

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT STRATEGY FOR EDINBURGH 2024 TO 2034

December 2024



Foreword - Convener of Culture and Communities Committee

I am delighted to introduce the new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Edinburgh. Physical activity, sport and all forms of movement are so important for our physical, mental, and social health and wellbeing, and by increasing our levels we will be collectively improving the health of our communities and Scotland's capital.

Our challenge is how we collectively respond to the evidence that clearly tells us that factors such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity and sex all have influence on levels of physical activity and our aim and ambition is to address these inequalities, to promote inclusion and ensure that everyone can be active and benefit from the opportunities that exist, both on an organised and informal basis.

Our approach to the development of this new strategy has been influenced by Public Health Scotland's report on "A systems-based approach to physical activity in Scotland." This framework and our new strategy highlight the key service areas and the range of partners that are involved in the delivery of physical activity and by working in a holistic, and joined-up way, shows how we can make best use of the available resources to maximise the benefits for those with the most to gain by being active.

Our strategy has been shaped by the views of over one thousand people who took time to take part in our consultation process and let us know about their levels of physical activity, the reasons why they stay active, along with the barriers that prevent them from becoming more active. We also received valuable feedback on the content of the draft strategy from individuals and organisations across the city, and I would like to thank everyone who participated for their contribution.

The new strategy has five priorities that focus on partnerships, people and places and will direct the delivery of physical activity and sport in the city. If we are to achieve these aims and ambitions it will require a collective effort from us all, working in partnership, to improve the health and wellbeing of the city and create an Edinburgh where everyone enjoys the benefits of an active life.

Councillor Val Walker
Convener of Culture and Communities Committee

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Introduction

Welcome to the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Edinburgh. This strategy sets out how the City of Edinburgh Council will work together with key partners, the sector and local communities over the next ten years to increase the number of people who participate in physical activity and sport. The Strategy sets out ambitious plans to create opportunities for all to improve and maintain their levels of activity through accessing the wide range of assets, and unique places and spaces that we have at our disposal in Edinburgh.

Scotland's capital is the top city in the UK for greenspaces with an amazing range of parks and open spaces including Holyrood Park and Arthur's seat in the centre of the city, and Pentland Hills on the outskirts. Supported by a fantastic portfolio of sports facilities, Edinburgh has many key assets that separate us from the rest of Scotland enabling us to cater for just about every way for people to get active, and through the implementation of the strategy we want to make it easier for everyone to get moving and enjoy the benefits of an active life.

Vision

An Edinburgh where everyone enjoys the benefits of an active life.

Mission Statement

Edinburgh will be a place where people are supported and encouraged to reach their full potential and to positively impact their health and wellbeing through improved access to physical activity and sport. To achieve this mission, we will work in partnership to explore and

promote opportunities for all whilst focusing on those who will benefit the most from an active life.



Why is physical activity and sport so important for our health and wellbeing?

Staying active is crucial for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It is not just about physical health, but also mental health and social wellbeing. And it is not just about going to the gym or playing sports, it is also about everyday activities which keep us moving such as being active at work, active travel, gardening, housework, walking to the shops or climbing stairs instead of taking the lift.

Evidence shows that activities like exercising, playing sports, dancing, and staying fit can improve our lives and our communities. Being active not only makes us feel better, but it can also improve our health and wellbeing, make us more productive, help us develop important skills, improve our education, and create stronger communities.

This is especially important when considering the local picture. Although Edinburgh is a more affluent area overall than other parts of Scotland, with the population generally in better health, there are existing significant health inequalities. The difference in life expectancy between people living in the most deprived areas compared to those living in the least deprived areas is ten years for females and fourteen years for males (Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership). In addition, 32% of adults in Edinburgh's least affluent areas are likely to be a healthy weight, compared to 44% of those from the more affluent areas (NHS Lothian Public Health Survey).

The UK Chief Medical Officers' [Physical Activity Guidelines](#) confirm the benefits of an active life. Being active:

- controls weight
- plays a key role in prevention, early intervention, and the management of long-term conditions and non-communicable disease
- improves mood
- boosts energy
- promotes better sleep
- can be fun and social.

Wider benefits for our city include:

- Stronger, safer, and more connected communities
- Population level health improvement
- Environmental improvements
- Reduced inequalities
- Greater productivity
- A more rounded educational experience



What is the strategy for?

