

## Care case study – Susannah

Legal & General's Care Concierge service was 'an absolute lifesaver' when Susannah needed help for a family member.

Uncle Robert, in his 70s, had shut himself off from his family and friends after losing his wife, Dianne.

When Susannah found out he'd been taken into hospital in October last year (2020) she and other family members tried to make contact but, still fiercely independent, Uncle Robert didn't respond.

Susannah, who lives in West Sussex, decided to jump in the car and head down to visit Robert, who lives just over 20 miles away.

She said: "Uncle Robert is my husband's uncle, but, as Robert doesn't have any children of his own, my husband is like a surrogate son to him.

"When I turned up at his flat I was really shocked. He looked like he had lost about six stone and his face was very gaunt. He'd been sent home from hospital a few days earlier with some milk, bread and baked beans, but it didn't look like he had touched any of the food. I made us both something to eat to encourage him to have something, giving him the lion's share, and he ate as if he was starving.

"In the few hours I was there he didn't talk very much, I was just getting a 'yes' or 'no' but I told him I would pop back later in the week with some shopping. I think Dianne had been the driving force in their relationship and he had just lost his way after she died and become unwell."

When Susannah returned later that week things had taken a turn for the worse, and she called the local GP for help.

"They knew Uncle Robert and someone came over and told me to ring an ambulance, as he was severely dehydrated" explained Susannah; "He had a huge bag of medication but I think he'd just been overwhelmed by it all and stopped taking it. When they got him into hospital he had a kidney infection and urinary tract infection, which were adding to his confusion."

The Covid restrictions in place meant Susannah couldn't go into the hospital with Robert and she says she drove home feeling desperately sad that she didn't know what to do.

She said: "I felt helpless. The GP told me he shouldn't be sent home from hospital without a care package in place, but I just didn't know where to start. Someone at work suggested I call Legal & General's Care Concierge service and I spoke to the most amazing woman.

"It was like counselling for me, as much as the practical help she provided. Uncle Robert isolated himself from all of us after he lost his wife. Who knows what could have happened if I hadn't just turned up on his doorstep. The lady at Care said this was a common situation. She was so calm and really listened to everything I wanted to say.

"I can't impress enough, she was an absolute lifesaver. She let me get everything off my chest then gave me some options to think about, including other people I could talk to and where we could access emergency funding, if we needed to. We talked a few times and she was absolutely amazing and stopped me panicking."

Some weeks after being discharged from hospital Robert fell outside his flat, cracking his collar bone.

Susannah said: "At that point, we thought about some kind of emergency care home, but he is a very private person and I don't think he would have liked that. I was able to get social services involved and they arranged care visits within his home, initially twice a day to make sure he was eating properly and able to take his medication. He is still having a carer visit, just in the morning, but he is doing much better now."

She added: "I can't speak highly enough of the Care Concierge service. They were there when we needed them and I don't know what we would have done without them."