

springboard

The newsletter for supported housing | August 2011



Residents design their own great garden!

 great places

PLUS: Enjoy a day out at Chester Zoo



Welcome to springboard

It looks as though loads of you have been having a really busy summer, making the most of what the weather threw at us.

You have been enjoying country walks, trips out and lots of gardening! Many more of you plan to get involved with gardening later in the year, too. I look forward to hearing about your fruit and veg.

Our residents and staff in St Helens moved from their old project into a new scheme at Bluebell Court – see page 4. Having been to their open day, I can certainly say they are enjoying their new home.

It was also good to see one of our first residents complete our Move On course "Steps" – hopefully more

of you will benefit from this as you get ready to move into more independent accommodation.

You've been so busy this summer I am reluctant to suggest you get more involved but the opportunities now available are just too good to miss - for example, the free trip to Chester Zoo on page 5.

All we are asking is that you spend some time telling us what you think of our services and what we could do better. Sounds like a good deal to me!

If you like the idea of helping us improve our services, why not consider becoming a service user rep at your scheme? Check out page 3 for details.

For any single parents, there is important news on changes to your benefits on page 12.

Finally, please take a look at page 14 where you'll find a guide to understanding your new-style rent statement.

Keep this handy and have another look next time you get your rent statement. You can also ask your support worker if you have any more questions about this important document!



Jane Greenhalgh
Assistant Director (Supported Housing)

Mums learn the art of survival

Young mums at Lorna Lodge, in Wythenshawe, Manchester, have been improving their parenting skills by taking part in a course that teaches them about "the incredible years."

They have just finished the first seven weeks of 14 weeks of training organised by the Children and Parents Service (CAPS), run by Sure Start and the National Health Service.

During the course, known as the Parents' Survival Course - which resumes next month - the residents, who all have children aged from two to seven, learn about the value of 'positive parenting'.

Natalie Briggs, 27, who has four children aged under eight, said: "I have learned how to interact with my children and have learned the importance of praising them. It is making a real difference."



Success! Mums show off their certificates



Tammy's moving on

Tammy Eachus, a resident at Lorna Lodge, recently successfully completed the Move On course. Tammy is pictured with her daughter, Asia, receiving her certificate from Florence Yaluma, the project support co-ordinator.

Residents of Mill View, in Lees, Oldham, enjoyed the sound of music as rock group In Due Process got people up dancing at a charity fundraising event.

About 100 guests and well-wishers tucked into a curry, chilli and a barbecue that had been cooked by staff and residents.

The event, held in June, raised £240, which will go towards creating and landscaping a vegetable garden which residents can look after.

The idea is for them to grow food from seed that they can cook at the scheme

Steve Lindsey, community support worker for Oldham Council, which manages Mill View, said: "It was a fantastic event and we had a really good turnout.

"The money we have raised will help us to create a garden from some spare ground here which will be of great value to



GUITAR MEN: In Due Process entertain guests at a Mill View

Mill View is alive with the sound of music

the residents. Gardening is very therapeutic and helps relieve anxiety and stress."

Mill View - the only housing project of its kind in Oldham - was built for Oldham Council's adult

and community services department by Great Places.

Residents spend about 12 months living there before being helped to find alternative accommodation and to

live independently.

It has eight self-contained one-bedroom flats and two fully-accessible bungalows plus a communal social space where residents can get together.

How do you fancy getting involved?

Want to have your say in how your scheme is run? Want to be the link between staff and residents?

If so, why don't you become a service user rep?

We're looking for more service user reps in our directly-managed

supported housing and floating support schemes. Your service user involvement champion may have asked you recently what you think of the role description we have devised for reps.

The final description reflects the ideas you fed back to your champions and includes tasks

such as attending part of the staff meeting to feed back issues from service users, taking minutes of meetings and encouraging other residents at your scheme to get involved in activities and training.

Speak to your service user involvement champion or key worker if you are interested.

Cover picture: Bethany Booth and Daniel Dolan in the garden at Bay6. See story on Page 11

St Helens

Residents move into new scheme

Residents have moved into Bluebell Court in St Helens, a great new scheme that replaces Dentonville.

Dentonville had served us well for the past 50 years but looked tired and old and was no longer fit for purpose.

