

Magic Life

SHARING EXPERIENCES

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Head Office News

Induction Week: Joining The Magic Life Family



Masud



Rowland



Joseph



Ebimene



Mary



John



Funmilayo



Festus



Adebayo

Magic Life UK extends a warm welcome to our newest members who have recently embarked on their journey with us, initiating their roles with a comprehensive five-day induction programme. The initial three days were spent at our Head Office, where the novices were introduced to the enriching world of Magic Life, gaining valuable insights into the pivotal role of a support worker and the expectations Magic Life has from its dedicated staff. Under the expert guidance of Peta, our esteemed Head of Training, the induction covered the essentials of the support worker role, laying a solid foundation for our new colleagues to build upon.

Upon successfully completing the three-day induction, each new starter was celebrated with the presentation of a certificate, symbolising their readiness and commitment, alongside a gift rucksack brimming with goodies, as a token of our appreciation and welcome. We earnestly request all existing staff to extend a warm hand of welcome to our new starters, embracing them into the Magic Life Family. Your support and guidance are invaluable as they navigate their new roles, helping to foster a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive. Together, let's continue to make Magic Life a place of growth, support, and community.

Looking for a new career?

We are always on the look out for outstanding people to join Magic Life. Check out our careers page at <https://magiclifeuk.com/>

Flying High With Magic Life

Let Your Creativity Soar: Design Your Dream Kite!

At Magic Life UK, we're always looking for unique and engaging activities that bring our residents and staff together in a symphony of creativity and fun. This time, we're taking inspiration from the sky! We're excited to introduce our latest community project: Design Your Dream Kite.

We're inviting all our residents and staff to let their imaginations take flight by designing a kite on an A4 pre-made stencil which you include.

Whether you're inspired by vibrant colours, intricate patterns, or meaningful symbols, this is your chance to put your creativity on display.

Here's how you can participate:

Find the pre-made stencil included. It's the perfect canvas for your masterpiece.

Unleash Your Creativity:

Using your favourite art materials, bring your vision to life on the stencil. Whether you prefer pencils, markers, or even collage, all techniques are welcome!

Submit Your Design:

Once you're proud of your creation, send it to joe@psm.group. I can't wait to see your unique designs!

But that's not all – the most imaginative and original kite design will be transformed from paper to sky!

The winning design will be professionally crafted into a real kite, ready to dance with the wind at our next outdoor gathering.

This project isn't just about designing a kite; it's about expressing yourself, sharing joy, and being part of a community project that celebrates the diverse talents of Magic Life UK's residents and staff. It's an opportunity to contribute to a collective artwork that symbolizes our spirit of togetherness and fun.

So, whether you're a budding artist or just love to doodle, your design has the potential to be the star of our skies. Let's come together to create something beautiful and watch our collective creativity take flight!

Remember, every design is a testament to the vibrant community spirit of Magic Life UK. We encourage everyone to participate, enjoy the process, and maybe even discover a new hobby along the way. Who knows? Your design might just be the one to soar above us all at our next kite-flying event!



look out for the template
inside the magazine

Kite Design By: _____
Service: _____



Harringay Road Are Winners

As we welcomed January 2024, Harringay Road, a key service within the Magic Life UK family, led the way in embracing the New Year with enthusiasm and a spirit of renewal. Our residents across the board, including those at Harringay Road, relished in a plethora of activities that not only infused joy but also cemented a strong sense of community and achievement.

A touching moment was seeing JC, one of our cherished residents, revel in the comfort of his new bed, symbolizing a new chapter and the supportive environment that Harringay Road and Magic Life UK collectively foster.

Thomas, another integral member of our community, made invaluable contributions that significantly uplifted the lives of our residents. His dedication mirrors the collaborative ethos that Harringay Road and Magic Life UK cherish.

The pinnacle of January's celebrations was at Harringay Road, where a significant milestone was marked. This achievement was a collective success, sparking joy and pride among residents and staff alike, and highlighting the unity and shared accomplishments that define our community.

Reflecting on January 2024, it's evident that the essence of Harringay Road and Magic Life UK lies in its people. From individual triumphs to shared celebrations, the month was a testament to the care, warmth, and vibrant community spirit that we uphold.

WORDS & PHOTOS BY: **HARRINGAY ROAD**

Ryan's Journey: Progress and Milestones at The Chapel Service

Embracing Growth: Celebrating New Skills and Community Connections

Ryan has been receiving consistent tutorial lessons from NT&AS with the support of an educator. He has been taught to write various letters and symbols. His abilities in writing, sketching, and drawing have shown notable development. Initially unaccustomed to using a pen, he is now gaining confidence in handling it independently. His reading and speaking abilities have also improved through regular sessions with his tutor. There has been a marked progression in his speech; he is now forming words that he hadn't previously articulated. His family was pleasantly surprised during a visit when he inquired about his mother's whereabouts with a complete sentence, something they had not anticipated he would be able to do. Such milestones are becoming increasingly frequent.

During a visit from the Manager to his residence, he expressed his gratitude politely. There has also been an improvement in his behaviour. He can now manage his emotions, understands how to navigate social settings, and reacts positively to various situations in the community. Interaction with support staff and

peers has become more constructive. He has been actively participating in community activities with peers from the service. In his personal life, he has formed a special friendship and enjoys sending notes and spending time together in community outings.

