

viridian



Social Impact Report

APRIL 2013 – MARCH 2014



YOUR SOCIAL IMPACT TEAM

Mary Whitfield
Head of Social Impact

Leading the Social Impact team is a great opportunity to show how the work of Viridian is about a lot more than bricks and mortar. The team work closely with partners, colleagues and residents to offer services that help improve lives. At Viridian we are keen to share the learning from our experience with other providers, so we can influence how the housing sector responds to the wider social impact agenda, and in turn improve lives for individual residents and the wider community.

Darren Grubb
Delivery and Engagement Manager

Seeing the team really develop over the last 12 months into a key part of the organisation has been amazing. They have worked incredibly hard to deliver high quality projects that both colleagues and customers alike are gaining great benefit from.

I am looking forward to developing our existing services such as the Employment and Volunteering programmes and developing new projects that will help Viridian and our customers to continue to grow.

Ed Wallace
Research and Innovation Manager

My biggest achievement has been setting up the Research & Innovation function at Viridian. At times it's been a bit of a painful process but the team are really motoring now. They're doing some fantastic work and making a real difference to Viridian and our customers. Social Impact is about pushing the boundaries of how we support and help people. What really motivates me is having this fantastic opportunity to think openly and creatively about the challenges we face as an organisation, and show that doing things differently will often lead to better outcomes.

“
...improves lives for individual residents and the wider community
”

Alice Granville**Research & Innovation Lead**

I'm passionate about listening to our customers and looking at their experiences of our services. Taking the next step and wanting to improve things is really core to what every team does.

Jenny Cook**Customer Engagement Officer**

Projects are so exciting to work on knowing that we can make a real difference to people's lives and give them access to opportunities. As with all our my projects I am thankful for the chance to work with Viridian colleagues, our partners and, more importantly, our residents.

Isabelle Champion**Research & Innovation Lead**

I really enjoy being able to work across different projects. In one day I might be talking to residents about their experiences of a service, analysing some data to look at how different areas have changed across the course of a project, and developing new projects with the rest of the team.

Helen Rowe**Research & Innovation Lead**

The positive feedback we receive from residents about how getting online has changed their lives gives me the most satisfaction in my role. They feel more positive and empowered. Since we won the TPAS award for Excellence in Digital Engagement, the project has diversified into a range of areas, including adult literacy, the Connected Housing Initiative and supporting residents with dementia. It's this diversity and innovation which is really satisfying.

Diane Webb**Welfare Benefits Officer**

I believe our customers deserve the best possible service from us and to see the difference I can make to someone's life makes me passionate about my role.

DB Crawford**Community Engagement Officer**

I am so proud of what we've achieved as a team. From helping a resident learn to read and write to helping them with their health and wellbeing.

Nicki Stephens**Financial Inclusion Advisor**

My biggest achievement is working daily with complex benefit problems but managing to keep the client central to our service. I am also proud to be part of a process that seeks to restore fairness and dignity.

Charlene Deleon-Jones**Research and Innovation Lead**

My biggest achievement this year would be the St John's Estate Regeneration project in Clapham. The project was only possible because I had the privilege of being able to pull together great people. The St Johns Estate regeneration project was resident led and at every step residents were at the forefront of decision making. Community spirit at the estate has also flourished; this is not just reflected in resident surveys but can be felt if you visit the estate on a Saturday afternoon. Previously unused spaces are vibrant with the laughs and chatter of residents of all ages and backgrounds. Issues with anti social behaviour, vandalism and engagement have all dramatically improved and the project is now run by the local community.

WELCOME

At Viridian we recognise that having a safe and secure home is an essential ingredient of a good quality of life. For many of our customers, the provision of an affordable rented home or a shared ownership property is as much as they need from us. However, others may find that they benefit from more. This is where the dedicated professionals in our Social Impact team come in. Our aim is to provide a range of services to help our customers make the most of their lives. We are also committed to demonstrating our social values and purpose.

We think it is important to provide services such as early tenancy support and employment initiatives as we all need a bit of support from time to time. We would like our housing provision to be more than bricks and mortar for people excluded from the housing market. We want the Viridian experience to be a positive step forward for our customers on whatever path they would like their life to take.

In this Social Impact report, we will look at the different projects we have provided for residents over the last year and their outcomes. We also review our financial investment and, where possible, measure the benefits created. In 2013/14 we can confidently show that our work has returned a positive well being outcome of £209k and our investment of £180k in the financial inclusion team has generated additional income for the organisation of £468k.

Our combined social value and income to customers and Viridian gives a total of £1,189,102 for the financial year.

In 2013/14 we can confidently show that our digital inclusion, employment and volunteering schemes have returned a positive social well being value of £410,852. Our innovative financial inclusion service has generated additional income for the organisation of £474,250 this has been achieved by ensuring we assist customers

to claim their full housing benefit entitlement and prevented arrears accruing due to the piloting of the affordability assessment being carried out prior to the tenancy commencement. Our financial inclusion team increased the personal income of customers, by a total of £304k in the financial year. These outcomes are positive for both Viridian and our customers.

This is our first year of producing a Social Impact report and some of our projects are in their infancy. However, we intend to build upon this report in future years, to capture the benefits produced and share the value created by our social impact activities.

