

# Autism services

Specialist care and support  
for people with autism



## The people we support are at the centre of everything we do

Lifeways is one of the UK's leading providers of support services for people with diverse and often complex needs in community settings.

Whether it's supporting people for a few hours each week to 24-hour support, we provide structured, skilled and consistent emotional and practical support to people with autism to help them live life to the full.

Using person-centred approaches we listen to, and work with, each person and their network of support to help them plan their support. By putting in place detailed support plans, risk assessments, and by working in partnership with family members, carers and health and social care professionals, we help each person to make choices and take control of their life.





## **We enable each person to think about and plan what they want, now and in the future**

Our flexible, personalised packages of support are tailored to meet individual needs. We listen, adapt and make changes over time. As part of the multi-disciplinary process, we aim to provide the right level of support that people need to develop skills and coping mechanisms which will increase their independence.

Through work, college, volunteering, shopping, meeting friends and family, enjoying a hobby or playing sport, we support and encourage each person we support with autism to access opportunities, activities and facilities open to everyone in the community – supporting them to be active members of their community.

**We create an environment where people can live the life they choose to live by delivering a service which has a positive impact on their life.**



# Offering choice and flexibility

**With a commitment to innovation and excellence, we ensure that we do a good job of listening to what each person really wants and the life they would like to live, helping them put this into practice.**

Our services for people with autism are based on best practice. This includes: the TEACCH approach which is about structuring and organising schedules; and the SPELL framework, which emphasises the importance of 'low arousal', calm and ordered environments.

We are working towards Autism Accreditation through the National Autistic Society.

## Supported living

As one of the UK's most experienced providers of supported living services, we offer unique packages of support for people with autism to live in their own home. We work with housing associations, private landlords and local agencies to offer community-based support across the UK.

## Community enablement and support

Whether an individual needs just a few hours of support a week or 24-hour support, we are able to offer a personalised service.

## Specialist short breaks

From day trips to weekend stays in our specialist accommodation, we support families to take a break. Our short break managers have many connections in the community which help people build up new networks of support.

## Residential care

Our houses, bungalows and flats give people the opportunity to live together and benefit from 24/7 support from our highly trained and dedicated members of staff. Some are based in the heart of the city; others are in the countryside or close to the sea. Specialist equipment and facilities include hydrotherapy and sensory rooms.

## Facts about Autism in the UK

- ▶ There are over half a million people in the UK with autism – that's around one in 100 people
- ▶ Around a third of people with a learning disability may also have autism
- ▶ Nearly two-thirds of adults with autism in England do not have enough support to meet their needs



## Craig's story

**"Craig hates change," says his mum Sandra. "He needs stability and consistency in his life. Finding the right support is crucial because getting it wrong could mean, in the worst case scenario, things spiralling out of control."**

Craig has learning disabilities and is on the autistic spectrum. In his mid-teens, he was bullied which affected his self-esteem. "Craig was having a very difficult time, what had been a manageable situation turned into something much more complex and challenging," says Sandra. "My biggest worry was about the level of support Craig needed."

Finding the right support through Lifeways has changed Craig's life.

His support worker Lee has helped him use specialist software to organise his daily schedule, keeping track of his activities week by week and planning for the future.

Fascinated by computers and meticulous about record keeping, this has helped to improve Craig's confidence. Now he goes to the local youth club and quiz nights at his local pub and he plays snooker. "We went together on the train to the seaside and had an amazing day out cycling and fishing," says Lee.

Craig has also started doing some voluntary work, helping out on the radio station at the local college. "The list of new things he's tackling seems endless," says Sandra.

# Our approach



**We encourage every individual to maximise their potential by supporting them to do things for themselves.**

Communication is key. We use Total Communication methods and employ consistent and well trained staff in order to aid understanding and reduce anxiety.

## **With a commitment to innovation and excellence, we put personalisation into action**

Our support teams are experienced in working with autism and we have a history of successfully supporting individuals with complex needs who may have challenged other services.

We're responsive to the changing needs and wishes of the people we support, and adapt our services to reflect them, helping people to recruit and choose

a support team with the right values and attitudes, who fully understand the challenges people with autism face.

We aim to give every person as much choice as possible when choosing their team, supporting them and their family members and advocates to be as involved as much as they would like to be. All members of a person's support team receive specialist training to meet the needs identified in their assessment.

**We create an environment where people feel safe and help build a person's confidence, trust and social skills so they can lead a fulfilling life.**

**"I work with Adam who needs 24-hour support from his Lifeways team who know him well and understand his needs. He uses communication symbols to make choices so he can get involved in the planning of his support. We're trained to respond to his anxieties and maximise his strengths."**

Katie, Lifeways Support Worker



# Lifeways is life changing



## **Our flexibility provides excellent outcomes and clear value for money**

Funding for our service can come from a variety of sources, including personal and individual budgets and local authority and health funding.

**Personal budgets** puts each person at the centre of their support, gives them greater control and freedom over the care and support they receive and provides them with a clear understanding of how much support they are entitled to and how they will receive their support. They allow people to get the support they need and services that suit them.



**“To be approached and have my work featured in a renowned newspaper was brilliant! The pull-out was great at explaining and raising awareness of Autism across all ages and across all walks of life, which, for someone like myself who has Autism, is so important. It was a fantastic opportunity.”**

David, who has Asperger's and is supported to live independently



**Each person we support  
can expect to feel:**

 **Heard**

 **Valued**

 **Respected**

 **In control**

 **Independent**

 **Included**

**Every person we support can be confident that we will:**

- Support them to make the right choices about the support they receive
- Provide them with the flexibility to adapt to their needs and aspirations as they develop
- Help them decide who will support them to achieve their goals
- Enhance their life skills – supporting them to develop their independent living skills and build and maintain their family and social network
- Enable them to access social, leisure, education and employment opportunities and activities open to everyone in the community
- Promote and respect their dignity, privacy, independence and choices



"Planning and flexibility is often the key to the approach we take to working with people with autism. Like with Jane, who we supported to move from a top floor flat to a bungalow in South London.

Our team of carefully recruited support staff speak the Ghanaian 'Twi' language that Jane learned as a child so can use key words and phrases that she understands. They make sure they have a ready supply of Jane's preferred drinks and snacks to hand when they go out for a car trip. She adores outings locally or further afield to the south coast.

But if Jane wants some privacy when she's out, her support team know that she will feel safe and relaxed in the car.

The team are also trained to use new technology to provide a way of learning and communicating that plays to someone with autism's strengths. Often people with an autistic spectrum disorder have a strong visual memory. So, we use applications, iPads and software to create structure in someone's life which helps establish routine and structure."

**Simon**, Senior Support Worker, Lifeways

# Contact us

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## To hear more

Please get in touch to find out how Lifeways can help you.

## To make a referral

If you're a family member, health professional or social worker, contact us to talk through how we can help.



Call: 0333 202 7185



Email: [referrals@lifeways.co.uk](mailto:referrals@lifeways.co.uk)



Visit: [www.lifeways.co.uk](http://www.lifeways.co.uk)



**"Marcus is more able to communicate his feelings and frustrations. He now likes to be part of what's going on in the home and is more inclined to join in with family, spending time with us in our space, happy to know he can always return to his space. These are all steps in the right direction."**

David, father to Marcus who has autism and is supported by Lifeways



Please visit our website at [www.lifeways.co.uk](http://www.lifeways.co.uk) to find contact details for your nearest Lifeways Area Office.

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