

## Saffron Walden Annual Town Meeting 2023 Report

### Accuro (Care Services)

#### Overview

Accuro is a local charity supporting children, young people and adults with a disability in West Essex. We do this through a range of social, leisure and educational activities to increase confidence, independence, life skills and self-esteem. Accuro is a place for disability inclusion where members can be their authentic selves without judgement. For many of our service users, Accuro is their only social activity or opportunity. Our services also give families and carers vital periods of short break respite which can be the difference between coping and crisis.

We plan activity programmes with the club members' input via forum-style discussions, cool walls, and surveys. We invite them regularly to tell us what activities they would like to take part in, and this gives them ownership of their clubs and allows them to express and explore their interests.

Our children and young people have told us:

*"Accuro is my happy place."*

*"Everyone is really friendly and being able to chat to people regularly has had a positive impact on my mental health."*

Adults attending Accuro have told us:

*"I like Accuro and the people that work there, I enjoy giving out the medals for the Christmas Santa Dash in Saffron Walden."*

*"I am happy that I can meet people similar to myself."*

Parents have told us:

*"Accuro gives us time together without the responsibility and care our daughter needs. We know she is gaining independence (at Accuro) that we cannot give her."*

*"Our son has gained more confidence, his anxiety is much reduced and we've noticed a big difference when he meets different people now from what he was like when he started. Accuro has been a fantastic find for us."*

*"My child has gained confidence and independence, without judgment. There is no other facility like this in my area."*

Quotes from Accuro Parent/Carer and Service User Survey 2022-2023

## **Accuro Projects in Uttlesford**

### Accuro Children's Clubs in Saffron Walden, Uttlesford

The Accuro Saturday Play Club for ages 8-19 operates alternately from the ECL or Dame Bradbury's on a Saturday during term time. During the year, children and young people attending have enjoyed a wide range of activities and events including diverse cultural celebrations, cooking, arts and crafts and sports such as horse riding and swimming. Trips into the local community and use of our sensory room for relaxation play an important part in giving our members a variety of experiences and opportunities.

### Under 19's Club, Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow, Uttlesford.

Membership at this fun and stimulating club for young people with a disability aged 11 to 19 has grown throughout the year and we now near capacity. A highlight in 2022 was a visit by The Flying Seagulls to help us celebrate the Queens Jubilee with magic and circus skills in the Jubilee Gardens in Saffron Walden. Our members joined in with members of the public to tell jokes and everyone had a wonderful time. At Christmas, the Club put on the hugely anticipated 'The Greatest Show' to showcase the musical talents of our members.

### Holiday Scheme, various locations.

The holiday scheme delivered a packed and varied programme throughout the school holidays for children and young people with a disability aged 11 to 19. Activities ranged from trips to Legoland, the beach at Clacton, tubing, visits to the farm, trips on a canal boat to one-to-one sensory sessions for individuals.

The Holiday scheme is a critical service for many families and can be the only opportunity for a period of respite for families and carers during the long school holidays.

### Accuro Adult Services

**STRIDE – Skills/Togetherness/Relationships/Independence/Diversity/Equality**

A life skills programme for young adults with disability aged 19 to 25.

The first cohort of young adults from Uttlesford completed their STRIDE Graduation in October 2022 to great success. During the 6 month programme sessions covered a range of topics including digital skills, healthy living, domestic skills, transport and travel and employment. STRIDE is designed to increase life skills, independence, and confidence as well as self-esteem. The programme is supported by outside speakers and professionals and has been a resounding success.

The next Uttlesford STRIDE will begin in the Autumn of 2023.

### 19 to 25 Friendship Scheme in Uttlesford.

This group meets in Saffron Walden either at ECL or in the community for group activities such as bowling, trips to the cinema and meals out. These activities consolidate friendships formed in earlier years and at STRIDE and allow young adults with a disability to socialise with their peers, continue to develop their skills, and be independent as they transition into adult care settings.

### Adult Friendship Scheme aged 19 plus in Uttlesford.

Using the ECL Building and Fairycroft House as a base, the adult friendship scheme has supported many adults with a disability to return to face-to-face activities during the last year. Many members in this age group have been particularly anxious following the covid pandemic and have taken longer to return to groups making them vulnerable to social isolation. We are pleased to report an increase in attendance and the group has enjoyed game nights, discos run by a service user, meals out and a wonderful Christmas party.

We are now planning a residential trip to Centre Parks in March; our members are thrilled to have the opportunity to have a weekend away with their friends and are looking forward to this immensely.

We would like to say a huge thank you to Saffron Walden Town Council for continuing to support Accuro projects throughout this year. Additional thanks must go to the Mayor for championing Accuro as one of his chosen charities, we are extremely grateful for all of your support particularly as we remain in challenging times economically and politically. We know that we face increased demand for our services and are entering an exciting time as we seek to expand services to meet need.

We hope the Town Council and Saffron Walden community will continue to support Accuro through grant giving and our local events such as the Accuro Santa Dash in the Market Square and our Accuro 50 long distance walking challenge. Without you we would not be able to support local people with a disability and thrive as a local charity.