

# What's your number?

INSPIRING ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

waveactive

IMPACT REPORT 2025/26

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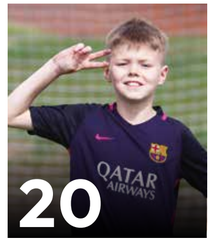

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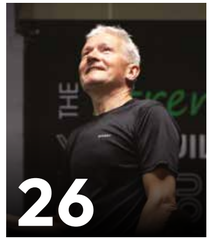

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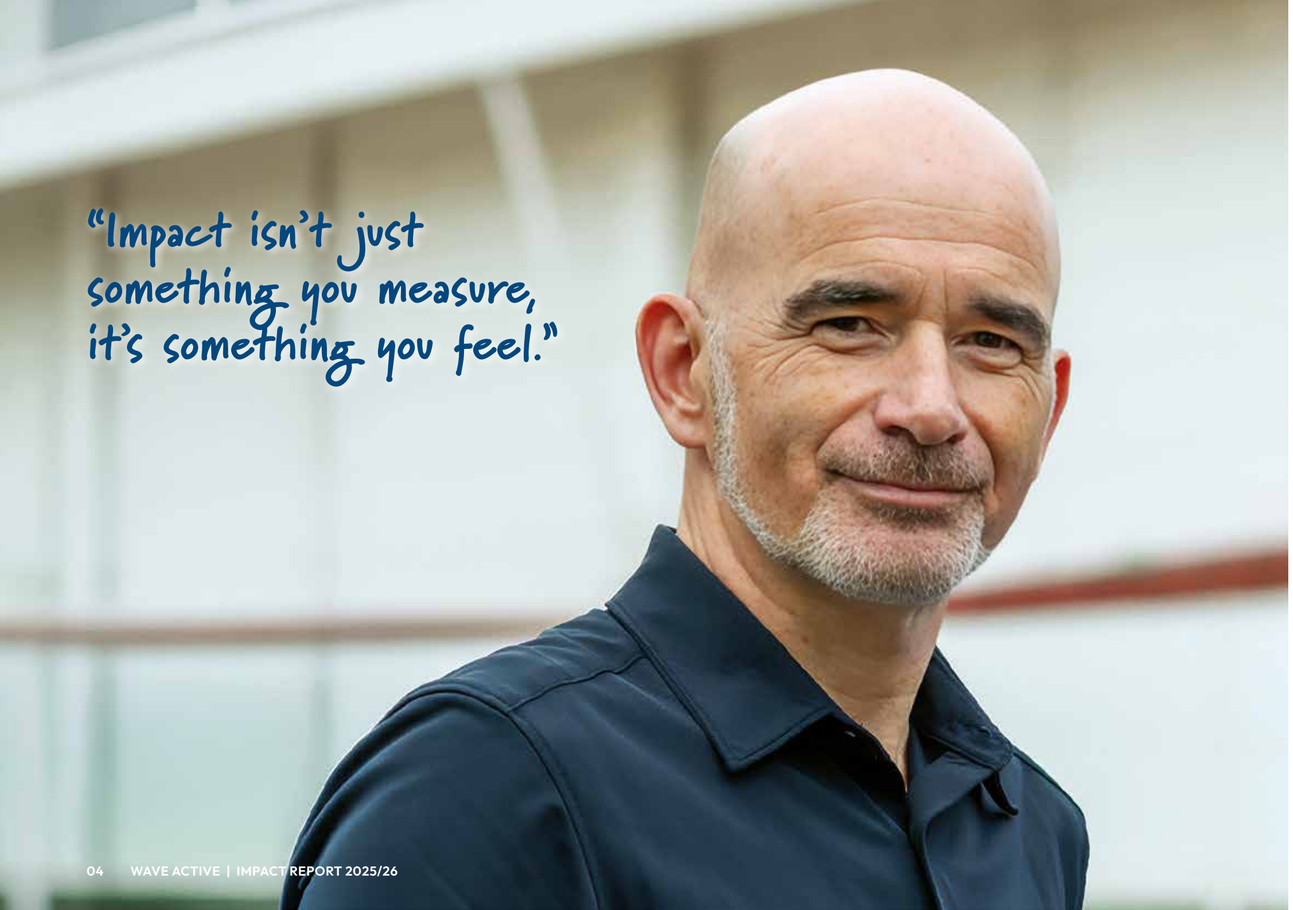

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# What's Your Number?

## At Wave Active, we believe that impact isn't just something you measure. It's something you feel, live and experience.

As a charity, we are committed to inspiring active lifestyles and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.

We achieve this by providing high-quality facilities, activities and programmes through Wave Active, alongside specialist health and wellbeing interventions through Wave Active Health.

Together, we help people of all ages and abilities to become more active, overcome barriers, manage health conditions and enjoy healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Ultimately, the true measure of our success is not simply what we deliver, but the positive difference we make to people's lives.

This year, we've chosen to tell that story differently. Impact reports traditionally focus on numbers: visits, sessions, programmes delivered and improvements recorded. These measures matter. They help us understand our reach, performance and progress. But on their own, they only tell part of the story. Behind every number is a person, with their own circumstances, challenges and ambitions.

- A person taking their first step back into activity.
- A person learning to manage a long-term health condition.
- A person rebuilding their confidence, strength or connection with others.

**This report asks a simple question: What's your number?**

As you'll discover throughout these pages, a number can mean many things. It might represent a milestone, a turning point, a goal or a daily challenge. It could be the number of steps someone can now walk without pain, the weeks since they last felt isolated, or simply the moment they found the confidence to start again.

Numbers may appear objective, but their meaning is often deeply personal. What we choose to measure matters, but understanding why it matters matters even more.

That's why we've put our members at the heart of this report. These aren't simply case studies or performance summaries. They are real stories, told in the voices of the people who live them. Each ends with a number that means something to that individual, a measure of progress, achievement or change that goes far beyond the statistics alone.

As a charity, we have a responsibility to make a positive difference, use our resources purposefully and demonstrate the value we bring to our communities. The stories in this report bring that responsibility to life. They show how physical activity, the right support and a sense of belonging can help people gain, regain and maintain their health and wellbeing. They also reflect our belief that being active should be accessible to everyone, whatever their starting point or circumstances.

As we move into our third decade, our vision remains clear: *to be at the heart of the improvement of health and wellbeing in the community*. Through Wave Active and Wave Active Health, we will continue to develop our offer, strengthen our impact and create opportunities for more people to experience the benefits of an active life.

This report celebrates what we deliver, recognises the people behind the numbers and demonstrates why our work matters.

So, as you read, I encourage you to pause and reflect. Not just on our numbers, but on your own.

**What's your number?**



**Duncan Kerr**
**Chief Executive Officer**

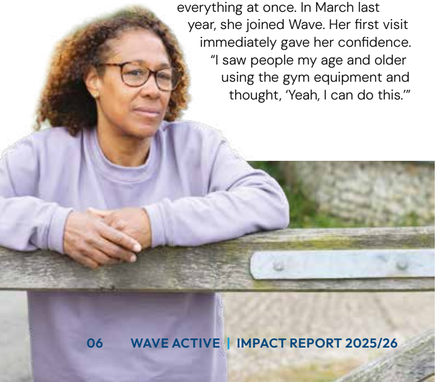
# I'm Cathie

**"My number is zero because I no longer need blood pressure medication," Cathie says. "My tablet count is zero now."**

For Cathie, zero represents a major change. A year earlier, she had been diagnosed with high blood pressure and started taking medication after feeling unwell and experiencing persistent headaches.

"As a nurse, it hit me quite hard," she says. "I'd spent my career monitoring other people's blood pressure and suddenly it was my blood pressure." At 52, post-menopausal and carrying extra weight, Cathie felt her health was moving in a direction she didn't want. "I felt like I was staring into the barrel of older life, collecting medication and health issues."

She knew she needed to make changes, but decided to start with exercise rather than trying to tackle everything at once. In March last year, she joined Wave. Her first visit immediately gave her confidence. "I saw people my age and older using the gym equipment and thought, 'Yeah, I can do this.'"



The support from staff was crucial. Having someone show her how to use the equipment and build a routine helped turn uncertainty into confidence. At first, Cathie focused on the gym and swimming. She quickly began noticing improvements.

