



Autonomie

Independence through education and support

**Empowering young people
with additional needs to develop
the skills to live independently
and achieve their potential**

Young people are at the heart of everything we do!

Who are we?

Autonomie is a charity for young people with a physical disability and allied additional needs. We also offer practical support to their families. Our services are based at our centre Lilac House (Linked Independent Living and Advice Centre) in South Belfast and we support local families in the Greater Belfast area.

Get involved

Pop by Lilac House, 4 Sandhurst Road, Belfast (we're close to Queen's University) and chat with our team over a cup of tea/coffee to find out more!

Alternatively, telephone us on 028 9591 8051, or email us at hello@autonomie.org.uk

Practical learning that's fun!

What do we do?

At Autonomie, we are committed to helping disabled young people overcome many of the challenges they face as they move into adult life.

We offer a range of practical skills-based and social activities programmes that give these young people a chance to try new things, fulfil their potential and lead fuller and more independent lives.

Through our support, young people can improve existing and develop new skills, meet new people and do things in the local community – like cooking, shopping, using the bus or train, going to the cinema, volunteering, education and work focus training and even a chance to try independent living at our centre Lilac House.

We also offer practical support to their families.





How can we support you?

We offer 2 practical support programmes suitable for young people with disabilities.

- What Next? programme
- Freedom2Choose programme

The programmes are delivered at Lilac House and at venues in the community.

We seek to develop:

- Self-confidence
- Independence
- Communication skills
- Social skills
- Positive mental health
- 'Natural' peer interaction
- 'Active' participation
- Opportunities for new friendships

Issues we are tackling:

- Mental health disorders prevalence rate amongst young people with physical disabilities is at a greater level than the general population; promoting positive mental health amongst these young people is core to our work.
- Social isolation of disabled young people who tell us that they 'feel trapped' at home.
- The lack of personal support during the difficult transition into adult life.
- The gap in support between later school years and adult services.
- The absence of opportunity to voice their views or to contribute to decision-making.
- Lack of information and support networks and fear/uncertainty about the future for their young person.

Empowering young people

Gary's story

"Become a regular volunteer, like everyone else."

Gary is aged 25 and has additional needs. When Gary left school, he had very few options for socialising or paid employment.

Now a member of both the What Next? and Freedom to Choose programmes, Gary has a hands-on role - helping to plan activities. He is also a volunteer at our centre Lilac House as part of the Millennium Volunteers programme.

In January 2018 Gary achieved 50 hours of volunteering and was awarded a MV50 Award. Since then, he has successfully gone on to complete 100 hours and has received his MV100 Award.

Gary is now working towards achieving the highest accolade - a MV200 for 200 hours of volunteering and in his own words "become a regular volunteer like everybody else."

