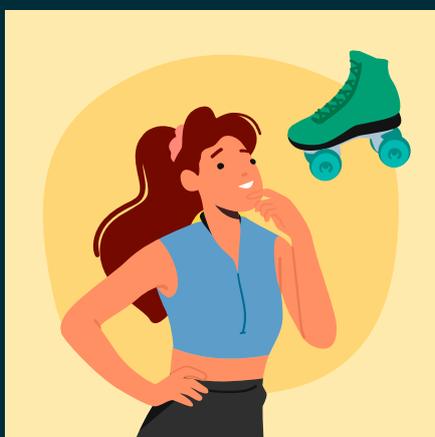
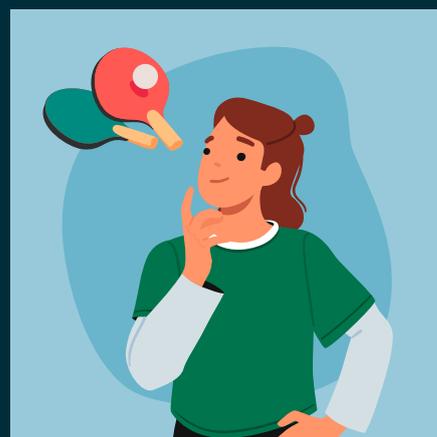
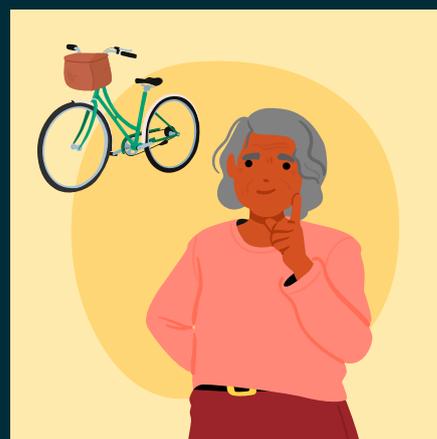


Kirklees Council

Director of Public Health

Executive Summary 2024/25

Physical Activity Matters



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Physical Activity Matters

Kirklees Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024/25



Rachel Spencer-Henshall,
Kirklees Director of Public Health

Overview

This year's report focuses on the critical role of physical activity in improving health, wellbeing, and community cohesion across Kirklees. It highlights the benefits of an active lifestyle, the inequalities in physical activity levels, and the systemic changes needed to support a more active population. The report is a call to action for all stakeholders to work collaboratively to reduce inactivity and its associated health burdens.

This report is the start of a journey. It is not intended to provide solutions, as other ongoing work will provide further insight into our local communities. We can then use these collective findings to drive forward local action across systems to enable as many people as possible to gain from the benefits of physical activity.

Why Physical Activity Matters

Being physically active simply means moving your body by using energy. Physical activity is a powerful tool for preventing and managing a wide range of health conditions. It improves

cardiovascular and mental health, reduces the risk of chronic diseases, and enhances quality of life. Beyond health, it fosters social inclusion, community cohesion, and economic productivity.

Despite these benefits, 26% of adults and children in Kirklees are inactive, engaging in less than 30 minutes of activity per week. National guidance recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate activity weekly for adults and 60 minutes daily for children, yet many struggle to meet these targets due to various barriers.

The good news is that even small amounts of physical activity can make a big difference over time. In terms of physical activity, the key message is that 'some is good, more is better'.

Understanding Inequalities

The report highlights inequalities in physical activity levels across different population groups in Kirklees:

- Older adults (75+) are 2.5 times more likely to be inactive than younger adults.
- People with disabilities are twice as likely to be inactive.
- Residents in the most deprived areas are three times more likely to be inactive than those in the least deprived.
- Ethnic disparities exist, with people of Pakistani ethnicity significantly more likely to be inactive than their White British or Indian counterparts.

Barriers include lack of time, cost, safety concerns, and limited awareness of local opportunities. These challenges are compounded by social, economic, and environmental factors.

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A Whole Systems Approach

To address these challenges, the report advocates for a whole systems approach, aligned with the World Health Organization's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity. This includes:

1. Active Societies – Promoting awareness and cultural change through campaigns and community initiatives.
2. Active Environments – Designing safe, accessible spaces that encourage walking, cycling, and play.
3. Active People – Supporting individuals through education, healthcare, and community programmes.
4. Active Systems – Strengthening governance, data, funding, and cross-sector collaboration.

The COM-B model (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation – Behaviour) is used to understand and influence behaviour change, supported by the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Strategy's 'rainbow model' of health determinants.

Local Assets and Opportunities

Kirklees is rich in physical activity assets, including:

- Parks and green spaces (e.g., the North Kirklees Greenway, Peak District National Park, Greenhead Park, Crow Nest Park)
- Recreation grounds and play areas
- Community-led initiatives like Streetbikes and Movement and Games in Chairs (MAGIC) sessions
- School-based programmes and inclusive cycling schemes
- Leisure centres and swimming pools

These opportunities and assets provide accessible and diverse options for residents to be active in ways that suit their lifestyles.

Next Steps

The report outlines seven key actions to drive forward change:

1. Working with communities, not doing to them, ensuring interventions reflect local needs and wants.
2. Expand research-led and place-based approaches in order to understand inequalities and local need.
3. Develop place-based partnerships through Sport England's Place Partnership Programme.
4. Empower Community Champions to promote physical activity locally.
5. Create a new physical activity strategy with a focus on reducing inequalities.
6. Embed physical activity in all policies, from planning to regeneration.
7. Take immediate action, such as promoting local assets and encouraging active workplaces.

Conclusion

This report marks the beginning of a renewed commitment to making Kirklees a more active, healthier place. By working together across sectors and communities, we can ensure that everyone – regardless of age, ability, or background – has the opportunity to move more and live well.