

DELIVERING PERSON CENTRED SUPPORT TO PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

OUR COMMITMENT

To see the person first and their autism as part of the richness that makes them a unique individual.

Based on this fundamental commitment we have considerable experience and success in delivering high quality support to help people with autism enjoy full lives as active, fully included citizens.

In line with the Scottish Strategy on Autism 2011, we believe that all support should be provided in ways which recognise that every person with autism is a unique individual who requires tailored support focused on their personal needs and desired outcomes.

What is Autism?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability also referred to as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or autism spectrum condition (ASC). Autism affects people differently with some individuals being able to live independently while others will need very specialist support.

People with autism find communicating and interacting with other people difficult. Autism also affects the way they process information about the world around them.

Our Experience in respect of Supporting People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

KEY and our subsidiary company Community Lifestyles currently support approximately 250 people with autism and this number continues to grow at a fairly rapid rate given our reputation for delivering person centred support that enables people to have a very good quality of life.

There has been a significant increase in the number of people with autism referred to KEY and Community Lifestyles in recent years, particularly in the local authority areas where services are individually commissioned. Reasons for this include:

- A higher incidence of autism diagnosed particularly among young people.
- Our reputation for designing and developing robust services for people with complex needs.

In line with the Scottish Strategy for Autism we have a process for data collection which allows us to report on how many people with ASD are receiving services from us and informs the planning of these services.

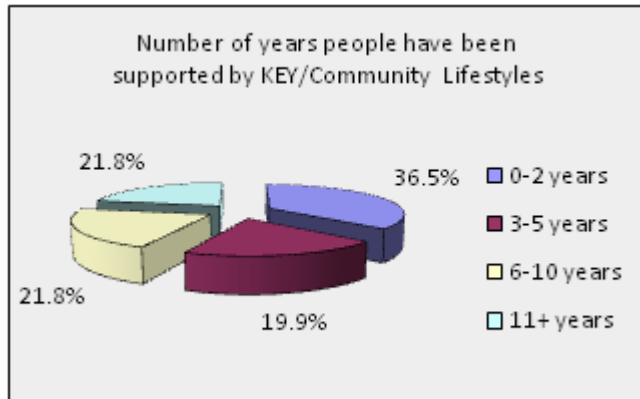
Who are the people with autism that we support?

The age range of people we support varies between 16 to 77 years. The majority of people are between 16 and 40 years old. Two thirds of the individuals are men. This is in line with the known prevalence of

autism. Many of the people we support with autism have additional support needs (e.g. related to learning disability, mental or physical health, or challenging behaviours.)

How long have we been supporting people with autism?

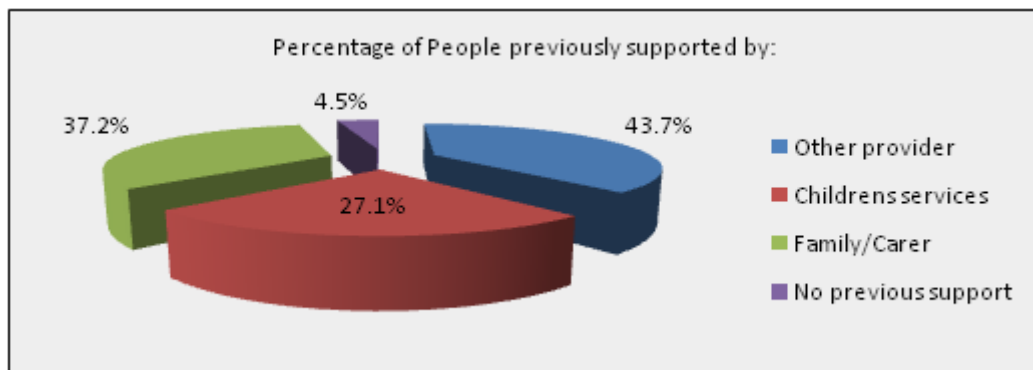
KEY and Community Lifestyles have been supporting people with autism since the organisations were set up in 1977 and 1995 respectively. We have a reputation for sticking with people through the ups and downs of life and have been supporting over 100 individuals for more than 10 years.



