

“...from complete dependence to meaningful independence...”

BACKGROUND

Carrie came into contact with Inspire North through Oakwood Hall, one of their medium-term residential placements for people with complex mental health needs. She had a long history of mental health challenges, homelessness, and exploitation linked to substance misuse. Diagnosed with schizophrenia in her late teens, Carrie had spent years in and out of psychiatric services. By the time she was referred to Inspire North (formerly Community Links), she was in a deeply vulnerable position.

Prior to receiving support, Carrie's life had become unsafe and chaotic. After losing her home, her property was taken over by drug dealers who subjected her to physical violence, leaving her with brain injuries that required intensive care. At this point, she had little stability, struggled to care for herself, and was at serious risk of ongoing harm and homelessness.

It was through this crisis that she was connected to Oakwood Hall and Inspire North, a turning point that ultimately saved her life.

SUPPORT FROM INSPIRE NORTH

Once at Oakwood Hall, Carrie received consistent, person-centred support from Inspire North staff, who worked with her patiently and holistically.

A key figure in her recovery was Karl, the chef and practical support staff member at Oakwood Hall. Over four years, Karl helped Carrie rebuild essential life skills from the ground up, including:

- Learning how to cook safely and independently
- Planning meals and writing shopping lists
- Budgeting and pricing food
- Managing her own shopping trips
- Using the shared resident kitchen confidently

In addition, Carrie's support workers helped her learn how to manage her money more effectively.

Carrie reflects that she previously struggled with budgeting and impulsive spending. With guidance, she now spends her money more wisely and feels more in control of her finances.

Through this practical support Carrie moved from complete dependence to meaningful independence. Learning to cook, plan meals, budget, and manage her own shopping not only allowed her to meet her daily needs without relying on staff but also prepared her for living safely and successfully on her own. Carrie describes how managing these tasks independently has strengthened her sense of capability, reduced stress, and enhanced her overall emotional wellbeing, giving her the confidence and tools to feel empowered and in control of her future.

IMPACT ON CARRIE'S LIFE

The difference Inspire North has made to Carrie's life is profound. Beyond practical skills, Inspire North also provided emotional stability and continuity of care. Carrie describes the team at Oakwood Hall as consistently supportive, reliable, and "rock stars" who stood by her during difficult times, including the recent end of her engagement.

BEFORE INSPIRE NORTH

- Homeless and unsafe
- Experiencing severe mental health crises
- Struggling with addiction
- Unable to cook, shop, or manage money
- Isolated and at risk
- Dependent on emergency services

NOW

- Safely housed at Oakwood Hall (with plans to move into her own home in the future)
- More independent and capable in daily life
- Able to cook, shop, and budget independently
- Attends medical appointments alone, including monthly blood tests and dental visits
- More emotionally resilient and less reactive under stress
- Better able to manage her voices and mental health
- Feeling happier, healthier, and more content with life

CARRIE'S FINAL REFLECTION

When asked what stands out most about her journey, Carrie says:

"If it wasn't for Inspire North and the team at Oakwood Hall, I wouldn't be here today — not in the way I am now. They saved my life."

FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about our work or to share your own story, please visit www.inspirenorth.co.uk. For further information, contact us at info@inspirenorth.co.uk.