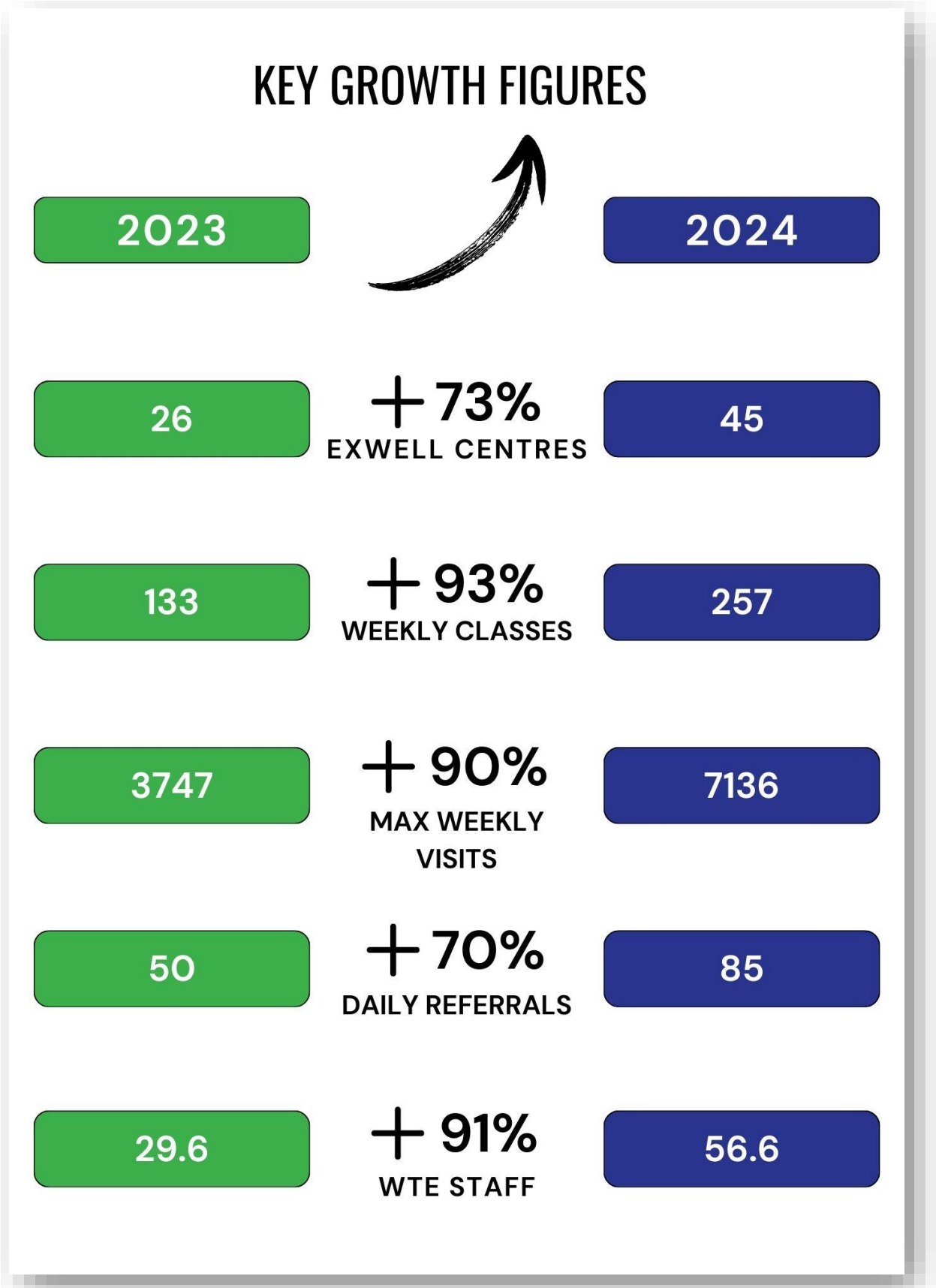
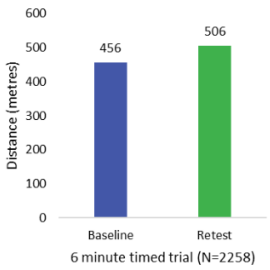

# ExWell Medical Annual Report 2024

# Contents

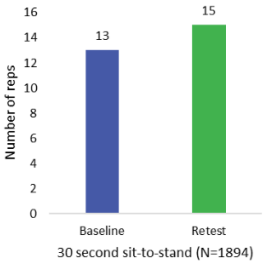
## Summary Infographics



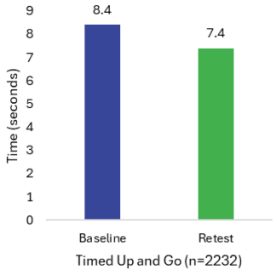
# IMPACT 2024



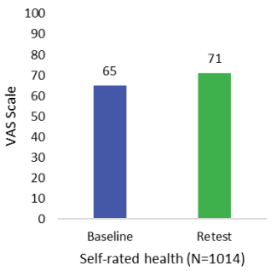

6 minute timed trial (N=2258)




30 second sit-to-stand (N=1894)




Timed Up and Go (n=2232)




Self-rated health (N=1014)

**6-Minute Timed Trial**
Aerobic Fitness

**+50m**

Cover as much distance as possible in 6 minutes.
*Exceeds MCID of 30m
Higher score indicates improvement.

**30s Sit-to-Stand**
Lower Body Strength

**+2 reps**

Complete as many sit-to-stands as possible in 30 seconds.
*Equal MCID of 2 reps
Higher score indicates improvement.

**Timed Up and Go**
Balance & Coordination

**-1s**

Stand up and walk around a cone 3 metres away as quickly as possible.
*Exceeds MCID of 0.9s
Lower score indicates improvement.

**Self Rated Health**
Subjective health measure

**+6%**

Self-report measure of overall health using a visual analog scale from 0 to 100.
Higher score indicates improvement.

