Together We Are Extraordinary
Find out how we are working in coproduction across the group with the people we support. See pages 4-5 for the full story

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Introducing Nicola Forshaw, MD for Lifeways Group

I started my role as Managing Director for the North region in November 2017. Before this new role, I’ve worked operationally for Lifeways for 5 years. I’m passionate about the work we do and continue to be impressed with the level of commitment our support teams have to making a difference to the lives of the people we support.

February has been a challenging time, mainly due to the cold and snowy weather and our teams have shown a tremendous amount of resilience and dedication. Especially for people living in Scotland and the North East who had to travel in very bad conditions, often having to walk long journeys to get to the people we support, and in some cases remaining at the service to provide support. A special thank you to you all for keeping going!

Another highlight since commencing my role has been attending two co-production events, in Halifax and Manchester. Photos from the Halifax event are included in this newsletter. I was privileged to work together with the people we support who shared their thoughts on our vision for the company. Working alongside those people who benefit from our support is so important as it directly influences how we shape our services and ensures we truly understand what people expect from us.

During 2018, we will be focusing on our core aim: to help people to live ordinary and independent lives through extraordinary support.

I’m proud to be a part of the Lifeways Group and look forward to many exciting collaborations during 2018.

Enjoy reading our stories and news in this Spring edition of Lifelines.
Dignity Action Day is our annual chance to celebrate people’s rights to dignity. This year we are highlighting the celebrations in Scotland. The people we support, their teams, friends and family all came together to hold Digni-Teas and decorate their Digni-Trees!

Would you like to share your story or event? If so, please contact us at yourstory@lifeways.co.uk
Together We Are Extraordinary

Here at the Lifeways Group, we believe that the people we support should be at the very heart of everything we do. This means not just asking your opinion once a year in a survey but really working together.

In December, we invited some of the people we support to attend a coproduction meeting at the Orange Box Youth Centre in Halifax.

Over 40 people attended the event, and the aim of the day was to discuss the organisation’s vision and values.

Guests were also given the chance to meet members of our senior management team including Chief Executive Paul Marriner.

Graham Farrington-Horsfall, Head of Quality, said: “It’s an important day for us, working with the people we support to understand what our vision for the organisation should be. It’s about helping people live ordinary lives with extraordinary support. We’re also looking at our values – We Listen, We Respect, We Deliver. What does that mean to the people we support?”
On the day we asked people a few questions to find out what they thought made a good support worker. Amber told us, “Good support for me is about being understood. I need a good rapport with my support team. My understanding is very good, but I do need things repeated a few times. Which can be very frustrating for me and them.”

We asked Oliver what an ordinary, independent life meant to him. He said, “Being listened to. Getting the support, you need to make sure you’re getting the best out of yourself.” Vicky told us that she needs extra support to help her to achieve her goal of going to America on holiday.

During 2018 there will be lots of coproduction projects going on across the whole group. Join us on our Facebook page to keep up to date with the latest projects from around the company: www.facebook.com/thelifewaysgroup
Getting Involved

Candy Land: A Sweet Panto

People we support at the John Orr centre in Glasgow alongside the Mungo Foundation gave an amazing performance in the Upbeat Theatre production of Candy Land.

Team leader Rosemary, said, “There was a great turnout from family and friends and community partners. Local police, West of Scotland Housing, Thriving Places, Tesco Community Champion, Glasgow Life and the Good Move walking group all came along to show their support. They told me that they thoroughly enjoyed the show and can’t wait till the next one. The cast remembered all their lines, positions and words to songs and were beaming with joy after they performed.”

Stacey from Upbeat Theatre had this to say of the production, “I think the cast did amazingly well with this performance. They really stretched themselves and we started to see some character work come out. The progress in the group is clear and I’m glad everyone got to witness all the hard work that was put in. We even had the police singing along!”

The audience had lots of positive things to say too:

" Wonderful work! Just gets better "

" Fantastic! well done to all involved! Looking forward to the next one "

" Amazing, fantastic, well done. Laughed, sang and almost cried"

To see more photos of the performance check out Upbeat Productions Facebook page www.facebook.com/ upbeattheatrecompany

Would you like to tell us about your adventures?
Contact us at yourstory@lifeways.co.uk
Defying the Odds

The Road to Recovery

In December 2006, after enjoying the Christmas markets with her sister, Dawn collapsed with a bleed on the brain. She later suffered a major cerebral hemorrhage that left her unable to walk, talk or feed herself. At one point the doctors didn’t expect Dawn to make it, but she defied the odds and kept fighting.

