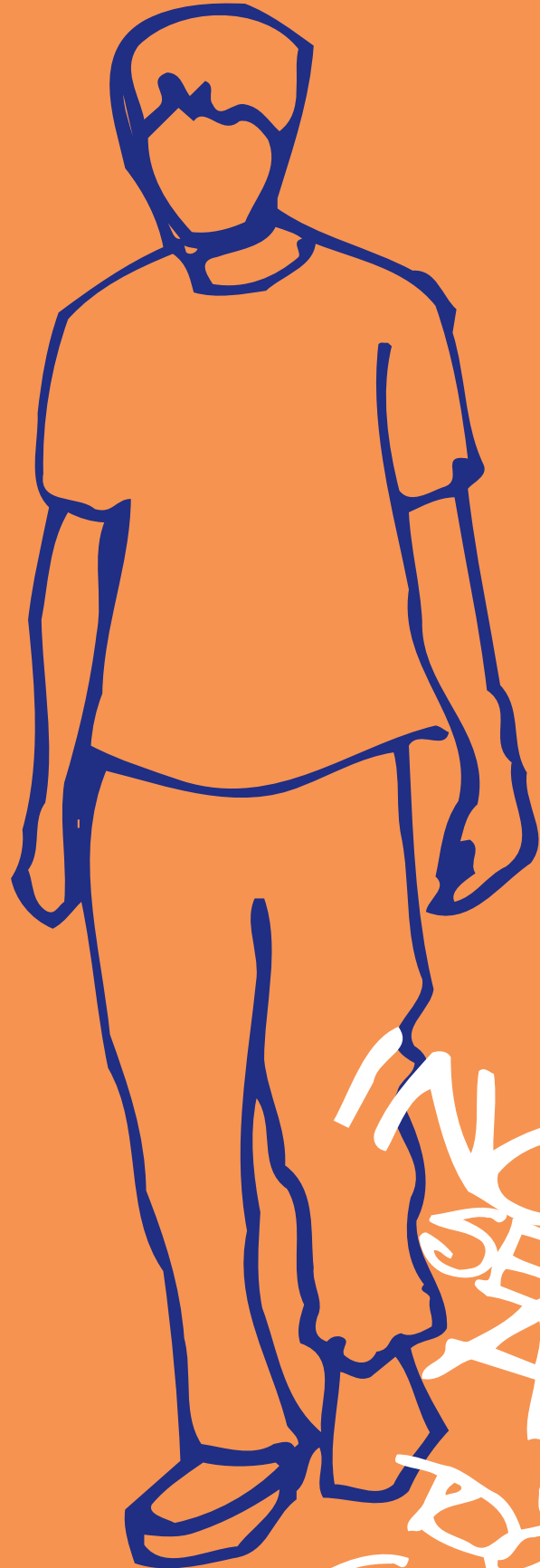


Annual Report 2006/2007



**The
BigLife
group**

social businesses
and charities





Contents

4	Introduction
6	Objectives, Targets and Achievements
8	The Big Life Company
10	Sure Start Longsight Children's Centre
11	Bloom – Healthy Living Network
12	Big Life Employment
14	Aisha Childcare
16	The Big Issue in the North
18	Charities
20	The Big Issue in the North Trust
22	Kath Locke Centre
24	Zion Community Resource
26	Self Help Services
28	Therapeutic Services
29	Well Being Centre
30	Summergrove
32	Funding Bodies

Introduction to The Big Life group



The Big Life group of social businesses and charities was formed in April 2002 and includes four social businesses (The Big Life Company, Big Life Employment, The Big Issue in the North and Aisha Childcare) and two charities (The Big Issue in the North Trust and Big Life Services). Northern Solutions (a facilities management social business) was dormant in this financial year and its activities transferred to other businesses within the group.

The group structure maximises the opportunities it offers to people to change their lives, is cost effective, and gives our businesses a bigger voice to influence government and statutory agencies. This year the group received coverage in 1,584 media stories, with an equivalent advertising value of £2m.

The group aims to increase the sustainability of its work by securing most of its income from independent trading, or by securing contacts for service delivery from statutory agencies. In 2006/7 the group had a turnover of £5 million, of which £1.3m was from trading, £2.1m was from contracts and £1.6m was from grants.

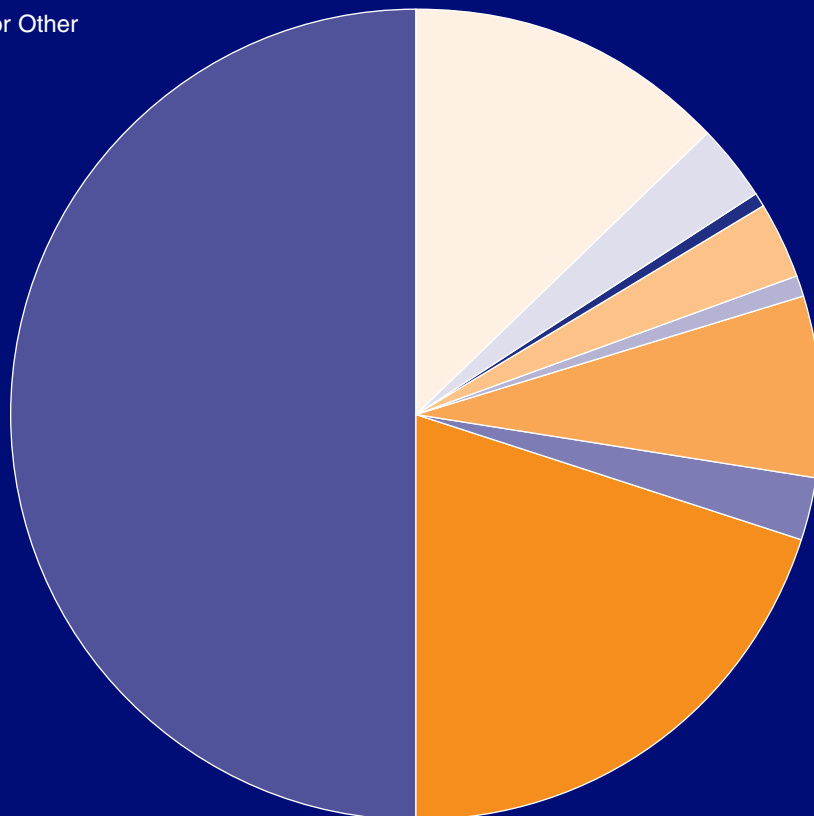
The Big Life group employed 204 people in 2006/07 and continues to pride itself on the diverse ethnicity of its workforce (see fig i).

