

I have worked for Phoenix for just over 5 years. Previously I worked in childcare & after 15 years I was ready for a new challenge & decided to work in social care. I have spent most of my time with Phoenix working with adults with mild learning disabilities. In August 2019 I met a service user which I'm going to call lady. Unknown to me, lady was going to be the most challenging person I have worked with.

LADY

Lady lived independently in the community in a flat. She was struggling after losing both parents, moving out of her childhood family home, her personal hygiene & had a poor diet. Lady was generally struggling to look after herself. Although she received some support hours & had support from family, she was struggling living alone. Lady didn't like staying at home & was spending a lot of time out in the community, even at night-time which was putting herself at risk. Lady also had an undiagnosed health condition & had been experiencing mood swings & some memory loss & after several scans, a mass was found on her brain.

RESPITE

In August 2019 Lady came to stay with us for 3 weeks for respite whilst her main carer went on her holidays. She settled well & she had a caring nature. She liked spending time with the other service users & really enjoyed her 1-2-1 time accessing the community. Unfortunately, She began to show some aggressive behaviour & at times became violent. She also began to self harm in frustration & her memory seemed to be getting worse.

I WANT TO STAY

After her 3 week respite had come to an end, She decided she wanted to stay. We worked together as a team to settle her into her new home, finding out & providing all the activities she enjoys. We created a daily routine with her, who was now showering daily & eating a good balanced diet. We worked together around her behaviour & mood changes & finding the best strategies to deal with her challenging behaviours.

COVID

In February covid affected all of our lives & in March the country was on lockdown. This was difficult for all of us but even harder for those who do not have the capacity to understand. She found this period of time extremely difficult as she did not like staying at home & just wanted to go out all day. Again as a team, we worked together to find alternative activities to keep her entertained & safe. Sadly during this time, her behaviour was getting worse & she was diagnosed with vascular dementia.

FINDING A NEW A HOME

Our next challenge was to now find her a new home. We needed to get this right & during this pandemic, it wasn't going to be easy. This is going to be her last move & her new forever home. It needed to be a quiet & peaceful environment as this helped to keep her to stay calm & happy. Ground floor as she was now finding stairs difficult. Walking distance to town or village because she liked going out daily & likes walking. And somewhere that has lots of activities to keep her occupied.

STRIKE IT LUCKY

Despite covid & so many 'must haves' on the list, the perfect placement was found. A residential bungalow in the peaceful community setting in the countryside & within walking distance to the local small town. There was plenty of activities available daily & a community hall where they often have activities & events. They also had a cat in the home which was a big bonus as she'd spoken about wanting a pet cat. On our visit, we took lots of photos which really helped her remember over the next few coming weeks as she often forgot all about her visit.

I went with her & her sister to settle her into her new home. What an emotional day to lose someone we'd worked so close with & so hard for. All the ups & downs we'd been through together. But it was also a day we could all feel so proud of what we had all achieved.