

Staple Down Here To Make This Into

An Easy Read Style Booklet



We enable support that makes a positive impact

Message from Kat

As the days grow lighter and the first signs of spring appear, there's something undeniably uplifting in the air. Spring has always been a season of fresh starts - new buds, new ideas, and that unmistakable burst of energy that reminds us all that positive change is not only possible, but inevitable.



Just like the world outside is waking up, this time of year encourages us to do the same. Spring invites us to:

- look for new ways to support the people who rely on us
- try fresh approaches to old challenges
- step forward with curiosity, optimism, and that **enthusiastic** Persona spirit



Whether you're introducing a new activity, improving a service, or simply bringing a smile to someone's day, this season nudges us to think: what can grow here?

As well as being filled with the joys of spring, this newsletter is special in another way. Can you believe this is the 100th edition of the newsletter?! How did we grow up so fast?? From our slightly clunky hard copy beginnings to the slick digital version we have now. One hundred editions of stories, updates, successes, challenges, photos, fun and - most importantly - one hundred reminders of the dedication, compassion and creativity that make Persona what it is.

100

Reaching 100 editions isn't just about longevity - it's about consistency, connection, and community. It means 100 opportunities to celebrate achievements, share learning, and keep each other in the loop. It means 100 editions fuelled by the people who make Persona extraordinary - you.

As we step into spring, let's carry forward the brightness, the hope and the sense of possibility it brings. Thank you for being part of Persona's story so far - for your hard work, compassion and humour, and for everything you do to make life better for the people we support.

Let's make this season (and this 100th edition!) a celebration of all we've achieved - and everything still waiting to bloom.

Kat

This quarter's highlights

3 - Staff News	18 - Compliments
13 - Digital Update	21 - Service News
14 - Wellbeing	29 - Special Feature
16 - Recognition	30 - Snapshot

If you're reading this online, you can click for more information where text is [blue and underlined](#).

Connect

Take
Notice

Be Active

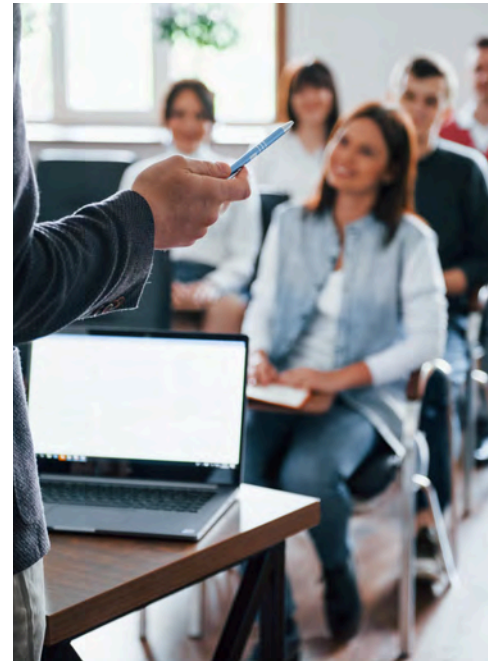
Keep
Learning

Give to
Others

OLIVER MCGOWAN TRAINING

As part of our ongoing commitment to delivering safe, compassionate and person-centred care, we have rolled out the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism for all staff. This is to ensure that every member of staff has the knowledge and confidence to support autistic people and people with a learning disability appropriately and respectfully.

Feedback from staff who have attended has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly due to the lived-experience stories which make the learning more powerful and memorable. Whilst a lot of our staff have worked in the sector for many years, the training has given them the opportunity to reflect, challenge myths, make reasonable adjustments, and continue to improve experiences for people we support.



Book a session now:

If you haven't had the opportunity to attend the training yet, don't worry! There are a number of sessions available from now until the end of June, so speak to your manager and book onto the next available session.



REFER A FRIEND!

The graphic features a purple megaphone with colorful floral accents on the left. To its right is a grey speech bubble containing the text 'REFER A FRIEND!'. The background is light blue with scattered white 'x' and 'o' symbols.

REFER A FRIEND

Know someone you think will be a good match to work at Persona?

Refer them to us! If they are hired and pass their probation, both of you will receive a **£250 voucher**.

Simply have them mention your name on their application form.

Details available on the intranet Refer a Friend page [here](#).

Connect

Take Notice

Be Active

Keep Learning

Supported Living rated GOOD by CQC

We are delighted to share that our Supported Living service has been awarded a GOOD rating in our recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, reflecting the dedication, compassion and professionalism of every team member.

This was our first inspection under the new regulatory framework and it was very different to any of our previous inspections.

The CQC inspects services that are registered with them to find out if the service is doing the best it can for people it supports by talking to staff, people we support and friends and families about quality statements in five questions called key lines of enquiry (KLOEs). They then write a report and decide whether to rate the service as OUTSTANDING, GOOD or REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT.

