

# BLUE TRIANGLE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

ASSISTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE BETTER LIVES



PEOPLE FOCUSED ● INTEGRITY ● QUALITY ● GOING THE EXTRA MILE



# CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

I am delighted to be able to report again that in the face of significant sector challenges, where an environment of little or no certainty beyond a few months continues to be the norm, Blue Triangle has again performed extremely well and finished the 2019/20 year in a very healthy position.

The financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 show a surplus of £190,404 (2019 - £424,598) and the Statement of Financial Position of the Association shows net assets of £5,564,643 (2019-£5,376,632). The Association continues to maintain sound financial management policies and enjoys a strong financial position. The results compare favourably to the budget set and continued close control of all areas of income and cost has resulted in another positive performance.

Having completed significant internal reviews as well as recruitment in vital areas of operation in the previous year the Association has been building on this position to upgrade its procedures and operations. The planned investment in systems and hardware will improve efficiency and identify further areas for development, across all areas of the business. This will continue throughout the coming 2-3 years as new structures are put in place and will place the organisation in a strong position for continuing and, we hope, growing activity in the future.

High performance ratings from sector regulators during the year have again been pleasing to receive and a positive stimulus to everyone.

However, the real judges are those with whom we work. I was privileged to be present at an Association presentation during the year where a service user gave her own reminiscences of how Blue Triangle had been able to help in her particular challenging life situation, and got her back to a place where having her own home and managing a family were something she could now be proud of achieving. I was not the only one present moved by the story she told! And this is exactly the sort of thing that all our staff work so hard for, an aim which we are glad to say is fulfilled in many cases and something to be very proud of!

As I write this report the whole country is still in 'lockdown' due to the restrictions enforced because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

All of us have been impacted enormously by this and Blue Triangle no less.

Seeking to continue to support some of the most vulnerable and marginalised members of society in Scotland is a major task at the best of times, and even more so now. New working protocols have had to be quickly put in place with the highest care for safety of everyone involved the priority and thankfully, so far, we have been fortunate in that the impact on staff and service users has been at a level we could cope with. That is not to say that it has been easy - many have demonstrated a wonderful level of commitment and care in very difficult circumstances. Thank you to everyone in BTHA who has already been willing in situations of enormous stress, worry and even potential danger, to keep going and serve others with such integrity and professionalism.

Coming towards the end of my report, I must also make mention of our Chief Executive, Fiona Stringfellow, who, after 10 years at the helm, has indicated she feels it is time to move on. It goes without saying that the position is key in any organisation, but I feel it is right to pay tribute to her as she leaves for pastures new. The organisation has been fortunate in its leaders since its inception and that has certainly been the case with Fiona. She leaves with Blue Triangle in a sound position financially, robust in its reputation of achieving with vulnerable people, firm on a foundation of strong procedures and policies, looking confidently to the future, and, perhaps most importantly, working as an efficient team of happy and valued staff. A significant achievement, I think. Thank you Fiona, we will miss you!

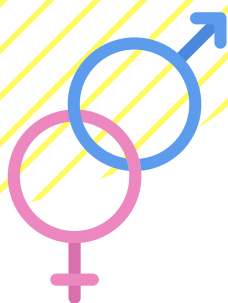
As always thank you to everyone, particularly to the project staff teams and Managers for all the fantastic work they do in partnership with service users and their families, and our statutory and third sector partners. Thank you also to the Committee of Management and the various Sub-Committees for all their work and also our Chief Executive, her executive team and the office staff team for their effort and commitment.

*Neil Robinson*

# 2019/ 20 IN REVIEW

## COVID-19 CRISIS

This financial year has ended with one of the most challenging events in the association's history with the public health crisis caused by COVID-19. The challenges even leading up to the lockdown have been significant for the services who remain fully operational, HQ staff who are all working from home and the committee members themselves whose lives, careers and families have all been impacted by the pandemic. The association is fully operational given that it provides essential services to vulnerable people and will continue to work throughout the pandemic.



