

supporting people  
people first

# supporting



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# people



Welcome to People First's annual review. People First is in business to deliver services that will improve the lives of as many people as possible. Since our last review much has changed and this year we are proud to showcase the achievements of our Community Support Service, which is now successfully operating across the region.

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People First is in business to deliver services that will improve the lives of as many people as possible. With this mission as our driver for everything that we do, we have set up a new Community Support Service. This has now completed its first full year in business and we are proud to showcase its achievements in this review.

We remain committed to delivering quality services and ensuring continuous improvement in our service delivery and this is demonstrated in our working practices. The new support service has undergone two reviews during the year and has received positive feedback from Supporting People Teams, stakeholders and service users alike. In 2003 we also received a 'satisfactory' rating from the Audit Commission for our housing management service following the Housing Corporation's last inspection.

As well as the development of the Community Support Service we have also sought further diversification in our activities, notably with the development of a rent deposit scheme for Vale Royal Borough Council. We were awarded the contract late in 2003 and have now housed twenty-five homeless families in the private rented sector. This is a service that we hope to expand to cover other local authorities in the longer term.

Our commitment to involving the communities that we serve continues to be a priority. We offer opportunities for involvement in the development and running of the business at all levels – from the board downwards. Tenants still make up the majority of the board and we have a menu of options for tenant involvement in housing management activities. In the Community Support Service we are also developing a policy to include and involve service users, in ways which will be shaped by our consultation with them earlier this year.

The phenomenal success of the Support Service – which is already operating across four local authorities – is a tribute to our newly expanded staff team, to our board members and to the tremendous trust invested by our partners in this exciting and innovative service. We would like to thank them for their drive, commitment and enthusiasm, which has enabled the expansion of the business and ensured its success.

In the coming year we hope to further develop and expand the Community Support Service and continue diversification of our activities, to promote continued growth and ensure the future sustainability of the association. We look forward to developing new contracts and partnerships across the north west.



chair and chief  
executive's review

by Adrian Lohrey  
and Kulbinder Kang

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success of the  
Community Support  
Service is a tribute both  
to our newly expanded  
staff team and to the  
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innovative service



it's hard, growing up so quickly,  
but People First give us the  
support we need to be  
independent – my friends are  
really jealous that I can look after  
my own house!

young people  
and families

supporting  
homeless  
families, single  
people and  
young people  
at risk

The Community Support Services in Tameside and Vale Royal have specific remits to work with homeless families, single people and young people at risk. But of course people can not be defined by specific 'problems' or categorised into neat groups, and many of the people that we work with have a range of problems.

As Dave Rathbone, Project Support Worker at Vale Royal, puts it: "very often they put labels on young people but I find that when you actually meet the young people a lot of these labels just fall away."

In Vale Royal we provide floating support to young people at risk across tenures as well as those living in one of our two shared housing schemes which are funded by Cheshire Supporting People. The support we offer can be critical in the young people's transition to independence and in dealing with the issues which led to their homelessness or put them at risk – whether that was a relationship breakdown, abuse or some other issue.

Our partnership work with a number of organisations in Vale Royal, notably with Weaver Vale Housing Trust and Vale Royal Borough Council has been essential in ensuring the success of this service.

In Tameside, in partnership with New Charter Housing Trust, we provide floating support to new tenants who were previously homeless and to existing tenants at risk of homelessness. We currently support forty service users, including families and single people of all ages. We also provide floating support in partnership with Housing Options, the Tameside homelessness service, to homeless families and single people living in bed and breakfasts, those who are so-called 'sofa surfing' or living on the street. We support eighteen service users. Both these services are funded by Tameside Supporting People.

In a recent service review by Tameside Supporting People we received very positive feedback about the services we provide from the Supporting People team, stakeholders and service users.

## people with mental health needs

### achieving high standards in service delivery



In recognition of the difficulties that some communities experience in accessing services, we have worked hard over the last two years to develop specialist, culturally sensitive services for people with mental health problems. In Rochdale, we work in partnership with the Community Restart Team to deliver a floating support service to Asian women of all ages with mental health issues.

Tanu Sarkar-Bacon, Project Support Worker, explains: “Our aim is to help women build their confidence, to live independent lives, empower and motivate them to do the things they used to do but are no longer able to. We may introduce women to local community centres, or Asian Women’s Groups, linking them in with the workers and activities. And we work closely with health visitors, mental health practitioners, GPs and consultant psychiatrists.”

We currently support seventeen women in their own homes across Rochdale, with funding provided by Rochdale Supporting People and the support of the Community Restart Team.

Meanwhile, in Manchester we work in partnership with black and minority ethnic housing associations, amongst others, to provide a floating support service to mainly black and minority ethnic people of all ages with mental health issues.

