

C02

Ymchwiliad i Effaith Deddf Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Llesiant (Cymru) 2014 mewn perthynas â Gofalwyr

Inquiry into Impact of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to Carers

Ymateb gan Unigolyn

Response from an individual

I like to think that I am a pretty strong person and I cope with pressure reasonably well. I do a lot of Voluntary Work with my three Therapy Dogs visiting School, Hospital and ironically Care Homes.

I am very, very fortunate to live in a beautiful part of the world and I don't have to venture far to get to a beautiful place to spend time with my dogs on my own.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. *She is probably the only one who would ever see the emotional impact that all this has on me.*

I have lovely neighbours who are very supportive.

However I find that the time I can leave mum is getting shorter and shorter. There is no way that you could ask neighbours or even friends to deal with some of the personal issues for my mum that I have had to deal with over the last few months. I would never have believed that I could deal with them but I HAVE to, I have no choice.

The sad thing is that whilst one tries not to let it, inevitably it affects the Mother/Daughter relationship. Some people can be Carers unfortunately I am not one of those I do it because I have no choice.

BUT I WANT TO BE A DAUGHTER TO MY MUM NOT HER CARER. We have always been very close and I sincerely hope we will remain that way but all of this does have an impact.

At the moment I do feel very constrained.

I take the dogs out and am care free for all of about an hour and then the worry kicks in.

I can no longer take a job as I fear I may be called home. It is not fair on employers. I like to do seasonal work it means I can fund my volunteering in school term and have a bit extra.

I have had to cash in some of my savings to supplement my pension.

My last holiday was in 2010 for my [REDACTED] birthday. Even then there was the constant fear that something might happen at home.

I am now contemplating selling Mums home (which as previously stated I own) to fund her going into a Care Home. This is a major decision as that house is a security blanket in different ways for both me and my Mum.

I have been told that Respite Care is no longer an option offered by Social Services but the Crossroads Organisation seem to think that is not the case. I wish someone had told me about the provision that Social Services had made after Mums hospitalisation in 2014!!!

I was in receipt of carers allowance but am no longer. In 2016 Mum went from paying no Council Tax to Full Council tax (minus 25% reduction for Single Occupancy) we found out that was due to the

fact that owing to her long stay in hospital the balance of her Bank Account went over the threshold where she was eligible receive free Council Tax. On seeking advice from CAB we found that if I gave up my Carers Allowance Mum could get Pension Credit (savings) and therefore would qualify for the Council Tax reduction. I was lucky to be able to do this for my Mum and more than willing to do so, however that Carers Allowance was a big help whilst I had it.

I do not feel that either my Mum or myself has had the best of services from the relevant Care Providers. I hope that my experience helps give you an insight from our prospective. I would like to think that we have been unfortunate and slipped through the "gaps" as it were but I suspect that there are many more like us. I also fear that there are many elderly people who are totally on their own with no one able to speak or fight for them and that is a very scary and sad thought. If this goes someway to help others in the future it was worth sending. If anyone would like to discuss things further with me I am more than willing to help. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject – Provision of Care for Elderly

Dear Sir,

I am Carer for my elderly mother who is 90 years of age, she will be 91 [REDACTED]. My mum lives independently across the road from me and has done for the past 16 years since she moved here when my father passed away. The move was made so that Mum would be close to me in her old age should she need help. This would not have been so easy had she [REDACTED] where she lived for over 30 years. Over the first 12 years we have been a support for each other and have managed without any help apart from two periods of 6-Week Reablement Care Packages following lengthy hospital stays, detailed below. Even though Mum became much more frail following both of those hospital stays we were able to manage without Carers once the package of care ceased.

In essence **we have never asked for any help.**

We hoped therefore that when we needed it we would be able to access it.

Apparently, that is not the case!

