

# STEPPING STONE PROJECT



23 years providing high quality housing, support and charitable services for people who are homeless or at risk of losing their home.

ANNUAL REPORT 2007



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stepping Stone would like to thank the following organisations for their continued support:

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Lancashire County Council  
 Bury Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Burnley Borough Council  
 Bury Probation Service  
 Rochdale Social Services  
 Rochdale Young Persons Support Team  
 St Vincent's Housing Association  
 Regenda  
 Harvest Housing Group  
 Rochdale Borough Wide Housing

# CHAIR'S FOREWORD



## Welcome to our 2007 Annual Report.

Enclosed you will find an outline of the activities we have been engaged in during the last year, and a summary of our future plans for Stepping Stone in relation to growth and the development of the services we provide.

As those of you who work with us closely will know, the key focus over the last 18 months has been the review and restructuring of our operations in order to meet the challenges and opportunities afforded by the Supporting People programme. In early 2006 the Management Committee initiated a review of the organisation so it could be more effective in working in the new business environment. Following the appointment of a new Executive Director, Kath Barlow, we completed this review and the new organisational structure became fully operational in January 2007. The changed structure will enable the sustainable delivery of quality, cost effective services through a more flexible organisational structure, which supports local strategic management and reduces overheads.

During 2006, the Council of Management and the Management Team also developed a three-year Strategic Business Plan, incorporating the organisation's Mission and Values, which were reviewed and updated at the annual staff conference. The key elements of the Plan are strategic focus on partnership, growth, continuous improvement, and diversification of our funding and support activities.

I believe that the Charity is now in a much more robust position to deliver our objectives. The continued focus on contract reviews and funding constraints in the Supporting People programme will require the Charity to implement a process of continuous improvement and ensure that our cost base supports a value for money service. As part of our Strategic plan we intend to continue exploring partnership working to strengthen our opportunities for growth and in winning new business in existing and new service areas.

Quality of service to our customers is an important objective and in this respect I have been pleased with the success so far achieved in developing a new Service User Forum. Work will continue alongside the development of the Forum to find innovative ways to ensure that there is continual customer and resident influence over the services we provide.

Finally, my thanks go to all Staff and Trustees for their patience, co-operation and commitment during this period of change and transformation.

I have been delighted this year to welcome three new Trustees to the Board who bring even more depth of experience, and I look forward to working with them for many years to come.

**Susan Sharratt,  
Chair**

# OUR KEY OBJECTIVES 2007-2010

## Partnership and growth

- i.** Identify the options for creating long term strategic business partnerships with other Housing and Support organisations
- ii.** Create partnerships with other Service Providers, where appropriate, to bid for Supporting People contracts.
- iii.** Pro-actively manage partnerships with and influence strategic planners at local and regional level
- iv.** Align the organisational strategy to local Housing, Health, Supporting People and Social Care strategies to assist the Statutory Authorities in achieving their goals
- v.** Develop new complementary charitable services.
- vi.** Identify and obtain sources of funding other than Supporting People for the development and delivery of services
- vii.** Extend the scope of current Supporting People contracts wherever possible

## Continuous Improvement

- i.** Continuously benchmark and review our services to improve outcomes and achieve better value, involving all our stakeholders in this process
- ii.** Manage and develop our operations and processes to support organisational improvement and to offer a person-centred approach to the delivery of services to individual clients.
- iii.** Identify and implement new ways of adding value to our services and activities
- iv.** Monitor and manage contract performance to ensure compliance and to identify financial risks and opportunities
- v.** Enable and support the personal development of our staff, empowering them to contribute to the business and to work effectively with clients