Matt Campion

Matt Campion
Director of Social Impact

Our approach

Whilst our immediate goal is to provide quality homes, we believe that we have a responsibility to help customers make the most of their potential. Our ultimate aim at Viridian, is to improve the quality of life of our residents. There are three ways in which we believe this can be done:

- By giving people access to a quality home that is safe and secure
- Through our 'traditional' core services (such as our ASB team)
- Through our growing wider offer, of inclusion & improving lives.

Our definition of Social Impact

With these three objectives in mind, our social impact projects give people access to the opportunities and resources that will help them do more for themselves and change their lives.

The Social Impact team was established to facilitate this change and sits at the heart of our work. The team works with customers, teams from across Viridian and external partners to support business priorities, and develop services and products that will help people sustain their tenancies and improve their lives.

Broadly speaking there are three types of project that we work on. They focus on:

- Improving existing services
- Working in partnership with 3rd parties and
- Taking an innovative approach to the problems we face.

Underpinning all of this is an emphasis on taking an evidence-led approach to our work. This is to ensure:

- We have a clear understanding of the problem we are trying to address
- We understand our customers' needs and
- We understand the difference we are making to their lives.

Our definition of innovation

When we talk about innovation at Viridian, what we are really talking about are the processes we follow to create better ways of working and customer satisfaction.

Sometimes this approach will focus on implementing new ideas, developing products or improving existing

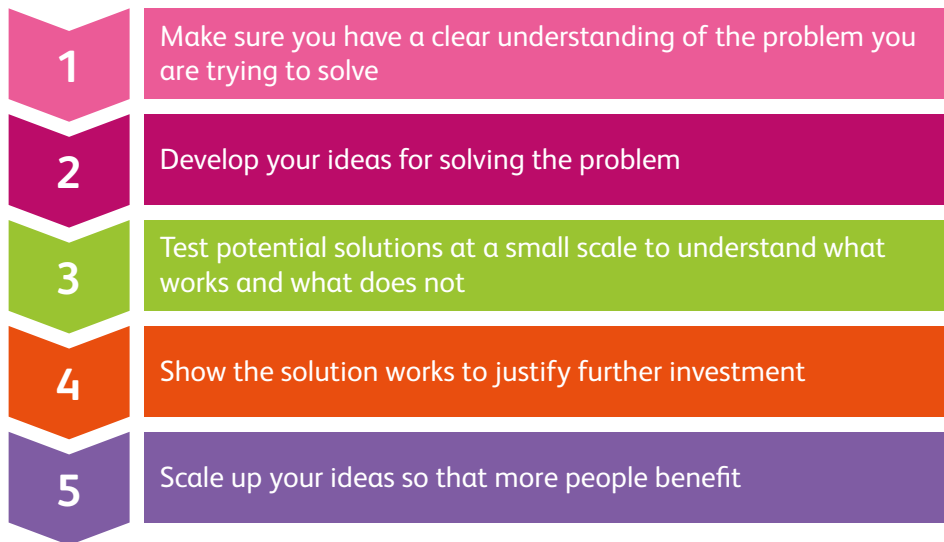
services. We also use it to understand how we adapt to changes in our business environment so resources are used more effectively and deliver better outcomes for our customers.

Ultimately across all of the work we do, our focus is on turning ideas into something that has a practical value for everyone.

