



# Tom's Story

## How 'Tom' came to Housing First

As a young child Tom was neglected. Both of his parents were long term alcohol users and his dominant Father was physically abusive to him and his siblings.

"They were alcoholics. As I got older I started getting involved in petty crime and by my 20's I was using drugs and dealing them. I couldn't lead that lifestyle I was a Dad by this point."

After he was seriously injured, Tom left where he grew up, and moved to Liverpool 7 years ago. He hasn't had any contact with his daughter since.

"I've been homeless for 7 years. I've had hostel placements and slept rough. I find it hard to stay in temporary accommodation for long periods. I have a lot of physical health problems as I'm in a wheelchair and I'm an intravenous drug user."

Tom wasn't engaging with services including his current housing provider and was unable to make decisions due to low self-esteem.

## What Housing First offered 'Tom'

Housing First is helping Tom choose a home of his own giving him the option of where he wants to live. He felt the first home he saw wasn't suitable for his needs.

"I turned down the second flat as I felt I didn't deserve a place of my own, but I'm about to have a look at a third one."

Housing First treated Tom as an individual without judgement and supported him to want to change. His support worker has helped him to manage his own safety by creating a harm reduction plan over his drug use and has given him support to arrange dental treatment.

"I choose when and where I see my support worker and I decided to get some support from them every day which is really helpful as they can come to all my appointments with me and help me when I need it."

"We have honest conversations about the way I am and why I fall into doing things in a certain way. We talk about how I can change this for the better. My support worker offers me help over things like my bank account and my benefits all the time and I know they won't just dump me if I don't turn up to an appointment."

## How things have changed for 'Tom' so far.

Tom is now maintaining his place in supported accommodation for the first time in 7 years. He is currently waiting to look at a third flat.

“I’m attending all my appointments and I choose to meet with my Housing First support worker on a regular basis. Sometimes they spend all day with me. I know they’re there to help me and support me. I’ve started creating some goals for myself such as sorting my teeth out before Christmas.”

Tom now has a bank account, his universal credit is in place and he is maintaining a healthy diet. He has decided to reduce his use of drugs and is now using crutches instead of a wheelchair due to his improved health.

“I can feel I’ve started to move away from street life, I’m enjoying doing things that other people might take for granted like going for a coffee. I’m feeling better about myself and starting to understand that I’m not bad at building a rapport with people.”

“I’d like to help people in the Irish community in Liverpool who are a bit like me and need a bit of support if they’ve just moved here.”

Tom now has plans to re-establish links with his family in Ireland, especially his daughter and has a plan to do this.