

**From small acorns...**

A celebration of  
Empanda's first five years

April 2016 – 31 March 2021

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# Chair's welcome



*"Five years is a milestone. It's an occasion to reflect, an opportunity to momentarily look back on the journey, and to give rise to celebrate achievements.*

*I am delighted to be welcoming you, as the Chair of Empanda's Board, to read our five-year review. Having been a part of the team from inception, I feel the utmost pride to be able to share the tangible growth and success achieved over our first five years.*

*From a concept in early 2016, the aim was to form an organisation with the fundamental purpose of creating value in the community. With strong values underpinning service delivery to our customers, the Empanda team, together, have truly embedded this vision.*

*On behalf of the Board, I would like to recognise the unwavering hard work, commitment and dedication shown by all members of the Empanda team. Each person has contributed to the outcomes attained.*

*We believe we are well positioned to build on our achievements, to further develop opportunities with our key external partners and to continue to deliver services we are all so passionate about.*

*Here's to our next five years!"*

**Clare Carr - Chair**

# About us

Established in April 2016, Empanda Care & Support Ltd CIC is a community interest company created by a group of three professionals who had previously worked together delivering a diverse portfolio of care and support services. With about 90 years' experience between them, they bring to the business a wealth of knowledge and skills and have excellent, well-established links with the localities in which they work.

## Our services

We offer a range of person-centred care and support services for vulnerable adults and those who will benefit from receiving outcome-focused, holistic support delivered in a way that suits the needs and expectations of the individual. Our services are funded by both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils.

## Young people's services



Empanda has three supported housing projects working with up to 26 homeless young people (aged 16 – 24) across North Norfolk (Stalham, Sheringham and Cromer).

Our team of 17 Housing Support Workers and Reliefs, led by Services Manager, Fiona Raison and supported by Ben Hughes (Executive Director), help young people who are unable to live at home

by giving them a place to live and supporting them whilst they gain the skills and confidence to live independently.

## Services for adults with a learning disability

Empanda has two services for adults with a learning disability, both of which are based in the Breckland area of Norfolk and led by Kerrie Good (Director – Learning Disabilities) and supported by Services Manager, Debra Bray. Both our services for adults with a learning disability are regulated by the Care Quality Commission.



Respite care at Oak Trees – Based on the outskirts of Attleborough, Oak Trees offers short stays of up to three weeks for up to four adults at a time (100 adults each year), allowing their main carers and families a break. Oak Trees provides an opportunity for people who usually live at home, to make new friends and enjoy stimulating and interesting activities as well as new experiences.

Supported Living - Offers personalised care and support to adults living in their own homes across 11 different contracts, with each customer having a flexible care and support plan tailored to them and their family's specific needs.

Our team of 33, which includes House Leaders, Community Support Workers and relief staff, each support and encourage service users to take an active part in the communities in which they live and to get involved with and use local services and activities.



## Services for older people



Empanda offers support to older and physically frail people, including those living with dementia, with enjoyable, therapeutic day care, within a safe, secure environment. Our two day centres - Brandon Day Centre in Suffolk, where we have been the provider since January 2017 and All Hallows Day Centre in Ditchingham, South Norfolk which we took over in July 2019, offer an opportunity for customers to have fun

and socialise with other people, whilst giving family carers a well-deserved break.

We have a dedicated team of care and support staff, catering staff, drivers and domestics, as well as a dedicated team of day centre volunteers who help support our care team and customers.

## Trusted partner service

Our newest service is a partnership with Suffolk County Council (SCC) and our team of three Trusted Partner Practitioners carry out reviews of SCC Adult Services funded customers' care and support plans. This involves ensuring the customer's care and support needs meet the Eligibility Criteria of the Care Act (2014) and that they have an up-to-date care and support plan that enables them to achieve their outcomes. Our team of home-based practitioners receive referrals from Adult Services teams based in West Suffolk. Our team also undertake Carer assessments if they feel it would benefit the family carer.

# Our values

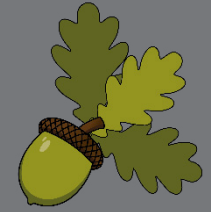
As we approached our fifth anniversary, we reflected on Empanda's progress since our inception in April 2016 and how the organisation had evolved during that time.

We felt the timing was perfect to consult with our staff team to come up with some core values they felt epitomised Empanda not only as a business, but as an employer and service provider.

Our new values, as chosen by the staff team, will become part of our culture, and are already embedded into our everyday working practices and promoted widely across the organisation to ensure we don't lose sight of what we believe in and to help us maintain our integrity and passion for what we do by living our values every day.



## Our values



### We are accountable

We take responsibility, we do what we say we will, and we see things through

### We are committed

We are dedicated to improving people's lives

### We are compassionate

We listen, we are understanding, and we help others

### We have integrity

We do the right thing for the right reason

## We are Empanda



# Success comes from within

## Our staff team

Recruiting and maintaining the right people is critical to the success of any business and Empanda is no different. Our workforce has grown considerably since April 2016, and with nearly 100 staff, we have more than doubled in size. But numbers aren't what's important. It's the calibre and loyalty of our people that sets us apart – dedicated and professional staff who go the 'extra mile' to provide person-centred care and support services to those who need it, ensuring their experience is the best it can be. We are delighted that two members of our young people's services team were previous users of the service, as was a member of our catering team, demonstrating the work we do really does make a difference.



