opportunity
choice
and
wellbeing
Creative Support is a not for profit provider of personalised services – supporting people to enjoy their lives and reach their full potential.

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To support our service users we provide a range of services to meet their individual needs, including supported living, supported housing, residential and extra care, community and home support, floating support and meaningful activities. We work with people who have a wide spectrum of support needs, ranging from short-term support to regain their independence to intensive support enabling people with complex needs to enjoy a good quality of life.

Creative Support also develops and manages high quality housing to provide supported accommodation. As well as owning and managing our own houses and flats, we manage many properties belonging to our partner housing associations.

As a not for profit agency (Industrial and Provident Society with charitable status) we are committed to using our assets and resources to create opportunities for the people we support. All our services are individualised, person centred and deliver valued outcomes, as we passionately believe that our service users have the right to live active lives which enable them to reach their full potential as individuals. Our services for people with a learning disability are based on person centred approaches and ordinary life principles, whilst our mental health services promote recovery and social inclusion. All our support services aim to increase the confidence and independence of our service users.

Over the years we have built up an excellent reputation for working in partnership to provide quality services and currently offer a diverse range of highly regarded services in over 50 local authorities across the North West, North East, Midlands, London and the South East.

Creative Support is a high quality provider of person centred social care services for people with learning disabilities, mental health and other support needs.
Since 1997 we have developed a range of person-centred services for people with learning disabilities. These now include supported living and community support, as well as intensive support services for people who challenge services and for those with complex needs. Our first specialist service for people with autistic spectrum disorders opened in 2005. Today, over half of the services we provide are for people with a learning disability.

Our first day service opened in 1996 and since then we have gained a track record in delivering meaningful activities and stimulating day services which enable personal development. Since 2005 we have provided extra care services to meet the needs of older people living in sheltered housing, with the aim of enabling our tenants to retain their skills and independence and to enjoy a good quality of life. In the last 10 years we have implemented many valued approaches to involving service users, their families and carers in improving and developing our services.

Creative Support now provides services throughout the North West, North East, Midlands and South East of England and we have opened a number of local and regional offices to provide greater support to our projects in these areas. By 2010 Creative Support employed a diverse team of 3000 well trained staff in over 50 local authorities providing a wide range of valued services in partnership with service users, families and carers, housing associations and other agencies. We have the management ability, infrastructure and resources to develop creative new services to meet individual needs.

Our continuing aim is to provide reliable, respectful services which enable service users to reach their individual potential and enjoy a high quality of life.
Creative Support is committed to an individualised, person centred philosophy of service delivery which is designed around the individual needs and choices of our service users.

We work in partnership with service users themselves, their families and carers and other agencies to enable people to:

- Enjoy a valued and inclusive life
- Respect and uphold their rights and choices as equal citizens
- Ensure their privacy, dignity and respect
- Offer unconditional positive regard to promote self esteem
- Enable people to realise their dreams and to achieve their goals and aspirations
- Empower people to make positive changes in their lives
- Recognise and build upon their personal resources, strengths and abilities
- Gain confidence, life skills and independence
- Improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Protect vulnerable people from harm and abuse
- Increase acceptance and understanding in their communities and assist them to make a positive contribution to these communities
- Provide opportunities for learning and self development
- Access fulfilling activities (work, education, leisure), social opportunities and relationships
- Provide equality of opportunity
- Ensure their safety, security and quality of life

Our mission is to promote the independence, inclusion and wellbeing of people with support needs. We do this by working with the people we support, their families and partner agencies to deliver innovative, high quality services that meet individual needs and aspirations in a person centred way. We also aim to provide best value to purchasers and to use our resources in efficient, flexible and creative ways.

John & Jude, Service Users

Jude and John first met in their 20s at a Gateway club on Bonfire Night:

“I found Jude and she found me. Then we did our own things and later we were working in the same place and she told them to ask me if I would have coffee with her and I did, and ever since then we have been right as rain.”

John moved into Jude’s flat at Buxton Road just before they got married in September 2007, 35 years after they met:

“He got down on one knee and proposed. We have been friends for 36 years and I wouldn’t change him.

