

Look Ahead people: Meet Daniel

At Look Ahead we know that the best thing about us is our people. The people who work for us and the people we support.

Every day they work together to achieve amazing things, and we want to share some of those amazing things with you. Every issue we are going to introduce you to a new customer or staff member and tell you a little bit about what they have done.

For our first issue we spoke to Look Ahead customer Daniel. Daniel has Asperger's syndrome and receives support at our service in Flying Angel.



Daniel is a very active member of the Look Ahead community; he is a member of our Customer Services Committee where he works with Look Ahead staff to make decisions and develop new projects for the

organisation. He is also part of the Experts by Experience Team where he delivers training to staff around Asperger's syndrome.

Daniel is a keen writer and has been using the hours he volunteers for Look Ahead to earn Time Credits. Time Credits is a scheme that rewards customers for the time they volunteer with Look Ahead. For every hour a person volunteers they receive one Time Credit. Time Credits can be spent on a number of activities such as cinema tickets, bowling or adult learning courses.

Daniel has volunteered so many hours that he has been able to join a Creative Writing course at City Lit. City Lit is an adult learning centre based in London. They offer a wide range of part-time courses, from one-off sessions to year-long programmes. When we asked Daniel if he enjoyed the course he told us: 'In all honesty I had such a brilliant time. I was able to learn so much in so little time.'

Daniel now plans to use more of his Time Credits to access another, longer creative writing course.

Do you want to be the next person we talk to?

Have you done something amazing that you would like to share? Are you involved in your local service?

If you would like to be the person we introduce in the next issue of 'Heads-up', let us know. You can either send us an email with your details to communications@lookahead.org.uk or call us on 0207 368 6982.

Join the Experts by Experience Team

Look Ahead's Experts by Experience team is looking for people to join them. The team delivers training to Look Ahead staff on areas including mental health, domestic abuse, young people, substance misuse and gangs.

Are you up for a challenge? Would you be willing to share your own experiences to help Look Ahead to create better services? Then why not apply to be part of the Experts by Experience team.

For information about the team or to apply please contact Wendy Rowley, Expert by Experience Training Manager, by emailing ExpertbyExperience@lookahead.org.uk

lookahead.org.uk

Services we would be proud for our loved ones to receive

If you are interested in volunteering for Look Ahead you can talk to your Support Worker or send an email to feedback@lookahead.org.uk



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Welcome to 'Heads-up'. This customer newsletter is the place to go to find out what's going on in Look Ahead.

June - July 2016



Customer Celebration: awards ceremony
Page 2



Why Relationships Matter: Peer Support scheme
Page 3



Look Ahead People: meet Daniel
Page 4

Heads-up

Look Ahead's new customer newsletter

Welcome to 'Heads-up'

Hello and welcome to the first edition of Look Ahead's new customer newsletter, 'Heads-up'!

Look Ahead staff and customers recently spent time agreeing new values for our organisation – these are the things that are important to us and guide how we behave. We agreed Excellence, Aspiration, Partnership and Trust. We also looked at how we share these values and other things that are going on at Look Ahead with you, our customers. So we have developed a great new newsletter to keep you in the loop with all things Look Ahead. For those of you who used to read our customer magazine, Periscope, think of 'Heads-up' as the new and improved version.

You might notice a bit of a theme of mental health in the articles featured in this first issue. This is because in May, we celebrated Mental Health Awareness week across Look Ahead. This was a week focused on raising awareness about mental health and ending stigma. As many of our customers have mental health needs we thought this would be a good focus for the first issue.

As well as being for customers, 'Heads-up' has also been created with the help of Look Ahead customers – you'll see many of them feature throughout this issue. Special mention should also go to Sharon, a customer from Providence House, who won our competition to name this newsletter.

You can see the brilliant poem she wrote about her idea in the yellow box on this page.

If you would like to help us to produce the next issue or give us some feedback on how you think we can make it even better, then please email communications@lookahead.org.uk

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Sharon's poem

This little poem is to say,
A new start is coming our way,
Our magazine called Periscope,
Will now be changed, it's time to vote.

My idea for the new name,
Is Heads-up, hopefully it's good, not lame,
Put pen to paper and have a go,
You may win first prize, you never know.

