

# Physical activity exercise and you



A Healthwatch Dudley report for  
Active Black Country based on a  
study of resident engagement  
with 900 local people

May 2021

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Black Country priority wards</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Questionnaire survey</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>What people are saying</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Priority ward data</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Emerging themes</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Future Research</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Survey questions</b>	<b>42</b>

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# Summary

## Background

There is a significant challenge to the health of the Black Country as a consequence of physical inactivity among the population. Different ways of working together need to be found to get more people active and reduce the health and welfare costs for them, the community, public services and the local economy.

Black Country Consortium Ltd, in partnership with the four Black Country local authorities, secured monies from Sport England to pilot a community asset-based approach to tackling physical inactivity across eight priority wards:

- Dudley Metropolitan Borough: Castle and Priory; Woodside, Netherton and St Andrews
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough: Friar Park; Princes End
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough: Birchills Leamore; Darlaston South
- City of Wolverhampton: Bushbury South and Low Hill; Ettingshall

Healthwatch Dudley designed a questionnaire survey used to collect people's views on physical activity and exercise. In total, there were 904 responses obtained to the survey. Almost three quarters of those answering a question on gender indicated they were female and of those answering a question on ethnicity just over three quarters indicated they were English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller or Any Other White Background.

## Findings

On technology and physical activity more people are using different technologies and going online to get help with physical activity or exercise, they have equipment and smart phones and watches. This trend was happening before the Covid-19 pandemic happened but has intensified during with many people spend more time at home. Any strategy must consider the implications of this change. But there is still a number of people not using such technology who are not or cannot get online and they should not be left out when we are thinking about policy and innovation to get more people being active

In describing physical activity and what it means to them there is considerable variation dependent on an individual's circumstances, their work and family responsibilities, how much spare money they have to spend, their health and wellbeing, and levels of confidence and motivation. Most, though, recognise the benefits for health of exercise and would like to start or do more to stay fit or get

fitter. When thinking about promoting physical activity and exercise it is suggested the messaging and images used must fit with people's, often complicated and busy lives, and be attractive to people of all shapes and sizes.

Unsurprisingly, individuals get information on physical activity and exercise from a variety of sources - some, like the GP or other healthcare professionals, the television and radio, or newspapers, leaflets and advertisements in public places have been around for a long time. But, social media and going online are now important sources of information and help too. In turn, any campaign designed to get people interested in being more physically active must offer convenient and affordable opportunities to get involved in activities suited to their situation and that are fun to do.

It is also apparent that many people have complex and busy daily routines at work and at home - or indeed trying to get by different types of benefits payments. During the Covid-19 pandemic period things have become more complicated with an increase in homeworking, those on furlough, and the home schooling of children. As a consequence, it seems, more people are exercising at home when they can in addition to those who were already doing so - though it can vary from going up and down stairs and gardening through stretching and yoga to the use of treadmills and rowing machines.

Careful consideration must be given to how people feel about physical activity and exercise and how they are motivated or not to get active or do more. They can be held back by a lack of confidence and being embarrassed about their body shape and unfitness, feeling tired and exhausted after a long day or week at work and tending to other home and family responsibilities, or a lack of money or places to go that easy to get to and safe to be in. Sometimes, individuals will need targeted support and encouragement to get active, help with deciding what they can do, and incentives or low cost options that make it easier for them to get started.

Then there is the place where someone lives and how close it is to leisure facilities, parks and other open spaces, the quality of public transport systems and how they can be used easily or not to get to different locations and venues. Where an individual lives can also determine how worried or not they are about gangs and groups of young people congregating, crime and personal safety, and being on the street or in other open spaces at different times.

## **Recommendations**

- Involve people, from the outset, in a process of conversation and coproduction to think about and develop plans and innovations to increase levels of physical activity and exercise

- Make the most of opportunities to harness different technologies including digital resources to help people with their health and exercise
- Develop robust policies on social media and how it can be used to provide information on and increase levels of physical activity - in addition to thinking about other ways of providing information and help too
- Work to develop a deep understanding of what physical activity and exercise means to different individuals and why - getting to know about their lives, challenges and opportunities, motivations and aspirations
- Ensure people are not put off by approaches and campaigns that don't fit well with their lives and circumstances - think about tailored messages for particular groups to get their attention
- Look at and improve, where needed, local leisure and sports facilities and parks and open spaces to create attractive venues and places that are well maintained and safe to use.
- Find out what people need in the way of support to increase confidence and motivation and make it easier for them to exercise
- Don't leave anyone out because of where they live or how much money they have to spend or because they are not using technology and digital resources or as a result of their sex or gender, ethnicity or age or the fact they have a disability or a health condition or are a particular shape or size

# Introduction

There is a significant challenge to the health of the Black Country with over 32.5% of the population classed as physically inactive. With a total population of 1.17m people that equates to over 305,000 individuals - we need to work differently to get people active and reduce the health and welfare costs for them, the community, public services and the local economy.<sup>1</sup>

The lives of Black Country residents are determined by a unique set of characteristics setting it apart as an area, largely, unlike the majority of others in England. With over half its residents living in the top twenty percent of areas of deprivation, the health of people across the region is largely negatively driven by their socio-economic status.

## The Black Country pilot

Black Country Consortium Ltd, in partnership with the four Black Country local authorities, secured monies from Sport England to pilot a community asset-based approach to tackling physical inactivity across eight priority wards. The aim being to develop wider, collaborative, partnerships which look at how all parts of a community can better work together to get people active, healthier and happier.

It was also an intention to generate learning to inform future planning and policy activity to increase levels of physical activity. The pilot would:

- Identify ways to reduce physical inactivity
- Improve understanding of the motivations and barriers to being more physically active
- Trial health, community, education and workforce interventions to increase physical activity
- Improve collaboration between partners to tackle physical inactivity

## Residents' engagement

This report details work done to get the views of people, within and across Black Country priority ward areas, on physical activity and exercise. The intention is to better understand needs and motivations and identify barriers to being physically active. And use the information collected to inform community campaigning to increase levels of physical activity and targeted social prescribing activity across the priority ward areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Active Black Country, Towards and Active Black Country Strategic Framework, <https://www.activeblackcountry.co.uk/about-us/towards-an-active-black-country-strategic-framework/>

# Black Country priority wards

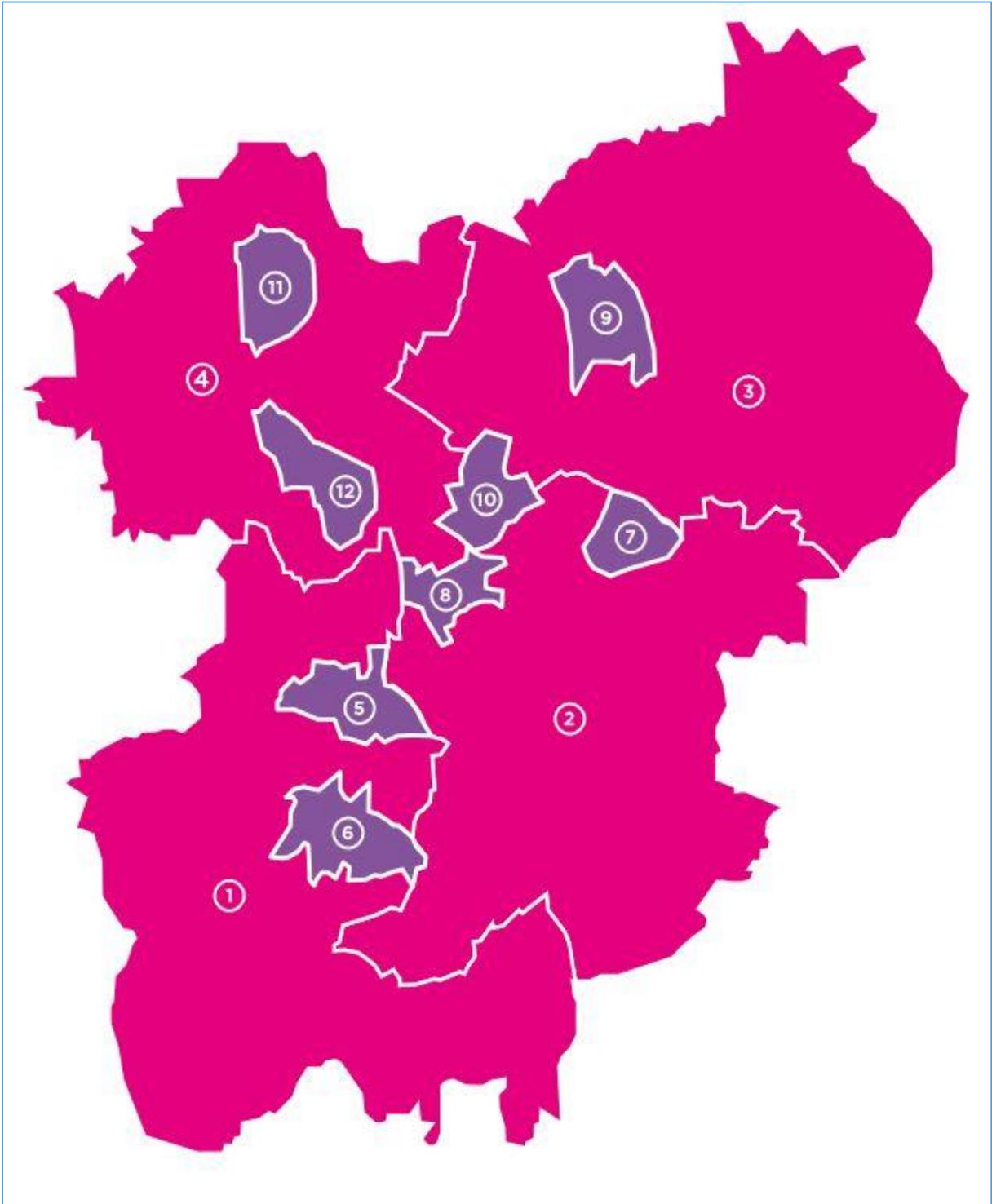
Active Black Country decided to target eight priority wards with a combination of high deprivation and low physical activity levels. They were identified using a combination of national data that included Indices of Multiple Deprivation and Physical Inactivity.

