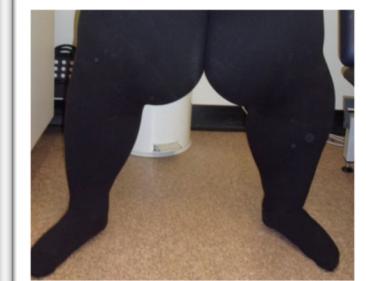


ANDREW



I was seen by the district nurses three times a week. Initially my wounds were just being cleaned, until I had a doppler. Once the doppler had been done I was ok to have compression bandages on my lower limbs. I continued to have compression bandages applied for around 3 months. Once the wounds had healed I had compression stockings up to my knee. I carried on using compression stockings until late 2019, at which point the tops of my legs (knee upwards) started to swell. There was a small amount of fluid leakage but not much. As the fluid was not coming out, my legs began to swell (at the biggest point they were between 48" and 51", so they were very big).

THERE WAS NOTHING THEY COULD DO

I went to see my GP, his actual words were "I have never seen anything like this". He then wrote me a prescription for Hydrocortisone Cream. It was only when I questioned him that he referred me to the district nurses and I asked about a referral to a Lymphoedema clinic, which he agreed to do. I went to see the district nurses, they measured me for new compression stockings for my lower legs and advised that there was nothing they could do for my upper legs so they advised I had been removed from their books.

I received a call from someone asking for my height and weight. Only people with a certain BMI could be treated. Once I had the information I contacted my GP and advised them of my height and weight and after that I heard nothing for months. At the same time, the whole Covid situation was kicking in so I just assumed it was down to that.

MY FAMILY WERE REALLY CONCERNED

My family were becoming more and more concerned as time went on as my legs were getting bigger and by this time it was affecting my mental health too. We started to do our own research and I was given a phone number by my Doctors for a lymphoedema centre. When I called they advised that they deal with women who have had breast cancer and wouldn't be able to help me. They gave me the details of the Lymphoedema Support Network. My mum contacted them and she was given the details of Fiona Sanderson at St Anne's Hospice (initially I was concerned when I heard hospice, but my fears were quickly allayed).

LEARNED MORE IN 45 MINUTES THAN IN LAST 12 MONTHS

As a stroke of luck, Fiona happened to live in the same town as me and she agreed to come and see me at home. This was 26th August 2020 and was the first time I actually knew I had lymphoedema. That initial meeting with Fiona taught us more in 45 minutes than we had learned in the previous 12 months.

From there I have been having appointments to have compression bandages on my legs and have now progressed to having compression garments. The difference is already vast and has made a huge difference.



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