

Livvy comes on leaps and bounds in Supported Living

An inspirational young woman has made incredible progress in the county council's Supported Living programme



Wednesday, 15 February, 2023



An inspirational young woman has reflected on her time within Leicestershire County Council's Supported Living programme and the incredible progress she has made.

22-year-old Livvy was awarded a tenancy in one of the council's Supported Living step-through schemes and has thrived within the service, gaining independence and achieving several qualifications along the way.

On her initial impressions, she says: "I was blown away by how flexible it was here – everything was just out, no need to ask for things. Right from the start, everyone made me feel so welcome. The staff gave me valuable emotional support - at the beginning, I couldn't regulate my emotions or express how I was feeling, but now I can."

Supported Living is part of the county council's Adult Social Care service. This particular step-through scheme helps people who have experienced mental health difficulties and is delivered in partnership with the Affinity Trust. Supported Living provides individuals within the service a pathway to a safe and suitable place to live, either by themselves or with others. It is designed to give people the chance to be more independent and live the lives they want.

Some of Livvy's initial challenges included struggling to adjust to new routines such as 24-hour and one-to-one targeted support. With the help of the staff at her accommodation, she progressed to needing just four hours of one-to-one support.

Livvy explained: "I have emotionally unstable personality disorder (EUPD) and autism, so I love routines. I felt anxious, so I would constantly test boundaries and try to run away. Before this, I was held under the Mental Health Act in a psychiatric hospital, so I had become a bit institutionalised. I may have scars, but now I see them as a reminder of how far I've come on my journey."

Now, she describes herself as "happy, healthy and living my best life."

Over the last two years, Livvy's incredible determination has seen her complete the YES learning programme and the Prince's Trust 12-week programme. Additionally, she is no longer subject to a Community Treatment Order.

Livvy's achievements don't stop there - she has also completed youth offender training, which means she can now mentor young people who have been in trouble with the law.

There are also ambitions to complete a Level 3 qualification in Health and Social Care to achieve Livvy's goal of becoming a mental health nurse. She has already demonstrated a will to help others in a similar situation, offering new Supported Living arrivals advice and encouraging them to make the most of the opportunity.

So, what's next for Livvy?

"I'm moving on to a different type of accommodation which is still supported, but I'll have my own flat. I'll still have help when I need it, but it means I can be even more independent. I can't wait!"

Kayleigh Bonsell, Support Manager at Affinity Trust said: "Livvy has made excellent progress since she came to us - she has channelled all of her effort into the programme. She completes all daily living skills independently, reaching out for support when she needs to. She has also worked very hard on fully understanding and safely managing her daily medication by herself.

We are all so very proud of Livvy and how far she has come in Supported Living. She is inspirational to anybody considering a step through scheme and has amazing potential for the future."

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There are currently 600 tenants in over 130 properties within Supported Living across Leicestershire. The programme currently includes six step-through schemes: four supporting individuals with mental health difficulties and two aimed at young adults with disabilities, with another opening this summer.

Councillor Christine Radford, cabinet member for adults & communities said: "I am thrilled for Livvy and wish her the very best. I'm sure she has a bright future ahead of her; using her experience to help others. Stories like this highlight how valuable the Supported Living service is.

"We are proud to help people like Livvy take positive steps towards independent living and thriving within the community. The Supported Living staff have done a fantastic job."

Livvy describes the moment she decided to take advantage of the Supported Living opportunity as a positive step she took to improve her life. In sharing her story, she hopes that others will follow in her footsteps.

"My advice to anyone thinking about Supported Living is to go for it. I often say; if you saw me at the start of my journey compared to now, you wouldn't believe I'm the same person. Never give up – things will get better!"

Livvy has also praised the staff who helped her thrive over the last two years for their unwavering support. She says "I can't thank the staff here enough for never giving up on me even when I was at my lowest. I am so blessed to have everyone who helped me along the way."

For more information about Supported Living, visit www.leicestershire.gov.uk/supported-living or email psl@leics.gov.uk .

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