited to be presented with a beautiful new mural in their family room.

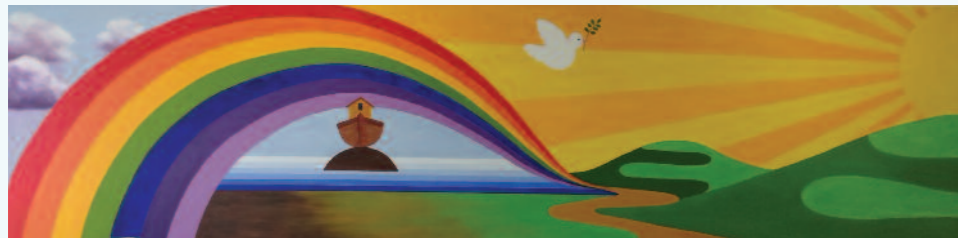
The mural was painted by local artist, Pamela Engels, who was a contestant on the Sky Portrait Artist of the year competition in 2013.

The new mural covers an entire wall in the service's 'Rainbow room' which acts as a communal play room for children living in the service.

Before painting started, staff and customers worked together to decide on a design brief for the room.

The aim of the new mural was to provide a positive and inspiring piece that encourages customers to have hope for the future, as well as creating a pleasant environment for the children to play in.

The painting took six days to complete and shows a scene from Noah's Ark with a large, brightly coloured rainbow. Speaking about the experience, Pamela said that it was 'wonderful to be involved in something like this'.



Easy-read policies now available

At Look Ahead we have created easy-read versions of our key customer policies to help our customers to stay safe, maintain their tenancies as well as understanding their rights and responsibilities.

These policies give guidance to anyone receiving support from Look Ahead and have been created to make them easy for everyone to understand.

If you would like to see these policies please speak to your Support Worker. If you would like to work with us to develop more policies please contact Beth, our Policy Manager at policyresponse@lookahead.org.uk

Learning to live for myself

I am a customer at Look Ahead's Crown House service, I have been living at the service since March 2016 and in that time my life has changed a lot.

Before I came to Look Ahead I was living with my family who were very controlling. Leaving my family was a very hard experience; they are the people who are supposed to love you best, but sometimes you have to think about yourself and do what is best for you. Since moving out of my family home I have gained my independence and found the courage and strength to think for myself and do what I want. Not what others are telling me I should do.

Now, instead of hiding my unhappiness and doing what my family want, I ask myself "Am I happy from moment to moment?" If I'm not, then I change something about my life. This hasn't been an easy change for me to make, it has taken time and support from others. In particular from my therapist who has supported me

to see my own needs and values, and to hold on to them. Without her I wouldn't be who I am today.

A relative once told me that 'there's nothing like family and other people can't be trusted'. But since leaving my family I have built several relationships with people I trust. It hasn't been easy, but after years of doubt and isolation I can see how important it is to let others into my life. With every person I get to know it is getting easier and I look forward to an easier future and making new friends.

I am enjoying life now, I come and go as I please, try new things and meet new people. Although I still have a way to go before I am fully independent, I am working hard to get there. With the help of my Support Worker I am starting to look after my finances and learning to cook and do laundry. I have a future that I can now see and look forward to; with my own place, my own private sanctuary with all my favourite things. I can't wait to have a place to call my own.



Men's Health Week Event in Bracknell

This summer, our Bracknell Floating Support Service hosted an event to mark Men's Health Week at Rainforest Walk, one of Look Ahead's two supported housing schemes for young people in Bracknell.

The event was attended by customers of all ages from our floating support and young people's services.

The event was hosted by comedian and men's health expert, John Ryan. John used his popular mix of stand-up comedy and motivational speaking to get the audience laughing and informed, as he shared his own practical advice.

After the event John wrote to say how much he had enjoyed the occasion. He said "I have rarely felt as humbled by an event and came away feeling energised and positive for my evening's performance at a regular comedy show; if only all my work was as enjoyable!

Thank you to John and everybody that attended for making the event such a success.



Comedian John Ryan

The event also featured a speaker from INVOLVE, the local volunteer service.

As well as the fantastic speakers, customer and ex-chef Mihail made sure everyone was well fed by providing a very tasty moussaka.

"If only all my work was as enjoyable!"

John's five top tips for a healthy life:

- 1. Laugh** – laughter reduces stress hormones and helps to boost your immune system
- 2. Say hello to people** – talking to other people helps with mental wellbeing, reduces isolation and it can make someone else's day
- 3. Move** – sitting down and not moving around is bad for you mentally and physically. Get up and go for a walk
- 4. Drink more water** – our bodies need water to keep healthy and to work properly
- 5. Get a good night's sleep** – turn off the technology and make your bedroom a relaxing place where you can relax and get a good eight hours sleep