

## A NICE Story



“Conductive Education has helped me get back everything I had lost, and given me more confidence in myself and my abilities.”

Francesca

# Francesca's Story

I am 26 years old and was born with Athetoid cerebral palsy which affects my speech and muscles and causes involuntary motor movements throughout my whole body.

Starting at age 3, my mum and dad took me over to Hungary to the Petö Institute twice a year, for a couple months at a time. Conductive Education helped me to control my involuntary movements and carry out day to day tasks much more easily. After a while, I was able to take my full weight when I stood. If I wanted to get out of my chair and walk around the shops or anywhere, with the support from mum and dad holding my arms both sides, I could walk properly.

With the help of Conductive Education, I learned how to crawl on my hands and knees when I was very young. This allowed me to move around by myself, especially when I was at home, and I could play on the floor and move wherever I wanted to go. I continued my conductive education right up until I was 16.

Everything I have learned from Conductive Education goes into my day to day life without a second thought. All of the CE programmes, such as sitting and standing, relate directly and in a very practical way to my daily activities. When I was born, mum had to teach me everything, even basic skills which all babies have and I didn't such as how to suck, chew and swallow.

To go from that situation to how I am today, is a little short of a miracle, and everything to do with the fact that Conductive Education has transformed my life.

I love horses and horse riding, but the effects of my cerebral palsy would have stopped me taking this any further. Because of the benefits of Conductive Education, I was able to sit on a horse by myself and keep sitting up straight and keep my balance while the horse was walking along.

Gradually I could steer the horse and still keep my balance sitting on the horse by myself. I entered for several Dressage competitions and really enjoyed them.

Unfortunately, 9 years ago I had to have complete reconstruction on one hip as it had completely rubbed away at the hip socket. The constant pain from my hip, which I had for many years, meant I lost my ability to stand, which in turn meant I wasn't able to continue with many activities such as horse riding. After my operation I had very bad nerve damage in both feet, and I couldn't have anything on my feet as they were so painful to touch. I couldn't wear any shoes, let alone stand up, and I lost strength in the muscles in my legs, and wasn't able to do what I always used to.

# Francesca's Story continued...

It took 8 years for my feet to recover and I decided for myself I wanted to go back and do Conductive Education as I wanted to get back everything I had lost because of the problems with my hip going wrong and the after effects from my operation.

I have been attending Cannon Hill House for almost 2 years now on a fortnightly basis. The conductors have helped me to retrain my body, especially my hips and legs, which are now able to move and bend.

I'm starting to stand and walk with the support from the conductors, which helps massively at home or if I am out anywhere with my mum.

I am much stronger all over my body and I have more control over my speech, which although it's not perfect, has become clearer. In addition, my leg, which had turned outwards because of my operation has now straightened back to a normal position.

Conductive Education has also helped with my wheelchair dancing, as I am sitting straighter and I have more control of my movements, I even went skiing earlier this year in a sit ski and it was fantastic!

None of this would have been possible if I hadn't been attending the NICE - Centre for Movement Disorders, which is helping me regain all the movement skills which had disappeared after my hip operation, and giving me a huge boost in confidence in myself.



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