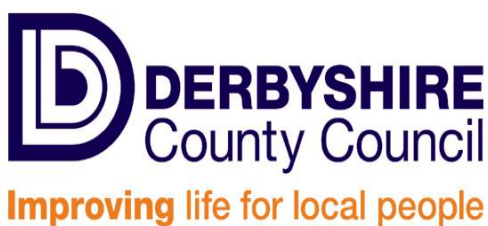




# Strictly No Falling Project Report 2021-2022



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Overview of impact

<b>THREE</b> fully trained in-house assessors	<b>ONE</b> fully trained in-house IQA	<b>THREE</b> fully trained in-house tutors
<b>45</b> monitoring sessions conducted	<b>49</b> delegates trained in Otago Exercise Programme delivery across 5 courses	<b>19 CBE</b> delegates trained across 3 courses
<b>6 new</b> instructors recruited	<b>1148</b> registered attendees (+ an estimated 680 unregistered attendees)	<b>195</b> inward referrals
Shortlisted for <b>1</b> national award	<b>100%</b> of classes now listed on CharityLog	An estimated <b>63%</b> of attendees now listed on CharityLog

## Executive summary

As the project emerged from the height of the pandemic in early 2021, several key themes and challenges were identified. These are indicated in **red**. A summary of the project response to each key theme is indicated in **green**.

**Loss of confidence amongst instructors** relating to the practicalities of delivering exercise sessions and the likely viability of sessions as they recommenced.

- **Increased support from advisors**, with coaching, mentoring and refresher training offered to instructors to in the run up to classes reopening.
- **Targeted ongoing funding support** as classes worked to return to independent viability.

**Fear of engaging in group activity amongst the core target demographic** which persisted even after all mandatory restrictions had been lifted.

- **Continued offer of virtual classes** to support engagement for those unwilling or unable to attend face to face classes.

**A heightened need for effective falls prevention activity** amongst those with health conditions and levels of frailty exacerbated by inactivity and lack of access to services during the pandemic.

- **Instructors encouraged to reassess all attendees** upon return to classes, in order to facilitate the delivery of appropriately challenging and safe activity.
- **Proactive outreach by advisors to potential referrers** in order to rebuild networks and ensure that the offer is well understood across local agencies.

**A desire to return to face to face socialisation** in a safe and carefully managed way.

- **Continued adherence to and surpassing of covid safety guidelines**, with mask wearing, social distancing, and ventilation arrangements assessed and agreed between instructors and class members.

## Project history

[Where unchanged, duplicated from the 2020-21 report]

The median age of the population in Derby and Derbyshire is expected to increase by 3 years between 2018 and 2043, with the number of people aged 90 or over expected to double during the same period. i Older people are at an increased risk of having a fall, and falls are the most common cause of injury related deaths in people over the age of 75.ii As a result, falls prevention is high on the Health and Wellbeing Board agenda.

Age UK Derby & Derbyshire as an organisation has been involved in the development and implementation of falls prevention services for over 19 years, winning the contract for delivering Strictly No Falling in 2013 and twice more subsequently, delivering in partnership with Derbyshire Community Healthcare Services. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Strictly No Falling operated exercise-based falls prevention interventions across Derbyshire in the community and in care homes. A caseload of approximately 50 actively engaged care homes and 147 community classes provides widespread geographical cover and excellent parity of access to the service. Prior to the pandemic (April 2019-March 2020), classes saw an estimated 2000 attendees per week. (957 registered attendees, plus an estimated 1050 non-registered attendees, who may have approached instructors directly or accessed classes via word of mouth rather than through formal referral routes). Between April 2021 and March 2022, 1148 registered attendees were accessing classes across the county. Based on extrapolation from average attendances reported by instructors, and factoring in an increased effort to register as many attendees as possible on CharityLog, it is estimated that a further 680 non-registered attendees accessed Strictly No Falling classes between April 2021 and March 2022. Prior to the pandemic, approximately 47.5% of attendees were registered on Charitylog. The proportion of class members now registered on Charitylog is estimated to be around 63%. This represents an almost 33% increase in member registration during the intervening year, signalling improved instructor engagement with digital reporting methods.

