

Seeing the bigger picture



Part of a bigger picture

children attended Longsight and Slade Lane nurseries

parents attended Children and **Parents Service** courses

of parents attended parents evening

adults attended a children's centre run course

98%

of parents think their child is making good progress

There were

visits to Longsight and Ardwick children's centres

people volunteered in our Longsight services

> Attendance at the school is

"The course has given me the confidence to help my son. For a time, I thought he was just being a naughty boy - whereas now I see that there was always something deeper behind it."

**Sarah** – Parent at Longsight Children's Centre

children attend Longsight **Community Primary** 

Longsight pupils speak

different

languages

Longsight Community Primary is a hub for children and families offering high-quality education through imagination, creativity and play in a safe, fun space, including:

- Longsight Community Primary School
- Longsight and Slade Lane Nurseries
- Longsight and Ardwick children's centres

### Sarah. Longsight Children's Centre service user

Sarah signed up for a parenting course after her 4 year old son, Ethan, showed increasingly difficult and aggressive behaviour that was disrupting his time at nursery and at home.

"Ethan was displaying a lot of anger issues. My confidence as a mother, due to my own social circumstances, was zilch. I had run out of ideas of what to do; how to help my child who was hurting in some way. I don't believe any child is angry unless there is something going on emotionally.



"As a single parent you can feel looked down on from people. I felt like I was being blamed for his behaviour. I blamed myself and I felt everyone else in the family blamed me for his behaviour.

"The course leaders made me feel welcome and not looked down on. I think recognising that I can have an impact on his behaviour, but I am not the cause of it was key. It wasn't even anything specific, just gentle reminders that were said in the group that were personal to me. I felt they knew who I was and they built my confidence up with positive reinforcement, then we relayed it to the children at home. I was made to feel like I am a good mum."

"Ethan's behaviour is more typical of a 4 year old now. He still gets angry, but through the course he has learned how to identify his emotions or to identify that he is getting angry...He knows that if he gets to the point where he isn't going to calm down, then he will take a time out or chill time where he will just come into the sitting room and get a blanket and lie here. When he wants to talk about it, he can come out to me.

"The course has given me the confidence and skills to teach him these things and how to help him. For a time, I thought he was just being a naughty boy - whereas now I see that there was always something deeper behind it. It was hard work at home, putting the skills we learned on the course into place, but I was consistently supported. If I didn't have anyone pushing me or coaching me like the course leaders did, then I wouldn't have done it. Emotionally, I wouldn't have had the confidence or energy to support him how he needed me to. I am so grateful."





Part of a bigger picture

"Unity has given me the chance to change my life; I have a job that I love and I can support my daughter in the way that I want. I don't know what I would have done if it wasn't for Big Life."

Sameena Hussain – Teaching Assistant at Unity Community Primary

**School** 

attendance was

free childcare

places were

offered to two-

year olds

62%

of children aged five show a good level of development

00%

of parents said their child was happy at school children attend Unity school and nursery

30

different languages are spoken in the school

125

community
events, such as
roller disco and
playschemes

969

of children in our schools of Black and Minority Ethnicities Unity Community Primary is a hub in Cheetwood, Manchester, developed in response to parents and children wanting high-quality education and support on their doorstep, including:

- Unity Community Primary School
- Unity Nursery

#### Sameena Hussein, Teaching Assistant at Unity Community Primary

After getting married in 2010, Samena left her job and relocated to Leicester to be with her new husband. Unfortunately, following a breakdown in the relationship and a miscarriage, Sameena's mental health suffered and she was diagnosed with depression.

Sameena returned to Manchester to live with her parents. However, over the Ramadan period, Sameena discovered she was pregnant.

"The timing was difficult because my husband and I weren't getting on. With the support of my parents, I decided to continue the pregnancy on my own and I had my daughter, Leeyah in 2013. I was so delighted to become a mum; I felt it completed me.

NEVER GIVE UP

"I sought counselling for my depression as Leeyah was due to start school – at Unity Community Primary – and I was really struggling with the transition. My esteem had suffered due to my marriage breakdown and I was worried about how I would cope with Leeyah at school."

