

Mrs J and her daughter provided 24 hour care for her mother, who had vascular dementia and chronic respiratory problems, in her own home.

Assessment:

When referred to Compass, Mrs J stated she was near the point when she could not continue as her mother's carer due to the emotional strain of the role. As her mother's condition worsened, she had become increasingly aggressive to Mrs J and her daughter. Mrs J was struggling with guilt about how this made her feel and about the prospect of "letting my mum down" if she went into care. Mrs J is an experienced carer and is very competent when dealing with statutory services but had no previous experience of dementia.

Compass support provided:

Initially, peer oriented listening support and discussion around her feelings of guilt was most helpful. After a few visits, mentoring to help Mrs J understand why her mother might be aggressive became the focus of support. By reflecting on the most recent behavioural difficulties in detail, working out why they might be happening and coming up with strategies to avoid these situations, the caring situation improved. For example, Mrs J stopped calling her mother "mum" when it was realised that this led to confusion and friction, as in her reality she was a girl without children. Later, Compass helped with forward planning, including getting access to Carers Break funding for respite and choosing a suitable care home in case it was needed.

When Mrs J was due to be discharged, her mother died at home and two more visits from Compass helped her come to terms with her bereavement.

Feedback:

"I don't think we could have managed without your support"

Mr H cares for his wife, who has dementia, at home. He struggles to cope with caring and has health problems of his own having recently had a stroke.

Assessment:

Mrs H gets very frustrated due to memory problems. Mr H does not know or remember what he's entitled to and is confused about benefits and financial support. He also feels he needs more time to be able to carry out shopping and get out more. They get some support from a care agency.

Compass support provided:

Referred for a Carer Assessment, requesting a home visit, leading to a one off payment. Liaised with care agencies on behalf of Mr H to optimise support. Logged all support in a book, so Mr H fully understood what was happening. Also liaised with local Council and the DWP to help him access appropriate level of services and financial support (Attendance Allowance). Information on a local lunch club provided. Helped Mr H access a local sitting service enabling him to go shopping and not worry about his wife wandering off. Provided emotional support and reassurance that he was doing "a great job" of caring for his wife. Provided a pack of information about services he could use, including respite, once Compass support had finished.

Feedback:

"My wife's face always lit up when you walked in the room because you took time to sit and make a fuss and include her. The service couldn't have been better. I so looked forward to the visits, it's nice that somebody did help and sort things out for me"

Young Carers' Projects in Nottinghamshire for 7- 18 year old carers

Feedback: Young Carers said:

- I'm able to speak to people about my home life
- We go on fun outings. It is time for me to enjoy away from the person I care for. I am happy I attend this support group
- I have made friends. Making / maintaining friends has never been easy for me but being at young carers has helped me to build new friendships
- I had lots of fun with the activities
- I liked playing pool with my new friends
- I enjoyed running around, having fun, being in a team
- I liked that I could talk about everything and my caring life
- I liked that I had fun and built up relationships with other people
- I liked the Zip Wire and working with friends on other activities
- Participating in various activities that I wouldn't normally get to do.

Article in the September 2016 Iris Magazine published for parents of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire



It's Great To Share!

A new pilot project in Mansfield and Ashfield is helping Young Carers get together to share experiences - as well as have some fun times.

The Young Carers project has been set up by Carers Trust East Midlands for any young person living in the Mansfield and Ashfield area under the age of 18 who cares for a family member with an illness or disability, mental health problem or problems with addiction to alcohol or drugs.

When Iris visited the Mansfield support group for a day baking pizzas it was clear how tightly knit the youngsters are already, with most of the young people saying they'd made close friends through the project.

13 year old Ben said: "I don't do much cooking so it's been good to do some here today."

"It's just good to meet other people as then you know you're not the only person caring for a family member and that's a good feeling."

The project hosts carer support groups in Ashfield and Mansfield, and also a series of local activities and outings which have so far included Lanes, archery and swimming alongside activity days.

It also helps to combat social isolation, raise self-esteem and gather feedback and suggestions regarding future services.

For more information or to make a referral please call the Carers Hub on 0115 824 8824 or contact it via email at hub@carerstrustem.org

You can also visit its website at: www.carerstrustem.org/young-carer-project