*"Empanda Care & Support does what the name says. It sincerely cares for and supports all its clients, but it also cares for and supports all its employees. We are its most valuable resource, and it is a great company to be a part of."*

**Fiona – Services Manager  
Young Peoples Services**

*"My manager is one of the nicest and most supportive managers I have ever known. She takes everyone's opinion into consideration and always makes sure she tailors herself to staff and residents."*

**Anonymous  
Source: Staff Wellbeing Survey**



*"I enjoy my job very much and look forward to coming to work each day. Empanda is a great company to work for."*

**Sue – Catering Supervisor  
Services for Older People**



*"Empanda is an excellent company to work for and it's great to be part of a fantastic team. They really do care about their staff and all the people we care for who use our services. We strive to improve the lives of those coming into respite and those living in the community. This job is very rewarding and is the best I have had."*

**Marie – House Leader  
Learning Disability Services**

*"Empanda has always been a supportive employer throughout my career. I haven't needed to speak to management often but have always found them very approachable and I always feel appreciated."*

**Anonymous  
Source: Staff Wellbeing Survey**



*"We genuinely help people lead a better life and feel a sense of achievement when we see the positive changes to residents' lives. No day is the same which really suits me. The staff team is very supportive both of each other and with other teams."*

**Liam – Housing Support Worker  
Young Peoples Services**



*"Fantastic company to work for. It's a small company so they really know all their staff. They are very welcoming and caring and you feel you are part of a family. They are very customer focused and I like that."*

**Linda – Day Centre Manager  
Services for Older People**

## Our volunteers

Our wonderful team of day centre volunteers give their time and energy to support our many customers using our day care services, whilst enhancing the work of our staff team. Their contribution is invaluable, and we are truly grateful for all they do. We very much look forward to welcoming them back when current Covid-19 restrictions have been fully lifted.



We pay a special tribute to Janet, volunteer at Brandon Day Centre, who sadly passed away recently.

Janet, who had been volunteering at the Centre for over 20 years, was our longest serving volunteer. She gave her time so generously twice a week to support both the care team and service users. She will certainly be missed by staff and customers

and will be remembered with great fondness for her service and dedication.

## Our board

We are indebted to our board of management who have been alongside us every step of the way to help us fulfil our strategic responsibilities and objectives. Led by Chair, Clare Carr, they bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from across both public and private business sectors including, social housing, finance and people management.



*Clare Carr - Chair*



*Sue Philp*



*Annette Giles*

We welcome new members to join our board, particularly those with a legal background or commercial experience, who share our core values and our passion for delivering person-centre care and support of the highest quality to the many vulnerable people support.



# At the heart of what we do

## Our customers

We have a diverse group of customers, each with their individual needs, who are at the very core of everything we do.

Here are some of their stories.

## Hilda's story



Hilda has been a customer at All Hallows Day Centre since 2012 and attends twice a week.

She has been a Bungay resident all her life and at 99, lives independently. Hilda isn't as mobile as she used to be and in recent years has found it more and more difficult to get about and is unable to use the stairs.

When we spoke to Hilda, she told us, "I love coming to the

day centre twice a week. Not only has it enabled me to live at home independently for longer, it gives my son and daughter a break, giving them peace of mind that I am being well looked after. They know that when I am here, I have a nice, cooked meal so they don't need to worry about me.

At home, I only have one bathroom which is upstairs, which I can't manage anymore. If it wasn't for being able to have a nice bath every week, I would only be able to have a wash.

*I really like coming to All Hallows as it gets me out of the house. I enjoy all the activities on offer and at 99 years old, they keep my mind going. I also enjoy having the company of the other customers and all the attention the staff give me."*

We caught up with Hilda's son Brian who told us, "It gives my sister and I peace of mind when mum comes to day care. We know she's being well looked after and has a good lunch. Mum is always delighted to tell us about how much she enjoys the coffee and biscuits when she arrives in the morning, and the cake in the afternoon. She loves and needs a bath every week and without this service, we really don't know how she would manage.

We are really grateful to know that the minibus picks mum up for day care as she can no longer get into our car and wouldn't be able to attend without it.

When she goes to All Hallows, it's like she is going off to see her extended family as the staff give her excellent care and attention.

She only sees family and home carers now so attending day care means she can make a lot of friends her own age. She would be really isolated at home seven days a week and it gives her the opportunity to socialise."

## Alex's story



Alex, aged 20, has Asperger's Syndrome and suffers with mental health issues. Born in King's Lynn, he lived with his birth parents until he was seven, when he was placed into foster care in Dereham before moving to Gt Yarmouth with his foster parents. Alex admits he wasn't the most stable of children and during one of his 'bad moments' last year, he fell out with his foster dad and had to leave home. At that point,

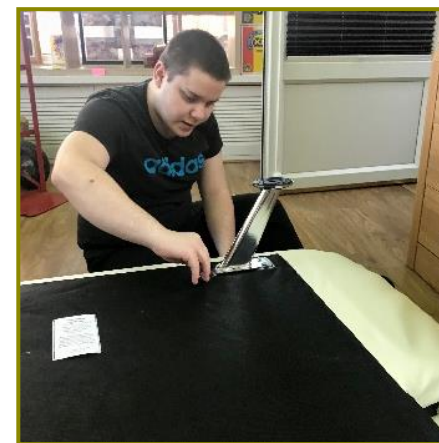
to avoid homelessness, Norfolk County Council (NCC) was contacted to find him a home. During the first Covid lockdown, Oak Trees Respite Service was used by NCC as a countywide emergency facility for up to four adults at a time. Alex was one of the first emergencies to arrive last spring and is still with us over a year on.

When asked what he'd been up to since arriving at Oak Trees, he said, *"I've been doing lots of things to keep myself busy. I like to spend time on my own and enjoy going on the laptop, watching YouTube videos, listening to music and playing video games. I have learned many new skills since I came here, including gardening. I recently helped with the hanging baskets and growing vegetables. I also help with household chores and have learned how to cook. I enjoy that very much and am rather good at making curries."*

Alex has also enjoyed going swimming, going to the shops and having fun at Oak Trees, including nerf guns and water fights with staff in the garden during the warmer weather.

