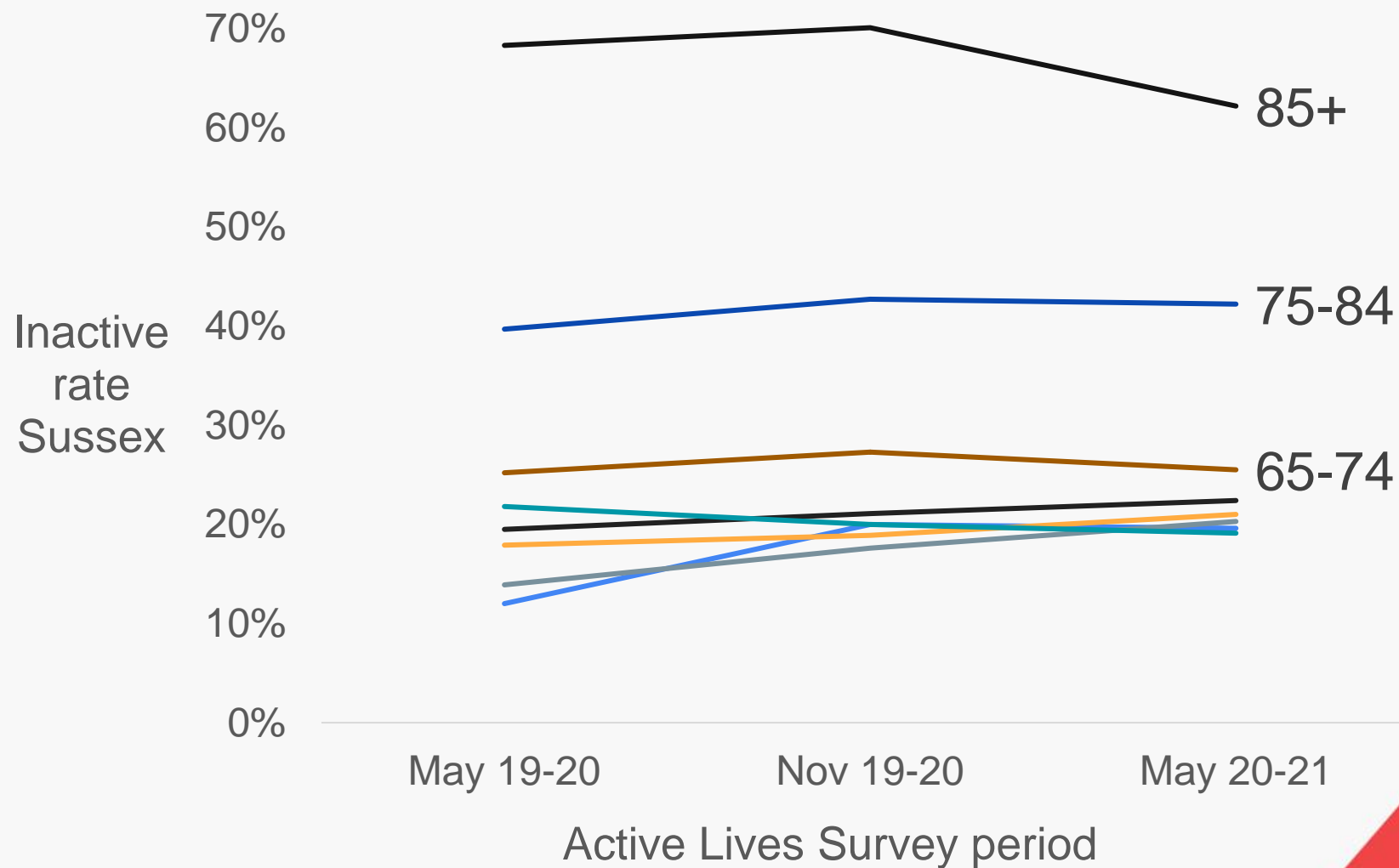


Stronger for Life

Building connections at place

Inactivity currently increases as people grow older