This plan aims to address the issue of unequal participation rates in physical activity and sport. The coronavirus pandemic has worsened this situation for disadvantaged groups.

Our focus must be on confronting these inequalities more than ever before. According to the Edinburgh People's Survey results from 2018, 72% of respondents had engaged in at least one physical activity in the last four weeks.

However, certain groups such as those who are older, have a disability, are from an ethnic minority group or are in a lower income bracket, are less likely to be active. Participating in physical activity and sport is vital for people's health and wellbeing, and we want to ensure that everyone in Edinburgh can be active. When we consider that *40% of long-term health conditions could be prevented if everyone met the recommended physical activity levels then this aim becomes more vital than ever (*UK Chief Medical Officers Report).

To achieve this goal, we need a well-organised and efficient approach that makes the most of the resources available. Many partners, clubs, and organisations already provide opportunities for physical activity and sport in Edinburgh, but we need to work together more effectively to achieve better results. To encourage more people to participate, we want to adopt a collaborative approach throughout this strategy to ensure that collectively, we are taking the right actions to create the conditions where more people will choose to get active and stay active. To this end, a range of relevant

teams across the City of Edinburgh Council (including the Sports teams, Active Travel, Education, Parks & Greenspace, Planning and others) will be engaged with key stakeholders, including NHS Lothian, Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership, Edinburgh Leisure, **sportscotland**,

University and Scottish Student Sport, to ensure that the strategy's design and delivery is integrated across all relevant sectors.



What is the strategic context for the strategy?

This strategy defines the areas of focus for service providers and for our partners and outlines the key principles that will guide our support for physical activity and sport in Edinburgh for the next decade. It has been developed using evidence and ideas from a variety of sources, including:

- [WHO's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030 \(GAPPA\)](#)
- [Public Health Scotland – a systems-based approach to physical activity in Scotland](#)
- [Physical Activity for Health: Scotland's National Framework](#)
- [Active Scotland's Outcome Framework and Delivery Plan](#)
- [sportscotland's Sport for Life](#)
- [COSLA The Positive Contribution of PA and Sport to Scotland](#)
- [ISPAH's \(International Society for Physical Activity and Health\) Eight Investments that Work for Physical Activity](#)
- [Covid-19, physical activity, inequalities evidence review](#)
- [Scottish Disability Sport Strategic Plan](#)

This strategy considers both the national policy context and the specific city landscape of Edinburgh. It is designed to align with the city's key plans and strategies, ensuring that all efforts work together to provide the best outcomes for Edinburgh's citizens.

Key city strategies include:

- [Edinburgh 2050 City Vision](#)
- [Council Business Plan 2023-27](#)
- [Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan](#)
- [Edinburgh Learns for Life](#)
- [20 Minute Neighbourhood Strategy](#)
- [City Mobility Plan 2021-2030](#)

- [End Poverty in Edinburgh Plan 2020-203](#)
- [A Vision for School Grounds](#)
- [Thriving Greenspaces Strategy](#)
- [Open Space Strategy](#)
- [Proposed City Plan 2030](#)
- [Thrive Edinburgh 2019-2029](#)
- [Emerging Events Strategy](#)

Connections and common themes between these key strategies that will influence the new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy include:

- Improving the quality of life, health, and wellbeing for the citizens of Edinburgh
- Ensuring Edinburgh is a good place to live and work.
- Ending poverty in Edinburgh
- Becoming a net zero city by 2030
- Reducing inequalities
- Accessing work, learning and training opportunities.

What role does the Council play in promoting sports and physical activity in the city?

We have developed a new strategy for physical activity and sport in Edinburgh, given the Council's responsibilities for local democracy, service delivery, and infrastructure provision.

However, the success of this strategy will depend on collaboration with key partner organisations from the public, private, and voluntary sectors who share the same vision of promoting a more active Edinburgh.

By working together, partners can achieve positive outcomes through increased physical activity and sports participation. Research by Public Health Scotland suggests that integrated action is needed across multiple sectors and settings, including schools, colleges and universities, healthcare, transport, urban planning, sports, leisure centres, communities, and workplaces, to effect meaningful change to improve opportunities for physical activity, sport and to improve health at a population level. This integrated or "systems-based" approach has been developed by Public Health Scotland and has guided the strategy.

