

# CASE STUDY

Everyone Active | Amy Widman, Contract Activity & Wellbeing Manager



## Creating Inclusive Sessions at Everyone Active



As the Activity and Wellbeing Manager for the Stratford upon Avon Contract at Everyone Active, I oversee initiatives that promote physical activity beyond traditional gym, swimming, and exercise classes. Everyone Active, established in 1987, is the UK's longest-serving leisure contractor, managing around 200 leisure facilities and cultural services in partnership with over 60 local authorities across the country.

My focus is on creating inclusive sessions, such as walking sports and programmes for individuals aged under 5 and seniors, ensuring that everyone - regardless of age, ability, or mobility - has the opportunity to engage in regular exercise.

Our efforts have grown into the Community Outreach Programme, which offers classes in local venues to combat rural and social isolation. This initiative allows participants who may struggle to reach leisure centres to engage in familiar, supportive environments. Currently, we provide 19 classes in the community, with over 6,000 attendances recorded in the past year. Our most popular offering is the Seated Exercise class, which accounts for 10 out of the 19 classes each week.



Amy with instructor, Katie

## CBE Course Experience

The Chair-Based Exercise (CBE) Course has been invaluable for our colleagues who lead the seated exercise classes. It has equipped them with both knowledge and confidence, benefiting those with prior experience as well as complete novices. Participants have transformed from lacking confidence to becoming experts, eager to expand their class offerings and further their careers in fitness. The online course and accompanying handbook serve as excellent resources for planning sessions.

## Implementation of chair-based exercise classes

We launched our Seated Exercise classes in early 2023 within familiar community venues to reduce attendance barriers. Now, approximately 18 months later, we've successfully expanded to 10 classes weekly across our district, with plans for future growth. We recognised that participants from our leisure centres, especially those on the GP referral scheme or our free Parkinson's membership, would also benefit from seated exercise. This expansion has allowed individuals recovering from injuries, those with long-term health conditions, and older adults to engage in classes they previously thought were unattainable.

One challenge we faced was payment processing, as we do not accept cash. To address this, we introduced portable card machines, making it easier for attendees, particularly older residents, to participate.

## Feedback from Participants

We consistently receive positive feedback from participants regarding the fun, engagement, and rapport they build with instructors. For many, these classes serve as their only social interaction each week, fostering friendships that extend beyond the classroom into social outings like lunches and coffee mornings.

Participants have reported improvements in their daily activities, such as increased strength for tasks like vacuuming or enhanced mobility for driving. They express gratitude for the safe space to engage in enjoyable sessions and meet new people.



**CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS**

“ I have been attending seated exercise in the community for 6 months now and it has really helped to improve flexibility in my neck area making it easier to drive. I love coming to the class to see everyone and have the social interaction. It has really supported me to stay active around my grandchildren and to keep myself as well as possible. ”

everyone ACTIVE

The graphic features a woman with short, curly blonde hair wearing a floral patterned shirt and blue jeans, standing in a room with a wooden floor and a whiteboard in the background. The testimonial text is enclosed in a red-bordered box with large red quotation marks.

## Benefits and positive outcomes

Customers continue to return to our classes, noting improvements in flexibility, strength, and coordination, which have bolstered their confidence in performing daily tasks. Our classes help reduce the risk of falls by enhancing posture and balance, enabling participants to lead fuller lives. For instance, a lovely lady in our Wednesday session can now care for her grandchildren weekly, feeling confident in activities like taking them to the park and driving.

## Future plans

We continue to promote our classes through various channels, including posters, social media, and email. Over the past year, we've partnered with numerous organisations, leading to requests for seated exercise classes at their venues. Our goal is to expand our offerings, ensuring that everyone who wants to participate can do so while fostering friendships and supporting ongoing health.

## Additional comments

The availability of the online CBE course and manual has been instrumental in supporting our colleagues and the wider community in enjoying exercise safely. This flexible learning format allows instructors to complete the course at their convenience and reference the materials as needed, enhancing their ability to deliver effective classes.