

Magic Life

Sharing Experiences

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Hello from Joe

Just a quick word

2022 has started with a bang as we welcome new residents to the Magic Life fold. At the same time, we also say bon voyage to Annette who is moving into her new flat. As she starts 2022 with excitement of new beginnings. Everyone at Grove Park Road and us all at Magic Life wish her the very best. We are happy and proud of this achievement, it only goes to show that hard work pays off.

The Chapel.

We too are excited with the opening of "The Chapel" in Bishop Stortford. We wish the new team members, Belinda (Deputy Manager), Hannah, Plaxedes, Marbel and Stacey the very best as the project opens its doors to the new residents. James Sherlock will be leading the team and we wish him the very best.

Welcome New Team Member's.

We also welcome Cady, Ahmed, Marie and Anne who also join Magic Life.

Training by Peta

2022 will also bring new training courses. Our in-house Trainer "Peta" will be sending course offers to all Service Managers. So, watch out of those emails.

Challenge

January has rushed by and there is no time to waste. So, without delay I would like to kick off 2022 with a new challenge. February sees the

celebration of St Patrick's day so the first challenge of this year is to bake a cake and decorate it in theme of St Patrick. Please bake your cakes and when they are ready take a photo and save it in the activity folder for Feb. The closing date will be at the end of the month.

Deputy & Training.

We are fully running Deputy and most of you signing into your shifts with your mobiles. Some sites are using tablets. Where this is the case, please remember that these devices must be plugged into the mains. If anyone needs training on how to make the most out of using the app or online account for Deputy please give myself or Alex a shout. We are here to help.

IT Training (The Basics) How to get the most out of Microsoft.

I will be offering basic IT training, from house keeping to words and beyond. If you want to get better on using Microsoft, please let me know. These are one to one courses and will be completed online.



Independence

Annette came to Magic Life in January of 2019 following a spell in hospital. She suffered from mental health and associated issues for many years and struggled with the demands of day to day living. On her discharge from the hospital, Annette joined Magic Life's Grove Park Road home. There she found support and guidance from the women at the female only staffed home.

From the start, it was clear that Annette's dream was to return to independent living. A support plan was created, with this in mind Magic Life staff worked closely with social workers and key people in Annette's life to help achieve her dream. Daily support was offered to re-establish routines that are required to live



Independence

Annette gets her own flat

independently. Boundaries and guidelines were implemented to help with this. We all live by rules that have long been established in our mind but following illness we may need to re-learn these. Staff at Grove Park Road have supported Annette so she is now able to live independently

We are proud of the hard work everyone has done to help Annette realise her dream.



Anniversary

Eamonn Cummings

Today we close the door to January and continue effectively into 2022.

January is always described as a difficult month, especially coming after the festive period and a slow reality dawning on us that the weather is still bleak, cold and uninviting. People seem less happy with life and yet life has this habit of moving on. There is just a variety of reasons for continuing to wallow in the mire but the role we have taken on indicates we are not in the position to do so simply because we are relied upon in order to getting things done. And as we approach the end of January, this is precisely the actions that I have seen from services in terms of our leadership.

We could simply use this month to look at the what have we learnt as it has not been without its challenges and having moments where the question comes up again in terms of 'is it worth it?' The fact that you answer this every day when you get in the car, jump on the bus, queue for the trains, cycle to the office or in some cases walking to the office under cold grey damp skies is a resounding yes. I know some days you go home thinking 'Nope' but then you are back the following day. Always good to reflect.

Towards the end of the month, I started to notice

small difference amongst managers, teams and services. Usually as we all know, the discussions has usually been about what has gone wrong instead of what has gone right. Usually a case of what do we need to fix, who has upset who, and how are we going to manage this? The tone however, is somewhat a little different. I am hearing from managers about their staff and what a wonderful contribution they are making towards the development of their service. I personally witnessed first hand the depth that some staff have gone through in supporting the individuals in the services as well as their families and the staff team themselves.

