

DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY

SELF-ASSESSMENT 2017

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**A charitable housing association,
registered under the Co-operative and
Community Benefits Societies Act 2014
No 21004R.**

**Registered with the Homes and
Communities Agency: No LH0013**

VALUE FOR MONEY SELF-ASSESSMENT 2017

DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY

This assessment is produced for our customers, commissioners, staff, partners and stakeholders. It sets out the Board's current assessment of the value for money we deliver at Look Ahead and how we plan to continue to improve our value for money going forward.

This statement covers the following areas:

1. Value for money at Look Ahead
2. Value for money assessment
3. Investment strategy for improving value for money
4. Look Ahead's KPI targets for 2017/18
5. Value for money 2017-22

1. VALUE FOR MONEY AT LOOK AHEAD

As one of the largest specialist providers of supported housing in the country, value for money at Look Ahead is integral to our success as a social care business.

We manage over 2500 supported housing properties and deliver excellent services which provide positive outcomes for our customers. Over half of our income comes from delivering commissioned housing related support and we are continually market tested in a highly competitive environment. Being cost effective is central to how we operate as a social business, and is essential to us winning and retaining contracts.

Our organisational mission is to work with people to make choices, achieve goals and take control of their lives through high quality care, support and housing and we do this by working with both NHS and local authority partners to deliver integrated health, social care and housing services.

We support thousands of people each year to bring about positive changes in their lives, by creating tailor-made plans for each individual which promote their independence and self-reliance and enable them to achieve their goals. Working across London and the South East our services support people with a diverse range of needs including Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, Young People and Care Leavers and Homelessness and Complex Needs.

At Look Ahead, our customers are central to everything we do. Value for Money means delivering high quality services that produce positive outcomes for our customers, through making the best use of our assets and resources (property, people, money, information technology).

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Being effective in delivering positive outcomes not only provides value to our customers, but also maximises public benefit to the local community, creating social and environmental benefits. For example, our services:

- make local communities feel safer and reduce policing needs by reducing the number of drug users on the street committing crimes
- reduce re-offending and keep people out of prison
- reduce NHS hospital admissions and medication need, and improve the health and wellbeing of customers and their families
- enable people to leave hospitals and care homes sooner to live more independent lives
- get customers back to work quicker and reduce reliance on benefits
- get young people into education for a brighter and more productive future

Providing innovative service models that improve the lives of our customers, whilst meeting commissioner demands for high quality at reasonable cost is an essential part of our business model. As the owner of over 1,200 units we are continually evaluating how to make the best use of these assets and in the last year we have invested £1.8 million in redeveloping buildings for new customer groups. During this year this approach has seen us implement new care leaver services using redesigned buildings at Ibis House and Minster House, and turning a de-commissioned young people's foyer into a mental health service for high needs residents from Lambeth.

We continue to work in a highly challenging environment with both local authority and health commissioners facing difficult budgetary decisions. Services like those that we deliver at Nimrod House and Tabard Court enable people to move out of expensive institutional settings to live much more independently in the community and closer to families and social networks. This business stream is becoming increasingly important as we develop services and adapt buildings to meet the needs of individuals with much higher support needs than we did in the past.

It is equally important in delivering value for money that we are financially efficient so that we can generate capacity to invest in service innovation and business improvements to increase our effectiveness going forward. Financial efficiency means that we must deliver better quality services and better outcomes for the same cost or less.

The external climate remains uncertain and this year we saw the Government announce there will be a new funding arrangement for supported housing which will start in April 2018 and in addition the Government confirmed that a 1% rent reduction would be implemented in 2017. We have modelled the potential impact on our services and whilst it will adversely affect us, we believe we have a sustainable business model which can incorporate the likely changes.

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The management and monitoring of Value for Money is embedded into Look Ahead's annual planning and regular monitoring processes, as well as across important decision-making and risk management processes. Look Ahead's performance framework focuses on our core business priorities which incorporate our approach to value for money; a suite of high level KPIs is reported to the Board quarterly, with stretch targets being set annually to drive performance improvements.

The funding and costs of the two parts of our business, social care and housing, are recorded and tracked separately, to aid close scrutiny of the financial and operational performance of each, at different levels of accountability. Budgets and benchmarks for performance monitoring are aggregated from the individual care and support contract and individual property level. All central costs (central housing management, property services teams, finance and HR functions etc.) are apportioned between the two businesses at the lowest level using the key drivers of these costs.

All new business proposals, bids for the delivery of care and support services and all investment proposals are assessed by a Look Ahead Risk Panel, consisting of at least three Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members. It considers the economic and social value of potential new services, as well as their strategic importance and profitability, assessing value for money.

Look Ahead constantly looks to improve and we have initiated a transformation programme which will ensure the organisation has the right strategies in place to ensure our future sustainability and the appropriate resources to deliver them. During 2016/17 we re-configured our senior management team and reviewed our internal governance arrangements, and have introduced new structures which will devolve accountability throughout the organisation and improve oversight of corporate work programmes. We will build upon this next year by implementing new housing and people management systems, enhancing our performance and quality management systems and developing a new customer strategy which will set out our customer offer.

