



**Age &
Opportunity**

Incorporating **Age & Opportunity active**,
The National Sport and Physical Activity Programme
for Older People



Sofa to Saddle 2019 Evaluation Report

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**Age &
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Executive Summary

In Summer 2019, 18 participants took part in Age & Opportunity's first Sofa to Saddle initiative as part of the EIT Health funded Moveage project led by Trinity College Dublin. The programme had the following stated outcomes:

Short term outcomes:

- Participants learn to cycle safely and confidently
- Participants take part in 60K Great Dublin Bike Ride
- Increased physical activity levels among participants

Medium term outcomes:

- Participants cycling regularly
- More positive attitudes to ageing

Participants were surveyed before the initiative began to ascertain baseline participation levels and attitudes (T1). The initiative was led by one of Age & Opportunity's **Active** programme trainers with support from staff. Participants met over 12 weeks in Dublin's Phoenix Park and the course covered elements of bicycle maintenance and safety as well as cycling experience.

When measured against the stated outcomes, the evidence suggests that Sofa to Saddle was an effective intervention. 15 participants completed the course and all learned to cycle safely and confidently within the park. 11 participants took part in the 60K Dublin Bike Ride held in September 2019 and, when surveyed three months after the end of the programme, 11 participants had continued to cycle and 9 reported a more positive attitude to ageing. 6 participants indicated that they would be interested in doing a cycle leader course *and were referred to cycling Ireland*.

Did Sofa to Saddle increase physical activity levels?

Age & Opportunity's Active Programme is funded by Sport Ireland. We used the single item measure (M1) to ascertain if levels of physical activity increased as a result of the Sofa to Saddle initiative.

How many times in the last 7 days did you engage in 30 minutes of moderate activity (ie. Brisk walking, light bicycling, swimming, dancing?)

This measure is the Sport Ireland 'M1' question which aims to track participation in sport and physical activity before an intervention (T1), at the end of the intervention (T2) and 3 months after the intervention (T3) to determine if the intervention succeeds in increasing activity levels.

13 surveys were completed at T1.

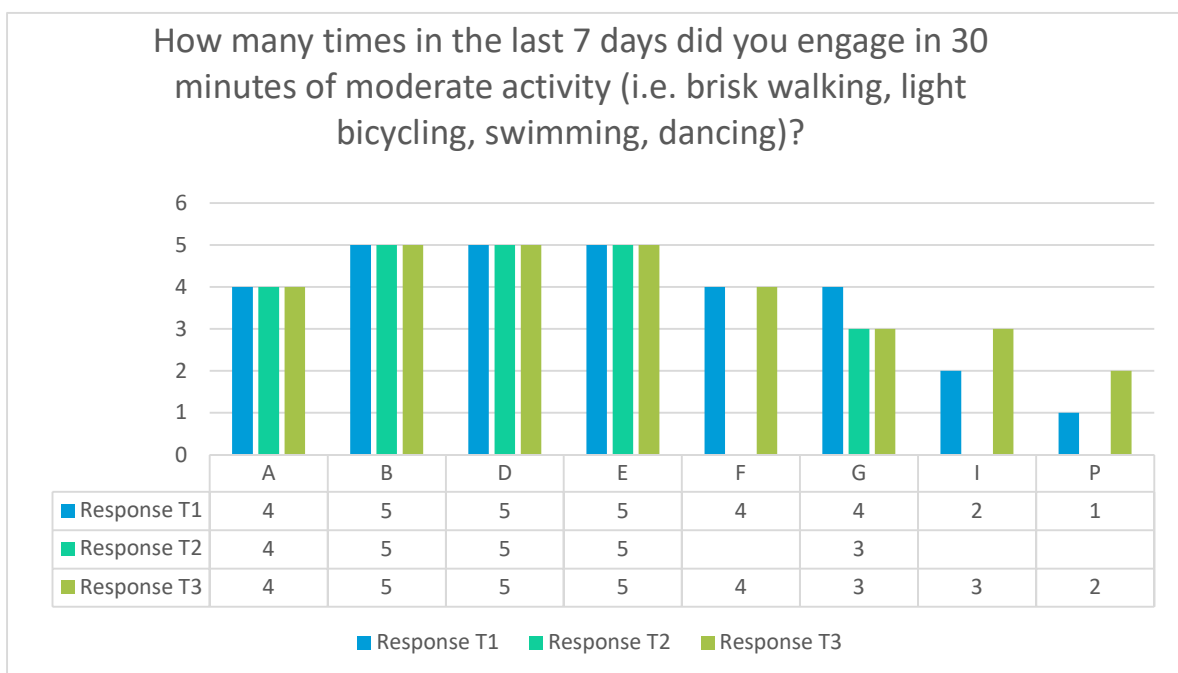
7 of the 13 T1 respondents completed surveys at T2 and 3 additional respondents completed surveys at this point also (the end of the programme). These additional respondents who had not completed T1 surveys are not included in this report as there is no way to measure distance travelled from baseline for them.

