

Community Stories

Daniel's Story

From isolation to finding connection



“You listened to me and helped me take positive steps to support my health needs, life isn’t always easy but it is a little better because of your service.” Daniel

Daniel's Story was provided by Amy Osborne, Age UK Cornwall Community Wellbeing Coach.

Daniel was referred to our Community Wellbeing Coach from the Community Gateway via the Social Prescribing Network. Daniel has several health conditions that have led him to feel very isolated and alone. This is his story.

Introductions

Initially, I contacted Daniel to introduce myself and my role. We talked about his health, his wellbeing and how he would like to make some positive changes. He shared details of multiple health conditions and how they make him feel, noting how they consistently affect his life. Often, taking the time to listen is as important as offering advice and information - Daniel described that, he felt let down by healthcare professionals in the past and is unsure how best to tackle his situation.

What matters to you

Daniel wanted to meet more people but also didn't want to do it in a way that felt forced - he didn't want to sit down and have a tea/coffee and would prefer to meet people in a more natural environment.

Together, we discussed his interests - and he told me that he plays the guitar. This was music to my ears (pardon the pun) as I knew there was a music group run by Cornwall Mind close by. Daniel was very interested but would need to double check if the venue was accessible and right for him. Subsequently, I contacted Cornwall Mind, who kindly telephoned Daniel to share the details of the group.

Daniel also shared his concerns about keeping on top of his housework. Daniel is a proud person and felt it was important to maintain a healthy environment at home. However, his health conditions at times made household chores difficult, so I asked if he would like me to look into availability for our Active Living Support Service. He enthusiastically said yes, it sounds great!

We also discussed whether he received Attendance Allowance that could help with any costs associated with this service. His finances, were already being reviewed by his Social Prescriber.

Daniel would also like to do more gentle exercise, he said; *“this might help improve my overall feeling of wellbeing, it could improve my health too. I also like the idea of meeting people this way.”*

I asked him if he had spoken to anyone regarding a referral for a gym or swim membership, but he said a few years ago that he did not qualify. I said I would look into this for him and liaise with his Social Prescriber to see if his Doctor could make a referral.



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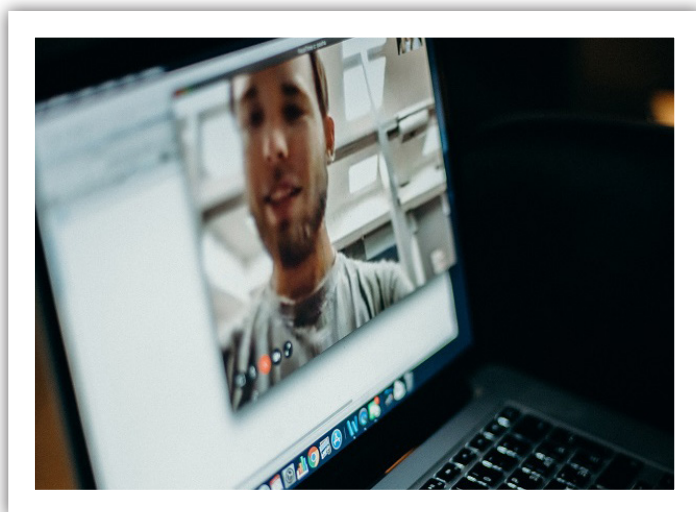
Following up

I telephoned Daniel every couple of weeks to check in and see how things were progressing. It is important that I continued to help him achieve his goals and see how he is feeling.

In Daniel's case, it was key that I adopted a person-centred approach that identified his needs first - building a strong network of support around him.

I remember one week when he was struggling to contact EDF regarding his vouchers and was worried he would end up with no electricity. So, we worked together to find a contact number and lessen his anxiety.

The following week, Daniel received some upsetting results from the hospital, I was there to listen and provide details of other supportive resources that he could call upon if he needed to. **Whatever the need or outcome, it is essential that I make every contact count.**



Success

Daniel now has a swim and gym membership and has successfully connected to the Cornwall Mind Music group. He is interacting with more people than ever before which has improved his social isolation.

Daniel said,

“even though I have received some unwanted results in the past few weeks, these positive changes have provided me with more hope, and I feel I will gain many health benefits from being part of a Leisure Centre - I am looking forward to my first swim.”

Daniel is also in receipt of an Attendance Allowance that has allowed me to organise an Active Living Support assessment - he has linked with Age UK Cornwall and has been allocated an Active Living Support Assistant to help him at home.

After we sourced the correct details, Daniel was able to contact EDF. He has received all his vouchers in time.

Together we have also built up a wealth of mental health resources and lessened the triggers that heighten Daniel's anxiety - this will support his future wellbeing. Whether Daniel feels he needs professional support or just to talk, someone will be there to help.

Daniel thanked me for all the changes we have put in place, and he feels a lot more positive as a result and is pleased about the progress he is making. The road ahead isn't easy, and Daniel will have more challenges to face - but he doesn't have to do it alone.

