

Autism at Kingwood Strategy 2024-2027



**Accepting, empowering, and celebrating
the uniqueness of autistic people**



Contents

Strategy 2024-2027

- 3 Executive Summary**
- 5 Strategic Ambitions**
- 6 Strategic Goal 1:
Improving Outcomes**
- 10 Strategic Goal 2:
Sustained Financial Stability**
- 12 Strategic Goal 3:
Growth**
- 14 Testimonials**



Executive Summary

In my first year at Autism at Kingwood, I have been struck by all the amazing people I have met. The people we support are truly inspiring, living their own unique lives within the community and challenging everyday assumptions about autism. The people who work for us show wonderful and purposeful support, whilst demonstrating empathy and resilience every day. And our families, who are our strongest advocates and critical friends, never stop caring for their loved ones.

In this era of increasing recognition and understanding of neurodiversity, Autism at Kingwood is at the start of a transformative journey in our approach to autistic services and support. The understanding of autism has evolved significantly over the years, recognising autism not as a deficit, but as a unique expression of human diversity. As we embark on this new three-year strategy, we are guided by the principles of acceptance, empowerment, and celebration of autistic people.

As Autism at Kingwood enters its 30th year, I have been reflecting on all we have achieved. From our original purpose to provide Dame Stephanie Shirley's son, Giles, a safe, happy, and meaningful life, through 30 years of growth and development which has led us to the present, where we are now developing plans for our future.

Our growth has not been without its challenges, and it should be recognised that some initiatives were too much too soon for Autism at Kingwood. Whilst we will continue to deliver our high-quality services, I am keen for us to get back to our original purpose and support more complex autistic people to live in their communities. Had Giles been here today, he would not have spent his adolescence in a hospital; rather, he would have benefited from attending a specialist autistic school, and from school would have transitioned to a specialist autism adult support provider. This is where I see an opportunity for



Kingwood to grow and develop, alongside our existing services, to work with special schools and colleges to become a service that can continue the specialist support into adulthood. To do this we need to develop a recognised, research-based methodology that will offer consistency and support to autistic people; we are calling this the Kingwood Autism Approach.

We are working hard to ensure we operate in the most effective and efficient way possible. There is widespread acknowledgment that social care in the UK is under immense strain, presenting us with a formidable challenge to navigate. However, with strong and prudent management we are confident that Autism at Kingwood is well positioned to meet this and any future challenges. We will focus on achieving financial stability and returning Autism at Kingwood to a financially sustainable position, while developing and embedding the Kingwood Autism Approach. From this stable base we will embark on a period of controlled growth.

To achieve our aspirations, we need to be prepared for the future. Autism at Kingwood must embark on the digitisation and modernisation of its operations and processes. We have already started to implement digital social care records (DSCR), which will be organisation-wide by the end of 2024. We will then seek funds to invest in infrastructure and ensure we have the technology to support our organisation's growth and development.

I feel so privileged to be on this journey with Autism at Kingwood and help shape the future of our charity. At its heart, this strategy is more than a set of goals and initiatives – it is a commitment to accept, empower, and celebrate the uniqueness of autistic people.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'SBA'.

Sarah
Chief Executive

Our Purpose

Empowering autistic people to lead fulfilling lives through specialist support in the community.

Our Ambition

To create a world where autistic people are valued, understood, and celebrated for their unique strengths and abilities. Where they have equal access to opportunities for growth, independence, and happiness.

Our Philosophy

Kingwood's philosophy is deeply rooted in enhancing the quality of life for autistic people. Our focus revolves around the people we support, striving to empower them in pursuing the life they desire. Drawing upon evidence-based practices, lived experiences, and stakeholder collaboration, our philosophy is to support the complex needs of autistic people throughout their lives, with an approach that is strengths-based, person-centred, and grounded in empathy.

