



Prior's Court

Transforming the future for autistic
young people with complex needs



2025/26 Young Adult Provision

The Cottages & Charlotte House

This is **Me**. This is **Us**. This is **Our** Future.

Contents

- 3** Prior's Court Foundation
- 4** Introduction and overview
- 5** A specialist approach
- 6** Key elements of the approach
- 11** What young adults learn
- 18** The environment
- 22** Staff
- 24** Our policies and procedures
- 26** Admissions





Prior's Court Foundation

Prior's Court Foundation (usually referred to as Prior's Court) is a registered charity based in Berkshire. Prior's Court provides education and residential care for autistic young people with complex needs aged 5-25, helping them to be healthy, happy, more independent and have the opportunity to access the world of work.

The Foundation manages:

- **Prior's Court School** – an independent special school for autistic children and young people with complex needs aged from 5 to 20 years. The young people are autistic and have severe learning disabilities and complex needs. Most of the young people are non-verbal, pre-verbal or have limited language. Some have additional diagnoses and exhibit behaviours that challenge. Day, weekly and termly placements are available over 38, 44 or 52 weeks of the year.

For further details about the School, a separate Prospectus is available. Please contact the Admissions or Transitions Teams for a copy.

- **Prior's Court Young Adult Provision (YAP)**
52-week supported living for autistic young adults aged 19 to 25 with learning disabilities and complex needs.
The on-site Cottages and off-site home known as Charlotte House provide a transitional step towards a more independent and inclusive future.
- **Prior's Court Learning & Development Centre**
– Providing specialist training, and consultancy.



Our purpose

– why we exist

To transform the lives of autistic young adults with complex needs, helping them to build a brighter, more independent future.

Our ambition

– what we strive for

To be a global leader for autistic young adults with complex needs.

Our philosophy

– how we achieve this

Prior's Court is here to transform the lives of the autistic young people with complex needs in our care; to help them achieve the impossible and give their families the magic moments they never thought they would have.

We understand that the little things are actually the big things for an autistic young person, and we celebrate them as major milestones. A daily life skill gained or an anxiety conquered today is a stepping stone towards tomorrow's work placement, or a shared special occasion with family.

Prior's Court never stays still. We are ambitious for our young people and aspire to be a global leader for autistic young people with complex needs. We want to deliver outcomes for them beyond our imagination; to help transform the lives of even more autistic young people, and develop practice improvements which we can share across the world.





Introduction and overview

Prior's Court's Young Adult Provision supports autistic young adults with complex needs to learn life and vocational skills within a person-centred framework. Learning is achieved through an approach that maximises the strengths, abilities and interests of the individual, supporting them to reach their full learning potential and empowering them to lead a fulfilling, more inclusive life.

This document is for The Cottages at Prior's Court Young Adult Provision, which are based on the main Prior's Court site, and Charlotte House, which is based in the nearby village of Hermitage. Adults within both settings have the same level of access to facilities at the main Prior's Court site.

All three of The Cottages, a mix of small group housing and flats, and Charlotte House are each registered as separate care homes with the Care Quality Commission.

"Our son is coming to the end of his time at Prior's Court. Staff have been brilliant throughout this time and his progress has been fantastic. We will always be thankful for the knowledgeable, patient(!) and caring staff who have been so amazing on our journey."

Parent of a young adult at Prior's Court



Young adults

The Cottages and Charlotte House provide 52-week placements for young adults between the ages of 19 and 25 years.

Each young adult will have a diagnosis of autism and have moderate to severe learning disabilities and complex needs. Some young adults may exhibit behaviours that challenge.

Each young adult is provided with an individual package of support tailored to meet his or her needs.

Objectives

To enable autistic young adults with complex needs to:

- learn strategies to self-manage anxieties and behaviour,
- develop a positive self-image,
- express emotions appropriately,
- experience fulfilment and achievement,
- experience a breadth of cultural activities which include those of their own race, religion and culture,
- take an active part in daily life,
- become self-determining, make informed choices and be involved in decision-making about their care,
- undertake social and leisure activities in their local community,
- undertake work experience, work placements and paid work which are built upon their strengths,
- To continue to learn new skills to support life post Prior's Court.



“People felt valued by staff who showed genuine interest in their well-being, quality of life and created a warm, inclusive atmosphere. We observed staff consistently treat people with kindness and a friendly demeanour, which visibly raised people's spirits and mood.”

CQC inspection

A specialist approach

A toolkit for independence

The Prior Approach is our autism best practice approach. It has been developed through extensive research and moulded to suit the special needs of autistic individuals and support their physical, intellectual and emotional needs.

Incorporating a carefully combined selection of methodologies and current best practice, informed by the latest contemporary knowledge of autism, the Prior Approach is a model which is continuously reviewed and adapted to ensure it meets the unique needs of each individual.

The Prior Approach is applied with consistency across all settings throughout the Extended Day. It provides a toolkit of skills to ensure the young adults supported by Prior's Court can make sense of the world around them and support them through their life.

