



**ACTIVE
HUMBER**

FORWARD IN MOTION

How physical activity and sport can help in the recovery from Covid-19 across the Humber

WELCOME

The Covid-19 lockdown has shone a light on the inequalities in our society. The dangers of living with multiple health conditions; the increased impact of the virus on Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities; and on people in our poorest communities living in overcrowded and/or multi-generational households. There is also increased concern about the toll on people's mental wellbeing – again, potentially worse for our poorest and most vulnerable people and communities.

Many of these issues are linked to physical inactivity. This affects our young people, who have become more inactive during lockdown, as well as our wider population. Unless they become more physically active, our young people will spend much more of their lives in poor health and will be the first generation to have a lower life expectancy than their parents.

At Active Humber (the physical activity and sport partnership for the Humber) we know there are many people across the Humber who are keen to get back to being physically active and playing sport in ways they have done before.

This paper is how we at Active Humber would like to work with our partners over the next 6 to 9 months on six 'big plays' to help people and organisations across the Humber to recover from Covid-19 by being physically active and the region 'returning to play' its role in national life. We want to help turn the 'game of life' back in favour for the people of the Humber.

Our 'game plan' is simple; that life is better when you are physically active and as a community, working together on six 'big plays', we will recover more strongly from Covid-19 and have a more equal, resilient and healthier community in place.

This pandemic has called for us all to work and approach life in very different ways. This moment is a huge opportunity to create a step-change in physical activity levels for many more people across the Humber by working in partnership.

We are keen at Active Humber to accelerate our work with partners from all sectors to make a step-change in these inequalities of activity. We know that this will help address wider inequalities around physical and mental wellbeing, skills and employment, community reliance, traffic levels, and greener, cleaner neighbourhoods.

When you have read this paper and you feel that what we are suggesting over the next year will help in your efforts to deal with and recover from the pandemic, please do contact me.

Thank you,

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INTRODUCTION

There is much work to be done to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and the physical activity and sport sector has suffered many detrimental effects from Covid-19. There will be no return to what was, and Active Humber needs to play its role to help the Humber community and the physical activity and sport sector to recover and thrive once again as well as adapting to future needs and opportunities.

At Active Humber we believe a better future will be created through a collaborative, place-based, whole system approach, able to show the significant contribution that physical activity and sport can make to the wider Humber Covid-19 recovery.

We believe there are six areas where physical activity and sport can help people and the community across the Humber recover from Covid-19. We feel by working with our partners on a 'big play' approach in each of the six areas we can speed up the recovery from Covid-19. The six areas are;

1. A more equal future - building back fairer
2. Creating healthier and more resilient communities
3. Ensuring children and young people's health and wellbeing
4. Physical activity playing a positive role in a community-led recovery
5. Helping to 'reboot & rebuild' the economy
6. Building a green recovery through physical activity

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A MORE EQUAL FUTURE - BUILDING BACK FAIRER

COVID-19 has affected some more than others, including; Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities; men; those who are overweight and obese; and those over the age of 55. We need to encourage people to be active to build the physical and mental resilience of everyone, and particularly people who fall into these groups, to guard against future pandemics and infections.

Some groups have been more adversely affected by the pandemic than others, with inequalities widening as a result. It is most important that the way we build back does not further exacerbate or fail to tackle inequalities. To make this step-change, we would like to work with all partners on how physical activity and sport can help to create a more equal future by:

- More effective use of relevant language, terminology and imagery ('people like me')
- Tackling inequalities in physical activity and sport.
- Focusing on health and economic inequalities.
- Working with under-represented groups and communities.
- Improving the diversity in our sector to ensure we represent the communities we serve.
- Review of recruitment processes to ensure that opportunities in the sport and physical activity sector are accessible to people from diverse communities

CREATING HEALTHIER AND MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

During the pandemic, many people, including people shielding and people living in our poorest communities, have found ways to become active at home. If we can bring this into the new World then vulnerable people who are least likely to be active, will be more mobile, improve their strength, and develop more confidence to go outside of their home. We have learned that many people have access to digital platforms. And we also know that other people are digitally excluded. This means we need a balance of opportunities that create access for everyone.

