

TACKLING LONELINESS

Case Study 1:

PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND DEMENTIA ASSESSED AND TREATED EARLIER AND SUPPORTED TO LIVE WELL

Help with early intervention befriending service for the bereaved and lonely client.

Emma lost her husband after 56 years of marriage and had become severely emotionally withdrawn and frail with signs of early onset of dementia. She was also experiencing extreme anxiety through being left on her own.

RACDV received a call for help from the bereavement officer who was placed to look after her by the Social Services.

We arranged for Emma to have a trial day at our Cottage Day Care Centre, where befriending, different daily activities, good food, a caring environment and approach by Day Centre staff and volunteers make a very big difference in every client's life.

Emma really enjoyed the trial day and, as a result, has been coming to our Day Care Centre for past 8 months. Now that she has made many friends at the Centre, she doesn't suffer anxiety any longer, her confidence had a great boost and she no longer needed the bereavement officer for the past 6 months.

Case Study 2

OLDER AND VULNERABLE RESIDENTS FEEL SOCIALLY INCLUDED

An elderly frail couple were no longer able to independently go shopping

We provide a weekly direct shopping service via minibus to the Sainsbury's at Pepper Hill, Northfleet where we have a good relationship with the supermarket management and staff. Six months ago RACDV received a telephone call from Sainsbury's Customer Service Manager about an elderly couple who shop twice a week there and they normally took a taxi.

They regularly had problems experiencing long waits for taxi drivers which might be ok for able-bodied people but for them it became a serious physical endurance test. On this particular occasion, they had been waiting for over an hour for a cab driver and when he finally arrived he was very rude to them and refused to pick them up.

Sainsbury's called RACDV and asked us to contact them and passed their details to us, to see if we can help them. Our operations administrator contacted them directly, explained the services that we provide and offered them a trial shopping trip to Pepper Hill Sainsbury's with our regular door-to-door minibus service. They took up our offer and were very pleased with the service, so much so that they have now been happily using the service twice a week for the past seven months.

Our drivers pick them up at their home take them to do their shopping which allows them two hours at the shops, wait for them and take them home twice a week. This provides them with activity, social engagement with the wider world and particularly other shoppers with whom they have a cup of tea or lunch. This physical activity, social engagement and independence in shopping has proved to be a weekly lifeline for these clients.

Case Study 3

MORE PEOPLE RECEIVE QUALITY CARE AT HOME AVOIDING UNNECESSARY ADMISSIONS TO HOSPITALS AND CARE HOMES.

Our Day Care Centre is a life-line as people are struggling with loneliness, also finding difficult to do food preparation and eat on they own.

Terry was a very independent 85-year-old, very mobile, going to different clubs each week and doing wonders with his garden, growing strawberries, sweet-peas and roses in his green house. His wife died and he stopped going out immediately, became very withdrawn and left his garden and his greenhouse to go wild and neglected.

Terry's biggest problem was that he wasn't eating and had lost an alarming amount of weight. At this stage RACDV received a telephone call for help from a very worried neighbour. The neighbour asked us to contact him and after several persuasive phone calls and conversations he agreed to visit our Day Centre on a day trial. That was two years ago. Terry now comes 5 days a week and has his lunch, see his friends in the Day Centre and plays chess too.

In the early stages RACDV, working closely with other agencies, also arranged for meals on wheels to bring his evening meal so that now, combined with his meal at The Cottage Day Centre, he eats at least two good meals a day.

From being housebound, withdrawn and not eating, Terry has improved enormously. He really looks forward to his cup of tea and biscuits ("loads of biscuits please!" when he arrives first thing in the morning at The Cottage.

Terry went back to tending his garden and gives our Day Centre Supervisor many tips over hybrid roses and gardening in anticipation of the future construction of our sensory garden at The Cottage.