
DRAFT

**EVERYONE
MORE ACTIVE
FOR LIFE**

**NORTHUMBERLAND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
STRATEGY 2018-2028**



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FOREWORDS

"The potential benefits of physical activity to health are huge. If a medication existed which had a similar effect, it would be regarded as a wonder drug or miracle cure".

Chief Medical Officer Annual Report 2009

The Northumberland Physical Activity Strategy sets out a framework for supporting everyone in Northumberland to be More Active for Life by 2028.

This framework has been developed with local partners following extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. What they have in common is a real and vested interest in the benefits being more active will provide for people and communities in Northumberland. This includes improved physical and mental health and wellbeing together with the collective social, educational and economic development opportunities associated with that.

Physical activity is important for our personal health, wellbeing and vitality. It also makes an important contribution to our communities bringing people together socially, building cohesiveness and adding to a sense of place and local identity. Being active adds to our individual and collective potential to live longer, happier and more fulfilling and successful lives.

We would like to thank Northumberland Sport for coordinating this multi-agency approach to tackling inactivity and wish to acknowledge the great work being done by those organisations consulted on the strategy and many others who are influencing behaviour change to help more people benefit from being active.



Physical activity has something to offer at every stage of life. No one is too old to start being more active or to continue being active and an active life is essential for physical and mental health and wellbeing.

We know that a number of diseases are not only on the increase, but affecting people at an earlier age. They include cancer and diabetes, and conditions like obesity, hypertension and depression; regular physical activity can guard against these. Many of our residents live longer with ill health than others living only a few miles away - this is largely driven by social circumstances.

Opportunities to be active in everyday life have been engineered out of our lives so responding to the physical inactivity challenge cannot rest with one organisation; it requires a partnership approach. This strategy has been developed through such a partnership involving many stakeholders.

We're not looking to turn everyone into an elite sports person, we are looking to use every lever at our disposal to support people to be less inactive so they have a better chance of living long, healthy and fulfilling lives.



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INTRODUCTION

Northumberland is a unique place, of coastline and castles with areas of outstanding natural beauty, of open spaces and a population with a proud social, cultural and economic heritage. According to national statistics, the average Northumberland resident is expected to live in good health until the age of 63, which is more than 75% of their lives.

However, this varies widely across the county. In some areas of Northumberland healthy life expectancy reaches 74 years but in other areas it is as low as 51 years. A significant factor contributing towards these health inequalities is physical inactivity, of which at the time of this strategy being written, levels are increasing in Northumberland.

At a personal level, physical activity is fun and sociable and helps people stay well, both physically and mentally. In every way, physical activity gets us outside the front door and connecting with others, avoiding social isolation and increasing social capital and community spirit. Increasing physical activity and reducing inactivity levels, has the potential to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities across Northumberland.

This strategy intends to use physical activity as a vehicle to reduce health inequalities in Northumberland and to help contribute towards the wider health, social, educational and economic priorities in the county. It is also designed to embed physical activity into daily routines and establish regular physical activity as the social norm across all age groups.

Getting the county moving every day is therefore the fundamental aim of this strategy.



THE INACTIVITY CHALLENGE FOR NORTHUMBERLAND

Population Breakdown

0-14 yrs	48,848
15-29	47,896
30-44	51,323
45-59	71,891
60-74	66,256
75-84	23,583
85+	9,233

64 (UK 427)
people per sq km

£6
MILLION
cost of inactivity
to the NHS in Northumberland

319,030
population over
5,013km²

Activity Levels in Adults (16+)

27.8% are inactive
(UK 25.2%) less than 30 mins of physical activity per week

12.0% are fairly active
(UK 12.5%) 30-149 minutes of physical activity per week

60.2% are active
(UK 62.3%) 150 or more minutes of physical activity per week



21.0%
of adults have a
long-term limiting
disability

609
deaths in Northumberland
are caused by inactivity
every year



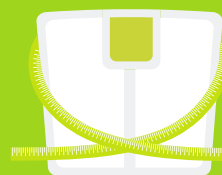
80 average life expectancy

63 average healthy life expectancy



89,798

people in a lower
socio-economic
group



33.0%
(UK 34.2%)

Year 6 children classed as
obese/overweight

17.2%
(UK 17.0%)

Children living
in poverty



THE COMPLEX NATURE OF INACTIVITY

Although anyone can be inactive, there are some stubborn inequalities within our society and we know some groups are less likely to take part on a regular basis. A priority for this strategy will therefore be to focus on developing a targeted approach through co-designed interventions that are tailored to the needs of identified priority groups across Northumberland.

