

ISSUE 12 | SUMMER 2025

lifewayslinks

The Lifeways newsletter for the **North East** region

In this issue:

- Page 3** Lifeways' experts champion co-production at national ARC England event
- Page 4** Meet Tanya – Lifeways' first ever Chairperson of new Family Advisory Panel
- Page 5** Welcoming new people and teams in Yorkshire and the North West
- Page 6** Talk Time Club helps to create new guide to tackle social isolation
- Page 6** Kevin gets special recognition for 30 years of service to local shoppers
- Page 7** How Jess is helping to define her own support
- Page 8** Helping Makye's skydiving dream come true!
- Page 8** Lifeways celebrates success at the Care Home Awards 2025
- Page 9** Region is united by football tournament

Welcome to the
**Summer Edition of
Lifeways Links!**

Interactive PDF





Hello, I'm Janine Forshaw and I'm your local Lifeways Business Development and Relationship Manager for the North East.

I'm currently working with developers and housing associations around new opportunities in the region. If you would like to discuss current gaps in provision and how Lifeways can help you meet these needs, then please contact me on janine.forshaw@lifeways.co.uk.

I hope you enjoy the summer issue of Lifeways Links where we take the opportunity to look at some of the exciting developments taking place in Lifeways, and to celebrate some of the great achievements of the people we support in your region and across Lifeways.



How we can support

Lifeways supports adults living with learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, acquired brain injuries or mental health needs to lead more fulfilling and independent lives in their local communities.

Our experienced assessment team - now joined by some new colleagues - are always available to work together with you, from arranging introductions, assessments and visits, all the way through to the move being complete and the kettle going on.

Get in touch today

If you'd like to make a referral, you can do so by clicking on any of the services in this newsletter, or call us on:

0333 321 4881

Email us at:

referrals@lifeways.co.uk



Debbie Robson
Referral Assessment
Practitioner



Isabel Malheiros
Referral Assessment
Practitioner



Nicola Reck
Referral Assessment
Practitioner



Hannah Neil
Referral Assessment
Practitioner



Lifeways' experts champion co-production at national ARC England event

by Gareth Roberts, Quality Director

ARC England is a leading membership body representing providers of services for people with learning disabilities and autism. It exists to improve lives by supporting everyone involved in planning or delivering care and support. Lifeways has been a member since 2003.

At a recent national event hosted by ARC England, I was incredibly proud to see Lifeways' Quality Checkers showcasing co-production at its very best!

Our Quality Checkers are the people we support who take on an active role in improving the quality of our services. The event brought together organisations from across the sector, along with people they support, to explore how co-production can grow and improve even more.

We have a continued commitment to co-production, where the people we support work alongside us to shape and improve our services. This was recognised and celebrated at the event and our brilliant Quality Checkers shared a powerful video showing how they identified issues, suggested solutions and helped deliver meaningful change at Lifeways.

It was so exciting to see them present and share their co-production journey and the positive improvements they've made. We now have over 200 Quality Checkers and they are incredible ambassadors for our organisation.

One innovative idea discussed was cross-organisation quality checking, where people supported by one provider assess and help improve services at another. It's a really exciting concept and that kind of collaboration could raise the bar for co-production sector-wide and is something that we are keen to champion!

Jessie, one of our Quality Checker's and a member of the Lifeways Executive Advisory Panel (LEAP), said:

I was very nervous to be presenting at ARC England, but I feel proud that I was able to provide information to other organisations. I think it's a good idea helping others learn and grow.

Because I am so passionate about it, I enjoy being a driving force behind it. I feel like we have really good quality checkers who can help others.

The people we support are amazing and their involvement in reviewing what we do, how we do it, and helping shape improvements is invaluable to Lifeways.

Victoria Buyer, ARC England Policy Lead, said: "We were delighted to welcome the Lifeways Quality Checkers to our Making Co-Production Real Network. Their lived experience and commitment to quality is helping to make co-production not just an idea, but a reality in people's everyday lives."

We're excited to be part of this important national conversation and even prouder of the people we support, who are helping shape the future of care both within Lifeways and across the wider sector.



Pictured above: Jessie, a Lifeways Executive Advisory Panel (LEAP) member

Meet Tanya – Lifeways' first ever Chairperson of new Family Advisory Panel

by Andrea Kinkade, Chief Executive Officer

We're proud to announce that Tanya Farley, has been appointed as the first ever Chairperson of Lifeways' newly formed Family Advisory Panel.

