



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Southampton Mencap's vision will always be a world where people with learning disabilities and their families and carers are valued equally, listened to and included in society. We will continue to shape and deliver services which allow opportunities for skills development, independence for people with learning disabilities and which enable them and their families and carers to benefit from regular short breaks from each other.



A not for profit organisation working with the learning disability community.

**“Small, local and strong”**

# ANNUAL REPORT



## What we've been up to in the year 2021...

Welcome to our annual report which marks the end of another year. Despite the progress made and the lifting of many Covid rules, it continues to be an exceptionally challenging time for people of all ages with a learning disability and their families and carers. This report includes the lockdown periods when our services were closed so the stats given reflect this. We continue to run good quality services through our fantastic team of staff and volunteers which we are fortunate to have at a time when there is a staffing recruitment and retention crisis across the sector. We are acutely aware that the changes resulting from Coronavirus have had a serious impact on so many people, particularly those whose support needs have changed significantly requiring a serious review of their lifestyles. We recognise that people have experienced many changes to their lives, including support needs, health and wellbeing, poverty, debt, unemployment, the need to access information more and more through digital platforms. People with a learning disability and their families and carers have always been at the heart of our approach and we have adapted our services within the challenges Covid has presented. Initially we continued to provide much needed information, advice, and support via telephone and online platforms (including email and Zoom). We continued a very limited face to face service for children and young people through our Fairplay Holiday service. We also worked closely with other partners to ensure that we were part of the wider community effort. The council supported us throughout and our links with them and National Mencap strengthened and we became more connected, linking with other local groups across the country, developing stronger relationships, campaigning together, sharing information, accessing training and funding opportunities as well as mutual support. We are happy that life has slowly resumed some normality with our staff teams, day service provision, evening and weekend social clubs now operating for from our centre in Portswood. We produced a 'welcome back' video to ease everyone back into our services. We continue to follow infection prevention control measures to ensure everyone is safe and this will continue for the foreseeable future. We are fortunate in being recognised as a social care setting giving us access to free lateral flow testing kits and staff and volunteers continue to test regularly and are all fully vaccinated. We are fortunate in that so far levels of positive cases have not impacted on the delivery of our services.

*Quote "I love the job I've been doing for so many years and the challenges it brings along with the satisfaction of seeing new services develop. Most of all I love to see the progress made and the smiles on everyone's face." Alex Iles, CEO*

Our Trustees...  
Jennifer Strevens [Chair]  
Brian Strevens  
Di Bernstein  
Hilary Linsen  
Daniel Mar-Moliner  
Heidi Oldrey  
Lisa Stead

Our Chief Executive Officer...  
Alexandra Iles

Supporting our admin & finance functions.. Hardeep Kaur and Babs Kaur

Managing our range of activities...  
Elly Iles

Programme Leaders... Home Kitchen and Bakers Groups, Pula Popat; Own2Feet, Jane Richardson

Supervisors... Handycrafts, Cath Wigham; Gardening & Maintenance, Marc Kibler

Day service team...  
Liz Curtis, Angie Gilbert, DJ Gover, Sue Dashper

Fairplay, Livewire and Adult Gateway Clubs team ...  
Sam, Elecia, Toby, Lesley & Kelly

Managing the Carers in Southampton Service (CIS).... Linda Lawless

CIS Team... Joe, Mike, Sue, Linda, Debbie, Jagpal, Ailish, Emma

And finally...without the support of our committed troop of volunteers who support our work we would not be able to do what we do for the people we serve and who rely on our services.

## Mencap Enterprises

Toward the end of the year we introduced a new concept to our Day Service programme, offering a more enterprise based experience. This has got off to a good start giving people with a learning disability the opportunity to be involved in either growing, making, mending or baking activities as well as thinking about how to market and sell the products to the general public. We continue to offer the care and support needed from our experienced staff team so that individuals can build these skills and achieve their full potential.

