

# About Include



include.org



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## Vision, Mission and Values

### Our Vision

A world where no-one is excluded because of communication disabilities.

### Our Mission

To provide Speech and Language Therapy-based community activities and training which:

- Promote inclusion and wellbeing
- Empower people with communication needs
- Develop communication skills with individuals, services and communities

### Our Values

Include is committed to co-production, ensuring that the views and ideas of people with lived experience of communication needs are at the heart of everything we do. Our organisational values and the images that bring them to life were decided through co-production. They are:



Kind



Fun



Respectful



Empowering



Inclusive

### Our Work

We teach better ways of including and involving people with understanding or speaking difficulties.

One in five people experience some form of communication difficulty or disability in their lifetime. Include empowers this group of people through community projects, training, choir performances, co-production and consultancy services. We combine music, Makaton signing and fun with Speech and Language Therapy and accessibility expertise.

## Our Story

Here is a bit about our **Founder and CEO Alix Lewer**:



My personal experience of communication difficulty came from seeing my Father lose his speech, aged 50, because of a brain tumour. The following year, my Grandfather had a stroke which left him temporarily unable to understand the words he heard or spoke.

I realised that people didn't know how to support or interact with people with communication needs, leading to significant isolation and inequalities. Include is my attempt to do something about it.

### What's different about Include?

The thing that makes Include.org unique is that the charity offers social, learning and therapeutic opportunities to everyone. No matter the origin or type of communication need.

We don't exclusively work with people who have learning disabilities or just those with dementia - we recognise people's strengths and similarities and work across communities.



This means that within our network, people with varying needs can support and learn from each other.

For example, one of our Supported Volunteers with autism, who finds it hard to find the confidence to communicate, will support another member with more profound needs who is confident and social - but has less functional language.

The projects we deliver are founded on speech and language therapy expertise but up-skill everyone - people who work in the NHS, the social care sector and anyone who does or doesn't have communication needs.

We're seeking **systemic change** and **learning at a community level** - not just individually focused inputs - though we do offer that too. The hope is that communities will become more adept at inclusive communication and Makaton.

## Theory of Change

Include projects and services work to boost three things; Communication, Inclusion and Empowerment.

- Increased enjoyment / quality of life
- Improved mental wellbeing
- Improved understanding of healthy choices



- Reduced isolation
- Increased community engagement
- Increased relationships

- Increased decision making
- Increased confidence
- Increased knowledge & understanding of rights

## Impact



"I enjoy being part of the Include Champions Group, it helps with my anxiety and helps me to speak more clearly...It helps with my speech and that helps my life."

**Hannah, Choir Member, Champion and Supported Volunteer**

"I have learned speaking and listening skills at Include Champions Group. I use what I have learned to teach the staff where I live." **Beth, Choir Member, Champion and Supported Volunteer**



"I love the fact that Include offers Makaton training and qualifications to their volunteers free of charge, as a thank you for everything. This means everyone can be a huge part of inclusive communication at Include and beyond. I've even used the Makaton signs that I've learned outside of Include, for example helping a lady order a coffee in McDonalds." **Kim, Include Volunteer**



"When I come to The Include Choir, I feel listened to. There are people with and without disabilities and we all help each other. Together we raise awareness of communication needs. I am proud when my Support Worker joins in with the singing and Makaton signing". **Sarah, Choir Member, Champion and Supported Volunteer**

"When we sing and perform together, we are one. There is no ability or disability. There is no staff and client." **James - Support Worker**



**Wellbeing**

"Going to Include Choir was one of the highlights of my brother's week, if not the peak of his highlights. This is very much the case for many of your members and it really makes people that may be left out in society feel hugely valued. That's simply priceless." **Family Member**



**Inclusion**

"Before Include I NEVER was able to engage and have any confidence to speak in front of others. In fact, this is the first time I have had any. Always been too shy everywhere and on edge in case I'm judged, but I can be me and feel comfortable being Beth while at Include." **Beth, Choir Member, Champion and Supported Volunteer**



**Empowerment**

"Places like Include and people like Alix are just wonderful, they don't see your disability. The Include Choir focus on the fact you can sing! The fact that The Include Choir performs in public places is really something big, by doing that we're actively teaching the world..." **Joss, Choir Member**

## Volunteering and Partnerships

We love to work alongside other people and organisations. Here are some examples of what can be achieved in collaboration with Include.org.