Tanya, a very determined mum-of-four with a passion for making a difference, was chosen by fellow panel members to lead the group. As the mother of James, who receives supported living care from Lifeways in Stockport, she brings years of lived experience to her new role.

The independent panel was set up following the success of our Quality Checkers initiative. Its aim is to further shape and strengthen the quality of care and support across Lifeways' services, giving a stronger voice to families whose loved ones receive support.

Tanya got involved with the panel after reaching out to me directly and we were able to have an honest conversation about her son's story and her hopes for improving supported living. She felt it was time to step up and use her experiences to drive change.

As Tanya herself explained:

I'm passionate about sharing what I've learned, making sure families are heard, and keeping standards high across services. It's about identifying best practice and sharing it.

Bringing deep insight from lived experience

Having spent years navigating the health and care systems, Tanya has a deep understanding of the challenges faced by families like hers. She is also the organiser of Autism: A Hands-On Approach conference, which has been running for more than 20 years. More recently, she has delivered online workshops designed to create a safe space to open up conversations around key topics. You can find out more at www.autismahandsonapproach.co.uk.

The title of "Chair" came as a surprise to Tanya, but her deep understanding and determination to create positive change made her a natural choice to lead the panel. Tanya recognises that



families have valuable knowledge which can be used to benefit not only their own loved ones, but other families and Lifeways' team members too. She is determined to create a culture where people feel empowered to speak up when something isn't working to make things better for everyone.

A key focus for the panel will be promoting open communication, peer-to-peer auditing, and encouraging continuous improvement in care. Tanya would love to see families visit and give feedback on other services, as well as their own, offering a shared perspective that could raise standards.

Personally, I'm thrilled to be working with Tanya and the Family Advisory Panel. Their insights are essential, not just for improving the quality of care, but for supporting our teams and shaping the future of Lifeways.

A stronger voice

The Panel is one way that families can help drive meaningful positive change and have a stronger voice at every level of our organisation. It will provide honest feedback on what Lifeways is doing well, where improvements can be made, and how we can build stronger relationships with families.

Our long-term goal is to set up similar panels in every region of the UK, creating a national network of engaged families. Members of our Executive Leadership Team will attend each panel, to listen, learn, and be held accountable. The Lifeways' Board will also hear the feedback, truly linking the family experience to the governance of our organisation.



Welcoming new people and teams in Yorkshire and the North West

by Amy Gilbert,
Managing Director, Supported Living

I am very excited to share that Lifeways has proudly welcomed 180 new team members and 60 new people to support, as part of our newly launched supported living services in Rotherham and Tameside.

We're delighted to welcome these new colleagues to our team. It's a privilege to work with new people and to learn from them as they begin the next stage of their career with us. Many of the colleagues joining us already know the people they support and we're here to make it as easy as possible for them to continue delivering great care.



Our new team members officially joined our Supported Living division in April 2025 and have been taking part in our learning and induction programmes to become familiar with Lifeways and how we work. They will be working across 15 locations (five in Rotherham and 10 in Tameside) where they will continue to fulfil their shared goal of delivering high-quality supported living services.

Building stronger support together

At Lifeways, we care deeply about providing outstanding support and helping people with complex needs to live their best lives as independently as possible. Every opportunity we get to support someone new is an honour.

We've already begun work in both Tameside and Rotherham and are looking forward to working with the people we support, their families and local partners to ensure that these services deliver exceptional support. We will be involving everyone in shaping the way we work and together look forward to delivering the best possible outcomes.



Lifeways has grown significantly over the past 18 months, delivering more support in more places around the UK. This expansion is part of Lifeways' ongoing transformation programme which has seen the company invest more than £10m in technology, property and systems since 2023.

The plan focuses upon four key areas:

- *Providing the best possible care and support*
- *Recruiting, developing and retaining exceptional people*
- *Using technology to improve lives*
- *Becoming the employer of choice*

Social care is complex and challenging and there is always more to do and we never stop learning. The way in which we listen, learn, and embed change is critical to our progression. Every time we are selected to deliver support, we see it as a validation that we're on the right path - creating more opportunities to help people lead their very best life and enabling more colleagues to build a rewarding career in social care.



