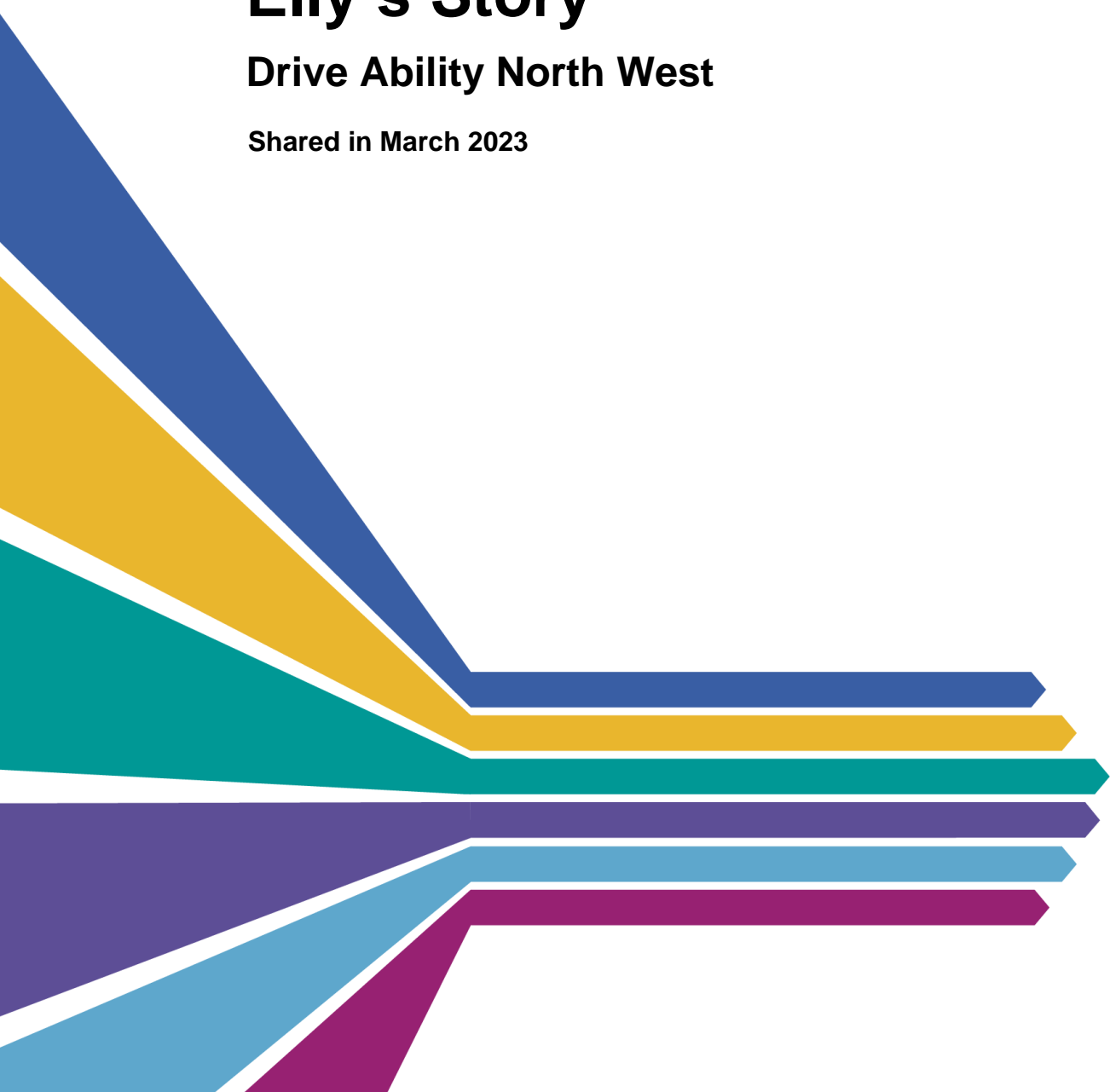


Elly's Story

Drive Ability North West

Shared in March 2023



Drive Ability North West – My Story – Elly

Drive Ability North West, a service delivered by Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, supports a wide range of people through assisted driving, accessibility and independent living.

Elly visited the service after the Driver Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) recommended her for Driving Support and Assessment. We spoke to Elly and her mum Marie.



Photo: Elly Milton (left) and Marie Milton (right)

Elly, can you tell us a bit more about yourself?

I'm twenty-three now, but four years ago, I was studying Psychology at university and had a part time waitressing job. I'd just completed my first year at Uni and got back from a holiday with my friends, when I had a stroke, completely out of the blue.

How did this affect you?

I was in hospital for nine months, seven in a rehabilitation unit and then I was supported by Community Services at home. At first, I couldn't speak or swallow, but

I've learnt to speak again and write with my left hand, because my whole right-hand side has been affected. I also have aphasia now, a condition that makes it harder for me to communicate.

Marie, who referred Elly to Drive Ability North West and why?

Elly's recovery is ongoing, but when she thought she was ready to start driving again, we contacted the DVLA to get her license back. They said that she'd need a driving assessment first, so we got an appointment with Drive Ability North West.

Elly, how did you feel about being referred?

Nervous, but more excited - it felt like I was getting my independence back. The day I went, the team were so nice. First, they gave me some adaptations to help me drive and they gave me the confidence I needed too. I've never driven an automatic car and it was different, but I loved it. It was an amazing feeling being able to drive again.

Marie, how did you feel about Elly's visit to Drive Ability North West?

It was definitely a positive experience. Because Elly can't use her right side she also had a car with the accelerator on the left and the brake in the middle, but she just took to it like a duck to water. We couldn't believe how many adaptations there are to help people to drive. Elly was perfectly capable; it was just about adapting the car. The team were so calming, so if she was nervous at first, she certainly wasn't by the time she'd practiced driving and got to the assessment. After it, they submitted a report to the DVLA, who have just given Elly her driving license back - we're over the moon! Elly's going to have some more tuition with Drive Ability North West too, just to get used to the adaptations.

Elly, how did you feel when you got your driving license back?

I can't put it into words. I've had so many goals I wanted to achieve, but driving was the ultimate one for me. The stroke affected every aspect of my life, especially my social life - and Uni has had to stop for now. I've been able to go back to waitressing for a couple of hours and now, I'll be able to drive to work, drive to see my friends, drive for a coffee, without having to ask anyone to do it for me. If anybody, stroke survivors, or anybody else are thinking of talking to Drive Ability North West about their driving, I'd say go for it.

To find out more about Drive Ability North West's Driving Support and Assessment Service call 01942 483 713.