

FOOTSTEPS CARE

20th ANNIVERSARY

SEPTEMBER 2024



We are excited to share a milestone moment with you – it's our 20th anniversary! Over the past two decades, Footsteps Care Group has grown, evolved, and achieved so much, and we couldn't have done it without your support.

To celebrate, we have put together a special edition of our newsletter, filled with highlights from our journey, stories of impact, and a look at what's ahead.

We invite you to join us in commemorating this special occasion by reading our exclusive 20th Birthday Special Edition Newsletter.

Thank you for being a part of our story!



20th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

OUR MISSION

Nurturing, caring and empowering.

We provide a nurturing, encouraging, environment which enables children and young people to feel safe and secure. Our passion and dedication drive us to support each individual to reach their highest potential. We understand that every child is different and carries a unique story which shapes the way they think, behave, and perceives the world around them.

Our person-centered care is tailored to the individual needs of each child, embracing a therapeutic approach consisting of trauma-informed practices to ensure children and young people flourish and thrive in our care. We believe it is imperative for their self-confidence that their views, wishes and feelings are valued, heard and understood.

Your home, our home, one family.

OUR VISION

We endeavour to ensure every child and young person in our care feels respected, happy, safe, loved, valued, and cared for. We provide a homely environment which supports children and young people to build on their skills and abilities enabling them to develop greater independence and confidence to take them into adulthood.

We are empowering children and young people with learning disabilities and additional support needs to overcome obstacles and reach their highest potential, whilst promoting welfare and wellbeing.

VALUES

Family, Opportunity, Outcome,
Teamwork, Success, Transition,
Equality, Passion, Support.

Our company values are the core principles that define who we are. We aim to create a healthy culture, within a long-lasting, successful, motivating, and safe home, where we embrace diversity and uniqueness.

We celebrate great teamwork and foster an atmosphere of respect, support, positivity, and kindness.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a special edition of our newsletter as we celebrate the 20th birthday of the Footsteps Family!

This milestone reflects our mission of nurturing, caring, and empowering young people and adults. For 20 years, we've worked to ensure that everyone in our care is valued, respected, safe, and encouraged to reach their full potential.

We provide a homely environment that helps young people build skills, gain confidence, and develop greater independence as they move into adulthood.

We are dedicated to empowering individuals with learning disabilities and additional needs, helping them overcome obstacles, all while promoting their welfare and well-being. With a person-centered and therapeutic approach, we ensure every voice is heard, valued, and understood.

As we look back on our journey, we are grateful for the support that has made us one family, and we look forward to many more years of nurturing and empowering together!

BACKGROUND

Back in 2004, we embarked on a journey with a vision to create a nurturing, supportive environment for children with learning disabilities. It all began as a small, six-bedded home, founded on the principles of compassion, care, and a sincere commitment to making a difference in the lives of those we served. Our goal was simple; to provide a safe, homely environment where children could thrive, gain independence, and reach their full potential.

Over the years, we have come a long way from those humble beginnings. What started as a modest 6-bed home has grown into a thriving residential community, adapting, and expanding to meet the changing needs of the children and young adults we support.

In 2008 we ventured into adult services, and this marked the year we opened our first adult service. In 2014, we took a significant step forward by opening a second children's home. This expansion marked an important milestone, enabling us to extend our support to even more children and young people in need.

We have invested in our facilities, broadened our services, and developed a team of dedicated professionals who share our passion for delivering high-quality care.

We remain proud of our journey and take great pride in the incredible progress made by the children and young people in our care.

As we look ahead, we are committed to continuing this journey, ensuring that every individual we support has the opportunity to thrive in a place where they feel loved in a place that is home.

MY STORY

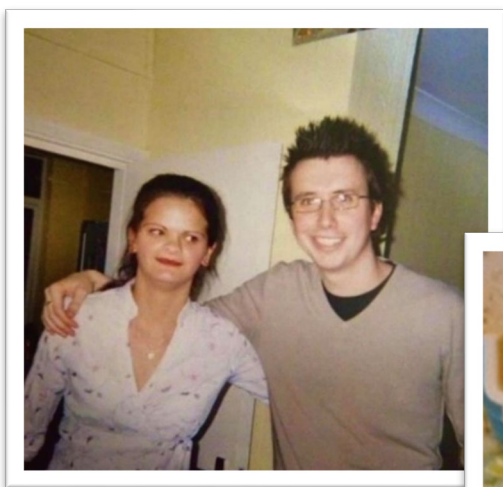
VICKIE'S STORY

In 2005, Vickie moved from another care home to Footsteps Care. Vickie felt the support from Footsteps was a great help in gaining her independence. "You can ask Jo," she laughs, "from day one I always wanted my independence, to do things for myself." Vickie shared that the care she received at Footsteps, "makes you feel like you're their own family."

