

The Voice

Our quarterly newsletter for Kisimul families and professionals



Welcome from Anita Andrews, CEO

Happy New Year and welcome to the latest issue of The Voice, Kisimul's quarterly newsletter.

The beginning of a new year is the ideal time to embark on new projects while reaffirming commitment to existing endeavours. For Kisimul, 2024 promises to be exciting, challenging and rewarding in equal measure, but before we get started, I have been looking back at some of the remarkable things we accomplished in 2023...

Last year, we reached out to our colleagues and the people we support

to develop a deeper understanding of the purpose and values that are fundamental to Kisimul's success. During this collaborative process, we identified three core principles – Be Yourself, Grow Together, and Think Forward. Watching these ideals brought to life through our 'Be YourSelfie' campaign, our crafty competitions, and by sowing seeds that will grow with us was truly inspiring - these values will continue to shape everything we do here.

Ensuring the happiness and well-being of my team and the people we support has always been my top priority, so I was also pleased to be able to launch our new physical health campaign for 2023. Focusing on a different aspect of health every month, we've been providing additional resources and setting fun challenges to make staying in tip-top condition a joy, as well as supporting our colleagues with various new benefits and initiatives such as Wagestream, The Village, and the Health Assured app.

In preparation for the rollout of our Meaningful Life model across our Adult Services in September, we reviewed our pay structure in recognition of our colleague's incredible contributions and in

acknowledgment of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. As a result, we increased our pay award and introduced clearer career progression pathways.

Our services received no fewer than SEVEN award nominations in 2023! I'm proud of them all, and particularly of the An Darach care team who were successful in the regional heats of the Great British Care Awards, following their involvement with a collaborative project alongside Every-One in Lincolnshire. What an extraordinary year we had!

I want to emphasise that the outstanding work of the entire Kisimul team never goes unnoticed. The recent Children's Services Relative's Satisfaction Survey, along with the numerous award nominations and positive feedback we receive is a testament to their dedication to ensuring the individuals we support lead full and meaningful lives.

With their support, I do not doubt that the next 12 months will be just as prosperous as the last.

**Award
Success!
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Fabulous feedback

for Kisimul's Children's Services



We are currently collating the results from the Adult Services survey and look forward to sharing some similarly positive feedback with you in the next issue of The Voice...

100%

of people who took part in our survey said that Kisimul provides good support to their relative

100%

told us they would feel confident raising any queries with the management team at the home

100%

of respondents told us their relative is respected when making lifestyle choices

100%

of those who took part said they feel confident that their relative's home has systems in place to ensure their safety

96%

said that their relative is supported effectively by Kisimul's residential staff and management

96%

told us that they would recommend the support the home provides to others

"It's changed our family's life and A's getting the experience and help he's needed"

"Thank you to all the staff. Absolutely amazing"

"I could write an essay regarding how good Kisimul is but I'm so impressed with this place, that I dug in my heels in and managed to get J an extended placement until he is 19 years old. I am also striving to get J to remain in Kisimul when he transitions into his adult supported living next summer"

▼ New services for 2024

There's been a lot of work happening behind the scenes at Kisimul lately and we are very excited to finally be able to announce some big changes for 2024. We've been beavering away developing not just one but three brand new services, and we hope to have the first two up and running later this year.

Introducing Clann Dion and Fionn, two new homes for young people with autism, severe learning difficulties and associated complex needs.

Clann Dion will be a six-bedroom setting in Rand, while Fionn in Swinderby will provide three specialist

places for young people who find living in larger shared environments more difficult, or whose needs make it more challenging to find placements.

Working with local authorities and families, we'll be designing bespoke services that will ensure everyone gets the care and support they need.

There's still plenty more to do, so stay tuned for further details about the wonderful ways in which both these and our third new addition will enhance our residential Children's and Adult Services, alongside our supported living and educational offering.

Introducing Clann Dion ▼





Success

at the Great British Care Awards!



2023 was a bumper year for award nominations at Kisimul and we rounded things off in style with success at the Great British Care Awards in December. The An Darach care team took home the Co-Production award at the regional prize giving and will now go through to the national finals, taking place at the ICC in Birmingham on 22nd March with famous face, Rylan Clark leading the proceedings.