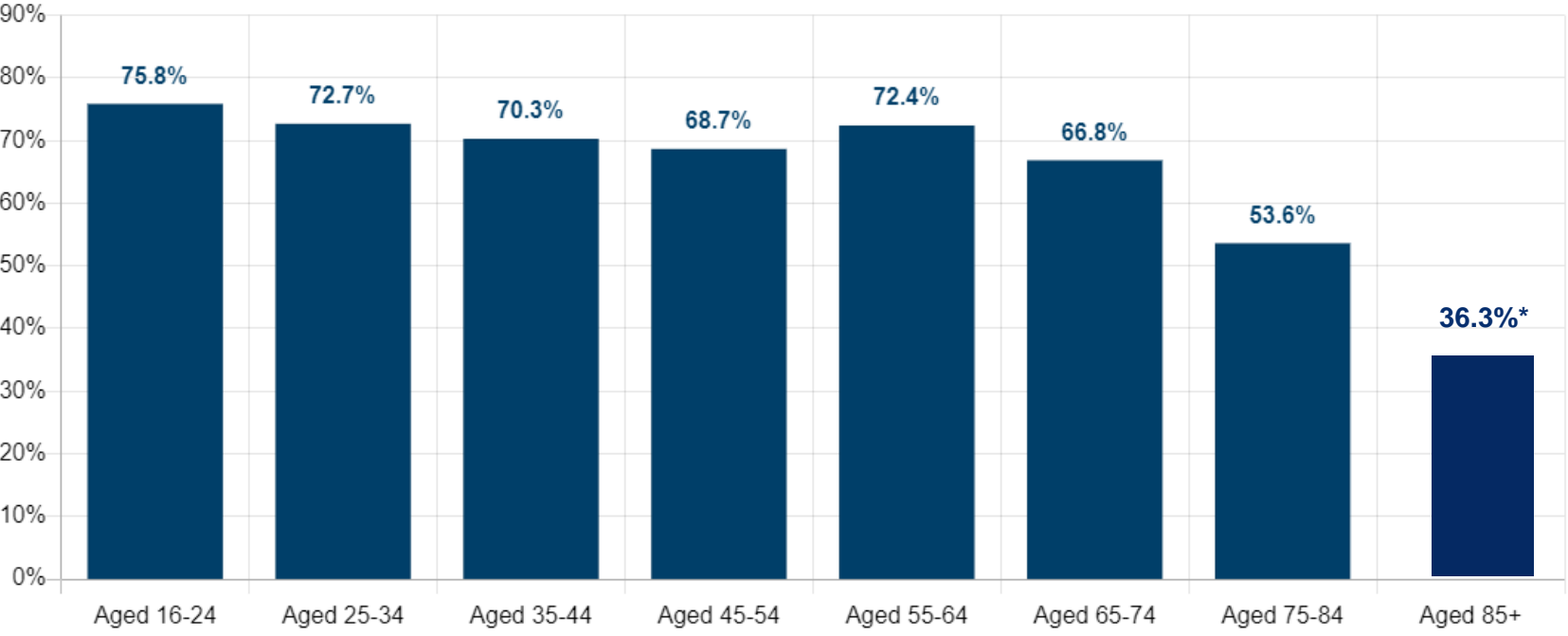


Strength and balance is as important as cardiovascular fitness



Muscle Strength : 2+ sessions per week

May 20-21



