



# Pheobe' Story - My Safe Space in Selly Oak

\* Some names have been changed to protect privacy.

**Trigger Warning – This story includes references to self-harm and suicide.**

I arrived for my first visit at grounded. in October 2023 and in crisis having been admitted to hospital after a suicide attempt. I did not receive the help I needed following my hospital discharge and I came to Talking Space for emotional support after finding the service online. I was very distressed on that first occasion, but the staff at Talking Space in Selly Oak made me feel safe and welcome. We agreed a 'safety plan' where I spoke to a clinician and had a wellbeing call that same night. The call helped me to cope with my emotions and suicidal ideation and I avoided having to go back to A&E which I didn't want to do.



I do receive support from my CMHT (Community Mental Health Team), but they became unreliable with their visits. During term times, I am thankful for the support I receive from my college wellbeing officer, she is really nice and we have a good relationship. I also work part time and my workplace is supportive of my diagnosis of Autism, ADHD and Dyslexia.

I struggle most when I don't have this support in place (e.g. school holidays or non-working days). I've recently had difficulties with my medication, as I have a combination of meds for ADHD and depression. I was having my meds reviewed weekly, but I am stable and coping better with things now.

The holiday period over Christmas and New Year are particularly difficult for me, with social obligations and family gatherings which I find hard to deal with. Added to this my grandfather has been unwell and went into a care home. He passed away in the new year, which was hard for me process and I am still grieving from his loss.

I have used the Birmingham Mind Helpline and Talking Space service at both Selly Oak and Erdington for emotional support a few times over those six months. In April 2024 I had experienced hearing voices, telling me to kill myself and I stopped eating. I was in a crisis again and I was admitted to hospital.



Since leaving hospital, I feel much better. I am currently finishing my college course and I'm excited to be starting a full-time role at the museum, where I currently work part-time. I love working there and I'm really looking forward to it and the possibility of being more independent in the future.

Attending Talking Space provided me with the emotional support I needed, when my other avenues to support were closed or not accessible to me. The staff listen attentively and supported me to access self- help apps and support from Shout. Putting a safety plan in place, including talks with a clinician and having wellbeing calls after a crisis have really helped me.

## The Difference We Make – Donna Henderson, Talking Space Service Manager

“Since Phoebe's discharge from hospital, her dad came to Talking Space with gifts of biscuits and cakes to thank me and the team for the support we have given his daughter at this difficult time, as it has impacted on the whole family. Her dad advised if it wasn't for the Talking Space, he doesn't know if his daughter would be alive today.

We have since seen Pheobe, who popped in just to say hello and thank you. She had a big smile on her face which is the first I have seen over the time we have been supporting her. Pheobe's confidence had improved and felt there was a purpose again and felt heard.”

Our Talking Space service operates 7 days a week, across three locations in Erdington, Selly Oak and Northfield. The service is available from 5pm – 11pm and can be accessed by appointment or by dropping in. For more information visit

<https://birminghammind.org/what-we-do/talking-space-inc-crisis-support/>