

Here to Help But
Not to Judge



Newsletter 21
December 19

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

More People Homeward Bound with Lofty Heights

We are proud to announce that our Homeward Bound Scheme is now expanding to West Suffolk. Last year's pilot for the Ipswich and East CCG was very successful. We had one hundred and twenty-seven referrals in the first twelve months. If we only saved one day of hospital time for each of those people, we have saved I&E CCG a staggering £50,800. Now consider the fact that in some cases we saved up to two weeks of bed occupancy...

In other news, we have expanded our team to include our handyman Mark. This means that we can bring added value to our already comprehensive services. We have found this to be in high demand, especially in the work that we do to help carers. This is a major part of what we do. We find out what people need and we find a way to make it happen.

This has been a good year for making stuff happen.



Pre-Employment Recognition

Always proud to be different, Lofty Heights are being recognised for the work we do to help young people to become great employees. We have secured a grant to provide two separate pre-employment training courses for Ipswich Borough Council.

Unlike other short courses, ours is being designed by some of the young people that we have helped. We are also talking to employers in our area about what skills they need young people to have when starting work.

We are especially keen to work with young people who are care leavers or those who are young carers. These are the people who face the greatest challenges. If you are working with young people in the 18-24 year old age group then please get in touch with us. We want to help as many people as possible with this project.

We are already preparing for our first intake so contact us now if you want to be included.

Don't Take Our Word For It!

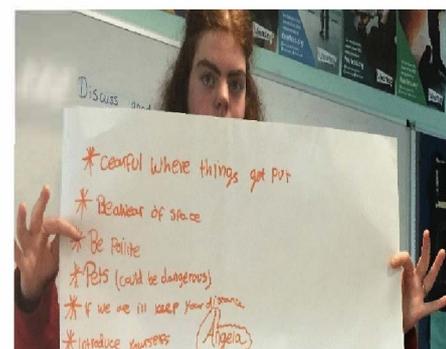
The way that we do things has been shaped by our experience. It's often slower, more costly, and, historically, we have been overlooked in favour of shorter, cheaper, quick-fix style working. However, more of our young people get results, they re-engage with learning, they start to make plans, and they grow in confidence. This makes such a difference. It is confidence and self-belief that enables them to make positive choices about what they want to do, rather than just taking any job. They can genuinely consider what it is that they want to do with their lives and begin to work towards it. Becky joined our training course last year. She successfully completed the course, she then earned a place in our work experience scheme, after which she was interviewed and offered a position with us as a trainee. It hasn't all been plain sailing but Becky has done all of this whilst dealing with a very difficult housing situation.

What does a job mean to me? By Becky

Having a job with Lofty Heights has been nothing but a positive. I wouldn't be where I am today without it. I enjoy feeling part of a team because it makes me feel confident. I certainly have learnt lots of new skills, I go out of my comfort zone lots, doing things I wouldn't have done before, e.g. stepping on a ladder! No day is easy, it's challenging, but that's what I enjoy.

I now have my own place through the council, after waiting a very long time. Without this job I wouldn't have had the chance or the confidence. I have also been able to buy things for my flat. I have the confidence to talk to my neighbours because, before Lofty Heights, that wouldn't have happened!

I just want to say thank you to Lofty Heights for giving me a chance and having faith in me.



During her time with us Becky has shown a real flair for working in one to one situations with people suffering severe anxiety. She has amazing empathy and patience that she delivers with a zing of humour that has earned her many a four-star review.

Westward Bound

Homeward Bound West went live on November 1st. We have high hopes, especially considering that we had three referrals prior to the start date.

The premise of our Homeward Bound service is to ensure that the home is 'good enough' for a patient to leave hospital, with any necessary equipment in place, and the certainty that carers can access and work safely in an environment that is conducive to recovery. What that means is; that space will be made for hospital beds, hoists and mobility aids, key areas are clean enough to prepare food, dress wounds and maintain good sanitation standards.

The issues that Occupational Therapists are dealing with are usually basic practicalities around being able to move furniture to make space for equipment, coordinating the delivery of medical equipment and spot cleaning areas following a period of ill-health. Once inside the property we will check for any other issues that may prevent a patient from returning home; like a lack of heating, or lack of gas/electric supply. We will also check to make sure that there are no unpleasant surprises; like mouldy food in the fridge/breadbin, smelly bins or sinks of dishes.

What we ask of NHS referrers is that we are given plenty of notice. We allocate our work on a Monday. A minimum of twenty-four hours' notice is essential, and more if possible. The service has integrated seamlessly in the Ipswich and East area because our involvement is part of the initial patient discharge plan at the admission stage.

At the end of the day we all know that "East or West, Home is Best!"

Shocking Finds

This picture shows HALF of the medication removed from ONE house clearance. Lofty Heights has worked with Ipswich and East CCG very closely over this case. The correct disposal of medication is a really important subject but lack of space at pharmacies makes it increasingly difficult to access the correct disposal. There is a separate issue of the volume of waste created here, the cost of wasted medication to the NHS and the disposal of it. Lofty Heights has known for a long time that this is a larger problem.

In this case, the CCG sent pharmacists to catalogue the drugs and calculate the medication value. We are awaiting the final total at this point but we are confident that this picture alone constitutes an equivalent cost of two nurses.

We have been very fortunate here to have been contracted by Ipswich Borough Council. Their sensitive approach to the clearance has meant that we have been able to ensure that this medication was collected and disposed of professionally and legally. However, most social landlords allow only seven to fourteen days for the clearance of a property. Can you guess what white van man or a desperate family might have done to get rid of a haul like this?



