

Style Acre

Supporting people with learning disabilities



Review 2016



Mission:

Style Acre provides safe and nurturing environments for people with learning disabilities and autism to grow and develop in their own unique way and with the utmost dignity. We recognise and embrace individuality and deliver person centred care of the highest standard.

Vision:

To work with others to create communities where people with learning disabilities and autism are valued as equals and given every opportunity to fulfil their potential and live the life they choose.



Our Chief Executive

Chris Ingram

I am delighted to be writing my first message for the annual review and having the opportunity to reflect on my first 6 months as Chief Executive.

I have been enormously impressed with what I have seen and heard since I started. We play an important role locally as an employer of almost 300 people across Oxfordshire and I am staggered by the commitment, dedication and passion for their role of those who work here. Having worked previously for a national learning disability provider it has been a refreshing change to work for a local charity that is so well connected to its community. I am passionate about people playing an active part in their community and striving to fulfil their potential in life irrespective of their disability. We all require support through life and I believe that it is important to provide that support in a way that is right for each individual and in a way that gives the person receiving the support the choice, control and dignity that they deserve. Style Acree does this really well.

What Style Acree has achieved this year is truly inspiring. The recruitment of our Job Coach for a 3 year project is hugely exciting and will lead to a lot more people with a learning disability getting a job. We plan to work together on a joint project with Dogs for Good and Kingwood, using therapy dogs to help people achieve a variety of personal goals.

Enough has been said about the challenging times we face but I am confident that Style Acree has a positive future and am really excited about delivering our new 5 year strategy, remaining local, listening to the people we support and employ and increasing our connection and dialogue with families. I would like to thank the Trustees for their support, welcome and willingness to take part in a skills audit, which has demonstrated a great breadth of knowledge and experience. We have now 'buddied up' each trustee with a support manager to improve connection and understanding of roles.



Supported Living

Enhancing lives of people with learning disabilities

Style Acree currently enables **86** people to live with their peers across Oxfordshire. The people we support range from those with complex learning, health and /or physical disabilities needing 24 hour care, to others who need only a few hours per week.

Supported living is designed **around the needs and wishes of the individual** and people are helped to plan their lives and make decisions with as much support as necessary. 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 encourage people to take part in a wide range of community activities and to develop new friendships whilst maintaining existing relationships.

Susan – mum to Lucy

As a parent of a young person with complex and severe special needs, the future is always a worry and a dread.

However, my daughter moved 2 years ago into a supported living house managed by Style Acree and the future is much more positive. Now Lucy, who is 22 is living life to her full potential. She is looked after by support workers who really care for her and leading an active and busy life with her three housemates. Both my husband and I and Lucy's two brothers are so thankful to Style Acree.



Day Opportunities

Style Acre Day Opportunities supports **over 190** adults with learning disability or autism at community hubs in **Wallingford, Didcot, Banbury and Wantage**.

We offer a broad range of **leisure and developmental activities**, designed to encourage people to realise their potential and **build their social networks**. We also organise day trips and **participate in community activities**.

that support people to learn skills, grown in confidence, help prepare for work and gain a nationally recognised certificate.

We have a person-centred ethos focusing on fostering and nurturing individuals' self-worth and value. Staff work to empower individuals to make informed choices, take more control of their lives and be actively involved in decisions affecting their service.

Day service support is traditionally funded through peoples' Individual Budgets. However, local government cuts are leading to reduced budgets and Style Acre is now fundraising to supplement Day Opportunities, so that people can still attend our hubs and benefit from the enhanced quality of life it provides.

Our Work Programme enables people to gain **work experience** at one of our social enterprises or with local companies. **As a registered ASDAN centre**, we offer a wide range of modules

Style Acre's hubs in Didcot and Banbury (both the result of capital appeal fundraising) support people with mild to moderate learning disabilities or autism with little or no Individual Budget.



Dean comes to our Didcot hub

"I have helped people to learn different bus routes. They meet me in my village and I teach them where to get on and off the bus to go to different places. I have really enjoyed doing this."

John comes to our Banbury hub

"Style Acre is very helpful, friendly. It has lots of different activities and a chance for me to meet other people with learning disabilities. I work on reception and at our bookshop."



Wantage Market Garden



Working collaboratively with Sustainable Wantage and local social services, our **market garden in Wantage** offers people the opportunity to develop meaningful and rewarding skills in a quiet, safe place.

Education ASDAN courses compliment the skills people develop through our activities. Many courses are achievable without the need to read and write. Topics include Using Computer Technology, Meal Preparation Photography and Yoga. Users are very proud of their achievements. During the year **11** learners completed modules.

Work Programme



We employ a **Work Manager** and a **Job Coach** to deliver our Work Programme. This means we can help as many of our people we support as possible to access work placements and paid employment. We run three social enterprises to provide work opportunities – a charity shop in Wallingford, our tea room in Blewbury and our bookshop in Banbury, where people are trained to develop work based skills in a supportive environment at a level that suits them.