Who has ever heard of a staff member literally taking orders from the team in terms of what they want to eat and going out and cooking for them as well as the people we support. I saw how this brought what could have been a divided team together. I witnessed an act of love and kindness as a member of staff decided to say thank you to the team at the office by using their unique baking talents to sending beautifully decorated cakes to the office to saying thank you for taking a chance on them. These are just a couple of reference points to the good that is happening amongst the teams. So much so that my colleague Joe has asked

for this to be celebrated. For managers to share what is good within services because we know it goes on.

I also need to make mention of the fact that one of Magic Life' biggest drivers is the need to recruit our own staff. Having both Jade and Alex working as a combination has seen an increase in our teams and equally starting to witness a drop in the use of external staffing and focusing on developing our own.

Another indicator in terms of the positive flow is that just this month alone in working with my colleagues Sonia and Ally is the compliance audits. This was mentioned at the end of last year which saw Hale End pick up the trophy for the best led service over the last quarter. What has been seen in the month of January is the fact that managers have stepped up. To date, the services that have been audited have all made significant inroads into the improvement of their services and I sense that by the time we get to making the announcement in March that the decision will be tight. I admit that like all the managers that has been audited, I get a touch excited anticipating the scores and then the focus being on how do I become outstanding.

I also need to mention the fact that because of the renewed confidences within

Magic Life as an organisation, we cannot fail to spot just how much things have already changed this year in relation to growth. Every time I pick up the phone to my colleague Raf, I ask the question in terms of 'are you sure we are ready for yet more people'? And the answer is usually how do we know unless we really test ourselves and with this determination in flow, we have already started to see the results.

