



Supporting people with learning disabilities



# Introducing Affinity Trust



# What we do

# 100%

of our registered locations in England rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission

In Scotland, all our Care Inspectorate reports rate the quality of our care, support and management as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.



**Affinity Trust supports over 1,000 people with learning disabilities across England and Scotland, enabling them to live as independently as possible.**

We have a track record of supporting people with more complex needs including autism, mental health needs and profound and multiple learning disabilities.

Set up in 1991, we have grown steadily ever since. Behind this success is our belief that everyone with a learning disability has the right to an active and fulfilling life.

Whether enabling people to live in their own homes, giving opportunities to enjoy community-based activities, or supporting people into work, we aim to ensure that those we support can live life to the full.



We support people with a range of needs, from those who need just a few hours a week to people who require round-the-clock support.

Many of the people we support used to live in institutional settings, like hospitals. We have worked with them to improve their independence and quality of life.

Supported living is our preferred model of support. We also deliver outreach, opportunities and residential services.

We are regulated by the Care Quality Commission in England and the Care Inspectorate in Scotland.



**Matthew**

**“Matthew is much more confident when out in the community”**

Staff who work with Matthew

## Matthew trains his staff

Matthew, who we support in Bedfordshire, has difficulty processing sensory experiences, which can make him anxious.

In common with many people we support, Matthew helped recruit his own support staff. Taking part in interviews gave him confidence in talking about his anxiety and how people could support him.

Matthew decided to take this further. With help from his Support Manager and Occupational Therapist, he co-produced his own training course, explaining when to leave him alone, when to talk to him, and what to say.

He also decided he would present the course himself.

In late 2017, Matthew delivered his first training course to his support team. He

later trained a contracts officer from Central Bedfordshire Council, who wrote to thank him, giving him added confidence.

Based on the positive feedback, Matthew decided to develop the course, produce a PowerPoint version, and present it to more people. His hope is to help staff understand how he, and others who have difficulty processing sensory experiences, can be better supported.

Staff who work with Matthew have noticed he is much more confident when out in the community. His achievements were recognised when he was nominated, and then shortlisted for, the People’s Award in the 2018 National Learning Disability and Autism awards.

# Supported living



# 65%

of the people we support are in supported living

Compared to the national average of 15%\*

**Around two thirds of the people we support live in their own home. We call this supported living.**

Depending on the needs of the individual, this support varies from a few hours a day to 24-hour support for people with more complex needs.

We have helped many people move into their own home from hospitals or care homes. They have flourished with the change, and become more active in their local community.

We aim for everyone in supported living to follow their aspirations and develop their skills.

We use assistive technology to boost people's skills and independence, and are rolling out person-centred Active Support to further develop people's involvement in everyday tasks.

Supported living is our preferred approach as we believe it gives people more rights, choices and control over their lives.



# Transforming Care

**NHS England's Transforming Care agenda is about enabling more people with learning disabilities to live in the community, with the right support and close to their family, instead of in hospitals or other secure settings.**

Some people with a learning disability have spent years in hospital. In this setting, they may have had many restrictions imposed on them, and may have lacked the freedom to develop their skills and independence. Many other people are at risk of hospital admission without the right support.

In line with our values and history, Affinity Trust has risen to the challenge of supporting more people in community settings, including those with the most complex needs, mental ill health and/or forensic backgrounds. We work closely with commissioners, health professionals, families and individuals to achieve successful transitions from hospital settings.

We have invested in Step Through services, where people prepare for their permanent home in a short-term tenancy, and increase their skills to live more independently. We deliver Transforming Care in many areas, for example in Leicester, Lancashire and Cambridgeshire.

## Ruth in her own home

After nearly ten years in hospital accommodation, Ruth moved into her own flat in our Transforming Care service in Leicester in 2016.

Affinity Trust worked with the community nursing team to ensure a smooth transition to Ruth's new home. We organised visits for Ruth ahead of the move, and ensured her staff received specialist training specific to her needs.

Ruth's top goal was to lose weight. She is achieving this through regular exercise and healthy eating. She's learned to ride a bike and enjoys



Ruth

cycling with her 'bike buddies' from the staff team.

Since moving, Ruth's stress and anxiety have decreased.

Our in-house psychology team know Ruth and her team well and have helped identify strategies that reduce her behaviours that challenge. Across Affinity Trust we use Positive Behaviour Support, ensuring that support is person-centred, and as unrestrictive as possible.

