

Heads-Up

Your quarterly Look Ahead customer newsletter.

Spring 26

Meet the Islington Co-production Group

this edition's Guest Editors

Hi, we're Diamond, Sean, and Joakim from the Co-production Group at Islington Mental Health Service. Welcome to Heads-Up. We're sharing our story because we want other services to set up groups like ours too.



Our group started in February when our housing officer encouraged us to sit down and think about how to bring other customers together to share their views about where the service could be better. One way we did this was to arrange a Pancake Day party and a raffle. These worked really well, and got people who wouldn't usually venture out of their rooms to join in. During the activities, we chatted about the service, what we like, what we don't.

After the activities, we made leaflets to show everyone we had listened to what they said, and that

we are sharing their views with the staff. Our group is having a big impact. We've presented our achievements to Islington Council as an example for other organisations.

Want to start your own group?

People need incentives and comfortable environments, it's easier to chat while flipping pancakes than in a formal meeting! Speak to staff about a budget, even £10 could help you get cakes, snacks or ingredients.

Lastly, don't forget to record feedback you hear and share it with staff after.

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JOHN'S STORY



John is a customer at Look Ahead's young people floating support service in Tower Hamlets. He is ambitious about finding work. He was interviewed for Heads-Up by Sharheena, Diane and Edward.

Hi, I'm John and I've been a customer at Look Ahead since 2024.

It was difficult when I first came here, I struggled because I didn't know much English. I'm originally

from Eritrea, and was getting used to a new country and culture back then.

But, Look Ahead has been there for me. I come to the office every week and meet my support worker, it's very reassuring. If I have problems at home, I can talk to them, it's great. I've been studying English and maths at college, and Look Ahead is supporting me get ready for work. They've helped me find volunteering at Bow Foodbank.

I love cooking – chicken, potatoes, anything – and want to be a chef. I'm hoping to find a catering apprenticeship soon. I'm excited about the future. I want to give back too, I'd like to lead cooking activities with other customers, and after my English course, I'd like to use my Tigrinya and Amharic language skills to translate in services.



Jake introduced Stacey to gardening.

Jake lives at a Look Ahead service in Lambeth. He has green fingers and leads different activities with his fellow customers.

I've been at Look Ahead for over three years, and I'm getting ready to move on. Honestly, I can't fault the staff here. My support worker drops by each day for about half an hour, we watch telly, videos, it's relaxing. I don't like idle chatter, I prefer a comfortable silence.

It's been good here. I love our garden. We spend lots of time outdoors. I want to leave something special for everyone to enjoy after I move. So, I've painted the walls and I've got a box of seeds. I choose what to plant and where. So far, I've got a fruit and vegetable patch – with courgettes, carrots, tomatoes, all sorts – and a wildflower bed. I give what I grow to other residents and staff. One of the best things has been getting my neighbours involved in gardening – I've taught a couple of friends how to plant their own flowers.

Sometimes I make the garden an outside living room for us. I set up my own projector with chairs like I'm having a party in case anyone wants to come and watch a film. I let everyone know they can join, but I make sure they can watch from their windows too if they prefer.

I hope everyone will remember things like these when I've moved and keep the good times rolling.

**£20
HIGH STREET
VOUCHER**

We want to hear your story.

If we publish it, we will give you a £20 voucher.

Send your story to: gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk

Heads-Up was Highly Commended in the Tenant Co-production category at the National Housing with Care Awards. **Congratulations to the team!**



Customers strutted their stuff at the latest AnyBODY Can Dance workshops.



Customers enjoyed celebrating Eid at Antill Road.

Look Ahead's partners Avison Young delivered Easter eggs to Tower Hamlets young people services.



Focus group: help us build a new mental health service

As a Look Ahead customer, you know what makes a good service. You are an expert by experience and see the things that we miss.

We are designing a new mental health service, and we want to know what you think will make it the best it can possibly be.

We will be holding a focus group about this on 25 June 2026.

To find out more, or let us know you are interested in joining, contact gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk or speak to your support worker.

GET IN TOUCH

To send us your art and photos, and learn more about opportunities to get involved, speak to your support worker or email the Co-Production Team at gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk

Editorial Team: Sharron, Sharheena, Louise, John T, John W, Joakim, Diamond, Sean, Diane, Kate and Edward.

MEET ANGELA AND JOE

Sharheena and Louise interviewed Look Ahead's Director of Housing and Customer Services **Angela Prickett**, and Head of Housing **Joe Thomas** to get to know them and learn more about housing.



LOUISE: WHAT DOES YOUR DAY LOOK LIKE?

ANGELA: Tea comes first! Then there's meetings, about policies, looking at performance, the Board. But I still make sure I visit services to meet our customers in their homes — it's so important!

SHARHEENA: WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

ANGELA: I like chatting with friends, drinking coffee, and northern soul dancing, if you know what that is.

JOE: I really enjoy reading in my spare time, and I quite enjoy gardening during the summer months. I'm lucky enough to have a garden, and we've also got a few chickens here as well.

SHARHEENA: WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT LOOK AHEAD?

ANGELA: What's really obvious is that Look Ahead really care about customers. You're really central to everything that we do here. I'm really passionate about delivering fantastic customer service, and it's so important that we work as one team with customers, because nobody knows better than our customers what services they want. That's what encouraged me to join.

LOUISE: WHAT DOES LOOK AHEAD DO TO ADAPT HOMES TO PEOPLE'S NEEDS? WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE'S NEEDS CHANGE?

ANGELA: Firstly, you would speak to your support worker or housing officer. Then we would support you to apply for an adaptation. If it's a big adaptation, we'd have to apply for a grant

from the council, but we'd support you with that. Then our Responsive Repairs Team would do the repair, making sure they follow what your occupational therapist says. If your circumstances and needs change again, then we would review your situation.