There are a number of demographic groups who are currently under-represented in terms of their engagement with physical activity and sport in Northumberland. This includes groups such as women and girls, older people, disabled people, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities.

Through an extensive consultation process with local stakeholders, the following under-represented groups were subsequently identified as a priority for Northumberland:

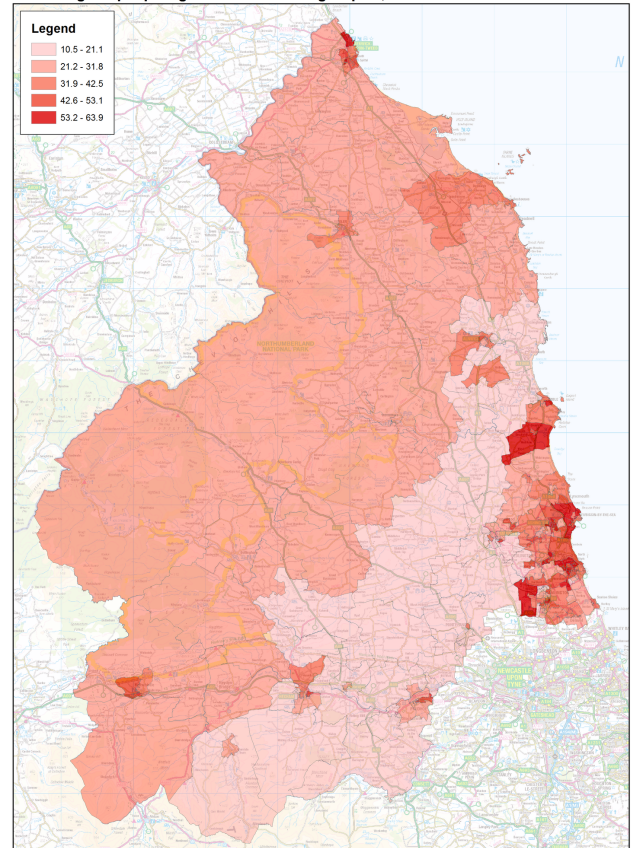
People in Lower Socio-Economic Groups

Sport England research shows that 35% of people in lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 6, 7 & 8) are inactive compared to 20% of people in higher socio-economic group (NS-SEC 1, & 3), who are typically from managerial or professional well paid occupations.

This large diverse group of people is not limited to those facing greater economic disadvantage or poverty. It includes people and families who sometimes, or often, struggle to make ends meet or "just about manage". It also includes people employed in 'semi-routine' jobs, like shop assistants, hairdressers and bus drivers; or people in 'routine' jobs, like waiters, cleaners and building labourers and is closely linked to household income and education as well as employment.

Almost a third of people in lower socio-economic groups in Northumberland (32%) also have a long-term limiting disability, compared to 21% of all adults. According to Sport England research, having a limiting disability impacts further upon inactivity levels, which increases from 33% to 43%.

