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Celebrating Lifeways' Achievements and Ambitions for 2026

by Andrea Kinkade, Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to our Summer issue of Lifeways Links. I'm delighted to share that our Annual Review for 2025/26 has been published, our yearly look back at the achievements of our brilliant team and, most importantly of all, the amazing people we support.

This is the third Annual Review in my time here as Chief Executive and I am so proud to share the remarkable progress Lifeways has made in that time; continuing our mission to support people with mental ill-health, learning disabilities, autism and complex needs to their very best lives.

I never tire of telling our story as it unfolds. I called 2023/24 our year of transformation, investing time and resources in future proofing our organisation, and I recall describing 2024/25 as a year of reward for all the hard work we have invested. Well, 2025/26 has unquestionably been a year of celebration as we have taken time to reflect not only upon our journey but also thirty years of Lifeways support – a brilliant milestone.

In my experience, the very best organisations make time to celebrate success. It recognises and re-energises hard-working team members, reminding them that the inspirational work they do – that they sometimes cease to recognise – has real, lasting impact.

One of the reasons that I am passionate about celebration is that, as anyone who has a relationship with our sector knows, the challenges are significant and enduring. I will say to anyone that will listen that our principal challenge is that need is increasing, funding is not keeping pace, and that great people are hard to attract, train and retain. But, at Lifeways, whilst we can – and do - campaign for positive change in adult social care, we can only control the work that we do and the way that we do it.

So, our approach is to relentlessly demonstrate how things can be when people with the right values, backed up by the right organisation, give their love, energy and expertise to delivering the very best support. It is this positive outlook and can-do approach, underpinned by our continued investment, that will make us the provider and employer of choice in our sector.

This is a key driver behind our You're Not Just Anyone campaign that you will see more about in the coming year. Our message is clear: if you come to work at Lifeways, you are not just anyone – you are someone with the values and desire to support people to thrive. And, if you are supported by Lifeways, you are not just anyone to us – you are an individual person that we understand, someone we will involve in co-producing your support, designing your own aspirations and outcomes, living your best life.

Some of my favourite stories within the Annual Review feature people with really complex support needs; people for whom institutionalised living has been their past (usually in placements that have failed) and would be their future were it not for the work that our teams do to support them to live with increasing independence in their community. Our aim is to get everyone out of institutions and into their own home continues.

The Annual Review features our team members talking about great lives being led, improving quality, systems that work, greater efficiency, better homes and increased colleague engagement that have led to our commissioners entrusting new support to us. You will also read about Lifeways as a listening and learning organisation: positive risk-taking, trying new things, pushing boundaries to improve lives. Lives worth celebrating!

So, as always, I finish this introduction where I started: celebration. Let us celebrate our teams, the people we support, their passionate families and, of course, hard work, investment, creativity and resilience. Thank you to everyone who has helped make our year of celebration so rewarding.



You can read the full Annual Review on the Lifeways website, where you can explore more stories, insights and achievements from across the year.

With Summer around the corner, it's the perfect moment to enjoy more time outdoors and see nature coming to life. Whatever you're doing we hope you find some time to relax and enjoy getting out and about. As always, Lifelines offers us an opportunity to shine a light on the work we do for the amazing people we support, and their families, and we hope you enjoy this latest edition!



You're not just anyone – Lifeways launches a brand-new recruitment campaign

James Westwood-Beere, Chief People Officer at Lifeways, shares why the new *You're Not Just Anyone* campaign is encouraging more people to consider a career in care.

