



## Rupan spent over 20 years locked in a secure unit, completely isolated from the rest of the world.

**This Christmas, will you help more people like Rupan to live a fulfilling life in a warm and welcoming home?**

Christmas is a time for celebrating and cherishing memories. However, some people with learning disabilities or autism, like Rupan, may not want to be reminded of their past holiday experiences.

When we met Rupan, he was withdrawn, overly medicated and unable to do so many things that many of us take for granted as he needed four people to be with him when he was out in the community and so he was rarely taken out. Service Manager Abida recalls visiting the secure unit Rupan used to live in:

*"It was in the middle of nowhere and it felt like it was a prison. The place was being closed down, but there were a few people living there still, and I wanted to bring them all out with me. Inside it smelled horrible and reminded me of an old hospital with long corridors. There was nothing in Rupan's room except a bed with no covers, no nothing. It was so sad. I sat with him and introduced myself and talked to him about the huge Primark in Birmingham, I could tell he was listening and engaged. I felt really emotional after that visit and absolutely determined to get him out of there. He was not getting the support that was right for him, he was not being treated as a person with wishes and feelings."*



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**Abida, Service Manager**

Now Rupan lives in a flat with two housemates, and Abida and her team have supported Rupan to get his life back. He is enjoying a happy, fulfilling, and independent life, thriving in a shared home with plenty of opportunities to get out and about. "It hasn't always been easy, so many people felt that Rupan still belonged in an institution, and we have worked hard to ensure that he is happy and safe at home and in the community. The PBS team have been amazing. Elaine was here at 8am on the morning of his third day with us, carrying out an assessment of what he needed, it was a huge transition for him. Going from something really regimented to having choice and freedom can be so daunting. Elaine stayed with us for a couple days, giving us loads of support and techniques that we still use today. She explained to the staff team to not overload him, keep it simple and don't make

*Continued over...*

lots of changes, so he can get used to his new life slowly. Now Rupan is so warm and loving, his vocabulary is improving all the time, and he is doing things for himself, changing his bedding, doing his laundry, paying for his shopping. I am so proud of him and so proud of FitzRoy, for supporting us. Rupan has achieved things he never thought possible, and now he has joy in his life. He is surrounded by love and laughter, and lives so much closer to his family now too."



**“ We have so much planned for Rupan this Christmas – we are going to the pantomime, having a Christmas party with a singer and loads of food. I feel like I want to make up for all those years he’s missed. ”**

**Rupan’s sister Nithy says** *“When he moved to FitzRoy, I was worried about how he would adjust. However, he settled in wonderfully. FitzRoy are really supportive and encouraged him to go out into his local community and gave him a new sense of independence. I was shocked, but the team at FitzRoy had the confidence and enthusiasm and believed in Rupan to support him with achieving his goals and this has had a positive impact on him and his wellbeing as he is happier and more relaxed. I would love to thank and praise the staff at FitzRoy for their wonderful support.”*

**This is a story of hope.** With **your help** we can transform the lives of more people like Rupan. With over 2,000 people with autism and learning disabilities still in hospitals there is so much for us to do. **Please donate today and help people with learning disabilities and autism have a better brighter future, this Christmas, and all year round.**

#### **What could your Christmas gift mean to a person coming out of an institution.**

- £30** could buy a starter kit full of everyday basics for someone moving into a FitzRoy home.
- £50** could help provide communication aids that help people communicate their needs and wishes
- £150** could deliver seven hours of therapy and training that enables people like Rupan to safely move out of secure units.

## **Meet Elaine, FitzRoy’s Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) Lead**

**Elaine leads a small team who work across our 100 services. They carry out in-depth assessments, and provide training, guidance, and interventions to improve the quality of life of the people we support. They equip our teams with the tools to enable people to connect with their communities, learn new skills, achieve their goals, and develop trusting relationships.**

### **“Distress can act as a barrier to a fulfilled life”**

“I was recently contacted by one of our care homes, who have been supporting Mia\* for a few weeks. The staff could see that Mia was increasingly distressed and this was showing in her behaviour.