He has completed two years of a carpentry course at Yarmouth, where he attends three days a week and is currently doing a year's plumbing course.

His carpentry skills came in useful when he was asked to help put some flat-pack furniture and shelving together for a temporary shop set up in the conservatory at Oak Trees during lockdown to help keep service users safe. He also helped kit out a newly acquired cabin as well as supporting outreach service users with their own DIY furniture projects.



Before coming to Oak Trees, Alex volunteered at the Mencap charity shop in Great Yarmouth but sadly, due to the distance from Attleborough, he is unable to spend time there at the moment.

When we asked Alex what his career aspirations were, he told us that he would soon be finishing college and had lots of jobs in mind – either in furniture making/carpentry or plumbing and if neither of those worked out, he would be happy to work in retail.

During our chat, Alex also told us, *"The staff at Oak Trees are phenomenal. They make me feel part of the family and have given me more freedom than I had at home. Thanks to the people here, I have learned many new skills. I have also learned a lot about myself and about taking responsibility for what I do and don't do and to try to understand things from other people's points of view, something I have struggled with in the past. I have spent over a year here, including Christmas which was the best I had ever had, even though I was the only guest here at the time. It was only ever meant to be a respite stay and I am hoping that I will soon have my own supported living flat to go to in Yarmouth. I really want to rebuild the relationship with my foster parents. My foster sister has recently had a baby and I am looking forward to meeting him. I will miss living at Oak Trees but will certainly be keeping in touch."*

## Carla's story



Carla was 18 and homeless when she arrived at our Young People's project in Sheringham. She had been living rough in a car for some time and was at breaking point.

Her parents, although separated, were both alcohol and drug dependent and she had been the victim of mental abuse by her father which had destroyed both her confidence and self-esteem.

When she first arrived, as well as her total lack of confidence, she struggled with reading and writing. Carla's dream was to join the army but was very aware that without these basic skills, she would never be able to realise that dream.

Having found a place for Carla at our Sheringham YPS project, she settled in really well and found herself a job working as a waitress for a while but taking food orders from customers proved extremely difficult.

Housing Support Workers Sue and Peter advised Carla to think about taking up English lessons which she did. Initially, she went to Merchants Court in Cromer and was referred to the National Organisation for Victim Assistance (NOVA), where she attended daily sessions to improve both her English and Maths.

To further improve Carla's chances, Sue and Peter would read with her and whilst there were times when she felt like giving up, she persevered. Steadily, she grew more proficient and with that, came a newfound confidence.

When her English and reading had sufficiently improved, Sue and Peter accompanied her to the Army Careers Office. To be accepted, she needed to improve her fitness levels and through sheer determination and much hard work, she met the physical requirements needed for army life and was eventually accepted. She could now start her new career and work towards achieving her dream.

Sue and Peter were delighted to be invited to Carla's *Passing out Parade*. She was extremely excited that they were able to attend as otherwise, she would have been unable to share this momentous occasion with anyone. Sue, Peter and the team could not have been prouder.

Carla still stays in touch to let us know how she is getting on. She told us, *"YPS meant a lot to me. Without the support and encouragement given by the team, I would not have made it. The army is my new family and I love it."*

Carla has finally achieved her lifelong ambition and has signed up for 12 years. Since joining, she has travelled widely. She has been based in Canada and Germany and was recently in Estonia. To her delight, she was called back to the UK to assist in hospitals with the Covid Vaccination programme.





## John's story



John (and his housemate Kevin) were the first adults with a learning disability our team had the pleasure of working with some 18 years ago.

We were delighted that when Empanda was established in April 2016, that all our previous contracts for adults with a learning disability transferred over which meant a continuity of service and both John and Kevin being supported by a

care team who were familiar to them and who had become part of their lives.

John had lived with Kevin for several years before we were asked to support them and were referred to us when the couple they had previously lived with were retiring. But even before moving into their current home in Dereham 18 years ago, our team supported them with decorating and gardening to ensure their new home suited their needs.

Whilst we have never been given an accurate diagnosis, we are led to believe that John has Down's Syndrome. He is also registered blind and is hard of hearing.

Unfortunately, many years ago, John's family had been advised not to make contact with him, but no-one ever knew why. At John's request, we managed to find his brothers Patrick and Michael and niece Marie. They were so happy that we contacted them and visited John the following day. Unfortunately, because of the Covid restrictions, they haven't been able to visit him lately but are in regular contact by phone and are hoping to meet up again very soon.

Brother Patrick always speaks very highly of the team and of the support given to John and recently he told us, *"The carers are wonderful and they do a marvellous job looking after John. I don't think he would have reached this age without the wonderful staff looking after him so well. We are so grateful to know that John is being well cared for and is happy."*

John celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday this year but sadly, due to lockdown, was not able to have the big party he wanted. He is hoping that when the Covid restrictions are relaxed, arrangements can be made for him to have his Birthday wish of a big party so he can celebrate properly with his family and friends.

At home, John enjoys listening to music, DJing for staff and feeding the birds.

Accompanied and supported by the staff team, John manages to get out and about and particularly enjoys being taken for a drive, going out for meals and visiting the garden centre.

He is very much looking forward to a well-deserved holiday to Butlins with staff in the summer.



## Anne's story



Anne has lived in Brandon in Suffolk all her life and now lives with her son.

Her family was recently referred to Brandon Day Centre via the community matron.

Anne has been diagnosed with dementia and after speaking with her family, they thought it would do their mum good to attend day care. They felt that it would not only allow her to get out to socialise with others, but

would help with her mental health, social skills and general wellbeing.

