



## The Market Research Benevolent Association

### Case Study

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**“I can’t tell you how much it means to know someone out there actually cares.”**

This is Cassandra’s story.

Cassandra (not her real name) has been doing fieldwork in the industry for a small research firm off and on since 2003. On March 23, 2007 she had a second fainting spell, but this time she was having a meal with friends and hit her head with such force on the dining table that she dislocated her neck.

Cassandra had already visited the doctor and undergone some tests and was waiting for the results when the second attack happened. Further tests showed she was suffering from complete heart block and needed a pacemaker fitted.

The heart operation would have been enough to contend with, but Cassandra’s dislocated neck became a far more serious problem. She couldn’t hold her head up straight leaving her vision blurred and her balance affected. She found standing and walking challenging. Sitting at the computer was difficult, and driving was out of the question.

**“I have never been in debt and have always paid my way”**

Self-employed, unable to work and living on her own, Cassandra didn’t have anyone to turn to for help. ‘Luckily she had some savings but these were earmarked for her pension, but she needed to dip into the money and that really worried her. “Not only was I terrified I would lose my little house, I was also concerned about not being able to finance my retirement,” she confesses.

After her heart operation, Cassandra underwent three separate operations on her neck because the muscles were permanently in spasm. To weaken and loosen them she has been having Botox injections and then physiotherapy will be needed, so it is going to take at least another 6-9 months.

**“Last winter I only had the heat on for two weeks.”**

In addition to the discomfort and awkwardness of her condition, the financial strain Cassandra was living under was in some ways worse. Although her employer was supportive, the only financial help she could get was incapacity benefit. “I woke up every morning worrying. I had already cut down on all my expenses, but the mortgage, council tax, and utility bills still needed to be paid. Last winter, despite the cold weather, I only managed to heat my house for two weeks because I just couldn’t afford to pay the bill,” she confesses.

As things were getting more desperate for Cassandra, her employer remembered reading about the work of the MRBA and gave her the telephone number to call.



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**“It made such a difference to be able to explain my situation to someone in person.”**

“Unfortunately the MRBA turned me down initially because I had some savings, Cassandra says. “When Marian Stringer rang to give me the ‘bad news’, I explained that the savings were really in my pension, so Marian made an appointment to come and see me. “Within two weeks, the MRBA Committee had agreed to pay my mortgage for six months.

I couldn’t believe it, “Cassandra exclaims. “I was so grateful and relieved. All I wanted to do was to give Marian the biggest hug in the world! She was just wonderful – a real treasure! The funds arrived quickly – it all just happened. I was very impressed.

**Anyone with a similar problem, should just get in touch**

“Now, the stiffness in my neck is less pronounced, my vision has improved and my balance is better. I am slowly regaining my strength and stamina and have been able to work a few hours a month. Marian has been in touch to see how I am – what a caring person!

“As far as I’m concerned, the MRBA offers a wonderful service. I urge anyone with a similar problem, to give the Association a call,” Cassandra advises.

**MRBA Helpline: 0845 652 0303**

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