

# ANNUAL REPORT 2010



new prospects



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



What a difference a year makes. The issues facing New Prospects 12 months ago were very different to those facing the Association today. Growth has continued to be controlled in a way which is sustainable. We have managed to develop new services that have offered new opportunities for our service users and staff alike. These new services have been a combination of independent supported living and outreach support. Each new service gives a great sense of satisfaction as it is positive proof that we are offering quality support that people like. It is also pleasing to think that each new service represents another person living their life in the way they choose.

The roll out of Individual Budgets started this year but so far the uptake has been relatively limited amongst New Prospects service users. This is pleasing as it suggests that people are happy with the support they already receive. Service users have a great opportunity to take control of their own lives but it is understandable that many would rather focus on enjoying their lives rather than dealing with the administration of their support. We are happy to support people in the same way they are used to under current arrangements. Likewise, we are happy to help those with Individual Budgets seeking specific areas of support. We aim to have a flexible, person centred approach.

During the year we have continued to review and improve our own internal administration systems, including making better use of IT and updating our internal procedures. This is important to the future of the Association as

we need the administration process to run efficiently. We also need to have a thorough understanding of our own costs to allow us to offer a 'menu' of service options to both existing and new service users alike. Service users feel more benefit from valuable resources being directed to front line support rather than administration.

We have continued to settle in and make good use of the facilities at the Linskill Centre. The newly refurbished premises give us a good base with flexible access to additional space. This seems to work well for both staff and service users. It would be desirable to combine the functions of Centre House with the Linskill Centre in a single location but finding affordable and accessible premises in this area is difficult if not impossible.

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New Prospects' financial performance has been good. Our reserves are getting close to the target stated in our reserves policy. This is the level which the Board believes should ensure the Association can cope with changes in services or occupancy without impacting on service users or staff. This is particularly important as a reduction in Government spending might result in changes in the near future. It is expected that there will be hard times ahead but this should not threaten the future of the Association.

Looking to the future, we are probably facing more uncertainty than we have ever faced before. At this time we do not know what impact reduction in central government spending will have on the services the Association provides. However, we are certain to lose some of our funded training, which means we will also need to meet this additional cost. We anticipate that further

strains on resources will be forthcoming, but we will endeavour to protect front line services as far as possible. We will continue to listen for any news, whether positive or negative, and we will be ready to respond.

Overall, the current position is positive and I would like to thank everyone for their support in getting the Association to the position we are in now. Good work has led to good results and a more secure future. The times ahead are uncertain but we are in a strong position and I firmly believe we can cope with whatever changes come our way.

**Paul Hutchinson**  
Chairman of Board of Trustees of New Prospects Association

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



I can't believe it is time to write another annual report. Where did the last year go? A great deal of work has taken place over the last 12 months with growing numbers of people accessing our support services.

But before I talk about work, let me tell you about some of the more fun things that have taken place. Our first ever Summer Ball was a huge success – it was so nice to see so many people having a great time, meeting up with friends and making new ones. The occasion was so successful and well received that we did it all again at Christmas.

**During this year we have seen the social side of New Prospects improve thanks to the efforts of some staff who arranged to help people from across the Association meet up for meals and trips out. These events have been very well attended and my thanks go to those who have taken the initiative to enable the people we support get out and meet others.**

Further fun was had at the Annual General Meeting which showcased the achievements of the people we support and samples of their skills, such as baked goods, handmade cards and tapestries. After an address from the Cabinet Member of North Tyneside Council responsible for Adult Social Care, we all took part in a rousing sing-along led by the Learning Disability Federation Choir with great support from our own Community Activities singing group. The afternoon ended with a buffet tea and the formal meeting.

On the work front we have continued to prepare for the personalisation agenda. This is a big change in how people receive support. Under the old system a person's needs and entitlement to a funded service would be assessed and their support arranged for them by social services. They would do this using either in-house Council services or an independent provider like New

Prospects. In order to do business with a Local Authority we had to go through a tender process that showed that we had good systems and processes in place and had the expertise to do the job.

Now the system is changing. People will still go through an assessment process to establish that they are entitled to funded support. Under the new system however, the person will then be offered a personal budget for that support. The person can choose to be in control of their budget or whether they want someone else – a broker, a provider or the Council – to control it for them.

Before any money can be spent the support plan must be agreed by the Local Authority and regularly reviewed to ensure that the plan continues to meet the person's needs. This is a massive change in the way that support is managed that will have implications for everyone involved in social care.

We have started to look at our systems to ensure that they are ready to respond to ever more individual circumstances and needs. We have also started to change some of our administrative and financial processes to ensure we are accountable to individuals for their personal service funds. We know that we will face challenges as this new way of working beds in and people demand increasingly flexible support. We also know however that New Prospects is a person centred organisation that has lots of experience of working flexibly WITH people to ensure that they have the opportunity to have a good life. This will stand us in good stead in the future.

