

Annual  
Impact  
Report  
2023

**ALDAG**

Always Learning Developing And Growing



## Our Vision

# Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



Social inclusion is defined as the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. *United Nations*

## How do we work towards achieving this?

By developing an employment pathway providing:

- a broad range of work experience placements
- opportunities for paid employment through apprenticeships in retail and hospitality
- long term voluntary job placements
- visibility in the local community

By developing social opportunities through:

- social groups
- team activities
- short breaks

## Our Vision

# Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



### Impact: social inclusion opportunities

#### Social events

- Club meetings
- Short breaks
- Small teams



#### Small groups

- Woodwork
- Panto
- Pub nights



### Impact: social inclusion in the workplace

#### 33 work experience placements

- 12 retail placements
- 15 hospitality placements
- 6 gardening placements



#### 2 apprenticeships

- 1 in retail
- 1 in hospitality



#### 4 different work experience provisions

- Re-Use It shop
- Cups & Co coffee shop
- Gardening services



## Visibility in the community

# Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



Being visible – our two shops are both part of the busy shopping centre in Dorking. Our gardening team also work in the community whether this is planting some of the town's planters or working in people's gardens.

I stumbled upon Aldag Charity **Cups & Co** during my first visit to Dorking, and what a delightful find it was! Walking down the High Street, my hunger led me to explore a random cafe, and I'm so glad I did. The charming appearance of the cafe caught my eye, and little did I know, it had a heartwarming mission of employing individuals with learning difficulties/disabilities. This cafe is a true gem, not just for its culinary offerings but for the positive impact it makes in the community. Google





## Visibility in the community

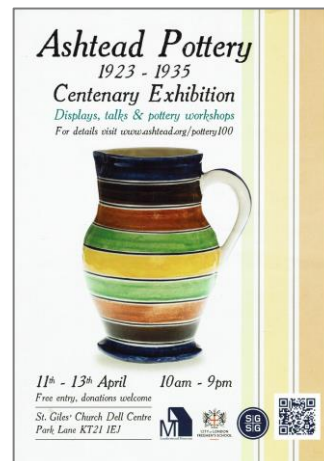
# Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



We have a great partnership with The Grange sharing our common values. In Cups & Co we sell cards made by their young people and also some beautiful needlework pictures - the embroidered budgies flew off the wall!



In Dorking we regularly join in their seasonal events: the Re-Use It shop entering their Christmas window competition and both shops taking part in various trails around the town with children looking for numbers in the shop windows. We exhibited in the 'Big Help Out' DorKing Coronation event further raising our profile in the community.



In April our catering team were asked to provide refreshments at the Centenary Exhibition of Ashtead Pottery in The Dell. It was extremely well attended, and our trainees provided a very efficient service. It was a great opportunity to be part of the local community and share the aims of ALDAG.



## Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) are key concepts crucial for building a fair and equitable workplace and society. Diversity's definition simply means the differences between people, and equity is about securing everyone's access to the same opportunities and resources. Inclusion creates a welcoming and respectful environment; belonging is the feeling of being accepted and part of a community. Inclusion means creating a work environment where all employees feel respected, and supported, regardless of their background or characteristics. An inclusive workplace is one where everyone can participate fully and contribute to the organisation's success.

Qooper 2023



**An Employment Pathway  
Re-Use It**  
62a West Street, Dorking

**Advancing the social inclusion  
of people with learning disabilities.**



### **Referrals and team members**

We had a team of twelve assistants over 2023 and welcomed four new shop assistants. The trainees were referred to us from a variety of sources including The Grange, Surrey Choices, other ALDAG provisions and from families. Our trainees develop their skills in a work context including excellent customer service often growing in sales confidence as they become familiar with the shop routines. We are proud of all our shop assistants who are valued team members. Some of our assistants are able to use their personal interests or college courses to develop their customer facing skills, e.g. providing information on music, film and AV from a Film and Production college course, hard selling of the allotment produce or putting maths study into practice using the card reader as well as handling money.

### **Volunteers**

We have been very ably supported by our six volunteers over the past year including two new people – all with different skills to share with our trainees.

