Never too old to learn a new skill!
Find out how learning new skills at 69 is helping Malcolm stay young - see page 3 for the full story.

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“Our staff do fantastic work with the people we support and we are so proud of the difference they are making to each person’s life. It’s what we are all about here in the Lifeways Group. On a daily basis myself and my teams of staff get to either see or hear about the great work that’s going on in so many different areas and it’s clear that our staff are working effectively with people to make a positive difference to their lives.

My role within the Lifeways Group is to oversee and support the quality and health and safety of service provision and to drive our approaches to workforce learning and development. Of course I wouldn’t be able to do my job without the support of excellent teams in all of these areas – they do a brilliant job of supporting our operational colleagues to deliver great services to everyone we support.

One of the many things that my teams do is to audit the services that we provide. This involves making arrangements to visit a person’s home, meet with them and their teams of staff and check that the quality of service they receive is of a good standard. They do this by talking to everyone involved and by observing what goes on in the person’s home. At the end of the visit we provide the people we support and the staff and managers of the service with a report that tells them what the service does really well and where things might need to improve – it’s a bit like a mini regulatory inspection. It’s fantastic that over the years that we have been doing this we have seen the quality of services rise by 20% - the average internal quality rating for services across the organisation is good which matches our overall regulatory rating. During 2016 the Quality Audit team completed over 1100 services audits which is over 3000 people’s that they visited, meeting people to understand the quality of their support.

In this issue of Lifelines there are some great examples of the diverse lives of the people we support from the volunteering work in gardening that Robert has undertaken to Malcolm learning a new skill of horse-riding. Inspirational stories like this are happening across the organisation – as I said earlier, it’s what we’re all about!

“We are proud of what we do here in the Lifeways Group but we always strive to do better, to go one step further to continuously improve our services to the people we support. I am really pleased that we are working on our ‘Good to Outstanding’ strategy which is aimed at driving all our service provision to an ‘outstanding’ level. We are looking forward to engaging with the people we support, our staff teams and our support colleagues to embrace this challenge to ensure that we support people innovatively and creatively to get the life that is right for them!”
Malcolm has been learning to ride for about two years, he says it’s good exercise and keeps him fit. He has a lot of hobbies, including snooker, darts, and pool, he loves to win! Malcolm said, “I like to keep busy, going to the cinema, out for meals, horse riding, and carpentry. I’m 69 years old, but I love to learn new things, and meet new people.”

Malcolm is a big fan of country and western music, cowboy films, cowboy fashion, and riding makes him feel like a real life cowboy. “I even like line dancing” he chuckled. Once a month he and the gentleman he lives with in shared supported living go to their local social club for a meal, bingo and Malcolm likes to belt a bit of Elvis out on the karaoke.

Malcolm only rides in the spring and summer, so I asked what kept him busy the rest of the year and he said, “I’m a really keen baker, I love making cakes, especially chocolate ones. My support staff are very encouraging and the cakes never last long! I’m really looking forward to The Great British Bake Off so I can practice some new recipes.” It sounds like I might have to visit Malcolm again soon!

What are you learning to do? Would you like to share your story? If so, please send your story to yourstory@lifeways.co.uk
For years, Daniel has suffered from anxiety, which left him isolated and made it hard for him to sustain friendships. He left his flat only to attend his local day centre, but didn’t like to take part in any of the outdoor activities. This has meant Daniel has missed out on lots of things like regular day trips with people from the centre. However, his support team observed that there was one thing he did enjoy, which was going for short drives in the car that the centre has.

Daniel’s support team soon realised that these drives could be the answer to helping him overcome some of his anxieties, so they supported him to research and buy a car of his own.

Daniel, supported by his staff, started going for drives twice a week. At first, he stayed inside the car throughout the journey but as time passed, he started to build up his confidence and with the support and encouragement of his team he eventually left his car. Since then Daniel has enjoyed many adventures, including day trips to Skegness and Whipsnade Zoo. Daniel now does his own food shopping at the supermarket, visits friends, and has even started to explore bus travel into his local town to go for a coffee.

Daniel is no longer isolated, he is spending time with his friends, enjoying the facilities in his local area and has set a new goal of going to Cornwall to visit family.

We wish Daniel happy travels and hope he keeps sending us lots of photos of his adventures!

From 4 Walls to 4 Wheels
Daniel has made huge progress in recent months. He and his support team have worked incredibly hard to overcome his fears and this has had an enormous impact on his life.