The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 came into force on the 1st April 2017 which means we need to publish an annual report on our gender pay gap. Last year we reported that our mean gender pay gap was 1.2%, with our median gap at zero. This year our mean gender pay gap is -2.34% and our median pay gap is -2.45%. This compares very favourably with the Office of National Statistics which indicates the UK mean earnings gap is 17.4% and the median earnings gap is 18.4%.

## GENDER PAY GAP

## NEW REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

We have had new Regulatory requirements this year as we became subject to Freedom of Information requirements. This means we are now even more open and transparent about what we do as we provide information on many of our services and activities through our website. The Scottish Housing Regulator also introduced a new assurance regime which involves the committee signing off that we have systems and processes in place to meet the standards required.



As part of our Away Day this year, the senior staff created a new mission and vision statement to give us a refreshed focus for the future.

Our new mission statement is  
“to assist vulnerable people achieve better lives”

Our vision is:  
“to put the needs of individuals at the heart of everything we do”

We also considered what makes us unique as an organisation:  
“We are progressive and forward thinking, committed to providing services that meet the changing needs of society”

This builds on our strategic aims of:

- Being the market leader
- Diversification
- Increasing innovation and creating new services

## STRATEGIC PLANS & ACTIVITIES

# PERFORMANCE & OUTCOMES

## OUR PROJECTS

Our Projects have had a successful year in providing much needed services for vulnerable people.

We provide 17 registered services over 25 sites in nine local authority areas and in any given night we accommodate and support up to 300 vulnerable people.

Over 2019-20, we accommodated 999 service users in our supported accommodation projects.

During the year, 514 service users moved on to more settled accommodation, for example: own tenancy local authority (312), own tenancy in the private sector (1), own tenancy Housing Association (23), and returned home (2), moved in with family or friends (65).

This means that 59% of all our service users left the accommodation in a planned way.

Unfortunately, 98 service users had their occupancies terminated, the vast majority for violence or vandalism, which accounts for 11% of the total number of leavers during the year.

We collect evaluation of services from the people that use our services and they have rated our services highly throughout the year.

We asked them to rate both the standard of their accommodation as well as the services & support received.

## SERVICE USER SATISFACTION

The scores range from 76% approval to 100%.

We have had a full programme of engagement activity which has been appreciated by the people that use our services!

## SERVICE USER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

In Sept/Oct we have a Creative Arts Poetry/Short story/song competition. We had some amazing submissions some of which were incredibly moving reflecting lived experience of homelessness and personal trauma.

In November, we held a Christmas card competition which resulted in some creative and inspired submissions – and also some very uplifting ones.

In December, we had a football tournament at Toryglen Football Stadium in Glasgow which was a great day out for our service users and external agencies such as Invest in Renfrewshire (who ended up winning the trophy! 2020/21 will be the year for a rematch, watch this space!).



# WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US

"I appreciate the fact that every single staff member is always there for me in my time of need and also the fact that they can always tell when I'm hiding that I need support so they are very good that way"

"My keyworker is open and honest with me and I can discuss anything with him. He will give me straight answers that I can understand. I feel like I have a good relationship with him and can trust him."

"The best bit...the support from staff, staff are great. I've improved my communication skills and I feel good"

"I appreciated the fact that they helped me when I was in a bad situation and helped me better myself"

