

Encouraging and enabling physical activity e-Learning

Introduction 1.1

Introduction

Physical inactivity is one of the leading causes of premature death in Scotland. It costs the NHS more than £77 million per year and contributes to more than 2500 deaths each year.

Source: Costing the burden of ill health related to physical inactivity for Scotland 2015 and 2012.

Even a small increase in physical activity can help to prevent and treat chronic diseases and improve quality of life.

We must take action to increase the physical activity levels of Scotland's population by encouraging and enabling physical activity.

Learning outcomes

After completing this eLearning, you will be able to

- explain the benefits and recommended guidelines for physical activity for the people you work with
- reflect on your own role and recognise the opportunities to encourage people to be physically active
- describe how to encourage and enable people to be physically active in a person-centred way
- describe how the national physical activity pathway (NPAP) supports people to be physically active.

Understanding physical activity

This section will define what counts as physical activity, highlight the key points from the UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) guidelines, provide an overview of how active people are in Scotland, and outline the benefits of physical activity and some common barriers preventing physical activity.

This section is aligned to the following learning outcomes

- explain the benefits and the recommended guidelines for physical activity for the people you work with
- reflect on your own role and recognise the opportunities to encourage people to be physically active.

What is physical activity?

Physical activity is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure.

Source: The World Health Organisation

It includes activities undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, engaging in recreational pursuits, as well as sport.

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[Click on the flip cards to find out about different ways to be physically active.]

Source: Adapted from Start Active, Stay Active 2011

Everyday activity

Active travel for example walking to work / school

Housework

Gardening

DIY

Active or manual work

Active recreation

Recreational walking

Recreational cycling

Active play

Dance

Sport

Sport walking e.g. walking football

Regular cycling

Swimming

Exercise and fitness training

Structured activity

- Understanding physical activity · CMO guidelines – 2.2

CMO guidelines

In 2019 the UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) updated the physical activity guidelines for different life stages and abilities. The guidelines provide information on the frequency, intensity, type and amount of physical activity that people should work towards to benefit their health, prevent disease and improve quality of life.

Do you know the guidelines for the people you work with?

Click on the links to find out about the guidelines for each life stage. They can be printed for quick referencing.

Adults and older adults [PDF infomatic](#)

Disabled adults [PDF Infomatic](#)

Pregnant women [PDF Infomatic](#)

Women after childbirth [PDF Infomatic](#)

Under 5s [PDF Infomatic](#)

Children and young people [PDF Infomatic](#)

Intensity

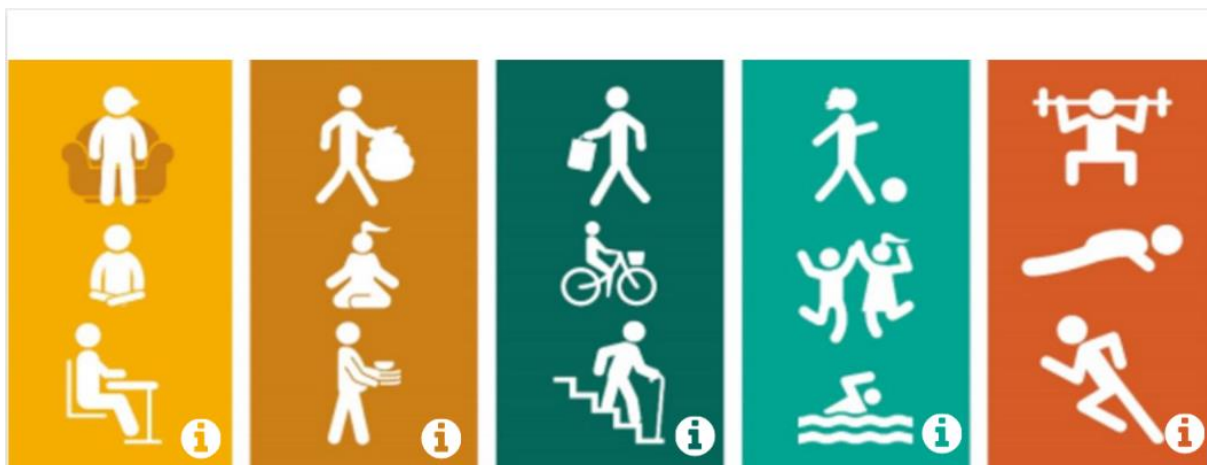
Ideally, activities should be of moderate or vigorous intensity to achieve the full breadth of health benefits. However, even the smallest amount of activity provides benefits.

