

# Alderwasley Hall School

## Case Study

A 14 year old girl was placed at Alderwasley Hall School in March 2014. She has a diagnosis of being on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and was an in-patient in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit after initially being misdiagnosed until her assessment of ASD.

During her 2.5 years at the school she made significant progress, highlighting the schools ability to support, educate and develop complex young people to leave the school equipped with the skills to succeed in life. Her story is typical of the types of young people that are admitted to our residential school.

### ***When she was first admitted she:***

- regularly self-harmed through cutting and trying to overdose on medication
- was unable to process feelings and manage friendships within school
- had poor educational development after being out of school for several months
- was estranged from her parents
- refused to return to her home city

### **Her placement**

She was placed in a Year 10 class group, and lived on Devonshire House at the Sixth Form Centre as this was felt the most appropriate placement for her. She commuted by mini bus to Alderwasley Hall for her education.

It was important for her to gain trust with her Key Team (Teacher, Enhanced Support Worker, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist and Key Care Worker) and from the outset, they met weekly, with a psychotherapist to reflect on her week and share strategies.

She had an individualised timetable that allowed her the time to express her worries, and cope with the demands of starting education in a busy environment. Her evening was structured carefully, and she required constant support to get her through an evening without resorting to self-harm.

She received intensive therapies, at times daily, aimed at improving her understanding of relationships, improve her self-awareness/esteem and develop her emotional intelligence and coping strategies.



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### The result

Over the course of 2.5 years the incidences of self-harm started to reduce. This illustrates the impact of therapy, education and residential care staff working effectively together to increase her coping strategies and thus keeping her safe. As a result, in September 2015 she was able to move to our more independent house in Matlock, where she remained until she left the school in August 2016.

Her attendance improved quickly. By six months she was attending education 100%. This remained at around 95% throughout her placement.

She improved her understanding of relationships, developed some strong friendships and started visiting her parents, supported by staff.

Although she came to us as a 52 week residential student by the end of her placement she was boarding term time only.

She achieved GCSE grades in her subject areas and wanted to progress her interest in a hair and beauty qualification. She made the decision to return to live with her parents and enrolled at a local FE college to continue her studies. In January 2017 her parents responded to an email asking for an update with the following comments:

Thank you for your email. She has been doing great she is half way through her beauty level 2 diploma which has cost us greatly in kits and extra makeup, she has around 70 make up brushes!!! Who knew there were so many different types and brands. She now has a boyfriend and is totally in love at the minute a very hard lesson to learn but she has to go through it like any other teenager. She has made friends at college and still struggles at times but is getting stronger and wiser slowly but massive improvements compared to a few years ago.

Obviously she is still under CAMHS with a few tweaks here and there she is doing well. Hopefully she will continue with beauty and do level 3 especially as she will be taught Botox which I have said she can gladly try on me. It's amazing having her back home and the experience we have been through has made us stronger I have more than a daughter I also have a best friend.

We will always be grateful to you all for the amazing work and support you all put into her

Kind regards

Parents