

Cheryl's^{*} Journey

Ducks Halt, Essex

Specialist Residential Service for
Adults with Learning Disabilities



Cheryl's History

Cheryl is a young woman in her 20's with a diagnosis of learning disabilities, autism and severe epilepsy. Due to her complex health needs and associated risks, she found herself in a high dependency hospital unit, where she stayed for a several years whilst professionals and her family tried to find the right placement for her.

Although Cheryl wanted change, repeated cycles of failed placements meant she often returned to hospital. Over time she lost faith in the ability of those around her to support her recovery.



When Cheryl Came to Us

When Cheryl transitioned to Duck's Halt, she was coming from a place of extreme restriction and control; her meals consisted of the same 'safe' foods each day and her access to her mobile phone and the internet very limited.

Whilst these restrictions were put in place with the best intentions, they contributed to a cycle of frustration. Cheryl developed a fear of doing something wrong and of the consequences that might follow, which often resulted in intense outbursts of anger.

An Enhanced Support team from the hospital gave the team at Ducks Halt intensive training and visited regularly to ensure Cheryl was coping and adapting to her new placement. Additionally, a review of her medication helped bring her epilepsy under better control and contributed to a greater overall sense of calm.



Outcomes Achieved

- > Moved from long-term hospital care to a residential service encouraging independence
- > Improved epilepsy management, leading to greater stability and overall wellbeing
- > Around **90% reduction in distressed behaviours** as restrictions were reduced
- > Built confidence, emotional resilience and everyday living skills
- > Successfully returned to live at home with minimal ongoing support
- > Now enjoys greater independence and a more positive future



Cheryl's Support

Duck's Halt is a specialist residential service, offering a structured yet person-centred environment where individuals are supported to make their own choices and develop independence.

The team worked closely with Cheryl to help her take an active role in co-producing her individualised care plan. Together they developed meaningful and achievable goals, providing her with increased freedom and creating lots of opportunity for her to grow and learn.

As the restrictions were gradually reduced, the staff team observed that 90% of Cheryl's behaviours seemed to disappear, highlighting how important autonomy and trust were to her wellbeing.

Working in partnership with Psychiatry and Psychology, the team supported Cheryl understand that while actions had consequences, these do not have to be permanent. This helped to reduce her fear of making mistakes and supported more positive emotional regulation.

There were some setbacks, but the team knew the importance of creating stability for Cheryl and the staff remained a calming and consistent presence in her life throughout all the ups and downs. They supported her during times of crisis and let her know she was safe, valued and cared for.

With gradual progress, Cheryl's trust in the team deepened. Each achievement built her confidence, and she began setting more ambitious goals, increasing her independence and developing the skills needed for everyday life.



Cheryl Today

As both Cheryl and the team began to recognise the progress she had made from her initial admission to the place she was at now, they realised that she might be ready to move on from Ducks Halt.

After discussing with Cheryl and her family, they decided that best next step for her would be to move into her family home. They developed a plan for her transition with a minimal level of continued support to help everybody adjust.

In just two years with Ducks Halt, Cheryl has transformed from frightened and distrustful, into a confident young woman with freedom, independence and a bright future ahead.

She is now living back at home and happy to continue her journey with a renewed sense of purpose, stability and happiness.



*Name has been changed to protect her identity.

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