

Wellbeing Programme – March 2014

One significant problem of old age is loss of independence. Exercising regularly, attaining and maintaining a reasonable degree of physical fitness has been proven to help older adults meet the demands of their daily routines and reduce the risks of falls.

In order to encourage and give confidence to older people to take part in exercise programmes, Age UK Waltham Forest has been providing a number of free Tai Chi and gentle exercise to music classes since 2008 at venues around the borough. During the 2013-2014 financial year these were funded via a conditional grant from the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

At present, classes take place in 12 different venues across the Borough. Efforts continue to sustain and increase participation at all venues. The worth of these classes to the local health and social care economy can be seen in the feedback received from participants (see Appendix A) as well as our Wellbeing report from 2012 and 2013. Numerous international and national reports exist on the benefits of exercise to older people, including for those with long term health conditions.

Classes 2013/2014 – 9509 attendances as follows:

Statistical Returns, April 2013-March 2014	
Number of Classes	550
Attendees	9509
Male	1268
Female	8241
White British	6035
Asian/Asian British	626
Afro-Caribbean	2067
Other Ethnic Groups	781

Physical Activity

Leading a physically active lifestyle provides important beneficial effects to both the physical and mental wellbeing of people in later life. It is evidenced that certain types of exercise such as tai chi, which improves balance and builds strength, are successful in preventing falls among older adults.

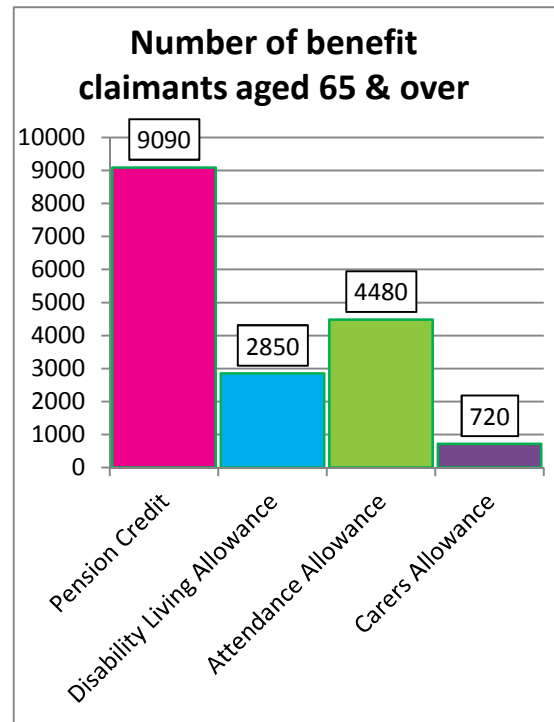
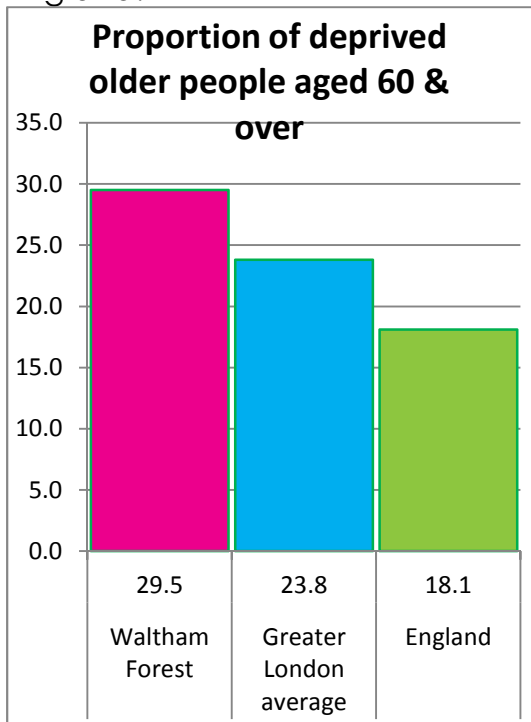
According to Public Health England's local Health Profile for 2013, in Waltham Forest 58% of older adults achieve at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week.

About Waltham Forest

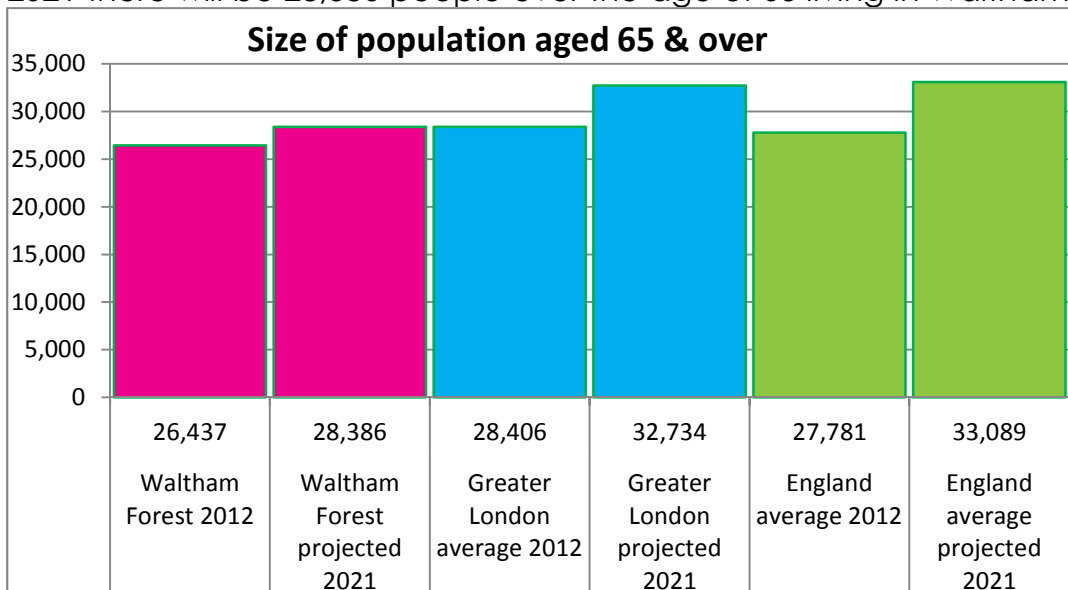
Waltham Forest continues to be one of the most deprived boroughs in England. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, Waltham Forest is the 6th most deprived borough out of 33 London boroughs, after Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Haringey and Islington.