The group has a commitment to develop its staff to enable them to deliver first class services. This year 197 staff attended training on 31 internal courses, ranging from health and safety to personal development opportunities.

Our annual staff survey showed that 65% of staff would recommend The Big Life group as a good organisation to work for and 88% were committed to its success.

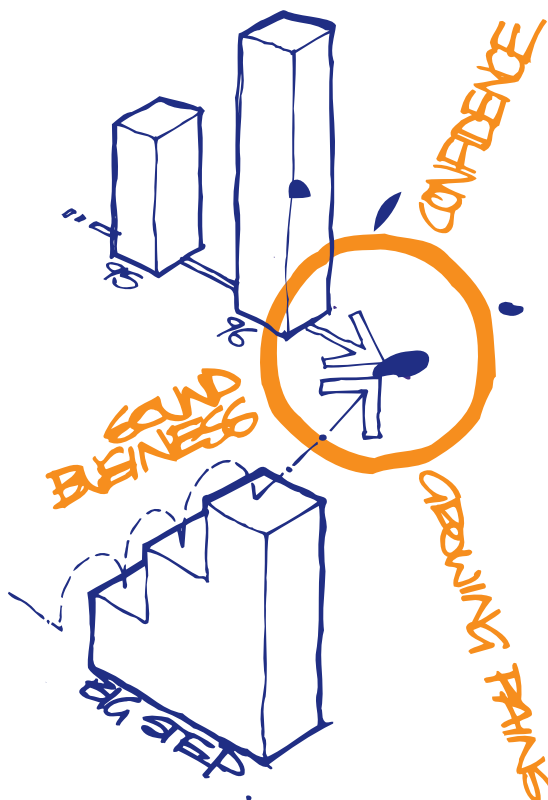
fig i. - Ethnicity breakdown of staff

- 50% White British, Irish or Other
- 20% Black Caribbean, African or Other
- 2.5% Indian
- 7% Pakistani
- 1% Bangladeshi
- 3% Asian Other
- 0.5% Chinese
- 3% Mixed
- 13% No Answer



Objectives, targets & achievements

The Big Life group has set itself four objectives over its first five years (2002–2007), with specific targets under each objective which staff across the group work towards.



Creating Opportunities for people to change their lives

Create 150 (Full Time equivalent) new jobs, of which a minimum of 50 jobs will be targeted for people who have been excluded from the jobs market for reasons such as ill health, addiction, mental health, disability or discrimination

- Two new jobs have been created this year. 107 new jobs have been created since 2002.

Provide 1,000 supported employment places for people who have been excluded from the jobs market, with 30% going onto mainstream employment

- 58 people have been on supported employment placements this year, of whom, 6 have moved into mainstream employment. The cumulative total for all years: 604 people in supported employment with 283 moving into mainstream employment (51%).

Offer training to 1,500 people, from a menu of 100 courses and projects, with 1,000 people achieving a recognised qualification

- 3,838 people have accessed training since 2002, with 758 of those achieving accredited qualifications.

Create six new innovative centres for delivery of Big Life group activities in cities across the North of England; with at least one being outside Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds.

Centres will be developed in partnership with other agencies

- Since 2002, Aisha Childcare Trafford Nursery, Space Life College and Sure Start Longsight Children's Centre have opened.

Develop a comprehensive menu of activities and services available through Big Life Centres for people from excluded groups, using a 'change exchange' approach

- The Big Life group offers over 180 services across the group and works with over 140 volunteers.

Develop and implement a model for measuring improvement in Quality of Life throughout The Big Life group

- Quality of Life template implemented at the Stockport Well Being Centre, Surestart Longsight, Summergrove, bloom, Therapeutic Services and Zion (Walk a Weigh project).

Doing good business

Develop three new profitable businesses within The Big Life group

- Aisha Childcare and Big Life Employment continue to be developed.

Achieve a turnover of £10m (£5.5m trading, £3.5m contracts, £1m grants) with a 10% profit on each business

	Trading	Contract	Grant
Total	£1.3m	£2.1m	£1.6m
Target	£5.5m	£3.5m	£1m

- Total turnover for 2006/7: £5m.

Support the development of 20 social enterprises, sharing expertise, practical support and providing incubator facilities for emerging businesses to assist them in becoming sustainable businesses

- 17 social businesses have been supported including Springboard, CHAP, Recycling Liverpool, Emerge and Meanwood Valley Urban Farm and Open Door.
- The Big Life group has had input into 5 Social Enterprise networks: Liverpool Plus, Manchester Social Enterprise Forum, Wyselink Leeds, NW regional Social Enterprise Coalition and the Social Enterprise Coalition.

- The Big Life group has also contributed to two government working groups (the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health) on social enterprise.

Create an asset base and sufficient cash reserves for The Big Life group

- Asset strategy discussed and agreed with Trustees.

No one customer to be responsible for more than 20% of each business

- None of the businesses are reliant on any one customer for more than 20% of their income.

Improving what we do

Achieve two recognised quality standards

- The Matrix Training qualification has been achieved and Investors In People, Drug and Alcohol National Operating Standards (DANOS), Quality Counts and BACP/UKCAP standards are underway.

Establish a comprehensive staff-training programme, ensuring all staff are fully supported to achieve their responsibilities

- 197 training places have been taken up on 31 courses this year.
- Since 2002, 1,407 places have been taken up on 187 courses.

Ensure all activities undertake monitoring and evaluation. This will include establishing customer feedback systems

- The Kath Locke Centre ten-year evaluation video and report have now been distributed.
- Nine services now manage their own internal evaluations as part of their work programme. Since 2002, 22 evaluations across the group have been carried out.

Have Non Executive Director involvement in all businesses, and user and community input into all services. Have a network of Ambassadors keeping up to date with innovations and best practice

- Seven Non-Executive directors are on the boards of our businesses and charities.

Have a culture which reflects our organisational values and works towards achieving our objectives

- Eight staff have undertaken Vision and Values training this year, taking the total number to 108 since 2002.

Changing the world

Launch three major campaigns which highlight and tackle issues of discrimination, disadvantage or poor quality, effectiveness or efficiency

- Two NWDA events were attended to promote the work of the group and lobby about the needs of social enterprise.

Work in partnership with external agencies, businesses and authorities to develop services and opportunities for excluded communities

- 93 partnership forums are attended on a regular basis across Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds.

