

Getting it right

Assessments for black and minority ethnic carers and service users

Supplementary written material for Mr and Mrs Choy — part three

In addition to a carer's assessment being undertaken, a community care assessment has also been carried out for Mrs Choy. There is general agreement that daycare would be beneficial for Mr Choy in terms of providing a break from caring and for providing Mrs Choy with additional stimulus.

The Chinese worker is able to identify a voluntary sector daycare provider who is willing to work with the Carers Centre to provide an individual and culturally competent placement for Mrs Choy. This will entail providing training to the daycare staff on aspects of Chinese culture, developing a phrase book to use as a communication tool and providing a Chinese volunteer to accompany Mrs Choy on the minibus and at the daycare centre.

Mrs Choy is introduced to the daycare service gradually and settles in well. She appears to enjoy the activities that are provided and Mr Choy is reassured that his wife is being well looked after. In fact the experience is so positive that Mr Choy asks for the hours to be increased from one half day to one full day.

The Chinese worker has also been able to secure funding for Mr Choy to receive music lessons from a Chinese tutor. He is delighted with this as he is able to pursue his own interests. Mr and Mrs Choy also attend the monthly support group meetings run by the Carers Centre. As a result of the assessments, the social work department will also provide a domiciliary homecare service.

Mrs Choy's dementia has become more advanced and a neighbour finds her wandering in the street in a distressed state. She has also become disruptive in the mini bus that takes her to the daycare centre. Mr Choy's sight has deteriorated to such an extent that he is nearly knocked down by a car that he did not see. He is referred to the hospital and undergoes an operation for the removal of cataracts. The operation is a

success but he is advised that he needs to rest and not undertake any strenuous tasks. He is very worried about how he will cope with looking after his wife.

The homecare worker is experiencing practical difficulties in providing personal care to Mrs Choy due to her mobility problems. A referral is made to the occupational therapist and a bathing stool is provided. Mrs Choy's mobility problems continue to worsen and she is once again admitted to hospital. She remains in hospital for two months.

Prior to her discharge, a case conference is convened and the possibility of nursing home care is raised with the family. Mr Choy is adamant that he wants to continue to provide care for his wife at home. A substantial package of care is agreed. Agency care staff are to visit Mrs Choy four times a day and a Chinese voluntary sector organisation has agreed to provide a sitter service.

Within two weeks the care package has broken down as the agency feels that Mrs Choy's needs outweigh the level of service being provided. An urgent case review is convened and it is agreed that it is no longer feasible or desirable for Mr Choy to continue to provide care at home. Mrs Choy is temporarily placed in a nursing home until a vacancy arises at Mr Choy's preferred choice of home.

After three months a place becomes available and Mrs Choy is transferred to a nursing home nearer to Mr Choy. Initially Mr Choy and his son are pleased to see Mrs Choy settled but as her stay progresses, they begin to identify a number of concerns to the Chinese worker. They both feel that Mrs Choy is not being sufficiently stimulated by the care staff and that she is often left on her own. Her weight has also dropped and Mr Choy is concerned that she is not getting enough to eat. He has started to cook meals for her at home and visits the nursing home three times a day to feed her.

With the assistance of the Chinese worker improvements are suggested and implemented and Mr Choy is able to settle down into a routine that he is comfortable with.