

ican | Wellbeing Group

PROJECT REPORT

Bellicon Beginners Gold

The main project goal is to improve participants physical and emotional wellbeing giving support to reduce deconditioning to prevent further stays in hospital and care home settings for those over 65. Creating a link with ICC, social prescribers, and HAWCS as well as our own referral systems. Creating an opportunity to build on a prehabilitation and rehabilitation centre for the future.



Introduction

This project is funded by Active Cumbria Live Longer Better Fund



What is iCan?

iCan is a health, wellbeing and social support charity (CIO).

At iCan we support people living in Cumbria to break down their fitness and wellbeing barriers from I can't to iCan.

We do this through a dedicated focus on prevention before recovery in our fitness and wellness centre in Carlisle and through our range of outreach activities across Cumbria.

We empower people to live healthier, happier lifestyles through our range of accessible and affordable (often free) services which are led by our lived experience team members, volunteers and mentors. Our services are open to all ages, genders, backgrounds and beliefs.

Project Overview:

This project ran 2 weekly 30 minute sessions for 36 weeks of the year for small groups specifically for over 65's, using small trampolines and with the option to stay and socialise. This project was working to support patient needs especially in the category of deconditioning. We linked with ICC representatives, social prescribers, GPs, HAWCS, as well as our Waiting Well project to engage our participants. Participants who have been led to believe they 'can't' soon realised they CAN!

Project Aims and Objectives

This project aims to:

- 1) Improve participants access to physical and mental support from a non-clinical aspect
- 2) Improve participants motivation to change or manage- mind health, physical activity, and other issues.
- 3) Prevent relapse cases- including low exercise levels, loneliness, isolation
- 4) Increase physical activity and decrease deconditioning
- 5) Improve socialisation
- 6) Increase advocacy that the NHS and third sector partners care and can/will offer support

“Older adults can benefit a great deal from even modest amounts of exercise on the bellicon. It's especially good at improving balance and proprioception, with studies showing that regular workouts can greatly improve the ability to prevent forward falls. Rebounding on the bellicon provides a very low-impact, highly efficient cardio workout that's gentle on the back, knees, and joints.”



Project input

Funding received:

- Active Cumbria Live Longer Better Fund - £5000

Staffing

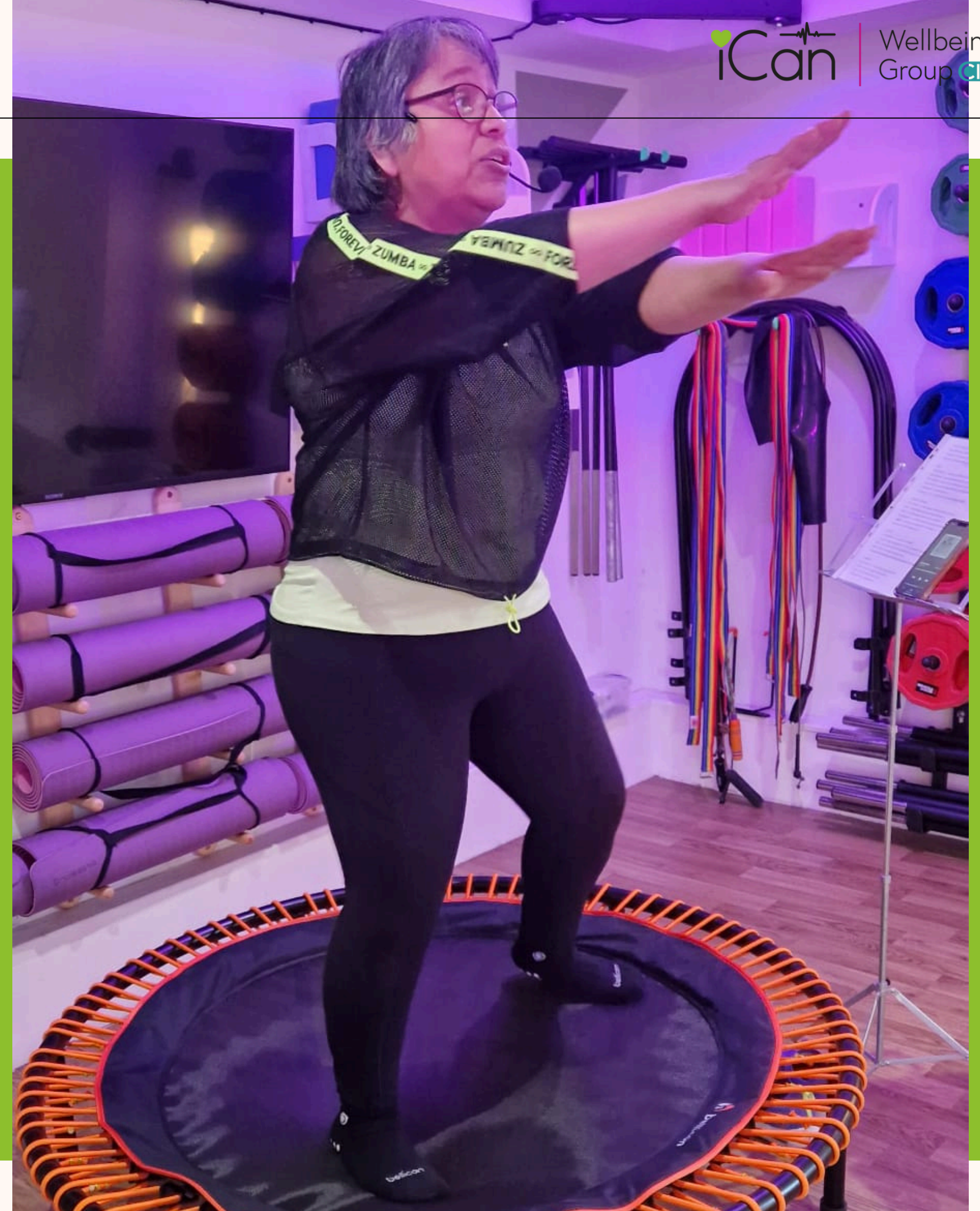
- 2 Staff members
- 1 Staff for delivery and project management
- 2nd staff member for administration support and training

