



**Forever Active Scheme**  
**Annual Report**  
**Review of 2012**

[www.forever-active.org.uk](http://www.forever-active.org.uk)

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## **Summary of Report and 2012 evaluation results**

- Forever Active exercise and activity sessions now take place in South Cambridgeshire District as well as Cambridge City.
- Forever Active is now a Company Limited by Guarantee.
- The Scheme has been working on the development of a new website and database system in 2012.
- Forever Active organised two celebration events in 2012.
- There are currently 26 mobility classes and 40 sessions for the Active 50+ . The focus this year has been to develop the classes in South Cambridgeshire villages
- At the end of the 2012 financial year the Forever Active Forum Ltd had funds of £46,855. The income for financial year 2011/12 was £71,384 and the outgoings for the year were £62,834.
- Forever Active membership income had increased by £3,856 since 2010/11.
- A total of 167 evaluation questionnaires were received back out of the estimated 1,000 distributed.
- 73% of respondents are residents of Cambridge City and 27% residents of South Cambridgeshire.
- The majority of respondents are aged 60 to 79 years.
- The results show that 30% of respondents consider themselves to have a disability.
- The majority of respondents have found out about Forever Active via the publicity brochure or word of mouth.
- 100% of respondents practise strength and balance exercises on a weekly basis.
- 67% reported an improvement in their fitness levels since attending a Forever Active session. 57% reported an improvement in their mobility and 44% an improvement in their strength. 34% feel more confident since attending the sessions.

### **Introduction:**

The Forever Active scheme has provided exercise and activity sessions for the 50+ age group within Cambridge City since its launch in 2006.

Following on from consultation with the Forever Active members and working in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council, the scheme expanded into South Cambridgeshire in September 2011.

Forever Active in the City continues to be coordinated by Helen Robbins at Cambridge City Council and Kirsty Human from South Cambs District Council coordinates the development of the scheme in South Cambridgeshire. The partnership working of both Councils with Forever Active is now outlined in a Service Level Agreement with the Forum.

The biggest change for the Forever Active scheme in 2012 has been its transition from a Constituted Organisation to a Company Limited by Guarantee.

The scheme also hosted two Olympic celebration events in 2012, one at Chesterton Sports Centre and one at Milton Community Centre as well as the annual promotional event at the Grafton Centre, Cambridge.

The scheme has also worked with GB Sport to have a new website and database system designed this year, which is to be implemented in 2013.

This report provides an overview and evaluation of the scheme in 2012.

More information about the scheme itself and activities provided can be found at [www.forever-active.org.uk](http://www.forever-active.org.uk)



## **Classes:**

The Forever Active scheme has worked hard this past year to ensure the sustainability of existing sessions, which are being offered on the programme as well as the development of new sessions, in particular in South Cambs.

With funding for the scheme being an ongoing challenge for the classes in Cambridge City it is key to make sure that sessions can be self-sustainable where possible. The Forever Active Instructors have been actively promoting their classes with the support of the office to achieve the minimum numbers required.

Attendances at classes within the City have improved and this has been particularly noticeable at some of the mobility classes where numbers were lower and at risk of stopping. Thankfully the Forever Active scheme also received funding from the NHS Cambridgeshire for 2011/12 towards the mobility classes and this funding has gone towards subsidising the sessions and ensuring the continuation of all Falls Prevention / mobility classes in the City.

New classes introduced within the City have included an introductory bowls course, in partnership with Chesterton bowls Club at their Centre. Many of the attendees have then gone on to join the club and participate in regular sessions.

A line-dancing course was also started at the Cherry Hinton Village Centre and has been a great success with over 20 people booked on.



There are currently 17 mobility classes in Cambridge City and 40 sessions for the active 50+. The scheme continues to offer health walks and Nordic walking sessions in partnership with local organisations and Instructors for those who prefer to exercise outdoors. The majority of these sessions are taking place within rural South Cambridgeshire.

A key focus of 2012 has been the development of 50+ classes in South Cambs. Promotional adverts have been included in newsletters such as the South Cambs magazine asking local residents to get in touch if they would like a class set up in their area, and the scheme has been working with Instructors already working on the scheme in the City to set up new classes in the villages.

The focus initially has been to get mobility / falls prevention classes set up in the villages. These new sessions have been really well received and there are now 9 mobility classes taking place across the district. The focus for 2013 will be to get Active 50+ classes at Sport and Community Centres across the District.

Alongside the classes the Forever Active scheme has continued to offer a range of educational health talks. Working in partnership with local Health Professionals the scheme offered the following talks in 2012:

- Basic First Aid –run by the British Red Cross
- Looking after your bones and joints –run by the NHS Falls Prevention Service
- Understanding Dementia and looking after your mental health –run by Dementia Compass.



### **Becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee:**

The Cambridge City Council Forever Active scheme was originally known as the SAILL project (Staying Active in Later Life), which consisted of predominantly chair based exercise sessions. The over 50's scheme was re branded in July 2006 and is now known as the Forever Active scheme. The scheme became a constituted voluntary organisation in May 2007 with the support of Cambridge City Council and joined partnerships with South Cambs District Council in September 2011 so the scheme is now supported by both District Councils.

The Forever Active Committee with the support of GP Sport, a consultancy firm, decided early in 2012 that it was necessary to change the structure of the Forever Active Forum to become a Company Limited by Guarantee. The reasons were as follows:

- The personal financial risk for Committee members and Forever Active members is now eliminated. (Previously all Forever Active members were personally liable in the event of Forever Active having insufficient funds)
- In order for the Forever Active Forum to become a more secure, formalised Organisation
- The structure is beneficial in terms of applying for grant aid and further funding to support the scheme.
- The Forever Active can continue as an independent Organisation even if there are future priority changes / funding cuts at either Local Authority.

