

Course changed Derek's life



Derek Bowler has managed to control his stammer with the help of the McGuire Programme. (NS)

FOR more than 30 years Derek Bowler avoided social situations and conversations because of his severe stammer.

He felt uncomfortable and guilty that he wasn't able to communicate clearly due to the condition which he developed when he was eight.

But after hearing about the McGuire Programme, which was publicised by pop star Gareth Gates, Derek, 40, signed up. He has now made so much progress that he has even joined a public speaking club.

"I joined the programme and went on an intensive four-day course in Scotland in October last year, which was a life-changing experience," said Derek, who works as a tax consultant and lives in Oxford Place, Dewsbury.

"Before, I wouldn't even order a take-away over the phone, I'd make my wife do it. I'd feel shame and guilt at not being able to communicate properly and presentations, which I sometimes have to do for work, would be awful. I'd just sit down and feel dejected," he said.

"But the course has altered the way I view things and really changed my life. I've now accepted the fact that I have a stammer and, although it isn't cured, I know that I can control it which has really boosted my confidence."

Derek, who has four daughters, added:

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"The McGuire Programme isn't a cure, but it helps those who stammer control it by using different breathing techniques. It's an ongoing process.

"There are people available 24 hours a day and there are support groups, including one in Dewsbury for people who've been on the programme. All the coaches are people who have stammered themselves

so they know what you're going through. Because of the progress I've made I may become a coach myself to mentor others in the area."

To find out more visit www.mcguireprogramme.com

FACTFILE

- **STAMMERING** affects approximately one per cent of the population.
- **GENERALLY** stammering affects men more than women.
- **FAMOUS** people with stammers include Bruce Willis, Winston Churchill and Marilyn Monroe.