

General Brochure

Supporting you to live the life you choose



- Learning Disabilities – Mild to Moderate
- Profound and Complex Learning Disabilities
- Autism
- Mental Health
- Housing
- Specialist Support
- Acquired Brain Injury
- Dementia
- Young People in Transition

Key Facts about United Response

- > We are a well established charity with an excellent track record in supporting young people and adults with a wide range of mental health needs and disabilities – which include learning disabilities, autism, acquired brain injury, sensory impairments and dementia.
- > All our support staff are recruited and managed locally but have the back up of national experts in health and safety, best practice, quality, housing, finance and HR.
- > We support over 2000 people and work throughout England and Wales.
- > We are a not-for-profit organisation – which means that our money is put back into giving each person we support the best life possible.
- > We work with a wide range of people. Some people need only a few hours of support each week – perhaps to help them to pay their bills, go shopping or get a job. Others need more support than this, while some people with more critical or severe needs may need 24 hour support each day. We can provide whatever support you need to live the life you choose.
- > We won't label you – we will support you to meet your own needs and to pursue your own interests and goals.
- > We can support you to do what you want to do and to live where you want to live.
- > We are constantly improving and developing our services. As well as being inspected by our regulators, we also carry out our own Quality Management audits to make sure our support is the highest quality possible. We involve the people we support in checking our services too.
- > We are leaders in delivering person-centred support.
- > We work with you and those important to you, to plan the right kind of support you need and want.

Involving you

- > We aim to involve you in all aspects of your support. This could be recruiting and training your staff, or working with our trustees and directors on how we run the organisation, or checking whether our services could be better.
- > You decide which things you want to get involved in – as much or as little as you choose.
- > You will be at the heart of developing your own support plans.

Our staff

- > We employ over 3,500 people and regularly win awards for our creative and innovative approach.
- > We train our staff to a high standard so they can deliver the best possible support to you. This includes understanding your way of communicating and treating you with dignity and respect.
- > Our organisation-wide programme, the Way We Work, trains staff in person centred thinking so that they can really listen to you and act on what you tell them you want – and give you high quality and consistent support.
- > All our support staff are DBS checked to ensure that they are safe to support you.
- > We are committed to representing the diverse communities in which we work and have achieved Investors in Diversity Accreditation at Level 2.
- > We have also been awarded accreditation by:



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A group of young people enjoying a trip to the Lakes as part of the Airway 2000 project.

Our mission is to ensure that individuals with learning disabilities, mental health or physical support needs, have the opportunity to live their lives to the full.

Our vision is a society where everyone has equal access to the same rights and opportunities.

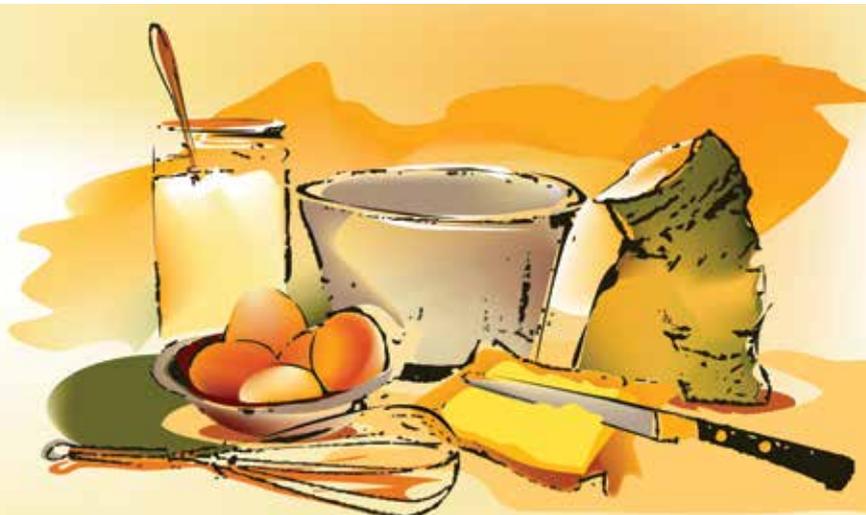
For more information about United Response visit:

www.unitedresponse.org.uk

Learning Disabilities – Mild to Moderate Support Needs

If you have mild to moderate support needs, we know that some basic support with housing, employment and accessing mainstream services and leisure activities can make an enormous difference to your ability to lead a full life.

- > Whether you need only a few hours of support each week, daily assistance or 24 hour care, we will work with you so that you can live your life the way you choose.
- > You will have choice and control over the support you receive.
- > You might want support to get a job or to buy your own food and clothes. We will support you to do the things you choose.
- > Where possible we will work with you to choose your support staff so that they match your personality and interests.
- > We will support you to live independently – either on your own, with friends or family or in shared accommodation if that is your choice.
- > We will support you to get out and about to meet new people and do new things in your life.
- > We can help you to manage your household bills and money.
- > We can support you to go on holiday.
- > We will help you to keep in touch with the people who are important to you.
- > If you are unhappy about anything in your life, we will work with you to make this better.
- > If you want to learn new skills we will support you to do this. This could be learning skills around the home or going to college.
- > If you want to get a job, we will support you to try and find one. We will also support you with the skills you need to do the job – such as learning to use public transport through travel training.
- > We will support you to keep yourself safe and healthy. We will support you with your personal care with dignity and respect and enable you to take full control of your life.
- > We will work with you to do the things you want to do and help you with the things you can't.
- > We will keep reviewing your support plans and make sure they change as your needs and wishes change.



Case Study

Trudy* has a mild learning disability, hydrocephalus, spina bifida and support needs with her mental health, requiring 1:1 support 24 hours a day. After an unsettled childhood she was placed in an assessment and treatment unit at the age of 19. Trudy was in her thirties when we first met her in the unit – she was extremely anxious, lacking in confidence, had low self-esteem and was on regular PRN medication when her anxieties and behaviours escalated.

Trudy's care managers told us that she would need 2:1 support, but we thought that this may not be the best way forward for her and asked if we could get to know her before the decision was made. After the proper assessments it was agreed that she didn't need such intensive support, saving the authorities money and, more importantly, ensuring the best outcome for Trudy.

We spent eight weeks visiting her most days building a relationship before moving her out of the unit. We created a personal profile with her that explained how she liked to be supported, how she communicated and how she wanted her life to be. We also took her out so that she was able to explore what was available in the community.

Previously Trudy had only gone out occasionally, if staff were available, and got upset when she knew others were leaving the unit. One Christmas Trudy was the only "patient" left as the others had gone home or were spending Christmas with their families – this was a terrible time for her.

Trudy started to put a lot of trust in us and wanted us around and, on days we weren't visiting, she would ask if we could phone her – which we always did.

We found a bungalow that we and other professionals thought was suitable and involved her in the whole process which started with a visit and her deciding that she wanted to live there. We supported Trudy to choose the décor, buy the things she wanted and then take them to the bungalow. This was an exciting and motivating time for her and she was really looking forward to her new life in her own home.

Now Trudy is a lot more confident and independent; she has choice and control over her life and goes out every day. She has not had to use PRN medication since we began supporting her and rarely feels the need to seek reassurance. She goes to college three times a week studying drama, art and cookery, as well as enjoying a busy social life. She also has a paid job with United Response, helping to interview and train staff. She has a great personality, a lovely sense of humour and gets quite cheeky with it – which we all like.

