Putting it into practice
Tools to support tackling inactivity through system change

Test and learn

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Test and learn

This test and learn resource will help to guide you through the tools, models and approaches being used by places to tackle inactivity through implementing a place-based approach. This is one of nine sections of our collective resource ‘Putting It Into Practice’ which is organised by what we’ve found to be some of the practicalities of system change. The full resource can be found on our website.

It’s OK to not know exactly where you’re going to end up, as long as you’re learning and growing as you go. There’s simply no way of improving without practical experience and experimentation.

Questions you might be asking:
- How can experienced-based co-design be used to test and learn?
- How can test and learn lead to implementation and scalability?

Creating active schools framework/implementation model
Regular physical activity is important for children’s physical and mental wellbeing and academic performance. At present, little guidance exists on what a true whole-school physical activity approach should look like. Researchers, policymakers and practitioners from the UK have laid the groundwork by producing the Creating Active Schools framework (CAS).

Using experience-based co-design, fifty school experts including teachers, headteachers, active-school coordinators, public health specialists, active partnerships, national organisations, Sport England local delivery pilots and UK and international researchers gathered to co-create a comprehensive whole-school physical activity framework.

Following a top down model with the school’s vision and mission at its heart, it allows schools to identify their strengths and challenges and prioritise their work accordingly. Building on their existing assets and using whole school priorities as a driver for improvement, CAS supports schools to align physical activity to other areas of work such as attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. This way of working ensures that creating opportunities to be physically active is everyone in the school community’s responsibility, not just that of the PE lead or coach.

Since August 2020, the University of Bradford (UoB), Yorkshire Sport Foundation (YSF) and Bradford Institute for Health Research (BIHR; JU:MP programme) have collaborated to design the implementation model for Creating Active Schools.

There are four CAS framework themes, these include:
- Policy
- Environment (physical)
- Stakeholders (including their impact on the social environment)
- Physical Activity.

The uniqueness of CAS resides in the flexibility of the approach to meet the needs of different schools to create organisational change for physical activity through an online profiling tool, an individually tailored online CPD programme, face-to-face CPD to support schools and the formation of local and national communities of practice.
Creating Active Schools Framework & Implementation Model

**Why would I use it?**
- To integrate the key ‘working parts’ of a whole-school physical activity system.
- To identify the value of establishing whole-school practice and aligning the work of organisations to deliver one clear message.
- To build capacity within the localised system.

**Who would I use it with?**
- School leaders and staff.
- Wider stakeholders.
- Stakeholders involved through the modelling include:
  - children
  - senior leaders
  - teachers
  - parents
  - wider stakeholders.

**How can it be used?**
- Online profiling tool - The web portal supports schools to assess their current provision against the four CAS framework themes.
- Implementation planning tool - the profile tool makes recommendations (based on the school's responses).
- By classifying the possible interventions into high, medium or low impact.
- Individually tailored CPD – with 22 modules available linked directly.
- CAS Champion (local/regional) support (including their own training on supporting schools with the implementation of the model).

**Advice to others**
- The framework has the whole school’s ethos (policy and practice) at its core. This is the most important factor to drive change. If the ethos doesn’t embrace activity, it won’t lead to true appreciation and whole school systems change.
- The most significant way to impact on the policy and practice of the school is effective senior leader and teacher CPD.
- This is why the model focuses on CPD and ongoing support of schools (both online and face-to-face), taking the framework and supporting schools to address each element through the view of four key areas:
  - Policy
  - Environments (physical)
  - Stakeholders (including their impact on the social environment)
  - Physical Activity opportunities provided

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**Name:**

**Why would I use it?**

**Who would I use it with?**

**How can it be used?**

**Advice to others**
PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE - HOW THE TOOL HAS BEEN USED

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Work on completing the CAS Implementation Model came from the involvement of 13 JU:MP Primary schools from the Pioneer Neighbourhoods in north Bradford who trialled its development. This was augmented by a further 30 schools that formed part of a PE and School Sport Premium Evaluation project with Bradford Birth to 19 Teaching School Alliance.

