



# NSI E-NEWSLETTER

February 2024

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## Welcome to Next Step Independence's first e-newsletter for 2024

Well, 2024 is off to a flying start and it's still only February!

We have lots of news and updates to share with you, relating to our incredible children and young people, our teams, our homes and our business.

Please take a moment to read what's been happening and we look forward to having the opportunity to work with you during 2024.

*"Thanks to all the amazing people we work with at the Local Authorities! We hope to be able to help more children and young people this year."*



# Our current vacancies

Our fantastic team have a wealth of experience and have helped many young people gain their independence, find employment and move into their own homes. They are ready and eager to do the same with more young people. Here is our homes where we have supported accommodation vacancies. All our homes are registered with Ofsted.

## **Cherry Tree, Tiverton, Mid Devon**

Vacancy details: **3 vacancies**, 2 rooms immediately available and 1 further room available soon.  
Suitable for 16–18-year-olds (any gender)

Cherry Tree in our largest and most established home, that can support and care for up to 4 young people. The highly established team provide a wonderful, nurturing home environment for the young people living at Cherry Tree and whilst rural in its location, there are nearby villages like Willand and larger, busier towns such as Tiverton and Wellington that can support a young person's education and employment needs.

## **Perinville House, Babbacombe, Torquay**

Vacancy details: **3 vacancies**, 2 rooms immediately available and 1 further room available soon.  
Suitable for 16–18-year-olds (any gender)

Perinville house is large, bright home that is close to all local amenities in Torquay, so ideal for any young person who is interested in seeking employment. It's also a commutable distance from the highly regarded South Devon College and only a quick walk to the beach! This home has an established team who possess a wealth of experience and they are keen to welcome a new young person into this nurturing and calm home.

## **Blakes Road, Bridgwater, Somerset**

Vacancy details: **1 vacancy**, the room is immediately available.  
Suitable for 16–18-year-olds (BOY)

Blakes Road is a quiet, settled 2-bedroom home that can support 2 young people aged 16-18. The bedroom has been recently decorated and furnished, all ready for a new person to live in. This home is close to all local amenities, so the young people can access an array of educational and vocational courses. This home has access to Bridgwater and Cannington colleges, both highly regarded further education provisions in the local area.

Contact Judith Beaumont on 07387 416924 for more information about our vacancies.



# Growing our portfolio

We are delighted to introduce our new 'soon to open' Registered Children's home in Somerset.

Pheasant's Corner is in Bridgwater, Somerset and is due to be an Ofsted Registered Children's home. This home will be our first residential home in Somerset.

As with our other Registered Children's homes, it will provide a safe and caring environment for up to two children aged 8-18.

## The home

Pheasants Corner is a 4-bedroom detached family home in a quiet cul-d-sac. It's within easy access to lots of local amenities and social areas such as the library, gym, cinema, and bowling alley.

The home has the additional benefit of been adapted to suit a child or young person with mobility disabilities. Extra wide door frames for wheelchair access, a wet room, a lift to the upstairs, lowered worktops in the kitchen for inclusion in all kitchen/cooking activities, and ramps to the front door and out to the back garden, making the whole home accessible.

There are also plenty of open green spaces for sports and leisure activities too, and several schools within a mile away from the home. All of this, makes it an ideal place to provide a stable and trusting environment for up to 2 children aged 8 and 18.

## The Team

The home is staff by a dedicated team, led by our highly experienced home manager, Michael Russell. Together they bring a host of skills and experience to provide 1-1 support.

The team will nurture and encourage our children to settle, develop positive and enriching routines. To become confident and valued members of the local community and have access to quality and inspiring education, social opportunities to help them flourish.



# New Learning and Enablement Manager

Hayley Gollop is our new Learning and Enablement Manager.

Using her extensive skills that she gained as one of our Home/Locality Managers and the strong relationships that she has developed in the homes, combined with her previous SEN teaching skills which involved working with families, providing pastoral support, training teachers and troubleshooting, to create a new role which will support and enable our homes and young people to achieve more.

This role gives us a unique opportunity to view each home's environment from a different perspective. Not as a complete outsider, but just a couple of steps back from the home team who are working in the home all the time. From this perspective, Hayley can see what's working or in some cases, what's not working and she can make recommendations and implement changes.

Hayley's role will also include supporting our young people and improving their outcomes. She'll be working and helping them to build their independence skills and knowledge of their entitlements etc. This will involve reaching out to regional businesses, to ensure our young people have access to all the relevant information.

Hayley's role also involves:

- Monitoring our training and setting monthly training goals for each home.
- Running collaborative working sessions for our apprenticeships to study together.
- Delivering regular bitesize training such as Safeguarding Quick 6 in the homes.
- Encouraging our teams, children and young people to participate in our monthly Mindfulness Challenge. Each month brings a new challenge - it might be an physical activities such as walking in nature every day or a creative activity, such as making a snowflake or like this month, promoting 'Random Acts of Kindness' activities.

Look out for more information in this e-newsletter and follow our social media coverage.



# Activities from our business...

## Mindfulness and Wellbeing

Our Mindfulness Challenges have been running for several months now and each month the winners receive a goodie bag bursting with wellness products and treats for everyone to enjoy.

Our Challenge for February is encouraging our teams, children and young people to do 'Random Acts of Kindness' throughout the month.

We have produced a Kindness Calendar of ideas and activities and the first act of kindness was received from the mysterious 'Chocolate Biscuit Fairy' who sent chocolate chip cookies to each home and teams, which everyone loved!

## Mental Health Matters

On the 1st February we organised a 'meet and eat' event, open to everyone to attend with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of making time to talk about Mental Health.

