

What is recovery-focused support?

Learning a new skill, doing some voluntary work or taking part in a group activity can help you build confidence and take steps towards recovery. A new set of factsheets gives an overview of different community-based activities to help you get an idea of what's available.

You can get support to help you take part in these activities: talk to your keyworker about what might be right for you. The full list of factsheets is at the foot of this page. The factsheets don't signpost to specific services – that's because it's best to talk to your keyworker first about what might work well for you.

What is 'recovery-focused' support?

The word 'recovery' means different things in different situations. Someone may recover from an illness naturally, or after receiving successful treatment. But it's also about personal recovery – recovering your hope and ambition to live a full life while managing ongoing symptoms or disabilities. Many people describe their recovery as a journey, with goals along the way but no fixed end point.

Recovery is 'a deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life, even with the limitations caused by illness.' – Dr William Anthony, 1993.

Recovery-focused support is support that can help you lessen the impact of your mental health problems to the point where you can live your life the way you want.

The types of support covered in the factsheets can help you work towards goals in different areas of your life. These include managing your mental health, maximising your living skills, building up your self-esteem and feeling a sense of trust and hope.

These are some of the areas used in the Recovery Star approach ([see over page](#)). The Recovery Star is a tool for measuring how well mental health support is working. It looks at specific areas of a person's life, identifying the difficulties people are facing in each area, and what progress is being made towards overcoming or minimising the impact these difficulties have on their lives.

Factsheets

- Factsheet 01 – Peer support
- Factsheet 02 – User-led groups and activities
- Factsheet 03 – Employment support
- Factsheet 04 – Volunteering
- Factsheet 05 – Education support
- Factsheet 06 – One-to-one support
- Factsheet 07 – Social enterprises

Turn over
the page for
more



Recovery-focused support *continued*

Recovery Star

The Recovery Star is a tool for measuring change. It lets the people who are using mental health support services, and those who provide them, see how well these interventions are actually working, and how effectively they are helping people achieve their outcomes.

It looks at ten areas of life (as shown below) and helps identify any difficulties people are experiencing in each area – and what progress they have been able to make in addressing these difficulties and moving on.

Areas looked at in the Recovery Star approach

Managing mental health	Relationships
Self-care	Addictive behaviour
Living skills	Responsibilities
Social networks	Identity and self-esteem
Work	Trust and hope

The Recovery Star is just one way of measuring outcomes. Your keyworker will be able to work with you to look at your needs and the areas of your life where you would like some help to achieve your goals. They can look at the different types of support that are available, and you can plan this together.

For further information about the Recovery Star, visit the Mental Health Providers' Forum website at www.mhpf.org.uk

For more about mental health support, visit:

www.leeds.gov.uk/mentalhealth

www.mentalhealthleeds.info

www.timetochange.org

For information about benefits, visit: www.leeds.gov.uk/benefits

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For Adult Social Care enquiries call Customer Services on 0113 222 4401 textphone 0113 222 4410.

Peer support

Spending time with other people who have gone through similar experiences to you can be a helpful way to share information, friendship and support, in an environment you control. This kind of support is known as ‘peer support’ and it can happen in various different environments.

The support of other people with mental health problems, who may be facing similar challenges, can help you feel more confident about spending time with others. You’ll also have the opportunity to help members of your support group who may be struggling, and share ideas for coping.

As part of a group, you may be able to do things that you don’t yet feel ready to do on your own. And many people find that attending a group can be a useful stepping stone to accessing work, college or other activities in the wider community.

Although you may have already been involved in peer support through your day centre, one of the benefits of this type of support is that it can happen *anywhere* – it’s not confined to a particular building or location. You can meet up at a cafe, park, library or a member’s home. No one else is making decisions for you – it’s up to the members of the group to decide what they want to do, and where and how they want to do it.

Peer support is also available through other avenues of mental health support. For example, if you do any voluntary work as part of your support plan, you’ll often be able to get help and advice from other people working in the same area. And many social enterprises and community organisations offer peer support for the people who work or volunteer there. [See Factsheet 4: Volunteering, and Factsheet 7: Social enterprises.](#)

Organised groups, like those facilitated by Leeds’ Community Alternatives Team – which provides day support in the community rather than in the environment of a day centre building – also offer peer support, and members often decide to set up their own, independent groups too.

