



Knowsley Public Health Annual Report 2018/19

Keeping Knowsley Active

Contents

03

Foreword

10

Understanding
barriers to physical
activity

26

Active adults

04

What do we
mean by physical
activity?

12

Creating health
promoting
environments

32

Keeping active in
older age

05

The impact of
physical inactivity

16

Physical activity
throughout the
life course

34

Recommendations

06

Benefits of
physical activity

18

Keeping active in
the early years

35

References

09

Declining levels of
physical activity
- a modern day
problem

20

Keeping children
and young people
active



Foreword



Dr Sarah McNulty
Director of Public Health

I am pleased to present my Director of Public Health independent annual report which this year focuses on physical activity, a topic which I feel passionately about.

Leading an active lifestyle starting in early childhood and continuing throughout life is essential for maintaining and managing all aspects of health including mental health and wellbeing. Being active can also help prevent and manage many long-term conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes as well as guarding against conditions such as obesity, hypertension and depression. It can be fun too and don't forget it's never too late to start!

To encourage and improve physical activity levels in Knowsley, access to safe, attractive public open spaces and recreational sites is key. Knowsley is fortunate to have an abundance of green space, parks and excellent sports facilities and other initiatives for the local community to access. However, the number of adults who are inactive continues to increase both nationally and in Knowsley.

The Council and partners are working to improve physical activity levels by delivering a number of targeted programmes and initiatives to support Knowsley's residents to become more active. I have chosen to highlight some of these programmes and developments in this report.

I have also highlighted how health promoting environments are being created to promote physical activity across the borough, for example through using planning powers to influence the built environment and maximising the use of green space.

As more of us live longer, there will be a huge potential to derive benefits to health and social care services and the economy from increasing physical activity levels.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed towards the production of this annual report and to all those who have agreed to have their case studies featured.

I hope you find the report interesting and useful.

Please forward any comments, suggestions or requests for further copies to emma.thomas@knowsley.gov.uk

What do we mean by physical activity?

Physical activity and exercise are terms that are often used interchangeably, but they are both two separate concepts. As a result, many believe that to be physically active they need to undertake exercise which is often perceived as hard work and unpleasant, when in fact to meet the recommended levels of physical activity this can be achieved by making small changes to everyday life.

Exercise is a subset of physical activity that is planned, structured and repetitive that involves purposeful engagement with the aim of maintaining or improving one or more components of physical fitness. On the other hand, physical activity includes other activities involving bodily movement as part of daily life. Examples include walking part of the way to and from work, taking the stairs instead of the lift or escalator and whilst at home carrying out household chores or gardening.



The impact of physical inactivity

For the NHS alone, it has been estimated that it spends around £1.2 billion a year on the treatment of long-term conditions and associated acute events such as heart attacks and strokes. Currently, treating the effects of obesity costs the NHS £5 billion per year with costs projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050. There are also financial impacts for social care arising from the loss of functional capacity and mobility due to conditions such as depression and falls.

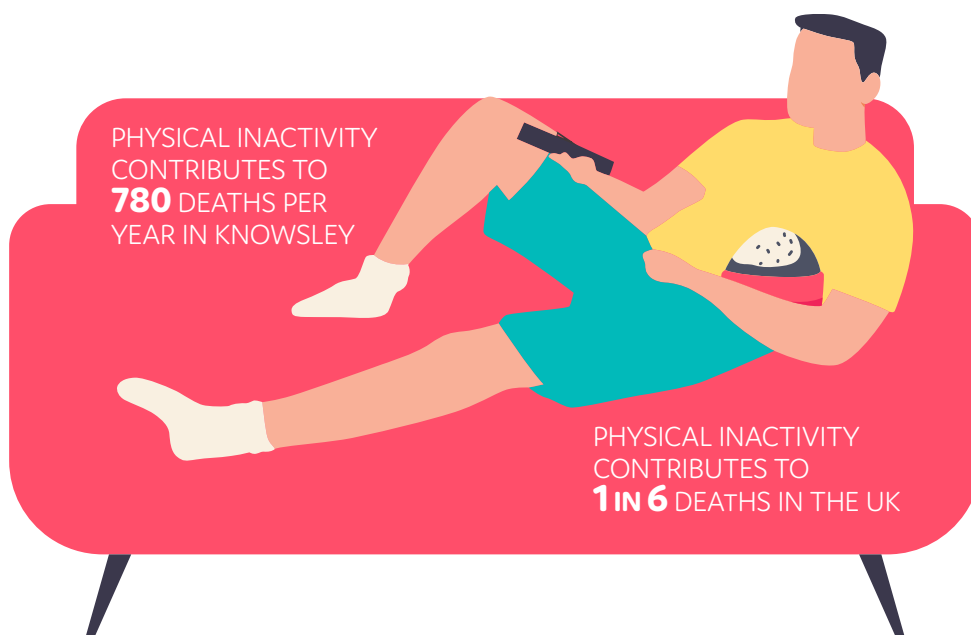
The health consequences associated with low levels of physical activity also has wider implications for the economy due to loss of productivity through increased sick days and premature death of employees. It has been estimated that inactivity costs the UK economy over £7.4 billion a year.

Physical inactivity increases the risks of a number of health problems, such as stroke, coronary heart disease, diabetes and obesity - all of which have an impact on the quality of people's lives and contribute to deaths in those under 75 which is significantly higher in the borough compared to national and regional levels.

However, there is an answer to reducing the incidence, treating and managing these health conditions along with many others such as anxiety and depression. This solution is free, has instant benefits and does not require medical input -

'it's to get people to do more physical activity every day'.

Simply put, the more active we are, the greater the benefit to health, wellbeing and the wider community and economy.



"If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat."