Percentage of people ages 16+ in NS-SEC groups 6, 7 or 8

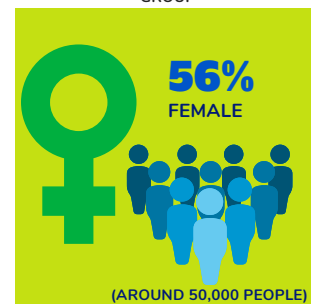


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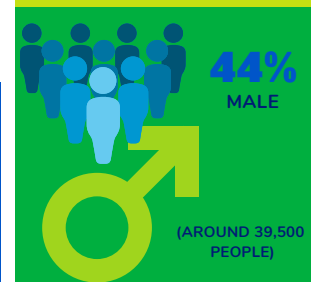
IN NORTHUMBRLAND

89,798 PEOPLE
IN A LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP



32.0%

30,172 people are INACTIVE



32.5%

29,199 people have a LONG TERM LIMITING DISABILITY

People with disabilities and/or long term health conditions

Insight from Sport England indicates that disabled people, including those with long term conditions or illness, both limiting and non limiting, are more likely to be inactive than other groups. In England 41% of men and 43% of women with a limiting illness or disability are inactive compared to 21% of people with no limiting illness or disability.

This strategy will use the social model term when referencing 'disabled people'. This term refers to people who have a long-standing and limiting disability or illness. These are impairments or health problems that limit or restrict activities in any way, in different areas of life. A person can have a long standing disability or illness without it being limiting. For the purposes of the implementation of this strategy, sometimes the two categories are classed as limiting and non-limiting.

The Northumberland Residents Survey (2015) identified over a third of residents (36%) have a limiting long-term health condition or disability. As Northumberland has an ageing population, research confirms that there will an increase in the proportion of disabled people, from both limiting and non limiting demographics. This strategy will therefore need to develop preventative solutions to combat this challenge.

Women and Girls

According to Sport England's research, normally there are fewer women (60%) than men (65%) who are regularly active. National data also indicates that whilst this gender gap is narrowing, it still exists in every age group.

National insight provided by Sport England identified that 27% of women are inactive, whilst the most recent data for Northumberland shows the local figure to be lower at 23.5%, which still accounts for approximately 44% of the inactive population.

The impact of this inactivity also correlates with our local health profiles, which show that whilst women typically have a longer life expectancy than men in Northumberland, they typically live longer with greater levels of ill-health, particularly long term lifestyle related illness.

To help facilitate the engagement with targeted female audiences, this strategy will harness the power of national campaigns linked to encouraging women and girls to get active e.g. embedding the learning and principles associated with Sport England's This Girl Can campaign at a local level.

The number of people aged 65 and over whose activities are limited a little is predicted to rise by 43% between 2014 and 2030. This percentage figure increases to 94% for those aged 85 and over.

Northumberland population age profile -
Northumberland County Council 2017



ADOPTING A LIFE COURSE APPROACH

There are many reasons for the continued epidemic of physical inactivity across the UK, which affect all age groups. Social and economic trends over decades have 'designed' physical activity out of daily life. Fewer of us have manual jobs.

Technology is becoming more and more dominant in the home and at work, the two places where most of us spend much of our time. Over-reliance on cars and other motorised transport is another factor. Our cities, towns, buildings and even parks too often work to discourage being active.

The design of schools, public buildings and urban spaces prioritise convenience and speed instead of encouraging people to walk or cycle. Concerns about vandalism and maintenance have also left public spaces without the benches and toilets that allow older or disabled people to venture out.

This strategy is therefore designed and underpinned by a life-course approach acknowledging that being active makes an important contribution at every stage of our lives. It also recognises that people's lifestyles and motivations towards physical activity vary at different stages. This may occur through significant change e.g. starting, changing or leaving school, seeking employment, changing jobs, being ill, moving house, suffering loss and bereavement etc. Where other cultural, social and economic factors (realities and temptations) compete or start to dictate, our energy is prioritised elsewhere.

A key aim for this strategy is about integrating incidental activity into our daily lives and taking the opportunity to make short everyday trips on foot, by bicycle or using public transport – as well as doing whatever local people enjoy in terms of physical activity or sport.

GIVING EVERY CHILD THE BEST START IN LIFE

Enabling all children to be active everyday for long term personal and social development

ADULTS LIVING WELL

Enabling more adults to choose and benefit from regular physical activity

ADULTS AGEING WELL

Increasing the number of people 55+ able to choose and benefit from regular physical activity

GIVING EVERY CHILD THE BEST START

In 2018 Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People Survey shows that around 3 million children (43.3%) nationally lead active lives, however of that group, only 1.2 million (17.5%) are meeting the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines of more than 60 minutes of activity a day, every day. In Northumberland, these levels are even lower at 16.3%.

