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Respondent

15

Anonymous

1398:16

Time to complete

Title and contact details

1. Title of Initiative (please ensure this is a good description of your initiative in no more than 90 characters) *

2. Name of organisation and region (please state context, ie general practice, community care etc) *

3. Name of person or team involved in the self-care initiative *

4. Timeframe and dates of initiative *

5. Contact name for entry *

6. Contact email for entry *

About your self-care initiative

7. Describe the problem you were facing and your objective(s) in tackling this. (1200 characters max) *

The UK's ageing population presents urgent challenges: increased long-term conditions, health inequalities, and growing pressure on the NHS and social care fragmented systems. Many older adults, especially carers or those digitally excluded, struggle to access consistent, preventative support. The Open University (OU) identified the need for a national, inclusive, preventative health intervention that could drive real, sustained behaviour change and create an opportunity to mobilise a community of older adults, putting ageing well on the national agenda. Take Five to Age Well (Take5) is a practical response: a month-long, research-informed campaign encouraging small, daily habits in five areas (Eat, Drink, Move, Connect & Engage, Think). The objective: to empower individuals to adopt simple behaviours that improve physical, mental, and social wellbeing, while building public awareness of ageing as a positive, manageable life stage. By focusing on prevention, accessibility, and long-term impact, the project aims to enhance independence through better-informed self-care, reduce reliance on health services, and promote equity across diverse communities within all four UK nations.

Please enter at most 1200 characters

8. Outline your initiative, explain your planning and execution of the project. (1200 characters max) *

Take5 a UK-wide, public health campaign developed by The Open University rooted in years of knowledge exchange and public engagement by Dr Jitka Vseteckova, the initiative applies the OU's "Five Pillars for Ageing Well" framework aimed at supporting all with better self-care, developed through engagement with academics, older adults, clinicians, and charities. Take5 invites participants to commit to one healthy habit across five areas for one month, supported by daily emails and optional coaching via an AI tool. Piloted in 2023 and nationally launched in 2025 with over 500 collaborating organisations (jointly engaging just over 5,000 participants). Planning included co-design workshops, behavioural science expertise, and an inclusive delivery strategy combining online and offline access to combat digital exclusion. The initiative was funded through the OU, Connected NI, and in-kind contributions from Age UK. Structured follow-up surveys at one, five, and nine months (in 2023) measured behaviour change. With 87% of 2023 participants maintaining habits months later, the initiative delivered meaningful outcomes and informed a broader rollout targeting underrepresented communities.

Please enter at most 1200 characters

9. What were the challenges and how did you overcome these? (1200 characters max) *

Three key challenges were identified: digital exclusion, underrepresentation among diverse communities of participants, and sustaining long-term engagement. Many older adults — particularly carers or those living in deprived areas — lacked regular digital access, creating barriers to participation. The OU and Age Scotland piloted a print-based toolkit, successfully supporting offline engagement. Participant demographics from the pilot showed limited diversity. For 2025, the campaign incorporated a strategy to reach more diverse communities and address participation gaps (improved by 1.3%). To maintain motivation, Take5 integrated daily prompts, regular email support, and an optional AI "coach" for accountability. Structured follow-up helped reinforce behaviours and track sustained impact. Additionally, the initiative's inclusive tone, focusing on starting new self-care habits rather than stopping existing ones, helped maintain participant confidence, increase knowledge and support self-efficacy, especially among informal carers, who made up over 40% of participants (2023). These solutions enabled the campaign to become a robust and adaptable model for preventative public health.

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10. Did you collaborate with other local partners, if so, who and why were they chosen? *

Collaboration was key to the success of Take5 with Age UK as the main strategic partner in 2025, and was supported by over 500 collaborating organisations across the four UK nations. Partnerships were made with those who have existing relationships with older adults, regional reach, and alignment with the campaign's preventative health goals, including Age Scotland, Age NI, Age Cymru, Public Health Boards, NHS partners, and community-based charities and groups. Age Scotland's involvement enabled the piloting offline support to participants with remarkable success, while numerous other collaborators helped adapt messaging to local contexts, promoted the campaign through trusted networks, and ensured accessibility for underserved and excluded groups. These partnerships enabled the campaign to scale nationally, reach vulnerable audiences, build local trust, and support positive ageing practices through community engagement. Take5 contributed to and supported the partners' vision, mission, and strategic objectives. This collective approach ensured real-world relevance, national reach, and mutual effort in supporting improved self-care and its long-term sustainability.

11. Would you describe your initiative as "innovative", if "yes" please tell us why. (800 characters max) *

Take5 is a pioneering worldwide first, research-informed campaign applying behaviour change science to ageing in an inclusive, scalable format. Offering daily achievable choices from five different areas with co-produced educational content that supports learning about better self-care choices. Inspired by proven behaviour change campaigns (Dry January), it uniquely blends digital and offline tools to ensure accessibility for all. Co-designed with older adults and delivered with 500+ partners, the initiative supports long-term behaviour change with structured follow-up. With 87% of pilot participants maintaining habits after nine months, it demonstrates genuine, lasting public health impact—making it a model for low-cost, scalable self-care innovation.

