



# Impact Report

# 2020

Working together to change lives

# Welcome

**2020 has been an immensely challenging year for people all around the world.**

Few people have been left unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but for all of the challenges we have endured, we have also seen what a small and connected world we live in.

From neighbours supporting each other through isolation to international communities working on vaccines, we have seen how we are better together and achieve more working in partnership. A value that has long been held by Independent Lives and has shone brightly over the last 12-months.

I am immensely proud of the work done by Independent Lives and of the way the people who work with us have reacted to the pandemic. We have achieved so much in 2020, from supporting people with vaccines and PPE, launching new services, to obtaining our first minibus. The efforts of our staff, volunteers, and our customers have been amazing.

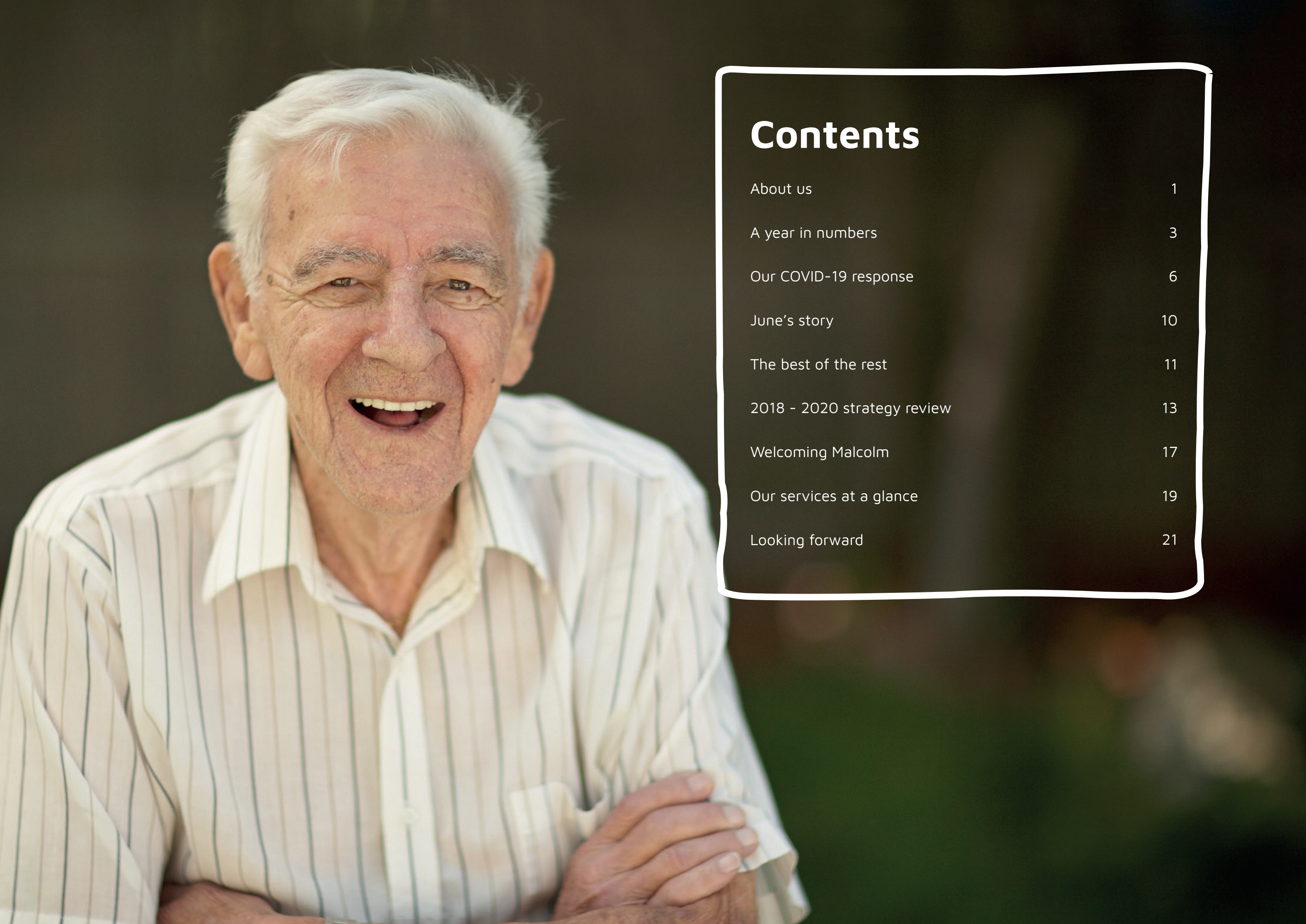
I hope you enjoy reading our Impact Report as much as I have enjoyed reflecting on our collective achievements. I hope to be able to see and speak to as many of you as possible in the coming months and look forward to a bright future for Independent Lives and the people we support.



