

## Stroke survivor Brian moves on after support from Shared Lives

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If you rewind a year, Brian Lee's future looked bleak. While out walking in local woods he had a stroke and ended up in intensive care and endured a four-month hospital stay.

His health deteriorated further while in hospital as he also suffered two minor heart attacks and Brian was extremely weak.

The medical trauma left him with complete memory loss and his mobility was severely compromised- making it difficult for him to walk even short distances.

Fast forward to now and his life couldn't be more different. Thanks to the support and care he's received from the Shared Lives team and ultimately his Shared Lives carers Jeanette and Alan Eames as well as his own determination, Brian is well on the road to recovery.



He's recently managed to plan and go on holiday to Thailand and has just moved out to his own flat.

"Jeanette and Alan have helped me through it all. I was decrepit feeble creature when I arrived at their home in March," said Brian.

"I couldn't walk down the drive, now I can nip up to town. I never dreamt of being so independent again when I came out hospital.

Since moving in with the Eames' family, near Okehampton, they have been there to support him every step of the way- from helping him with appointments to liaising with his friends to help him move forward and sorting his medication and preparing him for his trip to Thailand, where he visited with no support. It was paramount his carers got him ready for the trip and made sure he was able to manage all his medication.

The Shared Lives team were also on hand to make the match with the Eames family. They charity's Funding and Benefits team also maximised his benefits.

"They prepared me and made me ready for life outside," said Brian.

"The main help was with my medication, that was a key thing. With Jeanette's help there were visits to the doctors to make sure my balance of medication was right, as when I came out of hospital it was all wrong.

"I was on knock-out drops, I wasn't living life as it should be. By 11am I wanted to go back to sleep again. I spent most of my time just sleeping. It was too much and there was a real temptation not to take them.

"Jeanette got it sorted out for me."

Banking also became difficult as he struggled to remember numbers.

"If you ask me about a phone number or bank details and I wouldn't have a clue," he said.

With advise from Jeanette, they decided to change passwords to key dates that he could remember.

"That way I could do somethings myself with support," said Brian.

Once Brian - a former chef- settled in, slowly Jeanette has encouraged him to do more himself. Despite not knowing whether he'd ever regain his memory or his mobility, Brian has done his best to look forward and with Jeanette there to advise him with the help of his social worker, he has successfully found a flat in Okehampton.

"We looked at one with steps outside and I knew straight away that was unsuitable for Brian," said Jeanette.

"I can't drive, but on the flip side it saves me a fortune on car tax, petrol and insurance. I can now catch the bus as will be living right near a bus route and there is a newsagents right near my flat if I want to nip out and get a newspaper," added Brian.