

Summer 2026 newsletter

Supporting more people to access health checks



Hamelin has launched an exciting new partnership with NHS Essex to improve access to annual health checks and provide more personalised support for people with learning disabilities across Essex.

See page 12 for more.

Also in this issue...



'Don't make it a thing' video launch
page 3



Comedy night
page 8



Gowlands summer party
page 4



Celebrating our volunteers
pages 9-11

Welcome

Welcome to the summer 2026 edition of Hamelin's newsletter. We're delighted to share some of the inspiring stories, achievements and experiences that have taken place across our charity in recent months.

This edition celebrates the importance of inclusion, opportunity and connection. One of our highlights is the launch of our new NHS Essex partnership, which is helping improve access to annual health checks and provide more personalised support for people with learning disabilities across Essex. Since launching, the pilot has already supported 16 people, with work taking place alongside GP practices and families to help turn health checks into meaningful action (p. 12).

We are also proud to share how people we support are using their lived experience to create greater understanding of autism. A presentation created through our Ability Works programme has now been turned into a video, giving even more people the opportunity to hear the message behind 'don't make it a thing' and encouraging us all to challenge assumptions and create more inclusive communities and workplaces (p. 3).

There has been plenty of fun and celebration too. Gowlands welcomed people we support, families, friends, staff and volunteers to a summer party, with entertainment from Bezerkaz Circus and support from local businesses. Our bungalow residents have also been enjoying their annual holidays to Norfolk, with two trips packed with new experiences, days out and plenty of happy memories (p. 4 and 5).

We're also celebrating the incredible contribution of our volunteers. Around 40 volunteers came together for our annual celebration event in June, where seven outstanding volunteers were recognised through our annual awards. We share their stories and celebrate the difference they make to people's lives every day (p. 9-11).

And there is more to look forward to, including our Billericay Fun Walk, which will bring people we support and staff together for an accessible day of activity, connection and fun while raising funds to create more opportunities across our services (p. 7). We're also getting ready for Ha-Ha-Hamelin, our special charity comedy night in September, with six comedians coming together to raise funds for Hamelin (p. 8).

As always, we are incredibly grateful to our supporters, volunteers, partners and staff whose dedication makes all of this possible. We hope you enjoy reading about the achievements, experiences and positive impact taking place across Hamelin, and feel proud of the difference we are making together every day.

The Hamelin Communications Team
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‘Don’t make it a thing’ video launch

Earlier this year, we shared the inspiring story of a group from Hamelin’s Ability Works programme who used their lived experience of autism to create a powerful presentation to help others better understand autism.

Their presentation has now been turned into a video, so even more people can hear their message.

Created as part of the CILL Moving Forward programme, the project is honest, thought provoking and full of insight. It encourages us all to think differently about autism, challenge assumptions, and create more inclusive communities and workplaces.

One message really stands out, ‘don’t make it a thing’. It’s a simple reminder to see the person, not the label.

We’d love you to take a few minutes to watch the video, and share it to help spread this important message. Every share helps more people hear these powerful voices.

Together, we can build greater understanding and inclusion.

You can view the video on our YouTube channel here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFCZ7rtkFpY



Gowlands summer party

Gowlands held a summer party, bringing together the people we support, their friends, family, our staff, and volunteers. Thankfully the weather was kind to us as everyone enjoyed an afternoon of fun.

Thank you to Bezerkaz Circus for providing the excellent entertainment as well as local businesses Crystals on Sea, Tinks Fairy Houses and Gardens, and Sideline Treats for coming along.



Bungalow holidays

Our bungalow residents recently enjoyed their annual holidays to Norfolk, with two separate trips giving everyone the chance to enjoy a fun-filled week away.

The boys had a fantastic time exploring the local area, with highlights including a relaxing canal trip, visits to a steam museum and an aviation museum. They were even lucky enough to see planes taking off and landing!

