

Community Options

Flexible Support for People with Mental Health Needs

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

Eleanor Roosevelt



Annual Review 2006-07

“You see things; and you say, ‘Why?’
But I dream things that never were;
and I say, ‘Why not?’”

George Bernard Shaw

enable people



Community Options has been established for 16 years and during this time we have diversified to keep up with the changing times. We continue to offer residential homes, but we also provide support to people in the community and in their own homes and to service user groups.

An estimated 1 in 100 people experience severe mental health problems. Many more people experience common mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression. The impact on people’s lives can be dramatic.

Our **mission** is to, ‘enable people with mental health needs to work towards recovery and lead valued lives in the community.’ All our work is focused on our commitment to the belief that people who have experienced mental health challenges can and often do recover.

‘Recovery is what people experience themselves as they become empowered to manage their lives in a manner that allows them to achieve a fulfilling, meaningful life and contributing a positive sense of belonging in their communities. ‘(NIHME Statement 2006)

Recovery is a process, not a cure. Even if some symptoms and difficulties remain, people can be enabled to gain satisfaction, meaning and control in their lives.

Opportunity and choices

Opening doors

In the first annual report of the company in 1992, I described how the logo adopted at that time (open door) signified the changes from the large psychiatric units to our residential homes in local communities. Throughout the year the work of the people who use our services and the staff has meant that more doors are being opened, creating exciting opportunities.

Positive impact

I am immensely proud of the positive impact we can make to people’s lives. We have seen people venturing beyond the confines of their own home, plan their move into their own homes and even publishing their own works. All these achievements are the result of a person centred approach.

Voicing our experience

Some years ago, Judy Turner-Crowson - trustee, introduced the ‘recovery concept’ at our AGM. The influence of this talk has been tremendous. We have developed and provided training not only to our own staff and clients, but also externally. As our reputation has grown, we have been invited to speak about our work at national conferences.

All about people

Our achievements would not be possible without the contribution of our people; those who use our services, volunteer trustees and staff. We are well on our way to getting a three star rating for all our residential houses.

We continue to raise our aspirations. We have been formally recognised as an Investor in Excellence and in the London Excellence Awards 2006 we won People Involvement and Development Award.

Meaningful involvement has been our objective. Increasingly, people who use our services are involved in the recruitment and selection of staff (directly impacting on service delivery), meetings across the organisation (influencing the decisions taken) and the production of their own newsletter (giving people an independent voice).

This is equally important for staff. Staff have a role in shaping organisational development through participation in strategic planning meetings and working groups.

As always I am grateful to our dedicated team of trustees who guide the organisation by giving their time, experience, skills and knowledge freely.

Thank you to all.

John Wates
Chairman



“Without leaps of imagination,
or dreaming, we lose the
excitement of possibilities.
Dreaming, after all, is a form
of planning.”

Gloria Steinham

Staff: 10% are experts through experience

“There is nothing like a dream
to create the future.”

Victor Hugo

hope



We said a fond farewell to Tom Phillips who retired on the 31st March 2007. Tom joined Community Options in 1992. In 1999 he was promoted to Chief Executive Officer.

Tom led the organisation beyond its initial base of Bromley to Greenwich and Tower Hamlets; from mainly accommodation services to truly community-based services where learning and development is key to all that we do.

We wish Tom every happiness in his retirement.

I would like to thank the trustees of Community Options for appointing me as the new Chief Executive.

I feel very privileged to lead Community Options at this time. In the last year we have created a number of new opportunities for people, greater choice of accommodation and community services and more opportunities for training.

I am delighted that through our promotion of employment of people with experience of mental health services, 10% of staff are ‘experts through experience’. Our focus on the recovery concept and person centred approaches that instil hope, is something that I believe in and wish to further develop.

This review will celebrate the many achievements of clients and staff: clients who have moved on; clients who have taken a significant step on their road to recovery; clients and staff completing training and development programmes; recognition for our People Involvement and Development through the London Excellence Awards.

I would like to thank staff, especially Tracy Simpson, who worked on two pilot projects during the year: the Bromley Support Line and the Lambeth High Home Care Support. Whilst the Support Line closed in January 2007, the pilot provided commissioners in Bromley with the evidence to gauge the level of demand. The Lambeth project was a great success. Based on the model developed, Lambeth were able to tender during the year for a substantive service.