# Mencap Enterprises; Grow, Mend, Make & Bake....

## GARDENING & MAINTENANCE GROUP

The restrictions imposed by Covid meant the group was unable to access Longdown Farm. As a result we reviewed and replaced this with the Gardening & Maintenance Group which continues to offer 'work-like' skills to a group of up to 10 participants. Things are going from strength to strength with all places filled and participants are currently supported in offering gardening services to 4 local gardens as well as maintaining the Mencap Centre and grounds. The group is showing promising signs of becoming a small thriving business with good feedback from satisfied customers potentially leading to more work. In the future they plan to sell home grown produce such as plants, vegetable and herbs. One garden owner has also agreed that her garden can be used to highlight the group's skills and abilities to promote the service more widely.



*Quote "I really enjoy the gardening work and it is helping with my confidence." Jonathon*



## The BAKERS & MAKERS GROUP (BAKING)

We extended our day service provision to offer 10 places to participants seeking 'work-like' skills and registered this as a Food Business with the council. So far 4 places have been taken up by people who plan, prepare, produce and package a range of bakery products. With support the group has perfected a delicious and professional line of goods which are being sold regularly to internal and external customers. In the future a branded packaging system will be established which will be easily recognised across all goods products. So far the group has sold almost 200 products with the Lemon Drizzle being

the most popular but the newly introduced carrot cake is fast catching up.

*Quote "I love baking; my favourite things to make are the cakes and my best is the lemon drizzle cake!" Chris*

Own2Feet has 8 and 11 places filled on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The group continues to have a focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills and topic work which is differentiated to suit each level of ability. Participants have been involved in a photography course, a science day and, experiments, and planning and running a successful Christmas Fayre with the support of our other groups. Their involvement with the enterprise initiative has already got off to a start with shopping for the Bakers & Makers group to provide the ingredients needed for the weekly bakery orders. In the future they will be supported to create a 'made to order' service, arranging and helping with deliveries and a 'shop front', and to develop ideas for publicity materials, including an enterprise catalogue of goods for sale. Ways in which the work of the Gardening & Maintenance group can be integrated as part of the Thursday group are being explored as business grows to help those attending on either day to gain valuable customer, money and communication.

*Quote "I think this is the right place for me as despite my struggles with the support I get I have managed to overcome my disabilities". Darral*

## Mencap Enterprises, Grow, Mend, Make & Bake....

**Monday Handycrafts** has 13 places filled with participants enjoying art and craft activities, learning about different styles of painting. As a result they have been inspired to create individual art work. The group has been able to learn and practice a variety of craft skills producing small gifts and objects to make and keep. As part of the Treat me well campaign they produced a 'training' blanket covered in key messages to improve the way people with learning disabilities are treated in hospital. To support the enterprise initiative the group plan to create an exciting range of unique, personalized items, including seasonal crafts and goods made in advance. They will also be supported to develop ideas for the labelling and packaging of bakery and gardening goods.

**Quote** *"I love coming to Handycrafts, it's awesome and I just enjoy it so much"* Rohann



**Friday Home Kitchen** has 13 places filled with participants learning about the importance of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. To reinforce this learning, different activities have been introduced as an integral part of the programme, including exercise, walks, food safety and food hygiene. More recently participants have been encouraged to make foods from their own ingredients which they plan and shop for in advance supported by their families or carers. They are supported to make a range of different foods each week and have the choice of taking this home to share or to eat as part of their lunch during the day. The group will soon be supporting the bakery initiative by producing items, some of which will be stored in the freezer until needed. This will be a useful way of supporting the Bakers & Makers Group to ensure that supply meets demand.

