

## Table Tennis Aids Heart Attack Recovery

*Theme: physical wellbeing*

### Defining the Issue

According to the British Heart Foundation, there are over 80,000 hospital admissions in England each year for heart attacks. Physical activity plays an important role in recovering from a heart attack, as it builds up strength and stamina and improves the body's ability to take in and use oxygen. John has suffered from two heart attacks and argues that playing table tennis has massively helped during his recovery programme.

### Background Information

John is 73 years old, lives in Bolton and has had two heart attacks and a spine operation since 2017. After his second heart attack John took part in a cardiac rehabilitation programme, which involved him attending a local fitness centre for up to 20 weeks. However John didn't feel this sort of activity was for him;

*"When you're doing something and you don't particularly like doing it, it becomes a chore. That's how I felt about going to the gym"*

In June 2019, John was walking through his local shopping centre in Bolton when he came across one of Table Tennis England's Ping Pong Parlours and decided to have a go;

*"I thought to myself 'I used to play that game', and it drew me in to have a go. Before long I couldn't keep away! I wasn't getting enough exercise before, which I thought was fine. Then I found the Ping Pong Parlour and the gym went by the wayside and I've never looked back"*

### The Impact

John visits the Parlour every day and plays for around 4 hours each time. John regularly meets up with new friends and has also visited other Parlours that are nearby.

As part of John's cardiac rehabilitation programme he visited a nurse who monitored the recovery of his heart. The nurse was completing her Masters degree dissertation and asked if she could take some final images of John's heart;

*"She told me that my heart is so much better now to when I first saw her. She knew I had been playing table tennis regularly and said it had obviously helped the recovery of my heart"*

John has fallen back in love with table tennis through the Ping Pong Parlour and is extremely happy with the impact it's had on his health;

*"A few months ago I used to get very tired after playing for a while, but now I don't get tired at all and I'm much better throughout the whole day. I enjoy myself so much more playing table tennis than I did doing other things, it's the camaraderie I love and I'll definitely carry on playing!"*

