



Michael's Journey

The Old Vicarage in Blakeney, Gloucestershire

Specialist residential service supporting individuals with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs

Michael's History

Michael has been supported within social care services for over two decades. In 2002 he moved to The Old Vicarage in Blakeney, where he has since received long-term residential support focused on his health, wellbeing and stability.

When Michael first entered services, he was experiencing significant difficulties. He had limited routines, low stability, and found it challenging to maintain safe relationships, which at times led to his behaviour that was often unsafe for himself and others.

New environments, unfamiliar people and travelling long distances were particularly overwhelming for Michael, often causing anxiety and avoidance. As a result, his independence and engagement with the wider community were very limited.

Despite these challenges, Michael remained very family-oriented and expressed a desire to live a more independent and fulfilling life.

When Michael Came to Us

At The Old Vicarage, staff recognised that Michael was a "homebird" who felt safest with familiar people and predictable routines. At the same time, they also saw his aspiration to do more for himself and sought to build his interest in becoming involved in the local community, potentially through volunteering.

Rather than pushing change, the team focused on small, achievable steps that naturally built over time.

Having his environment and the staff team be consistent, offer reassurance and relationship-based support all helped to build Michael's confidence - at his own pace.

Michael's Care and Support

Michael's care focused on structure, routine, and trust. Staff supported him to establish a predictable daily routine, beginning with a simple walk to the local shop each morning to buy a newspaper. Once this became part of his routine and felt comfortable, these small journeys naturally expanded into longer walks around the village.

Over time, Michael began walking further and eventually took up running regularly. This not only improved his physical health but also increased his confidence navigating the community independently.

Staff worked closely with local community partners to create meaningful opportunities for Michael. The team contacted the minister at a local church, where he was warmly welcomed into a weekly volunteering role. He now attends the church independently, following a structured routine that includes cleaning tasks and general maintenance. This role provides him with purpose, responsibility, and a strong sense of belonging.

Having already built relationships at a local pub as a regular customer, Michael expressed a keen interest in getting involved. Old Vicarage staff approached the pub on his behalf.

Michael now volunteers twice a week, helping with tasks such as sweeping floors and clearing tables.

Alongside these positive achievements, Michael has also been supported to access healthcare that he had never previously engaged with.

Michael Today

Today, Michael is stable, settled, and thriving. He is described by those around him as polite, thoughtful, caring, and generous, with excellent manners and a calm, friendly presence.

Michael follows a well-structured daily and weekly routine that supports his emotional regulation and independence. He is a valued and well-known member of the small Blakeney community, where residents know him by name and greet him warmly.

Through consistent support and carefully paced encouragement, Michael has moved from a life shaped by instability and isolation to one where he plays an active and meaningful role in his community. His volunteering has given him purpose, confidence, and a renewed sense of identity.

Michael's journey demonstrates how the right environment, long-term support, and meaningful opportunities can help people rebuild their lives, regain independence, and truly flourish within their local communities.

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CYG2036 | Date of Preparation: 28/04/26



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