Annual Public Health Report:
Active Living

November 2015
Foreword

The Hounslow Health and Wellbeing Board adopted ‘active living’ as one of its priority themes for the years 2013 – 2017. Over one quarter of adults in Hounslow fail to achieve even thirty minutes of physical activity in an average week – despite the recommended level being around 150 minutes per week – and are classified as being ‘physically inactive’. This has serious consequences for our local population, with considerable short- and long-term impacts on both physical and mental health.

This year’s Annual Public Health Report presents the evidence on why we need to tackle physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour, and is intended to kick-start a discussion with residents and key partners on how we can better work together to reduce the high levels of physical inactivity in our borough.

We know from other countries that we can improve levels of physical activity, but that it will require a concerted and sustained effort across all sectors. Partnership working is essential if we are going to make physical activity fun, social and easier to integrate into our daily routines. This report presents a framework to consider the evidence for which interventions may work best for our residents, and sets a vision for the Health and Wellbeing Board to lead a campaign across a range of partners and agencies in Hounslow to halve the levels of physical inactivity over the next decade.

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# Key terms

The following key terms and their definitions have been used in this report:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Physical activity</strong></td>
<td>Body movement that expends energy and raises the heart rate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inactivity</strong></td>
<td>Less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week</td>
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<td><strong>Sedentary</strong></td>
<td>Time spent in low energy postures, e.g. sitting or laying down</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Everyday activity</strong></td>
<td>Activities such as walking, cycling, housework, and active or manual work</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Active recreation</strong></td>
<td>Activities such as dance, yoga, active play, recreational walking or cycling</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sport</strong></td>
<td>Activities such as swimming, rowing, fitness training, climbing, parkour, tennis, athletics, organised team activities</td>
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1. Inactivity and sedentary behaviour

Around half of all women and one-third of all men in England are damaging their health through a lack of physically activity. Physical inactivity is the fourth largest cause of death and disability in the UK, and costs society an estimated £7.4 billion a year through health and social care costs. In Hounslow, it is a key risk factor for dying below the age of 75 years (known as a ‘premature death’): physical inactivity indirectly caused 1,668 premature deaths in Hounslow between 2011 and 2013.¹

Only half of adults in Hounslow meet the Chief Medical Officer’s guideline of 150 minutes of physical activity per week, and one quarter of adults in Hounslow (27%) fail to achieve even 30 minutes of physical activity over the course of a week, which makes them ‘physically inactive’. Worryingly, levels of activity are continuing to fall, and as a society we are 24% less active today than we were in the 1960s.

Rapid changes to our social and work environments encourage sedentary behaviour, and for many, reduce opportunities to build activity into our daily routines. More than 40% of women and 35% of men now spend more than six hours a day sitting or being desk-bound. We know that this harms the health of even those who exercise on a regular basis. At the same time, rates of walking are falling and almost two-thirds of all journeys are made by car.

Changing social trends are also affecting how our children play at school and in their spare time. The Hounslow Children and Young People Survey 2014 identified that only 12% of primary school pupils and 4% of secondary school pupils actually met government guidelines (60 minutes every day) of physical activity for children.

Not everyone has the same access to opportunities to make active recreation or sport a routine part of life. A Physical Activity and Sports Needs Assessment² in Hounslow highlighted that:

- By the age of 75, only 1 in 10 men and 1 in 20 women are active enough to maintain good health;
- People from the least prosperous areas are twice as likely to be inactive as those from the most prosperous areas;
- People with a disability are twice as likely to be inactive as those who have no disability;
- Rates of physical activity in girls begin to drop off around the time of entry into secondary school, which is not the case compared to boys.

Tackling physical inactivity is crucial if we want to help improve the quality of life and wellbeing of local people. We know that increasing rates of physical activity can help reduce rates of key diseases and conditions including depression, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension and obesity. The health benefits of physical activity for older people often mean they are able to maintain everyday activities and lead more independent lives for much longer.

We know from other countries that we can improve levels of physical activity in our population, but what is required is a concerted and sustained effort across all sectors and partners.

Physical activity benefits for adults and older adults

**Benefits Health**
- Improves sleep
- Maintains healthy weight
- Manages stress
- Improves quality of life

Reduces your chance of:
- Type 2 Diabetes -40%
- Cardiovascular Disease -35%
- Falls, Depression and Dementia -30%
- Joint and Back Pain -25%
- Cancers (Colon and Breast) -20%

What should you do?

