

Tarka Red Button and Ben the wonder dog!

Mrs Gina Barratt, of Geneva Court, Bideford has thanked the Tarka Housing's 'red button emergency helpline service', Tracey Morgan of Home Safeguard call centre, and her own dog Ben for saving her life!

She had a severe asthma attack at home and became very ill very quickly, her dog managed to press the alarm button on her pendant and the marvellous call centre operator calmed her down and kept her going till the ambulance arrived.



"Thank goodness I'm here to talk about it" said Mrs Barratt. "I don't know what I'd do without the Tarka red button line to the call centre, when I'm that ill I cannot even get to the phone. I keep wondering what would have happened if I hadn't had the button and Ben there."

Mrs Barratt (62) said it felt like she couldn't get air in, but with such an attack you actually need to get more air out.

Mrs Barratt said, "It helped me a great deal that day – it saved my life – Tracey calmed me down by keep saying to let the oxygen out and breathe more slowly. I can't thank Tracey or the paramedic who came enough!"



Mrs Barratt also has epilepsy and you do not feel epilepsy coming on, so it is particularly dangerous for someone living on their own as Mrs Barratt does. Mrs Barratt uses both a pendant button and a unit by the telephone.

"It's never away from me – always there as either the pendant red button or the telephone unit. I really recommend it to give you a sense of confidence and keep you safe."

On the day in question, my button got stuck inside my fleece and Ben, my Chihuahua cross Jack Russell, is so wonderful, he knows when I am having an attack and he jumped up and pressed it.

Tracey came on the loudspeaker and asked me if I was alright. I said I can't breathe, help me, but I could barely get it out!"

"She stayed on talking to me the whole time and I don't think I would have made it otherwise. Everything was already going fuzzy. I felt myself going, it felt like my lungs were stuck together."

“The ambulance only took 7 or 8 minutes to come. It turned out I had a bad chest infection and was in hospital for five days afterwards with a severe chest infection which had triggered the asthma attack.”

Karen Witney, manager of the Red Button Tarka Emergency Helpline said, “It is a very satisfying job and each time I hear a story of how the button has helped someone I am delighted. This really is a fantastic story and I am so pleased that Mrs Barratt is with us to thank Ben and Tracey today!”

Tracey was an absolute gem and so once I was well enough I wanted to come here in person with Ben and give her my thanks.

Ben will only be 4 in February but he is a bright dog, thank goodness!