FOOTSTEPS CARE

Newsletter – September 2026 Issue

September has been another wonderful month at Footsteps. We have been lucky enough to enjoy some lovely warm weather, letting us make the most of the outdoors and keep up a variety of fun activities and adventures. From getting out and about in the sunshine to spending quality time together, it has been lovely to see everyone making the most of the last of the summer weather.

As we begin to welcome autumn, September has also been a time to watch the children and young people continuing to grow in confidence, develop their independence and enjoy new opportunities, with the ongoing encouragement and support of our dedicated teams.

CHILDREN'S HOMES QUALITY LEADERS CONFERENCE 2026



What a wonderful day we had at the Children's Homes Quality Leaders Conference 2026 in Birmingham! It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with so many passionate people from across children's residential care, sharing experiences, celebrating good practice and, most importantly, learning from one another. This year's theme, "The Complexity of Care: Excelling Amid the Challenges," really resonated with us all because if there is one thing that unites us all in care, it's understanding the complexities.

We came away with lots to reflect on, particularly around trauma-responsive care, strong and thoughtful leadership, listening to lived experience, and the importance of working together with the wider network around each child. One of our biggest takeaways from the day was that, despite the increasing complexities and challenges within residential childcare, we must never lose sight of what sits at the heart of everything we do- the experiences, relationships and outcomes of the children and young people in our care. Our children and young people are at the heart of everything we do.

We were also immensely proud of one of our own, Natasha Bailey, who was a finalist for Manager of the Year. Although Natasha didn't take home the award on this occasion, being recognised as a finalist amongst so many exceptional professionals in our sector is an incredible achievement in itself, and we do not need an award to validate how exceptional she is at what she does. Natasha, you may not have brought home the trophy, but you certainly made us very proud!

A huge thank you to everyone involved in making the conference such an insightful, thought-provoking and enjoyable day. Now it's about turning that learning into practice and continuing to do what matters most- making a positive difference to the lives of our children and young people.

NEWS FROM OUR GOODMAYES ADULT SERVICE

September has been another busy and enjoyable month for our young adults, with plenty of opportunities to get out into the community, spend time with friends, stay active and take part in activities. From golf, swimming and bowling to museums, meals out, train journeys and trips further afield, there has been something for everyone to enjoy. Staff have continued to support our young adults to make choices about how they spend their time, maintain important relationships and access their local and wider communities with confidence and increasing independence.

Our young adults enjoyed visits to Valentines Park, Goodmayes Park, Hainault Forest and Fairlop Waters Country Park, which proved particularly popular throughout the month. There was also a trip to Southend-on-Sea, as well as visits to Westfield, Valence House Museum and the Garden Museum. Train journeys continued to be a popular choice, including trips into London and journeys to destinations chosen by our young adults. One young adult also enjoyed plane spotting at London City Airport. These outings provided opportunities to experience different environments, make choices and continue building confidence when accessing the wider community.

As usual, we enjoyed spending time with friends throughout September. Our young adults enjoyed meeting friends for lunches and meals out, including visits to Toby Carvery and Harvester. Others enjoyed going to Hollywood Bowl with friends and playing golf together. These social experiences provide valuable opportunities to maintain friendships, enjoy shared interests and spend meaningful time with others outside the home.

There were lots of opportunities to stay active, we enjoyed swimming, sessions at Oxygen, walks in the community, bowling and golf, including a visit to Crown-land Golf Course. Visits to parks, Hainault Forest and Fairlop Waters also provided opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, go for walks and stay active while exploring different surroundings. It was lovely to take in the sights and sounds of nature.

Another highlight was a magic show in Romford, while other young adults enjoyed trips to the cinema, museums and different places of interest. Individual interests and routines remained equally important. This included attending a church service, enjoying train rides, plane spotting at London City Airport and choosing favourite places to visit. Supporting these individual preferences helps ensure that activities remain meaningful and centred around what each person enjoys.

A Lovely Visit and Some Exciting News! 💕

It was lovely to welcome Maxine back for a visit this month! Maxine enjoyed catching up with her friends. It was wonderful to see her again and hear how she has been getting on. Maxine also had some very exciting news to share-she is expecting a baby! We are delighted for her and wish her all the happiness as she prepares for this exciting new chapter in her life. Congratulations, Maxine! We can't wait to hear more about your journey into motherhood!

OUR MISSION

Working together to create one home, one family.