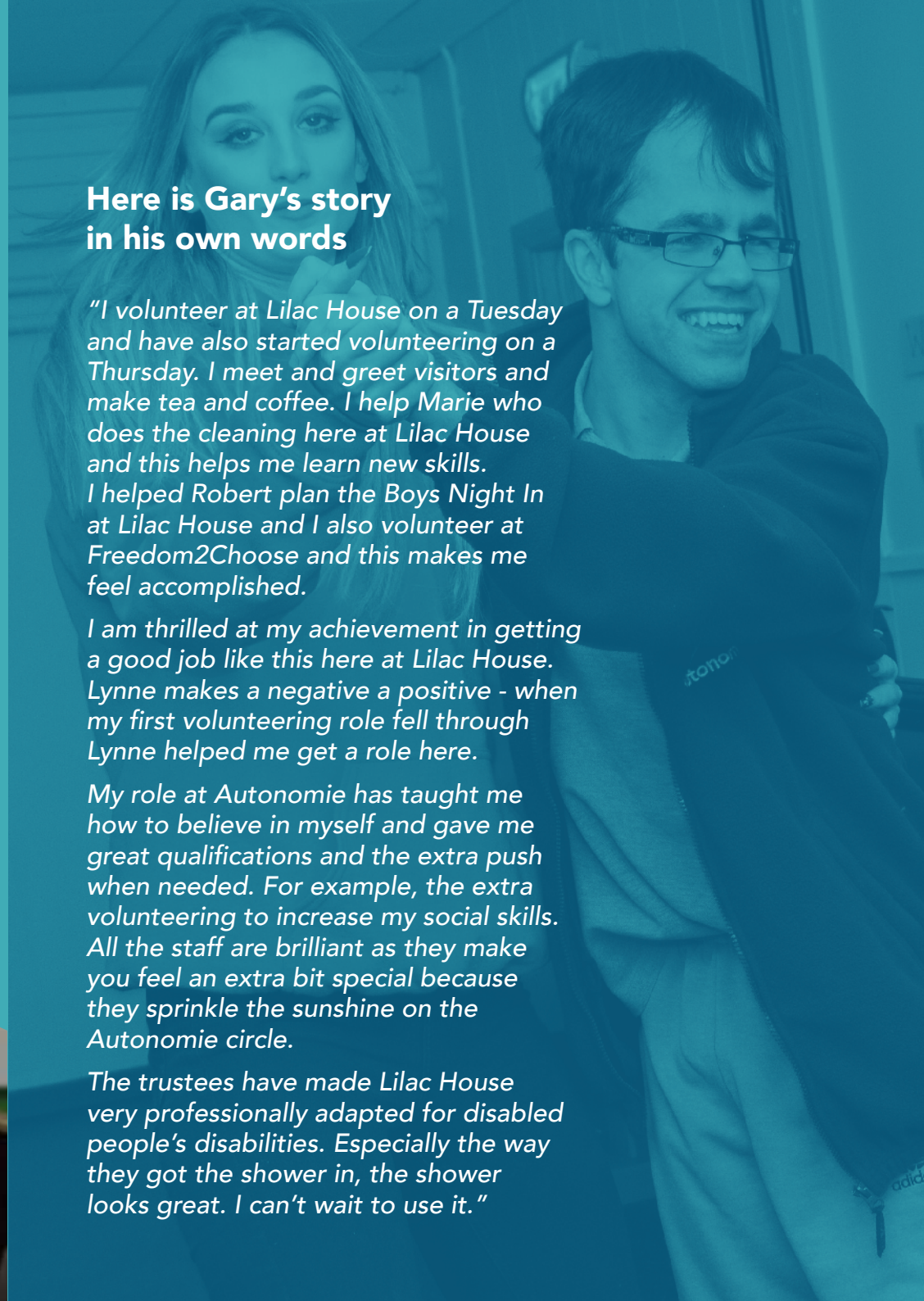
Here is Gary's story in his own words

"I volunteer at Lilac House on a Tuesday and have also started volunteering on a Thursday. I meet and greet visitors and make tea and coffee. I help Marie who does the cleaning here at Lilac House and this helps me learn new skills. I helped Robert plan the Boys Night In at Lilac House and I also volunteer at Freedom2Choose and this makes me feel accomplished.

I am thrilled at my achievement in getting a good job like this here at Lilac House. Lynne makes a negative a positive - when my first volunteering role fell through Lynne helped me get a role here.

My role at Autonomie has taught me how to believe in myself and gave me great qualifications and the extra push when needed. For example, the extra volunteering to increase my social skills. All the staff are brilliant as they make you feel an extra bit special because they sprinkle the sunshine on the Autonomie circle.

The trustees have made Lilac House very professionally adapted for disabled people's disabilities. Especially the way they got the shower in, the shower looks great. I can't wait to use it."



Promoting positive mental health

What Next? Programme

Who is the programme for?

What Next? is suitable for young people with physical disabilities and allied additional needs aged between 16 and 25 in the Greater Belfast area. Delivered at Lilac House usually 2 weekdays per week, What Next? offers practical learning that's fun and is free of charge to attend!

Suitable for young people that are:

- planning of leaving school
- have left school in the last 1-2 years
- not able to cope within mainstream activities
- socially isolated

What does the programme offer?

Independent Living

Independent Living offers participants a chance to gain a greater understanding of their strengths and limitations, improve existing and develop new skills.

Young people (who feel ready) even have a chance to experience a short-term stay at Lilac House!

