

How do you encourage a regular swimming habit?

Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL): Aqua Relax

Background

Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL) were a pilot operator for the Swim England's 'Let's Go Swimming' project, aimed at encouraging individuals with additional needs to make aquatic activity part of their weekly habit. Prior to starting Aqua Relax sessions, KAL's aqua classes were focused on improving fitness, rather than relaxation and swimming.

Challenges

The Aqua Relax session was trialled at Huddersfield Leisure Centre. When expanding the session to a further five pools in Kirklees, KAL had to ensure all Aqua Relax sessions ran as close to the session description as possible, whilst being aware that each pool's physical environment differs.

Approach

Aqua Relax sessions are targeted at people who want to swim for holistic benefits.

- The sessions are relaxation focussed and fully inclusive, with warmer water, dimmed lighting and relaxing music.

- Lane ropes have been removed to take away the competitive element and provide a sense of equality in the water.
- The sessions take place regularly, even during school holidays, allowing participants to build a swimming habit.

The Results

Since the pilot, Aqua Relax has evolved to be a fully inclusive activity for individuals in Kirklees. Feedback from participants has been very positive and indicated:

- Those with additional needs felt equality in the water that they didn't tend to find in other sports.
- Increased health and wellbeing, having made at least one of the Aqua Relax sessions part of their routine each week.
- The success of the sessions has led to a successful Sportivate bid for Adult Access Swimming Lessons for adults with additional needs.

"I come with my friend and we both love it. We're really active in the garden and walk together, but we like to come here because it's lovely and warm and we can relax."

Aqua Relax Participant 



Expanded Aqua relax sessions across the area/ at their sites to **19.5** hours a week

Participation has grown **50%** in 3 months

£10,000 funding allocation from local council to promote inclusivity

Find out more:

If you are interested in getting more involved with a similar project, please contact equality@swimming.org