A	Y	Y	Y
B	Y	Y	Y
C		Y	Y
D	Y	Y	Y
E	Y	Y	Y
F	Y		Y
G	Y	Y	Y
H			Y
I	Y		Y
J			Y
K	Y	Y	
L	Y		
M	Y	Y	
N	Y		
O	Y		
P	Y		Y
Q		Y	Y
R		Y	

5 of the 7 respondents who had completed both T1 and T2 surveys completed T3 surveys 3 months after the programme ended. 3 respondents who had completed T1 but not T2 surveys completed T3 surveys. The data was anonymized and each respondent was given an alphabetic identifier. The graph below shows the survey response pattern with those who responded at all three intervals shaded in darker green and those who responded at T1 and T3 shaded in lighter green. These 8 eligible respondents have been included in the M1 analysis.

Respondents L, N and O completed the survey at T1 only. Respondent O was the least active reporting 0 days physical activity at T1 while respondents L and N reported 2 days. Their apparent drop-out might indicate that the activity level was too high for them even though they were motivated enough to sign up for the initiative.

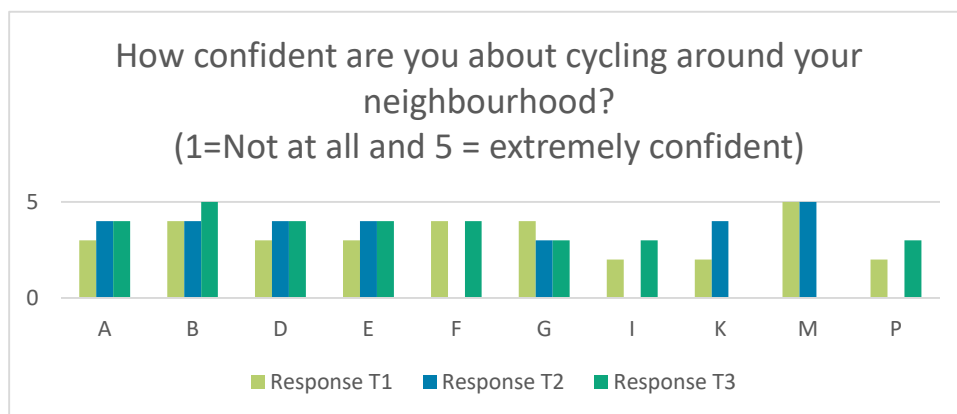
In order to measure an increase in physical activity using the single item measure, each participant needs to complete at least the T1 and T3 surveys. In this case there were 12 responses to the T3 survey, but of those 4 had not responded to T1. The graph below contains data from the 8 remaining surveys including 3 with data missing at T2.



