

Progression services for people with learning difficulties



“I am very happy with my life. I am going to Butlins next year with Emma and Sarah”

## OUTCOMES IN 2013

**3** members moved into Assist Trust properties

**11** other members moved in to more independent living

**20** small groups were supported to go out in the evenings

**71** members are now doing work placements in Assist and in the community

**33** members learnt how to travel independently to work placements

**7** new work placements were found during the year

**65** members have been trained and risk assessed to travel independently in the community

**4** members learnt to travel to Assist by bus, instead of using taxis

“We are learning about getting the right change if we buy something and road safety”

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“The best bit is walking on my own, it makes me happy.  
I have grown up and am independent”

## MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBER'S COMMITTEE



There have been lots of things happening at Assist Trust this year.

June was a busy month for everyone. One of our highlights was the summer ball, it had a hawaiian theme. It was great to see everyone dressed up in loud shirts, grass skirts and flower garlands. Lazar House looked really good with a huge sunset painting hung on the wall.

We also had an open day at the gardens in June. Lots of people came and looked round, bought some plants and enjoyed a cup of tea and a slice of cake in the sunshine.

Lots of members have been enjoying one of our new groups, doing zumba at the Sportspark at UEA. We have learnt routines to Olly Murs, Maroon Five, Rhianna and Robbie Williams, and some people have even tried out the moves on one of our nights out at Chicagos nightclub!

We are all looking forward to the christmas party on 19th December, and hoping it will be as much fun as last year. The Member's Committee will start organising this soon. The trustees have been coming in to visit us over the past few weeks. We've been asking them some questions so that we get to know them and because it will be our job as a committee to vote for who should be a trustee. It was good to think of the questions we wanted to ask and really interesting to hear the answers.

We hope that you enjoy reading about what's been happening at Assist this year.



### **A sad farewell...**

Everyone at Assist wishes to send a fond farewell to Darren Hogg, who very sadly passed away on October 18th 2013. He will be greatly missed by us all.

“It was good to go out and have a laugh and get out of my flat”

## EVENINGS OUT



Seeing such a clear need for the members to go out and enjoy themselves with friends that they choose, many of the staff members here at Assist give up their own evenings to facilitate the events, refusing to be paid for their time.

Members have been supported to go to 20 different events this year, ranging from trips to the theatre, visits to the pub, to restaurants, nightclubs and many other venues.

On behalf of the hundreds of members who have benefitted from this arrangement over the years, Assist would like to acknowledge the efforts of all staff and volunteers involved.

### How it works

Staff are approached by members who want to go out in the evening for a meal or to the cinema, or anywhere else they would like to go. The staff then help them to organise the trip by contacting the parents and carers about what the plans are, how much it will cost and how transport will be arranged.

Generally speaking, two staff members accompany the members in small groups and they encourage the members to choose from the menu or choose the film, etc. In a restaurant situation, they are encouraged to sit together with staff near enough to help with any problems but not at the same table, to encourage socialising with each other. The members do as much of the ordering and paying as they can manage for themselves.





#### ◀ Claire – My job

I work in Sense in Anglia Square. I walk on my own and cross the roads safely looking and listening. I have to be on time. I start at 1.30 until 2.30 on Fridays. I make cups of tea for the people I work with. I work on the till. I take the money for the things people buy. I enjoy doing this, I feel good. It's a bit quiet sometimes. The best bit is walking on my own, it makes me happy. I have grown up and am independent.



#### ▲ Eloise – Zumba group

I like Zumba it is fun and we do good moves and dancing. We go to UEA sportspark. I go on the bus with Katie. I use my bus pass. We do the zumba first then we have a drink the cafe at UEA. Sometimes it is busy but I like it best when it is quiet. I think the zumba is good exercise and it helps me keep fit.

## MEMBERS AGM SPEECHES



#### ▲ Kerry – Going out at dinner time

I can now go to the Orange Tree Cafe alone. I feel good because I can do it by myself and I don't need a member of staff anymore. I struggle with money but I give them £2 coins. I feel embarrassed when I can't count my money out. I think people may laugh at me. I am working on travelling to home in Dereham now with an O.T. I get a bit scared sometimes because I think I am on the wrong bus. I think I am more confident and grown up now.



#### ▲ Nicola – My home

I do my own cooking with help from the carers. I change my own bed. Sometimes I chill out in my room. I go food shopping with Claire and a carer. Me and Claire write a shopping list. I get on well with Claire. I like to go out in the evening. I go to Wednesday Club. I feel independent living with Claire and having carers. I miss my family sometimes but I see them at the weekend.



#### ▲ Colin – Orienteering

We go out, we have been to Cromer, we take our packed lunch. We sort out what time the bus goes. We looked round the shops. I used my bus pass. We went to Yarmouth. I chose this trip. We have a list of places we want to go to and take turns. We use the computer to find out what time the bus goes. We don't go on the train because it would cost us more money. We are learning about getting the right change if we buy something and road safety.