***MCID** Minimum Clinically Important Difference established from various published research studies.

## Key Findings from Participant Questionnaires

**Increase in number of days doing 30 minutes or more of physical activity**

**Reduced pain interference**

**Number of falls and fear of falling reduced**

**Experience of and fear of breathlessness reduced**

**Lower levels of self-reported healthcare utilisation**

## Chairperson Statement

I am very pleased to report that 2024 was a record year for ExWell, during which we made great progress on all dimensions, and the annual report will elaborate on these. I want to take this opportunity to share our collective thinking on where and how ExWell can have influence in Irish healthcare, and our key challenge as we look ahead.

ExWell's mission is to transform the lives of the chronically ill through community-based exercise programmes. Every day we strive to do this in a way that reflects our ethos of service which is one of our core values.

We have worked hard at delivering this mission in a way that we believe is truly distinctive. To be specific:

1. We operate with medical oversight, with a team of medical professionals who input into our programme design, conduct our inductions, support our delivery staff, communicate as necessary with referrers and value a client facing role by teaching classes.

2. ExWell's approach offers extra capacity to the HSE's own chronic illness rehabilitation services for patients who need medical oversight and provides a safe exit pathway for patients who have completed these services but are not yet ready for independent exercise.

3. Our philosophy is to encourage participants to aim for and achieve higher levels of effort and performance than they may have thought possible, and to do this in a safe, supervised setting with a rich social interaction overlay.

4. We constantly innovate. Our key insight was to accommodate people with different forms of chronic illness in the same class, allowing us to achieve a critical mass of participants to facilitate scaling and reaching vulnerable people who otherwise might not be able to access ExWell. Based on extensive experience, we have developed novel approaches to efficiently engage with and induct new participants. In addition, we focus on promoting independent exercise and self-efficacy in managing chronic illnesses, both really important achievements.

5. We conduct extensive research, to the highest standards, with independent oversight, in a way that provides us with enormous insight around key metrics that matter. These include

functional ability, fear of falling (and its impact on day-to-day behaviour), increasing self-efficacy, understanding impact, and providing promising evidence of improved healthcare economics resulting from exercise (e.g. reduced hospital admissions and A&E visits).

6. We think hard about all the extra components that are highly valued by our participants, including our health fair, our weekly educational webinars which are attended by hundreds, our ExWell choir and the ExWell "Inspire me marathon". We have more initiatives in the pipeline such as our planned volunteer programme and ExWell Extra (exercising outside the classes). All of these combine to build a cohesive community of participants who provide incredibly unique social and emotional support to each other.

7. We do all the above in a joined-up way, so that each part of our distinctiveness reinforces the rest. We genuinely believe that what we do, and the way we do it, is instrumental to delivering our mission, and having the impact we aspire to.

8. We invest huge effort and resource in robust impact measurement so that we know we are having impact. Simply put, the changes seen in strength, aerobic fitness and self-rated health, even over relatively short periods of time, are quite astounding.

9. But as important as those objective measurements are, of even greater importance (we think) are the individual changes that are not so easily measured, because in almost every case what is actually occurring is the triumph of the human spirit over adversity. All of our participants have their own individual stories, and every single one of those stories is inspiring.

10. With the greatest of humility, ExWell is enabling each of those triumphs.

I want to repeat what I wrote last year: We could not do it without the ongoing support of all our stakeholders, namely the GPs and consultants who understand and appreciate what we are trying to do and refer their patients to us, essentially "prescribing" ExWell, and of course the HSE without whom we simply could not deliver. We never take the support we receive from the HSE and other partners for granted, and we appreciate the faith they have placed in us. Without this support, many people who benefit hugely from ExWell would not be able to access our service.

Which brings me to our key challenge, which is how to ensure that we can sustainably provide our service to all those who need it, including those who cannot afford to pay for it themselves. We are constantly working to get this balance right.

I want to finish by thanking all my colleagues in ExWell for their commitment and passion in delivering our mission day in and day out.

**Lar Bradshaw, Chairperson, ExWell Medical**

## CEO Statement

I am delighted to reflect on a wonderful year for ExWell in 2024.

Our growth in 2024, across all key metrics, was very strong. The figures are laid out in the main report and include big increases in the number of centres we operate (up by 73%), the number of weekly classes (up by 93%), the maximum average weekly visits (up by 90%), the number of daily new referrals (up by 70%) and the number of whole-time equivalent staff (up by 91%).

The big recruitment drive was complemented by a parallel drive to secure British Association of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (BACPR) accreditation for most of our delivery staff. This, alongside the increased staff numbers, positions us very well for further growth in 2025. We also introduced more structured training and support for our staff, aimed at enhancing and maintaining the highest standards of instruction and safety in the classes, while at all times also making them as enjoyable as possible for the participants.

Alongside our main role of delivering exercise classes and growing this aspect of ExWell, we had a good year with our non-exercise activities. The first of these was our second Annual Health Fair which took place in May in TU Dublin, attracted over 500 attendees and was again a great success. We were honoured to have Barry Andrews MEP and Minister Jack Chambers in attendance to open the event. This year we also had the extraordinary success of the Inspire Me Marathon, brainchild of Danny Fagan, in which people from all over the country took part. Each centre walked or ran its own marathon and achieved this by getting at least 26 participants to complete a mile. It struck an emotional chord with so many people who were just thrilled to complete the event and get the medal to prove it. For some, it was the first medal they had ever won. In addition, the weekly education and discussion Zoom meeting for participants remained a core part of the weekly schedule.

Regarding our funding model, we are striving to achieve a balance between participants who pay to attend our classes and funded participants who are supported mainly by the HSE (in Naas / Wicklow, Tallaght / Clondalkin and the Midlands), by local authorities (in Dublin and Fingal) and by Healthy Ireland (in the Midlands). Getting this balance right will give us stability into the future.