After taking part in a confidence course for adults run by the school, Sameena learned about Teaching Assistant course. Through Big Life, she completed the Level 2 and 3 Teaching Assistant courses. When a vacancy came up at Unity School for a full-time Level 3 role, Sameena applied and got through to the final stages.

"I didn't get the job, but after eight years of not working, this was my first real interview and it was a big achievement for me to get as far as I did. It showed me that I still had it in me to achieve something and that I was capable. It was a huge confidence boost."

Sameena had impressed at interview. A few days later, Unity Comunity Primary contacted her to ask offer her a role as a Level 2 Teaching Assistant one day a week instead.

"I was delighted about being offered the role; I love working at the school and it is allowing me to build classroom experience. It's a great new beginning for me and I am positive about the future."



Part of a bigger picture

142,541

Visits to centres

22

Services, activities and campaigns

"I'd always worked in a very busy environment and had lots of people around me who I could speak to and ask for advice. I felt a bit alone and what Kim did was make me feel like I had a team again."

Cora, Be Well client

**39**Volunteers

Volunteers went on to secure employment

employmer

247

People engaged in healthy eating activities

7145

attended
wellbeing groups,
such as yoga and
massages

20  $_{
m years}$ 

The Sugar Group celebrated its 20th anniversary this year

681

Health chats were completed

Big Life offers wide-ranging health and wellbeing services in Manchester, offering one-to-one and group support that help people to make positive changes. They include:

 Zion and Kath Locke Centres – primary care and community services tailored to local communities

## Dennis Haughton Sugar Group attendee, Kath Locke Centre

This year, the Sugar Group at Kath Locke Centre celebrated its 20th anniversary. The group was set up by members of the local community, in Moss Side, to support the Afro Caribbean community to live well while managing diabetes.

For those who attend, it's an important weekly social event that reduces isolation by way of gentle exercise, trips out and talks with health experts.

Dennis Haughton is one of the many people to benefit from the group over the past 20 years.



"The Sugar Group has been superb. I've been coming for about 10 years. It's helped me care for my wife who has diabetes and lymphedema. As I'm on drugs for epilepsy that make me drowsy, it also keeps me active and gives me a way to get out of the house.

"To help understand the impact of diabetes, I've gone with the group to special events at places like Salford University. People have also come along to the group to check our weight and look at our diet and how we could eat more healthily. As a carer, it's helped me watch my wife's diet and cook healthy meals for her.

"It's been a great way of meeting people too – we went for a day out in the Lake District a few weeks ago and I'm going to the theatre with the group in a few weeks' time.

"Having the group at the Kath Locke Centre is brilliant. There is a great Café here – I can get a superb meal before the group meets and I also eat here to give me time to do other things like the computer group at the local library."



Part of a bigger picture

people attended groups and activities

1,650 times



88

people took part in a physical activity programme



people volunteered for us

96%

of people asked say their lives have improved since using the centres

"The smoke screen group has given me the courage and support I needed to help me quit smoking."

Marie, group attendee

The Energise and Willow Tree centres are community centres in Salford, from which statutory, community and voluntary organisations deliver health and wellbeing services, including a GP surgery.

### John Tyndall, Service user at Energise Centre

John was struggling with some major health and wellbeing issues when he first came to the Energise Centre. He was in rehabilitation after a recent stroke and, to control his diabetes, he needed to lose weight and improve his diet. But he lacked confidence and was socially isolated, so tackling these issues on his own was a big ask.



When John first came to the Energise Centre it was only to see his Work Coach. His coach immediately saw that extra help was vital and signposted John to the Centre's 'My Life Goals' service for one-to-one support with healthy lifestyle changes.

With the My Life Goals service, John was able to set small weekly goals for himself so he felt in control. John was not cooking his own food, so improving his diet was his first challenge. Slowly, John and his Key Worker introduced simple recipe ideas that John felt comfortable cooking. He now regularly cooks his own simple, healthy meals.

