

Helping a family get through a difficult time

Why were we needed?

Several months after being assured by a GP that the pain in his arm and shoulder was 'nothing serious', Matt was diagnosed with cancer. At the same time, Matt and his fiancée, Amy, became aware that Amy was expecting a baby.

Amy and Matt's plan to be married and buy their first home was upended by the devastating news of Matt's diagnosis. Instead, Amy, Matt and Amy's daughter Scarlett had to embark on a very different and difficult new path.

Matt's condition prevented him from working and the money he'd saved for a housing deposit had to be spent on cancer care. His diagnosis also made it hard to get a mortgage.

Matt and Amy asked for help with the combined matters of Matt's diagnosis, their complicated financial situation, and how Amy, Matt's stepdaughter Scarlett, and the baby would manage once Matt was gone.

Shortly after the couple married, Matt succumbed to cancer, leaving a widow, a daughter, and a tiny baby behind.

Our branch's Macmillan Welfare Rights team is funded by Macmillan and aims to create better outcomes for clients and their families during the most difficult times.

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

You can contact the Macmillan Welfare Rights Team directly, by calling: 01225 303819

The team works with the NHS and other health sector organisations and has additional funding support from:



What difference did we make?

Facing a cancer diagnosis is an overwhelming challenge in itself, before undergoing chemotherapy or surgery. Add on the frustration of benefits claims, concerns of future finances, and caring for a newborn, and you have a truly worrying situation.

We took away Matt and Amys' financial worries so they could focus on making the most of the time they had together, and we're keeping our promise to Matt to help his family now that he's moved on.

How did we help?

Karen and her specialist team at Citizens Advice, help people suffering from chronic or life-limiting conditions. Before Covid-19 restrictions, Matt, Amy and Scarlett met with Karen to plan how the family's finances would change as Matt's condition developed.

Then, we helped Matt to claim all the benefits he was entitled to and gave the family remote support whenever they needed it, throughout lockdowns.

After Matt died, we kept our promise to him and continued to help his family. We were always there to listen and helped Amy move onto benefits in her name, and claim bereavement benefits and a funeral grant.

During this time, Amy applied for Universal Credit. Her anguish was compounded by an online form that did not cater to those who were recently bereaved. The form forced her to identify as 'single', rather than 'widowed'. We reported this social policy issue to the DWP who are looking into it.

We continue to offer Amy and the children our support in whatever way we can.

You can support our charity or find out more about the services we provide by visiting our website

www.citizensadvicebanes.org.uk

If you have an issue you'd like help with call our Adviceline

0344 848 7919

(Freephone) 08082787897

Mon to Fri 9.30am - 2.30pm

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