



Learning Disabilities



WALSINGHAM
SUPPORT *Everyone is different*

It's not just support, it's happiness.

We are Walsingham Support, a charity that has been supporting people with learning disabilities, autism, brain injuries and complex needs for more than 30 years.

Whether it's a couple of hours a week or 24-hour, seven-day support, we provide bespoke solutions that enable individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling, happy lives.

At Walsingham Support, we do things differently. We really take time to get to know the people we support; to identify their needs, to learn about their abilities and aspirations, and to recognise what makes them unique.

By taking this approach, we jointly develop and deliver tailored, person-centred support to enable every individual to live life to the full.

Flexibility is key to achieving this, but while our work and the support we provide constantly evolves to meet the demands of an ever-changing social care landscape, our vision has remained the same:

We seek an equal and diverse society, in which people with disabilities are citizens in their own right who are supported to be happy and to reach their full potential.



Life with a learning disability

Living with a learning disability can mean that an individual might take longer and find it harder to learn certain life skills. These problems and challenges will vary in severity with each person, but always start before adulthood and affect an individual throughout their life.

Of course, everyone is unique and their disabilities vary from very mild to a more severe condition called profound and multiple learning disability (PMLD). An individual with PMLD will have a range of sometimes severe problems and often needs round-the-clock support with most areas of their lives.

Regardless of a person's specific needs, we are here to provide as much or as little support as they need in order for them to flourish.





Challenges associated with learning disability

Several conditions are associated with learning disability, including Down's syndrome, autism and Asperger syndrome, cerebral palsy and global development delay. A person who is diagnosed with one of these conditions is more likely to have a learning disability of some sort.

At Walsingham Support, we work on the basis that every individual with a learning disability will need a personal support plan created that is tailored to them and their specific needs, but it might include support with things like:

- taking care of themselves, such as health and wellbeing
- running a home or managing a tenancy
- reading, writing and learning basic skills
- making friends and taking part in social activities
- getting out and about
- accessing education and work opportunities.



Person-centred support

We work with each individual and their family to fully understand what they want, what matters to them and what they want to achieve, so they are always at the centre of conversations and decisions about the support they receive.

Our person-centred approach allows us to develop a structured support plan to enable each individual, which provides opportunities for them to develop relationships and to enjoy life.

We make sure that we offer 'just enough' support – enabling individuals to do as much as they can for themselves, developing the skills that will ultimately help them to live more independently.





Our heritage supporting people with learning disabilities

Back in the 1980s, people with learning disabilities often ended up in large, long-stay institutions, miles away from their families. Mark and Anne Snell wanted more for their 14-year-old son, Matthew.

Matthew has learning disabilities and was educated at special needs schools while living at home with his parents. But Mark and Anne were starting to think about what would happen to Matthew when he moved on from the family home to live more independently.

To that end, Mark and Anne founded Walsingham Community Homes in 1986. Its aims were simple: to provide high-quality care for people with disabilities in small-scale, local residential services.

Since then, we've grown both in size and in the types of support we offer. We have highly trained and passionate staff who provide support for people with learning disabilities in the setting that suits them best – whether it's in the family home, residential care, or in their own place.

We currently provide support for around 400 individuals and families.

Our staff

It's crucial that our staff have the right skills and knowledge to support individuals with learning disabilities to flourish.

So, when we recruit, we look for people who can deliver support in a manner that promotes choice and independence, who can make subtle changes in their way of working to give individuals just the right level of support at the right time.

Our staff understand the benefits of engaging in new experiences alongside recognising the importance of 'routine and rhythm' in a person's life. This helps people to develop knowledge and confidence in predicting and understanding the world around them.

We ensure that staff who support people with learning disabilities have undertaken appropriate specialist training as well – for example, in challenging behaviour and autistic spectrum disorders – so they can adapt their approaches to suit each individual and their unique challenges.

Our programme of continuous professional development (CPD) means that, as a team, we are always ready to meet the challenges of the evolving social care sector, whatever the individual's circumstances and needs.





Donna's story

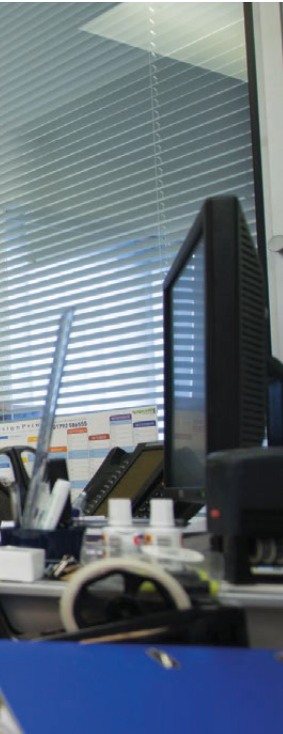
Donna has learning disabilities and lives independently with support at home. Historically she attended a day centre once a week, where she would socialise with friends and take part in activities.

Donna has always struggled with low self-esteem, but her confidence took a knock after she developed some health problems in 2013. She became down and stopped going to the day centre.

Walsingham Support staff respected Donna's wish to not go to the day centre, but they encouraged her to pursue a different interest that would keep her active and support her personal development.

Acknowledging that Donna enjoys meeting new people, her key worker suggested that she get involved in a Walsingham Support recruitment event. At the event, Donna loved meeting and talking with the applicants.

Seeing how much Donna enjoyed being a part of the recruitment day, her key worker asked her if she'd be interested in working part-time at one of Walsingham Support's offices.



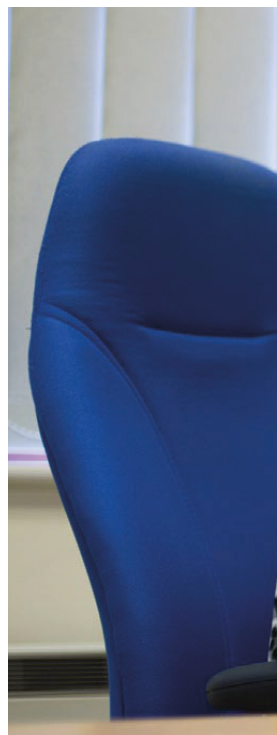
Donna jumped at the chance of having a part-time job that enabled her to be around people and work in team. She now works one day a week, answering phones, working on reception and cleaning the office.

She was a natural from the word go; she fitted in brilliantly with the rest of the staff and received lots of compliments for her work, which really helped to restore her self-esteem.

In fact, the job gave her such a confidence boost that she felt empowered to start going back to the day centre. She is now once again joining in the activities and events with her friends there, and having a great time.

However, nothing stops her from coming into work on a Friday!

“I like everything about my job; it’s brilliant,” says Donna. “I really enjoy shredding documents and answering the phones. And I love working with people at the office.”





Why we are different

Everybody is different. We don't just acknowledge that – we celebrate it.

So we make sure we're different, too.

That means offering more than a standard, one-size-fits-all service. It means delivering a tailored support package for every single person we work with, custom made to fit them.

We look beyond a person's disability. We work with individuals, their families and carers to really understand the challenges they face, and the support that will best meet their particular needs.

Then, together we develop creative yet practical solutions that match each person's abilities and goals, giving them the tools they need to thrive and enjoy a fulfilling, happy life.

We believe that our way of thinking sets us apart from other providers in our sector – and we're proud of that!





If you would like to find out more about Walsingham Support and how we can help with learning disabilities, please get in touch.



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