➔ [See Factsheet 2: User-led groups and activities for more about the benefits of running your own group.](#)

see also

- Factsheet 02 – User-led groups and activities
- Factsheet 03 – Employment support
- Factsheet 04 – Volunteering
- Factsheet 05 – Education support
- Factsheet 06 – One-to-one support
- Factsheet 07 – Social enterprises

Turn over
the page for
more



Further information about peer support

There are several ways to find out about peer support opportunities in Leeds.

- If you already have a keyworker or social worker, speak to them.
- If you are not a social care customer, call Adult Social Care Customer Services on 0113 222 4401 textphone 0113 222 4410. They will arrange a referral for you so someone can talk further with you about your needs.

For further information visit:

www.leeds.gov.uk/mentalhealth

www.leeds.gov.uk/benefits

www.mentalhealthleeds.info

www.timetochange.org

“ I got into football, gym and playing pool through the Community Alternatives Team. At the start I was very nervous until I got to know people. Now I love it, it gets you out and about and it's helpful talking to people who have been through the same thing. It's nice to know someone else understands the problems you're facing. ”

– Paul, 33

“ Kevin and I are both nervous of public transport and being around too many people at the same time, so we started up a buddying system, helping each other to get out more. We opened it up to other members. Now, we go out visiting castles, stately homes, museums, libraries... Everyone really enjoys themselves; they talk about it for days afterwards: the different places, the things they've seen, the photographs they've taken. This is a group run by the members themselves, nothing to do with the day centre, just something to help people get out in the outside environment. We support each other, too – if we don't see someone for a few weeks we make a phone call just to check they're OK. ”

– Neil, 50

“ You think sometimes you're on your own and that can be very isolating, but when you're with other people who've been through the same thing you can share experiences and that's very helpful. ”

– Mark, 50.

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User-led groups and activities

A user-led group is run and controlled by the people *in* it. The main benefit is that those in the group can make their own decisions about what the group does, where it meets and how it's run.

Joining (or starting) a user-led group can be a good way to get involved at your own pace, with no pressure, and help build up your confidence alongside other people who have experienced mental health problems.

The support of other people who are in a similar situation to yourself can help you feel less isolated and alone. You may find you gradually start to feel more confident about spending time with others. You'll also have the opportunity to help new members who may be struggling. Many people find that, as part of a group, they are able to do things that they don't feel ready to do alone.

Taking part in user-led groups can also be a stepping stone to accessing work, college or other activities in the wider community.

There are different kinds of user-led groups in Leeds, offering a range of activities, and with different levels of support available. Some operate as offshoots of more established groups or organisations, others are completely independent. Although you may have already been involved in user-led groups through your day centre, one of the benefits of this type of support is that it can happen anywhere – it's not confined to a particular building or location.

Activities can range from meeting up regularly at a cafe or other venue just to chat, to organising walks, museum visits, swimming, darts games, pool tournaments, quiz nights or even holidays.

If you run a user-led group you may be able to get a grant to help with the running costs. See over the page for how to find out more about this.

see also

- Factsheet 01 – Peer support
- Factsheet 03 – Employment support
- Factsheet 04 – Volunteering
- Factsheet 05 – Education support
- Factsheet 06 – One-to-one support
- Factsheet 07 – Social enterprises

Turn over
the page for
more



Further information about user-led groups

There are several ways to find out about user-led groups and activities in Leeds.

- If you already have a keyworker or social worker, speak to them.
- If you are not a social care customer, call Adult Social Care Customer Services on 0113 222 4401 textphone 0113 222 4410. They will arrange a referral for you so someone can talk further with you about your needs.

For information about grants to help with running a group, contact:

Leeds Mind on tel 0113 230 7608 or email leeds.mind@leedsmind.org.uk.