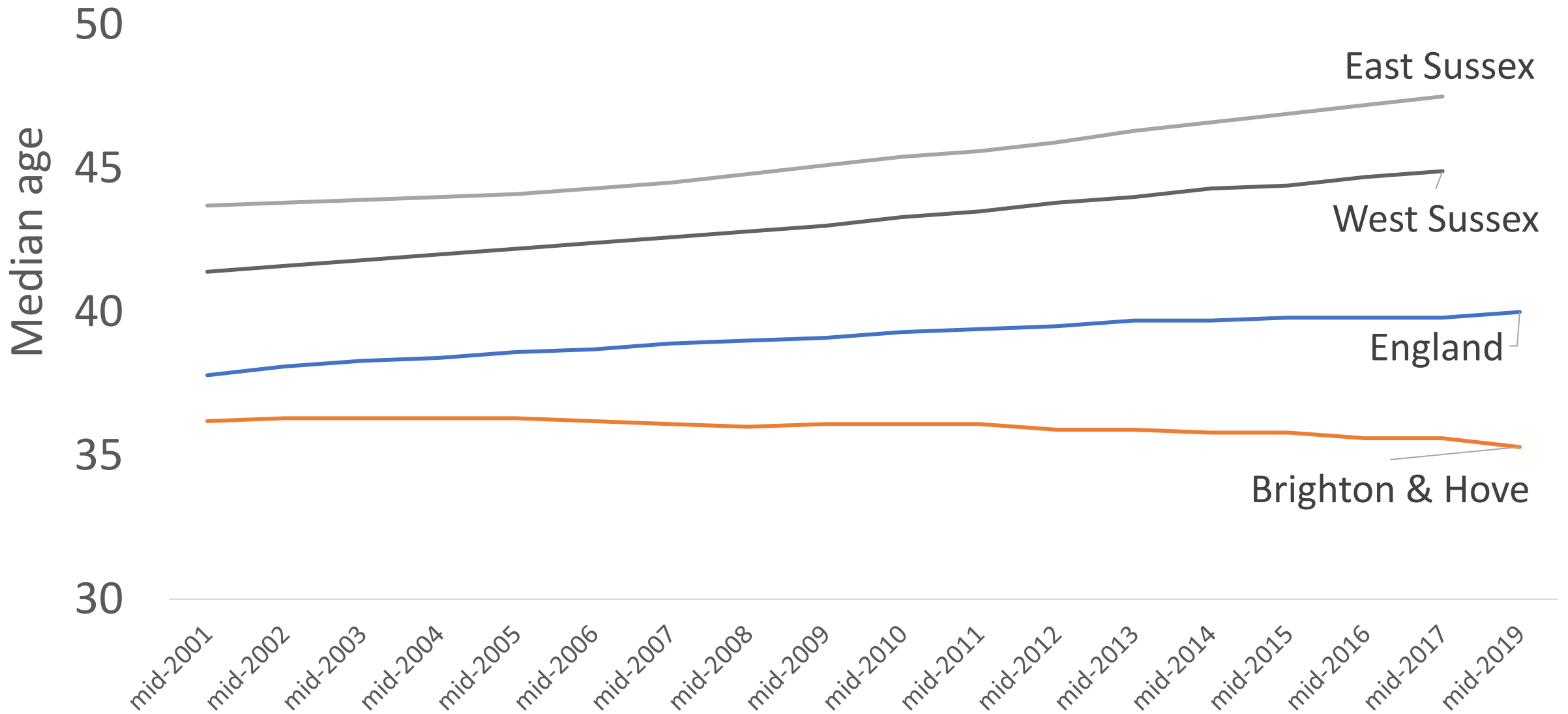
10 year bands

% Muscle Strength by Where:

■ Sussex AP *South East value used as Sussex sample size too small.

