



Independence & Wellbeing

great
places
HOUSING GROUP

Great homes. Great communities. Great people.



Answering a need

Great Places Housing Group exists to enable our customers to achieve their potential.

For many, that can mean simply offering access to quality homes. Others, for one reason or another, need more. They may find themselves facing a range of life challenges such as teenage pregnancy or being homeless; they could have problems with drugs or alcohol; they could be struggling with health issues, mental or physical; they could have learning difficulties or simply be getting older and less capable.

Independence & Wellbeing is the part of Great Places that provides services to support, encourage and empower people in difficult situations such as these.





A sense of purpose

Together, independence and wellbeing are the twin goals that inform the design of our services and provide a focus for those who deliver them.

Enabling our customers to achieve independence is our overriding objective. Promoting their wellbeing is an essential part of achieving it.

Independence

Apart from enabling our customers to have a home of their own, our priority will always be to help them to become more self-reliant and less dependent on others or on overstretched public services.

Achieving greater independence can mean different things for different people and is always life-changing:



- Being able to secure and maintain your own home.
- Living as a member of the community, rather than on the street, in a hostel or in residential care.
- Having the skills and developing the confidence to be self-reliant.
- Being able to access training and job opportunities.
- Having use of the equipment/ technology needed to live an independent life.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is not just about feeling good; it's the ability to tackle life's challenges, and the confidence to make decisions and take action.

Wellbeing involves every area of life – mental, physical, social, financial and the home. More importantly, it's a vital element in achieving and sustaining independence.

Making sure we get it right

There is strong evidence that certain types of behaviour promote and sustain wellbeing. The model below is based on one developed by the New Economics Foundation which identified five key actions that, when performed, improve wellbeing.

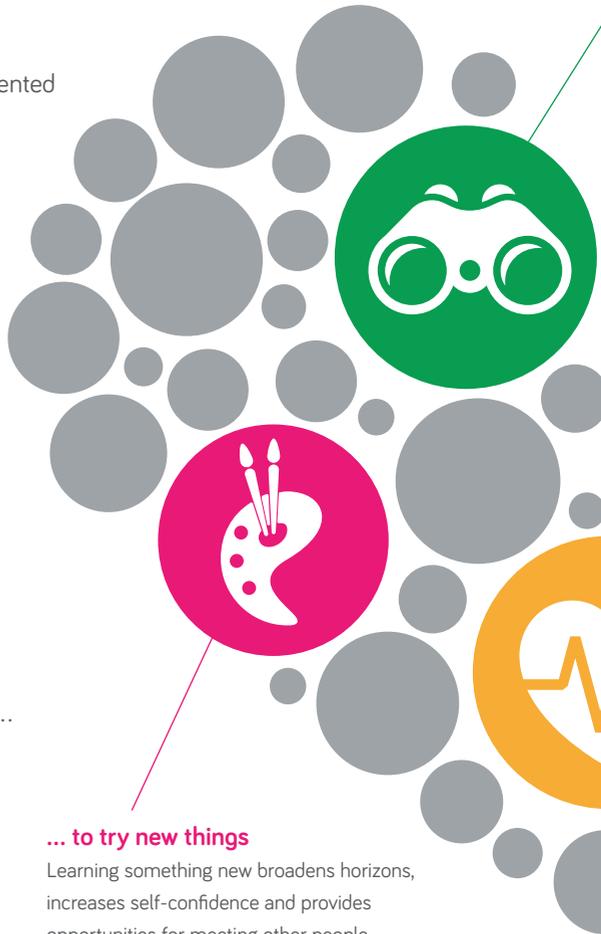
We have adapted this model and supplemented it with a sixth action – to be independent – that is particularly relevant to our area of activity.

A model for independence and wellbeing

We encourage and support our customers ...

... to try new things

Learning something new broadens horizons, increases self-confidence and provides opportunities for meeting other people.



...to be aware

Making the effort to take notice of the wider world helps you to reflect on your own experiences and appreciate the things that matter.

...to give back

Doing something for others - a friend, a stranger or neighbours - can be rewarding, makes you feel valued and links you to the wider community.

... to connect

Social relationships are critical for wellbeing. Making connections with other people enriches your life and theirs. Social isolation leads to poor health.

... to be independent

Taking control of an area of your life - at home or at work - makes you less reliant on others and helps to build self-belief.

... to be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety. It also encourages social interaction.



Six clear guiding principles

These provide a practical template for the work we do with our customers every day in delivering our purpose to provide services that promote independence and wellbeing.



