

Participant M19

- R: ...saw the benefit I had, and then I asked to go back on the programme, so I'm on the second stage of a programme now.
- I: **Okay.**
- R: Okay?
- I: **Yeah, that's...**
- R: So if you're asking me about the first programme, the answer is I've already done the questionnaire at the end of it; but the second programme is what you're going to talk to me about, is it?
- I: **Yes. So we're going to talk about the second programme, mostly. And, yeah, I'm going to go from that.**
- R: The one I'm on now?
- I: **The one you're on now. So I would assume it started around March time?**
- R: It - no, it didn't, it started very much later...
- I: **Oh, okay.**
- R: ...because [name] fitted me in on a course that wasn't fully booked, and I was able to join a course partway through.
- I: **Okay, that's great.**
- R: If she's been naughty, I don't want to get her into trouble.
- I: **No, no, we will anonymise everything, so her name won't be noted in the interviews, and anything like that.**
- R: Okay, fine. That's the only question I've got, okay.
- I: **Okay, perfect. So I've started the recording now, because I just wanted to grab that little bit of information you mentioned to me just now. And so we're going to start at - so with thinking... Sorry, with the second programme in mind, we're going to talk about you being invited, or you being invited, or asking for the referral for the second programme.**
- R: I asked for a referral.
- I: **Yeah. So can you talk me through a little bit about how that process was, and what you did?**
- R: Well, I started off by talking to the lady who'd run the first programme, and she supplied me with some forms which she sent off to the doctor. The doctor then filled the forms out. The

doctor checked me over, and said I was fit enough to go back on the course, as it were, and that's how it started.

I: How was that process for you, was there any...?

R: It was reasonably good, because I knew all the people involved. It was very easy to do. The forms were - they took a while to sort of push the forms around the system, but it was okay.

I: And when you say 'push the forms around the system', at what point were these forms? Was that the GP?

R: Well, they go from the council offices where the ladies, who organise the course are, and it then goes up to the doctors, and the doctors then check back with the girls at the council offices. And I then speak to the doctor, who says that I was okay to go on the course. He checked me out with - he did me a full check, well, a pretty full check. He was a - he's a fitness addict himself, actually, and he was very keen to support me in going back on the course.

I: Oh, okay. And when you say he was keen to support you, what were those conversations like between you and the GP?

R: Well, it was that he said it was very good, and I shouldn't always overdo it, but I should, again, benefit from being on the course. I am 85, you appreciate, and he thought it was good that I should do it, but he did warn me I shouldn't overdo it, though.

I: And when - did you have any questions at that point for the GP, when you were being...?

R: Yes, it was - I went on the course mainly because I've got two bad knees, and it was to specifically strengthen the quads, the quadriceps so that they'd tighten them up, so that I would have less pain and be able to walk better.

I: And was the G...

R: But that was the main purpose.

I: Okay. And was the GP able to answer any questions you had at this point?

R: Yes. No problem, and he was very clear, very good in his support of me, yeah.

I: And what were your expectations of the programme at this point, before you were going back into it?

R: Well, it was twofold, it was to improve my breathing, was one, because I am asthmatic. And the other one, as I said, was to improve my knees, particularly, and my overall fitness, to make me more active. I've always been active throughout my life, and I do a lot in the garden; I've got a large garden, and I do woodwork. And I was quite anxious that I kept my level of health that enabled me to continue with my hobbies and family issues, too, looking after, helping with repairs and maintenance with my children and grandchildren, and my great grandchild.

I: Yeah.

R: So, generally, to feel I was able to be up and going.

I: Yeah, that makes sense. Thank you. And you said that beforehand you - so you had all these expectations, and you spoke through with the GP about everything. Was there anything you might have been hesitant about, or unsure about going into the programme for this second time around, given there was a bit of a break because of Covid?

R: Yes, there was. It was - I just, I was quite happy that the restrictions, by that time, had been removed and you could either choose to have a mask or not. There was plenty of places where you could wipe, and they were all over the place. Wiping was encouraged, and everybody else around me was doing it, cleaning the apparatus after we'd used it. Quite a few of the gym people wore the mask, and I don't understand that, but it was obligatory to those using the gym, whether they could use a mask or not. And with breathing, obviously, a little bit heavier than normal when I was exercising, I did not use the mask.