The pandemic has increased recognition that those with long term health conditions (LTHC) are less resilient to disease, whilst ongoing isolation of shielded groups is leading to deconditioning and a negative impact on rehabilitation. There is increasing attention to public health, with primary and secondary care working with communities on prevention & tackling health inequalities.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with the Humber, Coast and Vale ICS, the 4 Humber CCGs and the 4 Local Authority and Public Health teams to:

- Help those with LTHC to become more active to reduce NHS and Social Care costs to aid economic recovery
- Where appropriate, use socially distanced activities like walking conversations, particularly with people who would get the most from being more active
- Work with mental health commissioners and deliverers from all sectors to ensure they understand the evidence and learning of how physical activity can improve mental wellbeing, and help them to include this in their work
- Deliver 'Active At Home' leaflets to every vulnerable household across the Humber
- Consider and test ways of reducing the reliance on technology/data
- Promote online sessions, particularly for people least likely to be active
- Remember that local messaging is most effective when delivered by 'people like me' and locally trusted organisations.
- Be flexible in messaging. Remember that different people may need different advice about adapting their activity, including people living with longer term conditions, older people and pregnant women
- Renew effort to tackling health inequalities with a focus on increasing physical activity amongst lower income groups
- Embed physical activity within existing local obesity strategies
- Embed physical activity within emerging social prescribing schemes

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ENSURING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING

During the pandemic, schools have been closed and many children have been educated at home. We know that school settings offer the most opportunities for children to be active and so have seen a reduction in children's and young people's activity levels during the pandemic.

We are fearful that foundation subjects including P.E. and extra-curricular opportunities could suffer as schools focus on the attainment gap in core subjects such as English and Maths.

We would like to help schools understand the positive impact that being active has, both in improving physical outcomes and mental health, socialisation, concentration and its role in supporting attainment in other subject areas.

Parents who have been tasked with educating children during school closures, and young people who have been trusted to be independent learners, have struggled to include physical activity in their day. We must ensure that opportunities and guidance exist to support children and young people to remain active whether continuing to learn at home or at school.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with schools and partners to:

- Walk and cycle to school to enable social distancing
- Use physical activity and sport to help 're-socialise & reconnect'
- Support schools to prioritise and deliver PE, school sport and physical activity in safe and creative ways including the PE & Sport Premium
- Support the safe use of external providers
- Help schools reopen facilities for community use.
- Support schools to deliver quality PE lessons and provide physical activity opportunities - particularly for our most vulnerable children - maintaining social distancing and bubble measures
- Work with Living Streets to promote safer routes to school to encourage more children to walk, bike or scoot to school
- Deliver Activity Packs to all children in low-income families, including those entitled to free school meals
- Use the '*Creating Active Schools Framework*' to promote a whole systems approach to school improvement

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SUPPORTING A COMMUNITY-LED RECOVERY

During the pandemic, the value of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector has shone through as a trusted partner and strong deliverer. Many more people and organisations now appreciate how quickly these organisations can respond to a crisis and galvanise effort to support people who need it most. This sector can do this because they have the connections with, and trust of, some of our most vulnerable people.

During the pandemic period, in a similar way to VCSE organisations, a light has also been shone on the neighbours and volunteers that have self-organised and stepped forward to support each other; to provide basic food and medical supplies, to find creative ways to keep people connected and to help people deal with loneliness, grief, isolation and mental health challenges. In this way individuals from our streets and neighbourhoods – ‘people like me’- have gained the trust of many people.

Research indicates 1 in 4 community clubs may not be able to open their doors again and over half of the clubs most at risk are in the most deprived areas where they are needed most. Most Leisure providers feel their future is insecure and facilities remain at risk. However, communities have come together strongly to support each other with a new generation of community volunteers and leaders emerging.

