

**YOU'VE  
GOT  
THIS.**

## **The Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel**

Our insight with older people



## **You've Got This: Our ambition for healthier, happier communities.**

### **Briefing Paper for the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel**

#### **Background to the You've Got This programme**

Physical inactivity costs the NHS in the UK around £1 billion per year and is responsible for 1 in six deaths per year. The numbers of people living with long term health conditions such as Type II Diabetes and obesity are rising each year, placing greater strain on already dwindling resources in the NHS and local authorities.

'Sporting Futures: a new strategy towards an active nation' was launched by the government in 2015 and for the first time, outlined not only the significant positive benefits of physical activity for **physical health** but also; **mental wellbeing, individual development, economic development and social & community development**. Soon after, in July 2016, Sport England announced their strategy which outlined their priority of exploring better ways to address the barriers that prevent the inactive (less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week) becoming active, such as social and cultural issues, personal safety, knowledge, motivation and confidence.

Through a highly competitive selection process, 12 areas were selected as national pilot places. Although each area committed to tackling inactivity in very different ways; the common elements that each pilot had to demonstrate were:

- **whole system change approach (personal, social and structural)**
- **distributed leadership and**
- **a specific focus on behaviour change.**

This funding was to be invested in these places over four years to create innovative and experimental solutions to tackle inactivity.

Our pilot created a collaborative partnership, reflecting a diverse, cross-sector membership to provide not only governance and strategic direction, but also to contribute, knowledge, experience and resource into the programme. The partnership encompasses more than the traditional physical activity and sport sector, with voluntary groups, social enterprises, primary care providers and commissioners, private sector businesses, faith organisations and housing associations all getting behind the programme.

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council acts as the accountable body for our partnership. Our proposal focuses on two key elements.

The first element takes a whole community approach to increasing physical activity in four of the wards across the boundary of the two boroughs, focusing first on specific age groups:

- Grangetown (adults)
- South Bank (Children/Youth transition)
- North Ormesby (Older People)
- Thorntree & Brambles (Children)

These wards were identified not only because of the significant levels of need and the stubborn health inequalities that prevail in these places, but also because of the assets, resilience and potential we believe is being unlocked within these communities.

The second element across the whole of South Tees outlines four specific “communities of interest”, hidden across the whole area and not geographically defined:

- People waiting for some types of surgery; we know that physical activity before surgery can improve their outcomes. Many people receiving orthopaedic surgery are older people.
- People with or at risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes; physical activity can reduce the risk or help ease the effects of the condition.
- People accessing commercial weight loss services, as these often look more at changing eating habits rather than increasing physical activity.
- Working with health professionals to change behaviour and build capacity to utilise physical activity as a clinical pathway.

#### **Focus Wards: Baseline Data**

Our first key task was to establish the current position in relation levels of physical activity, use of open spaces, active travel, social cohesion and personal capacity with residents in these wards. We utilised the capacity and networks of organisations and individuals; housing, voluntary and community organisations, health workers and ward members, to raise the profile of the programme and utilise the trusted connections these organisations and individuals have with residents to complete the baseline questionnaires. This approach was supplemented where needed by one to one interview.

The results of this baseline data reveal that inactivity is higher than the national average of 25% in all wards, with the Middlesbrough wards being significantly higher (**54% in Brambles/Thorntree, 49% in North Ormesby, 34% in Grangetown and 33% in South Bank**). Other findings also highlighted high levels of anxiety and low levels of trust in communities. The main headlines have been produced into an infographic to enable us to communicate these findings back into these communities.

#### **Getting a better understanding of older people's lives**

During April through to July, in partnership with Teesside University and key members of the community, we have organised and delivered a series of events within the four focus wards to talk to residents and gain a better understanding of their lives and the things that stop them from being active. We ran sessions for older people, adults, young people and children and talked to teachers and parents to help us understand the positive and negative issues in communities. We tried to make these events as informal as possible to enable residents to talk about the things that were important to them and to open about the issues they face.

Residents talked about a whole range of things that were important to them; the physical environment, social influences, crime, family pressures and conflicting priorities. Findings from the focus groups reveal that residents can identify many assets in their community. **Fields and green space** were frequently highlighted by children as one of their community most valuable assets, while adults and older people tend to value the **built assets and community organisations**.

## **North Ormesby: Older People's Insight**

Through in-depth conversation and engagement with both community members and community influencers and staff who support the community, a wide range of themes and areas for discussion have emerged around what impacts someone being physically active. This overview doesn't cover everything but picks out some recurring themes.

### **1. Perceived health conditions and needed transport.**

Older people and organisations who work with these people perceived their health conditions and transport as the major barrier towards physical activity. Transport and accessibilities to venues need to be carefully considered.