A key recruitment to our staff in 2024 was Dr Danielle Courtney who joined us as business development officer. Danielle has been a great addition and brings medical and business expertise to the team. She will be responsible for driving the expansion of our network across the country.

We have a very strong research committee, chaired by Professor Susan Smith of Trinity College. ExWell has been very active in research in 2024 and we will shortly publish a comprehensive scientific paper based on the work carried out over the last 2 years in the CHO 7 region. A very important development was the formation of ExWell's own Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) group, made up of 8 ExWell participants. This group will meet 3-4 times a year and has already provided valuable guidance to the research committee about proposed research projects.

Looking ahead, we hope to pilot our Friendly Faces volunteer programme in which volunteer participants will offer transport and companionship support to others attending ExWell. In addition, we will launch ExWell Extra, an important initiative that will encourage ExWell participants to take part in more exercise and physical activity outside the classes. This will be an important step in empowering people to become self-sufficient in relation to exercise behaviour whenever they stop attending ExWell. In addition, we will push on strongly with our expansion across Ireland.

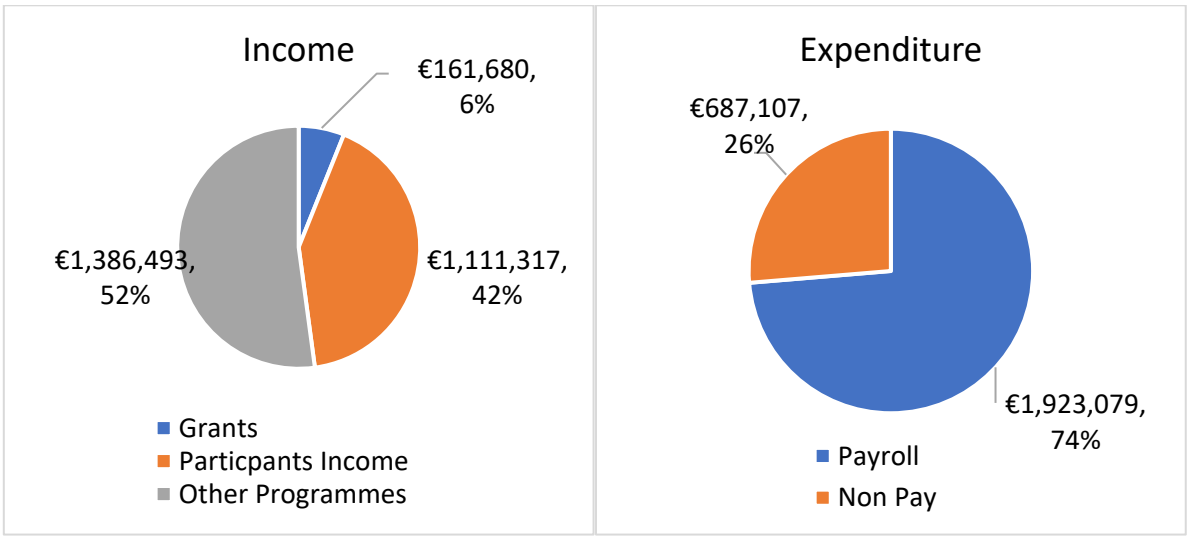
I wish to acknowledge the valuable support we have received in 2024 from the HSE, Fingal County Council, Dublin City Council (via the North-East Inner-City programme), Meath County Council, Healthy Ireland, UPMC, Novartis and VHI.

It is an immense privilege and pleasure for me to work in ExWell. I wish to sincerely thank our outstanding team, our amazing participants and our wonderful Board for making ExWell what it has become. We all continue to be collectively excited by, and committed to, our mission of transforming the lives of the chronically ill through community-based exercise.

**Dr Noel McCaffrey, CEO, ExWell Medical**

## Financial Report 2024

In 2024, ExWell Medical had an income of €2,659,490, compared to €1,582,450 in 2023. Grants and sponsorship accounted for 6% of our income, and they are a great support to our work. In 2024, sponsorship of €50,000 was awarded from our corporate sponsors to cover the cost of the Health Fair. Income from participants amounted to €1,111,317 in 2024, which reflected the growth in the number of centres and participants. Other programme income of €1,386,493 was received from The Health Service Executive, Fingal County Council, Dublin City Council and Offaly, Meath and Westmeath County Council for the delivery of our programme at multiple locations.




Expenditure in 2024 was €2,610,187, which was up from €1,468,408 in 2023. Payroll costs amounted to €1,923,079 (74%). This created a net surplus for the year on the income and expenditure account of €50,010, (2023 €115,042). In 2024, two staff members received salaries of more than €60,000, and there were no pension contributions made.

ExWell Medical is committed to openness and transparency both within the organisation and externally with donors, funders, participants, and the public. The annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102. ExWell Medical accounts are audited by Copsey Murray Accountants each year, and the financial year runs from 1 January to 31 December. These extracts are taken from the audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024.

**Brendan Gillen, Chief Financial Officer, ExWell Medical**

## Operations Report

Throughout the year, ExWell Medical experienced continued rapid and sustained growth. This expansion was largely driven by a significant increase in referral rates and renewed support for multiple HSE-funded centres across Dublin and the Midlands. While many regions experienced strong growth, some centres faced challenges related to lower-than-expected referral rates and participant uptake.

The organisation's transition from a relatively small start-up to a medium-sized enterprise required considerable attention from the leadership team. To support this transformation, new Programme Manager roles were established across Dublin North, Dublin South, and the Midlands. This regional management structure proved essential in enabling the scaling up of operations and delivery of services throughout the year.

Weekly class attendance grew substantially, increasing from 3,700 visits in January to a peak of 7,100 visits in November—a 92% rise. This growth was driven by a combination of factors, including the steady influx of new participants, the opening of new centres, and increased engagement within existing centres.