Talk Time Club helps to create new guide to tackle social isolation



by Jodie Allen-Cawley,
Head of Quality

“How can I make new friends in a safe and inclusive way?” This important question was raised at a recent Talk Time Club session - a relaxed space where the people we support chat directly with leaders at Lifeways.

I’m delighted to say that this powerful question has now sparked something great! Together we’ve created a brand new guide, full of ideas and suggestions to help people build meaningful connections and tackle social isolation.



The guide is packed with tips, advice and resources, and also showcases opportunities on how to get involved, join in, be part of a team and even support others through initiatives such as the Lifeways Executive Advisory Panel (LEAP).

Gareth Roberts, Quality Director at Lifeways shared:

Staying socially active can have a huge impact on wellbeing, and we understand how important it is for the people we support to have friends with shared interests and experiences.

Our new guide has got lots of ways for the people we support to reach out to others, join clubs, volunteer and more. I was really impressed with the ideas that were discussed in Talk Time Club and I’m sure the guide will be a big help for anyone looking to expand their social circle.

This new guide is another great example of how Lifeways works with the people we support to co-produce resources to help people live independent, fulfilling lives. To see a copy of the guide please visit our website and search for “Talk Time Club”.

Kevin gets special recognition for 30 years of service to local shoppers

by Lorraine Noble, Service Manager

Kevin, who we support in Berwick on Tweed, has recently achieved a huge milestone - three decades of continued service at his local supermarket! In recognition of his 30 years, Kevin received a special award, a celebration party and some lovely gifts from his colleagues.

Kevin, who is a true community champion, shared:

My job means the world to me. I have the odd bad day, but it keeps me busy and I like helping people with their shopping. I’d be lost without my job.

Kevin began his career when the store was a Co-op, and then when it was taken over by ASDA around 10 years ago, he transferred over, remaining a familiar face to shoppers in the community.

Kevin told me that the most important part of his job is helping shoppers find items in-store as well as helping older people with their bags and to their cars or seeing them safely to the bus stop.



Kevin also plays a vital role at Lifeways as a Quality Checker and member of our Lifeways Executive Advisory Panel (LEAP) – our experts by experience, who share their experiences with Lifeway’s Executive Leadership Team. In these roles Kevin enjoys visiting other services, meeting new people and ensuring that everyone has a voice within Lifeways.

You always know when Kevin’s working in the shop because everything looks extra clean! He loves looking after people and he’s really caring. He is well known in the area and is a truly lovely person.

Back at home, Kevin really values the support of the team, especially the emotional support we offer. People living here are encouraged to speak freely so that we can keep improving the service for everyone, and Kevin has been influential in making that happen.

Outside of work, Kevin is supported by the team to accomplish daily living tasks such as managing his medication and keeping appointments. He also enjoys going on long walks where he explores his passion for photography.

We’re really proud to support Kevin and everything he’s achieved, at home, in the community and at work.

How Jess is helping to define her own support

by Sophie Sayer,
Positive Behaviour Support Practitioner

Jess was the first resident to move into our brand new supported living service in South Tyneside and she isn't just settling in - she's helping to shape how the service runs!

Her new home is one of two supported living services, developed in partnership with South Tyneside council and Karbon Homes. Designed for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs, they provide the right environment for people to live more independently with the right care and support close at hand.



Jess (centre) delivering her training

Even before she moved in, Jess, who is 22, made it clear that she had a vision for what she wanted her support to look like. She asked if she could design her own support plan and deliver training to the team who would be supporting her. We loved the idea and as a social care provider that puts co-production at the heart of its work, we were more than happy to say “yes”.

The sessions cover everything from Jess' autism diagnosis and sensory needs to crisis support strategies and how to build trusted relationships. During the session Jess had the entire room engaged and it was genuinely moving and inspirational to see someone so young take such ownership over their care in this way.

Jess has experienced several care placements throughout her life, and she explained how they had not always met her needs. Often support plans were written for her rather than with her and whilst they were created with the best intentions, they did not include everything that made Jess who she is.

They worked with the information they had – but it wasn't all of me. I now understand what person-centred care really means, and how it allows individuals not only to access meaningful support but to live fulfilling lives. That's what I wanted for myself.



Jess and Sophie (centre) with Jess' support team

Since moving into her new home, Jess has been actively involved in every support planning meeting and continues to guide the development of her care. She's helping us grow as professionals, just as we're here to support her to thrive.

