

# Gateshead

# Physical Activity Strategy

## 2022-2032



## **Contents**

1. Foreword
2. Our strategic approach
3. Why is physical activity important?
4. National context
5. Where we are now – the national picture
6. Where we are now – Gateshead
7. Taking a 'whole system' and 'place-based' approach
8. The challenge
9. Opportunities and outcomes:
  - Objective 1: Recover, reinvent, and thrive
  - Objective 2: Creating a positive experience for children and young people
  - Objective 3: Living well and ageing well
  - Objective 4: Supporting communities
  - Objective 5: Creating active environments

## **1. Foreword**

For too long, many of the people with the most to gain from being physically active have often been the least able to take part. A combination of structural, social, environmental and economic factors have all played their part in keeping people away from physical activity, including access and affordability, a lack of opportunities, or a feeling for some that 'physical activity is not for them' or they 'don't belong' in sports facilities or clubs.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been devastating for many individuals and communities and it has both highlighted and exacerbated inequalities in Gateshead. Even before the pandemic, many aspects of modern life made it harder to live a healthy and active life: new technology at home and work, convenience food, more sedentary jobs, and a growth in leisure activities such as gaming have all played a part. Many of us need to make a conscious decision to build physical activity into our daily lives.

However, the pandemic has also brought with it a new energy to do things differently and to tackle long standing inequalities. We have seen the power of social action in communities when local community groups stepped up to support their vulnerable neighbours. We also learned how much successful partnerships can achieve when local government, health and other public sector partners, charities, the voluntary sector and community groups come together behind a shared goal. We can continue to build on this renewed focus and purpose as we look to the future.

Just before the pandemic began, Gateshead Council and partners published Gateshead's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 'Good jobs, homes, health and friends'. It sets out our ambition to make Gateshead a place where everybody can thrive. In a world living with Covid, it is now more relevant than ever.

We know that supporting people to be active is a vital part of achieving our vision for Gateshead. Not only can physical activity have profound benefits for our physical health, but it's also good for our mental wellbeing too. What's more, it helps us meet new friends, improves job opportunities and has huge value to the nation's economy. It can also help us move towards a greener future.<sup>1</sup>

As a Marmot City\*, we are passionate about the need to build back fairer. We want to ensure that every Gateshead resident can easily access a range of opportunities for sport and physical activity regardless of age, gender, race, ability, background, where they live or income. As part of our ambition to make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives, we need to get Gateshead moving. We particularly want to support those who are least active, or face the greatest barriers to physical activity, and so build a stronger, fairer society for all.

***Councillor Angela Douglas, Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure***  
***Councillor Bernadette Oliphant, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing***

## 2. Our strategic approach

### Our vision

[We want Gateshead to be a place where everyone thrives.](#)

Our strategic approach commits us to these pledges:

**Put people and families at the heart of everything we do**

**Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance**

**Support our communities to support themselves and each other**

**Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough**

**Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead**

Our vision for [health and wellbeing](#) in Gateshead:

**‘Good jobs, homes, health and friends.’**

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\*See Appendix 1: Glossary

**Our Physical Activity Strategy will help us to deliver our vision for Health and Wellbeing in Gateshead:**



## Our mission

Working with our communities and partners, to get Gateshead moving. We want to make Gateshead a borough where every resident has access to a range of appropriate and affordable opportunities for physical activity that become part of their everyday life and improve health and wellbeing.

## Objectives

- **Recover, reinvent and thrive** - we will learn from the pandemic to become a stronger and fairer borough, where no-one is less active because of who they are or where they live.
- **Creating a positive experience for children and young people** - we want our children and young people to enjoy being physically active and build foundations for a long, healthy and active life.
- **Living well and ageing well** - we will strengthen the connection between physical activity and health and wellbeing throughout every stage of life.
- **Supporting communities** - physical activity brings people together and helps makes better places to live. We will work with communities and partners to support people be more active where they live, particularly targeting where inequalities are greatest and recognising that every community is different.
- **Creating active environments** - we want to make it easier for people in Gateshead to be active in the space around them and contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions.

## How we will work

Our **values** and **guiding principles** are:



**Partnership** - working collaboratively across sectors and communities, bringing together experience, expertise, resources and enthusiasm. We need everyone to make it their mission to get Gateshead moving.

**Inclusion** - reflecting diverse voices and lived experience in our work. Treating all ideas and everyone's challenges and circumstances with respect.

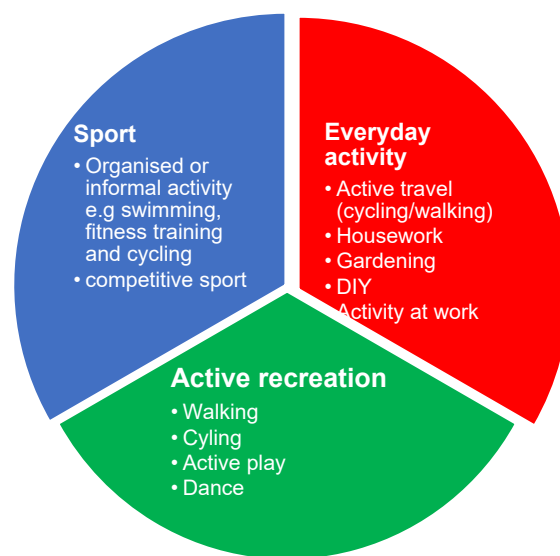
**Innovation** - exploring new ways of working to find creative solutions.

**Proportionate universalism** balancing universal and targeted provision in a way that's proportionate to level of need - focusing most on engaging the least active and those who face the greatest barriers to being active.

**People-centred** - putting people, their needs and the barriers they face at the heart of our plans. Delivering services in and with communities.

**Physical activity** - simply means all movement. Popular ways to be active include walking, cycling, sports, active recreation and play, and can be done at any level of skill and for enjoyment by everybody.<sup>2</sup>

Physical activity broadly falls into three groups.



*Adapted from: Be Active, Be Healthy. A Plan to get the Nation Moving, Transport 2017 (Department of Health 2009)*

### 3. Why is physical activity important?

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."

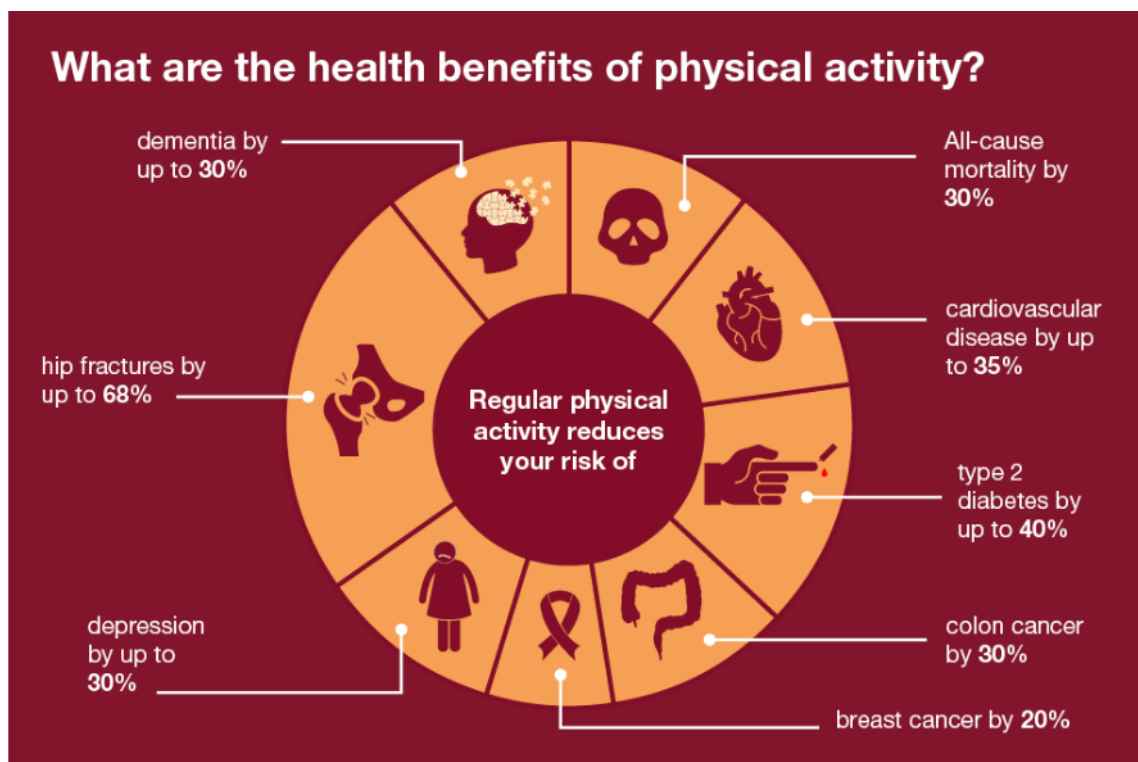
**UK Chief Medical Officers 2019<sup>3</sup>**

There is overwhelming evidence that regular physical activity is good for your physical and mental health and wellbeing and prevents long term health conditions such as heart and lung diseases, diabetes, cancers and obesity.

