

Community Solutions

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO A POSITIVE LIFESTYLE



90%

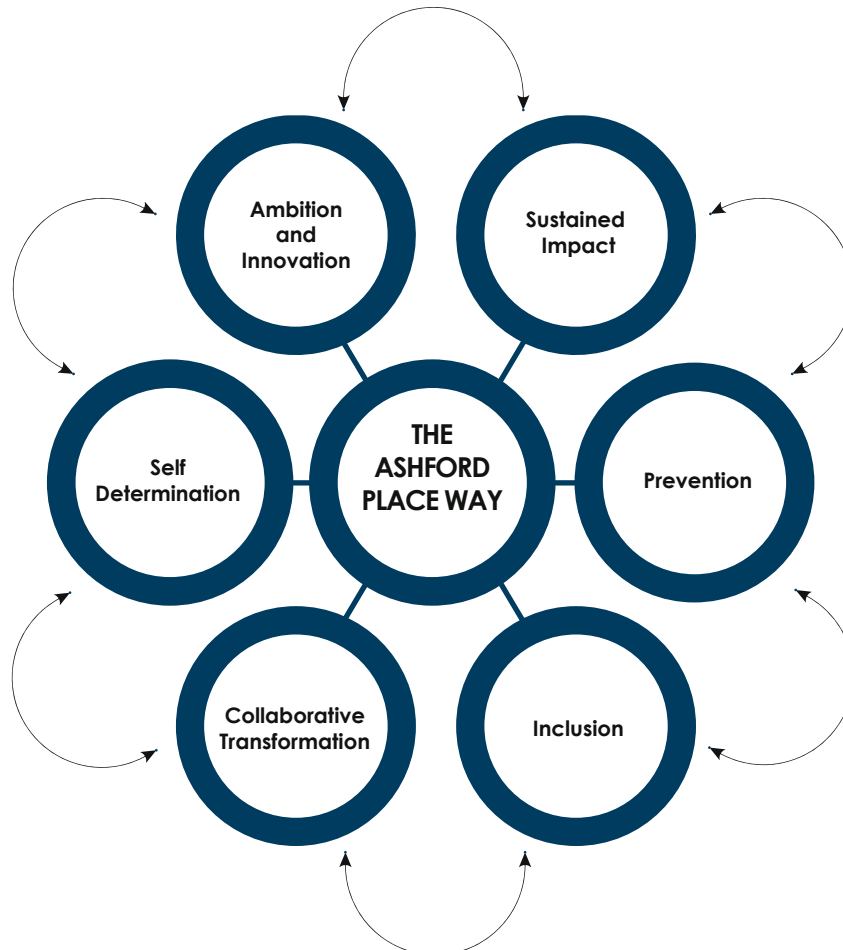
of the people
we support achieve and
sustain a significant
positive change in their
circumstances.

We have a severe and growing problem of homelessness, poor health and social exclusion in NW London at a time when state provision is being reduced. Ashford Place is a 30-year old charity deeply embedded in the community.

We provide a wide range of services helping people who have become homeless, unemployed or have health, mental health or substance abuse problems. We find that many of these conditions coincide. Our approach is to help clients to take a lead role in overcoming barriers to a positive lifestyle with the pro-active participation of their peers and the local community. **We excel at this.**

The Ashford Place Way

Our mission, our vision and who we are.



> The Ashford Place Way.

The Ashford Place Way involves a community-centred approach to ending social isolation and homelessness. It is based on our Guiding Principles and emphasises the key roles of the community and of individuals when it comes to creating real and positive change in people's lives.

> The Ashford Place Network.

We are building Ashford Place into a cohesive, networked, organisation embedded in the community. We act as the catalyst between a wide range of community stakeholders – community members, Ashford Place employees and trustees, faith and religious groups, councillors and council staff, community services and local businesses – to harness the collective capacity and capability of community resources to the greater good.

We want to continue to develop a local community we are all proud of and where everyone can contribute and participate together.

Vision, Mission & Principles

> Our Vision

To aim for social inclusion of all.

> Our Mission

To offer a full range of effective community-based services to homeless and socially isolated people enabling them to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Guiding Principles and Strategy

We work to a set of guiding principles and practices that underpin everything we do. These are:

> Prevention:

We seek to identify issues before they arise and take pre-emptive action.

> Inclusion in the Community:

We act as a community catalyst to energise, coordinate and harness the capabilities of multiple stakeholders.

> Collaborative Transformation:

We deliver interventions and solutions that are mutually reinforcing, which build capability and the capacity to transform lives and attitudes.

> Self Determination:

We support clients to use their skills and experiences to identify routes to personal, social and financial independence.

> Ambitious and Innovative Solutions:

We encourage new and innovative approaches and the use of technology to deliver scalable and sustainable solutions.

> Sustained Impact:

We make a sustained social and economic impact on the livelihoods of the individuals and communities we serve.

> Our strategic approach emphasises:

- The need to prevent and end isolation through inclusion in the community.
- The need to have a decent home and to remain safe & healthy.
- The importance of employment or meaningful activity.
- Having a strong sustainable community spirit that supports everyone.