**Rebecca Smicle**  
Chief Executive







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# About us

**Independent Lives is a user-led charity and social enterprise working to change the lives of disabled people, people with support needs and carers.**

Our vision is for a fair society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Working together we can achieve real change in the lives of the people we support - so that we can all participate in our communities and have greater choice, control, and freedom.

We provide a range of frontline services which support people

and their communities. From domiciliary care support to respite support for carers, from information and advice for direct payment recipients to campaigns that promote the importance of peer leadership and strategic co-production. Independent Lives is a charity which really matters and really makes a difference.

## Did you know?

There are **14.1 million disabled people** in the UK.

- 8% of children are disabled
- 19% of working age adults are disabled
- 46% of pension age adults are disabled



At Independent Lives we believe that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment. When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.

Our work is directed by the people who know best - our members and customers. We are run

by a board of trustees directly accountable to all other members.

We work with individuals and groups to promote what each of us, our friends, families and community can give. Working together we can improve our society and make it a better place for everyone to live.

# A year in numbers

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic in 2020, Independent Lives continued to support huge numbers of people and provide services which make a real difference. Here is just a snapshot of those numbers.



We helped **1,651 people** through our information and advice telephone helpline, covering **7,006 separate enquiries** and requests for information.

We supported **267 disabled people** to start to employ their own personal assistants through social care personal budgets, across West Sussex and Croydon.



Our payroll service provided services to **1,492 people**.



In 2020 we helped **more than 200 people** recruit support staff. We placed **231 new recruitment adverts** and received **1,066 applications**.



**254 personal assistants** attended **21 training sessions**, recording **340 separate attendances**. This training was rated as excellent or very good by **100% of participants**.



During 2020, we supported **173 domiciliary care customers**, making **78,079 separate calls**, and delivering **50,339 hours of care**.



During the year we provided **2,454 hours** of respite breaks to carers in the Adur area.





## Our COVID-19 response

**The pandemic has had a huge impact on all our lives. From the way we live day to day, to the way we think about and engage with life in the broadest sense.**

It will be some time before we understand the full impact that this pandemic will have on the world, but we are all aware of the immediate impact it has had on our lives.

Of course, Independent Lives has not been immune to its impact, and we have successfully faced a range of challenges during 2020 in direct response to COVID-19. From PPE to vaccines and from new technologies to home working, Independent Lives has responded effectively, adapting our support and redeploying resources to meet the changing demands on the organisation.

Effective provision of health and social care services has been central to combating the pandemic, and the nature of the support we provide has placed Independent Lives at the heart of

the local response.

Our amazing care staff continued to provide face to face support throughout the year, adapting to new procedures and demands as they went.

Information has played a key role in the fight against COVID-19 and again, Independent Lives has been integral in that fight, providing accurate and timely information on a range of subjects related to the pandemic. Our website saw a 373% increase in visitors following the first lockdown announcement on 23 March 2020. This is a pattern we saw repeated throughout the year as new information was announced by the Government.

Our information and advice staff have worked tirelessly to provide people with the knowledge that

they need to continue through the pandemic. Our staff supported 568 employers to obtain emergency PPE, and we also arranged vaccinations for more than 300 personal assistants.

Many of our staff moved to working from home. This presented several challenges as staff and teams were forced to adapt their usual ways of working to fit in with life under lockdown. However, staff were fast to adapt, proactive in their roles and as an organisation we are positive about the opportunities that new technologies and flexible working arrangements will give.

Some of our services faced larger constraints on their ability to function, such as our carers respite service or our ability to provide training. Again, we adapted to this shift effectively, looking to technology to help us continue our support. We delivered several services digitally, allowing people to stay

in contact and reduce the impact of isolation under lockdown.

