

# Personal Budgets Story - Mental Health

## JANICE'S STORY...

**Janice Grey, aged 33, has suffered from depression and anxiety since a teenager. She lives with her parents in Norwich.**

I first started to have problems with depression and anxiety when aged 15. I was getting bullied at school, was quiet and did not have many friends. Any so-called friends would turn against me, calling me names. I am not a confident person and I ended up stopping going to school because I could not cope. I was then referred to a psychiatrist. I still see the same psychiatrist. I did not manage to get back to school. The bullying issue was not solved.

After school I did voluntary conservation work, such as clearing shrubland and reed beds in the Norfolk broads.

In my 20s I had a breakdown, was admitted to hospital, and put on medication. I was very very depressed. When aged 19 I went to live in Norwich, and shared a flat with a friend. But later I became very ill.

So, I've also had problems with depression and anxiety. Often

I do not want to get up in the morning. I can feel suicidal. I take anti-depressants and tranquillisers. I have twice been off the medication. But it did not work out.

I am on income support and disability living allowance and see my psychiatrist every three months, and my community psychiatric nurse every one or two weeks. Over the years I have gone to support groups at the hospital. When in my twenties I saw a CBT therapist. I have also found reading books on depression and anxiety quite useful.

IN MY 20S I HAD A BREAKDOWN, WAS ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL, AND PUT ON MEDICATION. I WAS VERY VERY DEPRESSED. WHEN AGED 19 I WENT TO LIVE IN NORWICH, AND SHARED A FLAT WITH A FRIEND. BUT LATER I BECAME VERY ILL.

It was my CPN who told me about the individual budgets scheme. So she put my name forward and we applied. For me, the most important things were getting some independence and bringing my confidence up.

I decided to employ a personal assistant. I interviewed three

people for the job, which I advertised in the local newspaper. My CPN and mum helped me. Clare, who I chose, is in her forties and seemed down to earth. She was easy to talk to. I pay £6 per hour. I meet Clare in town, and see her twice per week. I've started doing a 10-week flower-arranging course with her.

I also have used the individual budgets money to start equine therapy every week. It involves grooming the horses as well as riding them. It is for other people have similar problems with depression. It's a really good experience and helps build up my confidence. People notice me coming back smiling and generally more happy. I have also spent £200 on a new stereo. I find music therapeutic.

All in all, the individual budgets scheme has helped me a lot. It's helped build my confidence, particularly having Clare as my PA. Before, I had no friends. I've got one now.

Janice's mother, Rachel, says: I feel that, over the years, mental health services have not taken us, as parents, seriously. The hospital system seems to think that as long as a person is not hurting themselves, then they are left on their own. It's been quite shocking.

But the individual budgets system has given Janice confidence. What she is doing now would not have been possible three years ago. For example, the PA has been fantastic – she’s a lovely woman with a family of her own. Janice has got an excellent relationship with her. I now hope Janice will be able, with support, to find her own accommodation.

Some may say that individual budgets is just about throwing money at people. I do not look at it like that. The courses, equine therapy and her PA has helped her so much. Plus, she has had to set up a bank account and manage it. Before, she would never have been able to do that. So if she does move into a place of her own she will be more prepared for it

I so hope other people get the chance to try an individual budget, it has made such a difference.

*As told to Adam James.*

## JANICE'S STORY...

***CSIP is grateful to the people and families concerned for sharing their personal stories.***

For further information please contact:

Carey Bamber  
Senior Consultant,  
Personalisation Programme

CSIP NW Office: 0161 351 4920

Care Services Improvement  
Partnership (CSIP),  
North West Development Centre,  
Hyde Hospital,  
2nd Floor,  
Grange Road South,  
Hyde,  
Cheshire,  
SK14 5NY