

*Stories help describe what services do.*

*Every-day and ordinary, or life changing and extraordinary?*

**David's story 2021**



**Service name: Cardiac Rehabilitation**

**Main purpose of service:** Locala's Cardiac Rehabilitation team works with patients who are recovering from a heart attack or heart surgery. Cardiac Rehabilitation can make it possible for people to return to a full and active life. The team helps people re-gain confidence and the level of fitness they need, to do the everyday activities that matter to them.

**About the person:** David is 61 and works as a sales manager for an agricultural supply company. His job involves travelling throughout the UK. He had a heart attack in December 2020 whilst exercising his dog at Scammonden Water. Following cardiac surgery, David was referred for Cardiac Rehabilitation.

**What happened:** It was growing dark and foggy one late afternoon when David was out with his dog Joules enjoying their daily walk as usual. Suddenly, David experienced severe pain in the middle of his chest. **"It was indescribable. Like a battering ram. I started finding it difficult to breathe."** He knew he needed help and suspected he was having a heart attack. In a remote spot and with no one else around, David felt his only choice was to climb the steep path to the road bridge 125 feet above the motorway, so he could describe where he was when he rang 999 on his mobile. **"I had to stop every 10 paces. Instead of taking what usually would take me 20 minutes, it took me an hour to get where I was aiming for. I was fearing the worst."** Unfortunately, when he rang 999 his location couldn't be located. By this time, it had started to snow and David was lying on the path with his arms and legs shaking. **"Snow was sticking to me. I know now that I was starting to suffer with hypothermia."** David felt he had to struggle on to get to the road. As he approached a gritter-snowplough, he collapsed. The driver spotted Joules running in the road at first then saw David and rang for an ambulance. Others stopped to help, **"I must have had about 5 or 6 coats on top of me!"** David was taken to Leeds where he had emergency surgery to insert stents to unblock 2 arteries.



**Rehabilitation:** David explains that the Cardiac Rehabilitation team have provided reassurance, guidance and instruction. He was introduced to a 'British Heart Foundation' exercise video and has been taught the importance of warming up and cooling down. He continues to walk most days. **"I now have a much more sensible approach to exercise."** Visits from the team included checking David's heart rate and rhythm during and after exercise. **"When I first saw the exercise regime I thought it must be for older people. It looked too easy. But it's deceptively hard if you go through it properly. I was told to keep my heart beat at the right rate for me."**

**Health:** David returned to work 3 weeks after his heart attack. **"My heart has permanent damage. I was told that every second counts from 15 minutes after a heart attack, and my surgery was 3 hours after mine."** He is now eating a healthier diet as well as keeping up with his exercise routine. **"I'm not calorie counting but just trying to be sensible and cut down on the silly stuff!"** David has successfully lost 11 lbs.

**Safety when out and about:** David has now downloaded the app 'What3words' to his phone. This enables a location to be identified by 3 words, so it can help emergency services locate someone in need.

**Message to the team:** **"The team have looked after me extremely well and I am very grateful for their advice, professionalism and kindness they have shown me throughout what was quite an ordeal."**

David spoke with Jo Vaughan on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and gives consent to share his story widely.