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Press Release

Tuesday 30th July

Employment service nominated for national industry award

Cheltenham Borough Homes' (CBH) Employment Initiatives Service has been shortlisted for Inside Housing Magazine's annual Women In Housing Awards 2019.

The service was nominated for the category of 'Team of the year: Frontline (Small)' in recognition for the work they do supporting the CBH tenants and the wider community to support people back into work – including 68 people into work and 225 into training.

Based at CBH's Oakley office the team runs four work club drop ins a week, two from Oakley and two in Hesters Way, with an average of 200 sessions delivered each year. At these sessions, the team supports Cheltenham residents who are out of work, looking to develop their CVs and in some cases to find their first jobs.

Working alongside Adult Education Gloucestershire the team has delivered six courses in basic IT training, benefitting nearly 100 people who leave with a recognised certificate to help them in their future employment

The team has worked particularly closely with vulnerable people, working in partnership with National Star College on their 'Steps into Work' scheme to support those with complex needs, and also supporting those affected by Welfare Reform, being recognised by GEM Project as an Exemplar Employer in the process. They have since established themselves as a preferred partner with the British Heart Foundation for arranging volunteering placements which have helped people to gain vital experience in the workplace.

In 2017 the EIS team launched 'Thrive', an alternative provision programme developed to help energise and inspire young people who are at risk of being excluded. This is a particular issue in Gloucestershire where the amount of pupils excluded is nearly double the national average, so the scheme's aim is to help keep these young people in mainstream education.

This year the scheme has been run with pupils from All Saints Academy and Pittville School and six young people have taken part in a six month programme where they completed a wide range of activities and work placements specially designed for them to achieve their ASDAN Careers and Experiencing Work certificate.

As part of the programme, the students also took part in six week work experience placements with our own responsive repairs and voids teams, as well as contractors Travis Perkins, Ian Williams, Liberty Gas and Cheltenham Flooring. The Thrive scheme has now been nominated for the Travis Perkins My Community Awards 2019 in September.

Paul Stephenson, chief executive at Cheltenham Borough Homes, said: "It's easy to assume that a business responsible for managing housing stock focuses on bricks and mortar and nothing else, but at CBH we do so much more.

"Our Employment Initiatives Service has such a positive impact on our communities, getting people into work for the first time, helping those struggling to find jobs develop new skills and supporting our next generation as they come through. Gayna and Caroline work tirelessly to support local residents and this nomination is recognition of the brilliant job they do – I'm very proud of them."

The award ceremony takes place on Thursday 10th October at Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester and we will share how the team got on the night.

For more information on the support available from our Employment Initiatives Service, visit: <https://www.cbh.org/services/help-support/employment-support-and-advice/>

ENDS

Editor's Notes:

Image details

L-R Caroline Wheelhouse and Gayna Griffiths from CBH's Employment Initiatives Service pictured during Give Us a Chance #CommunitiesThatWork campaign – a housing sector wide campaign to raise awareness of the work that the social housing sector does to help people into employment.

For more information on the campaign, visit: www.giveusachance.co.uk/communitiesthatwork

Case Study #1

A local female who has accessed our work clubs periodically over the 12 months to increase her employability skills, compile a CV and gain some interview techniques.

Due to her mild learning difficulties she was concerned that employers would want her to complete tasks that she had never tried before; she had little confidence in her own abilities.

EIS worked weekly with her for a period of two months before she was successful in gaining temporary employment in M&S. Having completed her contract she re-engaged with the service and undertook an ASDAN Employability Short Course with CBH, this course raised her confidence, reaffirmed her abilities and gave her motivation to pursue other job vacancies.

After a short period of time she was able to gain alternative employment within the retail sector. She has completed her probationary period and has been offered a permanent contract. She has been in this position for six months and regularly visits the work clubs to give us updates on her continuing progress.

Case Study #2

Mr S was made redundant from a job that he had been in for over 20 years and was finding it hard to get work. This task was made even harder by his Autism Spectrum Disorder.

EIS quickly identified that he would need expert help and support from other agencies to achieve his goal of finding a new job.

They worked closely with the National Star College who completed an assessment and offered him a place on their Steps into Work programme, working for the British Heart Foundation on a supported one-year internship.

He successfully completed his Internship this week and has re-engaged with our team to seek paid employment, his CV is updated and he has gained confidence, new skills and a work reference to support him in his ambition to remain independent.

Issued by: Shôn Douglas, Communications Team, Cheltenham Borough Homes, 01242387509, comms@cbh.org

Kind Regards,

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