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A local campaign has proved that age is no barrier when it comes to improving strength and balance in later life.

In October 2018, Cambridgeshire County Council along with partners including Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust, One Leisure and Forever Active launched the 'Stay Stronger for Longer' campaign to improve strength and balance and keep people doing the things they enjoy.

The Stronger for Longer campaign has helped increase attendances to strength and balance classes by an impressive 23 per cent, with an extra 170 extra people attending over 2600 strength and balance sessions over the last year.

As well as increasing the number of attendances to classes, over 24,000 people took the online 'strength and balance challenge' and over 40,000 people received the super six leaflet. To download the leaflet and find out more information and about strength and balance go to [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/strongerforlonger](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/strongerforlonger)

(<http://tracking.vuelio.co.uk/tracking/click?>

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Falls are one of the most common causes of accidental injury in older people and the commonest cause of accidental death in the population aged 75 and over in the UK. The estimated cost of falls and fractures to the health and social care system in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2017 was £85.5M.

One in three people aged over 65 will fall every year, increasing to one in two people aged over 80. A fall may cause feelings of distress, injury, loss of confidence and loss of independence, which may well cause anxiety for relatives and carers. However, research shows that group and home-based exercise programmes, such as strength and balance activities, can reduce the rate of falls by approximately 30 per cent.

Helen Tunster, Public Health Falls Prevention lead for Cambridgeshire said "Maintaining muscle strength and balance is crucial in helping people to maintain mobility and independence as they get older, reduce falls risk and to keep them doing the things that are important to them. Between the ages of 40 and 70 people lose up to a quarter of their muscle mass.

"Simple strength and balance exercises are proven to be one of the most effective ways of preventing people falling as they tackle the two biggest modifiable risk factors – low muscle strength and poor balance."

Cambridgeshire County Councillor Peter Hudson, Chairman of the Health Committee, said: "It's great to hear that the #StrongerforLonger campaign has contributed to the increase of around 2600 attendances at strength and balance classes in Cambridgeshire.

"We encourage any older person to do simple strength and balance exercises at least twice a week to keep you strong, steady and doing the things you enjoy for longer.

"Strength and balance exercises can be done in a fun and sociable class or at home, can make a huge difference to people's quality of life, increase confidence and are not only good for health but also a great way to make new friends."

To find out how strength and balance exercises can help you stay stronger for longer and information on classes in your area visit: [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/strongerforlonger](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/strongerforlonger) ([http://tracking.vuelio.co.uk/tracking/click?d=imSaihK9QK0DRAHXk6\\_i1jpW30I06wdXEzyIEKkmykFalENeuHlvxTPLoup5QEDDvRINBB-FFN5AOspsXLwZonbSDEI1Rut3V6f1CVVL1kPwvdudbXm8Fvcrcr5TmTjDYAt6bkJwYgCRmt6n-DqysmQ1](http://tracking.vuelio.co.uk/tracking/click?d=imSaihK9QK0DRAHXk6_i1jpW30I06wdXEzyIEKkmykFalENeuHlvxTPLoup5QEDDvRINBB-FFN5AOspsXLwZonbSDEI1Rut3V6f1CVVL1kPwvdudbXm8Fvcrcr5TmTjDYAt6bkJwYgCRmt6n-DqysmQ1))

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