

Style Acre

Supporting people with learning disabilities



Review 2018/19



Style Acre supports adults with learning disabilities and autism in Oxfordshire, providing supported living, day hubs and work opportunities



About Style Acre

Style Acre has been supporting people with learning disabilities and autism in Oxfordshire since 1997, after parents of a group of young people raised funds to purchase and run the residential home where their children were living. In 2004 the home was sold and houses bought for the residents. Supported living teams were established to enable people to live in the houses with their friends and peers. We developed our first day hub, Turnstyle, where people we supported could meet up and enjoy activities. In 2004, we were supporting 20 people – now we support over 250!

Supported Living

Style Acre currently enables 100 people to live successfully in 25 homes across Oxfordshire. The people we support range from those with complex needs, needing 24 hour care, to others who need a few hours per week.

Supported living is designed around the needs and wishes of the individual. Staff work hard to offer people the best possible housing and support to meet their needs. Our Quality Manager ensures that people are given every opportunity to understand, make choices and express their opinions about what happens in their lives. We deliver speech and language therapy and IT support to help people with communication difficulties, providing personalised communication support.

Our supported living service was rated 'outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission at the beginning of 2018. Less than 2% of adult social care inspections achieve outstanding; we are proud of our staff who work hard to create a positive and dynamic environment.



“It was clear the culture within the service valued the uniqueness of all individuals. There were many examples of people’s lives being transformed through accessing activities. There was an extremely caring culture that ensured people’s privacy was protected and respected. Everyone spoke of the openness of the service and without exception, people felt valued and listened to.” CQC

With the confidence he has gained from his experiences with Style Acre, John has recently started a new voluntary role with another local charity shop.

John

John has a mild learning disability and lives independently. He has been attending our Banbury hub, SABRe, for three years. He had previously spent most of his time at home. He had felt isolated and didn't want to talk to anyone.

John began by volunteering on the SABRe reception desk and started our tuck shop. His confidence grew and he began to come into SABRe every day.

John now volunteers in our charity bookshop. He is able to work independently in the shop and is integral to it remaining open. John is able to help other people we support with their work experience in the shop, in a 'buddy' system. John's confidence and sense of purpose has grown since volunteering with



SABRe, and it has provided him with a safe opportunity to develop his skills and improve his self-confidence and esteem. John was awarded SABRe's volunteer of the year for 2017.

With the confidence he has gained from his experiences with Style Acre, John has recently started a new voluntary role with another local charity shop, which has further increased his feelings of usefulness and importance. It has also broadened his community network.

Alongside his voluntary work John has also received some advice and support when needed. This has included help with the challenges of daily living, including support with bill payments, lost items and family issues. SABRe has also been a point of contact for John's family and other professionals.

Day Hubs

Style Acre supports over 200 people at hubs in Wallingford, Didcot, Wantage and Banbury.

We offer a broad range of leisure and developmental activities designed to help people realise their potential and build their social networks. We organise day trips and participate in community activities. We teach skills and help people develop a level of independence that will enhance their lives.

Style Acre's hubs in Didcot and Banbury support people with mild to moderate learning disabilities or autism, who often have little or no individual budget.



Charlotte

Charlotte has been attending our Didcot hub (T2) for seven years. She had chosen not to join our work programme, until an opportunity came up with the new garden maintenance team in March 2018, when Style Acre was looking for people to join a new social enterprise. Charlotte chose to join the project in order to increase her confidence and learn new skills. The social enterprise offers people a chance to learn new horticultural skills by doing maintenance gardening at some of the supported living houses of a charity with which we have close links. Training was provided at our Market Garden, along with on the job

“I love T2 and going out to do a job I love – getting fresh air and exercise and being paid for it!”

guidance. This introduced Charlotte to the basics of weeding, pruning, mowing and safety in the garden.

After a successful three-month training period, Charlotte started to receive pay for the work she does in the gardens. “I love T2 and going out to do a job I love – getting fresh air and exercise and being paid for it!” Her commitment to the project has impressed Sarah, the Garden Coordinator. “Charlotte hasn’t missed a single session, always comes to work with a positive attitude and is an incredibly supportive team member. Her plant knowledge is increasing all the time and she is always keen to learn, we’re lucky to have her in the team.”