The accolade recognises the team's invaluable contribution to a co-production project in collaboration with Lincolnshire-based charity Every-One - working inclusively with everyone to develop and deliver a range of person-centred services and projects that strive to 'make wellbeing personal'.

If that wasn't enough, we are also incredibly proud to have been named as finalists in a further three categories:

- ◆ **Best Care Home Employer**
- ◆ **Workforce Development**
- ◆ **Co-Production - Hawthorn House** *for working in partnership with One Planning and implementing our new Meaningful Life model*

Being shortlisted is an enormous achievement in itself and a real testament to the dedication of all those involved in creating meaningful futures for the people we support.

Well done, all!

Back to school

for Kisimul CEO Anita Andrews

"It's never easy going first or trying something new, is it? I had those first-day nerves all over again when I arrived at Acacia Hall on a Monday morning to spend a 'day in the life' of a teacher...

My fears were quickly put to bed as I met the team at Acacia School, however. They had planned a packed timetable for me and, as the day unfolded, I was impressed by how dedicated and innovative the team was in its approach to educating our young people.

The first stop was creative arts where learners were being introduced to Picasso. It was wonderful to see how engaged everyone was, but what really struck me was how in tune the team was - adapting and changing their methods to keep learners engaged with the topic.

Next up, I sat in on a transition meeting with parents looking to put their trust in us to educate their child. I know that the empathy and understanding needed to build trust with families is demonstrated every day at Kisimul but, as a parent myself, witnessing it firsthand got me thinking about how challenging this decision must be. The team was incredibly supportive, and their ability to balance the needs of each unique learner shone through.

At lunch, I got to meet more of the team and reflect on the morning, discussing what we can do more of as a business to ensure we make a positive impact on everyone we interact with. It was then time to head out to the animals - quite possibly my favourite part of the

day! What I loved most about this was getting an insight into the way the animal husbandry team adapts everyday activities to make them fun and appealing to the learners, while stealthily developing skills they'll carry with them through life.

Later, I spent time with three residents who weren't currently in education but were progressing steadily toward taking their first steps into education with the support of our Learning Practitioners. This highlighted the need to modify our curriculum, building further on our

Meaningful Life ethos. When I think about our purpose, education plays such a critical role, but it is when we take this learning outside of the school walls and apply it in the context of the home setting that we fully integrate this concept and realise its potential.

Going back to school was quite an experience and I would like to thank Tamsin and the team at Acacia for welcoming me so warmly. I thoroughly enjoyed the day, and it certainly gave me plenty of food for thought..."



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Anita



A TALE OF TRIUMPH

How collaboration, compassion and perseverance led to new beginnings for Matthew

**Names and images have been changed to protect the anonymity of the individual placed in our care.*

After a year of collaborative effort, assessments, and meticulous planning, 12-year-old Matthew finally found his place at Kisimul in the summer of 2023. His is a story that demonstrates the power of perseverance, compassion, and partnership...

At just 16 months old, a serious illness left Matthew with a brain injury which resulted in epilepsy and neurodevelopmental challenges. Despite all this, he has grown into a remarkable boy who loves being outdoors, singing, dancing, baking, and cuddling!

For a long time, his complex needs made it difficult for his family to find a placement that could offer him the support he required and the opportunity to flourish that he so deserved, resulting in an extended

period away from a school setting. It is fair to say that Matthew and his parents had reached crisis point and were beginning to lose hope when they discovered Apple Tree Bungalow at our Swinderby site.

Knowing that the school and residence would be the ideal fit, the teams at Lincolnshire County Council and Kisimul decided to come together to create a plan that would meet all his needs. Working hand in hand, the two set about ensuring that Matthew has access to all the services that support him across the county and a safe, welcoming place to call home.

After an extended transition period - and with the continued determination of the social workers, commissioning teams, therapy and training teams - Matthew has

been welcomed into the Apple Tree Bungalow family and is making great progress. Even the regulatory body, Ofsted recognised the significance of the collaboration, praising the efforts of both sides in the creation of a bespoke provision and commending the obvious dedication to providing Matthew with the right environment in which to thrive.

We are delighted that his remarkable journey has led him to us. His story is a reminder of the profound impact that our Meaningful Life model, collaborative approach, and unwavering support can have on a young person's life. Incredible things can happen when we work together, and we can't wait to see what the future holds for Matthew...

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