*One of our residents at a Burnley project*

# WHO'S WHO

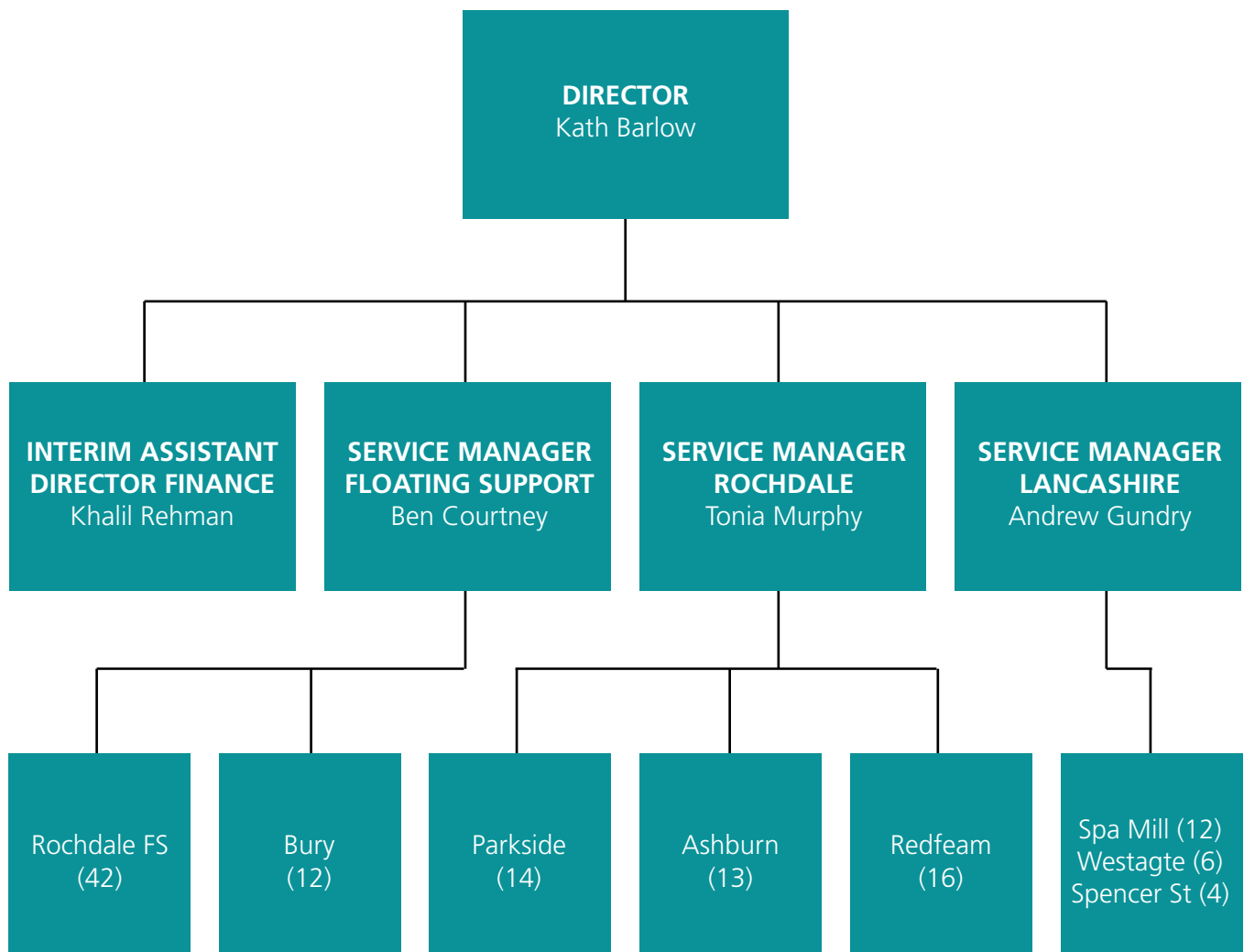
## Organisational Structure

The Stepping Stone Project has a Council of Management of up to fourteen members, who meet monthly and are responsible for strategic direction and policy. At present the Charity has six members from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the organisation.

Day to day responsibility for the provision of services is delegated to a management team consisting of the Director, an Assistant Director (Finance) and three Service Managers.

### TRUSTEES

Susan Sharratt, John Woodham, Terry Blanchon, Des Andrew, Andy Moss, David Berry, Jean Howell, Brian Courtney



# DIRECTOR'S REPORT



## OVERVIEW

As outlined in the Chair's foreword, the key focus in 2006 was the development and implementation of a new organisational structure. During that year

we also opened a new supported housing project at Spenser Street, Padiham, which offers self-contained accommodation and support services for 4 young people between the ages of 16 and 25.

In 2007 the Management Team have been busy with the establishment of the new operational staff teams and in refreshing our contacts with our strategic partners. A very successful staff conference was held in the late spring and staff and Trustees worked together in reviewing and articulating the mission and values of the organisation (see back cover) and the way in which we deliver these.

## WHAT WE DO

Our services are designed around two models – accommodation-based services and floating support services delivered 'in the field'.