All the support workers helped us to organise the wedding. We planned it together and they helped us. And for our anniversary we bought nice things, champagne and rings, and we went on a mini-break to The Croft. I didn’t want anyone to know. It was our secret romantic weekend and it was our first weekend away without support. We had support to go there, but then they left to go home, so we were on our own. It was lovely.”

Jude is supported to go on a computer course and John has been involved in landscaping the garden around the flats where he and Jude have a summer house.

“I’m growing whatever I want. When the garden has settled it will be beautiful and we will also grow vegetables.”

“We like Buxton Road and the staff they are there when we need them. John has help with the cooking as before he burnt himself.”

“Yes, the staff, they’ve been very good to us. We go shopping and get things that we want and I look after my money and my wife.”

“We have been friends for 36 years and I wouldn’t change him”

John & Jude, Service Users
Creative Support is an experienced not for profit provider of care and support services for:

- people with a learning disability
- people with mental health needs
- people with dementia
- people on the autistic spectrum
- people with acquired brain injuries
- people with sensory and physical disabilities
- people with complex needs, including behaviour which can challenge services

Our service users are very diverse, including vulnerable young people and single parents, older people, those who present risks to themselves or others, people who are hard to engage, people who are homeless, those who have a history of problematic drug or alcohol use and people at risk of offending. We support people from all ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Creative Support delivers high quality services to over 2,500 people in more than 50 Local Authorities. Our services range from tailor made support for individuals based on their assessed needs to larger services across wider areas. Our current services include supported living, supported housing, residential care, outreach and floating support, domiciliary care and extra care. We also provide day activities and support so service users, families and carers can enjoy holidays and short breaks.

Creative Support offers flexible support from a few hours a week to 24 hours a day. Our staff work with all service users to achieve positive outcomes, including the development of greater confidence and independence, improved wellbeing and increased choice and control. We support every service user to actively participate in their community, access leisure, work and educational opportunities and develop social networks.

Who we support and where we work

**North West**
Blackpool
Blackburn with Darwen
Bolton
Bury
Calderdale
Cumbria
Halton
Lancashire
Leeds
Liverpool
Manchester
Oldham
Rochdale
St Helens
Salford
Stockport
Stoke-on-Trent
Tameside
Trafford
Warrington
Wigan

**North East**
Darlington
Durham
Gateshead
Middlesbrough
Newcastle
North Tyneside
North Yorkshire
Redcar & Cleveland
South Tyneside
Stockton-on-Tees
Sunderland

**Midlands**
Birmingham
Derby
Derbyshire
Dudley
Leicester
North Lincolnshire
Nottingham
Shropshire
Sandwell
Staffordshire
Telford & Wrekin
Wolverhampton
Worcestershire

**London & the South East**
Barnet
Buckinghamshire
Camden
Oxfordshire
West Berkshire
Windsor & Maidenhead
Karen transferred to Creative Support under TUPE after we won the contract for the service she works in. She started as a Support Worker and has progressed to Senior Support Worker and now, Team Leader:

“The move to Creative Support was welcomed by all. Almost immediately things began to change for service users; rights, choice and independence were the main focus. Service users began developing their own skills, from domestic tasks to better understanding their finances and reaching their goals and aspirations, from going fishing to going on holiday. For the first time they had their own front door key! These were exciting new experiences.

Staff had to change their working practices and with Creative Support’s training, began developing skills which helped us to work in a more person centred way.

I have seen wonderful changes in the service users; someone who hardly spoke more than ‘yes’ or ‘no’ now makes verbal choices of his own, putting full sentences together. This has come about by working with new person centred support plans.

‘Sign Here’ training for staff has changed the lives of service users with non verbal communication, as they can now communicate their choices and staff can relate to their needs and wishes and provide better support.

With Creative Support I have seen the positive effects of working in a person centred way. The changes have been rewarding, not only for the service users but also for the staff. I am happy to come to work every day and enjoy being part of a company who values people’s lives and works together with people to make a difference.”

Karen, Team Leader

Opportunity and Choice

At Creative Support we empower the people we support to communicate their wishes and preferences and to exercise greater choice and control. We believe that people with support needs should be able to make choices in all areas of their lives, including their housing and where they live, who they spend time and live with, where they go on holiday and how they use their money and resources. It is also important for them to choose how and when to be supported, as well as who by. Making choices leads to greater satisfaction, enhanced self esteem and better quality of life.

