

Participant F12

I: Okay, the recording has now started. So we're going to start from the beginning of your experience with the NERS programme, and we're interested in understanding how people, who were invited onto the NERS programme, what was working well and maybe what could be improved. So could you talk me through that, really, right from the very start, how you found out about the programme and then what happened from there?

R: Yes. I was in the middle of a NERS programme when the pandemic fell, and everything closed down and all the rest of it. So and that was - I'm just trying to get my thoughts straight. I'd already done a NERS programme years ago, after a heart op to replace a valve, an aortic valve. And I went - it was a cardiac rehabilitation that was, but, of course, this was pulmonary rehabilitation, and I was having great difficulty getting my breath when I was doing any sort of elongated exercise about the house and things. Perhaps it wasn't too bad, but if I wanted to walk any distance, I did get very out of breath. I have the *[health problems]*. And I also have scoliosis, which means that my spine pushes my lungs into a squashed position, so it's not surprising I can't get my breath. But I live a normal life, and I live on my own and I go out and I drive. I do quite a lot in my surrounding area with charities and the church, and things like that. So I'm not a sort of sit-at-home, and don't do anything person.

And when the pandemic came and we were offered - well, first of all, *[name]*, who was the rep in *[place]* Leisure Centre, he sent me a programme to follow, a list of warm-up programme and a circuit, and a cool down. And suggested I did that three times a week, and I did, until recently, actually. But from April '20, I suppose, yes, March, April 2020 until of May this year. And then I had the pain and all sorts of things, so I thought you know what it is if you stop these things that you've done regularly, it's difficult to get back into the momentum. But that was exceedingly good what he offered me, and I used to email him to tell him I've done it each time, and he was so very encouraging and helpful. And if I didn't feel too good and I'd missed one, it doesn't matter, do what you can and all the rest of it. But also he encouraged me to do that, and I walked every day as well. I couldn't walk out, because I was shielding, so I walked up and down the garden path, and got that. And I think that because of that, I was really, really grateful, because I think because of it, and my doing the exercises, I was in better health than I would have been.

But when they offered the virtual thing to go and do it on Zoom or whatever, I wasn't so keen, and I liked doing it on my own. I did do it, and I've got a record of what I did. It wasn't to get out of doing it, but I just - I don't know, it's just me.

I: Okay.

R: Is that okay?

I: Yeah. So you've gone through quite a lot there. So I'm going to pick it out and break it a little bit down. So when you first - so you'd done the programme a while ago for your heart, after your heart operation, and then you went in a second time around for your pulmonary, through the pulmonary pathway. So when you first went onto that pulmonary

pathway, when you did it face-to-face, I'm assuming, because you said you were halfway through. How were you invited onto that programme that second time around, at the very beginning? So who referred you onto the programme?

R: I was referred to the physio at the general practice. I think it was just the doctor that just did it. I was - when [name] got in touch with me and said, you can do this programme if you want to, and I went and spoke to him at the leisure centre, and was invited to join it then. Because I'd been to the doctor complaining of not being able to breathe. Sorry, I shouldn't laugh. But it was just that I was getting so breathless, that it was sort of concerning me. And they suggested doing this exercise, so I went to the gym, obviously, for that twice a week, and it was for 16 weeks. No, 16 - no, that's right, 16 weeks, of two sessions a week.

I: **Okay.**

R: And obviously I haven't got the equipment at home to do all the things I could do in the gym, but nevertheless, what he set out for me was... Did the exercises I needed to do.

I: **Okay. And when you were first referred by your GP to do these gym sessions, to take part in the 16-week programme, did you...? How well was the programme described to you, and what were you told, and did you have any expectations around going onto the programme?**

R: Well, only the fact that it would keep me fit. It would keep me - it would help my breathing, because... And my general demeanour, really, and the fact that because I was doing it regularly, and... I mean, because I'd done it before, I knew what to expect of it, although they'd had one or two extra pieces of equipment in the gym. Therefore, I got those [unclear 07:51] as well as the ones I had used when I went on the other course. And I've also done a, what do you call it? Exercise by invitation, I did that course as well, but I don't think that's a NERS. Of course, it was done through the GPs.

