

PAPWORTH TRUST - GOLD AWARD – THE WHOLE STORY

THE HOUSING CORPORATION'S GOLD AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Foundations for Living project is one of the 2008 Housing Corporation Gold Award winners for the Building Cohesive Communities category.

Foundations for Living is a landmark project delivered by the Papworth Trust which supports disabled people to be an inclusive part of their community, delivered through an innovative and inclusive approach to accessible housing, community learning, employment and community cohesion.

Foundations for Living includes three key elements:

- 24 affordable rented wheelchair accessible properties across three sites
- 22 private flats
- Saxongate Community Learning Centre, which is an inspiring and fully accessible space for disabled and non-disabled people including local businesses, community groups and Huntingdon Regional College.

The Foundations for Living project (FFL) started in 2001 in response to local need and national policy. 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' clearly identified the multiple barriers experienced by disabled people; including a lack of suitable housing, high levels of unemployment, low skills, poverty, poor health and difficulties in accessing suitable transport.

The Papworth Trust is a charity and a registered social landlord. It consulted 28 disabled people living in residential care in a rural location about options for re-provision, led by the need to meet increased space standards and a desire for greater independence. The majority wanted to live in independent accommodation in an urban location near to shops, leisure and employment opportunities, and with less reliance on inaccessible public transport.

THE FOUNDATIONS FOR LIVING PROJECT INCLUDES:

- 24 affordable wheelchair accessible properties across three sites in a town-centre location. The flats are built to exceed former Scheme Development Standards and reflect Papworth Trust's expertise in detailed accessible design including wide corridors and doors, level access showers, height adjustable kitchen units, easy-to-access sockets and alarm/intercom systems, and assistive technology as required. At one of the schemes, Bradbury Place, accessible flats are 'pepper-potted' with a further 22 flats for sale.
- Individual support including personal care, housing support and community support.
- The Saxongate Community Learning Centre, which adjoins Bradbury Place, provides an inspiring and fully accessible space for the whole community including local businesses and community groups to run meetings, attend training

programmes and to take part in community groups. It has nine training/meeting rooms including: two IT suites, an art room, an accessible kitchen, and two rooms with height adjustable interactive whiteboards. It has staff offices, an atrium café and hot-desking area. Huntingdon Regional College have based a number of services at the centre.

OUTCOMES OF THE FOUNDATION FOR LIVING PROJECT

HOUSING OUTCOMES

- 24 disabled people have moved from rural residential care, parental homes or unsuitable housing into independent living in a town-centre location.
- Tenants report being much more independent and happier with their life, and say that it has exceeded their expectations.
- Tenants find it much easier to access town-centre facilities (shops, cafes etc).
- Because of people's increasing independence, support levels reduced dramatically from 148 core hours plus 63 hours sleep-in per week for 9 tenants in April 2005 (total = 211), to 30 core hours and no sleep-in each week for 17 tenants. A reduction in average hrs/week per tenant from 23 hrs to 1.7hrs (not including personal care).
- Tenants are able to access mainstream training programmes and community groups.
- Tenants across tenures work on joint projects together.
- Sales of private flats have benefited from increased accessibility standards and lifts.

“The best thing is having my own place ... able to go out when I want to. Being more independent is the biggest change – the best thing that could have happened – there’s no going back!!”

Quote from a disabled tenant

SAXONGATE COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE OUTCOMES

- 2529 disabled people attended meetings or training at Saxongate between September 2006 and the end of November 2007. Overall Saxongate has had 9579 visitors and 5600 incoming calls.
- Open days have attracted 300 visitors, and have showcased activities including Thai cooking, belly dancing, and IT courses. These have enabled local groups to engage with one another.

Of 45 students that enrolled on college courses in Sept 2007, eight had a disability, and 22 new learners enrolled for courses due to location and inclusive environment. Overall 485 learners have accessed courses.

- The Employment Programme has supported 430 people.
- Tenants have set up a club for community members.
- Local businesses with disabled staff are making use of accessible meeting facilities.
- A new office base has been created for basic skills and ESOL team.

James is disabled and recently won a Gold Medal of Excellence for outstanding and inspirational students after completing a mainstream City and Guilds IT course at Saxongate.

“I really enjoy going to Saxongate because it’s different and it gives me the chance to meet a whole new crowd of people. I’m really proud of my award, and hope it helps me to reach my goal of running my own business one day.”

