Welcome to our 2018/2019 Annual Review, our first as Inspire North. This last year has seen huge changes and shifts for us, and the headline change is the merger we announced on October 17th, 2018 between Community Links and Foundation. Together, both charities have decades of experience in mental health, wellbeing, accredited training, housing support, accommodation provision and domestic abuse. We were keen to work together in response to increasingly complex needs, requiring a rounded approach, and so Inspire North was born to realise the huge benefits of combining our expertise.

We created Inspire North as a parent organisation to Community Links and Foundation, which retain their brands to deliver frontline services to our communities, and we have also brought in the Community Links offender support subsidiary Bridging the Gap, and the Foundation social lettings subsidiary Foundation Living. This means we are now offering a wide range of services that are improving people’s lives in the north of England, from Durham to Greater Manchester, across to Scarborough and Hull.

While our work establishing Inspire North and bringing together the two charities has been significant, we are still running our award-winning services with the high quality and excellence our communities know to expect from us. Community Links was recognised for its Customer Service Excellence, gaining 100% compliance, with many areas where we are going above and beyond. We were also delighted to be included again in the Top 50 Inclusive Employers, a nationwide ranking in which we placed 6th, and to again be named a Sunday Times Top 100 not-for-profit organisation, ranking in the top 25. Foundation gained recognition from Leeds City Council for its domestic abuse expertise.

We are developing rapidly, with Foundation launching a new service in Wakefield and Community Links heading up the Leeds city-wide social prescribing service. There are lots more exciting developments, which we can’t wait to share.

With our new Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees, we are hugely excited about the many possibilities and benefits ahead of us on our new journey as Inspire North. Watch this space!

Ruth Kettle, Chief Executive
Claire Vilarrubi, Chair of the Board of Trustees
INTRODUCING
the Senior Leadership Team

Donna Gooby
Director of People and Culture

Faye Oldroyd
Director of Operations

Caroline Watson
Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Sinéad Cregan
Director of Development and Innovation

Board of Trustees

Claire Vilarrubi
Chair, Inspire North

Cielo Cartwright
Inspire North

Cornelle Parker
Inspire North

Richard Parry
Inspire North

Damian Pocknell
Inspire North

David Strachan
Inspire North

Philip Turnpenny
Inspire North

Jacqueline Hallam
Independent Trustee of Community Links

Fawzia Mir
Independent Trustee of Community Links

Anne Worrall-Davies
Independent Trustee of Community Links

Lisa Bradley
Independent Trustee of Foundation

David Powell
Independent Trustee of Foundation

Chris Welch
Independent Trustee of Foundation
Our purpose is to **Build Brighter Futures** with our clients, in pursuit of our vision, **Creating A World Where Everyone Matters**. We are a values-led organisation, and this year we launched our four new group values to reflect what we do across Foundation and Community Links, and how we do it.

Our four values are:

- **People**
  We will always treat you as an individual

- **Integrity**
  We will always do the right thing

- **Passion**
  We will always go the extra mile

- **Collaboration**
  We will always achieve more together
WHAT'S NEW

IT Integration
There is much to do to bring the two organisations’ systems and processes together, and we have been undertaking a significant project to merge and streamline our platforms and systems. Our IT is now being managed by Razorblue, a North Yorkshire-based IT company. All of our servers have been migrated from the previous providers, and we are now all using the Office 365 environment. Community Links has also been moved over to the Foundation finance system, and new plans include company phones and a group-wide intranet.

Branding Workshops
This year we ran a series of workshops on the development of our name and branding with local design agency HMA. Across the organisation 73% of us voted for the name Inspire North, reflecting our new geographical reach and our desire to inspire, innovate and lead in all of our service areas. The branding consultation resulted in our new modern, professional logo and colours.

Quality Achievements
We have been working hard since the merger to put in place the recognition across the group of our commitment to diversity and our people. In December 2018, just a few weeks after the merger, we were awarded Stonewall Diversity Champions, and in January we gained Disability Confident Leader status. We are now also a Living Wage Employer across the group, with many more developments underway.