**For a healthy heart and mind**
- Be Active
  - Vigorous: Run, Sport, Stairs, Swim
  - Moderate: Walk, Cycle

**To keep your muscles, bones and joints strong**
- Sit Less
  - TV, Sofa, Computer
- Build Strength
  - GYM, Yoga, Tai Chi
- Improve Balance
  - Dance, Carry Bags, Bowls

**Minutes per week**
- Vigorous: 75 or
- Moderate: 150

**Break up sitting time**
- 2 days per week

Something is better than nothing.
Start small and build up gradually:
just 10 minutes at a time provides benefit.
MAKE A START TODAY: it’s never too late!

2. Building a local response

A vision for Hounslow

Many may perceive high levels of physical inactivity as part of the status quo for an outer London borough with a large diverse community and pockets of relative deprivation. However, we want to build on Hounslow's assets in terms of our green spaces and community assets, to build a partnership that can challenge those perceptions and drive an evidence-based approach that will help to dramatically reduce our levels of inactivity.

Our vision is for all relevant partners and agencies – spearheaded by the Hounslow Health and Wellbeing Board, but not limited to those members – to work in partnership to halve levels of physical inactivity amongst residents over the next ten years. This will result in more than 27,000 fewer people being classified as physically inactive by 2025.

Getting out the right message

When we talk of becoming physically active, many of us may think of the need to sign up for a gym membership or the need to wear Lycra™ to take part in formal sport or an exercise class. However, for many people that is a leap too far and these kind of perceptions can stop people from committing to making a positive change. It’s important to stress that being physically active is much wider than just active recreation or taking part in a formal sport.

Put simply, being physically active is all about ensuring that we build in movement into our everyday lives. It means thinking about how we can reduce the time we spend every day being sedentary – sitting behind a desk, on our laptops or phone, or travelling in a vehicle. We need to consider how we can build in activities, such as walking or cycling, into our daily routines. We also need to consider how we can best spend our limited leisure time to include active recreation or a sport.

We know that simple activities such as walking or cycling for short periods of time can have a big impact on our physical and mental wellbeing. Indeed, just 150 minutes of brisk walking a week are enough to meet the current national adult physical activity guidelines. We also know that even smaller amounts of regular activity can have real benefits, and importantly, all the evidence indicates that the people who are the most inactive will benefit the most from small changes to their lifestyle. So the messages that we need to push to tackle inactivity are to ‘start simple and build up gradually’ and ‘anything is better than nothing’!

Building on our assets

Hounslow has more green space than many London boroughs, which includes 208 parks and open spaces, 34 allotment sites, 95 play areas and 137 outdoor sports facilities and pitches,
covering 7.2 million metres\(^2\) of land. These open spaces are owned or co-owned and managed by the council, the National Trust or private land owners.

The draft Leisure and Culture Strategy highlights our green space network as a fantastic asset to increase levels of physical activity. In addition, the council’s leisure centres have seen a 23% increase in attendances over the last two years. Whilst revenue budgets are getting tighter, the council has made significant improvements to local facilities in the recent years, including:

- 14 parks and allotments awarded the Green Flag Award which recognises and rewards the best green spaces in the country;
- A new children’s adventure park secured at Hounslow Heath Golf Club site, featuring indoor and outdoor adventure play facilities, a golf course, driving range and high ropes and zip line course;
- Over £700,000 invested into shared use pathways in and around parks and open spaces: River Crane Lands, Hanworth Airpark, Duke of Northumberland’s River, Pevensy Road Open Space, and Bedfont Links;
- 26 play areas refurbished or built since 2010, at a cost of £3.7 million;
- Refurbishment of five leisure centres and a further £13.5 million investment in a new state of the art leisure centre at Heston due to open in November 2015;
- Heston Park redevelopment of £1,140,000 to be completed by the end of 2015; and
- Planning application to be submitted imminently for Gunnersbury Park Sports Hub for a £10 million sport and physical activity facility. The site will be the biggest outdoor sport and physical activity facility in West London and has been highlighted as being of strategic importance by both Sport England and the Football Association boards.

In order to meet the challenge of physical inactivity in our population, we need to move beyond investment from the council to consider how we can work in partnership to secure external funding, and also how we can work together to engage local communities and people to take up opportunities to use the facilities that we already have.