In terms of the overall measure of multiple deprivation (IMD 2010) Waltham Forest ranks 15th most deprived among the 326 local authorities in England. Its position has declined from 26th in 2007.

In Waltham Forest, 29.5% of adults over 60 live in deprivation, compared to 18.1% in England.



Population growth projections from the Office of National Statistic suggest that by 2021 there will be 28,386 people over the age of 65 living in Waltham Forest



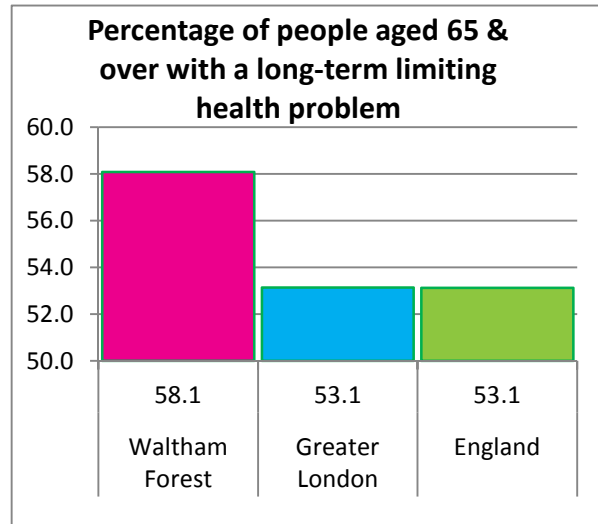
Source: ONS 2011-based interim sub-national population projections

Health: The Local Context

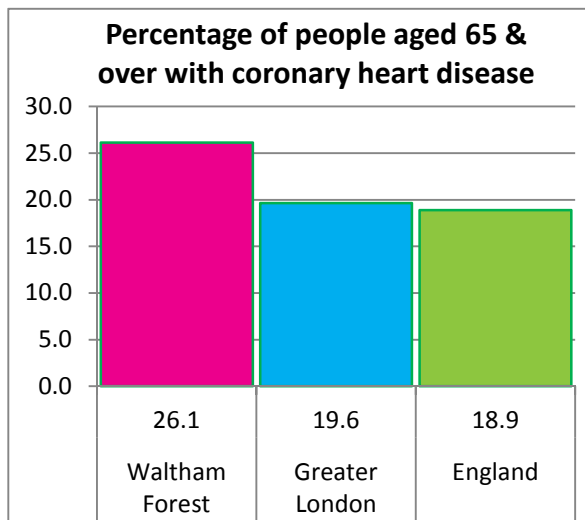
The percentage of people aged 65 and over with high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, COPD and stroke suffers is higher in Waltham Forest than Greater London and overall England.

Living with Long term Illness

According to the 2011 Census there was about 37,600 people in Waltham Forest categorised as having a limiting long-term illness. This represents 58.1% of the total population of Waltham Forest at the time of the 2011 Census. This is higher than the average for both England and Greater London.



Source: ONS Census 2011 Data



Coronary heart disease (CHD)

The mortality rate for people aged less than 75 for CHD for both men and women has fallen over the past ten years but remains higher than the average for London and England.

6198 people over the age of 65 in Waltham Forest have CHD.

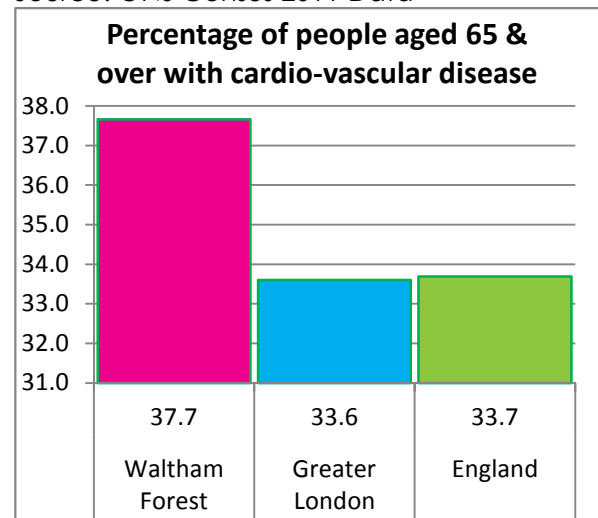
CHD mortality varies by ward, with the highest rates in areas of highest deprivation.

Source: ONS Census 2011 Data

Cardio-Vascular Disease

The percentage of people living with a CVD is higher in Waltham Forest than Greater London and England.

In 2011, almost 160,000 people in the UK died from CVD. 74,000 of these deaths were caused by coronary heart disease - the UK's single biggest killer.

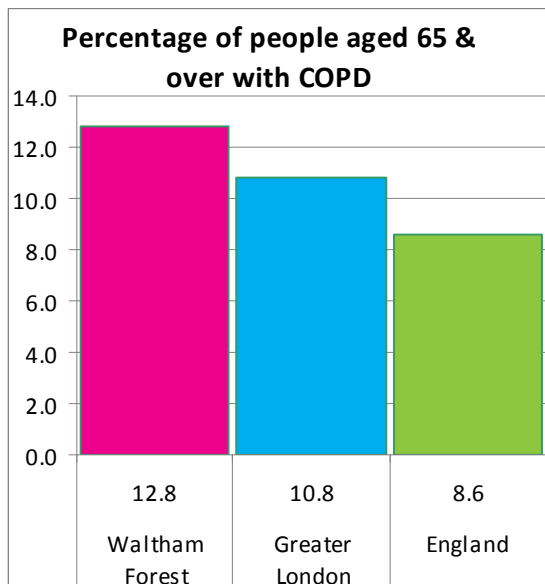


Source: The British Heart Foundation

Stroke

- Hospital stroke admission rates in Waltham Forest are significantly higher than the national average for those under 75 years; residents in Waltham Forest are 3 times as likely as residents in the local authority with the lowest admission rate to be admitted to hospital for a stroke before the age of 75 years.
- Patients from Waltham Forest are significantly more likely to be readmitted within 28 days of discharge following a stroke than the national average.

