



# Homes Caring for Autism Company Information for Job Applicants 2008

“ Each and every individual has the right to be treated as a human being. Individuals with autism have a right to be understood, a right to be listened to and a right to contribute to society ”

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Further information on the Company can be found on our website at [www.homes-caring-for-autism.co.uk](http://www.homes-caring-for-autism.co.uk)

### A message from the Managing Director

Thank you for your interest in Homes Caring for Autism Ltd. I hope that you will find the information you need in our brochure. If you would like a discussion about anything you read, or require further information, I look forward to hearing from you.

It's an exciting time for our Company. Both of our care homes in Somerset have been full for some time now, so it's great that two young men have developed to the extent that we are supporting them to move to our more independent services. This means that we have a couple of vacancies in our more established homes.

Our fourth home, Stafford Lodge, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset, opened in September 2008 and is registered for those aged 16 years and upwards.

We are also set to announce an autism-specific project for the support of adults living in single-services in the community, rather than in residential care home settings.

Throughout this exciting time of change and development, I can give you my personal assurance that the Company will continue its work in the spirit and letter of its original philosophy, which you can read about elsewhere in this brochure. We give great importance to promoting the independence of our service users and their integration into the community. Their needs will always, without fail, have the highest priority in our planning and day-to-day work and will continue to drive what we do as a Company.

**Richard Smith**  
Managing Director  
Homes Caring for Autism Ltd

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## What we offer

Homes Caring for Autism provide caring environments where service users are treated with respect and personal dignity.

The homes are always refurbished and maintained to a high standard, with a full time Maintenance Manager employed to support the homes and ensure a safe and well maintained environment for all service users.

Activities which are organised on a regular basis, according to the interests and abilities of individual service users, include:

- Bus trips
- Meals out
- Skittles and socials in the local public house
- Shopping for personal clothes and toiletries
- BBQs with friends and/or family
- Swimming
- Day trips to many and varied locations
- Celebrating notable days, e.g. Halloween, Christmas, New Year etc.
- Train trips
- Assisting with household tasks such as cleaning, cooking, laundry, gardening
- Shopping for gifts for relatives' birthdays, Christmas etc
- Birthday parties for service users



The lounge and conservatory at Holly Tree Cottage



Ensuite bathroom at Apple Tree House

- Shopping for small gifts for fellow service users' birthdays etc
- Visits to local swimming pools in Bridgwater, Burnham and Cheddar
- Church attendance
- Sporting activities, participating and/or watching
- Construction hobbies and creativity projects in art and music
- Horse riding

The intention is to enjoy a fulfilling life in pleasant surroundings.

## Philosophy

As you read about our philosophy, we appreciate that the cynic in you might feel that 'everybody says these things'. However, the Directors and Management of the Company feel passionately about these issues, and we only retain support staff who are also willing to embrace our philosophy. We have plenty of parents of our present service users who will confirm that we deliver what we promise. We will always accommodate visits and discussions.

Underpinning the philosophy is Homes Caring for Autism's commitment to and adoption of the following principles:

### Choice

The experience of growing autonomy or self-determination, in not only small everyday matters, but also in major decisions that people make, such as where they live or with whom they live. Personal choice and autonomy defines and expresses the way people live.

### Respect

The experience of having a valued place among a network of people and valued roles in community life. It is concerned with challenging the limited negative stereotypes which are built up around people with autism.

### Community Participation

The experience of being part of a growing network of personal relationships.

### Community Presence

The experience of sharing the ordinary places that define community life. Living in non-segregated settings and participating in a variety of valued activities including leisure and work.

### Competence

The experience of a person gaining more skills and ability to perform functional and meaningful activities with whatever assistance is required.

### Home for Life

All people who reside within one of our homes are within a philosophy of a 'home for life', if this is the wish of the service user, with support to move on if desired. The basic ethos is that a person is enabled to develop and grow, emotionally, educationally, socially and spiritually. If a circumstance arose whereby an individual's needs could no longer be met within their particular home, then it would be in their best interests to move on to a more appropriate environment. If this were the case, the individual's rights would be paramount and any decisions which needed to be taken as to an alternative home would involve the person themselves and/or their advocate. Also included would be other significant people in their life along with direct carers. It is only after all of these views are considered that any decision would be made.



