

Partner: St Mungo Community Housing Association

Borough: Hammersmith & Fulham

Case Study:

I was referred to the St Mungo's HARP team while I was in prison. I was met by my HARP Connect Worker about a month before I was due to be released. The HARP Connect Worker did an assessment with me to find out some more information about me and my circumstances. I have been in and out of prison custody for a few years and my housing has also been very unstable. I explained to the Connect Worker that I felt that my poor mental health was a big factor in this. I suffer from bi polar, anxiety and depression. I explained to the Connect Worker that I felt very anxious about being released this time with no accommodation to go to. The Connect Worker agreed to meet me at the gate on my release day and advocate for me at the council.

I met up with the HARP Connect Worker on my release day as agreed and waited with them at the council for most of the day. We were seen by a few different people throughout the day and they were all asking the same questions. I became very impatient and annoyed because of this but the individual assisting me explained that this was the normal procedure for the council. After a long day of waiting the council adviser said that they would be placing me in temporary accommodation immediately. This was a big relief for me because I was sure that if I had nowhere to go, I would end up back in prison within a day or two.

The same Connect Worker came with me to my probation appointment and explained what happened at the council to my probation officer. They also came with me to the accommodation to make sure I knew where it was. I did not have a phone at the time but was due to get one that day. The HARP Connect Worker gave me their contact details and advised that I contact them, so they could help me get my benefits up and running. I gave the individual my sisters contact number in case anything happened, and they needed to get hold of me.

I ended up losing my accommodation from the council because I did not go back to see them as they advised. I also missed my probation appointment and was subsequently recalled back to prison.