Group Size
As Inspire North, we are now a group of 450 employees, supporting more than 3500 clients in the last year. Our turnover for the last financial year was £20m, making us a significant player in the north of England and moving us to a mid-size charity at the national level.
Foundation Wakefield
We launched a new, vital service in Wakefield in April 2018, delivering Wakefield Council’s Access to Housing Pathway. We are working with adult clients living in Wakefield, or who have a connection to the Wakefield district, who are at risk of homelessness and need support to find suitable housing and maintain a tenancy. We follow a strengths-based approach with clients to work on their future together.

Domestic Abuse Perpetrators’ Programme
This year saw the establishment of our new Domestic Abuse Perpetrators’ Programme, the first phase of which started in York in March 2019. The programme works with perpetrators of domestic abuse on prevention strategies and spotting the signs of domestic abuse behaviour.

Helping Hands Young Parents Group
We were successful in securing funding from the Co-Op’s Loneliness Foundation to set up a group in Darlington to offer support to young parents experiencing loneliness and isolation. The project focuses on activities for young parents and their children, including outdoor play, storytelling and crafts.

Doncaster Care Leaver Accommodation Support Service
We were successful in retaining our Care Leaver Accommodation Support Service in Doncaster, which supports young people who are leaving care with their accommodation needs, and helps them to manage and maintain a tenancy. Doncaster Children’s Services highlighted our creative and flexible approach, our involvement and engagement of young people in decisions, and our focus on positive outcomes for the young people we work with. We are pleased to continue to support young people in Doncaster.

Leeds Domestic Violence and Abuse Quality Mark
We were pleased to gain the Leeds Domestic Violence and Abuse Quality Mark from Leeds City Council’s Safer Leeds initiative in recognition of the work we do to support clients who have experienced domestic abuse. We are developing our recognition and reputation in this area, with more exciting news to come in the future.
OUR CLIENTS An Overview

As of 31/10/18

Total Clients 1091

Accommodation 550
Domestic Abuse 28
Floating Support 454
Action Towards Inclusion 44
Offender management 14

Sexuality
HETEROSEXUAL 61.3%
LGBT 3%
NOT ASKED 33.3%
NOT STATED 2%
OTHER 0.4%

Ethnicity
WHITE 79.5%
BLACK 1.5%
ASIAN 1%
DUAL HERITAGE 2.5%
OTHER 1.5%
NOT KNOWN 14%

61.3% of clients identified themselves as having a disability
### Foundation Annual Satisfaction Questionnaire 18/19

#### HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT US?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92%</td>
<td>I feel that my story is shared appropriately so I don’t have to repeat myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96%</td>
<td>I make my own choices and feel supported through the choices I make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97%</td>
<td>I believe that workers go the extra mile - no one gives up on me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98%</td>
<td>I am treated as a human being and with dignity and respect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98%</td>
<td>I am happy with my personal contribution to my accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98%</td>
<td>My accommodation is at a high standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
<td>My repairs are done in a timely manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>I am happy with my heating and insulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92%</td>
<td>I feel safe and secure where I live</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on 197 responses rate of 18.1% of total clients. Percentages based on positive responses (‘Agree’, ‘Great’, ‘Good’, ‘OK’, ‘Extremely likely’ and ‘Likely’).

“**I’ve improved and am stable. Foundation has given me a new start in life.**”

“I feel that the approach is person-centred, making sure that all my needs are being met.”

93% of clients said they were likely to recommend us to their friends and family.
CO-PRODUCTION

We aim for co-production right across the organisation, working on projects and initiatives with our clients. In this Annual Review, we are featuring a hugely successful group initiative at Foundation Durham. Project Manager Jill Thorpe explains:

“The Durham group sessions are an important and valuable part of our service. They were created to allow clients to come together to participate in informal learning and to provide peer support to each other to reduce social isolation. They have gone from strength to strength and are now an integral part of the service we provide. Our groups are a great example of co-production as they are client led; we develop the timetable with clients and use their individual skills and knowledge to deliver the programme. Clients who attend have reported an increase in their confidence and the group sessions are a positive activity, producing some excellent outcomes.

