Summer Success

This month we are celebrating success after being named as finalists in the National Learning Disabilities and Autism Awards, we announce 100% ‘Good’ ratings across all of our CQC registered provisions and put the spotlight on Alex Green who is the Building Project Manager for our award winning new build services. We also hear about our Care Home Open Day celebrations, review the official launch of Swan Court which was opened by the CEO of Care England in June and find out more about our amazing team members of the month and people supported at Precious Homes!

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This month we’ve put the spotlight on Alex Green who leads the building and construction team behind our award winning new developments at Precious Homes. Over the past three years Alex has worked in partnership with our Directors, team members and people supported to develop a range of innovative, forward thinking and first class services that really are transforming lives.

Alex is both Building Project Manager and Site Manager for all new build and renovation work across Precious Homes’ services Nationally. His team are in the final stages of completing Swan Court - part of a new three tiered service and social enterprise in Kings Heath, Birmingham.

**Alex explains:** “We are constantly developing and changing approaches to make sure we are driving forward ideas as a team. This is the key to pushing the boundaries with each new project.”

Each new service is developed through thorough planning and working in partnership with Alex, the Directors, team members and individuals supported at Precious Homes. Together they form the ‘Creative Team’.

“We sit down as a team and simply ask questions: What has worked? What has not worked? Built into the features of our new developments are all the ‘best bits’ of previous service designs as well as new innovative ideas which have been developed as a team.”

A key focus is on environments and sensory needs due to the complex needs of the people we support including individuals with Autistic Spectrum Conditions and behaviours which may be described as challenging.

“We look at the layout, environment and building regulations so we can work proactively. This includes working creatively to make the best use of the outdoor space and transform existing buildings, maximising safety and space, incorporating the Creative Team’s innovative design ideas and ultimately leading to the creation of a homely environment.”

Alex and his team also led the design and building of Phoenix House which won ‘Best Care Facility for Younger Adults’ at the 2017 Pinders Healthcare Design Award Finals in recognition of Precious Homes’ London based residential service, Phoenix House.

“The key is to make sure that services can be adapted around individual needs. We set each space to a certain design level and can tweak certain aspects of their new home to suit their needs before they move in.”

This flexibility of design means environments can be adjusted during transition to meet a specific need such as additional security or responding to mobility or sensory needs.

“Over the years I have built hundreds of houses and worked on a number of developments. In my past three years of working for Precious Homes, I am now building something that matters and makes a real difference to people’s lives. It is genuinely fulfilling and a great personal reward!” Alex adds.

**Chief Operating Officer, Greg Lapham:** “Alex is not just a Construction Manager, he is a key part of our design team. He supports and helps us to achieve our vision for high quality, uniquely personalised environments. He is very person centred and is always thinking outside the box to create amazing homes for the people we support. Alex understands our unique requirements and vision for housing – making sure each service is the very best it can be and ensuring that with each new project we are raising the bar. It’s fantastic to have someone on board with the building skills and experience he has, but who is also passionate about our organisation and as a result is really making a difference to the lives of the people we support.”
Keith Walters has lived at Precious Homes’ Diligo House in Kingsbury, London for over 6 years. He recently achieved a personal goal to visit his cousins in Ramsgate, Kent accompanied by his Key Worker Richard and Support Team member Michael. The break was a huge success!

His Key Worker Richard Woodcock, explains: “Keith and his cousins grew up together as children and were very close as he had no brothers and sisters. Although the cousins now chat regularly on the phone, they had not met up for a number of years. Earlier this year they decided to work towards meeting up and Keith decided that he wanted to visit his cousins as part of a short break away in Kent.”

Keith uses a wheelchair and requires a specialist equipment, so his team at Diligo set about looking at the logistics of a trip away and how they could make this work well for him.

“We did lots of research, got everything together and made sure we had both accessible transport and accommodation. Keith stayed in a lovely seafront hotel in Ramsgate, near to his cousins, which has boasted several famous guests from writers and poets to the young Princess Victoria just before she became Queen.”

Keith had a fantastic two-day break in Kent meeting his cousins, enjoying meals out, eating ice-cream and sightseeing! “He had a great catch up with his cousins, Miranda and Valerie. Richard can sometimes struggle with his memory regarding recent events but his memory of his childhood is really sharp. It was fantastic to see him reminiscing about old times, remembering so many details and looking at childhood photographs. Everybody was pleased to have been re-united and the trip was a huge success.” Richard adds.