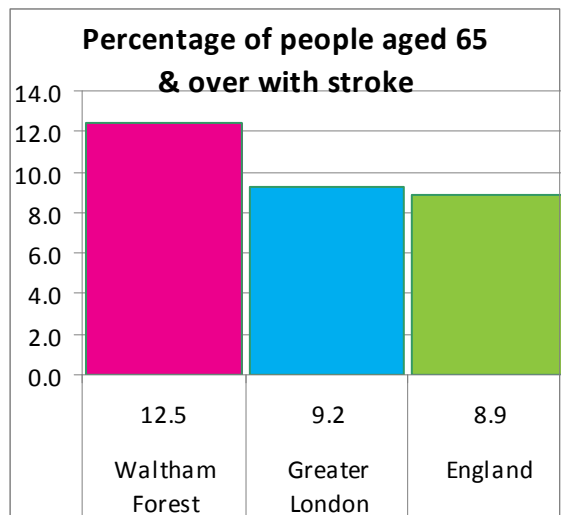
Source: Waltham Forest Stroke Pathway Profile 2011, London Health Programmes



Source: ONS Census 2011 Data

Hypertension

72.2% of people over the age of 65 are living with hypertension, significantly higher than Greater London and England



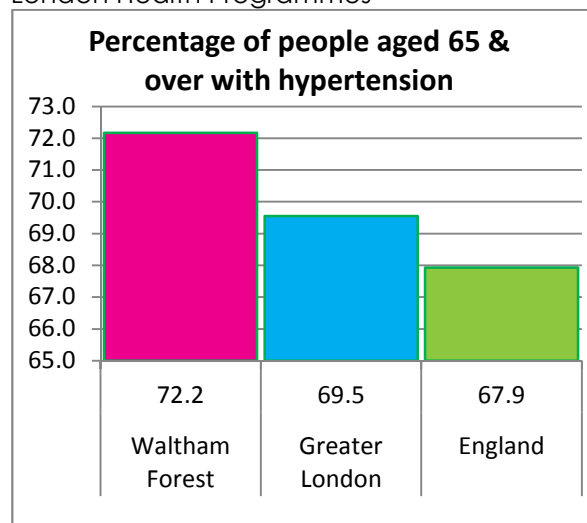
Source: ONS Census 2011 Data

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

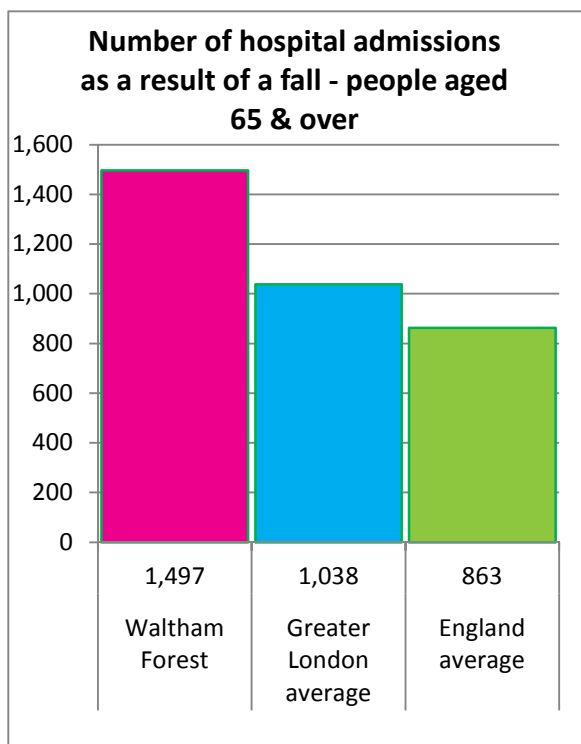
In Waltham Forest:

- Emergency COPD admission rates are significantly higher than average; residents are twice as likely as to be admitted into hospital in Waltham Forest than in other local authorities;
- Over 40 percent of all Waltham Forest patients admitted for COPD return to hospital within 90 days.
- Waltham Forest residents are nearly four times as likely to die from COPD before the age of 75 compared to other local authorities.

Source: Waltham Forest COPD Pathway 2011, London Health Programmes



Source: ONS Census 2011 Data



Source: East of England Public Health Observatory and Older People's Health and Wellbeing Atlas

Falls

In Waltham Forest the number of hospital admissions as a result of a fall is significantly higher than the Greater London and England Average.

According to data from the Older People's Health and Wellbeing Atlas collected in November 2012, there were 1497 hospital admissions due to falls in 2011.

The report *At Least Five A Week: Evidence of the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health*, DOH 2004 noted that exercise programmes, particularly strength training, have shown to be highly effective in reducing subsequent incidence of falls among older people. In programmes combining strength, balance and endurance training, the risk of falls was reduced by 10%; programmes with balance training alone reduced the risk by 25% and tai chi reduced the risk by 47%.

Mental Health

There are 665,065 people in England people in the UK who have dementia (Alzheimer's Society, 2013a). Based on current projections, by 2021 there will be over 1 million people living with dementia in the UK (Alzheimer's Society, 2012a).

Currently this costs the NHS, local authorities and families £23 billion a year (Alzheimer's Society 2007, updated to reflect 2012 figures). By 2018, this will grow to £27 billion (King's Fund, 2008).

The numbers of over 65s accessing specialist mental health services has continued to rise over the past 3 years.

Mental Health: Adults Accessing NHS Specialist Mental Health Services

Mental Health Service Users; Females 65 and over	Persons	Count	England
	Waltham Forest	London Region	Country
April 2010 to March 2011	849	30011	255725
April 2009 to March 2010	806	28424	246354
April 2008 to March 2009	743	27474	229912
Mental Health: Adults Accessing NHS Specialist Mental Health Services	Last Updated	06-Mar-12	
Mental Health: Adults Accessing NHS Specialist Mental Health Services	Source	The NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care	

Cancer

There is clinical evidence already that exercise helps improve cancer survival rates: six hours of moderate physical activity could reduce by up to 50% the risk of death among Bowel Cancer patients. Breast cancer and prostate cancer patients can improve their survival rates by up to 40% and 30% respectively through regular exercise.

