

# A SLICE OF PIE

**PIE is all about relationships....A Psychologically Informed Environment is a place or service that has been purposefully designed to support the mental, emotional, relational, learning and social needs of both service users and staff.**



## An Update on the Triple Aims for Homelessness Project in Tower Hamlets

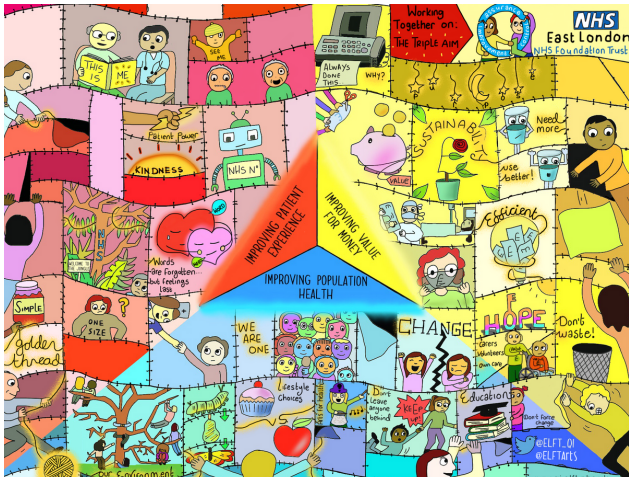
*By Dr. Louise Noronha, Clinical Psychologist, Psychology in Hostels Team, East London NHS Foundation Trust*

Since 2019 the East London NHS Foundation Trust's Psychology in Hostels Team (PiH) and Providence Row Housing Association have been working on a Triple Aims project to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in hostels.

We started out by interviewing around 60 staff members and residents across 2 complex needs hostels to find out what they thought helped or hindered the health of residents.

The key themes coming out of these interviews were:

1. The need for **positive, supportive relationships** for residents, within the staff team and between staff and residents.
2. The need to improve **hostel operations** (how the hostel is run, resources) and **safety**.
3. The need to improve residents' **mental and physical health**.



#### 4. The need to improve **access to services outside of the hostel.**

(To see a short video describing these themes in more detail go to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4flsWIMxZY>

Energised by the conversations we had, we then ran workshops for staff members in each hostel to feed back our findings and to come up with specific ideas for changes that we could try out. We asked staff to generate as many ideas as they could in relating to the themes outlined above and to vote on their top ideas. The initial ideas that staff came up with in each hostel were:

##### **Hostel 1:**

- To run meaningful activities that staff and residents can do together (for example, arts group and sports groups)
- To invite health professionals to come in to the hostel to meet with residents

##### **Hostel 2:**

- For staff to develop better relationships with other local services that can offer support to residents
- To invite healthcare and benefit support workers in to the hostel to meet with residents.

Over the past month our key priority has been to involve hostel residents in this

work. We have run workshops for residents and held individual interviews with residents in both hostels to come up with change ideas and decide on the top ideas.

We are also deciding on what measures we can use to understand whether our work is having the desired effect. As the name 'Triple Aims' suggests, there are three main outcomes that we are looking for:

- Improving health and wellbeing of residents
- Improving resident and staff experience
- Improving effectiveness and value for money

An important part of the 'Triple Aims' approach is to try out a few change ideas, measure whether these are having an impact and depending on the outcome either stick with, make adjustments to, or move on from the idea.

We have set up working groups or 'Project Teams' in each hostel- made up of PiH and hostel staff members, management and hostel residents- to lead on these specific change ideas. The group meets monthly to discuss specific actions and review progress.

Now that the ball is rolling, we plan to keep the momentum going by maximising opportunities for 'quick wins' (changes that can be made without much planning), but also continuing to take steady and thoughtful steps towards changes that require more thought.

True to the values and spirit of PIE, engaging in this work has been underpinned by relationships. We hope that both staff and residents involved in this work will be enriched by the process of having shared conversations and undertaking joint planning and problem-solving, in the same way that we have throughout the course of this work.

## **Meet Clare Mpofu Contract Manager Heather Lodge**

*interviewed by Rachel Clayton, Interim Team Manager Dellow*



### **1. What is your name, what is your current job role and how long have you been working within PRHA - can you give a general overview of what your role might entail?**

I have been working with PRHA for 8 years now – the time seems to have flown by! I have been lucky enough to work within several projects at PRHA and have been the manager at Heather Lodge for the last 4 years.

My role is to help the support team to provide a high standard of support to our clients to enable them to move on with their recovery pathways and achieve their goals.

I also like to look at ways that we can constantly improve or adapt our service to continue to meet the needs of our client group. The majority of my work is carried out in partnership with other agencies in the community.

### **2. What does PIE mean to you and how has using the frame work of PIE in the work place helped your practice?**

PIE has been a way of ensuring that our focus remains on our clients. All our work is client based and it has meant that we think of how we provide support in a more individualised and accessible way and this led to us looking at different ways we can work towards positive change for the project, our residents and our staff team. It has led to our clients feeling they

have more choice and control in the way their support and our service is delivered.

### **3. Can you think of any ways in which PIE has shaped your working style?**

Using a PIE approach has meant that I always focus more on understanding that some behaviours we can find challenging to manage can be caused by previous complex trauma experiences and using this framework means that I look at more creative and constructive ways to address these.