Themes and activities can include:

- Convenient cookery
- Money management
- Transportation
- Keeping safe

Social opportunities

Participants can take part in a range of social and recreational activities. Activities can include day trips, cinema/restaurant visits and cultural and drama experiences - activities that they may not routinely do!

Volunteering

Providing a sense of purpose, members can volunteer between 3-4 hours per week. Young people that can, can even deliver elements of the activities programmes.

Youth Forum

Hands-on and gives young people a voice! Members can get involved in the planning and development of activities.

Peer support and mentoring

Structured opportunities to support and befriend another young person.

Summer activities

During the summer months participants can enjoy a range of practical skills-based and fun activities. Activities can include: Arts & Crafts, music, baking, bowling, team games, adventure golf, cinema and restaurant visits.

Counselling course

Young people can gain a CPCAB Level 2 Award in Counselling Skills. This accredited course is delivered at Lilac House by qualified facilitators and offers young people a chance to learn basic counselling skills such as listening and responding skills. This 16-week long programme is free of charge with enrolment twice per year.

When does it happen?

For latest information on all programme activities, please speak to a member of our team.

The What Next? programme is supported by the Big Lottery Fund's 'Empowering Young People' programme.



Independence and development

Freedom2Choose Programme

Who is the programme for?

Freedom2Choose is suitable for young people with physical disabilities and allied additional needs aged between 14 and 25 in the Greater Belfast area.

What does the programme offer?

Social activities

Participants get the chance to be active in the local community and enjoy a range of social activities including cinema, restaurants, cultural and drama events.

Learning and development

Each 13-week long Freedom2Choose programme is themed and has a focus on personal development. Themes can include 'Good Mental Health' 'Independence' and 'Keeping Safe'.

Day trips

Members can expect day trips to places like Exploris Aquarium, Belfast Zoo, Newcastle and Carrickfergus Castle.

Recreational opportunities

Young people are free to use the recreational facilities at Lilac House to chill or choose an activity of their choice.

When does it happen?

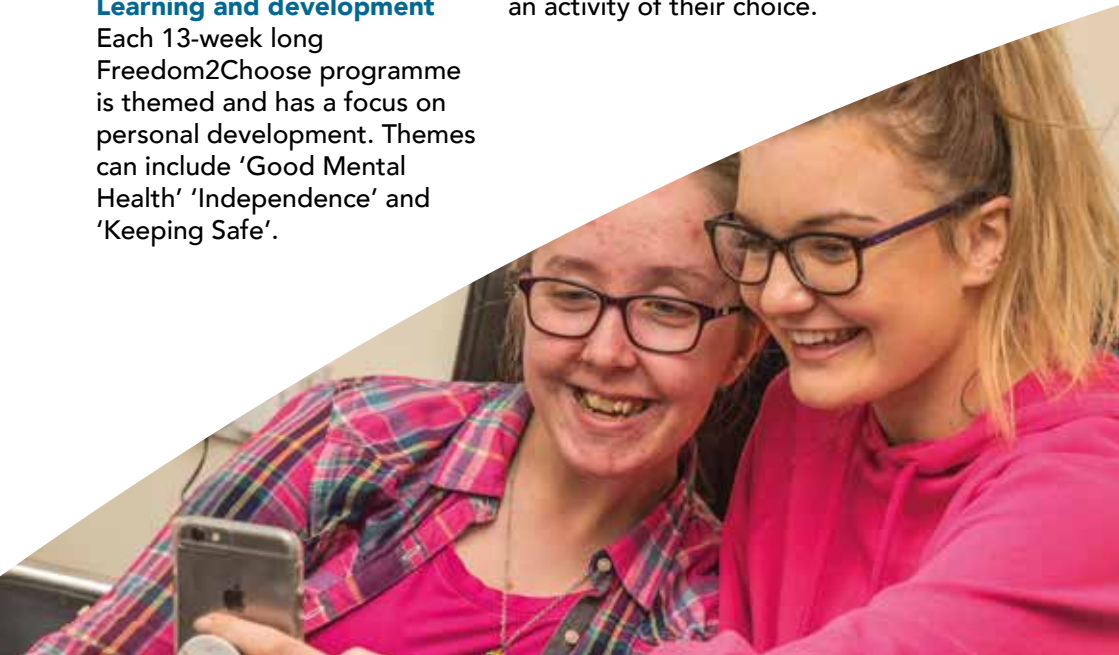
2-4 hours per week (usually on a Saturday). Participants are asked to make a small contribution each week (usually £3.00).

