

Natalie

"Because of My Life Support,
we all know what to do.
It works."

BACKGROUND

Natalie lived in Wigan with her husband and son when she had an acquired brain injury.

That means she now has a speech impediment, is registered blind and physically disabled in many ways - Natalie requires 24/7 support - but is also a bright, articulate woman in her thirties.

Thanks to My Life Support managing a Third Party Arrangement (ISF), which guarantees her continuity of quality care and forensic budget management via Alocura, she can now trust in her present and future in a way which seemed totally unachievable just 12 months ago.

Before My Life Support took over Natalie's care, she was living in an environment where recreational drugs were a constant backdrop. Natalie's life was chaotic and out of her control. She separated from her husband, which meant she relied on support from her teenage son and mother, but there was a lot of added and unhelpful interference.

Natalie had very limited support, many of whom were young and naive home carers, and the care was not being managed effectively - more than 30 carers had actively refused to go in the home. In May 2019 there was an incident which led the care provider to refuse to send any more staff, and by this point her mother, who had helped a lot, had passed away.

Natalie's care was a mess; she had no control over what happened in her own home, she was relying heavily on family, friends, and her 17 year-old son, and we believe that she could easily have ended up in residential care - or even died within two or three years - if there had been no intervention from My Life Support. In July 2019, Wigan Borough CCG determined that it would make a direct payment to MLS to pay for the services in Natalie's Personal Support Plan agreement.



THE PLAN

Natalie had actually come to terms with her disability and really wanted to live a good life, so My Life sent in a skilled staff member, Nina, who understood the environment where Natalie was living. This **matching of staff to need** is fundamental to the My Life Support service (see **Natalie's Team**).

Nina started to unpick a lot of the complexities of Natalie's situation. It became clear that nobody had ever considered what mattered to her. So when Nina did one simple thing - pushing her to the shop and asking what sandwich she wanted - it was a transformational moment for Natalie. Previously she'd not even been involved in actively buying what she wanted for her dinner.

We started to build trust in the first instance, to build a rapport and listen to Natalie. Rather than provide a generic conveyor belt of care, in the first instance My Life Support built a relationship with Natalie.

It was at this point where **My Life's Creative Support Planning and Action Planning** services came into play. While we were assessing the situation, it became clear that it would be better if Natalie took some respite in one of My Life's holiday lets in Standish. Not only did that mean she was around people who respected her, but in a very short space of time she was able to reevaluate her life

and what it might look like without all the surrounding hassle. It became apparent that the house she was living in did not meet her needs - she couldn't even access her own kitchen.

We then started to pursue, with Natalie's approval, a move out of her neighbourhood, to somewhere with her own rules where she could break all her negative chains. We sourced her a property as part of our **Action Planning** programme, with a housing association who purchase bespoke properties for people in good communities. She wasn't moving that far - but far enough that no-one would interfere. It was affordable, she could have a say in how that property worked, and we knew that the retention of staff would be much better if we got her out of her previous situation.

Natalie would have really struggled to manage the budget for all this - as anyone would. It's too consuming. And it's not just the budget which is daunting, it's the process of managing what are effectively her employees too. So with her approval we moved to a **third party managed budget** with 24/7 support in the home and a few hours community support. That included the services Alocura provide for us, such as **client bank account, payroll, HR** and much more.





NATALIE'S TEAM

Using My Life Support's **Recruitment Support programme, Pathways 2 Employment**, we built a team around Natalie. My Life Support ensures the right people in the home provide the right care - the match is critical. Carers might have all the qualifications in the world but if they were too rigid in their processes they wouldn't have fitted into Natalie's team. She needed different skill sets and types, and we could provide this creative support rather than just allocating service from a generic plan.

There are not many people who could have gone into a situation like Natalie's and coped with it, so we knew we might need a few people with more extensive life experience, who were brilliant at caring but also alive to Natalie's needs and circumstances.

Natalie also has a team manager, who knows her and acts as a conduit between her, My Life Support, Alocura and any funders when quick decisions need to be made. Their proactive approach has led to many positive outcomes for Natalie, including the provision of a mobility vehicle.