This changed was approved and voted in by the majority at an EGM meeting in May 2012. GP Sport have been employed as consultants to support Forever Active to file the relevant papers with Companies House on an annual basis and have supported the group in creating all the legal documents and papers required to be a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Articles of Association and By-Laws are available to view upon request.





## **Website and database**

The Forever Active Forum have invested in a new website and database created, following feedback and consultation at Forever Active Forum meetings.

This is a staged process and in October 2012 the Forever Active website was re branded with a new look and is now more user friendly.

The focus in 2013 will be developing the interactive element of the website such as online bookings and also the creation of the new database system, which will be linked to the website. The database will enable secure storage of all participant information as well as having functions for the Forum to generate all of the necessary reports and evaluations as well as an accountancy package.

Forever Active participants will be able to book their classes online, purchase their Forever Active memberships and their equipment.

The interactive website will also reduce the amount of admin currently being undertaken in the office. All Instructors will be able to submit their weekly class statistics online including participant details. This is already being done via paper copies so will not require any more work for the Instructors but will significantly reduce the amount of data input in the office.

The new database will also include an accountancy package, which can be used to track weekly income and expenditure and assist with the financial management of the programme.





## **Funding and Accounts**

The Forever Active 2011 – 2012 accounts were produced by Price Bailey accountancy firm on behalf of the Forum.

At the end of August 2012 the Forever Active Forum had funds of £46,855. The income for financial year 2011/12 was £71,384 and the outgoings for the year were £62,834.

Membership income had increased by £3,856 since 2010/11. It believed this increase is due to the price increase at classes for non-members in the 2012/13 membership year. Many members paid for their renewal in July/August 2012 so the funds have been recorded in the 2011/12 accounts.

The equipment sales have also increased by £1014 since 2010/11. The sale of equipment is actively promoted by Instructors working on the scheme and also on the website. The increase in revenue is also due to the production of the Forever Active DVD's in 2011.

Grant income has decreased by £16,907. This is partly due to the Forum receiving a one off grant of nearly £10,000 in 2010/11 for the DVD project, but is also due to the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find grants, which the Forum is eligible to apply for. The Forever Active scheme has already received many local grants in previous years and a lot of the Grants Giving Bodies do not allow Organisations to apply a second time. Also the Forever Active scheme is excluded from applying for a number of grants as the annual income exceeds more than £50,000.

The Forever Active Forum received a grant in 2011/12 from NHS Cambridgeshire towards the mobility / falls prevention classes in the City. This financial support is hugely appreciated and has enabled the Forever Active to sustain its falls prevention work and classes in the City.

The expenses in 2011/12 have remained similar to that of 2010/11 with the exception of the budget for marketing at PR. This is £6,000 more than last year due to the costs invested in producing the new Forever Active website and database. The equipment costs have also significantly increased by £2,000, this is because up until 2011 the equipment was purchased by Cambridge City Council on behalf of the Forum. Now the Forum is responsible for purchasing its own equipment for classes.

A full set of accounts is available to view upon request.

The focus for 2013 will be to seek external sponsorship to support the scheme and also to explore possible funding through the new GP Commissioning groups, CATCH and CAMhealth in Cambridge. The Forum will also focus on continuing to generate income through memberships and sale of equipment.

## **Events in 2012:**

### **Olympic Celebration Events:**

The Forever Active scheme hosted two Olympic celebration events in 2012. One was based at Chesterton Sports Centre in June and the other at Milton Recreation Ground in May.

Both events provided participants with opportunities to try new sports and activities, many with an Olympic theme. Activities included exercise classes such as spinning, boxercise, Latin workout and cheerleading, sports such as netball, walking football, martial arts, swimming, synchronised swimming, archery and climbing.

Great feedback was received from both events and it was felt that these events provided a celebration of 50+ sports and activities in London 2012 Olympic year.



## Grafton Event – October 2012

As part of Cambridge Celebrate Age annual event, the Forever Active scheme ran the promotional event for the second year running at the Grafton Centre, Cambridge.

There were taster and demo sessions taking place throughout the day in the diamond at the end of the Grafton Centre. Nearly 50 Forever Active volunteers supported the event and the day generated a lot of interest from people passing by doing their shopping!

The day was also supported by local 50+ Organisations who had displays stands at the event.

A thank you to the Grafton Centre for supporting this event again and for hosting us at the Centre.



### **Membership on the Scheme:**

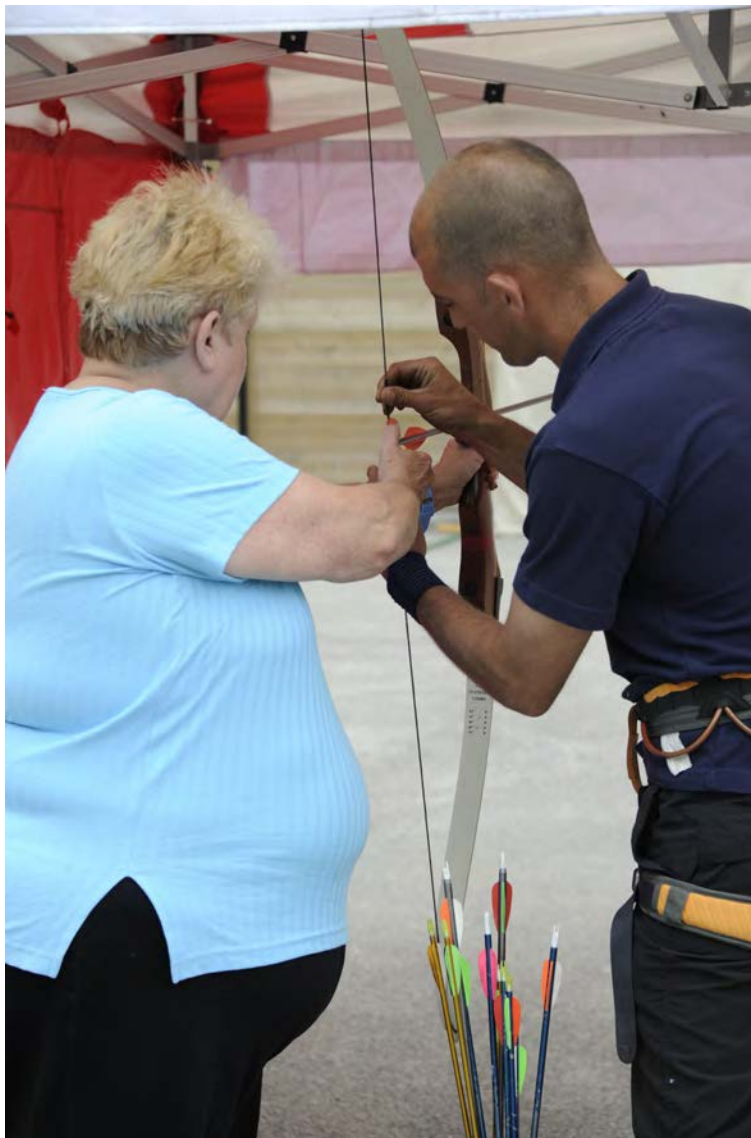
At the end of February 2013 (the deadline for all feedback to form the basis of the 2012 annual report), there were a total of 548 full Forever Active members who access classes in Cambridge City. (Full members pay £12.50 per year)

