

Caring about Care

Impact Report 2021





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Caring about Care

Our last Impact Report was published in the shadow of a global pandemic. Our latest edition covers not only the ongoing battle with Covid-19, but a period in which the care sector has faced up to an unprecedented funding and recruitment crisis.

2020-21 has been the toughest year the sector has seen, and our staff have had to draw on their reserves of resilience and dedication to continue to keep the people we support safe and well.

It seems a long time ago that the nation applauded health and social care workers during the weekly Clap for Carers. While the symbolic appreciation was powerful and appreciated by those working on the frontline, it has not led to any demonstrable change to the way the government views the role of social care in society.

The government's recent White Paper on Social Care articulates some fantastic principles of great social care but without sufficient funding or a seismic change in professionalising social care staff and appropriately rewarding them, then these aspirations will remain unfulfilled. Even with the upcoming Health and Social Care levy, we do not expect any meaningful new funding for the sector for at least another three years.

The theme of this year's report is to highlight the value of social care in people's lives, and its contribution to a healthy, fair society. Our staff continue to carry out everyday acts of heroism away from the public eye. We could not be prouder of their selfless, skilled work in helping the people we support to lead aspiring lives during the most challenging of times.

Despite the challenges, we have had a successful year and continue to progress as an organisation. We've created more new homes for people with learning disabilities, autistic people or those with mental health needs. We've continued to support the Pro-Active Community to go from strength to strength so that people have a loud and meaningful voice. And we were recognised as one of the top charitable organisations to work for in the country, with outstanding levels of staff engagement.

Our Impact Report is an opportunity to reflect on 2020-21, but also recognise the contributions of others. We're grateful for the support we've had over the past year from our commissioners, funders, partners, and the friends and families of the people we support. We remain driven to achieve our mission: to enable the people we support to live full and aspiring lives.



Maria Mills
CEO



Owen Vallis
Chair of the Board

Highlights of the year



We used our social funding from Social & Sustainable Capital (SASC) to open new services in Redhill, Leatherhead and Crawley. We also bought our first property in Brighton and Hove through support from Barclays Bank which we will develop in 2022.

We secured £6 million of new NHS Capital Grant

to develop much needed new homes for people leaving hospital in their own communities, recognising our leading regional role in the successor to the Transforming Care programme.



We were named as one of the

Best 30 UK Charities to Work For,

and one of the Top 100 Companies to Work For in the South East, in the prestigious 2021 Best Companies listings. In addition, we were awarded 2 Star accreditation recognising 'Outstanding' levels of staff engagement.

Our staff were recognised with national and regional awards for our work in outstanding positive behavioural support and training and development.

The Pro-Active Community, now an independent charity, rose above the challenges of the pandemic to progress as an organisation and positively support the voice and wellbeing of people across our communities.

We have not allowed the pandemic to dilute our focus on the quality of our services. All of our services are rated as Good by the Care Quality Commission, with a third having Outstanding ratings in individual domains.

We completed the first year of our Aspiring Prospects programme, commissioned by Surrey County Council, which supports young people aged 17-24 with a learning disability and/or autism to gain the skills and experience they need to access paid or voluntary work.

We launched our innovative Active Living programme of online activity sessions, which focus on health, wellbeing, learning new skills and active citizenship.

We secured significant grants to invest in assistive technology to help people we support to connect with their friends and families during lockdown, and specialist sensory and communication equipment to help to manage their wellbeing.

We won funding to lead a Surrey-wide project to tackle obesity among people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people as part of a programme with national significance.

We achieved accreditation from the NHS as being compliant with their Data Security and Protection Toolkit, and also achieved Cyber Essentials status.

Our Care in numbers

98%

of people we support thought that their support staff were 'very caring' or 'caring'.



99%

of people we support rated the support they get as either 'very good' or 'good'.

94%

of people we support would recommend Active Prospects to a friend.

93% of respondents said that they were either 'very happy' or 'happy' in their home.



96%

of people we support thought that support staff helped them to do the things they want to do.

97% of family members say the range of meaningful activities organised by support staff for their relative is 'very good' or 'good'.

21st best charity to work for in the UK, in the 2021 Best Employers awards



17 new homes developed for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people.

100%

of our CQC regulated services are rated overall as 'Good' with a third achieving 'Outstanding' ratings in individual domains.

92%

of people leaving long-stay institutions successfully maintaining their new homes after two years.