“Three of the team had been with her for the whole 16 years since she had left Lennox Castle. They knew and understood her well and were able to work with her in ways that minimised the effects of her autism and enabled her to take part in many new activities. They were an outstanding illustration that long term paid carers can be like family.” A Senior Speech and Language Therapist’s nomination for an award winning KEY team, recognising their long standing support of a woman with ASD and a complex learning disability.

What are their Backgrounds?

The individuals we support have a wide variety of backgrounds and support histories. A substantial number of people have been referred to us following placement breakdown in other situations. We also support a number of young people in transition from children’s services, usually residential school.

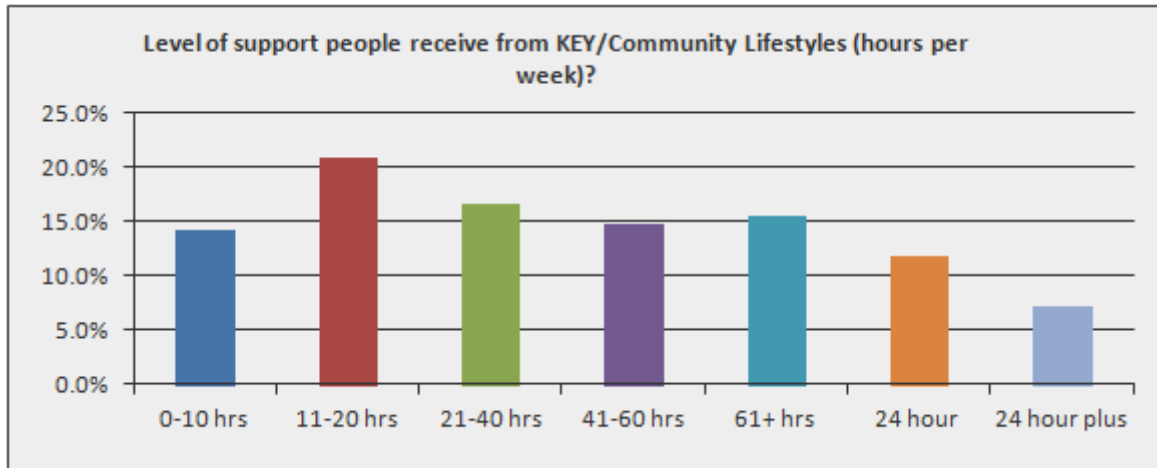


Some of the people with autism that we support are currently living with their families. In these situations KEY and Community Lifestyles augment the natural support they receive in the family home. For other people we are their main carer/support provider.

“It has been great to see Richard have a team of workers who want to be there and support him in what he wishes to do. If there are any concerns these are managed quickly and effectively.” Michelle, mother.

How much support do people receive?

People receive different types and amounts of support depending on their personal circumstances and needs. Our aim is to provide just the right amount of targeted individual support in order to maximise people's independence and to complement the support available to the individual from other sources.



What type of support?

We provide a very wide range of support including all aspects of personal and home care as well as support to develop a purposeful and enjoyable lifestyle.

Many of the people that KEY and Community Lifestyles support are looking to develop daily living skills related to managing finances and budgeting, household tasks, meal preparation etc. We also support a number of people with personal development skills including personal safety, health and well being and social skills. Our focus is always on assisting people to do things in a way that have a purpose and are meaningful for them.

We work extensively with specialist agencies (psychology, physiotherapy, occupational health etc) to support health and wellbeing and have an excellent reputation for following through on support and advice that is given. We also provide positive behaviour support for people with complex needs through a specialist team of highly skilled, accredited Behavioural Support Strategy (BSS) instructors to ensure that everyone can have access to the same opportunities for a good life.

KEY and Community Lifestyles have built up a high level of expertise in effectively supporting people with autism to take part in purposeful activities and be included in their local community. Each person is actively supported to consider personal outcomes in relation to sustaining and developing community networks and having a range of purposeful activities as part of the person centred planning process. We provide support to access recreational, learning and educational activities in the local community and develop vocational training and work experience to explore volunteer and work opportunities.

