



George's Community
Hydrotherapy Pool

St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool Report



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Summary

Why conduct a survey?

The survey was created to gain information and evidence about the people who were using St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool, the benefits that they as individuals were gaining from it, and whether there were any implications for the wider health and social care economy.

Further information about hydrotherapy and St George's Pool, including how to self-refer, costs, and the services offered can be found at:

[http://btckstorage.blob.core.windows.net/site8239/Forms/Info leaflet Jan 2016.pdf](http://btckstorage.blob.core.windows.net/site8239/Forms/Info%20leaflet%20Jan%202016.pdf)

The survey supplements a full research report conducted in 2013

<http://www.healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk/resources/hydrotherapy-patient-evaluation-report-2013>

Research studies have shown hydrotherapy (aquatic physiotherapy) to be effective in the treatment of number of conditions. Please see Appendix A.

The methodology used

Over the course of one week, service users visiting St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool were invited to complete a paper questionnaire. The questionnaire asked for information about them, their use of the pool and the effect hydrotherapy had on various aspects of their lives. An equivalent on-line version (SurveyMonkey) was also available.

The number of fully completed responses included in this survey is 234.

- 184 (78.5%) were on paper
- 50 (21.5%) were on-line

- 134 (57%) respondents were service users who completed the survey on their own behalf.
- 100 (43%) respondents were carers/parents who completed the survey *on behalf of the service user they cared for*.

234 responses represents 97.5% of the 240 users who on average attend the Peterborough City Council (PCC) run sessions each week. Two schools that have children and young people with autism, and some users from Day Services did not return completed surveys. An independent swimming group for tots that brings around 100 users each week and hires the pool privately from PCC did not take part.

There were 2,721 pool users registered by PCC at the time of the survey.

Some of the findings from the survey

- The high response rate of 97.5% would indicate how highly valued and important the hydrotherapy service is to its users. In addition, 205 (88%) of respondents elected to complete an optional question where they wrote in their own words about hydrotherapy at St George's and how it helped them. Extracts from these powerful testimonies – voices from the hydrotherapy pool – are included in the results.

About the hydrotherapy users...

- 80% were using the pool for a long-term physical health condition or disability: 52% had a long-term physical health condition or disability, 28% a learning disability and a long-term physical disability/health condition. Of the remaining 20%, 11.5% were using the pool for rehabilitation, 5% for a learning disability and 'others' was 3.5%.
- 63% of users with a health condition or disability said that their day-to-day activities were "limited a lot" by this.
- 72% of respondents had been using the pool for over six months, 47.5% had been using the pool for over a year and 33% had been using pool for over two years.

Benefits for individuals...

- 97.5% of users accessing the pool for their physical health said that this had 'improved' or 'greatly improved' as a result of hydrotherapy.
- 98.5% of users accessing the pool for their wellbeing said it had 'improved' or 'greatly improved' as a result of hydrotherapy.

Potential benefits for the wider health and social care economy...

- 70% of those for whom it was applicable, and 36% of all survey respondents, reported that they had reduced the number of visits that they made to their general practitioner (GP) as result of hydrotherapy.
- 44% of those for whom this was applicable, and 23% of all survey respondents reported that they had been able to reduce their intake of medication as result of hydrotherapy.
- 49% of those for whom this was applicable, and 27% of all survey respondents reported that they were using the pool to avoid or postpone surgery or hospital procedures
- There was also qualitative evidence that hydrotherapy was speeding rehabilitation and return to work and normal life. There was similar evidence that hydrotherapy was improving independence and thereby reducing care needs.
- The cost cutting evidence above indicates that hydrotherapy potentially benefits the wider health and social care economy.

And finally...

- The survey gives evidence of the real and positive psychological, physical and functional impact that hydrotherapy is having on some of the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach members of our community and how highly it is valued.

- The level of disability/ill health, the degree of dependence and the length of time that individuals have relied on the hydrotherapy service means that the potential impact on their health and wellbeing, on them, their carers, and the wider health and social care economy if they lost it, is likely to be significant.
- The survey adds weight to case for continuing to support St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool and for providing a new pool for the people of Peterborough.

Section 1: Information about the service users

The information gathered about hydrotherapy users included their gender, their age, how often and how long they had been using the pool, the type of condition/reason for using the pool and the degree of limitation that any health condition or disability caused was also gathered. Please see Appendix B for full details.

Section 2: The impact of hydrotherapy on the physical health of individual users

2.1 Impact on physical health

Physical health was a relevant reason for using the pool for 218/234 (93%) of the survey respondents.

Physiotherapist D

“Benefits of exercise are well researched and proven. Some people cannot exercise on land, water is essential to them.”

142 (60.5%) of all respondents said that their day-to-day activities were “limited a lot” by a disability or health condition.

129 (55%) of respondents said that apart from hydrotherapy that they took no exercise at all, or less than 1½ hour’s physical activity, in a week.

Carer writing on behalf of C [aged 40-64 years], who has cerebral palsy and lives in a care home:

“C is a lot more relaxed in the water which allows us to do his exercises which we are unable to do due to him being so reluctant when he is in bed/seated.”

Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) sufferer [40-64 years]:

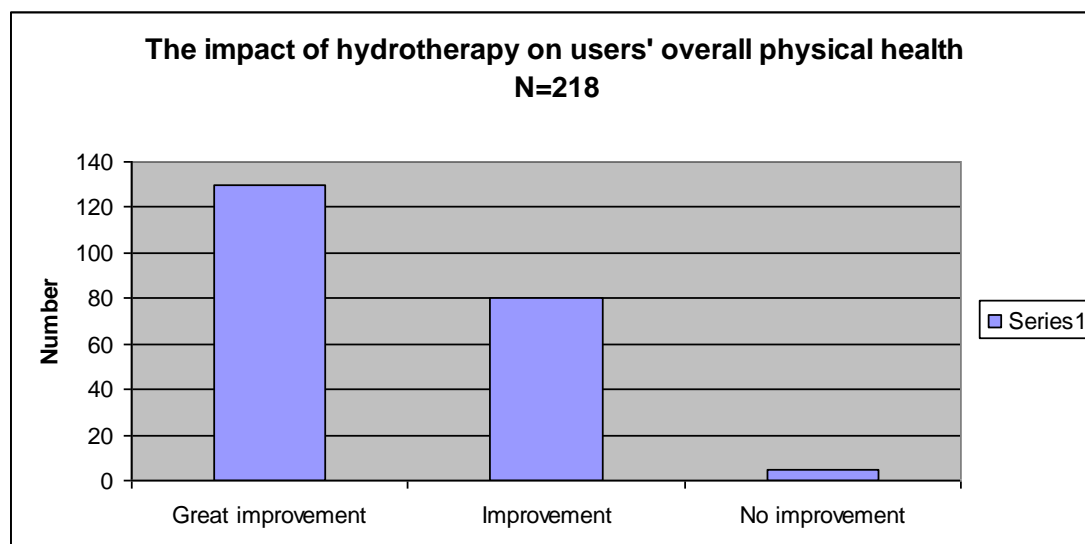
“It gives me the gentle exercise I need to keep as fit as possible. Other exercise classes are too much for me. Hydrotherapy is the only exercise I can manage from which I benefit greatly. The warm water eases joint pain. The aqua fit exercises build muscle strength.”

Support worker writing on behalf M [26-39 years] who suffers from cerebral palsy:

“He is a wheelchair user and the pool is the only way to gain free movement to help with flexibility and core strength. The warmth of the water helps him to de-stress and relax muscles to enable better movement.”

Respondents were asked to rate the impact on their overall physical health from their hydrotherapy sessions. The results were:

A 'great improvement' in physical health	An 'improvement' in physical health	'No improvement' in physical health
132	81	5
60.5%	37%	2.5%



97.5% of users who were accessing the hydrotherapy pool for their overall physical health said it had improved or greatly improved as a result.

Ms W [40-64 years] who has a spinal problem and arthritis:

“Allows me to do exercise that I would not be able to do otherwise. I travel 25 miles to use the pool, as there is not one nearer. It is worth the journey! I consider it to be a valuable place and it contributes to keeping me mobile and able to have a better quality of life.”

2.2 Impact on pain

Pain was a relevant reason for using the pool for 165 (70.5%) of users.

The pool users say...

Ms T [40-64 years] who has a heart condition:

“Only place I do exercise. I don’t feel extreme pain in the water. I feel relaxed.”