**Quote** *"I like coming to Home Kitchen and helping out, I enjoy cooking, especially making cakes. Everyone is very nice to me"* Hassan

**Quote** *"I love working here, it gets me out of bed each day! I enjoy interacting with our members who all have such individual personalities. The other staff are so supportive and this job has molded me into the person I am today. Everyone feels like a family to me."* DJ,

**Trainee Activities Worker**

### Our new addition to the Mencap family

A proud day for everyone when we took possession of our new vehicle, a 7 seater Ford Galaxy car fitted with a tow bar and with bold Mencap branding! This will help across our services by enabling us to promote our enterprise initiative when out and about. It will also be used by the Garden & Maintenance Group to enable them to work across a wider area of the City, transport equipment and for delivering baked goods where necessary.



**Did you know?** Our new acquisition means that the Gardening & Maintenance and Bakers groups will now be able to expand their reach across the Southampton area promoting their skills and the services available to the public.

# Mencap Enterprises, Grow, Mend, Make & Bake...



## Grow, Mend, Make & Bake

### Southampton Mencap Enterprises

A guide to our Day Service programme...  
for those interested in attending and those  
interested in finding out how to support us!



[www.southamptonmencap.org](http://www.southamptonmencap.org)  
[admin@southamptonmencap.co.uk](mailto:admin@southamptonmencap.co.uk)  
023 8058 4088



I am interested in...

- » **Grow**
- » **Mend**
- Make**
- Bake**

...Growing all sorts of plants, vegetables, flowers and herbs  
...Offering gardening services to the local community  
... 'Keeping Portswood Tidy' with litter picking campaigns  
...Promoting and selling the produce I grow so that lots of people can enjoy it!

*That's why I attend Mencap Gardening & Maintenance Group every Tuesday from 9.30am-4.30pm!*



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023 8058 4088



I am interested in...

- Grow**
- Mend**
- Make**
- » **Bake**

...Planning, preparing and producing a range of delicious bakery products  
...Selling these products to customers via a 'shop front' at the Mencap Centre  
...Getting involved in community events such as fetes and pop-ups  
...Packaging and delivering products to customers who might not be able to get to us

*That's why I attend Southampton Mencap Bakery and Home Kitchen every Wednesday and Friday from 9.30am-4.30pm!*



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For a downloadable version of our Enterprise Leaflet or to find out further information, including pictures and videos please visit our website [www.southampton.org/day-services](http://www.southampton.org/day-services)

# Independent Help and Support

Southampton Mencap recognises that independent support is incredibly important when caring for a loved one which can be an exhausting experience leaving little time for anything else. Our well established and skilled Carers in Southampton team offers free services for adults providing unpaid care to someone with ill health or a disability. Providing information and advice on learning disability matters or signposting to other organisations that may be able to help continues to be a central part of our support services. We continue to act as the voice on behalf of people with learning disabilities and their carers' and ask them to let us know about their experiences with healthcare, mental health, discrimination and money and support. We will support them or lobby where necessary on their behalf on issues such as finances, e.g. billing, charging and client contributions, travelling around the city, accessing an assessment or review of their needs and having regular breaks from each other which suit their individual circumstances and are accessible in case of emergencies, We also encourage and support them to think ahead and plan for the future as a safeguard when they are no longer able to carry out their caring responsibilities.

It is possible to do all the above through our team's participation in a number of forums, committees and working groups which represent the views of people with learning disabilities and their carers' to ensure that these issues are brought to the attention of decision makers and are included as an integral part of the City's strategy.

**Treat me Well** is a campaign we have been involved in since its launch in 2018 and is all about transforming how the NHS treats people with learning disabilities in hospital. More recently our group of TMW members have participated in the making of a film 'Good Care for Me' led by the University of Southampton which will be used when training medical students. The group has also facilitated the placement of two first year paramedics to become more familiar with and understand the needs of people with learning disabilities. In the future members of the TMW group have been invited to be involved in more training to medical and front line staff in hospitals and GP surgeries to raise awareness, including



some involvement as 'experts by experience' to 'quality check' the services provided by health care staff at Practice Plus at the RSH running the Urgent Treatment Centre and some wards too to

see if they are learning disability friendly. We were awarded some funding which helped to achieve the above outcomes.