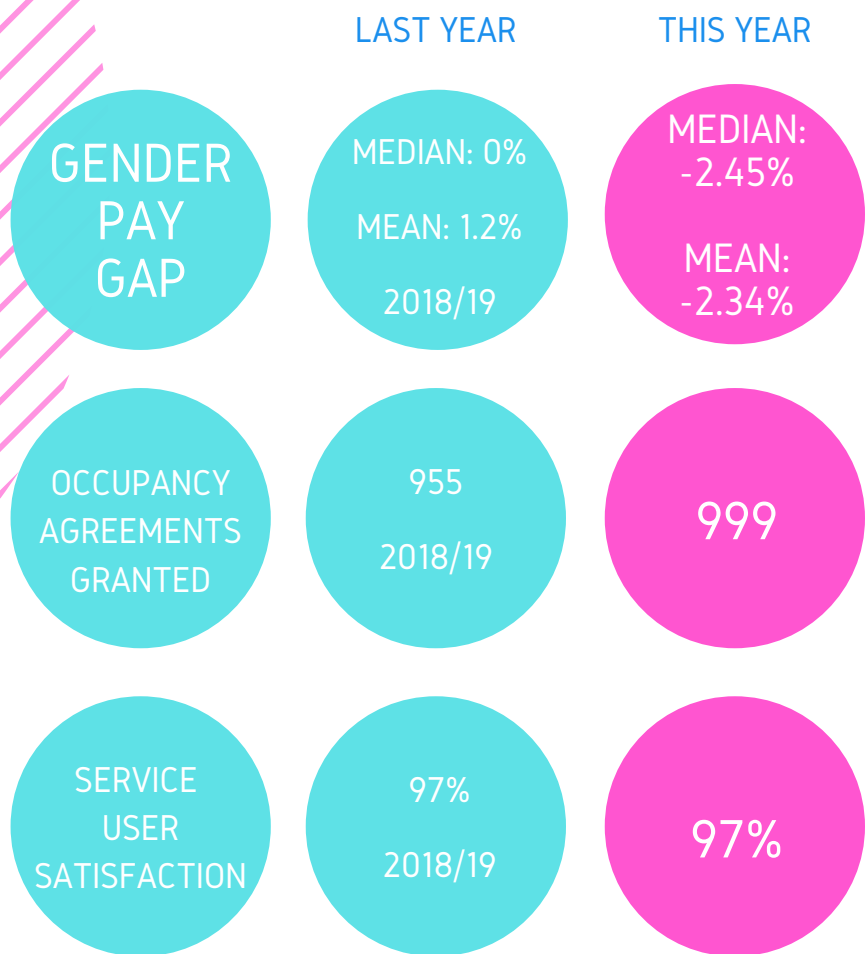
"I can't say enough about how amazing they are. They meant everything when I was down and couldn't get up"

"It's much better than I imagined it to be. I'm actually proud to say that I live here"

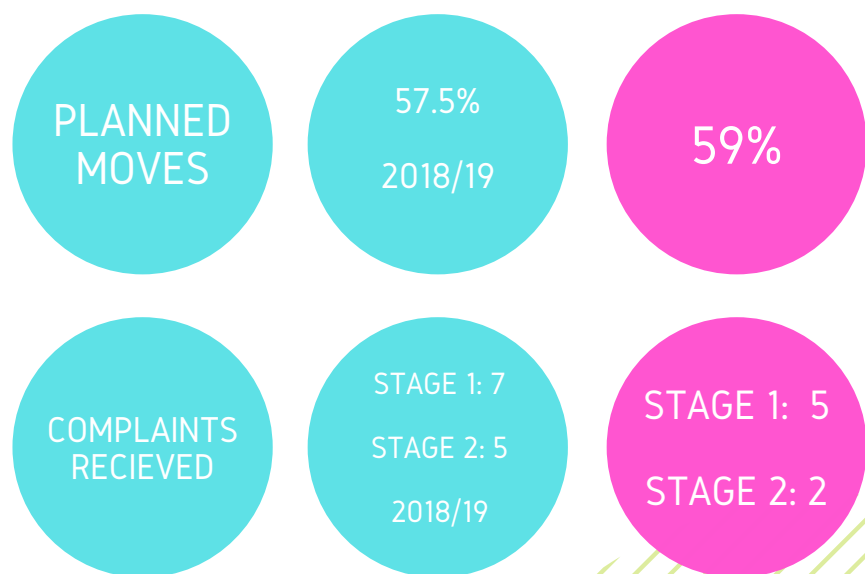
"A staff member helped me to do my CV and to apply for jobs. Staff are very helpful. It's very safe here for people who feel vulnerable"



# HOW WE DID IN NUMBERS



% OF PEOPLE WHO RATED THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVED AS EXCELLENT/GOOD



IN 2019/20, WE RECEIVED 0 EQUALITIES BASED COMPLAINTS.





