



Martin Rogers Role Model Profile

Communications and Engagement Officer

A little about me

Fun, loving, and humorous German who has lived in the UK since February 1988. I moved to London in 1997 when I joined King's College London to study German and ended up working for King's for over 22 years.

I was first diagnosed with Primary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis (PPMS) in 2015 having experienced symptoms in 2014. I grew up with MS as both my mum and her younger brother, my uncle have MS.

I already had an inkling in 2014 what I had so the diagnosis did not hit me like a speeding freight train. I have an amazing consultant at King's College Hospital who I admire for his knowledge and incredible empathy. Still, living with MS is challenging but having a wonderful supportive husband, fantastic family and friends really helps.

How would I describe living with MS? To me, my MS is like living with an irritating flatmate who sometimes plays loud music, slams the door or leaves dirty dishes in the sink: a nuisance and somewhat irritating - the point is, I have to accept that I will never be able to evict the flatmate but have to live with it. I have had to adapt, slow down and change my routine.

What is your role at Queen Mary? What do you do?

I joined the Queen Mary family on 6 April 2020 as Communications and Engagement Officer in Estates and Facilities in Directorate Support. In my role, I am responsible for ensuring that all EAF staff feel connected, informed and engaged. I am a people's person and I relish being able to engage with our staff and the Queen Mary community.

What is your experience of being disabled at Queen Mary (or in your life more generally)?

I truly love working at Queen Mary, I feel I can be me and my disability doesn't really play a major part in my working life as I feel so utterly supported. It takes away a lot of unnecessary worry that

having a disability can have and the act of worrying can have such a negative impact on the any condition. I simply love coming to work.

How does Queen Mary support you?

I have an incredibly supportive line manager (Panny Martin) who I can speak to anytime if I need more support. In addition, the [Occupational Health](#) team were super in evaluating my needs and very empathetic. In addition, we have our [Staff Disability Network group](#) which is a great support. To know that my employer is so supportive, means that I do not need to worry and can carry on with my working life.

How could Queen Mary do better to support its disabled community?

I think what Queen Mary is doing currently is great. I hope that we can start to raise the profile of disabled staff through the Staff Disability Network and get more people to join who have felt that they had no avenue of support; even if it is just to have a chat. I know from my own experience, just knowing that there is support and help makes such a huge difference.

Why do you want to be a disabled role model? Why do you think role models are important?

I want to be able to show that having a disability is not something that needs to be hidden or that you need to feel embarrassed about. I am an avid believer that sharing experiences with others can be utterly supportive and motivating, plus I believe that sharing is indeed caring.

What do you want staff and students at Queen Mary to know or understand about disability and the disabled community?

That we're a tough bunch of people! 😊 We face, I would say, added obstacles and more challenges in our lives and we are very adept in managing these. I think by sharing our experiences we can show that things are going to be ok and that there is always a solution to any problem.

How can staff and students be a better ally to the disabled community?

I think it's just about being there for us, someone that we can have a coffee and a chat to. I also think that by sharing our experiences we can spread the word and raise awareness about the disabled community at Queen Mary.