These words were composed by the members in preparation for the Assist Trust 2013 Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 20th November at Lazar House



**▲ Hannah – New member**

I was nervous and excited all at the same time when I first arrived. I have made loads of friends and I would recommend it to anybody. I like all my groups. I like zumba best it keeps me fit. When we had to go to Wensum Lodge instead of UEA, I walked back from there with Katie. I like the lunch breaks they are about the right amount of time. If they were too long I would get bored. I like walking home now. I have had a risk assessment. I would like to go for a meal and to Chicagos with the members and staff.



**▲ Tina – Social life**

I have been to Chicagos with Alison and Lynn, then I went with Nicky and then with Susan and Lyndsay. We had a drink and a dance. There are lots of people there from other centres and organisations. It was good to go out and have a laugh and get out of my flat. I have been to the cinema with Ali, this isn't always easy because she lives with her parents. I would like to go out more with my friends and not so much with my support worker.



**▲ Alan – Living independently**

When I first moved out I lived at Hope House which was a residential house. I lived there with Emma and we both became more independent and we moved to a council flat in the city. It was a bit strange at first because at Hope House we always had staff on hand. Now we have a support worker for about 8 hours a week. She sorts our post and helps us with our money. She supervises us with our cleaning. We do our own shopping. We have a list and the carer gives us £50 but we go on our own. We get on very well together, we argue sometimes but nothing too major. I am very happy with my life. I am going to Butlins next year with Emma and Sarah.



**▲ Joanne – My job and home**

I work in Sense on Mondays and Thursdays. I rotate the clothes so they can go to different shops. I feel happy when I go to work, I make lots of cups of tea there. When I was at Lazar I had to go on the bus but I like walking best. I take the letters to the post box in Roys. It is nice to walk on my own and not always be with other people. I will be moving to Acle soon. I will be living with Emily.

**▲ Lizzie – Employment**

I haven't had a job before but I would like to work with children. I am in a group called building employment skills. We have been to a cafe at the Forum to see what people do at work. Now we are practising working in a cafe. I like doing this. I will need to learn to travel independently before I can have a job.

“We have been to a cafe at the Forum to see what people do at work. Now we are practising working in a cafe”

## NEW GROUPS AT ASSIST

The timetable at Assist Trust is rearranged three times a year so that members get a chance to take part in the groups and activities that they are keen on. Each time it is changed, new groups are incorporated to answer the many needs and wishes of the members that attend.

The following is a short summary of some of the groups that were introduced as part of the most recent timetable changes, when they were added to the list of activities on offer. At the moment, Assist has 57 different types of groups and activities running through the week

### Zumba

Zumba is a combination of fitness to music with easy to follow dance routines. Zumba proves to be very popular everywhere at the moment, including here at Assist. There are many benefits to taking part in the sessions, which go beyond improved fitness and body tone. It also helps to improve mood, creates a positive self-image and improves coordination. The mood is very up-beat during our zumba sessions, which creates a fun and feel-good atmosphere.

### Healthy tuck shop

Healthy tuck shop promotes healthy cooking and healthy eating as well as budgeting skills. During the morning group, members make such things as healthy muffins and smoothies, which are then available for anyone at Assist to buy during lunch time. This equips the members in the group with skills to do the same at home, as well as providing all other members in the building with tasty, yet healthy alternatives to the usual not-so-healthy snacks.



### Drama for confidence

The drama groups provide a range of games and activities, all of which help to build confidence, as well as promoting teamwork, spontaneity, trust and creativity. These groups are delivered in a fun and upbeat manner.

### What's on in the community

Members actively seek what's happening in Norwich and the local community, and if possible, access events and things that are going on in the community.

### Bird watching

Bird watching provides many benefits to our members at Assist. These benefits include, improved communication skills, an increased ability to focus on tasks, increased self-esteem and confidence levels, as well as the more obvious benefits of providing an opportunity to relax and enjoy the scenery of our beautiful heath gardens.

### Housing

The housing group allows our members to take a deeper look at what it is to live independently, and the ways this can be done. In the past, the group has worked through an accessible programme, which takes in to account all aspects of what it is to live independently. This group continues to be useful and enjoyable to both members who already live independently and those who would like to move out in the future.

### Building employment skills

This group aims to provide (and remind) our members of the necessary skills needed to carry out an external work placement, with specific emphasis on the skills needed to work in a shop or a café. The group is delivered in a fun and stimulating way through customer and waiter/waitress/shop assistant role plays, which aim to show such things as good (as well as bad) customer service in a way that our members can apply to the real world. The group also highlights food hygiene and its importance when working in a café or a kitchen.



“I change my own bed. Sometimes I chill out in my room”

## HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT



### Housing

In August of this year, and after some delay, two young men moved into the last of the Assist properties that remained unoccupied. With these two now comfortably in residence, the number of tenants living in Assist Trust managed accommodation now stands at eight, in a total of six properties around Norwich.

As landlords, managing properties on behalf of their owners, Assist supports its tenants in a variety of ways. As well as helping to maintain homes to a high standard, Assist will provide support in areas ranging from budgeting to dealing with neighbourly disputes and emotional support when things go awry.

