



**THEME:**  
Health

**TITLE OF LEARNING:**  
Social Prescribing: Lacking Opportunities for Activity

### KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can we support our partners to tackle inactivity?  
How do we develop opportunities to be active in the community?



### AN EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE:

As part of preparatory work for the Black Country Fund, research was carried out by the Health and Wellbeing lead into the existing capacity for social prescribing across the four Local Authority areas and the different models of implementation of both existing services and planned provision in light of link workers being recruited by Primary Care Networks.

As part of these discussions, a common theme emerged. Whilst formal social prescribing is in its relative infancy, networks have been established via the voluntary sector council's in Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

However, lead officers from each area reported that, whilst there was a will to signpost to physical activity opportunities when appropriate, there was a notable dearth of opportunities to do so. Link workers were not equipped with the requisite knowledge of community-based programmes, therefore, at present, the social prescribing of activity was not taking place. It was a situation described by one area lead as 'Too many estate agents, and not enough holidays.'

### WHAT WERE THE LESSONS THAT WERE LEARNT AND HOW ARE THEY BEING APPLIED IN THE FUTURE?

Following the research, ABC have sought to fill the gap in knowledge and develop a database of physical activity opportunities across our four Local Authority areas, ready in time for the recruitment of two Community Connectors as part of the Black Country Fund. Additionally, a funding application has been submitted for an 'Inclusive Activities Developer' to work across one Local Authority area.

### HOW WAS SUCCESS MEASURED?

Improved knowledge. Once the database is complete, ABC will be in a position to provide all link workers across the Black Country with access to a bank of information (such as time, cost and target audience of programmes) that has the potential to reduce inactivity across underrepresented groups in the sub-region.