

John's story February 2020

Service name: Stoma Nursing

Main purpose of service: The service offers advice, support and guidance to people living in South Kirklees who are living with a stoma. The team is currently a team of one specialist nurse who works 22.5 hours per week. Patients are seen in their own homes and are often recovering from recent surgery. The service started in November 2016.

About the person: John experienced a 'twisted bowel' (sigmoid volvulus) 3 times in a 6 month period. This condition causes an obstruction of the colon. John had colo-rectal surgery in 2019 and now relies on a colostomy.

Specialist advice and support: John feels that his discharge home after surgery was rushed and that he hadn't had enough time to fully learn how to care for his stoma. Although his first visit from the District Nurse was soon after arriving home, it was the specialist advice and support from Cheryl, the stoma nurse that really made the difference from her very first call. *"I just remember, Hello John! It's Cheryl the Stoma Nurse here!"* After what John describes as a *"muddled start"*, when he experienced a *"few horrid incidences"* as he adapted to life with a stoma, Cheryl has *"constantly found better ways to help"* and has been *"patient as anything."* John strongly believes that he needed Cheryl's expertise to *"find something to help me help myself."* He values how she liaised with his GP and also her supportive approach with his wife who lives with dementia. John feels that he couldn't have done without Cheryl and was aware that he could have become too dependent on her. However, when both he and Cheryl were confident that they had found the correct kit – products that were working well for John – Cheryl stopped ordering the items and John became independent with this. He believes that specialist services are too important to be a 'team of one'.

The whole person: John describes Cheryl as always optimistic and cheerful. *"She thought about me as a whole person and tried to help me as a whole person...she referred me to others (the Falls service and Continence nursing) and that was very important."* John explains how subsequently, Shauni the falls practitioner has referred him for both a driving assessment and a bio mechanical orthotic assessment. Furthermore, Vanessa, the Dietitian was able to provide invaluable advice when information about a diabetic diet contradicted the dietary advice for living with a colo-rectal stoma. *"All these referrals - it was like a chain reaction!"*

Attitude: John says that Cheryl's attitude has always been positive and non- judgemental and that because of this, *"I never felt undignified when I was with Cheryl, she just deals with it....she would tell me that I had a lot to cope with and was always sensitive to my situation."*

John gives full consent for sharing his patient story and met Joanne Vaughan, Engagement Officer on 25 February 2020.