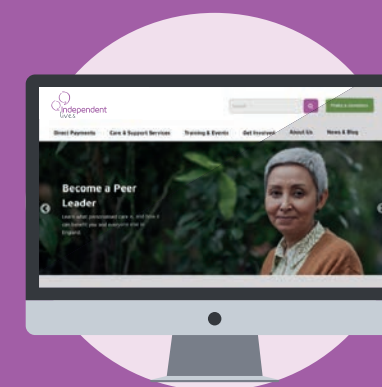
We are expecting that the impact of COVID-19 will last for some time yet, and we join others in remembering the many people who have been lost world-wide as we also think of their family and friends whose loss will be, for them, immeasurable.

However, we also choose to remain positive and hopeful that lessons will be learned, opportunities embraced and the respect that people have gained for health and social care services will remain in place.

**I just wanted to say thank you for your ongoing covid information and support and for helping me to understand the process and what I should be doing.**

**You have made it so much easier!**

- Direct payments customer



*Did you know?*

Our website saw an increase in visitors of **373%** following the announcement of the first lockdown on 23 March 2020.





## June's story

**In 2020, Independent Lives' hospital discharge service, Home First, supported 399 people to safely return home following a stay in hospital.**

The service, which launched at the beginning of 2020, covers the coastal and western parts of West Sussex, and provides a range of free support to ensure that patients can safely return to independent living at home.

Home First's main objective is to prevent people from staying in hospital for longer than they need to. People recover better outside of hospital, but a service needs to be in place to prevent isolation and re-occurring hospital visits.

June, a recent Home First customer, said this about her support:

'I had been in hospital for a fortnight when I was first introduced to the Home First team, and I was beginning to think I might never get back home! I was told I would be going

home, and that they would be visiting me three times a day to support me with everything I needed. I'd never received care before, so it was a big, but welcome, change.

'The staff were extremely supportive, and over a month or two I had started to regain my confidence and independence and had cut the visits down to once a week. I couldn't have done without the help, and I know I wouldn't be back on my own two feet so soon if it weren't for the support.'

Under the scheme, individuals are supported with up to six weeks of free personalised care, which includes confidence building, companionship, and practical things like making sure the heating is working and the fridge is stocked.



# The best of the rest

**2020 wasn't just focused on COVID-19. We continued to provide our essential support and develop new ways of reaching more people.**

At the beginning of 2020 we launched a new service, Home First. The service works to prevent people from staying in hospital longer than they need to. We provide much needed support which allows people to safely leave hospital and recover in their own homes where we provide domiciliary care.

During 2020, the home first service supported nearly 400 people with free personalised care, supporting them with not just their immediate care needs but helping them rebuild their confidence after their hospital visit and offering them companionship and practical support at home.

We were proud to take ownership of a brand-new minibus in 2020. The minibus has been used by our carers respite service which has been taking people out on