The Prior Approach focuses on supporting behaviours, physical exercise, sensory differences and communication. It is underpinned by its structured teaching approach and some of the key areas look at community opportunities, working in partnership with others and ensuring all young adults lead a happy and healthy life.

A toolkit for life

We believe the Prior Approach offers the most successful route to independence and enables each individual to achieve their highest potential. The Prior Approach capitalises on the strengths and interests of each individual supporting a person-centred approach.

Emphasis is placed on creating meaningful and functional learning opportunities to provide a person-centred approach applied across all settings with consistency throughout the Extended Day.

Person-centred learning

Utilising the Prior Approach each young adult has a person-centred plan which reflects their needs, skills and interests. Each individual is supported to develop skills through the Prior's Court Learning Framework.

Emphasis is placed on developing each individual's ability to participate within the local community, providing a transitional step towards a more inclusive life.

The seven key Areas of Learning in the Learning Framework are:

- Communication,
- Positive Behaviour Support,
- Daily Living Skills,
- Vocational Learning,
- Functional Academics,
- Keeping Me Safe,
- Healthiness.





Key elements of our approach

Person-centered

The Prior's Court Learning Framework outlines how we aim to deliver on our ambition for our young adults – to be happy, healthy, more independent and able to access the world of work.

The framework supports our approach of individual learning programmes for each young adult with the opportunities to develop the necessary skills to maximise their potential and ensure they are able to lead full and varied lives within the community.

Young adults are taught within all seven Areas of Learning. The Functional Academics Area of Learning is discrete within the programmes of learning.

Individuals are supported to engage in a rich and varied range of activities and opportunities tailored to meet their individual needs across their Extended Day.

Each young adult follows an individualised person-centred learning plan and these plans are reviewed regularly looking at the needs of each individual while building on their skills, strengths and interests. Each young adult is supported to be actively involved in the development of their plan and any meeting about their lives. Support is provided by key individuals including staff, professionals, family members and advocates ensuring all plans that are developed meet their individual needs and aspirations.

Partnership and communication with parents/ carers and families

The relationship between parents and Prior's Court Young Adult Provision is regarded as a partnership.

Arrangements for contact between parents, carers, relatives and friends are agreed during the pre-admission visits, individualised to meet the needs of the young adult and parents/carers and detailed in the young adult's plan.

Staff communicate frequently to update parents and families and young adults are encouraged and supported by staff in communicating with their families in a number of ways such as making a telephone call, video call or sending an email.

A parent newsletter is sent to parents/ carers approximately once every six weeks, giving an overview of news from the site. Parents have access to a private Facebook group and a closed section of the Prior's Court website for further updates. A regular Parent Forum, held virtually, is also organised.

For those parents who wish to join, parent WhatsApp groups (one per residential home and a site-wide group) are also available.

Parents are invited to special events such as Sports Day, the annual Christmas Carol Concert, a fireworks display, and our on-site music festival.

A parent survey is conducted annually to hear the views of parents, carers, and those who advocate for their child about Prior's Court's provision of education and care.

“People consistently experienced high quality person-centred care, which had significantly reduced the level of their anxieties and associated behaviours. This had enabled people to access the community and take part in stimulating activities of their choice, which had enriched the quality of their lives.”

CQC inspection



Structured Teaching

Prior's Court uses the Structured Teaching system which provides a structured way of organising the day and the layout of learning and living spaces.

Prior's Court uses the Structured Teaching system in every setting to support young people's independence and understanding with structure in the organisation of the day and the layout of living spaces. The structured approach is personalised to support each individual's needs to enhance their development.

The Structured Teaching approach was developed by TEACCH with five main principles:

- understanding the learning styles of autistic individuals and how to use strategies that build upon learning strengths,
- developing an individualised person and family centred plan for each individual, rather than using a standard curriculum,
- structuring the physical environment to make its purpose as clear as possible,
- using visual supports to make individual tasks more understandable, implementing assessment and strategies to build on skills.

Studies have shown that the Structured Teaching approach provides one of the most positive outcomes for autistic individuals, helping them to understand the events in their day, reduce anxieties, aid learning, and facilitate independence.



Total Communication Approach

Prior's Court adopts the Total Communication approach to help young people to form connections, ensure meaningful interactions and support exchanges of information.

Total Communication honours and accepts all forms of communication and we support a combination of methods so that communication can be individualised for each young adult.

Modes of communication that are included in the Total Communication Approach at Prior's Court include 'Primary Systems' (Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)) and 'Supporting Methods'. Each young person is assessed by the Speech and Language Therapists to determine the most appropriate and robust 'primary system' to support any other method of communication.





Prior Insight

Prior Insight is our big data platform which we believe can fundamentally alter care and education provision for individuals with complex autism. This is through the insights it can generate about an individual's autism, and the condition itself.



Prior Insight

Prior Insight allows our Autism Practitioners (this role may be called a Support Worker in other organisations but our staff are given extensive autism-related training) to record data on every aspect of a young adult's day – from the amount of fluid intake to successes with learning activities.

