

HEATHER'S STORY

Advocacy Awareness Week #AAW24

*All names have been changed to protect the identities of the people we support



What the person's situation before working with Advocacy Focus?

Heather* is a 42-year-old lady who resides in her own home with a package of care. Heather had led a normal life, until she was sadly involved in a road traffic accident. This resulted in an acquired brain injury and an extensive physical disability.

Prior to Heather being involved with Advocacy Focus, she had a package of care which did not meet her needs. Heather would frequently have falls and be on the floor for lengthy periods of time before a staff member arrived and could assist her. Heather had a complicated medication regime which required close monitoring, but due to the lack of support in place Heather would frequently miss vital medication or at times, overdose. Heather did not have the correct equipment in place to meet her needs or optimise her independence.

What did you do to help the person?

An Advocate was allocated to support Heather with a social care assessment. Heather did not trust professionals, as she felt she had been let down and dismissed by them in the past. Heather felt it was down to her processing needs and how long it took her to both understand and relay information back. The Advocate visited Heather regularly to build rapport with her, and once they had built up trust, they talked about her care and support needs at a pace she felt comfortable with.

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Heather told her Advocate that she was working with an Occupational Therapist (OT). Heather asked her Advocate if they would liaise with the OT to get her needs across and ensure any assessments were recorded accurately by the OT. During the social care assessment, it was clear that Heather's needs were well above the social care needs threshold, and she required continuing healthcare.

Heather had processing difficulties due to her acquired brain injury but had been deemed as having capacity around her care and support needs. Therefore, the Advocate adapted documents by changing the font size, format, and text colour, so that Heather was able to read the documents and be fully involved in the process. The Advocate also explained things to Heather in a simple, jargon free manner.

The Advocate supported Heather through the Continuing Health Care assessment and made sure that the nurse assessors understood Heather's processing needs. This resulted in the nurse assessors setting up regular two-hour meetings to go through one issue/decision at a time. The Advocate followed up the meetings by visiting Heather to go through the information completed. They checked to make sure that Heather was happy with the information recorded and made any amendments or additions that Heather may have forgotten to mention during the meeting.

What was the outcome?

As a result of the Continuing Health Care assessment, Heather qualified for fully funded Continuing Health Care. Heather was provided with a 14 hours per day care package for two staff members. This took into consideration Heather's needs and personal care and catered for Heather's extensive medication and physiotherapy regime.

By working with the OT, the Advocate was able to support Heather to have a track hoist fitted in her home, along with a mobile hoist. Heather also had motorised worktops fitted, which gave her access in her wheelchair. Heather, in addition, had a full fire safety assessment completed, with fire alarms installed and new fire doors. Heather also had a medication cabinet fitted for safe storage of controlled medication. Heather also had a customised shower chair fitted. Further work is ongoing for a specialised seating system and sleep system for Heather.

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How do you think this impacted on the person?

Advocacy supported Heather to get her wishes heard and helped her to remain in her home with a robust care package. The package did not just meet her needs, it improved her personal safety whilst optimising her independence.

Why do you think advocacy support was so effective?

Advocacy was effective as it gave Heather the time needed to process information in a format she was able to understand so she could be fully involved in the decision-making process. Heather was able to make informed decisions about her care needs and to get across the severity of her needs so they could be safely met. Heather was also able to achieve the adaptations in her home to promote her independence in a safe way.

Do you need an advocate?

We provide advocacy and related services across Lancashire, Salford, Trafford, and St Helens, you can view which areas our Advocates cover on our website.

