

The World We Inhabit!

For many people the Charity Sector can appear to be rather complex and difficult to define. Within the provision of social housing it can also be confusing particularly regarding how a charitable organisation differs from any other. This is particularly true of modern Charities as they provide more and more services traditionally delivered through public services.

The growth of partnerships between local authorities, National Government and Charities has seen significant growth in recent years. This will continue to grow and the provision of social housing will significantly increase particularly for people living independently and with disability. Charities will be called upon to partner this growth and the major difference is that they are cause driven, not for profit and should be client led through delivery of services meeting their needs. Charities also have access to Voluntary income through fundraising from Trusts, Corporate and the general public. This can enable Charities to go beyond statutory delivery of services and a recent example of this was the purchase by BeST of sensory equipment for one of our clients. Working for a Charity can provide a great deal of satisfaction particularly when we realise the impact we are making every day in a positive way, to many individuals and their families.

We often hear about the negative aspects of Charities, particularly around fundraising. This is often grossly unfair and unbalanced reporting. We never hear from the benefactors of Charities, like those who have guide dogs, Macmillan Nurses, local Hospices, happy homes through independent living etc. etc. We don't get told of the many millions of people who happily donate to Charities every year and have a positive relationship with the Charities they support. Charities are founded with the intention of making the world a better place, through helping the homeless, the hungry, and people with disabilities, medical research, the environment, animals, the dispossessed, the needy and much more.

So we need to celebrate being a part of the amazing community of charities across the world, helping to make the world we live in a better place. That's what makes it, in my view, very different in a positive way, from any other organisation.

Thanks for reading.
Hugh, Trustee at BeST

The Apprentice, You're Hired!

Holly



For a while now BeST have embraced an apprenticeship programme with a vision to give young people a chance to gain valuable work place experience in addition to class room based studying. We believe our apprentices form an integral part of our team and are very much part of our future. But don't just take our word for it, in the next few issues of Snippets we will all get a chance to meet our current and past apprentices and hear their story so far!

"With a good head for numbers and a little brother with Autism, the opportunity to work at BeST as an apprentice was the perfect role for me, it was almost too good to be true. Yet, here I am, almost four months in and having the time of my life.

BeST has given me a golden opportunity to continue my studies while earning and learning at the same time. My role as Account Administrator is constantly evolving as people trust me with more and more responsibilities. When I started, I was pretty scared but was welcomed with open arms almost instantly. Everyone in the company was so friendly and I settled straight in.

My colleagues in the finance department are really approachable and supportive, so if I even feel unsure about something, I can be sure that they will support me and guide me in the right direction.

I feel really lucky to have joined BeST while it is still a young charity, now I can watch BeST grow and more excitingly; grow with it.

It sometimes amazes me how well my previous and current studies apply to my role in BeST. I have been taught to use SAGE, master Excel spreadsheets, record and analyse data – all things that I do on a daily basis in BeST. Further to my studies I have learnt many more skills that I could only learn through this charity such as; managing voids, proper business communication skills, dealing with local authorities and processing housing benefit remittances for month end and sales reports."

Holly



From the CEO

"Dear A-team!!, what a year 2015 was, what a year 2016 will be We have provided some fantastic spaces and places for people to reside in over the last 5 years and our high quality of service provision continues to meet our tenants' needs. We continue to set the benchmark that we have created and stakeholders continue to champion. We are continuing with our strategic growth in 2016 for a further 400-500 bespoke spaces, provided by our diverse approach from Bond funded acquisition program and operational lease arrangements.

Our office move has been of great benefit and largely "went without a hitch", huge thanks to all who made this happen. We have new team members join us since our move who have been made very welcome, Steve Boyd (Chief Information Officer) and Matthew Fay (Housing Officer).

2016 will be another exciting and rewarding year, the "A team" will make this happen, I for one have great pride and admiration in the impact we have as an organisation to the people we assist and support, to lead it remains a pleasure, this only happens because of your unrivalled efforts; here's to 2016 ..."

Regards...
Kevin



Snippets

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New Move New Start New Year!



Cramped conditions, noise levels, staff wellbeing – all of which can have a negative impact on performance, productivity and general overall inter departmental function thus affecting output. After board consideration the decision of relocation was approved in September 2015.

Seeking both suitable locations and business premises was a real eye-opener. Location, location, location as they say is the most crucial aspect of planning such a change on many levels. Many factors can influence the end result and the decision making process, though through trial and error I am glad to say the right choice has been made.

Various opportunities were explored before arriving at Sentinel House, to name but a few - Manchester City Centre, Swinton, Salford and even consideration of a further site at Barton Hall, however after careful due diligence and cost analysis the overall relocation was to be Sentinel House based on location, staff travel, opportunity for expansion, flexibility of term and immediate availability given the conditions that staff had endured for copious amounts of time at Barton Hall.

13th November 2015 - D Day! The move was not without hiccup... Good old BT and IT issues have played part to a few more grey hairs it's safe to say though overall the pain has been outweighed by the outcome that is a spacious office environment with security of tenure promoting our own independence.

Staff are considerably happier with the move and location of the office. It offers better network links for both staff and visitors and gives a better perception to external stakeholders alike. Overall morale is much better giving rise to enhanced relations.

