



# Active Together

## Impact Report 2023-24

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# Introduction

**The Active Together work programme aims to reduce the burden on the local care system, by improving opportunities for older adults to be physically active in Hertfordshire – thereby prolonging their independence. There is a particular focus on those with mild frailty and with long term health conditions.**

## Project background

Active Together is a partnership with Hertfordshire County Council's Adult Care Services team and delivers against five work areas; Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire, bid writing service, upskill the sector on long-term health conditions, strength and balance county-wide programme and the Moving More activity finder.

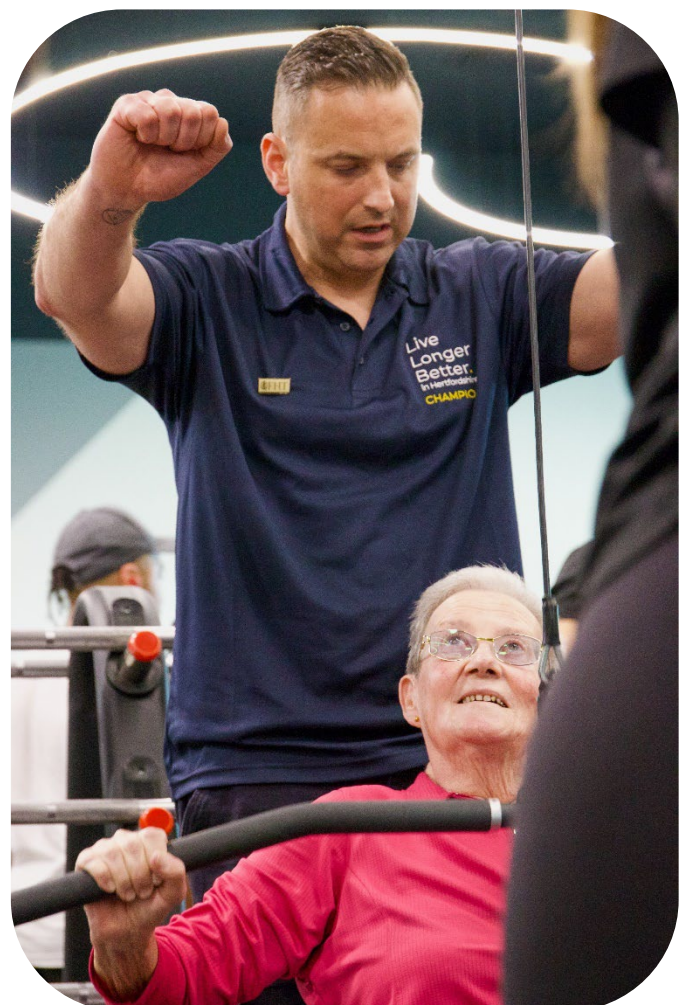


## Implementation

**Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire:** The delivery of webinars and face to face events are a key way to grow the network of Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire. Across the year there have been 17 *Masterclass* learning opportunities. These were on topics such as 'Falling for Judo – reduce risk of injury from falling' and 'Introduction to strength and balance principles' CPD for exercise instructors. We also regularly attend and present at community events (e.g. such as Older People's Activity Learning and Safety (OPALS) Events events), which reach older residents and present at webinars, feature in partners newsletters and events to reach professionals. Sending out regular newsletters to our network helps shine a light on the range of opportunities taking place across Hertfordshire. Important members of this network are the *Champions* who help to spread the message across Hertfordshire and often provide support and sessions to residents.

**Bid writing service:** In partnership with Funding 4 Sport, we provide Hertfordshire organisations the opportunity to have a bid written, free of charge to them, for up to £20,000 to deliver Live Longer Better activities.

**Upskill the sector:** Ensuring the physical activity sector is confident and competent in supporting people with long-term health conditions is vitally important if we are to make a positive impact on those individuals. We utilise the [resources](#) (such as exercise booklets) and successes of [We are Undefeatable](#), led by AgeUK and the Richmond Group of Charities.





**Strength and balance programme:** This programme is delivered by Stevenage Football Club Foundation and in Watford FC Community Trust, through Everyone Active. Classes support individuals' independence and reduce the risk of falling. Strong links with partner organisations throughout this year (e.g. via the HCC Enablement team), have seen high numbers of signposting to classes which are free of charge for residents. This has resulted in high demand and therefore, since 2022, we have established 7 new classes.

**Moving More:** Moving More is a Partnership initiative which seeks to encourage greater awareness of and participation in existing physical activity opportunities in Hertfordshire. The activity finder is an online search tool enabling members of the public or professionals working with them, to search for local physical activity opportunities



HSP health team attending the Lee Valley White Water Centre OPALS event, to support the World Canoe Slalom Championships.

## Partnerships

1,254

Live Longer Better in  
Hertfordshire network  
members

680

Unique strength  
and balance  
participants

### JOINT WORKING

Hertfordshire County Council

Stevenage Football Club

Foundation

Funding 4 Sport

Professor Sir Muir Gray

HertsOne GP Federation

Everyone Active

Local authorities

OPALS network

Older peoples co-production  
board

We are Undefeatable

## Outcomes and Benefits

**Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire:** There are now 1254 individuals signed up to the newsletter, which is a 128% increase in membership since April 2023. We have sent 18 newsletters covering topics such as challenging ageism and awareness of local opportunities to get active.

