

CUSTOMER STORY APRIL 2026

Ex-RAF Trudy discovers the power of playing pickleball thanks to Recare wheelchairs

Trudy Jones, 34-year-old medically retired RAF senior aircraftswoman from Oxfordshire, continues to fulfil her passion for sport by playing pickleball thanks to a range of wheelchairs from Recare.



STORY 016

Recare is a mobility and rehabilitation equipment specialist based in Long Hanborough, Oxfordshire. As a highly regarded family business, it enables people of all ages across the UK, with personally specified manual and powered wheelchairs, wheelchair power add-ons and specialist seating solutions. Trudy became a local customer in 2023 when she was seeking the right wheelchair for

her needs. Following online research, she discovered Recare and, as it was only a 20-minute drive away, she visited their demonstration showroom where she met Tim Cox. Tim, Recare's Rehabilitation Director, who is also ex-armed services, immediately struck up a rapport with Trudy and the 'rest is history' as she says.

Trudy joined the RAF in 2014; however, she became injured so had to return to

her previous career in retail. In 2016 she was able to rejoin the service until 2020 when the development of a neurological condition meant she had to take medical retirement. Since then, Trudy has been so grateful for support from several military charities and Recare in helping get her life back on track.

Recare and charities work together

Trudy begins to recall her journey with Recare: "I found Recare through Google as the military charities SSAFA and the RAF Benevolent Fund were helping me fund a wheelchair. It was a really smooth process with Recare as we collaborated to get my first wheelchair to perfectly fit me. This Quickie Nitrum, and my subsequent two Wolturnus wheelchairs, including a sports model for playing pickleball, have made a huge difference. I'm pain free when compared to my old wheelchair which was causing me more issues than solving them."

As time has progressed, Trudy has also purchased a Triride powered hand bike which she combines with her daytime wheelchair when travelling longer distances or off road. This was provided through the Veterans Mobility Fund with support from Help for Heroes.

Trusted advice

Trudy continues: "Talking about what I needed and wanted with Tim was brilliant; I know through this I have the best wheelchairs possible that suit my needs. As I drive a car, it was critical for me to have products that are lightweight so I can lift them in and out easily. When selecting a wheelchair, it's not just about finding a tool to manage your condition and daily life; it's how it can make you feel. The right cushion, the right backrest, the right frame, are all such critical components for comfort. Having experts



like Tim who understand you and the details of products meant I totally trusted his recommendations which have paid off. The fact that I can play my favourite sport, pickleball, without needing to borrow leisure centre wheelchairs is game changing for my mental health. My Wolturnus sports wheelchair is outstanding."

The importance of sport

Pickleball is a fun sport that combines elements of badminton, tennis and table tennis. It is an indoor and outdoor paddle sport in which two or four players use a smooth-faced paddle to hit a perforated, hollow plastic ball over a net.

Trudy goes on to explain why this sport means so much to her: "I first found pickleball when I attended a Help for Heroes sports event in summer 2024 which was a weekend where you can try different sports. If you like a sport, then they encourage you to go and find where to play this in your local area. I tried indoor rowing and wheelchair rugby which I played for a year; however, it didn't suit my body, so I moved to pickleball. I reached out to the coach at White Horse Leisure Centre in Abingdon who encouraged me to come along and try – Simon made me feel very welcome as did all the other players. I am currently the only wheelchair player there but I feel it is one of the most inclusive sports. I play a hybrid version which allows me to participate with non-disabled players."

"I play pickleball because I have always been a keen sports person. I really enjoy the community feel of the game. It brings a lot of joy into my life. The power of being in a sports environment should never be underestimated. It took a lot of courage for me to get involved as I worried about my capabilities; however, the community have been so supportive. To be on a court with people you have never met before as well as friends is brilliant. I'm now working towards becoming a coach."



"I did compete at the English Open and Welsh Open last year. The English Open was a steep learning curve for me as I don't get to play with three other wheelchair players often, which is a different style of play. Experiencing a tournament atmosphere was fantastic and I was so proud of how far I'd come. Other players from Oxon Pickleball were there, and we were able to support each other. I also recently competed at a tournament at Courtside in Stourbridge, West Midlands, which was a team hybrid tournament. The teams consisted of two non-disabled and two para standing or wheelchair players. It was a great opportunity to play a different tournament format and meet other players. Pickleball will be a new discipline at the Invictus Games in Birmingham next year which will generate huge exposure for the sport, especially as many people have not experienced the sport."

Believing in yourself

As Trudy finishes her story, she is keen to encourage disabled people to have a go at playing pickleball: "I'd say to other disabled people, it is completely normal to feel unsure. Trying something new tends to feel scary at first and the hardest part is reaching out and turning up the first time. What you might find is more than a sport. You might find people, confidence and a part of yourself you thought you'd lost. I hope you give it a go and join the growing adaptive pickleball community."

Call for a free consultation: 01993 880200

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