Theft by a support worker; verbal abuse from local youths
Charles’ story

“I’ve only got two more years before I’m 60. I don’t want to end up on the knackers yard! I went to Fernhill Croft and then Tashworth Wood. They were both special schools. If I could have got the support at the time I would have made it in the normal school which was a shame cos you miss all your mates. I got moved from that. They said I was too slow. I was registered under the disablement officers when they used to have them. I went for 16 or 17 jobs and it had to be pub work or labourer.

I live in a 2 bedroom bungalow with a friend. He has a learning difficulty as well. We help each other. I do a little bit of stuff for my friend. I try and do his ironing. One of his hands is paralysed. I’m an unpaid support worker! He’s in the same age bracket as me and we both know about each other. I get on with it. I like being independent and stuff like that. Doing my greenhouse, gardening, except at the moment it’s a mess. I get help with prompts and having my meds and if I’ve done something in writing I need it checking before I send it. I can do addresses, it’s just other things. We have people to do shopping with us and sometimes when I go places I don’t know, I need more help. I get Disability Living. I share a car with my friend.

In my family there’s Elizabeth, Tricia, my sisters. Jane, Anne they’re my sisters. Peter, Andrew, myself and that’s it. My mum and dad died. When they went, all the family drifted. I see one or two of them. I keep in contact with the phone. They are my trustees if anything happened to me. We do get on. Me and one of my sisters are doing the family tree.

Me and my friend we go out together shopping. We do gardening: we both share the planting. We both go to football and church. He has to go up in the lift and we can’t sit together. He has to go up in a wheelchair and I have to sit downstairs. So we go together but he sits with the people who go in the lift.

People have been really really cruel to me over the years. One support worker, she went right for the car. She said I should have paid her my Motability. She started being really nasty. I didn’t like her. She was a bully. Like a formal bully. Half the things she said I wouldn’t have done them to a child never mind an adult. I had enough and I went and told someone. She spent money from my housekeeping. She ended up with all my direct payments ‘cos she spent it on 2 trips out. She was going to be investigated and then she left ‘cos she would have been sacked, or put in another home.

Every so often you get gangs of people after you in town. It was near Macdonalds. They were shooting peas at me and they were just being horrible. Tony’s shoe shop is at the bottom. I had some friends there. Gavin there used to be very good and he said if you don’t leave him I’ll do
something to you. Then another time I was coming back from Sheffield on the bus and a gang was saying nasty things, tormenting me all the way back. A man got off the bus and told them to leave me alone, called them cowards. They were saying come and give us a kiss, mucky things you wouldn’t think of. It’s groups, gangs and things. I just stood there and let them say what they wanted, you know.

It was good that other people stuck up for me and made them run off. Yes I was really happy. I’d like to see somebody who could help me and make a formal complaint. I need reassurance – it’s just about being believed. Making people think you’re telling the truth.”