**Neta** volunteers her skills remotely with Include, helping to edit some of our videos. She says; "Helping Include adds meaning and purpose to my life, fostering a sense of connection and fulfillment. By lending a hand and making a positive impact on someone else's life, I also uplift my own spirits."

**Charlotte** comes in person to weekly Include Choir sessions, she says;



"Volunteering at Include is the highlight of my week. I feel connected and part of a lovely special group. Singing in a safe environment whilst helping others find their personal joy is sooooo uplifting and rewarding. It truly does make me very happy."

There are many volunteering opportunities, so whether you would like to attend an Include project like the choirs in Redhill or Epsom, help on a wellbeing walk, or edit videos etc, please let us know at [info@include.org](mailto:info@include.org)



### Volunteer Team Award 2022



We're always delighted to work with organisations that want to make a difference in the community. These are some of the ways people can get involved:

- **Volunteer** at some of our projects
- **Share** your professional expertise to help us improve
- **Mentor** one of our Supported Volunteers (people with disabilities)
- **Book** The Include Choir to perform at an event
- **Fundraise** for Include with a team of people from your organisation
- **Follow** and share Include's social media, links to our socials are on the website home page: [www.include.org](http://www.include.org)
- **Donate** to Include through our website or payroll giving
- **Partner** with us to ensure your company's resources are accessible
- **Train** in Inclusive Communication - training delivered by Include
- **Offer** a meeting or storage space (especially if you are based in Surrey!)
- **Give** items that we need - there is a list on our website:

[include.org/donate/](http://include.org/donate/)

✉ [info@include.org](mailto:info@include.org)  
☎ 07918 470190

## Partnership Case Study

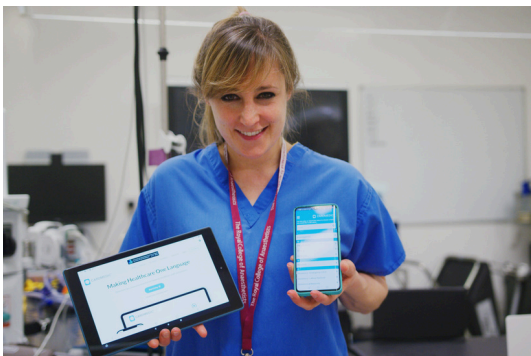
### The CardMedic collaboration

When healthcare information is accessible and understandable for all, it can literally save lives. CardMedic's mission is to break down communication barriers between healthcare staff and patients by **making healthcare information accessible** and understandable for all.

Alix Lewer, Founder and CEO of Include and The Include Champions helped to develop an accessible version of the CardMedic app, a tool that breaks down barriers to good communication in healthcare. It's a partnership that we are really honored to be part of. We had some lovely feedback too:



"Our partnership with Include has helped us refine our content to ensure that it's as accessible as possible to individuals with diverse needs, including those with learning differences, visual and hearing impairments, and language barriers. For anyone working in the accessibility, language, and communication space, they would be remiss not to reach out to Include!"



Include promotes inclusion and wellbeing, empowers people with additional communication needs, and ensures that they have equal access to services, facilities, and opportunities. They do a fantastic job of collaborating with businesses, educational institutions, and other organisations to help raise awareness of accessibility and provide practical solutions for inclusivity.

Include also offers brilliant training and consultancy services to help organisations improve their practices by making them more accessible. By partnering with Include, you'll gain valuable insights, guidance, and resources to enable you to create a more inclusive environment.