The girls also had a wonderful week, enjoying dinners out, a boat trip and a visit to a local mill, where they even had the chance to make their own bread.

Both holidays were a huge success, with lots of laughter, new experiences and happy memories made along the way. Everyone returned home with big smiles on their faces and plenty to talk about.





Billericay Fun Walk 2026

People we support and staff across Hamelin will be taking part in the Fun Walk on Tuesday, 15th September 2026 and we would love it if you could support us!

We'd be really grateful if you could support the walk with a small donation, or share it with your friends and family to see if they could support us too. Every penny raised will help us create more opportunities, from trying new things and discovering new hobbies to enjoying activities they love and building their confidence.

The bonus pot funded by local businesses means the money raised can get an extra boost and your donation can go even further. Last year, every £100 raised was boosted by an additional £40.

This walk is a unique opportunity for people across our services to come together, be active and have fun in a way that is accessible to them. It also gives people the chance to make new connections and take part in something together in the community, helping to challenge some of the barriers and stigma that autistic adults and people with learning disabilities can face.

If you're able to sponsor the walk, a sponsorship form is enclosed with this letter. Once the walk is complete, please return your completed form and any cash donations to your service manager by Wednesday, 7th October 2026.

If you'd prefer to do it online, you can donate through the JustGiving page here: www.justgiving.com/campaign/hamelin-billericay-fun-walk-2026

Thank you so much for all your support and for helping us make more opportunities like this possible!



Ha-Ha-Hamelin comedy night

Join us at Hot Comedy Club Camden for Ha-Ha-Hamelin, a special charity comedy night raising funds for Hamelin.

Expect six fantastic comedians, plenty of laughs and audience interaction across a two-part show, with the bar open throughout the evening.

Every ticket helps support Hamelin's work with autistic adults and adults with learning disabilities, helping provide opportunities to build independence, develop life and employment skills, make friendships and take part in inclusive community activities.

What to expect:

- Six brilliant comedians
 - A two-part live comedy show
 - Audience interaction
 - Fully stocked bar throughout the night
 - A special fundraising Heads or Tails game after the interval
-
- **Saturday 26th September**
 - **Hot Comedy Club Camden, 48-50 Camden High Street, NW1 0LT**
 - **7-9pm, doors open 6.30pm**



[Click here to get your tickets](#) or scan the QR code



Finn Feeney

Gabriel Madden

Sharifa Butterfly

Mohsin Ishaq

Eli Hart

Ashish Suri

Event celebrates our volunteers

In June, around 40 Hamelin volunteers came together for our annual volunteer celebration event at Little Channels in Chelmsford.

It was a fantastic opportunity to pause, reflect and celebrate the incredible contribution our volunteers make throughout the year. The day included team-building games, lunch and plenty of time to meet and connect with volunteers from across Hamelin.

The highlight was our annual volunteer awards, where seven outstanding volunteers were recognised for going above and beyond in their roles. Nominated by the people we support, the winners were celebrated for demonstrating our values, We are community, We enhance lives and We think differently.

Each winner received a certificate, commemorative plaque and a hotel break, generously donated by our charity partner Room to Reward.

While we were delighted to celebrate our award winners, the event was also a chance to recognise every volunteer who gives their time, energy and kindness to Hamelin. Our volunteers make a real difference every day, helping people feel connected, supported and valued.

We're delighted to feature our fantastic award winners in this newsletter. Read on to meet them and find out more about their incredible contributions.



Meet our award winners



We are community, Peter Craig

Peter volunteers weekly at Roots & Shoots and has become a much-loved member of the team. His passion for gardening shines through, particularly his dedication to weeding! Hardworking, supportive and always enthusiastic, Peter is a fantastic role model and mentor who makes a real difference to the Roots & Shoots community.



We are community, Wayne Thorne

Wayne has volunteered at Roots & Shoots for the past year, giving three days a week. A former Ability Works participant, he has continued building his skills through volunteering. Always willing to help, Wayne takes pride in his work, supports others and gets involved in additional events. His dedication and friendly nature make him a valued member of the team.