With growth came several operational challenges, including the need for enhanced staff training, additional funding, and the maintenance of high health and safety standards. A key achievement in this regard was the certification of 19 ExWell instructors through the British Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (BACPR), enabling a significant expansion in service delivery.

In early 2024, ExWell launched a new membership management software and the ExWell Medical App (ABC-Glofox). While initial uptake of the app among participants was modest, the platform provided substantial improvements in the administration of payments, class bookings, and attendance tracking. The app's 'Communities' section also enabled participants to access class schedules and resources such as pre-recorded exercise classes directly from their mobile devices.

A significant waitlist developed during the summer months, largely due to referral rates in funded centres exceeding the available induction capacity. In response, ExWell created a dedicated Induction Team tasked with delivering large-scale onboarding sessions nationally. This strategic initiative enabled the induction of over 3,000 new participants during July and August alone.

Several inspiring and community-focused events took place during the year. These included:

- The second **ExWell Medical Health Fair**, held at the Technological University Dublin (Tallaght)
- A **Wellness Retreat** at Club La Santa, Lanzarote, attended by 34 participants
- The inaugural **'Inspire Me' Marathon**, during which nearly 1,000 participants completed a one-mile walk or jog with their local ExWell team, contributing to a collective marathon effort at each centre. The atmosphere of camaraderie, celebration, and achievement was truly exceptional, with each participant receiving a finisher's T-shirt and gold medal.

At the start of the year, the ExWell team comprised 29.6 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) staff. In response to growing service demands, staffing increased significantly to 56.6 WTE by year-end. The majority of these new roles were in class delivery, supporting the expanded network of centres and increased number of classes.

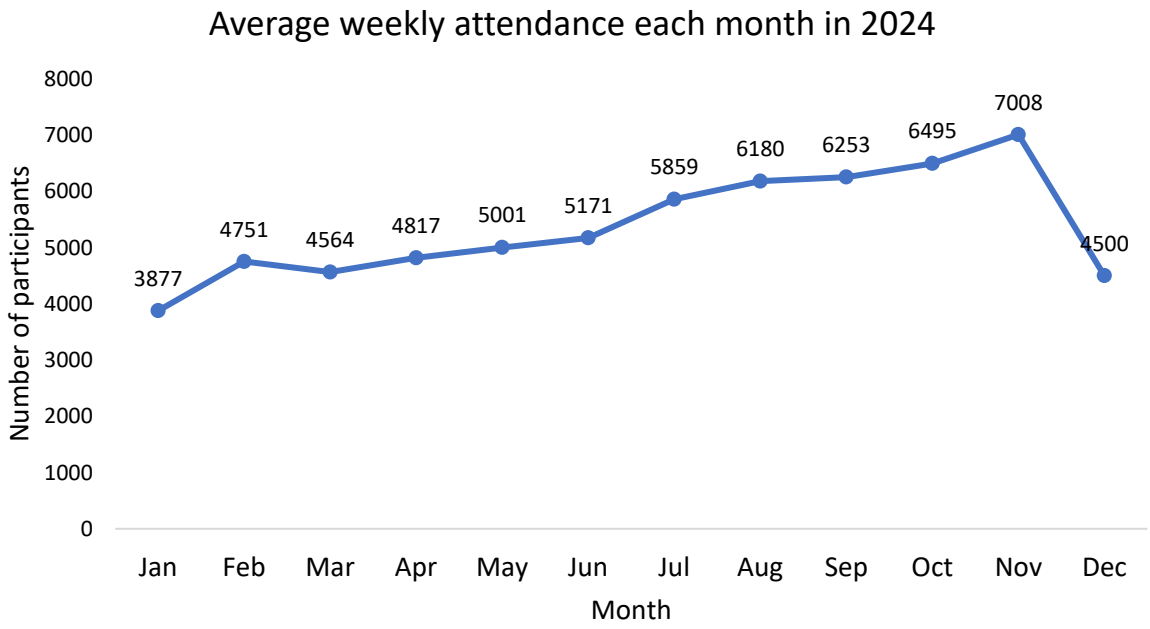
Our internship programme was a vital support to the operations team. We welcomed students from Technological University of the Shannon (TUS, Athlone), Dublin City University (DCU), and two nutrition students from Technological University Dublin (TUD). These interns made a meaningful contribution, bringing enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. ExWell's placement model also included the offer of paid summer internships enabling students to build further experience and skills whilst also helping to provide cover during staff annual leave.

The past year was one of exceptional progress for ExWell Medical. Despite some operational challenges, the organisation demonstrated its ability to adapt and grow sustainably. The dedication and collaboration of the entire team have positioned ExWell as a leading provider of clinical exercise rehabilitation services in Ireland and we look forward to building on this in 2025.

**Daniel Fagan, Head of Operations, ExWell Medical**

## ExWell Centres 2024

This year saw huge growth in the number of ExWell centres, up by 73% to a total of 45 and the number of ExWell classes, up by 93% to a total of 257 compared to 2023. Mulhuddart, which had temporarily ceased in 2023, restarted in January. Seven new centres opened across Dublin including **Artane, Finglas, Cabra, Sallynoggin, Portmarnock, Stillorgan** and **Rivervalley**. Kildare added two new venues at **Naas GAA** and **Newbridge**. The Midlands region welcomed new centres to Offaly (**Edenderry**), Westmeath (**Mullingar**) and Laois (**Portarlington** and **Laois GAA**). **Tuam** and **Salthill** were new additions to the Galway region. Cork saw its first ExWell centre established in July **at Pairc Ui Caoimh** and three new centres launched in Meath for the first time including **Dunboyne**, **Stamullen** and **Navan**.




Similar to last year, November had the highest number of weekly visits. The number of average weekly visits almost doubled from 3584 in November 2023 to 7008 in November 2024. There were over 250,000 participant visits to ExWell classes in 2024.

## ExWell Research Activity 2024

ExWell Medical's research vision is to design, conduct, analyse and disseminate research that will inform best practice in exercise-based chronic illness rehabilitation for people living in community settings.

