**RoSPA CASE STUDY – PHOTOS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

**Liz, 28, is a carer for adults in the community. She lives in Lancashire with her partner Josh, 32, who is a technical support advisor. She says:**

I’ve played American football since I was 10. I was running down the field during a drill and as I planted my foot on the ground, I felt a pop in my left knee and collapsed. I knew I’d done something serious but at A&E, an x-ray showed no broken bones.

Over the weeks it improved but during a game, I felt another pop and the injury went from bad to worse. A scan showed a fully torn ACL ligament, a medial meniscus tear and I’d also sprained my medial collateral ligament (MCL) – the inside of my knee. I would need at least one operation to fix it and knew that I wouldn’t be able to play for Great Britain in the European championships.

Working as an adult carer became really difficult as it’s a physically demanding job. On one occasion, my leg popped out while at a client’s house and I had to ask the client’s daughter to help me pop it back in. After the operation I couldn’t continue working, I was in agony and on crutches. We’d just bought a house and I’d been taking on extra shifts to pay the mortgage. Suddenly I wouldn’t be earning anything apart from statutory sick pay.

After a couple of weeks, I started doing some office work on the phones, but the only available shifts were at weekends. It meant cramming in often 17-hour days while also trying to keep my leg elevated. I’d been overcompensating by using my right leg more, so it also became swollen and extremely painful.

A month after my operation, I’m still doing office shifts because I’m not fit enough to do my usual job. I wear a leg brace 24 hours a day which is locked at a 90-degree angle and I’m slowly weaning myself off the crutches. I lay awake wondering how I’m going to pay the mortgage and it’s going to be at least a year before I can finally do the sport I love again.

ends