

Lights, camera, action!

Progress Care HA has made a video to help explain the rights and responsibilities of being a tenant.

And one of our tenants, Tracey Perry, has a starring role!

We decided to produce the video after a survey of our tenants revealed that more than a third of them did not understand they had rights. At the same time most of the support agency staff working with tenants said they would find it useful to have an easier way of describing what a tenancy agreement was all about.

We thought a video would be the best medium for explaining things in a straightforward, easy to understand way. It's just one of the ways Progress Care HA will use to develop better communications with its tenants over the next 12 months.

We commissioned a London based company called The Media Trust to produce the video for us. We chose them because they have experience of working with companies like Barnardos, Scope and Save the Children. And the director of our video, John Morrell, has 20

years of experience of working for the BBC and ITV, as well as producing videos for the Disabilities Trust and Autism Awareness Year.

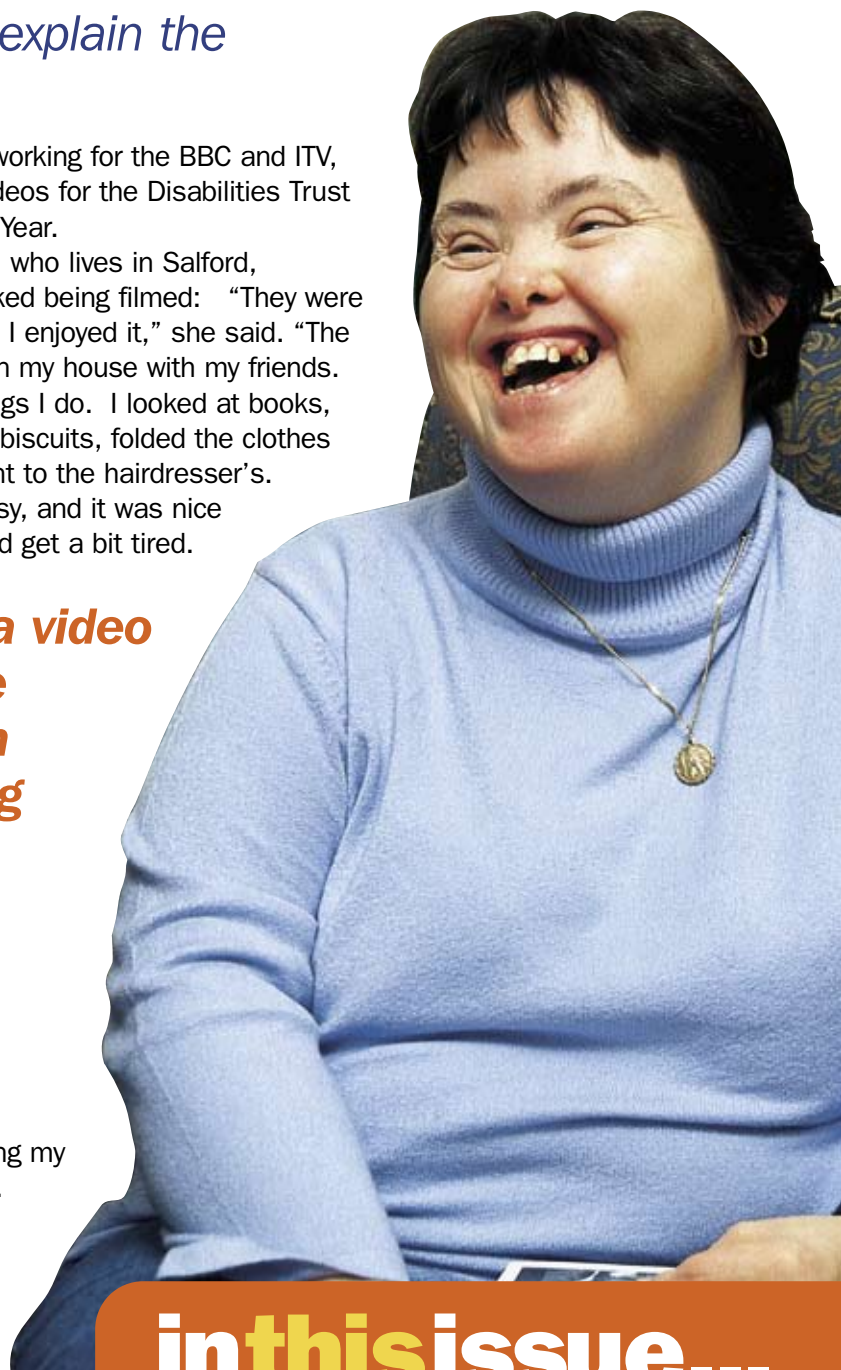
Tenant Tracey Perry, who lives in Salford, Manchester said she liked being filmed: "They were all very nice to me, and I enjoyed it," she said. "The video was about living in my house with my friends. It was about all the things I do. I looked at books, made a cup of tea and biscuits, folded the clothes in my bedroom and went to the hairdresser's. The house was very busy, and it was nice talking to everyone. I did get a bit tired.

