



ERIC'S STORY

Eric's dream of living independently has become a reality after almost 25 years. While in prison and various hospital settings he kept working hard to see his dream come true. Eric explains how his new home in Greater Manchester supported by Northern Healthcare has changed his life.

"My new home feels homely, it's comfortable and quiet. I'm respected and have more independence. Living here is very positive, I've got more staff and they are kind and supportive. I'm autistic and very intelligent. Together with the staff, we created flash cards to help them understand how I'm feeling.

I've got my own bedroom and bathroom that gives me more privacy, which is important. I have surrounded myself with my own things; I'm very religious and love Harry Potter. My own comfy bed has a Harry Potter duvet cover on it. The walls have been decorated with posters and have got many books and a TV and DVD player. I watch many films and think I'd make a good film critic!

For many years, I've not been responsible for my own money, so I've not needed a bank account. I didn't have any money when I first moved here. The staff here really supported me to claim my benefit entitlements and helped me to budget my money. Recently I set up a bank account and have got card and use this when buying things.

Now I can choose what I do and when. There are many things that I enjoy doing, using the computer, going shopping, cooking, walking, and looking around the shops. There is an antique shop close by and I've got to know the owner who is nice. I've been learning new skills. In the beginning I used a taxi to get around, then took the bus to places and now I've learnt how to catch the tram. Looking ahead, I'd also like to get a job.

I'm glad my staff and Encircle Housing believed in me; I was ready to live independently. Unfortunately, not all landlords give people the opportunity if they have got a history. I've met a few people from Encircle Housing who have been very helpful, polite, and approachable. If there are any repairs, they come and fix them straight away too."

"Now I think about the positives; I've got more freedom, staff are caring, and this is a very positive place to live. If I can do it, anyone can,"

**says Eric, Encircle
Housing tenant**