There were a total of 1337 people on the database. The full members have increased by 168 since the 2011/12 membership year.

This is due to the improved membership benefits, which were introduced in September 2012. The membership rate remained at £12.50 for the year but members now save £1 per class compared to 50p in 2011/12.

The membership fees generated are put back into developing the scheme in Cambridge City.

The membership scheme and benefits do not apply to the classes in South Cambridgeshire.





## **Results from the 2011 evaluation questionnaire**

Questionnaires were distributed to Forever Active participants via the Instructors at the classes and also available to complete online via SurveyMonkey. These were distributed between December and February 2013 and responses were requested by the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

It was the first year that SurveyMonkey has been used as a tool to evaluate the questionnaire responses. It is estimated that 30 people completed their evaluation form directly onto the website and the remaining questionnaires, which were returned to the office, were added manually into surveymonkey.

It is estimated that approximately 1000 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 167 responses were received back.



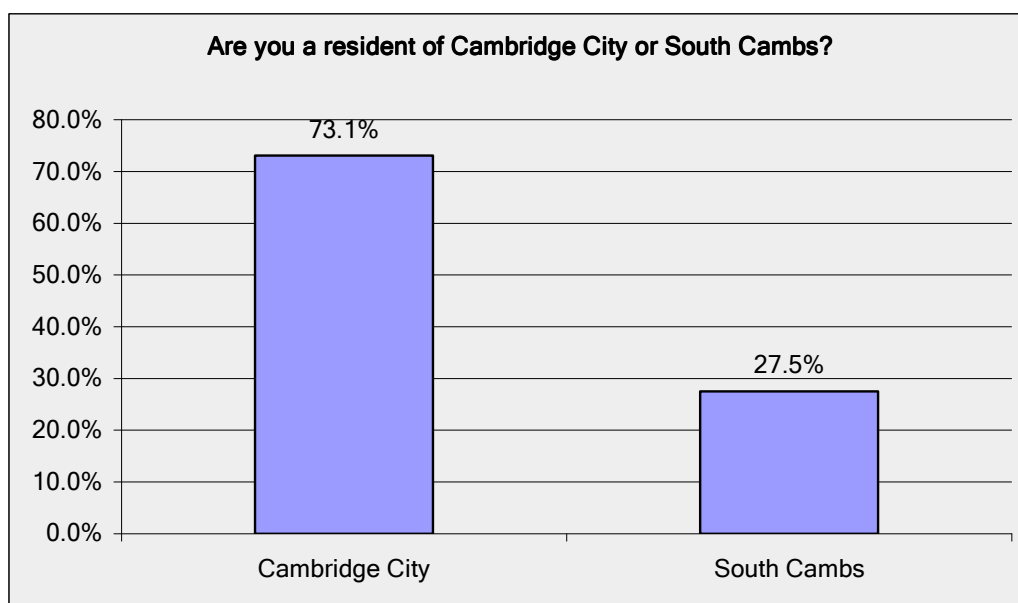
## **About the Participants**

### **Membership**

The results highlight that 87% of respondents are Forever Active members. Membership is optional and is £12.50 per year. Members get benefits such as reduced class costs, priority booking and they receive information on up to date activities and events. Forever Active has seen an increase in the number of members since the improvements introduced to the membership scheme in September 2012 as mentioned earlier in the report.

### **Residence**

From the 167 responses, the table below highlights the number of people who are residents of Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. This number is reflective of more classes currently taking place in the City.



