

## *VOCAL25 - Patrick*

### Self-Directed Support



Patrick first began to think of himself as a carer around 15 years ago. Feeling that he was “burning a candle at both ends” in order to care for Claire, he reached out to VOCAL for support. After some one to one support, and having accessed several training courses, life settled into a new rhythm. There now seemed to be enough hours in the day and energy for Patrick to give a little time to his own hobbies and interests again, such as cycling, as well as for caring. He even found time to volunteer for VOCAL for a while.

We hadn't heard from Patrick for a few years when he got in touch again recently with a new query. He'd seen an article in our regular newsletter about two new Carer Support Workers joining VOCAL, workers with the specific remit to help carers to look at Self Directed Support (SDS).

Claire had been assessed by Social Work in December, with the assessment suggesting that she spend a few weeks each year in a care home to give Patrick a break. They agreed that Claire's needs had progressed somewhat, things like the morning routine taking longer than it had before. Together they looked at a home, but felt it wasn't the right fit. Claire found it a restricted place with "no laughter". On reflection they were both more comfortable with the idea of someone looking after Claire in their own home.



Patrick knew about Direct Payments from some of the courses he'd attended at VOCAL and was confident this approach would offer them a suitable way forward, but he felt bewildered by the next step. With support from VOCAL they've navigated the various options, liaising with Social Work and Service

Providers. Patrick now has a tailored structure of support facilitating occasional short breaks of 4-7 days at a time throughout the year, with support for Claire to stay at home.

For his first break Patrick visited Normandy, and is confident these short breathers will help keep his caring role sustainable for the future. Claire's happier too now that she knows her husband's getting some much needed down time. Staying home made it easier for friends to come and visit, and the support she had while Patrick was away was great and made her feel good.

Moving forward Patrick is once again in a position where he's comfortable engaging with providers and shaping their support services on his own... with the knowledge that – whenever he needs us again – VOCAL is just a phone call away.