

Bat and CHAT



Background:

A priority for Barnsley Council is that residents are healthier, happier, independent and active. In line with this priority a key objective for our Sport & Active Recreation Service was to deliver a programme of activities that would encourage older people to become more active.

- Research shows that exercise is very good at preventing dementia and helping with the symptoms of the disease.
- **“...a lack of regular physical activity can increase your risk of heart disease, becoming overweight or obese, and type 2 diabetes – all of which are risk factors for dementia. Older adults who don't exercise are also more likely to have problems with memory or thinking (known as cognitive abilities).”**
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia/dementia-prevention/>
- We chose table tennis as it's easy to play, interactive and energising. Anyone can take part, whether it's their first time or they've been playing for years.

Aim:

- Increase the number of older people participating in physical activity, impacting positively on their physical and mental health.

Method:

Through a successful bid to Table Tennis England we became a 'Ping! City'.

- Ping! raises the profile of table tennis, challenges people's preconceptions about what it is, who the game is for and where it can be played. It's an opportunity to promote social table tennis, create ongoing opportunities and inform the public about all the places they can play.
- Barnsley chose to use some of the funding to deliver Bat and Chat sessions. These were delivered by Inclusive Ping Pong at a number of locations to allow engagement with a wide range of older people.

Results:

- Sessions ran for 12 months and saw 360 attendances.
- We saw marked improvements in participants coordination and movement.
- Following the session's one participant with dementia said **“he really enjoyed the session”**.
- Staff stated that **“sessions were thoroughly enjoyed by the people that took part.”**
- Age UK Barnsley reported that **“We would never have dreamt that table tennis would be so enthusiastically received by our service user group. The benefits are enormous.”**

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