



Case Study – Companionship Services

Sheila was suffering with dementia but desperately wanted to retain her independence and remain in her own home. She had the support of a loving family but as her condition progressed they felt Sheila needed more help than they alone could provide. Her daughter Sue explains how PerCurra’s Companionship Service bridged the gap perfectly.

“The decision to seek outside help to care for our elderly mother, Sheila, was a major one for us. My sister and I both lived several hours drive from her home and during our visits and phone calls we were becoming increasingly concerned for her safety and her ability to cope with daily life. She had been widowed 18 months before and was suffering with Vascular Dementia. We had noticed a slow, steady deterioration but Mum was adamant that she did not want to move from her home and memories of her life with Dad. The best solution for all of us seemed to lie in finding a local provider who could deliver a high level of care, understanding and support on a daily basis.

Finding the right care provider was the first hurdle. I asked around Mum’s friends and neighbours for suggestions and then researched companies on the internet before drawing up a shortlist to contact by phone. When I spoke to Gill at PerCurra I immediately felt at ease and she completely understood the magnitude of the decision we were making and our concerns. Gill came to my mother’s house to meet us and explain more about the companionship service that PerCurra could offer. We were happy that a daily visit from a care assistant assigned to Mum would give focus to her day and give us the reassurance we desperately needed. Mum needed more convincing. Again, Gill understood this and suggested we give Mum a little time to accept the idea before introducing her to her care assistant. Throughout the time that PerCurra were involved with Mum, Gill talked us through decisions and options at every stage and offered ideas and possible solutions when we were unsure.

We started in October 2008 with just one hour each day. Claire visited Mum each morning to check she was ok and keep her company but this gradually evolved into longer and more frequent visits that included shopping, lunch and other trips out. This gave back structure to Mum's daily life and she was able to do the things she enjoyed but with the security of someone by her side. She was so much happier and it was a great relief to us to know she was safe, eating properly, keeping medical appointments and maintaining social contact.

There were three care assistants assigned to Mum but Claire was her main contact and became a crucial figure and a friend. PerCurra's practice of leaving comprehensive notes on what had happened at each visit proved invaluable to us on several occasions. Sometimes Mum was very lucid but at others times she was confused or simply couldn't remember what she had done so the PerCurra notes kept us informed as to where she had been and how she was feeling. With hindsight, we wish we had bought PerCurra in earlier.

The element of trust when you invite someone else to be involved in a relative's care is huge. PerCurra's companionship service was excellent and made the biggest difference to the quality of Mum's life. Then, when Mum's condition became much worse and we had to make the traumatic decision about moving her to a residential care home, Gill and her team were there for us every step of the way and helped make the transition as smooth as possible. This help and advice, beyond the call of duty, has been much appreciated."

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