I: **Okay. And you said you didn't have any - you knew what to... You were expecting going into this second one. So did you have any - were you hesitant about anything, or unsure when going in?**

R: Not really. Only in the first one, I found out that although I liked the rowing machine, it actually didn't do my back any good. My back didn't like it, so I didn't do that, but there were other things that were very similar, that strengthen my arms and strengthen my legs, and my back, I suppose, and certainly helped with my breathing, because you gradually built it up, so you built up the strength. But he went through it with me before I started, and he showed me everything and all the rest of it. But he was - it was very good, in the sense that, at my age, you tend to... You see all these young ones running away on the treadmill thing and thinking, I can't do that! But you can do what you can do, and that's... We were sort of encouraged to do it as much as we could to our level, and if we wanted to push it on, that was up to us. But we were never - that was my only worry, that I wasn't going to be able to do what younger people can do, I think. And it didn't - but they made you feel as if that's fine, and you do what you personally can do, and push yourself a bit. But we were never expected to sort of, come on, you should be doing this, or you should be doing that. We

never were told that, it was just how do you think about perhaps doing ten minutes instead of five minutes, or something like that, or whatever?

Just a general encouragement to push a little bit further, but we were never expected to keep up with the younger people that were there. And they kept an eye on us as well, of course, which was good. I mean, occasionally, he would even say, sit down, because I was struggling or something. So that was - I was very well... I felt I was very well managed.

I: Okay. So you've mentioned quite a bit about your exercise professional there, your instructor, and I wanted to just find out a little bit more about how that first meeting was. So you said a little bit before that you had gone to the exercise, you'd gone to the leisure centre and spoke to [name], was it? And...

R: Yeah. Well, [name], and this is the pulmonary one. He was - and it was [name], the other one, because... But then [name] has since got up the ladder a bit, and he's now in charge of that. But it was a question of going and talking to him first, and he asked me certain questions and to do with my health and my wellbeing, and all the rest of it. And then I think I did a walk test, up and down the line, and I remember that. I had to...

I: And... Oh sorry, you continue.

R: No. Oh no, it's all right, it was just that I'm trying to remember, really. And then he showed me all the equipment and what it did, and suggested a routine.

I: And during this time, when you had that first meeting with him, what were your thoughts going ahead of, into that first session and first consultation?

R: Help! I really - I said to my children, I'm going to the gym to do an exercise programme, and they just laughed, because they're like me a bit. But because, well, they'll get to - then it was they don't get too much, and all the rest of it. But they thought - and I think they were quite proud of the fact that I would have a go. But when I got there, there was a lot of people who were of similar age, as well as other younger ones.

I: Okay.

R: But it was certainly laid out to me what was expected, and what was available.

I: Yeah. So if you had any questions, did you feel those questions were answered by the exercise professionals, so did you feel supported?

R: Yes, very supportive.

I: Yeah. And how good was the exercise professional at putting you at ease on any concerns you might have had?

R: Well, they covered it all, I think. They encouraged you, to tell you what was wrong, or what you found difficult and what you found, perhaps, easy or don't be put off by blah, blah, blah. And also, if you couldn't quite manage what they wanted you to do that particular day, it

didn't matter, do it next time. Or perhaps they'd say, well, do something on a different piece of equipment, or something like that. But they made it easy, but they kept you going.

I: Overall, how would you sum up your experience of that first meeting? Do you think there's anything that could have been improved, when you first met your exercise professional?

R: No, I don't think so. I thought it was a very good introduction, and they were asking certain questions. I presumed that they were - they had a list of things to ask, and they asked about my general health. And when I did the heart programme, I was still married, but when I did this latest one, I was widowed. I was widowed in 19 - 2015, so and [name] knew my [name] - like my husband was a [name] as well - and so it was nice to have that contact, that sort of link, really. And also you get to know the people involved, and I got to know him fairly well. And his - he'd had a baby, his wife had had a baby, and so when I came to do this programme, obviously their children, she had more children and they were all growing up. So it was a nice contact there, which was good, because you felt he was more of a friend than a tutor, sort of thing. But he was very good at explaining why I was doing a particular thing, sort of weights and... I don't mean weights on a barbell, or anything like that, but I did certain exercising with holding weights, and... Or balancing things, or that - whatever, he explained it all and how it was doing bits of me good. So it was all very - I've no complaints at all.

I: Okay, thanks for sharing that with me. We're going to go on to the actual exercise sessions themselves, so we understand that you... So as you mentioned before, you had the first face-to-face part, and then when the pandemic hit, you chose not to be involved in any virtual sessions.

R: Well, I'm not sure they were offered immediately.

I: Oh, okay.

