

Tom's story – by his mum

Tom is a 20 year old young man, he has an amazing sense of humour, he's really funny and loves a bit of banter. He is obsessed with premier league football and watches Wigan Athletic football team. He is friendly, sociable, loves going out and been around young people.

He has a genetic disorder which means he has a tracheotomy, is peg fed and is a wheelchair user. He left Hawkley Brook College in June 2015 with a Personal Health Budget which funded him with 2:1 support each weekday.

Initially it was daunting to work out how he would fill his day once out of an education setting. Continuing with something he'd really enjoyed at college, we started a small sewing group (Busy Bees) We hand sew comfort bags for relatives for the end of life team at Wigan Infirmary. While at college, Tom had been presented with a volunteer award for this work, and we were keen he continue with this sense of achievement (which he loves). Busy Bees has had an unexpected spin off, as we have a member who describes himself as lonely, who Tom and his PAs pick up and drop off in his mobility car to bring to the group each week. This man describes the group as the "best day of his week" and a "lifeline". Tom is now meeting at Made in Wigan, who provide opportunities for people to learn skills as part of developing a community business.

Since leaving college Tom has delivered 300 bags filled with toiletries to the hospital, he was recently awarded a Young Achiever Award from WISH FM.

Tom and PAs volunteer with Embrace one day a week making courtesy calls to people on the "let's connect" project, they've been asked to do another day but are struggling to fit that in.

Tom goes to a mainstream low circuit class at Profiles gym, he enjoys the music and company and his PAs encourage him with adapted exercises. He also visits the sensory room at Sensorial.

Tom's busy and giving so much to his community. I frequently hear people say there's nothing out there for people like Tom, but I don't agree. I'm really proud of all the good work him and his staff are doing, he's achieving so much.