



## Supported living in the West Midlands

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# Welcome to Lifeways Links!

The Lifeways newsletter for the West Midlands region

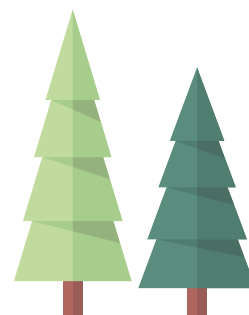
At Lifeways, our commitment is to providing extraordinary support that creates fantastic outcomes for adults with diverse and complex needs. We do this through our stability, our local teams, our strong relationships, and our shared focus on quality and improved outcomes.

We're proud to be known for celebrating the positivity, individuality, and ambition of each person we support.

This newsletter brings you the latest news and articles from Lifeways and our services in the West Midlands.

## Hear from Ros

Your local Community Engagement and Development Manager.



Hi, I'm Ros Creamer.

In my role, I've supported many people across the West Midlands to move into their new homes and I've seen the extensive work that my colleagues have put into delivering this support to enable people to live independently at the heart of their community.

We really hope this newsletter will be of interest to you. Please contact me if I can assist you with placements of individuals.

From myself, my team and everyone at Lifeways, we hope you have a lovely festive season and a happy new year!



**Ros Creamer**

Community Engagement and Development Manager in the West Midlands.

**0333 321 4881**

**Get in touch**

### Meet our Enquiry, Referral and Assessment Managers



**Jolene Instan**



**Lisa Reynolds**

# Latest updates from your region

## Supporting your winter planning

After another tough year with so much pressure still on the NHS, hospitals and the care sector as a whole, it's reassuring to know that Lifeways are still able to welcome adults with diverse and complex needs over the winter period, often at short notice.

## But what about mandatory vaccinations?

We are in a strong position following the introduction of mandatory Covid-19 vaccinations, with none of our services closing, not even temporarily, and many services completely unaffected. You can rest assured that your clients will be in safe hands with Lifeways.

## How can Lifeways help?

We support 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 teams are always available to work hand-in-hand with you, from arranging introductions, assessments and visits, all the way through to the move being complete and the kettle going on.

If you've got worries about how to place individuals this winter, please do get in touch with us!

## It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

The people we support are busy putting up their Christmas decorations and planning gifts!

Like last year, we imagine this Christmas may look a little different from many in years gone by.

Here's a Christmas poem by Lee, who lives at our supported living service in Leeds. It's reprinted here with Lee's permission:



## A Normal Christmas

Here comes another Christmas  
But Covid's still in the air  
This time it feels different  
Optimisms everywhere

As people start their shopping  
And plan for the big day  
Let's hope people take their boosters  
So, nothing gets in the way

We'll be able spend time with our families  
Throughout the winter holidays  
And think of those who we've lost  
We'll love them forever and always

We can dream for a white one  
But we know it won't come  
We dream of a safer place  
Although it's too late for some

We know it's not over  
But if we all do our best  
We'll have our normal celebrations  
As we stand up to the Covid test

So' normality's coming  
With all those festive cheers  
Wishing you all a Merry Christmas  
And we hope a happy new year





# Why community settings, not private specialist hospitals, are vital for longer-term support

By Alac Pengelly, Lifeways' Regional Operations Director for the South Region.

## “What can you offer the people you are assessing that we can't?”

The private specialist hospital's wood-panelled room seemed to quiver from its director's booming voice. The year was 1993.

I can't say I wasn't intimidated. After all, what 23-year-old newly registered care home manager wouldn't be?

However, my answer was clear – if rather hushed.

“We can offer a normal life in a community house,” I told the hospital director.

The private specialist hospital I was visiting at the time housed roughly 1,500 people. The two people at the private hospital I'd been assessing - who the director had been referring to - presented with a learning disability and mental health conditions.

These diagnoses meant they lived with 27 other people in one of the hospital's various wards.

