

Day Opportunities News

Cambridge

Edition 6

Boccia Ball

Boccia Ball, an adaptation of the game Boccia, is a popular game among our Cambridge customers. Using a curling target, they aim to score points by positioning their balls towards the centre. Players earn 10 points for hitting the bullseye, 5 for the next circle, 3 for the one after that, and 1 point for landing on the outer ring. Customers really enjoy this version of Boccia and are sure to play more in the coming months!



Nature Watch

Customers have been engaging in Nature Watch activities. They're planning their planting schedule, starting with cress before moving onto flower seeds in decorated terracotta pots. Watch this space for more.



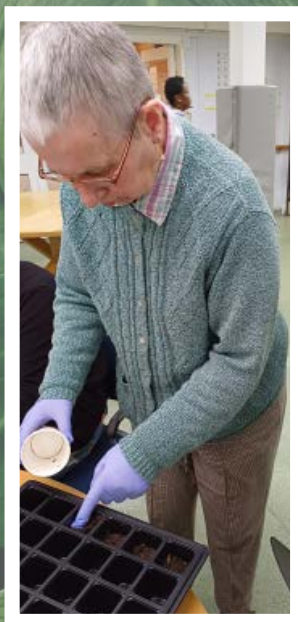
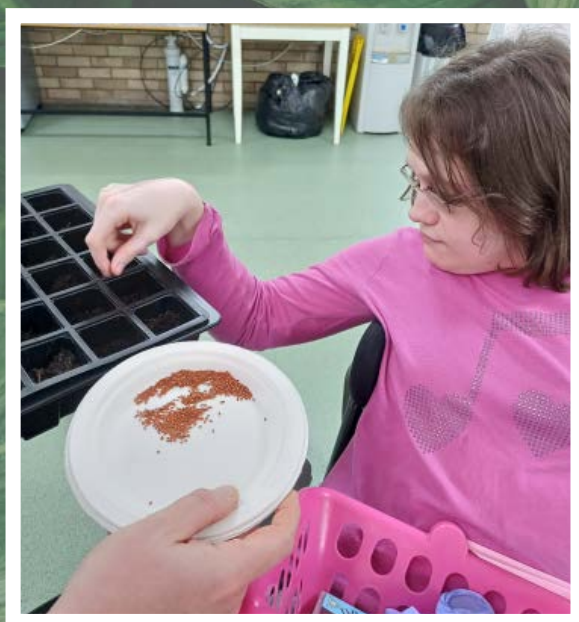
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Computer corner

The Cambridge team has been diligently establishing a computer area for our customers. Responding to feedback from customers across all sites expressing a desire for enhanced IT skills, we've established our hub with laptops generously donated by Deloitte.



