

we are
aspire

aspire
housing

pm
training

realise
charity

Our Social Impact

Supporting Our Communities



Social Impact Report

April 2019 to March 2020

Our Social Impact – Supporting Our Communities

Social impact is the effect an organisation has on people and communities, as a result of its actions.

Each year at **we are aspire**, we measure our social impact as an organisation by how much we are improving the lives of the people and the communities we work with, across our region.

Measuring and evidencing our impact helps us to demonstrate how we're meeting this purpose, and to understand where we can do even better.

This report reviews our activities over the course of our financial year, ending 31st March 2020, and highlights the key areas where we focused our support and contributed more than £27 million in added social value.

By delivering life-enhancing benefits to the people in our homes and communities, we help them become more resilient, more able and more confident in successfully building themselves better futures. **Our commitment to this is ongoing.**

we are aspire

Three businesses, collectively blending commercial expertise with social purpose, to revitalise communities.



A leading housing provider, property developer and place shaper.



The largest independent provider of apprenticeships for young people in Staffordshire.



Providing practical and holistic support to reduce poverty in our communities.

we build / we train / we support : we are aspire

aspire housing

How do we add social value?

We are a social enterprise. This means that our services aim to positively maximise our social, economic and environmental impact – adding social value to our local communities.

We achieve this by addressing social disadvantage and supporting our local communities in fulfilling their potential. We work with local partners, build networks that offer widespread support, and we create sustainable employment opportunities to enhance people's lives. We do all of this by living our values, to be:

- Ambitious • Creative • Collaborative
- Working smarter, simpler and slicker

People First

People First is our philosophy.

It dictates our way of working and shapes our values. It means putting people (customers, learners and colleagues) at the heart of everything we do – our processes, our decision making and our services.

By doing this, we can delight our customers and do a great job in building better futures for the people in our communities. In recognition of our group-wide commitment to social mobility we are recognised as a **Social Mobility Champion**.



1st

in our sector!

In 2017, we were awarded a Queen's Award for Enterprise, in the 'Promoting Opportunity' category – a **1st in our sector!**



A safe & affordable place to call home

147

New homes

600

homes provided to new customers



£4.89m

spent on home improvements

Supporting people into education & employment



431

new apprentices trained

124

customers supported into training, volunteering or employment

74%

of learners progressed into employment or an apprenticeship

The difference we made in

2019/20

We added £27,321,130 in social & economic value to our communities



Sustaining tenancies & supporting independence

1,521

health & wellbeing activities provided

6,980

intensive housing management visits

£902,787

in financial gains made for customers

Supporting our wider communities



10,327

people supported by Realise charity

£14.7m

spent with local businesses

214

tonnes of waste removed from community areas

A safe & affordable place to call home



We build aspirational homes, invest in communities, and help our residents feel safe and secure.

The homes we build are modern, affordable, and will serve our communities for generations to come. We're committed to maintaining our existing homes to a high standard, with a focus on improving repairs and consistently 'right first time' service that's always value for money.

Investing in our communities

While the private sector will only develop and build in areas where there's profit, our priority is to build new homes where they're most needed. This strategy of social purpose gives positive outcomes by giving people the choice of an affordable homes in their local area, which in turn acts as a catalyst for regeneration in our communities.

Creating community living spaces

We recognise that different people have different needs, and our goal is to ensure customers feel fully supported to live in a home that suits their lifestyle.

Our Community Living Schemes are specially designed to provide age-friendly homes for our over-55 customers.

£14m regeneration project gets green light

In early 2020, we received planning approval to invest £14m in a flagship older persons' scheme to redevelop and regenerate Ashfields Grange and the Hall Street flats, in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The new state-of-the-art independent living scheme, called Holborn Place, will have 89 one and two-bed apartments for over-55s.



"The design features, affordability and age-friendly nature of Holborn Place will make these homes aspirational places to live now and for generations to come."

Dan Gray, Executive Director of Property.