My first step is to find out everything I can about Mia. When I meet her family, they are upset and worried she will end up in a secure unit. I talk through what Mia was like as a baby, what they know and understand about her various diagnoses. I learn about a happy child, who grew into a curious young woman who is struggling with life as an independent adult, with more choice and less routine. I also read any case notes I can get my hands on. The more I know and understand Mia, the better I can assess her triggers, and work out a support plan that meets her needs.





Mia finds change distressing, so we establish routines to provide predictability. This has a profound impact on Mia and means she can do more for herself and participate more in activities that she enjoys.

### What is positive behavioural support?

Person centred care has always been at the heart of who FitzRoy is and how we work. Positive behavioural support is an extension of that ethos. We want to bring joy, independence, and the best quality of life to the people we support so that each person can fulfil their potential. Our PBS team informs best practice and develops enhanced ways of working with our beneficiaries, putting them – and their families – front and centre of how we improve their support. Communication is key.

Understanding why someone responds and reacts the way they do allows us to provide the right support for them. Our work means we can safely reduce unnecessary medication and helps us keep people safe in the community and out of institutions.

“ Our bespoke training gives support staff the skills and confidence to put strategies in place that empower the people we support with greater choice and independence. ”

Mia does not communicate with language, so I watch her reactions to the day-to-day activities around her, I get to know her as much as I can.

The team at the care home are committed to supporting Mia and helping her settle in her new home. You might think someone coming in from an outside team might be an issue, but it never is – they want to do the best for the people we support, and they see the difference that simple changes and strategies can make. Our bespoke training gives support staff the skills and confidence to put strategies in place that empower the people we support with greater choice and independence.

### What are behaviours of concern?

Also called ‘challenging behaviour’ or ‘behaviours of distress’. Behaviour is the main method of communication for so many people we support. Our job is to find out what they are trying to communicate through their behaviour and what actions we can take to support them and make improvements. We know that inadequate support can leave people feeling overwhelmed, anxious and frustrated, increasing their distress. Their behaviour to communicate their needs can result in injury to themselves and others.

### Empowering People

PBS respects people as individuals. We aim to understand their actions and implement proactive and positive strategies. A PBS approach means we can support people to develop coping strategies, such as breathing exercises or quiet time and personalised communication methods, like assistive technology or using Makaton signs or symbols.

Developing people’s skills in this way helps them avoid reaching crisis point, so they feel happier and more relaxed and more able to connect with their communities, learn and enjoy relationships. PBS has a profound and long-term impact on their quality of life.

*\*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.*



# Honouring Angie: Amazing Audrey, 86, wing walks in tribute to her daughter

FitzRoy supporter Audrey Harris recently took to the skies – at the age of 86 – in a daredevil tribute to her daughter Angie and to fundraise for FitzRoy.

## Angie's story

Audrey says, "Angie was expected to live about five years, she never walked, and only spoke a few words – but died aged 55 having brought happiness and smiles to me, her two sisters, and many others, having lived a full life thanks to FitzRoy. Angie was cared for and treasured for 30 years by staff at their Malvern care home."



## Giving in memory

"We invited donations for FitzRoy at Angie's celebratory funeral, as well as at the Thanksgiving Service of her aunty, but I wanted to do something more. With my family spurring me on, I had the idea of doing a sponsored wing walk. We hoped to raise £2,000 but I'm delighted that we've raised over £5,000, which is just wonderful."

Service manager Karen was there to cheer Audrey on:

"We are so grateful to Mrs Harris. We're planning to use the money she raised to get some lovely sensory things for our residents, which seems a very fitting tribute to Angie as she really loved sensory experiences and playing instruments."



To find out more about donating  
in memory of a loved one visit  
[fitzroy.org/support-us/in-memory-donations](https://fitzroy.org/support-us/in-memory-donations)

## Join the conversation



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ACE!  
thank  
you  
YOU'RE THE  
BEST!

