

Beyond Covid-19 Lockdown: Recovery and Renewal Asks

AN INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 lockdown has shone a light on the inequalities in our society. The dangers of living with multiple health conditions; the increased impact of the virus on Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities; and on people in our poorest communities living in overcrowded and/or multi-generational households. There is also increased concern about the toll on people’s mental wellbeing – again, potentially worse for our poorest and most vulnerable people and communities.

Many of these issues are linked to physical inactivity. This affects our young people, who have become more inactive during lockdown, as well as our wider population. Unless they become more active, our young people will spend much more of their lives in poor health and will be the first generation to have a lower life expectancy than their parents.

We know there are many people across West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire who are keen to get back to being active and playing sport in ways they have done before. YSF will support “Return to Play” plans to make sure these opportunities are reintroduced. We also recognise there is a huge opportunity to create a step-change in activity levels for many more people across the county through working with a wider range of partners.

Over the next six months in our Recovery and Renewal journey, Yorkshire Sport Foundation (YSF) is keen to accelerate its work with partners from all sectors to make a step-change in these inequalities of activity. We know that this will help address wider inequalities around physical and mental wellbeing, skills and employment, community reliance, traffic levels, and greener, cleaner neighbourhoods.

If you have a great example of any of these things, please let us know and we will pull together the step-changes we are all making.

You can contact our Strategic Director, Sam Keighley at: sam.keighley@yorkshiresport.org

ASKS

Over the next six months, we'd like to work with partners across all systems - including communities - to make these things happen:

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1. [Remember and take account of our rich diversity](#)
2. [Develop more active travel options for short journeys, as part of commuting and in tourism](#)
3. [Ensure our open and green spaces are safe, accessible and appropriate for local people](#)
4. [Help people be active at home and in their neighbourhoods](#)
5. [Help people develop physical and mental resilience to guard against infections and to develop self-esteem and confidence](#)
6. [Support and work with voluntary, community and social enterprise sector partners to meet the needs of people who need it most](#)
7. [Work with neighbours and other volunteers in communities to encourage more people to be active](#)
8. [Work with employers from private, public, voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors to create active healthy workplaces](#)
9. [Ensure all our children and young people can be active at home and school](#)

1. REMEMBER AND TAKE ACCOUNT OF OUR RICH DIVERSITY

Yorkshire is one of the most culturally diverse regions in the UK. We know that some groups are far less likely than others to be active or work in the sector.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with all partners, including specialist agencies and sport and physical activity organisations, to ensure that all action takes account of our diversity. This includes:

- Use of relevant language, terminology and imagery ('people like me')
- Review of recruitment processes to ensure that opportunities in the sport and physical activity sector are accessible to people from diverse communities

2. DEVELOP MORE ACTIVE TRAVEL OPTIONS FOR SHORT JOURNEYS, AS PART OF COMMUTING AND IN TOURISM

Across Leeds City Region, two-thirds of journeys are less than five miles - this could be done in 30 minutes by bike. In Sheffield City Region, 40% of journeys of less than one kilometre are driven.

If more people walked or cycled these short journeys, they would be more active, and reduce congestion and pollution.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with combined authorities and local authority partners. Here are some actions that will help change the way we shop, play, learn and work:

- Convert active travel trials into permanent, safe, accessible, high-quality infrastructure
- Connect active travel infrastructure plans to wider transport planning
- Encourage walking and cycling for short journeys (less than 2km and 10km respectively) or as part of longer journeys (infrastructure and behaviour change)
- Involve communities to ensure infrastructure is in the right places, and that we understand motivations, confidence and opportunities for behaviour change
- Extend provision of bike libraries in communities

3. ENSURE OUR OPEN AND GREEN SPACES ARE SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND SUIT LOCAL PEOPLE:

During the lockdown, many families have been more active and having fun in their local open spaces and parks. If we can keep this going, families will be happier and healthier, and our shared spaces will feel safer for everyone to use.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with Local Authorities, Friends of Parks, Housing Associations and others to:

- Think creatively about the messaging, graphics and instructions in parks - make them people and child friendly and give examples of activities to do (such as hide and seek, frisbee)
- Write a new 'green space code' similar the Country Code and Green Cross Code – using easy language, symbols and graphics to give people confidence of how to use spaces safely and with other people in mind
- Encourage even more local community groups to take ownership of their green spaces and keep it welcoming, litter free and attract resources for improved / new assets and activities
- Create more social spaces within green spaces (pocket spaces, pop-up spaces, play zones and 'pockettes'). These will help park cafes open, making it easier to enjoy spaces while socially distancing
- Add furniture, such as log seating, cycle hoops or picnic benches positioned with correct distancing
- Introduce measures that encourage safe cycling, scooting and walking in parks and gardens. This could be widening paths or segregation from pedestrians
- Consider and test how existing assets in these spaces can be developed for better use. For example, resurfacing dangerous surfaces
- Test removing "no ball games / no cycling" signs from residential neighbourhoods to encourage children to play outdoors safely

4. HELP PEOPLE BE ACTIVE AT HOME AND IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS

During the lockdown, many people, including people shielding and people living in our poorest communities, have found ways to become active at home. If we can bring this into the new world then vulnerable people who are least likely to be active, will be more mobile, improve their strength, and develop more confidence to go outside their home.