Trudy's relationship with her family has also improved. They speak each week on the phone and she has had sleepovers at her sister's house, as well as getting in contact with an uncle who lives abroad, and met up with Trudy whilst he was over and they now stay in touch by email.

*Name has been changed

She has a great personality, a lovely sense of humour and gets quite cheeky with it – which we all like. She has not had to use PRN medication since we began supporting her and rarely feels the need to seek reassurance.

For more information about how we work with people with **mild to moderate learning disabilities** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Profound and Complex Learning Disabilities

Although we support people across the whole range of learning disabilities, we have particular expertise in working with people with more complex needs – including people who other agencies have not been able to support – and we have a strong track record in supporting people to move on and to enjoy a better quality of life.

- > Instead of doing things for you, we will work with you to support you to engage as fully as possible in life no matter how profound your disabilities are.
- > Many of the people we support cannot speak. Our skilled staff are trained to work with you on a one-to-one basis, to find out how you like to communicate.
- > If you find it difficult to take part in activities we will help you to get involved through our Person Centred Active Support approach.
- > We will support you to take part in a range of activities of your choice, at home and in the community, using support which is matched to your needs and preferences.
- > We can also support you to go on holiday or take a short break to give you a change of scene.
- > We will make sure that our staff have the skills and resources they need to provide you with the support you may need to lead a meaningful and enjoyable life.
- > We have an expert Practice Development team, who work closely with our local staff across the country to ensure you receive the highest possible quality of support.
- > We believe that behaviour which challenges is a form of communication that can tell us important things about you and the quality of your life.
- > We will work hard with you to understand what you are trying to achieve by your behaviour and body language, so that we can respond in constructive ways.
- > If your behaviour may sometimes put you or others at risk, or limit your choices and opportunities, we will work with you using an approach called Positive Behaviour Support to help you to overcome these occasions so that you can enjoy the life you want.
- > We support people to move out of long stay institutions and also from “out of area” providing bespoke housing management and support solutions.
- > We implement Active Support which underpins the effectiveness of Positive Behaviour Support.

Hand-over-hand support



Case Study

Elisa* is a lively, intelligent lady who enjoys the great outdoors, swimming, shopping, looking at books and flicking through photographs. She doesn't use verbal communication and gets frustrated when misunderstood.

Elisa lived with her family until her parents were no longer able to provide for her needs. Initially she was moved to a psychiatric unit and then moved through a variety of placements. This was an extremely difficult time for Elisa and she expressed her frustrations through intense challenging behaviour which resulted in frequent sedation.

Elisa was transferred to United Response in 2001 and supported by a team leader, five permanent staff and a small bank of relief workers. Over time the team built up a strong relationship with Elisa and her parents. Through conversations and using the person centred tool, Working and Not Working, they pinpointed their concerns that the mood stabilisers were making Elisa more unpredictable, and the strong medication was masking her personality.

This prompted them to meet Elisa's psychiatrist who drew up a three year medication reduction plan with them. Although Elisa was not able to express her views about this, staff explained the changes to her and kept her informed every step of the way. The withdrawal stages were difficult as Elisa's challenging behaviour became more pronounced and she would behave aggressively, pinch, scratch, grab clothes and drag staff to the floor. Each stage took varying

lengths of time from a few weeks up to a couple of months. The combined effects of the medication reduction plan alongside the effective implementation of person centred techniques and guidance from a speech and language therapist have cumulated in improving Elisa's life beyond recognition.

In hindsight staff can see that when Elisa was on medication she was constantly anxious and agitated. Staff explained, "We assumed that the medication was supposed to help, we didn't realise it could be making things worse." This was echoed by Elisa's mother "She's a different person now. We've got the old Elisa back."

Staff can now defuse potential episodes before they begin, without resorting to sedatives, by using a range of distraction techniques by engaging her in other activities. These days Elisa goes out usually twice a day and staff are currently working on an activity planner to ensure she is participating in meaningful activities they know she enjoys.

Elisa is now calm and relaxed. She will sit down and interact with staff, read a book or look through family photos, she even sits down during the evening to watch TV with staff – something she has never done before. Looking back at the progress made over the last 13 years, her team leader reflected, "Our work can change lives."

*Name has been changed

We assumed that the medication was supposed to help, we didn't realise it could be making things worse... We had never seen her without medication.

For more information about how we work with people with **profound and complex learning disabilities** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Autism

Many people we support are on the autistic spectrum. Our staff are trained in recognised techniques, including Person Centred Active Support, so that they can support you in the way you want.

- > Everybody is different – liking different music, different clothes and different foods. Because everyone is different, we are flexible in our approach, putting you at the centre of your support.
- > We know that you may find it difficult to give an opinion or feel you have a choice – we will listen and respond to your wishes and choices.
- > We will work with you to create a personal profile which explains how you like to communicate, the things you like and the things you don't like.
- > In many cases we use picture boards as a visual tool for communication, and also additional techniques to support communication. This might include touch, listening, body language and objects of reference.
- > We will get to know you to understand how you experience the world and help you live in a more comfortable environment.
- > We will use things such as daily diaries to make sure your support is consistent.
- > We are experts in providing social and communications support.
- > If you find it difficult to understand what people mean or find it difficult to talk to people, we will support you to make this easier.
- > If you want to learn new skills we will support you to do this whether this is in the home or going to college.
- > If you want to find a job we will support you to do this. We will help you with job applications, interviews, travelling and work with your employer to understand you and how you communicate.
- > We will involve you in every aspect of your support to make sure you are comfortable with what is happening.
- > We will make sure that you do have a voice. We will listen and respond to you.
- > If you want to, we will create opportunities to meet new people, make friends and learn new social skills.

Peter in his first paid job



Case Study

"I first met Peter, who has autism, when he attended his local hospital as an outpatient. Over the years, I came across him more and more, first through the day centre he visited, and eventually through my job at United Response. The more I got to know Peter, the more I became aware that he had a lot of potential skills but nowhere to use them. When he moved to live in supported living in Darlington with support from United Response in 2002, I saw an opportunity for us to change that.

Peter had previously lived in a residential setting, where other people gave him his medication, paid his bills, cooked his food and his clothes were washed, ironed and put away. But with reduced support hours, Peter had to learn how to be more independent. I knew he was more than capable of picking these skills up, but I also knew we'd need to show him there was a 'need' for him to learn something before he'd show any interest. Throwing him in at the deep end proved a risk worth taking as within a year, he had become so much more confident and capable around the house and out and about.

As the funding for the day centre he had been attending came to an end I knew that he would need something to take its place, so I contacted a local company who are responsible for sending out paperwork for teachers' pensions and bereavement packages. They were open to the idea of offering Peter an unpaid placement but, due to the sensitivity of their mail outs, needed reassurance that both he and they would be adequately supported. I worked

with them to devise a suitably robust support package and Peter was given the green light. He began by collating packs and when his work was spot checked he consistently achieved a 100% accuracy record. Just as Peter thought in black and white in his home life, so he worked in black and white too – a useful attribute for anyone whose job requires concentration and focus.

Two years later, Peter was offered the opportunity to apply for another position. After further IT training, which he excelled at, he was interviewed and given the part time role of Post Room Administrator, which was his first paid job!

In early 2014, Peter was offered a job cleaning the local United Response area office for one hour a week, for which he is paid, and given support to complete the tasks.

Peter has also attended Darlington College and achieved qualifications in English and Maths. The main format of his study was via e-learning, which meant he became confident with using the computer, and is now able to video chat with his sister, who lives in New York.