Measuring Our Impact

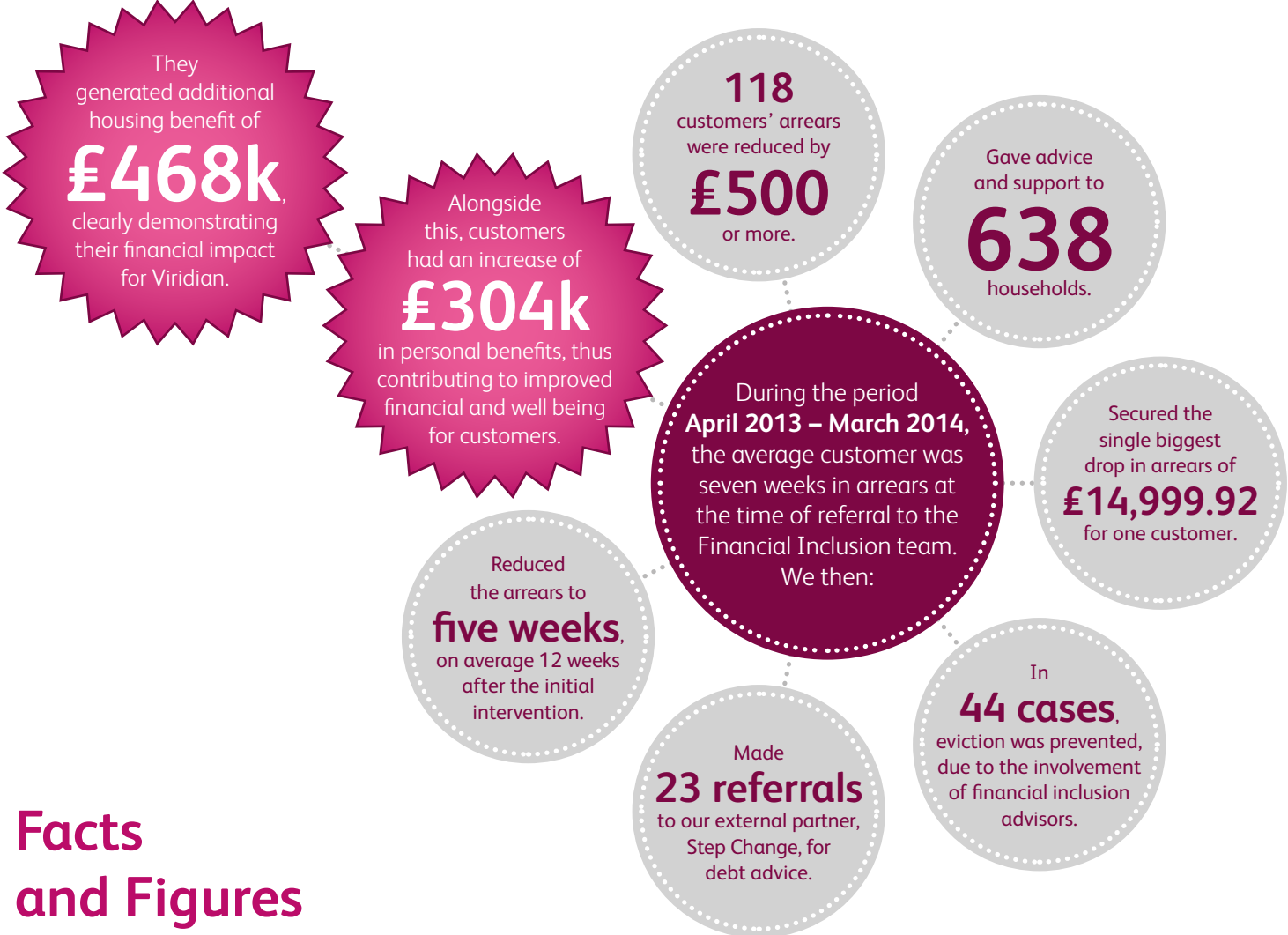
To help us measure the impact of our work, we have adopted the HACT Wellbeing Evaluation Tool - the latest thinking in social impact measurement. The tool allows us to measure the success of a social intervention by how much it increases a person's wellbeing. Rather than asking people about how much something has improved their life, which can introduce psychological complexities and extensive data collection, Wellbeing Valuation analyses existing datasets of national surveys which reveal effects on wellbeing in a robust way.

Viridian's approach to Innovation



FINANCIAL INCLUSION

The Financial Inclusion team work with customers who need support and advice with bank accounts, money, benefits, debt advice and affordable credit. Viridian has invested £180k in a team consisting of a manager and four advisors and gained £772k of housing and personal benefits.



Facts and Figures

Eileen, a pensioner with severe health problems, had an overpayment of Housing Benefit of over £800 written off, after our team intervened. This removed an issue that had been causing her severe anxiety. Of our intervention she said, “Sincere thanks for all your help. The patience you have shown, the depth of knowledge you’ve displayed and the level of support you have given.”

We successfully appealed Sandwell Council’s decision to charge the so called ‘Bedroom Tax’ for two residents. Until 3 March 2014, people who had received Housing Benefit continuously since 1996 were exempt from the ‘Bedroom Tax’.

Sandwell Council tried to charge our residents, as they stated the council’s records did not show they had received housing benefit continuously since 1996, and it was up to the residents’ to prove they had. Our Financial Inclusion Advisor, took up the case on behalf of our residents, and argued that it was the responsibility of the Council to prove there had been a break in Housing Benefit payment, not for the resident to prove otherwise. The tribunal agreed with Viridian, and Sandwell Council decided to pay the remaining Housing Benefit to Viridian for the whole of 2013 – 2014 financial year, which is a considerable sum of money, and a huge relief to our customers.

“Davinia has always been on hand to meet me, answer my emails and phone calls and to help with local council forms, etc. Nothing has ever been too much trouble and she is a true credit to Viridian Housing.”

Going Forward

Our focus is to build on our success; continuing to deliver savings for the business, while helping customers who are in the most need.

- We will work with Employment Advisors to make accurate assessments of different levels of earned income, to help people understand the financial impacts of going back to work
- We will offer a wider Financial Inclusion service, which helps improve awareness and knowledge of mainstream banking services for customers, and enables them to make informed choices
- We will work with colleagues across the Social Impact team and the wider business to provide a level of expertise in all initiatives which affect customers’ financial wellbeing.

AFFORDABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Our Research and Innovation team and Financial Inclusion Lead piloted Viridian’s Affordability Assessment tool in 2013. This is an on line tool for use with customers to identify their financial ability to afford Viridian’s accommodation and makes suggestions for maximising their income. The tool has been recognised as a market leader and shows real innovation in the way it brings together lots of complex data from many sources to help ensure customers start their time with us on the right foot.

During the pilot, twenty-five prospective residents used the tool, and it provided an insight into the circumstances of our potential customers. It enabled action to be taken to improve their level of financial inclusion.

Our research shows us that those residents, in the control group, who did not take part in the pilot had 50 %

higher arrears than the residents who piloted the Affordability Assessment Tool. Based on each of the customers included in the pilot paying an average weekly rent of £100, we estimate the assessment tool has prevented arrears of £6,250.