The last evaluation conducted aimed to illustrate the resilience and impact of the service within the context of the covid-19 pandemic and in the early phases of emergence from it. This report will focus on the continued recovery of the project from the challenges of the pandemic, illustrating the activity of the project over the year March 2021 – April 2022, with reference to the 2019-2020 financial year (prior to the first lockdown) as a point of comparison, setting out proposals for how the project should support its current and potential service users to engage with exercise for falls prevention over the next year.

## Project activity

### Activity

#### SNF 2021-22 timeline



### Community activity

A gradual return to face to face class delivery in the community commenced in March 2021, with some classes meeting outdoors. Monitoring of classes did not recommence until July, to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus between otherwise unconnected groups. Between mid-July to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, 45 community classes were monitored and quality assured. During this period, coaching and support was offered to instructors via Zoom and, where appropriate, face to face, to address issues such as loss of confidence, venue changes, and concerns about session viability. Between April and August 2021, covid support funding was given to 31 groups which were unable to reopen immediately. The last covid support funding payment was made on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021 to the 7 remaining classes whose venues had not yet reopened. All classes are now open, excepting a small percentage which have closed due to changes in instructor circumstances. During this period, instructors were supported to supply evidence of class attendance levels and viability via ongoing tutorials on the use of CharityLog. Approximately 50% of instructors sought this support.

Many instructors and attendees cited the ongoing contact during the pandemic as a strong determinant of their return to classes. Many expressed that they would have felt anxious, ill-equipped or unwilling to attend classes had they not maintained a rapport with their class instructor. Instructors themselves cited economic considerations, such as household income, as driving factors, indicating that they would have been unable to hold the space in their diaries for classes without the support payments from Strictly No Falling. Some even described a sense of higher quality attendee/instructor relationships as a result of the non-exercise focused interactions carried out during lockdown.

As classes returned to face to face activity, it rapidly became apparent that reassessment of attendee ability would be required. Many long-term class members had seen significant changes to their health over the course of the pandemic, and a number of classes had a high number of new attendees. The opportunity was taken to revise the data collection processes, including the New Starter Pack completed by attendees. This was accompanied by amendments to the referral process, which were ongoing until the end of the 21-22 period. The result of these system alterations has been to reduce burden on instructors, whilst placing CharityLog at the centre of client journey, ensuring that data is consistently, securely, and appropriately managed.

At the end of 2021, a 'thank you' event was hosted for instructors. This was an opportunity to celebrate the Royal Society of Public Health Award nomination, and to assure instructors that support would continue into the following calendar year.

## **Care home activity**

Re-engagement with care settings carried additional challenges and considerations. Many settings retained some degree of restriction on visiting to the end of the 21-22 financial year, meaning that flexible and creative approaches had to be sought to reinstate support. Zoom, off-site and outdoor meetings were utilised as appropriate, with advisors fully vaccinated and testing before each visit. Making use of these accommodations, care settings gradually began to re-engage, with **18** care settings now re-listed under the Active Care Home Mark. A further **30+** are re-engaged and working towards the standards.

The Shooting Stars game, developed during the prior reporting period, was delivered to every care setting in the county. Care homes received this contact and support warmly, with approximately **10** new contacts being made from settings with no prior history with the project. As a result of feedback from the Shooting Stars game and project staff CPD, the E.M.M.A programme was developed.

### Every Movement Matters (Always) (E.M.M.A)

Developed in-house by the SNF team, the E.M.M.A programme is designed to bridge the gap between total inactivity and a high degree of frailty, and more formal exercise sessions such as chair based exercise or Otago. Many course attendees from care home settings express the concern that their residents

will find chair based exercise too challenging to engage with, and sometimes the preconception that their residents are 'too frail' to engage in movement of any kind.

The E.M.M.A programme focuses on simple, functional movements, which older adults, even those who are very frail, may already be engaging in as part of their day to day routine. By training care staff to break down, progress and correct the form of these simple movements, it is hypothesised that activity levels can be increased and frailty levels reduced. The programme is currently being piloted with a care home in the Derbyshire Dales, with 20 staff members taking part. A 12 week efficacy study is being conducted, after which it is intended that the training will be reviewed, amended and rolled out across the county.