“Recent activities include producing an exhibition on homelessness for Stephenson College at Durham University. This exhibition allowed clients to express their feelings in a number of different creative ways. We have also used client skills to deliver groups on healthy eating, yoga, leathercraft, bike maintenance and gardening. Outdoor groups this year have focused on health and wellbeing, along with caring for the environment, and culminated in a staff and client fun day, which involved team events, games and a scavenger hunt.”

“I am treated like a human being.”

“I feel at ease and not judged.”

“Foundation changed my life for the better.”

“I am listened to.”
This is Joanne’s experience of working with Foundation Harrogate’s Young People’s Pathway. The Young People’s Pathway helps young people to either stay in their accommodation through mediation and support, or offers alternative accommodation options to suit their needs.

When did you first start working with Foundation, and what was it like at the start?
I had been living in a homeless B&B for five weeks before this and was put there by Harrogate Council because I had nowhere to go. I had been kicked out of home because of my drug and alcohol addiction at the time. It was awful when I first moved in – I found it really stressful.

What did you and your support worker do to help improve things?
My support worker speaks to me on a human level, he was patient with me. He was still patient with me even when I was rude and difficult towards him. He was just there and listened to me – all of the workers were.

How are things now?
My relationship with my adoptive parents has been rebuilt, I am now speaking to my twin sister, which is great. I have now got a part-time job. My confidence has grown and I feel like a different person. Before I went to rehab everything that I had ever done wrong or that had happened to me was crushing me. Now I can deal with everything because of the support I get. I know I can always sit down and speak to someone before it really starts bugging me.

How do you feel that working with Foundation helped you?
My support worker supports me to get to appointments I would miss otherwise and because of this I am now engaging with my mental health team. I have been in detox for my alcohol use, I have had sexual health screening, and I have not self-harmed in a very long time and feel confident I will not do it again. I have learned new skills with cooking and I am more independent. I am also thinking about college.

If I had not been with Foundation and had the support, I would have continued the way I was when I first came into the service.
Foundation Employees Overview

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 173

FULL TIME 51%
PART TIME 49%

Female 71%
Male 29%

Achievements

disability confident leader
INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
MINDFUL EMPLOYER
Stonewall DIVERSITY CHAMPIONS
Living Wage Employer
We were delighted to become the lead provider for the new Leeds city-wide social prescribing service, Linking Leeds, in February 2019. The service, funded by the NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group, replaces three existing services, with Community Links previously providing the Leeds North West service Connect Well. Linking Leeds will help people across the city to access a Wellbeing Coordinator, who will work to understand their needs, then help them to access relevant community activities, including art, gardening and fitness groups, mental health services and specialist advice or support services for housing, money and health.

In late 2018 we won an important new opportunity to partner with Leeds Community Healthcare to support vulnerable people across Humberside who find themselves in the criminal justice system. Liaison and Diversion is a six-year programme funded by NHS England, where staff work alongside police custody teams and courts to identify people with mental health issues, a learning disability or substance misuse when they become involved in the criminal justice system. Both adults and young people are referred to sources of help and support to improve their health and wellbeing in an effort to reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour and re-offending.

Last year Young Dementia Leeds has set up a highly popular monthly Dementia Café, hosting cultural events, fayres, raffles and parties. The hostels have been running cooking sessions to promote healthy eating and create home-cooked meals with clients.

