

Background

The benefits of physical activity for people with MS are now well known^{1,2}, but a variety of barriers can prevent them from meeting the National recommendations for exercise³.

The NHNN MS Physiotherapy team were successful in bidding for an outpatient transformation initiative, supporting recovery that's not activity generating. They collaborated with Neuro Heroes to provide their higher functioning patients the opportunity for physio-led, supported, on-line exercise. These patients historically would have been offered exercise recommendations and discharged, often failing to bridge the gap into community exercise and behaviour change. Delivering face-to-face groups has been an on-going challenge within the NHNN due to our geographical spread of patients and clinic space demands.

By minimising caseload follow-up for these higher functioning patients, it was anticipated that therapists could then offer more timely follow-up appointments for patients requiring more specialised hands-on treatment, whilst this cohort received their optimum intervention. This poster provides preliminary feedback and insight from the first cohort to have completed the six-session programme of MS specific exercise.

Intervention

The NHNN team complete a full physiotherapy assessment and identify those that would benefit from structured, regular exercise intervention rather than 1:1 hands on therapy intervention at NHNN.

The patients take part in 6 x 1 hour weekly Neuro Heroes classes on Zoom.



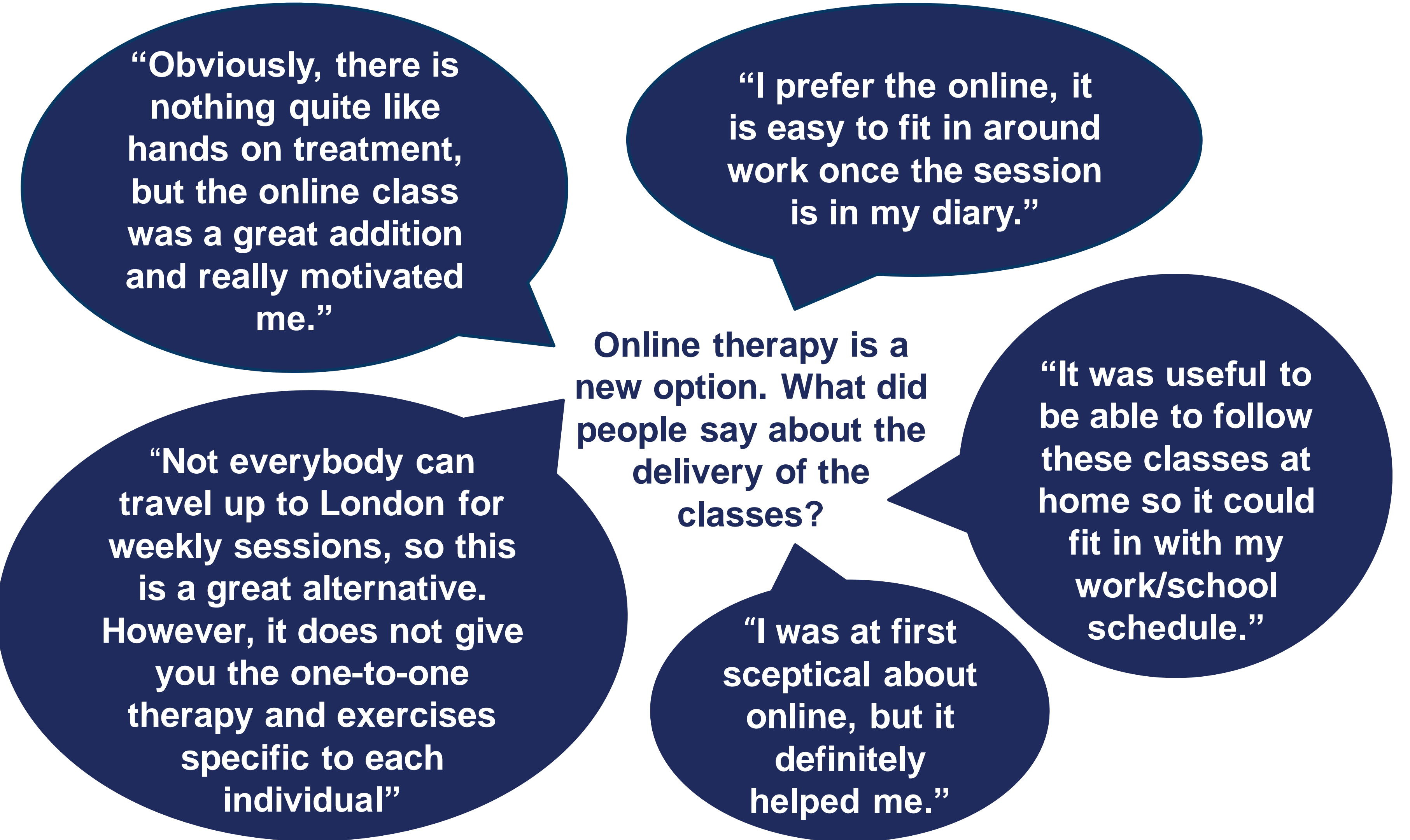
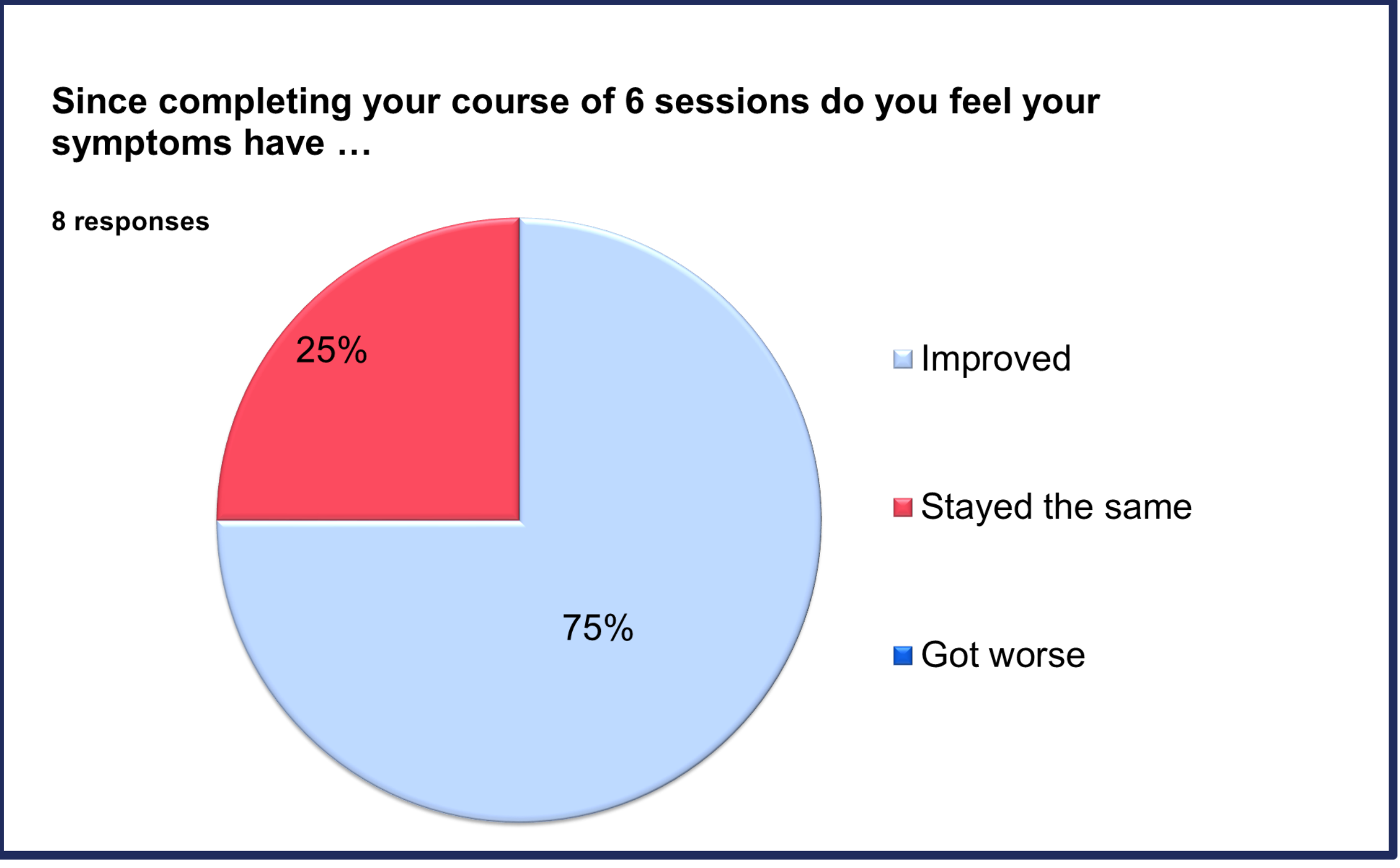