This year, we were delighted to partner with various researchers and institutions whose work aligns with our research vision. The following projects (with named research partners) were approved in 2024 and will continue into 2025.

- **Impact of dietary assessment and interventions on outcomes on liver cirrhosis patients (IDAIOC) study**, RCSI, Beaumont Hospital, Enterprise Ireland, Professor Karen Redmond.
- **An evaluation of the wellness and social return on investment impacts of the ExWell programme in GAA Clubs**, SETU Waterford, Carlow Sports Partnership, Ms Rachael O'Connor.
- **Andante: Musical walking for wellbeing - A feasibility study**, Alzheimer's Association of Ireland, Global Brain Health Institute, Trinity College Dublin, Dr Mikel Gainza.
- **Andante: Enhancing gait through personalised musical walking**, Enterprise Ireland, Global Brain Health Institute, Trinity College Dublin, Dr Mikel Gainza.
- **Pilot evaluation of a novel long Covid coaching rehabilitation programme**, Dublin City University, Dr Sarahjane Belton, Ms Kate Sheridan.
- **Incorporating stroke rehabilitation and recurrence prevention into the ExWell Medical model: A feasibility study**, Tallaght University Hospital, Professor Ronán Collins.

**Public and Patient Involvement (PPI)**

ExWell is delighted to have a core PPI committee made up of 8 ExWell participants. The goal of having a PPI committee is to improve the quality, value and impact of research conducted by or in collaboration with ExWell and to make it more beneficial to society. Two committee meetings were held in 2024, the first in relation to the Stroke project and the second on the GAA project. The committee's insights and feedback have been invaluable in helping to strengthen ExWell's research activities.

## The Inspire Me Marathon


The *Inspire Me* Marathon was a truly unique and uplifting initiative, consisting of 26 team-based marathons held across our network of centres nationwide. Each participant completed one mile, contributing to the team's collective 26-mile marathon distance. Completion times varied—from a swift 9 minutes to a remarkable 1 hour and 17 minutes—highlighting the incredible dedication and resilience of everyone involved.

These events were bursting with energy, encouragement, and community spirit. Participants cheered one another on until every last runner crossed the finish line, creating powerful moments of connection and shared achievement.

The final marathon event took place at the National Sports Campus in Abbottstown, Dublin—an inspiring venue that is home to some of Ireland's elite athletes. It was a fitting conclusion to a journey that pushed boundaries and demonstrated new ways to support people living with chronic illness through movement and connection.

A heartfelt thank you goes to ITL Europe (a vitamin and supplement company) for their generous sponsorship, which covered approximately €3,000 in costs for ExWell medals and T-shirts.

**Key Highlights**

- Over 1,000 participants completed their mile.
- Over €5,000 was raised through voluntary contributions, benefiting The Irish Heart Foundation and ExWell.
- Every participant received a commemorative ExWell medal.

Inspire Me Marathon Events across the ExWell Network - Pictures

## The ExWell Wellness Retreat – Club La Santa, Lanzarote


In April 2024, ExWell hosted a five-day wellness retreat at the renowned Club La Santa resort in Lanzarote. This special experience brought together 34 participants, 3 ExWell team members, and several family members for an unforgettable blend of health, activity, and relaxation.

The itinerary featured a wide range of exercise, sport, and wellness options, with the resort offering up to 80 different activities per day. ExWell led two structured sessions daily, including signature ExWell classes—some of which were even opened to other guests at the resort, creating a shared and inclusive atmosphere.

The retreat was filled with laughter, connection, and confidence-building experiences. For some, it was their first trip abroad in over 15 years—a milestone made possible through the supportive and encouraging environment created by the group.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and we're already looking ahead to a return trip in 2025.

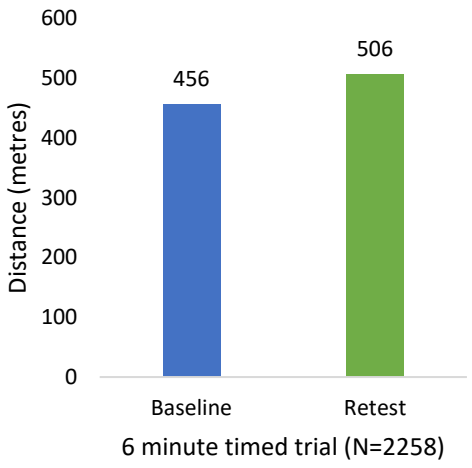
## Athlone Participant's Social Events - pictures

## Impact

### Physical Test Results

The results below are based on data from 2258 participants across 36 ExWell centres in 2024 who had both baseline and retest data. The average time between baseline and retest was 12 weeks. The average age of participants was 72 years (range 17 to 95) and 64% were female. Participants significantly improved from baseline to retest in the 6 minute timed trial, 30 second sit to stand, timed up and go, timed up and go dual task and self-rated health (all p<0.001).

- The average improvement for **the six minute timed trial** was **50 metres** which was well above the minimally clinically important difference (MCID) of 30.5 metres (Bohannon and Crouch, 2017).
- Participants improved by an average of **2 reps** from 13 at baseline to 15 at retest in the **30 second sit-to-stand** test. This was equal to the MCID reported by Zanini et al., (2019).
- The average improvement for the **TUG** was **1 second**, which is above the MCID of 0.9 seconds (Mesquita et al., 2016) and for the **TUG-DT** was **1.1 seconds**.
- Self-rated health measured using a **VAS scale** from 0 to 100 significantly improved by **6 points** from an average of 65 at baseline to 71 at retest.