Ruth is proud of what she's already achieved. Her message to people in hospital? "It's worth coming out here...you can have the life you want. It's fantastic."

**"You can have the life you want. It's fantastic"**

Ruth

# Other types of support

## Outreach

Our outreach support is designed for people who need fewer than 30 hours' support a week. The support is tailored to their needs, at times that suit them. This might include help with paying bills, managing their budgets, or accessing community-based activities.

**“The staff are brilliant”**

Person we support in Southend, quoted by the Care Quality Commission

## Children and young people's services

In response to demand from family carers and commissioners, we have started supporting children and young people with learning disabilities, and their families.

The children supported by our Positive Behaviour Support service in Bradford have been referred to us due to their level and intensity of behaviour that challenges. As a result, they are at risk of entering residential care. Our main aims are to improve their quality of life and ensure they can stay living at home with their families.

The service is funded partly by a social investor. We will be paid only if the children and young people stay out of residential care.



## Residential services

We run a number of residential homes where small groups of people live together in shared accommodation.

These are individually registered with, and inspected by, the Care Quality Commission.

The support we offer people in shared living is always person-centred. We aim to promote their independence, dignity, and right to live how they want. We know this approach is important to the people we support.



## Opportunities services

In Hereford and Leeds, we provide a range of community-based activities for people with learning disabilities.

The opportunities we offer for people to make friends, experience new things, and take part in local activities are always shaped around the individuals.

Our opportunities services are designed to help people reach personal goals and try new things, from volunteering to volleyball. Currently we support theatre, sports, music and art projects as well as gardening, health and beauty activities.



## Emily at work

Emily, who we've supported since 2012, works at a charity shop one or two days a week. It's a varied role. She works on the checkout, deals with customers' queries, oversees sales and makes sure that the right amount of stock is available on the shop floor. She also works at a local family centre once a week.

Emily relishes these opportunities, and her confidence has grown. She is well-liked by the store's staff and many customers enjoy regular chats with her.

At home, Emily has started to cook for herself and her housemates. She's a keen baker, following recipes from Slimming World.

Emily says: "I enjoy working at the shop – I am doing things that I like doing."

"I am doing things that I like doing"

Emily



Emily in the shop

# Working in partnership

## **We work in close partnership with commissioners, care managers and health teams in 35 local authority areas.**

We specialise in supporting people with complex needs, including autism, mental health needs and profound and multiple learning disabilities.

We have in-depth experience of tailoring support to meet the needs of people with behaviours that challenge.

We are focused on outcomes and pride ourselves on our ability to reduce the level of support we provide to an individual. We do so only when it is safe and appropriate.

Our dedicated Housing Partnerships Manager sources housing from, and builds relationships with, registered housing providers and private landlords. We are well placed to respond to opportunities that have specialist housing requirements.

Our in-house housing team also supports people in maintaining their own tenancies, and adapts and develops properties to meet the needs of the people we support. For instance, we may provide low-arousal environments for people with autism.

We also support the return of people from out-of-area placements, advised by our in-house clinical team. Many of the people we support have moved from in-patient settings to live successfully in their local community.

We have many years' experience of successfully managing TUPE transfers from the public sector and other support providers. In the last ten years, we've successfully transferred over 700 staff into our organisation.

We've worked with many local authorities and registered housing providers to support people as they move from residential care to supported living. When asked by the local authority, we have taken on failing services run by other providers.



## **Working with families**

We aim to build strong and trusting relationships with families of the people we support. This means respecting their views, and their role in supporting their family member.

Families are often worried when their child leaves home for the first time, and when their family member's support provider changes. We've earned a reputation for paying attention to detail and ensuring that changes go smoothly. Above all, we put families' loved ones at the heart of decision-making.

We also agree with families how and when we communicate with them, and how they are involved in ongoing reviews of our support.





**“Paul is happy and part of the community”**

Paul dad, Tony



**Paul loves to go riding**

**We work in**

**35**

**local authority areas across England and Scotland**

## Supporting Paul

Paul has multiple learning disabilities, walks with difficulty and has little verbal communication.

His parents had been worried about his move to Affinity Trust. His father Tony says: “I wasn’t expecting great things – we had been disappointed so often previously.”

Our staff worked with Paul’s parents to understand how he communicates. Tony says: “Paul loves his support staff. They are the reason we have our cheerful chap back for the first time in years.

“Suggestions they have made to Paul, including

using a wheelchair on day trips, and a different approach at mealtimes, both of which we have adopted, have really improved life for him and for us.”

