



Lucy: About me

"I'm like an onion with different layers.

I'm a mother of five, age 56, and originally from Nigeria. I've been living in Thames View estate since 2003.

Before then, I was living in the USA, in Maryland, and I moved here not long after the September 11th attacks - it was scary.

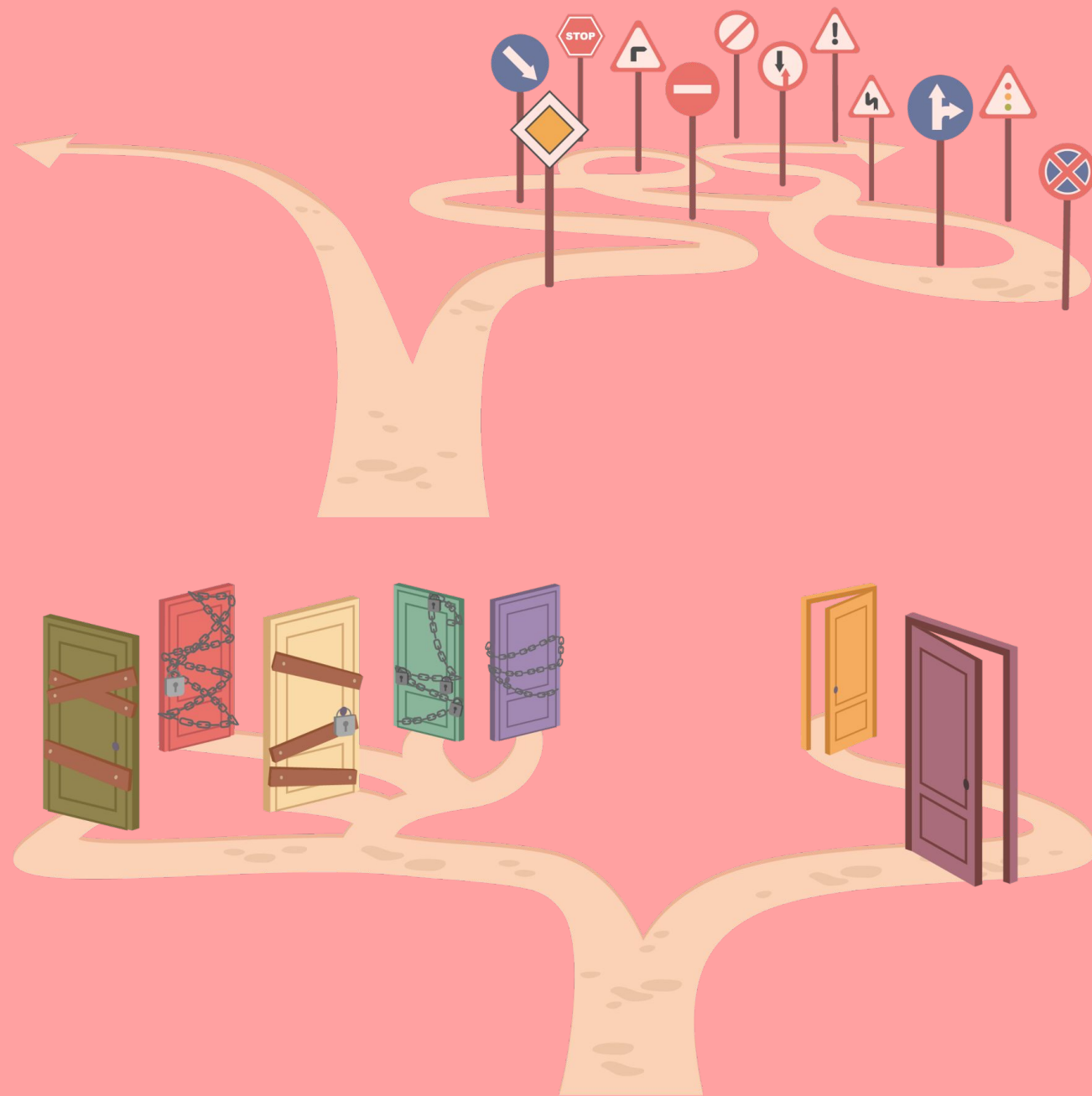
I'm able, but I don't go out often - I don't like going out generally."

Barriers to Connection

“I have **mental health needs**, which means I’m going to the hospital a lot. I also have difficulties with **walking and my eyesight**”.

There are **health conditions in my family** too that makes things difficult. My daughter is disabled and has social anxiety. My son has sickle cell anemia.

Before meeting Susie, I was walking around with a stick and a wheelie suitcase, for support. **I didn’t want to look like someone who needed help.** But my family found it embarrassing to be around me when I used the suitcase.”



My hopes for Connect

I had therapy previously, but it gave me flashbacks and made me feel worse. During COVID, they put me on a group Zoom call with people who already knew the therapist, but I didn't. I was never pulled into the conversation.

