

## Francine's Story

Bradley was six years old when he was first diagnosed with a glioma, brainstem tumour. We'd went to the hospital for eye-tests, just normal eye-tests, and they'd seen...spotted something, so they sent him for a further CT scan, and that's...we were told then that he had...a brain tumour on the brainstem.

At the start, we didn't have much support. When Bradley was going through chemotherapy, we'd met a few Macmillan nurses who had come out to the house, just to show us how to flush his line and stuff and...but...nothing... We were handed leaflets and stuff. I mean, it was just all information and it was overloading at times. I would have liked somebody to sit down and talk and answer questions, the questions that I had.

Being Bradley's mother, I done what I needed to do. I flushed his line and gave him his medication and made sure he was okay, and if was sick, I sat with him while he was sick, but I never...I never broke down in front of Bradley. I done what I done, and then I went into a different room and I maybe got a wee bit upset, and it's okay to get upset, you know.

When I first started going to appointments, I could see a consultant, I could see him, I could tell he was talking to me, but I just couldn't make sense of what he was saying, and then I used to go home and get myself worked up because I was all, "Well, why didn't I ask this question?" and "Why didn't I ask that question?" So, after a while, I started recording the conversations we were having and I was able to go home and listen and get more answers to my questions.

There was a few play therapists at the hospital that were really, really good with Bradley. They really took their time and helped him, and like answered any questions he had and reassured him of his fears and, you know... So, I think they need more of that.

You need to take care of yourself, because if you're not well, then you're not fit to help them through their journey. Even like 10 minutes, even just take yourself out for a walk or like go read a book or just something to take your mind off it, so you're not constantly...it's not constantly...like you're not living it every day.

If you have your family around or your partners, just...and I mean, you feel like offloading, just offload to them.

Bradley had been...not in remission, the tumour had lay dormant for near five years, and we'd went to the hospital just like on a normal visit for a scan, and the consultant called us up. There was activity going through Bradley's tumour, there was a slight change, a slight difference in it. So, I'd got myself into a bit of a state, and was passing one day and just... I didn't even know this Cancer Lifeline place was here, met Brian, and we had a good chat, and he'd phoned round a few places for me, and when I left, I left a lot happier than when I came in.