This year we were awarded some additional funding from the Leeds Community Foundation Winter Wellbeing Community Grants Scheme to offer our Winter Wellbeing packs. We received funding last year from the scheme and offered packs to clients from our Accommodation Gateway service, giving a mixture of items including kettles, gloves, scarves, hats and oil heaters to more than 40 people. This new funding enabled us to deliver more items to clients, such as duvets, oil heaters, blankets and kettles, to ensure the most vulnerable clients had the right equipment during the cold winter months.
Inclusive Top 50
We were thrilled and very proud this year to be ranked 6th in The Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers List, improving on last year’s position of 9th. The list recognises the outstanding efforts of organisations that have begun their journey to attracting and retaining a truly diverse workforce, achieving equality, diversity and inclusion. Diversity is incredibly important to us across the whole organisation, so we are delighted to be recognised in this way.

Sunday Times Top 100 Employer
We were delighted to be included in the Sunday Times Top 100 Not-for-profit Organisations this year, coming in at 25! This reflects our commitment to being a great place to work and develop your career. This is the 10th year we have featured in the list, and the 12th year we have been awarded Best Company status based on employee feedback.

Customer Service Excellence Assessment
We achieved our Customer Service Excellence accreditation again this year, with 100% compliance in all areas, and in some areas going above and beyond. 15 of our services took part in the rigorous assessment. We have already begun to build on our successes and we will have some brilliant feedback to share in next year’s review!

Assessment Services Award
In our Community Options service we adopted an ABCD (asset-based community development) approach, which is person-centred, focusing on people’s strengths and talents and placing clients at the heart of their own recovery. This transformation was recognised with an Assessment Services Award for Effectively Working with Communities/Partnerships to improve performance.
OUR CLIENTS An Overview

As of 31/10/18

Total Clients **1821**

- **Community** 540
- **Residential** 157
- **EIP** 404
- **Social Prescribing** 175
- **Personality disorder & complex needs** 148
- **Dual Diagnosis** 67
- **Housing related support** 48
- **Dementia** 51

**Dual Diagnosis** 67

**Housing related support** 48

**Dementia** 51

**Ethnicity**

- **WHITE** 80%
- **ASIAN** 7%
- **BLACK** 6%
- **DUAL HERITAGE** 3%
- **NOT KNOWN** 2%
- **OTHER** 2%

**Heterosexual** 79%

**LGBT** 8.3%

**NOT ASKED** 7.5%

**NOT STATED** 5%

**Achieving Positive Change**

The majority of Community Links services use the Outcomes Star as a tool to measure the positive changes achieved by the people we work with. These changes are referred to as ‘outcomes’ and are measured with the client and their support worker.

95% of clients maintained or made improvement on the overall average outcome score.

Our Leeds Early Intervention in Psychosis (aspire) service helped **21 clients find work** in 2018/19.

**Top 3 Primary Support Needs**

- **Mental Health** 69%
- **Housing** 7%
- **Social Networks** 7%

**12%** of clients were employed

**15%** of clients identified themselves as having a disability

**Female 51%**

**Male 49%**

**Age Breakdown**

- **Under 18** 1%
- **18-25** 22%
- **26-35** 26%
- **36-40** 11%
- **41-50** 17%
- **51-60** 13%
- **Over 61** 2%

15% of clients identified themselves as having a disability
“Very flexible approach, real understanding of the ways mental health can affect someone’s life.”

“The workers are amazing!”

“Staff are very supportive and approachable and help with things when needed, and always offer good support.”

89% of clients said they were likely to recommend us to their friends and family.
CO-PRODUCTION

Community Links clients are involved at all levels of the organisation, including our Board of Trustees, sub-committees and recruitment panels, and can get involved in a wide range of activities and events. Here we feature performance group Men’s Talk, who created their own performance project and have been performing it across Yorkshire.

Men’s Talk – Making Drama out of a Crisis

Men’s Talk in Kirklees is a creative performance project for men who are living with long-term mental health needs. Men work together in a group to write scripts based on their own experiences, then perform the scripts to an audience.

The project began last summer with a series of theatre workshops in Huddersfield and Dewsbury, resulting in the group performing to a 300-strong audience at the John Smith’s Stadium on World Mental Health Day 2018. The men went on to tour 19 venues over the following six months, performing to mental health professionals, NHS workers, teachers, community groups, mental health service users and Department for Work and Pensions staff.