It wanted to create strong links with priority audiences across the priority wards and improve understanding of what can be done to change and develop a network of organisations involved in creating a varied and integrated sense of place. Making the best use of assets within communities and exploring how all parts of a community can better work together to get people active, healthier and happier.

Active Black Country set out to work collaboratively with local authorities and other relevant organisations to ensure the coordination of investment into priority places is coordinated and complimentary. This would help to ensure impacts are maximised in terms of increased levels of physical activity and exercise.

The whole approach to place-based work would be underpinned by an intelligence and insight led approach, and learning and evaluation, to test new interventions and provide the evidence to scale up approaches that are shown to have a positive impact on levels of physical activity.

Priority wards	
<b>Dudley Metropolitan Borough</b>	
5	Castle and Priory
6	Woodside, Netherton and St Andrews
<b>Sandwell Metropolitan Borough</b>	
7	Friar Park
8	Princes End
<b>Walsall Metropolitan Borough</b>	
9	Birchills Leamore
10	Darlaston South
<b>City of Wolverhampton</b>	
11	Bushbury South and Low Hill
12	Ettingshall



Map showing priority wards

### **Dudley Metropolitan Borough**

Dudley Metropolitan Borough is located on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation, a little west of the city of Birmingham and south of the city of Wolverhampton. It is in the Black Country area, which also includes the neighbouring boroughs of Sandwell and Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton.

Latest population estimates, from 2018, published by the Office for National Statistics, show that the borough had a population of around 360,000. The figures indicate that 18.2% of the population is under 15, whilst 20.3% is aged 65 and over and 88.5% of is White British.<sup>2</sup> The targeted priority wards were Castle and Priory and Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews.

### Castle and Priory

Residents	14,904
Lower Socio Economic Groups	52.3%
Aged 5-16	17.9%
LSOAs that are deprived	50%
Year 6 pupils overweight	44%

### Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews

Residents	15,645
Lower Socio Economic Groups	56.9%
Aged 5-16	15.8%
LSOAs that are deprived	70%
Year 6 pupils overweight	43%

## Sandwell Metropolitan Borough

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough borders Birmingham, Dudley, Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton and has a population of around 327,378. More than 40% of residents are under the age of 30 and almost 40% are from an ethnic minority.

Sandwell performs below the national average on many indicators relating to skills and education across people's lives. The borough is characterised by widespread deprivation and is the 12th most deprived English local authority out of a total of 317. The impact of poverty on children is significant in terms of their life chances and healthy life expectancy of older people is also lower than that nationally.<sup>3</sup> The targeted priority wards were Friar Park and Princes End.

### Friar Park

Residents	12,718
Lower Socio Economic Groups	62.2%
Aged 5-16	17.8%
LSOAs that are deprived	78%
Year 6 pupils overweight	45%

<sup>2</sup> All About Dudley Borough, <https://www.allaboutdudley.info/home/the-borough/>

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Plan, 'Big Plans for a Great Place for the People of Sandwell', [https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/29963/corporate\\_plan\\_-\\_big\\_plans\\_for\\_a\\_great\\_place\\_for\\_the\\_people\\_of\\_sandwell](https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/29963/corporate_plan_-_big_plans_for_a_great_place_for_the_people_of_sandwell)

## Princes End

Residents	13,487
Lower Socio Economic Groups	63.4%
Aged 5-16	17.6%
LSOAs that are deprived	78%
Year 6 pupils overweight	43%

## Walsall Metropolitan Borough

Walsall Metropolitan Borough is in the Black Country and has a population of around 285,500. Its communities face many different challenges be it on health or wealth grounds. Walsall is a culturally diverse place where people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds form the largest minority ethnic groups.

Deprivation is deeply entrenched in the borough. There are extremes of deprivation, with central and western areas typically much more deprived than eastern areas. Walsall fares particularly badly in terms of education, income and employment deprivation and many of the issues that challenge the borough match the geography of deprivation.<sup>4</sup> The targeted priority wards were Birchills Leamore and Darlaston South.

### Birchills Leamore

Residents	15,762
Lower Socio Economic Groups	63.8%
Aged 5-16	17.5%
LSOAs that are deprived	92%
Year 6 pupils overweight	43%

### Darlaston South

Residents	15,820
Lower Socio Economic Groups	62.5%
Aged 5-16	18.2%
LSOAs that are deprived	89%
Year 6 pupils overweight	47%

## City of Wolverhampton

The City of Wolverhampton has a population of nearly 260,000. The city is diverse with one third of its population identified as being part of Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups. There are around 90 languages spoken within the city. In its strategic plans for the future the city council recognises that there are challenges to be addressed to do with poverty and inequality and the need to improve people's

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<sup>4</sup> Corporate Plan, 2021-2022, Inequalities are reduced and all potentials are maximized, <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan>

health and wellbeing.<sup>5</sup> The targeted priority wards are Bushbury South and Low Hill and Ettingshall.

#### Bushbury South and Low Hill

Residents	15,826
Lower Socio Economic Groups	62.8%
Aged 5-16	20.6%
LSOAs that are deprived	70%
Year 6 pupils overweight	43%

#### Ettingshall

Residents	15,934
Lower Socio Economic Groups	60.5%
Aged 5-16	17.3%
LSOAs that are deprived	80%
Year 6 pupils overweight	44%

In the tables a Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) is a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales, with mean populations of 1,500 and a minimum threshold population of 1,000.<sup>6</sup>

## Questionnaire survey

Healthwatch Dudley designed a questionnaire survey to be used to collect people's views on physical activity and exercise (see Appendix 1, on page 42). It contained a mix of closed, Likert scale and open-ended questions. There were 904 responses obtained to the survey from people in priority wards and a few from other parts of the Black Country.

### Participants and ethnicity

In total, 714 people answered questions on ethnicity, age, gender and disabilities. The question on ethnicity shows 543 (76%), of the people who answered, it describe themselves as English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, Any Other White Background, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller.

There were 20 (2.8%) of the people, who answered the question, who described themselves as of mixed or multiple ethnic background, 94 (13%) of Asian or Asian British background, 43 (6%) of Black or Black British background, one person of Arab

<sup>5</sup> Our Council Plan, 2019-2024, <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/your-council/council-plan>

<sup>6</sup> Active Black Country, Ward Statistics, <https://www.activeblackcountry.co.uk/insight-hub/learnings/castle-and-priory/>

background and 13 people who indicated they belonged to an ethnic group that was not listed.

Ethnicity		
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	74.23%	530
Any other White background	0.98%	7
Irish	0.56%	4
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.28%	2
White and Black Caribbean	1.40%	10
White and Black African	0.42%	3
White and Asian	0.70%	5
Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	0.28%	2
Asian/Asian British: Indian	4.62%	33
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	7.70%	55
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.70%	5
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0.14%	1
Any other Asian background	0.00%	0
Black/Black British: African	2.24%	16
Black/Black British: Caribbean	3.08%	22
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	0.70%	5
Arab	0.14%	1
Any other ethnic group	1.82%	13
	Total	714

## Participants and age

The question on age shows that, for those who answered it, 35 (4.9%) were aged under 16, 171 (23.9%) were aged 16 to 34, 305 (42.7%) were aged 35 to 54, 188 (26.3%) were aged 55 to 74 and 15 (2.1%) were aged 75 or over.

Age		
Under 16	4.90%	35
16 to 24	7.98%	57
25 to 34	15.97%	114
35 to 44	22.55%	161
45 to 54	20.17%	144
55 to 64	18.21%	130
65 to 74	8.12%	58
75 or older	2.10%	15
	Total	714

## Participants and gender

Of the people who answered the question on gender 522 (73.1%) indicated they were female and 186 (26%) indicated they were male. One person indicated Other and 5 people preferred not to say what gender they were.

