



new prospects

ANNUAL REPORT

2011





# THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

**It is strange to be looking back to the previous financial year as the contrast between circumstances then and now is so extreme. During the year to 31st March 2011 we had a change in government which we knew was going to result in a change in policy. It all felt like bad news at the time but the reality was the changes had made little impact at that time. For New Prospects it had been business as usual.**

During the year ended 31st March 2011 New Prospects had managed to expand its services with successful tendering and increases in funding from Local Authorities. All of this resulted in an increase in income of 3.72%. This has meant more clients, more support for those needing it and more choice. By the end of the year we were supporting 180 people with learning disabilities and helping them live their lives according to their wishes. A fantastic result for all concerned and real progress towards meeting the objectives of the Association.

New Prospects work is not confined to just more people and bigger numbers. We have an aim of achieving high quality in the services we provide. During the year, New Prospects staff have continued to work on personalisation of support and good progress has been made. Personalisation has become a culture within New Prospects rather than an aim but we know we can always do more. We will continue to improve our approach during the current year with a combination of hard work and training to make sure we offer the extra choice or to make a new goal possible.

Our clients set the agenda for us to follow. We ended the financial year on a high. Good financial results and improvement in both the quality and quantity of services we provide.

The spending cuts which resulted from the comprehensive spending review were announced in October 2010 but really only took effect in April 2011 which was after the end of the financial year. The public sector cuts were the most severe we had ever seen and I cannot report on the major events of the year without mentioning the impact they have had on New Prospects.

The major proportion of New Prospects income comes either directly or indirectly from local authorities and it was clear any public sector cuts would have a negative effect on our income and services. The problem we were facing was that we were unsure how local government would implement their cost savings so it was difficult to plan.

Central government were not prescriptive in the way spending cuts were to be achieved and different authorities

approached the problem in different ways. New Prospects works with three local authorities and all three had very different ideas of how they were going to achieve their budget targets. In the current financial year we have had to work with the contract providers to satisfy these three sets of new criteria. This was not easy as New Prospects is a single organisation with a single staff team but we were being asked to make different changes in different geographical locations.

**By the end of the year we were supporting 180 people with learning disabilities and helping them live their lives according to their wishes.**



We have been asked to achieve cuts which mean a reduction in income to the Association of £140k. We have managed to achieve that target but there was a great deal of effort went into working out how it could be done. Strategically we tried to identify what were the most important factors in what we do. We identified that it was essential to maintain quality support for our clients whilst protecting the jobs of the skilled staff team who provide the care and support. We would not accept any situation which would leave clients or staff at risk.



**We are still experiencing further changes but we are hopeful the true impact is now known and we can start to plan for the future with some degree of certainty.**



Unfortunately the cuts have resulted in a small number of redundancies from our office team and some changes to the way staff work. This was regrettable but we tried to be fair and to make sure we minimised the impact. We needed to achieve a balanced budget to

maintain a sustainable future and I am pleased to say that has been achieved and New Prospects future is secure.

We are still experiencing further changes but we are hopeful the true impact is now known and we can start to plan for the future with some degree of certainty.

It is testimony to the professionalism of the staff team that New Prospects has recently passed an assessment to maintain the Investors In People award. The assessment took place immediately after the implementation of the cuts at a time when morale would have been expected to be low. I am pleased to report everyone pulled together to achieve a positive result. I am hoping this is a start of more positive news after a period of turmoil.

Looking to the future we are hopeful of a positive future but stability would be acceptable in the short term given the changes we have faced. Opportunities for growth will be limited as public sector funding will continue to be restricted for some years to come but we are positively pursuing new opportunities when they arise.

Ultimately we work in the field of learning disabilities because we believe we can make a difference to someone's life. It is that belief which will help us get through the tough times to a brighter future.