UK Chief Medical Officers' 2019



Regular physical activity reduces the risk of:



- All causes of death by **30%**
- Cardiovascular disease by up to **35%**
- Type 2 diabetes by up to **40%**



- Colon cancer by **30%**
- Breast cancer by **20%**



- Depression by up to **30%**
- Hip fractures by up to **68%**
- Dementia by up to **30%**



Benefits of physical activity

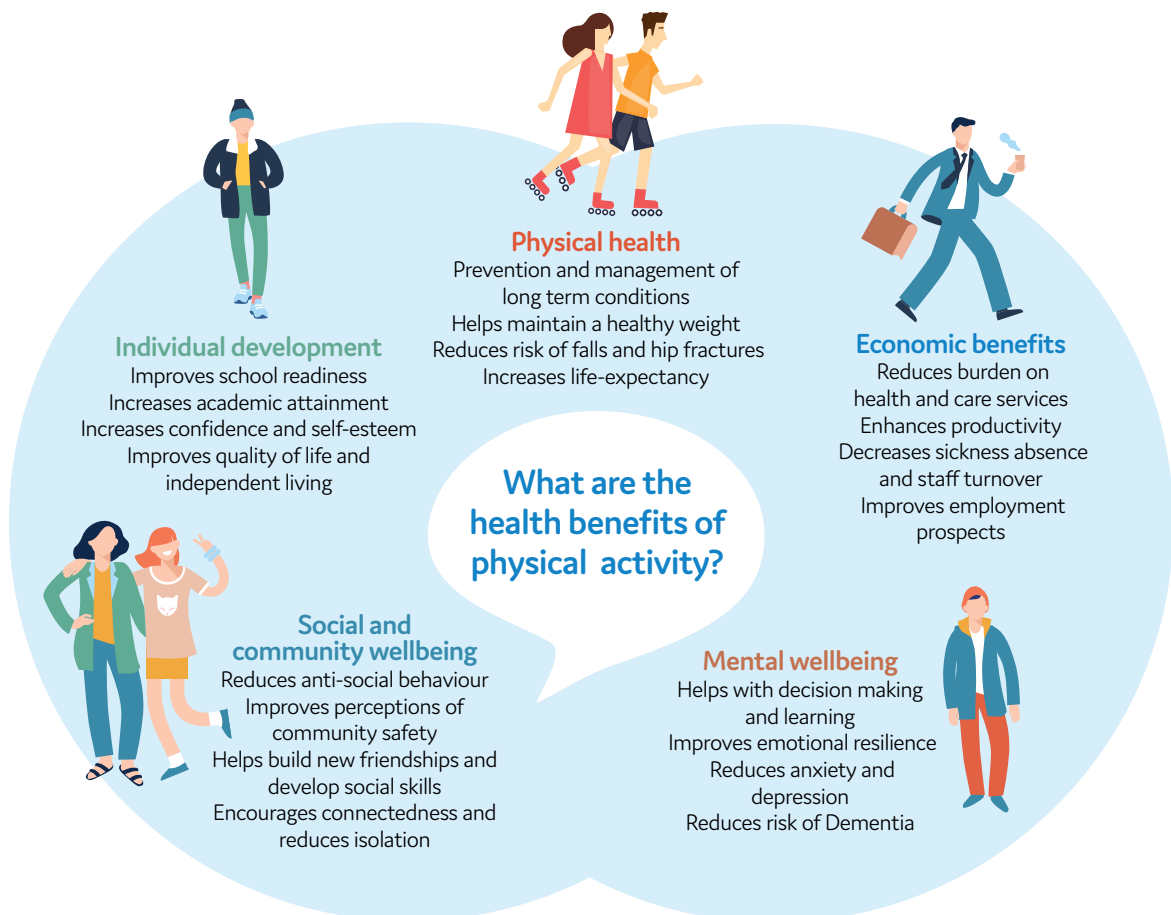
We know that physical activity throughout life can play a major role in preventing and managing long-term health conditions including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, obesity and musculoskeletal conditions, such as osteoporosis, arthritis and back pain problems. It can also help to prevent and control high blood pressure. However, we know that getting more active can be daunting, especially for people who haven't done much physical activity before or for a long-time or are living with a long-term health condition. Understanding the barriers to being physically active is discussed later in this report.

One of the main benefits of physical activity is in relation to managing a healthy weight, with obesity being a major factor in many of the long-term

health concerns described earlier. Being physically active can help with weight management, for example after a weight loss programme and also help to maintain a healthy weight.

The link between physical inactivity and obesity is well established. The number of adults who are overweight or obese continues to increase, with nearly three in four (71%) residents classed as either overweight or obese. Knowsley has one of the highest rates of any local authority in England and above the national average of 62%.

Knowsley's recently published Healthy Weight Plan for 2019-2022 details a range of activities and programmes aimed at supporting residents and their families to maintain a healthy weight.



Being active and having a healthy body and mind is important as mental health and wellbeing affects everyday choices people make and can have significant impact on physical health too.

Healthy body - healthy mind

Being physically active not only has a positive influence on weight and the occurrence of long-term conditions, it can also help to boost our mental health and wellbeing. Being active releases chemicals in the brain that can help us to positively deal with the difficulties of daily life and help us to cope better with stress and anxiety as well as reducing the risk of depression.

The links between our physical health and mental health are well known. As well as increasing our fitness levels, keeping active can help to boost our mood, improve our self-esteem, help with concentration levels and help us to get a better night's sleep.

Physical activity also has wider social benefits for individuals and communities by encouraging social interaction and therefore reducing social isolation.

The recent updated Chief Medical Officers guidelines state that any activity is better than none and more is better still. There are also strong links between the specific benefits of doing activity outdoors in the natural environment and green spaces. Just a short time spent doing physical activity outside can have a positive impact on wellbeing.

People with severe mental illness are at a greater risk of obesity, diabetes, respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer and hypertension along with early death than the general population. They are also less likely to engage in beneficial physical activity, this along with other lifestyle related risk factors such as increased rates of smoking, medication side-effects all contribute towards poor physical health.

One example of how services try and address this is all practitioners in North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust secondary mental health services (including later life and memory service) complete a yearly physical health assessment with service users. The assessment consists of physical checks such as BMI, blood pressure and cholesterol and also looks at a range of lifestyle risk factors such as physical activity levels and nutrition. Service users are offered support to improve their physical activity by onward referral to the Healthy Knowsley Service and Activity for Life, both Services are discussed later in this report.



Declining levels of physical activity - a modern day problem

The UK population is approximately **20%** less active now than in the 1960s. If current trends continue, we will be **35%** less active by 2030.

Over the last 40 to 50 years, physical activity levels have been declining nationally. Although the reasons for this are complex, it is clear that changes in the physical environment, technology developments, transportation modes and occupations have led to declining activity levels across the life-course.

