

Greater Manchester Pivot to Active Wellbeing

Addressing health inequalities through the transformation of public sector leisure services

BOLTON	MANCHESTER	ROCHDALE	STOCKPORT	TRAFFORD
BURY	OLDHAM	SALFORD	TAMESIDE	WIGAN

ACTIVE WELLBEING CASE STUDY: ROCHDALE **Moving On After Stroke**

1 The venue or service

- Moving On After Stroke
- Rochdale Leisure Centre

2 The aim of the project

Your Trust, the leisure operator in Rochdale, recognised that it could play an important role in the recovery of stroke survivors. From 2017 to 2020, it funded a programme called ‘Moving On After Stroke’. It aimed to provide stroke survivors with information relating to anything that may have affected them after stroke. This included nutrition, wellbeing, emotional state, mental health, finance and job related information. It also included weekly exercise sessions led by an Exercise After Stroke qualified instructor to work on improving physical ability. It was available at Rochdale Leisure Centre and online, via live stream.

3 The work undertaken

The work of the programme is best explained through the story of a stroke survivor, Alan Phipps. Alan joined the Moving On After Stroke sessions at Rochdale Leisure Centre to help with his recovery from a stroke in April 2019. Despite all leisure centres closing during the Covid-19 pandemic, this did not stop Alan. He continued to attend the weekly sessions that had been moved online. He also joined another online group. Throughout lockdown, he started walking outdoors and got back to his 10,000 steps a day on a regular basis.

As leisure centres started to re-open, Alan embraced more of what was available from Your Trust. He started swimming, attended a nutrition and wellbeing course and started back at face-to-face gentle exercise sessions. He completed the 10 week functional fitness course and attended the pilot learning course with Hopwood Hall. This enabled him to learn more about health and wellbeing and how to help others who are living with long term conditions.

Elaine Stott, Your Trust Active Community Development Coordinator, said:

“Alan is an inspiration to anyone who thinks they are being held back by a long-term condition. He always takes the time to talk to people and reassure them that he knows how they are feeling. He tells them that they can do it because he felt the same once and he has done it. He embraces everything with a great level of enthusiasm. The combination of all activities that Alan got involved with provided help in all aspects of his recovery and rehabilitation. Moving on After Stroke was a first step and provided a strong base of support and knowledge from which to move forwards and attend other sessions.”

Alan now volunteers on the falls prevention programme that Your Trust runs and helps others to get their confidence back.

4 The impact

While the programme was running, the courses were well attended, and the attendees benefitted greatly from both the education and the physical activity.

According to the Stroke Association, the Moving Forward After Stroke programme can achieve significant impacts for stroke survivors including:

- Increased motivation and confidence to begin or continue exercising
- Increased access to opportunities to exercise within the community
- Increased access to support networks and reduced social isolation
- Increased physical activity
- Increased knowledge of stroke risk factors and how to reduce the risk of further stroke
- Increased motivation to adopt healthier lifestyle choices
- Increased knowledge of medication compliance

Longer term outcomes can include improved quality of life, improved medical compliance and reduced hospital admissions.

5 The learning

The future of Moving On after Stroke was in doubt when the Stroke Association's funding came to an end in 2020. However, Your Trust has kept the weekly sessions going online and encouraged service users to access mainstream provision at its leisure centres. Six of the attendees from the 2020 course still attend online sessions each week and several others now attend sessions at their local leisure centre.

A key learning point is that neurological specialist instructors are needed, qualified in Exercise After Stroke to run these sessions. An understanding of stroke symptoms and side effects is critical.