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



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

**Time to write the Annual Report again!!! Time, as we all know, waits for no man and that is how it feels when you work at New Prospects. Days, weeks and months fly past – with never a dull moment. This year has been no exception. You will read about some of the highlights in the body of this report. And.....there are the ever present challenges too.**

Our focus is firmly set on being the best at what we do. We can't do that if we don't constantly challenge ourselves to do more, be more creative, help people we support to get more involved, push ourselves to find new opportunities by working in new ways. Please take the time to read about our involvement in a Regional Efficiency and Improvement Programme (REIP) funded project called "More to Life than Services" which will illustrate what I mean.

Do we get it right all the time? Well, no! But we try and we aim high and we are committed to being the very best that we can be. How do we know if we are achieving our aims? As our regulator the Care Quality Commission takes a more hands off approach to inspection and regulation, New Prospects senior staff have improved our internal audit and review processes to ensure that they are robust and hold those in positions of responsibility to account.

to live life the way they want to, doing the things that they enjoy and value.

Many of you will have seen the recent revelations about Winterbourne View and the appalling abuse that was happening there – and sadly this is not the first time we have all heard of stories like this. Scenes like those we saw should give every service provider in the land pause for thought.....could that happen in a service that we provide? I am confident that the answer for New Prospects services is a resounding NO because we are constantly reviewing and checking what we do to make sure that people using New Prospects services are safe and happy in their homes.

Please have a look at the results of our annual questionnaires. These are sent to everyone involved in New Prospects i.e. people we support, their families and supporters and our staff and other stakeholders. They reflect the views of the people who are most important to New Prospects – the people we are accountable to.

**We are able to show that our support makes a difference and that the people we support value what we do.**

This year we have changed our system to ensure that Service Managers spend time with staff and people we support as they audit each service every month. If you have a family member who receives support from Newcastle Enabling Service or North Tyneside Outreach then you may receive a call to ask you about the quality of the service you receive and for your views about how the service could be improved.

We have also updated our support plan to ensure that each plan reflects all aspects of the person's life. We will always have to be able to meet each individual's needs effectively but we can now demonstrate our commitment to supporting people



**Our focus is firmly set on being the best at what we do.**

We are supporting more people every year and we have been fortunate that this has been the trend over the past few years. It remains to be seen if the changes introduced by the Coalition Government to funding, benefits, support models and criteria levels will now reverse this trend for the future but it is reasonable to assume that this could be the case. You will know from your own experience that there are many threats to what we considered to be the status quo and I expect that New Prospects will be facing numerous challenges in the year ahead. However, I am confident that we will weather the storm. We are able to show that our support makes a difference and that the people we support value what we do. We are working hard to focus our support so that every minute we spend with someone makes a difference to the quality of their life in some way – whether that means helping them cook healthy meals, budget their money, keep their home safe and secure or helping them to get out and about. All these things are so important and New Prospects staff understand that our person centred approach is vital if we are to succeed in our mission to help

people realise their individual hopes and dreams.

I am privileged to lead a team of dedicated, skilled people throughout the organisation. A great deal has been achieved this year and I would like to thank all the people that play their part in making New Prospects an organisation to be proud of.

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



**We are constantly reviewing and checking what we do to make sure that people using New Prospects services are safe and happy in their homes.**

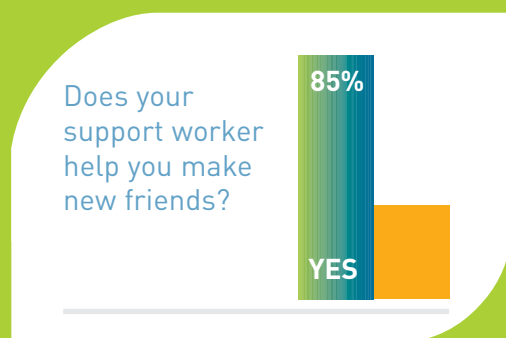


## HOW ARE WE DOING?

One of the most important things that any organisation can do is ask the people who use its services what they think about what they are getting. New Prospects conducts an annual survey of everyone concerned with the organisation – the people we support, their families and other carers, the wider stakeholders like social workers and health professionals. This year was no exception and the full results will be available on our website. The following is a sample of the responses we received and some of the key statistics:

### RESULTS FROM THE OUTREACH SERVICE USERS' SURVEY

*"You do not see the disability of my brother, but care for him as an individual who is less enabled, needing support. Staff appear to me to be more family members than individuals just doing a job"*



## RESULTS FROM THE INDEPENDENT SUPPORTED LIVING SURVEY

“At New Prospects there are friendly, approachable staff who go the extra mile. Your service has made a ‘real’ difference to Gary’s life. Down to earth, practical, person centred approach - excellent”

Do staff treat you with respect and dignity?