Ms P [40-64 years] who has arthritis and asthma:

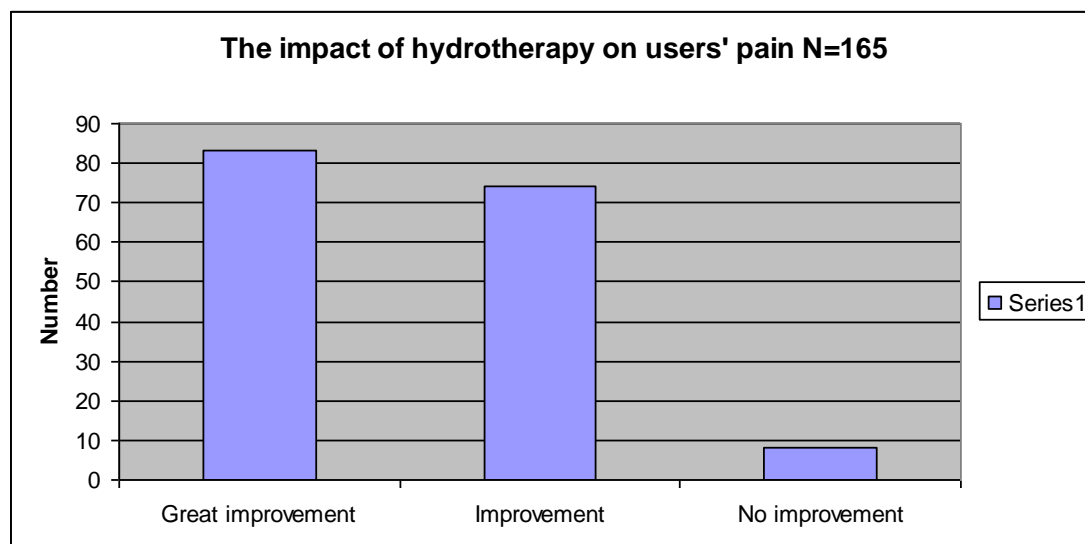
“Hydro gives me a temporary pain free time and I can move my lower joints in the pool but can’t do the things that I do in the pool on land. It is a relaxing friendly atmosphere, the staff are so helpful. I go home supple, relaxed and stress free. I would really miss it if I was not able to go.”

Ms A [40-64 years] with a back problem:

“Since I started attending St George's I have noticed such a reduction in pain.”

Respondents rated the impact hydrotherapy in the pool had on their pain:

'Great improvement' in pain from hydrotherapy	'Improvement' in pain	'No improvement' in pain
83	74	8
50%	45%	5%



95% of users accessing the hydrotherapy pool for their pain said it had 'improved' or 'greatly improved' as a result.

Parent of child [0-17years] who has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and joint hypermobility syndrome:

“It has helped with pain and also calms him.”

Ms C [40-64 years] suffering from rheumatoid arthritis and a back problem:

“Decreases pain and discomfort, which allows free-er movement – subsequently managing day-to-day life with fewer painkillers.”

2.3 Impact on mobility

Maintaining or trying to improve mobility was a pertinent to 209 (89%) users in the survey.

Ms L [65-80 years] rehabilitating from a knee replacement:

“Warm water is a great aid to mobility.”

Support worker on behalf of R who has Down’s syndrome:

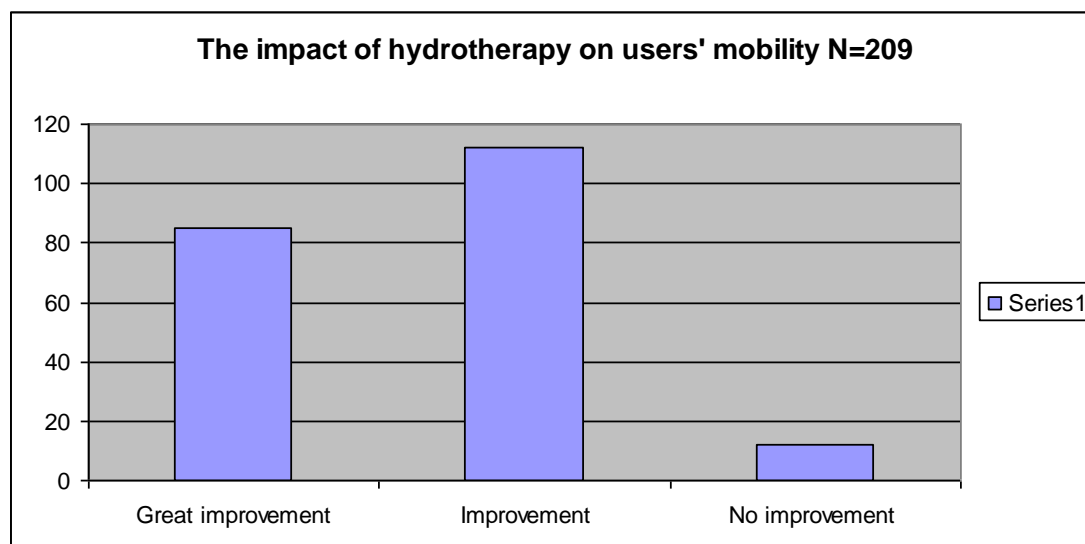
“Since using the pool, he has lost weight and is able to walk further without becoming breathless.”

Ms H [40-64 years] rehabilitating from complex knee surgery:

“Hydrotherapy provides an opportunity to exercise and improve mobility which "dry land" exercise opportunities do not offer me.”

Respondents rated the impact hydrotherapy had on their mobility:

'Great improvement' in mobility	'Improvement' in mobility	'No improvement' in mobility
85	112	12
41%	54%	5%



95% of users who were accessing the hydrotherapy pool to assist their mobility said that as a result this had 'improved' or 'greatly improved.'

Ms K [64-80 years] who uses the pool to postpone/avoid hip and knee replacement surgery:

“Warm water helps to keep me from getting stiff and I can walk and exercise my legs which I can’t do out of the pool very well.”

Mr B [40-64 years] with acute an advanced arthritis and sciatica:

“Has helped me build up muscle strength and improve mobility.”

2.4 The impact on balance and co-ordination

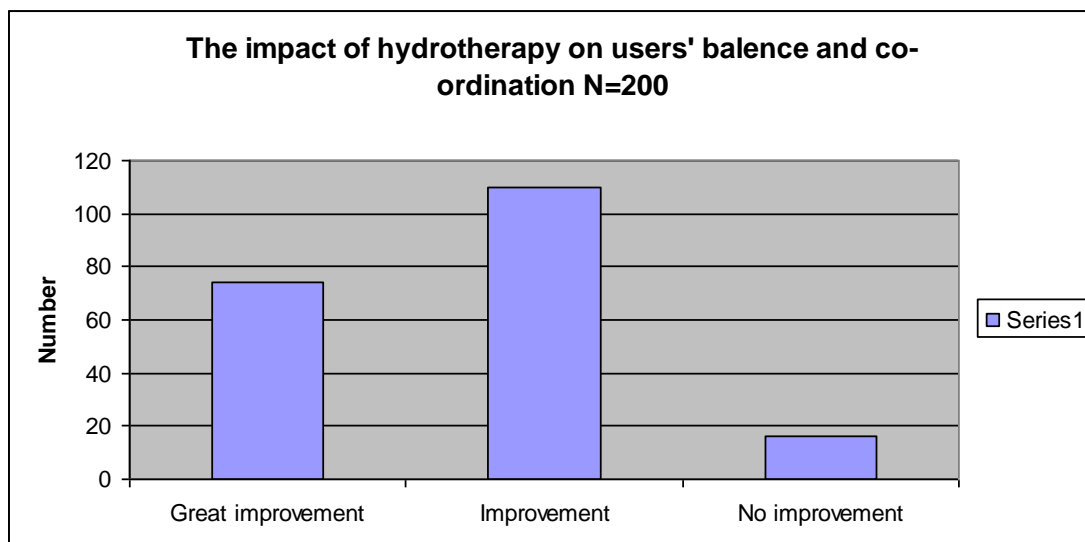
This was relevant for 200 (85%) of the survey's respondents

M (0-17 years) has learning and fine motor difficulties; he uses the service to improve mobility and co-ordination:

“I am using the pool to relax - it helps my balance.”

Respondents rated the impact hydrotherapy had on their balance and co-ordination:

'Great improvement' in balance and co-ordination	'Improvement' in balance and co-ordination	'No improvement' in balance and co-ordination
74	110	16
36.5%	55.5%	8%



92% of users who were accessing the hydrotherapy pool to assist their balance and co-ordination said it had 'improved' or 'greatly improved' as a result.

Mr J [65-80 years who despite congenital learning and physical difficulties is living independently said:

“I was walking with a stick but I am using it much less now. I am able to stand without holding on to things as much. As I have weak legs the less pressure of the water has really helped.”

Section 3: Impact of hydrotherapy on the wellbeing of individuals

3.1 Hydrotherapy and emotional health and wellbeing

This was a relevant for 218 (93%) of the hydrotherapy users in the survey.