Supporting Jess has been a privilege, and it is wonderful to see co-production truly come to life in this way. It was so rewarding to hear her say in her own words:

Since moving into Lifeways, I've felt a sense of relief – I can finally breathe again. My new home is everything I could wish for. I'm in my own place with my own space, surrounded by people that care.

It's the best thing that's happened in terms of me leading a fulfilling life. For the first time in a long time, I can officially say I'm happy in my home.

Helping Makye's skydiving dream come true!

by Kylie Crompton, Team Leader

Hold on to your hats because we have a true daredevil at one of our supported living services! Makye has completed a skydive and fulfilled a long-held dream. I was delighted to be able to support him to do the jump in March 2025 after surprising him with the gift of a lifetime for his birthday.

This all came about after we'd achieved Makye's first goal of joining the gym. I asked him what else he wanted to do and he said he would love to jump out of a plane! Makye and I have a bond where we like to joke around a lot, so I asked a colleague to question him about it to make sure he was serious. When they confirmed Makye's dream, I went ahead and booked it all for him and surprised him on his birthday. I think I was more nervous than he was on the day!

The skydive was the latest step on Makye's support journey, having also recently joined a gym and enrolled on a performing arts course. He's come so far since we've been working together. Initially he struggled for confidence, and we've worked really hard to encourage him out of his shell - now, he's smashing life!

Makye, who is 20, is also making progress in other areas of his life. As part of his performing arts course he rehearsed and performed a song - and it was incredible. I had tears in my eyes watching him. No one would believe he's the same person who



first came to us. Mayke really thrives on the unique environment of performing arts and shared with me:

I get a bit anxious, especially when I'm sitting down and have to stay still. So, I enjoy an environment where I get to move around and express myself.

To keep the adrenaline flowing, Makye has already set his next goal. He recently announced:

I want to do a bungee jump! The fear is what I find interesting. I've found that talking to your support workers, giving them a chance to help, you can achieve your goals.

We are all so proud of Mayke's new confidence and adventurous spirit and can't wait to see where it takes him next!

Lifeways celebrates success at the Care Home Awards 2025

by Karen Jones, Managing Director, Residential

On Friday 16 May, at the prestigious Care Home Awards in London, Lifeways proudly walked away with the Best Use of Care Management Software award plus three highly commended trophies!

The Care Home Awards are an annual event in the UK that recognise and celebrate excellence, innovation, and achievement within the care home sector. We were delighted to be recognised for the way in which we transformed our approach to care by introducing Nourish, a digital care management system, which enables us to record, plan and coordinate care in real time, and Deputy, a digital rostering system, which give our teams control over their own work patterns.

Lifeways was also highly commended in three categories

- **Best for nursing care**
- **Best facilities management**
- **Best for specialist care**



I am so proud that all our teams' hard work, passion and commitment to delivering excellent support has been recognised at the Care Home Awards.

We're especially delighted to have won the **Best Use of Care Management Software** award after we introduced Nourish and Deputy to our business in early 2024. In just over a year, and after a monumental 'one team' effort, we have rolled these game-changing pieces of software out to our incredible frontline teams.

The results have been amazing and it is all thanks to our teams who have embraced the change and helped us transform how we manage our support.

This is the first time we've entered the Care Home Awards, so to come away with a win and highly commended in three categories is an exceptional reflection on the extraordinary people who make Lifeways what it is.



Region is united by football tournament

by Tracy-Ann Dixon,
Regional Director for Supported Living

More than 120 people from Lifeways' Supported Living services in the North East came together to celebrate their love of football in a special tournament held in North Yorkshire.

We hosted the event at Northallerton Football Club, where teams played in more than 30 matches throughout the day. The event was designed to promote physical and mental wellbeing for our team members and the people we support.

We first organised the regional football tournament last year to bring the entire region together and around 100 people took part, so we decided to do it again this year. It's been so popular that we've already committed to another one next year.

Northallerton Football Club have been very supportive in helping us run the tournament. Not only did they give us a discount on using their pitch, but they also came out to support our players and opened the café so everyone could enjoy a drink and snack.



Teams were made up of both our team members and people we support and included players of all abilities, including wheelchair users. Each match lasted around 10 minutes with three points awarded to the winners. After each team had played each other, the two highest scoring teams went head-to-head in the final, where the winners took home the trophy.

