

# Northumberland Physical Activity Strategy 2018 - 2028

## Final Consultation

### Introduction

Welcome to the Northumberland Physical Activity Strategy - Getting Everyone More Active for Life.

Physical activity is vital for our physical and mental health and wellbeing. It is also a vital component of supporting our communities to live healthy, connected and independent lives. This strategy has been developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders and sets out our framework for supporting everyone in Northumberland to be More Active for Life by 2028.

### About Northumberland

Northumberland is the 6th largest county in the UK with an estimated population of 316,116. The majority of the population is concentrated around Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington, Morpeth, Alnwick, Hexham and Berwick. It is the most sparsely populated county in England having on average of 63 people per km<sup>2</sup> with 49% living in rural areas compared to 18.9% across England. The distance from the most northerly point to the westerly point is 99 miles which translates to over a 2 hour car journey.

Whilst there are some areas of significant prosperity in Northumberland there are also a number of areas that are very deprived. There are also large tracts of rural areas with small populations but high levels of social isolation and loneliness and limited access to local services, public transport and schools.

The geography of Northumberland poses many challenges for the county and growing inactivity levels (people doing 0x30 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week) contribute to some of the challenges facing our communities. The latest figures produced by Sport England Active Lives in October 2018 (diagram 1) shows our inactivity rates grew to 27.8%, as people who were previously active fell out of regular activity.

We have used local and national insight to help map our inactive communities within Northumberland. Some of these may be defined by geography whilst others will be defined by communities of interest.

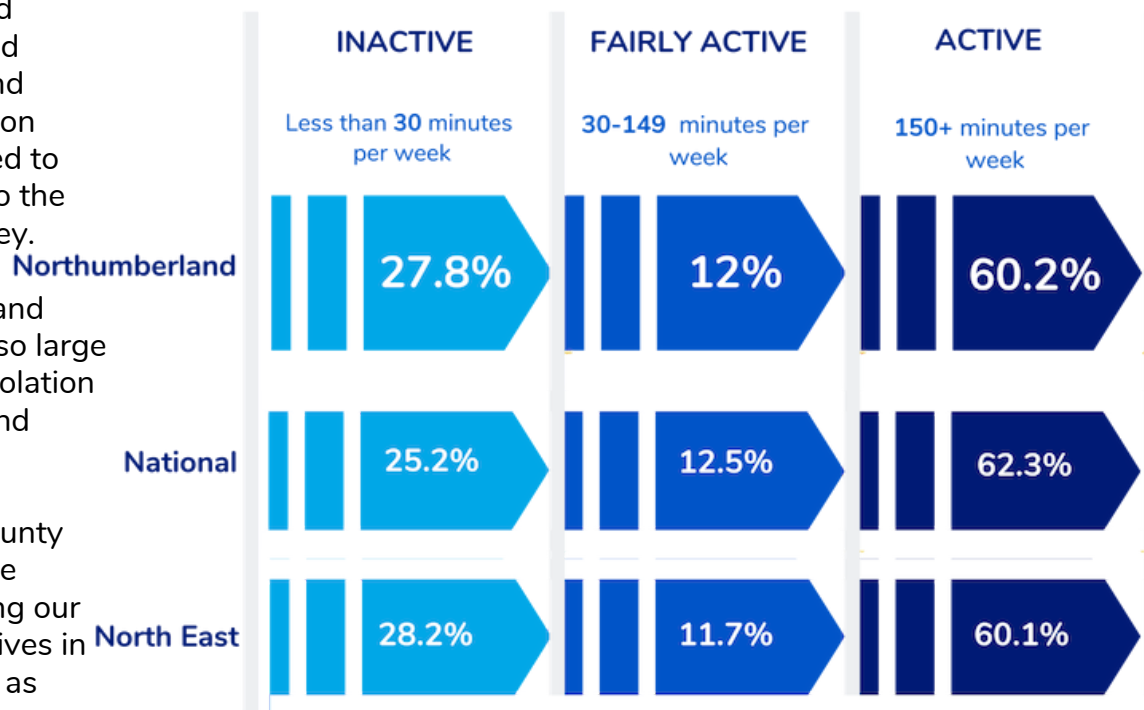


Diagram 1

# Our journey to developing a Physical Activity Strategy for Northumberland

Northumberland Sport asked to lead a multi-agency approach on the development of a 10 year Physical Activity Strategy

Cost of inactivity in Northumberland is £6 million

Physical Activity Strategy Steering Group established

There are 72,161 inactive adults in Northumberland

Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life partner consultation event

December 2017

January 2018

June 2018

September 2018

July 2018

July 2018

Healthy life expectancy age gap of 22 years for men and 21 years for women

Living Well partner consultation event

Ageing Well partner consultation event

Focus group with primary school children

Reestablishment of the County Walking & Cycling Board

October 2018

November 2018

February 2019

Feedback session with key partners

Active Lives Survey results published

Final draft Physical Activity Strategy presented for consultation

Physical activity is a key component included within "Health in All" policies local authority event

