



Harry's Story - Mental Health & Wellbeing Hubs

*** Some names have been changed to protect privacy.**

I was referred to the Birmingham Mind Handsworth Hub, whilst recovering from alcohol addiction due to my PTSD.

I am a veteran and I had recently exited the armed forces. I had been experiencing PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and I had been self-medicating with alcohol. This resulted in the breakdown of my marriage, which led to me and my wife getting divorced.

I was estranged from my parents and had limited contact with my young son due to concerns over my behavioural issues that had arisen as a result of alcohol abuse. At the time of attending the Hub, I was being supported by CGL (Change, Grow, Live) for my addiction and I was committed to my recovery journey. However I was desperately frustrated with social services and the disconnected relationship with my parents, who had custody of my son. I was suffering from stress which had affected my ability to manage the conflict with my relatives in a healthy way. This was then impeding my ability to navigate contact with my son and increasing my frustration.



Once I began to attend the Handsworth Hub, I was supported with arranging supervised contact with my son. I was receiving some support via the armed services but I was facing an 18 month wait for help from the local CMHT (Community Mental Health Team). What I needed was guidance on the practical steps of arranging supervised contact with my son. I also needed someone to support me emotionally and confirm my engagement in my meetings with social services. I was suffering from a great deal of stress due to tensions within my family and challenges with social services, so I was signed up to the Stress and Anxiety and the Healthy Relationships courses.

Attending both these courses helped me immensely. I was supported in arranging supervised contact with my son, and successfully met with him a number of times at a local contact centre. Birmingham Mind supported me in two meetings with my social services team, family members, alongside armed forces support.

In the beginning I attended the Hub every week to attend the groups, but as my applications for contact progressed, I also received support on a one-to-one basis. In time, this became less and less of a regular requirement as I was able to manage any incidents far more calmly and I needed less and less outside support. I gained a healthier outlook, and I was able to remain calm and in control of my anger. I was less stressed in navigating frustrating systems and I was able to manage these processes by myself. I would not rise to the bait when my family were being difficult, and I was able to achieve the desired outcomes in dealing with social services and arranging contact. I also came to accept the estrangement from my parents and recognised that the unhelpful patterns I had been engaging in were making the situation more painful.



I become more independent, recognising possible avenues to help myself, and strengthening my existing relationships. I have now moved away from Birmingham and I am in the process of renting my own home and I have regular contact with my son as per the guidelines laid out by social services. I feel much happier and calmer and ready to move on with my life.

Accessing support at the Handsworth Hub has been instrumental in changing my life. Without Liz, my Recovery Navigator and Kiran the Stress and Anxiety group facilitator, I would not have been able to make these changes to my life which has enabled me to be part of my sons life. I would not be where I am today without Birmingham Mind.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub service is an innovative service delivered with our partners [Creative Support](#). We have four Recovery Hubs based in Erdington, Handsworth, Yardley and Northfield. Find out more about our Wellbeing Hubs service here [Mental Health & Wellbeing Hubs - Birmingham Mind](#).