In the coming year, I am looking forward to undertaking a major review of our service user satisfaction survey, further developing the training and consultancy service and expanding the range of training courses for service users, achieving recognition as an Investor in Excellence and successfully being re-assessed as an Investor in People.

Chris Mansi



Hopeful environment

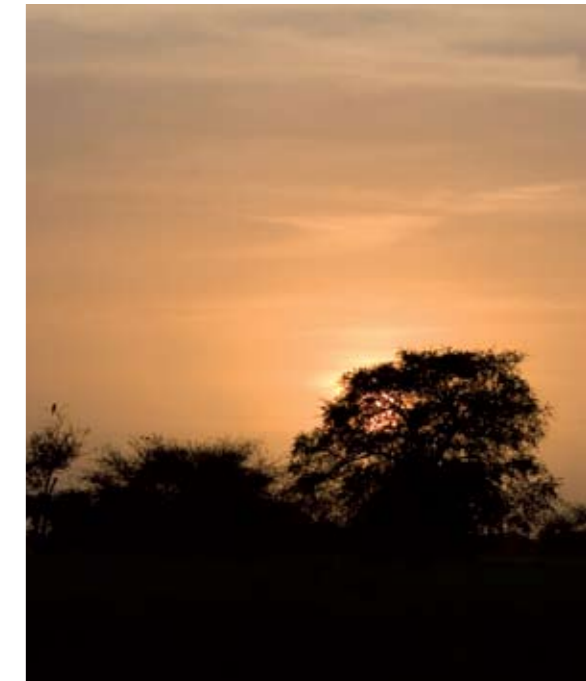
We all need to have a safe and secure environment in which to live. This is perhaps even more important for people with mental health needs – it is vital to their recovery. The best living environment will be different for different people. For some it may be a hospital ward for a time, some may benefit from a 24-hour staffed care home. Some can live more independently knowing that someone will be spending some dedicated time with them to support them in their daily lives.

By having a range of services we are well placed to support a variety of needs. We are seeing an increase in the number of referrals for people who have additional needs e.g. alcohol and drug issues, challenging behaviour, personality disorders and learning difficulties. We aim to provide services that are appropriate and responsive.

The effectiveness of our approach is highlighted by the responses to our Service User Satisfaction Survey, which last year showed that 90% of our clients felt staff believed in their recovery.

A significant number of service users who have progressed on their recovery journey want to be in employment. For many people this is very difficult to achieve. We are committed to employing people who have experience of mental health services. Last year, 18% of new employees had experience of mental health services. As positive role models they provide hope to others.

It is our commitment to meet or exceed all statutory requirements and to provide the highest quality of care. Three registered projects have received a 3 star rating from the Commission for Social Care and Inspection. We are proud of these high ratings we are committed to constant and continuous improvement in our work.



“Dare to live the life you
have dreamed for yourself.
Go forward
and make your dreams
come true.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Accommodation Services: 6% move-on to independent living

“There will always be dreams grander or humbler than your own, but there will never be a dream exactly like your own... for you are unique and more wondrous than you know.”

Linda Staten

Janice

Janice Samson

Before the intervention of Community Options into my life I suffered with agoraphobia. This made me feel that there was no other life apart from being at home in a safe environment. The STR worker spent time with me to help me with my fears of the outside world and encouraged me to come for short walks.

Since being supported by Community Options my life has turned around. If it wasn't for their support I would not have achieved passing my basic computer course at Greenwich UK online. I am at present taking driving lessons. I hope in the future to return to work. I continue to be supported by Community Options and believe with their support I will continue to succeed. I now believe that being agoraphobic doesn't mean that there is no life for you and with the right support the future looks positive.



Innovation and learning

Our experience in developing new services led to us winning the tender in Tower Hamlets to provide the first service, accessible through GPs' surgeries, for people with mental health needs. The Tower Hamlets Support Advice and Recovery Service provides GPs with an additional way to support people with anxiety or depression. Our Support Time and Recovery Workers can provide social, rather than medical interventions. At the end of its first year of operation, we provided over 145 hours of service per week to over 35 people and the service continues to grow.

In January 2007, we began a new Service User Involvement Project in Tower Hamlets. This exciting Project supports people who use services across the borough to engage in development opportunities and learn new skills. The aim is for people who use services to confidently participate in local forums to influence the decision-making process concerning their services. Twenty-one service user groups meet monthly. The project is engaging with over 600 people who use services. A wonderful achievement.

