



Joshua: About me

I'm 24. I grew up on the Thames View estate, with my mum Lucy. I went to school around here. Three of my friends come to see me at home - we play games together.

My whole family are very creative - we like art. My sister does photography and mum does sewing, while I like drawing and comics.

It's very convenient living here - the shops and the bus stop aren't too far from our house. We also live close to the library and GP.

I've had quite a few health issues in my life as I have sickle cell anemia."

Barriers to Connection

“My secondary school experience was good, but I’ve **missed a lot of school because of my health issues** - I didn’t even get to go to prom.



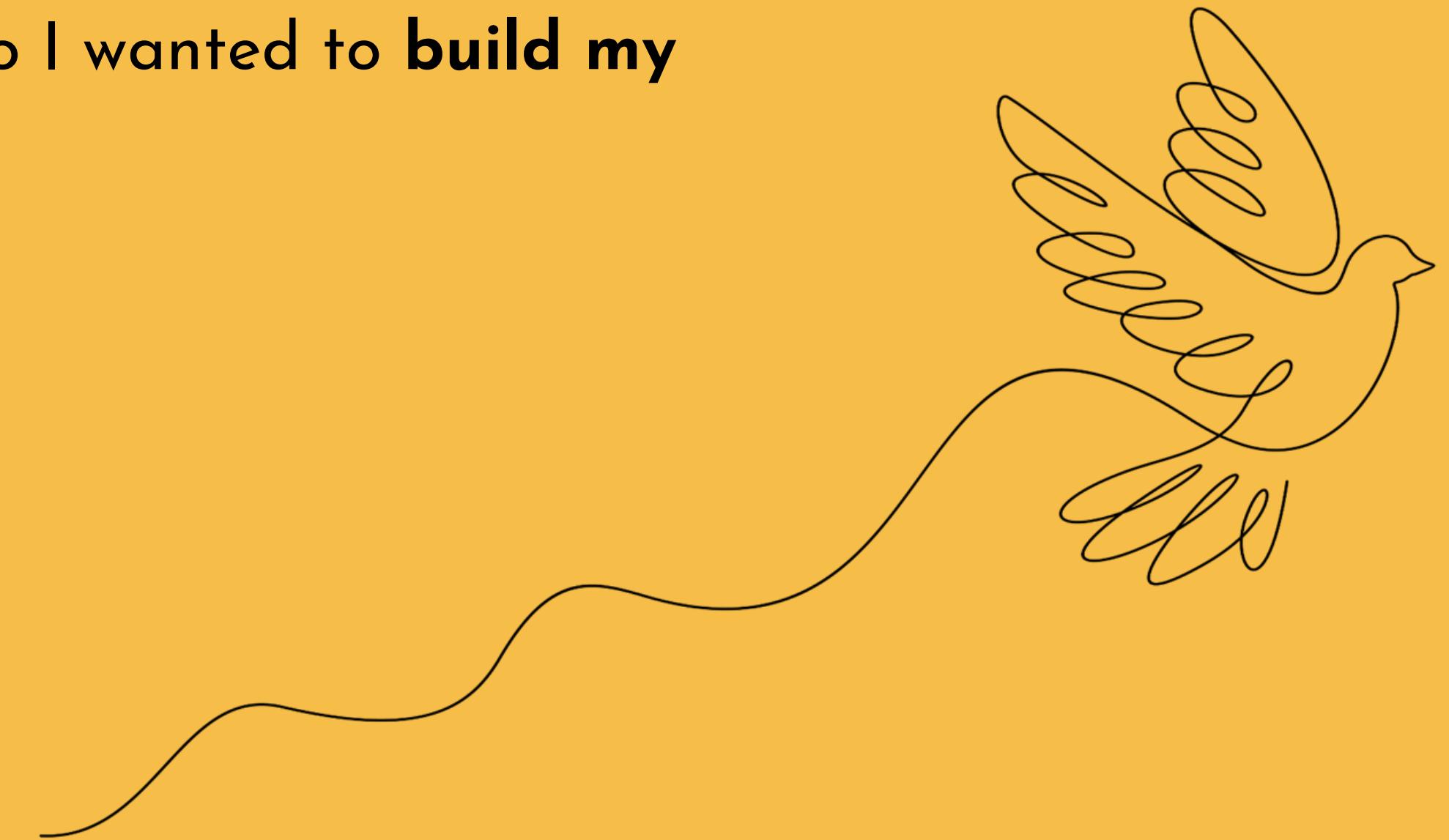
I’d rather stay at home when I need medical attention, but my mum and siblings advise me to go to the hospital. Back in July, I was in hospital for three or four weeks. This has made it hard to stay connected sometimes.

My mum has had to fight a lot for me during school as I’ve been in hospital a lot - she had to work hard to get people to give me work, or sit with me.”

My hopes for Connect

“I wanted to **find people to spend time and talk with, make friends and have fun.**

I don’t always get out the house a lot, so I wanted to **build my confidence.**”

