

Gillie's Story June 2021

Service name: Out- patient Dietetics

Main purpose of service

The service is based at Princess Royal Health Centre. All patients are assessed, treated and advised during clinic or telephone consultation appointments. The service receives referrals for people who are registered with a Huddersfield GP and who need the expertise of a dietitian. Patients are referred to the service for dietary advice related to a wide variety of conditions including Diabetes, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Coeliac Disease and Nutrition Support.



About the person

Gillie is a retired school teacher and was initially diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes in her early 70's. She was prescribed tablets and was given advice about her diet. Whilst travelling in Africa, Gillie became unwell and subsequently, following a consultation with a specialist in Cape Town, discovered she actually had Type 1 Diabetes and required insulin injections. She and her husband cut their trip short and they returned home to the UK, deciding to move to Yorkshire.

A dietitian's approach

Gillie explains that her GP has been supportive, teaching her how to introduce insulin into her daily routine and regularly checking her progress. Gillie feels that it was only when she was referred to Vanessa the Dietitian that ***"things really started to make sense."*** Gillie feels that Vanessa's nutritional approach marries up her insulin regime with the food she eats, for example, helping her to understand the delicate relationship between the carbohydrates she consumes in a bowl of porridge and the amount of insulin she needs to inject. So much so, Gillie says, ***"I feel more in control – more proactive. I'm not just leaving it to my body to sort it out."***

Learning takes time

Teaching experience meant that Gillie accepted that learning new information can often take time. Now her recent lived experience has confirmed this, ***"There's such a lot to take in. It's a gradual process – you can only take in so much...you have light bulb moments! The light bulb moments are when the knowledge you are gaining suddenly becomes meaningful. You have to do it to really learn."*** She believes that Vanessa has taught her so much since her first phone call last Summer and that, 3 years after diagnosis, her level of understanding is so much improved but that she is still learning.

Fearful at bedtime

Concerns about her 'blood sugar' levels dropping too low during the night meant that Gillie had become anxious at bedtime. ***"I couldn't sleep due to worry."*** She talked her concerns through with Vanessa and followed the advice she gave. ***"It's working."*** Gillie's concerns have eased. She feels Vanessa's expertise has been hugely reassuring. Gillian says that although she had read much on Diabetes and the effects of insulin, the telephone appointments with Vanessa have been invaluable. ***"It's so wonderful talking to her. I feel like I know what I'm doing now. Talking with her, her listening and us discussing things. I have my questions and Vanessa goes through them one by one. All answered beautifully!"***

Gillie spoke to Jo Vaughan in Locala's Engagement Team on 1.6.21 and gives full consent to sharing her Patient Story.