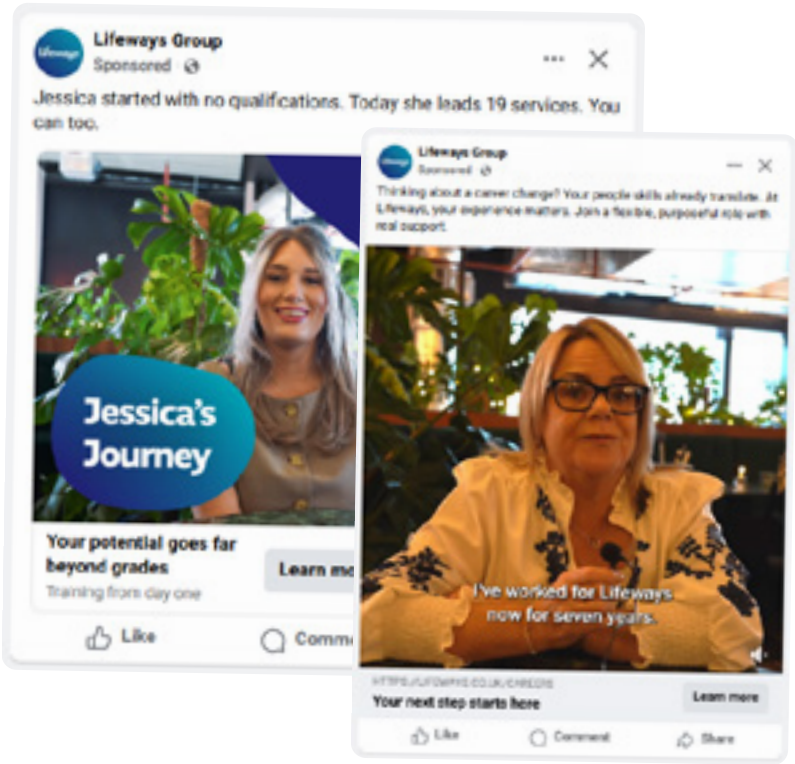
Every day at Lifeways, our teams support more than 4,000 people across the UK to live independent and fulfilling lives. The compassion, patience and dedication shown by our team members make a real difference to the people we support and their families.

That's why we've recently launched a new recruitment campaign called *You're Not Just Anyone*, encouraging people with empathy, compassion and a genuine desire to support others to consider a career in social care.

Supporting people to live the life they choose

The campaign shines a light on the incredible work of Lifeways' frontline teams and the positive impact they have every single day.

At the heart of the campaign is a powerful short film that captures the real impact of this support. The film features Jessie and Caroline, two brilliant people supported by Lifeways, and celebrates the compassion and empathy that help people live the lives they choose.



Inspiring people from all walks of life

You're Not Just Anyone is designed to inspire people from all walks of life to consider a career in care, even if they've never thought about it before.

We hope the campaign will encourage people looking for a career change, those returning to work, military veterans, retirees seeking a new purpose, young people starting their careers, and people from other sectors such as hospitality.

'It takes people with care at their core'

Not just anyone can do this job. It takes people with care at their core. I'm proud to see the difference those people make every day for the individuals and families we support.



You can watch the short film featuring Jessie and Caroline, and learn more about the campaign, on the Lifeways website at www.lifeways.co.uk/careers.

National Women in Tech Award for Lifeways leader!

by Kieron Steele, Chief Financial Officer

I'm absolutely delighted to share the fantastic news that Amanda Brooke, our Chief Transformation Officer, has won the Women in Tech Award at the 2025 Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards – better known as the WAGS.

The WAGS celebrate the extraordinary women leading, innovating and elevating social care, so this is a tremendous achievement. Amanda's win is also a powerful endorsement of the way Lifeways is using technology and innovation to drive improvements in the way we deliver support every day.

Amanda shared how much the recognition means to her: "I feel truly honoured by this recognition. It's a fantastic acknowledgment of Lifeways and the transformation journey we've been on and continue to drive forward.

"I'm deeply grateful to my team and everyone who has contributed to and supported the projects that made this possible. This award isn't just an individual achievement; it reflects the collective effort of everyone who helped turn these changes into a success."

I couldn't agree more. This award speaks of her dedication, expertise and the real, measurable impact she and her team have made, not only within Lifeways, but across the wider sector. Amanda is a true leader and it's wonderful to see her recognised on the national stage.

What makes this even more special is the calibre of this year's awards. They received an unprecedented number of high-quality nominations, showcasing the passion and talent of women driving progress in social care across the UK. To be recognised in that context is a remarkable achievement.



I'm also thrilled that three more incredible team members were shortlisted:

- **Karen Roberts, our Head of Health & Clinical Governance, for the Lifetime Achievement Award**
- **Amber Kingsnorth and Caroline Lynch, shortlisted in the Social Care Superwoman category for their outstanding work supporting people with complex needs**

The winners were selected by an independent judging panel led by awards Patron and former Royal College of Nursing president, Dr Cecilia Anim, which underlines the rigour and credibility behind these accolades.