Highlights from our report are:

- **Safety and openness:** colleagues feel confident and supported to raise concerns, knowing they will be listened to. People we support and their families feel safe, well looked after and happy in our care
- **Kindness and compassion:**
 - our team treat people as individuals with their own strengths, choices and dreams
 - families describe staff as kind, **caring**, **respectful** and person-centred
 - inspectors said they found warmth, empathy and dignity in every property
- **Life changing support:** people we support are helped to gain employment, develop new skills, grow in confidence and build meaningful connections, with families are involved in personalised care plans
- **We work brilliantly with partners and the community:** our team has strong relationships with health professionals, social workers, families and community partners.
- **Leadership, values and team spirit shine through:** an inclusive workforce with a supportive manager and a positive team culture that focusses on equality, diversity and staff wellbeing and that they feel proud to be part of Supported Living.



Report details on the KLOES:



Safe

- We have a strong learning and safety culture, where colleagues feel confident to speak up.
- People and families said they feel safe, well looked after and happy.
- Colleagues demonstrate excellent safeguarding awareness and act quickly and appropriately.



Caring

- Colleagues consistently demonstrate kindness, empathy and **respect**.
- Families praised staff for being **caring**, committed and values driven.
- People are supported as individuals, with personalised approaches to communication, their interests and wellbeing.



Responsive

- Care is person-centred, flexible and shaped around each person's needs.
- Colleagues work closely with families and professionals to support joined up care.
- People have meaningful ways to give feedback, and their voices lead to real changes, like Persona Your Voice and our accessible holiday lodge.



Effective

- Colleagues feel supported and proud to work here, describing great teamwork and positive leadership.
- People achieve impressive outcomes
- Managers know people well and work together to ensure smooth transitions and continuity.



Well-Led

- Leaders are visible, approachable and committed to our values.
- Colleagues feel comfortable raising concerns and know their voice matters.
- Strong community involvement helps people build connections, confidence and independence.

This GOOD rating is a celebration of dedication, care, professionalism and belief in the people we support and it belongs to every single person in Supported Living.

The inspection was intense, but it gave us areas to strengthen and improve. The professionalism, creativity, resilience and genuine care shown by every colleague made this possible and we hope our team are as proud of their part in the result as we are.

Thank you team - well done, Supported Living!

For more information and to read the full report, click [here](#).





The Willows Opening

The opening of The Willows on 23rd February marks an exciting new chapter for our Supported Living services and for Bury Council. This brand new development is the result of a strong partnership and a shared commitment to enhance independence, safety, and quality of life for the people who will live there. From its earliest stages, Persona, Irwell Valley Housing, and Bury Council have collaborated closely to design a service that meets modern needs while offering a warm, community-focussed environment.

The official opening was held on 20th March with the deputy leader, Councillor Tariq, along with members of the Persona team, Bury Council and Irwell Valley.

The Willows has 13 individual flats, each built with the purpose of providing a safe, comfortable home with everything needed for daily living. With their own front door, tenants are able to enjoy privacy and autonomy while still having support at hand. Everyone who has moved in is being assessed for assistive technology solutions, enabling them to develop and maintain independence in a way that works best for their needs.



In addition to the flats, The Willows includes office space and communal areas on both floors. These shared areas create opportunities for socialising, group activities, and events. Whether people we support wish to join organised activities, meet with friends and family, or simply enjoy shared space, there is plenty of room available. There are also raised garden beds outside so people can grow their own plants or vegetables if they choose.



A flexible on-site team ensures that support can be tailored to meet each person's needs, and the service includes waking night support, providing reassurance and assistance around the clock.

The Willows also benefits from a sizable car park, shared with Queensberry Place, which includes an EV charging point. This offers a greater choice for anyone who has, or in the future wishes to have an electric vehicle.

A dedicated service manager and operational support manager are based on-site, working with the team to ensure that everyone moving into The Willows is supported throughout their transition and beyond. This new development represents an invaluable opportunity for people to move into a modern, future-proof home. Lift access to upper-floor flats ensures that the accommodation remains suitable even if a person's mobility changes. Some of the people we support in other properties have chosen to move into The Willows, and we've been able to provide continuity of care in a brand-new environment.



We are building a strong, skilled and compassionate team to support people in settling into their new homes and thriving as part of this new community.



Would you, or someone you know, like to work here?

Click [here](#) to join our mailing list and be first to hear about new job and career opportunities.

The Willows shows what can be achieved through strong partnership, thoughtful design, and a genuine commitment to people's development, independence and wellbeing.



Learning Disability Day Services: Double the Creativity

The **Woodpeckers Workshop** at Elton is a creative, hands-on space designed for people we support by people we support. It's a space to learn new skills, build confidence, and enjoy the buzz of a real workshop environment.

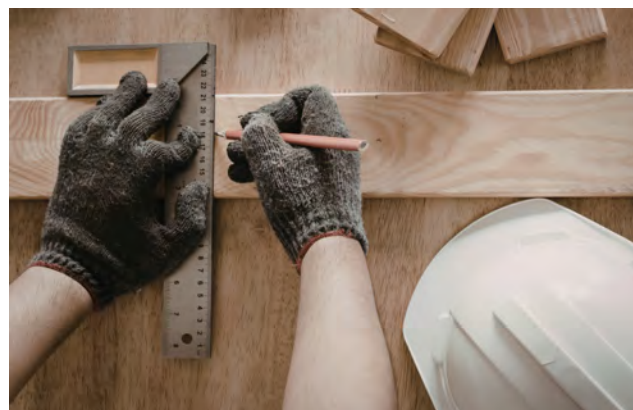
The inspiration came from an experience where one of our staff members took a group of people we support to Men in Sheds in Bury. Everyone had the chance to try new tools, learn practical skills, and create things they were proud of. The group loved it, but when the shed closed due to a lack of funding, we knew we wanted to bring that same opportunity to Persona.