### **Community involvement**

The window displays, created by a team of our young people, are successful in displaying and selling our more expensive items and drawing in customers. The young people have had to be creative with quite a few unusual items, from “Boney Toni” a skeleton, who has a new home on top of a dinosaur in Gomshall, to a 20+ foot long python snakeskin! We have developed relationships with some lovely people in the community who are willing to help the charity in different ways. Whether this is valuing some items or mending clothes.



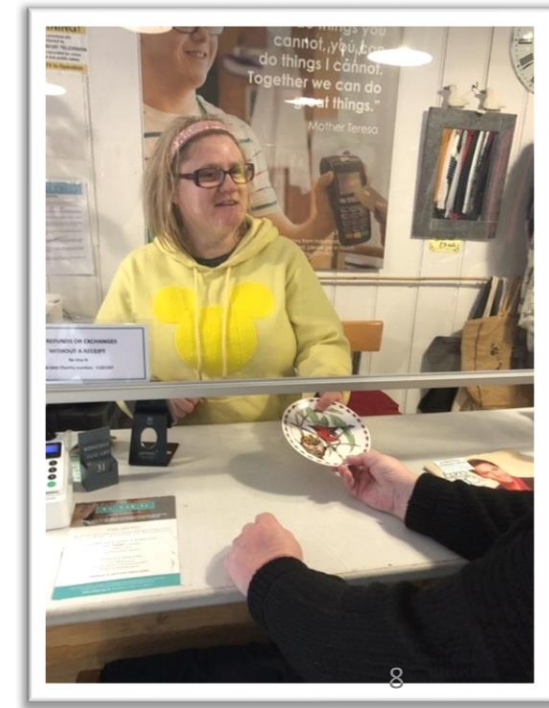
### Apprenticeship training

HK continues to develop her skills through her apprenticeship as she approaches her mock and final examinations in the spring of 2024.

Know how to identify and determine individual's situation and needs	By asking questions and watching customers body language
How to respond in the most appropriate way in line with the business culture and use effective methods of communication that achieve the desired response.	I need to be welcoming and look after our customers
Understand how personal performance contributes to the success of the business (for example the sale of products and services, increasing sales and achieving customer loyalty)	I need help with this and hope to learn this during the course
Challenge personal methods of working and actively implement improvements	I need to work on my confidence



Jo sorting stock and serving customers.





**Trainee targets**

Skills	My comments
Sorting clothes – good / recycle	I think I’m quite good at sorting. If they have a little stain I throw them away.
Sizing clothes	Pretty good, I suppose. I put the clothes next to another one to check the size if it doesn’t have a label.
26.09.23	<b>Wrapping goods independently</b> Use scissors to cut bubble wrap Wrap delicate goods Use the sellotape dispenser Bag items
26.09.23	<b>Customer service</b> Say hello and goodbye to customers Speak clearly and loud enough, so the customer can hear when serving behind the till

Using the till	Manager’s comments
January	T is working hard to talk to the customers at the till. He needs supervision but is accurate, reasonably quick and precise with the money. Since he began to work on the till, his confidence has grown. Occasionally has had to be asked to move to the till quickly and not keep the customer waiting, but this week, he has kept an eye on the monitor in the stockroom to see if there are customers in the shop ,and moving out to serve.
May	

An Employment Pathway  
**Cups & Co**  
114 High Street, Dorking

Advancing the social inclusion  
of people with learning disabilities.



