

# Copter instructor back in air after flying visit for op

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A FLYING instructor is back in the skies after he chose to undergo a specialist ankle operation in Leeds.

Ian Whitmore splits his time between Redditch in Worcestershire and California, but travelled to **Spire Leeds Hospital** to be treated by consultant orthopaedic surgeon Nick Harris.

The 68-year-old doctor and professor of anatomy was injured in a plane crash in 1989 and over the years suffered increasing pain.

When it became too much, he looked into having a total ankle replacement, which is only available at two UK hospitals.

Prof Whitmore said: "In the UK Mr Harris has considerable

experience in the procedure, more than 400 I believe, and a few inquiries I made in the profession informed me of his good reputation."

The helicopter flight instructor was involved in a mid-air collision

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**Prof Ian Whitmore.**

in 1989.

All four people involved survived, but he was left with a catalogue of injuries, including a fractured and dislocated right ankle.

"The pain worsened over the years and became unmanageable without strong painkillers, said Prof Whitmore. "It was becoming impossible to do my job and to fly – the two things that drive my life."

The surgery saw metal implants inserted into the ankle and within a few days the pain had gone.

"After six weeks and I was able to walk fully and start driving," Prof Whitmore said. "I flew a test to see if I was fit to return to flying at ten weeks."

A year on, he said the procedure had improved his life.

"I have good mobility in my ankle, I can fly and drive, and stand for long periods without any problems," he said.

"I cannot praise Mr Harris highly enough for the excellent job he has done."