

Participant F13

I: **There we go. That's all started.**

R: I've got to click on 'got it'? I've got a message here.

I: **Oh, normally you don't...**

R: Oh.

I: **Normally you don't have to click anything, and it just kind of starts recording.**

R: All right, because the message has come up, the meeting is being recorded, and then it said, there's a choice, either leave meeting or got it.

I: **Oh, maybe press got it then, and that'll just keep you in the meeting.**

R: There we are!

I: **Brilliant! Okay. So what we're going to do, is we're going to start at the beginning of your involvement in the NERS, so the invitation. So we're interested in understanding people's experiences of being invited onto the NERS programme, and what went well and how things could have been improved. So could you talk me through that, so right from the very start, how you found out about the programme and then what happened from there?**

R: Yes. I think I found out about the programme, because I have an annual check-up, because I'm asthmatic. And it was the asthma nurse who told me about it, and I'm trying to remember, I think it was around 2013/2014. And she asked if I'd be interested in going for exercise, and being referred. Now, I had breast cancer back in 2009; I retired from work in 2011, and at that time I had started doing Pilates classes, because they seem to be one thing that medics recommend, and I was interested in doing Pilates classes. So I started doing Pilates classes in the [place] Leisure Centre, and then a couple of years later, while I was having my annual check-up with the asthma nurse, she asked if I would like to be referred. So she referred me, and I started going to the [place] Leisure Centre again, so the same place. And I saw [name] there, to start with, who still, in fact, takes us every week and teaches us. So that was how I started on the scheme.

I: **That's brilliant. So when you went for this, when you had this first referral, how well do you feel that the programme was described to you, and what you were told and what were your expectations about going into the programme?**

R: I wasn't told - all I was told by the nurse was, is did I want to be referred for a fitness programme? So I was seen then by [name], and she went through all the detail with me. Now, as I say, I was familiar with the leisure centre, so I know that it had a gym and it had a fitness class, and all that sort of thing. So I was well aware of what went on there anyway, and so she was asking me what I would be interested in doing, and having a general discussion about what was available.

- I:** And that was [name] who was doing the discussion with you, your exercise professional, and not the referrer?
- R:** No, it was the exercise professional.
- I:** So from what you've just said there - correct me if I'm wrong - but most of the information about the programme came from that initial meeting with your exercise professional, rather than the referrer?
- R:** Yes.
- I:** Okay. And were you encouraged or supported by the referrer into the programme, or did you speak to any family or friends that could have supported you into it? What was that like?
- R:** No, I have over the years, belonged to gyms and then dropped off and then started again. So I was interested in fitness anyway, so it's, no, it's not something that I needed encouragement for, really. I realised when it was suggested that it was a good idea, and I thought it would be very helpful for me just to try and do something regular. If I may just say, for four years, the [place] Leisure Centre, well, the council was going to close it, so the community took it over. And for four years I did voluntary work behind the reception desk, and one thing that became very clear over those four years, was that many, many more people were being referred by GPs locally for this programme. So it's obviously during the last six, seven years, it's something that's increased in popularity here. And many more doctors have been sending people, and many more people have been picking up on it.
- I:** That's really interesting information. Thank you for - thanks for sharing that with me. And correct if I'm wrong, but you said you're from Bangor, was it?
- R:** No, no, I - the [place] University is just over the bridge, and I can see you've got a bridge behind you. I live not far here from the [place] Bridge, which is over the [place] to [place].
- I:** Oh, okay.
- R:** I live in the village of [place]. Now, I don't know if you're familiar with [place] at all, but we've got a village here with a very long name, 52 letters, and what I've just told you is the short version of it.
- I:** Brilliant. Okay. Thank you. So that's really great, so we're going to move on to a little bit about your first meeting with your exercise professional, so as you mentioned, [name]. So with your first meeting that you had with her or him...
- R:** Her.
- I:** Her. We want to understand what could be working here, and what could be improved. So could you talk me through that initial meeting that you had after your referral?
- R:** It's such a long time ago! Well, basically, she was asking about my health, I can remember, and what other things I did for exercise. She covered what I used to do daily and weekly:

walking, cleaning, the sorts of things that involve exercising a bit. And by then, of course, I'd already started, as I say, on the Pilates. So she talked through all of that, basically, and asked me also about my symptoms and whether I had any problems. For instance, I got - I had a dicky knee, so she was familiar with that sort of thing. So that when she was advising on what I could do, that she knew all about this. That's as much as I remember of the detail, I'm afraid.

I: That's okay. And was this meeting in person?

R: Yes.

I: Okay. And when you were having the meeting with that first consultation, did you have any concerns, and did you feel that the exercise professional was perhaps supportive when doing this initial consultation?

