



InTouch

AUTUMN 2022

The magazine for families and supporters of United Response



**World Cup
Easy News
special**

Your pull-out and keep guide to the Football World cup in Qatar

ALSO INSIDE

Stamping out disability hate crime - new research

A guide to making Christmas as stress-free as possible



Are we getting it right?

We're conducting a national survey to make sure we're delivering the very best for the people we support.

If you receive support from us, you're a family member of someone who does or are a professional working alongside us, we'd love to hear from you.

To be sent the survey as soon as it's available, please provide your details at:

www.unitedresponse.org.uk/survey

You can also access the survey by scanning this QR code:





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Our final InTouch issue of 2022 is all about the things that matter most to us at United Response – celebrating each other and fighting for the rights of people with learning disabilities.

Each year I am inspired by our staff: their warmth, their creativity, and their fierce determination to bring the best for your family members. I am also very grateful to you, the families of people we support, for your continuous dedication and kindness. With your help, we are able to provide the very best opportunities for your relative to develop and achieve in life.

Our piece on supporting a loved one in hospital (page 16) is one example of the way collaboration between families and support workers can make a big difference.

2023 is another year where we will need each other, as we face a cost of living crisis on top of the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, even more than before, there are many inequalities we need to tackle to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities. With this in mind, we

would appreciate your support in lobbying government at all levels to make sure no-one is left behind. We are also working hard to stamp out disability hate crime and fighting to remove the barriers that people with a learning disability, autism or an acquired brain injury may face as they vote in the next general election.

Despite the challenges ahead, there is so much to celebrate as we look back on the year. Our North and South news stories are packed with examples of celebrations, coming together, and skills development. I am particularly proud of the opportunities we provide for people with learning disabilities to develop their rich talents. Whether that's making artwork for an exhibition in Easingwold, getting stuck in at a farm in Totnes, or working for Trafford Council, this issue is full of examples of people we support enhancing their skills.

As we say goodbye to another year, I want to wish you the very best for 2023 and thank you for making 2022 an extraordinary year at United Response.

Tim Cooper
Chief Executive

Your feedback matters

United Response encourages feedback on everything we do, and we are always trying to improve the way we do things. If you have a comment, concern or complaint, you can tell us in the following ways:

- a one-to-one meeting/phone call with a staff member of your choice
- to the Chief Executive of United Response
- to your local Social Services, Health Authority, Local Government Ombudsman
- to the Care Quality Commission
- to the Supporting People Administrative Authority

Remember: you can also call our Head Office (0208 016 5678) or Chief Executive Hotline (0208 016 5673).

South News



▲ Above: Ben, enjoying himself at Bowden Springs



Welcome from Mike

We are really pleased to share stories with you from across the South which offer a great insight into the work of people we support, our staff and volunteers. From running a marathon to getting to work on a new farm – it's been a busy few months!

Mike Crowhurst,
Director - South

Eco-friendly joy at Totnes

Joe, one of our Support Workers at United Response, has recently started running sessions for people we support at Bowden Springs Farm.

Joe bought an old reservoir in Totnes in 2019. Lockdown gave Joe and his wife time to repurpose the reservoir and transform it into Bowden Springs, a market garden and flower farm.

People we support have been immersing themselves in the working garden. They will be growing their own veg and getting involved in every bit of the process – from making the raised beds to cooking and eating the food!

London marathon runners raise



Twenty brilliant and brave runners completed the London Marathon for United Response in October. They put themselves through one of the most demanding physical challenges out there, all to help make lives better for the people we support.

A team of United Response staff from across the country travelled to London to cheer everyone on. Together the runners raised almost £40,000, running

▲ Above: Hayley, getting ready to run 26.2 miles for United Response



▲ **Above:** People we support and staff at Richmond celebrated the life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II by creating artwork, talking and singing together.

Celebrating our staff



▲ **Above:** United Response stars celebrate! © Sam Stephenson Photography

After the success of our North Awards, colleagues from Operations South met in early September at the picturesque Hartham Park in Wiltshire for their celebration event, to recognise their hard work and dedication to the people we support.