### Moderate or strong evidence for health benefit

Children	Adults	Older Adults
Bone Health Cognitive function CV fitness Muscle fitness Weight status Depression	All-cause mortality Stroke and heart disease Hypertension Type 2 diabetes 8 cancers Depression Cognitive function Dementia Quality of life Sleep Anxiety/depression Weight status	Falls Frailty Physical function

Source: UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019<sup>3</sup>



Source: Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, Physical activity: applying All Our Health, updated March 2022<sup>4</sup>



Physical inactivity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK<sup>5</sup>.

Regular physical activity also contributes to a range of wider social, environmental and economic benefits<sup>6</sup> including:

**For individuals:**

- improved learning and attainment
- increasing productivity in the workplace
- development of social skills and better social interaction.

**For social and community development:**

- building stronger communities by bringing people from different backgrounds together via participating, volunteering and spectating
- improving community links, levels of cohesion and social capital
- improving residents' sense of belonging in an area.

**For the environment:**

- active travel reduces road congestion and air pollution.

**For the economy:**

- inactivity costs the UK an estimated £7.4 billion a year. The potential cost savings to health (in primary and secondary care) and social care are significant<sup>7</sup>
- sport and physical activity generate more than £13bn in economic value through the sports-related goods and services we consume as a nation including more than 285,000 jobs that employ people within the community sport and physical activity sector.<sup>8</sup>

**Every £1 spent on sport and physical activity in England generates almost £4 in return across health and wellbeing, stronger communities and the economy.**

This figure is calculated by measuring the total social and economic value (£85.5 billion) against the costs of engagement and providing sport and physical activity opportunities (£21.85 billion.)

*Sport Industry Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University* <sup>9</sup>

### **Some is good, more is better**<sup>3</sup>

For good physical and mental health, adults should aim to be physically active every day. Any activity is better than none, and more is better still.

For an adult, the UK Chief Medical Officers recommended physical activity levels are at least 150 minutes moderate intensity per week, or at least 75 minutes vigorous intensity per week or a combination of both. There are different recommendations for different age groups. A summary of these can be seen at Appendix 2.

#### 4. The national context

<p><b>UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines (2019)</b><sup>3</sup></p> <p>This report updates the 2011 guidance, covering the volume, duration, frequency and type of physical activity required across the life course to achieve health benefits.</p> <p>It presents compelling evidence to support the health benefits of regular physical activity for all groups. It also says that regular physical activity can deliver cost savings for the health and care system and has wider social benefits for individuals and communities.</p> <p>This report emphasises the importance of regular activity for people of all ages.</p>	<p><b>Uniting the Movement Strategy (2021)</b><sup>10</sup></p> <p>Sport England's 10-year strategy. identifies five big issues:</p> <p><b>Recover and reinvent</b> - recovering from the pandemic and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant, sustainable and inclusive network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities.</p> <p><b>Connecting communities</b> - Focusing on physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.</p> <p><b>Positive experiences for children and young people</b> - Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.</p> <p><b>Connecting with health and wellbeing</b> - Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing.</p> <p><b>Active environments</b> - Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.</p>	<p><b>Cycling and walking plan for England: Gear Change A bold vision for cycling and walking (2020)</b><sup>11</sup></p> <p>The strategy sets out that increasing cycling and walking can help of the challenging issues including improving air quality, combatting climate change, improving health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities and tackling congestion on our roads. Bold action will help to create places we want to live and work – with better connected, healthier and more sustainable communities.</p> <p>Actions are set out under four themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better streets for cycling and people.</li> <li>• Cycling at the heart of decision-making</li> <li>• Empowering and encouraging Local Authorities</li> <li>• Enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives (2020)</b><sup>12</sup></p> <p>The strategy outlines actions that the government will take to tackle obesity and help adults and children to live healthier lives. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHE's new Better Health campaign that will urge people to take stock of how they live their lives in the wake of Covid-19, promoting evidence-based tools and apps with advice on how to lose weight and keep it off.</li> <li>• expand weight management services so that more people get the support they need to lose weight</li> <li>• offer all Primary Care Networks the opportunity to equip their staff to become healthy weight coaches.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sporting Future A new strategy for an Active Nation (2015)</b><sup>13</sup></p> <p>The Government's strategy for sport confirms its recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference and states its intention that the sector will deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical health</li> <li>• mental health</li> <li>• individual development</li> <li>• social and community development</li> <li>• economic.</li> </ul> <p>In future, funding decisions will be made based on the outcomes that sport and physical activity can deliver.</p>
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## 5. Where we are now – the national picture

- 1 in 3 (34%) men are not active enough for good health
- almost 1 in 2 (42%) women are not active enough for good health
- 1 in 5 (21%) men are classed as physically inactive
- 1 in 4 (25%) women are classed as physically inactive
- 44% of disabled adults are physically inactive
- only 34% of men and 24% of women undertake muscle-strengthening activities at least twice a week

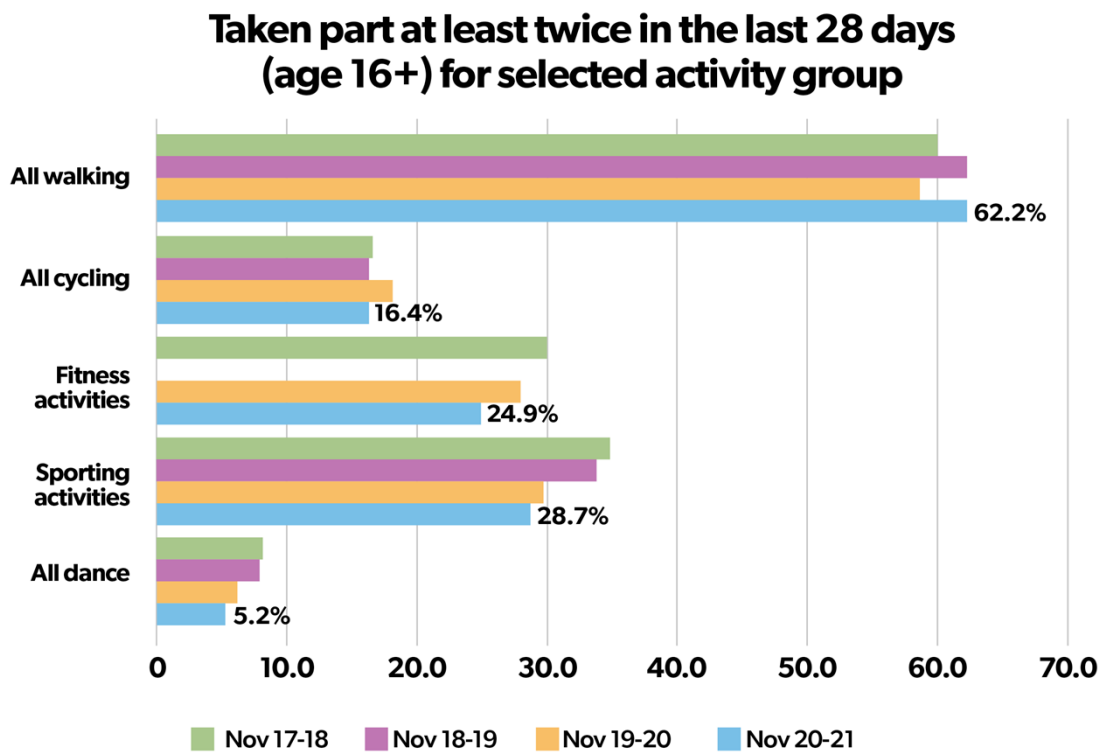
***Public Health England, 2020<sup>3</sup>***

