

New specialist autism service in Reading

Supporting young adults from education to supported living

INFORMATION PACK



*Embracing
Autism*



Contents

3	About Autism at Kingwood
4	Need
4	A continuum of support
5	The Kingwood Autism Approach
6	Lifelong Learning Programme
7	The Property
8	The Property – Plans
10	Kitchen
11	Lounge
12	Activity room
13	Bedroom
14	Contact information



About Autism at Kingwood

Autism at Kingwood is a charity and adult social care provider which has been delivering specialist supported living for autistic adults in Oxfordshire and Berkshire for over 30 years. Set up by Dame Stephanie Shirley CH to support her autistic son Giles who had lived in a psychiatric hospital for 11 years, the charity now supports approximately 100 autistic adults, many with learning disabilities and complex needs.

Autism at Kingwood's primary aim is to support people to live successfully in their own homes, with dedicated and highly skilled teams providing the care and support our beneficiaries need.

Our purpose is to empower autistic people to lead fulfilling lives through specialist support in the community.

Our ambition is 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 is deeply rooted in enhancing the quality of life for autistic people. Drawing upon evidence-based practices, lived experiences, and stakeholder collaboration, our philosophy is to support the complex needs of the autistic people we support throughout their lives, with an approach that is strengths-based, person-centred, and grounded in empathy.

Autism at Kingwood is a focused and robust organisation; we have faced the challenges of austerity, the pandemic and the cost-of-living crises. We have adapted to a leaner way of working, whilst not compromising on the quality of service we provide. Our latest

published financial accounts demonstrate financial stability, enabling us to position ourselves for growth as we deliver our 2024-27 Autism at Kingwood strategy, spearheaded by the charity's Chief Executive Sarah Butcher MBE.

Sarah has worked in social care her whole career and, prior to Autism at Kingwood, for over 24 years at autism specialist school Prior's Court in Newbury as Director of Care. Sarah is passionate about supporting autistic young adults from education to live fulfilling lives in adult care.

Our strategy specifically identifies the intention to partner with autism specialist schools to support appropriate transitions to our care, for the most complex of autistic young adults. Autism at Kingwood is therefore committed to leading this initiative and to opening this innovative flagship service.

Need

All too often, young autistic adults with learning disabilities and complex needs 'fall off a cliff' when they transition to adult social care. After being ably supported at autism specialist schools, families go through the fraught process of seeking appropriate support within their local authority for their loved one. Specialist autism school Prior's Court in Newbury reported that over the last few years, 35% of adult placements resulted in a placement breakdown or some kind of difficulty.

Prior's Court found that local authority adult social care teams are often unprepared for the young adults coming through from education. We also know there is a lack of adult specialist providers with appropriate environments and skillset to support young autistic adults with complex needs.

Autism specialist schools have in place distinct and provenly successful social and educational approaches and systems that will support the child for the duration of their stay. The child will have made great strides in communication and in learning of daily living skills, both of which have made them feel more understood which can result in reduced distressing behaviours or episodes. To achieve such milestones, staff will have assessed and delivered the absolute best and most appropriate approach for the child.

This approach needs to continue when the young adult reaches adult services, but we lack this joined up working between child and adult services. Without the familiar tools to learn, communicate and thrive, young autistic adults can become confused, anxious, and withdrawn; it is heartbreaking to see years of tailored support and progress disappear from someone's life when they transition to adult social care.

A continuum of support

Autism at Kingwood is poised to work with specialist autism schools to support young adults with learning disabilities and complex needs who are transitioning from education to adult social care.

Using a range of best-practice support methodologies, we will ensure that young autistic adults coming into our supported living care will continue to receive the individualised support they are familiar with, whilst actively bridging the gap between their more formal education setting, and the growth, development, and lifelong learning they require as they transition into adulthood.

The Kingwood Autism Approach

This approach is what underpins our support for the autistic adults we support. It is based on five core autism best-practice methodologies and exists to support the physical, social, and emotional well-being needs of our beneficiaries.

Autism at Kingwood support staff are trained in these methodologies and deliver these as a flexible toolkit enabling them 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, providing the support they require, whilst recognising their unique strengths, abilities, and interests.



