

Case Study - Return to Work

Mr Y was a 21 year old who was working on a demolition site. He was standing in front of a wall when it suddenly collapsed and fell on top of him. An ambulance was called and Mr Smith was taken to hospital and diagnosed with fractures to both arms and legs and a spinal injury.

He was admitted and treated in hospital for several weeks until he was finally discharged home to be cared for by his mother.

Mr Y's mum was a single parent who had a full time job and was finding it very difficult to look after her son and work, so she spoke to their solicitor and explained her predicament.

The solicitor contacted a Rehabilitation Case Management Company and asked them to arrange an Immediate Needs Assessment for Mr Y.

The Case Manager arrived at Mr Y's house to find him sleeping in the lounge on a makeshift bed. He had also been using a commode, which his mother was doubling up to use as a wheelchair to transport him around the house. The house had a small kitchen and a small lounge. There wasn't a bathroom downstairs and Mr Y's mum was wheeling him to the kitchen sink so he could wash and clean his teeth.

Mr Y was wearing a neck brace, he had one of his legs in plaster and his left arm was in a sling. He was also very drowsy and disorientated due to the pain killers he was taking.

The Case Manager spoke to Mr Y and his mother and listened to their concerns and frustrations. Due to his injuries Mr Y had been transferred to a hospital 50 miles away from their home and was still having regular treatment at the hospital. His mum was employed full time and whilst her employers had been supportive, they were getting concerned about the length of time she had taken off work.

Mr Y explained he was getting frustrated being stuck in the house all day and that he had little privacy. He has not been able to spend time with his friends or his girlfriend since the accident.

Following the discussion the Case Manager carried out an assessment at Mr Y's house. She thought purchasing a wheelchair for Mr Y would be useful as he would use this to be transported around the home. She also arranged for him to have a mobile ramp to put over the steps into the house. The ramp was such it could be transported in a bag, so Mr Y could take it with him when he left the house, so problems wouldn't arise for him or his family if somewhere wasn't disability friendly.

To help Mr Y get to and from appointments, the Case Manager organised a taxi account for him. It was agreed that this would also be used in moderation to go and see his friends and his girlfriend.

One of Mr Y's biggest problems was his lack of privacy, He hated sleeping in the lounge and was unable to get to the bathroom independently. With this in mind the Case Manager knew the best solution would be for Mr Y to be able to get up the stairs. She made an assessment of the house and felt the best solution would be a temporary stair lift as she knew in the long term Mr Y would be able to manage independently.

The Case Manager communicated regularly with Mr Y and his treating doctors to monitor his progress. As he gradually began to recover, further services were implemented to help with his rehabilitation. Whilst he was receiving physiotherapy on the NHS it was agreed extra treatment would help accelerate his recovery.

This was arranged in conjunction with gym membership, which enabled him to work out in his own time and regain his physical strength.

Eventually, Mr Y's recovery reached a plateau and he began to think about his future and his career. He discussed this with the Case Manager. The Case Manager had been in touch with his employers since the accident and asked Mr Y how he felt about going back to work for them. Mr Y was a little apprehensive because he had not spoken to his employer in several months and thought they may frown upon him for submitting a personal injury claim against the company.

He explained how he has always loved his job but thought the physical aspects may prove to be a problem. Mr Y agreed for the Case Manager to contact his employers.

The Case Manger arranged to meet the employer and view the site. The employer was keen for Mr Y to return to work as he was a valued employee. The employer was sympathetic with regard to the physical aspects of the job. Following a tour of the site, a role working in reception was identified, and the employer agreed Mr Y would be able to work there until he was physically fit enough to return to his previous role.

The Case Manager did an assessment of the job and sent it to Mr Y consultant for clarity. The Consultant responded and explained that Mr Y was going to require further surgery to his leg and would need to wear a frame for several months, but agreed once the frame was in place and providing the access to reception was safe Mr Y could return to work in a part time capacity.

Mr Y had his surgery and returned to work on a part time basis with the frame in place. The hours he worked fitted in with his hospital appointments and physiotherapy.

He continued to make a gradual recovery and eventually once the frame was removed increased his hours, and eventually regained his confidence and was able to return to his full time position.