We have learned that many people have access to digital platforms. And we also know that other people are digitally excluded. This means we need a balance of opportunities that create access for everyone.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Social Care partnership, South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw ICS, all West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire CCGs, local authorities, and Public Health teams to encourage people to be physically active at home including:

- Deliver 'Active At Home' leaflets to every vulnerable household in West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire
- Consider and test ways of reducing the reliance on technology/data, including all local radio stations broadcasting regular Active10 sessions
- Promote online sessions, particularly for people least likely to be active
- Remember that local messaging is most effective when delivered by 'people like me' and locally trusted organisations.
- Be flexible in messaging. Remember that different people may need different advice about adapting their activity, including people living with longer term conditions, older people and pregnant women

5. HELP PEOPLE DEVELOP PHYSICAL AND MENTAL RESILIENCE TO GUARD AGAINST INFECTIONS AND TO DEVELOP SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE

Covid-19 has affected some more than others, including Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities, men, obese, and older people. We need to encourage people to be active to build the physical and mental resilience of everyone, and particularly people who fall into these groups, to guard against future pandemics and infections.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Social Care Partnership, South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw ICS, all West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire CCGs, and Public Health teams to:

- Train every link worker and social worker in West Yorkshire Partnership and South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care System areas in Motivational Interviewing techniques to help their clients to be more active.
- Where appropriate, use socially distanced activities like walking conversations, particularly with people who would get the most from being more active
- Work with mental health commissioners and deliverers from all sectors to ensure they understand the evidence and learning of how physical activity can improve mental wellbeing, and help them to include this in their work

6. SUPPORT AND WORK WITH VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR PARTNERS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WHO NEED IT MOST

During the lockdown, the value of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VSCE) sector has shone through as a trusted partner and strong deliverer. Many more people and organisations now appreciate how quickly these organisations can respond to a crisis and galvanise effort to support people who need it most. This sector can do this because they have the connections with, and trust of, some of our most vulnerable people.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with all partners to tackle the inequality in activity to:

- Support VCSE organisations secure the sustainable resources they need to do their work with the most vulnerable people, including providing services for link workers to refer to
- Train volunteers and workers in VCSE organisations to use motivational interviewing techniques to support vulnerable people they are working with to be more active

7. WORK WITH NEIGHBOURS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS IN COMMUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE MORE PEOPLE TO BE ACTIVE

During the Lockdown period, in a similar way to VCSE organisations, a light has also been shone on the neighbours and volunteers that have self-organised and stepped forward to support each other; to provide basic food and medical supplies, to find creative ways to keep people connected and to help people deal with loneliness, grief, isolation and mental health challenges. In this way individuals from our streets and neighbourhoods – ‘people like me’- have gained the trust of many people.

To make this step-change we would like to work with neighbours and other volunteers, VCSE and other agencies to:

- Support them to think of ways they can use physical activity to address the challenges we know lie ahead for many vulnerable people including lack of resilience, reduced mobility, loneliness and isolation, mental ill health and grief.

8. WORK WITH EMPLOYERS FROM PRIVATE, PUBLIC, VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE SECTORS TO CREATE ACTIVE HEALTHY WORKPLACES

The lockdown has changed our working patterns and there are many examples where key workers and others have walked or cycled to work, taking advantage of the safer, cleaner environment.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with public sector anchor organisations, Leeds City Region, Sheffield City Region, and voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations:

- Public sector anchor organisations to lead the way in encouraging staff to travel actively, work flexibly to be active, and be active where possible in their roles.
- Leeds City Region’s Good Work Standard to include need for employers to support all staff to be active as part of looking after their physical and mental wellbeing.

9. ENSURE THAT ALL OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CAN BE ACTIVE AT HOME AND SCHOOL

During the pandemic, schools have been closed and many children have been educated at home. We know that school settings offer the most opportunities for children to be active and so have seen a reduction in children's activity levels during the pandemic.

We are fearful that foundation subjects including P.E. and extra-curricular opportunities could suffer as schools focus on the attainment gap in core subjects such as English and Maths.

We would like to help schools understand the positive impact that being active has, both in improving physical outcomes and mental health, socialisation, concentration and its role in supporting attainment in other subject areas.

Parents who have been tasked with educating children during school closures, and young people who have been trusted to be independent learners, have struggled to include physical activity in their day. We must ensure that opportunities and guidance exist to support children and young people to remain active whether continuing to learn at home or at school.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with schools and partners to:

- Support schools to deliver quality PE lessons and provide physical activity opportunities - particularly for our most vulnerable children - maintaining social distancing and bubble measures
- Work with Living Streets to promote safer routes to school to encourage more children to walk, bike or scoot to school
- Deliver Activity Packs to all children in low-income families, including those entitled to free school meals
- Use the Creating Active Schools Framework to promote a whole systems approach to school improvement

THANK YOU

Yorkshire Sport Foundation has developed these asks through talking to a wide range of partners over the last few weeks. This is not an exhaustive list and there may well be other actions that you think should be added. Please continue the debate and the call for ambitious change in Yorkshire's Recovery and Renewal Plans.