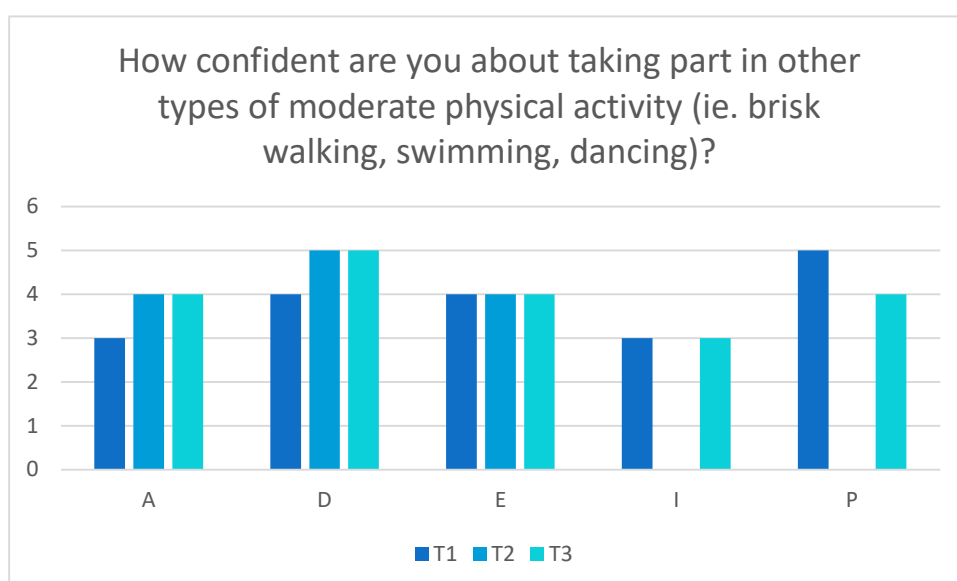
Telling the story, it looks like we were beginning with a fairly active cohort of people and that the intervention did not increase their PA levels. However, the two eligible respondents who began with lower levels of PA did increase by one day each. One respondent's PA levels dropped by a day. We could hypothesise from this that the programme is most effective when run with less active participants but it is a very small sample size from which to draw such a conclusion.

Confidence

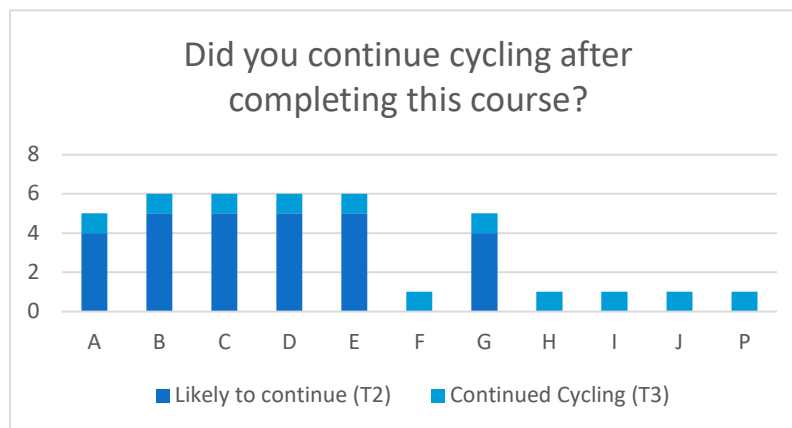
We measured how confident people were about cycling at the beginning and end of the programme. Included here is data from the 10 T1 respondents who completed either/both of the subsequent surveys. 6 of the 10 respondents were somewhat or quite confident at the beginning of the programme and 4 of these increased confidence levels by the end of the programme or three months later. One person stayed the same and one person who felt quite confident at the beginning of the programme reported feeling only somewhat confident at the end of the programme. Three respondents reported feeling only slightly confident at the beginning of the programme and all of these had an increase in confidence. One respondent was extremely confident at the beginning and end of the programme.



We also asked about confidence levels relating to other types of moderate physical activity. Only five people answered this question at T1 and of those five, two reported an increase in confidence, two stayed the same and one reported a decrease in confidence. The two respondents who reported an increase in general physical activity confidence had also reported an increase in cycling confidence while the respondent who reported a decrease in general confidence had reported an increase in cycling confidence. It is difficult to conclude a pattern from this very small sample size.



Are participants likely to continue cycling?



At the end of the programme (T2) we asked participants how likely they were to continue cycling after the course. Six respondents reported that they were very or extremely likely to continue and all of them were still cycling three months later. There were five respondents who did not answer the question at the end of the programme but

who were still cycling when surveyed three months later. We can therefore conclude that the medium term outcome of regular cycling was achieved with the caveat that we did not ask a question about regular cycling beforehand.

Great Dublin Bike Ride

One of the stated outcomes was to encourage participants to take part in the Great Dublin Bike Ride 2019. Of the 15 participants who completed the initiative 11 took part and were accompanied by staff and friends of Age & Opportunity.

Follow On

6 participants indicated that they would be interested in completing a cycle leader course.

Attitudes to ageing

There were 12 responses to this question which was asked at T3. 9 indicated that their attitude to ageing was more positive and 3 that there was no change. There were no responses indicating that attitudes had become more negative.

In their own words...

