

ISSUE 14 | SUMMER 2026

lifewayslinks

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

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Welcome to
the Summer
edition of
Lifeways Links!

Interactive PDF



Hello, I'm Ros Creamer
and I'm your local Lifeways
Business Development and
Relationship Manager for
the **North 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 ros.creamer@lifeways.co.uk.

I hope you enjoy this latest issue of LifewaysLinks 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 team members - 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



Kirsty Byrne
Referral Assessment
Practitioner



Monique Caton
Referral Assessment
Practitioner



Charlene Barlow
Referral Assessment
Practitioner



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 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.

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.

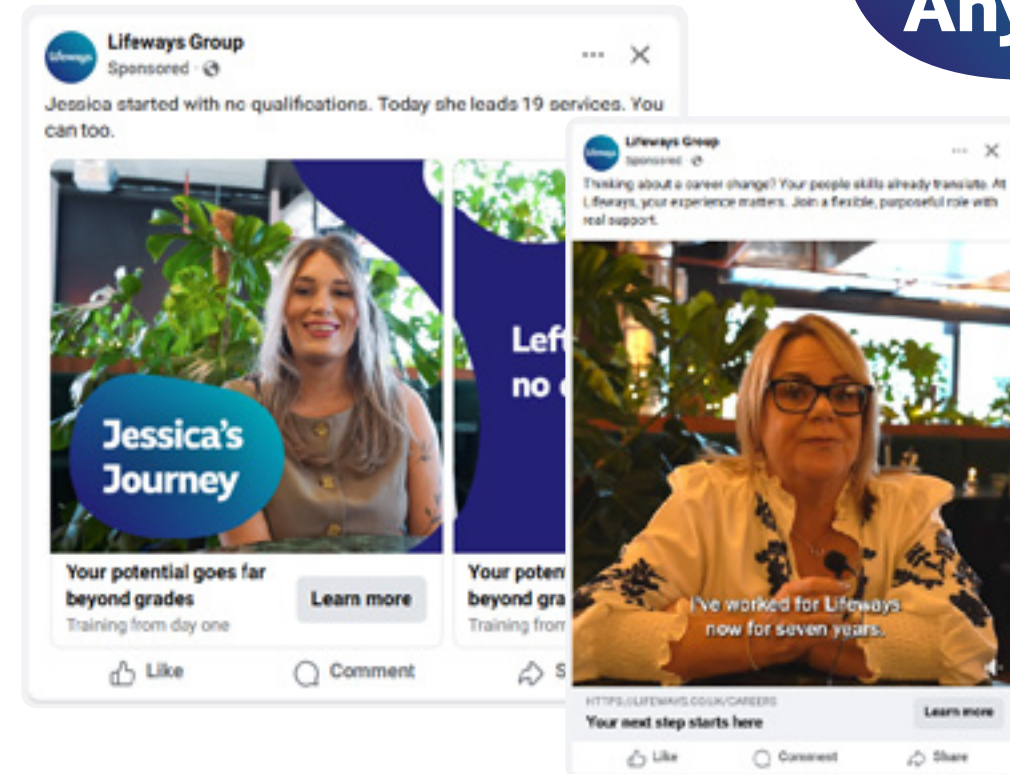
At the heart of the campaign is a powerful short film that captures the real impact of this support. The film features Jessie and Caroline, two brilliant people supported by Lifeways, and celebrates the compassion and empathy that help people live the lives they choose.

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.

**You're
Not Just
Anyone**



'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.

No qualifications? No problem! Jessica forges her own path!

by Suzanne Rosenberg,
Head of Learning and Talent

Albert Einstein famously said: “The only source of knowledge is experience.” And in Jessica O’Boyle’s case, it couldn’t be more accurate. From leaving school without formal qualifications to leading 19 Lifeways services as an Area Manager, Jessica’s journey shows what’s possible with passion and purpose.

As Head of Learning and Talent, I have the privilege of seeing people grow and develop across Lifeways and Jessica’s journey is one that really stands out to me.

Jessica didn’t originally consider a career in social care. At school, she leant more towards practical activities and sports, and initially imagined a career in the military. But after starting a hands-on support role she discovered a natural affinity for helping others – a role that has grown into a leadership position that impacts hundreds of lives.

As an Area Manager overseeing services across Staffordshire and Walsall, Jessica

is responsible for ensuring high-quality, consistent support. It’s a role I know she finds both challenging and deeply rewarding.

For Jessica, the reward lies in seeing people grow – both the people we support and the team members she works alongside. “It’s about building confidence, helping people develop skills, and supporting team members to grow into careers within social care,” she shared. “That’s what makes it worthwhile.”