2016/17 Value for Money Highlights

- Won £6.9m of new business & retained 100% of contracts retendered
- Rent loss from voids down from 7.1% to 6.3%
- Arrears down by £147k, a 9% reduction
- Invested in the redevelopment of buildings at Ibis and Minster House
- Brought a decommissioned foyer back into full occupancy
- Agency staff costs more than halved delivering a £827k saving
- 90% of services rated as good or outstanding for quality, up from 70%
- Awarded silver for Investors In People in recognition of our investment in our

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staff

- Our service at Nimrod House won a 2017 UK Housing Award in the category of 'An outstanding approach to meeting specialist housing needs'.
- Our Tabard Forensic service received an external evaluation from HACT, which was full of praise for the effectiveness of the service.

2. VALUE FOR MONEY ASSESSMENT 2016/17

Each year we assess our value for money against the five Corporate Priorities underpinning our Business Plan. During 2016/17 we made significant progress in delivering our business development plans and in embedding our workforce strategy, and consequently we have given a higher value for money rating than last year for the two associated corporate priorities.

Corporate Priority	VFM assessment	Trend
Providing excellent services that deliver positive outcomes for our customers	Good	Improving
Designing and delivering innovative services in partnership with our customers	Excellent	Maintaining
Achieving sustainable growth, maximising social and economic returns on investment	Good	Improving
Recruit, develop and retain a high performing workforce through strong leadership	Good	Improving
Enhance our financial strength and viability	Good	Maintaining
Overall Assessment	Good	Improving

VFM assessment: Excellent – Good – Satisfactory – Poor – Very Poor.

Trend: Improving – Maintaining – Deteriorating.

i. Providing excellent services that deliver positive outcomes for our customers

At the end of 2016/17, 90% of our services were rated as either outstanding or good through our internal audit system. This is a 20 percentage point increase on last year and well above our target of 80%. It continues the steady upward trend we have witnessed since we introduced our internal quality management system (QMS) four years ago and demonstrates its success.

Quality is essential to value for money for Look Ahead in that it is one of the main things that our services are assessed on by commissioners both in tenders and in contract monitoring. Each service is assessed at least annually using our QMS and improvement plans are monitored quarterly and progress reported to our SLT. Every year we revise our QMS to ensure it remains robust and incorporates learning from

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the last round of audits. We continually look for improvement and next year our scoring system will become more challenging in order to achieve this.

A number of our services are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and our QMS uses the CQC approach to assess all of our services. All of our CQC registered services are rated as good with five inspections completed in 2016/17 demonstrating the strength of our approach.

The table below shows our performance against target and benchmarks (where available) for the key metrics the Board have decided are the most important in determining how effective Look Ahead's services are:

Effectiveness - quality of services delivered to our customers	Bench- mark	Target	2015	2016	2017
% Services rated as 'outstanding' or 'good' in our internal QMS	79% ¹	80%	59%	70%	90%
No. of services rated "overall" as 'inadequate' by CQC	2%	0	1	0	0
% of new staff attending mandatory training within probation	NA	90%	NA	74%	87%
% of repairs completed to target	96% ²	85%	NA	NA	94%
No. of units without a valid Landlords Gas Safety Certificate	0	0	0	2	0

1. Taken from CQC's report on the state of adult social care services from 2014-17.

2. Taken from the Acuity supported housing benchmarking club, The Acuity club includes 17 small and medium sized housing associations and Acuity works in partnership with Housemark to produce the data.

Look Ahead supports customers with a wide range of support needs and each customer has an individualised support plan which sets out what they want to achieve in order to live more independently.

During 2016/17 when our customers moved on from our support

- 1,588 had moved on from our support in a planned way
- 426 took part in training
- 282 participated in work and 184 were in work when they left our support
- 953 had maximised their income by claiming the right benefits & reducing debts
- 1,092 were managing their mental health well
- 1,137 were managing their physical health well
- 462 had reduced their substance misuse

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The case studies below illustrate how we achieve these outcomes.

Tower Hamlets Community Intervention Service (CIS) provides structured support for up to 212 individuals living in Tower Hamlets. The support is short-term (up to seven and a half months) and focuses on providing support interventions to people with medium to high unmet needs. The service supports individuals to avoid crisis, achieve greater stability and link into appropriate local services.

The service processes around 120 referrals every quarter and accepts referrals from a wide range of sources. This includes the local authority, hospitals, probation, domestic abuse services, social services, housing associations and self-referrals.

Recently staff members have been working closely with the Metropolitan Police to find out more about the issues affecting individuals involved in street-based prostitution. They accompanied police on night time patrols with the aim of building stronger links and facilitating increased referrals. It enables staff to engage with individuals who may typically be too chaotic and hard to reach and also provides a unique insight into the risks and vulnerabilities of some of the individuals we support.

Recent **service outcomes** (over a three-month period include):

Reducing referrals into secondary care

- **25 people** were supported to avoid street homelessness or a return to rough sleeping.
- **35 people** were supported to effectively manage a mental health crisis.
- **43 people** avoided extreme financial hardship as a result of support provided by the team.

Mary Jones Court is a supported living service in Tower Hamlets for adults with low to medium level learning disabilities and autism. Customers may have additional support needs including mental health and substance misuse. Individuals may also require support around physical health, mobility or medication needs.

