

Here to Help But
Not to Judge



Newsletter 17
August 2018

Lofty Heights has two clear aims; to improve people's quality of life in their own homes whilst providing jobs and training for local young people

Happy 6th Birthday to Us!

We told you that signing up to our newsletter would be worthwhile! Well, take a look and see what has happened since last time.

We had a party to unveil Percy – our big blue behemoth. Just look at what you helped us to achieve. And the day was so gorgeous that we were able to take a beautiful new team photo! As it's also our birthday it's a good time to reflect on just how far we've come. Olive reflects on 6 years of 'Against all Odds' Enterprise.

But in the meantime, look at our lovely team (if you can see past the lovely van)!



Introducing Homeward Bound



We have been hinting for several months now about an exciting new project on the horizon and we are delighted to be able to officially announce it in this our 6th Birthday edition of our newsletter.

Over the years we have seen many planned discharges from hospitals fail due to the condition of the home environment. Reasons such as the patient being unable to manage the stairs, no immediate space for a bed to be placed in a downstairs living/dining room, or everything appears to be in place and then it turns out that the heating and hot water does not work.

Homeward Bound is a 12-month pilot project. We will be working closely with NHS colleagues on the frail elderly wards at Ipswich Hospital and with community health teams. The aim of the project is to reduce the number of delayed discharges. Our team will be clearing space in the home so that hospital beds, mobility aids or care can be put in place. Enabling patients to be discharged to a safe home environment more quickly and to receive care at home for as long as possible.

This is not to be confused with our declutter work – our new Homeward Bound Service simply covers up to four hours (including travel) to make small changes within the home and make simple checks to ensure that the home is suitable to facilitate discharge and care to continue at home.

This pilot project has been funded by the Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG so only patients registered within this CCG's area are eligible for. Referrals can be made by Ipswich Hospital-based staff and community nursing teams by ringing our dedicated mobile number: 07783 588023 or 01473 34530

We are happy to take referrals from other areas but only patients from the Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG will have their work funded under this pilot project.

Although early days we are already receiving positive feedback about this new service

Neill Maloney, managing director, of The NHS Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust said "This is a great initiative that will really help people leave hospital quicker and go back to their own homes. It is most appreciated."

OT based at Ipswich Hospital "Handovers and information taken over the phone is precise and all essential information is captured with the referral. The range of jobs you are willing to help with is not too narrow and you will always do your best to meet the needs of the referral."

QUITE INTERESTING STUFF

Lofty Heights CIC took 200 enquiries about hospital discharge work between 2015 and 2018.

We carried out 100 of those for patients or family members willing or able to pay for our time to do the work.

We received requests from all over the county so time charged has to include travel.

The other 100 couldn't, or wouldn't, pay for that work and remained longer in hospital.

We are monitoring demand between the East and West of the county to see difference in demand levels and impact of length of stay in hospital between a 'free' service (East) and a paid for service (West).

We look forward to sharing more information about Homeward Bound in future newsletters

Lowestoft Tragedy - One Year On



Grenfell Tower was the site of a great tragedy. Before that, and more locally, there was a tragedy in Lowestoft. Most people will remember the fire in a hoarded home where sadly the gentleman and his carer both died. These are the loose facts that were reported at the time but most professionals who know that case know that it was more complex than that.

That case brought about some major changes in Suffolk. One of which is the welcomed Self-Neglect and Hoarding Policy and the awareness sessions that Suffolk County Council Safeguarding Board have been holding with professionals across the county.

We know that there have been many more deaths attributable to hoarded homes, it shouldn't take a tragedy to create change but, sadly, that is often the case.

If you haven't seen it for yourself you can find the policy and practice guidance here: <https://www.suffolkas.org/assets/Working-with-Adults/Policies-and-Procedures/Self-Neglect-/2017-01-04-FINAL-VERSION-Suffolk-Safeguarding-Adults-Board-Self-neglect-Policy.pdf> The referral form is accessible through the same site. There is also a pathway that explains how the process works.