R: I don't - I might be wrong, but we just obviously had to not go, because they're closed. And then it was offered online, or by email and I don't remember it being... I can't remember anything definite about them saying, oh, this is the last session and you can't come again. I don't remember that, and I think it was all sort of, oh, my goodness, that's it, they're closing and things. And then they kept in touch and said, this is what you can do instead to keep going and gave me this programme that I could do at home; and then they offered the virtual thing.

I: Okay.

R: Sorry?

I: No, no, continue. So they offered you the home programme, so to speak, before they offered virtual?

R: Yeah.

I: So, correct me if I'm wrong, but was the home programme more immediate, straight after things had closed down?

R: Fairly - fairly immediate, yes. If I'm quite honest, I can't remember. I think we got an email; I got an email saying they couldn't continue it, obviously at the moment, but they would get in touch with a suggestion of how we could continue, and then they did.

I: Okay. Thank you. That kind of clears some things up for me. So I'd quite like to talk a little bit about your experience of those initial face-to-face sessions. You mentioned a little bit beforehand, but - and then when... Then we'll move on to the decision why you decided to postpone the virtual programme. Can you tell me a little bit about - a little bit more about your experience of the face-to-face exercise sessions? So you already mentioned that you were encouraged by your exercise professional, and they helped with any support when you were there. But how suitable did you feel the sessions were for you, and were they what you were expecting?

R: I don't know what I was expecting, if I'm honest. There's a lot of equipment to choose from, and I wouldn't have known, without guidance, what was good for me. I wouldn't have known how to work them anyway, and some of them were more difficult than others. But they - [name] explained it, every piece that I needed, why don't you have a session on this and do so much? And then perhaps do some exercises, like bicep curls, and I can't remember what the one is [?at the straight up 21:00]. And to vary it, and he always insisted that if you wanted to have a rest, you had a rest. There was no, you must do this in an hour, there was none of that. It was this is what you could do, but you take your time and you do what you can manage. But virtually, in the end, you did most things you'd planned to do, or he planned you to do. So that was - yes, that was ideal, and I must admit, I think I wasn't so keen on going, but when I got there, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I: Why were you - so what made that mindset change from you not wanting to really go, to being kind of enjoying it, I guess?

R: Yeah, I did enjoy it, yes. I think, to be quite honest, I felt better. I felt good when I came out. I hadn't - it wasn't a thing that I did during my life, go to the gym. I hadn't got time, working full time, etcetera, and the children, and living in a [residence] isn't entirely peaceful. And so I had never been to a gym, in that sense, before, but each piece of equipment I learned to use, I felt good about, and I'd come home and say, well, I've done so-and-so today. And also the encouragement that I had from the professionals there.

I: What else did you notice in that change that made you enjoy it a bit more? Did you notice any positive impact, or experience during the time, for example, maybe on fitness, or isolation or loneliness?

R: Oh, when I stopped doing it, you mean?

I: No, when you started doing it, and in the face-to-face sessions?

R: Oh right. Well, I did feel fitter, I definitely did. I mean, I felt tired too, and when I first started it's a lot, when you're not used to doing that sort of thing regularly. I suppose I was stiff and

what have you, all the usual things, but the way it was worked, it was easy. And the hour went by so quickly, because you were encouraged off one machine onto another, or off one machine onto doing something yourself. I don't know, as I've said, perhaps using the weights, or using a piece of equipment only involved one part of your body, and not all of it. Things like that, and making things, suggesting things like the step up, if you do a step up, it's quite high. Sometimes [name] made sure it was I started on a very low one, so I felt I was doing it, but I wasn't actually, and I could work up to the next height. So that was good, because I could cheat something, and I was working towards doing it better. So that was - and, yeah, that was just the general... And the very friendly team that works there, so a lot of banter and fun as well, which I think is important, because you go a bit in trepidation, wondering what's going to happen. And the worst put off thing was having sort of, I don't know, 20-year-olds running on a treadmill when you were plodding. But having said that, you got better and better; I never got to running!

I: Thank you for that. So were there any sort of challenges of attending?

R: Oh, it was a challenge, definitely, yes. But that was quite a challenge, as long as - and it was within my ability to face that, to a certain extent. Probably I didn't realise it was, but I did achieve more than I thought I would.

I: And what were those challenges?

