



**Live longer and stronger  
with regular physical activity**

Community Pharmacy  
**Living Well**  
Campaign

CHOOSE  
TO  
LIVE  
BETTER

**The Live Longer and Stronger campaign aimed to raise awareness of the importance of ageing well, with a focus on physical activity. The campaign ran throughout February 2023 and March 2023.**

The information used to develop this report is from our submissions of pharmacy team evaluation surveys from 96% of Living Well contracted community pharmacies. Evaluation figures are an estimation provided by contracted community pharmacies.

**Feedback from participating community pharmacies**

“A lady’s husband had fallen a few times over 2 weeks. I was able to give safety information and refer to local falls prevention officer at the council for help.”



“We talked to patients about their daily routines and how to incorporate some sort of exercise in their lives. An elderly couple told us that following our chats they had started to move around the house and carry small bags of groceries. Before they were afraid of falls but after boosting their confidence they can now do much more and feel independent. It is important to let the elderly take on tasks they feel confident to do, building up their strength and independence.”



“I advised a patient regarding armchair aerobics and then demonstrated on the chair in the pharmacy what they could do. We both enjoyed this!”

“We advised an elderly man about the benefits of gentle exercise and he is now able to walk significantly more.”



“We were able to refer patients to the local walking club. Several older patients have joined the club after conversations with our staff. One patient came in this week to thank us after returning from a walking trip in England with the club. She said that this had changed her health for the better, both her physical and mental health.”

“A customer in her late 50s, who had not run before, enrolled in a Couch to 5K as a result of discussion with staff and has been doing park runs since.”

“We encouraged a group of ladies in their 50s to partake in a charity 5K walk/ run event at the weekend. The group previously had not walked any further than 50 metres in the past year.”



“An older lady living alone who suffers from mental health issues was advised to take a short walk from her home to get fresh air and a little low impact exercise. The lady later reported she felt the benefits to her mental health and how she was able to gradually walk further.”

“We are aware of a number of groups in the local area that get older people out once a week for a free exercise session and were able to get a number of customers to join in and participate as they were unaware it existed.”



“Generally people were interested in doing more activity by making small changes e.g. a discussion with a patient whose weight/BMI and blood pressure were very high. The patient started making small changes, such as, walking around the house until they could then venture out over the coming weeks. As a result, their weight and blood pressure have reduced. They have a way to go but can already see the difference through making the small changes.”



“A pharmacist discussed the importance of physical activity with the family member of an elderly patient, advising on types of exercises that can help reduce the risk of falls. The family member came back to say they now do some YouTube videos every few days, and enjoy it and appreciated the advice.”

“A patient received a leaflet and said it would be extremely helpful for her elderly father. After asking her some questions and going through the leaflet, I directed her to the Frailty Network NI to get more information on falls. The lady came back a week later, thanked us for talking with her and said by using the frailty network website she realised one of her father's medicines could have been contributing to his high fall risk. By talking to the GP she was able to get an alternative medicine for her father which made him feel more stable and improved his quality of life.”



“A patient, over 60, whilst reading the leaflet, said he really should start doing a bit more exercise but found it hard to get motivated. One of the counter staff explained it didn't need to be strenuous exercise, but starting with small increase in activity at home. They also advised about a walking group and exercise classes in the local Healthy Living Centre. The patient decided that they would call in to the centre and see what was on offer.”

“Pharmacy staff spoke to an elderly gentleman. He had been struggling with mobility issues and a sedentary lifestyle. Staff encouraged him to start walking as a gentle form of exercise. Initially hesitant, he eventually started walking short distances. Over time, his confidence grew, and he began walking longer distances. This simple lifestyle change has improved his cardiovascular health, boosted his mood, and increased his social interactions with fellow walkers. His inspiring progress has also motivated others in the community to embrace walking as a health promoting activity.”



“A patient was very pleased to receive the leaflet. They had been feeling low, and the information made them feel empowered to make some changes to improve both their physical and mental health.”

“We found that our elderly customers were unaware of a local exercise class which is once a week and free. It teaches both strength and cardiac exercises and all equipment is provided. We found that the uptake of this class has been greater since we had been notifying our customers.”



“A man who was inactive and having health problems came into the chemist after receiving the leaflet with his prescription. He was encouraged when we underlined the importance of physical activity and although ageing is inevitable, we told him that the pace at which physical changes occur can be slowed or even reversed with regular physical activity. He agreed that he needed to build it up gently and was going to go to some classes being run by the local council.”

“A woman was shocked when she heard the recommended guidelines state 150 mins of moderate intensity exercise should be carried out weekly. I talked her through how this could be split into half hour sessions 5 times per week. I also gave people examples of how to increase their physical activity in daily tasks, e.g. take the stairs instead of a lift, walk short trips instead of driving, etc. I also explained how different types of exercise should be carried out (cardio and weight bearing exercise). One patient returned weekly to get help through this process as she really wanted to increase her physical activity but was finding it difficult. She was very impressed with her improvement over the course of 2 months. She lost weight, felt stronger and had a much more positive mental attitude.”



**Over 55,850 patients were engaged with through 521 pharmacies on campaign messages.**

**Over 64,800 leaflets were distributed.**

**248** pharmacies handed leaflets to all patients at counselling.

The main queries addressed were in relation to **health benefits of physical activity** and **ideas on being more active.**

The main age group provided with campaign information were those aged **61-70** years old.

**Number of pharmacies that provided campaign information to the follow:**

- 452** Elderly
- 341** Those with long term health conditions
- 224** Socially isolated
- 203** Housebound
- 91** English not the patient's first

**398 pharmacies reported the public's feedback to the campaign to be positive or very positive.**

**How did pharmacy engage?**

- 264** Provided leaflets alongside
- 220** Displayed the template poster
- 59** Via their delivery driver
- 52** Via social media or their website
- 39** Created visual displays in windows and instore
- 22** Disseminated information to care homes

**457** pharmacies felt campaign resources supported them to answer queries or know where to signpost patients to.

**12** pharmacies referred patients onto a Trust Community Dietitian.

**62** pharmacies referred patients onto another healthcare professional.

**174** pharmacies signposted patients to Choose to Live better webpage