



Impact Evaluation  
5 YEARS TO REMEMBER  
“It’s only just begun”



*“We’re safe now princess”*



"I used to live with my mother until she passed away, then I was made homeless while I was in the mental hospital.



I was going to be moved to a bed and breakfast where addicts live with needles everywhere, but then I was offered a place with Eden Projects. The flats are very nice and well renovated. The staff are helpful and are there if you need them"

Casius, Staffordshire.



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## A Word From Our CEO

For many generations, and mainly by local authorities, there has been a need to provide social housing for adults and children living with disabilities and other vulnerabilities.

The supposed solutions have, in many cases, been woefully inadequate, inappropriate and almost certainly designed around filling void housing stock rather than matching the needs of individuals. Examples are placing individuals who are not able to integrate with others in shared housing schemes, totally impractical and non-maintained accommodation given to the most vulnerable and needy. In addition, vast numbers of people are accommodated out of borough and away from their family support mechanisms making what is already a challenging life even more so.

We at BeST feel that all people, no matter what their needs, have the right to live in appropriately modified and well maintained accommodation, in an area close to family. This will pave the way for inclusion in the community, social equality and acceptance, leading to a more independent life. This enables individuals to build for themselves a more fulfilling future.

At BeST we are tackling exclusion from society, social inequality, prejudices, negative perception and attitudes towards social housing provision. You could argue that education is the key to a long term solution, however that would take generations and require a whole culture change if that was the only route available to society. Fortunately it is not.



Whilst trying to educate the public and tackle the previously mentioned negative perceptions and prejudices we truly believe that ensuring people living with disabilities have access to quality, bespoke and well maintained accommodation, close to family support mechanisms, is the best way to tackle this very real need we have in the UK today.

**Kevin Appleby**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Bespoke Supportive Tenancies Limited**



# What Our Tenants Think

Leroy, Staffordshire.

"I live in my own flat.

I clean my own flat.

I enjoy cooking and have learnt to cook spaghetti bolognese, cheesecake and chocolate brownies.

I go to college now. I enjoy animal care and PE.

In the future I want to go out on my own, have a job in scrap metal and get my driving licence.

I enjoy having my own freedom and stay up when I want."



## Available units of accommodation

We have a varied portfolio of bespoke accommodation built or refurbished to a specification with individual customer requirements in mind. This ranges from transitional short term bedsits right through to 3 bedroom apartments to satisfy the needs of two individuals and a full time carer.

Our aim is to provide bespoke housing for life even if that includes adapting the accommodation to meet changing needs through that lifetime.



## Number of tenants

We have seen significant growth in the number of tenants benefiting from living in one of our properties. A key learning for us has been that not all available accommodation can be filled quickly even though we know the demand is high. Lengthy delays caused mainly by red tape often leads to vacant properties for longer periods than desired. However this does not detract from the fantastic achievement accomplished to date.



## Cost savings for the tax payer

Although it is almost impossible to calculate an exact benefit in monetary terms specific to our organisation it is, however, well documented and evidenced that there are huge savings to be made by having people living independently rather than in institutionalised scenarios funded by local authorities, or in the day to day residential care as part of the NHS solution.

Taking into account a number of cost factors in relation to outsourced care costs, rents and residential charges we are confident that our impact on the treasury funds would equate to savings presented here.





## *Our Services - what do we do?*

We are specialists in providing accommodation for vulnerable adults from various groups of people including adults with learning disabilities, Autism, physical disabilities, sensory impairment and mental health needs.

We also pride ourselves in offering services such as housing need assessments, tenant involvement, housing management, property management and 24 hour maintenance on all of our properties.

We can acquire land and build to an exact specification, and source or purchase any property in any area for the purpose of providing accommodation to vulnerable people.

Once the accommodation is acquired and available for habitation we offer a full pre-move in service such as tenancy sign up, inventory detailing, set up of utilities, right through to full property maintenance and management service. Tenant support in areas such as house rules, tenancy agreements, managing behavioural and antisocial behaviour issues, sourcing of furniture, decoration and much more are also offered.

*In short, we change lives!*



# Some of Our Recent Developments



Leeds



The Wirral



A Typical Apartment Layout



Mansfield



The Wirral



A Typical Apartment Interior



The Wirral



Torquay



Harrogate

## Qualitative Impacts

### FACT

Living independently creates many opportunities which impact positively on the individual, their close family, friends and wider community generally.

#### Individuals

It is widely regarded across political parties, healthcare providers and social care providers, that independent living for people living with a disability brings favourable outcomes:

- improved planning strategy
- increased inclusion
- benefits to individual health
- increased self-value

This has a positive impact on providers, budgets and increases work opportunities, which in turn reduces benefit dependency; thereby also increasing tax revenue.



#### Friends and family

Caring for an individual living with disability can be onerous. It can negatively impact on health, reduce opportunities for socialising and prevent people from having a positive impact on their local communities. Having a relative housed independently within their local community, accessing local care provision which meets their needs, frees up positive energies which can be exploited within their community. There is clear evidence this improves quality of health and often creates further empathy with those living with a disability and are more inclined to civic duty through voluntary and charitable contributions. All of this has a positive impact on the communities within which they flourish including fiscal impact.