**Quotes** *"I liked doing the training with the students; they were very nice people. They listened to me when I told them I was in hospital."* Treat me well member

*"I really enjoyed going to the University and helping the students to understand what they should do to help people with learning disabilities, like me."* Treat me well member

*"This was a fantastic opportunity to deliver a training session to student nurses. There were benefit for everyone involved. I really enjoyed supporting our members to lead on the Treat me well campaign."* Cath, Group Leader

## Have your say

Representing the views of our service users and supporting them to have a voice or campaigning for their rights under the Care Act is a vital element of our work.

# Our Adult Activities Programme

At the heart of our services, as has always been the case, was our programme of social activities which continued to offer opportunities for socialisation and the chance for our members and their families/carers to benefit from short breaks from each other. This was very much needed after the pandemic! For adults aged 18+ these are provided on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays. As we were closed for part of this year, some of the statistics given reflect this. We did not begin to operate our Fairplay Clubs until April 2021, and our social clubs re-opened in September, Day Services in April. Some of the figures given reflect this.



## LiveWire Club

Our 18+ and 25+ LiveWire Clubs started back in September 2021 for the first time since the start of the pandemic. The group were incredibly excited to return so they could see their friends again and start doing the activities they know and love such as socializing, going out and about in the local area and enjoying themed evenings such as game night & movie night.

## Adult Gateway Club

Adult Gateway is a popular club which continues to provide a vital social opportunity for people over the age of 40 with a learning disability. The group returned in September 2021 following a long break as a result of the pandemic. It took some time to build the numbers back up but the group is now in full swing and enjoying being together with friends again.



## Stats as of December 2021

Number in LiveWire18: 13  
Number in LiveWire25: 12  
Number in Adult Gateway: 11

*NB:* Numbers are lower than pre-pandemic levels but slowly building back up again. They have increased in 2022.

**Did you know?** Our clubs give members a chance to relax, socialise and join in with activities such as cooking, creating, art/craft, bingo, etc. There's also the occasional visit to bowling, cinema or going out for an ice-cream as an indulgent treat. More importantly it's a chance for them to socialise with their friends.

# Our Children & Young People Activities Programme

Our programme of social activities continued with our under 18 Fairplay provision. The clubs and playschemes provided children with important developmental and play opportunities. It also provided family carers with much regular short breaks.

## FairPlay Junior Club and Schemes

Running on alternate Saturday mornings during term times, our FairPlay Junior Club is an ideal option for children with additional needs. This support continues during the school holidays for a range of playscheme days. In 2021, FairPlay activities resumed in the Easter holidays with 8 days of playschemes being offered for the first time since the start of the pandemic. Following this, the Saturday club re-started. Like our over-18 activities, it took a while to build our numbers back up but in 2022 they are now much healthier.

**Quote:** "Thank you for all that you do at the Saturday club. It is really reassuring to know that I can drop my child off at a safe place he enjoys attending." **Parent of Fairplay Junior member**

**Quote** "It is fun at Fairplay Teens as there is lots to do and I get to see my friends. I prefer it to school!" **Fairplay Teen member**



### Stats as of December 2021

Number in FPJ Saturday: 7  
Number in FPT Saturday: 9  
Average number across playschemes: 9

*NB: Numbers are lower than pre-pandemic levels but slowly building back up again. They have increased in 2022.*

Total Number of hours delivered (Saturday sessions): 91  
Total Number of hours delivered (playscheme sessions): 221  
*NB: No sessions delivered before Apr 21*

**Did you know?** FairPlay Schemes run during school holidays and give members the opportunity to get out of the house and have some fun! You can choose from indoor and outdoor activities based around a fun new theme each week.

