

Alex's* Journey

Marion House, East Midlands

Specialist Residential Service for Adults with Autism and Moderate to Severe Learning Disabilities

Alex's history

Alex was diagnosed with autism at the age of three, following advice from a paediatrician who noted his developmental differences compared to his brothers and a tendency towards enjoying time alone. Growing up, Alex was healthy and happy, though he often preferred his own company to mixing with his brothers. He found joy in watching movies and immersing himself in classical music through headphones.

He attended primary school, and then moved to a college in the north of England as a term time live-in pupil for a couple of years before graduating in 2013. It was during this time that he seems to have gained his love of the coast as a holiday destination.

A significant challenge in Alex's life was the passing of his mother. His father shared, "It took him a long time to 'come to terms' with this."

Once Alex was back home permanently, the Council facilitated his attendance at a local community centre which he attended daily. His routine involved a set driving route and specific music in the car, and at the centre, he enjoyed using his laptop, regular swimming and gym sessions, and various walks.

Later, he also began attending respite weekends at another Cygnet specialist residential home. His family praised both services for their exceptional care and the positive impact they had on Alex's development. The idea of Alex living in a self-contained supervised flat was explored by the Council, but when this option didn't materialise, the family decided Marion House would be the ideal next step.

When Alex came to us

Alex's transition to Marion House presented a familiar challenge: his strong resistance to changes in routine. While he was already familiar with the location from his respite stays at the respite home, he was adamantly against the move at first. However, in a surprising turn, just a couple of days before the actual move, his stance suddenly shifted to "Marion House OK," accompanied by a definitive thumbs-up. This demonstrated his ability to adapt and settle, even after initial resistance.

Family support is strong, with his father and brothers, living locally. Alex has always required guidance, and sometimes physical assistance, with personal grooming and food preparation. While he could manage cold dishes independently, he often created unusual combinations. Despite these areas needing support, Alex is remarkably resourceful and capable of picking up new skills surprisingly quickly by observing others.



Alex's care

Since moving to Marion House, Alex has made remarkable progress, flourishing in his new environment. His initial resistance to the move quickly dissipated, and his family confirms he has shown no regrets whatsoever. The dedicated staff at Marion House have been instrumental in his continued development and happiness.

The team at Marion House ensures Alex partakes in a wide array of meaningful activities and trips out, experiences his family feels they wouldn't be able to provide. His father notes, "I cannot praise the staff at Marion highly enough, he seems to be partaking in a host of activities and trips out which I wouldn't be able to provide and he seems to enjoy them immensely." These activities are tailored to his interests, fostering engagement and enjoyment.

A heartwarming example of his comfort and sense of belonging is his weekly Sunday drive with his father. Alex now confidently directs the route, and on the way back, his clear instruction is always "Back to Marion." His father shared a moment of worry when they passed the end of their old street, but Alex showed no interest in returning to his previous address, a powerful indicator of his contentment at Marion House. The staff's ability to manage his routine changes, support his daily living skills, and provide engaging, person-centred activities has been key to his smooth transition.

Alex today

Today, Alex is thriving at Marion House, clearly enjoying his life within a supportive and engaging community. He continues to enjoy a host of activities and trips, fostering his independence and broadening his experiences. His connections with his family remain strong, with their regular Sunday drives being a cherished part of his week.

Alex's journey at Marion House showcases how a tailored, person-centred approach, combined with dedicated and understanding staff, can lead to profound positive changes. He has found a place where he feels safe, happy, and truly at home, continuing to grow and embrace new experiences with confidence.



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*Name has been changed to protect his identity

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