About Affinity Trust

Here at Affinity Trust, we are dedicated to supporting people with learning disabilities to live the lives they want to. Whether helping someone to live in their own home, providing opportunities to make new friends, experiencing new things or gain work that is rewarding and enjoyable, Affinity Trust aims to ensure that those we support have the opportunity to live life to its fullest. Our values underpin the person centred support we provide.

Many of the people we support have come from institutional settings and we have worked with them to transform their level of independence and often, as a result, their quality of life. Supported living is our main area of support and we are committed to offering this model to people with learning disabilities in preference to typical residential care homes.

Affinity Trust Facts and Figures

✓ Affinity Trust has been supporting adults with learning disabilities since 1991

✓ We have ten operational divisions giving broad coverage of England and Scotland

✓ We currently support over 1,000 people in the UK

✓ We employ about 2,400 members of staff

✓ We are a registered charity in England and Wales – charity number 1139891 and in Scotland – charity number SC043881

✓ Affinity Trust was previously a UK-based voluntary sector organisation registered under the Industrial and Provident Act 1965 (Registration Number: 27515R)

✓ Affinity Trust is a company limited by guarantee and is registered under the Companies Act 1985. Our company number is 06893564
Our Mission and Values

Mission
To enable people with learning disabilities to pursue active and fulfilling lives, gain increased independence and achieve equal rights as citizens.

Values
In all our dealings with everyone we work with we will be:

- **Committed to doing our very best for the people we support and never giving up on someone we support.**
- **Inclusive in how we value diversity, support equality of access to opportunities and challenge discrimination.**
- **Reliable and always do what we say we will do.**
- **Respectful of others, their views and their rights.**
- **Honest and open in all of our relationships and transactions.**
- **Creative and flexible in our thinking, in our work and in how we use our resources.**

The Driving up Quality Code

The Driving Up Quality Code outlines good fundamental practices and behaviour that organisations that support people with learning disabilities need to be committed to. Signing up to the Code is a public commitment from organisations that they believe in these good practices and are achieving or actively working towards them. Signing up to the Code is also a commitment from organisations to be transparent about how they operate.

Affinity Trust signed up to the code in October 2014 to demonstrate our commitment to improving services.
The key principles of the Driving up Quality Code are:

1. Support is focused on the person
2. The person is supported to have an ordinary and meaningful life
3. Care and support focuses on people being happy and having a good quality of life
4. A good culture is important to the organisation
5. Managers and Board Members lead and run the organisation well

Our Assessment

Providing high quality person centred support has always been our emphasis; however, we understand we need to continually review and improve the quality of the support we provide.

Engaging with the people we support and other stakeholders is something which is incredibly important to us. Through our Key Quality Audit process, we regularly seek to gauge the views of people we support, staff, and have recently included a survey to professionals and relatives / representatives to also incorporate their views.

Across the organisation currently 100% of our services have been rated Good overall with CQC / SCI. We also regularly challenge the support services we provide via lessons learnt exercises in key stakeholder meetings and visits to properties. We are also starting to learn from
Person Centred Active Support, which we are rolling out across the organisation.

We have become increasingly involved with external agencies across the UK to improve practice and inform future commissioning approaches. Sharing lessons learnt and new initiatives openly.

1. Support is focused on the Person

Christina has been supported since 2014 and has shared her story through our newsletter, *Stargazer*. She recently went through a difficult period, becoming very low and finding it difficult to engage and be around other people. This meant it was difficult to go out and enjoy things she had previously done and it also affected her appetite and caused her to become unwell, which meant she needed health support with this.

Over the past six months, Christina has been supported to help improve the quality of her life and she is now going out to social
clubs with her friend, enjoying shopping again, taking day trips and reconnecting with old friends after going back to a day service that she used to attend many years ago. Christina lost contact with her mum during this difficult time but has been supported to get back in touch and is now seeing her mum every two weeks. Christina’s appetite is back and she is now eating meals and snacks throughout the day which has resulted in the dietician reducing the need for health support to eat.

