

## Darren's story

Darren used to live in a group living service with three other people, which was a situation that was deteriorating. Darren found it difficult to live with other people, and his behaviour was becoming more challenging. A psychiatrist's assessment said that he was autistic and had a personality disorder, which meant that he could not live with other people.

While waiting for the assessment, Darren was evicted from the service. His eviction meant that he was re-housed on his own in a council flat. The flat is near the local train station and the Derby city football ground – two of Darren's passions. Almost immediately after moving in, Darren's behaviour improved.

Darren was being partly funded by Supporting People – however, his housing provider had not completed the necessary forms in time. Supporting People deemed he was no longer eligible for funding, and they asked for a refund, which resulted in Darren's funding being cut by more than half – from 24 hours a day with a sleepover to 60 hours per week.

We had to work with Darren and his parents to successfully support Darren with this reduction in hours – firstly, we made sure we matched his staff team to him correctly. We then provided support around mealtimes, medication and prior to bed, and worked with him to be able to do these things independently.

Now, Darren can cook and take his medication independently, so he uses his support hours when he chooses. Through his increased independence, for example, going to the pub on his own, he has developed real friendships.

We have worked with Social Services to reach an agreement where Darren's support hours are now flexible, therefore he can bank unused hours to use at a later date (on holidays for example).

Rachel Graham, Regional Director, says: *"From our point of view, this is an excellent example of taking risks to achieve positive outcomes for a person."*

*"In Darren's case, the cut in funding meant that we had to be creative with the support we offered and take those risks. Darren is now in the correct environment for him, and has a real sense of inclusion in the community and well being."*