The idea was submitted to the Ideas Hub and it was a success! We secured part of the funding needed to turn the vision into reality. A small committee made up of staff, people we support, and their families worked together to design the workshop. They researched equipment, planned the layout, and made sure the room would be accessible to everyone. From strong, height-adjustable workbenches to spaces designed for people who use wheelchairs, every detail was chosen to make the workshop inclusive and welcoming.

A local company cut the benches to size, and our staff rolled up their sleeves to assemble each one. Together with the group, they finished off the room and brought it to life and created a space where people we support can:

- learn new skills
- use new tools
- enjoy creating something they can take home
- meet friends and socialise
- spend time in a relaxed environment



The workshop will open to services across Persona, giving even more people the chance to discover the joy of creating.

Keep an eye out for more information coming soon.



Persona Prints, our brand-new printing room workshop and mini social enterprise at Elton! It's an exciting new space that's been brought to life through the brilliant leadership of Lisa Duggan, deputy manager of LDDS, with support from Carmen Gillon-Weerasinghe, manager of LDDS, and it's already shaping up to be of huge value to people we support.



Over the past month, drop-in sessions have given people a chance to explore the equipment, get hands-on, and discover the creative possibilities the workshop offers. The team will continue running taster sessions in April for anyone in LDDS who wants to try out the printing activities, learn new skills, and potentially join the enterprise team.



The space itself is looking fantastic and the potential for people we support to create amazing products is truly inspiring. It's a real game-changer in terms of offering purposeful activity that people can enjoy, while also laying foundations for a sustainable social enterprise.

This project has been made possible through Foundational Economy Grant funding through GMCA and we are currently waiting to hear the outcome of a second bid that could help us grow the space even further.

Persona Prints isn't just a workshop.

It's a chance for people to express themselves, learn, and take pride in contributing to something that reaches beyond the service. Here are a few of the amazing things we've created so far:



Thank you to Lisa and Carmen for all your hard work, and thank you to Laura Stott for your help with securing funding. This new venture is set to make a meaningful difference!



Systematic Instruction Training

Training in Systematic Instruction (TSI) is a way to teach people who find traditional learning difficult, including people with learning disabilities and autism. The TSI course teaches staff the skills needed to help people learn in ways that work best for them.

This approach helps people we support to become more independent, learn new skills and complete tasks that might otherwise feel difficult.

We believe everyone should have the same opportunity to live the life they choose. Everyone learns differently, and when teaching is adapted to suit the person, anyone can learn.

People we support joined on the last day of training to help staff practice their new skills. They did this through different activities and were paid for their involvement at the end of the day.



Feedback from staff

I found working with people we support during the training to be very powerful and insightful

People we support added so much value to the experience, and it was great to see them paid for their time

I was surprised by how quickly people can learn when the instructions are broken down clearly

The skills I've gained have given me confidence to teach and support going forward

I learned ways to teach skills and communicate more effectively

Feedback from people we support

I enjoyed having the chance to be paid for my time

I enjoyed being paid for my time

It was fun

I enjoyed working with different staff

Click [here](#) to read more feedback from staff and people we support

A Fresh New Look at Sunnybank

Our long-awaited refurbishment is now in its final stages and has already transformed the feel of the whole building, causing a buzz of excitement. With a mix of modern design, accessibility and calming spaces, the updates are creating a brighter, more welcoming environment for everyone who walks through the door.



One of the biggest changes has been the complete redesign of our toilets. They are now modern, fully accessible and built with comfort and dignity in mind. The entire building has also been refreshed with new décor and flooring, giving Sunnybank a clean, contemporary look that lifts the atmosphere.

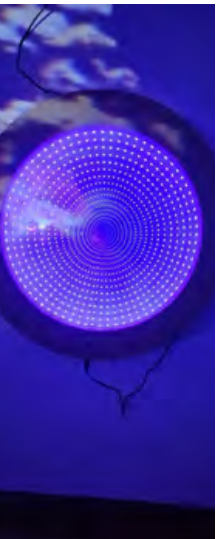
Our side lounge/breakout room has been transformed into a peaceful haven. This cosy space is now perfect for quiet time, relaxation, and taking a breather away from the busier parts of the building. It's already proving to be a favourite spot!

We are adding the finishing touches to our brand-new immersive and tactile sensory rooms. These spaces are designed to stimulate the senses, support emotional wellbeing and provide a safe, soothing environment. These rooms will offer something truly special, and we're excited to see the impact they will have.



Every step of the refurbishment has been shaped by working closely with people we support and our staff team. Together, we gathered ideas, shared feedback, and helped shape spaces that reflect what truly matters to us. Bright, modern, comfortable, and full of good vibes, Sunnybank is fast becoming a space that feels both homely and inspiring.

We can't wait to share more as the final pieces come together!