Now, at Bluebell Court, each resident has a fully furnished, bright and welcoming one-bedroom flat.

They have all added their personal touches to their new homes and have settled in really well.

The Court was officially opened by the mayor of St Helens, Cllr Tom Hargreaves, last month.

Vicky Rockliff, operations manager at Bluebell Court, said: "Residents who have moved from Dentonville were extremely excited to see their new flats."



It's a snip: Cllr Tom Hargreaves, Mayor of St Helens, officially opens Bluebell Court
Left: Sofa, so good for residents

Bluebell Court provides safe, temporary accommodation for homeless women aged 16 to 49 with 24-hour support staff,

including night cover.

It consists of 20, fully-furnished apartments and is close to the town centre, transport links and local services.

Pomona Gardens opens after £2.2m re-fit

Trafford, Manchester

A former elderly people's home has been transformed into a £2.2 million supported housing scheme in Old Trafford.

The scheme, Pomona Gardens, has been divided into 20 self-contained apartments with communal areas.

Helen McNulty, operations manager, said: "The staff have worked very hard over the past few weeks moving residents in, setting up

support and ensuring the move in process runs smoothly.

"The residents are very happy with their new homes and with the fantastic support they are receiving from staff."

Pomona Gardens provides temporary

supported accommodation to homeless people who need support to enable them to live independently.

Residents can live at the project for up to two years before they move on.

One resident said: "Everything about Pomona Gardens is cool! I am receiving support but also having fun."

Fancy a day out that'll cost you nothing?

Visit Chester Zoo with us!



We're going to the zoo, zoo, zoo - and you can come too, too, too!

We're inviting you to come with us for a day trip to Chester Zoo - for free!

We're always looking for new ways to involve our residents and this year we've decided a trip to the zoo will give you the chance to tell us what you think of our services.

The trip is on Saturday, October 8 and all Great Places residents are invited!

We'll provide you with transport to the zoo and pay for entrance for you and anyone who lives with you.

All you have to do is spend a bit of time telling us what you think of how we do things and what you'd like to see from us in the future.

The trip is only for Great Places residents and people who live with them all the time. This means we can't invite other friends or family members who don't live in one of our homes.

We'll arrange transport from all the areas we work in.

We hope to arrive at the zoo by 10.30am and will leave by 4pm. There are plenty of cafes and restaurants at the zoo for you to buy lunch or, if you prefer,

you could bring your own packed food. But you need to let us know as soon as possible because places are limited.

You can talk to your support coordinator or a member of staff at your project and ask them to put your name down.

We will let you know as soon as possible if you can go.



GO FOR IT!
get involved

How John stubbed out cigs and started digging

John Crome, a resident of Next Step, a Manchester scheme for men with mental health needs, quit smoking in June last year after smoking 20 to 40 cigarettes a day over 20 years.

To help him manage quitting, John began volunteering at a gardening project at Debdale Park, in Gorton, Manchester, where he trained as a health walk leader.

John (right) has recently used his walking leader skills to lead a group of residents and staff from Next Step projects on a walking trip around Ethrow Country Park, in Stockport.

John was an excellent leader and had thought of everything, including bus timetable, picnic, rest stops and tour of the visitors' centre.

Ethrow Park has a beautiful lake with lots of wildlife, walking paths and views of Cheshire countryside which

John was able to explain and guide during the walk.

John told other residents about the trip by using his computer skills to produce a colourful poster advertising the trip.

He also did an easy-to-complete evaluation sheet at the end of the day.

Other residents could then let him know what they enjoyed, what could be done differently, was the walk about right, easy or difficult.

Next Step residents are looking forward to John's next walk in August which will be around Vernon Park in Stockport.



Out of work? Get on a skills lifeline

Out-of-work Great Places residents in Oldham and Rochdale have been handed the chance to find a job thanks to the Skills For Jobs programme.

It offers free training at Oldham College tailored to your needs to help people get back into work.

The Skills For Jobs team offers fully paid-for courses for people who are 18+, at risk of redundancy or whose jobs are under threat.

Courses are available in customer service, health and social care, construction, warehousing, admin, office IT, food safety, teaching and waste management.

If you are interested in applying for a place on the next course complete an application form which you can collect from The Skills For Jobs team at Pennine House, 77 Union Street, Oldham.

