

## GREAT NEWS FROM ELY YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECT



In March, six of the fifteen residents at CHS' Ely Young People's Service moved on successfully into independent living after receiving up to two years of support and accommodation. The service at Wheatsheaf Close, Ely supports 18-25 year olds who are either homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

During their time with us, our young people have gained skills in managing their budgets and tenancy, applied for and remained in further education or employment, completing paperwork, learning to shop and cook for themselves as well as gaining a wide range of

house-keeping skills. They also found time to contribute to the well-being of the service by working well with staff and other residents, supporting each other and being good neighbours.

Nigel Howlett, CHS Group Chief Executive said "This is a great success story. Both staff and residents have worked really well together over the past couple of years and the young people now have the vital skills they need to allow them to go on to live successful independent lives and we wish them all the very best. Our staff have done a great job guiding these young

people and their dedication and commitment is highly commendable, as are the efforts of the young people themselves."

Fiona Hefferan, Manager at Wheatsheaf Close, recently organised a reunion of ex-residents, and we enjoyed hearing their news and reminisced over brunch. Nigel and Lucy Frazer QC, MP for South East Cambs also joined them. *See photo.*

For more information about our supported housing services, please contact [breege.brandon@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:breege.brandon@chsgroup.org.uk)

## CHS APPOINTS NEW FINANCE & OPERATIONS DIRECTORS



Tony Blewitt: left  
Stephen Hills: above

CHS is pleased to announce that Tony Blewitt has been appointed to the role of Finance Director, and Stephen Hills will be joining the company as Operations Director.

Tony, who has been interim Finance Director since July last year, was appointed after a competitive recruitment process. Tony is an FCCA qualified accountant and an experienced Finance Director/CFO. He has extensive experience in a variety of sectors, including within social housing. During his career, in addition to leading on the core finance responsibilities such as business planning, funding and treasury management, and compliance, Tony has also been responsible for leading IT and procurement functions and contributing to overall corporate strategy.

At CHS, he will provide strategic and operational leadership for the delivery of financial, treasury and risk management, financial appraisal, and payroll work. He will lead on treasury, value for money and risk strategies, and data protection for the Group.

Together with Nigel Howlett, our Chief Executive, he will also be responsible for providing strategic advice and direction for our open market sales subsidiary Cambridge and County Developments, and all CHS Group development activity in treasury, financial and risk management.

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## INTERGENERATIONAL INITIATIVE

CHS is leading the way in Cambridgeshire with intergenerational care, as it brings its oldest and youngest residents together to encourage mood and health benefits.

CHS's Sunflower Nursery took its pre-school children to visit the residents of Richard Newcombe Court, our extra care facility in Cambridge. The children and residents spent the day making Valentines cards, as well as playing with puzzles and board games. The afternoon was a success, with the children's confidence increasing as they interacted with a different generation, and the older residents expressing their enjoyment.

A resident at Richard Newcombe Court, said: "It's been lovely because I hardly see my grandchildren anymore, as they live so far away. This really works, the big age difference means nothing – it's brought life to the place."

Nigel Howlett, said: "The happiness of our residents is our priority. Our service managers and employees within each scheme are always exploring new activities to introduce to residents, and it's great to be able to bring two generations together. There is a lot of research which suggests that intergenerational care can bring huge benefits, and we look forward to seeing this initiative evolve."

After the positive feedback from the residents at Richard Newcombe Court, and the enjoyment from the children at Sunflower Nursery, CHS is looking to continue these intergenerational activity days, whilst monitoring the benefits this interaction brings to its residents.

### AND MORE..

Over the summer of 2017, CHS set up a small-scale Intergenerational Housing Project (IHP) pilot to provide accommodation for postgraduate students in one of our sheltered schemes at reduced rents in return for volunteering and spending time with residents.

Existing Ellis House residents were consulted on the project proposal, with an overall positive response after some initial reticence. Three postgraduates were selected and trained in partnership with the Cambridge Hub, which engages Cambridge University students in local volunteering projects.

Starting formally in October, all three postgraduates have been recording time spent on activities with residents via the "Time and



Talents" Timebanking app, used extensively elsewhere within CHS by Timebanking groups. Output from the app reveals that each student has delivered around 30 hours of volunteering support per month, including befriending, running errands, preparing meals, film nights, trips and administrative activities such as meetings and student training in data protection, dementia awareness etc.

A methodology to measure project impact was developed, combining the Warwick-Edinburgh NHS well-being approach with the Campaign to End Loneliness surveys. A baseline survey was undertaken and will be repeated on a quarterly basis.