- Active involvement in Huntingdon’s Diversity Forum where cohesion priorities are agreed.
- Support for the skills development of migrant workers.
- Working with the hate crime equalities officer to co-ordinate a project that will involve a school drama department and community safety team.
- Helped in organising ‘Unity in the Community event’.
- Enabling local retailers to learn BSL sign-language.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

- Purchasing a prime town-centre site in a nearby town giving disabled people access to a residential location from which they would otherwise have been excluded.
- Addressing funding issues associated with people moving from residential care to independent living.
- Research to track the project outcomes.
- Delivering a £2m fundraising campaign to help fund the project.
- Working in partnership with a Hill Residential, a private sector property developer, property developer to achieve an integrated housing solution.
- A transition programme for those disabled people who needed it, to help them prepare for living independently.
- Use of adaptive technology, internal design and interior design to maximum accessibility for all.

Because of the positive and inclusive ethos of Saxongate, and its town-centre locality, the project is also supporting migrant workers, ethnic minority groups and people with low levels of skills and education.

This landmark project is nationally significant because it is the first in the UK to demonstrate how a number of key mainstream services can be developed to be fully inclusive for disabled people across housing, support, employment, education and community integration, as well as challenging attitudes towards disability. It is also a unique model in its approach to mixed tenures.

One of the aims of the project has been to establish and disseminate best practice in the UK.

Some dissemination work has already started in order to promote the principles of inclusive design in the spatial planning of major new developments.

DOWNLOAD: The Papworth Trust Inclusive Design Guide from our website for more information: www.papworth.org.uk/goldaward/the-whole-story.php

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

The aim of the Foundations for Living project was to show how disabled people can be supported to live independently through a range of inclusive and accessible mainstream services which, by definition, need to be accessible to everyone in the community. The project is successfully providing accessible housing and support, integrated with housing for sale, a range of skills training, employment programmes and meeting facilities which are being used by a diverse range of individuals and groups in the community. Saxongate is having a tremendous impact through developing its role as a community hub, initiating projects supporting diversity and inclusion for a range of disadvantaged groups, and changing attitudes towards disabled people in the local community as a whole.

Examples of active engagement with local people include:

- Open days at Saxongate which provide 'taster' sessions to encourage people to access a range of leisure activities and skills courses including cooking, IT courses, exercise classes, numeracy and literacy. A wide range of local organisations and community groups put on displays to promote their work, and volunteering opportunities in the community. Disabled people have volunteered at the open days.
- The Saxongate Centre Manager is setting up a Steering Group to develop the role of the centre as a hub for local community organisations.
- People with mental health issues visit Saxongate as part of a community integration project.

The Saxongate team have worked with individuals to develop projects which meet their needs, for example:

- Kim is a disabled tenant. He recently moved out of residential care in a nearby town and now lives in his own flat in Bradbury Place. Initially he had low self-confidence but he has been supported by his support staff and the Job Club staff at Saxongate to set up a 'Friday Club' for other disabled people in the local community. He successfully applied for funding from Care Network's Community Champions Fund, and he is now organising a number of social activities and guest speakers. The Care Network development officer is providing training and mentoring to help Kim set up the project.
- Staff from the local authority have been working with disabled people from the wider community, and disabled people living in the scheme, to develop a range of education programmes covering cooking, money management etc. A questionnaire was used to identify which topics were most popular.
- The Adult Special Needs department have set up a group with 10 to 15 disabled people to develop lifeskills, including going out to buy groceries and then preparing a meal etc.
- People living locally use the college IT and business training facilities based in Saxongate to achieve NVQ level 1 and 2 qualifications. They can do this using a work-book approach at a time that suits them, such as after work.
- The HRC Basic Skills Units provides training in numeracy and literacy.
- Regular courses include: IT, digital photography, exercise, and employment job clubs.

Saxongate also supports shared understanding and respect for others in the community. Saxongate hosts the Diversity Forum for Huntingdon and the Centre Manager is on their Steering Group. As a result, a number of other initiatives have developed at Saxongate:

- Cultural studies and English for beginners to support new communities.
- The Regional College has moved their ESOL team to Saxongate.
- The College run courses for migrant workers (who weren't accessing existing college facilities).

