

## **SUPPORT PLAN – SJ**

### **All About Me and What's Important to Me**

My name is SJ, and I would like to describe myself as a vibrant creative person who is sometimes frustrated by the things life has thrown in my direction. I live with my husband G in our family home where we brought up our three children. They have all grown up now and are busy in their own lives – I am very proud of all that they have achieved. I also have a pet cat who (like me!) is a very independent spirit.

The house has been adapted for me, and I have an accessible downstairs bathroom and bedroom with patio doors leading out onto a decking area where I can enjoy the sunshine and the garden. I park my new mobility scooter in the back garden on the decking so it's nice and handy when I need it. My new bedroom is great – light and airy and a good size, and I spend a lot of my time there, however, it can get far too bright and hot in the summer with the large glass windows, and so enable me to be more comfortable and use it fully, I would like to purchase some new blinds.

I am close to my large family, many of whom live nearby in the village we were all brought up in. My mother, who is in her nineties lives just down the road, and I see her regularly each week when she comes to visit and beat me at scrabble! My sister and sister-in-law are also both very important to me and I see them regularly. I am hoping that under my individual budget I will be able to come to an informal arrangement which may reward them for their support in other ways, for instance filling their car with petrol if they take me out/costs of taking them out for lunch, a fortnightly bunch of flowers, or a small gift from time to time.

I am someone who enjoys the company and stimulation of other people and have a lively interest in others. I found the Planning Live support planning day a really positive experience, which helped me to look at my life and start thinking for myself about what I want to do and to take control. It also made me think about the skills and experiences I have, and what I can do to support other people. I have been mentored by someone from the Liberation Partnership (Charlotte) as part of the process of preparing my support plan, and I would very much like to get involved with the organisation to support someone else going forward with a budget in the future. I am hopeful of maybe doing some voluntary work along these lines, as I miss being a colleague in a work environment and I think I have something useful to give. One of the challenges that Charlotte set me was to find out more about the Partners in Policymaking course and join it to find out more about the ways I can get involved and make a difference.

One of my lifelong interests and pursuits has been art; I was a sculptor and artist in the past. I miss the company of other creative people with a similar outlook and I would like to find a way of fulfilling my artistic interests again. To this end, I've ordered the local adult education prospectuses to have a look at what art courses they are running from September, and hope to be able to find something

regular to meet this need. I'd also like to spend some of my individual budget on art materials to engage in some creative pastimes at home.

I have a number of other interests too, and a background in teaching children and voluntary sector management. Throughout my life I have had a keen interest in learning new things and I have an Open University Degree in biological science which I completed in 1990. Another of my interests is music, and I very much enjoy jazz; since attending my support planning day, I felt inspired to act upon this and joined the U3A group which meets locally once a week. I've enjoyed appreciating the music and getting to know some new people – G takes me along and sits in the car since he doesn't like jazz!

### **What Do I Want to Change?**

Unfortunately, a number of things in my life aren't working so well at the moment; my relationship with G has been under stress due to a number of factors, including my impairment, and I think for both our sakes' I need to find the company and stimulation of other people to give us both some space and time apart. He provides a lot of physical care and support for me at the moment, and this works well, as the care staff I have from the agency currently arranged as a direct service by ECC are not able to do practical things like transfer me, and as I do not want to use a hoist most of the time, this suits me well. To make sure that G keeps himself safe and well whilst managing some of the physical tasks for me, he will be going on a lifting and handling course soon.

I would, however, like to employ a new PA to provide me with some much needed female company and support. Ideally I'd like to find someone who shares my passion for Mah Jong (there's a local club run by the U3A which meets locally once a week that I'd like to go back to!). I realise that, even with a regular PA and support from family and friends, there may be occasions that nobody else is in the house, and this could place me in a vulnerable position. Jo (my Social Worker) has spoken with me about getting a Care Line put in, which I agree is a very good idea; although I have a mobile phone and can get hold of G easily, I think having something about my person which I can just press once would be more practical, and provide me and G with greater peace of mind. I would like to put the costs of this service onto my individual budget.

I'm also very bored and frustrated with other areas of my life at the moment – I don't get out very much at all, although I have recently purchased a new bright red mobility scooter which I have enjoyed going out on a few times already, and I hope to do this more frequently to get a bit more freedom. I have made an independent arrangement to pay for this scooter, but I would like to transfer the costs to my individual budget as I anticipate being able to use it regularly to get out and about more locally, perhaps up the shops or to see family, which is a big part of how I'd like my future to look.

Another thing which doesn't work so well is my swimming. I really enjoy swimming, and in the past I was very athletic – I regularly swam 5 miles, and not so long ago I did a one mile swim – once I'm in the water I'm able to swim

independently and I really enjoy it since getting about on dry land is proving ever more difficult these days. However, I am not currently able to attend my usual group since they are refurbishing the only local pool which is accessible to me. I'd like to go swimming again and have decided to look into what I can do to make this happen, maybe going with a supporter to help me.

