



## Tackling regional health inequalities with place-based working

**Be Active aligns with  
adult social care**

# Tackling health inequalities in Luton – working with adult social care

## Understanding the place

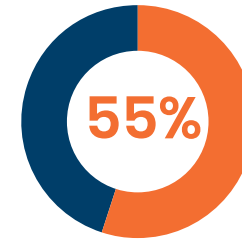
Luton's levels of physical inactivity are significantly higher than the national average. Latest active lives data tells us that 30.5% of the town's population do less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a week, compared with 23% nationally.

Luton has four wards that are amongst the most deprived in the country, and a population where those from a culturally diverse background exceeds the white British population, with the largest numbers of south Asian descent.

Supporting these populations to be more physically active, working alongside other partners in a systematic, collaborative way is one of Active Luton's top priorities. Working alongside Adult Social Care, with shared strategic priorities and geographical hotspots provides Active Luton with an opportunity to support the most vulnerable communities by introducing physical activity to these audiences. It also provides opportunities to educate, influence and change behaviours not only amongst service users, but also within workforces across the health and care system.



Luton has a proportionately large younger population with 5% more 0 – 19 year olds than the national average



Luton also has an ethnically diverse population, with 55% coming from BAME backgrounds



Luton has four Lower Super Output Areas in the top 10% most deprived nationally with a further 29 in the top 11 – 20% (IMD2019)

# What Active Luton has been up to:

## **Building relationships: Active Luton has been partnering with Adult Social Care (ASC), faith centres and the community to promote physical activity. Key actions include:**

- Participation in the [“Stepping into My Shoes” programme](#) to foster understanding and collaboration across the system to create public services that are more integrated and based on the needs of the local population.
- Establishing gender-specific activity sessions at local mosques and gurdwaras.
- Allocating resources to expand physical activities across faith centres in deprived areas.
- Establishing a process and offer to develop capacity in and across the system that builds knowledge and understanding about the benefits of physical activity, how to access opportunities and provide CPD and qualifications within settings.

## **Influencing governance and strategy by:**

- Integrating efforts within the Luton Strategic Vision for Sport and Physical Activity governance framework, to ensure that physical activity becomes part of the conversation.
- Embedding physical activity conversations and delivery within existing practices of those professionals working with adult social care.
- Developing a sub-group for the work which includes stakeholders from a variety of settings including public health, housing and social care, which oversees and guides progress.

## **Investing time in evaluation and learning:**

- Development of a Smartsheet-based tracker to capture data and evaluate progress, enabling reflection and evidence-driven actions. These specifically reference impact in relation to the enablers of change, considered to be so important for delivery, an effective systems based-way of working, as well as capturing knowledge and intelligence and recording key conversations and actions. Find more information on the [enablers for change](#).

# Impact so far:

## Building trusted relationships

Trusted relationships have been formed with the Prevention and Enablement Team, promoting a positive collaborative working environment. Previous learning has shown the value of embedding capacity within services directly responsible for supporting and caring for residents. It became apparent that embedding this capacity within social care would be instrumental to the success of influencing change and creating positive outcomes for those accessing services.

## Embedding capacity and enhancing community engagement

A 3-day a week post has been developed and will be located within the Adult Social Care (ASC) local areas coordinator's team located in Farley/Stockwood – a top priority area for ASC and also one of three priority areas within the top 10% in Bedfordshire as identified by Sport England. The role will educate ASC colleagues, share intelligence, map assets and improve communication across different parts of the system.

Rolling out the Active Medicine education piece across key partners and stakeholders to help build knowledge and understanding of the benefits of physical activity and how to access opportunities.

## Unexpected opportunities

There was unexpected appetite from sheltered accommodation and other partners working with SEND for physical activity opportunities. Active Luton also unlocked a number of volunteers who were supportive of the work and who they will work with going forward.

### Key learnings



Building trusted relationships and understanding local challenges is crucial



Expect early challenges and work through them together. For Active Luton this included limited partner engagement and governance inefficiencies, which were addressed over time



Local champions with community connections are vital for sustained impact

# Next steps:

Going forward Active Luton plans to:

- Expand and embed place-based work for long-term sustainability.
- Continue adapting to community and partner needs.
- Strengthen community leadership and capacity for delivering physical activity initiatives.

For more information contact Be Active, Bedfordshire's Active Partnership:

<https://www.beactivebeds.co.uk/>

<https://www.beactivebeds.co.uk/contact-us>

## Quotes from participants

*“Movement brings great things like greater health, friends, and community.”*

**Ann**

*“If we are going to make that change for generations to come, we need to go to the communities.”*

**Amran**

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