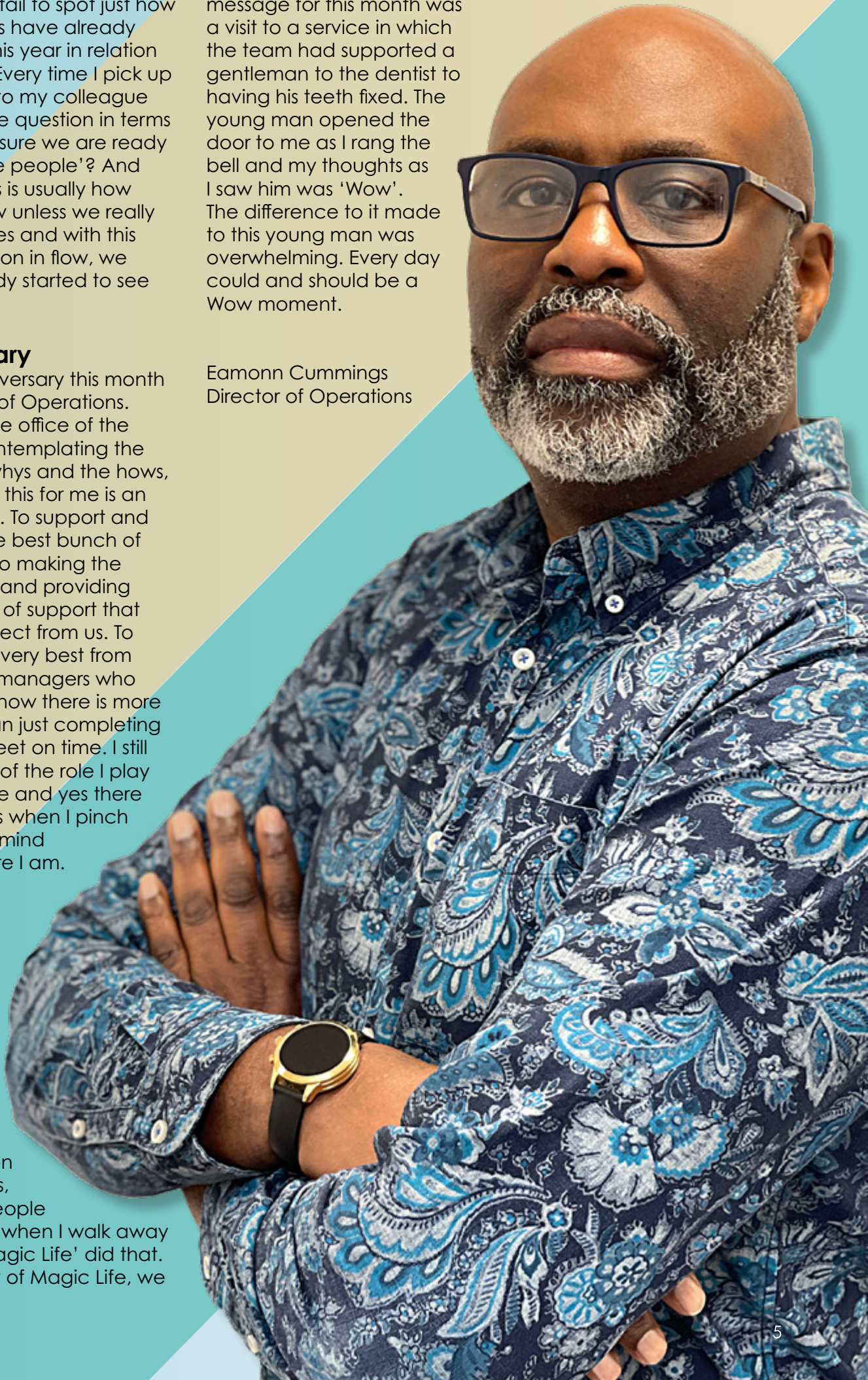
Anniversary

It is my anniversary this month as Director of Operations. As I sat in the office of the director contemplating the what, the whys and the hows, I left feeling this for me is an opportunity. To support and develop the best bunch of managers to making the best teams and providing that quality of support that people expect from us. To getting the very best from a group of managers who invariably know there is more to them than just completing a spreadsheet on time. I still feel in awe of the role I play in Magic Life and yes there are still days when I pinch myself to remind myself where I am. I am also humbled by the experience when I have a

My last thought as I end the message for this month was a visit to a service in which the team had supported a gentleman to the dentist to having his teeth fixed. The young man opened the door to me as I rang the bell and my thoughts as I saw him was 'Wow'. The difference to it made to this young man was overwhelming. Every day could and should be a Wow moment.

Eamonn Cummings
Director of Operations

conversation with families, staff and people we support when I walk away thinking 'Magic Life' did that. And as part of Magic Life, we all did that.



Depression

What are the signs

Recognizing depression symptoms

Family and friends are often the first line of defence in the fight against depression.

That's why it's important to understand the signs and symptoms of depression.

You may notice the problem in a depressed person before they do, and your influence and concern can motivate them to seek help.

Be concerned if the person:

Doesn't seem to care about anything anymore. Has lost interest in work, sex, hobbies, and other pleasurable activities. Has withdrawn from friends, family, and other social activities.

Expresses a bleak or negative outlook on life. Is uncharacteristically sad, irritable, short-tempered, critical, or moody; talks about feeling "helpless" or "hopeless."

Frequently complains of aches and pains such as headaches, stomach problems, and back pain. Or complains of feeling tired and drained all the time.

Sleeps less than usual or oversleeps. Has become indecisive, forgetful, disorganized, and "out of it."

Eats more or less than usual, and has recently gained or lost weight.

Drinks more or abuses drugs, including prescription sleeping pills and painkillers, as a way to self-medicate how they're feeling.

You Can Help

How to talk to someone about depression

Sometimes it is hard to know what to say when speaking to someone about depression. You might fear that if you bring up your worries the person will get angry, feel insulted, or ignore your concerns. You may be unsure what questions to ask or how to be supportive.

