



## Ben

Ben has faced significant challenges from an early age. For years, he witnessed his Dad abuse his Mum and, since they separated, he has been a carer for his sister who has learning disabilities. Ben and his sister were referred to CHEXS, due to their challenging behaviour. Although she has learning disabilities, Ben's sister was in mainstream education, but struggled with the rigour of school and often lashed out. First, CHEXS worked with the family to get Ben's sister a place in a special school, where she is now thriving.

Ben was facing permanent exclusion. His behaviour at school had spiralled out of control. He also started drinking and was regularly in trouble with the police. Ben now attends our Lea Valley Enrichment Programme, working in the natural environment to improve his self-esteem and confidence through team building exercises. Attending the programme bought near instant success. Ben's behaviour improved significantly, he drinks less and we're pleased to report he hasn't been in trouble with the police for a long-time.



As his confidence has grown, Ben has developed a passion for forestry. The support he has received now shows him how he can pursue a vocational career working in the environment, and he's interested in pursuing an apprenticeship. Ben recently told us, "[CHEXS] taught me lots of things about safety and rules, they didn't just shout at me they explained things".



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## Testimonials



## Joe

Joe was diagnosed with ADHD and about to undergo assessments to ascertain whether he had high functioning autism. He suffers with ticks and colour blindness and has very low self-esteem. His emotions were unpredictable and he struggled with how others perceived him. He was referred to CHEXS as in class he struggled to focus, would fiddle constantly and needed reminders of the task. He also struggled with friendship groups and has been subject to bullying leaving him very emotionally low and frustrated. He was at risk of exclusion as he was becoming increasingly physically violent. Joe's younger brother, Jordan was starting to copy Joe's behaviour becoming argumentative with his family. Joe took part in the Primary School intervention projects over an academic year whilst his family accessed parental support both one to one, group and craft sessions. CHEXS have completed a Family First assessment to ensure additional support and services are in place.

As a result of these interventions the sibling's relationship has improved, Joe is more engaged and progressing at school and is a lot happier in himself wanting to be more successful at school. He feels he 'has learnt how to work better in a group' and feels more relaxed and able to deal with difficult situations. His mother feels that the group means 'he can have successful fun activities to improve his self-esteem and know he is accepted'. At school his class teacher stated that Joe had learnt to work with others; had really enjoyed the sessions and had raised his self-esteem and felt valued.







## Max

Max started volunteering with the charity in September 2014 joining the CHEXS Lee Valley Enrichment Project, a community project where he helped to clear overgrown areas enabling the area to be used by the public. The school asked if Max could join the project as he was having difficulties at home; there was domestic violence, he no longer had contact with his mother and was living in a hostel in two rooms with his father and two siblings. This upheaval was making him angry and although he was very keen to do well, he could easily become disheartened and despondent. Once he joined the project he jumped at the chance to attend. He would be there encouraging others to join the team and keeping their spirits high especially when the weather or task became really challenging. By 2015 Max was a regular volunteer becoming the lynch pin of the volunteering group he was part of, making sure everyone knew that they were to attend the project. Max coordinated the group to continue volunteering with other projects and became a spokesperson for the group within the charity. Max has always been eager to find other avenues where he could support CHEXS, going the extra mile to ensure as many volunteers as possible could join him. Max has the ability to put people at ease, will always have a cheerful smile and is excellent at supporting others when the challenges become too hard for them. In recognition of his volunteering and hard work within the community he was awarded runner-up Broxbourne Young Volunteer of the Year Award.

### Max's View

CHEXS has helped me because I've done the things I never imagined I'd complete and learned that when things go wrong I know never to give up because I've done the hardest challenge! The skills I have learned will help me at home as I am not afraid to do most things now. It has been a life changing experience.



### Referrer's View

Max has shown improved behaviour at school and now has a more positive and enthusiastic outlook. He rarely has angry outbursts now and has continued with his education into the 6th form.



## Kian

Kian had been through an unsettled stage in his life due to his father coming back into his life for a short while and being involved in a car accident leaving his mother injured and Kian as a young carer to her. Despite being very academically able the impact of his emotional turmoil was taking a toll on him; he was under achieving being very happy to coast, lacking confidence and an assertive attitude.

The school referred Kian to CHEXS when he was in year 8 and he was placed on the Primary Enrichment Mentoring programme which led to him taking part in the Lee Valley and Team Building residential, returning as a mentor for the following year. These projects have helped Kian to develop his character, build confidence and resilience, as well as key skills needed for his future.

### Kian's view

CHEXS pushed me out of my comfort zone and made me do something I would not usually do or accomplish, during this time I felt supported by CHEXS, that they were behind me all the way and that they would help me whatever happened. It's really improved my confidence, self-esteem and has made me the person I am today. Ideally in the future I would like to get an apprenticeship with CHEXS so that I can continue to develop my skills and then work with young people so that I can pass on what I have learned with CHEXS.

### Referrer's view

Kian is a sensible young man who has gained the confidence and leadership skills to lead and mentor his peers. Kian developed more confidence in school and has become more emotionally stable. His calm and patient nature means he is able to control his emotions when he becomes frustrated with others to the point where they do not realise they have annoyed him. He was extremely enthusiastic about CHEXS and has become very mature doing well in his academic achievement.



### What Kian's Mum Said

'Thank you once again for all you have done with Kian over the years, I truly believe it has helped him become the well-rounded individual he is today. He loves spending time with you guys and comes back a happy chap from everything he does with you and CHEXS.'

