

**Name of Project: STAR Partnership**  
**Lead partner: Shelter**  
**Borough: Croydon**

After my marriage ended, I was homeless. I lived in a shipping container for five years, but I couldn't stay there anymore and had started sleeping in my car in Merton. I have diabetes, Raynards disease, ulcers and a back condition. I also suffered with anxiety which was resulting from abuse experienced in my childhood. Things were extremely difficult for me and finally I decided to approach Shelter for help.

I was given a Shelter adviser and a GROW trainee to help support me. It was great to be able to meet with the GROW trainee who was someone who had also experienced homelessness. This made me feel that they were able to really understand what I was going through and what I was experiencing. I was helped first with some practical tasks to enable me to live. My GROW trainee helped me set up a bank account through a scheme Shelter had with HSBC. I was then able to access the benefits I was entitled to. My GROW trainee also helped me get some extra clothing from the STAR Project's hardship fund and linked me into the local foodbank and day centre services.

After that, my housing adviser contacted the council's homeless services on my behalf. I was given emergency accommodation and I was helped to join the housing register for sheltered accommodation which I was eligible for due to my age. I was offered longer term accommodation space in a shared hostel, however, due to my past experiences I was not able to live in a shared hostel and turned down the offer. Because of this the council refused to provide any further temporary accommodation as they believed the shared hostel was suitable for me.

After months of my Shelter adviser advocating on my behalf and bidding on the housing register, I was made an offer of permanent sheltered social housing. I have been given a one-bedroom self-contained property in the Merton area which is where I wanted to be. I am very happy here. Shelter is continuing to help me with accessing grants for household items, setting up all my bills and helping me to make sure I pay my rent on time.