Consideration needs to be there around the levels and intensity of physical activity. Insight tells us that this is a key consideration for any future physical activity intervention. Moderate and intensive levels of physical activity might not be possible, but lower levels of activity can still provide benefits.

For some, walking was an activity that could be built into their daily lives, as that is an activity that is already taking place to some extent; even just a walk to the shop.

### **2. The Dependency on local assets/buildings and working with organisations familiar to them**

The community hub was viewed being vitally important for influencing activity and driving community members through the doors.

"...these hubs are absolutely crucial to the neighbourhood. They're neutral, people feel safe here, and the people that work here are trusted by the people in the local area. Everyone's welcome and there's no exceptions to that, in any exception."

Residents in the community feel grateful for various organisations that provide support for elderly individuals. They felt that such organisations have provided them with opportunities to change their everyday life by imparting them with skills and confidence.

"I mean when my husband was put in a care home, I just had nowhere to go really, of a morning, because I used to go and see him in an afternoon. And that was the best thing I ever did, when I started to come to Age UK, because I'm a different person now, aren't I, to what I was when I first started, because it's given me the confidence."

### **3. Physical activity not being a priority.**

It was acknowledged that even lower levels of physical activity did not appear high on the list of priorities for people. Exercise did not carry the same importance as paying bills or being able to put food on the table

"You've got high levels of poverty in the area, unfortunately high levels of unemployment, you've got people that have got ill health, you've got people who don't know how they're going to pay their rent or feed their kids or whatever so exercise is the last thing on their mind. Whether it's activities in terms of getting active and physical or whether its other things are probably far down the list of priorities for a lot of people, not for everyone but for a lot of people."

#### **4. Awareness of physical activity being 'something for them'.**

Influencers believed that there was still a general lack of awareness about the benefits of exercise, even just walking to the shops, and how it can have a positive impact on both physical and mental health.

Notions and preconceived ideas of activities that involved lycra and super fit athletes was still seen as a stumbling block, with raising awareness of what was on offer and what the benefits were key to making a difference in North Ormesby:

"Some people haven't got the knowledge of the benefits of exercise. They've still got it in their head, that they will end up in leotards! Until we actually get them through the door, and they see that its different, then we won't be able to move forward. It's just getting the knowledge to these people.

Influencers were keen to discuss ways that they felt would help to support the delivery of any physical activity intervention. Linking in with the idea that physical activity is not always a first priority for some, a way to reach those who were inactive was to combine a physical activity session with an everyday task, such as shopping.

#### **5. Co-Design with communities**

The importance of the community co-developing any interventions taking place was articulated by participants, as that involvement from day one would be more likely to encourage active participation that was longer-term:

"If you don't get people in their own community interested and engaged in anything then they're not going to buy into it.....whereas if they've had some control over it in either the development, the setup, whatever it is then they're more likely to come out and use that or be positive about it."

#### **6. Isolation and safety**

All the factors such as inhospitable neighbours, feeling unsafe, drug users, and messy surroundings has forced the residents in the community to stay indoors most of the times. This has paved way for a perception of isolation among those living in the community. They believe the options for interacting with their neighbours are lost and it is very rare that they could speak with others.

"And you're very lonely and it's only in these community groups that you can get talking to people, because I'm too frightened to go out on my own now, I must admit."

A strong impression of lack of safety can be observed from the conversation of the residents. They do not feel the community is safe to walk in the dark, and everyone in the family is concerned about the safety of others.

"It's not safe is it... Not safe at all, no... I wouldn't walk out there in the dark."

There is also an opinion among the residents that the number of police personnel employed is not proportionate enough to tackle the anti-social activities in the community.

#### **7. Importance of group activities**

The residents are very positive about the importance of doing activities in a group. They feel that it provides an opportunity to meet everyone and adds company to their rather lonely lifestyle. It can be understood that the residents are eager in using any form of activity that brings in people and creates a space to get social and enjoy the company of their neighbours and friends.

### **Working with Slimming World**

Part of our commitment to Sport England is to provide baseline data to establish our start point so that we can monitor the potential impact of our collective efforts going forward. We had a phenomenal response to our baseline questionnaire and received over 800 responses over a matter of weeks. We hadn't realised how many people over the age of 50 years were using Slimming World: 37% of the Slimming World users that filled out the survey are over the age of 54.

Overall, respondents aged 75 and over were the least active age group with 50% of them falling into the 'Inactive' category (less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a week) – a figure double that of the national average. Only 50% of respondents in this age group had gone for at least one walk of moderate intensity that week while none had gone for a bike ride. On a more positive note, respondents aged 75 and over reported high levels of life satisfaction and mental wellbeing.

### **The Next Phase**

The next part of our work will be to work with local groups, organisations and residents to identify some key barriers, prioritise two or three key issues and work with people to design interventions or initiatives that will help to address the issues. This work will take place over the next 3 – 4 months in North Ormesby.