

Carers need care too

Dorothy McTague from Darwen is reaching out to other carers to get the support they need.

Her husband Alan (72) has vascular dementia, which means he has memory loss and a decreasing ability to perform tasks in everyday life, but also suffers small strokes, which further affect his memory.



It is the second most common form of dementia after Alzheimer's disease in older people.

Alan was diagnosed three years ago and Dorothy is now his full-time carer and has been since his condition deteriorated. He now needs 24-hour care in all aspects of his life.

She is now trying to help other carers to get the help they need, and are entitled to, to help them cope better with the demands of their life, through Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's adult social services and local charities who can offer support.

Both the Council's adult social services and Blackburn with Darwen Carers Service offer help to carers, provide respite opportunities and organise breaks, events and days out.

The couple recently moved back to Darwen following three years in the Ribble Valley and a year in Cumbria, to be closer to family who live in the area.

Dorothy (69) who has been married to Alan, a retired builder, for 20 years, said: "The biggest thing I miss, and I am sure other carers do as well, is that I have essentially lost my husband and my best friend. Sometimes you feel you have no one to talk to and you can feel very isolated.

"Everyone who meets Alan says he is a lovely man, and he was always so kind and wonderful, which makes it incredibly hard

"Adult Social Services and The Carers Service have been absolutely wonderful, at a time when things were really hard and I really appreciate every bit of support they offer.

"You can call them just to talk if things are getting on top of you and you feel you can't cope and they are so kind and understanding. They organise trips

out as well which are really nice. They also make sure you know about your entitlements and how to apply for them.”

“It has really helped enormously to be in touch with other carers, who are going through the same thing. I have met some wonderful people through social services and the carers service and we go for lunch and meet up which is lovely.”

Alan also currently spends three days a week at Spring Bank Court Daycare Centre in Mill Hill, Blackburn, which offers activities and care for mentally or physically frail older people who live in their own homes or with a carer.

Cllr Mohammed Khan, the Council’s executive member for adult social care, said: “The selfless job done by carers all over the borough needs to be recognised more and one way of doing this is for them to access more care through Council services which can be invaluable.

“I hope all carers in Blackburn with Darwen will make contact with adult social services and the carers service who will be able to offer them the assistance and help they deserve.”

“I would like to pay tribute to those individuals who devote their time and energy to look after a family member and friend or love one. They have demonstrated outstanding excellence within their field of work.”