First up were our graduating apprentices, receiving qualifications ranging from Level 2 to Level 5. They donned their caps and gowns and were presented with certificates from Lesley O'Connor of Realise Training.

The next awards were presented to Margaret Gingell and Lorraine Woor, recognising their service of 30 and 25 years working for us respectively.

Margaret said: "It's been lovely. I'm such a people person and I've had the opportunity to work in lots of different services supporting people. There's huge job satisfaction too, when things go right, which they usually do."

Everyone gave a standing ovation to Beverley Forbes and David Brown from Bristol, who received a special bravery award for reacting quickly in an emergency, assisting people we support safely out of a car shortly before it caught fire.

Last but not least were the 'UR Stars' awards, given to individual staff members and teams from across the region for going above and beyond.

Ben, who attends Bowden Springs, said "I love getting stuck in. Bowden Springs lets me work in a team and be part of a thriving garden."

Totnes is also home to the beautiful Lower Sharpham Farm, where people we support have the opportunity to participate in animal care, forestry, woodwork, horticulture, metalwork, conservation and more.

If you are interested in getting involved in any of our brilliant eco-initiatives, please contact team leader Emma Rankin on 07880 250547.

almost £40,000

a total of 524 miles between them. Our very own HR Advisor, Hayley, was one of them.

This is what Hayley had to say:

"It was an amazing thing. Everyone tells you it's an incredible experience, but the atmosphere really was electric. It was everything I thought it would be and more.

"Working for United Response I have first-hand knowledge of the amazing things we do. All of my colleagues were rooting for me. I would never have ran for anyone else!"

Welcome from Julia



These three stories from the North emphasise the importance of connecting and sharing in our local communities, demonstrating how we are progressing this major ambition as part of our Long Term Strategy. We are proud to celebrate the creativity and kindness of people we support and staff.

Julia Casserly, Director - North

North News

‘Walk With Me’ – a community reunited

Bernard, from Liverpool, loves music and dancing. When local discos stopped, he struggled to find a group activity to do instead.

As Covid restrictions were lifted, our local team were determined to find activities that he would enjoy, to help him get back out in the community.

Bernard is a keen walker, covering miles every day. His support workers helped him to start a walking group called ‘Walk With Me’, which now has members from across Merseyside and Blackpool.

Team Manager Andra Morton said:

“This walking group is so important. Bernard is a very social person and loves being surrounded by people. He is non-verbal but he smiles a lot and points at the poster on the fridge every time he goes past.”

Andra and the team were also concerned about other locals who were staying at home a lot. The walking group has helped people reconnect after Covid.

Andra explained that she had seen amazing change as a result of the walking group:

“Their smiles are my favourite thing. What wakes me up every morning is the difference we make. It’s great seeing the change in people.”



▲ Above: Smiles all round in Darlington

Local exhibition for Boot Shop artists



▲ Above: Cameron at work

The Boot Shop is a community setting in Easingwold, North Yorkshire, that gives people we support the chance to show off their creative talents. It's full of amazing artwork and craft items made by people we support which locals can pop in and purchase.

There are button and felt pictures, colourful mosaics, paintings, photos and much more. Many of their pieces have also been made into popular greeting cards.

Like most shops, the service had to shut in 2020 but people we support in York used lockdown as a chance to tap into their creative side, producing incredible paintings,

drawings and mixed media pieces.

They also started a 'Camera Club', practicing their photography skills whilst out on nature walks around the town.

When the shop reopened earlier this year, their artwork caught the attention of Linda, a volunteer who manages exhibitions at Easingwold Community Library.

She organised for fifteen works from our talented Boot Shop artists to be displayed in their computer room until October. Team Leader Brian said:

"It's just a real celebration of what the team have achieved – supporting people with exceptional artistic skill and talent.

"Most importantly, it starts to change people's ideas about who the people we support are and what they're capable of. That's really powerful."



Wonderland all year round

People we support in Darlington and their neighbours got together to enjoy an Alice in Wonderland themed tea party for a very important date – the Queen's Jubilee!