This allows us to observe and investigate patterns in behaviour to provide enhanced support for young adult, to monitoring and celebrating learning progress.

The platform also hosts a young adult's timetable to help practitioners build structure throughout the Waking Day, with Support Steps also available so practitioners can quickly access information on how best to aid and support young adults in a variety of settings and scenarios.

All parents have access to the Parent Portal section of Prior Insight.

The portal enables parents to access three key areas of information about their child:

Profile – basic placement details.

Media gallery – a log of all approved media uploaded by staff working with the young adult.

Reports – live data displayed virtually to keep up-to-date with the young adult's wellbeing and activity.

This helps parents get a closer look at what their child is doing on a day-to-day basis and to better understand their child's autism.

Extended Day

A key feature of the Prior Approach is the recognition that learning takes place throughout the day and across all settings – residential, educational and in the community. Autistic individuals often learn best in real life settings and may require support to generalise new skills.

The Young Adult Provision supports the development of each individual through a Extended Day approach that reinforces learning in a variety of situations with a focus on meaningful skills that contribute to an active life within the community.



This Is Me plans

Each young adult has their own This Is Me plan. This Is Me plans are a single, dynamic, digital location for all of an individual's care and learning documents.

This Is Me plans identify care delivery needs which are linked to daily diaries allowing for live tracking, celebrating progress and learning development across all settings throughout the Extended Day. This is achieved through our I Can statement system of progress measurement.

This Is Me plans consist of items such as key persons in the individual's Circle of Support, individual care and learning plans, Positive Behaviour Support plans, protocols, and risk assessments. These are reviewed by specialist, experienced staff across our multi-disciplinary teams. This is to ensure a young person's learning targets are appropriate and their achievements celebrated.

This Is Me plans are hosted on the Prior Insight platform.



Physical exercise

Regular exercise is a vital part of each day and a core principle of the Prior Approach. Physical exercise helps autistic individuals to manage their energy levels and improve their fine and gross motor skills.

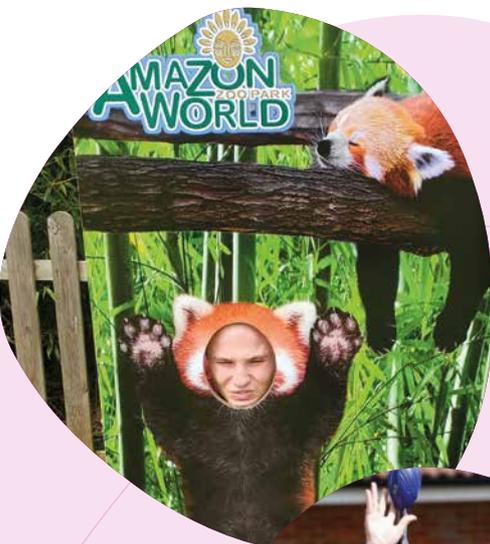
Prior's Court recognises that exercise helps regulation it improves attention and sleep patterns, releases excess energy, provides opportunities to play and for social interaction, and can help to calm when stressed or struggling to engage.

Individuals are encouraged to regularly participate in a wide range of physical activities which are available both onsite and within the local community.

Young adults enjoy a wide range of activities both in groups and individually. This includes walking, running, cycling, swimming, trampolining, ball games, yoga, outdoor sports, and horse-riding.

Facilities to support physical exercise include approximately 50 acres of extensive grounds, outdoor gym equipment, running track, gymnasium, trampolines, swings, bicycles, tricycles, scooters, and an indoor sensory swimming pool.

Community facilities such as swimming pools, gymnasiums, climbing walls, sailing clubs and leisure centres are also accessed to further support our programme of activities.





Positive Behaviour Support

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) aims to enhance Young adults' quality of life and ensure they lead full, enriched, and productive lives with opportunities and choice. If the needs of the young adults are met and they lead satisfying lives the occurrences of behaviours that challenge will be reduced. We use a range of strategies to support young people to learn to self-regulate.

PBS uses information from a wide variety of sources to understand what the young adults are trying to tell us. Assessing the functions of behaviours that challenge allows us to develop individualised, person-centred strategies and interventions that proactively meet the young adults' needs, making these behaviours redundant.

These interventions support the development of new skills and enable them to cope more effectively in an environment or situation they find difficult. Each young adult has a PBS Plan detailing all this, written and regularly reviewed by our PBS Learning Specialists. Strategies are carefully considered by all supporting a young person, including staff and parents.

"The houses are well managed, organised, and structured, which has reduced the family anxieties. I also believe this environment helps my son to feel calm too. He picks up on those around him, so their calm style and approach works well. Thank you to the team."

Parent of a young adult at Prior's Court

Therapy and Multi-disciplinary Provision

As an integral part of the Prior Approach, there is access to advice and support from a multi-disciplinary team on-site including a Positive Behaviour Support team, Speech and Language Therapists, and Occupational Therapists with Sensory Integration training.