The magazine is for everyone,
So get involved and join the fun.
It's our magazine so let's make it the best,
So it can be different from all the rest.

lookahead.org.uk



Customer Celebration Event 2016

On Thursday 19th May, we celebrated Look Ahead's annual Customer Celebration event. This is a special event to celebrate all the amazing things that our customers have achieved over the past year.



The Learning and Development team with winner of the Made a Difference Locally award Chris.

This year we held the event at Central Hall Westminster, just around the corner from our Head Office. The day involved lots of entertainment including songs from the Baked Bean Choir and Look Ahead customer Lizzie Emeh, as well as a magician.



Customer Lizzie Emeh

Customers enjoyed a series of interactive workshops based on activities designed to improve mental wellbeing. These included yoga, art and crafts, and drama and expression. The event finished with Look Ahead's annual Customer Awards. Customers were nominated for the awards by Look Ahead support staff and

winners were presented with their awards by Look Ahead Chief Executive Chris Hampson and Chair of our Customer Services Committee, Julie Jones.

Congratulations to all of this year's winners!

New Website

Over the next few months we are going to be working hard to create a brand new website for Look Ahead.

To help make sure this new website tells our customers everything they need to know about being part of Look Ahead, we want your help! If you would like to get involved give our Communications Team a call on 0207 368 6982 or email them on communications@lookahead.org.uk.

My mantra for a healthy life.



My name is Carolina and I am a customer at Look Ahead's Lambeth Mental Health Floating Support service. I became a customer at Look Ahead after being diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

It was a very hard time in my life. To help me to recover and stay strong, I thought about what it was that made me happy and then made sure that I always try to have those things in my life.

For me there are six things that I need in my life to help me to be happy and healthy. These things have become my life mantra (a set of rules/beliefs I live by). These six things are:

1. Love – find the things that you love to do and the people you love to do them with, but most of all learn to love yourself.

- 2. Faith** – my faith in God is a very important part of my life.
- 3. Relationship** – don't just surround yourself with lots of people; take the time to build strong, trusting relationships with people you can rely on.
- 4. Health** – look after your body, eat well and exercise but also make sure to treat yourself sometimes.
- 5. Hope** – no matter how hard things get, never lose hope. As long as you have hope for the future you will find a way to make things better.
- 6. Confidence** – have confidence in what you are doing and who you are.

Whenever I feel down or stressed I think about my mantra and what is going on in my life, and it helps me to see where things are going wrong. I hope that by sharing it with you, you may also find it helpful.

Everyone is different and has different things that make them happy. I am a Christian, so my faith in God is an important part of my life, but you may believe in a different religion or you might not be religious at all and that's ok.

You might have only five things you need in your life, or you might have seven totally different ones. My mantra won't work for everyone but it might be a good place for you to start.

Why relationships matter

This year's Mental Health Awareness Week was all about relationships. Here Peer Support Coordinator, Peter Goodband talks about why he thinks other people are so important to good mental health.



Finding someone who you can talk to about what is going on in your life (good and bad) is so important. And having somebody who has been through similar things, who can understand what you are going through and who you can trust not to judge you; that's priceless.

At Look Ahead we are always looking for new volunteers to join our Peer Support scheme so if this of interest to you please give me a call or email me.

Peter Goodband
020 7368 4626
petergoodband@lookahead.org.uk

Three years ago, I had a mental health crisis that led to me spending some time in hospital and becoming a customer of Look Ahead's Crisis House service. As I was leaving the hospital I spoke to the matron of the ward who told me that he thought I would be alright because I had friends.

When I left Crisis House I became a Peer Support Volunteer for Look Ahead, and after finishing the programme, I then joined the team as the Peer Support Coordinator. The more time I have spent with the programme, the more I see the truth in that matron's words.

The idea behind Look Ahead's Peer Support Programme, Platform, is simple. People with 'lived experience', such as a mental health need, will be able to use what they have learnt to support our current customers who have similar life experiences. In other words, the whole thing works because of the relationship that is built between the customer and the Peer Support volunteer.



Get Creative!

This amazing picture was painted by Len, a customer at Look Ahead's Edward Alsop service.

Len recently had a number of his oil pastel artworks exhibited at St Matthew's, a church near his service. This painting is of Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament in central London. As a school-leaver, Len worked in the printing industry.

Len has created a number of different paintings and drawings. He enjoys creating the work and finds it relaxing.