



TAKE FIVE TO AGE WELL

Take Five to Age Well Groups Pack evaluation report

Authors: Rebekah Ballantyne and Doug Anthony
January 2026



Executive summary



Partners Age Scotland, The Open University.



Duration Preparation January to March 2025. 'Live' phase April 2025 onward.



Location Scotland-wide



Who? Older people (aged 50+) within pre-existing groups or services, or new Take Five to Age Well groups.



Why? To extend the reach of Open University led UK-wide Take Five to Age Well online personal healthy ageing pledge campaign by:

- Enabling the participation of digitally excluded older people,
- Maximising opportunities for older people who wish to explore and act on healthy ageing information to benefit from peer support.



How? Provision of a paper-based group pack for older people's groups to explore healthy ageing over a series of activity and discussion sessions.



Outputs Age Scotland distributed more than 170 packs between April and December 2025 to older people groups and services in Scotland.



Outcomes Significant positive impact was reported by a cohort of pack recipients regarding what their group members had learned and enjoyed from participating, and about individual and group changes they were making for healthy ageing.

However as the proportion of pack recipients willing to share information about their experiences has been low it has not been possible to determine the extent to which the pack has been used, or whether any intend to use it in the future.

Background and project rationale

Take Five to Age Well (Take Five) is a healthy ageing initiative from The Open University that Age Scotland has been a partner in since 2022. The campaign offers encouragement and a framework for individuals to change habits for healthy ageing in one or more of The Open University's 'Five Pillars of Ageing Well' areas: nutrition, hydration, movement, social connection, and brain stimulation.

The main element of Take Five to date has been a UK-wide one month online health pledge campaign, running in September 2023 and in May 2025. For 2025 a need was identified for additional paper-based resources that would enable participation by older people who are unable or unwilling to access the internet. An opportunity was identified to test ways of engaging such individuals through Age Scotland's network of older people's community groups and services in Scotland, with the additional benefit of enabling peer support for healthy behaviour change.

Age Scotland developed a free paper-based group pack with which older people can, over a series of activity and discussion sessions, explore the Five Pillars for Ageing Well and identify individual and group changes they might make for healthy ageing.

The pack drew on materials prepared for a series of healthy ageing sessions Age Scotland led with a group of older men in HMP Shotts, run in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire and the Scottish Prison Service*. There was also significant input from The Open University, Age Scotland staff, and members of the charity's Expert Friends Panel for healthy ageing developments which brings together academic, delivery, and lived experience experts in an advisory and co-production forum.

This report shares implementation evidence gathered by Age Scotland's Health and Wellbeing team, and includes an assessment by it of the pack's impact alongside conclusions and recommendations for its future development and deployment.

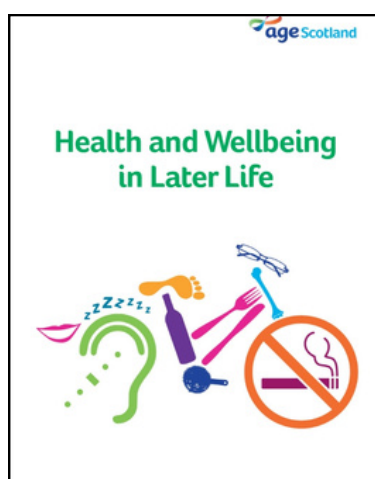
* Further information about the HMP Shotts project is available online at <https://www.agescotland.org.uk/news/1441-ageing-well-in-prison>

Designing the pack

The Take Five pack was designed to enable a staff member, volunteer, or group member to guide their group through a series of activity and discussion sessions exploring the Five Pillars of Ageing Well, each taking 60-90 minutes. Groups could opt to do between three and seven sessions depending on their interests and the time available to them (the introductory and concluding sessions, and between one and five topic sessions). The pack could be used at any time, not solely during the May 2025 Take Five to Age Well challenge.

Included in the pack were a facilitator's handbook and a series of activity handouts which groups could copy and distribute. Each participant would also receive a personalised healthy habit change planner (My Pledge Card). See Appendix 1, page 9, for examples.

The pack was intended to make the evidence on what supports healthy ageing accessible, and to guide facilitators step-by-step through each session. Age Scotland also ran 'Supporting older people to age well' workshops in various locations through which facilitators might boost their confidence and knowledge, if desired.



Age Scotland's Health and Wellbeing Guide was referenced throughout as an additional, evidence-based, resource for participants.