At The Chapel Service, a potential resident for Flat 16 recently visited and is considering the accommodation. Two new staff members, Chinyere Vivian Nwako and Olufemi Omolara Adeaga, have successfully completed their induction as part of the initial group to experience the new induction programme at Head Office. They found the process to be engaging and enjoyable.

Several interviews have been conducted, with successful candidates now awaiting the onboarding process. The staff expressed great satisfaction upon receiving gifts from the company, highlighting Magic Life's generosity and affirming it as an excellent organisation to be part of

WORDS & PHOTOS BY: **CHAPEL ROW**



Celebrating Deputy Manager Shamar Grant's Impact and New Beginnings

A Legacy of Leadership and a Future of New Opportunities

In January 2024, the residents at 672 High Road have been engaging in a variety of activities, showcasing their diverse interests and talents.

CB had a culturally enriching month, beginning with a visit to a theatre show at Soho Place. The experience was a delight for him, as he not only enjoyed the performance but also took the opportunity to meet the artists, capturing the moment with photographs and autographs. Back at home, his creativity continued to flourish as he played the piano and sang his favourite songs with evident joy. CB's pursuit of independence was highlighted by his involvement in cooking, where he took the initiative to prepare his breakfast. His sense of responsibility was also seen in the meticulous cleaning of his flat, and he further indulged in his love for cinema with a visit to the movies.

CM's month was marked by everyday life skills and the pleasures of outdoor activities. Accompanied by staff, he went shopping, carefully selecting his provisions. His culinary journey was supported by the staff, and he even took the lead in cooking on several occasions. Daily park walks became a routine that CM eagerly looked forward to, and he found joy in attending car boot sales, which has become a favourite pastime.

CK demonstrated a blend of life skills and leisure pursuits. With staff support, CK honed his cooking skills and enjoyed outings to the cinema, a place he is particularly fond of. His participation in cleaning activities also reflected his growing independence.

DF's transition to 672 High Road was a significant milestone. Having moved in on the 18th of January, he has embraced independence, safely exploring the neighbourhood. His self-sufficiency continued to shine through as he took care of his flat and engaged in cooking.

SSS, known for his sociability, enjoys

interacting in the courtyard and walking around the area. However, his family has expressed their wish not to have his photos used in the magazine.

The Magic Life Service at 672 High Road prides itself on a person-centred approach and clear objectives. The staff, in collaboration with management, have been ensuring the delivery of quality service. This commitment to excellence was recognized by SSS's family, who complimented two staff members, CHRISTINE IGHOMUARYE and PATRICIA AGBENOSI, for their exceptional service.

Christine, who has been named Staff of the Month, displayed remarkable responsiveness and presence of mind during an emergency involving SSS, swiftly contacting paramedics and preventing the situation from worsening.

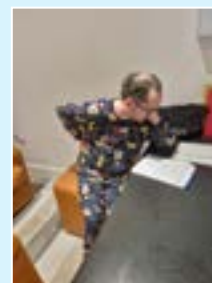
Patricia, also honoured as Staff of the Month, plays a dual role as the Infection Control Champion and a dedicated support worker for SSS. Her commendable interaction with SSS's daughter during a hospital visit led to a heartfelt compliment to the service manager, which was forwarded to the head office.

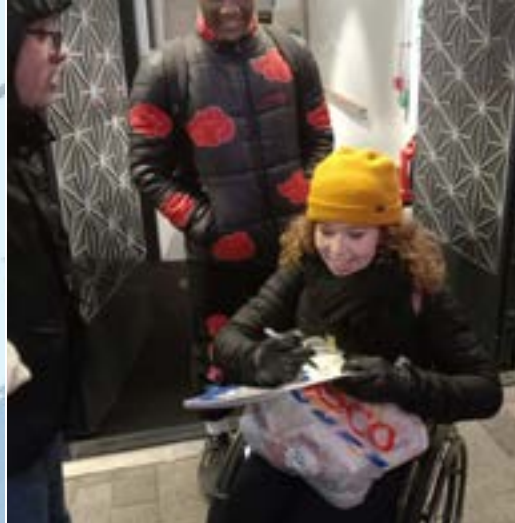
Patricia Gray, another Staff of the Month, showed her commitment and adaptability by supporting CB to a theatre show at short notice. Her dedication ensured a smooth and incident-free evening.

The departure of Deputy Manager Shamar Grant marks the end of an era at 672 High Road. Shamar's contribution has been invaluable, and her skills and work values will now benefit another service. The team honoured her with a celebratory lunch, and the support workers organized a dinner evening as a tribute to her dedication, capturing these moments in photographs.

These stories from 672 High Road not only reflect the daily lives and achievements of the residents but

also the unwavering support and dedication of the staff, creating an environment where everyone is encouraged to thrive.





Triumphs and Milestones at Bruce Grove

At Bruce Grove, the year has commenced on a remarkably positive note, with a palpable sense of contentment and a wealth of constructive interactions among everyone. It is heartening to witness such a harmonious start.

A standout achievement we've observed is the culmination of nearly a year's dedication to raising multiple safeguarding alerts with Haringey Council. These were driven by our concerns for a particular individual in our care. Through unwavering persistence and the valuable assistance of Raf, our efforts have been recognized, leading to decisive actions that safeguard the welfare of this service user. This triumph stands as one of the most challenging yet deeply moving experiences for our team. It is a stark reminder of our shared humanity; despite maintaining professionalism, the emotional toll of protecting a vulnerable person from exploitation cannot be understated.

