



reach

Issue 3

May/June 2008

INVESTING IN YOUNG FUTURES

Each year we invest a large amount of money in our homes, schools and in our staff. We know it is important to provide the most pleasant environments for living and learning and we ensure that each facility always meets specific needs. As a result we recently calculated our expenditure in these key areas, to demonstrate our transparency and commitment to progress.

During the year 2007 Continuum invested...

£746,000 in staff training

Our expenditure on staff development increases all the time as we add more courses to our programme and offer training more widely. Every January a vast programme of training is devised which contains mandatory and optional courses. Any staff member can be included to attend their own regional courses and utilise these opportunities for their own development. All of our training programmes are updated regularly to ensure they are highly relevant when working with a range of young people. Our Skills Pledge has recently been awarded 'Wall of Fame' status by the Learning Skills Council and the Children's Workforce Development Council. Please see the back page of this newsletter for more information.

£1.6 million in new homes

Since Christmas we have opened eight new homes, mainly in the North East and South West. These tend to be larger homes and have been established to provide an even better mix of suburban and rural locations.

£404,000 in new schools

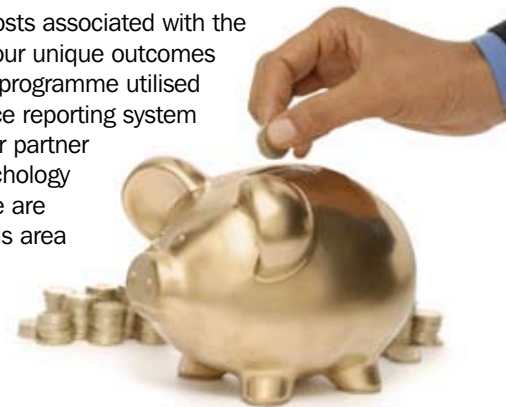
In April two new schools opened, one in our South West region (Somerset) and another in the North West (Warrington). Both schools have brand new facilities for vocational and academic learning and employ an experienced team of SEN teachers.

£946,000 in upgrading current facilities

This figure includes the refurbishment and ongoing upkeep of all our properties, both homes and schools, as well as the upgrade of Information Technology facilities and any changes required by our regular Health and Safety checks.

£688,000 in the further development of our outcomes monitoring system and research

This figure includes the costs associated with the ongoing development of our unique outcomes monitoring software. The programme utilised for our House of Resilience reporting system has been created with our partner organisation, Clinical Psychology Associates. As a result we are continually investing in this area to ensure this unique clinically governed system is always ahead of our competitors.



Making Progress, Moving Home

Danielle came into care when she was 12 years old and was placed in one of our homes over two years ago. During her time with Continuum she has achieved and developed most specifically within her target areas of education and staying safe. One thing that continued to be an issue and a catalyst for some of her problematic behaviour was her identity with her home area and her desire to return. Danielle's family were also supportive of the idea of her returning although anxious about possible outcomes. Over time, we were able to increase her contact and begin home visits including overnight stays. This was achieved through a working partnership with Danielle, her family and her social worker.

Following many discussions and numerous planning sessions with her social worker it was decided that Danielle could remain at home for a trial period with support provided by our family support team. An agreement was drawn up which included three sessions with our staff each week. One of these sessions was set aside for the whole family in which progress was monitored, plans were made and discussions took place over any issues that had arisen. The parallel support sessions were predominantly activity based and enabled staff to monitor welfare and offer continuity of care. Following this induction a proposal was put forward to Danielle's Local Authority offering family support sessions after her notice period had ended. This was welcomed and the family have since stated that they have found the support given helpful and reassuring. In future months we plan to reduce the level of support as Danielle becomes fully reintegrated within her family and home environment. (Names have been changed)

REFERRALS 0800 731 3805

Behind the scenes



Over 700 staff Coverage all over England and in Wales Over 75 homes 5 DCSF registered schools.



Julia Clifton

Regional Manager

Based in East Anglia, Julia currently oversees the day to day operations of a range of group and dual occupancy homes

within the region. She has 15 years experience working with young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and thoroughly enjoys the challenges that the role brings. In particular, Julia finds making a positive contribution to the lives of young people highly rewarding. Continuum has an outstanding group of staff and homes in this region and as a result is able to offer high quality consistent packages of care in a range of locations both rural and suburban.