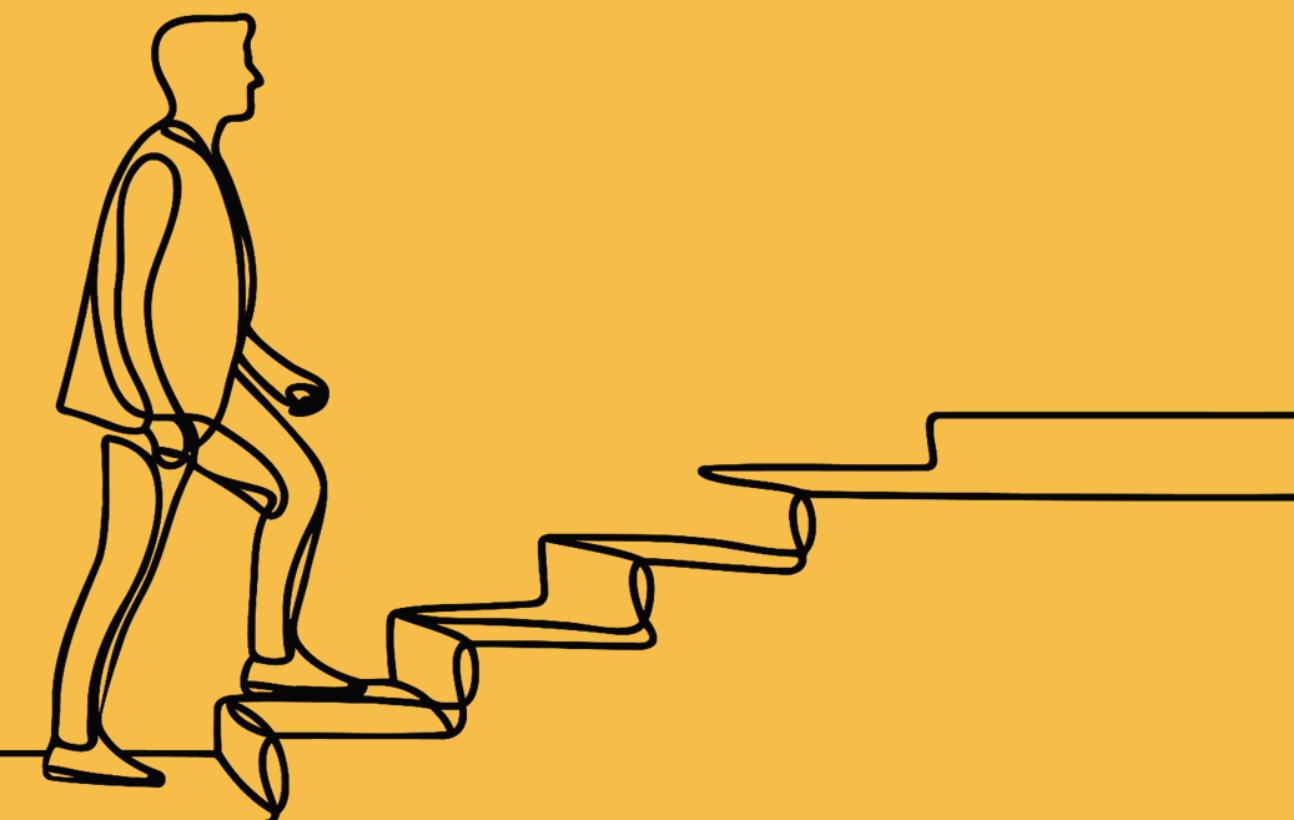


Some steps we've taken together

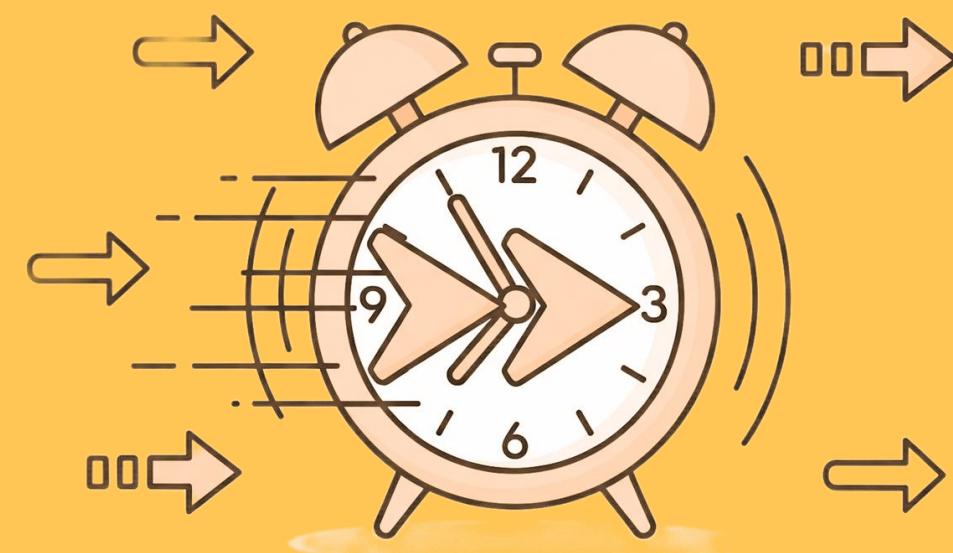
"Susie has introduced me to Shed Life - a weekly, drop-in community group in the Thames Community Hub. **I've made lot of friends there** which has helped me be way more comfortable.

I'm volunteering there now too. I welcome people coming for the first time. **I've built up my social skills** through this.

I like to draw, and using the Small Good Things Fund they were able to get me a refurbished iPad to help me draw and create a comic. Now they're using the funding to start "ShedInk", which will be days where we'll work on comics.



10 months later....



Joshua



What happened next?

Joshua is continuing to develop and support others as part of the Shed Life community. The group has commented on how **Joshua's confidence has grown enormously** since taking on responsibilities.

Joshua continues to be an **official volunteer for Shed Life**, as part of which he is bringing people together and supporting them to build relationships. Being more active as a volunteer, Joshua is in much **better physical condition and able to manage his sickle cell anaemia**.

Joshua



Wider ripples

Joshua has built up a friendship with a local White British man employed as a refuse collector, who joins the *Shed Life* group in his orange uniform - he is known in the group as "Mr Orange". Group members have commented on benefits and importance of such **friendship between people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds**, to build social cohesion in a neighbourhood where this isn't always strong.

Together, Joshua and Mr Orange are trying out new hobbies - most recently, roller skating.