

Name of Project: STAR Partnership
Lead partner: Shelter
Borough: Ealing

I have severe congenital disability, mobility issues and was living in a house of multiple occupation that was completely unsuitable for my needs. I could not reach the kitchen surfaces so had to climb onto a stool to cook; I would often fall of the stool. I also had to navigate a flight of stairs to access my bedroom and I suffered from falls down the stairs. I had to share an un-adapted bathroom with three others. The lack of privacy had a severe impact on my mental health. My condition was deteriorating so the problems with the house were getting worse. I had applied for the housing register and was placed in Band C with little chance of being made an offer of social housing soon.

When I got to Shelter my caseworker, advised me that as my home was unreasonable to continue to occupy and I would be considered homeless. I was therefore eligible for assistance from Ealing Council to relieve my homelessness. We decided that due to the urgency of the situation the best thing to do would be to make a homeless application. However, we needed to ensure that throughout the process my care needs were considered and any accommodation that was offered was suitable for my needs. My caseworker referred to me to the Shelter resilience team to assist with this task.

My caseworker supported me to make a homeless application to Ealing council and my resilience worker referred me to Ealing Social Services. He strongly advocated to Ealing Social Services for the need for their involvement in my case. They sent someone from the reablement team who confirmed that the accommodation was entirely unsuitable for my needs and the only resolution was a move. My caseworker supported me to gather my medical evidence in addition to the evidence from the reablement team and we presented a clear case to Ealing Council that the accommodation was unreasonable to occupy. This was alongside clear specification as to what we would consider a suitable offer of accommodation. Ealing accepted the duty to relieve my homelessness. However, it took a long time for an offer of suitable accommodation to be made and I remained in the shared house. My caseworker then referred me to a solicitor from the Ealing Law centre who agreed to take the case on.

Following the initiation of proceedings, I began to receive offers of social housing. I accepted an offer of a suitable ground floor property from a housing association provider. There was still lots of work to be done to make sure the property was properly adapted for my needs before I moved in. My resilience worker made sure that an occupation therapist from Ealing Social Services was allocated to the case. The lock down restrictions were put in place before the move happened but the work continued to make sure I could move. An assessment from the OT was completed, aids were provided and a follow up visit for after lockdown restrictions were lifted was scheduled. My resilience worker also successfully applied for grants for on my behalf to secure essential white goods and furniture for the property. I am now living and safely self-isolating in my new home.