

This Girl Can

Our Suffolk ambassador Helen has had a positive impact on Irene from Ipswich. Read Irene's story here:

How did you meet the This Girl Can ambassador?

I work with Helen at the Canute Group. I have not done any exercise in the last 20 years and I used to smoke 20 cigarettes a day. I got to know Helen and I saw how much she enjoys running and I thought that maybe I could see if running would work for me.

How has the ambassador inspired you?

She told me that I may enjoy going to GoodGym and said it would be another way to meet new people—I am Spanish and I do not know a lot of people here in Ipswich. Helen came with me to my first time at GoodGym. I really enjoyed it and decided I would do it the following week. Helen then suggested that I might enjoy parkrun as there is no pressure to run, you can walk or walk-run so I decided that same week to give the Chantry parkrun a go.

Helen has given to me the passion that she has about exercise and having a healthy lifestyle. She has changed my outlook on looking after myself. Since I have gotten to know her I have learnt how important it is to exercise and eat healthier and how much better it can make you feel as a result.

Helen also really encouraged me at the very beginning when I first took part in parkrun and texted me to ask how everything was and to tell me how proud she was of me when I told her I ran my second parkrun in 34 minutes. Since my first run, I have got a PB every week and am very proud of myself.

How has the This Girl Can Campaign influenced you to do more sport and/or physical activity?

When Helen became an ambassador for This Girl Can she explained the campaign to me and how it worked. She showed me the website and the Facebook page and reading about other ladies and their experiences of taking part in sport or new sports really inspired me to continue what I am doing.

What barriers have you faced and how have you overcome some of these?

My only barrier is myself—my mind! I do not have any issues with my breath or pain when I am running, but my mind tends to be very negative about running. Every time that I do it, my mind is telling me, "Please, stop it, you do not need to do this", but I keep running as I know that it is having a positive impact on my life.

Why should other females get involved in sport/physical activity?

For me, the main reason it is to feel so good when you finish the exercise. I love that moment. In addition, I think, you feel good and your thoughts start being more positive. You can see life from another perspective.

What benefits have you had from taking part in sport?

I am more confident with myself. I am telling myself that if I can run 35 minutes without stopping, I can get whatever I want in my life. In general, I am more positive and I am not scared to try new things.



Who are This Girl Can Ambassadors?

This Girl Can ambassadors are women from a variety of different backgrounds, of different ages and with different interests with one thing in common: they have all found ways to overcome their barriers and become more physically active.

The ambassadors support the This Girl Can campaign locally in Suffolk by telling their own stories about how they have fitted exercise into their busy lives, the barriers that they have faced and the positive impact that exercise has had on their life. The ambassadors help to inspire others to become more active, encouraging women and girls to remember that it doesn't matter how well they do it, how they look or how red their face gets.