There are stark inequalities in levels of physical activity:<sup>14</sup>

- Inactivity increases steadily as people get older.
- LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and other sexual and gender identities) people are less likely to be active than the general population.
- Women are less likely than men to reach recommended levels of physical activity
- More girls than boys disengage from sport and exercise in their teens.
- Less affluent people are more likely to be inactive than those who are better off as well as less likely to be active.<sup>15</sup>
- Disabled adults are almost twice as likely as non-disabled people to be physically inactive.<sup>16</sup>
- Levels of physical activity vary with ethnicity. People of mixed ethnicity were the most likely out of all ethnic groups to be physically active. The percentages of physically active people in the Asian, Black, Other and Chinese ethnic groups were lower than the national average.<sup>17</sup>
- Participation in sport and physical activity is higher among some faith groups than others.<sup>18</sup>

A range of sports and physical activities contribute to people’s engagement with physical activity<sup>19</sup> :

- Looking at broad types of physical activity\*, walking (whether for recreation or travel) makes the biggest contribution to physical activity. Just over 62% of adults over 16 took part in walking. This is more than double those who participate in either sporting activities (28.7%) or fitness activities (24.9%). Even before the pandemic began, walking had by far the highest level of participation.



*Note: Taken part at least twice in the last 28 days (adults age 16+) with at least moderate intensity.*

**Source:** Sport England, Active Lives Survey, Nov 20-21.

## 6. Where we are now – the Gateshead picture

### Population



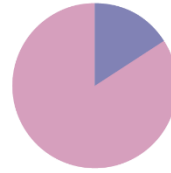
**201,950**  
17% are under 16  
20% are over 65

The population is ageing.  
By 2043, it's predicted that:

People 65+ ↑ 29%.



Children under 16 ↓ 10%.



**32,700 (16%)**  
people in Gateshead live  
in one of the **10%** most  
deprived areas of England.

### Ethnicity:

White ethnicities: **96.3%**

Black ethnicities: **0.5%**

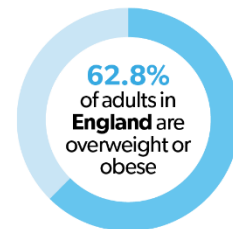
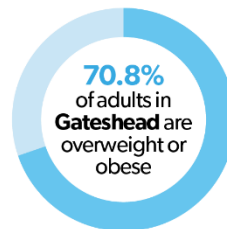
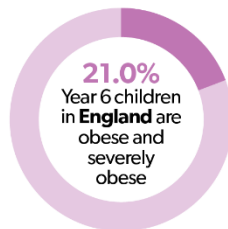
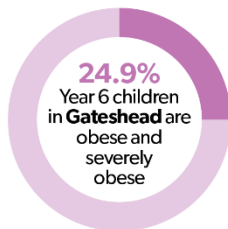
Asian ethnicities: **1.9%**

Mixed ethnicities: **0.8%**

Other ethnicities: **0.5%**

Over **3000** people state  
that their religion is **Jewish**.

### Health



#### Gateshead:

**86** people per **100,000** die from  
cardio-vascular disease

#### England:

**70.4** people per **100,000** die from  
cardio-vascular disease.



#### Gateshead:

Since **2009/10** Gateshead has seen a  
year-on-year increase of **5.8%** GP  
patients with a **diabetes diagnosis** to  
**7.3%** in **2019/20**.



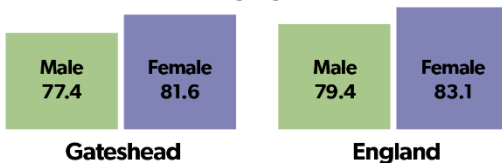
### Mental Health

Estimate of proportion of the  
adult population in **Newcastle**  
and **Gateshead** with both  
depression and anxiety is  
**17.3%**.

Estimate of the adult  
population in **England** with  
both depression and anxiety  
at **13.7%**.



### Life Expectancy (years)

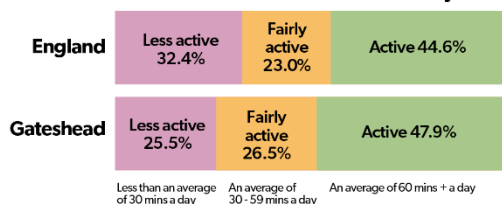


### Healthy Life Expectancy (years)

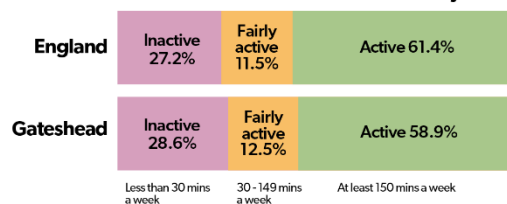


### Physical Activity

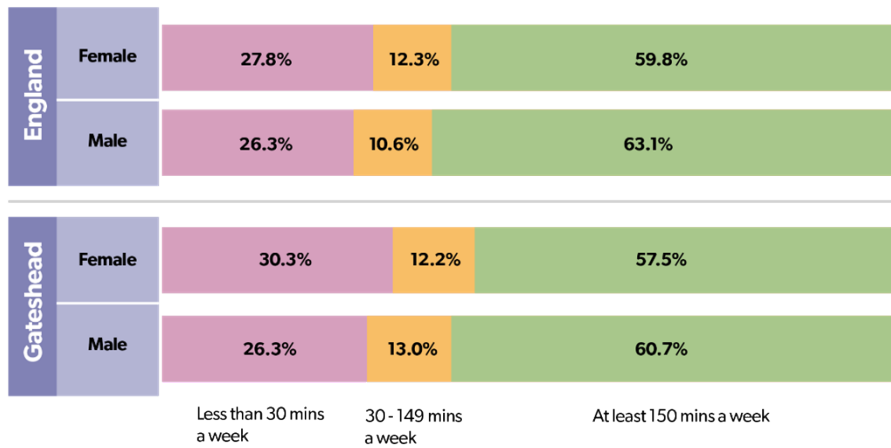
#### Children's Activity Levels



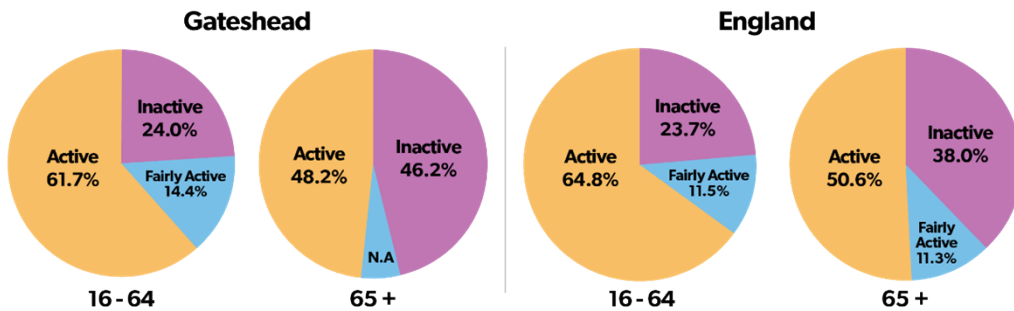
#### Adult's Activity Levels



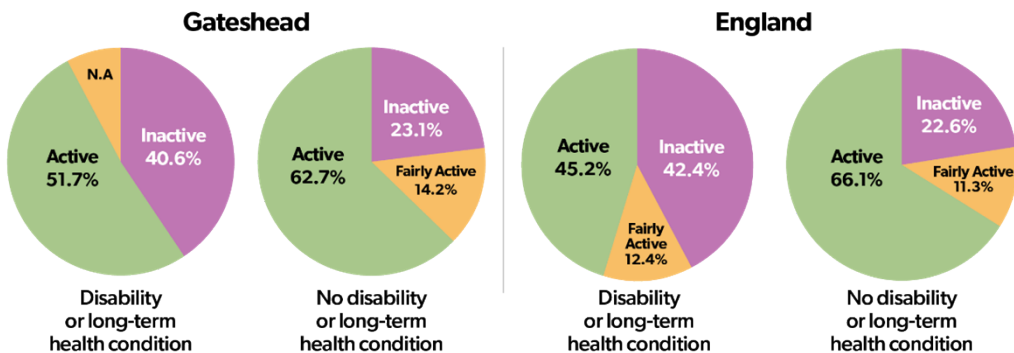
### Level of activity (adults): gender



### Level of activity (adults): age



### Level of activity (adults): disability or long-term health condition



**Source:**

Gateshead JSNA [Gateshead JSNA - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

