



Case Study – PA Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities

Andrea is a bubbly and fun-loving women in her forties. She has Down's Syndrome and lives at home with her mother Brenda. When Direct Payments were first introduced Brenda embraced the change and saw it as an opportunity to have more control over Andrea's care.

Brenda is Andrea's primary carer and is absolutely dedicated to securing the very best care she can for her daughter. Brenda explains: "There's no doubt that Andrea has a real zest for life. She is very outgoing and adventurous and if there is an activity she wants to do then I try and make it happen for her. In the last few years, since I have been using PerCurra's services, opportunities have opened up for her.

"PerCurra have been providing support to Andrea since 2008 and the PA's (Personal Assistants) have become her friends. I can't drive so her PA's take her to the day centre and accompany her to various activities. I'm in my seventies now but they are young and it's good for her to be with younger people rather than in isolation with me.

"The Rowan Organisation first recommended PerCurra to me. We have been having Direct Payments for seven years and I had employed PA's for Andrea. In recent years, because of all the various activities Andrea likes to enjoy, it just wasn't possible for one PA to do the job. PerCurra have put together a regular team that ensure she attends all her groups. They have even welcomed her into the head office as a volunteer for one afternoon per week and she absolutely loves this. She makes everyone tea and coffee and helps the staff with tasks such as filing. Going to 'work' makes her feel so valued. Everyone there loves her. PerCurra is a very caring organisation.

“As Andrea gets older she is getting more health problems but she doesn’t want to slow down. She does incredibly well. She certainly gets a lot of personal satisfaction from her visits and outings with the Percurra staff. Each morning her first question to me is ‘who is coming today?’

“At the moment she sees someone six days per week. Sometimes it’s simply for half an hour in the morning and at night to transport her between home and one of her activities. Andrea is very sensitive and the driver taking her to the day centre or to the ‘Life’ group can set the tone for the rest of her day. A normal taxi service wouldn’t work for Andrea. There are other times when one of Andrea’s PA’s will just come and spend some time with her, as a friend, at home doing a puzzle or watching a film. Having a team of PA’s I can trust gives me peace of mind and allows me to have a break.

“One evening a week she goes to one of PerCurra’s social groups for people with learning disabilities. This is a chance for Andrea to make new friends and enjoy activities like bowling or a pub meal, out in the community.

“I have built a great relationship with PerCurra. The girls feel like part of the family and I feel so comfortable with them and I believe they feel comfortable with me. The flexibility of the service is a great help. If Andrea is ill and can’t get to a group I will phone up and say either don’t send someone or just come and spend some time with her. When we need to change arrangements Percurra are accommodating and work with us.

“PerCurra really understand that I have needs too. No-one has ever acknowledged my experience in the way they do. I was absolutely thrilled when they nominated me for the Great East Midlands Care Awards. It was lovely to be able to go out at night, with Andrea, and totally relax and have fun. It was 51 years since I had last worn a long dress! I really didn’t mind if I won or not – I just enjoyed the whole evening and so did Andrea. It made me feel appreciated.

PERCURRA 117 Trent Boulevard, West Bridgford, Nottingham. NG2 5BN

Tel: **0844 544 7780** • Fax: **0844 544 7781** • Email: care@percurra.com • Web: www.percurra.com

Registered Office: 4 Cross Street. Beeston, Nottingham. NG9 2NX. Registered in England No. **6314569**

“PerCurra have gone out of their way to help Andrea do the things she wants. They even took her white water rafting which was something she had always wanted to do. She is socialising more and more and meeting new people. She is happy and that’s so important to me. It’s a misconception that people with Down’s Syndrome are always happy. Andrea gets moods and it’s important that she isn’t allowed to stagnate.

“Our team of PA’s are invaluable to us and I am constantly recommending people to PerCurra.”

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