Lead Senior Support Worker Mandy Nichol and the team turned the service garden into Wonderland. They found objects, carved signs, built tables and even paid for things with their own money when needed.

Guests were invited to turn up in fancy dress. Support Worker Mark Thompson came as The Mad Hatter,

Mandy as Alice and one of the people we support's parents was the White Rabbit! Everyone had lots of fun in the sun playing croquet and enjoying their lunch.

Mandy said: "The laughter was beautiful. It just brought everyone together."

The Hutton Avenue team are no stranger to big and bold creative projects. Last December, they transformed a garden shed into a grotto to lift everyone's spirits ready for Christmas.

On top of all this, they've recently hosted a spooky Halloween-themed bash...We look forward to seeing what they do next!

United Response is

GOING DIGITAL



▲ Above: Back to the future?

“Where a calculator today is equipped with 18,000 vacuum tubes and weighs 30 tons, computers in the future may have only 1000 vacuum tubes and perhaps weigh only 1½ tons” said Popular Mechanics magazine in 1945.

A programme of IT investment is helping us provide our support more efficiently and securely. By Mark Ospedale, Going Digital project sponsor

Despite being under-ambitious about the car-sized format, they certainly had the foresight to see how technology would change us all.

The latest iPhone weighs 0.02% of that prediction and has a memory 100,000% bigger than the first space shuttle, so it's perhaps surprising how much our society still relies on a 2000 year old technology – paper.

Getting it right

I'll be honest – moving from paper-based systems is fiendishly difficult to get right. The health and social care sector doesn't have a great track record in implementing IT changes on-time, on-cost with results that everyone is happy with. So we didn't go into this with our eyes closed, but we're confident that we have the right approach, people and resources to make this happen.

Our broad ambition is that whenever information is entered, it's only done once in an ultra-secure way and the information is then instantly available to all the right people. We're also working hard to make sure it never

feels like our support is provided from behind a screen, but rather that technology liberates time, headspace and information to assist great support.

So imagine this: a support worker is notified that Tom's support plan now includes an ambition to build more friendships. They notice a poster advertising a drama workshop, which is right up Tom's street. The support worker snaps a picture of the poster and logs the event in Tom's support calendar. The support worker on the big day receives a notification of the plans and can spend the lead-up preparing with Tom, rather than dealing with last minute surprises.

It's just a small example of how technology, rather than post-it notes, can make sure those vital opportunities for personal growth aren't missed.

Projects currently underway:

Grade - Coming Summer 2023
A major new IT system to manage our HR and finances.

Nourish - Beginning November 2023
A mobile phone-based system to plan, record and report on the support we provide, all in one place.

Mobiles for All - Currently rolling out
These new systems aren't much use if no-one can see them! Every permanent member of staff is being issued with a work mobile phone.

Homemaster - Now live!
A new system to manage our properties, helping us plan and maintain our housing better.



**easy
news**

EASY READ
SPECIAL
PULL-OUT



FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022


**United
Response**
support that changes with you



The FIFA World Cup is a football tournament which usually takes place every four years. Football teams from different countries compete to win a gold trophy.



This year's competition is in Qatar, which is a country in the Middle East



The first World Cup took place in Uruguay in 1930. 13 countries took part and Uruguay won, beating Argentina 4-2.



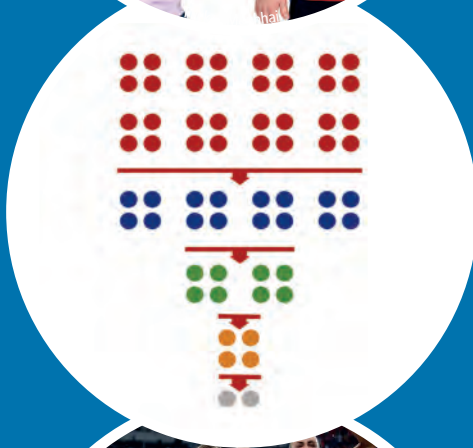
The World Cup usually takes place in June and July, but in 2022 the competition is taking place from 21 November to 18 December. This is because it would be too hot in Qatar in the summer months.