This strategy has been developed by the Physical Activity and Sport Partnership Group which includes representatives from the City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Leisure, NHS Lothian, **sportscotland**, Scottish Student Sport, and Edinburgh University, informed by city data on participation and health inequalities and shaped in response to feedback from over a thousand individuals, clubs and organisations who gave their views on what they thought would make the most difference.



What is the city's current sport and physical activity landscape and participation?

Several public sector organisations provide sport and physical activity programmes, including the Council (through Community Sport Hubs, Active Schools, Sports Development, Outdoor Learning and Adventure Education, Outdoor Centres and curriculum Physical Education), Edinburgh Leisure, and tertiary education institutions.

These organisations have modernised their approaches as thinking around sport and physical activity has evolved, as demonstrated by [sportscotland's Changing Lives Programme](#). A key strength in Edinburgh is the delivery of physical activity and sport by hundreds of clubs and third-sector organisations who organise and develop opportunities for people to participate in many ways. Awareness and appreciation of smaller, localised community organisations that utilise sport and physical activity to support their own objectives while contributing to the delivery of broader outcomes has increased. This has led to more cohesive partnership working, particularly in areas of the city where people experience higher levels of poverty and more health inequalities, and where local groups can better connect with residents than larger, city-wide organisations.

Alongside this sits the wide range of community-based programmes that also work locally to support and enable people of all ages to be active, ranging from buggy walks, active play, and outdoor activity through to health walks, tea dances, and active greenspace initiatives. Making these opportunities more visible and accessible can contribute significantly to increasing participation in physical activity for all ages.

While there is a wealth of opportunities across the city to participate in sport and physical activity, inequalities exist. Survey results from the Scottish Household Survey in 2022 show that 33% of residents living in the most deprived areas of Edinburgh took part in sport in the last four weeks, compared to 63% in the least deprived areas.

The survey also shows that men and boys are more likely to participate in sport than women and girls. Male participation in sport has steadily reduced in Edinburgh from 68% in 2013 to 62% in 2022. Female participation has remained stable, with 53% participating in 2013 increasing to 54% in 2022.

There is also inequality when considering participation by those with lower levels of qualification. With 69% of those who have achieved an HNC or higher taking part in sport compared to 21% with no qualifications. This shows a widening gap between those participating in sport with higher qualifications and those with no qualifications in the last three years.



Similar patterns exist for people with disabilities and those from ethnic minority communities. In the 2022 Scottish Household Survey, 42% of people surveyed with a disability took part in sport at least once in four weeks compared to 62% of people without a disability.

When reviewing figures against ethnicity, 53% of those identifying as White Scottish and 72% of White British had participated in sport at least once in the last four weeks compared to 46% of those from ethnic minorities.

In summary, sport and physical activity participation levels across the city have remained static over the years, with a significant gap in participation between the least and most deprived areas of the city.

This picture remains the same when we take educational achievement, disability, and ethnicity into account. Challenging economic times exacerbate this gap in participation, putting more financial pressure on families. There is also an increasing number of residents in Edinburgh who do not have access to networks or opportunities.

For physical activity such as walking, 60% of people living in the most deprived areas participated in recreational walking for at least 30 minutes in the last four weeks in 2019, increasing slightly to 63% in 2022. This compares to 86% of people who participated in the least deprived areas in 2019, decreasing slightly to 82% participation in 2022.

Sport and physical activity can help people to integrate and live a healthy life. Therefore, we need to be creative in finding solutions to make it easier for everyone to participate across the city.

What are the high-level priorities for the strategy?

Our aim is to increase physical activity and sport participation in Edinburgh, improving people's quality of life and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.

To achieve this, we have been guided by [Public Health Scotland's new strategic approach to physical activity in Scotland](#), which provides a framework for action at national and local levels.

The approach is based on ISPAH's (International Society for Physical Activity and Health) eight investments that work for physical activity and aim to deliver outcomes that are effective for local people while contributing positively to the national picture.

Our new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy does not replace or compete with existing strategies but provides an integrated approach that takes account of the city's unique characteristics and helps stakeholders understand the connections between strategies and identified priority areas. It will enable organisations to work together more effectively to support more people in becoming physically active, thereby improving health and wellbeing.

We will develop an implementation plan and performance framework which will show how we will deliver against the priorities and measure success.