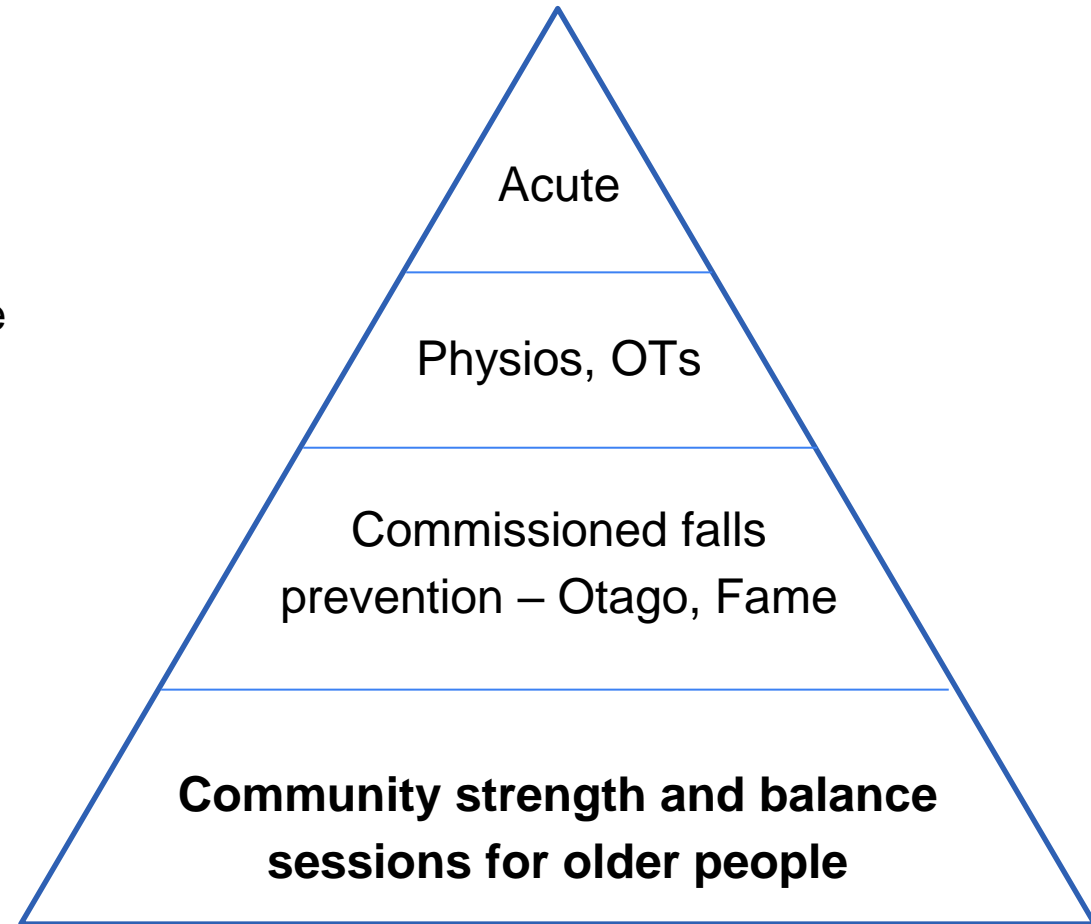


Residents in East and West Sussex are older than the national average.



Active Sussex liaised with Daniel MacIntyre, Consultant in Public Health at West Sussex County Council and formally Chair of the National Falls Prevention Coordination Group, to frame the approach.

- Gap in provision of community-based strength and balance identified pre-Covid.
- More urgent following deconditioning.
- Project to support those who may be at risk of falling as they get older but haven't been referred to falls prevention services.
- Also suitable for those who have been through commissioned falls prevention and are in need of a pathway back into community-based activity.










