

## Josie's story

**Name of service:** The Community Stroke Team.

**Main purpose of service:** Working together with clients and their families, the team enable people to reach their rehabilitation goals, so that they can live as independently as possible following a stroke. As well as providing skilled assessment, treatment and advice to clients, the team offer education and guidance to carers and other health care workers.



**Introducing Josie and Graham:** In June, the couple were in France, about to start a new adventure renovating a house for a relative. Their plans changed rapidly when Josie had a stroke, caused by a blood clot on her brain. The stroke mainly affected Josie's right side and her ability to communicate. Graham explains, **"It was 2.30am. Josie got up and sat on the edge of the bed and was moaning and moving from side to side....an ambulance took her to hospital, and they operated. The blood clot was the size of a pea."** Following a short spell recovering in France, Josie was transferred to Pinderfields hospital before eventually returning home on 17 August. Locala's Community Stroke team started seeing Josie at home, soon after. Graham says, **"Being home again felt better for Josie than anything! Mentally, socially, it made such a difference to be home – we have family who all live very close by."** This was particularly important for Josie, as Covid restrictions in hospital had often meant that visitors could only wave at a distance through a glass screen.

**Rehabilitation:** Josie and Graham explain that they have worked most closely with Kirsty, Nikki and Jules from the Community Stroke team. Josie has needed physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. Graham says, **"They've been very good – they've worked together and talk with each other. Sometimes they've overlapped appointments."** The couple describe how Josie has learnt to write with her left hand – she is naturally righthanded – and that when she returned home, she couldn't walk at all. Aches and pains in Josie's right side have also been a problem. Thinking about Jules, Josie's physiotherapist, Graham says, **"He does his job well – getting her to stand straight."** Josie smiles and says very clearly, **"Firm leg!"** as this is what Jules says to her during treatment. With some help, Josie can now take a few steps within the house using a 'quad stick'.

**Equipment:** The team have arranged specialist equipment that has made a huge difference to Josie and Graham. Josie is particularly pleased with a recliner armchair- **"My Chair!"**- that she can control via a handset, and a standing aide has made moving from the bed, commode or chair safer and easier. Graham has built a ramp outside and this means that Josie can go out in her wheelchair.

**Continuing progress:** The Community Stroke team have used 'electrical stimulation' on Josie's right hand which **"tickled!"** and felt both **"strange and good"**. She wears a splint to keep her right hand and wrist in the best position. Talking remains a challenge and Graham says that Josie has got very good at pointing and can write down words. Josie continues to practice word finding and pronunciation. She says the Speech and Language therapy is **"amazing"** and that the therapists are **"excellent."**

**Future:** Josie and Graham are looking forward to enjoying a family meal out on Christmas Day. Thinking further into 2023, they both hope that rehabilitation continues to make a difference. Josie's ongoing goal is that her right leg gets stronger, her hand moves more and that her speech improves further.