The Celebration Day delivered in September 2023 was a huge success and saw 316 unique attendees who discovered the importance of, and opportunities to be active in later years.

We had a 'Champions Networking Lunch' in December 2023 which saw 24 (out of 124 total) Champions share their plans for 2024 – many of which have already seen success and progress.

**Bid writing service:** In partnership with Funding 4 Sport, £232,422.00 of funding has been brought directly into Hertfordshire to support 17

organisations to deliver projects that encourage adults aged 55+ to be more active. Sample projects include:

- A 24-week programme of women-only Gym, Fitness and Sports sessions designed to benefit women 55+ from ethnically diverse communities by providing a culturally appropriate, comfortable, and bespoke fitness experience.
- Direct face-to-face sessions supporting unpaid carers of older people to offer advice, information, and support in looking after them, many of whom are living with dementia, cancer, Parkinsons and other long-term health conditions.
- A community badminton project that will provide social badminton activities for people over 55 years old who are inactive to increase their physical activity levels. Delivered in various community venues across Hertfordshire's 10 Active Local Areas.

"Our first ever Over 50s CAN DO CIRCUS was brilliant last Sunday! I hope you enjoy the [video](#). We have 56 people in all wanting to do it (we can only have 12-14 people) so there is obviously a demand for it!!"

Emma Taylor, Generation Circus CiC.

**Upskill the sector:** In partnership with MolyFit Ltd, 47 Everyone Active staff have been upskilled in supporting people living with Parkinson's Disease. This had great feedback including a feature on [BBC Look East!](#) There is a range of CPD opportunities available to the sector which we co-ordinate as part of LLBiH. This includes Dementia Friends which offers a chance to develop a greater understanding of what it means to live with dementia, and how exercise professionals may be able to start adapting their sport or physical activity session to better support someone living with dementia. In addition we provide Health Walks volunteers with training on sensory inclusion, this was in partnership with Watford FC Community Sports & Education Trust and the Herts Disability Sports Foundation.

**Strength and balance programme:** Across the 2023-24 contract year class attendances were 8,675, an 82% increase on the previous year. This is partly due to establishing new classes, however, it is also reflective of the busyness of the classes which have an average attendance rate of 98% for face-to-face classes. In total, 26% of participants are unpaid carers, 26% of participants live in the four lowest quintiles of deprivation, 57% of participants declare they are living with a least one long-term health condition and 43% declare they have a physical disability.

When surveyed in December, 93% of participants agreed the classes improved their physical wellbeing and 87% agreed the classes improved their mental wellbeing. Examples given of improvements include:

- ✓ "I am now able to get out of the bath whereas previously I could not."
- ✓ "Back to salsa dancing outside the classes"
- ✓ "Gradually building up activity since knee replacements."

**"Before doing the strength and balance class I couldn't lift my hand or feet due to my stroke and now I can. And now I can cook my own food and do the washing. I have been housebound for about 8 months and now I am starting to go out again. I used to have a package of care twice a day and now I just have them in the morning. I used to take 4 Tremadols a day (makes me sleepy) and now I don't need to take any." – Stella, Watford resident**

**Moving More:** Following the redevelopment of the Moving More website, with a successful re-launch in February 2024 we have seen improved engagement. When comparing the number of website visits during 2022-23 to 2023-24, there has been an increase of 80%. The number of sessions appearing on the Activity Finder has increased by 25%, when comparing the same time periods. See separate report for more details.

## Key Learnings

Hosting strength and balance classes within Active Local areas **does not necessarily mean they will serve the local community** as a lack of alternative provision, or a desire for as many classes as possible, means that **participants will still travel** into these communities to attend classes. Going forward we will encourage participants to attend only one class per week, in order to give opportunity for more people to benefit from the classes with a focus on encouraging Active Local residents.

With strength and balance classes having **significant demand**, it is putting **stress on delivery**. In order to facilitate as many individuals as possible, we allow classes to exceed capacity with the additional support of a first aid trained individuals. Where this is not possible, we have to turn away participants once the class has reached capacity.

Partners within the health and care systems are very interested in the project areas of Active Together.



## Next Steps

1

### **Reach new audiences**

Deliver a Parish, Town and Community Council conference as these organisations will be key in reaching rural communities

2

### **Live Longer Better bids impact**

Follow up with the organisations who have benefitted from a bid, to gather and share impact of their programmes

3

### **Increase funding for bids**

23-24 we allocated enough funding to cover 10 bids, however we exceeded this with 17 successful bids. For 24-25 we will allocate funding for 20 successful bids.

## Conclusion

We have seen lots of growth across this programme in 2023-24 in terms of throughput and partnerships.

Partnerships are key to success and changing culture across the health, care, and physical activity sectors.

By advocating for physical activity and connecting individuals, organisations and programmes, Active Together is in a strong position to continue in 2024-2025.

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for an absolutely fabulous day yesterday... We had the opportunity to try several different sports and also to learn about organisations that might be of help to us in the future... and the young people who helped us - what can I say - the future is in good hands! I learned that I can still hula hoop and have ordered myself one!"  
- Celebration Day attendee



Members of the Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire movement attending the National Live Longer Better conference March 21st 2024. Attendees include Stevenage Football Club Foundation, Apex 360, Stevenage Borough Council, Dacorum Borough Council, MolyFit, Judo Space and Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership.

Live  
Longer  
Better.

in Hertfordshire

Herts  
**Sport &  
Physical  
Activity**  
Partnership