Please enter at most 800 characters

12. Did you use any of the Self-Care Forum's free resources as part of your initiative? Provide details *

Not this time but we plan to include Self Care Forum's free resources in the next Take5 campaign run.

Impact, outcomes, and evidence

13. Who was the initiative directed at and what were the benefits to the targeted group or individuals? (1200 characters max)

Take5 is aimed at UK-wide populations aged 50 years and older, including individuals, groups, and communities who want to take a step closer to creating and sustaining healthier behaviors, self-care, and self-management, prevent ill health, and achieve improved long-term physical and mental health and wellbeing outcomes. As benefits Take5 in 23 & 25 has generated significant social and cultural values ranging from challenging ageist stereotypes, empowering all to increase their knowledge and understanding about ageing well, fostering thus health literacy, increase confidence to take action towards better self-care, resilience, and independence, particularly among older adults and informal carers (who made up over 40% of participants in 2023). Take5 created an opportunity to mobilise a UK-wide community of older adults, demonstrating that improving self-care can be fun, every little helps, and no one needs to Take5 alone online or offline. Take5 exemplifies the power of higher education institutions to lead beyond the campus. The OU has harnessed its research expertise, networks, and societal mission to tackle a pressing issue with creativity, compassion, and measurable impact.

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14. Please quantify the impact of your initiative. (e.g. cost improvement, numbers of people helped, time saved) ((1200 characters max))

Take5 in 23&25 supported over 5,000 participants UK-wide in adopting healthier and lasting behaviours. 80% of respondents (2023) adhered to the month-long challenge and were still doing the action they chose at the end of the challenge month 5 or more days in a week. At 9 months follow-up 87% of respondents were still doing the action they chose 4 or more days per week. Participants report long-lasting engagement with five pillars, and a sense of agency. The community impact is ensured via events across the UK and online forums, intergenerational diverse connections, combating loneliness, and dismantling age-related stereotypes. Take5 shows what's possible when research, education, partnerships, inclusive approaches, and community come together to raise awareness, inspire action and create a movement of lasting change. Take5 transforms individual lives, builds capacity in communities, and influences policy, as cited in strategic health planning conversations. It offers a cost-effective, scalable model of preventative care that can ease long-term burdens on the NHS. Its low-cost infrastructure ensures long-term viability and adaptability across sectors and geographies.

Please enter at most 1200 characters

15. Do you have formal or anecdotal evidence of success? (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, informal feedback?) (1200 characters max)

Take5 participants: 'This is such a fabulous idea and hopefully, it will be back in 2026.' 'It has been a pleasure to take part and I've made improvements in every area.' 'This is just what I needed, a challenge to jolt me out of my blues! I look at life afresh and make better use of time and will reap rewards. I'm thinking differently too.' 'This national campaign helped us to locally shine a spotlight on the importance of healthy ageing. We would like to thank colleagues at the Open University for their tireless efforts in creating such an impactful campaign that we hope to build on in the years to come' Public Health Director, Take5 Partner 'Ageing well does not have to wait for a biochemist to develop a new chemical or drug – just join Take Five and Age Well.' - Sir Muir Gray, Take5 Ambassador '...congratulations on a fantastic programme.' 'Take5' really inspired such a diverse range of participants with the ambition not only to live well and thereby age well in later life but very importantly to realise the possibilities for so doing! Take5 programme can reach parts of the community that other programmes can't. All eminently achievable' – Dame Philippa Russell, Take5 Ambassador

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Learning and sustainability

16. What was the cost of this initiative in time, money, and other resources? Please be as specific as you can. (1200 characters max) *

Initial pilot funding Take5/23 was provided internally by The Open University in the four Nations, Open Societal Challenges Programme and Connected NI. Take5/25 campaign secured funding from Open Societal Challenges and Connected NI. Just over £120,000 in total funding has been received for Take5 campaigns 23&25. Take5 Team is led by Dr Jitka Vseteckova, supported by Take5 leads in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland and the Take5 Engagement Lead. A large team consisting of advisors and stakeholders, including commissioners in health and social care, clinicians, and people with lived experience of ageing and living with long-term conditions, was involved from the outset in the 2022 planning and piloting of the 2023 Take5 campaign to establish co-design and co-production. As a low-cost, high-impact intervention, Take Five to Age Well offers a powerful model for public health innovation.

