



Case study three

Susan



My name is Susan and I look after my partner Grace. She's 82 and I'm the youngest of the two of us being just 70. Grace isn't too good. She fell and went into hospital and she's in a care home now. It was like a stepdown from the hospital. A rehabilitation bed they called it. Before she fell we managed. I cared for Grace, I'd help her to dress and to bath and to use the toilet, I do all the cooking too. We were independent until she went into hospital, that's changed.

Actually we've always been independent. When we were young we travelled all over the world and the friends we had in every place you could imagine. We don't have children, lots of nieces and nephews though. We're not supposed to have favourites, are we? But Graham is my favourite nephew and we're very close. I talk to him a lot. Grace's family have been a bit difficult about her being a lesbian. Her brother Clive he never agreed with it. A very difficult man.

Grace always used to be in charge making all the big decisions and leading the way. She can get snappy and bossy with me these days if I don't do things the way she would have or if I suggest something she thinks is stupid and she shouts. You should hear her in that care home if they get it wrong. She's been in there six weeks now for rehabilitation and needs help with walking and the washing and whatnot, needs checking on at night.

It doesn't stop for me you know. All the while she's been in the care home and in hospital I've gone in every day and if I can I take her to the loo or help her shower. It's important to me that I'm still there for her. I don't want to let her down. She calls me often, a few times a day, "Can you get this? Have you remembered that?" and she's still good on the text asking for things.

It was exhausting looking after her at home. We had a meeting, a multidisciplinary assessment they called it and I talked about that I might not be able to have her home. Supposing she fell again? It's too much for me. I felt so guilty to say that I couldn't care for her. Anyway, Grace has agreed to trial the care home for three months. I do worry, we're not civil partners or any of those things. It all came a bit later in the day for us so I've got no legal right to say what happens to Grace, no power of attorney, no rights at all. What if Clive has his say? I'm worried he'll say no to the care home and try to make me manage at home. Maybe he has a point. How are we going to pay for the care home? That's anyone's guess. How much does it cost I wonder? I've had so many worries and now I've got an assessment and it feels like they might be able to help me. I hope so. I just want the best for my Grace.