On [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Mum was admitted to [REDACTED] having passed out whilst washing herself in the bathroom of her home and hitting her head on the radiator valve causing a nasty gash to her head. Mum remained in hospital for two weeks. To date no cause of her collapse has been identified and the head injury after scans and observations was not deemed to be serious. This incident had been preceded by several weeks of general ill health, feeling unwell with a dizzy head, blurred vision and feeling nauseous. The Dr had attended the house on several occasions, but no cause was identified. It is true to say that this has been an ongoing problem for some 5 years now. At times, as on this occasion, the situation was worse than usual.

On [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Mum was discharged from hospital. She was assessed by Occupational Health and because she had demonstrated her ability to wash herself in the

presence of staff, even though on their admission it took rather a long time, she was released without any support whatsoever. Despite my efforts to find out when she was going to be assessed by Social Services following a referral [REDACTED] it never happened.

Whilst in hospital my Mum, very bravely came to the decision that she felt it was time that she went into a home, it is still her wish to do that. We now know it is not that simple!

In summary: -

- My mother is 90 soon to be 91.
- She has had an operation for a Melanoma Tumour which has left her with eye problems and bad heads, due to nerve damage following her operation to stabilise the Tumour.
- She often suffers with Nausea.
- She has had High Blood Pressure for many years.
- She has bad heads which make her feel very dizzy and unwell to varying degrees.
- She has Diverticulitis and Irritable Bowel – resulting NOW in uncontrollable diarrhoea for which she has no warning and is unable to cope with her own.
- The above bouts leave her feeling weak and sometimes near collapse.
- She has had two long periods in hospital – in 2014/15 she spent 6 months in [REDACTED]. In 2016 she spent 5 weeks [REDACTED].
- She is short of breath because of her age and very easily gets exhausted.
- She is unable to shower confidently without a supervisory presence.
- She has now had a fall resulting in a head injury.
- She has fallen on previous occasions when an ambulance has been called.
- She is unable to walk unaided and uses a Trolley indoors and a walker outdoors. However even outdoors with the aid she needs a supporting arm. She cannot walk far at all.
- She has started to get quite forgetful of late but no more (until her accident) than you would expect of a 90-year-old.
- NOW her memory since her fall seems to have deteriorated to a noticeable degree to me and indeed to her.
- The Doctors have been called regularly over the last few months but seem unable to give any help and therefore we have to carry on as best we can.
- Mum is Socially isolated. She is afraid to go out because of her bouts of incontinence which come with no warning or control.
- Mum suffers from extreme anxiety and worries over every little thing. This does not help all the above.
- Her confidence is rock bottom.

On [REDACTED] I spoke to one of your Social Workers [REDACTED] [REDACTED] it was not a very productive conversation as I was extremely anxious, emotional and frustrated following a meeting with the discharge team at the hospital who informed me that my Mum would be coming home without any Support OR indeed even a Social Service Assessment. My frustrations turned to

anger, for which I have apologised to the gentleman concerned, however it did not help when he told me that Mum wasn't entitled to an assessment or any help: -

- **Because we did not have Carers prior to her hospital admission.**

We haven't had any help because we thought we were doing the right thing by managing by ourselves. We did so in the mistaken belief that when we needed help we would be able to access it!
Again, apparently not the case.

In addition to which I was informed, [REDACTED] that after her previous stay in hospital a provision for Emergency Respite Care had been put in place should either of us need it.

NOBODY EVER TOLD US THAT!

About 20 minutes after I spoke to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] rang me back to say that my Mum could have an assessment, but it would take at least 6 weeks for this to happen.

Carers are wonderful BUT:-

- What are the chances they will be with Mum when she has a dizzy turn?
- What are the chances they will be with Mum falls?
- What are the chances they will be with Mum when she has a bout of Diarrhoea?
- The chances of me being around when Mum has any of these episodes are more likely BUT I have to attend to things in my life and do all the practical stuff for Mum like shopping etc and chances are I won't be around.