R: Well, it was just the exercises expected, like, I would have plodded on the treadmill, and then, oh well, do next week... Oh, well, you did four minutes last week, do six minutes this week, and never pushing it too far. And also the slope could be altered, and try that and if it was too much, fine, we won't do that this week. But you were always encouraged to push forward, and so... And there was always, because of that particular session, they did let other people who just wanted to come in and do the session on their own, they would. But it was that particular hour was for people who had been referred to the sessions, and there was always somebody there to make sure you were all right.

I: Okay. And do you think there's anything that would have made attending more easier or more attractive, or anything that's helped you, motivated to keep attending?

R: I'm sorry, could you do just repeat that?

I: Yeah. Sorry. So is there anything that would have made attending easier, or more attractive to you?

R: No, I don't think so. Everybody's very friendly. It was, I suppose, I'm not very up to date with things, so I didn't have any music going on in my ears, or anything like that. If there had been - because it was a plain room inside with no windows, that might have been nice to have had a television or something. And I think it probably could help, but I didn't find out how, because I did do another session at pulmonary with a physio and an occupational therapist, that was arranged through [?haaspihtuhl 28:40]. And, oh, I'm sorry, I'm in Wales, I keep forgetting, haaspihtuhl is just a word for hospital.

I: That's okay.

R: And the big hospital is at [*hospital*]. And because I had been seeing - I see a cardiac surgeon once a year still to check on my valve, and then I was also referred through a pulmonary surgeon, or... Well, not a surgeon, a doctor, I got an invitation to join that [*?trust 29:32*], which was a group session at our local, small hospital. And it's perfectly placed, because it's all the windows look across to the mountains.

I: Oh.

R: So you've got the - when you... I was on the bike in that session at our local hospital, I could look across to the [*place*], and a mountain that's closer. And I got - oh, and I could see the school next door, when they were out playing or whatever. So it was lovely, because it took your mind off what you were doing, and it helped you. I think it helped a great deal to have an [*?audience 30:20*] to look at.

I: Okay.

R: And it wasn't made up, it was real. So that was good, but you couldn't do that. I understand that you couldn't do that, but maybe a television or something. I think they had to - if I'm honest, I think they've got one, but I never asked about how you linked up with it.

I: Okay. That's great. Thank you. Moving on to when the pandemic hit, approximately how many weeks of the face-to-face sessions did you have before the first lockdown?

R: I can tell you, if you hang on a minute. I think I've got my card still. Sorry to keep you.

I: That's okay.

R: I suppose it - oh, here it is. One, two, three... Five, I think it was.

I: Five weeks?

R: Yes.

I: Okay.

R: That was the end of - until the end of February, and then everything stopped.

I: And so you did five weeks, and then you were given a home programme, and then you were offered the virtual programme. Can you talk me through your decision to do that, really, to not do a virtual programme and to continue with a home programme?

R: It's just my natural shyness. I mean, I was happy to do virtual meetings. I was using Zoom three times a week and another session once a fortnight, to do with church. That I didn't mind being in a meeting, but I didn't really want to be doing exercises with other people watching me. That was basically me, so I opted just to do it - carry on doing it on my own.

I: Okay. And then so you decided to continue doing it by the virtual - via the home programme. So you still had support during the pan-...after everything shut down, but just through the home programme and not the virtual programme?

R: Yeah.

I: Okay. And approximately - what were you told about the way the new program-...this kind of home programme would be delivered to you, once you were... Once the pandemic happened and you were given the home, told about the home programme and offered it, what were you told about, and how did you feel about it?

R: I had a phone call from [name] saying that if I wanted to, I could continue the sessions, but doing my, doing it to his set programme. And he explained it all, and I said that was fine. And he then sent me - I can't, to be honest, I have a feeling he called. He either called, or he sent it me by email, or through...and by email, of what I've got to do. And I wrote it down, and then I...every time I did it, I wrote down on a piece of paper, the date and what I did, to check that I've got the evidence of it. And then I - he used to say to let him know every time I'd done it. So every time I'd do an email, I mean, after a session I would email him saying Tuesday is done, or something like that. And I would get a little well done, Jane, or something like that. Or if I'd put anything like, didn't feel so good, missed Wednesday or missed whatever day it was, and he'd always say, oh, don't fret about it, have a go again on Friday, or do it when you're ready to do it. And so he was always very encouraging, and if I didn't email, he would get in touch and say, are you all right? And then eventually I started doing a week - I did Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and I started sending him an email on the Saturday, rather than three times a week [?to see a person 36:01].

