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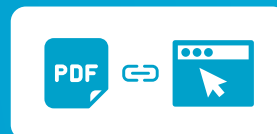
# lifewayslinks

## The Lifeways newsletter for the **South West** 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** Talk Time Club helps to create new guide to tackle social isolation
- Page 5** Celebrating Care Home Open Week at Ash House
- Page 6** £500,000 transformation brings new life to Beeton Grange
- Page 7** Stewart's mental health journey at The Valley
- Page 7** Julie O'Donovan Highly Commended at Housing with Care Awards 2025

Interactive PDF



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



## Hello, I'm George Bray and I'm your local Lifeways Business Development and Relationship Manager for the South West.

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 [george.bray@lifeways.co.uk](mailto:george.bray@lifeways.co.uk).

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



### 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](mailto:referrals@lifeways.co.uk)



**Andy Hood**  
Senior Assessment Manager



**Jean Dawe**  
Referral Assessment Practitioner



**Ruby Silverman**  
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](http://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.





# 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”.

# Celebrating Care Home Open Week at Ash House

by Karen Jones, Managing Director, Residential

**Services across Lifeways opened their doors to celebrate Care Home Open Week in June and hosted a series of fun-filled days packed with music, games, food and celebration.**

I was delighted to join the team at **Ash House** in Coventry. The wall of fame reflected everyone's achievements and showed what fantastic outcomes are being achieved. There were games, music, great food and a very warm welcome.

The event truly captured our CHOICE values with the recognition of people's achievements and talent. Our 'One Team' value was very evident with lots of people coming together to make the event a success. People attended from other homes and services nearby, and there was a wide-array of cakes on show in the hotly contested cake competition.

## Elsewhere...

**Guildford Road** marked the week in style – also celebrating the completion of their renovations and Lifeways' 30th birthday!

At **Unity House**, guests enjoyed live music, bubbles, and celebrating both their achievements and those of several team members who were recognised with long service awards, some over 20 years!

**Duke's House** celebrated with a carnival themed event and a great day was had by all, including some visiting animals. Everyone got involved and family members discussed ideas for getting more people involved as Quality Checkers – watch this space!

Meanwhile, **Whitwood Hall** wowed with another carnival-themed event full of dancing, party games, and brilliant teamwork – truly living the spirit of “open doors and open hearts.”

*A huge thank you to all the teams for making these events such joyful and inclusive celebrations for everyone involved, family members, professionals and those just visiting on the day – it was really something special!*





# £500,000 transformation brings new life to Beeton Grange

by Sakinah McIntosh,  
Registered Manager

**When you walk into Beeton Grange now, the first thing you notice is the light. Sun pours into the lounges and modern, calming colours brighten every corner. Most importantly, you'll see smiles - lots of them - from people who now truly feel at home here.**

Beeton Grange has been part of Birmingham for a long time. Built in the 1930s, our 24-bedroom residential service supports adults with specialist mental health recovery needs. But until recently, the building was showing its age - grey, tired, and not the uplifting environment we wanted for the people who live here.

That's why we're so proud of what's happened over the past year. Thanks to a £500,000 investment by Lifeways, we've completely transformed Beeton Grange into a spacious, colourful and welcoming place where people are in an even better position to rebuild their



confidence, regain their independence, and work towards moving back into the community.

One of the best parts of this makeover? Everyone here got to be part of it. People chose the colours for their own bedrooms and even for our shared spaces. The results are as unique as the people who live here - mellow yellow, peach-pink, coke-bottle red... personalised colours that tell proud stories, not just follow trends.

Anthony, one of the people we support, is especially proud of his baby-blue and ruby-red room, complete with grey velour furniture he



picked himself. "Feels great," he told me. "And when your family come and visit you, you've got somewhere clean and tidy to show them."

We marked the official reopening on 23 April in true Beeton Grange style - with a rap performance from Sarah, another person we support. Her words captured exactly what this place is about: "Love and joy and care, compassion and kindness always there."

The refurbishment, carried out by Igloo Property Group, included upgrading bedrooms, adding en-suites, creating vibrant new lounges, and giving our garden a peaceful, inviting feel. It's more than just a new look - it's changed how people feel and interact. We're seeing more smiles, more conversations, and more confidence. People who once preferred to stay in their rooms are now spending time together in the communal areas.

*For us, this is exactly what the investment was about. The right environment can lift moods, encourage independence, and make recovery feel achievable. At Beeton Grange, everyone has a personal support plan, and now our surroundings truly match our goals - to help people develop skills, regain independence, and enjoy life.*

Looking around today, it's clear that Beeton Grange isn't just a brighter building. It's a brighter home - and a brighter future - for the people who live here.





## Stewart's mental health journey at The Valley

by Christine Chilcott, Service Manager

**When Stewart moved to The Valley in December 2024, we could see right away that he was ready for a fresh start. At 56, Stewart is living with the effects of a brain injury, a psychotic disorder and type 2 diabetes. His journey hasn't been easy - he's faced alcohol and substance misuse in the past, and in 2015 he went through a particularly difficult crisis period.**

Before joining us, Stewart spent a year and a half at the Kite Unit, a specialist service for people with acquired brain injuries. While he made progress there, moving to The Valley meant a big step towards independence, one that he's adapted to incredibly well.

