



## LEARNER CASE STUDY



**Learner:** MJA from the 2021-2022 Cohort

**Programme:** Achieve Lifeskills - a course designed to empower and support young people in everyday fundamentals for living life more independently. Learners work towards a Diploma in Independent Living Skills, an employability award as well as English and Maths Functional Skills.

**Centre:** New Meaning Berkshire (Reading)

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## Reluctant Learner to Ready Returner

Maya had been out of education for several years. She made it clear to us from the beginning that she did not want to be there and felt as though she was being forced to be in education.

Maya presented with Pathological Demand Avoidance in the form of no verbal communication and minimal to no engagement in lessons. When she arrived with us in September she would come in, put her head on the table and stay that way all day, with various efforts from staff and students to encourage and engage. She even refused to let us have her phone number so we could text her. Despite all this we could see there was clearly something driving her to come in every day, as her attendance was great.

Slowly but surely, she began to engage again. At first it was her allowing our staff to communicate with her via text. We found being funny and using sarcasm were very effective ways to connect and we quickly learnt that she had a fantastic sense of humour.

It was still a challenge to imagine what her next steps could be after the course, and she also still wasn't engaging in class work. After a little more time, Maya completed her first piece of Maths. This was a fantastic step forward and she had fought through some intense anxiety to complete the task, but it definitely helped her turn a corner. After this she found completing her other work much easier and by the time we reached mid July she had completed her Independent Living Award, Employability Award and she had passed her Functional Skills Maths exam. Brilliantly Maya then let us know that she was keen to stay with us for another year!

Overall, this reluctant learner eventually had a very positive year on the Achieve Programme. She developed her confidence and trust in others, she gained qualifications and she saw the value in education and personal development. I think the biggest thing she took away from her first year at Achieve is belief in herself. Maya can see that she can do things and overcome challenges. We are looking forward to working with her again in September.

Next year we will be able to build on this success, gaining her next level in English and Maths (we know she's capable) and she will go on to do some optional modules in animal care, which is really where her heart lies. She is really keen on passing her driving test so she can be truly independent and so, in line with our aim, we will be also working with her on this. As she's already been with us a year and whilst it hasn't yet been agreed, we're hoping that she may like to take on a mentoring role for the new students.