#### Wider community

All communities flourish better when their residents participate rather than receive. People living with disabilities and their wider relatives and friends when freed from the burden and limitations of care at home, take positive steps and actions which are very often to the benefit of the wider communities within which they are freed up to contribute. It is widely recognised that their collective contribution improves planning for inclusion and enhances the local economy. Society as a whole then benefits.





## *Dreams and aspirations*

Our belief is that vulnerable people should not be further disadvantaged by being forced to live away from their families, often an intrinsic part of their support mechanism; or in totally inappropriate accommodation.

Our short to medium term goal is to have around 4,000 tenants living in appropriate and affordable accommodation which meets their specific needs.

We also aim to be the “go-to” provider for housing that meets the needs of vulnerable people, to develop a model of envy, and to be the provider that others benchmark against.

## *What has happened that we didn't expect?*

Like a number of charities, we started out with the belief that we could accomplish anything we put our minds to. However, not surprisingly, we found a number of challenges to overcome.

The biggest negative by far was a total lack of funding available by the very people whose problem it is to find an appropriate solution for vulnerable members of society. Finance for projects requiring this kind of specialism is not widely available, which severely delays the amount of people we can support.

What we didn't expect is the sheer amount of demand for our services and the huge growth we have encountered over the 5 years we have been in operation.

We have grown from just 11 tenants during 2011 to 653 tenants for our year ending 2015.

Our staff count in the last five years has grown from just 3 staff members on day 1 to 25 staff in 2015 with a Trustee count of 5.

At the very start of our journey we had just one 2-bedroom house in Wigan on our books, today we have just under a 1,000 individual rooms. Growth is likely to continue while funding is available although we will limit the speed of growth to ensure deliverability and quality can be achieved. The culture at BeST is always to remember why we started the journey in the first place. This means putting our tenants at the forefront of what we do, which will always limit our speed of growth.



# What Our Tenants Think

Jessica, Staffordshire.

I have improved my cooking with sharp knives. I plan meals for the next day.

I now have my medication in my own room

I have struggled with my personal hygiene in the past but now I shower every day.

I didn't used to read my own letters as it would jumble up in my head but now I will read my own post and it makes me feel good.

I was scared when I first came here because I felt that I wouldn't have support but I have a lot of support from staff and I get on well with all of them.

I have made friends with other people here.

I struggle with cleaning but I am slowly getting better at this.

I can talk to staff about any problems I have and I feel awesome that I don't need a CPN any more and it's all down to my hard work.

I am proud of what I have done over the last three months.



## What are our resources?

When talking about the resources of any social housing provider the most obvious area to focus on would be the housing and land stock available. No matter how much land or indeed housing stock a housing provider has at its disposal it has a very limited value without the knowledge, passion and commitment of the organisation's workforce.

At BeST we see our staff as a major resource and this is how we use and develop it.

### Trustees

The board of trustees at BeST have between them 80 years in senior posts within the Charity Sector together with social housing provision.

Our Chief Executive Officer has over 20 years of industry specific knowledge of vulnerable people groups and associated supported accommodation attained from both public and private sector employment.

### Leadership Team

The senior management team has a wealth of hands-on and management experience covering all the key elements of our operational activity.

Without the dedication, passion and willingness to push the boundaries of our staff across the whole organisation the world would be a slightly different place, or indeed a very different place for our tenants.

From the early part in our growth we took the decision to support, nurture, inspire and develop young people. Our Apprentice scheme has delivered 5 staff members into our workforce all who have thrived and prospered since joining BeST and have become a crucial resource.

## What have we learnt?

As with any relatively new organisation, learning is paramount and not surprisingly we have learnt a huge amount over the years.

We have learnt very quickly that the financial implications of dealing with partners operating in this area are very challenging. We have certainly found that time scales can vary, due to the length of time it takes to secure the funding to start a project. We have learnt not to offer ambitious time scales from negotiation leading up to acquisition of accommodation. This is somewhat out of our control.

Although we would like to help everyone we have certainly learnt that we can't change the world overnight and where we may wish to take a project on sometimes we just have to say "no" purely because we can't deliver our promise.

### Utilising our learnings?

We have gained an enormous amount of insight over the last five years which has enabled us to improve our service levels in our chosen area of expertise.

We now spend a huge amount of time evaluating our potential client's needs by doing a full client needs evaluation and detailed risk assessment, however our starting point is always from a 'can do' approach and how can we make this opportunity happen. At the forefront of this process our clients' needs are always paramount and will never be compromised.



Bespoke Supportive Tenancies



Homes &  
Communities  
Agency



Bespoke Supportive Tenancies Ltd  
is a Registered Charity,  
Registration Number 1143046

Bespoke Supportive Tenancies Ltd  
is a Registered Provider of Social Housing, HCA  
Registration Number 4718

Bespoke Supportive Tenancies Ltd  
is a Not for Profit Organisation,  
Ltd by Guarantee, Companies House  
Reg Number 07375502

Registered Office:  
2A Sentinel House, Albert Street, Eccles, Manchester, M30 0NJ

Telephone: 0845 833 8885  
Development Lead: 07921 844323  
Email: [info@bestha.co.uk](mailto:info@bestha.co.uk)  
**[www.bestha.co.uk](http://www.bestha.co.uk)**