We have excellent links with an ever-growing number of local companies who provide a variety of placements including Waitrose, Sainsbury's, DeVere Milton Hill House Hotel, as well as hair salons, sports centres, garden centres, nurseries and more.

We have many great success stories of people who have never worked before who show significant increases in confidence, independence, communication and specific work skills, independent travel training and money handling. We provide help with CVs, applications forms and job interviews as well as accompanying people to the Job Centre where necessary. At our tea-room all our catering assistants complete an online Food Hygiene course.

This year we have set up **31** work placements, providing work experience for **49** people, of which **16** are in paid employment.

Hawkins Group

Providing work placements



"We are delighted to support Style Acre. For us, it's not just about writing cheques, it is about helping Glenn & Ollie learn and develop workplace skills by becoming part of our team and seeing their confidence and independence grow every week."

Rebecca

Rebecca has started work experience in a local hair salon.

"I love working there. All the staff are very helpful. I am much more confident with all my jobs now – my new tick chart has really helped me."

Staff have noticed increased confidence in Rebecca in her weekly tasks and since we introduced a visual checklist, Rebecca has started to do the jobs more independently. She will complete an ASDAN award (Salon Assistant) to develop her skills.

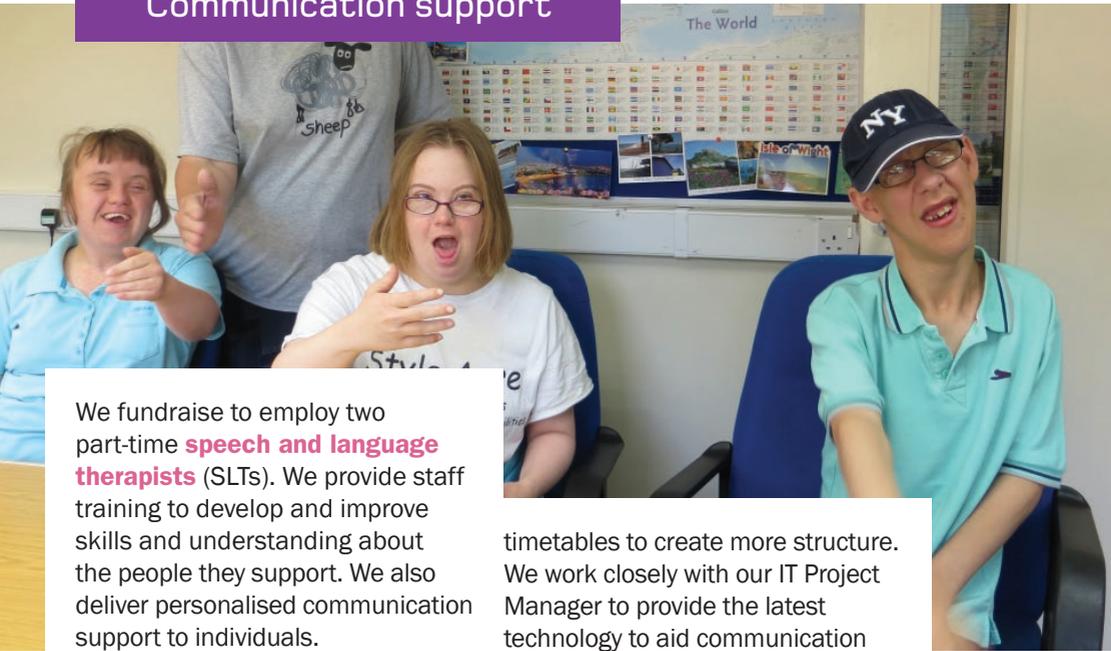


Doris

Our long-standing **charity shop** provides a safe, calm introduction to work experience for some, and a permanent solution for others, like Doris. Situated in Wallingford, it is a social hub, bringing volunteers, people we support and customers together.



Communication support



We fundraise to employ two part-time **speech and language therapists** (SLTs). We provide staff training to develop and improve skills and understanding about the people they support. We also deliver personalised communication support to individuals.

This year we have worked with over **50** individuals, providing a huge range of interventions, including sensory programmes, putting Objects of Reference in place and using individualised visual

timetables to create more structure. We work closely with our IT Project Manager to provide the latest technology to aid communication and sensory experiences.

We offer ASDAN courses that support communication and sensory experience and notice improvements in participation from many of our learners with complex needs.



Katherine

Katherine often finds it difficult when she is asked to make choices verbally, to express herself or say how she is feeling, especially when there is a lot going on around her. We worked with her to put together pictures to help her make choices as well as a portable set of pictures and phrases that she can look at or show staff when she is not able to express herself. Together we found strategies that would help her if she became anxious.