In addition to the E.M.M.A programme, which has been met with a warm response and a high number of early expressions of interest, care home delegates have also continued to access the Chair Based Exercise and Otago training courses. The latter has been made more geographically accessible to care home delegates by in-house delivery, due to greater flexibility of the venues utilised.

Continued quality improvement and standardisation of our work with care homes is supported by regular care home advisor caseload meetings, in which common difficulties are shared, best practice identified, and action plans agreed for work with each care setting.

## **Outreach and collaboration**

Emergence from the covid-19 pandemic has meant that many projects have been keen to rebuild links and develop new ways of collaborating. An effort has been made to increase use of social media to promote the project and support instructors. A winter campaign, the 12 Moves of Christmas, utilised fun and festive movement prompts to engage our social media audience. These were shared with over 2000 people via our social media channels. Radio outreach provided another opportunity to reach a wide range of people. After a successful weekly slot on Radio Derby, Jo (project manager) was invited back as a special feature to talk about the project in more detail.

Talks for community groups were offered again as the year progressed, with uptake of this gradually building. The opportunity to educate and build understanding of falls risk and prevention strategies was taken up at face to face events as these recommenced.

Royal Society of Public Health recognition saw the core SNF team attend the award ceremony in London. The team were delighted to be recognised as runners up in the Health at Every Age category out of hundreds of nominees, and it offered the opportunity to learn more about innovative and exciting approaches to Public Health across the country.



Existing collaborations with projects such as Live Life Better Derbyshire were strengthened through the establishment of clear and consistent referral processes, resulting in an increase in referral rates. Other local relationships have been re-established, with updated guidance circulated to a range of agencies via a new 'Live Stronger for Longer' information booklet.

- 6000 copies have been supplied to Derbyshire Fire and Rescue for distribution as part of Safe and Well checks
- 250 copies supplied to Live Life Better Derbyshire for use in 1:1s and signposting
- 250 supplied to the Get Out Get Active project
- 250 supplied to Derbyshire Dales CVS