Based on evidence so far, the two original aims of the IHP have been largely achieved:

- To retain viable affordable housing for local priority groups, namely older people and postgraduates, and
- Potentially to improve the quality of life/ tackling wider loneliness issues in the elderly.

Student contact and activities have been well received by residents – results of the third well-being survey show improved scores. The students report good satisfaction levels with the personal and transferrable skills they are acquiring through their involvement in the project.

Alongside the survey, a discussion was held with a small group of Ellis House residents in March in order to better understand their views and experience of the project overall. The group

included two people who had chosen not to get involved in any student-organised activities but all residents in the discussion group were clear that

- They enjoy having the students around
- They feel they get on well with them all
- They find the students friendly and helpful – with many examples of help from students with shopping, iPads, visual impairment
- They feel "safer" having the students there
- They think the students are hard-working and understand that volunteering activities need to be mostly at weekends
- They had no negative comments – no sense of anything they didn't like about the students being there

The first year of the IHP resulted in a small deficit due to the lower than expected rents charged to the students and the costs of preparing student-ready rooms. A second year of the project should result in a small surplus.

It will also provide an opportunity to generate further data on the effectiveness of the IHP approach by comparing it with different ways of providing wellbeing activities through non-resident students volunteering at another of our sheltered schemes, provided informally by Cambridge Hub or through CHS' Timebanking team, which could also support skills development for unemployed people.

For further information about CHS's Intergenerational Housing Project, please contact [jane.kershaw@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:jane.kershaw@chsgroup.org.uk)

## Living

"Irene was referred to CHS in 2017 after being evicted from her home after struggling with mental health and drug use. After working with her support worker, Irene has managed to find a new home and a job. She's now living her best life."



41/90

## Focused

"Ned was referred to Railway House after he was emotionally neglected and exposed to domestic violence as a child. His first year at Railway House saw him become confident, sensitive and focused. He's now employed and lives in his own property."



42/90

## Hero

"Ten years ago, Amanda joined the CHS IT team to support the ICT skills and business vision. She's worked thousands of hours for CHS, been the Computer Hero for her team and in 2017 was voted the region's Digital Hero."



43/90

## Celebrate

"Mr Fordham celebrated 68 years with CHS in 2017. He's lived in CHS's first homes at Green End Road, worked on the original Langdon House, taken part in CHS's 65th anniversary celebrations, and has lived at Langdon House since 2016."



44/90

## WE LISTEN...

We always like to listen to our residents and staff, and during our 90th year, we collected 90 of their stories together to help us give an overview of the range of our services and the outcomes that they have achieved. We are sharing some of them on social media and on our website [www.chsgroup.org.uk](http://www.chsgroup.org.uk) – we hope you will find them as moving as we do.

LinkedIn



## GENDER PAY GAP REPORTING

CHS is required by law to carry out Gender Pay Reporting under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017. This report is based on data at 1 April 2017.

Our data has identified that we have a Mean Gender Pay Gap of 24.3% and a Median Gender Pay Gap 10.1%.

This means that women's mean hourly rate is 24.3% lower than men's. In other words when comparing mean hourly rates, women earn 76p for every £1 that men earn.

### Understanding the Gender Pay Gap

The overall average (mean) pay gap is mainly due to the diversity and type of roles across the organisation. Our workforce is made up of significantly more females (84%) than males (16%).

In the lower quartile we have 17 men (15%) and 99 women (85%) working in nursery, housekeeping and laundry roles. In the lower middle quartile we have 10 men (8.7%) and 105 women (91.3%) working in nursery and care roles. Our gender make-up within these roles reflects the national picture; in 2016/17, the adult social care workforce in England was 82% female and 18% male. In early years nurseries roles are 98% female.

In the upper mid quartile we have 16 men (13.9%) and 99 women (86.1%) and in the upper quartile we have 32 men (27%) and 83 women (72%) working in roles ranging from administration, senior and middle managers

through to Executive Director. Our Executive team comprises 1 female and 2 males. Our senior management group has 7 women and 4 men and our Board 5 women and 3 men.

Whilst females are still not under-represented at senior levels we have a mean gender pay gap of 20% here, again reflecting diversity and types of roles and market forces.



Our **WORKFORCE** is made up of **SIGNIFICANTLY more females (84%) than males (16%)**.

We are clear that all posts are paid at the same rate regardless of gender. We review salaries against independent market pay data biannually – we will be reviewing salaries this coming autumn and will pay close attention to gender pay.

