

Hello Everyone

I started working with PUK 13 years ago. In those days my title was Information Support Worker and I was covering Swindon & Gloucestershire. Since then my title and area teams have changed twice and, when my area changed last time, I wasn't covering Swindon. Now after a restructure of the regional teams I am back in the South West team so I am the named contact for the Swindon and South West area as **Parkinson's Local Adviser** supporting people with Parkinson's and carers in the community.

A lot has changed within the organisation and we have restructured our services in order for us to reach and help more people affected by Parkinson's within our resources. We are here for you all but there is a new way of accessing our adviser services.

If you require advice or support, your first point of contact is with our helpline advisers **0808 800 0303** who will be able to answer queries and, if needed, refer you to our team in the South West for more in depth support and advice. We then have the time to support those that require more time and have perhaps more complex issues to deal with.

As local advisers we take a holistic approach, depending on what the needs of people with Parkinson's are. It could be they need support with benefits, emotional support, employment issues, or their partner needs support. We can provide support for those who are newly diagnosed via information or a chat about the person's circumstances. We can also refer or signpost people to other agencies to get the right help and advice.

I will be able to visit you a few times a year to meet you all and I will have contact with the branch so that I can promote you to anyone who wants to become a member and keep in touch to find out what social events and activities there are for the members. It will be nice to see everyone again once we are allowed to return to face to face activities.

Best wishes

*Rekha Tanna Hirani. Parkinson's Local Adviser, Parkinson's UK*