Our registered residential projects support people with a high level of disability due to their mental health. These projects specialise in supporting people with complex needs. Even clients with significant mental health challenges can, through the intensive work with our staff and other professionals, after 12/18 months realistically be looking forward to moving on to lower supported accommodation or independent living. Our current length of stay in our short term rehabilitation projects is 16.4 months on average. Move-on to lower supported or independent living was 12.35%.

Working with our partners in Bromley, we continue to review and revitalise our services. Our residential services have been adapted and expanded to provide more Supported Housing Projects, offering more independent living opportunities. We opened our first Older Adult Supported Housing Scheme – providing support as and when the clients request it.

The Community Support Service continues to grow and develop. The service is now supporting people with a range of needs including learning and physical disabilities. We have supported 289 clients across four London Boroughs during the year.

The key to all our services is choice and opportunities. One size does not fit all.



“No one should negotiate their dreams. Dreams must be free to flee and fly high. No government, no legislature, has a right to limit your dreams. You should never agree to surrender your dreams.”

Jesse Jackson

Short-term Projects: 7.7% move-on to independent living

“To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.”

Anatole France

Maria

Maria Jemmot

My journey with Community Options began in February 2003. I did not want to be in a residential care home having lived in my own flat for 3 years – I felt sure I would never have the opportunity to live on my own again. At first I lived in the shared house. Then after about 18 months I was able to move to the flat within Croydon Road. This has helped me to plan for my next move to my own place.

I have been able to do a number of courses whilst at Croydon Road - basic computer training, co-operating and building self-esteem, management of finances and line dancing. I like to do lots of things, cooking, crocheting, knitting and I sing with the Church singing group.

I have also taken more control over my life – setting my objectives in my support plan, working on my own objectives, preparing the agenda for my CPA meetings. I have even represented the views of service users at Community Options meetings.

My next step is to move to my own place. I am currently waiting for a flat so that I can move on to the next part of my journey.



People's voices

Listening to and learning from other people's experiences helps the organisation to develop. At our last AGM, we listened to three people's very different recovery journeys - a very thought-provoking and moving event.

Our first speaker was Kamahl who had lived at one of our registered care homes and moved on to independent living:

“When I became ill, which was when I was 16, and following traumatic experiences, I developed a lot of paranoid thoughts. I coped with these thoughts by smoking a lot of cannabis which I believed helped ease such thoughts but which I now know worsened them... I have not smoked cannabis for over a year now.

The turning point for me was coming to Sandford Road (Community Options). Here I had people that listened to me, that believed in me, and had hope for me. It was during this time I learnt independent skills (albeit reluctantly at first being a young teenage man) including how to cook traditional food. I now cook for family and friends confidently and well!

Moving on was the next step in my journey. I have found, and am still finding, new found freedoms. I am now able to enjoy physical exercise such as football and cycling and socialising, something which I have struggled with in the past. I am still finding myself.

What's helped? My family. They have been my rock and so supportive to me... They have stood by and been there unconditionally.

I feel settled now but still have a way to go, but I can look forward with hope and enjoyment rather than fear.”



“A dream is an answer to a question we haven't yet learned how to ask.”

Anon

Supported Housing Projects: 3.6% move on to independent living

“If one advances confidently in the direction of their dreams, and endeavours to lead a life which they have imagined, they will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.”

Henry David Thoreau

Helen

Helen Horner

I have lived with a depressive illness for many years and often felt suicidal and alone. However, for the last year I have had the support of two STR workers from Community Options and this is how life has changed for me.

I had great difficulty leaving my house to use local facilities due to lack of confidence and self-esteem. I was unable to do simple tasks like shopping or even posting a letter as this would cause me great anxiety. Since working with my STR workers they have both helped me to develop coping strategies to achieve the above and I have built up a trust with them.

Diabetes is one of my medical conditions which I had difficulty in managing, but my STR workers have helped me get back my control of this.

Material things do not mean much to me, but being able to visit parks, feed the ducks, visiting garden centres, admiring nature, or just popping to a café for a coffee are all things I now enjoy doing – thanks to the support of my STR Workers. Activities I had stopped doing because I lacked motivation to do anything.

I cannot thank enough my STR workers Bradley and Cora and other mental health professionals who have helped me turn my life around.

I still have crisis times in my life but I feel I can depend and trust my STR workers for help and support to get me through these times.