Gender		
Female	73.11%	522
Male	26.05%	186
Other	0.14%	1
Rather not say	0.70%	5
	Total	714

## Participants and disability

Of the people who answered the question on disability 604 (84.6%) did consider they had a disability and 112 (15.7%) did not consider they had a disability.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?		
Yes	15.69%	112
No	84.59%	604
	Total	714

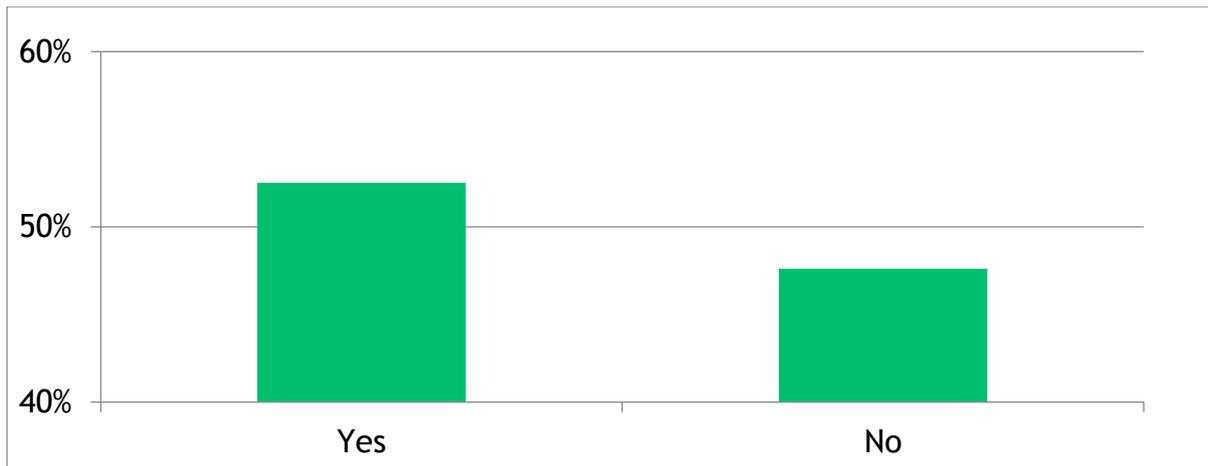
The disabilities that individuals indicated they have include: reduced mobility; different types of arthritis (especially affecting the back, hips and knees); swelling in the legs and feet; heart or lung conditions; diabetes; asthma; Parkinson's disease; neuropathy; autism; epilepsy; stroke; cancer; migraines; hearing or visual impairments; Crohn's disease; muscular dystrophy; multiple sclerosis; fibromyalgia; post-traumatic stress disorder; social anxiety; panic attacks; and depression.

# What people are saying

An in-depth analysis was undertaken of all of the responses to the questionnaire survey. The following sections of the report detail the findings from this analysis.

## Technology and physical activity

In response to a question on the use of technology to help with physical activity and exercise - for example a mobile phone app, smart watch, Fitbit or Wii Fit equipment - 375 (52.5%) individuals indicated they did and 340 (47.6%) indicated they did not.



### Using technology to help with physical activity and exercise

The technology used includes: smart watches (Apple, Fitbit, Whoop strap and others); mobile fitness apps, fitness bracelets set at a certain number of steps per day, exergaming video games (such as the Nintendo Wii Fit); YouTube and other online physical activity and exercise videos; online platforms like Zoom to hold group exercise sessions; and Strava an internet service for tracking human exercise which incorporates social network features - mostly used for cycling and running using GPS data.

### Describing physical activity

When people are asked what physical activity means to them there are a range of responses. They can be, broadly, grouped together under the following headings:

- Getting active, exercise, moving
- Walking (the dog), doing 10,000 steps, jogging, cycling
- Raising your heart rate, getting a little out of breath
- Keeping fit, gym work
- Sports, football, tennis, cricket, swimming
- Gardening, decorating, housework
- Dancing and yoga

*'[It's], walking, dancing [the] gym ... gardening or manual work'*

*'It is exercise or physical work that raises the heart rate for a sustained period'*

*'Bending, stretching, walking, swimming'*

*'Can be lots of things, from organised sport to gardening to vigorous cleaning'*

*'[It's about] being mobile, whether walking, running on my own or with others or sporting pursuits with others like football, tennis, cricket'*

*'Getting a little out of breath and moving about'*

## **Promoting physical activity**

There are different ideas on the words or phrases that can be used, in awareness raising campaigns, to help individuals feel more positive about being physically active. In the main they are about:

- Healthy body healthy mind
- Self-care, wellbeing, reducing stress
- Fitness, keeping active and moving to improve health
- Having fun, growing old well, living longer and better
- Going for it, a little and often, it's for your benefit
- Loving yourself, releasing happy hormones
- Feeling alert and energised, happier and calmer
- Not over thinking it, just doing it, the feeling after exercise is great
- It's never too late to start, we should seek to be inclusive when thinking about who can be physically active

*'Count yourself in, your worth it !!! ... do it [exercise] for YOU !!'*

*'Be active and say hello to someone'*

*'One step for a better, healthier future'*

*'Any activity is better than none ... you can do it!'*

*'Unlock your potential, revitalise your body, become the best version of you'*

*'[It's about] health, happiness, community, physical and mental fulfilment ... mental peace'*

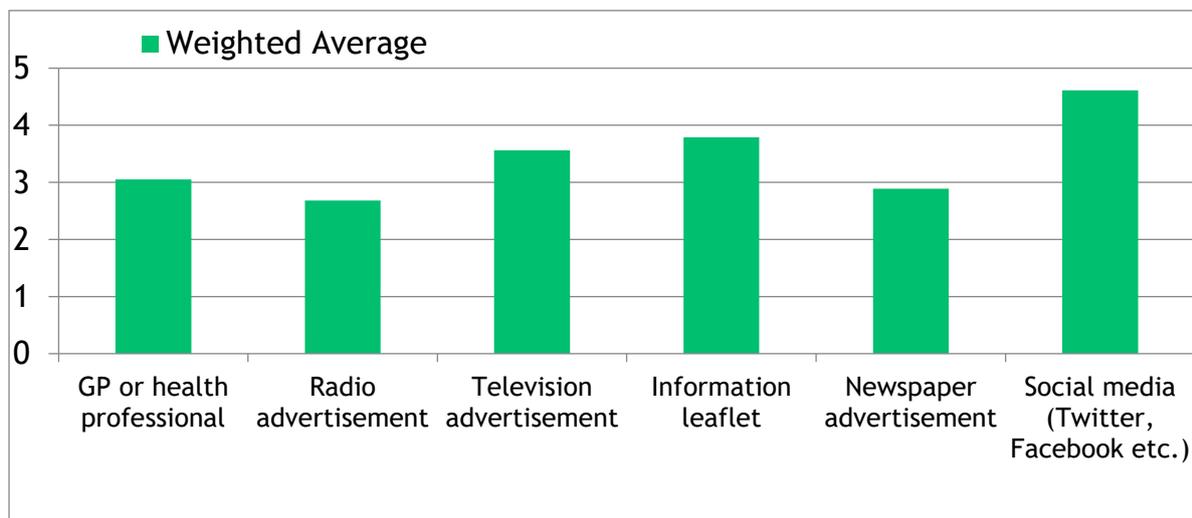
*'Keep going, small steps will encourage you to do more and ultimately you will feel positive and energetic'*

*'Have a go, no matter how little you do it all adds up for the better'*

## Getting information on physical activity and exercise

When asked about the best ways to get information on physical activity and exercise it is clear the 714 respondents use a variety of ways to get it - with marked use of social media followed by information leaflets and television advertisements. A little less used, but still important, are a GP or health professional and newspaper and radio advertisements. Other ways to get information on physical activity and exercise include:

- At the gym, at the park
- A community or leisure centre, church, sports clubs
- Fitness magazines, books and other literature
- Council websites, the Internet, fitness apps, email, social media



### How people get information

- Posters around about in the community at bus stops in shops
- Library (leaflets and books), schools, organised groups, at work
- Health professionals, GP practice, personal trainer
- Community and social gatherings
- National news and campaigns

## Getting people interested in physical activity and exercise

When asked if there was a campaign on physical activity and exercise what would be the best way to get their attention people remarked:

- Social media, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, apps
- A leaflet, television and newspaper advertisements
- Posters in public places, at GP practices and on buses
- Activities for families, children and young people
- Activities that are free or low cost, discounts
- Incentives, rewards, competitions and offers, prizes
- Before and after statistics and pictures
- Benefits to health and ageing well
- Activities that are local and safe to take part in
- Advertisements that are attractive to people of all shapes and sizes
- Pictures of fun, smiling and happy people

‘Use social media [and] activities aimed at everyone despite their physical appearance, too many things show thin, skinny, people - the majority of people are not like this’

‘Happy people, enjoying themselves doing exercise’

‘Ask people what they want, what worries them, what the barriers are, then, help people around these [barriers]’

‘[Activities] are free and fun, there are no judgements and they are tailored to your fitness level’

‘It’s not expensive [to do things], they are not too ambitious and overwhelming, [there is] something for beginners’

‘Put the focus more on exploring and being outside rather than punishing your body’

‘Have real people’s stories to show it [physical activity and exercise] works’

In turn, people remarked that the images best suited to making someone feel like wanting to be physically active and exercise are:

- Fun ones, healthy, outdoors
- Normal people, happy faces, people having a good time
- People of all sizes and with disabilities
- Families, walking the dog, exercising in nice areas
- Nice places to visit and be active in, hiking in a picturesque setting
- Anything except people in Lycra
- People enjoying themselves, in the fresh air, green open space
- Someone sitting in an armchair watching TV struggling to get up  
(714 responses to each of the two questions)

‘Photos of happy people or local facilities and what they can be used for’

‘Showing improvements made from the start of a journey to when ... [a person] reached their ideal weight’

‘People who have a typical body not looking super fit or slim’

‘People having a good time’ ... ‘happy people!’

‘Realistic people, no one in leotards, my age group with similar ailments’

‘Ordinary people, overweight like me, laughing as they exercise’

‘A physically strong person, good body, toned’

‘Seeing people that are fit and skinny, it makes me want to look like that’

## Daily routines and free time

People who have been working through the Covid-19 pandemic period, working at home, are looking after children and managing household tasks (more often women than men) or are retired all have quite different daily routines and more or less free time to participate in physical activity and exercise.

Daily routines can vary, from relaxing at home and not doing much, through involvement in different activities like chores at home or in the garden, going for walks - sometimes with family or friends - to working out at the gym and participating in different sports.

