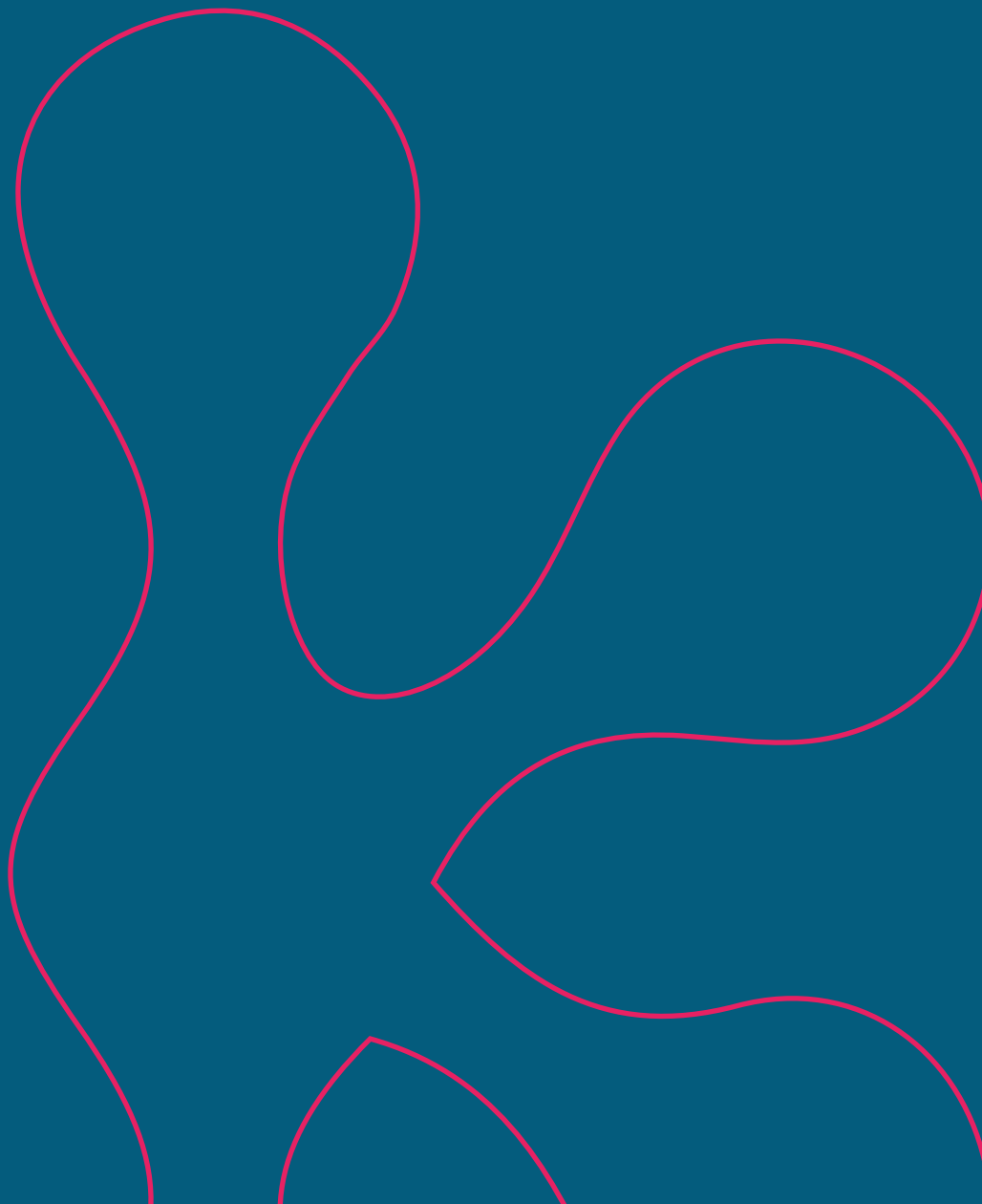


KADA 

 **Yorkshire
Sport
Foundation**

**Sport and Physical
Activity Matters**
in West Yorkshire

**A Kada
Research
Report**
for Yorkshire
Sport Foundation
May 2024



Foreword

We often say that sport and being active is in the DNA of Yorkshire.

Most people in the region are regarded as active; we have a rich sporting heritage of professional and local sports clubs; our classically green landscape is home to active pursuits every day; communities are vibrant with local organisation of opportunities to participate and our health systems are increasingly seeing physical activity as a crucial element of healthy places and healthy lives.

But we know being active is not the case for everyone. Deep and long-standing inequalities remain; inequalities that mean it is much harder for some people to access the benefits of being active and playing sport due to an array of things that get in the way. The mature partnerships that are in place in each of our five districts are leading the work in addressing these challenges.