Strategic Ambitions

- 1 Improving Outcomes
- 2 Financial Stability
- 3 Growth

Ambition	How will we know we achieved it?
Improving Outcomes	At least 80% of the people we support will have experienced a positive improvement on their overall Quality of Life measure by 2027
Financial Stability	By March 2027 we will achieve a 5% margin on operational activities By March 2027 we will have six months' operating costs in cash reserves
Growth	We will support at least 125 people by March 2027. We will have more services for autistic adults with severe and profound needs



Strategic Goal 1: Improving Outcomes

We want the people we support to have knowledgeable, well-trained staff, in the right place, at the right time delivering the very best individualised support. We will achieve this ambition by creating a new and innovative evidence-based approach, called the Kingwood Autism Approach. Once embedded within the organisation we will monitor and evidence the progress autistic people we support are making in their lives. We will also modernise our organisation through a programme of digital development.

The Kingwood Autism Approach

The Kingwood Autism Approach is based on autism best practice and will exist to support the physical, social, and emotional well-being needs of the autistic people we support. Applied across all areas of life, our approach will provide a toolkit of skills which will enable staff to support autistic people to have a meaningful and good quality of life – whatever that might look like for each person. A significant aspect of the Kingwood Autism Approach is that each person is placed at the centre of their support programme, and the approach is formed around them from key elements, providing the support they require, whilst recognising their unique strengths, abilities, and interests.



The Kingwood Autism Approach consists of:



The TEACCH System of Structured Teaching

Fundamental to the Kingwood Autism Approach is the TEACCH system of Structured Teaching. This structured teaching approach supports autistic people throughout their lives. Studies have demonstrated structured teaching provides one of the most positive outcomes for autistic people, helping them to understand the events in their day, reduce anxieties, aid learning, and facilitate independence.

An important factor in the successful support of autistic people is the consistency of approach. This is achieved through having a shared approach, co-designed with the autistic adult and significant people in their lives, careful planning, and a focus on ensuring expertise

from all support staff. Every part of the day is considered to provide opportunities for learning and strengthening skills.

A Total Communication Approach

Total Communication is about finding and using the right combination of communication methods for each person. This helps people to form connections, have successful interactions and supports conversations. Autistic people communicate in many different ways; the Kingwood Autism Approach will always respect the supported person's preferred method of communication but will also support development of broader communication methods where appropriate to aid their quality of life and independence.

Positive Strengths-Based Support

Positive Strengths-Based Support is based on an understanding that all actions have a meaning and a function. To support the autistic person, we must first understand what is driving the actions. Autistic people are all people with unique personalities; however, there are common autistic characteristics which may present difficulties with the way autistic people interact with and understand the world around them. A strengths-based approach for autistic people focuses on identifying and building upon each person's unique strengths, abilities and interests, rather than focusing on deficits or challenges. This approach acknowledges that autistic people have diverse talents and capabilities that can help to promote their success, well-being, and overall quality of life.

Person-Centred Support

Person-Centred Support is fundamental to our approach. The autistic people we support accessing the Kingwood Autism Approach are considered equal partners in the planning,

development, and monitoring of support to make sure their needs are being met. The people we support (and their families) are at the centre of decisions and they are the experts, working alongside Kingwood and other professionals to get the best outcome. The approach recognises that we are all life-long learners, and autistic people are no different. We will develop a Daily Living Skills Programme, where the people we support can continue to learn, grow, and develop skills relevant to their life goals.

Quality of Life Framework

A Quality of Life framework for autistic people encompasses various areas that contribute to their overall well-being and satisfaction with life. It will be designed to address the unique needs, strengths, and challenges experienced by autistic people. Alongside the people we support, we are looking to develop a programme that identifies key areas, and sets goals and aspirations that can support and enhance their success, well-being, and overall quality of life.