We are the first generation who need to make a conscious effort to build physical activity into our lives. Technology dominates the two main areas we spend most of our time - home and work. Fewer people have manual jobs, many of us choose to spend our free time doing sedentary activities such as watching television or using the internet and more of us take public transport or use our car to travel.



Changes in the built environment in which we live have resulted in fewer opportunities for people to be physically active, contributing to declining inactivity levels. Increasing car use is a major contributing factor to lower levels of physical activity in the UK. In 1961, 31% of households did not have access to a car or van by 2018 this had decreased to 24%.

People may struggle to access paid for activities such as after school clubs and gym memberships. This, combined with busy lives and a lack of activity built into home, school and work life is causing an increase in sedentary lifestyles.





Understanding barriers to physical activity

Understanding and addressing the underlying reasons behind individual motivations, perceived capabilities and actual or perceived opportunity to undertake physical activity needs to be addressed to support people to become active.

Levels of physical activity and the drivers that encourage and prevent engagement in activity are individual and complex. However, behaviour change models state three distinct areas of influence:



MOTIVATION - The majority of people say they enjoy sport and physical activity despite many not doing the recommended levels.



CAPABILITY - The majority of inactive adults do not believe they have the capability to be more active due to physical and/or psychological reasons.



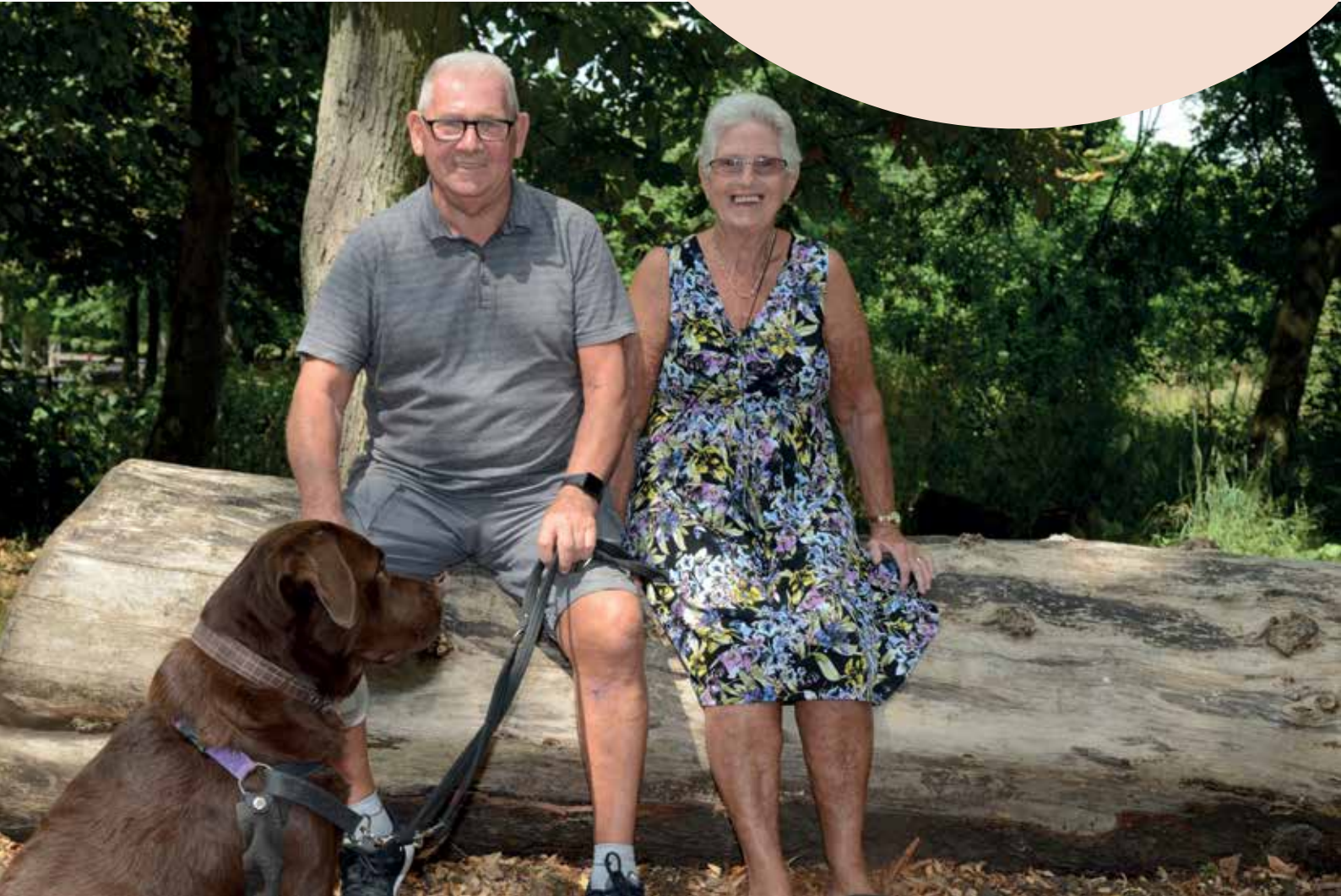
OPPORTUNITY - More than three in ten adults who are not active in England believe they do not have the opportunity to take part in physical activity.



Capability and the opportunity to be physically active differs across demographic groups. For example, women strongly agree that they had less capability and opportunity to be active compared to men and individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds believe they are less likely to have the ability to be active compared to those from higher socio-economic backgrounds.



Improving the physical environment and making the healthy choice the easier choice is important.



Latest figures from 2015/16 show that



21% OF KNOWSLEY RESIDENTS USE GREEN SPACES FOR EXERCISE



17.4% IN THE NORTH WEST



17.9% IN ENGLAND

THIS IS AN INCREASE FROM **9.3%** IN 2014/15

Creating health promoting environments

Creating health promoting environments which enable people to build physical activity into their daily lives is essential to encourage positive behaviour change. For example, planning and designing town centres, housing and employment developments which encourage physical activity such as maximising the inclusion of green spaces for play or leisure, the pedestrianisation of shopping areas and the design of places and buildings which include prompts to encourage people to use the stairs instead of lifts.