OHID, Local Area Health Profiles [fingertips.phe.org.uk](http://fingertips.phe.org.uk)

Sport England Active Lives Children and Young People data Academic Year 2020-21 [Active Lives | Children And Young People Activity Data \(sportengland.org\)](#)

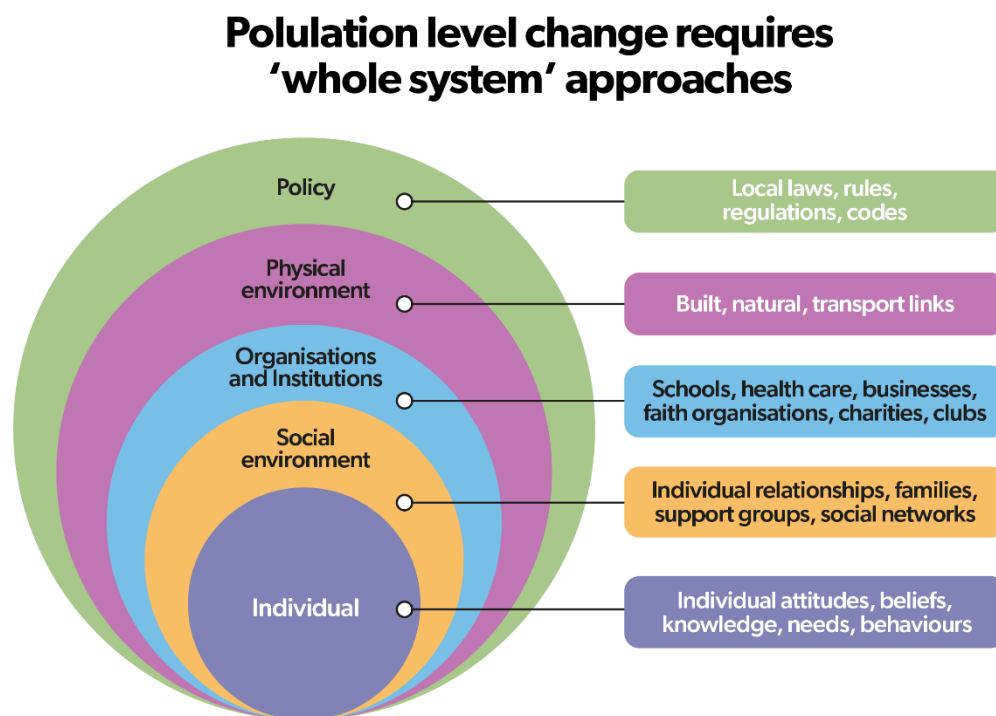
Sport England Active Lives Adult data Nov 20- Nov 21 [Active Lives | Adult Data \(sportengland.org\)](#)

## 7. Taking a 'whole system' and 'place-based' approach

There isn't one magic solution to get everyone moving - real lives are influenced by a combination of many factors.

### Looking at the 'whole system':

We need to consider the changes required, at all the layers in the system, to tackle inactivity. This includes changes to policy, the physical environment, organisations



and institutions, the social environment, as well as to individuals themselves.

*Source: socio-ecological model as used by Sport England, 2021<sup>20</sup>*

Examples of changes that can be part of a whole systems approach:

- **Policy** e.g. policies and systems that promote walking, cycling and public transport.
- **Physical environments** e.g. access to open and green spaces which encourages people to be active.
- **Organisations and institutions** e.g. programmes embedded in primary health care such as social prescribing in GP practices and schools that integrate physical activity initiatives into the school day.



- **Social environment** – e.g. people are more likely to be active if it is seen as ‘normal’, and if their friends and peers are also active.
- **Individuals** e.g. people can decide to become more physically active in response to a community campaign. Evidence suggests these are only effective when supported by local level community activities.<sup>20</sup>

### **Focusing on ‘place’:**

To really change how active a person or a community is, all of these influencing factors need to work coherently as a ‘system’ around them. If we’re going to help foster positive change in these places, there needs to be a change of focus.

#### ***Sports England, 2021<sup>21</sup>***

We know that physical activity levels are closely related to the wider determinants of health (the conditions into which people are born, live and work). Health inequalities are not caused by one single issue, but a complex mix of environmental and social factors which play out in a local area, or place - this means that local areas have an important role to play in reducing health inequalities.<sup>22</sup> But national programmes often can’t tackle the barriers that can exist at a local level, and top-down interventions don’t lead to sustainable change.<sup>23</sup> That’s why it’s important to shift to a person-centred, bottom-up approach, whilst looking at the whole system from a community perspective. By working together to gain local knowledge and insight and make best use of the resources available locally, we can better meet the unique needs of people in one place.

#### **Case study: ‘It’s not about telling people to eat better, stop smoking or get on the treadmill’**

Gateshead Council’s Public Health team commissioned Pattinson House, a Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisation in a deprived ward in Gateshead to develop a childhood obesity prevention project. This was part of ongoing work with residents to ‘build happier, healthier, friendlier communities.’ The project was evaluated by an embedded researcher from Fuse (The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health.)

The research uncovered major structural, environmental, social and financial barriers to health and wellbeing. It raised concerns about traffic, community safety and the lack of safe spaces for children to play. The adverse effects of welfare reform and austerity increased poor health outcomes and limited people's choices. Community engagement and children's activities, alongside opportunities for people to volunteer, eat, socialise, have fun, get out, learn and play together improved health and wellbeing, social support, community cohesion, sense of belonging and partnership working. Social relationships developed through Pattinson House helped to reduce social isolation, promote mental health, improve community connectedness and increase physical activity.

***Source: Fuse brief, Fit 4 The Future – how community-led approaches can address childhood obesity, 2018<sup>24</sup>***

## **8. The challenge**

We need to increase levels of physical activity across Gateshead because:

- Preventable, yet life-changing conditions, like obesity and diabetes are increasing.
- There is overwhelming evidence that regular physical activity is good for your physical and mental health as well as bringing a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits.

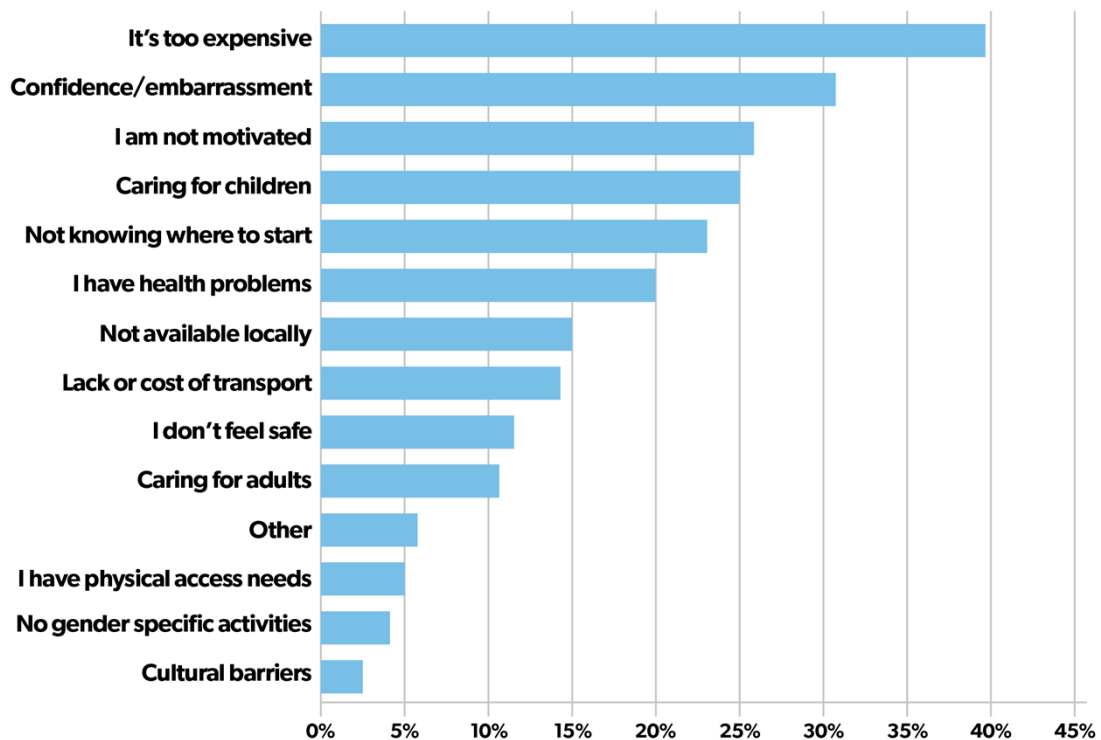
We need to work differently because:

- The pandemic has widened health inequalities. It has also increased the ongoing financial pressures that the Council has experienced over the last 10 years.
- We need to expand our focus and encourage all physical activity because the most frequently undertaken activities, like walking and cycling, take place in informal settings, green and open spaces and the built environment.
- There is increasing evidence about the importance of using a place-based approach – working with communities to develop opportunities for people to be physically active close to home. To be successful, we need to drive change across the whole system – individuals, social environment, organisations, physical environment and policy.

We need to address barriers to participation and increasing physical activity levels across everyday activity, recreation and sport. Barriers include:

- Increased sedentary behaviour stemming from pandemic restrictions, working from home and reduced opportunities for active travel.
- Difficulties in accessing green and open spaces for recreation including proximity and fear of crime or anti-social behaviour.
- A built environment that doesn't support healthy choices or active travel.
- Cost - the current rise in the cost of living is squeezing budgets. This affects both the ability of individuals and families to participate in many sport and physical activities and the viability of sports and activity providers to offer them.
- In addition to cost, individuals can face many barriers to physical activity including.<sup>25</sup>
  - a lack of confidence or embarrassment
  - no motivation - some people simply do not want to change
  - time and commitments: fitting activity around education, work, family life or caring responsibilities
  - health or physical access issues
  - few local opportunities
  - lack of culturally appropriate opportunities for exercise.

Our local residents highlighted a wide range of barriers to physical activity:



*Source: Council Health and Wellbeing Survey March 2021*

## 9. Opportunities and outcomes

### Objective 1: Recover, reinvent and thrive

**We will learn from the pandemic to become a stronger and fairer borough, where no-one is less active because of who they are or where they live.**

As the UK emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic it would be a tragic mistake to attempt to re-establish the status quo that existed before – a status quo marked in England, over the past decade, by a stagnation of health improvement that was the second worst in Europe, and by widening health inequalities.

***Build Back Fairer, The Marmot Review, 2020<sup>26</sup>***

## **Opportunities**

The Covid-19 pandemic made physical activity difficult for many, significantly impacting people's physical and mental wellbeing. Lockdowns, social distancing and other restrictions resulted in massive changes to how people were physically active, particularly for those who, before the pandemic, regularly took part in organised sport and physical activity such as football clubs, dance, parkrun and community fitness classes.

Gateshead's network of sports clubs and activity providers are a key gateway to local opportunities for sport and physical activity, often hugely reliant on volunteers and run on a shoestring. Supporting and developing a strong and sustainable network of organised activity providers, working collaboratively to reduce inactivity, will be essential as they recover and rebuild after the pandemic.

Also, vital to widening opportunities for physical activity are the community groups and organisations in Gateshead who engage with those who are more likely to be physically inactive. Introducing physical activity awareness into the offer of these groups will support the engagement of different audiences. This is already happening in some cases but is unrecognised as physical activity. Running tea dances, walking to a meeting and encouraging people to get out and about are all ways that inactivity is challenged without people realising it.

During the pandemic, when facilities were closed, there was a new enthusiasm for many people to increase physical activity through informal avenues such as walking, either on their own or with friends or family. We need to continue to promote the huge benefits/importance of informal exercise for both mental and physical health as we continue to recover from the pandemic.

We know that women and girls, people who are poor, disabled people, people aged 55+, people from LGBT+ communities and people who are from ethnically diverse communities and/or minoritised communities can have lower levels of physical activity and experience more barriers to participation. We want to adapt our offer and meet the needs of the people, in our borough, who need our support the most and encourage our partners to do the same. This will involve working closely with local

communities, providing activities in new places close to where people live and may also include the provision of new or emerging activities, or targeting activities to specific groups.

#### **Case Study: Active through football**

With support from the National Lottery, Gateshead Council is delivering the Active Through Football programme together with Sport England, the Football Foundation, RISE, and local partners including Gateshead Older People's Assembly and Egberts House.

Over the next five years, the programme aims to increase activity levels particularly amongst females aged 16+, males aged 50+, refugees and individuals experiencing mental health issues. Its purpose is to make football more accessible to these groups, with sessions tailored to all levels of fitness, ability and confidence.

#### **Case Study: A weight off your mind (AWOYM)**

People with mental health conditions and people with learning disabilities are at increased risk of premature morbidity, dying up to twenty years sooner than the general population. It is thought that two thirds of these early deaths are caused by avoidable physical illnesses that are linked with unhealthy lifestyles such as poor diet and low levels of physical activity. Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation are working with partners, service users and carers to develop a regional weight management plan which aims to address the needs of those in their care. It combines physical activity, healthy weight and nutrition as core topics to ensure consistency of messages to patients.

## Outcomes

By 2032 we will have:

- Increased physical activity levels and reduced inactivity levels for:
  - Women and girls
  - Ethnically diverse and/or minoritised communities.
  - Older people (55 and over)
  - People with a disability or long-term condition
  - People from LGBT+ communities
  - People who live in areas that are in the 10% most deprived in England.
- A strong and sustainable network of organised activity providers, working collaboratively to reduce inactivity.
- Worked with clubs, community groups and other physical activity providers to access funding, training and opportunities to develop their activities to reach less active groups.
- Adapted the Council sport and leisure offer to better meet the needs of groups who have lower levels of activity by being more accessible, more inclusive and by offering improved, more affordable experiences.
- Provided more opportunities and support for people in Gateshead to be physically active in the places where they live, using community facilities and the local green environment.
- Encouraged the introduction of new sports and physical activities to complement more traditional ones and appeal to new audiences.

## Objective 2: Creating a positive experience for children and young people

We want our children and young people to enjoy being physically active and build foundations for a long, healthy and active life.

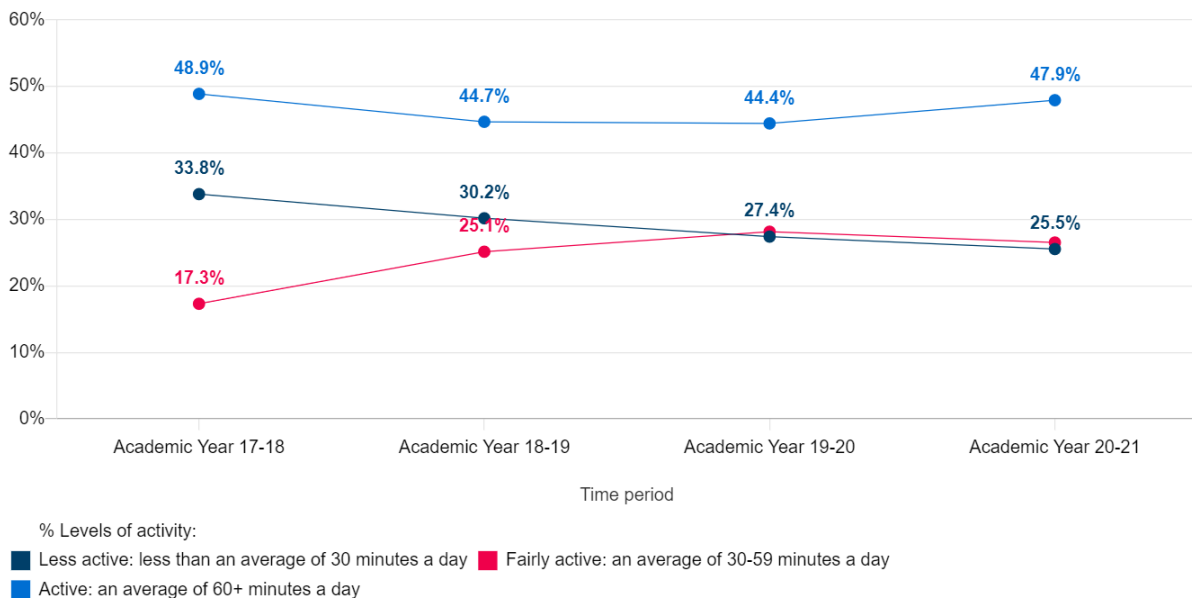
Physical inactivity poses a serious and growing danger to society; it damages health, economy and the environment and limits the educational attainment and future lives of children.'

