



Sharon was referred to Women's Work by her Mental Health Therapist at her GP surgery, who felt that she would benefit from the services provided. Sharon had an initial assessment and became a participant on the Opportunity and Change project.

Sharon was residing in an upstairs flat which she had lived in for a number of years and reported that the landlord had been letting himself into the property unannounced and was abusive. There was also a mice and rat infestation which was causing Sharon a lot of distress. Furthermore, due to mobility issues, Sharon was finding it difficult to use the stairs and step into the bath. Due to these reasons, Sharon had been sometimes staying at her husband's bungalow but advised that he was physically and verbally abusive. Sharon decided that her husband's accommodation was the better of the two options as she could access the shower easily and did not have to live with the mice. However, these various issues were impacting on Sharon's mental health and depression. In addition, Sharon had limited understanding and suspected learning difficulties.

Sharon needed assistance with advocacy and representation to report the issues with her landlord and make an application for rehousing. The issues with the landlord and tenancy were reported to DHA (Direct Help & Advice) and Sharon attended a housing appointment with Derby City Council. Sharon has now been rehoused which has positively impacted on her mental health as she is no longer feeling afraid of her landlord or husband. The flat is a ground floor property with a walk-in shower so her physical health needs are now addressed.

Sharon has also attended a 10-week course at Spirit & Soul Equine Group therapy sessions weekly which has contributed significantly to an improvement in her depression, self-confidence and assertiveness. Sharon looks forward each week to spending valuable time with the horses and finds sessions extremely enjoyable and rewarding. Sharon is also considering becoming a volunteer with Spirit & Soul to continue her work there. Sharon states she feels so much happier with her life compared to how she felt 2 months ago and is discovering new skills which she did not recognise before.

Sharon viewed her inability to read and write as an obstacle and now recognises that this is no longer a barrier. Sharon had assumed that as she had left school at an early age and is limited with reading and writing that she was not able to engage in further learning. Sharon is now attending basic English and Maths to improve her reading and writing and wants to continue this in order to potentially secure a volunteer role with Spirit & Soul project.

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