

Getting Norfolk Moving

Active Norfolk's
2026–2030 Strategy



active
norfolk



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Introduction

Imagine a Norfolk where everyone has the opportunity to be active, and where inequalities no longer limit people's ability to lead healthy, fulfilling lives. We are committed to playing our part to make this a reality.

Over the past 20 years, Active Norfolk has evolved; shaped by the voices of our communities, the strength of our partnerships and a deeper understanding of the vital role movement plays in improving lives. We are now at a pivotal moment. The challenges facing our communities are significant and complex, but so too is the opportunity to create lasting, system-wide change.

Physical activity is not a standalone issue, it is a fundamental part of the solution to many of the inequalities we see today. It has the power to improve physical and mental health, strengthen communities, and support economic and social resilience. Realising this potential requires leadership, collaboration and a relentless focus on those who stand to benefit most.

This strategy reflects that ambition. It sets a clear focus across the life course, helping children and young people to build strong foundations and Start Active; supporting adults to Live Active, healthier lives; and enabling older people to Age Active with independence and connection.

At the same time, we will ensure everything we do is rooted in place, shaped by communities, and built on principles of safety, inclusion and sustainability – because lasting change only happens when everyone is able to take part.

We recognise that we cannot achieve this alone. It will take a collective effort; partners, communities, organisations and individuals all working together towards a shared goal. By advocating for movement, connecting organisations and ideas, and enabling communities to take action, we will create a powerful, county-wide 'movement for movement'.

Together, we can shape a Norfolk where movement is not a privilege, but a possibility for everyone, every day.



Eve Dewsnap
Eve Dewsnap, Director

Our vision

To create a Norfolk where inequalities are no longer a barrier to an active life.



Our mission

We combat inequalities and remove barriers to physical activity – making movement part of everyday life, for everyone.

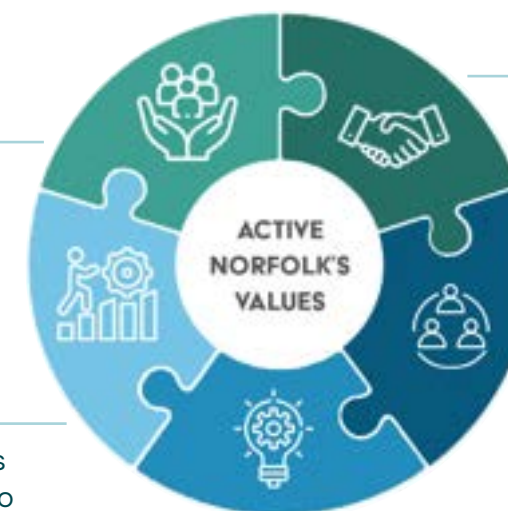
Our role

- ADVOCATE** We advocate the benefits of physical activity and movement – for physical and mental health, and contribution to wider social outcomes.
- CONNECT** We connect partners and communities, co-ordinating resources and investment into physical activity where it can have the most impact.
- ENABLE** We enable communities and organisations to create safer, inclusive, accessible opportunities to be active.

Our values

SUPPORTIVE
We care for and support the wellbeing of our own Active Norfolk community.

DRIVEN
We push ourselves because we want to make a difference and we do.



COMMITTED
We passionately care about improving people's lives through physical activity and are trusted to make a positive impact.

COLLABORATIVE
We drive change through system and community collaboration.

INNOVATIVE
We provide creative, innovative, and impactful solutions to combat inequalities.

Our priorities 2026–2030

We have a dual approach to achieving our mission:

Our programmes and projects: We work with communities and our partners, we co-ordinate and deliver a portfolio of programmes and projects that deliver real impact for communities in Norfolk. These will change over time to reflect funding streams, innovation and local priorities.

Creating system change: To create long-term systemic change, we unite partners around a shared mission to achieve equitable access to physical activity to improve the health and wellbeing of communities. We are hard-wiring physical activity into our local systems, priorities and strategies.

Physical activity is a powerful tool to address a wide range of health and wellbeing, societal and economic challenges. We have taken an insight and evidence-based approach to guide us in identifying the most urgent priorities for Norfolk and where we can have the most impact across 3 life stages:



During the life of this strategy, the system in which we operate will change significantly due to local government reorganisation, devolution and reorganisation of Integrated Care Boards. While Active Norfolk's vision, mission and purpose will remain constant, we will need to be agile and able to respond to changing priorities, policies and funding decisions. Our priorities and programmes will be reviewed annually, ahead of budget and business planning for the year ahead.

