Red2Green

2023-2024

Annual Report



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Who we are

Red2Green works to increase opportunities in education, training, work and leisure for people with learning disabilities and/or autism across Cambridgeshire. To achieve this, we offer a variety of programmes which enable learning new skills, enjoying a broad variety of leisure activities, making new friendships, gaining confidence and preparing for employment. We also raise awareness of the potential of people with disabilities to make positive and valuable contributions to society.



What we do

We have two main services across our centres.

Firstly, our Aspirations service works with adults on the autism spectrum, working on a range of life skills, independence, self-advocacy and employability work. Our learners enjoy cooking, socialising, and working on projects together. Our Aspirations service is split between Granary Barn and Harvey's Barn in Swaffham Bulbeck.



Secondly, our Options service supports adults with a range of learning disabilities and physical impairments across two sites: Harvey's Barn in Swaffham Bulbeck, and the Red2Green Community Garden in Bottisham. Each site offers a range of opportunities for learners to support independence and meaningful contributions to the local community.

A few words from our Chair - Jane Miller

As we moved into the financial year 2023/24 life at Red2Green began to feel 'back to normal'. Although Covid had not gone away completely, community visits and trips were happening for our clients and learners, and we were pleased that volunteers were once again able to be part of Red2Green. Our programme of trustee visits to our services continued during the year allowing us to see for ourselves how important the work we do at Red2Green is.

The year has not been without its challenges: as trustees we carefully scrutinise our finances at our board meetings, and this year has been even more difficult due to the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis.

My sincere thanks to everyone involved with Red2Green during yet another busy and challenging year. Our staff have continued to work tirelessly, showing their commitment to Red2Green and our trustees have helped steer us through those challenges.

A few words from our CEO - Liz Taylor

Nothing ever stands still at Red2Green, and 2023 -2024 was no exception. This was my third year as Chief Executive and sixth at Red2Green. It was good to see pre-pandemic activities return and new ones begin. We saw an increase in volunteers and we began some new exciting partnerships. I was pleased we increased the organisations and companies that we train on autism and neurodiversity. Our name is now a regular on the Woman's Institute circuit too, with our talk on autism in girls resonating for many, and increasing awareness.

There were challenges, in particular with finances, as the cost-of living crisis hit us. We are so grateful to everyone who has supported us through this difficult period, myself, the trustees, and our staff appreciate your generosity with both finances and time. You have enabled us to continue helping those with learning disabilities and or autism to achieve and live the life they want.

It's their smiles that make it all worthwhile.

Looking back at the year in numbers

Volunteers gave us **98.5** hours of their time

10 new clients joined our services, taking our total to **87**

We provided a huge **8000** days of support to **76** clients

and

1450 days of 1:1 or 2:1 support to **11** clients

We gave **6** talks raising awareness of autism across Cambridgeshire

Our staff completed **229** training courses in total

Clients achieved **442** AQA unit award certificates between them



Aspirations

It was a busy year working towards AQA Awards, and learning skills under the three pillars of our curriculum: 'Independence and Home', 'Employment, Interests and Hobbies', and 'Community'.

Aspirations learners love to get out and be a part of our community. Having been unable to do so throughout the pandemic years, this year they have taken full advantage, and it has been trips, trips, and more trips! This has included walks around the village and visits to Anglesey Abbey, Wimpole Farm, West Stow, Scotsdales, and Darwin Nurseries. We practiced independence and improved our confidence in social settings including Christmas pub lunches.

With the ceasing of 'bubbles' learners have enjoyed being able to mix with others and some Aspirations learners visited the Red2Green garden. One learner also joined the Options group that worked on the Red2Green sign at Rowan Humberstone.

In working towards our AQA certificates we've found volunteering opportunities in different ways. A group started 'micro-volunteering' regularly, helping for short periods at Branching Out's shop in Littleport. We have also supported work experience for those in our 'working towards employment' group including the company we use for IT support, Centra-data, who provided mentoring and work experience at our site.

There are so many successes that we love to celebrate, but it's not often we do so when a learner leaves. However, we did so when one moved on from our services being given a permanent full-time contract as a welder. We are very proud of him.

With the leftover grant money from the Red2Gym project, we purchased sensory and sports equipment and implemented weekly sensory circuit sessions. The use of the new sensory cushions has proved popular for learners who struggle to sit still.

