*Positive Movement* is a unique and hugely successful activity programme which was developed with support from *The Big Lottery, Comic Relief* and the Hertfordshire Community Foundation. Originally run in 15 venues across North Herts and Stevenage, it can now, thanks to funding from Hertfordshire County Council’s Community Wellbeing Team, be rolled out county-wide to 25 towns and villages across East and West Hertfordshire. Sessions in Letchworth and Stevenage will continue with support from, respectively, the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and the Stevenage Community Trust; those held in Hitchin, Baldock and Royston are financed by other charitable funds.

The 20-week programme has been designed for:

* Older people
* Those who experience mobility issues or a physical disability
* Anyone who is frail and/or at risk of falls
* People living with a limiting long-term illness
* Carers

Underpinned by mindfulness principles, the programme combines techniques drawn from Adaptive Yoga (an approach which enables people with restricted mobility to experience the benefits of yoga) and the Alexander Technique (a method of postural re-education which has been shown to reduce back and neck pain).

The sessions, run in small groups of about 10 people, consist of an hour-long structured session of gentle activity followed by an opportunity to socialise over a cup of tea. Each session costs £3 and advance booking is essential!  Anyone wanting to participate should telephone 01462 678804.

The programme is effective and fun, with participants reporting that they are less anxious, more confident, can move with greater ease and experience fewer aches and pains as a result.

Some of the benefits from participating in *Positive Movement* are:

* General health and wellbeing improve:  the techniques participants learn to use in their daily lives have far-reaching positive effects
* Quality of life is improved as participants learn methods to reduce  pain and anxiety
* Individual resilience is boosted: participants report being capable of doing more for themselves and therefore are likely to remain independent for longer
* Feelings of social isolation and loneliness are reduced:  the group provides important support and friendship
* Participants are empowered to self-manage their health and wellbeing, thereby easing some of the pressure on our health and social care services