Our five priorities

- **One: Active Partnerships**
- **Two: Active People**
- **Three: Active Places and Spaces**
- **Four: Active Places of Learning**
- **Five: Active Promotions**



What are the guiding principles for the strategy?

This strategy is informed by the following guiding principles that will underpin the implementation of actions at every level. To be:

- inclusive
- accountable
- collaborative
- preventative
- evidence based.



Priority One - Active Partnerships

Why this priority matters

Edinburgh is committed to promoting physical activity and sport for all.

To achieve this, we are adopting a joined-up or "whole systems" approach, bringing together partners from all sectors, including the Council, NHS, health and social care organisations, education, national bodies, voluntary organisations, the third sector, and community groups. By working together, we will create a long-term plan that will improve the quality of life of our citizens through physical activity and sport.

This approach will enable us to optimise our resources and maximise the positive impact on our community.

By understanding our roles and responsibilities in promoting and supporting physical activity, we can achieve better outcomes for ourselves and those we work with. We invite you to join us in this effort to create a healthier, more active Edinburgh.

Success for this priority will mean:

- Physical activity and its promotion will appear in more organisations' aims, policies, and strategies.
- Partners will work closely to develop effective approaches that will increase the number of people participating in physical activity and sport.
- Stronger leadership for physical activity and sport in Edinburgh.

To address this priority, we will:

- Build on established collaborative working through the development of existing partnerships and the creation of new strategic groups where required to and ensure efforts are coordinated and effective.
- Increase access to and maximise the use of physical activity related data and intelligence across organisations to inform planning and decision making.
- Share information about opportunities across organisations to maximise the numbers of people benefitting from access to physical activity and sport.
- Support partners to share best practice of their successful approaches to encourage employees to become more active.

Case study

[Active Partnerships – Wester Hailes United](#)

Priority Two – Active People

Why this priority matters

Improving population levels of activity and supporting healthcare services with prevention, and early intervention approaches will reduce health inequalities, the pressure on welfare services and improve the health and wellbeing of the city.

It is important to support those who are less active to feel empowered, informed, and able to participate in physical activities and sport. This will benefit individuals, communities, and the entire city.

By listening to what people want and having a strong and sustainable sports and recreation structure, along with a firm commitment to promote active living, we can make sure that everyone has the chance to join in, reduce health inequalities, and increase diversity and inclusivity.

Success for this priority will mean:

Increased participation:

- In physical activity and sport through equitable and inclusive access to appropriate places, spaces, and services.
- By those from under-represented groups and those who live in the most deprived areas of the city or who experience the highest levels of poverty or live with a long-term physical or mental health illness.
- Through improved collaboration with third sector and community organisations who have expertise in the development and delivery of programmes with their specific communities.
- By supporting healthcare professionals to deliver clear messaging around the benefits of being active as well signposting opportunities and support to be more active.

To address this priority, we will:

- Identify and reduce local barriers to participation through engagement with equalities groups and those who may not traditionally participate in physical activity and sport to improve access to opportunities.
- Promote collaboration between Council, health partners and voluntary and community organisations including sports clubs to support the development and co-production of prevention and early intervention approaches and physical activity programmes for those who would benefit the most.
- Help people who have the most to gain from physical activity by supporting the provision of localised solutions which reduce costs and are delivered in partnership with trusted people and organisations.



- Support partners to create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments to encourage the inactive to become active.
- Build workforce capacity through supporting the education and development of coaches, volunteers and deliverers who perform a vital role in increasing participation with groups of people with the most to gain.
- Provide more physical activity opportunities for those with disabilities and additional support needs.
- Integrate the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy delivery plan to key health and social care strategies such as the Integrated Joint Board Strategic Plan and Thrive Edinburgh Line to ensure they are connected and complement each other.

Case study

[Active People- Steady Steps](#)

[Active People – Health walks](#)

Priority Three – Active Places and Spaces

Why this priority matters

The provision of safe and welcoming recreational spaces and facilities is essential to improving people's opportunities to be more active and promote health and wellbeing.

Edinburgh benefits from a considerable number of these spaces alongside a range of available open green space as well as access to the coast and other waterways such as the canal.

Local streets, parks and public spaces throughout a neighbourhood can also support every day and informal outdoor activity and play for all ages.

The new strategy provides a chance to maximise the physical activity opportunities that these active places and spaces provide by working across service areas and sectors, including the private sector, and collaboratively with a wide range of partners.