### The ethos and aims of Cups & Co

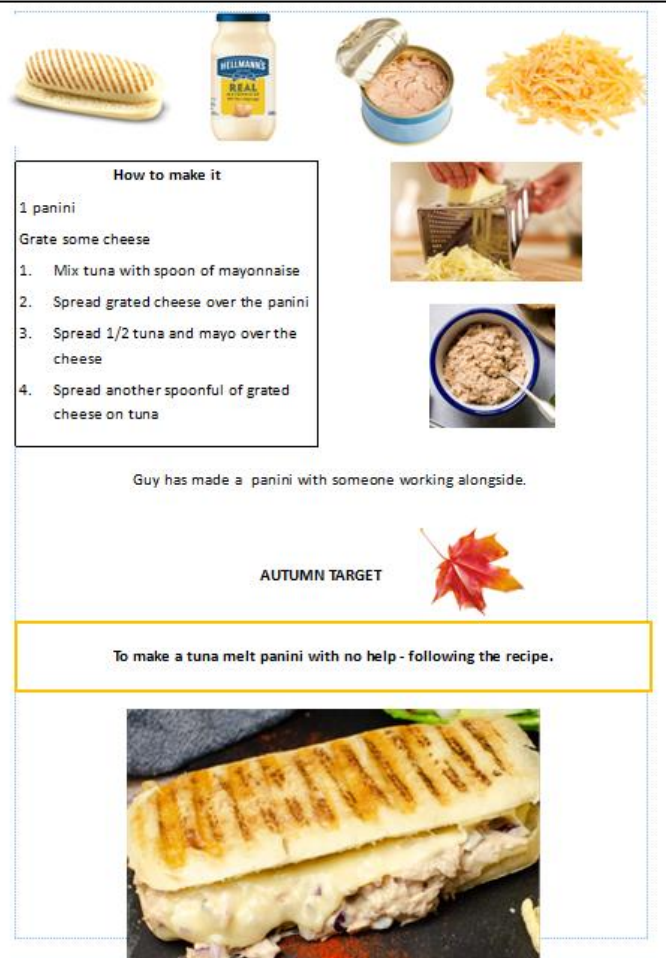
Cups & Co is run as a commercial coffee shop and we expect our trainees to take their work as seriously as they would in Starbucks! Our aim is to train our assistants in hospitality skills with the ultimate goal, for some, of gaining a paid job in the community. There are lots of practical skills to learn: making different hot drinks including takeaways, as well as a variety of toasties, sandwiches, paninis, jacket potatoes and fresh soups. There are also the important customer facing skills whether this is taking orders, responding to questions or delivering the food to customers. We have many 'regulars' during the week and families on Saturdays. Google review - Second visit, just as good as the first. Cheerful, friendly and helpful service. Being coeliac, it was great to have a choice of 3 gluten free tasty treats.

**Food: 5/5 | Service: 5/5 | Atmosphere: 5/5**



### Referrals and team members

Over the course of 2023 Cups & Co welcomed fifteen trainees. Two trainees started as interns from NESOT and then stayed on with us, several have been referred from Surrey Choices, others from The Grange or special schools and colleges. Placements vary from half a day up to three days a week depending on other commitments especially for our younger trainees who are on work experience. We also support students from special schools who are on a Duke of Edinburgh course. Everyone has individual targets as well as working towards gaining a Level 1 in Food Hygiene and Safety. Our apprentice started with us in the summer and continues to make great progress on his Level 2 Hospitality Team Member course.



**How to make it**

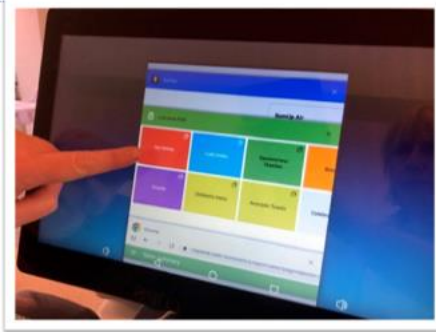
1 panini  
 Grate some cheese

- Mix tuna with spoon of mayonnaise
- Spread grated cheese over the panini
- Spread 1/2 tuna and mayo over the cheese
- Spread another spoonful of grated cheese on tuna

Guy has made a panini with someone working alongside.

**AUTUMN TARGET**


To make a tuna melt panini with no help - following the recipe.



Jennie can use the till.

**SUMMER TARGET**

Make sure the right cake and drink is put into the till.





**Accredited training**



**Hospitality Team Member Skillscan**

<p><b>Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know the business vision and values, its main competitors, how it fits into the wider hospitality industry and how own area of work contributes to achieving business targets</li> <li>Know how own role can minimise unnecessary financial loss to the business</li> <li>Understand how personal discipline in approach to work, for example time-keeping, attendance, personal appearance, personal presentation and conduct can all have an impact on the business/ brand reputation</li> <li>Know the products / services that are offered by the business, their prices and special offers and how to match them to customers' needs</li> <li>Know how the business aims to increase its market share and compete against its main competitors, for example its unique selling points, promotions and marketing campaigns</li> <li>Understand how the use of technology can enhance customer service and productivity in hospitality businesses</li> <li>Recognise and understand legislative responsibilities relating to the business and the products and / or services it offers</li> <li>Know how the activities in hospitality businesses can have a negative effect on the environment</li> </ul>	14
<p><b>People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the importance of using appropriate methods of communication that are suitable for different situations and individuals' needs in a variety of hospitality contexts</li> <li>Know how to support and influence the team positively, recognising how team members are dependent on each other to meet business objectives</li> <li>Understand how to work with people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures</li> </ul>	14
<p><b>First line supervision / Team leading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand how to support the supervision of team members for example new and junior employees to assist line manager</li> </ul>	14
<b>SKILLS</b>	<b>Score Yourself</b>
<p><b>Customer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use clear and engaging communication to establish a good rapport with customers and ask relevant questions to determine their needs</li> <li>Deliver excellent customer service in line with the business / brand standards with the aim of exceeding customer expectations</li> <li>Check that customers are satisfied with products and services and act on feedback in line with business procedures</li> </ul>	16


