Live Longer Better in North Herts Celebration Day

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Introduction

Active In The Community (AITC) is a not for profit organisation which aims to enable communities to be more active through the use of physical activity and sport.

Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP) and Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire partnered with AITC, North Herts District Council and Everyone Active to combine resources and expertise to host an event spanning across North Herts Leisure Centre and Letchworth Rugby Club offering a 'come and try' event.

Project background

Active in The Community (AITC) have been running low cost Older Adult Exercise sessions in the North Herts area, specifically focusing on the Jackmans Estate as an area of need within HSP's Active Local initiative. AITC has established through conversations that older adults lack awareness of the available classes in the North Herts area. Furthermore through the connections we have made within the Jackmans area through our Active Local engagements, we had established there was a large amount of support and activity available to older adults however organisations were struggling to reach the residents of the area. After the success of the Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire Celebration day, hosted at the University of Hertfordshire, in which over 400 older adults took part in a range of physical activities, AITC partnered with Live Longer Better, North Herts District Council and Everyone Active to produce a similar event for residents of North Hertfordshire. The aim of this event was to display the range of physical activities available in the area through the use of physical activity taster sessions and a marketplace made up of local community organisations and groups.

Implementation

On Tuesday 12th November, we successfully hosted an event at North Herts Leisure Centre, bringing together a collective of 16 organisations dedicated to promoting physical activity among older adults. A total of 97 older

adults signed up to participate in four separate physical activity sessions on the day, which were strategically spaced throughout the morning. Each session featured six engaging taster activities for the older adults to choose from, allowing attendees to explore various forms of exercise and physical activity.

In addition to the activity sessions, a marketplace was set up, featuring stalls representing thirteen local organisations. This marketplace provided a space for community organisations to showcase their offerings, enhancing awareness of available activities to the older adults in attendance in North Hertfordshire.

To conclude the day, we distributed goody bags containing valuable information from the participating organisations and some sweet treats, as well as resistance bands and other items designed to encourage continued physical activity at home. The event was recorded throughout the day on film, promoting local organisations and serving as a reminder to local residents of the available physical activity sessions they can take part in weekly after the event.

Partnerships


Outcomes and Benefits

Residents left the event feeling more informed about the variety of local activities available in their area, having participated in nearly two hours of physical activity during the day. Feedback collected from participants indicated a strong likelihood of continuing engagement, with attendees rating their willingness to try one of the activities again at **4.53 out of 5**.

Additionally, the event had a notable impact on participants' perceptions of ageing. **77.14%** of attendees reported that their views on ageing had changed after attending. Before the event, **54.3%** of participants believed that losses in strength, mobility, balance, memory, and the ability to learn new skills were inevitable aspects of ageing. Following the event, many expressed a renewed sense of control over these aspects of their health and wellbeing.

Participants also provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about their experience. They described the event as a "great way to experience new activities and meet new people," commended its organisation and the helpfulness of staff, and found the marketplace particularly useful. Many appreciated the opportunity to explore new activities in their area, calling the event "fantastic to have in North Hertfordshire" and "very interesting for trying out new activities."

Key Learnings

Allow longer for promotion - we would have liked to have sold out all 150 available spots.

It was suggested to extend the day to increase capacity and reach those that might have to work in the day time.

Next Steps

1

Gather Feedback - Follow up with event participants to collect additional feedback and offer further information about the local activity providers who provided activities at the event if needed.

2

Exercise Referral - Utilising local connections, AITC will refer any older adults to classes / activities that they have asked to take part in more regularly, or suggest suitable local alternatives.

3

Activity Provision - Where gaps exist in provision AITC will continue to build on the foundations formed through the Active Local initiative, focussing on providing physical activity provision to the Jackmans Estate and surrounding areas utilising local connections and the feedback from residents that attended the event.

Conclusion

- 97 sign ups
- 13 stall holders
- 13 different activities
- 4.88/5 activity satisfaction rating

The event was successful in bringing older adults from across North Hertfordshire together to try new activities. The response and feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive and those unable to make it asked for similar events in the future. There is a clear demand for this type of event to be organised again, and to be organised with a longer amount of time spent on advertising and the duration of the day increased from a morning event to a day long event.

Additional Resident Quotes

"A great way to experience new activities, meet new people. Well laid out, helpful staff and the marketplace was useful"

"Fantastic to have it here in North Herts. I will continue to spread the word about all the activities on offer :) Thanks."

"Very interesting to try out new activities - well organised - well done"

"Excellent event. Very well organised and fun. Keep it up"

"Such a positive community event. It was so much more than I expected."