We offer a range of different housing options to suit people in all walks of life: from affordable renting to community living, shared ownership, and all the way through to full home ownership.

100%
ownership of their home
acheived by 5 customers



"We knew we wanted to staircase to 100% – and we did it in five years. Now it's all done, it's amazing, absolutely amazing."

Tim, shared ownership customer

600
homes provided
to new customers
this year

84 households helped
onto the property
ladder with shared
ownership

99.999%
of our homes meet the
Government's Decent
Homes Standard

9,000 affordable homes
managed locally



£4.89m
spent on home improvements



Sustaining tenancies & supporting independence

From setting up bills, to finding local activity groups, to supporting people in hardship – we have a robust package of support services for our customers.

We use a person-centred approach that recognises individual needs and we collaborate with partner organisations to provide wrap-around support to help people to live independently.



“If you are struggling with payments or debts please go along to them. I went last year with debt problems and they were fantastic! I now have no problems and am worry free!”

Miss J, Money Advice customer

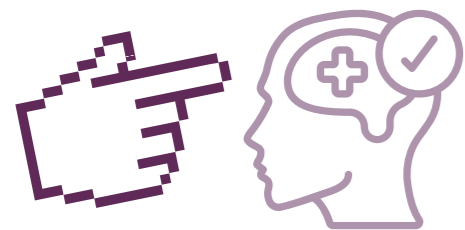


2,139

jobs completed by our handyman service

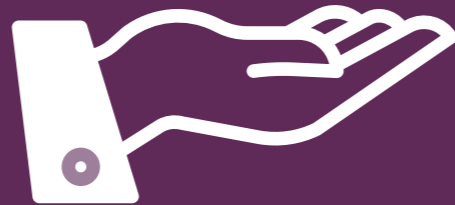
91,167

customer service calls handled



24/7

free online mental health support available for all



Helped customers receive unclaimed benefits worth

£385,194

1,161

money advice appointments held



361

customers supported

Reduced housing arrears by

54%



42

evictions prevented for people at risk of homelessness

Money advice

Aspire Housing's Money Advice team gives face-to-face and virtual advice to hundreds of customers every year. In 2019 we launched Money Smart Families, in partnership with Potteries Moneywise, to widen our support-reach beyond Aspire customers, to other eligible members of the community.

Money Advice Awards 2019

Debt Team of the Year WINNERS

Money Advice team, Aspire Housing

This award recognises Aspire Housing's commitment to delivering honest, useful money advice, and the impact the team has had on the many individuals it's helped.

Helped customers write-off debt totalling

£534,765

Supporting people at home

Our Housing Support & Wellbeing team flexibly support customers with anything from financial issues and tenancy advice to health needs and safety concerns, to help them sustain their tenancies and live independently. We've also introduced a mental health counselling service for customers, funded by Realise charity.

£902,787

in financial gains made for customers

388

 Foodbank vouchers issued

6,980

 intensive housing management visits

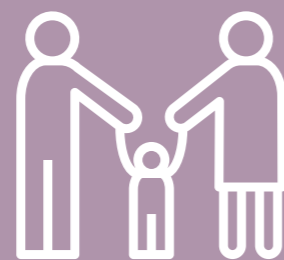
1,738

 customers supported to achieve their goals

192

 customers empowered by completing their support plans

228

 successful charitable applications made

386

 families given specialist tenancy support

285

 big difference scheme applications made for customers

24Housing Diversity Awards 2019

Best New-Build Accessible Scheme WINNERS

Aspire Housing

Our innovative scheme empowers local adults with learning difficulties to live independently with access to 24/7 care and support, in partnership with Elite.

Living independently for longer

Working across our Community Living Schemes, we helped our over-55 customers stay fit, healthy and live independently, and to feel safe and secure at home, in many ways:

325

 people attended our Dementia Friends sessions

1,521

 health & wellbeing activities provided

66

people attended Boogie Beats music & movement sessions



255

 residents engaged in the design of our new service offer

Getting off to the right start...