As the months progress, we continue to nurture unwavering determination to transform his life and perseverance, he has been venturing progress by overcoming his paranoia. We him to maintain his excellent efforts. Looking ahead, we are committed to of working in a kitchen and serving the not just a milestone for BF; it symbolizes Grove empowering individuals to meaningful contributions to society.

and applaud our 'Star of the Month', BF. His is inspiring. With commendable confidence into the community, showing remarkable are incredibly proud of BF and encourage

supporting BF in achieving his dream homeless. This aspiration is the ethos of Bruce make



WORDS & PHOTOS BY: **EMEM EKANEM**

Burlington Lodge Celebration & Outings



January Joys: Embracing New Beginnings at Devonshire Lodge

January kicked off with a fresh start and a wave of new ideas, filling us all with the energy of a brand-new year.

We're thrilled to share that our newest client, MG, has settled in splendidly. The staff have done an outstanding job adapting to his needs and ensuring he feels completely at home.

Embracing Winter: Despite the nippy weather, our team has been making the most of the season. From ice skating and bowling to hitting the gym and enjoying brisk walks in the park, we've been relishing the winter wonderland around us.

DB has introduced a new morning routine to her schedule. She now begins her day with a swift visit to the local Nisa for those small, yet essential, items.

SS is looking forward to an exciting month ahead! Her packed schedule is brimming with gym sessions, ice skating adventures, bowling afternoons, and leisurely strolls in the park.

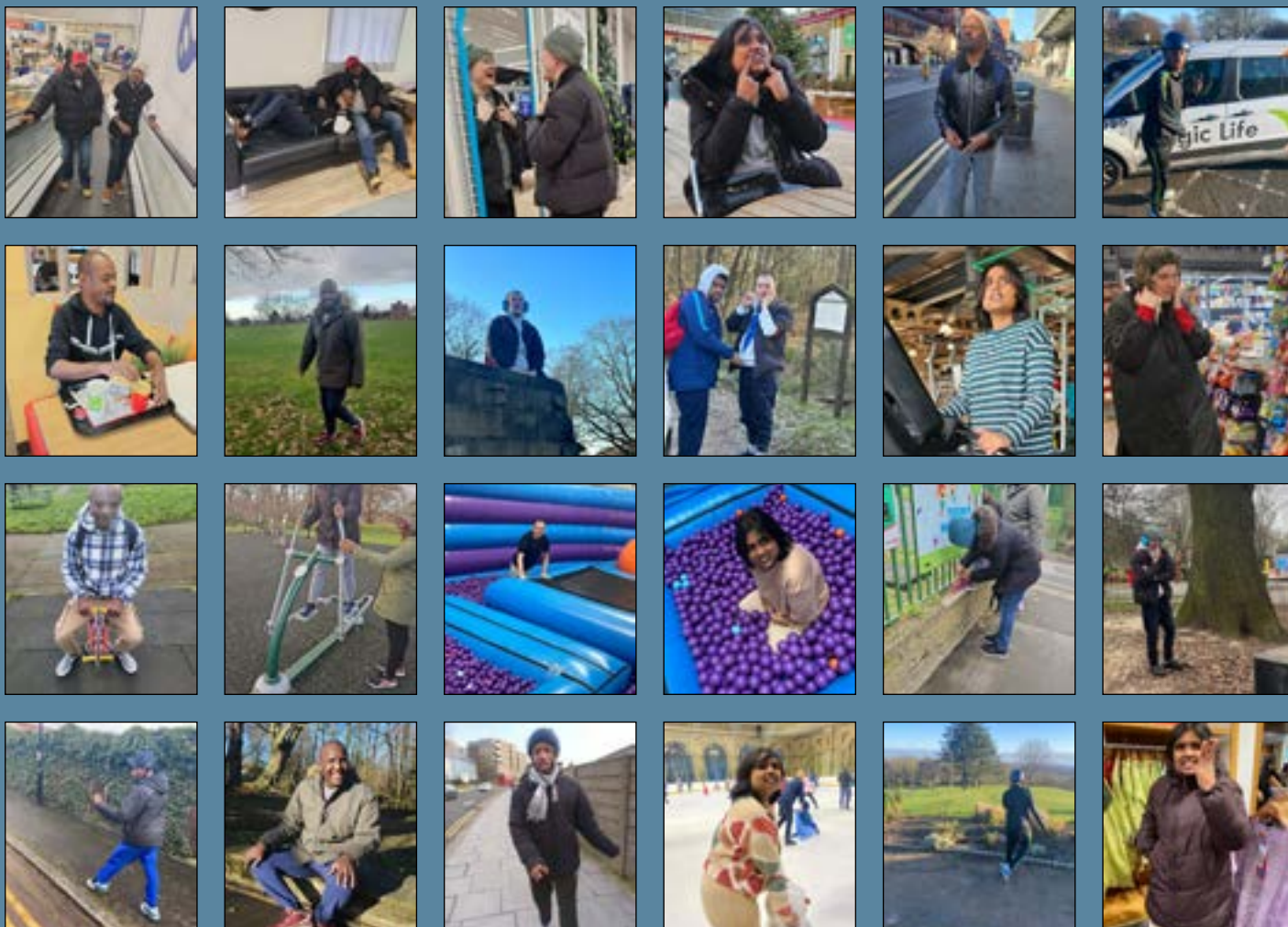
Despite some unpredictable behaviour, our staff have remained committed to engaging IW in regular morning and evening walks. We believe in the power of consistency and providing unwavering support every step of the way.