Publish research on three topics affecting the lives of people who are disadvantaged

- The Joseph Rowntree Street Enforcement study has now been completed and the first draft of the final report has been distributed for comments. The Vendor Audit has been completed.

Promote the brand of The Big Life group, its subsidiaries and associated charities in order to improve the lives of the people we work with

- This year The Big Issue in the North was a finalist in the York Press Awards and the Zion Community Resource Garden won the Manchester in Bloom, Communal Garden Award. To date we have been winners or runners up in 10 awards.

The Big Life Company

Company No. 04227431
Annual Turnover £1,731,095

Board of Directors:

Fay Selvan
Kevin Wilson
Neil Turton (resigned 23.11.06)
Priti Butler (appointed as company secretary 24.7.06)
Hadas Altwarg
Donna Ngan (resigned as company secretary 24.7.06)
Peter Marcus
Allan Beswick

The Big Life Company is the holding company for The Big Issue in the North, Aisha Childcare and Big Life Employment. It provides core services to The Big Life group including: human resources, finance, communications, corporate governance and strategic development. The Big Life Company is also the lead agency for the bloom Healthy Living Network.

This year The Big Life Company has driven down costs of its central functions in order to improve the profitability of businesses within the group. It has brought in external expertise to develop marketing within the group and has focussed on developing a customer care culture within the businesses.

Campaigns: Hazel Blears MP at a Big Life group event (Photo: Jason Lock)



Campaigning

Members of the Executive team met with a number of senior politicians this year including Tony Blair and John Hutton, raising the profile of the potential of social business to deliver public services and how government could support social enterprise in the future. Executive Directors also spoke at several conferences across the region including the Social Enterprise Coalition conference in Manchester. This year the website was developed and attracted over 22,410 hits, compared to just under 12,000 in the previous year.

Staff Intranet Launched

The Big Life group staff Intranet launched in May 2006 giving all members of staff within the organisation access to the latest news from across the group, a library of documents to download, a project management tool, a database of staff and business contacts and a staff forum.

Business Planning

This year is the final year of the Business Plan and The Big Life Company organised a series of events to develop a new business plan for the next five years. The process started with a two-day business planning event for staff to come together for the launch of a comprehensive business planning toolkit which helped managers to evaluate their work and get feedback from stakeholders. Over the year, staff, managers and service users were all engaged in developing plans culminating in the development of a new business plan for 2007-12. This will be published in May 2007.

Office Move

During this year The Big Life Company devised plans to redevelop The Big Issue in the North Trust's premises in Manchester, relocating teams into alternative premises. With the help of a feasibility grant from Future Builders, it worked with a range of partners to develop options for consideration by the Trustees. The Big Life Company also facilitated the relocation of the three main Big Issue in the North offices this year into buildings with better access to a range of different services (see The Big Issue in the North section for more details).

what next?

The first five years of the group have been a stimulating and exciting time. In the next five years The Big Life Company wants to:

- Support the development of new social enterprises in the delivery of public services
- Support Self Help Services to establish as an independent user led mental health project
- Continue to improve the service it offers to the group including outsourcing services (such as payroll) and utilising external support (advice and software)
- Develop a new innovative HQ for The Big Life group
- Support each social business within the group to be independently financial sustainable.



The BigLife Company
business changing lives

Sure Start Longsight Children's Centre

Sure Start Longsight provides a range of services to local parents and children including a play unit, early years library, parent and toddler groups, family support services, welfare and benefits advice, community parents, employment information, advice and guidance, children's information services and volunteering opportunities.

A range of training has been offered this year including aromatherapy, assertiveness, parent survival, counselling, English as a Second Language (ESOL) and IT courses. Last year, Sure Start Longsight became the first centre to be given Children's Centre status in Manchester and now offers even more services to parents and children.

This year 411 children used Sure Start Longsight services attending 4636 sessions, 102 people accessed training at the centre and 89 people completed the volunteering course.

Sensory Garden Launched

The sensory garden at Sure Start Longsight Children's Centre was unveiled after months of preparation this year.

People who had committed minor offences and who were on a Community Payback scheme worked alongside parents from the centre to produce a landscaped garden and outdoor play area. They created an attractive communal garden on what was previously barren land, with a water feature and bedding plants.

"The work that the Community Payback team have done at Sure Start Longsight has been fantastic," said Yvonne Dervin, Sure Start Longsight Centre Manager. "They helped transform a previously unused space into a blossoming garden which can be used by anyone in the centre." The garden project was funded by Manchester City Council's CAS:H Grant.

Visitors

Former Conservative party leader Iain Duncan Smith visited Sure Start while in the area. He was leading a debate in Manchester on his Social Justice Policy Group's report on the state of 'Breakdown Britain' after which he visited a number of organisations which were involved in social and community regeneration. Sure Start was also visited by a group of international journalists this year. The visit, organised by Manchester City Council, focussed on community cohesion.

Fruity Fun Day

The centre held a 'Fruity Fun Day' Health event in June 2006 to coincide with National Sure Start Month. Over 200 people attended the event, where there was face painting, arts and crafts, raffle prizes, henna tattoos and a relaxation workshop along with stalls about smoking cessation, food and mood, dental health, breast awareness and fire safety. Local Councillor Maryam Khan attended the event to give out raffle prizes to the lucky winners.

Volunteers and staff celebrate the launch of the sensory garden and some features from the garden





bloom in the community

bloom - healthy living network

bloom is a Big Lottery funded project that aims to promote healthy living in four wards of Greater Manchester: Hulme, Moss Side, Whalley Range and Old Trafford. It is a partnership project with central Manchester PCT, Trafford North PCT and various local groups. The Big Life Company is the lead agency, employing staff and managing finances. The project is overseen by a multi-agency steering group.

bloom targets four priority groups as part of its work: families living in poverty, young people, people who speak English as a second or other language and people with mental health needs. It aims to work with local voluntary agencies, recruiting volunteers and improving access to statutory services.

Highlights

This year, bloom arranged and/or attended over 23 events and activities across the region, making contact with over 12,600 people in the area. This included events such as Eid and Diwali celebrations, Health Awareness events and Laughter workshops. Bloom gave talks to other agencies including the police and local schools and participated in local events including the 100 year celebration of Seymour Park school. Bloom worked with over 4,500 people this year through projects including a computer learning suite and a gardening project for people with mental health needs, and through training courses including 'Living your best life': a six week course for women to help build self esteem.

27 people have volunteered with bloom during the year and attended their volunteer training programme. Community volunteers have gone out to work in a variety of places in the region,

both within The Big Life group and with a number of external projects including Broome House, St Johns Centre and the Zion Community Resource.

