

BUILD

NEWSLETTER

TIME TO ADAPT

FOR EVERY ABILITY

MARCH 2019



WELCOME

TO BUILD MAGAZINE

Working in partnership with care providers, housing associations, commissioners and care professionals, we help vulnerable people to live in their own homes.

What makes us different is that we don't just understand commissioning and social care, we've lived it. Our expertise in property is supported by specialist experience within the care sector. We understand the challenges that care professionals face, the importance of integrated housing, and the impact of finding the right home for residents.

**We're more than just
bricks and mortar.**

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BLACKPOOL: WIDENED ACCESS FOR POWERED CHAIRS

SUPPORTED LIVING IS INTEGRAL TO MAINTAINING THE BEST STANDARDS OF LIVING FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN THE UK.

Reformed in 2014, the Care Act states that local authorities must promote well being when carrying out any of their care and support functions in respect of a person. Part of the definition of well being is 'suitability of living accommodation.'

Here at Mersten, we are committed to providing outstanding quality in the homes that we provide, consulting with Carers, families, Occupational Therapists, Commissioners and Registered Providers to achieve detailed specifications for each resident.

WE BELIEVE IN

Positive Relationships

We understand that there's more to a strong relationship than just being easy to deal with. We become true collaborators with every one of our partners, advising and adding value wherever we can.

A photograph of two young men smiling at the camera. The man on the left is wearing a dark blue sweater, and the man on the right is wearing a maroon t-shirt with white lettering. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

PROPERTY WITH PURPOSE

OUR MISSION TO HELP PEOPLE OF
EVERY ABILITY TO LIVE IN
THEIR OWN HOMES



EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS AS STANDARD

PEOPLE & PROPERTY HAND IN HAND

In 2015, Mersten was founded to provide a more integrated and human approach to property development.

Drawing on expertise in property and social care alike, our founding team understood that delivering much-loved homes for vulnerable people takes more than building capability. It takes understanding, consideration and care—holistic, integrated development that's as much about people as it is about property.



Case Study: Durham

WORDS AND PICTURES BY

Ceri Wood

Our 6 apartments in Durham are set out over three floors, and cater for a range of needs and abilities.

As the tenants would have a range of abilities, we've worked closely with Care Provider **Community Integrated Care**, who run the scheme, to ensure that the property has been fitted out to cater for everyone's safety and specific needs, while retaining as much independence as is possible for the tenants.

We firmly believe that when it comes to living arrangements, one size most definitely, does not fit all. Our aim is to create places that each tenant is proud to call home.

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I love it...since I've come here I've felt a lot calmer ”

KIERAN

Mersten Tenant - Durham



Providing specialist homes that are fit for purpose is at the heart of what we do.



Each apartment has been fitted with induction hobs, new white goods in fully fitted kitchens, with details being tailored for the individual needs of each tenant such as anti scald taps, lockable cupboards, full bathroom and/or wet rooms, and durable flooring where appropriate. Each bathroom is completely individual to each tenant and contain a range of baths, showers and wet rooms.



Many of the apartments have spare rooms that can be utilised as guest rooms, calm spaces, or used for leisure activities, giving tenants more choices around how they want to organise and customise their living spaces.

Offering a sense of independence and choice is fundamental to the rights of our tenants, and we make sure to revisit our properties to hear what our tenants think of their new living spaces.

Now home to five (soon to be six!) tenants, we revisited Durham in January 2019. It was wonderful to see that everyone had settled in well, both at home and in the village where the local community, shops and pubs have already welcomed everyone with open arms.



Welcome home

Having their own front doors has given the tenants greater independence to explore the local village and space to enjoy their own homes without disturbing each other in a safe, and quiet environment. Gavin is able to go to the shops and pub independently and already having made friends with Kieran, they are planning pub trips together.

Kieran previously lived with family and is in his first week in the apartment but he is already so proud of his home and enjoys being “master of his own home” and greeting guests. Kieran had personalised his apartment and was delighted to show us his very impressive sheep collection, DVDs, and the new furniture he’d chosen. Kieran now does his own dishes and has stopped the support worker from helping him with this task.

We spoke with several of the fantastic support workers and it was lovely to hear that the tenants were showing improved behaviours and greater independence since moving to the property. We wish everyone a wonderful time in their new Mersten home!

At a glance...

RECENT PROJECTS

BEDFORD

This shared accommodation has 7 bedrooms with adapted bathing facilities and wet rooms. This property has a range of accommodation types to fit varying needs.