We had over 20 people in the room and online, tucking into their lunch, whilst sharing ideas and thoughts on the tools they are using to maintain their mental health and wellbeing during these colder, darker months. Walking the dog, being surrounded by nature and retail therapy were the most popular tools!

To support and promote mindfulness and mental health wellbeing on a regular basis, we have created a full calendar of events and ideas that can be used either as a team or a home activity or by an individual.

Each month's theme is linked to our Mindfulness Challenges or other activities organised, such as 'Spring into Nature' for April is linked to our new Gardening Roadshow (which you can read about on the next page!)

This goes hand in hand with the support and advice our teams and their immediate family have access to, via our Employer Assistance Programme (EAP) Health Assured, which is available 24/7, 365 days a year.



## Ready, Steady, Grow!

Move over Alan Titchmarsh... our Estates team are embarking on a Gardening Roadshow to spruce up our gardens and get our teams and young people planting up containers and shrubs this Spring.

For the Summer, we are launching a fun 'best in bloom' style award for all our homes to enter and providing sunflower growing kits next month, for the children and young people to try and grow the tallest sunflowers!

Many of our homes grow a few soft fruit, salad leaves and veggies and one of our homes has even got an allotment!

Growing your own, is a great way of encouraging our children and young people to be outside in the fresh air. It broadens their knowledge about where food comes from and helps to introduce new foods to try. After all, who doesn't love to eat a sweet, sun-ripened cherry tomato, that is still warm from being picked in the summer sunshine! Yum.

One of our South Devon homes always grows lots of tomatoes and strawberries and has a solar watering system set up!

## Our green agenda

Each of our homes have a shed, a mini greenhouse, a waterbutt and a compost bin, everything they need to be eco-friendly, wildlife friendly, to recycle green waste, to grow from seeds and to water the garden during the Summer.

Our Estates team helps, by producing a quarterly gardening bulletin: Grow! This features seasonal gardening tips and jobs to do throughout the year for wildlife and maintaining the garden.

Our homes play a big part in our green agenda. We want our children and young people to learn and understand how we can all make a difference when it comes to sustainability and conservation of our planet.



# Training and apprenticeships

We have welcomed Ofsted's Regulations for Supported Accommodation homes and believe that our commitment to providing quality training and apprenticeship qualifications to our teams is key to the success of our staff retention and business overall.

## Training ambitions

As we grow our business, we are also expanding the number of providers we work with and the topics we cover. Our training programme for this year is robust and has courses planned for every month of the year, including two new topics;

- Hosting Suicidal Conversations with Empathetic & Compassionate Responses
- Coping with bereavement

We work with accredited, and highly regarded trainers such as CYP First, Essential 6, Houghton Associates, Tidal Training, Studio 3, Training with Pride, TRN Ltd, Impact Futures and Aspiration Training. We are always looking to work with new specialists to enhance our training.

We also seek additional resources and courses from organisations such as NSPCC, Dialogue, Social Care Skills and we link in with regional multi-agency learning hubs to ensure that our Managers have sight of the latest regulations and guidelines and have a chance to engage with their peers.

## Apprenticeships

Our apprenticeship programme continues to grow and we currently have 19 learners on their Level 4 CYPF and Level 5 CYPF Diplomas. We have another 21 learners who are about to begin an apprenticeship in the first half of this year.

We have been fortunate to access funds via the Transfer Levy System and have received a number of pledges from Levied Companies. This allows us to offer all our team the chance to gain a diploma qualification, regardless of their role in the business.



# A few stories from our homes

## Wiltshire Homes

One of our new children in our Registered Children's home in Swindon has been on lots of walks, swimming and enjoys story writing and going to school. He went out on a picnic recently and tried hummus for the first time and loved it, especially with peppers to dunk! The whole team are incredibly proud of how quickly he has settled in.

One of our other young people is focussing on his independent planner, working towards a brand new computer in the style of employment. He will achieve his independent goals with contracted hours (school work) then his overtime hours (independent jobs) and at each month receives a payslip (life skills) on his earning and his goal is to achieve a top of the range PC for his bedroom.

## Somerset Homes

One of our young people and the home team from our Supported Accommodation Home in Somerset have created a beautiful memory/ keepsake photo box from our Christmas lunch, which includes the menu, place card, our Christmas card and a twisted fork!

It was a special occasion, as we bring everyone together to celebrate the festive season. One of the many highlights, was the magician who performed close-up magic with the guests on each table and one of his tricks included twisting a fork in your own hand - it was amazing!

## Devon Homes

One of our home team and their young person have already decided what veggies they are growing and they are being quite adventurous in their choices! They have planted seeds for Black French Beans, Purple Sprouting Broccoli and Rocket.

Apparently our young person is really excited to watch them grow and equally eager to taste them!





## Are you looking for new quality services in your area?

At NSI, we have established a strong reputation for delivering high-quality services to children and young people aged 8-18 years in Devon, Somerset, and Wiltshire.

Through close collaboration with local authority commissioning colleagues, we continuously identify opportunities to enhance and develop our offerings.

As a testament to our commitment to excellence, all our homes are registered with Ofsted, ensuring that they meet the highest standards of care and support.

If you are interested in partnering with us to develop or expand services in your own area, we would be delighted to hear from you. Judith Beaumont, our Business Development Director, can be reached at 07387 416924 or via email at [judith.beaumont@nextstepindependence.co.uk](mailto:judith.beaumont@nextstepindependence.co.uk).

We believe in the power of collaboration and look forward to the opportunity to work together towards providing exceptional care and support to children and young people in your area.

For our latest news and stories visit [www.nextstepindependence.co.uk](http://www.nextstepindependence.co.uk) or follow us on our social media pages.

