

Theraposture adjustable bed delivers 'true life changing independence' for Reverend Tom Clammer with MS

Freelance priest and ex Salisbury Cathedral Canon discovers easier living with Multiple Sclerosis thanks to a tailor-made double combination adjustable bed from Theraposture

CASE STUDY 23



Ordained in 2005, The Revd Canon Dr Tom Clammer OC, 42, from West Grimstead, currently teaches theology at Church of England colleges in Salisbury and Oxford. Before taking early retirement in 2018 due to ill health, Tom's rewarding career included the prestigious position of Canon Precentor at Salisbury Cathedral. Following his MS diagnosis in 2014, Tom's mobility became progressively worse resulting in a career change from full- to part-time consultative work.

Adapting home life was equally as important for Tom, his wife Emma, a 6th form drama teacher, and cat Esther. This led to him choosing an adjustable double combination bed from Theraposture – Tom describes this bed as 'truly life changing.'

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Tom's interview:





Tom can fully relax in a personalised lying position

As Tom's symptoms became more pronounced, he required additional equipment to remain mobile. His Occupational Therapist started to discuss options for easier access in and out of bed which was important for safety and well being. With impairment down Tom's left side and the need to manage severe fatigue, a solution was required to maintain independence.

Social services provided a NHS pillow lifter however it was 'utilitarian and unattractive' as Tom describes, plus its size meant Emma was squashed in less than a third of the couple's double bed. A grab handle also helped Tom for a while get in and out however as time progressed, he needed assistance from his wife day and night to achieve a standing transfer to his rollator. The process of hauling Tom up was not safe

for either of them with the risk of back injury or a fall. As the situation was unsustainable, Tom was offered a hospital style single adjustable bed by the NHS however this meant the couple would need to sleep apart or in separate rooms. They both were not ready to accept this kind of arrangement so sought an attractive adjustable bed that would keep them together at night and give Tom his freedom back.

Tom's Occupational Therapist suggested a specialist electrically operated bed with a

profiling action and a powered vertical lift. This would provide greater personalised enablement and comfort as Tom picks up the story: "When we decided to look for a bed to help, we shopped around online and shortlisted two companies. Both came to our home to do a product demonstration – Theraposture were by a long way the most kind, attentive and professional. We found reading their customer stories online very insightful. The assessing Occupational Therapist, Shaun, came to meet us and talked through all the options. He was

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honest and upfront about pricing right from the start and explained why Theraposture were not the cheapest as they offered higher quality products and a more comprehensive service. We followed our home assessment with a visit to the Theraposture showroom in Westbury where Shaun met us again, he was so reassuring and clearly understood the nuances of my degenerative conditions and how to deal with spasticity, posture and core strength challenges."

Whilst at the Westbury showroom Shaun demonstrated to Tom and Emma how Theraposture could manufacture a bespoke double combination bed with various powered functions built in. The bed would have two separate halves with powered adjustment in Tom's side so he could lower and raise the head and foot end, plus lift the entire sleeping platform to stand up and sit down safely. The bed surround would be handcrafted in modern attractive oak so it did not look like a medical device.

If Tom needed additional support in the future, his side could be swapped out for a Rotoflex rotating mechanism which would give complete powered movement from a lying to an upright chair position.

Tom continues: "The fact that my bed functions could be adapted in the future gave me more reassurance. As I don't have a critical, but rather a degenerative condition, my life expectancy is normal so we needed a product that would last and could be developed for changing needs. Plus, we saw the bed could be adapted for physios or carers to access my half from both sides without having to lean or strain – it could be split in two."

"All through our discussions Shaun's manner and tone was professional and caring. Talking about your difficulties such as getting to the loo in the night is embarrassing, it's a personal bit of your life – Shaun took this into consideration."

The Clammers considered the adjustable bed as an investment for mid-term support with the option of adding a Rotoflex in the future for long term care. As MS is an unpredictable condition, Tom was fully aware he could relapse tomorrow, in years to come or not at all, so this future proofing was important. Their bed was ordered, made and installed in their previous temporary accommodation until a suitable accessible property was found for them by the Church. With extensive delays due to the pandemic behind them, the Clammers



Tom can transfer into his rollator in a safe, controlled manner



The variable height platform aids with standing, sitting and carer access



Adjustments of Tom's side does not affect Emma's half of the bed ensuring they both get a good night's sleep

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were able to relocate to their current house assisted by Theraposture's technicians who organised a complete bed move.

Now settled in their new home, Tom, Emma and Esther are enjoying greater flexibility as their double combination bed provides vital support for many aspects of their life.

Tom explains: "Our bed has restored independence for both of us. I can get in and out on my own including at night without having to wake Emma. I can lift my side high, so I have the physical capacity to stand up with my knees starting from a position above my bum. Equally when I get in, I can lower myself slowly and with the bed in its lowest position, I can swing my legs in on my own."

"More than that, Emma's quality of life is better as she's not squashed in a bed dominated by NHS kit. She gets a proper night's sleep and her anxieties about me are massively reduced. Previously every time I moved, she'd wake up and say: 'are you alright?' Improving the mental health of carers is just as important as they have their own set of worries and concerns. Not that she often does, but Emma can now stay away overnight in the knowledge that I can manage safely on my own."



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Getting out of bed with a disability is one of the times where you are at the highest chance of a fall."

The Theraposture double combination bed is also benefiting Tom's career as he goes on to say: "As I'm now teaching and mentoring on all aspects of Worship, my bed is vital to me. It is so effective for managing my MS fatigue as I can achieve the ideal resting position. Sitting still requires many of your muscles to be active whereas in my bed I can adjust to the ideal lying position for complete relaxation. Without this therapeutic place I would again be at risk of potential injury from falls as I get so tired. If I've been out teaching in Oxford, I say to

myself: 'hey, don't worry I have a great bed to recover in when I get home!'"

In conclusion, Tom highlights one of the main reasons why they chose Theraposture: "Overall, we are quite canny people and could see Theraposture were a company to trust. Their partnership with the MS Society demonstrated that they were reliable and ethical. When you are new to disability your mind is full of terrifying thoughts regarding the future. Knowing you have someone you can rely on, especially in stressful times, is very helpful indeed. We knew by displaying the MS badge Theraposture would not let us down and our faith in them has been proven time and again."

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