Physical Activity Strategy to be presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board



## What key stakeholders told us

Availability  
 Perception  
 Prevention  
 Confusion  
 Dis-jointed  
 Flexibility  
 Cost Barriers  
 Support  
 Busy-Lives  
 Fear  
 Rurality

## Consultation

We have taken a life course approach in the development of this strategy and to support this we held three consultation events with key stakeholders; "Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life", "Living Well" and "Ageing Well". This is what key stakeholders told us:

### Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life

- Use key contact points with parents from an early age (ideally antenatal) to promote physical activity i.e. midwives, health visitors, nursery staff.
- 0-19 is a wide age range and messages and information (and communication methods) will be different across the age range.
- Green spaces, parks and playgrounds are important facilities for this age group and need maintenance/investment for improvement.
- Support is needed for appropriate SEND facilities to promote inclusive physical activity opportunities and increase participation.
- Use key partners, known and trusted by children and young people, to promote physical activity and its benefits.

### Living Well

- A range of peer support groups exist to facilitate the engagement of people into physical activity e.g. These Girls Can Run, carers groups, service support groups etc.
- Organisations who are not directly delivering or providing physical activity are happy to see themselves as "sign posters" to physical activity.
- Planning, Transport and Community Regeneration departments etc in the local authority; Charities including Sustrans; Town and Parish Councils all have a key role to play in the design of active environments.
- Use physical activity as a tool to support recovery for those referred into specific services such as alcohol recovery and mental health.
- Workplaces are key drivers for the physical activity agenda, and staff need time and flexibility to be physically active, as well as improved facilities in the workplace.

### Ageing Well

- Rurality is an issue for those wanting to access more structured physical activity opportunities and facilities.
- Messages to promote physical activity often centre around leisure centre activities which are often not age appropriate e.g. someone in their 20's/30's dressed in sports clothing.
- Technology can be used to get key messages across a range of social media platforms.
- There is often misconception across the older population that physical activity is either: not for them, requires a certain level of fitness, is only provided by leisure centres, is too difficult and is only beneficial if done at a high intensity.



# Action

During the consultation sessions stakeholders told us they want the following to be considered:

## Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life

- Make the best use of family friendly activities with suitable promotion.
- Develop a clear information package relevant to age group(s) which supports an already busy family life.
- Ensure that individuals and organisations are able, when appropriate, to be signposted to local activities.
- Work with children and young people in the design and development of activities they want to participate in.
- Where barriers exist e.g. reluctance to attend local leisure centres, work with children and young people and organisations to remove barriers (both actual and perceived).
- Work with schools to create physically active environments and promote activities to improve the wellbeing of children and young people.

## Ageing Well

- Link physical activity to the Ageing Well agenda.
- Messages around physical activity for older people must be: age appropriate, resonate with older people, use "people like us", focus on key life events that can present barriers to older people e.g. retirement, becoming grandparents and receiving a medical diagnosis.
- Use Making Every Contact Count (MECC) to facilitate key messages and start physical activity conversations across a range of roles to support patients and customers e.g. carers, volunteers, social care staff, tradesmen and customer service staff.
- Adopt social prescribing for an active life to enable GPs and primary care staff to refer patients into activities to increase levels of physical activity.

## What stakeholders want us to do



## Living Well

- Where local assets are no longer priorities for organisations such as Northumberland County Council/Arch/National Trust, look at asset transfers to small community groups or development trusts/CVS.
- MECC training for those with daily contact with the public e.g. handymen in the housing sector, receptionists, hospital staff, local authorities.
- A directory of available activities to signpost people towards, which raises awareness of local opportunities to be physically active.
- Develop a clear message, particularly for those who are inactive, as to what counts, why do it and what are the benefits of being physically active.
- Work with Clinical Commissioning Groups, GPs and primary care providers to prioritise physical activity as a tool to prevent and to support those with existing long term health health conditions.
- Adopt a community asset based approach with the design, delivery and venue for physical activity in the community.