For further information visit:

www.leeds.gov.uk/mentalhealth

www.leeds.gov.uk/benefits

www.mentalhealthleeds.info

www.timetochange.org

“ The PISCES fishing group goes out every few weeks. One lady caught a trout yesterday. We look after people, show them how to fish, how to use ropes, lines and tackle. The main thing people get out of it is relaxation and friendship. You can talk if you want to, but there’s no need. This has helped me more than anything else: finding something I was interested in. ”
– **Kevin, 55** (founding member of PISCES)

“ I set up a creative writing group. It didn’t work perfectly at first, but eventually we got about ten people turning up every week wanting to write poetry, short stories, limericks or songs. It helps keep our minds occupied so we don’t dwell on the bad things – we’re enjoying the moment. Ideally we’d like to get some short stories and songs together and approach someone like West Yorkshire Playhouse with our ideas. It’s about saying, ‘This is my goal and I want to reach this position’. It’s taking that first step. Coming out of your comfort zone; taking a risk. ” – **Neil, 50**

“ I’m vice-chairman of a user-led group called the SET team – it stands for ‘Get Set Go!’. We organise lots of things – Christmas parties, karaoke nights, auctions. We’ve even arranged holidays to Ireland and Scotland. It’s fantastic that I’ve got the confidence to do this now, to get out and travel and see other places. When new people come along I always tell them – get involved. If you don’t, it’s not going to work for you. ” – **Mark, 50**

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Employment support

Working, either in a paid job or as a volunteer, can be an important part of recovery from mental ill health. Work can not only provide a steady routine, and in some cases, a regular wage – it can also bring friendship, increased confidence and a sense of identity. Support is available to find opportunities to work, or to help you keep working if you're experiencing mental health problems.

Many people with mental health issues are not in employment, yet most would like to work. The good news is, mental health problems need not stop you from working, if you have the right support.

Employment support is available to anyone who wants to work, even if you haven't done any paid work before. It's tailored specifically to your needs, and can help you find a job that matches your interests, abilities and support needs. Help and advice are also available if you want to stay in your job and are experiencing difficulties due to mental ill health.

Employment support means you get the right advice from the start about important things like:

- where and how to look for work, including writing a CV and applying for jobs
- staying in work if you are experiencing mental health problems
- your rights as an employee who has mental health issues. Employers are required by law to be flexible and make 'reasonable adjustments' for people with mental health problems, to enable them to do their jobs.
- benefits, and how they may be affected when you start, or return to, paid work.
- getting the training you need.

➔ *Doing voluntary work is often a useful stepping-stone to paid work.*
 See Factsheet 4: Volunteering; and Factsheet 7: Social enterprises.

see also

- Factsheet 01 – Peer support
- Factsheet 02 – User-led groups and activities
- Factsheet 04 – Volunteering
- Factsheet 05 – Education support
- Factsheet 06 – One-to-one support
- Factsheet 07 – Social enterprises

Turn over
the page for
more



Further information about employment support

There are several ways to find out about employment support opportunities in Leeds.

- If you already have a keyworker or social worker, speak to them.
- If you are not a social care customer, call Adult Social Care Customer Services on 0113 222 4401 textphone 0113 222 4410. They will arrange a referral for you so someone can talk further with you about your needs.

For further information visit:

www.leeds.gov.uk/mentalhealth

www.leeds.gov.uk/benefits

www.mentalhealthleeds.info

www.timetochange.org

Jane (40) was diagnosed with Bipolar Affective Disorder and borderline personality disorder, and had been off work for four years. When she felt well enough to start thinking about her future options, she was referred to Dove Employment and Training. At Dove, Jane was supported to update her IT skills, and began to plan short and long-term employment goals, receiving support and coaching. She began applying for jobs and gained full-time employment. Jane says:

“ I feel very proud of myself. This has had such a monumental effect on my life. I feel like a useful member of society now, and I didn't feel like that before. ”

Janet (35) was finding it hard to keep working because of mental ill-health. As she was unable to attend meetings with her employment support worker outside of work, he met with her at her workplace during lunch-breaks to discuss the issues. Janet says:

“ He told me about the Access to Work programme and, after I had contacted them, a worker from JobCentre Plus advised me about possible adaptations to the workplace. This encouraged my employer to take steps to make me feel happier at work. It included things like having regular breaks, having someone to talk to if I'm feeling stressed and some flexibility with my hours. ”

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Volunteering

Through volunteering (doing unpaid work) you can learn new things, make friends and build up confidence – all at the same time. It not only helps to bring some routine and structure to your week, it's also a good way to find out more about what kinds of things you may like to do in the future.

