

Shazia's Story

This account was told by Shazia, her family, a member of the support agency Bridging The Gap, and a member of All Of Us.

Shazia and her family were asked what their hopes were of being able to take control of Shazia's support. They wanted a more flexible service, one that took account of the things that were important to her.

“I wanted my support to be truly flexible in terms of a number of things as it was not always possible when I was supported by traditional services...”

Some of her support issues related to gender issues and respect for Shazia's religion and culture. Her support also needed to be bi-lingual. This would combine to improve her family and community life. Nothing of this kind had been offered up to this point.

Shazia and her family were asked about what it meant to have control of their support

“To be able to choose the staff that support my daughter, not having services deciding for me who should support Shazia. To have staff who understand her needs and lifestyle and support my daughter accordingly. Not having to explain and justify why I do things differently. Not worry about staff bringing non-halal food into my house and the risk of Shazia eating it”.

It was clear that, in the past, things had not been right for Shazia and her family. The stress had resulted in her being admitted to hospital with mental health problems.

“Before In-Control, it seemed difficult to imagine things could change for the best. We almost believed, as told by the professionals, that this was part and parcel of Shazia and her mental health problems.”

Fortunately for Shazia, the area she lived in had adopted In-Control for all eligible adults. Shazia and her family attended awareness days to hear about others’ experiences. This gave them the confidence to go ahead and work on implementing a plan and recruiting Shazia’s staff. They were in control of decision-making rather than a care manager. The assistance of Bridging The Gap made a positive difference too as it helped them make sense of the whole process.

“Traditionally services make these decisions for you. It was a bit scary to get used to the idea of having to make all these decisions. Having a good agency gave me the confidence.”

The individually tailored support really worked well for Shazia. The consistency of staff led to a significant improvement in her mental health. She became very settled and she soon began for the first time to access community-based facilities in her area.

Everyone involved has seen a big improvement in Shazia. The family concluded:

“Give it a try and find a good local provider to help “.