

# SHEPPEY MATTERS

Tackling Inequalities funded project

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## Why did you choose to deliver this project?

We chose to deliver this project because of the feedback we had received through lockdown, from members of Sheppey Matters, the Community Wardens and older Nordic walkers whose mobility and strength had dramatically declined during lockdown. There were also those that were now unable to leave their houses because of not only of physical health but also poor mental health and loss of confidence.



## Why did the participants chose to take part?

In the beginning most participants chose to take part in the project because they were scared they would be isolated at home and lonely for years to come, and the others were because they had loved walking but were no longer able to because their conditions had been made worse during this time. This resulted in reduced mobility and pain.

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## What was enjoyed most about the activities?

Activities offered are home based exercises with the Active at Home booklet that includes routines with bands & squeeze balls, and Nordic Walking. All the clients so far that have wanted to learn how to Nordic Walk have wanted to be in a group environment. They would say that the most enjoyment has come from being able to walk again and walking in a group.

Sue can now walk upright and pain free after learning to Nordic Walk, she had not walked for years because of spinal problems and arthritis which had compounded her weight issues.

Pam can now walk without feeling like she has a dagger poking her in her hip.

Marjory can now walk around her garden and is hoping that soon she will be able to walk down her driveway with confidence after a bad fall in lockdown.

Margarete ended up with two black eyes because of a fall in lockdown, she had been on the waiting list for Falls Prevents but because of lockdown it never went ahead. Prior to lockdown she had had a heart attack which had reduced her mobility, she can now walk to the end of the leas without sitting down, she is now starting to lose weight and be more confident.



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**What positive impacts on health and well-being, both physical and mental, have you seen?**

All house bound participants are given a routine to do every other day to start with and then increased to everyday, they are contacted regularly either by myself or the office staff and those that have been on a programme for a number of weeks have improved in both strength and mobility, enabling them to be able to get out in their gardens and walk around either using their walking frames or Nordic walking poles, this has also improved their mental health.

For those that have learnt to Nordic Walk the impact has been by far the most dramatic, and those that have learnt have referred other to the project. The mental health of those that have taken up Nordic Walking has been inspiring, for those that have not walked for years because of health conditions that have left them unable to walk due to pain are delighted and emotional.



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**Have you witnessed any other benefits gained from being involved e.g. social interaction, making friends, improved confidence & self-esteem?**

One participant, Dorothy said I cannot believe I have walked up that slope not only pain free but not having to hang on to my husband, who has his own health problems. He initially was not interested in learning how to Nordic walk, but after the 1st session I was convinced to buy a set for both of us!

On our 2nd session I brought along my daughter who had breast cancer and sepsis four years ago which had left her with no feeling in her feet and unable to walk. She had now purchased her own poles because trying mine had enabled her to walk again. Her attitude had changed so much she was so positive and could not stop smiling.

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**My whole demeanor has changed in the space of one week. At our first meeting I had been hunched over and in pain, I had a frozen shoulder that I had not bothered to sort out for years but by my second visit I could walk again.**

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Dorothy

