



The Shires provides specialist residential care and education for young people aged 11 to 19 who have autism, severe and moderate learning disabilities. The Post 19 provision Millfield, continues to meet the individual needs of adults up to the age of 65.



Daniel

Moving On!

“The Shires became my home. Now I’m able to live semi independently, and I’m loving it!”

Daniel

“We’re all very proud of the way Daniel has evolved from being an unruly adolescent into a fine young man.”

Support Worker, Phil Pendleton



Transition Planning

“Planning Daniel’s transition started more than a year before he moved, once funding was agreed for him. For Daniel, it was an anxious time because it represented the end of his time at The Shires, which he considered home.

Like any teenager leaving home, he faced the uncertainty of where he would go and how he would manage.

We attended meetings together, sometimes with his Mum and other agencies, and we all discussed whether he should move back to Kent where his family live.

Meetings followed which offered Daniel the chance to speak openly about the support he required, and as the process continued his confidence grew.

Daniel was keen to staying living in the area he was most familiar with, and after looking at a couple of properties which he didn’t like, Daniel found his next home himself while searching the internet, about 20 miles from The Shires.

We arranged a visit, Daniel liked it and, once funding was agreed, the date for him to move in was his 19th birthday.

He met his new key worker, and during the transition process, Daniel showed a new depth of maturity I hadn’t seen before. He was chilled and grown up in his whole attitude to the move, with only one minor wobble.

On the day of the move - his birthday - we had a birthday lunch at The Shires, watched him open his presents which included a new holdall full of clothes, and he was presented with a lap top.

We helped him settle into his new surroundings, wished him good luck, and said an emotional farewell, assuring Daniel he could keep in contact with us by phone and email. The first week he phoned frequently but now he sends just the odd email.

I’ve worked with Daniel since he first arrived at The Shires. He has been an inspiration to all of us with the way he has evolved from being an unruly adolescent to a fine young man. I wish him every success for the future and he knows I’m always at the end of a phone if he ever needs to speak to me.”

Phil Pendleton, Daniel’s support worker at The Shires

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ACORN
Better days, Better lives

Daniel was a pupil at The Shires for 4 years after being excluded from his previous school in Kent. His Educational Health Care Plan identifies Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD and associated learning and sensory difficulties. With the dedication of the team of staff at The Shires around him, his behaviour improved, his confidence grew and he completed two work experience placements. On his 19th birthday he made a successful move to live semi-independently 20 miles away in Peterborough.

My Life at The Shires

Q: What was life like for you at The Shires?

A: "The Shires became home. I knew that there was always someone here to help me, whatever help I needed. I learned who could help me best with which problem, whether it was in my lessons, life skills or something personal. I learned how to stop being stressed. Perhaps I grew out of it, but I don't get angry now; I have learned to let stressful things float over me, instead of reacting badly."

Q: What were your favourite lessons?

A: I liked most of my lessons in school, especially those with Christian White. I enjoyed IT and the computers. After school, I enjoyed my piano lessons most of all because I realised that when I played music I felt relaxed. It was a good feeling for me, and The Shires arranged for me to take my piano with me when I left.

Q: What were your most important lessons?

A: Without doubt, all the Life Skills lessons which helped me to get where I am now, living semi independently. They taught me how to cook and how to look after myself: from doing my own washing to learning how to budget and learning how to go shopping. All the things that I do now.

Q: Favourite Activity?

A: I enjoyed lots of activities, including cycling. I also love playing computer games on the Xbox.

Q: Special Achievement at The Shires?

A: I realised I could be a student advocate for some of the other pupils here who can't do as much as I can. Often I understood how they were feeling because we all have autism, and although they couldn't express in words what was the matter, I realised I could tell staff what was wrong. That made me feel good when I knew I could help them. I became known as the students' voice.

Q: Biggest achievement at School?

A: Learning to play the piano and performing at school assembly and at our annual Christmas performance of Hosanna Rock. I really enjoyed that.

Q: Favourite Memory?

A: The trips to Alton Towers! Going on the big thrill rides with the staff again and again and again! I'm not sure they enjoyed it but I loved it!



Moving to Semi-Independent Living

Daniel now lives in Hampton, Peterborough with several other young adults. He has a room with en-suite facilities. He receives 30 hours a week support from Adult Services and knows that staff at The Shires are still at the end of a phone to offer him voluntary support.

Q: What do you like best about semi-independent living?

