

Darren's Story

Darren is 27 years old and has lived at Norton House since July 2005. Darren has been diagnosed with suffering from schizophrenia and as having learning disabilities.

Darren chose to move to Norton House after a four month stay as an inpatient at the local mental health unit where he had been admitted following a deterioration in his mental health. He had been living independently but was not able to cope.

Whilst living on his own, Darren explained that he felt isolated and alone. His flat was in a poor neighbourhood and he was vulnerable to manipulation and financial exploitation. He began hanging around with "the wrong sort of people" and taking drugs. His relationship with family members also caused him lots of stress.

Whilst living alone Darren found it difficult to carry out general household tasks such as cooking, cleaning and doing the laundry because he lacked motivation.

Darren says loneliness and the effect of taking drugs contributed to him becoming unwell.

On referral to Norton House Darren explained that he wanted to develop his daily living skills, build his confidence and establish a social life without fear of intimidation by others. His budgeting skills were particularly poor and he had debts.

Darren moved to a part time supported Norton House property. In the early days the Support Worker reported many issues with self care and taking his medication, both issues requiring much prompting.

Since moving to Norton House Darren has continued to make a series of small steps forward which represent significant progress for him. In 2006 his CPA level was reduced from Enhanced to Standard as he was doing so well.

In 2007/08 Darren began to address his health and fitness levels by giving up smoking, going swimming twice a week and eating more healthily.

Darren explains that as a result of being at Norton House he now feels more confident. His cooking skills have improved with support and he is far more independent. He is also much less vulnerable to exploitation and reports that he now feels able to say "no" so that people do not take advantage of him.

He has enjoyed making new friends and socialising both within and outside Norton House. He says he likes the security of living at Norton House as he is not under pressure to move on. He also says he feels more motivated and signs up to different activities that are offered.

His medication has also been altered and he is managing his mental health much better. His RMO and CPN consider his mental health is now stable with no psychotic symptoms.

Darren says he thoroughly enjoys living at Norton House and that he wishes to stay so that he can continue to build up his skills and enjoy life.