The Community Sports and Physical Activity Network (CSPAN), which is co-ordinated and managed by the council, has successfully brought together local partners such as Brentford Football Club, Indian Gymkhana, Grasshoppers, St Mary’s University, Sport Impact and Fusion. In the past three years, this network has secured in excess of £1 million in revenue funding to deliver sport and physical activity programmes across the borough, targeting various priority groups and areas.

We now have the potential to use our physical assets and our successful CSPAN network to forge a wider partnership between the council, private sector, and wider public sector to make a real impact on physical inactivity amongst our local residents.
3. Everybody active, everyday

To build an effective and sustained partnership approach to tackle inactivity, we need an agreed common framework from which all partners can work from. The Everybody active, everyday framework, published by Public Health England in 2014, seeks to give local areas a practical roadmap to consider the interventions to making a real impact on the ground. The framework provides a structure to enable the council, NHS, schools, businesses, the voluntary sector, and most importantly residents to begin to make the changes to live more actively. The framework has four domains:

1. Active society: creating a social movement
2. Moving professionals: activating networks of expertise
3. Active environments: creating the right spaces
4. Moving at scale: scaling up interventions that make us active

Active society

What is it? The idea behind creating an active society is to make being active a normal part of everyday living, by building activity into the places we live and work. This involves effective communication of the active living message through long-term media campaigns, providing our communities and individuals with a variety of opportunities, equipping them with the tools to enable communities to become empowered to make changes.

What have we done or what can we implement? In 2014, Hounslow supported the Change 4 Life ‘10 minute shake up’ campaign. Through localising the campaign, engaging partners, and some simple promotion on the back of the national campaign, we saw young people undertake over 172,000 minutes of activity over the six week period. The support and engagement of more partners to promote campaigns like this could start turning this 172,000 minutes into one million.

We all spend the majority of our time at school or work. It is important that wherever possible, we incorporate being active into our working day. Many people are not just inactive, but completely sedentary even 10 hours a day which has serious implications for our wellbeing. Employers have a responsibility to ensure they create a working environment that encourages and allows staff to get up and move around, for example providing sit / stand desks and encouraging lunch breaks or installing showers.

There is the potential to create an army of people that can champion active living if we support these people to engage and spread the message.

Moving professionals

What is it? Who are the influencers in society, the people we all trust and whose advice and support we value? Doctors, nurses, religious leaders, police, carers, receptionists and teachers are among those that have contact with all of us every day and can help to spread the word about the benefits of active living. We need to engage with and educate these groups of individuals to broaden their understanding of physical activity and the role it plays in health improvement and general wellbeing, so they in turn can spread this message.

What have we done or what can we implement?
In Hounslow, the Sport Impact Teacher Training programme provides physical activity training for around 400 teachers at all 54 primary schools, reaching over 3,000 pupils.

A good example of how we can ‘move professionals’ is the Stockport ‘Train the Trainer’ programme. Through this programme, frontline staff were given training which increased their knowledge of local public health issues and their knowledge of the services available and gave them the confidence to address lifestyle concerns through conversations with clients.

Active environments

What is it? How readily does our street, neighbourhood or town allow us to lead an active lifestyle? Can we walk to the local park without negotiating a major road? Do we feel safe enough to cycle to work? Nationally, we are all being encouraged to use active forms of travel instead of getting in the car. Active environments are about the bigger picture, providing communities with inclusive, safe and healthy environments, ensuring people can walk, bike, exercise and play through policy and environmental changes.

What have we done or what can we implement? We are working hard to make our parks and open spaces more attractive and accessible places for people to walk, bike, play and be active. Recent investments in Avenue Park and Heston Park have been made, with a further £1.4 million planned. Key strategic sites to be developed, with a focus on sport and physical activity, include Redlees, Dukes Meadow, Feltham, and Gunnersbury Parks. Hounslow is in the process of implementing Greenways, a network of accessible routes for cyclists and walkers across our parks and open spaces that include providing safe and car-free surroundings.

A good example of what we could do is a project in Camden called Active Spaces. A £1 million project funded through a partnership between the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health has led to the implementation of original, imaginative, challenging and never-before-seen structures in the playgrounds. Schools are taking full ownership to maximise school and
community use and are supported to build new relationships with the local community to inspire organisations to be more active.

