

Opt-in

Options for Supported Living, a local Merseyside charity existing to support, empower and enable people with disabilities to live their lives to the full.

Part One

Living without limits



Read the unique and extraordinary stories of people we support on pages 2 - 3.



Turn to pages 4 - 5 to read about our recruitment and advertising reboot, and Project Collective's success at the Market 3rd Sector Care Awards!



Part Two

360° support

Part Three

Focus for the future

Living Wage Foundation

NHS Improvement

5

Steps to Health



Mental Health Act Reform



Pages 6 - 7 focus on key debates within social care, from Mental Health Act Reform to the real Living Wage for social care workers. Read NHS Improvement funding success on pages 8 - 9, plus a special shoutout to some of our fabulous staff on page 10 and plan ahead with upcoming calendar months.

Tess' Story of Fitness and Fundraising!

We are now on (what we hope is) the last leg of the national lockdown! And on the 29th March 2021, when we were able to meet people outdoors, Tess embarked on a new challenge: to walk as many miles as possible and raise as much money as possible!

Before being supported by Options, Tess attended Derwen College, a unique residential college for young people with learning disabilities, between 2009 - 2012. She thoroughly enjoyed her time at college and has kept involved ever since! So it is no surprise that Tess was up for a new fundraising activity.

And who better to join Tess on this challenge than her sister Louise! After a year of restrictions and lockdowns, it was a fantastic opportunity for the pair to spend time together again. They spent two weeks together and - powered by cake and sisterly fun - they walked over 100 miles along the stunning Wirral trails!

In total, **Tess and Louise raised £450 for Derwen College**. What an incredible contribution!



Tess' positive outlook and motivation throughout the last year was a great aid in her preparation for the charity walk. She has kept healthy through good meal planning and cooking – a result of attending the online cooking classes Options run with Baytree Catering.

Keeping active and physically fit has also been key to Tess' wellbeing and mental health over the past year and going forward too! Prior to Covid-19, she regularly attended her local gym and enjoyed swim sessions, Hot Wheels Club at Hoylake Community Centre and Options' events. During the pandemic, some sessions continued online allowing Tess to maintain her fitness, keep in contact with friends and gain confidence using tech.



[Tess and sister Louise, photo taken prior to Covid-19]

Tess has appreciated the recent easing of restrictions. As much as she enjoyed regular beach walks and cycling along the promenade - nothing replaced the jacuzzi and steam room at the gym! She's over the moon to be back.

A new way to host our Christmas Party!

The coronavirus pandemic has changed our lives in so many ways, so how we party would have to adjust too! Our annual Christmas Party was hosted virtually using Zoom, and meant we were able to have festive fun in a safe way.

From a Christmas quiz, bingo rounds, a best dressed competition, to lots of fantastic dance-offs! We ended the night with sing and sign-alongs to our favourite tunes.

Options is dedicated to showcasing the unique and extraordinary stories of people we support.

Can you guess which competition Irene won?!



Recruitment Reboot

As we set our sights on our vision of a better world for people with disabilities, our focus turned to the recruitment of incredible staff to join us on our journey.

Jennie Shaw, our Recruitment Lead, and Olivia Campbell, our Recruitment Assistant, both bring experience in support to the role and using this in how we recruit has been really successful.

**Dedicated,
Person-Centred,
Passionate, Creative,
Highly-Skilled, Committed,
Hard-Working.**

Okay, that's enough **about you.**
Tell us about your friends...

Refer a friend in January 2021
and receive up to £200!

Refer A Friend Scheme

Using our best asset (our staff!) in how we recruit has proven to be a great way to ensure values and beliefs are aligned. It's also raised awareness about who we are and what we do, helping to share the importance of social care organisations like ours.

And we do love to reward our staff and boost morale, especially during the past year!

External Advertising

Our recruitment adverts have been featured in newspapers, online sites, social media and even on buses! It can be a more creative and fun way to recruit and we certainly found this was the case with the bus advertisements!

We ran a bus spotting competition when the adverts launched which had a feel good impact for people we support, staff and friends of Options. It was great to feel the buzz of people chasing down buses to get a photo to send in!

From the external advertising between September to December 2020, we received 160 applications and 47 people were successful and joined us! Stay tuned for more exciting adverts coming soon...



