

ED Doesn't Stop Me!

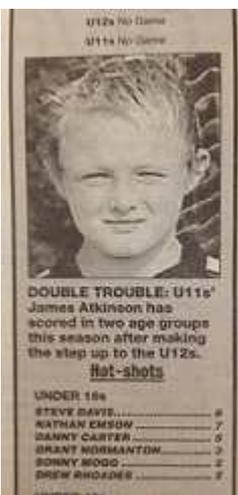
I am James Atkinson 20 years old and I live in Grimsby with my partner Sophie.

I suffer from ED but that doesn't make me any different from anyone else, it hasn't stopped me from achieving the dreams and goals I have set myself. My ordinary life couldn't be better at the minute as I am serving my apprenticeship time at a Engineering company also located in Grimsby; I have just gone into my second year and have 2 and a half years left before I become a fully qualified fabricator and welder.

When I was born my parents Alison and Chris Atkinson discovered my teeth and hair weren't growing properly so they took action and I was diagnosed with Hypohidrotic Ectodermal Dysplasia; I have always suffered from birth. My parents didn't want to make me feel I was any different from anyone else, but as I got older I grew to understand everything about my condition.



On-going treatment for my teeth as they developed like fangs every tooth grew to a point, so Leeds dental institute played a vital part of my life making my teeth look absolutely fantastic and I am now a very proud young man and couldn't thank the teams and professors that helped me achieve a normal look when I smile.



My football career took off from a very very young age; I started playing when I was 3 years old although it wasn't easy when I got older the heat and temperatures were unbelievable I didn't think I could cope but I found my own way of coping.

My first team was called LLS and I was 6 years old I then got scouted to play for Scunthorpe academy under 9's , a year later Leeds United academy under 11's wanted me to play for them. " I went for my first trial and it was so so hot I knew I wouldn't be able to cope, but I wanted it so bad I thought to myself I have to do this otherwise all those nights kicking the ball against the wall and training on my own would of been a waste of time." " I felt I was going to faint and collapse so I drenched myself with freezing cold water half way through my trial I felt so much better". A few days later I received a letter from the club saying I had got in the team I was so happy.

2 years later I then went on to play for Grimsby town football club and played for them for 4 years because it was a lot closer to home. Now I don't have the time to



play because I'm so busy working , but I would say to those parents whose children suffer from ED to make them feel they are not any different from anyone else and to make them feel they can still do hobbies and sports because I did it. I struggled at times but you find independent ways to cool your self down and I knew within my body when to stop. It isn't easy growing up with ED, every case is different but maximum support and opportunities and your children will achieve so much.

Going through school wasn't easy as I got bullied at times but that just made me a stronger person which makes me who I am today (would just like to thank those bullies for putting me down all those times because It just made me such a strong minded person). Not everyone can think like that but I learnt to because if I did I would just have been sad all the time and I didn't want that however it's hard to figure out if your children are getting bullied as it isn't always obvious to tell and your children may feel confused about speaking about it because I never spoke to anyone.

To this day lots of people have a good long stare at me, but I just think it makes me feel more important; I am original; I am who I am and I love me because it helps me think positive.

Would just like to say a few more words life is for living so live it and don't let anyone get in your way or put you down (if they do just come back fighting stronger) always keep your mind set on something you want and be proud of who you are. All the best to everyone.

James x