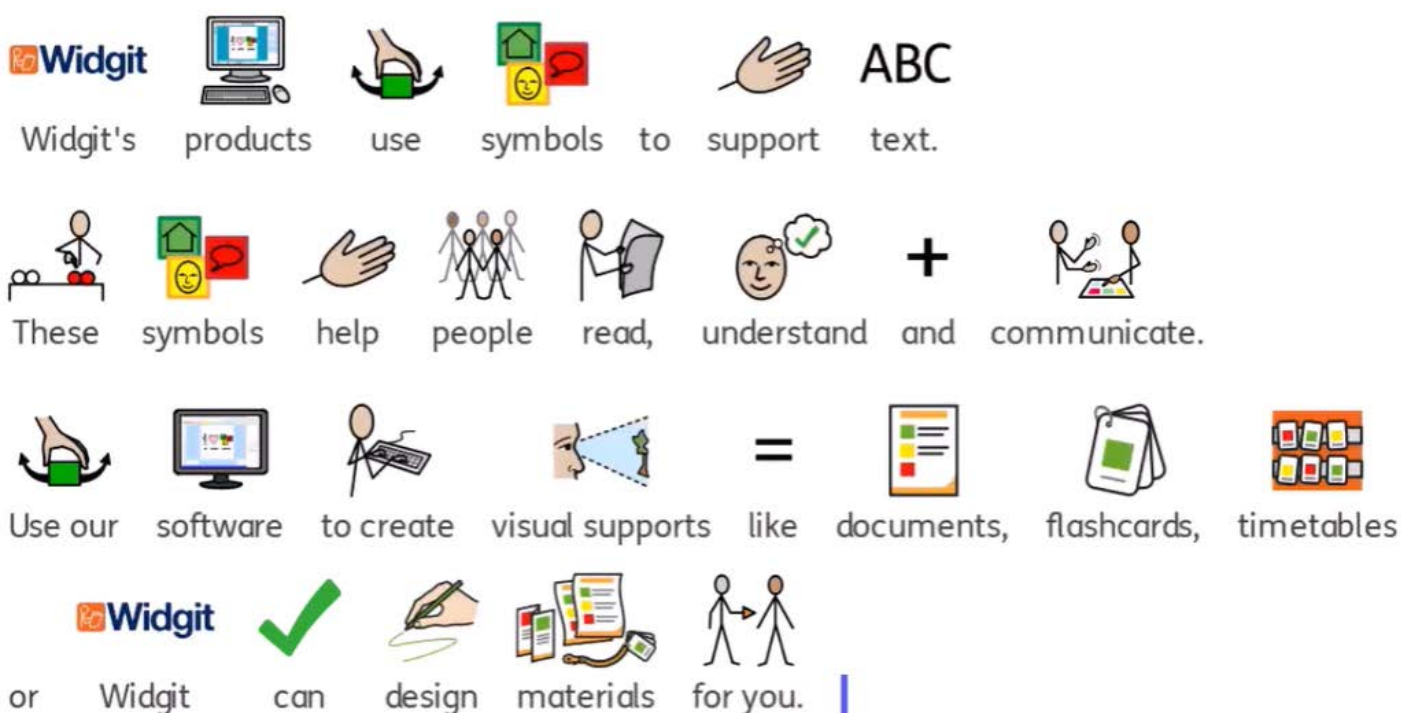
Nature walks

Strolling through Cambridge our customers enjoyed the rich local history. While crossing the River Cam on a footbridge, one customer noticed a blue plaque and an information board. We discovered that the bridge was renamed after a man who was once enslaved but managed to buy his freedom, later becoming a prominent member of the abolitionist movement. During the same walk, we came across an old church with a small nature reserve. We stopped to read about the different species living there and took a picture of some customers standing next to the church to remember the visit.



Cambridge Feedback Week

During feedback week in Cambridge Day Opportunities staff introduced a feedback box and asked customers if they would like to see additional activities. They used the accessibility tool, Widgeit, which allows individuals to express themselves independently through symbols, aiding comprehension and understanding across any environment. From 21 responses, suggestions included more cooking, baking, sports, computers, art, bingo, outings, and learning new skills such as laptop use and Makaton. Some feedback also mentioned improving the accessibility of the disabled toilet and fixing a leaking fire door. Due to its success, we plan to keep the feedback box permanently available for continuous input.



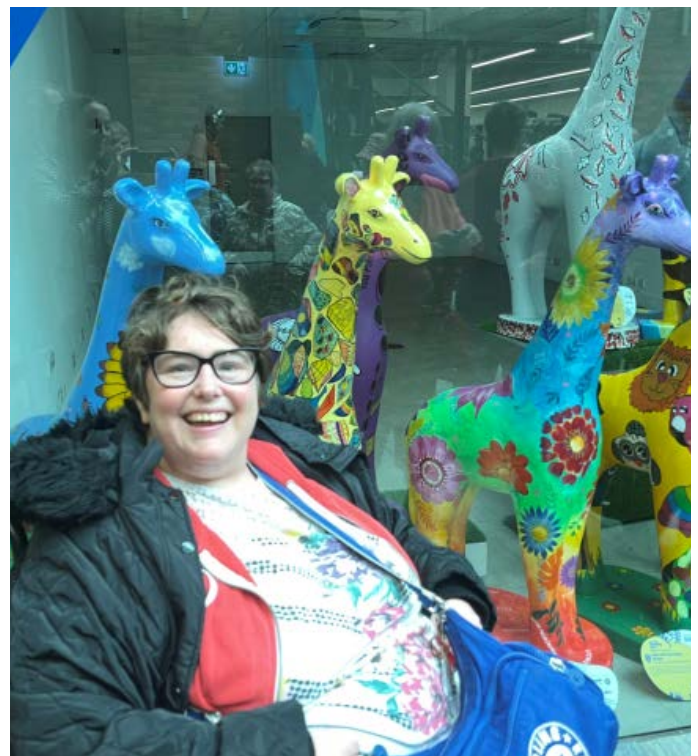
In a feedback forum, customers reviewed the Customer Charter and Customer Service Standards for Day Opportunities. Easy-read versions of both documents were shared on a big screen for discussion. Two sessions were held on our busiest days, Tuesday morning and Wednesday afternoon, with a follow-up for absentees. Topics covered included expectations, support, and performance checks. Additionally, Tracey Croucher, the Customer Engagement Lead, introduced herself and her role. We also used a feedback wall to gauge feelings about activities, with 43 customers participating. Most feedback was positive, with a significant number of ticks in the 'happy' category, indicating overall satisfaction.

