
Your Livability

Spring Edition
2024



A proud milestone

Thanks to the kindness
of people like you, we're
celebrating 180 years of
supporting people with
disabilities

It all adds up to

Livability

Dear friend

2024 is a year of exciting plans at Livability, as well as a time to reflect on our heritage.

This year, we're celebrating our 180-year anniversary and Victorian reformer Lord Shaftesbury's figurehead role in our work. His vision remains our motivation: to enable those who can be pushed to the margins of society to flourish. Today, we do this through disability services. We're always looking for innovative opportunities and this year, we're opening a children's service in the north-east of England, where local authority services are struggling with demand.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Chivers
Chief Executive



In this issue



Royal visit to Livability college

- 02 Foreword
- 03 Contents
- 04 Becki's story: her new focus and confidence
- 06 Music is my language
- 08 Royal visit to Livability college
- 10 Changing Lives with a gift in a Will
- 12 Thank you for your incredible support!



Becki's story: her new focus and confidence

Graduate Becki's life changed course abruptly when she had a massive brain bleed. She tells us about how she tackles life, with Livability's support.

I'm 28 and I live at Livability Treetops in Colchester. I grew up nearby and studied music at Bath Spa University. I play saxophone, clarinet and flute to grade 8 standard and I've got a brother who's four years younger than me.

My story

I'd just graduated university, I was feeling perfectly healthy but one day I started speaking really funny, and then I remember waking up in Colchester hospital. I couldn't remember anything about what had happened. I tried to move but I felt stuck. I wasn't able to do anything for myself and I needed a wheelchair.

After hospital, you moved to Livability's high dependency home, Livability Treetops. What was that like?

Staff were very friendly and helped me a lot. Especially when I was feeling down, the staff here helped me. They were encouraging and my confidence is building slowly, with all the physio and training I get.

What progress have you made at Treetops?

Speech and language is the biggest improvement and I got rid of my 'trachy' as well [tracheostomy, which opens up a surgical airway to enable breathing]. I had that for about four years. I get to the gym about three times a week, with staff supporting me, and I use cardio and weight machines.



Becki, far right in black hat, playing saxophone



Becki and her keyworker Chrissy have formed a close bond

'Becki has gone from a shy, non-verbal lady, hiding behind her hair, to a confident, caring, funny, determined woman. It's been wonderful seeing her confidence grow and becoming more and more chatty.'

Becki's keyworker, Chrissy

Your support can help more people like Becki to rebuild their life. Please donate today by completing the enclosed form, visiting livability.org.uk/spring-news or calling 020 7452 2121.

Music is my language



Very few of us get to have a piece of music we've produced premiered at London's Royal Festival Hall - but that's exactly what residents at Livability Bradbury Court experienced.

Working tirelessly behind the scenes, Livability staff helped Bradbury Court, a home for adults living with physical disabilities and a range of needs, to qualify for a unique, musical opportunity.

As part of the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO), OrchLab is an inclusive project which shares music-making with disabled adults.

Residents at Bradbury Court were one of only two partners chosen to work with OrchLab, whose team ran seven days of workshops at this north London residential care home.

OrchLab makes it possible for adults, whose disabilities prevent them from using most traditional musical instruments, to create music with members of the orchestra, using assistive technology, iPad apps, percussion instruments and adapted instruments.

Staff member Teo says: 'Several of the people we support are non-verbal but they used the instruments to show what they were feeling. At the end of each session, there was a calmness and a satisfaction you could see they felt.'

Says service manager Margaret: 'The experience with OrchLab has pushed people in terms of how much they think they can achieve, going from "I can't do it!" to learning how to do it.'

Livability Bradbury Court staff have been trained in the technology used in the sessions so they can continue supporting residents to make music. 'OrchLab have been incredibly generous in donating four iPads and speakers, as well as the staff training, so we'll now be able to carry on music-making with our residents,' says Margaret.

'You could see the excitement and joy people felt in taking part. The sessions were filmed and wowed an audience at the Festival Hall.'

Margaret - Registered Manager, Livability Bradbury Court

***See link to the film below**



See the musical journey Bradbury Court took with OrchLab on this amazing video <https://tinyurl.com/orchlab>

Your donation can help the people we support to take part in exciting projects like OrchLab, which add so much to people's lives and continue giving joy into the future. Please donate today, using the form enclosed, visiting livability.org.uk/spring-news or calling 020 7452 2121.