Peter is treated the same as everyone else at work. He has got and kept these jobs and achieved his qualifications because of his strengths, not because he has autism."

John Armstrong – Senior Support Worker

Peter is treated the same as everyone else at work. He has got and kept these jobs and achieved his qualifications because of his strengths, not because he has autism.

For more information about how we work with people with **autism** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Mental Health

We support young people and adults with a wide range of mental health challenges and disabilities to live the lives they choose.

- > We support people with a range of severe mental health needs, including psychosis, schizophrenia, multiple personality disorder and severe depression.
- > We work in partnership with you, your care team and other agencies to deliver truly individualised and person centred support that will meet your needs.
- > Our emphasis, where possible, is on recovery and we are committed to early intervention to help prevent more serious problems from occurring.
- > We will support you to make choices about how you want to live your life, create opportunities and enable you to choose the support you want.
- > We can support you in your own home or provide accommodation with support. If you have enduring mental health needs we can support you in residential care and supported living.
- > We will support you to overcome social isolation and maintain a presence in your local community.
- > We will work hard with you to build relationships and trust, providing a non-judgmental environment and focusing on demonstrating positive outcomes.
- > We will work in partnership with you, and other people important to you, to deliver support that meets your needs.
- > We will work with you to boost your confidence, promote your independence and empower you to make choices and decisions about how you want to live your life.
- > We will try and provide whatever it is that you need to get better and recover from a period of mental health distress. This means looking at all sort of different approaches, and being open to new ideas to help you.
- > We will actively listen and support you at times of emotional distress.
- > We will support you to find and keep a job or find opportunities for vocational training if you want to increase your skills.
- > We will support you to regain a greater sense of self-worth and independence.
- > Our ultimate aim is to support you to move away from psychiatric care and help you to develop skills, confidence and links that will enable you to lead a full and independent life in the community.



I have spent over two decades being supported by United Response and for me, it is a dream come true. I am treated as a person – a valued person.

Case Study

My name is Simon Partridge. I have a Master of Arts degree in English from Oxford University.

We are all tucked into boxes – in my situation, it is “schizophrenic”. When I was very ill, I had a phantom following me to while away the time – I tried to make sense of it. I have an insight into my mental illness now but I can ‘forget’ my head and just enjoy being myself.



I have spent over two decades being supported by United Response and for me, it is a dream come true. I am treated as a person – a valued person. I have a huge range of interests, hobbies and talents, including chess, contributing to local community radio, and particularly writing poetry, letters and

email. My mind is full of ideas. I visit the charity shops and go for tea at the Morrison's tea-rooms.

I live with my fiancée, Ginny, in a top floor flat above a United Response supported living service. This independence is very valuable to us, we are both creative and lead a happy life, supporting each other. I still have some support from United Response, which is important to me as I am a social animal and I need to communicate and feel respected. I have food, warmth, companionship, understanding and a cool environment.

There is wonderful communication between the support team and us, so I have a mental health support system in place as well as a practical one. I think of the staff as being like in-house psychiatrists, particularly Steve, the manager, who has been most supportive to me. In other places I've been to, your personal life can be ignored. But with United Response I have privacy – my own flat and bedroom. No one laughs at me or attacks me. No one can come in unless I say. I am reminded about medication and appointments, which allows me to pursue my hobbies.

One of the frustrating side effects of my mental health problem is drowsiness, caused in part by the drugs I take to control my illness. I know I need them to silence the voices in my head, but my support workers understand my wish to reduce my reliance on this medication and so are helping me to discuss this with my psychiatrist. I am growing older and with age comes understanding.

The public haven't always understood what it is to have a mental health need. I was once out when a man got out of his car, threatening me and shouted “You should be in a mental hospital.” To which I replied “That's exactly where I come from.” This foxed him and he drove off. Understanding of mental health seems better these days. You are not mad but mentally challenged. But I can have a girlfriend and friends. I am just like you.

For more information about how we work with people with **mental health needs** please email get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Housing

At United Response, we know how important getting the right housing is for people with disabilities. We have a housing department who manage all of our housing activities and, amongst other things, can support you to understand and explore different housing options and then secure the housing that best meets your current and future needs.

- > In recent years we have successfully delivered housing solutions for dozens of people including supporting people to secure a rented property and manage their own tenancy, buy their own home, move on from residential care homes or shared housing into a home of their own and move out of the family home for the first time.
- > We work in partnership with a large number of landlords and reputable property developers to create housing opportunities. We sometimes develop our own housing if our partners are not able to help
- > We also provide a high quality person centered housing management service to our own tenants and partners including helping people meet their obligations and have their rights upheld and ensuring that rent is paid and people's home are adequately maintained and improved.

Housing Brokerage

- > Our housing brokerage offer is designed to help you understand your individual housing needs and the different housing options available.
- > We will find out what is important to you. For example, living on your own, close to your family and friends, in a quiet place or in a city, if you want to rent or buy and if your property needs to be adapted to meet your physical needs.
- > Once we have helped you understand the different options, we can then help you to find a home that meets your needs if you would like us to.
- > We will talk to property developers, private and social landlords that we know, who work in the areas where you want to live, to see what properties are available that meet your requirements.
- > If buying your own home is the right solution for you and you can afford the costs involved, we can support you through the process. This includes putting you in touch with specialist mortgage advisors who will help you secure a mortgage and find the right property.

- > We charge a set fee for our housing brokerage service. You only need to pay the full fee if we are successful in securing you a property.
- > If you need continuing support to help you live in your home, you might wish to look into other types of support provided by United Response. Apart from personal care, getting out and about, finding a job or learning new skills, we can also work with you, and your family, to help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a tenant or shared owner and advise you about benefits to help you pay your rent and mortgage costs.

Thank you for treating me like a proper bloke. I am alright now I have my own place and a car, I could do with a girlfriend though!

Case Study

Adam* used to live in one of our residential care homes in Kent, which was recently converted into six self-contained supported living flats with communal space and staff sleep-in facilities. The house had been equipped for people with complex needs, and the existing occupants moved into some of the flats with a couple of new referrals made by the local authority.



Adam has complex needs and can display challenging behaviour; he was prone to compulsive behaviour, unable to recognise and respect other people's boundaries, and would often interrupt other people's care and support with his own demands. This had sometimes caused disruption and safeguarding alerts for both him and other residents.

Previously, there had been an average of three staff on shift at any one point, shared between six residents. In the new setup in his own flat, Adam has 64 hours of 1:1 support per week but also contributes to the shared cost of having 24 hour access to support. And the overall cost of his needs, although similar, are offset by his right to housing benefit. By individualising the accommodation and support, Adam's previous issues have been resolved and he is now sociable, relaxed and willing to engage more in general.

The change of environment has meant that staff have been able to support Adam to engage in meaningful activities, including photography and going to visit a local lonely elderly man as a volunteer. He also has more control over his income and has been able to purchase a small car which had long been a dream of his.

Adam's needs are still very complex and he has mood swings due to his depressive illness, but he now has more good days than bad days. He says that bad days are easier now that living in his own environment has alleviated some of the pressure of living in a large shared home.

In a recent satisfaction survey carried out with people we support, Adam wrote: "Thank you for treating me like a proper bloke, I am alright now. I have my own place and a car. I could do with a girlfriend though!"

*Name has been changed

For more information about our **housing services** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Specialist Support

We have an excellent track record of working with people who need specialist support in order to take more control over their lives.

