



Denise's Story

Name of service: Continence Advisory Service

Continence Advisory Service - a team of specialist clinicians who assess and advise on bladder, bowel, pelvic floor and vaginal health. The team supports other health professionals giving them advice about continence care and

catheter management.

About the person: Denise is 50 and had been experiencing bowel and bladder problems for many years which were having a huge impact on her life. She had been seen by her GP but wasn't having any success with her symptoms. She was referred to Locala's Continence Advisory Service where she was seen by Julia Firth, one of Locala's Continence Nurse Advisors.

Empathy and understanding: Denise described the care and support she received from the Locala Continence Service as "**Fantastic – they have changed my life completely**". Denise was experiencing several problems including urgency in needing the loo and found herself doubly incontinent. This was affecting her daily life and causing her to not want to go out, and when she did, she had to take spare clothes and was always worried about being able to find the toilets and if she could get there in time.

She says, "It's not easy talking to people about these problems, you think these things only happen to older people and I felt embarrassed. I needn't have worried, the team were amazing. They listened, believed me, and had such empathy with what I was experiencing. I wasn't talked down to and they were so understanding. I have been seeing them for around two years and we've tried various techniques to retrain my bladder as well as medication. I now feel like I have my life back."

Don't wait, get the help you need: Denise says "the one regret is that I didn't get help earlier. If I had, it could have been sorted out sooner. I didn't realise that you can refer yourself into the team, so I would say to anyone out there struggling, if you are worried about discussing anything with your GP contact the team directly. Don't leave it like I did, you won't regret it, the team are amazing and so supportive".