

April 2014

## Case Study

### **GB Triathlete back on track after treatment at Progress Clinic**

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**Tonia Schofield, Cambridge-based teacher and member of the amateur GB triathlon squad recently came fifth in a European competition in Horst, Holland. She is back competing after treatment at Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital.**

The 54 year old biology teacher from Earith was recently treated by Professor Cathy Speed, Rheumatologist at Progress Clinic, part of Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital after a swelling appeared on her ankle one evening after a training session.

Tonia adds: "I am an active person, last year I completed one of the biggest challenges of my life - swimming across the Channel. This year I have earned a place in the GB triathlon squad, coming fifth in my age group in a competition held in Holland this month – third for



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the GB squad. I had completed a training session one evening and when I got home I discovered a swelling around my ankle, I hadn't injured myself during my training so I was a little confused."

Tonia said she contacted the Progress Clinic and was met then seen immediately by Professor Cathy Speed.

Professor Cathy Speed explains: "I have treated Tonia a few times over the years, as an avid sportswoman she has picked up a few injuries in training and races. When I saw Tonia with her ankle swelling I immediately arranged for her to have a CT and MRI scan as well as the relevant blood tests, I knew the importance of her being fit for her GB squad debut in Holland in April."

Many patients have musculoskeletal symptoms including joint pain, soft tissue pain and swelling of joints, Professor Cathy Speed explains: "These medical problems are too frequently dismissed as trivial issues. Patients who do have an underlying problem that is not addressed early can sustain damage that can cause functional limitation longer term. It is important to take symptoms seriously and make a clear diagnosis and intervene appropriately to avoid long term problems."

Professor Speed continues: "It is often very distressing for the patient to have unexplained symptoms; uncertainty is a difficult thing for anyone to deal with. It is important to acknowledge that these issues aren't exclusive to athletes."

Swelling in joints is a possible sign of Osteoarthritis (OA) which is a condition that commences with thinning of the cartilage 'cushion' of one or more joints, followed by a reaction within the bone underneath the cartilage as an attempt to repair the damage. It is not just a symptom of "ageing", and can affect people of all ages.

Professor Speed adds: "Osteoarthritis can be caused by an injury such as a bad ankle sprain which is why it was one avenue of investigation when I met Tonia.



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“After completing all the relevant tests, the results all came back as normal although Tonia was still suffering with the swelling. I decided that although the diagnosis was unknown the best way forward was to ensure Tonia was not suffering with this bruising. I administered a series of Cortisone injections which brought the swelling right down and enabled Tonia to continue training.”

Tonia says: “Treatment from Progress Clinic has been brilliant and the swelling has disappeared. I have been able to continue with my training and I look forward to competing next month in Holland.

“I am really grateful to Cathy Speed for her help and support, she has kept in touch and ensured my training is going well. It’s this personal service that makes Progress Clinic so special.”

Professor Speed has special expertise in the management of sporting and non-sporting musculoskeletal injuries and chronic pain syndromes. She also has a specialist interest in arthritis and in exercise medicine. For more information please call Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital on 01223 266900.

-ENDS-

**Photo caption:**

Tonia Schofield, pictured cycling at the recent triathlon competition in Horst, Holland.



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## About Spire Healthcare

Spire Healthcare is one of the UK's largest private hospital providers with 38 hospitals and 11 clinics nationwide. The company is founded on a 30 year heritage of operating successful private hospitals and offers a full range of integrated surgical, medical and diagnostic services.

The company was formed from the sale of BUPA Hospitals to private equity company Cinven in 2007, followed by the purchase of Classic Hospitals and Thames Valley Hospital in 2008. Spire has since built Spire Shawfair Park Hospital (Edinburgh), the Montefiore Hospital, acquired London Fertility Centre, and Lifescan. Since Spire was formed, performance improvements have included:

- Multiple Independent Healthcare Awards: 'Excellence in Training' (2013) 'Medical Practice' (2012) 'Innovation' (2011), 'Risk Management' and 'Nursing Practice' (2010), 'Nursing Practice' (2009), and 'Healthcare Outcomes' (2008)
- Increase in percentage of patients rating Spire 'excellent' or 'very good' - from 87% in 2008 to 92% in 2013\*
- Increase in percentage of consultant surgeons rating Spire 'excellent' or 'very good' - from 51% in 2008 to 78% in 2013\*
- Increase in percentage of employees who think Spire is a 'great place to work' - from 62% in 2009 to 72% in 2013.

For further information please visit: [www.spirehealthcare.com](http://www.spirehealthcare.com).

\* Rating options include 'excellent', 'very good', 'quite good', 'quite poor', 'very poor' and 'totally unacceptable'



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### **About Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital**

- The Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital sees over 40,000 patients a year has 68 beds, 5 theatres (3 with ultra clean airflow for orthopaedic surgery) , a dedicated endoscopy suite, a state of the art physiotherapy centre, full on-site imaging including MRI and CT scanners, 2 treatment rooms and 22 consulting rooms. The hospital provides a comfortable environment including patient gardens and free car parking. The hospital is a premium private facility, dedicated to the highest standards of cleanliness, clinical care and excellent patient satisfaction.
- At Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital, we specialise in orthopaedic surgery, neurosurgery, gynaecology, urology, ENT, general surgery, cardiothoracic surgery and ophthalmology and treat patients with a range of conditions.
- The majority of specialists operating at the hospital also work at the internationally recognised Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (Addenbrookes) and are amongst the best in their field, attracting referrals from across the UK and overseas.
- The hospital has three major accreditations from the leading private medical insurer Bupa which recognises the quality of service offered to patients with breast, bowel or gynaecological cancers. Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital also promotes preventative health care and operates a Wellness Centre which offers a range of private health assessments, health and wellbeing programmes and primary care.
- We employ over 150 staff including nurses, radiographers, physiotherapists, pharmacy, catering, housekeepers, administrators and porters and support our staff in career development.

Spire Healthcare offers a full range of integrated surgical, medical and diagnostic services and treats over 930,000 patients every year. Sustained clinical performance improvements and standards has led Spire to win multiple Independent Healthcare Awards, including 'Nursing Practice' in 2009 and 'Risk Management' and 'Nursing Practice' in 2010.

For further information please visit: [www.spirecambridge.com](http://www.spirecambridge.com)