32 teams are taking part in the 2022 World Cup. Most teams had to qualify by winning group games against each other. Qatar automatically qualified because they are hosting the competition. The current European champions, Italy, did not qualify.



Wales, which is part of the United Kingdom, has qualified for the first time in over 60 years.



The 32 teams are divided into eight groups of four teams, with the top two in each group going forward until there are two teams left. The final will be held on Sunday 18 December.



The England women's team recently won the 2022 UEFA European Women's Football Championship. They beat Germany 2-1 in the final, after extra time with England goals from Ella Toone and Chloe Kelly.



The England men's team played in the UEFA European Championship 2020 (also known as Euro 2020) last year. The tournament was delayed until 2021 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.



England reached the final, but finished runners-up after losing on penalties to Italy. Penalty shoot outs are used to decide who wins the match if it is a draw.



Some people think Qatar should not have been chosen to host the World Cup because they have treated certain groups of people badly. Some people want teams to **boycott** the World Cup. Boycotting means you decide not to take part because you do not agree.

This article is an example of an Easy News story written by people with learning disabilities, in a style which many people with learning disabilities or autism enjoy reading or discussing.

To read more Easy News stories, or to sign up to be emailed new stories, please visit www.unitedresponse.org.uk/easy-read

Nolan's story:

Working as a SEND Youth Voice Assistant at Trafford Council

Nolan used our Supported Employment service to find a part-time job at Trafford Council. He works in their SEND Local Offer department.



I am really enjoying my job as a part-time special educational needs and disabilities

youth engagement assistant. My job is interesting because there is a range of tasks to do.

My tasks include working on spreadsheets of the views of the website, checking the social media and updating the calendar for other council departments to find out when we posted something, checking emails, checking when the directory pages were last updated, fixing broken links and correcting spelling errors.

These tasks are very important because residents need to find relevant and up to date information. It is against the law for a council not to provide this. If the information isn't there, people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) can't get the support they need. There is a lot of false or outdated information about SEND on the internet, so it is important to have reliable sources.

The team are great to work with. They are friendly colleagues and are committed to SEND. The office is a pleasant environment and the IT is



By Nolan Barratt

I enjoy meeting people and helping out with the tasks.

reliable. I enjoy meeting people and helping out with the tasks.

I have various duties, so I'm going to give you some examples:

- I visit sessions for people with special educational needs such as Carrington Riding Centre, where people can go horse riding and I went to see the small animals

such as cats, dogs, and rabbits. These centres offer alternative schools for children with SEND.

- I went to a stay and play session at Delamere School, where there were music sessions and a parachute game. I went to the The Play Factory and went down a big slide, took part in laser tag and went on a trampoline game. So basically, I get to play while doing my job!
- I visited a Down syndrome session at a school, where they did singing and signing, art activities and speech and language therapy. I really enjoyed these activities. The students were happy and enjoying themselves, which helps their personal development.
- I have written about my experience and have some videos on the Trafford Directory Local Offer. I uploaded videos at the sessions to promote on social media so people can find out what the sessions are like before they go. This provides more information for residents of Trafford.

Trafford Council is a great place to work and I really enjoy it. The only problem is, it is a temporary contract – I wish it was permanent!

I would recommend this job to anybody.



Stamping out disability hate – new research from United Response

For the past five years we've been campaigning to stamp out disability hate crime.

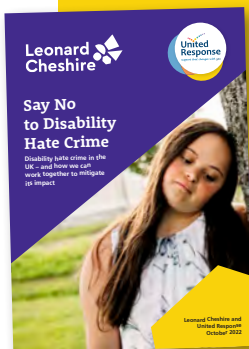


3.2%

The highest percentage of disability hate crimes resulting in charge or summons achieved by any police force in England and Wales (Kent)

1.1%

The national percentage of hate crimes leading to a charge or summons



Through partnership work with police services in Yorkshire and the Crown Prosecution Service we have been able to raise awareness and provide training, advice and guidance on how to better support disabled victims.