For me, this recognition is about more than a trophy. It reflects the strong leadership, innovation and clinical excellence we're building across Lifeways, shaping the way we deliver support across the organisation.

Huge congratulations again to Amanda and to all our shortlisted team members. Achievements like this show what's possible when talented, values-driven people come together with a shared purpose.

Our 30 wishes journey continues!

by Gareth Roberts, Quality Director

As part of our 30th anniversary celebrations last year, we introduced our 30 Wishes initiative, creating special, meaningful experiences for the people we support. Following it's success, I'm delighted that we're continuing this into 2026.

Our teams nominate people they support for a once-in-a-lifetime treat that could be something fun, memorable or truly personal. We've loved seeing the joy these wishes bring and below are some of the latest examples.

Addison builds confidence with a trip to London

Addison, who we support in Warwickshire, was nominated for a 30 Wishes award to visit London Zoo and enjoy an overnight stay in the city.

A passionate volunteer and active member of the Mental Health LEAP Council, Addison has grown in confidence over time and is now travelling more independently and connecting with others in ways that once felt out of reach.



On hearing about the award, Addison shared:

I'm overwhelmed but feel very pleased. I have always wanted to go to London, and visiting London Zoo will be a lovely experience for me.

For Addison, this wish is a chance to recognise and celebrate how far she's come and supports her to keep building confidence for the future.

Alastair reconnects with a friend in Edinburgh

Alastair, who lives in a supported living service in Northumberland, will soon travel to Edinburgh to spend quality time with a close friend and enjoy a meal together.

He summed it up simply: "I'm so pleased. I will get to see my friend and get to go out and have food."

Reconnection and relationships are such an important part of wellbeing. For Alastair, this trip is all about friendship and having something special to look forward to.

Julie enjoys a well-deserved spa day

Julie, who has made incredible progress in her mental health recovery at our service in Preston, will soon enjoy a relaxing spa day at Ribby Hall.

She has worked incredibly hard on her recovery, and this experience is a wonderful way to celebrate her achievements and enjoy something just for herself.

“There are plenty more wishes still to come, and I'm excited to see what 2026 has in store. It's been brilliant to see the smiles and confidence these moments bring.”

Erin's move to Lewis Gardens is life changing

by Alison, Erin's mum

As Erin's mum, I can honestly say the move to Lewis Gardens has been transformational for her and it's all down to her new surroundings and the incredible support team around her.

Before moving in, Erin was stuck in a bit of a rut. She didn't have close friends nearby, and that was limiting her independence and confidence. Since settling into Lewis Gardens, she has absolutely blossomed. Her mental health has greatly improved, and she's grown in confidence in ways we hadn't seen before. Knowing the support team are there for her has given Erin the reassurance she needs to try new things and do more for herself.

She's formed lovely relationships with the support team and she's also built friendships with other people living at Lewis Gardens. That sense of belonging has made such a difference.

Erin adores her new bedroom and has really made it her own. She's used her creative skills to add sensory lighting and her own furnishings, creating a space she feels proud of. One of the biggest changes has been her whiteboard. She chose to put it up herself and has written out her daily tasks, including brushing her teeth and hair, having a shower, keeping her room tidy and emptying the bin. She follows it to the letter! Before moving to Lewis Gardens, this simply wouldn't have been something she'd have done independently.

She's also discovered a route she feels comfortable walking to the local gym and now goes a couple of times a week. When she lived at home, Erin needed lifts everywhere, so seeing her head off on foot with confidence is amazing.

Erin has even developed her own evening beauty routine. With support, she has a shower and then enjoys some pampering with face masks and skincare. The team have also supported her to have her nails done during a one-to-one outing with a support worker, which she absolutely loved.



The support team have been excellent in encouraging Erin to learn new daily living skills, from hanging her washing out to loading the dishwasher. She now helps with the big food shop too, choosing food and drinks and packing the bags. These might seem like small steps, but for Erin they represent huge progress.

As a family, we truly believe this has been the best move for her. And we're not the only ones who can see the difference – Erin's social worker recently shared, "Erin loves living there and is really happy."

For us, that says it all.

Beada House celebrates diversity with a special cultural day

by Beverley Deeming, Deputy Manager

The special cultural day we recently hosted at Beada House couldn't have gone any better! It was a celebration that truly reflected the diversity, warmth and community spirit of the people we support.