The top four cancers in Waltham Forest that contributed to overall cancer mortality in 2008 were lung (20%), colorectal (12%), breast (9%), and stomach cancer (5%). Cancers in WF are responsible for the second largest contribution to health inequalities, accounting for around 25% of all deaths in people aged 65 and over.

Social isolation

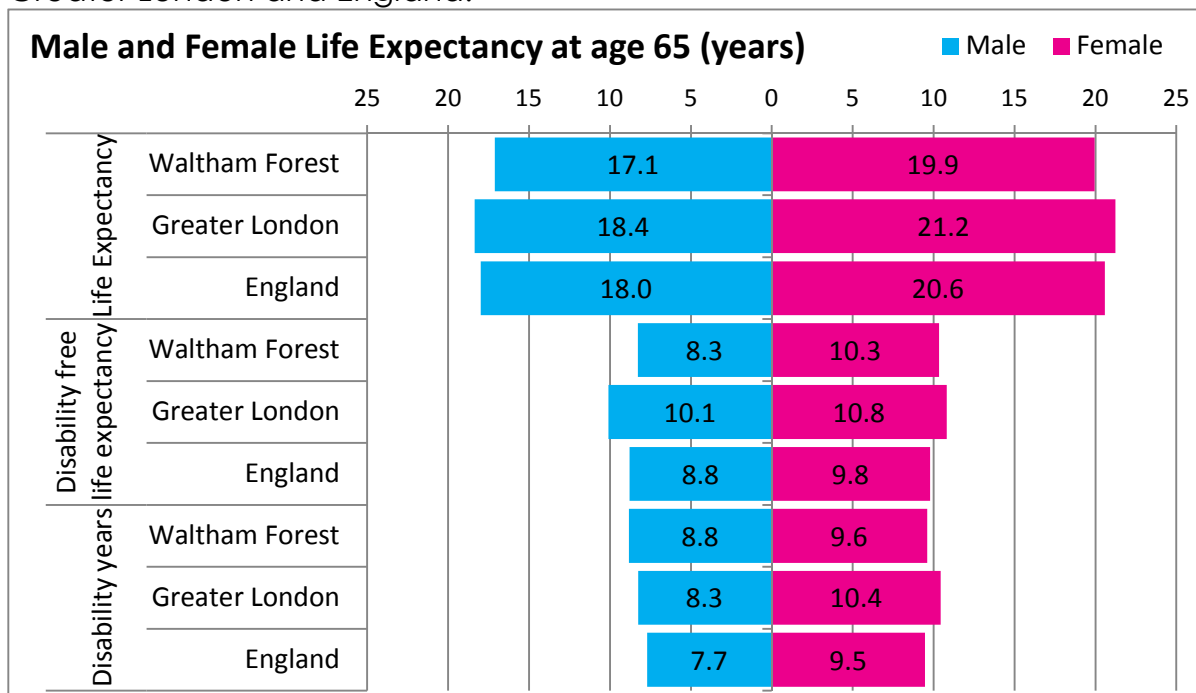
Loneliness is a key issue for older adults. Those with high social isolation are more likely to be older (aged over 75) and belong to White, Black Caribbean, or Somali groups. Those who are severely lonely are more likely to be older, single and Pakistani in origin. Tackling isolation will not only improve the quality of life and reduce health inequalities; it will also help to build stronger local communities. Typically social isolated older adults have mobility issues and health conditions such as arthritis and depression.

IPPR's Older People and Wellbeing published in 2008 noted that there are 1 million socially isolated older people and this number is projected to rise to 2.2 million in the next 15 years.

According to the 2011 census there are 17,372 homes in the borough headed by someone over the age of 65, of these 8,879 are single people aged 65+ living alone.

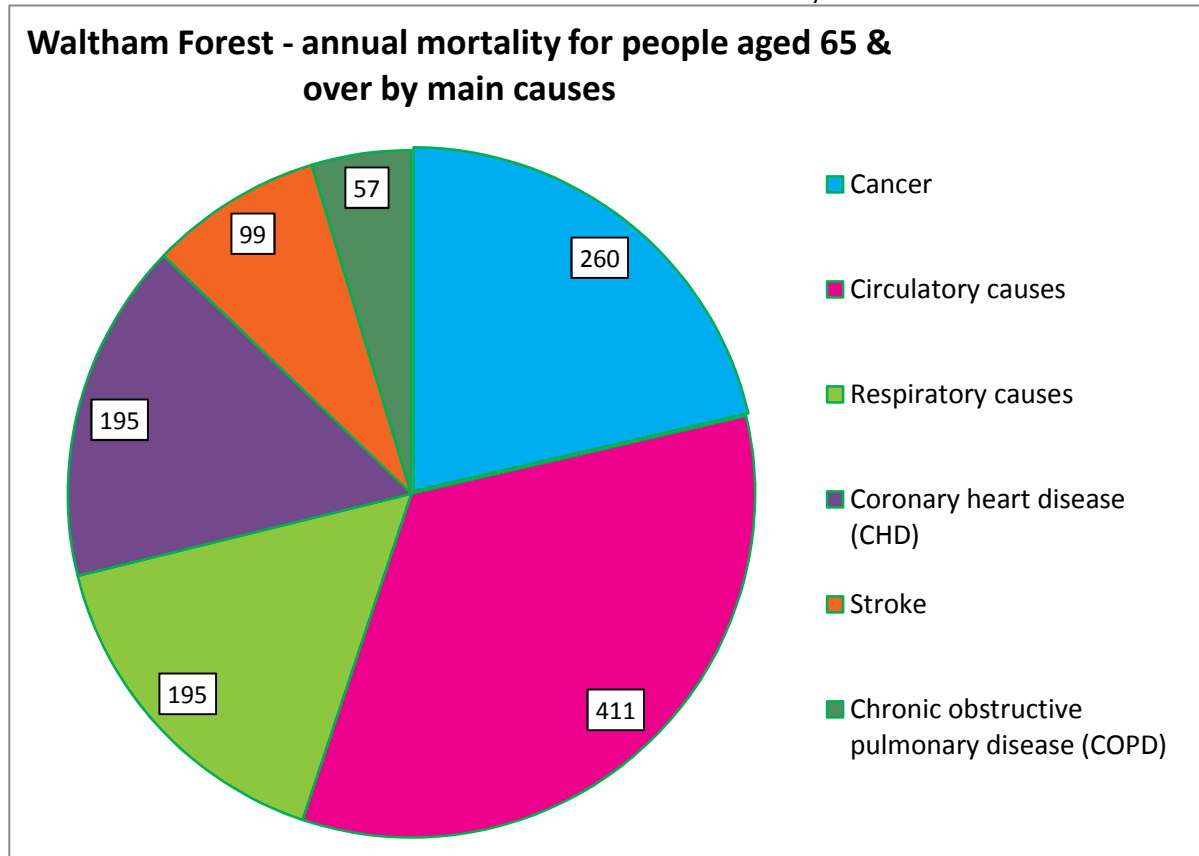
Life Expectancy and Mortality in Waltham Forest

