



I was involved in the process and I felt safe

Laura's story

About

Laura is 38 years old and lives alone in Warrington. Laura is a vulnerable adult with a dual diagnosis of a learning disability and a mental health condition. Laura struggles with reading and writing and has difficulty in expressing her opinions. Laura has a history of substance misuse and was being targeted by local drug dealers. The drug dealers were using Laura's property to sell drugs and used threatening and intimidating behaviour towards her. Laura does not have a stable support network and felt extremely unsafe in her home. Laura's mental health deteriorated, and she agreed to a voluntary admission into a psychiatric hospital.

Advocacy need

Laura was initially referred for advocacy support under the Care Act regarding the safeguarding concern, and later for a care and support review. In addition, she accessed advocacy for informal patients. In line with the organisations' ethos of continuity of advocacy, the same advocate supported Laura for both issues.

How we helped

The advocate met with Laura on the hospital ward and explained the advocacy role and safeguarding process. Laura wanted to attend and participate in the safeguard meetings, which are usually held in the council buildings, but she feared for her safety if she were to leave the hospital ward. Considering Laura's views and wishes, the advocate put in reasonable adjustments to support Laura to be involved in the safeguarding process. The advocate supported Laura to voice her concerns and arranged for the meeting to be held on the ward. The advocate used easy read information throughout and supported Laura to prepare for the meetings. Laura had no previous experience of the safeguard process, therefore, the advocate arranged for Laura to meet with the safeguarding chair with advocacy support, prior to the meeting taking place.

Several safeguard meetings took place all of which were held on the ward and Laura had access to advocacy support throughout. Due to Laura's learning needs the advocate created easy read minutes of the safeguard meetings and read these through with her to support her understanding of the process.

Laura shared that she wanted to address her drug addiction and access a substance misuse support agency. Laura engaged extremely well within their programmes. Due

to Laura's continuous fear for her safety, she shared that she wished to move away from the local area. Taking into account these two issues, Laura felt that a specialist addiction housing support placement would be most helpful for her future recovery.

Laura shared that she wished for the drug dealers to be charged by the police. The advocate supported Laura within an informal interview with the police to share her views and wishes.

As the advocate took on a dual role, they also supported Laura as an informal patient on the ward. The advocate explained their role and supported Laura to understand and exercise her rights. The advocate helped Laura to prepare for ward rounds and provided support within the meetings regarding her care and treatment. The advocate used easy read information to support her understanding within this process.

Outcome

Laura was engaging very well with her care and treatment on the ward and was ready for discharge. Despite a delay in identifying a specialist placement Laura was eventually discharged and moved into her new home with a specialist support package.

The advocate supported Laura within her review of her new placement under the Care Act. Laura shared that she is very happy and feels safe in the placement and is progressing well.

Laura says:

I was worried about going off the ward and so pleased to have the safeguard meetings on the ward. The meetings went alright. All the professionals did their best. I felt listened to and got to put my words across. The easy read minutes helped me to understand and I kept them in a safe place. It was good to have the advocate in the ward rounds too.