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**Norfolk Support Worker with Autism Busting Myths in the Workplace**

**(June 2023) Michael Neave, a local man with Autism, has become a qualified support worker at a learning disability service in Norfolk run by national charity, Ambient Support. With specialist help from his Team Leader, Sarah Green, Michael is the first person with Autism to achieve employment status at this supported living service and his achievement is being officially recognised by Ambient for Learning Disability Week (LDW) 19 to 25 June.**

The focus of LDW 2023, run by Mencap, is on busting myths about living life with a learning disability and showcasing the incredible things that people with a Learning Disability can achieve.

Michael, 44 and from Norwich, was diagnosed with Autism in 2012 and in 2015 started supporting nonspeaking individuals at Autism Anglia. He began training with Ambient in 2022 and was mentored by Team Leader, Sarah Green, who helped him to qualify. **Sarah says:**

“We look at Michael’s Autism as his superpower – he can relate to, understand, and connect with the people we support from a unique perspective.

“You only get this deep understanding if you’re able to support people with disabilities in the workplace. It helps that Michael is very open and honest about his Autism. He can communicate well about what he needs, and it allows us to support him better.”

He now wants to highlight his story to encourage others with learning disabilities to take on new challenges. **Michael says:**

“I’ve learnt a lot of new skills and worked through lots of new experiences in this particular role. I get to spend a lot more time with the people we support- I love being a part of their lives, taking them out in the community and I want to give them the best opportunities, but this is very different to my previous role with non-verbal people.

“Sarah has supported me throughout and we’ve worked together to understand what works and what doesn’t in terms of successfully acquiring new skills.’

**Sarah continues:**

“We worked closely with Michael throughout his probation period and adapted the training to his needs to ensure he felt positive and confident. For example, Michael completed manual handling training twice and he found it easier to learn alone rather than in a group setting.

### “At Ambient, we are proud to take positive actions regarding the employment, retention, training, and career development of employees with disabilities. Sometimes it’s only small changes but these can make a huge difference to the individuals working with us.”

**On his Autism, Michael says:**

“My autism is very routine based, and I always have a plan. I’m very good at being consistent in what I do, I’m good at routine and checking things such as medication and money. I’m good at planning and making sure everything is correct. I am very meticulous, but this benefits the people we support and the wider team at Ambient, it’s a strength to be proud of.”

**On what Michael has brought to the team, Sarah says:**

“As I said, Michael’s Autism is his superpower, being able to connect and understand the people we support. But Michael is also very practical, he a good strong team member, he’s very involved and people never ask him to do anything. He’ll always be unloading the washing machine as soon as it finishes and at 4 pm on the dot, he will be organising the medicine. He’s very productive and uses his own initiative very quickly. He’s also very good with IT and often helps people when they have problems.”

**When asked about advice for other people living with Autism who may want to get into care, Michael says:**

“I came to social care because of my condition and was able to adapt it into a job that lets me change people's lives. It’s good to have an understanding about it and share information, knowledge, and ideas between people. We all share each other's skills and qualities at Ambient and I’m looking forward to continuing working with the team, gaining more experience and helping others.”

Ambient’s Supported Living services enable people to live as independently as possible in a home of their own. This usually means a small group of people sharing a house with their own secure tenancy, with care and support tailored to meet their individual needs.

Find out about Ambient’s Supported Living Service in Norfolk, [HERE](https://www.ambient.org.uk/services/norfolk-supported-living/).

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**Notes to Editors:**

**About Ambient Support:**[www.ambient.org.uk](http://www.ambient.org.uk/)  @ambientsupport

* Ambient Support is one of the Top 20 generic Not-For-Profit Health & Social Care Providers in the UK
* They deliver services that meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable adults in society
* Operating in 110+ locations, they provide over 30 thousand hours of care to people on a weekly basis to support a range of needs due to the ageing process, learning disability or mental illness
* **Ambient is certified as a Great Place to Work** following an in-depth survey of staff in October 2022. Survey findings showed that**84%** said they felt they made a difference and were proud of what they accomplished. Whilst almost **90%** said they are treated fairly, regardless of age, race, or sexual orientation. Similarly, **83%** of employees said that when they joined Ambient, they were made to feel welcome
* Ambient’s range of quality specialist services are delivered by dedicated, professional, and passionate staff and their success is built on supporting people to live a full and meaningful life
* Latest results from Ambient Support’s 2022- People We Support Satisfaction Survey show:  
  **82% believe that Ambient supports them to live their life in the way they want to and 85% say we have helped make their lives better since support them.**​ **A total of 82% of people would tell others that they like Ambient**
* Ambient currently supports around 950+ people across the UK in a number of care settings
* Ambient can also help young adults who are transitioning from Children’s to Adult Learning Disability Services
* **89% of CQC registered locations rated Good or Outstanding**
* Ambient Support partners with EasyFundraising which allows people to turn their everyday online shopping purchases into donation funds for the charity, without costing extra money. Find out more [HERE](https://www.ambient.org.uk/ambient-on-easyfundraising/) and visit Ambient’s EasyFundraising link [HERE](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ambient-support/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_medium=clipboard&utm_content=rm-cpl)