### **What is working well**

Happily, it's not all bad news, and lots of things are working well in my life – I have very good regular support from Jacky my reflexologist, who comes fortnightly, and my homeopath, who alternates with Jacky the 'other' fortnight. I believe these therapies help me maintain my health and I find them relaxing and of great benefit. I like a nice neat garden, and I appreciate that G has a lot to do with keeping on top of the house and helping me out, so I have engaged the services of a gardener and cleaner, also on a fortnightly basis to help out in those areas of household maintenance. I would like to pay for these services with my IB.

One thing which I have found to be useful whilst spending so much time at home has been my computer. Although I find it difficult to type larger amounts, I am confident to use the internet to research new things (which has proved very useful with my support plan!) and it helps me stay in touch with family members by email – especially the children who are in different parts of the world. I would like to put the costs of my internet connection on my IB to reflect the important link with independence it provides me.

### **How Will I Be Supported and How Will I Manage my Support?**

With support from my family and friends I am confident of being able to adequately manage my individual budget. I am an independent person who knows her own mind, and I have found that being disabled has made me very determined. I realise, however, that I do need help and that I will need support to make my plans happen once I have reached my decision on things I want to do. In particular, I see my sister as being a great help and support to me in this area – she is a really organised person who will I am sure be able to get things moving in the right direction! I will also need G's continued support, and despite our current difficulties, I realise that he is a big part of making my plan happen. Being part of a big family, I can also draw on help from a wider network, and call on help from other sources too, like the Liberation Partnership or statutory services.

### **How Can I Keep Going and Stay in Control?**

I realise that these days I need support to help me stay in control of things and to manage the challenges I am faced with. Obviously G is a big support to me, although things have become more difficult between us. We have spoken honestly about the current situation and the future with my Social Worker Jo and Nicola from the IB Team, and G has agreed to continue to support me, but I realise that in order for this arrangement to work out, we need to have our own space and G needs to have a break from his caring role; to this end, Jo has

arranged for some respite care which I have now organised – I'm having 2 weeks at J L (on the weeks beginning November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 and February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2008), and I'm planning another week away later in the year, during which I hope to be doing some more extreme activities – maybe even white water rafting with a contact I have through the U3A! I realise I also need to organise other support, and have a contingency plan worked out if anything unexpected happens, like G becoming unwell or being unable to help me – he had to have an eye operation recently, and if he needed any further operations, I might need to draw on some agency support, even though I don't really like the idea of this.

Another way of me keeping control would be to take more financial control of my support needs. At the moment I receive a direct service, and I would like to have my individual budget paid to me as a monthly direct payment so that I can set up my support and organise all my plans independently. G will help me keep track of all my IB financial income/outgoings to stay on top of things, and I know I can call on help from family or friends, or Charlotte; I have been advised about the services of Essex PASS, but do not wish to use them at this time. I have also thought about the possibility of finding an independent financial advisor who could help me. I find my social worker Jo supportive and would also draw on her assistance where necessary; she has referred G and I to ILA (Essex) and an advocate will be meeting with us very soon to discuss employment issues which will provide me with the information I need to explore recruiting a new PA.

Another proactive thing I can do to get in control and stay in control is for me to keep active and widen my social networks. I feel I have been isolated and that it's time for me to get out there and do more things. This will also be good for my mental health and keep me involved and actively interested in all sorts of things; I have also agreed not to smoke any more cannabis, as using it was having a negative effect upon me.

### **What is my Action Plan?**

#### **Within 1 month**

- Contact Jane – Partners in Policymaking – Charlotte to provide contact details
- Investigate local art/sculpture courses
- Get prospectus for Harlow and Ware adult education courses
- Get blinds fitted for downstairs bedroom
- Put advert in shop for female mah jong playing PA
- Look into brokerage courses – Tony

#### **Within 6 months**

- Enrol on courses at college/U3A
- Rejoin mah jong club
- Investigate other local interest groups – eg bookclubs
- Attend art gallery/museum
- Go swimming

#### **Within 1 year**

Have more of a social life  
 Be attending Partners in Policymaking course  
 Be more involved with the Liberation Partnership

### How I will spend my Individual Budget?

<b>Resource Allocation</b>	<b>£7,578.48</b>
<b>Payment to cover Respite Care (3 weeks – client contribution already deducted, payment already received)</b>	<b>£2,364</b>

<b>Carer's one-off payment (already received)</b>	<b>£2,850</b>
---	---------------

**£12,792.48**

### Proposed items to go on budget

Mobility scooter - £48.13 per month for 3 years <i>(this has very recently been purchased)</i>	£ 577.56 pa
Cleaner £31.50 per week	£1638
Gardener £21 per fortnight	£ 546
J B reflexology £25 per fortnight	£ 650
Homeopath – every other fortnight £25	£ 650
Blinds for Sue's room <i>(fitted 25.07.07)</i>	£ 355
Petrol expenses	£ 450
U3A membership fees	£ 11
Contingency plan <i>(If G is unable to support me, agency support may be required)</i>	£ 450
College fees	£ 125
Art materials, books etc	£ 200
Outings – trips to museums, galleries, etc	£ 236
PA costs (£11 per hour 6 hours pw) <i>(covered by G's carer's payment, to enable him to take a break)</i>	£3,432
'Thank you' fund for additional family support	£ 655.92

Contribution to annual internet connection fee	£ 200
Care Line	£ 52
Start-up PA costs, recruitment & insurance	£ 200
Respite breaks	£2,364