

# Learn from Others

## Case Study



### Jason Vaughan & The Grey Matter Group

#### Using online assessments enabled me to demonstrate that my PA provides excellent support and recognise her skills and abilities

I am one of the founding members and chairman of the Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC). I am committed to promoting rights and independence for people with disabilities. I live independently and want everyone else to have the opportunity to live an independent and enjoyable life. SILC was set up to support disabled people to make a difference and promote their independence. I am always looking for new ways to do this.

My childhood was no different to anyone else's. Although I wasn't able to get around like my siblings or communicate as easily as them. I was never wrapped up in cotton wool and did everything they did. I got my own flat as soon as I could and have lived here for 18 years. I am well known around town and love to meet new people when I go to the pub or snooker club.

I don't want my PA, who supports me with my meetings and activities during the day, to also provide my personal care at home. Just like anyone else I want to keep these areas of my life separate so I have different PA's. It is important to me that my PA really understands and shares my views on promoting independence and can support me to communicate them to others.

I attend a wide variety of meetings, boards and networking events to promote independence for disabled people. Sometimes this can be an issue when there is a difference of opinion, but I am used to standing up for myself. The challenge is to get other people to listen and understand, for example, I noticed that the payments for my hydrotherapy didn't seem right. After some investigating it turned out that there was something wrong with the contract but it took 2 years before someone listened and did something about it.



"Independence is the most important thing for me and listening is the starting point."

#### It's all about communication

Vern has worked for me for 12 years as my PA during the day. She has learnt how I use my word board of key words and an alphabet which I can spell words out with. Vern often knows what I want to say from just a couple of words and this really helps as she can quickly tell others what I want to say. If I see someone with a disability when we are out I go over with Vern and ask her to tell them about SILC and see if they would like to find out more about how we can support them.

It frustrates me when people complain about things and don't do anything to try and put them right. Disabled people can be just as lazy as anyone else and keeping things simple is always my starting point.

I met Eddie Stevens from the Grey Matter Group at SILC. He came to our 'Good Boss Training' and Peer Support Group to show us the online assessment package and e-Learning to use with PA's. The questions are mapped against the Common Induction Standards and looked like a quick and easy way to see what PA's know and understand about promoting independence.

Some of the questions were not as straightforward as we were expecting and we had some in-depth discussions about which ones were right. When we got to the results page we were surprised that we had only got 54% and definitely felt that some of our choices were correct. I liked the way that we could personalise our responses and show how things need to work for me.



Vern and I took the assessments together on my Dynavox, which has an internet browser built into it.

We went through the assessments with Eddie and used the 'add evidence' features to explain what we had talked about. The assessments allowed me to use this evidence to mark the questions as correct and quickly build the score towards 100%.

As we were going through the results with Eddie it was really encouraging to hear just how much we had got right. It shows that Vern really does know and understand as much as I thought she did. This evidence will be really useful when I meet with my Care Manager from the Council to show that my Direct Payment is being spent on the right things and that my PA is providing valuable support.

After the initial surprise at only getting 54%, Vern found the feedback and opportunity to think things through really helpful. I know Vern is fantastic and this has helped both of us to understand a little more about how we can support other people to achieve a more independent and fulfilled life.



I use a Possum system to control my phone, front door, call system and various electrical devices which enable me to live independently.

I have only recently got my Dynavox and have used it to give presentations at meetings; however, I still use my communications board for my day to day communications. I am going to look into the funding that is available for PA's to access training and see if there is something that might be available so Vern and I can learn how to make better use of my Dynavox.

I am looking forward to letting other people know about the 500 free licences to the online resources that Skills for Care have funded through The Grey Matter Group. Anything they can use to ensure their PA's support them properly is really helpful.

**The Grey Matter Group has developed the online assessments through [CIS-Assessment.co.uk](http://CIS-Assessment.co.uk) and e-Learning through [LogonToCare.org.uk](http://LogonToCare.org.uk) as part of a project funded by Skills for Care to deliver learning provision to support personal assistants and individual employers. This includes 500 free licences for Individual Employers and their PA's to use. If you would like to find out more or try them for yourself please complete the contact us form on [www.tgmgroup.net](http://www.tgmgroup.net)**