Together with two of the people we support, Sara and Addison, we co-produced the event to create a space where everyone could share their unique backgrounds, faiths and experiences. We held the celebration at Bedworth Methodist Church, bringing together residents, team members, friends and local commissioners for a vibrant and inclusive day.



We were also honoured to welcome the first-ever Gurkha Mayor of Nuneaton and Bedworth, Bhim Saru, who joined us in recognising and celebrating the rich diversity within our community.

At Beada House, we support people from around the world, including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Poland, with a wide range of faiths and cultural backgrounds. I felt it was important to bring everyone together to share their stories so we could better understand and appreciate one another. Lifeways has been incredibly supportive throughout, and I've had encouragement from colleagues across the organisation to make this vision a reality.



Sara and Addison put their hearts and souls into planning the day. Seeing this truly co-produced event come to life was a fantastic moment, not just for us as a team, but for everyone who took part.

The Mayor kindly led introductions, with each person sharing something about their background. We also enjoyed interactive activities, including matching flags to countries and taking part in quizzes, which sparked plenty of conversation and laughter.

What meant the most to me, though, was seeing the confidence it inspired. Some of the people we support don't usually speak up in group settings, but on the day, they found their voices, shared their experiences and fully embraced the celebration. Watching them grow in confidence and enjoy themselves so openly was genuinely wonderful.

For me, this cultural day wasn't just a one-off event. It was a powerful reminder of what can happen when we create the space for people to be seen, heard and celebrated.



Unveiling a new welcoming hub at Hird Road in Bradford

by Estella Dick, Area Manager

Our new hub at Hird Road in Bradford is a fantastic space designed to bring people together and create more opportunities for meaningful activities.

The hub, connected to our Hird Road supported living service, officially opened its doors in November. We marked the occasion with a small celebration alongside our colleagues from Yorkshire Housing, who very kindly donated the space.

The building was previously used as an annexe at a Yorkshire Housing property and became vacant when a customer moved on to a more suitable home. Rather than seeing it stand empty, we saw an opportunity. Today, it has been transformed into a warm and inclusive environment that will benefit the people we support for years to come.

Just days after opening, the hub was already being put to good use. Our team held their first meeting there to plan a full schedule of activities, which is exactly the kind of energy and purpose we had hoped the space would inspire.

For me, this achievement stands as a testament to the power of true partnership. It has only been possible through the collaborative efforts of our dedicated support team and the unwavering commitment of Gary Wardle at Yorkshire Housing. Gary has played a pivotal role in turning the dreams of the people we support into reality, and I'm incredibly grateful for the shared vision that brought this project to life.

Yorkshire Housing made a significant contribution to renovating the hub, providing new flooring and furniture, including tables, chairs and gardening tools, as well as giving the space a fresh coat of paint. The result is somewhere that feels welcoming, practical and full of possibility.

Gary Wardle, Senior Supported Housing Officer at Yorkshire Housing, shared: "For us, it was never just about giving the annexe a fresh coat of paint, it was about creating something that genuinely supports people's day-to-day lives.

"We wanted a space that felt welcoming, flexible and truly theirs. Seeing people already using it to plan activities, spend time together and take pride in looking after the outdoor areas shows just how much it means. We couldn't be happier for them!"

At Lifeways, we're committed to helping the people we support to live fulfilling and independent lives. This new hub is an excellent example of bringing that commitment to life with a welcoming space where people can meet, try new activities and enjoy time together. I'm looking forward to seeing how it continues to grow and evolve, shaped by the people who use it every day.

Worcestershire walk and talk group makes an instant impact!

by Craig Taylor, Area Manager

We're so proud of the impact our Worcestershire walk and talk group is having for the people we support.

We launched the group in January 2025 with help from our fantastic local service managers, and we're now thrilled to have reached our one-year anniversary. Held on the first Monday of every month, it brings together colleagues and the people we support from five local supported living services. What started as a simple idea has grown into something that genuinely boosts confidence, improves mental health and helps people form lasting friendships.



From the outset, the aim was to create a relaxed, welcoming environment where people could engage with their local community while enhancing their wellbeing and I truly feel we've achieved that.

Our November event, which saw around 30 participants come together at Worcester Racecourse for a wheelchair-accessible walk along the River Severn, was a perfect example. It's been fantastic to see so many of the people we support getting involved.