To get physically active and gain better mobility, John also started going on the weekly health walks from the centre. As he walks with the aid of a stick, John found this quite a challenge at first. But he persisted, adding small daily walks into his routine, gaining confidence and improving his mobility. Now, the majority of the time, John walks unaided.

In one of his sessions at the Centre, John mentioned he was interested in learning how to swim. John's Key Worker pointed him to the 'Aqua Buddies' sessions, which support people who lack the confidence to go in the pool on their own. He enjoyed them so much he's now signed up for regular sessions at the Broughton Leisure Centre.

After his 12 week My Life Goals Programme ended, John went for his first diabetes check since his diagnosis. He was delighted when his GP rang to congratulate him on getting his HbA1c levels under control.

John is now a regular at Centre sessions, like the Mindful Eating workshop and the Friendship Group for over 50s, which has helped him get out and about, socialise and meet new people.





Part of a bigger picture

5.827

People used healthy lifestyle support services

2,234

Mini health MOTs and health chats delivered 2,285

People went on wellbeing training courses

4.957

People got support to set healthier lifestyle goals 86%

Of people who completed their lifestyle change support programme achieved their goals

790

People were supported to stop smoking

ogramme neir goals

"I've got my new job to look forward to and I've learned a lot about myself. My life's a lot cleaner, a lot better - thanks to Craig. Because of him, things are great."

Chris Hamilton - Living Well service user

1,511

People were supported to lose weight

Our Healthy Walk and Talks were attended

12,196

times

**A**th 321

People went on family walks

1/122

Volunteers and Community Champions

Living Well Rochdale enables people to improve their health and wellbeing, through oral health, smoking cessation, exercise and weight management, and a team of health trainers. It works from community settings to help people in Rochdale, Heywood, Middleton and the Pennines.

## Chris Hamilton, Living Well Rochdale service users

Bereavement was the trigger for a downward spiral in Chris's life. He lost his mum and a year later his sister.

"I was drinking, smoking, and alienating everybody. You just get to a point where you don't want to talk to people because they feel like they're judging you all the time."

"As a bloke, you don't want to admit you've got issues. My dad would say, 'Suck it up, you're a man.' So I turned to drugs and alcohol, and basically ruined my life."



It got to a point where he decided he needed support. "I went to my doctor and they suggested that I needed someone to listen to me who was neutral and not there to make judgment against me and my past. That's when I got in touch with Living Well."

Chris met up with Living Well Coach, Craig. "I had to make a decisions in my life to make a change, and I was the only one who could make them. Craig has been fantastic. He's helped me see things in a different light so I can deal with my grief and anger."

"He's helped me focus my life, not just the drink and the drugs - even my diet, how to live well.

"When I want to sound-off or I'm having a crap day, I'll talk to Craig. And when I get that out of my system and we talk, it suddenly doesn't seem as bad as I thought it was."

While getting his personal life back on track, Chris decided to he wanted to take his working life in a new direction too.

"From 1997, I was doing care work but that finished in 2000. I thought, because I'd done it before, it was something I could look into again. Craig's helped me massively with this. I've now earned a care certificate, completed four week placements, and soon I'll get my start date to work."

Chris feels he's well on the way to turning his life around.

"I've got my new job to look forward to and I've learned a lot about myself. My life's a lot cleaner, a lot better - thanks to Craig. Because of him, things are great."





Part of a bigger picture

The Sanctuary helped people

we recieved



may have attempted suicide or self harm without us

our sanctuaries were visited



visits to A&E or calls to emergency services were avoided

of people said that their distress levels were reduced

The Sanctuary provided overnight mental health crisis support, across Greater Manchester in Bolton, Manchester, Wigan and Leigh, to adults who were in crisis, experiencing anxiety, panic attacks, depression or suicidal thoughts.

### Richard Crewe, Sanctuary service user and supporter

With the help of the Sanctuary, Richard was able to understand the root causes of his anxiety and depression, and take back control of his life. He went on to raise money for the service and wrote a monthly blog to help others. Here, he shares his views on a future without the Sanctuary.

