



PARTY IN THE PARK

Kieran - Cheshire 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. 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.

Cheshire House in Greater Manchester provides residential accommodation and nursing support for individuals with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs, including behaviours that challenge.

For the Cheshire team, Party in the Park provided a good opportunity to test run a holiday experience for the individuals attending so they could identify and model the support required for future independent holidays.

One of the supported individuals that attended the event from Cheshire House was Kieran, an individual with autism who likes to have fixed routines as they help him to manage his anxiety.

Preparing for Party in the Park

For Kieran, it was very important to have a routine throughout the holiday. As Kieran responds well to what he likes to call a 'rule book,' which clearly states his routines and sets boundaries for him to follow, the team decided to create him a 'Party in the Park rule book.'

This included a social story of what he would be doing each day with pictorial aids of caravan parks to support his understanding. Kieran's usual rules were then integrated into the rule book.

For the team, it was about managing and supporting Kieran with the change in routine during the event while

also enforcing the boundaries of the rule book to ensure he maintained a sense of comfort and security.

To ensure Kieran was well supported throughout the event, Managers of Cheshire House, Chris and Charlotte worked closely with the support team to identify who wanted to participate in the event and where skills would match with individuals. In total, seven members of the team attended the event. Taking a higher level of staff allowed support to be swapped regularly which helped minimise the risk of staff experiencing 'burn out' over the course of the three days.

Travelling to Party in the Park

As Kieran can struggle with having other people in his space the team hired a mini bus for the journey. To ease the transition, they planned the journey in advance so that they could incorporate some of Kieran's usual routines in to it, for instance stopping for a break at Kieran's usual meal times and sticking to his usual rule when ordering McDonalds of having a medium sized meal.

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Staying in a caravan

Staying in a caravan was a completely new experience for Kieran but he coped remarkably well. The team supported him by pretending that he was staying in his own flat and incorporated all his usual routines. He really enjoyed the interaction with the staff and he used

up so much energy on the activities during the day and the evening disco that he was happily in bed by 10pm each night.

Pet Therapy

The activity that Kieran enjoyed the most was the petting farm which consisted of a range of different animals including Shetland ponies, sheep, rabbits and a dog as well as the more unusual 'skinny' pigs and domesticated hedgehogs.

Kieran has dogs in his family home and loves dogs in general. He spent over two and a half hours with all the different animals. The positive impact being around the animals had on Kieran was a new and very interesting discovery for the team.

Since returning from the event, the team have been actively looking at opportunities to introduce animal therapy as a regular activity for Kieran.

Laser Quest

Another activity Kieran loved was the Laser Quest. After having an initial game with his support team, he joined a different service for another game and was able to manage and regulate his own behaviour which was a fantastic result for him.

Since returning to Cheshire House, the team have been in contact with a local laser quest venue and are making arrangements for Kieran to go.

Positive Outcomes

Manager of Cheshire House, Chris Taylor said, "Initially, we had some reservations about how Kieran would cope with an unknown environment; whether he would struggle with the change from his usual routine, the swapping of staff, the volume of people at the event and whether the level of activities would be too

overstimulating for him and result in an increase in anxiety/behaviours.

"As a team positive risk taking is a key part of our approach and for Kieran, it was about striking the balance between maintaining boundaries while still enabling him to have new experiences.

"One of the good things about the way the event was set up was that it enabled people to dip in and out of the activities. The main time Kieran showed signs of struggling was when there was some spare time between breakfast and the activities starting.

"To support Kieran, we decided to take everyone down to the local beach, while still setting clear boundaries for Kieran, such as, "we will walk to that point in the beach," which he responded really well to.



From this experience, Kieran has enjoyed lots of new experiences and we have discovered new things he enjoys which we can now incorporate into his support plan.



"The event has also been a good test run for us as a team to be able to support Kieran on an independent holiday as it has given us an opportunity to find out what support he needs in a new environment, so we can model that moving forward."



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