



Sally Hanlin – Chair of the Executive Committee – AGM overview of 2020 to 21

Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone for joining us either, in person or virtually, this evening for our 2020/2021 Solo AGM.

I remember last year, when we had our first ever virtual AGM, I broke with tradition and thanked all our staff for continuing to ensure all our residents were supported throughout the periods of lockdown in 2020. Normally I would reflect on the previous financial year, ending in March, however, given the challenges we all had to contend with brought by the pandemic, it felt right to use the period from March as our focus instead. Twelve months on and we are still coping with the many challenges a pandemic brings. We are in a far better position with vaccines available for all those who want them and testing kits also freely available. Yet despite these advances, we are still dependant on the dedication and resilience of our front line staff who have continued to support our residents, adapting their methods as necessary, but always ensuring they have someone they can turn to and that their voices are heard. This has never been more important as COVID-19 has impacted on us all and for those coping with other issues in their lives, the pandemic comes as a huge added burden.

We, on the executive committee feel humbled and have nothing but respect and admiration for the teams who support our residents, manage our properties and work with our landlords and for those, working behind the scenes, who keep everything going to enable the front line staff and management team, to do their jobs effectively. Each of you have had to overcome challenges to enable you to fulfil your roles and some of you have felt quite isolated when working from home. These challenges have added to the demands you already encounter on a daily basis and you have consistently put the well being of those we support, and of your colleagues, first and continued to provide holistic care and support to all those in need. On behalf of my colleagues on the Executive Committee we'd like to thank each of you for your resilience and commitment.

By way of capturing the essence of what makes Solo unique, the Exec committee were delighted to be asked to get involved in the process of identifying the core values that embed all that Solo does. It was a great opportunity for us, for staff and for service users to reflect on what values underpin what we do. The methods used to achieve this were creative and accessible and the outcome is values that accurately describe what is at the core of all we do within Solo. These are something we can all take ownership of, feel proud of and share with current and future service users, partners and commissioners. A very positive experience at a time when positive experiences are rather thin on the ground!

Finally, before I hand over to Carolyn who will talk us through many more positive achievements from the past year, I'd like to, once again, convey the committee's thanks to the Solo staff team who all do such an amazing job allowing us to feel very proud to be part of the organisation. I, personally, would also like to thank Carolyn and her management team for all their hard work and expertise and for building on Solo's excellent reputation as a landlord and service provider. This has resulted in new opportunities and new services for Solo at a time when opportunities are very thin on the ground.

I would also like to thank my fellow committee members for their passion and commitment and for their contributions throughout the past 12 months and for the versatile way in which they have embraced the virtual world! It is a real privilege for me to be part of this group. We hope to be welcoming new committee members in the next 12 months too.