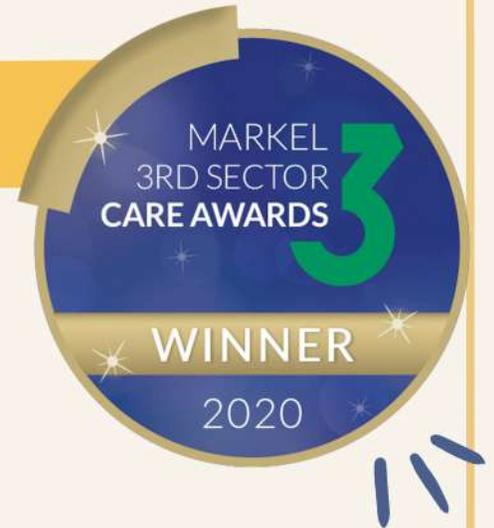
Teamwork Makes The Dream Work

We are really proud and excited to announce that **Project Collective won the Collaboration (Integration) Award at the Markel 3rd Sector Care Awards!** The award celebrates the importance of working together, sharing knowledge and learning from others.

What is Project Collective?

Project Collective is the collaboration of six organisations all working towards the same goal of improving access and inclusion for artists with learning disabilities, and to raise awareness around the health inequalities they face.

We work with Blue Rooms, which provides art sessions and spaces for artists with a learning disability; Tate Liverpool; Mencap Liverpool and Sefton, which focuses on people with low support needs; Acorn Farm, a day service specialising in wellbeing and horticulture; and Natural Breaks, a support provider to people with learning disabilities.



Partnerships To Be Proud Of



[Photo taken prior to Covid-19]

When the UK went into lockdown, we were able to use our brilliant partnerships to share information easily and efficiently, making vital resources in Easy Read formats available quickly for all organisations.

Presenting our 'Stuck In' workshop for two NHS Trust conferences was an incredible opportunity for the members of Project Collective. People with learning disabilities presented and helped NHS clinicians to produce their own hospital passport and discover what their reasonable adjustments would be if they were a hospital patient. This provided medical professionals with real life experiences and understanding around health inequalities.

Support is multi-faceted at Options. We all have a role to play, but we know team work makes the dream work.

And our dream is to create a better, inclusive world.

A Real Living Wage for Social Care

As the real Living Wage increased for 2021/22 to £9.50, we call on the Government to incorporate a real Living Wage into the budget for social care. This would then allow local authorities and providers to pay our incredible key workers a wage that better reflects their dedication, work ethic and skill.

While we stayed at home, it is social care workers who went out day and night to support others to live full, meaningful and safe lives. They were clapped by the nation during the first lockdown. They could receive a free Care badge to highlight their invaluable work. But neither provide a wage that people can *actually* live off. Surely then, as 'key workers' social care staff ought to be paid more than the legal minimum?



[Photo taken before Covid-19]

The real Living Wage can provide the long overdue recognition, respect and tangible reward that is so needed and deserved for our social care workers.

We are petitioning government with the aim of rallying support, create pressure, and increase public awareness. If you value our social care workers, please sign and share the online petition:

www.change.org/LivingWage4SocialCare

Mental Health Act Reform: Have Your Say!

After years of calling to reform the Mental Health Act 1983 (not to be mistaken for the Mental Capacity Act), the Government announced that they would be making changes to this law in 2021.

Currently, people who have a learning disability or autism are being inappropriately sectioned under the Mental Health Act and locked away in inpatient and secure units – even when they do not have a treatable mental health condition.

The Act and its powers do not distinguish between a mental illness and learning disabilities and/or autism. This is wrong. A learning disability or autism is not a mental illness or disorder.

The changes proposed will limit the reasons to detain, limit detention to a maximum of 28 days, and ensure support is available in community, rather than institutional settings. But this is not enough.

As the number of people with a learning disability and/or autism admitted to mental health wards reached a 3 year high in 2020, there is no time to waste. People deserve quality support in their local community, with their friends and families close by. **People deserve to live in homes, not hospitals.**

It is vitally important we take this opportunity to share our ideas, experiences, and perspectives on how the Mental Health Act should be changed, especially for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

To have your say, please go to our website to find the online surveys:

www.optionsforsupportedliving.org/MHAreform

Adjusting our lens to a broader perspective means keeping a focus on the end goal.

We hope to inspire, provoke thought and together create a better future for all.

