



OUR CASE FOR SUPPORT

Help us provide social
and educational
activities for people
of all ages with
learning disabilities
and complex needs



We support local
families across
Herts & Essex,
but we welcome
anyone who can
get to us.



OUR STORY

At Grove Cottage we are proud of our long history of providing support for people with learning disabilities. Grove Cottage began in 1966 when a group of like-minded parents united with a vision of creating a place of belonging for their children and other local people with learning disabilities.



Through their dedication and hard work Grove Cottage was created. At that time our social clubs were hosted from church halls and other local venues, until 1972 when this determined group of parents joined forces with the local community. They secured a permanent home for our charity by purchasing and transforming 151 London Road in Bishop's Stortford, into a social and recreational hub.

The need for our charity was evident, and as the number of members grew and the demand for our services increased, we needed a larger premises. In 1974 we purchased the adjoining property to 151 London Road which enabled us to meet local demand and support more families.

Since then, we have continued to provide vital social and educational clubs and services for people of all ages with learning disabilities and complex needs, whilst welcoming those that care for them into our supportive community and providing them with much-needed respite.

OUR PAST HAS PAVED WAY FOR OUR FUTURE

Brian Crabb, the son of one of the founders of the original Grove Cottage, sadly passed away in 2018. Brian had attended Grove Cottage for 53 years. His estate was generously left to our charity, and this incredible legacy has enabled us to embark upon the next chapter for our charity, to redevelop Grove Cottage and create a 'Better Building for a Brighter Future'.

Our new, fit-for-purpose building will increase accessibility and capacity, enabling us to meet growing local demand, and support people with a learning disability for their whole life course and those who care for them, well into the future.



Grove Cottage is a professional, passionate community, enriching lives and giving those who learn differently the opportunity to achieve their potential.

OUR MISSION

To provide social and educational activities for people of all ages with learning disabilities and special additional needs; to help them develop their potential, avoid social isolation by supporting lifelong friendships, and to provide respite for their families.

OUR VISION

A world in which every individual has the opportunity to learn, develop, integrate into society and exercise choices, and where families can enjoy a regular family life.

We achieve this through:

OUR VALUES

Professional: Professionalism allows us to serve our community effectively, efficiently and ethically, maximising the positive impact of our support for those who have learning disabilities and complex needs.

Passionate: Our passion drives us to make a difference every day. We approach our work with unwavering enthusiasm, driven by the belief in the unique abilities of each person.

Community-Centred: We focus on the community of individuals who have learning disabilities and complex needs, as well as their families and allies. We create a supportive network that fosters understanding, inclusion, and positive change.

Enriching: We are committed to enriching the lives of individuals of all ages within our community. Through education, empowerment, support and social engagement, we aim to enhance their opportunities and quality of life.

Encouraging Potential: We encourage individuals who learn differently to achieve their full potential. By providing the necessary resources, tools, and guidance, we empower individuals to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society.



***“We don’t limit, we adapt”
Club Leader, 2024***

THE NEED FOR GROVE COTTAGE

People with a learning disability are particularly vulnerable to social isolation. Challenges with learning, communication and behaviour have an impact on how someone socialises and engages with others, both inside and outside the family unit. Unfairly disadvantaged from birth, having a learning disability can affect a person's whole life.



Grove Cottage is here to make a real change by providing vital services to give equal opportunities to our members. One in four adults with a learning disability do not leave their homes each day, but Grove Cottage is here to welcome them to learn life skills, make friends and have fun!

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Grove Cottage is excellent! Brilliant staff, varied activities and opportunities as well as great facilities. My son's speech and language skills have improved as has his life skills such as getting places and meeting with different people. I know he's happy and Grove Cottage is like an extended family to him. He first attended at two weeks of age and has been a regular member ever since. He's 35 now!

THE ONLY ORGANISATION PROVIDING LIFELONG SUPPORT

Bishop's Stortford's rapid population growth increases the need for high quality support and resources for individuals with learning disabilities and complex needs. Grove Cottage is the only local organisation providing lifelong support for this community. We are committed to meeting this growing demand and adapting our services to continually meet evolving needs.

“Grove Cottage has made me feel like I am not alone, like I'm not the only one with a child with special needs. Grove Cottage is such a supportive community and is massively helpful. It is a welcoming community and connecting with other parents through Grove Cottage has been so helpful.”

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HOW DO WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Grove Cottage supports over 180 people with learning disabilities and complex needs and their families and carers every year.

Our varied timetable of vital services and clubs improves the emotional and physical wellbeing of our members.



Through attending Grove Cottage our members develop their potential and become more independent, confident and obtain a wide range of life skills.

