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## Initial Pilot

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### What is it about?

We all know that Parkinson's affects everyone in different ways - we exhibit different symptoms, we need different medications yielding different side effects and have different health histories.

One thing that is true for all of us is that exercise is good for you. Some people have found a class or activity that is right for them. Other people may need help to find the right path, especially in the first year or two after diagnosis.

### Could some professional advice and guidance get you started with something that is right for you?

We think so, and we have partnered with professional physiotherapists at Thorpes Neuro Rehab to help assess your needs and abilities. It will point you towards exercise and activities that are a good fit for you, your Parkinson's and your circumstances.

This scheme – called **PEAPs (Personal Exercise and Activity Program scheme)** is in the early stages of development, but we are looking for up to five people with Parkinson's for an initial trial of the scheme, involving a mixture of group meetings and face-to-face assessments. For the initial pilot we are particularly keen to involve newer members who are relatively recently diagnosed.

### What do you need to do to take part?

**Express your interest** by emailing [PEAPS@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:PEAPS@parkinsonsreading.org.uk) if possible, by 24<sup>th</sup> May, and tell us why you would like to take part. We will need up-to-date contact details including email, date of birth and date of diagnosis.

If you are part of the first group you will:

- Complete a **confidential questionnaire** about yourself and your health for assessment by our specialist neuro-physios
- attend a **group briefing** about the benefits of exercise and how the scheme will operate. You can get to know the others in the group (and their partners/supporters, if desired).
- Attend **two face-to-face sessions** with a specialist neuro-physiotherapist, to discuss individual needs, personal circumstances, and develop an exercise plan that is right for you.

- Be encouraged to **try out different activities and exercise** sessions, guided by your neuro-physio. The second 1:1 session will allow you to review your experience and modify the exercise plan as seems necessary.
- Attend a **final group meeting** to share experiences with fellow PEAPS and what you have learned. We hope that the scheme will help you adopt the exercise regime that is best for you, your Parkinson's, and your quality of life.

For the initial pilot, the group sessions will be in Reading or Wokingham, but face-to-face assessments will need to take place in Eversley, where Thorpes, our adviser neuro-physios, are based. Identifying a more central location for 1:1 sessions will be a high priority in rolling out the scheme beyond the pilot stage.

We will review the experience of all who have taken part in the initial pilot and revise our approach accordingly. We hope that this will lead to a second group going through the scheme later in 2024, and the scheme then running on a regular basis thereafter.

## Who are we?

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We are the **Reading Branch of Parkinson's UK**. We have over 350 members, of which more than 250 have Parkinson's. We serve the Parkinson's community in Reading, Wokingham and the surrounding areas through meetings, social events, and a variety of exercise, therapy and activity classes that we organise and subsidise.

Although physical exercise is best, taking part in any form of movement-based activity is good for you. Our group meetings provide the opportunity to meet and share experiences with others in a similar situation.

Regular activities currently include five different physiotherapy classes a week at different levels of intensity, plus Pilates, hydrotherapy, ballroom dancing and group drumming.

Activities are generally part-funded by the Branch, with participants typically paying £5-£7 per session. A first "taster" session is free with the exception of hydrotherapy.

The Branch is run by a committee of local volunteers and is funded entirely by fundraising from our local supporters.

The scheme has been developed in partnership with **Thorpes Neuro Rehab** who provide neuro-physiotherapy services from studios in Eversley, near Fleet.

Their staff include highly regarded Parkinson's specialists who provide lead physiotherapy advice to a number of local Parkinson's UK branches and include the co-founder of the Parkinson's UK Exercise HUB.

Beyond the initial pilot stage, the Reading branch of Parkinson's UK will work together with Thorpes Neuro Rehab to involve other suitably qualified local physiotherapists and exercise professionals in operating the scheme and allow it to be rolled out on a wider scale.

## What will it cost, and who pays?

Thanks to generous donors, we have some funding available that will allow the Branch to pay about half the costs of running the Scheme. We would ask you to pay for the other half, which will be about £100 per person including attendance at the group meetings and the face-to-face sessions with your neuro-physio.

In addition, you will need to pay for the activities/exercise groups in which you take part. Those provided and subsidised by the Reading Branch typically cost attendees about £5-£7 per session. Those offered by other providers would need to be paid for at their standard commercial rates.

If you are keen to take part but are put off by the potential cost, let us know, and we may be able to provide additional financial support.

### Any questions?

*When does the scheme start?* First group June 2024, and provisionally a second group in November.

*Can anyone with Parkinson's take part?* Yes, but it is designed to be of greatest value to those recently diagnosed, and the initial pilot selection will reflect this priority. You must also be registered with the Reading Branch of Parkinson's UK.

*Who will be providing the specialised advice and guidance?* The scheme has been developed and will initially be run by local neuro-physiotherapists who we know and who have a national reputation.

*Where will sessions take place?* For the initial pilot:

- Group sessions – Reading or Wokingham
- Face-to-face assessments – for the initial pilot, Eversley
- Exercise and Activity classes – those provided by the Branch are in Reading and Wokingham, others vary by provider.

*Where can I find out more?* Email: [PEAPS@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:PEAPS@parkinsonsreading.org.uk)