

PROJECT FIRE ENGINE CIC

COMPANY NUMBER 17185181

A community-based meaningful activity service for adults with care needs and young people with SEND

THE CONCEPT

Project Fire Engine CIC delivers structured, person-centred meaningful activity using a Rolls-Royce B60-powered 1954 Dennis F8 fire engine as its centrepiece. The vehicle is not the end — it is the medium. It creates a skills-based distinctive, motivating environment for practical learning, social connection, confidence-building, and community participation that generic day services simply cannot replicate.

The service operates two pathways simultaneously: a skills-based opportunity for adults with assessed social care needs, and a heritage-based engagement programme for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities referred through Education, Health and Care Plans.

ACTIVITIES & DELIVERY

Restoration Phase

- Cleaning and polishing
- Basic restoration tasks
- Equipment familiarisation

Experience Phase

- Supervised hose use (controlled pressure)
- Pump demonstrations
- Cab exploration
- Role-play activities

Marketing & Communications

A learner designs a flyer for an upcoming community showcase — choosing images, writing a caption, and presenting it to the group for feedback. Outcome: contribution to society, communication, decision-making.

Health & Safety

A young person with SEND completes a pre-session safety walkround — identifying hazards, PPE needs, checking equipment storage, and signing off a checklist. Outcome: cognition and learning, preparation for adulthood, independence.

IT & Digital Skills

An adult learner photographs the engine restoration in progress, edits images on a tablet, and compiles a simple visual log. Outcome: practical skill development, meaningful occupation, confidence with technology.

Experiences & Community Engagement

The group prepares the Dennis F8 for a village event — polishing, positioning, and staffing a public display. Each person holds a named role. Outcome: community access, volunteering pathway, social connection.

Independence

A learner arrives, collects their task card, gathers the correct tools, and begins work without prompting. Progress is recorded against their EHCP independence outcome and shared at annual review.

Teamwork & Communication

Two adults work together to identify and label engine components — one reading from a reference sheet, one applying labels. They negotiate pace, resolve disagreements, and complete the task. Outcome: developing and maintaining relationships, communication and interaction.

Further Learning Opportunities

As well as aligning with the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes, learners will gain the following skills: English (both written and verbal), Maths (counting, measuring and sorting), History of manufacture of vehicles and equipment, origin of materials and engineering principles, Fire safety, Environmental effects from fuel and lubricants)

ADULT PATHWAY

Designed for adults with learning disability, autism, mental health needs, physical disability, acquired brain injury, and older people with assessed care needs.

SEND PATHWAY

For young people aged 15–25 with SEND, referred through Education, Health and Care Plans from schools, colleges, and families.

FINANCIAL MODEL

The service is built for financial sustainability through statutory commissioning — not grant dependency. Revenue flows directly from Personal Budgets, Direct Payments, and EHCP-funded hours. This means income is tied to assessed need and local authority frameworks, providing predictable, recurring revenue from the outset.

LEADERSHIP

Les Rudkin — Service Lead

Over two decades in specialist SEND education, including as an Assistant Head. Qualified teacher with experience in carpentry, motor vehicle and land-based environments. Extensive delivery experience in adult social care, School Links and SEND.

Samantha Crehan — Educational Lead

Accomplished teacher trainer with vast experience in Supported Learning. Degree in English Literature. Strong community engagement background.

WHY IT WORKS

- A genuinely distinctive environment — no comparable local offer
- Structured around statutory frameworks from day one
- Commissioner-ready: full policy suite, evidence records, and referral process in place
- Dual pathway maximises reach and revenue resilience
- Heritage vehicle creates authentic community identity and public engagement opportunities
- Led by professionals with direct commissioning relationships

Immediate Priority

The Dennis F8 — the vehicle that makes everything else possible — has not yet been acquired. Securing the vehicle and a suitable base in Cambridgeshire are the two critical first steps. All other elements — policies, frameworks, commissioning relationships, and referral pipelines — are already in place and ready to activate.

We are actively seeking introductions to supporters, funders, and advisors who share an interest in community-based social enterprise, heritage, and practical education.

The Fire Engine is bequeathed to The Norfolk Fire Museum should the project end.



