

The Impact of Bat & Chat

Theme: intervention, loneliness, physical activity

Defining the Issue

England has an ageing population, with the number of people aged 60 or over expected to surpass 20 million by 2030. As people get older, they are more likely to become inactive and are more likely to feel socially isolated or lonely. Table Tennis England's *Bat & Chat* project aims to combat both of these areas, by bringing older people together to get active with table tennis.

Background Information

The *Bat & Chat* project involves regular table tennis sessions focussed around being social, having fun and being active. The sessions are aimed at those aged 50 and above and are held in a variety of venues, providing an accessible activity to those who may be more at risk of social isolation and physical inactivity.

Since the project's launch in 2018, a total of 39 table tennis clubs now deliver *Bat & Chat* sessions to support local people. In addition, the *Bat & Chat* concept is used across other areas of the organisation, including within the Mass Participation department's *Ping Pong Parlour* project.



The Impact

- > An average of 17 participants attend each session
- > On average, 43% of participants are female
- > 59% of participants have increased their physical activity levels since starting sessions
- > 64% of participants attend sessions once a week, with 20% attending sessions more than once a week

"We have a member who joined after recovering from brain damage after an accident. He has lost coordination on one side, which is already improving after a few week's attendance at Bat & Chat"

"It makes me feel more alive – partly the exercise and partly the social contact"

"We had an individual who had suffered a stroke which impacted his speech. He has seen the benefit of attending our session in Bristol, and has said that he doesn't need to speak to play – so he's really happy that table tennis is an accessible sport that he can get involved in"

case study

March 2020

Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre, Blackpool



"For me, the best thing about the sessions is that the participants have become friends away from the session. They now go to other local social table tennis sessions, play badminton together and meet up for coffee outside of the session"

"I've increased my circle of friends, get a great deal of enjoyment from coming, and it's a great physical and mental activity"

SGS College, Bristol

"One of the highlights of my week! It's improved my fitness, table tennis skills and my social life"

"It's had a significant impact on me, socially, for fitness and mobility. I also like a new challenge and being competitive"



The Dracaena Centre, Falmouth



"Its become a small community in itself. I walk in each week and ask people about their weeks, their family. It has a personal touch rather than being just another sports session"

"Got me back into group activities and into a group sport. It's also helped my coordination, concentration and memory"

Withington Baths, Manchester

"I've made new friends and acquired a new hobby which has improved my self confidence and mental health"

"I'm much fitter physically and I've also noticed an improvement in my mental wellbeing"



Further Information

For more information about *Bat & Chat*, visit www.tabletennisengland.co.uk

Sport England
21 Bloomsbury Street
London WC1B 3HF
sportengland.org