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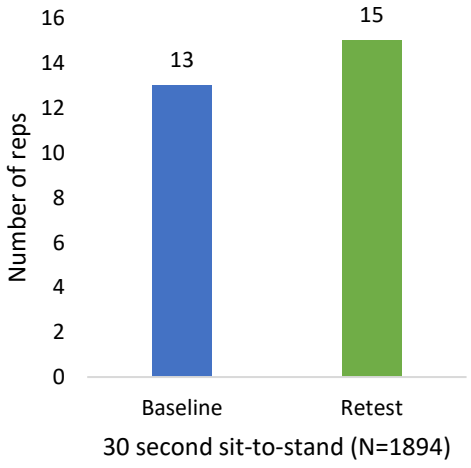

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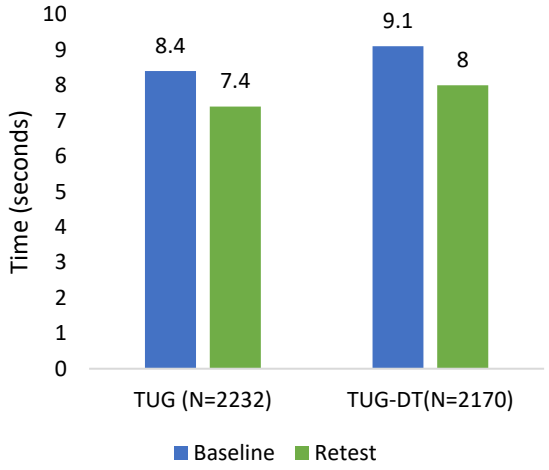
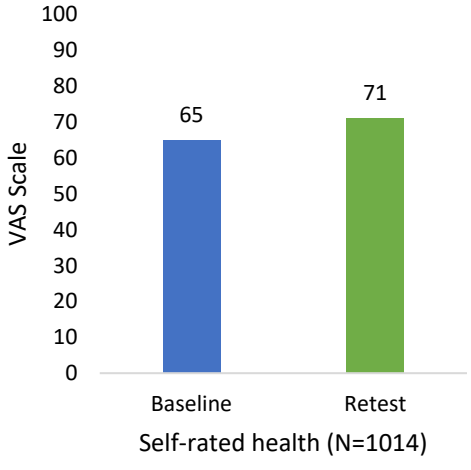


Self-rated health (N=1014)

## Questionnaire results

Participants completed questions about physical activity, pain, falls, breathlessness, sleep quality, healthcare utilisation and readiness for exercise at baseline and retest. The following represents a summary of the key outcomes from those who completed the questions at both timepoints.

### *Physical activity*

- At baseline, a quarter of participants had done no physical activity in the previous week. At retesting, this figure had fallen to just 5%.

### *Pain*

- At baseline, 51% reported having significant pain in the past 7 days compared to 40% at retest.
- Participants who experienced pain were more likely to report that 'exercise makes their pain better' at retest compared to baseline
- There was a significant improvement in pain interference scores at retest compared to baseline.

### *Falls*

- Participants reported significantly fewer falls at retest compared to baseline.
- Participants were significantly less likely to have a fear of falling at retest (50%) compared to baseline (55%) ($\chi^2 = 10.0$ p = 0.002, N=950).
- Fear of falling was significantly less likely to cause participants to limit their activities at retest (26%) compared to baseline (36%) ($\chi^2 = 28.4$ p <0.001, N=843).

### *Breathlessness*

- The median score for fear of breathlessness was 2 at baseline and retest $z = -5.3$, $p < .001$, N=983).
- The median score for experience of breathlessness was 2 at baseline and retest ($z = -5.3$, $p < .001$, N=840).
- Despite having the same median scores at both timepoints, Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated significant improvements between baseline and retest for both.

### *Healthcare utilisation*

- There were significant improvements in self-reported number of ED visits, number of hospital admissions and number of nights spent in hospital in the previous 6 months at retest compared to baseline (all p<0.001).

### *Sleep quality*

- Sleep quality scores were similar at baseline and retest.

### *Readiness for exercise*

- Participants were less afraid of taking part in exercise at retest (median score 1) compared to baseline (median score 2) $z = -10.7$, $p < .001$, N=970.
- Participant's readiness for exercise improved at retest (median score 4) compared to baseline (median score 3) z = -13.3, p<0.001, N=968.

## Irish Healthcare Awards

Dr Noel McCaffrey, CEO of ExWell Medical, won the **Outstanding Contribution to Irish Medicine Award** at the **Irish Healthcare Awards 2024.**
Some of the ExWell Medical team and board members joined Noel at the Dublin Royal Convention Centre on Wednesday 4 December to celebrate this fantastic achievement.