Our accommodation-based services provide grouped self-contained flats let on Assured Shorthold tenancies to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. On site support staff act as link workers with individual tenants, working with them to help them develop the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to maintain a stable home and a structured lifestyle before assisting them in the process of securing permanent independent accommodation. We currently have five accommodation projects across Rochdale, Middleton, Heywood and Burnley.

Our floating support services help vulnerable people to make the transition into their own independent accommodation and to help others living in their own homes maintain their tenancies. We currently provide Floating Support services to clients in Bury and Rochdale.

*Ashburn House, Heywood*

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## HOW WE DO IT

We believe that everyone has a right to quality accommodation and services which help them to achieve their optimum level of independence. Operationally, we pursue our objectives through:

- Planning, shaping and delivering services in consultation with service users and other stakeholders
- Active participation in local strategic partnerships and working groups to ensure that we can influence and respond to local strategies for planning, shaping and delivering services
- Development of our work 'on the ground' in partnership with other agencies such as Prince's Trust, Connexions and Healthy Living Agencies, to add value and attract supplementary funding to support our work in providing a holistic service for individual service users
- Developing close working relationships with the diverse communities that we serve
- Prudent financial management
- Strong governance and leadership which enables the organisation to remain focused on our core values and vision in a changing competitive environment
- Extension of the use of charitable reserves to fund educational and training opportunities for service users and to provide resettlement grants where needed, including tenancy start-up packs comprising fuel tokens and food and grocery provisions
- A review of the core training needs of staff to ensure we have a well-trained and experienced staff team to deliver our work

Stepping Stone support staff work closely with clients on a confidential basis, designing the support around the individual. Clients needs and aspirations are identified and agreed at an early stage and support is delivered in a structured way to deliver the jointly agreed outcomes.

The profile of clients requires staff access to specialist support services and multi-agency and partnership working in the interest of the client. Stepping Stone staff are multi-skilled and training plans ensure staff are encouraged to continually develop their skills and expertise.

We are a flexible service provider and take referrals from a variety of sources including housing offices, health services, social services, self-referrals, police and probation. We work with a broad range of agencies on behalf of our clients and have developed close links with local housing providers and community based health and social services.