We promote a culture of positive risk management so that our service users can participate in activities they enjoy and safely experience new opportunities, balancing choice with safety and wellbeing. We follow the social model of disability – people with disabilities should not be prevented from enjoying a full lifestyle by discrimination, social barriers or lack of support. To achieve this we are proactive and creative in enabling people to achieve their goals and dreams.

Creative Support promotes the recovery of people with mental health needs by assisting them to use their support networks, personal resources, strengths and coping skills. Staff work in partnership with each individual to develop their own personal pathway to recovery using Wellness Recovery Action Plans and to enjoy opportunities for personal growth and development through access to education, training, volunteering, work, creative arts and other meaningful activities.

Creative Support uses a variety of effective service user and carer involvement initiatives so that our service users can access peer support, participate in the selection of their staff, assess service quality and shape the development of their service and the agency as a whole.
We promote health and wellbeing as a key theme within support planning and person centred planning. Service users have detailed Health Action Plans to ensure that their health needs are met.

We emphasise healthy living, eating, exercise and health promotion to enable service users to improve their physical and mental wellbeing and to manage their own healthcare needs as fully as possible. Staff are trained in effectively promoting health and wellbeing.

Service users are supported to access all of the health services available to them and to receive a level of proactive and preventative healthcare which is as good as or better than that enjoyed by the general population.

Where a service user requires support with personal care, this is delivered in such a way as to protect and promote their dignity whilst also maximising their independence wherever possible.

Creative Support has been supporting me for 7 years now. Before this I was drinking and getting into fights and had to keep moving, living in different houses. I was not happy with my family and in trouble with the police.

At Creative Support I lived with other guys and they became my friends. Creative Support helped me to plan for my life, now I can do my medication myself, I enjoy meeting friends, I have learnt a lot through going to college, I have a provisional driving licence for my car, I volunteer in the dogs’ home and I go on holiday with my friends. When my support workers could see that I could do all these things, they sat down with me and talked about moving on and we planned how I was going to get my own place and I now have my own place, near my friends. Now sometimes I do not have support as I thought to myself that I need to help myself. If I get stuck they help me, they are there if I need them.

I feel really happy I have got everything now. Before I didn’t have it but now I have.

Creative Support does things the right way. The right way is helping people by listening and not interrupting. When I am helping in interviews for new staff, this is what I look for. And I look for a good sense of humour. You listen to them and they listen to you.

I have also gone to meetings with Anna Lunts [Chief Executive] on the train. We went to talk about what Creative Support is like, to tell people who did not know and to meet people who might ask Creative Support to support them. I have been to a few of these meetings. I can tell them, in the past there was nothing and now there is a future.”
Putting People First

Creative Support is committed to the transformation of adult social care by delivering personalised services which enable people to:

- Enjoy access to all education, leisure, transport and healthcare services by ensuring everyone has the information, advice and support they need.
- Make a positive contribution to their community by developing social networks, volunteering, supporting each other and making their communities the best possible places to live.
- Maintain their physical and mental wellbeing, including access to preventative support and early intervention so that people are able to continue their everyday lives.

Most importantly we want to ensure that the people we support can exercise choice and control over their lives so that they feel they have a full life, rather than just a set of services.

We promote choice and control by:

- Making sure people have access to the right support, information, advice and advocacy to make informed choices.
- Providing practical training for our staff in delivering personalised services.
- Matching staff directly to the needs and interests of service users, with lots of service user and family carer involvement.
- Providing clear information about our services so people know what to expect from us.
- Welcoming service users, families and carers who want to self-direct their own support, including people who want to buy services using their Individual Budget or a Direct Payment.
- Supporting people to understand and maximise the resources available to them, including costing out support plans and accessing brokerage and advocacy services.
- Offering accountable finance and administration systems so everyone knows how their money is being spent.
- Working with everyone involved to ensure people are kept safe.
- Using person centred approaches to support our service users in the ways they want and need.
When recruiting and employing staff Creative Support seeks:

