The Empowered Living Team (ELT) is a community volunteer project which supports and enables people with serious life-limiting illnesses to live at home with a higher level of independence and a better quality of life. The ELT is composed of a team of palliative care professionals and volunteers from St Joseph's Hospice, Hackney that provides support to terminally ill patients living at home in the London borough of Newham.

ELT Volunteers are recruited, trained, and supervised by a palliative care physiotherapist and rehabilitation assistant to be able and confident to visit patients in their homes to provide physical and psychological support. All patients are encouraged and coached to work towards rehabilitation goals that aim to optimise their independence in physical activities of daily living, achieve better understanding and self-management of their symptoms, and ultimately improve their quality of life.

Many patients with complex and serious illness are able to better self-manage their conditions with rehabilitative, non-pharmacological and psychosocial approaches. These can be taught by a palliative care professional in 1-2 sessions, however the integration of these approaches into patients' everyday lives can take much longer. Often patients lose confidence to practise techniques when they are at home by themselves or they may not remember exactly what they were trying to do. For some patients the fatigue they experience can be so overwhelming that they lack the motivation to initiate techniques they have been taught even though they know these will help. For these self-management approaches to have the greatest impact on patients' wellbeing, patients and carers require support and encouragement to master the techniques and embed them into daily life, this support is provided by the ELT volunteer.

The ELT provides support to patients with a wide range of terminal illnesses and offers therapeutic interventions for symptoms that include reduced mobility, breathlessness, fatigue, falls, anxiety, and low mood or motivation. The ELT also aims to support patients to be able to increase their participation in activities of daily living and to access their local community. The ELT professionals and volunteers address the patient’s difficulties and work towards their empowerment goals by providing supervision of rehabilitation and exercise programmes, breathlessness management techniques and advice, massage and relaxation techniques, and befriending and listening.

All volunteers are provided comprehensive training and on-going supervision and support to be able to safely and competently provide rehabilitative and psychosocial interventions to patients in the community. After a patient has been assessed by the hospice professional they will be matched to a volunteer who will visit them weekly at their home for 1 hour for a total of 8 sessions, at the end of this empowerment programme patients are reviewed and their needs reassessed.