You can also call Oldham College on 0161 785 4014 if you have any questions.

Learning a load of new skills!

Staff and residents praise scheme's 'positive impact'

Residents and staff have given the thumbs up to our Staff With Skills project.

During the scheme's three-month trial – which began in March and ended in May – 138 residents and 55 Great Places staff took part.

Events included gardening, cooking, IT, singing, music lessons, arts and crafts, jewellery-making, football, film and games days, walking sessions and

massage and beauty treatments.

The residents who joined in came from Lorna Lodge, Doherty House and two Next Step schemes, all in Manchester.

Staff members and residents said they enjoyed the experience and looked forward to more events.

Jacqui McCann, operations manager, said: "Staff With Skills has had a very positive impact.

"It gives residents the opportunity to engage with people that are not directly involved in their support."

Keira Burns, Great Places' employment and training manager, said: "The idea was to ask staff members to dedicate half a day a couple of times to deliver a fun, informative and engaging session to our residents."



Cooking



Gardening



Arts & crafts



Football

Turn to Pages 8 and 9 for a picture special on a Staff With Skills water parks walk

A trio of top residents

Three residents at Rodney Street, a Liverpool scheme for women, have each been awarded the title Resident Of The Month.

Jennifer Baguley, Jade Cannon and Lauren Cunningham got certificates and £5 Primark vouchers from supported housing officer Stephen Lewis.

They girls were nominated after attending all support sessions, trying to do all tasks given to them and paying their rent every week.



Jade Cannon



Jennifer Baguley



Lauren Cunningham

Flower power brings Dermot Murphy garden to life

Four planters were donated to Dermot Murphy Close in Withington, Manchester by property services contractor Cruden.

They were built by Cruden to bring some colour to the gardens and to create a little interest for patients who cannot get outside.

Apprentice joiners from Cruden designed and built the planters

themselves at the company's site in Ormskirk before they were brought to Withington. Their green-fingered



Cruden's Marvin Thomlinson with a planter

colleagues in property services then had them planted with a bright mix of colours and installed them in the scheme's gardens.

The team at Dermot Murphy were delighted with the addition to the garden and have enjoyed maintaining them over the summer.

Dermot Murphy Close is a scheme for people with serious health conditions.



Ready for the off (left): Great Places residents and staff prepare for their walk from Chorlton Water Park to Sale Water Park

Bottom: staff member Diane Hartney and Kevin Brind

It's good to walk

Great Places staff and residents from two Next Step schemes, for Manchester men with mental health needs, braved the weather to enjoy a brisk four-mile walk in May.

The group – nine residents who live at Palatine Road, Withington, and Knutsford Road, Gorton – were accompanied by seven Great Places employees.

The party set off on their four-mile trek from Chorlton Water Park, a stone's throw from our Southern Gate head office, and walked along the banks of the river Mersey before stopping for lunch at a cafe at Sale Water Park.

There the residents enjoyed a packed lunch provided by Great Places' staff.

The Great Places party included Shelagh Woodbridge, Rita Martin, Diane Hartney, Steve Jackson,

Residents and Great Places staff enjoy trek to water parks

Denise Thomason and John Stacey.

Maggie Shannon, director of performance and innovation, led the way.

Despite some heavy clouds overhead, the rain kept off ... well, at least until everyone was well on their way back to base!

Resident David Owen, who moved into his accommodation at Palatine Road a few months ago, was glad he decided to go on the walk.

He said: "I thought it would be something different to do and I really enjoyed the exercise and

meeting new people. I don't often get the chance to go out these days since I stopped driving."

Maggie said: "It was a great day and everyone enjoyed the fresh air and exercise. Fortunately, a few raindrops didn't dampen everyone's enthusiasm."

"It was a wonderful opportunity for staff and residents to take part in an activity together."

The residents – Kevin Brind, John Jocos, John Lawanson, Brian Mickleborough, David Owen, Christopher Ward, Kevin Ward, Brian White and Paul Wilson – were each presented with a certificate.



You can bid for money for your project!

What one thing would help you to change your life for the better?

The chance to do a college course to improve your chances of getting a job? Or some equipment to help you to enjoy your hobby?

These are just two of the things that the Great Places Opportunities For All Tenant Dividend fund has paid for over the last years.

If you can think of something that would help you to change your life for the better you can apply, too!