Success for this priority will mean:

- Active places and spaces are safe, appropriately designed, created, and maintained to enable people from all backgrounds to be physically active in their community.
- Increased numbers of people are more physically active more often in free to access spaces.

To address this priority, we will:

- Adopt a joined-up and strategic approach to the city's recreational spaces and sports facilities estate.

- Produce a Pitch Strategy for the city which reviews the pitch landscape and identifies priorities for the future management and development of spaces to improve provision and accessibility to best meet the current and future needs of individuals and groups.
- Bring together partners who currently manage Edinburgh's sports facilities estate to review the current booking process and ease of access to spaces used for physical activity and sport.
- Review the cost of access to facilities to maximise the use of spaces and increase activity levels for those that benefit the most.



- Collaborate with partners to ensure that places and spaces are accessible for sports participation at all stages of the pathway from grassroots to performance to ensure Edinburgh is an attractive and accessible place to train and develop.
- Collaborate with community and third sector partners to review accessibility of local facilities for people who could benefit the most from physical activity and sport.
- Community Sport Hubs will work together with sports clubs and community organisations to support the delivery of local programmes in safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces.
- Maximise opportunities for learning for sustainability and rewilding local areas, involving schools and communities and providing opportunities to be active outdoors.
- Integrate the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy delivery plan with the City Mobility Plan, Thriving Greenspaces Strategy, 20-minute Neighbourhood Strategy, the new City Plan and other placemaking plans and strategies.

Case study

[Active Places and Spaces – Friday Night Lights](#)

Priority Four – Active Places of Learning

Why this priority matters

Achieving the confidence, motivation, and ability to participate in physical activity and sport within learning settings (schools, colleges, universities, community learning areas etc.) can help set people up for lifelong participation.

Being active by participating in sport or by engaging with the outdoors is also proven to raise educational attainment and achievement. Positive impacts include increased confidence, a reduction in concerning behaviours, improved attendance, and by enhancing skills such as resilience, self-discipline, self-regulation, concentration, teamwork, and time management.

Taking a rights-based approach, the right for children to play and be healthy goes hand in hand with opportunities for physical activity and is set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act.

Success for this priority will mean:

- More places of learning, from nursery to tertiary, will adopt an approach where all staff, services and partner organisations take responsibility for helping people, families and individuals become physically active.
- More children and young people will move more and participate in physical activity, sport, outdoor learning and adventurous activities.
- Active travel will increasingly be the norm and part of the school, college, university or community learning experience.

To address this priority, we will:

- Improve physical activity levels in school-based programmes with available resources including the Active Schools and Sports Development teams, and local partners.
- Training for school staff and partners, including physical literacy, will be explored and developed proportionately based on feedback, needs analysis and the identification of suitable resource.
- Embed play and outdoor learning across the curriculum with a key focus on health and wellbeing for all.
- Explore opportunities to support and maximise community access to physical activity in learning spaces such as school sports facilities and other Higher Education/ Further Education spaces.



- Adopt a partnership approach with Higher Education /Further Education institutions to develop and improve activity levels across the population including young people, students, and the workforce.
- Continue to promote and support access to high quality outdoor learning and adventure education, residential trips and opportunities to gain awards such as Duke of Edinburgh, particularly for identified groups who are traditionally less likely to participate.
- Link mental and physical health and wellbeing in learning programmes, both formal and informal, in school and community.
- Integrate the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy with existing strategies and plans that support active places of learning such as Edinburgh Learns for Life to ensure inclusive opportunities for all within learning environments.

Case study

[Active Places of Learning – Gold for St Cuthbert's](#)

Priority Five – Active Promotions

Why this priority matters

Ensuring people have the right information about the importance of being active and the benefits that it brings, and developing lifelong habits of activity is essential to improving the health and wellbeing of the city.

A key part of this will be to reach those groups with the most to gain from engaging in sport and physical activity, including enjoyment in being outdoors, and who may currently have disproportionately low levels of participation. Clear, understandable, and targeted messaging will be essential if we are to mitigate inequalities and promote inclusion. This must be consistent across council services and partners and based on targeted opportunities made available in local communities i.e., a genuine call to action.

This work must be delivered alongside effective programme development, allowing communications and engagement to focus on local opportunities to become and stay active.