In developing such environments, the inclusion of residents or employees in shaping the design and planning of developments is crucial to empower residents to take part in regular physical activity, taking into account needs in relation to mobility and accessibility. Regular promotion of the available activities and associated benefits can help raise awareness with local residents.

Knowsley Council has adopted a number of planning policies which have health considerations including physical activity promotion built into them. For example, policies in relation to sustainable development and transportation includes reducing the reliance of private transport and promotion of active travel. Green infrastructure policies cover accessibility, quality and design to help to improve usage and increase health benefits.

Regeneration and major developments have health considerations included as a core part of development. The Halsnead Garden Village development is a good example of an approach which considers the health of residents built into plans.

Halsnead Garden Village

To embed health and promote physical activity into future housing developments, Knowsley Council and partners are engaged in an NHS England Healthy New Towns Programme. The principles of the programme encourage physical activity, play and encourage social interaction, along with innovative approaches such as social prescribing. This will provide a real opportunity to improve health outcomes and reduce future demand for health and social care services in the Halsnead area.

Halsnead Garden Village was chosen as one of six sites identified by NHS England and has the potential to deliver approximately 1,600 new homes, alongside 22.5 hectares of employment development and community facilities. Halsnead Garden Village residents and existing residents in the local area will have access to 82 acres of public open space together with a 74 acre country park as part of the development.





The local planning system also has a role to play in ensuring that any new developments within the borough promote and encourage cycling and walking not only for leisure purposes, but also for active travel. Designated cycling routes with no obstructions, which are well lit, with cycle parking and are directly linked to housing developments and major destinations, will encourage cycling across all ages.

Creating safe walking routes can encourage active travel to school as well as reduce parking congestion outside schools and reducing the potential risk of road traffic accidents. To support this, Knowsley's Road Safety team delivers age appropriate road safety education sessions across pre-school and all school years. The team also deliver awareness raising campaigns aimed at adults.

Active travel in areas with low pollution levels is associated with increased physical activity among older adults. The perception of air pollution appears to constitute a barrier to participating in outdoor physical activity and active transport.

Living in close proximity to accessible parks, green spaces and woodlands which are well-maintained, accessible and welcoming not only increases visits, but it can also have a positive impact on our mental health and wellbeing especially when compared to participation in physical activity in an indoor setting. It is also associated with a reduced risk of obesity among children and young people and demonstrates an increase in physical activity across all ages.

Issues to take into account which can hinder access to green space is the presence of busy roads which may require additional walking time to reach an appropriate crossing point. Poor public transport links, poor quality traffic-free paths within and around green space settings can be a particular concern for individuals with mobility problems and those with a fear of falling. Consideration also needs to be given with regards to the provision of toilet facilities, seating and safe play facilities.

Green gyms

To encourage the use of green spaces for exercise, in 2016 Public Health worked in partnership with the Council's Green Spaces team to install free to use gym equipment at 15 sites across the borough. Since the installation, various instructor-led exercise programmes have encouraged and supported residents to use the equipment to improve both their physical and mental health.



Cycling and walking in Knowsley

Brisk walking and cycling are good examples of moderate activity and can be incorporated into daily life to provide regular exercise and as part of active travel. Knowsley has a well-established cycling and walking network which meets regularly to share information and ideas to promote and increase cycling and walking across the borough.

Knowsley's Environmental Sustainability Service also offers a broad range of walking for health activities across the borough to suit all ages and abilities. The Walking for Health Programme aims to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of participants by providing a safe and supportive environment to help people get active and also make new friends. This also includes memory walks for people with dementia and their carers. Each week the walk takes the same route and also includes reminiscing about the local area to help stimulate and reduce short-term memory loss.

To enhance the existing walking and cycling infrastructure, over the next few years, a joint urban development is planned with Halton Borough Council to provide a continuous route for both cyclists and walkers to use from West Street, Prescot to Runcorn.

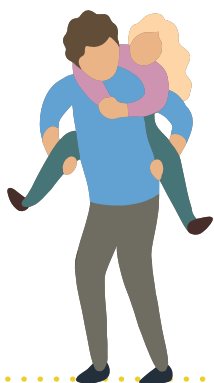
Pedal Away

Pedal Away is a free community cycling programme which has been delivered by Cycling Projects in Knowsley since 2008. It provides opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to take part in weekly rides with trained leaders from one of four community cycling hubs across the borough. Each hub provides access to bikes and helmets and has adapted cycles available at Halewood Environment Centre for those with disabilities.

Knowsley's Great Pedal Away annual mass participation cycle ride has taken place every September since 2015. The route takes riders through the lanes, cycle paths and greenways of Knowsley and other areas of the Liverpool City Region. This year over 200 people took part in either the 43 mile challenge ride, 17 mile guided ride, 3 km family ride, Wheels for All or learn to ride sessions. Every year, the event gets bigger and better offering rides of different lengths for all ages and abilities.



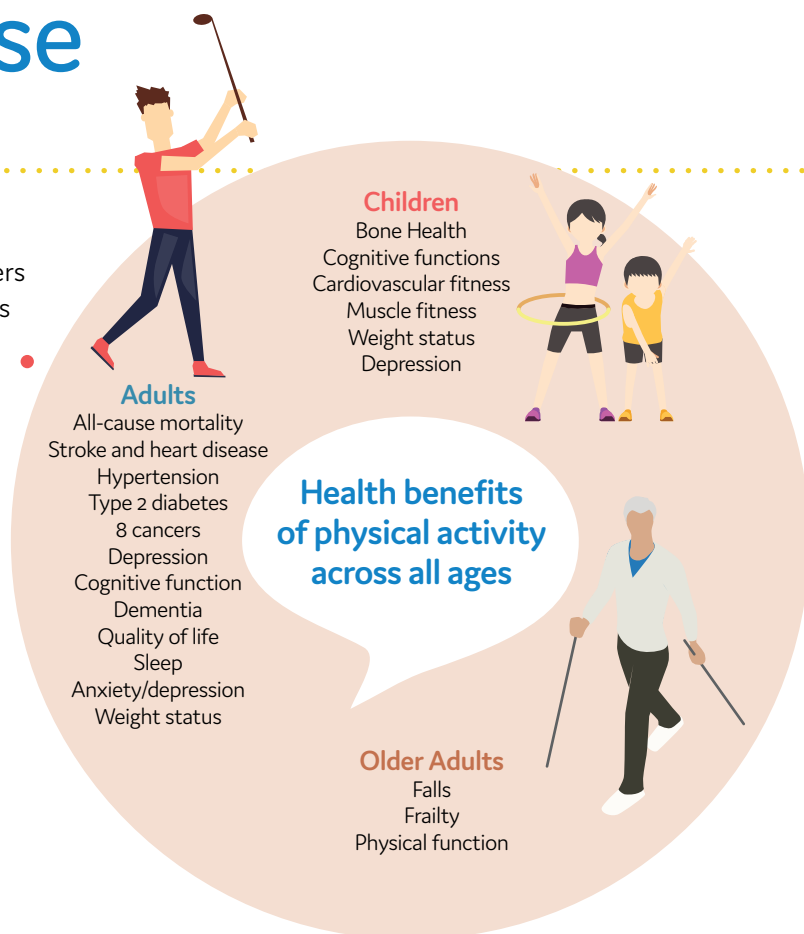
The remainder of this report highlights a selection of the services, programmes and initiatives on offer across the borough to encourage and promote physical activity for all ages and abilities.