R: I thought she was very supportive, and I see her every week now in the fitness, and she's... That's how she is with everybody; she's very supportive, I have to say.

I: That's great. And when you first started the programme, what were you hoping to get out of it at that point?

R: Well, basically, just to keep fit and keep healthy, as healthy as possible.

I: Okay. And that's great. So we're going to move into a little bit now about the exercise sessions. So we understand - so from your online registration, we understand that you had, and what you've been saying there, you've had those face-to-face sessions from when you first got referred, which, correct me if I'm wrong, was what you said, 2014 time?

R: Yes, it was 2013 to 2014, and I can't remember exactly, but it was around then.

I: And then - and you've been using the programme ever since then, have you?

R: I still - I go now to the fitness class that she runs every Friday. But she does run different classes every day, but because of other things that I do, I go to, I still go to the Friday fitness. She calls it the circuit class, which is in the large room in the [place] Leisure Centre. I also do - still do the Pilates, which actually is not with [name], but I still do Pilates as well. And the rest of the time, because I'm busy doing other things, I try and walk every day and do a bit of gardening, but I'm not now actually going to the gym regularly, like I did before.

I: So you were doing all those exercise sessions with [name] since... Sorry?

R: I'm just sorry, I forgot to say, I do have a bike thing upstairs, because about four years ago I had a minor op on my knee, so I use the bike as well. I try and use that every day, and maybe not for very long, but I try and use it every day, so I still do that. So that's one of the things, of course, that I used to do in the gym.

I: Okay. That's great. Thank you. So you've been doing a lot of exercise, by the sounds of it, over the years and doing your sessions with the NERS programme as well. And so as of

March last year, the pandemic hits and then everything went to virtual delivery, and they moved to virtual delivery. And from your registration, I mean, correct me if I'm wrong, you decided to postpone the sessions with the NERS programme, or did you continue virtually?

R: No, I was doing the - as soon as she started the Friday circuit programme on Zoom, I was doing those regularly.

I: **Oh, okay, that's fine. Okay, so - sorry, give me two seconds.**

R: That's okay.

I: **So you were - when the pandemic hit, you then, as soon as they were offered again, virtually, was there a space of time when there wasn't anything available? Can you talk me through a little bit about that?**

R: Yeah. Well, I think there was. My husband and I, because of our health, had to shield, right? And this is from March 2020. So what I started to do, I have a DVD, a Pilates DVD, so a couple of times a week I would do the warm-up watching the DVD, then - this is going to sound daft - we started clearing and I found that I had about 100 CDs. So what I did was, I played a different one every day and I used to dance to that for half an hour. So that gave me a bit of exercise. I used to walk around the garden when the weather was appropriate, because I wasn't going out at that stage. And also I picked up on Joe Wicks, and I used to do some, and he used to do ten-minute sessions for elderly people. So I used to try and do those ones regularly. So I was still doing something to try and keep up the exer-...some sort of exercise, before they started the Zoom sessions for the circuits with [name].

I: **When about did they start, the Zoom sessions?**

R: I'm sorry, I just - I don't remember, but it was going for quite a long time. It must have been a year - they must have been going for a year, I would have thought.

I: **Sorry [over speaking 12:17].**

R: But I can't be certain.

I: **Yeah, so, roughly speaking, when the pandemic hit to the start of the virtual sessions, how long was that gap, do you reckon, a couple of months, a month?**

R: It probably was a couple of months because, as I say, I was doing other things to try and get some exercise, in the meantime. So, yes, there was. And then when lockdown stopped, the gym reopened for a while and we started going again and, of course, there was another lockdown. So I'm sorry, I can't be quite specific about the dates.

I: **No, that's no problem at all. So because you had both face-to-face and the virtual sessions, we're going to talk a little bit about them both. So if we start with the face-to-face ones first and then we'll move on to the virtual, can you tell me a little bit about your**

experiences of the face-to-face exercise sessions? So perhaps how you felt when you first started them, any concerns you may have had?

R: No, I didn't have any concerns because, as I say, over the years, on and off, I've been trying to go to the gym and things. What I found, it helped motivate me, so there was somebody there taking an interest. And [name] was very good like that and going to the gym, she'd see which exercise machine you were using and try and encourage you, or help you if you weren't doing things quite correctly. And then when I stopped actually going to the gym and using the machines, but I've continued to do the circuit training, which she does every week; and I still do that now. And she's very, very good, because even though it's a big hall, at the moment, the numbers are limited to 20 because of Covid, and she gives exercises. And since the Covid, she's - we always have to be more spaced out, and be more careful about how close you get to other people. But she - when she does a minute of each exercise goes... You go round in a circuit, and she goes around and talks to everybody, checks them, helps them if they're not doing things correctly. And the way they've laid the hall out now, they've got things every couple of metres with names on them. And if I don't remember exactly what I've got to do, she will always come and explain and tell me how to do it.