Thank you for sharing your photographs Keith!
On 7th June Professor Martin Green, Chief Executive of Care England launched our new community residential service, Swan Court. The service is part of a new three tiered service and social enterprise in Kings Heath, Birmingham which will provide innovative and high quality support shaped around individual need.

Martin Green is the Chief Executive of Care England, the largest representative body for independent social care services in the UK. He joined Precious Homes’ team members, families, people supported and local health and social care professionals on the day to officially launch the new service in Kings Heath, Birmingham.

In his opening speech Professor Martin Green said: “What really stands out within this special organisation is that everyone buys into the values of caring. I think that is the definer that makes things very different. Precious Homes are here to give people a really good life.

They are not here just to deliver a service, but are here to enable people to live well. It’s so fantastic to see the quality of the buildings but also to see the philosophy that underpins this – the quality of the care and support that is delivered as well as the quality of the lives of the people who live in these services. I know this is going to be a fabulous home for people and I am really honoured to be here. I wish the team tremendous success.”

Once fully completed the new development will comprise of a social enterprise called L’Ucello café and three main services: Swan Court, a residential service for 8 individuals; Falcon Mews, a Supported Living Plus service for 11 individuals; and Robin’s View, a Supported Living Service for 7 individuals.

Manager Paul Smedley, Senior Service Manager at Precious Homes said: “The Open Day was a fantastic event to showcase the amazing development. We had a wide range of professionals, stakeholders and people to be supported and their families attending on the day. I would like to thank everyone for joining us and we look forward to really making this a home for people supported to call their own.”

Greg Lapham, Chief Operating Officer, said: “Thank you to Professor Martin Green for attending on the day and supporting the launch of our new service in Birmingham. We have certainly raised the bar in terms of environment at Swan Court which really does not fit into traditional models of what a residential care home looks like. Feedback from the day tells us that people are highly impressed with the care and support, environment and future plans for the services. Well done to the team.”

For further information about Swan Court and other future provision on site contact Senior Manager, Paul Smedley on 07574 858867 or paul.smedley@precious-homes.com.
Precious Homes celebrates Care Home Open Day 2017

For the 5th year running, Precious Homes joined care homes across the UK to celebrate National Care Home Open Day 2017. With events at both Oster House in Hertfordshire and Treow House in Houghton Regis, our team members, people supported, families and friends celebrated the National Event in style!

The events really gave the opportunity for both people supported and their guests to meet new faces and increase links and friendships.

Jo says: “At Precious Homes people being part of their local community and developing friendships is a key part of our support. These events were a way to celebrate this – as well as an excuse to have a party!”

At the Treow House event individuals and the team were also joined by the individuals and family members of those moving into the services newly built flats over the coming months. The event was a great platform for them to meet the whole team and start to build friendships with the people who already live at Treow House.

“Our building development team who are working on our refurbished flats also joined us. Not only helping us celebrate on the day but also supporting us to get set up and even building a BBQ prior to the event! I would like to say a huge thank you to them, and to everyone who came to support our two events and make the days so special.”

A huge success! Thank you to Jo and her team for the fantastic photos shared by the people supported at Treow House and Oster House.

To find out more about National Care Home Open Day go to: www.carehomeopenday.org.uk.
CQC Success across the Board!

Every inspected service across Precious Homes is accredited with a CQC rating of ‘Good’ – a real testament to the organisation-wide drive for truly outstanding services and lives for individuals supported.

Chief Operating Officer, Greg Lapham says: “Across the board ‘Good’ ratings for all of our inspected services and supported living registrations is an amazing achievement which our team members should be very proud of.”

This puts Precious Homes one step closer to its aim to become the provider of choice with outstanding provisions across the UK.

Greg explains: “We don’t just want a handful of services to be outstanding or this to be achieved because we have one outstanding Manager. Our vision is for company-wide outstanding services with a shared culture on increasing quality further and continuously improving and raising our standards. We are already very reflective – taking a ‘lessons learnt’ approach and striving to raise the bar and improve continuously in everything we do.”

Over the past few years Precious Homes have invested in HR, recruitment, retention and operational delivery with new team members, systems, ideas and processes to drive forward quality across the organisation.