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Cathy Braiden

Regional Manager

Cathy is a registered social worker with over 15 years experience of working with young people and their families.

Her experience has been gained through a combination of Local Authority, voluntary and private sector work. In 2001 Cathy joined Farrow House as a Homes Manager, later becoming Family Centre Manager. Following the merger that led to the formation of the Continuum Group in 2006 Cathy took up her current post as Service Development Manager for the Yorkshire/Humberside and East Midlands regions.

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Daniella Glynn

Human Resources Manager

Daniella joined the company as an administrator for Green Corns in December 2000. As the company expanded her role grew and in 2007 she was asked to take on the role as Head of HR for all our 700 staff. In September 2003 Daniella enrolled on the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development qualification and successfully completed this in July 2006. As the Head of Human Resources for the Continuum Group Daniella is responsible for all people related aspects of the company including recruitment, performance, disciplinary and succession planning. Apart from a passion for the she does have another... Liverpool FC and in particular Stevie Gerrard.

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Liz Jones

National Training and Development Manager

Liz joined the Continuum Group in 2004 as North West Education Manager and in 2006 took over her current role. She has experience of running an Institute of Leadership and Management Qualification Centre, experience which she has used to set up Continuum's internal NVQ centre, which has maintained an 'A' grade since its establishment. The main purpose of Liz's role is to ensure every individual who works for the group is confident, competent and qualified to provide the best for our young people. Continuum's annual training planner is created by Liz and her team and revised on a daily basis to ensure it always meets current requirements. Liz arranges all training delivery including our unique Continuum Intervention Programme (CIP), child protection training, use of medication and self-harm, many of which are delivered by psychiatric nurses.

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Next Stop College

In November 2007, 16 year-old Karen joined one of our complex needs homes in Warrington. Previously she had been in group accommodation in her home region of the East Midlands. On receiving her care plan, teachers at her new home noted a lack of engagement in education and on meeting Karen found she had little desire to study for her qualifications. During her time with Continuum Karen has changed from a disengaged student to the 'mother hen' of our Warrington School. Attending school has developed Karen's social skills hugely and her maturity has shone as she organises both fellow students and teachers!

Currently Karen is splitting her time between her family home and our school in Warrington to ensure she meets with her teachers regularly. In June she will sit her GCSE's and has selected the subjects of English, Maths, Science and PE. Karen's teachers have provided her with the books and study materials she requires to revise for her exams and she has proven she can work on her own without constant supervision. In addition to this she has taken on numerous extra-curricular activities including ballet lessons, drama classes and horse-riding. Following her successful application to college Karen is due to start a Public Services course in Nottingham in September and is interested in using this qualification for the community's benefit by joining the police force. (Names have been changed)



Reaching out to Lucy

Following her placement in one of our Anglia homes, Lucy left residential accommodation just before Christmas last year. The plan established for Lucy started with her living at her mother's address with a view to moving into independent accommodation. Since her departure from residential care Lucy and her mother have been receiving outreach support through her Continuum key-worker on a one day per week basis. Lucy is provided with £10 a week pocket money and her mother is given £15 a week to assist with Lucy's clothing needs. Each week a report is compiled which is sent to her Local Authority, which helps her social worker understand what work is being undertaken. In the months that the outreach work has been taking place Lucy has become much more established in her community. She has been registered with medical professionals in the area and had check-ups and booked appointments as required. Her key-worker has liaised with her college and helped research other courses that may be of interest to Lucy. They have also visited the Job Centre together to enquire about part-time employment and have been to shops and other local amenities to find out about part-time vacancies. Lucy has been progressing well and her key-worker speaks to her and her mum by phone on a weekly basis. The pair also have 24-hour telephone support if they need guidance or advice. This reduced contact has assisted Lucy to progress in some areas of her life independently and therefore she is on the way to gaining full independence. (Names have been changed)



A LOCAL TEAM FOR LOCAL NEEDS

The NHS Community Homes Health Team (CHHT) is a vital part of Continuum's residential and family support capacity in the North West. This small yet dedicated multi-disciplinary team works exclusively with young people across the region. The CHHT works specifically with young people who have histories of lack of engagement with health services from a very early age. Approximately 90% of the young people CHHT work with have complex combinations of needs, including mental health issues, developmental disorders, learning disabilities and challenging behaviour. As a result the professional assistance this team provides to Continuum is vital in ensuring every young person gets the support they need.