The service accommodates up to 20 customers in self-contained accommodation, and has a number of units that have been purposefully adapted for customers with mobility issues. The staff team is available 24 hours a day and customers typically move on after two years.

The service focusses on progression for individuals who may be stepping down from residential care, or higher support accommodation placements. Support is focused on equipping people with the skills and confidence to adapt to independent living and understand the rights and responsibilities of managing a tenancy.

Recent **service outcomes** include:

- **85% customers** are in education, training, volunteering or work. **25% customers** are in paid employment.
- **50% customers** regularly attend digital workshops led by support staff in our IT suite, improving their digital literacy and inclusion. One customer has gone on to

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study a foundation level IT course at a local college as a result of their involvement.

- **A customer** at Mary Jones Court has been trained through our Peer Support Programme. He now volunteers eight hours a week supporting customers at our Amy Garvey House service in Kensington and Chelsea.

ii. Designing and delivering innovative services in partnership with our customers

We work in partnership with commissioners and customers to develop new ways of working which are more efficient and deliver better outcomes to customers than existing approaches. Services like the Lambeth and Southwark Medication Support demonstrate how Look Ahead works collaboratively to provide community based solutions which improve the quality of life of customers whilst saving money.

Medication support service

In partnership with local CCGs, Look Ahead delivers medication support services across Southwark and Lambeth. The CQC registered services provide intensive, flexible reablement support over 12 weeks, offering medication delivery, observation and/or administration within people's own homes between 9am-9pm. This enables customers to take medication at a time which suits their lifestyle (e.g. medication which induces drowsiness can be taken in the evening rather than the daytime, which enables them to stay in work).

Our staff teams work closely with the Home Treatment Teams to ensure secure collection and storage of medication, personalised phased self-management programmes for individuals and enhanced medication awareness for customers through one-to-one support. Joint working with our clinical partners also means the service can offer a rapid identification and intervention system, enabling support to be stepped up when required.

Recent **service outcomes** include:

Reducing referrals into secondary care

Only one of the sixteen individuals accessing the medication support service has been readmitted to hospital.

Positive user experience

86% of customers rated the service as 'excellent' or 'good'.

- **100% of customers** would recommend the service to a friend or family member in a similar situation

Reintegrating ex-offenders, Tabard Forensic service

One of the broader areas in which Look Ahead demonstrates value for money is through savings for the public purse in delivering step down accommodation for people who would otherwise be housed in high cost residential care or inpatient placements in hospital. In 2014, Look Ahead, in partnership with East London NHS Foundation Trust and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, set up **Tabard Forensic Service**. Tabard Forensic Services provides a vital step in LB Tower Hamlet's wider forensic pathway, supporting customers to move on from a secure mental health unit, whilst managing a forensic level of risk. It supports male customers aged eighteen to seventy-four who are seriously affected by mental health needs and have a significant offending history.

Look Ahead invested £500 000 to refurbish and adapt its existing building to the service specifications. There are 18 individual self-contained flats, staff offices and rooms for customers to meet with care teams, a communal kitchen and activity space, security features (e.g. CCTV, screened walkways) and a garden area. Unlike other supported accommodation, Tabard Forensic Services offers medication management support and alcohol/drug testing. Customers move towards self-management and substance misuse reduction and/or harm minimisation. Staff undergo a bespoke training package and receive clinical supervision from ELFT to manage the unique challenges and risks that come with supporting customers with such complex needs. Look Ahead's principle of co-production allows customers to help shape their support, improving engagement and preparing for independence. At the same time, Look Ahead's psychologically-informed risk management model ensures well-trained staff spot and respond to emerging risks at an early stage.

A recent external evaluation by HACT found that Tabard Forensic Service provides excellent value for money for people stepping down from secure mental health inpatient services. It is:

- £2,972 cheaper per unit per week than the average of a medium-secure mental health inpatient service.
- £2,412 cheaper per unit per week than the average cost of a low-secure mental health inpatient service.
- £377 cheaper per unit per week than the average cost of a local authority residential care service, which reflects the cost of an out-of-area placement.

These figures are based on the reference costs of services per user within the most recent publication of the Personal Social Services Research Unit's Unit Costs of Health and Social Care 2016 (PSSRU 2016).

We have a well established approach to **co-producing services** and this year saw the latest example of this with the Lifeskills Programme, which we have implemented in our care leavers services, whilst flagship programmes like Peer Support and Experts by Experience continued to thrive.

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Young Peoples' Lifeskills Programme

Co-developed by staff and customers, our Lifeskills Programme has been designed to encourage independence, confidence and resilience. It aims to give young people the life skills they need to live independently when they leave us. Mapped to the government's care leavers strategy, it focuses on building practical skills and confidence in the different areas professionals look at when assessing a young people's ability to live independently.

Customers are supported to 'learn, do, reflect' as they work through 54 different modules increasing in difficulty as they progress to bronze, silver and gold certification. Customers can rate their own progress and evidence their achievements with both Look Ahead staff and their Leaving Care Team.

Peer Circles Programme

This is a customised client centred project delivered with St Giles Trust and partner organisations including ourselves. It is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and European Social Fund through the Building Better Opportunities Fund. It provides support and activities for people with complex needs and severe and multiple disadvantages which results in them having improved employability.

