

Active Ageing: Insights and learning from the Forever Active Kent Service

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Claire Grant – Thrive by the Sea CIC

Introductions



- **Elise Rendall – Active Kent & Medway**
- **Karley Hubbard – Active Kent & Medway**
- **Claire Grant – Thrive by the Sea CIC**



Why active ageing matters

- Kent has an **ageing population**.
- More people are **living longer**, but not always in good health.
- **Strength, balance and physical activity** are increasingly important in helping people stay independent, connected and active.
- Strong case for **prevention** and supporting people earlier rather than waiting until needs become more significant.



Why we needed to change

- Prior to development of the Forever Active Kent service there was a **more traditional commissioned Postural Stability service model.**
- As part of service transformation work, **a review was undertaken** which included consultation and stakeholder feedback.



Focus & aims of new service



Support	Support adults aged 50+ to improve and maintain strength, balance, flexibility and co-ordination at convenient times and locations.
Ensure	Ensure access to safe, enjoyable physical activities with clear information and close to home.
Reach	Reach more people in underserved communities and areas of greatest need.
Reduce	Reduce inactivity, promote independence, enhance quality of life, and help delay or prevent disability.

Forever Active Kent



- Three-year community grant programme plus research evaluation.
- **25** organisations awarded micro grants (max £6k) across all **12 Kent Districts**.
- Adults aged **50+**.
- **Free 12-week programmes of evidence-based activity.**



Forever Active Kent



- **Activities include** - Yoga, Pilates, tennis, low impact classes, non-contact boxing, Tai Chi, circuits, aqua classes, chair-based exercise, walking sports, Nordic walking.
- Building **strength, balance, flexibility** and **co-ordination**.
- Prioritising communities where the **need is greatest**.
- Providers supported with **training and resources**.
- Supporting **sustainable behaviour change**.



Successes



Older adults becoming more active, confident and independent

I know my upper body strength has definitely improved. The other day my husband said, "Shall we book a court?" We wouldn't have even considered that before doing the course. Also, he has been considering doing walking football for months & now feels confident enough to do it.

Successes



Reduced loneliness and strengthening community connections

It has been a wonderful 12 weeks; every session lifts your spirits and has really improved my fitness and balance. Also, the group have been so friendly and welcoming. I feel I have made friends which is great at my age and has enriched my life.

Successes



Delivery organisations becoming stronger

The programme has helped us develop new and strengthen existing relationships with the Swale Seniors Forum, Social Prescribers, Community Wardens and other local charities and community organisations, creating stronger referral pathways and collaborative working.

Challenges

**FOREVER
ACTIVE**
— KENT —


active
Kent & Medway



Participant recruitment, attendance and retention

Worked with partners, waiting lists, regular contact and video recordings

Extreme hot weather

Missed weeks, end dates pushed back, adapted and used shaded areas.

Capacity and staffing pressures

Adapted delivery models and upskilled internal staff.

Differing abilities of participants

Adapting activity to suit all abilities.

Monitoring requirements and physical assessments

Accessible forms, produced video of tests.



What we have learnt so far

- **Community organisations** are well placed to engage people who may not respond to traditional services.
- **Relationships** and **trusted local networks** matter.
- **Engagement** and **recruitment** takes time.
- A **‘one size fits all’** approach doesn’t work.
- **Social connection** is often as important as the activity itself.
- Providers are finding **innovative ways** to encourage people to continue being active beyond the funded programme.



Case studies and film



- **Swale CVS Case Study:**

[Chair-Based Exercise and Yoga Programme – ActiveKent](#)

- **Inclusive Sport Case Study:**

[Gym-based Circuit Class Programme – ActiveKent](#)

- **TM Active Balance and Build – RBVE Village (Aylesford) Film:**

[Forever Active Kent - Balance and Build](#)

Thrive by the Sea CIC

Claire Grant

Forever Active Kent Delivery, Engagement & Sustainability

Pilates in New Romney and Folkestone



Programmes delivered to date



Stronger Through Menopause

New Romney

12 weeks of mat-based Pilates

20 participants initially, 8 at completion



Seated Pilates progressing to standing

Nepalese Community, Folkestone

12-week programme

24–36 participants weekly during weeks 1–8

Learnings from Engaging the Over-50s

New Romney

High demand doesn't guarantee retention

Folkestone

Strong community connections support engagement

Accessibility alone doesn't ensure sustained participation.

Sustaining Participation Beyond 12 Weeks

Maintaining Momentum

Building on the confidence, mobility and relationships developed during the programme.

Bridging the Funding Gap

Exploring funding opportunities to continue the Folkestone sessions through to summer 2027.

Community Partnerships

Working with local organisations, including the Nepalese Community Centre, which has offered to support continued delivery through donated venue hire.

**Twelve weeks can start the journey.
Sustained opportunities help to make movement a lasting habit.**



Creating opportunities to move, connect and thrive.



Thank You

Q & A



Contact details & further information



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Live Longer Better Network:

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Thank you