If you don't know where to start, the following suggestions may help. **But remember that being a compassionate listener is much more important than giving advice.**

You don't have to try to "fix" your friend or family member; you just have to be a good listener. Often, the simple act of talking face to face can be an enormous help to someone suffering from depression. Encourage the depressed person to talk about their feelings, and be willing to listen without judgment.

Don't expect a single conversation to be the end of it. Depressed people tend to withdraw from others and isolate themselves. You may need to express your concern and willingness to listen over and over again. Be gentle, yet persistent.

Starting the conversation

Finding a way to start a conversation about depression with your loved one is always the hardest part. You could try saying:

- **"I have been feeling concerned about you lately."**
- **"Recently, I have noticed some differences in you and wondered how you are doing."**
- **"I wanted to check in with you because you have seemed pretty down lately."**

Once you're talking, you can ask questions such as:

- **"When did you begin feeling like this?"**
- **"Did something happen that made you start feeling this way?"**
- **"How can I best support you right now?"**
- **"Have you thought about getting help?"**

Remember, being supportive involves offering encouragement and hope. Very often, this is a matter of talking to the person in language that they will understand and can respond to while in a depressed state of mind.

What you CAN say that helps:

- **"You're not alone. I'm here for you during this tough time."**
- **"It may be hard to believe right now, but the way you're feeling will change."**
- **"Even if I'm not able to understand exactly how you feel, I care about you and want to help."**

These tips are just a few examples of how we can help support people with depression.

Information on this article was taken from the following website:

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/helping-someone-with-depression.htm>

Square Pegs

Tailor Made Support Plans

Supporting those difficult to engage, by its definition is one of the biggest challenges, whilst working in social care and it is no different at Devonshire Lodge.

It is important to realize, that someone who has been in, so called "social care system" for the majority of their life may have an entire list of often valid reasons, why do they wish to dismiss support offered. Occasionally, it may be linked to their ASD diagnosis and inability to build relationships with other human beings, however if we wish to be successful in our roles, we need to agree, usually this is not the main reason for ongoing disengagement and lack of interest. One does not have to work in "the field" for a very long time to come across a number of people supported which are disheartened by poor quality of support, lack of person-centred approaches, inconsistent level of service offered by social workers, NHS and other professionals.

If our clients have been exposed to this type of treatment for majority of their existence, it is going to take something special to rebuild this trust and it is not going to happen over short period of time.

Another important factor that needs to be considered is linked to our belief that people in general do not want to be lonely. If they are

rejecting or pushing others away there must be a reason.

At Devonshire Lodge we believe it is our job to find out what is the reason and how to approach clients, so they open up to our offer.

When you rebuilding this trust it does not have to be about big things.

Quality of life and successful support do not have to be about spectacular achievements, employment and all the smart words social workers and commissioners love to throw about at reviews and meetings.

Essence of everyday living is about little things and interactions that make a difference and put smiles on faces of people we support. Hopefully those will lead to further development but throwing those large words around at the beginning of the relationship is often a mistake.

Having this in mind when we were looking to increase the staff team at Devonshire Lodge. We started with recruitment of right people that would be able to engage in a simple conversation and to make a difference. All those candidates who would "throw dry definitions" in their answers which would not impress us. Some of our residents that were difficult to engage, liked music, football, fashion, and we wanted this to be reflected in the process

of recruiting new people to our team. We still expected candidates to be able to give good answers when asked about safeguarding, CQC and abuse but we wanted to see that natural ability to put people at ease and just "be normal".

As time progressed our new starters got to know the residents, including those difficult to engage, we decided to redesign weekly hours of support of some of our clients. At Devonshire Lodge, every individual is supported following principles of person-centred support and appropriate tools are used to achieve this outcome. Having gone through the process of reviewing support packages, it emerged that people do not wish to be supported every day in the same way. Yes, we provide support in people homes as they live at Devonshire Lodge, but it does not have to be dull and repetitive. In fact their expectations were rather opposite. They want to do what every young person does. Sometimes people have to attend an appointment, sometimes chores needs to be completed, but those are just boring elements that have to be done. Do they improve quality life? Not always.