Help to find voluntary work is available whether you have worked or volunteered in the past, or never done any kind of work before. Depending on your needs, interests and abilities, there are different kinds of voluntary work you could consider, from manual work such as gardening, to various office-based roles.

Volunteering can be a good stepping-stone back to paid work, if that's your goal. But it doesn't have to be about returning to work. If you're over 65 or unable to work, it's still a good way to try things you haven't done before and meet new people.

You can work anything from part of a day per week, to every day. Training, buddying and peer support (help from other people with mental health issues) may be available too, to help you get to grips with the job and the new environment. As long as you're not being paid and only get out-of-pocket expenses, your benefits won't be affected – but you'll need to let your benefits advisor know that you are doing voluntary work.

Volunteering support helps you find flexible work you enjoy, get training or mentoring to help build your skills, and understand your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer.

Whatever type of volunteering you do, you'll be supported by trained professionals who can offer advice if and when you want it, and help you make your employer aware of any particular needs you may have. Your support is tailored to *you*, because everyone has different needs, and different strengths and abilities.

You can also get involved in helping to develop and run mental health services through joining a service user involvement group – ask your keyworker for details.

➔ See Factsheet 3: Employment support, and Factsheet 7: Social enterprises.

see also

- Factsheet 01 – Peer support
- Factsheet 02 – User-led groups and activities
- Factsheet 03 – Employment support
- Factsheet 05 – Education support
- Factsheet 06 – One-to-one support
- Factsheet 07 – Social enterprises

Turn over
the page for
more



Further information about volunteering

There are several ways to find out about volunteering opportunities in Leeds.

- If you already have a keyworker or social worker, speak to them.
- If you are not a social care customer, call Adult Social Care Customer Services on 0113 222 4401 textphone 0113 222 4410. They will arrange a referral for you so someone can talk further with you about your needs.
- Visit www.direct.gov.uk/volunteering for up-to-date information about volunteering while receiving benefits.

For further information visit:

www.leeds.gov.uk/mentalhealth

www.leeds.gov.uk/benefits

www.mentalhealthleeds.info

www.timetochange.org

“ I’ve suffered from depression through most of my life. As I began to recover I realised I wanted to do social work. I started training with Touchstone Volunteer Services. Now I’m on a placement, with regular support. The next step is to apply for a social work degree at university. When I started I was very nervous and I had no experience. My confidence has really grown. Many of the other volunteers have also been service users, so I’m with people who understand where I’m coming from. I’ve learned so many new skills and ideas. You’re never alone and the support is always there if you need it. I can’t believe how far I’ve come in just a few months! ”

– Amy (34)

“ I’ve started doing a day’s voluntary work at the Discovery Centre. I’m involved in a medal-cleaning project, getting ready for a big exhibition. I help with researching and photographing the medals. I got so interested I bought a book on it myself which has been helping me in the job. I’m hoping this might be a stepping stone, or a foot in the door for paid work in the future. ” – Ian (47)

“ With the voluntary work, I’ve got something to aim for. I’m taking each day as it comes, but now I have a long-term aim. If things aren’t going well one day, I know something else will come along. Just because you’re at a low point it doesn’t mean it will last forever. ”

– Ryan, 24

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Education and training support

Mental health problems need not stop you from studying, training or learning something new. Learning can be an important part of recovery from mental ill health, helping you increase your options for the future and take steps towards your goals.

Training and education can help you gain confidence and build up friendships.

There are many areas to explore, depending on your needs, interests and abilities. If you like the idea of doing some training or further learning, but are not sure whether it's right for you, there are ways to start gradually. Joining groups which help you learn about something you're interested in can be a good way to see whether you'd like to do more.

Supported employment schemes can help you learn skills to help you live more independently, such as cooking, sewing, gardening or IT. You could also consider volunteering in an area which interests you, which would help you build up experience and knowledge. Support is available to do this too.