The Therapies and PBS teams at Prior's Court delivers therapy through the Wave Model and PBS Framework (see our website for copies of these). Our specialists provide individualised support as needed to upskill staff in their understanding and implementation of these processes. All staff are responsible for universal support to embed consistent use of strategies and skills across everything young adults do.

Specialist teams include:

- Speech and Language Therapists and Assistants,
- Occupational Therapists and Assistants,
- Positive Behaviour Support Learning Specialists,
- Physiotherapist,
- Sensory Integration Therapists,
- Music Therapist,
- Nurses,
- Keeping Me Safe Learning Specialist,
- Healthiness Learning Lead and Healthiness Instructors.

All therapists and PBS workers receive relevant clinical supervision, and additional therapists can be brought in as required to provide therapy to meet young adults' identified needs.





What young adults learn

Independent living skills

There is a focus on developing self-care and life skills for all individuals, which comes under the Daily Living Skills Areas of Learning. Daily Living Skills is a key focus within the Young Adult Provision, in line with our ambitions for our young adults to be as independent as possible.

This focus includes:

- developing personal care routines and good hygiene,
- learning to plan, shop for and cook their own meals,
- learning to do their own laundry and take responsibility for their personal belongings,
- learning to complete day-to-day domestic jobs including the cleaning of personal and communal areas,
- learning to manage their money and developing their skills to travel on a variety of transport within the community.

Within the residential houses and flats each individual is encouraged to play an active role within their community and participate in social events and celebrations.

Vocational skills

Our ambition for young adults is to give them the skills they need to enter the world of work. Our ultimate goal is for our young adults to be able to make a meaningful contribution to the community or as part of the Foundation.

We recognise that due to the complexities and challenges that many of our young adults face, this may be an experience or work placement within the organisation rather than the community, but we still ensure this has purpose and meaning.

The Vocational Learning Area of Learning contains key programmes of skill acquisition, each focused on employment sectors, in which young adults develop skills and experiences based on their pre-existing skillsets and interests. Young adults can access different sub-programmes of each of the two programmes. A team of specialist staff ensure all young adults access a range of experiences, to practice and develop their skills.





Focus on Vocational Skills

Our ambition for our young adults is to give them the skills they need to be able to access the world of work.

The two key streams of skill acquisition are:

Landbased

- **Orchard** – Young adults are involved in nurturing and growing our apple trees. They will learn to weed, compost, prune and water our trees.
- **Grounds maintenance** – Young adults learn skills such as pressure washing patios and paths, laying bark chip paths, and painting outdoor sheds and fences.

- **Grounds gardening** – Learning gardening skills such as lawn mowing, strimming, leaf blowing and hedge trimming alongside weeding, litter picking etc. This prepares young adults for possible off-site placements in the future.
- **Nursery** – Using our on-site polytunnels young adults will be planting and potting plants for use across site. Young adults will also learn how to grow plants including fruit, flowers and vegetables and all associated tasks such as washing and filling pots, watering, and pest control.



"Families were confident the provider responded appropriately to concerns and they were able to contact the provider anytime they needed to."

CQC inspection



Hospitality

- **Customer service including reception and retail** – Learning customer service skills, such as how to meet and greet a visitor or customer, and to offer and provide help. Young adults will also learn how to serve a retail customer whilst managing stock, how to handle payments and account for takings.
- **Housekeeping including commercial laundry** – Being involved in the upkeep of various environments across site, learning to clean rooms, window clean and use industrial floor cleaners. Young adults will also learn how to operate the machines in our main laundry room, and washing, drying and folding items of laundry.
- **Conference services including room set up and portorage** – Setting up meeting and training rooms in accordance with the booking requirements, ensuring furniture, consumables and refreshments are in place. Young adults will also provide a portorage service across site, delivering packages and other items as required.
- **Food and beverage incorporating our bakery, a café and barista training** – Our food and beverage training will equip young adults to prepare drinks and simple meals, and host and serve customers within our café area. Young adults learn barista skills, being able to prepare and serve a range of hot and cold drinks.



Some young adults will also work in our on-site industry standard equipped bakery, learning how to follow recipes and other techniques (including food hygiene) needed to make bread and other baked goods.

All young adults regardless of which vocational pathway they follow will also be taught Readiness to Work skills to prepare them for entering the world of work. These are skills such as manual handling, wearing PPE, focus and productivity among other topics.





Choice-making, advocacy and personal development

Choice-making is an important skill that often needs to be taught. Young adults are encouraged to make choices in everyday situations such as what to wear and selecting preferred leisure activities, or through the 'choice' options within their schedules.

A range of strategies are used to enable young adults to make real choices about their lives such as what to wear, preferred leisure activities, and personalising their bedroom. Our aim is to provide experiences for our young adults which will enable them to achieve a sense of personal identity, self-esteem and self-respect.

Through a focus on personal development, citizenship and opportunities for decision-making about their lives presented throughout the Extended Day, we strive to create a happy and stimulating environment for the development of sexuality, physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social skills, which takes into account the individual needs of our young adults.

