

NEWS

Community support gives a boost to Avalon Court

August 2020

Residents and staff at Avalon Court, a supported housing service in Ipswich, are giving thanks to their local community for all the support they've received over the past few months.

Avalon Court, part of Sanctuary Supported Living, provides accessible accommodation with onsite care and support for people with physical and learning disabilities. Residents live as independently as possible in their own apartments, knowing that support is on-hand if they need it.

Since the start of lockdown, the service has been taking part in the 'Postcards of Kindness' project, receiving cards, postcards and photos from people of all ages, from



across the country. Residents have enjoyed responding to as many of them as possible, with support from staff when needed. They've also had letters and pictures from staff at other Sanctuary services, with everyone working hard to spread as much positivity as possible.

As many residents have underlying conditions that meant they were vulnerable or shielding, receiving something nice in the post really brightened their day. They have now created a letter-shaped wall display for all their post, so residents can stop by and read them whenever they want.

Staff also got a little lift when they received little stone decorations from a mystery

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sender, which were hand-painted with rainbows and 'thank you keyworker'. Staff commented how much it meant to them, to know that someone was thinking of them, especially during some of the more difficult days of lockdown.

As well as all the letters and cards, residents received a donkey-themed activity pack, including games and colouring, from 'Miniature donkeys for wellbeing', who provided a mood-boosting mini donkey visit at Avalon Court last year. While the donkeys are still unable to visit due to restrictions, residents had fun completing the activity packs and remembering how much they enjoyed spending time with the animals.

When the kind team at Asda Stoke Park in Ipswich heard how hard the Avalon Court staff had been working to support residents and keep the service free from Covid-19, they decided to donate two food hampers, one savoury and one sweet, as a pick-me-up. The hampers were well-received by staff and residents alike, and included tea, hot chocolate, cakes and activity books, as well as some rainbow and 'pocket hug' decorations made by local schoolgirl Dejah, in her 'Operation Spread a Smile'.

Most recently, the local district nurse team generously donated a mobile phone to the service, so that residents can more easily contact their families. Many residents found it particularly difficult to be separated from their family and friends during lockdown, so having the mobile phone provides reassurance that they can now more easily keep in touch with loved ones.

Katrina Jackson, Local Service Manager, said: "We're so grateful to our community for all the support we've received over the past few months. Since the pandemic and lockdown began, the kindness we've been shown by so many people really means a lot and has got us all through some tough times. It's wonderful to know that we are in a supportive community that supports us to care for some of the most vulnerable people in our society."