She still asks me, is your knee okay, can you - and give me an alternative exercise, if I'm having problems. She still remembers with everybody, I've noticed, and she's very good in noticing and remembering their conditions, and what help that they need, and she's like that with me as well.

I: That's great. Thank you. And was it - when you first signed up, was the face-to-face exercise programmes what you were expecting them to be, or was it more or less?

R: Well, going to the gym and using the machines, I had used those sort of things in the past, so I knew about that. The one in the circuit, what she calls the circuit training in the hall, that was totally new to me. But we'd do all sorts of exercises, and we used to warm-up, move around, use different equipment, use weights and still do all of that. Well, we don't do the walking around in a group now, as I say, because of the Covid. But she's - part of the exercises, because she's set it all out with two metres apart, all around the perimeter of the room, then we've got to walk back and forth to different places, so we get the exercise just doing that. No, the circuits was new to me; I hadn't done that sort of thing before, but I didn't find it a problem.

I: Okay, that's great. So moving on to the Zoom classes that she was doing, I know you had - by the sounds of it - you had a bit of, you had it a bit on and off because there was a lockdown, and then the easing and then the lockdown again. But how many weeks do you reckon?

R: Oh gosh! It went on - yeah, it went on for some months and, to be fair, I think she's still doing Zoom sessions for some people who can't actually come, because the numbers are limited, and the numbers who can come to the actual class now, there are still Zoom sessions available. So they went on for quite a long time. And...

I: And can you... Sorry, [over speaking 17:05].

R: Yeah. No, no.

I: Can you talk me through the decision to continue with the virtual method, rather than waiting until the lockdown had eased, and going back to the classes face-to-face?

R: I'm sorry, I don't quite understand that question.

I: So when the virtual online Zoom classes were offered, you decided to do them. Can you talk me through why you decided to do those Zoom classes, rather than waiting until face-to-face happened again?

R: Oh sorry. Well, no, because I think it's important to keep exercising. And, as I say, I was trying my best to do something with the dancing and the walking around the garden. I think having [name] there telling us what to do, and showing us what to do was very important. And also on the Zoom, of course, you could see other people. I was doing it on the iPad, so I could only see nine people at a time, but it put me back in contact with other people whom I'd been in the class with. So, to me, that was quite important, and I think one thing about the circuit training on the Friday, is that the social side of it is obviously important to some of the people there, because they spend a lot of time chatting to each other between exercises and things. And, you see, I - certainly, I know that I go there now to that class, and I got to know people and I've made friends there, so there are three or four of us who know each other well, who go together. And that social side, I think, helps motivate me. It helps - it certainly helps me being with other people doing it, so that's kept me going as well. And I'm sure that's true for lots of other people.

I: And you found that those online Zoom classes still held with the - you still felt the social aspect and the friendship aspect to it?

R: Well, she was allowing us - if people joined early, for instance, they could have a little chat before she started. The class lasted for an hour, and then if people wanted to, they could have a chat at the end. And she was...

I: And - yeah, sorry.

R: ...she was... I mean, I was doing them in my lounge, and people had to find a space in their house to work it out. But we had to have weights ready and things, so as much of the equipment as we could, if you needed... Some people needed a chair for when they do squats and things, and they need to lean on a chair or something. So she'd warned us about this all in advance, so that you could have it all ready for the session.

I: And when you were having - and you felt like you had the friendship from the Zoom classes, did you do anything outside of the Zoom classes, in terms of seeing other people, or was it just through that?

R: Well, some of them live in this village, so I see some of them around. But my son, who is a doctor, said to me after about three months, he said, you should start going for a walk every day, mum. So I started walking around the village regularly, and I used to see people and

then we used to have a chat across the road, because we weren't supposed to have close contact. But because it's a fairly small village, I quite often used to bump into people I knew, including some of the people who used to go to the class, and who have started coming again.

I: Okay. That's great. Thank you. So were you just involved in the circuit training? Was there any other training that you were involved with, any other classes you were involved with? Sorry.

R: Not in recent years. As I say, I do the Pilates every Thursday, and that's the one thing I really do not want to miss. I think that really helps strengthen my core, and so I look at that as one day's exercise, and then I've got the circuit training. I don't go to any of the other weekly classes now, because I have other things going on on other days. But I do, as I say, try and walk regularly and do gardening as well, so I try and get some exercise that way.

I: Okay. And you touched a little bit on beforehand, saying that you had the weights, and [name] prepared you for what to expect in the sessions. Can you tell me a little bit more about that? What information you were given before the live sessions, and if you had any struggles or challenges, and how you might have been supported there?