An Independent Visitor visits every month to observe different aspects of the young adults lives including to ensure their choices are supported within the provision.

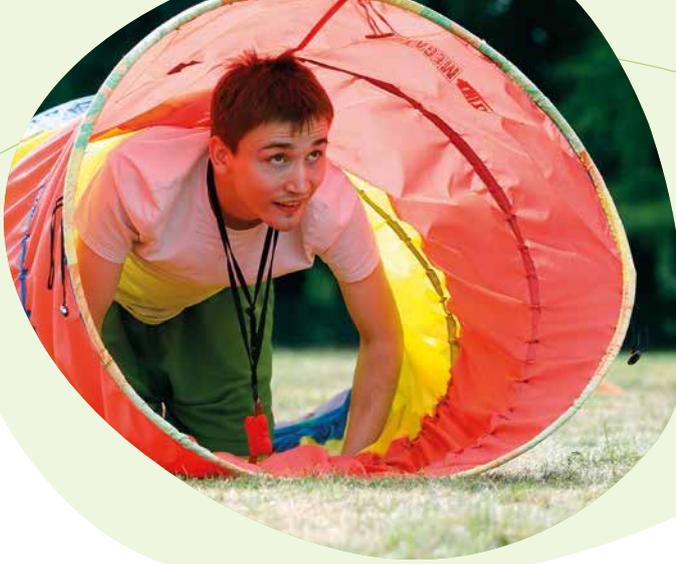
Young people have access to an independent advocate who can provide support on bigger life choices.

We aim to make sure our young adults are able to make informed choices and a range of communication strategies are employed to help young adults communicate their views.

Where the individual finds it difficult to understand or make a choice and self-advocate, key individuals within their life work collaboratively to ensure any choices made are in the best interest and meet the needs and aspirations of the individual.

Some young adults are able to attend their Annual Review for a short time. If they are unable to do so their presence is represented via photos and/or videos of their work and achievements.





Community links and generalisation of skills

The development of skills for each individual to successfully participate within the local community is a key focus. Access to and involvement in the local community is planned as part of each young adult's person-centred plan and provides opportunities to develop their participation according to their choices, skills and interests.

Prior's Court is actively involved in the community and welcome and encourage links with local schools, colleges, and organisations. Young adults regularly use local supermarkets, cafes and shops to consolidate their skills. Visits are structured according to individual requirements with visual instructions, schedules, shopping lists, and reward systems.

A wide range of outings and special events are arranged including birthday parties, music concerts, cinema and theatre trips, swimming, bowling, tourist attractions, and holidays.

Staff also encourage the young adults to follow hobbies and take part in recreational social activities with on-site sessions and clubs. This can include Scouts, trampolining, cookery, art, drama, dance, and cinema club. Staff can also arrange for the young adults to attend youth clubs, sailing, horse riding, rock climbing, and other clubs or activities which require off-site travel.

Leisure and relaxation

Leisure and relaxation are important areas of life for all young adults. autistic individuals often struggle to engage independently in leisure and relaxation activities, particularly when the focus is on self-occupation. Each young adult is supported to develop leisure activities and hobbies which build upon their interests and aspirations.

Individuals are encouraged to follow hobbies and take part in a wide range of recreational, social and fun activities.

Within each individual's Extended Day, they are supported to develop relaxation activities and techniques which will contribute to their spiritual and emotional wellbeing.





Measurement and celebration of progress

We have high expectations of our young adults in all areas of their lives. We celebrate their achievements and progress in a multitude of ways.

Each Young Adult's This Is Me plan identifies care delivery needs which are linked to daily diaries allowing for live tracking, celebrating progress and learning development across all settings throughout the Waking Day, via our I Can statement system of progress measurement. Independence in usage of skills is assessed based on level of prompt required. For example, physical prompt or communicated prompt up to Mastered level.

Accreditation

Learning delivered at Prior's Court is accredited by ASDAN, a charity, curriculum development organisation and awarding body offering qualifications to grow skills for learning, skills for employment, and skills for life.

ASDAN offers a framework of qualifications which our young adults work towards. Our Vocational Skills Learning Programmes, Hospitality, Land-based and Readiness to Work, are accredited by ASDAN, with skills developed in each programme's modules creating a pathway for each young adult. This builds a record of personal achievement for them, with each skill acquisition across each Learning Programme recognised.

While our customised learning programmes are accredited by ASDAN, for our young adult learning itself is delivered through the Prior's Court Learning Framework which outlines how we aim to deliver on our ambition for our young people – to be happy, healthy, more independent and have the opportunity to access the world of work.



"People's support plans reflected their range of needs and promoted their wellbeing and enjoyment of life. Staff provided care to meet people's needs and aspirations."

CQC inspection



Young person progress data

The table below shows the average number of I Can statements achieved per young person as set, with prompt levels, within each Area of Learning over the past three years. This data covers both the School and our Young Adult Provision.