NHS Funding News!

We are delighted to share that we recently secured further funding from NHS Improvement's 'Transforming Care' department. This follows on from last year when we successfully bid for funding to create a '5 Steps to Health' booklet that highlights how we can enable people with a learning disability to lead longer and healthier lives. The booklet aims to raise awareness of the findings in the Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR) published in 2019.

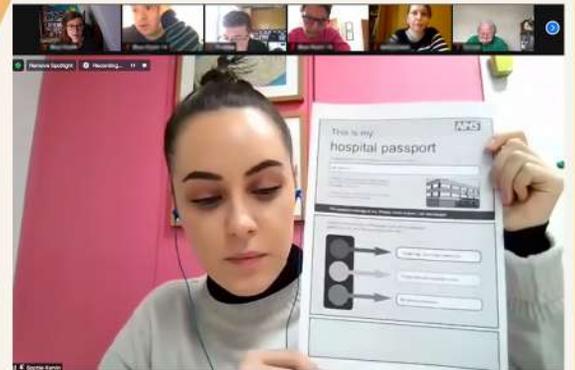
The latest funding will be used to deliver online activities to help people with their health and wellbeing. We will also be building on the '5 Steps to Health' booklet by hosting training, both internally and externally around the findings and steps for the future.

Let's get to know who was involved and the part they play!

Sophie Kervin, Health Research Assistant

It has been my job to research each of the 5 Steps and to produce the content for a booklet, alongside an accessible Easy Read booklet. I've held health workshops over Zoom to chat with people we support about health, and to get their input on the project. We were also invited to host workshops with Bluerooms and Mencap, as part of Project Collective. We talked about what health means to us and about what support should be available to help us stay healthy. We did lots of art tasks in the sessions that were based around the 5 steps, and the artwork that people created features in the final booklet.

I recently met with Mencap's Easy Read experts and they helped me to make sure the booklet was accessible. I'm also going to be leading my own Easy Read session during Voices R Us so we can get feedback from people we support.



To receive copies of the booklets, either digital or print, please email 5stepstohealth@ofsl.org.uk

Alice Bentley, Health Lead

For the last 5 years prior to becoming Health Lead, I was a Support Worker for Options. When discussing the bid our main focus was to address the LeDeR recommendations and to raise awareness of how health can be improved and how best to do this.

Adapting training into a workshop environment that suits people we support, families and Support Workers creates an environment that can educate, as well as support independence. Our plans with the funding are to deliver five training workshops that focus on each of the recommendations of the LeDeR Report (which follows on from the 5 steps to health booklet).

I am aiming to explain how things can be put in place for people to help themselves with their health and how others can support people to do this. I will also be taking part in a range of online activities that support both physical and mental health, such as, mindfulness activities, sports classes and opportunities to enjoy time together.

I am really looking forward to helping educate and support independence around health and it is a brilliant opportunity for everyone to learn how to keep healthy together.



Barry O'Toole, Fundraiser

NHS
Improvement

NHS Improvement's 'Transforming Care' team accept applications they feel will make a difference, and it's good to know the panel deciding on bids is inclusive and people with learning disabilities have an active role in the application process.

Staff Spotlight!

We know fabulous staff are our greatest asset, so we like to share our thanks as far and wide as possible! In each edition, we highlight people who have shown incredible commitment, work ethic and creativity.

A huge thank you to...

Anthony Taylor
★

Charlie Ward
for all you've done
for Erik's new home

Brian Duckworth
★

Jane Pennel

Daniel Harding
★

Samantha Chamberlain

Diane Barrow
for your consistency
and creativity
throughout Covid-19

Graeme Waddington
★

Jo Dickson
★

Shirley Blocksidge

Simon Lockley Evans

Naomi Hawkings

Roxanne Stewart
for your dedication to
improving people's
health care

Kevin Flynn
for being proactive
in completing QAA
actions
★

Daniel Johnson
★

July 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



August 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	28	29	30	31





HOLMWOOD FARM FRIDAYS!



Every Friday 10am-2pm
or just drop in to say hello if you cant
stay!

Come along and meet
the animals!



Have a go at
growing your own
plants and
veggies!



There will be different
seasonal activitives
held at the farm
throughout the year!



Its a great place to get
together and have some
fun outdoors



There will be tea and
coffee available



Remember the farm is all
outdoors so if the weather
is bad there is always next
Friday!