Charlotte is particularly interested in lawn mowing and is able to use her new skills elsewhere. “I’ve started doing my own garden at home and mowing the lawn because I’ve got confidence from gardening with Style Acre.” Over the next few months, Charlotte wants to learn how to use the strimmer safely. She’s also made it clear she doesn’t plan to be gardening in the snow!

Wantage Market Garden

Our hub in Wantage is a market garden, which we run with Sustainable Wantage. Our Garden Coordinator ensures those with more complex needs have an opportunity to enjoy quiet, therapeutic sessions in a safe place. For others, it provides horticultural skills and this has led to the establishment of our latest garden maintenance social enterprise.



IT Assisted Technology Support

We provide the latest technology whenever possible to enhance the lives and everyday activities of our supported people.

The most recent introduction is voice activated home assistance devices such as the Amazon Echo and Google Home and virtual reality to support both education and sensory experiences.

A recent example of this is the use of multiple applications to enable

someone with very limited mobility to have more control in her life. With these technologies she can now control the TV, view content from the iPad on the TV, discover the weather forecast, ask the time and listen to her favourite radio stations.

Our comprehensive assessment tool is used to recommend and select appropriate technology that will give maximum benefit and ensure that the person supported will be able to achieve as much independence as they are able to.



During the year, we established 51 work placements, of which four are in paid employment.

Matt

Matt began working at You HR for one session weekly, processing numerical data, assisting with uploads and helping develop newsletters and mailshots. His IT skills and efficiency didn't go unnoticed and after three months, You HR offered Matt paid work and an increase in hours.

Matt feels he is a confident member of the team and the staff at You HR feel that they have got to know Matt well and are able to joke with him. They say: "Matt works super-fast and really well, the whole team think he is lovely and that he has integrated well." Matt said "It is really nice to have my skills appreciated". When asked about Matt's confidence You HR said there was a "Noticeable difference. I can see that Matt is more confident in our



"It is really nice to have my skills appreciated."

team setting. He was a real giggle at our team dinner out and we were so happy that he wanted to attend".

Work Programme

We employ a Work Manager and a Job Coach who help people access work placements and paid employment. We have developed four social enterprises – a charity shop, tearoom, bookshop and our new garden maintenance service – which provide work opportunities where people develop work-based skills in a safe supportive environment, at a level that suits them.

The Work Programme can demonstrate many success stories. People who have never worked before go on to show significant increases in confidence, independence, communication, independent travel training and money handling. During the year, we established 51 work placements, of which four are in paid employment.

We have excellent links with an ever-growing number of local companies who provide a variety of placements.

Speech and Language Therapy

Style Acre's Specialist Speech and Language Therapists provide a range of pictorial support that can hugely enhance the communication skills of many people we support. Examples include using visual timetables to help people understand what is happening in their day and visual sequence charts to help individuals become more independent at work or out in the community.

We encourage staff to use a Total Communication approach, which means they use the communication method most meaningful to the people they support, whether it be through signing, using pictures, social stories or visual resources etc. We also promote active support ensuring staff understand how to do things with people, rather than for them. This can be achieved through ways of communication, such as hand-over-hand support in cooking or breaking down tasks so that the person can be involved in the activity.

Fundraising and our community

We raise funds to deliver new services, including day hubs and social enterprises and were this year able to move our Didcot day hub to a refurbished location. We continue to be supported by the Big Lottery which subsidises our Banbury hub, enabling people without a budget to use the service. We are grateful to the Trusts that fund key positions which deliver our Work and Garden programme. Much of our fundraising is used to supplement our day services, but we also raise funds so that we can make purchases and improvement for our supported living homes, buy specialist communication aids, accessible vehicles and equipment.

We make applications to grant making trusts to support our work and we reach out to the community, where we have forged positive relationships with organisations, companies and individuals.

We put on events which enable participants to have lots of fun, like our annual Wallingford Santa Dash and Didcot Colour Run. People we support get involved too; during the year a number of participants completed a 100k challenge. Events help raise our profile and develop good relations with our local community. People we support, our 350+ staff and our volunteers are our greatest ambassadors. Many people volunteer at our social enterprises, day hubs and as drivers to help people we support get to their work placements.

We are grateful to those who remember Style Acre in their will, and especially to Fumiyo Boulton, mum to someone we support and tea room volunteer. Her wish to provide a lasting legacy that would benefit our support workers enabled us to create a fully equipped training room, where we deliver comprehensive training for our staff.