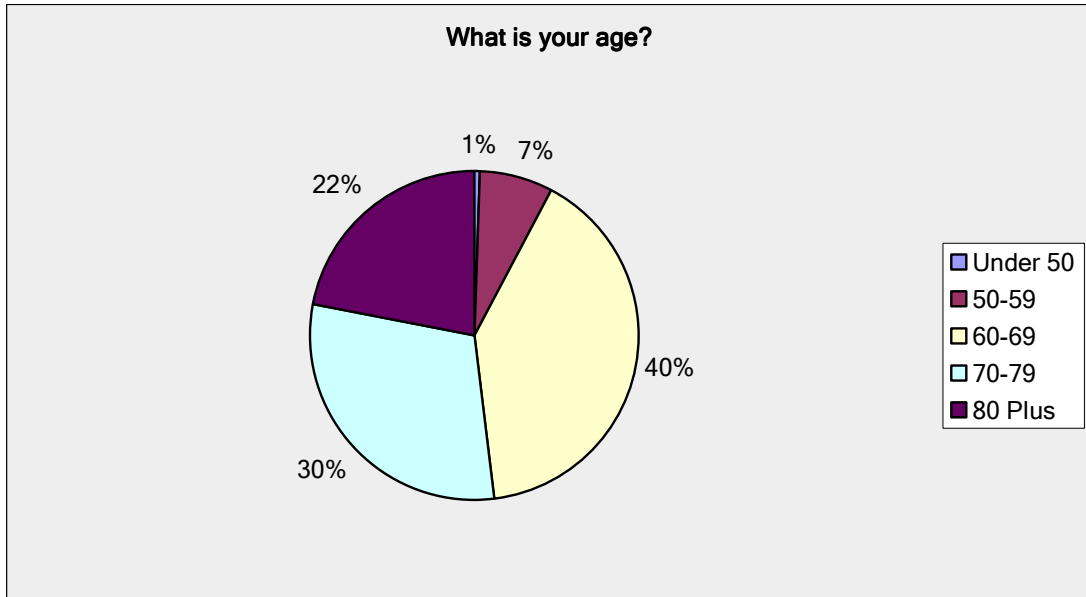
### **Gender of Participants**

Since the start of Forever Active, attendance on the scheme has been dominated by females. This is clear in the percentage of males / females completing the questionnaire, with only 13% males. It is estimated that attendance across all Forever Active classes is approximately 90% females. The scheme has set up sessions such as golf, rowing and bowling to try and appeal to male residents, however the scheme would like to look into ways of attracting more males onto the programme in 2013.



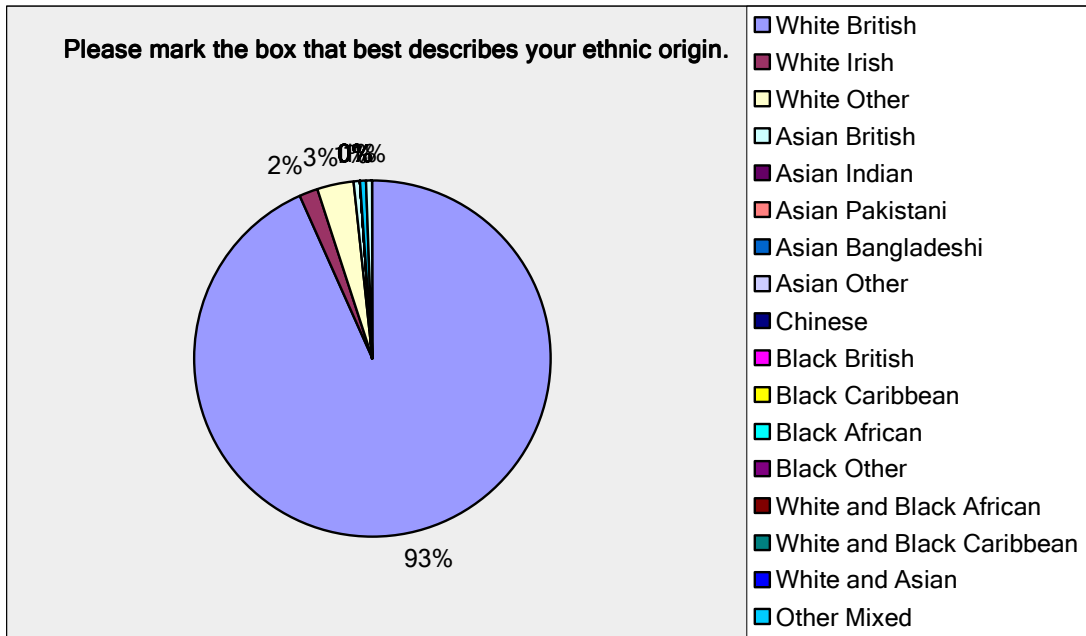
### Age of Participants

The results show that the majority of respondents are between the ages of 60 and 79. This is the same as the findings in 2011/12. The project would like to focus on providing off peak classes to cater for those who are still working and also to focus on promoting the scheme to those who are pre retirement age.