We intuitively know that playing sport, being active or simply moving more can make a hugely positive contribution to people's lives and in turn to communities and to the region. But our intuition isn't enough for policy and decision makers to take seriously the contribution that sport and physical activity can make when developing their plans.

Impacts on health of being active is well grounded and there is growing evidence coming forth on a day-to-day basis to support this as referenced in this document.

We also need to demonstrate better our contribution to the economy. In areas such as workforce productivity, supporting people to be closer to the workforce, the visitor economy, the effects of sporting events, the value of volunteering, the development of a broad skills base and others, all have a role to play in growing West Yorkshire's economy.

We have commissioned this document to bring together the evidence and data we currently hold to build a narrative of the sector's contribution to wider strategic plans. Where possible we have drawn upon West Yorkshire specific data and, where not, we have used the national data that is available.

The West Yorkshire Plan, developed by the Mayoral Combined Authority, illustrates a vision of a brighter future for all and describes missions for all of us to work towards. It is vital that sport and physical activity contributes fully to this bright future. The Plan gives a framework to provide the evidence of that contribution.

This document provides a snapshot of the huge amount of work taking place in our local areas which is being evaluated on a regular basis. As a result, we will be regularly reviewing the document so that we show a full and current picture of the vital role of sport and physical activity in the region.

Thank you to our partners who have contributed to this document and to Kada for pulling it together.

Nigel Harrison
Yorkshire Sport Foundation

The importance of sport and physical activity for West Yorkshire

Movement, physical activity and sport have the power to improve and transform lives in West Yorkshire. Sport and physical activity can contribute to the five missions of the West Yorkshire Plan's vision of a brighter West Yorkshire that works for all. In parallel, it can support the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership's vision for the future of health, care, and wellbeing. Under this vision all partners work together so people can thrive in a trauma informed, healthy, equitable, safe, and sustainable society.



“In West Yorkshire we are a family with a long history of collaboration born out of our shared opportunities and strong partnerships. We know that we can only achieve success working together. Our success is dependent on all parts of the region thriving, contributing, being championed and celebrated”¹. Sport & physical activity have an important role to play in supporting the delivery of the West Yorkshire Plan and the ambition for the region to be prosperous, happy, well, sustainable and safe.

There are many benefits of sport and physical activity. In terms of economic ambitions, sport and physical activity can create a healthier workforce and boost workplace productivity through improved physical and mental wellbeing, helping West Yorkshire achieve its goal of increasing GVA and stimulating economic growth.

While many people throughout West Yorkshire enjoy the benefits of an active life, some face challenges to build physical activity and movement into their daily lives.

Partners across West Yorkshire have a fundamental role to play in supporting people to live longer, better, and healthier lives, helping residents feel happier and more connected within their communities.

Moving more to address inequalities in West Yorkshire

There is a lot being done to address inequalities already in West Yorkshire. The West Yorkshire Plan is focused on creating a brighter West Yorkshire that works for all. At the heart of this are the themes of equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Integrated Care Board aims to reduce health inequalities through its place-based health and well-being boards.

Across West Yorkshire there is a strong foundation of district partnerships who bring together the key organisations and deliverers of sport and physical activity in the local area to develop and implement a joint vision to support people to be more active.

They work alongside local communities to design and deliver activities which best meet the needs of local people and address the barriers and inequalities they face which impact on their ability to build sport and physical activity into their daily lives.

The map on the next page summarises the physical activity plans for each West Yorkshire authority and how they are each supporting their local communities to embed sport and physical activity into daily lives and address those inequalities.



20.6% of those who live in the least deprived areas are physically inactive, compared to **33.8%** of those in the most deprived areas.



82.8% of those in the least deprived areas participated in sports at least twice in 28 days, compared to **67.5%** in the most deprived areas.

This infographic shows the link between deprivation and participation⁷⁷.

“

West Yorkshire has a strong foundation of district partnerships who bring together the key organisations and deliverers of sport and physical activity in the local area to develop and implement a joint vision to support people to be more active.”



Active Bradford

In Bradford, a systems approach is used to tackle health and physical activity inequalities in the area. The overall aim of the Every Move Counts strategy is to create a place where everybody can move a little bit more every day, in a way that suits them and their needs.

By working with both system leaders and the community, priorities have been established such as access to green space, opportunities for sport and activity at school and flexible workplaces that promote active travel. Ensuring everybody feels safe and able to participate in sport and physical activity is a key priority.

Active Calderdale

In Calderdale the whole-system approach focusses on developing the capability and capacity for physical activity promotion, and enabling people to move to be integrated and embedded across assets that make up our communities – health & social care, voluntary & community sector, workplaces, local residents, education settings, parks & green spaces, the built environment, streets, sport & leisure. In order to address inequalities, the focus of the work is towards people who have the greatest opportunity for impact, these include – low income households, minority ethnic communities, people with a disability and/or long term health condition, women and older people.