And so that seemed to work, and we carried on like that. And then it's just recently, really, June, that I got a pain in my back and it hurt to do it, so I stopped doing it. And then I think because I stopped doing it, I thought to myself, oh, I must do my exercise. Now I'll start my exercise, but then I didn't and you sort of get out of the momentum, and I'm still thinking like that at the moment, but I do... I'm sure I will get back into it; I won't just abandon it, I will keep trying. And I'm still walking.

I: Okay. Thanks for sharing that. And what were your - what factors did you sort of weight up in making the decision to continue with the home programme, rather than waiting until the next face-to-face, or postponing until face-to-face happened again, all those in-person gym sessions?

R: Well, there weren't any, I mean, we didn't know when they would start again and I was shielding anyway, so I couldn't have gone. And, as I say, it was - the leisure centre was closed, so I thought this was a good alternative and it kept me going, and it kept me... It was something to look forward to, in a way, I've done today's, now I'll do it on Thursday, and I did. I mean, obviously, there were some times when I thought, oh, flip, have I really got to do it! But I didn't force myself exactly, but I made myself do it because I knew that once I stopped, I wouldn't get back into it again. So I tried to keep going and keep doing it, and it's worked, so just recently.

I: Okay. And would you have preferred to carry on with face-to-face sessions if you could have? So rather than having the home programme?

R: Yes, except that it is only a 16-week programme, isn't it, or [?what have you 38:31]?

I: Yeah.

R: Yeah. So I wouldn't have been - obviously, it went past that, but if they'd said you can come and do the end of your course, I would have gone, yes. But, at the moment, I prefer to be at home. But that's just me, I mean, it's I'm sure a lot of people have gone back.

I: Do you see any benefits of having virtual sessions, or a home programme?

R: Well, the benefit, to me, was the home programme is that it does keep me fitter than I would be. It would be very easy not to do anything, but that isn't my nature, really, and I want to keep... There are certain things that I can't do anymore. I think I can, but I can't. I mean, generally, in life, I'll think to myself, oh, I could do that, but then I'll do it and, yes, I can't. But this programme is within my reach and I can do it, and I improved it, actually, so that if... I'll just get the programme, and there were certain things like you walk on the spot for [unclear 40:12]. Here it is. I mean, the first time I did it I thought, oh, flip! Because it had been a few weeks and everything collapsed, and march... The warm up was marching on the spot for a minute, then weight, lift ups with weights for a minute. Then the high knees, which nearly crippled me, for a minute, and bicep curls for a minute. And when I'd done just the warm up I thought, oh, flip, I can't do any more, but I did. And there were certain things, like the circuit itself, included things like arm punches and sit to stand, and leg stretches and wall press ups. And all of those I gradually increased over the weeks, and started off with five, then went to ten and then to 12, I think it was. And I ended up doing 20 of each, so I must have got fitter because I was able to do that, and it gave me satisfaction that I'd increased it as well.

I: Okay. And looking at the home programme and your experience of having it, how would you compare between the face-to-face sessions, and that home programme?

R: Well, the only thing that's different, of course, if you haven't got the equipment, you haven't got the treadmill or a bicycle, or a what's it called? A rowing machine or thing to strengthen your leg muscles, or those sorts of things that you could have access to in the gym, you can't do at home. But, nevertheless, the things that [name] set out for me, I can see would strengthen certain parts of my body. So you can't compare it in the fact that you can't - because it's this equipment available in the face-to-face sessions, but it was as good as I could get, using this, which I've... I mean, it's - that was March. Fifteen months I did that for.

I: The face - the home programme?

R: Mm.

I: Oh, gosh. Okay. And then did you have a preference for the home programme, and for the face-to-face? You said you enjoyed the face-to-face sessions, did you enjoy both of them equally?

R: Yes. I think probably I enjoyed the home better, because I was at home.

I: **You enjoyed - sorry, you enjoyed home better, because?**

R: Because I was at home, because I was... I could do it when I wanted to. I don't mean I kept to the days that were suggested, but I could do it at any time of day. I didn't have to think I must go to that. And, actually, because I'm fairly busy with meetings and things like that in my own life, sometimes it clashed and I couldn't get to the gym. I would say, well, I can't come on such-and-such a day because... Whereas at home, if I had a meeting, I could do it at a different time. So that was easier for me, and less worrying. I mean, the whole thing about now, about whether you go into a building and feel safe. And, I mean, of course, I do and I went out yesterday with an organisation to a café, and had afternoon tea, which was very nice. And that was - we went in with masks, but at the tables we sat without masks. And you - I felt safer than I might have done six months ago sort of thing. It is nice to be able to go out and about at last, but, nevertheless, you're not risking anything if you're at home.

