



# Wolverhampton's Physical Activity Strategy

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# Foreword



**Councillor Jaspal**  
Chair of Health and  
Wellbeing Together

**Whatever your age, there's strong scientific evidence that being physically active can help you lead a healthier and happier life and reduce your risk of developing major illnesses like coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer.**

Research shows that it can also boost your self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy levels, as well as reducing your risk of stress, depression, and dementia.

Being physically active is the miracle cure we've always had available to us, but too many people in our city are not taking their recommended dose – and their health is now suffering as a result.

We also recognise that being healthy and feeling good is about more than simply not being ill; lots of different factors shape our health and wellbeing – where we live, our education, income, the type of job we do, our lifestyles, access to green spaces, and the connections we have with other people.

But we can change that. Together, we want to help create an environment where our residents can live longer, healthier, and more active lives, and where every child in the city has the best start in life.

We will do this by working in partnership across the council, health and social care partners, the voluntary sector, faith, and community groups, businesses, education and delivery partners and by listening to local people, understanding their experiences, and making decisions informed by health data from our local population.

Given its importance in tackling health inequalities, Health and Wellbeing Together have made tackling physical inactivity a key priority in the Wolverhampton Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2028.

The strategy and action plans will focus on getting adults who do less than 30 minutes activity per week and children and young people who do less than 30 minutes a day moving more, delivering the greatest health benefits by reducing their risk of many non-communicable diseases, improving their wellbeing, and building connected and cohesive communities.

We will also continue to support those who are already taking part in regular sport and physical activity to continue to do so, and continue to back our city's wonderful clubs and other organisations who are delivering a fantastic range of opportunities for our residents.

This is an exciting chance for stakeholders to work together to make Wolverhampton a city that helps its residents to get moving more, and to enjoy the many benefits that enjoying an active lifestyle can offer.

## Introduction

**Getting Wolverhampton moving more will help Wulfrunians live longer, healthier lives. Being physically active has many health benefits, including reducing the risk of a range of chronic long-term conditions and have wider societal benefits.**

The people who have the most to gain by moving more are those adults who are currently not completing at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week, and the children and young people who are not completing 30 minutes a day.

By enabling them to move more, we can have a huge positive impact on their health and wellbeing and help to reduce health inequalities. This is the rationale for focusing the strategy on supporting inactive people to change their behaviour to move more.

In 2023, 30.5% of Wolverhampton's adult population are classed as inactive<sup>1</sup>, doing less than 30 minutes a week, which is significantly worse than the West Midlands average (25.5%) and the national average (22.3%<sup>1</sup>). For children aged between five and 16, 42.5%<sup>2</sup> are less active, completing less

than 30 minutes of physical activity a day; this is worse than both the West Midlands average (30.1%) and the national average (30.1% (2)). Inactivity levels are higher amongst women and girls, too.

Through Health and Wellbeing Together, Wolverhampton's health and wellbeing board and a forum where key leaders from the health, care and wider system come together to work collectively to reduce health inequalities, the city is taking a whole-system approach to tackling physical inactivity.



1 Public Health Outcomes Framework  
2 Sport England Active Lives

# Our Vision: Wulfrunians will live longer healthier lives

## Our Mission: To inspire and support Wulfrunians to move more every day

### Our Values

#### Innovative

Using an evidence-based approach we will deliver new and innovative approaches to creating an active Wolverhampton.

#### Collaboration

We will work in partnership across organisations, combining skills, knowledge and resources to make a difference to Wulfrunians' lives.

#### Inclusive

We will strive to create a city where all Wulfrunians have equal and fair access to being physically active, and where all Wulfrunians' voices are heard and listened to.

#### Ambitious

We will be ambitious in our work, and strive to transform opportunities for Wulfrunians to be active every day.

### Roles

#### Health and Wellbeing Together

System leaders who provide direction, challenge and influence system change.

#### Physical Activity Steering Group

To provide the strategic direction to deliver the Physical Activity Strategy.

#### Task and Finish Groups

Bringing partners together to deliver the Physical Activity action plans.

#### System Partners

Working collaboratively to change the whole system approach towards delivering and promoting physical activity.

### Themes

Active Wulfrunians

Active City

Active Spaces and Places

Active Systems

# Active Wulfrunians

**A city where everyone is active every day and has a positive attitude towards physical activity. Where everyone understands the benefits of being physically active and how to be active in a way that suits their ability.**

## What we know

- Physical inactivity levels are significantly worse in Wolverhampton than the England average in both adults and children.
- There are inequalities within the city of groups that have a high risk or prevalence of inactivity.
- Wulfrunians want to increase their physical activity levels.
- Positive physical activity behaviours begin from birth, however, there is no early years measure for physical activity.
- Girls face a significant drop in their enjoyment in physical activity as they grow up.
- A large proportion of children in Wolverhampton have low swimming attainment.
- There are lower levels of Active Travel in the city compared to England average.

