

Age UK Cornwall & The Isles of Scilly

Celebrating Volunteers' Week

Jan & Mike - A day in the life



First impressions

The Sat Nav is on – this is the place we want. We ring the bell and there is no answer. We gingerly open the door and call out! There seems to be a muffled sound somewhere. We are asked to come in and walk along the hall to enter a dark, depressing room.

A small person sits in a chair with a blanket wrapped around them.

Cheerful Introductions

After cheerful introductions are made, a response of **“I don’t think you can help me”** or **“I’m not entitled to anything”** is often the norm.

We sit down and chat about the weather, a pet or a view from the window to put the individual at ease. Together, we can make a start on the forms. **Bundles of paper are on the coffee table, here we sit and troll like detectives to find the right information.**

As we start to go through the form, question by question, we get all sorts of information (*plus a few views on subjects we didn’t expect!*) this helps to fill in the gaps. **We have begun the process.**

Making progress

A little later we will return to ask more questions which will back up the significant facts. Usually, the person will feel that these are insignificant or not applicable to their situation.

Even if it takes hours to achieve this, we will do this so a problem does not become a bigger problem!!! Gradually, the trust builds between us and confessions of not being able to do several things anymore are quietly

expanded on. Admissions of depression, pain, being unable to cope and frustration are shared. **Our hearts go out to them as they sit in a prison of four walls, but by working together we help them to receive extra money that will give them a more comfortable future.**



Leaving as friends

We make moves to leave, now leaving as friends with smiles on faces, and a hope for a better future and the knowledge that there is help out there.

A bond has been formed and the days have been happier for the time spent with us. Our day too has been enriched by meeting such an interesting and lovely person in poor health or in a situation that is out of their control. We feel that we have helped in a small way. **We call goodbye, shut the door and acknowledge that we have done our very best.**

What a massive privilege this role is.

Jan & Mike Volunteer for our Information & Advice service. This service makes a huge difference to the local community. Often it makes the difference between heating or no heating, eating or not eating and staying independent.