The work across systems involves redesigning policies, processes, ways of working and increasing skills and knowledge. Working in and with communities helps deliver the conditions that help people be more active.

Leeds Everyone Moving More Ambition

In Leeds, 31% of young people, 23% of adults, and 36% of older adults are currently inactive, with inactivity in the most deprived communities double that in the most affluent wards. There is an understanding that motivation is not enough, instead the right information and spaces for physical activity need investment.

By taking a whole-system approach, Leeds will create a city where it is easy to be physically active every day; where external drivers affecting physical activity are understood and mitigated; where communities most at risk of inactivity will be supported to be more active every day, and where partnerships will enable the city to become stronger and greener.

Everybody Active Kirklees

In Kirklees, the Everybody Active strategy aims to make it easier for everybody to be more active. By making changes across a number of areas from schools and workplaces to travel infrastructure and regeneration, physical activity and sport can be promoted and made more accessible.

A partnership, steering group and operational group will work together to shape, progress, and deliver the strategy, leading to a reduction in health inequalities, increased public awareness around physical inactivity and more physical activity.

Move More Wakefield

In Wakefield, striving for the best mental and physical health possible for all residents is a key priority.

To do this, the district will increase physical activity rates in the area by encouraging and supporting frequent exercise and ensuring that children have access to leisure opportunities. It will promote a modal shift to walking and cycling to improve physical health and reduce carbon emissions.



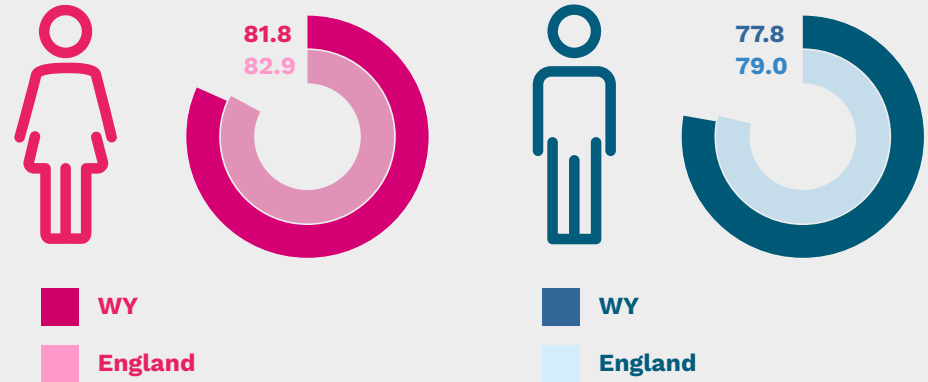
Inequalities in sport and physical activity across West Yorkshire

Local physical activity strategies have the potential to reduce the stark and persistent inequalities between wealthy and deprived areas. People in the most deprived areas have much shorter lives and tend to live those years in poorer health³. Life expectancy in West Yorkshire is lower than England; and the number of years lived in good health are also lower (60.4 for men and 61.7 for women)⁴.

Women in West Yorkshire are more likely to be physically inactive than men (29.2% compared to 25.9%) and Asian residents are significantly more likely to be physically inactive than White residents (39.1% and 24.9% respectively)⁵.

There is a link between wealth inequalities and inactivity and ill-health. Approximately 20.7% of houses in West Yorkshire experience two or more dimensions of deprivation⁶. Those who are most deprived are least likely to be physically active, which contributes to poorer health outcomes. **Physical inactivity and inequality is putting people at a greater risk of heart attacks, strokes, type 2 diabetes, and depression⁷.** Poor housing also has a detrimental effect on people's health and well-being.

Average life expectancy



People leading active lives in West Yorkshire⁸

6 in 10 people in West Yorkshire are active and benefit from sport and physical activity. However we know this is not the case for everyone. Deep and long-standing inequalities remain. Inequalities make it much harder for some people to access the benefits of being active and playing sport. There are still around 1 in 4 people who are doing less than 30 minutes a week.

When asked whether they felt that they have the opportunity to be physically active, 65.8% of those in West Yorkshire reported that they do not feel that they have the opportunity to be physically active, which is slightly lower than the national figure of 67.3%.



27.8%

of people in WY and **25.8%** of England do under 30 minutes of physical activity weekly.



31.2%

of people in WY engaged in sport at least twice in 28 days, compared to **33.3%** of England.



73.7%

of people in WY and **76.7%** of England participated in physical activity at least twice over 18 days.



Locally, physically active people are **9%** less likely to be lonely than those who are inactive.



65.8%

of people who are physically inactive in WY feel they do not have the opportunity to be active.



Physically active people score **7.23** out of 10 for life satisfaction, compared to **6.17** for those who are inactive.