Physiotherapist C:

“I have seen many patients make massive and measurable changes in their pain levels, mobility and especially their mental wellbeing.”

Ms W who accompanies her elderly mother in the pool:

“I recommend the hydrotherapy to so many people as it aids recovery and makes you feel 'over the moon.'”

Ms J [40-60 years] living with many health conditions:

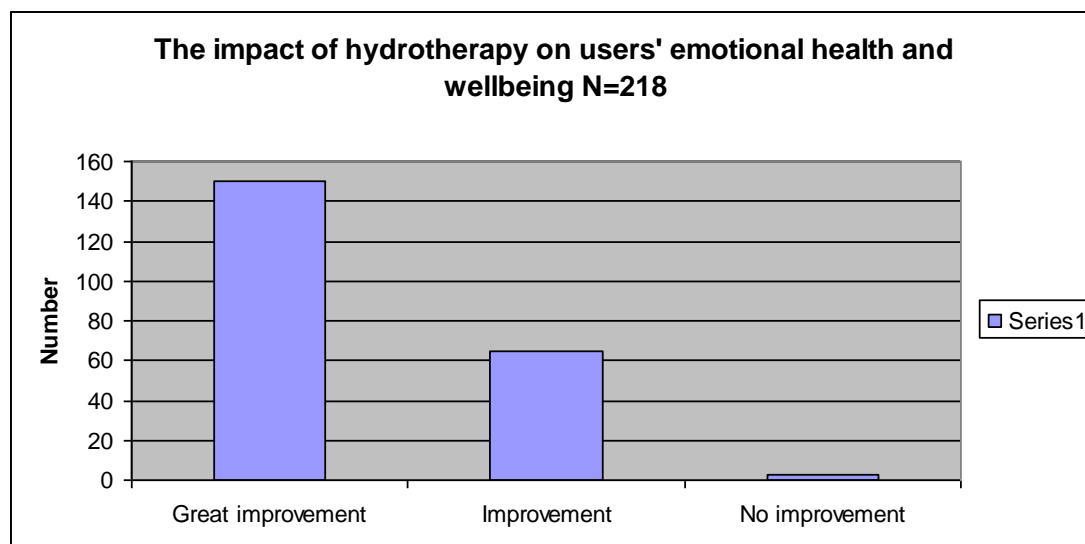
“It has an all-round help to one's wellbeing and helps you to keep motivated when you live with long-term pain.”

Mother of son [0-17 years] with high-functioning autism:

“J loves coming to St George's because the water is warm and he finds other pool large and intimidating. Having smaller groups has helped him to become more confident in the water. He has a better weekend and copes better at school /more attentive when he has been to St George's.”

Respondents rated the impact hydrotherapy had on their emotional health and wellbeing:

'Great improvement' in emotional health and wellbeing	'Improvement' in emotional health and wellbeing	'No improvement' in emotional health and wellbeing
150	65	3
68.5%	30%	1.5%



98.5% of users said that their emotional health and wellbeing had 'improved' or 'greatly improved' as result of using the pool.

Ms N [aged 80+ years] living with a number of health conditions:

“Hydrotherapy helps my conditions and improves my wellbeing tremendously. I recommend St George’s to everyone and the staff are lovely and very accommodating.”

Ms B [64-80 years] who suffers from multiple sclerosis (MS)

“I can do exercises in the water that I can't do normally. I feel very good after my time in the pool.”

Carer for D [40-64 years] who has severe learning and physical difficulties:

“I have worked with D for twenty years, and I have never seen him so happy as when he is in the water at the hydrotherapy pool. D now recognizes the route to the pool, and the building itself, and becomes so excited when he knows he is going swimming. Due to D having brittle bones, and being in a moulded wheelchair the freedom he experiences when he is in the warm water is shown completely by his happy, smiling face and body language.”

Mr B [65-80] - hereditary neurological disorder:

“Not only has the pool helped my wellbeing. But it is clear that all users benefit.”

3.2 Relaxation

Relaxation was a relevant use of the pool for 219 (93.5%) of the respondents.

Support worker for N [40-64 years] who has autism:

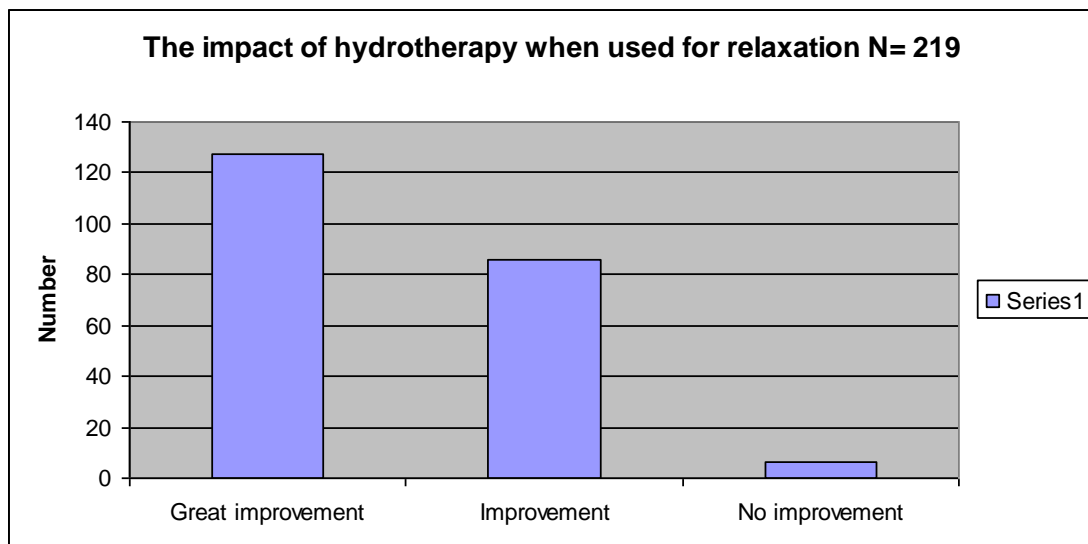
“Hydrotherapy gives my service user a chance to access a swimming pool in a controlled and an un-overwhelming environment and with a strong staff team with a lot of patience for him. It creates a relaxing environment without the need and stress of rushing about.”

Ms M [65-80 years] with joint problems

“Love coming and meeting people, it is relaxing and I feel good afterwards.”

Respondents rated the impact hydrotherapy was having on this as follows:

'Great improvement' in relaxation	'Improvement' in relaxation	'No improvement' in relaxation
127	86	6
58%	39%	3%



97% of user who were using the pool for relaxation purposes said it had 'improved' or 'greatly improved' as a result.

Parent of child with autism:

“P can be very anxious and is constantly seeking stimulation. Having a session at St George's gives him an opportunity to relax. He is much calmer and reassured for the rest of the day...”

Mother writing on behalf of J [18-25 years] who has autism, a severe learning disability and dyspraxia:

“St George's helps me as it helps me relax. I can have a dance in the pool when the music is on too. I do have autism so being at St George's swimming pool calms my anxiety.”

Mother of E [18-25 years] who has a number of severe and complex conditions:

“As E’s mother, hydrotherapy has helped her, not only from the enjoyment perspective, but also having accessed one of the physio sessions. To be more free in her movements which are limited and this in turn helps those who care for her making moving and handling easier. Keeping her muscles relaxed is very important to her whole wellbeing. Physically and socially without this service she would soon become very tight in muscles causing her lots of difficulty day to day.”

3.3 Independence

Using the hydrotherapy pool to assist with keeping as independent as possible was relevant for 180 (78%) people.

Ms W [aged 80+] with a shoulder problem and arthritis:

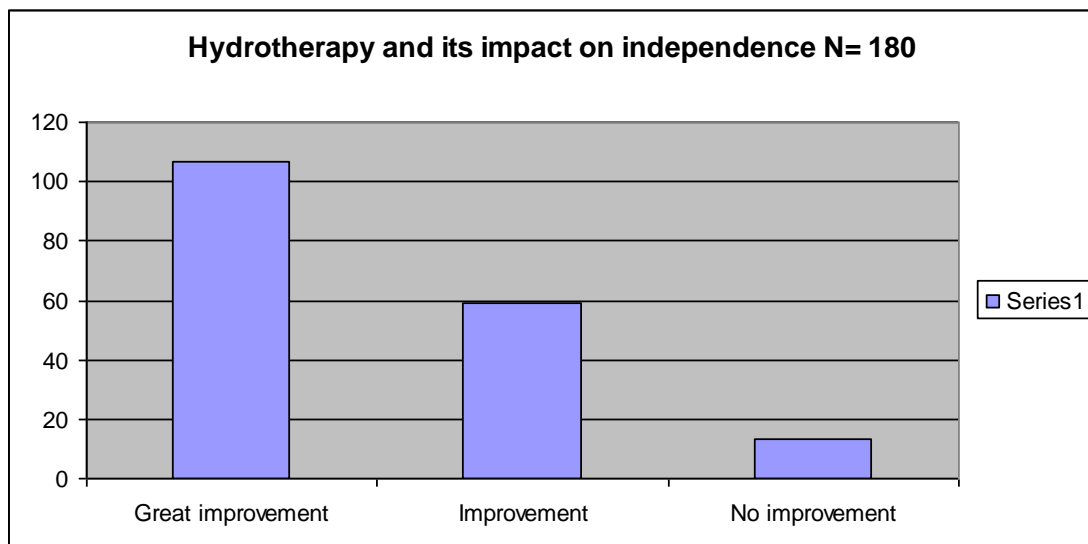
“Living on my own the pool helps me to keep my independence.”