In February 2007, bloom moved from their original office space at the Kath Locke Centre and into space at the Old Trafford Job Shop, run by Big Life Employment. This move increased the number of people bloom had direct access to, and meant that they are now able to offer Quality of Life services to people seeking employment or training through Big Life Employment.

Big Life Employment

Company No. 04118653
Annual Turnover £783,905

Board of Directors:

Fay Selvan

Donna Ngan (resigned as Company Secretary 24.7.06)

Priti Butler (appointed as Company Secretary 24.7.06)

Big Life Employment provides training and employment opportunities to people who have been excluded from the mainstream jobs market.

This year Big Life Employment found 58 people supported employment places. 701 people accessed training through Big Life Employment from a menu of 59 training courses.

Giving a Lift in Partington



Trafford Job Shop Opens

Big life Employment, working in partnership with Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, opened the Old Trafford Job Shop in 2006.

The Job Shop provides a range of services including: employability workshops offering one to one support and group work; Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services; and a variety of vocational preparation sessions including basic computing courses, CV preparation and interview skills. The Job Shop is now the permanent base for the main Big Life Employment team.

Besides the Job Shop, other IAG services now operate out of many Big Life group buildings including Sure Start Longsight Children's Centre, Kath Locke Centre, Zion Community Resource and The Big Issue in the North Manchester office.

"Perfect Example of Good Practice"

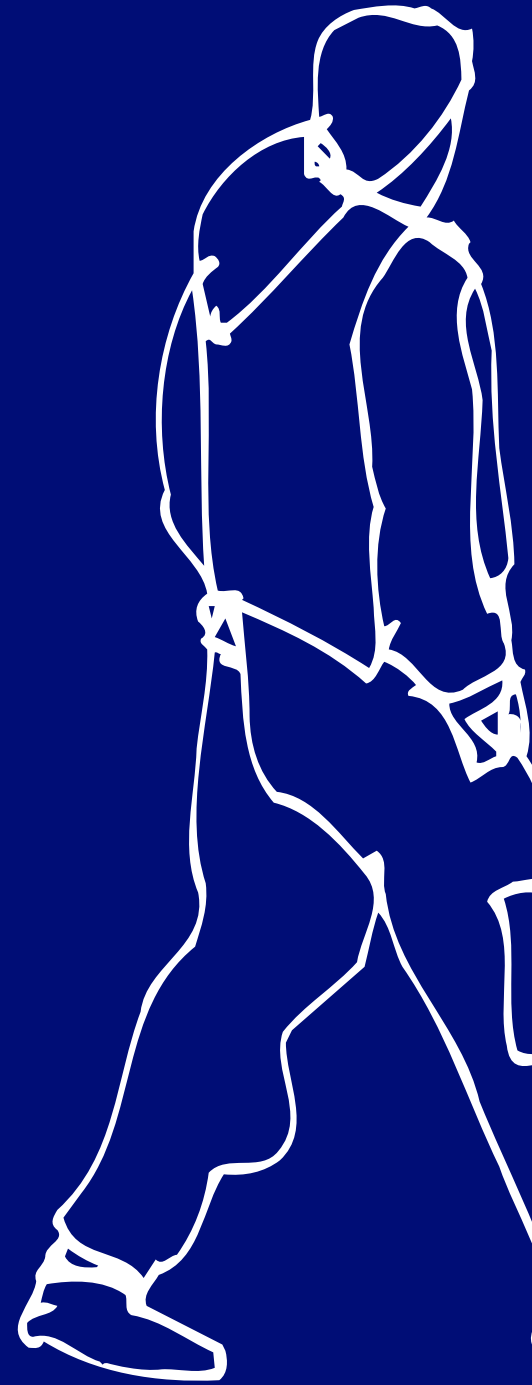
Out of the whole of Greater Manchester's Next Step Service, Big Life Employment's advice sessions are being printed and sent out to the network as perfect examples of good practice and how an Advice Session should be conducted and paperwork filled in accordingly.

Giving a Lift in Partington

Big Life Employment are now working with Harvest Housing on a housing estate in Partington. Five local young people, aged 17-24, are providing a grounds maintenance service on the estate with training and support from local gardeners and maintenance workers.

By the end of the 13 week placement, the people involved in the project will not only have helped improve the local area, repairing damaged fences and tidying gardens, for example, but will also have completed a vocational preparation course to help them back to work, and gained some valuable life skills and work experience in the process.

The project is funded by ERDF money with the support of the Ainscough Giving a Lift Project.



what next?

- Aim to secure long term mainstream contracts to enable it to move towards sustainability as an independent business
- Develop a new mentoring service for Manchester Area Case panels, helping young people move away from crime and gang culture
- Expand the training offered to include new courses such as ESOL.

Aisha Childcare

Company No. 04713084
Annual Turnover £1,162,401

Board of Directors:

Fay Selvan

Donna Ngan (resigned as company secretary 24.7.06)

Priti Butler (appointed company secretary 24.7.06)

Aisha Childcare offers high quality and flexible childcare through its day-care, after-school and play schemes while also employing and providing training opportunities to local people.

189 children accessed Aisha Childcare's services this year. 43 local people accessed childcare

training at Aisha's two centres and 14 people were employed from the local community. Aisha continues to employ a diverse range of staff, reflecting the communities that it works within (fig ii shows the ethnicity of children who attend both of Aisha's nurseries and their after-school clubs).

Cllr Maryam Khan enjoys a beach breakfast with a local parent and child at Aisha Childcare



After School Club

The After School Club on Stretford Road closed part way through the year due to the high costs of transporting children from school to the service. Whilst this was a loss, Aisha aims to focus on developing its services in local schools. During this year a new After School Club was opened at Seymour Park Community Primary School in Trafford, offering term-time after school care and holiday care programmes for children aged 3–11 years old. Aisha continued to deliver a busy After School Club at Our Lady's school in Manchester.

