

housing21



Kent and Medway 
NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

News Release

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Issued by: Porchlight

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Long-term support in Margate

George Culmer Court in Margate officially opened to residents on Monday 17 November.

The project is the first of its kind in Kent, providing a range of support for up to 7 residents aged 18 or over.

The building contains 7 purpose built, modern, fully furnished flats with staff on hand 7 days a week.

The project, part of one of several Horizons projects, is a partnership between homeless charity Porchlight, the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust and Housing 21, a national provider of supported housing.

The building is funded by a private funding initiative which is part of the Better Homes Active Lives Housing PFI Project offering a total of 340 units of accommodation to vulnerable adults across Kent. George Culmer Court was delivered in partnership between Kent County Council, Thanet District Council and Housing 21 and will offer support to residents through 3 Porchlight Support and Resettlement Workers, NHS Staff and the Housing 21 team.

Residents will hold assured tenancies and the main aim of the intensive support giving by the staff will be to promote recovery, social inclusion and encourage residents to engage with the local community by getting involved with meetings, projects and groups.

The Porchlight staff have been funded by Kent Supporting People and will offer a diverse range of support to the residents helping them to develop support plans and access a range of specialist agencies.

For further information on Porchlight and our other support services for vulnerable and homeless people across Kent please visit www.porchlight.org.uk

Further information on Housing 21 can be found at <http://www.housing21.co.uk/> and the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust at <http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/>

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Notes to Editor:

1. ***Porchlight*** is one of the foremost charities in Kent working to support single, vulnerable homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. It was established in 1974 as Canterbury Cyrenians. In 2007-8 Porchlight helped over 1,400 vulnerable people.
2. The Porchlight Support and Resettlement workers have been funded by Kent Supporting people: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/SocialCare/adults-and-older-people/supporting-people/>
3. ***Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust*** is the organisation responsible for providing mental health, learning disability, substance misuse and a range of other specialist services to the people of Kent and Medway. The Trust was formed on 1 April 2006 following the merger of West Kent NHS and Social Care Trust and East Kent NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust. Further information is available from the Trust's Communications Department on 01732 523384.

4. **Housing 21** is a leading provider of housing, care and support services. It currently manages over 16,000 sheltered and extra care apartments and bungalows and is a driving force in the development of dementia services. Under the terms of the PFI contract in Kent, Housing 21 will deliver seven extra care schemes for older people, providing 275 new apartments for rent. In addition a total of 58 supported living apartments for adults aged 16 years and over are being provided for people with mental health problems and learning disabilities.

5. Porchlight has accommodation based projects in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. The outreach team works with street homeless people as well as supporting former homeless people in their own homes, to prevent them returning to street life. Other services support people in their own homes who are at risk of becoming homeless.

6. Porchlight provides accommodation for people suffering from enduring mental ill-health in Dover. 'Prospects' opened in 2005 and was named by one of the residents. The project accommodates single people aged 18 to 65 with enduring mental health issues. The aim of the project is to assist in promoting independence for eventual move on into accommodation which has tenancy support in place. The length of stay for residents can be for six months and up to two years. Whilst at Prospects residents receive key working sessions with a fully trained mental health worker. They also receive intensive community support from the local mental health team.

7. *Porchlight projects include:*

Kent Outreach: Our street outreach team work across Kent including working within prisons to help offenders who will be released from prison homeless.

Young Persons Services: This includes a direct access hostel, longer stay hostel and shared house, providing support for number years, until each individual is ready to live independently. We also have a young persons' mental health service that enables young

homeless people with mental health problems to better access the health services they need.

General Accommodation: We have hostels in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. They range in the levels of support provided from high support needs with staff available 24hrs a day, to medium support with staff available on a 9-5pm basis.

Floating Support: This is a preventative service that provides support to vulnerable people in their own home who are at risk of becoming homeless. Many of these clients have been through the hostel system and are almost ready to live independently but just need a little support every now and again.

Training and Service User Involvement: We have a team that works with people accessing any of our services and helps them develop their skills and education. We provide tailored training and encourage people to get involved in the running and improvement of their project, or volunteer on a more formal level in the organisation. Porchlight is committed to involving our service users throughout all the activities of the charity. They are actively encouraged to become involved in education, employment, volunteering and service user involvement opportunities.