

MS – Case Study

Bridge Programme

MS is a 29 old male. He grew up in Somalia where he lost his mother at a very young age. His aunt was his guardian, who then passed away and his grandmother looked after him and brought him up. At the age of 15 his grandmother put him on a plane to Britain on his own. She sold the family home in order to fund him to travel, making the sacrifice for his safety. MS had never flown before and spoke no English at all so it was terrifying leaving his family and coming to a strange country.

Immigration kept MS at the airport and they placed him in care where he lived in London until he was 16. He then had to move out on his own. MS got caught up in the London gang and drugs culture and spoke about his life in London being something that made him grow up, MS learned to take care of himself any way he could. He spoke very little about what he did as he was ashamed of the whole culture he was involved in (gang drugs etc)

MS got married and had two children in London and continued in that lifestyle so he could support his family. Eventually he started to break away and work at call centres to get money for his family, in a way he felt proud of. However there was a threat of violence from the gangs for leaving them. MS's wife had an affair and he left the family home. MS ended up in Cardiff with his grandad and his drinking quickly became problematic. His life felt so lonely and this gave him time to think about all his loss he had experienced and the traumatic things he had witnessed in Somalia, including seeing family and friends killed.

MS was drinking vodka and using cocaine daily with his friends. MS's grandad passed away and he had to move out of the council property. He ended up becoming homeless in Cardiff. MS eventually moved in to Ty Gobaith into the main centre.

MS was assessed for the Bridge Programme and was admitted into the project on the 10th February 2016. He was alcohol dependant and often very angry or sad and would cry for the loss he had suffered with losing family members (dad, mother aunty, grandmother grandad) MS did not have many living relatives left. MS started to open up about the severe trauma he experienced in Somalia through his childhood, seeing people get killed and his life threatened regularly. He has scars all over his body from the police and the army there. He has a large machete wound across the top of one of his legs.

MS recognised that his emotions were more heightened when he was drinking and so with support of the groups and the nurse stopped his substance use. The team did a lot of work around his social network and he changed his friends. This worked as MS stayed off substances and completed prep (stage of the programme) in 6 months. During this time MS worked intensively with the programmes counsellor Cheryl on the trauma he experienced. To not use substances through this was an enormous achievement, helped by the regular breath testing and urine testing across the programme. MS moved over to after care for 6 months and then the community house for six months. MS completed a resettlement strategy and was accepted on to the waiting list. MS continued to work intensively on his trauma with the groups and counsellor through the entire programme.

MS had felt ashamed of his drinking and had therefore walked away from his religion. The team supported MS to engage with a local mosque who were extremely supportive of MS recovery.

MS played football for the hostel and was picked for the Welsh homeless team to play in the world cup and went to Norway to play. Whilst there he had the opportunity to see family he has in Norway which was extremely important for him. MS came back with more confidence and enthusiasm and felt inspired to explore what more he could achieve. MS looked into New link wales and completed the Mile programme.

MS's was then offered a flat in Grangetown, not far from the house, through the resettlement strategy. He was over the moon with this as this area was familiar and meant he was close to the mosques that he prayed in and his religious community.

MS is still being supported by the outreach worker on the programme and continues to maintain abstinence. MS has also started volunteering with a hostel that works with young homeless people and he really enjoying giving something to his community. This is something he has always been interested in doing.

MS still pops in to the centre every few weeks for a cup of tea with the team and still sees his counsellor on the programme (which is time limited due to funding).