During 2014/15, the affordability assessment tool will be developed as

an on line tool and an App that will be used with all new tenants, prior to being accepted for housing. We believe this is an essential tool for improving financial inclusion and ensuring the income of both customers and Viridian is maximised. This approach, along with our early tenancy support service, will help customers succeed in their tenancies.

The pilot found that:



63% of the prospective residents were referred to our Financial Inclusion Team.



32% of these residents were helped to claim more benefits.

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN

11% had no money left over at the end of the week.



26% were spending more than 50% of their net income on rent.

When comparing the 25 residents, with those who didn’t complete the affordability assessment, the number of weeks in rent arrears at week 8 of the tenancy was 2.5 weeks compared to 5 weeks for those not taking part in the pilot.

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN

ACTIVE ONLINE

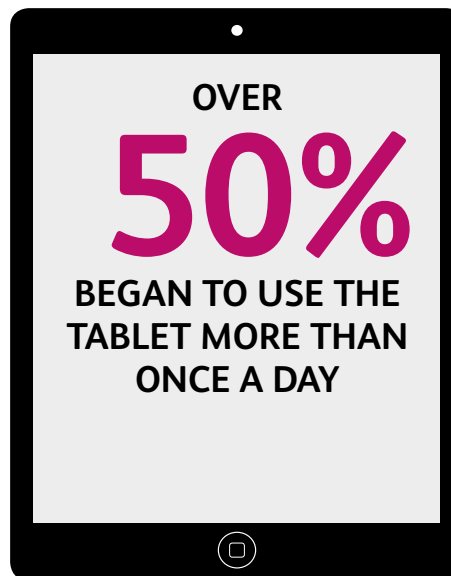
The Government's digital strategy has set out their intention for all Government agencies and services to become 'digital by default' since April 2014. This will mean customers will have to use the internet for transactions that they may have previously preferred to undertake "offline".

A 2012 review of Viridian's residents estimated that 40% do not have access to the Internet in their homes, and that typically these residents are older people. National research has also found that many older people are digitally excluded. Around 40% of people over 65 are 'offline' and many older people do not have the skills or interest required to use the Internet.

In 2013, the Social Impact team launched an exciting new internet access scheme called Active Online, aimed at helping our older residents learn the skills needed to get online. Initially the scheme was made available to all aged over 50 who were either beginners or intermediate internet or computer users. We offer free one-to-one lessons to customers, in the comfort of their own home,

provided by our partners Student@Home. We have also partnered with the charity, UCanDoIT, for those with specialist needs such as visual impairment so no one was excluded.

The pilot ran for six months with 100 participants and was completed in 2013. It was very successful and delivered positive impact for older people.



Here's what participants told us about their newly acquired internet skills:

"I can click on and Skype Greece where my other family is, and sit and see them – it's out of this world!"

"Well, I had broadband and I said to my daughter 'I'm going to buy a computer' and she said, 'yeah, right!', so I think she's quite surprised that I've taken to it and I'm learning all this. I mean, she's pleased but I don't think she expected it if she's honest. It was great fun to surprise her!"

"It's very comfortable for shopping; that will be very interesting. I would like to do it and I want to know how."

"When you do it for the first time you feel as though you've achieved something."

"I found it very useful. I can do my shopping which helps me a lot; I don't have to go out to get it. I get it delivered. I pay a few bills with it, and if I need information, I just go on Google and it gives me the answer!"

"It's so easy...when I showed Carmen how to do it, she typed in her city in the Philippines and found her old house! The same with me; I can see the olive trees that my dad planted before he died. It's amazing the technology. You can hardly believe it."

"I use it for music, and play Solitaire. It keeps me busy. I call through Skype and I can communicate with my son."

The pilot also demonstrated that learning the new skills increased social interaction for the older people:



61% - MORE IN TOUCH WITH WORLD



70% - SHARED NEW SKILLS



POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH TRAINERS

Residents are now more confident using the internet to:



PLAY GAMES



USE SKYPE



SHOP ONLINE



LEARN MORE ABOUT ONLINE SERVICES

The pilot won the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Southern Region Excellence in Digital Engagement Award.



We have completed a follow up evaluation with participants who took part in the original pilot to understand how many people are still active online; we know that the majority of the people who took part in the pilot are still using the Internet on a regular basis. This delivers a HACT wellbeing value of £186,336.

Mainstreaming Digital Inclusion

Digital skills training is now being offered to over 5,700 households which house 6,800 older people, across all Viridian regions. In the 1st year of operating the full service we've set ourselves the target of taking 300 older people through the training with nearly 200 residents signed up so far.

The model has also been commissioned by a number of other housing associations.

The work doesn't stop there though, and our current offer gives us a platform for further improvement. Once we have rolled out digital skills training to all of our older residents, we will examine how our offer can be adapted for other customer groups, and specifically those who are on benefits and likely to be affected by the introduction of Universal Credit.

IMPROVING SERVICES AT ST JOHNS

Viridian own and manage a range of property types and recognise that our service delivery should be tailored to meet the needs of our residents. With this in mind, the Social Impact team have been working closely with housing management staff and residents of the St Johns estate in Clapham.

The aim of the programme is to deliver a bespoke improvement programme that:

- Improves customer satisfaction with core services
- Improves the external environment and in turn
- Investigate whether these lead to improving key performance targets with housing management and the repairs service.