On admission to one of Continuum's homes in the North West the CHHT are seen for a screening assessment. Health and developmental information is sought from the young person's family, as well as current observations from the house and school staff. Each individual case and assessment is then discussed at the CHHT and Continuum weekly meeting. This is followed by detailed assessments as recommended in the initial screening report and offers conclusions and recommendations for intervention.

Currently the CHHT has eleven clinician members. All of these clinicians are fully qualified and registered with their professional bodies. Members of the team include Registered Mental Health Nurses, Speech and Language Therapists, Art and Music Therapists, Clinical and Forensic Psychologists and Psychiatrists.

The Community Homes Health Team are currently working with Continuum to set up a dedicated specialist therapeutic centre which will set the standard for crisis intervention with young people in the county. By building on professional relationships Continuum is ensuring a multi-agency approach to our work and is becoming a market leader in providing unique partnered services like this one.



Judy Debenham retires

Howay the lads!

Charlie, a young person from our North East region has made a friend of our Chief Operating Officer Bob Hall. This seventeen year old was commissioned to produce a painting of the Newcastle United Football Club badge especially for Bob and as you can see he is rather pleased with it.



NE Manager Lorna Fearon presents Bob with his painting

As a national organisation Continuum has a wide array of football fans amongst its staff and residents, so to make things fair Charlie - lets make this the first of many (but not Sunderland Bob says!).

After much deliberation Judy, Head of the Community Homes Health Team has decided to retire at the end of May. She assures us there will be lots of things she is going to miss! However, we have no doubts that because of her constant contact with young people and professionals, hers will be big shoes to fill. Everyone at Continuum's North West offices will miss Judy's approachability and would like to thank her for all her hard work, which has gone way beyond the call of duty. Judy has thanked the company and in particular Gary Thistlewood, Louise Tierney and Bob Hall for supporting the development of the partnership between Continuum and the CHHT. When asked about her plans for the future Judy told us she is looking forward to being free to see much more of her family in different parts of the country, and to visiting both new and well-loved places. Judy also hopes that her real and valued friendships made with colleagues will continue. She will be greatly missed as a friend and colleague. We wish her the best of luck in the future.

Continuum Training achieves Wall of Fame status

During April Continuum's commitment to training was awarded the Learning Skills Council (LSC) and Children's Workforce Development Council's (CWDC) preferred provider Wall of Fame. The LSC determine who is awarded this status by looking at training delivery and the maintenance of training to ensure nominees meet the requirements of the Skills Pledge.

This award recognises the quality of Continuum's training and that it goes above and beyond the compliance standard. Continuum's aims in terms of training revolve around the needs of our young people, and our staff so that we provide the highest quality of care and at the same time help team members develop their skills.

Training at Continuum is rooted in our very own NVQ centre which offers qualification levels in Health and Social Care for Children and Young People (levels 2, 3 and 4) and Leadership and Management (levels 2, 3, 4 and more recently level 5). All of Continuum's regional managers are registered social workers and we also encourage all our registered managers to complete a BA (Hons) Social Work degree. The number of Continuum staff with qualifications and the volume of qualifications achieved is increasing all the time, demonstrating a rising standard in our workforce's skills and competence. Professional training and qualifications for our care staff are backed up by the opportunity for our education team to study further qualifications in teaching.

Continuum has strong commitment to training and delivers over 800 days of training to our own staff each year. It is the skills of our staff which make the difference to young people's lives and sets us apart from other providers.

Continuum's website is due to launch in June 08. The site at www.continuumgroup.org.uk will feature lots of new sections including 'our homes', 'news and events', 'jobs and training' and a facility for you to sign up for your next copy of Reach. In addition Continuum will be distributing our new portfolio of services during the Summer so you will be able to find out about everything we offer in one place.

Look out



Poetic Licence!

Our residential manager in Wales Gary Leece received a heartfelt poem this week from one of the young people in our care. Fiona's residential team granted her wish during the last week of April and Gary turned out to be the nice as she thought he was!

To Gary

I've been good for so long,
And soon I will be gone.
So I'm taking the time.
To write you this rhyme.
I've heard that you're nice.
And if it's at the right price.
Can I go to Alton Towers?
In-between the April showers.
So I'll bake you some cakes.
Or whatever it takes.

Yours hoping,
Please please please.

Fiona
(Names have been changed)



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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