80% of people increased how they are understood and how people know them

(e.g. through 'This is me' support plans, wellbeing outcomes, and specific training for staff in Positive Behaviour Support).



68%

of people with high levels of behaviours of concern showed a significant reduction over the year.

SE100: we were named once again as one of the top 100 social enterprises in the UK.

80%

of people increased their independence skills over the previous 6 months.

Caring in a challenging year



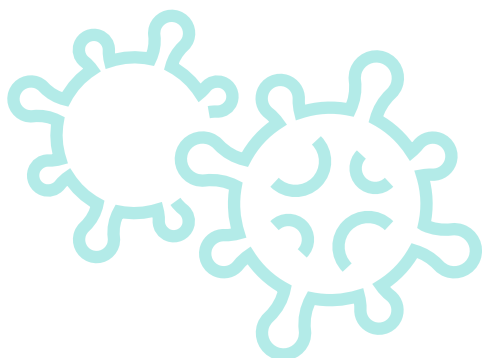
“This has been the most challenging year of our careers.”

– Support worker

Our staff and people we support have shown great resilience during an incredibly challenging year.

The year has been dominated by a combination of the Covid pandemic and an unprecedented funding and recruitment crisis affecting the whole sector. We are proud of the way that we have risen to these challenges and continued to keep people safe and enable them to live full and aspiring lives.





“Active Prospects has dealt with the circumstances in the past year in the most amazing and professional way. The speed at which the organisation has adapted and cared for both staff and people we support is incredible.”

– Support worker

Dealing with Covid-19

We have continued to proactively manage the risk to the people we support of bringing Covid-19 into services by:

- + maintaining robust infection control procedures for all our services, and ensuring a sufficient supply of PPE to meet the requirements of all staff.
- + implementing robust PCR and LFT testing for people we support and our staff, in line with Government guidance.
- + keeping the number of individual support workers providing people's care to a minimum.
- + providing financial support to staff required to self-isolate.
- + in periods of lockdown, we minimised the number of staff visiting people in community settings, through greater use of digital support.
- + enabling people we support to stay in contact with family and friends by facilitating Covid-secure visits and contact through video or phone calls, while following the government's visiting guidance.
- + reducing the number of agency staff we employed and ensuring those we did employ were used in single locations. Similarly, we aligned bank staff to single services.
- + as soon as vaccinations became available, we got as many staff and people we support vaccinated as quickly as possible and supported people financially to enable this.

To date as an organisation, we have not lost an employee, but we have sadly lost one person we support to Covid-19. We have had a number of staff members affected, all of whom are now recovering.

We have also had to deal with a chronic recruitment crisis, which has continued to deteriorate during 2021.

We've increased the hourly rate we pay our support workers, and pay above the Real Living Wage and well above the sector average. However, we firmly believe that care workers should be paid a lot more – it cannot be right that pay rates for care staff now lag behind retail, hospitality and logistics. We continue to argue the case both locally and nationally (through our membership of representative bodies) for emergency funding to prevent the collapse of the sector and the safety of vulnerable people being compromised.

Caring about our 'why'

“There is nothing better than seeing positive results in someone’s life knowing you are part of it. The moment they make a step towards the goals they want to achieve, you already have achieved!” – Support worker



Peter is a man in his 60s with a learning and physical disability. Before coming to Active Prospects, he had lived in institutional settings since the age of 8.

Peter’s previous support provider shared a number of concerns about his behaviours during the assessment process. However, Active Prospects felt that with an outcome-based model of support and an Active support strategy backed with comprehensive positive behaviour support, the team would be able to meet all of Peter’s needs.

Peter moved into his new home in 2019 and settled quickly. He is a vibrant individual, full of laughs, and loves to engage with people. He enjoys arts and crafts, singing and dancing, and watching horse racing. He likes to go to the local shop every day to get his own newspaper. He is a friendly, loving person who will say hello to everyone he meets in the shop. He likes to pay for items by himself and tries to be as independent as possible.

Through assistive technology, Peter is able to enjoy different types of music. He is able to do video calls (using a smartphone) with his sister and his brother, and regularly sends gifts to them in the post including craft items which he designed himself with support from staff.

Since Peter moved into his own home, he has made outstanding progress; there have been no incidents of behaviours of concern, and his mental health has improved significantly. The labels which have been placed on Peter throughout his life are now in the past.



“Being able to make a difference to the lives of people we support is what keeps me in this job.”