Standing Tall

Our Cambridge and Huntingdon customers have recently been out exploring Cambridge city centre to look at the Cambridge Standing Tall giraffe trail. Across the city's streets are 31 beautifully decorated giraffe sculptures alongside 60 Mini G's, each created by local school and community groups, 3 of which were designed by our Cambridgeshire Day Opportunities customers.

Customers had a great day trip out and even spotted their own Mini G's. Cambridge's nestled in the menswear department in John Lewis and Huntingdon in a shop window at the Grafton centre.

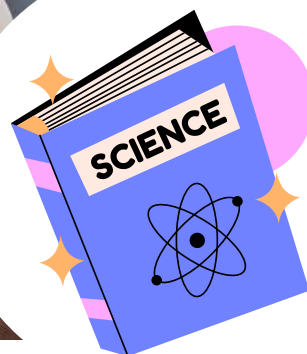






Science experiment

It was science time at Abington, and it was Lucy's turn to set the question. She chose "What floats in my boat?". Customers crafted tin foil boats and conducted water experiments using various items to see if they would float or sink. Among the items tested were eggs, cake bars, biscuits, and fruit. All performed well except for the Jammy Dodger, which failed miserably!



Feedback Week

Day Opportunities Abington recently hosted a fantastic Feedback Week, where the incredible Abington Experts by Experience – Katie, Frank, and Chris – sat down individually with each customer for a personalised chat. The primary focus was on prioritising the customers and making their experience exceptionally personal whilst asking them which activities they enjoyed the most.

The customers expressed a keen interest in having more gluten and dairy-free cookery classes on offer. Additionally, they requested that the patio area be made more colourful with a variety of vegetables planted.



In response to the feedback, Day Opportunities Abington has exciting plans in the works. A fun day at the centre is being planned for June, with a Harry Potter-themed event. Furthermore, quiet areas will be made available to cater to those who prefer a more calm environment, especially on busy days when the noise levels can be high.

Thanks to the generosity of a customers parents, the centre has been kindly donated a Nintendo Wii and an Xbox, fulfilling the customers' desire for these gaming consoles.

Exciting news as well for OWL Dynamos - the football is expanding into a new indoor league, which will be held at Cambridge Regional College starting in June. This development comes as a direct result of the customers' feedback.

Library bus Abington

Ryan was thrilled with his visit to the library bus in Abington, enjoying researching projects and participating in the wildlife session. He was impressed with the selection and happy to become a member, planning to return at the end of the month.

Lucy loved browsing the children's section and found several books for her niece Poppy. She rarely leaves the day centre but enjoyed her outing and is excited to borrow more books.



Exploring Wales

Our Abington customers had a delightful adventure exploring the marvels of Wales! Every Monday, they set off on a cultural voyage, delving into a new destination.

This session was dedicated to Wales, celebrating its vibrant history and stunning landmarks. They savoured homemade leek soup and Bara brith cake, while also crafting Welsh spoons and creating their rendition of The Castell Coch!



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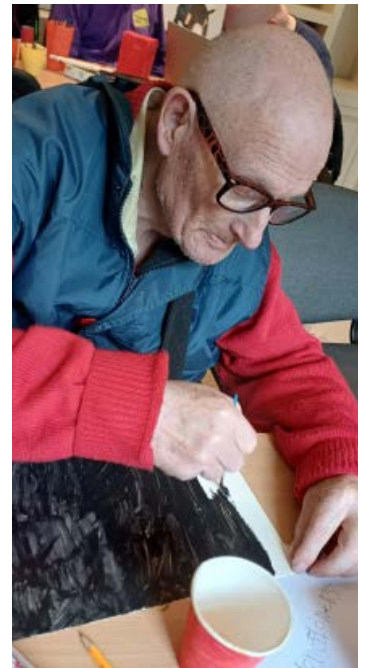
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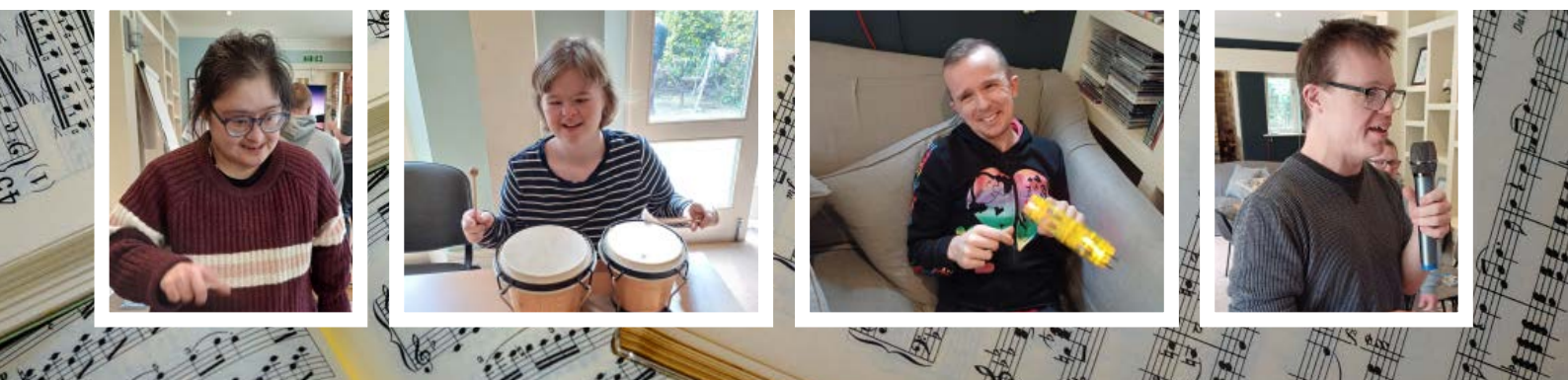
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Music and karaoke