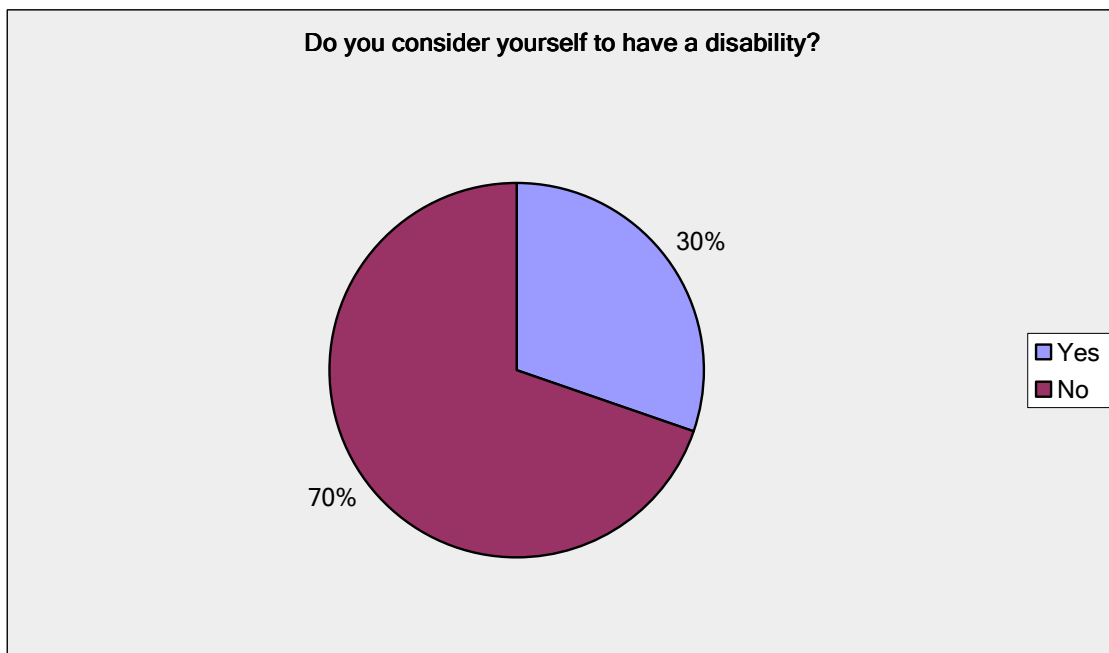
### Ethnicity of Participants

The vast majority of respondents are white British (93%) The Forever Active group continues to work with the Indian Cultural Community Group to provide bi-weekly sessions for their members.



### % of respondents with a Disability

The results show that 30% of respondents consider themselves to have a disability. This is 16% less than in 2011. All of the classes are tailored so that they are suitable for individuals with an age related medical condition and disability. In particular the mobility classes are suitable for an individual with a disability.



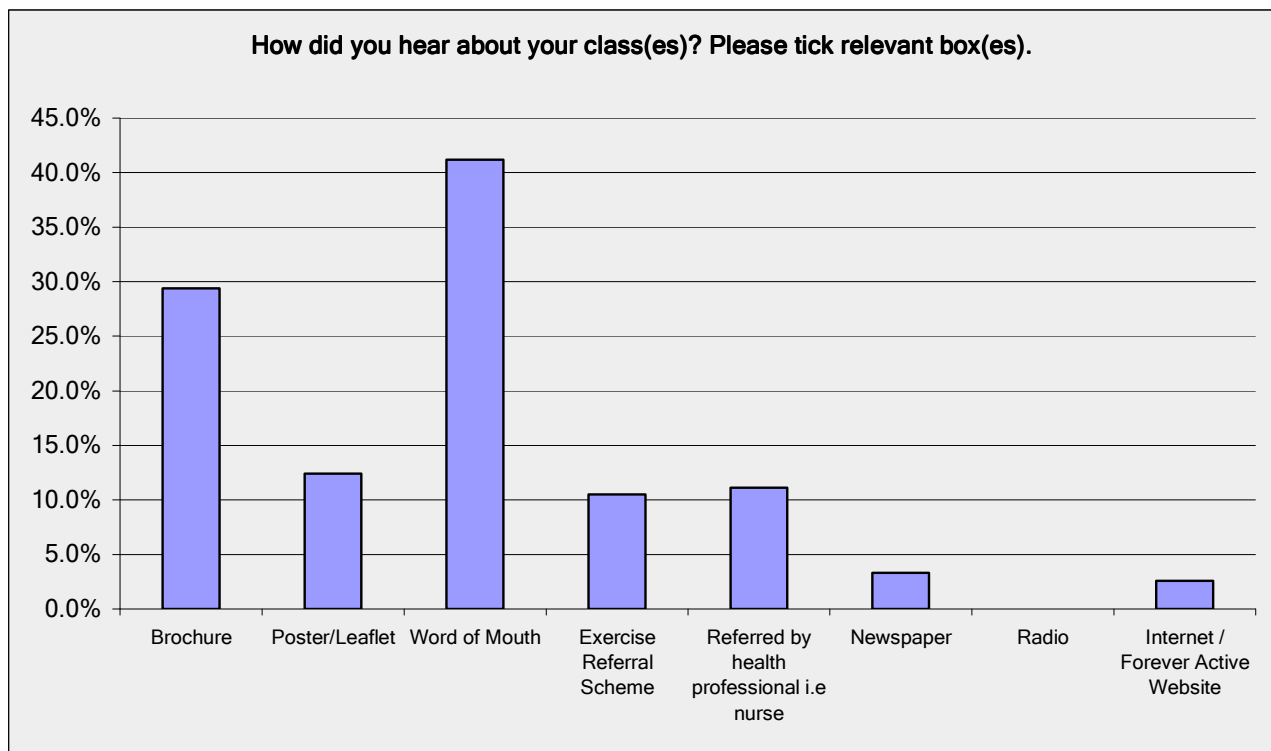
## **Promotion and Marketing of the Scheme**

As with previous years, it is clear from the results that the majority of people found out about the Forever Active scheme via word of mouth and the publicity brochure.

It was agreed at the AGM in 2012 that the Forever Active scheme will continue to produce the publicity brochure twice a year in 2013. 12,000 copies of the brochure are printed for each edition and are distributed within Cambridge City and South Cambs. Forever Active volunteers also help distribute the brochures in their local area.

A key focus for 2013 will be to use the new Forever Active website as a means of promoting the scheme. Only 3% of respondents heard about the scheme via the website.