Our next step was to allocate staff at times our residents wished to hang out with them. Not always, was it the

Round Holes

Person Centred Care Plans

most convenient from rota perspective. So we started creating, short shifts spread sporadically across the week that were reflection of residents' interest and their timetable. Thanks to this approach they are able to engage in more personalized activities like; watching football, going to the pub, volunteering at Haringey FC, visiting Spurs stadium, joining trampolining early in the morning on Sundays, and many more.

Shift Building

Introduction of the new Deputy System was a great help with this process. All those short allocations that staff were participating in, were much easier to be coordinated with the use of efficient and clear software. We are all people and it is easy to forget about activities planned in advance. Deputy allows us to create areas and tasks that need to be completed. It does not have to and should not have to be a blocked booking of staff that work at the project for twelve hours. A person centred approach requires specific people with specific skills supporting clients that bond with them.

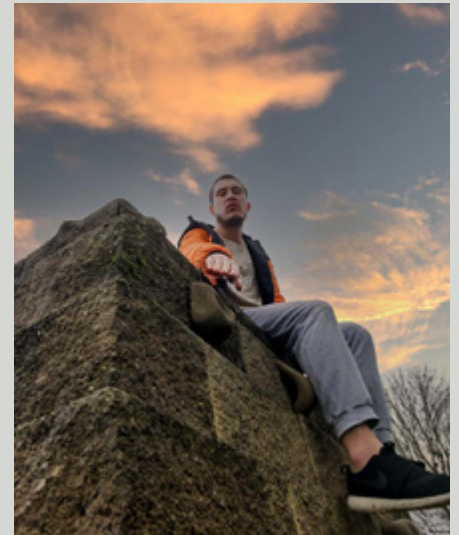
Photos that were taken this month reflect one of our clients' difficulties to engage. He worked well with staff during activities offered on his birthday. We all felt that fantastic progress was made as he simply wanted to hang



out with two of our staff and also to join some activities in the morning.

Thanks to person centred approach and flexibility around rota it was possible to happen. In addition there was a visit from his family and had a small gathering a day after going out. We all thought that this birthday celebration was a reflection of real life arrangement and entire team deserves recognition for supporting our clients in this way.

Devonshire Lodge



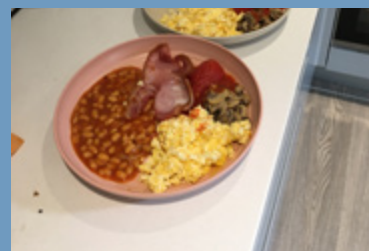
Breakfast Club

Park Lodge



Park Lodge welcome visitors from Park Side to join them at Breakfast Club which is every Sunday. They love their slap up breakfast.

Park Lodge welcome two respite residents who came for the weekend only.



Birthday Celebration

Park Side

January has been a busy month at Park side with a new resident moving in, birthdays celebrations and weekend group activities.

Park Side celebrated PC's and SM's birthdays at the start of the month, on that occasion PC was supported for her birthday shopping and lunch out. Followed by small birthday party among the team and residents.

SM also celebrated his birthday where he had a cake cutting ceremony which was facilitated for him by the team, afterwards he sat in his new chair socialising with another resident, DM in the garden.

New resident Emma moved into room 5 on New Year's Eve she is currently still settling in to her new environment and getting to know the staff team at Park side.

PS and PL have a joint Sunday group activity which includes Sunday Brunch or dinner on alternate weekends followed by Bingo/ Games / Art and Crafts / Sing-a-long Karaoke by resident ED.



Getting Stuck In

Manor Lodge

Gareth joined Manor Lodge back in August of 2021 and has settled in to his new home.