The Take Five to Age Well sessions, as appears in the Facilitator's Handbook



Complete sessions 1 and 7, alongside up to 5 optional sessions, with your group

Session 1:
An introduction to ageing well



Session 2: Eat



Session 3: Drink



Session 4: Move



Session 5:
Connect and engage



Session 6: Think

Session 7:
Get ready to Take Five to Age Well



Evaluation approach

A multi-strand approach to evaluation was taken:

- To gather direct individual participant feedback we inserted freepost feedback postcards in the 'My Pledge Cards'.
- To generate evaluation case studies we invited participating groups to keep a journal (physical or digital) of their Take Five experience and submit it to enter a competition with a small money prize for group wellbeing resources.
- We shared information about pack recipients with Age Scotland Community Development Officers so they could elicit group feedback in the course of their conversations with them.
- We ran online drop-in 'cafes' for pack recipients to share ideas and experiences.
- We compiled verbal and written feedback from partners and stakeholders.

Evaluation results

Two entries were received to the groups journal competition, from Pickleball for Wellbeing in Perth and the Super Snowdrops group at the MS Centre Mid-Argyll. Detailed feedback was also provided by the Yoker elderly social inclusion project (Time Well Spent) and an informal later life exercise group in Scone. In addition Age Scotland facilitated a series of Take Five sessions for clients aged 50+ of a Job Centre Plus centre in Edinburgh, staff from which undertook a participant survey. We also received 6 completed feedback postcards.

These sources indicated that participating older people found the sessions engaging and informative and had been prompted to make personal and group changes for ageing well. Facilitators also shared that they found the pack engaging and easy to use, and that their experience of using the materials in sessions had been positive.

Feedback from other recipients directly and via Age Scotland Community Development Team staff was that many were positive about and intending to use the pack, however time pressures and timing issues were barriers.

“We have been so short staffed as it's only me so I have not used the pack. But I have publicised it and intend to get it up and running with patients once my staffing improves.”
NHS allied-health professional

“To date I've not used the resource as a pack to work through but instead have taken some key themes from the pack and made these a topic at our meetings ”
Sight Scotland Veterans staff member

Individual participant feedback

The following participant quotes are taken from journals submitted by Pickleball for Wellbeing and the Super Snowdrops.

“Getting into the habit of always keeping a water bottle with me throughout the day”

“My meals have never been so colourful!”

“These conversations...gave us space to say things we wouldn't normally say, and it's changed how we think.”

“It's a good reminder to get in touch with people I haven't seen in a while”

“It's not just useful once. It's useful to go over and over, because every time you see something new in it.”

“If an hour of weeding in the garden counts as exercise, I smashed it this afternoon!”

“Enjoyed company and exercise, changed [my] way of eating”.

“Have communicated more with others, phone etc. Group friendship, feel healthier. Added another fitness class”.

“Instructive, informative in a social way. Enjoyed meeting and catching up with all the others and learning new experiences and skills”.

Facilitator feedback

Pack recipients included sport activity clubs, services that support people living with dementia, day centres, sheltered housing complexes, and NHS services. A handful were new informal groups formed specifically for Take Five to Age Well. Where pack recipients gave feedback on their impressions of it, and on their experience of running sessions with it, this was positive.

“Family members noticed positive changes at home, such as healthier eating habits and increased engagement.”

Staff member, Time Well Spent

“We definitely found that our group’s involvement with Age Scotland and the Take Five to Age Well 30-day pledge, helped us better understand how small daily lifestyle changes can provide us with an overall improved outlook for healthy ageing”.

Sandra Macrae, Pickleball Scotland

“[Take Five to Age Well] has been such a rewarding experience, one that helps celebrate ageing, with intention, connection, and care”.

“very informative and fun challenge.”

Laurene Cameron, Super Snowdrops

“It did not feel like an academic framework. It felt practical and accessible”.

Staff member, Time Well Spent

“As an experienced facilitator and programme leader, I have always been committed to evidence-based practice, inclusive participation, and high standards of community engagement. The Take Five to Age Well programme has been a valuable resource—offering a structured, research-informed framework that aligns with my own approach and the ethos of Time Well Spent. Integrating the Five Pillars has reinforced our commitment to co-production, adaptability, and member empowerment, allowing us to build on our strengths and deliver even greater impact for our community”.

Kirsty Gibbons, Project Coordinator, Time Well Spent

Conclusions and next steps

There is demand for healthy ageing resources

That more than 170 packs were requested indicates a good level of interest in ageing well resources from older peoples' groups and services in Scotland. However there is no evidence available that this interest has as yet translated into widespread usage.

Next steps

- Remove the pack request webform, inviting groups to instead have a conversation with Age Scotland to jointly determine if the pack is right for them.
- Promote and distribute the pack primarily in the context of our 'Supporting older people to age well' workshops, using that workshop as a primer and capacity builder for potential facilitators.

