

Judith and Martin's Story



Name of service: Community Nursing Network (District Nursing)

Main purpose of service: The District Nursing team provide a 24-hour service, 365 days a year, caring for and supporting patients in their own homes. They work together to improve or maintain the health of mainly housebound people aged 18 and over who are registered with a Kirklees GP. This involves working in partnership with GPs and social care providers, hospital and hospice teams, Macmillan, Age UK and other third sector organisations. Judith met with Jo from Locala's Engagement Team to talk about the 'Out of Hours' Community Nursing team who supported her and her husband Martin.

Judith and Martin:

The couple met as teenagers and enjoyed 37 years of marriage, having two sons and working hard for the family business. Judith describes Martin as a **"massive family man"** and someone who loved football, rugby, keeping fit, going to the greyhounds and holidays in Benidorm. **"He was my wingman, and I was his!"** Martin was diagnosed with cancer in 2017 and passed away in December 2021.

Complications:

Judith explains that Martin faced many complications as his health deteriorated. At first, Martin needed surgery to remove the tumour and a course of chemotherapy. Despite this, at first, he was able to continue running and working – the family business is based next door. On holiday in 2019, Martin's foot started to swell and this worsened, with the 'lymphoedema' affecting his whole leg, then both legs and eventually up to into his torso. Martin also experienced cellulitis, sepsis, urinary infections and septic arthritis of his hip, which required 'flushing out'. Martin was referred to the Community Nursing Service by his GP because of sores on his legs.

Support at home:

Judith cared for Martin at home. A hospital bed was provided downstairs when it became too difficult for Martin to go upstairs. The hospice team advised with pain control, but Martin was able to remain at home. Judith describes how the community nurses helped towards the end of Martin's life, **"They were injecting Martin for pain relief. During the last two to three days, he had a syringe driver for pain relief. He lost his swallow. He would become agitated at night and had pain. The nurses came during the night or during the day, daily or every other day, to do dressings or something with the syringe driver."**

Help at night:

Judith found nights harder than days. **"During the day was alright – there is always someone here, working next door."** Judith explains the urgency of needing support during the night, especially when you are caring for a loved one on your own. **"When you need treatment and someone to help, it can't wait until 9am. The first night Trudie came, I was so pleased to see her."** Judith says that when she rang Single Point of Contact (now known as the Community Health and Care Hub. Tel: 0300 304 5555) during the night, she was relieved because her calls were answered quickly. To be told someone would be with her and Martin soon made all the difference.

Judith spoke with Joanne Vaughan from Locala's Engagement Team on 24 October 2023. She gives consent to share her and Martin's story widely.