

# **New Channel 4 programme shows one way to make life better for elderly, but much more can be done for happiness of older people in care homes**

Submitted by: Oomph!

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"Let's leave crocheting to the hipsters, older people want more," says care home wellbeing entrepreneur.

The new Channel 4 series 'Old People's Home for 4 year olds'

(<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/old-peoples-home-for-4-year-olds>) demonstrates how social contact with younger people creates leaps in the quality of life of elderly people.

"It's brilliant to see the huge boost in wellbeing older people on the Channel 4 programme are experiencing. This is something very close to our hearts," says Ben Allen, who this week became one of Care Home Professional's 2017 annual Leaders In Care in the 'Innovators in Care' category.

"At our social enterprise Oomph! Wellness (<http://www.oomph-wellness.org>) wellbeing involves empowering older people to live their life in full colour, so they can pursue new, as well as old, hobbies and passions, alongside improving physical and mental with adaptable fitness classes. We are making huge strides in transforming wellbeing this year, with 60,000+ classes and outings for care home residents."

The Channel 4 series has found, from a sample group of older people's home residents, that:

1/3 exhibit some signs of depression

9 out of 10 find life unexciting

1/2 fell hopeless about the future

News reports in recent weeks have also shown the upsetting variability of standards within the UK care home sector.

"But, Oomph!'s research with care home residents found that close to 90% demonstrated a significant improvement in mood, sociability and mental stimulation through doing our classes and trips}," says Allen.

"With the right support, older people are rediscovering and pursuing passions such as motor racing, cocktail making or playing musical instruments, and are feeling fitter than ever with chairbics sessions and outings to art galleries.

"Even the oldest care home residents are making friends and more fully engaging in life, after previously rarely or never interacting with others at their home," comments Allen.

The new findings come in the Oomph! Wellness social enterprise organisation's new Annual Impact Report 2016/17. See here <http://bit.ly/ImpactReportOW>

They include:

- 88% of care home residents using Oomph!'s excursion service 'Out & About' reporting improved mood
- 83% of staff said residents were more engaged in other activities after going on trips
- Exercise and activities for those in care and community settings, run by staff trained by Oomph!, have seen 84% of participants experience a significant improvement in mental stimulation
- 85% experienced improvement in social interactions
- 68% of participants doing activity and fitness sessions have seen a positive impact on physical mobility with improved everyday living skills.

In an age of increased focus on wellbeing and of opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to follow their true passions in life, Oomph! Is making sure older adults don't get left behind. We increased our cost-effective classes and outings by more than 50% last year to serve as many elderly people as possible.

Allen adds: "Our vision is a world in which older adults live life in full colour, and key to this is ensuring people get to do things they genuinely want to do every day and have the physical ability and confidence to do them.

"In particular, we all know how vital regular trips out are to wellbeing and I'm delighted that this summer we have trips running daily across the UK to venues as diverse as safari parks, art galleries, castles, aquariums and even distilleries. Let's leave crocheting to the hipsters and focus on what people most want to be doing."

Laura Marston, activity coordinator at Berehill House care home in Basingstoke says residents "Don't necessarily want to sit and crochet a tea cosy."

"A lot of my residents enjoy drinking gin and we run cocktail classes and make gin ice lollies in the home."

Speaking about the transformative effect of continuing to pursue lifelong passions Lesley Wheal, Activity Co-ordinator at Wickmeads Care Home in Bournemouth explains:

"One of our residents loves to play the mouth organ but until now has not played a complete tune. There was a really special moment for him during a visit from the Rock Choir. He started to play in front of them, and 30 sang along with him. His wife was so proud and at the end he received a standing ovation from everyone in the room. It was a really empowering moment for him and since that day it has given his self-esteem a real boost."

ENDS

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

Oomph! Wellness: Oomph! is an award-winning social enterprise dedicated to transforming the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of older and vulnerable adults. We provide training, support and services to enable anyone working in care or community settings to deliver outstanding, sustainable activity programmes. Working with care groups, local authorities and community support organisations across the UK we prove our impact every step of the way and lead the industry in how we track health and wellbeing outcomes. [www.oomph-wellness.org](http://www.oomph-wellness.org)