

Patient story: extensive care **Peter and Lily Greenwood, Blackpool**

Peter is a 78-year-old gentleman and retired book maker who lives with his wife Lily.

Peter sustained a stroke while on holiday in 2011, resulting in communication limitations and a change in his personality. From being a lively and outgoing person, Peter subsequently became socially isolated and reluctant to engage in conversations and activities. He is unable to have empathy for others or the ability to compromise and is occasionally verbally inappropriate. He also has frequent falls. A following diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease has also compounded his brain injury.

Lily is his main carer and has found the last few years increasingly stressful and frustrating. This has been made more difficult by Peter refusing to attend respite which has left Lily feeling socially isolated and exhausted. Due to this, Lily has neglected her own health which has begun to suffer as a result. Lily often feels lost and frustrated with Peter and in herself.

The extensive care team have worked with Lily and Peter to develop a care plan which focuses on four key goals:

- Reduce Peter's risk of falls.
- Improve communication and reduce frustration.
- Improve Lily's understanding and awareness of dementia.
- Reduce their social isolation.

Much of this support has centred on the service working with Lily as Peter is unable to engage with the team due to the nature of his dementia.

To reduce falls and maintain safety the team referred Peter to a community physio to assist with mobility and improve strength. They also set-up Peter with a Vitaline device to maintain safety and prevent the inappropriate ambulance calls. Peter's falls have subsequently reduced and with the implementation of Vitaline there have been no further inappropriate uses of the ambulance service.

Vitaline also provided a carer's emergency card to alert others that Lily is a carer to Peter. Unfortunately Lily had both emergency and elective admissions to hospital due to cardiac issues. The carer's emergency card alerted A&E that Lily was a carer and the contingency plan was successfully implemented, with as little distress to Peter as possible and Lily could focus on her own condition without worrying.

Joint efforts from a wellbeing support worker and social worker within the service resulted in appropriate respite being found for Peter. Provision which specialised in care for individuals with dementia was found to ensure Peter's needs would be met and that he was happy to attend. This enabled Lily to have some much needed rest and time to focus on her own needs and health concerns whilst also alleviating some of Peter's social isolation. The respite formed part of the contingency plan to maintain Peter's safety in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

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Due to Peter's lack of ability to communicate attempts were made to improve his social isolation, which he continually declined. This caused additional stress and frustration for Lily. To address Lily's frustrations with Peter, she was introduced to the Carers Trust by the wellbeing support worker.

Lily went on to complete a four-week dementia education course following this. This was massively beneficial for Lily, who felt she learned better coping strategies and how to communicate more effectively with Peter. She felt she was better able to manage Peter and this hugely reduced her stress levels. It also enabled Lily to socialise with other carers and like-minded people.

Following the course, the Carers Trust asked Lily to return to talk to other carers and share her experiences to help other people in similar situations. She has featured in the local press, promoting the work of the Carers Trust and she is now also in the process of organising multiple charity events in aid of The Carers Trust. This has opened up a new social circle and increased her confidence massively.

Following the input of the service Peter has been able to continue living at home with Lily. Due to the successful completion of their goals, Peter has now been discharged back to the care of his GP. Lily has expressed how she feels much more in control of the situation and less reliant on health professionals for reassurance. She has expressed her gratitude for the input of the extensive care service, especially from her Wellbeing Support Worker, Brian. Lily said: "At first I didn't want to come to the extensive care service and I said no we're alright. I said I'll ring if I need help. You think you can do it, you think you don't need anybody. Well I did need help. I came in and they were absolutely wonderful. I'd recommend it to anyone."

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