To make this step-change we would like to work with local people, clubs, groups and other volunteers, VCSE and other agencies to:

- Help sports clubs and providers adapt, survive and thrive with funding and support
- Help non sport agencies with connections to target audiences to encourage or offer physical activity
- Connect with a new generation of community leaders and volunteers to help communities become and stay active
- Recognise and addressing digital poverty
- Train volunteers and workers in VCSE organisations to use motivational interviewing techniques to support vulnerable people they are working with to be more active.
- Support VCSE organisations to think of ways they can use physical activity to address the challenges we know lie ahead for many vulnerable people including lack of resilience, reduced mobility, loneliness and isolation, mental ill health and grief.

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HELPING 'REBOOT & REBUILD' THE ECONOMY

The pandemic has changed our working patterns and there are many examples where key workers and others have walked or cycled to work, taking advantage of the safer, cleaner environment.

The pandemic has had a significant economic impact and there is a need to reboot and rebuild the economy. Elements of the sport sector and economy are also facing unprecedented challenges.

To make this step-change, we would like to work with the Humber Local Economic Partnership, the 4 Local Authorities and the voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations to:

- Tackle unemployment through work placements, apprenticeships and internships, and to use physical activity and sport as a vehicle for skills & employability development
- Use active working to support employee mental & physical health & wellbeing, increase productivity & reduce absenteeism.
- Help the physical activity and sport sector to recover and renew addressing closures, reopening and unemployment in the sector.
- Support the visitor economy recovery by creating links with physical activity and sport opportunities and promote active travel.
- Address the ageing workforce through health and wellbeing programmes
- Encourage public sector anchor organisations to lead the way in encouraging staff to travel actively, work flexibly to be active, and be active where possible in their roles.

BUILDING A GREEN RECOVERY

During the pandemic, many families have been more active and having fun in their local open spaces and parks. If we can keep this going, families will be happier and healthier, and our shared spaces will feel safer for everyone to use. These green spaces are vital to our collective recovery from Covid-19.

The changes in working patterns is also through active travel an opportunity to embed changes to sustain reductions in air pollution & congestion and reduce carbon footprint. Across the Humber two-thirds of journeys are less than a couple of miles. If more people walked or cycled these short journeys, they would be more active, and reduce congestion and pollution.

Here are some actions that will help change the way we shop, play, learn and work: To make this step-change, we would like to work with Local Authorities, Humber LEP, Friends of Parks, Housing Associations and others to:

- Change infrastructure to promote active environments
- Embed changes to create a culture of active travel
- Help sport to rebuild in ways which reduce carbon footprint
- Convert active travel trials into permanent, safe, accessible, high-quality infrastructure
- Connect active travel infrastructure plans to wider transport planning
- Encourage walking and cycling for short journeys (less than 2km and 10km respectively) or as part of longer journeys (infrastructure and behaviour change)
- Involve communities to ensure infrastructure is in the right places, and that we understand motivations, confidence and opportunities for behaviour change
- Extend provision of bike libraries in communities
- Think creatively about the messaging, graphics and instructions in parks - make them people and child friendly and give examples of activities to do (such as hide and seek, frisbee)
- Encourage even more local community groups to take ownership of their green spaces and keep it welcoming, litter free and attract resources for improved / new assets and activities
- Create more social spaces within green spaces (pocket spaces, pop-up spaces, play zones and 'pockettes'). These will help park cafes open, making it easier to enjoy spaces while socially distancing
- Introduce measures that encourage safe cycling, scooting and walking in parks and gardens. This could be widening paths or segregation from pedestrians
- Test removing "no ball games / no cycling" signs from residential neighbourhoods to encourage children to play outdoors safely
- Write a new 'green space code' similar the Country Code and Green Cross Code – using easy language, symbols and graphics to give people confidence of how to use spaces safely and with other people in mind

THANK YOU

Active Humber has developed these six 'big plays' through talking to a wide range of partners over the last few months. This is not an exhaustive list and there may well be other actions that you think should be added.

Please continue the debate and the call for ambitious change in how physical activity and sport can help the Humber's recovery and renewal plans and getting us all to get in 'motion to move forward' and play our part in making the Humber a great place to work and live in.

If you would like to help us deliver on these six 'big plays' please contact;

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