PERSONA THEMED QUARTER

Our Current Themed Quarter: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) themed quarter will focus on strengthening inclusive practice, building confidence in supporting people from diverse backgrounds and ensuring dignity, **respect** and belonging remain at the heart of everything we do.

Your EDI Champions



Carmen



Lisa

We will be leading the way by coordinating activities, sharing resources, and supporting teams across Persona to embed EDI into everyday practice in meaningful and practical ways.

We'll begin the quarter by focussing on reducing barriers and strengthening accessibility across all our services.

During this quarter we'll:

- promote inclusive communication with Intensive Interaction Training
- launch our new sensory room at Sunnybank
- refresh our EDI Policy to enhance safer spaces and inclusive practices across Persona
- share stories that highlight how we support people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- celebrate Cultural Food & Music Month*
- celebrate Pride Month with Persona's annual Pride Party
- roll out EDI Training for all managers
- introduce interactive and fun activities for everyone to get involved in

There's lots more to come, so keep an eye on the page!

*In May, we're asking all services to explore a culture's food and music!

Share your experiences and your pictures and stories with us at info@personasupport.org

Our Previous Themed Quarter: Waste Management

Key things we've focussed on are:

Food Waste

Separating food waste from general waste is important. It helps create biofuels and green energy, which protect the planet and keep our air clean.

Offensive Waste (personal care items)

At home, we can put them in the general rubbish bin.

When a paid carer is involved, it becomes commercial waste and has to go in yellow bin bags.

New Laws

We now have to:

- separate all waste
- check what can and can't be recycled
- use the right bin for the right waste
- dispose of batteries and electronics the right way

The new laws take effect in early 2027, giving us only a few months to prepare.

If we use the wrong bin for a piece of rubbish, the council won't empty the bin.

Thank you to everyone who got involved.

Click [here](#) to read more about our Themed Quarters

Our New Pay and Rota System

We're in the process of introducing a new payroll and rota management system and we were working with a provider to develop a system based on our needs. Unfortunately, this didn't progress as we hoped, so we've been looking at other options to digitalise the management of rotas and how we process pay variations.

Introducing Sona

We're excited to announce we will soon be launching a new rota management system across the organisation. This change is part of our strategy's commitment to digital solutions and improving efficiency, strengthening communication, and giving our staff better access to the information they need - whenever and wherever they need it.

What this means for staff:

You can use your phone or tablet to:

- view your rota anytime
- pick up overtime shifts
- request annual leave
- receive key messages from Persona and your team



What happens next:

Over the next few weeks, we'll be testing the system with a number of managers and staff.

We'll then run some training sessions with all our managers, ready for going live in the coming months.

We know that this will be a big change to the way we currently manage rotas and process variations to pay. For some this will be more daunting than for others, so we will be working with managers and staff to make the change to this new way of working as easy and streamlined as possible for everyone.

Your feedback will be invaluable as we roll this out, so keep an eye out for chances to share what you think!



Wellbeing support you can trust

Stressed? Anxious? Grieving? Sad?
Long term or chronic health condition?

Where do you turn when you need support?

How can you stay well?

Your Care from Vivup - free
click [here](#) for:

Professional advice, counselling, CBT and crisis phone support 24/7, 365 days a year

Self-help workbooks

Set goals, do health assessments, get wellbeing scores

Articles, recipes, blogs, podcasts

Wellbeing Hub - free

Practical information about:

- [stress at work](#)
- [talking to your manager](#)
- [reasonable adjustments](#)
- [money worries](#)
- writing your [WAP](#) (wellness action plan)

Trusted external [contacts](#) for support by phone, text or email

Learn how to:

- [Manage stress](#)
- [Stay active](#)
- [Eat well](#)
- [Sleep well](#)
- [Know yourself](#)

Inspiration from other people who've been where you are - [our wellbeing stories](#)

Talk to a volunteer [wellbeing champion](#) by email, phone or face to face: someone who understands and can support you to get help

Other ways to support your wellbeing

[Zen Room](#) treatments for everyone:

- Reiki
- aromatherapy massage
- reflexology
- Indian head massage

(low cost or claim on Medicash)

[Medicash](#).*

Claim money back for dental, physio, eye appointments & more.

Coverage for pre-existing conditions.

*for staff on Persona Wellbeing t's and c's only

Wellbeing sessions free, weekly, for staff:

- [live](#)
- [on demand](#)

Breathing, stretching, taking notice - no experience needed.

[Join John](#):

- monthly parkruns and parkwalks
- sign up for this year's Bury 10k (coming soon)

For everyone.

Is AI a safe way to get support with your health?

If you are using AI (eg ChatGPT, Copilot, etc) for mental health advice, read [these tips](#) from Mental Health UK to use it safely. Always:

- use AI alongside professional support and not on its own
- check the sources for the information AI gives you are trustworthy, accurate and evidence-based, like the NHS and established mental health charities

Remember that AI:

- isn't regulated or confidential
- can make you dependent on using it
- may make some mental health conditions worse if you rely on it too much
- isn't always accurate (it makes up information to fill knowledge gaps)
- may not get answers from reputable sources

Please share these tips with your friends, family & people you support

Get on your feet to work, walk or run

It can be easier to motivate yourself to move more now spring is here, but if you prefer other people's support to get you going, we've loads of ideas for you!



