

Here to Help But  
Not to Judge



Newsletter 19  
March 2019

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

## Impact - Tastic

We have hit the ground running this year! Homeward Bound has taken its 90<sup>th</sup> referral (at time of print), our new recruits have astounded us at how well they have settled in and Lofty Heights is about to run its very first dedicated hoarding training! We have plans afoot to re-apply for funding for working with carers – this service has been sorely missed by many who supported us in our very early years. We do all of this without funding!

**Feedback** – it's only a nuisance to musicians!!! Please let us know what content you would like to see in our newsletters. Do you yearn for our case studies, do you live for our stats? or look forward to the types of issues we raise?

Please share your copy of our newsletter with your friends, neighbours, and colleagues. GDPR legislation decimated mailing lists throughout the land with the opt-in rule – so let everyone know what they are missing!!!

In this issue we demonstrate the impact we are having in the many areas, trying not to be a broken record here but Lofty Heights' only income is the charge for our services. We give free advice, assessment visits, training to young people, attendance at network meetings, MASH meetings, talks to professionals (including MPs), and estimates.



## Lofty Heights CIC First Ever Dedicated Hoarding Training is SOLD OUT



Working Effectively with Hoarders

Tuesday 12/03/19 9:30am to 4:30pm

Venue - Rural Enterprise Hub, Otley

### What you will learn:

- Hoarding disorder and its possible causes
- OCD, including causes, prevalence, symptoms and links to hoarding
- Tools to help identify and work with hoarders
- Understand and be able to categorise different types of hoarders using a validated screening tool
- Understand how to work effectively and creatively with hoarders using proven methods and recognised techniques
- Different support and specialist treatment options for hoarders.
- Enforcement techniques for hoarders

Cost = £132 Per Person

For information or bookings

Call - 01473 345 301

Email - [info@lofty-heights.org](mailto:info@lofty-heights.org)

**Lunch is not included,**  
Refreshments are available



### **Course Details as described by HQN**

Hoarding is not against the law but the damage it can cause often breaches tenancy agreements, Public Health legislation and could even be a safeguarding issue.

Hoarders need to be identified as quickly as possible and support offered – or in extreme cases enforcement action taken. There are many types of support – decluttering and therapy, behavioural contracts, SMART monitoring. Hoarders must be properly assessed using appropriate and accredited tools.

This course will explore all the recognised options available to staff working with hoarders as well as help organisations create policy, procedures and protocols. It will look at the role of housing professionals as well as how health or social care specialists can assist.

### **Who should attend?**

All housing, care and support staff as well as repairs and frontline staff who have direct contact with customers will benefit from this course as hoarding is so prevalent and has such an impact on customers and services alike.

### Lofty Heights Takes Initiative

Frustrated by the lack of quality training locally, we have

teamed up with HQN to commission our own. Trainer Danny McGowan hosted some very excellent training in Chelmsford a few years ago and his knowledge and delivery impressed us. We are really pleased to have secured Danny for our training.

There is a lot of confusion between cluttered and hoarded homes, collectors and people who have got into a muddle. We aim to help with how to categorise these key individual issues in order to help identify the help that is needed.

The venue is Otley College, thank you to Digby Chacksfield who runs the Rural Enterprise Hub at Otley for offering us a venue.

### Update

The training was a great success (a full report will be given next time) and we have had requests for more. So please let us know what you want. If enough people from specific areas make the demand then we can organise training tailored to the needs of the group. We are very excited about this prospect – Suffolk really needs access to affordable, local training on these issues.

*Lofty Heights CIC receives no funding to provide training. Could you help fund us to do more?*

## New Recruits Update

As you will know Lofty Heights does not do anything by halves. Our recruitment process took us into many unusual places, working in partnership with many support services to be able to introduce ourselves to young people who were needing extra help to find employment. We are delighted to have had the opportunity to create new links with the Suffolk County Council Leaving Care Team as we are really keen to give care leavers opportunities with us in future. We also re-established links, since the closure of the MyGo youth employment centre, with Job Centre Plus and have developed a really successful relationship with Realise Futures who we worked with for the first time to deliver our latest training programme. We will certainly be working with them again in the future. We do not receive funding for the work we do to provide training, work experience and employment opportunities for young people. So we are extremely grateful to Realise Futures for providing the funding for those on the course aged over 19 years and to Orbit Group and SCC Virtual Schools for sponsoring two places for eighteen-year olds to whom we otherwise could not have offered places. Working collaboratively, we were able to provide training to nine young people.