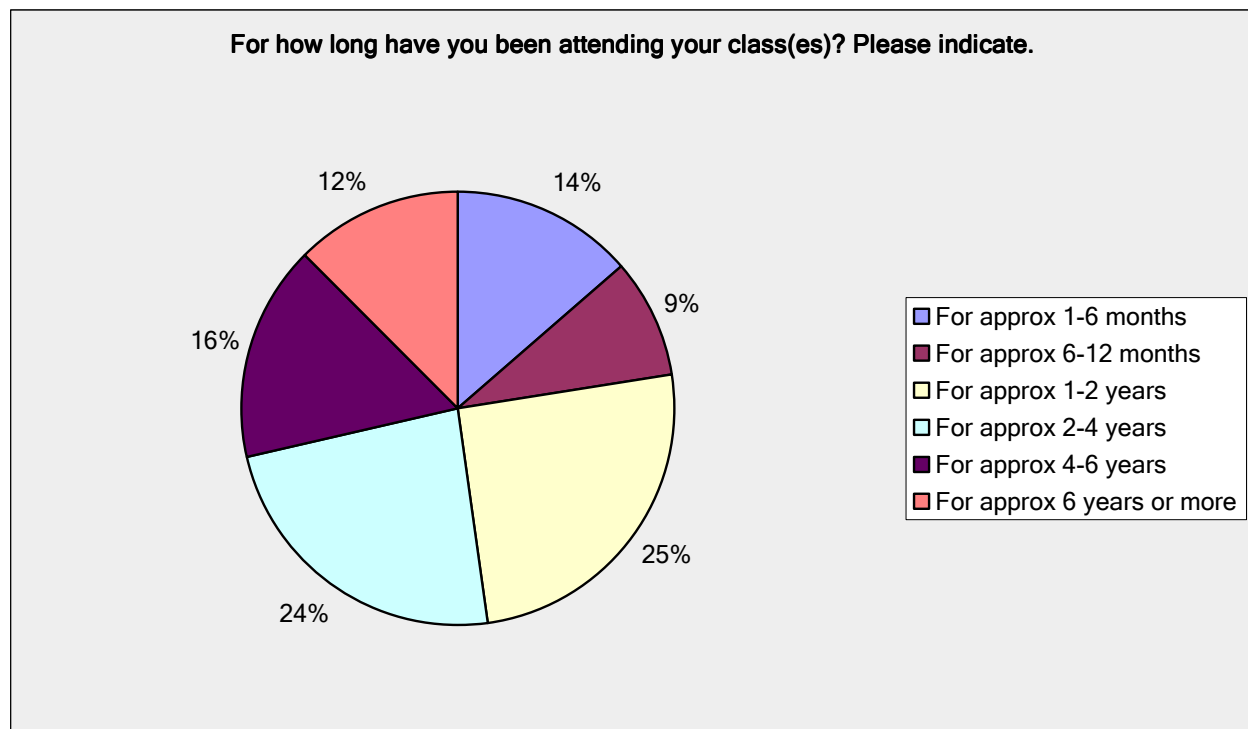
It will also be possible for participants to book online for classes on the website and purchase their annual Forever Active membership.



### **Attendance at Forever Active Sessions**

In line with the findings from 2011, the majority of participants (54%) have been attending the scheme for two plus years. The findings show that 14% have been attending since the project started over 6 years ago. The results also show that the project is continuing to succeed in attracting new members as 14% have been attending sessions for 1 – 6 months.

The scheme will continue to strive to retain existing members and to ensure participants are satisfied with the provision of classes. It is also important for the scheme to continue to promote the project and sessions on offer to new residents, in the hope of continuing to increase the attendance rates at sessions as well as increasing the membership base.

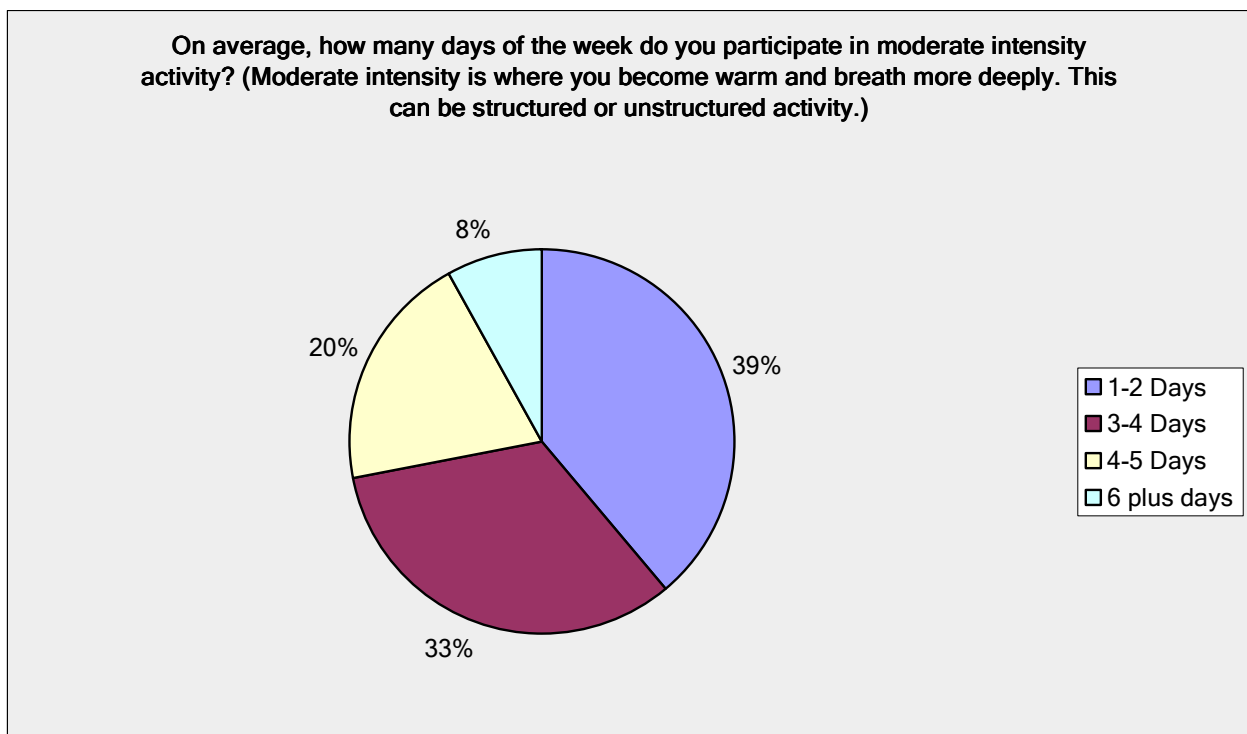


In line with the 2011 report's findings, 21% of participants have been a member of the City or South Cambs exercise referral schemes. Forever Active continues to work in partnership with other specialist projects such as CHIP and weigh 2 go weight management programmes, NHS Falls Prevention and other local groups to attract referrals and recommendations onto the project.