Strategic Goal: Improving Outcomes

24/25	25/26	26/27
• Deliver Structured Teaching training for all frontline staff and managers • Devise Strengths-Based Support model • Start to develop practitioners' guide	• Develop a Daily Living Skills programme • Develop our Quality of Life model • Continue to develop practitioners' guide	• Complete the Kingwood Autism Approach practitioners' digital guide • Measure the impact and outcome of the Kingwood Autism Approach

Success Measures

24/25	25/26	26/27
• By December 2024 all frontline staff and managers will have received Structured Teaching training • By March 2025 the Strengths-Based Support model will be written and staff will be trained in the approach	• Daily Living Skills Programme will be implemented by August 2025 • Quality of Life model will be devised and implemented by December 2025	• All Kingwood staff will have access to the Kingwood Autism Approach practitioners' digital guide • Impact report published, supported by robust data which demonstrates improved quality of life for the people we support

Strategic Goal 2: Sustained Financial Stability

Autism at Kingwood has weathered a very challenging period. The effects of 13 years of austerity, the Covid pandemic, cost-of-living crises and Brexit, culminated in a recruitment crisis in social care which undermined the charity's previous growth and expansion strategies. However, we have now turned a corner and are actively working to get Autism at Kingwood back to financial stability. We will need to be efficient and continue to apply strict financial controls.

We will set ourselves a target to achieve a 5% margin on our operational services; this will ensure we have the resources to reinvest in our services and people. We will also undertake to grow our cash reserves to at least six months' operating costs.

We will maintain active partnerships with all commissioners and seek to have robust ongoing contract negotiations to ensure they remain financially sustainable. If we cannot do this satisfactorily, we will divest any financially unsustainable contracts, whilst always ensuring the people we support are not disadvantaged through the process.

We will apply to be autism specialist providers on local authority frameworks, which will enable us to tender for new financially viable service contracts as preferred providers. During this period of strategic implementation these will be in areas where Autism at Kingwood already operates. We will review our systems and processes to ensure we are running as effectively as possible. All senior leaders will be equipped to have the skills and information they need to apply financial controls and develop opportunities within their services.

We need to modernise our organisation by implementing a digital development programme. We will start with Digital Social Care Records (DSCR) which will be a significant step in Autism

at Kingwood's digital development. We will successfully transition from paper-based records to digital systems, improving efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility while mitigating risks associated with manual record-keeping processes. Following the effective implementation of the DSCR system, we will prioritise the development and introduction of a digital rostering system. This will ensure we have the right staff, at the right time and in the right place to support appropriately. We are also introducing improved online learning platforms and a new integrated digital HR system.

With digital systems in place, Autism at Kingwood will have access to comprehensive data and information about the people we support, our services and operations. This data can be analysed to gain insights into service quality, resource allocation, H&S issues, and areas for improvement. By emphasising the importance of data quality and effective management practices, we will develop a culture of accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

Autism at Kingwood has seen the positive impact that strong staff recruitment brings. We will continue to grow and develop our diverse staff team to ensure we continue to meet the needs of the people we support.

Autism at Kingwood needs to grow and expand to ensure good financial stability. We will plan steady growth over this implementation period, whilst establishing our new strategy. We will maintain the current numbers of people we support whilst growing by at least one new service, or at least four new people we support, every year for the next three years.

Once the strategy and the Kingwood Autism Approach is embedded, we can then embark on a period of growth from a strong and secure base.

Fundraising

There will be a strong focus on fundraising to support the strategic aims. We will fundraise for specialist roles to support the implementation and training of the Kingwood Autism Approach.

Strategic Goal: Financial Stability

24/25	25/26	26/27
• Renegotiate existing contracts with commissioners • Decommission unsustainable services • Apply to local authority frameworks • Open at least one new service • Gain funding for and recruit a specialist autism trainer • Reduce agency costs	• Establish partnerships/relationships with specialist autistic schools and colleges • Apply to local authority frameworks • Open at least one new service • Gain funding for and recruit a specialist Daily Living Skills practitioner • Grow cash reserves • Sustain minimal agency cost • Achieve a margin of 3.5% on operational activities	• Apply to local authority frameworks • Open at least one new service • Grow cash reserves • Sustain minimal agency cost • Achieve a margin of 5% on operational activities