This strategy has been informed by local and national policies, strategies and frameworks. Find out more by scanning the QR code or at www.activenorfolk.org/about-us/our-strategy/



Access to
physical activity
to improve
the health and
wellbeing of
communities.





Start Active

We want all children and young people in Norfolk to have positive experiences of physical activity, supporting them to flourish and to instil healthy habits for life. We will focus our efforts on children and young people who experience inequalities or barriers to participation. Our priorities are to:

- Increase participation in physical activity among underrepresented groups:
 - Children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs
 - Children and young people from low-income families
 - Girls
- Support children and young people with mental health conditions
- Increase active travel to schools

In Norfolk

30.3% of pupils in Years 1-11 are doing **less than 30 minutes physical activity** per day. (CYP Active Lives Survey, 2024)

Obesity prevalence in children is 9.1% at Reception age and 22.9% at Year 6 age, an increase of 3% since 2007. (Norfolk JSNA)

1 in 6 pupils (aged 8 to 18) report that they **did not do any sport or physical activity** outside of school in the 4 weeks before this survey. (FLOURISH Survey, 2024)

4 in 10 pupils (aged 8-18) report **low mental wellbeing**; 6 in 10 report that they never like talking about their feelings. (FLOURISH Survey, 2024)

30,132 children and young people aged 0-25 are **identified with SEND**, a 60% increase since 2016. (Norfolk SEND Survey, 2025)

20% of children are living in a **household below average income** compared to 21% in England, and this proportion has been steadily increasing over the past 5 years. (Norfolk JSNA)

We will:

Advocate

- Champion use of Youth Voice and co-produce solutions with children and young people across our projects and programmes.

Connect

- Build and sustain long-term relationships with schools, clubs, providers, local authority partners and VCSE organisations, to create safe, affordable and accessible opportunities for children and young people to be active.

Enable

- Work with schools and partners to embed physical activity beyond the PE curriculum; providing staff with skills, confidence and resources to enable their school to be more active.



We want all children and young people to have positive experiences of physical activity.

Our current work with partners

Through these projects, we are combating inequalities and removing barriers for children and young people to Start Active.

Place Partnerships: We are connecting partners and communities in innovative ways to better understand the real barriers to physical activity, and co-designing new opportunities.

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun: Working with 100+ local providers, we co-ordinate a programme of fun activities and healthy food during the school holidays, benefitting thousands of children and young people from low-income households and SEND.

Whole School Activity Frameworks: We work with schools and partners to embed physical activity beyond the PE curriculum; providing staff with skills, confidence and resources to enable their school to be more active and championing the voice of children and young people to design their own solutions.

Schools Active Travel Survey: Collaborating with Norfolk County Council's Road Safety Team, we support schools to carry out an active travel survey and to put in place an action plan to enable more families to make active travel choices.

Safer Sport: We support clubs, schools and other activity providers to improve their safeguarding practice, train coaches and volunteers, and empower parents and children with information and guidance.

Family Hire Hubs: We are supporting communities to access funding to set-up new Family Hire Hubs, providing access to bikes, scooters and equipment, creating opportunities for active travel and play.

School Games: In collaboration with School Games Organisers, we co-ordinate a programme of inclusive activities to support more children and young people to participate and find a physical activity they enjoy.

Combating inequalities and removing barriers for children and young people to Start Active.

Since the launch of Big Norfolk Holiday Fun, the programme has recorded more than 184,000 attendances.





Live Active

We want more adults in Norfolk to benefit from being more active – improving their physical and mental health, preventing and managing long term health conditions, and increasing their healthy life expectancy. Some adults experience greater inequalities and barriers to physical activity. Our priorities are to:

- Increase levels of activity among people with long term health conditions
- Support adults with mental health conditions
- Increase participation among underrepresented groups:
 - Adults with disabilities
 - Women
 - Adults from low-income households
- Improving access to opportunities to be active in rural areas



In Norfolk

Inactive adults (doing less than 30 minutes physical activity per week) account for 24.7% of the population (down from 28.7% in 2022/23). Ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, people living in deprived areas and women are less likely to be active.