Carer writing on behalf of Ms G [26-39 years] a supported living resident:

“Due to public swimming pools causing high anxieties St George’s therapy pool is fantastic for our service user who regularly enjoys her independence in the pool weekly.”

Users rated the impact hydrotherapy was having on their independence:

‘Great improvement’ in independence	‘Improvement’ in independence	‘No improvement’ in independence
108	59	13
60%	33%	7%



93% of users who were accessing the pool to help their independence said that this had ‘improved’ or ‘greatly improved’ as a result.

Mother of child T who has cerebral palsy:

“It gives my son independence that he doesn’t have on land. He has learnt to swim in the pool.”

Carer for J [40-64 years]) who has cerebral palsy and is resident in a care home:

“J is completely relaxed in the water and a lot more independent. It allows her to work her own muscles without the need of a carer (which she needs to mobilize). She has lots of fun splashing and seeing new people”

While many users depend on the pool as the means of managing their health, but for some it is their only means of exercise and freedom.

Carer on behalf of T [40-60 years] who has physical and learning difficulties and uses Peterborough Day Services:

“T uses a moulded wheelchair so being in the pool is the only time T gets to be not in or on a piece of equipment and to feel absolutely free.”

3.4 Social contact

169 (72%) of respondents said that St George’s provided an opportunity for them to get out and meet people. Many commented that the understanding, safe and friendly environment that the pool provided was important.

Support worker on behalf of A [0-17 years] who has ‘severe and profound’ learning difficulties:

“A has only been using this facility for a couple of weeks, but his parents have already noticed that he is moving his limbs in a stronger way. The use of this facility has proved to be such a great help to the family and they all feel safe and secure here. The staff have been going out of their way to make it a pleasurable experience for A and his family.”

Ms H [18-25 years] with hypermobility, chronic pain and fatigue:

“People are understanding and helpful and non-judgmental.”

Ms L [40-64 years] who has a heart and lung condition:

“Coming to the hydro pool is a warm gentle exercise, which helps greatly. I enjoy coming to the pool for the benefits I receive. It’s a nice place to socialize with like-minded people.”

Support worker on behalf of S [26-39 years] who has autism and bi-polar disorder:

“The service user has tried different swimming pools but refused to swim in any of them. When he came to St George’s Community Hydrotherapy Pool he has never declined coming, which means he enjoys this pool.”

Ms S [40-64 years]:

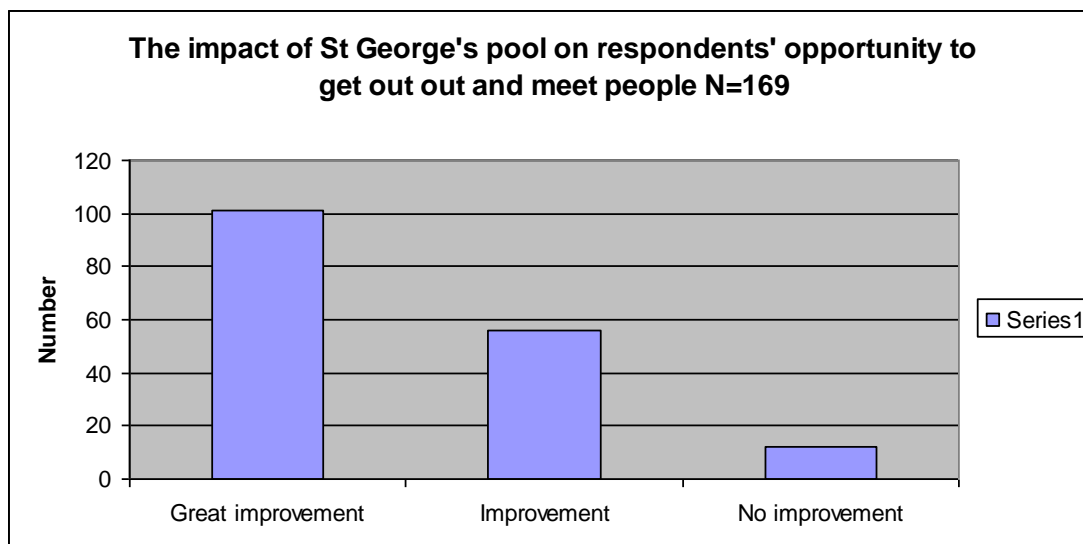
“I first came to St George’s after a serious car accident as my doc said it would help with my injuries; I have continued as I enjoy the social side and it helps with arthritis.”

Ms B [40-64 years]

“Great for exercising the joints and a great way to meet people - LOVE IT!”

The improvements in social contact reported as a result of using St George's pool were as follows:

'Great improvement'	'Improvement'	'No improvement'
101	56	12
60%	33%	7%



Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) sufferer [40-64 years]:
“The social interaction improves mental health.”

Ms C [65-80 years] who has rheumatoid arthritis and muscle wasting and who regularly attends aqua fitness classes:
“I couldn't walk or move until I came to St George's and I have made some nice friends.”

Support worker on behalf of Mr S [40-64 years] who has a learning disability:
“It's a great opportunity for meeting people and doing exercise.”

Section 4: Potential benefits for the wider health and social care economy

The hydrotherapy survey also demonstrated potential benefits for the wider health and social care economy.

187 (80%) of the hydrotherapy users in survey had a long-term physical health condition or disability. Of these 119 (64%) said that this limited their day-to-day activities “a lot” - a potentially costly group of people.

Those using the hydrotherapy pool were proactively self-managing their conditions. The improved health and wellbeing that they were gaining as individuals, was also potentially having beneficial effect on the wider health and social care economy...

Ms S [65-80 years] with arthritis and other health conditions:

“Hydrotherapy helps me a lot to keep me able to do the things I need to do, like voluntary work and meeting people, and making friends – probably with people worse off than myself.”

Ms T [65-80 years] with severe osteoarthritis and sciatica:

“The difference in my mobility before getting into the pool and after a hydrotherapy and aqua fit session is obvious. Without the hydro pool I have no doubt my disability would be much worse.”

The survey demonstrated the following cost cutting indicators:

4.1 Reduced number of doctors' appointments

Being able to reduce the number of visits made to their general practitioner (GP) was relevant for 120/231 (52%) of hydrotherapy users.

84 (70%) of these said that having hydrotherapy had enabled them to reduce the number of visits that they made to their GP. This represents 36% of all respondents.

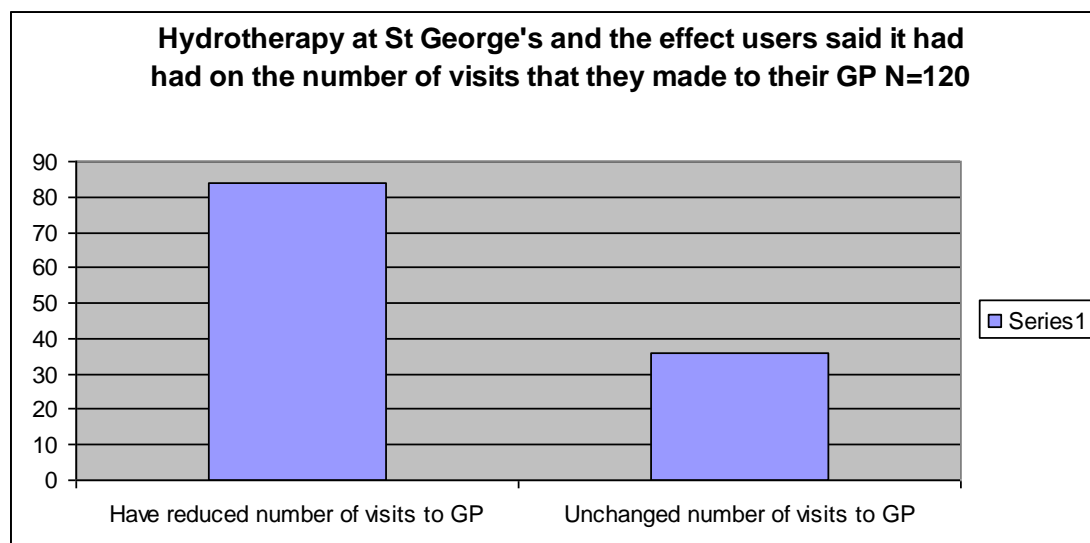
Ms S an ME sufferer [40-64 years]:

“Having the opportunity to use the hydrotherapy pool has helped me to manage my condition and reduce visits to my GP.”