R: Sorry, are you talking about the Zoom now?

I: Zoom. Yeah, Zoom classes, sorry. Yeah, the live Zoom classes.

R: Yes. No, she's - [name] is very good at communicating with people, I think, and she makes sure that everybody understands. And, as I say, even when we actually go to the classes now, she walks around and if she sees... If she perceives that there's a problem at all, she'll explain, come up and explain and try and help. But she was doing the same thing on the Zoom, really. She's very good like that and I think, looking back, I think most of the people in our class, many of them have been there for as long as I have and we... They continue going over the years. And then we did - at one stage, there were a couple of people there who were in their nineties, because whatever exercises she gives you, she says you know your body, you do what you can do. So she will go around and help everybody adapt, so that they don't overdo things, and do what else suits them.

I: And building on that, do you think that on the virtual classes, the live classes, the Zoom classes, did you feel that you could fully participate in those virtual sessions?

R: Oh yes, certainly, yes. And if I wasn't sure about something, I just used to put my hand up and I would ask a question, and the other people did the same.

I: Okay. So we're going to go on to comparing the virtual versus the face-to-face a little bit more, and having experienced them both, how would you say that they compare, really? So what are the pros and cons of doing it on Zoom, and then doing it face-to-face?

R: Well, in the circumstances, as they were with the Covid, it was either Zoom, or I didn't do it. And whilst I was on my own here doing it, I did find it more difficult doing it when I was on my own. I think I'm a social person, and it helps me being with other people doing it. But the

fact that I could actually see other people, you can adjust the screen so you see just one person, or you can see the crowd. The fact that I knew there were other people their doing it helped me with the Zoom, but my personal preference is obviously to be there doing it live. But, certainly, with the Zoom and with [name], was obviously keeping an eye on everybody, and if she was spotting any problems or anything, she would say and she would help. So if it was either Zoom or nothing, obviously I would do the Zoom. It's certainly a lot better than not doing anything, and whilst it's not perfect, I think there's a lot going for it.

I: What do you think that could make it better for Zoom classes?

R: Oh, gosh. Well, for me, seeing it on the computer rather than on the iPad. But my husband uses the computer all day, and he's in the study, so I had to manage with the iPad. But, no, I didn't find it - it was that much of a problem, and the only thing I would say with the Zoom, a lot of the class are more, are elderly. Now, so I know people in other circumstances where I've had meetings with people, that they haven't been able to join because they can't get their head around the Zoom. So I think the main disadvantages of the Zoom is that. If people can get somebody in to help them set it up and just show them, once you've set up, you get an email and all you do is have to put your finger on the connection, and you're there. So it's - I think the greatest disadvantage for Zoom, I think for the older person is actually trying to use it on the computer. I first started using computers when I was 40, right? Now, my grandchildren are using it and they know exactly what to do with everything already. So that's the main disadvantage for older people, I think, is the fact that it is a computer and they sometimes perhaps need some help.

When I was working, if there was anything on the computer that was new, they would send me on a course. And, of course, once you retire, you don't get that, so you have to try and find out how to work these things. And during Covid and people were stuck in, it wasn't so easy for some people.

I: Yeah. And you said there a little bit about how Zoom might be less suitable for the elderly, if they didn't have the knowledge of getting on to, the IT knowledge. Are there any more different types of groups or people that you might think would be more suitable, or less suitable for the Zoom, or online sessions?

R: Well, I suppose, if people are unable to - like with the Covid - if people are unable to go out and mix and socialise, then, or if you are unable, for some reason, to get out to somewhere, then at least having the Zoom as a backup is a good idea. Because then at least you can say you can join in, and you don't completely miss out. I'm sorry, I can't be much more specific than that.

I: No, that's okay. Do you think that there's any distractions for you doing the virtual sessions at home?

R: No, basically, I just had to be disciplined and say, right, I'm doing it and tell my husband, I'm going into there for an hour, don't come in. I was used to doing - the Zoom classes were at the same time as the classes I'd been, and are still during the week. So it wasn't a problem,

because it was what I was used to doing at that time of day. So my mindset was right, at one o'clock on a Friday, this is what I do and so I just got on with it.

I: And was there anything that kind of kept you motivated during this time, or motivated to do the exercise?

R: I think it's important to keep exercising, and that's what I was trying to... What was keeping me going, and it's obviously the healthy thing to do. As I say, after I had a knee op about three years ago, and I bought that bike upstairs after that. And so I thought, right, since it's there, I'm going to try and make the best of it, I'll try and use it every day, even if I only do about ten minutes, it's there, so use it. And the same with the Zoom: it was there, make the best of it.

I: So it sounds like your...

R: [Over speaking 29:43].