Success Measures

24/25	25/26	26/27
• By August 2024 all unsustainable services will be in the decommissioning process • By September 2024 be active on the new Oxfordshire (OCC) framework and tender for a new service • By December 2024 all current voids will be filled • Increase staffing by plus five FTE monthly until sufficiently staffed • Reduce agency use to under 10% • By December 2024 all supported living services will be using DSCR	• By April 2025 have working arrangements with at least one school or college to be an onward provider of choice • By July 2025 be active on the new Reading (RBC) framework • Increase staffing by plus five FTE monthly until sufficiently staffed • A new digital rostering system will be operational by September 2025 • Cash reserves at three months' operating cost • Agency use remain under 10%	• By July 2026 be active on the Buckinghamshire (BUCCS) framework • Increase staffing by plus five FTE monthly until sufficiently staffed • Cash reserves at six months' operating cost • Agency use remain under 10%

Strategic Goal 3: Growth

Autism at Kingwood currently supports a diverse group of autistic people throughout their lives, and we are dedicated to maintaining these services, whilst ensuring their financial sustainability. Currently we have supported living services; outreach services and the Oxfordshire Adult Autism Diagnostic Service (OAADSS). We have intentionally limited our growth over the next three years to a sustainable level. This is to ensure that we can embed our new autism methodology and increase our staffing capacity safely.

Local Authority Frameworks

Autism at Kingwood will apply to move onto local authority frameworks as they become available. These frameworks vary depending on the local authority, so we will continue to develop our tendering skills to ensure we are on the frameworks and seen as a preferred provider. Many local authorities are setting very demanding contract terms within their frameworks, so we will need to be very targeted in the services we are tendering for. Autism at Kingwood will tender for special autism services, and work with commissioners to identify and provide the appropriate service models to meet needs.

Supported Living Services

We will continue to run supported living services for autistic adults with mild and moderate needs throughout their lives, who may need support to be healthy and safe, but may not require constant support. This service will grow organically, as tenders become available on local authority frameworks.

Pathway to Adult Living Service

Autism at Kingwood will develop a new supported living service model for autistic young adults leaving specialist schools and colleges. Typically, this cohort of young autistic adults will have learning disabilities and more severe

and profound needs and may need continual support. This Pathway to Adult Living Service will bridge the gap between formal education and lifelong learning. By implementing our Kingwood Autism Approach bespoke to each person we can continue their growth and development into adulthood. We will develop this pathway in collaboration with autistic schools and colleges to ensure we are best placed to meet the needs of the autistic young people moving into the adult supported living sector.

Outreach Services

A full review of outreach services is needed to ensure we have a service that is deliverable and can grow in line with the needs of autistic adults and commissioning prioritises.

OAADSS

Autism at Kingwood is commissioned to deliver an autism assessment and diagnostic service for Oxfordshire. This service fulfils a vital role within the community and is substantially over-subscribed and under-funded. We aim to work with commissioners to establish a service that can appropriately meet the need.

Organisational

Autism at Kingwood has several organisational challenges. We do not have the systems and processes in place to support growth and development. We need to embark on a series of digital developments and process reviews that will enable us to deliver our ambitious strategy.

We will start by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the existing systems and processes, identifying inefficiencies where we can bring the most significant improvements. We will engage with all our departments to understand their challenges and requirements, ensuring buy-in across the organisation. This will lead to the development of a comprehensive digital strategy with an implementation plan for process improvements, which will be based on impact and feasibility.