The pack is an effective intervention

Feedback from the groups/services that used the pack was that it enabled them to facilitate discussion and learning that prompted individual and group behaviour change in line with evidence on what enables healthy ageing. Only minor amendment suggestions were received from users. Participants also welcomed and were motivated by the opportunity to explore healthy ageing in a social setting with their peers. A participant workbook was tested in partnership with the DWP Job Centre Plus service and received positive feedback.

Next steps

- Publication of pack second edition incorporating user change suggestions, additional academic inputs, and Age Scotland's experience of implementation.
- Provide an optional 'download to print' participant workbook for use alongside the pack.

A champion in a group/service is essential for success

While the pack is free, it does require a commitment by groups/services over a period. Having a champion within the group to 'sell' the value of making time for Take Five, encourage participation, and facilitate sessions, is therefore key. It is not necessary that such a champion be a professional, but they do need to have good interpersonal and communication skills and be enthusiastic about ageing well interventions.

Next steps

- Seek opportunities to utilise the pack in collaboration with agencies and networks that share our ageing well aims, including gathering of evaluation data.
- Where there is an opportunity to test application of the pack in a new context, the Health and Wellbeing team will assist with some or all sessions facilitation.
- Explore funding options for sessional staff who can utilise the pack with geographic and/or ethnic communities where a need is identified.

Appendix 1: Pack materials

The Facilitator Handbook and downloadable handouts are available at <https://age.scot/takefivepack>

A copy of Age Scotland's Health and Wellbeing in Later Life information guide was included with each pack, with recipients invited to order copies for each of their group members and use it in tandem with the pack.

Handout examples

Hydration Bingo

Score off whichever of these you have had.
Each of these examples will help to keep you hydrated!

Water	Herbal tea	Fruit juice / smoothie <small>High in sugar</small>
Milk	Coffee <small>Caffeine? Go easy!</small>	Breakfast tea <small>Caffeine? Go easy!</small>
Stew	Soup	Curry
Leafy greens, Spinach or Kale	Diluting juice	Yoghurt
Hot chocolate	Juicy fruits	Custard or jelly

Handout 2 - Session 3

Movements for everyday life

Sit-to-Stand

Sit up tall near the front of your chair. Place your feet slightly back and hip-width apart. Lean forward slightly and stand up – using the chair if needed. Stand tall then back until your legs touch the chair. As slowly as you can, lower your bottom back into the chair – using the chair if needed. Repeat 10 times. This will strengthen the muscles in your thighs and bottom.

One Leg Balance

Stand close to your support so you can hold on if you need to. Balance on one leg, keeping your supporting leg straight but your knee soft. Stand tall and look ahead. Hold as long as you can, up to 60 seconds. Repeat with the other leg.

Heel-toe standing

Stand close to your support so you can hold on if you need to. Put one foot in front of the other, heel touching toe. Hold this position as long as you can, up to 60 seconds. Repeat with the other foot in front.

Handout 5 - Session 4

My pledge card

Front and back

Daily pledge suggestions

- Eat a healthier breakfast
- Eat more veg and fruit
- Have a protein source in each meal
- Go for 2 short walks
- Do 6-10 minutes of power moves, 3 times (weights or body weight)
- Stand and move, 5 minutes, hourly
- Talk to a friend or family member
- Greet a neighbour or local person
- Try a new hobby with others
- Take water whenever you go out
- Check your wee (drink more if dark)
- Reduce or stop drinking alcohol
- Learn something new
- Write about your day in a journal
- Pause, breathe and notice - 3 times for one minute

I will

TAKE FIVE TO AGE WELL

For more healthy ageing info, call our Helpline on
0800 12 44 222

Inside

My personal pledge

Take Five to Age Well, from Age Scotland and The Open University, invites you to change one thing about your day, for one month, for healthy ageing. Using this planner will help you turn that change into a lasting habit.

What I will do

Why I will do it

My SO EASY Plan

Specific	Where and when will I do it?	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Obvious	What will remind me to do it?	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Effortless	How do I make it quick and easy?	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Attractive	How do I make it appealing to do?	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Satisfying	How will I track my progress?	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Your allies	Who could help me to succeed?	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>

Appendix 3: Impact evidence - response postcards

How did you do?

Please return this card one month into your pledge to help us improve future support for healthy ageing.