Nursery Events

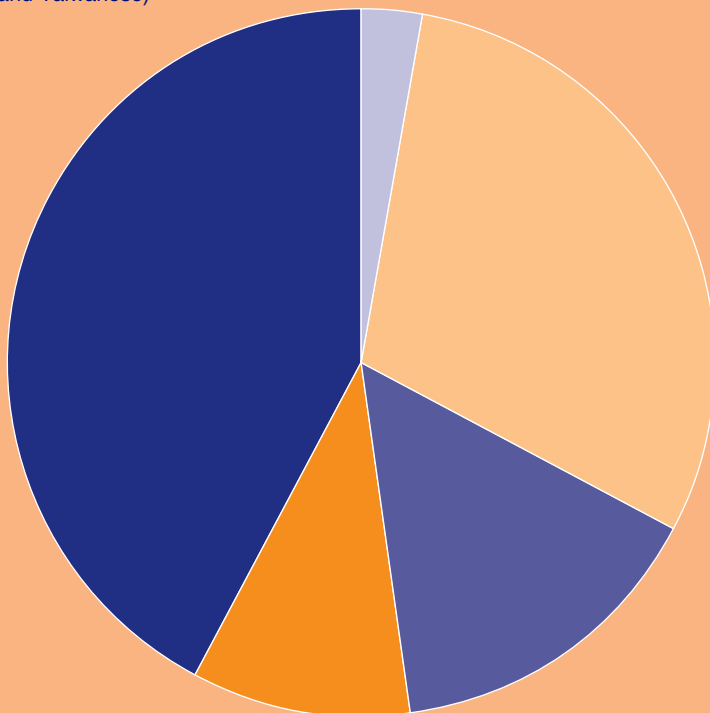
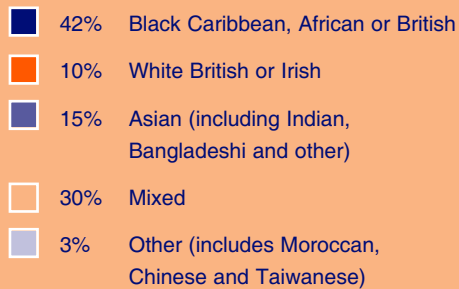
The Aisha Longsight nursery held a beach themed Big Breakfast for parents, carers and children as part of National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Big Breakfast month. Councillor Maryam Khan, the local councillor for Longsight, joined parents and children on "the beach", to celebrate healthy eating and promote the high quality service day nurseries offer.

The Trafford nursery held a party to celebrate its first birthday. Parents were invited to taster sessions of massage and other complementary therapies.

Surveys of parents in both nurseries showed that 85% of parents felt that the service was good or very good, and 80% of parents felt that the nursery environments were of high quality.



fig ii. - Ethnicity of children



what next?

Whilst Aisha's Trafford nursery has gradually increased its occupancy since opening in 2005, it has not increased at a sufficient rate to cover costs. In 2007 Aisha will be leasing the nursery to a private provider who can invest in developing the service, thus ensuring high quality childcare remains available to the local community. Aisha will also:

- Continue to deliver its Longsight nursery as a model of first class practice
- Develop the training it offers to local people, including a new Play work NVQ qualification
- Deliver a new childcare service to Manchester City Council Children's Centres
- Develop its offer of children's centre services to other local authorities.

The Big Issue in the North

Company No. 03026628
Annual Turnover £1,477,776

Board of Directors:

Fay Selvan
Donna Ngan (resigned as company secretary 24.7.06)
Priti Butler (appointed as company secretary 24.7.06)
Kevin Wilson
Richard Brown
Allan Beswick

The Big Issue in the North is a weekly magazine sold by homeless people across the North of England, giving them the opportunity to earn a legitimate income and operating as an alternative to begging or crime.

580 vendors were badged up to sell The Big Issue in the North this year. In order to improve the service to

vendors a number of sub offices were opened, including Carlisle, Bradford and Doncaster, but only Doncaster proved to be successful.

Advertising brought in over £42k to the company this year and the circulation figure of the magazine remained stable at 30,824 in 2006 (ABC figure).

Kelly Holmes and a Big Issue in the North vendor in Manchester



Famous Faces

A host of famous people appeared in The Big Issue in the North magazine this year including sporting hero Kelly Holmes. Kelly met a Big Issue in the North vendor by chance during a festival in Manchester, and during their conversation discovered that they had both had careers in the army and they had both previously self-harmed as a result of suffering from depression. A Leeds Big Issue in the North vendor met BBC's Apprentice contest Paul Tulip following comments Mr Tulip had made about Big Issue sellers while on the television programme. The vendor and Paul were interviewed on BBC Radio 5 Live where they discussed different sales techniques. The magazine also featured exclusive interviews with former Manchester United star David Beckham, DJ Tim Westwood and Sir Alex Ferguson.

Homeless World Cup

England's Homeless World Cup team, organised by The Big Issue in the North with support from Manchester United, returned from the international tournament in South Africa 13th in the rankings, out of the 48 countries which took part. The team played some great football in front of an excited South African crowd, met footballing legends Lee Sharpe (formerly of Manchester United FC) and Eusebio, and made friends from around the world who had come to take part in the tournament.

During their stay, the England team also won over the support and appreciation of local homeless people and organisations in Cape Town. The team took part in a one-off friendly match against a street homeless team from a local project. The unscheduled match was watched by scores of local homeless people and made local radio news.

The Big Issue in the North and New Charter Housing Trust organised another football match between members of England's Homeless World Cup team and a celebrity packed All Stars team which included actors from ITV's Coronation Street and Channel 4's Hollyoaks. The event was part of a campaign by the two organisations to raise awareness of homelessness in the Tameside region.

Office Moves

Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield's Big Issue in the North offices undertook re-location this year. Liverpool moved into a refurbished space in the People's Centre, Leeds into space in St Anne's Community Resource Centre, Manchester into totally refurbished building on Swan Street called Number Ten and Sheffield moved, along with the Archer Project where it is based, into a purpose built new centre next door to Sheffield cathedral. The new offices mean vendors will get better access to a range of multi-agency services provided in and around the new centres.

what next?

- Appoint a new editor and develop the content of the magazine making it recognised as a high quality independent publisher
- Explore developments in e-media
- Develop a social audit.



Charities

The Big Issue in the North Trust

Company No. 03164559
Charity No. 1056041

The Big Issue in the North Trust is a registered charity that raises funds to provide services for vendors of The Big Issue in the North magazine and other homeless people, to help them move away from homelessness for good.

Big Life Services

Company No. 03311884
Charity No. 1062333

Big Life Services is a registered charity which includes: Kath Locke Centre, Zion Community Resource, Therapeutic Services, Self Help Services, Summergrove and the Well Being Centre.

The two charities are separate organisations but share one board of trustees:

Mark Fitzgibbon - Chair

Laura Nuttall

Angela Young

Mumtaz Bashir (resigned 6.6.06)

Adrian Jennings – Treasurer

Fay Selvan



The Big Issue in the North Trust

The Big Issue in the North Trust provides support and services for homeless people across the North of England.