Sport England research also indicates that in total, 39% of children in the least affluent families do fewer than 30 minutes of activity a day, compared to 26% of children from the most affluent families. An example of this is evidenced with 77% of all children being able to swim 25 metres unaided by the time they leave primary school, which drops to 42% for children from the least affluent families compared to 86% from the most affluent.

In Northumberland, a key priority for the 'Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy' is to ensure that a good health status positively affects educational performance and attainment.

Growing evidence shows that increased levels of physical activity and sport can be used to achieve wider outcomes linked to tackling childhood obesity; mental health and the development of life skills and increased emotional wellbeing for children and young people.

Following an extensive consultation exercise, to improve access and develop more opportunities for children and young people in Northumberland, a consensus was agreed to focus on:

- Supporting early years settings to consider how they create active, healthy environments that develop the physical literacy of all children, which provide opportunities to move more and sit less.
- Developing and improving communication messages on the levels of physical activity guidance, tailored to meet the different needs of children and young people aged between 0-19 years.
- Protecting, maintaining and investing in local safe green spaces, parks and playgrounds. Ensuring all children and young people have the freedom, time, space, permission and opportunity to play and be active, throughout their childhood and teenage years.
- Ensuring interventions and facilities are inclusive, fully accessible and represent the diverse communities in Northumberland.



ADULTS LIVING WELL

According to Sport England's Active Lives research (2018), 25.2% of adults aged 16+ are classified as 'inactive' nationally. In Northumberland, levels of inactivity are above the national average and rising, a trend which is in contrast to the national data, where inactivity has decreased between 2017-18.

Northumberland's demographic make-up and geography presents unique challenges to adults of all ages to engage with physical activity. As the county has the most dispersed population in England, access and use of facilities and transport is challenging. Significant life transitions can also affect people's health and wellbeing.

During the consultation process for developing this strategy, to help address these local challenges, empowering people and communities was identified as a positive change, supporting people and communities to identify and develop their skills, knowledge and their communities' assets.

To address barriers to participation amongst under-represented groups within this life-course phase, this strategy will focus on:

- Developing and improving communication messages on the levels of physical activity guidance, tailored to meet the different needs of adults aged between 20-54 years.
- Seeking to maintain and secure local assets that empower local communities to take ownership of their needs.
- Embedding the principles of 'Making Every Contact Count' for professionals in daily contact with members of the public.
- Working with Northumberland's Clinical Commissioning Group, GPs and Primary Care providers to prioritise physical activity and promote and encompass a 'more than medicine' approach.
- Developing a diverse network of community champions, using a 'People like Me' approach, that understand the needs of the participant and delivers excellent experiences.
- Using physical activity as a vehicle to improve the health and wellbeing of employees, which help improve productivity and reduce sickness and absenteeism.



ADULTS AGEING WELL

Sport England's Active Lives (2018) 'Spotlight on Older Adults' identifies that over half of all inactive people in England are aged 55 and over. Nationally, inactive people aged 55+ represent a large and diverse group of approximately 6.4 million people.

Northumberland has an ageing population, with 38.9% of the adult population aged 55+. It is predicted that by 2035 the dependency ratio of pensionable aged population against working aged population will be 54.8%, compared to 34.4% nationally, which is one of the highest in the country.

In Northumberland, the average life expectancy for women is 82 years and for men, 79 years. However, the 'healthy life expectancy' varies significantly between 74 years in some of the more affluent areas compared to 51 years in the less affluent. This inequality is likely to be accompanied by a larger proportion of people living with long term health conditions including more people living with dementia.

The ageing population face additional challenges in Northumberland, as increasingly older people are living in rural areas by choice. These additional challenges include access to services, transport and facilities which would encourage them typically to be more active.