- To create a flexible and adaptable staffing model to provide a personalised service to individuals
- To match the needs and interests of our service users with the skills, experience and interests of employees from a range of backgrounds
- People who are warm, sensitive and engaging as individuals and can demonstrate the qualities of respect and empathy
- People who are accountable, trustworthy, reflective and open in all aspects of their practice, can problem solve and deliver creative responses
- Competent staff who are confident in working with service users in their own homes, our projects and in the wider community
- A diverse staff team who can offer support in a non discriminatory way and can demonstrate a clear understanding of equality of opportunity
- Staff who are committed to their own development and training needs and enthusiastic to learn and develop in their role

Creative Support’s rigorous recruitment processes ensure that all our staff have the skills, experience and personal characteristics to provide effective, professional support in a warm and positive way. Service users are involved at all levels of recruitment.

We are proud of the diversity of our staff team. Currently over 15% of our staff are from black and minority ethnic groups. We employ people of all religious persuasions and encourage tolerance and respect for religious beliefs. Gay and heterosexual staff are equally comfortable working for Creative Support. We employ men and women at all levels and offer flexibility to people with responsibilities for childcare or adult dependants. We are positive about employing people with disabilities, including people who are recovering from mental health problems. Older people with life experience are highly valued as are young people with lots of potential.

Our commitment to training ensures that all our staff continue to expand their knowledge, increase their skills and are able to develop their careers with Creative Support as fully as possible.

Jess, Support Worker

Jess first worked for Creative Support in our Cyber Café. In 2008, after nearly 20 years in the catering industry she decided she needed a change. She thought of leaving and spoke to her manager, who suggested she apply to be a Support Worker as she knew the service users and had shown herself to have the essential personal characteristics. Jess applied and was successful.

When she took on the role Jess attended training to gain the right skills and knowledge to provide the support needed. Jess meets and greets new members, introduces them to the activities and sessions and delivers the Health and Safety induction. She provides practical assistance; assists in the sessions, such as art, cookery and drama; and participates in the evening sessions and day trips. Jess also provides emotional support and, if appropriate, feeds back to each service user’s regular support team to ensure they are provided with the care and support they need.

“Creative Support encourages people to develop their skills and knowledge”
Creative Support is recognised as an Investors in People organisation because of our commitment to staff training and development. Our comprehensive training programmes are based on person centred values to ensure that services are respectful and personalised.

Our Head Office and five Regional Training Centres offer more than 600 days of training each year, meeting all National Occupational Standards for care and support services. We are also proud of our status as an approved Edexcel NVQ and BTEC Centre, delivering over 300 of these awards annually to our staff. We actively contribute to training partnerships in the areas where we work, thereby extending access to many other training opportunities.

Creative Support provides induction, mandatory and ongoing corporate training, practice teaching and management training. We also provide specialist training including:

- Staff supporting people who have a learning disability or autism undertake the Learning Disability Qualification (LDQ), person centred thinking and planning, autism awareness, communication techniques and positive approaches to behaviour support
- Staff providing housing related support receive dedicated training in tenancy sustainment and promoting independence
- Recovery focused mental health training is provided for staff supporting people with mental health needs

Creative Support has a well regarded Practice Teaching Programme for student social workers. In partnership with 18 Universities we deliver over 75 high quality student social work placements each year.

As well as providing training for our staff, Creative Support also offers training to our service users. In response to service user consultation, we offer places to service users on our core training courses, including First Aid, Food Hygiene, Health and Safety, Service User Involvement and Recruitment and Selection. This builds the skills and confidence of our service users and encourages them to get involved in all aspects of service provision, recruitment and quality assurance.
Creative Support is committed to the achievement of quality standards in all areas of service delivery, to a philosophy of continuous improvement and positive outcomes for service users. We promote agency wide standards of good practice and compliance with statutory requirements whilst actively acknowledging the need for local innovation and diversity.

We have developed an internal quality assurance system based upon external assessment frameworks and standards and underpinned by our Agency Philosophy and the principles of Valuing People.

Creative Support’s internal quality assurance system involves annual inspections and periodic unannounced inspections of our services by teams of quality auditors, including trained lay assessors, most of whom are current or ex-service users.

Creative Support is recognised as an Investors in People organisation highlighting our high standards in staff training and development, communication, vision and achievement of business objectives.