For everyone:

- join us for a run or a walk every month at Clarence Park or Heaton Park - all the dates are [here](#).
As you can see from parkrun UK's Facebook post, Mandy says 'parkwalk isn't the second best option. It is a brilliant experience in its own right'.
- take a sensory walk:
 - listen for different birds
 - see how many different blossoms and flowers there are
 - feel the sun or breeze
- have a regular sunshine break on a bench or in the garden
- plant seeds and water plants, notice how they change each week
- plan a walk to meet up with friends and enjoy a brew together afterwards
- take a beanbag or ball outside and play catch there

If you work in an office:

- can you do some meetings face to face while you walk, rather than sitting down?
- could you walk to some meetings instead of driving or using public transport?



If you're planning to join John at **parkrun** or **parkwalk**, please email him or drop him a text so he knows to wait for you! Contact details are [here](#).

Save money with Flexearn



If you have a permanent or temporary contract you can now use Flexearn to:

- save money automatically from your pay
- deposit savings whenever you like

Click [here](#) for more information.

Flexearn is not available to casual staff.

Want to save but don't use Flexearn? Click [here](#) for BEESMART with Manchester Credit Union.

Please share these tips with your friends, family & people you support

It's great to see so many staff being recognised for living our values.

Here's a selection of this quarter's High Fives - congratulations to everyone!



Michael Jones

Respectful

Mike has been supporting a gentleman on the Shared Lives dementia project and, following drastic health changes for both the gentleman and his wife, has provided consistent support going above and beyond what is asked of our carers. This support shows the impact of Shared Lives for the families of people living with dementia and the difference it can make in providing a service that works around a person and their needs.

Atiyyah Fatimah

Enthusiastic

Atiyyah truly demonstrated our **enthusiastic** value during the Eid celebration by being a fantastic sport and wholeheartedly supporting the event. She went the extra mile bringing home cooked, delicious traditional food for people we support, helping everyone experience and enjoy the celebration together. Atiyyah showcased true teamwork by offering her henna skills to staff, adding a special cultural touch to the day. Her positive energy and commitment beautifully highlighted cultural diversity and made the celebration even more meaningful for everyone involved.

Noor Qureshi

Noor truly lived our values by wholeheartedly embracing and celebrating the Eid event. She went the extra mile by dressing up beautifully for the occasion and thoughtfully providing a wide selection of delicious Asian sweets for everyone to enjoy. Her genuine admiration for the event, **enthusiasm**, and willingness to contribute created a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Noor's efforts highlighted the importance of teamwork and **respect** for cultural celebrations, helping make the event a meaningful and memorable success for all.

Jessica Pardoe

Adaptable

Jess is part of the team at Escape, who has been supporting Jamie* to use a communication app. Prior to the app, Jamie would rarely interact with staff about his needs. Since using the app, Jess has been able to communicate with Jamie about his wants and needs. Jess has taken this a step further by promoting independence, encouraging Jamie to make his own hot drink. This is a huge step forward for Jamie and is allowing him to learn new skills. This has led to Jamie making a drink for others. Well done Jess! **name changed for privacy reasons.*

Mags Grainge

Caring

Mags has planned a whole year's worth of activities with a person we support. She has listened to them and created a whole itinerary. Mags also makes plans outside of work just so she can accommodate people she supports. I haven't seen her without a smile and she always encourages people to live their best life. I would want Mags to care and support a member of my family, she is a credit to Persona .

Living the Values - Above and Beyond

This quarter's winners of a £50 gift voucher of their choice were...



Bury Care Academy
Enthusiastic



Caitlin Stanton
Enthusiastic



Charis Albanese
Enthusiastic



Laura Stott
Enthusiastic



Lisa Duggan
Enthusiastic



Maygan Zayne
Enthusiastic



Janice Thomas
Adaptable



Jessica Pardoe
Adaptable



St Mary's Team
Adaptable



Elaine Sindall
Caring



Escape
Caring



Joanne Naisbitt
Caring



Julie Pierce
Caring



Laura Faulkner
Caring



Mags Grainge
Caring

Well done & congratulations to you all!

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to complete my 6 week placement with Escape. During this time, I've gained valuable experience and developed a much better understanding of how to support people with learning disabilities. I truly appreciate how welcoming and supportive everyone has been. From the very beginning, I felt included and supported not only by the staff but also by the people you support. I was initially nervous due to my limited experience and knowledge, but this placement has helped me grow in confidence and develop both personally and professionally.

I would also like to say a special thank you to Laura and Julie for doing their very best to ensure I had the opportunity to observe and participate in a wide range of activities with both Escape 1 and Escape 2. Because of this, I have gained a much better understanding of communication and person-centred care for people with learning disabilities, which means a lot to me. Thank you once again for making this placement such a positive and meaningful experience. Kind regards, Anna

The logo for ESCAPE, with the word in a colorful, multi-colored font.

To all staff & management, thank you so much for all your help, love, and care shown to Barbara while she was with you. This was very much her happy place to spend her last few months. Thank you, especially Kaitlyn & Sarah, we appreciate your help, advice and understanding. Best wishes, Brett, Janet, Gavin, Nicola & children.