## Scandals

Tragically, over the years we've seen and been horrified by various scandals in private specialist hospitals - with the most notorious being Winterbourne View.

In 2011, when reports of the horrendous abuse and mistreatment at Winterbourne View came to light, we've seen a plethora of central government policy and local authority initiatives seeking to prevent parallel tragedies from ever happening again.

The key aim behind these initiatives discourages the use of private specialist hospital settings for long-term accommodation for people who live with autism or a learning disability.

Sadly, one decade later, we continue to see reports detailing incidents of mistreatment in private specialist hospitals.

## Continued reductions

It's not all bad news. Encouragingly, in the past decade we've seen a reduction of 1,350 people who live in state-funded private specialist hospital inpatient beds, Learning Disability Today reported earlier this year. However, that still means there are 2,050 individuals who live in a private specialist hospital setting.

The question we in health and social care should ask is: Do we think that figure is good enough?

We should acknowledge that the general level of support in hospitals in recent years may mean a better environment than we saw three decades ago.

Thankfully, private specialist hospitals in 2021 may be less intimidating, and they may be more personalised for the individual.

But what a hospital can never provide is a long-term home for a person, or a sense of belonging or community – both key elements to forming a life a person would choose.

## The task of supporting a person with complex support needs in the community can be tricky - and working in social care isn't easy.

Yet with the right support package, most - if not all individuals - can live in community settings, not private specialist hospitals. We've seen it here at Lifeways.

**The almost 5,000 adults we support thrive and are supported to grow their independence in open, non-restrictive settings, almost always connected to a community in a city, town, or village.**

For example, we operate The Avenue, a large detached house which is a supported living service for four adults with complex needs. The service is just a ten minute walk into the town of Tiverton, Devon.

Then there's Loch Park in Moray, north-east Scotland, where adults who live with learning disabilities take part in ventures such as selling sustainably sourced food and firewood to the community.

Both these services are hugely different - but what binds them is a commitment to take part in and be part of the local community.

### Win-win

Supported living settings are a win-win for the taxpayer, too. The average cost for a person's support as an in-patient is £3,000 a week - or £156,000 a year.

Meanwhile in community settings, costs vary dramatically depending on the individual's needs, but you're generally looking at half that cost.

By the end of 2020, 3,730 incidents of restraint in NHS-funded inpatient beds were recorded in one month. This means over a

year, there could be over 44,000 separate incidents of physical intervention.

And the reality of restraint-heavy care gets even more worrying. Of the 2,050 people who are currently inpatients in private specialist hospitals, each individual could be subject to a physical intervention 22 times a year. Although this figure would vary heavily from individual to individual - as not every person is subject to physical interventions - the number still shows a disquieting dynamic.

### Talking louder

Of course, on occasion, private specialist hospital admittance may be the best-fitting environment for some people who live with autism or learning disabilities.

But for an overwhelming majority of individuals, I'm convinced that the social care sector can assist with providing community settings for individuals who currently live in private specialist hospitals.

While we at Lifeways don't think that the model of community-based settings are a panacea, or fix-all solution, we know that people who receive support living in the community make social care better for everyone.

This means community-based settings benefit large swathes of society: individuals who need support, support teams, funders, community members, and taxpayers.

Let's rewind to the beginning. What happened to the two people I assessed back in 1993? They both moved into the community-based house I ran as Registered Manager. Thankfully, both individuals flourished in the independence-boosting setting they lived in.

**Would I change anything I said to the private specialist hospital director I was talking to back then? No, I wouldn't - but I would say it a little louder.**

[Read more](#)

# Hear from the people we support

## ‘It’s just perfect in every way’: How Joel’s mum found his perfect place, at our Tipton supported living service

**What do you do when your grown-up child lives with multiple support needs, but you can’t secure a formal diagnosis or find the right support?**

**This was the struggle for Denise, and her son Joel, who’s now 23 years old.**

Since Joel was a very young age, Denise noted that he wasn’t quite like other children. He was a late developer, didn’t talk much, and never ran around as toddlers his age do.