A: The independence! I like having my own place. It's new, and modern, and I have a piano which The Shires gave to me so that I could continue playing. I do my weekly budget and shop for the food and toiletries. If I need help with anything, I only have to ask.

Q: Are you enjoying looking after yourself?

A: The life skills lessons I had at The Shires were really good and have helped me a lot. At the moment, I'm really enjoying cooking and Quorn is my new favourite so I'm cooking either a Quorn curry or bolognese. Every Saturday night, we all have a takeaway together, which is great.

Q: What are your ambitions?

A: I'm working on increasing the number of different meals I can cook, and learning more skills such as going into the city centre on the bus on my own. I've already been to the cinema and met one of my friends which was arranged with the help of the staff at The Shires.

There is a new supermarket being built very close to my new home and I've already contacted them to find out about a job. Perhaps my work experience at Morrisons will help.

I'm also looking into applying for a computer course at the Regional College in Peterborough.

Q: What are you most proud of?

A: There are lots of things I'm proud of: overcoming my stresses, getting on with the staff at The Shires who helped me so much, helping other students, learning to play the piano, doing my work experience, finding myself somewhere to live, and learning to be independent. I also know that my Mum is very proud of me.

Work Experience

Daniel's work experience placements at a Rutland kennels (2012) and at Morrison supermarkets (2013) provided him valuable insights into the world of work. At Morrisons he gained valuable life skills in customer care and his confidence & self esteem grew. He ensured his uniform was washed & ironed regularly and looked very smart for work. He learnt to overcome a setback when he was unsuccessful in his application for a job at Morrison. His earlier placement at a dog boarding kennels was a good stepping stone for him, introducing Daniel through a less formal route to a place of work and the commitments required.

Research from the National Autistic Society shows that only 15% of people with autism have full-time paid employment. The Shires would like to thank the companies who offered Daniel these opportunities.

National Curriculum levels:

English: Reading & Writing: 4

Maths: Using & applying: 5

Science: 4

Art & Design: 3

ICT: Level 4 PHSE: Level 5

AQA Awards undertaken:

English Literature: Studying a Modern Novel (level 3)

English: Writing a script for a Radio Programme

Music: Self Recording in a Recording Studio

Music: Playing Blues on an Electronic Keyboard

Music: Creating Music with others

Music: Keyboard Playing Food Technology



Daniel's time at The Shires

2012

Daniel arrived at The Shires as a very angry and anxious young man. He had been excluded from his previous school and at first he could be abusive, non-compliant and damaged property.

Staff were patient with Daniel, and often took him outside in the fresh air to calm his behaviour, sometimes to the swings at school or into the country lanes around The Shires for a cycle ride.

As Daniel settled at school, he spent more time in lessons and started to understand the consequence of his actions. He loved visiting his family at home in Kent, but at first the journey caused him severe stress.

Daniel soon learnt to know and trust the staff, and his support worker Phil Pendleton took him fishing, an activity that was calming for him. Daniel learnt to be able to discuss problems he had with Phil.

Daniel was growing in confidence and self esteem and his behaviour started to settle.

Staff helped Daniel purchase his first piano for £10 and collected it with him for his room. Lessons followed and it unleashed a new talent within him, which he found calming.

Daniel's first work experience placement at a kennels in Rutland introduced him to the world of work.

The Christmas play Hosanna Rock is performed annually at The Shires in front of parents and invited guests. Daniel would be playing the piano for the whole performance.

Daniel's improved understanding of his own autism encouraged him to help other pupils. He became known - unofficially - as the student voice.

Links between The Shires and local music studios led to Daniel attending weekly workshops "Beat This". His musical prowess provided a tremendous boost in his confidence.

Daniel regularly helped staff with tasks around school such as collecting litter, and showed his growing maturity.

Staff helped Daniel secure a work placement at a local supermarket chain where he showed he was a reliable and trustworthy worker.

Preparing for looking him after himself: shopping for kitchen utensils as part of a life skills lesson.

Farewell to The Shires with a leaving party, BBQ & bouncy castle. "I'm not sad: I'm ready to move on, and I know we'll keep in touch."

Happy 19th Birthday! A special birthday lunch with students and staff; presents included a new holdall full of clothes and a lap top. Later that day he moved 22 miles to his new life of semi independent living

Daniel has settled well into his new home and receives 30 hours of support a week from adult services. He was allowed to take with him the piano from his room at The Shires.

2013

2014

2015