A prosperous West Yorkshire - an inclusive economy with well paid jobs

Community leisure in the UK contributes £3.3bn in social value when accounting for improved health, reduced crime, increased educational attainment and improved life satisfaction (subjective wellbeing)²⁹. Being fit and healthy has a direct effect on economic productivity; lost productivity costs an estimated £5.5bn in time off and £1bn in premature death of working aged people³⁰. Leading an active lifestyle prevents 900,000 cases of type 2 diabetes and 93,000 cases of dementia (the leading cause of death in the UK) – a combined saving of £7.1 billion to the UK economy.



Getting 10% of people who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness back into work would boost the economy by **£282m**.



Participating in sport at university is linked to enhanced employability and managerial skills – good news for the 67,201 physically active students in WY!



Promoting sport and leisure courses could address some local skills gaps, giving people the opportunity to train in areas like healthcare or management.



Physical activity is associated with better next-day energy levels, leading to increased productivity and GDP.

This infographic shows how physical activity and sport can benefit the economy ^{9 10 11 12}

In West Yorkshire sport and physical activity make an important economic and social contribution to the labour market and economy.

For example, sport and physical literacy have a range of transformational economic and wider effects on those in work, seeking work and students (see infographic). 93,100 (5%) people over 16 were economically inactive due to long term sickness in 2023 (5.0%) compared to 4.7% nationally¹³.

Increasing physical activity could reduce health issues, helping some of these people re-enter employment. Furthermore, when young people participate in sport, they are more likely to develop their team working and managerial

skills increasing their employability¹⁴. This could help West Yorkshire to move towards achieving its goal of becoming a NEET-free region by ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to develop the skills they need to find work after education.

Young people who engage in sports and are physically literate are more likely to make healthy lifestyle choices and be more mentally resilient in the face of challenges¹⁶.



£837.4m

Sports and physical activity **GVA**



34,575

Sports and physical activity **businesses** in West Yorkshire



78,000 jobs

6.3% of the WY workforce (comprised of **13,000** core jobs, **65,000** in the wider sector)



£376m

Annual sport and physical activity **volunteering well-being benefits** (2022)



£172.1m

Monthly **well-being benefits of participating in sport** (WY)



Employment and productivity

Employee productivity loss is at a record high, with 50.6 productive days per person lost to ill-health. This is often related to musculoskeletal conditions, depression, and poor sleep¹⁷.

The annual costs of new cases of work-related ill health, excluding long latency illness such as cancer, were £13.1 billion¹⁸. 86% of productivity days lost in the workplace are due to presenteeism, that is, people attending work but not working productively. Increasing opportunities for activity in the workplace and during the commute which could help to increase employee activity, energy, mood, satisfaction and ultimately productivity meeting a key economic ambition for the sub-region¹⁹.

The sport and physical activity sector is also an important wealth and health contributor to the West Yorkshire economy. **Every £1 spent on sport and physical activity generates almost £4 in health and wellbeing benefits, strengthening communities and the national economy.**

1.1% of jobs in West Yorkshire can be attributed to core roles relating to sport and physical activity including coaching, leisure and sports managers and assistants, and physiotherapists. The wider sector workforce comprises an estimated 65,000 jobs (6.3% of the workforce).



In 2019, sport in Leeds contributed £350m to the economy, indicating the significant impact that increased participation can have on the local area²².



This is therefore a sector which presents many employment opportunities for the region. It has enormous potential to support people to live happy and healthy lives. Work to support skills development in the sector will ensure that the region has the skills and expertise needed to help people to embed sport and physical activity into their daily lives, whatever their circumstances or abilities.

Community sports and volunteering have substantial economic and social effects. For example grassroots football has many impressive economic benefits. With some 12 million grassroots football players in the UK, the sport has been shown to save £43.5m by reducing the number of GP visits and it provides an overall social wellbeing value of £8.7bn²¹. Participating in grassroots sport either as a player or supporter generates £39bn for the UK economy from the purchase of equipment and kit, tickets to matches and gym memberships²¹

Team sports have a greater impact on life satisfaction though both individual and team sports are positive - dance and swimming in particular have high valuation²⁷. **The monthly well-being economic benefits of participating in sport in West Yorkshire (for those who have participated at least twice in the last 28 days) could be £172.1m at 2023 prices²⁸.**

Locally, 17.2% of the population (322,500 people) attended at least two sport events per year, compared to 17.8% in England.

In West Yorkshire 368,500 people volunteered at least once in 2021-2022. When they did volunteer, 7.5% of this group volunteered at least once a week and 49.4% volunteered for over an hour²³.

The well-being benefits of volunteering in West Yorkshire to support sport and physical activity are estimated to be £376m at 2022 prices²⁴. This includes volunteering for clubs, refereeing, coaching, and marshalling.