Success for this priority will mean:

- A well-targeted information programme with clear and consistent messaging leading to increased awareness and understanding of the benefits of regular physical activity and increased participation, particularly amongst those groups with lower levels of participation who could benefit the most.
- Clear, understandable, and targeted messaging to those with the most to gain from physical activity and sport.
- Consistent messaging from council services and all sectors and partners based on targeted opportunities made available in local communities.

- Active travel behaviour positively influenced with more people choosing to walk, wheel and cycle across Edinburgh.

To address this priority, we will:

- Raise the profile of physical activity and sport at all levels, but focusing on children and young people, older people, those from under-represented groups, and those who live in the most deprived areas of the city or who suffer from the highest levels of poverty or poor mental health.
- Raise the profile of active and outdoor spaces that are free to access e.g., green and blue spaces.
- Promote and support active travel opportunities to increase physical activity participation.



- Actively encourage the provision of opportunities for people or communities to try physical activity and sport at community events including local and citywide festivals, galas, park and greenspace events.
- Review, improve or develop new communication platforms that provide various ways to access advice on how to be physically active.
- Ensure local partners can access relevant information so they can inform and support their communities to access physical activity and sport opportunities.
- Raise awareness of the importance of workplace and employer involvement in engaging with their workforce to promote physical activity and sport to encourage a move away from more sedentary behaviours.

Case study

[Active Engagement – International Day of Older People](#)

Case studies

Case study – Active Partnerships – Wester Hailes United

Wester Hailes is a large area to the southwest of the city which has one of the most diverse communities in Edinburgh with over seven times the average population of residents from a Black African background. The Wester Hailes United project was developed to improve understanding and relationships between communities and reduce tensions between groups of local young people through involvement in sport.

The project is organised by the Wester Hailes Community Sport Hub which is part of the national sportscotland community sport hub network. The National Lottery funded network brings local sports clubs and community organisations together to benefit from the positive contribution that sport and physical activity delivers within communities across Scotland. The aim of the targeted intervention was to improve community cohesion in Wester Hailes by supporting local young people from a variety of backgrounds to build friendships and improve their health and wellbeing in a safe environment.

The project runs in partnership with Passion4Fusion, a charity supporting black and minority ethnic communities, The Wee Haven Youth (WHY) Project and the Council's youth work team and is funded by Places for People.

The Wester Hailes United project has resulted in strengthened relationships between young people, an increased awareness of racism, and young people feeling more aware and respectful of the differences between their backgrounds, ethnicity and family life. Feedback from participants has been positive with the young people involved enjoying

the opportunities to play football with new friends and sharing their views that the project has helped to reduce bullying between their peer groups.



Case study – Active People – Steady Steps

Steady Steps is a 16-week course managed by Edinburgh Leisure that supports adults who have had or are at risk of having a fall to improve their strength, balance, and mobility. The classes are led by Specialist Health Instructors, who help participants build their confidence to live fuller and more independent lives. Margaret, aged seventy-nine, lives independently, but in the past few years she has had several falls both at home and while active. Margaret tells us how participating in Steady Steps has benefitted her:

“The falls shook my confidence and led to persistent anxiety. Every time I left the house and closed the door behind me, I would be worried about falling. It was affecting my quality of life and ability to spend time with my friends and family. My GP referred me to the Steady Steps programme.

I had never tried the gym or fitness classes because the idea of a rigid regime was intimidating. Despite this hesitation, I decided to give it a go.

I was pleasantly surprised – I discovered a fun and welcoming group of people, including the Instructor, Mandy, who loves entertaining everyone with stories, games, and quizzes while we work. We are all supportive of each other and enjoy chatting over tea and biscuits after exercising. I have learned many tips from Mandy that I have integrated into my day-to-day behaviour. For example, when gardening, I will kneel in the grass rather than bending over and risking losing my balance. Now armed with the skills and knowledge from Steady Steps, I am more confident, my anxiety has receded, and I am proud to report that on a recent weekend outing I was able to keep up with my daughter and granddaughter all day.”



Case study – Active People – Health Walks

Walking, for those able to, is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to be more active and become healthier.

Walking is a great way to keep active, though too many of us are not as active as we need to be to enjoy the potential health benefits. The reasons for this are complex and the likelihood that a person will choose to walk or be active often depends on a matrix of factors, like their physical and mental health, being affected by poverty and inequalities, where they live, their awareness of the benefits, easy access to greenspace, perceptions of safety, caring responsibilities, and feeling socially isolated, among other things.