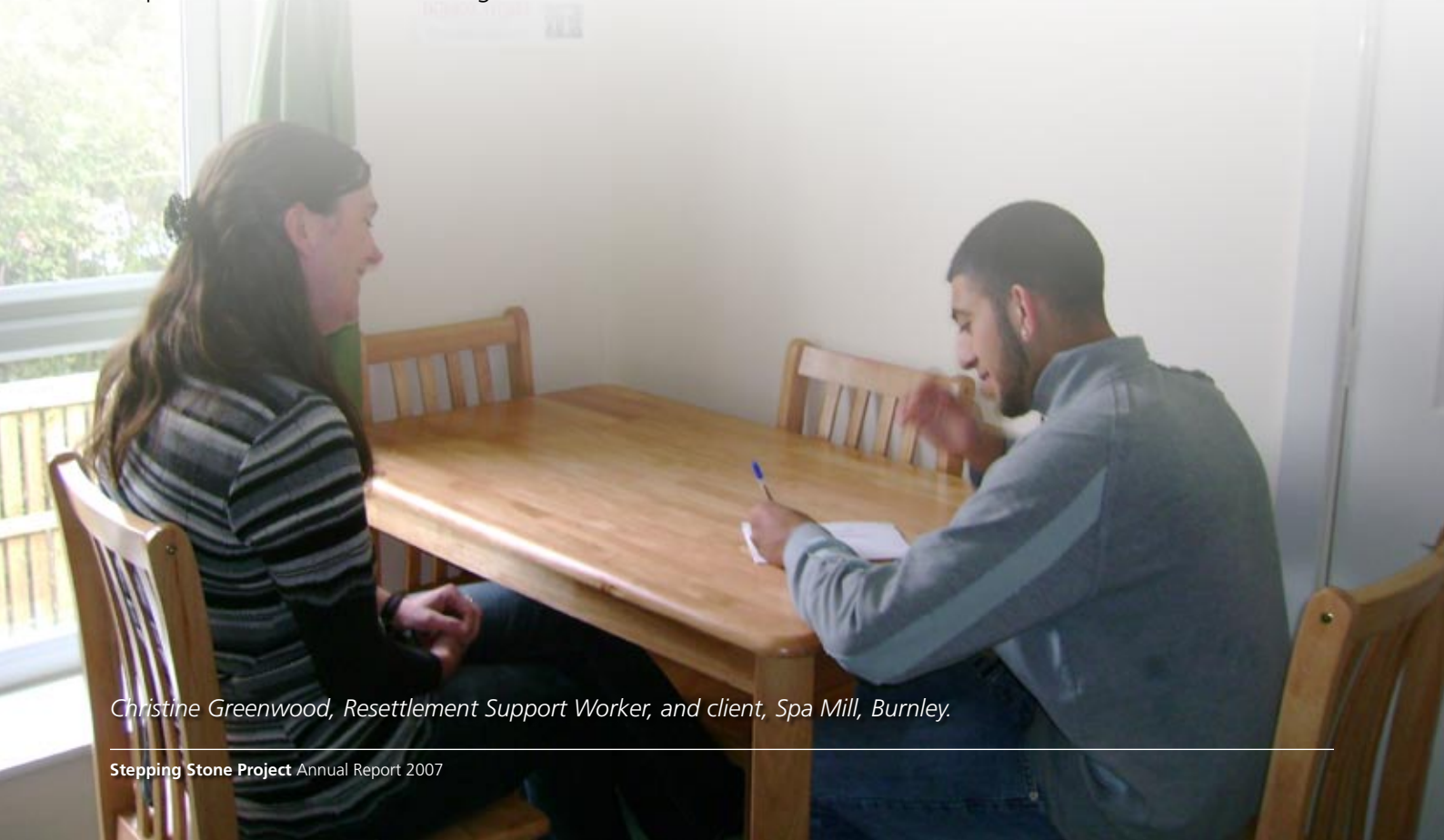
*Service User Involvement Day 2007*

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Our achievements this year have been many and diverse, as outlined in the following reports from each of the service Managers. Key achievements in the last eighteen months have been:

- The recruitment of a new Executive Director
- The transfer of the Central office team to new, modern and accessible premises close to Rochdale town centre
- The development of a strategic plan designed to deliver growth through partnership
- Transformation of the operational structure and planned review of policies to support future growth whilst improving service quality
- Restructure of our financial information systems for the financial year 2007/08 to separate income and expenditure across different cost centres. Further work is to be carried out in 2007/08 to achieve efficiency savings and to review the allocation of costs between housing management, housing services and central administration
- Investment in IT infrastructure to support operations and mobile working
- Maintenance of average service utilisation levels above 96% in our accommodation-based services
- Utilisation levels in excess of 100% across our floating support services
- Design and implementation of a new Annual Performance and Development Framework for staff
- Successful re-accreditation as an Investor In People organisation under the new framework
- Development of a new Service User Forum for consultation and participation in the design and delivery of services
- Utilisation of our charitable resources to support people with moving and settling into new accommodation
- The development of our long-standing co-operative partnership work with local Supporting People teams, Social Service teams and Housing Association partners including membership of local strategic planning groups and Provider Forums.



*Christine Greenwood, Resettlement Support Worker, and client, Spa Mill, Burnley.*



# PERFORMANCE STATISTICS (1/4/06 – 30/9/07)

Performance Indicator	Actual 2006/07		First 6 months 2007/08	
	Accommodation Based services	Floating Support Services	Accommodation Based services	Floating Support Services
Contracted number of services	65	110	65	54
Units available to let	99.8%	n/a	100%	n/a
Utilisation *	97.6%	113.2%	99.7%	139.2%
Throughput %**	212.3%	315.9%	155.4%	200.0%
Length of stay (current at period end)				
>2 years	1	4	1	4
1-2 years	10	76	12	16
< 1 year	11	80	52	55
No. of service users leaving the service	73	179	37	33
Length of stay (leavers)				
>2 years	2	17	0	2
1-2 years	32	48	19	10
< 1 year	34	65	18	21
% leavers who achieved independent living or died	45.2%	n/a	64.8%	n/a
Service users who established or maintained independent living as % of all leavers ***	n/a	72.6%	n/a	96.7%
Unknown outcome	10.9%	39.6%	0.12%	6.0%
Planned departures %	73.4%	57.5%	94.5%	93.7%

\* the time that a unit is occupied as a proportion of the total time for which it is available or the number of days that support is utilised by service users as a percentage of the total

\*\* the number of service users who have received the support service as a percentage of the number of units or support

\*\*\* Moving into own, not shared or supported accommodation, or custody

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## Financial Review

The principle funding sources for the Charity are Supporting People income from Rochdale, Lancashire and Bury Local Authority and rental income from tenants.

