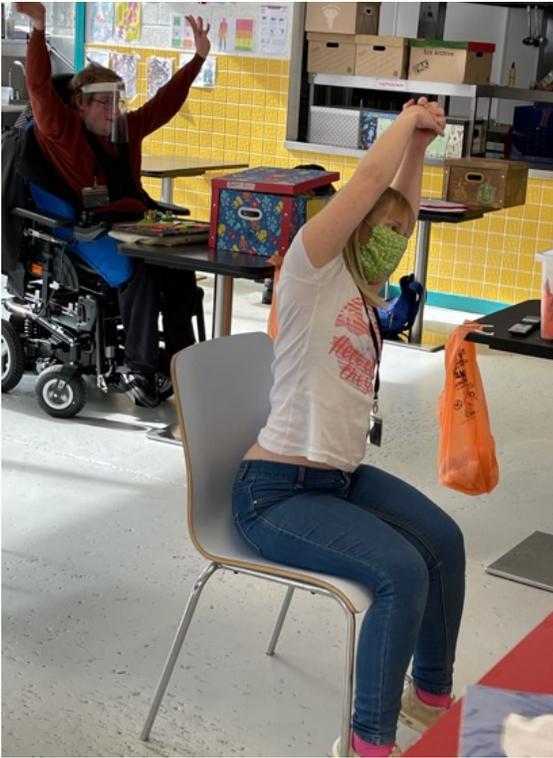


## Supporting Communities Feedback

**We completed 2 yoga sessions a week (online, due to COVID restrictions) for the members of Waves Group in Slaithwaite. Waves hosts adults with severe and multiple learning disabilities.**



**What did we do and who took part?** The sessions were tailored to the needs and limitations of the participants, who all suffer from complex learning and movement disorders. Many participants are in a wheelchair, and / or have limited physical control and range of movement. Most suffer from severe cognitive impairment. Sessions were designed to be fun and engaging, whilst supporting participants to develop breath control and ease of movement. Regulating the nervous system through repetitive movements and steady breathing can help people find a state of calm and ease.

All individuals who were present in the center took part. This included 20-25 members for each session, plus staff members. (It was the same people for each session).

**What was the impact of the activity?** As a result of lockdown many of the activities the members of Waves had been participating in have had to be suspended. The twice-weekly yoga sessions have provided a chance for them to **do something different and engage with someone new. This in itself has had a positive effect on the group.**

The movements are designed to be accessible and manageable, whilst also challenging people to try something new. When members try a new posture or





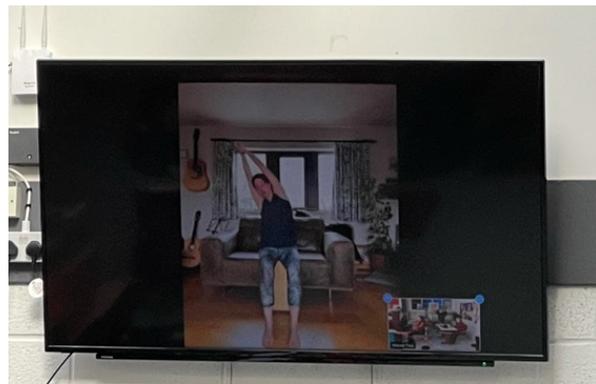
movement, they feel **a sense of achievement and pride.**

Many people with complex learning disabilities find themselves in a constant state of 'fight-flight'. This means they are stuck in the sympathetic nervous system. We use **repetitive movements and sensory calming techniques to help people activate the parasympathetic nervous system**, or the 'rest-digest' state.

Establishing this state of calm can then allow people to move on with their days with a calmer and more relaxed approach.

The physical movements help to **develop motor skills and muscle tone.** Overtime they may also increase range of movement.

This group, like many others, have suffered during lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic. The loss of routine and structure will have had a severe impact on the mental health and stability of many people with learning disabilities. We hope the yoga sessions will have **helped with low mood and feelings of worry and anxiety.**



### Feedback from our participants:

*Ruth: "I love it it helps me exercise and keeps me mobile"*



***Louise : “it helps me keep fit and it’s very good for my health”***

***Josh : “mmm.... she does a good job with the yoga”***

***Jonathan: “I like the yoga it’s good for me . I like Ellie she cheers me up .”***

Feedback from Sallyanne Hazzard ( director Waves)

*“The yoga had certainly lifted the mood of the members during lockdown, Ellie has such a presence even on a TV screen , the engagement is a pleasure to see. It is hard to describe the benefit of the sessions , probably fair to say invaluable and a huge boost to mental health . Thank you”*