We currently support fifty-five service users with funding provided by Manchester Supporting People. The Manchester Supporting People team lead by example, and have achieved the standards that they have a right to expect from providers. When they were inspected earlier this year by the Audit Commission, they attained the highest achievement: three stars for an excellent service with excellent prospects for improvement.

People First shares this commitment to achieving high standards in service delivery. When our mental health service was reviewed during the year we were pleased to receive positive feedback about the service from the Supporting People team, service users and stakeholders alike.

sometimes I feel like I'm a bottle  
of fizzy drink... my support worker  
lifts the lid just a little – it releases  
the pressure and stops the bottle  
exploding

Asian Women's Project service user

# Community Support Service

## building on firm foundations

The development of the Community Support Service proved to be an enormous challenge for the association. We started off with a handful of staff whose main task was to ensure we got sufficient service users to secure our funding. We were working to incredibly tight deadlines and in some cases uncertain circumstances.

We were successful in meeting our targets in all areas of operation and now have twenty-six staff involved in delivering floating support to just over 150 service users across four local authority areas in the north west: Tameside, Manchester, Rochdale and Vale Royal. We deliver services to people with a range of issues – and from diverse backgrounds, for example Asian women in Rochdale with mental health issues; people with mental health issues in Manchester, predominantly from the black and minority ethnic community; homeless families and single people in Tameside and homeless families and young people at risk in Vale Royal.

All our services are delivered at a local level with staff working from area offices in Northwich, Stalybridge and Rochdale and our office in Hulme. We have a diverse staff team to reflect our customer base. Our teams' experience spans mental health, young people, supported

accommodation, drug and alcohol work and homelessness. Some of our workers are also Bangla, Urdu and Punjabi speakers. This means we are able to deliver support tailored to a wide range of individual needs.

Our success in getting the services up and running and securing contracts is to a large extent attributable to the commitment of the staff who work at People First, the vision and support of the Board and the partner organisations that we work with, who have provided the association with opportunities in what was new territory for the association. As well as setting up the new service we have had to gear ourselves up for the challenges of supporting people. The success of two service reviews which were undertaken during the year gives us confidence that we are meeting this challenge.

Our biggest challenge now is to ensure that we retain our contracts in a time of great uncertainty about funding levels. This means regular consultation with service users, stakeholders and partners and ensuring continuous improvement and excellence. We have built a strong base from which to develop further over the coming year. We are confident that we can achieve this if we ensure that – as always – we put 'people first.'

our teams' experience spans mental health, young people, supported accommodation, drug and alcohol work and homelessness. So we're able to deliver support tailored to a wide range of individuals' needs.

Dianne Sodhi, Head of Community Support Service

## housing management in Hulme

## continuing to meet new challenges

We are continually challenging ourselves to achieve higher standards of service to our present and future tenants, as well as renewing our commitment to Hulme by promoting tolerance and harmony in the community as a whole.

We achieved a 'satisfactory' rating from the Audit Commission in 2003 as the last association in the north to be inspected by the Housing Corporation. To improve on this performance in future years we have developed a comprehensive action plan that will address the weaknesses identified by the inspection. This has led to a programme of service reviews that are already having a dramatic effect on the way we deliver services. The review groups are made up of staff at different levels of the association, tenants and board members.

The repairs review led to a complete restructuring of the way the service was provided. It also led to a more comprehensive stock condition survey being undertaken that ensures that there is a planned maintenance programme in place for the next thirty years. The Customer Services Review has led to the agreement of comprehensive customer service standards.

In terms of commitment to Hulme we have continued to make our contribution to its sustainability. We are involved in Hulme Together, a community safety initiative that increases awareness and tolerance of different lifestyles and cultures and actively encourages the enforcement of prosecutions for hate crimes. We also play an

active role in the Local Area Partnership, Hulme Alliance, the Ward Co-ordination Group, the Burglary Task Group and the Adventure Playground Development Group. Furthermore we continue to support the Hulme Festival of Fun, an event that we helped to create, and hold our own Christmas Party for the children of Hulme (fifty-five children attended in 2003).

We welcome the new powers available to combat anti-social behaviour and have begun consultation with tenants to ensure that our use of the powers balances our commitment to support a community that tolerates each other's lifestyles, with the tenants' right to peaceful enjoyment of their home.

Tenant involvement and consultation at all levels of the association's decision making process remains a firm commitment. Not only do our tenants form a large part of our board of management but we also have a menu of options for tenants to be involved or to receive information. This year, tenants living in our Rolls Crescent scheme are involved in designing and creating their own garden in a currently unused communal space.

We continue to take on new challenges, setting up a Rent Deposit Scheme at the end of 2003 for Vale Royal Borough Council to enable them to re-house homeless families. By the end of 2004, twenty-five families had successfully been re-housed in the private rented sector by landlords that had previously been reluctant to take tenants receiving welfare benefits.

