Our Way
self advocacy





Annual Report 2026



Speaking up and breaking down barriers since 1986



Introduction

A message from Our Way manager

Our Way continues to be a lovely place to be, where all our members, staff, Volunteers and Trustees support and work together. Lots of fun, and fantastic memories made every week. Of course there is always the more serious, one-one support with members individual needs, but the relationship we have the privilege to hold with our members is something that needs to be celebrated, as it is through these relationships that trust is built, and we can help, guide and support our members to reach their full potential.

Richard has done an amazing job at securing some integral grants which has enabled us to welcome Karen to the team, focussing on this one-one support with peoples individual needs that we have done for so many years quietly under the radar, and Karen has settled in very well, and is doing a fantastic job with the wide variety of needs and tasks that she is faced with.

Selina continues to keep the office a welcoming environment, where our members feel they can drop in at anytime for a chat, book onto the trips and keep all our finances up to date and in order. She is often the first contact new members and professionals have with Our Way when they reach out to the charity and her kind and empathetic approach is often a relief after making the scary first step to make contact with a new organisation.

Our Sessions and events, both weekly and monthly are well attended, with well planned and consistent dates in the diary. Caroline does an amazing job at making sure everyone feels they get the attention and time they need. Always being there for each and every person that has something they want to share and valuing it.

Our Craft sessions continue to be an important therapeutic time, learning new skills and being able to sell these at the Craft Fayres, gives purpose and meaning to the sessions, which we are incredibly grateful to Heidi for as she plans and supplies all the equipment and time to ensure these sessions run smoothly.

I would like to finish by thanking all of our funders, which includes everyone who continues to use our Easy Fundraising and donates through our Facebook and Website, we wouldn't be able to be here without you!! I feel as I hope you will agree, the year has been a successful one, with new members continuing to join, and accessing the sessions to build on their independence and confidence. I am incredibly grateful to work as part of such a kind and supportive team, and look forward to many more years to come!!

Cat Bennett - Our Way Self Advocacy Manager

A message from our Chairman



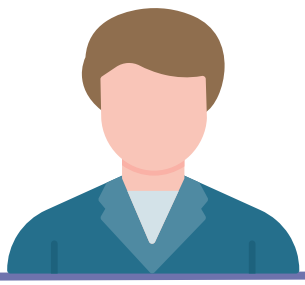
We have had new members join who have become firm members of the Our Way family.
Our Way is still going strong, with lots of trips, events and sessions. We have had trips to Waterworld, Shrewsbury Castle, Twycross Zoo, various different museums and theatres. We even produced our own Recipe Book, which sold out very quickly!- and is now available to purchase on Kindle!

We have kept fit with lots of sports sessions thanks to the wonderful Luan, and these have been supported with our monthly walks around the county.

I would like to thank all our volunteers for the support and time that they give us, as-well as the paid staff team for all their hard work and dedication.

I would like to thank all our trustees for their continued support. I look forward to the coming year.