With moderate intensity breathing becomes faster, the heart rate increases, and you will feel warmer.

This varies from person to person. An inactive person may only have to walk up a slope, whereas a regularly active person may be able to run quite fast before they notice these signs.

The next slide shows the type of activities that come under different intensities. As intensity increases, the heart rate, respiratory rate and energy consumption also increase.

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Click on each icon to reveal the intensity for the activities in each of the boxes.

Source: Adapted from the UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) physical activity guidelines 2019

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Understanding physical activity · CMO guidelines 2.2

Strength and balance

The guidelines emphasise strength and balance activities on at least two days per week for everyone.

Click on the flip card to learn more.

Early years, children and young people

Muscle strength essential for building blocks for sitting, standing, walking and any other physical function.

Important for healthy bones.

Adults

From around the age of 40, strength, endurance, balance, bone density and flexibility are all lost at about 10% per decade, and muscle power is lost at around 30% per decade.

Builds and maintains muscle strength and healthy bones.

Older Adults

Loss in physical function affects health and wellbeing, ability to maintain a good quality of life and independent living.

Delays the natural decline in muscle strength and bone density and reduces falls and fractures.

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Safe for everyone

Some people fear hurting themselves or worsening an existing health issue, particularly if they are not regularly active, have a health condition, are disabled, pregnant, or older or frail.

There is little evidence that physical activity is unsafe for anyone when done at an intensity and in a manner appropriate to an individual's current activity level, health status, and functional capacity. Starting at low durations and intensities and building up over time as the body adjusts is the safest way to become active.

Source: UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) physical activity guidelines 2019

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The next slides summarise key points from the CMO guidelines.

Picture of a park.

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1

The guidelines apply to everyone, irrespective of physical ability, gender, race or socio-economic status.

2

Over the course of the week, adults should aim to do at least 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity, or a combination of both.

3

Strength and balance activities should be incorporated at least two days per week.

4

Ideally, activities should be at a moderate or vigorous intensity to achieve the full breadth of health benefits.

5

Even the smallest amount of activity provides benefits. That's why, some activity is good, but more is better.

6

People should try to be active every day, and spreading activity across the day or week can help people achieve the recommended levels.

7

Breaking up long periods of inactivity is also a good start.

Please click 'Next' to continue.

Reflection

Thinking about the people you work...

What would you advise about the physical activity they should do?

7/7

How active are we?

Each year, the Scottish health survey provides information on how the Scottish population are doing in meeting the CMO physical activity guidelines.

- Two thirds of adults (66%) met the moderate/vigorous physical activity (MVPA) guideline and only 37% met the muscle strengthening guideline.
- Men are more likely than women to meet the MVPA (71% compared to 61%) as well as the muscle strengthening guideline (31% compared to 27%).

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- Adults are less likely to meet the MVPA guidelines as they get older. By the time people reach 75 and over, only 35% are active.
- Adults spent an average of 5.4 hours per day on weekdays and 6.2 hours on weekends of their leisure time in sedentary activities. Being sedentary means sitting or lying down for extended periods when awake, for example, watching television, playing video games or playing on the computer.
- Adults in less deprived areas are more likely to meet the guidelines.

Source: Scottish Health Survey 2019.

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Health Inequalities

The amount of physical activity a person does is influenced by several factors which are outwith their control, including

- age
- gender
- ethnicity
- disability
- where a person lives
- whether they have a job and if so what it involves
- financial circumstances.

These can influence a person's access, experience and ability to participate in physical activity which can have a positive or negative impact on their health.

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Barriers

Whatever someone's barriers to participate, it's important to understand why it's a barrier to them, respect their reason and not to dismiss how they feel. You should listen to their reasons without judgement and help them to come up with solutions that are realistic to them.