Area of Learning	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Communication	6.5	10.5	14.2
Daily Living Skills	10	8	7.3
Functional Academics	15.5	52	47.3
Healthiness	10	11.5	–
Healthiness – Care	–	–	2.9
Healthiness – PE	–	–	7.6
Keeping Me Safe	5	7.5	6
Positive Behaviour Support	9.5	14	10
Vocational Learning	53.5	43.5	58.8
Average I Can's achieved per young person	15.5	21	18.4

Notes on this data:

- With the three years of focused data, year-on-year we are able to set targets that stretch (i.e. ambitious targets)
- Alongside this, we review the whole of the framework for each young person to see what skills they have gained through regular practice. This ensures all skill development is recognised.
- Where progress is not yet at the level we would hope for a young person, this is often because they still require some level of staff support or prompting to complete a task at the set level, therefore while they haven't yet achieved the skill, they are working towards it. This is reviewed regularly across the year, looking at many factors, and support is provided to improve outcomes where appropriate.

In 2024/25, we set individual targets for every young person in six Areas of Learning (Communication, Daily Living Skills, Healthiness, Keeping Me Safe, Positive Behaviour Support) and one of either Functional Academics, or Vocational Learning, dependent on their age. We also divided Healthiness into two sections to allow for targets to be set where there were different areas of accountability from staff members.

The table below shows the percentage of young people (in the School and Young Adult Provision) who achieved expected, or higher, progress:

Area of Learning	2023-24	2024-25
Communication	78%	90%
Daily Living Skills	29%	53%
Functional Academics	89%	96%
Healthiness	54%	–
Healthiness – Care	–	33%
Healthiness – PE	–	85%
Keeping Me Safe	78%	75%
Positive Behaviour Support	95%	75%
Vocational Learning	74%	73%

Outcome data in most Areas of Learning has remained consistent or improved against individual targets. We now have two years of data, and therefore even more ambitious individual targets are set.

Due to a shortage of Speech and Language Therapists, whilst young people have continued to work on communication skills, not all young people have been assessed at the end of the year as we have prioritised therapists to be working with the young people and upskilling staff. Therefore, the data reflects progress for approximately half of the young people. Others will have made progress but have not been assessed by a therapist.

We continue to support staff in leadership, delivery, and moderation to ensure all seven Areas of Learning are achieving the best possible outcomes. Where we have separated Healthiness, the overall figure remains roughly the same percentage, but there will be a focus this year on improving the outcome in Healthiness Care. It is noted that the figures for number of I can's available are less than other Areas of Learning, and therefore overall data for this area is affected when a small proportion of young people make below progress.





The environment

Residential accommodation

The residential facilities of both the Cottages, which are on-site at Prior's Court, and Charlotte House in the nearby village of Hermitage, have been carefully designed to provide a homely, supportive environment for the autistic young adults with complex needs we support.

Both The Cottages and Charlotte House have a strong emphasis on creating a calm, tranquil, structured environment to allow individuals to develop their skills in real life settings.

Part of the 50 acre site at Prior's Court, the Cottages are based within three converted cottages which provide a mixture of small group housing and flats. It also contains a Learning Centre, a horticulture area, a recreation area, and access to further vocational skills-based learning opportunities on the main site.

Dove and Robin Cottages are both group homes providing accommodation for six young adults. Bradbury Cottages are a collection of four flats each providing accommodation for two young people.

Charlotte House is an off-site home located in the nearby village of Hermitage which provides accommodation for five young adults. The young adults who live in Charlotte House have access to the same facilities on the main Prior's Court site as the Cottages, as well as its own in-house facilities.



This gives each young adult the opportunity to live within appropriate accommodation according to their needs, preferences and lifestyle choices and providing them with the experience to prepare for future housing choices. A young adult's age, abilities and compatibility with their peers is also considered when deciding on accommodation.

The houses and flats have been designed to provide an age appropriate environment which promotes dignity and respect for each individual. Each young adult has their own comfortable bedroom with en-suite facilities which they are encouraged to personalise.

Communal spaces in each residential house include a lounge, kitchen, dining and laundry area. Each area has been designed to enable the individual to participate, develop and practice their skills in all areas of daily living and to support the individual to develop social skills and facilitate appropriate interaction with peers.

"People's body language and expressions indicated they felt secure and safe around the staff who were supporting them. People actively sought out staff support and all the staff interventions seen, were positive and supportive in their impact."

CQC inspection





Each residential area has an enclosed central garden with a mixture of patio areas and grass which supports the development of leisure, relaxation and social activities.

The location

The location of both [The Cottages](#) and [Charlotte House](#) offer easy, 10 minute access to the town centres of [Newbury](#) and [Thatcham](#).

This brings within reach a wide range of leisure facilities including swimming pools, bowling alleys, shops, restaurants, cinemas, countryside walks, museums, and venues for activities such as horse riding, golf, youth clubs, football clubs and more. Reading, Bracknell, Basingstoke, Oxford, and The Ridgeway are all within half an hour's journey, providing further opportunities for leisure and learning.

There are vehicles to support frequent off-site trips as well as good access to public transport and safe walking routes from the homes to the local village amenities which include a bus stop, restaurants and a shop.

