WELCOME

Welcome to our special Christmas edition of Breakout. This quarter, in keeping with the Christmas message, we are celebrating ‘good news’. Firstly, there has been a remarkable, and highly welcome, turnaround in the Government’s approach to supported housing funding. Secondly, we were delighted to celebrate client success at our Annual Review Launch, where clients won awards for making exceptional progress, overcoming adversity, creating a positive future and successfully living crime-free. Paul’s story (page 5) also illustrates the positive change that happens with the right support.

We are excited to have launched our Christmas appeal. We are both hoping and anticipating that many people will partner with us to change offenders’ lives. Seeing our clients overcome addictions, mental health issues and homelessness to live crime-free, fulfilled lives has got to be the ultimate good news this Christmas.

May you have a wonderful Christmas and thank you for whatever part you can play in being part of our good news.

Yours ever,

Samantha

Editor, Break Out

P.S. We’ll be celebrating our 60th year next year so more celebrations will be underway!

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PAUL

*Paul’s picture has been changed to protect his identity.

“Langley’s given me a new lease of life.”

PAUL* SPENT 10 YEARS ON THE STREETS FROM THE AGE OF 15, ENDING UP IN A LIFE OF CRIME, DRUGS AND DEBT. HE’S NOW BACK ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW AND FEELING LIKE HE’S PART OF SOCIETY AGAIN.

What was life like growing up?
Life wasn’t very good when I was growing up. My dad passed away when I was 14 and it went from that really. I was a bit of a wild teenager. My mum kicked me out when I was 15 – she got remarried and didn’t care. I had to survive on my own. I was on the streets for 10 years.

What was life like before coming to Langley?
Life was stressful, very stressful. I was struggling with finances. I hadn’t opened mail for a long time and the bills were building up. I got to a point where I didn’t want to open the letters because I didn’t know what to do with them. I lost some of my benefits and I lost my gas – I didn’t have hot water for two years. I ended up with issues with drugs again.

What was your lowest point?
There were a couple of points where I felt quite low and suicidal. I reached a point of despair where I didn’t know what to do. I got into a rut and couldn’t see any light at the end of the tunnel.

What help did you receive?
Langley helped me to look at finances first and get my benefits back up and running. They put me in touch with some outside agencies which helped to get my debts sorted – I’ve got a payment plan in place now. It was a big weight off my shoulders. They helped with housing. They helped with stress. They were supportive. It’s different to other places that I’ve been.

What’s the biggest thing that Langley did that made the difference?
They built my confidence up. I feel more confident now.

What is life like now?
A lot better. I’m more chilled out now. I’ve been doing the gardening – it gets me out! I’m not thinking about drugs, I’m in the fresh air all day. I’ve never had a compliment before coming here. It’s taken me a long time to get used to that. Langley’s given me a new lease of life.

What’s your hope for the future?
I really want to meet someone.

*Paul’s picture has been changed to protect his identity.
GOOD NEWS IS DEFINED AS SOMEONE OR SOMETHING THAT IS POSITIVE, ENCOURAGING, UPLIFTING OR DESIRABLE. IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES, GOOD NEWS IS CERTAINLY SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE CELEBRATED AND THE RECENT TURNAROUND BY THE GOVERNMENT ON SUPPORTED HOUSING FUNDING IS WORTHY OF A CELEBRATION.

Supported housing funding has been under threat for the last few years. Despite providing a vital housing lifeline to vulnerable groups (including the elderly, victims of domestic violence and ex-offenders) it was very much up for the funding chop. That was until October 2017 when the Government made an unexpected, but highly welcome, announcement that the proposed funding cut would no longer take place.

What was the issue?
In the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015, the Chancellor announced an intention to cap the levels of Housing Benefit paid for supported housing to ‘Local Housing Allowance’ rates (LHA) from April 2019 – the rate paid to most private renters on Housing Benefit. On the surface, this seemed to be a good way for the Government to help balance the books.

However, the proposal didn’t recognise the severe impact this would have on the sector – for instance, the higher rate of Housing Benefit paid for staff to work with those accommodated within supported housing. Without the staff support, there was a real risk that clients in those tenancies would fail, leading to people becoming homeless. Moreover, Local Housing Allowance rates alone were nowhere near high enough to keep some supported housing schemes viable which would mean hundreds of schemes closing down or scaling back.

For the offender rehabilitation sector, there was a grave concern that housing would no longer be available for those leaving prison, increasing the risk of homelessness and crime.

The development of supported housing units ground to a halt...
The Chancellor’s announcement ushered in a bleak period in supported housing history and the impact was widely felt. Plans by housing associations to develop new supported housing units reduced drastically – from 8,800 to 1,350.* This was in the face of ongoing uncertainty about future income streams and represented a decrease of 85%.
The housing sector’s fight back
The housing sector urgently called for an exemption for supported housing, arguing that supported housing delivered average net savings to the public purse of around £940 per resident per year and that demand for this type of accommodation was growing. When put into the context that at the end of 2015, there were 651,000 supported accommodation units in Great Britain, the saving that supported housing delivered ran into the hundreds of millions.

