

**SEE
ABILITY**

SeeAbility Stories

Spring 2021

“My sister Jan has a learning disability and has so much to give and to look forward to in life.”

Kerry, Jan’s sister

#WeSeeAbility

Jan's healthy lifestyle

Jan with her Support Worker.
Picture taken before
COVID-19.



Before moving in with SeeAbility, Jan had gained a lot of weight due to her anxiety. Over time because of her weight gain, she found it difficult to walk and needed a wheelchair to move around.

"My sister had always had a smile for everyone but she had become depressed and introverted. It was like she was disappearing," said Kerry

At SeeAbility, we work hard to ensure everyone we support can participate and contribute to the things that are important to them. This was something Jan and Kerry noticed when they visited our Waterside House.

"When we walked into the lounge, there was a big table

with everyone sitting around it. There was such a lovely family atmosphere. When Jan sat down, a lady said, 'I'm in the choir - you could join too'. It just felt so right," said Kerry.

As soon as Jan moved into Waterside House, the SeeAbility team took time to understand her and what she enjoyed doing. They recognised that Jan's anxiety had caused her to gain weight through comfort eating. So they worked with her and found ways of reducing her anxiety and need to comfort eat.

The team also started encouraging Jan to make healthier food choices and gradually they worked together to introduce regular exercise. They found that Jan loved using

a Fitbit to track her steps and helped her develop a positive approach to keeping fit.

"Jan absolutely loves it here. She hasn't used her wheelchair for two years now and has grown out of her comfort eating habit. Even during lockdown, she has been able to keep fit by doing indoor exercises." says Clair, Waterside House Manager.

"The change in Jan is amazing. Every day she tells me how happy she is. SeeAbility is the best thing that could have happened to Jan," added Kerry.

Our aim is to enable the people we support to live more independently and achieve things they never thought possible. You can meet more of the people that we support on our website at www.seeability.org/stories

Creating Connections Sheffield Voices

Over the past 12 months, many people, including people with learning disabilities, have felt lonely and found it difficult to adjust to the lockdown rules. Working in partnership with Learning Disability England (LDE) and their members (23 self-advocacy groups), in October 2020, SeeAbility launched a six-month programme called Creating Connections. Supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport via the National Lottery Community Fund, Creating Connections aims to tackle isolation and loneliness among people with learning disabilities by helping them to connect with others online.

In Sheffield, we worked with an existing group for people with learning disabilities, called Sheffield Voices, who received a grant from Creating Connections to help them keep their members connected in lockdown.



Kathryn Littlewood, Sheffield Voices Project Lead said; "This funding has enabled us to set up a new group and support 14 people with learning disabilities to come together one night a week, play fun games and see their friends at a time when they are most alone."

Creating Connections is specially designed to support people to

use the internet safely to connect with friends and family and to create new friendships and interests that enable them to thrive. For example, the Wednesday evening social group in Sheffield offers a wide range of activities - most recently a baking session with a competitive edge - and helps people feel mentally and emotionally engaged and cared about.

To find out more about our **Creating Connections** programme, visit www.seeability.org/stay-connected



Putting Learning into Action - Bryony and Jo

Like many young women, Bryony wants to be independent and do things for herself. However, over the past 10 years despite having learnt how to use the keyboard at school, Bryony has relied on other people like Support Worker Jo to write things like a shopping list.

At SeeAbility, we work in a way that ensures everyone we support can be as independent as possible and can form meaningful friendships and relationships that give them a sense of belonging.

Through our Learning into Action course, Jo helped Bryony to rediscover her typing skills and regain her independence.

"Bryony used to just let people do things for her, like writing a shopping list or composing an



email, but we wanted to give her the skills to do that herself," explains Jo.

With help from the course facilitators, Jo identified that Bryony's keyboard was not suitable for her needs and replaced it with one with bigger and coloured keys. Bryony is now able to write emails to her

friends with little support and can communicate better with Jo. "I like writing using the keyboard" says Bryony.

Bryony's story shows that, with the right support around us, we can all learn and discover new skills that enable us to live a life where we can participate and communicate without limits.

Leave a Legacy

Gifts in Wills play an incredibly important role in helping us to improve the lives of people in the UK with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss. Every gift enables us to provide tailored support and specialist services to those who need us now and in the future. If, like us, you see ability in everyone, and not their disability, please consider giving a gift in your Will and leave a lasting legacy.

For more information
Visit www.seeability.org/future
Contact us in confidence on 01372 755 042
Email supportercare@seeability.org

A Big Give Thank You

Thank you so much to everyone who donated to our Big Give Christmas Appeal. Thanks to you, we raised an incredible £40,000 to support our work to end isolation among people with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss. This is a huge achievement – thank you so much from all of us!

The Virtual London Marathon is back!

Do you love running, but not sure about crowds? Join Team SeeAbility in the Virtual Virgin Money London Marathon and run your route, your way. We have only a few places left so follow the link below to find out more and apply for your place.

www.seeability.org/events

What does it mean to live a good life?

I am sure that, like us, you believe that everyone in society should have the opportunity to feel valued for who they are.

From 1 April, SeeAbility plans to embark on a year-long campaign to encourage a national conversation based on four themes: 'Live'; 'Love'; 'Thrive'; and 'Belong' - issues that are important to everyone's wellbeing but which people with learning disabilities are often excluded from.

The "Big Conversation" will focus on our wellbeing, as individuals and as a society, as we emerge from the Covid pandemic. Follow us on social media and join in the conversation.

Any questions?

To **keep in touch** or find out more about how we're helping to change lives by focusing on ability:

Call:

01372 755042

Email:

supportercare@seeability.org

SeeAbility, Newplan House,
41 East Street, Epsom, KT17 1BL.



www.seeability.org



[Facebook.com/RSB.seeability](https://www.facebook.com/RSB.seeability)



[@seeability](https://twitter.com/seeability)



[youtube.com/SeeAbilityFilms](https://www.youtube.com/SeeAbilityFilms)



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Registered Charity No. 255913