“Our team members are the fuel that drives our vision and why we have reached such an important milestone with our 100% CQC ‘Good’ success. The whole team are on board and proud of what we do and what we can achieve. This is evident across our entire organisation.”

The plan now is for further investment into quality as the next step of the journey to ensure Managers and Team Members are equipped with the training, knowledge, processes and tools they need to achieve Precious Homes’ outstanding quality goal.

“The big focus is on training and how this can link into service improvement plans to increase quality. We are also exploring options of developing our support planning, with plans to invest in smart phones and apps that can capture outcomes in real time, linking to electronic support planning so that team members can capture and evidence success in a more proactive way.”

To find out more about the range of services and support Precious Homes’ provides go to: www.precious-homes.co.uk/what-we-do

Awards Galore

Congratulations to Jo Rodell, Glen Randall, the Fountain Road Support Team and the entire Precious Homes team who have all been named as finalists in the Learning Disabilities and Autism National Awards 2017!

The National Learning Disabilities and Autism Awards celebrate excellence in the support for people with learning disabilities and autism spectrum conditions and aim to pay tribute to organisations and individuals who excel in providing quality care and make a huge difference to lives of people across the UK.

Recognition has been achieved in the following award categories:
- Precious Homes – ‘The Employer Award’
- Jo Rodell – ‘The Manager Award’
- Glen Randall – ‘The Great Autism Practice Award’
- Fountain Road Team – ‘The Making a Difference Award’

The finals are being held on the 14th July 2017 at the ICC in Birmingham. Our team members and representatives will join other finalists from across the UK for the grand finals where National Champions will be named. Congratulations and good luck to our amazing finalists!

To find out more about the awards go to: www.nationalldawards.co.uk
Over the past 8 months a mini revolution has taken place in how Precious Homes recruit new team members - with a key aim to attract and retain people with the right values, skills and drive to develop their careers in Social Care.

Tony Ferrari, Talent Acquisition and Retention Manager, explains the whole process and the key benefits it has brought to recruitment at Precious Homes:

“Some of our new team members reading this article will have passed through our new recruitment process with its wacky format and fun element, but there is a serious side to it too. In the past, recruitment has been carried out in the conventional way which sometimes involved 2 or 3 interviewers in a panel format, with decisions being based on the performance of the interviews and experience captured from within their CV.

As an organisation, Precious Homes is exceptionally person centred in every aspect - we wanted this to be reflective of our recruitment process. We believe that a new team member with the right, attitude, values and beliefs aligned can learn the skills, receive training and acquire mentorship from our experienced teams across Precious Homes with the aim for them to really succeed and develop their experience, and ultimately careers, within a supportive and proactive learning environment.

In response our team, led by Cathal Lyons, have re-designed Precious Homes’ recruitment process with the aim to support Managers across the UK to recruit and retain high quality staff focussed on values rather than past experience.

This began with a brainstorming the idea for our new Assessment Days – a more fun, interactive and group orientated process with values and culture at the heart of it.

These involve group sessions, scenario based assessments and then 1:1 interviews with Managers.

The days have been a real success with the agenda of the sessions designed to capture their judgement, behaviours and decisions in a range of scenarios. The group work also puts candidates at ease prior to their 1:1 interview which we know can be nerve racking for some people. In response, they come out of their shell and we get to see the real ‘person’ in action.

The sessions are also an opportunity for our teams to ‘sell’ the Precious Homes’ dream – describing the culture they will be joining and exactly the team we want to develop into the future.

The feedback about these new sessions has been overwhelmingly positive from both a Manger and candidate perspective. As a result, some fantastic team members have been recruited over the past 8 months as part of this innovative process. We have even received emails from candidates who didn’t pass through saying whilst they were disappointed, they thoroughly enjoyed the day and could see what a great company Precious Homes is!”

Thank you Tony. A fantastic result for the team and a key part of our drive for truly outstanding services!
Our July team of the month are Michael Peters, Ricardo Estrada, Gideon Durham and John McGonigle who all support at Treow House Supported Living service, Houghton Regis. They were nominated by Senior Manager, Jo Rodell, for supporting George Hanmore at the end of his life.