Let's now look at some of the reasons people have given for not participating in physical activity.

Practical things such as lack of time.

Previous negative experiences which develop into negative associations with physical activity.

Lack of understanding of why or how it could benefit them.

Low self-worth or not valuing health enough.

Health is not good enough.

Fear of injury or making health condition worse.

Inequalities that exist in physical activity that are outwith their control such as lack of facilities, greenspace in their area or financial circumstances.

Source: Scottish Health Survey 2018

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Reflection

Thinking about the people you work with....

What is preventing them from being physically active?

How would you help them come up with solutions to these barriers?

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Health benefits

There is strong evidence that physical activity helps people to live longer and can prevent and treat many physical and mental health conditions.

The next slide highlights some of the benefits to health and wellbeing, development and maintenance of physical and mental function and conditions which can be prevented and managed by physical activity.

Source: Cumulative health benefits of physical activity across ages adapted from UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines 2019.

Children

Bone health

Cognitive function

Cardiovascular fitness

Muscle fitness

Weight

Adults

Stroke / Heart disease / Hypertension

Type 2 diabetes / Weight

Cancers

Mental health / Cognitive function / Dementia

Quality of life / Sleep

Older Adults

Falls

Frailty

Physical function

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Wider benefits

Physical activity benefits individuals, communities and wider society, the economy, and our environment.

Greenspace and natural environments have a positive effect on people's mental wellbeing and social and community development. It helps people feel connected, increasing community engagement and safety.

Active travel (such as walking / cycling) reduces our carbon footprint, and provides us with cleaner air, less congestion and safer roads.

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The next slides summarise the overall impact of physical activity where there is good evidence.

Source: Adapted from the UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) physical activity guidelines 2019.

1

Physical wellbeing

Physical activity is effective in the prevention, treatment and management of many medical conditions. It also has an important role in motor skill development, and maintenance of muscle strength and bone health. All of these can reduce the decline in physical function, particularly in later life.

2

Mental wellbeing

Physical activity is a source of enjoyment and stimulates feelings of happiness which leads to improved mood and reduced stress levels.

It improves confidence and self-esteem and improves cognitive function e.g., learning, thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving, decision making, and attention.

3

Individual development

Physical activity supports the development of 'soft' skills such as communication skills or relationship management. This can have a positive impact on employment opportunities and increase confidence and self-esteem levels.

4

Social and community development

Physical activity reduces social isolation by bringing people together from different backgrounds and can promote engagement and trust within communities.

5

Economic development

Ill health due to physical inactivity puts a strain on the Health and Social Care services. It also impacts the economy through sickness absence costs and reduced productivity for employers. Physical activity and sporting events provide opportunities for employment, attract tourism and participation in sports.

Please click 'Next' to continue

4/7

In the following clips, Lynn and Callum tell us how being physically active has personally benefitted them.

Click to find out more about the [Care about Physical Activity \(CAPA\)](#) programme and the [Friday and Saturday Night Projects](#).

[Click](#) to find transcript for Lynn

[Click](#) to find transcript for Callum

5/7

Reflection

What are the benefits of encouraging physical activity to

- you
- your role
- your service or organisation?

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Click on the flip cards for some examples of what you might have thought about.

You

It is motivating and personally satisfying hearing how people have personally benefited from being active.

People will see you as someone who is concerned about their health and wellbeing.

Your role

Increased confidence at supporting a person's physical activity journey.

It creates opportunities to discuss benefits, barriers and remove any misconceptions.

Service / Organisation

Reducing demand on services and appointment times.

Helping people to achieve a better quality of life and improve their wellbeing.

7/7

Key messages

Click on the flip cards to reveal a key message from this section.

- 1.** Physical activity includes activities undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, engaging in recreational pursuits, as well as sport.
- 2.** The CMO guidelines cover frequency, intensity, type and amount of physical activity and an emphasis on strength and balance.
- 3.** You should know the specific physical activity guidelines for the people you work with.
- 4.** Physical activity has multiple health, social and economic benefits.