We see their social isolation reduce and friendships form resulting in our members becoming happier and more socially engaged. Parents and carers of those attending Grove Cottage are welcomed into our supportive community and gain much-needed respite and support.

What makes Grove Cottage unique is that we have a lifelong impact on our beneficiaries; our youngest member is 2 years of age and our eldest is 70 years old

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“The range of clubs and activities is extensive, and the care is outstanding. My son’s learning difficulties and health problems prevent him from having an independent life. He relies on family members every day for everything from getting up in the morning until going to bed at night. Grove Cottage gives him the opportunity during the day to step away from family, to have somewhere of his own, something that empowers him learn and grow in a safe, caring environment”

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THE COST OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The annual cost of Grove Cottage providing support, services, and social and educational opportunities to those with a learning disabilities and complex needs is around £600,000.

Whilst we are affiliated with Mencap we receive no funding from the national body and have independent accounts. Grove Cottage relies on the support gained from our community fundraising efforts and the generosity of grant-making organisations.

Grove Cottage aims to be a fully inclusive organisation and is committed to supporting people through financial hardship. We always put our members at the heart of everything we do and prioritise their needs and safety above all. We can therefore, on a case-by-case basis, subsidise the cost of our services.

We believe that with the right support, people with learning disabilities can live independent and fulfilled lives.

Grove Cottage has strong roots in our community. We are incredibly lucky to have over 60 dedicated volunteers who support us at fundraising events and assist staff and members in our clubs. We collaborate with local businesses to increase the inclusivity and visibility of people with learning disabilities in the community.



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I absolutely love volunteering at Grove Cottage and look forward to it every week. Seeing how much the members enjoy themselves and have fun is really heart-warming. I love chatting to everyone and seeing how they are doing and also being there for them if they need any help. It's also great to be part of a team and I've made some lovely new friends myself. I always leave feeling happy, fulfilled and appreciated!"

Louise

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THE IMPACT YOUR SUPPORT COULD MAKE

Your support will enable our charity to continue providing high quality care and support for people of all ages with learning disabilities. From tender nursery age to adulthood, we support our members, nurture their potential, and open doors to new experiences. Your funding could support the following:

YOUR FUNDING COULD SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING:



- The cost of hosting inclusive cinema film events for our members and their families/carers (£250)
- The annual cost of day trips and external entertainers for our Nursery children (£500)
- The cost of hosting our adult social club at the Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church for a year (£994)
- Supply all club and nursery staff and volunteers with our Grove Cottage branded uniform (£2,000)
- The annual direct costs of hosting our weekend clubs for children (£3,000)
- The annual cost of hosting our inclusive "Get Active" sports sessions (£9,850)
- The annual cost of our vital day and evening social and support groups for adults (£21,110)
- £44,400 would support the costs of running our Ofsted-regulated Nursery for 6 months.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORE COST AND MULTI-YEAR FUNDING

Grove Cottage cannot compromise on our staff-to-member ratios (some of our members require one-to-one care). We are committed to providing a safe, stimulating environment and creating a place of belonging for our members.

The continued rising of energy costs and the necessary increased costs of paying fair wages threaten our ability to sustain our vital clubs and services. Core funding is therefore incredibly important in helping us navigate this unpredictable financial climate.

Multi-year funding enables us to plan for the future and gives a vital layer of stability to our services and clubs and enables us to build long-lasting positive relationships with our funders.

Every donation helps us to shape futures, change lives and enable those who attend Grove Cottage to reach their full potential.

Josh's Story

Emotional Wellbeing

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I'm Josh, and I'm 26 and a half years old. I have Down syndrome and special needs, and I've been part of the wonderful Grove Cottage family since I was just three. I still look forward to attending the clubs every week.



Grove Cottage means the world to me. It's not just a charity; it's a place that has always supported me and felt like a second family. I can't thank them enough. During the difficult days of the COVID-19 lockdowns, my mental health suffered, and I'm still dealing with anxiety today. In 2021, my mum gave me some advice: "Be a helper to others." I took that to heart.

With Grove Cottage's love and support, I've had the chance to rebuild my confidence and try new things. Now, at Grove Cottage clubs, it's not just about what I learn but also how I can help others. I've introduced and led meditation sessions in our groups which are a safe space, surrounded by friends who make me feel at home. It's my way of helping others find peace and comfort, and it helps to calm my anxiety too.

Looking ahead, I have big dreams. I want to own my own house and make my family proud. With the support of Grove Cottage, I believe I can achieve these goals."

As told by Josh, with the help of his sister Mel

TO FIND OUT MORE

email: fundraising@mencapgrovecottage.org
call: **01279 651908**
head to: www.mencapgrovecottage.org



[@grovecottagemencap](https://www.instagram.com/grovecottagemencap)



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