



- Wellbeing**
- + Community**
- + Friends**
- + Good times**
- + Belonging**

**It all adds up to**

**Livability**

**Ten ways to connect  
with people in your  
community**



1

## + HOST A FILM SCREENING

**Getting together and watching a film is a great way to connect.**

Consider hosting a film screening and invite friends and acquaintances. You can keep it small and cosy, maybe with hot chocolate to help things along, or set up a larger event where you take donations for charity, and serve popcorn and other movie favourites. If you're hosting a screening outside a cinema or home setting, you're likely to need a licence from the film's copyright owner, for a fee - be sure to check ahead.

2

## + HOLD A CAKE OFF

**Do you enjoy baking? Could you or a friend demonstrate a couple of simple recipes at a cake off?**

Cooking with others is a great way to learn new skills. Involve people who may love to cook but find it harder to do on their own. Doesn't have to be complicated - delicious homemade shortbread only has three or four ingredients. Enjoy the fun and get baking!



3

## + ARRANGE A WALK

**Going on a walk is a long-held tradition and a way to connect with people while keeping healthy.**

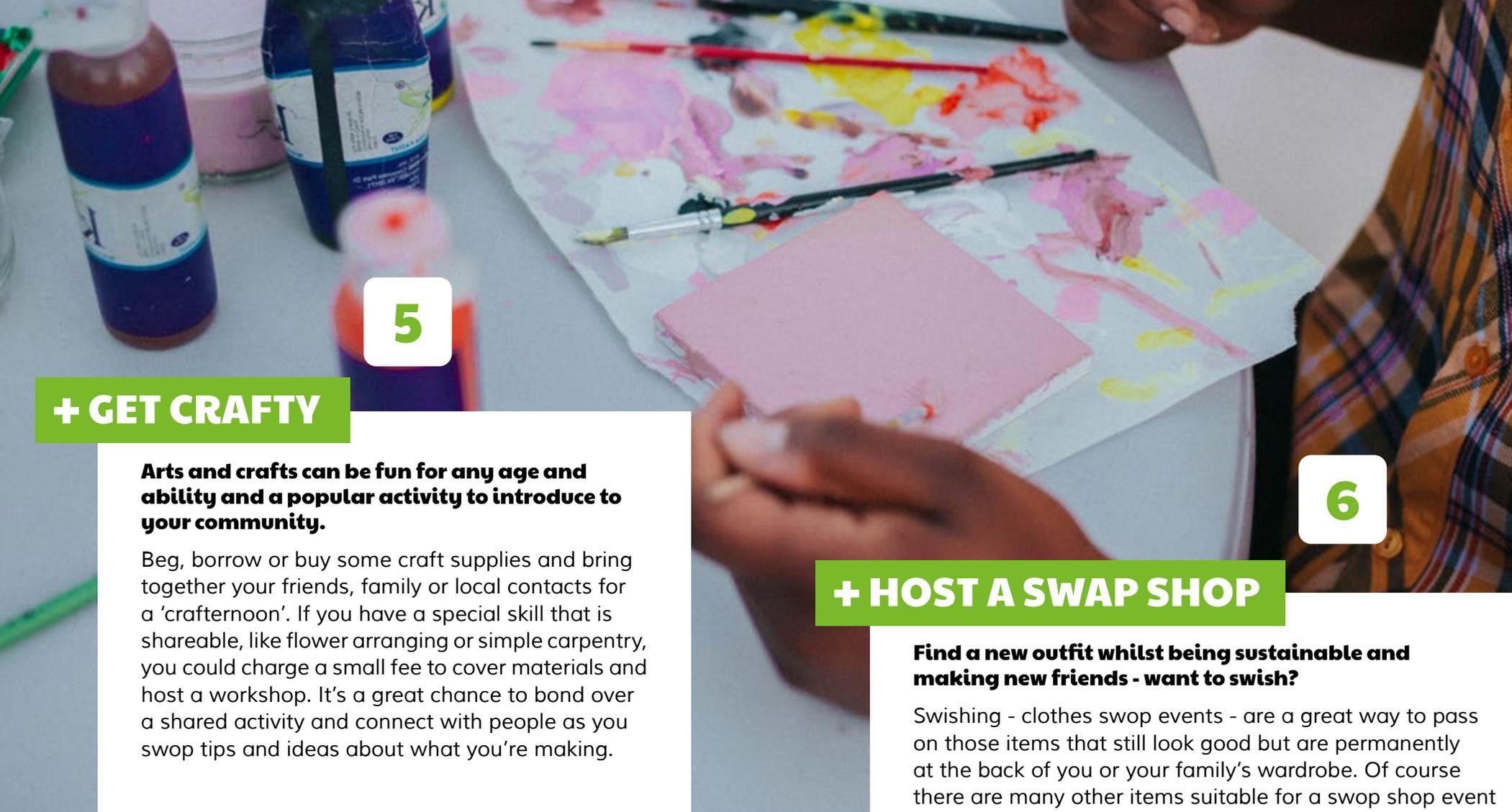
When you walk, your heart pumps faster and sends oxygen to your muscles and brain, improving your heart and lung fitness, giving you stronger bones and balance, and even helping your memory and attention. Walking with others – especially with people you don't know very well – can also help to open up conversation. By walking alongside someone, rather than sitting across from them at a party for example, you may find that you're able to explore new thoughts and topics as you pass different stimulating sights. Perhaps the best thing about a walk is that it's open to everyone; people of all ages and fitness types can take part, you can do it in urban landscapes or countryside, and it's a safe, free activity.

