

Physical Activity

Statement of Intent from the Health & Wellbeing Board

'The Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board are promoting increased participation in physical activity across all age groups in the county. The Board want residents, businesses and health professionals to take action to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the local population. Simple changes to people's everyday routines, such as going for a short walk regularly or doing some gardening, can have a big impact in the prevention of disease.'

Why do we need to increase participation in physical activity?

At present 7 in 8 adults in Buckinghamshire are not active enough to reap the health and wellbeing benefits of regular physical activity.

What is physical activity?

Physical activity includes all forms of activity, such as:

- Everyday walking or cycling
- Active play
- Work-related activity
- Active recreation (such as working out in a gym)
- Dancing
- Gardening or playing active games
- Organised and competitive sport.

Physical activity does not have to be expensive, many of the activities listed above are either free or can be taken part in for minimal expense.

What are the benefits of physical activity?

There are many health benefits of physical activity, these include reducing the:

- Risk of depression, anxiety and helps manage stress
- Risk of stroke by 27%.
- Incidence of heart disease and high blood pressure by approximately 40%.
- risk of developing type II diabetes by 33-50% and in high risk people by 58%
- risk of developing of Alzheimer's disease by approximately 40%; and
- Physical **inactivity** increases the risk of nursing home admissions by 40%

But also:

- Improving children's educational attainment and reduces discipline and behaviour problems
- Helps people to relax and sleep better
- Improves confidence and self esteem
- Helps people to maintain independence and live a healthier, happier life.
- Can help people make new friends and improve their social life

How much physical activity should I do to improve my physical and mental health?

- Physical activity should be encouraged from birth, particularly through floor-based play and water-based activities in safe environments
- All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.
- For general health benefit adults need at least 5 x 30 minutes moderate intensity physical activity per week

As an employer, what are the benefits of physical activity for my business and my staff?

Employers should invest in the health of their employees to reap the potential benefits of a fitter, more active workforce, including decreasing sickness absence and potentially increasing productivity.

Workplaces are major influences on behaviour, and employers' health promotion policies can help people to be more active and less sedentary as part of their working lives. This is not just about providing gyms at the office, but it is also about enabling employees to be active in different ways by providing showers for cyclists and walkers, prioritising stairs over lifts and encouraging active commuting.

Where can I find out more information?

Start Active, Stay Active:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_128210.pdf

Simply Walk: http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/row/simply_walk.page

Reactivate Bucks: <http://www.buckssport.org/en/reactivate/>

Change 4 Life: <http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx>