

Appendix 3: More Adults are Active

Activity levels are starting to recover following large drops caused by coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic restrictions, our latest Active Lives Adult Survey report shows that Leeds inactivity rate has significantly fallen since this sharp rise due to previous lockdown periods. **The Inactive rate has fallen from last year (25.6%) to 23.3% for the period Nov 2020 to Nov 2021 which equates to 150,000 people.** This highlights that an extra 14,000 people have moved from being inactive to active this year. Leeds now has one of the lowest inactive rates in North Yorkshire with only Craven and Harrogate recording lower rates of inactivity. Leeds is only 2nd compared to all Core Cities, only behind Bristol which records an inactivity rating of 20.7% and is substantially lower than the National (27.2%), regional (28.4%) and core cities (26.6%) averages

The recovery started in mid-March 2021 when there was a rise of 3% to 61.2% of the population getting active (between mid-March – mid-May), compared to just 58.2% 12 months earlier.

While numbers are still down compared to pre-pandemic, with 600k (1.9%) fewer active adults and 1.3m (2.6%) more inactive adults (National rates), the recovery is a testament to the work and investment that went into helping people stay active during a period of unprecedented restrictions.

However, while this initial recovery is good news, the data shows that this is not universal, with many people struggling, a trend that emerged before the pandemic and which is why we have such a strong focus on tackling inequalities and barriers.

When restrictions were lifted in July 2021, the number of people saying they felt they had the opportunity to be active increased close to levels we saw pre the emergence of coronavirus.

Team sports participation numbers bounced back close to pre-pandemic levels, following large drops during restrictions. Football (+2% across mid-July - mid-September 2021), cricket (+0.3% mid-July – mid-September 2021) and basketball (+0.3% mid-September – mid-November 2021) in particular have seen large numbers of returners which is driving the overall recovery in team sports.

However, because pre-pandemic, the numbers taking part in team sports were declining, we are continuing to support this part to recover and to reinvent how it provides opportunities to play sport and get active.

There is positive news for older people with recovery to pre-pandemic levels seen in activity levels for those aged 55-74 and 75+.

Overall population numbers hide stark inequalities with women, those from ethnically diverse communities, those living in more deprived areas, disabled people and people with long-term health conditions still less likely to be active than others, and the pandemic has exacerbated the inequalities for the least affluent, Asian people, disabled people and people with long-term health conditions in particular.

The gap in activity levels between the haves and have nots has also widened during the pandemic, with those that live in deprived areas seeing bigger drops in activity levels than those in more well-off areas. For example, activity fell 4.4% for those living in the most deprived areas (IMD 1-3) compared to pre-pandemic compared to a 1.2% for those in the least deprived areas (IMD 8-10).

Active Leeds are expanding our targeted place-based working and partnerships through initiatives such as the Get Set Leeds programme to help start to tackle inactivity in the cities priority neighbourhoods.

While initial drops have stabilised for most groups, activity levels for the younger adults (16-34) have continued to fall at a worrying rate, continuing a downward trend that started before the pandemic. As the sport and physical activity sector recovers from coronavirus, it's vital that activity offerings appeal to this younger generation so they can benefit from the profound health, social and personal benefits that being active brings. The Leisure Centre membership figures show that the younger age groups from 12-15 are seeing record numbers attending the gym and swimming pools which is bucking the trend nationally.

We'll also continue to work with Active Travel initiatives to improve cycling and walking infrastructure to make environments more suitable for the active travel with 51% of people saying they intend to do more walking, running or cycling for everyday journeys, which is likely to be linked to the cost of living crisis and rising fuel prices potentially making driving less accessible. Active travel numbers have seen a partial recovery from mid-March 2021 onwards whilst swimming numbers have started to recover since mid-May 2021.

Fitness activity numbers remain notably below pre-pandemic levels across the whole year (down 1.3m), however membership levels across Leeds Leisure Centre have recover to pre pandemic levels following record numbers of new people joining the service in the first quarter of this year so we expect this to further aid recovery of activity rates this year.