I: **And do you see that as a benefit of the home programme?**

R: I do. I mean...

I: **Is there any more... Oh sorry, continue.**

R: Well, no, I'm sorry. It's not for everybody to go to the actual gym, and I've got, I have got, I think, probably during this pandemic, I've got that I like my own home very much. I don't mean I'm scared to go out, I do go out, and I do my shopping and all the rest of it, but I like to come home.

I: **And...**

R: But maybe that's something to do with age, I think, probably.

I: **And do you see any more positives or pros of doing it at home, doing the home programme in comparison to face-to-face? For example, maybe you mentioned a little bit about travelling and doing it in your own time, and you mentioned beforehand as well that the virtual... You didn't feel comfortable doing virtual online, because people would look at you. So is there any other kind of positives to doing the home programme over the face-to-... Over maybe face-to-face or the virtual offered Zoom programmes?**

R: No, just those, really, that I prefer to do it on my own. It isn't - the travelling isn't a problem, because you could... It's not very - it's only a mile down the road. And so I go and drive down and there's a car park, and all the rest of it, and it's quite easy. There's even a lift to get upstairs, but I did go upstairs on purpose. But I think just what I've already said about the house, I prefer to be in my own home, and yeah.

I: **And so...**

R: I mean, I put music on where I could have - I know I could have earphones in the gym, but I can... I just like it at home.

I: And do you think that the type of delivery might have impacted how - impacted on maybe friendships made, or feelings of isolation or loneliness?

R: Well, I mean, certainly every time I've been on a session to whichever, whether it's been on my own to the gym, into the leisure centre, or whether it was to the group session I went to, yes, I've made friends. And it's lovely to - I mean, the one I went to in the little group session that was ordered by the hospital, I was the only one not on oxygen, I think. Everybody was worse off than me. So it was - and it was we had a laugh, and at the sessions in the gym as well. I mean, when I went for the first one after my heart op, there was another lady who... I was only in my seventies then, and she was eighty-something, and I thought she was fantastic for somebody in their eighties doing this programme. And we used to chat, and we used to get told off for chatting like naughty schoolgirls. We'd [literally 48:54] do something instead of chatting, which was fun. It was just banter, and it was fun. And I can see - I understand the thing about virtual, and that people might find it lovely to share with other people, but now I've got... No, I just like it at home. And certainly though, there was a friendship and a lovely light-hearted banter, and a café. They have a healthy-eating café there, which it was nice to go and share with people and chat afterwards. So there are advantages of going, and the virtual thing would be fine, I suppose, it's just... I just felt happier with doing it on my own.

I: Okay. And you said - you mentioned before that you knew it was a 16-week programme. Did you have a 16-week assessment with the programme?

R: Yes.

I: And was that held remotely, or over the phone, or how did that happen?

R: Well, of course, it didn't this time, because of the pandemic stuff, and I just went on to this home programme. But he just kept in touch with me and made sure I'm okay, and I've kept in touch with him. But in the - when I did the first one for the cardio rehabilitation, I had an interview at the beginning, the usual blood pressure and all the rest of it, tests and a talk with him, and then another one when I finished, so yes.

I: But you didn't have that second chat with him, when you were given the home programme?

R: Well, not really, because I hadn't finished it. I mean, well, yes, he talked to me and went through it with me, and let me know if you have any difficulties or whatever. But nothing formal, this is the end of the programme. And I've actually gone on longer, obviously, than it would have been.

I: Yeah. Okay. Thanks for sharing that with me. And on reflection of both your experiences of everything that's happened in the last year or so, are you happy with your decision to continue with the home programme, rather than waiting for a face-to-face session start up again?

R: Yes.

I: Yeah. Why is that?

R: Well, because that means I don't have to go out, and that... That sounds awful of me to sound lazy, and it isn't that at all, it's I feel it's doing me good. I definitely feel fitter than I would have been if I hadn't done it, or I hadn't... I am still doing it. Well, I've got the means there to start it up whenever I want to, because I know it works. And, yes, I do prefer to do it at home, so I'm very grateful for the fact that it's been made available to me.

I: And if... Ooh, sorry.

R: No, that's all right.

I: And if there were no restrictions in place, what type of delivery would you choose yourself? So this could be the home programme only, face-to-face only, or a mixture of the two?