4

## + ORGANISE A SOCIAL EVENT

**There's never been a better time for getting together, as we relish our post-pandemic freedoms. Take the chance to bring together people from your workplace, community or family.**

It could be a meal, a quiz night, or even going to your local pub. Try reaching out to people that you might have lost touch with or don't see as often as you'd like, or those people who you'd like to make new connections with in the place you live. Try to find an evening or a couple of hours to unwind, put your feet up, and forget about your to do list. Your mind and body will thank you for the break, and you can spend some quality time with the people around you.



5

## + GET CRAFTY

**Arts and crafts can be fun for any age and ability and a popular activity to introduce to your community.**

Beg, borrow or buy some craft supplies and bring together your friends, family or local contacts for a 'crafternoon'. If you have a special skill that is shareable, like flower arranging or simple carpentry, you could charge a small fee to cover materials and host a workshop. It's a great chance to bond over a shared activity and connect with people as you swap tips and ideas about what you're making.

6

## + HOST A SWAP SHOP

**Find a new outfit whilst being sustainable and making new friends - want to swish?**

Swishing - clothes swop events - are a great way to pass on those items that still look good but are permanently at the back of you or your family's wardrobe. Of course there are many other items suitable for a swop shop event - household items, jewellery, accessories, unused gym equipment - which need new homes. Host the swop shop in your home or a local venue and throw into some tea and biscuits for a great evening.