TAKE FIVE TO AGE WELL

- How well are you sticking with your pledge?
☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ✓
- How much has being in a Take Five group helped you with your pledge?
☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ✓
- Please share 3 words on how you feel about Take Five to Age Well

1. Good & Healthy 2. Make you happy

www.age.scot/takefive
Registered number 153343, Charity number SC010100

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Please return this card one month into your pledge to help us improve future support for healthy ageing.

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1. MOTIVATES 2. ENCOURAGEMENT

3. GROUPWORK

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1. ENTHUSIASTIC
HAPPY

2. CHALLENGING

www.age.scot/takefive
Registered number 153343, Charity number SC010100

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☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ✓
- Please share 3 words on how you feel about Take Five to Age Well

1. IT HELPS A GREAT DEAL 2. _____

www.age.scot/takefive
Registered number 153343, Charity number SC010100

How did you do?

Please return this card one month into your pledge to help us improve future support for healthy ageing.

TAKE FIVE TO AGE WELL

- How well are you sticking with your pledge?
☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ✓
- How much has being in a Take Five group helped you with your pledge?
☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ✓
- Please share 3 words on how you feel about Take Five to Age Well

1. DOES 2. YAY

3. GOOD

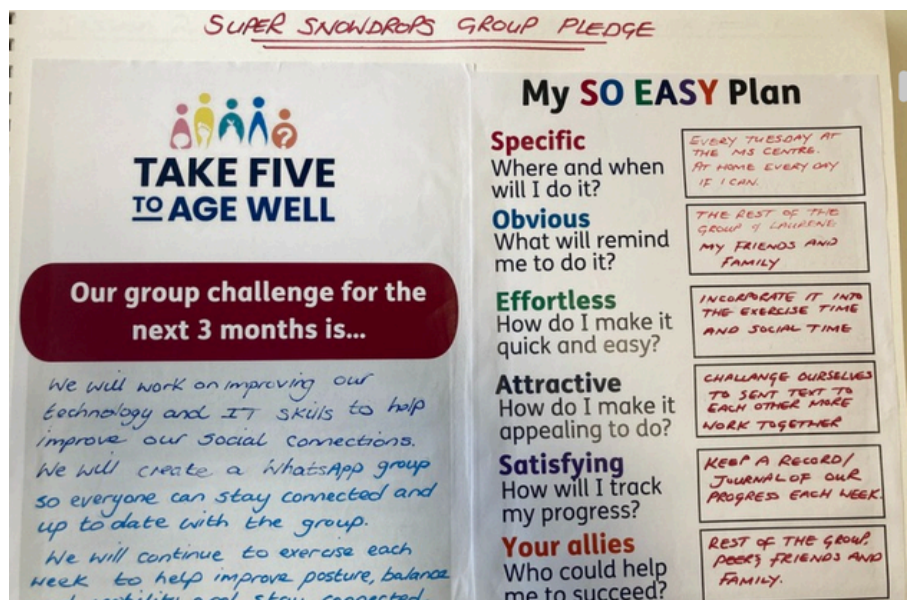
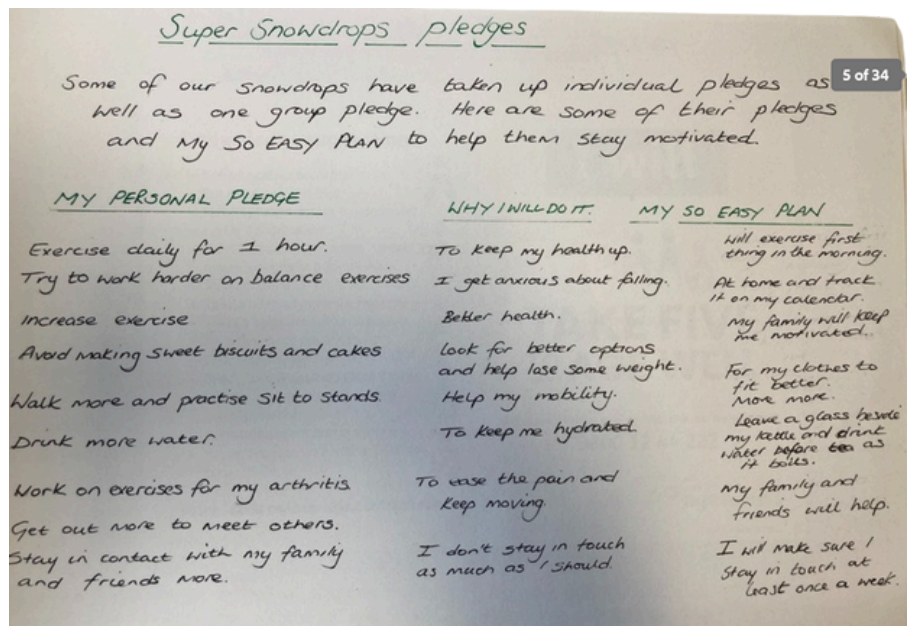
www.age.scot/takefive
Registered number 153343, Charity number SC010100

Appendix 3: Impact evidence - Snowdrops journal



“Our aim, with the help of the resources given, was to provide our senior group with meaningful, accessible ways to stay connected, reflect and thrive”.