We were pleased to be involved in the task group that helped to shape the Self-Neglect and Hoarding policy as this was one of the proposed outcomes from the first Hoarding Conference that Orbit Housing and Lofty Heights jointly organised in 2013. We also raise awareness by speaking up at meetings, providing training sessions to social care teams, through our social media, articles in local newsletters, magazines and radio.

We understand the difficulties that cluttered hoarded homes create. Cluttered, hoarded homes in Suffolk are everybody's problem, yet remain a 'Hidden Need'. We would like to suggest it as a research topic for the next **Suffolk Annual Public Health Report** or the **University of Suffolk** for inclusion in the next Suffolk Community Foundation 'Suffolk Hidden Needs Report'

Training Opportunity

Many people working with the new Self Neglect and Hoarding policy may not yet have experienced a hoarded home. We visit them on a daily basis, if you or members of your team would be interested in a job shadowing opportunity with Lofty Heights in order to gain a better understanding of the issues faced by people living in cluttered hoarded homes we would love to help. Call or email us on: Tel: 01473 345301 email: info@lofty-heights.org

CLUTTERED HOMES

If there is a fire in a home known to be hoarded the attending fire crews are likely to not enter the property. This is not a criticism – this is information that needs to be given to individuals.

If there is a medical emergency in a hoarded home critical care will be significantly delayed. We know of cases where it has taken several hours to safely reach the person inside.

Most hoarded homes are uncovered by a medical or maintenance emergency – for obvious reasons.

If you are supporting someone in a cluttered/hoarded home there are two questions to ask:

Could you get an ambulance stretcher into the property?

Could you access the stopcock?

We are often asked about the emotional effect of hoarding but there are serious practical consequences too.

Talking Rubbish

I keep telling people that we are not a rubbish removal company. It is not **what** we do, but it is something we know a lot about.

Fact: As a resident of Suffolk you can dispose of your household waste at any of Suffolk's Waste and Recycling Centres for *free. *charges for some items.

Fact: You can help your friends and family to dispose of their waste at any of Suffolk's Waste and Recycling Centres for *free.

Fact: If you can't drive to the tip, or have friends or family who can, you cannot access this service.

If you cannot access the tip then the onus is on **YOU** to source a person or company to dispose of your rubbish legally and responsibly. If your rubbish is dumped, by you or by someone you have employed, then **you** will be liable for the clean-up. Lofty Heights paid £105 to deposit a single bed and two armchairs at the tip in Bury. This is the trade price for waste disposal. So, if you are quoted £40 by a 'man in a van' service please question their disposal source.

Solutions

Bulky Waste - You could book a bulky waste collection from your council – as long as you can get that item to the boundary of your property. You will pay for this service – see blue info strip. There may be issues with physically moving items out of the property. There are charities that may do this for you, or Helpful Friends Schemes. Lofty Heights can help – we do this by charging for the time it takes travelling to and from the property and the time it takes to do the job. We can dismantle/deconstruct items as well as lift them.

We recommend the use of bulky waste collections as the cheapest option but be aware that things that come apart can be considered multiple items. A bed breaks down into up to 4 parts. In Ipswich that's within the lowest price but take a look at what that would cost in Suffolk Coastal area!

Council Bin Hire: This can be done for as little as £30. It is an excellent solution for times when a big clear out or 'blitz' is needed. It does still rely on you being physically able to pick up the items and move them.

Skip Hire: Starting at around £150 (dependent on size and location) – we use these when there is a large amount of stuff to be disposed of. Beware: you cannot put just anything in a skip! There are likely to be additional charges for items such as: mattresses, carpets and fridges/freezers. This solution still relies on your ability to transfer the refuse from the home to the skip (large skips will have high sides too)

Hazardous Waste: This is also the local council and is unique to each area.

We try to find legal, inventive and environmentally friendly solutions to waste problems. We're happy to share this with you – just ask!

BULKY COLLECTIONS LEAGUE TABLE

Did you know that bulky collection fees are set by each different local authority? You may do, but did you know how much they varied!