I: Okay, that's interesting. And these - you said you had a few hesitations, did you speak through any of these hesitations with your GP?

R: Yes, of course I did, yeah. There was one that did worry me, and that was the... I had, at that time, a swollen ankle and I had quite a build-up of fluid in my left ankle, and I discussed that with him and he said it was normal, and it was not a problem and I could exercise.

I: Okay. And do you think there's anything you could have imp-...that could have been improved, in that initial stage of being referred onto the programme, and having the chat with your GP and things like that?

R: Well, yeah, but it's the only obvious one, and it's hard to get to see a GP, but other than that, no problem.

I: Okay, that's great. Thank you. And we're going to move on to talking a bit about your fir-...or your first meeting with your exercise professional, but I guess it will be the second, because it's your second round.

R: It was the second round, and it was the similar format to the first one, and went through all the usual checks with me: weight, height, did my blood pressure for me, and generally make sure that she knew my medication, make sure I had my inhaler with me, and that was it really.

I: And what were your - you said she went through all the checks with you, and did you have any other conversations about the programme, or did you have any questions for her?

R: No, I was fairly clear about what the programme would do.

I: Was it - were you contacted in person by your exercise professional, ahead of the first session, or...?

- R: Yes, she made an appointment to see me, and I went down for the appointment where we discussed the programme, and what the routine would be as well.
- I: **Yeah. And did this invitation, from the exercise professional, could that have influenced the way that you felt going into the programme?**
- R: Well, yes, I was very confident, yeah.
- I: **Why were you confident, apart from - yeah, why were you confident going into this programme?**
- R: Well, they seemed very professional, and I was having my own questions answered, and I checked the doctor and I'd been on the programme before.
- I: **And how supportive was the exercise professional at that meeting? You said she ran through - she answered all your questions, or he answered all your questions.**
- R: Yeah, she was very supportive. It's difficult to answer some of these, because she's a personal friend; I've known her since she was born, so... But she is, she's a lovely lady and she was very professional, even though we did know each other, and went through a series of questions with me. And I was very confident that she knew what she was doing, and I knew what I was going to be doing.
- I: **Yeah, that's great. Is there anything that you could say would be improved with this experience, or...?**
- R: Not really. No, it was first class.
- I: **That's great. Thank you. And at this point in the programme, or going into the programme, what were you hoping to...? I know you mentioned beforehand about your knees and your breathing, but, again...**
- R: That's right.
- I: **...I just wanted to confirm, what were you hoping to get out of the programme, at that point, with your exercise professional at that first meeting, was it health, wellbeing, friendship or anything like that?**
- R: Well, all of those things, it's - I wanted to feel I was more active and able, therefore, to socialise as much as we could, with my family and friends, yeah.
- I: **That's great.**
- R: I wanted to be more active.
- I: **That's great. Thank you. We're going to talk a little bit about the exercise sessions themselves. I just want to confirm, so we're going to talk about the overall programme, and the overall sessions, as a whole. And I just want to ask what type of exercise sessions**

you had, because the programme offers a virtual session, they also, they offer face-to-face. I just wondered what sessions you had been involved in?

R: All face-to-face.

I: Okay. And of these face-to-face sessions, how suitable did you find them for you?

R: Easy. Yeah, they were fine.

I: They were - was there anything that you liked most about these sessions, or didn't like?

R: The actual programme itself, when I went into the gym you mean?

I: Yes. So we're talking about these ex-...the exercise sessions face-to-face when...

R: Yeah, I only did the gym this time, and last time I did swimming as well, and the aquarobics, but this time, because of the difficulties of using the pool, it was restricted, to a certain extent, and I just had the gym sessions.

I: How did you find these gym sessions, was there anything...?

