My brother and I have always been close since he was very young, so when Mark was diagnosed with cancer it was a terrible shock for me. I was doing my exams at the time, so my parents didn’t want to tell me until I’d finished them, but I think I knew it was something serious but just didn’t really want to accept it. With everything that had been happening my exam results were worse than expected, but I didn’t know how to tell my teachers that things had been so difficult for me at home.

At this point we met Vilja, a Family Support Worker from Rainbow Trust Children’s Charity, who came once a week to support us as a family. Sometimes she would take my sister and I out somewhere, or perhaps take Mark out with my mum or dad. I had become quite depressed and anxious with OCD symptoms, always washing my hands, but I was able to see a therapist which really helped me. Vilja would talk to me about all the things that were going on in my life, about school and what I hoped to do in the future. She also explained to me about Mark’s treatment and appointments as my mum found it tough to talk to me about it all.

Vilja really brought our family together, talking to all of us and mending bridges that had been broken because of the stress we were all under. She has given me much needed moral support as well as helping my parents and brother with hospital visits. She has helped them feel more relaxed which means I can feel more relaxed too.

It’s been so good to have an adult who understands, who doesn’t judge us or our situation. Vilja supports me in so many ways, though there never seems to be enough time for all the things I want to talk about with her. I know there are so many families that need Rainbow Trust’s support so her time is limited, but she has helped our family so much. I’m pleased to say that Mark is doing really well now too!