Parts of NW London,

where Ashford Place operates, have a serious problem of social deprivation. Brent, where we do most of our work, is ranked amongst the top 15% most deprived areas of the country. This deprivation is characterised

by high levels of long-term **unemployment**, low average incomes and a reliance on benefits and social housing.

Living in poverty can lead to social isolation, poorer health and a lower level of wellbeing. Socially isolated adults are more likely to undergo early admission into residential or nursing care. Being isolated can have a profound effect on mental, physical and emotional health. People on low incomes are more likely to have a life-limiting health condition, generally taking less exercise and having a **lower life expectancy**.



Homes – Secure homes for all

“The UK’s demand for housing far outstrips supply. Combined with changes to welfare, homelessness is an increasingly prevalent issue – in 2015, an estimated 3,500 people slept rough on any one night across England, a rise of 30% on the previous year and double the number reported in 2010. And yet this is merely the tip of the iceberg. (Inside Housing, Nov 18 2016)”

To address the rising demand, in 2014 we opened up rooms in Ashford Place to house 25 single homeless people who needed emergency accommodation.

What we do about this:

- The Assessment Centre in our building now provides emergency accommodation together with a comprehensive package of support and resettlement to help clients into independent living, social and financial independence. Since we opened in November 2014 we have booked in over 130 people a year to the Assessment Centre. The current average stay of a client in the centre is 93 days. Last year 350 people were given advice and support with housing problems, 133 people were helped off the streets, through our Assessment Centre, into secure accommodation and reconnected with family and friends.
- As well as providing much needed accommodation services, we provide counselling and drug and alcohol support.
- We run a Peer Support Project. Former clients come back to volunteer at Ashford Place using their lived experience to help others. They develop skills and experiences to make their transition into work much easier
- Latest data shows that 95% of those who move on from Ashford Place have maintained long-term accommodation after six months and 86% have maintained long-term accommodation after 12 months. We will continue to access a portfolio of suitable housing solutions increasing the number of clients moving from rough sleeping on the streets to independent rented accommodation.
- **Key Activities and Challenges Ahead**
 - Becoming the lead body for the coordination and integration of homelessness services in Brent with the intention of ending homelessness in the borough.
 - Providing a one-stop shop for the assessment and management of homeless clients.
 - Working with appropriate partners to identify individuals who are potentially at risk of becoming homeless.
 - Improving the employability of homeless people by providing Employment Training and Education services in partnership with local businesses and education providers.
 - Providing peer support to those in the community who have been resettled. We will work with them to develop the skills required to become fully independent through employment, education and training, preventing any relapse into homelessness.

Inclusion – An inclusive community

What we do about this:

- We work with a range of local groups within Brent and other parts of NW London to identify socially isolated individuals.
- We work with our clients to understand exactly what it is that they want and need so clients will co-design and co-produce services.
- **Key Activities and Challenges Ahead**
 - Promoting the Ashford Place building as a Community Hub.
 - Establishing a Good Neighbour Scheme working with volunteers to identify and engage with people who are socially isolated.
 - Helping socially isolated people to create their own 'Voice' – clients who are willing to act on behalf of others to influence the design and delivery of programmes aimed at social inclusion and to challenge current commissioning approaches.

Health & Wellbeing – A healthy community

What we do about this:

- We promote positive Mental Health and its benefits.
- We promote Healthy Living and the benefits of nutritious food to enable clients to have healthier lives.
- We provide a range of services in house including an on-site GP surgery, laundry and shower facilities, nutritious hot cooked meals, financial inclusion and employment support.
- **Key Activities and Challenges Ahead**
 - Promoting our on-site GP and health practitioner service including counselling services, social prescribing and dementia support programmes.
 - Promoting a healthy eating programme.
 - Promoting active lifestyles.
 - Creating a mental health service programme focusing on emotional literacy and capacity building.
 - Identifying people who need our services through partnerships with hospitals and GPs.
 - Offering peer-to-peer support whereby people who are living with dementia work with those who are new to the service.

Working together - Community action

Our ambition is to become the lead in building and sustaining coherent relationships with community partners like faith groups, local businesses, the police and neighbourhood groups. We aim to provide a single point of contact to end social isolation in the community.

What we do about this:

- We will identify capability and capacity amongst our local stakeholders to utilise available resources including IT, people, premises and knowledge to deliver results.
- **Key Activities and Challenges Ahead**
 - Utilising technology to provide solutions and information that allow us to achieve greater reach and impact.
 - Leveraging partnerships with local stakeholders to deliver financial literacy and debt management skills.
 - Supporting clients to access meaningful activity opportunities including volunteering, training and employment.
 - Working with Brent, Camden and Barnet Councils to agree a unified strategy for Cricklewood on policing street care, business development and licensing.
 - Ensuring the community benefits from the upcoming Brent Cross and Cricklewood development through training and employment opportunities.