Lifelong Learning Programme

Autism at Kingwood has developed a programme of lifelong learning with functional learning areas broken down into small, achievable outcomes.

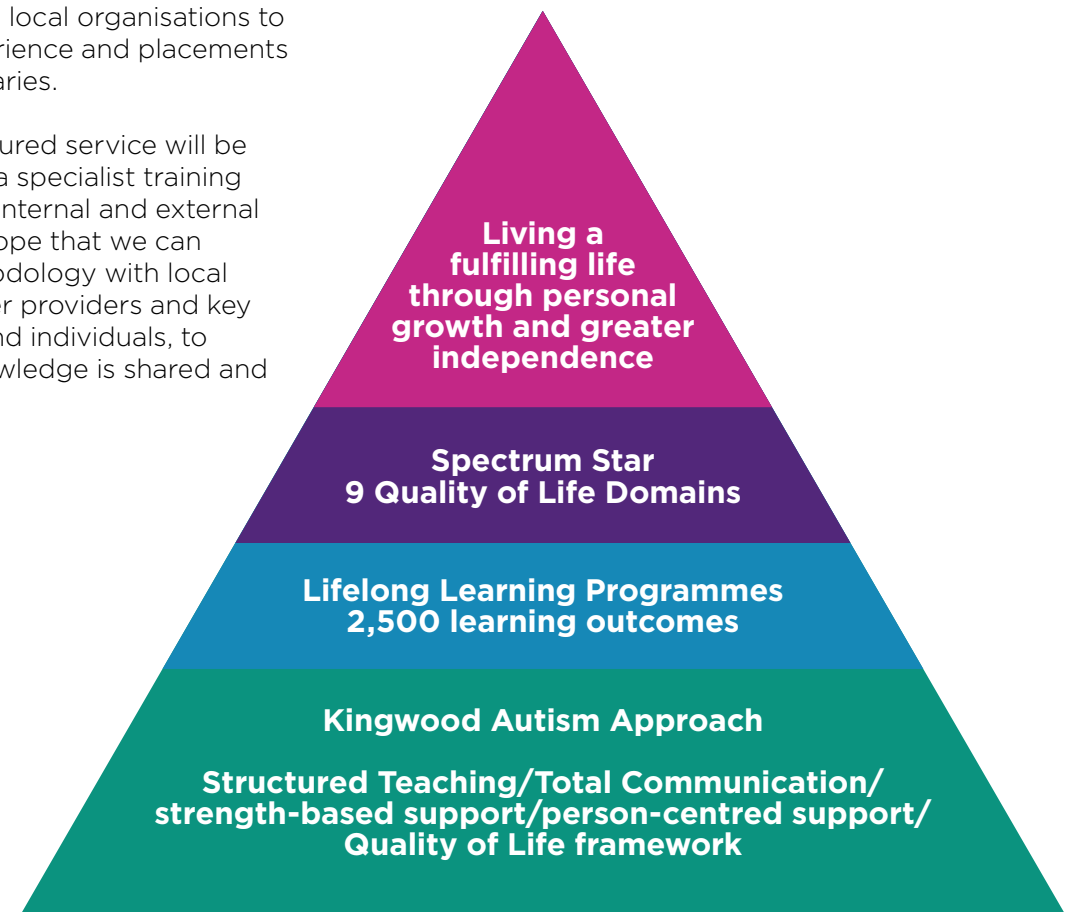
The learning outcomes have been mapped to the Spectrum Star, which is part of the Outcome Star Model, a nationally recognised, evidence-based Quality of Life measurement tool. The broad areas covered within the Spectrum Stars Programme are physical health, living skills & self-care, well-being & self-esteem, sensory needs, social skills, relationships, being safe & responsible, time & activities, communicating.

The Lifelong Learning Programme will be delivered through the Kingwood Autism Approach and supported by our dedicated practitioner, with the aim of helping each autistic person to acquire skills, achieve personal growth and reach a greater level of independence, leading to a happy and fulfilling life.

We are committed to enabling the people we support to access their community, and within the structure of the Lifelong Learning Programme we will partner with local organisations to seek work experience and placements for our beneficiaries.

In time, this featured service will be developed into a specialist training centre for both internal and external staff, with the hope that we can share our methodology with local authorities, other providers and key organisations and individuals, to ensure that knowledge is shared and disseminated.