When asked about some favourite memories, Vickie shared about a trip to Disneyland Florida. "We stayed in a villa with a pool. I remember there was a lizard near the pool and Jo was saying how its eyes were popping out. It was so funny." Vickie continued, "We got to go on rides like the Back to the Future ride. And the funniest time was when Chris was doing a funny dance and Jo was saying, "Footsteps Crew!""

When Vickie turned 18 in 2006, she left Footsteps Care to go into supported living. She liked the freedom this gave her and felt ready to live independently when she left supported living. Since then, Vickie has gotten married to Trevor, who she met over social media, but knew through his brother, whom she went to college with. The happy couple have a little girl called Amy. She is four years old now and going to school. Vickie says, "I love being a mum and getting to interact with her. My favourite thing to do with Amy is to take her to soft play."

Vickie is now working with Age UK, supporting lonely residents who become isolated. She calls them on a regular basis to connect and provide emotional support. When asked if there was anything she would like to share, Vickie said, "I would like to say thank you to Jo and Chris for making me more independent. Thank you." Through her experiences, Vickie has embraced her independence and found a way to impact the lives of others positively. Thank you, Vickie, for sharing your inspiring story.



Vickie, Chris & Jo



HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT

We are pleased to announce that Footsteps Care Group has engaged the services of an Employee Assistance Program. All staff members have access to the all-new Care first Zest platform provided by My Possible Self. The platform offers fully confidential Health and Wellbeing Support Services, including 24 hour fully confidential telephone counselling, with an interactive health and wellbeing management portal.

RECRUITMENT

We currently have full time support worker roles available in our Goodmayes & Leyton. If you know someone who would like to join us, please direct them to our website where they can download an application pack to complete and return to

applications@footstepscare.net

STAFF HANDBOOK

Please take the time to read through the staff handbook which can be found on our system, in each office and on our website. The staff handbook contains all the HR policies.

WEBSITE

Our website is regularly updated. To access information about the organisation, important contact details, employee handbook, newsletters and the gallery, please follow the link below.
<https://www.footstepscaregroup.com>

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Oct 1 - Black History Month begins
International Day of Older Persons
National Vegetarian Week
ADHD Awareness Month
National Disability Employment Awareness Month
Oct 2 - UEFA Conference League
Oct 3 - UEFA Europa League
Oct 7-13 - National Curry Week
Oct 11 - Yom Kippur
Oct 24 - United Nations Day
Oct 27 - Clocks go back
Oct 28 - Autumn Half Term begins,
Oct 31 - Halloween, Diwali

CLAIRE'S STORY

I came to Footsteps when the foster carer said they couldn't look after me anymore because of my behaviour. Everything was going wrong for me. I felt scared because I didn't know where I was going or what would happen.

When I first walked into Footsteps, I was scared. The staff were so nice and kind, but I thought it might be a trick because they were being nice, but it wasn't. I had a lovely bedroom, and they let me decorate it however I wanted. It was my room, and I could choose whatever I liked. I remember buying a pink lamp with a matching rug and curtains. I'll never forget that.

I remember one day, I went shopping. I bought loads of stuff, and Jo and I had a long talk about things. We had dinner at a restaurant and then went roller skating all night. It was the best day, and I still have the photo. Jo was the manager, and she didn't have to take us out, but she did, she could have left it to the staff. She helped me get into school. I was always in trouble at school. Jo had loads of meetings with the headteacher.

She was always with the head teacher because of me, but they never expelled me. I wrote a card to the school three Christmases ago to say sorry. I got a lovely letter back from the head teacher. He was nice.

I liked the other children I lived with. We were a family. There were not loads of kids coming and going, it was just us. What I liked best at Footsteps was it was a family. We all had dinner together at the table every night, and the meals were lovely. We talked about our day. Saturday nights were fun. We had treats, watched The X Factor with our blankets and PJs, and played on the PlayStation. Sundays were fun too. The house would smell of breakfast. Gemma used to cook breakfast on the weekends, and I can still remember that smell. She was the best cook and really spoiled us.

At Footsteps, I felt safe. When I got sad, the staff cared. They were my family, and I loved it there. I still remember sitting on the brown box in the garden under the window.

Christmas was so good. I got loads of presents, and even though Vicky told me they were from Father Christmas, I knew it was the staff. One Christmas, we stayed up late, ordered takeaway, and Vicky took us to see a panto.

I went to church at Christmas with Jo and we sang carols. She got emotional and I told her she was embarrassing me, and we both could not stop laughing. I thought we were going to get thrown out. She laughs really loud, and it makes you laugh. I still laugh when I think about that night.

The one thing I would like to say to the staff at Footsteps is thank you all so much. I'm sorry for my behaviour. I've changed a lot. I live independently and have been working at my job for three years. I'm very happy. To the children, I would say you are lucky to be there.