Since joining Manor Lodge he has been busy looking for work. He started by posting his CV with Indeed and then searched for jobs in the surrounding area. Whilst looking he also would pop in to local charity shops to offer his assistance.

With the guidance and support from Magic Life staff and other external services Gareth applied for various jobs. His efforts were rewarded with an interview with a prestigious restaurant based in Barnet. Gareth was invited to an interview which he attended with the support of John, Manor Lodge's service manager. Following a trial the restaurant offered him a full time position as a kitchen porter but this was reduced to a part-time role to start with as Gareth felt that this might be too much for him.

Gareth is over the moon with this opportunity and starts working as I write. Everyone is really proud of the hard work and tenacity he has shown.

Future Plans

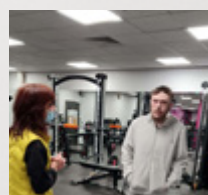
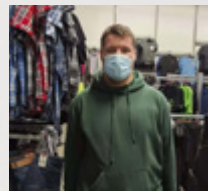
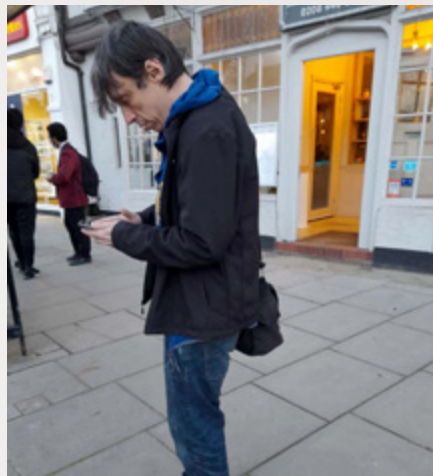
Chatting with Gareth whilst taking this photo of him. I asked him about his future

plans and goals.

Gareth is in to Sci-Fi movies and loves Star Wars. He really likes the special effects and would like to train as a special effects artist.

In the meantime he looks forward to his new job and will also offer his assistance to local charity shops.

Well done Gareth for getting stuck in.



Gym Membership

Manor Lodge's other residents have also been busy. Shane visited the local sport

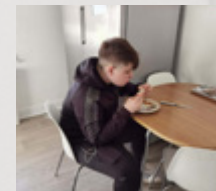
centre to enquire about a membership. He was given a guided tour of the facility and will be joining shortly. He has also decided to get his Covid-19 vaccinations. This will allow him to enter pubs and other venues.

New Clothes

Michael used some of his Christmas money to buy some new clothes. He visited Hatfield shopping centre and also enjoyed a McDonald's Meal.

Cooking Skills

Jo has been developing his cooking skills. He made Pasta with tomato and herb sauce. He also made some poached eggs on toast with cheese. Watch out Gordon Ramsey!



Gareth is leading the way
With a new job in Barnet



Cooking Delight

Bruce Grove

January has been a month of serenity. One of our service users who moved over from another of our services in Magic Life, has amazing culinary skills and shows kindness when cooking his evening meals; he has been sharing his Indian cuisine amongst his fellow house mates, he is a really good cook and chooses extremely healthy choices, using authentic Asian spices, the aroma around the house is sensational, since he has been sharing his meals, the other service users have been doing the same amongst each other, showing elements of kindness and understanding of other people's needs goes a long way.

This month the service users have been planning for the months ahead, deciding on trips that they would like to go on, things that they would like to do, coming up with ideas that will help them to reach a new height and feel better for being out in the community. This will also give them that sense of purpose, to achieve goals and aspirations that they wish for.

Now that things have settled a little with Covid, in the next few months some of our service users would like to do some volunteering out in the community.



Communal Cooking

Harringey Road

Residents have been taking part in communal cooking regularly this month. JC, RL and sometimes TB are regular participants. RL helped staff prepare the food too. The residents have been enjoying hot home cooked meals such as Chicken and Curry rice, Salmon with vegetables and Spaghetti & King Prawn, Garlic & Chilli Linguine. Chicken curry was especially a big hit with everybody,



Cup Cakes & Bunnies

Northlands

Magic Life Northlands welcomes a new resident to the home. The ladies got to know more about each other as they made cupcakes together.