"My legs felt stronger," she says. "Walking uphill was getting easier." As her fitness improved, so did her motivation. Exercise led to dietary changes, then other healthy habits followed. "I lost three and a half stone and I no longer vape," she says. "Everything's completely different now."

Around six months after joining, she realised something important had shifted. "I was becoming somebody who went to the gym, not somebody who just talked about going to the gym," she laughs. The benefits extended well beyond physical health. Cathie had struggled with anxiety, particularly after Covid, and often woke feeling anxious at the start of the day.

Once exercise became a regular part of her routine, that daily anxiety began to fade. "It wasn't that I felt less anxious. The anxiety had pretty much gone." She also noticed changes in her mood, energy and relationships.

"I have a much more positive outlook," she says. "I'm more present for my friends and family, and I've got the energy to show up for people." One person who benefits most is her four-year-old grandson, Elias. "He wants me to chase him and race him," she says. "I can do that now. I'm not sitting on the sidelines watching him play. I'm joining in."

At the beginning of this year, less than a year after joining Wave, Cathie came off her blood pressure medication completely. But for her, zero is about much more than tablets.

"It made me realise there wasn't just the pharmaceutical option," she says. "I had the option of being able to do something myself." Now, she is looking ahead with optimism. "For the first time, I'm actually looking forward to getting older," she says.

**For Cathie, that's what zero means: taking back control of her health and feeling positive about the future.**

**AROUND**

**1 IN 3**

**UK ADULTS HAS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.**

Taking control of your health can transform quality of life, confidence and independence.

We deliver dedicated programmes for people living with conditions such as high blood pressure. Over the past 12 months, we have seen:

- Over **5,000** classes and courses delivered
- **185%** increase in number of users

Since starting her "What's Your Number?" journey, Cathie became interested in Wave Active's vision and has since joined the team within Wave Active Health.










# I'm Tony



**Tony's number is 1. It isn't about a single achievement or fitness target. It's about feeling whole again after a period of stress, illness and uncertainty.**

At 66, Tony never imagined becoming a regular gym user. "I'm not a lover of the gym," Tony says with a laugh.

After more than four decades working in the bus industry, exercise had never been a major part of life. Long shifts often left little time or energy for anything else. When Tony was active, it was usually outdoors, walking across the South Downs.

Then everything changed. Heart problems led to a stent operation at a time when Tony was already coping with workplace stress, mental health challenges and the after-effects of the pandemic.

One of the hardest parts was the possibility of losing the ability to drive buses. "That really got to me," Tony says. "Driving buses had been such a huge part of my life." Initially, joining Wave was purely practical. To regain their licence, Tony needed to pass a treadmill fitness test.

"That was honestly the reason I went there in the beginning," Tony says. "I just needed to get fit enough to pass the test." Tony passed with full marks. But instead of stopping, they kept going.

"It gave me something else," Tony says. "Not just physically, but mentally." Exercise gradually became part of everyday life. Cardiac exercise classes, swimming, gym sessions and regular walks all helped rebuild confidence and fitness. Tony even started attending Zumba classes. "I have absolutely no coordination whatsoever," Tony laughs.

What matters most, however, is how exercise affects their mental wellbeing. "If I'm swimming or walking or in the gym, I can turn off," Tony says. "I can breathe again."

Wave has also become a place of connection. "Sometimes it's just having somewhere to go, somewhere people know you." That sense of community helped remove any fears about joining. "You've got all sorts there," Tony says. "Ordinary people just trying to look after themselves."

Tony is also keen to challenge the idea that people need to become fitness fanatics. "People think they've got to suddenly do loads. But you don't," Tony says. "Just try it. Five minutes. Ten minutes. Build it slowly."

Today, Tony still enjoys driving buses at special events, spending time with friends at cricket matches and walking across the Downs listening to history podcasts. Exercise has become one of the foundations that supports those interests. Looking back, what began as preparation for a medical test became something much more meaningful.

"Don't think you've got to become some super-fit person," Tony says. "That's not the point. It's about feeling better. Feeling more yourself."

**For Tony, that is what 1 represents. "One means whole."**

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

**is associated with improved mood, reduced stress and better mental wellbeing.**



Nearly **9 out of every 10 members** surveyed reported feeling more confident.

# I’m Rashmi

**“In my mind, I keep saying four days,” Rashmi says. “Two days in the water and two days in the gym. That’s sufficient for my body.”**

For Rashmi, four is not about pushing herself harder or chasing perfection. It’s about consistency and looking after herself so she can continue doing the things she loves.

A few years ago, she and her husband moved to Peacehaven to transform a rundown bungalow into their retirement home. What was meant to be a major project became four years of physical work, alongside family responsibilities, the pandemic and caring duties. Over time, her knees began to suffer.

Eventually, scans revealed osteoarthritis and low bone density. “It was bad,” she says. “Especially in the morning.”

Looking back, Rashmi feels she ignored her body for too long. “I should have been more careful after 40 plus,” she says. “But anyway… it’s never too late.”

A physiotherapist referred her to a pain management programme, where one message kept coming up: exercise. “That was really the turning point,” she says. “I had to have a conversation with my body. You can’t just take it for granted.”

She joined Wave and began attending water exercise classes and using the gym. What appealed most was that she could work at her own pace. “I don’t look at the other people,” she says. “If I compare myself to them, it’s just not possible.”

Over time, exercise became less about fixing a problem and more about understanding her body. She even enjoys the mirrors in the gym. “I can’t hide myself from myself,” she laughs.

Wave has also helped her reconnect with a lesson from childhood. “My mother always said, ‘First of all, love yourself and love your body.’”

Perhaps most unexpectedly, it has brought joy. Rashmi loves being in the water. “When you go into the water, you should feel like a little child,” she says. She knows exercise won’t cure her arthritis, but it helps her manage the condition and maintain her strength.

“At the end of the day, I must strengthen my muscles,” she says. Life remains busy, with family commitments, caring responsibilities and recent bereavement. But her four days remain protected.

“We have to keep that time,” she says. “Even if it’s just a small amount.” And there is another reason she keeps going: her grandchildren. “When they come running to me, that’s my mental happiness,” she says. “You have to be fit for them.”

**For Rashmi, four is about staying active, independent and able to enjoy the people and moments that matter most.**

**ADULTS SHOULD AIM FOR AT LEAST**

**150 MINUTES**

**OF MODERATE ACTIVITY PER WEEK.**

Building regular activity into everyday life can have a lasting impact on physical and mental wellbeing.




We had **186,804** gym visits and **108,565** swim visits.



# The Difference We Make: Our Social Value

## How do you measure the difference an organisation makes to people's lives?

**1**

### Our objective

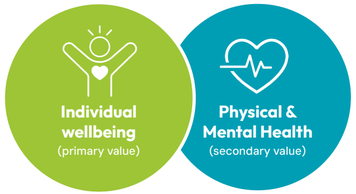
To demonstrate how the focused work taking place in leisure facilities contributes towards the projected social value generated.

We use the 4Global Social Value model to measure the wider impact of our work. The model draws on participation data from our facilities, gathered through 4Global's InsightOS, along with wider data and industry estimates, to calculate the projected social value created by people taking part in our activities.

**2**

### Key features

To provide total projected social value split into two sub-categories:




To break down figures to a **per-person level**.

**3**

### Leisure facilities

Outputs are provided for Wave Active using the projected annual usage at the site level in 2025/26:

- Lewes Leisure Centre
- Downs Leisure Centre
- Peacehaven Leisure Centre
- Eastbourne Sports Park
- The Wellbeing Square, Newhaven
- Shinewater Sports Centre
- Seaford Head Swimming
- Hampden Park Sports Centre
- Ringmer Swimming Pool
- Wave Active Digital Hub

**Making a difference that matters**

At Wave Active, we look beyond how many people use our facilities or take part in our activities to understand the wider benefits our work brings to individuals and our communities. This is known as Social Value: a way of putting a financial measure on benefits such as improved physical health, better mental wellbeing and stronger social connections.

Using this model, it is projected that Wave Active generated £10.3 million in Social Value between April 2025 and March 2026, from 41,026 participants. The average projected Social Value contribution per person is £253. Of the total, £8.6 million relates to individual wellbeing, with a further £1.7 million relating to physical and mental health.

These figures are about more than money. They help illustrate the difference that opportunities to be active can make, from improving health and confidence to helping people feel less isolated and more connected to their community. As a charity, this is central to our purpose: using our facilities, activities and programmes, alongside our targeted Wave Active Health interventions, to help people lead healthier, happier and more active lives.