Jo explains: “The family of George have spoken highly of each of these team members, stating that they do not know what they would have done without them. Not only did they support George himself, they also supported his family through an extremely difficult time. As George struggled to eat in the end, Michael gave him an encouraging high-five and cheered after every spoonful of food George managed to eat. The team managed to get George out of bed, into a wheelchair and walked him around the hospital grounds to ensure he wasn’t laid in bed looking at the walls. In fact, they all showed the family what caring truly means without having to be told, they treated George with dignity and respect in his last few weeks and told me they wanted to make a difference.”

Quick fire round with Gideon:

How long have you worked at Precious Homes?

I recently joined the team after having gone through the new recruitment process which was really interesting. The people assessing on the day got to know me as a person and not as a piece of paper. This is my first care role and I really love it.

What do you like most about working at Precious Homes?

The smiles on the people we support’s faces and the difference we can make. We recently supported a man to go to Thorpe Park for a trip away. We supported him to stay in a hotel and he absolutely loved it. He gave me the thumbs up as he got on every ride. It was brilliant!

Tell us an interesting fact about yourself?

I used to be a truck driver!

What is your favourite track?

Lately I have been listening to ‘Tool’ - a rock band. In fact, it’s all I’m playing at the moment!
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Team Member of the Month

Our team member of the month is Genevieve Ndidiemaka has been nominated by Jodie Hammond for her teamwork and kind, considerate disposition.

Jodie adds: “We have a resident who enjoys red wine but is unable to drink it due to health reasons. Recently, Genevieve supported him to a ‘BYOB’ local restaurant with a non-alcoholic bottle of wine. His words were “Positive Support” after finishing. Genevieve is a very reliable and valued team member who always goes that extra mile.”

July Team Member Honourable Mentions

Over the last month we have seen a huge number of amazing nominations and news highlighting the fantastic work being delivered by our team members across Precious Homes. Here are some of the best - our honourable mentions for July:

Rachel Williams nominated the team at Phoenix House for supporting a very complex transition. They have all done extremely well, increasing their knowledge and skills in the process.

Go team Phoenix!

Both Andy Combs and Cathal Lyons have nominated their colleagues Dan and Paul from Precious Homes’ maintenance team. The pair of them have shown real person centred values by helping to paint the people we support’s rooms to requested colours which allows the people we support to show off their rooms with pride.

Well done team and #proudtobeprecious.

Our Operations Director Simon has been nominated by Manager Angela Sharpe. She explains: “Simon is a very supportive manager and is always on hand if I have any problems. When he visits Lucentio House he always takes the time to speak with team members and people supported. Everyone at the service always comments on Simon’s friendly and cheerful demeanour!”

Marcelo Moreira has nominated his Deputy Manager at Ulysses House, Rashpal Bansel, for her hard work and commitment over the past 6 months. He says: “Rasphal has been helping the team to achieve the goals that together we set on the very beginning of January. Some of these goals, “planted” on the last cold winter of January have already been achieved. Rasphal is highly motivated and proactive, very person centred and keeps people we support at the centre of everything that she does."
Managing Director Mitesh has nominated Precious Homes' finance team at Central Support. He says: “The Finance Team have been through a number of changes over the past six months. They have shown true dedication and commitment, going above and beyond to ensure that the projects are well supported and that all the finance functions are completed on time, ensuring smooth running of the Company. The team are very reflective, always looking at ways they can improve.”

Support Team Member Susan Gaffoor at Burghley Road has been nominated by her colleague Dwen Gosling for showing ‘great consistency while maintaining a professional approach’ towards the team and all people supported. Dwen says: “Susan continues to work to the best of her abilities and consistently goes the extra for her team, people supported and company.”

Matthew Best has nominated Karen Gill stating: “Karen is an amazing manager with a brilliant personality and excellent communication skills. She puts us all before herself and listens to and understands her colleagues. She is quick to resolve issues to reduce any anxieties. This makes the team and working environment a fun and enjoyable place to in.”

Dates for your Diary

Learning Disability and Autism Award National Finals:
14th July 2017
ICC Birmingham

Treow House Open Day:
11th July 2017
Treow House, Park Side Drive, Houghton Regis LU5 5QL
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Precious Homes is an independent provider of residential, supported living and bespoke community support for young people and adults with autism spectrum conditions, learning disabilities, mental health needs and behaviour which may be described as challenging.

We support individuals to become significantly more independent and confident and to successfully integrate into the community over time.