For latest information on all programme activities, please speak to a member of our team.

Freedom2Choose offers young people with physical disabilities and allied additional needs a chance to have new experiences, learn new things, meet new people and be part of a community!

Suitable for young people in Belfast and surrounding areas, Freedom2Choose offers structured opportunities for practical and fun learning, social and recreation activities and access to what's on offer in the community – doing what every young person should be doing!

We deliver Freedom2Choose with the support of partners including the Education Authority.



Support for all the family

We offer practical support for parents, carers and siblings.

We do this through:

Counselling services

One-to-one or group confidential counselling from a registered CPCAB counsellor free of charge.

Support Groups

To share experiences, ideas and access emotional support for stress management.

Training and advice

Signposting, advice and training including wellbeing sessions to support positive mental health.

Counselling course

Not just for the young people! Parents, carers and siblings can also gain a CPCAB Level 2 Award in introduction to Counselling Skills. Course participants can learn basic counselling skills such as listening and responding skills in helping roles and although the qualification won't teach participants to be a counsellor, it can benefit professional and personal development and help them decide whether they want to train as one. Running twice per year, this 16-week long course is free of charge.

To learn more about support available to you or your family telephone us on 028 95918051 or email us at hello@autonomie.org.uk

We deliver Family Support Services with the support of partners.

Volunteer at Autonomie

Be a champion for young people with a disability become a volunteer

Passionate about empowering young people with disability?
Can you help deliver practical and fun activities programmes?
Do you have a couple of hours a month to spare?

We are always looking for amazing people (especially young people) who are passionate about helping young people with disabilities and allied additional needs lead fuller and more independent lives.

You would be supporting a small thriving charity dedicated to empowering young people who are often isolated, vulnerable and excluded.

You would be joining a team of staff and volunteers at our centre Lilac House (Linked Independent Living and Advice Centre) in South Belfast and would help deliver a range of practical activities programmes for our members.

There are lots of ways to get involved! Be part of our What Next? or Freedom2Choose programme delivery teams and help deliver practical learning that's fun!

We encourage active participation and young people are hands-on and those that can help deliver elements of our programmes! We offer flexible opportunities and volunteers are given full training and support. Access NI essential. If you have some time either weekly or monthly, we have options during weekdays and weekends.

Interested?

Pop by Lilac House, 4 Sandhurst Road, Belfast (we're close to Queen's University) and chat with our team over a cup of tea/coffee to find out more!

How can you support us?

You can help us by:

- making a donation
- becoming a supporter of Autonomie, or
- volunteering.

We rely on the support of individuals and companies, whether through donations, your time or your involvement.