Many people, though, indicate that physical activity or exercise, outside of what they need to do for work or managing at home, does not feature much in their day-to-day living. Individuals remarked that 'Physical Activity doesn't play a huge part in my lifestyle', 'I wake, wash, [have] breakfast, walk to work, walk home, make dinner and relax', 'I stay at home and watch TV, shopping once a week', 'I wake up, shower, [have] breakfast, do the school run, commute to work and home again, cook tea, do the cleaning, watch TV and go to bed'.

Patterns of physical activity have not been much different during the Covid-19 pandemic period to what they were before for some people. But, a significant number of individuals, at the time they completed the survey, report on how their daily routines had changed a lot during the pandemic period and many were less physically active as a result.

The comments included: '[I've been] working from home for the past year ... I go from bed to desk most days', 'I'm not very active at the moment with Covid and two small children and no car, [I'm] stuck at home a lot', 'At the moment I'm working from home so not leaving the house much. Before Covid I would be playing football or going for a run'. 'I am currently at home so I spend most of my time indoors working ... I try to go for a walk at the weekends', '[With] home schooling I'm so busy ... if I was not [so busy] I would take a daily walk in local park'.

A smaller number of individuals are doing a more substantial amount of exercise: 'I get up, do a mile run on the running machine, do some weights, and go to the gym three times a week', 'When the kids are at school ... I go running for [up to] an hour then walk the dog ... before work', 'I go for runs ... do strength training ... I do yoga too'.

In turn, people indicate that they are sometimes doing more or less physically active things which include:

- Crafting, knitting, cooking, gardening, housework, do-it-yourself
- Walking, getting out with the dog, visits to the countryside, dancing, bowls
- Watching TV, listening to music, reading, choir practice
- Relaxing, spending time with family and friends, volunteering
- Gym workouts, cycling, football, golf, swimming
- Using social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok), computer games
- Playing guitar, playing the piano
- Caring for children, housework, shopping

‘I usually go for a walk with my husband and children or if it’s raining I’ll relax doing cross stitch’

‘I go walking, do gardening, go shopping ... visit and meet friends and family, [have] days out and holidays ... [I’m] restricted now due to Covid’

‘I’m a full time carer for my partner so not much free time but I will read or craft’

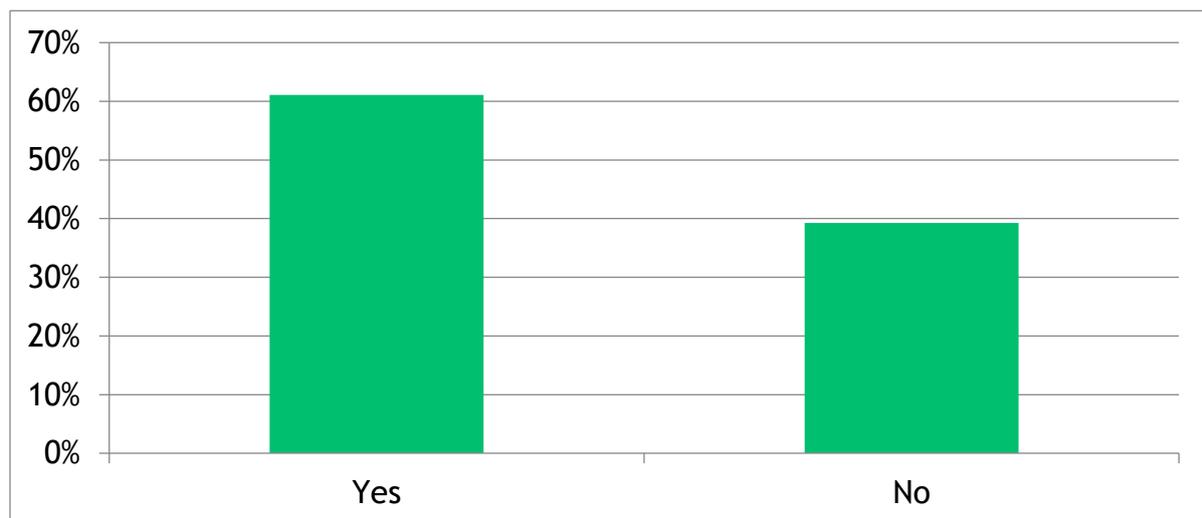
‘I [enjoy] walking and swimming when allowed to do so, visiting places of interest, reading, cooking and watching TV’

‘In normal circumstances I would be at gym classes or playing netball. Currently crafting and watching TV or films’

(565 responses to a question on daily routine and 655 responses to a question on spare time activities)

### Exercise at home and club membership

Of those people answering a question on whether they had done any exercise at home, in the last week, 400 (61.07%), indicated that they had and 257 (39.24%) indicated that they had not.

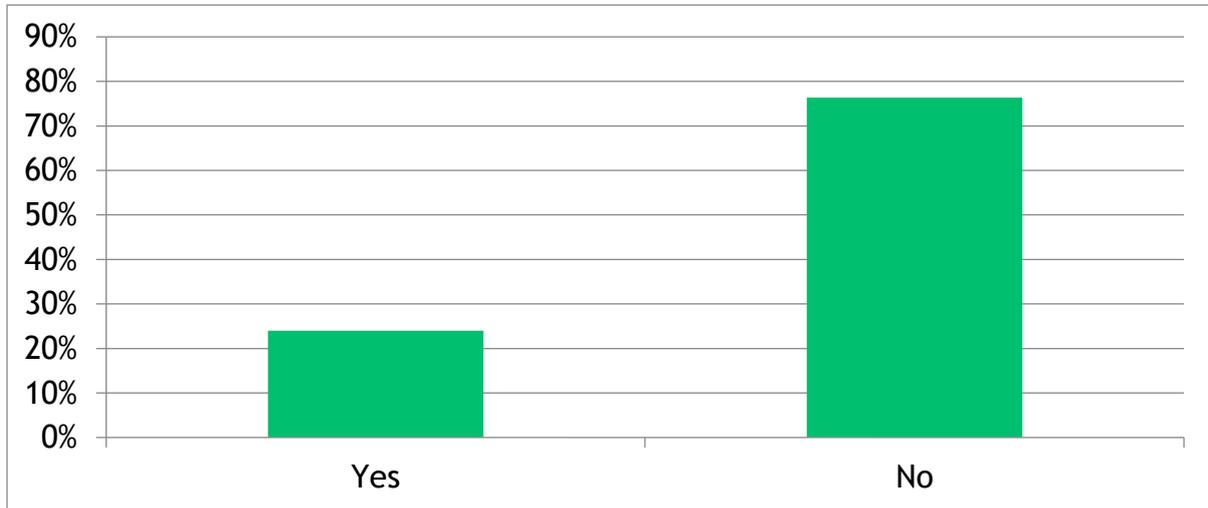


#### Physical activity at home

Individuals are doing: housework; going up and down stairs, taking part in aerobics and stretches; press-ups; squats and sit-ups; using weights; rowing machines, treadmills, static bikes and boxing equipment or on their own or with others taking

part in yoga, dancing and gardening or going online to get access to exercise activities and platforms like 'Zoom' to get together to do exercise in groups.

When asked if they belong to any club or group where they take part in physical activity or exercise responses show that 157 (23.97%) of the people answering the question do belong to such a club or group and 500 (76.34%) do not.



#### Belonging to a club or group

It is remarked that the benefits of being part of a club or group, in addition to taking part in physical activity and exercise, are:

- Opportunities to socialise, meet others and make new friends
  - Getting encouragement, support and help with motivation and confidence
  - Chances to chat about issues or problems, interactions that lift your mood
  - A sense of belonging, being part of a team and togetherness
  - It is good for your mental health, you feel better about yourself
  - It gets you out in all weathers, it's all about getting fit
  - You are with like-minded others
  - It can help to alleviate loneliness
  - You can get a sense of accomplishment
- (424 responses)

Individuals are members of or involved with: walking and gardening groups; ladies keep fit classes; weight loss groups; yoga; and dance classes; gyms; karate; sailing; football; rugby; tennis; basketball; netball; Sunday league football; running; cycling; swimming; golf and bowls groups or clubs.

#### Physical activity, feelings, motivation and barriers

When asked how physical activity or exercise makes them feel people remarked that they are:

- Energised, happy and in a positive mood
- Tired, in pain, exhausted, out of breath, sad
- Fitter and more alert, in good health
- Contented, feeling they have achieved something
- Refreshed and given a mental boost
- Feeling fabulous, better in themselves and alive
- Anxious, fearful and embarrassed
- Revitalised, invigorated, exhilarated
- Proud, sweaty, stronger, pumped up
- Relaxed, clear minded, calm
- Feeling amazing, motivated, competitive, determined
- Challenged, buzzing, euphoric
- Confident, pleased, fulfilled, satisfied
- Feeling fantastic, great and younger  
(581 responses)

‘I ... feel better about myself’

‘I feel good, empowered, want more’

‘I am better afterwards, I never look forward to it but don't regret it once it's done’

‘[I feel] good about my body, confident about physical ability. I suffer with mental illness and exercise makes me feel better’

‘I'm proud of myself and happy that I pushed myself to do something, even if it's just 10 minutes, because I am basically inherently lazy’

‘[I feel] happy, healthy and for that time I'm in a workout nothing else is on my mind, I feel free. It helps with my anxiety and has helped me with depression’

‘It takes a lot of energy [power walking] that sometimes I just haven't got. I've been enjoying my power walks though, to get out, put music on and just to have some time alone!’