Starting From Scratch

Jessica’s own journey began without any formal qualifications. Her first role was as a frontline support worker, guided by a simple but powerful question: How would I want my loved one to be supported?

That person-centred mindset became the foundation of her career and led her to begin formal training and qualifications, progressing from Level 2 in Health and Social Care to completing Level 5 in Leadership, all while balancing work and family life. “I remember doing coursework during maternity leave,”



she recalled. “I could tell you about social care, but writing it down was a challenge!”

Rising Through the Ranks

Jessica quickly demonstrated her commitment to quality. Within three months of stepping into an acting manager role, she faced an inspection and successfully turned the service around in just six to nine months. Her leadership delivered outstanding practice, earning praise from senior leaders.

What I admire most is her attitude to promotion, only accepting a role when she felt she could genuinely contribute at

**You’re
Not Just
Anyone**

the next level and deliver the quality she expected of herself and others. That mindset eventually led her to apply for - and secure - the Area Manager position at Lifeways.

The Values That Matter

Jessica believes that great social care professionals are defined more by their values than their qualifications. As she explained to me: “You’re born with the values needed. We can teach skills and provide qualifications, but that natural empathy and commitment to doing the right thing - that’s what makes the difference.”

Her story is a powerful reminder to me and to anyone thinking about a career in social care, that it isn’t just a job - it’s a calling filled with opportunity. With the right values and support, people can build meaningful, impactful careers that change lives – including their own.

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 its 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.

Ugne's dream trip to St James' Park

Ugne, who lives at a supported living service in Berwick-upon-Tweed, is set to enjoy an autism-friendly tour of her favourite football team Newcastle United's home ground, St James' Park.

When Ugne heard the news, she was over the moon. The visit is expected to be a truly special experience, giving her the chance to explore a place she loves in a way that feels comfortable and accessible for her.

Her Service Manager, Lorraine Noble, who nominated her for the initiative, shared just how much the trip will mean: "We can't begin to tell you how much this means for Ugne. This one trip has possibly made her year and we all know she's going to come back with a new Newcastle FC shirt."

For Ugne, this wish is about more than football – it's about confidence, excitement and creating a memory she'll treasure.



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.”

Leon builds the future he deserves at Hullard Hall

by Melonie Duffin, Service Manager

When Leon arrived at Hullard Hall at the end of October, he was just 18 and had already faced more instability than many experience in a lifetime. Leon has Global Development Delay, Autism and ADHD and after leaving the family home at 14, his teenage years were marked by uncertainty, temporary accommodation and periods of homelessness. By the time he reached us, he had very few belongings, no furniture, and over a year later was still waiting for a decision on his Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Leon moved into an empty flat, and although he was grateful for the space, it was clear that starting from scratch was taking a toll on his comfort, his confidence, and his emotional wellbeing. I knew that helping him feel at home would be the first and most important step in supporting him to rebuild his life.

Working closely with our team and with Gorse Hill Youth Centre, somewhere Leon had connected with before, we brought together everything he needed to make his flat feel like a real home. From essentials like a bed, sofa and white goods, to the smaller touches like kitchen equipment and soft furnishings, the transformation was remarkable. Seeing Leon's reaction as his flat took shape was incredibly rewarding; you could almost feel his sense of stability and pride beginning to grow.

As he settled in, we focused on helping him develop routines and build confidence around important daily living skills such as cooking, cleaning, food shopping and banking. Understandably, his personal hygiene and self-care had been affected by years without a stable environment or consistent support, and this is something we focused on for Leon. Through patient guidance, role modelling, and plenty of encouragement, Leon's self-awareness and independence have flourished. His progress has been a real testament to the power of a safe, supportive space.

A major milestone came when Leon's long-awaited PIP claim was finally approved and backdated. For the first time, he could afford



the small comforts and choices that many of us take for granted. Our team continues to support him with budgeting and money management so he can maintain this new financial stability with confidence.

One of the most uplifting parts of Leon's journey has been watching him give back. He now volunteers at Gorse Hill Youth Centre, signing in young people and families and helping out at events. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive – they've seen the same growth in maturity, pride and self-belief that we see every day.

Leon is warm, helpful, and genuinely funny with a great sense of humour. His cheekiness is part of his charm and a sign of how comfortable he's become in his surroundings. Given the adversity he's faced, watching him move forward with such determination has been inspiring. He now feels secure, cared for and has truly turned his life around.

Supporting Leon has been one of those experiences that reminds me why this work matters. With the right environment, the right encouragement, and a community around him, he's now building the stable, fulfilling future he deserves.