Forensic services

- > If you have a disability and have a history of offending behaviour, or of being at risk of presenting offending behaviour, we will provide you with support to match your needs and work towards preventing future risk to yourself and others.
- > We will work closely with professionals from the wider multi agency/disciplinary team to support you to manage your behaviour whilst also supporting you to engage in a full and valued life in your local community.

Multiple diagnosis

- > We support lots of people with a multiple diagnosis – so if you have more than one disability we can support you. Many of the people we support have a physical disability, learning disability, mental health need and/or sensory impairments.
- > We will provide you with the skilled support you need so that you can live the kind of life other people may take for granted.

Communication

- > We have extensive experience of working with people whose communication is mainly non verbal – 40% of the people we support do not speak and 47% use at least one alternative method of communication.
- > We believe that all behaviour is a form of communication that can tell us important things about a person's life.
- > If you experience situations or events that cause you to behave aggressively to yourself or others, we will work with you to change these situations to reduce these incidences and improve your quality of life.
- > Our staff are trained to understand how you like to communicate, and they are supported by our specialist Practice Development and Inclusion coordinators who are nationally and internationally recognised for their work in these areas.



Intensive Interaction has really helped us to find a way to connect with John. It's so rewarding to look back over the last six months and see how things have changed for him.

Case Study

Like many of the people United Response works with, John* doesn't communicate verbally. His support workers wanted to find out about the things he liked to do and support him to become more engaged in activities but they knew that, first of all, they had to find a way to connect and communicate with him.

So they contacted their local Community Learning Disability Team's speech and language therapists and our Practice Development team to ask for advice. After assessing John's individual needs, it was decided that the team would try to connect with John using intensive interaction.

Intensive interaction is an equal form of communication. It is all about the support worker creating a relationship with the person they are supporting by entering their world and mirroring the things they do or ways they behave – their gestures, actions and sounds.

It is a long process. The support worker must follow the lead of the person being supported. The person may make a noise for example or touch something. The support worker would then replicate the action and wait for the person being supported to respond. To begin with it may all seem very ad hoc and it can feel a little strange. But gradually a whole dialogue is built up and using patterns of behaviour and sounds that the person recognises, the support worker will eventually be able to initiate interaction and the person being supported will begin to respond to more conventional forms of communication.

Six months later, service manager, Olivia and her team were amazed by the changes. Olivia says: "When we first started working with John, he didn't make many sounds at all and showed little interest in the things going on around him. He would spend a lot of time sitting quietly in his chair watching other people do things, but not actually taking part in them himself unless instigated by a support worker. Then, one day when I was sitting talking to John about his support plan, I noticed that he kept putting his hand on the file and so I mirrored the action. John then put his hand on the file again and I repeated the action back

to him. We carried on doing this and then after a while John looked at me and smiled. We had made a connection.

"Now that John seems to know that other people are interested and can help him he will communicate when he wants to do something by smiling and leaning forwards. And now that we have a relationship that makes sense to John, we have a platform on which we have built other communication and choice opportunities.

"If he wants something to drink, he now gets up out of his chair, goes into the kitchen and picks up his cup. Once in the kitchen, John is now able to communicate to us what he wants and feels confident enough to make that decision. We've been able to use objects of reference with John and they have become incredibly important. We will hold up the teabags and coffee jar to him, for example, and he will touch the one he wants. He will also take part in making the drink. The support worker will put their hand on the handle of the kettle and John will mirror the action and together they pour the hot water into his cup."

It is not only in the house that support workers have seen a real difference in John, but out and about in the community as well. He is also engaging more with people around him, making eye contact and smiling back at them. John has been supported to develop his interests. He now regularly uses local shops and restaurants and feels confident enough to take the bus to the cinema or to see a band and has developed a passion for rock music.

He also took part in a recruitment day for new staff. With his support worker, he was responsible for the meet and greet section of the day and did a fantastic job. By using cards with smiley and non-smiley faces on them, John was able to feedback to us his thoughts on the potential staff.

*Name has been changed

For more information about how we work with people who need **specialist support** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Acquired Brain Injury

We have expertise in working with people with acquired brain injury and currently support a number of people across the country with this diagnosis. We support people who have had a brain injury from early childhood and also people who have acquired a brain injury much later in life, through an accident or illness.

- > We work in partnership with clinical partners and specialist units such as BIRT (Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust) to provide community based rehabilitation and support to help you to build or regain your independence.
- > If you have acquired your brain injury in recent years, we will work closely with you, and the people who are important to you, to support you to cope with the natural feelings of loss and grief that you may be experiencing and help you to adjust to a new way of life.
- > We know that your support needs may fluctuate and your skills may be patchy. In all cases we will work with you to design a support plan that meets your own unique needs in the way that suits you best.
- > As well as providing you with personal support we will also work with you to investigate the use of assistive technology and other tools which may help you live a more independent life.
- > However we support you, we will ensure that your support needs are planned with you and are designed around you and your rehabilitation.
- > Your brain injury may result in you experiencing physical effects such as fatigue, mobility problems, sensory impairment, difficulty with speech, epilepsy, weakness, paralysis or memory loss and we will support you to overcome these either with external specialists or with our tried and tested person centred tools.
- > Your injury may have resulted in you feeling a loss of confidence, mood swings, depression or obsessive behaviour. We will work with you to manage your negative feelings and regain your self-esteem.
- > We will work with you to help you to recover as many lost skills as possible over time.
- > We will work with you to produce your person centred plan and we will frequently monitor this to aid and monitor your rehabilitation.

We learn every day about how the injury affects Paul; while the theory is useful to know and helps to explain what may appear inexplicable, the really important work is helping Paul to cope with its effects in a way that makes most sense to him.



A relaxed Paul

Case Study

“Paul acquired his brain injury in a road traffic accident when he was 40 and was referred to United Response four years later. Before his accident Paul had been an IT consultant and a bank manager – coming to terms with the changes in his life and lifestyle has been no mean feat for him.

Paul can read and write, use a computer and engage in complex conversation. He can do crossword puzzles and regularly beats my team colleagues at Scrabble. But his brain injury is such that he doesn't always know that he can no longer do some things without support – this understandably can cause him to be defensive or angry. Paul also struggles to respond directly to questions about himself and how he feels, though he is able to reflect when he's not under pressure.

To support Paul we have equipped him with a range of tools so that he is able to remind himself how to do things. This gives him control rather than always having to be told what or how to do something. For instance, the daily household rota tells Paul which tasks are his responsibility each day. In addition, we have developed some small cards with more detailed instructions about how to complete a task. He can keep these in his pocket and refer to them himself. He has a small whiteboard which, in consultation and agreement with Paul, we use to write his routine for the next day. He then wipes

off each item as it is completed. He now writes the board himself which gives him more autonomy and control.

The Consultant Neuropsychologist, who had worked with Paul after his accident, carried out a Psychological Assessment 18 months ago. She was impressed with his progress since coming to live with us, but also recognised his ongoing difficulties.

Paul has friends and family who he is still in contact with from before he had his accident. He is noticeably more relaxed since he first came to us. Some of the unwanted behaviours that he struggles to control have subsided and others have disappeared. He is less worried about where he lives and has got involved in our Local Leadership Team and offered his help in campaigning for people's rights. He has also trained as a Quality Checker for United Response

We learn every day about how the injury affects Paul; while the theory is useful to know and helps to explain what may appear inexplicable, the really important work is helping Paul to cope with its effects in a way that makes most sense to him. That will be different for each person.”