Are you happy with your key worker?



Are you happy with the people you live with?



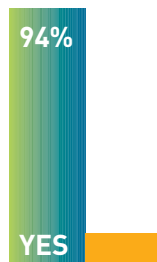
Do you have a choice about how you want to spend your day?



“New Prospects always put the client/service users welfare first and give constant support and help for carers”

“Can’t praise the things you do more highly. New Prospects gives the service user the opportunity to experience new activities outside the family”

Are you still happy living in your own home?





# BUILDING A SOCIAL NETWORK

New Prospects prides itself on being sociable and this year we have made a big effort to find ways to bring people together to have fun and enjoy themselves. The Team Leaders have organised a number of social evenings to enjoy karaoke or a barn dance. Support staff have organised nights out to the theatre, and to local restaurants and sporting events. Office staff have taken the lead on the Summer Ball and the Christmas disco.

We have all enjoyed ourselves at these events but more importantly we have seen friendships develop between people we support. These friendships have led to invitations to tea, a Come dine with Me evening, a Ladies who Lunch group and a camping group. People are starting to create their own networks and friendships are blossoming.

### SOCIAL EVENTS

Just some of the events that made this a special year.



### SOCIAL NETWORK

A range of activities that brought people together.



## WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

**(MORE TO  
LIFE THAN  
SERVICES)**

**This year at New Prospects we have been looking at different ways of providing our services. One of the exciting opportunities which arose was a chance to take part in a project called More to Life than Services. This programme has developed really interesting new ways in which we can support our service users and exposed a range of staff at New Prospects to many different organisations.**

The project brought together a consortium of learning disability provider organisations to learn how to help people we support to make real links and friendships in their communities. New Prospects, as the local lead organisation working with Lives Through Friends, an organisation from Gloucestershire, made a bid to the Regional Efficiency and Improvement Programme for funding for the programme. The bid was backed by North Tyneside Council.

All the bidders were invited to a 'Festival of Ideas' where the twelve local authorities in the region came together with those making proposals for a day of sharing the ideas put forward by the bidders. Our bid was one of eight successful bids. The idea behind the project was that, by connecting people to their communities and helping them make friends and contacts, there would be a reduction in the amount

of paid support needed as there would be more people in their lives who could give support of various kinds.

Ellen Vick, Chief Executive of New Prospects, led a team of ten staff who attended a series of learning events in order to improve their skills and understanding about using and developing community based initiatives. The aim was to help people to become part of their own local communities and thereby becoming less dependent on funded services. We embarked upon a series of learning events which covered a wide range of topics; planning for change with 'Go Mad Thinking', Asset Based Community Development and Community Connecting as well as a day with local and national entrepreneurs who are working to change social care delivery. We took part in world café style discussions, created a PATH for the project, and met

together regularly to ensure that we all stayed on track.

Staff from every level of the organisation – support workers, team leaders, a service manager and the Chief Exec were involved. This team used the learning sessions to then go away and work with people that they supported to help them improve their lives. Using the tools gained from the programme, New Prospect's staff are now working hard to ensure that everyone we support knows that there is More to Life than Services. The programme has encouraged us to be more outward-looking and to recognise that there are many people and organisations that can support the people who use New Prospects' services. Our job is to make sure people get the chance to have as wide a circle of friends as possible.





**Margaret's story** - Margaret was one of the many people who benefited from the More to Life than Services project. Margaret had very clear ideas about what she wanted and she identified her dream as being able to walk again. She knew that we would work with her to think about ways to help her get closer to her dream.