23,000 people volunteered at major sporting events in 2022, and 12 events generated a return on investment of 6:1²⁵. 586,300 people locally have participated in sport at least twice in the last 28 days²⁶. The value of sport participation is approximately £1,490 per person per annum (2023 figures).

A happy West Yorkshire – great places and healthy communities

Sport and physical activity make a substantial contribution to this priority leading to a happier and healthier West Yorkshire. At whatever age, there's strong scientific evidence that being physically active can help an individual lead a healthier and happier life³¹ with potential transformational outcomes that can address some of the most entrenched and severe economic and societal challenges in West Yorkshire.

Physical and mental health dividend of keeping moving



Children that engage with physical activity make **more informed health decisions.**



Physically active children form more **pro-social relationships** and exhibit **better behaviour** in the classroom.



Pupils participating in development activities like sport perform **10-20%** better in their GCSE's

Choosing more healthy lifestyle habits can improve mental health, help prevent diseases and reduce obesity. Childhood obesity is a significant health issue in the UK and in West Yorkshire, with 1 in 5 children being overweight or obese at reception age and one in three children by year six³⁷. Sport also has benefits for children's development from conflict management to self-control and teamwork³⁸.

This infographic shows how physical activity and sport can benefit young people and children^{32 33 34 35 36}

JU:MP Bradford

JU:MP (Join Us: Move. Play.) aims to test and learn more about what helps children aged 5 – 14 years and their families to be active. JU:MP schools have been able to engage with their community and support everyone to lead a happier and healthier life. PE teacher Niall O'Brien stated that the JU:MP programme inspired parents to celebrate physical activity, leading to families feeling more confident about sport and physical activity.

Children began to be more enthusiastic about living a healthy lifestyle, leading to improvements in social and emotional wellbeing in families and communities. "We have developed an offer which we believe provides regular positive early experiences surrounding play, physical education outdoor learning, right from our very youngest pupils through to year six." - Niall



£204pp is spent on mental health in WY compared to £210pp in England. **4.6%** of people in WY accessed IAPT (talking therapy), compared to 4.9% in England.



The economic cost of dementia in WY is **£1bn**, rising to over **£1.6bn** by 2030.



WY sees **270,000** cases of circulatory disease, **316,000** cases of high blood pressure and **450** deaths per month (1 in 4) linked to heart disease.



12 per 100,000 people in WY finished an admission episode with a primary diagnosis of obesity, lower than the 20 per 100,000 in England.

This infographic shows health statistics for WY and England^{39 40 41}.

Physical activity and exercise are linked to a range of biological and physiological benefits with the increased release of ‘happy chemicals’ such as endorphins, relieving stress and helping to manage pain. It can alleviate negative psychological effects such as anxiety, depression, and anger⁴². Aerobic sports such as running can improve self-esteem and life satisfaction⁴³. **Mental health problems cost the UK approximately £118bn each year, around 5% of its GDP, from lost productivity and the costs of unpaid, informal carers for people living with a mental health condition⁴⁴.**

Loneliness can be linked to early death and is associated with depression, increased risk of coronary heart disease and sedentary behaviour. Physical activity and sport can be important in tackling this issue, as group exercise provides opportunities for social interaction, strengthens social networks, and increases personal motivation and confidence. Sports club membership has a positive effect on life satisfaction, happiness, and well-being⁴⁵.

Including both diagnosed and currently undiagnosed individuals, there is currently estimated to be 26,897 people in West Yorkshire over the age of 65 living with dementia^{46,47}. West Yorkshire has a mean emergency admission rate for dementia per 100,000 people of 3820 which is 8.6% higher than the English rate of 3517 per 100,000⁴⁸.

While dementia does not have a cure at present, participation in physical activity and sport has been shown to act as a preventative measure against neurodegenerative diseases.

According to a report by Alzheimer’s Research UK, **an estimated 2% of dementia cases could be eliminated by an uptake in physical activity⁴⁹**. For those living with dementia, sport and physical activity is also associated with enhanced cognitive function and reduced social isolation^{50 51}.



Moving More Often Kirklees.

Moving More Often (MMO) sessions provide opportunities for people to socialise, improve mobility and have fun. The sessions, aimed at older less mobile people or those who have memory challenges, are run weekly in a number of community locations led by the council's sport and physical activity development team and volunteers. MMO sessions are informal and provide activity and movement in chairs. They encourage interaction and friendship as well as incorporating elements of reminiscence and memory games. Some of the sessions also include music.

Obesity costs the NHS around £6.5 billion a year and is the second biggest preventable cause of cancer⁵².

