



PARTY IN THE PARK

Tom and Baz - Aldeburgh House

In November 2019, Consensus held 'Party in the Park' a company-wide event whereby colleagues and supported individuals from across the organisation were invited to attend a three-day event at Golden Sands Caravan Park in Lincolnshire in celebration of Consensus, our colleagues and the people we support. In total 81 of our 90 services, over 150 supported individuals and over 350 support staff were in attendance.

The aim of the event was to live our values of opportunity, choice and success for the people we support by providing them with an opportunity to go on a holiday, try new activities and experiences and meet and make new friends in a social environment where they were free to be themselves and have fun.

One of the services that attended was Aldeburgh House. Based on Mersea Island, Essex the service provides residential accommodation and support for individuals with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs.

The individuals supported at Aldeburgh House, in West Mersea, love being an active part of their local community and are always keen to take part in various activities, ranging from art and drama, to water sports, walking and dance classes. They also enjoy regular day trips away as well as eating and socialising in the local pub, however not every individual at Aldeburgh House has the means to go on a holiday.

When deciding which individuals from the service would go, the team focussed on identifying who they thought may not otherwise have this kind of opportunity as well as who would get the most benefit from the experience, and so decided to take Tom and Baz.

For Tom, who cannot financially afford to go on an independent holiday, the event provided the perfect opportunity to experience his first ever holiday and overnight stay away from the service. The team then looked at who would be best suited to go with Tom and decided on Baz as they enjoy with each other company and socialise well together. The team also felt that Tom

and Baz would both benefit from the social aspects of the event and would enjoy mixing with others and making new friends.

Members of the support team were chosen using the same approach; identifying whose company Tom and Baz most enjoyed, who was compatible with each other and who would benefit the most from the experience. The team members who attended were Scott, Stacey and Saffron.

Aldeburgh House is close to Four Winds, another Consensus service, based in Brightlingsea and the supported individuals from both services often enjoy spending time socialising with each other, so to make the journey more fun, the services travelled up together and stopped at the same place for breaks.

The team had prepared print outs of what activities were going to be available over the two days, which ranged from physical activities such as the Spinner and laser tag to more creative pursuits such as tie dye t-shirt and Christmas decoration making to Brazilian percussion workshops and a petting farm.

Tom and Baz were really excited when they arrived. After finding their caravan and setting up their own cubby holes to feel cosy and homely, they headed off to get involved in the activities.

Tom regularly enjoys taking part in trampolining competitions, so he loved the Spinner game, a giant inflatable with a revolving beam that people took it in turns to jump over.

In the evening, both Tom and Baz loved the music and entertainment and couldn't wait to get on the dance floor. They really enjoyed dancing and interacting and making friends with people from different services. Tom also enjoyed the live band and was happily giving them his orders and making sure they were doing it properly!

Both Tom and Baz felt really relaxed and happy throughout the whole experience. They really enjoyed feeling a sense of belonging to the wider Consensus family and felt like they were a part of something special.

It was also a great opportunity for the guys to practice their daily living skills in the caravan and both enjoyed helping to make a cooked breakfast every morning.

Tom and Baz were really happy about going and were sad when the event came to an end as neither wanted to leave! Both said they couldn't wait until next year as they would definitely want to go again.

The support team who attended also really enjoyed the experience. For Saffron who has worked at the service for a year and is in her first support worker role, the experience enabled her to practice her skills and knowledge in a new and unique environment. For all three support workers, it was a great opportunity to meet and mix with other colleagues and supported individuals and they all loved the experience.



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