If people require direct support in their homes (and their personal budgets allow), they can choose from providers such as Dimensions, Allied Healthcare or Elizabeth Fitzroy Support, to help with things like cooking, shopping and cleaning.

### Employment

Assist encourages the members to try an internal work placement when they feel

they are ready and when we think they can manage the responsibilities involved. These placements include cleaning, admin duties, helping with the tuck shop, acting as a courier between sites and dealing with recycling.

When the members have done these internal placements for a while and are proving themselves to be reliable and responsible, we ask if they would like to try an external work placement.

These placements are in a variety of different businesses including café work, stacking shelves in a supermarket, cleaning in a church and helping in shops. Job coaches are available to support the members during travel training and coaching in the workplace until they feel confident enough to do the work placement on their own.

Risk assessments and regular reviews are arranged to ensure the members and the employers continue to value the placement and find it rewarding.

“We use the computer to find out what time the bus goes”

# MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSTEES AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The past 12 months at Assist have seen a great deal of consolidation work going on behind the scenes, while the members have continued to exceed expectations by becoming more and more independent in their lives.

For an organisation that had grown rapidly in recent years, the securing of a realistic daily rate last year meant that Assist could strengthen its foundations and confidently look towards finding more opportunities for its members in the real world. Out of the current total of 137 members, over half are now in work placements of some kind and more numbers than ever have managed to progress towards independence by managing their own finances or travelling independently or by moving into more independent living.

Assist's own housing scheme continues to provide opportunities for those members who are keen to support themselves more and contacts made with Norfolk County Council, Norfolk and Waveney Quakers Association and others promise to extend those opportunities through genuine partnership working in the future.

The innovative and unique work of the trust was further strengthened during this year by the appointment of our own in-house social worker. We welcome Alison to the fold and we hope that she will enjoy using her expertise for the direct benefit of the members, whose needs and wishes she is here to support.

This appointment marks the beginning of a new phase at Assist which will see the launch of many new ideas to help the members achieve more in their lives. At a time when County Council budgets are not just squeezed but occasionally chopped altogether, it is down to dynamic and creative organisations like Assist to find solutions; to find ways to do more for their members, with less money. In the next 12 months, we are planning the following:

- More investment in staff training, so that our experienced workforce can use their skills more effectively.
- Better outcome measuring, so that the “building block” approach of Assist Trust can be communicated more clearly.
- Securing funding for more job coaching, travel training and independent living assessments, so that we can build on the successful models already employed by Assist, saving the county (and the tax payer) considerable amounts of money into the bargain.
- Using our in-house social worker to help assess the needs of the members and to advocate for them as they become more independent.
- Updating the Assist Trust website to be more informative and accessible.
- Improving facilities and resources all round and especially at Lazar House.

- To continue helping individuals to have full and happy lives, as we support them to cope in the real world. (In our experience this approach helps people become safer and more socially aware, reducing the need for more intensive services at the same time and again saving more money!)

The board would like to thank the whole staff team at Assist – and the management team in particular – for their continuing hard work and commitment. Numerous volunteers have also helped throughout this year and their kind support is likewise greatly appreciated.

Mike Pearce stood down earlier in the year after many years on the Board of Trustees and we thank him for his generous support over that time. Two new trustees have since joined us – Helen Walsham, an Executive Director of Flagship Housing and Paul Downes, a retired judge – and with their help, we hope we can continue supporting the excellent work of the trust as it develops its services in direct response to the needs of the members that attend.

Assist would also like to welcome Dr. Ian Gibson – a long standing supporter of the Trust – as a new patron. We hope he will enjoy representing this important and hard working charity for many years to come.

“We go to UEA Sportspark. I go on the bus with Katie.  
I use my bus pass”

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For the year ending 31 March 2013

Income	2013	2012
Donations	12,058	24,200
Investment income	51	66
Incoming resources from charitable activities	827,578	630,266
<b>Total income</b>	<b>839,687</b>	<b>654,532</b>
Expenditure		
Staff costs	564,342	471,405
Premises expenses	144,603	142,146
Depreciation	30,894	36,383
Fund raising	-	6,500
	<b>739,839</b>	<b>656,434</b>
Support costs	40,805	48,287
Governance	3,600	5,143
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>784,244</b>	<b>709,864</b>
Surplus/(deficit) of income over expenditure	55,443	(55,332)
Surplus brought forward	277,832	333,164
	<b>333,275</b>	<b>277,832</b>
Represented by:		
Fixed assets	118,257	147,832
Debtors	63,668	77,177
Cash at bank	161,271	86,331
	343,196	311,340
Less creditors due within a year	(9,921)	(33,508)
	<b>333,275</b>	<b>277,832</b>

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Assist Trust gratefully acknowledges the support of



## DIARY DATES FOR 2014

**Heath Gardens Open Day**  
Saturday 31 May

**Summer Ball** Friday 22 August

**Christmas Party**  
Friday 19 December

**Closures (training days)**  
Monday 10 February  
Tuesday 11 March  
Wednesday 23 April  
Thursday 25 September  
Friday 31 October

**Christmas closing**  
Finish at the end of the day on  
Tuesday 23 December, reopen on  
Monday 5 January 2015