R: They were fine, and they took me through the apparatus all the time, and they made sure they were the right height and I was using them properly. They were always available for questions, if I had a question about something. At one point, during the sessions, my blood pre-...my heart rate seemed to whizz up, and I called her over. We stopped immediately, and it was only just during as I started the warm-up session. She checked the machine out, because she said the machine sometimes is not very good. And I went up to the doctor immediately, and he checked me and she said that I could resume as well. So there was a bit of a scare, but I did have that backup from her, to send me up to the doctor to say, stop now. And my heartrate went up from what would be a normal 110, 115 exercising, it shot up to 140. And she said it might be the machine, which was wrong, which I do suspect was the case. And she said, suggested I get checked out and I did, and I got checked out and sent back on the programme. So she was very quick to take action, once I saw there might be an issue.

I: And how did it feel, I guess, being face-to-face with the exercise professional nearby? How did it feel to know they were there when you were having this scare?

R: Oh, it was terrific, and she got my blood - she checked my blood pressure straightaway, and checked my heart rate.

I: And did...

R: She had a little machine, and she had a smartwatch.

I: And did it - I guess, did you feel happy with, or confident in what she was doing, and the fact that she was nearby, and was able to help you immediately?

R: Yeah, absolutely. She happens to be an ex-nurse anyway.

I: Oh, okay. That's great. Thank you for sharing that information with me. And I guess when you're having these exercise sessions, what did you like the most about them?

R: Feeling it was a routine that I could do, rather than something - it was something I had scheduled to do, to go there and do it, because, if not, I wouldn't necessarily have done some of those things.

I: So because of the routine it got you to...

R: Absolutely.

I: ...go?

R: Yeah.

I: What about any encouragement or support from your exercise professional to attend, or do the sessions?

R: Excellent. There's two of them, actually, but one does one day and the other one does the Friday. And the other gentleman is a lad called [name], and who is equally helpful and just as efficient as [name], the other lady I spoke about.

I: Okay, and...

R: There's two there that deal with the exercise programme, for me, anyway.

I: Did they encourage you to attend the sessions?

R: Of course, yes. And when I couldn't attend - you heard me coughing - I'm not on the programme at the moment, because I've got a chest infection.

I: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

R: In fact, I've just been to see the doctor today, before you rang me, actually. Well, he's put me on antibiotics and prednisolone, the steroids, so I'm not on the programme at the moment. But I keep in touch with her, and I ring her and I tell her when I'm not able to go, and I've told her what my situation is. And she usually replies within the next day to confirm she's had the message, and encouraged me. And I have confirmed, I'm not backsliding, I want to come back on the programme as soon as I'm fit.

I: Okay. And with that encouragement, is there any additional encouragement that would have been helpful for you?

R: No, that was all I needed.

I: Okay. I mentioned before about the suitability of the sessions, but I wondered if you could tell me a little bit more about, did you feel that the sessions were suitable for you, the gym sessions?

R: Yes. Okay, well, they were tailor-made for me, because she took into mind that (a) I wanted to improve my breathing, so several of the exercises, they were obviously aerobic exercises.

I also - well, she was concentrating on the programme, where I went on two different machines to work the quadriceps. The other one I did ask for, was for general health issues, for doing work in the garden and things, where it was upper body strength she was working on as well. So there was probably ten different - well, no, probably more, 12 different pieces of apparatus that I was using, as well as other things, like just weights for strengthening the triceps and biceps, and sitting up and standing up, balancing on one leg. All these other things that we were doing as part of the programme. It was two sides of a particular piece of paper, and on those were written the programme, and I went through it in turn in the order that I was told to do them.

I: Okay, that sounds great. And how many times a week were you doing all of these exercises?

R: Twice.

I: Twice a week. And so you were doing the sessions twice a week, did you notice any positive impact from the sessions that you've done so far?

R: Yes, very much so, although, of course, as I said to you, I've got a chest infection at the moment, and I'm on steroids. So that has set me back again, of course. But in the few weeks that I've been on the programme, I certainly felt my knees were better and my breathing was better, and I was more active, yeah. I was already seeing improvement, yeah.

