

# The Voice

Our quarterly newsletter for Kisimul families and professionals



## Welcome from Anita Andrews, CEO

Welcome to the latest issue of The Voice, Kisimul's quarterly newsletter.

I have always viewed September's arrival with a sense of optimism, taking the opportunity to reset after the summer and look ahead to a new season. This September has been particularly significant, as we begin to introduce our Meaningful Life model across Kisimul's Adult services.

In preparation for this change, I felt it was important that we review the pay we offer to our colleagues - recognising their fantastic

contributions to the business and acknowledging the wider economic landscape. For so many of us, the cost-of-living crisis is having a significant impact on our day-to-day lives and I feel strongly that, as an employer, Kisimul should take steps to support the people who do so much for us through this difficult time.

With that in mind, I'm thrilled to share that we have increased our pay award. Going forward, we will introduce a standard pay table across both Children's and Adult care, with an increase to our starting rate for Life Practitioners and a 3% increase to new pay scales across the board. These changes will mean that all colleagues within Children's and Adult care will have the opportunity for greater career and pay progression.

To promote these exciting developments to potential new recruits, we have invested in a marketing campaign which we hope will attract applicants and allow us to continue to grow.

Meanwhile, my congratulations to Acacia Hall for being recognised with a 'Good' rating from Ofsted, and to St Mary's who also received a 'Good' rating in all areas following recent Care Quality Commission (CQC)



**Musical  
Therapy  
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**Graduation  
celebrations  
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inspections. Well-deserved results for the wonderful teams involved.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to all Kisimul colleagues for their continued professionalism, hard work, and positivity. Without all of you, we would simply not be able to do the great work we do here...

**St. Mary's -  
'Good' in all areas  
Pg. 2**



## A 'Good' time to be a resident at St Mary's

As the independent regulator for health and social care in England, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is responsible for ensuring services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care. Following inspections carried out earlier this year, we are thrilled to share that our newest service, St Mary's in Surbiton, has been rated 'Good' in all areas by the body.

In its report, the CQC said: "People were involved in planning their care and received care how they preferred, such as personal care and their choice of meals. People were supported to be as independent as they were able and wanted to be."

"Staff spoke about people kindly and it was clear they understood people's needs and preferences well.

A relative told us, "[My family member] seems to be happy and content. The staff are all very attentive and very caring. They seem to understand her and her needs."

St Mary's, June 2023 CQC Report

Inspected and rated

Good



*"The staff are all very attentive and very caring"*



▼  
Let's get  
**Physical!**

**20,000,000**  
steps in August

*Well done team*

At Kisimul, we want the people we support to be as happy and healthy as they can be. That's why we've launched a new physical health campaign which sees us focusing on a different aspect of health and wellbeing every month. We're sharing relevant information and resources relating to each topic with colleagues and will be measuring our success with an audit of interim outcomes early next year.

To kick off the initiative, we encouraged everyone over the age of 14 to book an annual health check with their GP. These check-ups can help detect medical problems early, give people a chance to talk through any worries they may have, and shape the individual's Health Action Plan which ensures they're getting the best care for them.

Next up, we held our very own 'My Smile' competition during **National Smile Month** – a contest which had us grinning from ear to ear. We asked the people we support to send us photos and drawings of their pearly whites and were absolutely overwhelmed by the response. We received over 50 photographs and artworks which were judged by a panel made up of Tom from Acacia Hall, Phoebe from Tigh Coilean, and our new manager, Becky Sansom from Tigh Bruadair.

After some diligent deliberation, the panel chose three winners - Teneisha from An Caladh, because of her beaming smile, Saikou from Hawthorn House, and Pierre from The Old Vic – both of whom clearly kept their teeth in tip top condition.

Most recently, we challenged our colleagues and the people we support to tackle the mammoth task of collectively clocking up 20 MILLION steps. That's the equivalent of walking around the globe! Each week, participants received updates which showed where in the world they had reached, and we're delighted to report that they had smashed their target by the end of August. A huge well done to everyone who took part.

A special shout out to the **Service Development Team** who racked up a whopping

**2,013,385**  
**steps!**

## Calman Colaiste - innovation in education

Last year, Kisimul Group introduced Michael Hayden as the new Head of College at Calman Colaiste, our independent specialist college for young adults with autism, learning disabilities and complex needs. A year on and under his stewardship the setting has undergone a complete

transformation, establishing an overhauled curriculum for learners, and enjoying a rather fabulous facelift to boot...

Michael and his team have overseen the implementation of an innovative new curriculum for learners aged 19 to 25 at Calman Colaiste, which fully embraces Kisimul's Meaningful Life model – our ground-breaking concept

which focuses on helping people with learning disabilities and autism to uncover their unique gifts, develop their abilities within a therapeutic community, and move toward a more meaningful future – whatever that might look like for them.

Read more about Michael's big plans for the future of Calman Colaiste, [here](#).





# Rainbow Stars

## still shining thanks to Kisimul



Follow us on social media for regular updates on living our values



*"It's a brilliant charity, run by an amazing team who support some incredibly resilient families... I'm so glad we could help"*

In our last newsletter we mentioned that Kisimul was a proud supporter of [Rainbow Stars](#), a Lincolnshire based support group for families with hidden and physical disabilities.

You may remember that Kisimul School hosted an Art & Autism exhibition at the local village hall as part of Autism Acceptance Week, raising over £1,000 by selling artwork created by learners. Well, since then we have stayed in regular contact with the Rainbow Stars team and, in July, Kisimul's Partnerships Director Steve Bromley, and Life Practitioner

Maryanne Bentley paid Rainbow Stars a visit.

Steve said, "It was great to get down to see the gang at Rainbow Stars again. It's a brilliant charity, run by an amazing team who support some incredibly resilient families.

The Hub looked tremendous, was absolutely buzzing and we had the chance to join in with some fab games. It has really developed since the last time we visited. Young people, parents and volunteers alike were so appreciative of the fundraising

efforts of our learners and I'm so glad we could help".

Returning their hospitality, Kisimul invited a group from Rainbow Stars to Acacia Hall to give some of the children they work with the chance to interact with our animals. As we've seen with our own young people, the positive impact the animals have on those with learning disabilities and autism is truly amazing and we're delighted we could share that with the Stars.



# Graduation Celebrations



Swinderby School learners graduated in style this summer!

Not even the drizzle could dampen anyone's spirits as the Kisimul house band provided the soundtrack to a perfect celebration, with food, drinks, and bouncy castles a-plenty. Students received their hard-earned achievement awards, as well as their Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) certificates.

During an uplifting ceremony, learners were recognised for their enormous achievements – ranging from increased participation in the local community, to helping to run the school tuck shop.





Meanwhile, Acacia Hall put on a showstopping two-day festival to mark the end of term and celebrate 20 years supporting young people with learning disabilities and autism, alongside learners past and present.

Day one saw everyone don their headphones for a brilliant silent disco, before throwing themselves into karaoke and enjoying some tunes from a local ukelele band. On day two, the local secondary school's rock stars put on a very special performance, before Kisimul's house band took to the stage to play.

It was fantastic to see so many families getting involved to celebrate the enormous achievements of our young people this year, and to see the smiles on the faces of those graduating. What an incredible end to the term for all!



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