

# Team Brief

Protect  
Trust  
Hope  
Persevere

## Tenancy Support Service expands

The new Supporting People contracts for floating housing relating support in the County officially began on 5th July. This means that the Tenancy Sustainment Service has been expanded in Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire and Bolsover to take in support for teenage parents while also being extended to the additional areas of Amber Valley and Erewash.

The expansion means that we have welcomed new members into the YMCA Derbyshire staff team who used to work for former contract providers Carr-Gomm. In the photo (right) Mark Love and Gillian meet new team members (left to right) Dawn Nixon, Jane Bevens and Helen Abbott on a visit to The Campus.

We have also been recruiting new members of the team for Amber Valley and Erewash, and are sure that all the newcomers will receive a very warm welcome to the YMCA Derbyshire team.



## Team continues to grow

In addition to the new Tenancy Sustainment Workers, there are four other new staff members who have joined us.

David Smith (pictured) has joined the team as the new Finance and Resource Director. He will take responsibility for the Finance, HR, Premises and IT teams and will normally be based at The Campus.

We'd also like to welcome Mark Elliott, our Regional Youth Involvement Co-ordinator; Nikki Shaw, our Job Centre Plus Advisor; and Ewan Craig, a Duty Support Worker.



## Congratulations

to Caroline Higgins, a sessional support worker, on the birth of her new baby Isabella.

Her baby was 12 weeks old when she brought her in to see us last month.



# A message from the Chief Executive

It has often been said that in order to understand our present, we need to know our history. Each and every one of us has a history, or story, which explains how we've got to where we are today. This is very much the case for each of our service user members, whose stories have often been troubling and might make for difficult reading. Our role at YMCA Derbyshire is to help them turn the page to a new chapter in their lives, giving them the support they need to take their own storylines in a more hopeful and promising direction.

We are not writing these stories ourselves, but giving our residents, learners and other service user members the confidence, experience, skills and safe environment to take control of their lives and become the authors of their own life stories.

Of course, it is not only individuals who have stories. Organisations have stories and histories too, and we are no exception. Derby YMCA, as we were called then, was founded in 1847 and we have been supporting the young people in our county ever since. A copy of our in-house newsletter from 1893 tells the story of when the YMCA's founder, George Williams, helped to open our new centre in 1892. As the door to the building was ceremonially unlocked, Mr Williams expressed the "fervent hope" that it would "prove a door to hope, happiness and success" for all those who would walk through it.

Nearly 118 years have passed, and many chapters in Derby YMCA's story have been written, since our founder expressed this hope but I believe we are still writing the same story – and it is the same "fervent hope" that motivates us to continue.

**Gillian Sewell**



## Busy month for Supported Housing

What a busy month we've had! Our Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework validation visit seemed to go well, although there are still a few loose ends to tie up. We should get feedback from the visit later this month, but I'd like to say 'well done' to the team for doing so well and also keep up the hard work!

**Sue Griffin**

*Photo (above):* Residential members (left to right) Kelly, Patricia and Jacqui prepare to scale the climbing wall at the Alvaston Park Fun Day in June. They also helped Marc Stevens provide a YMCA Derbyshire information stall at the event.

## Marketing and Communications

We're making steady progress with embedding our brand and values across all areas of our work. Many of you will have noticed the newly branded minibus, and team members in Alfreton, Ilkeston and Forman Street have seen the new values posters put up recently.

The aim of all of this is to give us a strong sense of common identity and purpose as we move forwards.

Development work on the website is continuing, with updates made almost every day. Since the start of the year, 78 members of the public have used the 'Contact Us' button on the website to send messages ranging from enquiries about living with us to offers of donations to the Furniture Project. All ideas for further improvements to the website will be much appreciated.

**Dominic Baster**

*Image: An early predecessor to Team Brief – our newsletter from 1893 mentioned in Gillian's Sewell's message (left)*



## Burton go-ahead

Burton and District YMCA has got the go-ahead for a £700,000 project, known as Reconnect, to redevelop its current site to provide a new training and support centre for homeless adults in the town.

Chief Executive Paul Laffey said, "We are delighted that the needs of the most vulnerable in our town can at last be addressed in modern facilities."

## Reflection of the month

New mercies, each returning day;  
Hover around us while we pray  
New perils past, new sins forgiven,  
New thoughts of God,  
new hopes of Heaven.

If on our daily course our mind  
Be set to hallow all we find,  
New treasures still, of countless price,  
God will provide for sacrifice.  
Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be  
As more of Heaven in each we see.

*From a reflection on 'The Morning' by John Keble (1792–1866)*

## A fond farewell to Christine Jackson



Christine Jackson, Housekeeping Coordinator at The Campus, is retiring after 22 years of service to YMCA Derbyshire's residential members.

Christine has seen many changes during her time with us – including the building of Douglass Court. She says that what has given her the most happiness is hearing a former resident come up to her years after leaving and say 'thank you'.

"Knowing that I've made a difference and helped even just one person makes the whole job worthwhile," she says.

## Making our residents' views count

YMCA Derbyshire's residential members regularly get involved with youth forums. They are a great way to meet new like minded people of their own age and have a say on things that are happening in their area. They are also a way of gaining free training and even free money for projects they are involved in – and having fun at the same time.

Our residents are currently represented on three different forums. 'Voices in Action' is held once a month at the Joseph Wright Centre and covers topics relating to Derby City Council. 'Youth Bank' is a forum for discussing award money available to different YMCAs in the Midlands for activities and small projects run by residents – such as the £500 recently awarded to our YMCA towards the cost of two bicycles.