Become a supporter

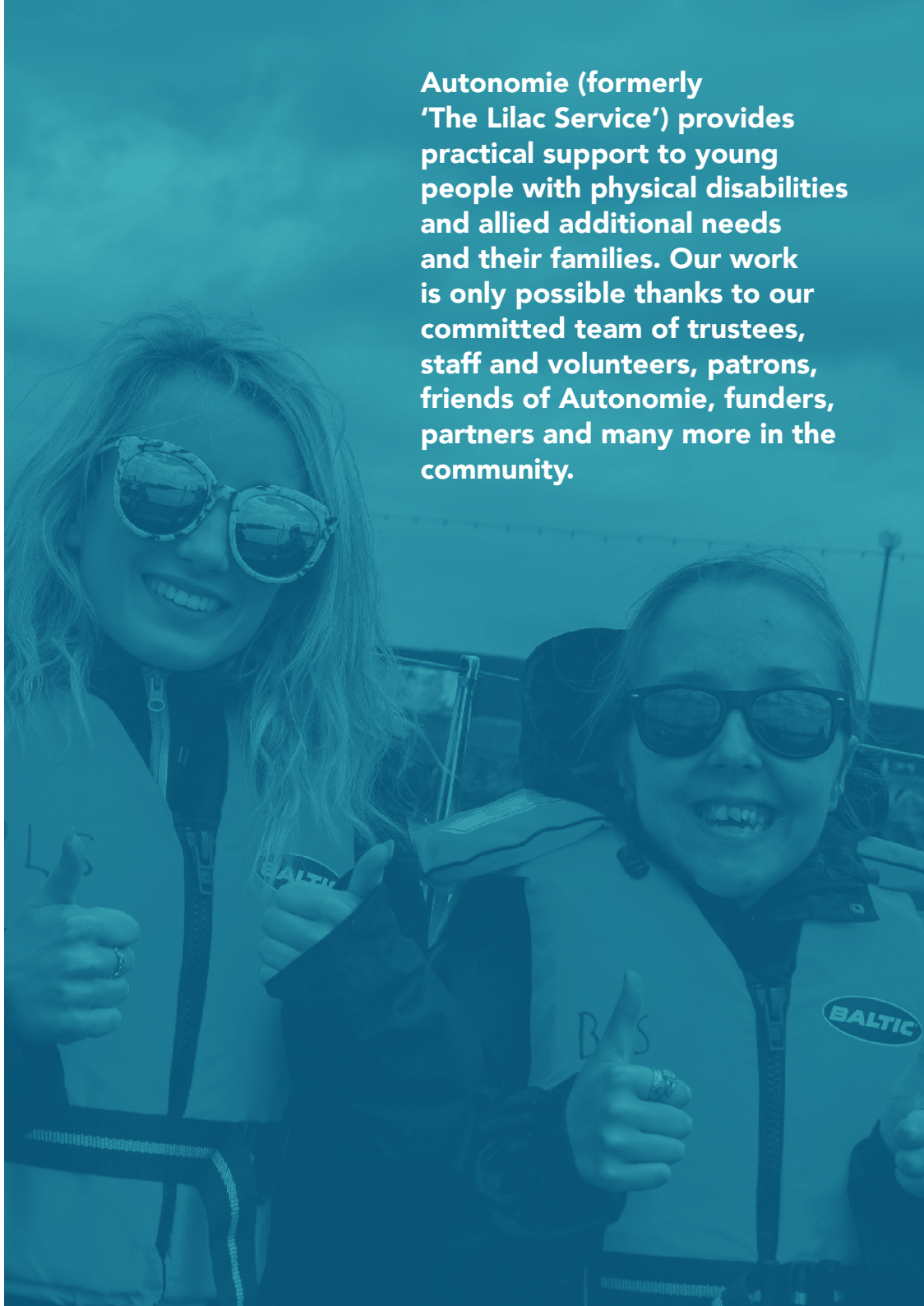
There are a number of ways you can support us:

- Volunteer with our What Next? and Freedom2Choose programmes
- Share your story
- Join our Facebook group at www.facebook.com/www.autonomie.org
- Join us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/AutonomieInfo
- Support us when you shop at Amazon Smile
- Subscribe to our eNewsletter
- Run a fundraising event (e.g. coffee mornings)
- Send a cheque to support our projects
- Corporate involvement e.g. charity of the year, sponsorship, fundraising

Even if you don't have time or money to give, you can still support our charitable work by telling your friends about our services, pass on our booklet, leaflets, website address and social media pages.

Think of young people and local families you know and meet who can benefit from our work and let them know about our services, including What Next?, Freedom2Choose and Family Support Services.

THANK YOU! Your support is greatly appreciated.



Autonomie (formerly 'The Lilac Service') provides practical support to young people with physical disabilities and allied additional needs and their families. Our work is only possible thanks to our committed team of trustees, staff and volunteers, patrons, friends of Autonomie, funders, partners and many more in the community.



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FIND OUT MORE

www.autonomie.org.uk

Lilac House

(Linked Independent
Living and Advice Centre)

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KEEP IN TOUCH



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