highspeedtraining.co.uk

**Certificate of achievement**

High Speed Training certifies that

has completed

**Level 1 Food Hygiene and Safety**

A high quality, interactive training course that gives learners the confidence to understand food safety laws and recognise how to keep food products safe for consumers.

Issued On: 07/08/2023  
 Recommended Renewal Date: 06/08/2026  
 Certificate Number: T-3692201-3902481  
 To verify please visit: [www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/verify](http://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/verify)







On behalf of High Speed Training

## Work Experience Gardening

## Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



We started 2023 with the erection of the greenhouse. It was bought with money donated to us in memory of our friend, Colin. The team enjoyed working with the friends who came to help us put it up. We had a busy spring tidying up the allotment, doing any repairs and planting the seeds.

We are very much a part of the allotment community and have made many friends. Some of the team and their families went to the allotment barbeque and two of the team go to the clear up Sundays once a month.

One day an SOS went out, A big pile of grit had turned up unexpectedly in the car park. Jxx and Mxx volunteered to go to the allotment straight away to help spread it over the car park. It was very much appreciated.

In June we had a stall at Ashted Village Day. We potted up plants, sold books and jigsaws from the Re use it shop and had a very successful raffle





## Work Experience Gardening

## Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



This year at the allotment we grew rhubarb, tomatoes, lettuce, garlic, cucumbers, beetroot, broad beans, dwarf beans and runner beans, radish, turnip, cauliflower beetroot, leeks, sprouts broccoli, carrots, pumpkins and squash. We also grew onions, courgettes and potatoes but these did not do quite as well in the dry conditions. We sold our produce in the Re-Use It shop.

In addition to working at the allotment we also work in private gardens. This gives a greater variety of work and skills needed. In September we entered the Ashted Horticultural Show. We were thrilled to win 1<sup>st</sup> prize for both our leeks and sunflowers. We also won third prizes for our tomatoes and potatoes. We had the end of season barbeque in October. Jxx decided that he should take on Colin's role and be the chief cook. He sat down quietly and concentrated on the cooking just as he had seen Colin. He did a brilliant job! The food was delicious.



We finished the year off with hot chocolate, mulled wine and roasting marshmallows around the fire. A Good Year!





## Work Experience Craft workshop

## Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



Our crafters made some great items using donated or scavenged wood. The items were sold at the Open Doors cafe, at Ashted Village Day and through our 2 shops – Re-Use It and Cups & Co. The young people developed their fine motor skills using a variety of tools and had great fun whilst doing the tasks! Pyrography was a favourite activity personalising the bird boxes with examples of different birds – although the flamingos were a bit hopeful!



Unfortunately, the running costs of the workshop proved too expensive for us to continue with this project and we had to close at the end of August. The members were signposted to the Conquest Art Group in Ashted and are enjoying using their craft and artistic skills.

*“Our group members find fulfilment through joining in, whatever their level of ability and disability, and experience a sense of achievement and satisfaction from exhibiting their artwork.”*



## An Employment Pathway Open Doors

Advancing the social inclusion  
of people with learning disabilities.



The poster is divided into four quadrants. Top-left: Dorking United Reformed Church logo and ALDAG logo. Top-right: 'Thursdays 10.30am-1.00pm' and 'Warm Welcome'. Bottom-left: Photo of a woman in a black uniform serving drinks, with 'Open Doors Café with ALDAG' text below. Bottom-right: 'Hot Drinks, Cakes, Light Lunches.', contact number '01306 886644', email 'hellodurc@outlook.com', and small text: 'DURC: Registered charity no. 1122113 ALDAG: Registered charity no. 1182187'.