Its all things fluffy as the ladies snuggle up with Oreo and Maple the rabbits.



Thriving to be the best

Winns Mews

Thriving to be the best support worker you can will bring changes.

This month's focus has been about empowering the support workers to be the best they can at what they do, the managers focus at Winns Mews has been about helping her team to search deep into their souls and reach for that fire and passion to understand how to achieve the best for the service users that they support. Much talk has been centred around understanding the uniqueness about an individual with the same diagnosis, the foundation that may have been blurred in the individual's life, family background and possible trauma's that may have had an impact on the service user.

It is important to understand that we have not walked in their shoes, having empathy, no matter how hard the job gets is the key to building good relationships. Realising that their genetics and make up is different, their journeys have been different and the trauma they have gone through, although it may have been similar, is more relevant as to how that individual has processed it mentally. This came about by observing staff responses and the way in which they may tackle some challenging occurrences, so differently. We have all found common ground by being patient throughout,

making the changes and implementing them in the work that we have done.

They have stepped up to the plate, with level and strength of support for each individual, bringing peace and harmony in the girl's home. My motto is, "You never stop learning, no matter how old you".

I always ask the staff to remember, that it could be your family member in supported living, think about what you would want for them. The end result has been overwhelming, especially for the seniors who have experienced some beautiful and emotional moments of progress with the service users, the outcomes have been good for our lovely ladies who live at Winns Mews and have given all of the staff a better insight as to how, when, and why.

The support workers have seen the fruits of their work, with PB especially, who has been engaging well with the staff, she spent nearly the whole day in the lounge last week, conversing, colouring, laughing, letting us get to know more about her likes, listening to her music, for all of us this was a breakthrough, no matter how big or small it meant a lot to all of us, during her time of chilling with us, she reached out for support by asking if the manager could be with her during a regular meeting she has with the

Mental Health team, once a week, her words were that the manager is good at speaking up for us, so she wants her to be there, as she feels that her voice is not being heard, in the way she would like, PB has struggled to engage for a long while, staff now have a better understanding of her triggers and what will cause a negative reaction, we look forward to continue to improving the nice vibes we have at Winns Mews, empowering the girls much more and doing much more activities as a team.



London Sights

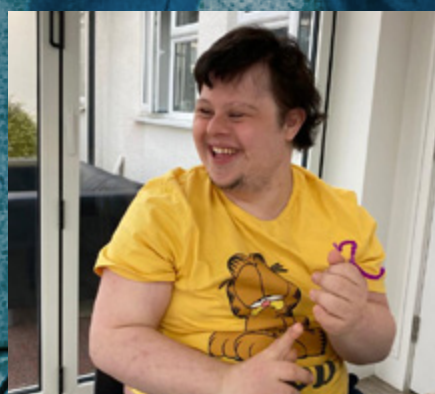
Hale End

Its been a busy January with trips to London, nights out, discos and a Birthday celebration as RE celebrated his 29th Birthday.

Happy 29th Birthday to RE
A trip to London was enjoyed by TP. Visiting London's most famous sites and braving the cold.

SR enjoyed music therapy and also went to Waltham Forest to see the lights and water fountain with the other house mates.

RS has also enjoyed some sight seeing and a great Disco night out with house mates



Fresh Air

Burlington Lodge

After many months of lockdowns, residents at Burlington Lodge enjoy the sights and smells of London.

It really feels great to be getting out and about.



Bowling Boys

672 High Road



Chris is in full swing as he enjoys bowling at the local bowling ally. There have been creative card making sessions at 672 and also residents enjoying some fresh air as they go for walks in the local parks.



Refer A Friend

Refer A Friend is back until end of March 2022

Click on the cash to refer a friend.

