



Case Study 1

BACKGROUND:

The Vulnerable Young People's post, funded through a partnership involving Social Services, Connexions & the Drugs and Alcohol Team (DATT) was created in 2004 when a gap in service provision was identified for young people (16-19) in housing crisis who had no access to statutory support services.

THE ROLE:

Working on a one to one basis, support is provided to help young people access and/or maintain accommodation and to address other issues which may affect their ability to do so. Referrals are made by the Local Authorities in the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales, Connexions, the Youth Service, Youth Offending Team, and the Drug and Alcohol Team.

A CASE STUDY

Adam, aged 18, was referred by the Probation Service. He had been evicted from his family home as a result of his conviction for criminal damage which had occurred while under the influence of drugs. His punishment for the offence was a £1,300 fine and 150 hour community service order.

After the eviction, Adam was homeless and sofa-surfing between a number of friends' houses. In discussing his situation, he explained that a big problem he'd encountered in relying on friends to put him up was the fact that drugs were continually on offer. He felt obliged to accept them, feeling that refusal would be seen as an insult and result in him being kicked out. This potentially put him at risk of re-offending. Because of the constant uncertainty, Adam felt really low and despondent, unable to see anything worthwhile in his life. The situation was also exacerbating his self-harming.



Adam has been open and thoughtful, reflecting at our meetings about the offence and the impact this has had on his life. We looked at the choices he'd made and how he could learn from them to make positive ones in the future. We also talked about how he planned to change his behaviour and what he wanted to do with his life. Adam really enjoys anything to do with art, so one goal set was to meet with his Connexions adviser and look into going back to college to do something in Graphic Design. This helped him to think about the future and set achievable and realistic goals to focus on.



We looked into the various housing options available to him and agreed that finding private rented accommodation was the best. With help from Adullam's Bond Scheme, Adam secured a tenancy with a local landlord in Buxton.

He has worked hard to sort out his various benefits and is successfully maintaining his tenancy. He is also managing to keep away from drugs.

Review:

I wanted Adam to reflect on the huge progress he has made and his achievement in moving his life in a more positive direction. He has noticed a significant improvement in his mood and outlook from doing this. His self-harming habits have almost stopped.

Adam has faced up to his responsibilities: is paying his fine and attending his Community Punishment.

In terms of future goals, Adam wants to access local counselling services in the hope that this will help in dealing with some of his underlying issues. As well as planning to return to college and training, Adam is also beginning to look ahead to finding his own self-contained flat. By then he no longer wants to be on benefits, but in employment. He hopes to be saving money by then and wants to be able to afford some treats for himself. He also hopes to have some space to create his own art studio.

I have been really impressed by Adam's insight and determination to turn his life around. I look forward to being able to see Adam's plans materialise.

Matt Whittaker

Vulnerable Young People Project Worker