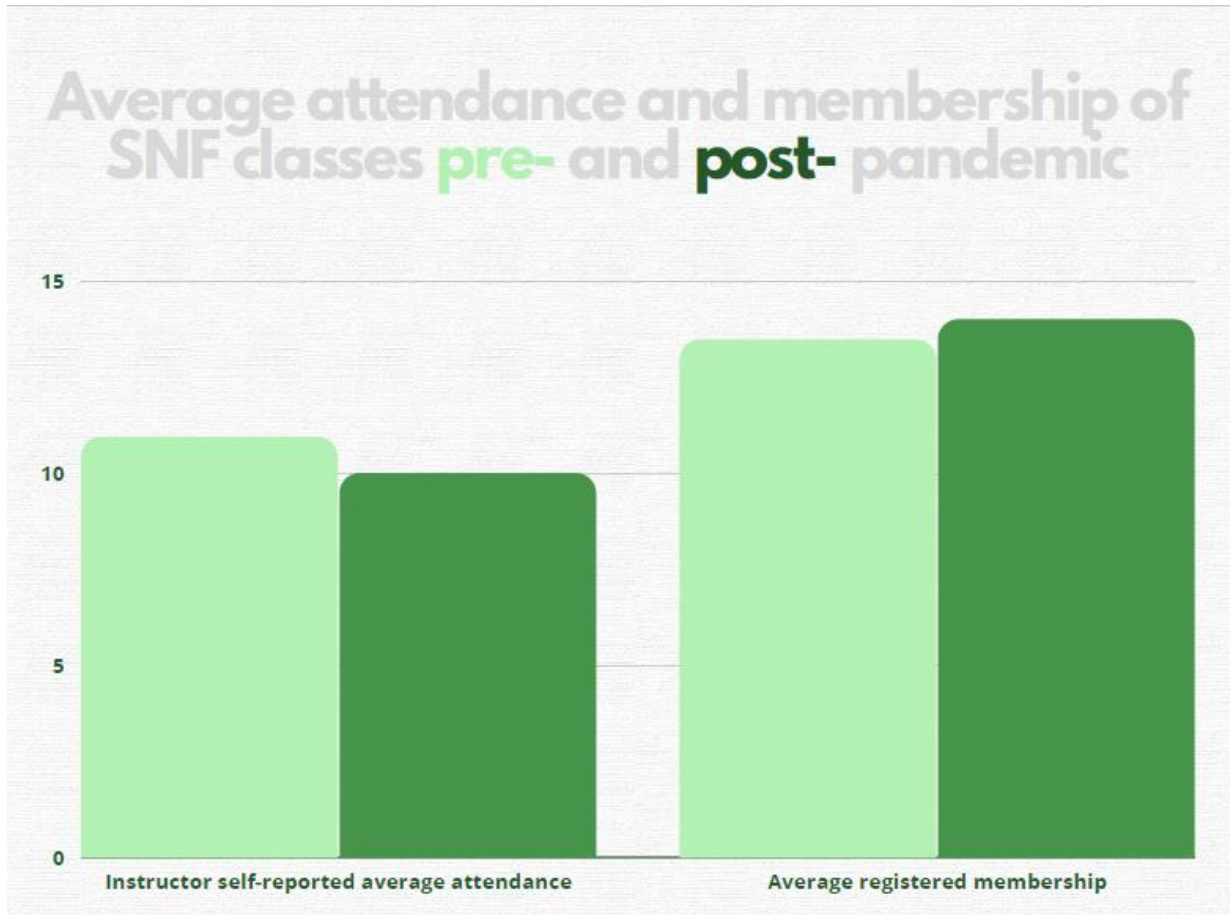
### **Training and development**

All team members have developed their skillsets over the past year. The team now includes three qualified Tutors, three Assessors, and one Internal Quality Assessor, all equipped to deliver the Chair Based Exercise, Otago, E.M.M.A and other training sessions. Online offers were developed internally, with Falls Awareness and the Benefits of Exercise, Otago and Chair Based Exercise theory all being delivered using Zoom or Teams where appropriate. This minimised disruption to courses as a result of covid cases, and enhanced the inclusivity of the offer. A number of delegates were able to access courses which they would not have been able to physically attend due to a lack of transport or childcare. A total of 39 delegates were trained in Otago across the year. A further 19 delegates were trained in Chair Based Exercise. Falls Awareness and Benefits of Exercise elearning, developed in-house, is now available for free on the Age UK DD website, offering resilience to this training offer independent of staff availability.

Staff and instructor development was supported through regular online supervisions and meetings, creating an opportunity for concerns to be addressed and best practice shared. This mode of support continued to be offered in a more ad-hoc fashion once most classes had resumed, as this impacted upon instructor and advisor availability.

## Outcomes

### Attendance statistics



Prior to the coronavirus outbreak, SNF classes for which digital registers were kept had an average registered membership of **13.47** members (defined as individuals attending sessions at least once across the calendar year). As of the end of March 2022, this had increased to an average of **14** members per class for which registers were maintained, indicating a consistent level of engagement with classes. Instructor self-report indicates that actual attendance levels, too, have remained consistent, with a pre-pandemic attendance average of **10.94** reducing slightly to a post-pandemic average of **10** attendees per class. This represents a **91.4%** sustainment of pre-pandemic attendance levels. Instructors report that many attendees have returned to classes having attended prior to covid, indicating the maintenance of sufficient mobility and health to engage with sessions, and signalling that those who attended classes prior to the pandemic have either not fallen or have, in most cases, recovered well from falls.

## **Focus on: Hasland Chair Based Exercise**

Write up by Kyle Wall, volunteer

Barbara and Dave attended the instructor training with the intention to offer chair-based exercise classes to the people of Hasland and Grassmoor. The training in Ilkeston was well attended by people local to the Chesterfield area and so to make it easier for the attendees, Barbara offered their community space in Hasland to complete the rest of the course. Kyle, who was attending to offer the classes to residents at Tapton Grove Nursing Home, then took an interest in the application of this in the community and offered to volunteer with Dave and Barbara in Hasland and Grassmoor. The instructors received their certificates in January of 2018. Barbara and Dave, already leaders in the community, advertised to residents and the first few began attending the class which was successful very quickly. Scott, our most recently qualified instructor has been made very welcome by the attendees and brings with him many ideas to improve our offer, including a change in the exercises to make them more suitable, challenging and interesting to our attendees and assisted with the planning of our Christmas party in 2021.