Paul’s health has improved and his weight has increased. He has grown in confidence and attends courses at the local college.

Tony says: “Thanks to Affinity Trust, Paul is happy and part of the community, including doing ordinary things that my other children do – such as enjoying a takeaway on a Saturday night.

“That means so much to his mother and me.”

# Our staff

**We employ over 2,000 staff who work at more than 250 locations across England and Scotland.**

They enjoy a range of benefits including:

- life assurance
- childcare vouchers
- confidential employee assistance programme
- refer-a-friend scheme
- recognition and reward scheme
- a benefits scheme offering discounts at high-street and online retailers.

We have been accredited by Investors in People since 2003 and are proud to be a Disability Confident Committed employer.

We carry out a regular organisation-wide survey to ensure that all our staff can have their say about working for Affinity Trust. Staff forums and team meetings allow staff to share opinions and ideas

**“Training is brilliant; we are always kept up to date”**

Staff member, quoted in a 2017 Care Quality Commission report

face-to-face. Through our quarterly staff newsletter Stargazer, news and stories are shared across Affinity Trust.

## Learning and development

Ensuring our staff have the right skills for their roles is an essential part of providing the best support we can. It is also important that people have the opportunity to develop and grow during their time with us.

We offer staff a wide range of learning opportunities, including classroom-based courses, coaching, distance learning, self-study, management apprenticeships, and a dedicated online learning website.

As well as receiving sector-standard mandatory training, our staff can look forward to developing their skills in many specialist areas, such as autism, dementia care, mental health and Positive Behaviour Support.

## Meet Ajitha



Ajitha, a Support Manager working in Maidenhead, joined Affinity Trust in 2012. She works with people who have moved into supported living from a residential care home. She says: “I’m helping the people we support there gain the confidence to do things for themselves, rather than have staff do things for them.

“Supporting people to live in their own homes and make their own choices is more rewarding than my previous roles. It’s better than a nine-to-five job.

“My job is not about simply doing things for the people we support. It is about encouraging and helping them to do things for themselves, so they can live the life they want. There is nothing better than seeing the delight of someone we support when they achieve something they want to do – big or small.”

# Facts and figures

## Types of support

Supported living is our preferred model of support. We also deliver outreach, opportunities and residential services, and manage Englefield Garden Centre in Berkshire, a social enterprise. This chart shows the percentage of people we support in each case.



- 65%** Supported living
- 23%** Outreach
- 6%** Opportunities
- 5%** Residential services
- 1%** Social enterprise

Our income in 2016/17 was just over £50m, nearly all of which came from contracts with local authorities and the NHS. Since 2011, our income has doubled.

Visit [affinitytrust.org](http://affinitytrust.org) to download our full annual accounts.

## Where we work



## Social enterprise



Part of Englefield Estate near Reading in Berkshire, our garden centre grows more than 100,000 plants a year. It is a self-sustaining

social enterprise that operates without funding grants or subsidies.

At Englefield Garden Centre, nearly half the permanent workforce have learning disabilities. The people we support take on a range of tasks, including growing the centre's plants and helping customers.

[englefieldgardencentre.co.uk](http://englefieldgardencentre.co.uk)

This map shows the local authority areas we work in.

**Our mission is to enable people with learning disabilities to pursue active and fulfilling lives, gain increased independence and achieve equal rights as citizens.**

## Our values



Committed to doing our very best for the people we support and never giving up on someone we support



Reliable and always do what we say we will do



Honest and open in all of our relationships and transactions



Respectful of others, their views and their rights



Inclusive in how we value diversity, support equality of access to opportunities and challenge discrimination



Creative and flexible in our thinking, in our work and in how we use our resources

## Get in touch

Affinity Trust Head Office, 1 St. Andrew's Court, Wellington Street, Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 3WT

**Phone: 01844 267800 Email: [info@affinitytrust.org](mailto:info@affinitytrust.org) [affinitytrust.org](http://affinitytrust.org)**

Follow us on:



[@AffinityTrust](https://twitter.com/AffinityTrust)



[/AffinityTrust](https://www.facebook.com/AffinityTrust)



[/company/affinity-trust](https://www.linkedin.com/company/affinity-trust)

\*15% figure on p4 – Department of Health, 2016.

A charity registered in England and Wales no.1139891 and in Scotland no. SC043881 Company Number: 06893564  
All information correct at the time of going to print. Please check our website for updated information. © Affinity Trust 2018