**Testimony of Hayley Bury from Nightsafe Blackburn**

Thomas has accessed Nightsafe’s day centre for various support needs since 2015. When we first met Tom he was battling with Spice use and was on the cusp of becoming involved in serious trouble that can come with drug addiction. However, Tom began to move away from negative peers with the support of his parents and a self determination to better his situation. He enrolled at college to study joinery in 2016, however due to suffering from significant mental health issues and only recently diagnosed ADHD, Aspergers Syndrome and a personality disorder, Tom found a busy classroom environment extremely difficult to cope with and as such was put on study leave soon after starting, while his symptoms could be brought under control.

This study leave went on into 2017 and Tom struggled to know how to get back into college, as he was waiting for the college and mental health teams to OK things. He went back in November 2017 and was told he would have to start the course again and to try and enrol on the January 2018 intake, however, this would be dependent on someone dropping out. His only other option would be to wait and enrol in Sept 2018.

So we had a new plan. Tom was still absolutely determined to gain some skills and did still want to go to college eventually, however he knew the reality of the situation being that this could be another year and so we talked about accessing a Princes Trust programme. Tom signed up for Get Started with BAE in January, however was unsuccessful. He was offered the Team Programme but did not feel this was for him, however was interested in Get Started with Hospitals. Unfortunately, again, he was unsuccessful, but was called back and given another chance.

Over this period of two years, despite repeated barriers and knock backs Thomas has shown himself to possess incredible resilience and determination, with a total refusal to let both his psychological conditions and his circumstances prevent him from keeping on going and applying, interviewing and calling until someone gave him a chance. Princes Trust provided him with that chance, and he has flourished ever since.

**Hayley Bury**

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