# performance indicators

<b>Rents</b>	2003/4	2004/5 Target
As a percentage of all rent due in we collected	98.4%	99%
Unpaid rent of all that we could have collected	8.2%	7.8%
Unpaid rent of current tenants	7.7%	6.5%
Unpaid rent of former tenants	1.7%	1%

<b>Empty Properties</b>	2003/4	2004/5 Target
Lost rent due to properties being empty	£6,131	£4,324
Average number of weeks that properties are empty between lettings	4.2	3.0

<b>Repairs</b> (completed within target times)	2003/4	2004/5 Target
Emergency Repairs	96.3%	95%
Urgent Repairs	90.2%	95%
Routine Repairs	93.6%	95%
<b>Appointments</b>		
Appointments Made for Repairs	78.7%	80%
Appointments Kept	92.3%	95%

<b>Lettings</b>	2003/4	2004/5 Target
Tenants nominated by City Council	43%	50%
Tenants from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups	46%	33%
Tenants allocated for links to community	18%	20%
Tenants allocated for economic links to area	12%	15%

## BME Profile of New Tenants

	Hulme Ward population (2001 census)	Lettings actual in 2003/4	Letting Target 2004/5
White	67.8%	53.3%	67%
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	20.6%	33.4%	21%
Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi)	5.6%	6.7%	6%
Chinese/other	5.4%	6.7%	6%

<b>Tenant Satisfaction</b>	2003/4	2004/5 Target
Satisfied with the overall service	83%	90%
Satisfied with the property	92%	95%

# accounts

## income and expenditure

for the year ending March 2004

	2004 £	2003 £
Turnover	1,613,191	992,094
Operating Costs	<u>(1,075,415)</u>	<u>(656,598)</u>
Operating Surplus	537,776	335,496
Interest payable and similar charges	<u>(282,061)</u>	<u>(284,738)</u>
Interest receivable	<u>28,980</u>	<u>27,645</u>
Surplus on Ordinary Activities before Taxation	284,695	78,403
Tax on surplus on ordinary activities	<u>(72,101)</u>	<u>(24,484)</u>
Surplus for the Financial Year	212,594	53,919
Transfer to Designated Reserves	<u>(161,568)</u>	<u>(11,067)</u>
Retained Surplus Brought Forward	<u>440,029</u>	<u>397,177</u>
Retained Surpluses	<u><u>491,055</u></u>	<u><u>440,029</u></u>

All amounts relate to continuing activities

There were no recognised gains or losses for 2004 or 2003 other than those included in the income and expenditure account.

## balance sheet

for the year ending March 2004

	2004 £	2004 £	2003 £	2003 £
<b>Tangible Fixed Assets</b>				
Housing Property Cost		13,187,148		13,187,148
less				
Housing Association Grant		<u>(8,700,767)</u>		<u>(8,700,767)</u>
Depreciation		<u>(237,764)</u>		<u>(185,226)</u>
		4,248,617		4,301,155
Tangible assets		<u>32,186</u>		<u>19,806</u>
		4,280,803		4,320,961
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Debtors	125,520		132,431	
Investments	393,857		-	
Bank and cash	<u>689,352</u>		<u>750,426</u>	
	1,208,729		882,857	
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	<u>258,865</u>		<u>163,952</u>	
Net Current Assets		949,864		718,905
Provision for Liabilities & Charges		<u>(5,047)</u>		<u>(1,772)</u>
		<u>5,225,620</u>		<u>5,038,094</u>
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>				
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year</b>		4,459,483		4,484,551
<b>Capital and Reserves</b>				
Share capital - non equity	65		65	
Designated Reserves (Service items)	80,929		69,361	
Designated Reserves (Planned Maintenance)	194,088		44,088	
Income and Expenditure account	<u>491,055</u>		<u>440,029</u>	
		766,137		553,543
Total Capital and Reserves		<u>5,225,620</u>		<u>5,038,094</u>

These accounts were approved by the Board of Management on 26 July 2004 and signed on its behalf.

A Lohrey

Cym D'Souza

K Kang





# people first CD ROM

To find out more about  
People First's Community  
Support Service, simply put  
this interactive CD ROM  
into your PC's CD drive.

If the CD does not auto run, click on your  
computer's start menu, select Run and type  
D:\start.exe (where D is your CD drive).

Alternatively, locate the CD in "My Computer"  
and double click the **start** icon on the CD.

No CD? Write to People First, or ring  
0161 226 1917 to request a free copy of the  
People First Supporting People CD ROM.



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**Chief Executive**

Kulbinder Kang

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J Hepplestone

A Armstrong

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Registered with the Housing Corporation No. L4088.

Registered as an Industrial & Provident Society No. 27746R with Charitable Status.

The Association is a member of the National Housing Federation.

The Board of Management of People First Housing Association accepted the NHF's revised Code of Governance at its meeting in May 2000 as a guide to best practice. It agreed that it would accept the spirit rather than the letter of sections that are less relevant to the Association.