The patio area, Apple Tree House

## People and Culture Department: Training

In order to benefit all service users, the skills and retention of our staff team are a priority for Homes Caring for Autism.

We are, therefore, deeply committed to an in-depth Induction and ongoing training programme for all staff.

When a member of staff joins the Company they begin their career with us by undergoing a week long Induction. This consists of:

- An Introduction to Autism and the Autistic Spectrum (ASD Level 1)
- Communication - examining PECS and other forms of communication
- Health and Safety
  - Fire
  - Food Hygiene
  - Manual Handling
  - General
- Epilepsy: an overview
- Safeguarding Adults: 'No Secrets' and awareness of Abuse
- Policies and Procedures
- A full day spent in their allocated home, giving them the opportunity to develop their knowledge of the individual service users they will be supporting.

As well as being mentored for their first 13 weeks of employment, each member of staff also partakes in the following training courses:

- Infection Control in the Care Home
- Medication Administration
- Autism and the Autistic Spectrum - Level 2
- First Aid
- Positive Response Training (PRT) - as required
- Supervision

Management Training also includes:

- Legalities and Legislation
- Running a Homes Caring for Autism home
- Management and Leadership

As a progressive, forward thinking company we give great importance to the value of constantly updating our processes and our training programme is no exception. With this in mind we are currently developing additional training, to include:

- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Management and Leadership Level 2
- TEACCH Level 1 and 2
- Key Worker specialisation
- Person Centred Planning
- Equality and Diversity



## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Company is committed to providing a working environment in which employees are able to realise their full potential and to contribute to its business success irrespective of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part time status, age, religion or belief. This is a key employment value to which all employees are expected to give their support.

In order to create conditions in which this goal can be realised, the Company is committed to identifying and eliminating unlawful discriminatory practices, procedures and attitudes throughout the Company. The Company expects employees to support this commitment and to assist in its realisation in all possible ways.

Specifically, the Company aims to ensure that no employee or candidate is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, race (including colour, nationality or ethnic origin), sexual orientation, marital status, part time status, age, religion or belief or disability. This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures;
- training;
- promotion and career development opportunities;
- terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment related benefits and facilities;
- grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures; and
- selection for redundancy.

Equal Opportunities practice is developing constantly as social attitudes and legislation change. The Company will keep its policies under review and will implement changes where these could improve equality of opportunity. This commitment applies to all the Company's employment policies and procedures, not just those specifically connected with Equal Opportunities.

### Recruitment of Ex-offenders

- As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) service to assess candidates' suitability for positions of trust, the Company complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all candidates fairly. The Company undertakes not to discriminate unlawfully against any candidate who is required to provide information through this process. The information provided is known as a Disclosure.
- The Company's policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders will be made available to all candidates at the outset of the recruitment process.
- The Company actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. The Company selects all candidates for interview on the basis of their skills, qualifications and experience.
- A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where such a check is required, all application forms, job advertisement and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.



- Where a Disclosure is part of the recruitment process, the Company encourages all candidates called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. The Company requests that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to a designated person within the Company. The Company guarantees that only those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process will see this information.
- Unless the nature of the position is such that the Company may ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record, the Company will only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- The Company will ensure that all individuals involved in the recruitment process receive appropriate guidance and training in the legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g., the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- The Company will ensure that it discusses with the candidate the relevance of any offence to the job in question. A candidate's failure to reveal information directly relevant to the job could result in withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- The Company will ensure that it makes any candidate who is subject to Disclosure aware of the CRB Code of Practice and will provide a copy of the Code on request.
- The Company undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in the Disclosure with the candidate before withdrawing the offer of employment.
- Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent the candidate from working with the Company. Whether or not it does will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

## Harassment

Harassment is physical, verbal or non-verbal behaviour which is unwanted and personally offensive to the recipient, and which causes the recipient to feel threatened, humiliated, intimidated, patronised, denigrated, bullied, distressed or harassed.

