

# Highwater House - Annual Review 2024

Highwater House is a 22 bed dual diagnosis registered care home rated Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). We support single men and women aged 18-65 with both mental health issues and problematic substance use (a dual diagnosis).

The residents living at Highwater House have been homeless or vulnerably housed. Most will have experienced abusive and traumatic events in their lives and been unable to cope with independent living. Our goal is to help our residents regain an equilibrium and to begin to rebuild their resources - mental, physical and emotional.

Highwater House is an integral part of a network of care services provided by St Martins which has been providing housing, care and support to the homeless and vulnerable of Norwich since 1972.



# Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE)

Highwater House uses the PIE framework to continuously improve our care and support.

A PIE takes into account the psychological makeup - the thinking, emotions, personalities and past experience - of its participants in the way that it operates.

The framework is particularly effective when supporting those who have experienced complex trauma. It also considers the psychological needs of team members: developing skills and knowledge, increasing motivation, job satisfaction and emotional resilience.

Many of the residents at Highwater House have difficulty managing their emotions, appear impulsive and do not consider the consequences of their actions. Some may be withdrawn, isolated and reluctant to engage, or might exhibit anti-social behaviour.

The purpose of a PIE is to help staff understand what drives these behaviours and therefore be able to work more creatively and constructively with challenging situations.

Due to the complex needs of the people who use our service, they will from time to time become verbally and physically aggressive. Highwater House uses 'elastic tolerance' to help the resident retain their placement at the home.

Elastic tolerance is a concept that encourages creative and flexible ways to work with issues that would normally result in a warning or eviction. The aim is to address disruptive and negative behaviour without re-enforcing the client's sense of rejection or abandonment - this helps give the resident the skill to reflect without fear of further repercussions.



# Events

2024 saw us take every opportunity we could to celebrate! Placing a strong emphasis on community as a curative force, we use events to build social ties and shared experiences to create an open and welcoming space. Our catering team always put on an amazing spread!



Our dedicated chef team are deeply integrated into the running of the home. They join the care team for meetings and reflective practice sessions - we place food at the heart of the service. Every year sees an incredible array of special meals, birthday cakes and shared events with our sister service, Under-1-Roof.



# Holidays!

Adam has lived at Highwater House for several years, and had regularly spoken to team members about his memories of working in France with a family member when he was a young man. His memories were positive, with him recollecting working hard and enjoying the culture. Despite his life taking a troubled path, he was rightly proud of his past. Over 18 months the team developed Adam's confidence to explore going abroad - for someone suffering from deep seated anxiety and psychosis this was a long and considered process.

As well as helping to organise Adam a passport and health card, the team worked with him to choose a good place to visit, looking at the route, ferry crossing times and hotels.

In late June, Adam, Ben, a resident Adam is good friends with, and Kev and Connor, two dedicated team members, loaded up the car and set off.

After driving through France to the hotel, they found themselves enjoying pizza and a beer in the town square in the early evening light watching the world cup on a big screen... Life was good!

Adam is already planning another trip - as well as being a life enhancing experience, leaving the home and going abroad has significantly increased his confidence. Undertaking this trip was a long term process with the team building trustable connections, moving at Adam's pace, and working with Adam's life story to create a narrative of achievement.



# Partnership Work

We are always keen to develop our connections with the wider care and support network of services across Norfolk. This year we have continued to integrate with our sister service, Under-1-Roof, organising shared barbecues and developing activities.

The manager was part of Norfolk Care Association's peer support programme which involved mentoring another care home as it developed its systems and best practice.

We provided service introductions to new social workers, and a session on working with complex needs for 3rd year medical students. A team member gave insight into the service and our approach to providing person-led care when he took part in a podcast as part of the CQC Share for Better Care week, highlighting the importance of dignity when working with complexity.

We were pleased to welcome Thomas, a paramedic student, for a placement at the home as he developed his understanding of working with a dual diagnosis client group.

Thomas Millar is studying to be a paramedic at Glasgow Caledonian University. He joined our team at Highwater House for three weeks on placement and gained valuable insight into working in the homelessness sector.

Thomas said, "It was an incredible privilege to have been able to work at St Martins. As a student paramedic I value the ability to experience and work in dynamic and unfamiliar situations."



"The biggest aspect which I will take from St Martins was the incredible vision to replace the label of 'homeless' to simply view every person simply as an individual with their own life story - this was incredibly touching and really grew on me the longer I spent at St Martins."

# Continuous Development

This year we welcomed a new project worker Megan into the team. Our focus on learning and development has led to the manager completing an MBA in Healthcare Management, the deputy completing a level 5 in Social Care Management, and a project worker finishing her level in adult social care.

We have created a bespoke professional boundaries training course for the organisation as well as a working with complex needs course developed alongside Shelter. Several team members have followed their own interests too, attending courses on alcohol use and safeguarding and personality disorder and trauma.

This year we have undertaken a large development program of the home, completely updating over half of the bedrooms. We have been piloting an innovative digital platform for our catering department which will replace all paper over the coming months - great for the environment! Our fantastic team continue to dedicate themselves to creating a welcoming and inclusive space for all.