R: I think I prefer the home programme, but if they said, well, you're missing out on certain things, like using the equipment, and the doctor said or the health professional said, it would help you to do this, then, yes, I would do it. But I would - overall, I would prefer to carry on with this programme at home.

I: And you said you like doing it at home, because you like being at home. Is there a reason why you prefer doing it at home, and prefer doing it on your own, or prefer just being at home when you do it?

R: Well, not really, it's just that's how I like my own company, I can do the exercises and I can carry on with my housework, or do whatever I'm planning to do, or go to a meeting, or... I mean, normally, in a normal week, not in August, I would have... I'm [*occupation*], so I would have a team meeting on a Monday with all the others. On Tuesday, we have a coffee shop drop-in, which used to be face-to-face, and obviously we've done it on Zoom instead. And on Wednesday we do a [*event*], which makes me sound very old, and I assure you I'm not. And then on every other Friday, until recently, we had a quiz in the evening on Zoom, and it's really kept the [*community*] together. I think probably it's helped to get us to know each other better as well. So I wasn't - my time is quite limited, so it's easy to fit a session in at home, and actually get in the car and drive to the leisure centre, and do an hour and come back again. So I found that it's more convenient to do it at home.

I: Okay. Thank you for that. And thinking about the pro-...everything... Oh, I'm mindful that it's 11 o'clock, and I said I'd be an hour, are you okay to hang on for a little bit longer, or how...?

R: Yes, I'm fine. I'm fine.

I: Okay, perfect. And thinking of overall reflections, what changes would you like to see from the NERS programme in the future, particularly in terms of how it's delivered?

R: Well, I think it's delivered in as many ways as you can deliver it. You can now - as it's getting safer to go back to the gym, actually in person, you could go to the gym. If you wanted to do it virtually, because you didn't feel safe going out, that's been offered as well. And then the

chance to do just a programme on your own, but set by the NERS programme is also offered, so that I can't see... Really, they're covering every angle, and probably I can't speak for everybody else, but I'm quite happy using Zoom for most things, but I think for the exercise I just prefer to be on my own.

I: Okay.

R: I'm sorry, I'm sure it's an age thing.

I: No, that's okay. Thank you for that. Do you think there's any part of the programme that you think should always be delivered face-to-face, or should be delivered virtually?

R: It's really an individual thing, isn't it? Because it depends what exercises suit you, and your whole medical thing, and because I've got heart and lung things, the exercises I do suit me very well. And other exercises might suit other people, but the thing is that however it's provided, there's a virtual... There's a health professional there to advise you, or to ask questions of, if you're worried about anything. So I can't see how I would change it, as far as I'm concerned, and maybe they would think I ought to change it, I don't know, but it keeps me fit and certainly fitter than I would be. And I find that I've had to use a stick these days to walk anywhere, out of the house, if you like. But I also have a walker, well, whatever they call them, and I find that very helpful, because it gives me the balance I need. I can walk with a stick so far, and then I start - my back plays up or whatever. But with a Rollator, or a walker, I can walk that little bit further. It just - this sounds silly, but when I got it, I was very indignant. I said to the physio, I don't want one of those, they're for old people. And he said, yes, which brought me down to earth a bit.

But it isn't just the leaning on it, it's the balance and I get... I tend to get unbalanced if I walk too far, and certainly very out of breath, but with the Rollator (a) I can... I go, but I can't go any faster, and that's what I expected me to be able to go faster. But, of course, I can't and I can still only go at the speed I can go, but it does help with the balance. And I've been practising lately, because next week I'm doing a walk, a sponsored walk, which is a mile. So I've been practising going up and down our street, so [it's fine 1:00:26]. And the other thing, of course, is that I can sit on it if I want to, so if I get out of breath I can just sit down, which is very good.

I: That's good. Thank you for that. We're going to go on to some costs, basically, and we'd like to understand any costs that you might have had to pay for... To be able to participate in the NERS programme. So I know you...

R: Yes, carry on.

I: I know you said you had five weeks face-to-face sessions, but approximately, in total, how many weeks of the NERS sessions did you have?

R: Well, every week you paid £2.

I: Okay. Every week you paid £2. So you had five weeks of the face-to-face, and then how many weeks did you do of the home programme?

R: Well, I don't know. Since March 2020, so that's 52-plus whatever comes after March. And I always felt guilty, really, that I hadn't paid my way, because I should have paid for the 16 sessions. Sixteen weeks, rather, so that's 52 sessions, isn't it, in a 16-week programme?