SHARHEENA: WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ENSURE PEOPLE CAN STAY LOCAL WHEN THEY MOVE ON?

JOE: Our customers have move on plans and discussions with staff about their preferences, where they want to be, where they want to live. We help them contact local authorities or to bid on properties. We've got a small number of properties that we manage, that might be appropriate for move on which we can discuss with customers as well if they're suitable.

If you enjoyed this interview, you can watch the full video recording by scanning this QR code



PANEL UPDATES



Tenant and Landlord Panel (TALP)

At the March meeting, the TALP looked at complaints. We discussed common issues raised in complaints, including repairs, communication and concerns affecting tenants who don't receive support from Look Ahead.

Tenants also worked with the Housing leadership team to share what they feel should be their priorities for the next 12 months. Key themes included the importance of homes feeling more welcoming and homely, challenges with shared and communal spaces (especially cleanliness), and the need for clearer, local and easy-to-understand welcome information to help people settle into new areas. This feedback will directly shape the work they do, with progress shared at future TALP meetings.

Our next TALP meeting is 9th July, 1 – 4pm at our Head Office in Islington.

Customer Incidents Panel (CIP)

In February, The Customer Incidents Panel talked about self neglect and hoarding.

Members highlighted how important it is for staff to use respectful, non-judgemental language and to build trust by working at the right pace. The panel also discussed balancing a person's choices and independence with safety, and the positive role of peer support and lived experience.

Our next CIP meeting is 1st October, 1 – 4pm at our Head Office in Islington.

Service Design Focus Groups

Three service design focus groups took place in February and March.

One group helped co-design a new mental health service, talking about bedrooms, shared spaces and what helps a service feel safe, calm and welcoming. Two groups brought together tenants receiving tenancy sustainment support to share what is working well and what could be improved. This feedback will help us design services that work better for people.

Policy Stars

Policy Stars is a new customer panel that helps us review and approve changes to our policies. They recently worked with our Head of Positive Behaviour Support to review the Reducing Restraint and Restrictive Practice Policy.

They gave feedback about necessary changes like ensuring restraint reviews are done for individual services (not groups), that reviews happen every year, and that customers and Experts by Experience play a central role in monitoring restrictive practice.

They also stressed the need for clearer rules on PRN, which is medication that you take as needed. and stronger checks on people's health after restraint. All of their recommendations were agreed in March and added to the policy.

Get involved. Speak to your support worker or housing officer, or email: gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk
Visit our website: lookahead.org.uk/customer-hub/get-involved

FREE SPRING OUTINGS

Did you know there are lots of free museums and art galleries you can enjoy in London this spring?

Here are a few:



British Museum, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3DG.



Design Museum, 224-238 Kensington High St, London W8 6AG.



Tate Britain, Millbank, London, SW1P 4RG

Send photos from your outings to gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk

Sharheena's Biryani Recipe



Ingredients (serves two)

- 1 baby chicken (ask the butcher to cut it into curry size pieces) or 2 chicken breasts (diced)
- 1 tsp ginger, garlic paste and salt
- 1 and a half cups of basmati rice (soaked in water for 20 minutes)
- Spices/aromatics - 2 large onions slices, 2 bay leaves, 4 cardamom pods, 1 cinnamon stick, cumin powder, coriander powder and yoghurt
- Optional garnishes - fresh coriander and/or fried onions.

Instructions

- 1) Marinate chicken with spices and yoghurt
- 2) Cook chicken until brown with tomatoes for about 20-30 minutes or follow the instructions on the chicken packaging.
- 3) Boil your rice for 5 minutes or follow the instructions on the rice packet if you are unsure.
- 4) Mix the cooked chicken, tomatoes and any garnishes with the rice and tuck in.

Please make sure your chicken is fully cooked before you eat it.

Enjoy

NOTICE BOARD



Repairs update

We know some people are waiting longer than usual for repairs at the moment, and we're sorry for the frustration this can cause.

We've had recent staff shortages in our Contact Centre, which have now been resolved. The team has worked hard to clear all outstanding repair requests and we're working with our contractors to complete these jobs as quickly as possible.

We're confident that emergency repairs have not been affected, but some urgent repairs (usually done within 5 working days) and routine repairs (usually within 20 working days) are taking longer than normal.

To help us respond faster, please avoid reporting the same repair more than once, and let us know if you have any health needs or other vulnerabilities when you report it.

For updates, call **0333 010 4600** or email repairs@lookahead.org.uk.



Want to give feedback or make a complaint?

Tell a support worker or the service manager or contact Look Ahead's Feedback and Complaints Team team on feedback@lookahead.org.uk or calling **0333 010 4600**.



Young people's running coaching

If you live in London and are aged 16-25, you can sign up for running coaching through Look Ahead's partner The Running Charity.

By signing up and taking part, you can get free access to 1:1 personal training, counselling, and fitness gear, group fitness sessions and much more.



To sign up, scan this QR code and complete the referral form with your support worker.

For more information, contact: fundraisingsocialvalue@lookahead.org.uk

SAMARITANS

If you need someone to talk to, you can call Samaritans for free at any time day or night on

116 123

FUN AND GAMES

COLOUR ME IN



A JOKE FOR YOU



Question: What do you call a girl with a frog on her head?

Answer: Lily!

QUIZ QUESTION



Which flower is famous for blooming in early spring?

(Answer at the bottom of the page)

 **Look Ahead**
CARE, SUPPORT AND HOUSING

Get involved at Look Ahead:
gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk

Email Look Ahead: getintouch@lookahead.org.uk

Call Look Ahead: 0333 010 4600

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