Additionally, OB has been rekindling his relationship with the great outdoors, hopping back on his bike, and revelling in the freedom of cycling. He's been managing his shopping at Woodgreen and even venturing on public transport once more.

Lastly, JI has continued his routine at the day centre and, on weekends, he's been discovering the Sunday market and enjoying some quality time in the local park.

That's a wrap on our January highlights! We look forward to what February has in store!

Warm regards,
The Devonshire Staff





WORDS & PHOTOS BY: **DEVONSHIRE LODGE TEAM**

Embracing New Beginnings and Celebratory Moments at Grove Park

We have welcomed a new resident to the family here at Grove Park; her name is Amy, who joined us from East Sussex.

NR has continued with her usual activities, such as keeping her room tidy, doing her laundry once per week, and spending her days socialising in the community.

EL did not celebrate her birthday on the actual day, 26th December. She was unsure how she wanted to mark her special day but eventually decided to bake some delicious, mouth-watering Jamaican black cake, containing fantastic ingredients such as Red Label Wine and Wray & Nephew white rum. On 30/01, staff prepared a delicious meal of jerked chicken, rice and coleslaw. EL and the other residents enjoyed the cake and meal.

AW came to us from East Sussex. She is unsettled at present, but we are supporting her in getting to know the local area.

DR celebrated her daughter's birthday by bringing her some wonderful gifts and spending the day with her in the park.

ET visited her mum in Hastings. She spent just a few hours there but was happy upon her return.



WORDS & PHOTOS BY: GROVE PARK ROAD

Embracing Progress: Manor Place's January 2024 Highlights

The year ahead promises a plethora of client activity packages, appointments, referrals, and celebratory events. Our staff are eager to provide the finest person-centred care, having already fostered partnerships with families, professionals, and carers. A variety of new activities have been introduced to enhance our clients' development and well-being. The management team is fully committed to supporting improvements across our services, staff, and cherished clients.

A full slate of activities is scheduled for January 2024, with both clients and staff anticipating the new challenges of the new year. All necessary documentation to be completed by staff before the year's end is nearly finalised, a testament to our dedicated team and the solid backing of our administrative structure.

Service Users

SH

In December, SH participated in a productive online CPA meeting with his team of professionals to discuss his progress. They expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of all activities, with special commendation directed at our entire staff team. Stakeholders in SH's well-being were pleased with his accomplishments since the year began. A festive visit was organised by staff, SH's mother, and SH himself, taking a lead role in the decision-making. SH's mother and aunt attended the end-of-year Christmas party, generously gifting both clients and the service at large. SH received presents from his family and enjoyed a heartwarming family reunion during his break at home.

JO

JO received visits from both the adult mental health team and the local authority. His social worker and personal assistant came for their regular catch-up and to follow up on his activity referral. JO has received considerable attention recently due to his mental health, with frequent reviews and appointments with the adult mental health team.

During the festive season, JO had several overnight stays at home and took part in our Christmas celebration at the service, alongside staff, parents, and family friends. Plans are underway to support his mental and physical well-being, pending a psychiatrist's decision following a medication review. He remained content and upbeat throughout the festivities.

GS

GS has had a stable and productive month, securing his part-time job for nearly a year—a significant marker of his progress. His community engagement has been commendable and consistent, showing remarkable improvement in all areas of his well-being. He has kept up with appointments and other essential responsibilities. Opting to stay at his current job rather than transfer to a closer branch, GS values the strong working relationships he's developed with his colleagues and our service. He contributed to decorating the house for Christmas and was actively involved in the year-end party with staff, families, and housemates. GS also enjoyed preparing the Christmas dinner and ended the year with visits to the Enfield cinema in December, indulging in some of his favourite films.

LF

LF has enhanced his adaptability to change, taking the lead in his decision-making processes. Initially supported by staff in meal preparations, he now manages to cook some meals independently. We are gradually assisting LF in making constructive changes that suit his needs.

