



Belong Limited – Trading Statement and Appointment of Chief Executive

30 November 2021

Belong is today issuing its consolidated trading update for the six months to 30 September 2021. These figures are unaudited.

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

“In what continues to be a challenging environment, I am pleased to report a good performance over the first six months of the financial year. The organisation has generated £1.5m of cash from current operations, turnover and EBITDAR are significantly ahead of budget year to date and our overall occupancy is now above 95% with all households at both Belong Morris Feinmann and Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme now fully operational, despite some services continuing to be closed over the year.

Our commitment to quality services continues to be recognised through consistently high public review scores and the recognition through several awards received during the year.

Belong Chester which is a wholly owned freehold site is planned to open April 2022; construction work is progressing well. We expect Belong Birkdale, which is a predominantly leased site, to open in the last quarter of 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. Tenders are due to be received for the Belong Wirral development in December 2021, which is to be a virtual freehold with a peppercorn ground rent on completion. Start on site is expected early 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 in greater numbers next year.”

Key Points

Performance

- Belong continues to expand its operations in line with its strategic business plan.
- Belong now operates seven established villages.
- In addition, Belong is developing three further villages in Chester, Birkdale and Wirral.
- All our regulated services are rated ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’.

Awards

- Belong won Best Care Provision at the 2021 HealthInvestor Seniors Housing Awards.
- Belong won the Social Care Covid Hero Award at the in the Great North West Care Awards.
- Belong won a gold medal in the Workplace Awards (recognition from staff that Belong is one of the happiest places to work).
- The Practice Development Facilitator Team won the Workforce Development Award at the North West finals of The Great British Care Awards 2021.

- Front of House team won the Housing with Care Award at the Great North West Care Awards (Belong Crewe).
- Belong at Home ranked in the top 20 home care groups in the UK by Homecare.co.uk

Appointment of the Chief Executive

Belong has appointed Martin Rix as its new Chief Executive, following the announcement of Tracey Stakes' intention to retire early in 2022.

Martin joins from Norfolk-based Norse Care, where he is Chief Operating Officer, with responsibility for services in 36 care homes and housing with care schemes. He brings experience of leading specialist dementia and nursing settings and managing operations supporting around 1,600 residents and tenants and a similar number of employees.

He also brings extensive experience of development projects and property consultancy, as a Chartered Surveyor and Civil Engineering graduate.

Chair of the Board of Belong Limited, Nicola Brooks, said: "After concluding a rigorous recruitment process, we're delighted to announce Martin's appointment as Chief Executive and look forward to welcoming him to our executive team.

"We have every confidence that, in Martin, we have found someone with the leadership skills and integrity to take the organisation forward into a new era of growth. He shares our values, our passion for high quality care and our ambition to innovate, making him ideally placed to lead Belong as we look to establish new services and sustain our pioneering contribution to the sector."

With Belong's first intergenerational care village approaching completion in Chester, Belong Birkdale under construction and a third care village due to start on site as part of the Wirral Waters regeneration project, 2022 is set to be a busy year for the not-for-profit organisation.

Martin will take up the Chief Executive post in April 2022, with Belong's Chief Operating Officer, Stacey McCann, and its Chief Finance Officer, Chris Hughes, jointly providing interim cover for the Chief Executive post from 1 January 2022.

Financials (April to September)

Average Occupancy	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22
	Actual	Actual	Budget
Belong Established Villages	91.3%	94.4%	94.7%
Belong New ¹ Villages	64.6%	85.8% ¹	86.8%

Household Fees	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22
	Actual	Actual	Budget
Belong Established Villages	£1,137	£1,184	£1,175
Belong New ² Villages	£1,172	£1,213	£1,153

Turnover	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22
	Actual	Actual	Budget
Belong Established Villages	£11.8m	£12.5m	£11.9m
Belong New ¹ Villages	£3.4m	£4.5m	£4.0m
Total	£15.2m	£17.0m	£15.9m

EBITDAR³	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22
	Actual	Actual	Budget
Belong Established Villages	£3.1m	£3.6m	£2.9m
Belong New ¹ Villages	£0.4m	£1.2m	£1.0m
Central Overhead	(£1.3m)	(£1.6m)	(£1.7m)
Total	£2.2m	£3.2m	£2.2m

¹ Current occupancy 94.4%.

² New villages are those which are in the process of increasing household occupancy to a mature operating level.

³ Excludes Local Government Pension Scheme deficit payments of £0.3m.