The team are so friendly, and their expertise will help you address communication barriers and send out a powerful message about your commitment to inclusivity. All in all, we'd highly recommend partnering with Include!"





## The Include Choirs



Include.org runs two choirs: the award-winning **Redhill Include Choir** and the newer **Epsom Include Choir** for anyone age 16+.

The choirs rehearse weekly and take bookings to perform publicly at community events, conferences and venues throughout the year.

**Redhill Include Choir** - 7.30 to 9pm, Wednesdays at Redhill Methodist Church, RH1 1BP. The Redhill Choir is also run on Zoom, to allow virtual access.

**Epsom Include Choir** - 6 to 7.30pm, Tuesdays at St Joseph's Church, KT18 7JQ

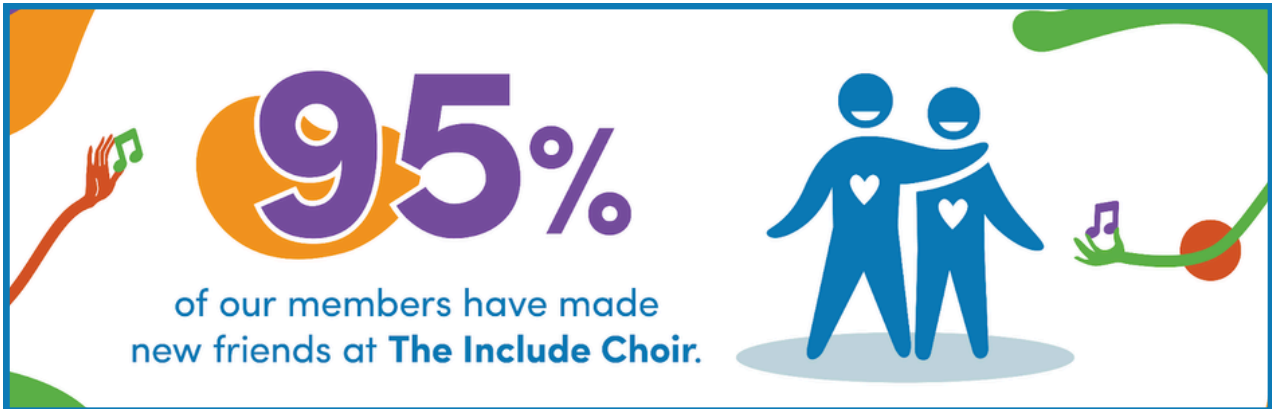


Set up by a passionate Speech and Language Therapist (SLT), our choirs provide **indirect speech and language therapy** to members, and use **Makaton signs** and **objects of reference** alongside singing.

This unique approach also encourages **audience engagement**, promotes **accessible communication skills** and provides an **entertaining experience**.

Please see our SLT Consultancy page or ask us for information about **Communication Corner** - our SLT led advice and signposting service at the last choir rehearsal of each month.





While communication skills underpin what we do, providing a **fun, engaging community** for members is at the heart of the Include choirs.

Our choirs are open to people with communication needs, as well as their family, support staff, and members of the local community. Some people come on their own, some come with others - all are made welcome.

We believe in creating an **inclusive environment** where everyone can come together to enjoy music and singing, regardless of their abilities.



✉ Email [info@include.org](mailto:info@include.org) to book a free taster session or to enquire about booking an Include Choir performance.



## The Include Champions: Experts by Experience

The Include Champions Group is our lived-experience consultancy team. The team generates ideas and feedback on important topics including **Inclusive Communication** and the **Mental Capacity Act**.

Our members have real world experience in **learning disabilities, autism** and **other communication needs**. They meet every week via Zoom, and there is always something important to discuss and analyse.

The group helps to design Include's training and resources, including **Easy Read resources** that we publish on our website. We collaborate with companies and other charities to offer consultations on becoming more inclusive, or creating information in alternative formats.



We also review Easy Read information from other organisations to check that information is as **clear and accessible** as it can be. Contact us about a project.



