

Service User Testimonial

“A Step into Normality” by Jeff, Dual Diagnosis service user

I was having major problems in my life, firstly due to mental health and secondly an addiction to the class A drug heroin.

I was referred to Community Links by my shared care worker. By this time I was clean of all illegal substances but I was in a position of deteriorating mental health which most definitely would have seen me turn back to drugs for respite.

After an initial meeting with Linda and Emma to assess my requirements, Linda became my key worker. I really can't heap enough praise on Linda as she has helped me in so many ways that instead of feeling like I don't fit into the world, I now feel I have taken a giant step into normality. There isn't any doubt in my mind that I could have got close to this without Linda. The organisation that Linda works for, Community Links, is very different because the help they offer is directly based on the needs of the individual and I can't stress enough how crucially important that is. We are all individual so why wouldn't a direct care package be directed at the individual concerned. It makes so much sense but individual care packages are almost impossible to locate. This is why I would recommend Community Links to anyone. Since meeting Linda I have learnt and done the following:

- I know my core values
- I have implemented an emergency plan for wanting to use drugs. It acts as a last line of defence
- I know what my needs are and what I want
- I know the main reasons I want to be and stay clean
- I have learned how to alleviate my increased anxiety levels most of the time
- I know the symptoms of my anxiety
- I am aware now of the things I have to do every day ie. washing, showering, brushing my teeth etc
- I have some effective ways to prevent my self-harm and anxiety
- I am in the process of familiarising myself with getting out of my flat and using public transport to go to local towns and cities
- I have been writing a diary if I get anxious or if I'm in positive mood and it really helps to look back and correct behaviours that lead to heightened

anxiety. My diary is brilliant and just a great tool to use and writing helps to decrease my anxiety

- I know how to and when to 'take a step back. Taking a step back is very useful as when I remove myself from a situation that has raised my anxiety I can calm myself by writing about it and then analyse what I have recorded on paper

There are more things I have learnt but the later points culminate in me now having a great set of tools at my disposal that do work for me and I've learnt lots and lots about myself and when and why I get anxious. This is all thanks to Linda and Community Links. I am a testament that this process does work very effectively and I really have taken a giant step into normality.

Jeff