Anne started Brandon Day Centre in April 2021 and currently attends one day a week. She is very much enjoying the time she spends with us and when we spoke to her about how she was finding her time at the Centre, she said, short and sweet – *“Yes, I love coming to Brandon Day Centre, you know I do.”*

Anne's daughter Gina told us that *“As a family, we are the main care givers for our mum, so when the opportunity arose for her to attend Brandon Day Centre once a week, we were a little apprehensive, particularly because it meant entrusting her care to someone else.*

*We needn't have worried though; this has been the best decision we could have made. The staff are so caring and considerate, and I have every confidence in leaving mum with them. Having mum in day care has also given us a little time to ourselves which makes such a difference.*

*Anne really enjoys her time at the day centre. The activities she takes part in, particularly the games and the exercises, have helped both her mental and physical wellbeing and her life has truly been enhanced because of the experience. I can't thank the care team enough, particularly Lynn, who looks after mum the majority of the time.*

*I would highly recommend Brandon Day Centre to anyone needing to find a secure part-time place to care for a parent or loved one. It's such a wonderful place.”*



# From small acorns

Empanda Timeline (1 April 2016 - 31 March 2021)



- April 1** Empanda becomes operational.
- July** Launch Event for Empanda Board.
- August** 'We value our staff' package of benefits is launched with 'Refer a Friend to Work' Scheme.
- September** Empanda website and Facebook page is launched.

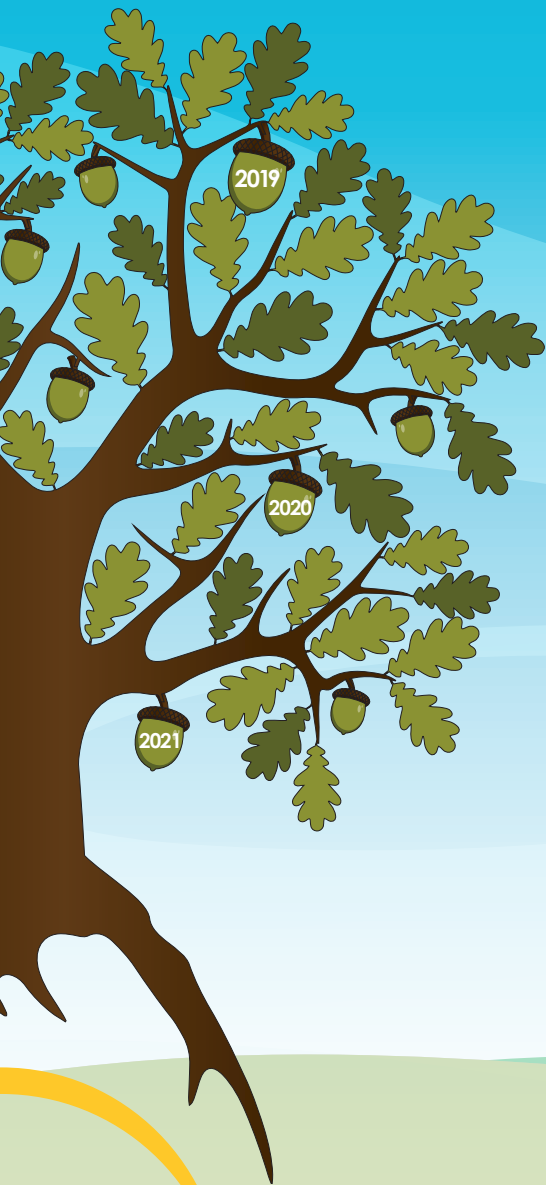


- January** Empanda takes over as provider at Brandon Day Centre.
- April** Oak Trees Respite and Supported Living Services rated as 'Good' at first CQC inspection.
- June** New vehicle purchased for Oak Trees Respite Service.
- October** Staff, Board and customers start work to create Empanda Business Plan (launched 2018).



- February** Empanda becomes landlord at its three young people's services in North Norfolk.
- April** In-house training manager recruited to provide training and development for staff and external agencies.
- July** Café 27 opens its doors to the public at Brandon Day Centre.
- July** Brandon Day Centre hosts local 'Meet up Mondays' Group.
- August** Empanda Info website launched for YPS residents.
- September** Matt Hancock (then Secretary of State for Health & Social Care) officially opens BDC and launches new minibus.





- May** First inter-generational event takes place at Brandon Day Centre.
- June** ADASS inspection at Oak Trees achieves 100% across 15 KPIs.
- July** Empanda takes over as provider at All Hallows Day Centre.
- September** Empanda improves 'green' credentials by choosing environmentally friendly cleaning products.



- January** Oak Trees Respite and Supported Living Services rated as 'Outstanding' by the CQC.
- March** Denny Day Centre opens its doors.
- April** Pop-up shop introduced at Oak Trees to help keep customers safe during Covid-19.
- September** One of only four CICs to be featured in the 2019/20 Community Interest Companies Annual Report.



- February** In partnership with Suffolk County Council, Empanda recruits a team of Trusted Partner Practitioners.
- February** New cabin delivered at Oak Trees for Covid-testing/safe visiting for respite service guests.
- February** New Empanda core values introduced (as chosen by staff).
- March** Conversion of old laundry facility into new commercial kitchen at All Hallows.

## Lewis' story



Lewis was a fostered child living in Devon. He attended a special needs school and when he left, trained to be a chef. At that time, Lewis wanted to be near his partner who lived in Norfolk but had no experience of living independently or developing the skills needed to manage a home, such as household chores, managing bills, budgeting, maintaining his own garden, basic DIY tasks and dealing with people on the

phone and face to face. This posed a huge challenge for Lewis as learning new skills was something he struggled with. Even using a washing machine would be a new skill as this was a chore he hadn't done at home.

Lewis managed to find a chef role in Norfolk and applied to live at the YPS Stalham project, using the internet and Facetime (to avoid the long journey from Devon).