Lifelong Learning



The Property – 45 Cressingham Road, RG2 7RU

As an adult social care provider, Autism at Kingwood does not generally own supported living properties. However, the charity does own outright one property in Reading, purchased in the early days of Autism at Kingwood, when supported living models were being developed.

The property was originally configured as two semi-detached properties, providing supported living accommodation for nine people.

Having sought the advice of a highly regarded social care facilities manager, who has advised us how we develop our service to better suit the needs of complex autistic people, we are in the process of completely refurbishing the building to create one purpose-built property that will support ten young adults with learning disabilities and complex needs.

The building requires renovation to a very high standard. Existing bathrooms and kitchens need to be replaced, as well as flooring, doors and windows. To ensure we meet the needs of young autistic adults with

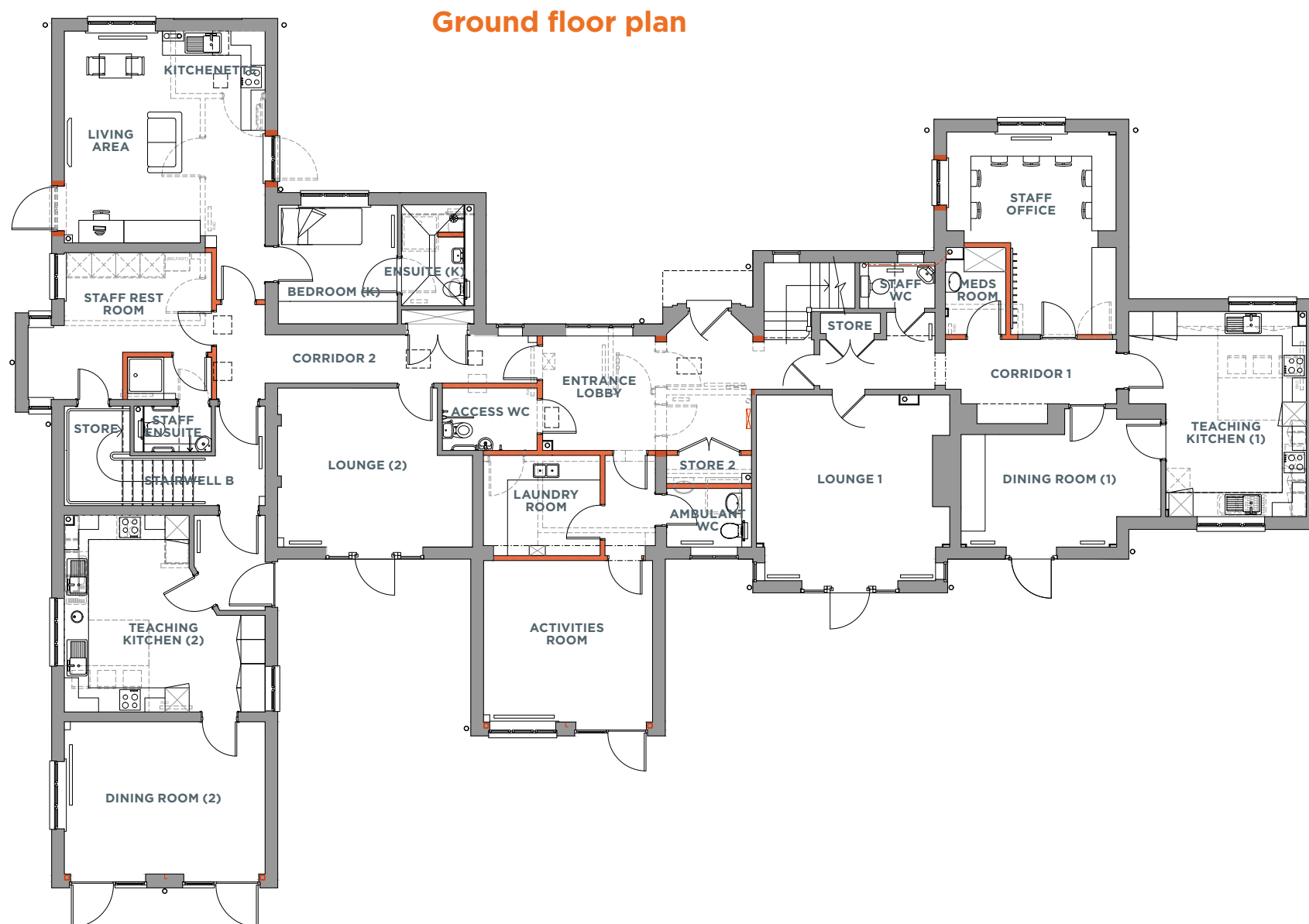
complex needs, we are creating an inbuilt robustness. However, the robustness of the infrastructure will not detract from the warmth and hominess of the building.