This work has helped to improve reporting experiences for victims at a local level, but we now need to translate this to a national one.

Our new research launched during Hate Crime Awareness Week with Leonard Cheshire has found that disability-motivated hate crimes have risen nationally by nearly 10% over the past two years.

The difficulty in analysing such numbers is deciding what they represent. Do they indicate that disability hate crimes have doubled in four years? Or is improved reporting by police forces generating a false positive, a 'report-demic' of a problem that is the same in scale but becoming more visible?

Whichever is true, it hasn't translated to any significantly improved outcome. In 2021/22, 129 disability hate crimes resulted in a charge or summons out of the 11,224 reports, a rate of 1.1%.

This needs to change.

We will be campaigning for a long-term hate crime plan that will improve access to justice, offer better support for victims and improved training for police officers. But most importantly to ensure disabled people can live a life free from hate.



I was afraid when a man took control of my wheelchair and wouldn't release me for a mile, but was it a crime? Did this man, who repeatedly heard me say 'no' as I begged to be released, cross a criminal line?

Was it a hate crime?

Melissa



Accessible voting campaign launches

United Response has partnered with Dimensions, another national learning disability support provider, to deliver an exciting and first of its kind campaign.

The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust donated £30,000 to support the My Vote, My Voice campaign, which

aims to increase voter participation amongst young people and adults who have a learning disability, autism or an acquired brain injury. Previous studies indicate that voter turnout of people with learning disabilities is as much as 40% lower than that of the general population.

The national campaign will provide resources, activities and support so that young people and adults who have a learning disability, autism or an acquired brain injury are informed and empowered to cast their votes in the next general election.

My Voice, My Vote will also encourage self-advocates, support providers, local councils, charities, education providers, family networks and MPs to work together to close the electoral participation gap.

Recently, United Response led the call with Dimensions for the government to guarantee accessible voting for people with disabilities and autism, with over 30 signatures from leading charities such as Mencap, Sense, Leonard Cheshire and political figures, including Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, co-signing the accessible voting pledge.

This new two-year campaign hopes to build on this momentum, with the expectation that resources will be in place early next year to encourage voter registration before the next general election. With Mencap already pledging their support for the campaign, we hope that many more will join the coalition.

Ali Gunn, Public Affairs and Policy Lead for United Response, said: "We are delighted to have received funding from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust. Voting and elections should be accessible to everyone with the legal right to vote, whether they have a disability or not."

Mark Brookes, Advocacy Lead at Dimensions, comments: "If, like me, you live with a learning disability in the UK today, you're likely to be having a tough time.

"I believe one of our best chances of changing this would come from more of the people with learning disabilities and/or autism exercising their right to vote.

"What if all 2.2 million of us voted? If we all voted, politicians would have to listen to us."



Supporting a loved one in hospital

Hospital admissions can be a scary time for your loved ones, especially in an emergency. Alison Worsfold, Head of Healthcare, talks about how to prepare for hospital admission and what you can expect while your loved one is in hospital.

When you're preparing for a planned hospital stay, if your relative is not able to consent, a best interests meeting will be held to plan and discuss any concerns and adjustments that may be required. Health services need to be accessible to all disabled people. This is why it's a legal requirement for your relative's care to be tailored to their specific needs. During emergencies we don't have valuable planning time, but there are things that can help to support your loved one during this time:

- A hospital passport is a document that details your relative's health and support needs as well as other important information like their communication needs. This document will travel with your relative into the hospital to help staff understand how best to support them.
- Have a discussion with us to decide what role you want to play in an emergency hospital stay and who will communicate with the hospital ward team.
- Help us to clearly list the things your relative will want to have with them during a hospital stay.

Your relative won't lose their rights to reasonable adjustments, even in emergencies. Once they get to hospital, your relative is under the hospital's care. There are lots of people in the hospital who will provide day-to-day support, such as:

- Many hospitals have a Learning Disability Liaison Nurse. Their job is to make sure your relative gets the best quality care and can ensure 'reasonable adjustments' are put in place.
- Doctors, Nurses and ward staff.
- Therapy staff such as Speech and Language therapists, Occupational therapists and Physiotherapists.