We love crafts, and this year has been no exception. Many crafts and crochet items were made by learners for the Christmas fair. We also created a box topper for the coronation and took part in the local crown colouring-in competition. We also supported Swaffham Bulbeck's village coronation tea party with eco-friendly recycling posters reminding villagers to recycle their paper plates!

Finally, there were some staff changes, Sally Pearson left us to enjoy retirement and was replaced by Amy Lay. We also said goodbye to Katie Robinson.

Options

Our amazing options clients proved this year that there is always something to celebrate! No matter the weather, the season, or the mood, we were having a party!



Of course in the UK, we had more reasons than normal with the King's coronation, where we supported Bottisham's village party with planted teacup centrepieces created by our garden team.

In the summer we donated vegetables to Swaffham Bulbeck's green fair, and our client Charlie had his own stall at our summer fair selling sausage rolls, helping to raise £827.28 for us!



Autumn followed with a halloween silent disco and Goatober (an annual celebration of goats), where we sold plants and crafts alongside other market traders.

Christmas was celebrated in style with our carol service and fair. This year too, our amazing manager cooked a Christmas dinner for 50 people so we could celebrate as a community. When we came back in 2024, we dived into learning about Chinese New Year and the symbolism behind the year of the dragon.



Our clients gained more AQA unit award certificates in a range of topics including how to load a dishwasher independently, making a cup of tea independently, cooking and baking....



More highlights in Options this year included:

- Mrs Hutt (from Hutties in the barn next door) raised £360 by selling our plants at a garden sale she hosted.
- New gardening volunteers joining our service on a regular basis.
- A staff member accessed specialist horticulture training to become our on site expert.
- Clients took part in mental health group sessions including coffee mornings and drama!



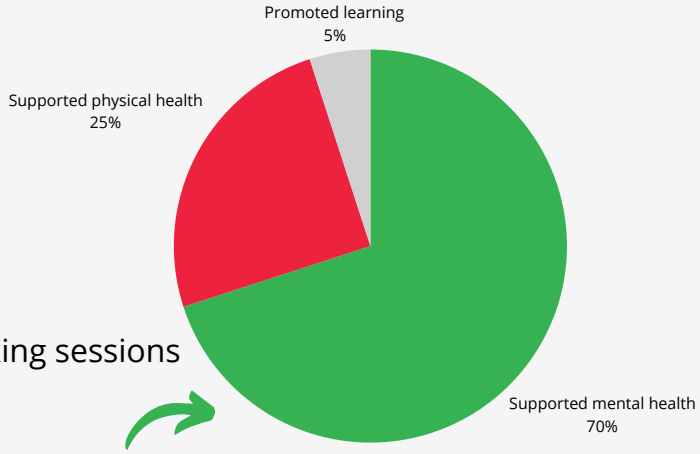
Rainbow Tables

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

Thanks to funding from Cambridgeshire Community Foundation's Cultivate Cambs grant, and the Cambridge Technology Fund, we were able to purchase 3 rainbow tables to help support digital inclusion and mental and emotional regulation for all of our learners.

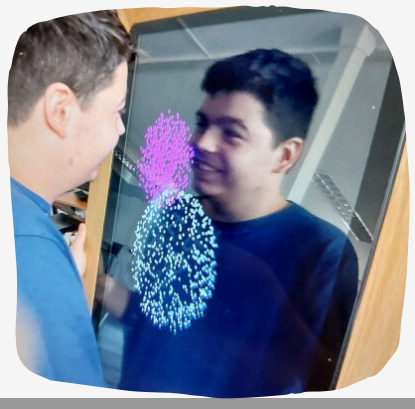
These locally designed tables are height-adjustable, wheelchair-friendly giant tablets, that can support multiple users at once. Every aspect of the tables are designed with accessibility in mind. Our learners adapted to them instantly in their services, using them for a range of activities including:

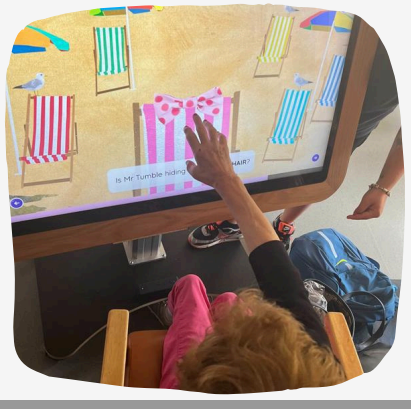
- Learning Makaton
- Visual storytime
- Internet safety lessons
- Group puzzles
- Sensory sessions
- Chair yoga videos
- Displaying recipes for sensory cooking sessions



