

Movement for a Better Life

Date: July 2026



Movement for a Better Life was funded through the Active East Salford Fund to provide accessible movement and wellbeing sessions for people living in Lower Broughton, Broughton, Trinity and Blackfriars.

Originally designed to support people recovering from drug and alcohol misuse, the project adapted when referrals from the planned partner did not materialise. Instead, the sessions were opened to local residents, including those living in Salix Homes tower blocks, ensuring the funding continued to benefit the local community.

How it worked

The project created a safe, supportive space where people could improve both their physical and emotional wellbeing at their own pace.

Across the programme:

- **17 local residents took part**, with an average of six regular attendees
- **Five participants** described themselves as previously inactive
- **Three participants** were living with long-term health conditions
- **Participants represented a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds** and all lived within the target neighbourhoods

Written by: Hannah McAdam
Development Worker
(Movement and Physical Activity)



Salford CVS support

Funded through the Active East Salford Fund

Feedback

For many people, the sessions became far more than an exercise class. They offered routine, friendship and somewhere to escape the pressures of everyday life.

"I am autistic and tend to have a lot of anxiety. At one point it was the only time of the week where I felt relaxed."

"It gives me time to myself as my job can be demanding and I am going through the menopause. It is non-judgemental and I always feel refreshed afterwards."

Participants reported noticeable improvements in flexibility, balance and confidence in movement. The instructor observed that:

- **At least three participants** were able to get up and down from the floor more easily
- **Seven participants** progressed from needing a chair for balance to completing exercises independently
- **Five participants** had started practising yoga or Tai Chi at home between sessions.

The small group setting allowed activities to be tailored to individual needs, making movement accessible for people who found traditional fitness or yoga classes intimidating.

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The difference it made

Participants consistently described feeling calmer, less anxious and better able to cope with everyday stress. The combination of mindfulness, gentle movement and supportive conversation created an environment where people felt listened to, accepted and valued.

"I come away feeling relaxed, positive and heard."

"It gives me time to myself as my job can be demanding and I am going through the menopause. It is non-judgemental and I always feel refreshed afterwards."

An unexpected strength of the project was the sense of belonging that developed between participants. People who had previously lived near one another without speaking began forming friendships, sharing experiences and supporting one another outside the sessions.

"When I first started coming my work was very isolated, so it was really nice to meet people who live nearby that I would never otherwise have met."

The project also encouraged participants to become more involved in their local community.

As a result:

- Two participants joined the Bridgewater Community Garden.
- One participant began volunteering through local litter-picking activities.
- Participants regularly shared healthy recipes using seasonal produce grown in the garden.

Next steps

Although funded sessions have now reduced in frequency, participants have continued meeting because of the positive impact the project has had on their lives.

Movement for a Better Life has demonstrated that accessible, community-based wellbeing activities can improve physical health, reduce stress and strengthen local connections.

Participants have expressed a strong desire for weekly sessions to return, and The Wellness Project CIC is seeking further funding to continue building on the success of the project.