We thought a video would be the best medium for explaining things in a



The best part was having my sister there helping me.

Tracey has been a tenant with Progress Care HA since 2000. She is supported in



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Left: John Cannon picking pears in the garden at Annan Road

A sense of

Tenants in Dumfries and Galloway have transformed their gardens into a stimulating experience for all the senses.

Two houses owned and managed by Progress Care Housing Association used grants and the help of experts and the local community to create award winning sensory gardens. Sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing are all catered for, as well as an interest in plants, animals and nature. We talked to Service Managers Angela Cameron and Frances Crook of Turning Point Scotland who were responsible for getting the projects off the ground.

Annan Road

Annan Road in Dumfries was the first of the two properties to embark on the quest for a sensory garden. The challenge facing Service Manager Angela Cameron two years ago was how to turn half an acre of hayfield into a garden that reflected everyone's tastes, abilities and disabilities.

Angela explains: "We wanted to design a garden with everyone's needs in mind. Our planning involved the tenants, their families and our own experience of knowing them as individuals. We tried to find out what the tenants really liked, and helped them to come up with ideas for their garden. We drew up a plan and asked landscaping firms to do some designs for us. The company we chose was not only able to fulfil our basic ideas, but also made some really creative suggestions. And John and Stuart had a good time with the landscapers, who were young men of a similar age to them."

Angela says the result is a garden of contrasting areas that is special to each tenant:

"A garden like this is not just about visual pleasure, although of course it looks beautiful. It's accessible, practical and designed with ease of use and independence in mind. The tenants really like it too. Peach loves to pick the strawberries and drink tea in the garden when it's sunny. Ian likes to sit and watch the pigeons and the fountain, and listen to the sound of the wind whistling through the bamboo. John says he likes the home grown "tatties" and Stuart enjoys the barbeques."



"A garden like this is not just about visual pleasure, although of course it looks beautiful"

Below: Bubbling water feature in the garden at Annan Road





“John says he likes the home grown “tatties” and Stuart enjoys the barbeques.”

proportion



Leafy canopy at Lochmedrie House, Dumfries

Lochmederie

Four tenants with learning difficulties share Lochmederie, a house set in beautiful countryside. Support staff helped the tenants make an application to the Fieldfare Millenium Trust for funding for their sensory, interactive garden. Their application was a success and with the help of the wildlife trust, local artists and the community, the tenants designed a fabulous garden tailored to each of their needs.

Frances Crook, Service Manager, said their aim was to create a calming and peaceful environment that would blend in with the rural surroundings. She said: “We wanted a very natural garden, so wherever we could we used materials that were natural and local to the area. We’ve got wooden instruments in the garden that are beautiful to look at as well as listen to. We employed a plant specialist to select plants that stimulated the senses, and plants with different textured leaves, some smooth, some hairy, some rough.”

Frances says the tenants reactions and responses give staff a clear picture of what they like: “You can tell by John’s facial expression that he loves the water feature, and the sound of the birds singing. He’s usually very active, but when he hears the birds he stops and listens. And Judith is eager to walk round the garden with a member of staff and touch the plants and instruments.”