Guided Health Walks can help to overcome these barriers. They turn what might otherwise be seen as a solitary activity and a bit of chore into a socially connected, opportunity to share time with like-minded people. They tend to be tailored for different abilities and fitness levels, allowing everyone to find a pace that's right for them. A structured, regular group provides a supportive place to overcome the uncertainty about taking those first steps to starting out on a new activity and offers a shared routine to help sustain motivation. Plus, there's the safety of walking with others that can be helpful for those who might feel vulnerable walking alone.

There are Health Walks on offer across the city that people can access for themselves. Also, GPs and Community Link Workers looking to refer patients who would benefit from joining a health walk can access a range of walks provided by community-based organisations such as Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust, as well as a number of local community health projects.

A great example of how this kind of activity can be tailored to provide real health benefits is the 'Walk with a Doc' initiative that was developed by a partnership between the Health All Round community health

project, Edinburgh University, and Sighthill Green Medical Practice. Walks start with a 30-minute talk from a health professional, such as a local GP, then the group goes for a walk and talk with time for a chat and a cup of tea at the end. Participants reported a better understanding and management of their medical conditions, increased happiness. They felt more confident, more socially connected and less isolated.



Case study – Active Places and Spaces – Friday Night Lights

The Friday Night Lights project began as a result of Community Sport Hub officers and local partners recognising the benefits of providing increased opportunities for local young people to participate in sport and physical activity programmes within the Leith community. Discussions with Community Police Officers highlighted the significant negative impact that involvement with criminal activity has on young people and the consequences of criminal gangs intentionally targeting that age group to coerce them into organised crime and other forms of anti-social behaviour. In addition, a gap in prevention activities was identified, with some youth work provision ending at 7pm on a Friday night and not restarting until the following week.

To provide support for the community, the Friday Night Lights project was created which offered a programme of activities on Friday nights aimed at local young people which benefits from using safe, accessible facilities at Lochend Football Academy and the Hibernian Community Foundation. Local youth work organisations, the secondary school, Leith Academy and Community Police Officers all worked to identify potential participants who would be most interested in the project and who would benefit the most from attending.

To date, the project has been very successful with young people reporting a heightened sense of belonging to the community and improved connections and relationships with local role models and the Community Police. Evidence has also shown a corresponding reduction in crime rates by young people in the area.



Case study – Active Places of Learning – Gold for St Cuthbert’s

St Cuthbert’s Roman Catholic Primary School in the west of Edinburgh received a gold **sportscotland** School Sport Award in recognition of its outstanding commitment to sport and physical activity. The school runs free daily sports clubs ensuring children and young people in most need including the inactive, those living in poverty, with an additional support need, those with a disability, girls and those who are care-experienced or in kinship care can take part in Active Schools clubs.

The school is committed to developing young people as leaders in sport, recognising and valuing the important contribution they can make. The school benefits from sports leaders with the school sports committee made up of young people from across each year group who have been instrumental in securing the gold **sportscotland** School Sport Award.

Funded by the National Lottery, the School Sport Award is presented for innovation and achievement in delivering school sport and physical activity. It recognises schools that put young people at the forefront of decision making and planning of school sport and PE, while also increasing participation opportunities.

The Head teacher of St Cuthbert’s, Pat Brack, said: “Being active is one of our key school values and as a school which has recently become a Gold Standard Rights Respecting School, we also really value our pupils’ right to play and to maximise their talents. Consequently, we have been really pleased to see the increase in active school clubs and in school sporting activities catering to a wide range of interests and cultures that we have affected over the last few years.”



Case study – Active Engagement – International Day of Older People

Leith Community Sport Hub and partners host a series of weekly activities and events for older people in Leith. Partners include Edinburgh Leisure, Hibernian Community Foundation, Pilmey Development Project (local charity) and Places for People (housing association).

One engagement event was held on the UN's International Day of Older Persons to tackle isolation of older people and to increase physical activity levels. The event allows participants to be informed of weekly physical activity sessions held in the local area. The events also give services and experts a chance to share valuable information on a wide range of areas including the benefits of being active along with energy advice given in the recent announcement on the winter fuel allowance.





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