Waltham Forest has a lower life expectancy rates for both males and females than in Greater London and England.



Source: Older People's Health and Wellbeing Atlas

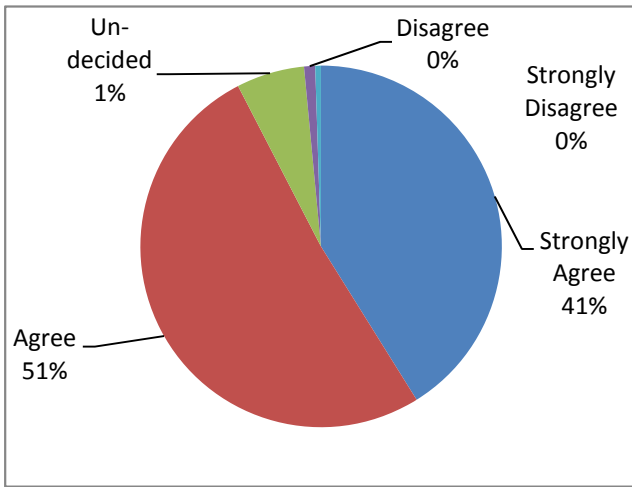
The table below breaks down the causes of mortality in Waltham Forest.



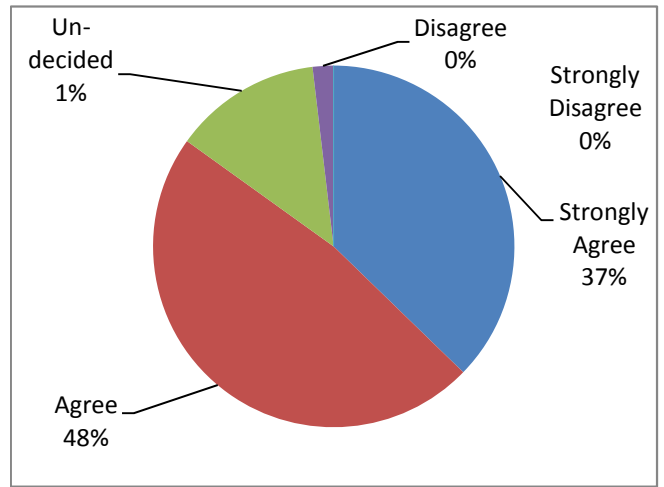
Source: Older People's Health and Wellbeing Atlas

Appendix A Results of consultation carried out in December 2013

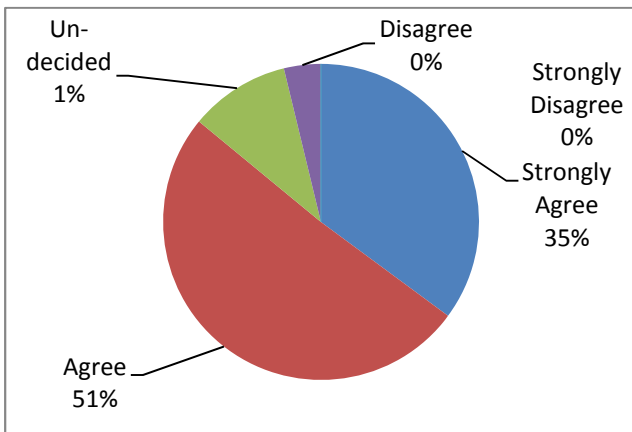
Since joining the classes I am more confident that I can get up out of a chair without losing my balance



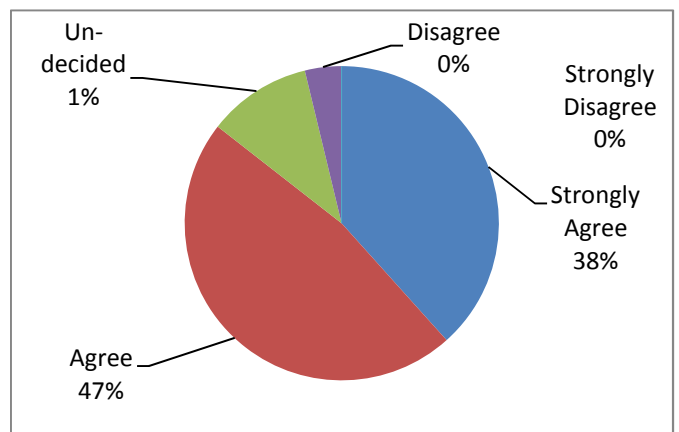
Since joining the classes I am more confident that I can pick something up off the floor without losing my balance



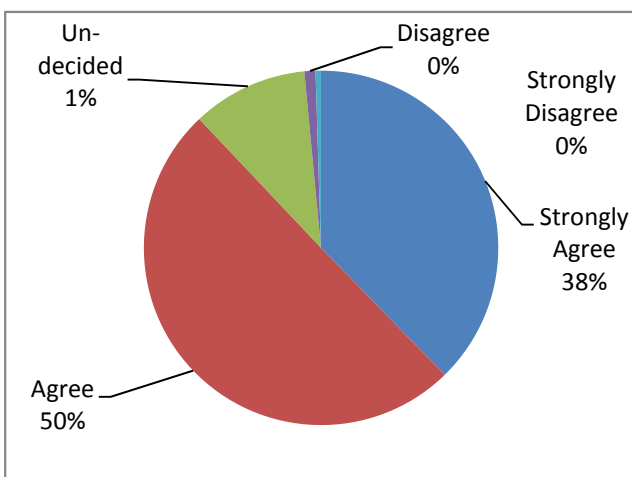
Since joining the classes I am more confident that I can go down stairs indoors without losing my balance



