



# Living in supported accommodation: Darren's Story

## How Supported Accommodation Gave Me the Confidence

Birmingham Mind's Vulnerable Adults Service has been providing supported accommodation for over 15 years, with properties either owned or managed by us. Offering 72 self-contained flats, our service is one of the most in-demand in the region. Unfortunately, demand far exceeds supply, but we remain privileged to support each individual who comes to stay with us.

Service users typically stay in our accommodation for periods ranging from 18 months to several years, and we are proud to be part of their journey toward greater independence. To better understand the impact of our service, we spoke with Darren, a current tenant in our supported housing, about how this service has positively affected his life.



## Darren's Journey: A Step Toward Independence



"I moved into my Birmingham Mind flat 4 years ago, after transitioning from residential care. Although it was difficult to move to a new part of the city, Birmingham Mind made the process as easy as possible. My flat was newly decorated, with brand new carpet, a fridge-freezer, cooker, and a bed. I had a small amount saved and was able to buy my own settee and a small table.

In supported accommodation, staff are on-site from 9am every day, providing consistent support. In the beginning, I had regular support sessions and chats with staff two to three times a week. Over time, as I adjusted to independent living, my need for support lessened, and now I am able to live more independently.

The accommodation itself offers both communal and private spaces. There is always someone to cook, eat, or chat with, while respecting each other's privacy. We also have regular meetings and events. Most recently, members of The Active Wellbeing Society visited, and we have also enjoyed learning about Buddhism and meditation practices together.

Every week, I volunteer at the on-site art group, working with fellow service users to create a variety of art projects, ranging from clay animals to Christmas decorations and pastel drawings. I also volunteer at a weekly art group at Creative Support in Yardley, and recently I joined a new art group at the Omnia Centre.



My flat now feels like home. I've decorated it, bought a new TV, and even set up a dedicated art area as well as space for my DJ decs. Birmingham Mind staff have been nothing but professional and supportive. The staff motivate me to make the most of my time here and give me a reason to get up every day.

After four years in supported accommodation, I feel ready to move into my own home, ideally closer to my family in Castle Vale. Birmingham Mind's staff are supporting me in this transition, and I feel confident that I no longer need as much support as I once did. I also know that there are other people who are waiting for a supported accommodations place, and I want to make room for them.

The support I've received has been invaluable, and I've recommended this service to many of my friends. Moving into accommodation that was partially furnished and newly decorated exceeded my expectations. Having my own space, where I can come and go as I please, with the support of Birmingham Mind staff when needed, has allowed me to build the confidence to move on. Now, I feel truly ready to take the next step."

Darren's story is just one of many examples of how Birmingham Mind's Supported Accommodation service helps individuals rebuild their lives. Through a combination of personal support, community engagement, and the opportunity for independence, service users are empowered to regain confidence, develop new skills, and make positive steps toward their future.

We are proud to continue offering this vital service and look forward to supporting more individuals like Darren in the years to come.

For more information about our Vulnerable Adults Supported Housing Service please visit:

<https://birminghammind.org/what-we-do/supported-accommodation/>