Moving into the foyer was the start of Lewis' journey towards independent living. He lived at the Stalham project for about 18 months during which time, he learned how to get buses on his own and how to budget his wages and calculate what rent he would need to pay based on his weekly earnings. He also learned to communicate with neighbours and address any issues around using shared facilities. This, he says, helped him a lot when he eventually moved into to his new home as he had built up the confidence and skills to speak to people without staff support.

He also learned how to use any spare income to build up his household goods and store them at the project ready for when he moved on into his own home. Working with his keyworker through the resettlement stage, he got all his bills set up in a way that he could manage them on his own when he got his own home.

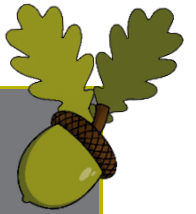
*Lewis told us," I would never have made it as far as I did without the support from Empanda and my keyworker, Liam, who taught me basic DIY skills which I went on to use in my new home. I was able to completely redecorate my new flat to a high standard, and with Liam's help, I tackled the garden as well and I now feel the flat I was given is my home.*

*I always knew that living alone would be a major challenge and some people didn't think I could do it. I have been living independently for a while now and my partner lives nearby.*

*I still pop into the Stalham project from time to time to let everyone know how I am getting on. When I visit, I like to speak to the current resident group to let them know how far I have come despite the challenges I faced, and that with the support of the staff team, they too could achieve great things."*

# Our performance

A snapshot of our performance to 31 March 2021



## Our learning disability services

**12,740 +**  
sleep-ins  
(supported living)



**185,380 +**  
care hours  
delivered  
(supported living)



**9.6/10 (96%)**

customer satisfaction  
(respite care)



## Our older people's services



**13,116**  
day care attendances

## Our young people's services

**97.5%**  
average  
occupancy level



we helped **75**  
young people  
move on to live  
independently



## Our staff team



Has more than doubled  
from **43** at 01/04/16  
to **93** at 31/03/21

## Our turnover

Has almost doubled  
from **£1.1m** at 31/03/17  
to **£2.047m** at 31/03/21



# Our story so far

There were times when we thought setting up Empanda wasn't going to happen, but through sheer determination, much negotiation and dusting ourselves off when things didn't quite go to plan, we opened for business on 1 April 2016.

The focus of our first few months as a community interest company was to settle in the staff team who had transferred across to our new organisation, establish a suite of policies, procedures and templates and to engage specialist services such as IT and payroll to work alongside us, as well as build up our list of suppliers.

In July 2016, we hosted a launch event for new board members which gave an opportunity for us to get to know one another in an informal setting and for us to give an overview of our journey to that point, our aspirations moving forward and how they could work with us to fulfil those aspirations and develop Empanda in the future. Our chair, Clare Carr, was elected at our inaugural meeting in September that year.

August 2016 marked the launch of our 'We value you' package of staff benefits with a 'Refer a friend to work' scheme – a way for us to cast our nets wider in the search for the right person for the right role whilst rewarding staff should we appoint someone they had recommended.

We feel it is important that our staff team is rewarded well for the valuable job they do and we now have a comprehensive package of benefits and rewards in place including *HSF Health Plan* – a health cash plan that is easy and affordable to help cover the cost of everyday healthcare expenses; *HSF Assist* – providing unlimited access to a variety of assistance helplines and services; *Monthly Staff Draw* – a chance for staff to win a £25 shopping voucher, plus many more.

We are currently looking at new benefits including partnering with a local credit union and introducing an employee wellbeing programme.



In the autumn of 2016, the Empanda website and Facebook page were launched. Working alongside Community Action Suffolk's IT team, we created a site that is fully optimised for different devices, easy to navigate and informative for potential staff, customers and the wider public. Our latest analytics show that the site attracted over 2,000 new users in the last quarter.

January 2017 saw Empanda taking over as provider at Brandon Day Centre in Suffolk, where we support older and frail people (including those living with dementia), to enjoy therapeutic day care, have fun and socialise with others whilst giving family carers a break.

The centre, funded by the local community, had been threatened with closure at the end of 2016 when the previous provider decided it wasn't economically viable. Backed by the media, Matthew Hancock MP, Suffolk County, Forest Heath District (now West Suffolk) and Brandon Town Councillors, the Brandon Community Association and the wider community, a campaign was launched to save the much-needed facility.

When we took on Brandon Day Centre, we welcomed the existing seven care team members who transferred under TUPE and at the end of March this year, the team has doubled in size as has day care attendance.



Not being able to get out and about featured regularly on customer satisfaction surveys carried out after every guest stay at Oak Trees Respite Service for adults with a learning disability. So, after an amazing fundraising effort over several months, donations from supporters, local businesses and customers' family members, financial support from the Mildred Tolman Fund (managed by Norfolk Community Foundation) and a top-up from Empanda, in the summer of 2017, we were able to purchase a nearly new people carrier.



Having the vehicle makes such a difference and gives those using the service lasting and happy memories of the time spent with us, which is vitally important for their wellbeing and independence. They are now able to enjoy outings and trips out, including going to the cinema, swimming, bowling, shopping, as well as restaurants and pubs.

We have since purchased a second, smaller vehicle to take those we support in their own homes to appointments and trips out. A popular day out is to the Horham Dairy & Care Farm where some like to volunteer and gain new skills, or simply get out in the fresh air and experience being around and tending to the animals.



February 2018 saw Empanda become landlord of our three young people's projects in Cromer, Sheringham and Stalham. Having previously just provided a housing management service, this positive step not only gave us more autonomy in the running of the buildings but the opportunity to choose our preferred, local suppliers to carry out repairs.

In the summer that year, following months of hard work, decorating and furniture upcycling, our aspiration to turn Brandon Day Centre into a real community hub was realised when Café 27 opened for business to provide a nutritious and freshly prepared lunch for our day care customers and a range of savoury snacks, homemade cakes, hot beverages, and soft drinks to the wider community.

Super-fast WiFi provided an ideal space for those wanting a quiet space to work.