"The Sanctuary has had a massive impact on my life - ever since that first call that helped me to understand that I am not alone. So, for me, it's sad to see that the service is closing due to funding cuts.



"Yes, there are other charities and organisations where you can get help, but the Sanctuary was unique in it's ability to care for those in crisis, who needed a safe place away from busy, overstretched A&E departments.

"I know I can reach out for support from family and friends when I need it, but it feels like something has been taken away that I care about – just like they cared about me.

"The person on the end of the phone at the Sanctuary wasn't just there because they needed a job - they were there because they cared and wanted to make a genuine difference to someone in crisis.

"There will, I'm sure, be knock-on effects to other services, such as the police, A&E departments and GP surgeries. Someone has to pick up the pieces when a service like this closes.

"I don't want to get too nostalgic about the support I had and could have had in the future - things come to an end they always do. But when mental health is at the forefront of the news and we see how it can affect everyone - from the Royal Family to young people - it's sad to see such an amazing facility taken away from you.

"This might be the end of the Sanctuary, but it's not the end of my journey. I will still live with anxiety and depression, but I will always find ways to cope with this, as I am stronger person than I once was."

The Sanctuary closed on 31 August 2019. To read our response to the closure of the Sanctuary, visit <u>www.thebiglifegroup.com/what-price-sanctuary</u>.







Part of a bigger picture

people were supported by

Talking Therapies

Manchester

Talking
Therapies

**Stockport supported** 

3,124
people

Our recovery rate in Manchester was

62%

well above the national benchmark

89.4%

of people were supported within six weeks in Manchester We supported

3,227

people by

Eastern Cheshire

We supported

93.49

of people in Eastern Cheshire within 6 weeks Thinking Ahead

helped

6,195

people across Rochdale

Over

85.5%

of people in Rochdale were supported within 6 weeks

"It was far from an easy journey, but Lauren's patience perseverance and guidance were invaluable. I was able to completely open up and be honest with her."

Trish, service user at Talking Therapies Eastern Cheshire

We supported W

1,722

people with eTherapy in Salford, Trafford and Liverpool We supported

115 💆

children and young people across Stockport Big Life offers a range of mental health services that help people deal with negative thoughts and feelings and make positive changes. These include Talking Therapies Manchester, Talking Therapies Stockport, and Talking Therapies Eastern Cheshire, Thinking Ahead Rochdale, eTherapy, training and Self Help groups.

# Lucy, Talking Therapies Manchester service

I was in a bad place and self-harming, something I had done since I was a child, but nobody knew because I hid it well. It got to a point where self-harming wasn't enough anymore, and I wanted to die. Life, so to speak, felt like it was too much for me.

I spent a night in hospital, following a suicide attempt, which was the worst the night of my entire life. Being there was a complete wake-up call and I vowed there and then that I would do whatever it took to live a fulfilled life.



I reached out for the first time and got in touch with Talking Therapies Manchester who arranged for one-to-one therapy sessions. The biggest obstacle for me has always been talking and being open. I've spent my whole life pleasing others and not having a voice. Instead of talking I would cut or punch something.

Talking Therapies was great at getting me to open up. It's helped me to understand that how I feel is ok and normal even. I hate the term normal, as everybody is individual, and we have to embrace our differences. But the service has taught me to talk, explore my creative side and be proud of who I am.

I like how Talking Therapies made me feel sane. I've always thought there was something wrong with me, like I was different from others, when in actual fact there isn't. Talking Therapies helped me see life from a completely different perspective and helped me move forward in a positive way.

Without this support, in all honesty, I don't think I would still be married. I don't think I would have my new job where I get to travel the world and succeed successfully. And, more importantly, I hate to think what would have happened to my dog, he would miss me like mad or be a completely different dog if he had to live with "the old" me.