Physical activity throughout the life course

In September 2019, the UK Chief Medical Officers updated their physical activity guidelines across all age groups. For the first time, guidance is also included for during pregnancy, after giving birth and for disabled adults.

Being inactive such as prolonged sitting, reclining or undertaking little movement should be minimised when possible at any age. The guidelines emphasise the importance of being active on a regular basis and for any duration to bring about health benefits. This is opposed to the previous guidelines which stated activity must be in bursts of at least 10 minute intervals. However, for people previously inactive, setting a 10 minute target can be an effective behavioural goal.



Early Years
Aim for at least 180 minutes per day

Under 1s
at least 30 minutes of tummy time across the day

Children & Young people
Aim for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week

Pregnancy
Not active?
Start gradually
Already active?
Keep going

After birth
If active before birth, restart gradually

Adults and older adults
Aim for at least 150 minutes moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes vigorous intensity activity or a combination of both across the week

Disabled adults
Aim for at least 150 minutes each week of moderate intensity activity within capabilities

Just keep active, any activity is better than none

Do strength and balance activities on at least 2 days a week

Being physically active every day is important for the healthy growth and development of babies, toddlers and preschoolers.



Keeping active in the early years

Physical activity should be encouraged from birth, through floor-based play and water-based activities in safe environments. In the early years, the benefits of being active contribute towards a healthy weight, development of movement and co-ordination, encourages curiosity and problem solving skills and supports learning of social skills.

Children aged one to five years should spend at least 180 minutes spread throughout the day being active including outdoor play. For pre-school children aged three to four years, this should include 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity activity such as running and chasing games, riding a bike or walking to and from pre-school. All under-fives should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary such as being restrained or sitting for extended periods of time, except time sleeping.

Physical activity does not need to cost time or money and can be built into our daily, family routine at home or whilst out and about in the local area using the green spaces or play equipment in many of Knowsley's parks. There are also activities for children and their families on offer at Knowsley's Children's Centres and Home-Start Knowsley.

The Daily Toddle

The Daily Toddle, based on the concept of the 'Daily Mile', which is popular in Knowsley primary schools, is a programme designed to assist early years providers to promote and encourage movement and physical activity and gain confidence in being outdoors in the under-fives.

The initiative, which was launched in Knowsley in September 2018, was promoted by the Early Years team to their pre-school networks and was delivered by the Green Space Ranger team in four of Knowsley's parks. Information was provided to help childcare providers set-up their own 10 to 15 minute daily toddle within their setting if there is no park or green space nearby.

Case study: Big Cherry Tree and the Daily Toddle

Big Cherry Tree nursery in Halewood has been taking part in the Daily Toddle since the launch event. The children go out and about in the field and nature trail at the side of the nursery setting in all weather conditions. The children are kitted out in appropriate clothing for the weather and on windy days the children love to run around catching the leaves which have blown from the trees. Rainy days involve splashing around in the puddles in their wellies!

Initially, a number of the smaller children asked to go in their pram or would ask to be carried and some lagged behind. However, with lots of encouragement, games and praise along the way, the children quickly got into the routine and soon started to ask 'is it time to go on our toddle?' The nursery staff could see the children becoming more energetic and excited on going out and upon return from the toddle, the children appeared to be more focused on their learning and the rooms seemed calmer.

Not only are there benefits for the children, the nursery staff enjoy going out in the fresh air and seem to return less stressed, calmer and energised. Parents have reported that they feel more confident walking with their children and find it an enjoyable time together.



Knowsley's park run takes place every Saturday morning at Stadt Moers Park, Whiston and is a free, weekly timed 5km run, jog or walk and is open to all ages and abilities, families welcome.



38% OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS REPORTED THAT THEY HAD EXERCISED FIVE TIMES OR MORE IN THE LAST WEEK, ENOUGH TO INCREASE BREATHING RATE



20% OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS REPORTED THAT THEY HAD EXERCISED FIVE TIMES OR MORE IN THE LAST WEEK, ENOUGH TO INCREASE BREATHING RATE



Keeping children and young people active

Children who are overweight or obese as teenagers are more likely to become obese adults and have a higher risk of illness, disability and premature death in adulthood. However, those children and young people who have positive experiences of being physically active are more likely to be active as adults and therefore reducing the chances of them becoming overweight or obese.

Children and young people aged five to 18 years should take part in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity such as football or fast running for an average of at least 60 minutes each day. This should also include activities which strengthen muscle and bone such as hopping and skipping and sports such as gymnastics. Physical activity can also be built into daily routines whilst at home, travelling to school or using outdoor environments such as parks and green spaces.

Access to physical activities whilst children and young people are at school also play an important role in influencing and encouraging participation. PE lessons or extra-curricular activities with a focus on physical activity can help to improve educational outcomes and have a positive impact on behaviour, attainment, attendance and emotional wellbeing. Team sports and exercise can also teach children and young people about relationships, team work and problem solving.

Knowsley School Sports Partnership offer support to schools to develop PE and school sport through a range of programmes and activities to ensure all five to 18 year olds have access to high quality physical education and sport in the school setting regardless of age, ethnicity, gender or ability. There are also many initiatives that schools are encouraged to support to promote physical activity such as Bike to School Week, This Girl Can, Change 4 Life and National School Sport Week.