# Support for Families and carers



Our contract with SCC for the Carers in Southampton service is into its fifth and final year before it goes out to tender. Over the last 7 years since we began delivering this, the service has been hugely valued by both carers and the council and offers free services to adults providing unpaid care to someone with a disability or ill health. Below is a summary of the service's key achievements in the last year.

- Worked with SCC on the Carers Partnership Board and strategy work
- Delivered 13 Wellbeing zoom sessions jointly with Parent Support Link
- Developed targeted services for the BAME community to support them in their caring role through a successful grant bid. To date appropriate leaflets publicising the support available, stickers for pharmacy bags and the setting up a specific WhatsApp group. Other plans include a diabetes awareness session and the development of a series of short focused video clips.
- Supported the carers' vaccination process with a take up by over 800 carers.
- Undertook training on how to use the council's new management system, Care Director, which replaced the current model.
- Supported the annual national carers' survey.
- Accessed training, including Safeguarding and deaf awareness.
- Organised 4 carers walks during Carers Week
- Supported carer friendly hospital work
- Met with Devon and Portsmouth carers' services to share good practice

## Quotes from family carers on the Carers in Southampton Service

*"These carers lunches are like a 'SAFE SPACE', I can say anything and will not be judged for it, only supported."*

*"I needed someone to talk to, I was overwhelmed. I needed to feel supported. And that's exactly what I got when I reached out to Carers in Southampton."*

*"Carers in Southampton are understanding and sympathetic. They gave me strength to advocate for myself."*

**Carers Boards and Forums;** the purpose of all these groups is to ensure carers' voices are heard. Southampton Mencap continues to play a key role within all these groups by either facilitating, organising or representing carers' views.

**Carers Co-Production Group;** this group was set up specifically during Covid-19 by the council and Clinical Commissioning Group to address the additional challenges to people with learning disabilities and their families.

**Carers Sub Group;** this group was set up specifically during Covid-19 by the council and Clinical Commissioning Group to address the additional challenges to people with learning disabilities and their families. Southampton Mencap continues to play a key role within all these groups by either facilitating, organising or representing carers' views.

**Learning Disability Partnership Board;** originally set up as part of the Valuing People agenda, we have ensured that there is a wide representation of carers of people with learning disabilities with varying needs and ages and to share the key points of discussion from the meetings with the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the carers' co-production group.

## Looking ahead

We will continue to work with others and to do all we can to highlight the daily challenges that affect people impacted by a learning disability and to improve the support available to them.

# Thanks to everyone who has helped us during the year. Without their support we could not do what we do.....

Over the last year we have received lots of support from people involved at all levels across the organisation. We benefit hugely from their commitment, skills and expertise and it is a testament to them that the organisation accomplishes so much and has such a good reputation as a service provider to benefit our service users. We are proud that we have such a dedicated team of people who work so hard for local people with learning disabilities and their families and carers and would like to thank them for the contribution they make to our services.

## Staffing

During this year we were sorry to see some of our team leave us to go on to new opportunities. We bid a sad farewell to Gail, our office manager who moved to Stratford be closer to her family. We also waved goodbye to Mary Street, Own2Feet programme leader, who embarked on a new life in Spain. Ashley Rayner from the Carers in Southampton took up an exciting role with the Rose Road Association but we were pleased to welcome Debbie Hendry and Linda Bray who joined the carers' team as Specialist Carer Workers and Ailish McRedmond who took on the admin role. We welcomed Hardeep Kaur into her new role as Mencap's Senior Administrator and DJ Gover who took on the exciting new opportunity as our trainee activities worker within our day services and social activities.

## Trustees

During this year we had 7 trustees who, in their own time, play key roles in the running of our charity. We are very grateful and appreciate all they do in taking on the responsibility for steering and setting the scene. They meet regularly and give hours of support each year to help the organisation in setting the strategic direction and culture of the organisation and ensuring we are well led and managed to achieve our charitable objectives.

