



CARE TO PLAY

Pioneering Table Tennis
in Social Care
Impact Report





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Welcome

John Hughes, Director of Partnerships & Communities, Community Integrated Care

Community Integrated Care

Community Integrated Care is one of the UK's biggest and most successful social care charities.

We provide care and support to more than 3000 people who have a range of disabilities, including learning disabilities, autism, mental health concerns, dementia and age-related conditions, acquired brain injuries, and other complex care needs. We reach thousands more through our ground-breaking community programmes.

Founded in 1988, for almost 35 years, we have continually aimed to break boundaries to enable people to live 'The Best Life Possible'.

Community Integrated Care is passionate about the role that sport can play in changing the lives of people who access care and support. We don't just look at sport through the lens of physical activity, but instead recognise the much wider opportunities it can deliver to promote social connection and personal development, and underpin a life filled with fun and purpose.

We recognise that too many people who access social care are sadly disconnected from their communities and constrained by the limiting attitudes and beliefs of others. We strive to promote people's independence, and to give them and the people around them the tools and support to achieve their goals and dreams.

Sport with purpose

We've found that sport is a powerful catalyst for delivering the opportunities that many people who access support, and their loved ones, are seeking. It is a universal pleasure that enables people to find friendships and enjoy meaningful connection. It brings people into the heart of their community – overcoming the isolation that too many people in social care face. Sport is exciting and rewarding and can be a platform for personal development and progress in so many ways.



Sport is a universal pleasure that enables people to find friendships and enjoy meaningful connection. It brings people into the heart of their community – overcoming the isolation that too many people in social care face.

So, for more than thirteen years, we have worked tirelessly to unlock the potential of sport for thousands of people who access social care. We have sought to enable sporting organisations to deliver accessible and adaptable provision – not only focusing on the game itself, but more widely how their sport can be a broker for inclusion and social change.

Importantly, we have a strong belief that sport should be for everyone. In Community Integrated Care’s ‘Partnerships and Communities Department’, the team that manages and designs our sporting innovations, we have a mantra of “nobody gets left behind”. Yes, many sports offer disability focussed provision, but too often this is focussed on people with a higher level of independence who can play a game in its ‘truest form’.

We want to challenge this orthodoxy with a recognition that sports can be explored, adapted, and made meaningful across all levels of independence and care settings.

We do this by focussing on how the sport can be adapted to the individual, rather than how the individual can adapt to the sport. This often leads to novel and unique approaches, where the essence of what makes a sport brilliant and exciting are reformulated to create exciting, enabling and enriching activity options.

This is at the heart of our table tennis strategy.

A unique approach

In this report, you will discover how Community Integrated Care initially explored the value of table tennis in 2018, recognising its potential as an adaptable sport that could spur many important outcomes for people who access health and social care.

You’ll also see how the insight that we gained through these small steps led us to identify table tennis as an incredible sport to scale across our charity and beyond – a move that proved invaluable during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a socially distanced, fun and adaptable sport, table tennis became an essential activity for many of the people we support during lockdown.

It remains an essential part of our future too, as we seek to scale table tennis hubs across our larger services. It is rare to find a sport that is equally exciting and adaptable to teenagers, yet table tennis offers this.

As a charity with a philosophy of ‘generous leadership’, we want to share our experience and insight to benefit others. We have already done this by developing www.CareToPlay.co.uk – a free video training resource that supports care services to adopt table tennis in their activity provision. Our hope is that this impact report can provide others with some of our key lessons and strategic insights.

I’d like to recognise our partners at Table Tennis England, who have been integral in this success. Their interest and investment in our work has enabled us to scale pockets of innovation into a coherent national offer. Their belief in and support of table tennis is social care is inspiring. Our partnership is truly appreciated and valued.

Our thanks also go to Sport England, whose support has given us the capacity and encouragement to develop opportunities like these.



And finally, thank you to the people supported by Community Integrated Care, their families, and our colleagues. This project has been led by you and your passions. You have co-produced these solutions and led the way. It has been a pleasure to see the fun that you have had. By learning from your experiences, many more people will benefit from enjoying this special sport.