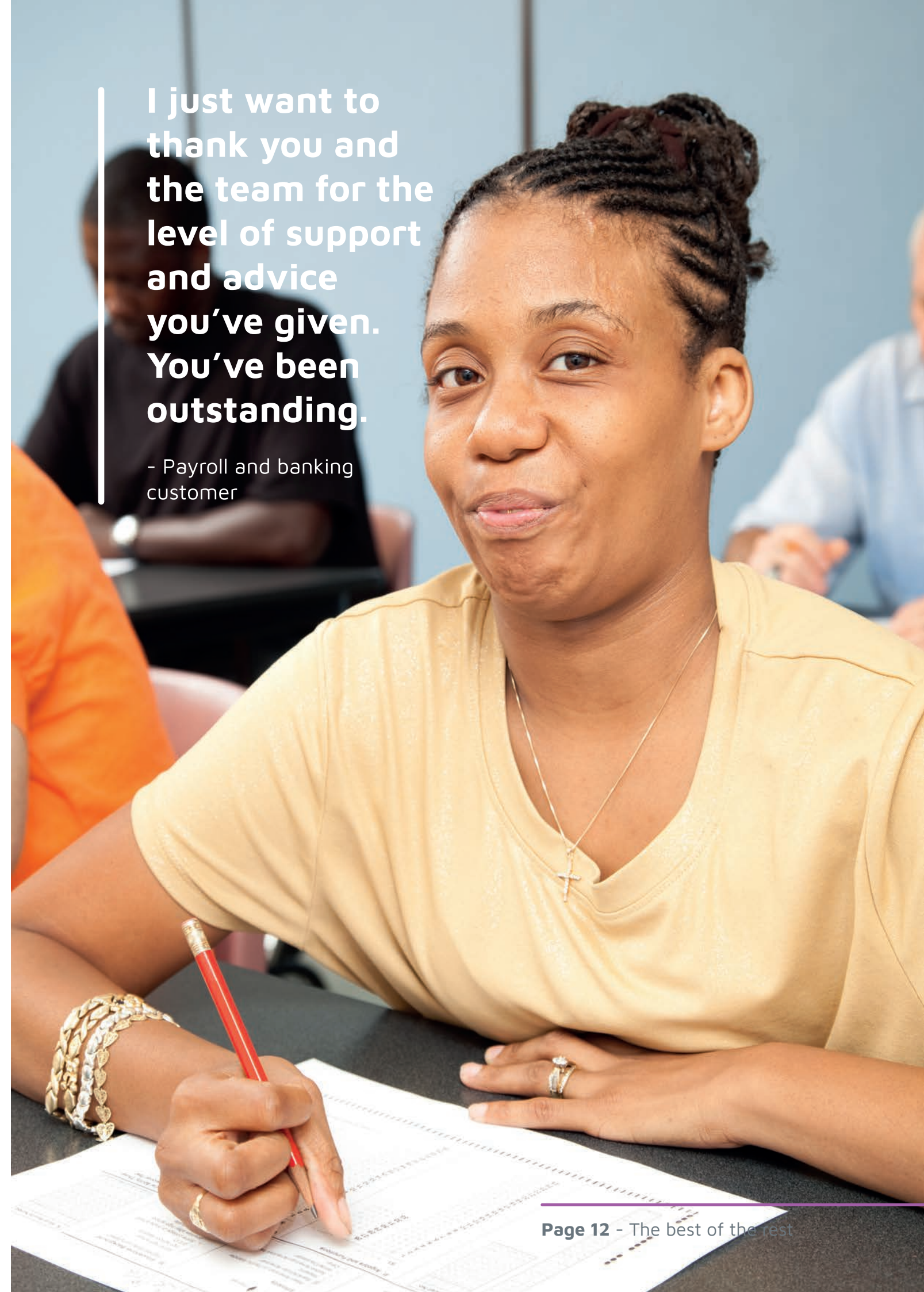
much needed day trips, allowing carers some time and space to themselves.

You may see our minibus driving round town and won't be able to miss it with the large Independent Lives logo on its side. We are currently looking at new opportunities which the bus presents to us, including events and day trips for our customers. If you haven't already, we hope you'll be able to see the bus soon!

We continued our involvement with the Southeast Network of Disabled People's Organisations, continuing our tradition of collaboration and working with others to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people we support.

**I just want to thank you and the team for the level of support and advice you've given. You've been outstanding.**

- Payroll and banking customer





# 2018 - 2020 strategy review

**In 2017 we developed a new set of strategic objectives which we worked towards between 2018 and 2020.**

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 we made great progress as an organisation and achieved some great outcomes for the people we support, while growing as an organisation.

The below highlights the objectives we set for ourselves and the measures we took to ensure their completion.

Our 2021 strategy is currently being launched which will ensure that Independent Lives remains at the heart of local health and social care, and allows us to support as many people to live independently as possible.

## We said we would...

**Maintain** a strong, stable, and sustainable base to consistently support and deliver our mission now and in the future.



We expanded both the types of services we provide and the locations we provide them in.

We expanded our care service, launching a carers respite service and hospital discharge service. We also started providing services in Croydon for the first time.

## We said we would...

**Champion** choice and control through person centred planning and personal budgets support, services, and information and advice.



We continued to support large numbers of people through personal budgets, personal health budgets, and direct payment support.

We are working on plans to extend our services to include individual service funds, pooled direct payments, and develop new uses for personal health budgets.

## We said we would...

**Provide** quality community care and support where people choose to live.



We rebranded our care service as Independent Lives Care Service in line with our other services. As of May 2021, we have a '**Good**' rating from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in all areas. We have expanded our recruitment, training and development offer as well as our customer feedback processes to listen and act upon what our customers tell us.

We continue to work with local authority, NHS, and customers to deliver flexible support in the community, to make care more personalised.



## We said we would...

**Innovate** to build support and services around the individual and community, where and how they need it.

We planned to invest in fundraising, social groups and activities. Some of these activities were greatly affected by the pandemic, but they remain a key area as we look to the future.

We plan to continue to invest in workforce development and career pathways for personal assistants and intend to develop a PA Academy.

We will continue to invest in technology to improve services and processes and engage with our customers how and when they choose.