**Our Social Value demonstrates that the benefits of Wave Active extend far beyond participation. It helps put a value on the positive difference we make to people's lives and the communities we serve.**

### Examples of Physical Health

Long-term conditions and physical health outcomes

- Coronary heart disease (CHD)
- Stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- Hip fractures
- Back pain
- Reduced GP visits
- Sports injuries (treated as a negative value)
- Cancer Outcomes

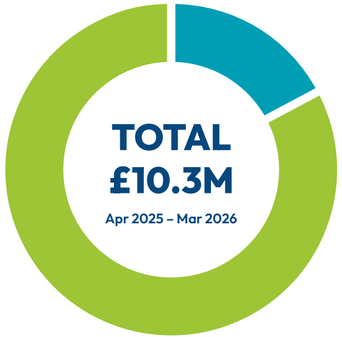
### Examples of Mental Health

Emotional wellbeing and mental health service usage

- Depression
- Psychotherapy
- Reduced GP visits (linked to mental health)
- Improved life satisfaction

# The bigger number behind the individual stories

## Projected Social Value Breakdown




- Individual Wellbeing
  **£8.6M | 83%**
- Physical & Mental Health
  **£1.7M | 17%**

Projected throughput data from across the Wave Active estate was used to calculate the social value projected to be generated by users of these facilities.

**£10.3M**

A total of **£10.3M** of social value is projected for the 12-month time period **APR 2025 – MAR 2026**

**41,026**

from **41,026** participants.

**£253**

The average projected social value contribution per person is **£253**.

**£4.3M+**

The top performing site is projected to be **Lewes Leisure Centre**, creating over **£4.3M** in attributable social value.

**£8.6M**

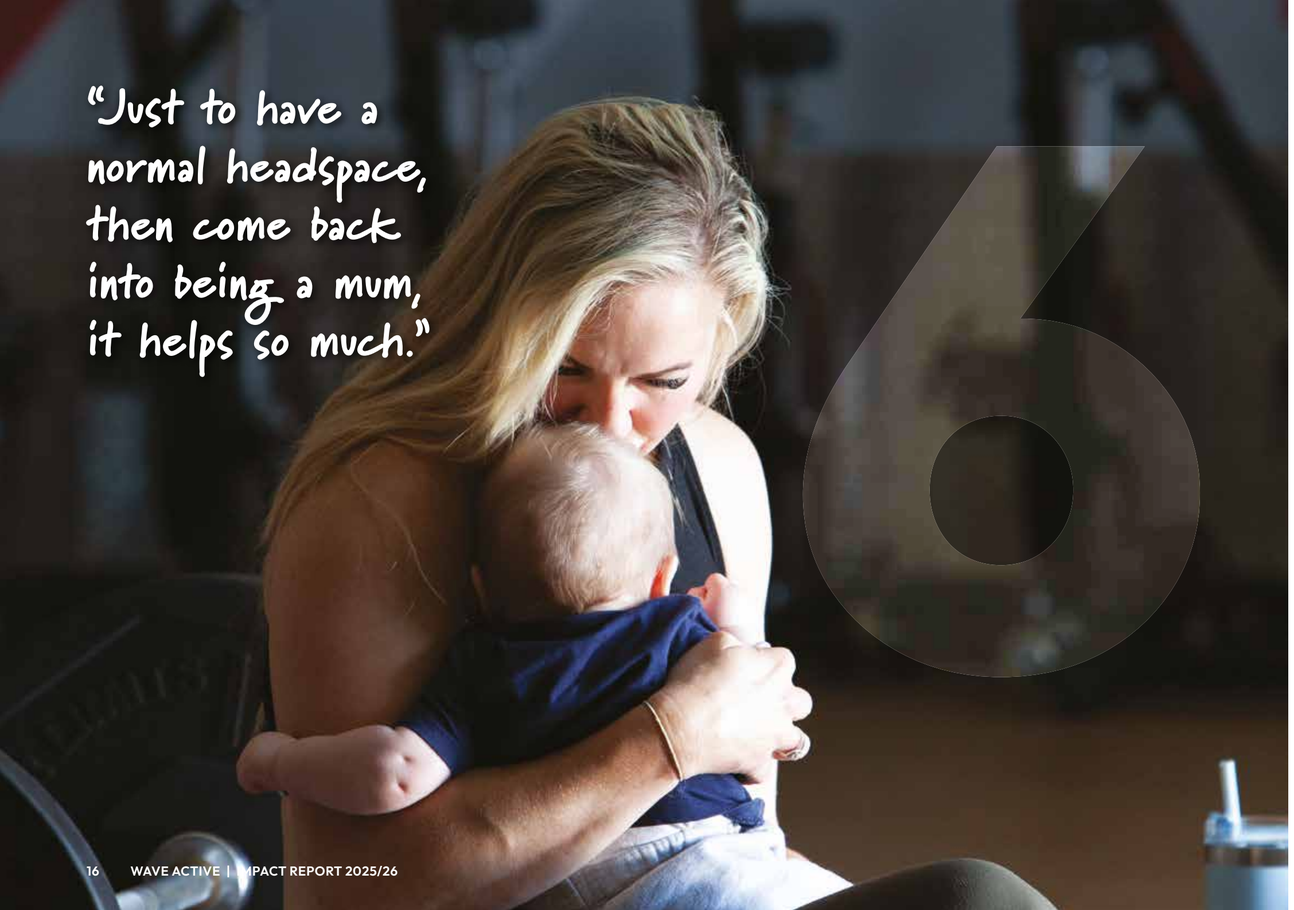
**Individual Wellbeing** is projected to contribute **£8.6M** of that total attributable social value.

**£1.7M**

**Physical & Mental Health** is projected to contribute **£1.7M** of that total attributable social value.








# I'm Emma

**Before becoming a mum, Emma trained six days a week. "Training, lifting, CrossFit, you name it, I gave it a go," she says. Today, with baby George just a few months old, six still matters.**

"If I can get six sessions in a week, we're happy," she says. "Sometimes it drops to five, but six is what I aim for." Emma uses Wave Seaford, just a short walk from home. It's also where her mum works, making it a place that has been part of her life since childhood.

"I used to finish school and go straight there to see Mum," she says. "I'd join little classes and watch her doing aerobics and circuits. I think it had a big impact on how we live our lives." An active lifestyle has always been normal for Emma.

She played football from the age of six, as well as gymnastics and dance, and exercise remained a constant throughout adulthood. She even trained throughout her pregnancy. "I remember having contractions in the gym on the Sunday," she laughs. "George arrived on the Monday."

After becoming a mum, her relationship with exercise changed. The long gym sessions she once enjoyed are no longer practical, but staying active remains important. "Before George, the gym was my selfish time," she says. "Now it's more focused. You go in, get it done and come home."

Making time for exercise requires teamwork. Emma and her partner James take turns looking after George so each can fit in training sessions.

"We call it teamwork," she says. "It's a case of tagging in and tagging out." For Emma, exercise isn't about returning to a previous version of herself or achieving a particular appearance. It's about maintaining her wellbeing while navigating the challenges of motherhood.

"Even when you're tired, sleep deprived and have a million things to do, having that hour to yourself is so good for your brain," she says. She believes people often overcomplicate exercise.

"You don't have to do crazy weights," she says. "Even a little bit of movement can make a huge difference." What Wave gives her is space.

"Just having time where you can focus on yourself for a little while is so valuable," she says. And yes, she believes it helps her as a parent.

"Definitely," she says. "You come back feeling refreshed and ready to be mum again." Wave has now become part of family life too. Emma takes George to swimming lessons and values the variety of activities available under one membership.

"It's very family orientated," she says. "There's something for everybody." As George grows up, Emma hopes he will see the value of being active. "He doesn't have to go to the gym or be sporty," she says. "But living a healthy, active lifestyle is important."

**For Emma, six isn't about perfection. It's about maintaining a routine that supports her wellbeing, fits around family life and helps her stay connected to herself.**

## WOMEN ARE LESS ACTIVE THAN MEN

**in every age group with lack of time one of the biggest barriers. Taking time to be active can improve confidence, wellbeing and resilience.**



At Wave Active, we constantly challenge this statistic. We have seen a **160% increase** in total female users over the **past 12 months.**

# I’m James

## James’s number is 7. It’s a number that has followed him throughout his life.

“When I was younger, my favourite maths equation was seven times seven equals forty-nine,” he says, laughing. “Seven just became my thing.”