Despite this, it seemed like the cap would go ahead. In 2016, the Government restated that the cap would come into place in 2019 and that local authorities would receive a ‘top-up’ fund for supported housing schemes in their areas. This would be ring-fenced for supported housing but it would be up to local authorities to decide which schemes they funded.

Offender housing at risk
This caused further alarm bells for the sector – the top-up fund in itself wasn’t enough to fully offset the amount that would be lost through the cap. There was also a real concern that ‘unpopular’ groups simply wouldn’t get a look-in. For instance, the National Housing Federation carried out a consultation in 2017 to assess the impact of the supported housing cap. Although local authorities and commissioning groups recognised that offenders were one of the most vulnerable groups to be impacted by the cap, they stated that due to political reasons, offenders were the least likely group to be funded.

The impact of Grenfell and unexpected breakthrough
Fast forward into 2017 and the terrible tragedy of Grenfell put social housing firmly in the spotlight. Although not supported housing, Grenfell highlighted the need that housing needed to be available and safe for all.

And then breakthrough came. During Prime Minister’s Questions on 25th October 2017, Theresa May confirmed that the Local Housing Allowance caps would not be applied to the supported housing sector, or the wider social rented sector.

The Government followed this up with more information about a ‘fit for the future’ funding model, which addressed the concerns raised by the social housing sector and other key stakeholders. Further consultations will take place about this funding model before the final details are published.

The U-turn has been welcomed by many leading figures and associations in the sector.

The Rt Hon Frank Field MP, Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee, said:
“The Government has gone even further than we recommended, scrapping any local authority top-up for rent and housing costs in the supported housing sector, on top of the welcome announcement that they were scrapping the Local Housing Allowance as a basis for funding.

“As always however, the devil is in the detail. We need to know that all the necessary funding is in place. Likewise, costs must be controlled – taxpayers cannot fund whatever landlords in the sector demand. The new ‘sheltered rent’ cap must be set at a level that will allow investment in the sector to begin to reverse the steep shortfall in supported housing places.

“It is disappointing though that the Government refuses to address the postcode lottery that faces desperate women and children seeking refuge from domestic violence. It cannot be right that access to potentially life-saving shelter is determined by disparities in local authority funding and access rules across the UK. I hope they will reconsider.”

David Orr, Chief Executive at the National Housing Federation said:
“The removal of the LHA cap, represents a very welcome and significant shift from the Government and shows they recognise the value and importance of supported and sheltered housing. I am confident the new system outlined by the Government today addresses concerns about the long-term stability of funding for most schemes.

“This, coupled with assurances about levels of funding and a new timetable of 2020, will give housing associations the certainty they need to keep providing and building these homes.

“The Government has provided assurances that automatic entitlement will remain in place for people in short-term services, however we do need to consider the implications of a system where housing costs are paid through a local authority grant.

“We want to work with the Government to ensure users and providers are confident that the entitlement to payment is secure for the long term. There is still much at stake in the detail of the consultation and we look forward to working with the Government to get this right.”

Alas Rome was not built in a day and there is still much work to be done but the foundations are certainly starting to be laid.

*Figures were taken from a survey conducted by the National Housing Federation in May 2017 to which 69 housing associations responded.*
NEWS & EVENTS

On 8th November 2017, Langley held its Annual Review Launch at the House of Lords.

The event was a celebration of the fact that many of our clients were now living ‘ordinary’ lives, after years of destructive or chaotic behaviour. The Annual Review’s theme was about everyone deserving the chance to fit in.

The event was hosted by Lord Ramsbotham (former Chief Inspector of Prisons), with guest speakers Judge John Samuels and Minister of Prisons and Probation, Sam Gyimah MP.

Over 100 people attended, including delegates from the criminal justice, care, business and charity sectors. They were treated to an afternoon of heart-warming client stories, awards to Langley clients and staff and insights from Criminal Justice.

Minister Gyimah applauded the work of Langley and commended Langley’s reconviction rate of less than 3%.

The good news didn’t stop there as guests were treated to a surprise adaptation of John Legend’s ‘Ordinary People’ by a group of singers.

Tracy Wild, Chief Executive of Langley House Trust, said:

“\textit{The Annual Review Launch is a culmination of the excellent work of Langley’s clients and staff over the past year. Our guest speakers provided a wealth of knowledge into the Criminal Justice System and wholeheartedly praised our mission statement of establishing positive foundations so that people can lead crime-free lives and become contributors to society.}”

\textit{We’re just ordinary people, We don’t know which way to go}\n
\textit{‘Cause we’re ordinary people, Maybe we should take it slow.} \hfill - John Legend

\begin{quote}
\textbf{EVERYONE DESERVES THE CHANCE TO FIT IN.}
\end{quote}
Langley Christmas Appeal

Be a star this Christmas and provide for someone in need...
give an amazing gift this Christmas to someone who needs a home.