During the hospital stay, you can request meetings with the staff caring for your relative and you will also be invited to be part of any decision making. If there's anything you're unhappy with, you might find the following teams helpful:

- The Hospital Safeguarding Team.
- The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS can provide you with information about how to make a complaint.
- Learning Disability Liaison Nurse or social worker (if they have one).

When the time comes for your relative to leave hospital, there will often be the need to plan for their discharge and aftercare. If there is a change in their needs then there will be a discharge planning meeting to discuss next steps. Sometimes this may mean going to an assessment bed, or having some adjustments made to their home.

If you can contribute to how we support families and people with learning disabilities during hospital stays, please contact Alison Worsfold via info@unitedresponse.org.uk

When things go well: Phillip's story

Phillip* needed an emergency blood transfusion earlier this year, after a blood test showed he was anaemic. But Phillip gets really anxious in hospital environments – clinical machines, uniforms and some medical terms make him very distressed.

United Response Service Manager, Emma Rimmington, and the team discussed the urgent admission with his sister, who is his legal Power of Attorney, and everyone decided that it would not be in Phillip's best interest to go directly to A&E.

Meetings were then held with members of the Bradford Royal Infirmary's Learning Disability Health Support Team. Arrangements were made for a planned admission so that everything could be in place before Phillip arrived.

"We sent Phillip's communication profile, social stories, his likes and dislikes, emergency hospital

plan, his positive behaviour support plan and a list of distraction objects. When Phillip was admitted 24 hours later, the ward had responded to all of his care and support needs" said Emma.

Phillip stayed in a side room near the nurses' station to reduce noise. Staff covered medical equipment with pictures, provided an easy read guide to what was happening and were careful in the words they used to describe events. Phillip also had a member of United Response staff with him at all times.

Emma said: "A great partnership between the management, our team supporting him, his Power of Attorney, health professionals and the hospital ward meant that the admission went really well."

*Names changed to protect identity.



▲ **Above:** Equipment was hidden with pictures of Phillip's favourite things and health professionals used phrases such as 'red tube' to avoid medical terminology.

When things don't go well: Rita's story

Rita* was diagnosed with a cardiovascular issue after our staff team noticed she'd become breathless. Despite the seriousness of the situation, a consultant at the hospital said that Rita wouldn't 'cope' with the procedure because she has a learning disability.

United Response Area Manager, Catherine Taylor, said: "We challenged the consultant on his understanding of learning disability. There was no person-centred element to his approach – he just assumed that this lady wouldn't cope."

United Response staff held multidisciplinary meetings with health professionals to discuss the procedure and the support that would be needed. Rita was finally admitted, but her first procedure was cancelled because she was given breakfast at the hospital even though she needed an empty stomach.

Despite being given Rita's communication profile, hospital passport and support plan, she was let down a lot when re-admitted too.

"Staff would listen to my explanations about guidelines,

but once they'd gone away that information would be quickly forgotten" said Team Manager Kelly Irvine. "At one point they weren't going to do the procedure because Rita refused to get on a trolley. I helped them to see that Rita had not refused what they wanted to do, but how they wanted her to get there."

One of the conditions of the operation was that Rita had 24-hour support while she was in hospital. Our staff took turns to be with her on the ward, advising the hospital team and challenging decisions when Rita became anxious or upset.

Lead Senior Support Worker, Michelle Davies, said: "We felt like the nurses saw us as a pain because we kept speaking up for her. Rita was lucky in that she had us to do that for her. How many other people are there out there with learning disabilities that haven't got somebody to speak up on their behalf? They might go into hospital without a voice because they've got no family."

Thanks to the efforts of Kelly, Michelle and our other Salford staff members, Rita is recovering well. At her post-op checkup, her surgeon said he is really pleased with her progress. Once she's discharged, the team plan to book her a holiday.