Exercise is a crucial part of any support plan for a patient with obesity. It can increase their well-being and quality of life, lead to fewer complications in future including cancers, type 2 diabetes and musculoskeletal problems and increase the potential to lose weight and maintain the weight loss⁵³. The benefits also include reduced admissions, drug costs, appointments, and visits.

In West Yorkshire, 27% of adults are obese and 35% do not meet physical activity recommendations⁵⁴.

Around ten people a day suffer a stroke in West Yorkshire and Harrogate⁵⁵ and two thirds of stroke survivors are left with some form of physical, mental, or emotional disability – often completely life changing. Regular exercise can prevent stroke incidence by regulating weight and blood pressure⁵⁶.

“

In West Yorkshire, 27% of adults are obese and 35% do not meet physical activity recommendations. ”



Remaining active across people's life courses maintains strength, mobility, and stamina, improves life satisfaction, and can reduce medication use⁵⁷.

With 50% of GP appointments and 70% of the primary care budget spent on preventable health conditions⁵⁸ physical activity engagement could reduce the risk of falls, hypertension, poor bone health, hip fractures (by 68%) and some cancers by 40% ⁵⁹⁶⁰.

Physical activity and exercise can also provide a non-invasive means for added chronic disease prevention and treatment⁶¹. For instance, physical activity can play an important role in cancer prevention, treatment, recovery, and survivorship⁶².



70% of British people say attending a sporting event impacted their happiness.



Social prescribing sees a **£3.42: £1** return on investment.



The value of sport and physical activity to the nation's wellbeing, is **£42bn per year** - more than three times the total NHS spending on mental health.

This infographic shows the wider benefits of sport and physical activity^{63 64 65}.

Exercise following a cancer diagnosis: Giving people in Yorkshire more life to live.

Exercise can reduce the risk of dying from cancer by 44% and can reduce the risk of cancer coming back by 66%. 2,000 people in Yorkshire were asked about their experience with exercise while living with cancer.

People being treated for cancer stated that exercise made them feel more in control of their life and would like to know more about tailored exercise and support opportunities for people experiencing cancer.

One survey respondent stated "I found the exercises gave me more energy, more zest for life and they just kept me going. I'm really feeling the benefits." - Peter

Imagine a West Yorkshire Future: Healthcare Pressures and Prevention

If current trends continue, the number of people living with a major illness will have increased by more than a third, reaching almost 1 in 5 by 2040⁶⁶. However, prevention and early intervention measures such as sport and physical activity will have reduced the impact of illness and improved the quality of people's lives, helping people to live well with illness.

GPs and health professionals will routinely prescribe activities such as walking, cycling and other physical activities linked to improved health and wellbeing⁶⁷. There is also likely to be an increase in volunteering and sport participation, ensuring healthcare is inclusive and personalised⁶⁸.

Technology will continue to improve prevention and early diagnosis and help patients live better with their conditions. It will transform the experience of sport and physical activity including for example immersive fitness experiences, wearable technology, and gamified and personalised fitness.

A well-connected West Yorkshire – a strong transport system

Active Meetings, Active Calderdale

Active Calderdale includes a campaign to ‘meet and move.’ It has an active meeting agenda that aims to encourage walking, exercise breaks and communication about physical activity during work meetings⁷⁴. Ice breakers are centred around active travel, local landmarks, and recent physical activity. Walking meetings are encouraged and breaks and activities that encourage movement can be incorporated into meetings.

Hybrid and remote working which increased in 2020 has changed the way we think about commuting and work. In 2023, 12.6% of West Yorkshire residents regularly worked from home⁶⁹. In 2023 this accounted for 8% of the population in Leeds and Calderdale⁷⁰. This has enabled more flexible working hours to suit individuals but can also impact on opportunities to be physically active..

Imagine a West Yorkshire future where policy makers recognise the increasing demand for accessible green space, targeting those communities not within a 10-minute walk of a park. Gentle exercises such as yoga or Pilates are likely to be more commonly used to tackle back and neck pain and stiffness due to unsuitable seating and desk set ups⁷¹⁷². Sports and physical activity including group exercise and interactive classes will be used more routinely to tackle loneliness and isolation which emerged during the Covid-19 years⁷³.

In terms of transport and active travel, more hybrid working could reduce engagement in active travel as people do not commute as often as they once did. It is therefore more important for workplaces to be conscious of building in breaks for exercise and movement during the workday.

Active Travel is a valuable way of connecting people with employment, education, leisure and tourism, alongside the physical and mental benefits of more walking and cycling. It is however vital to ensure that everyone can easily access these modes of travel by integrating them fully into the wider public transport system.

Effort is being made to build active travel into daily life from a young age, in order to promote positive habits from childhood. In West Yorkshire, the School Streets programme will support more children and their families to walk and cycle to school by making roads and parking safer around school areas⁷⁵. This follows a national focus on improving walking and cycling routes to reduce congestion, boost high street business and transform commuting and the school run.

