

Nick's story

Nick was living in a bedsit attached to his mother's adapted bungalow, and was becoming increasingly frustrated at his lack of independence. He was directing a lot of his frustration towards his mother, and as a consequence, their relationship was close to breaking point. Nick wanted to live on his own – however, in the past, he had already lived in a family home, a supported flat and a large group home, all of which were placements that had broken down.

Nick wanted to try and live independently again, so a risk assessment was carried out, looking at all areas of vulnerability and identifying safeguards, and a suitable flat was found. Worcestershire social services increased our funding to provide 24 hour support for Nick.

Over the next year, Nick lived with a full staff team. Staff would come on shift when Nick got home from his day service, then sleep over and leave when he went to his day service the next day. However, Nick wanted to spend more time on his own, and wanted to leave the day service, as he was getting very little out of it.

We began a trial of leaving Nick at home for small periods of time, with support workers available on-call if they were needed. As his confidence grew, we increased Nick's time alone. He stopped attending the day centre, and again, provided an on-call support worker to respond during the day or to support him with other commitments. We arranged for an advocacy group to train Nick about staying safe in his home, including the need for visitors to show identification.

Gaining in confidence, Nick then asked for his sleepovers to stop. Again, this required a risk assessment, and we then worked with Nick using role play about the different scenarios that he could encounter while alone at night. The withdrawal of sleepover was achieved in two weeks.

We persuaded social services to fund a door chain that could be released by staff in an emergency, and also to fund a call aid phone line. Both of these installations further decreased the number of support hours we needed to provide and led to substantial cost savings for Worcestershire social services. Nick's support has decreased from an initial support package of 107 hours per week to 31 hours – saving £14,196 over the course of a year.

Adey Stevens, area manager, says: *“Nick now has on call support. He makes a phone call in the morning to say he's up and fine; and support is planned week by week depending on his commitments. He is now an active member of his community, he sits on advisory boards and committees, and is much happier now he is in control of his own life.”*