So, I invite you to find out more about the opportunity of table tennis in care settings, support our work, and help us to spread the word of our findings.

Best wishes

John



Our Table Tennis Strategy

Understanding
our approach

Our Table Tennis Strategy

Pioneering table tennis as an intervention in social care

A legacy of leading in sport & community engagement in social care

Community Integrated Care is committed to utilising the power of sport to promote health, happiness and wellbeing, and a more equal society.

For more than thirteen years, we have developed a range of innovative programmes that transform the lives of people who access care and support and enrich our communities.

Through partnerships with many of Britain's leading sporting clubs and NGBs, we have created numerous ground-breaking innovations that are recognised as best practice models in the sports and social care sectors.

This experience has led our unique table tennis strategy for social care.



Providing first-of-their-kind insights into the application of table tennis in social care

Since 2018, we have explored and proved the impact of table tennis across more than 200 care services.

These collectively represent a true cross-section of the social care sector in England. As such, our experience provides first-of-its-kind insights into the application of table tennis in social care.

We have explored the benefits of table tennis across a whole range of client groups - including people with learning disabilities, autism, mental health concerns, dementia, acquired brain injuries and other complex needs.



Our Aims

Exploring outcomes at scale

Working independently and in partnership with Table Tennis England, we have sought to:

- Pioneer the implementation of table tennis as an intervention / opportunity, across a wide range of care settings and support categories.
- Introduce the sport to individuals who have never had opportunities to ever play or experience table tennis.
- Achieve a breadth of social care outcomes and assess the impact of table tennis in social care.
- Capture and showcase the benefits of table tennis, as an accessible, adaptable and social form of exercise to inspire other social care and community organisations.
- Create new training and thought leadership opportunities.
- Share our learning with others.



Outcomes that we have identified include:

- Promoting greater physical activity, fun and social connection for people who have learning disabilities and autism.
- Cognitive and physical benefits for older people living with dementia.
- Social benefits to support people in mental health services, in their recovery, and as a tool for talking therapies.
- Community building and public engagement in large social care settings, such as Extra Care and care homes
- Promoting physical and mental stimulation for those with profound support needs.
- Physical activity for individuals who cannot participate in traditional sport or exercise.



“We have a young lady who we introduced to a new service. Her autism means change and meeting new people is challenging but she was apprehensively looking forward to accessing the community and getting to meet new people.”

Table tennis has been a great way for her to interact easily with her support staff and others. Between the laughter and movement from chasing balls all over the place, she and her team have really bonded.”

Manager, Autism Day Service



Delivery

9 Programme of Delivery

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www.CareToPlay.co.uk

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Covid-19 Response

14 *In Focus:*
Table Tennis Hubs

Programme of Delivery

Three phases of activity, with our most ambitious plans still to come.

Through targeted delivery, training and effective internal communications and engagement, we have set the conditions for table tennis to leave a lasting impact across our charity.

The strategy has promoted table tennis in a range of settings – from activity sessions in specialist dementia care homes and learning disability supported living services, through to utilising it in mental health talking therapies.



Phase 1: 2018 - April 2020

In 2018, we first piloted table tennis as a focused activity offer within our charity. Recognising research into its health and wellbeing impacts, we sought to test its potential application across care settings.

- Community Integrated Care self-initiated the introduction of tables in some key services to great success.
- In a small collaboration with Table Tennis England, we also secured equipment in two of our large mental health services in Liverpool.
- As a result of this pilot-stage success, we formed plans with Table Tennis England to scale a bigger exploration of the sport.

Phase 2: June - November 2020

- The pandemic hits. Table tennis identified as a priority activity option during lockdown, as socially distanced, low cost and accessible.
- Covid response and research project with Table Tennis England launched.
- 200 starter packs introduced into services, supported by programme of activation.
- Creation of www.CareToPlay.co.uk - a training programme to enable care workers to promote the sport.
- Care To Play shared through the main social care representative bodies and trade magazines.
- Grant from Merseyside Sports Partnership secured an additional 130 hours of 1-1 table tennis delivery in two of our large Extra Care services.