Family and friends now get their birthday cards on time!



People's voices continued

Joni was our second speaker. She is currently being supported by our STR workers.



“Up until a couple of years ago, I was trapped inside my illness. Unable to go out, unable to see a future. All I could think about was how to end it all.

With the help of community Options I was encouraged to slowly start leaving the restraints of both my home and my mind. I started to believe in myself again. I didn't realise how much I had gained until this New Year. My thought process changed so dramatically that I wrote this:

‘Oh welcome this New Year. I feel so incredibly happy at the thought of another year in the life of me. Onwards and upwards... Let us meet every challenge with gusto and come what may, each one will be an experience to look back on...’

I could not have reached this stage of recovery on my own. Thank you to all those that helped make this possible and to all the friends that I have made on the way.”

Since the AGM, Joni has published her first collection of poems and is currently writing her second collection. Joni said, *“I have become more confident in myself and my abilities.”* Joni is also an active member of the Newsletter group contributing poems. She has also made new friends. *“I have met up with... my friends at the picnic in Crystal Palace Park, the visit to Greenwich Market and at the Christmas party... I have been able to attend things I would never previously have considered.”*

Our third speaker was Gillian who attended one of the recovery groups facilitated by Community Options.

“My situation involves anxiety and depression which I have experienced for more than 40 years. Various life events and experiences have contributed to the way I have felt.

About a year ago I referred myself to MIND... (it was suggested) that I join a ‘Recovery Group’. This was the opposite of having things ‘done to me’...

Within the group I felt safe and able to begin to identify and reveal my ‘real self’. During the period of 20 weeks I was heard, understood, accepted and supported. ... It is person centred, promoting empowerment.”

Gillian now helps spread the recovery message and facilitates recovery groups.



“Dreams pass into the reality of action. From the actions stems the dream again; and this interdependence produces the highest form of living.”

Anias Nin

“When we are dreaming alone it is only a dream. When we are dreaming with others, it is the beginning of reality.”

Dom Helder Camara

James

James Sewell

“My journey began in 1998 when I was sent to a maximum secure prison and condemned, well that’s how it felt. Since then I haven’t lived on my own, instead spending time in different institution.

Then I came to Sandford Road in 2005 from the low secure unit, Banbury House. It was here that I began to enjoy things again. I have become a keen gardener, growing my own tomato plants and looking after all the indoor plants. I also look after the fish at Sandford Road and enjoy feeding the ducks up at the park. I now enjoy cooking and looking after my health.

I have worked hard to get to where I am now, which is at the point of moving on to independent living. Now I feel I can look forward to an enriching life. I am a success merely because I refused to quit!

Community Options, I strongly feel and believe, extols the virtues of compassion and tolerance. Quite simply Community Options works effectively.”



People Development Opportunities

Staff costs including training and development account for over 85% of our expenditure – this is important because our services are about engagement with people. And we invest in our people to ensure that they are confident, competent, effective and happy in their work.

Training and developing staff helps the organisation to deliver quality services. That is why, on average, staff spent five days on formal training and development activities during the year (10 people training each week). These activities are enhanced by informal training, such as on the job training, training sessions within their team and project meetings and discussions with colleagues.

Our latest staff survey showed 89% of staff like the work they do and 91% felt that improving quality was part of their job. This is reinforced by our excellent record on staff turnover 12.7%, (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 2005 Survey UK average 18.3%).

In promoting the recovery concept, 15 courses were run over the year with 105 attendances. These included such aspects of recovery as Messages of Empowerment, Wellness Recovery Action Plan, Spirituality and Recovery, Person Centred Planning, Hope, Opportunity and Control, Transformation and What Helps and Hinders Recovery?

90% of clients said that staff believed in their recovery. (Bromley CSS)

