



# Joanne's London Marathon Journey

**Employer:** DWP Bishop Auckland

**Area:** Durham

**Theme:** Physical Activity



Back in 1989 our colleague Joanne Illingworth finished her first (and what she thought would be her last!) London Marathon. Every year she watched it on TV and thought that she would love to do it again. She entered in 2017 and was unsuccessful but tried once more in 2018 and was accepted!

Who is Joanne? She described herself as an unfit, fat, fifty-one-year-old facing a huge personal challenge. She was hoping to show herself and anyone else who would listen, that you can get fit enough in 26 weeks to complete the best marathon in the world.

Once she was signed up with a place, she started to take the training very seriously. This was something that required a complete lifestyle change with Joanne undertaking months of hard work, determination and training. Starting with the couch to 5k plan.

With it being a spring marathon, Joanne found herself doing the bulk of her training



throughout the winter. So, rain, hail and snow she was out pounding the pavements and raising awareness for the charities that she chose to support, 4Louis and Macmillan cancer care.

As an office we were all looking forward to following Joanne's progress during the race as we had followed her journey to this point. We had all downloaded the app to track her and were searching the crowd to spot number 10090.

Joanne completed the marathon in 8 hours 1 minute, which was amazing! She finished the hottest London Marathon on record in very difficult conditions.

**She posted the following on her blog: 'Joanne's London Marathon Journey'**

*"Most will know now I finished the London marathon in 8 hours 01 second and to be honest I'm disappointed with this time (I know you all think differently) However reading some people collapsed and there was a fatality on the course puts everything into perspective ... would I do it again? Goodness me no! But I am also glad that I did it. The memory of this will stay with me forever."*

**However less than 3 weeks later.... she is now training for The Great North Run and has now said...**

*"Although I said never again, I have re-entered the ballot for next year...if I do get another chance then I hope that you will all join me on my 2019 journey"*

Joanne's journey has inspired a lot of our people to take the plunge and start training. We have a number of staff who have started couch to 5k. Also at least 3 x members of staff have signed up and are currently training towards The Great North Run and have entered the ballot for the 2019 London Marathon.

A number of further events have been organised and promoted by the health advocates to promote physical activity going forward such as The Charity for Civil Servants Walking Challenge, Memory walks to raise awareness and funds for dementia charities and also setting up a walking group for those staff that have been inspired to start their journey but don't want to run.

**Joanne raised a massive £2668.59 for the charities 4Louis and Macmillan Cancer Care**



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