– Support worker



Joe is a young man with a diagnosis of autism, mild learning disability, ADHD and bipolar affective disorder. Joe began having difficulty with managing his emotions and behaviour in his early teens. Joe had a number of placement breakdowns and at 16, he was having repeated interactions with the criminal justice system (though no charges were brought); he was self-harming; and he continued to have aggressive outbursts. Following a period of significant mental health decline, Joe was sectioned and admitted to hospital, where he remained for eighteen months.

Joe was referred to a new Active Prospects development of nine individual flats in Redhill. The location suited Joe, as he was keen to move back to Surrey to be closer to his family. He also wanted to live in supported living to enable him to ‘become a man’, in his words, and develop independence.

The staff team were trained in Positive Behaviour Support, and a bespoke package of training covering mental health, autism and active support was designed around Joe’s specific needs. The team also had frequent access to the Active Prospects’ Senior Clinical Lead, including through weekly meetings with staff, observation and coaching, and direct work with Joe as needed.

Joe moved in August 2019. In the first six months there were incidents of shouting, banging in communal areas, and some physical aggression. Joe had poor personal hygiene, a poor diet, low compliance with medication and he struggled with managing his money.

Over time Joe has matured and formed good working relationships with staff and other tenants. Joe has a love of gardening and DIY and was supported to trial some employment schemes, join some local social groups and join the local gym. Two years later, Joe is very settled, and there have been no reported incidents in over a year. Joe has improved his diet and life skills, he is generally a positive person and is very popular with staff and tenants.

Joe has now decided to move to another supported living service within the organisation which is closer to his family, and has only three flats. He said he felt that he wanted to live with less people in a quieter environment, develop even more independence and focus on finding paid work.



Caring about our staff

It was a year when we recognised the skill and dedication of our staff. Clap for Carers was a powerful public recognition of health and care workers, but it was only a symbolic one. Our staff have put themselves at risk throughout the pandemic, working long shifts to cover for colleagues forced to self-isolate, and wearing uncomfortable PPE for hours on end. Yet over recent years, wages across the care sector have fallen below retail and hospitality, as a direct result of public funding failing to meet demand or keep up with inflation.

“Thirty years ago, when I was a frontline support worker, I earned £13k a year. That would be £31k in today’s money. If we could afford decent salaries for support workers in the 1990s - why can’t we now? We pay above the Real Living Wage but that isn’t enough for the complex roles support workers do. Decades of chronic public underfunding are leaving our staff and the care sector as a whole working in unsustainable environments.”



Maria Mills
CEO

In the UK, there are currently more staff working in social care (1.5 million) than in the NHS, yet the sector is left neglected, underfunded, and in danger of collapse. Until social care is valued as a skilled profession and seen as a much-needed service, like the NHS, the sector will continue to struggle to stay afloat, with staff being lost to retail, logistics and hospitality.

“Care worker’s roles are skilled and complex: they work unsocial hours; they give medications and manage complex health conditions like epilepsy; they operate PEG feeds; they support profound disability and communication needs; they support challenging behavioural needs. They need to be motivational, person-centred and creative. Their work deserves to be paid and valued so much more.”



Jade Vallance
Director of Care



This year we raised the hourly rate we pay our support workers, and recognised the dedication and skill of our staff through our monthly Aspiring Staff recognition scheme and annual Star Awards.

But we firmly believe that our staff deserve far more. This year we have used our influence and networks to campaign for fair funding for the care sector, and will continue to do so in the year ahead.

Caring about people's wellbeing

We've invested in the wellbeing of our staff and people we support. The impact of the pandemic has reinforced our commitment to health and wellbeing at Active Prospects. This year we set up a Wellbeing Committee, to enable staff and people we support to share their ideas and oversee delivery of the Active Prospects three-year Wellbeing strategy. Our Active Living team have put on a range of activities for staff and people we support:



The activities have encouraged everyone to try something new, join in with events or spend time in their teams or with friends. This all goes a little way to show respect and appreciation for everything everyone has coped with during the year.



We've also continued with our digital revolution, by using grant funding to invest in more digital and assistive technology, such as:

Smart hubs

like Amazon Alexa or Google Home to open curtains, set lighting, or play music.

Tablets

for people we support to use to stay connected with family and friends, or to access educational or training programmes.

Virtual reality headsets

have opened up new opportunities and experiences for people, including swimming with turtles in the Maldives, cross country skiing, or floating in a hot air balloon.

More switch kits

to increase life skills and independence for people with more complex physical disabilities.

