



Belong Limited – Trading Statement and Retirement of Chief Executive

21 June 2021

Belong is today issuing its consolidated trading update for the year to 31 March 2021

Commenting on the results, Chris Hughes, Chief Finance Officer, said:

“In what has been a very difficult year I am pleased to report, from a financial perspective, that the performance has been good. The organisation has generated £1.6m of cash from current operations despite income being lost due to some services being closed over the year. We have ended the year with an overall occupancy within our villages in excess of 90% which compares favourably to the sector. This includes established village occupancy of 93.5% and new village occupancy of 81.9%, as at the end of March 2021.

Our commitment to quality services continues to be recognised through consistently high public review scores. We are also pleased to see our Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme service attain a CQC overall rating of ‘Good’, following a previous rating of ‘Requires Improvement’. This means that all of our regulated services are rated overall by CQC as ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’. We also retained our Investors in People ‘Gold’ accreditation during the past year.

Belong Chester which is a wholly owned freehold site is planned to open in the financial year 2021/22; construction work is progressing well. We expect Belong Birkdale, which is a predominantly leased site, to open in the financial year 2022/23. Contractual documents with our funder and contractor are in the process of being finalised for work to restart on site. Pre-tender work is on-going at Belong Wirral, which is to be a virtual freehold with a peppercorn ground rent on completion. Start on site is expected in the financial year 2022/23.

We also look forward to being in a position to begin welcoming community customers, other than residents, who use village facilities back into all of our villages later in this financial year, once Government guidance allows lifting of restrictions.”

Key Points

Performance

- Belong continues to expand its operations in line with its strategic business plan.
- Belong operates five established villages and two new villages; Didsbury which opened in 2017 and Newcastle-under-Lyme which opened in 2018.
- In addition, Belong is developing three further villages in Chester, Birkdale and Wirral.
- All our regulated services are now rated ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’.
- One of our regulated care villages was inspected in the second half of this year. The Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme services was rated overall as ‘Good’.

Awards

- Belong retained its Investors in People ‘Gold’ accreditation during the year.
- Individual villages and team members were recognised in several regional/national awards.

Retirement of the Chief Executive

Belong is today also announcing that Tracey Stakes, the Chief Executive of Belong Limited, has announced her intention to retire from the not-for-profit care village operator later this year.

Belong is in the process of recruiting her successor and Tracey will remain in post until at least October 2021 to ensure a smooth handover.

Chair of the Belong Board, Nicola Brooks, said: "Tracey has played a key role as a creator of the Belong vision and will be much missed across the organisation. She leaves the organisation in a solid financial position, in spite of the challenges of Covid-19 and with an experienced executive and management team to take the organisation forward."

Belong Limited is also today issuing its consolidated trading update for the year to 31 March 2021. These figures are unaudited.

Financials

Average Occupancy	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Actual	Actual	Actual
Belong Established Villages	97.6%	97.8%	92.1%
Belong New ¹ Villages	41.9%	66.4%	69.4%

Household Fees	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Actual	Actual	Actual
Belong Established Villages	£1,019	£1,083	£1,145
Belong New ¹ Villages	£1,030	£1,125	£1,164

Turnover	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Actual	Actual	Actual
Belong Established Villages	£22.6m	£23.6m	£23.3m
Belong New ¹ Villages	£4.1m	£6.5m	£7.1m
Total	£26.7m	£30.1m	£30.4m

EBITDAR²	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Actual	Actual	Actual
Belong Established Villages	£6.7m	£7.1m	£6.3m
Belong New ¹ Villages	£0.1m	£1.3m	£1.3m
Central Overhead	(£2.7m)	(£2.7m)	(£2.8m)
Total	£4.1m	£5.7m	£4.8m

¹ New villages are those which are in the process of increasing household occupancy to a mature operating level.

² Excludes Local Government Pension Scheme deficit payments of £0.7m.