He even has the Roman numeral tattooed on him. Over time, it became a number he associated with reassurance and good fortune. Today, it has another meaning.

James goes to Wave in Seaford seven days a week. That routine began during an extremely difficult period in his life. Relationship breakdown, poor mental health and years of emotional strain had eroded his confidence. “I had no belief in myself,” he says. “None.”

A close friend named Will had started going to the gym and seemed noticeably different. “He seemed happier and stronger somehow.” Eventually, James decided to give it a try himself.

What began as somewhere to spend a couple of hours quickly became something much more important. “It became my safe haven,” he says.
These days, his routine is built around Wave. After the school run, he heads to the gym, swims, plays football with his son JJ and catches up with familiar faces.

Over time, the leisure centre has become a community. “I know everybody there now,” he says. “Everyone talks to each other and looks after each other.” That sense of belonging has been especially valuable during periods when anxiety has made everyday life feel difficult.

“I still get anxious,” he admits. “But when I walk into Wave, I feel safe.” Exercise has also transformed his physical health. Since joining, James has lost more than 30 kilos. But the greatest change has been in how he feels about himself.

“I actually feel like I’m worth something now,” he says. The confidence he has gained affects every part of life. “I’ll smile at people now. Chat to strangers. It’s given me confidence again.”

One of the most meaningful parts of the journey has been sharing it with his son. The moment JJ became old enough to use the gym, James signed him up. “He wanted to come because he saw how much it changed me.” Now they train together regularly, swim together and encourage one another.

“As a dad, this is huge,” he says. “You become a little hero to your son.” James is passionate about encouraging others to take that first step too. “So many people think it’s not for them,” he says. “But honestly, just try it. What have you got to lose?” Even on challenging days, he still turns up. “Life is better because I went,” he says simply.

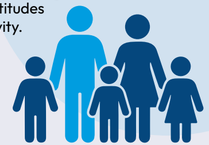
**For James, 7 is more than a lucky number. It’s a daily commitment to his health, his confidence and the community that helped him rebuild both.**

**CHILDREN WITH**

**ACTIVE FATHERS**

**ARE 3.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE ACTIVE THEMSELVES.**

Parents play a powerful role in shaping lifelong habits and attitudes towards activity.



Over the last year we have facilitated **53,663** swim school visits.






# I'm JJ

**JJ's number is 7. It's the number on the back of his football shirt and the position he plays on the pitch. "The person who holds the team together," he explains.**

At 11 years old, JJ is rarely still. Most days involve football, swimming or trips to Wave in Seaford with his dad. Now that he's old enough to use the gym, it's become an important part of his routine too.

The first visit wasn't quite so comfortable. "I didn't really know what to do," he says. "I'd never properly been in a gym before. It felt a bit weird."

Like many people, he started cautiously, sticking to the machines he was allowed to use and watching others around him. Gradually, his confidence grew.

Now he enjoys using the weight machines and pull-up bars, and has already noticed the difference on the football pitch.

"Last year, when I went into tackles, I wouldn't always get the ball," he says. "Now I'm stronger and more physical." What stands out about JJ is that he talks far more about confidence than appearance. Even during SATs week, he found exercise helped him feel calmer. "It gives me confidence," he says simply.

One of the things he enjoys most is going to the gym with his dad. They train together several times a week, encourage each other and occasionally compete. Asked who wins, JJ doesn't hesitate. "Me, obviously." Then he laughs.

JJ wishes more of his friends would be active too. While some prefer gaming or watching television, he'd rather be outdoors playing football or keeping busy. "You're not going to get stronger or more confident just sitting inside eating sweets and drinking fizzy drinks," he says.

Some of his enthusiasm is starting to rub off. "Some of my friends say, 'Lucky you, you get to go to the gym.' Some of them want memberships now."

For JJ, Wave has become part of everyday life. He knows the football schedules, recognises familiar faces and enjoys being part of the community. Most importantly, it's somewhere he gets to spend quality time with his dad.

The gym has become a place where they encourage each other, share routines and celebrate progress together. Just like his role on the football pitch, JJ seems happiest when he's active, surrounded by people and part of a team.

**For JJ, 7 is more than a shirt number. It's confidence, strength, friendship and family — all rolled into one.**

**ACTIVE CHILDREN ARE MORE**

**LIKELY TO HAVE BETTER PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING AND DEVELOP HEALTHY HABITS FOR LIFE**



Around **1,900** children are enrolled in our Swim School.

# From seeing us, to finding us, to walking through the door

## Before someone walks through our doors, they first need to know we're here and that there's something for them.

Over the past 12 months we've shared health and wellbeing messages online, helped people explore our activities and memberships, and spent time in the community with schools, healthcare providers and local organisations. Each step makes it easier for someone to get started.

**1,077,911**
social media reach

**Why it Matters:** Reaching over one million people with positive health and wellbeing messages.

**183,014**
website sessions

**Why it Matters:** Every online visit is an opportunity to inspire someone to become more active.

**108,519**
engaged sessions

**Why it Matters:** People actively explored activities, memberships and health opportunities.

**1,925**
website clicks

**Why it Matters:** Helping people move from inspiration to action.

**12**
community outreach events

**Why it Matters:** Working with schools, healthcare providers, businesses and community organisations to encourage more people to become active.

**122**
hours of community engagement

**Why it Matters:** Time invested in building relationships, raising awareness and supporting healthier communities.





# I'm Alex

**For Alex, the number is 12. "It's the number of times I aim to use Wave each month," she says. "Usually about three times a week, depending on how I'm feeling."**



For Alex, 12 is a goal rather than a rule. It gives her something positive to work towards without adding pressure. "It feels realistic alongside everything else in my life. It's enough to keep me active, but it doesn't feel like an obligation."

Alex joined Wave six months ago after deciding she wanted to do something for herself. Living with endometriosis can bring pain, fatigue and flare-ups, and she was also dealing with challenges in her personal life.

"I thought, going into winter, what can I do to help myself through those dark, cold months, physically and mentally?" She signed up at the end of October and quickly began noticing the benefits.

"The first thing I noticed was my mood and general wellbeing," she says. "That happened almost immediately." Today, she combines swimming, gym sessions and classes. Swimming is especially important when her symptoms flare up.

"Being in the water really helps. Even on painful days, I can move gently and stretch my muscles." One experience stands out. After waking with severe lower back pain, she almost stayed at home. Instead, she went to the gym, took things slowly and completed some gentle exercise.

"I came out, walked home and felt like a different person." That memory motivates her on difficult days. "If I wake up feeling fatigued or in pain, I know I'm going to feel better afterwards." As someone who works from home, Wave also gives Alex the chance to leave the house, move away from her desk and spend time around other people.

"Even if you don't really know people, you start seeing familiar faces. Sometimes you end up having a little conversation, and it's nice." Those small interactions help her feel connected and supported. Friends and family have noticed the difference too.

"I've had people say, 'You're handling everything really well,'" she says. "A big part of that is because I've got something supporting my health mentally and physically." Alex encourages others to approach exercise with kindness rather than perfection.

"Be kind to yourself. Don't be too hard on yourself," she says. "Rest can be self-care, just as much as going to the gym or pool." She also understands why some people feel nervous about joining. "I felt exactly the same," she says. "But everyone feels that way when they start. You're not alone."