Total incoming resources in the year to March 2007 were £1,611,737, which is slightly less than the income for the previous year.

Direct charitable expenditure accounted for 96% and governance accounted for 4% of total expenditure.

Our key financial objectives for 2007/08 are to:

- Review our budgeting and procurement procedures to improve asset management activities and achieve improved cost-effectiveness
- Develop our key strategic objective of diversifying our funding and support activities in order to maximise the funding from Supporting People whilst reducing our dependence on it
- Agree a Reserves Policy which will be used to support organisational growth and service diversification

*Safeur Rahman Khan, Resettlement Support Worker, Burnley*



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

## Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31 March 2007

	2006/7	2005/6
<b>Incoming resources</b>		
Incoming resources from Charitable activities		
Grants and contracts	1,265,245	1,339,035
Rents receivable	317,443	261,465
Incoming resources from generated funds Investment income	29,049	32,583
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	1,611,737	1,633,083
<b>Resources expended</b>		
Charitable activities	1,421,965	1,446,629
Governance costs	65,897	38,361
<b>Total resources expended</b>	1,487,862	1,484,990
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	123,875	148,093
<b>Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2006</b>	734,141	586,048
<b>Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2007</b>	858,016	734,141

# ROCHDALE ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

## Report from Tonia Murphy, Service Manager



Well, where do we start? The past twelve months have passed in a flurry of change, development and achievement, none of which would have been possible without the full support and commitment of the Staff Team & Service Users

The organisational restructure has resulted in many positive changes. These have ultimately improved the delivery and quality of the service we are able to provide to our Service Users, who are at the forefront of our thoughts and actions.

One of the major changes we have undertaken is the process of reviewing our administrative systems, with the aim of making our services more efficient and accessible. We have introduced new IT based systems, which have proved to be more efficient and effective, and are at present concentrating on the introduction of a new referral form, which will be more "user friendly". We are aiming to introduce this later in the year.

Demand for Ashburn House in Heywood (13 units), Parkside in Middleton (14 units) & Redfearn House in Rochdale (16 units) is at an all-time high, with waiting lists in operation at all sites.

2007 has also seen the development of Stepping Stone Service User Forum. Although at the initial stages of development, the group so far has been successful in attracting Service User Representatives from each of our Projects. As well as acting as an advisory body for the development and delivery of services, the role of this group will also include the ongoing development and co-ordination of social and educational opportunities across the Organisation.

During the past 12 months we have been fortunate to be able to co-ordinate a number of activities and opportunities for Service Users, some of these included:

**The Salon Day**, where Contrast Hair Design in Leigh provided a free hairdressing service for all Service Users. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Michelle Alexander and her staff team for providing this service, as all staff gave up their day off!



*Hairdressing day at Parkside*

**Healthy Lifestyles Course**, which was organised in partnership with Demesne Community Centre. This course provided Service Users with the opportunity to develop their knowledge of nutrition, improve their cookery skills and enhance their physical well-being. This course was facilitated by our Social Work Student, Caroline Gleeve, as part of her practice placement.

**Poetry/Writers Workshop**, with the renowned poet, Lemn Sissay. 22 Service Users attended the event and feedback has been very positive. Due to the success of this event we will be running another session later in the year.



*Paula Lord, Residential Support Worker and client from Ashburn House*

# LANCASHIRE ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

## Report from Andy Gundry, Service Manager



Staff in the Lancashire Service Team have been positive in their response to the organisational changes which have taken place this year and I believe we now have a strong, effective team in place.

Our accommodation-based projects in Lancashire have helped significantly to meet the need for supported accommodation for young people within Burnley and the surrounding area identified in Burnley's Homeless Strategy and Lancashire's Supporting People Strategy. The services have all worked at capacity or over capacity throughout the year, and have provided support to over a hundred service users.

Our newest project in Padiham, Burnley, opened in April 2006. This new project was developed to cater for tenants with low-level support needs, the majority of whom are being supported through education and training programmes.