Strategic Goal: Growth

24/25	25/26	26/27
- Establish links with autistic special schools and colleges - Develop new Pathway to Adult Living Service model - Establish on Oxfordshire (OCC) framework - Review and revise current service models	- Establish partnerships with autistic special schools and colleges - Establish on Reading (RBC) framework - Open at least one new service under the Pathway to Adult Living Service model	- Align methodology with partner schools and colleges to create a continuum of support - Establish on Buckinghamshire (BUCCS) framework - Open at least one new service under the Pathway

Success Measures

24/25	25/26	26/27
- New service model is being marketed to schools, colleges, and local authorities - Actively tendering for services on the Oxfordshire (OCC) framework - All existing voids are filled - New service established via OCC framework	- At least one partnership is established with a school to work on individualised Pathway to Adult Living - Actively tendering for services on Reading (RBC) framework - New service established via RBC framework - New outreach model is in operation	- At least three active partnerships established with schools and colleges - Actively tendering for services on Buckinghamshire (BUCCS) framework - New service established via BUCCS framework

Testimonials

“ Our daughter Lydia lives in a supported living home in Witney.

This service was set up in 2020 in response to the sudden closure of Lydia’s social care provider, where she was given three months’ notice.

Having spoken to various people, our preferred service provider was Autism at Kingwood, who stepped up to the mark and responded with expedition, and the new service in Witney opened with an initial intake of Lydia and another former resident of the closed provider. This has since expanded to the final complement of five.

The devastating loss of their long-term homes, combined with the restrictions enforced by Covid, was potentially a highly traumatic period for the residents, but the team at Windrush House was outstanding in ensuring a smooth transition and creating a warm and welcoming new home, and thanks to that Lydia made the move with remarkable ease.

We visit Windrush House fairly frequently when we come to collect Lydia for short breaks and holidays with us, and we are always impressed by the warm and homely atmosphere there, with staff engaging with residents and helping them to fulfil their days meaningfully, which in Lydia’s case includes walks out for coffee and the shops and trips to swimming and bowling etc. Staff also take great care to keep us aware of any concerns, and we frequently receive reassuring photos of Lydia enjoying herself on outings or just at home. Recently, Lydia had to be taken to hospital following a seizure and fall, and as we were away on holiday, the staff supported her really well, staying with her in the hospital until 4am when she eventually got home.

In all, we consider the service provided by the team to be outstanding.

Barbara and Graham Williams

“ I have had the utmost pleasure of being part of a transition for a young man from Secure services to the Community provision of Saxons Way in Didcot.

Throughout the whole process of this complex case, I have worked with, alongside, and as part of, the Saxons Way staff team and managers.

This has been the best transition I have experienced in my 50 years in Learning Disabilities.

At no point were the staff ever unable to accommodate requests from our service, keeping risk management at the forefront of everything alongside their incredibly kind and caring attitude towards the individual, always driving towards the best outcome for the person concerned, all of this whilst delivering the same standards to their current service users.

Effective, efficient, kind, compassionate and dedicated to their work in providing what has been the best and hopefully successful transition I have been involved with.

The personal touches, the welcome this young man received and the ongoing display of sheer hard work, determination, and the end goal for success and happiness for individuals, is second to none.

Thank you to all those involved and who made this a life event to be proud of.

You are all a wonderful group of people.

Kate Brown

Forensic Community Learning Disability Nurse



“

I'm pleased to see that growth is the key strategic aim over the next three years, and that the trustees and senior leadership team have thought carefully and realistically about how this will be achieved.

For me, the absolute highlight of the strategy is the idea that Autism at Kingwood will provide partnership with autism schools to ensure a safe and successful pathway for young adults moving into adult social care in the community. This takes teamwork to another level – specialist organisations coming together, learning from each other, and providing bespoke lifeline care and support.

I applaud Autism at Kingwood's social outcome over the years and am invigorated by its future direction of travel.

”

Dame Stephanie Shirley CH
Founder Patron

Autism at Kingwood

Baptist House,
129 Broadway,
Didcot OX11 8XD

info@kingwood.org.uk
www.kingwood.org.uk

Autism at Kingwood is a UK registered charity,
managed by a highly skilled Senior Leadership
Team and led by a Board of Trustees

Charity No.1041924
Autism at Kingwood is a company limited by
guarantee. Registered in England No. 2980543