Our Housing Transition service supports care leavers into their first tenancies when they turn 18.



"I am indebted to you and your department for all the kind work you have put in on my behalf over the last three years."

Mr M, Community Living Customer

Supporting people into education & employment

As a housing association, and a training provider, we see how low levels of education can make it difficult for people to find jobs. This can have a negative, personal, social and economic impact on the individuals, their families and the also community.

We work with local people to help them acquire education and vocational skills that local employers and businesses need, to give them the best possible chance of finding sustainable local employment.



Aspire to Work

Aspire to Work is a life-changing service offering employability support to Aspire Housing customers. We were one of the first housing associations to offer this service and the results are immense.

With expert support delivered by PM Training's Employment & Skills team, customers gain employment, no longer rely on benefits, and notice increased levels of confidence, self-esteem, ambition and wellbeing.

Overcome barriers to employment

Our Employment & Skills team works collaboratively with our Housing team to provide holistic support for customers.

Embracing the People First philosophy we successfully support a diverse range of customers in their journey towards sustained employment.

We also deliver tailored training, which involves anything from specific qualifications and accreditations that will help a customer land a job, to teaching interpersonal skills that might help a customer not only sustain their job but excel in it.

Learners at PM Training

Through holistic experiences and challenges, we support young people to build vital skills so they can hit the ground running with apprenticeship and employment opportunities.

This engaging approach has seen wellbeing and learner enrichment experiences introduced with counselling sessions, funded driving lessons, cultural trips and innovative enterprise projects.

“Doing an apprenticeship has made me realise that you can study while you work. I know I can continue this after my apprenticeship and gain high level qualifications in my chosen career.”

Naila, Business Admin Apprentice



UK Social Enterprise Awards 2019

Education & Training
FINALIST
PM Training

3,000

students reached through

105

career advice sessions at

61 schools

TES FE Awards 2020

Training Provider of the Year
FINALIST
PM Training



431 new apprentices trained

96

grants provided for people to access training & employment



498

pre-apprenticeship learners

74%

of these progressed into employment or an apprenticeship



97% customer satisfaction

342

new customers supported

124

customers went into training, volunteering or employment



63% of those going into work sustained it at least 3 months

A focus on mental health

PM Training strongly supports positive mental health and wellbeing and was the first training provider in the UK to be recognised as an ‘attachment aware’ organisation. Our learners each have a dedicated counsellor, providing a wide range of support, to help them in their day-to-day lives.

Our investment in Togetherall – an online mental health community and support network – gives all customers, learners and colleagues free access to 24/7 mental health support. Aspire Housing was the first housing association in the country to subscribe to this service.

“I feel counselling has really helped me. It’s so nice to have such an amazing person to help see things from such a beautiful perspective.”

Learner, PM Training



Setting the standard

PM Training’s dedication to learner progression and achievement was highlighted in early 2020, when four members of our first group of Aspire Housing apprentices to take their level 2 Customer Service Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard, achieved distinctions.

“I feel great about achieving a distinction and doing my apprenticeship with Aspire was a big part of that grade. I would be in a completely different place if I didn’t work here, that’s for sure.”

Leo, Customer Services Apprentice



21 new apprentices were employed by we are aspire this year, making **45** in total



“You have been absolutely amazing, helped me a lot”

Andrew, Employment & Skills customer



CASE STUDY:

Customer Name:

Andrew

Age:

Early 30s

Background:

Andrew moved into the area following a difficult relationship breakdown. He was living on benefits, struggling with debt and rent arrears, and suffering from social isolation.

Thankfully, he reached out to our Employment & Skills Team and he hasn’t looked back since.

Outcome:

The team helped Andrew to access employability training and worked with him, as he gained his Publican’s Licence. Andrew then quickly found steady employment as a pub relief manager.