**For Alex, 12 isn't about achieving perfection. It's about creating a routine that supports her health, fits around her life and helps her feel more like herself. Month by month, those 12 visits are making a difference.**

**AROUND**

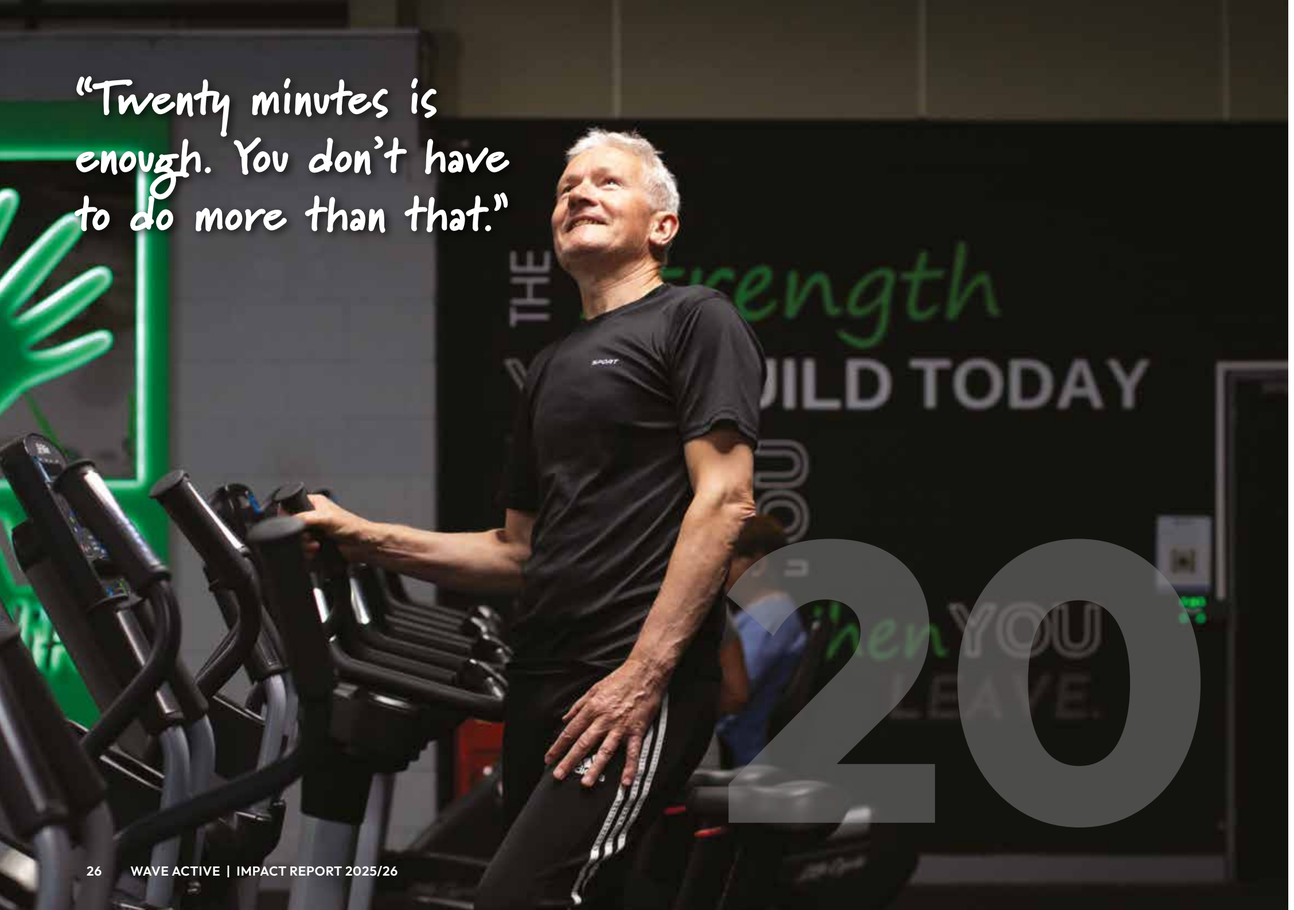
## 15 MILLION PEOPLE

**IN ENGLAND LIVE WITH A LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITION.**

Being active can help people manage long-term conditions and improve overall wellbeing.

In 2026, we opened Lilian's Room in Seaford, a dedicated studio with power-assisted, low-impact exercise equipment. It provides an inclusive space for older adults and people with long-term health conditions to stay active, improve mobility and build confidence. Since opening in February 2026, Lilian's Room has welcomed approximately **8,086** visits by the end of September 2026.






# I'm Brian

**For Brian, the number is 20. "My number is 20 because it's a target I can aim for," he says. "It's something I can repeat over and over again."**

Whether he's swimming 40 lengths in around 20 minutes or spending 20 minutes on the cross trainer, the number represents a routine that keeps him fit without turning exercise into hard work.

"It allows me to maintain the fitness level that I'm happy with," he says. "It doesn't make it feel like a chore.

It just makes it fun." Brian is 70 and has spent most of his life being active. Swimming, cycling, walking, football, athletics, marathons and triathlons have all played a part at different times. "I still get excited when I go to the gym," he says. "I love the atmosphere. I just find it a thrill."

A regular visitor to Downs Leisure Centre in Seaford, Brian cycles there, completes his workout and cycles home. His routine includes swimming, gym sessions, weekly bike rides and walks with his wife.

The key, he says, is consistency rather than intensity. "Twenty minutes is enough. You get your heart rate up, but it doesn't take over your life."

Although he once focused on performance and pushing himself harder, his motivation has changed over time. "When I was younger I was always trying to go faster," he says. "Now I do it because I enjoy it."

That enjoyment was especially important after a serious accident nearly ten years ago. A fall from a ladder left him with severe pelvic injuries and three months confined to bed.

"All my muscles went," he says. "I had to build everything back up from scratch." Recovery introduced him to the cross trainer, which remains one of his favourite pieces of equipment because of its low-impact nature.

"I absolutely love it," he says. While age and injury mean he can no longer run as he once did, he has adapted his routine to focus on activities that work for him.

"Swimming, cycling, walking and the cross trainer are all low impact, so I can manage them." Fitness also helps him keep up with his three grandchildren.

"They're always running around, cycling, swimming or on their skateboards," he says. "You need to be fit." His advice is simple: find an activity you enjoy and stick with it. "You don't have to be fantastic," he says. "You just need to persevere a little bit and be consistent."

Wave helps make that consistency easy. Brian values the facilities, the friendly staff and the welcoming environment, but most of all he appreciates having somewhere that supports an active lifestyle.

**For Brian, 20 is a routine that works. It's enough to keep him moving, enough to keep him fit and enough to make exercise something he genuinely enjoys.**

## GYM AND LEISURE MEMBERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE ACTIVE.

Only 3% of current gym and leisure members are physically inactive, compared with 18% of former members and around one third of people who are not members.

waveactive

We are committed to making swimming accessible for all, that's why we have re-opened the swimming pool in Ringmer.

Since reopening in June 2025, Ringmer has received **8,874** swimming visits.

# Investing in a Greener, More Sustainable Future

## As a charity, we are committed to protecting the environment and investing in the long-term future of the facilities our communities rely on.

Leisure centres are energy-intensive buildings, particularly those with swimming pools. That's why reducing our environmental impact is a key priority. Over the past year, in partnership with Lewes District Council, we have made significant investments in energy-efficient technology and infrastructure, helping us reduce energy consumption, improve operational efficiency and create more sustainable facilities for future generations.

### Our sustainability improvements include:

- **10 ultra-efficient pool pumps installed**, improving the energy efficiency of our swimming pool operations.
- **8 LED lighting installations completed**, reducing electricity consumption across our facilities.
- **5 pool covers installed**, helping retain heat, reduce water evaporation and lower energy demand.
- **1 voltage optimisation unit installed**, improving electrical efficiency.
- **1 energy monitoring system installed**, allowing us to better understand, manage and reduce energy consumption.

These improvements represent a substantial investment in the future of our centres, helping us reduce our environmental impact and manage rising energy costs.

For Wave Active, sustainability is about making responsible investments today that protect our facilities and ensure we can continue providing accessible, high-quality leisure opportunities for our communities for generations to come.

### Encouraging Sustainable Travel

Dedicated cycle parking is available at 6 out of 10 Wave Active sites, with alternative areas available at other centres where bicycles can be safely stored or secured. This encourages customers, visitors and staff to make healthier, more sustainable travel choices.

For members like Brian, who regularly cycles to Downs Leisure Centre in Seaford, active travel is part of everyday life, combining physical activity with a more environmentally friendly journey.

**250,000 kWh**

of estimated annual energy savings – equivalent to the electricity used by more than 50 average UK homes in a year.



# I'm Gwen

## "My number is 21," Gwen says. "Twenty-one is the nautical miles from Dover to France."

This August, Gwen was part of a relay team swimming the English Channel while raising money for SwimTayka, a charity that teaches children in disadvantaged communities how to swim. After 18 months of training, Gwen completed her Channel relay on 8 August 2026 as swimmer number 3 in the six-person "Seal the Deal" team. After 15 hours of swimming through darkness, cold water, jellyfish and relentless waves, the team reached France, with Gwen making it onto the beach with just 10 seconds left on the clock.



