

Trevor's Story **Leicester**

Even after more than ten years of helping people with a disability buy a home of their own we're still frequently amazed by the difference that it can make to their lives. One of the most remarkable stories belongs to Trevor, who we helped several years ago. We caught up with him again to hear how home ownership has delivered more than just a roof over his head.



“I encountered a great deal of difficulty in the social environment in which I was being housed” recalled Trevor, the painful memories of those days still clearly felt “unfortunately that meant that my mental health state completely deteriorated”. In fact Trevor was told that he would spend the rest of his life on a dizzying cocktail of medication to keep his condition under control.

There followed a frustrating period of consultation with psychiatrists, carers, social services and Trevor's local council – all of whom agreed that he needed to be moved somewhere else...but where? There simply wasn't a suitable answer, except to be moved to a high rise block of flats with, as Trevor notes ominously “...all of the inherent social problems. It wasn't just affecting my mental health state it was affecting me physically”.

Then the possibility of home ownership was flagged up and Trevor's world began to change. “Suddenly I thought, hold on, there's light at the end of the tunnel, and that I had to hold on to, I had to believe that there would be that light”. Working closely with Advance Housing and MySafeHome Trevor found his dream property and secured the mortgage that he needed to buy his share. On top of this the interest only mortgage repayments would be met by benefits.

Trevor picks up his story “Now? I’ve come off the majority of my medication, I don’t suffer so many panic attacks...I’m not afraid of people around me and I’m more at ease with myself, more comfortable with who I am and where I am”. This turnaround is totally at odds with the future that Trevor once faced. “I’m a different person to who I was five years ago, completely changed and that’s down to living in accommodation that I wanted to live in, in an area I chose to live in and not being dictated to by a Council or Housing Association saying this is what we’ve got, take it or leave it”.

Whilst the details of the unique MySafeHome shared ownership scheme were, as Trevor noted, “explained in great detail, that made it very easy to follow, very easy to understand and in actual fact negated many of the questions that you were going to ask”, difficulties came from perhaps unexpected quarters.

“We’ve encountered difficulties where the support team i.e. your social workers, your carers, all thought these schemes were too good to be true...in many cases now it’s not the client who has a problem with the scheme, or understanding it or its benefits, it’s getting through to a lot of the support workers that this is a very feasible and acceptable scheme. It does support people, give them independence and many of us have made leaps and bounds in our well being and find ourselves part of the community again – being included, not excluded”.

Seeing Trevor today, looking round his immaculate home and blooming garden, it’s hard to imagine that he was effectively written off and destined to spend the rest of his life in some form of care facility, on a range of medication. Now, as well as living independently he’s contributing to his community through voluntary work and looking forward to life once more. It might just be bricks and mortar, but to Trevor a home of his own is much more than that. It’s hope.

For more information about MySafeHome and home ownership for people with a disability call us on 08000 121333, email enquiries@mysafehome.info or visit www.mysafehome.info