I have more time to reflect in a group setting during our team sessions with our psychologist on both our clients and our staff teams psychological needs and recognise the importance of the relationship between the two in the work that we do. It has changed my perspective and led to a workspace where our clients have more direct choice and control in the support and service they receive.

### **4. What advice would you give to a new member of staff working in a similar environment?**

Creating a welcoming and supportive environment would be the most basic advice I would give anyone working in this type of setting. Not only does this mean that we see clients feeling that there is less of a barrier between them and the staff and being able to express their thoughts by understanding that support is openly accessible to them, but also this creates a more dynamic way of working with our teams and harnessing the skills and life experiences that our staff bring to the role; which can be challenging at times.

However based on my own experiences I would also say access to a good coffee machine is a must!!!

## Reflections on 6 months of working with PRHA hostels

I've been working with PRHA hostels since April, when I joined the Tower Hamlets Psychology in Hostels Service as an Assistant Psychologist.

Our team works mainly with hostel staff, offering reflective practice, as well as one-to-one consultations. We're also partnering with PRHA on the Triple Aims project to improve the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of people living in hostels.

A big part of my role has been supporting this project, which has involved spending an afternoon a week at Daniel Gilbert House and the Dellow (the two hostels taking part). I've also spent time at Edward Gibbons House and at Heather Lodge.

Sadly I will be leaving at the end of October as part of my journey to becoming a fully qualified psychologist. I've learned so much from both staff and residents over the past six months, so I thought I would share some of my reflections.

Firstly, I've really enjoyed getting to know the hostels. Each service has its own unique atmosphere. I remember visiting EGH on one of my first days in the job. I buzzed at the big black metal door, feeling slightly nervous about what might await me on the other side.

Then I walked through into a beautiful garden, with residents sitting and enjoying the sunshine. I immediately felt more at ease and welcome. It brought home what a difference the physical environment can make.

Another highlight has been working on the Triple Aims project. Previously I was mainly based in a clinic, working one-on-one with clients and waiting for them to come to me. I've really enjoyed working with a wider community to try and create change.



It has been especially energising talking to residents. There is a common misconception that people who experience homelessness don't care about their health, but research shows this isn't true.

They do, but it can be hard to look after their health when they have other pressing concerns and there are significant barriers to getting help.

This has been borne out by my experience. For the most part, residents have been keen to share their thoughts and have really good ideas about how to improve things. I like the fact that most residents don't mince their words in telling you what they think!

Spending time in the hostels has also given me huge respect for staff, in particular the way they persevere and hold onto hope for residents even when there are challenges.

They are very skilled in building relationships with people bit by bit, making the most of every interaction they have, not judging and not giving up. It would be great if other services could learn from them.

It has also given me an appreciation of how much time and energy both staff and residents have to spend to get basic things like benefits sorted.

This makes me think of a recent study that highlighted how being homeless involves a lot of invisible emotional and physical labour that often isn't recognised, with people having to navigate lots of different services and appointments.

I wonder if hostel staff sometimes feel this too, because they have to deal with so many systems on behalf of their clients, and these systems can be frustrating to engage with.

At the same time, because they are in an official role, sometimes residents might blame them for delays and problems that are outside of their control.

I've also noticed how often everything seems to happen at once in the hostels, with multiple demands being placed on staff's attention at once. They are very good at staying calm and prioritising what they need to focus on, which helps residents feel calmer too.

At the same time I think it must be challenging for staff to hold in mind everything they have to do when they are often interrupted.

I think this is part of the value that reflective practice and 1:1 consultations can add – having some protected time to slow down and think through some of the challenges staff work with.

I'd like to close by taking this chance to thank the whole team at PRHA for making me feel so welcome and included. I'm really going to miss you and I wish you all the best for the future.

**Sarah O'Reilly, Assistant Psychologist**  
**Tower Hamlets Psychology in Hostels Service**



**We are always looking for  
feedback, comments, suggestions,  
articles and photos for the Bulletin.**

**Please email:  
Jaydee Anciro  
Specialist Services Team Manager  
with your contributions at:  
[janciro@prha.net](mailto:janciro@prha.net)**

## Welcome Armie, Social Worker student on placement at Dellow

Hi my name is Armie Fortune. I am a social work student from London Metropolitan university and I am currently doing my placement at the Dellow Centre.



I have been at the Dellow Centre since mid July of this year, working alongside keyworker to support residents living in the supported housing accommodation.

I have had the opportunity to work with residents who present with different ranges of needs and difficult circumstances due to homelessness, drug and alcohol dependency.

I liaise with other agencies and advocate for residents to promote their independence and well being. Working at the Dellow centre has given me the opportunity to gain knowledge of the Care Act 2014.

Handover meetings have been a huge learning curve for me as it informed staff of every resident and their situations.

- **How have you implemented PIE in your placement?**

For me it is important to understand my working environment; the people I'm working with and the people that I am providing support for.

I am fortunate to be working with colleagues who are very caring, accommodating and willing to guide and support me in my journey.

I see people as individuals therefore they should be treated with dignity, respect and empathy which is what I have done with every individual I have worked with. I always consider individuals and their circumstances and take that into account when working with them.

I treat individuals as I want to be treated if I was in their situation.

- **Any top tips for future social worker students on placement with PRHA**

I will say come with an open heart and mind. There are a lot of learning opportunities at the Dellow Centre.

It might look unwelcoming from the outset but the staff are brilliant and even the residents are people you can work with as long as you have the skills.