Many people have worked hard this year to make sure that New Prospects continues to provide excellent support to those who need it. I would like to thank them all.

**Ellen Vick**  
Chief Executive, New Prospects Association

## THE PAST YEAR

**At the end of the last Annual Report we set out our plans for the future. The most important plans are those that put the people we support at the heart of the Organisation. Here is an update on what we have achieved.**

### **To promote inclusion of service users at all levels of the Organisation**

During the year the Service User Forum has been continuing to identify what is important to the members and what they want to spend time on. They have all agreed that social activities are an area that they would like to see developed.

So.....we have arranged more social evenings than ever before – the Gala Ball, our Christmas party, as well as numerous events hosted by the Community Activities service. Our fundraising group has the full involvement of service users and we plan to introduce even more events during the next 12 months. In addition to this a social group led by support workers from North Tyneside Outreach has been established to arrange outings. It has already proved a huge success.

### **Increase service user involvement in their communities and ensure community presence**

People we support told us that they needed more information about what goes on in their neighbourhoods.

So.....we made sure that our weekly newsletter – The Caterpillar – has been used as a vehicle for spreading information about events, classes, travel passes, concerts, and much more.

As part of our commitment to improving our marketing, our website has received a makeover. This means that there is now an online 'news' section which we use to advertise local events as well as celebrate achievements and successes.

### **Ensure that service users have friends who are not paid support**

Our planning process showed that some of the people we support need to have more opportunity to make friends by contributing to their communities and meeting new people.

So.....New Prospects is taking part in a project called 'More to Life than Services'. The aim of the project is to help staff at every level of the organisation to find ways of getting people involved and helping them to find friends – people they know that are NOT part of the paid support that New Prospects gives.

We have developed literature about volunteering and are currently looking for more volunteers to assist us in helping the people we support to do more things and to make new friends.

# AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS TO BE PROUD OF



Linda receives her trophy

#### Team Leader gets trophy!

Linda Shaw (Team Leader, Isabella Walk) received an outstanding achievement award from the Tyne and Wear Care Alliance for her work encouraging the people she supports to move towards greater independence.

#### Recognition for local lads

Two young gentlemen who live in their own tenancy in North Shields were presented with an award by the Corner Club, a local organisation that supports people with learning disabilities. The award is given annually to members who have made significant progress towards independent living.

#### Volunteers play their part

Two of the volunteers at our Community Activities sessions were nominated by Team Leader, Anja Beurgel, for a North Tyneside Council award for their dedication and contribution to the group. Ron and Denise come every week to play music, sing and lead an increasingly popular session for people with a learning disability. They were both invited to an award ceremony at the Quadrant offices on the Silverlink Business Estate where they were

presented with a certificate to mark their volunteering efforts. Well done Ron and Denise!

#### Moving out and moving on

Robert moved into Heaton Terrace in 2008. He was very determined that he wanted to learn new skills and become independent so that one day he could live in his own home and be his own boss. New Prospects staff worked hard with Robert to help him achieve his dream and in February 2010 Robert moved into his own flat in Battle Hill in North Tyneside. At Heaton Terrace there is always a member of staff on hand to help with anything the tenants might need. Now on his own, Robert manages with much less support and is going from strength to strength. He has made friends with his neighbour, is attending college regularly and manages his home successfully. His next goal is to find himself a job. Staff from New Prospects have successfully supported him to make these big changes in his life and are confident that Robert will continue to succeed in his aims.



Denise and Ron get their well deserved award



Graham and Neil show off their certificates



Mr Independent!

# OUR GROWTH

The last 12 months have seen an increase in the number of people who receive support from New Prospects. **Here are some of their stories:**

Michael moved into his own flat in Monkseaton in March 2009. He was already receiving support from New Prospects as part of our outreach service. Michael had been living at home with his family but changes in their circumstances meant that Michael needed to strike out on his own and become independent.

The move has been a great success. Michael loves his new flat and is very proud of it. He has had help to furnish and decorate it and it is now just the way he likes it. Since the move, Michael's cooking skills have greatly improved and although not a keen cook, he knows that he needs to learn more so that he can look after himself. Michael interviewed for his own staff team and they are 'matched' so that they all have interests in common and skills that will help Michael to continue along his journey to independence. Michael had tried to live independently earlier in his life but he did not have the support he needed and as a result the experience was not successful. This time New Prospects will ensure that Michael has the right help to get the life he wants.

We have already helped Michael to achieve a lot. As an art lover, Michael now goes regularly to join others at a further education art class at Longbenton College, where he has made many friends who all look out for him. Michael also

had a fear of water and swimming before we started supporting him. With the encouragement of his team he has gradually overcome his fear and is due to start swimming lessons.