We put home at the heart of what we do

As a housing group, we recognise the value of home. It's the foundation of independence and having a home and maintaining it properly can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

We help customers to develop the skills they need to secure a home and to keep it.

We help them to learn the practical skills to live independently, from managing their finances to cooking, cleaning to basic DIY.

We make sure they know how to access the services that are available for them.

"I had been sofa surfing for years between different family members who looked after my benefits. Since moving in, I have opened a bank account and taken control of my money and bills. I've also learned how to keep the place clean and how to deal with visitors. It was difficult at first, but I am starting to really enjoy being independent and having my own place."

George

We empower customers to make their own choices

We support customers in exploring options. By giving them the information they need to make a considered choice, we help them to take control of their lives.

We encourage them to explore the alternatives available to them and to reflect on the possible consequences.

We help our customers to arrive at their own decisions and we respect the result.

"I had found a job, but the pay was very low. The housing and wellbeing officer explained the options. If I took the job, I would no longer be eligible for housing benefit and would be left with very little to live on. But if I could find cheaper accommodation, it was still worth it. So that's what I decided to do. Without knowing there was an alternative, I would probably have turned the job down."

Bahar



We don't focus on weaknesses, we play to strengths

Too often the negatives of a situation can overwhelm the positives. We help our customers to recognise their strengths and capabilities and to build on them.

We see customers as individuals with a story to tell rather than simply people who need our support.

We turn an assessment of a situation or symptoms into a personal conversation, about what makes them tick, the things they enjoy and the skills they have.

By helping our customers to discover their own strengths, we encourage them to look outwards and to give to others.

"Before I became unwell, I worked in HR and payroll and had a very different life. My keyworker encouraged me to relearn all of my skills in using computers and tablets. Recently she has been helping me to learn how to access my universal credit online account. That has given me so much confidence and belief in myself."

Lori

We help our customers to become a part of their community

There is a close link between wellbeing and social inclusion. That's why we help people to reconnect to society and to take part in mainstream activities.

We provide support to a diverse range of people. By building meaningful relationships with our customers based on trust and respect and involving ourselves with their communities, we can help them to build bridges and engage with others. Then, when they move on from us, they will have a support network to help them maintain their independence and wellbeing.

"When I moved into the project, my self-esteem and confidence were at an all-time low. I was in an abusive relationship and my living situation was poor. The project gave me the opportunity to meet other people who needed help. I support them by having coffee mornings where all the residents can come and talk and support each other. I now believe that I can achieve things if I really want to."

Elizabeth



We involve partners

There are many specialist agencies – statutory or voluntary – that can offer valuable support with everything from education and health to employment opportunities, and we make sure that our customers have access to them.

Our approach is holistic. We aim to build an all-round package for each customer, comprising partners who can help them to learn and grow.

Working with partners and sharing skills helps us as well, to develop and improve our services.

“As I got older, I was finding certain things more difficult. I knew I needed help, but I was worried about losing my independence. Fortunately, I was put in touch with a local Extra Care scheme. Now I will be able to stay in my own home for the foreseeable future.”

John

We do things ‘with’ not ‘for’ our customers

Involving the customer in tasks rather than doing everything for them cultivates their self-belief, develops their skills and encourages independence.

We follow the customer’s agenda and let them take the lead. They may lack confidence at first but increasing involvement will lead to a point where they can well, to complete tasks themselves.

“It was time for me to move out of short-term accommodation. I probably hoped that someone would sort something out for me, but Chloe simply showed me what to do and let me get on with it. I contacted the landlord and then, with a little encouragement, arranged a viewing and finally moved in. The result was a new place to live and a real sense of achievement.”

Saline



A framework that works

Independence & Wellbeing has been carefully designed to bring clarity to the services we provide to those customers who need more than a home, and to ensure that we deliver them efficiently and effectively.

It provides us with a clear sense of purpose. We want our customers to be truly independent and we recognize that helping them to gain a sense of wellbeing for themselves is an essential part of achieving that objective.

Our evidence-based model enables us to recognize the types of behaviour that contribute to wellbeing, those we need to encourage and promote.

Finally, our guiding principles provide all of us with a practical template that we can use, every day, to inform our interactions with our customers. In line with current directions in public service reform, this aims at reducing dependency on services and effecting sustained change by empowering our customers.



For more information
visit www.greatplaces.org.uk

Great homes. Great communities. Great people.

great
places
HOUSING GROUP



Great homes. Great communities. Great people.

great
places
HOUSING GROUP