I: And so you mentioned improvements of your fitness there, did you notice any other improvements in your wellbeing or your mood?

R: No, I'm always pretty happy.

I: Okay, that's great. So you say you're taking a bit of a break from your sessions at the moment?

R: I am at the moment, yes, I've been off it for two weeks, yeah.

I: Do you know how many sessions - how many weeks you've done of the programme so far?

R: Five.

I: Five, okay. And is there anything that's helped you keep motivated to attend these sessions, in the last five weeks?

R: Yes, it's - as I said, it's I want to feel that I'm more active and my knees are better, and that motivated me. I don't need any more motivation, no.

I: So that self-motivation?

R: Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

- I: Okay, that's great. And would you have been interested in doing this programme, if it was offered in a different way, so online or a mixture of both?**
- R: I doubt it very much.
- I: And why would you think that?**
- R: Well, I prefer personal contact, I prefer the social aspect of the course as well.
- I: And what parts of the personal aspect do you like, do you value the most?**
- R: Well, just meeting other people. To be honest, online, it doesn't interest me. I've done things with Zoom, obviously, in the past, but I find that at my age, I prefer it to be personal contact and I don't like using the internet unless I have to.
- I: Yeah. And is there any specific reason why you don't like using it?**
- R: Yeah, I'm too old.
- I: Do you think that your age has anything to do with the fact that you don't want to use the...?**
- R: No, it's just personal choice.
- I: Oh, okay, that's great.**
- R: I can use the internet, but I choose not to, okay?
- I: Yeah, that's perfect. That's interesting to know, because obviously the programme offers a virtual as well, so it's interesting to know why.**
- R: Yes, it does, yes, I understand, yeah.
- I: Yeah, that's great.**
- R: No, I wouldn't be interested in that now.
- I: Okay. That's great. Thank you.**
- R: In fact, if I got to that stage, I'd probably organise my own programme at home.
- I: Oh, okay, that's interesting to know. And we're - I just wonder if there's anything else that you'd like to mention to me about your sessions, or anything that could have been improved in these sessions?**
- R: No, they were excellent, and the gym has been refurbished; it's got all new machines. As I said, everybody plays their part in keeping them clean and wiped. There's lots of people in there to supervise and help, if needed. So it's - no, it's excellent facilities from the local council.
- I: That's great. We're going to talk a little bit about relationships, and we'd like to know how different people supported you on the programme. We talked quite a bit about support**

from your exercise professional along the way. Oh, exercise professionals, sorry. And I wondered if you had anything else to tell me, and you've already mentioned that you felt that they were appropriately skilled, and that they encouraged you along the way, and they gave you a tailored course. I just wondered if you - there's anything else you'd like to tell me about your relationship with your exercise professional?

R: No, that was fine. They were very professional, and very efficient.

I: **And do you feel like they went at the correct pace for you, when you were doing the sessions?**

R: Yes. They were always careful to make sure that I didn't go further than I should. And we discussed when we would increase the weights, for instance, or increase the time I did an exercise. Or dropped an exercise, for instance, if I felt I was having difficulty with one, where with an old hip operation. Well, I've had a new hip at one time in the past, and so one of the exercises required twisting and they decided I wouldn't do that side of it.

I: **Okay.**

R: So I got the appropriate advice, yeah.

I: **Yeah. And do you feel like this advice, and this support that you were offered, was it the right amount of support for you, or would you have wanted more or less support?**

R: No, perfect.

I: **Yeah. And any ways in which the support offer could have been improved?**

R: No.

I: **Okay. And do you think that your exercise professional was important? And we talked a little bit about this before, but in your engagement in the programme?**

R: Very much so, yes. I think if I hadn't developed a relationship with both the exercise professionals, and, in confidence, in the way I've been treated, I wouldn't necessarily have been as happy on the programme, obviously.

I: **And so you - how well do you get along with both of them? You've already mentioned before, one [?of your 25:23]...**

R: Well, they're both very excellent - excellent! And they're both helpful, and they're both... It's almost a nice, personal relationship you have with them.