In June 2009 a young man moved into his own house – also in Monkseaton. He was able to take advantage of the 'shared ownership scheme' which North Tyneside Council were promoting in partnership with NOMAD/E5, a registered social landlord. Shared ownership allows a person to have a mortgage for a stake in the property, whilst renting the remaining part of the property. We have worked very hard with this gentleman and his family to ensure that the service he receives is tailored to meet his very individual needs. His parents have been a fantastic part of the team and we have all learnt together what 'partnership' is really all about.

This was a new experience for New Prospects and we have learnt a tremendous amount from it. We will be able to use this new knowledge to help others take advantage of this exciting opportunity to own their own home.

Following a tender process in which we were successful, New Prospects undertook another first for the Organisation. This time we were asked to employ a staff team to take over the

support of two ladies who were previously supported by Social Services. Sarah and Sheila live in a bungalow in Bedlington which has been specially adapted for their needs. We spent lots of time getting to know the ladies and their families and worked to create a team that can help them to get the most out of life.

We took over providing Sarah and Sheila's support need in November and since then we have seen both of them blossom and develop. The rotas are structured so that both ladies now have time to do the things they want to seven days a week, something that was not possible when they were supported by Social Services.

Both ladies are now actively involved in running their own home and have gone on their first ever holiday together. They have started to take an interest in their garden and both now have new hobbies and interests including swimming, music and ten pin bowling. Sarah and Sheila are both great examples of how New Prospects can help people to change their lives, because we believe that everyone can achieve their goals and we want to see the people we support succeed and flourish.

And finally, again after a tender process, we helped three very different ladies to move into their new home in North Shields. This was a

quick turnaround as there was very little time between being told that we had been chosen to support them and the date of the move. Once again however, New Prospects staff rose to the occasion. We worked in partnership with housing association, Stonham Housing, and persuaded them to change their usual purchasing processes to allow the ladies to buy their furniture locally (and quickly) so that there was something to sit on when they moved in.

The families also rallied round and everything was ready in time for the move-in date of 18 January 2010.

Alison, Ashley and Laura are now really enjoying their new freedom and independence. Laura and Ashley love technology and are always texting or surfing on a computer. Alison brings the wisdom and stability of a few extra years to her younger companions. So, if you need advice about makeup, music or how Facebook works, Laura and Ashley will be happy to help. For local knowledge and information about where to get the best bargains – Alison is the one to ask.

# GETTING OUT AND ABOUT

There have been lots of occasions when people from New Prospects have been out and about over the past year...

## Linskill Summer Fayre

We now have two reasons to spend time at the Linskill Centre in North Shields. Firstly, the Community Activities group has moved from its long time home at the Balkwell Hut to a new base at the Linskill Centre. The new location gives the group the chance to 'own' a space and the walls are decked with projects they have undertaken, numerous photographs of outings and events and a community map of the local area with all the facilities marked and identified. The room is used as a base for most of the group's sessions but the Centre managers also let them use the hall space when more room is needed for drama and music activities. The second reason to visit the Centre is to say hello to our Team Leaders, who now have office space at the Centre - a great improvement on their former home at Park View in Whitley Bay.

So, we took the opportunity to get involved in the Linskill Summer Fayre, with a range of games and a tombola which provided fun for visitors as well a boost to our fundraising efforts. We also had a stall in the Community Hall to show off what New Prospects can do.

## New Prospects Social Group

New Prospects has many dedicated, skilled and enthusiastic staff and this new group just goes to prove it. A small group of staff from North Tyneside Outreach has taken the initiative and started to organise ad hoc social events that anyone can attend. So far this group has already enjoyed an Italian meal together at a local restaurant and had a fun night out at the dogs - Sunderland Greyhound Stadium was very busy that night. Both occasions were very well attended with large numbers of people meeting up for a good time. Who knows where they will strike next - keep an eye on the website for details of the next event.

## The Gala Ball

In May we enjoyed our first ever Gala Ball. The evening was funded by our sponsored walk which made walking through rain and wind along the seafront of North Tyneside all worth while, as it led to a really enjoyable evening. The ball took place in splendid surroundings and everyone dressed up, let their hair down and had a great time. This is now likely to become an annual event due to the huge amount of excellent feedback we received from people who attended - and the demands of all the people who couldn't make it who want to go to the next one.



Making music at the Fayre



David goes greyhound racing



Albert enjoying the Christmas party

# NEW IMPROVEMENTS

## INTERNAL

### Getting updated

The new-look New Prospects Association website has been up and running since January and has been a great way to keep staff and service users up-to-date with news and successes, forthcoming events and service developments. It has also helped to introduce New Prospects to a wider range of people and really shows off who we are and how good we are at what we do.