By consolidating excess space of the existing layout, we will create light open spaces that, with structure, will support the learning of daily living and life skills, as part of Autism at Kingwood's Lifelong Learning Programme.

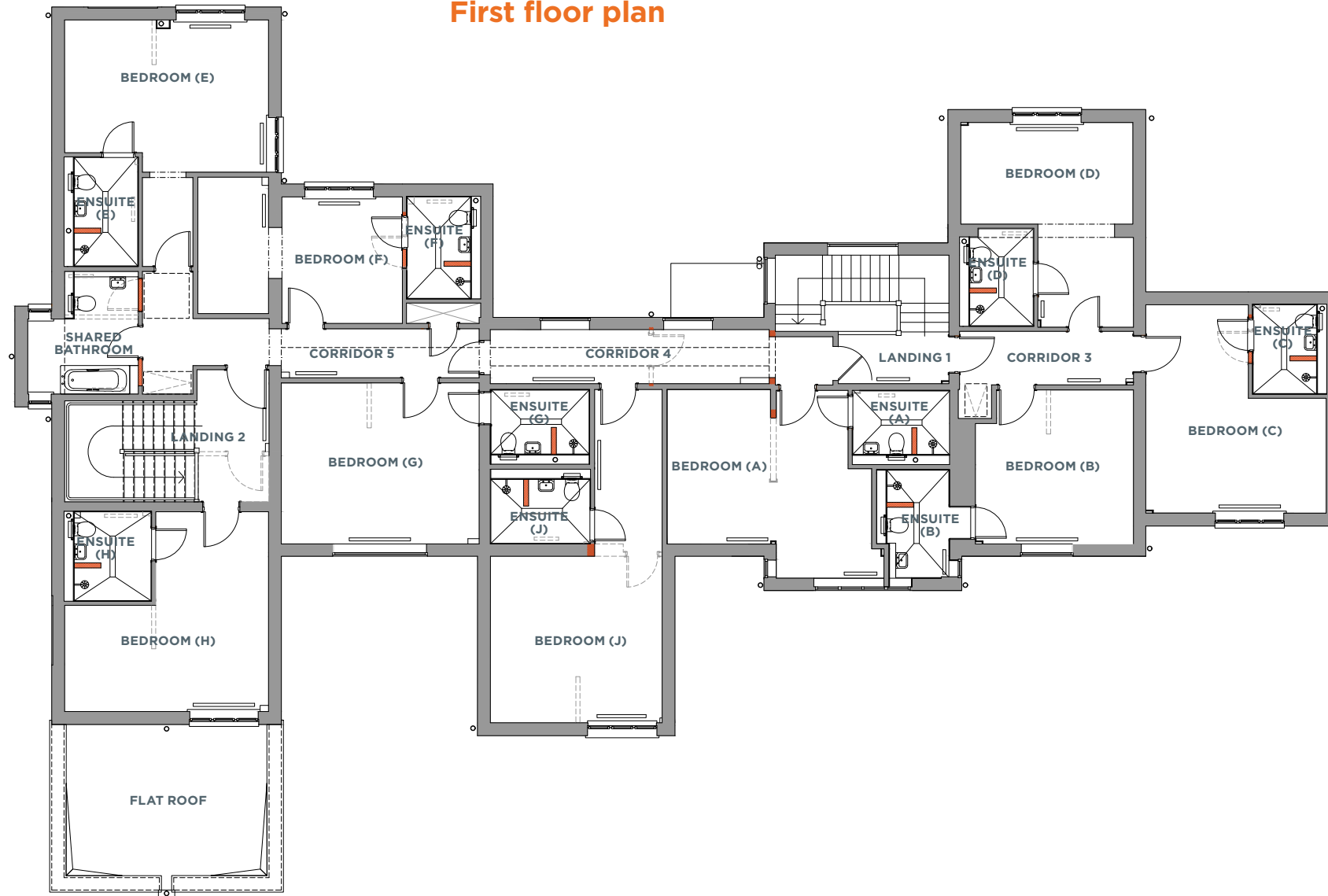
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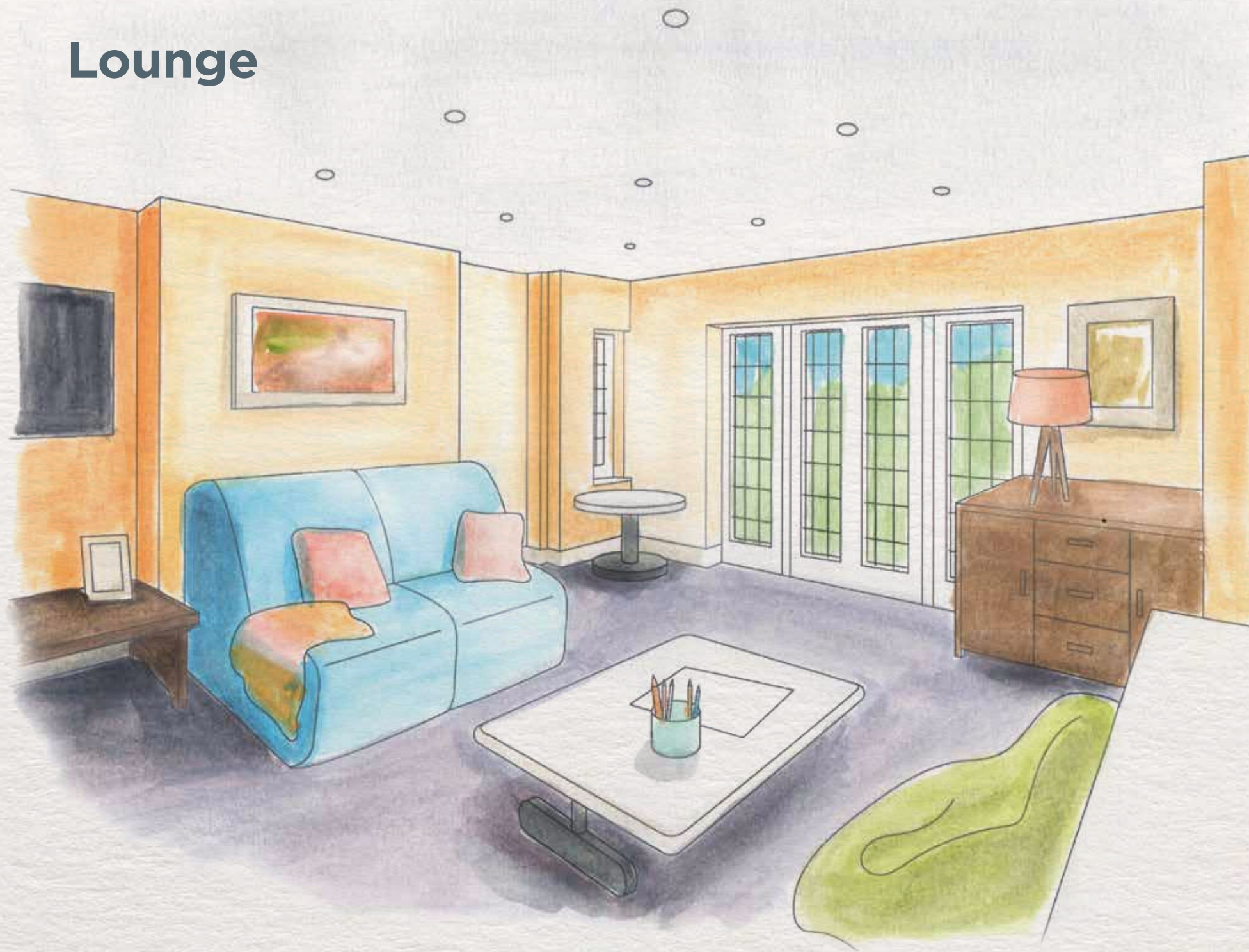
First floor plan



