



Concrete's Changing Futures Case Co-ordinator Charlotte has supported 38-year-old George\* for several months.

George is a vulnerable man with learning difficulties who was introduced to monkey dust by a group of people who were taking advantage of him. They used his Stoke-on-Trent City Council flat like their own and completely controlled him and his finances.

George met Charlotte and she worked with him to help him start a new chapter. She made sure he couldn't return to his flat, which was no longer safe for him, secured him a room at the George Hotel and helped him find peer support opportunities. She also made sure he was engaging with support services, like CDAS, to address his monkey dust addiction.

Before Christmas, George's biggest barrier was housing, but this has now been solved. Charlotte secured accommodation for George at Hillcrest (Brighter Futures), where he receives support from STRs (support, time and recovery workers) and is learning to be more independent.

The team at Hillcrest help him with budgeting and make sure he's keeping on top of his finances. Previously his money was taken from him by those that took advantage of him, so Charlotte said it was 'brilliant' that his money is now completely his own.

Charlotte described George as now being 'on the road to recovery'. He's been regularly attending Expert Citizens' social events and has even been offered a voluntary role there which he is 'over the moon' about. He'll receive training on customer service, effective communication and how to build a good rapport with people. Alongside this new role, he'll also be taking part in a course to improve his literacy. He can't wait to get started and improve his skills.

George's biggest goal is to support others going through similar situations to what he went through. He wants to help them and show them that the road to recovery isn't scary and there is always hope.

Charlotte explained that a small barrier to George's journey at the moment is the redundancy of STR workers who are supporting him while he's at Hillcrest. They have been helping George with his shopping and attending appointments. He'll have their support until the end of February, so Charlotte is working to secure something else for George, as he benefits from 24/7 support. He has an assessment booked in with CareTech, who Charlotte hopes will be able to support him following the end of STR support.



George is also socialising well and building really positive relationships with friends and family. He's improving his relationship with his brother and two sisters and enjoys meeting up with them on a regular basis.

He is also enjoying spending time with new people at the pub and has built some genuine friendships. Charlotte said that it's a new thing for George because he's never put himself out there before, but he's enjoying socialising. Charlotte is mindful that George was taken advantage of before, so she's helping him to recognise when people might not be so genuine towards him.

Like Charlotte said, George is 'on the road to recovery' and enjoying the opportunities that Changing Futures have given to him. He's working well with Charlotte and is excited about his new opportunities with Expert Citizens.

Charlotte specifically wanted to credit the 'outstanding' work of CDAS, Expert Citizens and George's social worker. Without them he wouldn't be so settled in his placement at Hillcrest or have his potential support from CareTech. She is really proud of his progress and can't wait to see what the future brings for him.

\*name changed