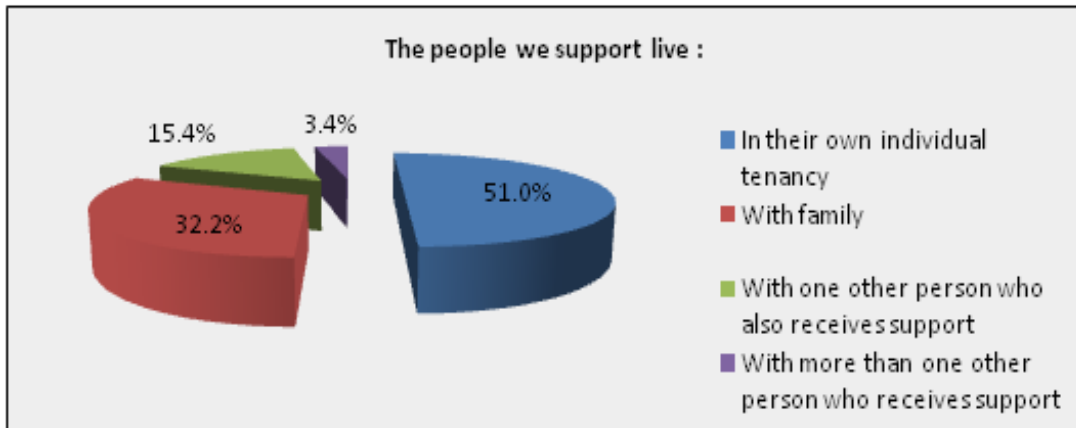
KEY and Community Lifestyles also provide short break services which can offer a holiday to individuals as well as providing families with a break from caring responsibilities.

Our services pay close attention to the fine detail of people's support requirements to ensure that the individual and their family can benefit from the break without difficulties arising from changes to routines that are important to the individuals.

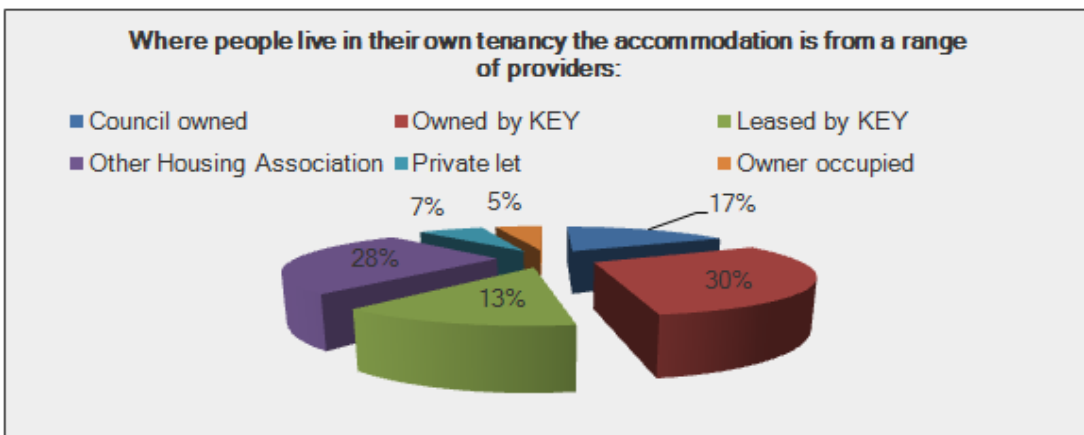
What type of accommodation?

We support a large number of people with autism in their family homes but we also have a good reputation for sourcing suitable, high quality housing.

Many people live in their own tenancy, sometimes with a friend or partner, and a small number of people live in shared accommodation with more than 1 other person.



In some situations houses are close to a 'support cluster' which can provide immediate and cost effective back up support without compromising the privacy of the individual. Where people live in their own tenancy, housing is procured from a wide range of housing providers.



“They worked well with other organisations to find the right accommodation for me.” John, supported since November 2008.

“I feel my team are great guys and they helped me to settle into my flat” Mark, supported since February 2013

Our Approach to Supporting People with Autism

Our experience has shown us that there are 3 critical factors to successfully supporting individuals with Autism.