Part of a bigger picture

**Peer Support** provides support from someone who has lived experience of a similar difficulty.

Peer
Support
groups were
attended

times across Trafford

100%

of people said they were satisfied with our Peer Support groups in Trafford

100%

of attendees said that Peer Support increased their confidence Peer Support groups were attended times across Manchester and Salford

Our recovery rate in Trafford was above the national benchmark

70.2%

"Peer Support is a brilliant service because they are very patient, and it's very dignified - you're not made to feel you're a problem."

Shauna, Peer Support service user

# Shauna, Peer Support service user

Shauna had been married to a controlling husband for over twenty years before a torrid marital breakdown. It left her divorced and facing mounting debts, afraid that she was about to lose her and her children's home. She was lonely and isolated.

"My husband stopped paying the bills. I couldn't afford to pay for the phone or the internet. The Gas hadn't been paid for 6 months and the bill was £500. None of the bills were in my name. Then he stopped paying the mortgage.



"By this stage, I was so afraid that I couldn't open the door to leave the house – not even to empty the bins.

"I went to see my Doctor, but I couldn't talk to her. I just cried for half an hour. But she did give me a lot of people to call. First I went to Women's Aid, to Pankhurst House and spent a little time with them. Then I called the Zion Centre. Through Janet from Self Help, I got Saadia from Peer Connect to come and see me at home.

"Saadia was good, really, really good. At the time, I couldn't even go out, I was too scared. So she used to make me meet her. Locally at first, in places like Costco, which I could walk to and slowly, slowly I got confident enough to meet her further away, so eventually I was able to meet her in a city centre coffee shop.

"She also helped me work out a strategy to get qualifications so that I could move on. She helped me find college courses because I needed my maths and we looked at apprenticeships. She helped me find out how I could get my Level 3 qualification in nursery nursing and early years because I want to start a nursery school at my home.

"Through Saadia, I was able to get in touch with other Self Help services I needed. CBT to help me get my mind in place and Peer to Peer Support, for someone I could talk to and work out how to do things, a buddy.

"Peer Support is a brilliant service because they are very patient, and it's very dignified – you're not made to feel you're a problem. You're treated with respect and thoughtfulness. It's given me the strength to do a lot of stuff now."



# BIG ISSUE NORTH THE INDEPENDENT STREET PAPER I WORKING NOT BEGGING

## **Impact report** 2018/19

Part of a bigger picture

people sold
BIG ISSUE NORTH
last year

Our staff provided health and wellbeing support

times

Our staff provided crisis support

1,521 times

33 artists played

**Street Noise** 

events

11,542

magazines were sold by vendors each week

vendors were supported into education

Our staff provided finance support

213 times We reached

,807,659

people on Twitter

"If it weren't for the staff and customers at Big Issue North, I wouldn't be here now."

Stuart, Big Issue North vendor

11

vendors were supported into employment



vendors were supported into accommodation

Big Issue North provides people with a means to earn an income and develop skills to improve their lives, by selling a weekly street paper. Vendors get support from Big Issue North Trust, a charity that provides signposting and advice, help getting ID, home furnishing packages, projects such as breakfast clubs and much more.

# Stuart, Big Issue North Vendor

In February 2018, Stuart was battling a dangerous addiction, while sleeping on a friend's sofa.

But Stuart was determined not to give up on his dream of remaining sober and changing his life, and with the support of Big Issue North staff and his own resilience, he is now able to focus on detoxing and getting clean in a safe environment.



Thanks to the staff's local knowledge, and good relationships with other organisations and services, Stuart has been supported into specialist recovery accommodation. This means that he will begin his journey of clean and independent living with a network of other residents who also understand the struggles that he has been facing.

Stuart said: "I sold the magazine because it was a way to support myself. Not just earning money, but to get other things in my life sorted too.

"Big Issue North has helped me with everything, from getting ID to helping me make and arrange appointments. They have given me support with my recovery and managed to get me housed into specialist recovery accommodation.

"If it weren't for the staff and customers at Big Issue North, I wouldn't be here now."

During his time with Big Issue North, Stuart has thrown himself into the role, proving to be a reliable and outgoing member of the vendor community.