“My friend has got a son who was born a day earlier than Joel,” says Denise. “You shouldn’t compare - but it’s always there.”

After failing to get a diagnosis from a paediatrician, Joel was eventually diagnosed with dyspraxia, a condition which affects physical co-ordination.

Joel then attended a council-run school for children with special needs, where he got on well, and, when older, went on to study at two colleges.



### Not thriving

Yet Joel was not thriving – and was often too frightened to leave Denise’s house, where he lived.

Then, over two years ago, after a chance encounter with a neighbour, Denise found out that Savery Gardens, a Lifeways supported living service, was being built just a few minutes’ walk from her home.

Based in Tipton, in Sandwell, Savery Gardens is a custom-built supported living service, made up of 18 one-bedroom self-contained apartments.

This style of supported living service provides each individual with both independence and support when they need it.

For Denise, her mission had begun: to find a way to secure funding for Joel to move to Savery Gardens, once the service had been completed.

Continues on next page ►

## Finding evidence

Yet demonstrating Joel's needs in order to secure funding proved to be tricky. "I'd got no evidence [of Joel's support needs]," said Denise.

Then, early last year, Denise secured a virtual appointment between Joel and a psychiatrist, who is qualified to formally diagnose individuals.

To Denise's relief, Joel was now diagnosed with a learning disability, which entitled him to more support from her local authority.

However, further evidencing Joel's support needs would prove to be another piece of the puzzle to secure support.

But after meeting with a social prescriber at Joel's local GP, Denise acted on their suggestion: to ask the two colleges Joel had attended to write a report on him.

## Turning point

Gathering this evidence would prove to be the turning point.

"It just all turned around," says Denise. Encouraged by her local Lifeways Enquiries, Referrals and Assessment Manager, Lisa Reynolds, Denise now had the needed evidence to secure funding from the local authority for Joel's placement.

This meant Joel could now move to his own self-contained apartment in Savery Gardens, which by this time had opened.

Joel moved to Savery Gardens in late July.

So how has Joel been getting on?

## The perfect place

**"He said he loves it there. The best thing about Savery Gardens is that it's a ten-minute walk from me. And it's the perfect place, because he's always lived in that area. He's not scared to walk around. It's just perfect in every way."**

Denise

Denise is relieved that her mission to secure support for Joel has succeeded.

"I am very happy," she says. "Don't get me wrong, when he's gone I've got anxiety... but in my own mind, it's the safest place for him."

## High praise

Denise has high praise for Lisa, our Lifeways colleague who assisted her.

"She has been absolutely straight to the point, truthful, and it's gone swimmingly," says Denise.

Joel's path to supported living – in a location that's familiar, and with the right balance of independent and support when he needs it – hadn't been an easy one.

Lifeways' Lisa is delighted that Joel's settling in.

"It has been a long journey for Denise and Joel," says Lisa. "I know at times it was causing a lot of worry: worries such as his placement would go to someone else and that Joel would miss out."

"So thank you both so much for being patient and putting your trust in me to manage the assessment process for you," Lisa adds.

"Joel, congratulations and I wish you all the happiness in your new home."

# This move will help future-proof my life

Arts student Robert transitions to supported living.



**Robert, who's in his thirties, has transitioned from a home setting – his dad's house – to a Lifeways supported living service.**

He's moved into Queen Oaks Court, a brand-new Lifeways supported living service in Bucknall, Stoke-on-Trent.

Robert, who's an artist by profession, is currently completing a Master's Degree in disability within art at Staffordshire University.

"I mainly focus and am best skilled with painting and a bit of digital artwork and some sculpture - but mainly painting," says Robert. The artist's work includes private commissions and sketches and graphics for the Newcastle-under-Lyme heritage trail.

## Getting involved

Robert hopes that his artwork will lead him to a job.

