



Hi I'm Julie, I am a 57 year old woman who was diagnosed with Primary Progressive multiple Sclerosis (PPMS) 3 years ago, 3 days before my 54th birthday.

The symptoms I experience that impact on the quality of my day-to-day life include; bladder urgency which means activities require careful planning around available conveniences. Fatigue and the associated brain fog has meant that even working the 4 day week that I had reduced to soon after my diagnosis had become too much at the end of the year. This means that I now find myself on the supported living benefit and juggling a very different income to that which I was used to. Just another thing that I had somewhat taken for granted MS has taken.

Muscle weakness means that I can't be confident that my fingers won't suddenly release a glass I'm holding or that my right leg won't collapse as both have happened more than once. Sometimes I get confused when things are busy as I no longer have the ability to cope with more than one thing at a time. I need to prioritise or I find I become overwhelmed.

Having MS means I have a very uncertain future as no two cases are the same. MS means there is a lack of control over your own body. MS Waikato has given me the tools to remain in control of as much of my life as possible through education and understanding of MS and what is, with support, still achievable.

The gym sessions which MS Waikato provide at a subsidised cost are vital for me for physical and emotional reasons. The interaction with other MSers is important in keeping me connected to others with MS and keeping as active as possible is well documented as a health benefit.

MS Waikato Trust has been vital in my coming to terms with the prospect of a very different and limited life to that which I have planned for.

Donations to MS Waikato keep valuable people there for us and provide services like the gym and support groups which hold the MS community together. I shudder to think what my physical and indeed my mental state would be without MS Waikato.

My strongest advice to anyone newly diagnosed with MS is to make contact with MS Waikato as soon as possible.

The MS life maybe new to you but MS Waikato know it well and therefore have the knowledge to help.