INNOVATION

Foundations for Living is based on a unique approach to tackling the multiple barriers experienced by disabled people in society. The project set out to demonstrate the 'added-value' of bringing together in one project a range of interventions which tackle housing, skills development, employment, transport and stereotyping and discrimination.

The FFL project is distinctive in a number of ways:

- It provides wheelchair accessible housing in a vibrant town centre location with ready access to shops, cafes, leisure facilities, banks, volunteering and employment opportunities and enabling disabled to participate in the local community. Residential care and accessible housing is often located in rural or 'disconnected' locations.
- Accessible housing for disabled people has been built alongside private housing for sale to help disabled people integrate quickly with people from other backgrounds.
- Improved access standards have been adopted in and around the development to enable disabled and non-disabled tenants to access each other's homes.
- The provision of fully accessible training and community facilities for the whole community is also benefiting older people, parents with young children and disadvantaged groups in the community.
- Housing support staff, and staff at Saxongate, take a proactive role in challenging perceptions and attitudes towards disabled people by retailers, local businesses and the community as a whole, and shows how services can be delivered so they are accessible to all.
- The project is supporting voluntary and community groups working with disabled people and other disadvantaged groups.

The principles behind the FFL project are now being reflected in the innovative approach being taken by the staff teams. Some examples include:

- One of the Saxongate Open Days was used to host the Young Chef Awards run by the local Council. The centre was particularly suited for the competition because the young people from the local neighbourhood (aged 13 to 16) benefited from the height adjustable appliances and cooking surfaces in the accessible kitchen.
- Saxongate is included in the Huntingdon Arts programme and supports a number of artists from the community. As part of a local initiative to develop a permanent base for creative enterprises, space at Saxongate is to be used to enable local artists to 'test market' their goods, such as pottery and art work.
- The open out scheme actively encourages the reporting of hate crime from members of the community with a mental or physical disability. Saxongate is working with the Huntingdon District Council Community Safety Team to coordinate a project using the drama department at St Peter's school to use drama to help disabled people understand and deal with hate crime issues. It will also give school children a chance to work with, and understand the issues faced by disabled people living in the community.
- A new local community church used the building at weekends. It has since grown and moved to larger premises.

A number of local authorities have visited the project and are looking at how they can replicate aspects of it in other housing or community projects. Local authority teams have come from Oxfordshire, Essex, Bedfordshire, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and the London Borough of Havering. A number of these have already commissioned Papworth Trust to deliver housing and support projects based on the Foundations for Living approach.

EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

The total scheme cost for the project was £7.5 million, not including the private flats.

Funding included £4.3 million from Papworth Trust reserves, £1.2m from land sales, and £2.0 million from a dedicated fundraising campaign including former Prime Minister John Major MP who was Huntingdon's MP. The project wasn't eligible for housing grant as the social housing was re-provision of residential care. However, as a specialist RSL the Papworth Trust trustees were happy to sign up to this level of investment of the charity's own resources for such a ground-breaking project.

A fundraising and communication campaign was led by a Development Board including local employers and community leaders. Major donations were secured from the Greater Cambridge Partnership (£250,000) and The Bradbury Foundation (£400,000). A community fundraising appeal supported by the local paper raised over £100,000 from local groups and community events.

Papworth Trust recognised the need to build a shared vision for the project - in particular for the Community Learning Centre - so that it was 'owned' as valuable resource for everyone – irrespective of background or ability.

Papworth Trust worked with a wide range of groups to raise awareness of the project objectives including voluntary organisations, the college, schools and MPs. It was also important that staff understood the ethos of the project.

The campaign included:

- a press campaign
- a DVD film used with schools and community groups
- Developing brand values and a brand identity
- Choosing a name for Saxongate which built local engagement
- Fundraising based on equality, not a charitable view of disabled people
- Using a 'code of behaviour' during the recruitment of staff

By working with Hill Residential, a commercial developer, the Trust was able to create a scheme which provided accessible housing interspersed with private flats. This ensured that the scheme would promote integration from day one, as well as making the scheme financially viable.

A number of the design requirements for the accessible housing (eg wide corridors, lifts, level landscaping) were carried across into the shared spaces for the private flats. Although initially the property agents and funders had concerns that building accessible social housing alongside the flats for sale would impact negatively on their sale value, in practice the private apartments sold well. This has provided a very positive incentive for increased accessibility in future schemes, and has changed attitudes to be less discriminatory.