Swimming has been part of Gwen's life for as long as she can remember. Her father was a swimming teacher and coach, and over time a regular lunchtime swim became a passion.

"It got to the point where I couldn't wait to get into the pool," she says. The idea of swimming the Channel began with encouragement from a fellow swimmer. "He said, 'You can do this.'"

As she approached her 60th birthday, Gwen decided there was no reason not to try. "I just thought, why not?" To prepare, she combined regular swimming with strength training at Wave. Early morning sessions fitted around work and helped her stay consistent. "I'm a diesel engine," she says. "Slow and steady."

But 21 has another meaning too. "Twenty-one was also the age our daughter was when she passed away."

In 2016, Gwen's daughter Brianna died in a car accident. Since then, grief has remained part of family life. "Grief follows very closely alongside us," Gwen says. "But you can't let it consume you." Swimming has helped her navigate that loss.

"When I swim, I don't think about anything. It's almost meditative." Exercise has provided both a release and a sense of purpose. "Having challenges and goals stops grief from swallowing you up," she says. Wave has played an important role in making that possible.

"If I didn't have Wave, where would I swim?" The community matters just as much as the facilities. When Newhaven pool closed temporarily for refurbishment, local swimmers stayed connected through a WhatsApp group, helping each other with lifts and encouragement. For Gwen, that sense of belonging is one of the greatest strengths of swimming and fitness communities. "You're all there for the same reason," she says.

**"Twenty-one is a positive number for us, but also a very sad number," she says. "Life keeps moving, doesn't it? You've got to keep putting one foot in front of the other."**

She also wants people who feel intimidated by gyms or pools to know they are welcome. "Give it a go," she says. "Just walk through the door and ask for help." And if someone feels nervous? "Take a friend. And if you can't, you'll probably find one when you get there."

For Gwen, 21 will always carry mixed emotions. It represents an extraordinary challenge and a personal loss that will never disappear. But it also represents resilience, community and continuing to move forward.

**SETTING AND ACHIEVING**

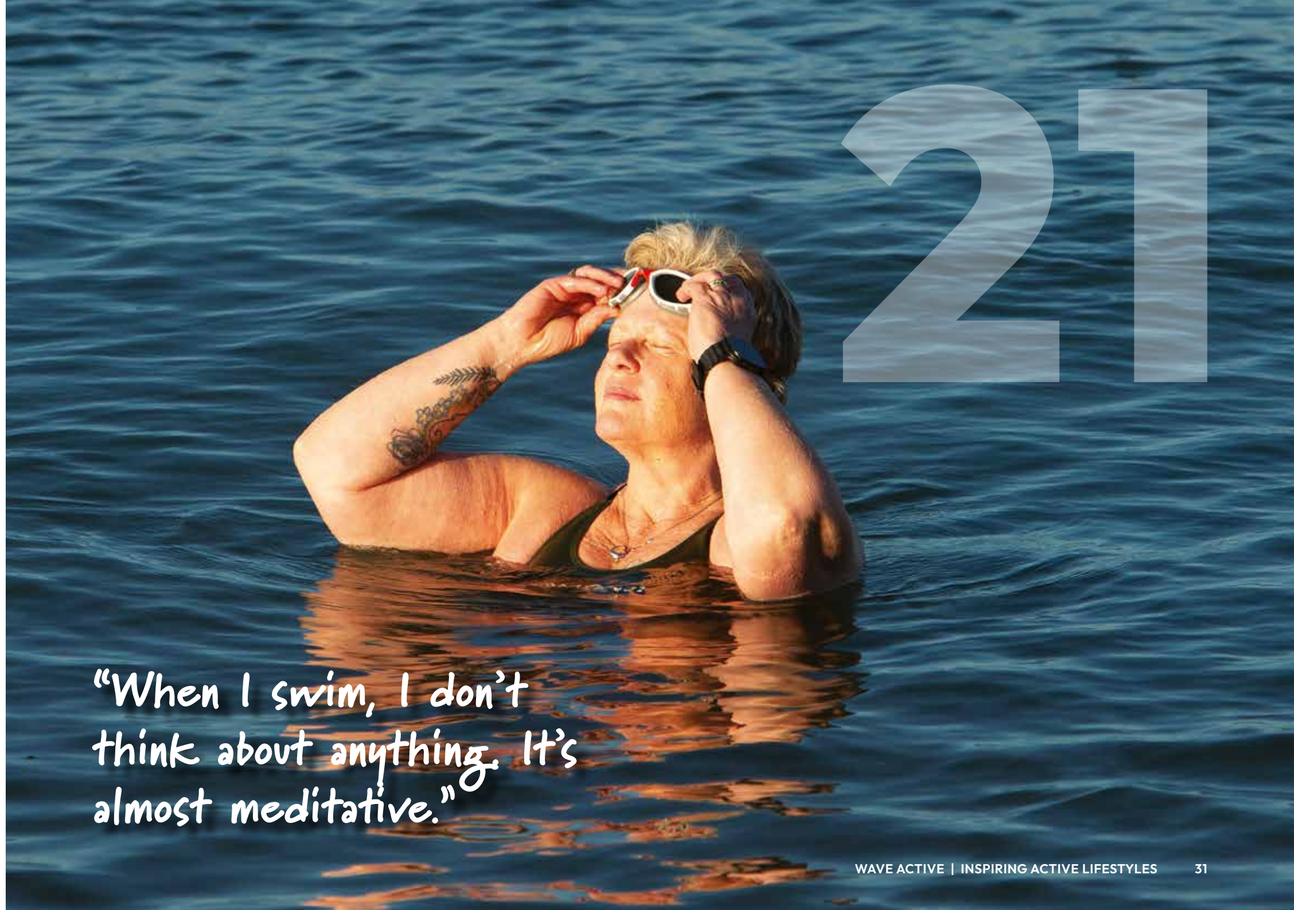
**PERSONAL GOALS ARE LINKED TO INCREASED CONFIDENCE AND WELLBEING.**

Being active can help people manage long-term conditions and improve overall wellbeing.

At Wave Active, we believe in you. Helping you set and achieve your targets.

Over the past 12 months our dedicated fitness teams have created **490** personal programmes.







# Learning to swim is a vital lifesaving skill

## Building water confidence, developing essential swimming skills and helping our communities stay safe in and around water.

At Wave Active, we believe everyone should have the opportunity to learn to swim. Swimming is more than just a way to stay active; it's an essential life skill that builds confidence, supports wellbeing and helps people stay safe.

Our popular Wave Swim School teaches around 1,900 children every week, helping young swimmers develop their skills and confidence in a fun, safe and supportive environment.

Alongside our Swim School programme, we work with 26 local schools, providing swimming lessons to more than 2,500 children during the year. We also welcome scouts and community organisations, helping even more young people gain valuable water confidence and swimming skills.

Our lessons cater for all ages and abilities, from babies and pre-school children taking their first steps in the water to adults learning to swim or improving their technique. Through our range of programmes and aquatic activities, we aim to make swimming accessible, enjoyable and part of everyday life.