Ray Gallier
Chair of Trustees



Meet Our Team



Cat Bennett

Manager



Caroline Jones

Development Worker



Selina Tipper

Administrator/accounts Clerk



Richard Paton

Fundraising Co-Ordinator



Karen Woodward

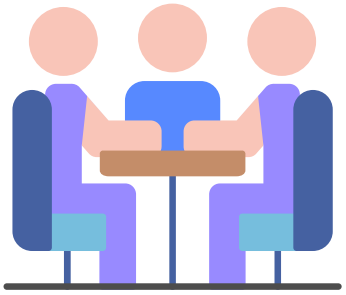
Support Worker



Heidi Worth

Sessional Worker

Our Board of Trustee's





Ray Gallier
Chairman



Lin Bullock
Secretary



Marsha White
Treasurer



Carolyn Ayres



Janet Jones



John Lawley



Murray Roy



Natalie Dixon



Sue Houghton



Tracey James



Vikki Vincent

Meet Our Volunteers



Adam Mytton



Ben Bennett



Kevin Eades



Catherine Quekett



Chris Puttock



Gary Martin



George Mytton



Heidi Scott



James Keighley



Michele Martin



Nick Clarke



Sarah Duce

Young People's Group

The Young Peoples Group continues to be a valuable part of the Charity. It is often the first time the young person spends time away from their parents and carers that is not in a school environment, which can be both scary for the young person and their parents and Carers!
We feel it's important for young people to learn social skills, and also have time around their social peers, allowing them to grow and develop in a relaxed, fun and safe environment.
We continue to cook at each session which the ideas come from conversations with young people.
The trips that we facilitate throughout the school holidays are chosen and voted on by the young people, which we celebrate with them to encourage them to continue to come up with more ideas and suggestions.
Wyre Forest School continue to visit on Thursday afternoons, where we discuss topics, and work along side the school to develop their learning and social skills.
We visit Russel House quarterly to deliver activities, both in the kitchen and their art and craft room.
Young people and parents/carers recommend the young peoples group to their peers, and it is a privilege to watch and be part of their growing in confidence, independence and development.



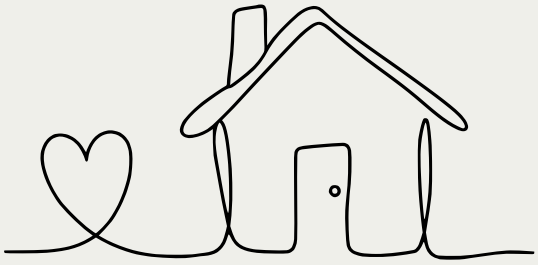








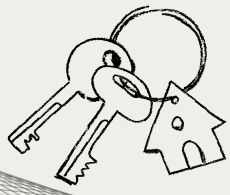
Housing Project



Thanks to Skipton Building Society and National Lottery Awards for all we were able to support people with their housing needs.
Members access support around their correspondence, utilities and house moves.
We have been able to dedicate the time to chasing and navigating various agencies from social care to universal credit, GPs and Support workers to ensure smooth transitions happen at such a stressful time.
We continue to be on hand for support by both our members and their parents/carers when they are not sure which way to turn when an email or letter tunrs up unexpectedly, and make everything bitesize and support them to tackle it one step at a time.
There is always a way forwards, sometimes we just need a little help finding the map!

SKIPTON BUILDING SOCIETY Since 1853

NATIONAL LOTTERY AWARDS FOR ALL COMMUNITY FUND







Stars In The Sky

Our events continue to be well attended, with all the ideas for activities coming from our members.

Through some of these events and budgeting workshops it was identified that some members wanted to work on their travel training. We were able to do this, both on an individual basis and in groups. The members that participated got a lot out of it, and have continued to work on travelling independently, with members even going on holiday together for the first time, travelling by public transport and having to navigate cancellations!!

We have held various partnership events such as the 'Promoting Health Event' with the Learning Disability Nursing Team, which was a great success, and opened the door to new relationships with the NHS for a lot of our members.





















Zumba & Coffee Mornings



We always suggest that potential new members pop down to a coffee morning a few times before joining, to make sure that it is suitable, and they feel comfortable at the session. Our Coffee mornings are our busiest weekly session with over 50 members regularly attending. It is an ideal opportunity for members to pop along and meet their friends, bring any correspondence that they may want support with, chat to a member of the Our Way staff team and meet other professionals.

We find that we are frequently asked by social workers if they can hold annual reviews with us, as it is where the person they are supporting feels the most comfortable and therefore the meeting is more successful, addressing problems and concerns or things that may need some additional support.

Zumba continues to be well attended, a relaxed Zumba session where people can do as much or as little as they feel able. Louis is fantastically supportive, and some members have managed to join other sessions that he runs out in the wider community.

Members have even told us how it has helped with their rehabilitation following injuries!







Zumba

Gardening Project

Our gardeners have been busy tending to the gardens, both at Youth House, Stourport and Berrington Court. Members have been able to independently tend to the gardens at Youth House and Stourport and have grown potatoes, Strawberries, Peppers, Lettice's, Tomatoes and Chillies.

Being outside and having the opportunity to independently work on the shared space is empowering and our members have found that they enjoy having the responsibility.

We have also been able to support KDYT in keeping their carpark and surrounding areas clean and tidy.













Safe Places

Our Way members continue to visit shops, businesses and venues to promote and recruit to the Safe Place scheme. The details for registered 'Safe Places' are then kept up to date on a directory which can be found on our website, (www.ourway.org.uk).

The Safe Places Scheme aims to provide place of safety for anyone who finds themselves in a vulnerable situation when out and about in their community.