Since the beginning of the project staff have worked with Margaret and the local Occupational Therapy team. Margaret now has a standing frame to help strengthen her legs. She is also a keen attendee at the local pool as swimming regularly is also helping to strengthen her legs – and she knows some nice lifeguards into the bargain. Finally, she visits her personal instructor at the gym once a week. Margaret now has many more friends – she knows people at the gym and at the pool. This gave her the confidence to start visiting the local community centre – where she made more friends whom she sees every week when she goes to the centre with no support from staff.

Margaret also decided to take a college course which led to a part time admin job (another one of her dreams). Currently Margaret is considering becoming a befriender at the newly built older person's home on her estate – she says she would like to spend time chatting to people who don't have anyone to visit them.



**Sylvia's story** - Sylvia did not have any friends other than the staff that support her. She does not communicate with words and will not make eye contact unless she is very comfortable with the situation she is in. Before the start of the project Sylvia needed two support workers with her when she was out because she would often place herself on the ground when out and slap herself on her face. We knew this was because she found it difficult to cope in many situations and this was her response when she was anxious or unsure.

She now attends a coffee morning every Tuesday at the local community centre. She has been going for many months and she has become used to going and now feels at ease. She has gradually been accepted by the other ladies who go there to have coffee. She goes to keep fit in the afternoon with the same group of ladies. Although Sylvia has no speech you can tell from her facial expressions how happy she is to be part of this group. She also goes to church every Sunday and is now a well known member of the congregation. As people got to know her, a wonderful thing has happened. A local lady who was friends with Sylvia's mother many years ago and remembered her and her family was also a member of the congregation. This lady has now re-established contact with Sylvia and meets her at church every Sunday. Two to one support has now reduced to one to one support when Sylvia is out.



**Julie's story** - Julie has no speech and is confined to a wheelchair. Again staff have worked hard to understand how Julie makes choices and they can now understand when Julie would like to do things and when she does not want to do something.

She can make a lot more choices now, and so she is more in control of elements of her life. The team worked with the Occupational Therapist to source a comfy chair for Julie so that she can get out of her wheelchair and sit in the living room with her house mates watching TV. They have also helped her change her diet which is a big improvement.

She now uses her local area rather than using facilities further away. Neighbours acknowledge her and she is well known to lots of people who stop to talk to her and her support worker. Julie has also reduced the amount of support she needs when she is out of the house.



## NEW PROSPECTS VOLUNTEERS

Two volunteers from New Prospects won an award for their tireless effort and enthusiasm from North Tyneside Council's annual Commendation Award Scheme.

Paul Holroyd and Sandra Taylor volunteer on a weekly basis at New Prospects community day activities. They have been recognised for their hard work and enthusiasm in encouraging adults with learning disabilities to get involved with a range of community activities such as music, drama, craft, film-making and healthy eating.

Sandra Taylor, who has been a service user of New Prospects for over 15 years, was invited to become a day-volunteer due to her passion over the years to help and assist other day-service users.

Anja Stueness from New Prospects commended Sandra's work saying, "Sandra is a wonderful member of the team, she has a huge heart and is always sociable, friendly and caring towards our day-service users. She takes huge pride in her work which has helped develop other areas of her life".

Sandra said, "I like helping everybody, treating people special and doing a good job. I like being busy and I like joining in all the activities, especially drama".

Paul Holroyd, who has volunteered at New Prospects for over 2 years, was recognised by North Tyneside Council

for his relentless encouragement of New Prospects day-service users to develop their skills and build confidence.

Paul is a talented artist and shares his artistic skills with users by working on craft projects and leading art-based activities. Paul said, "I find my work at New Prospects very rewarding. It's a nice, warm feeling knowing that I can give back to others. New Prospects is not just a charity, it's a family, and we all help each other.

"I felt so surprised and honoured that I got nominated for the award because volunteering for New Prospects is something I love doing. I was speechless when I won, I feel proud of myself and Sandra and proud of the people I work with".