Phase 3: November 2020 - December 2021

- Partnership formed with Sport England, aimed at expanding our work in enabling disabled people to access sport and physical activity.
- Lead Partner Agreement with Table Tennis England formed to introduce quality tables and equipment in 27 our services, to create table tennis activity hubs.
- An exciting activation plan is co-developed with colleagues and the people we support, These hubs will support more active lives, greater community involvement, and exciting experiences.
- We intend to continue to grow our number of hubs over the years ahead.

In Focus: www.CareToPlay.co.uk

A unique training programme for table tennis in social care

When Community Integrated Care and Table Tennis England came together to provide table tennis starter packs for 200 of our services in lockdown, we had to support our teams to make the most of this much needed resource.

We also felt a moral responsibility to highlight to the care sector the unique opportunity that we had identified in table tennis, as an accessible, low-cost, and socially distanced sport. At a time when activity routines had been upturned and access to the community was impossible, we needed to get the word out.

That's why we created www.CareToPlay.co.uk a unique free training program that gives care workers and families the key insights to enable people to enjoy the sport.

This website provides a series of fun and creative bitesize training videos, which in just 13 minutes give people the fundamentals of how to promote table tennis in ways that are meaningful and relevant in social care.

Drawing on two years of prior knowledge of delivering the sport, as well as the insight of our Partnerships and Communities team and Positive Behaviour Support leads, this is an expert-led, yet hugely simple course.

Care To Play not only teaches people the fundamental skills of how to play table tennis but also looks at the many ways that the sport can be adapted and used to promote health, happiness and confidence.

Designed, produced and launched during the height of the pandemic, this quality resource represents Community Integrated Care's absolute commitment to promoting meaningful and aspirational activities – no matter what the challenge. With each of the 200 services being given access to this training when they received their starter packs, we created the conditions for an exceptional uptake of table tennis and a long-term capability within our charity.

This resource was also shared widely by Community Integrated Care's sector partners, including many of the leading trade associations for the social care, health and voluntary sectors. This led several other care providers and family carers following our lead and adopting this sport.

We were honoured to receive the 'Inclusion Award' at the Pride of Table Tennis Awards for www.CareToPlay.co.uk, recognising us an organisation that 'has championed outstanding volunteering and engagement with under-represented groups.'



Ted and James Chapelhow - The professional athletes collaborated with our charity in the creation of www.CareToPlay.co.uk



Recipient of Table Tennis England's prestigious **'Inclusion Award'**

The Care To Play Method...

1 Getting Started...

We share how any household table can be transformed to play table tennis! Introducing the simple roll net and the basic equipment needed, viewers learn how cheap and easy it is to play.

2 Person-Centred Principles

Learners discover the key principles to making table tennis a fantastic person-centred activity. This includes:

- Considering sensory needs
- Identifying and creating the best environment for play
- Understanding physical needs
- Recognising verbal and non-verbal feedback
- Praise and reward
- Patience and empathy



3 Let's Play

We highlight the fundamentals of how to play table tennis, including how to hold the paddle and the basic moves.

Importantly, we also teach people how to build the confidence and skills of the people they support, and creative ways to adapt the game to meet their physical and sensory needs.

4 Table Tennis Rules

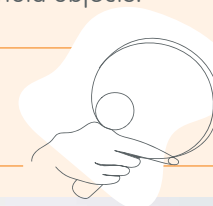
We explore the fundamentals of how to play the traditional format of table tennis.



5 Great Games

Recognising that many people need adaptations to enjoy the sport, we show that there's more than one way to play table tennis! We teach five great games that people can play, that require a table tennis paddle, a ball and everyday household objects!

Try our free table tennis training!
www.CareToPlay.co.uk



In Focus: Covid 19 Response - Accelerating the Programme

An urgent need to help to keep people physically and mentally stimulated during lockdown

Having seen the impact of promoting table tennis in a range of settings, when lockdown hit, we felt it would be an ideal activity to help deliver at scale – meaning that staying at home wasn't a barrier to staying active.

