



Ribbon Court and Community Cohesion

Employing local people

As soon as the builders handed over the scheme to Ashram we were determined to engage the local community. Carpet City across the road from Ribbon Court provided us with carpets, beds, bedroom furniture and white goods for the five Winter Pressures/Intermediate Care flats. Carpet City staff also put up the flat-pack IKEA furniture for us free of charge. A colleague of theirs has also provided the vertical blinds. As a result the Ribbon Court team are going out to lunch with Carpet City staff to say a big thank you.

The management team at Ribbon Court very much want to provide employment for the local community.

We have been inundated with local people wanting to work at Ribbon Court as care assistants, cleaners, cooks and kitchen assistants, window cleaners and receptionists.

One of the Carpet City staff, who is an unemployed professional, would like to be a handy person at the scheme.

Greenscape will be providing cleaning, gardening and window cleaning services and they are keen to respond to our request that local people are employed to provide these services.

Proline Recruitment Agency have conducted a day of interviews for the Coventry applicants for the Ribbon Court care assistant posts. They have reported that the standard of applicants has been very high and that there are, unfortunately, many qualified care assistants out of work.

Apprenticeship opportunities

The West Midlands Apprenticeships manager for the LSC and is keen to work with us to provide apprenticeships in Health and Social Care and Catering. There is also potential for Youth Work and Housing Apprenticeships. To deliver this programme we will work in partnership with a local training provider which will give us further links in to the business community.

Community based faculties

The Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies are keen to provide us with a group of students who will conduct a research project to support us to produce a top quality international menu, as well as maximise the community use of Restaurant 689. We will be visiting the Coventry YMCA in the New Year to gain further knowledge on to how to run a successful community restaurant as part of an accommodation based scheme. As well as a relaxing venue to have a pleasant meal, the Restaurant 689 will also be used for entertainment, receptions, and training events.

The hairdressing salon will be expanded to become a holistic health centre and promoted as part of the Health Inequalities initiative, providing low level health checks' and a variety of holistic therapies.

One half of the Phoenix room can be let out for community use for small training events or meetings. There is a larger section of the Phoenix room which could occasionally be let out but we want to prioritise this for the use of the tenants as a quiet lounge.

Financial Inclusion

We are already providing welfare benefits advice to prospective tenants in order to maximise their income. Many who are eligible have never applied for attendance allowance or pension credit.

This advice service could be expanded to the community, and also to the Coventry Ashram general needs tenants, thus increasing the uptake of benefits for marginalised or minority groups.

Socialbreakfast and Young People

We are aiming to encourage inter generational involvement at Ribbon Court and, as a first initiative, we will be working with the Research and Development team to make Ribbon Court a **Socialbreakfast** hub for the community. Local young people up to age 30 will be able to access the Social Breakfast website (www.socialbreakfast.org) at a dedicated computer kiosk in the foyer of Ribbon Court.

Two final anecdotes:

- One of the local neighbours already informally keeps an eye on the scheme for us to improve security.
- Kim Gill has been complimented by a son and daughter of a tenant who is moving in this week, saying: "there should be many more places like this, with such quality of staff"

Tony Dann
Senior Extra Care Manager
18th December 2009

For more information about Ribbon Court you can contact Tony on 07920 799543. Ribbon Court is an extra care scheme in Coventry providing accommodation and live-in support for people over 55. It also has a restaurant open to all the community, Restaurant 689, and in addition will accommodate a wide range of community based activities.