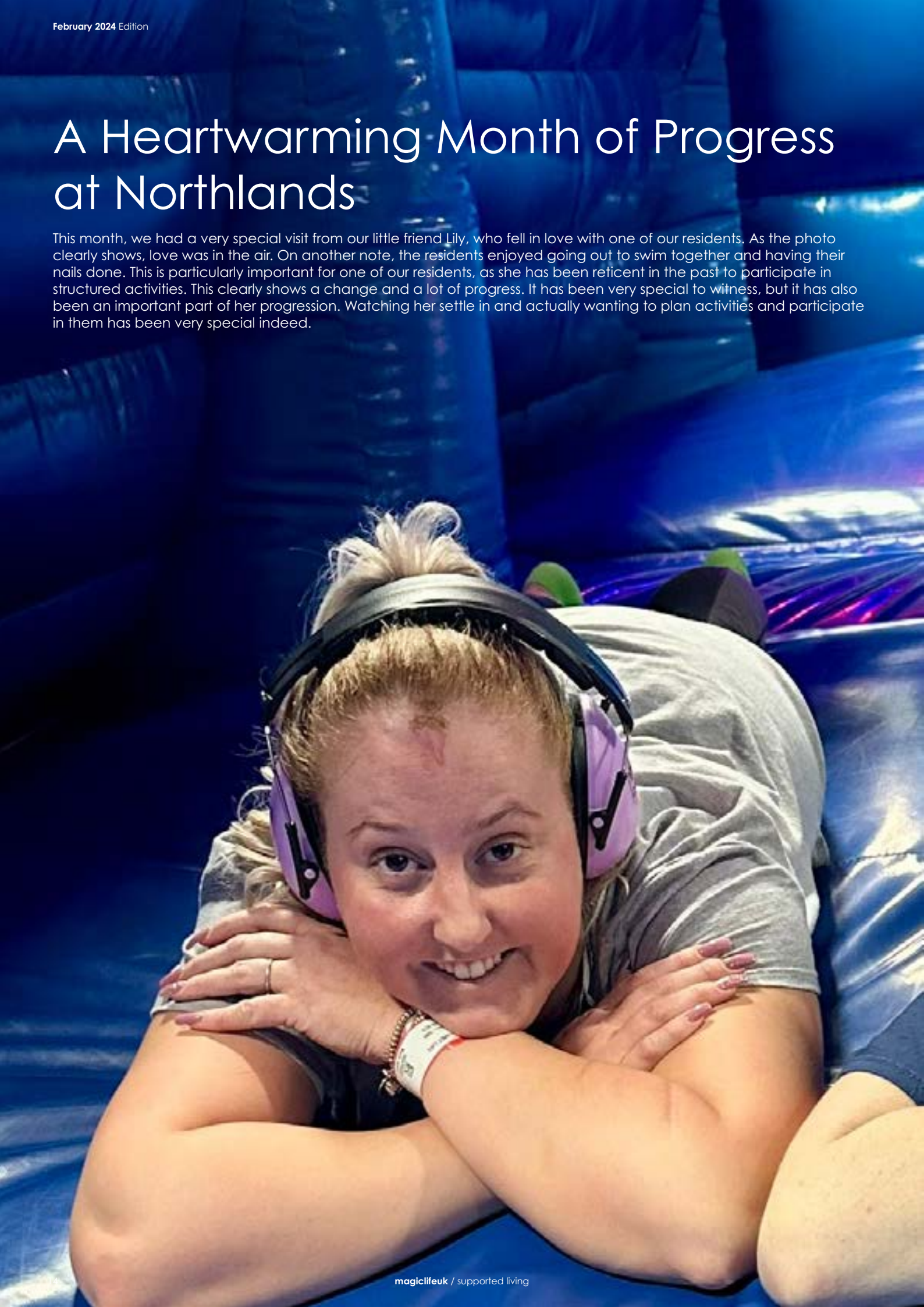
LF attended all required professional appointments last month and participated in our end-of-year party, receiving gifts from family. He accessed the community independently several times, in accordance with his recent one-hour LPS from the court. LF is diligently managing his finances, balancing his weekly allowance with his expenses, and is content with the support from all staff and the comforts provided by our service.

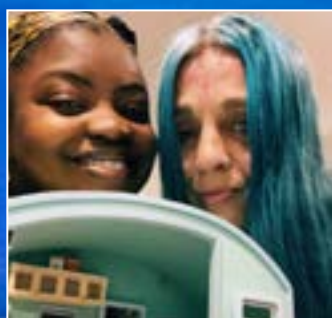


WORDS & PHOTOS BY: **MANOR PLACE**

A Heartwarming Month of Progress at Northlands

This month, we had a very special visit from our little friend Lily, who fell in love with one of our residents. As the photo clearly shows, love was in the air. On another note, the residents enjoyed going out to swim together and having their nails done. This is particularly important for one of our residents, as she has been reticent in the past to participate in structured activities. This clearly shows a change and a lot of progress. It has been very special to witness, but it has also been an important part of her progression. Watching her settle in and actually wanting to plan activities and participate in them has been very special indeed.





WORDS & PHOTOS BY: **NORTHLANDS**

Cherry Tree Lodge: Celebrating Togetherness and Milestones in January 2024

January was a month filled with vibrant social interactions, celebrations, and the nurturing of a supportive living environment at our facility. With a focus on fostering camaraderie and ensuring the well-being of our residents, we orchestrated a variety of engaging activities and milestones.

CP's Birthday Celebration:

We commenced the year with a joyous celebration as CP celebrated his 66th birthday. A lively house party was organised, complemented by ample food, refreshing drinks, and music to set the tone for an unforgettable evening. The atmosphere was imbued with laughter and merriment as residents came together to honour CP's special day, creating cherished memories that will be fondly remembered.

Strong Bond among Residents:

Throughout the month, residents

deepened their connections through shared experiences. From communal meals to spirited game nights, dancing sessions, and heartfelt conversations, the bond among CP, JE, RF, and NG flourished. Visits to each other's flats further strengthened their friendships, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support within our community.