(Active Lives Survey, 2024/25)

Healthy life expectancy has declined over the last decade to 63.9 years for females and 62.9 years for males. *(Norfolk JSNA)*

The percentage of adults overweight or obese is approximately 60%. Being overweight can contribute to health issues such as heart disease, high blood pressure, strokes and diabetes. *(Norfolk JSNA)*

19.7% of adults in Norfolk aged 35-54 are **'inactive'** doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week. *(Norfolk JSNA)*

More than 140,000 people live in areas classified among the most deprived 20% in England, primarily in urban areas of Norwich, Great Yarmouth, and King's Lynn, with additional pockets of deprivation in rural areas, coastal villages and market towns. *(Norfolk JSNA, 2025)*

The life expectancy gap between the most and the least deprived areas is 7.4 years for men and 4.4 years for women. *(Norfolk JSNA)*

People with learning disabilities often experience poorer mental health and lower life expectancy, both of which can be **improved through physical activity.** *(Norfolk JSNA)*



60% of men attending the All to Play For programme reported reduced stress and anxiety three months after joining.

We will:

Advocate

- Innovate with partners to create new pathways to physical activity for those people experiencing the greatest inequalities.
- Encourage organisations to sign up to our 'Norfolk Moves Charter'; a commitment to making physical activity a priority for their users and employees and addressing inequalities.

Connect

- Develop the health workforce to support more inactive people to move more.
- Strengthen and create new connections between partners to address complex issues.

Enable

- Enable local communities to access funding, training and resources to create sustainable opportunities for people to be active close to where they live.

Our current work with partners

Through these projects, we are combating inequalities and removing barriers for adults to Live Active.

Active NoW: Our flagship programme in partnership with the Norfolk & Suffolk ICB, local authorities, leisure and community providers, providing exercise referral pathways for adults with long term health conditions. 13,000 people have been referred to the programme since it started in 2023.

All To Play For: A weekly, socially inclusive drop-in football programme for men aged 18+ experiencing poor mental health, providing a safe and supportive environment to engage in physical activity and improve wellbeing.

DRAGONS On the Move: A user-led accessibility programme supporting venue reviews across Norfolk, gathering lived experience feedback to help improve the accessibility and inclusivity of sport and physical activity settings.

Special Olympics GB: Through our unique partnership with Special Olympics GB, we are enabling people with physical and learning disabilities to participate, compete and enjoy sport and physical activity.

Active Communities: We work with a wide range of partners to enable and deliver numerous physical activity, health and wellbeing interventions.



Age Active

Physical activity and movement have a significant role to play in improving healthy life expectancy. We want more older people in Norfolk to benefit from being more active, supporting independence and improving physical and mental health. Our priorities are to:

- Increase activity among the ageing population with long term health conditions
- Prevent falls
- Reduce isolation and loneliness

In Norfolk

We have the **16th most elderly population in England**, with a proportion of residents 65 years or older rising from 25% to 30% over the next 20 years. The area with the highest number of older people is North Norfolk. *(Norfolk JSNA)*

People from the most **deprived areas are three times as likely to die before the age of 75** compared with the most affluent areas. *(Norfolk JSNA)*

26.2% of adults in Norfolk aged 55-74 and 41.8% aged 75+ are **'inactive'** doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week. *(Active Lives Survey, 2024-25)*

A risk factor for poor mental health among older people is **loneliness and social isolation**. At age 65 about 2 out of 3 people live in a couple, at age 85 this has reduced to about 1 in 3. *(Age UK)*

Those living in deprived areas, both urban and rural, are **more often lonely** compared to people living in non-deprived areas. *(Age UK)*

Creating opportunities for movement and social interaction.



We will:

Advocate

- Promote physical activity as part of a broader preventative approach to healthy ageing, working with partners in health, social care, Public Health, and VCSE, and advocating for this approach with local and national policymakers.

Connect

- Grow investment into local initiatives that enable older people to access physical activity in or close to their home, supporting the sustainability of existing community assets.
- Develop the health and social care workforce to support more inactive older people to move more.

Enable

- Empower communities and residents to make choices and do more for themselves to improve their quality of life.

Our current work with partners

Through these projects, we are combating inequalities and removing barriers for older people to Age Active.

23% of referrals to Active NoW are aged 65+

Older people with long-term health conditions are supported to find a physical activity that is right for them.

Bowl for Health: Creates opportunities for movement and social interaction. Participants are more active, learn new skills, and make new connections in their community.

Active Libraries: Brings physical activity into trusted and familiar spaces already accessed by older people in their communities.

Active Communities: We work with a wide range of partners to enable and deliver numerous physical activity, health and wellbeing interventions.



The essentials

For any project or area of work, we will consider: how it can be best delivered in place to meet the needs of different communities, how it can be made safer and more inclusive, and how it can be environmentally sustainable.



