



## SARAH SMITH

GROUP HSE DIRECTOR, MITIE AND PARENTS AND CARERS NETWORK MEMBER

### **What is your own caring story?**

Around seven years ago my mum was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. I moved back to my family home because I wanted to keep my mum in a familiar environment. When it became a struggle for my dad, we had a part time private carer, and I would help in the morning and evening.

My dad's health was declining, and the last three months of my mum's life I found particularly hard. I was juggling work priorities and caring for them both. I would get them up in the morning, washed, dressed and move them downstairs. If I was working from home, I would also prepare lunch. In the evening I would get them both ready for bed.

As the main carer for my parents, I was also the contact point for doctors, consultants, and district nurses, which added to the pressure. I tried to do it around working hours, but it wasn't always possible.

When you're caring for loved ones, you make it work. Sadly, both my parents passed away towards the end of last year. Caring for them at home meant they could stay in the house they loved.

### **How did your caring role affect your work?**

I was fortunate that I could manage my time when I was caring. I would work late into the evenings. During last three weeks of my parents' lives, I took leave so I could provide the care they needed at the time.

### **What could Mitie be doing to support you better?**

Mitie was very supportive when I needed to have flexibility. We need to ensure that carers and parents have support from Line Managers to look at options on how situations can be supported.

### **Any advice you'd give parents or carers who are struggling?**

Please speak to your Line Manager about the situation, and don't try and struggle through without necessary support.

