

Aaron's^{*} Journey

Outwood, West Yorkshire

Specialist residential service for adults with learning disabilities, autism and associated complex needs



Aaron's history

Aaron is a young man with diagnoses of a severe learning disability, autism and epilepsy. He has accessed the support of social care for most of his life and was previously placed in a residential setting that wasn't meeting his needs. There were concerns around neglect at his placement and so he was referred to Outwood.

When Aaron came to us

When Aaron joined us at Outwood he was very withdrawn and disengaged from activities. Verbally, he was limited and could only say a word or two. He struggled to communicate his needs and so for a long time they had not been met. That led Aaron to feel extremely frustrated and he expressed this through self-injurious behaviours, these incidents were both frequent and severe. Visits home or into the community made him feel anxious.

Aaron's care

The team at Outwood were keen to draw upon specialist support for Aaron, both internally from Cygnet and externally from local resources. They built strong links with the community learning disability team who became integral in Aaron's progress through regular meetings to discuss progress, lessons learnt and reflective practice.

The team also reached out to Cygnet's National Practice Development Lead in Learning Disabilities for specialist input into his day-to-day care. She analysed incident reports and requested increased monitoring by staff to help everyone better understand Aaron's needs. She formulated a bespoke activity plan for him, asking the team to feedback regularly so that the plan could be developed based on what worked well. It was ensured that Aaron's neurological and sensory needs were assessed and included in his care planning.



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Staff spent time trying to make Aaron feel comfortable and safe at the service by providing consistent support. As they spent more time with him, they were able to build trust and rapport which eased his anxieties, in turn, they were able to pick up on Aaron's cues and needs throughout the day.

Through a combination of the staff building upon their relationships and Aaron feeling more comfortable and confident, he was able to pick up language and set phrases. He was able to speak short sentences in context, and so staff were able to begin to build some basic food preparation and self-care skills.

As time went on, the incidents decreased and staff were able to really get to know Aaron, he was able to focus on enjoying himself rather than worrying his needs would not be met. They set goals and encouraged him to push himself, whilst also working at a pace that was comfortable for him.

His relaxed and happy attitude was reflected in his visits to home, which were able to be longer and more enjoyable for both Aaron and his family. They gradually built up his confidence enough to visit a local shop, which he was very proud to be able to do. He continues to make the trip weekly.

The team continue to offer a variety of activities through his plan each day, although his favourites are playing music and messy play. The staff will often play the guitar for him which he loves.

Aaron today

Aaron has a great relationship with the team and other residents at Outwood. He can communicate his needs, such as wanting a bath and can take steps to prepare the things he needs. He is a pleasure to be around and loves to be silly, often having banter with the staff. He is kind and caring towards other residents, always wanting to cheer them up if he sees they are feeling down.

His family are happy with the progress he has made and are pleased to see him living his best life. His goals for this year are to further increase his community access.

We are a dedicated team trying to get the best out of people, this truly represents what community care is aiming to do – progress in a way that works for each individual - Service manager

I'm so pleased he's there with you and your team. We feel that he's really safe and that you all really care about him. He's come along so well and it's all down to how dedicated you all are. His talking and daily skills are so far from where they were. I tell you, if anyone ever wanted to move him along they'd have an argument from me for sure! - Parent



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*Name has been changed to protect his identity

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