

Case Studies

The logo for 'GETTING HEARD' is a blue speech bubble with the words 'GETTING' and 'HEARD' stacked vertically in white, bold, uppercase letters.

Please note all identifying details have been changed to protect the identities of our clients

Where will I live?

Client: Female, 40 (Ann)

Reason for referral: Housing

Background and reason for referral

Ann was referred by a social worker who was concerned about her living situation, inappropriate for anyone with deteriorating cognitive functions and limited mobility. The social worker supported Ann with her application for another accommodation and attended one viewing of a potential flat. However, the housing association rejected her application for alternative housing on the basis of violent outbursts that supposedly took place during the visit. Following the social worker's enquiry it became clear that the housing association was not willing to change their decision. The social worker felt that a volunteer advocate should support Ann with her communication with the housing association and with exploring potential alternative options for accommodation.

Actions taken by the Getting Heard Community Advocate

The GH volunteer advocate visited Ann and together they wrote a letter to the housing association outlining the circumstances of the viewing. The volunteer advocate gathered and enclosed written statement from the social worker explaining the misunderstanding regarding client's supposed violent outburst.

Following a subsequent rejection letter from the housing association and information that Ann was not allowed to bid for other flats, the GH volunteer advocate and Ann wrote an appeal. When waiting for the decision, Ann and the volunteer advocate started searching for alternative accommodation options.

Ann was invited to an appeal hearing. Ann and GH volunteer advocate drafted a list of points that Ann wanted to raise during the hearing and gathered all documents required. The GH volunteer advocate accompanied Ann and ensured that minutes were taken and shared with Ann, that Ann understood the process and documentation presented, and that Ann was given the opportunity to present all points as prepared with the GH volunteer advocate.

The appeal was successful and shortly afterwards Ann was offered another place. The GH volunteer advocate and Ann together analysed the pros and cons of accepting the offer. Ann decided to move and the partnership was successfully concluded.

Outcome of the partnership

As a result of GH involvement, Ann had her voice heard and the misunderstanding regarding her behaviour was explained. The final decision was thus in her favour and she has finally moved to a more suitable placement

Impact achieved

Ann appears much happier and has much better relationship with her housing association, which may affect her quality of life. The housing association themselves have a greater understanding of Ann and her needs.

What will I live on?

Client: Male, 27 (John)

Reason for referral: Benefits

Background and reason for referral

John asked for support during a PIP assessment. He was concerned that he might not be able to attend the assessment by himself due to his anxiety issues and resultant black outs. He did not have any friends or family members who might be able to support him. John felt intimidated by the process and difficult vocabulary that professionals might use. He did not know what documentation to prepare for the assessment.

Actions taken by the Getting Heard Community Advocate

John and his GH volunteer advocate met in a nearby community centre and together went through the letter that John received from the Department for Work and Pensions. John explained his circumstances to the GH volunteer advocate. They called Oxfordshire Welfare Rights so that John could obtain some advice and the volunteer advocate took notes. At the end of the conversation, John and the GH volunteer advocate listed a number of things that John wanted to do before the assessment in regards to his paperwork.

Subsequently, John and the volunteer advocate together attended the assessment. The decision of the assessment is still pending, but John managed to go through the process without any black outs and anxiety attacks. At one point, the volunteer advocate stepped in and ensured that John understood a question correctly, when it seemed particularly probable that he would not.

Outcome of the partnership

Following the engagement of the GH volunteer Advocate, John felt understood the documentation around PIP assessment and obtained and understood information from Welfare Rights. His anxiety levels were significantly lower before and during the assessment as he knew that he was well prepared, had all necessary information and had the moral support of the volunteer.