- **A person centred approach and outcome focused planning**
- **Good staff training and support**
- **The right accommodation**

A Person Centred Approach and Outcome Focused Planning

KEY and Community Lifestyles are seriously committed to an approach that recognises the person first and their autism as part of the richness that makes them a unique individual. We are passionate about providing support which gives people the opportunity to explore their strengths and skills and build their confidence and abilities.

Our approaches to service design and support planning for people with autism derive directly from our approach to personalisation. We have a deep commitment to ensuring that every individual support arrangement is designed to meet the person's unique requirements to help them achieve their personal outcomes. This support is consistently delivered by a small team of workers who know and understand the person well.

Service Principles

Our support services for people with autism are all designed in line with the following service principles.

We will;

- Enable each individual to reach their full potential at home and in the wider community, while safeguarding them in situations where they may be vulnerable.
- Have a person centred approach with a total commitment to the individual and willingness to continually adapt and amend arrangements to suit the person's requirements.
- Work in partnership with families and other professionals.
- Develop support plans that are Outcome Focused and are in a format that the service user or their advocate can understand and have been fully involved in developing.
- Ensure that support plans detail the unique characteristics of the individual and how their autism impacts on them. For example, plans will detail what the person's diagnosis is, what their routines are, special interests/skills, effective communication and what needs to be in place to help the person cope with the challenges of everyday life.
- Understand that all behaviour is a form of communication, managing and responding to complex and challenging situations positively and creatively.
- Understand and respect the sensory and communication challenges faced by the individual; responding with empathy, consistency, routine, predictability, and calmness.

We use a range of person-centred planning tools and accessible recording systems to ensure consistency across teams and support delivery which is structured around the very specific needs of the person being supported.

These tools also provide a basis for regularly reviewing support arrangements thus ensuring that the support is consistently delivering desired outcomes for the individual and maximising their independence, whilst ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

“We were very involved in (worker) meetings regarding getting to know Mathew’s likes and dislikes. I valued the communication planning and Crisis Risk Intervention Support Plan meetings.” Maureen, mother.

Partnership Working

“ASD provision should demonstrate that service delivery is multi-agency in focus and coordinated effectively to target meeting the needs of people with ASD” The Scottish Strategy for Autism.

We believe that good individual services for people with autism require a multi-agency approach and work with a wider variety of partner agencies to deliver joined up services.

“The organisation have always been positive and proactive and prepared to seek support and advice from others when issues arose or care plans required review.” Val, Complex Needs Team, Social Work Department.

This ensures best quality support for the people we support and appropriate advice and guidance for their support teams. Examples of this are:

- The Autism Resource Centre (ARC) – we have worked extensively within Glasgow with the ARC who have provided us with expert knowledge and training in relation to working with people who are on the autism spectrum. ARC practitioners provide both general and 'individual-specific' training. They also greatly assist with assessment and the development of autism specific support planning.
- Community Learning Disability Nursing – close working links with these professionals have helped us understand and respond to the health care and behavioural needs of the people we support who are on the autism spectrum.
- Psychology and Psychiatry – often the involvement of a Psychiatrist and/or Psychologist has been essential in assessing and supporting someone who has complex behavioural or emotional needs.
- Social Work – social work input has been central to ensuring all relevant agencies are involved in an individual’s life and in ensuring that the support package reflects their full range of needs.
- Speech and Language Therapy input is also invaluable in many areas. A Speech and Language Therapist can provide essential support in determining which communication systems will be most appropriate for each person.

Working alongside these agencies and professionals KEY and Community Lifestyles have developed a reputation for being able to work effectively, creatively and in a consistently solution focused manner.

“I have an excellent relationship with this organisation. They work extremely well with Social Work and other agencies in developing their service for the service user.” Diane, Care Manager, Social Work Department.

Staff Training and Support

KEY and Community Lifestyles are committed to ensuring that every worker who is supporting someone who is on the autism spectrum receives the necessary training to enable them to provide high quality person centred, autism specific support.

Induction

All employees are provided with a structured induction which is an integral part of their probationary period.

Within six weeks of starting work all new workers attend a five day taught course which starts with an input from a Co-trainer, (a person who uses our services). Hearing from someone we support on the first session of their induction sends a strong signal to staff about the importance of listening and learning to people who use our services. This reinforces the importance of our commitment to the participation and involvement of people we support in every aspect of our work.

