



“ I really appreciate everything WHAM and Julia has done for me. She’s always got the time to talk and treats you as one of her family. As soon as she comes along she gets things done! She has helped me more than anyone else and I look forward to having a cup of tea and biscuit with her when lockdown has finished.”

Ted, Avonmouth

• Ted and Shirley of Avonmouth, Bristol were referred to WHAM (Warmer Homes, Advice & Money) by project partner Talking Money because their energy bills, based on suppliers’ estimated readings, were very high.

• WHAM caseworker, Julia Bowen, takes up the story ...

• I first met Ted and Shirley when they had been given estimated energy bills from EON that they felt were excessively high. We spoke about the best way to deal with this and I gave them correct meter readings which they passed to their son who spoke to EON on their behalf and had the bill reduced, saving some £612 over the year.

When the Covid-19 lockdown happened, we were starting the process of applying for Attendance Allowance for Ted who'd been admitted again to hospital after a fall. With lockdown in place, we completed the paperwork over the phone together. In due course I dropped it through their letter box for Ted to read through with his son and make any changes or add any further information he wanted to. He then signed the form and I went back to collect it and post it for him. Within a few weeks, Ted called to say his Attendance Allowance of £355 a month was in place and that he'll receive some back pay as well.

We have also applied for council tax reduction and this was approved and, again, back pay of £207 was given.

We've also discussed funeral plans. This is outside my remit but it's something Ted didn't feel comfortable talking to his immediate family about. With a bit of research on the internet I was able to answer the questions he had, and he's now able to plan for the future.

As both are in a vulnerable group and as I am working in the food bank around the corner from them, I've popped around regularly to just check in. It's been nice to chat from the pavement and make sure that they are as well as possible and that they have been able to get their medications, shopping and so on.

All in all, we chat lots and we are looking forward to having a cuppa and biscuit when we are able to get together again when the Covid-19 crisis is over.



Julia Bowen

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Julia is one of the nicest people I've ever been in contact with. She sits and listens with patience and without interrupting, and then suggests things that can be done to help. I'd had a previous bad experience with a financial company who my energy company put me in touch with. They said I was spending too much on food (£100 per month) and that they couldn't help me.



Julia was entirely different, she got my council tax dropped down and helped me get an attendance allowance benefit. She's now going to help me get a quote for getting a shower in my bathroom.”

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