

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Congregation of the Brothers of Charity was founded in Ghent, Belgium in 1807. In the first sixty years of its existence the Congregation expanded within Belgium providing a variety of services. These included a range of educational services for deprived children, for children with hearing impairment, for children with speech impediments and for children with learning or physical disability. From an early stage the Congregation also provided services for people with psychiatric illnesses, for the elderly and for people with terminal illness. The first contact between the Congregation and the British Isles began when two candidates from Scotland joined the Brothers of Charity in 1880. Two years later in 1882 the Brothers started a community to provide accommodation for apprentices. The foundation failed due to lack of resources.

In 1887 the Brothers again established a community in Britain with the opening of 'a home for orphans' at Rochdale. This was followed in 1903 by the opening of a similar home at St Edward's, Broadgreen, Liverpool, which in more recent years has become the administrative base for the Brothers of Charity Services, Merseyside. In 1931 the Brothers of Charity expanded their services in Great Britain when they opened the service at Lisieux Hall, Whittle-le-Woods near Chorley in Lancashire. The most recently established location of Brothers of Charity is in the Borders Region of Scotland with its administrative offices in Galashiels.

The Brothers of Charity in Britain are part of an international movement, with headquarters in Rome and with service locations in more than twenty countries throughout the world. The Charity in Britain concentrates almost exclusively on the provision of services to people with learning disabilities, and offers the services at three locations in Merseyside, in Central Lancashire and in the Borders region of Scotland. Throughout the rest of the world other works include the care of young people, the care of people with learning disabilities, education, relief of poverty and apostolic works.

The objective of the Charity in Britain is to make each location as autonomous as possible within the framework of overall accountability, and therefore each service has its own separate administrative structures responsible directly to the Trustees.

The Brothers of Charity aspire to the creation not merely of a service but a close-knit community. This means responding to needs and potentials of all including those who use our services, co-workers, families, Brothers and other interested persons in the neighbourhood and in society. The role of the service is a supporting one, which facilitate families and other members of the caring community in sharing their lives at work, recreation, development and prayer with persons with learning disability. In fulfilling this role the Brothers of Charity Services fully recognise that people with a learning disability and their families need special assistance to achieve an appropriate level of confidence and competence in addressing and presenting needs and potential.

The Brothers of Charity Services in each of the three locations in Britain enter into contracts for the provision of services with the respective statutory agencies such as Primary Care Trusts and Local Authorities through Social Services Departments.

In addition to those living in supported tenancies, a Supporting People Grant is also used. Further funding from the Department of Works and Pensions may also be appropriate in certain situations.

As mentioned previously, one of the main objectives is to enable each individual to fulfil his or her potential and the range of activities and employment available to service users continues to be increased. Through each individual's Essential Lifestyle Plan (ELP) we endeavour to support each person in a way that facilitates a lifestyle of their choice through accessing a diverse range of opportunities and facilities in non segregated settings.