“By designing-in access features from the start, not only is it accessible for disabled people, but its has proved very popular with people who appreciate the additional circulation space, a lift and level access throughout. It has added value to the properties”.

Andy Hill, MD of Hill Residential

Securing the involvement of the college as a tenant at Saxongate was also key. They moved their IT training facility from their out-of-town site to make their courses more accessible to all sections of the community. Their service draws people into the centre, from where they can then access employment support etc.

Disabled tenants who are now living independently have benefited:

- Individuals are financially better off
- They are financially independent – with many having a bank account for the first time
- Dramatically lower levels of support – reducing the cost to the local authority
- Employment programmes are helping people consider paid work for the first time

The project effectiveness is monitored through:

- A Quarterly Business Review which reviews outcomes and financial performance
- Saxongate staff track usage of the centre by disabled people
- Independent research tracks tenant satisfaction against a ‘basket of measures’ on independent living skills, social engagement, community accessibility and service user involvement
- The Steering Committee of community organisations will involve local people in continuous improvement

USER INVOLVEMENT

The vision for developing Foundations for Living developed out of a long term consultation process with residents living in residential care.

Through discussions with individuals it became clear that although they had lived in Papworth Everard village in Cambridgeshire for a long time, people actually wanted to move to a more urban location with better access to shops, community facilities, volunteering and employment opportunities.

Residents were supported throughout the process by the staff team and an independent advocacy service to ensure their views were accurately reflected and incorporated into the project, and that they had individual plans which captured their individual aspirations for the future.

Residents moved in three groups of eight, and one of the disabled people from each group was part of the project management team responsible for the new scheme. In this way people were able to raise issues directly with the architects and care managers and could communicate progress back to their group.

Papworth Trust is one of the few housing associations in the UK specialising in the development of wheelchair accessible housing. The design of the flats exceeds former Schemework Development Standards and reflects The Trust’s extensive experience of meeting best practice access standards. By involving the tenants right at the start of the

process we ensured that any specific requirements in terms of bathroom design, hoists or alarms were incorporated. Residents were also involved in the choice of location for the scheme and in recruiting staff.

Throughout this time we were working with individuals to prepare them for living independently. A Transitions Team was set up specifically to support people through this process.

Preparation included trips to Huntingdon to locate the doctor's surgery, shops etc. People were supported to open bank accounts for the first time, to use public transport, to shop for themselves and to prepare a meal, and to make contact with local social groups and the local gym.

A number of tenants produced a 'video diary' as part of the communication and fundraising campaign, and tenants spoke at all public events, including the opening of Saxongate in September 2006 by Papworth Trust's patron HRH The Duchess of Gloucester.

OPERATIONAL PHASE

Individuals continue to be at the centre of the project:

- A number of disabled people living at the scheme have started college courses at the Saxongate Community Learning Centre. Others have started volunteering, some are looking at employment opportunities while others have had the confidence to join local clubs and go on trips.
- Papworth Trust's Employment Team runs a weekly Job Club at Saxongate for people with a learning disability that want to take up volunteering or work in the community. The Job Club develops people's self-confidence and awareness of workplace issues, and supports them to access the HRC Basic Skills Unit to develop numeracy and literacy skills.
- Tenants from across the housing scheme (including disabled people living in social housing, and people in private housing) have started building relationships by coming together to raise money for a bench in the main courtyard, and to support Children in Need
- Tenants and staff from Saxongate worked together to support the 'Teas in the Trees' event, run by the Rotary Club, to raise money for the local community.
- A local organisation which provides advocacy for people with learning disabilities runs courses for people to develop their skills and confidence.
- A management committee is being established for tenants in Bradbury Place (which includes private tenants).
- One of the centre staff volunteers as a community advocate, and two advocacy organisations (one which supports deaf people) use the centre to support people in the community.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The Foundations for Living project has developed links between a wide range of individuals and organisations:

- By providing an accessible community resource which can be used by everyone, and by providing accessible housing in a town-centre location, disabled people have been able to play a much more active role in the community and this has

already started to build relationships and change attitudes towards disabled people in the wider community.