Your newsletter

We hope you enjoy ‘Progress People’, our first newsletter for our supported housing tenants. We’ve tried as far as we can to produce something that includes the things our tenants and support agency partners want to read about, as well as the information we need to give you.

To make sure we got it right, we wanted to involve tenants and their support workers in deciding what the newsletter would be like. To do this, we asked some tenants and their support workers to take part in a Newsletter Advisory Panel.

In September we all met at our head office in Leyland for the first meeting. Our aim was to find out what tenants would like to see in the newsletter and to draw up a list of ‘rules’ for future issues. We asked our panel members questions like: What size of newsletter would you like? What subjects do you want to read about? What would make the newsletter interesting for you?

We also discussed four themes that we thought connected our organisations with our tenants and their support workers. These were choice, independence, inclusion and rights. We all agreed that these themes should influence the newsletter. And everyone thought it was important to illustrate our articles with real life stories about tenants, and use photos to help ‘tell the story’.

We hope you like the newsletter, but we would like to know exactly what you think. If you fill in the enclosed newsletter questionnaire and post it back to us, you could win £50. And if there’s something you would like to tell us about, please get in touch. You could be in the next issue!

Our newsletter advisory panel members were:

- Lesley Stanworth of Colne, Lancashire, accompanied by Denis Lawson of Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale Primary Care Trust
- John Williams of Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, accompanied by Beverley Parkin of Independent Advisory Service
- Gordon Howard of Walton, Liverpool, accompanied by Christina Byrne and Cathy Murphy of Brothers of Charity
- Shirley Ryder of Salford, accompanied by Beverley Foltyn of Paragon Care.

Below: Tenant members of our Newsletter Advisory Panel discussing the newsletter in Progress Care HA’s boardroom. Left to right: Gordon Howard, Shirley Ryder, John Williams and Lesley Stanworth



Three East European children had a special treat on Christmas Day, thanks to the tenants of Bloomfield Road in Blackpool. Tony Marlow, Charles Tordoff and Russell Clark each filled a shoe box with gifts to be given to children living in difficult circumstances who would otherwise receive nothing.

Merry Christmas, someone cares

Edwina Biggs, Team Manager at Blackpool Social Services, says that by taking part in the charitable appeal the tenants are showing they are good citizens. She said: "Our tenants may be cared for themselves, but they are also capable of caring and helping other people. Sometimes their enduring illnesses prevent them from getting involved in voluntary work, but the shoe box appeal was an ideal way they could give something back."

Charles Tordoff

"I took part because it's a good cause. It's for a child that isn't as fortunate as others and for them to have a Christmas gift to open on Christmas day."

Tony Marlow

"If I could say something to the child that opens my box I would say: Merry Christmas, someone cares"

Russell Clark

"I wanted to take part to help a child in need. My box is going to a girl aged 5 to 9. I filled it with hair decorations, sweets, a doll's set, a drawing book and crayons and a Christmas card."





Right: The launch of the women's refuge
Far right: Children's playroom



Smiling welcome to safe haven

This beautiful mosaic was designed and made by the residents of Clare House women's refuge in Leyland, Lancashire to mark the house's second anniversary.



Well equipped family kitchens

The residents worked with a local art tutor from Runshaw College to create an attractive, welcoming design that would reflect the warmth and safety of the refuge. Maria Edwards, Refuge Co-ordinator, Progress Care HA said: "The mosaic took some time to complete so lots of women had a part in its creation. It now hangs on the wall in Clare House as a testament to those who have stayed, and a welcome to those yet to come."



Facts and figures about Clare House

- **Clare House was opened in April 2000. Until then, there had been no refuge in South Ribble for women escaping domestic abuse.**
- **The refuge is a 'safe house' offering women and their children somewhere temporary to stay. The house can accommodate up to 8 women and 16 children at any one time.**
- **Clare House was purpose built by Progress Care HA and provides some of the best standard accommodation to be seen in this field of work.**
- **The refuge is protected by secure external boundaries overseen by CCTV cameras and there is a secure entry-phone controlled front door.**
- **During the first two and half years, 490 women have been referred to the refuge, along with 788 children. Of these, Clare House offered refuge to 158 women and 211 children.**

£20 vouchers up for grabs!