We think differently, Pete Blanks

Pete has volunteered with our Links befriending project for more than three years, running a weekly group in Chelmsford and mentoring participants one-to-one. Drawing on his own lived experience, Pete helps people build confidence, feel included and overcome challenges. His patience, understanding and encouragement have made a life-changing difference.



We think differently, Jacob Gallivan

Jacob first joined Hamelin through our Ability Works employment project and, after completing the programme, became a volunteer administrative assistant at Gowlands. Over the past year and a half, he has grown in confidence while supporting the team with a wide range of administrative tasks. He has become an extremely valued member of the team.

Meet our award winners



We enhance lives, Josie Sams

Josie only started volunteering at our Life Skills service in Billericay in April, but has already made a huge difference. Her kindness and compassion have helped her build fantastic relationships with the people we support. Always enthusiastic and willing to help, Josie has quickly become a valued member of the team and a real asset to the service.



We enhance lives, Jacob Adams

Jacob has volunteered with Hamelin for the past year, first at Gowlands and now with our Ability Works project in Rochford. Bringing valuable knowledge and experience, Jacob is always ready to share ideas, encourage participants and support staff. His kindness, positivity and willingness to take the lead have made him an invaluable member of the team.



We enhance lives, Chris Smith

Chris has made a huge impact at our Life Skills service in Billericay. He always bringing enthusiasm and encouragement and has built strong friendships and created a welcoming space where people feel comfortable being themselves. His kindness and support have made a real difference to people's confidence and wellbeing.

Congratulations to all of our winners!

The awards are always a highlight because they shine a light on the extraordinary acts of kindness, dedication and commitment that happen throughout the year.

While only a handful of volunteers can receive an award, every single person who gives their time to Hamelin makes a difference. We are enormously grateful for everything they do and proud to have such an inspiring volunteer community.

Health check pilot takes off

In June, we launched an exciting new partnership with NHS Essex to improve access to annual health checks and provide more personalised support for people with learning disabilities across Essex.

Since launching, we have already supported 16 people, which is fantastic progress and a real reflection of the work being delivered through the programme.

The year-long pilot is taking place in areas where uptake of annual health checks is currently lower than expected, starting in Billericay. These checks are an important opportunity to identify health concerns early, but we know that the support people receive afterwards is just as important.

Through the pilot, we are working closely with GP practices and people with learning disabilities to make sure health checks lead to meaningful action. This includes co-creating personalised health action plans, supporting people to achieve their health goals, and helping them access specialist services and other health and care providers where needed.

At the heart of the programme is listening to people with learning disabilities and their families, understanding what matters most to them, and shaping support around their individual needs.



We are proud of the progress so far and look forward to building on this work over the coming months.

Read the full story on our website to find out more about the pilot and our plans for the year ahead.
www.hamelin.org.uk/news

Make a smile lottery

When you play **make a smile lottery**, you are doing something amazing. Not only are you in with the chance to win cash prizes every week, but you are also helping to raise funds for Hamelin!

For only **£1 per play**, you can be in with the chance of winning the weekly top prize of £1,000. There are 281 other weekly prizes up for grabs - 1 x £200, 10 x £10, 270 x £5, plus a rollover prize. The rollover goes up by £500 every week and should it not be won, rolls over to a maximum of £25,000!

You can get single tickets or set up a recurring subscription. Find out more at www.makeasmilelottery.org.uk/partners/hamelin

Win up to £25,000!

www.makeasmilelottery.org.uk



You shop, Hamelin benefits

Did you know you can support Hamelin with your everyday purchases?

Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to you!

All you need to do is sign up and remember to use easyfundraising whenever you shop online. It's easy and completely FREE! These donations really mount up, so please sign up to support us. Thank you.



www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/hamelintrust