Natalie now has 1:1 support overnight, 35 hours a week of 2:1 support - which allows her to play an active part in the community - and 84 hours a week of 1:1 support. It's worth recognising that previously, her care package only extended to 20 hours a week, and for the rest she had to rely on family members. As Natalie says, for the first time it felt she was receiving specific and targeted care from people who cared about her.

WHAT NATALIE SAYS

"I can't tell you where my life would have headed if I hadn't had the help of My Life Support - because I daren't think about it. It felt for the first time that I was getting care that was specific and targeted to me, from people who cared about the outcome, rather than the delivering the bare minimum for their standards.

I'm far happier, I love my own home and I'm far more active out of it too. I want to go into schools at some point and talk to kids about how to avoid the direction my life was going in. And I can do all this because I don't have to worry about my care or my budgets; it's all taken care of in a way where I feel really important in the decision-making process. My Life has given me my life back."

WHAT NATALIE'S SOCIAL WORKER SAYS

Zoe Baldwin, Adult Health And Social Care, Wigan Council

"I'm so happy to see that Natalie has settled - and that's credit to the commitment of Natalie's team at My Life Support. We all consulted with Natalie throughout and she was at the heart of our practice. We all knew our roles and what the expectations and relationships would be, and that's why it's been so successful."



HOW NATALIE'S BUDGET IS MANAGED

In partnership with Natalie and the commissioner, My Life Support wrote - and continues to adapt - Natalie's support plan, with the financial management element of her **Individual Service Fund** operated by Alocura for MLS.

This has many benefits for the provider of care (MLS) - but also Natalie. For example, in discussions with MLS it became clear that Natalie's community support budget wasn't being spent during lockdown; with Alocura's forensic budgeting and auditing systems MLS have been able to suggest that she can use that money to go on a supported holiday. The budget only allows her to spend what's being delivered; traditionally providers are paid and nobody analyses the detail of delivery.

Sometimes, the management of this budget will also mean that a team manager from My Life will discuss with the commissioner directly when additional money is needed in the budget for her care. Alocura will store the subsequent authorisation, so that when an audit or statement is required the information about payments is clear and immediately accessible to all.

The presence of a fully-costed and highly skilled team manager is crucial in terms of

liaising with Natalie, My Life and the funder to ensure high quality long-term care. As soon as this team manager - or Natalie's personal assistants - go on to Natalie's rota, that timesheet information comes to Alocura to track and manage hours coming out of the budget. Alocura takes responsibility for that work so that the provider and Natalie can simply concentrate on her care.

Some councils require audits regularly and a provider can quickly access a full report from Alocura's budget management system. On a weekly or monthly basis, Alocura also provides My Life with budget information so they can make informed decisions about the provision of Natalie's care.

Alocura also ensures the budget the commissioner is paying lasts Natalie the term it's set for, and continually liaise with My Life to ensure Natalie is receiving consistent and continuous care while providing budgetary information for My Life to make decisions.

These services offered by Alocura guarantee that My Life can continue the care for her - and guarantee the provider is paid within seven days.

THE OUTCOMES

Life isn't perfect for Natalie, but it's on the way. She was getting very standard care, and now she benefits from a holistic approach where My Life Support look at the whole life, where she lives and who she lives with.

She is awaiting delivery of her accessible vehicle which we have helped procure, which will open up her life even further and more dramatically - and she's regained contact with her sister, who visits regularly.

Natalie has developed good rapport with her staff, she's a lot more active than before and she's got control over her shopping. Her life and chances have changed dramatically. The cost of that may be a little bit more than it was, but her care is so much more **sustainable in its current form**.

We **log the care** for Natalie via Alocura, which is really valuable scrutiny. A lot of providers might say they have similar monitoring but often that is just "time and task", rather than focusing on outcomes. It's the balance of both which helps Natalie feel she is getting the very best care she can.

We've taken the chaos away and our staff are constantly working out positive solutions and best practice so Natalie can focus on her best life.

NATALIE'S FULFILMENT INDEX

My Life is committed to employing regular reviews and reporting to understand how the people and families we work with and for are using My Life, how they are feeling, where we can improve and where we are performing well.