The site

The layout of The Cottages and Charlotte House supports the aims of the Young Adult Provision in providing opportunities to learn and practice a wide variety of purposeful skills within carefully designed, realistic settings enabling each individual to develop their skills to participate within community life. There is a strong emphasis on using local community facilities.

However, the design of the site with a Learning Centre recognises the complex needs of our young adults that may not always be able to be met in a generic community-based setting. The layout allows each young adult the opportunity to practice, learn and develop skills in preparation for community life.

"Staff were respectful and encouraging when speaking with people. Staff spoke with people about appropriate topics and monitored their body language and verbal responses to gauge their views."

CQC inspection





The Learning Centre

Daily access to the Young Adult Learning Centre (and the education facilities of Prior's Court School) further supports the range of vocational and life skill learning opportunities.

Individuals have the opportunity to access a range of activities following their identified vocational streams and person-centred timetable within the young adult's Extended Day.

The Learning Centre consists of a main learning base equipped with an interactive smart board which supports individuals in all areas of learning.

A sensory and relaxation room has been incorporated into the building to enable each individual to explore their own sensory needs and to facilitate the learning of self-relaxation and calming skills.

A hospitality learning area in the Learning Centre provides young adults with a safe environment in which to learn a range of skills. These range from cleaning and bed-making, to customer service in the specially designed customer service section. Here, the young adults can learn about stock managing, food preparation, customer interactions, and much more, which will prepare them for potentially entering the world of work in later life. The Learning Centre has



a horticulture area with polytunnel and raised beds providing the opportunity to grow seasonal vegetables and flowers.

The Learning Centre also has an attached garden and an adjacent paddock and recreation area for the development of social, leisure and exercise activities.

Vocational facilities

In addition to the Learning Centre, access to the main Prior's Court site provides a kitchen garden and horticulture area, and a Countryside Learning Centre providing individuals with the opportunity to learn and develop horticultural and animal husbandry skills, an orchard, a careers library where accessible information on job roles and careers is available, and an industry-standard bakery.

The 50 acres of open space on the main Prior's Court site is also used as an area in which to practice skills within the Learning Framework.





Further specialist facilities

- kitchen garden and horticulture area with a greenhouse, polytunnels, raised beds, and fruit and vegetable patches,
- a Countryside learning Centre (CLC) with a stableyard and paddocks which house a small range of farmyard animals,
- suites that reflect an office environment to encourage and support vocational skills,
- a careers library with accessible information about the world of work.

Leisure, exercise and recreational facilities

In addition to the facilities within the Young Adult Provision, there is also the opportunity to use the specialist facilities and education facilities at the main Prior's Court site which includes:

- 50 acres of safe open space including a 10-acre wood with sculpture trail and quiet garden,
- indoor, heated sensory swimming pool,
- all-weather activity track for walking, running, cycling, and scooting,
- swings, trampolines, trim trail and outdoor gym equipment,
- indoor gym with equipment including treadmills and static bicycles,
- art room,
- library,
- contemporary art and sculpture placed throughout the site, gifted by our late Founding Patron, Dame Stephanie Shirley CH.

A bespoke Performing Arts Centre

In 2025, Prior's Court opened a brand-new, bespoke Piper Arts Centre, believed to be the only arts centre in the UK built to meet the needs of autistic people, which features adapted facilities to support autistic young people with complex needs to access opportunities in music, dance and drama and the life-enriching benefits this provides.

One aim of the centre is to mimic theatre environments to prepare more young adults to access arts venues in the community successfully, as well as providing a space for families to come and watch performances.



Staff

An employer of choice

The staffing community within the Young Adult Provision is of a wide cultural and ethnic diversity, with a good balance of male and female staff. It is our aim to be an employer of choice with staff who feel valued, respected, motivated and inspired.

Staff expertise

The Young Adult Provision aims to provide a very high standard of education and care with well-qualified and well-trained staff. Learning delivered by Vocational Instructors. Homes are led by Care Managers while each individual home will have Team Managers who are responsible for leading a team of Autism Practitioners. Young people are also assigned a Key Worker. Waking night staff are responsible for young people throughout the night.

A large team of multi-disciplinary and therapeutic professionals include a Speech and Language Therapy team; Occupational Therapists; a physiotherapist; General Registered Nurses; and Positive Behaviour Support specialists as well as Therapy Assistants support therapeutic input for the young adults.

Staff liaise with external professionals and additional therapists are brought in to meet young people's identified needs.

The expertise within Prior's Court Young Adult Provision is supported by a strong focus on learning and development; induction and refresher training is complemented by specialist personal and professional development.



"[people were observed] consistently receiving a kind and compassionate approach from staff using positive and respectful language. Staff used communication aids recognising peoples individual communication needs and to maximise effective communication with people."

CQC inspection





This image was taken by young person Ewan D

Our core programme of training includes:

- Safeguarding,
- Team Teach (positive behaviour support),
- First Aid,
- Medication Dispensing,
- Epilepsy,
- Infection Prevention & Control,
- Food Hygiene,
- Autism training (Prior Approach).

