



Blackburn with Darwen  
**carers service**

# Alcohol

## The Carers Service assessment identified:

- Sally\* became aware that her husband's alcohol consumption was problematic after she realised that he seemed unable to have an alcohol-free day. At the time they were both working and she wasn't really sure of the amount he was consuming during the day, but noticed that he'd have several drinks every evening. Sally suspected he was alcohol-dependent, which was a huge concern for her and something she knew very little about. She did not know what to do and her first port of call was her GP, who referred her to the CASH Project (Care, Advice, Support, Help) at the Carers Service for support in understanding and managing her situation. The CARER was also struggling with her own health; she was born with a heart defect and has struggled with poor Mental Health since she was a child. Even though she had received MH support in the past she felt that she had not got the treatment she really needed. She was aware that her own health was deteriorating to a point where she needed help
- Sally also feels the social impact of her husband's drinking, especially in relation to friends, as she said her and her husband's social invites have considerably reduced, possibly as their friends and family don't want to compromise his sobriety by inviting them to occasions where alcohol might be present.

## Co-ordinated support offered:

- Sally met with the Drug and Alcohol Carers Advisor for 1-1 sessions, where they looked at her concerns and put an action plan in place which involved Sally increasing her knowledge of addiction and local treatment options. Sally started to attend the weekly CASH group, which brings together people who are affected by someone else's addiction. Through these meetings, Sally quickly realised that she wasn't alone, and other people were experiencing similar issues. She was able to offer support to others and receive it in return, which she says got her through some very difficult times. The CARER was also encouraged to discuss her situation with the college and explain how it was impacting upon her life, with the intent that with this information they would be more understanding and able to support her further at this time.

## Outcomes for carer:

- Sally learned about the support that Evolve can give, and she persuaded her husband to address his alcohol use by engaging with them. He enjoyed the groups there and found them really beneficial, and over the months also started to attend AA meetings and local training opportunities
- Sally's husband had a few slips during this time, of which she knew could happen due to discussions with the adviser and other carers in the CASH group. However, Sally has been

instrumental in encouraging her husband to seek help, and in persuading him to keep on attending services even he did slip up, as she had learned that a slip doesn't have to mean a relapse

- Being armed with this knowledge helped Sally to be more understanding and less reactive (negatively) when these situations did occur. She said she found the support of the CASH group was crucial in helping her define her expectations and hope for the situation
- Sally also signed up for some trips and activities with the Carers Service, attended a health check and received complimentary therapies as a way of helping her deal with stress and to make some time for herself
- On the whole though, Sally feels that their relationship is strong and that they've overcome many challenges together during this time. She has moved from a place of hopelessness and anxiety to one where she has a good understanding of their situation and hope for the future.

## What could the long term savings be because of this support:

- By accessing information and emotional support that is enhancing her own health and wellbeing, Sally has not only been able to prevent further breakdown of her relationship with her husband, but has helped to equip her with the confidence and knowledge to help them both to move forward together. Through Sally having this early support it can considerably reduce the potential demand for other costly services now and in the future, for example, health services, housing, benefits.

\*Name changed

[www.bwdcarers.org.uk](http://www.bwdcarers.org.uk)