Annette Hales-Owen – Service Manager

For more information about how we work with people with an **acquired brain injury** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Dementia

We support people with dementia to live as well and independently as possible and to maintain the things that are important to them in their lives, even as their dementia progresses.

- > We will get to know you – your personality before your diagnosis, what things you liked and did not like and who was important to you – so that we can ensure your support and environment continues to reflect what you have always enjoyed.
- > Our support will focus on you rather than on the dementia which may, at times, hide your likes and dislikes.
- > We will ensure we know what was important to you and we will support you to carry on doing those things. If you cannot tell us, we will ask people who have known you.
- > We will help you to keep your cherished memories alive by using our person centred tools with you.
- > Familiarity is very important and we will ensure that your routines remain the same where possible.
- > Your visual perceptions may change due to your dementia – we will change your environment to make this less confusing.
- > Whether your dementia affects you gradually or in stages we will work with you, and those close to you, to adapt your support as your needs change.
- > We will work closely with you to monitor any changes so that your support needs can be adjusted sooner rather than later.
- > We work in partnership with clinical experts, and if you need it, we will support you to work with specialists such as speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and psychiatrists. We will ensure you get the best support available.
- > We know you will have good times and bad times. We will support you to make the most of the good times and we will help you through the bad times.
- > We will support you at your pace, adjusting this according to how you are feeling.
- > You may, over time, require more support than you did before. We will adjust this support as and when you need it.
- > We will monitor your health and wellbeing so that we can plan your current and future care and support as much as possible with you.
- > If the time comes when you are not able to do as many things for yourself as you could in the past, where possible we will use assistive technology to ensure you are as independent and safe for as long as possible.
- > We will support you to keep in touch with those people who are important to you such as family and friends.

United Response has signed up to the...



Cheryl enjoys going out in the community and has great presence; she is well liked and enjoys socialising, which is something that we want to continue and will work with her husband to ensure we can achieve

Case Study

Cheryl* is in her mid 70's and lives with her husband who is her main carer. They live in a market town in the North West of England as they have done for the past 50 years. Cheryl has dementia and her three children see her as much as possible but, with working full time and having their own children, it often proved difficult to provide as much support as they would like to.

Initially, her husband was wary of using another agency due to issues they had experienced previously, including lack of consistency of staff members, regular late arrival of staff and poor communication with them. We understood the importance of providing Cheryl and her husband with consistent support and agreed to see Cheryl on a set day each week. This allowed her husband to continue looking for a PA to try and eliminate concerns he had about unreliable care providers.

The first Wednesday went really well. We walked to the park and sat in the cafe for a cup of tea, which Cheryl enjoys doing. We looked for various ways to engage in conversation with Cheryl and be in the moment, which seemed to really work. When we arrived home, Cheryl was very happy and positive about her time spent with me, which pleased her husband as he hadn't seen this reaction from her before.

As such, we agreed to provide daily morning support ensuring that staff are consistent, with me providing the majority of support and having another staff member for when I am unavailable. Both Cheryl and her husband are happy with this as he knows and trusts that we will arrive on time or notify him if there is an occasion where this might not be possible. This has allowed her husband to go out and have some time to himself.

Through getting to know Cheryl, we are learning different things about her every day and adapting what we do as her illness changes and progresses.

I continue to use various creative approaches such as music, singing, matching Cheryl's rhythms, reacting to the moment and other techniques that allow us to connect with Cheryl and communicate with her in a way that best meets her needs.

We regularly discuss the support package with her husband to look at where we can change our support to meet Cheryl's and his changing needs. Her husband is confident that even when Cheryl's behaviours could be deemed as physically challenging towards others, we will respond in the appropriate way and move on to promote a positive atmosphere for all. After working with Cheryl for several months we have built up a great relationship experiencing some wonderful moments. It may be challenging and intense at times, but five minutes later Cheryl reaches for your hand and just strokes it whilst saying thank you. I know that Cheryl's behaviours and challenges come from frustration and am still learning different techniques every day to alleviate these.

Cheryl goes out with our support every Wednesday. She really enjoys attending the Genesis Wellbeing Centre three times a week and also visits a local 'singing for the brain' group with her husband, as music has always been part of their lives.

We manage the risks as positively as possible. For example, road safety is generally fine following lots of encouragement and instruction ahead of time. This is something we will monitor and discuss with her husband to ensure that this can continue as long as possible, increasing Cheryl's sense of independence, which is a key part of our work. Cheryl enjoys going out in the community and has great presence; she is well liked and enjoys socialising, which is something that we want to continue and will work with her husband to ensure we can achieve.

United Response Service Manager

*Name has been changed

For more information about how we work with people with **dementia** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Young People in Transition

We provide support to young people in transition. We want to help you explore your options, try out new activities, build your skills and independence and plan for a future of increasing independence.

- > We can provide outreach support to young people and their families to help develop skills around communication and start building aspirations for the future.
- > We can work with you, and the people close to you, to support you to live a more independent life.
- > We will listen to you and make sure we understand what is important to you as you make the transition into adulthood. Most importantly, we will keep you involved every step of the way.
- > You will be in control of your own life, and the decisions around it.
- > We will talk to you and those that are important to you – your family, friends, school and the people who know you best – to find out how you want to be supported.
- > We will take time to work with you to find out your likes and dislikes, interests and long and short-term ambitions and support you to achieve these.
- > We will help you plan what you would like to do with your life and where you want to live – and we will keep reviewing these plans with you as your life changes.
- > We can provide training and other resources to help you and your family make the best choices for you.
- > We can support you to choose people to work with you who share your interests and hobbies.
- > We can help you to choose where and how you want to live – you may be looking forward to living in your own home with whatever support you require or you might prefer to live with other people.
- > We will work with you to find out what you like to do support you to get involved in your local community and build up a wider social network.
- > We will support you to do whatever it takes to lead a fulfilling life – help with getting a job, enrolling on a college course, taking up cycling or meeting your friends at the cinema, for example.
- > We will review and update your person centred plans with you regularly, changing as your needs and wishes change.
- > Our support will always be centred around you.
- > We recruit and develop a diverse workforce to ensure equality of treatment for everyone we support. We provide an environment that values cultural diversity and treats people with fairness and respect in order to maximise their talents and resources.

Being visible in the community



Case Study

In April 2013, we launched a pilot scheme for five young adults, who have learning disabilities and are on the autistic spectrum, to live independently and study at a local mainstream college as an alternative to attending a residential college away from family and friends.



Our key goals when supporting young people in transition are to make sure that they are involved in their local community, developing real transferrable skills that could lead to employment opportunities, working towards the highest level of independence possible and able to maintain informal networks of support. Working closely with the individuals, their families, and the local authority, we found two houses suitable for the three young men and two young ladies which were near the town centre, local shops, and within walking distance from their colleges. There has been a massive reduction to their initial support needs which means that they are now able to live more independently and are developing their own skills and interests.

At the start, all five individuals required 1:1 support to travel to and from college. After careful planning, we slowly and gently reduced the amount of support and within just a few months, they were all able to walk

to and from college unsupported. One of the young men has even passed his cycling road safety test so that he can cycle to college when he wants.

At first, Katy* needed 1:1 support to go food shopping. Now, with minimal support, she does this herself. As well as singing in the local choir Lauren* is looking to start a dog walking business, while Katy would like to create a cat sitting enterprise. Aaron* has already established a successful small enterprise building and selling bird boxes.

When Lauren and Katy were moving into their new home, their neighbours instantly warmed to them and lent them a television until they were able to get one of their own. With support from staff Lauren and Katy thanked them by cooking them a three-course meal.