Over the last few decades, children and young people's freedom has been reduced due to safety concerns around traffic, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour in particular. Therefore creating safe spaces to encourage physical activity as discussed earlier in this report is important. Creating safe walking routes can encourage active travel to school as well as reduce parking congestion outside schools and reducing the potential risk of road traffic accidents.

There are many structured activities available across the borough to encourage physical activity in children and young people. For example, Knowsley's leisure centres offer junior gym memberships and swimming lessons, and older children can make use of the BMX track based at Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park in Huyton. There are also lots of excellent local groups offering opportunities for children and young people to take part in football, gymnastics, dancing and martial arts.

For those learning to ride a bike, Knowsley's Pedal Away offer learn to ride sessions which teach children how to ride their bike safely without stabilisers.

Knowsley Youth Mutual offer a range of activities to support the health and emotional wellbeing of young people aged 11-19 years including physical activity. For example outdoor education sessions and sports activities including an indoor climbing wall situated at Our Place, Huyton. Following local research by Knowsley Youth Mutual, Public Health has adapted the national 'This Girl Can' campaign to fit the needs of teenage girls, including improved choice of activities and girls' only sessions and continue to support this.

Public Health, in collaboration with key partners Environmental Sustainability Service and the Healthy Knowsley Service, utilised the £60,000 revenue from the industry generated 'sugar tax levy' known as the Healthy Pupils Capital Fund to develop a package of activities across the 20 community primary schools. The activities were developed to encourage health promoting school environments and address the high obesity and low physical activity rates. Faith schools and academies received their Healthy Pupils Capital Fund directly. These initiatives are discussed below.

Enhanced Healthy Lifestyle Programme

The Healthy Knowsley Service was approached by Public Health to explore enhancing the family healthy lifestyle sessions that were delivered as part of the Primary School Aged Wellbeing and Resilience Programme.

The enhanced programme was delivered as a pilot at Northwood Primary School in Kirkby. The Healthy Knowsley Service worked closely with school staff to recruit 10 separate family groups from the typically 'hard to reach' families who had the characteristics they were looking for such as visibly overweight adults and/or children and complex family makeup. The offer included healthy diet education such as understanding food labelling and recipes and demonstrated ways to increase physical activity as a family.

Participants were given physical activity trackers to wear during and outside the sessions to encourage activity. Physical activities were delivered by sports coaches from the Jamie Carragher 23 Foundation. At the end of each weekly session, each family was given a take home pack of fresh fruit and vegetables and a voucher for the local Fruit and Vegetable Scheme currently in place with vendors on Kirkby Market.

Reported findings so far have been very positive and encouraging in terms of behaviour change between the group of families and within individual family dynamics. The programme is currently being rolled out across schools in different parts of the borough.

Case study: Charlie's story

Charlie, aged nine years, was invited to join the enhanced healthy lifestyle course that was running in his school. The PE coordinator in the school identified Charlie as someone who might benefit from the course as despite attending various after school activities, Charlie hadn't found anything that he wanted to participate in.

Charlie attended the five week programme with his dad who was enthusiastic about joining in the activities. The programme focused on education through physical activity throughout each of the sessions. Charlie responded really well to his dad's involvement and his dad became his physical activity role model. They set themselves a 'family challenge' each week to increase their activity such as going to the park or for a swim.

Charlie and his dad were loaned a physical activity tracker for the duration of the programme and were given weekly feedback on the amount of activity they had completed, along with lots of encouragement to continue. This resulted in a 21% increase in activity in the last week of the programme compared to the first.

Since completing the programme, Charlie has joined two after school activity clubs for dodgeball and football which he really enjoys attending. This introduction of a sustainable activity is likely to impact Charlie's activity levels for years to come.



Possibilities



1a) Traverse wall



1b) Walk and stretch posts



1c) Clatter bridge



1d) Roll over bars



1e) Scramble net log

Proposed Improvements

Possible Works as part of the Sugar Tax - Change it Program

1. Foundation and KS1 Area Activity Trail
 - a) Traverse wall
 - b) Walk and stretch posts
 - c) Clatter bridge
 - d) Roll-over bars
 - e) Scramble net log
 - f) Full activity trail
2. Picnic tables under cover
3. Football kickabout area
4. Raised planters sheltered seating
 - a) Raised planters
 - b) Existing sheltered seating
5. New pieces of equipment and bark surfacing
6. KS2 Area with playground markings

Key

- Improvement Areas
- Sugar Tax Priority Improvement Areas



Plan - NTS

Possibilities



3) Football kickabout area



4a) Raised planters



4b) Existing sheltered seating



5) Equipment with bark surfacing



1f) Full activity trail

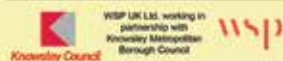


Ideas board Ravenscroft CP Primary School



6) KS2 area with markings

Super Ten Improvement Works Project
Concept Plan - Ravenscroft CP Primary School
7881768-L-024



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'Change It' – Creating the Outdoor Classroom Programme

The Environmental Sustainability Service developed the 'Change It' programme to offer support to schools to encourage greater levels of physical activity as part of the school day for all children including those with special educational needs and disability.

The immediate surroundings of a school are an easily accessible, cost-effective and convenient resource for learning outside the classroom. However, school grounds are often under-used and under-regarded assets that offer great potential for increasing physical activity levels.

The 'Change It' programme supports schools by undertaking a site assessment for each school that captures the existing physical features within the school grounds and explore opportunities to enhance the teaching and learning environment by developing a vision for each school.

Improvements may include play areas for problem solving, group games and activities. This includes habitats such as hedges, meadows and ponds for science, allotments for food education, trim trails for alternative PE areas and site orienteering, artificial grass paths to support the daily mile and wooded areas for Forest School activities.

Six community primary schools who had above 30% of their pupils identified as obese through the National Childhood Measurement Programme have participated so far.

In Knowsley between 2016 and 2018, **1.5%** of working days were lost as a result of sickness absence, one of the highest rates in the North West region.



MODERATE INTENSITY ACTIVITY - CAN TALK, BUT NOT SING



VIGOROUS INTENSITY ACTIVITY - DIFFICULTY TALKING WITHOUT PAUSING

Active adults

1 in 4 patients would be more active if advised by a GP or nurse.

