

# Manor Farm – Life Skills Residential Support Service St Neots, Cambridgeshire



## Our Support

Manor Farm supports ten young adults aged 16 to 25 with a dual diagnosis of Autism and Learning Disabilities. This bespoke service helps young people to prepare for life in the adult world. We work in partnership with family members and young people, to provide support that enables individuals to live with their Autism with hope and optimism and work towards a truly valued lifestyle.

We offer a person centred and Autism friendly approach for every autistic person supported. Staff encourage people to gain self-awareness and an increased understanding of their own Autism. This ensures that the support we provide, makes the most of the gifts and skills their Autism can bring, as well as seeking to reduce the difficulties each person may face.

## Our Approach

The need to support and encourage self-esteem by motivating people to feel good about themselves and their achievements is central to the care provided at Manor farm. Everyone is supported to gain confidence and do the things that are important to them and ultimately to lead happy and fulfilled lives. We encourage young people to have a voice about what matters in their lives and the support provided is focussed on ensuring that their voices are heard and listened to.

Each person we support liaises with their keyworker to discuss their likes, interests, goals and aspirations. These could include starting a college course, having a job, wanting to cook or just having the confidence to go to the shops. Staff support people towards achieving their goals. This may require social stories, education on social rules, understanding body language and facial expressions.

## Our Focus

Manor Farm have a proactive Autism Strategy in place, which aims to promote independence and positive experiences. Staff support people to manage and learn to accept themselves as autistic individuals with their own unique set of strengths as well as any struggles they face. Everyone supported at Manor Farm have unique skills and abilities and staff endeavour to provide meaningful opportunities, which enables individuals to express their personalities and raise their self-esteem, by really valuing everyone's gifts and skills. We provide a quality service built on respect, trust and honesty and believe in offering equal opportunities to all while recognising and respecting difference.

At Manor Farm we understand the challenges that social interaction presents for autistic individuals and we seek to develop each person's social ability, both in the home and out in the community where they are encouraged to practise new skills.

## Positive Outcomes

Our positive and encouraging approach has successfully worked, with individuals currently accessing training, volunteering, attending college and where possible employment opportunities.

The staff are enthusiastic and willing to try another approach when a certain approach may not work. Whether this means researching different activities to ensure it is suitable or being brave and trying something different. The sky is the limit and the staff ensure that the people who live at Manor Farm are enjoying their lives whilst trying new things.

## Highlights

- Two of the people we support attend a working farm as part of a way to integrate with the community.
- One of the people we support attends college four days a week.

## Autism friendly interventions:

- Using clear and unambiguous language
- Giving good structure to a meaningful day – meaningful to each person
- Offering visual support to aid communication
- Social stories to gain a perspective on how other people think
- Regular exercise as part of a positive predictable routine
- Support for sensory processing differences and difficulties

## Autism Profiles

With support from the company Autism Advisor, we have developed a profile of the way Autism impacts each person living within our service. The Autism profile highlights the person supported strengths as well as the areas where support is needed. Each Autism profile summarises the diagnostic criteria and creates a picture that is both Autism focussed and person specific. Through this, staff can work in a truly person-centred and Autism intelligent way.

## Quotes from Parents

**"My son has been a resident for almost three years and Manor Farm is very much like a second home for us and him. Staff are caring, positive and consultative. They really follow a person-centred approach towards all. The standard of support and encouragement given to everyone is exceptional and the quality and delivery of provision is superb. Highly recommend!"**

## Transition Service

Manor Farm offers a transition service to support young people who are leaving home, school or college and setting out on adult life. Moving forward can be an exciting and challenging time and with it can bring lots of changes. Manor Farm's aim is to work together in an integrated way with all involved, to ensure a smooth transition onto the next chapter of a young person's life. We understand people may feel anxious about change and ensure each person has a transition plan which can include pre-visits, personal information booklets, photos, maps, social stories and schedules. This ensures a truly autism aware and personalised approach is carried out for each transition experience.



## Accommodation

Manor Farm is a detached house surrounded by large gardens. Within the main house are ten en-suite bedrooms, a communal lounge, kitchen and dining room, art/games room. Outside in the garden is our sensory lodge and movie room.

**"Another outstanding year for my Son. Because of the excellent nurturing and positive ethos of the home and the staff, my Son has been happy and motivated to gain confidence and learn new skills. He remains safe and well cared for and I have no concerns about his welfare and health. Any concerns I have are responded to quickly and staff are happy to collaborate and work in partnership with the family to achieve best interest outcomes for my son. A really well managed and progressive facility".**

## Attending College

"Alan\* has a diagnosis of Autism and severe Learning Disabilities, he moved to Manor Farm from a residential school. Historically Alan\* has displayed challenging behaviours whilst in an educational setting. When he first moved to Manor Farm Alan\* found it difficult to engage with peers and preferred his own space and there was little interaction with staff. Staff researched different opportunities for Alan\* to help increase his independence and social interactions. Staff liaised with his family and Social Worker and identified a local college that ran a suitable course which would enhance his life skills. Once a week Alan\* was supported by a member of staff from Manor Farm to transition onto a college course, this took place over a six-month period. Alan\* settled well and has now progressed to attending college four days a week without staff support. Alan\* has since become a more outgoing individual and attending college has enabled him to develop social relationships, as well new life skills such as cooking, which he really enjoys.

\* Name has been changed for confidentiality