I’m happy to be seeing my mum and going shopping again and my support team are encouraging me to make my own drinks and meals.”
Christina

Things that are working

✓ The Person Centred Active Support model is in its second year of organisational roll out, and is already demonstrating its positive impact for both the people we support and our staff.

✓ Continue to deliver Induction and Training programmes tailored to the people we support. Where it has been possible there has also been people we support and/or their families involved in their own training.

✓ Our LEAD training for Managers has been designed to be more person centred and focused on our values. For example, our Health & Safety for Managers training is more focused around people’s homes, their

“A staff member told us they had received training from a person who had autism and this had been particularly powerful as the person was able to give actual examples of how the condition applied to them.”
CQC Report, East Sussex
choices and the types of support systems we may have in place, to enable the people we support to undertake activities safely.

✓ Our management development programme now ensures that all operational managers receive Positive Behaviour Support training as part of their management induction, as well as training in assessment skills.

✓ Support plans focus on an individual’s strengths. People are encouraged to co-produce their plans.

✓ Bespoke support for people and demonstrating a clear commitment to de-registering services to supported living wherever possible.

✓ The majority of the people we support have core staff teams.

✓ Quality Audits are completed regularly for people we support; they have a number of standards in relation to focused and individualised support. Clear action plans are produced and implemented with quarterly reviews following audits.

✓ Senior Managers visit people in their own homes to ensure they are aware of people’s experiences of the support they receive which then informs future business planning and initiatives.

✓ All PROACT SCIP-r-UK approaches are developed around each person.

✓ A new Quality and Compliance dashboard has been developed which focuses on overall quality on several key metrics, as well as trends and patterns. This allows staff to identify specific areas where improvement might be needed and to show overall performance on a month-by-month basis. This dashboard is continuously reviewed to ensure as much useful information is contained to allow us to monitor the service we deliver to the people we support.
In our Children & Young People’s Positive Behaviour Support Service in Bradford we are succeeding in improving the quality of life of young people and reducing their behaviours that challenge, so that they can stay in the family home and out of residential care.

**Things we need to do more of**

- Continue to support the successful embedding of Person Centred Active Support across the organisation.
- Ensure every person we support has the opportunity to be involved in the recruitment of their staff, in whatever way is possible for them.
- A pilot site to be identified within the organisation to trial quality checkers.
- We need to continue to ensure accessible information is being embedded.
- To ensure people we support are more involved in Quality Audits.
- Implement Individual Service Funds.

2. The person is supported to have an ordinary and meaningful life

Clare is supported in our East division. She has dreams and aspirations to jump out of a plane, drive a car and become a DJ. Clare has been supported to work towards achieving these goals and has experienced indoor sky diving on a number of occasions to prepare her. She has been to a driving centre and has driven a car; she now wants to drive a lorry. Clare also loves music and attends music workshops and is now producing her own music CDs and album cover. She is also being supported to promote what she has achieved on the radio.

CQC’s feedback on Clare’s successes were very positive, commenting that this was a “massive achievement” which has led to her life being “completely transformed.” “They also told us this was due to staff members’ hard work, dedication and commitment to the person’s care.”
Things that are working

✔ People are supported to maintain relationships; this is a focused area of peoples support plans.

✔ A clear approach to positive risk taking; people we support and their staff are encouraged to pursue their aspirations and goals.

✔ We have added Hospital Passports and Goals Summaries to the management information system to make them readily available to staff who work with the people we support.

✔ Support is focused on all aspects of everyday life, encouraging focus on people’s strengths and abilities to undertake everyday tasks.

✔ We have supported many people to live successful lives who have previously been supported in our assessment properties.

✔ In Leicester, funds raised by ex-rugby star Marcos Ayerza, supported the opening of an allotment, which will enable people we support to use it to grow their own plants, fruit and vegetables as well as spend time in a relaxed, sensory environment.

“We found that staff had used their imagination, creativity and understanding of what was important to the person to empower them to experience new opportunities and achieve life-long goals.”