I am not the issue here, my Mothers safety is utmost in my concern, but my circumstances are:-

1. I am a [REDACTED], I have been since [REDACTED]
2. I worked [REDACTED] after my retirement [REDACTED] [REDACTED] when due to my Mums health I finished completely. I didn't feel it fair to be called away from work as happened on several occasions.
3. I have taken on Casual and Seasonal Work which I love but that has not happened for the last 2 years for reasons as at 2.
4. [REDACTED].
5. [REDACTED].
6. [REDACTED].
7. My support comes from close friends and neighbours but there is a limit to what you can ask of them.

8. I remain very busy Volunteering [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. As a Volunteer cancelling meetings and appointments doesn't matter quite so much but nevertheless is not ideal.
9. Most importantly of all ***I WANT TO BE A DAUGHTER TO MY MUM I DON'T WANT TO BE HER CARER.***
10. I find it very difficult doing her personal care, I don't want to do it and she doesn't want me to have to do it.
11. I have Lasting Power of Attorney for Mum in relation to both Health and Finance.
12. Because of my commitment to Mum I don't go away on holidays any more, fortunately I am happy in [REDACTED] which offers the Walks and Beaches that I love.
13. I last went on holiday [REDACTED] for my [REDACTED] birthday at my Mums insistence however as nice as it was there being always the fear that something will happen whilst I am away.

Please can you advise me what we do from here?

We have tried our utmost to cope without any help up until now. We are very close and always have been which helps tremendously but I say again I WANT TO BE A DAUGHTER TO MY MUM NOT HER CARER AND IT WORKS THE OTHER WAY TOO.

I feel at the very least my Mum deserves Carers to help her in the mornings for which we are now paying privately. Assessing her whilst in hospital in a controlled environment when she was well was assessing her at her **BEST, surely the need is to look at her at her WORST**. Someone needs to speak to ME in relation to the whole picture not just what she was like in hospital. Mum is of a generation if someone in "authority" asks her to do something she will do her utmost to do it even at her age which is what happened on the day she was asked to wash herself. She told me she was exhausted afterwards. Also, she will never complain or moan and say she can't do something.

[REDACTED]

Not until the afternoon of the day before she was discharged from hospital did anyone speak to me or responded to my requests to speak to someone who I could give some history to! That discharge meeting had a lot of awkward silences in it when I outlined the whole scenario.

CURRENT SITUATION

- My Mum after [REDACTED], spent all of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in bed as she was feeling unwell. She was adamant she didn't wish me to call a doctor or stay the night.
- On [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I receive a call from my Mum she had had a very bad diarrhoea attack and needed help to clean up the house and herself. This left her exhausted.
- We have now taken on a Private Care Agency to help mum wash and shower 5 days a week.

- I am cooking meals and taking them over to her, as well as doing all the practical things I have always done.

I now have the same situation we were in before her fall just three weeks ago which was an accident waiting to happen. Whilst I understand Social Services advocate it is better for people to remain in their own home as long as possible, we have kept ourselves out of the system until now, we have done our best to manage without help and now when we need help I am having to fight for it.

My Mum and I, NOW feel she needs to be somewhere she is taken care of 24/7 for her physical, emotional wellbeing and most important of all for HER SAFETY.

She does not have the finances to pay for this privately. She does not own the property in which she now lives and although she has savings they are nowhere near the threshold that would necessitate her paying for her care.

IF it is deemed that she is not suitable/able to go into a home THE VERY LEAST she deserves an assessment AND carers in the morning to help her wash/shower. We know that has to be paid for in part, but it will not be the [REDACTED] a day we are paying now. My Mum and Dad worked hard all their lives and paid into a system in the belief that they would be looked after in their old age, both worked well passed their retirement age.

My Mum NOW deserves help and she NEEDS, not in 6 weeks and however long after that we have to wait for a decision. She needs it as soon as is possible and SHOULD have had it from her discharge from hospital.

I will have to manage the rest as best I can whilst still carrying on with my life. IF the worst comes to the worse at least I will know that I tried my best for her.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I look forward to receiving a reply within the next 7 days.

Your Sincerely

[REDACTED]