Immersive health virtual reality system

which gives a 360 degree view of a popular British walk. When combined with a floor based pedal exerciser, it encourages people to exercise.





Building new homes with Care



This year we've developed 17 new homes for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people, despite the restrictions caused by the pandemic. This includes a new development of six flats in a small cluster in Leatherhead.

We receive referrals from local authorities and health services to support people to transition from long-stay hospital settings into their own homes. We spend time getting to know people before they move in, and work with them, their families or advocates, and health and social care professionals to develop bespoke accommodation which will meet their needs.

For example, V was referred to Active Prospects after her placement at a residential school, far away from her family, proved unsuitable.

The lengthy assessment process enabled us to develop a flat bespoke to V's needs in the Surrey area. We worked with the architects and builders to make the flat as safe and robust as possible, due to the high risk of V causing damage to the property and risking her own safety at the same time.

Some of the features included:

- + all electric wiring directed through the roof so that light and plug sockets were out of reach, and all electrics could be controlled from an external panel.
- + one-piece flooring which ran from the front door throughout the flat (plank-based flooring would have been too easy for V to pull up).
- + underfloor heating to avoid the need for radiators.
- + specialist windows which contained blinds within the actual window, so that blinds or curtains couldn't be removed.
- + toilet and water sources operated via sensor, so there was no need for taps, flushers or handles which could be removed.



We are the leading provider in Surrey for supporting people to move from long-term hospital settings into supported living settings, and would like to give opportunities to more people to live independent, aspiring lives.

However, the workforce crisis affecting social care means that we cannot guarantee that we would be able to adequately staff a new service – and have reluctantly decided to predominately focus on existing services until there is greater certainty across the sector.

We think this is a great shame: investment in our sector would not only enable more people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people to transform their lives, but would also reduce cost pressures on NHS services. We are hearing more and more about people spending too long in hospital due to a shortage of placements in community settings. Over the last few years we have been part of the solution, and would like to continue to be in the future.

Caring about co-production

The Pro-Active Community has continued to flourish as an independent charity.

The disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on people with learning disabilities highlights that it is more important than ever that their voice is heard. The Pro-Active Community is a user-led group that was set up in 2015 with the aim of putting the voice of people we support at the heart of everything we do. In September 2020, Active Prospects supported the Pro-Active Community to become an independent charity registered with the Charity Commission.

The Pro-Active Community continues to lead the way in advocating on behalf of their members and peers. They have embraced digital technology by continuing to meet virtually throughout the pandemic, including running the Surrey People's Group in collaboration with Surrey County Council.

Over the next year, Active Prospects will be supporting the Pro-Active Community to become more independent, to generate new funding, and find more ways to share their voice.





Lizzie Wheeler recently completed a two year term as Chair of the Pro-Active Community. Lizzie picks some highlights from the last year:

“ In March we worked on a video that was shown at the Learning Disability England conference. The theme was ‘hope’. We read poems, showed art work and joined the Include Choir to sing songs. We got amazing feedback from people at the conference!”

“We restarted quality checks and did refresher training, so more people can help with quality checks. We have visited several services to do reviews and will be doing lots more over the next year.”

“ We took part in a coronavirus research project with Manchester Metropolitan University. We are also working with the Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health & Science Network to look at reasonable adjustments, and accessible health checks.”

“We shared our experiences of health services with the acute learning disability liaison nurse from East Surrey Hospital.”

“I completed my NHS Peer Leadership Course along with three other members.”

“We produced a video for the LeDeR programme, which stands for ‘learning from deaths of people with a learning disability’. We also helped them to review their three year strategy.”

“We did our first podcast for World Earth Day with Surrey Wildlife Trust which is on our new website at www.proactivecommunity.org.uk.”



“ We ran online sessions to keep people entertained and to help them to learn new skills – for example I ran My Makaton Sessions, and Emma ran smoothie workshops.”

“We interviewed councillors for the local elections which is also on our website.”

Caring about our social value

This year we became a Disability Confident Leader, which is a Government-sponsored scheme to encourage more employers to go the extra mile to employ people with disabilities. We now employ seven people we support in paid roles at our Head Office and Re.Work.It, our charity boutique on Reigate High Street. Kieran started as a receptionist at our Head Office this year, and with support from our Aspiring Prospects team, has made incredible progress:



“I enjoy working with others who understand my needs and can help me when I am struggling. I like the people I work with – they’re happy, bubbly and just a joy to be around. They make my day brighter and they help me push forward to reach my goals and to be successful.