Initially staff spent time building relationships with residents and working with a research provider to improve our understanding of the issues that exist on the estate, this gave a clearer view of the priorities that need to be addressed. The main themes which emerged were general concerns about the management of the estate, the lack of play area for young children, the lack of communal facilities and underlying issues with unemployment, poor education and skills, and poor health.

The project is intended to create long term outcomes and is a work in progress but we are already seeing a positive impact for the residents.




Outcomes of our work

In May 2014 we carried out a formal review of the work:



A core group of 25-30 residents regularly contribute to estate activities.



In 2013, 46% of residents felt their views were not listened to by the end of the project this figure had dropped to 7%.

When the project commenced, many residents asked for improvements to the play area and the unused car park area. Working with the families the areas have been redesigned and a new play area opened in August 2014.




Residents successfully manage a “hot kitchen” catering for local homeless people on a weekly basis.



Overall satisfaction figures related to consultation and resident involvement were significantly higher.

Going Forward




There is a rota of 15 – 20 residents that volunteer to run the kitchen on Saturdays and a number of residents also contribute food.

Overall, residents rated the estate as a place to live as 7 out of 10.



- Develop a plan to establish John Morris House as a resident led community hub
- Work with partners to deliver longer term wellbeing initiatives; continuing to address obstacles to employment, education and financial wellbeing.



80% of residents are aware of the Social Impact project.



5 WEEKS IN ARREARS

APRIL 2013 23% → MAY 2014 13%

50% of residents rate the project as either:

9/10 ★★★★★★★★☆☆

or

10/10 ★★★★★★★★★★

In April 2013, a total of 23% households were more than 5 weeks in arrears, by May 2014 there are 13% of households in more than 5 weeks arrears.



EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Our employment, education and training initiatives aim to work in partnership with local and national organisations and to deliver opportunities for customers in their local communities. This includes employment opportunities via dedicated job brokerages, apprenticeships, pre-employment courses and targeted work programmes aimed at young people.

Since January 2014, 73 referrals have been made to our partners. Fifteen have secured pre-employment training and nine have moved into paid work. The HACT wellbeing value of those undertaking training is £19,975 and gaining employment is £82,364.

Work yourself into a new home

Viridian worked in partnership with Wandsworth Council on their pilot programme 'Housing into Work'. The programme is open to unemployed or part-time workers who are between the ages 18 to 30, on the condition that they either find work, increase their part-time hours or take part in training to make them ready for work. These young residents are supported via training, workshops and one-to-one coaching. If they pass a probationary period, they will be offered a Viridian home. Since its launch, five young people have been accepted onto the project and three have moved into their new homes.

Elizabeth received the keys to her new home in January 2014.

"Last year, I was approached by Viridian asking if I would like to take part in their Housing into Work scheme. At the time, I lived at home with my parents and two brothers which meant I had to share a room with my 23 year old brother who is registered blind. Our Housing Officer said that I may qualify as we were overcrowded and I was looking for work.

"After they explained what it is, I jumped at the chance as it meant I would get help finding work and also be offered my own flat. Through the programme, I now have an apprenticeship with the NHS and I am taking a business administration course at college one day a week. I've also been really lucky with my new flat as it is next door to my aunt's in Battersea and is only a short drive from my parent's house. I never thought that at 20 I would have a job I enjoy and a

home to call my own – and I can't wait to put my personal touch on it!

"The Housing into Work scheme is brilliant. It gives you the start, stability and opportunity to move forward with your life and really go for what you want."

Going forward

- Research and pilot project to develop advice and support for customers who wish to work from home
- Development of a support package for young people to set up their own businesses
- Six apprenticeships across Viridian during the year, offering skills and training across the business
- Continued development of our strategic partnerships to offer more opportunities to our customers
- Development on bespoke projects helping customers to make the steps towards employment.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering improves an individual's quality of life and can lead to employment, education and training opportunities, as well as helping us to build stronger communities and improve the quality of lives in the local areas our customers live. Each person has their own personal goals and reasons for wanting to volunteer. Bearing this in mind, we have developed opportunities for both work experience and community volunteering.

What has been achieved in 2013/14

- 64 customers have been involved in volunteering projects or events on a regular basis (volunteers at least once per month for 2 months). This gives a HACT wellbeing value of £122,177
- We have recruited a team of volunteers to act as brokers, who will establish relationships with external organisations, to place and support our customers into volunteering
- HACT Social Values for regular volunteering is £2,357 per person per annum. So just with volunteer advisers to date that is £33,469 for this financial year.

Gardening Success

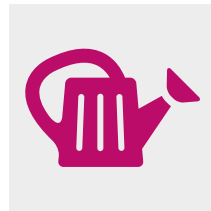
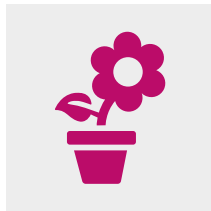
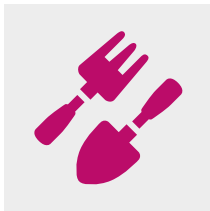
A recent gardening project in Battersea saw residents involved in creating their own garden, bringing about a wonderful sense of community spirit. Joan Bartlett House, a retirement scheme for older people, had a large but run-down rooftop garden in need of some care and attention. Some of the residents have ill-health or disabilities, so they wanted a safe and natural outdoor space to enjoy, where they can garden and socialise with their neighbours. The resident group, Sunnyside Residents Association, rallied around to raise funds, with support from the Wandsworth Older People's Forum.