‘[Exercise] relieves my stress, helps me work through problems or challenges at work and makes me feel good’

What helps to make someone want to be physically active or exercise is:

- Being with friends, being part of a group
  - Encouragement, support, coaching, goals
  - Mobile phone apps, music, having a dog, having fun
  - Good weather, fresh air
  - A positive outlook, benefits for your health
  - Nearby facilities, open spaces, easy access to venues
  - Free sessions, affordable sessions, discounts
  - Focus, motivation, willpower
  - Having the time to do things, wanting to be fit
  - Incentives, competitions, rewards
- (655 responses)

‘Any routine I can find on the internet that is doable and easy to maintain, easy to follow’

‘A supportive family, having equipment at home ... and the motivation to want to be fit and healthy for my children’

‘A good choice of activities in the local community and variety not just [activities] for athletic and competitive people’

‘I wear a Fitbit which reminds me if I've sat still for too long’

‘Fear of immobility, I've had lots of periods in my life when I was immobile and I want to stay active and not get fat for as long as possible!’

‘Putting time aside, so it [exercise] becomes part of your daily routine’

What prevents someone wanting to be physically active or exercise is:

- Managing family and caring responsibilities
- Work patterns and hours, lack of time
- Tiredness, lack of energy, depression
- Disability, poor mobility, poor health, menopause
- Low motivation, laziness
- Others watching and judging

- Costs, poor transport links
  - Gangs and young people gathering in open spaces, crime
  - Nothing local that suits me, doing exercise on my own
  - Mobile phone, social media, gaming
  - Stress, weight, drinking, smoking
  - Bad weather, dark nights
- (655 responses)

‘Cost is ... an issue due to very low income’

‘[For me it’s] bad weather, time, not feeling safe to walk outdoors alone, lack of green space locally’

‘It’s my weight, back and hip pain’,

‘There is a lack of safe cycle infrastructure ... painted cycle lanes are few and far between, badly designed, and blocked by parked cars’

‘I’m wary about personal safety, whilst walking alone. I won’t walk in a park alone, even in daylight’

‘The fact is there is nothing for me to do where I live’

‘Sometimes the car stops me from being physically active due to the convenience of it’

‘[I’m] just ... set in my ways. I put things off, tell myself I’ll start [exercising] on the first of the next month and then when it comes around there’s a new reason to delay it again’

Various comments show individual’s want to be more physically active, knowing it is good for their health, but they feel constrained by, for example, age or not knowing quite how to go about it. They are saying: ‘I know it’s important for my health’; ‘It’s important to keep in good shape’; ‘It is important to my health and ageing well’; ‘I would love to start just don’t know where’; ‘I would love to be physically active every day like I used to be’.

It is recognised that even a little exercise can be a good thing; ‘The smallest bit of activity helps’; ‘Start small and take it easy’; ‘It’s never too late to start’; ‘[There are] physical and mental health benefits that everyone could find beneficial’.

At the same time, others are worried about their health and what exercise is right for them: ‘I know I need to do more physical activities, due to my health conditions, however, it’s a fine line of doing enough physical activities to stay fit or doing too much, to trigger a flare up which can leave me bed bound’. A person’s health and motivation is a factor affecting how they feel about exercise: ‘I wish I could be more active, I am very unmotivated due to poor mental health and physical health. I just wish I had someone who understands my needs to support me and help push me to be more physically active and healthy’. (655 responses)

### Physical activity, the person, place and fun

Physical activity and exercise can mean different things depending on a person’s own views and their circumstances - although many agree it is about keeping fit and trying to remain healthy in mind and body. It is variously viewed as being about:

- Being active, keeping fit and healthy, wellness of body and mind
- Having an exercise routine, doing the best you can
- Getting your heart rate up, getting sweaty and out of breath
- Wellbeing, being happy, coping, enjoyment
- Keeping in shape, losing weight, staying slim
- Effort and rewards, able to move more easily
- Being out and fresh air, having fun, feeling good
- Staying healthy as you get older, looking after yourself
- Housework, walking, cycling, gardening, swimming, work outs
- Moving for at least 30 minutes each day
- Doing something 3 times a week or more
- Improving your mood, staying calm
- Pain, hurt, hard work, frustration, intimidation by ‘fit’ people

(627 responses)

It is, perhaps unsurprisingly, for many people important for them to have fun when they are physically active or exercising.

Physical activity and having fun						
Not at all					A lot	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	
2.89%	1.61%	9.16%	16.88%	18.01%	51.45%	100%
18	10	57	105	112	320	622

Of the 622 people who answered a question on physical activity and fun 320 (51.45%) of them indicated it matters a lot and 432 (69.46%) felt it matters quite a lot or a

lot. Meanwhile, they are (or are not) physically active or exercising in different places with some individuals indicating they want to do more.

	I'm not active		I'm active		I'm active there and want to do more	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
A park or open space	29.03%	182	48.01%	301	22.97%	144
A leisure centre	68.58%	430	20.89%	131	10.53%	66
A faith centre	81.18%	509	13.40%	84	5.42%	34
A school or college	80.86%	507	14.04%	88	5.10%	32
A community centre	75.44%	473	16.11%	101	8.45%	53
At home	24.72%	155	56.62%	355	18.66%	117

More people are physically active at home 355 (56.62%) or in a park or open space 301 (48.01%) and fewer people indicate they are physically active at a leisure or community centre, a school or college (mostly applicable to a smaller group of younger people participating in the survey) or a faith centre.<sup>7</sup> Some indicate they want to do more mostly at a park or open space 144 (22.97%) or at home 117 (18.66%). Of the 627 people answering a question on other places where they are physically active or exercise 154 (24.56%) indicate they are physically active in other places. They include:

- Countryside, woods, park, walking, by the canal
- School, gym, cycling, jogging, skate park
- Workplace, dance hall, gardening, allotment
- By the sea or river, swimming baths
- Online sessions
- National Trust grounds, mountains
- Sports club, golf course

<sup>7</sup> The number of people indicating they are active at home or active and want to do more is somewhat higher than the responses given to a question on exercising at home in the last week - which appear in the table on page 20. This reflects, in part, the way that a question is phrased can impact on an individual's response to it.

Other places where people are physically active or exercising are: At work; in the countryside and woodlands; at National Trust properties and nature reserves; hill walking; by canals, at the allotment and in the garden; at the skate park.

### **Being more active and time**

When asked if they would like to be more physically active 503 (80.22%), of the 627, individuals answering the question indicate they would. However, some will be commenting on their situation during a pandemic lockdown period. And may be more active when gyms and leisure centres are open and there are no restrictions on how people can get together.

Individuals answering the question say they want to be fitter and healthier. Some want to lose weight and be slimmer others want to be able to get access to convenient, attractive and affordable places where they can be active and exercise.

‘I’d like group walks to be set up ... maybe a walking or hiking group where we can head off to the countryside’

‘I would like safer places to walk as a lone female’

‘I want to feel better about myself and fit into my clothes!’

‘I’d like to join more clubs and try different sports to enhance my physical activity experiences’

‘I want to get more strength in arm and leg, affected by stroke, and more flexibility and walk a longer distance than I can at the moment’

‘It’s the weather and motivation, after a long day at work, you come home and it’s cold and dark. It takes some strength to actually push yourself to do it [be physically active or exercise]!’

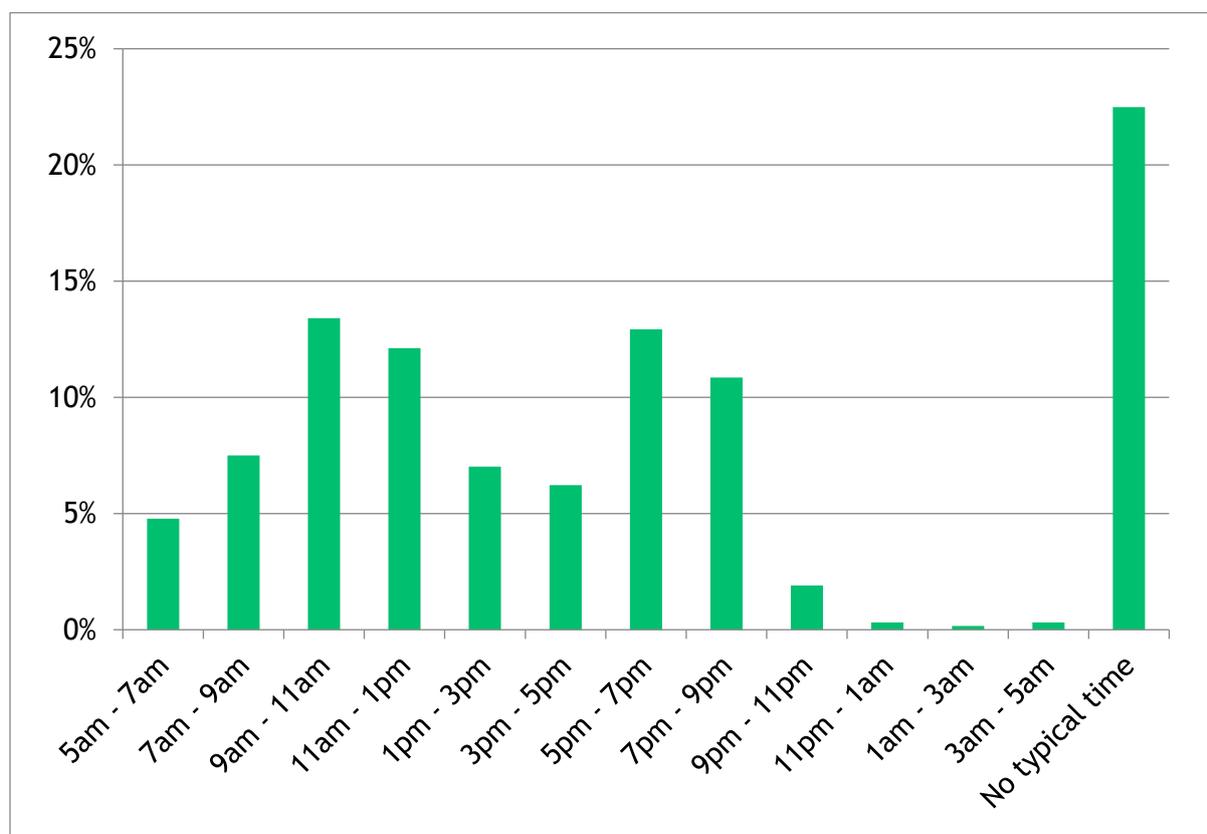
‘I would like to go to the gym, and maybe some exercise groups, to meet new people, but in my age group’

‘I am not fit, I’m overweight, I tire easily. I hate my body and exercise could change all of this, if only I could get into it’

There need to be opportunities for families and people of all ages and levels of fitness to participate in physical activity and exercise.

