



Improving our services: what do you think? Page 2



Your chance to vote: register now! Page 3



Look Ahead People: meet Charlie Page 4

# Heads-Up

This **customer newsletter** is the place to find out what's going on at Look Ahead

## Nominate a Look Ahead staff member for our annual awards

As Look Ahead customers, you will probably spend quite a lot of time speaking to and working with our staff, which is why we want your opinion on who you think has gone the extra mile in the past twelve months.

In June, we are holding our annual staff conference and a big part of the day is going to be our Annual Staff Awards. As part of these awards, we have a special section of awards called our Customer Choice Awards, which are only open to nominations from customers.

The Customer Choice Awards are your chance to nominate a member of Look Ahead staff who has made a real difference to you.

If a member of staff has gone out of their way to help you to achieve your goals then we want to hear about it. This could be anything from showing you particular kindness, supporting you to get a job or get back in touch with your family or showing they really believe in you.

Look out for posters in your service for more information or ask any staff member for a nomination form.

**We'll let you know the winners next time around!**

If you know a staff member you would like to nominate for an award then all you need to do is fill out a nomination form and send it back to us. You can post it to **Customer Choice Awards, Look Ahead, Kings Buildings, 16 Smith Square, London SW1P 3HQ**, email it to **customerchoiceawards@lookahead.org.uk** or you can even call us to make your nomination over the phone on **0207 368 6982**.



# What does an excellent service mean to you?



A big part of my job at Look Ahead is to make sure our services meet the needs of our customers and offer excellent support.

*“Now we need to hear from the most important people - you, our customers - about what you want and need from Look Ahead”*

Over the last few months, I have spent time visiting services and talking to our staff about what they currently offer to the people they support. Now we need to hear from the most important people - you, our customers - about what you want and need from Look Ahead, and what an excellent service looks like.

At Look Ahead, we are always looking for new ways to improve our services and the support we offer to customers. Here Rachel Hirst-Dean, Head of Innovation and Partnerships, talks about our new project to get your opinions on how we can make sure you get everything you need during your time with Look Ahead.



As part of this, I have recently started an important piece of work with Look Ahead's Customer Services Committee where we are going into services to speak to customers and listen to their views.

Both myself and other Look Ahead staff will be visiting services and meeting with customers to ask you: what are we doing well, what needs to get better, is there anything missing?

This will help us to understand what is working best in our services and if there are any barriers that might be stopping things from working.

Once we have collected all of this information we will use it to develop our new Look Ahead Customer Offer. This will outline what we will offer to each and every customer joining Look Ahead and will make sure everyone receives the right support to make the most of their time with us.

*“We are going to be offering you lots of different ways to get involved and have your say”*

To make sure that we hear from as many of you as possible, throughout May and June we are going to be offering you lots of different ways to get involved and have your say.

## Welcoming new customers

At the start of April, we were pleased to welcome four new services to Look Ahead. As an organisation, we are working hard to grow so that we can offer support to more customers.

These new services include:

- **BEH Recovery Houses** - this service offers short-term mental health support to people living in Barnet, Enfield and Haringey.
- **Daniel Gilbert House** - this service offers supported accommodation for homeless people in Tower Hamlets.
- **Gateway Mental Health** - this service offers 24-hour supported accommodation for individuals with mental health needs.

As part of these new services, we will be welcoming over 100 new customers and several new members of staff.

*Welcome!*

**Hello and welcome to all of our new customers –**

we look forward to getting to know you all!



Don't miss out on your chance to vote – get registered now!

In April, Prime Minister Theresa May announced that she will be calling a General Election on Thursday 8th June 2017. Voting in the General Election is open to everyone eligible to vote in the UK and will decide which political party will run the country.

Everyone who votes gets to have their say on who they would like to represent them as their Member of Parliament (MP) for their local area. The leader of the party with the most MPs as a result of the election will then become Prime Minister. In order to be able to vote you need to be:

- Aged 18 years or over on election day
- A British citizen
- Registered to vote

If you are not already registered to vote then you need to **make sure you have registered before Monday 22nd May** to be able to vote in this election. You can check if you are already registered by contacting your local electoral registration office - visit [www.yourvotematters.co.uk](http://www.yourvotematters.co.uk) to find out where your local office is.

If you have not yet registered to vote, you can do so online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

There is also a downloadable form on the site if you would rather register by post. If you have any questions please speak to your Support Worker or visit [www.yourvotematters.co.uk](http://www.yourvotematters.co.uk)

## 2017 Customer Celebration coming soon

Every year, we hold a special event to celebrate the achievements of Look Ahead customers. This year we are going to be holding the event in September and we are looking for people who are interested in helping us to plan the event.

The Customer Celebration is all about getting customers together to recognise your achievements.

The event will feature customer awards, workshops, entertainment and a guest speaker!

This will be the fourth year we have held the event and we want your help to make sure this year's event is the best yet!

As part of our planning group, you will help us to decide the format of the day, what it includes and where it will be held.

If you are interested in being part of the planning group please speak to your Support Worker or send an email to [communications@lookahead.org.uk](mailto:communications@lookahead.org.uk)

Keep an eye out for more information about the event nearer the time. We hope to see many of you there in September!

If you are interested in getting involved in this work, please speak to your Support Worker or email me on [rachelhirstdean@lookahead.org.uk](mailto:rachelhirstdean@lookahead.org.uk)

# Look Ahead people: **Meet Charlie**

**Heads-up is created by and for Look Ahead customers, and every issue we use this section to get to know more about a staff member or customer. In this issue we meet Charlie, a Look Ahead customer from Southwark, who has just completed his training to become a Peer Support Volunteer.**



Charlie first found out about our Peer Support Programme when his Support Worker recommended it to him. At first, he was a little unsure as he didn't know too

much about it but once he found out more information he decided to apply.

Look Ahead's Peer Support Programme trains people who have experience of using similar services to offer extra support to customers across Look Ahead who may now be going through similar experiences or challenges.

Before becoming a Look Ahead customer, Charlie used to work in a youth centre where he ran an LGBTQ+ group for people that may be lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender or identify as queer. He also taught music and was interested in the chance to work directly with people again. After sending in his application, Charlie had an interview with Wendy, our Expert by Experience Training Manager and Gideon, our Peer Support Volunteer Coordinator.

Charlie has now completed all of his peer support training and is waiting to be matched with a service where he will offer an extra level of support to customers.

*"I'm looking forward to starting in a service and getting to know the customers"*

Charlie's told us 'I'm a little bit nervous but mostly excited. I'm looking forward to starting in a service and getting to know the customers. I want to support them to get through the kind of things that I have already been through.'

Since getting involved in our Peer Support Programme, Charlie has been thinking about continuing his training so that one day he can become a Support Worker. He is also working with the Experts by Experience Team to use his experiences to develop some new training all about supporting people who are LGBTQ+.

*Congratulations on all your hard work Charlie! We're sure you'll make a great Peer Supporter.*

Do you want to be the next person we talk to?

**Have you done something amazing that you would like to share? Are you involved in your local service?**

If you would like to be the person we introduce in the next issue of Heads-up, let us know.

You can either send us an email with your details to [communications@lookahead.org.uk](mailto:communications@lookahead.org.uk) or call us on **0207 368 6972**.