567 vendors took part in The Big Life Plan this year, accessing a comprehensive package of support including help finding temporary or permanent accommodation, registering with a GP or accessing drug or alcohol detox services.

This year The Big Issue in the North Trust helped:

- 34 vendors into jobs
- 158 vendors into temporary accommodation
- 47 vendors into permanent accommodation
- 483 vendors to be referred for drug treatment
- 13 vendors into training
- 77 vendors to register with a GP

Vendors enjoy a Christmas party in Liverpool





Ways to Raise

A new newsletter for The Big Issue in the North Trust has been produced, showing the many ways that people can raise money for the charity including recycling, shopping and organising events. It's currently available to download from the website www.bigissueinthenorth.com.

Relay project

Over in the Liverpool, the Relay Project, which, among other things, gives people who use drug and alcohol services in the city a say in the services they access, has been working with the Office for Public Management (OPM) and the Department of Health on a research project. People using the Relay Project took part in the project which looked at service users' views of drug intervention in an attempt to stop young people from using drugs in the first place.

Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club in Manchester re-opened for business in 2006, serving tea and toast to vendors. Volunteers run the club and people from across The Big Life group from the Chief Executive to volunteer vendors have been helping out.

One person lending a hand was Bridgette, from the finance department of The Big Life Company. "I got involved because it's really interesting to speak to vendors and find out who they are," said Bridgette. "I realise how lucky I am when I see people coming in who have spent the night sleeping rough. It's really important for them to be able to have a cup of tea and some toast, and it's a pleasure being part of the team of volunteers that run it."

The Big Chop Launches

The Big Chop also opened in Manchester in 2006. It's a hair cutting service for vendors run by Andy Siley, who is a vendor himself. Andy had ten customers in his first two sessions and hopes to continue the service in the new Big Issue in the North offices.

what next?

- Re-contract for the management of the Relay Project
- Develop a commissioning role for The Trust to purchase services from The Big Issue in the North Trust
- Revise The Big Life Plan to ensure maximum efficiency and value for money
- Review branding to ensure that it reflects the work that The Trust is doing
- Complete a feasibility study on the Oldham Street building and ensure The Trust utilises its assets to maximise benefit for its clients.

Kath Locke Centre

The Kath Locke Centre is an NHS primary care facility managed by Big Life Services.

The centre has a range of primary care services including chiropody, a dentist, audiologist and opticians which run alongside complementary healthcare services such as counselling, massage and self-help services. A community mental health

team, a range of voluntary agencies (including the Black Health Agency and the African Caribbean Mental Health Service), and bloom Healthy Living Network, also operate out of the centre.

In 2005/6, the Kath Locke Centre had over 35,000 visitors and received over 19,800 telephone calls.

Partying at the Kath Locke Centre 10 Year celebration (Photo: Jason Lock)



10-year Celebrations

The Kath Locke held a week of events to celebrate its 10th anniversary in October 2006. Many of the events were split over four themed days which focussed on older people, young people, social enterprise and health and well-being respectively. There were art groups, poetry workshops, exercises classes, a talent show, a Question Time about local health services and a health marketplace all held during the week of events.

The celebrations were well attended and visitors included Hazel Blears MP, who was in Manchester for the Labour Party conference and who described the centre as "inspiring" in an article written later for The Independent newspaper.

Refurbishment

After ten years of operation the centre received a well earned spruce up this year. Over £20,000 was spend on replacing flooring and repainting the centre.



Kath Locke Centre Evaluation

An evaluation report was produced assessing the impact of the Kath Locke Centre on the community, service users and service providers.

Key points in the report included:

- Evidence that the centre has helped local people access more services and there has been a positive improvement in some key health indicators
- 94% of people using the centre said it had made a positive difference to their lives
- The short term nature of funding for voluntary projects has interrupted the development and delivery of services at the centre
- The centre has influenced the way some statutory services are delivered and provides a range of services which complement them
- The centre has enabled local people to feel in control of their own health.

The full evaluation report can be downloaded from The Big Life group website www.thebiglifegroup.com.

what next?

- Develop the primary care services delivered from the centre
- Develop the centre as a beacon for NHS social enterprise
- Improve the telephone and IT system within the centre.

Zion Community Resource

The Zion Community Resource is home to a variety of services for people living in Moss Side, Hulme, Old Trafford and beyond. These include the Zion Art Project, the Garden Project, Self Help Services, an IT Learning Zone, National Phobics, HARP Café, Manchester Drugs Service, Youth Contact Team,

DASH (Drugs Advice and Sexual Health) and a new service which opened at the Zion this year, ASHA – Asylum Seekers Housing Advice service.

More than 30,800 people visited the Zion Community Resource during the year and it received more than 29,000 phone enquiries.

Volunteers at the Zion cook up healthy food



Zion Garden Award

The Zion Garden project was awarded a Manchester in Bloom award for Best Communal Garden. The project, which provides training and volunteering opportunities for people with mental health needs, was visited by judges in August 2006. Competition to win the prestigious Bloom awards is always very high, but the judges were impressed by what they saw, describing it later as "Extremely memorable and personally quite inspirational."

As part of the award the project has received a £250 cash prize and members of the garden project group attended a special award ceremony at Manchester Town Hall in February to collect their trophy.

Di Chisholm

A mosaic made by Di Chisholm was donated to the Zion this year and erected in her memory. As Director of Public Health in the early 1990's, Di brought the Health Authority to Hulme — long before involving local people in health was seen to be a good thing. Di's ability to encourage people to take their control of their own lives and their health is something she will be remembered for, and something which the Zion will continue to strive for.



Events

The Zion Community Resource centre held a Volunteer's Day during National Volunteer Week. The day celebrated the volunteers currently working for the Zion, and other centres in The Big Life group, and was an opportunity for local people to find out more about volunteering opportunities.

Staff, volunteers and visitors enjoyed food and music in the garden, and there was the chance to try various taster sessions including acupuncture, Keeping in Touch massage and an origami art workshop.

The Zion also held two health days this year. Visitors to both events were able to take part in taster sessions in a range of health related activities including massage, relaxation and acupuncture, have their blood pressure and blood sugar checked, get advice on everything from quitting smoking to gardening and healthy eating, and try a range of healthy food.

The event was supported by the Walk-a-Weigh group, a weight-management project based at the Zion which is funded by the NHS.