The three young men successfully applied for funding to throw a hugely popular community barbecue and, with support, to build a vegetable patch. Aaron also saved up and bought a ping pong table, and wants to turn the garage into a games room for the young men and their large circle of friends to enjoy.

One of the most rewarding aspects when reviewing the success of this new transition model is how consistently the young people meet and exceed all expectations in terms of what they are able to achieve. They, and the people around them, have learnt that goals, dreams, aims and ambitions are just as achievable for them as they are for anyone else.

*Names have been changed

The key goals with young people in transition are for us to make sure that they are working towards the highest level of independence possible.

For more information about how we work with people in **transition** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Building Independence

We will help you to develop your skills and confidence and provide opportunities for you to learn the new skills you may need to live more independently.

- > We will support you to live where and how you choose. For example, if you want to live on your own, we will support you to find, and run, your new home.
- > We will support you to develop your literacy and numeracy skills to help you take control of your life and your money.
- > We will provide you with the level of accessible communication you need to understand information that is important to you.
- > We can support you to use technology, where appropriate, to enable you to live your life more independently.
- > We will support you to take risks in your life to achieve the things you want to do. We will do this by supporting you to

make informed choices – and by working with you to identify risks and take steps to manage them to ensure you can achieve your aims.

Community Inclusion

- > We believe that to truly have the best quality of life we all need to engage with other people and situations outside of our home and circle of support.
- > We will work with you to find out what your community has to offer you and then support you to take part in the activities you wish to.
- > We will support you to do the things you want – whether this is to take part in sporting activities, go shopping, go to the cinema, join a club or go to the pub.
- > We will support you to meet new people and make new friends and keep in touch with those who are important to you.

> We will support you to speak up for yourself. This could be in your local community about issues that interest or concern you, or it could be talking to your local MP about things that matter to you.

- > We will support you to manage your money so that you know how much you have to spend on paying bills and how much money you have left to spend on yourself. We can also help you save up for bigger things you want to do, such as going on holiday.
- > As your independence and skills increase, you may feel you want less support to do some things. We will work with you to see how this can be done but making sure that you are still healthy and safe.
- > If you like to travel independently we will support you to do this by helping you get to know the route to new places you want to go and making sure you feel safe and that you can find your own way there and back.



The friends have been able to use their budgets to achieve flexibility with their support, a wider network of friends and participate in activities in their local community.

Case Study

Sisters Julia and Kate live with their friend Sophie – all of whom have learning disabilities. They are extremely house proud and love the independence of owning their own home while also enjoying holidays together, taking part in extreme sports and their weekly Zumba classes.

So that Julia, Kate and Sophie can make the most of their individual budgets their support workers make sure that they can afford to fund their favourite activities. For Kate and Sophie this means being able to go horse riding and take part in sports. The friends have been able to use their budgets to achieve flexibility with their support, a wider network of friends and participate in activities in their local community. The budget has also given the ladies more 1:1 support and therefore an opportunity to develop their skills - for example all three receive three hours support daily between 7am and 10am, an expense that they share by paying for one hour of support each.

When Kate uses her 1:1 time to tidy her room she is given £5 in cash from her budget, which is looked after by staff. This means she can save and put it towards buying nice things for herself. She loves to shop but this is an effective way for her to learn how to earn, save and spend money carefully. Sophie uses this extra 1:1 support to volunteer as a waitress in the local village centre's café. Julia has used her support to help her develop confidence skills and, following a systematic confidence building programme, can now use the bus independently. She also raises money for an emergency foreign aid charity by taking part in sponsored walks and holding a stall in the local market.



All three are members of a local charity group, SAFARI, which is open to anyone with learning disabilities, where they take part in social events such as quizzes, discos, day trips to the seaside. They also participate in the annual carnival, for which they have previously won best entry to the parade.

The flexible support provided enables Julia, Kate and Sophie to take control and live their lives in the way that they choose.

Their staff support them to maintain a high level of independence by helping them to make the most of their individual budgets.

For more information about how we work with people to **become more independent** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Employment

Having a job can make a real difference to a person's life. It can help someone become more independent, build confidence and start new friendships.

If you would like support to find a job:

- > We will work with you to find out what you want to do, build your skills and find opportunities.
 - > We will work with you to increase your existing skills and help you develop new ones so that you can get the job that you want.
 - > We can work with you to help you make informed choices about your future.
 - > We will work with you to find out what your skills and interests are.
 - > We will help you to develop the skills you need, using internal and external training and resources tailored to meet your individual needs.
- > We can also support you to get voluntary work. We will match your skills and interests with volunteering opportunities in your local community.
 - > We will then match what you tell us you want to do and help you find job opportunities in both work experience and paid employment.

If you have not worked before:

- > We will help you adjust to any changes that may come with having a job.
- > We will support you with applying for a job and with the interview process.
- > We will work with your employer to make any necessary adjustments to the workplace to ensure that you are able to do the job.
- > We will help you take responsibility for using transport, getting to work on time and with your working relationships.

- > We can support you to do a range of work: full-time, part-time, casual or work experience.
- > If you need training to do the job you want, we will support you to access training courses or work experience.
- > We will provide you with the information you need in a way that you prefer – whether this is large print, plain words and sentences or words and pictures.

When you start work:

- > We will support you in your new job or until you are confident enough to carry on by yourself.
- > We will support you to meet with your manager if there is anything about the job that you are unhappy with.
- > We will carry out a risk assessment of any place you will be working to ensure that you are safe.



Some people don't always give you a fair chance in this world, unfortunately. It feels good to have a fair chance.

Case Study

Aishah is a bubbly and enthusiastic young lady, who was first referred to United Response's Supported Employment service in late 2009, hoping to gain paid employment. She had already gained some previous experience working with children, though she wasn't sure what she wanted to do next.

Through working with the Supported Employment team, Aishah discovered that she was very open minded about what kind of role she took on but wanted to work with people in a customer-facing role as she is chatty, friendly and sociable. Aishah initially went out and about in the local community with support staff to see what kind of jobs were available.

In early 2010, Aishah heard that a local cinema was hiring new staff, so her support team approached the cinema's manager and opened a stream of communication with him. He was very interested in the services United Response provide and asked that Aishah apply online. With support from her team she applied successfully and was invited for an interview which she excelled at. Staff then entered negotiations with the manager to ensure that the role would be beneficial for both Aishah and her new employers, ensuring that the working hours were practical for Aishah and that any identifiable obstacles could be overcome with training.

Aishah initially started with one four hour daytime shift per week, and later progressed to two shifts and overtime as and when needed, after showing how valuable she was as a member of the team. Cinema manager Dan said "She's a big hit with all the customers and staff. She's no different to anybody



else that works for me, and I'd say in fact she probably knows the job a lot better than some of the other staff do."

Aishah also required travel training to ensure she could safely and easily get to and from work using public transport, which included walking there and back to the station, taking the local metrolink and changing trains, before navigating the complex corridor system in the underbelly of the shopping centre the cinema was in. She picked this up quickly and now travels and works independently, with no further support unless requested or needed, though she keeps in touch with the supported employment team and drops in to see them regularly through her work with the UR Consultants.

Aishah takes pride in her work and is pleased with what she has achieved. "Some people don't always give you a fair chance in this world, unfortunately. It feels good to have a fair chance."

She's no different to anybody else that works for me, and I'd say in fact she probably knows the job a lot better than some of the other staff do.