The way in which complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment will be handled

Discrimination and harassment are often complex matters, and there is no single way of dealing with every suspected or alleged instance. In some cases employees may be able to deal satisfactorily with an issue by raising it with their immediate manager.

If an employee wishes to make a formal complaint he or she should use the Company's Grievance Procedure which is set out in the Employee Handbook.

The Company will treat seriously all allegations of unlawful discrimination or harassment.

If an employee is accused of unlawful discrimination or harassment

If an employee is accused of unlawful discrimination or harassment, the Company will investigate the matter fully.

In the course of the investigation the employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation of his or her actions.

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If the Company concludes that no unlawful discrimination or harassment has occurred, this will be the end of the matter.

If the Company concludes that the claim is false or malicious the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

If on the other hand the Company concludes that the employee's actions amount to unlawful discrimination or harassment he or she may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

## **Monitoring**

The Company will not tolerate unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind in the working environment and will take positive action to prevent its occurrence.

In this connection the Company will monitor its policies and will implement changes in order to improve them as social attitudes and legislation change. This commitment applies to all the Company's employment policies and procedures, not just those specifically concerned with Equal Opportunities.

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## **Safeguarding Adults Policy Statement**

Homes Caring for Autism will not tolerate abuse in any form. The company is committed to working in partnership with other agencies to ensure that abuse is recognised, reported and stopped.

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It may be something that is done to the person or something not done when it should have been. It does not necessarily have to be intentional; if the vulnerable person experiences practice or action as abusive we have a duty to support them in this, and a duty to explore the facts. We will keep the vulnerable person fully informed throughout this process.

Autistic people and people with learning disabilities have the right to live a life that is free from abuse in any form.

As a member of staff supporting people who are vulnerable to abuse, you are responsible for promoting a culture of comfort, safety and homeliness. Working practices should minimise the risk of abuse by being sensitive to cultural and individual needs, and vulnerable adults should be made aware of their rights, and given information, advice and support.

If you become aware of abuse or abusive practices, you have a duty to tell a manager and, in partnership with them and the Company Directors, to safeguard the individual who may have experienced abuse.

The person within Homes Caring for Autism who is responsible for co-coordinating our responsibilities is Lucy Clark, Director of People and Culture.

Please read this Policy Statement in conjunction with the Safeguarding Adults Procedural Guidance.



## Shift Patterns

Shift patterns will vary slightly from home to home but the basis for all shifts and patterns are as follows.

Day shifts consist of early and late shifts:

- Early shift 07:45 - 14:00
- Late shift 13:45 - 20:00

These shifts will be used throughout the week i.e. Monday to Friday. However there are *occasional* exceptions to these which are, for example, 09:00 - 17:00 or 10:00 - 18:00

Shift patterns are such that you work **alternate weekends** consisting of two double shifts, one each on Saturday and Sunday.

- Double shifts are 07:45 - 20:00.

There will also be a requirement for day shift workers to do **sleep-in** duties. This will mean that you will be required to work a late shift, sleep-in and early shift. Late shift and early shift hours are extended to facilitate the sleep-in and will therefore work like this:

- 13:45-22:00 - sleep-in - 06:45-14:00

A sleep-in shift therefore normally runs from 22:00 - 06:45.

Waking night shifts run from

- 19:45 - 07:45.

## Training Agreement

Homes Caring for Autism believes that training and development of all staff is an investment, not a cost. We therefore will pay for the comprehensive training undertaken by staff, from induction, through mandatory training and NVQ to more specialised training, according to the needs of the role and the development needs and aspirations as agreed with each individual. As staff embark on any significant external training course a training agreement will be put in place. In return we look forward to working with and further developing the staff member for a significant amount of time. Where this does not occur we reserve the right to recoup some or all of the training costs invested, as per the agreement.

## Confidentiality Policy Extract

Confidentiality concerns the right of service users to expect that information about them, available to staff, will not be released to others inappropriately.

## Smoking Policy Extract

There is absolutely no smoking allowed in any of the premises or vehicles belonging to or utilised by Homes Caring for Autism Ltd, nor in the company of any service user, whether he or she is a smoker or not.