Being a Champion is a chance to **develop skills**, as the group receives training and support from speech and language therapists within the programme.

The Include Champions Group is committed to **promoting inclusive communication** and **empowering** those with diverse communication needs to live **full and independent lives**.

By empowering people with learning disabilities and / or autism (and other communication needs) to advocate for themselves, services can be improved and individuals have greater control over their lives.



### 2023 Include survey:

- ✓ Champions Group makes me feel I am helping the community – **100% agree**
- ✓ Champions Group helps me feel more confident in my life – **100% agree**

## Stroll and Sign

Stroll and Sign sessions enable people to experience the beauty of Surrey's green spaces with an inclusive and supportive group.

The project brings people together for gentle, mindful walks that incorporate **multisensory exploration of the environment** as well as developing communication skills and opportunities to connect.

Stroll and Signs last about one and a half hours, though we do have longer sessions when visiting somewhere special or further away.



Our sessions are designed to bring the well-documented benefits of outdoor exercise and contact with nature to people age 16+ who have communication disabilities.

Stroll and Sign promotes inclusive communication through the use of **Makaton signing, tactile** and **visual references**, and **digital chatbooks**, allowing everyone to participate and communicate.

The sessions are a great opportunity for support staff and families to learn speech and language therapy-based communication skills, as well as helping people with communication needs.

**“Stroll & Sign helps people to converse more and it’s nice to talk to and see other people. I also try to let Lucia get away from me and meet others on the walk as she is with me all the time as her carer.”** Wendy

We incorporate fun activities such as **treasure hunts, quizzes** and **challenges** to enhance the experience. We have volunteering roles for people to take on and develop skills such as photography and filming (as well as inclusive communication skills).

Anyone can join us to connect with nature and improve their physical and mental wellbeing with Stroll and Sign.



We seek-out opportunities to unite with other organisations and partner with groups with similar interests across Surrey. In this way we increase the opportunities for people to enhance their **social communication skills**, and build more **enlightened and integrated communities**.

The upcoming Stroll and Sign session locations and timings are available on the calendar on our website: **[include.org/calendar](https://include.org/calendar)**

## Supported Volunteering

Our supported volunteer programme for young people and adults with learning disabilities and autism is a structured and inclusive initiative that provides opportunities for people to gain valuable skills, experience, and confidence while contributing to our community.

The program is designed to accommodate the unique needs of each participant, including tailored support and training, clear communication, and a safe and inclusive environment. The goal of the program is to help participants **build self-esteem, develop new skills, and establish meaningful relationships** with their peers and the wider community.



The program may include a range of volunteer opportunities, such as helping during a choir session, contributing to our Champion Group, assisting with administrative and creative tasks, and more. Participants will receive **support and guidance** from staff, who will work with them to identify their interests and goals, and provide assistance as needed.



## Supported Volunteers on the Board

We plan for 75% of Include's Trustees to be people with disabilities.

Some of our Board members are Supported Volunteers.

Here is what Martin said; **"I have never done this before - this will be a first - but Include have put me on to be a Trustee to help us go greener. So, how we can make the organisation greener - which should be good. I feel like it's something we need to take more seriously onboard. It's a case of doing what we can do."**

## Recognition for what we do



These are just some of the awards Include.org has been recognised with. The work of our Supported Volunteers is integral to this recognition:

- Stars in Surrey Award for Championing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Queen's Award for Voluntary Service
- The National Learning Disabilities and Autism Award



### Nominate us

If you know about an award that you think we could have a chance of winning, please do nominate us!







## Training by Include

Include helps organisations to be **more inclusive** of people with communication needs, across a range of settings. For example, we might train staff in a care home supporting people with communication difficulties, in a business which people with communication difficulties access, or in a healthcare service.

We can help staff to use **inclusive communication strategies** in all communications/interactions with service users. Our training helps people to understand and use inclusive communication strategies, to think about the communication environment and know how to evaluate and continuously improve inclusive communication practice.