Some one-off volunteering days saw several groups come together to help transform the garden. Volunteers from

businesses, a local disability charity called Thrive, Viridian colleagues and residents all took part in this worthwhile community venture.

"Helping others and knowing they will benefit from your work... such a rewarding feeling", said one of our volunteer residents.

The event created a strong sense of community with people from different backgrounds and abilities coming together, eager to volunteer their time. Our Social Impact and Green teams worked together to get more people involved. The Green team managed the hands-on activities and ensured that the choices of plants supported the natural wildlife and would be easy for the residents to maintain.



Going Forward

During 2014/2015 we will focus on volunteering opportunities to help our customers work towards employment, education and training and build on the success of our community projects by offer more chances for people to be involved in their local area.

We are also working with The International Citizen Service (ICS), a UK government-funded development programme that brings together 18 to 25-year-olds from all backgrounds to fight poverty in overseas and UK communities. All they ask of each candidate is the ambition to make a difference. Two Viridian residents and one volunteer have been successful in gaining places on the programme and will be volunteering in India, Tanzania and Nepal.



TRANSFERS PILOT

An element of the Welfare Reform agenda is the bedroom subsidy or 'bedroom tax', meaning that customers who are under occupying a property will not be eligible for help to pay all of their rent. This could have a major impact on the lives of our customers living in larger properties.

Many of our customers have expressed an interest in moving because they are either affected by the 'bedroom tax' or are in need of a larger home due to being overcrowded. As this can sometimes be a lengthy process taking months to complete, we developed a pilot to trial new ways of helping customers move to a new home. The pilot aims to match homes of under-occupiers with overcrowded households. Our Housing Options Officer is available to spend time with customers to understand their needs and try to find the home that suits them.

The expected benefits of the pilot are

- A reduction in the number of customers under occupying their home
- A reduction in the number of overcrowded households
- Reduced waiting times for moving in South West London.



Transfer Success

We recently rehoused one of our residents, Jane in a one bedroom property which is much more suited to her needs than her previous three bedroom home. Jane received the keys to her new home in March 2014.

“The first property Patricia showed me was all it took. I walked into the ground floor flat and knew this was the one – I accepted straight away! It had everything I could need and even things I have always wanted. For instance, in my old house, we had a bathtub which I found really hard to get in and out of due to my mobility issues but my new flat had a wet room so I didn’t have to struggle to wash anymore! Also, I fell in love with the garden in the flat. I never had a garden before - my house had a patio - and am very much looking forward to the weather picking up so I can start gardening and keep busy. I still can’t believe my luck that within three months of even hearing about this pilot, I have moved to a new place I can really call home. The neighbours have already called around to welcome me and offer me help. This area really has a community feel to it – and is still only ten minutes away from my old place so I won’t lose touch with my friends and family.”

The move means that a family have been able to move into the home vacated by Jane, so two more of our customers are now living in homes that meet their needs.

The transfers pilot continues and we will be working with operational staff to embed the offer into our business as usual offer during the coming year. At the time of the report being published.



From November 2013 – March 2014 a total of 6 households have moved to their new homes.

From April - October 2014 a further 33 households have moved to their new homes.

159

customers have discussed their situations, including 39 home visits.



This means 17% of customers on the priority list who said they wanted to move have done so.



We also ran a ‘Get Moving’ event in Battersea, in March 2014 and following this event 70 customers have received information and advice on transferring to another home.

STAYING HEALTHY AND WELL

Winter Phone Calls

Viridian recognises that some of our customers, particularly older residents do not always contact us when they have an issue, so in the winter months of 2013 we ran our Winter Phone Calls Campaign. We highlighted 343 of our most vulnerable older residents living in our General Needs properties across the UK. A Winter Information Pack was sent to all of them and it received wide praise from the residents who were spoken to. In January the pack was published on the Viridian website for all residents to access.

In addition to providing the Winter Information Pack, we made telephone contact with residents to give advice on keeping well, warm and maximising their income.



Phone-calls Summary

- 23 staff and volunteers offered up their time to make the phone calls
- 178 residents, over 70, have been spoken to and of these:
 - 20 have been spoken to by the Financial Inclusion Team and received support with their benefits
 - Five received an Emergency Fuel Payment
 - By making the calls we also picked up previously unreported repairs, the need for aids and adaptations and we were able to refer isolated customers to voluntary sector organisations.

In 2014 we intend to run this programme again, starting earlier than last year so we can contact more customers. We will also improve the pack we send out to people, and look to provide other services such as a befriending scheme to support people in what can be a lonely time of year.

Healthier, Wealthier Home

Moving into a new home is an exciting time. At Viridian we want our customers to make the most of their time living with us. To help, Viridian have produced the Healthier, Wealthier Home book, which contains ideas, suggestions and important information on how to live well, eat well, save money, stay safe in the home and sustain a tenancy. The book is available for all new residents.