The logo for Elmhurst Short Stay, with 'Elmhurst' in white and 'Short Stay' in a smaller font below it, on a purple background.

It's Connie's last day of work placement tomorrow at Grundy Hub and I just wanted to say a massive thank you for giving her the opportunity to spend 10 weeks with you. The staff have been amazing with her and done nothing but support her over the last 10 weeks, which has really helped, as she was quite nervous with it being her first placement. She's had a great time, and it will stand her in good stead for her college course and her future in health and social care. Please pass thanks on to your staff and add that from what Connie has told me, of the way you run the centre and how the service users respond to the activities and staff, it's a huge credit to you. Thanks again and wishing you all the continued success in the future. Kind Regards, Jim.

The logo for Grundy Hub, with 'Grundy' in white and 'Hub' in a smaller font below it, on a pink background.

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Give to Others

PARTY IN THE PARK

For staff & people we support

Wednesday 1st July | 9am till 3pm

Get your tickets by 1st June 2026
from a manager or Basecamp

£2 a ticket for:
entry

live entertainment

all activities

all food & some drinks

cake

Find out more



tinyurl.com/PITPP



The Green Community Café,
Clarence Park Bowling Pavilion,
Walmersley Road, Bury, BL9 5DH

Persona

The Green
Community Café

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Person **A**wards
Celebrating excellence

2
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2
6

Save *the* Date



Thursday 08.10.26

Horseshoe Barn, Stables Country Club,
Bolholt Hotel Complex, Walshaw Road, Bury,
BL8 1PU

More information coming soon...

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Mark's Baptism Journey

Mark has finally been celebrating his baptism after a year long wait. It meant a lot to him and he's told us why:

'Baptism is a new start; a way of washing away our sins. I made the decision about a year ago after I had seen other people being baptised and I wanted to feel a part of the congregation properly.'

All of my friends, my brother and my support workers came to my baptism. I felt very special. I now feel truly part of the church.

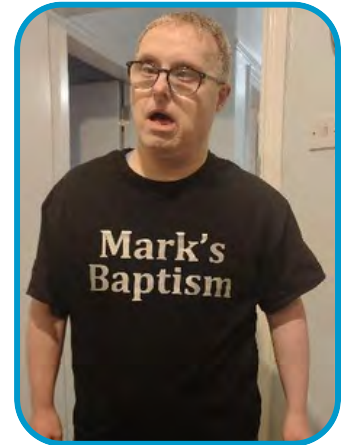
We celebrated by going out for a meal together at Jewel in the Crown in Bury - I was very happy.

My Supported Living operational support officer helped me the most. She arranged all the meetings and helped me get ready to be baptised. My support team also helped me on the day as they brought everything I needed.

I believe everyone should be baptised. It's a way to wash away all their sins and gain a big family in the church.'

Congratulations Mark!

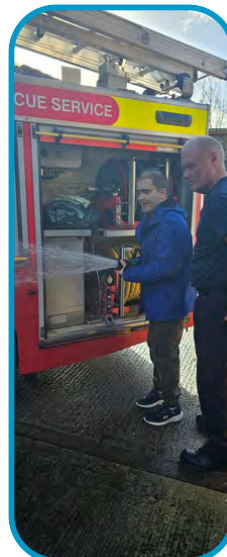
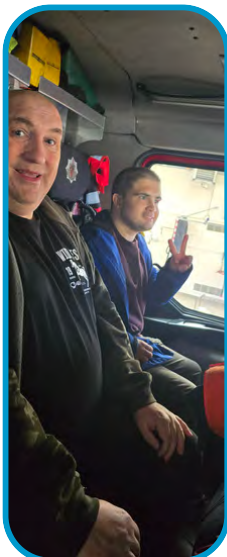
Click [here](#) to read more.



Ticking Off His Bucket List!

Isaac has always wanted to visit his local fire station and try out some of the equipment. Thanks to the help of our Supported Living team and Ramsbottom Fire Station's team, he had a great morning!

We hear Isaac was made to feel very welcome and was given a thorough induction into the role of a fire fighter.



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Give to Others

'Being happy is number one'

Martin started a volunteering role at his church in late 2025. He was supported by our Persona Employment Pathways service, which helps people we support learn new skills and get a job or voluntary role.

Martin tells us: 'I was looking to do something different in my life; to gain new skills, become more independent, and build on my confidence and self-esteem. I felt that volunteering would allow me to contribute positively and help others in the community.'

Keeping the church clean is important to me. I enjoy my role and love meeting new people. It makes me feel happy and relaxed. I feel good knowing that I'm appreciated. This makes a huge difference to how I feel overall as I'm much happier and satisfied.



I'm very happy with the support I got from the Persona Employment Pathways team; they've helped me find a job I love and been very supportive, kind and **caring** and given me the confidence I needed.

They make sure I feel confident in my role and help me to understand my tasks. They're also great listeners and are very encouraging.

I've already learnt lots of new skills. I used to struggle using the long extension cord, but I now know how to use it with patience. I've also learnt which cloths to use for different tasks.