In June 2020, we proposed a Covid response and research project with Table Tennis England, by introducing 200 starter packs into our charity and devising a programme of activation to make it one of our primary activity offers during the pandemic.

For Community Integrated Care and Table Tennis England it was a unique opportunity to not only assist people during the pandemic, but also to explore at scale if table tennis is a suitable and welcome activity in social care.

This was enabled by the creation of www.CareToPlay.co.uk. Care To Play is the first ever training guide to promoting table tennis in social care. Using short and engaging videos, it meant that every colleague was capable of promoting the activity brilliantly.

We also sought to extend this impact beyond our charity, ensuring that any support worker or family member can easily assist people to enjoy the sport.

The guide has been shared freely through our care and sports sector networks. We have been astounded by the response to this free resource and the impact that it has made on so many people.



As well as being a 'social distance-friendly' activity, this is a sport that anybody can take part in – regardless of physical or cognitive barriers they may face. We've used our starter kit as a 1-1 activity and people have enjoyed it a lot.

We would now like to get a permanent table tennis facility, so the public and families can engage in the activity, and we can also use it in big group sessions and dementia café carer events."

Manager, supporting 60 people with dementia, aged 58 to 92.

1-1 Support Hours

Social connection in Extra Care services during Covid

During Phase 2 of the programme, in the height of the pandemic, we were pleased to secure a grant from Merseyside Sports Partnership, which enabled us to commission an additional 130 hours of 1-1 table tennis delivery in two of our large Extra Care services.

Extra Care services are properties where people live independently in their own flats, with access to specialist support. The support that people receive flexes according to their need – some might not need any, whereas others will receive frequent support visits throughout the day.

When Covid hit, the communal facilities in these services closed, all activities ceased, and people were at huge risk of isolation. We used these hours to use table tennis to check in on people who didn't qualify for support, and to ensure they had some positive experiences.

We also integrated the activity into our core support delivery, promoting people's physical health and cognitive stimulation during our regular care visits.

The impact of this support was phenomenal - providing the people we support with exciting new experiences, adapted physical activity, friendship and social contact during the most difficult days of the pandemic.

With colleagues across both services all receiving specialist training and mentoring to be able to deliver these activities, and accessing our www.CareToPlay.co.uk platform, this programme has left a lasting capability in the staff teams.

Table tennis remains a much loved and frequently enjoyed activity in the services.



This was a fantastic way to strengthen our relationships within our communities, whilst making sure people had company and someone checking in.

**Marie Godrey – Service Leader,
The Watch Factory**



In Focus: Table Tennis Hubs

A strategic expansion of table tennis in our services and wider communities

“If we look at our client group - we support so many people with mental health challenges, and sport and purpose is so important in that context.

We definitely need to continue to get the benefits of table tennis out there, and that is where the hubs initiative will come into play and have a huge impact.”

Vickie Martin – Head of PBS Practice Design

Our Lead Partnership Agreement with Table Tennis England is enabling us to support 27 larger care services to become vibrant table tennis hubs.

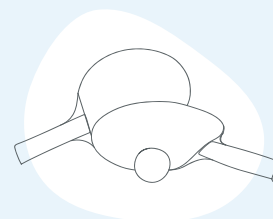
Each service is being provided with a quality table and all the equipment they need to enable the people they support to enjoy playing.

This is being supported by an activation plan, where each service is being assisted to develop strategies to best engage the people they support, families, local care services and community members.

This includes the provision of resources to create Ping Pong Parties – themed events, with branded equipment and rewards, and guidance on how to host inclusive table tennis games.

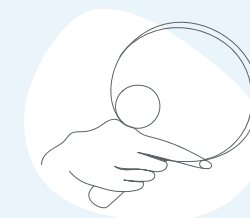
The implementation of the hubs programme emphasises how the people we support can lead and direct all of these activities and the scope for them to become our table tennis mentors, with them leading the engagement with others.