One day I had to shout on the Zoom, I felt like I was becoming small and needed other people to share with. I **wanted to find more people to talk to, with more empathy, to get things out of my head."**



Some steps we've taken together

Since joining Connect, I have time to talk to Susie one to one about what's going on with me. She calls us through the week, which helps bring positive energy when I'm down. **I see that me and my children are happier.**

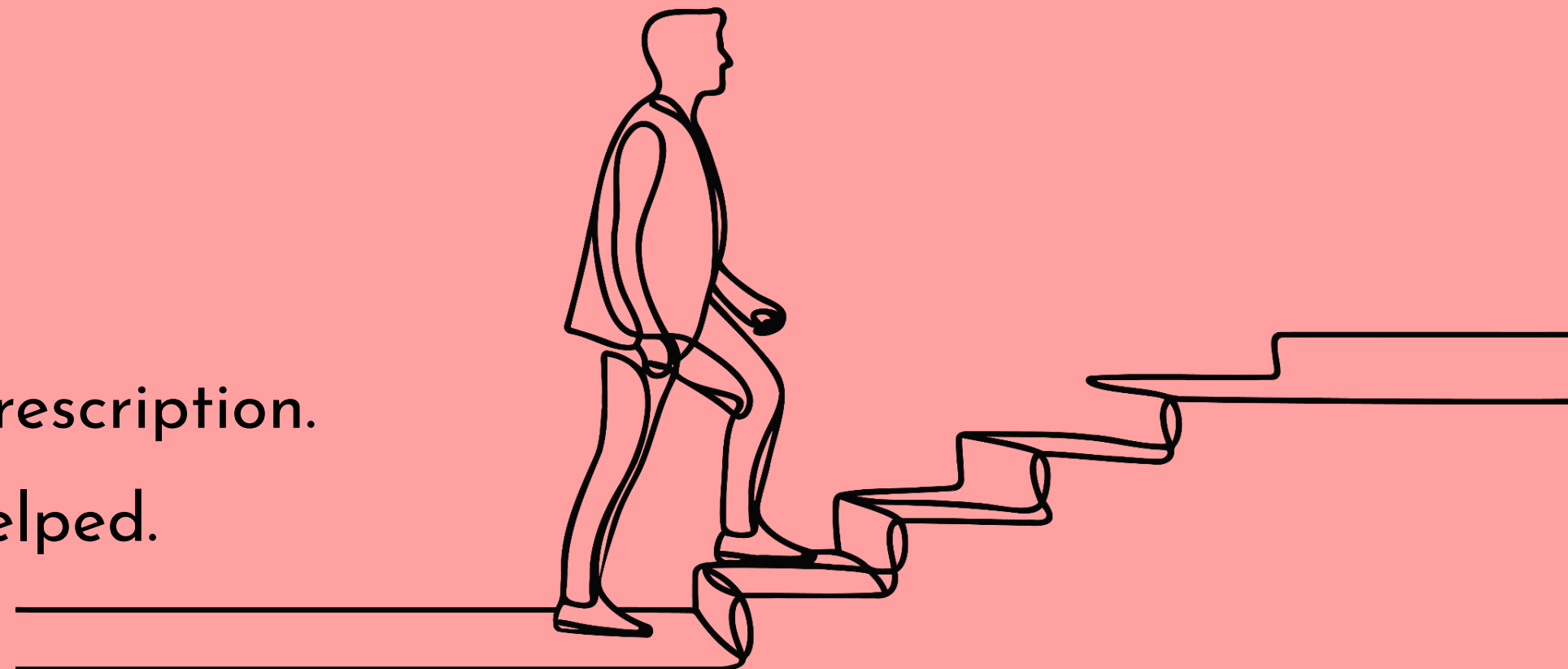
I've joined ShedLife. They've helped me to feel more creative.

Susie helped me get a mobility aid through the Small Good Things Fund - one that looked nice. **Now, I'm able to go out with pride.**

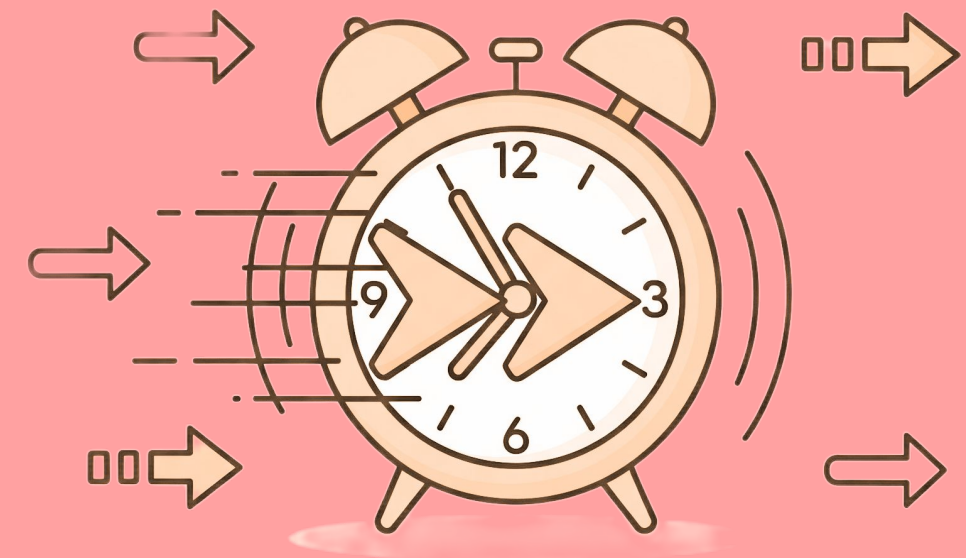
She also helped me get my glasses.