I: That's okay. It seems like your attitude towards exercise, as a whole, is what's been keeping you motivated to keep going with the sessions?

R: Yes, you're probably right. I think it's important and, yes, I've been doing classes now for so long, but over the years I've tried to... I haven't always managed to maintain it for a long time, but I've tried to go to the gym and things regularly, and if I wasn't doing that, I was doing something else. I was swimming, or I'd try and walk. I like walking, so it's - and being out in the fresh air as much as possible as well, of course, is important. So, yes, I think exercise is important, and the one thing I have found during Covid, and that I've been sitting down a lot more than I used to, and I know it's not good for me and I try not to do it. I try and get up and do something, but it's just because you've got time on your hands and you'll end up sitting in the chair.

I: Thank you. And did you have any - did you have your 16-week assessment online? So the assessment that you - I know, because you've been doing the programme for quite a few years now, so I'm not sure when you would have had your 16-week assessment.

R: Oh gosh, no. Yes, that was a long time ago, so I didn't have it online, no.

I: Okay. And, on reflection of your experiences, are you happy with how - were you happy receiving the virtual sessions, or would you...?

R: Yes.

I: And why is that?

R: Well, first of all, as I say, it's mot-...it helps me to get motivated to have something like that, and seeing [name], somebody I knew, leading them, it helps motivate. Also, because it was online and because it was on Zoom, I've been able to have chat with other people, and that was quite nice being able to catch up with people you hadn't seen for a while. But, yes, to me, the personal connection is important. So, for me, that was a great motivator and with the Joe Wicks things, which I think I mentioned earlier, I did those for a while, but then I sort

of got out of the habit, and because there was no personal connection, I suppose. It's just a personality thing, I think.

I: So when you say personal connection, can you explain what you mean by that?

R: Well, I'm one of those people who likes to talk to everybody. I know, I suppose my personality, I just enjoy company and I like being with people and talking to people. I'll tell you a story, when I was - I was down in college in [place] in my twenties, and I was talking to this chap who came from Suffolk, and he said to me, you talk to everybody. And he thought - obviously thought I was very strange, and I don't know if it's a Welsh thing, or if it's just my personality, but that's how I am. So I just like - I mean, I'm enjoying talking to you now.

I: It was that sort of community feel?

R: Yes.

I: Okay, that's great. And so if there were no restrictions in place, so perhaps when Covid eventually goes, what type of delivery would you choose? So would you choose face-to-face only, a mixture of the two, or remote only?

R: No, I would choose face-to-face. I would accept a mixture of the two, if somebody wanted to do it that way, but I wouldn't really want to just have it virtual. The face-to-face, to me, is quite an important part of it. And also, of course, with the equipment and everything, I don't have everything here that they have there. So I do have weights, and over the years I bought some equipment to do with the Pilates and things, but I don't have quite the same facilities here, obviously, as I would have if I go to the leisure centre.

I: Okay. And are there any other reasonings why you'd kind of prefer it to be face-to-face?

R: Well, the social side, personally, and [name], and we are very lucky to have [name]. She's excellent, I have to say she's very good. And over the years she's very helpful, and any changes over the years, when I was having problems with my knee and things like that, she was always careful if she was giving us an exercise. She'd always say if your knee is giving you a problem, do it a little bit differently and that sort of thing. So maybe she picks up more when you're face-to-face with something like that that, that she might do on Zoom.

I: Okay. So we're moving on from that, and we're going to talk a little bit more about relationships in the NERS programme, and what... And we'd like to talk about how different people have supported you on the programme. And you've talked quite a bit about [name] and your relationship with her, I wondered if there was anything more you could tell us about, tell me about your relationship with her, and perhaps how appropriately skilled she was to deliver the sessions, or how and what style of, I guess, support she had, and a little bit more about that, I guess?

R: Well, she's obviously well trained, and she's an excellent teacher, and she also has good relationships with people. Now, I've never quite worked out whether she was employed, or is employed by the county council. I think that she certainly was, and I think they may still be and have sessions in the leisure centre in [place], which, as I say, is now a community-run

venture, because the council were going to close it. But she has been - well, in all the years I've been going, she's been holding sessions and she holds all sorts of different sessions. I started off, as I said, I was going to the gym and I was also doing some session on a Monday with her, that she still holds. She has been holding sessions for older people who haven't had the mobility, and who have had to be seated while they were doing sessions and things. She was saying the other day that she'd been on some training course for something, so she's obviously keeping well up to date with things. Now, the Pilates class I started wasn't with [name], it was with somebody else who was starting them off in the leisure centre. But, apparently, [name] had been to her Pilates classes years before, and I know that [name] teaches Pilates one day. So she teaches all sorts of different forms of fitness training and classes, and I think she's obviously well qualified, and she obviously knows what she's doing, but I don't know what her qualifications are.

