

## Tracey Jones - Age UK Wiltshire

Fitness & Friendship Project Worker

### Volunteering and beyond

In March 2020 the country entered lockdown and my personal business was reduced by 65%. I wanted to help people who were struggling to keep active during these difficult times.

When the lockdown started to lift in June, I spotted an advert for Age UK looking to recruit volunteers to run Fitness and Friendship Clubs. (F&F clubs are social clubs with an emphasis on keeping active and staying healthy). I thought this would be something that I would enjoy being a qualified personal trainer and unable to see clients due to Lockdown restrictions, so I took the plunge and sent off my application.

I am pleased to say I was successful in my application and over the summer I undertook various forms of training in order to prepare me for the role, this included;

Low Impact Functional Training & Exercise, inc Tai Chi, Covid Awareness Course, Adult Mental Health Awareness Training, Make Someone Welcome Training and information on Restarting Clubs Safely.

I was looking forward to getting out in the community and helping people who really needed support to become more physically & socially active through delivering new Fitness & Friendship Clubs. However, then Lockdown 2 emerged!



Whilst the lockdowns were in place and many people felt isolated, I still wanted to keep people motivated and engaged so I helped to distribute activity packs that had been developed by Age UK and Wiltshire & Swindon Sport, collated feedback, made weekly check in calls and produced an Advent Exercise Calendar video, which was something I thought I would never do!!

With the volunteering role going so well, I was then appointed as Project Leader to work on the GOGA programme for Wiltshire. I am currently looking at new ways to engage new members through the use of online sessions and I can't wait to get out and be active in the clubs again!

I have thoroughly enjoyed the new things I have learnt working with the Fitness and Friendship Team and the people I have met - socially distanced of course. The courses and training have improved my knowledge of Covid and the impact this has had on many people. It has given me the confidence to deliver classes safely & confidently when they can restart.