



‘For the sake of the family’

Evie’s Story:

Evie came to Hafan Cymru at the age of 69.

Evie was raised in a children’s home and when she married and became a home-owner, she felt she was safe and secure and that her home could not be taken away from her. She trained as a nurse and practiced until she had her family. She and her husband Trevor raised their family, budgeting well enough to take their children on summer holidays to the coast in their caravan. They attended their local church on Sundays and watched their children, one by one make their way in the world.

During their retirement years after 40 years together, Evie had a fall in the garden and sustained a head injury, leaving her confused and forgetful. It was then that she was referred for support. Evie said that Trevor was finding her difficult to cope with and sometimes became angry and screamed at her. She believed he had been a good father and provider and felt very much a burden to him. She excused his hostility or indifference and often blamed herself or appeared bemused at his behaviour.

As Evie began to open up, she shared stories of long-standing abuse, physical, mental, emotional and financial. In some instances, the physical abuse was from one of her daughters, who was a ‘daddy’s girl’. She remained in the marriage in order that her children had a ‘normal’ family, remembering her childhood in an orphanage.

Things were now so bad that Trevor spent much of his time in the caravan at the coast, removing most of the food and all finances from the house. Evie minimised the abuse and accepted that Trevor had always handled all the money as he had earned it. Also, he felt that Evie was not to be trusted with money as she was irresponsible. Neither was Evie to be trusted with his car, even though she had obtained a licence decades earlier.

Eventually, Trevor moved out acquiring sheltered housing. He took all the furniture that he wanted and all the valuables that he believed belonged to him. He continued to come to and from the property and Evie struggled to become independent of him. Evie was struggling financially and found that Trevor was claiming all benefits as a married couple, leaving her short of basics such as food and heating.

Evie finally admitted that the fall in the garden was not an accident, she truly believes that Trevor pushed her.

Hafan Cymru worked with Evie to obtain her benefits independently, gain sheltered accommodation, put the house on the market, apply for a divorce, separate her finances from Trevor’s, build self-esteem, confidence and friendships through groupwork and outings and to become independent of Trevor. We referred her to the Community Intervention Team and Age Concern and continue to watch her slowly grow into someone who is enjoying her life and fulfilling her potential.