If you have any questions please call or email Alice on:



Email- Alice.bentley@ofsl.org.uk



phone- 07593564853



BE SAFE BE ACTIVE

A 5 WEEK COURSE TO HELP YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE TO THE FULL!

Including ideas for you to keep active, eat well, know your rights and maintain your wellbeing.

Each workshop will be packed full of fun, information, games and other activities such as bingo, quizzes, food tasting, planting veggies and more!

You will need to be available on all of these dates:

- WEEK 1: SEPTEMBER 17th- 11:00-14:00
- WEEK 2: SEPTEMBER 24th- 11:00-14:00
- WEEK 3: OCTOBER 1st - 11:00-14:00
- WEEK 4: OCTOBER 8th- 11:00-14:00
- WEEK 5: OCTOBER 15th- 11:00-14:00

VENUE: Holmwood Farm
Holmwood Drive, Heswall
Postcode: CH61 1AU

After completing the course you will receive a pack to take home with everything you have done over the 5 weeks!

LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE!



If you and your Support Worker would like to come along please email Alice on: alice.bentley@ofsl.org.uk by 30/07/21



1. We were founded on 13th October 1993.
2. We support people in Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral.
3. Our mission is to support, empower and enable people with disabilities to live their lives to the full.
4. We employ 360 staff - most who are support workers.
5. We support 180 people with learning disabilities, autism and acquired brain injury.
6. People we support have raised over £15,000 for cancer, children's, animal and homeless charities in the past couple of years.
7. Alice, our Health Lead, works to support the health, fitness and wellbeing of people with disabilities and our staff.
8. We've hosted three community festivals called One Wirral in Birkenhead Park promoting inclusion and equality, and approximately 8,000 people attended.
9. We partner with an urban farm, Holmwood Farm, who grow vegetables and rescue animals and provide an opportunity for people Options supports to get involved.
10. Each year we hold a free community Tea Party in St Nicholas Church gardens.
11. For the past 2 years, people we support have taken part in Project Artworks at Tate.
12. We have 15 volunteers working across various areas from befriending to events.
13. We employ people based on their great values and beliefs, not their experience.
14. We offer fabulous training opportunities to all staff, volunteers, family members and anyone we support who would like to get involved!
15. Each year we hold our Options' Oscars to recognise outstanding achievements of people we support.
16. Our photography group have held two exhibitions at The Bluecoat and auctioned off some of their work.
17. People we support often take part in the interviews we hold for new staff members and get involved with some of the training we do.
18. We have forums called Voices R Us run by people we support who meet regularly to discuss the support they receive and other aspects of our organisation.
19. There are people we support who volunteer at the Royal Liverpool Hospital, Tranmere Rovers FC, charity shops and rescue centres - amongst many other places.
20. Will, our Tech Lead, is developing projects around assistive technology to further improve independence for people we support.

Did you know...

#socialcarefuture is a growing movement of people from with a shared commitment to bring about major positive change in the social care sector. Options is a proud supporter of the movement and our staff members regularly attend their conferences.

Inspected and rated

Outstanding 



About Us

Options

Options for Supported Living has existed for 27 years with the mission of supporting, empowering and enabling people with disabilities to live their lives to the full.

We are a local charity that supports adults with learning disabilities, autism and acquired brain injury in Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral. We were rated 'Outstanding' by the CQC following our latest inspection in 2019. Only 4% of providers receive this rating, so we like to shout about it!

2020 was the year we planned to widen our lens from an individual-based perspective to a broader focus on the integration, contribution and equality of people with learning disabilities in society. As such, we launched our vision of:

 “ **A better world where people with disabilities contribute as unique and valued members of dynamic and inclusive communities.** ” 

Well... unfortunately, coronavirus had other ideas! The immense challenges of Covid-19 have forced Options to work and adapt in ways we have never had to before.

We have no doubt that with the support of our fantastic staff, people we support, families, commissioners, social work teams and the many other partners we work with, we will come out the other side in 2021, brighter, stronger and more resilient than ever.

Get in touch

We'd love to hear from you!

 welcome@ofsl.org.uk

 0151 236 0855

 optionsforsupportedliving.org

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We're very **social**. Join the conversation, stay up to date with news, events and what's happening at Options. Find us on @OptionsEmpowers