Getting Out and About
On The Road

We featured DJ Andy back in our Spring 2016 issue when he had just played to his biggest audience at the Swindon Christmas party. Since then Andy has gone from strength to strength and recently he took his DJing skills to the next level and played his first party.

Andy worked really hard putting the playlist together to keep everyone on the dance floor and in the party mood. He even left his decks and showed off his dance moves! Andy’s confidence is growing with every performance and he is proving he’s no wallflower. So what’s next for our superstar DJ? He is already working hard on his new playlist for the Swindon Christmas party!

Green Finger Winner

Robert has been volunteering at the Ayrshire Hospice for the past ten years and has developed a special interest in working in their extensive gardens. Robert, along with other volunteers was invited to a ceremony where the Chair of Ayrshire Hospice, Sheena Cochrane, presented his award.

Robert has been awarded a bronze certificate and badge in recognition of all his hard work and dedication to volunteering.

Joanne, who is part of Robert’s support team, attended the ceremony and said, “It’s wonderful to see him receiving this award. Robert loves his work and in the ten years he has been volunteering he has only missed work once due to ill health. He takes his responsibilities at the Ayrshire Hospice gardens very seriously.”

Congratulations Robert - the gardens look amazing!

If you would like to share your achievements and stories please contact us at yourstory@lifeways.co.uk
Summer is now well and truly over, but here is a look back at what some of the people we support were up to this summer!

Have you been on holiday? Been on a day trip? Would you like to share your story? Contact us at yourstory@lifeways.co.uk
“I am really enjoying gardening at the moment, something I hadn’t done before my traumatic brain injury. I left the gardening to family and friends.

I started with some young tomato saplings and plants which were kindly donated by one of my support team. I gave them a simple start in my back garden, then week after week as they grew, I started to take a real interest. I chatted with family and my support team asking for their advice and experience and my interest grew along with the tomatoes!

Some things are simple; watering, trimming, installing canes to aid growth, planting new herbs and plants, fertilising the tomatoes and chilies etc. All the planning and organising has given me a daily and weekly routine. At the moment I’m growing tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, chilies, oregano, thyme and rosemary, all of which are growing great!

I have been expanding my cooking repertoire also and have used the chilies in a chili con carne and the rosemary for a leg of lamb. Cooking is something I’ve always enjoyed and have started to really get into since my injury. Cooking helps me to work with my ‘right sided’ disability, assisted and helped by my mum and others.

My little garden has become a great hobby and it is helping me to improve both physically and mentally. Family and friends have been really helpful with their advice, time and help and I’m growing them gifts to say thank you.

Thank you, best wishes & ‘good growing’ to all.”
Living Together

Living with housemates can be difficult no matter who you are, it’s no different for the people we support. We work incredibly hard to make sure that when we place people together they are the right ‘fit’. Recently two groups of people we support moved into their new homes. We worked closely with local authorities, housing providers, families and social care professionals to make sure that everyone got a chance to spend time together. We organised visits and outings for everyone to get to know each other well, so they could make their own choice as to whether they wanted to live together.

The first people to move were Philip, Anthony and William. The three had come from very different backgrounds: one had been living in a residential secure hostel, the other a large residential home and the third had always lived with his family. We asked them if they could take some time out of their busy schedules to answer a few questions about living together.

What are the main differences for you living here?

**William:** I have independence, a social life and I have started looking for love.

**Philip:** The freedom! There aren’t lots of locked doors, I can make a cuppa whenever I want and do the things everyone else does.

**Anthony:** I wanted to live near a city because there are proper shops and I really like fashion.

What’s it like living with the others?

**Philip:** We are like the three musketeers; we do everything together in the house. We plan our meals together, prepare and cook all our food together and even clean up together.

**Anthony:** I am really enjoying cooking; we have meal planners so we don’t get bored. We’ve all learnt to plan, figure out portion sizes, and budget. This is the first time we have had to budget for ourselves and we are getting really good at it.
Do you have anything in common?

**Philip:** We like football; in fact, we are planning on going to see Chesterfield play soon. We have a bit of banter about football because even though we all support Chesterfield as our second team we all support different Premiership teams too.

**Anthony:** We go to karaoke on Sundays and all have our own songs: I sing Laura by Scissor Sisters, William does Bird Dog, and Philip just loves singing so has lots and lots of songs.

**William:** We watch some TV shows together like Love Island and Geordie Shore and we like to play Fifa on the XBox.

What's next for the three Musketeers?

**Philip:** Anthony and William both work a couple of days a week and I am going to start to look for something soon, so that’s really exciting.

