

Derrick's Story July 2021



Service name: Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Main purpose of service: Locala's Pulmonary Rehabilitation team works with patients who have reduced their daily activity because of difficulty breathing. Pulmonary rehabilitation helps people re-gain confidence and a level of fitness they need, to do the everyday activities that matter to them.

About the person: Derrick is 70 and has had breathing problems all his life. He explains he was born at Princess Royal Maternity Hospital and spent his first 4 months there

because his lungs were underdeveloped. At 8 years old, Derrick contracted measles and complications caused further lung damage. He experienced many bouts of bronchitis throughout childhood and was diagnosed with bronchiectasis at 15 years old. Bronchiectasis is when the airways of the lungs have become permanently damaged and widened due to persistent infections. Ill health meant that Derrick missed a lot of school, but despite this, he enjoyed a career for 43 years in textiles, engineering and as an after sales 'Parts Manager' for car, tractor and caravan businesses. Derrick has always had a stoic approach to his lung problems, **"I wouldn't let it stop me – I pushed myself."** Derrick lives independently in sheltered accommodation and is supported by friends and family.

Shielding: Derrick explains that over time, **"My lungs have got worse and worse."** He has never smoked. Since 2009, Derrick has needed nebulisers twice a day to administer antibiotics **"to treat the pseudomonas bacteria that is resident in my lungs."** In his early 60's Derrick was told his lung function was 50%. He attends the Respiratory Clinic at Fartown and is cared for there by his consultant and the Respiratory Nurses. He says, **"Sarah, the nurse is brilliant – we've got to know each other well. At the start of the pandemic she rang me and advised me it would be safer to stay in my room. This was the start of me shielding."** Sarah also referred Derrick to the Pulmonary Rehabilitation team.

Getting fitter: Derrick takes up his story, **"Before rehabilitation my legs had become very weak – if I had gone into a cupboard low down, I had to pull myself up with my arms. At the start, I was timed standing up and sitting down and I could do 14 in a minute and it took quite a while for my heart rate and breathing to recover. At the end of 8 weeks, I could stand up and sit down 20 times in a minute and my breathing, heart rate and blood 'sats' (oxygen levels) recovered much quicker."** Derrick enjoys reading and understanding the science behind his health. He describes his take on Pulmonary Rehabilitation, **"It's a fitness regime. The fitter you become the less out of breath you will be. The stronger your muscles are, the more stamina they have and the less oxygen they need."** His legs are now stronger and he can do 15 squats comfortably. He no longer struggles with cupboards.

Expertise: **"These sorts of services need to keep going. Emma rang me, Helen visited twice. They were helpful and enthusiastic and supported me."**

Everyday changes: Derrick is no longer shielding. Initially he walked along his corridor and then into the grounds where he lives. After 4 weeks of following the Pulmonary Rehabilitation programme he could walk 160m before becoming very out of breath. He can now walk 260-290 metres. He finds it important to keep track of how far he walks, **"I guesstimate the distances. If you can't monitor yourself, what's the point? It's about increasing."** Derrick says he can do more now before he becomes out of breath, but of course, he still has to pace himself.

Moving forwards: The 8 week programme may have finished but Derrick is motivated and disciplined. **"There's no point in doing 8 weeks then stopping!"** He is committed to his routine - walk one day then do exercise regime the next. Derrick's next goal is to take the bus to his local supermarket. Thinking of others who may be offered Pulmonary Rehabilitation, Derrick says, **"Go for it – it's the best thing you'll be doing. It's more beneficial than not!"**