



## Shaun – MS Waikato's Face of MS

"I first took myself to hospital in April 2014, after pins and needles had travelled up from my feet to over my shoulders in the space of two weeks. It was worse when I got hot, like after going for a run and I couldn't feel my feet when I was trying to cross floor joists. Six months later I was told I had Multiple Sclerosis.

The symptoms that stop me from leading a normal life are varied. My number one symptom is fatigue. Until you experience it, you think that someone with fatigue is just being lazy or cunning, and the list continues. To make matters worse the exhaustion seems to come and go as it wants. For those who endure it, the guilt of not being able to do what you previously could, is just as damaging.

Another symptom is the lack of feeling. Numbness can be dangerous, if you develop an infection and didn't see it, that's bad, twice now I have developed an infection and nearly had to go back to hospital. "Getting feedback from your limbs telling you that something is hot is important! "

The feelings of depression and loss of confidence are symptoms which also affect my life. Feeling hopeless, useless, worthless, a drain on humanity and that you are letting down people who are close to you. As a father, it isn't easy knowing I can't promise that everything is going to be ok. Going on a date and having someone you got on really well with until you were honest with them about your MS, I've found that's a really good filter. Sometimes it is hard not being able to do what everyone else is doing.

I have questioned, "Why me?", and "What did I do that was so bad that I got this?" I'm still working on answering that one, and I don't think I'm going to get an honest reply from anyone! MS Waikato helped me to realise I am not alone; this is one of the most empowering things for a person like me with MS. Social interactions are essential, as there is usually a more experienced person, with MS, who can help to explain to you what's happening.

MS Waikato offers a range of valuable services and support, from answering your call for help, supplying information about seminars, treatments, helpful diets, and other agencies that can assist. MS Waikato value people and their dignity. I never thought it would be me with MS. Your support for MS Waikato means that I, and others like me with MS, can feel valued, important, and human again. Your donation allows the good people of MS Waikato to help me to be as good as I can be. One day it may be you who needs their help."