

Robert's Story October 2023

Name of service: Integrated Transfer of Care (ITOC)

Main purpose of service: ITOC is an integrated health and social care team who support the safe discharge of patients from our local hospitals. The team includes carers, nurses, therapists, assistant practitioners, specialist practitioners, and advanced clinical practitioners.

Robert and his daughter Lisa met Joanne from Locala's Engagement Team to talk about their experience with Physiotherapist Krysia from the ITOC team.



Becoming frailer:

Robert is 77 years old and a retired blacksmith, the fourth generation to run the family business until retiring five years ago. He lives alone since his wife Hazel died in July. His daughter Lisa comes around to see him every day. Robert describes how his health deteriorated this year, **"Me and my wife had Covid in March. It made us both weak."** He also explains that he was a carer for Hazel for four years and as her dementia progressed, they went out less and less. **"I lost strength in my legs. I could hardly walk or get up off the sofa."** Pain in his left groin and thigh added to Robert's mobility problems. **"My leg would give way and it was taking me an hour to get my socks on! When you can't put a sock on, it's a right do!"** Lisa explains that Robert fell at her Mum's funeral and then two days later he fell again and was on the floor at home for five hours. Robert went to A&E and was given a stick. Krysia from the ITOC team, visited Robert at home 48 hours later to complete a full assessment. Lisa feels this response was **"Brilliant."**

Getting stronger:

Robert explains that Krysia taught him the Otago Exercise Programme to help improve his balance, strength and posture. The Otago Programme was developed in New Zealand with the aim of reducing falls in older people. Studies have shown that the exercises can reduce falls by up to 40%. Robert describes the exercises, **"They include the whole body – neck, arms, legs."** It's now two months since Robert started the exercises and he says they have been a great help. **"She said it would take a long while, but I can do things easier now."** Lisa agrees, **"It was a slow thing, but you'd notice the exercises were looking easier for him – and more controlled."** She's noticed his mobility improve too. **"It used to take him four or five times to get up from the sofa, usually he can get up first time now."** Lisa bought Robert a 'sock aide', a simple gadget to help him put his socks on. Robert says this little piece of kit is **"unbelievable!"**



Making the effort:

Robert and Lisa think that Krysia was helpful and easy to work with. **"She was really lovely."** Robert continues, **"She was very positive. She asked if I'd ever tried sleeping with a pillow between my knees. That's helped the pain a right lot!"** He does the exercises most days and plans to continue. Lisa supervises to keep things safer. Robert says, **"It's nothing strenuous, it's mild effort really. It's only for my benefit. You have to put the effort in."**