Don't forget to return your repairs satisfaction form when we do a repair at your home. You are now 4 times more likely to win the £20 prize draw!

Until November last year Progress Care HA tenants were entered into the same prize draw as tenants from New Progress HA. But now our

tenants have their own monthly prize draw, making the odds of winning the prize much higher.

This is how it works: When you report a repair, we send you a letter confirming what work needs to be done, and telling you when we will do it by. We also include a repair satisfaction slip that we ask you to fill in and return to us once the repair has been completed. Then once a month we enter all the slips

into a draw and pull out a winner, who scoops a £20 gift voucher. The winners so far are Jennifer Skipp of Aylesbury (October's draw), John Drew of Blackpool (November) and Rita Connor of Norwich (December).

So don't forget to send back your slip – the next winner could be you!



June Clark and support worker
Jenny Donnachie



From left to right: Grant Griffin with
Shona Knight, Stewart O'Connor
with Linda Callendar, Brian Smith
and Alistair Graham

We won this...

Filling in and posting back a customer satisfaction questionnaire for Progress Care HA won 8 tenants £600 worth of prizes.

First prize of £400 went to Margaret Purvis, Peter Thompson, June Clark and Andrew Nicolou who share a house in Scrogg Road, Newcastle. They decided to use the money to contribute to their holidays. Margaret and Peter plumped for an adventurous mini cruise from Newcastle to Norway. It was Peter's birthday while they were away so this was celebrated in style with a meal in the ship's restaurant. June's holiday took the shape of a few days caravanning in Berwick,

Scotland with her support workers. June had a great time singing along to her favourite songs at the local club. Andrew doesn't like staying away from home so day trips to Scarborough and Kielder Reservoir plus a trip to the coast made up his holiday treats.

Four tenants from Glendarroch, Dumfries in Scotland (see above) won second prize and decided to use their winnings to buy a bird bath and bird table. Now they enjoy watching the local birdlife through their living room window.

Peter Thompson
and Margaret Purvis



This attractive bungalow provides supported housing for three people in Barnstaple, Devon

Reaching more people

In Devon

We began working in Devon two years ago with support agency Lifeways Community Care. We have just finished the first phase of our developments in this area, and the final property was handed over in September last year. This means we now have 8 properties in Devon, providing homes for 26 new tenants.

In Norfolk

By March of this year we will be providing 11 properties for 33 long-stay patients needing homes following the closing of Little Plumstead Hospital, near Norwich. We're happy to be working with support agencies, the Thera Trust, New Support Options and Elizabeth Fitzroy Support.

All change

Supporting People Grant - important information about your rent

Supporting People grant is used by your care organisation to help pay for the support you receive on a daily basis. At the moment this is a charge to you which is included in your rent and service charge. If you receive housing benefit, the cost is paid for by this benefit.

This system will change from April

2003. Instead of being included in your rent and service charge the cost will be paid directly to your care organisation by the Supporting People Team in your local area. This will mean that you will see a big decrease in the amount we charge on a weekly basis for you to live in your home.

If you do not receive housing benefit

at the moment you should check with your local housing benefit department to see if you are entitled to claim. Your support worker will help you do this. If you have any other queries about this grant, please contact your Senior Supported Housing Officer at Progress Care Housing Association on 01772 642150.



What is Progress Care Housing Association?

Alan Johnson, Director of Progress Care Housing Association, talks to 'Progress People'

What exactly is Progress Care Housing Association?

ALAN - Progress Care Housing Association is what is called a 'registered social landlord'. It's an organisation set up to provide affordable housing for people who need it, and it's the charitable arm of Progress Housing Group. We've actually been involved in supported housing since 1995, although back then it was under the umbrella of New Progress Housing Association. At that time we became involved in providing new homes for residents leaving Calderstones Hospital in Lancashire, a long-term residential home for adults with learning difficulties. This was so successful that other organisations asked us to carry out similar projects and before long we had built up a good reputation. By 1998 we felt we needed to create a separate organisation to concentrate on supported housing, and that was when we officially set up Progress Care Housing Association.