Adults should aim to be physically active every day with any activity being better than none. The more activity that can be done and the less time spent sitting down either at home or at work, the better for our health benefits.

In Knowsley, 31% of people aged 16 years or above are inactive, which means being active for less than 30 minutes per week. This is higher than the England average of 25% and the North West regional average of 26%.

Figures show that 57% of people aged 16 years or above in Knowsley meet the recommendations of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week. This is lower than the England average of 63% and slightly lower than the North West regional average of 62%.

The updated Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults should aim to do 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity each week such as swimming, brisk walking or cycling or at least 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activities such as running or playing sport or a combination of both. Adults who are disabled should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity within their capabilities each week and pregnant women should keep up with normal activity levels or if inactive should build up gradually.

Muscle strengthening activities on at least two days a week are also recommended to help increase muscle strength, maintain bone density, improve balance and reduce joint pain - all of which can help to reduce falls later in life. Activities include using free weights or resistance equipment at the gym or activities based in the home such as using elastic resistance bands, carrying heavy shopping bags, gardening or manoeuvring your wheelchair all count.

Many adults in work are now in sedentary jobs and therefore spend significant amounts of time sat down or inactive. The Office of National Statistics report that one of the main causes of sickness absence in the UK was musculoskeletal disorders such as back or neck pain accounting for 19.7% days lost. Mental health conditions such as stress, depression and anxiety accounting for 12.4% days lost.

Brief advice on physical activity from healthcare professionals has been shown to improve health outcomes. However, as many as 72% of GPs do not speak about the benefits of physical activity with patients. To address this, Public Health England has to date delivered three peer-to-peer sessions to Knowsley GP practices. The locally tailored sessions support staff to develop their knowledge and understanding around integrating a physical activity brief intervention into clinical practice. Further sessions are planned for 2020.

Time and money are often seen as a barrier to an active lifestyle. However, building time for activity into daily life for example by active travel or a lunchtime walk all count towards being active.

For those who prefer more structured physical activity, Knowsley's five leisure centres offer residents a variety of health and fitness facilities such as the latest gym equipment, fitness classes, swimming pools, 3G football pitches and badminton / squash courts. For adults who are currently inactive, community wellbeing classes are structured exercise programmes which take place within the leisure centres and are designed to encourage residents to get back into exercise.

Healthy Knowsley Service

The Healthy Knowsley Service is a key part of the Public Health workforce, ensuring that programmes and interventions are targeted at and accessed by those in greatest need of support.

The service offers a single point of access known as the 'hub' and supports residents to make changes to their lifestyle which can have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. Lifestyle Advisors provide free confidential one-to-one support such as conversations about keeping active whilst at home or increasing daily walking, independent exercise in the home, active travel or can signpost residents on to other services such as Pedal Away discussed earlier in this report.

Since April 2019, the service received 1,788 referrals to support residents to improve their physical activity levels. Of these, 1,396 residents accepted onward referral to specialist services or programmes such as Activity for Life delivered by Volair Leisure.

Since 2013, the Healthy Knowsley Service has supported residents who have been identified as having an impaired glucose level or known locally as borderline diabetes or pre-diabetes. Residents are referred into the Healthy Knowsley Service via their GP practice or following an NHS Health Check for management via the Impaired Glucose Regulation

(IGR) pathway. The IGR pathway offers residents a minimum of eight contacts over an 18 month period with a Lifestyle Advisor who has received specialist training. Patients are also followed up in primary care to monitor their blood glucose levels.

Evidence shows that through effective lifestyle interventions around weight management and physical activity, the onset of type 2 diabetes can be delayed for an average of eight years.

The Healthy Knowsley Service also supports and promotes a number of national and local awareness raising campaigns aimed to deliver behaviour change messages across a variety of health and wellbeing topic areas.

Activity for Life

Residents who have a long-term condition such as diabetes, can be referred into Activity for Life by their GP or a health professional via the Healthy Knowsley Service. Activity for Life is a 12 week structured exercise programme designed to help residents manage and improve their long-term condition. The programme is delivered by qualified instructors from Knowsley's Volair leisure centres. Following completion of the programme, participants are offered discounted gym memberships to help them continue with their improved lifestyle.

Residents can self-refer into the Healthy Knowsley Service:

www.heathyknowsley.co.uk

0800 0731 202 or 0151 289 9555

Or by their GP practice or other health professional.





“Absolutely loved Mamafit! From someone who has never done any exercise classes before, Mamafit has changed my perception of them. Small group size, friendly instructors and achievable exercise goals. With the added bonus of making new mum friends. Just brilliant. Thank you!”

Bex



Pregnant women and new mums

Pregnant women who are not currently active should build up gradually, whilst those who are already active should keep us with normal levels and slow down as the pregnancy progresses. Health benefits include a reduction in the risk of diabetes in pregnancy or problems with high blood pressure. Being active after pregnancy can help with a faster return to pre-pregnancy weight and also help to reduce the risk of post-natal depression.

In October 2018, Public Health commissioned Mamafit - an award winning health and fitness programme for pregnant women and new mums. Mamafit works closely with Midwives and Health Visitors from St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust as well as Knowsley’s Children’s Centres to signpost women into the service.

There is a wide range of classes suitable for all fitness levels from indoor activities designed for pregnant women who are inactive or who have a high BMI to outdoor activities for new mums and dads such as buggy running classes or outdoor circuit sessions.



Liam, Managing Director said:

“The purchase of the fitness watches has resulted in a competition between staff to measure who has done the most amount of steps which has resulted in staff moving around the office more, going out for a lunch-time walk and an improved overall sense of wellbeing within the office. We’re now looking at ways to support the national ‘This Girl Can’ campaign to get more women active in the workplace”.



Working Well programme

Knowsley’s Working Well programme, delivered by Knowsley Chamber of Commerce, encourages local businesses to achieve eight workplace health standards to promote and encourage health and wellbeing for their staff. Small to medium local businesses are also able to apply for grants to improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce. The case study demonstrates how one local business put their grant towards increasing physical activity within the workplace.

