



# Fitness Fun in the Community

By Linzi Clark, Communications Assistant

“ Our Seniors Show the Way service now has more than 900 Community Health Champions helping people across Bradford stay healthy and keep active. When I was invited to join one of the Champions at an exercise class for the over 50’s, I jumped at the chance. But nothing could have prepared me for what it involved...

While I watched Allan Perfitt, one of our Community Health Champions, set up for the exercise class, I started to wonder what the group would be doing over the next hour. Maybe a few stretches? Perhaps lifting a couple of weights?

No! This was no ordinary exercise class. Once the play button on the sound system was pressed, we were off! A brisk march on the spot soon got everyone warmed up, and it wasn’t long before we were into ‘downhill skiing’, ‘front-crawl swimming’ and kicking balls to one another in a ‘football match’.

Now I’m only in my early 20’s (they let me in just this once!) so I thought I’d cope quite well. But with Allan’s creativity in full-swing for the exercises, I was finding muscles I didn’t even know existed.



## What is a Community Health Champion?

A health champion is someone who volunteers to take on a health message and share it with family and friends to raise awareness.



After 'throwing darts', 'ringing church bells', 'sprinting' and 'weight-lifting' amongst many other things, 45 minutes had flown by and it was time for a relaxation session to finish (pewh!).

**I asked Allan why he wanted to become one of our Community Health Champions. He told me:**

*"I know just how important it is to stay healthy and I love being active. Running the exercise class is just one of many things I do to bring people in the community together, have fun, and keep fit."*

**Some of the group's members told me why they enjoyed the weekly class so much. Peggy said:** *"It's just great. I like the different exercises we do and doing it with other people gives me more incentive to push myself."*

**Fred added:** *"The group is good company and we have a laugh. Of course, we do exercises too! They keep me going."*



I bet you wouldn't believe me if I told you this was a chair-based exercise class. But it was. The whole-time the group sat down. It just goes to show how far creativity and imagination can go to making exercise accessible to everyone. I had a great time, and judging by the smiles on everyone's faces - so did they.

If you would like to find out more about our Community Health Champions or any other work going on in our Seniors Show the Way service, please contact **01274 321911** or email [seniors@bdct.nhs.uk](mailto:seniors@bdct.nhs.uk)