Experts by Experience Programme

Customers use their life experience to co-create and deliver, with staff, training on key issues, such as mental health and substance misuse awareness. The programme delivers on 11 subjects, with 3 new subjects in development. Over this year we have delivered 79 training sessions, a 50% increase on previous years and have also delivered training to external partners, such as Police Now, St Barnabas and Evolve.

Peer Support Programme

We have increased the training and supervision of peer supporters who, based on their own experience, help other customers in achieving aspirations, wellbeing and community inclusion.

- There are currently 20 trained Peer Support Volunteers who are supporting over 90 customers
- 5% of our peer supporters have remained in the programme for more than three months, a 20% increase on previous years.

This year we also reviewed how our **Customer Services Committee (CSC)** works and our customer voice at Board level. Our new approach will be less formal and focus on overseeing specific projects of most relevance to customers, as well as scrutinising that customers across the organisation can play an active role in influencing service design and delivery.

Quality checkers

This year our team of customers audited 33 quality audits.

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Customer Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction has remained at 86% for the year although we have slightly improved our ratings across the other five areas. In particular, satisfaction with both repairs and with opportunities to get involved have improved significantly over the last two years.

Customer Satisfaction with:	Bench- mark	Target	2015	2016	2017
Overall service provided by Look Ahead	89%	87%	83%	86%	86%
Choice and control over their support	NA	85%	80%	84%	85%
Opportunities to get involved	83%	83%	76%	82%	83%
Staff listening, respecting and encouraging	NA	88%	85%	87%	88%
Where they live	91%	75%	73%	74%	77%
Maintenance	77%	72%	69%	71%	74%

Overall benchmark satisfaction is taken from the Acuity supported housing benchmarking club.

Next year we will be changing the way we measure customer satisfaction and will be working with customers to design an annual survey which will provide more in-depth information, including perceptions of value for money.

iii. Achieving sustainable growth, maximising social and economic returns on investment

Overall we delivered £6.9 million of new social care business against a target of £6.0 million. Half of this was through developing tailored services with commissioners to meet the specific needs of the customers, which is in line with our Business Development strategy of developing new innovative, high value services. A good example being our new care leavers' service at Ibis House where placements are commissioned on a "spot purchase" basis by local different authorities thus providing them with flexibility and value for money in that they only commission what they need. For Look Ahead the ability to accept placements from different boroughs ensures the service is fully utilised.

The other half of new business was won through competitive tendering and we had a successful year in that we retained all those existing re-tendered contracts we bid for, as well as winning new services. Those services we retained following tendering largely retained their value with a net 0.2% reduction overall. In addition a number of new services are located outside London which is a key strand of our business development strategy to ensure the long term sustainability of the business.

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Among the new services developed or won this year are:

- Milton Keynes Young People – a high value contract in the home counties
- Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Recovery Homes – a CCG commissioned services which expands our crisis and recovery offer and provides entry into three new London boroughs
- Kent Domestic Abuse service – a service which expands our offer on domestic abuse and is built on partnership approach which includes us sub-contracting the Independent Domestic Violence Advice service to Choices, a local specialist provider, thus helping to sustain a vibrant local voluntary sector
- Bracknell Learning Disabilities – a service developed with commissioner to transition people from residential schools into the community
- HAWK service in Croydon – a foundation trust commissioned service to work with patients in hospital to actively tackle delayed transfer of care

At the same time the financial pressures on the NHS and local authorities means they are constantly re-evaluating the services which they are able to commission and we have seen £1.6m of contracts de-commissioned so that our net new business growth for the year was £5.3m.

We recognise this challenge and in any one year expect a third of our services to be subject to review. We are constantly re-evaluating our services and work collaboratively with commissioners to deliver further efficiency savings on existing contracts, which will enable us to secure the services for a longer term.

In 2015/16 we took strategic decisions to pay all London based staff the London Living Wage and to hand back non-viable contracts, in order to reduce agency costs and staff turnover and to release resources for alternative deployment. As planned we invested in driving business development and marketing activity and have started to achieve our aim of generating less income through tendering.

We also drew down on our investment portfolio and converted properties to support the business, In places such as Ibis and Minster House for care leavers and at Nimrod House for customers with leaning disabilities , we have developed services for high needs customers, where the social value and social impact is highest, by converting our properties for new uses.

Nimrod House, Newham

In 2016, we developed our Nimrod House service in response to the government's Transforming Care programme, providing bespoke support for individuals with complex learning disabilities, high support needs and behaviour that challenges.

This specialist service focusses on supporting individuals to live safely within the community, rather than in secure settings.

The 24-hour service offers accommodation-based care and support for up to five people in self-contained flats. It provides a unique combination of registered care

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and supported living services to ensure flexibility in tenure and the level of required care.

Individuals are supported by a highly trained staff team, who provide a combination of flexible 1:1 or 2:1 support during waking hours, as required. Referrals are agreed with local authorities and bespoke support packages set up for individuals, dependent on their requirements.

Our model includes staged, transitional support designed to support a more gradual move into the community and is delivered in close partnership with clinicians, commissioners, carers and families.

Nimrod House has won a 2017 UK Housing Award in the category of ‘An outstanding approach to meeting specialist housing needs’.