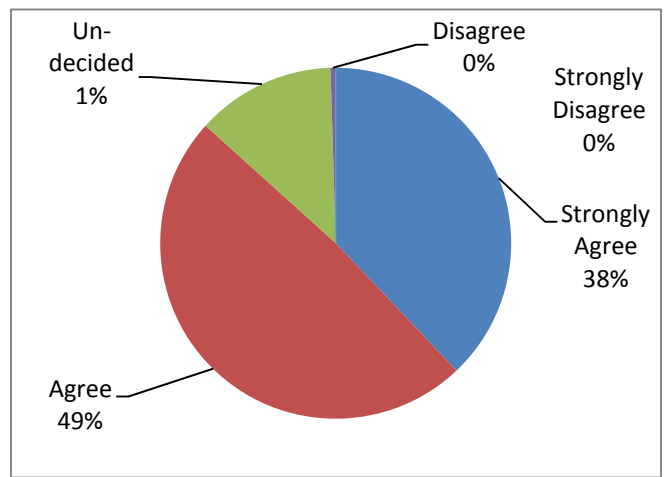
Since joining the classes I am more confident that I can go up stairs indoors without losing my balance



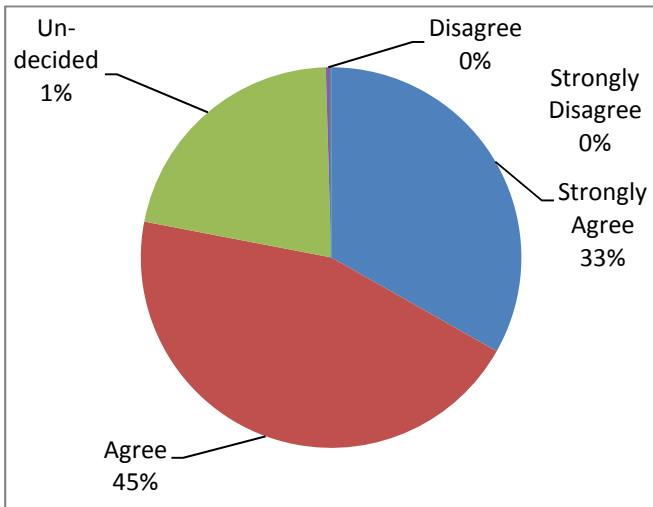
Participating in the Balance/Exercise Classes has improved my ability to perform tasks of daily living



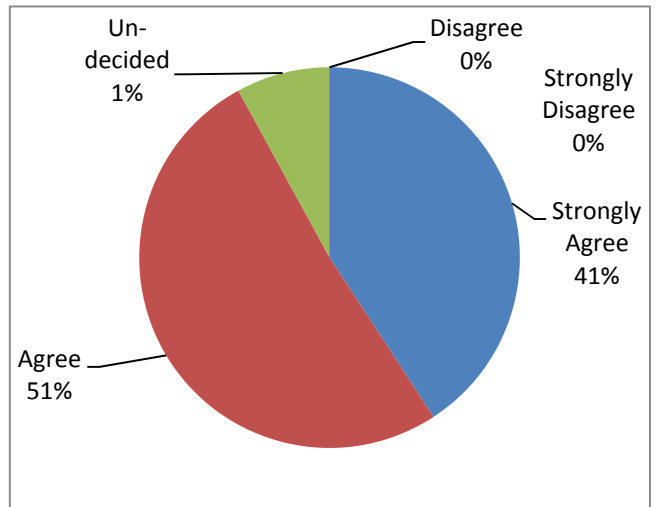
I have seen improvements in my energy levels since joining the classes



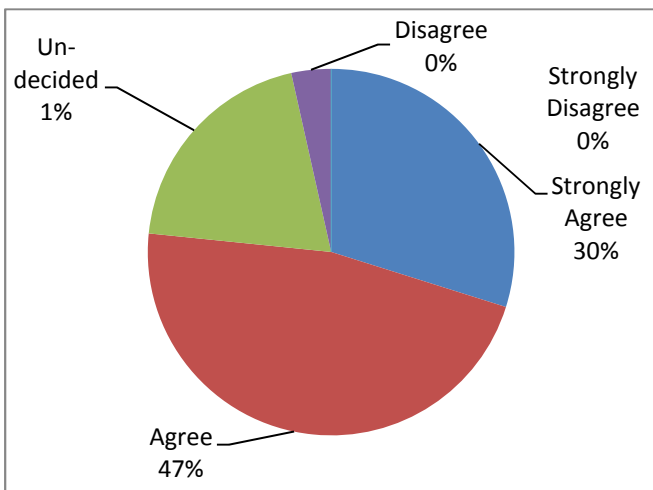
I have seen improvements in my strength since joining the classes.



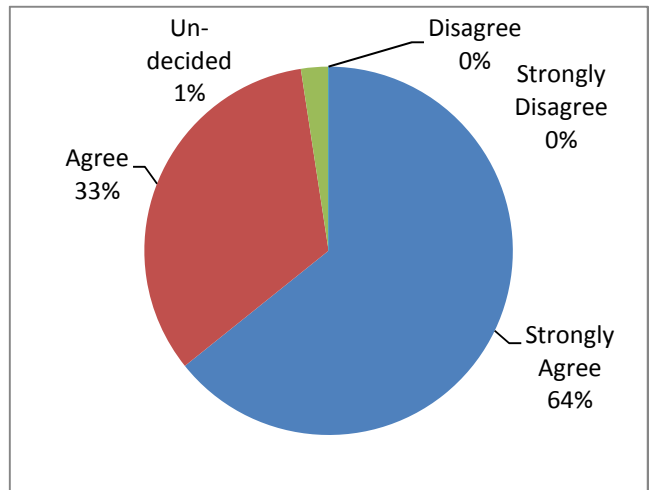
I have seen improvements in my flexibility since joining the classes.