Hoarder Training

We are pleased to announce that we are running a second training course. This time in conjunction with the Fire Service at East Ipswich Fire Station.

Date: **January 27th 2020** starting at 9am



Hoarding is not against the law but the damage it can cause often breaches tenancy agreements, Public Health legislation and could 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 – de-cluttering and therapy, behavioural contracts, SMART monitoring. Hoarders must be properly assessed using appropriate and accredited tools.

This course will explore all the recognised options that are available to staff working with hoarders as well as help organisations to 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.

Costs: £110 (Bring your own lunch)

We are already preparing a second training course next year for an advanced or specialised course – more details to follow.

Have You Met Mark?

“I started in September this year and Lofty Heights has a great team, they have been really welcoming and I can see that what we do really makes a difference. Many people tell you that you are ‘part of a team’ and that you can ‘help shape our services’ but this is the first role I have had where that is the truth.

Before joining Lofty Heights, I had no idea that so many people were in such desperate need of help. It has been truly humbling to receive such gratitude. Often, what we do is not complicated, it’s practical stuff, but it makes such a huge difference to people’s lives.

I have to say that, in my opinion, Lofty Heights does exactly what they say they do, every one’s voice counts; whether that is staff or customers and I can honestly say I wished I had done this years ago!”





Waste Not!

Earlier in the year we met with MP Sandy Martin. He listened to us about the issues faced by vulnerable people in Ipswich and throughout the whole of Suffolk. Sandy enabled us to have a meeting with Suffolk County Council to talk about waste. I would like to give you an update on this, since we had this meeting in April, sadly we are still awaiting the results.

Lofty Heights CIC has a great relationship with all of the waste teams throughout Suffolk. The individual boroughs really 'get' what we do. They enable us to organise bulky waste collections for customers, knowing that we are on site and able to move large items outside for waste teams to pick up. Babergh and Mid-Suffolk waste team have even facilitated some free collections because their residents have really needed help. This 'what can we do to help?' attitude has touched us deeply at Lofty Heights because that is our ethos – 'what do you need and how can we help?'

Yet, at this moment Suffolk County Council has not addressed the problem of the inequality of access to its waste disposal services. The access is only open for people able to transport their own waste personally. There is a view that because Lofty Heights charge for their services we are trying to offer a waste disposal service. This is not the case. Waste is a central problem within the homes of people we are supporting, mostly as people are unable to access the tips due to mobility, age, ill-health, and a lack of family support. We are preparing homes for patients receiving end of life care, and we are having to discuss with them the cost for a council collection (which may not happen for up to 2 weeks). Imagine returning home from hospital to see your soiled mattress outside waiting for collection, in full view of the neighbours, and having to pay for this to happen. It is simply unbearably sad and unnecessary. We always try to minimise distress by wrapping soiled mattresses, but why can't we dispose of them, for our customers, at the tip, like other householders are able to?

Up until last year Lofty Heights CIC had an agreement with FCC Environment to access ALL tips throughout Suffolk to dispose of recyclable materials. This is the standard access agreement to all charities. Lofty Heights CIC is not a charity, we are a non-profit social enterprise. This year that has changed to be limited to Foxhall Tip only. It means that, despite covering the whole of Suffolk, Lowestoft to Beccles to Haverhill, ALL of our recyclable waste must be transported to Foxhall.

What are the options for elderly and vulnerable people in Suffolk? Well, you can pay for a bulky waste collection – you must still heft it outside of your property. Family and friends can take it to the tip for you. If you don't have those? Well, we are still waiting to find out if we can help you.

Tis the Season...

When considering fire risk, we often highlight clutter and hoarding as a major risk, but a much-overlooked problem is vermin. Rats and mice find the coating of electricals to be a tempting treat. The cable pictured was removed from a property in Suffolk. It was a clean house, not in the 'filthy and verminous' category at all. It's not entirely clear from the photo but this cable was gnawed down to expose the copper wiring and was a severe fire risk. It's important to note that in many homes 80% of wiring is hidden, behind furniture or within the walls. Though a particular risk in cluttered homes, where the condition of wiring cannot be checked, it's important for everyone to be able of this risk. It's the season for pretty lights and outdoor festive displays, which are often stored throughout the year in lofts and garages. Please check your Christmas decorations thoroughly or check if you are entitled to a free fire safety check by calling Suffolk Fire and Rescue on 01473 260588. If you are supporting someone living with clutter, please take a moment to inspect extension leads and power cords, you could make a worrying find like ours!



End of Year Reflection

It's been a dynamic year. We've made new links for collaborative working and strengthened old ones too. Our work for the CCGs through Homeward Bound is inspiring a really creative use of social prescribing and partnership working in some truly shocking conditions. Like many social enterprises we are managing to do a lot with very little, it's important to remember that the only income we have is from the work that we charge for, and there is much that we do that cannot be recharged – all of those case reviews, strategy discussions, networking events, and assessments are all things that we have to balance against our need to cover our costs. Please remember that you are getting a lot more than 'a job done' when you book Lofty Heights CIC; you are getting a huge amount of social value and the knowledge that we really take ownership of every case we are involved in. We know all about the bottom line but we do this because we care, and because we care we won't skimp on doing things properly.



We send our very best season's greeting to all of you. Thank you for your support, interest, and kind words throughout the year. Enjoy the break, if you are lucky enough to have one, and we look forward to starting afresh in the new year.

Thank you to our team, all of you, for all you have achieved this year. I hope you know that you are all the A-Team! **Merry Christmas everyone!**

Jaki Field
Operations Manager Lofty Heights CIC