



PROSTATE  
CANCER UK

phs Group

## HELPING MEN LIVE WELL

“Nothing stops me going to see Cardiff City, but things could be made easier for men like me.”



**Mark Lewis, 57**, is a Cardiff City fan from Merthyr Tydfil. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer in November 2016, has experienced incontinence and now has a urinary stoma.\*

**Club:**  
Cardiff City F.C.

\* Urostomy

*A urostomy is carried out during a radical cystectomy. A small section of the small bowel is removed and connected to your ureters (the two tubes that normally carry urine out of the kidneys).*

*The surgeon then creates a small hole in the surface of your abdomen and the open end of the removed bowel is placed in this hole, creating an opening known as a stoma.*

*A special waterproof bag is placed over the stoma to collect urine. A stoma nurse will teach you how to care for your stoma, and how and when to change the bag.*

### Cardiff City fan calls for incontinence bins for men.

“I’d lost quite a bit of bladder control. I was having to wear Tena pants, which after you’ve leaked can make you feel like you’re walking around with a soggy nappy, desperate for somewhere change it.

“It’s hard to believe how much it affects you until you’ve been through it yourself. Everything revolves around the toilet. Even if you’ve had a wee, you could still leak a few minutes later. I think I know every toilet and layby in Merthyr and South Wales by now, because of the number of times I’ve had to stop to jump out for a wee or change my incontinence pad. But what do I do with it once I have changed it?

“Depression can really set in because you can’t do the things that you want to do. I’m a Cardiff City season ticket holder, and there’s a gang of us who go down to the games together. Now my pals have to change their plans to accommodate me. They don’t mind, but it does make you feel bad. Some of my mates have free bus passes, but we all go on the train now to make sure that there’s a toilet and a bin for me.

“In 2023 I discovered the cancer had moved from the prostate to the bladder, and I had a nine-hour operation, and they fitted a urinary stoma\* for me. It works brilliantly for me but comes with its own challenges for disposing of it too. You need a sanitary bin if you need to change your stoma. There are no bins for men’s pads or stomas or anything like that at the football, the pub or any public toilets really.

“I don’t think anyone realises how common this is and how much of a problem it is for men, so this is a great campaign to raise awareness. It’s hard for men to talk about this stuff but once people start opening up about it, everyone starts chipping in about their issues or someone they know.

“At the football, I said I was off to the loo because I had a stoma, and then all of a sudden in our row, someone said, ‘He’s got a stoma too’. Then someone else popped their hand up and said they wore incontinence pads, then someone else too, and all of a sudden you realise how common it is.

“Nothing stops me going to see Cardiff City, I’ll be there by hook or by crook, but things could be made much easier for men like me. It’s totally changed my life. We used to go for a full day out and really enjoy ourselves, but now I just get there to watch the game and get back again.

“The facilities at Cardiff are great, but the cubicles are always busy, there’s always a queue and it’s a stress getting to the loo and you do feel a bit self-conscious queuing. When you do get in and change your incontinence pad or stoma bag, there’s no sanitary bin in the loos. Your only option is to carry it out with you and put it in the waste bins where the cups and the food are. It isn’t ideal but what can you do?

“I’ve thought about using the disabled loos, but I don’t want people accusing me of not being disabled – and I’m not.

**I just need a sanitary bin, it’s not much to ask for and it would make things easier and much less stressful.”**

Mark has raised over £3000 for Prostate Cancer UK, via its Prostate United Walking Challenge. To donate, head to [prostateunited.prostatecanceruk.org/fundraising/mark-lewis-prostate-united-walking-challenge](https://prostateunited.prostatecanceruk.org/fundraising/mark-lewis-prostate-united-walking-challenge)

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