“A single 11.7 minute trip to the GP costs the NHS £45 according to government data.”

*(‘2013 Units Health and Social Care Report’
Personal Social Services Research)*

Service users who said hydrotherapy had enabled them to reduce the number of visits made to their GP	Service users who had not reduced the number of visits to their GP
84	36
70%	30%



4.2 Reduced medication

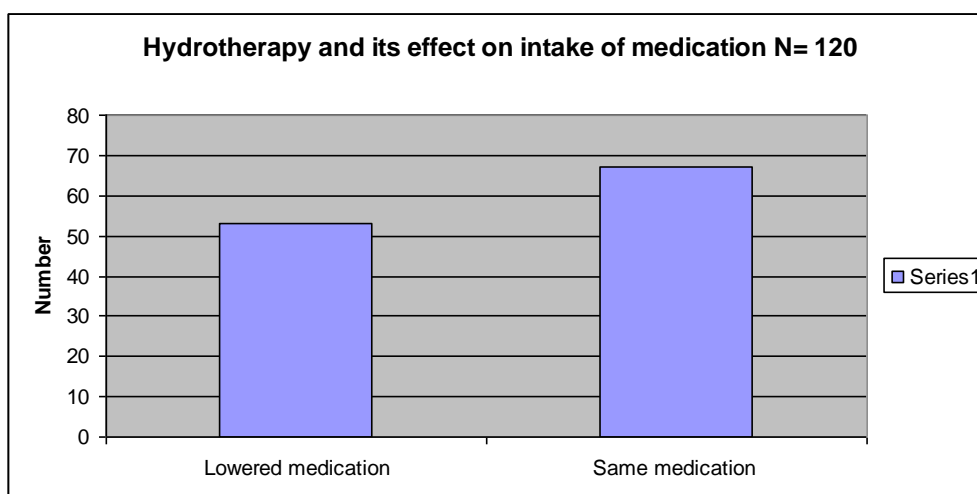
Being able to reduce medication intake was relevant to 120/232 (51.5%) of users.

Ms R [40-64 years] hip and disc trauma:

“If it wasn't for St George's, I know that I would have constant pain from spasms and back pain. I have been able to come off morphine and other medication.”

Survey respondents were asked if hydrotherapy had enabled them to reduce their intake of medication

Hydrotherapy users who had reduced their medication intake	Hydrotherapy users whose medication remained unchanged
53	67
44%	56%



Ms H [40-64 years] a fibromyalgia sufferer:

“Using the pool has given me back my mobility and confidence. Without it I would be in pain and relying on medication.”

Mr A [40-64 years] arthritis sufferer:

“Without coming here for a week, I end up being very stiff and uncomfortable and would probably have to increase my painkillers.”

Ms D [40-64years] who has a back problem:

“Since attending St George's I have fewer back spasms, I'm taking less medication and I feel less stressed. St George's has been invaluable in my overall physical and emotional wellbeing.”

As 44% of the respondents for whom medication was relevant reported that they had been able to reduce their intake of medication because of hydrotherapy (23% of all the survey respondents) this has cost cutting implications for the National Health Service (NHS).

The average Net Ingredient Cost (NIC) per prescription item in 2014 was £8.32.

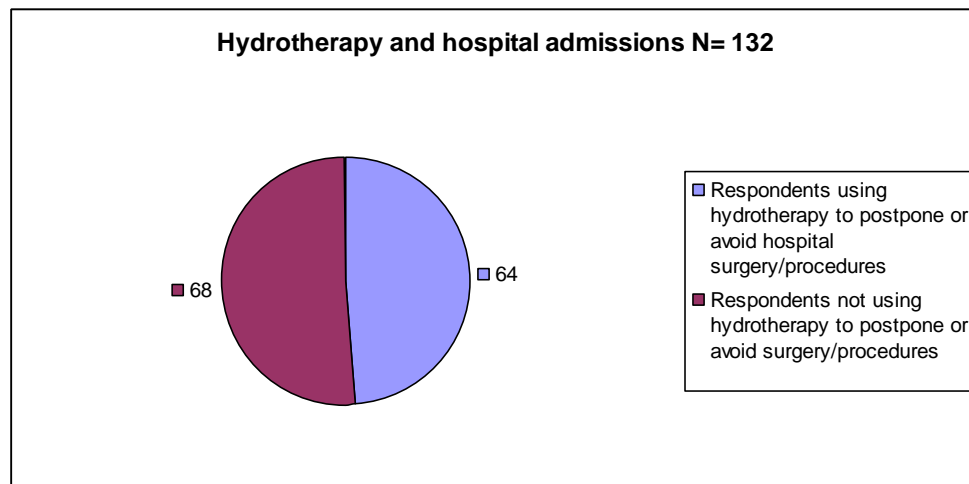
(Prescription Cost Analysis, England – 2014'
Health and Social Care Information Centre)

4.3 Hydrotherapy and reduced and postponed hospital admissions

Hospital procedures or surgery was applicable for 132/231 (57%) of the hydrotherapy respondents.

Of these 64 (49%) said that they were using hydrotherapy in order to avoid or postpone this. 68 (51%) said they were not.

Ms B [80+ years] who lives with a number of health conditions says:
“It stops me having to go to the hospital.”



Ms K [40-64 years] with complex orthopaedic and neuromuscular conditions:
“Regular access to a hydrotherapy pool enables me to manage my conditions and pain. It has allowed me to postpone complex and major hip and spinal surgery for many years, which has no guarantee of success. If this access to this service were removed, I am certain it would not be long before I became a considerable financial burden on NHS and the local authority.”

As 49% of those for whom hospital was relevant said that they were using hydrotherapy to postpone or prevent this (27% of all respondents), this has potential cost cutting implications for the health economy.

Examples of surgical costs to the NHS:

- Primary total hip replacement £4546 - £5770
- Primary total knee replacement £4913 - £6127
- Major procedure following a fracture of the hip £4790 - £8263

(Source: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/2015-16-eto-spreadsheet.xlsx>)

Ms L [65-80 years] rehabilitating from a traffic accident and a number of falls:
“I have been able to put on hold a major operation (involving 3 months in plaster). Hospital and doctors’ visits have been reduced... It is quite evident to me that the pool generates a lot of cost savings in for the City Council (reduction in social care provision) and the NHS (reduction in hospital visits and treatment costs, doctor visits and medication). There was also other potential cost cutting indicators...”

4.4 Hydrotherapy can result in faster rehabilitation and faster returns to work and normal life, thereby producing cost savings

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to write in the own words how hydrotherapy at St George’s helped them or the person they cared for. These revealed evidence of additional potential cost cutting indicators such as faster rehabilitation and reduced care needs....

Physiotherapist F

“It is extremely satisfying to see patients progress so quickly from using the pool whilst improving their ability to return to their normal daily activities.”

27 (11.5%) of respondents were using the pool for rehabilitation from an illness, an accident or from surgery.

A multiple injury patient who cannot weight bear and cannot begin functional rehabilitation on dry land for three months can start physiotherapy in the pool after two weeks. This can have the effect of shortening rehabilitation and the time taken to return to work and normal life by three months.

(‘Hydrotherapy and the Orthopaedic Patient’ Maynard 2008)

Faster rehabilitation can produce cost savings for the individual, the employer and for the government/taxpayer.

Cost to Britain per case 2013/14 – average appraisal estimates (2013 prices)

	Total cost (rounded)
Non-fatal injury	
7 or more days absence from work	£27,700
Up to 6 days absence from work	£880
Ill health	
7 or more days absence from work	£37,400
Up to 6 days absence from work	£850

(‘Cost to Britain 2013/14’ Health and Safety Executive)

The following quotes are from some of the rehabilitation patients who are understood to be in work or returning to employment:

Ms R [40-60 years] hip and back trauma

“...I have also been able to return to work a lot quicker than thought.”

Mr O [40-64 years] a multiple injury patient who was able to return to full-time work following hydrotherapy having been on long-term sickness benefit.

“The pool helped me more than physio at hospital.”

Ms L [26-39 years] a traffic accident victim who also suffers from hypermobile joints:

“Keeps my whole body moving, extreme pain reduction, stabilizes joints due to increase in strength due to pool exercise, enables me to keep my full-time job. I am really not sure what would have been if not for the pool.”