Dawn spent several years in rehabilitation centres, learning to regain control over her body. With slow, steady progress Dawn learned how to talk again, feed herself, and use a wheelchair. Unfortunately, she had developed type 2 diabetes, which limited how far she could travel. After moving into a supported living flat, she wanted to become more independent. Her support team worked with her to plan a healthy diet, get regular exercise and encourage her interest in healthy cooking. Dawn says “My biggest problem is I’m a bit lazy. I’d rather watch TV and eat chocolate than exercise!”

18 months on and Dawn’s transformation has been astonishing. She is managing her diabetes through diet and medication, and has taken a real interest in nutrition.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Dawn’s recovery is she no longer needs her wheelchair. With support and encouragement Dawn was able to use a walking frame, which she found very tiring, but she persevered. It has taken two years but Dawn is now walking on her own, and her team are incredibly proud of her success.

Dawn’s mum Joyce said, “It’s so great to see how far she has progressed.”

Dawn has come a really long way in the past 12 years. She has regained control over her body and is increasing her independence on a daily basis. Dawn’s sister Sharon said, “In the past two years Dawn’s progress has been absolutely remarkable. I can’t praise Tara [Dawn’s support worker] and her team enough, they have gone to extraordinary lengths to support Dawn. They include her in all decisions, she is given choice and her opinion is valued. It’s been a long, tough road to recovery for Dawn, her three kids and the rest of the family. They are all so proud of Dawn and how hard she has worked.”

Dawn loves to explore and is looking forward to lots of day trips this year. She hopes to go somewhere new on holiday but hasn’t quite made up her mind where yet! We’ll be sure to check in with Dawn after the summer to see where she has been.

Dawn is a huge fan of music. She loves to sing and has an eclectic music collection stretching from the 1930s to the present. She also loves films, especially musicals because she likes to sing along. Dawn’s brother said, “It’s amazing, bit by bit you can see the old Dawn coming back.”

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My support team were arranging some charity events in aid of Macmillan. I heard them talking about the Killer Mile. “I will do that with you!” I said.

They were really shocked and asked if I was sure. I asked what it involved, they told me that it was a very steep hill at Mow Cop you have to walk up. I know what Macmillan do and was keen to take part. We looked the Killer Mile up online so I could see what was involved. I still wasn’t sure, so they asked if I would like to go to see the Killer Mile in person. I said yes and I’m glad I did. “Wow, that is steep!” I said. They asked me if I still wanted to do it and I did. I was so excited!

I had a few weeks to find myself some sponsors. Everywhere I went, my sponsor form came with me and I managed to raise a lot of money. I attend college so I had to ask for the day off, but they were fine with it as it was for a great cause.

On the day, I got ready with comfy clothes, my walking boots and a drink to keep myself hydrated. We got to the beginning of the Killer Mile and I did wonder what I had let myself in for. But I said to myself “I can do this”.

We headed up and up and up, it was never ending. My legs began to hurt, but I soldiered through it. When we got to the 25% incline part of the hill, I could see the castle at the top so I knew we were almost there.

I’d done it! I was really proud of myself and everyone said I’d done really well.

But now we had to walk back down, the walk down was the hardest part. I felt like I was going to fall but I didn’t. It actually took us longer to walk back down than it did to walk up! We reached the bottom and I could see the car, I couldn’t wait for a rest!
Josh lived with his parent’s until he was 15, then moved to a residential home which met his support needs at the time. As Josh gained more independence his needs changed and his support team worked closely with children’s services, social care professionals and his family to find somewhere new to live. They also worked with the 2 gentlemen who Josh was moving in with, to make sure that they all felt comfortable and were compatible. The team wanted to make sure they enabled everyone involved to communicate with each other about their needs, wants, wishes and feelings.

After several meetings with his new housemates, they all became comfortable and very excited about the move. Everyone agreed that the three were a good match and really related well to each other.

Since moving in, Josh has gained more independence and confidence. He has become more involved with planning, preparing and cooking his meals, he’s even started doing the dishes! Josh’s team are supporting him to learn to budget, he says he really wants to go abroad on holiday, so they are all now working towards this goal.

We asked Josh how he was finding living with his new housemates. Josh said, “It’s really good and I really love my new home.”

Josh will finish school in July and is looking at college courses, he is keen to continue with his education and wants to focus on the subjects he enjoys. He is looking forward to his new adventure!