Finally the 'Midlands Youth Governance Forum' is very well attended by residents from all the YMCAs in our region and helps to organise various

regional activities such as the Regional Celebration and Regional Relay. This group also offers residential and training opportunities to its participants.

One such residential programme was held recently in Sutton Coldfield where residents from six different YMCAs came together for a weekend packed full of training sessions and seminars led by the well known public speaker, Pip Wilson. Residents had the full use of facilities at the four star Ramada Jarvis hotel for the whole weekend. On the second day, chief executives from various YMCAs joined the residents, who had the opportunity to express some of their views and opinions on how the YMCA movement is run. The residents even planned and delivered workshops on this theme to the chief executives in the afternoon.

If you would like to know more about youth forums, please contact me for further details.

**Marc Stevens**

## Hospitality Service

The summer has now come and I am happy to say the Hospitality Service continues to shine. We are now developing our menus and it's exciting to see new products and options on the way.

I'd like to thank all the team for their hard work and effort. I'd also like to thank the volunteers whose efforts have been outstanding. July will see the first volunteer celebration take place. This will be an opportunity to thank the volunteers for all their hard work and to get their views on our service. All are welcome to join us on the day, and we'll let you know when it is soon.

July's focus is on continuing to develop our community involvement while building on the activities we presently have. We look forward to seeing more new faces and meeting new people.

**Rachel Bradley**

## So what is 'SP'?

Winning three Supporting People (SP) contracts recently for supported housing and floating housing support is a great achievement for the whole YMCA Derbyshire team, but what exactly is 'SP' and what has it achieved?

SP is a government programme to provide housing related support to vulnerable people aimed at enabling them to live more independently.

The programme began on 1st April 2003, bringing together seven housing related funding streams from across central government. It is a grant programme administered through 152 local authorities and is delivered largely by the voluntary and community sector, and housing associations.

Local Authorities' performance in delivering housing-related support is closely monitored and measured. From April 2010, SP funding has been allocated to local authorities as a non-ringfenced grant paid as part of the Area Based Grant.

The programme now helps around one million people at any one time, including approximately:

- 815,000 older people with support needs
- 39,000 single homeless people
- 36,000 people with mental health problems
- 10,000 women at risk of domestic violence

Between April 2008 and March 2009, recipients of SP funding leaving short-term services (less than two years in duration) achieved the following outcomes:

- 59,556 people maintained their accommodation and avoided eviction
- 43,100 people were able better to manage their physical health
- 30,330 people accessed their desired training and education needs
- 7,896 people gained paid employment

## Interview: Encouraging our residents to hope and dream

**S**hearon Walker and Nikki Shaw make a great double act in the support team at The Campus, and demonstrate how working in partnership with local agencies can pay dividends for our residential members.

Both Shearon and Nikki are working with us on secondment from other organisations – Shearon from Connexions Derbyshire and Nikki from Job Centre Plus. Shearon works with those aged 16 to 19 who are living either at The Campus or in supported accommodation elsewhere in the City and are neither in employment, education or training. Her target is to have them all engaged in some form of education or training and ensure they are claiming the correct benefits.

Nikki, on the other hand, works with our residents of all ages to conduct their ‘Mandatory Interviews’ required by the Benefits agency. This is the first time a Job Centre Plus worker has been placed in this role and she is already proving valuable. She makes sure all the residents are receiving the correct benefits and identifies action plans to help them find work, addressing any barriers they may have.

Both Shearon and Nikki agree that being on site with the residents is a big advantage. “It’s important to be here rather than in the Connexions office because many of those who need support just don’t come looking for it. We need to come to where they are,” explains Shearon.

Nikki adds that it really helps to “gain a better understanding of the barriers people are facing – such as employer prejudice and the things they need to overcome themselves”.

“Most of the barriers are perceived,” Nikki continues, “that is, they’re inside people’s heads. People have housing as their main priority and, because of their situations or their history, looking for work is the least of their priorities.”

Both Shearon and Nikki admit there are formidable challenges to overcome. “Trying to encourage young people to see that they have potential is a big challenge,” says Shearon.

“Often they think that there isn’t anything for them – no opportunities, no options. My role is to broaden their horizons, build up their confidence and give them hope. Often I ask

**“My greatest satisfaction comes when young people suddenly realise that they can achieve and can dream”**



Shearon Walker (left) and Nikki Shaw

them what they would like to do, and they can’t say because they haven’t thought about it; they just haven’t ever felt that they can achieve anything.”

Nikki agrees but adds, “One of my biggest problems is to get the residents to sit down and have an honest conversation about their needs because they’re so used to being defensive. So, I’ve worked hard to show them the benefits of working. It is a bit of a struggle, though.”

Yet both of them are pleased to see what can be achieved.

“The majority of young people I’ve encountered have engaged in some kind of training and have then gone on to further training or college,” Shearon says with a smile.

“A number I’ve worked with have successfully moved on into their own homes, jobs and a successful independent life,” she continues. “My greatest satisfaction comes when young people suddenly realise that they can achieve and can dream – when they have aspirations and hopes.

“That’s got to be the best thing because it’s aspirations that help them get on with it and fulfil their potential.”



Cllr Robin Baldry, Chairman of Derbyshire County Council, met staff and service user members on a visit to The Campus on 6th July and expressed his admiration for our work across the County.