



Annual Impact Report

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023



A word from our chief executive

I begin this year's introduction to our Annual Impact Report with the very sad news that in July and in December, we lost two of our longest-serving trustees, Brian Coates and Angela Currie.

Brian, who served as our chair for the past 4 years, was an enormous asset to the organisation, working hard to help us improve quality of life for older people living in Gateshead. Angela was involved in almost everything the Assembly did. When she wasn't busy being a trustee, she ran a social group, volunteered in our community café, the credit union, the QE hospital, and anything else she could help out with. Brian and Angela will be sadly missed by everyone involved with Gateshead Older People's Assembly.

One of the many things close to both of their hearts was the alleviation of financial hardship. We're currently experiencing a devastating cost of living crisis, with the prices of fuel, energy, and food increasing far more rapidly than older people's incomes. This situation is felt far more acutely because of the after-effects of the COVID pandemic, Brexit, and in a region that has suffered massively disproportionate cuts to local services from central government.

Basic human needs like being able to socialise and exercise are increasingly becoming commodified, and the people who have the least are being squeezed out because of their financial circumstances. This is why I am delighted that Gateshead Older People's Assembly offers such a wide range of free and low-cost activities for people living in one of the most deprived regions in our country. In this past year, we have expanded the number of free and low-cost activities available to the people of Gateshead, we have increased the geographical spread of our opportunities for people to socialise, exercise, and learn, and we have helped improve the lives of thousands of older people across our wonderful borough.

And our plans for next year? Many more opportunities to socialise, exercise, and learn, resulting in healthier and happier older people.

Craig Bankhead
Chief Executive

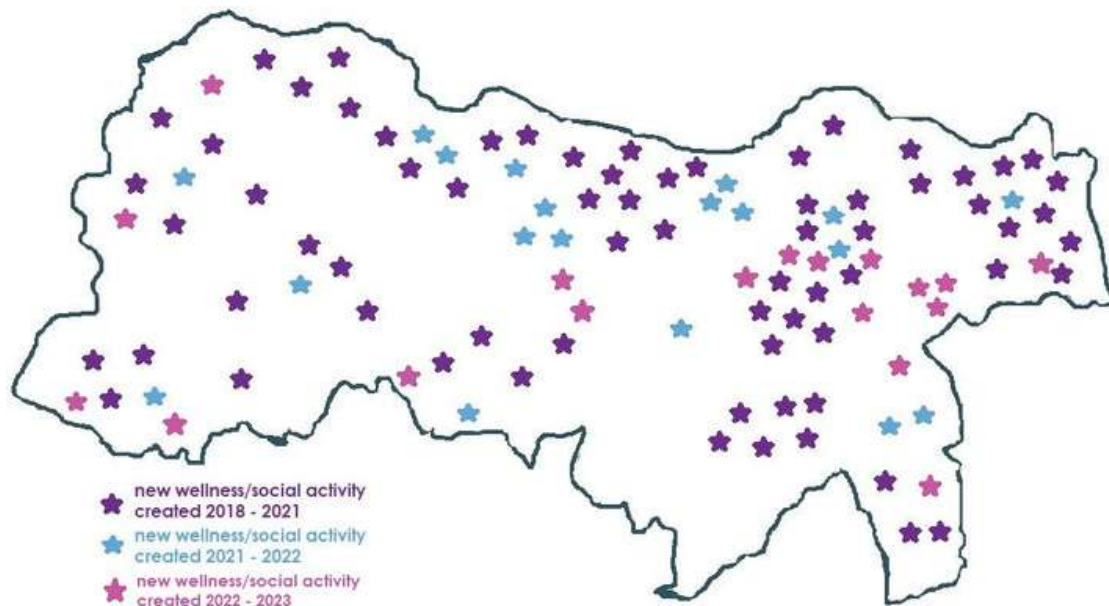


What we do

We want Gateshead to be a great place to grow older and we believe everyone should have access to fun and affordable ways socialise, exercise, and learn. As a charity, we focus on early intervention with a view to helping over 50s maintain their health, mobility, and independence. We avoid reinforcing the negative stereotypes associated with ageing and focus on providing a programme of activities through which beneficiaries can progress as they build their strength and confidence.