But, for some, finding the time to exercise can be difficult given work, family and caring responsibilities. Others comment that they lack motivation or they have pain, are tired or old and this stops them from exercising.

In turn, there were 141 (22.49%) individuals who indicate there is no typical time when they are physically active. For others the best times for physical activity are in the morning and early afternoon, 160 (25.52%) indicating between 9 am to 1 pm, and in the evening, 149 (23.77%) indicating between 5 to 9pm. (responses 627)



Best time for physical activity or exercise

## Support and opportunities

Levels of support or opportunities needed to help with physical activity and exercise vary. There are those who say they don't require any or much support through those who want to know more about what they can do to be physically active where they live and those who want improved leisure and exercise facilities close to where they live or work. There are those, too, who need encouragement and want help that means they are more motivated to be physically active - whether it be from family and friends, trainers and coaches or health and care professionals.

For some opportunities to exercise outside are reduced through fear of personal safety. Others want to see improvements made to paths and canal side walkways or more safe cycle routes and lanes.

There are calls for more free, discounted or affordable opportunities to use gym, leisure centre and other facilities where it is possible to exercise. Individuals also remark that they would like to see more government help for people on low incomes to be physically active and exercise.

There is also mention of more help for older people, carers (especially women), parents and those with disabilities or mental health problems. Being more physically active can also be about getting support to build confidence or help with diet or giving up smoking and doing more exercise. (627 responses)

When asked what opportunities there are in their local area to be physically active and exercise the replies to the question are:

- Don't know, not much, nothing
  - We have a park, green space, woodland, walking, an outdoor gym
  - The countryside, hill walks, canal walks, the nature reserve
  - I use the leisure centre, gym, swimming pool, and join keep fit sessions
  - There is the stadium, sports academy, football, wrestling,
  - We have tennis courts, basketball courts, the golf course
  - There are park runs, sports clubs, running clubs, the cricket club
  - The cycle track, boot camp, dance classes
- (627 responses)

On being asked if it is possible to take up opportunities in the local area to be physically active or exercise, of those answering the question, 369 (58.85%) indicate they can and 262 (41.79%) indicate they can't - again, this can be for different reasons including Covid-19 pandemic restrictions on permitted activity, age, caring responsibilities, work patterns and times or poor health and disability. (627 responses)

People commented that they were not motivated to be more physically active, they were tired or could not find the time - because of work or caring responsibilities - they lacked information on what they can do to be more active - especially if they were older or had a disability, or did not have much money to spare. (240 responses).

## **Travel activity and walking**

In reply to a question about travel activity in the last week 362 (58.39%) individuals answered that they used a car or motorcycle on two or more days - 131 (21.13%) every day whilst 145 (23.39%) had not used a car or motorcycle.

Then there were 63 (10.16%) individuals who had used public transport on two or more days - 11 (1.77%) every day and 491 (79.19%) who had not used public transport

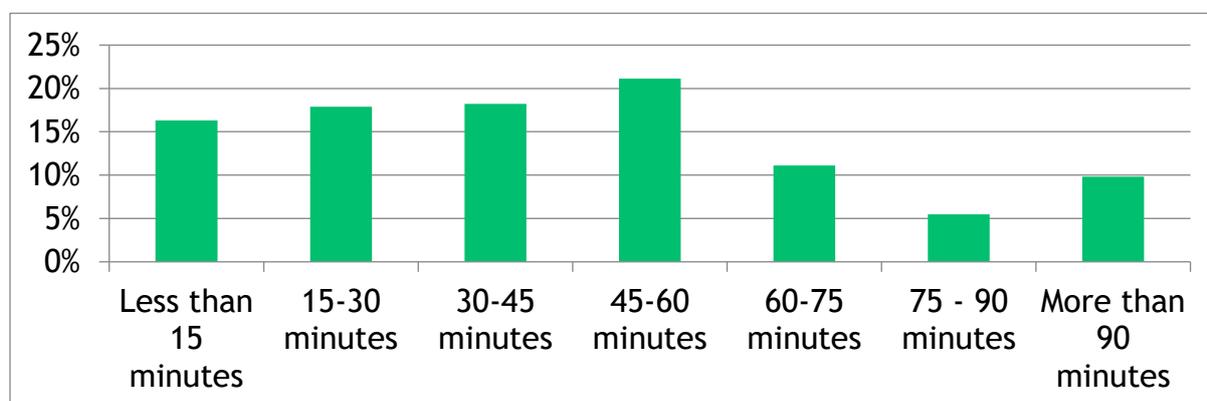
at all and 55 (8.86%) individuals who had used a pedal bike on two or more days - 11 (1.77%) every day and 523 (84.35%) who had not used a pedal bike.

In the last week	Never	Once a week	2-3 days a week	4-6 days a week	Every day
How often did you use a car or motorcycle?	23.39%	18.23%	23.39%	13.87%	21.13%
How often did you use public transport (train, tram, bus) or a taxi?	79.19%	10.65%	5.97%	2.42%	1.77%
How often did you use a pedal bike?	84.35%	6.77%	5.32%	1.77%	1.77%
How often did you run or jog?	75.48%	10.00%	7.90%	4.52%	2.10%
How often did you walk?	11.45%	16.29%	24.35%	17.90%	30.00%

#### Travel activity

There were 90 (14.52%) individuals who had been running or jogging on two or more days - 13 (2.1%) every day and 468 (75.48%) who had not jogged or ran at all and 448 (72.25%) individuals who had walked on two or more days - 186 (30%) every day and 71 (11.45%) who had not walked at all. Again, the figures will be affected by the age and health of respondents and them commenting on travel activity during a pandemic period that had changed attitudes to travel (respondents 620).

Regarding the longest time spent walking, in minutes, on a regular basis 101 (16.29%) individuals walked for less than 15 minutes and 355 (57.26%) individuals walked for between 15 and 60 minutes.



#### Walking activity

Meanwhile, 103 (16.61%) individuals walked for between 60 and 90 minutes and 61 (9.84%) individuals walked for more than 90 minutes (respondents 620). What stops people from walking is:

- Covid-19 restrictions, working at home, family and caring responsibilities
- Being overweight and unfit, embarrassment, poor motivation
- Fear about personal safety, not having someone to exercise with
- Being on the phone, social media, television, gaming
- A medical condition, poor mental health, pain, disability
- Not wanting to go out, the weather, dark nights, laziness
- A strenuous job, long working hours, lack of energy, tiredness, can't find the time (Respondents 311)

Of those individuals answering a question on whether they would use a local bike sharing scheme 489 (78.87%) indicated they would not and 131 (21.13%) indicated they would (620 responses).

They remarked that they wanted to use their own bike, they would like a bike of their own or they had not learned to ride one and in some instances were not keen on riding a bike. Others feel a bike sharing scheme is a good idea. There need, though, to be safe roads and cycle paths to use. Sometimes old age or health conditions can prevent people from using a bike. A bike share scheme would need to be accessible and affordable - with opportunities for families, older people, the disabled and the less confident to use it - with different bikes available to suit their needs like tricycles and some with child seats. (209 responses)

When asked about fearing for their safety when walking, cycling, running or jogging of those who answered the question 296 (47.74%) individuals indicate they would not be at all fearful for their safety undertaking these activities whilst 144 (23.23%) individuals indicated they would be quite fearful or fear a lot for their safety undertaking these activities.

Fear about your safety and walking, cycling, running or jogging												
Not at all		2		3		4		5		A lot		Total
47.74%	296	9.68%	60	8.55%	53	10.81%	67	7.26%	45	15.97%	99	620

Fear about safety

## Physical activity and the local area

The things that help people to be physically active or exercise where they live are:

- Parks, walks, the dog, canal paths, a bike and bike lanes
- An exercise buddy, being with others when exercising

- Gyms, the leisure centre, a sports academy, free tennis courts
- Good weather, the nature reserve, outdoor gym
- Having exercise equipment at home, swimming, boxing  
(456 responses)

The things that stop people from being physically active or exercising where they live are:

- Crime, Gangs, young people hanging around, it's unsafe to walk alone
- A lack of green spaces, busy roads, no decent facilities
- Nobody to exercise with, embarrassment, being cat called
- Work, tiredness, poor health, disability, a lack of motivation
- Few facilities or opportunities to exercise for women only
- Cars parked on pavements, litter, dog mess
- Dark streets, poor lighting, lack of safe cycle routes
- Poorly maintained pavements and open spaces
- The cost of doing things  
(456 responses)

'I don't find it safe to cycle on our roads. Too many bloody idiots. I would enjoy cycling ... but you're dicing with death against some of the drivers these days'

'There is no police presence, people do what they want, where they want, there are a lot of alcoholics and druggies up and down the main road'

'I feel ashamed about my body so do not want to exercise in public places'

'It's the people who are smack heads in the parks or low life'

'There are busy roads, pollution and an unpleasant environment'

'I avoid some parks at certain times ... not nice in the evening'

Among the other comments on being physically active or exercising it was remarked that: 'It's not hard to be active and people need to take responsibility for their own health and well-being'; 'The opportunities are there if people want to do it

[exercise]'; 'It's all about motivation with support to do it [exercise]'; 'It is good to be healthy and fit and some things are free like going for a walk or a run'. At the same time, there were calls for improvements to be made to parks and open spaces - to include more exercise equipment, running tracks and tennis courts.

