



85% of young disabled adults aged 18-34 said they feel lonely.

Kath Hyslop

Kath is 29 years old, she has a learning disability as well as Dyspraxia which is a physical disability affecting her balance and coordination.

Kath had a stroke at birth, preventing oxygen getting to her brain. The doctors told her parents that they didn't know if she would ever walk or talk. 29 years later, Kath plays for a hockey and football team! Kath has travelled to London, Belgium, Barcelona and Amsterdam to compete in the European ParaHockey Championships. Kath has clocked up over 4,000 miles to compete, but the miles are only part of her journey. Kath joined Midland Mencap for social reasons but quickly got involved with their sports programmes. She first joined the football team but found it difficult to keep up. Once coach Steve Bradley joined Mencap and started the Flyerz hockey programme, everything changed for Kath.



The Flyerz hockey team at Midland Mencap has players with a variety of differing abilities, but collectively they have developed incredible hockey skills on the pitch but even more importantly friendships off the pitch. The friendships that have formed are not only between the players but the families as well. There is an active WhatsApp group for the families, and every single one belongs to it. Kath and most of her Mencap teammates have now joined their local hockey club, Harborne, where they truly feel included in a mainstream club. Kath said, "it makes me happy every time I come and play with Harborne. It feels really good to play for a real hockey club. They're all friendly and have different disabilities. It's really good fun and teaches me and makes me a better player." Sport keeps Kath going and has contributed so immensely to her health and wellbeing. Kath's dad says that Flyerz was a life saver for her and without it her life would be quite different.

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The amount of self-worth she gets out of Flyerz is immeasurable ”