We worked closely with a number of organisations to bring this project to fruition to create a welcoming, bright and contemporary space, but a special mention must go to West Suffolk College. The café's design is based on an idea presented to us by their catering management students who also helped with some of the furniture painting.



Shortly afterwards, Brandon Day Centre (Café 27) became the host venue to a new 'Meet up Mondays' group – weekly sessions run by volunteers, offering a free cuppa and a chat to people feeling lonely or isolated, giving them a chance to make new friends with those in a similar situation.

The centre also provides an excellent meeting facility for local organisations and businesses.

A significant highlight in 2018 was when over 150 people came together in September to help us celebrate the long-awaited official launch of Brandon Day Centre, the newly opened Café 27, and to unveil a new minibus enabling access to the centre's services.

An ongoing fundraising campaign to raise money for two minibuses by the Brandon Day Centre Steering Group, headed up by Cllr David Palmer, secured a grant award of £20k from The Postcode Community Trust, a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of the People's Postcode Lottery which together with donations from locality budgets and Community Chest, local businesses and supporters resulted in our first minibus being purchased.

The event provided an opportunity for partnering organisations to promote their services and for the local community to chat with members, staff and guests.

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP (then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) officiated the event, declared the centre and café open and unveiled the new minibus with the help of the grandchildren of day centre member Keith Lawrence.



*"I wouldn't have missed this for the world. It's fantastic how the whole community has pulled together to make this happen. Empanda taking over Brandon Day Centre is evidence that it was the right thing to do. With so many different services on offer, it truly is a multi-generational centre. From being at crisis point, it has transformed into an even better day centre than before, and that warms my heart."*

**The Right Hon Matthew Hancock MP**

In May 2019, we welcomed some very special visitors to Brandon Day Centre when children from the local pre-school joined us for 'Splish, Splash, Splosh', the first in a series of inter-generational music and movement sessions held at the centre. Jo Nichols, who runs a regular dance and movement workshop for us, gave her time freely to organise and run this event, which took inspiration from the TV hit series 'Old People's Home for four year olds'.



Being able to deliver Inter-generational activities at the centre had been on our wish list for some time and we were keen to explore first-hand the many mutual benefits – physically, emotionally and cognitively to all involved, no matter what their age, so we were thrilled to be participating in this exciting project.



July's event, 'Animal Magic' enabled participants to explore their own way of moving as they took on the characteristics of the animals featured in the music; and in October, with the day centre decked out with Halloween themed decorations, we ran 'Spooktacular', where everyone was encouraged to be as scary as

they could be, whilst moving and singing along to monster, ghoulish and beastly inspired music.

We feel very lucky that Brandon Day Centre welcomes such creativity, and it proves that age really doesn't matter when you are having fun together. We are looking forward to re-introducing more inter-generational sessions in the not-too-distant future.



We were initially approached by Suffolk County Council commissioners at the end of May 2019, to see if we might be willing and able to take on All Hallows Day Centre. There had been a lot of coverage in the local press and on TV/Radio news when the Trust that ran it announced their intention to close the All Hallows hospital and day centre as they believed it was no longer financially viable. The day centre staff team of 17 were under consultation and facing redundancy at the end of June. Norfolk and Suffolk CC's worked collaboratively to try and save the services that were under threat and supported us to complete our due diligence and go through the TUPE process ready to start delivering day care on 5 July 2019.



All Hallows is a purpose-built day care service with facilities for assisted bathing, gardening activities and treatment rooms. The staff, volunteers, customers and their families were all very supportive of Empanda taking over the centre and we were delighted to have been asked.

2020 started on a high when our respite and supported living services for adults with a learning disability, were rated as 'Outstanding' by national regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The service, which was inspected in December 2019, was rated 'Outstanding' for being safe, caring, and well-led, and 'Good' for being effective and responsive, giving Empanda an overall rating of 'Outstanding'. This was the second time the service had been inspected since Empanda took over in 2016 (in 2017 we were rated as 'Good' across all five key lines of enquiry (KLOE's)).

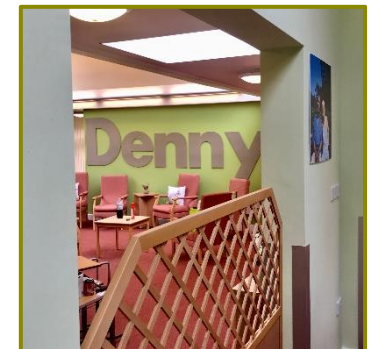
The CQC's report said that people were provided with flexible, responsive and person-centred care and praised staff for the high quality of service, their commitment, dedication, compassion and creativity; their open and inclusive ethos and well-established

relationships of trust and support between staff, service users and their families, enabling people to stay safe.

This fantastic result is tribute to the hard work and dedication of our staff team, and we couldn't be more proud.



Having been chosen as preferred provider at the Denny Day Centre in Diss and after working in partnership with Norfolk County Council and Saffron Housing Trust for many months to bring this valuable resource back into use (it had previously provided day care to older people but had closed in Spring 2018 when the provider at the time deemed it not to be financially viable), we were delighted to open for business in March 2020. Sadly, just a week later, the announcement came that the country was to be placed in a National 'Lockdown' due to the Covid-19 pandemic. When the lockdown was lifted, with just two customers, it wasn't financially viable to re-open the centre, so we ensured the wellbeing of those customers via telephone welfare calls and visits.



We have since made the difficult decision to close the Denny Day Centre as despite our many efforts to promote the service (including local radio slots) and expressions of interest from the community, referrals just haven't come through. Unfortunately, because it took far longer than we anticipated to get the building ready and open, any gaps in service provision had been filled with alternative community-based resources such as local dementia cafés. The two existing customers have now been offered a place at our All Hallows Day Centre in Ditchingham where they will have the added benefit of the company of others and a more varied activities programme to ensure their day care experience is enjoyable, stimulating and fulfilled.



