



...For School & College Leavers

Everyone should be afforded the opportunity to make informed life choices and to safely explore and nurture their individual talents, interests and possibilities.

That's why Optima Care's Shine programme offers 2-5 year person-centred pathways, designed to help school and college leavers make the journey to adult Supported Living with a sense of confidence and optimism.

Shine was designed by Optima Care to help ensure that people of all ages, with learning disabilities and complex needs, including mental health issues, realise their full potential. Underpinned by a clear support framework with milestones of personal goal achievement, Shine may be tailored according to individual need. It helps ensure a transition journey for the people we support through our services towards more independent living.



Personal by design

For school and college leavers, this journey begins with the development of a bespoke transitional programme in partnership with the school leaver, their family and care support team. This starts well in advance of individuals actually leaving school to help ensure the best possible outcomes. The programme is tailored to individual requirements and can include any or all of the following:

- Day visits to our life skills & vocational training centre

- Informal visits to meet with staff and the people we support
- Respite stays - from overnight to a few days / weeks

A home from home

Optima Care can offer various single occupancy and gender-specific shared accommodation options designed with the needs of 18-30 year olds in mind.

Our settings are based in central village locations in Kent, in which we have developed strong community





CASE STUDY

Phil's story

Phil, age 20, has an intellectual disability. After leaving school and spending some time at home, Phil came to live at Heron House, part of Optima Care, at the age of 18 and weighing 19.5 stone. He was very withdrawn, prone to mood swings and would only eat junk food.

Thanks to positive behavioral support from the staff at Heron House, in conjunction with his parents, Phil's life has now – in the words of his mum – “completely turned around” and he is looking forward to a very positive future. He now eats a much more varied and healthy diet and has succeeded in losing 8.5 stone.

As he started to lose the weight, it became easier for him to get out and about. The self-confidence he gained also ensured that he was willing to socialise more and try new activities. Phil now attends Looking Ahead – a weekly group where he enjoys woodcraft and agricultural work. He also loves being around animals and is looking forward to starting a voluntary placement at The John Graham Centre - a local farming activity and education facility. With the support of staff, he's also looking into agricultural courses at a local college.

“My relationship with Phil is 100% positive now,” comments Phil's mum. “Before Heron House we were at breaking point but his life has now been completely turned around. The mood swings have gone and he's much more independent.”

“My life has also changed for the better because I feel confident that Phil is in such a happy and supportive environment. I trust the team explicitly – it doesn't matter what time of the day I pop in to see Phil, they are happy for me to just turn up unannounced. That means an awful lot to me.”

relationships that afford volunteering and work experience opportunities. We also provide separate adult residential and Supported Living services.

Continuity of support

We enjoy the benefit of our own, modern, ASDAN* registered centre, which aims to help all our young people develop skills for learning, skills for employment and skills for life.

Our pathways also ensure continuity in communication skills practiced at school – from

Communicate: In Print and Makaton to sessional Speech & Language Therapy support.

“The service provided imaginative and varied opportunities for people to develop and maintain social, emotional, communication and independent living skills”

Care Quality Commission inspection report on Optima Care's Gate House (2013)

If you would like to find out more about the Shine programme for school and college leavers, please call us on 01843 822 508. You may also email us at enquiries@optimacare.co.uk.

*Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) – A British charity organisation helping young people, post school age, to further develop their personal and social attributes. ASDAN award programmes and qualifications are usually vocational in nature and are designed with special education needs in mind.

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