The national physical activity pathway (NPAP)

In this section you will learn about how the national physical activity pathway helps you to support people to be physically active.

You will look at a health behaviour change model, person-centredness principles and brief advice or intervention to support using the pathway in practice, with opportunity for reflection.

This section is aligned to the following learning outcomes

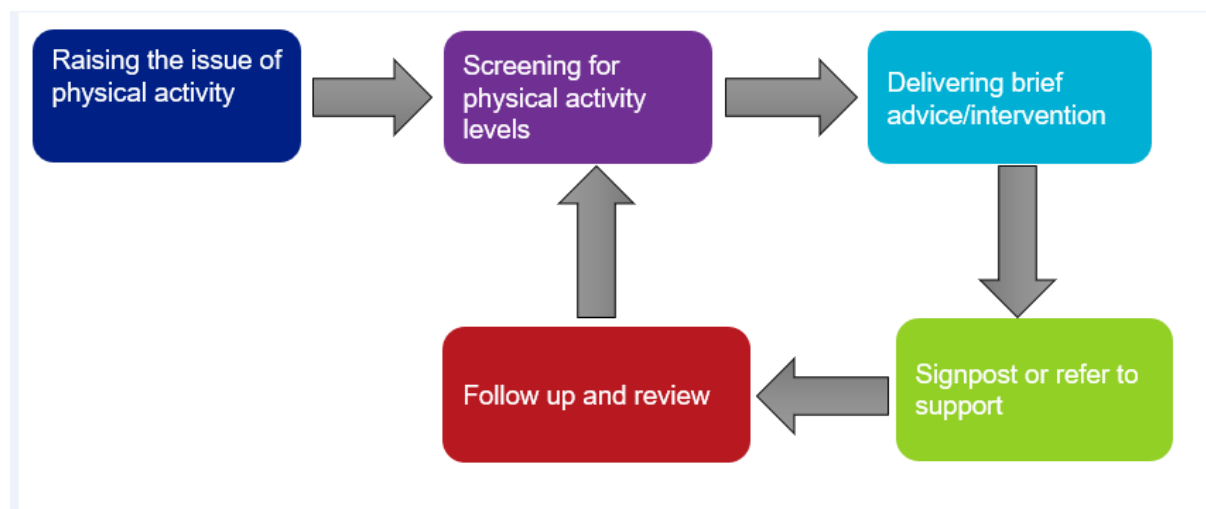
- reflect on your own role and recognise the opportunities to encourage people to be physically active
- describe how to encourage and enable people to be physically active in a person-centred way
- describe how the national physical activity pathway (NPAP) supports people to be physically active.

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The [pathway](#), developed by Public Health Scotland, can be used to structure a conversation with adults about their physical activity using five simple steps.

The pathway is cyclical in nature and is designed to motivate and enable adults not currently meeting the CMO guidelines to be more active.

In the next slide you will learn about applying these steps into your practice.



This film clip introduces the first three steps of the pathway.

While health and social care staff may initiate the pathway, the activity element of the pathway may require support from those working in physical activity in the community, and in the leisure sector.

Click for [transcript](#).

3/3

Raising the issue

The conversation can take as little as 30 seconds. It begins with either

- you (planned or opportunistic) or
- the person themselves (person led) raising physical activity.

Click on each of the speech bubbles on the right for examples of what you might say.

Planned

Raising physical activity with individuals, or a specific group of people, as part of a routine programme of activity.

'We're trying to increase the range of support we can offer to people and I have just been on a course about the benefits of physical activity.'

'We're working on a number of health topics today and next on the list is physical activity. Do you enjoy walking/exercise?'

'We are taking part in a new programme and we're talking to people about their physical activity. Would it be OK to ask you a few questions about this just now?'

Opportunistic

This could be when you raise physical activity in response to a particular sign, comment, symptom or event.

'Some people with similar symptoms/problems have found that physical activity such as walking has helped. What exercise or walking do you take part in?'

What do you think of physical activity? Could this be a factor?

'It's surprising how even small amounts of walking/exercise can help with ...'

Person led

Probably the easiest way to start is when the person brings up physical activity themselves as this provides an automatic 'way in'.

