

Case study: Justin



Context

Momenta Newcastle are delivering a group-based Diabetes Remission Programme (DRP) virtually over Zoom in Birmingham & Solihull CCG as part of the NHS England Low Calorie Diet Programme pilot.

Justin's background

Justin lives alone having previously been a carer for both his parents who have recently passed away. At the moment he isn't working.

He considers that the programme has been easy for him to manage as he only has himself to look after. His substantial and rapid weight loss has led to greater mobility and he is enjoying being active and walking daily.

Any aches that he used to have from being overweight have now been swapped for aching limbs from exercising regularly!

Life before the programme

Justin describes being overweight since childhood. He was made redundant in 2016 and became the carer for his elderly parents. When his mother passed away in spring last year, Justin's health deteriorated and by the middle of 2020, he describes being in a bad place knowing that he needed to lose weight to improve his health. He was taking a total of 8 tablets a day for management of diabetes, blood pressure and an underactive thyroid. When his GP mentioned that he could refer him to the Momenta DRP, his reaction was one of relief ...

'At last I've been offered something to help me'.

Justin's journey

Justin describes the time being right for him to embark on the Momenta programme,

'I was in the right frame of mind'.

He was desperate for some support in losing weight and felt he was '*handed a lifeline*' after years of being '*told to lose weight*' with no more support or guidance than '*You're overweight – you need to lose weight*'.



Phase 1 – Total Diet Replacement (TDR)

He took a regimented and strict approach to the TDR phase, considering the products as '*medication to get better*' and following the guidance '*to the letter*' with four TDR products spaced out regularly at set times every day.

Justin describes the TDR phase as '*monotonous*' and in particular missed chewing solid food but he appreciated the choice of products available and the many different flavours of bars and shakes. For a change he also enjoyed the pancakes but wasn't particularly keen on the soups and '*meal*' substitutes, which he found disappointing compared to familiar dishes.

His starting weight was 151kg and each week on the TDR he lost between 2 and 3.5kg finishing the 12 weeks of TDR at 119kg – **32.2kg or 5 stone lighter** – having lost 21% of his starting body weight in just 12 weeks.

Phase 2

Approaching Phase 2 and knowing that he would have the freedom to eat normal food, Justin was naturally concerned about how he would manage to keep his weight off. However, he has continued to lose weight.

Phase 3

At the beginning of Phase 3 Justin is a further 19kg lighter, now 100kg. **So far he has lost 34% of his starting weight.**

He is determined not to '*pile it back on*' and acknowledges that he has changed his behaviours, stressing the importance of developing an activity routine to prevent weight regain. Justin's been focusing on building up his step count and starts every day with a walk, regularly clocking up 15-20,000 steps each day. He would like to do other types of exercise but is a little restricted because of a hernia.

How did the programme fit into Justin's life?

Justin considers that his positive and determined attitude, living alone and '*being in the right frame of mind*' have all helped him succeed on the programme. He even considers that the recent lockdown restrictions have been helpful as there have been limited opportunities for socialising.

He approached the TDR with the mindset that the 12-week TDR phase was

'a prescription to correct my body weight and an opportunity to make a significant difference to my health - an opportunity to change myself'.

Justin considers that it would be good to meet others in person but has appreciated the convenience of the virtual programme which he considers to

'allow for group interaction whilst feeling relaxed and comfortable in your own home'.

He would however have liked the opportunity to connect with others for group support between meetings through social media such as a Whatsapp or Facebook group.



How has the programme improved Justin's health and life?

'For me everything worked!'

Justin has been told by his GP '*if you came in for a blood test now, I would not suspect diabetes*'. He feels great about having reduced his medication and is in the process of coming off all his medication for blood pressure. He considers that improving his diabetes management is just one benefit of the programme. He now has a new wardrobe, feels more comfortable in his clothes and has improved mobility.

Further benefits he describes include;

- ❖ Not having to do the three fingerprick tests daily for blood glucose monitoring
- ❖ Reduced snoring and better quality of sleep
- ❖ Enjoying exercise
- ❖ Being put on the surgical waiting list for a hernia repair

Conclusion

Justin is fully committed to the programme and has attended all sessions. He continues to 'Give it the best I can' describing the programme as '*Genuinely one of the best things I've done*'. Another participant has joined the programme on Justin's recommendation. He would tell others:

'Go for it – you've nothing to lose!'

By the middle of 2020 I was taking 8 tablets a day to manage various conditions. I knew I needed to lose weight to improve my health and was so relieved when my GP talked to me about a referral to the programme. At last I was offered something to help me after years of being given no more support than being told 'you're overweight, you need to lose weight'.

I was handed a lifeline when I was in the right frame of mind so I followed the programme to the letter. The 12-week Total Diet Replacement phase was monotonous and I really missed chewing solid food. But I looked at it as medication to get better and at least liked the wide choice of products and flavours. I was worried about piling the weight back on when I started eating 'real food' again but I've carried on losing weight sensibly – I've found building up my step count really important in so many ways.

So far I've lost over 50kgs – 34% of my starting weight! I'm coming off all my blood pressure meds too. My mobility's better and I've got a new wardrobe – I feel comfortable in my clothes. My snoring and sleep have improved, I'm enjoying exercise and I'm on a waiting list for a hernia repair. And I don't have to do three fingerprick tests a day for blood glucose monitoring any more.

For me, everything worked! My GP's told me that if I came in for a blood test now they would not suspect diabetes. I'll keep giving it the best I can – the programme is genuinely one of the best things I've done.

'If you think you're eligible talk to your GP about a referral – you've got nothing to lose'.



NOTE: The Momenta DRP has 20 group sessions and one individual phone-call in three phases over 12 months, including an initial 12 weeks of Total Diet Replacement (TDR) products including shakes, soups, bars and pot meals. Referred participants must meet NHSE eligibility criteria and comply with medication adjustment advice given by their GP at referral.