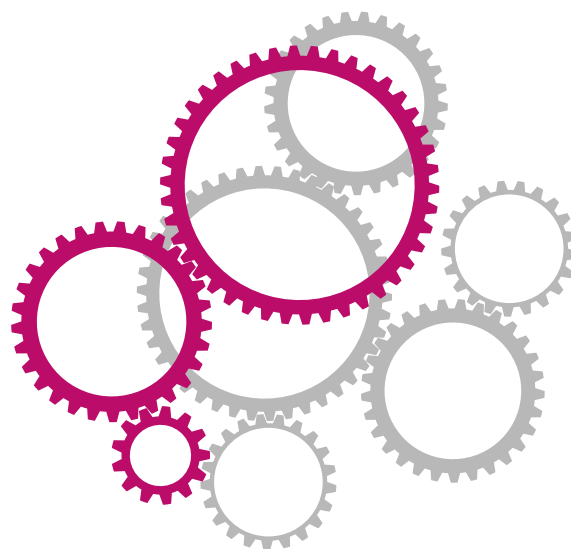
Healthier, Wealthier Home was written by Jenny Cook, a member of the Social Impact team, using her experience of finding creative ways to help reduce costs around the home. “The main lesson I learned is that the saying ‘look after the pennies and the pounds look after themselves’ really is true.” said Jenny “No matter how small a saving you make, it all adds up to a bigger saving over time.”

Dementia Awareness

As part of our ageing work, we offer dementia awareness training to staff which enables them to spot the early signs of dementia and use their knowledge to inform the services we offer to people with dementia.

The Alzheimer’s Society has shown that keeping an active mind is a key way of reducing the onset of dementia. There has also been some anecdotal evidence that learning how to use the Internet can improve

the life and condition of a person living with dementia or severe disabilities, though there have been no formal studies published on this topic. Therefore, we are currently undertaking a project with Peabody to research the impact of learning to use the internet, by extending our digital inclusion lessons to residents living with dementia and disabilities.



THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL IMPACT

Data analysis driving resource planning

At Viridian we aim to provide services, which are tailored to meet both customer and organisational needs. We can identify the needs in a number of ways, one of which is analysing data to inform where we allocate resource. For example we are working with the repairs service to highlight geographical areas with high levels of repairs so we can ensure that we use this information to estimate the staff resources needed, look at our reinvestment and replacement programmes and the quality of the components required for excellent service delivery.

We are also beginning the development of a web based data hub; this will be a live tool for the organisation to use to, thus embedding our evidence based approach to our work.

Development of Domestic Abuse work

In May 2013, we published research undertaken for us by ESRO. The broad aim of the research was to bring to light the experience of domestic violence from the point of view of victims and survivors. We also wanted a better understanding of what it is like to live within a violent relationship and raise awareness among colleagues. A further key outcome was to review Viridian's domestic violence service, and identify how it can be improved and developed.

Following on from the report's recommendations, we have launched the No Home for Domestic Abuse campaign to tackle the effects of domestic abuse. Our campaign is dedicated to making sure that whatever the customers' circumstances, our team can provide a support system to help them.

Our commitment to improving our offer to those customers reporting domestic abuse continues and we have appointed a specialist worker to develop our services further.

We want to:

- Make sure all frontline staff are able to identify someone at risk and can easily report these concerns; 400 staff have already received training to help them identify domestic abuse
- Improve our support offer to survivors and their families so it is easier for them to escape a violent partner and settle into their new lives once they have done this
- Provide increased support after the relationship when someone is starting their new life
- Develop a support offer for perpetrators that is aimed at helping them change their behaviour.

No Home for Domestic Abuse

Early Tenancy Support

In April 2014, we launched our Early Tenancy Support Service. Experience shows us that building a good relationship between the customer and Viridian at the outset of their tenancy agreement is important. This approach has benefits for both Viridian and the customer as we believe:

- It will deliver a reduction in early tenancy arrears
- It will offer a better understanding of tenancy obligations

- Customers will be financially included and better able to afford their property
- Customers will benefit from access to our range of services, such as the employment, volunteering and digital inclusion programmes.

Our Financial Inclusion team will aim to offer all new customers an appointment at the outset of their tenancy.

Exercise Classes and Wellbeing

In April 2014 we worked with the residents in three of our retirement housing schemes to deliver tai chi classes, this enabled twenty older people to take up a new form of exercise. Our aim in the coming months is to work with other retirement residents and residents associations to submit applications to fund the classes.



90% OF RESIDENTS STATED THEY FELT PHYSICALLY FITTER SINCE ATTENDING TAI CHI AND THEIR COORDINATION AND BALANCE HAD IMPROVED.



90% OF RESIDENTS SAID THAT TAI CHI RAISED THEIR PHYSICAL AWARENESS AND WANTED TO CONTINUE A MOVEMENT PROGRAMME WHICH CONSISTED OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Support to Families and Children

We are working with Tutors United to provide tutoring for 53 infant and junior school aged children. Evidence shows that low income families have been disproportionately affected by rising living costs, earnings stagnation and welfare reform, therefore they are more likely to be experiencing financial stress and social isolation. It also shows that low income parents and children are not achieving their educational or career potential.

We want to enhance the educational opportunities for young children by supporting the parents to enrol their children for additional English and Maths tuition. Initial findings of the evaluation report, published in August 2014, are telling us:

- Children gained a clearer understanding of the value of school, tutoring and preparation as a result of the programme
- Children showed a greater recognition of their own resourcefulness and ability to rise to a challenge as a result of the programme
- There was no perceptible alteration in motivation as a result of the programme but children expressed greater degrees of self-confidence and mastery at the end of the programme.