We asked Jonathan about the experience and his new home. He told us, “I wrote the speech because I really like my new home, it’s a great flat. It’s the best place to live, I take great pride in my new home. I also like to look after the area by keeping it litter free. I’m really enjoying getting to know people in my local community and I think this will really help me to settle in.”

He went on to explain, “Where I used to live was very strict with lots of rules and not much privacy. One of the best things about my new place is the freedom. I live on my own, I can do what I like, when I like, just like everyone else. I’ve really got into cooking now I have a place of my own. I’m really enjoying planning, budgeting and preparing healthy meals. I don’t really like cleaning and all that, but it’s my place so I need to do it.”

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**Independence Through Technology**

April moved to Craig Court in 2016 after a traumatic brain injury. Initially she had been cared for in an end-of-life facility because she was in a coma. When April came out of the coma her family asked for her to be assessed and she was then moved to Craig Court - a residential rehabilitation centre specialising in brain injuries.

April's only means of communication was to use her tongue to signal 'yes' or 'no' to questions. In 2017, April's support team referred her to the NHS Occupational Therapy team to explore ways of improving April's ability to communicate. In the summer, the NHS team introduced a communication aid to April which would help promote her independence. It would allow her to do various tasks by simply pressing her head against the side of the pad.

The device gives April the options to: call for a support worker or nurse when she requires assistance. She can turn on and off her bedside fan and turn the DVD player on and off. This system will continue to evolve with April's needs. The next upgrade will allow April to open and close her own curtains.

This communication aid has made a huge difference to the quality of April's life. Fiona Whyte, Craig Courts manager said, "It's incredible to see how happy it makes April. She has gained some of her independence and can communicate more effectively. April's relatives, including her mum and grandmother, have also praised the aid. April enjoys calling for the team to come and hang out with her and share what they have been up to!"

**On Course to Succeed**

Written by Andy and his support team

My name is Andy and for the past three years I have been going to college studying a range of subjects.

Last year I studied 'Everyday Maths', which focuses on the maths we use in our day to day lives. It gives you confidence with handling your money, helps you to understand information which can help you to make better decisions. I really enjoyed the course, I like learning new and interesting things. It also gives me the chance to meet new people.

This year I am taking a cookery class studying how to prepare, plan and cook meals. It is also helping me to understand nutrition and how to live a healthy lifestyle.

I've just applied for and received my passport and my new skills helped me with the application because I felt more confident. I applied for my passport because my brother and I are going to Spain for my big 50th birthday next year, which I am really looking forward to. I will have to figure out what the exchange rate is now!

If you're interested in improving your everyday maths skills, find out more from this website www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk

Has Andy's story inspired you to take up the learning challenge? If so, speak to your support team about college and online courses.
Joy goes to the Weight Watchers meetings but only like to stay for the weigh ins. She doesn’t really enjoy crowds of people and doesn’t want to participate in the rest of the meetings - so all her encouragement to keep losing weight comes from her support team, Fran and Ruby. They have worked with Joy to find healthy low fat and sugar alternatives to the foods she likes.

She has stopped snacking and started walking. She walks to the shops regularly and feels very comfortable using public transport now to venture further afield. She is well known by all of the local bus drivers!

Joy has started to work with her support team to plan and prepare nutritious healthy meals and she is looking forward to going swimming when the weather gets a little warmer.

Joy still wants to lose 3 stone and is determined to keep going and to keep the weight off.

Joy’s top tips to losing weight:

1. Swap sugar in hot drinks for sweetener
2. Cut portion sizes down
3. Swap puddings for low fat yogurts and add fruit
4. Swap salty crisps and nuts for fruit and vegetables
5. Swap fizzy sugary drinks for still naturally flavored fruit waters
6. Don’t cut out all treats, Joy still has a chocolate pud on a Sunday
7. Swap white bread for brown or 50/50 and keep it to just 2 slices a day
8. Swap sugary biscuits for sugar free version like malted milk and rich tea but only 2!
Joining the fight to get healthy

Samantha joined Slimming World 4 weeks ago and has already lost 7lb, she has achieved her ½ stone sticker and has been awarded ‘Slimmer of the Week’ too!

When Tina met Daniel

Tina met her hero Daniel O’Donnell last year, Tina said, “He put his arm around me and gave me a kiss on the cheek before asking would you like a photograph with me Tina my darling? Of course I said yes! I still can’t believe I met him, I shed some happy tears that night I can tell you.”

Rebound Therapy

Congratulations to Stephen who achieved Stage 1 of WINSTRADA, which is a nationally recognised award for trampolining and rebound therapy.

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