### What we already do:

- Recruitment and selection policy – clear and transparent recruitment processes, a competency based approach to recruitment with all appointments made on the basis of merit demonstrated against objective and

non-discriminatory criteria

- Transparent and fair pay with posts at all levels rated against independent market testing
- Competency frameworks linked to pay and career progression
- All staff have the opportunity to pursue fully funded qualifications
- Apprenticeships
- Internal secondments to develop skills and experience
- Management development programme for new and aspiring managers
- A range of flexible working options to enable work life balance
- Comprehensive training and mentoring programmes encouraging personal development and progression
- Disability confident employer; registered with the Disability Confident scheme and committed to supporting people with disabilities to work with us

We are committed to positively promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging diversity across the workplace. We will continue to analyse our gender pay gap data and implement changes with the aim of reducing the existing gap within CHS.

For our full Gender Pay Gap report and further details about how we intend to tackle our gender pay gap see CHS website <https://www.chsgroup.org.uk/work-for-us/why-work-for-us/> or for more information contact [marie.canning@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:marie.canning@chsgroup.org.uk)

# Who runs CHS?

CHS is led by a Board of up to twelve local people who have a wide range of experience and skills. This is a profile of one of them.

## Gerhard Oberholzer



I joined the CHS Board in late 2017 and also sit on the Audit & Finance Committee. It is early days but I can confirm that the Board and Committee meetings to date have been focused and full of positive energy. CHS has a unique mix of services that it provides and this means that the Board is populated by people who bring together a broad spectrum of experience and skills and

so provide different perspectives on many of the issues to be discussed and resolved.

My background is in finance and I established and managed a number of finance companies and funds in the City over the last 20 years. I am a director of GB Social Housing which provides funding to registered housing providers across the UK. In this role I spend a lot of time meeting with social housing managers and staff, regulators, consultants and investors. I also have the privilege of walking estates and meeting tenants all over the UK and I can confirm that social housing is very much alive and well. As a sector, we do however face headwinds including continuing pressure on grants and benefits, an improving global economy that is likely to drive interest rates up and a population steadily growing older and it is our challenge and responsibility to deal with all these (amongst others) effectively on behalf of our tenants.

To find out more about CHS Board membership, please contact Alison Booth, Corporate Services Manager, on 01223 713757 or email her at [alison.booth@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:alison.booth@chsgroup.org.uk)

### Follow CHS Group on:



## AFFORDABILITY RESEARCH PROJECT

During our 90th year, a research project was commissioned by CHS, with support from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), from the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (CCHPR), a research centre in the Department of Land Economy at the University of Cambridge.

The primary aim of the project was to explore how CHS Group could set rents that are genuinely affordable by analysing:

- The incomes of CHS' general needs tenants, taking account of their household types and any support from welfare benefits
- Existing rents in CHS Group's stock across our six local authority areas, together with practicable options for moving towards a more affordable rent structure
- The impact of changes to rents on tenant incomes, including any support for

housing costs from Housing Benefit or Universal Credit

- The implications of any change to the overall pattern of rents for public expenditure in support for housing costs.

Interim findings were shared at a workshop in mid-March with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Housing Board which has been developing its own new methodology for analysing affordability. This provided helpful feedback from practitioners on potential policy recommendations for final publication of both sets of research.

The CHS Board will consider the research findings but the main conclusion is that affordability is very dependent on the rules and implementation of Universal Credit and regular Government changes to this make it too uncertain on which to base a rent policy. We also have limited scope to change rents under our current regulatory regime. CHS already carries out a range of best practice including money advice for people affected by the bedroom tax or benefit cap and support and priority for under-occupying downsizers.

For more information about the research, please contact [jane.kershaw@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:jane.kershaw@chsgroup.org.uk)

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We are also excited to welcome Stephen Hills FCIH, FRSA to CHS as our new Operations Director from July 2018.

Many of you will know Stephen from his role as Director of Housing at South Cambridgeshire District Council where he is responsible for housing management services, sheltered housing, property services, asset management, housing strategy and development, homelessness and housing advice. Stephen has also been a housing consultant and a lecturer at Sheffield Hallam and Middlesex Universities.

At CHS he will provide strategic and operational leadership for the delivery of high quality housing, community, care and support services. He will lead the formulation, implementation, monitoring and review of operational strategies and take innovative and entrepreneurial on development of strategy and the pursuit of opportunities.

We know that both Tony and Stephen will inspire their respective teams with innovation and vision, whilst promoting our values.

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CHS Group recognises the importance of trying to reduce the environmental impact of our activities.

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