I never could use a computer before. I couldn’t use printers to be completely honest - I couldn’t do a lot of things! I’m now able to do it all. I can use the computer with files, Excel, Word documents, PowerPoint, emails, I could go on. I’ve learnt how to print, scan and copy. Active Prospects helped me with my confidence and my self-esteem and to be honest, I wouldn’t be here today if it wasn’t for them.”

We became a Kickstart employer this year, which gives young people in receipt of Universal Credit the opportunity of a six-month work placement, with their salary covered by Government.



“Hello, my name is Lisha and I joined Active Prospects through the Kickstart scheme this year.

I always wanted to work for an organisation which is making a positive difference to people's lives and which is genuinely caring and I felt Active Prospects met both of my expectations.

My Kickstart role was as a Marketing and E-commerce assistant mainly based at Re.Work.It. Being creative and innovating was a huge part of the role. I knew I wanted to secure a permanent position here at Active Prospects and being proactive, I was appointed as a Care Administrator within two months of commencing the Kickstart role. My current role is extremely rewarding as I am part of a team consistently looking for ways to improve the quality of life for our people we support. I very much work with pride as health and social care lacks the recognition it deserves!”

We have continued to deliver our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which we published in 2020.

We have rolled out mandatory EDI training across the whole organisation (including our Board). We also published our first Diversity Pay Gap report, which includes analysis of pay according to ethnicity, as well as fulfilling our statutory requirements to report on gender pay. We also took a leadership role by carrying out a survey of Surrey charities on their work to promote equity, diversity and inclusion. The survey led to an action plan which is owned and monitored by charities across Surrey.

Reasons to celebrate Care

Despite the challenges,
we've found plenty to
celebrate:



**At the Great
British Care
Awards for the
South East
region, we
won Best Care
Employer.**

Our Training Manager Vicky Marshall won the
Workforce Development award.

We entered the Best Companies awards for the first time and were named as the 21st Best Charity to Work For in the country.

We are proud of this achievement, particularly because it was based on the views of our staff (shared through an anonymised survey).

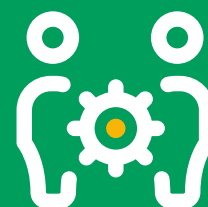
Our Clinical Lead, Lynsey Way, won a National Learning Disability & Autism Award in the Positive Behaviour Support category.



Matthew Leadbeater, a person we support and also co-chair of the Pro-Active Community, **was named on the prestigious Learning Disability Leaders List.**

Our stunning Mosaic of Hope,

created painstakingly by staff and people we support, was exhibited at the Belfry Centre in Redhill.



We were named once again on the **Natwest SE100 list of the top social enterprises in the country.**



We recognised the achievements and dedication of our staff and people through our annual Star Awards.



We created an innovative online interactive art exhibition,

featuring the fantastic creative exploits of people we support, as part of Learning Disability Week.

We secured over £300,000 of fundraised income

to invest in new opportunities for people we support.

Financial summary

2020/21 Financial Statements

Income

Care and Support	£8,221,000
Property services	£2,827,000
Grants	£699,000
Other Income	£224,000
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Total 11,971,000	

Costs

Staff costs	8,435,000
Other costs and overheads	3,433,000
<hr/>	
Total 11,686,000	

Turnover Profile

2017/18	7.60
2018/19	8.90
2019/20	10.80
2020/21	12.00

Our partners



Funders

Barclays Bank	NHS Digital
Central Surrey Voluntary Action	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Community Foundation for Surrey	SES Water
Gatwick Airport Community Trust	Social and Sustainable Capital
Good Things Foundation	Surrey Central Voluntary Action
National Lottery Community Fund	Tesco Bags for Help



Associations and representative bodies

Charity Retail Association	Surrey Learning Disability Partnership Board
Learning Disability England	Surrey Care Association
National Care Forum	Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG)



Commissioners and other partners

Surrey County Council	London Borough of Sutton
Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust	West Sussex County Council
NHS Surrey Heartlands	Brighton and Hove Council
London Borough of Croydon	Voluntary Action Reigate and Banstead
London Borough of Merton	Voluntary Action Tandridge



Professionals

AHP Architects and Surveyors Ltd	Orchid Communications
Citation	Royds Withy Kind Solicitors
Kreston Reeves	Trowers and Hamlins LLP
More Kingston Smith	

Contact us

Active Prospects enables people with learning disabilities and autism, physical and mental health needs to live full and aspiring lives.

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