

# Case study

## Information & Advice



*The AUKWSBH Information & Advice team offers free and confidential information and advice to everyone over 50.*

The team is able to help with everything from finding great social activities near you, to arranging help at home or working with partners to identify potential on-going care solutions. They can also help with financial issues, accessing welfare benefits and getting a blue badge.

- ✓ Partnership working
- ✓ Financial support provided
- ✓ Emotional support
- ✓ Independence maintained

\*ALL NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED

# Iris\* – meeting basic and complex needs to restore dignity

## Issues/challenges faced:

The West Sussex County Council Hub referred Iris to AUKWSBH for support with shopping. In her early 50s, she lived alone with complex health conditions, was being treated for depression and was doubly incontinent following an operation several years ago. She had lost her job due to ill health.

After gentle exploration of her life, it emerged that Iris had very little money, was unable to pay for shopping, had no income or savings and had defaulted on her mortgage repayments, resulting in debt. Her boiler didn't work, so she had no heating or hot water for 4 years, no washing machine (her clothes were soiled) and no working toilet – she used buckets. She couldn't afford incontinence products. In short, she needed a huge amount of support urgently.

## Support given:

The I&A team worked to urgently address all the issues Iris faced, helping directly and also referring internally or to external agencies where appropriate.

- A welfare food parcel was delivered.
- A winter warmth pack that contained a blanket, hot water bottle, gloves socks and a thermal cup was delivered, as was an oil filled radiator.
- An electricity top up voucher was sent to her so she could run the radiator.
- She received a food bank voucher.
- The team collected and delivered her prescriptions.
- Iris was visited by the bladder and bowel service who then delivered boxes of pads and arranged collections.
- Iris was referred to Shelter for housing advice and Citizens Advice Bureau for help with her debts.
- The team ran a benefit check and identified Iris was entitled to Universal Credit and potentially 'new style' Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, all of which the team worked to help her to claim.
- Iris was referred to the Prevention Assessment Team for a care needs assessment which was carried out. A commode was delivered because she didn't want anyone in her property.
- Iris was also referred to Arun Wellbeing for help to get her heating and hot water reinstated.

## Outcome

Sadly Iris passed away in 2020 and the cause of her death was undetermined. Despite being a heart-breaking case, the intervention of the AUKWSBH Information & Advice team meant that before her death Iris had food, warmth, medication and support with her finances.

**The team are hopeful that the support she had also allowed her to regain some dignity and feel cared for in the last months of her life.**