**All-Party Parliamentary Commission on Physical Activity<sup>27</sup>**

Developing regular physical activity behaviours in childhood is crucial as we know that children who are active are more likely to become active adults and continue to reap the benefits of an active lifestyle throughout their life course.<sup>28</sup>

Although children and young people have the lowest clinical risk from Covid-19, they nevertheless experienced significant disruption at a critical time in their development, which may have long term implications for their physical and mental health.

### Levels of activity in Gateshead's children and young people



Source: Sport England Active Lives Children and Young People data Academic Year 2020-21 <sup>29</sup>



In Gateshead, the number of 'active' children dropped in the year before and during the pandemic, although is now increasing. However, the level of 'less active' children has decreased over the last four years. National results suggest that across the academic year (20-21) as a whole, activity levels have fallen compared to pre-pandemic (2018-19) for children from the least affluent families while remaining unchanged for those from the most affluent families – widening the gap.<sup>30</sup>

The Gateshead Millennium Cohort Study found that physical activity levels may start tailing off as early as seven-years-old, rather than during adolescence as is widely believed, and there is no evidence to indicate that the decline is greater among girls than it is among boys.<sup>31</sup> Other research has found that too many girls are disengaging from sport and exercise in their teens and teenagers' engagement with exercise differs between boys and girls and requires different solutions. Self-belief, capability, and body image concerns can be significant issues for both boys and girls but are more apparent in girls than in boys.<sup>32</sup> Evidence also suggests that young people who are not cis gendered also experience significant issues in relation to self-belief, capability, and body image concerns.<sup>33</sup>

We want to enable all children and young people to become physically literate, to really enjoy physical activity and feel more confident and competent taking part. We need to particularly focus on those groups who currently have less opportunities to be active and experience more barriers to taking part including teenage girls, children and young people from diverse or economically deprived communities and disabled children. We will work with children and young people, schools, colleges, clubs, community groups and other physical activity providers to explore ways of doing this and offer new opportunities. We also want to support pathways for progression where those that want to progress in their chosen sport are able.

Schools and early years provision have an important role to play in encouraging children and young people to be active. We believe that multi-component, whole school approaches that encompass, active travel, active play and cross-curricular physically active learning and are embedded in the culture, ethos and environment of the school, are most effective.<sup>34</sup> Many local schools already make a significant contribution to increasing children and young people's physical activity levels. In addition, we want whole school sport and physical activity in schools and early years settings to be complemented by opportunities in the community which appeal to

families and young people who prefer the social side of physical activity and sport, as well as opportunities for those who prefer competitive sport.

### **Case Study: WOW walk to school challenge**

A number of schools in Gateshead are working with national charity, Living Streets, to deliver their WOW walk to school challenge. WOW is a pupil-led initiative where children self-report how they get to school every day using the interactive WOW Travel Tracker. If they travel sustainably (walk, cycle or scoot) once a week for a month, they get rewarded with a badge. Living Streets are working to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.

### **Case Study: Brighten the day of a child**

For several years, Gateshead Council has worked closely with partners (including schools, local charities and community organisations) to provide much needed food and activities during school holidays, particularly aimed at children who are eligible for school meals and families who are struggling to make ends meet but do not access this benefit. The activities include pop-up sports activities, bike rides, nature walks and healthy cooking ideas.

## **Outcomes**

### **By 2032:**

- More children and young people in Gateshead will be physically active and achieving the Chief Medical Officer's recommended levels of physical activity.
- There will be an improvement in childhood obesity levels.
- We will work with young people to gain a better understanding of barriers to activity and the opportunities they seek. New place-based opportunities and environments to be active will be co-created with children and young people.
- More children and young people in our most deprived areas will be regularly taking part in physical activity, enjoying the experience and be reporting more positive mental health.
- More schools will have adopted a whole school approach to physical activity.

### **Objective 3: Living well and ageing well**

**We will strengthen the connection between physical activity and health and wellbeing throughout every stage of life.**

There is no point in life where doing more exercise does not improve health in multiply ways

**Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, 2020<sup>35</sup>**

### **Opportunities**

By strengthening the connections between physical activity, health and wellbeing, we can make physical activity a central part of how we all feel about our health and wellbeing. Throughout people's lives, their interests and values change. We want to ensure that there are always opportunities, throughout their lives, to enable them to lead an active, healthy lifestyle. The more we can widen access and participation in physical activity, sport and active travel, the more it becomes embedded in everyday life and the greater the chance of increasing levels of physical activity across Gateshead.

We know that there are many barriers to people taking part in activity which can vary depending on where they live and their individual circumstances. To break down these barriers, we need to understand more about what stops them taking part and map the barriers for different localities and communities. We can then develop targeted actions to overcome them whether at home, work or play.

### **Case Study: Active Mums**

Active Mums is a fun way to meet for new mums (after their 8-week health check or 12 weeks if they've had a Caesarean) to meet new people and get active outdoors with their baby. With babies safe and snug in their pushchairs, mums work on improving fitness and toning up by performing a range of enjoyable cardio and bodyweight exercises, overseen by a qualified instructor. As well as supporting mums to become more physically active, the scheme helps reduce social isolation and builds confidence.

Whilst for some, physical activity is an integral part of their job, for others their role is mainly sedentary. Along with stress, depression and anxiety, musculoskeletal disorders account for most of the sickness absence in the UK.<sup>36</sup> Regular physical activity can support good musculoskeletal health as well as positive mental health. Many employers recognise that supporting measures to improve the health and wellbeing of their employees can bring business benefits such as better staff satisfaction and retention, as well as reduced absence. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has produced guidance<sup>37</sup> to help employers prevent the diseases associated with a lack of physical activity. Efforts made in the workplace, alongside wider strategies to increase physical activity levels, can help improve people's health significantly. In Gateshead, we want to create a culture where being physically active in the workplace is encouraged and we will continue to support initiatives which contribute to this such as the Better Health at Work award.

Activity levels generally decrease with age, with the sharpest decrease coming at age 75+. Nationally, the 75+ age group was particularly affected by the pandemic. This may be linked to the requirement for many of those aged 70+ to shield during the earlier stages of the pandemic and a continued nervousness of mingling indoors or in crowded outdoor spaces.<sup>38</sup> Regular physical activity, in combination with standard medical care, also has an important role in the management and prevention of many long-term conditions.<sup>39</sup>

### **Case Study: Gateshead Falls Prevention pathway**

Partners from health, the voluntary sector and local authority have developed a referral pathway that enables those who have fallen or who are at risk of falling, to engage with supported exercise to improve their strength and balance. By offering Otago based exercise, staying steady classes and physical activity opportunities in the community, the over 50's are encouraged to stay active for longer. This approach aims to reduce frailty and help individuals to stay in their own homes for longer.

Gateshead Council works in partnership with health providers to provide a range of targeted services to individuals and groups with long term conditions such as pulmonary rehabilitation and cardiac rehabilitation. We want to ensure that this is expanded so that physical activity provision is integrated with health systems and will

strengthen our connections and collaboration with primary and secondary care, so that more people are recommended or referred into activity as part of services and care pathways. This will result in more people engaging in physical activity and better outcomes.