I: **That's great. Okay. Perfect. And...**

R: You're going to find it very hard to find anything nasty about them, honestly.

I: **No. Yeah, that's great.**

- R: And they were - I can't stress enough, they were all excellent, and they really are dedicated to what they do. And I see them with others who have got more problems than me, and they take time with them and they're very caring.
- I: **Yeah. That's great to know. Thank you. And we - I wondered if you had any support from any friends or family, outside of the programme?**
- R: Yes, I did. Yes, I've been encouraged by all my family, my children, and my grandchildren, particularly, they encouraged me to be on the programme.
- I: **And in what sort of way do they encourage you?**
- R: Well, they asked me about the programme, and they asked me if I'm going and why I've stopped, and they're interested in what I'm doing.
- I: **Great. And do you have any other support in terms of getting to the classes, or...?**
- R: Well, no, I've got a car and they're very good. After a slight hiccup, where they give you a pass to park your car in a disabled parking place, so it's very convenient and it reduces the walk to the place. Unfortunately, it's probably just off the field a little bit, but they gave me a pass, but the first time I went there, they fined me.
- I: **Oh.**
- R: They put a notice on for me, because the people in the gym had actually put one digit wrong, and instead of putting a Z, they'd put a two.
- I: **Oh no.**
- R: So I was fined. But, eventually, after going through a lot of rigmarole, they eventually said they wouldn't fine me.
- I: **Oh, great. Oh, that's unfortunate, sorry.**
- R: All they said is that you've got to be careful when you make a two or Z.
- I: **Yeah. That's great. How important is the support from your family and, or friends?**
- R: Well, I've always had their support; we are a very close family and we all live nearby.
- I: **That's great. I wondered if there were any - were there any negative influences around you for the programme?**
- R: No.
- I: **No. Okay. And talking about others on the programme, so did you make any friends on the programme?**

R: Well, I've lived in this place for a long time, and there are others who are on the programme who I do know, yes, and I talk to them if I see them, yes. But a lot of them are strangers and you nod and you say, hello, good morning or something.

I: Do you ever meet any of them outside of the sessions?

R: No.

I: No. Do you feel that others in the class, or in the gym provide encouragement for you during the sessions?

R: Yes, sure they do, yeah.

I: In what way do they do that?

R: Well, in every way. They make sure that - I don't know, I think positive issues. I can't think of anything negative, so everything must be positive. It's a strange question to ask. I can't - I...

I: So do the other people on the class, in the sessions, do you all encourage each other to keep going? What sort of environment is it?

R: Yes. Yeah, we do, yes. You don't - because while you're exercising, you don't necessarily chat to each other on the next machine. You might make a comment or something, or say good morning, good morning or good afternoon or something when you go on a machine next to a person. But that's it, really, and I'm not there to chat, really.

I: Yeah.

R: And certainly not while I'm exercising anyway.

I: Okay, that's great. And I just wanted to know if there - so we're going to move on to now, some overall reflections. Oh sorry, actually, I just wanted to know the support or encouragement from the other people in the class, is that...? How important is that for you, for the session?

R: Not really, no.

I: No, okay. And so we're going to move on to...

R: Well, you don't need - we're all on separate machines at different times, and if you don't know them, particularly, you're courteous with them, but you don't necessarily want to start a chat with them while you're puffing away on the machine.

I: Okay. Yeah. Okay, that makes sense. Thank you. And some overall reflections, I wondered, through the programme, have you... Or through the five weeks you've done, have you developed an enjoyment for exercise?

R: Yes, pretty much so, I've always had an enjoyment for exercise, yeah. I played golf until I was not able to continue, because of my hip and then my knees. So I was used to playing 18 holes of golf for walking two and three miles, yeah.

I: And do you find that the programme, or have you found that the programme has benefitted your wellbeing or mental health?

R: Yes, both. Yes.

I: In what ways would you say?

R: Well, certainly I'm more active, yeah, and until I had this chest infection, I felt the benefit of it, yes. I have a sneaking feeling that I'm going to go back to where I started again, by the time I start again, but there we are!