Paul is currently studying towards an NVQ in art and has aspirations to become an art teacher. Paul says, "The skills learnt from volunteering at New Prospects have helped develop my confidence to become a teacher. The staff at New Prospects encouraged me to go one step further, and I like to pay this forward by encouraging others to develop their skills and realise their potential".

"I felt so surprised and honoured that I got nominated for the award because volunteering for New Prospects is something I love doing. I was speechless when I won, I feel proud of myself and Sandra and proud of the people I work with".





# THE TREASURER'S REPORT

**NEW PROSPECTS ASSOCIATION LIMITED  
TREASURER'S REPORT YEAR ENDED  
31 MARCH 2011**

Financial highlights of the year are:

|  |                         |               |
|--|-------------------------|---------------|
| Income   | Increased by 3.9%       | to £4.2m      |
| Annual Costs   | Increased by 7.1%       | to £3.9m      |
| Operating Surplus  | Decreased by 28.6%      | to £261k      |
| Staff numbers  | Increased by 4%         | to 198        |
| Net Current Assets – these are the funds we have available to meet our monthly costs [see next item]                                       | Increased by £274k      | to £1.006m    |
| How long would our net current assets [excluding those designated for special purposes] last, until our running costs reduced them to nil? | Increased from 2 months | to 2.6 months |

Whilst the results for the year are undoubtedly pleasing and would appear to be very satisfactory, they do have to be viewed with a certain amount of caution. On the one hand, income from the work that we do increased, again, and was almost £4.2m. On the other hand, however, our costs – predominantly wages – went up from £306k per month to £328k per month. The total of costs for the year rose to over £3.9m. The end result was that the surplus we were able to retain was cut back from last year's record level of £365k to £261k. This did mean, however, that we were able to move a step closer to our target of having at least 3-months worth of

running costs held in "free" liquid assets.

This reserves target is reviewed periodically by the Trustees and we feel that it remains appropriate – especially now when we are seeing savage cuts being imposed upon our commissioners, the Local Authorities, who are seeking to pass those cuts on to us. At the time of writing we are looking at a somewhat uncertain picture and we will have to ensure that our costs are tightly controlled.

On the positive side, there is no question of any of our services being curtailed or of our standards falling. Just the opposite, in fact. We are constantly

striving to maintain, if not improve, standards. We are, also, examining possible ways to widen the range of services we can offer.

As ever, there is no room for complacency. That being said, we have a strong Balance Sheet and continue to be able to fund the various activities and meet those charitable objectives that are our 'raison d'être'. Our service users can be assured that they are in good hands.

**Keith Williamson FCA**

**Treasurer**

**New Prospects Association**

# THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

| Where we get our funding from | 2011             |            | 2010             |            |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
|                               | £                | %          | £                | %          |
| Contract Income               | 4,111,596        | 98         | 3,935,058        | 97         |
| DSS Allowances                | 12,628           | 0          | 10,924           | 0          |
| Other Income                  | 71,266           | 2          | 93,711           | 2          |
| Interest received             | 610              | 0          | 13               | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>4,196,100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>4,039,706</b> | <b>100</b> |

| What we spend it on | 2011             |            | 2010             |            |
|---------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
|                     | £                | %          | £                | %          |
| Care Costs          | 3,337,615        | 85         | 3,138,198        | 86         |
| Day Activities      | 282,507          | 7          | 229,736          | 6          |
| Management          | 289,644          | 7          | 279,067          | 8          |
| Depreciation        | 21,772           | 1          | 22,144           | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>3,931,538</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>3,669,145</b> | <b>100</b> |

| Where we use our assets | 2011             |            | 2010           |            |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------|----------------|------------|
|                         | £                | %          | £              | %          |
| Provision of housing    | 0                | 0          | 0              | 0          |
| Working reserves        | 865,643          | 70         | 607,481        | 63         |
| Designated Funds        | 354,125          | 29         | 354,125        | 36         |
| Special projects        | 8,061            | 1          | 8,681          | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>1,227,829</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>970,287</b> | <b>100</b> |

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



new prospects