Although Stuart will be taking a break from life as an active vendor to focus on getting clean and deciding on his next steps, he isn't ready to step away from Big Issue North entirely.

"Although I'm no longer selling the magazine, I will still be around to volunteer with Big Issue North because they have really helped me."





Part of a bigger picture

people accessed
English and Maths
courses through
Learn Well

JOBS 12

people found jobs through our Higher Skills and Education Programme "Without the Maths and English there was no chance of me going to University. Learn Well is like a god send."

Isatou, Learn Well client

people gained apprenticeships as Disability Support Workers

23

people attended
Strengths-Based
Approaches
Courses

13

of Learn Well

students passed

their course

learners offered a placement through our Care Pathway programme

of Learn Well students passed

students passed their English exam with Learn Well

89

courses are available on

\_earn Well

for staff, volunteers and service users Big Life's employment services help people overcome barriers to work, giving service users the tools and skills they need to flourish in training and employment.

 Learn Well offers face-to-face and online courses to Big Life staff, volunteers and service users, enabling them to learn and improve their wellbeing.

#### Isatou, Learn Well student

Isatou, from Hulme, is set embark on a new career in nursing after becoming one of the first students to complete English qualifications with Learn Well, Big Life's basic skills training scheme.

#### Isatou's said:

"I joined the Navy aged 23 and, after retiring two years ago, I was looking for a stable job in civilian life. I applied to go to University to do nursing but was told I needed Maths and English qualifications. I had done them at high school but they no longer counted. Looking around, other courses were a year long and I wanted to be qualified by September 2019.

"Then I just happened to be taking my son to the Arts Centre in Hulme and he spotted a leaflet about a basic Maths and English course they were starting in the Zion Centre."

Learn Well offers formal adult Maths and English qualifications through six to eight-week courses at convenient community locations.

"The course is lovely, it feels like a proper class with so many people there's more interaction and Charmaine, our tutor, helps make it relaxed. I'd advise anyone thinking about it to go for it. I've told a couple of my friends and they've registered to do it," said Isatou.

After starting with Learn Well in October last year, Isotau passed her English NCFE Functional Skills Certificate and is on track to get her Maths certificate in time to start her nursing degree.



# BigLife Homes

## **Impact report** 2018/19

Part of a bigger picture

People provided with independent housing and one-to-one support

12

Housing benefit problems sorted out successfully

"The next minute I was being shown a flat in Belmont Road and I accepted it before I even had a proper look at it. It was like 'WOW'! All my Christmases come at once."

Alby, Big Life Homes tenant

19

Requests for support with ESA and Universal Credit issues managed

Energy supplier issues sorted out on

occasions



occasions where we helped tenants to access mental health services

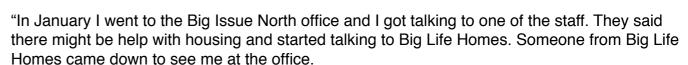
Big Life Homes provides high-quality accommodation at two sites in Liverpool, offering low-level support with housing-related issues such as money management, and practical advice on maintaining a tenancy.

### Alby, Big Life Homes tenant

After being in and out of care as a child Alby, aged 41 from Ellesmere Port, has been homeless on and off for most of his life.

"I've lived most of my life on the streets. I've travelled the whole of this country and sold the Big Issue on and off for years first in Norwich but also Liverpool, Chester and Blackpool and I moved to Scotland for a while.

"I was born in Liverpool, so I came back to be rehoused.
But they kept sending me away. There were times
when I was thinking about throwing myself in the River
Mersey. My mental health had started to deteriorate
rapidly. I was just having silly thoughts. I stood there selling Big Issue
North thinking – that's a nice tall building.



"The next minute I was being shown a flat in Belmont Road and I accepted it before I even had a proper look at it. It was like 'WOW'! All my Christmases come at once.

"It has a cooker, shower, bed and settee and it gave me a roof over my head. Something I haven't had for a long time."







