

## Mum Michelle moves on after 18 months in Shared Lives Family

November 2017

Michelle has moved on from Shared Lives South West and now has her own flat with her son Owain.

The walls are adorned with pictures of herself and Owain and she is loving her independence and new adventure.

Two years ago, life was very different from Michelle who lives in Devon.

It looked like social services were going to take Owain off of her, but at the eleventh hour Shared Lives was suggested as a possible solution.

Following a court case, Michelle got to continue living with Owain in a Shared Lives family and she was matched with carer Alistair Dodge in Torbay.



**“ It’s been brilliant. I’m really sad to leave, but I know it’s the best thing for me to live with my son.**

**“ Shared Lives is amazing, it’s one of the best experiences I’ve had, ” she said.**

During her 18 month stay with Alistair he taught Michelle an abundance of life skills.

“I learnt about managing my finances, how important to do a plan for the week, making a cleaning rota and most importantly I have to stick to my child’s routine and not get out of it,” she said.

“I’ve now got to remember those things every single day.”

Michelle has just moved into her flat and still has the support of Shared Lives for the next six months to help the transition and support her on the road to independence.

“Jane Rolfe my Shared Lives coordinator has been so supportive all the way through and so has Julie Bladon, funding and benefits officer at SL, who has been helping me with my benefits,” she said.

“I will continue seeing Alistair twice a week and will be in regular contact with Paul (who uses Shared Lives services and lives with Alistair). I would also like to thank Alistair for plodding me along and supporting me please.”

As soon as she knew she’d secured the flat, she couldn’t wait to book a removal van and furnish her new home.

“I picked up the keys and gradually moved in as I didn’t want to unsettle Owain,” she said.

“Alistair gave me a bed and also a bed for Owain, plus a TV unit and dining room table and chairs for which I am very grateful.

“I then went around the second hand shops and managed to get a fridge freezer and a nest of tables. It already feels like home.

“I feel so lucky as it has a sea view and there is woodland and a park so Owain can play.

“It’s great Owain has his own room and lots of room to play. I’ve kept up his routine and he still goes to nursery twice a week and also goes to weekly swimming lessons.

“Since January I’ve also been going to combat exercise classes so I’m really looking after myself.”