# HOW WE DID IN NUMBERS & WORDS

## CARE INSPECTORATE REPORTS

IN 2018/19, THE CARE INSPECTORATE UNDERTOOK 6 INSPECTIONS OF OUR SERVICES.  
IN 2019/20, THE CARE INSPECTORATE UNDERTOOK 7 INSPECTIONS OF OUR SERVICES.

### LAST YEAR

GRADE 5: 10  
GRADE 4: 2  
GRADE 3: 2  
2018/19

### THIS YEAR

GRADE 5: 12  
GRADE 4: 1  
GRADE 3: 2  
2019/20

## CASE STUDY "S"

S is a lady in her 40s. She has drug and alcohol addiction issues, mental health issues and a history of abusive domestic relationships. In addition to these factors, S had experienced a total breakdown in her relationships with her brother and her two adult sons.

S was admitted to the service having been involved in a violent altercation with her previous care provider. She had significant bruising and cuts to her face and body, and had been charged with assault for the part she played in this incident. S arrived in the clothes she was wearing with no other personal belongings. The previous care provider had refused to return her belongings to her. S's self-esteem was at rock bottom.

Initially, S's keyworker submitted a request for a Blue Triangle Welfare Fund Grant. This was awarded and S was then able to go shopping with her keyworker and purchase new clothing and footwear. Her mood and self-esteem visibly lifted.

S was very appreciative of the support she received from project staff and kept her accommodation really clean and tidy. She was very obliging and would volunteer to help frequently with household tasks around the project and in the outdoor area. She also built very kind and caring relationships with some of the other service users in the project. In addition, S also managed her finances very well. She attended all appointments arranged in relation to her support package, including medical, dental, addictions and legal appointments.

S took part in our consultation with service users to discuss the concept of our service's support. The group's ideas were then translated by our student and local artists into two visual designs.

These murals now take pride of place on the first floor of the project and are a great point of focus, reflection and discussion for service users, staff and visitors alike.

S's vulnerability was also linked to living in a town where she had no family links. Her keyworker did support her to make contact with her brother, and whilst this did not work out exactly as she had hoped, it did however open the channels of communication again. Her brother clearly cared for her and checked on her welfare, and S accepted that it would take time and effort on both sides to allow the relationship to recover fully, and to rebuild trust.

Following the sad and unexpected death of another service user, S struggled to cope with the emotions this brought up for her. Initially, she returned to using alcohol and drugs, with staff having to administer Naloxone and emergency lifesaving first aid treatment. Her personal hygiene standards slipped, with frequent incidents involving her being found in semi-naked state, and frequently having urinated. She could be verbally aggressive towards others at these times. Following an intervention, S agreed to bereavement support being arranged for her. She engaged really well with this service, and was able to discuss her feelings and emotions more openly and healthily following this.

Staff also linked S in to the local recovery network and she started to attend regular meetings and events. She was now doing well and building her own social networks which ensured she continued building her resilience, helping her to make more positive choices.

Shortly before moving out of the project, S's belongings were finally returned to her – this was due to the sheer tenacity of S and her keyworker. (Con't...)



# CASE STUDY CONTINUED...

## WHAT WE LEARNED

Like any other transition, moving on can be a stressful situation for our service users. Additional stress arises for service users when they are allocated tenancies with no carpets and curtains, a full benefit award is not made or delivery of furniture is delayed and they are not sure what furnishings they will have in the intervening period, if any.

