

Meanwhile, in a care home near you...

"I was in a wheelchair at one point, then I graduated to a walker. The next thing will be the marathon."

These words are coming from Jean, an 88 years young woman living in a care home in the South of England. Previously, the low levels of physical activity were severely limiting her life. But then, doing frequent cycling sessions to videos of roads from near and far, her life has changed. And her daughter confirms:

"My mother was pretty much bed-ridden. To see her now, exercising on a daily basis like this is extraordinary".

Inactivity and the lack of stimulation has become a rising challenge for many people, and especially do we know it to be true for many living in long term residential care. Not because we don't know about it, but rather because of a lacking focus on facilitating physical activity, and too few systems ensuring it. It started long before anyone knew how to spell COVID, but it has become increasingly challenging in recent times. As Charles Johnston, Executive Director of Property at Sport England, puts it: *"The benefits of physical activity for older people are considerable but often there are limited opportunities, especially for people living in care."*

The video and cycling concept Motiview brings the outdoors inside, enabling people in care facilities to take indoor cycling trips through familiar surroundings (e.g. their hometown, where they have been on holidays, or similar). It allies innovative use of technology with a sense of fun and increased self-efficacy through high-quality videos that evoke memories, provide an immersive experience, and create a social norm for incorporating physical activity into their everyday lives. This has contributed significantly to enjoyment and social aspects as the bike becomes the community hub with residents



sharing stories with each other, staff, and relatives as they pedal on.

As vaccines are now coming and we will be moving out of the lockdown situation, initiatives such as this may prove to be a highly beneficial way of retaking control of normality. And even through COVID and all related challenges, many care homes have seen the need to facilitate physical activity and mental stimulation, such as Motiview offers.

Nationally, more and more governmental strategies, policies, and guidelines point to the importance of activity as a preventative measure for many unwanted conditions. For instance, the NHS Framework for Enhanced Health in Care Homes from March 2020, wants to *"move away from traditional reactive models of care delivery towards proactive care that is centred on the needs of individual residents, their families and care home staff"*. And from the NICE Quality Standard; *"Mental Well-being for older people in care homes from 2017"*: *"Older people in care homes are offered opportunities during their day to participate in meaningful activity that promotes their health and mental wellbeing."* These are just some examples, and on top of strong national incentives, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2021-2030 the "Decade of Healthy Ageing".

These things should inspire us all to take action on behalf of building environments for healthy ageing with a strong focus on habilitation rather than treatment and rehabilitation. We need to focus on abilities instead of disabilities - there is so much untapped potential with people living in long term residential care. And even better;

If initiatives that increase physical activity can help people live in their own homes longer, that is good for them personally, for their relatives, for the health and care services, and for society in general. While much of the tone around the care space, especially in the media, seems to be darkened by disease and challenges, we shouldn't overlook those who establish good and proactive practices to improve the situation with regards to activity for their residents. And Jean and many others are benefitting from this forward-leaning attitude. What we want, is more enthusiasm and support for physical activity, like what we are hearing from seniors and care homes that currently use Motiview;

"You've done what the doctor couldn't", "It is just so wonderful", "I can go next!", "I feel alive, let's put it that way.", "We cannot praise this program enough", "It's the best project we have ever done!", "This has fundamentally changed our culture."

We agree with the former CEO of British Cycling, Julie Harrington: *"It is vital that everyone has opportunities to remain physically active throughout their life, and the Motiview concept brings people together, forming new communities that may have never existed. We want people to get physically active and feel motivated to take part and cannot wait to see where, around the world, Motiview takes them."*

