

Case study

Nursing and therapy joined forces to help a family 'at breaking point' after their father suffered a series of falls at home.

The two disciplines work together in an integrated way for one of the two neighbourhood teams in Peterborough to ensure patients get holistic care.

Anna Thomas, Advanced Community Nurse Practitioner, said: "The patient needed a lot of support at home and as he was diabetic the district nursing team was regularly visiting to ensure he received his insulin injections.

"Unfortunately, in addition to this he suffered a series of falls from bed. His two grown up children were struggling to combine their work commitments with being family carers, and one didn't live locally, so they were convinced that bed rails were the answer to prevent him falling at night."



Maxine Lloyd (left) and Anna Thomas (right)

At this point Anna spoke with Maxine Lloyd, Advanced Practitioner Occupational Therapist, for more specialist advice.

Maxine explained: "Following an assessment it became clear that bed rails wouldn't have been safe. His family couldn't understand why we were saying no which was quite frustrating for them, but after explaining the situation we agreed to look into ordering a bariatric bed.

"This would meet his needs and also be in line with policies and procedures, and adhere to safeguarding guidelines. It also met tissue viability guidance in order to prevent pressure ulcers. We successfully applied for continuing healthcare funding and a new bed was purchased and delivered."

The patient has not suffered any falls since and is sleeping much better. The family meanwhile are also coping far better than before.

Anna added: "In this case the district nurses needed extra expertise, which because we work in such a multi-disciplinary way and developed a joint plan, had a really good outcome for the patient. We also had a student district nurse with us at the time, who said she plans to adopt our approach when she qualifies."