West Suffolk: £32 for up to 5 items – with a 50% discount once a year for 'qualifying benefit' recipients

Ipswich Borough Council: £35 for up to 5 items – with 1 free collection each year for recipients of qualifying benefits

Babergh & Mid-Suffolk: £39.30 for up to 5 items – no discounts available

Waveney Norse: £39 for up to 3 items – no discount available

Suffolk Coastal: £46 for 1 item + £16 each additional item – No discount available

NB: Waveney Norse and Suffolk Norse have joined together to make East Suffolk but their individual pricing structures have not changed yet.

New Team Time

We are Recruiting - Engaging, Supporting and Motivating Young People

Like many other people we were shocked and saddened to learn of the unnecessary waste of young lives in Ipswich in recent times. Waste of young lives not just through dying young at the hands of others, or the impact this may have on siblings and friends. Waste of young lives by being involved in crime or drugs. Waste of young lives through anxiety, depression, lack of hope and motivation.

We want to make a difference

During August we will be holding 3 information sessions around Ipswich to let young people between the ages of 19 and 24 know about the opportunity to take part in our new training, work experience and employment programme. We are pleased to be working in partnership with Realise Futures who will be delivering over 5 weeks our training programme, covering topics such as Health and Safety, Customer Service, employability skills etc. We are targeting NEETs and Care Leavers in particular. If you are supporting a young person and want more information please email info@lofty-heights.org and we will send you further information.

We are trying to do our bit. What will you do to help us help young people?

Please talk to us if you have any access to funding or any in kind benefits that will help us to help our young people. We need your help so we can help others. Please email olive@lofty-heights.org if you would like to have a chat about how you might be able to help us help young people. We will do the hard work. With little effort on your part you can be part of a young person's success.

Dates and Times

Thursday 16th August – Info Bar Ipswich, Constantine House, Constantine Rd - 2-4pm

Wednesday 22nd August – Gainsborough Community Library, Clapgate Lane - 1-3pm

Wednesday 29th August – YMCA Ipswich, 2 Wellington Street – 2-4pm

Would Your Company Benefit from Our Talent?

Once our training programme is complete we will have young people, freshly trained and demonstrating they want a chance of work. We want the young people we engage to get the most out of their experience. Sadly, we cannot afford to employ them all but we will have already started to 'knock the rough edges off them' so other local employers could give a young person a chance.

Would your company like to interview any of these young people for any upcoming positions you may have?

Together let's make a difference to the lives of vulnerable young people in Suffolk

www.lofty-heights.org

info@lofty-heights.org

IT'S NOT JUST WORK EXPERIENCE

What our intake get is not just a sticking plaster.

They have five weeks of intensive learning, plus real workplace experience, and a chance at a real job.

Placements are a vital part of the training that we give.

We'd like to talk to local businesses, local authorities, and housing providers about providing placements involving practical skills:

Neighbourhood wardens
Local Parks
Handyman services
Charity Groups
Sheltered Schemes

Anyone that provides practical support to people, especially in their own homes, could help to make this a superior experience for our group!

If you are about to start an apprentice scheme or advertise a role, then talk to us because we could introduce you to some home-grown candidates.

Tel: 01473 345301

Case Study with Georgina

My complex case study this month focuses on a customer 'Eve' who lives in



private rented accommodation. Her landlord is taking advantage of a free offer to have the heating system upgraded, but the clutter in the flat means carrying out the work is impossible. 'Eve' is at risk of eviction if the work can't be done.

The referral was made after weeks of the customer trying to declutter with help from her family and social worker. Initially

opposed to the idea of outside help, 'Eve' reluctantly agreed to Lofty Heights coming to assess.

'Eve' presented as very nervous, and highly anxious about the future. She explained that her possessions meant a great deal to her, that she had nothing as a child and the thought of everything being taken away filled her with fear and panic.

I was able to reassure her that nothing would be removed without her approval, we would help her to make decisions, but she would be in control.

'Eve' had a lot of possessions from late family members, as well as presents and collectables that she was keeping to pass on. All of these were jumbled together and impossible to find, in piles that were unstable and liable to 'avalanche'.

Eve's anxiety meant that she could only work with a female team member. As the timescales were so tight, we juggled appointments to make sure a female could be on the team. We supported 'Eve' to contact family to come and collect items she was saving for them, helped her to sort and put in order the things she wanted to keep, and encouraged her to let some items go to charity.