“When I was asked to do co-training I was a bit nervous, but it was something I really wanted to do. I enjoyed setting up my presentation and during the training I talk about my family, my life and my support.” Karen, Co-Trainer.

The course covers person-centred support; SSSC Codes of Practice; effective communication; understanding behaviour; inclusive working; moving and handling and emergency aid.

At the end of this course workers complete a learning review to evidence a full understanding of course material. This is then used in discussion with line managers during supervision.

Autism Specific Training

“ASD provision should provide an ASD Training Plan to improve the knowledge and skills of those who work with people who have ASD, to ensure that people with ASD are properly supported by trained staff” The Scottish Strategy for Autism.

KEY and Community Lifestyles ensure all workers supporting people with ASD have a blend of understanding autism and how it affects each person on an individual basis. Equally as important is a detailed understanding of the person they are supporting, their needs, wishes, preferences and aspirations.

“I was impressed at how quickly management reacted to changing/moving staff if they felt the matching process for my son was not quite right” Mary, mother.

Everyone working with people on the autism spectrum are trained to understand autism; the triad of impairments, theory of mind, effective communication and the importance of adhering to **the principles of consistency, predictability, empathy, calmness, structure & communication.**

Workers attend an autism awareness course focussing on the individual they are supporting and the specific way their autism affects them. This training is delivered to all the staff supporting that individual.

The course is augmented by material which contains all the information covered on the autism awareness course.

We also have an online information forum.

Input from other professionals is another important element of training and ongoing practice development, for example, Care Manager, Community Learning Disability Nurse, Psychologist and other specialist ASD personnel will spend time with teams to discuss and resolve person specific issues in relation to autism.

Where possible family members will also have the opportunity to have an input into team training. This provides workers with the opportunity to learn from the family's expertise and knowledge of their family member.

"I feel that the staff had excellent training. I enjoyed being part of the 'Listen to Me' process and passing on my knowledge at the planning meetings" Betty, mother.

This understanding is then combined with learning from a detailed outcome-focused planning approach which is asset based and builds on the person's strengths and gifts. This enables workers to develop an understanding of important aspects of someone's life and how that person needs to be supported in relation to their autism. When blended with the theoretical understanding of autism, workers develop the knowledge and understanding to deliver individualised support in an autism friendly way.

This learning is augmented by other training opportunities in a range of related topics, such as Intensive Interaction approaches which have been used effectively with people who have autism.

Behavioural Support Training

KEY and Community Lifestyles have a team of qualified behavioural specialists who are accredited as Behavioural Support Strategy (BSS) Instructors, by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities, (BILD).

The BSS course equips worker teams with the understanding that all behaviour is a form of communication and helps them develop a range of strategies that will help the person to better manage challenging situations. Great attention is paid to primary prevention i.e. avoiding behaviours of concern arising in the first place. This training and active support to teams has a particular focus on issues relevant to the person's autism including any particular issues in respect to communication, preferences for structure and routines, environmental or sensory issues.

An important feature of this approach is work with teams to develop a Crisis Risk Intervention Support Plan, (CRISP). This document, which is reviewed regularly, highlights the requirements for each person in terms of supporting them when their behaviour is challenging and details where a consistent approach is crucial for the person. It clearly lays out the expectations of the worker team as to how they will support the person, identifies triggers which may cause the person anxiety or distress and then details strategies as to how best to avoid these situations occurring.

Following BSS training, as described above, ongoing support to teams is provided by the BSS instructors to assist teams in further developing the Crisis Intervention Support Plan (CRISP) and to work through and problem solve any issues that may arise.

Continuous Learning and development

KEY and Community Lifestyles are committed to continuously improving our services to people with autism.

Individual services are reviewed regularly with all stakeholders offered the opportunity to comment on the quality of the services. Outcome based support plans and CRISP documents are reviewed on a 6 monthly basis. We also undertake regular training audits in our services to ensure that there is no unmet training requirement.

In addition KEY and Community Lifestyles have a Community of Practice where a focus group of experienced managers of services for people with autism comes together with a shared learning agenda. These discussions lead through into our staff and policy development agendas.

Senior managers also participate in external autism network groups and a significant number have undertaken post qualifying training.