The installation programme for the tables commenced in July 2021, with the aim that all 27 services should have them by Spring 2022.



27

Number of Table Tennis Activity Hubs across the UK



1453

Total population of colleagues and people living in these services



800

Number of people we support in these services



Case Studies

16 Table Tennis for
Better Support

18 Table Tennis For
Mental Health Support

20 Table Tennis for Life Skills
& Independence

22 Table Tennis for
Community Development

Case Study

Vickie Martin, Head of PBS Practice Design

Delivering Better Support



I've always believed in the power of sport and its ability to deliver a multitude of benefits, including focus, purpose and pride. That's even before we get to the specific physical and cognitive benefits of participating in a sport like table tennis, particularly for those with support needs.

The table tennis strategy so far has been really successful, enabled by the starter packs, embedded through Care To Play, and due to be expanded through the Table Tennis Hubs roll-out. I'm convinced that we will see continuous and long lasting benefits for the people we support, and the communities they live in.



There is nobody else doing the things we do in sport, and it's something to be really very proud of.

A lot is expected of support workers, and being able to provide tools and ideas to help them in their work is crucial. In the context of Covid and lockdown, this became an even more vital need. Simply being able to say “here is something you can do, and here is everything you need to adapt it to your environment” felt positive in a very challenging time.

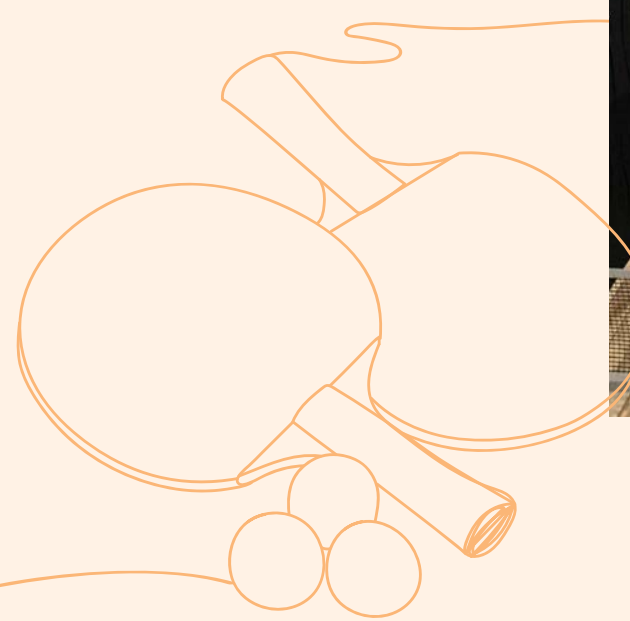
During the pandemic, I spent some extended time in one of our most complex autism services in Portsmouth, where we have 12 people living together with high level needs such as learning disability and autism. Nobody could go out and do their usual planned activities, and there were times when people were very upset and frustrated.

Table tennis gave people something positive to focus on in their day. It gave people time carved out for themselves or with their support workers, and through the Care To Play training, those colleagues knew how to adapt the activity depending on the needs of the individual.

For example, for those that need support with their coordination, using a 1-1 guided ‘hand over’ approach to table tennis can help their development, and is a fun way for support workers to meet those needs. Care To Play teaches support workers how to do that.

Table tennis can be very social, giving people a reason to come together, or it can be enclosed and more solitary if that’s what you need. Simply hitting the ball against a wall and using a repetitive action is very soothing for some.

What Community Integrated Care is doing here is so unique. There is nobody else doing the things we do in sport, and it’s something to be really very proud of.



Case Study

Alan Howells, Deputy Manager of Gordon House

Table Tennis for Improved Mental Health

In our service, we are supporting people with complex mental health needs on their journey to a more independent life. We have certainly been able to use table tennis to help us achieve this, and to improve both physical and mental wellbeing.

Through the Care To Play training, there is an understanding amongst staff that there are many ways to adapt this sport to be suitable for the people here, and that has given us a really positive start.

