

# News Reach

Thames Reach's newsletter for service users and staff

June 2010

ThamesReach  
100%

## Getting personal

### A new approach to providing care and support

**Audrey Mitchell, Thames Reach's director of street and hostel services, on a new approach to providing care and support.**



The way in which adult social care is provided is going to change thanks to the introduction

of an ambitious and exciting new approach called 'personalisation'.

Supporting People funding, and the Quality Assessment Framework, have ensured that services have improved in recent years, and offer support that suits the individual.

**"Local authority commissioners and providers of services need to offer more choice to all service users."**

Personalisation will take the person centred approach to a new level. Local authority commissioners and providers of services need to offer more choice to all service users.

Locally, every citizen should

have access to community services. Agencies will need to work together on prevention, and through intervening earlier, reduce the chance of people being in crisis.

Some people may have 'individual budgets' to purchase elements of the support they need but personalisation is about more than that – it will mean building strong communities where everyone feels included and able to take up opportunities and choices. Personalisation will involve the following:

- Universal services – meaning access to all community services
- Early intervention and prevention – to reduce crises
- Choice and control – personal budgets/self-directed support

▪ Social capital – strong communities including everyone  
Every council, and every agency providing support, is now considering how to deliver the aims of personalisation.

There are challenges and around the country agencies have started to try new ways of working.

Thames Reach is running two pilots in Stafford House and Lewisham Reach which will help show how we can offer more choice and more control to service users.

We try very hard as an organisation to involve service users and ensure that they make key decisions about their support and their lives.

*(continues back page)*



*Celebrated actress and charity campaigner Joanna Lumley helped launch Thames Reach's 'fab ad' fundraising campaign, which pledges to spend every single penny on helping homeless people in London. The normally glamorous star donned work overalls and went aloft in a cherry picker crane to hand paint the campaign message on an advertising billboard near our Graham House hostel in Vauxhall. She was joined by formerly homeless service user Marion Albrecht who now volunteers at Thames Reach.*

*The campaign was the brainchild of Mark and Lewis, two of the brightest sparks from the world of advertising, who gave up their time and expertise for free after seeing people sleeping rough on the capital's streets whilst out training for a marathon. This inspired them to seek out a charity known for providing effective services directly to the public. Backing for the campaign also came from Clear Channel Outdoor who gave up 1,000 bus shelter advertising sites across the capital. The bus shelter ad was a hand-painted design by formerly homeless Marion rather than the more common glossy ads favoured and paid for by charities with large advertising budgets.*

*Joanna Lumley said: "The campaign to support Thames Reach and provide services to London's homeless is one that I hope gets the public's backing. I've been up in a crane to paint a message asking people to make a donation. It was an uplifting experience for me. Make a donation yourself and make it an uplifting day for yourself and homeless people too."*

*To make a donation you can phone 0845 901 1811 or visit the Just giving website at [www.justgiving.com/glossyfundraiser](http://www.justgiving.com/glossyfundraiser)*

# Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of Thames Reach's staff and service user magazine.

One of the biggest changes from the last edition is the new name – News Reach.

This reflects the growth of new projects bearing the Reach name in their title and does what it says on the can – brings you news!

Noticeboard somehow seems a bit dated at a time when new communication forms are springing up every year, whether they be the Thames Reach Facebook page or Thames Reach tweets.

News Reach will retain Thames Reach's commitment to green issues by being printed on 100 per cent recycled paper. It is also available online as a pdf from both our website and Pulse.

The latest edition also doubles up as a poster too. The insert has a 'Respect' poster on one side, which you can stick up in your project. It reflects the organisation's commitment to challenging discriminatory behaviour. If you require a larger A3 version of this poster, contact the Communications Team.

# Contents

**Page 1**

Personalisation  
Fundraiser

**Page 2**

Reconnection Project

**Page 3**

Reconnection Project  
Croydon Reach

**Page 4**

Respect poster

**Page 5**

Framework agreement

**Page 6**

Personalisation  
News round-up

News Reach is also available online at [www.thamesreach.org.uk](http://www.thamesreach.org.uk)

News editor: Mike Nicholas

Reporter: Ben Hennessy

Editor: Audrey Mitchell

Printed on 100% recycled paper

# Saving lives

## Helping people off London's streets

**For hundreds of thousands of people from Central and Eastern Europe, European Union enlargement earlier this decade gave them the freedom to find work in the UK. The vast majority of people flourished and their tax contributions helped to boost the UK economy.**

**For a small minority however, the move proved a disaster. Unemployed, penniless and unable to claim benefits, they have ended up destitute and homeless on the streets of London.**

**Communications manager Mike Nicholas met up with service manager Petra Salva to find out what Thames Reach is doing to help these people.**

**Mike:** *"What sort of conditions are these London-based Central and Eastern European homeless people living in and what are the health consequences for them?"*

**Petra:** "Everyone we help is destitute in some way or form and some are very ill. Many are sleeping rough on London's streets and others are in very rudimentary squats and derelict buildings.

The Central and Eastern European homeless often have poor language skills and no money and have become reliant on street handouts.

**"We have two clear options. We can try to help people find jobs here or we can help them to return home."**

Most took a gamble in coming over and that gamble didn't work out for them. Some just simply lost out but others lost their lives. It's disturbing to see the level of destitution amongst this group of people. One of the biggest issues we come across is alcohol misuse. Sometimes we'll come across people sleeping on filthy mattresses surrounded by empty

bottles of alcoholic hand wash stolen from hospitals. We know of at least six deaths and there have undoubtedly been more.

People are dying and dying far too young. This stuff is poisonous."

**Mike:** *"What sort of support is Thames Reach offering people who end up homeless on London's streets?"*

**Petra:** "We have two clear options. We can try to help people find jobs here or we can help them to return home.

"The work-first approach differs from the traditional model of support given to UK rough sleepers which focused on helping people into hostels.

"Our Greenhouse Centre in Hackney helps Central and Eastern European men and women by helping them register for work with the Home Office Workers Registration scheme,

linking them into employment agencies, and ensuring they get help with CV writing and interview skills along with healthcare. Our West London Reconnect project will also help people who want to stay.

"Obviously, people will find it easier to hold down a job if they have accommodation so although we can't put Central and Eastern European homeless men and women into hostels as they can't claim benefits, we can help find private accommodation if they are working.

"But many people believe they are closer to the job market than they actually are and their aspirations are unrealistic given their situation. For these people, their best option is to take up the offer of a reconnection back home where they can get the support of services and their family."

*(Continues overleaf)*



*A rough sleeper bedded down on the streets of North London. Some Central and Eastern Europeans face a disturbing level of destitution.*

# Saving lives

## Helping people off London's streets

(Continued from page 2)

**Mike:** "How many people have the reconnection services helped home?"

**Petra:** "Thames Reach's two reconnection teams – the London Reconnection project and West London Reconnect – have helped 362 destitute Central and Eastern European people home. 153 to Poland, 40 to Lithuania, 39 to Latvia, 36 to the Czech Republic, 34 to Romania, 31 to Slovakia, 18 to Hungary and 11 to Bulgaria."

**Mike:** "What has been the impact of the recession?"

**Petra:** "Many people didn't realise that they would have to compete against others for job opportunities and the economic situation means there is more competition for entry level jobs."

"Add to this the fact that the people we are trying to help may be living on the streets, drinking heavily and have poor language skills, and you realise that some

will struggle to find work. A recent job as a cleaner in a London hospital attracted 70 applicants."

**"These reconnection schemes are saving lives. Without them there would be far more people dying on the streets of Britain."**

*Mike: "Some critics have rounded on the reconnection schemes as poor use of taxpayers' money? How would you respond to these critics?"*

**Petra:** "These reconnection schemes are saving lives. Without them there would be far more people dying on the streets of Britain."

"I'd also challenge those people who think we shouldn't use taxpayers' money to help people from abroad. The reality is that we will actually be saving the British exchequer large sums of money."

"As a result of our schemes,

there will be far less pressure on frontline emergency services such as the police and A&E departments. One individual who was helped home had notched up over 50 visits to A&E while he was here as his health had deteriorated so badly.

"We're also providing an outreach service on buses and we're taking the pressure off London Ambulance crews who no longer have to attend incidents when rough sleepers are found on buses and freeing them up to deal with real emergencies."

"We're also seeing a drop in anti-social behaviour when people are helped to escape from dangerous squats and from sleeping rough on London's streets."

"Our reconnection schemes have to be good news for the people themselves, their families, our local communities and London itself."

**Mike:** "What does the future hold for Central and Eastern

Europeans on London's streets?"

**Petra:** "It's a helping hand to find work or getting linked in to services back in their homeland. Staying on the streets and relying on handouts isn't going to be an option."

"The Government's UK Borders Agency is operating a new pilot scheme in seven areas including parts of London. Those people who are thought to be in breach of the European Union enlargement Treaty because they are not looking for work, and have refused offers of help, could be returned home. Our reconnection teams will be there for people who need support and want to voluntarily go back home."

"Our overarching concern is for people's well-being. It is heart-breaking seeing the condition many people are in and the hopelessness of their current situation. For many, the answer is to seek the support they can get back home."

## Reaching out in Croydon

This time last year, things weren't looking good for Charles. Having been made redundant from his job and then losing his flat, Charles ended up sleeping rough in a car by a busy Croydon office block.

Fast forward to today and things look a lot brighter. He's working as a painter and decorator with Thames Reach's Shift scheme, hoping to move into his own flat in the next few weeks and is looking forward to taking up cycling this summer.

Much of Charles' progress is a result of the hard work of Thames Reach's Croydon Reach team. This unique project manages three key services within the borough, helping people through the different stages of homelessness. An outreach team goes out three days a week helping people off the streets; a 13 bed hostel

located in the town centre provides safe, secure accommodation for former rough sleepers and a resettlement service offers support and advice for people that are ready to move into their own accommodation.

The Croydon Reach staff have helped Charles a great deal after he arrived in the hostel last year. Since being encouraged by his key worker to enrol with Thames Reach's Moving In Moving On (MIMO) painting and decorating course, Charles hasn't looked back. He now works with the Shift team decorating buildings across the capital and volunteers as a teacher with MIMO, helping those in a similar position to the one that he was once in.

Charles explained: "The Croydon Reach team provided me with a lifeline. Without them I don't know where I'd be now.

They've given me the confidence and skills needed to work as a painter and decorator. I'm now ready for the next step - full time work, my own flat and the routine of getting up and going to work every day."

Croydon Reach manager Cora Conway says the service has helped many vulnerable men and women like Charles since launching in June last year. "We're very proud of the real difference Croydon Reach has made over the past 11 months. By making small changes, such as our outreach team going out in the evening and early morning as opposed to only between 9am to 5pm, as it was before, we've managed to find and help some of the borough's hardest to reach people."

"It is also a unique service in London in that we help people across all the key stages of

homelessness. We assist people off the streets, through sheltered accommodation and help to find homes for those who are ready to make the transition into private, rented accommodation."



Charles at the Croydon Reach hostel.

## Round-up

Our **Stamford Street** hostel in Lambeth is to be transformed thanks to a £650,000 injection of money primarily from the Department of Health.

Thames Reach has won a contract to provide substance misuse support to 12 people living in two properties in **Sutton**. The contract is worth £70,000.

The **Hostels Diversion Project** has proved to be a big success, housing 33 people in the private rented sector in its first seven months. The scheme is a joint initiative between Thames Reach, Lewisham Council and the London Housing Foundation. It helps house people for whom hostel accommodation is either not appropriate or not available.

Planning permission is being sought for the £6m **Employment Academy** in Southwark.

Contracts have been exchanged on its home in Peckham with a view to completing soon.

Thames Reach **Chairman Ken Olisa** has been named Non-Executive Director of the year in the not-for-profit category of the prestigious KBC Peel Hunt awards, sponsored by The Sunday Times. The awards acknowledge the work and importance of non-executive directors across the private and not-for-profit sectors.

The **Employment Project** which helps socially excluded adults in Lewisham and Southwark to find work, has had its funding extended until March 2011.

The **TRaVEL** scheme wants projects across Thames Reach to create volunteer placements for service users. Contact

Miranda at: [miranda.sank@thamesreach.org.uk](mailto:miranda.sank@thamesreach.org.uk)

The **Thames Reach Farm Project** has opened up its doors for service users wishing to get a feel for work by attending the organic Boathouse farm in the heart of rural Sussex. Contact Foye Hatton at: [Foye.hatton@thamesreach.org.uk](mailto:Foye.hatton@thamesreach.org.uk) You can also phone Elmfield House on 0207 062 0500 if you want more details.

# Getting personal

## A new approach to adult social care

*(Continued from front page)*

We are already seeing some possibilities through the two pilots.

One of the main ways that service users can have more choice and control is by using a new planning technique called 'person centred planning'.

**“Service users are able to say what is most important to them in a way that isn't possible in traditional keyworking or support planning.”**

We have trained some staff already in hostels, and over the next few months will be training more teams to use this new approach. There will be still be support plans and one-to-one meetings, but we are offering new sessions where the service user decides what kind of life they want, who they want in it, and then decides how they will get there.

The tools concentrate on what kind of life the service user wants, what they can contribute to achieving it, what gifts and qualities they have which will help, and who else in the community will be important.

The plans are full of visual images and are completely unique. Just putting them together is fun and service users are able to say what is most important to them in a way that isn't possible in traditional keyworking or support planning.

Service users who have tried it have remarked how they enjoyed it, and liked the control it gave them. That's exactly what we want. Staff have been amazed by how clear service users are about what they want – in ways which haven't been stated before.

As part of the pilots we are also looking at other ways to extend choice. For example we are trying to offer service users a choice of keyworker.

In one pilot, there are some

funds for service users to try different things to help with their support needs. This could involve someone using therapies such as massage to help with their stress levels, or perhaps someone exploring a hobby or interest which could build self-esteem or confidence levels, and may even lead to something else like employment.

There are some boundaries and limits but we hope that by opening up the possibilities, service users can feed back after the pilots what gave them a better service, and more control. We are working with councils to design these new services, and to work through any challenges.