For more information about how we work with people to support them into **employment** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Health

United Response is committed to ensuring that people we support with a disability or mental health challenges have access to the health services that meet their specific needs which have been assessed by their social worker, referring agency, GP or identified by their support staff or family.

- > We will work with you, your family and healthcare professionals to reduce barriers and ensure your health needs and treatment are met.
- > Your support team discuss with you any changes in your behaviour which could be caused by ill health and support you to take the appropriate action or get advice from the relevant health professionals.
- > We will ensure that you are registered with a local GP, dentist and optician who can meet your needs.
- > If you have complex needs or behaviours that are challenging we will seek professional health support from a community learning disability nurse, a behavioural support team (employed by the NHS), an occupational therapist and/or a physiotherapist where appropriate.
- > We will remind and support you to attend any health related appointments and to take any medication you have been prescribed.
- > Your staff will ensure effective communication between you, the health professionals and your family if they are involved in your life.
- > We will make sure that your support staff are fully trained to support you with your specific health needs.
- > If you do not have the capacity to understand concerns and possible consequences about your health, your staff will work with your GP or other relevant health professionals to make decisions which are in your best interest when required.
- > If you require urgent treatment and are unable to give consent, the relevant health professional will make a decision in your best interest.
- > If you take regular prescribed medication, we will support you to have a regular review of your prescriptions with your GP.
- > You will be offered an annual health check and you and your support staff will have detailed information available for the appointment.
- > You will be offered, and supported to attend, any health screenings and checks available.
- > Your support staff will ensure that the benefits and risks about the screenings are explained to you in a way that you understand so that you are able to make a decision.
- > If you ever need to go into hospital, we will work with your family and healthcare professionals when appropriate to explain to you what will happen and how you will be supported during your stay. We will also explain to hospital staff how you like to communicate.
- > We will work with you to produce a health passport which details key information which will help nursing staff and doctors support you better when you are in hospital.
- > If you are not given proper access to the health services you require, or are not happy with the treatment you receive, we will either help you to complain or we will complain on your behalf to resolve the issue.
- > We will regularly review your health and support plans with you and change these plans as your needs and wishes change.
- > We will not discuss your private health issues with your family unless you are happy for us to do so.
- > If you are not able to make decisions about your health care, we will meet with the relevant health and social care professionals to agree what support or intervention is in your best interest.

Case Study

Harry* struggles with going into new buildings, as he has fears of not knowing what is inside and meeting new people can present major problems. Despite staff's best efforts, Harry had a tendency to allow his hygiene to lapse, and particularly this had led to swollen gums as he did not like to brush his teeth. Staff initiated a slow introduction to regularly brushing his teeth again to lessen the concerns he had about using a toothbrush. With gentle encouragement and hand-on-hand support from his support team, he began brushing his teeth after lunch each day.

It was clear that Harry needed to see a dentist to ensure that the gum swelling was not as a result of developing an infection or gum disease, but that presented problems because of his fear of going to new unfamiliar places. After finding a local learning disability dentist, staff began going for walks and doing other activities near the building with Harry, to gently introduce him to the building.

After a while, the staff would sometimes wave at the dentist in the window, and he would wave back, something that Harry quickly began reciprocating. Harry is often very verbal, and the dentist soon learned to recognise his voice so that he could wave when he heard them coming past if he was there. Noticing that this seemed to be an effective way of making Harry more comfortable with the process of meeting new people, staff spoke to the dentist and agreed to call ahead when they would be walking past so that he could be near the window to wave to Harry every time he came past.

They then discussed the possibility of just going into the waiting room and sitting there to get used to the surroundings. Staff knew that the large plant

behind the door into the building would be difficult for Harry to deal with, so they discussed this with him beforehand and explained that they would put themselves between Harry and the plant so that he would feel safe. They also took in a photograph of his health facilitator so that he had something familiar with him and reassured him that he was somewhere secure. Harry's health facilitator acts as a 'bridge' contact between his doctor, dentist, and other health services, and Harry knows him well so it was a good way to reassure him that his surroundings were safe. The gradual build up of relationships and interaction with the health professionals and support staff throughout was brilliant.

Pictures have always been very valuable to Harry so this technique was successful, and it wasn't long before Harry was comfortable enough to go in to meet the dentist properly. Harry's love of cars had initially helped him to get used to the outside of the building is on a busy road. The dentist then realised that closing the blinds in his office helped Harry to focus on what was happening in the room. Once the visual stimulus of cars driving past outside had been removed, it became much easier for Harry to focus on what was happening inside the office. The entire process took just a few months.

Harry now has regular dental appointments and is able to address his hygiene needs with support from staff. The building also houses a variety of other health support services such as a podiatrist, optician and a speech and language therapist, and Harry is so comfortable with the building that he has since had an eye test at the opticians.

*Name has been changed

The build up of relationships and interaction with the health professionals and support staff throughout was brilliant.

For more information about how we support people's **health needs** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Personalisation

All our work is based on a person centred approach and we see personalisation as a natural progression of this.

- > We have a strong track record of providing creative, flexible and individualised services and welcome the opportunity for people to purchase their own support directly from us, or through someone acting on their behalf. We already work with a large number of people who buy their support this way.
- > We believe that if you want to manage your own support (whether through an individual or personal budget, a direct payment, or other money that you have) you should be able to do so, whatever your ability.
- > We work with local authorities to make personalisation and self-directed support a reality for people with disabilities – including people with complex needs.
- > We support a lot of people who have their own funding and we support them to have real choice and control over what they do, perhaps for the first time in their life.
- > We have a strong track record in supporting people to use their

individual budgets in creative and truly person centred ways and we can support you to do this too.

- > If you would like to be supported by us, we will agree with you what support you want from us.
- > We will work with you to create a bespoke individual contract that sets out how we will support you so that your rights and our responsibilities are clear.
- > We will work with you to choose your support worker or personal assistant, so that they suit your personality and interests. We will employ them directly, so that you don't have to. This means that we will take care of all the administration around your support including DBS checks,

induction and training for your support workers, payroll, tax and insurance.

- > We will make sure that your staff are properly trained and supervised. We will involve you in as much or as little of this as you want.
- > We are happy to provide you with information and advice about different types of funding that may be available to you, so that you can take control of your support.
- > If you do not want to manage your own money, we can do this for you. We will make sure you know exactly how this is used and what it is spent on.



For more information about how we work with people who have **personalised budgets** email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Working with families

All our work centres on working in partnership – with you, with the people who know you best, and with other agencies and professionals, where appropriate.

- > If you have family, we will support you to keep in touch with them and to form a partnership that respects everyone's roles, skills and responsibilities.
- > We will keep your family in touch with what we do and how we work through our regular magazine for family members to keep them up to date with the latest news.
- > We will also provide your family with information on the support we will provide, how to make comments, suggestions or complaints, about the service itself and about the local area.
- > If you have lost touch with your family and would like to be in touch with them again we will support you to do this.
- > We will support you to keep in touch with other people important to you in your life and maintain friendships.
- > We will work invite your family to come to your support review meetings if you want them to be there.

Case Study

When I was four years old my brother Peter was born. He went to Leybourne Grange Colony in West Malling in Kent when he was nine. But 37 years later, when the process of closing began, the conditions for Peter got worse – he was losing weight and his challenging behaviour was increasing. There were some good things about Leybourne Grange but so many difficult things for Peter and it is a great credit to him that he came through there without letting it destroy his spirit and personality – I really admire him.