Staff Room Launch:

In a bid to prioritise the well-being of our dedicated staff members, we proudly introduced the newly furnished staff room. Designed to provide a cosy retreat for relaxation and storage of personal belongings, the staff room offers a tranquil space for our team to unwind and recharge, ensuring they remain energised and motivated to deliver exceptional care.

Healthcare Commitments:

We are pleased to report that all

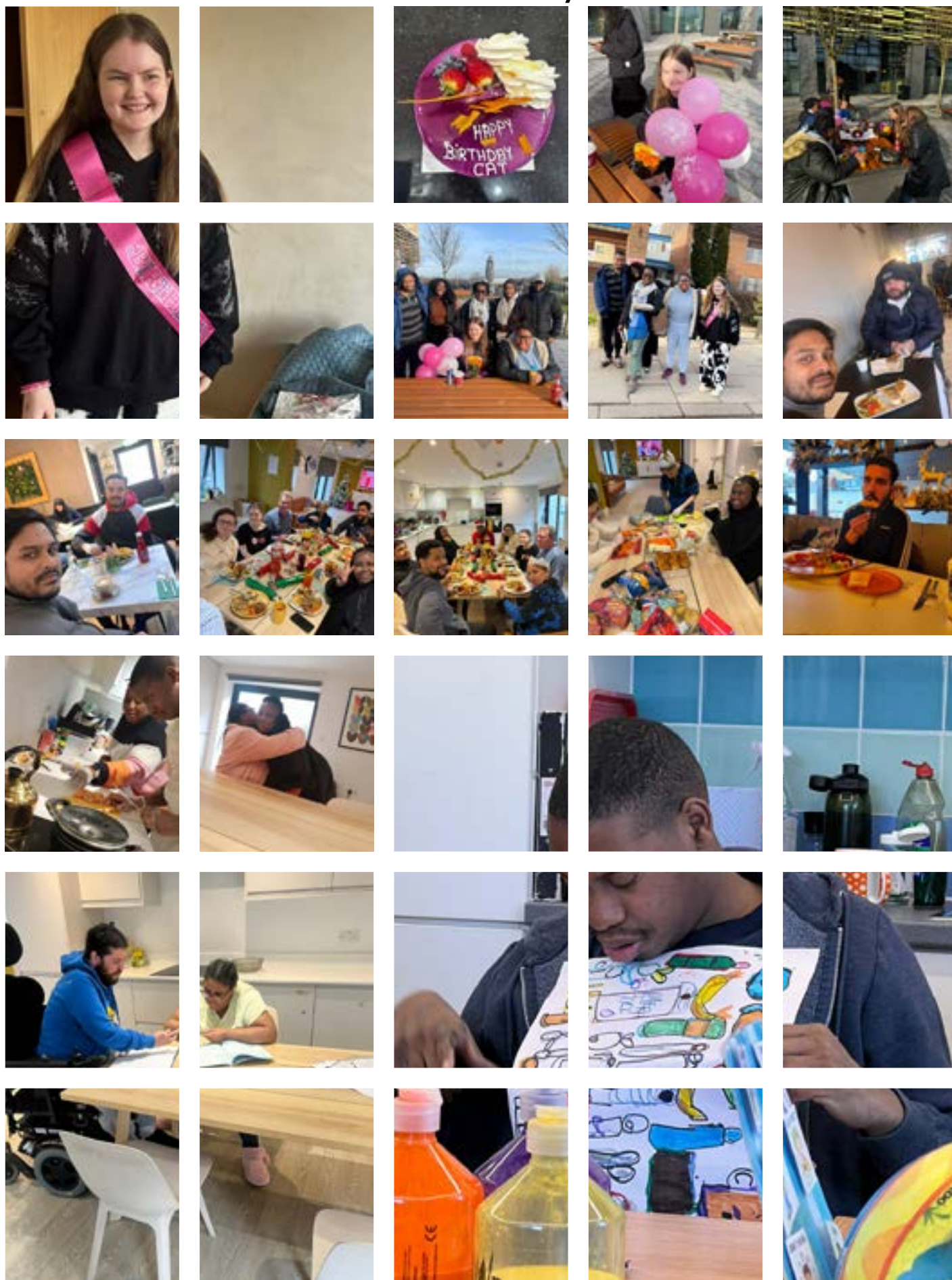
residents attended their medical appointments diligently, underscoring their commitment to maintaining optimal health and well-being. Our proactive approach to healthcare management remains paramount in ensuring the continued vitality and longevity of our residents.

As we reflect on the vibrant tapestry of experiences woven throughout January, it is evident that our commitment to fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment has yielded tangible benefits. With a focus on celebrating milestones, nurturing bonds, and prioritising holistic well-being, we look forward to embracing the opportunities that lie ahead in the coming months.

WORDS & PHOTOS BY: CHERRY TREE LODGE



Park Lodge January Photo Gallery of Activities & Brithday Celebrations



PHOTOS BY: PARK LODGE

Happy New Year to the Magic Life family From Park Side

As we welcomed the new year, we treated all staff and residents at Parkside to a delightful pizza feast.

This month has been relatively quiet, with residents focusing on their daily routines, such as attending college, visiting the day centre, doing weekly food shopping, and spending quality time with their families.

We took a moment to reflect on the treasured memories of 2023 and to bid a fond farewell to our dear and amicable manager, Dan, while also extending a warm welcome to

our new manager. The past year at Parkside was imbued with positivity. We proudly retained the audit cup for being first in every audit at Magic Life, a testament to our hard work and dedication.