We learned that S needed the time to get to know people and build trust to invest in the new supporting staff in order to adapt and settle. Contact between our service and the follow on service was beneficial to assist S and other service users in their transition in to their tenancies.

Moving from group living environment to living on her own was a frightening prospect for S, given her previous history of isolation. Whilst S engaged well, some other service users are not able to do so due to severe mental health and addiction issues. We aim to enable those we support to thrive. The best way to do this is to collaborate closely with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure holistic services for our service users.

(Con't...) S's confidence rose again when she was reunited with her possessions, her personal photos of family and other mementos.

S moved in to her own tenancy and with the support available, she has started to turn this in to a home. Fortunately, her tenancy is in an attractive location. She is looking forward to the spring and summer time when she can spend time tending to her garden.

S maintains regular contact with the staff and one or two of the service users in the project and attended the Christmas meal. S is growing in confidence and has the added support of move on support from other voluntary agencies, who will provide support for her during her transition and resettlement in her tenancy. She is due to have a new kitchen installed in the near future, and following this she plans to make use of her decorating grant to freshen up her paint work.

We are very proud of S and the progress she has made.



# DONATIONS WE'VE RECEIVED THIS YEAR



& Pat's Trust



wetherspoon



# MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS

TOTAL  
JOBS

LAST YEAR

EMERGENCY: 73  
NON-EMERGENCY:  
734  
2018/19

THIS YEAR

EMERGENCY: 85  
NON-EMERGENCY:  
848

AVERAGE  
TIME

EMERGENCY: 1.03  
HOURS  
NON-EMERGENCY:  
1.14 DAYS  
2018/19

EMERGENCY: 0.9 HOURS  
NON-EMERGENCY:  
1.13 DAYS

WITHIN  
TARGET  
TIMESCALES

EMERGENCY: 100%  
NON-EMERGENCY:  
100%  
2018/19

EMERGENCY: 100%  
NON-EMERGENCY:  
100%

CASE STUDY  
IN THEIR  
OWN WORDS  
"B"

AGAINST ALL  
ODDS, THE  
FUTURE LOOKS  
BRIGHT.

## Background

My younger sister and I were placed in foster care when I was 13 years old. Before that we lived with my dad but due to his illness he felt that a foster placement would be better for us. I have an older sister too who I am still in contact with. I enjoyed school and made some good friends. I liked IT and I decided to study an HNC in this at college. I had a very good circle of friends around my foster placement and I spent most of my time out with them. As I got older I found it more and more difficult to cope with the pressures of my foster family. I moved out my foster home at 18 and move back in with my dad and things starting feeling better. Sadly, my dad died about two weeks later. I did not know how to come to terms with this, I had suffered a massive loss in my life. My biggest support was my friends.

## Care Experience

I found living in my foster home very difficult and I was never able to fit in and it never really felt like home. I struggled with the strict rules and structure and felt these were too harsh. I was glad my sister was with me because I did not really bond with anyone else. We were able to have a good relationship.

She settled in a lot better than me and still lives there but she was there for me when I needed her. When I moved to Somerset Place I felt anxious I was moving into a place with seven other young people that I did not know.

It was very intimidating. It took a while but I gradually settled in. I kept busy with college and spending time out with my friends. I have been living here for three years and over this time I have met some very interesting people. I have made friends for life but I have also had to live with people I did not get on with. This is something you have to get used to living in a communal environment.

## Mental Health

I suffered a breakdown in December 2017 and was admitted to a psychiatric ward where I was diagnosed with drug induced psychosis. This was a very frightening time for me, it was very confusing and I worried if I would ever recover. I was prescribed medication which helped me to cope.