Case study: The Forshaw Group – working well together

In January 2019, The Forshaw Group were awarded a Working Well Grant to hold a Working Well Together day. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating and promoting a team spirit within the office. The grant enabled each staff member to receive a goody bag which contained a fitness watch, reusable water bottle and a selection of fruit.

The team decided to set themselves a challenge with each person taking their turn to do a 20 minute static-cycle ride, the equivalent of cycling from their offices in Kirkby to London whilst fundraising for the British Heart Foundation.

“Having a bike means I can do the school run and still be in work on time. I’m saving money and I can get out and about to more places.”

Jess

Bike and Boots

Merseytravel’s cycling and walking to work initiative was initially funded by the Department for Work and Transport. The initiative offers jobseekers or those employed within the last six months who want to walk or cycle to work help with travel costs in the form of a voucher worth up to £100.

The scheme known locally as the Bike and Boots project is managed and delivered by Cycling Projects Knowsley. Participants can use their voucher towards the cost of a new bicycle or the purchase of outdoor weather clothing and / or footwear at Decathlon Huyton who is proud to support the initiative.

Participants who wish to cycle to work are offered bike safety and maintenance sessions, route planning and participation in group rides to increase confidence before going out on their own.

For those participants wanting to do their bit for the environment or who have a limited budget, MerseyCycle based in Court Hey Park, Huyton take donated bikes from the community and upcycle them with help from local volunteers. This provides an affordable option and often enables a higher specification of bike to be purchased at a cost that is within budget. A helmet, lock and lights are also provided within the value of the voucher.

The initiative has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those taking part and will also contribute towards reducing less traffic on the roads and air pollution.



Case study: Jess’s story

Jess had recently started a new job as a domiciliary care worker in Huyton and was delighted to hear about the Bike and Boots project from the Troubled Families team.

Jess was keen to be a part of Bike and Boots as it meant that travelling between calls on her bike rather than walking made for a less stressful working day. Jess was also able to go out on rides in the local park with her little one after school and at the weekends.

Any activity is better than none and more is better still.



Older adults who are already fit and active and achieving the recommended 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week are also encouraged to undertake activity to improve muscle strength and balance on at least two days a week.



Keeping active in older age

Keeping active in older age, as in the rest of life, is essential to staying fit, mobile and independent as well as reducing social isolation and loneliness. However, there are many perceived barriers which may limit participation in physical activity such as a belief in physical capability, a fear of falling or over exertion and general aches and pains. Accessibility and fear of crime can also act as a barrier to getting active out and about in the community.

Regular activity can help to reduce arthritis-related pain, improve sleep, prevent falls and resulting injuries and help to improve low mood and memory. Regular activity includes activities which get the body moving such as doing housework, chair-based exercises or taking regular short walks around the home, garden or up and down the street.

There are many activities on offer for older adults in the borough such as community based volunteer led groups that offer activities such as tai chi and chair based exercise tailored for those with health conditions and limited mobility such as wheelchair or walking-aid users. For those who are more active there are also local groups offering dancing, bowling or walking activities or taking part in Knowsley Older People's Fun O'lympics.

Falls prevention and reablement

Adults over the age of 65 years are at an increased risk of falls, with the highest risk being in those over age 80 years. Falls can have serious consequences for older people with around a third of those who fall suffering injuries that reduce mobility and independence.

Knowsley's Reablement Service provides short-term support to those who need help to return to independent living in their own homes following a long-stay in hospital or recovering from an illness or injury. The service supports residents with practical tasks and personal care as well as daily living activities such as keeping active within their own home environment and when out and about.

With reablement support, adults are able to return to their usual activities and reduce their need for

further support. Longer-term, effective exercise programmes can reduce the risk of a fall, help avoid a long-lie (the length of time spent on the floor) and can help to maintain independence. Knowsley's Falls and Wellbeing Service is available to people aged over 55 years or over who are registered with a Knowsley GP. The service delivers two evidence-based programmes which are part of the postural stability programme, a weekly instructor led class for up to 18 weeks and a home exercise programme.

Case study: Jenny's story

Jenny, aged 86 was referred into the Falls and Wellbeing Service following a serious fall at home. Jenny was visited by a Falls Assessor who arranged for her to be seen by the Physiotherapy Service as Jenny had reported other numerous near misses and commented that her legs felt as if they were going from underneath her as if gravity was pulling her down. The physiotherapist demonstrated a range of exercises for Jenny to do to help improve her range of motion, strength and balance whilst waiting for the next Postural Stability exercise class to start.

After attending the classes for a few weeks, Jenny reported that she had put into practice some of the techniques she had learnt when she fell in her garden and was unable to stand-up. Jenny was able to move along the floor on her bottom from the back garden up a step and into the kitchen and through to the living room where she was able to telephone her neighbour for help. It took her over an hour to reach the telephone as she had to rest often. As Jenny hadn't suffered any injuries, her neighbour was able to help her to stand and did not require the use of the ambulance service, like she did previously.

Jenny completed the course and commented that she felt much more confident as she was able to stand, bend and walk much better. Jenny's fear of falling was nowhere near as bad as it was and the feeling she was experiencing in her legs was improving. Jenny also reported how her confidence had improved in her ability to get herself off the floor should she experience another fall.

Recommendations



1. Create environments that encourage physical activity:

Planners and other partners to ensure new developments are designed to encourage active lifestyles.

2. Employers encourage physical activity in their workforce:

Knowsley workplaces will be encouraged to engage with the Working Well programme. Working Well will support organisational change to enable employees to become more active.

Support employers to create active travel opportunities for staff

Grow the number of workplace champions to actively promote physical activity, encouraging colleagues to increase physical activity by cascading information and organising health and wellbeing themed events.

3. Schools encourage pupils and staff to be more physically active:

Continue the roll out of the Change It programme to all schools.

Support the widespread uptake of the Enhanced Healthy Lifestyle Programme in Schools.

4. The Health Service supports patients to be more active:

GP practices to be encouraged to adopt an Active Practice Charter which supports the promotion of physical activity to practice staff and patients.

Further clinical champions to be trained and supported to promote physical activity in clinical settings.

5. Physical activity is promoted to all:

A widespread physical activity campaign will be developed in Knowsley.

For an update on recommendations from 2017/18 go to knowsley.gov.uk/publichealth



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An electronic version of this report and the latest health statistics is available at www.knowsley.gov.uk/publichealth

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