

Dear Scrutiny Board

I would just like to very briefly tell you how five years ago my Mum's [REDACTED] illness changed not just her life and mine, but everyone around us and how then finding the best dementia/Alzheimer's care provider in Leeds has allowed us to move from a very challenging and difficult cope with environment changed into a positive environment which has improved my Mum's health and wellbeing as well as mine.

My mum has always been 'the quiet one' a true introvert with a tradition relationship with my dad 'in charge', so on reflection the way he cope with Mum's Alzheimer's meant no one else was even aware of it. That was until the shocking day on Friday 9 September 2011 when at the request of my dad, who was physically disabled following a series of strokes 12 years previously, ask me to take my mum to the doctors as 'she was driving him mad as she couldn't remember anything!' We chatted normally before going in to see the doctor. Then came the test. My poor mum, bless her she didn't know what day it was never mind what century we were in! I was in a state of shock and she couldn't even remember we had been to the doctors. Further tests followed and in March 2012 she was finally diagnosed with Alzheimer's, which the doctor said she had already had for about four years.

Unfortunately at the same time my dad became very, very ill and ended up in hospital. My Mum's world was turned upside down and as it became clear just how dependant she had been on my dad for her memory. My already very busy life became chaos as I needed to include time to care for my mum and visit my dad in hospital. After a few weeks it was clear dad wasn't coming home anytime soon and my juggling of life wasn't working. With both parents very ill, in very different ways, my priorities had to be caring for them along with keeping my work commitments. My husband was very understanding but my young children not so much! Sadly my dad died on 29 May 2012 and that was the beginning of an even more challenging period with mum struggling to remember that her husband of 58 years had died.

The journey from then until October 2014 has been exceedingly difficult given the challenges and whilst I managed to care for my mum, as was my dad's dying wish my world and everything around me slowly fell apart and my health deteriorated with the exhaustion of it all.

In October 2014 my mum became exceedingly ill and we spent almost three months in hospital. (I say we as by this point it was as if mum and I were one.) We both knew we could no longer continue lurching from crisis to crisis. Having asked mum what she wanted from a new home, with 24/7 care, I diligently visited care homes across Leeds in the main they were shiny and new with lovely en-suites however there were only two who confidently provided satisfactory answers when I asked about the specific care they could give my mum in particular for her Alzheimer's. I then looked at CQC reports only to be very disappointed with how bad they were the only place that was good was The Green. I used a scoring system and although The Green wasn't shiny and new it was head and shoulders above everywhere else in every other aspect. Best of all my mum and I knew the staff from my mum attending The Green Day Centre. And we had both experienced their excellent standards of care.

Mum moved into The Green as I knew this was the best and only place for my her. Even though mum wanted to be at The Green she did have times during the first few weeks when she got very upset as she wanted to return to her home of over 40 years. These were difficult times but the staff were excellent at caring for and reassuring mum and helping me cope with a very difficult period.

During the almost two years my mum has been at The Green I cannot praise them enough for everything they have done. I visit my mum every day and sometimes at very strange times and I have never seen anything other than kind, caring, happy and truly motivated staff at all levels. When my mum went to live at The Green, due to her health problems the doctors didn't expect her to live beyond a few months. However, the expectational care she received means she is living happily in a place she loves and calls home.

Leeds City Council should be proud of this excellent facility and be building upon the fantastic work it does by using it as a centre of excellence.

To close The Green would be a travesty and for many of the residents at The Green, who are vulnerable, fragile and unable to cope with change, it would be a death sentence.

I hope having heard our story you will see keeping The Green open is the best thing for its current residents and in the future for people across Leeds who are suffering with the terrible diseases effecting the memory and who are at the point of needing care 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. As before we know it it could be all of us!

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