**Anthony:** We have just been to Skegness on a day trip and we are hoping to have a few more days out soon. Hopefully we can go on holiday next year all together, maybe somewhere abroad like Spain.

**William:** I am going to be swimming in the Special Olympics so am working really hard on that at the moment. I have been swimming since I was young and have won lots of medals.

Philip summed up how they all feel about their new home, “We are over the moon to be here, we have a nice secure home with good friends and great staff, we couldn’t be happier.”

The second group to move were Jade, Emma, Gloria, and Poppy. They all moved into a lovely new home together a few months ago and are already getting on brilliantly.

Jade said, “We love to sit around the kitchen island and chat about our day and we all work together to prepare our meals. We share all the chores and we like to watch television and have movie nights. We’ve been bowling and we’re planning a trip to Cleethorpes soon.” Emma said their new home, “is gorgeous” and Gloria said, “I am really happy we’re all here now.”

Thank you to Philip, Anthony, William, Emma, Gloria, Poppy and Jade for inviting us into your new homes and talking about your lives. Would you like to tell us about your life? Contact us at yourstory@lifeways.co.uk
**Taking the Plunge**

Five years ago Angela fell and broke her shoulder while walking to the shop. Because of this accident Angela lost confidence to go out on her own, even a trip to the local shop was difficult for her. Recently, Angela decided that she wanted to take part in the Lifeways Health Kick Challenge to see if this would help her to regain some of her old self-confidence.

Angela’s support team Kerry Crabb, Lucy Carter, and Morgan Tomlinson have worked incredibly hard to find different ways to support her to get back out into her local community. Taking part in the Health Kick Challenge has encouraged her to use the local leisure centre, which is perfect for Angela’s needs as it has a warm water pool with sloped access. Angela’s new found hobby of swimming has not only helped her to get fit but has also helped her to regain her self-confidence.

**Getting Along Swimmingly**

Zoe has been learning to swim with the help of her support worker Robert and recently she managed to swim her personal best of 110m.

To celebrate Zoe was awarded a certificate, trophy and medal which she is very proud of. Zoe is continuing to improve her swimming skills and hopes to get another certificate very soon.

**Have you been involved in the Health Kick Challenge? Are you finding new ways to get healthy or have you taken up a new sport? Contact us at yourstory@lifeways.co.uk**
Growing in Independence

Ticket to Ride

Donna has made amazing progress after deciding that she would like to be more independent. She discussed with her support team that she would like them to support her in traveling independently. We asked Donna about her experience of travel training and what it entailed.

“I go to college three days a week, so my team and I agreed that it would be a great idea for me to be supported to travel to and from college. I was really happy with this and couldn’t wait to get started.

To start with I needed information, so we went to the bus station so I could get timetables etc. The team and I went through the timetables and planned a route. It’s a long way and I have to get two buses, so there was lots to remember.

At first, the team would have to remind me what time I needed to leave the house, walk me to the bus stop and remind me when to get off the bus.

The staff supported me with prompt cards just in case I ever got lost or couldn’t remember something. They took photos of my buses, my bus stops, where I needed to be when I pressed the button and a photo of the time I needed to leave the house. They laminated the pictures and put them on a key ring for me to keep in my bag, but I have never needed to use them.

At this stage an expert in travel training had been assigned to me.

He came out to meet me and my staff to see how he could help me. I told him everything that we had done, he was very pleased and said he would not need to do anything.

This was a really big goal for me to aim for and although I was a little bit nervous at first, I am now really confident with it. I am so pleased and proud of myself for achieving this.”

Have you learned a new skill and would like to share your story with everyone? Contact us at yourstory@lifeways.co.uk
News Round Up

**Special Olympic Winners**

Congratulations to Sion and William who competed in the Special Olympics held in Sheffield during August.

Sion won a silver medal for seven a side football with his team Highland Disability. William won two bronze medals for swimming in the Special Olympics. One for 50 meters and the other for the relay. William can be heard talking about his win to BBC radio on our facebook page www.facebook.com/thelifewaysgroup

**Adam Special Award**

Well done to Adam who has been awarded Male Sports Personality of the year 2017 by his support team.

Adam is a keen athlete and has won lots of awards over the years for taking part in badminton and running. Congratulations Adam and keep up the fantastic work.

**Forever Love**

Congratulations to Pat and Tony who have just got engaged and are planning their wedding in 2018. They first met when they were in their teens and now they are in their 70s.

If you have a story you would like to share please contact us at yourstory@lifeways.co.uk