### **% Achieving National guidelines for activity levels and health**

National guidelines state that adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more. For those who are already active at a moderate intensity, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week.

The results highlight that only 8% are active on 6 plus days of the week. The majority are active on 1 – 2 days of the week. Further clarification is needed as to the amount of activity the person is doing on these days, however the results suggest that more promotion is needed with regards to the National exercise guidelines for health and to promote the benefits of being moderately active on a daily basis.

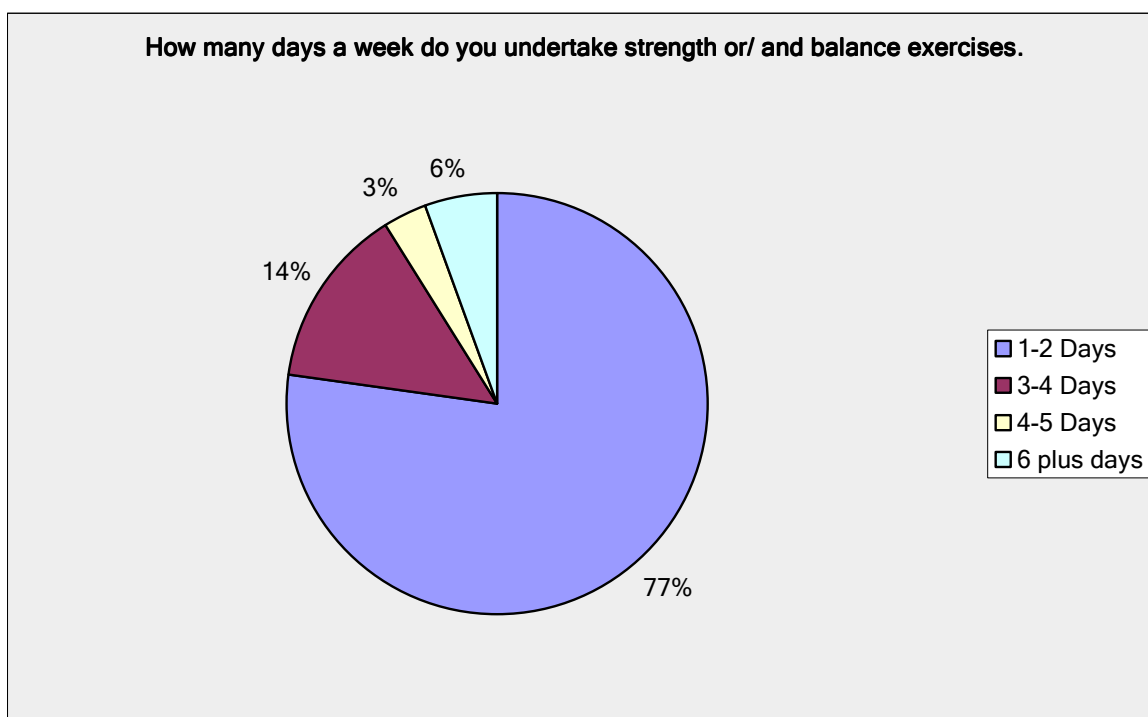


As we get older it is increasingly important to do strength and balance exercises and it is recommended that these exercises should be done on at least two days of the week.

The results show that 100% do strength and/or balance exercises on at least a weekly basis. The National recommendations are to undertake the exercises on at least two days of the week. The Forever Active scheme ran two workshops in 2012 on exercises to improve strength and balance and the benefits with regards to falls prevention and musculoskeletal conditions.

Over 100 people attended these workshops in total and they were an excellent opportunity to promote the benefits of doing regular strength and balance exercises. All of the Forever Active classes within the programme have a focus on strength and balance exercises specifically for the older adult.

The Forever Active scheme also promotes the National guidelines in the publicity brochure to raise awareness with regards to the guidelines for exercise and health.



77% of the Forever Active participants stated that they practise the exercises taught in their class/es at home in their own time. This is an increase of 8% since 2011.

The Forever Active scheme continues to promote the home based exercise DVDs and booklets as a resource for people wishing to exercise at home.



## **Reported Health Benefits**

Evidence suggests that there are many health benefits, which can be gained from taking part in regular physical activity. The result below highlight the number of participants who have seen a noticeable difference in the areas listed below as a result of attending Forever Active sessions.