Laurene Cameron, wellbeing development worker at The Super Snowdrops



Appendix 3: Impact evidence - Pickleball group journal



A series of photographs submitted via the journal competition from Pickleball for Wellbeing group members who participated in Take Five to Age Well.

They formed a group of 12 female members who belong to a local Pickleball for Wellbeing group in Perth. As a group of women all over the age of 50, they were interested to explore what sort of habits support ageing well and they wanted to share experiences about making small changes to help reach individual health goals.

Appendix 3: Impact evidence - Time Well Spent

“Yoker ranks within the top 10% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Many residents face barriers to fresh food, health services, and social participation. The Take Five to Age Well course’s focus on accessible, incremental change was particularly relevant in this context. For example, the “Eating Well” and “Staying Hydrated” sections helped us address local food insecurity and limited shopping options, and provided a springboard for group discussions on nutrition and hydration”.

Kirsty Gibbons, Yoker Resource Centre

Bringing Take Five to life

- Movement Prompts – Alexa reminder at 1 pm, everyone joins in
- Healthy Choices – sweets only after lunch
- Independence – urn replaced kettle, enabling safe peer-led tea breaks
- Member-Led Change –The market stall activity identified gaps in education: health, food, and hydration. We also used it to build our next calendar.

Difference made

- Increased confidence and peer support
- Open conversations leading to new connections
- Appetite for ongoing health and wellbeing activities

Next steps

- Document outcomes (stories + evidence).
- Integrate nutrition & hydration sessions into the group calendar.
- Share our stories to inspire others.
- Strengthen peer leadership that was started with in this project.

Appendix 3: Impact evidence - Scone exercise group

“They all enjoyed the sessions and activities involved and thought it worthwhile.”

Group facilitator

Take away moments

- Being positive about life can, on average, add up to 7.5 years to your life.
- As a group, we have taken this on board and now no negative thoughts allowed!
- Just 10 minutes a day of walking helps older adults live longer.
- New habits can be formed in as little as a month.
- You can build muscle and bone at any age.
- Listening well tips. Ways to improve listening skills.

Thoughts and observations on completing the sessions

- Mindfulness – a new area to explore.
- All were happy to contribute their ideas.
- There was useful discussion and exchanging of thoughts and opinions. e.g. One lady said a tin of beans was too much so she froze the rest for another time. Another that she was trying this out. Another had covered oats with milk and left it overnight in the fridge to be eaten for breakfast with berries etc. on top. New recipes were tried. All agreed that preparing and eating meals for one was difficult.
- They enjoyed the facts and figures quoted and liked the True or False activity.
- Everyone thought the resources were excellent.
- They found the handouts useful and some tried the weekly challenge. (Homework)
- They thought the project was worthwhile doing and found they were more motivated.
- Worried about societal problems i.e. the number of overweight people especially the young and use of smart phones.

Appendix 3: Impact evidence - Job Centre Plus

Age Scotland delivered Take Five to Age Well to a group of five Job Centre Plus clients aged 50 plus at High Riggs Job Centre in Edinburgh. These were delivered over four weeks, with two pack sections covered each week except week four, which covered one pack section followed by Age Scotland's Body Boosting Bingo movement game. A prototype workbook for individual participants was also tested, this eliciting positive feedback. The Job Centre plus service surveyed participants and shared on completion of week four and shared findings.

"I really enjoyed the first session, which was very thought provoking. I loved the input from the group too."

Staff member, Job Centre Plus service

"I did not have a clue about how my body was till I came here."

Client, Job Centre Plus

Follow-up survey results

- How would you rate your experience of the course?
9/10 average, 10 most positive
- What if anything could have improved the sessions?
No suggestions made.
- What ideas have you taken away from the sessions for your health and wellbeing?
Talking to people / joining a group /try small ways of moving more.
- Did the workbook help you follow the course?
100% yes.
- Did you make a personal pledge for ageing well?
3 yes, 1 'not made one yet', 1 'no'.
- What next steps, if any, would you consider?
4 'visit local community centre groups, 1 'gym', 'volunteering', 'training courses'.
- How likely are you to recommend this course?
9.2/10 average