It is felt there is scope to provide more opportunities for people to participate in physical activity and exercise at local venues in the community, which are attractive to families and others and are free or low cost to use. It is suggested 'It would be nice to get funding for dance lessons in local centres' and 'Something ... like ... a yoga class locally' or 'Activities in the park for older people ... would be good' and 'Running groups ...'. (375 responses)

## Priority ward data

In total, 904 individuals participated in the questionnaire survey. Of these it was possible to identify 542 individuals and categorise them according to the ward where they live since they had provided the first part of their postcode. Other had not provided the first part of their postcode or had provided an unidentifiable or invalid postcode.

Across all of the eight priority wards, located in the Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall boroughs and the city of Wolverhampton, there is a substantial number of individuals, answering the relevant questions, who are using technology to help with physical activity and exerciser - in the main mobile phone apps, websites, smart watches, Wii Fit and similar equipment or exergaming video games. But, a significant number of people are not using technology. Meanwhile, many people are exercising at home or in parks or open spaces, perhaps more so than might normally be expected because of the Covid-19 pandemic, leisure and sports premises closures and restrictions on how people can gather together indoors and outdoors.

Many people indicate that they want to be more active. They want to be able to take part in activities suited to their work and family circumstances, age and state of health. Leisure and sports facilities also need to be convenient to get to and affordable. Most people do not belong to formal clubs or groups - for those who are there are opportunities to make new friends and get encouragement and support to exercise and improve levels of fitness.

Daily routines are predominantly about work and caring for children and, during the Covid-19 pandemic period, working from home and the home schooling of children. After a busy working day, perhaps, looking after children or dealing with other household chores tiredness means an individual just wants to rest, watch television

or play games on their computer. At other times free time is devoted to doing things with the family or a partner, gardening and going for walks, and maybe going to the gym, playing golf or football or taking part in some other sporting activity.

In all of the wards individuals indicate that exercise can make them feel: tired and exhausted; healthy and energised; happy and calm. They are better able to exercise when they are motivated, have the time to do things, and a nice environment or facilities where they can be physically active and exercise. They may be stopped from exercising when they lack motivation, do demanding manual work, work long hours, have time consuming family or other caring responsibilities, find it difficult to get to leisure and sports facilities or struggle to afford the costs associated with taking part in sports or other types of exercise.

Individuals get information on how to be physically active and exercise from their GP, leaflets, the television and the radio. But, many are getting information via social media or by going online and visiting different websites. It can be good to have the support of family or friends and sometimes a trainer or coach to help with being physically active and exercising.

Across the Black Country priority wards the car or motorcycle is the most common way for individuals to travel - and likely more so for those who own one and need to travel to work or have some other reason to travel during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown periods. With fear of the virus and government guidance causing a reduction in the use of public transport. In turn, the majority of people, who answered a question on bike share schemes indicated that they felt it was not something they would use - citing ownership of their own bike, that they lacked the confidence to ride a bike, had never learned to ride a bike or were too old or had health conditions that meant they could not ride a bike.

## Dudley Metropolitan Borough

### Castle and Priory

Castle and Priory							
Survey responses							46
Female	31	Male	15	Other or prefer not to say			0
Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 or older
1	3	4	8	17	10	1	2
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background							39
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab							4
Any Other Ethnic Group							3

Some individuals remarked on Priory Park, indicating the absence of organised park walks and outdoor gym equipment. Others point out there are parks with gym

equipment and tennis courts. In addition, there is the Sycamore Adventure Centre.

#### Woodside, Netherton and St Andrews

In total, there are 59 individuals identified - 42 female, 16 male, 1 other or prefer not to say - the majority indicate they are English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background.

<b>Woodside, Netherton and St Andrews</b>							
Survey responses							59
Female	42	Male	16	Other or prefer not to say			1
Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 or older
0	1	5	11	18	10	12	2
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background							56
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab							2
Any Other Ethnic Group							1

Individuals remarked on the Dudley Leisure Centre and circuit training, the Saltwells nature reserve and swimming at the David Lloyd Centre.

#### Sandwell Metropolitan Borough

##### Friar Park

In total, there are 98 individuals identified - 69 female, 26 male, 3 other or prefer not to say - the majority indicate they are English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background.

<b>Friar Park</b>							
Survey responses							98
Female	69	Male	26	Other or prefer not to say			3
Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 or older
10	15	19	25	10	11	4	4
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background							90
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab							7
Any Other Ethnic Group							1

Individuals remarked on the Wednesbury Town Hall Leisure Centre, Darlaston Leisure Centre, Brunswick Park, Walsall Arboretum, Tipton Harriers, and the Wrekin hill and Long Mynd heath and moorland in Shropshire.

## Princes End

In total, there are 86 individuals identified - 68 female, 17 male, 1 other or prefer not to say - the majority indicate they are English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background.

Princes End							
Survey responses							86
Female	68	Male	17	Other or prefer not to say			1
Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 or older
1	9	12	22	23	13	6	0
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background							68
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab							16
Any Other Ethnic Group							2

Individuals remarked on the Jubilee Park and fitness sessions and gym in Great Barr, Birmingham.

## Walsall Metropolitan Borough

### Birchills Leamore

In total, there are 59 individuals identified - 45 female, 14 male - the majority indicate they are English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background.

Birchills Leamore							
Survey responses							59
Female	45	Male	14	Other or prefer not to say			0
Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 or older
1	2	9	13	13	14	7	0
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background							50
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab							8
Any Other Ethnic Group							1

Individuals remarked on the Bloxwich Leisure Centre, Reedswood Park Cycling Club, Sporting Spirit CIC and recreational football and the Willenhall Wombles a group of volunteers who collect litter from the streets and open space.

## Darlaston South

In total, there are 64 individuals identified - 45 female, 19 male - the majority indicate they are Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab

Darlaston South							
Survey responses							64
Female	45	Male	19	Other or prefer not to say			0
Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 or older
0	19	11	12	7	2	2	0
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background							8
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab							56
Any Other Ethnic Group							0

Individuals remarked on the Darlaston Youth Centre.

## City of Wolverhampton

### Bushbury South and Low Hill

In total, there are 72 individuals identified - 45 female, 26 male, 1 other or prefer not to say - the majority indicate they are English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background.

Bushbury South and Low Hill							
Survey responses							72
Female	45	Male	26	Other or prefer not to say			1
Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 or older
0	5	19	16	15	9	8	0
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background							56
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab,							14
Any Other Ethnic Group							2

Individuals remarked on the Temple on Cannock Road, West Park and Northcote Farm and Country Park.

### Ettingshall

In total, there are 58 individuals identified - 47 female, 11 male - the majority indicate they are Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab - with a significant minority indicating they are English, Welsh,

Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background.

Ettingshall							
Survey responses							58
Female	47	Male	11	Other or prefer not to say			0
Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 or older
0	2	12	16	9	13	5	1
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Any Other White Background							22
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Arab							30
Any Other Ethnic Group							6

Individuals remarked on the Bert Williams Leisure Centre, Hickman Park, East Park and Silver Jubilee Park.

## Emerging themes

### Interest in digital and online

A significant - and daily growing - number of people are using different technologies to get help with physical activity and exercise (especially noticeable at home during the Covid-19 pandemic period). There are individuals who don't want to or can't use the technology, sometimes because they cannot afford it or lack the skills needed to use it.

People are able to get different types of information on how to be physically active and exercise on social media. Many are, though, still getting information and help from GPs and other health professionals, leaflets and newspapers that they get at home or pick up elsewhere, posters or adverts in different venues and public spaces, and the television and radio. So, a broad approach to getting information to people is needed - not forgetting those who are not online and not using social media.

### Difference and diversity

Physical activity and exercise can mean different things to different individuals depending on their circumstances, motivation and ambitions. Any strategy to increase levels of activity will need to consider how it can include these different people in its thinking about approaches and initiatives used to get people to exercise or do more.

It will need to bear in mind what exercise can mean to different individuals when thinking about and designing any campaigns to get them interested in exercise and what it can do for them. Being careful not to put key groups of people off with images that make them feel exercise is only for people who are already fit, have lots of spare time and are doing much demanding and arduous working out or sporting pursuits. For those who are not doing any or much in the way of exercise it has to come across as something that fits with their circumstances and that they can have fun doing especially if they have a health condition that might limit what they can do.

To get people's attention any campaign to get them interested in or doing more exercise will, again, need to adopt a broad approach to delivering information in different ways and locations. It must be inclusive and appeal to target audiences - for example those who are largely inactive or doing some exercise and wanting to do more, and those it would be good to get doing more. Anything proposed must consider issues of convenience to get to and use facilities and open spaces, any costs that might be incurred, opportunities for individuals and family groups, the disabled and those with different health conditions.

### **Circumstances and situation**

Any strategy to get more people exercising must also consider how best they can fit it in with their often busy lives at work, managing family responsibilities, and maybe just wanting to relax watching television or computer gaming after returning home from work or at the weekend. In future, there will be more people working from home for at least part of the time which could open up new opportunities for exercise at home or at local leisure facilities or open spaces.

