

Mrs L - December 2023

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:

Mrs L was born in Jamaica and came to live in Huddersfield in the 1960s. She worked as a book binder for many years and raised a family with her husband. Her family live locally and are very supportive. Sadly, her husband passed away five years ago, **“He was always here for me.”** Mrs L was diagnosed with diabetes in 1994. She attends a health screening appointment every year and has an eye test every two years.

What happened: Mrs L woke up one morning in May unable to see. She had been reading the newspaper the day before. **“Talk about a shock to the system.”** A friend was staying, and Mrs L asked her if the light had stopped working. **“She said, ‘can you see me?’ and I said ‘No, I can’t see you. I had no headache, no pain.’”** Mrs L was taken to hospital. **“I was there for 3 months. They ran all the tests, CT scan, biopsy, everything. They found the nerve that supplied eyesight had gone dead. I had no sight in my right eye and I could see a glimpse, a shadow in my left eye. They wanted to do what they could to preserve that. Anything is a bonus.”**

Coming home: Mrs L says that the hospital team were worried about her coming home. **“They started talking about respite or going into a care home. I said, ‘I don’t think so!’ Going to a care home! That was like another shock to the system! I know my way around this house – it’s been my home for 46 years!”** Mrs L explains that she came back to her house with the physiotherapist for a home assessment. **“The ambulance waited outside. I had a stair lift already. I went into the lounge, the bathroom, the bedroom. I got in and out of bed.”** It was agreed that Mrs L was safe to stay at home and would be supported by the Reablement team. **“They started to come that same night. It was good to be home. I felt comfortable being at home. They’ve been very good.”**

Support: The Reablement team initially visited Mrs L four times each day. Mrs L was given a ‘medication carousel’ and she was taught to use this. **“There is an alarm, and you tip it, and a pill comes out.”** (See photo above). The team helped her adjust to living with impaired sight, making a referral to the ‘Low Vision clinic’ and working closely with the Kirklees ‘Sensory Impairment Team.’ **“I got a white stick and a magnifying glass with a light. I practised carrying a cup and walking with my stick. They gave me a gadget shaped like an egg that makes a noise when I’ve filled my cup enough. They put stickers on my microwave, so I don’t go past ‘5’. I can vaguely see the stickers.”** The Reablement team also helped in the bathroom. **“I had a bath seat already. After I was assessed, the carers helped. They did my back and feet. I did the rest. They’ve been very supportive.”** Mrs L explains that she needs the District Nurses to give her insulin twice a day. **“I used to do it myself, but I can’t see to draw it up.”** She describes the nurses as **“fantastic”** and says they were particularly helpful when they found that her blood pressure was too high and arranged for her GP to visit.

The Reablement Team referred Mrs L to Locala’s Diabetes specialist nurses. They organised a new device to be fitted in Mrs L’s arm that monitors blood sugar levels. It comes with a bigger screen so that Mrs L can still independently check her results.