



Blackburn with Darwen
carers service

Alzheimer's

The Carers Service assessment identified:

- Mrs J* who is in her 70's cares for her husband with 'advanced' Alzheimer's. She said she was feeling exhausted, through what she described as an extremely intensive caring role and finding it difficult to come to terms with supporting Mr J* in regards to his health, whilst also having to deal with new behaviours he was displaying, which included visiting the bank daily and making unnecessary withdrawals and attempting to buy the same medication each day. Mrs J* was being contacted by the bank regularly and it was making her feel very anxious.
- Mrs J's husband liked to go for walks each day, however, if he returned back to the house and his wife wasn't there he would get very distressed. This resulted in her never leaving the house just in case. Her social isolation was having a negative impact on her own mental health. She wished she could see friends but was starting to feel very detached from them. In addition to this Mr T had been caring for Mrs JT for twenty years due to her own long term health diagnosis which has impacted on her mobility, respiratory system, sight, and major organs.
- The couple were struggling on a low income and finding it ever harder to maintain their home and garden, of which in parts was becoming unsafe, especially for Mr J.
- Her daughter was trying to support her but runs her own business and works long hours.

Co-ordinated support offered:

- Discussion around the value of sharing her concerns and worries with other family members so they could take on a more active role in helping to care and support Mr J
- A referral was made to the Alzheimer's society on their behalf, who supported Mrs J's with her many questions and worries. She was also offered a place on the CRISP course to improve her knowledge of the condition and how she could better support her husband. Mrs J was also provided with full information about all the services and activities that the Carers Service offer as well as information in regards to day care facilities and other support groups in the local area
- Mrs J was encouraged to contact the bank and discuss the problem
- A welfare and benefits adviser visited the family at their home and helped them to complete Attendance Allowance forms after discovering that neither Mr or Mrs J were claiming this allowance
- Mrs J was initially concerned about the suggestion of a referral to Crossroads for a sitting in service for her husband, as she felt that, although she could clearly recognise that this service would provide her with much needed respite, she was concerned that she would have no say over who would be appropriate to support her husband. However, Crossroads reassured her that they would include her in the process at all stages. Mrs J felt if this worked it could be a real solution to her isolation
- Mrs J was offered a Carers Respite Grant to be able to take a break and really concentrate on her own health and well-being. Her daughter had said she that if granted she would take over her caring role temporarily to enable Mrs J to have this opportunity. Mrs J was made aware of support groups and activities that could also provide her with further information, support and respite
- Mrs J was given DASH and Care Network information so she could seek support with maintenance required around her home.

Outcomes for carer:

- Mrs J and her daughter said they have come together as a family and feel that as they now have more knowledge of Mr J's condition they are now able to support each other more and feel much more in control of the situation. Mrs J and her daughter continue to work alongside the Alzheimer's society
- Mrs J contacted the bank and discussed the situation with them. This increased the banks awareness and understanding and therefore they are now much more sensitive and supportive to the needs of both Mr and Mrs J
- A carer's respite grant was awarded, of which Mrs J was able to use for a weekend away due to her daughter agreeing to take over as full time carer while she was away. This helped her daughter better understand some of the challenges that her Mum faced on a daily basis. Mrs J said that the break had really stopped her breaking down
- Mr and Mrs J were both awarded Attendance Allowance, of which, Mrs J said has helped to relieve a lot of the stress she felt – Mrs J said "it has made a huge difference to our lives, as we are now able to afford to pay for work on our property and the garden, which enables us to have positive time together. The Crossroads sitting service has also been life changing, I know I can have a break and see friends. Just knowing this has significantly helped me to continue caring for my husband". The family now fund the sitting service themselves so that Mrs J gets regular breaks
- Initially Mrs J said she felt she was drowning in her caring role and had a very limited support network. Now she has a number of services supporting her and she knows who she can turn to if she needs more support. She feels a lot more empowered about her caring role as she has good knowledge of local services. Mrs J has said she is extremely thankful to the services and happy that her and her family are able to still lead a relatively independent and happy life together.

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

- Mrs J feels her health has really improved, which has potentially avoided her needing long term health care and regular visits to the doctors
- Support has greatly reduced social isolation issues, of which it is widely known can lead to Mental Health problems and subsequent treatments
- As the family now have the funds to do repair work on their home, it greatly reduces the chances of an accident occurring, of which, could have resulted in hospital treatment or even long term expensive care packages for Mr J if it had been Mrs J who was hurt
- Initially Mrs J's daughter did not believe her mum would be able to caring role much longer. However, now, both Mrs J and her family feel she is well enough to carry on. Without the above support Mr J may have needed to go into residential care.

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