## We said we would...

**Collaborate** to optimise what is available to support disabled people's access, engagement, wellbeing, and equality.

We have continued to work across the health and social care sector to engage our community and stakeholders to support our customers to access streamlined services.

We will continue to work collaboratively to support the wants and needs of disabled people and their carers.

## We said we would...

**Improve** the sector by supporting the wellbeing of staff, trustees, members, supporters, volunteers, customers, and the wider population.

We have ensured our quality through quality marks, standards and KPIs and continue our commitment to being a Mindful Employer and a Disability Confident employer. We have maintained our ISO9001 2015 standard.

We have continued to provide flexible and rewarding employment opportunities and have structured our hourly rates in line with the Foundation Living Wage.





## Welcoming Malcolm

**In 2020, Independent Lives took ownership of a new minibus which we named Malcolm.**

The minibus was named in honour of a much-loved customer who sadly passed away earlier in the year. Malcolm's family generously donated towards our Carers Respite Service which had been providing them with much needed support.

Mrs. Colchester, Malcolm's wife, told us:

'Independent Lives have been like a lifeline. I don't know what would have happened without them. On my first day of respite when they took Malcolm out, I just sat in a chair and relaxed for a couple of hours'.

Despite a brief hiatus due

to COVID-19, the service managed to provide an incredible 2,454 hours of respite care during 2020.

Catherine Goldsmith, who runs the Carers Respite service, said:

'We carry out vital work providing a respite service and promoting wellbeing for older people across Worthing and Adur.

Now we have our own minibus, we are able to safely offer more days out for more people - supporting older people to make friends and socialise, to eat out and to have fun'.



# Our services

**Independent Lives provides a range of services to support disabled people and those with health and care needs to live independently.**

## Care Service

We provide flexible, person centred support to meet people's individual needs and assist them to live independently in their own home.

 **01903 219482 (option 2)**  
 **careservice@independentlives.org**

## Carers Respite Service

We provide activities for older people, people with support needs, and those living with dementia. The support we provide allows carers some time and space for themselves.

 **01903 219482 (option 6)**  
 **carersrespite@independentlives.org**

## Home First Service

We provide domiciliary care and support enabling, people to leave hospital and return to their own homes.

 **01903 219482 (option 2)**  
 **careservice@independentlives.org**

## Direct Payment Information & Advice Service

We provide support to people who receive a direct payment, supporting them to better manage their care, including employing personal assistants. We offer information and advice via telephone, our website, and in person.

 **01903 219482 (option 3)**  
 **advice@independentlives.org**

## Personal Assistant Training Service

We offer support and training to personal assistants and to people who are employing their own personal assistants.

 **01903 219482 (option 4)**  
 **training@independentlives.org**

## Personal Assistant Recruitment Service

We support people to recruit their own personal assistants, advertising vacancies and maintaining a list of personal assistants available for work.

 **01903 219482 (option 4)**  
 **recruitment@independentlives.org**

## Payroll Service

We provide a payroll service to people employing their own personal assistants. We offer guidance on employment legislation and help employers to deal with issues like pensions, tax, and national insurance.

 **01903 219482 (option 1)**  
 **payroll@independentlives.org**

## Banking Administration Service

We support direct payment recipients to more easily manage their direct payments, setting up and managing a dedicated bank account or pre-paid card for them.

 **01903 219482 (option 5)**  
 **banking@independentlives.org**



# Looking forward

**As we leave 2020 behind us, we will remember the people that have been lost locally, and globally, but also reflect on what we have achieved and the lessons that we have learned.**

We will all remember the effects of 2020 for a long time but let's not forget how we came together as a community, how we worked together and how we supported each other through a challenging year.

The World Health Organisation has designated 2021 as the year of the International Health and Care Workers in appreciation and gratitude of their unwavering dedication in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and we couldn't agree more. Everyone who works with Independent Lives has fought tirelessly to support others throughout the pandemic just as they do in more normal times.

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported Independent Lives over the last twelve months. All

of our customers, our volunteers, our staff. All of the people who have made donations. All of the commissioners, the organisations, and people who have helped us to help others. You are all amazing and thank you for your continued support.

We believe that disabled people and those with health care needs continue to face a challenging world, but we remain confident in our collective ability to reshape the world for the better and to create better outcomes for the people we support.

Many thanks, and I hope to see as many of you as possible, as soon as possible.




**Chandos Green**

Chair of the Board of Trustees



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