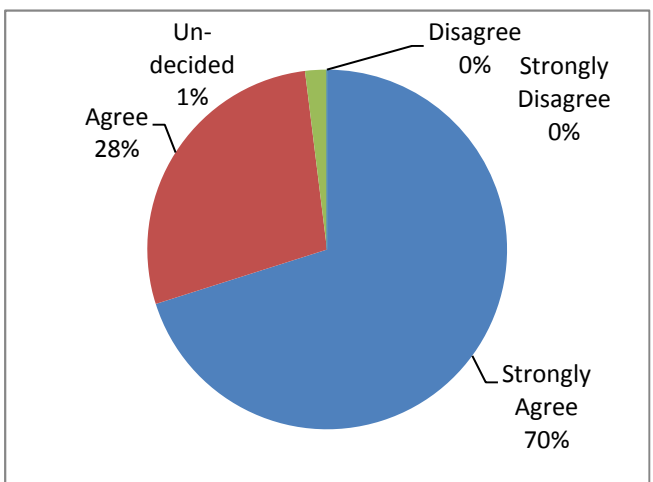
I have seen a decrease in my overall fatigue since joining the classes.



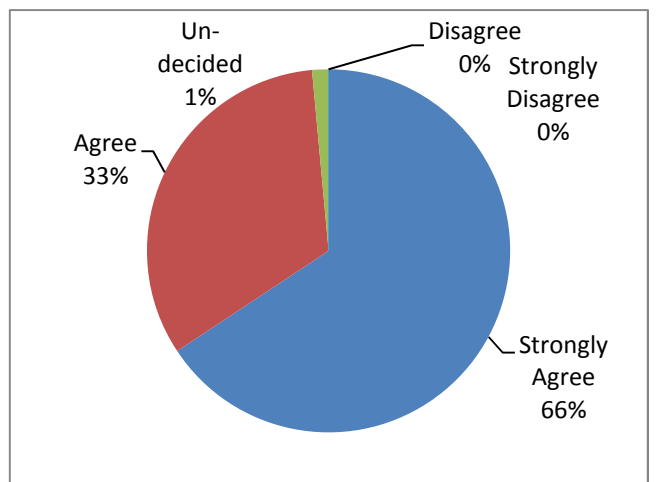
I value the social aspect of the classes.



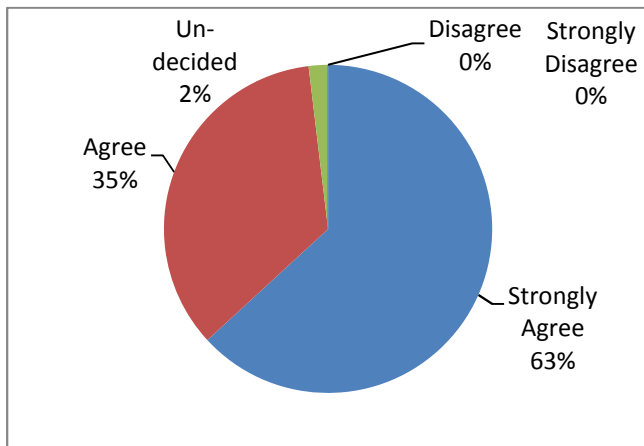
The tutor is knowledgeable and able to answer any questions I may have.



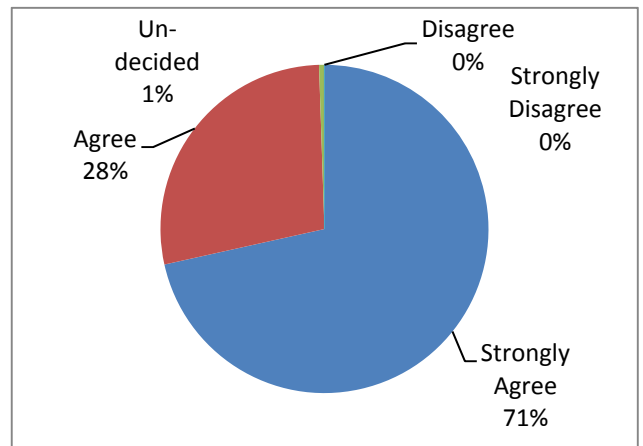
The tutor is attentive to my needs and concerns.



I feel safe while performing the exercises.



I enjoy taking part in classes.



Appendix c

Participant's comments about attending the classes

Tai Chi has benefits for depression; it lifts moods and energy levels, and improves one's connection with the body and others.

I am able to perform normally as we are constantly taught to move our joints and other parts of our body to enable us to cope with everyday occurrences. The atmosphere in the class is very pleasant and like having a great big family around you. Many thanks for providing this service.

I think the classes are very useful and encourage you to exercise daily. Also the social aspect is good as some participants cannot go out alone without help.

I look forward to Tuesday's class the very friendly welcome and fun and invigorating Tai Chi – it's great! I noticed improved mobility and flexibility, my daughter says I look younger since coming to Tai Chi. I appreciate all that I have learnt in this class. I do feel that I achieve so much and I'm glad to join this class and I do enjoy meeting people and making friends. It is also a place to get me out of the house and I enjoy the tutor for being so patient with us.

I find this class very helpful and informative. Our trainer is always willing and able to answer any questions we may have. The class accommodated all levels of ability which makes me feel confident in what I can do. I feel much better since joining the class.

I am very happy with all aspects of the class and our instructor makes the sessions fun as well as instructive. A very important factor for the elderly people who live alone.

I feel generally better health-wise since joining this class. Age UK Waltham Forest have helped me by placing stair rails and bath rails so I don't fall but the social aspect of a group exercise class is therapeutic.

I look forward to Tai Chi class on Fridays, to meet up with friends for a chat and a laugh. Our teacher is a very friendly caring man and is very considerate to anyone with a real problem. Because this group is popular we could really do with a bigger hall and then more people could join.

I have always been a lover of keeping fit; with this tutor he explains what a certain muscle use is and how to improve it.

This is a beneficial service physically and socially. Our tutor makes the class most enjoyable. Thank you.

