

"Tom arrived as a 13 year old who was clinically obese and couldn't move very far before he - literally - dropped to the floor when out on activities in the local community. His confidence was low and his head would go down. His motor skills were poor. The way I'd describe him in those days was 'zonked out'.

Under doctor's supervision, we spent 12 months weaning him off the cocktail of medication he was taking. It had to be done very slowly - milligram by milligram. The medication had impacted his metabolism and as the drugs were slowly reduced, the weight dropped off him. Tom's life has been transformed, he is so much happier, more confident, much more active and exceeding his targets at school. It's fabulous progress.

Now, he doesn't need any special diet - he enjoys the same nutritional, balance and healthy diet we provide for everyone at The Orchards.

His verbal communication has improved and he's taking part in everything we offer, and enjoying it. A highlight was Tom taking part in a 5k charity walk where there were thousands of people and he coped magnificently.

The contact with his family has increased which has been rewarding for everyone. Initially, we worked with Tom's Mum & Dad to look at areas where they were struggling with Tom. Staff accompanied them to take Tom into community settings so they could see our strategies and follow them.

Now, Tom goes home to Mum's and Dad's every other weekend. They also know that if anything does go wrong we're at the end of phone and will support them in the home or Tom can come back to The Orchards. When that happened on one occasion we also offered the family post incident support."

The Orchards provides a home for five children. With five bedrooms, two bathrooms, a shared kitchen, living room and large conservatory, the children have the use of their own sensory room and a large garden to enjoy.



"Tom is so much happier, more active and exceeding his targets at school. It's fabulous."

**Zoey Lees**  
Registered Manager



Tom

"To see him today I can't believe he is the same boy."  
Tom's Mum

Pathway Care Solutions provides high quality care for looked-after children. With a philosophy of homes in family-sized houses, it avoids the effect of institutionalism and fosters a spirit of family-like living, allowing children to receive the individual care and attention they require to produce the best possible outcomes.

The Orchards offers long, medium and sometimes short-term placements for children and young people with:

- Moderate, Severe and Complex Learning Disabilities requiring continuing care.
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders [ASD].
- Social & Emotional difficulties, which can be expressed through challenging behaviour and attachment difficulties.
- Children & Young People with mental health issues, at risk of Self-Harm who require therapeutic intervention.

"We've got our little boy back. When he left we were at breaking point. Now we can enjoy him being here. You can't put a price on that: it's wonderful."

**Tom's Mum**

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Tom is diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum and has associated learning difficulties. Before coming to The Orchards he had been prescribed a 'cocktail' of medication. His weight had ballooned and he was clinically obese, unable to climb a flight of stairs or walk very well with tiring himself out. He had little confidence and spoke only single words. Although he was attending school, he wasn't engaged with learning. Now, having lost almost five stones, he's active, more confident and enjoys visits home.

*"Before we found The Orchards, we'd reached breaking point at home. Tom's behaviour was such that we were covered in bruises and scratches and trying to get him ready for school was an impossible mission each morning.*

*We were prisoners in our home: we couldn't take him out of the house because he would just throw himself on the floor and refuse to get up. He didn't sleep at night and I was worn down. His behaviour was out of control. He was very overweight and part of that was my fault because I gave him what he wanted to eat for an easy life. I knew it wasn't the right thing to do but we gave in to him to avoid another outburst.*

*He was on medication for epilepsy and he had been on various medications for his sleep patterns. He was under the care of CAMHS and we were getting nowhere. He settled in beautifully and it's made a huge difference. To see him to today I can't believe he is the same boy. He's a smashing lad; wonderful. Zoey and her team should take the credit for the changes in him because they have persevered and worked tirelessly with him. They put in an incredible amount of hard work with him and they have done an incredible job with him.*

*Zoey has been an amazing support to me and she is a very special person. She puts so much energy and enthusiasm into her role and you can see how genuine she is and how much she cares for all the young people there.*

*I look forward to our weekends together. I miss him terribly, but The Orchards has made such a difference to his life. He's settled, he's happy and he's absolute pleasure to have around the home. He's like a different child.*

*I gather he is always excited and has his case ready to come home for the weekend but he is equally happy to go back to The Orchards so I know he is happy there.*

*We've got our little boy back. When he left home we really were at breaking point. Now when he's home we can enjoy him being here. You can't put a price on that: it's wonderful."*

**Jude, Tom's Mum**



**"Tom's life has been transformed here. You'd struggle to realise he is the same teenager."**  
**Zoey Lees**  
**Registered Manager**

## ACTIVITIES AT THE ORCHARDS

More than 40 activities take place after school, at weekends and during the school holidays. Initially Tom was unable or reluctant to take part. Now, he enjoys all of them:



**GAMES | BOWLING | SWIMMING | CAR JOURNEYS  
 ZOO VISITS | LASER QUEST BOATING | SHOPPING  
 HORSE RIDING | COUNTRY WALKS | CINEMA | GOLF  
 ALTON TOWERS | LEGO LAND | GARDEN ACTIVITIES  
 DRAYTON MANOR PARK CANOEING | HOME VISITS  
 PICNICS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE | TRIPS TO THE SEASIDE  
 FARM TRIPS | SENSORY ROOM | POTTERY PAINTING  
 MOTOR SKILLS GAMES | PEDICURES & MASSAGE**

## PROGRESS AT THE ORCHARDS

	July 2012	September 2015
Health	Clinically obese. Weight 92kg (14st4lbs).	Weight 60.9kg (9st 6lbs). Tom has lost almost five stones in weight and has been very gradually weaned off all his medication. He now eats a nutritional, healthy diet. Takes regular exercise, walking to school and enjoying the numerous activities at The Orchards and outings.
Accessing the community	Tired very quickly. Struggled with large, noisy, or crowded group environments. Lacking confidence and would drop to the floor.	Tom took part in a 5k charity walk at Woollaton Park in aid of the Alzheimer's Society last year. There were thousands of people - Tom loved it. He also takes part in children's parties at The Orchard.
Family Contact	Family contact at the children's home and would last only an hour or so.	Every other weekend at home with Mum or Dad. Support as necessary during and after visits.
Accessing Education	Tom was attending school but not engaging in lessons.	Tom loves going to school and walks to school every day. He has met all of his educational targets and in some subjects has exceeded them. His attendance record is excellent: he will only have time off if he is ill or if he has an appointment.
Verbal Communication	Tom could only communicate using one word.	Now stringing words together to make sentences such as "Look over there", "Go outside please." With his improved verbal communication there is an increased confidence in him too, and a willingness to participate in activities.
Behaviour	Tom's family admit they were at the end of their tether, and worn down by daily outbursts of poor behaviour.	With strategies and consistent routines put in place for Tom, his episodes of poor behaviour have vastly reduced. He understands what is expected of him and staff will explain consequences of any poor behavioural incidents.