Workshops and Projects

Two Positive Parenting courses have also taken place at the Zion. The six-week courses helped local parents manage difficult behaviour and implement change in their children, build confidence and self-esteem, create positive relationships within the family and focus on communications skills. A "Believe in Your Parenting" support group, run by parents for parents, also launched this year.

Meanwhile, the Walk a Weigh project in the Zion has gone from strength to strength. Around 50 people have taken part in the weight management group, which is funded by the NHS, and collectively over 269 pounds in weight has been lost by those taking part so far. As well as promoting healthy living, group members have also reported feeling more confident about themselves and a growth in their self-esteem. An evaluation report about the project is due to be published in 2007.

what next?

What next?

- Redecorate the building internally and externally as part of the cyclical maintenance programme
- Develop a local food worker project as part of a North West consortium
- Expand the training on offer — building on the successful ESOL course run by volunteers this year.

Self Help Services

Self Help Services is a network of user led groups operating across the North West.

Self Help Services continues to develop new services across the region and now runs 18 groups in towns and cities in Greater

Manchester and Blackpool. This year it also offered five structured self help groups, three complementary therapies, a guided self help clinic and a computerised cognitive behavioural therapy.

Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with Self Help Services (Photo: Jason Lock)



Beat the Blues

People suffering from anxiety or depression can now access 'Beat the Blues', an eight-part computer-based programme which helps people to change the way they think and behave, which in turn can change their feelings and moods. The service is part of a pilot project running until June 2007, which aims to make Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CCBT) more accessible to people living in Manchester.

Service users can access a variety of case studies and practical therapeutic techniques which will help them regain control over complex emotional problems. Though people can access the course on their own, there are also three support workers, who have all used the programme, on hand to provide support.

The project has been funded and supported by Care Services Improvement Partnership, the National Institute for Mental Health in England North West and Manchester Primary Care Trust.

Guided Self Help Services

A new one to one Guided Self Help Service was also launched this year, for anyone living with anxiety, depression, low mood or other mental health or emotional difficulties. The service will help people learn ways of managing their problems more effectively, enabling them to become their own expert.

Food and Mood

The Food and Mood group re-launched this year. The group explores the relationship between food and mood, looking at how food can influence your emotions, mental and physical health. The group runs on a weekly basis, is free of charge to attend and food making and tasting is included.

Women's Refugee Group

A Women's Refugee Group also launched in 2006. The aim of the group is to break isolation and provide a network of support to female refugees and women seeking asylum in this country. The group is facilitated by two dedicated and inspirational women who both have personal experience with the issues involved and who are fluent in many African languages.

what next?

- Establish Self Help Services as an independent user led mental health charity
- Secure mainstream contracts and expand the delivery of the CCBT programmes
- Produce a detailed impact report which assesses the impact of Self Help Services on improving people's lives.



Therapeutic Services

Therapeutic Services deliver counselling, massage, relaxation, Reiki and homeopathy to promote health and well-being.

Events

Therapeutic Services ran 14 events reaching 164 people this year including a Health Awareness event for Carers. There were information stalls, Quality of Life assessments, relaxation and exercise classes, and health checks available on the day. A Pamper Yourself day and a Recharge your Batteries day were also held giving people the opportunity to access taster sessions including hand massage, mini makeovers, Tai Chi, Keeping in Touch courses and Laughter Workshops.

Counselling

This year Therapeutic Services delivered 1,758 counselling sessions to 345 people. 108 people came from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) community. 306 referrals were received from GPs.

Counselling sessions took place at the Kath Locke Centre, Zion Community Resource and GP surgeries in Manchester at Victoria Park, Whalley Range, West and South Gorton, Cheetham Hill, Blackley, Ancoats, Miles Platting and Ardwick.

Other Services

64 people accessed a range of complementary therapies this year including homeopathy, massage, reflexology and Reiki service. These services were offered at the Kath Locke Centre, Zion Community Resource and Longsight Surestart.

This year a market research exercise was undertaken to explore opportunities for expanding the complementary therapies available by charging a small fee to clients. The findings will be used to expand the service next year and piloting a low cost complementary therapies clinic at the Kath Locke Centre.

Therapeutic Services

what next?

- Support counsellors or recruit counsellors who are BACP accredited
- Expand the range of counselling services offered
- Deliver a pilot low-cost complementary therapies clinic at the Kath Locke Centre, which can be rolled out to other centres.



Well Being Centre

The Well Being Centre in Stockport opened in October 2006 and promotes health and well being for local people.

Among many things on offer in the centre are: information about a range of local services, complementary therapies, counseling sessions, self-help groups, music and art workshops, personal development opportunities, exercise and dance sessions, free internet access, a self-help library, volunteering opportunities and much more!

A Vision for the Centre

A visioning day for all the partners and service users was held in May 2006 to shape the activities and look of the centre. The Well Being Centre was then officially opened in October at a launch event attended by Ann Coffey, MP for Stockport. Visitors to the launch had a chance to see what was on offer at the centre, take part in dance workshops, access some complementary therapies, enjoy live music and meet the people who work at the centre and who helped develop it.

An art competition was held in the weeks running up to the official launch and proved very popular. The winners of the competition were presented with prizes at the official launch and the artwork is now displayed on the walls throughout the centre.

Masha Bennett, who manages the centre, said, 'We know that health and well being can mean many different things to different people, that's why we're striving to provide a wide range of services and resources here so that everyone can find something that's of value and interest to them.'

Since opening, the Well Being Centre has attracted 3,866 visits and now has 22 volunteers.

The Well Being Centre produces a monthly newsletter and events calendar and the popularity of the centre continues to grow and grow.

The new Well Being Centre in Stockport



what next?

- Implement a range of tools to measure the impact of the centre on people's well being
- Extend the opening hours of the centre.

Summergrove

Summergrove is a supported housing scheme containing 11 flats for parents, who have undertaken a drug or alcohol detox, to live with their children and rebuild their lives.

The building is owned by Maritime Housing Association while Big Life Services manages the day to day operation of the project.

16 families were supported at Summergrove this year. This included 16 parents and 16 children. A further 11 children visited their parents who were staying at Summergrove. The project continues to prove its effectiveness in helping families stay together: during their parent's stay at

Summergrove, one child was removed from the Child Protection Register. Summergrove has now achieved 100% occupancy and even has a waiting list.

The Summergrove building (Photo: Jason Lock)



Drug debate

A resident of Summergrove took part in a national debate about drugs and the future of drug law in the UK organised by the Academy of Medical Sciences in February 2006.

The Summergrove resident, and staff from the project, joined some of the country's leading experts in drugs and the law, to discuss the ways in which drug use might be regulated in the future. The views gathered from both the live-event and an online debate also organised by the Academy will help influence government policy.