Operational

- 36 weekly sessions at iCan
- Bellicon mini trampolines with handles were used to guide exercise sessions

Core operating/senior management

- Senior management time was used in bid writing, staff management and support for the project
- Clubmanager booking system implemented/ Upshot reporting system implemented





Project outputs

Total people supported

- We worked with a total of 51 people
- We worked with an average of 4 people per session
- Out of the 51 attendees, 16 joined longterm memberships with iCan from these sessions, 44 continue to attend various sessions with iCan

Contacts/ referrals

- Out of our 51 participants, 24 came through our referral programmes that we have at iCan with our Waitiing Well Project and National Lottery funded projects.

Sessions delivered

- We worked with each group for 4-6 weeks at a time delivering 36 weeks
- 216 staff hours were used to run the project

Other outputs

- We made connections with Parkinsons UK - Carlisle branch, Pulmonary Rehab Group in Carlisle, NHS Physios, as well as various community groups who work with seniors locally.



Demographics

Upshot reporting tool

At iCan we report on all our projects using the UPSHOT (www.upshot.co.uk) reporting tool, kindly granted to iCan by Cumbria Youth Alliance, This tool allows us to track beneficiary attendances, outcome data and demographics

Age range :

Participants ages ranged between
65 - 86

Geographical reach :

Participants were from Cumbria, Including:

- Brampton
- Carlisle
- Penrith
- Wigton

Project outcomes

- Increased support for participants both in the care system and support to avoid hospitalisation
- Increased portfolio of support and referral onto other sessions at iCan
- Decrease in reconditioning and low level mental health demands
- Improved communication between NHS staff and ourselves
- Increase advocacy and awareness of the project for further delivery

“You have hugely encouraged him.....
he wants to keep as fit as possible and hopefully
avoid ortho surgery. He can't sing your praises
enough – so, thanks so much for all you do.”
Quoted from GP referee

Key project achievements :

- Great retainment of participants to stay engaged in physical activity and enjoying the community aspect
- Feedback from most participants saw improvement in balance, flexibility and mood

Key personal achievements:

- Staff member completed bellicon certified training
- Staff member completed Certificate in Parkinson's -Physical activity and exercise training
- Improved coaching abilities enabling us to add more sessions to our iCan timetable, adding variety to the classes we offer





Case study

Case study name: Liz, age 77

“I so appreciate each Bellicon session because my arthritic knees feel less stiff and I know that all the muscles in my body are being used, which dramatically improves my balance. I am delighted that I haven't had to buy a tube of Biofeeze (for painful knees), since I started Bellicon.

I am 77 years old, born with only one hand, which has never been a handicap to me. A weekly Pilates class and lots of walking in the countryside has always kept me fit. Unfortunately, over-use and an accident caused inoperable damage to my hand, making it impossible to return to Pilates Classes. The iCan chair exercises with Liliana were a great discovery for me, and I gratefully attended regularly. Jenny, her colleague, brought in a Bellicon for the class to try. It was exactly what I was looking for! At last there was a way to restore my balance.