It is hoped that doing this will support people to make more active choices regarding both work and leisure and reduce emissions, benefiting the environment and health⁷⁶. In West Yorkshire, each district has a unique Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, indicating the current and future importance of active travel to the sub-region.



A sustainable West Yorkshire – making lives greener

Sport and physical activity has an integral role to play in place based solutions, green space access improvement measures, natural environment investment and stimulating local participation.

Access to greenspace is linked to better physical and mental outcomes, including improved cognition, improved resilience, healthy weight maintenance, reduced stress, reduced risk of stroke, better birth weight of newborns and improved life satisfaction⁷⁸.

NICE states "greenspace should be used whenever possible to support people of all ages and abilities to move more, improving their health and wellbeing and reducing the need for direct, more costly interventions"⁷⁹. Individuals experience improved feelings of wellbeing as a result of accessing social support through walking and through being close to nature. **Those who are fairly active or active in West Yorkshire are more likely to report having a higher level of social trust (3.45 and 3.34) than those who are inactive (3.04)**⁸⁰.

Engagement with the natural environment can make significant improvements to quality of life. Some 23% of residents have local natural greenspace within easy access of their homes (defined as within 5 to 10 minutes walking distance depending on walking speed). By promoting and maintaining green spaces and by providing purpose-built environments to cater to all, sport and physical activity can be used to benefit the individual and the community⁸¹. West Yorkshire has access to three national parks and many areas of outstanding, natural beauty which could boost opportunities for physical activity for locals and visitors⁸².

Imagine a West Yorkshire future: Climate

By 2038, West Yorkshire aims to be a fully net zero carbon sub-region by taking proactive measures to promote a low carbon future such as incentives and active travel, including a network of walking and cycling routes^{83 84}.

This could mean practical measures will be more commonplace such as reducing the flood and drought risks to sports grounds and reducing the emissions relating to sporting competitions⁸⁵. The local research community will help ensure athletes' health and performance and people's motivation to engage in physical activity is not reduced as a result of heatwaves and other extreme weather phenomena.

By 2037, one in four people in the sub-region will be over 65 with more time and money for leisure and volunteering⁸⁶. Imagine a future where policies will continue to increase participation through inclusive and accessible activities, helping residents to age well and thrive, preventing the onset and severity of some age-related health conditions⁸⁷.

The current policy landscape is aiming for West Yorkshire to be a more equal society where practical, personal, and social barriers to participation are significantly reduced. Societal attitudes, safety concerns and accessibility barriers will hopefully improve. Place-based solutions, systems approach, and co-design of new programmes will become more widespread too. These have become more innovative in response to continued rising living costs, with resources targeted at disadvantaged groups and sports organisations' resilience⁸⁸.

A safe West Yorkshire – a region where all can flourish

As well as the well evidenced health benefits, sport and physical activity supports social connectedness and community engagement. Participating in sports, group activities, fitness classes and walking groups bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

For many individuals and communities these social benefits can be transformative.⁸⁹ Sports clubs play a pivotal role in bringing people together and promoting physical and mental wellbeing.

They allow people of all ages and backgrounds to connect and form friendships. Participation in sports is a positive option to bridge the deficit in trust and social capital between the more affluent and vulnerable groups in society.⁹⁰

There is also evidence to suggest that sport and physical activity can encourage people away from anti-social behaviour. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) found that underachieving young people participating in sporting activities could increase their skills in numeracy by an average of 29 per cent more than those who did not participate in sport.⁹¹

Effective programmes that encourage physical activity participation have the potential to reduce anti-social behaviour. For example the Premier League “Kicks” programme has seen a reduction of up to 60 per cent in anti-social behaviour in areas it operates in. This programme aims to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in hotspots through sport and development sessions. Physical activity can help rehabilitate offenders back into society as well as enhancing social cohesion and reducing youth crime.⁹²

It is important that sport and physical activity opportunities are universally accessible through active planning, design and safety interventions.

Green and blue spaces are particularly important to help us make the most of natural settings. However the benefits of parks are not always accessible for all, for example two-thirds of women experience abuse while running⁹³.

“

Green and blue spaces are particularly important to help us make the most of natural settings”

Listening to the views of women and girls, and how they can be made to feel safer in green spaces is important for increasing the inclusivity of physical activity.

It is important to address the root causes of perceptions of unsafety, such as harassment and bullying⁹⁴. Using active design to create spaces where all people feel safe, and welcome is a vital way to boost engagement in sport and physical activity.

Implementing good lighting, restricting road traffic in some areas, decreasing anti-social behaviour in public spaces, and taking a firm stance on harassment in public spaces are measures that can be taken to improve everyone’s experience of using the park⁹⁵. Making sure that women, those who identify as LGBTQ+ and those from ethnically diverse backgrounds feel safe in parks is vital to increase their usage.