Our process is more complex than regular jobs because we look beyond the CV and the qualifications to find young people who demonstrate the dedication, will, desire and commitment to work. It starts with a 6 weeks training course, the end goal of the training to earn a two-week placement for work experience with Lofty Heights leading to the opportunity to be interviewed for a paid employment opportunity with us. New trainees start on a part time basis with the opportunity to increase their hours following successful completion of a probationary period. Our aim is to help young people gain confidence and skills and move away from Lofty Heights to other employers in due course.

That is a whole lot of ifs and maybes but it works. Nine young people were re-introduced to education and they all signed up for volunteering to further their experience. Everybody made it through to finish the course. Some of them chose to pursue further training – which is a real breakthrough moment for young people disengaged from learning. We are very impressed by them all. Lofty Heights hopes to celebrate this success with a ceremony – watch this space for the results.

The feedback received from one young person makes all the effort and challenges we face worthwhile. *“I started induction today for a job with B \* (a large, well known company). Thanks for the opportunities you gave me, it means a lot, you have changed me a lot and had faith in me and that means a lot. If it wasn’t for you, I don’t know where I would be. Thank you I am very grateful to you.”*



### Dan – Lofty Heights CIC Trainee

*“Having a job has made a massive difference. I expected that, but it has changed everything in areas of my life that I didn’t expect. It has also improved my relationships. I have something to say when people ask me how I am or what I’ve been doing. I have things to talk about; the different types of work that I’ve done, the difference that the work I do makes to people’s lives. I have a feeling of satisfaction when I finish a job and see what I’ve achieved, what we’ve all achieved. Finally, I have more money. I’ve been able to take my partner out for a meal and a drink. I was able to pay for that. It made me feel like a man.*

*Working isn’t just about the money, it’s about worth.”* Daniel Dawson.

Lofty Heights CIC receives no funding towards their employment programmes to date. Could you help fund us to do more?

## Untold Added Value



We have wholly embraced partnership working, we gave a talk about it at the recent SCC Self Neglect and Hoarding Conference. We feel it's necessary to say thank you to some of our partners for the difference they have made to our customers. **The Forge Church at Thurston** runs a furniture bank. Through their dedicated volunteer, John, they collect and distribute surplus furniture to those in need. This also helps people needing to make room because they can donate good quality items that can go on to have a whole 'nother life with a new family. Age UK Suffolk have also strengthened ties with us, they will take surplus household items to sell in their shops and that helps people on low incomes to furnish and decorate their homes.

## Campaigning

We are trying to do our bit to encourage waste reduction and to encourage people to repair, reuse and recycle unwanted possessions. Sometimes it is as simple as knowing who needs what and when. Through our networks we know that we can take craft materials, DVDs and junk jewellery (amongst others) to **Re-Create**. Here they will be used as therapeutic tasks and eventually be sold in the Re-Create shop to raise funds (and the running of the shop has training value too). Wood and timber are needed by **Genesis** who will either re-purpose it or burn it as fuel.

One of our most recent partnerships is with **Repair Re-Use Recycle Colchester**. They will collect household electricals to restore and sell on at very low prices in their shop in Queen Street – now open Saturdays and Sundays. They are selling vacuum cleaners, microwaves and kettles from as little as £5 and they have donated some of these items back to us to help vulnerable people in need.



We have recently been interviewed on BBC Radio Suffolk speaking about reducing the waste of medical equipment including walking frames and crutches, medication and incontinence pads. Regrettably we see too many being thrown away. Prior to our cage rattling it was standard practice to tell people to dispose of these items. The medical aids amnesty of two years ago was so successful that it has become policy to collect **all** items.