Following a full assessment of our Health and Safety systems, in November 2008 we became a ‘CHAS registered contractor’ under the Contractors Health & Safety (CHAS) Assessment Scheme.

We work to achieve the highest attainment under the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework. Many of our services are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) under the appropriate residential or domiciliary care standards. We have worked hard to achieve these standards within our services and we are proactive in improving services based on recommendations given by CQC inspectors.

Quality is also assured through our compliance with service specifications and the quality standards specified by purchasers. We ensure that contract monitoring procedures and our own internal audit processes demonstrate the achievement of customer expectations. Our philosophy is to work collaboratively with our purchasers, service users, families and partner agencies to achieve continuous improvement.

David, Service User

“I have had a disability since being attacked in 1998. At first I said to my family that there was nothing wrong with me and I didn’t need any help or support. After a period of time things were getting worse for me, my health and for the family. I decided, after a meeting with my social worker, that I did need help and I was introduced to Creative Support. My support started in 2007, and at first I found it hard as I had to ask, ‘what are we doing today?’ My support workers said that they would take me anywhere that I would like to go, but it was hard for me, a person with a disability, to decide where to go.

After a year of help from Creative Support now I tell my workers what we are doing for the period of time that I have with them. When I receive the rota for the month in advance, I start planning on what to do, where to go. We the clients make the choices and Creative Support will help us with everything.

Creative Support are there to help you and you may think that what you want is a silly little thing, but nothing is silly for Creative Support. There are times when I have support that I just go to a coffee shop for a drink and a chat for three hours, but the way I feel after those three hours is fantastic.

Every minute is important for us all and Creative Support is there when you need them, every minute of the day. And the final thing that I can say is; supporting you the way you want it is what creative support achieve.”
“I moved here into my home with Creative Support in March 2002. I had lived in residential care before this. Since moving here I am more able around living skills. I am supported to make meals for myself and my co-tenants, I use the kitchen appliances with support from the staff, the oven, washing machine, tumble drier, doing my own ironing and using the microwave. I like living here as I can choose my own things: what I want to eat, when I want to make a cup of tea and what I want to watch on the television. I have my own telephone and I can ring my boyfriend at any time and my sister, which makes me happy.

I am also more independent in the community; I access the local shops independently and have made friends with people in the community. I also access the local theatre to see any shows that I want to see and any pop concerts. I have a job in a local tea room on a Friday morning, where I help out with preparing the meals and making drinks. I enjoy this work as it makes me feel I am doing something that I want to do.

I have achieved a couple of my life’s ambitions since moving here: I now have a season ticket for Middlesbrough Football Club and the staff support me to attend the games with my club mascot, Roary the Lion; and I also went abroad on holiday for the first time. I have been to Disneyland Paris and also Majorca.

I have come a long way since being involved with Creative Support: I feel more confident, I have even been involved in tenders for the company and have stood up in front of groups of people to deliver my presentation, which was scary at first but I am used to it now and enjoy it.”

Dianne, Service User
Key details

Company name: Creative Support Ltd
Registered office: 5th Floor, Dale House, 35 Dale Street, Manchester, M1 2HF
Status: Industrial and Provident Society with charitable status (regulated by the FSA)
Date first registered: 1st August 1991 as the Manchester Housing Consortium
Registration number: 27440R
Name change: Name changed to Creative Support Ltd on 24th February 1994

Management Committee
Chair: Martin Igoe MBE
Chief Executive & Company Secretary: Anna Lunts

Executive Management Team
Julie Cooke, Service Director
Debbie Craddock, Service Director
Charlie Culshaw, Service Director
Sarah Dimmelow, Service Director
Chris Hindle, Service Director
Colette Leigh, Service Director
Debbie Nutt, Service Director
Louisa Houghton, Management Accountant
Michelle Knowles, Finance Manager

Principal Activities
Creative Support provides high quality care and support services for people with learning disabilities, mental health and other support needs. Our principal areas of activity are:
- Floating Support and Supporting People Services
- Community & Outreach Support
- Home Care Services
- Supported Housing
- Supported Living
- Residential Rehabilitation Services
- Day Services and Activities
- Extra Core Services in Sheltered Housing
- Culturally Specific Services
- Referral and Advice Services

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