When the first Covid lockdown was put in place last Spring, we were concerned about the risk of food shopping to staff, supported living tenants and Oak Trees respite guests, so we set about equipping and stocking our own 'pop-up' shop in the Oak Trees conservatory.

To maximise the stock we could hold, we borrowed a chest freezer and display furniture. As well as buying staple food items, we asked people their food/drink preferences to eliminate waste and ensure we were stocking what they wanted as well as what they needed. Ordering food through our local catering suppliers meant we could also help them, as many of their customers (hospitality and food establishments) had been forced to close.



The shop was extremely popular and meant everyone could shop safely without the need to travel out to the local supermarket.



The pandemic presented many challenges for our teams in their efforts to keep staff and customers safe. With staff being tested weekly and NHS and Public Health guidance recommending a dedicated area outside of any residential care facility for visitors and professionals, the only option we had was to create a dedicated space in the Oak Trees garden.



We were able to source a cabin which, following planning permission being granted, was delivered and erected in the driveway next to the Oak Trees Respite Service.

The majority of the cost for this essential resource came from Infection Control funding from central government. The cabin has proved to be invaluable as a centre for staff to receive their vaccinations and to have their weekly COVID-19 tests, and for respite guests to meet family members and visiting professionals.

We were approached by the CIC Regulator at Companies House in April 2020, inviting us to submit an article about Empanda for inclusion in the 2019/20 Review of CICs. Given there are approximately 16,000 CICs and only four are chosen for inclusion in their Annual Review, we were very flattered to be asked. Capturing the essence of Empanda, our ethos and the year's highlights in 400 words was a challenge. However, we were delighted when it was published in the summer of 2020.



When it became apparent that the Denny Centre might never become viable for us to continue there, we had to consider the wider implications on day care services should we not have the Denny

Centre. The biggest impact was the fact that all our day care meals are produced there in the fully equipped commercial kitchen and transported to our other day care centres in our meals-on-wheels van.

As a home cooked meal is an integral part of the day care offer, an alternative had to be found. We explored a variety of options but none were able to meet the needs of our diverse customer group, their dietary requirements and the geographical spread of our centres. As we have an excellent established catering team based at the Denny, we were keen to retain them. We therefore opted to convert the former laundry room at our All Hallows Day Centre into a commercial kitchen. Supported by partners, we sourced a local supplier of re-conditioned catering equipment and using local trades and suppliers, have created a fully equipped commercial kitchen.



Our Executive Director, Ben, has project managed the whole process and has taken on many of the decorating and DIY jobs himself. The finished kitchen offers the catering team a spacious, light filled working environment with ample storage and designated areas for different tasks.

Our All Hallows customers and their families are delighted that meals will now be prepared on the premises and our catering team are looking forward to starting work in their new kitchen.



# Our corporate social responsibility

## Keeping it local

A significant part of Empanda's income comes from public money. As a CIC, we believe in supporting the local community and economy, so wherever we can, we make a conscious decision to buy local – not only for the products we use but for the external services we buy in to support our business.

## Our key business partners

<b>Bank:</b>	Unity Trust Bank – based in Birmingham but chosen for its social and environmental ethos
<b>Solicitor:</b>	Kerseys, Ipswich
<b>Insurance:</b>	WRS Insurance Brokers Ltd, Colchester
<b>Accountant:</b>	Kerry Butcher Accountancy Services, Attleborough
<b>Bookkeeper:</b>	TDS Bookkeeping, Attleborough
<b>Payroll:</b>	Charity Backroom Solutions, Norwich
<b>DBS Services:</b>	Community Action Suffolk, Ipswich
<b>IT Services:</b>	Lucid Systems, Ipswich
<b>Fire Consultant:</b>	TAS Valley Fire (UK) Ltd, Hethersett
<b>H&amp;S Consultant:</b>	Health & Safety Associates, Norwich
<b>HR Consultant:</b>	HR & Development Options, Enfield

## Our green credentials

We realise the importance of sustainability in the workplace. Wherever possible, we recycle and use 'eco-friendly' ranges when purchasing goods. To further reduce our carbon footprint, in September 2019 we signed up to a new cleaning supplies organisation (Newline Anglia) and to using their range of eco-friendly cleaning products specifically designed to reduce environmental impact. It was easy for us to make the switch from traditional cleaning products, not only because the bio-enzyme products gave a much deeper clean, but through a controlled dosing system, they continue to prove cost effective whilst being much safer for the environment, our customers and staff.

## Giving back

Each year, instead of sending Christmas cards to our staff and the many organisations and agencies with whom we work, we make a donation to a charity chosen by our staff team to help support their fantastic and worthwhile work to make a difference to those in need.

To date, we have supported The Yemen Crisis Appeal, Save the Children, the East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA); Crisis, and East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH).



The Motor Neurone Association also benefited from an Empanda donation in memory of Lena, relief care and support assistant at Brandon Day Centre, who sadly passed away from the condition in December 2019. Lena was well-loved by customers and colleagues alike and we remember her with great fondness.



Giving back takes many different forms and since early 2018, through the *Community Payback initiative*, we have been providing offenders the opportunity to make amends for their crimes in their local community by carrying out unpaid work on local projects.

Engaging the services of *Community Payback* has been invaluable as it has meant that projects, including the

'nice to haves', could be completed quickly without depleting valuable budgetary resource.

In March 2018, despite the bitterly cold and wet weather, a group of offenders, led by supervisor, Adrian, came out to Brandon several times over a course of a few weeks to help transform a donated, unused allotment area into a Community Garden that could be used to grow fruit, vegetables and herbs for use in Café 27 at Brandon Day Centre.

