

Supporting People Service User Newsletter: June 2006

Introduction

Welcome to our newsletter aimed at Lambeth tenants who receive Supporting People services. We hope that you find the Supporting People related stories and news interesting

and informative. We would like to hear your views and opinions on any of the topics covered in this issue. Please contact Jane Ritchie on (020) 7926 7520 or email the team on:
supportingpeople@lambeth.gov.uk

Who are Supporting People?



Some members of the team

Here are the nuts and bolts of Supporting People (SP) for people in our services:

- Supporting People commenced nationally in April 2003 and is funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government (formerly known as Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)
 - Lambeth Supporting People fund 368 services providing housing-related support to more than 5,000 people
 - The grant allocation we work with is around £21 million
- Some of the client groups we cover include vulnerable adults, older people, socially excluded groups, people with mental health problems and those with disabilities
 - Supporting People services are delivered through individual support packages agreed between you and your provider
 - Our key aim is to develop and fund new services that effectively meet the needs of local people; this is achieved in the following ways:
 - Reviewing services with in-depth scheme visits and interviews
 - Monitoring services every three months
 - Working closely with a wide range of partners and groups in similar fields e.g. Older Person forums, Mental Health groups
 - Communicating regularly with providers and asking you for your views on the services we provide

Your newsletter, your views

The team would like to hear from you if you are interested in contributing to this newsletter. The next one will be due in autumn 2006. Have you got something to say on community safety, life in Lambeth and/or your hopes for the future? You could try out a vox pops on your fellow tenants with any burning issues of the day. Or if you are on the verge of moving to your own tenancy we would like to hear about how you are finding this. These are just some ideas to get started on. We hope that people will embrace this newsletter and use it as a forum for exchanging ideas, views and opinions. Please send your emails to jcritchie@lambeth.gov.uk or write to:

**Supporting People
Phoenix House
10 Wandsworth Road
London, SW8 2LL**

Having your say...

Many of the people who use SP services have already had a say in both developing the 5 year Strategy and the programme of service reviews which has been undertaken over the last 3 years.

We want to ensure that your views continue to shape the future of the services we fund and how the SP Programme in Lambeth is managed.

These plans are set out in our User Engagement Strategy, which is available on our website (www.lambeth.gov.uk/supportingpeople) and includes the proposal to

develop a "User Engagement Panel" made up of service users who can represent the views of our wide range of clients.

Once established, the Service User Panel will be consulted on various aspects of SP work. They may for example be asked to;

- Join the SP Team to help select providers for newly commissioned services.
- Comment on the development of policies and strategies.
- Help formulate plans for future SP priorities
- Develop specific actions for the future involvement of SP service users

Support and training will be planned to help service user representatives carry out their role.



Lambeth sheltered housing residents meet the Mayor at an SP event

We have started preparing for this by looking at existing meetings where service users are involved and surveying service providers to identify user groups that already exist.

If you would like to become involved in the future of Supporting People Services and take part in the Service User Panel or would like some further information please contact; Jane Ritchie 020 7926 7536 or David Worrall 020 7926 9978

Lingham Court Launch



In early April, Supporting People were invited to the launch of Lingham Court; a new frail elderly sheltered scheme based in Stockwell. Lingham Court is a mixed use scheme and the first of its kind locally, providing homes for up to 30 older Lambeth residents with support needs. During a tour of the building we were impressed by this sophisticated, bright, spacious and modern looking complex.

The building never loses sight of its priority which is to cater for the needs and comfort of its tenants.

Wheelchair accessibility is possible throughout the entire building including the rooftop garden terrace and apartment balconies. There is underground heating throughout the building and plenty of large windows which enhance the light and airy feel at Lingham Court. Each apartment can incorporate any further adaptations required that will enable residents to live as independently as possible.

The construction process was as innovative as the design. The Victoria line runs beneath the development, therefore Metropolitan Housing Trust (MHT) had to meet strict weight

limits. Much of the building was prefabricated with pods (the rooms) being carefully aligned and slotted into place. Lingham Court's imaginative design was awarded with a 2005 Housing Design Award.

Whilst developing Lingham Court MHT looked to StepForwards extensive experience in running older persons' services by linking their sheltered housing schemes to social activities in the wider community. Lingham Court welcomes local residents' groups such as the Stockwell Portuguese community.

Computing made easy for Older People

Would you like free access to internet and computer training? If so, please contact Maurice McLeod or Tony Snow on **020 8672 9800** for information about free training sessions as part of the 'Myguide' project based in Lambeth. These sessions are designed to help those who have never used a computer before or for those concerned about internet safety, those finding it difficult to read the screen or use a keyboard can also attend.