I would like to learn more about gardening, as it's a passion of mine. When the weather is nicer, I'd like to focus on litter picking and weeding the church's entrance.

I now feel I have a purpose in helping others, which makes me very happy. **Being happy is number one.'**

Click [here](#) to read more.

Martin's name has been changed to protect privacy.



Love Is in the Air

Staff at Bolton Road completed a Signalong course and they couldn't wait to share what they learned with people we support!

During their Valentine's lunch, everyone signed along to 'Can't Help Falling in Love' and then enjoyed a buffet with the table decorations they had made.

Jo tells us 'the group were amazing!!'.



Escape 1 and 2 made some paper hearts and with handwritten messages in them. Some people wrote messages to loved ones and others wrote about what love means to them. They then created a Valentine's board displaying everyone's messages. Some messages read: 'love is butterflies in your tummy', 'my dad', and 'love is my family'

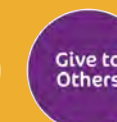


Love wasn't the only thing in the air this Valentine's! Ramsbottom hosted their very own bake off and people we support went all out, creating:

- strawberry hearts cheesecake
- smiley lovers sponge cake
- lovebug cupcakes



Meanwhile, at Grundy Hub, love really was in the air, with balloons and banners decorating the reception. They enjoyed making cards and cookies too.



'We found a gap we could fill'

Laura talks about the move from fostering to Shared Lives and the importance of a good match:

'We became carers to help fill a gap for people whose culture and beliefs were underrepresented. Both my husband and I were brought up in Jewish orthodox families, and we saw that there were more Jewish children going into care than there were carers who shared their experiences and needs. In 2015, we began fostering Maya, who has Down's syndrome. By the time she was 17 she was very much part of our family and we couldn't bear the idea of her leaving when she turned 18, so we became Shared Lives carers.

The transition was seamless. Because we share a culture, we understand Maya's needs and goals and we've been able to support her faith alongside her day-to-day skills. She now goes to college, learning life skills and more about her culture. She cooks for Jewish festivals, attends synagogue with her illustrated prayer book and loves visiting holy places in Israel, like the Wailing Wall and Rachel's Tomb.

A good Shared Lives match is so important because it allows people to live their life valuing things that are important to them, and because those same things are important to their carers, it's easy and rewarding for everyone. There is a certain satisfaction in watching others grow and achieve and making a difference in someone's life.'

To read more, click [here](#).



Elmhurst Easter Comp

These Easter bonnets were decorated by people we support from both Elmhurst and Escape. They used a variety of colours, fabrics and textures to create the bonnets and every entry was fabulous, unique, and creative, making it a challenge to choose the three winners.

Everyone who participated won a chocolate Easter egg.

Well done to everyone who took part!



Connect

Take Notice

Be Active

Keep Learning

Give to Others

Pancakes All Round

Elmhurst was the place to be this Pancake Day.

With the help of people we support at Escape, they had all sorts of fun - making, topping and eating pancakes!

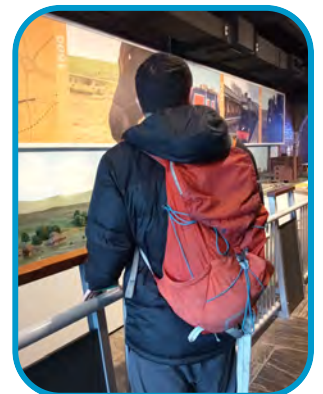
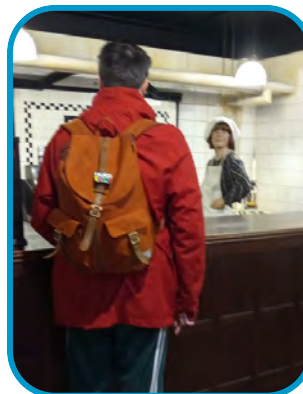


A Journey Back in Time

Escape journeyed back in time at the Portland Basin Museum, experiencing what it was like 'back in the day'!

They wandered through a 1920's street, looked around the canal along and at different barges.

We hear everyone really enjoyed it and they're hoping to go back for a trip on one of the boats soon!



LEAD Training

Leads and managers enjoyed a multicultural spread during training.

Zabeena graciously brought in some delicious food she had prepared for everyone to enjoy at lunchtime.



Hearts of Comfort



Grundy Hub's Knit & Natter group knitted matching hearts to provide comfort to patients and their families during end-of-life care at Fairfield Hospital.

The idea is that one heart stays with the patient and the other is given to a family member to represent a lasting connection.

Well done to everyone involved!



More Crafty Projects

That's not all the Knit & Natter group has been up to!

They've also:

- knitted an aquarium
- created a display board for Ramadan
- knitted Easter bunnies and chicks



Exploring Taste

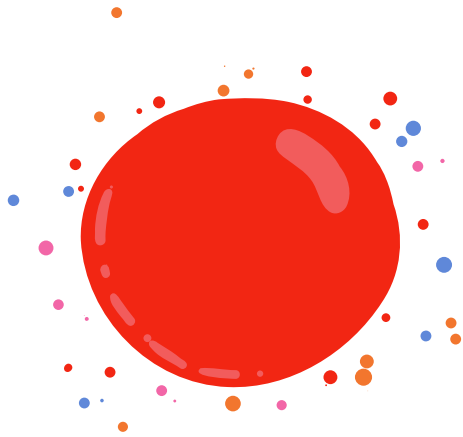
The new Sensory Sessions at Bolton Road have had great responses from people we support!

