

Age UK Burton, St Giles Hospice and Trent & Dove Housing Wellbeing Project Evaluation

Introduction

The Wellbeing Project in collaboration with Age UK (Burton), St Giles Hospice and Trent and Dove Housing schemes ran from April 2014 to April 2015 and consisted of four programmes of 12 sessions. Each session comprised of 45 minutes of seated exercise provided by *Move it or Lose it!** The second half of the session was aimed at supportive care with information from a variety of speakers.

Evaluation using the Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB)**

The Community Engagement Manager from St Giles was trained to use the Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB) to evaluate changes in physical function and completed all the evaluations.

Thirty-seven older adults (78 ± 8.2 years) both male ($n = 4$) and female ($n = 33$) voluntarily took part in the programme. Three groups of 11, 13, and 13 participants, completed 12 weeks of *Move it or Lose it!* training, and SPPB data was collected on weeks two and 12. Therefore, results illustrate change over a 10-week period. Eleven participants' data were incomplete due to absence on the final data collection session; consequently pre- and post- test results could only be compiled for the remaining 26 participants. Results from the fourth group are pending.

Total SPPB scores improved, on average by 15%, with the greatest improvement being 67% from a score of 2 to 10 points.

85% improved gait speed (4 metre walk) which correlates to improved wellbeing¹ and functional status.²

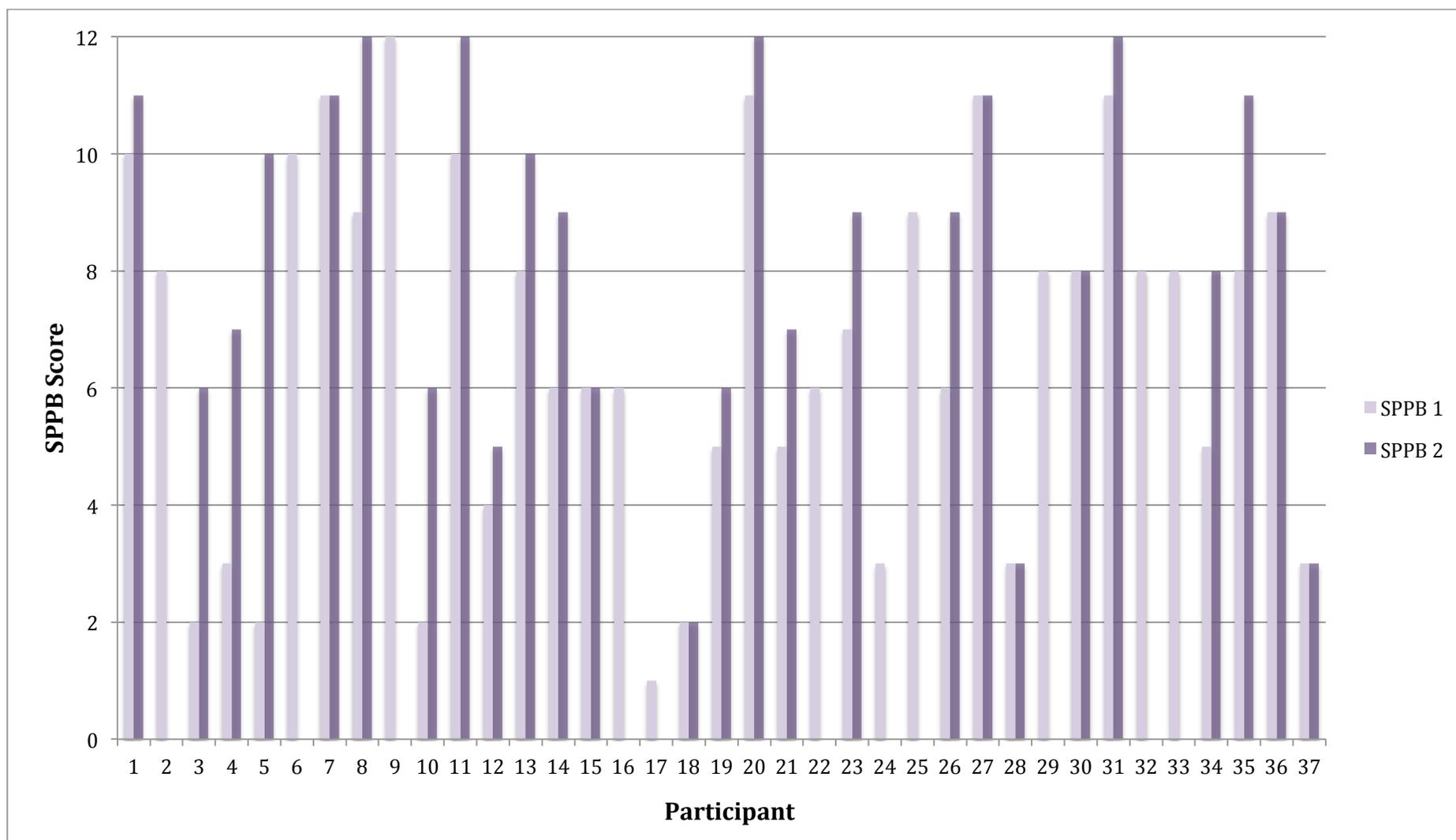
96% increased the number of chair rises with the greatest improvement being 60% (from 26.91 to 16.1 seconds on 5 chair-rises). Good lower limb function is vital for the maintenance of physical capability at levels which are adequate to ensure an independent and healthy life.