'You mentioned that as a family you would like to be healthier - would you like to talk about some of the physical activity options there are?'

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Reflection

Can you think of opportunities to raise physical activity with the people you work with?

What possibilities might you need to be prepared for?

How would you respond?

2/3

Click on the flip cards for some examples of what you might have thought about.

Opportunities

Opportunities to raise physical activity can happen anywhere.

Possibilities

They may not see the relevance of physical activity to them and do not realise how they can benefit. Some people will have misconceptions about what being active means and what activities count. They may recall negative experiences with physical activity or be unsure how to go about it.

Your response

You will need to relate the benefits to them personally, help build confidence or motivation, discuss activities to be active or help them with setting goals.

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Screening for physical activity

The next step is to identify people not getting enough activity using the Scottish Physical Activity Screening Questionnaire (Scot-PASQ).

Watch the clip to find out more.

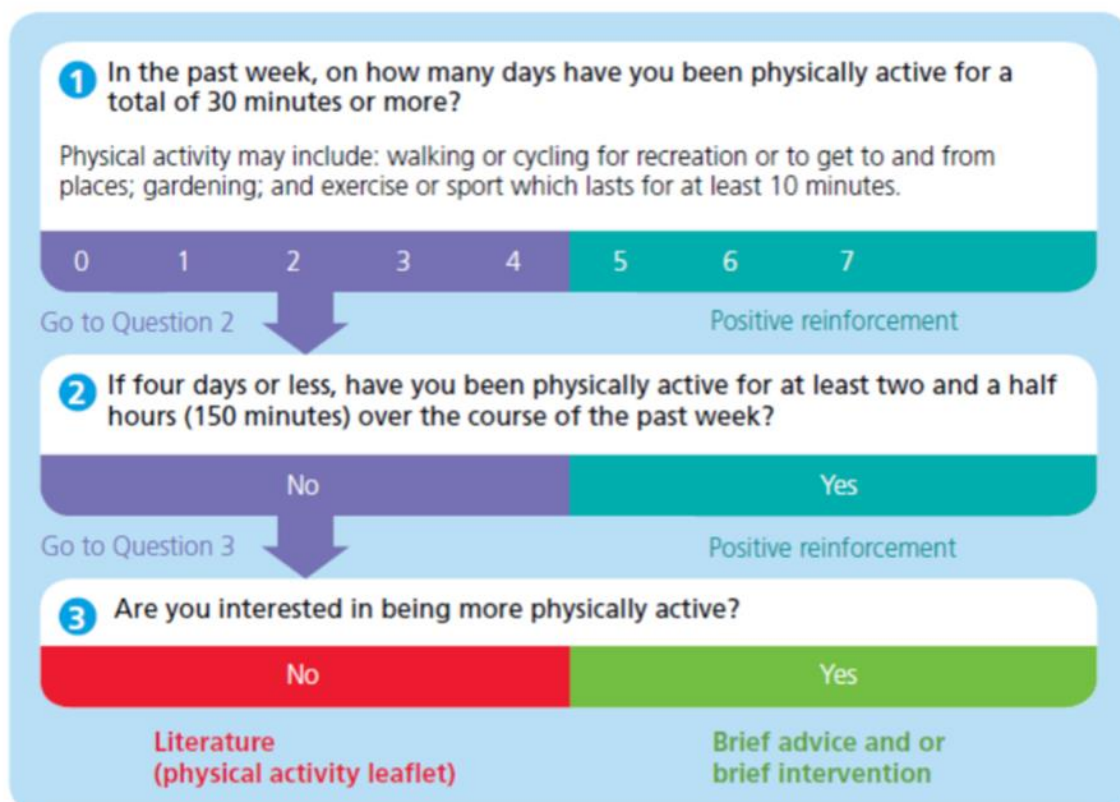
[Click](#) for transcript.

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For some people it may not be the right time to make the changes needed to be more active.

If someone is not quite ready, it may do more harm than good to continue the conversation. The person will benefit from knowing that when they are ready, the offer to return to the conversation will still be there.