Wellness activities

This year, we've continued to set up new wellness activities for over 50s in Gateshead's community venues. All of the new classes we support are delivered free of charge for at least the first 6 weeks to allow over 50s to try something new without making a financial commitment.



This year, we set up 18 new classes in 13 of Gateshead's 22 wards.

- Cricket
- Tai Chi x 3
- Gentle Circuits x 2
- Keep Fit, Strong, and Steady
- Stretch and Core
- Line Dancing x 2
- Seated Yoga
- Yoga
- Dancercise
- Meditation and Relaxation
- Mobility Fit
- 50+ Boxing x 2
- Zumba Gold



In addition to setting up new classes across Gateshead, we maintain a thriving wellness hub for older people in Deckham. Here, we offer over 100 opportunities for over 50s to socialise, exercise, and learn each month.

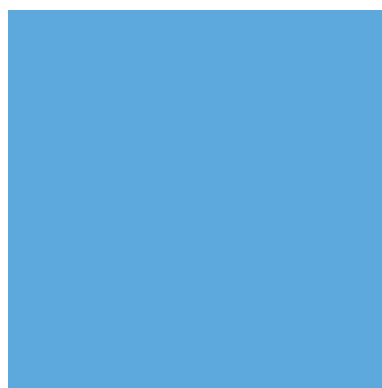
March Activities in Deckham

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 10:00 - 12:00 Social Group (£1) 11:30 - 12:15 Strength & Balance (£4) 12:30 - 13:15 Dancercise (£4) 13:30 - 14:15 Pilates (£4)	2 10:30 - 12:30 Art Group (£1) 10:30 - 12:30 Craft Group (£2) 13:30 - 14:30 Gentle Yoga	3 10:00 - 10:45 Beginner Line Dancing (£4) 10:00 - 12:00 Walking Football 11:00 - 11:45 Line Dancing (£4) 11:30 start Health Walk 12:00 - 13:15 Cricket
6 10 - 10:45 Dancercise (£4) 11 - 11:45 Dancercise (£4) 12 - 12:45 Strength & Balance (£4) 17:30 - 19:30 Never Too Old to Rock	7 10:30 - 11:30 Tai Chi (£4) 11:45 - 12:45 Tai Chi (£4) 13:00 - 14:30 Gateshead 50+ Singers 14:45 - 15:45 Ukulele Group (£4)	8 10:00 - 12:00 Social Group (£1) 11:30 - 12:15 Strength & Balance (£4) 12:30 - 13:15 Dancercise (£4) 13:30 - 14:15 Pilates (£4)	9 10:30 - 12:30 Art Group (£1) 10:30 - 12:30 Craft Group (£2) 13:30 - 14:30 Gentle Yoga	10 9:30 - 10:15 ZOOM Active at Home 10:00 - 10:45 Beginner Line Dancing (£4) 10:00 - 12:00 Walking Football 11:00 - 11:45 Line Dancing (£4) 11:30 start Health Walk 12:00 - 13:15 Cricket
13 10 - 10:45 Dancercise (£4) 11 - 11:45 Dancercise (£4) 12 - 12:45 Strength & Balance (£4) 17:30 - 19:30 Never Too Old to Rock	14 10:30 - 11:30 Tai Chi (£4) 11:45 - 12:45 Tai Chi (£4) 13:00 - 14:30 Gateshead 50+ Singers 14:45 - 15:45 Ukulele Group (£4) 16:30 - 18:30 Art with Alan	15 10:00 - 12:00 Social Group (£1) 11:30 - 12:15 Strength & Balance (£4) 12:30 - 13:15 Dancercise (£4) 13:30 - 14:15 Pilates (£4) 14:45 - 16:15 Lunch & Learn (ring to book)	16 10:30 - 12:30 Art Group (£1) 10:30 - 12:30 Craft Group (£2) 13:30 - 14:30 Gentle Yoga	17 9:30 - 10:15 ZOOM Active at Home 10:00 - 10:45 Beginner Line Dancing (£4) 10:00 - 12:00 Walking Football 11:00 - 11:45 Line Dancing (£4) 11:30 start Health Walk 12:00 - 13:15 Cricket
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For those who are unable to attend our face-to-face classes, we offer a free weekly wellness class via Zoom. Our Active at Home participants receive an exercise band and expert instruction from our health and wellbeing manager.