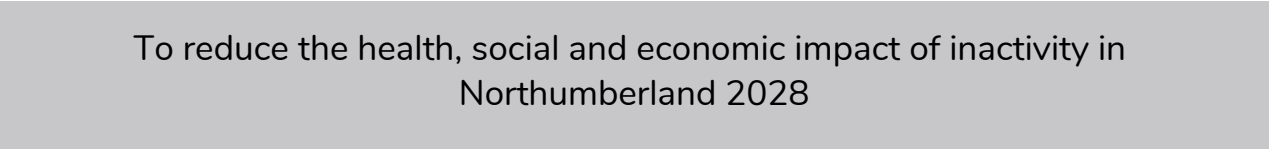


# Strategy Framework

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES



THROUGH OUR VISION



AT EVERY STAGE OF PEOPLE'S LIVES



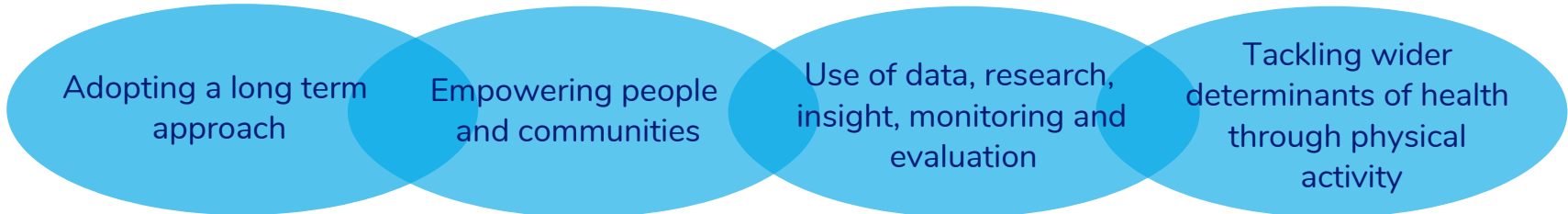
USING ENABLERS ACROSS THE "WHOLE SYSTEM"



FOCUSING ON



LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR WHAT WE DO



# Our tactics

To be successful we need to embed physical activity into the daily routines of everyone, making it the norm to be active. To do this we need to make physical activity an easy choice to ensure it is affordable and make it easy to find and access.

Following feedback from our key stakeholders we have developed the following "tactics" which will provide a platform centred on a "whole system approach" to effectively tackle inactivity at a local level.

## Active Policy

- Policy Revision - Utilising the Health in All policies approach adopted by Northumberland County Council to influence Northumberland strategies, policies and commissioned contracts to support people to become and stay active.
- Conversations - Make physical activity part of the conversations across the public, private and voluntary sectors in Northumberland. Embedding the MECC approach, making it everyone's business to address inactivity.

## Active Place

- We will continue to embed the principle of active design into Northumberland planning policy.
- We will maximise the use of green and blue space across Northumberland to make physical activity easy to choose and access.
- We will encourage more people to be more active by maximising active travel options and improving the cycling and walking infrastructure.

## Active People - Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life

- We will raise awareness of and embed the UK Chief Medical Officer physical activity guidelines into the practice of the children and young people's workforce.
- We will embed the [Northumberland PE & School Sport Alliance](#) across all early years and education settings in Northumberland.
- We will support the development of effective transitions and pathways for children and young people to continue an active lifestyle between school and community settings.
- We will prioritise the development of a more joined up approach outside of the school curriculum, utilising physical activity to address mental and physical health issues (including obesity) in children and young people.

## Active People - Living Well

- We will prioritise the role of physical activity in supporting prevention and early intervention of people (aged 35-55 years) with, or at risk of developing, long term health conditions.
- We will support those who are already active to maintain their active habit, particularly during key life transition points.
- We will make active workplaces the norm in supporting people to lead more active lifestyles and use physical activity to support people out of work to become and remain economically active.

## Active People - Ageing Well

- We will embed physical activity within the Ageing Well Alliance to support wellbeing and reduce isolation of our ageing community.
- We will embed physical activity into care pathways to reduce the impact on those living with long term health conditions.

## Active Society - Workforce (Paid & Voluntary)

- We will utilise the principles associated with Making Every Contact Count (MECC) to create a culture where physical activity becomes "everyone's business".
- We will develop a diverse and inclusive workforce which incorporates more "people like me" with the skills, competencies and behaviours to engage a diverse range of people into physical activity and sport.
- We will develop excellent experiences to establish attractive volunteering, coaching, education, employment and career pathways to support delivery of high quality provision.
- We will seek to raise the profile of the wider workforce to ensure this is recognised for the excellent service provided to participants and external stakeholders.

## Evidence, Data & Insight

- We will utilise local and national evidence and insight linked to inactivity and apply this in Northumberland.
- We will commission local research to address gaps within our intelligence base, to help build the business case for future development.

## Action Plan

To support the development of the strategy, an Action Plan will be developed for an initial period until April 2021.

## Active People - Inclusive Approach

- We will address the inequalities that exist between demographic groups and geographical communities across all age groups in Northumberland.
- We will utilise insight to target inactive population groups and geographical communities.
- We will utilise an asset based approach using Locality Coordinators to support Community Champions to develop, promote and support physical activity in local communities.

## Active Society - Marketing & Communication

- We will develop simple but consistent messages the whole workforce can use to remove confusion about:
  - How active people should be
  - The benefits of being active
  - What is appropriate physical activity
- We will develop a coordinated approach to promoting opportunities and making it easy for people to find out what is available at a local level.

## Evaluation

- We will develop and implement a consistent evaluation framework to understand and demonstrate the social and economic impact of reducing physical inactivity.



## Have your say

To provide feedback on this draft consultation document please complete the online feedback form at;

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PJWCM2R>

If you would like to speak to a member of the Northumberland Sport team regarding this document please call the team on 01670 623515 or email [northumberlandsport@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:northumberlandsport@northumberland.gov.uk).