Mr C [40-64 years] who was using the pool following a total knee replacement in specifically to speed his return to work:

“Due to knee surgery I was told by my physio it would be helpful to use this facility. It has helped greatly to enhance my mobility and general health.”

Mr A [40-64 years]:

“It helped enormously in the recovery to fitness again following my accident and provided a freedom from the limitations of movement I was experiencing whilst convalescing.”

Ms T [40-64 years] rehabilitating from a broken shoulder:

“I was recommended to come to aquatic physio by my NHS physiotherapist in order to speed up my rehabilitation. The aquatic physio has greatly helped me stretch out my shoulder and arm and is much more comfortable than land physio.”

Mr M [40-64 years] rehabilitating from cancer and surgery:

“Hydrotherapy helps me build up my quadriceps that is seriously atrophied after surgery and chemotherapy. I am able to do exercises in the water that I simply am unable to do elsewhere.”

Ms C [40-64 years]:

“Hydrotherapy has really helped me on my recovery after my hip replacement. It does help with my other joint too. I love the aqua fit – it really helps.”

Of course, faster rehabilitation helps those not in work too...

Ms B aged 80+ years

“Hydrotherapy has enabled me to recover quickly after a total knee replacement. “

4.5 There was also evidence that respondents attributed hydrotherapy to improving their independence in a way that reduced their care needs

Physiotherapist B

“It provides the clients with confidence, better ability to complete functional activities and over time help some reduce not only a pain relief regime but reduce carers and help stop further decline in independence.”

For some users it meant being able to remain independent and living at home ...

Ms S [40-64 years]

“Having used hydrotherapy for nearly 40 years it is the main reason I still live independently although now a wheelchair user and having had five major operations.”

Ms P [64-80 years] an MS sufferer

“It has helped me stay in my own home.”

Mr J aged 80+

“After being in hospital for five weeks recently, three of those in an induced coma, I lost over three stone in weight and had to learn to walk again and build all my muscles back to a level where I don’t need constant help from others.”

Ms H [65-80 years] who has a number of complex health conditions:

“I need an electric scooter for out of the house. I have limited mobility in the house and have to sit most of the day. My husband looks after me; I am taken out to hospital appointments etc by my husband, daughter or sister. I found my arm muscles and legs have improved by going to the pool which helps me get in and out of chairs etc. I can only do armchair exercises, but in the pool can use my legs to get them stronger.”

Ms P [26-39] who suffers from fibromyalgia:

“Before hydrotherapy I was quite depressed due to unexplained fatigue, swollen joints and pain. Diagnosed as fibromyalgia I was recommended hydrotherapy. I first came to have consultation with physiotherapist. Then progressed and joined in hydro-fit classes. Now I have increased fitness am very much more flexible, no longer depressed, I have energy and can function ‘normally’. (I couldn’t dress myself fully before, washing was also a difficulty.) I no longer need assistance with anything.”

For others the supportive water of the hydrotherapy pool provides the only medium in which they weight bear and walk. The following quotes come from the parents and carers of day service users who live at home with their families:

L is 26-39 years and has physical and learning difficulties.

“L uses the hoist to access the hydro pool. L is unable to walk unaided but with close 1:1 support, he is able to walk around the pool. L always focuses when he is in the pool and uses his core muscles to stand well in the pool and becomes calm and relaxed. L is generally is much calmer and a happier young man when he has been swimming.”

L is 26-39 and has genetic condition. She regained the ability and confidence to walk after starting sessions in the pool four years ago.

“L’s mobility has improved loads. Her walking is better – keeps her healthy and she enjoys using the pool and it keeps her weight down.”

C is aged 26-39. She is blind and has Parkinson’s disease.

“C needs to have her legs and arms exercised. The water helps relax her making stretching easier. With the water, she is able to stand with little support helping balance and mobility.”

Hydrotherapy had enabled some of those living in care and supported living homes to be able to reduce the amount of care that they needed.

Carers verbally reported that as result of using the pool, the physical abilities of some their clients had improved to a level where their care needs had decreased. One resident with complex needs had begun to walk at home again following sessions at the pool. As result, the ratio of his carers had been reduced from 3:1 to 2:1. For other clients, learning to use their legs and bear weight in the pool had enabled their transfers on land to be made more easily, which required less time and staff.

B [65-80 years] is such an example. He is a supported living resident with a learning difficulty who has suffered two strokes:

“B has been unable to use a regular size pool for many years now, and when the opportunity arose to use the facility at St George’s it was very apparent, very quickly that it would be beneficial to B. He is able to walk and relax in this warm safe environment, and as he is such a people person, he interacts well with the other pool users.”

Section 5: The value placed on the hydrotherapy service by its users...

234 (97.5%) of users and carers accessing the pool during the survey volunteered to fill out the questionnaire.

205 (88%) completed an optional question where they wrote in the own words how hydrotherapy at St George’s had helped them - some took great effort and wrote at length.

210 comments were received in total, as five physiotherapists submitted comments independently from the questionnaire. This is a testament to the level of motivation and care that those associated have for this service.

Indeed, one of the most dominant themes throughout the users’ words was this strength of feeling towards St George’s and for having a hydrotherapy service. It was evidently highly valued and very important to users and to their families and carers.

The comments included throughout this report are only a selection of the many powerful ones received.

Ms S [40-64 years] who is a wheelchair user following an accident some years ago...
“It has changed my life and my family’s.”

Mother of C who is 40-64 years and has cerebral palsy:

“He loves going to the pool and meeting people. It helps C move his arms and legs more freely. He looks forward to going to the pool. It needs to stay open for people like C to enjoy the water like the rest of us. Please keep it open!”

Wife of M who is a stroke survivor (2013) who is aged 40-64:

“M has a physio who treats him in the pool for one hour per week and the visible change to his limbs week after week are incredible. If we lost this provision, it would have a very negative effect on his recovery. We travel from King’s Lynn weekly because this provision is so needed and so great!”

Mother of child A who has hemiplegic cerebral palsy:

“A fantastic place that me and my son wouldn’t want to be without. It has improved my son’s muscle tone, co-ordination and confidence in the water. St George’s is a lifeline for many people and is vital for the community.”

As Ms T [40-64 years] who has osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia and who has used the pool twice weekly for the past two years speaks on behalf of many users when she writes,

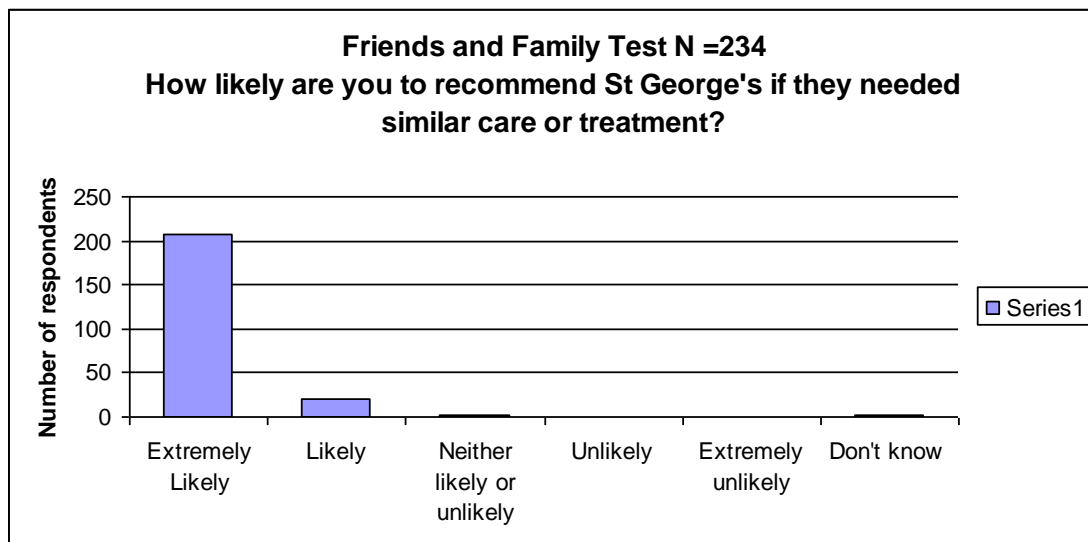
“When I first started to attend my mobility was very painful. Even though I still have pain on walking distance, I have found that the hydrotherapy pool helps to repair the areas of pain. Mobility is much better after each session and my mental health is greatly improved. I am able to spend time with other users who understand living with constant pain and being able to talk to others who also can share their experiences. The pool plays a great part in my life and I always look forward to attending knowing that my physical and mental health will be improved... The pool is of great importance to me.”

St George’s Community Hydrotherapy Pool and the ‘Friends and Family Test’

Survey respondents were asked, ‘How likely are you to recommend St George’s to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?’ This test is used by the NHS to gather feedback on its services.