SNAP !

Most Supporting People services in Lambeth can now only be provided following an assessment by the Support Needs Assessment and Placement team, better known as SNAP.

The team has been in operation for just over one year during which time support services have been arranged for over 400 people.

Council tenants can contact the team via their Area Housing Office but anyone can contact the team directly, or ask someone else to contact them on their behalf in order to arrange an assessment.

More information about Supporting People and the SNAP Team is available via www.lambeth.gov.uk/snap or www.lambeth.gov.uk/supportingpeople

To contact the SNAP Team:

Telephone 020 7926 4407

Email: infosnap@lambeth.gov.uk

The team is based at 2-7 Town Hall Parade, Brixton Hill, London SW2 1RP, but an appointment is needed for assessments.

Furniture projects

When people are first housed, the relief they feel at getting a roof over their heads can wear away when faced with bare, empty rooms. Many can get in to debt buying furniture, kitchen appliances and many of the other essentials needed to make a house a home.

For those on benefits, Morph sell high quality second hand furniture at low prices. SP have had a look at the website and the quality of the products on offer is exceptional.

Please look at www.morph.org for further information or contact them directly at their address:

Morph Store
19-23 Kingsland Road
Hackney
London, E2 8AA
Tel: 020 7168 2531

Other furniture re-use projects located in South London include:

South East

DAGE Deptford Action Group for the Elderly

Tim Hamilton, 71 Deptford High Street, SE8 4AA
t: 0208 6918823

Shaftesbury Resources Centre
Shan Rogbeer

93 Camberwell Station Rd
London, SE5 9JJ

t: 0207 7377475 f: 0207 7377022

e: srogbeer@shaftesburysoc.org.uk

South West

FURNITURE AID SOUTH THAMES
Block f, Offley Works, (Between 25-27 Clapham Road) The Oval, SW9 0JD

t: 0207 7937787 f: 0207 8207888

For further information on furniture re-use projects please look at the Furniture Re-Use Network website on www.frn.org.uk/.

Streets Alive

Streets Alive are an innovative theatre company based in Waterloo. They work with young people aged 16 to 25 who are in housing crisis, usually living chaotic lifestyles in hostels, temporary accommodation or on the streets. Streets Alive empower young people to move on away from the streets. This is achieved by using performance and

Streets Alive (continued)

theatre skills as a vehicle for confidence building. Despite the personal problems that many of these youngsters face, most new recruits readily give a huge amount of commitment to the theatre group. Streets Alive put this success down to the provision of a safe supportive space for self-expression in a programme that enables young people to move on in a healthy and positive way.

Streets Alive do outreach work in various hostels and drop-in centres across London. Any young people who express interest in the company are supported to join an Open College Network accredited programme.

Streets Alive tackle homelessness from a preventative angle by educating audiences about the reasons behind homelessness. They take their performances to various locations, including schools, youth centres, hostels, pupil referral units, conferences, art festivals and many other venues and events.

Supporting People were delighted to work with Streets Alive last year in conjunction with a homelessness event that was held at Lambeth Town Hall. Streets Alive gave us a wonderful theatrical performance which was one of the highlights of the day. If you would like further information about Streets Alive please check out their website on www.streetsalive.org.uk or contact them at their address:

Streets Alive
14 Baylis Road
London SE1 7AA
tel 020 7928 6822
fax 020 7928 7855



Streets Alive performing at a Lambeth SP event on homelessness

Thames Reach Bondway - Work Scheme by Michelle Binfield

Thames Reach Bondway has developed a new scheme – Giving Real Opportunities for Work (GROW) – which is intended to ensure that at least 10% of our workforce by 2007 will be former homeless people. GROW, which started in July 2005, will tackle organisational and cultural barriers within Thames Reach Bondway to provide new routes into employment for homeless people.

To achieve the 10% recruitment target, Thames Reach Bondway, which currently employs 320 people, has developed 12 traineeships for formerly homeless as a staged introduction to working in the homelessness sector and they in turn will provide support and training to other former homeless people. We aim to share the findings of this new initiative across the homelessness sector.

Thames Reach Bondway - Work Scheme (cont)

The GROW traineeships are a nine month training and development programme that offers people with little or no experience in this area, the opportunity to gain the skills and experience necessary to become employed in the sector as a support worker. Delivered by a range of training providers, trainees complete a comprehensive induction into the organisation, the trainee scheme and their specific role.

John Crowther, Director of Operations at Thames Reach Bondway, said: "User-employment makes a lot of sense to us, but is still rare amongst UK homelessness charities. We want to change things so that resettled people get more of the jobs, current service users see inspiring role models when they come to us, and we get the benefit of people's wealth of first-hand knowledge, expertise, and ingenuity. If other charities do likewise, the range of employment opportunities available to formerly homeless people will be substantial."