When the landlord visited and agreed that enough had been done to prevent eviction and allow the work to go ahead, 'Eve' was delighted and gave us a lovely thank you card to

express her relief. It took 3 weeks from the date the referral came in, to the work being completed. If we hadn't been able to act quickly, build trust and accommodate personal needs, it's difficult to imagine what would have happened to this person and all her belongings.



LOFTY HEIGHTS DECLUTTERING SERVICE

Georgina has been with us for 18 months now. She joined us from Alzheimers Society and is a qualified social worker.

The level of clutter that we deal with is often misinterpreted by others – it is seen as laziness, or having low personal standards, or something that just needs removing.

We will never 'just remove' items from a cluttered home. Each of the items represents something important to that person. As such, they need to be considered calmly and patiently so that the person in the centre of this feels comfortable and confident that they can part with it. If they can't do that then we can organise a space to make it safe until such a time as they are ready to try again.

It's Georgina's job to know what that person needs right now and to help that happen.

It helps that she is very good at doing that.

Curtis Update

Curtis is now a fully-fledged member of Team Lofty (see photo on front page), working with us for 1 day a week. He has transformed our warehouse, our website and our office. He was also responsible for taking fabulous photos.

Curtis has many talents, we can prove those talents to other employers. Not only is he gaining valuable working experience but growing the list of achievements as he goes. Although, he is highly computer literate, a fabulous photographer, and all-round technical wiz there was no evidence of using those skills in a working environment. Until now!

Words from Olive – A Reflection on 6 Hard Years

There have been many challenges and at times it has felt like a daunting roller coaster ride. With a background in Public Health, Health Improvement, and community development work it has been hard to take my 'health hat' off. I wanted to give vulnerable young people a better future, opportunities for training and employment, to make a better life, but also to help vulnerable people in the community.

Years 1-2 - I felt alone with my crazy idea to address fuel poverty and create employment opportunities. Long days and sleepless nights followed.

Year 3 - Ploughing on against the odds I was joined by 2 volunteer directors, a right-hand woman, in the form of Juliet Freeman, part time, decluttering service development officer, grant funded for 2 years by the Tudor Trust. What joy to have some help to keep the 'show on the road'. Year three saw demand on our loft emptying and decluttering services grow, expanding to gardening and other small jobs. This created the opportunity for us to give employment to another group of young people. Hooray.

Year 4 - worries about funding intensify and sadly we had to let Juliet go as funding ran out; Even longer days and more sleepless nights, as I tried to do everything myself. Not possible. I needed temporary help in the office, cue Jaki. What a risk, with money so tight. Shortly, the impact of that bold decision was felt. Having Jaki in the office to answer the telephone, signpost people to sources of help resulted in more work. Hooray. Jaki came with a background in Housing, a great asset to Lofty Heights. She also sorted our processes and set up databases that meant better monitoring and recording of our work.

Year 5 - Evaluation of the impact of our decluttering service meant that six months later the Tudor Trust granted us a further two years funding. I am eternally grateful to them for their faith in us. It meant we were able to replace Juliet with Georgina. Days are becoming less long and sleepless night are fewer, I even managed a holiday.

By **Year 6** I have learned so much. I have met many interesting, inspiring people. I have a fantastic network of people, including 3 amazing unpaid directors and our staff. They "get me" believe in 'the vision' and make such a difference. Without this tremendous help and support Lofty Heights could not be the success it is today. So, as we celebrate our sixth birthday I would personally like to thank you, everyone that helped us get this far, for your help and support. Here's to the next six years.....

Olive Quinton

Our Achievements

So, what does success on a shoe string look like?

- Reintroducing 20 vulnerable young people to a learning environment and helping them to gain new qualifications
- Providing work experience for 12 young people
- Paid employment for 8
- Turning 'frightened boys' into confident 'working men' and improving their future life chances.
- Announcing that we are starting our next recruitment aimed at NEETs and Care Leavers. Working with Care Leavers will be a new area of work for Lofty Heights and something we are looking forward to.

All this and that's not including the 100s of vulnerable people and family carers we have helped in the past 6 years.