

Volunteer: Justin Clark

Justin chose to volunteer at the Haven because he had been reading a lot about women's rights and struggles through the ages. He wanted to contribute positively to the cause of women.

Justin's background was in IT and he volunteered at the Women's Resource Centre by helping service users with IT skills.

'I found helping the women immensely rewarding and I enjoyed the challenges it brought. It felt like a very purposeful and meaningful role, and raised my awareness and knowledge of Domestic Violence and Abuse considerably. These days so many essential services (housing, benefits, etc.) are accessible only via the internet and the use of computers and I realised just how much that can act as a major obstacle for those who are in vulnerable situation'

Justin used his time volunteering as an opportunity to engage with other volunteers and staff members. In the process he made some true friends with shared values and ideals who he will stay in touch with for years to come. Justin has autism, a condition which affects social communication which he says is something that he finds quite difficult to do in everyday life. By being at the Haven, Justin's social confidence has improved vastly. He says he is able to speak up and communicate more effectively than before.

As a male in an organisation that solely supports women, Justin felt that he was made to feel very welcome. He says that the staff, other volunteer and service users never expressed any objections based on his gender. Justin felt that he was setting a good example by empowering and providing support to the women and developed a strong sense of solidarity with some of them.

Justin secured a full time job and had to stop running the IT skills sessions. He was really sad to leave, but glad he could help so many of the women during his time at the Haven Wolverhampton.

'My experience at the Haven has helped me in so many ways. My transition from volunteering whilst working early mornings as a cleaner at my old university to full time employment in IT has been a big change for me. I have no doubt that the skills I developed through my experience at the Haven helped me to secure and to keep my current job so and I am very grateful'