7

## + LEND A HAND VOLUNTEERING

### **What's going on your community? Summer fetes? Visitors to local beauty spots?**

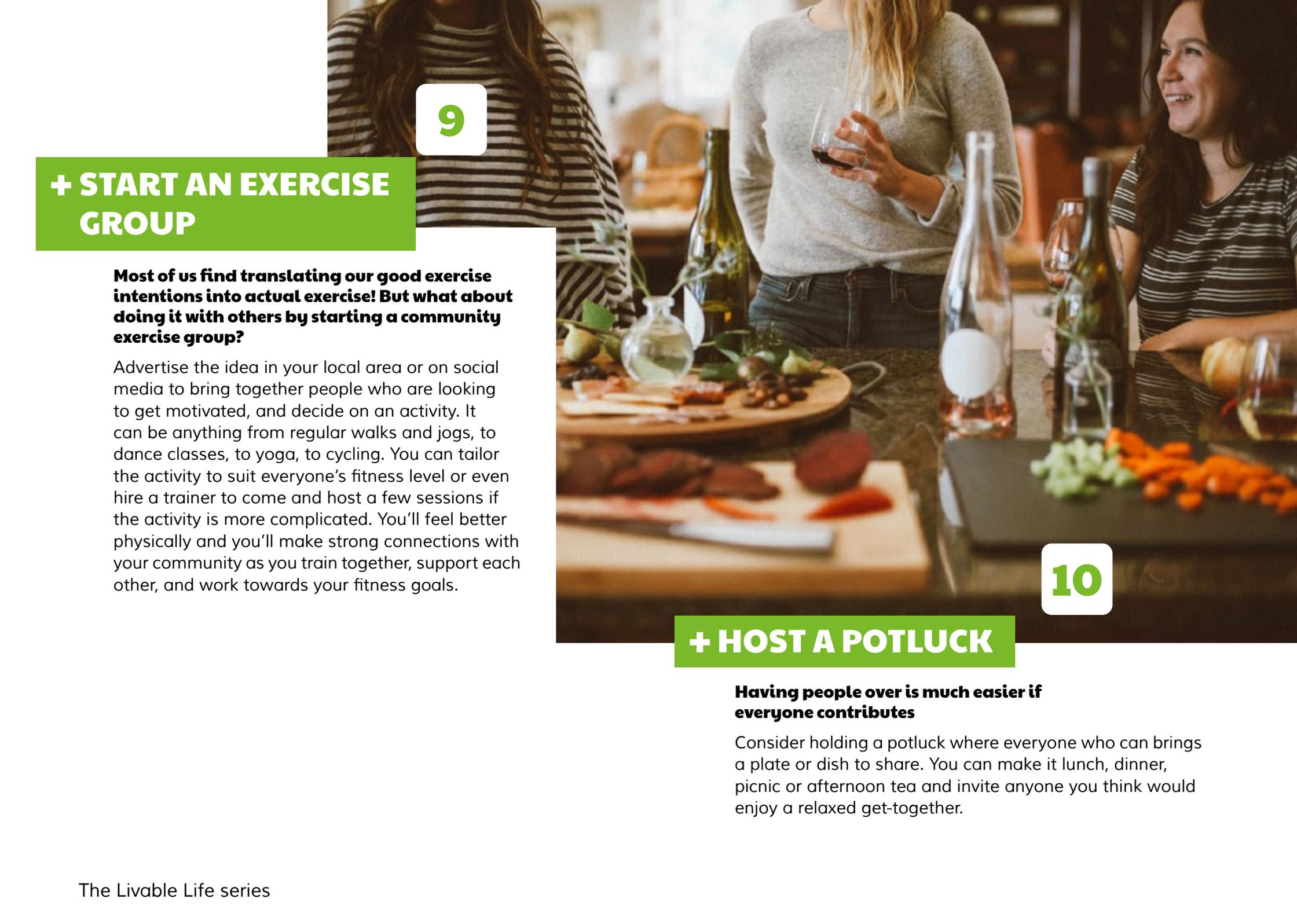
Some of our residential homes and supported living services have made a valuable contribution to local happenings by litter picking, serving teas, welcoming visitors etc. Find out who needs a hand in your area and see if you can give a little bit of time to your community.

8

## + SING WITH ME

### **Bonding over music and singing is an age-old tradition that can be shared with people of all ages.**

Thanks partly to some popular television series, community singing has taken off and you shouldn't have to look too far for a community choir or group to join. There are groups for different music styles and abilities and you don't have to be a 'good' singer - just enjoying singing is the point. Check out what's on offer in your area.