# CASE STUDY CONTINUED...

Cont... I was in the hospital over the Christmas period, I felt very lonely despite having family and support staff visiting me. I was able to get well enough to move back to Somerset Place and it was good to see familiar faces and be in my own room. After leaving the hospital I started engaging with my CPN weekly and a psychiatrist regularly. I got more active with the support of ASIST staff, going to the gym or going for a walk. To be honest I struggled taking my medication and following an assault that put me in the hospital my mental health deteriorated and in 2019 I ended up back in the hospital.

## Getting Well

This stay was much shorter as I was able to recover much quicker. The medication I am on is working well for me. I try to take on the advice from my CPN, my social worker and support staff because I know they have my best interest at heart. The road has not been easy but I have learnt so much along the way and this will be so valuable when I move into my own place. I want to be nearer my friends and family and I think this will help me and so I am looking for a place in an area near them.

## Positive Relationships

My key worker, Mags supported me through my journey in Somerset Place. I could rely on her to help me with any problem and I knew she would never judge me or get annoyed with me. Mags visited me in the hospital whenever she could to cheer me up and bring me what I needed. To have a consistent figure, someone I could trust helped me massively. I have made friends for life and got back in touch with friends from school. I know for me to be happy I need good people around me.

## The Future

I feel ready to move into my own tenancy and so I'm looking at housing options. I feel well, happy and hopeful about the future and I am excited about what this will bring.

## Reflection and Evaluation

I used to think that I wanted to move on without any support but after a lot of consideration and discussion I realise that some help will be good for me. It is not a weakness to admit you need help. It takes a strong person to see obstacles and put plans into place to get over them. I realise now that no-one needs to go through life on their own and that it is good to help other people whenever you can.



# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020/21



## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Our Digital Transformation Manager will be driving forward new initiatives developing our IT and telephony systems to assist our staff teams and enabling access to digital services for people staying in our projects.

We will be building on the performance management pilot that we have established throughout the year which looks at reflective practice and value based recruitment and staff development. We now have an on-line learning and development portal for both staff and service users to access training and development and this will be focused and expanded on this year.



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



## FUTURE PROOFING OUR PROJECTS

There will be a focus on investing in our projects and buildings to ensure fixtures and fittings meet the needs of delivering trauma informed services in an accommodation setting. This will be looking at investment in buildings as well as technological solutions. There will also be focused investment in learning and development of staff teams to ensure that services are delivered in a trauma informed way.

The new CEO will be tasked with developing our plans to diversify our association whilst ensuring our core activities continue to expand and remain high quality solutions for homeless people with complex needs. They will be tasked with raising the profile of the association and what it does.



## DIVERSIFICATION

This year will be my last report as CEO and so this report is written in a spirit of reflection. I have hugely enjoyed working for a values driven organisation and am immensely proud of the things that Blue Triangle stands for and delivers for vulnerable people. The staff team (both in the projects and HQ) is highly qualified, committed and without question go above and beyond for the users of our services. The Committee of Management are a fantastic group of volunteers who are supportive and value driven and who strive to make Blue Triangle a great organisation for those that work for it and those that use its services. I wish them continued success and I hope that the association goes from strength to strength and develops and grows to meet the changing society needs post COVID-19. A new CEO will bring new and exciting ideas to the table and I am looking forward to seeing where Blue Triangle goes next!



## A FINAL WORD FROM FIONA...



# COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT AND OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 1 APRIL 2019 TO 31 MARCH 2020

Neil Robinson (Chair)  
Frances Miller (Vice Chair)  
Stuart Dryburgh  
Deborah McGuire  
Anthony Keith Jones  
Heather Ward  
Anna Davis  
Mike Trant  
Donald Simpson  
Stuart McIvor  
Elisa Campanaro  
Caroline Clark  
Rhona Harper

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS LEFT THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Paul McGarry (resigned 19 September 2019)  
Jean McCormack (resigned 8 April 2019)

## EXECUTIVE TEAM



Fiona Stringfellow, Chief Executive Officer



Graeme Holmes, Finance Director



Ian Batt, Operations Director





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