

The Katie Piper Foundation: Catrin's journey

Further information

The aims and objectives of the Katie Piper Foundation are:

- To improve outcomes for burn survivors
- To deliver, directly or indirectly, intensive comprehensive burns rehabilitation in the UK (following the burn survivor's discharge from acute hospital care)
- To support burn survivors throughout their journey of recovery
- To advance a deep understanding of the context in which the Katie Piper Foundation acts (the burn care world) and of key stakeholders
- To develop key relationships, collaborations, associations and partnerships.

In April 2013, I was involved in a road traffic accident that changed my life forever. I was left with full thickness burns to 96% of my body, leaving only my scalp and the soles of my feet untouched. I spent three months in an induced coma, and a further five months in the burns unit at Whiston Hospital.

I had amazing support and the quality of care that I received was outstanding. My acute care involved over 200 operations and procedures, daily dressing changes, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and scar management. My last wound(s) didn't heal until about 20 months after the fire. I wore pressure masks and garments 23 hours a day, which helped the appearance of my scars.

THE LONG ROAD OF RECOVERY

Since leaving hospital, I have faced rigorous physiotherapy every day, involving learning to talk, eat, walk and use my hands again.

Living with scars is not easy, not only because of how they feel but also because of how they look. My whole body is covered in scars, some flat, some smooth and some contracted. As a burns survivor, scar revision treatments and surgeries are inevitable in the future. Due to the size of my injury, I have been able to experience first-hand a range of different treatments, for example mechanised massage, laser treatments and water therapy, not only to improve my burnt skin but also physical function.

RECEIVING SUPPORT AND GIVING IT BACK

The Katie Piper Foundation made it possible for me to attend a burns rehabilitation centre in Centre Ster, Lamalou-Les-Bains in the South of France. Without the support of this charity, I wouldn't be where I am today, or have been able to benefit from the vast improvements attending the centre gave me.

The ultimate goal of the charity has always been to deliver a gold standard of burns rehabilitation in the UK, so that everyone can

benefit from the experiences I've had. I attended their new rehabilitation facility as part of the first phase of a pilot of the new rehabilitation service in 2016, and was pleased to return to support two other patients during the second phase of the pilot earlier this year.

WHERE I AM NOW AND WHAT THE FUTURE MIGHT HOLD FOR ME

The Katie Piper Foundation does amazing work helping people like me achieve the life they want to lead after a burn injury. I am now a professional motivational speaker, work with various charities and intend to further my academic studies by training to be a physiotherapist, in the hope of giving something back. I cannot change what happened, but feel the future is positive and in my control.

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Catrin has a wide range of scars — some are lumpy and raised, while others caused changes in pigmentation.

CATRIN PUGH
Charity worker,
motivational speaker