Ryan*, Nimrod House

We are experienced in developing support packages and property offers personalised to the needs of single individuals.

Ryan, 36 has lived at Nimrod House since April 2016. Before coming to Look Ahead, Ryan had lived in secure units since he was 18 years old. This is the first time he has lived independently.

He has his own one bedroom flat which he has been involved in furnishing and decorating.

The accommodation has been tailored to meet Ryan’s specific needs; it includes appropriate furniture and assistive technology to minimise risk and ensure safety whilst also promoting independence.

Through support from a dedicated specialist support team, introduction of a structured routine and close partnership working with Ryan’s family and Newham’s multi-disciplinary team, he has made significant progress.

A year into his stay at Nimrod House, Ryan is now:

- using public transport, buses and the underground to travel around London, supported by staff.
- seeing his family far more regularly – he is now able to visit his family and spend time with them independently at their home every Sunday. Before, he typically only saw them once a month.
- cleaning his flat independently, preparing his own breakfast and hot drinks safely and doing his laundry every week with minimal support. Previously all of these things were done for him.
- more physically active – he has joined the local leisure centre, swims regularly and has started riding a bike again, something he had not done since he was a child.

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- enjoying a higher quality of life – he does his weekly shop with staff every Monday, DJs at a local Friday night disco and is supported to manage his finances.

The cost of Ryan's placement at Nimrod House is 17% cheaper than the cost of an alternative high secure hospital placement.

(based on NHS National Schedule of Reference Costs - year 2014/15)

* Not customer's real name

Ibis House, Newham

Looked after children service

Ibis House in Newham is a 24-hour accommodation-based support service specifically designed for young people leaving care, providing high quality self-contained flats for 15 customers. It can accept referrals from other local authorities which is of particular value to Leaving Care Teams who may lack this type of specialist provision in their own locality. Currently customers at Ibis House come from six different London boroughs.

Customers receive a support package of between five and ten hours of support each week from a highly skilled team of on-site specialist support staff. Support focuses on building strong, positive relationships and establishing independent living skills.

This type of service provides an alternative to fostering and residential care places. The cost of a placement at Ibis House is 67% cheaper than the cost of an average annual residential care placement.

(based on National Audit Office HC 787 -Children in Care report – year 14/15)

Amber*, Ibis House

Amber was placed into care at a young age due to difficulties at home: her mother had mental health needs and she had experience of domestic abuse.

Amber first came to Ibis House after several placement breakdowns. When she first arrived she had difficulty respecting staff members, and her behaviour was very challenging. Over the last few months this has significantly improved due to:

- The staff team's consistent approach which included setting and communicating clear expectations about acceptable behaviours, tolerances and consequences.
- Flexibility in how staff worked with Amber when she initially didn't want to engage showing persistence and commitment in how they worked with her and offering her choices.
- Having a Mental Health Specialist Support Worker on-site as part of the staff team who was able to look at the reasons behind Amber's behaviour and support other staff on how best to work with her.

As a result, Amber's behaviour is continuing to improve; she responds more

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appropriately when she is unhappy and she has successfully maintained her placement. She is now more focused on her future and is taking steps to work towards her career aspirations.

* Not customer's real name

iv. Recruit, develop and retain a high performing workforce through strong leadership

In 2015/16 we implemented many of the key elements of our Workforce Development Strategy including a new Reward Strategy with a commitment to both London and National Living Wages, and formal staff recognition awards. These initiatives were embedded during this year and there has been a particular focus on staff recruitment and retention.

Recruitment and Retention

We reduced our voluntary staff turnover from 30% to 27% this year, yet we recognise it remains slightly higher than the average for the care sector in London of 23% and retaining good staff is critical for us in terms of both value for money and customer satisfaction.

We have a young workforce compared to similar organisations, with 19% of our workforce under 24 and only 25% over 45, compared to 12% and 50% in the sector as a whole and whilst this brings many benefits it also create challenges in that younger workers tend to move jobs more frequently.

We have been reviewing how we recruit new staff and at the end of 2016/17 we rolled out four assessment centres and these will be a core component of the future model. These will reduce the number of recruitment campaigns and ensure we have a consistent approach to new appointments.

Learning & Development

Look Ahead has a comprehensive learning and development programme, which ensures our staff have the right skills to deliver support and care to a wide range of customers. This year we have delivered the following:

Leadership and Management Development

Our refocused management development programme has been accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). The programme supports movement through career pathways at Look Ahead, with modules covering both practical and theoretical learning for our future leaders. We are aiming for up to 80% of leadership roles to be filled by internal appointments and have also reviewed our succession planning activities to identify potential and devise appropriate development opportunities. Since the launch of the programme 14 people have been promoted.

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Internal Training Academy

We have created an Internal Training Academy which will capture and develop the knowledge and experience of staff across the organisation by developing them as qualified trainers. As part of the Academy staff will attend an accredited (Institute of Leadership and Management) Train the Trainer course, gain experience in training, group facilitation and public speaking, sharing knowledge with other staff to better serve our customers and receive coaching and feedback.

Apprentices Programme

Look Ahead's Apprentice Programme provides an opportunity for apprentices to gain experience in the workplace, develop knowledge and skills and undertake a Level 2 Health and Social Care qualification through Westminster Kingsway College (WKC). Three of the five apprentices from last year have gained permanent employment with Look Ahead, and this year we have taken on 15 Apprentices who are currently half way through their programme.