We are also pleased to support the delivery of a weekly walking programme. Every Friday morning, around 30 over 50s meet to enjoy a 3-4 mile walk. The location varies each week, but always includes a stop at a cafe to enjoy refreshments and some social time.

This year, we were delighted to expand our Staying Steady falls prevention programme. We now deliver twelve cohorts in six locations across Gateshead and have continued to see incredible progress in participants' mobility, flexibility, and balance.



Opportunities to socialise and learn

Our mental wellbeing is as important as our physical wellbeing, so we work to ensure over 50s in Gateshead have ample opportunities to stay socially connected and engage in life-long learning.

This year, we hosted a fantastic series of Lunch & Learn events at which attendees enjoyed hearing from an expert guest speaker whilst enjoying a lovely lunch. Topics this year included:

- Energy advice and support
- Walk leader training
- First Aid essentials
- Tackling loneliness
- Making your money work for you
- Frugal foodie fun

Our Never Too Old to Rock project has grown and our tutors are now teaching dozens of over 50s how to play guitar, bass, and drums each week. The group learns a new song every month and divides into bands to showcase their talent at our regular performance nights. A few participants have become so confident on their instruments that they've started to attend buskers' nights. In the longer term, we'd love to see some of our bands performing at local venues!

We also started organising cinema visits this year. So many people dislike going to the cinema alone, so we were very pleased to be in a position to offer tickets to a variety of films people could attend together. The cinema trips have proven so popular that we will be seeking funding to support more trips in the future.

This summer, we celebrated the return of our annual beach day. We took advantage of the good weather and enjoyed walking football, cricket, and surfing lessons at Sandhaven Beach in South Shields.



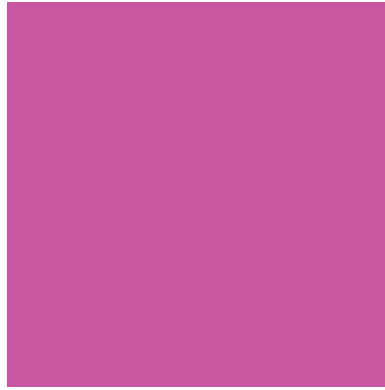
The Gateshead 50+ singing group has grown to nearly 40 members and continues to enjoy singing a selection of pop hits. Those who take part in our singing group tell us time and again how singing boosts their mood and, in some cases, has improved their cardiovascular health. This year, we recorded a series of performance videos which are available on our YouTube channel.



Our art, craft, and social groups have enjoyed another year of success. The groups continue to welcome new members and have expanded the range of activities they enjoy together. Our art group is now working with a tutor to explore different media and techniques. New guest speakers and day trips have been added to our social group's calendar and the craft group is now regularly producing loads of lovely knitted and crocheted items for beneficiaries of the Love, Amelia charity.

We ensure that those who come along to our wellness classes have a chance to socialise, too. After each class, everyone is invited to stay to enjoy free refreshments and some social time. Those who stay after tell us this time is invaluable for forming new friendships and learning more about the other activities on offer at our wellness hub.





Why our work is essential

To understand why it is so vital that older people in Gateshead have opportunities to improve their health and maintain their independence, we must consider the current context of growing older in our borough. Deprivation, falls, and loneliness all have a tremendous impact on the lives of older people in Gateshead.

Deprivation

- Gateshead is ranked as the 47th most deprived of England's 317 local authorities.
- Gateshead's rate of older people experiencing income deprivation is 36.4% higher than the national average.
- Our wellness hub is based in Deckham, which along with neighbouring wards High Fell and Felling are the three most deprived wards in Gateshead and among the 10% most deprived areas in England.
- Gateshead residents live two years less than the English average. Deprivation exacerbates this discrepancy. On average, someone born in one of Gateshead's most deprived areas can expect to live over a decade less than if they had been born in one of England's most affluent areas (15.1 years less for men and 13.9 years less for women).

