



## Ping! smashes the million mark

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The popularity of social table tennis has scaled new heights this year with Table Tennis England's public ping pong project 'Ping!' recording the highest number of participants since the programme began 9 years ago.

A record breaking **1.24 MILLION** people took to the tables across the 25 towns, cities and counties involved in the project, which makes table tennis more visible and accessible by placing the tables in places people are already spending time, and making the equipment free to use.

The project is delivered in partnership with a network of Councils and County Sports Partnerships, and records that:

- **60% of the participants were previously inactive**
- **32% are female**
- **99% would play again**

There's evidence to suggest that this social play leads to the participants developing a ping pong habit. This summer [Ping! Oxford](#) launched a popular social league which bridged the gap between social and competitive play, whilst [Ping! Leicester](#) was successful in re-engaging ex-players who went on to play in local leagues.

The impact of Ping! does not just stop at getting more people active. There are examples of positive social change where the free tables have been introduced. [Ping! Blackpool](#) has seen reduced anti-social behaviour in a deprived area of the city where a Ping! table tennis activity was introduced (which actually proved more popular than the video gaming activity on offer too and led to a table tennis club being set up). [Ping! South Norfolk](#) noted that parents engage with their children in a much more active way rather than just watching them on playground equipment.

Table tennis can work wonders for people with dementia too and lots of Ping! sessions have been centred around such groups of people. Peter Thompson, the [Ping! Leeds](#) Activator takes Ping! into residential care

homes and explains in this video how table tennis can transform the resident's lives.

[Ping! Barnsley](#), have worked with Age UK to introduce Ping! sessions to their Alzheimers and Dementia Group. Senior Health Improvement Officer with Barnsley Council, Claire Barnes explains how these sessions have particularly helped one lady whose carers were amazed by the improvement in her hand eye co-ordination despite the fact she has no memory of attending each week!

Since Ping! was launched in 2010, there has been an exponential surge in the public's appetite for social table tennis and this has led to the programme evolving into a family of projects that includes [Ping in the Community](#) and [Ping Pong Parlours](#).

The former makes it easy for community groups and charities to get their members active in an environment

they're comfortable in, and Ping Pong Parlours transform otherwise vacant retail space into ping pong social clubs – right in the middle of town. Parlours create a warm and welcoming space for people to meet, socialise and play together, this year has seen 37 of the Parlours open in shopping centres across England.

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