

## Moving forward

*Allan Foreman from Mansfield in Nottinghamshire has a professional background in teaching. He trained as a school teacher in the 1970s and found himself at ease in what would now be classed as special education needs teaching, catering mostly for pupils whose disruptive behaviour had resulted in their expulsion from mainstream schools.*



An increased workload and reluctance to ask for help and support resulted in what would now be classed as burnout and Allan found himself suffering from symptoms including anxiety, depression and extreme agitation. Allan recalls how he was told to take medication that would make him better without supporting information about how this process was supposed to work or any information about the potential effects or side effects of drugs prescribed, which included Chlorpromazine and Haloperidol. According to his medical notes at the time, these produced side effects such as stiffness, akathisia, tardive dyskinesia and dystonic movements.

What neither Allan nor medical staff at the time realised, until much later, was that these features would prove to be permanent in Allan's case and leave him with a virulent form of dystonia that would completely transform his life.

However, Allan has not allowed his particular form of dystonia to completely dominate his life. He has lectured and written on his condition and co-authored a chapter in the 'Teaching Mental Health', considered a contemporary perspective for those involved in planning and delivery of mental health education. He is a member of the Dystonia Society and also a leading supporter for the Central Nottinghamshire branch of MIND. Another major achievement in Allan's impressive CV is to regularly take part in the World Tricycle Championships to help raise mental health awareness.