Nicola's journey from TUPE transfer to becoming Lifeways' newest Regional Director

by Amy Gilbert,
Managing Director, Supported Living

Seeing Nicola Beasley step into the role of Regional Director for our R03 North West region is not only a proud moment for her, but for all of us across our supported living division.

Nicola's journey with Lifeways began more than a decade ago, when she transferred to us through TUPE in 2015 after our acquisition of Care UK's Learning Disability division. She has often spoken about how daunting that change initially felt, but also how welcomed and supported she was from the very beginning. That's something I'm incredibly proud of, because it reflects the culture we're building together across every region.

Nicola joined us as a Service Manager before becoming a Registered Manager, taking on the oversight of CQC requirements. Just one year later, in 2016, she was promoted to Area Manager, leading 13 services across

Staffordshire. Her commitment, depth of knowledge and ability to build stable, high-performing teams really stood out. She was joined by several team members she had worked with previously, creating a real sense of continuity and shared purpose that has underpinned their success ever since.

What inspires me most about Nicola is her constant drive to keep improving. Living Ambitions, under the wider Lifeways Group, already holds an overall Good rating from the CQC, but she's been working closely with our Quality Team to build on this to reach Outstanding. She has never shied away from a challenge, and she leads with a blend of ambition and care that perfectly reflects our values.

Nicola also talks passionately about the journey Lifeways has been on over the past few years. Moving from a mostly paper-based organisation



to a more digital way of working has made a real difference, giving teams better visibility, reducing admin time and strengthening our ability to deliver consistent, high-quality care. Nicola sees that impact first hand across her region every day, and knows how vital it is as we continue modernising and evolving our services.

As Nicola steps into her new role, succeeding James Dennison, she brings a clear vision for the future. She's committed to making sure services across Lancashire, Cumbria and beyond not only maintain high standards, but continue to grow, innovate and deliver the exceptional

support people deserve. And knowing Nicola, I'm confident she will do exactly that.

I couldn't be prouder of her achievement. Stories like hers show what's possible when talented, dedicated people are supported to thrive. I'm excited to work alongside her as we shape the next chapter of Supported Living at Lifeways.

Emma rebuilds life at Cobblestone Court

by Ian Billows, Service Manager
at Cobblestone Court

When I think about the incredible people we support at Cobblestone Court, Emma's journey is one that will stay with me forever. She has been part of our community for many years, and seeing the resilience she has shown in rebuilding her life, day by day, has been inspiring.

When Emma first arrived with us, she'd already been through so much. Back in 2010, during an incredibly difficult period, she experienced a crisis that led to a fall and a severe injury, leaving her with no feeling from the waist down. What followed was years of hospital stays and time in residential care before she finally found her home here with us in Liverpool.

Emma has been really open about how low she felt during that period, including a time where it seemed like nothing could change. But everything shifted when she had what she calls her "lightbulb moment". She realised she couldn't change her injury, but she could change everything around her and that's exactly what she set out to do.

She reconnected with her faith and started working with personal trainers at the gym. If you could see the upper-body strength she's built, you'd understand how determined she has been. She's also begun regaining some leg strength and is relearning how to walk. Watching that progress has been remarkable.

When Emma first came to us, she was understandably guarded. Trust didn't come easily. But over time, with consistency, encouragement and a supportive team around her, she began to open up. Now, when something matters to her, she speaks up proudly and with a confidence that has grown every year.

One of the things I'm most proud of is her commitment to learning. Emma has thrown herself into every opportunity for personal development. She's completed mental health and wellbeing qualifications, counselling-related training, first aid and a whole range of certificates – 18 in total! She often tells us how proud she is to show them, and we're just as proud to see how far she's come.

She's also learned more about herself. She talks openly about having ADHD and how,



for years, she believed it meant she wasn't capable. Now she sees things differently, understanding how her brain works and how to work with it rather than against it.

Emma isn't stopping here. Her next ambition is to study at university and become a primary school teacher. She's already gaining experience by mentoring a young child with autism and working as a teaching assistant. Her confidence, passion and empathy shine through, and I truly believe she will achieve whatever she sets her mind to.

She's also beginning to think about living independently. It's something she sees as the next natural step in her journey, and we're supporting her every step of the way, just as we always have.

I'm incredibly proud of Emma. Watching her reclaim her future has been one of the greatest joys of my role, and I look forward to seeing where life takes her next.



Darren enjoys dream day at Liverpool's Anfield Stadium

by Samantha Harrington,
Service Manager at Ivy Cottage

Supporting Darren to visit Liverpool FC's Anfield Stadium is one of those moments that reminds me exactly why we do what we do at Ivy Cottage.