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*The BeST start to continued success!
Vision and possibilities await!*

The departmentalisation has promoted unexpected innovations throughout the team allowing further focus on strategy and alignment over the short term.

I am happy to say that the move has been a very positive start to 2016 and furthermore the space will allow for the expected growth, improved communications both internally and externally and

provides for a better brand perception to all stakeholders.

The future ahead will be a very exciting time for BeST and I am happy to be a part of the continued success and to be working alongside such a dedicated group of individuals who have common goals.

Shelley

OUR PEOPLE

Matthew Fay

Do you remember when you were 23? Did you have everything planned out and knew exactly where your life was going? Well, I once thought I did. With a degree in teaching that suddenly felt like a ball and chain and expansive experience in the care sector but with no opportunity of making a career from it; I felt lost.

Fast forward to October 2015 and I am sitting in an interview room, answering questions about a Job I wasn't sure I knew much about. When I had applied it had seemed like the perfect job, an opportunity to make a difference, an opportunity to start a career, an opportunity to ignore that 'ball and chain degree' and most importantly – an opportunity to start building my own independent life. I now find that ironic; as that is what BeST aims to do for its customers – to give them independence, and now they did it for their new Housing Officer: they did it for me.

When I started on November 17th, I thought I would drown in the amount of knowledge I was required to absorb, I

thought I would be a hindrance and pain to the company. With only a teaching degree and seven years' experience as a support worker, who could blame me? I had never done anything like this before.

Only two months later and my understanding and knowledge of what BeST is, does and stands for is clear, and let me tell you, that it is an exciting thing to be part of. BeST has the values and care for its customers at its heart, and coming from the support sector this is very important to me. BeST never brushes aside someone because of their differences, wants or needs; BeST is flexible, adaptable and caring and works to suit the customer, whoever they may be.

I spend my days as the eyes and ears of the charity. Responsible directly to our customers and their support, I am the person who they can trust, become familiar with and know that when they have a question: I will find the answer. When they have a problem: I will find a resolution.



My new job has been the breath of fresh air I needed. BeST broke the mould by employing someone with limited experience, giving younger people a chance and supporting them through their development. I now get to explore the country, keep in touch with the sector that I am truly passionate about – and above all – I am able to make a positive difference to the lives of so many people.

Applying for this job and taking that leap of faith was the BeST thing I ever did.

Danielle Higginbotham

OUR TENANTS



Blackpool for her to reside at with an NHS support worker making a weekly visit. Danielle was worried about living Completely on her own but felt this was her only option.

Living at Bespoke Supportive Tenancies supported living for people with mental health issues at our Blackpool project.

Danielle was in hospital for five months during 2014 and the care team arranged a private rented flat in

Danielle received a visit from a support worker once a week for about an hour and this was her only support for the whole week. She started to stay in her room all the time and often had suicidal thoughts and would sometimes act on these thoughts.

Danielle moved into Napier Avenue in October 2015 and she is much happier and does not feel isolated in supported living. She is able to talk to staff if she is feeling suicidal and does regular social activities in the community with staff and other tenants.

The support Manager at Napier Avenue advises that Blackpool had a lack of provision of supported living for people with mental health issues.

Fundraising for BeST

I am the Managing Director of a company called Income Generation Ltd who specialise in fundraising for charitable organisations across the sector. As you may be aware I was formally Appeals Director at Christie Hospital and Development Director at Bolton School.

As I have not worked with a housing association before, I was really interested in being contracted to BeST to investigate the potential for raising funds. Immediately, I was aware that this presents a somewhat different situation to other charities. The public perception of housing associations is not really one of "not-for-profit" and though we are a registered housing provider specifically dealing with tenants with ASD and physical handicaps, trying to clarify our charitable status is not as straightforward as it would be with a health or children related charity. To achieve this, we need to create a "case for support" outlining our activities. This then acts as a template for bid applications in support of our work. However, once the initial difficulty is overcome, the basic principles of fundraising can apply.

Charities are probably best known for their community fundraising activities such as sponsored events, street collections and locally organised events in schools, pubs and clubs. These do take up a lot of time but are generally thought of as putting the "fun"

in fundraising. Well known examples are parachute jumps, marathons and, of course, bar rallies. Secondly for consideration are the companies and businesses that may consider having a corporate social responsibility. Again we are presented with having to state our case but we can apply for support from local supermarkets up to major corporates. Many of the larger businesses have associated charitable Trusts and Foundations with their own particular aims and objectives. In addition, there are a large number of other Charitable Trusts and Foundations that we can apply to. This requires some research as they all have their specific requirements for consideration before they will give grants. Many can be done on line but it does sometimes take up to several days to complete an application. We have been reasonably successful to date with such bids but they do require very specific project details. I shall be researching and identifying such projects in the coming weeks. Finally, and it is actually that, is the potential income we could gain from legacies. Charitable bequests are increasing annually and serious thought must be put to this aspect to secure the future.

It is important that fundraising is a team effort. It should not be left to one individual so any ideas you might have, do please talk to me. As you are probably aware, I am usually in the office one day a week.

David Poppitt
Chair of Trustees