About £50,000 of tenant dividend funding is available this year and the tenant funding panel will consider applications for most things. You can apply for all of the money you need or part of it.

We'll soon be producing a new application form that you can use to apply for funds. In the meantime, think about what you want to apply for and why it would make a difference to you.

If you have an idea for funding and you need some help, or want to discuss your idea with someone, or you just want to know how to apply, contact your local support coordinator or a member of staff at the project you live in, who will help.

Getting a tan on great day out in Lakes

Residents from The In Partnership Project, in Blackburn, enjoyed a grand day out in the Lake District.

The women – Hannah Handley, Katrina Cassidy, Ann Hort, Louise Crawford and Leah Carhill – were

accompanied on their minibus trip by Debbie Whewell, Lindsay Warburton and Ann Spinola.

They took part in a series of activities at The Tower Wood Education Centre, including canoeing,

kayaking and sailing on Lake Windermere.

Project support worker Debbie Whewell said: "Everyone had a fabulous time.

"The weather was fantastic, everyone came away with a sun tan."



Day trippers, from left: Great Places staff members Lindsay Warburton (left) and Louise Crawford (far right) with residents Leah Carhill, Katrina Cassidy, Hannah Handley and Annie Hort

Residents gain money to grow fruit and vegetables

Residents at Lorna Lodge will soon be able to grow their own vegetables – and enjoy the results of their labours – after receiving nearly £1,000 to develop a garden to kitchen project.

They applied to Greater Manchester Community Foundation, in partnership with the Seed Project, for funding.

The £969 award will be used to create a communal vegetable garden and buy new kitchen equipment so residents can learn how to grow, harvest and cook

healthy meals. Pamela Moran, project support worker, said: "This is a fantastic amount of money for the project and grateful

thanks go to Daniel Mountford (Great Places' fundraising co-ordinator) for his much-valued help and guidance."



In the money: From left, Claire Burrows, Pam Moran (Great Places), Ria Headey, Nicola Kershaw, Florence Yaluma (Great Places) and Lisa Stanley



We've got our dream garden

Under cover: Residents and staff at Bay6 in the garden's pergola. Below: how the garden looked before

Bay6 residents see their ideas turned into reality

Residents at the Bay6 project now enjoy fresh air every day, thanks to Great Places.

They drew up plans to create a much-needed garden at the Leyland housing development.

Great Places, which owns Bay6, contributed money from its environmental fund to help out.

Before, the garden (inset, right) was just a patch of grass with a patio area.

Now it has been transformed, and features a beautiful, hand-made pergola, decking and new paving along with state-of-the art lighting, a water feature and a barbecue area.

Architect Vicky Godfey from Bernard Taylor Partnership Ltd, staff from Alan Chew's in Manchester and DJH Electrical, from Liverpool, helped create the garden.

Jenny Ashcroft, children's services manager at Bay6, said: "We are delighted with the new garden and are so grateful to everyone who

worked so hard to turn drawings into reality.

"The young people have been involved all the way along, including adding the finishing touches and planting the pots to add some colour.

"The garden will now be used all year round, providing a calm and safe space that residents can use to come together and relax."

The Bay6 project provides supported accommodation to 11 young people aged 16-25 who are either at risk or who have become homeless and are in need of support to gain the skills to live independently.



changes to benefits ... changes to benefits ... cha

No need to panic

In previous editions of Springboard we have kept you up to date with changes to the benefit system. The next change is in October.

It will affect lone parents receiving income support.

From then, once your youngest child turns five you will be taken off income support and will have to claim jobseekers' allowance.

If you are receiving income support because you are a carer, or have already been assessed as being unfit for work, you may find that you continue on income support.

If you are moved from income support to jobseekers' allowance there will be big changes.

To receive your jobseekers'

Losing income support does not have to be a disaster

allowance you need to sign on. This involves attending the JobCentre Plus every fortnight to check you are actively seeking work.

Sometimes you may have to show what you have done or are doing to get a job. If JobCentre Plus does not think you're seeking work they can stop your benefit.

At present, tenants who receive income support get their rent and council tax paid. This should continue for those tenants who are moved from income support to jobseekers' allowance.



What happens if I forget to sign on?

Firstly, you won't get your benefit. Your

housing benefit and council tax claim may be suspended, too.