Stronger for Life

Aims

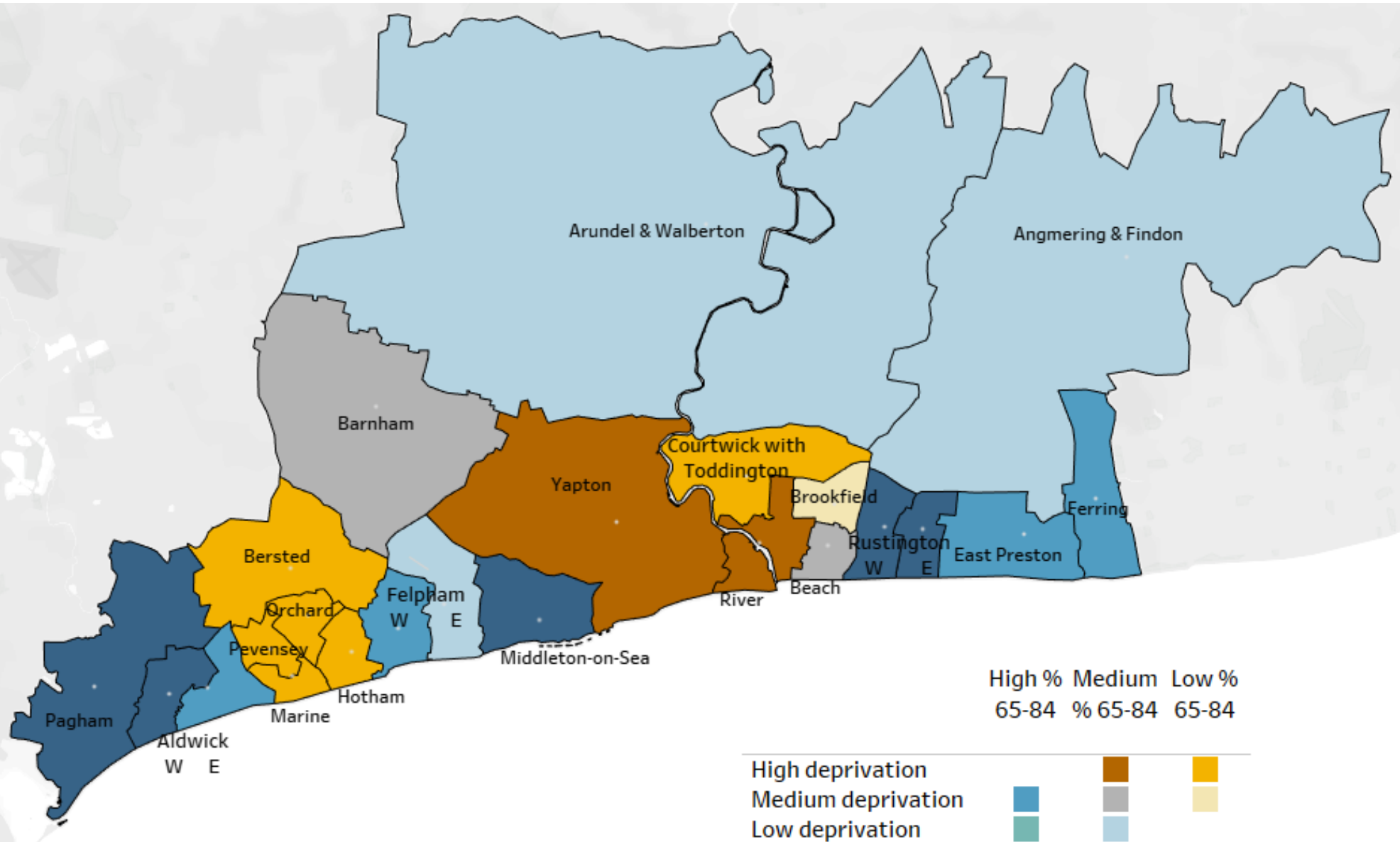
- To increase provision of community strength and balance sessions for over-65s in West Sussex.
- To ensure there is buy-in from the health system in West Sussex, this work should be 'system-led'.

Activities evidenced to improve strength and balance

Type of sport, physical activity or exercise	 Improvement in muscle function	 Improvement in bone health	 Improvement in balance
 Running	★	★★	★
 Resistance Training	★★★	★★★	★★
 Aerobics, circuit training	★★★	★★★	★★
 Ball Games	★★	★★★	★★★
 Racquet Sports	★★	★★★	★★★
 Yoga, Tai Chi	★	★	★
 Dance	★	★★	★
 Walking	★	★	☆
 Nordic Walking	★★	?	★★
 Cycling	★	★	★

