

Makaton Champions opening up the world



Imagine having someone make every decision for you, and having no say over your daily life. This can often be a frustrating reality for people with learning disabilities and autism. When a FitzRoy supporter left us a gift in their will, we were able to fund the life-changing Makaton Champion scheme.



Kirsty, our head of quality said: "Understanding the needs and choices of the people we support is fundamental and at FitzRoy we do everything we can to overcome any barriers to that communication."

Makaton is a vocabulary of signs and symbols that enables people with limited or no speech to communicate. Thanks to the donation, Kirsty was able to forge ahead with FitzRoy's Makaton Champion scheme – a training programme for support staff. Now just over one year later, we have 40 Makaton Champions sharing their skills and expertise across our services. We visited Hall Drive in Nottingham to find out the difference the scheme is making to people's lives.

Kimberley, service manager for Nottingham supported living said:

“Lots of people we support use their own variation of Makaton, mixed with other verbal and visual techniques. When Steven moved to Hall Drive five years ago, he only had a few words he used regularly. He would say 'coat', or 'dinner' and we knew what he meant, but we wanted to expand his vocabulary.”

Support worker Craig told us: "When I used Makaton with Steven, I noticed how signing at the same time as saying the word helped him remember his vocabulary, so he was talking a lot more. He used to get a lot more frustrated when he first came to FitzRoy, but the more we can understand his needs through understanding his communication, the less frustrated he gets and the happier he is.

“The training sounds daunting, you have to learn 450 different signs, but it is really good fun. If we can't understand the people we support, it affects their quality of care and their quality of life.”

Kimberley agrees: "Being able to communicate your needs and being understood is fundamental. The staff really persevered. To see Steven now, speaking in sentences and being a complete chatterbox is wonderful to see."



A new home where dreams come true

The people we support have finally made their big move from Silver Birches in Richmond into their new state-of-the-art home in Teddington – and they couldn't be happier.

Service manager Kim said: "Staff worked tirelessly to make sure the move was as smooth as possible. We are really proud of them.

"We moved in just before Christmas and it was a lovely time of year to move, the surrounding area felt really festive and everyone went out to buy their own Christmas tree for their flats.

"We have noticed a big difference in the people we support since moving here. Adam's family have said how much more active he is when he's at home, and he's been communicating a lot more. The other day he said my name for the first time!"

Thank you to everyone who supported this enormous project – a new build, a huge move and a new home to make new memories and dreams come true.



New Love4Life hub opens

Our Love4Life friendship and dating programme currently operates from Fareham, Hampshire. We regularly get contacted by families further afield who need the service, so FitzRoy has decided to launch a second Love4Life hub in Basingstoke to help us reach even more people with learning disabilities and autism than ever before. We already have around 100 Love4Life members, and many of them tell us how important and life changing the service is, so this is an exciting and much needed move. Our new Love4life Basingstoke coordinator Cader – a former Love4Life volunteer herself – told us: "I am so excited, we are already planning for our first events in a few weeks, and recruiting new members. And if you are interested in the best volunteering role around, do get in touch!"

“ Love4Life has been such a success, 92% of members said they feel less lonely because of the group and 94% said they have made new friends. We can't wait to make the same impact from our new Basingstoke hub. ”

For more information on Love4Life visit fitzroy.org/love4life



The challenge of a lifetime

Running fanatic and former FitzRoy service manager Sam is taking on the challenge of his life – the London Marathon. It has been Sam's dream from an early age to run the London Marathon, so the opportunity to take part and raise money for FitzRoy was an offer he couldn't refuse.

He said: "I know first-hand the difference the money I am raising will make. It definitely gives me the extra push when I am lacking a bit of motivation knowing I am running for FitzRoy. I am setting myself this challenge that has an end point, but for some people just getting out of bed every day is a challenge. I want to be able to make a difference."

A huge thank you and good luck to Sam.



Join Team FitzRoy – take on a challenge and transform lives

Whether you're a keen walker new to challenge events or a seasoned runner looking for your next challenge, these "Ultra Challenge" events are for you! You can walk, jog or run while taking advantage of England's most beautiful scenery.

Isle of Wight Coastal Path – 2/3 May 2020

Jurassic Coast – 16/17 May 2020

London 2 Brighton – 23/24 May 2020

Lake District – 13/14 June 2020

Cotswold Way – 27/28 June 2020

Peak District – 4/5 July 2020

South West Coast 2 Coast – 25/26 July 2020

South Coast – 29/30 August 2020

Thames Path – 12/13 Sept 2020

Chiltern 50 – 26 Sept 2020



FitzRoy staff took on the Peak District Challenge last year



In it just for fun?

Birmingham Big Fun Run
– 15 August

Manchester Dog Jog
– 23 August

If you prefer an adrenaline rush, then celebrate the Summer Solstice with us with a skydive:

Summer Solstice Skydive Day – 21 June – Jump locations include Salisbury, Brackley, Nottingham, Norwich and Peterborough.

Find out more about our challenge and fun events www.fitzroy.org/events

Donation Form

Help us transform lives. Your donation, large or small, will support someone with a learning disability to live more independently.

Thank you.

Online donations visit www.fitzroy.org/donate

Text donations up to £20: text **FitzRoy** followed by the amount to **70480**.

Cheque Donations please make your cheque payable to **FitzRoy Support** and return it to FREEPOST RLTB-UUSU-LCKT, FitzRoy House, 8 Hylton Road, Petersfield, GU32 3JY

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Rural skills

FitzRoy's Rural Skills team are doing all the prep work for their new pond and seating area. Support worker Alex said: "The local Lions club have generously offered to support the project financially and Bedales school are helping with labour so it is a real team effort. Towards the end of last year, we dug the pond out and we are moving the plant beds in order to create a seating area next to the pond. We want to encourage more wildlife and have an area of sensory wellbeing for people with learning disabilities and autism."



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ACE!
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thank you very much

