



Christmas rescued for a bereaved family in Northfield

Dad is a bereaved single father of 3 boys aged 6, 8 and 11. Dad came to the Northfield Community Partnership via the Early Help hotline, initially asking for a food parcel. Mum had died 9 weeks prior to this and he had had to stop working. He was in transition to universal credit which was causing financial issues.

Initially, Dad was supported with food parcels, warm home vouchers, £50 food assistance grant and a full benefits check. Following this initial help, he has had ongoing support to access legal advice to gain parental responsibility of the eldest child (who is not biologically his). He has his court date for the hearing and is hopeful of a positive outcome as social services has advised that it is in the child's best interests to remain with him and his siblings.

Dad was also struggling to cook meals and was really worried about feeding his children, as his wife had previously done that task. We got in touch with Gym Shark who donated fresh healthy meals, and continued to support the family with food parcels. Further to this, when restrictions allow, we have secured him a place with the Shakespeare Trust who cook and prepare fresh meals for the community on a weekly basis and where he will learn to cook for himself. Dad said that he will feel like he is giving back and it will give him some self-worth.

Christmas was looking particularly difficult for the family and Dad wanted to make it as special as possible for the children. We started an appeal for the family; different organisations including the Redeemer Church were able to donate toy vouchers, presents and a Sainsburys voucher. The family also received a Christmas hamper.

We will be continuing to work with this family, referring the children for bereavement council and building a ongoing relationship with them to support them in any way we can.

Here is the email Dad sent to the Northfield Community Partnership/Pathfinders:

When my wife passed away my whole life ended, I felt so alone looking down at my three boys and could not fathom how I was going to continue. As the days moved forward I just felt like I was keeping afloat then you guys contacted me and I really do not feel alone anymore. The kindness we have been shown at this time will never be forgotten -you have gone above and beyond to try and ease our suffering. Seeing my children smile as they see there piles getting bigger helps me realise I still have something left. You are definitely in the right job, you're a warm and caring person and it shows. I feel connected to you straight away and know that you have our backs going forward.

I will at some point need to find a way to repay you and your company if ever you need me for something please let me know I have never seen kindness like this before and I want to share some of that back.