How to have a good Christmas



By John Ockendon,
Practice
Development
Co-ordinator

Yes I know, it's much too early to be thinking about Christmas! It feels like we've only just made it through a hot dry summer, for goodness sake! But for many people, this time - autumn leaves turning, nights beginning to get noticeably longer and colder - really isn't too early to be planning for Christmas.



While for many of us Christmas is wonderful, for people who struggle when routines are changed, or with sensory overload, crowds, surprises and unwritten rules, Christmas can be very difficult. We have gathered together a range of hints, tips and strategies for helping with Christmas difficulties, from some of our support workers and relatives of people we support. We're sharing them with everyone else in United Response – and indeed anyone else who's interested - in a guide called "A person-centred Christmas".

The guide will help if you have questions like these:

"What can we do about opening presents? We like to take it in turns, but now this always ends in tears and it spoils everything."

"How can we help Jenny understand that it's not Christmas yet, even though there's Christmas decorations in the shops?"

"We've given up on crackers in our house. They're just too alarming for Conrad. What else can we do?"

"Christmas dinner has become tense every year. How can we make it better for everybody?"



The guide provides solutions to these and many other dilemmas.

Here's some examples:

- Build up a picture of what the person might expect to happen at Christmas. What have they experienced in the past? What strategies have been used previously to reduce any anxiety and distress? When do their family normally start talking to them about Christmas? Perhaps that's a good time for you to do the same.
- Plan alternative routes for transport to allow for busier roads and public transport – particularly if waiting and delays are difficult.
- Consider a gradual change to the physical environment, adding any decorations a bit at a time so people can get used to them, or putting the tree up undecorated for a few days before adding to it. Find ways to support everyone to play a part in this change – it's usually helpful to avoid the sudden and extreme change involved in the traditional way of putting up decorations. For some people it will also be important to be in control of this adjustment of their environment.
- Think about crackers. You can take them apart in advance to remove the bang or to substitute a more suitable gift inside – and then put them back together ready for the day. Or you can make them with the person so they know what to expect.
- Consider a calendar countdown so the person can see days and events that will happen before Christmas. Use pictures of people, places and events to mark out the days. Support the person to cross them off.
- Remember that your aim is to create a person-centred Christmas, rather than anybody else's expectation of what Christmas should look like – and it doesn't have to be the "best Christmas ever".
- If a person's been away from home for some of the festive period, but needs to be part of taking down the decorations, save some for them to do.
- Use the same visual timetable and countdown approach to forthcoming events and activities after Christmas.

Our guide also includes some real life scenarios to illustrate some of the difficulties that arise because Christmas can be such a big thing, and because we all have expectations about what counts as a good Christmas:

"Roy's mother told us he doesn't like a Christmas Dinner and prefers a plate of ham and cheese sandwiches and a packet of crisps on Christmas Day. I had to really stop myself from bursting out with 'But that's not a proper Christmas Dinner'."

The guide describes suggestions in a sequence: through early preparation and then the lead up to Christmas. It provides hints and tips for the day itself and also for the period afterwards. We've also provided some of the popular ways to record personal preferences and coping strategies, and for planning and reviewing what's worked well and what hasn't.

As we listened to the successful strategies that people have developed, it became very clear that starting to prepare early was pretty vital – and that's why we're talking about it now. If you have any ideas that we haven't included, do let us know at Practice.Development@unitedresponse.org.uk so we can share your wisdom in future versions of the guide.

You can access a copy of
"A Person Centred Christmas" at
www.unitedresponse.org.uk/christmasguide



**You
made
all the
difference.**

**Now get
paid
for it.**

**Gain qualifications
while you work**

**Buy additional
annual leave**

**Blue Light card,
shopping and
holiday discounts**

**Have you ever thought
about using the skills and
understanding you gained
from supporting a friend or
family member to begin a
paid career in support work?**

We will ensure you receive all the training and support you need but we often find that people with lived experience are able to hit the ground running when they join us. Most of our services offer part-time or relief contracts to enable us to offer you the right level of work/life balance.

**United
Response**
support that changes with you

**To search for jobs near you, visit
www.unitedresponse-jobs.org.uk or contact
our recruitment team on 0113 887 0962.**