**Moving at scale**

**What is it?** We have some fantastic programmes, activities and examples of how people can be more active from across the country. Moving at scale is about identifying fully validated and evaluated projects and scaling them up so they can reach a wider audience increasing their impact. Evidence has shown that positive change needs to happen at every level, to everyone, in all communities.

**What have we done or what can we implement?** In 2015, we delivered a project called ‘Beat the Street’ with a simple aim: to encourage children and their families to walk more. Twenty-one schools and many community groups across Feltham, Heston and Cranford took part and earned points by swiping cards on ‘Beat Boxes’ located across the local area. Over 11,000 children and their families participated, and walked over 40,000 miles during the 6-week challenge. The challenge sparked several resident-led activities including themed walks, community breakfasts and art and drama workshops in schools.

By engaging a significant proportion of the community and making every day walking more visible, Beat the Street is helping to establish walking as a new social norm: from the children who refused to be driven home from school as they wanted to walk, to the elderly residents who added a short walk around the block into their daily routine. We aim to scale up Beat the Street to all areas of the borough from September 2016, to help lift thousands of residents out of inactivity and get the whole borough walking more.

Nationally, over 70,000 people walk as part of the Walking for Health programme and there are over 10,000 volunteers. In Hounslow we are working hard to scale up our health walks by making it a key priority of our newly commissioned wellbeing service (from April 2016). Through delivery of this programme we can increase the number of people that walk, thus creating an active society, helping to make walking a normal part of life in the borough.
4. Next steps

We will use this report to kick-start a series of discussions with partners, ranging from the public, private and voluntary sectors, focusing on what more we could do together to promote physical activity for local residents.

Using the Everybody active, everyday framework, these workshops will lead to the development of a borough-wide action plan to promote active living which will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in April 2016. This partnership plan will enable the Health and Wellbeing Board to lead and monitor a collaborative approach to increase physical activity across the whole population, while paying special attention to targeted groups such as girls and young women, those living with a disability, and residents living in priority areas, as identified by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

What we promise to do:

- Deliver a new integrated wellbeing service for Hounslow which will provide information and advice on lifestyle issues including physical activity for all residents.
- Work with frontline council staff to ensure that as many staff as possible are aware of where to go to find information on physical activity and are confident to signpost residents appropriately.
- Continue to invest in parks and open spaces facilities in a strategic way to maximise opportunities for active recreation and leisure time.
- Open the new refurbished Heston Leisure Centre in December 2015.
- Work with our leisure centre providers, carers and older people to ensure that council facilities and gyms are accessible for older people and those with a disability.

What we promise to do, working with our partners:

- Begin a series of open workshops and discussions to engage partners, including NHS, public sector and local organisations, to identify how we could work together to promote active living. This will include identifying key, evidence-based interventions that local partners believe have the potential to be scaled-up across the borough.
- Increase the capacity of local sports clubs to attract external funding via working through CSPAN and local sports networks.
- Build on the Beat the Streets pilot to deliver stronger partnerships with schools to promote active living through active travel and play.
- Engage with the wider voluntary sector to encourage new sections of the community to take up active recreation and leisure including women and girls, particularly those from Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, and people with a disability.
- Work with Public Health England to keep abreast of emerging evidence on what works, and evaluate the impact of our local interventions.
### Appendix 1:

**Chief Medical Office’s guidelines on physical activity**

**Early years (under 5 years)**
- Physical activity should be encouraged from birth, particularly through floor-based play and water-based activities in safe environments.
- Children of pre-school age who are capable of walking unaided should be physically active daily for at least 180 minutes (three hours), spread throughout the day.
- All under 5s should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (being restrained or sitting) for extended periods (except time spent sleeping).

These guidelines are relevant to all children under 5 years, irrespective of gender, race or socio-economic status, but should be interpreted with consideration for individual physical and mental capabilities.

**Children and young people (5 to 18 years)**
- All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.
- Vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week.
- All children and young people should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

Based on the evidence, the guidelines can be applied to disabled children and young people, emphasising that they need to be adjusted for each individual based on that person’s exercise capacity and any special health issues or risks.

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**Adults**

- Adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in blocks of ten minutes or more – one way to approach this is to do 30 minutes on at least five days a week.
- Alternatively, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity, spread across the week or a combination of moderate and vigorous intensity activity.
- Adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.
- All adults should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

Based on the evidence, the guidelines can be applied to disabled adults, emphasising that they need to be adjusted for each individual, based on that person’s exercise capacity and any special health or risk issues.