As well as turning the ground over and making beds ready for planting, the team erected a chain-linked fence and gate which had been purchased through the Tesco 'Bags of Help' community grant scheme.

In November that year, they returned to help clear an area of overgrown bushes and shrubs to lay paving slabs and erect a greenhouse at Brandon Day Centre. This work has meant that during the warmer weather, customers can propagate seeds and grow fruit and vegetables, or simply sit out in a pleasant environment to enjoy the sunshine.



In 2019, we called upon the team again but this time, to help redecorate and refresh a very tired looking Denny Day Centre in Diss. They painted the building throughout, varnished the outside wood areas and tidied up the garden.

We are extremely grateful for the invaluable part *Community Payback* have played in making our buildings and outside spaces better for our customers. The variety of work they have undertaken has also offered new skills and a sense of worth to those involved and we hope, that in some small way, we have given back to them too.



# Looking back over our first five years

## A personal perspective from our management team



*"One of the best things about starting up Empanda was creating something with colleagues with whom I had worked for many years. We had a shared aspiration to be the best service provider and the best employer we could be, and we have remained true to that ambition throughout the last five years!"*

*We have had some amazing highs and a few lows, especially during the early days, but what kept us all going was the support we received from our colleagues who put their*

*trust and faith in us and from the partner organisations with whom we work.*

*I feel incredibly privileged to be part of Empanda and incredibly proud of the work our teams do."*

**Sally Hanlin – Managing Director**



*"Over the course of my career in Social Care, I've been proud of many things that I've been involved in, but none more than my involvement in the creation of Empanda.*

*To see the growth of the company, its teams and staff over the past five years has been an honour and a privilege and, based on everything we have all achieved together, I can't wait to see where the future takes us*

*I've felt at times that I was going crazy but feel that it's all been worth it when I see the people we support happy and that's what gets me up every day."*

**Kerrie Good – Director (Learning Disability Services)**

*"It's been an amazing five years, going from mild panic in the early days, through a period of growth and new projects to where we are now - reasonably comfortable but with much still to do. The learning we've all had to do has been huge, and there have been some challenges along the way.*

*The constant throughout these five years has been the unfaltering commitment and dedication of the Empanda team who continue to humble me, especially so in the last 18 months. The compassion, care and down-to-earth human approach that this group of individuals deliver day in, day out is what underpins Empanda's very existence and ongoing success. With this team in place, I'm looking forward to new challenges as Empanda continues to build on these first five successful years."*



**Ben Hughes – Executive Director**

*"I can't believe how quickly five years has passed. It seems like only yesterday we were getting ready for Empanda's first day.*

*Being here from the start has enabled me to be fully immersed in Empanda's incredible journey, experiencing first-hand the highs, lows and everything in between. I have learned so many new skills along the way and have been privileged to work alongside a wonderful and dedicated team of people.*

*As we begin our sixth year, I am looking forward to the challenges ahead and to playing a small part in building on our past successes and achieving our goals and aspirations for the future as Empanda goes from strength to strength."*

**Paula Armenis – Head of Business Services**

# Looking ahead

We will continue to recruit, develop and retain a multi-skilled workforce who share the Empanda ethos and values of offering our service users quality care and support services that are designed around the individual. We will continue to work in partnership with statutory/voluntary organisations to offer specialist support, a wider range of opportunities for service users and value for money.

Underlying these aims is our key principle, which is true in every service we deliver regardless of client group or situation; *to promote independence and the choices available to those we support.*

Since 2016, our senior team has delivered most of the essential 'back-office' services and outsourced services such as IT, payroll and HR. We are now at a point where we need an in-house finance professional to complement the skills within the team and have the budget to recruit a Finance Business Partner. Whilst there have been advantages in our taking on much of the day-to-day financial administration, at times, it has left us lacking the financial projections needed to enable us to make informed decisions to plan for the future and meant that other areas of the business have been left under resourced.

As our staff team has grown to almost 100, the administration associated with many of the routine HR functions has also increased. With her HR expertise, Non-Executive Director, Annette Giles, recently researched various HR Databases to find a system that could accommodate the various contracts of employment that our staff team (many of whom joined us during one of the three TUPE transfers), are employed under. We have now subscribed to *Breathe HR* and are inputting staff data before rolling it out across the company.

We are confident that using this new system will bring greater consistency in working practices and will make reporting sickness absence, booking annual leave, recording 1-2-1's/appraisals and other routine administration easier, whilst empowering each member of staff to manage some of these tasks themselves.

Looking to the future, we would like to recruit a dedicated HR professional to join the Empanda team, perhaps on a part-time basis, to work alongside our HR consultant and part-time training manager to support one of our key aspirations, *to recruit, develop and retain a multi-skilled workforce.*

With our strong cash flow position, we are also beginning to explore another of our current Business Plan objectives, which is to *'maintain and expand our portfolio of accommodation to secure short-term and longer-term sustainable housing for young people.'*

To achieve this, we will need to explore social investment opportunities, for example, *The Big Issue*, to identify eligibility criteria and affordability of using the investment to purchase properties either for our supported accommodation, supported living tenants or for move-on accommodation for our young people.

We will also look to develop relationships with other private and social landlords to explore alternatives to leasing buildings to house our Young People's supported accommodation. This would underpin another key Empanda objective - *'to ensure our accommodation continues to be affordable, accessible and of a high quality'.*

Since we began in 2016, we have been keen to improve the sleep-in facilities at Oak Trees (Respite). With no dedicated sleep-over room, staff currently sleep on a mattress or camp bed in the manager's office. The space is limited and cramped and is far from ideal. Having purchased a cabin for Covid-19 testing of staff and for visiting family members and professionals at Oak Trees, we hope that when we no longer need the space for this purpose, we can re-apply for planning permission to convert the cabin to a manager's office which will free up the current office space to provide a workstation for duty staff and a dedicated sleep-over bedroom.





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