Investors in People Silver

In December we gained this prestigious award which only 6% of organisations obtain. With regard to people the assessor fed back that we are a people focused organisation which is evident at all levels, the internal promotion programme is excellent, true commitment to equality and diversity and training is highly valued.

v. Enhance our financial strength and viability

Financial efficiency and economy:	Bench -mark	Target	2015	2016	2017
Operating surplus	NA	1.8%	1.3%	1.7%	0.9%
Contract income collection	NA	90%	94%	90%	92%
Maintenance cost (reactive/voids) per unit	£735	£903	£824	£919	£983
Maintenance cost (planned) per unit	£785	£436	£323	£157	£497
Void %	6.0%	5.5%	6.8%	7.1%	6.3%
Net arrears of current tenants	5.0%	5.5%	6.6%	7.8%	6.9%
Bad debt %	NA	4.0%	4.0%	4.1%	5.1%
Agency staff as % of total staff spend (see section iv above)	NA	5.0%	11.0%	5.7%	2.5%
Voluntary staff turnover	22%	28%	29%	30%	27%
Overheads as % of turnover	12.2%	14.7%	13.8%	13.9%	14.6%

Benchmarking figures taken from the Acuity benchmarking club for all KPIs with the exception of voids and arrears where combined Acuity and Housemark costs have been used to ensure a larger dataset.

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Operating surplus

Look Ahead's operating surplus for 2016/17 was £0.5 million (1.0% of turnover). This is less than our original budget of £0.9 million. Whilst we had a good performance with regard underlying operating performance, the results reflect another challenging year for Look Ahead. We over achieved on our new business growth target by £0.9 million, however the beginning of the year was very slow with regard to tendering. This meant most of this new business started late in the financial year, which adversely affected on our achievement of the 'in-year' new business target, the impact on surplus being £0.2 million.

The largest single item affecting our surplus results for the year was the decision by one local authority to change their mind with regard to leasing one of our large decommissioned buildings. The subsequent delays caused in securing a new agreement with another authority and completing the refurbishment works resulted in a reduction in surplus of £0.6 million compared to our original budget.

Our contract income collection improved to 92% from 90% last year and was also better than target. We have seen more of our commissioners move from payment in advance to payment in arrears over the past few years.

Housing indicators

We face a particular challenge when it comes to managing voids as our commissioners expect most of our customers to move on within 2 years, and this year 36% of our own units and 58% of the managed units became void. This compares to an average of 8% for other housing associations. Another way that we differ from general needs housing providers is arrears management. The majority of our customers are in receipt of benefits, and it is essential that we work with our customers to ensure they are in receipt of the relevant benefits from the moment they move to a Look Ahead service. This early intervention has helped us to reduce our arrears performance by almost one percentage point over the last year, despite the high turnover of units.

Look Ahead is unusual among housing associations in that nearly all our own stock is used for supported housing and we manage almost as many units again for other landlords. This reflects the nature of our business where many support contracts are delivered within the premises of other providers.

Maintenance costs per unit – owned properties

The average spend per property on reactive and void repairs was slightly higher than last year at £983 per unit but we increased our average spend on planned works to £497 so that the relative spend was approximately 2:1 this year compared to 6:1 in 2015/16. By investing in planned maintenance we expect to reduce the amount spent on reactive maintenance in the future. Two of the schemes with the largest spend on reactive and void maintenance will be refurbished in 2017/18, our five year business plan includes £2.9 million of capital investment to improve these buildings.

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Our Housemark benchmarking against other housing providers showed that our reactive maintenance costs are at the lower end, however the picture with voids is complicated in that we spend significantly less per individual re-let than the other providers but the average cost per unit is escalated by our much higher volume of re-lets. The benchmarking shows that we spent the 3rd lowest amount per property on reactive repairs among our peer group in 2015/16.

Rent losses

Cumulative rent losses through voids were 6.3%, this was an improvement on 2015/16 although 0.8 percentage points above our ambitious target of 5.5%. We took on a homeless service in April 2016 where a third of the units were void and it took a few months to let all the units. Performance improved in the second half of the year and we have seen some marked improvements in void management with the average time voids are with maintenance falling from over 30 days in April to 18 days by March and an increasing number of our longer term voids being let each month.

A high proportion of our long term voids are due to problems getting suitable referrals or delays with other landlords completing repairs, and we are in constant discussions with commissioners and landlords to address these issues.

Rent and service charge arrears improved by almost one percentage point from 2015/16, and there has been a particular focus on ensuring new customers have housing benefit in place to prevent arrears from escalating. We introduced a new income collection toolkit to support staff to manage arrears and bespoke training for managers of supported housing services.

We have begun the implementation of a new housing management system which will be launched in early 2018. As part of this process we are reviewing all our housing management process and we expect this to deliver significant efficiencies. The new IT system will significantly improve our ability to improve management of arrears cases and we will be reviewing how our resources are used, with the likelihood of introducing specialist housing posts in some services.

Agency staff

For the second year running we significantly reduced our reliance on agency staff, making a saving of £827k and we reduced agency costs as a proportion of total staff costs to 2.5%.