Our chair-based exercise class is unique in that it is incredibly accessible to members of our community, but not only in a physical way as the friendly and warm atmosphere opens it up to individuals who face challenges with their mental health. We not only offer exercise, physical development and fun, but we also offer camaraderie and support. On alternate weeks we provide generation games, where attendees can join in with indoor boccia and curling. We work physical activity into these games and focus on practical skills, such as rising out of a chair and walking short distances.

Being part of Strictly No Falling in our offer has helped immensely. It has provided us with practical and financial support as well as giving us an identity to enhance our offer to the community. Importantly, this support assisted us through venue changes, as we have grown like goldfish, quickly reaching capacity of our venues as word of mouth and social prescription consistently raises the attendance.

The lockdown response to Covid-19 presented us with an interesting challenge. We do not consider however, that we had to bounce back after Covid-19 as our provision never stopped throughout. Although we ceased group activity, the volunteers were very proactive and used the 10am – 12pm Thursday slot for calling our attendees, encouraging physical activity in the home and having a good old chit chat. Many of the attendees at this time were going through extended periods of isolation which had a damaging impact on their physical and mental health, but they expressed enthusiasm for their weekly calls with the team and appreciated the ongoing camaraderie and support throughout.



## **Case studies**

### **Self-case study from a member of Heanor Bowls CBE/Otago**

8.6.2022

*I was advised by the muscular specialist at Ripley Hospital, physiotherapist, when I went to see him for pain in legs and back, after a bad fall, to go to Emma's class, for Age UK, for 12 weeks. Also, so I got out meeting people, as we had lost our local bus.*

*Emma was very welcoming and I was made to feel at home. She is very good at explaining the exercises we are doing and keep a good eye on everyone to make sure we are doing it the right way, but also made iT fun.*

*Since going to the class, I made friends" with another lady who was on her own. Since going to the class my back is getting better slowly, also my legs are getting better, also with treatment form the doctor.*

*Your sincerely,*

*Mrs J.D. Beeston*

(edited for clarity)

### **Sent from Emma Yates – Willington class in South Derbyshire.**

Please see below. Pete sent this to me in January after I'd had to cancel our face-to-face session due to the snow ice and done an impromptu Zoom class.

This came as a WhatsApp where you can't see much of the message and I'm sure that you can imagine where I thought the tale was heading!

**Morning Emma,**

**We went for a walk after the zoom session yesterday.**

**I walked off the drive and on to the tarmac'd path where, unbeknown to me, was a sheet of black ice!**

**My left foot shot forward so quickly and my right one went in a different direction!**

**Sue shouted and tried to grab me, as it all happened so quickly, as I twisted and turned in order to prevent what looked like being a very nasty fall.**

**I then skated forward bringing both legs back together to steady my balance and finished up on the road, upright and still standing!!**

**Sue was shocked and amazed as she thought I was heading for a serious fall and possible breakage and said that Emma PSG lessons had saved me.**

**Your classes had helped me with my balance and strengthened muscles needed during the 'dancing on ice' routine!**

**A very big THANK YOU!**

Following recommendation from a friend, Pete started to attend my Zoom Postural Stability Group (PSG) in October 2020. After a few months he noticed a significant improvement in his sit-to-stands - no longer needing to use his arms to get up from a chair. As well as helping him with his dancing on ice moment, Pete has seen how his improved balance has helped in other areas of his life. He went for cycle ride the other day and a friend commented on how good Pete's balance was - a real morale boost given his friend is 10 years younger, and a lot wobblier on his bike!

Pete is now a regular at the PSG session held in Willington and a great advocate for my groups - he has already recruited 2 of his friends!

He is also great fun and a pleasure to have in sessions - thank you Pete.

Emma Yates

PSI



### **Challenges:**

- Post pandemic life. The SNF service, all its individual classes and the team have operated in the most recent phase of the Covid 19 pandemic. Inevitably older people, home care management and staff, instructors, venues, referrers and the team themselves are living with the consequences of a rapid and dramatic change to daily life and two years of uncertainty and change. Everyone is experiencing some level of anxiety and many people are struggling to now make changes back into more social contact and leaving their homes. Community settings are experiencing significant reductions in community activity and it has been rewarding for the team to see how well

many classes resumed. For older people there is still a significant reduction in everyday activity which makes their class even more important to them.