### Getting Creative

During the year people who are supported by New Prospects have had the opportunity to get involved in film-making. You can see the results of their hard work and imagination on our website. From the promotional to the inventive, they are all mini masterpieces so go and have a look at all the talent on display.

### Getting connected

During the year New Prospects invested in Netbooks for the Team Leaders. Now they have a portable, convenient way of keeping in touch with the office and with each other. The Netbooks have greatly improved communication and efficiency throughout the organisation.

### Getting to know you

Another first for New Prospects! Every year we send out a questionnaire to all our stakeholders to find out how they think we are doing in terms of the support we give. This goes to the people we support, their supporters and professionals like social workers and health professionals. This year we decided it would be good if we could also talk to people in person to find out more about what they think of New Prospects. We held two events, one for service users and one for staff, both of which were a great success. We also sent out a questionnaire to all staff to gauge their satisfaction with the Organisation

and to find out how they thought New Prospects could be improved. All this information will feed into future strategic plans as we move forward together.

## EXTERNAL

### New Provider Network

New Prospects staff have taken a leading role in the creation of a new learning disability provider network in the North East and Chief Executive Ellen Vick is a member of the steering group. This is a unique innovation – there is nothing quite like it in the rest of the country. Following a series of bids, funding was secured from the Department of Health, and NETSwork, the North East Third Sector Learning Disability Provider Network, was born. It is hosted by VONNE and you can find more information about the network and its activities on the VONNE website: [www.vonne.co.uk](http://www.vonne.co.uk)

### More to Life than Services

Once again New Prospects is making a difference. As one of eight providers engaged in the 'More to Life than Services' project, New Prospects is learning new skills such as brokerage, support planning, how to set up a social enterprise, partnership working and asset-based community development. Why? In order to give a wider range of support to people who currently use, or might want to use, our services. Whether it's working with others to make sure there is a wide range of social activities available to them or helping people to become self-employed, New Prospects will always look to provide the support our service users want.



Sarah and her mum looking forward to the future

# TREASURER'S REPORT

## NEW PROSPECTS ASSOCIATION LIMITED TREASURER'S REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2010

Financial highlights of the year are:

Income	Increased by 18.3%	to £4.04m
Annual Costs	Increased by 14.7%	to £3.67m
Operating Surplus	Increased by 73%	to £365k
Staff numbers	Increased by 22%	to 183
Net Current Assets	Increased by £331k	to £732k
Number of months running costs covered by liquid assets	Increased from 1.5	to 2.4



What a pleasure it is – especially in the current economic climate of doom and gloom – to report on a further year of significant financial success. This follows three years of increasing surpluses and is testimony to the hard work, dedication and prudence of the management team and all of the staff and reflects the operational success and established reputation of the Organisation.

Staff, at all levels, are the backbone of New Prospects Association and their efforts make the job of the Board of Trustees relatively straightforward. They represent by far the biggest resource we have. This year and last, out of every £1 in income generated, 81 pence was spent on staff costs.

Our Balance Sheet has been strengthened by reinvesting this year's surplus back into the business and we have moved closer to achieving our aim of having liquid assets sufficient to cover three months of running costs. Last year we were at the half-way stage; this year we are within 80 per cent of our

target. It is my view that the coming year will be a challenging one and we will do well to maintain these reserves.

As ever, it is important to remember that financial success is not the main aim of New Prospects Association: it is merely the means to an end. That end is, of course, to provide for the needs of our service users. The measure of how well we have achieved this is dealt with elsewhere in the report.

**We are looking to the coming year with cautious optimism knowing that we have financial stability, excellent staff, peer approval and service users who can depend upon us for value-for-money, quality care.**

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Where we get our funding from	2010		2009	
	£	%	£	%
Contract Income	3,935,058	97	3,353,716	98
DSS Allowances	10,924	0	11,272	0
Other Income	93,711	2	46,626	1
Interest received	13	0	3,441	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4039706</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3415055</b>	<b>100</b>
What we spend it on	2010		2009	
	£	%	£	%
Care Costs	3,138,198	86	2,647,692	83
Day Activities	229,736	6	239,519	7
Management	279,067	8	307,310	10
Depreciation	22,144	1	3,592	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3669145</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3198113</b>	<b>100</b>
Where we use our assets	2010		2009	
	£	%	£	%
Provision of housing	0	0	0	0
Working reserves	607,481	63	572,140	88
Designated Funds	354,125	36	0	0
Special projects	8,681	1	32,931	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>970287</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>605071</b>	<b>100</b>

The Figures confirm the position

YEAR ENDED

31 March	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Income	1,987	2,426	3,069	3,168	3,353	3,935
Surplus (Deficit)	(72)	(161)	9	188	211	365

Bankers: Lloyds TSB, Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

Auditors: Reed Milburn & Co., Howard Street, North Shields, Tyne and Wear

Registration: Company No. 2728R registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965, with charitable status