We celebrated various occasions, including birthdays, an Easter party, Black History Month, casual get-togethers, and bank holiday festivities. Thanks to Mo and the transport team at Magic Life, we were able to organise more group excursions last year. We had a robust team of staff dedicated to the welfare of our

residents.

Looking ahead, this year promises to be brimming with even more positivity. SM celebrated his birthday this month with a cake-cutting ceremony surrounded by his daughters and grandchildren, an event facilitated by our supportive team. We aim to organise additional activities that we couldn't accommodate last year and to achieve more goals with our residents. We will also encourage residents to participate in an increased number of activities.



Welcome to 95 Greyhound Road



PHOTOS BY: 95 GREYHOUND ROAD

An Extra Mile and A Little Visitor At The Hamptons

During the cold month we had a furry little visitor called Alfie. Alfie brought a smile to everyone's faces.

As the weather finally warmed up we walked a mile and enjoyed the beautiful surroundings of the parks and the lakes in The Hamptons.

PHOTOS BY: **THE HAMPTONS**



3 Winns Mews Festive Season

Winns Mews had a wonderful start to the Christmas festive season. To kick things off, the Girls Club, on 19 December 2023, was put together by our lovely Tamara. She organised a Christmas Brunch with a beautifully designed table, featuring Father Christmas chair covers, gold plates and cutlery, wine glasses, and Christmas crackers. An abundance of lovely food was provided.

Cheryl supported Liane in viewing a one-bedroom flat in Surrey Quays. The flat, a new build on an estate, was spacious and much to Liane's liking. She took pictures to share with the staff, who also loved the flat and offered Liane plenty of advice. Tamara, Liane's keyworker, assisted her in finalising the acceptance paperwork for the flat. Liane will be

leaving Magic Life very soon and will be greatly missed; her presence has made a significant difference in our lives.

Then came the Winns Mews Christmas Party, hosted by 2 & 3 Winns Mews. Cheryl and Lydia took care of the cooking, providing amazing and tasty food. The company was good, with a spread including chicken, fried fish, jollof rice, pizza, salad, and a range of drinks from fruit juices to fizzy beverages. All the residents came out to party and savour the moment.

Christmas Day was special at 3 Winns Mews, made even more so by the other residents in the compound, especially for Danii, as three of the residents at 3 Winns Mews had gone on social leave to stay with their families over the festive period.

Everyone came together to enjoy a big Christmas meal, cooked by Lydia and others, to mark the day.

The residents have had a good year. Mica mentioned that she has had the best year since moving to 3 Winns Mews, having reconnected with her family and changed her medications, which has significantly improved her management of her mental health. Liane feels she has been able to move forward and get her life on track since Magic Life intervened. Danii, the newest resident, mentioned she is still a work in progress.

WORDS BY: **3 WINNS MEWS**

Commendable Progress At Winns Mews 4

JK's new year has been brimming with ambition as he strives for greater independence. He has made significant improvements in personal care and is eager to plan his life — a commendable stride forward. JK now recognises that good hygiene is vital in his daily routine. He relishes relaxing in the lounge, listening to music, playing board games, and shopping. Furthermore, he constantly voices positive aspirations. A highlight for JK was reuniting with his brother after many years apart. The anticipation of their meeting was great, and they shared a joyous day together. Reinforcing family ties is crucial, as it aids in healing and provides mental stability. JK's longing for this reunion was profound, and organising the visit himself marked a positive leap in building his confidence.

We are immensely proud of JK's accomplishments, his seamless integration into our service, and we eagerly anticipate supporting him further. Our staff will assist in budget planning, enabling him to enjoy his interests and reinforcing that independence is not merely a goal but a means to enhance his quality of life.

JH has bolstered his self-esteem, which

reinforces his dignity and respect. His confidence has soared compared to six months ago — even in social interactions. Now, he seeks support when necessary, which is readily available. Taking charge of his health and wellbeing, JH communicates his needs to staff, allowing for preventative measures and reducing the necessity for intensive clinical support. He has improved in maintaining his living space and managing his laundry, although dishwashing remains an area for development.

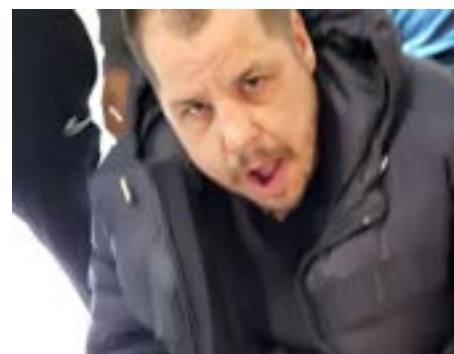
JH's sociable nature and vibrant personality have earned him many friends within the service. His journey towards building positive relationships and understanding healthy boundaries is noteworthy. His charm has positively influenced other service users, and he thoroughly enjoys community social events. While there's still progress to be made, JH's readiness to engage promises further advancement.

WT has showcased remarkable artistic talent, particularly during the pumpkin challenge that stunned everyone at Winns Mews. His meticulous hand-carved design revealed his keen attention to detail.

