

'Hospital error' left pensioner in agony after unnecessary operation

AN 81-YEAR-OLD from Bricket Wood said she was left in constant pain for years after surgeons misdiagnosed her.

Tessa Alexander, of Jenkins Avenue, underwent back surgery at St Albans City Hospital in November 2011, after being diagnosed with degenerative spondylolisthesis – a condition associated with the weakening of the spine as a result of ageing.

Following the operation Mrs Alexander said she couldn't move and had shooting pains down her legs, which the surgeons told was the result of nerve damage caused by the operation, but what made the situation worse initially was her "horrible experience" of how the hospital treated her.

Mrs Alexander said she was asked to wash herself despite not being able to move and the freezing temperatures in the ward at the time.

She said because the hospital apologised for their treatment she didn't do anything else.

However, her pain in her legs continued and she struggled to walk.

Mrs Alexander said the doctors still believed that the pain was due to the operation and she started to have spinal injections.

After being advised by her dentist to try pilates exercises, Mrs Alexander found out it was her hip that was

causing her so much agony.

She said: "Within the first session, the instructor told me there was nothing wrong with my back, I needed a new hip. He recommended Neil Davies."

Mrs Alexander phoned the hospital asking for a consultation and X-ray with Mr Davies and they told her she had to go back to her doctors and get a referral.

She added: "I got the letter to see Mr Davies and went back to Watford General, who told me I couldn't have the operation in the near future and may have to wait up to 18 weeks.

"I had been suffering from a misdiagnosis of it for two and a half years. Mr Davies said he could do the operation both on the NHS or privately and in the end I couldn't wait."

In a letter to Mrs Alexander, Jacqueline Kelly, chief executive of West Herts Hospitals, which runs St Albans City Hospital, said: "When you [Mrs Alexander] suffered recurrent left leg pain it was reasonably presumed that this was due to irritability of the spinal nerves.

"In July 2014, it is likely that your hip symptoms had become dominant, but we did not appreciate this."

Mrs Alexander paid nearly £11,000 for her hip replacement operation and has complained to the Ombudsman.



Tessa Alexander underwent back surgery at St Albans City Hospital in November 2011

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Cash boost of £5,000 for groups

MORE than 20 voluntary and community groups that help vulnerable people have been given grants of up to £5,000.

Among the 22 grants issued by St Albans District Council is an award of £1,750 to the Talking Newspaper's Outreach 2015/16 programme to expand its service to blind/partially-sighted local residents.

The grant will enable more listeners to contribute to weekly programmes and will also help launch Blind Spot meetings in local cafes.

St Albans Mencap is to receive £3,888 for its Buy, Cook and Eat project.

This will contribute to the cost of eight-week courses in basic cooking skills, helping around 40 vulnerable adults with learning disability, autism or mental health issues.

The YMCA, West and Central Herts, will receive £4,993 to help young people aged 13 to 17 in Cunningham, St Albans, enter the 2016 Youth Bike competition.

The teenagers will build a motorbike during weekly sessions and work towards an award.

Yet more acclaim for restaurant

A FISH restaurant is celebrating renewed praise in the Waitrose Good Food Guide 2016.

Lussmans Fish & Grill has been recommended for a seventh successive year in the UK's bestselling restaurant bible.

The sustainable eatery has been described as having a 'modern feel' with a 'crowd-pleasing and 'sensibly priced' menu and as 'a boon for locals in an area with arguably little epicurean excitement'.

The prestigious guide's endorsement coincides with the restaurant group's celebrations to mark 10 years of success in St Albans.

This year has also seen Lussmans rise above strong competition to retain the title of UK Sustainable Small Restaurant Group of the Year at the Sustainable Restaurant Association Awards 2015, and once again take home the 'highly commended' runner-up prize for the Sustainable Business Award at the 32nd annual Cateys.

Owner Andrei Lussmann said: "It's local diners that make or break the business so I am delighted that we continue to impress."

Lussmans have restaurants in St Albans and Harpenden.