

KIRKLEES HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	
MEETING DATE:	7th August, 2025
TITLE OF PAPER:	Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024/25: Physical Activity Matters
1. Purpose of paper	<p>This paper highlights to the Board the Kirklees Director of Public Health (DPH) Annual Report 2024/25, entitled Physical Activity Matters.</p> <p>Directors of Public Health have a statutory requirement to write an annual report on the health and wellbeing of their local populations. The focus of the report is chosen by the DPH and its aim is to inform local people about the health of their community as well as inform decision-makers on health gaps and priorities that need to be addressed - for example in subsequent policies, strategies or action plans. It is important to note that all DPH reports are an independent professional statement about the health of local communities and are separate to the political decision-making process of Local Authorities.</p> <p>This paper outlines the purpose and content of the 2024/25 DPH report, which the Board can use to support the promotion of the report findings and the implementation of its recommendations.</p>
2. Background	<p>There is strong evidence to show that at all stages of life, from the very early years and right into older age (including during pregnancy, and for those with long-term health conditions), physical activity (in its many different forms) is a fantastic way to maintain and improve physical and mental health, to better connect with families and friends and with local places and open spaces.</p> <p>Even small amounts of physical activity can make a big difference over time; the key message is that <i>'some is good, more is better'</i>.</p> <p>National and local evidence shows us that levels of physical activity vary hugely across different population groups. Within Kirklees, data tells us that around a quarter of people (children and adults) report that they do less than 30 minutes of physical activity each week. When this rate is considered amongst different groups of people, the inequalities become clear. For example, we know from the 2021 CLiK (Current Living in Kirklees) survey that people out of work in Kirklees are over three times more likely to be inactive than people in work.</p> <p>The trend data from Sport England's Active Lives Surveys and our CLiK surveys also tells us is that these inequalities have existed for many years and remain persistent across a range of population groups. Despite what we may perceive as a broad range of opportunities for people to be physically active in Kirklees, there remains a range of complex barriers and enablers which influence our ability to live an active life.</p>

The 2024/25 DPH report is presented as a series of web pages, including national and local contextual information, alongside case studies and next step recommendations. The report also includes an Executive Summary and Plain English Summary in accessible PDF format.

By reading the report and next step recommendations, people and organisations will gain an improved understanding of the Kirklees inequalities experienced around physical activity. By working together, we can help to reduce these barriers and reduce the inequalities experienced by too many of our people and places.

This report provides a focus for upcoming work on developing new strategies and approaches to increasing physical activity levels amongst the least active, as part of a drive to a healthier and happier Kirklees.

This report is the start of an important journey. It focuses on developing a systems understanding of physical inactivity across Kirklees, the associated inequalities and the factors that influence our ability to move more. It is not intended to provide solutions as other ongoing work will provide further insight into our local communities. We can then use these collective findings to drive forward local action across systems to enable as many people as possible to gain from the benefits of physical activity.

4. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications connected to this DPH Report, however there are programmes of work with officer time and some external funding which may be influenced by the report and its recommendations for next steps.

5. Sign off

Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate Resources

6. Next Steps

The report will be published on the Council's web site and will be promoted by the Council's Comms Team via the usual channels.

A slide deck will also be made available to help support partners to disseminate the findings across organisations.

7. Recommendations

It is intended that Board members will make use of and disseminate the DPH report, and to adopt a *proportionate universalism* approach, which prioritises the reduction in inequalities in physical activity by supporting the next step recommendations.

1. Working with, not doing to. It is of fundamental importance that our guiding principle for future work and strategy development is one where stakeholders and partners are working with our communities and not 'doing to' them. Despite the many assets that we have in Kirklees, inequalities in access to physical activity opportunities remain. With this in mind, it is important

that all system partners base interventions and communications on what people, and especially the least active, tell us they want.

2. Research and Insight. More broadly, it is important that a research led place-based approach is taken to understanding inequalities and local need. For example, there is currently a research insights project focusing on physical activity in North Kirklees that aims to engage residents between June and August 2025. We will use these findings, as well as new data obtained through the 2025 CLIK survey, to understand place-based needs and opportunities and develop a community informed local area action plan based on this feedback. It is important that we learn from this approach and continue to develop this way of working across Kirklees places.

3. Place Partnership development. Kirklees Council and partner organisations are currently working with Sport England on their Place Partnership Expansion Programme. This work will act as a catalyst to develop and embed a whole systems approach to movement and physical activity in Kirklees. This will involve looking at specific challenges of some of our least active cohorts and communities experience, and understanding what systemic level change may be effective in reducing barriers to activity in a sustained manner.

4. Community Champions. We have a fantastic group of Community Champions, who are supported by Third Sector Leaders Kirklees. We will work with colleagues to develop a Community Champions approach to physical activity. This work recognises the significance and importance of place-based working and the power of communities.

5. Strategy. In combination, this work will be used to develop a new physical activity strategy for Kirklees, supported by the Everybody Active Advisory Group and other key partners. The aim of this strategy will be to provide a clear steer to the Kirklees system on ways in which individuals, communities and organisations from across Kirklees can enable more people to access and participate in physical activity. Whilst recognising the universal importance of physical activity across the life course, national and local data makes it clear that our strategy needs to have a specific emphasis on helping inactive people to become more active, and on reducing the inequalities in physical activity levels that are experienced by some groups.

6. Physical activity in all policies. Key to our ongoing work will be the recognition of taking a 'physical activity in all policies approach' which places emphasis on local levers that can influence change. Examples include: effectively using Health Impact Assessments to adopt active design principles through the planning system; and ensuring major regeneration projects consider and incorporate access to high quality, accessible environments, places and spaces and that travel infrastructure is designed to enable more people to be active.

7. Immediate steps. As well as the work already identified, there are immediate steps we can all take now to support people to move more:

- I would urge you, your colleagues or your organisation to promote the wonderful assets we have in Kirklees for being physically active
- Think about how your organisation encourages its members of staff to be active, and whether more could be done to support staff
- Consider how your front-line workforce can engage in brief conversations with Kirklees residents in order to remove barriers and enable participation in physical activity

- And finally, if this report has enabled you to reflect on your own personal physical activity levels, think about how our local assets and opportunities can support you to move more.

The full report will be available via the Kirklees Council web site.

8. Contact Officer

Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate Resources,
rachel.spencer-henshall@kirklees.gov.uk

Lucy Wearmouth, Head of Improving Population Health, lucy.wearmouth@kirklees.gov.uk

Owen Richardson, Data and Insight Enablement Lead for Public Health,
owen.richardson@kirklees.gov.uk

Martin Gonzalez, Public Health Manager, martin.gonzalez@kirklees.gov.uk