

Case Study – Barbara

64-year-old Barbara joined the police when she was 18 but her career was cut dramatically short following an on-duty road traffic accident. Barbara had been standing in the back of an ambulance, escorting someone to hospital, when it was struck by another vehicle. She received numerous injuries that day, some of which were not picked up on until several months later.

“I had a head injury which needed twenty-two stitches and I was unconscious for a couple of days afterwards”

Barbara left the service after the accident. Being a single mum she found alternative work to keep herself and her son going, but after a second car accident in 1997 she wasn't able to work at all. As time went on, Barbara's deteriorating health brought more challenges to overcome.

“It's very painful. I have been in hospital because of it. It can be quite frightening and basically means I have to stay at home because sometimes I can't do very much.”

Barbara has been registered with the Police Dependents' Trust since 1997 and as well as helping her, we have been able to provide financial support for her son during his university education. In May 2016 when Barbara put in another request for help, the Trust's Volunteer Manager, Claire Craigie visited to check how she was getting on and what more the organisation could be doing to support her.

“Having my own money, the independence it gives you is important. If you've always known independence, it's very hard to give it up”

Barbara is a fiercely independent woman, and only really wanted enough for her contribution to the kitchen renovations her partner had paid for.

“He's very understanding and does an awful lot which I'm grateful for... having the kitchen redone is already making such a difference, I have an oven and microwave at eye level so don't have to bend, everything's at hand which makes it much easier.”

But when Barbara told Claire they were thinking of redoing the bathroom next, as she was struggling to get in and out of the bath due to her injuries, Claire knew this was something the Trust could help with. Barbara explained that the council had put a shower in, however this was above the bath, which she could no longer step in and out of.

Barbara has been encouraged to submit an application and quotes for the bathroom adaptations to enable her to live independently.

“It will be wonderful. I can't get in and out of the bath and stepping over is a bit of a challenge so having a walk in shower will be amazing for me.”

“To other people in a similar position I would say the worst thing anyone can say is no, you have a 50/50 chance and if help is available you should take it. I was surprised in the beginning when the Police Dependents' Trust helped, but it lifted a weight of my shoulder – it was a miracle actually. So don't be proud.”