The NHNN Neuro Heroes exercise classes are:

- Designed to improve quality of movement, fitness, strength and balance.
- An opportunity to receive evidence based exercise support.
- Varied and engaging and designed to require minimal equipment.
- Carried out to music, to encourage and motivate patients to work at a higher intensity of exercise than they usually would⁴.

After their 6 week intervention period the patients were reviewed by the NHNN team to review and address any unmet physio needs as indicated.

Results

Neuro Heroes has been delivering weekly, bespoke sessions for NHNN for five months. 37 pwMS have been referred for the exercise class intervention. Three were discharged due to non-attendance, three were discharged back to NHNN therapy due to inability to attend the class alongside work commitments, and one person did not feel comfortable in the online group setting. Eighteen pwMS have now completed the 6-week intervention period and responses to a feedback form and emails received were collated.



Conclusions and next steps

- The NHNN and Neuro Heroes collaboration will continue for another six months to give patients an opportunity to exercise with support.
- We will continue to gather feedback to keep evolving sessions to meet people's exercise and physiotherapy needs. Increased data will enable us to evaluate the outcomes for pwMS and whether it has reduced NHNN physio follow-up session demand in this client group.
- The exercise classes have been well received, safe, gained positive feedback and supported pwMS to exercise despite pandemic restrictions.