When dealing with complex mental health issues, people can lack motivation, and find it difficult to engage in activities, or indeed with others. Table tennis has helped counteract some of those issues.

Often you're not just playing table tennis, although that in itself is very beneficial. For example, we have one man who can find conversations with staff difficult in a structured setting. A game of table tennis is a good time to have these chats because he can be focusing on something else, and doesn't feel under pressure.

We have another person whose concentration span is limited as a result of his condition. He comes over, has a short game and goes to do something else. Maintaining focus even for a short time is a success for him.



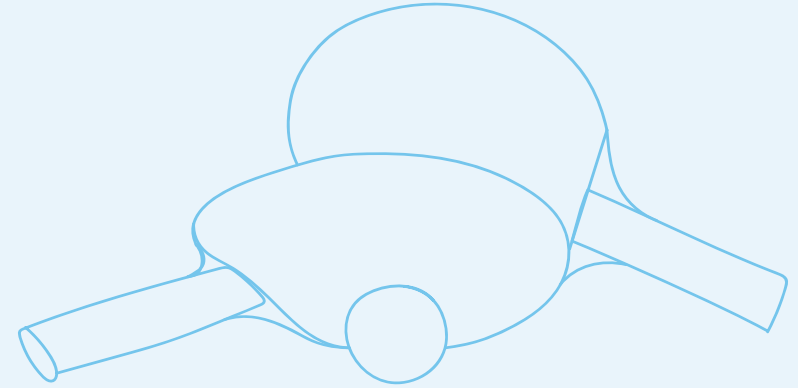


Dealing with complex mental health issues can be a solitary experience and people can get quite isolated. Table tennis is another tool to get people to develop their confidence to build bonds with others.

When we first got our table, we had a long period of nice weather, so we moved it on to the back patio. We have one lady who prefers not to leave her room to engage with others. We found that she liked to have a game using a bigger squash style racquet, which made it easier for her. She would sit in her chair and play and hit it nearly every time! It gave her a reason to leave her room, get some sunshine and fresh air, participate in some physical activity and most importantly - have some fun.

Dealing with complex mental health issues can be a solitary experience and people can get quite isolated. Table tennis is another tool to get people to develop their confidence to build bonds with others.

It's a new skill for people and it is a big thing to try something new. People often feel self conscious and their self esteem might not be brilliant. Just getting that ball across the net, or getting a point can be an important confidence boost.



Case Study

Stuart, Resident at Mill Point, and Alison, his Support Worker.

Table Tennis for Life Skills & Independence



Mill Point is a supported living service in St Helens, where nine close friends are living together independently, for the first time.

The facility opened in 2019 after lots of exciting planning, but unfortunately, the move coincided with Covid-19, and just preceded the first lockdown.

We had to work hard to ensure that the group's journey to independence was still a success, by bringing the opportunities to them. One of these opportunities was table tennis.

The people we support loved the starter packs, so were keen to become one of Community Integrated Care's hub venues. They are very excited to invite local care services to visit and play with them .

Stuart loves sport and previously has done gymnastics. He's discovered a passion for table tennis and is the one who leads the activity with the other people he lives with at Mill Point.



Mill Point is a lovely, vibrant place. We have a very large garden and over time we have collected garden games and activities, but nothing like the table tennis table. It has definitely been the best thing we have received here.

When the table arrived, it was a big "wow" moment for Stuart and the other people here. To see them get involved, playing mini competitions and being active, it is all amazing.

Alison Heaton, Support Worker



“Table tennis is fun. I like playing games outside. I like to play with my friends.”

Stuart

Table tennis has become one of the activities that the people we support often ask for, meaning it is easy for staff to get some engaging activity going. It's a good social activity, and a great physical activity. Even chasing the ball around the garden gets people moving!

Stuart is always keen to get involved in activities, but with table tennis, he takes it upon himself to ask and encourage people to come and play, and has been able to show people how to play, if they aren't sure what to do.