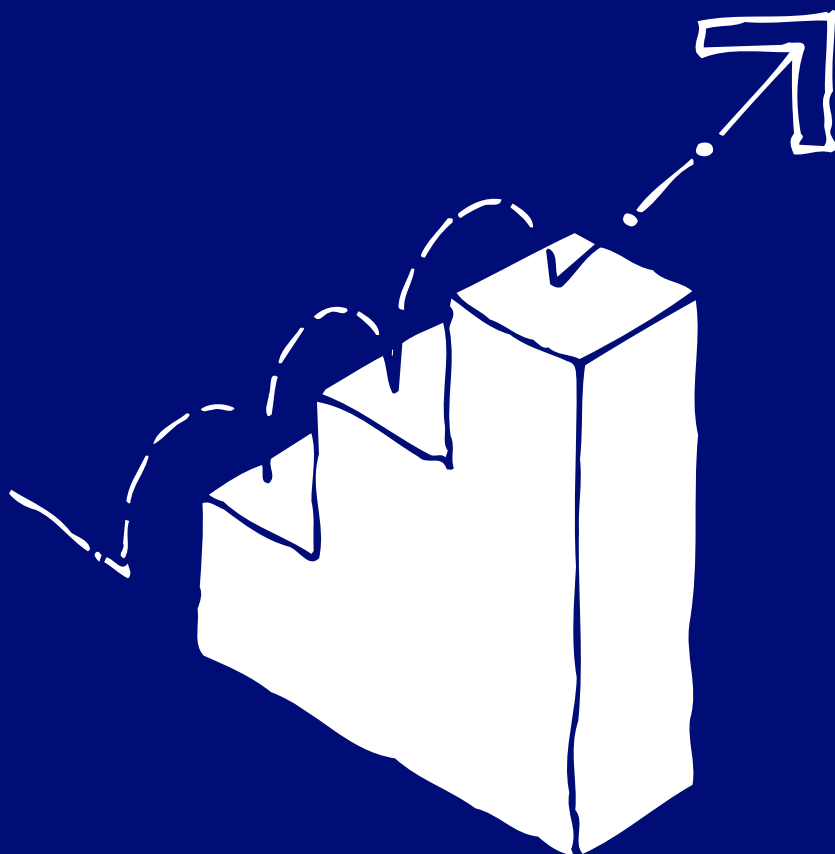
Questions on the agenda included: What influences peoples' attitudes to drugs? Why do people start to use illegal drugs? Should we think of people who use drugs as ill or as criminals? And would harsher drug laws make any difference to people's drug use?

Events

Young people from Summergrove took part in a range of fun activities including horse riding, rock wall climbing and a trip to Blackpool. Three teenagers from Summergrove also took part in a sailing trip with the Ocean Youth Trust. They sailed from Liverpool Docks to the Isle of Man during a five-day trip. The teenagers became part of the crew, learned new skills and had a great time.

Allotments

Allotments have now been established for each family at Summergrove. Families have a small plot of land each to tend and grow vegetables and plants in. The allotment also acts as a training project for people in the centre, helping to teach basic horticulture skills and healthy eating, for example.



what next?

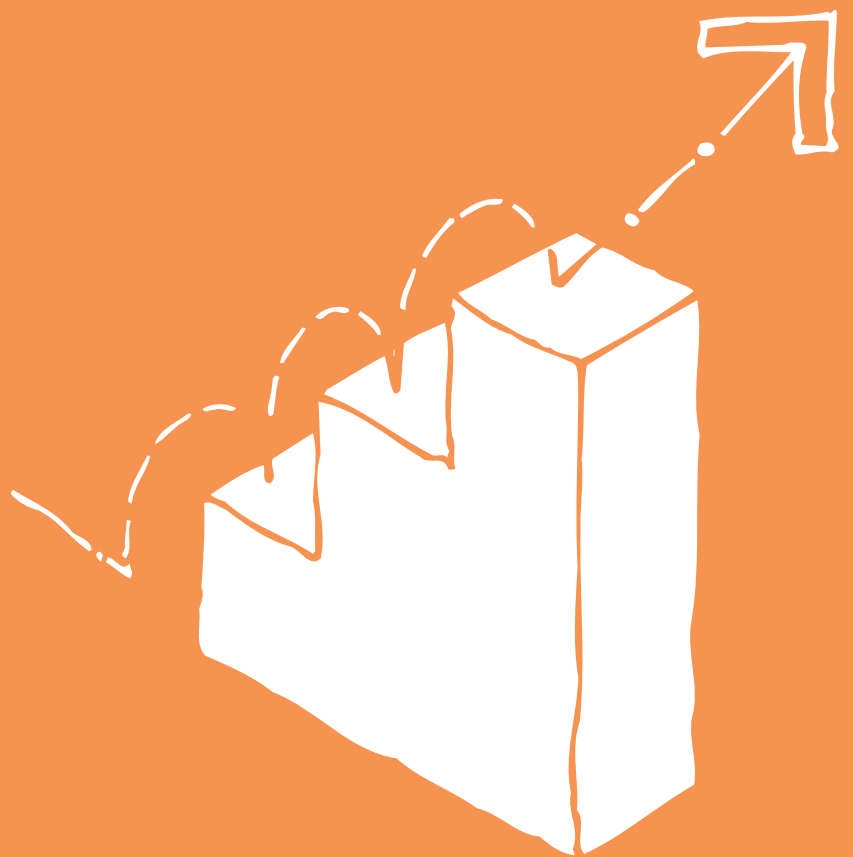
- Secure funding for developing work with children and families
- Extend the service to deliver out reach to families who have left Summergrove
- Achieve a high standard in the Supporting People Audit
- Develop a Supported Housing business.

funders



- Manchester City Council
- Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
- Liverpool DAAT
- Knowsley DAAT
- Sefton DAAT
- Manchester Joint Commissioning
- Tudor Trust
- Lloyds Bank
- Manchester Primary Care Trust
- Big Lottery Fund
- Trafford North PCT
- Learning and Skills Council
- Job Centre Plus
- Ainscough Cranes
- Action for Employment
- Manchester Multi Agency Gang Strategy
- Liverpool City Council
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Community Foundation for Merseyside
- European Social Fund
- European Regional Development Fund





The Big Life group
Kath Locke Centre
123 Moss Lane East
Manchester M15 5DD
Telephone: 0161 227 0200
www.thebiglifegroup.com