I: **Okay.**

R: I always felt that I haven't paid that, and I ought to have done because I still got the support, and I was able to do exercises and I ought to pay it back, really. But it was never mentioned of paying for it or anything, it was just this is what you should... This is a suggestion of what you can do, and I'll be there to answer your questions or whatever. So I didn't pay for that; I haven't paid for the whole sessions, which I should have done.

I: **Do you think that NERS users would be willing to pay for any access to digital content and, if so, what do you think would be a reasonable amount?**

R: Well, yes, I think we should. I think we should, and it's all that equipment. Well, obviously, you haven't got equipment at home, but the support has been immense. And £2 a week, £2 a session really is nothing, and I certainly would be willing to pay for it. But then there may be some that aren't, and there's that sort of side to it, but if there is a requirement for me to pay what I didn't get, I'm quite happy to pay.

I: **Okay, thanks for that. So...**

R: Don't throw a £100 bill at me, or anything, but...

I: **No. And so how - did you have to buy any clothes to participate in the NERS programme, and the NERS sessions?**

R: When I did the first one, I did, because I wasn't sure what I was expected to wear. But, I mean, I had trainers already, but I did buy some new T-shirts and trousers and things. But that's all, and that I can use them anyway, so why would I want to charge them for that, or be reimbursed for it? That's fine.

I: **And, roughly, how much did you spend on clothing?**

R: Oh heck, I have no idea.

I: **Okay.**

R: It was 2008, so I can't remember whatever it cost a couple of T-shirts, and some jogging bottoms was. But I didn't even bother sometimes, and I wore my own trousers and just a T-shirt. But it - so I was happy to pay that, and to be able to have the facility.

I: **And so I've put approximately £15, as a rough estimate of what some T-shirts and joggers would cost, if you're happy for me to put that?**

R: Yes, of course.

I: Okay. And so we're - I'm just going to whiz through some questions about how many sessions you've had face-to-face, and how many sessions you've had virtually again. So of the time you had - so you had five weeks of face-to-face sessions.

R: I think it was five, and it might have been six, but I can't honestly remember.

I: That's okay.

R: My card is marked up for five, so...

I: Okay.

R: ...it might just not have gotten signed, possibly the last one.

I: And when you were doing the home programme, how many days a week did you do the home programme?

R: Three.

I: Three. And when you were doing it face-to-face, you mentioned earlier that you did it for two days. Is that correct?

R: Yes.

I: Okay. Perfect. And for each session, face-to-face, you paid £2?

R: Yes.

I: And you paid nothing for the virtual.

R: I didn't do any virtual.

I: I'm sorry, that's just terminology and I meant the home programme.

R: Oh right, yes.

I: So what was the main form of travel to the face-to-face sessions at the leisure centre?

R: The car.

I: The car. And you said it was a mile beforehand?

R: Yes.

I: One mile. And did you have to pay for any parking?

R: No. Well, I've got a disabled badge.

I: Okay, no problem. And then - so did you... You said you'd bought some clothes, did you have to buy any trainers for the exercise sessions, or any equipment?

R: No.

- I: No. Okay, that is everything from that bit. So, yeah, just it's a whiz through, it's because we're looking at costs that might have occurred taking part in the sessions, so there's quite, some quite specific ones there. But those are all my questions for you today, is there anything that you were expecting me to say, or anything that you'd like to add?**
- R: No, I don't think so. I remember thinking at 11 o'clock (a) that you were very punctual, and (b) that I couldn't think what would fill an hour up, but it's past the hour and I don't feel as if it was an hour at all.
- I: Oh, that's great to hear. So there's nothing else you'd like to say, or anything that you might think I might have missed out, or during our chat today?**
- R: I don't think so, no. I just have an immense respect for the organisation that has kept people going during this blinking time. That was one of the things that I suppose did keep me going, because I could so easily have sat here and watched television all day. But it was good to know, well, today is my exercise day, and it didn't really last all that long. But I had music on - when I first started it, I was doing a jigsaw - a very difficult jigsaw - and I was busy there doing the air punches and goodness knows what. And thinking, oh, I need to get that piece, I wonder where that is? So that was the sort of side-effect, really, because I was looking at the jigsaw in quite detail while I was bouncing up and down, or doing whatever I was doing, so it was just fun.
- I: Okay.**
- R: Sorry.
- I: No, that's okay. I'm going to stop the recording now, if that's okay?**
- R: Of course.

End of Transcription