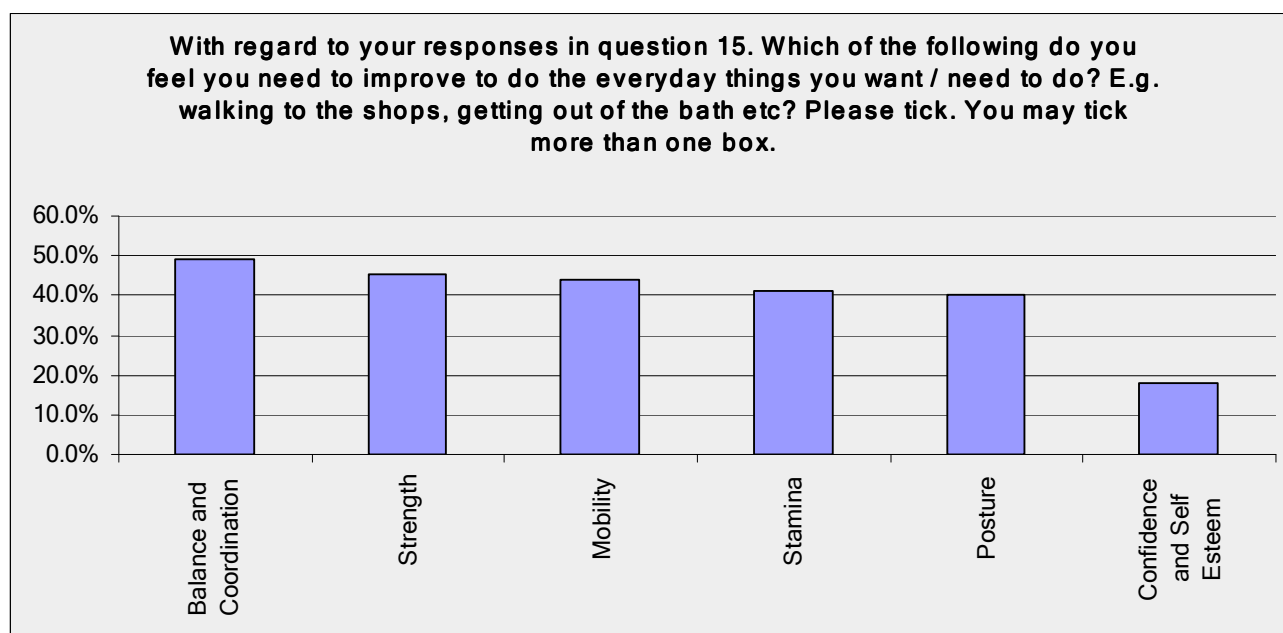
Fitness	62%
Mobility	57%
Strength	44%
Mental Wellbeing	50%
Ability to do daily tasks i.e. hoovering, washing?	23%
Weight Loss/Management	17%
Sleep Patterns	16%
Confidence	34%
Balance	49%
Coordination	35%
Energy Levels	45%
Medical Conditions inc blood pressure	20%

The majority (62%) stated that the most noticeable difference, was in their fitness levels since taking part in the project. This is in line with the 2011 findings. Closely followed by 57% who have seen a noticeable difference in their mobility. All the Forever Active classes focus on improving the strength and mobility of participants' joints to help with age related medical conditions such as arthritis and osteoporosis.

Forever Active recognises the importance of exercise for improving mental health and well being. 50% of respondents stated that they have seen a noticeable difference in their mental health since attending the sessions and 45% have seen an improvement in their energy levels.

As we get older it becomes increasingly important to maintain our ability to do everyday tasks and all of the Forever Active classes focus on functional exercises and fitness. 23% stated that they have seen an improvement in their ability to do everyday tasks since attending the scheme.

Participants were asked which area of their fitness they would like to improve to help improve their quality of life. The results were as follows:



The results show that 49% would like to improve their balance and coordination, 46% their strength, 44% their mobility, 41% their stamina, 40% their posture and 18% their confidence and self esteem.

All of the Forever Active classes focus on these key areas and the results show that the programme needs to continue to focus on these key areas in classes.

### **Satisfaction Levels:**

Participants were asked to rate the level of service they have received by Forever Active during the last year. Results are as follows:

Answer Options	Poor	Good	Excellent
Overall rating of the class	0	36	120
The facility where the class takes place	5	68	79
Your instructor / teachers / coach	2	17	136
Effectiveness of catering for the needs and abilities of yourself and others	1	41	99
The cost of your class	0	75	78
The advertisement of your class	10	84	36
If applicable: the cost of your membership	2	71	55
If applicable: the benefits of your membership, i.e. priority booking	5	40	35

The results show that the majority of respondents rate the service they have received as 'Good' or Excellent'.

The areas, which need improvement, are the standards of certain facilities. Forever Active hires the use of halls and Centres for the exercise classes and sessions. Therefore the quality of these facilities is out of the control of the scheme. However the project seeks to choose suitable venues to host the classes and where possible will look to move a class should the participants feel the venue is no longer suitable.

Two respondents were not happy with the Instructor who led the session they attended. All Instructors must be qualified to a minimum of level 2 on the Register of Exercise Professionals and must have completed an additional Older Adult Qualification. Instructors are also required to complete additional CPD qualifications each year. The project has a team of nearly 20 freelance Instructors who are dedicated to providing safe and effective exercise sessions for the Forever Active participants. Even though we realise an element of class enjoyment comes down to the style and personality of the teacher. We always welcome constructive feedback about how the sessions are led so that we can continue to improve the service offered.

Responses suggest that the scheme needs to continue to improve the publicity of the programme. Currently marketing and publicity includes the publicity brochure, which is produced twice a year, the development of the website, posters in local centres, talks at local older adult groups and word of mouth. The scheme is also promoted in newsletters such as the monthly COPE newsletter and the quarterly ward newsletters. However we realise that there are still a number of local residents who we need to reach. Forever Active will continue to explore other promotional and marketing avenues and is grateful for the support of volunteer brochure distributors who help distribute the brochures in the local community.

Results also suggest that there are still improvements to be made to the membership scheme including cost and benefits. The scheme welcomes any suggested benefits, which you would like to see included as part of your membership package.

### **Priority Areas for 2013:**

- To further develop the programme of activities in South Cambridgeshire, in particular sessions for the active 50+.
- To continue to work towards the sustainability of all classes in Cambridge City and develop new sessions where appropriate.
- Look at ways of generating more income and sponsorship to support the ongoing development of the programme.
- To increase the amount of unrestricted funds via sale of the DVDs, other equipment and fundraising opportunities
- To continue to increase the number of Forever Active members and attendances at sessions.
- To finalise the upgrade of the Forever Active website, database system and evaluation processes.
- To have all admin related to classes inputted by Instructors via the new website and database system.
- To increase the number of volunteers involved in the day-to-day running and operations of the scheme to support the sustainability of the programme.
- To look into ways the programme can become more self-sustainable with less hands on support from both Local Authorities.
- To look into the possibilities of in-house training and development courses for Instructors.
- To look into the possibility of the Forever Active Forum achieving Charity Status

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