



PROSTATE
CANCER UK



Group

HELPING MEN LIVE WELL

“You wouldn’t expect a woman to carry her sanitary pads out into the street to find a bin, so why would you think it’s ok for men to do it?”

BOG
STANDARD

Peter Jones, 76, from Watford in Hertfordshire was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2018 and had an operation to remove his prostate the same year.

The treatment was successful in removing the cancer but left him with incontinence.



Peter calls for better facilities to support men.

“If I was sitting down or lying down, I was fine. If I was standing or walking, I was constantly leaking. I was using two to three of the really thick TENA pads a day.

“My incontinence really affected me mentally. My confidence just went through the floor. I didn’t want to see anybody, and I didn’t want anybody coming round. It wasn’t embarrassment as such, but I was so uncomfortable with it. Eventually Covid hit, and for me it was a godsend. I must have been the only person in the world that was happy about a pandemic because it meant I didn’t have to go anywhere or make excuses and I could just stay in, and nobody could visit.

“It wasn’t fair on my family and in the end when the pandemic eased my wife and I went to the theatre together. It was my first time being out in public, and I had to go and change my pad in the toilet, but there was nowhere for me to put it. In the end I had to put the used pad in a carrier bag and put it back in my shoulder bag and put it under my seat during the second half.

“The same thing happened in a restaurant. Nowhere to put my pad and I had to take it out of the bathroom with me. Men’s toilets and especially cubicles aren’t the most pleasant or clean places in the world either and I hated going in there and every time, nowhere for me to put my pad.”



“...I stopped seeing friends completely. **Mentally it really affected me.**”

“Every time I went somewhere it became so difficult in terms of what to do with the pad. Sometimes I would have to walk down the street with in it in a plastic bag and put it in a bin in the middle of the street. You don't want to do it because it's not hygienic, but what can you do?”

“I mostly stopped going away, but once we stayed in a hotel for a few nights, and that was difficult, because I didn't want to put a big pad in the bin for the cleaners to have to tidy that up. In the end I kept them with me and brought them home with me.”

“Sometimes I would go out and I just wouldn't change the pad at all because it was so stressful – and that can cause infections but to me it was better than the alternative.”

“In the end I thought – I really don't want to be doing this and I don't want to go out anymore. I made excuses not to go anywhere and I got really depressed with it.”

“Disabled toilets are better equipped as there's usually a bin in there, but then people stare at you when you go in because you don't look disabled.”

“I missed out on so much, so many moments with friends and family. I used to be quite an outgoing guy. I would play golf, play darts, go for a few drinks go to the theatre. But I stopped seeing friends completely. Mentally it really affected me.”

“If I could have changed my pad and binned the old one it would be something. But most of the time, you go to the loo and you come out with a carrier bag with a wet pad in it, and I just thought to myself, this isn't the way that I want to live my life. I stopped playing golf, stopped seeing my friends and stopped people coming around.”

“I got so low with it, really depressed, but thankfully my family helped me through it. I don't want to talk about this, but we need to talk about it. Men need to be taken care of.”

“...I thought - I really don't want to be doing this and and don't want to go out anymore.”



“If there were bins everywhere, it would have helped me so much.”

“After four years, the hospital said they could support me a little more and fit me with an artificial sphincter. I jumped at the chance because like I said, I knew I didn’t want to live like this anymore.

“Touch wood – that operation has left me about 99% dry. It will last me around 10 years, so I don’t know what will happen after that point. I’m hoping the sphincter will see me out rather than me have to live with incontinence again. That’s how I feel about it. It’s not even wearing the pads. The main problem is that it’s just so difficult when you have to change them. There’s nowhere to put the used pads and it’s a nightmare.

“I’m so grateful that I have my life back and the stress of changing pads has gone, but what about the other men who will have treatment, what will they have to go through? That’s why I want to speak up about this.

“If there were bins everywhere, it would have helped me so much. I would have gone out so much more, it would have made such a huge difference. Nobody can see that you’re wearing a pad, but if you’ve got nowhere to put the old one – that’s where the stress comes from.

“You wouldn’t expect a woman to carry her sanitary pads out into the street to find a bin, so why would you think it’s ok for men to do it?”

For men living with the effects of prostate cancer treatment or incontinence, **the washroom should be a safe space.**

That’s why **phs** Group, in partnership with Prostate Cancer UK, have created the **BOG STANDARD Charter**, to encourage safe spaces for men and allow them to dispose of their incontinence waste with dignity – which will allow them to continue living their lives, free from embarrassment, shame or anxiety.

For more information, visit www.phs.co.uk/BOGSTANDARD