## What we are going to do

- Put Wulfrunians at the centre of our work to create an active Wolverhampton through consultation, collaboration and coproduction.
- Concentrate our resources to support those who are facing the greatest barriers to being active.
- Influence early years providers to measure and promote physical activity, to support every Wulfrunian to have the best start in life.
- Improve Wulfrunians' knowledge of the level and the type of activity they should be doing, how they can be active and strive to make active choices.
- Investigate the low swimming attainment levels in the city and how we address this.
- Support Wulfrunians to make active travel their first choice for short journeys and understand the wider benefits.



# Active City

**Through the creation and promotion of suitable activities, programmes, and infrastructure, Wulfrunians will be able to engage in regular physical activity that meets their needs.**

## What we know

- Communication and marketing surrounding physical activity promotion needs improvement.
- There is a lack of provision for children to be active outside of the school day.
- There is a limited active workplace offer in Wolverhampton.
- Council run leisure facilities have increasing membership, but more needs to be done to increase the provision for those at risk of and experiencing health inequalities.
- A fifth of Wulfrunians have no budget to allocate to physical activity.
- Walking is a key activity to help people move more.
- Activities need to be fun, social, and safe.

## What we are going to do

- Create and deliver a physical activity marketing and communication plan, that includes a 'people like me' campaign.
- Reduce the financial burden of physical activity, through creating free and low-cost opportunities across the city.
- Understand gaps in provision in relation to Wulfrunians' need and target support to increase the number of suitable activities available, through working to develop the public, private and third sectors.
- Take an insight and evidence-based approach to developing the offer at council run leisure facilities that meet the diverse needs of Wulfrunians.
- Develop an Active Workplace offer that supports the city to have a healthy, happy, and productive workforce.
- Create a culture of active learning at all stages of education, including early years.
- Maximise the impact and legacy of national, regional and local sporting events to inspire and motivate Wulfrunians to be active and grow the Wolverhampton sport sector.



# Active Spaces and Places

**A city where we enhance, invest in, and protect our community spaces and places that encourage and promote physical activity and make them more accessible to our residents.**

## What we know

- Wulfrunians want to use hyper local spaces and places to be active.
- Perceived safety is a driving factor to whether spaces and places will be used to be active.
- Wulfrunians want to be active in parks and nature spaces.
- School facilities can offer valuable local provision, more needs to be done to promote the opening of facilities to the community.
- A clear evidence base is needed to inform capital investment in Wolverhampton.
- Wulfrunians do not always feel facilities are accessible.
- Canal usage varies across Wolverhampton, and these can play a key role as active corridors through the city.

## What we are going to do

- Finalise the suite of planning documents to ensure that spaces and places are fit for the future.
- Create an Active Capital Investment plan for Wolverhampton.
- Embed Active Design principles in Wolverhampton's approach to planning, transport, communities, and regeneration.
- Create a network of safe, accessible, and welcoming indoor and outdoor spaces for people to be active.
- Trial active neighbourhoods as a method to maximise hyper local community assets.
- Work to develop Active Travel networks across the city, to enable Wulfrunians to choose to travel actively.



# Active Systems

**Through working collaboratively as a whole system, we will create leadership, governance and partnerships that enable practice and protocols to promote physical activity across all sectors.**

## What we know

- There are many factors that affect activity levels including opportunities to be active and partner influence and engagement
- The skills, knowledge and capability of the workforce that influence physical activity is inconsistent.
- Workforce development and training opportunities are needed to increase competence and confidence of physical activity and behaviour change.
- NICE Guidance is available and needs to be utilised and embedded across the system.
- There are limited pathways for health professionals to refer into physical activity.
- Wulfrunians trust and listen to community leaders.
- Health professionals are valuable influencers to promote physical activity.

## What we are going to do

- Continue to develop and enhance the physical activity steering group and task and finish groups to ensure there is strong leadership and governance.
- Create a stakeholder management plan to ensure each partner understands their role in creating an active Wolverhampton.
- Create and deliver a workforce development plan that supports both the paid and volunteer workforce to have the knowledge, understanding and skills to change Wulfrunians' behaviour to move more.
- Ensure future work is driven by data, insight and evidence and that there is a robust monitoring framework that enables celebration of success and learning based practice.
- Creation and implementation of a physical activity behaviour change framework that can be used by the public, private and third sector to help Wulfrunians to move more.
- Maximise the role of community leaders and groups to support communities to move more.
- Enable health professionals to address physical inactivity as part of their practice and ensure there are clear pathways from clinical to community settings.



# Implementation and Success

## Implementation

The physical activity strategy will be implemented by creating a set of action plans with clear steps to deliver the recommendations. These actions will be undertaken by the Task and Finish groups and monitored by the Steering Group. There will be a regular review process to ensure that the strategy meets its set outcomes and tackles inactivity in the city.

## Success

Knowing what success looks like is key to measuring impact and progress. The levels of inactivity in Wolverhampton will be monitored over time using national, regional and local indicators. Whilst local measures will show the short-term impact of specific interventions, a reduction in the city's physical inactivity levels will take time, but a downward trend year-on-year would demonstrate success.

**Our ambition is to have physical inactivity levels in line with regional levels by 2030.**



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