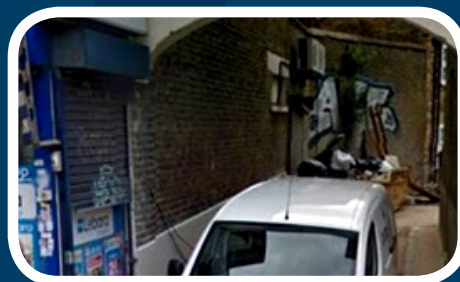


How the Ashford Place Way has made a difference

Wahid's story

We helped Wahid, 44, move from sleeping in an alleyway off Kilburn High Road, to staying at the assessment centre, to living in a one bedroom flat in Hounslow.

When he was sleeping beside a skip, Wahid had to wash in public toilets before going to work at a jewellery store in central London. He couldn't bring himself to tell his employers. Now, after we found him this flat, Wahid can travel back from work not with the dread of returning to the alleyway but with joy of putting his keys in the door of his flat preparing his own dinner and sleeping in his own bed.



Christine's story

"I love coming to Ashford Place as it benefits older people very much. I would like the issues of aging Irish women abroad to be addressed more openly. At Ashford Place we get treated very nicely by staff and everyone gets treated the same. I really enjoy the clubs here. I take part in bingo, music, film club, IT classes and especially love all the St Patrick's Day and Christmas celebrations. I have lunch here two or three times a week and the chef always looks after me and there is always someone to keep me company."

"I found it very difficult to join in the groups at first but I persisted and soon got into the swing of things and find activities at Ashford Place very worthwhile and coming here relieves my loneliness and keeps me active and interested in life. I would advise anyone I know to come here and join in the fun."

Dennis's story

"I fell homeless due to family breakdown. Then I was sleeping in Gladstone Park for two months. It was very cold, freezing, around Christmas time."

"I've been at Ashford Place for four weeks, but now I've found a place. I'm jumping for joy. I got my tenancy agreement this morning, signed and sealed. And I've got the keys right here – I never want to lose them."

"I feel like an adult now, more of a man. It's a nice feeling."



Pauline & Maureen's story

Pauline & Maureen from the Sacred Heart Church, Quex Road in Kilburn come in on Tuesday evenings to prepare a healthy and delicious dinner for our clients in our Assessment Centre. Both Pauline and Maureen say they have some free time now and so want to support vulnerable people in our community. Maureen is a pensioner. They love the atmosphere here and have learned so much about homelessness and people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Pauline says, "Volunteering makes a difference to the lives of others. I have been volunteering at Ashford Place for a number of years and I am enjoying it. I appreciate the joy, fun and the friendships we give to the people on the margins of society". Maureen adds, "We come to Ashford Place not just to prepare meals but also to talk to people".

Aymeric's story

My name is Aymeric. I am from a Business School in French Guiana. I was encouraged by a former intern to do my internship here at Ashford Place. The internship not only enhances my CV, but also opened my eyes to the reasons why charities exist here in England. I did not expect to be given so much responsibility as an intern, yet the whole team are very encouraging and allowed me to gain as much experience as possible. I'm very glad that I got the opportunity to intern here!"



Patrick's story

"I was living in a very small room in a shared house. I was waiting for a hip operation, unable to work because of the pain. I had no hope as well as no money. I heard Ashford Place helped Irish people so I made an appointment. The advisor asked me about my financial state and living conditions as well as my health and so I told her about my need for a hip operation.

"Having visited my room, the advisor contacted social services to get an occupational therapy assessment as she did not feel the living conditions conducive to recovery from surgery. This was confirmed, my surgery was put on hold but an urgent application to a housing association was made so I should have somewhere better to live and, in turn, the surgery could go ahead.

"I was offered a one bedroom flat and supported through the tenancy paperwork, and in obtaining financial support, by Ashford Place. I was able to have the surgery and am now able to live a mainly independent life. It is very comforting to know that Ashford Place is always there if I have problems I can't deal with on my own."



Muriel's story

"As I was getting on a bit I began to feel more tired, tended to stay at home a bit more and was beginning to feel very alone which was surprising as I'd always led a full and active life. I suppose that is what retirement does to you?

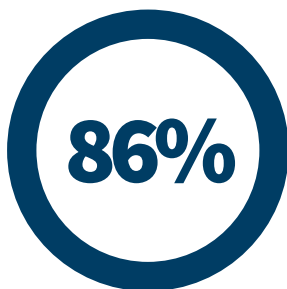
Things began to change when I heard about the Gentle Exercise for Older Adults class run by Ashford Place at the Willesden Sports Centre. I have been going to this now for over a year and it is doing me a world of good as I am fitter, I have made some lovely new friends some of whom I meet up with outside of the project and it has put me in a positive frame of mind to keep busy, fit and well".



The Ashford Place Way works



Latest figures show that **95%** of those who move on from the Assessment Centre have maintained long-term accommodation after six months.



86% have maintained long-term accommodation after 12 months.



"We all have to work side-by-side, as a community, for the people of Brent. The work that Ashford Place does with homeless people has fundamentally changed lives, and changed the way that we view homelessness – we now see that it is a year-round problem and not just something that happens over the winter months. Ashford Place will always have my support."

Dawn Butler, MP for Brent Central



"We need community champions like Ashford Place who lead the way in effectively supporting vulnerable people to overcome barriers to social and financial independence. The charity supports the individual to harness their own resources to improve their lives"

Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader, Brent Council



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