Scottish Physical Activity Screening Question (Scot-PASQ)



Delivering physical activity advice

For people who are ready to make the change and become more active, the next step is to deliver person-centred physical activity advice.

Delivering physical activity advice varies from basic advice (brief advice) to a longer more detailed discussion (brief intervention).

The decision on which approach to take will be influenced by the time you have available, and whether other people in your setting would be more appropriate to have the longer discussion for example community link workers.

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Person- centred

Whichever approach you take, it is important to work with the person to understand how physical activity relates to them and to respond to their needs, preferences, circumstances or experiences.

It might be helpful to

- explore motivations, barriers and confidence to change, in a way that allows them to discuss how they feel without being judged or dismissed
- personalise the benefits by linking to their wider goals
- find appropriate ways for them to increase activity
- discuss ways of incorporating physical activity in their day-to-day life.

Brief advice

This film clip describes what brief advice (BA) is and the key components that make it up.

[Click](#) for transcript.

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Reflection

What are the main points to consider in relation to below when discussing physical activity with someone?

- Barriers and solutions.
- Benefits.
- Recommendations.

4/7

You may have considered the following

Barriers and solutions

The word “exercise” can be off-putting to some people. Encourage them to suggest activities they enjoy.

Everyday activity (e.g., walking or taking the stairs) and small changes make it easier to include activity in daily routines. Sitting less is also a good way to introduce activity.

Benefits

Linking physical activity to wider benefits and their personal goals will help the person to come up with their own reasons to be more active. For example, fundraising events, spending time with the family, school projects and workplace challenges.

Recommendations

The advice should include recommendations on strength and balance as well as activity levels.

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Brief Intervention

This next film clip outlines what is brief intervention.

It includes the same initial components as brief advice but provides a little more time to work with the person to

- make decisions on what they want to change and build their motivation and confidence to make the changes
- discuss in more detail the options for increasing activity and set achievable goals
- come up with strategies to make attempts easier.

[Click](#) for transcript.

6/7

Motivation, Action and Prompts (MAP)

MAP is a behaviour change model to support someone to change their health behaviours. By understanding their context or situation and listening for any cues or resistance to change you can discover what support they need. **Click on the flip cards to learn more.**

Motivation - Support them to decide if they want to change

Help them to weigh up the pros and cons to change and visualise the difference.

Recall previous successful attempts. Discuss support they can get from their social circle and signpost/refer to services e.g. exercise referral, walking programme or befriending service

Action - help them to start or maintain the behaviour change

Help them come up with what changes they want to make and how they will do this.

Are the goals their own?

Do they need help with starting or maintaining the change?

Does the plan include self-monitoring to track progress?

Prompt -help them to make the attempts easier

Discuss how their environment, social circle and their emotional or mental wellbeing can make efforts easier.

What can make this work for you?

Discuss strategies to overcome unexpected or new barriers.

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Signpost and referral

Finding appropriate local physical activity opportunities and services that can support someone to be active is important.

By exploring someone's preferences, needs and circumstances, you will be able to discuss activities they enjoy and find appropriate opportunities locally.

Do you know what is available in your local area?

See examples of key physical activity services, programmes and websites that provide physical activity opportunities on the next slide.

In the video above we hear from the volunteers and participants on a [Paths for all](#) walking group.

You will find a transcript [here](#).

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National and Local programmes and services

The national services directory has information on local groups and physical activity opportunities.

The local physical activity lead will know about physical activity referral schemes.

Paths for all run local walking groups and Park run offer free, weekly, community events.

Leisure providers offer a range of physical activities.

Websites and resources

NHS Inform has useful tips and information on [how to get active](#) and [exercises for strength and balance](#).

[NHS UK physical activity pages](#) has information on easy and accessible ways to build activity.

[Mind](#) has useful information and tips about physical activity and mental health.