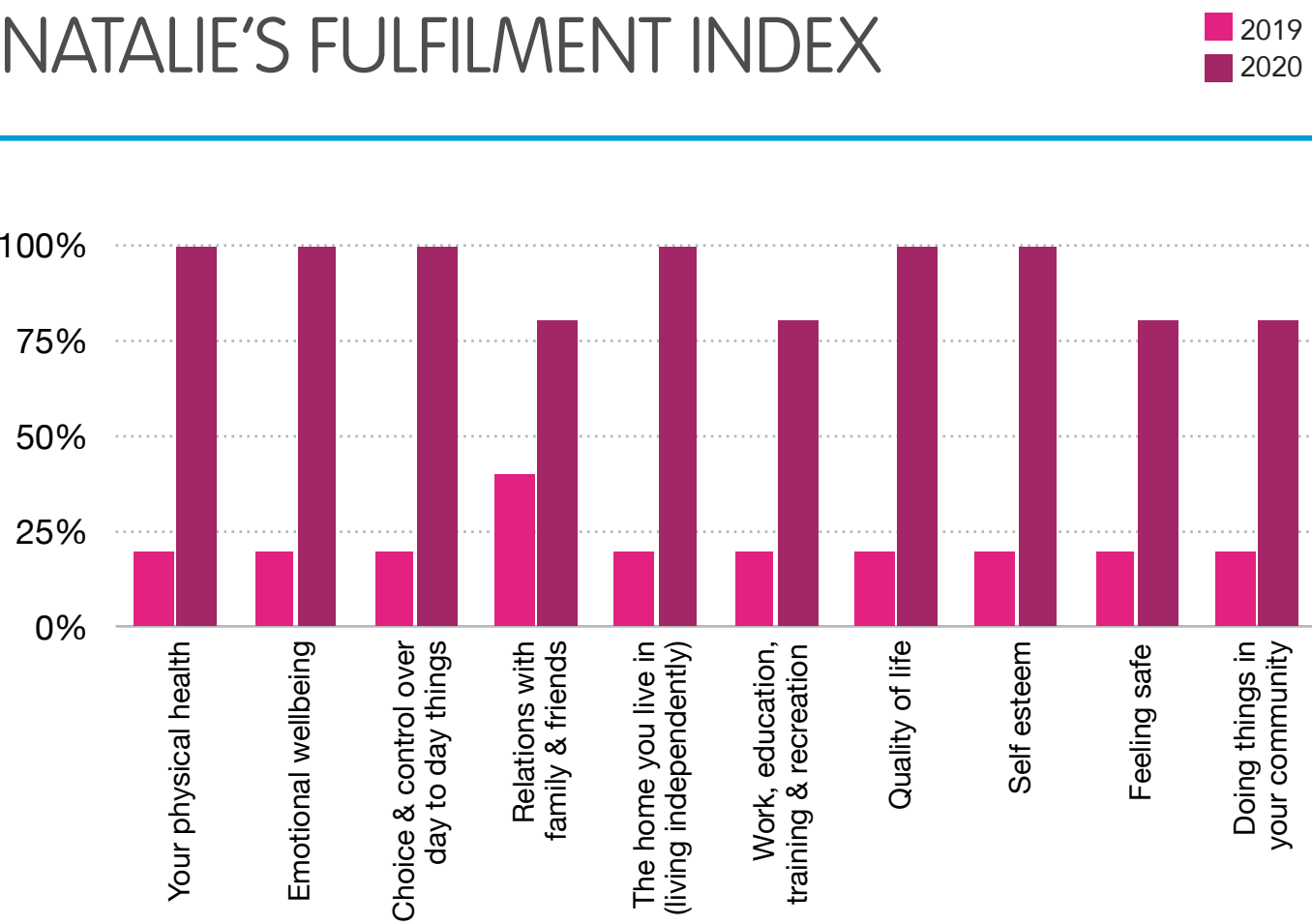
This data is compiled independently and uses the well-regarded Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool (POET) as a basis to understand a person's health and wellbeing, quality of life, choice and control and much more. From this we have been able to track the impact of My Life Support on Natalie, comparing an assessment we made with her when we first began our relationship with her latest review in August 2020, and create this fulfilment index.

In Natalie's case we have been delighted to see exceptional increases in many facets of her life, many of which she considered 'very poor' in 2019 but now regards as 'very good'.

We categorise the impact that My Life Support has had on an individual in the following way:

- Exceptional increase: 60% or more
- Good increase: 40% or more
- Acceptable increase: 20% or more
- Minimal increase: 0-20%

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