GREENWICH

Greenwich is a multi room property where tenants have their own private bedrooms as well as sufficient space for communal life such as relaxation rooms, a large kitchen and outdoor decking.

NEWCASTLE

This recently completed property will be home to two service users who are now picking out their furniture! We will be catching up with the tenants to see how they've settled in soon.





Meet the team!

Sharon Ballantine

Our Business Development Manager , Sharon Ballantine on her role with Mersten and why finding the right properties by working with care and industry professionals is crucial for our tenants.

"As Partnership Executive for Mersten, I work as part of the Business Development team to raise awareness of Mersten. By working with health and social care partners, we are able to propose

individual solutions to meet local housing demand for vulnerable people. Being able to provide bespoke properties which meet the specific needs of the tenants is one of the most rewarding jobs I've done. We provide housing solutions by starting with the person and understanding their wants and needs.

By working closely with commissioners, housing and support providers, we can provide an environment enabling people to take more control over their own lives; our developments are so much more than just bricks and mortar.

I joined Mersten two years ago from national social care charity, Community Integrated Care. As Key Account Manager there, I worked closely with Housing partners and operational colleagues to find the right properties for the people we supported and to find alternatives where accommodation no longer provided the right environment to support people to live as independently as possible.

Our developments are so much more than just bricks and mortar.

Every person is unique and they are entitled to live in a property which enables the best quality of life, supported by people who are focused on the person, rather than worrying about housing issues. I live and work in Newcastle and am passionate about the work we do in my native North East but also support partnerships and development in other parts of the UK. The more innovative and bespoke properties we can provide to give people the opportunity to live with independence, the better.

I enjoy the development stage of my work, working closely with tenants, their families and Health and Social Care partners to deliver properties which are right for them. We all take our homes for granted but we shouldn't underestimate the impact having the right property and support can make - nothing can beat visiting tenants once they've moved in and hearing about the impact having their own home has made to them and their families, that is the most rewarding and humbling part of the role."

Sharon





WE'RE LISTENING

We spoke with Josh Bannister, who is one of the amazing Support Workers at our Blackpool bungalow...

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We aim to rehabilitate people who have acquired brain injuries to the best of our abilities and the best of their abilities by providing supported accommodation for adults after they've come out of hospital. Through time and effort and hard work, we get to see the tenants become re-abled and become more skilful and lead a more self-sustainable life.



BLACKPOOL BUNGALOW AND
SUPPORT STAFF

It's helped putting slopes in and widening door frames, and it's just little things that help... being all on the ground floor because we have a lot of wheelchair users. Bedrooms being close to the wet rooms and the kitchen so if people have poor mobility, it's easier to manoeuvre from one place to another, you don't have to go upstairs or from one side of the building to another.

It's one of the nicer houses I've worked in and I think that reflects in the staff members' and the service users' moods, especially as there are more open areas and more sitting areas so when families come and visit they can engage more and have personal time with family; I really think that this place is something quite special. "



Josh Bannister
Support Worker - Blackpool

Mersten Foundation

The Mersten Foundation assists local charitable causes in the North West of the UK.

NEUROMUSCULAR CENTRE

The Mersten Foundation has partnered up with the NeuroMuscular Centre to support those living with Muscular Dystrophy and their families and carers.

The NMC provides a unique combination of life-enhancing opportunities and support, it's an organisation providing physiotherapy and other muscular treatments, advice, support, employment and social clubs to an ever growing community. Affecting just over one in every 1000 people, Muscular Dystrophy is a progressive illness that has a huge impact on the lives of patients and family members.

Based in Cheshire, the Centre primarily caters for the North West of England, but the unique provisions and care available, free at point of service, mean that members often travel long distances from all over the UK, and even overseas, highlighting the huge gaps in public service provision for people living with MD and their families and carers.

The NMC's specialised gym is the only one of its kind in the UK.



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"Part of the grant from Mersten Foundation will enable NMC to buy materials and equipment for the Men in Sheds activities. The accessible workshop brings together carers and those with Muscular Dystrophy to make a wide range of items such as garden planters, furniture and just about anything else that can be crafted from wood! The workshop is a buzzing, fun and social place where practical activity and mutual support bring about improved well-being for all involved.."



Lyndsey Cannon
Grants and Contracts Manager- NMC



A Project by 'Men in Sheds'

The Foundation believes that the outstanding difference the NMC makes to the lives of members and families is key to providing fulfilling and enriched lifestyles for those living with this condition.

Main Text + Photos:
Ceri Wood



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