

## MY STORY



James (not real name) lived in the north of the city on a small estate. He was referred to Julian Support, having had little contact with statutory services for some time.

He was isolated and services were concerned that he was becoming increasingly unwell, both mentally and physically. On an initial visit to his home there was no answer, however we noted that he had boarded up his letterbox and removed the wiring from the doorbell.

We returned several times over the course of a few days until eventually he responded. It was clear that he was surviving in difficult circumstances, his heating was not working and there was a pile of un-opened post on the floor. He looked thin and we suspected that he hadn't been eating properly.

We spent a few minutes letting him know who we were and how we might help, but were careful not to appear pushy. It was his choice, but we were often in the area.

The following visit James agreed to pop over the road with us so we could get something to eat. One of us had forgotten our lunch that day so it was a good excuse to offer him something to eat without it feeling intrusive.

Over time, we were able to see more of James. He started to develop trust and we managed to hold off an eviction, whilst we supported him to get his finances back in order. We talked to him about his interests, the things that he used to do with his time or things that he'd always wanted to do. We were also able to broker some contact with one of the Community Mental Health Nurses on the back of the relationship we had with James.

James had enjoyed sport a lot whilst he was at school, but when he left many of his friends drifted away to college or jobs in other parts of the country. We introduced James to some other people who had set up a football group and talked to him about a martial arts

programme we were running through an Academy in town. James was interested and he started to come along for some sessions. With his money sorted, he was able to buy his kit and he appeared proud to be a part of something again.

James's mental health fluctuated and he continued to have some difficult times. We were able to increase our support when he most needed it and reduce it when he felt more independent. On one occasion he was taken into hospital under the Mental Health Act. When we visited him his main concerns was that he didn't want to lose his place on the martial arts programme. We reassured him that his place would still be there for him and supported him to have leave from the ward to go and attend a class as soon as possible.

James liked the grading system and the new belts he received each time. It appealed to his competitive streak. Helping other newcomers at the classes helped James to grow in confidence. It also helped him to think about what he needed to do to stay well as he didn't want anything to get in the way of his next grading. James didn't like taking medication particularly, but he would tolerate it so long as he could manage the side effects.

His relationship with statutory services improved and he would occasionally go out for a coffee with his Community Mental Health Nurse. His relationship with his family also improved and he would meet up with his parents on a Sunday.

Contact with James reduced as he felt more connected with the community he built around him, but he knew that the support was there when he needed it.