Through accessing Community Integrated Care's mentoring and personal development programmes, we'll be supporting him to make the most of these talents, taking on a more official 'table tennis mentor' role as the project expands.

I'm very keen on the idea of using table tennis for community engagement. Inviting other services to come here will give the group a chance to interact with new people.

I think this could really enhance the support we provide, by gently taking the group out of their comfort zone. The people here are so comfortable with each other, but I think some new faces and healthy competition would be a positive experience for Stuart and his friends. We can't wait!



Case Study

Marie Godrey – Service Leader, The Watch Factory

Table Tennis for Community Development

It's difficult for me to express just what the table tennis programme has done for us in Extra Care - for the people we support, for their families, for our staff team, and our communities as a whole.

During the pandemic, table tennis gave us the lift we needed, and I'm so excited to see how we can develop our approach to the sport further, and benefit from even wider impacts.

I was already keen to bring table tennis into our services, as in Extra Care we tend to have large sites, with games or hobby rooms, or fantastic outside spaces where we can provide activities that strengthen our sense of community. But, when we faced lockdown, the need for this sort of programme felt even greater.

The support and training was amazing and truly innovative. Our colleagues were really motivated and enjoyed the Teams sessions with the guys. During an extremely difficult time, it helped us find the spark we needed, and inspired us to find creative ways to support people.



We were in a situation where we couldn't use our communal areas, and were in danger of becoming completely isolated. The guys helped us find ways to adapt the sport and the equipment to suit a range of needs, and in people's own homes - helping us to think outside the box.

The extra 1-1 hours allowed us to also engage with those in the service that we do not regularly support, and some people who were really vulnerable. This was a fantastic way to strengthen our relationships within our communities, whilst making sure people had company and someone checking in. We soon saw the power of this - even with a short visit, people would be talking about it for days.

The feedback we got from families was a highlight for me. We would send photographs and videos and we would get comments like "I've never seen my dad laugh so much." Knowing we've managed to bring that much pleasure is very gratifying.



It's been so important for mental health, stimulation and motivation for all sorts of people, including our staff. I really feel that table tennis has brought people together.



As soon as the hobby rooms and garden were back open for use, table tennis helped us bring fun, laughter and vibrancy to our spaces.

Whether it is through structured activities, or purely by spontaneously picking up a bat, we now see people here engaging with each other, getting involved with their families, and building a sense of belonging together.

We have a range of people here and it is truly adaptable. If you're a wheelchair user or are less active, we can turn this into a chair-based activity. If you don't fancy it yourself, come down and watch and have a giggle. Just because you can't join in the 'typical' way doesn't mean you're not included.

We're always looking at different ways to make this the community we want it to be - with a real sense of home and belonging and people wanting to look after each other.

Now we're getting excited about the idea of making a day of it, taking people to other Extra Care services in Knowsley, having some games, sharing some lunch. The hubs will really take it to the next level in terms of socialising and community building.

It's been so important for mental health, stimulation and motivation for all sorts of people, including our staff. I really feel that table tennis has brought people together.

Seeing people laugh in challenging times was everything. If we can continue to bring those pockets of joy to everyone, why wouldn't we do it?



Next Steps

- We aspire to introduce the sport into more of our settings across England and Scotland.
- We will continue to explore how we can embed table tennis as a core activity capability in our charity and find new, creative ways to deliver the activity and draw value from table tennis.
- We'll take inspiration from the Commonwealth Games to do bigger activations in 2022. We are also aspiring for the people we support to attend the Games or enjoy other live table tennis events.
- We'll enable the people we support to volunteer and develop skills through the sport. They can create and lead their own table tennis clubs from our hubs, and also get involved in their local table tennis community.
- We will continue to share our learning with Table Tennis England and Sport England, and the wider health and social care sectors.