Lesley (9) and Peter (5)

Dispirited by the first places we saw, Dovedale (which was run by United Response) was just about to open. It was ideal for Peter with both personal space inside and a safe garden for him to enjoy.

Also, the staff not only were welcoming and friendly but they came from a wide variety of backgrounds and life experience. This was so good as they didn't view Peter as a patient but as a human being. They have greatly enriched Peter's life.

They regularly visited Peter in Leybourne Grange before the move to get to know him and for him to know them and introduced him gradually into his new home before he moved in permanently. It is amazing to be included in decisions on things that affect Peter – whereas before, our family and Peter, had been shut out of his life altogether.

The last 20 years have been really great for both Peter and myself. Peter is being supported by people who have his best interests at heart. They are always looking for ways to make his life more enjoyable. I have nothing but the highest praise for all the staff and the values of United Response.

Lesley Moreland

For more information about how we work with **families of people we support**, please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

Person Centred Approaches

However we support you, it will be underpinned by a truly person centred approach that places you in the centre of your life and your support: we build our support around you, not the other way round.

- > We use a range of simple person centred thinking tools that help us to take a creative approach to problem-solving and to ensure the best possible – and consistent – support for you.
- > We use the tools to continuously review what's working and what's not working for you, so that our support to you can be developed and improved.
- > We are pioneers in person centred active support – an approach which concentrates on providing enough support to enable you to participate in activities and relationships, gain more control and more independence.
- > Person centred active support is based on using ordinary everyday activities to encourage choice and engagement. Instead of doing things for you or to you, we will work with you so that you can take part in all the activities of everyday life, no matter how complex your support needs may be.
- > The support we provide is focused on what is important **to** you – to do the things you want to in your life – and what is important **for** you – for example, to keep you healthy and safe, whilst supporting and enabling you to lead a rich and interesting life.
- > Person centred planning is a way for people we support to plan for what they want now and in the future, with people in their lives whom they like and trust.
- > We review these plans regularly to make sure that the desired outcomes have been achieved.
- > We also use the Life Star to make sure every aspect of your life is how you want it to be.
- > Your local staff are supported by national specialists in best practice, inclusion, quality and health and safety, ensuring that expert advice is always on hand.
- > We have a comprehensive range of health and safety and other policies and regularly audit our support services. We involve the people we support in checking our services too, through a Quality Checkers programme.
- > We have a reassuring and professional complaints procedure. We treat all concerns and complaints seriously and will investigate if things go wrong. We aim to learn from our mistakes to make sure our support to you continually improves.



Case Study

Lauren* is a considerate and thoughtful lady who spent ten years living in a shared house with her close friend. She has a learning disability and at times can struggle to maintain her mental health – she also experiences schizophrenic traits which she reacts to by shouting out.

United Response provides support to Lauren using a range of person centred approaches. Her local team manager, Stacey, believed the Life Star might be a useful tool to illustrate and explore the different elements of her life that were working well or hindering her progress, as staff could see Lauren was going through a challenging time.

Stacey worked through the Life Star with Lauren and found that her score was low on several elements. Her social life was limited because of her mental health needs. Living with a flatmate meant she rarely had time alone, and she felt there was nothing enjoyable to look forward to in her life. For the first time she suggested that she would like to move out.

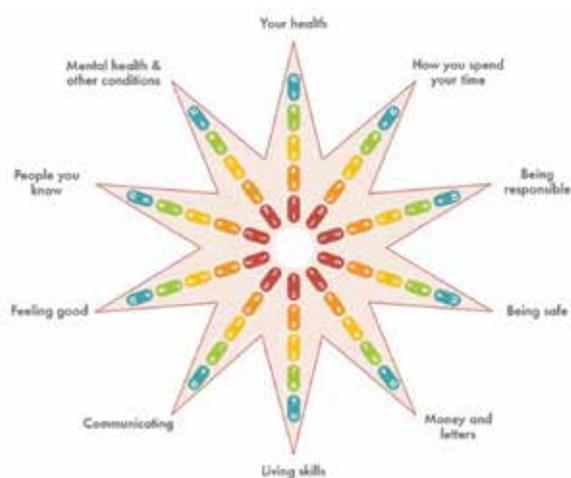
This declaration was a huge step for Lauren as she is sensitive to the people around her and would rather tell people what she thinks they want to hear rather than expressing her own needs and wishes. The tool enabled her to express what was not working for the first time and the results were a revelation to her staff.

With Lauren's permission, the findings were shared with her key worker who was also surprised by the outcome. The knowledge enabled her key worker to explore the idea of moving out, where she wanted to live and whether she wanted to continue being supported by United Response.

Now that support staff and her key worker knew that Lauren wanted to live independently they were able to get the ball rolling with supporting her to find a suitable property through her local housing association and helped her explain to her flatmate of ten years her reasons for wanting to move out. Since she valued their friendship she chose not to go too far and opted to live nearby in her own flat across the road.

Six months after creating the first Life Star, Stacey and Lauren did a follow up to monitor the changes

and the difference was phenomenal. Stacey explained "It was like looking at the results for a new person". Moving out had completely transformed Lauren's life giving her a feeling of contentment. She had started going out and making more friends, managing her health and enjoying doing things in her own space without disturbance.



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Another massive change was that she started attending a support group for people who hear voices which was a huge step forward and something she would not have done before. This support has helped her to find her own way of managing the voices better and now she lives in her own flat she is able to shout out as she needs to whereas previously she would have refrained from responding to avoid disturbing her flatmate.

It was like looking at the results for a new person

Stacey and Lauren review her Life Star every six months and the results a year later showed that improvements to her quality of life were maintained over time. Despite moving out Lauren managed to retain her close relationship with her flatmate and they continue to enjoy each other's company on a regular basis.

* Name has been changed

For more information about how we deliver **person centred active support** please email: get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk or leave a message on our Get Support line: **0800 0884 377** or visit: www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

United Response – supporting you to live the life you choose

CQC comments about support provided by United Response

"Staff presented as caring and we saw that they treated people with warmth and respect during the course of our visit. A relative we spoke with told us they felt staff genuinely cared about the welfare of their family member."

"Staff supported people in a discreet, friendly and reassuring manner. Staff knocked on people's doors before entering their rooms and had understanding of people's needs. Some people were preparing and cooking their own meals and some were supported by staff in the kitchen."

"People felt that they were listened to and were involved in planning all aspects of their care and support. Meetings were organised for people so that they had the opportunity to communicate what mattered to them. They were supported by a stable and consistent staff team who knew them well."

United Response is a national charity which provides person centred support to over 2000 people across England and Wales.

If you have a learning disability or a condition that may result in physical or mental health difficulties, we are here to support you. We will offer you bespoke support to ensure you have the care you need as well as enabling you to do the things you want in your life.

We have an excellent track record in providing flexible and creative support to enable people to live an ordinary and integrated life in their local community. We work with people to build their confidence and skills, opening up opportunities that perhaps were never thought possible.

For more information on our work, please visit our website

www.unitedresponse.org.uk

or if you would like more information on specific areas of support please contact us:

☎ 0800 0884 377

@ get.support@unitedresponse.org.uk

🌐 www.unitedresponse.org.uk/get-support

🐦 <http://twitter.com/unitedresponse>

📘 or search for United Response on Facebook

United Response is committed to fostering a culture which promotes equality and the right of all individuals to be treated with dignity and respect, valuing diversity and celebrating the talents of the people we support and our colleagues.

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