Overheads as a % of turnover

Overheads of 14.6% of turnover were slightly better than the target of 14.7%. Overheads included one-off restructure costs following a reorganisation of the Senior Leadership Team. Excluding these costs overheads would have been 14.3%. Year on year, overhead costs have remained relatively static but have increased as a % of turnover from 13.9% in 2015/16, reflecting the lower level of turnover.

3. INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING VALUE FOR MONEY

In February 2016 Look Ahead's Board approved an investment strategy to ensure the long term sustainability of our business in order to deliver our social purpose. During 2016/17 we made progress in implementing that strategy:

A. To deliver growth in our social care business and achieve added value either through financial synergies and/or the addition of strategic assets such as property, talent, expertise, technology and new innovative social care service models

- During the year we were invited to tender for three acquisition opportunities and we were shortlisted for two, one of which we are still currently engaged with.
- We have engaged with Corporate Finance teams in external audit organisations, promoting our business development and acquisition strategies to ensure we are approached with further opportunities.
- We have commissioned some research to identify merger opportunities in the not-for-profit sector.

B. We will continue to adopt a proactive approach to investment in our property assets

- During 2016/17 our main focus was on bringing properties that had been previously decommissioned back into use, where we knew the financial and social returns would be the greatest. Since the investment strategy was approved we have brought 150 decommissioned units back into use. These have delivered rates of return between 12% and 69% as well as providing much needed services to the most vulnerable in society.
- Many of the properties which have been brought back into use have been reconfigured so they can be used for more complex support services including the Gateway mental health service and care leavers services at Ibis and Minster House. All these services provide solutions for commissioners which they can buy on a flexible basis.
- We disposed of 21 decommissioned units to another registered provider, ensuring the units remained in the social housing sector.
- Our next priority in 2017/18 is to conduct a sustainability review of Look Ahead's entire property portfolio to ensure we fully understand the social and economic return on each of our assets. This analysis will inform a new asset management strategy which will be approved as part of Look Ahead's overall strategic framework going forward.
- In the coming year we are planning to invest in three development schemes which will improve both our economic and social returns:
 - Development of 9 market rent units at Coulsdon Lodge to improve our longer term margins

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- Redevelopment of Princess Beatrice House, converting 70 bedspaces into 38 self contained units suitable for customers with more complex needs
- Refurbishment of Holly House for 35 units for Young People.
- We have applied and secured investment partner status with the GLA which will enable us to raise grant funding for future supported housing schemes.
- Look Ahead's financial plan also includes the speculative acquisition and grant funding for 40 Residential Care units and 67 Supported Housing units over the next five years to support our Business Development aspirations.

C. We will invest resources in supporting our business development strategy and in innovation

- This year we appointed a Head of Innovation who is taking forward work to analyse the customer journey and to digitise our support planning to better capture outcomes and improve customer service.
- We have developed our communications with a new internal communications manager and published a series of marketing materials setting out our service offer.
- We continued to develop our market analysis to better understand needs coming through and being able to develop innovative solutions like the Medication Support Service.
- We commissioned a research piece on our forensic mental health service which has demonstrated cost savings of up to 50% on existing service models and enabled people to return to the community for first time.
- In 2017 we exceeded our business development target for gross new business.

D. We will invest resources in improving the efficiency of our services and central teams

- We procured new IT systems for housing management and HR, payroll and learning and development and have begun implementing them. Both will go live in 2017/18. We are also upgrading the infrastructure to improve the efficiency of these and other systems.
- We implemented our reward strategy to recognise the contribution of our staff in delivering our organisational goals.
- We have piloted service based income collection officers to maximise income and reduce arrears.
- In search of further efficiencies and savings, we are developing a new procurement strategy for the organisation, which will include central procurement function.

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E. We will maximise the returns on cash invested with Rothschild within acceptable levels of risk.

- During the year we achieved net investment income of £0.4 million which was £0.2 million above our target.
- During the year Look Ahead's investment portfolio achieved a return of 7.9% which was 2.8 percentage points above target, generating an unrealised gain in the year of £3.2 million.

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4. LOOK AHEAD'S KPI TARGETS FOR 2017/18

We have set both challenging but achievable targets for next year which reflect our aims to improve value for money. The main indicators reported to Board are:

Performance Indicator	Benchmark	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Target
% of all services achieving outstanding or good in our internal quality audits	79% (CQC)	80%	90%	80% *
No. of CQC locations where one standard has been rated "overall" as inadequate by CQC	2% (CQC)	0	0	0
No. of units without a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record	0	0	0	0
% of reactive repairs completed within target times	96%	85%	94%	90%
% of customers satisfied with Look Ahead overall	Median: 89% Top quartile: 91%	87%	86%	90%
% rent lost through voids	Median: 6.0% Top quartile: 3.7%	5.5%	6.3%	5.3%
Net rent and service charge arrears of current tenants	Median: 5.0% Top quartile: 3.2%	5.5%	6.9%	6.0%
Staff leaving voluntarily as % of total number of staff	23%	25%	27%	27%
Agency staff spend as a % of total staffing spend	None available	5%	2.5%	3.0%
% of new operational staff who have completed their mandatory training within their probation	None available	90%	87%	90%
% of staff who have completed their required safeguarding training	None available	New		100%
Surplus	None available	1.6%	0.9%	1.8%
Gross value of business development	None available	£6m	£6.9m	£7m
Net Growth	None available	New	£5.3m	£4.5m
% of contract income retained of retendered or extended contracts	None available	80%	99%	80%

* The quality target remains at 80% of all services receiving outstanding or good in quality audits. For the audit programme of 2017/18 we have reviewed our scoring mechanism, thus making it more challenging to achieve a good or outstanding rating. The change in methodology means a target of 80% will be a stretching target for 2017/18.