They are able to visit a venue that displays the Safe Place sticker in their window where they will be made to feel comfortable and offered to call someone to help.

We are seeking funding for this project as it is so valuable, and we would like it to continue!!





Summer Ball

The Summer Ball was held at Kidderminster Harriers Supporters and social club again this year, where we received a very warm welcome and were able to enjoy the music from Version. We were able to raise over £100 on the raffle and one of our members Nicholas who is a dedicated air guitar player, was even gifted a guitar by the band!

















Football

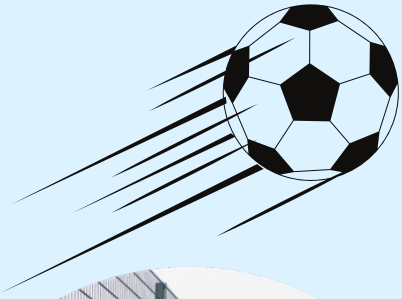


2025 – 2026 season saw us entering 2 teams in the Worcestershire All Ability Counts Football Tournaments playing monthly matches in Evesham and Redditch. We saw some great performances from both teams with Our Way Blues finishing second place in their league.

Sunday morning training sessions at the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre have been lots of fun and inclusive with something for everyone.

At the start of last season, we started to play some walking football for those players who choose to play at a more relaxed pace which has proved to be very poplar with a group of regular players.

















Men's and Ladies Groups



Meeting monthly both Ladies and Men's groups have had many informative and engaging conversations and opportunities sharing their issues and ideas. Health is always an important topic so during the year we have been able to invite health professionals Claire and Kirsty from the learning disability team, giving members a chance to ask important questions and better understand their health.

Both groups have been out and about in their community with trips to Birmingham to play indoor football and golf, shopping in Worcester, Leisurely walks and visits to Bewdley and Stourport





















Advocacy Group

Meeting weekly Our Way Self Advocates have had many discussions about issues and topics of importance to them, sharing their views and voices with community groups and professionals. For example, we worked with Manchester University and Arc on their Digital lifeline project, finding out how individuals benefit from digital devices.
We continue to sit on the West Merica Disability IAG raising issues and situations that affect us, hate crime and keeping safe are always high on the agenda.

Topic











Workshops



Throughout the year we have held a range of workshops, with the need for these suggested by our members. We have welcomed Seetec, DWP, SM Lawsons Solicitors and Barclays Bank to deliver Budgeting workshops.

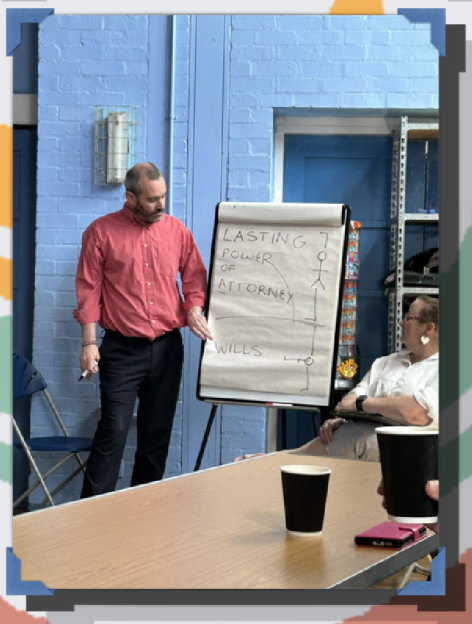
We have also been joined by Tony who delivered a very practical and purposeful First Aid workshop.

In November we joined forces with Worcestershire County Council to work together around being more Digitally Inclusive, and help combat isolation through the Digital world. Our members have been instrumental in providing valuble feedback and this work will continue into the new year.

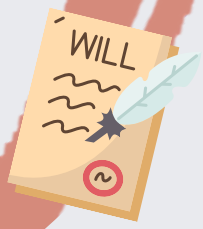


















Our Way self advocacy

01562 820 262

www.ourway.org.uk

office@ourway.org.uk

Youth House, Bromsgrove St
Kidderminster, DY10 1PF

This Year we have been supported by

Nineveh Ridge Care Farm

Muddy Boots Ground Care

Ombersley Dramatic Society

Skipton Building Society

The Bakers Cafe

Co-op

National Lottery Community Fund

National Lottery Awards for All

Kidderminster and District Youth Trust

Thank-You

Charity Number 1091939