Part of a bigger picture

volunteers
engaged
with our user
inovlvement
services

monthly meetings engaged people

150

drop-in sessions were attended

**694** 

times

We carried out

3

drug and alcohol commissioned reviews

12

people with lived experience were trained to consult and provide advice on Waves of Hope projects in the Liverpool

"A degree in psychology gave me a theoretical understanding of mental health, but listening to service users life stories has helped me understand their feelings and how this affects them day to day."

Susana, Waves of Hope Hub volunteer

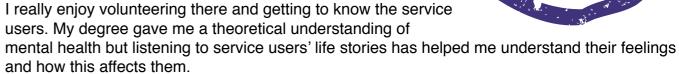
Big Life's user involvement services give people in Liverpool with experience of a range of issues the chance to have their say on how services are run. They include:

- Community Voice, giving drug and alcohol users a voice regarding recovery services.
- Waves of Hope, for people with experience of mental health issues, homelessness, addiction and offending.

### Susana Quinoy Garcia, Waves of Hope Hub volunteer

I was a psychology graduate, and that was the career I wanted to get in to, but I needed a job, so I started working full time in a hotel.

It's really hard to gain practical experience in supporting people's mental health, but then I found the chance to volunteer with Waves of Hope.



Waves of Hope is a drop-in hub for people who need support in all sorts of areas. It's led by volunteers like me, who've got personal experience of a mental health condition. I've got PTSD, so it means that I have a good understanding of what our service users go through.

Hopefully, people like me, with personal experience, can show service users that even in the darkest of circumstances people can move forward and learn to manage past traumas successfully and have everyday lives. It gives people hope and can motivate people to seek help and support.

I'm an artist, and the team at Waves have encouraged me to engage people in practical art tasks; I find it makes it easier for them to talk and open up.

In the future, I want to be a psychological wellbeing practitioner, and the experience I'm getting through Waves, plus all the training I've been able to get, is giving me a great chance to get on the training.

The team have helped me to fill in applications for job roles that are more linked to my skills and aspirations, and they really encourage me to branch out and try different things. Now, I'm applying to be a bank member of staff with Big Issue North, which will hopefully give me some more experience, and open even more doors for me.







Part of a bigger picture

people attended drop-in groups at Minds Matter

1,409

people supported with drug and alcohol issues by

Achieve

Be Well carried out

health assessments

We set up a
Neighbourhood
Mental Health
Team

in Tameside and Glossop

"I wanted to work in drug and alcohol services and use my experience of recovery to give something back to others."

James Carter - Big Life group staff member and ex-service user **Big Life** launched four new health and wellbeing services that help people to make positive changes. They include:

- Minds Matter provides support with everyday issues that affect mental wellbeing
- Be Well provides support in the community for issues relating to work, housing, family and money worries
- Achieve drug and alcohol assertive outreach
- Tameside & Glossop Neighbourhood Mental Health Team

# James Carter, Big Life staff member and ex-service user

The sky is the limit for James Carter who, with the support of Achieve, has turned his life around after 15 years of addiction.

"I had previously spent 15 years of my life dominated by alcohol addiction. At my lowest point, I could hear sirens as I lay in an ambulance, facing death.

"My recovery started when I was put in touch with Achieve who helped me get my life back on track. The support I received was life-changing! It made me want to work in drug and alcohol services and use my experience of recovery to give something back to others."



James enrolled with the recover academy at Achieve and completed a range of courses where he gained the key skills that he needed to get his working life back on track.

"Slowly, but surely, my confidence was growing, and I wanted to take the next step. With the support and encouragement of the Community Development team at Achieve I started volunteering on a local community project."