As part of the support package we offer to tenants, we encourage and promote social interaction, healthy living, learning, working and community involvement. We have offered a variety of activities in partnership with other organisations, including;

- A half-day circus event delivered by Starlight Circus, providing classes in juggling, unicycle riding, diabolo-throwing and tight rope walking. These activities promoted team building, social interaction, and confidence building
- A one day outward bounds course at Borwick Hall promoting self-reliance and team building through activities such as canoeing, raft building, climbing and other outside activities
- Strike for life – a project delivered by Stepping Stone in partnership with the Burnley Youth Engagement Service, offered a five week course using sports as an incentive to engage young people. The project provides recognised qualifications and experience and supports young people into employment within the sports, leisure and recreation industry. The course runs between 3 and 4 times a year
- Step 2 It – As a response to the relatively small numbers of women on the Strike for Life project, a women only course was offered which provided the same qualifications and outcomes.
- Joint working with the Prince's Trust offering
  - Cookery classes, enabling service users to provide nutritional and cheap meals for themselves.
  - Arts and Crafts and games nights
  - Sexual Health Classes providing information and advice for young people.
- Other social activities include cinema and bowling trips

# FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICES

## Report from Ben Courtney, Service Manager



Although at first an unsettling time, front line staff were not substantially affected by the restructure, and the results have been positive, both financially and strategically.

### **Rochdale Floating Support Service.**

In late 2006 and early 2007 the team delivered a series of promotional presentations to local agencies, which had a positive result on the number of referrals we had been receiving. For the remainder of 06-07 the referrals have remained consistent and the number of service users we are helping has remained high, balancing this with a manageable waiting list.

### **Bury Floating Support Service.**

The Bury service, dealing with offenders or those at risk of offending, continued to thrive throughout 06-07, increasing our excellent reputation in this area. The scheme is consistently working above the contract capacity and provides the only floating support service specifically for offenders in the Borough.

### **Rossendale Floating Support Service.**

During the past year the Support Workers for the Floating Support service for young parents in Rossendale carried out some excellent promotional work, and tireless networking, to improve referrals and access into the service. The scheme was operating at full capacity of 28 service users at the end of 06-07. We were therefore very disappointed to lose this contract together with a second generic floating support contract in Burnley as part of the rationalisation of contracts across Lancashire.

### **The Stepping Stone Cup**

This was a 5 a side football tournament organised for Service Users and Staff in spring 2006 and proved a great success. All participants received a trophy and all enjoyed the day.

### **Art Workshop**

Using a local freelance community artist, service users from Floating Support and Residential services were taught some basic art skills as a form of therapy and this also proved a great success.

### **Poetry Workshop**

Several service users from the floating support service attended the poetry workshop in September 2007 and feedback from them has been very positive.

We will be organising more group events in the future and encouraging service users to attend the Service User Forum meetings, which will help to develop and deliver activities.

Several clients on the floating support schemes are being supported in their own tenancies having moved on from Stepping Stone residential projects. One example is Charlie Morley, who moved from Redfearn House with ongoing floating support. As part of the support planning process Charlie's aspiration to run his own business was identified as a key objective in enabling him to become financially independent. The Floating Support worker assisted him in successfully applying for a 'Changing Lives' Grant for business start up costs from the charity, Crisis. In late summer 2007 he set up his own business, Ethical Trade.



*Charlie Morley being presented with a cheque for his business start-up costs.*

# IN SILENCE

## Poem By Michelle Greasley

As I sit in a room surrounded by strangers,  
thoughts gush through my head and anxiety rages  
So I sit on my chair in silence

The people around me laugh and chatter,  
but to me it's just noise and instant clatter.  
So I sit on my chair in silence

The speaker arrives to the sounds of great cheer,  
people clap and all I can think of is my fear.  
So I sit on my chair in silence

The workshop begins like the page in a book,  
but no one understands, just to be there, the strength it took  
So I sit on my chair in silence

Questions are asked and answers are given,  
I'd like to tell of the hell that I've lived in  
So I sit on my chair in silence

The speaker turns, looks and expects me to speak,  
I open my mouth and out comes a pitiful squeak.  
So I sit on my chair in silence

In a flash the workshop is over and done,  
and I wish like the others I could have shone  
But instead, I sat on my chair in silence.

# STEPPING STONE PROJECT

## Mission Statement

Stepping Stone Project is a provider of high quality housing, support and charitable services for people who are homeless or at risk of losing their home.

Through our work we aim to make a measurable and lasting difference to vulnerable people enabling them to live securely and independently in their own accommodation

## Vision

Our long term vision is to provide readily accessible housing related support services to vulnerable people to assist them in securing and maintaining their own independent accommodation as soon as they are able.

## Values

We believe that everyone has a right to quality accommodation and services which help them to achieve their optimum level of independence.

We have a strong commitment and long standing reputation for providing quality accommodation and support services which are tailored to individual needs, and provide value for money to all our stakeholders.



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