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# tabard forensic service



**An executive summary of an independent  
evaluation carried out by HACT**

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**“The service provides intense support in a less restrictive environment than that offered by more traditional forms of care.”**  
**Forensic social worker**

The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health argues for easier access to supported housing for people with mental health problems, including ‘step-down’ from secure care. This evaluation reviews a Look Ahead service delivered in partnership with East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT), London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) and Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (THCCG) and helps to establish the case for support for this type of joined up working.

Look Ahead commissioned the Housing Associations’ Charitable Trust (HACT) to conduct an independent evaluation of the Tabard Forensic Service, which was completed in Autumn 2017.

## About the service

Tabard Forensic Service provides a vital step in the wider forensic mental health pathway, supporting residents to move on from a secure mental health setting, whilst managing risks. Opened in April 2014, the service houses 19 male residents aged 18-74 who are seriously affected by mental health needs and have a significant offending history.

Co-designing with ELFT, Look Ahead refurbished their building to fulfil the service requirements, creating self-contained flats alongside communal areas to encourage engagement in positive practical and therapeutic activities. As part of the service’s recovery-focused care and support package, it provides medication management support and alcohol/drug testing from a highly-trained staff team, who receive clinical supervision from ELFT.

Tabard Forensic Service provides an internal pathway from a higher support area to a lower support area. This allows residents to physically and psychologically progress in their recovery, before moving on to independent accommodation.

## What does it achieve?

For commissioners, the service reduces out-of-area placements and length of stay in secure mental health inpatient services, improving outcomes and resulting in significant cost savings.

### Outcomes from initial 19 residents

- **37% of residents had become fully self-administering medication (16% with supervision support)**
- **63% were engaged in structured community activity**
- **31% had moved on to their own independent tenancy in the community**
- **37% had started a course and 10% are in paid or voluntary work**

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## Value for money

Tabard Forensic Service provides excellent value for money for people stepping down from secure mental health inpatient services.

Per unit, per week it is:

- **£2,972 cheaper than the average cost of a medium-secure mental health inpatient service**
- **£2,412 cheaper than the average cost of a low-secure mental health inpatient service**
- **£377 cheaper than the average cost of a local authority residential care service<sup>1</sup>**

For health and social care commissioners in Tower Hamlets, actual savings have been even greater. Tabard Forensic Service has contributed to reducing the use of Registered Care and hospital admissions and saved:

- **£3,777 per week per service user in residential care placement costs - out of Borough (ten service users)**
- **£2,639 per service user per week in residential care costs - in Borough (seven service users)**

Details of the first service-user cohort (19 people)\*:

Referral source	No	Benefit	Weekly cost saving	Total savings up to 31.3.16
Out of borough residential home	10	Return to local community	£3,777	£441,909
In borough residential	7	Increased independence	£2,639 (Forensic residential care)	£308,763
Other supported accommodation	2	Forensic needs better met	Cost neutral	

\* Actual local cost savings provided by commissioners.

## How does it work?

### Support

The highly-trained, well supported team combine Look Ahead’s housing and support expertise with ELFT’s clinical expertise. They successfully use therapeutic techniques, alongside practical assistance to improve physical health and wellbeing within a recovery-focussed model.

### Risk Management

The service’s approach to risk management focuses on early identification and comprises a number of key elements, namely co-production, partnership working and positive risk-taking. It is underpinned by Look Ahead’s innovative See Think Act approach to relational security.

The evaluation highlighted the close collaboration between the service and statutory partners in ensuring clear, consistent boundaries backed up by swift joined-up responses.

### Partnership

Strategically, Tabard Forensic Service plays a vital role within both NHS and community pathways. Commissioners from LBTH and THCCG co-commissioned the service following a shared analysis of local need, putting Tower Hamlets at the forefront of innovation to meet NHS England objectives. Operationally, Look Ahead staff integrate seamlessly with care teams around the resident.

### Quality

Quality is assured through a robust Quality Assurance framework that is mapped against the CQC five key lines of enquiry: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

Please see the detailed report for further information.

<sup>1</sup> These figures are based on the reference costs of services per user within the most recent publication of the Personal Social Services Research Unit’s Unit Costs of Health and Social Care 2016 (PSSRU 2016)

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# Conclusions

Drawing together the detailed information covered by HACT's evaluation, they identified the following conclusions and key learning points for commissioners and providers of forensic mental health services.

- **Multi-agency partnership working is critical to the successful design and implementation of local forensic mental health pathways. As recently recognised by NHS England, these partnerships need to be community-facing and have supported housing providers at the centre to ensure the local health and social care economy can meet local need and deliver efficiencies.**
- **Successful integration of Supported Housing in the forensic mental health pathway requires a sophisticated approach to risk management and quality. Through its See Think Act guide to relational security, and mirroring the CQC five key areas of enquiry within their quality assessment framework, Tabard Forensic Service has assured local clinical and criminal justice partners that they satisfactorily address these key areas of delivery.**
- **Integration is more than just a concept. It requires detailed shared systems and processes governing information sharing, shared communication pathways, risk management and service user engagement between housing, clinical services and key stakeholders such as the police. Integration is key to delivering a safe co-ordinated community pathway for forensic mental health services.**
- **Recovery-focussed services that treat people in a personalised way with co-production at the centre of their treatment and support is key to building trust and delivering successful outcomes.**
- **Having options for internal step-down within specialist accommodation-based support services in the community is useful in assisting recovery and successful move-on as it recognises progress and empowers residents to gradually exercise levels of choice and responsibility within a safe and therapeutic environment.**
- **Significantly, analysis of cost data demonstrates that one of the key successes of Tabard Forensic Service is its cost effectiveness. This was a key driver to its creation.**

The cost per bed at the service is lower than Local Authority or private sector residential care, which would be the alternative for many residents. Savings are even more substantial when compared to secure in-patient services, which historically has been the main option for people where suitable step-down alternatives are not available. This is important as it proves that, as well as being better for patient or resident experience and outcomes, the introduction of Tabard Forensic Service into the pathway is cost effective.

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Look Ahead is a specialist housing association and provider of tailor-made care, support and accommodation services across London and the South East.

[www.lookahead.org.uk](http://www.lookahead.org.uk)

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