For more information about this initiative, please contact - michellebinfield@trb.info

Resident's story by StepForward

Residents name has been changed to protect his identity.

In 2005, Sidney moved to Lingham Court. At his previous residence, Sidney had experienced severe isolation which resulted in depression and an attempted suicide. He had

some difficulty with domestic tasks and required supervision. It was for this reason that he was referred to Lingham Court's extra care team.

Sidney was using a wheelchair but he found that this placed many restrictions on his life and this made his depression worse. Sidney's key support worker assisted Sidney with the purchase of a Mobility scooter. This dramatically improved the quality of Sidney's life. From this point on Sidney started collecting his pension and doing his shopping alone, which had a very positive impact on his overall mood.

On first arriving at Lingham Court, Sidney had tried to isolate himself from those around him. Therefore part of his support plan was to gently encourage him over two weeks to have one meal at the meals club. Sidney agreed to this and found that he enjoyed his first meal with the club; he started attending on a more regular basis. And it was here that Sidney made friends and became more confident. He also joined the tenant's social club as a committee member.

Sidney is a highly articulate individual and this makes him a great choice for his leading role within the service user's social club. Sidney enjoys this role and the group's next goal is to raise money for the social fund, to enable residents to have day trips, parties and further activities. With consistent support from his key workers and fellow residents Sidney was able to turn his life around with positive results. He is very happy and settled at the scheme and has continued to engage with all services.

Move-on interviews

James Mallon of Refugee Housing Association recently contacted ex-service users to find out how they had found moving into their own tenancy. Over half responded to his questions as shown below:

How do you feel in your new home?

Michelle: *Before it was good but now it is too small because of my kids.*

Tecleberhan: *Good*

Mulugette: *Very comfortable. I have learnt about how to run my own life independently and am working through it, thanks to RHA.*

Alemzewd: *It is good.*

Do you find the local services in your area good?

Michelle: *Yes.*

Tecleberhan: *Yes*

Mulugette: *I have some of them, such as the dentist and the GP.*

Alemzewd: *I haven't got any contact with them.*

How did you find the move on process?

Michelle: *Very good.*

Tecleberhan: *Very good.*

Mulugette: *It was smooth, and helped me to realise that I have a lot of responsibilities.*

Alemzewd: *It is good. Living independently is fantastic.*

Do you enjoy living in your new home?

Michelle: *Yes, but now we are one big family!*

Tecleberhan: *Very good.*

Mulugette: *Oh yes!*

Alemzewd: *It is good. But I still live in temporary accommodation.*

How did you find the support services when you lived at our

property?

Michelle: *Very good.*

Tecleberhan: *Yes, but it is a noisy area to live in.*

Mulugette: *They were extremely helpful. I learnt how to get the local services, manage my finances, understand and know the emergency services etc.*

Alemzewd: *It was very very good. Generally it was fantastic.*

Did you receive sufficient support after you moved on to independent housing?

Michelle: *Yes.*

Tecleberhan: *Not really.*

Mulugette: *Yes, but I believe I have gained enough while, I was in the hostel.*

Alemzewd: *Yes, I receive sufficient support.*

Are you studying any training courses or receiving further education?

Michelle: *No.*

Tecleberhan: *Not at the moment.*

Mulugette: *I am receiving further education.*

Alemzewd: *I started a course, but because of child care responsibilities I gave up.*

Have you achieved any educational qualifications?