## In memory of Ali Sheikh

We were extremely saddened to hear of the death of Ali, one of our committed trustees, during this year. He was a huge supporter of our charity over many years. We are sure he would be pleased to know that we continue to support his family through our services.

## Volunteers

During this year 12 people contributed almost 200 hours of their own time across 6 of our services. The contribution of volunteers across our varied activities is invaluable and we cannot thank the enough for giving up their time s freely. We love the energy and enthusiasm that they bring to the organisation. There are so many ways in which they support us; within our clubs, holiday activities, supporting carers, taking on the role of an independent home visitor, or generally helping out at functions and events, gardening or fundraising. Inevitably the pandemic and our closures impacted on people's ability to volunteer and we will be focusing on this area in the coming months.

## Grants and Donations

The last two years have been difficult and challenging for most of us which has impacted on the grants and donations that we usually receive from so many individuals through fundraising efforts. Donations totalled just under £1000 during this year. However, we received a grant from the lottery which enabled us to purchase several Ipads which helped our members to participate in various zoom sessions held during the closures. We also received some funding from Mencap to support the Treat me well work. By working with the University of Southampton we also received donations for our involvement which will go toward the development of a sensory room. In the coming year we intend to put more time into raising additional funds for the organisation so we can sustain and develop existing services as well as setting up additional ones to meet unmet need where possible.

## Mencap Centre We have almost reached capacity with the building used throughout the week.

The day service programme operates every week day, holiday schemes between 2 and 4 days throughout all school holidays, Social clubs run on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays, and it also houses the office team. Portswood Church is used during pinch times which helps to avoid disruption to our services. Meon House continues to be used as the base for the Carers in Southampton team.

## New ways of working



**Social Media;** we made great progress in reaching people through social media. Our Facebook page is now followed by over 1000 people and provides regular updates on our own activities and sharing items of interest. Through this medium we managed to raise awareness both locally and nationally to some major campaigns, e.g. highlighting the need for people with learning disabilities to be prioritised for the Covid vaccine.

Our website was completely re-designed by Elly, Activities Manager, with the support of Dan, one of our trustees. This resulted in a much improved and user friendly interface acting as a constant source of reliable information in finding out about our services and important news. Throughout the pandemic we offered a 'good news blog' and a weekly bulletin. We also recognised that some are unable to easily access the internet so made sure to keep in contact by letter, phone or face to face.



**Activity Packs** were sent throughout the early 2021 lockdown to a range of age groups, including under 18 and over 18 service users. In total, 40 a week were delivered over the first 12 weeks of 2021, ending in April 2021 when the centre was reopened. The Activity Packs were hand delivered by our staff team who were allocated an area of the City and enabled them to keep regular contact with members and their families. In addition they were accompanied by regular Zoom sessions, for example art and craft packs were sent which were then used during zoom sessions. This kept members occupied during the second lockdown and provided a much-needed continued connection between staff and members. We included a 'pampering treat' for carers in one pack which was well received. Our 'Healthy Eating' cookery book was also included one week in order to encourage cooking together. At the height of delivery of zoom sessions staff were engaged in delivering 10 each week. Most had a take up of around 10-12 members each time. These included fitness, quizzes, music, cooking and cultural activities. Attendance began to tail off as people gradually returned to services. We also arranged a 3 week water colour course, delivered by City Art Gallery staff via zoom sessions. 10 people participated and completed the course.

Providing 'Information, Advice & Guidance' on learning disability issues to our members, their carers, or interested professionals is a central part of our work. We pride ourselves on developing good relationships so that people are able to rely on our support when needed. During the pandemic our team offered practical support which included regular 'keeping in touch calls' to our members and their carers.

*Quote "I was very isolated and depressed during the lockdowns; it was just me and my daughter without any of her usual support. It really helped to have someone to talk to each week to just check that things were ok. This helped me tremendously and we both looked forward to the Mencap Activity Packs." Family Carer*



## CONTACT DETAILS



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