

Community Pharmacy
Living Well
Campaign

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



The Live longer and stronger campaign aimed to highlight how keeping active helps you to stay healthy and age well.

The campaign ran throughout August and September 2024.

Over 53,400 patients were engaged with through 505 pharmacies on campaign messages.

Over 46,800 leaflets were distributed.

Number of pharmacies that provided campaign information to the following:

- 441** Older people
- 332** Those with long term health conditions or their carers
- 233** Socially isolated
- 203** Housebound
- 146** People experiencing drug or alcohol dependence

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

The main queries addressed related to the **health benefits of physical activity, tips to building up physical activity, barriers to physical activity, strength and cardiovascular exercises, and medication and falls.**

The main age groups provided with campaign information were those aged **51-60, 61-70, 71-80 and over 80 years old.**



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

214 pharmacies signposted patients to Choose to live better website.

56 pharmacies referred patients into another pharmacy service.

414 pharmacies felt that the campaign helped to support the health and wellbeing of the pharmacy team.

How did pharmacy engage?

- 301** Verbally informed patients
- 282** Provided leaflets alongside prescriptions
- 107** Displayed the template poster to capture local activities
- 75** Via social media or their website
- 64** Via their delivery driver
- 47** Created visual displays in windows or instore

“A recently retired customer was struggling with mental health. We spoke about exercise being a key factor, recommended local walking / running club, reading club, Men's Shed activity. This has made such a big impact.”

“An elderly couple asked for advice on healthy living and diet. When the pharmacist engaged them in conversation it emerged they never walked anywhere as the husband had a lot of back pain over the years. Hence they had both put on weight and they also smoked. Both became breathless very easily. The pharmacist enrolled both on the smoking cessation programme and advised them of pensioner’s activities in the area and local sports forum. They were also given a diet sheet and healthy living advice. At their last visit both had lost weight and were off cigarettes.”

“Pharmacy staff have increased their physical activity in line with the guidance provided through the campaign.”

“Patients particularly liked the local community active groups on the poster we filled in. Some made calls and attended local groups and returned to the pharmacy to say they found the groups brilliant.”

“I definitely had a lot of patients say they were going to try to be more active after seeing the campaign materials. It was a good talking point that physical activity decreases your risk of stroke, heart attack, obesity and is good for mental health etc.”



“Some staff chose to walk to work instead of driving. They are now walking to collect prescriptions from the surgery rather than sending the driver.”

“A widowed gentleman in his 60s with osteoarthritis in his knees and to a smaller extent in hips was reluctant to exercise or exert himself as he found it painful and challenging. We convinced him to take up a concession membership at the leisure centre and attend the gym twice a week for strengthening activities. The leisure centre provided a free induction and coaching in the particular equipment which would directly benefit his condition. Over the course of the campaign he experienced a marked reduction in discomfort, but more importantly, a massive boost in the confidence he now has with his knee joints. “I don’t feel like they’re going to give way under me any more”. He is loving his new hobby and clearly deriving huge health benefits.”

“A patient struggling with his mental health and grief since the death of his mother had seen some of the activities on the poster. This patient gave some activities a try and now feels so much better for it. He has thanked us several times even though we didn’t even speak to him. He had just read the poster.”

“Walking and gardening were two activities that were actively promoted, emphasising the positive health benefits on mind and body. The weather helped encourage people to meet up, socialise and keep moving.”

“A local resident, initially hesitant about lifestyle changes, approached the pharmacy seeking advice on managing her diabetes. We discussed simple dietary adjustments and the importance of regular exercise. She later returned to share her progress, expressing how our support motivated her to join a local walking group. She now feels more energised and has made lasting friendships. Her transformation not only improved her health but also inspired others in the community to seek support from the pharmacy. This experience reinforced the value of personalised care and community connection, showcasing how our campaign truly empowers individuals to take charge of their health.”

“Staff all coordinated a get fit/lose weight drive among themselves and supported each other with regular check-ins and accountability. Some staff have taken up regular physical activity which was completely new to their routine and one member of staff lost three stone through the campaign.”

“One patient told us about a young relative who was disabled as a result of an accident a few years previously. Her relative had now opened her own gym to facilitate people with disabilities. We were able to use this information to pass on to other patients who had a disability.”

“We worked with a local community group for older people keeping fit.”



“We used to run a weekly ‘walk and talk’ group which disbanded a number of years ago. The campaign stimulated several conversations about re-starting the group. We intend to do so shortly.”

“A lady entered the pharmacy looking for help and advice on how to strengthen her bones as she has aches and pains. I advised her to take calcium and vitamin D and to increase her exercise where possible. She was shocked to hear the CMO activity target. We talked about simple way she could incorporate exercise into her daily routine. She started a swimming group for people over 50 years through the local leisure centre. She was happy with her progress when she returned.”

“A patient entered the pharmacy and was complaining of mental health problems (feeling sad and depressed). I was able to use the Live longer and stronger resources to emphasise the benefits of social interaction and physical activity. I also referred the patient to a local social prescribing centre. The patient returned to say they had entered into the social prescribing scheme for gardening.”

“As part of an elderly community group which we provided a talk to, we provided leaflets and information to them on this campaign. One person at this talk enquired about the availability of swimming lessons for older people. We spoke to the age friendly coordinator at mid-Ulster council and they have arranged lessons for this age group of which several members of this group are now attending.”