**Impact:** The initial amnesty in March 2017 saw 8,500 items returned with a cost benefit of £85,000 according to West Suffolk CCG report April 2017

Imagine if we could do the same for the return of unopened incontinence pads and catheter items? Until recently we were giving these to charity shops to resell to the public but with the ease of access to bulk prescriptions these items are in danger of becoming landfill. Apart from the problem of the large orders cluttering up people's home, the fire risk around that issue, the sheer waste that we see when people's needs change is appalling. I feel a campaign coming on....

*Lofty Heights CIC receive no funding for their campaign work or the environmental and social impact of this dedication to recycling. Could you help fund us to do more?*

## Homeward Bound News

We have received our 90<sup>th</sup> referral! We knew it was a good idea long before the I&ECCG began to talk to us about it – we had been providing the service to Suffolk for six and half years previously as a chargeable service. However, we had still underestimated its impact on patients and



families in East Suffolk, not to mention the hospital staff that organise patient discharge from hospital.

**Case 1:** Gentleman with mental health needs admitted to hospital with a physical health crisis. Once treated he needed a hospital bed to be installed. The stay in unfamiliar surroundings was already worsening the patient's mental health condition. However, he had no family or support network to make space nor to attend to the delivery. It sounds simple BUT without Homeward Bound the gentleman would have been left on the ward, or gone to respite care, until somebody could attend his home. This may have had to happen twice – to attend to make the space and then to accept the delivery of equipment. Prior to Homeward Bound – did you know – hospital staff would have carried out this work. An OT and a member of the ward staff would travel out, maybe twice, to ensure that this work happened.

**IMPACT** – We saved up to twelve hours of medical professional time, plus the on-costs of the cover needed to allow them to leave the ward, and a week of bed time whilst trying to co-ordinate other options to make this happen. Not only did we prevent this scenario but we also saved Medequip time, manpower (because our team could help with moving equipment), but also the potentially missed appointment.

**OT feedback** – “You guys are amazing – is there anything you don't do!”

**Case 2:** An elderly gentleman receiving end of life care needed hospital equipment installed to allow him home for his final days. The only person in the property was his equally elderly wife who could not move furniture. There was no capable family member available to help and their support network was also elderly. Homeward Bound attended within 24 hours of the referral, they made the space and reported back to the team at the hospital. The gentleman arrived home later that day. Prior to Homeward Bound it is highly likely that the gentleman would have died in hospital, in direct opposition to his wish to die at home. His wife would have struggled to visit as she was reliant on lifts and favours. If the gentleman was to get home then hospital staff would have had to attend and carry out the work themselves, again two medical professionals for several hours, leaving ward short of staff or additional cover to be paid for.

**IMPACT** – reduced professional time, bed time reduced, end of life wishes upheld, stress and worry greatly reduced to immediate family.

**OT feedback** – “The family wanted me to tell how very grateful they are to you, they were at their wits end'.

**Case 3** – Elderly woman required hospital bed installed. Only family available was her daughter with no help from other family members for at least ten days – due to a family holiday. As a single person cannot carry furniture alone, we attended the next day and enabled delivery to go ahead.

**IMPACT** – Discharge would have been delayed for 10 days or the OT plus ward staff would have attended to help. Mother and daughter both have reduced stress, healing at home is always better for people, reduced costs to service.

**Customer feedback** – “Thank you so much for your help, your people were lovely, all of them, we are both so grateful.”

We launched Homeward Bound in June last year – with it taking off fully by August. In six months, we have uncovered 7 self-neglect cases, 6 hoarded homes, and enabled 90 discharges to happen (figures rising daily). If we only saved 1 day's bed space per patient then that is 90 days saved, but we know it's potentially significantly more. We do know that some of those cases would have been weeks awaiting funding or 'outside the box' solutions were it not for the Homeward Bound service.