REMEEZ'S STORY

At first, Remeez's time at Footsteps Care may have felt a bit rocky, but he settled in. Overall, his experience was positive, as he had the opportunity to try new things, like attending his first festival and going on his first holiday. These were big milestones in his journey. He also enjoyed tasting different cultural foods that he hadn't experienced before. He particularly enjoyed African cuisine.

The activities offered at Footsteps was a highlight of Remeez's stay. He appreciated having the freedom to choose where to go.

The best part of his experience was the relationships he built with the supportive staff members, including Michael GB, Michelle, John, Nafisa, Sabrina, Hasara, Shamus, Festus, Felicia, Catchy, and Abdul. These staff members were kind.

Among his favourite memories might be the Butlin's holidays and his leaving meal and party. Remeez found that most of the staff were encouraging and supportive, allowing him to follow his interests and ask questions. "Footsteps is dedicated to helping you do what you love, so be sure to participate in as many activities as possible!"

YOUNG PEOPLE'S STORIES

MAXINE'S STORY

Maxine started at Footsteps in 2010, and she has loved being part of the children's home ever since. She enjoys watching movies and going out on fun trips. What Maxine really likes about Footsteps is how nice and kind everyone is—it feels just like one big family to her.

Maxine says she's learned so much during her time here. She's learned how to cook, take care of things around the house, and other important life skills that will help her as she gets older. But what she loves most are the friendships she's made. She has built strong friendships with other kids and staff, and those friendships mean a lot to her.

For Maxine, Footsteps is more than just a place to stay. It's a family where everyone cares about each other. Her favourite part is feeling close to everyone, just like being part of a big family. We're so happy to have Maxine in the Footsteps family, and we can't wait to see all the great things she'll keep doing!



WILL'S STORY

You might have seen Will around Footsteps, delivering parcels. He makes sure our packages don't get mixed up and earns a weekly wage for his work. Will joined the adult home in 2016 and has been a great part of our community.

Some of Will's favourite memories are dancing and scaring people at the Brentwood Halloween party and enjoying Andy's delicious Christmas dinners. Andy also taught Will how to cook, which he hadn't done before. Now, Will sometimes cooks pasta bake or Bolognese with mushrooms for others in the home.

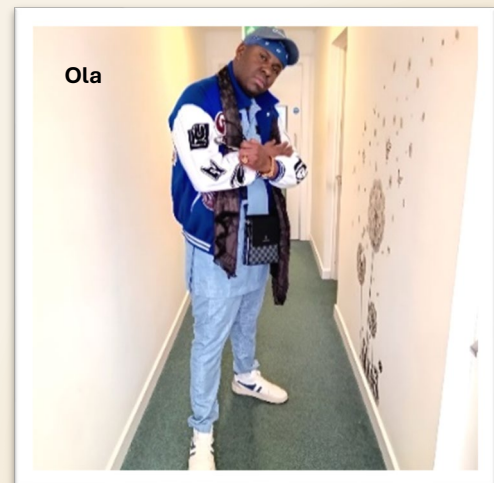
Will has a great sense of humour too. He loves giving staff funny nicknames, like calling Cathy 'Naggy-Grinch.' He jokes that the best way to stop her from nagging is to give her chocolate. Thanks for the tip, Will! We love having him here at Footsteps.

OLA'S STORY

Ola has been part of Footsteps since 2014, and one of his favourite things to do is go out and meet new people. He loves socializing and exploring new places, which has helped him make friends and feel more confident.

Cathy has been a big support for Ola in the home. He says she's always there to encourage him, cheer him on, and help him when he needs it. With Andy's help, Cathy even supported Ola in making his CV, which made him feel proud of his achievements.

Ola's favourite memory is when he came back from Goodmayes Hospital. He was really worried he wouldn't be allowed to return, but when he did, it felt like coming home to his family. That moment meant a lot to him, and we're so happy he's here with us!



CDK'S STORY

At Footsteps, the young person has had so much fun! He explains that Michelle always tells the best jokes and makes everyone laugh and that Laura is the best cook ever; every meal she makes is delicious, and everyone loves trying all the different foods she prepares.

One of his favourite memories is when they went to Winter Wonderland. He said "It was amazing!"

The young person thinks Footsteps is a really nice place where everyone is friendly and kind. Since arriving, he has learned many new skills, such as doing his own laundry and washing his plate after eating.

WHO IS JO?

As you can see from the memories shared by some of our young people, one staff member who has had an impact on the life of numerous children is Jo. Jo has been part of the Footsteps family for 19 years, spending a majority of that time as the Ofsted registered manager of the children's service, before becoming area manager. Throughout this time, she has witnessed many changes and played a role in supporting and guiding children and young people through their unique journeys. We asked Jo to share a few words on her experience.

