

Fiona's^{*} Journey

Longfield House, Bradford

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

Fiona's history

Fiona has diagnoses of a learning disability and personality disorder. She has been supported for most of her life and although she previously lived independently in the community, she had a history of placing herself at significant risk of abuse and exploitation. These risks resulted in Fiona requiring support and a safe place to learn in a residential service.

When she came to us

When Fiona came to live at Longfield House, she was struggling with the increase in restrictions. She presented with high risk behaviours such as physical aggression, self-injury and raising allegations. A result of these behaviours, she required 2:1 support. Understandably, Fiona was finding it difficult to comprehend why she couldn't go out on her own anymore and why staff were always with her.

From the first time I met Fiona she was very clear that she wanted to be independent again, so it had to be our commitment to her that we would support her to achieve this. It wasn't always easy and there were some setbacks, but through consistent support and transparent, honest communication with Fiona and her social worker we were able to work together to achieve the outcome Fiona wanted.

Registered Manager

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Fiona's care

The service manager, Fiona and her social worker discussed her care plan and behaviours during regular review meetings. Together, they worked on a plan for positive risk taking to increase her independence again. As this was being heard through the Court of Protection, the plan was a gradual staged process and risk assessed, working in partnership with West Yorkshire Police.

The main goal for Fiona was to increase her independence safely. The co-produced plan included goals to achieve this such as reducing staffing support to 1:1, accessing the community independently, spending time alone in her flat and reducing her daily support hours.

They began to increase independent community access with a beauty appointment that Fiona was able to attend by herself. As this was successful, they were able to increase the length of time that Fiona spent by herself.

There were challenges along the way, and when things didn't go as well as hoped, it was discussed together during reviews. The team then adapted the plan with Fiona and agreed how best to move forward.

Staff at Longfield House spent time building Fiona's self-esteem and confidence, which were key components in her history of placing herself at risk from others. They did this through routinely discussing relationships, especially how they should work and how she should be treated.

The team also found that the hair and beauty appointments, praise, and consistent reinforcement of her worth improved Fiona's confidence. She would often return from the hairdressers feeling confident enough to ask for a 'photoshoot' with the staff.

At times, Fiona felt frustrated that the process wasn't happening fast enough, but the team reassured Fiona that they not only had to ensure it was safe, but were also gathering evidence to support her increasing independence for the Court of Protection.

Longfield House supported Fiona, alongside her advocate, to challenge her DoLS and this was successful. It was agreed that Fiona still required support from carers to ensure her needs were consistently met, but this was a huge step forward for her.

Fiona today

Fiona's social worker secured her a tenancy back in her home town. The day she left Longfield House it was a very bittersweet day for both Fiona and the whole team – although she was happy to be moving on, and we were all very proud of how hard she had worked, she was going to be missed.

Fiona now lives in own flat, with minimal support attending throughout the week to ensure her needs were being met, she was accessing her benefits and attending health appointments.

*Name has been changed to protect her identity

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