## Equal Access to Waste Disposal



Lofty Heights CIC has come across nearly every waste disposal problem over the years. We've worked with every borough and district council in Suffolk to support our customers to reclaim their homes. Recently we took our findings to Ipswich MP Sandy Martin. Having been appointed as shadow minister for Waste and Recycling, we could think of nobody more motivated to hear about our findings. We have an ongoing issue with access to Suffolk County Council's recycling centres and we did talk in length about this. We were also able to discuss the disparity in charges for local bulky waste collections. If you consider that these collections are for residents who are unable to gain access to the recycling centres due to lack of transport or by being physically unable to move items to dispose of them. If you also consider that **all** domestic waste can be taken to the tip by householders, for free,

then bulky waste collections can be seen as a tax on those too poor to own their own transport or too frail to move their items.

In nearly every borough there is a form of bulky waste collection. If you are unable to move the unwanted items to the outside of your property then you cannot use that service either. So, the elderly or immobile are doubly penalised. Not only do they have to pay for items to be collected from their home but they also have to find someone to enter their home to remove the items for collection. It does also open up various safeguarding issues, but the difficulty is more of an insurance one. If elderly people are in need of these services there is a concern about the risk of fraud or other crime in this situation.

We all know that 'tip run services' and cheap waste disposal abound across social media, with Facebook full of offers to take away huge piles of mattresses, sofas, carpets for as little as £20. We also know that fly-tipping has increased dramatically since the restricted opening times of the tip began, since the implementation of charges for certain types of waste, and since the need to apply for permits for skips to be parked on the road, along with the additional costs for the supply of lights and cones from skip hire companies.

With all of this stuff that isn't working why not just allow people to nominate an able-bodied person/company to carry this stuff to the tip? Disposal of waste should not become **Trade Waste** unless it is created by a trade. It is domestic waste that people should not have to pay a dividend on because they are physically incapable of carrying it to the tip.

Please let us know if you would support a scheme whereby people could give testimony that waste taken to the tip by not for profit organisations or Charities is the householders personal domestic waste. This would enable more help to be given to the vulnerable in our society to live in clean and uncluttered homes.

With the complexities of Universal Credit and the ongoing issues with PIP assessments we need a system that is not reliant on the production of evidence of receipt of current 'mobility related benefit payments'.

These payments are stopped more often than they are paid. After all, Mrs Lady who is 93 is not going to be in receipt of a mobility benefit but it is unreasonable to expect her to carry her sideboard to the tip, or even lug it through the house by herself. It is also unreasonable to charge her for moving items to the outside of her property, and again for collection by the council.

*Lofty Heights CIC receives no funding for towards its campaigning for changes to waste policies. Could you help fund us to do more?*



## Thank You to Cllr Nicky Yeo and SCDC

Nicky has been a keen supporter of Lofty Heights CIC and she was highly supportive when we ran our 'Plea for Percy' Campaign at the end of 2017. At that time Nicky was very apologetic that she had spent her budget for the year but would help out with any shortfall once April 2018 arrived and refilled her pot. By April we had reached our target and were ready to purchase 'Percy' our big blue behemoth. However, we were then faced with the need to get the new arrival sign-written and the bill that goes with it.



Thank you Councillor Yeo for stepping into the breach. Nicky's donation of £500 paid for the signage and for the adaptations inside to keep tools safe whilst traversing the length and breadth of the county.

Percy has been on the road for almost a year now and what a difference he has made. He's travelled over 8,000 miles with the Lofty team. We have not had to hire a van since his arrival, this means that we have saved our customers, primarily ACS and people on low incomes, the burden of vehicle hire on their bills. We have saved miles by reducing the number of journeys needed when transporting items, whether in a house move or declutter, meaning we have also reduced our emissions and our carbon footprint.

*Lofty Heights CIC received an excellent response for this fundraising project – the only funding we received last year.*

## Job Shadowing Opportunities



Six months ago we offered staff from other organisations the opportunity of job shadowing experience with us. We thought it was a good idea but it has been even more successful than we could have predicted. Before Christmas we were able to feedback about Anne from Orbit's experience and since then we have had a senior officer from ACE Colchester spend a day with us and we are making plans for two people undertaking their social work degrees and with the offer from Sandy Martin MP that will be five!