OUR VISION

We endeavour to ensure every child and young person in our care feels respected, happy, safe, loved, valued, and cared for. We provide a homely environment which supports children and young people to build on their skills and abilities enabling them to develop greater independence and confidence to take them into adulthood.
We are empowering children and young people with learning disabilities and additional support needs to overcome obstacles and reach their highest potential, whilst promoting welfare and wellbeing.

VALUES

Family, Compassion & Empathy, Safety & Security, Nurture & Empower, Passion, Opportunity.
Our company values are the core principles that define who we are.
We aim to create a healthy culture within a long-lasting, successful, motivating, and safe home where we embrace diversity and uniqueness.
We celebrate great teamwork and foster respect, support, positivity, and kindness.

IMPORTANT DATES

Black History Month (UK)
Breast Cancer Awareness Month
ADHD Awareness Month
Menopause Awareness Month
Dyslexia Awareness Month

1 October – National Poetry Day
1 October – International Day of Older Persons
2 October – World Smile Day
4–10 October – World Space Week
4 October – World Animal Day
5 October – World Teachers' Day
5–11 October – Dyslexia Awareness Week
6 October – World Cerebral Palsy Day
8 October – World Dyslexia Awareness Day
8 October – World Sight Day
10 October – World Mental Health Day
10 October – World Hospice and Palliative Care Day
12 October – World Arthritis Day
12–18 October – Dyspraxia Awareness Week
15 October – Global Wave of Light
22 October – International Stammering/Stuttering Awareness Day
23 October – Wear It Pink
31 October – Halloween

NEWS FROM OUR GOODMAYES CHILDREN SERVICE

September has been a very month for us here at Goodmayes children service. We had a fantastic summer break which was well deserved, but September has brought us to the beginning of a new school year. The children have all adapted well to the return of school and we are proud of them for adapting very quickly to new school routines.

During September, we enjoyed lots of various activities**.** The weather was very kind, and it felt like summer, allowing us to still enjoy time and activities outdoors. We had much fun visiting the local parks as well as taking walks in nature. There is nothing like a walk in nature to help us refocus and relax.

We had a lovely time in London walking along the Thames and going on a boat ride, which was great fun. We enjoyed creative activities, trips to bowling, and fun at the cinema.

September also brought opportunities for our young people to get involved in preparing meals at home. They were supported to choose ingredients, participate in cooking dinner, and really enjoyed the meals they had helped prepare. These everyday activities encouraged decision-making, independence, and practical life skills, while making mealtimes a shared and enjoyable experience.

Sensory activities continued to be an important part of the month, with young people enjoying opportunities to explore different textures and experiences through sand and water play, even if we did get a little wet!

We were delighted to recognise our Manager, Natasha, who was named a finalist and attended the Managers Conference in Birmingham. This was a wonderful achievement and an opportunity to celebrate her dedication, leadership and contribution to the home. We also came together to wish Ayomide all the very best as she began her maternity leave. Her final working day was a lovely opportunity to celebrate this exciting new chapter and thank her for her hard work and contribution to the team. We wish her and her family all the happiness in the months ahead.





NEWS FROM OUR LEYTON CHILDREN'S SERVICE

Well, well, well, what a busy month! We have had a wonderful month here at Ambleside. Following an enjoyable summer, the return to school has brought familiar structure back into the week, while evenings and weekends have continued to provide opportunities for fun.

Despite a return to school, there was still plenty of opportunities for children and young people to get out and enjoy the community throughout September. We had a fantastic time taking part in the All Ability Club cycling sessions at Leyton Jubilee Park. These sessions provided a wonderful opportunity for everyone to enjoy cycling in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment, with activities suited to different abilities and confidence levels. It provided us with opportunities for us to build confidence, practise following instructions, and develop our independence. Most importantly, it was a chance to have fun, enjoy the fresh air and experience a real sense of achievement!

We had a fantastic day getting closer to nature during a visit to the Beautiful Bees Workshop at Leyton Boundary Community Garden. This lovely activity provided an opportunity to learn about the important role bees play in our environment and why protecting wildlife and nature is so important. The workshop encouraged curiosity, learning and an appreciation for the natural world.

There was plenty of excitement during our trips to Gravity MAX! With lots of entertainment and activities to enjoy, these visits provided a fantastic opportunity for our young people to have fun, try something different and spend time together.

We had great fun attending gaming sessions at YMCA Walthamstow, providing a great opportunity to socialise, relax and enjoy one of their favourite interests. We also had a very interesting visit to Gabriel's Wharf Arts Festival provided a wonderful opportunity for our young people to experience creativity, culture and the arts in a lively community setting, where we explored different forms of art and creative expression. It also encouraged us to express our own opinions on the wonderful art.