CQC Report, Cambridgeshire, the Responsive Section, which was rated “Outstanding”

✔ A number of people we support participate in paid and voluntary employment which provides structure and fulfilment, and enables them to use their skills. We link to a local employment support e.g. ADAMHS (employability skills), Ability Net (IT skills), ReBuild North East (recycling projects).
Affinity Trust has created many innovative projects offering people with learning disabilities the opportunity to enhance life skills, gain work placements and permanent jobs. Englefield Garden centre is one of these; it is a social enterprise we operate near Reading.

Englefield is a thriving garden centre in more ways than one. It is a self-sustaining social enterprise that operates without funding grants or subsidies; and nearly 50% of the permanent workforce are adults with learning disabilities. In addition to growing 100,000+ plants a year, it runs a horticultural therapy programme for people with learning disabilities.

Things we need to do more of

- Continue to implement Person Centred Active Support across the organisation and to measure its effectiveness and evidence that this leads to increased levels of meaningful activity for the people we support.
- Consider a more outcome-focused assessment.
- Develop better access to housing options.
- Restrictions and Deprivation of Liberties has continued to be a key focus of the organisation over the last 12 months, we have embedded a management information system to support managers and directors at all levels to monitor and ensure we support people in the least restrictive way.
3. Care and support focuses on people being happy and having a good quality of life

Things that are working

☑️ Our Positive Behaviour Support approach has enabled some of the people we support to minimise the intensity, frequency and impact of behaviours that challenge and engage in a good quality of life.

☑️ One person that we support, alongside her Support Manager presented her case study at the Improving Lives Conference in Manchester, which was well received by the audience.

☑️ Staffing selection aims to match staff skills and interests to better support people to do the things they love. One of our own quality standards is for people to be supported to explore and identify new activities and interests; this is regularly reviewed by managers, the aim of this is for people to be supported to develop happy and fulfilling lives.

☑️ We regularly ask the people we support if they are happy with particular aspects of their lives. This includes how they spend their time, the support we provide, their staff, where they live, the control they have to make decisions and their control and involvement in support planning.
✓ Ensure that people we support and their relatives / representatives are fully involved in the reviews of their support.

✓ Our full training package from induction through to our manager’s programme was reviewed to further ensure that all training content is values-centric.

✓ The Quality and Compliance dashboard has allowed staff to more quickly focus on specific areas that might need attention, whether it be a group of homes, risk assessments or specific support plans. This frees them up to spend more time working on improving the lives of the people we support.

✓ We work closely with people we support, in relation to Health and Safety, to be involved in assessments and plans to enable them to undertake activities that they enjoy. For example, we support a gentleman who only communicates through pointing and facial expressions; he uses a frame to mobilise around his home and receives 24-hour support. The individual loves everything about cars: car books, magazines, going out in cars or just watching cars go by. We found out that there was a car show in his home town and there was an opportunity available for people to travel as a passenger in a high performance sport car. The gentleman always points to fast cars, and with pictures and a video to help support the decision, he indicated that he would like to have this opportunity to be a passenger. He expressed this through smiles and signs of excitement. He absolutely loved the experience of travelling at high speeds, and was laughing the whole journey.

**Things we need to do more of**

✓ We have centralised the recruitment team at Head Office and therefore, want to continue to improve staff recruitment and retention to ensure people we support have staff who know them well.

✓ We know that having happy staff provides better and positive outcomes for the people we support.
4. A good culture is important to the organisation

We started out as Thames and Chiltern Trust (TACT) in 1991 and now work in partnership with commissioners in 30 counties across England and Scotland.

Our mission today is the same as it was 25 years ago: To enable people with learning disabilities to pursue active and fulfilling lives, gain increased independence and achieve equal rights as citizens.

Things that are working

✔ The values and aims of the organisation are clearly communicated through the induction of staff. This is continually reinforced with training and things such as our Stargazer newsletter.

✔ Feedback from the people we support is always sought when undertaking quality checking. Feedback is the starting point of our quality audits.