"I think this move will both improve my independent living skills and help to future-proof my life," he says.

He's also hoping to get involved with decorating Queen Oaks Court - perhaps with a mural or wall paintings.

"Robert has a very rare talent and keen eye for art and we want to support him to have the confidence to sing this from the rooftops," said Lisa Reynolds, Lifeways' Enquiry, Referral and Assessment Manager for the West Midlands.

## Supported living vacancies in the West Midlands

### Ash House Coventry, West Midlands

This modern detached house provides care for six people and is split into four individual apartments, and a two-person shared accommodation, each with an en-suite bathroom, kitchen, dining room and lounge alongside two person-centred living quarters. There is also a communal games room, and an arts and crafts room.

The support team at Ash House are equipped to deal with challenging behaviour, so someone with complex care needs is very welcome here. The people we support are aged between 18 and 35 and have diverse needs including learning disabilities, autism and cerebral palsy.



[Full details](#)



# Greenlands

## Birmingham, West Midlands

Greenlands View is a specialist residential service where people are supported to live independently. 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 murals, dim lighting and a jacuzzi bath for people to relax in. There is also a sensory room with lights, a projector and bean bags for people to use too. Outside there is an accessible garden with a patio, swings and a BBQ.

We are ready to welcome someone with complex needs aged between 20 and 60. The people living here are aged between 23 and 37 and have complex care needs and challenging behaviour, so we are equipped to support someone who has equally challenging needs.



[Full details](#)

# Savery

## Tipton, West Midlands

Savery Gardens has 18 one-bedroom apartments arranged over three floors. There are also two accessible one-bedroom bungalows. Each apartment and bungalow has an open-plan kitchen and living room, hallway, bedroom and wet room. There's also a communal area and a shared garden for everyone to enjoy. Assistive technology within each apartment can be tailored to suit individual needs.

Life at Savery Gardens is suitable for people with learning and physical disabilities, brain injuries or autism.



[Full details](#)

## Alex paints the benches!

Varnish = magic! Alex, who lives at our supported living service in Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire, has been busy in the sunshine revamping the benches. They now look good as new!



## A total home makeover!

William, who lives in his own apartment at our Worcester supported living service, has gone with this very chic transformation. Looks awesome, William!



## Josh's puzzle!

Josh, who lives at one of our supported living services in Stoke-on-Trent, is very proud of himself today - he completed a puzzle on his own! Well done Josh!



## Halloween at Lifeways

Across Lifeways' 1,500 services, we'd carved jack-o'-lanterns, making spooky treats and scary decorations, and most importantly, had lots of fun!







**Season's Greetings from everyone at Lifeways.  
We look forward to seeing you in the new year.**



## **Get in touch**

Make an enquiry or find out more from our team by calling **0333 321 4881**

# Refer to Lifeways with confidence

From the moment you get in touch we'll work hand-in-hand with you, from arranging introductions and assessments all the way through to completing the move.

## Step 1

Call or email us with your referral and we'll gather all the information we need to start the referral process.

## Step 2

We'll arrange a one-to-one assessment to spend time with the person, their social worker and family, to understand their current situation, support needs and their medium- and long-term ambitions.

## Step 3

Once we've built our recommendation for support, we'll arrange for the person, their family and social worker, if requested, to visit our available homes giving the opportunity to meet our team and ask any questions.

## Step 4

We'll produce a funding proposal detailing the support hours required and then send it for funding approval, making sure all stakeholders are kept up to date with the progress.

## Step 5

Once the funding is approved we'll agree on a move in date and start the transition with everyone involved. We'll be on hand to offer support and guidance throughout to make sure everything runs smoothly.

Learn more about the independent living that we provide, make a referral or arrange a visit by contacting Lifeways:

Call **0333 321 4881** Email [referrals@lifeways.co.uk](mailto:referrals@lifeways.co.uk)

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yes to you