I: And how does that make you feel being - I guess, being taught by her, knowing how qualified she is?

R: Well, I think that's very important, because she can always pick up problems and weaknesses. And give you also - as I say, give you alternative exercises if you can't cope with something. As a consequence of my knee problem, I can't go on my knees, for instance, so if everybody else is doing an exercise on their knees, then she'll give me an alternative to do. And that's - I think that's very important, and we have our warm-up session before the beginning of the hour, and then a cooling down session at the end. And she seems, to me, very, very competent, I have to say, and she seems to know what she's doing. And, as I say, I'm still going to the classes, so that says something.

I: And do you think that your exercise professional is an important reason to why you engage with the programme, and with your progress?

R: Oh, it certainly, certainly helps me, yes. I can remember going actually to some exercise classes. I think - yes, it was in [place] here on the Island of [place], and there was one of the people that used to be in the gym, and I just couldn't get on with her; it was just her manner. So I just stopped going. So it does make a difference. It certainly does make a difference, the teacher, I think.

I: Thank you. Did you have any support from any friends or family outside of the programme, with your engagement in the programme, and can you tell me a little bit about that?

R: Well, my only family here is my husband, and he suffers from a medical condition, so he doesn't do that sort of exercise at all. No, it's something I'd always done. I have two sons, who are now in their early-forties, and I used to take them swimming. I used to go to the gym, and they still exercise and go to the gym. And it's something I've - it's always been part of what I've done. It's maybe on and off, I've had memberships, but I've always been interested in fitness and doing something. So it's something that I've just done myself, and will continue to do, because I think I need to do it.

- I: Okay. When you talk about support, did you have help from your husband driving to the sessions, or any [over speaking 40:47] sessions?**
- R: Oh no, I drive myself, and I still do.
- I: Brilliant! And were there any negative influences around you for the programme? People who may have sort of dismissed your efforts, or anything like that?**
- R: No, none at all.
- I: Okay. And so you mentioned a little bit about making friends in the programme, and it seems that that social aspect to you is really, really important.**
- R: Yes.
- I: And so when you made friends on the programme, you said you'd go to the sessions together. Were you expecting that to happen when you joined the programme, to make such friends, or how did it all happen, I guess?**
- R: No, the first session I went to, I walked in and who was there, but my next door neighbour. Well, I hadn't known she was going there, and then there were other people from the village that I knew. And in the Pilates sessions, I didn't know anybody in those sessions, but I'd got to know them over the years and both on the... In both things now, after the end of the sessions, we go for the cup of tea together. So I've got to know people a lot better, so the cup of tea at the end of the session, having a chat and putting the world in its place is almost as important as the exercise. So, for me, that was very important. And I'd noticed that particularly in the Friday sessions, as I said, there have been people... There was a gentleman there who was in his nineties. There was another lady there, and she was well in her eighties, and she'd had a stroke and she... The way that she used to react and talk to other people, the social side of it was always... It was obviously important to these people, that they were getting out and having a chance to see other people, and talk to other people. And there are some people now in the session that I go to on a Friday, and when I walk in, they're always in a cluster talking to each other. So I think for a lot of people, I think the social side is important; I don't think it's just me.
- I: And do you think that these sort of friendships would have been the same, or would have developed in the same sort of way if it had happened from...if you started the programme remotely?**
- R: No. Because, as I say, when you go for a cuppa with somebody, you sit down for an hour and you have a chat, and you get to know them. And the Pilates class, for instance, they don't... I would never have come across them, because they live in another part of the island. But a lot of them are connected to the university in [place], different departments. So we have discussions about all sorts of things, and I learnt a lot of new things, and it just makes life interesting. And I think what makes life interesting, is that you do learn something new every day.

I: Yeah, thank you. Were there any individuals in the programme that may have influenced you negatively? I know you said beforehand there wasn't any negative influences around you, but...?

R: I suppose there are a couple of people there who don't always follow instructions, particularly with the Covid, about keeping apart and things. But I just - when I walk in, I make sure I'm [unclear 44:29] and I'm at the other end of the hall, so it doesn't matter.

I: Okay.

R: They wouldn't put me off.

I: Okay. So we're going to move on to overall reflections of the programmes, and through your programme, do you... Or the use of the NERS programme, have you developed an enjoyment for exercise?