The following responses were received:

‘Extremely likely’	‘Likely’	‘Neither likely nor unlikely’	‘Unlikely’	‘Extremely unlikely’	‘Don’t know’
207	20	3	1	1	2
88.5%	8.5%	1%	0.5%	0.5%	1%



97% of respondents said that they would recommend St George’s to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment.

Section 6: Conclusion

“This is a comprehensive report that measures the feedback from users, their carers, families and support workers. The report provides anecdotal evidence relating to improvements based on the impact on the physical health of users, the impact on the health and well-being of users and their support networks and on the potential benefits for wider health social care services in Peterborough and the local health care economy.

The report clearly demonstrates that the people who use the pool are in the large majority people with chronic, long-term health conditions. The use of the pool has not only improved their condition, but their ability to manage their condition. Both users and carers have also seen improvements in levels of independence and general health and well-being and by association improvements to the lives of carers and family members themselves.

These are not insignificant claims and should be rated as major factors when considering the future of a hydrotherapy pool in Peterborough.

The report provides real and hard-hitting evidence of the benefits of providing a hydrotherapy pool to the people of Peterborough and some of its most vulnerable members at that. These benefits have to be considered; not only in terms of the personal benefits for users, but also the benefits to carers, family members and support networks that often go unnoticed, unsupported and unpaid for. These benefits have an unmeasured impact on the local economics for Peterborough’s health and social care providers, in terms of improving and extending good health as well as reducing and prolonging the need for health interventions, all of which have a monetary value.

This report adds weight to the case to continue supporting a hydrotherapy pool in Peterborough.

Making the case for continuing support for a hydrotherapy pool in Peterborough for the People of Peterborough

Options for the continuation of a hydrotherapy pool in Peterborough are being prepared by, and with the co-operation of the PCC Hydrotherapy Steering Group Committee, and will be published once this work is concluded.”

Healthwatch Peterborough

Appendix A:

Research studies have shown that hydrotherapy (aquatic physiotherapy) to be effective in the treatment of a number of conditions:

- Osteoarthritis *Belza (2002) Cochrane (2005) Foley (2003) Binman (2007)*
- Rheumatoid Arthritis *Sandford-Smith (1998) Bilberg (2005) Eversden (2007)*
- Osteoarthritis & Rheumatoid Arthritis *Suomi (1997) Suomi (2000) Suomi (2003)*
- Arthroplasty *Ackerman (2004) Gilbey (2004).*
- Ankylosing Spondylitis *van der Linden (2004) Dagfinrud (2007)*
- Fibromyalgia *Gowans (2007) Assis (2006) Gusi (2006) Jentoft (2001)*
- Low Back Pain *(Mcilveen & Robertson (1998) Roberts & Freeman (1995) Maynard (2007)*
- Upper Limbs *Watts (2007) Hodgson (2006) Liotard (2003)*
- Lower Limbs *Petrick (2001)*
- Stroke *Chu (2004).*
- Acquired Brain Injury and Intellectual Disability *Driver (2004)*
- Cerebral Palsy *Hutzler (1998) Getz (2007)*
- Multiple Sclerosis *Coco (2006), Roehrs (2004).*
- Spinal Cord Injury *Gass (2002) and Thomaz (2005) Stowell (2001)*
- Guillain-Barré Syndrome *Taylor (2002)*
- Post-Polio Syndrome *Jubelt (2004) (Willen (2001).*
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome *Sherry (1999).*
- Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis *Takken (2001) Epps (2005)*
- Management of Multiple Sclerosis *NICE Guidelines (2003)*

Appendix B:

Information about the hydrotherapy service users in the survey

1.1 Survey respondents:

134 (57%) respondents were service users who completed the survey on their own behalf.

100 (43%) respondents were carers/parents who completed the survey *on behalf of the service user they cared for.*

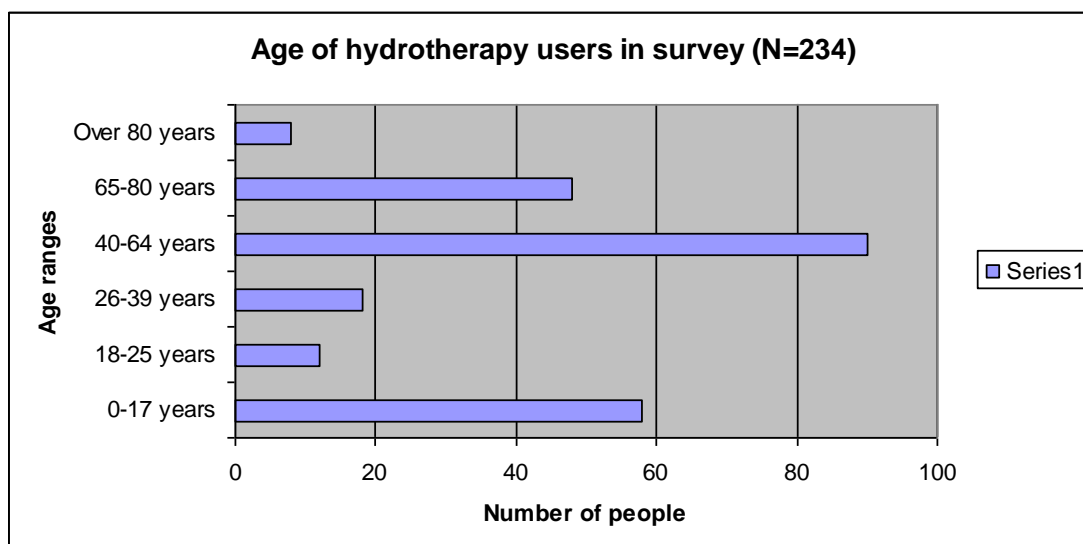
1.2 The gender of service users in the survey:

134 (57%) were female

100 (43%) were male

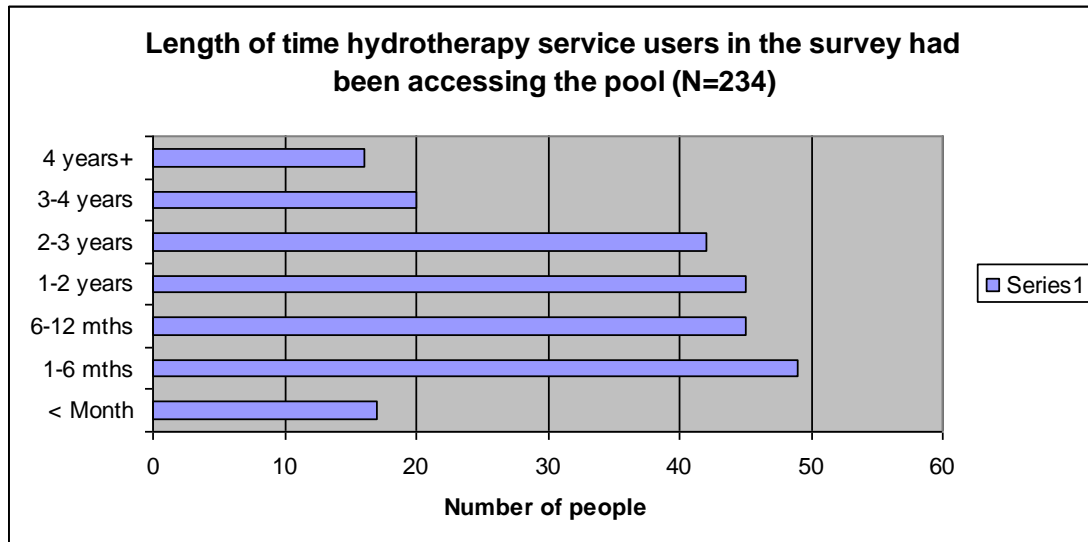
1.3 The age of service users in the survey:

0-17 years	18-25 yrs	26-39yrs	40-64 yrs	65-80 yrs	>80 yrs
58	12	18	90	48	8
25%	5%	7.5%	38.5%	20.5%	3.5%