Over the last 12 months we have been undertaking various pieces of work to support those living with long term health conditions who have been disproportionately impacted by covid-19. The impact that covid has had upon not only physical health but mental health has been widely seen across the city, therefore we have been working to embed physical activity pathways into the health care system in order to tackle this. We have worked closely with organisations such as Live Well Leeds and Leeds and Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LYPFT) to improve the connection between physical activity and mental health and to build better relationships with these organisations to receive referrals into our support based programmes. We have also be working with communities who have developed long covid to get them in to physical activity to support their ongoing symptoms developed from catching COVID.

Active Leeds have added to and improved our communication channels to reach as wide an audience as possible, for example by purchasing a new marketing automation module which allows us to send targeted push notification messages to

65,000 people. Through social media and email platforms we have a reach of well over 100,000 residents of Leeds. Social media channels have focused on mental health and wellbeing as well as promoting Active Leeds services, focusing on the mental health benefits of activity, tips for getting started with exercise and advice on how to get back into activity after having Covid-19. The "LoveYourself" campaign focused on the mental health benefits of activity and how Active Leeds is an inclusive service with something for everyone regardless of age, ability, and previous exercise experience. Images used are more reflective of the people who use or and people we are looking to attract to use our services. The main aim of the campaign is to get the people of Leeds moving more, whether that's starting to walk to the shops instead of driving, or using our services or that of partners across the city.

Understanding that the impact of lockdowns has had a really adverse effect on children and young people's swimming opportunities, and particularly those with a disability, new swimming sessions were introduced at Fearnville Leisure Centre such as the SENSory Family Swim for children with additional needs & female only family swims for females and boys up to the age of 7.

Additional swimming lessons were run during mainstream lesson time for children with additional needs, in addition to the disability hub lessons (which also increased in number). Healthy Holiday lessons were set up- with free swimming lessons for children entitled to free school meals.

The team are working with the Black Swimming Association (BSA) to understand the barriers for BAME communities to access swimming activities and working with Leeds Becketts who undertaking this research.

Active Leeds organised the delivery of the sport and physical activity as part of the Council's Healthy Holiday (HH) programme across Leeds over the summer and Christmas holidays. This programme was funded by the Department for Education (DfE) to provide families living in the 10% most deprived communities and on Free School Meals (FSM) with the opportunity to access FREE HH provision within their local communities

For International Women's Day 2022 Active Leeds delivered a carousel of activities aimed at women and girls in the city to welcome a new audience to the Leeds Dock. Sessions included an outdoor climbing wall, Roller Skating, RAF reaction board, Cancer Awareness, History led walk, 5k Fun Run, Bumps & Babes Buggy walk, Female only Yoga & mother and baby yoga, free of charge. We also provided a platform for female street artists to paint live murals and celebrate the IWD themes #breakthebias. Over 200 people predominantly women and girls of all ages and diversities attended the 3 hour event.

Black History Month 2021 Active Leeds coordinated videos to show support for Black History Month, giving clues to describe who their personal black sports hero was/is and revealing this at the end. There were also discount activities put on at the leisure centres for BAME communities to access during this month.

Over 23,500 access the leisure centre programmes using our discount card for people on low incomes and/or receiving benefits, who are accessing our swimming

lessons, aquatics training schemes, tennis lessons, gymnastic lessons, fitness classes, gym and swimming sessions.

A large focus of this years work on the Physical Activity Ambition has been to define the priorities for this work and to seek approval for these priorities via the scrutiny board and Health and Wellbeing Board. The agreed priorities moving forward are:

- Active Environments and Reconditioning, both priorities are underpinned by a focus on improving health inequalities and BAME groups. The project areas being scoped further include:
- Active Environments- Department for Transport bid which combines social prescribing, community development and infrastructure re: walking and cycling. This project is at feasibility stage and is focused on the community of Richmond Hill. Get Set Leeds Local – This project focuses on increasing physical activity levels in 4 of the cities most deprived communities via a systems-based approach and co-production / ABCD approach. The project is demonstrating success in engaging residents from these communities into the project.
- Reconditioning- Currently work is being undertaken to scope out around Ageing Well and Children and Young People. A specific focus for these two areas of work is yet to be confirmed, but discussions have included: Looked After Children; Healthy Holidays; Mental health of C& YP and their carers; C&YP transitions; prevention work with the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable adults and Over 70's.