

as housing, rent and benefits. *“They did so much for me. **They took away all the external worries I had, so I didn’t have to worry about anything.** They sorted it all out. I can’t tell you what a relief it was. I had been trying to do it all myself and was getting nowhere. Everybody here was terrific; they couldn’t have been more helpful.”*

*“Phyllis Tuckwell is great,” she concludes. **“They are never too busy for anything, and I don’t think I have ever heard them say ‘no’ to a request. Being here makes you feel uplifted. They give you confidence. It’s the one place you can go to and totally be yourself, you don’t have to put on a front and say ‘yes I feel fine’ when actually you don’t. I wouldn’t be here without this place. They go over and beyond their job. They’re marvellous!”***

We are privileged to care for people like Cathy and her family, at probably the most difficult time in their lives, but we can only do this with the generosity of our local community.

We have to raise over £20,000 every day in order to provide care, free of charge, to our patients and their relatives.

For further information about how to support Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care, contact our Fundraising team on:

**01252 729446**  
**support@pth.org.uk**

Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care  
Waverley Lane, Farnham  
Surrey GU9 8BL

The Beacon Centre,  
Gill Avenue, Guildford,  
Surrey GU2 7WW

Phyllis Tuckwell Memorial Hospice Ltd.  
Registered Number 1063033. Registered Charity Number 264501.

**Tel: 01252 729400**  
**Email: mail@pth.org.uk**  
**www.pth.org.uk**

November 2017

Our patients are inspiring...

***“It’s such an uplifting place to be.”***



### **Cathy’s Story**

Day Hospice, Therapies and respite care

**Phyllis Tuckwell<sup>®</sup>**  
Hospice Care  
...because every day is precious

# Cathy's Story



**Four and a half years ago, Cathy, now 59, came down with what she thought was a cold. Three weeks later, when it had still not cleared up, she went to see her doctor. Cathy's doctor realised that this cold**

**was in fact a virus, which had resulted in impaired respiratory function. Cathy was sent to many different hospitals, including The Royal Brompton and Charing Cross hospitals in London, in an attempt to fully diagnose her condition. It was finally confirmed that she had Dynamic Airway Collapse, a condition so rare that doctors were unsure of how to treat it.**

When she contracted the virus, Cathy had been working full-time on the front desk in a solicitor's office, a job which involved lots of talking - to both clients and solicitors - and which she greatly enjoyed. However, with the respiratory problems which the virus brought with it, Cathy soon found it hard to speak and was barely able to walk, as just this small level of activity would use up too much oxygen and she would run out of air. The virus also attacked her immune system, and she began to pick up infections very easily.

To enable Cathy to breathe, doctors made a hole in the front of her throat, through which they inserted a tube into her trachea, allowing her to inhale oxygen from a cylinder which she needs to take with her at all times. A filter on the front of the tube, at Cathy's neck, helps

her to speak. Cathy travels by ambulance to Frimley Park Hospital every four weeks, where her tube is removed and a new one is inserted.

Cathy was first admitted to the Hospice's In-Patient Unit in February 2014. She had just moved from her house into a purpose-built flat in central Farnham, and was visiting Day Hospice, when she was taken ill, suffering from an attack which meant that she could not breathe.

***"The nurses were absolutely terrific,"*** she says, ***"but I was very ill. If I had been anywhere else on that occasion, I don't think I would have pulled through. I had a guardian angel looking after me that day."***

Cathy was treated for her attack and Phyllis Tuckwell staff decided that she should be admitted to the In-Patient Unit. ***"It was the kindness of the people here that made me pull through,"*** Cathy says.

***"They were wonderful. That was why my daughter did her 5k run."*** Cathy's daughter Vanessa took part in a Basingstoke 5k run earlier in the year, raising over £300 for Phyllis Tuckwell. ***"She said that as a relative they were really good to her as well,"*** Cathy explains. ***"They kept her informed and were always very helpful. They made time to speak to her and answer any questions she had. It made a big difference, especially with her living so far away. It helped to put her mind at rest. They were very open with her."***

Cathy stayed at the Hospice for three months. ***"I was in an awful state,"*** she remembers. ***"I couldn't do anything for myself, so they did it all for me, with a smile and a chat. Because I couldn't get out of bed, they used to wheel my bed to the arbour in the garden, so I could enjoy the nice weather."*** She finally left the Hospice in May, but returned again two months later, this time for three weeks.

Cathy was finally discharged at the end of July and returned to her flat, where she is able to live independently. She is visited four times a day by carers, who help her to get washed and dressed, and take her out in her wheelchair if she wants a change of scenery. ***"I'm lucky as I have some very good friends too, who come and visit me."*** Cathy says. As well as her daughter, who lives in Yeovil, Somerset, Cathy also has a sister in Aldershot, whose two sons have children of their own now, too. ***"One has six children; the other has two little boys,"*** Cathy says, smiling as she thinks of them. ***"The children are far more accepting of my condition,"*** she says. ***"Adults can find it harder to adapt to."***

When asked how she feels about Phyllis Tuckwell, Cathy smiles. ***"They make me feel normal. People can find my condition quite daunting, but here they make me feel like a normal person and that makes a huge difference. The way they treat you makes the difference and pulls you back. It's such an uplifting place to be. The staff always have a good word to say, or a little joke to make you feel better."***

Cathy now attends Day Hospice once a week, and has also found relief and relaxation in the therapies offered through the Hospice's Dove Lounge. ***"I've had massage, relaxation classes and healing sessions,"*** she says, ***"and found them very helpful. I had very swollen legs and feet, and I found the massages particularly beneficial. I was finding it very hard to relax at the time, but I would find that by the end of one of the sessions, I was asleep! So they obviously helped!"***

Cathy has also had help from the physiotherapy team, and is now able to walk short distances again. The Patient and Family Support (PAFS) team have also helped Cathy with the practical side of things, such