

Opportunity & Change case study: Women's Work Derbyshire

Zara was first referred to Women's Work Derbyshire's Turn Around Project through Probation Services.

It was from this Zara was further referred to the Opportunity and Change Programme. Presenting with bipolar, OCD, depression and anxiety, severe drug and alcohol use had been a part of Zara's everyday life since the age of 12, whilst experiencing child-hood abuse, sexual, emotional, physical and mental abuse throughout her teenage years and much of her adult life.

Zara had a prolific criminal record with her most recent offence being committed for ABH. As a result of her offence, Zara was put on supervised visits with her children with her ex-partner present. Throughout her time on Opportunity and Change, Zara has attended a variety of support programmes: Freedom Programme, Equine Therapy, Loudspeaker Programme, Skills Plus For Change, WEA courses and Therapeutic Intervention groups at Women's Work Derbyshire as well as attending one to one appointments with her personal navigator.



Zara successfully applied for, attended an interview, passed her interview and training to become a Peer Mentor with Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire & Rutland Community Rehabilitation Company. She has since fulfilled the role to the highest standards and has given speeches about her journey to Magistrates and at the Police Commissioner's Conference.

With help, support and encouragement, Zara applied to the court for unsupervised contact with her children. Although the case is ongoing, it is looking extremely positive. For the first time in her life, she is working alongside Social Services and is looking to get 50/50 custody of all three of her children.

Zara's mental health has improved drastically. She has overcome and become extremely knowledgeable about the abuse she has experienced, her risk of re-offending has reduced, she has

remained abstinent from drugs and alcohol throughout her time working with Women's Work Derbyshire and is now in employment with Probation Services.

Opportunity & Change

Opportunity and Change is an employment-related support project for people facing severe and multiple disadvantage. It is delivered by a partnership of community-based organisations across D2N2 (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire). The project is led by [Framework](#).

The project supports unemployed or economically inactive individuals, referred to as participants, experiencing at least two of the following:

- Being homeless or vulnerably housed
- Problematic substance or alcohol misuse
- At risk of offending or reoffending
- Mental ill-health
- Domestic Abuse

The project is part of the [Building Better Opportunities Programme](#), which is funded by the European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund.

For more information about Opportunity & Change, [visit the website](#).

For more information about Women's Work Derbyshire, [visit their website](#).