One of the best things about Lifeways is the freedom to shape local initiatives. The encouragement we've received has allowed this group to grow into something truly shaped by the people who attend and driven by what matters to them.



Sarah Eastwood, Service Manager at our Stourside supported living service in Stourport-on-Severn, has seen the difference first-hand. She shared: "One gentleman in our care has always struggled with anxiety when accessing the community, but he's always one of the first by the door and ready to join the group because he feels it's a safe and supportive environment."

She also referenced the friendships forming across services. "Another person we support at Stourside has sometimes struggled with making friends, but this walk and talk group has given him the space to form close friendships with others, and he keeps in touch with them regularly." Jessie, who lives at our Stourside service, shared her thoughts: "I think it's a fantastic way of getting everyone together and sharing new experiences together."

For me, that's what this is all about - building connections, confidence and community. Looking ahead, we're excited to build on this momentum. We're planning to invite families, social workers and other local stakeholders to join future sessions, strengthening community links even further.

We're also exploring the idea of introducing a spin class at a local gym, tailored specifically for people with learning disabilities, to support both mental and physical wellbeing.

With lots of exciting plans for the year ahead, and the people we support eager to see what's next, the Worcestershire walk and talk group is set to continue going from strength to strength.

The Maples achieves 'Good' in its first-ever inspection

by Cherianne Howe, Head of Regulation and Governance

A huge congratulations to the team at The Maples, which achieved a 'Good' rating in its very first inspection. Opened in 2023, The Maples is a purpose-built service of five bungalows and a staff hub, supporting adults with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs.

Inspectors highlighted several areas of exceptional practice including learning, culture, people's experience, leadership, and innovation. They highlighted the truly person-centred support provided by the team, alongside strong safeguarding and proactive risk management.

The inspection also praised the thoughtfully designed environment and use of assistive technology, which help people live as independently as possible. The team's commitment to approaches such as Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), Active Support and trauma-informed care



was also recognised, along with a strong culture of learning and continuous improvement.

It was wonderful to see positive feedback from families too. One relative shared: "The care is great, the environment is great. The staff are great."

To achieve such a strong result at a first inspection is a fantastic testament to the dedication and professionalism of the whole team. Registered Manager Katie Butlin added:

We are extremely proud to have achieved a 'Good' CQC rating. It motivates us to keep learning, developing and innovating as we continue striving towards an 'Outstanding' rating.

New resources for families and the people we support

by Jodie Allen-Cawley, Head of Quality

I'm really pleased to share some new resources for the people we support and their families or carers.

The Nourish Family and Carers Guide has been co-produced with our Lifeways Family Advisory Group. It's designed to help families be fully involved in support planning. It promotes transparency, and ensures everyone involved in the person's support has the information they need to work in partnership.

We've also created a set of easy read guides for the people we support, covering *How to Keep Your Money Safe*, *How to Be Independent with Medication*, *How to Use the Internet Safely*, and *Understanding Hate Crime, Hate Crime and Cyberbullying*. These guides help build confidence, independence, and safety.

How to keep Your Money Safe

1 What is money?

Money is the coins and notes that we use to buy things we need like food or clothes.

Counting money, and it is safe to use it and how to keep it safe.

What is Medication?

Medication is something you take to help you feel well. It can be a pill, liquid, or injection.

Why Do I Take It?

You take medication to help with:

- Pain
- Mood
- Sleep
- Concentration
- Epilepsy
- Other health problems

Always take it the way your doctor tells you.

How to Take It Safely

- Take it at the right time
- Take the right amount
- Ask for help if you are not sure
- Keep it in a safe place

If I Feel Unwell

Sometimes medication can make you feel strange, for example:

- Talking or shouting a lot
- Feeling very restless
- Not keeping still
- Feeling "not yourself"

If this happens:

- Tell your doctor, pharmacist, or support worker
- Do not stop taking it on your own
- Write down how you feel

keep my money?

2

Money in a bank is safer to keep at home.

account?

an place in the bank where you trust should use it. This must be in your support plan. Your trust statement to show you how your account.

account to:

benefits

you need it - using your bank card. a PIN code - a 4-digit number.

anyone your PIN number

If you would like a copy of any of the new guides, please contact the manager at your or your loved one's service.



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