Re-ablement
Case Study: Margaret

For 11 years, Margaret cared for her husband who lived with Parkinson’s disease at home. When Margaret fractured her ankle he was admitted to a care home. Following his death Margaret suffered another fall in which she badly bruised her left arm and shoulder. This knocked her confidence and resulted in her spending most of her time in bed, relying on the support of her niece. “Since my husband’s death, I felt very sad and lonely making me feel that I didn’t want to do anything myself,” Margaret says.

From being someone who was able to do her own shopping and cleaning, she found it increasingly difficult to dress and wash herself, as well as cope with domestic tasks. She found it hard to eat and drink making it difficult for her to maintain her weight, which affected her general wellbeing.

Margaret had not personally received any services from Westminster before, but wanted to regain her independence by being able to shower and prepare her own meals. Her aims were to increase her appetite and improve her mobility and strength.

The Re-ablement Team worked very closely with health colleagues from the Westminster Rehabilitation Service to improve these aspects of Margaret’s life. A dietician provided advice on increasing appetite and weight gain. The physiotherapist provided strengthening exercises and walking equipment.

“I got to know the team as it was always the same people visiting and I felt that I could trust them,” said Margaret.

The re-ablement programme focused on personal care, increasing activity and outdoor mobility, so Margaret was able to walk to her local shop. Advice on diet and meal preparation led to an increase in appetite and weight gain. “The team help me want to get better and feel determined to do this,” says Margaret.

At the end of the re-ablement Margaret returned to washing independently, doing her own cleaning and laundry and going outside with her friend. Margaret has no ongoing care needs.
Supported Housing
Case Study: Beryl

Three years ago, Beryl moved into her own flat after living in her family home, so this was a big change for her.

When she was living in her family home, Beryl spent her days going to a day service for people with learning disabilities. She had been going to the same place for almost 30 years. She’d always wanted to have her own house and was able to choose where she lived and is now living close to people she knows and the people who help her.

After Beryl moved into her new house, she had support for a short time to help her pay the bills and develop her cooking skills, all of which she can now do for herself. She has good neighbours and has just ordered some garden furniture so she can sit outside in the garden.

“I am very happy living here. I can decide what I do during the day and when I do it,” said Beryl. “I still go to the day service, but only one day a week where I can stay in touch with friends.”

Beryl now goes to a local drop in centre where she has lunch and meets up with other people. She can choose what time she gets there and what time she leaves. She recently went on a coach trip to the seaside and goes to evening clubs where she enjoys going out for meals, to the cinema and ten pin bowling.

“After having some travel training I can now visit my family in Essex for holidays, which is something I never did before,” said Beryl. “Moving into here has been a big change for me, but I am happy here and am enjoying my life.”
Direct Payments and Education
Case Study: Omar - anonymous

Omar has suffered from a debilitating mental illness for a number of years. The nature of this illness contributed to the loss of his wife and family.

Omar has a post-graduate level qualification from his home country, but the onset of mental illness has led to an inability to use his education. For the last several years, Omar has been living in a mental health residential hostel, attempting to work his way back to sufficient skill levels to re-enter the community and live independently again.

After an extended period of taking medication and having worked on his personal and domestic skills, Omar felt increasingly confident to re-enter education. His desire was to work towards becoming an adult education teacher.

Assessments were conducted and an introductory course of study was identified. Applications were approved for Direct Payments that enabled him to pay study fees and for a computer.

Omar’s studies are continuing at this time. With the help of an education advisor, he has made an application to a University to study for an Adult Education qualification.

Omar says that as a consequence of his studies, his self-confidence is improving and he feels more involved in the community. He says he is feeling less isolated and hopeless and has an increasing perception of normality again. Omar says he feels that his relationship with his family has improved since his sense of purpose and self-worth has developed.
Direct Payments and Exercise
Case Study: Martin - anonymous

Martin first experienced mental illness in January 2003 while he was happily living with his wife and young daughter. Prior to becoming ill, Martin was slim, fit and had a successful career in advertising. Since becoming ill, Martin lost a succession of jobs, his marriage broke down, he experienced frequent relapses into mental illness and was forcibly admitted to psychiatric units.

During the initial few years of his illness, Martin struggled with the concept of mental illness and his frequent hospital admissions led to immense weight gain, as well as a severely damaged sense of self-worth and hopelessness.

Discussions with Martin on ways to work his way out of his situation led to Direct Payments being applied for. Martin wanted to learn workplace skills, but understood his former career was no longer available so he began studying massage therapy.

Martin says his ongoing study of massage therapy, funded by Westminster, sparked the hope he may still be able to experience a sense of usefulness. He’d been unemployed for so long and had exhausted the free and subsidised massage studies available to him.

Initially, a single massage therapy course was funded by Direct Payments at a cost of £60 before a further £340 was approved to enable Martin to progress to a more advanced level. Unfortunately, Martin discovered he had a weak left wrist, which caused him significant pain when he performed prolonged massages so he was forced to give up his course.

However, alongside the massage courses was a Direct Payment to Martin’s local gym. Martin has been attending regularly and has increased his fitness levels and lost weight.

Martin says that it is the gym membership, with its effects upon his weight and overall fitness levels that have really benefited him. He explains his increased fitness and weight-loss have had significant effects upon his self-image and he now feels much more positive about himself.