Gateshead already has a well-established social prescribing scheme. Health professionals can refer patients to community link workers who spend time with patients addressing their needs in a holistic way and supporting individuals to take greater control of their own health. They make referrals to non-medical services and support people to engage with activities, usually provided by voluntary and community organisations, including volunteering, arts and befriending as well as ones which can promote physical activity including gardening, sports, walking and cycling.

## **Outcomes**

### **By 2032:**

- More adults (aged 19-64) and older adults (aged over 65) will be physically active and achieve the Chief Medical Officer's recommended levels of physical activity.
- Being physical active will be a larger part of workplace culture.
- More physical activity opportunities will be seen as 'age friendly'.
- We will understand more about the barriers that prevent people from being active at different stages of their life and be working with communities to tackle this.
- More people will be accessing physical activity through the health care system, at both primary and secondary care, with it becoming further embedded into care pathways. This will include increased use of social prescribing into active recreation and active travel.

## **Objective 4: Supporting communities**

**Physical activity can bring people together and help make better places to live. We will work with communities and partners to support active lives, particularly targeting where inequalities are greatest.**

In order to build community contributions into a central role within place-based strategies to address health inequalities, it is important that all partners, including communities themselves, understand their potential. The assets within communities, such as the skills and knowledge, social networks, local groups and community organisations, are building blocks for good health.

**Public Health England, 2021<sup>40</sup>**

### **Opportunities**

The place around us has a significant impact on our health. By working together to adopt a place-based approach, we want to create local communities that are happy, healthy and active. We want to create sustainable opportunities for physical activity which are fun, easy to access and affordable.

We know we need to do more to meet communities where they are today, develop our collective understanding of their priorities and challenges, and support them to make sustainable changes to their behaviours so that they can lead healthy, active and fulfilling lives. To achieve this, there will be a need to collaborate with local people to develop local opportunities for physical activity that meet their needs and interests. This will require a bottom-up approach to be used, working with the people in each community and the organisations that local people trust.

One essential factor in increasing levels of physical activity amongst under-represented groups, is the role of skilled, supportive and non-judgemental enablers (including employees, community members and volunteers) to engage with people in the community. Widening these skills will require investment in training and development.

### **Case Study: Beat the Streets**

Beat the Street is an evidence-based intervention that increases activity levels, reduces health inequalities and can bring about sustainable behaviour change across local populations and communities, including those in areas of high deprivation. It uses gamification to mobilise large numbers of residents and create a social norm around walking, cycling, rolling and running. Beat Boxes are placed on street furniture (usually lamp posts) across the playing area and players score points by tapping at least 2 Boxes within an hour using fobs. The focus starts with schools and their families but can include all aspects of the community and local businesses. Other community groups, teams, families and individuals can also take part. Teams compete against each other over the four-week game to win prizes and travel as far as they can. Beat the Street creates a legacy of physical activity by signposting people to events and activities in their area as well as working with local stakeholders to continue to build active communities. Gateshead Council has worked with Intelligent Health (a strategic partner within Beat the Street) and local partners to pilot this initiative in two wards locally. The initiative was well-received.

### **Outcomes:**

#### **By 2032:**

- More Gateshead people will be taking part in fun and sustainable physical activities in their local community.
- Sports clubs, community groups and other activity providers will be providing more opportunities for local people to be physically active.
- New activities and services will have been co-designed with residents in their communities, following work with them to understand their priorities and challenges.
- More enablers, with a diverse experience and backgrounds, will be active in communities and have been equipped with the training and skills to engage with people effectively.
- Good practice, innovative projects, inspirational role models and influencers will be recognised within Gateshead.

## **Objective 5: Creating active environments**

### **Opportunities**

We want to make it easier for people in Gateshead to be active in the space around them. The places where we live, work and play all influence how physically active we are. Environments that are attractive and accessible encourage us to become more active within them. The places that support us to live active lives include:

- Sports and leisure facilities e.g. swimming pools, sports halls, fitness facilities, pitches, and courts
- Community spaces e.g. parks, green and open spaces, public rights of way, community centres and school buildings
- Built environment e.g. streets, housing estates, roads and paths

Councils have a central role in championing the vision for active environments and bringing everything together by connecting diverse Government objectives and service areas including planning, active travel schemes, parks and playgrounds, allotments and sports and leisure facilities.

**Sports and leisure facilities:** We want to ensure that Gateshead has affordable, accessible, and sustainable sport and leisure facilities which will support residents to live active and healthy lives now and in the future. Our Physical Activity Strategy is supported by a Built Facilities Evaluation and a Playing Pitch Strategy which have been developed using Sport England methodology to underpin our understanding of future demand. The strategies recognise that there are significant challenges in delivering the level and quality of infrastructure required and that we will need to explore innovative partnerships and cross-sector sustainable delivery and funding models to support achievement of our vision.

**Community spaces:** although walking and nature has been a lifeline to many in the pandemic, national research shows that people from more deprived communities and people from ethnic minorities live further from green spaces.<sup>41</sup> The links between access to green space and levels of physical activity are well-established and



research shows that access to green space is associated with better health outcomes, and income-related health inequality is less pronounced where people have access to green space.<sup>42</sup>

Gateshead has a fabulous network of parks, green and open spaces and countryside sites. We need to make sure that everyone can access and enjoy them. Allotments also provide a great opportunity for exercise as well as opportunities for growing fresh produce and getting fresh air. We want to explore measures to further increase access to allotments such as encouraging plot-sharing schemes and shared community allotments.

#### **Case Study: Get Walking Gateshead Council**

Get Walking Gateshead offers a series of free led walks that take place weekly at various locations across Gateshead. Walks last from 10 to 90 minutes, are led by fully trained Volunteer Walk Leaders and take place in a variety of locations across the borough. They are a great way for people who are new to exercise or need more support to get out, get active and meet new people. The walks are run in partnership with the Ramblers Association who provide schemes with support and free resources such as training, and insurance.

**Built environment:** Building well-designed, accessible places and neighbourhoods can encourage healthier choices. For most people, the easiest and most acceptable forms of physical activity are those that can be built into everyday life. Examples include walking or cycling instead of car travel and using stairs instead of lifts.<sup>43</sup>

Several aspects of neighbourhood design (walkability and mixed land use i.e. areas that include green spaces) can maximise opportunities for social engagement and active travel.<sup>44</sup> The strategic housing sites allocated in the Gateshead and Newcastle Councils' Planning for the Future, Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan 2010-2030 (CSUCP), have been master-planned to incorporate access to green spaces, sports facilities, play and recreation facilities to promote active and healthy lifestyles. Gateshead Council's Making Spaces for Growing Places Local Plan contains policies to require the provision of open space and play in new housing

developments, as well as policies to promote active travel. We will continue to promote healthy and active lifestyles through Gateshead's Local Plans.

We are exploring concepts such as '20-minute neighbourhoods' which aim to create places in which most of people's daily needs can be met within a short walk or cycle. Benefits include people become more active, reduced traffic, thriving local shops and businesses and people seeing more of their neighbours.

Gateshead declared a climate emergency, in May 2019 and there are areas where air quality is an issue. We know that giving people the opportunity to walk and cycle more will be key in reducing carbon emissions and levels of Nitrous Oxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) as well as increasing physical activity levels. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCIP) aims to identify the cycling and walking improvements required.

We want – and need – to see a step-change in cycling and walking in the coming years. The challenge is huge, but the ambition is clear. We have a unique opportunity to transform the role cycling and walking can play in our transport system and get England moving differently.

***Department of Transport, 2020<sup>45</sup>***

## **Outcomes**

By 2032:

- The refreshed Sport and Leisure Built Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies will be monitored regularly to ensure that our Physical Activity Strategy is supported by appropriate, affordable, accessible and sustainable sport and leisure provision, irrespective of ownership and operation.
- More people in Gateshead will be using our parks, green and open spaces and countryside sites.
- More journeys will be made by walking and cycling and will be supported by more walking and cycle routes

- Increased active travel will be reducing the environmental impact of transport and supporting Gateshead's climate strategy
- Allotments will be supporting increased levels of physical activity.
- Gateshead's Local Plans will continue to promote healthy and active lifestyles.