Who do you provide supported housing for?

ALAN - We provide good quality housing mainly for people with learning difficulties and mental health problems. We also have a refuge in South Ribble, Lancashire for women and children fleeing domestic abuse (see the article on page 5), as well as flats for vulnerable young people in Preston. We now provide supported housing for more than 1,200 tenants.

Where are your properties situated?

ALAN - We have more than 350 properties all over the UK and we're working in around 45 different local authority areas. Most of our properties are based within Lancashire and Greater Manchester but we have growing numbers in South West Scotland, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Devon.

What type of properties does PCHA have to let?

ALAN - Most of our properties are detached bungalows and houses, which 3 or 4 tenants share, living alongside 24-hour support workers. We also have some self-contained flats. There are some lovely properties and some have really big gardens.

You mentioned support workers, does Progress Care HA employ these staff?

ALAN - No, with the exception of the women's refuge, we work in partnership with over 40 different support providing agencies. In this way we can offer housing with support and enable people to live as independently as they can.

One of Progress Care HA's supported homes in Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan





Useful Addresses and Telephone Numbers

HEAD OFFICE

Progress Care Housing Association
Progress House
Lancashire Enterprise Business Park
Centurion Way, Leyland, Lancashire
PR26 6TZ

Tel. 01772 642150

Fax No. 01772 642151

Web: www.progresscare.org.uk

Email: enquiries@newprogress.co.uk

LINCOLN OFFICE

Progress Care Housing Association
1 Sixfields Close
Skellingthorpe Road, Lincoln
Lincolnshire LN6 0EJ

Tel. 01522 507208

Fax No. 01522 507211

REPAIRS

Property Repairs Hotline
Monday - Thursday
8.45 am - 5.15 pm
and Friday 8.45 am - 4.45 pm

Tel. 01772 642199

Out-of-office-hours
(Emergency repairs only)

Tel. 01772 436756

Repairs to furnishings,
kitchen or laundry equipment

Tel. 01772 642150

Come on board

Progress Care HA is looking for tenants to become more directly involved in the way it runs its business. The housing association is inviting tenants or their advocates to have their say by becoming members of its Board of Management.

Lynda Mason, Supported Housing Projects Manager, explains: "All housing associations are 'not for profit' organisations, run by committees of experienced and knowledgeable volunteers. These people make up our 'Board of Management', and they are chosen because they understand and can offer advice about different areas of our business. No one knows more about how good or bad our service is than the people who live in our properties. So who better to have on our board than one of our tenants or their representative?"

Have you got something to say about how Progress Care HA runs its service? What are we good at? What could we do better?

Why not have your say by getting on our board:

What it involves: It is a serious commitment since you will be helping to manage the Association and how it spends its money but it can be rewarding and interesting. It is also an opportunity for you to learn new skills and we will provide some training to help you understand how the board works.

How much time: Meetings are held five times a year in the evenings at Progress Housing Group's head office in Leyland. Meetings usually last about 2 hours. We would pay your expenses for getting there.

More information: If you think you would like to help us to give a better service and represent the tenant's point of view in the work we do then contact Lynda Mason, Projects Manager, on 01772 642161.

This newsletter is available on audio tape. For a free copy, please write to Lynda Mason at our head office address above. You can also phone Lynda on 01772 642161 or e-mail her at lmason@newprogress.co.uk

If you will need the newsletter in another format or language, or additional copies, please let Lynda know and we may be able to produce it for future editions.



'Progress People' is published by Progress Care Housing Association and sent to our supported housing tenants, support agency partners and service commissioners. If you have anything to say about the newsletter or our service, or a subject you think would make a good article, please get in touch.

You can write to: Lynda Mason, Supported Housing Projects Manager, Progress Care Housing Association, Progress House, Lancashire Enterprises Business Park, Centurion Way, Leyland PR26 6TZ. You can email Lynda at: lmason@newprogress.co.uk or telephone her on 01772 642161.