R: Oh, yes. And, of course, one thing that you do is you learn new exercises, which I wouldn't have thought of doing on my own. So also - and different things, even if you're stuck at home you could do. If I can't do press-ups on the floor, because I can't go down, because of my knees, I can do them on the wall and that sort of thing. Now, when I had the breast cancer, I had the mastectomy, and one thing they taught me was, when I saw the physio, was to do exercises, taking my hand up the wall. And going to the NERS after that, and keeping moving, I got total full movement in my arms, right? My husband is a GP, and he had a patient who had had a mastectomy, who had gone like this, and after a while she couldn't move her arm. So little things like that are so important and for my age, I think I've got full movement and I'm quite fit. Apart from the fact, I can't go on my knees perhaps, but I think it has been very important for me, and I think a lot of the different exercises I've learnt that I wouldn't have thought of doing on my own. But while we are doing the circuits, I have to tell you, my favourite is the trampoline, but I'm not allowed on it for more than a minute.

I: And do you feel like it's benefitted your wellbeing and mental health?

R: Oh, absolutely. Yes.

I: In what sort of ways?

R: Well, I think it's kept me feeling that I'm making an effort to keep as fit as I can, and that helps my health. And so there's also the social side of it that you see other people. For people who are... Excuse me a minute. [Respondent speaks to someone on a mobile] I'm sorry, the phone went.

I: That's okay.

R: Oh, I've lost my thread now. No, I think, yes, it does make me feel good, and that's why I keep going. I think it's an important part of my week and if I miss it, I don't like missing it. I don't like missing the exercise.

I: Okay. And do you think you'll continue by the - do you think you'll continue exercising?

R: Yes. I'll be going again on Thursday and Friday this week. And [name] has just been on two weeks leave, but she organised for somebody else to be there in her place during that time. And so I was there last Friday and I'll continue, and she'll be back this weekend and we'll be going again. Yes, I will be going, and I will continue to go as long as I can. And if I moved away from here, I would be looking for classes wherever I went. I'd be - because apart from anything else, it's one way to meet people and that is an important part of life.

I: And so if some of the content continues to be delivered digitally, going forward, so these live sessions or recorded sessions, how important is it for you that these are created by your EP, exercise professional, that service users know? So, for example, how important would it be that it was [name] creating the sessions, rather than someone else?

R: It is important because she knows you, and so she can see and look out for individuals, and what she, how she knows them, and what she knows about them. If that wasn't possible, like I say, I joined the Joe Wicks thing for a while. I didn't keep on with it, but it was better than not doing anything. So given a choice, I would prefer somebody I knew and who perhaps knew me, but I wouldn't not go because it was somebody different. And I would try and keep going as long as I could, and if you're going for a, no doubt you'd get to know somebody. If it's - say it was somebody doing... I suppose it depends on the size of the class that they've got on the Zoom session. If they've got a class that's say up to 20 people, or something that they know individuals, and perhaps individuals might know each other, it's easier to keep going, than if it's just on a screen and you see nobody else, and you don't know anybody else.

I: Okay.

R: If that makes any sense?

I: No, it does. Thank you. No, that's important. Do you think the NERS users would be willing to pay for the digital content? And, if so, what would be a reasonable amount to charge for these digital or live sessions?

R: Well, I would. I think we pay to go to the circuits. As a member, it only cost me £5 and I don't know what other rates are in other places. I don't know what - it's difficult to say a reasonable amount, because I'm only aware of my local gym, so I know what they charge here. Personally, I would be prepared to pay, and I suppose I would be prepared to pay up to £5, actually, if it was a regular thing, and I'd got to know the person, but I don't... I can't recommend for other places, because I have no idea of values everywhere else. Sorry.

I: So that's okay. And perfect for your area, really, so that's fine.

R: Yeah.

I: So I'm just going to look - so this last bit that we're going to do, is... It's all a little bit about costs and how much it all costs to be involved in the programme, and how it's been virtually. And so we're going to run through a few questions, if you don't mind. I've just

got to get it up, so I'm going to ask the right one. Yeah, so we'd like to understand if there were any costs that you, as the user of the service, had to pay to participate in the NERS programme. So I know you've been involved in the NERS programme for quite a few years now, but approximately how many weeks of NERS exercise sessions did you have in total? So if you go by years, I can calculate the weeks.

R: Yeah. The only time I miss is if I go away.

I: **Okay.**

R: And I have two sons who live away with my grandchildren. So my - I would, in a normal year, I would probably be away once a month, so I would miss one Friday in the month, say on the Friday session. So I'm doing...

I: **[name], you're frozen.**

R: Oh! Oh, what's happened? Yes, you've frozen. Hello?

I: **Hi, [name].**

R: Oh, there - oh, you're back!

I: **I don't know what happened there. My computer seems to have really done a number on me.**

R: Oh, I could see you anyway.

I: **Oh, that's excellent. So I've only got a little - I've only got a little bit left to finish off. I really do apologise.**

R: That's okay.