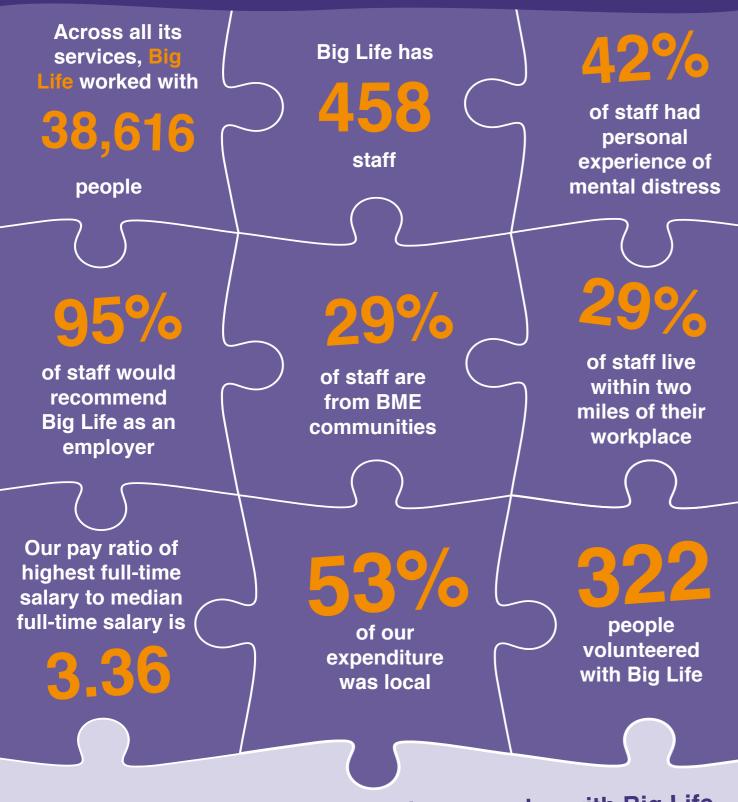
After volunteering for almost two years, James felt like he was ready to go after paid work, so he started applying for vacancies. He successfully applied for a job at Big Life and now works at Achieve, as an Assertive Outreach Worker, supporting people who are in addiction and facing the same up-hill battle that went through.

"The connection that I have with clients now is unreal. I see myself growing and learning everyday with Big Life. They have given me the chance I needed. My managers, Donna and Kirsty, are invaluable. They are always here for me with any problems I have – it's a really caring team."





Part of a bigger picture



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**James Carter**, Big Life staff member

The Big Life group is in the business of changing lives for people who have the least. We start where people are at, and support them to get to where they want to be.

We know there might be all sorts of things stopping people from making changes. That's why we look at every aspect of a person's life, and work with them to remove obstacles on the journey to changing their life for the better.

#### **Creating Opportunities**

While 29 per cent of our staff are from BAME communities, and our leadership team reflects this diversity, our overall pay gap between BAME and non-BAME staff is 10.3%. To address this, we created three BAME graduate trainee opportunities, and offered workshops and career development coaching for existing BAME staff. We are proud that the ratio between our highest and average earner is just 3.36 to 1. This compares to a ratio of 12 to 1 in the public sector.

#### **Doing Good Business**

We run our services efficiently, and this year we made a profit of x% - all of which will be invested in services of the future.

We have begun work to develop a new Procurement Policy, ensuring that we make the best decisions about what we buy. For the first time, we have a baseline for the amount of our purchasing that's local – 53%. We aim to build on this, and ensure that quality and environmental factors are considered when identifying the best provider.

### Improving What We Do

We have focused on improving our environmental impact, engaging staff at all levels in order to be as effective as possible. In recognition of our improved sustainable processes, Big Life has received ISO 14001 certification.

We have also invested in a new learning platform – Learn Well – which offers online and face-to-face training to staff, volunteers and people who use our services. New courses include Food and Mood, Resilience and Managing Your Money. Providing this online means we can reach many more people, while retaining face-to-face training ensures we won't leave anyone behind – a key objective in our business plan.

#### Influencing

As part of our remit to give a voice to people and groups that don't traditionally get heard within the mainstream media, we have produced new episodes of our Anon Podcast this year. We have focused on issues that typically affect the people that we work with, sharing stories of people with experience of homelessness, addiction, the criminal justice system and immigration.

We continue to speak at events, and our chief executive blogs through our website, covering issues ranging from child poverty to mental health.

