



Piotr, Granton Information Centre

Funded by NHS Lothian through the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, Granton Information Centre runs an advice service in GP surgeries and medical centres.



Piotr, 35, found the Granton Information Centre's GP service a lifeline when he and his family faced eviction.

Unforeseen Circumstances

Piotr explained: "Life was going along quite happily. We didn't have much money but my children were well fed and clothed and we were okay. That all changed in the space of a few weeks and I struggled to cope.

"First, my wife had to give up her work earlier than we had planned. She was expecting our third child but she became ill so she had to stop working. She had high blood pressure and we did not want to put her life, or the baby's life, in danger.

"We had been saving what we could because we knew my wife would be going on maternity leave, so it just meant being even more careful about what we spent.

"My car broke down and it needed a really expensive repair. At the time I was doing three different jobs to try to make ends meet. I needed the car for delivering parcels during the day and also to get me to my other jobs. What made things worse was that if I didn't work I didn't get paid.

"Then, the same weekend, I injured myself playing football with my son, I fell awkwardly and landed on my wrist. I had planned to cycle to one of my other jobs to keep some money coming in, but I sprained my wrist and ankle and so now I couldn't even do that.

"I kept it to myself."

With no income and debts quickly spiraling, Piotr ignored letters from his landlord. "I put it off", he explained. "Although my English is okay, the letters were difficult to understand. I did not want to worry my wife so I kept it to myself. I hoped that, once I was working again, I could sort it and things would be okay. That was wrong - things would just have got worse and worse."

Piotr accompanied his wife to an appointment to see her practice nurse, who suggested it would be worth speaking to a Granton Information Centre adviser. The adviser was in the medical centre at the time and Piotr was able to share his problem.

Good Advice

He said: "At last I felt able to share my problem with someone. She was very patient. She explained that we were facing eviction unless immediate action was taken we would have found ourselves homeless.

"It was very serious, but our adviser was so good. She made sure that we were able to stay in our home. She also worked with us to find out what benefits we were entitled to. I had thought I could not claim benefits because I was working - but I was wrong."

While Piotr and his family are not debt-free, their debts are being managed and the family are now receiving the benefits they are entitled to.

Piotr concluded: "It was a relief to talk over our problem with someone who understands the system. I had been keeping it all to myself and it made me ill. We were so close to losing our home."