## ExWell Governance

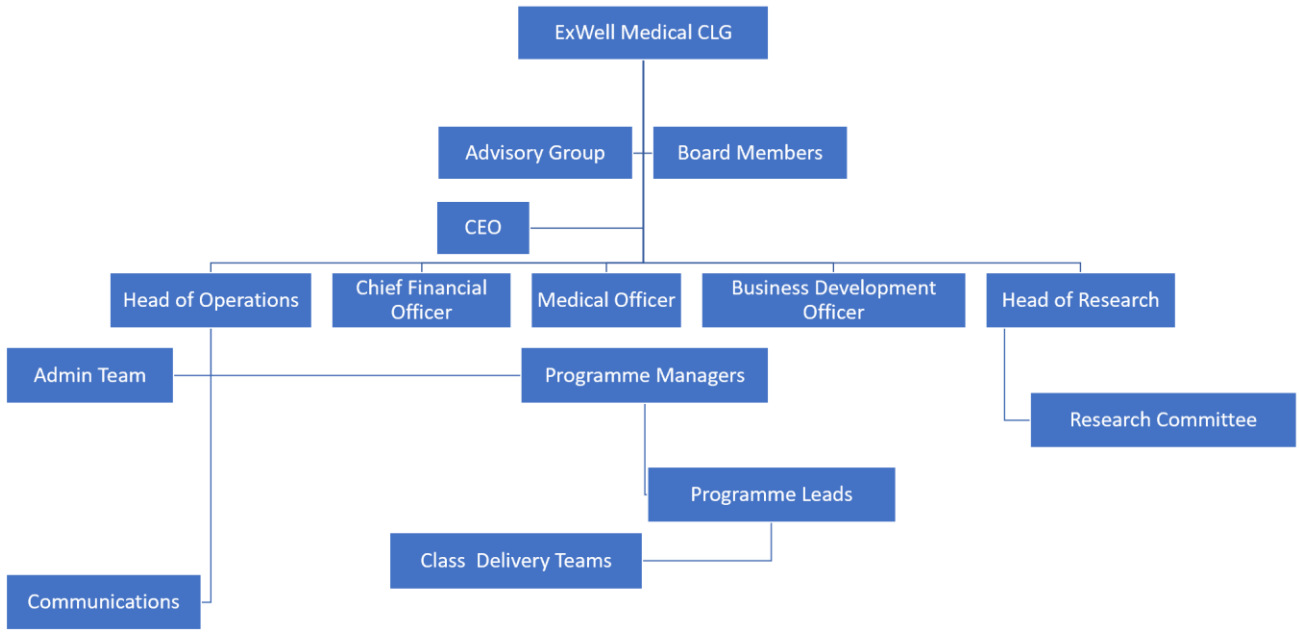
### Corporate Structure

ExWell Medical is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is a social enterprise with a not-for-profit ethos. It was founded in January 2019 by Dr Noel McCaffrey.

### Organisational Structure

The organisation structure is laid out in Figure 8 below. The following committees report to the Board:

1. Finance committee: Chair Clive Kilmurray
2. Remuneration committee: Chair Grainne McMorrow
3. Nominations Committee: Chair Chris Kelly
4. Research Committee: Chair Professor Susan Smith




*ExWell Medical's Organisational Structure 2024*

### Executive Team

There are five members on ExWell's executive team. Dr Noel McCaffrey and Danny Fagan are full time employees. Brendan Gillen and Dr Emmett Byrne are part-time employees and Professor Sean Kennelly has an honorary position.

## ExWell Advisory Board 2024

**Lar Bradshaw**
Chairperson,
Retired Managing Partner of McKinsey & Company

**Prof. Sean Kennelly**
Consultant Physician in Geriatric and Stroke Medicine, Tallaght University Hospital

**Anne Dermody**
Retired Business Development Director with Rethink Ireland

**David Beirne**
Senior Vice President UPMC International (University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre)

**Dr. Noel McCaffrey**
Founder and CEO of ExWell, Sports and Exercise Medicine Specialist

**Prof. Susan Smith**
Professor of General Practice, Trinity College

**Chris Kelly**
Retired CRH Senior Executive, ExWell Participant

**Grainne McMorrow**
International Human Rights Lawyer and Jurist, ExWell Participant

**Clive Kilmurray**
Entrepreneur and Corporate Finance Specialist

**Diarmuid McNamee**
Managing Director of Tower View, Chair of the Dublin Simon Community Board

## ExWell Staff 2024

ExWell would not be thriving as it is without the ongoing work from all staff involved. A big thank you to all our staff from 2024 as well as all students and volunteers who supported in any capacity throughout the year.

**Management and Research**

- Dr Noel McCaffrey, *Chief Executive Officer*
- Mr Daniel Fagan, *Head of Operations*
- Mr Brendan Gillen, *Chief Financial Officer*
- Dr Fiona Skelly, PhD, *Clinical Exercise Physiologist / Researcher*
- Mr Colm Ryan, *Programme Manager, Dublin North*
- Dr Emmett Byrne, *Medical Officer*
- Dr Danielle Courtney, *Business Development Officer*
- Dr Lisa Kelly, PhD, *Research Officer*
- Mr Aodhaghan O'Deasmhunaigh, *Programme Manager, Dublin West*
- Mrs Edel Larkin, *Programme Manager, Midlands*
- Ms Cliona McGowan, *Programme Manager, Dublin South*

**Administration**

- Cathy Dowdall
- Karl Corcoran
- Lorraine Corcoran

**Class Delivery and Programme Leads**

- Adam Byrne
- Adam Hawkins
- Aideen Cooley
- Alex O'Reilly
- Alex Regan
- Amy Hopkins
- Amy Adams
- Ananya Maher
- Andrew Evans
- Ant Morgan
- Brian McMahon
- Carl Walshe
- Cein McMonagle
- Chris Myles
- Christian Crosbie
- Ciaran Hartnett
- Colm O'Meara
- Conor Owens
- Darragh Travers
- Deirdre O'Reilly
- Emily Cahill
- Emma McClean
- Eva Tretjacova
- Fionn Delaney

- Ingrid McGloughlin
- Jade Geraghty
- Jason Quaile
- Kaitlyn Whelan
- Katie Moran
- Kirsten Branigan
- Leah Irwin
- Lisa Shaw
- Luke O'Connor
- Megan Moynagh
- Muireann Booth
- Nathan Farrell
- Niamh Smyth
- Oisin O’Donoghue
- Oliwia Pikul
- Rebecca Reilly
- Poppy Maguire
- Precious Aderinwale
- Rachel O'Reilly
- Rita Trenz
- Roma McLaughlin
- Ruth Cronin
- Sean Collier
- Shane McMonagle
- Sophie Gibney
- Stewart Metcalfe
- Susie Burzawa
- Tim Staunton
- Úna Smith
- Warren Murray

## Testimonials

*"Having been attending ExWell classes for past 18 months, I am delighted to state that the programme has **changed the pattern of my life for the better** in so many ways. Aside from the physical wellbeing aspect benefit, the programme has opened up a new **social outlet** door wherein I have met and interacted with many **new friends**. The enthusiastic and upbeat attitude of the brilliant Tutors has rubbed off on us all and the whole experience has brought our outlook and **positive frame of mind** to a much higher level. I therefore have no hesitation whatsoever in highly recommending the ExWell programme to anyone who might have mobility or loneliness issues."*