This would mean your rent and council tax will go unpaid.

Once your jobseekers' allowance is sorted your housing benefit and council tax benefit claim should be reinstated.

But this could take some time and you may be chased by the association and council over unpaid amounts.

How to make the most of your money

Do you want to make the most out of your money? It's easier than you think. The Money Advice Service offers a free, confidential health check. It takes 5-10 minutes to complete online. You will get:

Helpful money advice

A clear picture of your finances

Ideas to make the most of your money

An action plan tailored for you

Clear goals you can work towards

For more information go to www.moneyadvice.org.uk, talk to your support co-ordinator or email FinancialInclusionTeam@greatplaces.org.uk

Garden gang get planting

Residents, their children and partners from Olivia Lodge in Clayton, Manchester, enjoyed a few days of gardening activities with the staff.

They planted pots and baskets and put up bunting around the grounds to make the courtyard brighter for the summer months.

A barbecue was held where staff and residents and their children enjoyed fun and games - including 'wrap the mummy' - in the

sunshine. Jackie Mongan, project support worker, said: "All the residents and staff - and even some fathers - took part. It was a lovely day and a great time was had by everyone involved."

"The best bit was the 'wrap the mummy' game; the children, and everyone else for that matter, thought it was hilarious!"



Garden girl: Kadie-Leigh Anderson (above) helps make the flowers grow while mums enjoy fun and games



We get a kick out of football!

Residents form their own team and join five-a-side league

Residents of Meadow Lodge, in Stretford, Manchester are taking part in Powerleague five-a-side football at the JJB Soccerdome, in Trafford Park, after successfully bidding for funds from Great Places' Tenants Dividend Fund.

The residents at the scheme said they wanted to take part in something that would help them get more involved with the community.

As a result, the Meadow5 Football Club was formed and a bank account opened.

Bidding for funds was mainly done by residents Ryan Clegg and Anthony Davies, who became chairman and



secretary of the club. Meadow5 FC has so far played five league games and two friendlies, with an average eight players turning out for each game plus the occasional supporter.

Residents were also involved in writing the club constitution and designing and buying the club kit.

They train twice a week and organise transport to and from JJB sports every Wednesday.

The second season started in mid-June and Meadow5 FC now hope to get promoted to a higher league.

Meadow Lodge residents are expected to be resettled after two years but those who leave the scheme can still stay as a member of the team.

Jon Chambers, project support worker, said: "The residents are really enthusiastic about the football team and enjoy training and playing regularly."

"It's great seeing them in action!"

How to understand your Rent statement

1 This line tells you the name and phone number of your housing officer. Call them if you want to discuss rent matters.

2 Here are the dates when we have charged you for rent and you have paid. The most recent transactions are at the bottom, like a bank statement.

3 The 'description' column shows the weekly rent you are charged under 'Total Charges/Rent Due'.

The 'Allpay payments' are money you have paid us by direct debit or with your rent card.

Where a date is in the description, like '1/04/11-008/05/11' this shows housing benefit paid. You should check this to make sure all the money due to your has been paid. If there are entries that say 'Cash' this refers to notes and coins you have given to Great Places staff in person. We always give receipts for cash.

4 Your tenancy number is the unique reference we use to identify you on our computer system.

The date shows when the statement was printed and the rent charge shows your total weekly rent including any service charges.

Where it says 'current' this shows the balance of your account. If it says DR, it means you are behind with your payments and your account is in debit. If it says CR it means your account is in credit and you are up to date or ahead with your payments.

Great Places Housing Group Rent Account Statement

Miss G. Places
729 Princess Road
Manchester
M20 2LT

Tenancy **4** GP1234567
Statement 13th June 2011
Rent Charge £149.72
Current £686.55DR