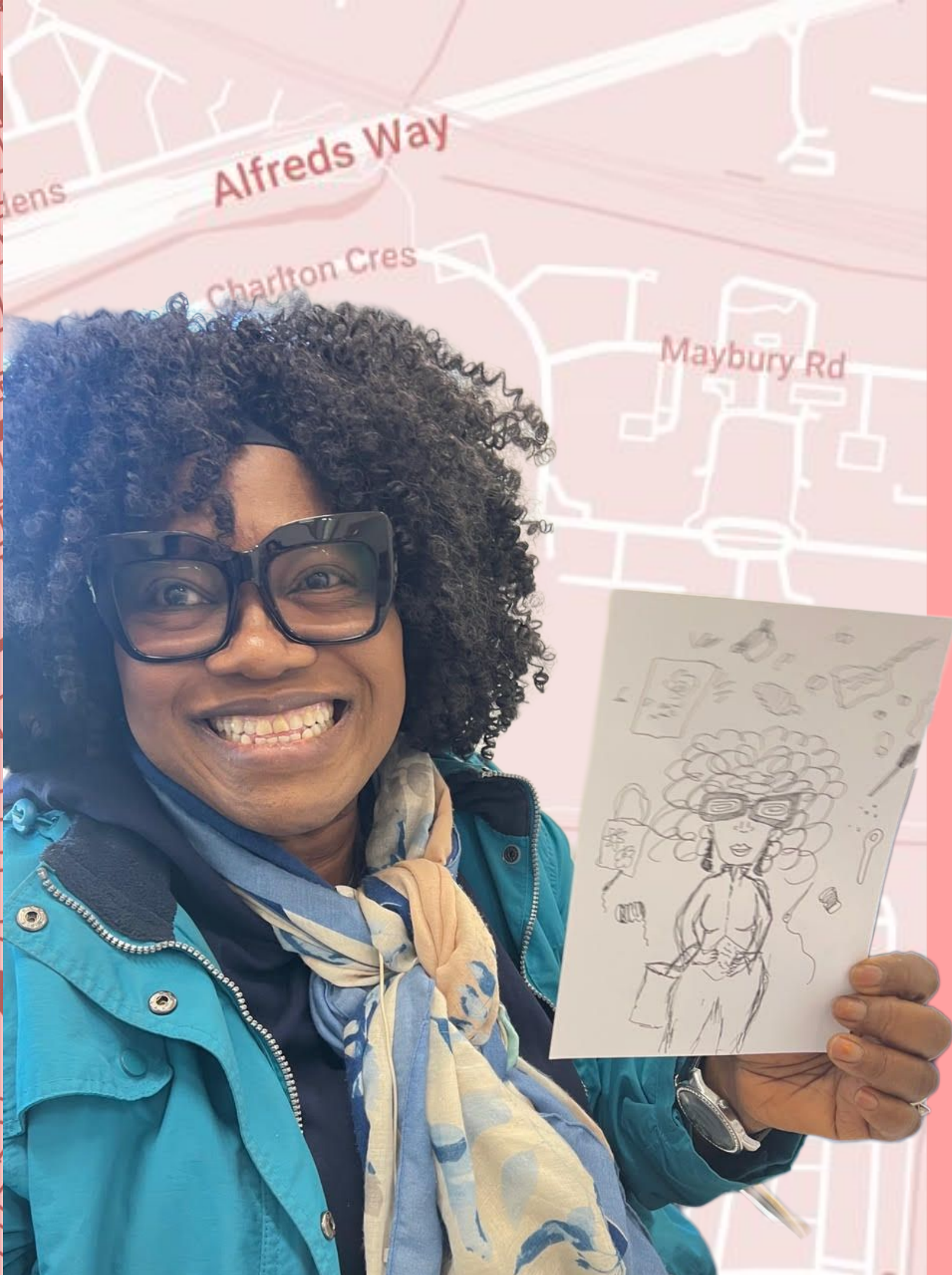
Because of my diabetes too it's an expensive prescription.

I wasn't able to get this myself and the fund helped.



**10 months
later....**





Lucy is continuing to thrive as part of the Shed Life Community. The group is helping her build **healthier relationships with her family**, and together they are supporting Lucy's children to pursue their own ambitions.

Building on a passion for textiles, Lucy is sewing culturally inspired scrunchies and other items. **These items are being sold to generate income**, inspiring further plans for Shed Life to roll out a programme supporting people to become sole traders.



The **local mental health team** has commented on the benefits Lucy has experienced through Connect and they are **sending more people to the ShedLife group.**

Lucy supported her daughter Elizabeth to join ShedLife and receive 1:1 support. Elizabeth has since grown in confidence and been supported in her ambition to become a writer. She is **writing a regular column for the Barking & Dagenham post** and joining writing communities that Connect has linked her into.