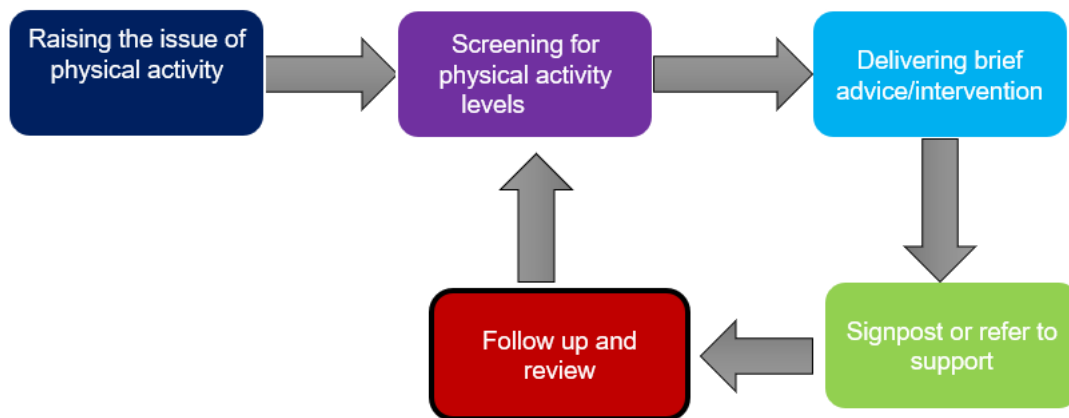
[Active 10](#) walking tracker app for setting goals to build up walking.

[Macmillan Cancer Support's Move More programme](#) supports people living with cancer to become physically active.

Follow up and review

Where possible, it is important to follow up with the person at a later time to check if the plan is working or if circumstances have changed. It provides an opportunity for positive reinforcement or to revisit the plan.

As part of the follow up, it is a good idea to reassess physical activity levels and continue to support the person by going through the steps of the pathway.



Key Messages

Click on the flip cards to reveal a key message from this section.

1. The NPAP consists of five steps: raising the issue, screening for physical activity levels, delivering person centred brief advice/intervention, signpost and referral to support, and follow up and review.
2. Person centred physical activity advice is responding appropriately to someone's needs, preferences, circumstances and experiences.
3. Delivering advice involves highlighting the recommendations for physical activity, discussing the benefits, and exploring barriers and solutions.
4. Know what physical activity opportunities and services are available in your area.

Review learning

Having completed the eLearning, you should be able to

- explain the benefits and recommended guidelines for physical activity for the people you work with
- reflect on your own role and recognise the opportunities to encourage people to be physically active
- describe how to encourage and enable people to be physically active in a person-centred way
- use the national physical activity pathway to support people to be physically active.

Key resources

Publications

[UK CMO guidelines \(2019\)](#) – National guidelines on physical activity

[Scottish Health Survey 2019](#) – Data related to risk factors for a range of specific health conditions and related health behaviours

[WHO Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world](#) - The global action plan to promote physical activity

[Active Scotland delivery plan \(2018\)](#) – Scotland’s national strategy for physical activity

[Up and About](#) - A guide for older people on how to keep active and reduce the risk of trips and falls

[Standards for the delivery of tier 2 and tier 3 weight management services in Scotland](#)

Websites

[Public Health Scotland Physical activity pages](#) – Key information about physical activity, health inequalities and the NPAP

[National Physical Activity Pathway](#) – How to structure a conversation about physical activity using 5 steps

[Scottish Government physical activity pages](#) - Information on the Scottish policy context, useful tools and resources

[NHS UK physical activity pages](#) - Easy and accessible ways to build activity

[NHS Inform keeping active pages](#) - Ideas on activities to keep active

[This girl can](#) – Ways for women to be active

[World Health Organisation physical activity pages](#) - Key reference material on physical activity including fact sheets, data and guidelines.

Next steps · Further learning

Further learning

You can find additional learning opportunities -aimed at healthcare professionals below.

[Physical Activity and Health eLearning](#) – e-learning module on clinical management of long term health conditions for health professionals by Public Health Education England.

[MAP eLearning module](#) - A behaviour change model by NES to support people to change health behaviours.

[Moving medicine](#) - Resources aimed at health professionals to integrate physical activity into clinical care.

Next steps · Assessment and evaluation

Assessment and evaluation

To receive a certificate, you will need to complete a [short assessment](#).

Please leave your feedback by completing this [short evaluation](#) and helping to improve the learning resource.