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*"I love going to my ExWell classes. I go twice weekly and enjoy every minute of it. We exercise to music and it's **fun and enjoyable**... and **hard work, but in a good way**! We have wonderful instructors who are helpful and supportive and there's a lovely relaxed atmosphere. We encourage each other and help each other with little tasks like getting water or weights for anyone who needs a little extra help. My fitness has certainly improved. I would recommend ExWell to anyone who needs help regaining fitness. It's **a tonic mentally and physically**! Socially I have made some lovely **new friends**."*

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*"Following DC from the National Rehab Hospital in Dun Laoighre and, as part of my recovery from Burketts Lymphoma with a spinal injury, I was referred to Physiotherapy services in Monksland. They recommended I attend the local ExWell classes in Drum. I have been attending twice weekly for the last year and it has **benefitted me in every way**. I could not praise the class enough. It has kept me **fit**, it has helped **my flexibility** and it has offered me access to support from other class members i.e. the **social benefit**. The class has motivated me to keep working on my physical and emotional recovery. The class helps me to achieve my goal of **living as independently and as functionally** as possible. I feel with the benefit of the class and I am maximising my potential recovery, following my illness. I am very hopeful that this class will continue to be available to me on an ongoing basis in order to maintain and grow the skills I have developed."*

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*"I have had a few fractures and have a diagnosis of osteoporosis among other autoimmune diseases. My GP referred me to the ExWell programme. I started about ten months ago and have rarely missed a session. After nine years of worsening or the same scores on a dexa scan I have finally had improved scores this year. I really enjoy the ExWell sessions and I am sure they have* ***contributed to my improved bone health****."*

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*"I began attending the ExWell programme in July 2024. I had been referred with shoulder pain. At this time, I was also going through the Mother and Baby Home Redress Scheme process, which was rolled out by the government in March 2024. As I had spent 7 months in the notorious Bessborough House Mother and Baby Home in 1973, I was eligible for the redress scheme.*
*The redress process went on for over 6 months. It was very retraumatising and there were days when I didn't even want to leave the house. During that time, it was the* ***ExWell classes that got me through the toughest of times.*** *Not only did it help physically, but my mental health during this time which was very low, was saved by the twice weekly sessions. The physical activity, the cheerful mood of the facilitators and their willingness to listen to my queries also helped greatly. I would highly recommend this programme and hope to continue with it for as long as I can."*

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*"I have been a member of the ExWell Club for the last 6 weeks. I find it very rewarding, not only as a way of getting fit, but I also see it as a social event. My Wife passed away last April and this is the* ***only effort I have made to get out and socialise*** *without any pressure. All of the staff are very committed, but not pushy in any way, which makes the whole experience even more enjoyable."*

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*"I'm 56 years old and I joined the ExWell programme in April 2024 and it was the* ***best decision I ever made****. I suffer with depression and I wasn't very sociable. I only left the house to do my shopping. Since I started the ExWell programme, I* ***feel I have a purpose to start to enjoy my life****. I have made* ***new friends*** *and I hope to continue this journey. The team are unbelievable. No words can describe how they have helped me. The support has been unbelievable."*

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*"The ExWell programme has made a real difference to my life. Having Parkinsons left me unable to do many things, but this programme has **allowed me to be so much more active**. I am dependent on it for my quality of life in the future. It is also beneficial to my mental health as it is a **social outlet**. Long may it last."*

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*"I would like to say how much I have appreciated the help I've had from the ExWell staff I was attending last year and had mobility problems, but the work in the classes **helped my coordination and stamina improved**. Then I had major surgery and 9 months later am back again and know the only way to improve is to attend twice a week as I am never made to feel I can't manage the exercises and always **encouraged** to keep trying to do what I can, that makes it a **positive experience**, so thanks to the staff for their expertise."*

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*"I have been attending physio led exercise in Portlaoise for just over three months and I have seen great improvement in my strength and flexibility as an MS patient I have limited mobility and have found the exercise classes extremely beneficial for both my **physical and mental wellbeing** as I've been pretty much house bound as I cannot leave the house un-aided. I've been attending the classes twice a week and have found it beneficial both socially and physically."*

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*"ExWell classes have made a huge difference to my husband and myself. Before we joined, we hardly ever left the house another outcome of covid, **now my husband goes uptown and is more active**. Elderly people need things to get up for."*

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*"I would like to share a bit about my ExWell journey so far. I was recommended to go there by my physio and I am glad I joined the class. I had both of my knees replaced also have a curvature in my spine. My **walking is finally improving and my general fitness** too. Thank you ExWell for your help and support and the smiling patience of the team."*

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*"With reference to the keep fit class sponsored by the Health Board I find my mobility has improved greatly since I had my right hip replacement surgery & I feel that if the classes were to continue my fitness would improve immensely and being a member of a group it would be an incentive to keep up the exercises left to one on their own one would have little or no incentive to exercise. Regarding the* ***social aspect*** *of the gym I also find that the instructors are very* ***friendly & professional*** *& the members that attend are lovely. If the classes continue after the set number of free classes offered, I would attend & would have no hesitation in paying for them."*

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*"I have been attending the ExWell classes for the last two years. I suffer from a number of chronic conditions especially spinal stenosis and osteoarthritis and feel the program is of great benefit to me. It is also very* ***interesting to observe the benefits that the new inductees get from the program seeing their progress from week to week*** *after they start. I have recommended ExWell to many of my friends. All the members of the team in Portlaoise are excellent and are very friendly and bring their own personalities to the routines."*

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*"I can't praise the classes enough. I am attending a year now and find the mix of aerobic strength, core and balance great. I haven't ever come across any of the leaders who hasn't been lovely* ***knowledgeable, friendly, with a genuine interest in all our welfare****. I'm glad I found this class at 60 post cancer and a tri malleolar ankle fracture. I am in awe of those 80 plus determined to keep moving and going."*

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