Being involved in Men’s Talk has had a significant positive impact on the men’s mental health. One performer said: “It’s given me purpose – and I know now, that no matter what you are going through there is always light at the end of the tunnel”, with another adding “For those 25 minutes we’re doing Men’s Talk – it’s like it’s a different person standing there. I have a real feeling of being part of something important … and a sense of belonging, I’ve got a reason for existing – I didn’t before.”

Audience feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with the performances being described as ‘inspirational’, ‘brave’ and ‘helping to open people’s eyes to mental health’.

Men’s Talk is run by Community Engagement Worker Stuart Hawkes for CLEAR in Kirklees. To watch an excerpt from a performance visit https://tiny.cc/MensTalk

From Client to Support Worker – Adam’s Experience with Community Links CLEAR

Adam was working as a history teacher when he suffered a breakdown. He began accessing support through CLEAR and later became a volunteer, then a support worker. With his fellow clients and support from CLEAR he co-produced a training course on Confidence and Resilience, which he has been delivering inside and outside the organisation. Adam said: “I don’t think I’d be working for CLEAR without co-production – it is that powerful.” To read Adam’s story, visit https://tiny.cc/adamstory
Richard shares his experience of working with Community Links Engagement and Recovery (CLEAR). CLEAR is our recovery-focused mental health service for people with mental health needs, including dementia. We provide a range of social, leisure and skills-based activities which aim to develop confidence, motivation and self-reliance.

Can you tell us about your experiences before you came to Community Links?
Life was difficult. Having recently left prison after a long sentence I was in the process of settling back into the community, rebuilding a life and coping with bipolar. I had recently been having suicidal thoughts, I was in a process of changing medication and was struggling with periods of anxiety.

When did you first start working with Community Links, and what was it like at the start?
November 2017 approximately. I was referred to Community Links by my community psychiatric nurse to look at a mindfulness course to help with my anxiety. Initial impressions were very good, I found the staff were professional, welcoming and friendly.

What did you and your support worker do to help improve things?
We discussed my situation, my needs and looked at what Community Links could help me with. I initially did a couple of courses, one to help with and understand anxiety and then a course on mindfulness. Both were well-run courses and helped me on my journey. After that I joined the men’s group which I still attend every week.

How are things now?
Much, much better. I have a much more balanced life, my mental health is much more stable, I am happier, I have more friends and generally I am in a much better place.

How do you feel that working with Community Links helped you?
Community Links have helped enormously. They have been the bridge that has helped me to rebuild a life again. In particular, the men’s group that I attend has provided me with friends, advice, a sense of direction and made me a more confident person. From this group we have now set up two men’s groups to help people who are moving on from Community Links.

“Community Links have helped enormously. They have been the bridge that has helped me to rebuild a life again.”
Community Links
Employees Overview

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

- **Male**: 27%
- **Female**: 73%

**Full Time**
- 71%

**Part Time**
- 29%

Investing in Volunteers

We welcome and value volunteers, who attend training as part of their induction. Many of our volunteers are former clients. We had 20 volunteers working with us in 2018/2019. To find out more about volunteering with us visit [www.commlinks.co.uk/volunteering](http://www.commlinks.co.uk/volunteering).

**Achievements**

- Disability Confident Leader
- Investors in People Gold Award 2019
- Living Wage Employer
- Mindful Employer
- Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers 2018/2019
- Stonewall Diversity Champions
- The Sunday Times 100 Best Not-for-Profit Organisations to Work For 2019
- CSE Customer Service Excellence
WHERE TO FIND US

Inspire North Head Office
3 Limewood Way, Leeds, LS14 1AB
Tel: 0113 273 9660
Email: info@inspirenorth.co.uk

Locations

Barnsley  Durham  Hull  Selby
Batley  Grimsby  Redcar  Skipton
Darlington  Halifax  Richmond  Stalybridge
Dewsbury  Harrogate  Scarborough  Wakefield
Doncaster  Huddersfield  Scunthorpe  York