



Benjamin's^{*} Journey

North West Supported Living
Supported living for adults with learning disabilities, autism, mental health needs and behaviours that may challenge

Benjamin's history

Benjamin is a young man in his 30s with a diagnosis of mild learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and substance misuse. Benjamin lived a troublesome childhood, changing schools regularly due to his complex needs and challenging behaviours. By the time Benjamin was in his early teens he dropped out of the school system.

Throughout his adolescence and 20s, Benjamin's life became more chaotic and developed an addiction to illegal substances, this made him more vulnerable and put his life at risk. He was in and out of prison on multiple occasions and found himself homeless. As a result of his behaviours, his family kept their distance and he was on his own.

In early 2020 Benjamin, who was living in a homeless unit, was referred to Cygnets Cedars, where he was sectioned under the mental health act. Cygnets Cedars is a high dependency complex care service for men with learning disabilities, associated complex needs and who may have behaviours that challenge. Throughout the 18 months Benjamin was at Cygnets Cedars he received care and treatment from the multi-disciplinary team, he was able to withdraw from drug use, he stopped offending and it was here that he received his diagnosis of ADHD.

Benjamin built up a relationship with the staff and his peers at Cygnets Cedars and could see the change in himself so worked with the team to begin the journey to learning how to live independently again.

[Click here to read more about Benjamin's journey in a case study provided by the Cygnets Cedars team not long before he moved on](#)

When Benjamin came to us

Benjamin initially came to North West Supported Living on a section 17 leave from Cygnets Cedars, it was only for a short period of time before he was moved onto a community DoLs (Deprivation of Liberty safeguards), which was less restrictive.

At first, he was very excited about moving into his own place, however, there was also some anxiety about being back in the community and the prospect of relapse in either his drug use or criminal behaviour.

Benjamin seemed to struggle when he arrived at North West Supported Living with having 1-1 staff due to his supervision requirements, he also took a long time to get to know and trust people.

After years of crime, substance misuse, homelessness, prison and hospital, Benjamin struggled to know who he was anymore.



Benjamin's care

The team at North West Supported Living needed to gain Benjamin's trust, so they ensured that they provided him consistency with his staff team. They got to know him, worked with him on his positive behaviour support plan and became aware and mindful of his triggers. If there were any new members of the team introduced they were given specific training to ensure they knew as much about Benjamin as possible before they started working with him.

Once the team gained his trust, they soon started to see that he was very friendly and wanted to befriend everyone. Whilst the team were happy that he was starting to come out of his shell, they knew that they needed to work on boundaries with him. It is not always appropriate to greet everyone like they are a close friend or family member.

Upon arrival in his new flat, Benjamin became quite disheartened by the fact that in his mind, his home still resembled a hospital, with plain white and magnolia walls. The team did some research with him to find out what styles and colours he liked. They then supported him to find paint, wallpaper and furnishings that he liked to decorate his flat. Benjamin loved the whole process of putting his own stamp on it and making it his own.

Benjamin and the team spoke in depth about his future plans and what he wanted to achieve. They helped him enrol at a local college where he completed a bricklaying course and Maths and English. He found a volunteer role working at a local hospice in their garden. This means a lot to Benjamin as eventually, he wants to find a job where he is working to help others, like a support worker.

Benjamin today

Benjamin now has a great outlook on life, he is comfortable being out in the community alone, and he has had no instances of offending or any substance misuse.

After completing his bricklaying course at college he now wants to further that skill so is currently waiting to hear about a local construction work course he can enrol on.

Benjamin's relationship with his family has improved beyond belief. His younger brother now looks up to him as a role model and visits often.

The future is looking very bright for Benjamin and the team is looking forward to supporting him to achieve his goals and dreams.

In Benjamin's own words

"I've really turned a corner. I finally feel safe again. I can go out the front door and not worry about the harm which might come to me. The staff are amazing, they are all there to help you. I don't trust people easily but I trust all of them here. It's just a lovely, nice place. We have all got different needs here but the staff know how to handle all of us.

"I feel I am getting all my confidence back and I have a smile back on my face. I wouldn't be like this now without the staff here.

"A big goal for me was to get my family back. I've done that and I've regained their trust. I've got everyone behind me now.

"I didn't want a life where I was constantly looking over my shoulder or the police were knocking at the door. I wanted a life I could feel hopeful about. I've made it, I got through the worst and I feel proud of myself. That is a gift the team at Cygnet have given me."



www.cygnetgroup.com

*Name has been changed to protect his identity – he has chosen Benjamin as this is a name he likes

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To make a referral or for more information about **North West Supported Living** please call **0808 164 4450**/email chcl.referrals@nhs.net or contact your regional Business Development Manager