- Recruitment and retention. In common with every area of employment and volunteering our workforce has undergone a period of reflection and change. The team have worked very hard to continue to recruit instructors and to retain those we have as we emerge from the pandemic. Across all employment sectors and in volunteering organisations are seeing unprecedented challenges in recruiting new staff as people make life changing decisions about their work-life balance. Changes in local employment, the cost of living rise, increased family caring roles etc have all impacted on the availability and flexibility of volunteers in every type of role and this will potentially impact on larger classes or higher need participants who would benefit from additional support.
- Changes in the landscape. The pandemic saw significant changes in health and social care as staff were redeployed and relocated. Since 'business as usual' resumed there have been changes in the workforce and hard-won relationships with referrers, partners, care home staff etc have been broken. Developing new relationships within emerging structures all rapidly appearing with lots of district meetings has stretched the team's capacity and Age UK Derby and Derbyshire.

### **Learning:**

- The falls prevention classes, instructors and participants have grown in resilience with the pandemic response our team provided, supported by Public Health. Digital inclusion skills, creativity, communications and the close working relationships have all increased during the past two years and the team are building on this strong base.
- Whilst recruitment and retention remain a challenge the flexibility of Instructor roles may provide recruitment opportunities for people wanting to earn around an existing role or to change their work pattern.
- The impact of the classes and our support package during the pandemic may engage instructors, volunteers, participants and referrers in different ways. The message on falls remains the priority and a strong motivation but the social and emotional impact may resonate with people more conscious of mental wellbeing, the experience of loneliness and the value of social connectedness.
- The social connectedness work in the County presents good opportunities to build on the holistic nature of the falls classes, including in care homes.
- The care home programme and individual development in homes has subtly shifted to focus on achievable changes in everyday activity where a regular full class is not possible or staff don't feel its possible. Addressing the component parts of increased mobility and reduced falls risk such as the EMMA programme works with care staff's priorities and starts to engage staff and residents in some fundamental improvements.
- The team have excellent skills and experience and work in a very person-centred way working with individual Instructors and Care Home staff to support them through training, development and with responsive and creative approaches to improving falls prevention activity levels.

## Summary of outcomes

# STRICTLY NO FALLING PROJECT IMPACT APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022



INSTRUCTOR REPORTED CLASS  
ATTENDANCE RATES HAVE RETURNED  
TO **91%** OF PRE-  
PANDEMIC  
LEVELS



AND AVERAGE REGISTERED CLASS  
MEMBERSHIP HAS INCREASED BY 4%

**50,000+**  
HOURS OF PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITY FACILITATED



147 COMMUNITY CLASSES  
50 CARE HOMES ACTIVELY ENGAGED



**68**  
Chair Based  
Exercise and  
Otago delegates  
trained across 8  
courses

**"Getting out the house to see and  
chat to others makes a big  
difference to me. The group is my  
main source of exercise and it really  
helps me with my health  
conditions."  
SNF class attendee**

Falls can have serious and lasting consequences for overall health and wellbeing, but the  
impact of Strictly No Falling classes goes far beyond reducing falls risk.



## Summary of proposals

The following foci are proposed for the coming year:

- The continued delivery of 2 Chair Based Exercise and 2 Otago training courses per year, with additional online provision for those unable to access face to face courses.
- The development of further elearning resources to support delegates, including videos, presentations and online submission options.
- The wider rollout of the E.M.M.A programme, offering community based courses to a wide cohort of care homes.
- Continued work to engage and encourage referrals into the service, in order to support and reduce waiting lists in DCHS services.
- Build better working relationships with clinical teams and agencies across the county to embed falls discussions, understand the impact of a fall on services and individuals and advice on how simple preventative methods such strength and balance exercises that can be included into daily activities can reduce falls.

## References and methods

Data collection and analysis methods are indicated throughout the report via the following colour coding:

- Data drawn from CL
- Data drawn from informal instructor and advisor self-report/polling
- Average taken from instructor poll combined with CL data/other sources such as third party data collection