£25 can provide essential toiletries and food for someone coming out of prison with nothing.

£50 can provide replacement clothes for someone coming out of prison.

£100 someone’s bedroom is their home - this can provide the bedding and soft furnishings needed to make a bedroom feel like home.

Please enclose your gift along with a completed donation form and return this to us - please giftaid this if you can. Thank you!
OUR PEOPLE

--- the staff and volunteers who make the difference ---

CHRIS IS THE MANAGER OF OUR PARK VIEW PROJECT IN FLEETWOOD. HE RECENTLY WON OUR ‘UNSUNG HERO’ AWARD FOR CONSISTENTLY GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND WHAT WAS ASKED WITH A GENUINE CONCERN FOR HIS TEAM AND CLIENTS. HE IS DETERMINED TO HELP CHANGE CLIENTS’ LIVES AND PRODUCE RESULTS THAT LAST THE DISTANCE.

What was your significant life event before coming to Langley that influenced your decision to join?

My wife sadly passed away from breast cancer and I became a single dad with four children under the age of 10. As a pastor in a large church at the time, I came back from bereavement leave and found my experiences had given me empathy and an open door to support hurting and broken people in the community.

What process brought you to Langley?

As part of being a pastor, I had developed programmes to care and support offenders and people in recovery. One day, I “accidentally” discovered an advert for a Project Manager position at Langley and this gave me the opportunity to build upon the experience that I had started in the church.

What's been your biggest challenge?

Bringing up four teenagers without their mum whilst working full-time has been massive. But since joining Langley, I have seen Park View go through some huge changes – from being a 10-bed council-funded project to a 25+ bed “dispersed care” model where every client needs to be individually funded.

The staff team has doubled in 12 months, and the needs of clients have become more complex. However, the project has largely remained a happy, positive place with incredible support from our stakeholders, successful inspections, growth from our clients and commitment from our staff team.

What's been your proudest moment?

One of my proudest moments was receiving the feedback from our recent Care Quality Commission inspection. The Inspector’s observation and comments from the clients and staff reflected that Park View “oozed care”. As a result, the clients were queuing up to tell their stories of changed lives and their appreciation for the love and care shown by my team.

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

Coffee...!

Looking back, what impact do you want to have made?

Whatever I have been involved in in my life, be it church ministry or with Langley, I want the results to last the distance – and for our clients that means living life to the full – happy, meaningful and crime-free.

Who inspires you?

Forrest Gump – because “life is like a box of chocolates!”

Three words to describe life working for Langley

Busy, challenging, hope.

HANDS UP, WHO’S IN!

Our volunteer Chaplains play an integral part in the life, growth and health of Langley projects and teams. As well as providing spiritual support, they provide a listening ear, act as a bridge and ambassador to the wider community and help to organise and lead faith-based events.

We are thankful that three new Chaplains have recently joined our community: Pastor Pam to The Shrubbery; Michelle to Central Services and Murray Lodge and Vivien to House of St Martin. We are truly blessed that Langley has a team of chaplains who have our mission in their hearts.

We are also delighted to welcome the following volunteers to Langley: Ric, Rusilla, James and Katie, (Murray Lodge), Victoria (Chatterton Hey), Saiset (Central Services) and Tony (Ashden). As Christmas approaches, we extend Christmas greetings to all our volunteers across the Trust and we thank you all for giving Langley and Kainos the most precious gift you have – your time! Your hard work and dedication are truly appreciated.

If you are interested in joining our volunteering team and would like to find out more please contact Paula Smithson, Volunteer Manager:

Email: volunteermanager@langleyhousetrust.org or Tel: 07734 147314
We would love to share about the work of Langley with your organisation, church or local group. We know that the right support breaks the cycle of crime, reduces victims, restores families and makes society safer.

The more people who get on board, the more we can help others to live crime-free. If there is an opportunity to speak to your organisation, local group or church, please let us know.

Contact Dee Spurdle, Head of External Relationships:
d.spurdle@langleyhousetrust.org, 02476 587361

Thank you for being part of this journey of transformation and change
“Everyone deserves the chance to fit in.”

- Langley House Trust

Langley House Trust is an innovative Christian charity that provides specialist housing, programmes and support services in the community, and targeted advice in prisons, for offenders seeking to live crime-free. Since 1958 we have earned an enviable reputation for reducing reoffending with proven results.

Part of the Langley House Trust group, Kainos Community transforms lives through Challenge to Change, a pioneering prison wing community and post-release mentoring programme.

Regardless of a person’s history, our passion is to change every life for the better, working with people of all faiths and none.

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