✔ Senior Managers and Board members visit people on a regular basis, these visits are monitored to ensure they take place, feedback is documented and any actions as a result of this are fed back to the relevant manager and staff team.
In early 2018 an engagement survey was sent to all staff. Results showed that, compared to the previous issue, we had a 19% increase in the number of staff who completed the survey. A total of 1101 employees took part, which is 52% of staff. The results showed that we had improved levels of interaction, such as 70% saying they’re motivated by our values, 75% saying our work positively contributes to society and 86% saying they’re provided with the training to help develop skills that are valuable and relevant.

Our biennial Managers Conference ran in 2018 offering our managers the chance to come together to network and share stories, as well as reflect on the year we had as an organisation.

We have relaunched divisional staff forums across the organisation.

Quality planning days have been implemented in all divisions, which allows a time for reflection, learning and developing, as well as encouraging each other.

We have launched a staff discount scheme, Affinity4You, as well as thank you and incremental anniversary cards.

We were thrilled to have had 6 finalists at the National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards in July 2018.

We recognise the positive impact that sharing good news has, and we have increased our use of social platforms e.g. Twitter and Facebook to enhance this, as well as producing our internal newsletter, Stargazer, which has received great feedback from our staff.

We are a Disability Confident Committed organisation, and are striving towards becoming a Disability Confident Employer. We continue to hold Investors in People accreditation, and CHAS accreditation which demonstrates that we are meeting health and safety standards across the organisation.

“The provider, registered manager and staff promoted a culture that was person centred and empowering.”

CQC Report, Beckley Close, East Sussex
We have reviewed the terminology used across the organisation to ensure it reflects our values.

We promote an honest and open culture where staff are able to reflect and learn. Lessons learnt are also shared with staff.

We encourage having an inclusive culture, which includes regular meetings such as the Quality Development Group and Health & Safety Committee. We are also working to improve two-way communication.

A team from our North division was nominated for a Daisy Best Practice by Tameside Borough Council, for their dedication and exemplary team working during the very inclement and challenging weather conditions during last winter. All support was provided as scheduled, with staff going “above and beyond,” sometimes putting themselves in danger to reach the most vulnerable people.

Things we need to do more of

Retention of staff is an area that we are striving to improve; we believe there is always scope to improve this which would have a significantly positive impact on the people we support and the quality of our support. We have set ourselves a clear target to improve this over the next 12 months.

As an outcome of the staff engagement survey results we will be implementing our engagement action plan.

Moving forward we will be rolling out internal awards and recognition schemes across the organisation.

This year we begin our mental health and wellbeing initiative, with training for managers being rolled out across 2019.

We recognise that we need to strengthen the development opportunities that we offer to our support staff, and 2019 will see us introduce our apprenticeships pilot.
5. Managers and board members lead and run the organisation well

Things that are working

- We have 100% of our services rated as Good with CQC / SCI
- Our managers programme, LEAD, continues to garner great feedback, and we look forward to continuing the programme across 2019.
- Senior Managers and Board members visit areas and homes and seek feedback from the people we support and staff, professionally challenging when required.
- The management information system provides an overview of staff performance reviews, allowing line managers to stay up to date. The associated monthly report provides an overview of progress towards completing these. All reports produced enable us to analyse and see trends / patterns.
- Performance reviews are carried out with all staff in the organisation; they enable information and progress to be communicated throughout the management structure. A 360° element has been introduced into the performance review process.
- The Board and Senior Management Team hold regular performance committee meetings to understand performance, required areas of improvement and to inform decision making. We have reviewed the

They told us that the management team listened and responded to any matters raised that related to people using or working for the service. One support worker told us “The support we receive [from management] is fantastic. I’ve never worked anywhere where you’ve had such good, well-led support.”

CQC Report, Tameside
format and communication of our organisational strategy, and involvement across the organisation, to ensure that key information is clear to all staff.

Things we need to do more of

✓ Continue to ensure that action plans produced from our Key Quality Audits are completed promptly and there is clear evidence to show the improvements made to the quality of people’s support.

✓ Ensure that all people we support are regularly visited by local Senior Managers.

✓ Implement the apprenticeships pilot.