Training and further learning can be a useful stepping-stone back to paid work, if that's your goal. But it doesn't have to be about returning to work. If you're over 65 or unable to work, it's still a good way to try things you haven't done before and meet new people.

If you would benefit from attending a college course, you can get help to apply, and to make sure support is available throughout your period of study. Colleges and universities are becoming much better able to support learners who have mental health problems. In most cases your course can be tailored to your needs and goals, with support and feedback available when you want it.

➔ *Doing voluntary work can be a good way to get training and mentoring on-the-job. See Factsheet 4: Volunteering and Factsheet 7: Social enterprises.*

see also

- Factsheet 01 – Peer support
- Factsheet 02 – User-led groups and activities
- Factsheet 03 – Employment support
- Factsheet 04 – Volunteering
- Factsheet 06 – One-to-one support
- Factsheet 07 – Social enterprises

Turn over
the page for
more



Further information about education support

There are several ways to find out about education and training support in Leeds.

- If you already have a keyworker or social worker, speak to them.
- If you are not a social care customer, call Adult Social Care Customer Services on 0113 222 4401 textphone 0113 222 4410. They will arrange a referral for you so someone can talk further with you about your needs.

For further information visit:

www.leeds.gov.uk/mentalhealth

www.leeds.gov.uk/benefits

www.mentalhealthleeds.info

www.timetochange.org

“ I joined a group through my day centre and learnt to play bass guitar. This had a big knock-on effect on my life outside the centre. I got really into playing and making music. I started going to evening classes at Leeds College of Music, and joined a band. I’m now doing so many things I never thought I’d be able to do.

I started asking myself at the end of last year—do I really need to keep coming to the day centre? It’s helped me a lot but I don’t want it to become a crutch, so I’m planning to leave next month. ” – Ian (47)

Steve (22) had been suffering from depression for a couple of years and had been on various benefits including Incapacity Benefit and Disability Living Allowance. Through the Leeds Work Well project he found out about the re’Build programme, which offers one-to-one tailored support to train and work in construction. He then went on to do a course at the Leeds College of Building. Steve says:

“ I wanted to go back into construction work, so I was really glad when they told me about re’Build. I did the course and the Work Well team were brilliant at giving me lots of interview practice. I finally hit lucky when I got a work trial placement with a construction company. ”

Jenny (28) was sectioned after experiencing two psychotic episodes. She has depressive psychosis and was self-harming. Jenny received support to take computer, literacy and numeracy courses at Technorth College. She is now doing some work in an office and charity shop.

Jenny says:
“ Having these qualifications has really helped and I’m hoping to do more. ”

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One-to-one support

If you're experiencing mental health problems, you may be eligible for one-to-one support. This is more intensive support provided by a trained professional who will help you set goals, and work with you to achieve the outcomes you've identified in your recovery plan.

This type of support is sometimes chosen by people who use a personal budget, and can be tailored specifically to your individual needs and situation. Together, you and your one-to-one support worker will look at where you'd like to be at the end of your period of support, and the types of things that would help you to get there.

They will help you identify your strengths, interests and those things you're finding difficult, and talk to you about the different types of support and activities that may help you start to get your confidence back and feel less isolated.

Your support worker can help you to take part in things again, make the most of opportunities and get back to doing what you want to do. For example, they could help you take a course, go swimming, visit the library and other local facilities or even get back to work. They will support you to overcome any barriers you feel are stopping you taking part in day-to-day activities.

If you need information or advice from agencies such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau or Leeds Advocacy, your support worker will help with this too.

You will have regular meetings to see how things are going.

see also

- Factsheet 01 – Peer support
- Factsheet 02 – User-led groups and activities
- Factsheet 03 – Employment support
- Factsheet 04 – Volunteering
- Factsheet 05 – Education support
- Factsheet 07 – Social enterprises

Turn over
the page for
more



Further information about one-to-one support

There are several ways to find out about one-to-one support in Leeds.

- If you already have a keyworker or social worker, speak to them.
- If you are not a social care customer, call Adult Social Care Customer Services on 0113 222 4401 textphone 0113 222 4410. They will arrange a referral for you so someone can talk further with you about your needs.

