

THE IMPACT OF PARKINSON'S ON OUR MONEY



Elizabeth Taylor, whose husband has Parkinson's, talks about the impact her husband's diagnosis has had on them and their finances.

"It was a worrying and uncertain time when Bob was first diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1998. We knew it would have a big impact on our life. Naturally, our biggest worry became Bob's health. Speaking to other carers helped me realise we were not alone and that really helped us both.

Concerns about money

"Finance is obviously an important consideration. Bob was unable to work and we lost a good salary. Both of his pensions had to be frozen as we could no longer afford to pay into them, so the future looked very uncertain. I had to become the main breadwinner. This worried me, as I hadn't worked for a few years while bringing up our son. I had to find a job, and with no career at 40, that wasn't an exciting prospect.

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"I enrolled at college and spent a year studying for a legal and medical secretarial diploma. A few weeks after it finished I joined the Financial Ombudsman Service as a temporary worker.

A problem with life insurance

"Working at the ombudsman meant I knew where to turn when a problem came up. We faced a specific issue with Bob's life insurance, when the

insurers decided they no longer wanted to insure him. We fought this, but the insurer still refused.

"Luckily, with where I work, we knew we did not have to accept the insurer's final word and we could take the complaint to the ombudsman service. They listened to our concerns and decided that the insurer was acting unreasonably and told them to reinstate the policy.

Adapting to the challenges

"Problems will crop up, but it's crucial to know where you can turn to get them sorted.

"I think you learn to adapt to what's thrown at you in life – and we certainly have. It's far better to concentrate on finding the best solution for the problems that you face, rather than sitting and worrying about them. There is help and support available for people who have been diagnosed and their loved ones, it's just about finding the right places to go.

"With my work and home commitments I make sure I stay organised and plan carefully. My manager at work has always been very flexible with my working hours and understands that Bob comes first.

"Simple things like poor mobility mean Bob can feel the cold more, especially when he 'freezes' – when he stops moving suddenly and is unable to get mobile again. So the heating can still be on in July if it's cold! We also have to pay for prescriptions for Parkinson's medication. We lost a salary and the security of a pension for later in life, so it's important to try and save a little for our future comfort too, if we can. Parkinson's had a huge impact on our financial situation, but with a bit of careful budgeting, we get by."



Getting problems with financial companies sorted

As Elizabeth says on the previous page, being diagnosed with Parkinson's can bring many uncertainties. This can include worries about money and financial matters.

If you experience problems with a financial company, such as a bank or insurer, it can be difficult to know what to do. But the Financial Ombudsman Service can help.

The Financial Ombudsman Service is an independent, impartial expert that was set up by the UK government to help people who have a problem they can't sort out with their bank, insurance company or finance firm. The service is free of charge to consumers.

The Financial Ombudsman Service offers these top tips for dealing with a financial complaint:

- If you think you might have a financial problem or find yourself struggling, talk to the business involved straight away. It should be able to help.
- Don't ignore a problem, as it won't go away on its own.

- Get it clear in your own head what the reason for your complaint is, and what you want the business to do to put it right.
- Keep a copy of any letters you send to the business and a note of any phone calls you make, including names of anyone you speak to.
- If you have a financial problem you can't get sorted with the bank or insurer, contact the Financial Ombudsman Service. If you're not sure whether it's an issue they can deal with, just give their helpline a call and ask.
- Tell the Financial Ombudsman Service if you have Parkinson's or if you're a carer. They'll be able to help you fill in the complaint form and it helps if they know everything about your circumstances.

Financial Ombudsman Service
0300 123 9123
www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk

For further information and support about money and employment, call the Parkinson's UK helpline on **0808 800 0303** or visit our website at **parkinsons.org.uk/workandmoney** ■