After a six-week beginner course, my daughter noticed that my balance had improved noticeably, as I require her help less and less, over rocky places and crossing streams, on our weekly walks in the Lake District. In her job she sees the results of falls by elderly people regularly and so appreciates the benefits to my balance that come as a result of weekly Bellicon sessions with Jenny. Elderly people are prone to falls through lack of exercise, which often result in hospital and serious operations.

Jenny has explained that Ican is a charity, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributes, to enable this work that helps restore people's wellbeing, and gives them back their independence.”



Case study

Case study name: Jenny, age 78

Jenny shared her story with us and we are so proud of her determination to keep improving her health and fitness. Here she tells her story.

“In January 2023 I fractured my right hip while doing a complicated yoga balance/stretch in my kitchen which meant that I was whisked off to hospital to have it repaired with a dynamic hip screw. The period between coming home from hospital five days later and being put in touch with iCan in about August/September of that same year was quite a hard graft trying to get back to some kind of normality. One slight complication of the fracture was that after surgery there was a 20 mm discrepancy between my right and left leg which left me with a limp. I had recently had orthotics provided and was in the process of getting some of my footwear adapted.

When I first came to iCan I was very stiff all over my body, my balance was poor, my mood was quite low, I was tired most of the time and I felt that life was still quite a struggle. I'd been fit and healthy prior to the accident, and really wanted to get back to my previous active life. I'd been given a whole range of exercises by the physios to do at home, which I worked hard at, but I needed something more challenging and something more sociable and fun. A place on the 6 week bellicon course became available and I signed up because the trainers thought it would be ideal for me. Initially I found it really scary, but I stuck with it and by the end of 6 weeks I really gained in confidence.

I'm still quite nervous when I first arrive at a class, but once I'm on the trampoline I quickly gain confidence, and really enjoy the sessions. I find myself laughing and smiling, and it really lifts my mood. The music helps, and the enthusiasm of the teacher really helps too. I'm also finding it very good for increasing my cardiovascular capacity. iCan is a very friendly place, and I always feel welcome there.

I would say that bellicon has been a big turning point in my recovery. I still have a way to go, but in the long run if I'm able to continue to go to classes I think it will help me a lot with my general fitness and flexibility.

Thank you to you and everyone at iCan. You've brightened my life so much.”

Challenges, risks and solutions

Main Challenges:

- Running the project in 6-week blocks we found challenges with commitment and consistency with some participants
- We also found our pool of participants was limited working in 6 week blocks with people just missing the start date of one block and losing motivation by the time the next block start date.

Risk Mitigation:

- Participants often felt nervous about stepping onto the bellicon rebounder for the first time and the initial stepping on and off.

Solutions:

- We changed to a rolling 6-week block so a participant could start their 6 week journey at any point. If they had to miss a session, they could continue again on their return to the next class without too much disruption.
- We worked with people on a 1-1 basis inviting them in earlier for a session to give them the opportunity to find their confidence getting on and off the bellicon for the first time, sometimes assisting them with a hand and a step.



Conclusion and next steps

Successes

- The project has proved essential in introducing gentle exercise and participants enjoyed the classes often expressing positive feedback about the sessions.
- Participants expressed improvement in their confidence to join exercise as well as improvement in their physical health with balance and stability.
- Participants expressed an improvement in their emotional wellbeing, helping them to feel confident and included in a community creating a sense of belonging.

Recommendations:

- Keeping the 6 week rolling beginners course giving participants the opportunity to grow in confidence, ready to join in with weekly classes
- Having more flexibility for participants to begin, works better than having a strict 6 week beginning and end

Next steps

We feel this project is essential to continue in order to support our over 65 community in continuing to exercise, keeping them healthy and engaged in the community. We will need to continue to find funding for this project to include all future participants and not just those that can afford our services.

Running this project has been so rewarding, to see the improvement in participants physical well being which in turn shows an improvement with their emotional well being. Watching a participant squeal with delight when she realises she can now balance on one leg and see how much she has enjoyed herself and the effect it has had on her whole wellbeing is priceless.


“Thank you to you and everyone at iCan. You’ve brightened my life so much.”

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to read about our recent project.

For more information on this project or to reach a member of our project team please contact us using the details below

 01228 819101

 Unit 17 and 18, The Maltings,
Bridge street, Carlisle,
Cumbria, CA2 5SR

 Jenny@icanwellbeing.co.uk

 www.icanwellbeing.co.uk