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As an organisation we are committed to delivering value for money and using benchmarking analysis is one way in which we can demonstrate this. Therefore we have volunteered to take part in a pilot by submitting our data to Housemark in 2017/18. We will use this data to enhance our suite of KPIs, ensuring they are relevant for our business.

5. VALUE FOR MONEY 2017-22

Our five year business plan incorporates our corporate priorities and key business strategies as well as Look Ahead's commitment to delivering value for money services for our stakeholders and excellent outcomes for our customers. The corporate priorities can be seen below:

Corporate priority number	Corporate Priority
1	Providing excellent services that deliver positive outcomes for our customers
2	Designing and delivering innovative services in partnership with our customers
3	Achieving sustainable growth, maximising social and economic returns on investment
4	Recruit, develop and retain a high performing workforce through strong leadership
5	Enhance our financial strength and viability

Sustainable and managed growth in innovative services

Over the course of the five year plan and in line with our business development and asset management strategies, we will increase the number of services that are outside of the tendering cycle and are developed collaboratively with Commissioners to provide personalised support to customers. These services offer better margins than contracts that are awarded through the tendering process. This satisfies corporate priority 2, 3 and 5.

We plan to invest £23.8 million into 107 new units over the next five years. These units will be used to deliver care leaver services and for customers moving out of a secure setting with complex needs. These services provide better outcomes for customers and value for money for the public purse in terms of the cost of the placement and the prevention of future use of public services.

These units will be pursued in Greater London and the Home Counties, where property prices are more reasonable than central London. This will enable us to provide services that are affordable to commissioners and in line with our business development strategy will increase our presence in the South East. We have found

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with the services that we have developed in the last financial year that commissioners are willing to procure services out of Borough, providing the customer is within a reasonable distance to their support network.

Investment into existing property

The financial plan includes £6.0 million of capital investment to develop some of our existing properties to use the buildings in a different way. Working closely with our commissioners we are developing two properties at a cost of £2.9 million, to ensure that the services being delivered from them remain strategically relevant and continue to achieve positive outcomes for the customers. Working with our commissioners in this way is congruent with priority one of our corporate priorities

In addition to the capital investment in developing properties, we will spend £4.9 million on planned maintenance. This proactive programme of works will reduce reactive maintenance in the future and preserve our property assets.

Operational performance

At Look Ahead we are constantly looking to improve operational performance, as per corporate priority 5. Our five year business plan shows year on year improvements in the loss of income due voids from 5.3% of rental income in year one to 4.6% in year five, achieving the objective of providing high quality support to a greater number of customers.

The plan also includes a decrease in the amount of income lost through bad debts, from 3.7% of rental and service charge income to 3.5% in year five ensuring that there is greater surplus to invest in our services and properties in the future.

Efficiency in central services

As well as delivering services that demonstrate cost effectiveness and positive outcomes for customers, we are also committed to ensuring our central resources are providing a value for money, efficient service. The five year business plan shows our central overheads reducing from 13.5% in year one to 10.9% in year five.

One way in which we plan to drive efficiencies in our central teams is the investment into IT. Over the next two years we are implementing new housing management and people management systems. Each of these systems will replace five existing software products; this will not only reduce costs but also streamline processes. Each system will produce more up to date granular analysis, providing the business with strategic decision support and aiding the achievement of the ambitious corporate KPIs over the coming years. Our five year business plan includes total investment into IT of £2.4 million.

Despite the 35.6% increase in turnover over the period of the five year plan, central services expenditure remains constant in relative monetary terms. The transformation programme that we have initiated will look at central resourcing, ensuring that we have the skills and capacity to absorb the future growth.

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Our commitment to corporate priority 5 is demonstrated throughout our plan. In line with our Workforce Strategy, we want to reduce voluntary staff turnover and develop and retain staff. In order to reduce staff turnover we plan to:

- Implement a people section for the tender process when submitting bids for schemes to ensure the risks around working environments are properly assessed.
- Introduce recruitment campaigns to appeal to a wider variety of applicants including older workers and parents
- Develop a career development plan for all newly employed support workers to be reviewed at 3, 6 and 12 months.
- Develop a more blended workforce by regularly rotating experienced members of staff to different services for periods of three to six months.
- Pilot a troubleshooting team made-up of experienced members of staff. The purpose of the troubleshooting team will be to assist in any services that may be experiencing a high amount of turnover or management issues, and attempt to create a more stable environment amongst the workforce.

As a result of the above initiatives we will not only provide continuity to our customers, helping them achieve better outcomes, but we will also reduce the amount spent on recruitment. Our five year projections show these savings. These mitigate the cost of additional training as we grow, enabling us to retain a constant level of overhead expenditure.