Darren lives with severe cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, but with the right support he continues to enjoy a rich and fulfilling life. Recently he has gained access to his own mobility vehicle, which has opened up many more opportunities for trips and activities.

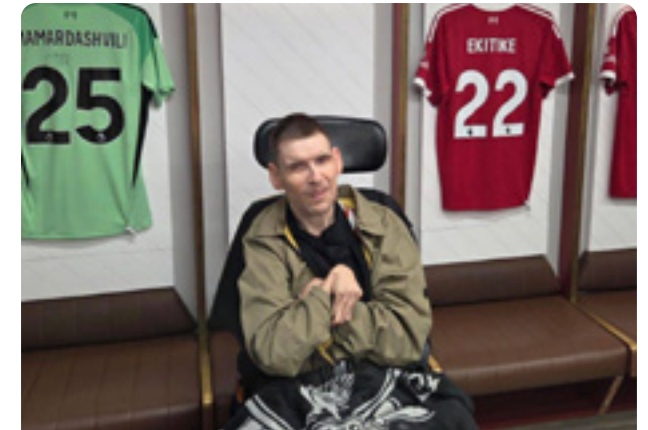
At the start of each year, Darren's support team work with him to identify goals and experiences he would like to achieve. Because he has limited verbal communication, the team use a combination of pictures, options and observation of his body language, facial expressions and sounds to understand his preferences.

As a lifelong Liverpool FC fan, this year he made it clear he wanted to visit their iconic Anfield stadium. So when the opportunity came up for him to enjoy a stadium tour, the whole team was just as excited as he was.



Supported by one of his key workers and the service team leader, he had a fantastic day and you could see how much he loved it. He was smiling in all the pictures and really enjoyed being there. Seeing all the trophies up close, exploring the changing room and looking out at the pitch he's watched on TV so many times was a moment he truly cherished.

Days like this show just how much personalised support helps people enjoy moments that matter – moments where someone feels seen, valued and able to enjoy something deeply personal to them.



I feel so proud of him and of our team for helping make his wish come true. These experiences might seem small to some, but to the people we support, they mean so much more.

Darren and the team are already planning his next visit – this time a trip to the seaside!

Current vacancies in the North West



[Read more](#)

Supported Living for 8 people

South Drive

Liverpool, Merseyside

Purpose-built apartments

- ✓ Mental health specialism

South Drive offers eight one-bedroom apartments, each with an open-plan kitchen and dining area, a living room, and an en-suite bathroom. Each apartment comes with modern white goods and integrated appliances and is beautifully finished so anyone moving in can really make it their own. Outside there's an accessible communal garden with a patio for spending time together. With a focus on community, South Drive provides a safe environment for people to live independently, while receiving the personalised support they need.

South Drive is in a vibrant residential area with restaurants, pubs and takeaways. There's a library, a post office, church and a cricket club within walking distance and The Royal Albert Dock is a fifteen-minute drive away. People can also enjoy picturesque walks in Wavertree Park and the surrounding areas.



[Read more](#)

Supported Living for 12 people

Croft House

Preston, Lancashire

Purpose-built apartments

- ✓ Mental health specialism

Set in the heart of Preston, Croft House is a development of 21 high quality, self-contained apartments that provide accommodation and 24 hour support for people with complex mental health needs.

The on-site team of Recovery Workers, with additional support from our peripatetic Quality and Practice Team, works to support and sustain the transition for people with mental health needs 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.

At Croft House we can support people living with mental health conditions across the spectrum of mental illness, including schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, anorexia and bulimia, self-harming, anxiety and depression.



[Read more](#)

Residential Care for 8 people

Dukes House

Wallasey, Merseyside

Life-changing residential care

- ✓ Learning disabilities
- ✓ Autism
- ✓ Physical disabilities
- ✓ Acquired brain injuries
- ✓ Mental health

Dukes House is a welcoming, supportive and stimulating residential service for people with complex care needs. The property has eight en-suite bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, lounge area, laundry room, a quiet room and a shared bathroom with a hydrotherapy bath.

Life at Dukes House is suitable for people with complex needs including brain injuries, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, non-complex physical disabilities and autism. The people we currently support at Dukes House are aged between 29 and 63, and live with autism, learning disabilities and challenges with communication.

They enjoy a variety of interests including walking, swimming, cycling, computers, rug making and beading, listening to music, baking, watching television, sports and visiting family. The property also has a large, accessible garden with a patio area, a sensory room, a family visiting room, and a training kitchen to support people with learning cooking skills.

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