In real terms, experiencing deprivation at such rates means that 'luxuries' like fitness classes, cultural events, and short courses are out of reach for many older people in our borough. To combat this, we offer free or low-cost options for older people to exercise, socialise, and learn.



Falls

- The rate of emergency admissions for injuries due to falls in people aged 65+ is 15% higher in Gateshead than the English average.
- It is predicted that by 2040 there will be a 25% increase in the number of people aged 65+ experiencing falls and a 34% increase in the number of older people admitted to hospital as a result of a fall.
- In some Gateshead wards, the rate of emergency hospital admissions due to hip fracture are dramatically higher than the English average -- 64% higher in the Bridges ward, 59% higher in High Fell, and 47% higher in Lobley Hill and Bensham.
- After a hip fracture, more than 30% of older people die within a year, 20% enter a care home, and only 46% return to their usual residence or previous level of independence.

It is therefore essential that evidence-based falls-prevention activities are embedded in the work of organisations working with older people. We are commissioned by Gateshead Council and North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board to deliver our postural-stability-instructor-led Staying Steady programme and also support the delivery of evidence-based Tai Chi practice across the borough.



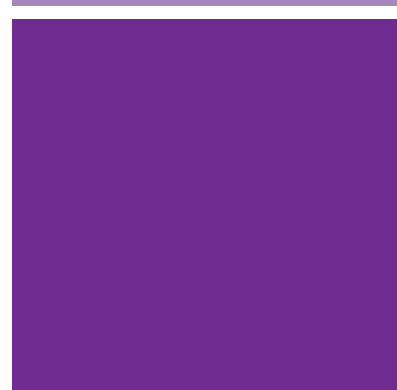
Loneliness

- According to a 2020 Brunel University London report, those aged 50+ living in the poorest areas of the country are more likely to suffer from loneliness.
- In Gateshead, 33.9% of people aged 65+ live alone.
- Loneliness can lead to feeling vulnerable, which can lead to depression and a serious decline in physical health and wellbeing.
- According to the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, people aged 50+ are 3.7 times more likely to be often lonely if they are in poor health and 2.3 times more likely to be often lonely if they have money issues that prevent them from doing the things they want to do.

Our programme of setting up a sustainable network of classes and activities for over 50s all across Gateshead gives them the opportunity to establish friendships with others who live near them, ensuring real social connections which exist beyond the boundaries of the group. Setting up activities in community venues also encourages over 50s to attend independently, eliminating the need for long (and increasingly expensive) journeys.

The big picture

By design, our programme of activities seeks to address problems caused by deprivation, reduce falls, and help our beneficiaries feel part of their local community. By taking full advantage of what we offer, over 50s could improve their physical health, increase their confidence, reduce levels of depression and anxiety, and ultimately increase their lifespan.

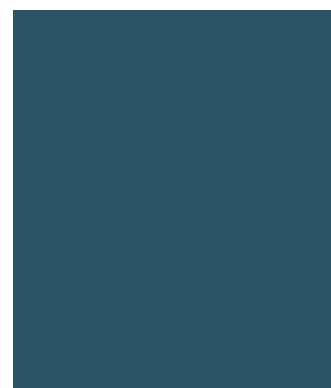


Measuring our impact

The numbers

In order to ensure we're meeting our goal of ensuring over 50s in Gateshead have access to local health and wellness activities, we monitor the numbers of sessions delivered each year as well as the total number of attendances. Here's how we've done this year:

Activities at our Deckham wellness hub this year	943 sessions delivered	13,783 attendances
New activities set up this year	268 sessions delivered	2,782 attendances
Activities set up 2018 - 2021 which are still running	2,450 sessions delivered	29,400 attendances
TOTAL for 2022/23	3,661 sessions delivered this year	45,965 attendances this year



Beneficiary feedback

Every year, we survey our beneficiaries to make sure the opportunities we offer are meeting their needs. Here are the highlights from this year's beneficiary survey:

81% feel happier as a result of taking part in our activities

60% visit their GP less frequently since joining us

86% now socialise with someone they met at one of our activities

100% say we create a warm and welcoming environment for newcomers

60% feel more relaxed

43% say they feel more connected to their community

76% say their physical health has improved

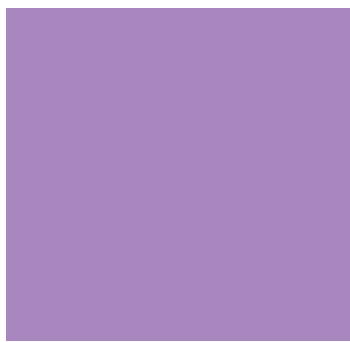
54% feel more confident

63% say their mental health has improved

59% say they have more energy

48% have learned new information or developed new skills since joining us

100% would recommend our activities to their friends and family



Having become a widow in my early 50s, this group has really helped my mental health by meeting people and enjoying many varied activities.



I suffer from anxiety and depression and this group has helped enormously. I have made new friends and meet up for coffee!



I really enjoy all your activities and have made some friends for life. The instructors are fabulous and I would recommend you to anyone.



This service is second to none and offers help and friendship to all. I have more confidence since coming here.



I have found that I have more energy and I love meeting new people. Coming here gives me something to look forward to.



I am so pleased I plucked up the courage to enter this fantastic place. It's made my retirement so much easier!



You offer something for everyone and there always seems to be a warm welcome for anyone wanting to try something new.



Staying Steady feedback

Our Staying Steady falls-prevention programme is designed to help over 50s improve their balance, strength, and mobility and regain their independence. We have delivered this programme since 2016 and, to date, over 80% of those who complete the course move on to participate in other community-based exercise classes or resume long-abandoned hobbies like bowls, swimming, and rambling. Most importantly, course participants report that they are able to complete personal care and household tasks with more ease, helping them to maintain their independence and self-efficacy.



I feel more confident walking around and no longer need a stick for balance. I can get off the floor much easier and I can now get in and out of the bath, which I could not do before. I have started to do dancercise and Tai Chi and I am walking my dog twice a day now.

I am able to do activities for longer and can more easily clean my house. Last week I went up a ladder to change a bulb! I have also booked a holiday to Portugal -- this is something that I would not have had the confidence to do before!



I can now reverse my car and check my blind spots with ease because I can move a lot better. I have also noticed a big improvement in my walking. I have just started an exercise class in Whickham, so will keep going with my exercise.

My balance has improved and I can stand on one leg to put on my trousers. I used to have to sit down or lean against a wall before. I have now started Tai Chi and have also gone back to swimming once a week!



I can bend a lot better which helps enormously to wash the bottom half of my body, pick up things, etc.. I also get up and down on the floor easily. I am going to continue with the balance exercises at home and I am a member of two walking groups.

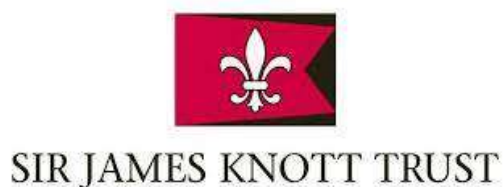
Community connections

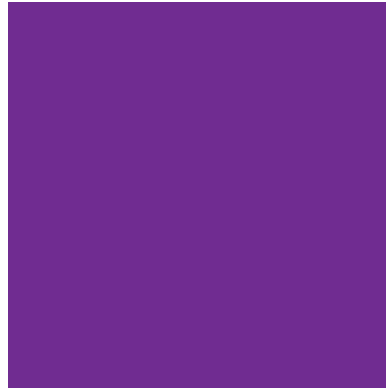
This year, we've greatly expanded and strengthened our relationships with local community organisations, instructors, businesses, and community venues.



Thank you to our investors

We are delighted to have the support of many of the UK's most forward-thinking investors. Without their support, our work would be impossible. Thanks to these investors, we are in a position to be able to respond to our beneficiaries' needs quickly, making an immediate and measurable difference to their quality of life.





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