

“...from isolation and despair to a place of greater acceptance, purpose, and emotional stability”.

BACKGROUND

Martyn first came into contact with Inspire North following a referral during a period of significant physical and emotional distress. He had been diagnosed with severe Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), a progressive and life-limiting condition that was having a profound impact on his daily life and mental wellbeing.

Having witnessed the effects of the disease through his mother's death, Martyn carried a deep fear about what the future might hold.

Prior to receiving support, his situation had become increasingly difficult: Experiencing severe physical symptoms, including breathing episodes that could lead to loss of consciousness. Largely confined to his home with limited social contact. Recently forced to give up his long-term career as an award-winning chef due to his condition. Struggling with depression and having attempted to take his own life. The sudden loss of his career after 47 years in kitchens was particularly devastating.

“My career was my life... and then to go just like that overnight... that really did get to me.”

It was during this period that Martyn began receiving support through Inspire North — a crucial turning point in his journey.

SUPPORT FROM INSPIRE NORTH

Martyn received one-to-one support over several months, working with staff who provided consistent emotional support, practical guidance, and signposting to additional services.

A defining part of this support was having a safe, non-judgemental space where Martyn felt genuinely heard.

Key elements of his support included:

- Emotional support and active listening – A consistent space to talk openly about his fears, frustrations, and the reality of living with a life-limiting condition
- Practical guidance and signposting – Support accessing services such as Citizens Advice, welfare rights, and assistance with his Personal Independence Payment (PIP) application
- Financial and wellbeing support – Guidance on managing bills, accessing energy support, and budgeting
- Rebuilding social connection – Encouragement and referrals to community groups and meaningful activities

One of the most impactful outcomes of this support was being introduced to a volunteering opportunity with Age UK, allowing Martyn to return to a familiar environment - the kitchen.

“It just gets me out and it keeps me doing what I used to do. I miss my kitchens.”

Through volunteering, Martyn began baking and preparing food, using his professional skills in a way that worked for his health and energy levels.

“I've raised about £1,600 for them. I feel good about it.”

IMPACT ON MARTYN'S LIFE

The difference Inspire North has made to Martyn's life has been significant. This opportunity not only provided structure and routine but helped him reclaim a sense of identity that had been lost when his career ended.

BEFORE INSPIRE NORTH

- Experiencing severe depression and suicidal thoughts
- Socially isolated and mostly housebound
- Struggling to cope with a life-limiting diagnosis
- Loss of identity following the end of his career
- Overwhelmed by fear about the future

NOW

- Improved emotional wellbeing and greater ability to process thoughts and feelings
- Engaged in regular volunteering, providing structure and purpose
- More confident managing finances and accessing support
- Reconnected with others through community involvement
- Better able to focus on day-to-day living rather than fear of the future

MARTYN'S FINAL REFLECTION

While volunteering restored a sense of purpose, Martyn identifies being truly heard as the most transformative part of his support.

After each session, he describes feeling lighter and more at ease:

"You just feel better for yourself that you've got it off your chest... it lasts the rest of the day and even into the next."

The support has helped him move from a place of despair to one where he can find meaning, connection, and moments of enjoyment again.

When asked what stands out most about his journey with Inspire North, Martyn is clear about the impact:

"I'm going to be frank with you, I'm here. There were times where I wouldn't have been here... and that's the truth."

He credits the support he received with helping him through some of his most difficult moments and giving him the space to open up in a way he never had before.

"If it wasn't for all of you, I know I wouldn't have been here today... I would have just stopped the medications."

Martyn also reflects on the importance of being heard:

"People like you help people like us get it out... you are helping, very much."

Despite the challenges of living with a progressive condition, Martyn is now focused on taking each day as it comes, staying connected to what he can do, and continuing with activities that give him purpose.

Through compassionate listening, practical support, and meaningful opportunities, Inspire North has helped Martyn move from isolation and despair to a place of greater acceptance, purpose, and emotional stability.

FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about our work or to share your own story, please visit www.inspirenorth.co.uk.
For further information, contact us at info@inspirenorth.co.uk.