People's communication skills are well documented



Staff have good communication support skills




The environment is good for communication



People can understand and talk about their health needs

We will help you reflect on the **Five Good Communication Standards:**

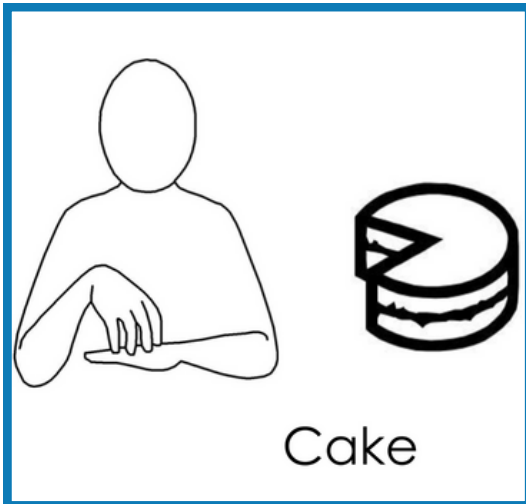


People are supported to understand and communicate decisions

We help staff use inclusive communication strategies in all communications and interactions, including essential **Mental Capacity Assessment**. And we offer **accredited** Makaton and Talking Mats training - see overleaf...



## Makaton



Using signs, symbols, and speech, **Makaton** helps individuals to communicate more effectively, promotes inclusion, and reduces barriers to communication. This approach is widely used in schools, healthcare, and community settings, and is particularly beneficial for individuals with learning disabilities, autism, or other communication difficulties.



With **Makaton training**, individuals can improve their communication skills, enhance social interaction, and develop their confidence and independence. Whether you are seeking to improve your own communication skills or support others in their communication needs, Makaton training can be a valuable and rewarding experience.

## Talking Mats

Talking Mats training is an innovative and evidence-based approach to support communication and decision-making for individuals with communication difficulties. It is a practical tool that uses a set of picture symbols and a simple framework to enable people to express their views, feelings, and needs on a range of topics.

***We can adapt our training to suit you in terms of content and length of session. Please contact us to discuss your needs and our prices.***

## Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Consultancy Services

All of our projects and activities are underpinned by Speech and Language Therapy principles and offer indirect therapy. On top of that we focus on individual SLT-related queries, and can offer one-to-one interventions.



## Communication Surgeries

Our award-winning Speech and Language Therapy team offer 'Communication Surgeries', usually in person.

You may live or work with someone who has communication difficulties that have been assessed, with advice given. If you are finding it difficult to implement the advice, you can come to a **Communication Corner** surgery, bringing any information you have about previous Speech and Language Therapy input, and we will help you understand what you need to do to support them most effectively.



This service is available to anyone who comes to our Include Choir rehearsals on the last session of each month.

Include.org has been recognised by Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Giving Voice Award 2023.

## One-to-One Support

In some cases, it will be useful to have a more detailed assessment of a person's communication needs and strengths. Our team of Speech and Language Therapists can assess and advise on a one-to-one basis. This will include a description of communication strengths ('communication profiles') and individualised communication support strategies and resources.

We will also work closely with communication partners to help them develop their skills in supporting the communication needs of individuals, i.e. supporting them to implement strategies which can reduce communication difficulties and build on the person's communication strengths.

## Staff training

In lots of cases, the best way to help someone with communication difficulties is to train their communication partners to use inclusive communication strategies.

At Include, we understand the challenges of freeing staff for training - and in embedding good practice. Based on the evidence, including our own research - Include is developing a unique and innovative approach to training, based on **audit of the communication environment**.

This means we can recognise and appreciate good practice that is already in place, and offer targeted, **bite-size training solutions**, which model skills and involve the experts by experience in your settings. As part of the process, we provide external evidence of good practice, and accessible resources.

We may also suggest one of our training courses for a staff team (see 'Training' pages 17 and 18).

**Please contact us to discuss your needs and our prices.**