

# Rebuilding Confidence

Yvonne

Step into Wellness



**“Thank you Age UK Cornwall for the amazing work you do and the support that you give to the people of Cornwall.”**

**Yvonne**

***The ‘Step into Wellness’ programme helps people by encouraging them to go on a journey with us, where we use the ‘5 Steps to Wellbeing’ to open their minds to the importance of feeling comfortable, healthy, and happy in themselves.***

***Being part of this programme helps to rebuild confidence and engages people in thinking about their own journey towards wellness.***

***This case study was received as we celebrate our 50th Year (Go for Gold) and highlights our ongoing commitment to Inspiring People and Communities to Age Well.***

***This is Yvonne’s Story, written in her own words and supported by Roy, our Wellness Volunteer.***

## **Yvonne**

I moved to Cornwall about 12 years ago. I wanted to be nearer to my family, but at first, I found the change so difficult to deal with - I was on my own, I needed to make new friends.

I had Asthma and my health was not good. This condition caused a narrowing of my airways, which affected my breathing. But I had been prescribed inhalers which helped manage my condition. **I tried to remain positive and make the most of life, but 15 months ago my breathing deteriorated. The deterioration meant that I could not breath properly, especially at night. I was afraid to go to sleep for fear of not waking up. These feelings became so overwhelming that I started having ‘panic attacks’ when I felt unable to breath. My anxiety became so bad that I needed to talk to my GP about it to see if he could offer support.**

My GP examined me and then sent me to the hospital for chest x-rays. Following the results, I was referred to the ‘Oncology’ department - the Oncologist explained that I had ‘Terminal Lung Cancer’ and that all he could offer me was the best possible management of the condition.

**At first, I could not come to terms with the diagnosis and how it would change my life. It was even harder for me as my dear husband had been taken from me by lung cancer, and I recalled how much he had suffered.**

Although I felt consumed by anxiety and depression, I decided that if I was to have any future, I needed to change my thought process and try and get on with what life had in store for me. **So, about 12 months ago, I joined the ‘Saltash Age Concern Lunch Club’ where I made some new friends. Then last February, two of the Age UK Cornwall & IOS ‘Step into Wellness’ team came to one of our lunches and talked to us about the ‘face to face’ group programme that they were going to run in Saltash.**



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### **Yvonne Steps into Wellness**

I was very interested, but one of the sessions included gentle exercise and I was concerned about my condition and whether I was suitable for the programme. Following the talk, I spoke to the 'Step into Wellness' facilitator and asked if she felt I would be able to join the programme - **she was so understanding and put me at ease, gently encouraging me to sign up - along with about ten other people in our group.**

When we first started the face-to-face sessions, I found walking from my car to the venue a struggle - I get so breathless if the distance is too far for me. I explained my difficulties to the Facilitator and the Wellness Volunteer, who asked me if I had a 'Blue Badge'? **I had tried to apply for one but found that completing the form was far too difficult. The Wellness Volunteer asked me if I would give him permission to ask one of Age UK Cornwall's 'Information & Advice' team to call me - they would help me complete the form and submit the application.**

Of course, I was happy to take up the offer of help, and within a couple of days, I had a phone call from one of the team who talked me through all the questions on the form and completed it for me.

All I had to do was send her a digital photo and some proof of identity, and within a matter of weeks, I received my 'Blue Badge'.

**I was so thankful for all the help I was given because this would make such a difference in my independence.**

**This wasn't the only help from Step into Wellness. My Wellness Volunteer asked me if I received 'Attendance Allowance' - I told him that I did not, as I didn't think I would have any entitlement. However, he explained that because of my condition he would like to refer me to the Age UK Cornwall Macmillan Cancer Support Services - he felt they would be able to offer me guidance and information.**

At first, I was reluctant as I am very independent and I don't like to make a fuss - however, after some gentle encouragement, the Wellness Volunteer and the facilitator encouraged me to at least let him make the referral to see what help was available.

A few days later, I had a call from the Age UK Macmillan Community Navigator, who took her time to explain what help she could offer me. She arranged for a member of Age UK Cornwall's 'Information & Advice' team to call me and complete the 'Attendance Allowance' application on my behalf. **Thanks to her, I am now in receipt of 'Attendance Allowance', which has made such a difference to me - the extra money will enable me to pay for any help or support I might require.**

**Throughout the ongoing help I received, I continued to attend the weekly 'Step into Wellness' sessions. These sessions have greatly improved my wellbeing, and I am happy to say that I have completed the programme.**

**I am so glad that I was encouraged to be a part of the group sessions - I can, without doubt, say that all the things I have learnt, along with the genuine team and peer support, have helped me to become more confident.**

*If you would like to find out more about Step into Wellness, please call our Helpline or email [stepintowellness@ageukcornwall.org.uk](mailto:stepintowellness@ageukcornwall.org.uk)*