- Local employers have been asking for advice on improving access, and asking for disability awareness training.
- By operating from a friendly, accessible and town-centre building, the regional college has experienced a significant increase in the uptake of courses by older people, single parents and people who are unemployed.
- The business community and other organisations have been quick to make use of the centre for meetings – valuing the high level of accessibility.
- Saxongate helped organise a ‘Unity in the Community’ event on a nearby estate which brought together different sections of the community to celebrate cultures through food, drama, music and displays by community groups.
- The staff at Saxongate have worked closely with a gym in the town centre to encourage disabled people to access their facilities. The gym has chosen Saxongate as their Charity of the Year.
- Saxongate have working closely with a local recruitment agency called Qubic Recruitment. The ESOL course for migrant workers, and basic skills courses have enabled migrant workers to develop the skills needed by local employers.
- The Huntingdon Business Network has recently run a course for its members on web design using the IT facilities at Saxongate.
- Business Link use meeting rooms at Saxongate because rooms have built-in hearing loops which enables one of their staff to participate in meetings more easily.
- A number of organisations have taken office space at Saxongate because of the inclusive and accessible environment it offers, including Care Network, Huntingdon Regional College Basic Skills Unit, and Huntingdon Regional College ESOL team.
- A number of people from town-centre shops are starting to learn sign language so they can communicate better with disabled people who are now living in the town centre.
- Trading Standards have run a session on consumer rights and managing money.
- The U3A (University of the Third Age) have run a digital photography class.
- Saxongate was used for a number of art exhibitions and events as part of the Great Fen Project.
- The ‘Diversity Uniting Communities Group’ is working with staff at the Environment Agency to map the different diversity clusters in the Huntingdon area to identify population change and to inform further cohesion and integration projects.

In terms of supporting social enterprise, Saxongate provides space for people embarking on creative industries (selling art or ceramics), and works with a recruitment agency to help migrant workers develop skills relevant to the local employment market.

Through the diversity forum and these other initiatives, project staff are working with organisations including: Cambridgeshire constabulary, Huntingdonshire Community Group, Adult Support Services, Hunts MIND, Jobcentre Plus, Huntingdon Regional College, Hunts Forum for Disabled People, Victim Support and the Ormiston Trust.

FOUNDATIONS FOR LIVING – KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Part of Papworth Trust’s vision is to identify gaps in provision and develop best practice. Alongside the implementation of the Foundations for Living project there has been a long term research project to capture the learning, outcomes and best practice elements.

The research has been carried out with an independent research organisation RAND Europe.

The research project has included:

- 'Modelling' the project in terms of national policy context, expected aims, objectives and outcomes, and developing performance indicators for each part of the project which can be used as a basis for ongoing performance monitoring embedded into management information.
- Through 1:1 interviews, capturing the views and levels of independence of tenants before they moved, shortly after they moved, and after 12 and 24 months to track actual outcomes from the scheme against four 'baskets' of measures which look at Independent Living Skills, Social Engagement, Access to the Community and User Involvement
- Benchmarking the approach and impact of the scheme against other projects in the UK using a case-study approach.
- Disseminating learning from the project by writing up the research findings

The cost for the current research project is £90,000, which has been jointly funded by the Papworth Trust (£30,000) and by Cambridgeshire Horizons, Inspire East, English Partnerships and Gallagher Estates. This project ended in March 2008.

Addressing the housing needs of disabled people still remains a huge challenge for the UK. Despite a huge programme of house building it is estimated that by 2020 still only 12% of housing stock will meet part M, let alone higher levels of accessibility, and that there is a need for a further 371,000 accessible homes in the UK.

Accessible housing is normally included in allocations for 'social housing' but rarely planned for – often because of a lack of data on housing need. With the exception of the Greater London Plan, few planning authorities have set targets for the levels of accessibility in new build housing.

Papworth Trust will continue to champion the need for greater provision of wheelchair accessible housing, to develop good design practice and to develop innovative schemes – like Foundations for Living – which show how inclusive design principles can be embraced as part of mainstream developments.

The Foundations for Living project has demonstrated what can be achieved and is starting to impact at a local and regional level:

- We are part of the Cambridge Partnership which has been selected to provide 16,000 new homes across key sites in Cambridgeshire over the next 5 years
- The project is being presented to Baroness Andrews, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- We are also producing a Guide to Developing Inclusive Communities which sets out the key principles to planners and developers.