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17. Were there any learnings from the initiative, if so what were they? (1200 characters max) *

We are immensely proud to have gauged interest from over 5,000 participants (23&25) especially from informal carers, whose time is extremely limited. Over 40% of Take5/23 participants were informal carers. Take5 surprisingly generated also a high engagement with creative and social connection activities—like community meetups, intergenerational sharing, and artistic expression combined with positive mindset shifts toward ageing, countering negative stereotypes. Due to the unique blending of educational & evidence-based approaches joined up with co-designing and co-producing the Take5 Campaign with the public the Take5 meets people where they are and helps them to get closer to where they would like to be. We are not making anyone feel bad because of what they may not be able to stop doing. We help them via the Take5 to start a new healthy behaviour and sustain it long-term, and feel better for it. We have identified the lack of diversity in 2023 and developed a robust strategy for Take5/25 to address it going forward, including the need for emergence of local champions promoting ageing well within their networks in the future Take5 iterations.

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18. Are you continuing to implement the initiative, please give details. (1200 characters max) *

We are currently working with Age UK, Age Scotland and other partners on funding for Take5/27. In addition to that, we are approaching diverse funders known for their community-based approaches and funding of scalable interventions across the four nations to secure funding to increase funded work and engagement with Take5 diverse communities champions (our learning). We have recently received NHS funding to adapt Take5 for newly diagnosed patients with low-grade haematological cancer and support them on their individual patient journeys. Funded by Hallmark Foundation we have co-produced Live Well Together (educational) Toolkit with Campaign for Learning (CfL) and the University of Bedfordshire to support intergenerational engagement and building healthy behaviors in families. We have just received funding from the Hallmark Foundation to initiate the co-production of a toolkit supporting individuals nearing retirement in collaboration with the CfL. We continue working and collaborating with UK-wide partners in supporting the adoption of Take5 in communities of need, e.g. Haringey's Age Well Festival, Take5 to prevent, delay the onset of, or progression of dementia and frailty.

Please enter at most 1200 characters

And finally

19. How easy will it be to replicate your initiative and do you have top tips to share? (1200 characters max)

Take5 is replicable, our tips: 1.Keeping the communication consistent, the design simple and actions easy to incorporate into daily lives. This facilitates making self-care universally accessible, by providing a user-friendly and adaptable framework that meets people where they are, irrespective of their background, activities of daily living, level of fitness, or education which improve health literacy and self-care as we age. 2.Offering both online and offline options, catering to diverse learning preferences and situations - individuals can engage with self-care practices when and how it suits them best, thus increasing the likelihood of sustained involvement and improvement in personal well-being, increased knowledge, and confidence in taking action. 3.Offering choices, some people already look after what they eat, they may want to focus on hydration or physical activity. 4.Ensuring that any intervention is co-designed/co-produced with people with lived experience from the outset. Committing to inclusivity and accessibility positions Take5 as more than just a resource; it serves as a lifeline for those who typically struggle to incorporate self-care into their daily lives.

Please enter at most 1200 characters

20. Please let us know the social media addresses of those involved in the initiative.

@Age UK; @Open University; @Age Cymru; @Age Scotland; @Age NI; @Carers UK; @Carers Bucks; @Northamptonshire Carers; @Age UK Buckinghamshire; @NHS Horizons; @Bridgit Care and many others

21. Why do you think this initiative deserves to win the award? (800 characters max)

Awarding Take5 promotes a public health vision where self-care is available and accessible to everyone. Uniquely blended educational content empowers people to set individual targets towards a healthier and fulfilling life for themselves and their families. Take5 was purposefully designed to support individuals regardless of where they are on their wellbeing journey and is a comprehensive tool that supports all aspects of health and well-being, particularly for those who often struggle to prioritize self-care. The team's unwavering commitment to improving population health also makes a significant contribution to supporting our health and social care systems in meeting their priorities, including digital transformation, prevention, and alleviating secondary and tertiary care bottlenecks.

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22. Do you have an image, materials or weblinks to supplement your application? Please supply no more than 2 images which may also be used to promote your application if successful. Ensure images are square (ie height and width dimensions are the same). Please email information to selfcare@selfcareforum.org including the name title of your initiative (as in Q1).

<https://wels.open.ac.uk/research/projects/take-5> <https://wels.open.ac.uk/research/projects/take-5/extra-resources>
https://wels.open.ac.uk/sites/wels.open.ac.uk/files/files/Live_Well_Together_toolkit_final.pdf

23. Your application may be chosen to be uploaded to the "best practise" page of the Self-Care Forum website to share self-care excellence with others who might want to use the learnings in your application. We will also include your email address so that people may get in touch with you. Please confirm your preference below. *

- ☒ I am happy for the Self-Care Forum to add our entry to the website **with** my email address
- ☐ I am happy for the Self-Care Forum to add our entry to the website **without** my email address
- ☐ I would rather our entry was not included on the Self-Care Forum website

24. Would you consider becoming a self-care champion? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe, I'd like to know more