

**Marlene and Chris' story July 2022**

**Service name: Re-ablement.**

**Main purpose of service:** Working with people and their families in their own homes, to help them regain abilities and maximise levels of independence. Locala therapists work in partnership with Kirklees social services colleagues, to ensure a better quality of life for those using the service.



**Who the story is about:** Chris and Marlene are married and in their 70's. They both enjoyed careers in the textile trade. Their lifelong passion is ball room dancing and they have competed all over the UK since they were teenagers. Chris has Parkinson's Disease and early onset dementia.

**What happened:** Chris had a fall outside in March, banging his head. Marlene takes up their story, **"After the fall – he had fallen before – as a few days went on, he was putting his cup down where the table wasn't, standing was becoming harder and his balance wasn't so good. Then bruising started to show."** Marlene took Chris to A&E. **"They X-rayed him and said all was OK. But the next day I was concerned again and rang the GP. They said I needed to take him back to A&E."** Marlene explains that it was now too difficult to get Chris into the car, so he needed an ambulance to take him to hospital where he had a scan and was then admitted. Marlene remembers how difficult it was because of Covid restrictions. **"I wasn't allowed to even explain to him what was happening or say goodbye."** Chris was diagnosed with Covid. **"I couldn't visit him for weeks. He was in hospital for a total of 8 weeks, and I was only allowed to visit during the last 3 weeks."**

**Second chance:** Marlene was shocked at how much weight Chris had lost whilst in hospital and that he was doing so little. **"The nurses didn't know what Chris was like before he was admitted. I told the ward that they should give him a second chance. It was like they had given up on him. The next day we saw the physios. They asked what he could do before. Could he go up and down the stairs? Yes! Could he walk? Yes! We have always been active and worked full time. We go out every day, either shopping or for a coffee."** In hospital, Chris would often say, **"Get me home Marlene."**

**Home:** Marlene felt Chris was supported by the Reablement Team from the minute he got home, **"They followed the ambulance home."** Marlene explains what happened next. **"Chris had two carers four times a day. They would talk slowly to him, so he understood. They did absolutely brilliantly. Every one of them tried hard with Chris."** Marlene feels that the team were compassionate and that they had a good understanding of his needs, with the carers following the guidance of the therapists.

**Progress:** Gradually as the weeks passed, Chris improved. At first he needed a standing aid to be moved. Marlene says, **"Every time the physios progressed him, the carers practiced. He really came on! Even the physios said, 'I can't believe it!'"** Marlene continues, **"I can't thank them enough – how they were with Chris. I knew in the back of my mind that we could get back to how we had been, but those first few weeks, when it was just moving up the bed or putting one foot forward – it wasn't easy for them."**

Marlene feels the patience and perseverance has paid off. The day that Marlene shared their story, the couple had been into Huddersfield town centre and Chris had walked with one stick the furthest distance since coming home. Marlene is confident that many years of dancing has kept Chris fit, **"Dancing was like a lifeline - he kept strength in his legs and his core."**

Marlene gives full consent for sharing her and Chris' story and spoke with Joanne Vaughan, Locala's Engagement Officer on the phone 12.9.22