Kitchen



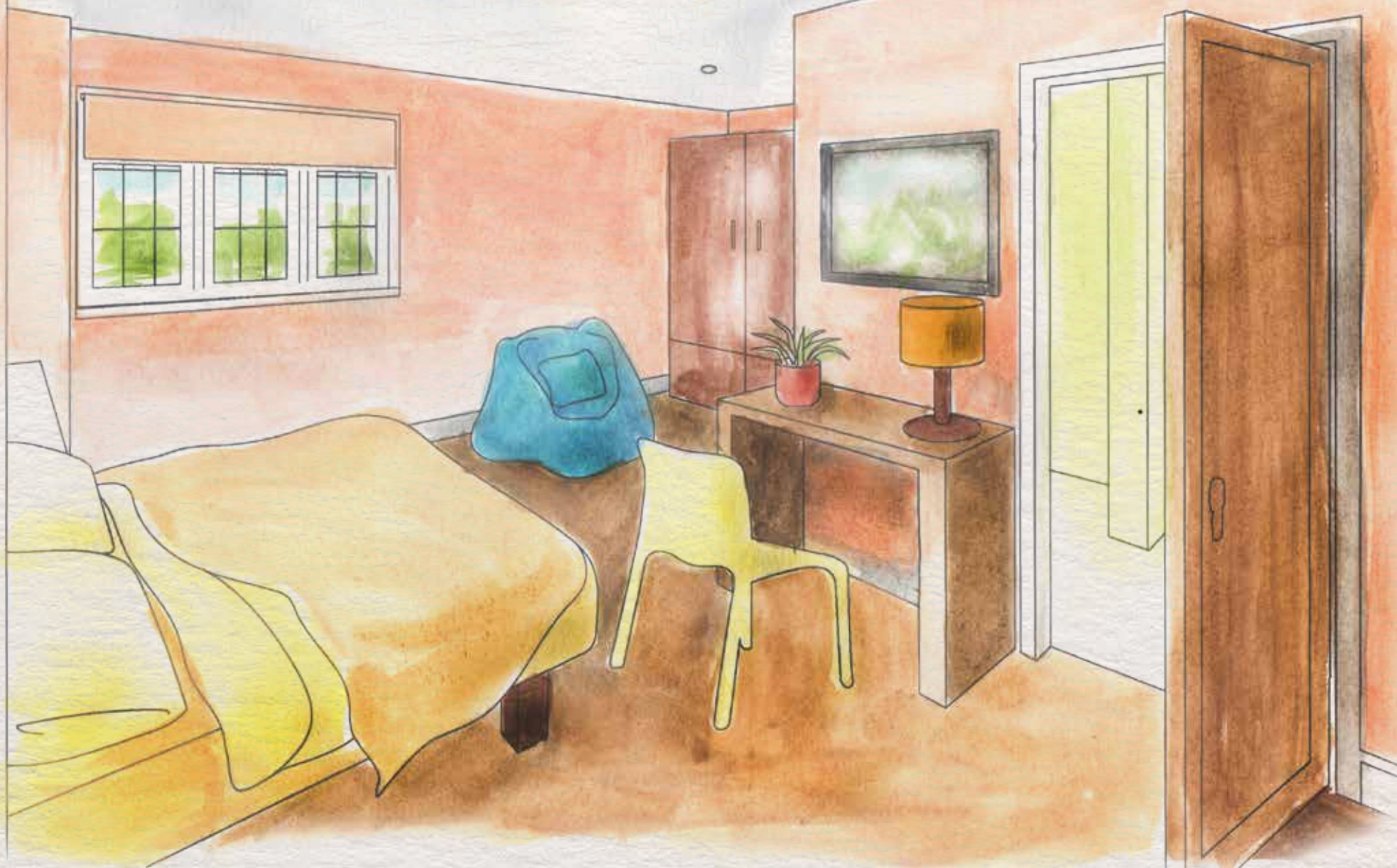
Lounge



Activity Room



Bedroom



Contact information

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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

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