Our young people had the opportunity to experience a little magic during a Harry Potter walking tour! This exciting outing offered a chance to explore the city while discovering locations and stories connected to the much-loved Harry Potter films and books. It was a very interesting day. The experience also provided opportunities to develop communication skills, ask questions and share interests with others, all while enjoying a fun and memorable day out.

Bus rides! We never get bored of bus rides here at Ambleside. Throughout September, the children enjoyed bus and train rides to destinations of their choice, giving them opportunities to explore different places and become more familiar with public transport. These outings are particularly important for developing independence and practical life skills. Young people can practise planning journeys, recognising stops, understanding travel routines and learning how to stay safe when travelling in the community.

We have been fortunate to enjoy some lovely warm weather throughout September, which has meant plenty of opportunities to continue getting outdoors and making the most of our local community. We visited the local parks, community walks and outdoor play, giving us the chance to enjoy fresh air, explore their surroundings and take part in physical activities.

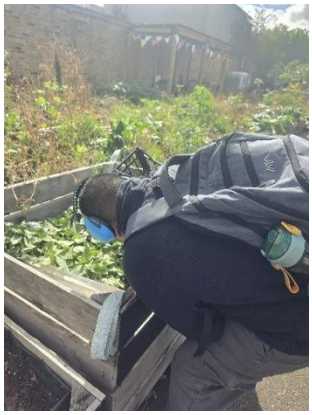
We have also had great fun playing in the garden, trampoline sessions, sensory play, music and dancing, animation, television and reading.

September also provided regular opportunities for young people to continue developing their independence and everyday living skills. The young people were supported, according to their individual abilities, to make their beds, tidy their rooms, participate in household tasks, develop their understanding of money, prepare fruit smoothies, practise waiting and turn-taking, make choices and communicate their wants and preferences. These everyday experiences allow young people to build confidence and develop practical skills at a pace appropriate to them.

BIRTHDAYS- A very happy birthday to our team members Felix, Marios and Raymond! We hope you all enjoyed your special day and thank you for your continued dedication and contribution to our young people and the home.

A Fresh New Look for Our Home!

We have been busy making some lovely improvements to our home this month, including having brand-new flooring laid throughout! The new flooring has given the home a fresh, modern, and welcoming feel, creating an even more comfortable and homely environment for our children and young people to enjoy.







A Special Thank You to Our Behind-the-Scenes Team!

Last week, while sitting in my office, I heard a wonderful round of applause coming from our training suite. A few minutes later, as staff were leaving the room, I overheard someone thanking Chris for such an informative and valuable training session, expressing how much they appreciated the knowledge and information he had provided.

It was a reminder of just how fortunate we are to have our very own in-house trainer, who delivers bespoke training tailored to the individual needs of our services. We have a number of individuals who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure our services run smoothly and that our teams have the guidance, resources, knowledge and support they need to deliver safe, compassionate, person-centred and high-quality care.

So, here's a heartfelt thank you to Chris for his continued commitment to staff learning and development; Sam for all her hard work in facilities; Katrina, Mel and Shamus for their invaluable support in HR; and Shayfa, Marios and Tommee for the fantastic administrative support they provide across our services.

We couldn't do it without you. Thank you all. You are more valued than you know. 💙

HEALTH & WELLBEING

All staff members have access to the Care First Zest platform provided by My Possible Self. The platform offers fully confidential Health and Wellbeing Support Services, including 24-hour fully confidential telephone counselling and an interactive health and wellbeing management portal.

RECRUITMENT

If you know someone who would like to join us, please direct them to our website where they can download an application pack to complete and return to applications@footstepscare.net

STAFF HANDBOOK

Please take the time to read through the staff handbook which can be found on our system, in each office and on our website. The staff handbook contains all the HR policies.

WEBSITE

Our website is regularly updated. To access information about the organisation, commitment to safeguarding, important contact details, newsletters and the gallery, please follow the link below. https://www.footstepscaregroup.com

YOUR FEEDBACK

Your input means so much to us, and we truly appreciate your thoughtful feedback. The survey is also available on the website. This helps us better understand your thoughts, suggestions, and ideas for improving our workplace. Your feedback plays a key role in shaping our plans for the year ahead. Thank you again for helping us build a better and more inclusive workplace. Stay tuned for updates on our progress and next steps! Click on the QR code and leave you feedback.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Our policies and procedures are available to view and read on the FODS system and Footsteps Care Drive. Our core HR policies are also in the staff handbook.