"Hmmm, I'm not quite sure where to begin. It has certainly been an eventful 19 years and has been the most amazing adventure. I have had the absolute pleasure of working alongside some of the kindest, most caring, and dedicated staff you could ever wish to meet. These are people who have gone above and beyond to better the lives of vulnerable children and young people, and it's been a privilege to be part of these teams. I have been blessed to work with deeply caring colleagues who dedicate their time and efforts to better the lives of our children and young people.

The memories I've made here are ones I will always cherish. It really is like being part of one large family. From the first day I walked through the door of a small, 6-bedded house, to where we stand today as an organisation, I could never have imagined just how much this job would become such a big part of my life. The highs, the lows, and the challenges have all been worth it because of the incredible children we've supported.

Working with children and young people in this capacity has been deeply rewarding, despite the challenges it brings. To be a part of a child's life in such a meaningful way is a great privilege, and it's a journey I have truly loved. When I hear from young people we cared for many years ago, and they recall their experience of living in our home with memories of love and fondness, it fills me with warmth and pride.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the staff teams and the management teams who work tirelessly to make a real difference to the lives of our children and young people. They are dedicated, passionate and committed to changing the lives of many, so a special heartfelt thanks goes to you all.

I would also like to extend a very special thank you to Anslim and Michael, without them, none of this would be possible, and thank you for putting up with me for the last 19 years! That alone deserves recognition! 😊

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO ALL OUR STAFF

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our incredible staff teams, who work tirelessly every day to ensure that the children and young people in our care receive the very best support possible. It is their dedication, compassion, and unwavering commitment that make a real difference in the lives of those we care for. From day one, our staff have been at the heart of everything we do, guiding and supporting each child and young person to feel valued, appreciated, and truly cared for.

Our staff are more than just caregivers, they are the cooperating parents, mentors, role models, and advocates. They provide not only the practical support our children and young people need but also offer emotional guidance and encouragement as they grow and support them to reach their highest potential.

As an organisation, we have a deep appreciation for the hard work and dedication of our staff. Their passion for the children and young people in their care shines through in everything they do, often going above and beyond to make sure everyone feels safe, respected, and empowered. We know that our success as a residential care provider would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of our incredible staff teams. They are the backbone of our organization, and we are immensely grateful for the care and compassion they show every day.

We are incredibly fortunate to have had many dedicated staff members, both past and present, who have remained with our organization for a number of years, playing an integral role in our journey and success.

We would like to give a special mention and heartfelt appreciation to all staff past and present. Their loyalty and long-term dedication are a testament to their care for the children and young people we support. Staff have not only contributed to the daily lives of those in our care but have also helped to build and sustain the values, culture, and sense of family that define our organisation.

COMPLIMENTS

Thank you for the high standards of support that you provide. I am impressed by the progress that the young person made since he moved here, well done! - Social worker

Thank you Footsteps to all your team for taking care of Dino. Thank you Angie.

Just a few lines to keep you informed that my son is settling well, had a good night last night. Throughout the day there are no such issues to be concerned with. His mother was at the Unit when he arrived. She stayed until late to see him settled. Mother brought some dinner as well. I, myself was there to witness him being settled. I just want to thank you for your time and efforts in providing us with suitable advice that helped us to initiate to settle our son so far. You have been instrumental in this successful transition to permanent placement.

My young person has settled well and is often seen laughing & joking with staff!

I visited the home on five occasions to deliver Makaton training to all the staff. I found the home to be welcoming with staff who are friendly. The home has a lovely, homely feel with a calming environment. All the staff I trained are passionate about supporting children under their care. They were keen to develop Makaton skills so they could communicate with the children. Makaton also enables children in their care to be able to communicate and express their wishes. The home has signed up to the Makaton charity where they can continue to access resources and have a sign a week on display. I enjoyed my visits to this home and observed it is thriving to make it the best experience for the children. Hopefully, I can return to deliver more training in the future. Keep up the good work - Trainer

I really appreciated the care and attention given to Mohammed. A special welcoming place. Excellent care workers and managers with great compassion. Thank you for such a wonderful care, we will miss you all.

Warm and welcoming environment. I really liked a personal wall sticker in HT's room as it made his room very cosy and beautiful!

Thank you so much to all the staff at Footsteps Care for the hard work you have put in with Emily. She has made so many fantastic changes with support from the whole staff team. There has been such a transformation in her presentation, behaviour confidence and independence which is massively down to the great care she has received. Frankie, Emily's Social Worker.

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Brilliant thank you so much, I trust Footsteps chose this home and fought for this placement for five years before it was granted, I am very grateful for the hard work and care given by all staff. He looks very well and happy, I'm glad he has a safe permanent home with a big loving family. Hard decisions are not easy to make and so seeing him doing so well really makes me feel so glad. Thank you again. - Parent