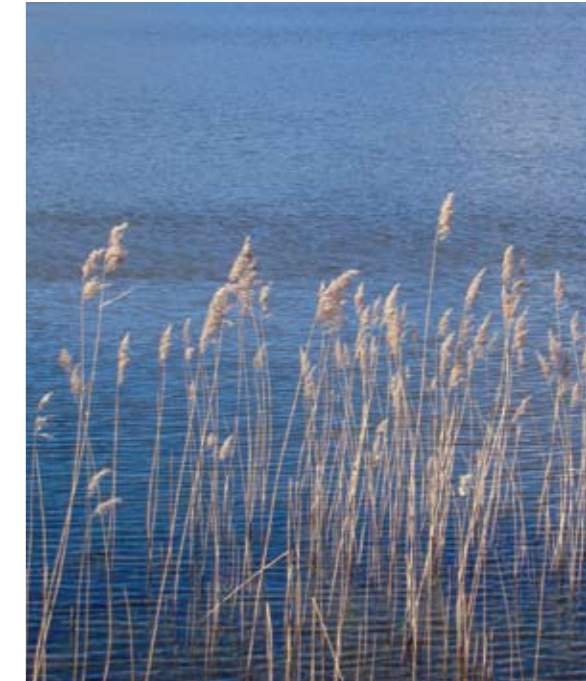
During the year the department has provided training services to a number of agencies including MIND, Bridge 86, SLAM and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. We have also delivered workshops at national conferences on recovery training and social inclusion.

We have also expanded the range of service user training programmes to include: personal development, recruitment and selection and job search.

Since winning our award for People Involvement and Development at the London Excellence Awards 2006, we have introduced a new performance management system developed by staff. It helps staff and managers track achievements and plan training and development activities linked to the business objectives.

In consultation with staff we introduced a new pay structure and process for evaluating roles within the organisation.

The impact of training and development activities has not only been the achievement of the London Excellence Award 2006, but also attaining 3-star ratings from the Commission of Social Care Inspection and B-rating from Supporting People. Most importantly, we have seen the positive impact on the lives of people who engage with our services.



“Dreams are wishes cast upon the stars, so catch a shining one ~ take your friend’s hand and hold on forever.”

Traci Brown

Community Support Service: 31% move-on from the service

“In dreams begins responsibility.”

William Butler Yeats

Finance

The trustees are pleased to report a surplus before the unrealised loss on investments of £97,516. This represents a considerable improvement over the previous year and enables us to start to replenish reserves. We aim to hold enough reserves to meet obligations to clients, and contractual commitments to staff and suppliers, in the event of any funding contracts being terminated.

There were several significant reasons for the improved financial performance. New income was generated through the addition of the Tower Hamlets contract and the extension of the Lambeth pilot and through delivering training for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Cost control measures were taken throughout the organisation, for example insurance costs were sharply reduced.

During the year, we consulted with staff to change pay and benefits to enable the organisation to have greater control over staff costs. The new scheme will come into effect from April 2007.

Statement from the Trustees of Community Options

These are summarised financial statements containing information from both the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 March 2007. They are not the full statutory report and accounts which were approved by the trustees on 3rd October 2007 and subsequently submitted to the Charity Commission and Companies House. They received an unqualified audit report and copies may be obtained from Community Options' central office.

On behalf of the trustees, Andrew Winter
(Treasurer)
3rd October 2007

Summary of year	2006-07		2005-06	
Incoming resources	£	%	£	%
Residential Care Services	2,078,115	59.9	2,231,973	73.1
Community Support Services	889,514	25.7	617,537	20.2
Supported housing	442,570	12.7	134,975	4.4
Interest receivable	20,828	0.7	24,161	0.8
Other	35,842	1.0	45,666	1.5
	3,466,869	100	3,054,312	100.0
Resources expended				
Direct charitable expenditure	3,325,402	98.7	2,980,901	98.2
Governance	43,951	1.3	48,112	1.8
	3,369,353	100.0	3,029,013	100.0
Balance sheet				
Fixed assets	245,984		5,187	
Net current assets	378,797		525,518	
	624,781		530,705	
Represented by:				
General funds	504,651		410,575	
Designated funds	120,130		120,130	
	624,781		530,705	

Independent auditor's statement to the trustees of Community Options

We have examined the summarised financial statements which comprise the summary statement of financial activities and summary balance sheet.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with UK law and the recommendations of the charities' Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP). Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion of the consistency of the summarised financial statement with the full financial statements and trustees' Annual Report. We also read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 199/6 'The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement' issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom. Our report on the organisation's full annual financial statements describes the basis of our audit opinion on the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion, the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the trustees' Annual Report of Community Options for the year ended 31 March 2007.

Sayer Vincent Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, 2007

What we offer

Accommodation Services

Our projects' provide hopeful environments in which to work towards recovery. Clients' identify goals and aspirations and plan how these will be achieved.