I: **And it seems like the recording is still in progress, which is good news.**

R: Oh yes, I've got a red dot.

I: **Yeah. Okay, brilliant. So as we were saying, so approximately how many weeks of the NERS exercise sessions have you had in total? But if we go off years, then I can calculate weeks roughly.**

R: Yes, let's have a look now then. I must have been doing it for seven or eight years, and I go regularly, and I'm still going regularly.

I: **Okay.**

R: But, as I say, when things were normal, I was probably missing once every four to six weeks, because I was going to see my sons. So probably about, I would say about four to six weeks a year.

I: **Okay. Four to six. Okay, and what type of sessions did you have, so both?**

R: To start with, I was doing both, but that didn't last terribly long, probably for a year or two. And then I was - I've been going to the Friday ones all the time, so that's the... And I've been doing Pilates for even longer. So I've been doing Pilates, which wasn't a NERS, but it's their exercise. So I've been doing Pilates and circuits twice a week, for seven or eight years.

I: **So of those seven or eight years, how many of those have been face-to-face, so the last...?**

R: All of them, apart from the Covid sessions.

I: **Okay. And so during a typical week, on average, you're attending one session a week or two?**

R: Well...

I: **On the NERS programme.**

R: On the NERS programme, I'm doing one session.

I: **Okay. How many weeks have you done virtually, roughly?**

R: Probably about four or five months, I would say.

I: **Okay.**

R: Because there were two lockdowns. Yes, at least, I would say.

I: **And you were attending those once, the one circuit session?**

R: Once a week, on the Friday, yes.

I: **And how - what did you pay for the face-to-face exercises?**

R: Well, we weren't paying for those.

I: **The face-to-face, you weren't paying?**

R: No.

I: **Okay.**

R: Sorry, I was just going to say, I have an annual membership of the leisure centre, and I normally pay £5 a week. But I think people who don't have an annual membership, pay a bit more.

I: **Okay. Brilliant. And did you pay for any of the virtual sessions?**

R: No.

I: **And what was your main form of travel to the...?**

R: Sorry. Sorry. What they did say was, if you want to give a donation to the centre, you can. So I was making donations to the centre, rather than paying for the exercise, if you know what I mean?

I: **Yeah. Okay. And what was your main sort of travel to the face-to-face exercise sessions?**

R: Oh, car.

I: **Okay. And how many miles is it from your home, roughly?**

R: I think it's about nine miles.

I: **Okay. And is that - that's one way, nine miles one way, or 9 miles round trip? One way?**

R: One way, yeah.

I: **Okay, brilliant. And do you have to pay for any parking when you're there?**

R: No. As a member of the leisure centre, I get free parking.

I: **Okay. And when you joined the NERS programme, did you have to buy any sort of extra clothing or footwear, or any sort of equipment?**

R: It's likely I probably bought the weights then, but those are the... I use those at home, and I don't take them to the... Because they do supply them, but I think those are the only things, really.

I: **Okay. And how much did you spend on the weights, roughly?**

R: [Over speaking 1:03:38].

I: **I know, these questions.**

R: Sorry, I've got no idea.

I: **No idea. No problem. That's okay. And did you have to buy any devices or tablets, so you could take part in the exercise sessions online, sorry?**

R: No, I had the tablet anyway; I bought that anyway.

I: **And then what's your main way of connecting to the sessions, is it via wi-fi or through 4G?**

R: Wi-fi.

I: **This is going to be a difficult one, but do you know how much, roughly, approximately, you pay for wi-fi?**

R: Oh crikey! Well, it's my husband pays those. Because he's got a phone line, and I think it's about £35. Because he got extra - he does a lot on the computer, so that covers the phone line and the wi-fi and everything.

I: Okay, that's brilliant. Okay. [Unclear 1:04:39], but that doesn't matter. That's great. That's brilliant. So those are all of my questions for you today, including those last cost ones at the end. Is there anything you were expecting me to ask, or anything you'd like to add, or anything else that you'd want to mention about the NERS, your experience with the NERS programme?

R: No, I can't think of anything, except to say that I think it's a very, very good programme and a very good idea. And, as I say, I'm glad to see the numbers that have been referred on to it are increasing. As you might have gathered, I come from a medical family and my mum was a nurse, and my son is a doctor and my husband is a doctor. My other son is married to a doctor. And there has been a discussion recently about getting people to do more exercise, rather than pharmaceutical stuff, treating with tablets and things like that, try to get people, to get themselves in a better shape. So I think from that point of view, I think it's an excellent idea, and I shall certainly continue to go to it. And anybody else that asks me, I would encourage them as well.

I: Okay, that's great. So I'm going to stop the recording now. Stop recording.

R: So can I just ask you a question now that you've done that?

End of Transcription