

**Charity wins award for its work helping people with long-term health conditions stay active**



A charity which helps Londoners with long-term health conditions stay active has won an award for its on-going work in and around Bromley.

MyTime Active runs an array of different classes in sports and activities ranging from golf and swimming, to bowling and racket sports. It also provides guidance in subjects like fitness, weight management, and nutrition, offering support to Londoners of all ages.

Earlier this week the charity won the Health and Wellbeing Award at the London Sport Awards for its Active Lifestyles project, which focuses on supporting people in the Bromley area.

The annual awards, which are supported by the City of London Corporation, celebrate the outstanding work being done throughout the city to help people play sport and enjoy all the social, physical, and mental wellbeing benefits which regular activity provides.

The Health and Wellbeing Award recognises significant achievements among organisations using physical activity to promote physical and mental health, emphasising the vital role being physically active plays in supporting health outcomes.

MyTime Active, which runs a string of initiatives aimed at people with long-term health conditions, including free community walks and an exercise referral scheme, impressed the London Sport Award judges with the support it was able to provide in helping people overcome often significant barriers to being active.

Those working with the Active Lifestyles team have generally been referred to MyTime Active by their GP, hospital, or specialist clinic or recovery services. Some will have had a stroke, heart attack, or other significant health event which makes getting active all the more important for long-term health outcomes, but also potentially more challenging. This work is commissioned by the local NHS, meaning participants have access to free sessions.

People are assessed by the Active Lifestyles team, before being given an exercise programme developed specific to their needs. Following an initial 12 sessions, people are then given access to subsidised health membership and free activities, including the increasingly popular community health walks.

It is an approach which works; 65% of people involved with the programme saw a significant improvement in their health and wellbeing scores and 60% achieved or exceeded physical activity guidelines.

Diane Friday, who works on the Active Lifestyles programme, said: "If you've had a heart attack or stroke confidence is a huge thing, knowing what you can do and how far you can push yourself.

"Our job is to give people the knowledge of what is safe for them to do, what level they should be working out at, what exercises we can give them which help them improve their condition."

And what does it mean to have won the award?

Diane explained: "It's amazing. Quite a few of our team have been doing this work for about 20 years, working really hard, often under the radar. It is really nice to have that recognised."