These are in addition to the methodologies and practices within the Prior Approach, sensory integration therapy, and other autism specific training.

To ensure consistency and best practice, a strong emphasis is placed on training staff in Structured Teaching. Prior's Court has strong links with the University of North Carolina, where the Structured Teaching system was developed. Staff attend regular Structured Teaching training sessions run by our TEACCH qualified staff with support from University of North Carolina specialists. As of June 2025, more than 125 members of staff have completed the 3-day Structured Teaching course, close to 60 have completed the 5-day course, and 13 have completed the Beyond the Basics course, which focuses on advanced applications of the TEACCH principles and practices.

Prior's Court has developed a successful Diploma programme which supports our residential teams to achieve their Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare in line with the government's Quality Standards for Children's Homes. Senior residential staff are offered the opportunity to complete the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership & Management for Residential Childcare.





Our policies and procedures

Transition planning

Through careful planning and liaison with families, our Transitions team, comprised of experienced practitioners, ensure incoming and outgoing young people's transitions are as seamless and successful as possible.

Safeguarding our young adults

All staff are carefully screened before commencing employment. This includes positive references, occupational health assessments and a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check to ensure that practice is in accordance with the regulatory bodies and the Government's Safeguarding Children's Strategies and Safeguarding Adult's Strategies. Those involved with recruitment processes have to complete Safer Recruitment training.

Personal, Social, Health and Sex Education

Our aim is to provide experiences for our young people which will enable them to achieve a sense of personal identity, self-esteem and self-respect.



Through our approach to PSHE embedded within our Learning Framework we strive to create a happy and stimulating environment for the development of sexual, physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social skills, which considers the individual needs of our pupils.

Religious, Education and Collective Worship

The school has a multi-faith ethos. Acts of Worship involve activities in which the young people are given the opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate their own faith and learn about other faiths. All parents have the right to withdraw their child from such activities.

Equal opportunities

Implicit in the aims of the Young Adult Provision is the recognition that all young adults are equal and are therefore entitled to the same opportunities of learning experience within Prior's Court. It is our intention that this provision does not perpetuate stereotypes that undermine this aim.

EAL

Our communication programmes support the needs of young people with English as an additional language.





British Values

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum we aim to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our young people. This includes promoting fundamental British values as set out by the Department for Education (2014).

Some of these values are complex, but through our specialist approach using visual cues and sensory stories we are able to help young people explore these values at a level they can understand.

See our website for further details.

Uniforms and possessions

There is no set uniform for the Young Adult Provision but parents are asked to provide a range of appropriate clothing and young adults may bring a selection of personal possessions. Parents are asked to provide pocket money for their child.

All contact staff wear a navy blue uniform to ensure young adults can recognise appropriate people to go to if they need help.

Complaints procedure

Our Complaints Policy is available on our website or from our reception.

Disabled provision

The Young Adult Provision is fully wheelchair-accessible, but some areas of the wider Prior's Court site are not.

All of our policies and procedures can be found on our website.





Admissions

Prior's Court Young Adult Provision welcomes parents, carers/guardians and professionals to attend individual visits upon request to enable families, carers and local authority professionals to consider whether Prior's Court Young Adult Provision might be suitable option to consider, where places are available.

An initial screening of statutory reports is undertaken by the Admissions Manager following completion of an admissions questionnaire and feedback to the Practitioner Panel to establish suitability to assess the young adult. With the support of the local authority, the young adult and their parents/carers are invited to an on-site assessment undertaken by senior lead practitioners with significant experience and members of the multi-disciplinary team where appropriate. A second assessment in the current provision or individual's home is undertaken if necessary.

The assessment, together with further information from parents/carers and professionals, is considered by the Practitioner Panel to determine whether Prior's Court Young Adult Provision would be able to meet the individual's needs, provide an compatible peer group, enable progress and if an appropriate placement is available.



“People received care and support that was effective and based on detailed assessments and care plans which reflected their physical, mental and social needs”

CQC inspection



Decisions by the Practitioner Panel are guided by Prior's Court's Admissions Policy. The Practitioner Panel confirm that the admissions criteria have been met and that a place is available within a compatible environment and group before an offer of placement may be made.

The suitability of the placement and level of support required will be subject to an initial 3-month review and annually thereafter.

Fees available on request.

For further information about the admissions process or for a copy of the admissions policy please contact the Admissions Team:

T: +44(0)1635 245914

E: admissions@priorscourt.org.uk



Prior's Court School

38, 44 & 52-week specialist education for 5-20 years

Prior's Court Young Adult Provision

52-week supportive living and learning for 19-25 years

Prior's Court Training & Development Centre

Specialist training, and consultancy

Managed by Prior's Court Foundation,
a non-profit making charity

Registered Manager

Emma Mackay

School Principal

Helen Franks

Prior's Court Foundation, Hermitage,
Thatcham, Berkshire, RG18 9NU

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