Royal visit to Livability college

Students at Livability Millie College had their first royal visit recently, when our Patron HRH The Princess Royal visited to celebrate the college's first-year anniversary.

Students welcomed the princess as she toured the extensive countryside site. She was shown the many outdoor learning opportunities, including horticulture in the gardens and greenhouse, conservation activity, and animal husbandry work including rescued goats, sheep and chickens.

Student intake has already doubled and more places are in demand. A new sensory boardwalk connecting learning zones around the campus and development of the curriculum, which includes plans for an equine therapy programme, form part of the college's vision for growth.

Gaining catering and hospitality skills is part of the Dorset college's enterprise curriculum, preparing students to be ready for the world of work, as they move into adult life.

A Friday breakfast club has become a favourite weekly fixture. Sparked by student Tyler, who enjoyed making special breakfast orders for individuals, the club developed into an 'all welcome' venue. Student groups take weekly turns to host and serve food, and to be customers.



The catering part of the curriculum allows students to learn key skills like safety in the kitchen, excellent hygiene standards, healthy eating and following a recipe.

Says Education Enterprise Visitor Services Manager Annabelle, 'Students get the opportunity to try many different areas of enterprise and find out what they really enjoy. We then develop those skills further over their time here and help them to create their future pathway.'

Plans for 2024 include selling eggs, veg boxes and homegrown plants from the college, and opening a retail space at a nearby craft centre, where students can learn to handle money, provide good customer service and increase their confidence.

Your support can help more people like Tyler to live independent, fulfilled lives. Please donate today by completing the enclosed form, visiting livability.org.uk/spring-news or calling 020 7452 2121.

Changing Lives with a gift in a Will

A Will is one of the most important things you'll ever sign, for both you and your family.



If you haven't got around to making a Will, or you're putting off updating an existing Will, you're not alone. Staggeringly, more than half of British adults don't have a Will.

Writing a Will is a lot easier, and more affordable, than you might think. In fact, here's 4 key reasons to make or update your Will.

1. Decide what happens to your estate

Writing a Will is the only way you can make sure everything you've worked hard for - your home, possessions and money - gets passed on to the people you care about. You can appoint an Executor who will wind up the affairs of your estate.

2. Decide who will be remembered in your Will

Your Will can help you to make provision for loved ones after you are gone. It is important to review your Will every few years too in case there are new grandchildren you may want to include, or perhaps if a family member has passed away, along with any other relationship changes where changing your Will might be necessary.

3. Help to reduce inheritance tax

Another reason to have a Will is that it allows you to minimise inheritance tax. The value of what you give away to family members or charity will reduce the value of your estate when it's time to pay inheritance tax.

For instance, if you give 10% or more from your net estate* to charity, your inheritance tax rate drops from 40 percent to 36 percent for your estate.

*Visit gov.uk for more information about the 36% discounted inheritance tax rate.

4. It's easier than you might think and can provide an opportunity to support future generations

Some people put off writing a Will because they think it's too much hassle, or too expensive. Thankfully, it's neither of those things.

Many of our supporters choose to leave a gift in their Will to support our work. These gifts help us to be there for future generations and change the lives of the people with disabilities we support.

Livability's Free Will Service

Did you know that Livability has a partnership with the National Free Wills Network? We can offer you the opportunity to have a simple Will written or updated with a local solicitor - for free. Of course, Livability would be very grateful if you do decide to support us with a gift in your Will, but there is no obligation to do so.

Sign up to our Free Will Scheme in 3 Easy Steps:



Step 1 - To receive your free will pack please call our friendly supporter services team on 020 7452 2121 or email supporterservices@livability.org.uk



Step 2 - you will be referred to The National Free Wills Network and will receive a pack with a list of local solicitors to choose from.



Step 3 - Simply choose a firm and contact them directly to make an appointment to make your Will.

Thank you for your continued support!



At Livability, the support and engagement you have with our charity really matters to us. From the people that use our services, staff, supporters, volunteers - each person is a valued part of our charity community.

Together, we are able to deliver disability care and education services, raise funds and awareness, and create vital community connections for the people we support.

We've recently updated our Data and Privacy Policy which you can view at livability.org.uk/privacy. We promise to respect any of your personal information which is under our control and to keep it safe.

We welcome any queries, comments or requests you may have regarding this policy and any other relevant policies.

Please do not hesitate to contact us on **020 7452 2121** or email **dataprotection@livability.org.uk**