Working with our Housing Team, we were able to support Andrew in identifying and accessing the correct benefits. This enabled him to set up his new home, clear his rent arrears and debts, and gave him a clean slate to go with his new career.

Andrew feels that he has been supported to address his social isolation and he now feels part of the community.



Supporting our wider communities

We work in many communities throughout **Staffordshire** and **Cheshire**, with local partnerships, voluntary organisations and our health partners, to ensure we positively affect the lives of as many disadvantaged people as possible within those communities – as well as our own customers.

Engaging with our communities

10 'Great Get Together' events have:

Collected **36** tonnes of bulky waste

AND Filled **182** litter bags with the help of **11** schools, **350** pupils, **28** teachers & **15** local councillors



92 children & their families joined our big Easter Egg Hunt



200 customers took part in our Community Action event addressing homelessness, knife crime, anti-social behaviour & more



Our **BIGGEST EVER** customer engagement event saw

1,600

local people talk to us with

300

becoming 'involved customers'

The **Sentinel Business Awards 2019**

Business in the Community WINNER
we are aspire

This award recognises we are aspire's outstanding contribution to the communities it serves, through direct support, giving back to local charities, and the wider work it does within North Staffordshire.

Driving so many, otherwise isolated people around is wonderful, I talk and listen to them, which definitely brightens up their lives. It's magic for me to do this every day.

Tony, Volunteer at VAST Door2Door Transport Service (funded by Realise)

realise charity

15 months ago, I wouldn't have had a clue how to send this email. It's opened up a whole new world to me and enabled me to renew old contacts and make new ones.

Mr G, Digital Skills sessions customer

I've received 3 food parcels so far, they were fantastic. It felt like Christmas, I'm truly very grateful for them. Mrs P, Realise charity customer

Providing necessary support

10,327 people supported by our Realise charity



130 older people given digital skills classes

54 families supported with free school uniforms



14,000 toys collected for Xmas Community Gift Appeal

7,055 jobs completed by our caretaking & handyperson teams

771 users of our transport service for shopping trips & medical appointments

Homeworks teams

PM Training's Homeworks teams carry out repair and maintenance work and improvements to our homes and communities across Staffordshire. Further supporting our communities, we have over 250 young people a year progress onto apprenticeships through Homeworks.

709  rooms decorated

2,908  metres of new fencing erected

180 tonnes of waste removed from empty properties

214  tonnes of waste removed from community areas



“The team were absolutely excellent and went beyond what they needed to do. I’ve never known my garden to look so nice!”

Mrs H, Homeworks customer

Local economic impact

In addition to the people we help find work with our training, skills and employability programmes, we further support our communities by:

£14.7m  Spent with local businesses

487  People employed

96% of colleagues live within a **30-mile** radius of our offices - potentially putting more than **£9m** back into the local economy



Our ongoing commitment to social impact

We are an organisation that proudly works within our communities and for our communities. We employ local people, we support local initiatives, we work closely with local partners, and we love to see our area thrive.

As a business, our strategy outlines our commitment to Building Better Futures by Putting People First. Social purpose is at the heart of everything we do to achieve this.

We focus our resources to address social disadvantage wherever we can, and we support local communities to maximise their potential.

How we achieve our goals

We support people into safe and secure, good quality homes, and we support them to maintain their tenancies and live independently.

We support people into training and employment, and we give them the help they need to overcome issues that may prevent them from achieving these goals.

We provide mental health and wellbeing support for thousands of people across our communities with one-on-one counselling sessions for learners, and online mental health support for customers, learners and colleagues.

We invest in frontline resources, which enable us to engage with our customers in new and exciting ways, to better understand what's most important to them and how we can deliver change where it matters most.

We focus our resources to address social disadvantage wherever we can, and we support local communities to maximise their potential.



Continuous improvement

Working together with our partners, we will always be committed to making a positive social impact within our communities by continuously improving the support we offer to people across Staffordshire and Cheshire.

Follow us



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