My balance has improved with regard to standing on one leg particularly when mounting my bicycle. I have noticed particular improvement to suppleness of my hips, knees and ankles.

I value the opportunity to participate in classes which are local i.e. within easy reach. And feel that we all benefit from both the health aspect and the social interaction.

Since joining the classes my joints have become stronger and more pliable. My balance has improved and I am able to walk without 'rolling' I can now walk upstairs without holding on to the handrail. My energy levels have increased and I am less breathless when walking.

Our tutor is a fantastic teacher very patient and kind and has a great wealth of knowledge and experience.

This is an excellent class, the tutor is A+++

Since joining the class I feel confident when doing my domestic work and shopping

Please keep classes going, they are right for my ability.

I enjoy the exercise classes very much and would like it to be continued – many thanks.

I am disabled and the exercises have helped me to get around my flat much easier.

I am happy with the improvement to my health.

This class is very useful, I have only been in the class for 3 months and I hope to see much improvement as I continue the classes.

Exercise makes me feel good and our tutor's advice is very helpful.

I enjoy the classes and to associate with friends, the keep fit instructor is very good and answers all the questions which we ask.

Trainer very knowledgeable and advises on your needs. I missed some time due to heart operation earlier in the year.

I really enjoy the social part of these classes.

Social aspects is one I look forward to coming and joining in each week. The instructor is very good, also willing to listen and advise.

I feel since joining the club it gets me out and the people are friendly.

Exercise helps me keep independent and able to look after myself. We have a good laugh every week which helps people who are feeling down.

I enjoy the classes very much and look forward to them; I believe they help with my wellbeing and my independence.

I like this exercise because I feel much better when I do exercise and I have more confidence to do things which once I could not do it.

I find that I have more energy. I value teachers' advice as I have trouble with the top and bottom of my spine.

I find the exercise class on a Monday afternoon most beneficial combined with the social side it makes a very enjoyable afternoon. The ladies who run the club do a wonderful job, long may it remain.

I realise through the class the importance of daily exercise which the tutor has explained and demonstrated with exercises that can easily be performed in your own home on a daily basis. The class also provides contact with people in a similar position and the tutor gives you confidence to do exercises within your capabilities to improve your wellbeing health wise and mentally. It is a valuable class which is very needed by all that take part.

I now apply the principles of tai chi to my daily life – when washing up, chopping vegetables, getting out of the bath etc. I am able to let go of tension in my neck, arms etc. place my foot steadily before transferring my weight etc. I have managed to avoid my back going into spasm for over a year. As my understanding of tai chi gets deeper I am finding unexpected benefits e.g I can put my contact lenses in with ease (due to tai chi I can relax my body and control my reactions).

The social atmosphere in the class is very good which adds to contentment and relaxation in daily living. The exercise obviously helps with general physical ability.

I feel these classes have a social side which is beneficial to all who attend as well as the exercise involved.

The tai chi classes helps to keep balance in older people, it improves arthritis, teaches posture correction, how to bend down and lift objects safely and improves flexibility. It also provides a great opportunity for social interactions for the elderly and those living alone who may not wish to join a social club.

I have been attending tai chi classes since July 2013 and I am sure that it is contributing to my wellbeing. Some examples in my day-to-day activities are:

- I am always aware of my posture and now walk and sit without slouching;
- I have more flexibility in joints – no pain after house chores or gardening or any other form of exercise;
- Relaxation techniques came in useful recently when I had hospital treatment;
- I have a better sleep pattern.

I would like tai chi to be part of my life for the foreseeable future.

Since I joined tai chi classes I feel so confident in myself. I am stronger in my mind and body, my bones are stronger. Altogether it's very beneficial.

I have had a great benefit from the class and enjoy the company of the people that attend.

When I joined the class I felt apprehensive but our tutor is very accommodating which made me to feel at ease.

The class has helped me to progress. I enjoy the tutor's style of teaching, she spends time with each individual. The sessions are enjoyable and I have made new friends.

My balance has improved. I do not trip now.

I really enjoy the class. It is good for the memory. We are valued in the class whatever our ability. Our teacher is extremely good at explaining what we have to do. She makes each session interesting. Tai chi really makes a difference to my overall health.

I have found many benefits to my health and wellbeing since joining the class and my confidence in undertaking tasks and jobs about the house has increased.

I am able to grip with my hands since joining the class.

I don't know what I would do without the classes, its good for you.

The exercise helps me a lot I am able to get out with more confidence.

I would be at a loss if my Tuesday Keep Fit classes were not available. Love the social and friendly atmosphere.

Appendix D – Case Study of a Tai Chi Participant

Name: Mrs. XX Age: 71 years

1. Why did you take up tai chi?

I have had a problem with my balance for some years which has been investigated at the National Hospital for Neurology. Following treatment for hypothyroidism followed by a course of physiotherapy and exercise the problem remained. I had heard tai chi helped to improve balance.

2. How did you find the process of accessing the classes (i.e. did you contact Age UK Waltham Forest directly? Was there a waiting list for classes etc.)?

I accessed a class in my local area by coincidence following my sister being allocated a flat in a sheltered housing scheme with twenty-four hour cover. Initially I thought that the classes were for residents only but I subsequently found that non-residents were welcome to attend. Fortunately a vacancy had just occurred at the time that I enquired.

3. What have the results and/or benefits been of you attending the tai chi?

I have now attended the classes for over two years and can report that my balance and general health have improved considerably. Furthermore my hips and knees are more stable than before I started the classes. My energy levels have improved and my breathing has improved. It is nice to be able to walk alongside someone without worrying that I may lose my balance and knock into them.

4. What would you do if the classes were withdrawn due to lack of funding?

I would initially contact my local councillors and the local Member of Parliament to enquire how they could justify withdrawing funds for what is obviously a low cost health improvement scheme, the withdrawal of which would undoubtedly put additional costs onto the National Health Service for doctors' appointment, anti inflammatory medication, physiotherapy etc. resulting from the loss of these most valuable classes.

5. Any other comments you would like to make?

Because the classes are for senior citizens, members support each other and there is not the competitiveness associated with other exercise classes. Our tutor/instructor is extremely good and encourages us to try and extend our range of movements and gives advice on individual needs.