The schools used a ‘beta’ version of the profiling tool, and understood how the model should work but had difficulty seeing how its application could help them. This led to the creation of a data profiling tool against four outcomes:

1. POLICY. CONSIDERING
   a. School improvement
   b. Monitoring and evaluation
   c. Policies and routines
   d. Communication
   e. Professional development and knowledge

2. ENVIRONMENTS
   a. Classrooms and corridors
   b. Hall space
   c. Outdoor space (moveable resources)
   d. Outdoor space (fixed resources)
   e. Outdoor space (beyond school site)

3. STAKEHOLDERS
   a. School leaders
   b. Teaching and other school staff
   c. Children and young people
   d. Parents and Guardians
   e. Wider stakeholders

4. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES. CONSIDERING:
   a. Curriculum lessons (non PE)
   b. P.E. (including swimming)
   c. Playtimes
   d. Events/Visits
   e. Before and After Schools clubs
   f. Active travel
   g. Community events

WHY WAS THIS TOOL USED?

The Implementation Model is designed to provide:

- Consistency - a standardised model that promotes high quality evidence-based support to schools
- Capacity – it had to be relevant for school leaders in the context that they’re operating in, for example, it led to the development of an online profile tool which saved time.
- Collaboration – (and also accountability) it identifies best practice across the sector as it becomes more widely used, which can then be used to share across the system and support schools most in need.

HOW WAS IT DONE?

The Implementation Model was initially developed in 3 phases starting from the original design by creating an on-line spreadsheet tested by one school.

In a series of further discussions, the remaining 12 JU:MP schools provided feedback based on testing the model as it developed. Each school received 1-2-1 help to complete the on-line tool from the CAS Manager which helped with the schools understanding and progressed the teams learning of its application.

Finally, the CAS Manager held joint workshops on the final model involving all schools. The tool is designed to be used annually as detailed in the diagram below.

REFLECTIONS FROM THOSE INVOLVED:

"It captures the complexities of developing children’s physical activity at primary school very well and enables discussions and self-reflection on the best most successful strategies for a school community."

Primary School Teacher and PE leader

Creating Active School Implementation Model - Annual Cycle

Evidence based approach

Understanding and influencing school priorities
- Health
- Wellbeing
- Curriculum
- Financial
- Community

CAS profiling process

1. Physical activity identified as school priority
2. CAS profiling questionnaire
3. Reporting and recommendations
4. Implementation planning
5. Monitoring and evaluation
6. Building capability, opportunity and motivation for physical activity

School led, website supported

Facilitation

Expert

Web-based CPD
- organisational change, behaviour change, targeted approaches

Individual School Solutions
- bespoke CPD, resource, expert support

Collective School Solutions
- bespoke CPD, resource, expert support
**WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?**

The CAS Implementation Model has gone through a full series of check and challenges for feasibility and acceptability of use. The schools that were early adopters have been able to shine a light on the impact it can have against the four outcomes: policy, environments, stakeholders and opportunities. For example:

**POLICY** - on reviewing policy and practice in relation to learning and play, one school has decided to try to remove the concept of “wet play” and focus on children being able to play and learn outdoors whatever the weather. It’s put this into school policy along with an investment in waterproofs for each class to support this.

**ENVIRONMENTS** - on reviewing the use and availability of play space, one school has decided to utilise all its pockets of green space that children are not currently allowed to access to provide opportunity for different forms of play and movement for those children not interested in traditional sports and games.

**STAKEHOLDERS** - on reviewing the capability, opportunity and motivation of different stakeholders, one school decided to set up a bike library to engage children (and their parents) in cycling and active travel, increasing both opportunity and motivation, and supporting capability by providing cycling and scootering courses within school time.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES** - on reviewing their provision across the school day, one school is working on a project to introduce active outdoor learning across the school day, in order to reduce sedentary time, increase engagement, and ensure children benefit from regular opportunities to connect with nature and each other outdoors in both learning and play.

**WHAT DID WE LEARN?**

This re-enforced that we need to understand school systems and pressures for middle and senior leaders and how any model has to align with wider school priorities such as behaviour and attainment. If we don’t get this right, then the model has no buy-in or impact. Schools that are using CAS very effectively start to look wider at other schools’ performance, learning and opportunities instead of being siloed in their own world.

**THINGS TO CONSIDER:**

It’s important to recognise that PE/school leaders have to understand the complexities of the agenda from the outset to fully buy-in. Following the model can be a long process and genuine behaviour change is a slow-burner, contact with schools is essential (little and often) to nudge and ensure they continually apply their learning.

**WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER INFORMATION?**

*Look North feature*

*Visit the Creating Active Schools website*

*Contacts*

*Creating Active Schools journal paper*
Also in this series:

- Understanding value
- Understand the lived experience
- Distributed leadership
- Capacity and time to reflect
- Common purpose/shared value
- Power shift
- Having the right conversations
- Understanding the system you're trying to shape