All agencies will need to produce very clear information about what their services include, and what the costs are so that service users may purchase what they want or need. This could mean that we will have to separate out

'core' bits of our service that we must always include (for example health and safety) from any that might be optional.

This does present financial challenges for organisations who need to plan ahead for costs and who have staff on permanent contracts.

It is early days and there are many things that we, and our commissioners, still need to work through in every borough.

We will be offering training to our service users in Westminster in 'person centred planning' so they know what to expect, and they could even become facilitators themselves.

We will be producing more information about services – like a 'menu' and we will be letting everyone know what we learned from the pilots. It is an exciting time. If you have any questions, ask your team manager, or service user representative.



Lewisham Reach's Natalie (right) has been visiting Claire to help her through an extremely difficult period in her life. One way Natalie helped Claire deal with her traumas was to encourage her to use the 'shoebox' tool. This involved creating a special box in which Claire adds things like photos, letters and objects that she associates with both good and bad times in her life. Claire explains: "When I add things to the box that remind me of a bad part of my life, it helps me to get over that time and move on. "Natalie has helped me in so many ways. In the future I'd like to help people who have experienced similar problems to the ones I've faced."

# Respect

**We are all entitled to go about our lives without being subject to prejudice, negative discrimination or abuse and this behaviour is not acceptable. However we recognise that in the course of our work staff or service users may experience this.**

**Thames Reach staff are responsible for challenging discriminatory behaviour, whether that is directed towards themselves or others, and for supporting others that are affected by this behaviour.**

**Staff can expect to be supported by Thames Reach in their efforts to do this, using the law where appropriate.**



# Quality and the price is right

## Providing services in south London

**Thames Reach receives much of the funding it needs to run its services from local authorities. Thames Reach was recently involved in a very important process determining which organisations would be invited to provide services in some of the south London boroughs where we already help a lot of vulnerable people. Bill Tidnam, Thames Reach's director of housing and community services, writes about how we have fared in this 'framework agreement' process.**



At the beginning of April we heard that Thames Reach had been successful in our bid to be included on the South London Framework Agreement in all six categories that we applied for.

So what exactly is the Framework Agreement and how important is it to Thames Reach?

It is a process by which organisations that 'commissioners' – the people who decide on behalf of the council what kind of services they need – can identify a short-list of organisations that are able to provide services that are the right quality and the right price.

This means that when they come to choose 'providers' – organisations like Thames Reach that run services – they only have to deal with applications from organisations that they know can do the job. In some cases they may be able to just choose a

provider from their list. Organisations who are not on the framework list won't be considered and won't be able to provide services.

We applied to work with the following three broad client groups in both the 'accommodation based' (hostels and supported housing), and 'floating support' categories:

- Vulnerable adults – this category includes most street homeless people, and virtually everyone we currently work with. Many people with substance misuse and/or mental health problems will be included in this group, particularly if they're not currently in touch with specialist services.

- Mental health – primarily people who have a diagnosed mental illness and/or who are in contact with mental health services

- Substance Misuse – schemes with a focus on treatment as part of the service.

The South London Framework covers the three boroughs – Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham – where most of our services are based, as well as the borough of Bromley, where we don't have any services.

So does this mean all our services are safe? Well, the Framework won't just affect new services. Competition law means that councils have to invite bids for existing services every few years, and other organisations have the chance to prove that they can run the service better and/or cheaper than the existing provider. This is called 're-commissioning'. The law protects the rights of employees in these services by making sure that they continue to work under the same contracts even if the organisation changes (TUPE regulations). What this means is that existing providers of services who are not on the framework will not be able to bid to continue to do this work when these services are re-commissioned, and even providers who are part of the framework will

have to prove that they can provide a good and a cheap service. Councils will also want to change services to meet the changing needs of people in the borough. It's great news that our bid for the framework was successful, but it doesn't mean that we won't see big changes over the next few years. Services in the three boroughs are likely to be re-commissioned and we'll have to compete to continue to provide them; while other services are likely to be closed down completely.

Where we continue to provide services, it's likely that due to the pressure on local government spending we will be asked to provide a similar level of service for less money. This isn't new and this pressure on costs is something that has affected our services for

some time. This means that we've already started to look at how we can provide better services at less cost, and this will continue.

One of the most important questions is how will this affect service users? It's too early to say yet. We hope very little. Even if the organisation that provides services change, the staff providing it are likely to stay the same. Some services will change however, and local authorities are keen to talk to people who use services to see how they can be better. It's important that you take them up on this offer if you have a point that you want to get across, or an idea about how things could be done better. If you're not sure how to do this we can put you in touch with the right part of the council in your area.



*Southwark Reach's Alpheus Williams out and about in one of the south London boroughs affected by the new framework agreement.*