

Restoring Strength

Your Stories

Respiratory Support



***“I am feeling much better, but even if I wasn’t,
hearing your voice cheers me up
and makes me really happy”
Claire***



Jan (Age UK Cornwall, Respiratory Care Coordinator) supports people with long-term health conditions across Cornwall.

Jan and Mary, from Chaos Group Cornwall, have also helped to set up new Breathers Groups within local communities. These groups aim to rebuild strength and improve general wellbeing in a safe environment - providing tools and advice so that people can enjoy a more full and active life.

These Stories, were received by people referred to our Respiratory Support Programme.

Rita

Rita has COPD and several illnesses. Rita’s health has deteriorated considerably in recent months.

Rita was referred to Jan at the beginning of the year. Jan called Rita to find out more about her situation. Unfortunately, Rita had difficulty communicating with her due to her breathlessness - Jan spoke to Rita’s husband, who relayed Rita’s concerns.

A care agency supports Rita twice a day, and helps her with her care needs. Rita’s husband is also unwell and finds it increasingly difficult to care for Rita as his own health declines. Recently, Rita’s Daughter has been helping care for both parents which have caused Rita’s anxiety to worsen.

Jan and Rita’s Daughter were also concerned about Rita’s financial situation. Rita’s health continued to deteriorate, so Jan spoke with her Daughter, providing information and advice on heating grants, Disability Cornwall, and arranged

for Rita to receive a benefits check via Age UK Cornwall’s Helpline.

Jan organised a weekly telephone catch-up with Rita’s Daughter - this was arranged when she was visiting her Mum. The subsequent phone calls became invaluable and a source of great comfort - Jan became a listening ear, offering support as Rita’s situation worsened- a few weeks later, Rita was rushed into hospital.

Remembering Rita

Sadly, a few days later, Rita passed away in hospital. **Jan contacted the family to express her condolences and to see if she could support them during this difficult time. Rita’s Daughter thanked Jan for being thoughtful, supportive and kind - this had been the most difficult time in her life.**

“Your phone calls really perked me up. When I was at my lowest you kept me going”

Rita’s Daughter



Restoring Strength

Your Stories

Respiratory Support



Engaging with Carers

Our Respiratory Support is vitally important to families and those affected by a loved one's health condition. Quite often, conversations are with a carer/family member as they are not in the position to hold a telephone conversation due to poor health.

By sharing Rita's story, we hope to highlight the need for more engagement with both patient and carer. **Our approach involves open and honest conversations that ask 'what matters to you?'**

By providing a listening ear, with no time constraints, we can support people to find solutions or information right for them; reduce anxiety; improve wellbeing; increase confidence and plan for the future.

"Talking (and listening) with someone is easy. However, the impact and long-lasting benefits are huge. It is important that we provide this service and continue to support everyone affected"

Jan

Ken

Ken has been very healthy throughout his life - taking part in a wide range of sports. In particular, he was an avid cyclist and enjoyed cycling through rural parts of Cornwall. Ken was part of a local bike club - socialising and joining many events. Ken is married and has a family in the North of England.

Recently, Ken was diagnosed with COPD and has difficulties breathing. Unfortunately, Ken has become increasingly anxious and has developed a fear of being outdoors on his own - he is socially isolated and stopped connecting with local groups.

Ken could not talk to his wife about his fears and had become institutionalised at home.



Helping Ken

Ken was referred to Jan via a local social prescriber. Initially, Jan spoke to Ken about his condition, sharing information on the importance of keeping active and how he could take small steps to get back on the saddle - highlighting the health and wellbeing benefits of exercise.

Together, Ken and Jan came up with a series of tasks that were achievable and specific to his needs. Slowly but surely, Ken ticked off each action. Speaking with Jan each week was key to helping Ken -discussing strength-based exercises that would build confidence and fitness and reduce anxiety.

In just a few months, Ken was able to start cycling on his own.

"Ken's confidence is through the roof, he feels fitter and healthier. Ken hopes to rejoin his local club and is thrilled to do something he loves again. COPD might be here to stay, but Ken knows that he can manage the condition with the right support"

Refer today

Please refer to our Respiratory programme by **email: jan.howells@ageukcornwall.org.uk**