Lofty Heights CIC goes into some of the most hoarded properties in Suffolk. We do this with a shocking regularity. We also go into chaotic and cluttered homes, and there is a very big difference between the two. Most people that work in housing or support services might only see one case throughout their career and those working in areas where they are drafting policy may never see inside a hoarded home ever! So it makes sense for us to open up the opportunity to experience the problem first-hand and to meet the people living in those situations.

**Impact:** Five professionals have gained experience in hoarding, the causes, how to approach the task and learning from case studies of our previous work.

**Unintended Impact:** during one of our job shadowing experiences the professional involved a trained OT was able to make suggestions about the space needed for mobility aids enabling us to better plan the layout of the room and persuade the next of kin to allow for additional furniture to be moved from the room to create a safer space.

*Lofty Heights CIC is not funded as a training program for professionals. We do not charge for this service. Could you help fund us to do more?*

### A Fine Line by Georgina Salmon

I once knew a woman who cleaned to excess.  
Her husband despairs; the cat can't care less.  
Once she has started, she cannot be stopped.  
She dusts and polishes, sweeps up and mops.  
The cat tries to hide: a quick outmanoeuvre.  
But she tracks him down with her new hand-held  
hoover.

She harries her husband to get out of bed.  
To straighten the sheets, before taking her meds.  
The good man contributes by cutting the grass.  
But most of the time, he just sits (buffing brass).  
It's unclear what started this frantic hysteria.  
This compulsive battle with dirt and bacteria.  
He puts it down to the grief they both hide:  
But you can't scrub away so much pain deep inside.  
And though their house sparkles, her hands are red  
raw.

Just one baby photo kept safe in a drawer.  
He wants them to go back to living a life.  
His misses the laughter: he misses his wife.

I once know a woman who cleaned not enough.  
Her place was alarming; all cluttered with stuff.  
Flies in the jam; dishes stacked in a tower;  
Unidentified food; milk gone solid and sour.  
There was rubbish to walk on instead of the floor.  
Junk mail and junk food obstructed the door.

### Finally

In this newsletter we have tried to give a flavour of the impact we have and the difference we make to people's lives. Summed up in the feedback below.

*"I instructed Lofty Heights in connection with an estate I am managing. In all my years of practice, I have never come across a property quite like this. I was seriously concerned at the outset that the task would be too much for any one company to take on. Despite my concerns here, however, Lofty Heights not only managed the clearance of the property efficiently and professionally, but project managed any additional elements where necessary. I could not have completed the work in this matter without the assistance of Lofty Heights. I would happily recommend their services to anyone looking to achieve the clearance of a property, however, big or small the task."* Local solicitor.

Dear Lofty Heights,

Thank you so much for moving furniture upstairs at my mums house. This made space for a single bed and speeded up hospital discharge. The two guys who came were very thoughtful and efficient. Thank you all. Family of patient

We hope you enjoy receiving our newsletters and that it gives an insight into why all of us here at Lofty Heights are proud of what we do.

Olive Quinton

She desperately wanted her house to be neat.



But each task she started remained incomplete. It's unclear what triggered the chaos to build. Some parents can't nurture- they too are unskilled. Foster care helped, but the damage was done:

The best form of defence is Attack Everyone.  
So, anxious and lonely and crippled with doubt;  
There was no one to visit and she dare not go out.  
She's been offered help, but she's still too afraid.  
It's hard to reach out from behind barricades.

These women; so different (though almost the same).  
Both trapped in their prison of self-harm and shame.  
A fine line between them – a mental tightrope.  
They're using the wrong end of life's telescope.  
Reliving the trauma, exposing the wound.  
An ocean so vast, but they've been marooned.  
Behind these four walls, whether cluttered or clean,  
All sense of normality ceases to be.  
They need to feel kindness: to hear someone speak  
About grief, loss and sadness: the havoc they wreak.  
Talk to someone, hear a different view;  
Let somebody listen to what you've been through.  
Clear a path to the front door: put down the bleach.  
Choose freedom, choose life. It's not out of reach.

© Georgina Salmon, Decluttering Officer, Lofty Heights