Katherine says; **"It has really helped me when I can't think what to say"**

Technology for Independence

This project ensures our beneficiaries have access to technologies that will enhance their lives through improved communication and increase their independence.

We have taught people to use voice recognition and text reading software so they can use computers, even though they cannot read or write.

We have found numerous applications for tablets that can prompt people to carry out

daily living tasks. The use of the latest generation of touch screen technology is encouraged whether simply choosing a holiday or enabling better communication with other people. We use an interactive floor projection system that provides fun and engaging sensory learning experiences. The images projected respond to the smallest gesture or movement, enabling our beneficiaries to interact.



Style Acre in the Community

Throughout the year, community events are a great opportunity for people we support to get involved, such as volunteering as marshals at the Thames Run, directing runners and giving out water and medals. As well as being a major employer in Oxfordshire, **36** people volunteered for us during the year at our tea room and charity shop

or through our 'Just 60 Minutes' scheme, where we encourage people to give a small slice of time where we matched their skills, hobbies or interests with someone we support. Additionally, 6 corporate and youth teams (75 volunteers) gave us **525** hours of their time.

**JUST
60:00
MINUTES**

We received funding to run photography, radio and video courses, which were exhibited at our annual day-long festival - Access All Areas - hosted by local arts centre, Cornerstone. The day was filled with arts sessions, dance performances and culminated in a Style Acre showcase with a large audience turnout.



Values: Style Acre prides itself on being a values based and driven charity; we use these values to recruit train and manage our staff and support the people using our services. We believe these 5 words that best describe what is important to us:

Caring, Respectful, Honest, Ambitious, Collaborative



Fundraising and awareness



The year saw the official opening of the Banbury support hub (SABRe), after a £1.4m capital appeal and subsequent Big Lottery grant to supplement start-up running costs and beneficiaries on little or no personal budget. Our Patron John Craven OBE officially opened the hub, which received local TV, radio and press coverage, as did the opening of its adjoined second-hand bookshop social enterprise. John continued his support by co-hosting 'Getting to Know You', an exclusive fundraising event with Dame Stephanie Shirley at Oxford's Harris Manchester College.

Community fundraising events included a sky dive, two walks, a Madonna tribute curry night, Marathons and a Christmas carol service & craft fair. Trusts, companies, local organisations and individuals continued to support Style Acre raising £231,185 of voluntary income, which funded our Work Development, Technology for Independence, Communication Support and capital/equipment resources. We are very grateful to all our supporters.



Fundraising efficiency

The total cost of our fundraising activities was **£69,234** and we raised **£231,185**. For every £1 invested in fundraising, we raised £3.34.

Our fundraising team during the year was a full-time equivalent of 2 employees.



From our Chair of Trustees

Tony Vernon

This year Style Acre has experienced change both internally and in our operating environment. Changing Chief Executives is always challenging, but I'm pleased to report that we have achieved a seamless transition, enabling Style Acre to continue to improve and grow our services.

The levels of local authority funding is at increased risk for people we support, resulting in reductions in many of our service users' support packages. We have consciously decided to use our reserves to sustain the quality and volume of our activities.

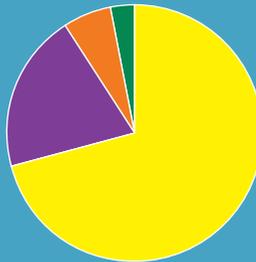
We have continued to grow, with the opening of a community hub and supporting living flats in Banbury. We worked on new supported living houses in Didcot and Wheatley, which opened in late spring 2016.

We strive to ensure positive outcomes for those we support.

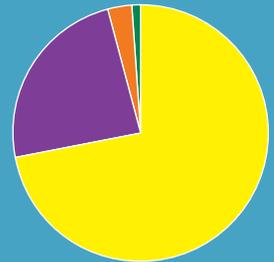
Financial Performance

Income £5,520,679

Expenditure £5,701,803



- Supported Living £4,195,553
- Day Opportunities £1,083,706
- Donations £150,147 (plus £81,038 raised for future projects)
- Other Income £91,273



- Supported Living £4,205,222
- Day Opportunities £1,405,142
- Fundraising £69,234
- Other Costs £22,205

Expenditure exceeded income by **£181,124**, which we funded from our reserves. Of this:

£70,000 – the final planned capital expenditure for our Banbury service

£68,525 – setting up and initial running costs of our new day opportunities in Banbury

£20,394 – maintaining day opportunities in the face of unexpected reductions in contract income

£22,205 – reduction in the value of our listed investment funds

Our Trustees
 Tony Vernon (Chair)
 Ian Boulton
 Philippa Chalmers
 Alison Elliott
 Trish Millar

Sarah Nye
 Rob Thornton

Our Patrons
 Sinead Cusack
 John Craven OBE

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