I: Okay. Do you think that you'll contin-...so you've got the chest infection at the moment?

R: Yeah, I have.

I: Do you think - yeah, do you think you'll continue exercising after the programme, and when you get back into...?

R: Yeah, I had intended, actually, after the first programme, of joining the gym and going there regularly. I was already swimming regularly, but then I was going to actually join the gym. But, of course, I think the day I signed, I was about to sign the forms to join the gym, was the day the Covid restrictions came on, in March last year.

I: Yeah. Do you think you'll do the same for the exercise sessions after this?

R: I'm not sure now. I'll see how I feel at the end of it?

I: How come you're not feeling as sure this time?

R: Well, I'm not sure how much fitness I'll regain.

I: Okay. Yeah, that makes sense. What changes would you like to see from the NERS programme, in the future?

R: None, really. No, it's excellent.

I: And if some of the content continued - so, obviously, there's a virtual side - if some of the content was to be delivered digitally, do you think that you'd...? And the exercise professionals who are creating it, are known to the service user, do you think it's important to have that sort of local feel to the sessions?

R: Well, yeah, that's why I said that I'm not particularly interested in the virtual sessions.

I: Yeah. Okay. And if it's delivered virtually, do you think the service users of the programme would be willing to pay for the digital content?

R: Well, I don't know, because I wouldn't.

I: Yeah. And you wouldn't...

R: Not that I wouldn't be prepared to pay, it's just I'm not interested in it.

I: Yeah.

R: If I was interested, I'd pay probably, yeah.

I: Okay. That's great. And we're - I'm going to ask you now a little bit about some costs, so we're interested in knowing about the costs to the service user, for taking part in the programme. And I'm just going to run through some questions, so from what you've told me, you've had about five weeks of the NERS programme?

R: That's right, yeah.

I: And it's all been face-to-face?

R: Yeah.

I: And you've been attending twice a week?

R: Yeah.

I: What do you pay for these sessions, face-to-face?

R: I pay £2 to enter the gym.

I: Okay. And you mentioned you get there by car?

R: Yeah.

I: And how many miles is the gym from your house, by car?

R: Oh, one mile there, and one mile back.

I: Okay.

R: Downhill, and uphill. I live on a hill.

I: Okay. And you said you've got your permit, so does this mean that you don't pay anything for parking?

R: Correct.

I: Yeah, okay. And did you have to buy any clothes for the programme?

R: No, I'd already bought them for the previous time I used the programme.

I: Okay. So when you originally bought them for the old, for the first programme, how much did you spend, roughly, on clothing?

R: Probably about 30 quid.

I: And did you have to buy any footwear?

R: Yes.

- I: And, roughly, how much would you say you spent on that?**
- R: Well, I bought the footwear long before, actually, so I didn't wear them, particularly for the programme, but I had bought footwear to go down to the pool and things.
- I: Okay. I'll put that you didn't buy it for the programme then.**
- R: Yeah, I didn't buy them for that, but I bought a top and trousers.
- I: Okay, excellent. And...**
- R: And a T-shirt with tears on, that showed my six pack. So the kids enjoyed that.
- I: Yeah, I can imagine.**
- R: Yeah, you know the one, do you?
- I: No, I don't think I know the one, but I can imagine, I can...**
- R: Well, it's a T-shirt and it's got printing on it, and it looks like it's all torn, and through the tears, you can see a six pack. Oh dear!
- I: Oh, that's great. And did...**
- R: You've got to laugh.
- I: Did any of the costs impact you on being able to engage, or...?**
- R: No.
- I: No. Okay, that's great. So those are all the main questions for me today.**
- R: Good.
- I: For you today.**
- R: Good.
- I: I just wondered if there's anything else that you particularly want to add about your experience of the programme, or anything that you were expecting me to ask, and perhaps I didn't?**
- R: No, I think you've been very comprehensive and very clear, thank you. I've heard all your questions clearly, and some of them, of course, are designed to wrinkle out where there's been issues, but I've had no issues, really.
- I: Okay, that's great. I'm going to stop the recording now, then.**

End of Transcription