Michelle: *Yes.*

Tecleberhan: *Yes.*

Mulugette: *Not yet.*

Alemzewd: *No*

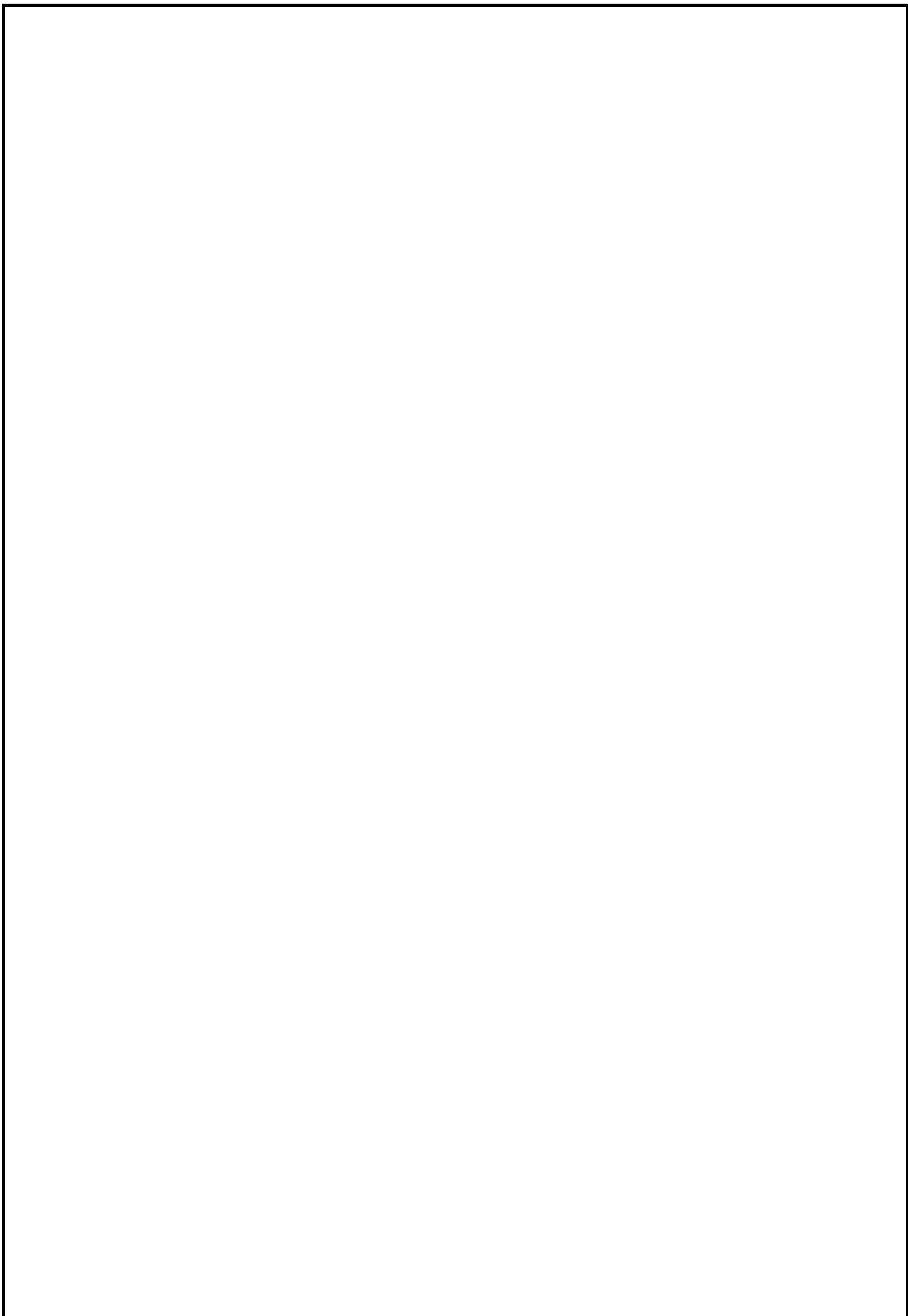
Have you found employment and do you enjoy your occupation?

Michelle: *No employment.*

Tecleberhan: *Yes, I enjoy it very much.*

Mulugette: *I am studying at the University of Kings College.*

Alemzewd: *No.*



Gaia Centre

In the coming months there will be a campaign in Lambeth to launch the Gaia centre; a brand new service for women who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence. In this newsletter we would like to highlight some of the issues around domestic violence including contact details for the Gaia centre.

Domestic violence is used to describe a range of behaviour, threats and abuse. Domestic violence can occur between partners, former partners or family members. It can include: physical abuse, threats, sexual abuse, financial abuse, verbal or psychological abuse, emotional abuse, and harmful traditional practices. Domestic violence exists across the whole of society. If you are experiencing it, you may feel isolated. But there are many women who have had similar experiences, and there are services to support you.

The Gaia centre combines different services that support women affected by domestic violence. It is a confidential service, where you will only deal with female staff. All the services and support at the centre are free of charge.

Domestic violence is an abuse of power and control. Women and children have the right to live their lives free from the threat of abuse.

The aims of the Gaia centre are to reduce the level of domestic violence towards women and children. The Gaia centre also aims to ensure that women using the centre are treated with respect and sensitivity in a supportive and confidential environment.

Contact details

Tel: 020 7733 8724

Fax: 020 7095 8976

Email: administrator@gaia-uk.com

If you are in immediate danger please call 999

If you need a refuge space please call 0808 2000 247

Opening Hours:

Monday 10am – 4pm

Tuesday 1pm – 4pm

Wednesday to Friday 10am – 4pm

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10 Wandsworth Road

London SW8 2LL

Email: jcritchie@lambeth.gov.uk

Tel: (020) 7926 7520