A message from our Ambassador, Daniel Orpin

I have been coming to Style Acre for about eight years now and I love it – all the staff are so friendly! I have worked at the Style Acre Tea Room and a company called blueU, which sells kitchen equipment. Working has helped me meet new people and get confident. When I first came to Style Acre, I was a bit nervous, now I love talking to people.

As Ambassador, I represent the charity all around Oxfordshire at events. I work with the fundraisers, and give talks with them. I get to chat to lots of supporters. I took part in the 100k challenge which included kayaking. I loved it so much, that I am starting it as a hobby with one of the support workers in our spare time!

■ **From our Chief Executive, Chris Ingram and our Trustee Chair, Tony Vernon**

2017/18 has been a year where Style Acre and the people who make it such a great charity have ensured that our values aren't just words scribbled on a piece of paper but are brought to life on a daily basis.

We were delighted and proud of our 'outstanding' CQC report and outcome but it was the stories and experiences that people shared which were really humbling and magical. Style Acre only exists to make a positive difference to people with learning disabilities and their community and this report certainly demonstrates we have achieved this.

There have been some amazing community events which are becoming more inclusive every year, some fantastic examples of great care and support, real collaboration that makes a positive difference and some great results in getting people with a learning disability into work and getting paid.

What we both love about Style Acre though is talking to people, hearing their honest reflection and listening to their ambition for what people could achieve. This is what gives us confidence that 2018/19 is going to be another exciting year.

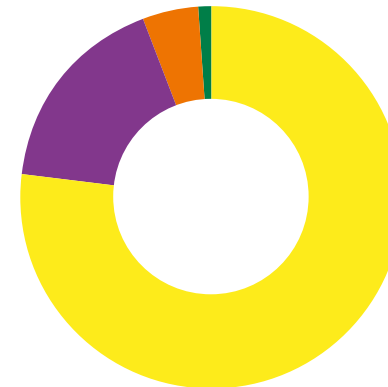


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Financial Performance

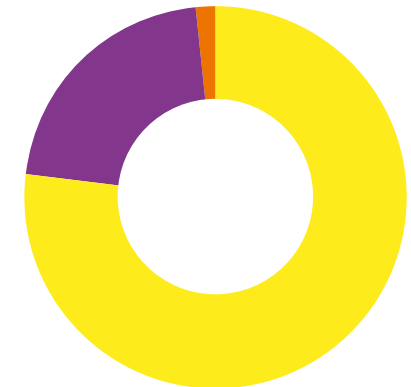
Although we have a small deficit of £30,567, we are pleased that we have been able to maintain our level of service, despite cuts to individual budgets of many we support. Our general fund in our reserves is £1,013,872 and represents two months' operating costs.

Income £7,141,375



- Supported Living £5,495,132
- Day Opportunities £1,249,063
- Voluntary Income £322,018
- Other Income £75,162

Expenditure £7,155,640



- Supported Living £5,515,161
- Day Opportunities £1,540,456
- Fundraising £100,023

Mikey

Mikey has been volunteering at an animal rescue for five years, comforting cats. People with learning disabilities often like the opportunity to help out in the community and make a difference.

His carer has observed that Mikey has learnt to read the body language of cats, so that sometimes he will talk to them, rather than handle. He has gained a sense of purpose, as his contribution to the rescue is greatly valued – he was nominated ‘Volunteer of the Year’ this year.

Mikey, who has Williams Syndrome, attends our day hub in Didcot three times per week. Mikey takes part in the cooking group and life skills workshops; he is also an active member of the performing arts group and the choir. Mikey is a member of the Men’s Group, which goes on weekly outings to places of interest, based on the suggestions of the group. This year, visits have included an F1 factory, Countryfile Live, This Morning Live, Fort Nelson near Portsmouth, Warwick Castle, dry slope skiing, laser clay shooting, Fairford Air Tattoo, Weston-super-Mare and Cotswold Water Park.



Mikey has learnt to read the body language of cats.

Williams Syndrome is a genetic condition, caused by deletion of genes on Chromosome 7, affecting one in 10,000 people. Williams Syndrome causes developmental delays and varying learning disabilities. However, people with Williams Syndrome often have striking verbal abilities, highly social personalities and an affinity for music.

Trustees

Ian Boulton, Philippa Chalmers, Alison Elliott, Sarah Nye, Rob Thornton, Keith Tibbs, Paul Townsend, Tony Vernon (Chair)

Patrons

Sinead Cusack, John Craven, Christine Wallace

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