Since joining the service in August '23, WT, who previously lived rough, has faced challenges adapting to a new environment. However, through dialogue and support, he has become more settled, forming meaningful bonds with staff and residents, contributing to his confidence. Always cheerful, WT has a passion for cooking and savours fish and healthy meals, with staff aiding him in areas he finds less enjoyable.

Regrettably, WT was hospitalised on the 28th of January and remains there currently. Our thoughts are with him, and we eagerly await his recovery and return to the service, where he is greatly missed.

WORDS BY: **AUSTIN OKEKE**





A Joyous January Celebration At Winns Mews 2

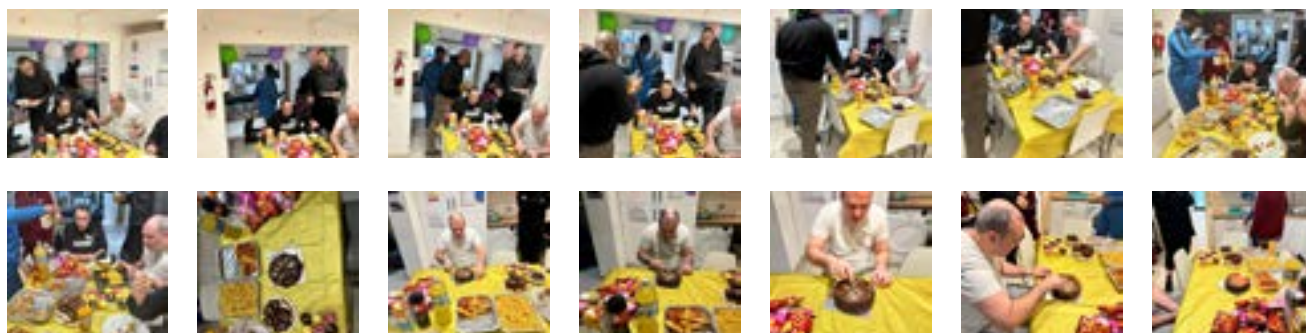
This month, 2 Winns Mews has been nothing short of a joy and has been very eventful. It started with the birthday party of PC who was spending his first birthday within the service since moving in. It was important for staff to make it a special one and, indeed, the staff did their best and definitely delivered!

The party was bubbling with great vibes as not only did all the residents from the service attend, but also the residents from nearby services! Everyone had a blast and enjoyed the crispy French fries, the extra cheesy pizza, and not to forget the juicy, flavourful chicken that was on offer. Everything was amazing and was all planned around his favourite food, which PC was very appreciative of.

All the food was marvellous, but what was remarkable was the constant engagement that went on. Everyone was smiling and cheerful throughout the entire party and never stopped, which was an amazing sight to see. The togetherness within the service was more than visible and the staff were very proud of how everyone conducted themselves.

The entertainment side of the party was not lacking at all, as the service had just received a new 4 Sport Games Table. The table consists of football, pool, table tennis, and also air hockey and was a very big success on the day. All of the residents indulged in the games they liked and played all of the games fairly, which was brilliant. Since then, the residents have not stopped playing and it has become the highlight of their day!

WORDS & PHOTOS BY: **2 WINNS MEWS**



Joyful Jubilations at Winns Mews 5: Celebrating JL's Birthday in Style

For a significant portion of human history, birthdays went uncelebrated. Many individuals were oblivious to the date of their own birth. Historically, only monarchs and saints – the notable figures – traditionally commemorated their birthdays, as noted by William J. Doherty, a professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota.

Elizabeth H. Pleck, in her book "Celebrating the Family: Ethnicity, Consumer Culture and Family Rituals," highlights that in the early 19th century, affluent American parents initiated the tradition of marking their children's birthdays, which gradually became a public phenomenon. By the 1950s, a modest child's birthday party typically involved just a simple serving of cake and ice cream. At that time, the emphasis was not on gifts, according to Dr. Doherty.

The 1980s witnessed a boom in birthday celebrations, spurred by the

emergence of family entertainment centres such as arcades, roller skating rinks, and bowling alleys. Dr. Pleck notes that these venues encouraged on-site festivities, leading to an increase in children's parties at schools, with friends, within the nuclear family, and amongst extended relatives.

Dr. Doherty posits that a birthday is the one day in the year when an individual can truly feel cherished and acknowledge it as their own special day. In St. Paul, Minnesota, he established Birthdays Without Pressure, an informal coalition of professionals and parents aiming to reduce the extravagance, expense, and stress associated with children's birthday celebrations – a significant aspect of our individualistic culture.

Naturally, not every birthday evokes the same sentiments. Some years, you may be inclined to throw a celebration or organise a gathering

with close ones. Other times, you might feel pressured to enjoy the day or experience apprehension about ageing.

This year, JL at Winns 5 celebrated her birthday precisely as she desired. Staff had previously engaged with her to plan the celebration according to her wishes. The festivities included food, drinks, chocolate cake, and the decoration of the service, with fellow service users and staff joining in the celebration. Adorned in one of her exquisite wigs from her collection, JL was radiant with happiness. They exchanged conversations, sang, shared jokes, and generally had a splendid time. Expressing her gratitude, JL remarked that the experience was a refreshing change. We extend our heartfelt wishes to JL for a remarkable year and hope for even more joyful and brighter days to come.

WORDS & PHOTOS BY: **EMEM**