A person's circumstances will, in part, determine how they are able (or not) to be physically active and exercise - despite there being wide agreement that it is good to do to stay fit or get fitter and be healthy in both body and mind. Where an individual works (or are unemployed) and the job that they do, the responsibilities that they have to care for others, the spare money and time that they have will all impact on choices about what exercise to do (or not). Then there is their nearness to leisure facilities, parks and other open spaces, or ownership of a car or public transport systems that mean they are able to easily get to where they want to be. Where an individual lives can determine how worried they are about gangs and groups of young people congregating, crime and personal safety, and being on the street or in other open spaces.

### **Motivation and support**

Thought must be given to thinking about the best ways to bolster motivation, encourage, and support individuals who are not doing any or much exercise and help them to be more physically active. Helping them to gain confidence and understand the benefits of exercise even when they lead busy lives, are older or at home for much of the time, or have a health condition that might mean there are limits on

what they can do. Showing how they can have fun too and make new friends, and, maybe, helping with diet or giving up smoking.

## Recommendations

- Involve people, from the outset, in a process of conversation and coproduction to think about and develop plans and innovations to increase levels of physical activity and exercise
- Make the most of opportunities to harness different technologies including digital resources to help people with their health and exercise
- Develop robust policies on social media and how it can be used to provide information on and increase levels of physical activity - in addition to thinking about other ways of providing information and help too
- Work to develop a deep understanding of what physical activity and exercise means to different individuals and why - getting to know about their lives, challenges and opportunities, motivations and aspirations
- Ensure people are not put off by approaches and campaigns that don't fit well with their lives and circumstances - think about tailored messages for particular groups to get their attention
- Look at and improve, where needed, local leisure and sports facilities and parks and open spaces to create attractive venues and places that are well maintained and safe to use.
- Find out what people need in the way of support to increase confidence and motivation and make it easier for them to exercise
- Don't leave anyone out because of where they live or how much money they have to spend or because they are not using technology and digital resources or as a result of their sex or gender, ethnicity or age or the fact they have a disability or a health condition or are a particular shape or size

# Future research

The questionnaire survey findings provide a useful snapshot, and insight, on people's lives, what they do each day, and their views on physical activity and exercise - as well as how they might be helped and supported to do more. It captures much information from a significant number of individuals living in eight priority wards across the Black Country area.

But, the survey was undertaken in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic period when leisure and other public and business premises were closed and there were many restrictions on how people could gather together and what they could do. Inevitably, the answers to some questions are based individuals' situations when they were completing it - which might be quite different to what they were before the start of the pandemic and the introduction of national lockdowns.

It might be beneficial to repeat the survey, at some time in the future, when all premises are open and restrictions on people's movements are lifted. At the same time, extra consideration could be given to capturing the views of particular groups of people - perhaps using targeted surveys to get their views, reinforce their voice, and better understand their position on physical activity and exercise. The groups include:

- Men - since the majority of respondents were women
- Minority ethnic groups
- Individuals with disabilities or health conditions
- Children and young people
- Older people

At ward level the numbers of people participating in the survey becomes smaller and less representative of a whole area population. Occasionally there is a bias towards a particular group of people, maybe from a particular place or locality in a community or neighbourhood. Some of this bias is cancelled out or reduced when the data from wards is aggregated to give an across the Black Country area set of findings.

This survey, as is often the case, raises questions about why exactly individuals are answering questions in the way that they do. Some individuals provide some, usually brief, extra information in response to open ended questions. However, more qualitative work such as in-depth interviewing or case studies could be done to obtain more detail on people's lives and the implications for any strategy designed to increase levels of physical activity and exercise.

# Appendix 1: Questionnaire survey

## Physical activity and exercise

The Active Black Country partnership is a champion for sport and physical activity across the area. It is a strong voice for the health and wellbeing benefits of physical activity for people and communities.

Meanwhile, getting more people to be physically active or exercise is more likely to happen when councils, sports and leisure centres or clubs, the providers of health and social care services and voluntary or community groups are able to work together to encourage physically active lifestyles.

This survey will gather people's views on physical activity and exercise and feedback on findings to organisations and individuals who can change and improve opportunities for people to be physically active and lead a healthy life.

Your name will not be used in the report on survey findings that is written up. This means your answers to questions will be anonymous. In turn, you will be able to see the finished report on the Active Black Country partnership website.

**Are you happy to carry on?**

Yes

No (end survey)

## Part 1: About You

1. **Postcode:** First part (for example DY5)

**2. Ethnicity**

Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background

**White**

English/Welsh/Scottish/  
Northern Irish/British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background

Please describe:

**Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed/Multiple  
ethnic background

Please describe:

**Asian/Asian British**

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background

Please describe:

**Black/African/Caribbean/Black British**

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/African/  
Caribbean background

Please describe:

**Other ethnic group**

Arab

Any other ethnic group

Please describe:

**3. Age**

Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65-74	75 or over	Rather not say
<input type="checkbox"/>							

**4. Gender**

Male	Female	Other	Rather not say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**

Yes  No

If Yes, can you say something more?

6. Do you use any technology to help with physical activity and exercise? (For example a mobile phone app, a smart watch, Fitbit or Wii Fit equipment)

Yes  No

Can you say something more?

7. Throughout this survey we have used the words 'Physical activity and this can mean anything from taking part in organised sport or going for a swim, to doing yoga or walking the dog. What do the words 'physical activity' mean to you?

8. Can you think of any other words or phrases that could be used in awareness campaigns, that might help people to feel more positive about being active?

9. What are the best ways for you to get information on physical activity and exercise?

GP or other healthcare professional

Not at all useful       very useful

Radio advertisement

Not at all useful       very useful

Television advertisement

Not at all useful       very useful

Information leaflet

Not at all useful       very useful

Newspaper advertisement

Not at all useful       very useful

Social media (Twitter, Facebook etc.)

Not at all useful       very useful

10. Are there any other ways where you would get information about physical activity and exercise?

Yes

No

If yes, can you say something more?

11. If there was a campaign on physical activity and exercise what would be the best way to get your attention?

12. What images are best suited to making you feel like wanting to be physically active and exercise?

## Part 2: How can physical activity best fit with people's lives?

13. Could you share a little about your daily routine?

**14. How do you typically spend your free time?**

**15. In the last week, did you do any physical activity or exercise at home?**

Yes

No

Can you say more?

**16. Do you belong to any club or group and take part in physical activity or exercise?**

Yes

No

Can you say something more?

**17. Is there anything, apart from taking part in physical activity or exercise, you get from being part of a club or group?**

Not applicable

18. How does physical activity or exercise make you feel?

Not applicable

19. Is there anything that helped you to be physically active or exercise?

20. Is there anything that stopped you from being physically active or exercising?

21. Is there anything else you want to say about being physically active or exercising?

### Part 3: Physical activity, exercise, place and health

22. What does being physically active or exercising mean to you?

23. How important is it that physical activity and exercise is fun?

Not at all       A lot

**24. How are you physically active or exercising in these places?**

A park or open space

I'm not active  I'm active  I'm active & want to do more

A leisure centre

I'm not active  I'm active  I'm active & want to do more

A faith centre

I'm not active  I'm active  I'm active & want to do more

A school or college

I'm not active  I'm active  I'm active & want to do more

Other (please state)

**25. Are there any other places where you are physically active or exercise?**

Yes

No

If yes, can you say more?

**26. Would you like to be more active?**

Yes  No

Can you say something more?

**27. What is the best time for you to be physically active or exercise?**

- 5 am - 7 am
- 7 am - 9 am
- 9 am - 11 am
- 11 am - 1 pm
- 1 pm - 3 pm
- 3 pm - 5 pm
- 5 pm - 7 pm
- 7 pm - 9 pm
- 9 pm - 11 pm
- 11 pm - 1 am
- 1 am - 3 am
- 3 am - 5 am
- No typical time

**28. What support do you need to be physically active or exercise?**

**29. What opportunities are there in the local area to be physically active and exercise? (please list)**


**30. Are you able to take up opportunities in the local area to be physically active or exercise?**

Yes  No

Can you say something more?

### Part 4: How you travel

**31. in the last week**

	Never	Once a week	2-3 days a week	4-6 days a week	Everyday
How often did you use a car or motorcycle					
How often did you use public transport (train, tram, bus) or a taxi					
How often did you use a pedal bike					
How often did you run or jog					
How often did you walk					

**32. In minutes - what is the longest that you walked for, on a regular basis?**

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15 - 30 minutes
- 30 - 45 minutes
- 45 - 60 minutes
- 60 - 75 minutes
- 75 - 90 minutes
- More than 90 minutes

**33. If you did not walk much what stopped you?**

**34. Would you use a local bike sharing scheme?**

Yes  No

Can you say something more?

**35. Did fear about your safety stop you from walking, cycling, running or jogging?**

Not at all       A lot

**36. Is there anything that helped you to be physically active or exercise where you live?**

**37. Is there anything that stopped you from being physically active or doing exercise where you live?**

**38. Is there anything else you want to say about being physically active or doing exercise where you live?**

## Part 5: Can we contact you?

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

If you are happy for Active Black Country to contact you please fill in the box below.

<p>Name: .....</p> <p>Address: .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Tel: .....</p> <p>Email: .....</p> <p>I would like to take part in reviewing report writing <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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We would like to remind you that the answers you gave to questions are confidential and you will not be identifiable in any report that is produced using findings obtained from the survey.

The findings from the survey will be used to show how people are physically active in the Dudley borough and help with the development of policies designed to facilitate and increase levels of physical activity.

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