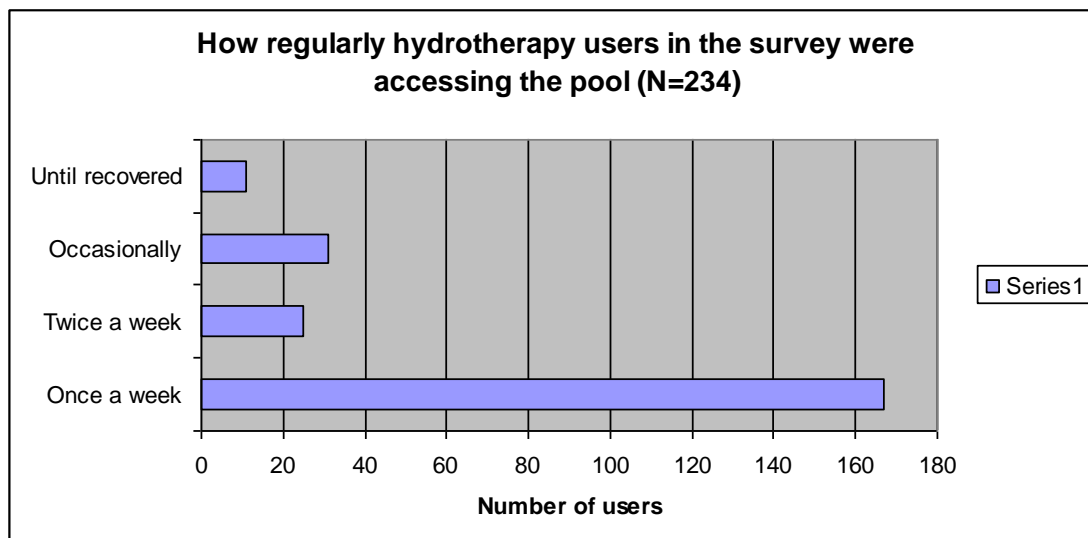
1.4 The length of time service users had been accessing the pool:

< month	1-6 mths	6-12 mths	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	> 4 years
17	49	45	45	42	20	16
7%	21%	19.5%	19%	18%	8.5%	7%



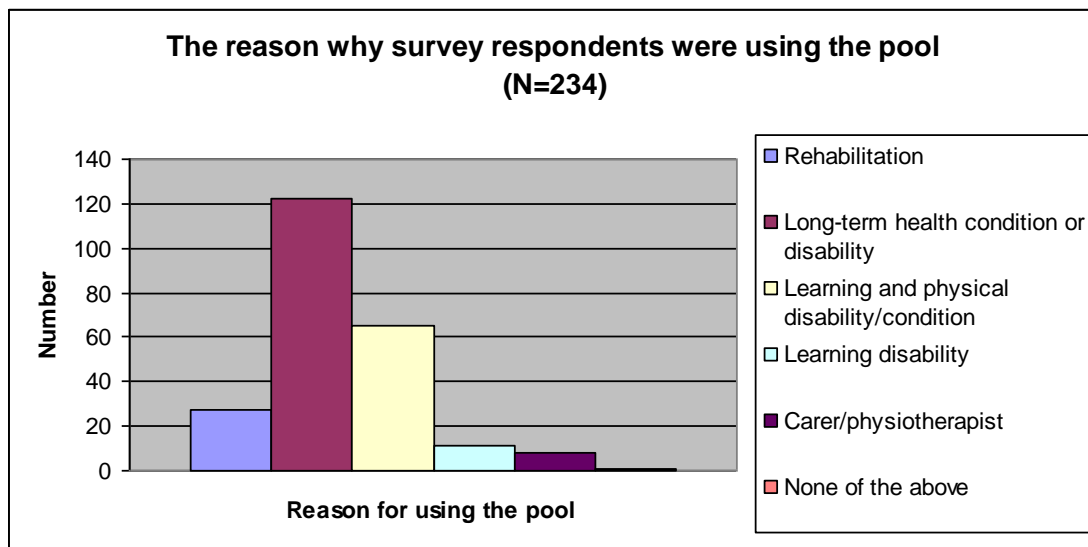
1.5 How regularly service users were accessing the pool:

Once a week	Twice a week	Occasionally	Until recovered
167	25	31	11
71%	11%	13%	5%



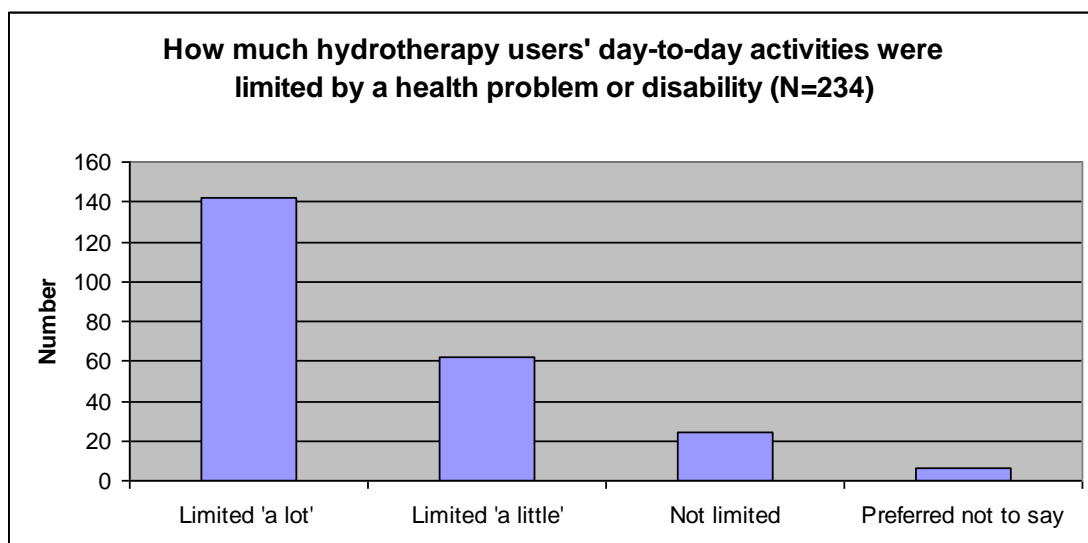
1.6. The reason why respondents were using the pool:

Reason for use...	Number	Percentage
Rehabilitation	27	11.5%
Long-term condition/disability	122	52%
Learning disability combined with a physical disability/long-term condition	65	28%
Learning disability	11	5%
Carer/physiotherapist	8	3.5%
None	1	0%



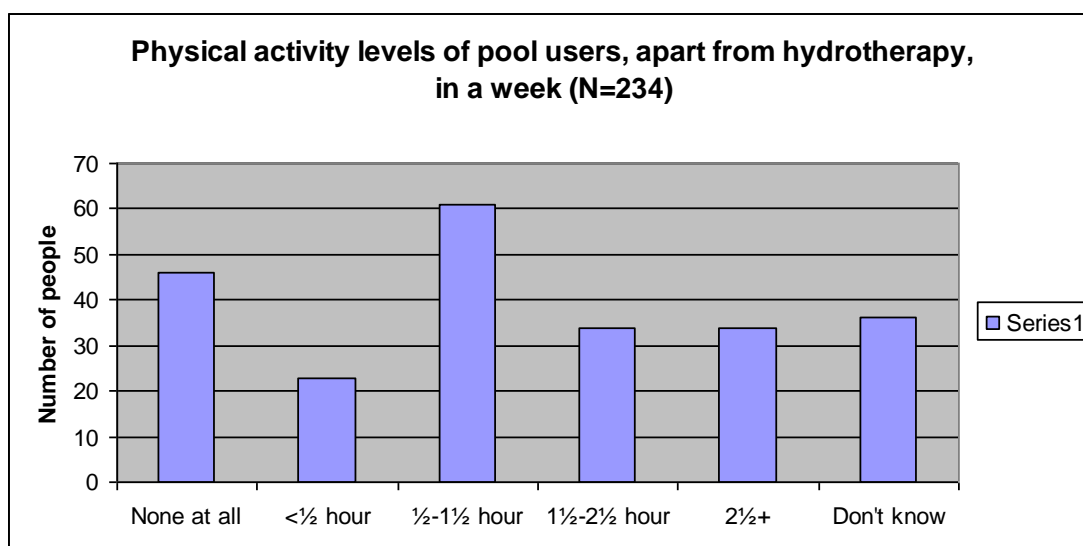
1.7. How much hydrotherapy users' day-to-day activities limited by a health problem or disability:

Limited 'a lot'	Limited 'a little'	Not limited	Prefer not to say
142	62	24	6
60.5%	26.5%	10%	3%



1.8 Physical activity levels, apart from hydrotherapy, of service users in a week:

None at all	<½ hour	½-1½ hrs	1½-2½ hrs	2½+	Don't know
46	23	61	34	34	36
20%	10%	26%	14.5%	14.5%	15%



Acknowledgements

This report is dedicated to St George’s Community Hydrotherapy Pool users - a most remarkable group of people. It was written so that their voices could be heard. Thank you all so very much.

In addition, thanks must go to Councillor Diane Lamb (Cabinet Member for Public Health) and Tina Hornsby (Head of Performance and Informatics) from PCC for their indispensable advice, encouragement and support throughout. Similarly, thank you to Healthwatch Peterborough, Thomas, Sam, Jane, Gill, Phoebe and Robert for your essential help and support too.

Karen