1 Please contact Mr Mann if you have any queries about this statement on 0161 447 5000.

Date	Description	Charges	HB Paid	Rent Paid	Balance
27/04/11	Allpay payments			£12.41	£411.93DR
02/05/11	Total Charges/Rent Due	£149.72			£561.65DR
04/05/11	Allpay payments			£12.41	£549.24DR
06/05/11	Total Charges/Rent Due	£149.72			£698.96DR
09/05/11	11/04/2011 - 08/05/2011		£549.24		£149.72DR
11/05/11	Allpay payments			£12.41	£137.31DR
16/05/11	Total Charges/Rent Due	£149.72			£287.03DR
18/05/11	Allpay payments			£12.41	£274.62DR
23/05/11	Total Charges/Rent Due	£149.72			£424.34DR
25/05/11	Allpay payments			£12.41	£411.93DR
30/05/11	Total Charges/Rent Due	£149.72			£561.65DR
01/06/11	Allpay payments			£12.41	£549.24DR
06/06/11	Total Charges/Rent Due	£149.72			£698.96DR
08/06/11	Allpay payments			£12.41	£686.55DR

5

Registered Office: Southern Gate, 729 Princess Road, Didsbury M20 2LT
Please note: this statement will not include any payments made since the statement was printed.

5 The 'charges column' shows money taken by Great Places for rent owed.

The 'HB' column shows housing benefit that has been paid.

'Rent Paid' shows rent you have paid, by cash, card, or direct debit.

'Balance' shows the balance on your rent account. Remember, DR means your account is in debit (arrears), and CR means you are in credit, or up to date.

What happens if I am in arrears because my housing benefit has not yet been paid?

If your account is in arrears (DR) because your housing benefit has not yet been paid, you do not need to worry. Great Places knows the money will be paid.

The example statement above says the tenant's account is £686.55 in arrears (DR). This is because her housing benefit has been paid only up to 08/05/11, so five weeks of benefit is owed. In this case, the arrears are not the fault of the tenant. She is up to date with the contribution she makes through Allpay.



A little Harry Potter magic!

A Harry Potter evening at Ellen Court in Radcliffe gave residents the chance to dress up their children as wizards and witches.

Children and their parents watched one of the films and listened to a chapter from one of JK Rowley's smash-hit novels before painting Harry Potter-themed posters and cutting out cardboard candles.

Colourful posters on a Harry Potter theme were created by resident Narissa Smith. Residents and guests enjoyed lemonade, cake and magic biscuits!

Jane's day with board member David

David Copley, a member of the Great Places board, spent a day visiting the floating support team in Leeds in June.



He met floating support workers who told him what they did and gave him an insight in the service they provide in Leeds.

Then David and a floating support co-ordinator went out and about on home visits to meet clients.

He met resident Jane Tyrrell at her home and presented

her with a certificate for her involvement in recruiting a newly-appointed floating support co-ordinator.

Jane spent the day with us at our office in Leeds and took part in the service user interview for all the candidates who had been shortlisted for the job.

Jane said: "I enjoyed the day. It was great to ask the questions and get the different answers.

"I would definitely do it again and it was great to hear who got the job."

Tell us what you think!

If you have a suggestion or comment about any of our services, your experiences or this magazine, we'd love to know. This is your chance to let us know anything you want, good or bad. Remember, it will only help us to get better! Post your comment to: John Stacey, Southern Gate, 729 Princess Road, Manchester M20 2LT

Your name:

Your address:

Your telephone number:

Your comment:

Win £20 in vouchers!

Find the 23 activities readers can do as part of Great Places' campaign to encourage customer involvement and you could win £20 in vouchers.

3
readers
could
win!

Send your entry in the post to: FREEPOST, R L S C - H L L J - E Z R Z, John Stacey, Great Places Housing Group, Southern Gate, 729 Princess Road, Manchester M20 2LT.

Fill in your name and address on the form over the page

.. and please take the chance to have your say on our services

Board member
Community rep
Competitions
Complaints
Clean up
Day trip
First aid
Focus group
Fun day
Fundraising panel
Local Area Forum
Meeting
Money saving
Mystery shopper
Neighbours day
Residents conference
Resident inspector
Shout panel
Sports
Survey
Tea dance
Training
Walks

N E I G H B O U R S D A Y V B X L S
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B F U N D R A I S I N G P A N E L R

Oops, sorry!

A mistake in the May issue of Springboard meant the wordsearch was impossible to complete. Apologies to readers who struggled to make sense of it! Our winners did as well as they could in the circumstances. They are **Val McDonagh**, of Docherty House, Rusholme, Manchester; **Teresa Henney**, of Elk View Court, Blackpool, and **Joyce Chirambo**, of Moston, Manchester.

Walks



Residents' conference



Fun day

