



Blackburn with Darwen

carers service

Korsakoff's Syndrome

The Carers Service assessment identified:

- Lisa* came to the service looking for both practical and emotional support as her dad, who is 58, has Korsakoff's syndrome, which is brain damage caused by a lack of thiamine due to heavy alcohol consumption over a long period of time. This means that Lisa's dad has lost capacity, and because he lives alone, he is solely reliant on Lisa*. Because of the nature of the symptoms, which are very similar to dementia, he is unable to engage with treatment services as he lacks the understanding to make changes or remember what had taken place in the sessions. In addition to this, Lisa's baby son has a blood disorder which requires a lot of care, and Lisa has her own health issues, including epilepsy, which are exacerbated by stress
- Lisa was finding her situation really challenging. Her dad was spending all his money on drink, which meant that Lisa was paying for his utility bills, council tax and other daily living costs out of her own pocket. Although Lisa and her partner both work, they have their own mortgage, bills, living costs and childcare payments to make and could ill-afford Lisa's dad's bills and living costs on top of their own. He'd regularly get drunk to the point of collapse, and Lisa would go round on the bus each day to check on him and make sure he was as safe as possible. Lisa's dad had a social services care package, but Lisa felt that the care workers weren't meeting his needs sufficiently or going in at a time when her dad needed support. Lisa's dad was incontinent, and did not have a washing machine, so she would have to take his soiled clothing and bedclothes to her house several times a week on the bus. Lisa felt a lot of stigma doing this at times, as the washing could smell and she felt people on public transport would be looking at her and moving away from her. It was also quite a lot of work to collect the laundry, wash and dry it, then deliver it to his house again on the bus with a baby and pram. This was clearly a huge source of stress for Lisa.

Co-ordinated support offered:

- In order to address Lisa's stress levels, she was referred for a series of massages. Lisa found these enormously beneficial and reported that she felt they helped keep her stress-related illnesses at bay
- Lisa was also invited to apply for a grant to have a break away, as the demands on her income from running the two households would not have permitted her to take a holiday otherwise.

Outcomes for carer:

- Lisa reported that having the washing machine at her father's house was a huge benefit to them both and saved Lisa lots of time. Lisa reports that the support has prevented her from

reaching crisis point. She has had a lot of pressure on her and feels that without the support she would not have been able to carry on

- Lisa found the emotional support hugely beneficial because she didn't like to talk to her family or friends about her worries about her dad. Because Lisa could feel herself becoming ill through stress, She has said that the adviser totally encouraged her to take the opportunity to offload, via 1-1 support
- Lisa went for a 4 day break with her son and partner and reported feeling that the break really benefitted them all. For the first time in a long time Lisa was able to switch off and relax
- The support that Lisa needed was quite unique, as in this case there wasn't much hope for recovery or any way that alcohol treatment services could offer help. As the time came to close Lisa's file, her dad was given a prognosis of having 6 months to live, due to the damage alcohol had caused to his body
- Because Lisa found the service to be invaluable, she has said that she'd like to do some fundraising and get involved in promoting the service. Lisa works at a local company which employs a large number of people, and she's already carried out awareness-raising in her workplace. Lisa continues to receive notifications about what's going on in the service and is intending to volunteer so that she can share her experiences with other Drug and Alcohol Carers.

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

- Lisa's health conditions were affected by her stress levels, so accessing support for her emotional well-being will have helped to potentially reduce her demand on health services in the future
- Lisa being in a position to continue to care for her dad equates to a huge saving for the borough's care bill, as without Lisa, it would have been likely that he would have needed a residential care setting where controlled drinking is permissible, in order to ensure his safety and overall well-being.

*Name changed

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