We ran 234 sessions on the tables





Mental Health

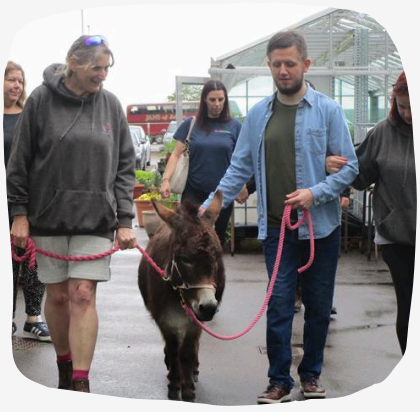
With support from the Evelyn Trust, we enabled our Mental Health Support Worker Nikki to become full-time. This meant that 100% of clients had access to her services when they needed her, including regular 1-1 chats, or just a one-off bad day.

In her full-time capacity she organised a lot of activities for Red2Green including:

- 'Walk and talks' in the village and mindfulness sessions in the park
- Offering urgent support during the day and virtual support to clients on days they don't attend
- Supporting Red2Gym sessions to increase physical activity and mental wellbeing
- Running group sessions on understanding different emotions
- Signposting to different services in Cambridgeshire and supporting first visits
- Ran Care and Share sessions for parents and carers
- Organised drama sessions where clients act out routine scenarios such as going to the doctor, to reduce anxiety levels
- And so much more!

Our personal favourite activity that Nikki organised was inviting the Miniature Donkeys for Wellbeing Charity onto site. Our clients all had a go meeting the mini donks, grooming them, and walking them. The donkeys were really calm and enjoyed socialising with our clients.

The donkeys offered a sense of companionship without any judgement and a calm moment for individuals. They helped our clients manage difficult feelings, express joy and laughter, and left a lasting positive impression on everyone. We hope to have them back again soon!







Makaton

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

With help from the D&J Lloyd fund and the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, we were able to provide Makaton level 1 training to all our frontline workers!
This include 19 staff members who had never had the opportunity to learn in a previous job, and almost all staff expressed interest in learning to higher levels in the future.



The opportunity for training recognises that more and more clients arrive with us using Makaton as a way to communicate their need, and by empowering our staff to learn it too, everyone thrives!

DCT Woodworking

With support from the D'oyly Carte Foundation, we worked with Rowan Humberstone in Cambridge to create a new sign for our community garden.
This project had 2 stages that allowed our clients to be involved in designing the sign and creating motifs in woodwork. They learned creative skills they wouldn't normally have access to thanks to Rowan's specialist workshops and tutors.
13 clients took part in the project overall, thinking about garden motifs and colours they associate with us, and then learned how to lino print, trace, carve wood, and glue wood together.
Now the sign is in safe hands at Rowan and nearly ready to be revealed to the world.
We can't wait to see the finished result!







Staff who joined us



Hannah Hall - Premises Administrator
David Dean - Autism in the Workplace Coordinator
Nikki Brown - Senior Tutor and Complex Needs Lead
Amy Lay - Tutor
Dennis Strydom - Support Worker
Midna Fonseca - Support Worker
Rebecca Graveling - Support Worker
Polly Barnes - Support Worker



Staff who left us



David Dean - Autism in the Workplace Coordinator
Sally Hulme - Bank Tutor
Sally Pearson - Tutor
Alison Martin - Tutor
Katie Robinson - Aspirations Manager
Deborah Voda - Support Worker
Judy Maddox- Support Worker
Janet Nightingale - Contractor
Stacey Huckle - Support Worker
Polly Barnes - Support Worker



Trustees and Patron

Jane Miller - Chair of Trustees
Roger Crabtree - Vice Chair of Trustees
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Fred Peeling - Trustee
Ruth Rogers - Trustee
Hobson Bullman - Trustee
Philip Lane - Trustee
Sian Constantine - Trustee
Caragh McMurtry - Trustee
Andy Hamilton - Patron

Keep in touch

Red2Green is a day opportunities provider and registered charity supporting people aged 16+ with learning disabilities and autism towards achieving independence, education and employment. We support 90 clients a year from our barns in Swaffham Bulbeck and our Community Garden in Bottisham. Follow our work via our social media channels or join our monthly newsletter.
https://linktr.ee/red2greenuk

General Enquiries

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