For further information visit:

www.leeds.gov.uk/mentalhealth

www.leeds.gov.uk/benefits

www.mentalhealthleeds.info

www.timetochange.org

“ My world shrank when I became ill with depression, anxiety and panic attacks. I was frightened of being outside the house, and struggled with grocery shopping or visiting the doctors or dentist. I hardly ever left the house. I've used a personal budget to enable me to choose the type of support I need and to focus my recovery process. This is helping me in leaps and bounds.

With my support worker, I've been able to go to places I would never have dreamt of going to. I now see a glimmer of hope that I will one day return to my normal self, and go back to work, which I'm passionate about.” – C, 47

“ When I was asked what I wanted to achieve from this service I said I just want to do everything that people take for granted on a day-to-day basis. It isn't asking for the world, it's just to feel that you're living again. To be able to get your own shopping and clothing yourself. To be able to live independently again, and have no fear. To be able to get from one place to another.

Since being with my support worker I feel I'm growing stronger and making little steps on my road to recovery, and as we all know, it's the little steps that turn into massive ones.” – B, 27

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Working with social enterprises and community organisations

Working or volunteering can help you learn new skills, meet people and build up your confidence. Many community-based businesses and not-for-profit organisations offer voluntary and paid work opportunities which are flexible and can be tailored to your needs.

Social enterprises are businesses which use their profits to benefit society and the local community, rather than existing to make money for their owners or share-holders. They often help a particular geographic area or section of society, providing local employment and training opportunities to support people in that area or group.

Doing some part-time work for these, or similar types of community organisations can be a great start if you're wanting to get some structure back in your day, or to learn new skills – perhaps with a view to training or paid employment further down the line. In most cases you can work for a social enterprise regardless of whether or not you have ever done any kind of work before.

Depending on your needs, interests and abilities, there are different kinds of work you could consider, such as gardening, cooking and printing and design work. Training on-the-job, and support from other people working there who have mental health issues (known as 'peer support'), will often be available to help you get to grips with your new role. Your supervisors will be understanding and flexible, and the work can be arranged to fit in with any specific needs you may have.

As long as you're not being paid and only get out-of-pocket expenses, your benefits won't be affected – but you will need to let your benefits advisor know that you are doing voluntary work. If you start doing *paid* work, you will need to speak to the JobCentre (or appropriate benefits advisor) about how this may affect your benefits. Support is available to help you do this.

➔ See Factsheet 3: *Employment Support* and Factsheet 4: *Volunteering* for further information.

see also

- Factsheet 01 – Peer support
- Factsheet 02 – User-led groups and activities
- Factsheet 03 – Employment support
- Factsheet 04 – Volunteering
- Factsheet 05 – Education support
- Factsheet 06 – One-to-one support

Turn over
the page for
more



Further information about social enterprises

There are several ways to find out about working with social enterprises or other community organisations in Leeds.

- If you already have a keyworker or social worker, speak to them.
- If you are not a social care customer, call Adult Social Care Customer Services on 0113 222 4401 textphone 0113 222 4410. They will arrange a referral for you so someone can talk further with you about your needs.

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www.leeds.gov.uk/benefits

www.mentalhealthleeds.info

www.timetochange.org

“ Working here at Design & Print United has made a big difference to my life. It keeps me well, it keeps me out of hospital, it gives me a feeling of self-worth and self-confidence. Before, I wasn't motivated to do anything, I'd just give up. Now, I'm motivated, I can talk to people. It's just getting better and better.

Our aim at D&PU is to help people get into mainstream education and employment. When people come to work here, we make them feel as welcome as possible. We start people off with little steps, with lots of support and one-to-one training. We help if they want to do a course. We can be flexible. We understand what people are going through because we've been through it too. ”

– **Paul (39)**, Secretary, Design & Print United

“ I started here two and a half years ago, knowing nothing. Since then I've learnt how to use different tools and gained some really good skills. Now I'm committed to something. I have to get up in the morning. Getting out in the fresh air doing physical work seems to help a lot – instead of just being sat there with my problems.

It's hard work but it's a relaxed environment – no one caring about the way you look, or how you express yourself. And meeting new people out in the community all the time just builds your confidence up in so many ways. ” – **Jim (37)**, New Leaf Gardening Group

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