“The service provides an excellent and personal service for people. People feel empowered and in control of their own lives. Staff work in partnership with service users and their relatives to discuss risks and behaviours and action plans are agreed together to support individuals to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.” Care Inspectorate Report 2012

Service Leadership and Robust Backup

In designing and delivering services for adults and young people with autism we acknowledge the need for strong leadership from managers who are confident in the design and delivery of support which reflects the critical service principles outlined above. Evidence shows that strong, principled leadership creates good responsive support, so we invest in our team leaders and senior managers to ensure that the support they provide to teams is both robust and appropriate.

In addition all managers are trained to lead and deliver outcome focused support services and are committed to leading with a style of staff management, support and supervision that is consistent with this approach.

Managers provide workers at all levels with regular, formal individual supervision and appraisal and this is backed up by management structures that enable immediate and responsive supports as required.

Good teamwork and peer support are viewed as essential components of providing a quality service and this is fostered through regular team meetings which are usually led by a team leader or more senior manager.

KEY and Community Lifestyles Staff Development and Training Officers attend team meetings as required and meetings are often further enhanced by contribution from external professionals.

The Right Accommodation

Experience has demonstrated that the right accommodation along with appropriate assistive technologies and/or relatively small scale housing adaptations can be critical in helping people with autism thrive in their community. We are able to source a wide range of high quality, suitable housing.

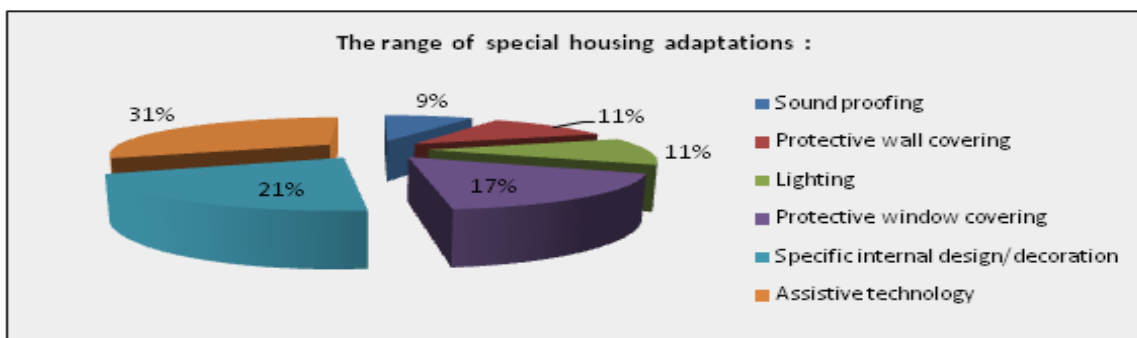
Key Housing Association provides property development services which enable us to approach housing procurement, adaptation and management with an understanding of the particular needs of the people we support. Working in partnership with colleagues in other Housing Associations, Local Authorities and the Private Sector means that, even when quality accommodation is in short supply, we are able to source a wide range of high quality suitable housing.

When choosing or designing accommodation for people with autism, we have found that it is essential to have an understanding of how individuals experience their environment and perceive people and objects within this environment. A detailed environmental needs assessment is carried out in advance of any housing decisions being taken.

Designing consistent low arousal environments with appropriate lighting, acoustics, ventilation and use of colour and materials can minimise sensory overload and reduce anxiety for some people.

Protected and private garden space or quick and easy access to open public space such as parks or gardens can often provide an outlet for frustration or anxiety. Providing environments in which the individual's strengths and special interests can be harnessed enhances basic motivation and confidence.

Around 40% of the people we currently support have housing adaptations;



Minimising risk to the individual and their carers is also important for some people with very complex needs and locating accommodation close to existing services for some individuals may provide robust and flexible support options and sustain services through difficult times.

“I feel that my daughter is in the right accommodation with excellent support” Betty, mother.

KEY and Community Lifestyles have a strong and growing reputation for providing high quality individualised support to people with autism. All of our services, including those for people with autism, are regularly inspected by the Care Inspectorate and we consistently achieve grades described as “very good” or “excellent”.

For more information about our support services for people with autism please contact;

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