

Sue starts 2018 smoke free thanks to Stoptober success

“I’m celebrating 2018 and my 50th year feeling great!”

So says Sue Banks, who is one of thousands of people in Derby to join the Council’s Livewell service to stop smoking.



A Derby City Council Project

Sue took on the Stoptober challenge in October ahead of her big birthday so she could celebrate being smoke free. Now she’s happy to start 2018 in her 50th year, free of the addiction that was putting her at a higher risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) - a group of lung conditions that causes breathing difficulties.

Expert support

A smoker for 30 years, Sue had several failed quit attempts before joining Livewell. Three months into her journey, Sue is hoping that her story will inspire others to reassess their lifestyle choices this New Year. She said: “The expert support I’m receiving from Livewell advisors, Paul and Darminder is second to none. They helped me find the best treatment for me – a medication called Champix, which works by blocking the signal of nicotine reaching the receptors in the brain and therefore reducing my cravings. This medicine combined with continual encouragement whenever I need it makes it feel like someone is always holding my hand. I see Paul weekly at one of the smoking drop-ins and they are both at the end of the phone in between if I need them.

Right from the start, Livewell helped me to plan distractions and find ways to deal with different situations that could potentially lead to me smoking. I keep as busy as possible with yoga, reading and do a lot more ironing as a result!”

Quitting isn’t easy

However, Sue admits that quitting hasn’t been plain sailing. A bout of flu and a severe chest infection have meant that she’s been unable to take part in the free exercise Livewell offers to all clients. Livewell advisor, Paul Mallett explains why this is not unusual:

“When stopping smoking the immune system can be put under quite a lot of pressure as the body clears the toxins built up from smoking. Sue suffers with asthma so is more susceptible to respiratory illness especially at this time of year. However, usually within two to four weeks of quitting, the blood oxygen levels improve making physical activity like walking and running much easier. There are plenty of other benefits of quitting too including being able to breathe more easily, not coughing as much, having more energy, improvements to taste and smell and skin can look visibly better.”

Sue is delighted that she has beaten her cravings and has taken great pride in ditching the emergency tobacco she had on stand-by as she explains: “Some of my friends smoke but now I have no inclination to join them – the cravings have gone. I found my last pack of tobacco and all the paraphernalia and got rid of it. It’s been a big part of my life for so long but I found it very therapeutic to rid everything in my house that’s smoking related. It feels good to know that I no longer rely on a cigarette.”

“I’m looking forward to getting into tip top health this year by improving my fitness and managing my weight. Luckily there are lots of fun Livewell sessions like boxing, circuits and spin as well as a weight loss course that I can do for free as part of my 12-month programme.”

Councillor Martin Repton, Cabinet Member for Integrated Health and Care said: “January is a great time to change your lifestyle and Livewell is ready to support people to stop smoking, lose weight, get fitter or all three if they want to. It is proven that people are five times more likely to quit using a specialist local service like Livewell so people really are in good hands. Sue’s story is one of many, demonstrating the positive impact this free service has on people in Derby.”

Sue finished by saying: “Livewell is a fantastic service that Derby people are lucky to have. I’m really proud of what I’ve achieved and I hope that by sharing my story, more people will feel motivated to quit, especially as New Year is the perfect time to re-evaluate your lifestyle.”

Inspired by Sue? Find your Will Power

Livewell offers 12 months’ free support, stop smoking treatments and free exercise to people registered to a Derby GP practice. To apply and book a first appointment, go to www.livewellderby.co.uk

For more information about Livewell’s other lifestyle services, which include funded 12-month programmes to lose weight, visit www.livewellderby.co.uk or search Livewell on Facebook or Twitter.

In good company

2500 people in Derby have achieved a four-week quit with Livewell with 33% remaining smoke free at 12-months, triple the national average of 11%. Studies show that you're up to five times more likely to quit successfully if you use a combination of stop smoking medicine and specialist help and support from a service like Livewell.

Sue's top tips

1. Keep busy – fill every spare moment with things that keep your hands busy but try to avoid over eating.
2. Adapt your social calendar whilst you're quitting. Holidays and celebrations are particularly tricky but participating in activities that don't involve smoking can help curb cravings plus the money you're saving helps afford them! I'd recommend going to the cinema, doing yoga, playing badminton or even having a relaxing day at the spa.
3. Lean on your loved ones – my mum and dad have been particularly supportive and knowing I'm making them proud helps keep me on track.



Sue is pictured with Livewell advisors,
Darminder Kumar (right) and Paul Mallett