★★★ Strong effect ★★ Medium effect ★ Low effect ☆ No effect ? Not known

We've gone for a combination of the two

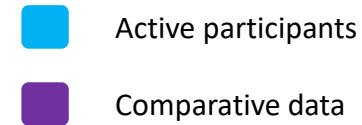
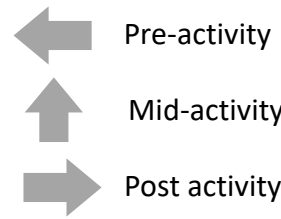


What's been funded

Activity	Locations	Participants	Surveys
Community strength and balance classes	7	100	17
Walking netball	5	66	12
Strength and balance - sheltered housing	4	128	27
Walking cricket	3	48	10
Walking football	2	44	8
Nordic walking	2	28	2
Gym circuits	2	28	8
Walking rugby	1	8	0
Table tennis	1	20	10
Dance	1	30	0
Total	28	500	94



Measures



Physiological



- ▲ Leg strength – 30 second sit-to-stand test¹
- ▲ Balance – 4-stage balance test²

Behavioural



- ▼ Adapted Short Active Lives⁴ focusing on strength and balance
- ▲ Attendance at evidenced strength and balance activities

Falls risk



- ▲ Perceived: Short Falls Efficacy Scale International³
- ▼ Actual: Question on number and recency of falls

Knowledge and attitudinal



- ▼ Questions to assess knowledge of the Chief Medical Officer guidelines on strength and balance⁵
- ▼ Motivations and barriers

1. physio-pedia.com/30_Seconds_Sit_To_Stand_Test
 2. physio-pedia.com/The_4-Stage_Balance_Test
 3. sites.manchester.ac.uk/fes-i
 4. evaluationframework.sportengland.org
 5. gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-uk-chief-medical-officers-report

Sustainability

Most sessions funded through Stronger for Life have been sustained through participant fees.

For example, Cancer United launched several new sessions which are continuing well beyond the funded period.



Most sessions

Active Sussex
seed funding

Participant
fees

Low income older people

Active Sussex
seed funding

Other partner
funding?

For sessions supporting older residents on low incomes, such as those in sheltered housing, additional funding must be found to continue them.

Active Sussex are trying to leverage further funding for some of these sessions.

Did Stronger for Life meet its aims and has this helped to build connections?

To provide more community strength and balance and for this work to be 'system-led'

- More strength and balance sessions and an increase in participants - due to the high demand for activities from older residents and some excellent community providers who are skilled in engaging these groups.
- Not clear if the project has raised understanding of how community strength and balance relates to falls prevention amongst some health and wellbeing professionals.
- East Sussex Public Health potentially investing funding into embedding physical activity across the system (e.g. improving referral pathways, and adult social care, etc).
- NHS Sussex Prevention & Personalised Care to commit £45k to targeting people on low income and supporting weight management.
- Improved relationships with local networks and Director of Public Health

Recommendations

1. Active Sussex and other physical activity partners continue to increase the focus on community strength and balance, and scale up this work where funding allows. Continuing funding is needed for low income residents.
2. Health professionals and local services concerned with falls prevention consider how they can further support community strength and balance. Providing long-term activity can offer exit pathways for those completing falls prevention courses and aid habit formation. Directing funds upstream could reduce frailty in the older population so that there are fewer falls.
3. NHS decision-makers to engage in genuinely collaborative work to tackle inequalities through preventative healthcare such as physical activity. This passage from the Kings Fund report on tackling health inequalities explains our experience to date:

“Spending on inequalities work is too often considered additional or novel, directed at specific groups or one-off projects. In many cases, notably when focused on preventive measures, this funding is expected to meet a higher value-for-money threshold than other spend. For work on inequalities to endure, there must be a shift in the way baseline funding is spent. This means treating inequalities spending as part of the mainstream and not as short-term funding.”

Kings Fund report on tackling health inequalities, 2022⁶

6. www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/how-can-we-tackle-health-inequalities

Explore the data: activesussex.org/active-ageing

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