The group are currently exploring 'taste' and experiencing flavours from the six taste categories: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent and astringent.



Red Nose Day

We celebrated Red Nose Day in style over at Hoyles with staff and people we support dressed in their pyjamas, playing bingo and enjoying a session of laughing yoga!



St Patrick's Day



Hoyles also celebrated St. Patrick's Day with plates decorated in shamrocks and a delightful array of green foods!



Discover your new cosy corner with our velvet wingback chair!

with space for a hoist underneath

Book an accessible break in Carnforth



Designed & decorated by people we support



Dog friendly at no extra cost



Sleeps 7 people



Wheelchair accessible



Home from home



Free leisure pass

- worth up to £116 per week for a family of 4

External bookings: £189 per night

Special price: £115 per night (for people we support, Persona and Bury Shared Lives colleagues)

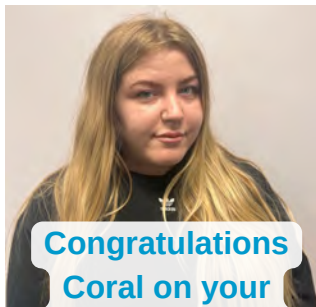
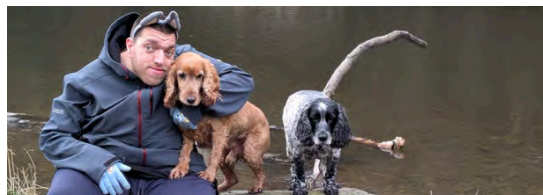
Join our Facebook group [here](#)

For more information, T&C's & to book, click [here](#)

To hear about any offers, join our mailing list [here](#)



Happy 60th Birthday Shelly!

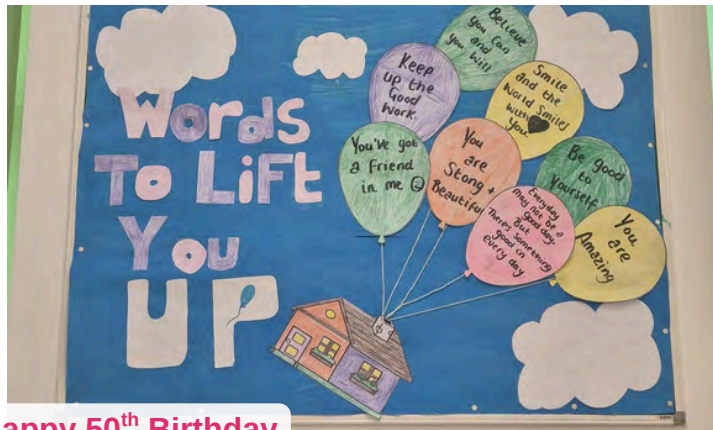


Congratulations Coral on your Level 2 NVQ Distinction!



Happy 60th Birthday John!



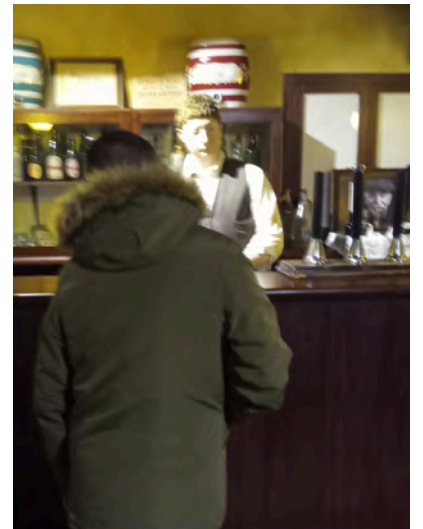
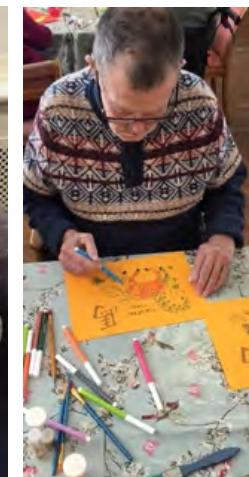


All the best for your maternity leave Hollie!

Happy 50th Birthday Ruth!



Happy 40th Birthday Siobhan!



UPCOMING EVENTS

23rd April



Hollywood Bowl
with Escape

23rd April



Seated Zumba
at The Green

23rd April



Chat & Crafts
at The Green

24th April



Musical
Memories

27th April



Sound Baths
at Sunnybank

1st May



Bingo & Raffle
Ageing in Place

5th May



Coffee Morning
Ageing in Place

1st July



Persona
Party in the Park

For more information & events, click [here](#).

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Notice

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Learning

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Others

These are the #FiveWaysToWellbeing, approved by the NHS, that remind us how to keep well. You'll see them throughout each newsletter, to celebrate how people are living their best life.

If you'd like to share a story, photos, or an idea,
please email us at info@personasupport.org

We enable support that makes a positive impact

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