With the support of our team, Stewart has taken charge of his own medication and finances. He's now completely abstinent from substances, which is an incredible achievement in itself. But what's been equally inspiring is how he's thrown himself into new and positive routines.

Stewart has rediscovered his love for gardening and has been instrumental in creating a beautiful communal garden space for everyone to enjoy. He's



also been exploring volunteering opportunities and regularly attends a Men's Shed group every week - something that gives him both structure and the chance to connect with others.

*It's been lovely to watch Stewart build meaningful relationships with other people we support here. But one of the most touching moments for all of us has been his reconnection with his daughter, who lives abroad. That renewed bond is something he treasures deeply, and it's a reminder of why we do what we do.*

Stewart's story is one of resilience, courage and growth. With the right environment and the right support here at The Valley, he's been able to take control of his life again. He's proving to himself, and to everyone around him, that lasting change is possible.

## Julie O'Donovan Highly Commended at Housing with Care Awards 2025

by Brooke Gossling, Service Manager

**I am proud to share that Julie O'Donovan, our dedicated Specialist Support Practitioner, was awarded "Highly Commended" in the Workforce Development category at the Housing with Care Awards 2025!**

Lifeways was shortlisted in five categories and on the night, Julie stood out among a strong group of nominees in her category. The Workforce Development Award recognises outstanding professionals who go above and beyond to nurture talent, share expertise, and foster continuous learning.

Julie is a very passionate leader who plays a key role in helping shape the high level of support we provide at Lifeways. Her passionate dedication to creating personalised Positive Behaviour Support training has



made a lasting difference not only to the lives of the people we support but to her colleagues too.

These prestigious awards, run by Care Talk, are among the UK's leading celebrations of excellence in supported living, extra care housing, learning disability services, and mental health support.

Talking about Julie's nomination, the judges said:

*Julie is a passionate and dedicated specialist whose personalised training and mentoring improve outcomes for both staff and those they support. Her innovative, adaptable approach and commitment to best practice make her an invaluable part of the team, driving continuous improvement in person-centred care.*

Andrea Kinkade, Lifeways' CEO, was delighted to hear of Julie's success and added:

*Congratulations to Julie for being recognised nationally for the skill, heart, and dedication she brings to workforce development at Lifeways every single day. We couldn't be prouder of Julie and her achievement shows that Lifeways is not only supporting people in our care, but also the professionals who help shape the future of that care.*





## Current vacancies in the South West



Residential Care for 19 people

### Millwater

Birmingham, West Midlands

#### Shared house

- ✓ 19 bedrooms, each with en-suite
- ✓ Level access throughout
- ✓ Accessible garden

Millwater is a shared building made from three adjoining properties to create a home for 19 people to live happy, fulfilling and independent lives. Ideal for sociable people, our dedicated team provides care for people who are autistic or living with acquired brain injuries, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, Down's syndrome and cerebral palsy.

Recently refurbished all 19 bedrooms have an en-suite bathroom. There are also three shared kitchens, one laundry room, three open-plan living rooms with dining areas, a new sensory room and a lift for wheelchair access. There is plenty of accessible garden space, as well as a shared courtyard, patio and barbecue area.

Close by, there is lots to do at the library and leisure centre, and there are also cafés, shops and restaurants to enjoy. Central Birmingham is offering a wealth of cultural options, shopping and entertainment. The team at Millwater have access to a shared minibus, making it easy for people to enjoy days out.

[Read more](#)



Supported Living for 16 people

### Moor House

Hereford, Herefordshire

#### Purpose-built apartments

- ✓ Mental health specialism
- ✓ Beautiful period building
- ✓ Virtual tour available

Moor House is a development of 16 self-contained and spacious apartments in a beautiful period building in Hereford, providing accommodation and 24-hour support for people with complex mental health needs.

Set within the quiet location of Widemarsh Common, Moor House is a 15 minute stroll from Hereford Town Centre where there are shops, cafés, restaurants an art college and a retail park. The Courtyard, Herefordshire's Cultural Creative Hub Theatre, Cinema and Gallery is a short walk and offers a creative space for the whole community to share.

There is a local gym and football pitches just a 2-minute walk away offering various training sessions and clubs. There is also an excellent cycle route nearby. There are bus stops across the common and Hereford train station is within easy reach with direct services into Birmingham New Street station.

[Read more](#)



Residential Care for 8 people

### Greenlands View

Bartley Green, Birmingham

#### Shared bungalow

- ✓ Eight en-suite bedrooms
- ✓ Sensory bathroom
- ✓ Large wheelchair accessible garden

Greenlands View supports people with complex care and support needs.

The detached bungalow has a kitchen, an open-plan lounge and dining area, and a second living room. There are eight bedrooms, each with a wet room style en-suite, and a shared sensory bathroom with a jacuzzi bath. Residents can also enjoy a sensory room and an accessible garden with a patio, two swings and a BBQ.

Greenlands View is ideal for someone aged between 20 and 40. The current residents engage in a wide range of activities including walking, cooking, socialising, shopping, listening to music, going to the disco, sensory play, arts and crafts, swimming and watching films.

The neighbouring towns of Halesowen, Harborne and Northfield offer a wide range of shops whilst nearby Birmingham has a large range of amenities. Day trips to Liverpool and Manchester are also firm favourites.

[Read more](#)



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