



Case Example: Poppy Hart – Supported Living

In 2026, Poppy and her mum met with a Thalidomide Society Trustee to share their personal experience of accessing Supported Living.

Outcomes for Poppy

Poppy's move into Supported Living has resulted in significant positive outcomes across multiple areas of her life. Although her physical disability remains unchanged, the support model has substantially improved her quality of life, confidence and social participation.

- Increased self-confidence and self-esteem
- Improved communication skills
- Greater social engagement within the community
- Meaningful daytime occupation through volunteering
- A stronger sense of identity as an independent adult

Poppy now lives a lifestyle that is appropriate for her age, rather than remaining in a family-dependent role.

Choice and Control

Poppy exercises a high level of choice and control over her daily life, supported by staff rather than directed by them.

- Choosing what time she wakes up, is supported with personal care and goes to bed
- Deciding what she eats and how her day is structured

- Choosing which activities, she wants to take part in, both at home and in the community
- Deciding whether to attend the agency-run social club and how many days per week
- Choosing how she spends her one-to-one support time

Although staff require advance notice of plans to ensure care is delivered smoothly, this is framed as practical planning rather than restriction. Poppy is also able to express preferences regarding her support staff, and the agency makes efforts to maintain continuity of carers to preserve routine and emotional security.

Independence

Supported Living has enabled Poppy to develop functional and emotional independence, even though she continues to require high levels of physical support.

- Making her own phone calls and managing communications
- Advocating for her preferences with support staff
- Developing routines separate from her parents
- Building relationships outside of her family
- Engaging with support workers in ways that allow her to express thoughts she may not share with her parents

Importantly, independence is understood not as “doing everything alone” but as having control over decisions and being supported to live the life she chooses.

Risk Enablement and Safeguarding

The support Poppy receives balances positive risk-taking with safeguarding. Staff enable Poppy to go out independently with one-to-one support, attend social venues, volunteer and travel, while ensuring her safety and wellbeing.

While shared living arrangements restrict overnight visitors due to safeguarding considerations, alternative arrangements can be made in

exceptional circumstances, such as illness. This demonstrates a flexible, person-centred approach.

Long-Term Outcomes

Long-term outcomes of the Supported Living arrangement include:

- Sustained independent living for over five years
- Reduced reliance on parental care
- Increased life satisfaction and community inclusion
- Preparation for future decision-making with appropriate advocacy support

Poppy's mother describes Supported Living as "*the best thing*" for Poppy, despite the emotional difficulty of letting go, because it has allowed Poppy to live her own life as an adult.

Summary

Poppy's case demonstrates that high levels of support do not prevent independence. Instead, when delivered through a Supported Living model that prioritises choice, continuity of care and person-centred planning, support can actively enhance independence, autonomy and long-term wellbeing.