9

## + START AN EXERCISE GROUP

**Most of us find translating our good exercise intentions into actual exercise! But what about doing it with others by starting a community exercise group?**

Advertise the idea in your local area or on social media to bring together people who are looking to get motivated, and decide on an activity. It can be anything from regular walks and jogs, to dance classes, to yoga, to cycling. You can tailor the activity to suit everyone's fitness level or even hire a trainer to come and host a few sessions if the activity is more complicated. You'll feel better physically and you'll make strong connections with your community as you train together, support each other, and work towards your fitness goals.

10

## + HOST A POTLUCK

**Having people over is much easier if everyone contributes**

Consider holding a potluck where everyone who can brings a plate or dish to share. You can make it lunch, dinner, picnic or afternoon tea and invite anyone you think would enjoy a relaxed get-together.

# KEEP CONNECTED

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A little care to connect with your community goes a long way. Good relationships are important for mental wellbeing and building strong social connections with your wider community can help you to feel happier, more secure and give you a greater sense of purpose.

By reaching out to people around you, you can help strengthen the bonds you already have, make new connections, and inspire others to do the same.

Remember, if you take up any of these ideas, don't stop there but perhaps try another idea to help you to build connections in your community.

## SHARE YOUR CONNECTIONS

If you've tried any of the ideas in this pack or have ideas of your own to connect people in your community, join us on social media to share your thoughts and photos.

  **LivabilityUK**

**Wellbeing**  
**+ Volunteering**  
**+ Independence**  
**+ moving**  
**+ Family**  
**+ Partner**

**It all adds up to**

**Livability**



**Kerry made a major life change recently when she moved from the family home to a Livability residential care setting. She struggled to settle but now is enjoying life and feeling good. She tells us about the past year and her wellbeing...**

'I arrived here in August 2021 and settling in was very hard during lockdown, especially as it had been only me and my mum for years. But we'd had to have that conversation – I'm getting older and my mum's getting older. I wanted to have my independence and my mum wanted to see me settled and know that I'm ok.

'The staff were there for the emotional support I needed. There was someone to talk to if I was struggling emotionally. I'm a sociable person so I mentally struggled a lot. It took quite a few months to feel settled. But I could meet with the other residents in that time and people tried to help me settle in.

'Covid safety was handled very well here. I felt confident with what was in place. My mum can come and see me now, thank goodness; she comes once or twice a week. It was wonderful when they said family could visit again. It was about nine months before that happened. My brother and his family visit when they can – they live a long way away.

My family make me feel good. And I have a partner who I met here, Stuart. We were just friends and then things developed.

'What I love doing is volunteering at Southend University Hospital, five days a week, for a couple of hours or so. I'm a patient visitor and go round chatting to people at their bedside. I can pop to Costa and WH Smith and get them things they need. They often tell me I'm an inspiration and how much I've helped them and I talk to their families. I love it and find it very rewarding. It was daunting at first but not now – I've been doing it for six years. It's a big part of my life.

'I know I can have the independence here that I wouldn't have had once upon a time and that I can do things that I didn't think I could do. I never used to go out for walks on my own, for instance. Staff have helped me gain confidence and went out with me at first. And I threw myself into it – I think "right, I'm going to do it", and then I do it!'

# About Livability

This pack is written and produced by Livability.

Livability is the disability charity that's committed to enabling children, young people and adults to live a life that adds up for them.

What makes life livable is never down to just one thing - it's the sum of many things. From friendship to fun; from companionship to community; from a great chat to a challenge overcome – it all adds up to Livability.

We are a wellbeing-driven charity. Wellbeing looks different for each of the hundreds of children, young people and adults with disabilities who use Livability's services.

Through a wide range of disability care, special education, and rehabilitation services, we promote inclusion and wellbeing for all.

Together, we work to see people take part, contribute and be valued. We put the elements in place that all add up to connected lives.

Find out more about our work here:

[www.livability.org.uk/lifsum](http://www.livability.org.uk/lifsum)

It all adds up to

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# Livability

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