



Care pathways case study -
Priory Highbank Centre to Elton Unit

Max's story

The mother of a patient at Elton Unit shares her experiences of her son's road traffic collision and subsequent brain injury, as well as the care and support they all received at Elton Unit. Debbie* recounts her son's initial stay at Walmersley Unit, Highbank's neurorehabilitation unit, to his transition to Elton Unit, a nearby residential support setting saying, "our son is treated as an individual and with respect and dignity".



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MAX'S MOTHER

Our son, Max

Our son, Max*, sustained a significant brain injury when he was involved in a road traffic collision in 2014, when he was just 18 years old. In an instant, our lives changed forever; it was the beginning of a rollercoaster for us and at times, we have been stretched to breaking point.

There have, of course, been periods of relative calm when our son is more stable and we are almost unaware of the ongoing background of low level stress his accident has caused, but then suddenly something happens to set off another period of high anxiety and emotional trauma.

When we first received the news that Max would be transferred from Walmersley Unit to Elton Unit, which focused more on continuing care rather than rehabilitation, we felt apprehensive, unsure of the unknown and what this would mean for our son.

This move wasn't what we had originally wanted for Max. He was very settled at Walmersley Unit and was familiar with the routines and the staff who cared for him. It was an environment where he had made real progress in his therapies and it was hard for us, as parents, to accept that he would move to Elton Unit where his allocated therapy time would be reduced and done for maintenance.

I can understand how difficult it is for any relative to take on the task of finding a new home for their loved one. It is only natural to want the very best for them, and change is never easy. For other loved ones going through a similar experience, it will be a time of huge emotional stress for you and you will have to build trust with another group of professionals.

I vividly remember when visiting Elton for the first time that I sobbed during the meeting with the unit manager and the charge nurse after we had done the tour. When I was asked about the things I was worried about, my reply was "It's just the whole thing...everything!" I was emotionally exhausted. We had to try to come to terms with the fact that this move would be our son's home for life; that he would never reach his full potential or enjoy the 'normal life' of a young man.



Eight months down the line, our son is very settled and we are more than happy with Elton Unit.

The logistics for the move were handled fantastically by the staff, who co-ordinated the transfer of medical equipment and our son's possessions. Personalisation of the room was a real team effort between the staff and us. We were all made to feel extremely welcome. Nothing is too much trouble for the staff who want to 'get it right'; any concerns are addressed quickly and communication is excellent. During lockdown, we were amazed and truly thankful with how the staff kept our son medically safe and his morale high. He has made significant progress through his work with the on-site therapy assistant and social and recreation co-ordinator; their sessions are always fun and are run in a much less formal way. Max has responded incredibly well to the staff and we are confident that he will continue to make further progress.

We cannot thank the staff enough; our son is treated as an individual and with respect and dignity. The care is superb!

Learning to accept that things will never be the same again is one of the most difficult tasks you have to deal with. Breathe deeply and remember the mantra: 'this too shall pass'.



Find out more

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