Through our consultation exercise, to improve access and develop more opportunities for older people in Northumberland, a partnership consensus agreed that this strategy focus on:

- Co-designing local interventions that consider the impact of rurality and access to more structured physically active network of opportunities for older people.
- Ensuring physical activity is used as a vehicle to reduce loneliness and social isolation.
- Developing and improving communication messages on the levels of physical activity guidance, tailored to meet the different needs of adults aged 55+ years.
- Addressing the misconception that physical activity is 'not for old people' and providing clarity on the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations for older people's physical activity requirements.
- Adopting an asset based approach for using physical activity as a preventative solution to addressing the needs of Northumberland's older population. For example, developing social prescribing approaches that enable GPs, nurses and other health and social care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical physical activity opportunities.



A WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH TO TACKLING INACTIVITY

To tackle the issue of inactivity in Northumberland, there was overwhelming support during the consultation process, to utilise a whole system approach to developing a long term strategy, through until 2028. As part of this approach, four 'strategic tactics' were identified, which enabled a multi-agency, collaborative approach to be developed, with the primary shared purpose of reducing inactivity. These are outlined as follows:

Active Policy

This tactic aims to influence and embed physical activity as a driver for health, economic and social change across all relevant policies, strategies and commissioned contracts in Northumberland.

This tactic will also aim to establish simple, effective messages that advocate the benefits of physical activity at a senior level across public, private and voluntary sectors.

Active Place

This tactic aims to utilise the stunning natural environment (green and blue space) that Northumberland has to offer, as a fantastic resource to encourage people to change their behaviours and lead a more active and healthier lifestyle.

This tactic will also aim to embed the principles of 'active design' into the development of new homes, towns and infrastructure to provide safe, inclusive places to play and be active.

Active Society

This tactic aims to utilise a life-course approach, which will be insight led with interventions delivered by inspirational and appropriately skilled people that are representative of their communities. This approach is also designed to enable positive and sustained behaviour change across Northumberland.

This tactic will ensure safeguarding, inclusion and diversity remain core to the delivery of the strategy, which results in high quality, safe and accessible opportunities for all.

Active Enablers

This tactic underpins the implementation of the whole strategy by empowering people and communities through the creation of a more diverse workforce, being insight led with a robust joint marketing and communications campaign.

This will also be underpinned by an outcomes framework, which helps to track progress and use learning to build momentum to target inactive audiences more effectively.



WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

The strategy will be driven through shorter term implementation phases, the first being 2018-21, which will be underpinned as highlighted in this document, by a multi-agency approach to tackling inactivity.

It also recognises the significant challenge in measuring impact and return on investment against strategic priorities. Northumberland Sport will continue to lead on the implementation of this strategy with partners to support better evaluation of local interventions.

The long term vision for this strategy in Northumberland is that by 2028:

- The year on year rising trend of inactivity is halted, leading to a decline in line with the national averages.
- There will be a reduction with inequalities experienced in Northumberland by people from lower socio-economic groups, people with a disability or long term health condition and women and girls.
- Physical activity is recognised as a strategic driver for change across health, social, education and economic outcomes.
- Momentum will be generated through a collective effort and change across 'the whole system' which establishes being active everyday as the norm or 'convention'. This recognises that changing people's behaviours is crucial to achieving desired outcomes linked to getting people more active.
- A diverse, appropriately skilled workforce is in place which meets the needs of local communities inline with the 'Northumberland Workforce Framework 2018-2028'.
- This strategy is utilised to lever in additional investment into Northumberland, which is utilised to target under-represented groups across Northumberland.
- A genuine collaborative leadership approach will be fully embedded to tackle inactivity, which is recognised nationally as an outstanding area of innovative, best practice.

In summary, this strategy recognises that physical inactivity presents a significant challenge for Northumberland and through a targeted approach and universal offer, demonstrates the commitment to a multi-agency approach to achieving shared outcomes that help improve the lives of inactive people across the county.

Further further information about any aspect this strategy, please contact Northumberland Sport by email at northumberlandsport@northumberland.gov.uk or telephone on 01670 623515.