## Appendix 1: Glossary

Active play	What children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way, and for their own reasons.
Active travel	Active travel (or active transportation or mobility) means walking, scooting or cycling for the purpose of making everyday journeys
Built environment	Man-made structures, features, and facilities viewed collectively as an environment in which people live and work.
Embedded research	Embedded research involves co-locating researchers within non-academic organisations. It is increasingly seen as a powerful way to link research and researchers with practice and practitioners.
Fuse	The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health
Health inequalities	<p>Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population, and between different groups within society. Health inequalities arise because of the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age.</p> <p>These conditions influence our opportunities for good health, and how we think, feel and act, and this shapes our mental health, physical health and wellbeing.</p>
Marmot City	<p>Marmot Cities are a network of local authorities in England, working in-depth to develop a 'Marmot' approach tackling health inequalities, based on the Marmot Review Team publication <a href="#">Fair Society, Healthy Lives</a> (The Marmot Review) in 2010.</p> <p>Sir Michael Marmot has been Professor of Epidemiology at University College London since 1985.</p>
Neighbourhood walkability	Making neighbourhoods walking friendly.
Organised sport and physical activity	Sport and physical activity organised by people including volunteers.

Place-based approach	Place-based approaches recognise the importance of addressing the wider determinants of health (the conditions into which people are born, live and work) across the life course.
Physical literacy	Physical literacy: is the mastering of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills that permit a child to read their environment and make appropriate decisions, allowing them to move confidently and with control in a wide range of physical activity situations.
Sedentary	Tending to spend much time seated; somewhat inactive.
Social prescribing	Social prescribing is a way of linking patients in primary care with support within the community to improve physical and mental health. It may be used in place of medication or alongside other forms of treatment. People are referred to activities in their community such as exercise, lunch clubs and volunteering
Socio ecological model	The Socio Ecological Model (SEM) is a theory-based framework for understanding the multifaceted and interactive effects of personal and environmental factors that determine behaviours, and for identifying behavioural and organisational leverage points and intermediaries for health promotion within organisations.
Wider determinants of health	Wider determinants of health describe the social and environmental conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, which shape and drive health outcomes

## Appendix 2: Summary of UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines (2019 and 2022)

### Physical activity for early years (birth – 5 years)

Active children are healthy, happy, school ready and sleep better

- BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL SKILLS
- MAINTAINS HEALTH & WEIGHT
- CONTRIBUTES TO BRAIN DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING
- IMPROVES SLEEP
- DEVELOPS MUSCLES & BONES
- ENCOURAGES MOVEMENT & CO-ORDINATION

#### Every movement counts

Aim for at least **180** Minutes per day for children 1-5 years

**Under-1s** at least 30 minutes across the day

Activities to include:

- PLAYGROUND
- JUMP
- CLIMB
- MESSY PLAY
- THROW/CATCH
- SKIP
- OBJECT PLAY
- DANCE
- GAMES
- PLAY
- TUMMY TIME
- SWIM
- WALK
- SCOOT
- BIKE

**Get Strong. Move More. Break up inactivity**

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

### Physical activity for children and young people (5 – 18 Years)

- BUILDS CONFIDENCE & SOCIAL SKILLS
- MAINTAINS HEALTHY WEIGHT
- DEVELOPS CO-ORDINATION
- STRENGTHENS MUSCLES & BONES
- IMPROVES CONCENTRATION & LEARNING
- IMPROVES HEALTH & FITNESS
- IMPROVES SLEEP
- MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD

#### Be physically active

Spread activity throughout the day

Aim for an average of at least **60** minutes per day across week

All activities should make you breathe faster & feel warmer

Activities to include:

- PLAY
- RUN/WALK
- BIKE
- ACTIVE TRAVEL
- SWIM
- SKATE
- SPORT
- PE
- SKIP
- CLIMB
- WORKOUT
- DANCE

Activities to develop movement skills, and muscle and bone strength **ACROSS WEEK**

**Get strong** (vs. **INACTIVITY**)

**Move more**

Find ways to help all children and young people accumulate an average of at least 60 minutes physical activity per day across the week

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

# Physical Activity for Disabled Children and Disabled Young People

Getting and staying active is about



Equality



Inclusivity



Finding what's fun



Exploring what activities make you feel good

## Benefits of physical activity



## How much physical activity should I do?

When starting build up slowly  
Ask: Can you do this today?

Do bitesize chunks of physical activity throughout the day

For good health benefits do  
**20 mins**  
of physical activity per day

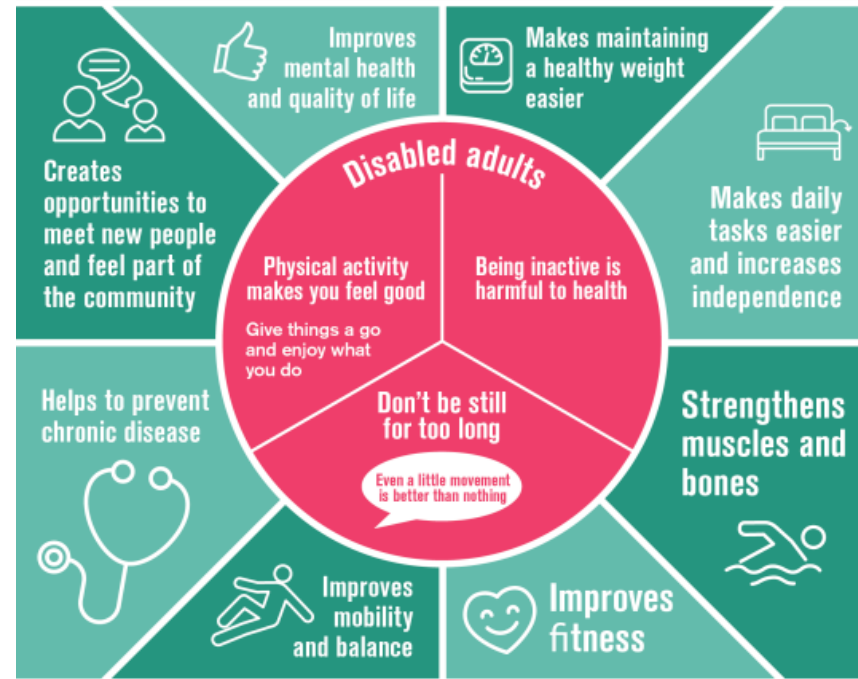
Do challenging but manageable strength and balance activities 3 times per week

Small amounts of physical activity are good for you as well

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines for Disabled Children and Disabled Young People 2022. This infographic was co-produced with disabled children, disabled young people, parents and carers.

# Physical Activity for Disabled Adults

Make it a daily habit



Do strength and balance activities on at least two days per week

For substantial health gains aim for at least 150 minutes each week of moderate intensity activity

Remember the talk test:



Can talk, but not sing = moderate intensity activity

Difficulty talking without pausing = vigorous intensity activity



UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

# Physical activity for pregnant women

Helps to control weight gain

Helps reduce high blood pressure problems

Helps to prevent diabetes of pregnancy

Improves fitness

Improves sleep

Improves mood

**Not active?**  
Start gradually

Home

Throughout pregnancy aim for at least

# 150

minutes of moderate intensity activity every week

Out and about

Leisure

**Already active?**  
Keep going

Do **muscle strengthening** activities twice a week

**Every activity counts**, every minute counts, more is better

**No evidence of harm**

Listen to your body and adapt

**Don't bump the bump**

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

# Physical activity for adults and older adults

Benefits health
 
 Type II Diabetes
 -40%



# Physical activity for women after childbirth (birth to 12 months)



Time for yourself - reduces worries and depression



Helps to control weight and return to pre-pregnancy weight



Improves tummy muscle tone and strength



Improves fitness



Improves mood



Improves sleep

**Not active?**

Start gradually

**Active before?**

Restart gradually



**It's safe to be active.**  
No evidence of harm for post partum women

Depending on your delivery listen to your body and start gently



**You can be active while breastfeeding**

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