52%

OF RESIDENTS SAID THAT IF THEY DID NOT ATTEND TAI CHI THEY WOULD NOT LEAVE THEIR HOME.

33%

OF RESIDENTS STATED THAT TAI CHI WAS NOT FOR THEM AND DID NOT WANT TO TAKE PART IN ANY ACTIVITY THAT WAS PROVIDED AT THEIR SCHEME.



ORGANISATIONAL

Within Viridian a range of teams contribute to the delivery of our social impact agenda.

Some of the highlights are our successful development programme; alongside grant funding of £22.3m, Viridian has invested £123.6m to deliver 250 high quality new homes, providing housing for up to 615 people. We were also placed in the Top 50 developers for the year.

As well as providing new homes, we invest in our existing homes to ensure they meet the needs of customers. In 2013/14, we invested £280,000 to fit aids and adaptations, which promote independence and improve quality of life for customers and their family, friends and carers. For example, fitting grab rails and a shower seat for a new resident at one of our retirement schemes, means he can shower himself and no longer relies on carers to assist him.

Viridian employs a specialist legal team, who during the year have had huge successes in preventing tenancy fraud. The team work closely with colleagues in Housing Management to return sub let properties to the social rented market.

Subletting is when a legal tenant is not living in their property and is letting someone else live there, whether for profit or not. For every property being illegally used in this way, there is someone in genuine housing need being deprived of a home, and the average cost to Viridian of building a property for them would be £180,000. During the year we were successful in gaining possession of 63 homes, which were being illegally occupied and they are now let to families who are now living in secure affordable homes and contributing to their local community.

FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

The team deliver both a financial and well being return for their work. During the year we have demonstrated this by using the HACT wellbeing evaluation tool, customer surveys, increased rental income, for Viridian, and increased personal income for customers.

In 2014/15 we will fully implement the HACT wellbeing measures, where appropriate, and alongside this we aim to show the social return on investment of all

of our work, contributing to the value for money agenda. We will continue to seek the views of colleagues, customers and stakeholders to improve services and lives through innovation.

The cost of the Social Impact Initiatives team in 2013/14 was:

Direct Project Costs:	£506k
Indirect Costs:	£565k



For every £1 spent we have created £2 of social.

Return on the HACT Wellbeing Measures

Project	HACT Definition	HACT Value	Expenditure to deliver
Digital Inclusion: Pilot	Regular access to the internet	186,336	110,799
Volunteers: Regular volunteering	Volunteers at least once per month for 2 months	122,177	60,690
Employment and training F/T	Employment: Moving from unemployment to full time employment	82,364	23,704
	Training: General work related training to help find new job, to increase skills for job or improve skills for job	19,975	5,926
Total		410,852	201,119

Return on financial inclusion

Project Costs (£)	Income Achieved (£)
180K	468k of housing benefit
	304k of personal benefits to customers



For every £1 spent, on financial inclusion, we have gained £4.28 in income.

Our combined social value and income to customers and Viridian gives a total of £1,189,102 for the financial year

HACT STATEMENT

What is an Impact Valuation Statement?

This report has been prepared as an Impact Valuation Statement. Impact Valuation Statements are intended to give a true and accurate view of social impact related to an activity or programme of activities. Due to the complexity of trying to measure all of the other things going on in people's lives at the time of the activities, it gives an indication of the impact that activities have contributed to, with some adjustments to seek to estimate the specific impact of the activities.

What are the simplifying assumptions used in creating an Impact Valuation Statement?

As noted above the Impact Valuation Statement measures overall improvements and does not directly identify the activities' specific contribution to it. To give a better

estimate of the activities' specific impact an adjustment has been made that reduces the value by a percentage to try to account for the social improvements that would have happened anyway in the absence of the activities. This is known as a 'deadweight adjustment', and is made on the basis of the average deadweight for different categories of activities. Also, Impact Valuation Statements draw upon the robust valuations of the social impact of different outcomes and activities, contained within the Social Value Bank. However, these values are stated as the value per person per year. For the purposes of an Impact Valuation Statement we simply take that value and do not try to make an assessment of whether the people benefiting from our activities obtain benefits that might last for less than or more than a year.

Notes to the Report

- During the period April 2013 – March 2014 the HACT Wellbeing questionnaires have not been completed, as the measurement tool was only published in January 2014. The wellbeing questionnaires will be used in this current financial year and the results will be available in future reports
- A number of our activities do not currently have a value in the social bank calculator and therefore a social value figure has not been generated.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you would like further details of our work and approach to enabling our customers to live fulfilling lives please contact **mary.whitfield@viridianhousng.org.uk** or call **0330 1230220**

'Word of thanks'

The work of the social impact team is made possible by the staff team and volunteers at Viridian, who deliver the projects alongside customers, partners and colleagues, with the aim of improving services and quality of life.

Social Impact Report

APRIL 2013 – MARCH 2014

I confirm that this Impact Valuation Statement is, to the best of my knowledge, a true and accurate record of the social impact of the stated interventions, and that the relevant rules of application have been followed.

Signed:

Mary Whitfield

Mary Whitfield
Head of Social Impact

Date: 16 September 2014



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