To add to the experience, team members either sourced kits from local football teams or made their own for players to wear on the day.

Jessica, a person we support, shared:

It was such an amazing day. The best part of it was making friends with other people supported by Lifeways, because if you didn't plan the football event, I maybe wouldn't have met them.

Sam, also supported by Lifeways, said:

Even though I didn't play football due to being a wheelchair user, I was still able to get involved from the sidelines and I felt included in the whole day.

Bringing everyone together for an event like this comes from a passion to provide the best possible care for the people we support. It took a lot of organising in terms of transport, getting the kits sorted and making sure everyone was being looked after, but the dedication of our team members made these things easy to overcome.



Everyone had a fabulous day - one of the players on the winning team was so happy he'd won that we couldn't get the trophy back off him to get it engraved! These are the kind of events that remind the people we support that no matter what challenges they face, they can still be involved and have fun.

This tournament is just one of three joint events that have been organised by the North East region. We have an athletics event and a "Lifeways' Got Talent" event scheduled for later in the year and I can't wait to see even more people getting involved.

Current vacancies in the North East



Residential Care for 17 people

Eldon Lodge

Bradford, West Yorkshire

Purpose-built apartments

- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Support available 24/7

Eldon Lodge is a development of 17 high-quality, self-contained flats in Bradford, providing accommodation and 24-hour support tailored to each person's specific needs. We support and help people with complex mental health needs to transition from institutional settings to their own tenancy in the community, enabling them to live independently while receiving the exact package of recovery support that they need.

Our person-centred recovery support is provided by our core on-site team of Recovery Support Workers, with support from our Quality and Practice team of mental health professionals (RMNs, Social Workers and OTs).

Eldon Lodge is ideally located offering easy access to all Bradford has to offer including the nearby sports centre, supermarket, community centre, college, and museum. Plus, with great transport links, including Bradford Forster Square train station and local bus routes, it's easy to get out and explore the city.



Residential Care for 16 people

Whitwood Hall

Castleford, West Yorkshire

Shared House

- ✓ Life-changing residential care
- ✓ Support across three properties
- ✓ Ideal for maximising independent living
- ✓ Recently refurbished

Whitwood Hall is one community that combines three specialist residential services - The Lodge, Saxon House and Moore House. Working across these three houses, our dedicated team are ready to support people living with learning disabilities and autistic people to live happy, independent lives. Whitwood Hall is ideal for people who have a good level of independence and enjoy being active.

There are 16 bedrooms across the services, all of which have shared bathrooms, living rooms, a kitchen, dining room and laundry rooms. Each property has its own private garden for everyone to enjoy. All the rooms can be adapted with assistive technology to help everyone living there stay safe and maximise their independence.

We are located just south of Leeds, within easy reach of local amenities including supermarkets, shops, restaurants, and local attractions or for trips out to the coast or the Yorkshire countryside.



Residential Care for 17 people

Whitwood Grange

Castleford, West Yorkshire

Shared House

- ✓ Support across three shared properties
- ✓ Mix of communal and private spaces
- ✓ Shared garden and patio area
- ✓ Easy access to junction 32 of the M62

Whitwood Grange brings together three homes into one community - The Fold, Hugh House and Walton House. All offer a mix of independent and shared living space for people, who are autistic or living with learning disabilities. Across the property there are 17 bedrooms (all with en-suite bathrooms) as well as shared kitchens, dining areas, living rooms and a shared laundry room and bathroom facilities.

Our team works collaboratively with families, social workers, GPs, and other professionals to ensure the support we provide is person-centred, safe, and of the highest quality.

Located just south of Leeds, we are in easy reach of shops and restaurants, theme parks, the coast and beautiful countryside. We enjoy a sociable community and our enclosed gardens are perfect for games, picnics and BBQs. We have our own transport which makes it easy to go to the coast, on walks, for meals or to visit friends and family.

Follow us on social:

 [linkedin.com/company/lifewaysgroup](https://www.linkedin.com/company/lifewaysgroup)

 [facebook.com/thelifewaysgroup](https://www.facebook.com/thelifewaysgroup)

 [@lifewaysgroup](https://www.instagram.com/@lifewaysgroup)

 [youtube.com/@lifewaysgroup](https://www.youtube.com/@lifewaysgroup)

[lifeways.co.uk](https://www.lifeways.co.uk)