These priorities closely match the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan which aims to ensure that West Yorkshire is safe, just and inclusive. During the consultation period, 95.5% of respondents stated that safe spaces and thriving communities were an important issue for them⁹⁶.

A key priority in this report is the safety of women and girls, which builds on the Safety of Women and Girls Strategy.

This strategy aims to create safe spaces for women, working with transport teams and partners to ensure that women can travel through the sub-region without fear of harassment or violence.

Funding from the Safer Streets fund will be used to improve other public spaces and shared areas to make them accessible to all⁹⁷.

Our Roots, Wakefield

Between 2019 and 2022, Our Roots supported young people from migrant communities to engage in sporting, cultural and volunteering activities, building valuable relationships with peers and mentors along the way. Weekly football groups, self-confidence workshops and hosting events celebrating cultural heritage led to stronger and more positive community relations.

The programme designed by young people themselves aimed to help break down 'them and us' barriers and help build new skills and access new opportunities. "This project supports children and young people from those communities to build that social capital."- Kebba

Kashmir Park, Bradford

Young girls are less likely to use green space and be physically active than their male peers. Bradford set out to change this, hosting workshops and site visits for 35 girls with the aim of discovering how girls feel about using the park, what they liked, what they didn't like and what they would like to see in the future.

Safety, sociability, and places to eat were all listed as positive factors to consider when designing an active space for all. "It is absolutely amazing to see how many people will be using the park. This goes for children, young people, elders, people with disabilities and mental health issues. It is an amazing community initiative". - Fozia

“

This project supports children and young people from those communities to build that social capital”

“

It is absolutely amazing to see how many people will be using the park.”

Creating a more level playing field for West Yorkshire

Supporting West Yorkshire to move more could have incredible physical, mental and well-being benefits and meet the West Yorkshire economic ambitions for good growth. Collective working and engagement has the power to enrich West Yorkshire's communities, workplaces and places and spaces improving health outcomes, productivity, and life expectancy. By seamlessly blending the benefits of sport and physical activity into the thinking, planning and delivery of a wide range of organisations, many multi-dimensional, long-lasting productivity and well-being impacts and outcomes could be realised.

Working better together strategically.

Consider how physical activity and sport can be better embedded at a strategic and policy level in West Yorkshire to support economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Ensure that physical activity is implicit in the work of the ICB to address health inequalities for health and well-being and reducing the number of inactive adults (an ICB ambition). This requires a collaborative approach with sport, industry, social prescribers, healthcare practitioners and physical activity partnerships.

A commitment that **active design principles are integral to planning guidance and decisions to create active communities and places** which both encourage and support people to be physically active. Promoting places, facilities and communities that are

designed to encourage physical activity and sport, active travel, and climate resilience, including high quality and distinctive accessible walking and cycling routes linking our towns and cities. Creating safe routes and more space for people to travel actively, will result in significant positive impacts on health, air quality, congestion, and quality of life, ensuring the sub-region is in the 'top tier' for active travel.

Investing in future generations by promoting an active school agenda, providing more and higher quality sport and physical activity opportunities before, during and after school. Developing effective pathways between schools (from early years to teenagers) and local sports clubs, building programmes that could be easily replicated.

There are strong partnerships working at district level, delivering many impactful sport and physical activity projects and programmes. There is now an opportunity to work sub-regionally to support and enhance these networks and build on work already taking place.

This will ensure West Yorkshire's citizens and workers can start, live, and age well. There are several areas where collective action sub-regionally would help meet local priorities and WYCA's and the ICB's headline ambitions:

Working with police and crime

partners to develop approaches to support those most at risk of anti-social behaviour and crime and ensure that places are safe for people to use for sport and physical activity.

Sharing good practice and identifying ways for better joint working with partners across the sub-region and close work with local partners and colleagues who also support communities to address inequalities. This might include high impact, co-designed solutions with trusted intermediaries. This will build on local examples such as:

- The safer parks projects (Bradford) and the ground-breaking 'Safer Parks' University of Leeds report.
- The Leeds Community Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme or

simple measures to stimulate grassroots sports where there are cost or other barriers (e.g. through recycled kit or targeted measures like Our Roots Wakefield).

- The Active Calderdale experience and Moving More Often Kirklees.

Promoting new business start-ups, scale ups and spin outs, and investment in the new West Yorkshire Health and Digital Tech Investment Zone, especially those addressing local health challenges and market opportunities. **Up-skilling of the sector** including filling skills gaps in health and rehabilitation and pathways for new entrants. Supporting the sector to be a valued and credible career choice with people who are highly skilled to support local people to be more active.



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