

## Dame Kelly Holmes Trust Alfie's story

March 2024

When the winter chills set in, so can the blues, with many young people struggling with their mental health.



In these darker days, the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust, in partnership with Sanctuary Supported Living, provides light and helps young people to stay motivated and social. This partnership, funded through Sanctuary's Sustainable Communities programme, aims to build connection and resilience for our customers and their communities while providing a range of health and wellbeing activities and igniting their ambition to achieve their goals.

The responsive and tailored personal development programme delivered by the [Dame Kelly Holmes Trust](#) at Sanctuary Supported Living's services in Brighton, Basildon, Hartlepool, and Weston-Super-Mare is designed to develop the confidence, well-being, and self-esteem of young people. The Trust's athlete mentors provide a reason for the young people to get out and about, learn budgeting skills and connect as a group.

For determined 24-year-old Alfie, who lives a supported housing service for young people aged 18-24 in Basildon, the struggle was real. Having previously experienced PTSD and anxiety, he lacked confidence and struggled to find motivation, alongside dealing with the rising cost of living. He said, "I don't do a lot of food shopping, and I go without eating a lot. Gas and electric – sometimes I can't top it up, and it can be hard in the winter."

With hopes of living independently, Alfie talked about the difference the programme has made in his life, explaining how the physical and team-building activities gave him a reason to leave the flat, and refuelled his love for socialising: "I feel more confident in myself now; I can set and follow goals. I'm doing lots more physical activity now, and I try to go to the gym most days, which helps with my mental health and wellbeing."

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When asked what he believes is the biggest challenge facing young people today, Alfie didn't hesitate; for him, it's mental health, which was also something he was keen to raise awareness of with his social action project. Working with his athlete mentor, [Claire Bennett](#), former GB Fencing team captain and Commonwealth Gold Medal winner, Alfie wore yellow for [World Mental Health Day](#) to raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity for mental wellbeing.

Reflecting on Alfie's progress, Claire said: "He has shown me how focused and determined he is to achieve his work-life goals, and I do not doubt that he will achieve anything he sets his mind to. His commitment to the programme inspired me every session, and any future employer would be lucky to have him on their team. I'm excited to follow his progress!"

Local Service Manager, Beverley Ford, highlighted the benefits of the programme for the young people living at the supported housing service, adding: "The programme had a great impact on the young people we support. Initially, we were concerned that they would struggle with committing themselves to a 20-week programme, however the way that Claire delivered it, and how she related to them, meant that they really looked forward to the weekly sessions.

"Every young person involved got something out of the sessions and they've grown in confidence and motivation. They said that they found it easy to attend because they liked spending time with Claire. They found that the one-to-one sessions helped build their confidence by giving them the opportunity to open up to someone other than staff, and also helped with their mental wellbeing."

Dame Kelly Holmes Trust created this programme following a listening exercise with 80 young people at 14 of Sanctuary Supported Living's services, focusing on what the young people want, what matters to them most and what support they need.