

## My experience of observing Delirium

My first experience of Delirium was when my husband had hallucinations. He reported that there were people on top of the fitted wardrobe. Realistically, this was impossible as there was only a small gap of 10cm beneath the ceiling. On that occasion, I was able to use distraction by offering to read from a book. As he could no longer read due to his Dementia, he was very pleased to accept this and it brought him back to reality.

The second occasion he experienced Delirium was when I had gone out on an errand. I received a phone call from an off duty police officer, reporting that my husband was wondering around a local road, carrying a large suitcase, was very confused and agitated. A neighbour telephoned her family member (the police officer) to attend. My husband was carrying one walking boot with the handsfree telephone inside. He had taken my husband to the GP then telephoned me. I would have preferred to be contacted first of all, as the GP was unable to help. She sent him off to perform a urine sample, an impossible task for him, to ascertain a urine infection. I believe the lack of hydration was the cause of the Delirium.

The third occasion was more serious, as my husband did not recognise me and believed I was there to harm him. We had registered with the ambulance service to inform them of the Dementia diagnosis so that any crew in attendance were aware. Instead, when I telephoned 999 to ask for an ambulance, the situation was misinterpreted. The ambulance arrived on blues and insisted going to hospital. The ambulance crew forbade me to go to hospital in the same ambulance as my husband, and phoned for a second crew. With none, available, I was taken in the back of the police van! We were both assessed in hospital and allowed home. Thinking about it now, I understand that the ambulance and police personnel are often called out to incidents. I believe that some education about the effects of the condition Delirium would help them in the future.

**Ruth Turner (Stockport).** I work as a volunteer after nearly 30 years in the NHS, where I worked with all levels of service providers. I gained extensive knowledge about dementia through my experience as a carer for my husband, who was diagnosed with Early Onset Alzheimer's Disease. I am the Chair of the Greater Manchester Dementia Carers Expert Group, working with Dementia United. In my

role as Chair, I attend the Dementia United Strategic Board as a carer representative with lived experience, as well as the Locality Information Forum meetings. I have several areas of special interest and am part of multiple focus groups with Dementia United, where I contribute to compiling guidelines for people living with dementia and their carers. Additionally, I am a local representative for the Alzheimer's Society and a member of three hospital steering groups—the Dementia Steering Group, the Frailty Group, and the End of Life Group—providing carer input to their work. I am also a member of the Healthwatch Steering Monitoring Group and the Lived Experience Panel. I am passionate about helping to improve services for people living with dementia and their carers. I attend groups to support both carers and those who have lost their loved ones to dementia. Additionally, I am qualified in holistic therapies and have used these skills to help those with dementia and their carers.