



Owen Mayes shortlisted for the 2026 'Support Worker Within a Learning Disability Setting' Award



Owen is genuinely one of a kind. Since joining Autism at Kingwood in August 2020, he has shown unwavering dedication to enriching the lives of the people he supports. His commitment, creativity, and compassion are evident in everything he does.

Owen consistently goes the extra mile. He takes time to understand what matters to each individual and actively seeks out opportunities in the community that align with their interests and aspirations.

For many years, Owen has supported Ben, who loves being outdoors and operating a lawn mower. Thanks to Owen's encouragement and practical support, Ben has a regular role maintaining the grass paths at a local allotment and will soon be taking on a nearby lawn as well. This meaningful activity gives Ben a sense of purpose and pride.

Jay, another person Owen supports, has a passion for Michael Jackson and discos. Owen has found and supports Jay to participate in several activities, including a weekly silent disco and a regular music and dance session. Importantly, Owen never stands on the sidelines—he is always right there on the dance floor with Jay, sharing the moment and celebrating his joy. Jay also loves Tutu's Ethiopian Kitchen in Reading's Palmer Park, and Owen takes him to lunch there regularly.

Owen's creativity extends beyond community activities. He has run outdoor woodworking sessions where people we support have built bird boxes, bug hotels, and even outdoor benches from recycled wood. These sessions build confidence, skills, and a sense of achievement.

Owen is a deeply empathetic support worker who truly loves his job. He cares profoundly about the wellbeing of the people he supports; Owen volunteers to work the Christmas Day shift because it matters to him that residents have a joyful, memorable day.

His manager sums him up perfectly: "Owen is polite, cheerful, optimistic, honest, trustworthy and extremely helpful. He will go out of his way to support the people we support in any way he can. Every service needs an Owen!"

Owen embodies the very best of social care—compassion, creativity, reliability, and heart. He is an exceptional support worker and a credit to Autism at Kingwood.