

Gemma, 19



My mom and dad split up when I was 5. I didn't get on with my mum so I went to live with my dad, but he became homeless and we stayed in B&Bs for a while.

I had to move back in with my mom until I left school. We had terrible arguments every day. I had to get away.

I travelled around and stayed overnight with friends, but I struggled to attend my college course and eventually dropped out.

I was embarrassed to tell people about my situation but my best friend could see I needed help and suggested I phoned YMCA Cornwall. After meeting with the housing team I moved into a room the next week, then into one of their flats. It was so good to have my own space.

My support worker helped me to take on adult responsibilities, budget for bills and food, apply for jobs and go for walks outdoors and be active. It was the first time I'd had a proper routine – getting up in the morning, going out in the day and sleeping properly at night.

I'm looking into doing a course at college now.

Living at the YMCA is a fresh start for me, a wake-up call to sort myself out. I feel responsible for my own life and I'll never get into that situation again.