The participants also completed feedback questionnaires (quotes below) reporting improvements in their mobility and confidence with the opportunity to socialise being a key component of their enjoyment. Such is the success of the Wellbeing Project, that an extra session per week is now being offered and Age UK have sought funding to continue the programme in other locations.

* The *Move it or Lose it!* programme includes adapting chair-based exercise to suit the needs of participants through evidence based exercises including the sit to stand, strengthening and mobilising exercises. Exercises are adapted from Dr William Evans' PEPPI programme (Peer Exercise Programme Promotes Independence) and The Chair-based Exercise Programme for Frailer Older Adults (Skelton, 1994 Fiarone, 1998, Campbell, 1999).

** The SPPB is a group of measures that combines the results of the gait speed, chair stand and balance tests (Guralnik et al., 2000). It has been used as a predictive tool for possible disability and can aid in the monitoring of function in older people. The scores range from 0 (worst performance) to 12 (best performance). The SPPB has been shown to have predictive validity showing a gradient of risk for mortality, nursing home admission, and disability.

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References

¹ Hall, W.J. (2006). Update in geriatrics. *Annual Intern Medicine*, 145 (7), 538-543.

² Abellan, van Kan, G. et al. (2009). Gait speed at usual pace as a predictor of adverse outcomes in community dwelling older people. *Journal of Nutrition, Health and Aging*, 13 (10), 881-889.

This report from St Giles Hospice outlines the key achievements of the project:-

- 1) The exercise classes are now continuing on a Tuesday afternoon at Age UK, Burton. Such are their success that Age UK are looking to add an extra weekly class. It is unlikely that this would have happened without the Wellbeing Project.
- 2) We have been able to watch friendships form amongst the groups and this was demonstrated when at the final session of programme two, one of the regular ladies did not attend. Two of the other members of the group were able to phone her to see why she wasn't there as they'd become friends and swapped telephone numbers.
- 3) The sharing of information has been very important. Every home and safety session has seen an uptake of an offer from the fire service to perform a home visit. The session on Benefits was also very enlightening and led to some participants successfully applying for an attendance allowance.
- 4) Throughout the exercise classes, everyone attending has seen an improvement in their mobility. They were evaluated on week two and twelve and almost all were shown to improve.
- 5) It has introduced people to other groups who can provide support; several members now attend classes, lunches and go on trips with Age UK, Burton.
- 6) Ian Leech, "I think the biggest achievement has been to watch each group grow, from the first session where they were sat, clearly concerned about what they had signed up for, to the final evaluations where they posed for photographs and told how they were looking forward to the exercise classes continuing. We have a great selection of photographs and videos from the classes, including one where our exercise class recently flash mobbed Sainsbury's in aid of Comic Relief."
- 7) It has strengthened partnership working within our organisation and led to exploring other ways in which we can support and help each other.
- 8) The success of this project has led us to support a lunch group in a similar way and this has seen their number rise from 7 when we took over six months ago, to a current number of 20. This has been done by slightly adapting this programme and has proved equally successful.

The following statements were provided through evaluation of the first programme. Whilst anonymous, all evaluations are available to view on request.

"It's made me feel like a new woman"

"Feel fitter, didn't know you could do so many chair exercises!"

“The exercises were fun, but you knew you had exercised”

“Gained information, met marvelous people, also made me aware of the good that people do to help others”

“The group was friendly and helpful and a pleasure to be with”

“This is a wonderful opportunity for people, I hope lots take the opportunity to use this gift”

“I met someone who used to work where I did. Also met a lady who lives round the corner from me. I met lots of new people”

“The exercises were very good, I can tell that I have done them. I think it’s good to come, I look forward to coming as I live on my own”

“Have enjoyed all the sessions, very pleased the classes are going to continue”

“I feel much stronger and able to move better”

“It is easier to exercise in a group and also to be shown different ones than can be corrected if need be”

“The thing I enjoyed most about the group was just being with other people.”

“Speakers from Police/Fire, Occupational Therapist and Bereavement at St Giles all very good, I got something from all speakers”

The exercise classes continue on a Tuesday afternoon at Age UK, Burton with participants attending from all the previous groups along with new members. The Tuesday afternoon group is currently at capacity for the room they are in, so they are going to be introducing a second class on a different day in the week. Once established we have agreed with Age UK, Burton to implement the supportive care speakers to the new group with a refresher to the old group after six months.

We find the refresher particularly useful as some of the group have dementia and cannot always remember the information supplied. Also, with information like benefits, they can change quickly so it is important that participants have the most up to date information.

It was originally thought that the fees for the group would be met by members paying a weekly charge, however, such is the popularity of the sessions, Age UK, has sought successfully to fund the ongoing exercise groups. Should that funding cease, I am certain the participants would self-fund.