Recognising the different and complex needs of people, the accommodation services provide a range of support:

- 24-hour support – registered care homes
- 24-hour support – supported housing scheme
- Flexible support – supported housing schemes

People will be supported on their recovery journey which may also include support with issues around alcohol/drug misuse, challenging behaviour/ personality disorder and learning difficulties.

Community Support Services

Our Community Services provide varying degrees of support (in terms of type and frequency) through Support Time and Recovery (STR) workers. People may be referred by Community Mental Health Teams, GPs or self refer. STR Workers build up a rapport with clients and can help them to develop a sense of self-belief and confidence.

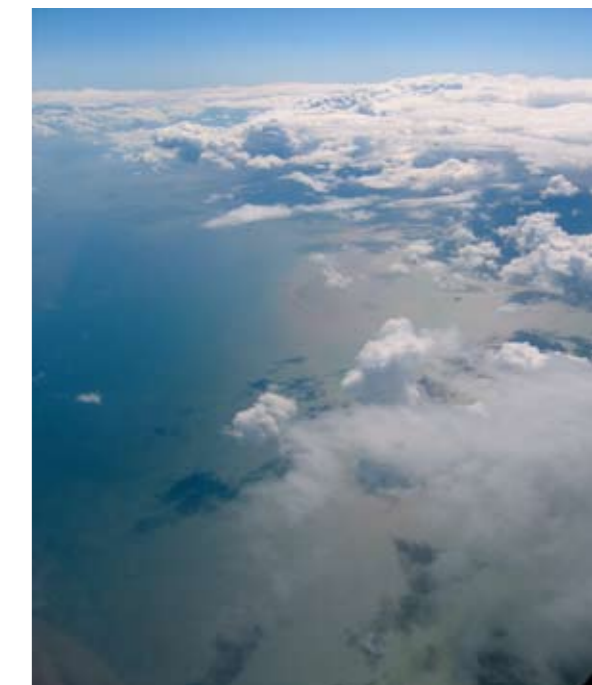
Service User Involvement Project

This project has been developed to ensure that Service User Involvement is co-ordinated and supported throughout the borough of Tower Hamlets. The aim is to provide information on individual rights, access to services as well as the choice and opportunity to become involved in planning and development of local services.



Training and Consultancy

Training and Consultancy services work with professionals and organisations to develop recovery orientated strategies. To support implementation we deliver specialist supervision services and training such as recovery awareness and PCP. We also design and deliver training for service users and carers. Training services are developed in consultation with service users and frontline staff. Our trainers have a direct experience of services either through work or engagement.



“Your hopes, dreams and aspirations are legitimate. They are trying to take you airborne, above the clouds, above the storms, if you only let them.”

William James

Staff: 10 people attending training activities each week



Commissioning organisations

Bromley and Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trusts
London Boroughs of: Bromley, Greenwich, Lambeth and Tower Hamlets
Oxleas NHS Trust Bromley and Greenwich
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Supporting People, Bromley and Greenwich

Trustees

John Wates: *Chair*
Edward Young: *Vice Chair*
Andrew Winter: *Treasurer*
Pam Buttrey
Heather Donovan
Monica Hanscomb
Robin Hogg
John Johnstone
Phil Jones
Judy Turner-Crowson

Management team

Chief Executive: Tom Philips
Deputy Chief Executive: Chris Mansi
Care Services and Development Manager: Tracy Simpson
Finance and Information Systems Manager: David Robjohns
Accommodation Services Manager: Jon Cribbens
Community Support Service Manager: Nathan Pathmanathan
Head of Training and Consultancy: Sally Lawson
Office Manager: Fran Hurren

Principal bankers

Lloyds TSB Bank plc
6 Market Square
Bromley
Kent BR1 1NA
COIF Charity Funds
80 Cheapside
London EC2V 6DZ

Auditors

Sayer Vincent
23 Angel Gate
City Road
London EC1V 5AQ

Solicitors

Sinclair Taylor & Martin
The charity team at
Russell-Cooke Solicitors,
2 Putney Hill
London SW15 6AB

Thank you to local organisations that have contributed in 2006/2007

Alliance Communication Solutions Ltd
Fairlight Group
Marks and Spencer
Recruitment Shop
Sterling Syncordia
Tesco
Utilize Plc
Voicecom

“Nothing happens unless first a dream.”

Carl Sandburg

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Email: enquiry@community-options.org.uk

Charity number: 1005994 Company registration number: 2548974

Designed by The Upper Room (020 8406 1010)