Abington customers immersed themselves in a music and karaoke session, choosing songs ranging from the timeless tunes of Abba to the contemporary hits of Sam Smith. They love this form of expression and we will definitely be hosting more sessions in the future.



Huntingdon

Beef Stroganoff

During one of their weekly cooking sessions, customers whipped up a mouth-watering, Beef Stroganoff.

Neil declared it a perfect "10 out of 10," and all the other customers agreed that it was lovely.



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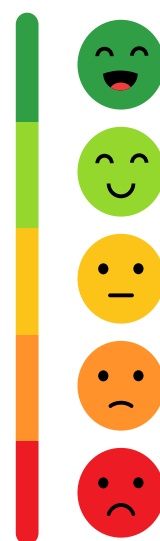
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Feedback Week

In Huntingdon, customers delved into our new Customer Charter and the Day Opportunities Customer Service Standards easy read, as well as their thoughts on how we should all treat each other. They also asked customers for their thoughts and feelings about the new timetables and activities offered, and their Expert by Experience, Dan, offered drop-in sessions for customers. It was such an informative week, and as always, we learned so much about what our customers want.



Money management

Customers have been developing money management skills during their maths sessions. The customers were identifying how much money was in each jar. There were two different levels depending on individual ability. In past sessions, customers have also calculated the cost of shopping lists for cooking sessions, budgeting exercises where customers calculate if they can afford items on a list, and exercises to see how much change they would get from buying certain items. These life skills are invaluable, and the customers get a real sense of achievement while challenging themselves.



Beat This

Over the course of 12 weeks, our Huntingdon Day Opportunities customers took part in music sessions facilitated by Beat This, an initiative aimed at providing music and technology sessions to people with additional needs to develop skills, interact, and express themselves through music. This project was supported by a generous grant of £6,443 from the NFU Mutual Charity Fund.

Through guitar strums, drumbeats, and lyrical compositions, participants delved into the world of music, ending the programme in the recording of their own song at the Beat This studio in Peterborough. The project not only honed musical skills but also fostered a sense of teamwork and accomplishment among the customers.



The initiative had a big effect outside of the studio and sessions. Customers said that they felt healthier and happier, looking forward to each session. One customer told a member of the team “it changed my life and has given me a reason to live”.

The sessions increased the customers confidence and self-esteem providing them with an opportunity to do something totally different to their normal day to day activities. This was particularly the case for a small number of customers who are more reserved and cautious by nature.

A shining example of the initiative's impact is illustrated through customer CM, a 19-year-old participant who is very shy and socially anxious. At the time of the sessions starting staff were concerned that CM was very nervous and not engaging with others, she was very quiet and shy. They were worried that they would not be able to bring her out of her shell.

The music sessions sparked CM's enthusiasm leading her to perform the dance routines from her favourite music videos in front of the whole group. She explored musical instruments and fully engaged in all the musical activities. She giggled and beamed with happiness whilst exploring the musical fruit. This newfound engagement not only provided insight into CM's preferences but also informed the centre's approach to supporting her needs.

The project was a huge success, and our fundraising team is currently endeavouring to secure funds for future sessions.

Huntingdon Day Opportunities customer Claire created an amazing CD cover so that all of her friends at the centre could have a CD of the songs they created.



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Read and review

Customers in our Huntingdon Day Opportunities have been studying Matilda in their read and review sessions; each week they listen to a bit of the story (and some people read along), and then they do an activity related to the story. These have involved; writing limericks, thinking of revenge ideas (for Mr Wormwood), insults, rhymes, as well as drawing the characters. The customers each have a folder of all their work.



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