Thank You

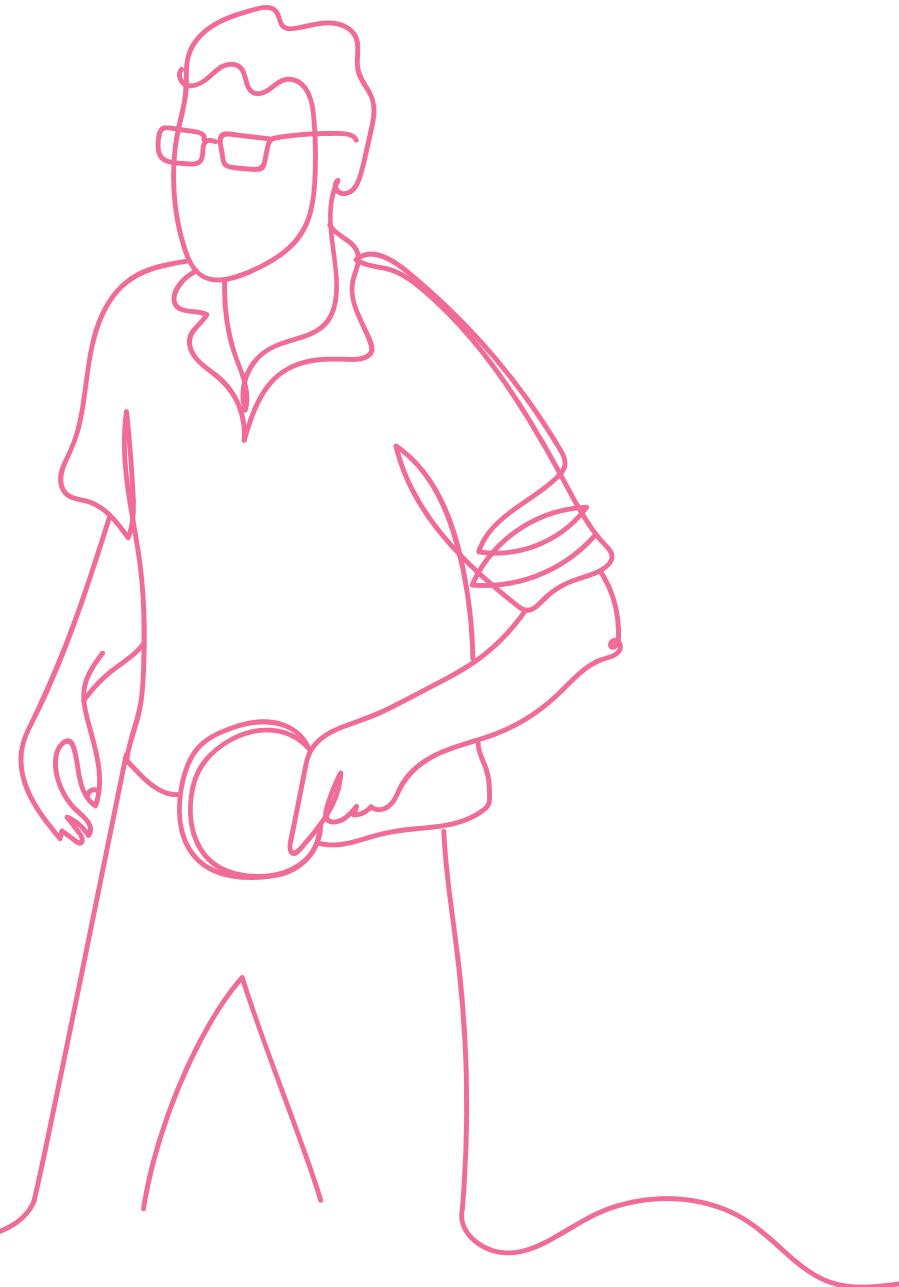
Many thanks to Table Tennis England and Sport England, for their incredible backing in helping us to introduce the sport across our charity.

We are excited to further these partnerships in the years ahead and for the opportunities to evolve this work.



Recipient of Table Tennis England's prestigious **'Inclusion Award'**

Proudly recognised at





People Passion Potential

Community Integrated Care is a registered charity
(Charity Registration Number 519996 (England) and SC039671 (Scotland))

Community
Integrated
Care

®