### Water safety in our coastal communities

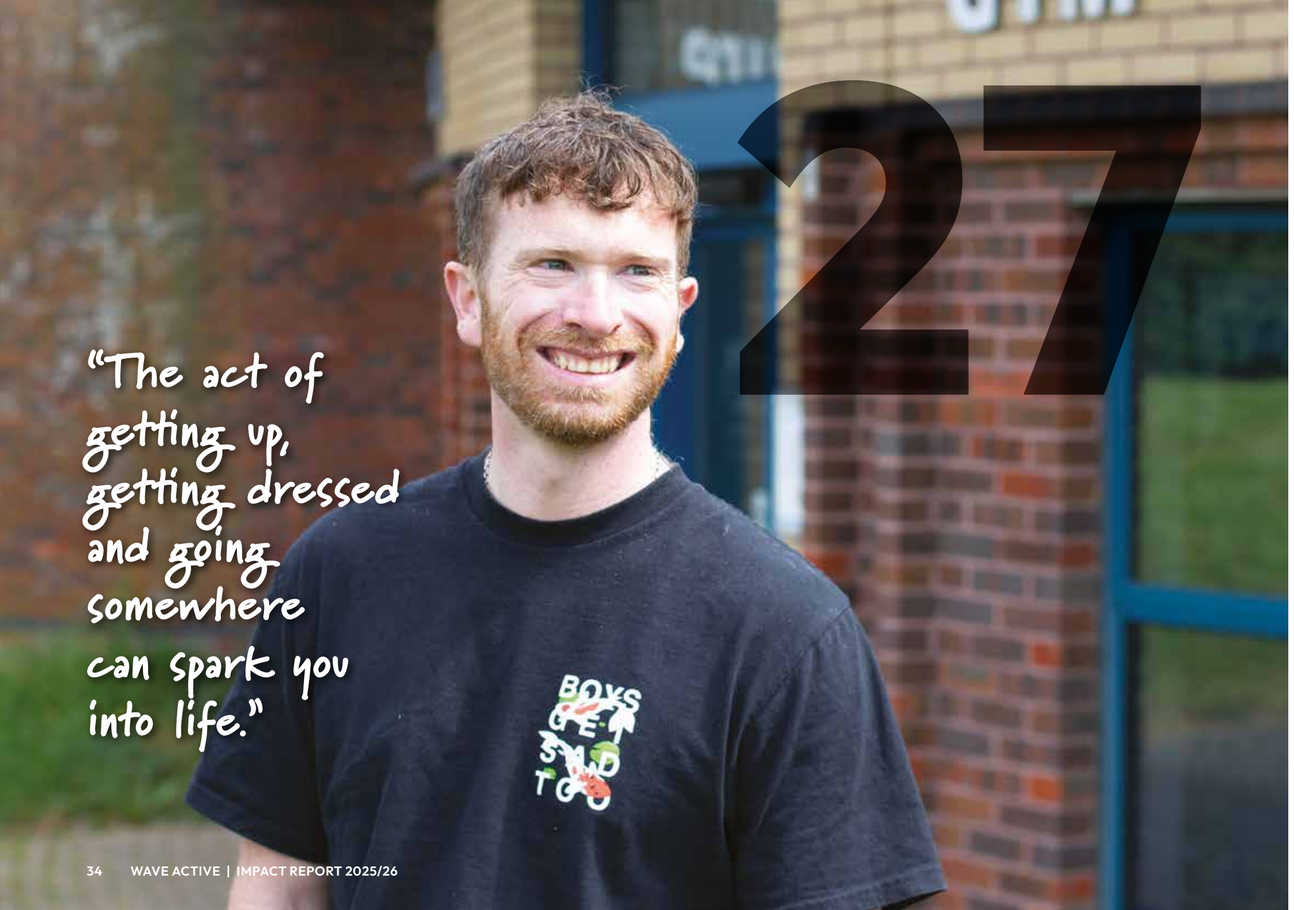
Living in Sussex, we're fortunate to have the coastline on our doorstep. With our beaches and the sea playing such an important part in local life, knowing how to stay safe in and around water is especially important. Learning to swim helps children build confidence, develop essential water safety skills and better understand the potential dangers of being around water.

By introducing these skills from an early age, we're helping young people become more confident and capable swimmers, giving them valuable knowledge that can stay with them throughout their lives.

### Inspiring Lifelong Confidence in the Water

From first swimming lessons to swimming for fitness and enjoyment, we're committed to helping people of all ages feel confident and safe in the water. By making swimming accessible to our communities, we're supporting healthier, more active lifestyles while promoting essential water safety skills that can last a lifetime.

| Newly Qualified Lifeguards | Local School Children Receiving Swimming Lessons | Local Schools | Public Swimming Visits |
|---|---|---|---|
| 100 | 2,500+ | 26 | 108,565 |




# I'm Alex

**For Alex, the number is 27. "Twenty-seven is how long I've been going to the same gym in Peacehaven," he says. "The gym itself is massively bigger than it was, but it's still the same building. Same place. For 27 years."**

Alex is nearly 43 now, meaning he first walked through those doors as a teenager. He wasn't diagnosed with bipolar disorder until September 2024, but looking back, he believes the signs were there much earlier.

"At 16 I was struggling with anxiety, self-image, self-harm and not eating properly," he says. "I was becoming obsessed with being thin." His GP suggested joining the gym. Looking back, Alex recognises how valuable that advice was. Exercise gave him something positive to focus on and gradually became more important than the unhealthy behaviours he was dealing with.

"It became a higher motivating factor than the desire to be thin," he says. That has remained true for nearly three decades. Through periods of change, difficulty and uncertainty, the gym has been one of the few constants in his life.

"It's always given me a sense of purpose." Since receiving his bipolar diagnosis, exercise has taken on an even more important role.

While medication forms part of his treatment, Alex already had an established routine that helped support both his physical and mental wellbeing. He now visits at least three times a week, combining weights and cardiovascular exercise. The gym helps whether he is experiencing low mood or periods of excess energy.

"Sometimes I have a huge amount of energy if I'm in a hypomanic phase," he says. "The gym gives me somewhere positive to direct it." When he's struggling, simply having somewhere to go can make a difference. "The act of getting up, getting dressed and going somewhere can spark you into life," he says.

Wave's welcoming atmosphere has also mattered. Alex says he has never felt judged, even during periods when his mental health struggles may have been visible. "When you're incredibly low and you've dragged yourself there, feeling judged would be the worst thing that could happen. But I've never felt that."

Instead, staff have occasionally checked in when they've noticed he seemed different. "Sometimes somebody simply noticing can be really helpful." For Alex, Wave reflects the wider community, with people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities using the facilities together. That inclusivity is part of what has kept him coming back for so long.

**So why does 27 matter?**

Because for 27 years, Wave Peacehaven has been somewhere to go. A place that has supported Alex through different stages of life and helped him stay physically and mentally well.

**"It's always been the thing that's given me a reason to go somewhere," he says. "And after 27 years, that still matters."**

**AROUND**

## 1.25 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE UK ARE AFFECTED BY AN EATING DISORDER.

Exercise can help build a healthier relationship with body image, confidence and wellbeing.



Our Wave Active teams completed **2,510 hours** of training, developing skills and expertise to deliver quality services and support the health and wellbeing of our communities.

# We believe in the power of physical activity to change lives

## Wave Active Health exists because too many people are currently locked out of healthier, happier lives by inactivity, ill health, injury and isolation.

At Wave Active, our purpose is to inspire active lifestyles, and our vision is to be at the heart of improving health and wellbeing in our community. Wave Active helps people start and maintain an active life through our facilities, activities and programmes. Wave Active Health takes this further by focusing on the people who need support the most.

Wave Active Health designs and delivers activity and behavioural change programmes for people living with health conditions, recovering from injury or illness, or finding it hard to get started. Working alongside GPs and local health partners, it offers practical pathways back to better physical and mental health, and helps people become healthier and more independent in the long term.

For us, this is about more than leisure or fitness. By focusing on prevention and early support, we aim to reduce health inequalities, ease pressure on local health services and help people regain confidence, independence and quality of life.

During 2025/26, we made significant progress in expanding and embedding evidence-based health programmes, including weight management, rehabilitation, mental health support and health coaching.

### Wave Active Health Classes and Courses

Wave Active Health provides supportive, specialist-led activities for people living with health conditions, illness or injury. Our Health Practitioners help people find the right pathway to gain, regain or maintain activity and improve their health and wellbeing.

Our programmes include Move More and Move More in the Gym, supporting people to build fitness and confidence; Move & Mobilise, focusing on strength, balance and falls prevention; Guided Gym Sessions, helping people exercise independently; and Health Coaching, offering personalised support across a wide range of health-related topics.

We also provide specialist sessions including Cardiac Rehab, Chair Based Exercise, Low Level Functional Fit, Referral Circuits, Pilates and Yoga, helping people of all abilities take positive steps towards healthier, more active lives.



### Wave Active Health continued to evolve through:

- Increased investment in health improvement activity.
- Growth in behavioural change programmes.
- Expansion of health-related participation.
- Strengthening links between physical activity and healthcare pathways.
- Increased integration with wider health and wellbeing infrastructure.

waveactive health



# I’m Sam

**“My number is 78,” Sam says. “That’s my weight now, day in, day out. It’s where I feel most like myself.”**

For Sam, 78 is much more than a number on a set of scales. It represents years of effort, healthier habits and a relationship with exercise that has transformed both his physical and mental wellbeing.

His struggles with weight began in childhood. “I’ve struggled with weight since I was about seven or eight,” he says. Over the years, his weight fluctuated dramatically. At one point, he reached 124kg and tried a range of diets and exercise programmes, often achieving short-term success before drifting back to old habits.