Following a successful two years running the church's weekly café our partnership with Dorking's United Reformed Church came to its conclusion at the end of July. The church was able to take over the running of the café as they continue to develop their outreach to people with a learning disability. Our 4 café assistants continue to be part of the church café team. Great to have been part of this super project and we wish them every success for the future.

## What our trainees think

# Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



I like making coffee and different types of drinks. It's challenging and I like that. I learn more new skills, am aware of hygiene every time, it's important. I can use this for a paid job in the future. This is a very important thing.

I like the area we are in and the people I work with, we're all good friends.

I enjoy doing the hot drinks, I like being busy, I like everything here except the drying up!

I like working on the till and talking to people. I like helping them out if they ask how much something is.

It's an enjoyable place to work and continues to teach me new skills, it's a good place to learn.

You never know who or what will come in and you always get a surprise with the donations. Doing the till has really helped me with my money skills.



## What our partners and parents think

# Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



We would like to thank you and your team for all the support that they have given Sxxx. She has thoroughly enjoyed working at Cups & Co and feels that she has learned lots about working and interacting with customers.

It's such good experience for him and I know he's getting a lot out of it so I do really appreciate what you've done for us here.

The placement at Cups & Co has been very good for Cxxx.

Hi, this is wonderful to see, thank you for sharing Lxxx's review. Lxxx genuinely enjoys working at the shop. Thank you for helping him boast his confidence we have seen a lot of positive changes in him.

Thank you Cups and Co ALDAG for giving us the opportunity to learn invaluable world of work skills. We have enjoyed every minute of our Supported Internship working with you. We have learnt so much more about customer service and communications. It has been great fun!

## Social Opportunities Conquerors

## Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



During 2023 Conquerors continued partly run by volunteers and partly with a new manager. At the end of November, the club returned to being run by volunteers. This was due to a change in circumstances and the resignation of the manager.

Conquerors has a core membership of 20 but we have other members who attend on a more casual basis. We have continued to run twice monthly meetings where the members have the opportunity to meet up with friends in a relaxed social setting. They have access to pool, table tennis and other large equipment also table-top activities including craft, book art and puzzles. We also use the kitchen on a regular basis and in warmer weather there is a large outside area.

We started off the year with a visit to a local pantomime. This was well attended by members. During the year we had a pub night in Ashted. This is always popular. With members and some support staff there were 30 of us. We also had two visits from Georgina and Jackson. Jackson is a therapy dog. This proved beneficial to some members who are a little scared around dogs. As we started, we ended the year with a visit to the pantomime. This time 29 of us went to Leatherhead Theatre and had a great time.

During the year we have had 3 new members join us and we hope to welcome more in 2024.

## Social Opportunities Social Groups

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of people with learning disabilities.



It was wicked, I liked the drinks and meeting my friend.

We just wanted to say how much Cxxxx enjoyed the panto this evening, thank you so much for arranging it. His faith in the traditional festive frivolity has been restored.



Thank you for giving Exx a great evening. She was on a high when she got in.



It was enjoyable, funny and an experience I'll never forget.



## Social Opportunities Short Breaks

## Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



Everyone had a really good time at Butlins. Despite the weather we all made the most of what was on offer, including the ABBA show, the circus and of course shopping and the beach. By consensus, the best night was the silent disco, singing and dancing to different songs. The concept of a Silent Disco is fairly new and it is very simple – everyone has a set of LED headphones playing the music.



Unfortunately, 2023 was our last annual summer break at Butlins. It has been difficult to get insurance cover for groups staying overnight unless it is for an activity run by another company, so we had to make the decision to stop this particular activity. But we will be exploring other options for 2024.





A very big thank you to everyone who donated or raised funds for us over the past year including our much appreciated regular donors.



# Fundraising

Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



Together we can





## Goals for 2024

# Advancing the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.



### Goal 1.

Establish links with local hotels for potential work experience placements.

### Goal 2.

Establish link with local coffee shop chain for potential work experience placements.

### Goal 3.

Expand and reorganise our gardening group to reach more people.

### Goal 4.

Use outdoor learning centres to provide weekend sessions for groups.

### Goal 5.

Provide a calendar of evening events that small groups or pairs of friends can enjoy.