

Our Stories



In November 2013 I received a referral via email from a branch of Victim Support. The referral form contained details of Mr X, a victim of disability hate crime. After reading the referral form I established the victim has mobility issues, as well as other medical conditions affecting his everyday life. The referral form noted some detail of crimes against Mr X, including violence, verbal abuse, and on-going harassment.

I rang Victim Support and spoke with the employee who provided the referral. Contacting the referral source is important not only for information on the victim, but also to establish if there are any safeguarding issues for the advocate. After speaking with the referral source I rang Mr X and arranged a meeting to discuss the crimes committed against him and what support I could provide. We arranged to meet at Victim Support office in mid-November 2013.

Originally Mr X was quite nervous in conversing with me on the phone and our first meeting was arranged through his friend. The meeting took place and included Mr X, his friend, me, and the referral source from Victim Support. Mr X was very nervous but through chatting we were able to establish that he had been victim of at least 3 crimes, mainly within his own home where he still lived with his mother.

We spoke about how Mr X would like to move forward and how I could support him. As Mr X was reluctant to speak with the police and we agreed that I would contact the PSNI to clarify if these crimes had been recorded as

hate motivated , and if these crimes were linked by the PSNI. Mr X also asked if I would correlate all police correspondence to which I agreed. We also spoke about approaching the Housing Executive about an application for a property as Mr X was keen to move away from his family home – as they were linked to his on-going harassment. Victim Support agreed to continue providing emotional support for Mr X.

Following this meeting Mr X and his friend booked an appointment with the Housing Executive and asked me to attend in early December. With help from the Housing Executive and my support, Mr X was able to complete housing application form. I supported Mr X to work through the form, as he noted his requirements, and areas of choice. We knew that finding a suitable property could take a while, but Mr X was very happy to be moving in this direction.

I was able to speak with a PSNI Sergeant from Mr X's area and explained the crimes against Mr X. He was able to confirm 2 of the 3 crimes had been recorded – but none had been recorded as hate crimes. After discussion all 3 cases were recorded as disability hate crimes – as that is what the victim believed them to be. The PSNI Sergeant was very helpful and agreed that all police correspondence could be directed through me - as this had previously caused Mr X some distress. He asked if he could speak with Mr X to assure him they are taking the crimes against him seriously, and to apologise if there had been any gaps in the service provided; but he said he respected Mr X's request not to have police contact – I passed this message to Mr X.

Mr X had received an offer of a property from the Housing Executive in early January 2014 but the property was not appropriate for his needs as it was not ground floor accommodation, and not in his area of choice. Thankfully Mr X received the offer of a one bedroom property 2 weeks ago (early February 2014) which was suitable for his needs and in his area of choice. Mr X has now moved into this property and away from the harassment he had suffered in the family home.

Mr X said he is extremely grateful for the support provided for the advocacy service. He said he has a renewed confidence and is looking forward to his future away from the abuse and harassment he had become used to. Mr X knows he can contact us if he needs support in relation to hate crime, but hopefully he won't need to.

To find out how you can get support from our Advocacy services please phone us 022890661281 or e-mail advocacy@leonardcheshire.org