The turning point came after a health check in 2023. “I tipped the scales at 103 kilos,” he says. “And I remember thinking, ‘That’s more than I thought.’” Around the same time, Sam became increasingly aware of friends facing serious health challenges. It prompted him to take a closer look at his own wellbeing.

Eventually he found an online coaching programme that appealed to his data-driven mindset. “It was holistic,” he says. “Food, sleep, exercise, meditation.”

For the first time, resistance training became part of the plan, and he needed somewhere to make it happen. That’s where Wave in Lewes came in.

Today, Sam runs to Wave four times a week, completes an hour-long gym session and runs home again. “It’s like a contract with myself,” he says. One mindset shift has been especially powerful.

“Instead of saying ‘I have to go to the gym’, I say ‘I get to go to the gym.’” The physical benefits have been significant, but they are not what surprises him most.

“What I hadn’t realised was the positive effect of exercise on mental health and wellbeing,” he says. “I run more for mental health than I do for physical health.” Exercise has also given him a greater sense of control and confidence in his daily choices.

“It’s not about restriction,” he explains. “It’s about awareness and choice.” For anyone nervous about joining a gym, Sam describes Wave as welcoming and inclusive.

“I’ve never felt remotely intimidated,” he says. “I feel safe. Respected. Comfortable.” His message to others is simple.

“You may be surprised at what you can go on to achieve,” he says. “It won’t happen overnight, but it will be incremental.”

**For Sam, 78 is not really about weight. It’s a marker of the habits, consistency and wellbeing he has worked hard to build. “It couldn’t matter less,” he says. “And it matters completely.”**

## MAINTAINING WEIGHT LOSS IS OFTEN CONSIDERED HARDER THAN LOSING WEIGHT ITSELF.

Consistency and perseverance can help people achieve goals they once thought were out of reach.

Our Health Improvement Practitioners and qualified fitness instructors provide personalised guidance, encouragement and ongoing support, helping people achieve their weight management goals, build healthier habits and maintain their progress over time.






# I'm Lesley

**Lesley's number is 150. It represents the Tai Chi movements she has learned over the years through classes at Wave in Seaford, including the sword form.**

"First I put 149," she laughs. "Then I realised I couldn't add up. It's 150." Tai Chi first entered her life more than 40 years ago when someone suggested it as an alternative to martial arts.

She loved it immediately, but life moved on and the practice gradually slipped away. Years later, she attended an older people's open day and noticed something unexpected. "I thought Wave was just a gym," she says. "Definitely not for me." Then she spotted a 50p Tai Chi taster session. "There was Tai Chi looking at me. I grabbed that."

A few weeks later, she walked through the doors and started again as a beginner. Today, Tai Chi is a major part of her life. She attends two classes a week at Wave and also helps a small group practise at home.

For Lesley, Tai Chi is much more than exercise. "It is meditation in motion," she says. The slow, controlled movements improve balance, posture and flexibility, but the mental challenge is equally important. "You're asking your brain to get involved," she says. "You're learning, memorising and turning what you're told into action." That mental engagement is something she values deeply.

"It keeps my mind active." She has seen physical benefits too. Neck stiffness improved, balance became stronger and everyday movement feels easier. As she puts it: "Hopefully if I trip on the pavement one evening, I'll be able to catch myself."

Tai Chi also supported her through a difficult period following cancer surgery in 2018. She believes the combination of Tai Chi, Qigong and meditation helped her approach recovery with a calmer mindset. "If you can centre yourself and let things go, you can meet difficulties differently," she says.

Wave has provided something else as well: friendship. "I have made proper friendships at Wave," she says. What started as conversations after class grew into a close social circle that now meets outside the leisure centre too. Living alone, those connections mean a great deal.

"It gets me out of the door. It's something I want to do." Lesley's message to anyone who thinks Wave isn't for them is simple. "Go through the door." Tai Chi, she says, is not about competition or proving yourself. It's about working within your own abilities and finding a form of movement that can stay with you throughout life. "You do what you can."

**For Lesley, 150 represents much more than a collection of movements. It's balance, friendship, resilience and lifelong learning — one movement at a time.**

Over the past 12 months, we've delivered **1,441** body-mind focused classes, including yoga, Pilates and Tai Chi, with **21,742** visits.

**ACTIVITIES SUCH AS**

## TAI CHI CAN IMPROVE BALANCE, MOBILITY AND CONFIDENCE IN LATER LIFE.

Learning new skills and staying active supports physical and mental wellbeing throughout life.



# People and culture are at the heart of everything we do

## Our impact is not created by buildings or facilities alone; it is created by passionate people who genuinely care about improving lives across the communities we serve.

Every interaction, every programme and every moment of support reflects a culture built around inclusion, compassion, energy and purpose. We are proud to foster an environment where colleagues are empowered to make a difference, where innovation and collaboration are encouraged, and where wellbeing matters not only for our customers, but for our teams too.

As we continue to evolve and expand the wider community initiatives, our culture remains our foundation, bringing together people from different backgrounds, skills and experiences with one shared ambition: inspiring active lifestyles.

### Supporting Our People Through Strong HR Policies

- 35 HR policies in place to ensure a safe, fair and supportive working environment.
- Of these, 18 are dedicated to staff health and wellbeing, providing enhanced benefits, flexibility and support.
- Our policies are designed to support our people at every stage of their career and life journey, helping them maintain a healthy work-life balance and feel valued at Wave Active.

### Supporting Staff Wellbeing

- 100% of extended leave requests approved, helping staff balance their personal and professional commitments.
- Counselling and wellbeing support available to all staff through our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and private counselling services.
- 100% of flexible working requests approved, supporting a healthy work-life balance.
- Positive wellbeing outcomes, with sickness absence remaining low at just 2.92% and staff turnover reducing by 45% over the prior year.

### Improving Employee Experience and Engagement

- 100% of new starters invited to attend a breakfast meeting with the CEO as part of their induction, providing an opportunity to connect, share ideas and feel welcomed to Wave Active.
- Staff Social Committee established to organise activities and events that bring colleagues together, strengthen relationships and promote a positive, inclusive workplace culture.

### Reward and Recognition

- 244 staff nominations received, with 100% of nominees recognised through a certificate and a shout-out in the staff newsletter.
- Monthly Recognition Award presented to a staff member in recognition of their outstanding contribution.
- Annual Staff Awards Ceremony held at the Christmas party to celebrate exceptional achievements and contributions throughout the year.

### Staff Engagement Survey

- Staff engagement scores improved by an average of 17.28% compared with the previous year, across areas including feeling valued and appreciated at work, commitment to quality, perception of managers, career development opportunities and feeling encouraged.

### Training & Development

At Wave Active, we're passionate about helping people develop new skills, gain nationally recognised qualifications and build confidence for the future. From First Aid and Lifeguarding to Health and Safety and Safeguarding, our training programmes support individuals, businesses and the wider community.

- 266 external training candidates supported through our training programmes, helping people gain valuable skills and work towards new qualifications.
- 264 online compliance course attendees, supporting professional development and safer working environments.
- 144 hours of ongoing First Aid training delivered, helping our teams maintain essential lifesaving knowledge and skills.
- 2,377 hours of lifeguard training delivered, supporting high safety standards and ensuring our teams are prepared to protect customers in and around the water.

Through our range of scheduled and bespoke training courses, we're helping people develop their potential, progress their careers and contribute to safer, more confident communities.





waveactive

Wave Active is an award-winning charity and social enterprise, working in partnership with **Lewes District Council**, **Eastbourne Borough Council**, **East Sussex County Council** and other **key community partners** to inspire active lifestyles and improve health and wellbeing across our communities.

Through our leisure facilities, Newhaven Fort, activities and specialist health programmes, we create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to gain, regain or maintain their health, fitness and wellbeing.

Our dedicated teams are at the heart of everything we do, creating welcoming, inclusive environments where everyone feels supported on their journey towards a healthier, more active life.

As a charity, we reinvest our surpluses into improving facilities, developing services and creating new opportunities that deliver lasting benefits for the communities we serve.


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Connect with us


Wave Active is a charitable not-for-profit Trust and social enterprise.

Company No: 5621359 | Charity No: 1113486. Registered in England and Wales
Registered Office: Downs Leisure Centre, Sutton Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 4QW


**Your support can help us do even more.** By making a donation, you can help us continue supporting people in our communities to gain, regain and maintain their health and wellbeing.


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