Place

Working in place is at the heart of Active Norfolk's strategy and will continue to underpin all areas of our work. Our Active Communities team, jointly funded with local authorities, provides:

- Strong relationships with local organisations and communities.
- Deeper understanding of specific community needs and challenges.
- Delivery of local physical activity frameworks which identify the key priorities for each area.
- Implementation of county-wide programmes at a local level (such as Active NoW and Big Norfolk Holiday Fun).
- Opportunities for people to be active in their communities by working with local organisations to combat inequalities.
- Support the development of local plans and strategies.
- Increased funding in to physical activity initiatives that are strategically relevant to specific community needs.

We lead Sport England's Place Partnerships investment in Norfolk. Sport England have committed £250m to reduce inactivity and increase activity in places that experience the greatest inequalities.

80 places were identified nationally and 3 are in Norfolk – Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn & West Norfolk, and Breckland.

We are working intensively with partners and communities in these areas to create long-lasting systemic change to support a healthier, more resilient, and active population. Our work is closely aligned to the Marmot Place initiative in King's Lynn & West Norfolk, led by the Institute of Health Equity.



Safer

Active Norfolk is committed to creating safer, inclusive, and supportive environments in sport and physical activity where everyone can thrive. For us, safety and inclusion are not just policies, they are a shared commitment to protect everyone participating in sport and physical activity in our county.

Enabled by Sport England's investment into Sport Welfare Officers, we have strengthened and embedded our safeguarding practice across all areas of our work. We have invested in training, so that all staff have skills and confidence to promote safer practices. We are working with coaches, volunteers, parents, and participants to empower them with the tools and knowledge to make a difference.

We will:

- Continue to improve our practice in adult safeguarding, to bring it up to the same level as children and young people.
- Maintain and continuously improve our exemplar practice of safeguarding of children and young people.
- Embed safeguarding practice across our commissioned services, providing resources and training to our partners and providers.





Inclusive

Our mission is to combat inequalities, so understanding and working with the diverse groups we seek to support is at a heart of everything we do. We are committed to being an organisation that embraces diversity, equality and inclusion through every aspect of its governance, staffing and distribution of resources.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan drives our work to deliver on this commitment. Every member of our staff and board are required to engage with, uphold and proactively promote the activities of the plan. We still have work to do, and this strategy reinforces the commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as an underpinning priority. In particular, we will:

- Proactively work to increase diversity (age, gender, LGBTQ+, disability, ethnic minorities and all protected characteristics) of applicants to join our team and the board.
- Engage with communities and underrepresented groups to gain a deeper understanding of their barriers to being active and the inequalities they experience.



Sustainable

The changing climate is already impacting on opportunities, motivation and ability for people to be active, and the consequences of this are more significant for those experiencing the greatest inequalities. As a Sport England system partner, we are committed to playing our part in delivery of their Environmental Sustainability Strategy – Every Move.

At Active Norfolk, we will:

- Reduce our carbon footprint by prioritising active travel, minimising waste, and making sustainable choices in our operations.
- Champion sustainable behaviours across the sport and physical activity sector, working with partners to drive positive environmental change.
- Advocate for and support communities most affected by climate change, ensuring our sustainability efforts help tackle health inequalities.

How we work



Working in partnership

We are leaders in our system, advocating for physical activity as a solution to many of the challenges we are facing as a society. We connect with hundreds of organisations across Norfolk and beyond and it is through convening these partnerships that we are creating the conditions for change. We work alongside communities to co-produce solutions that will work for them and empower more people to be active. Our annual stakeholder survey provides insight into how our partners feel about working with us and highlighting areas for improvement.

Our partners are important to us, and we want to continue to strengthen our relationships so that together we can create a “movement for movement”, removing barriers to and addressing inequalities in opportunities to be physically active. We will lead:

- An annual ‘Norfolk Moves’ conference, bringing together partners from across our system to celebrate, listen, learn and be inspired.
- Organisations to pledge their support for a Norfolk Moves charter, focusing on those who are addressing inequalities and removing barriers. They will be recognised as part of a growing community of partners who believe that movement matters.
- Quarterly briefings for senior leaders in our system, to share the latest research and developments in physical activity, local impact stories and calls to action.
- The creation of a ‘Norfolk Moves’ Advisory Group, bringing together senior leaders from key partners to facilitate commitment to and action towards prioritising physical activity in primary and secondary prevention.





Investment in physical activity

In 2025/26, **Active Norfolk distributed over £3m** to a range of organisations across the county to support the provision and sustainability of physical activity. We will continue to contribute to the creation and sustainability of physical activity through:

- Supporting communities and organisations to identify and apply for funding opportunities.
- Working with the Active Norfolk Foundation to identify and bid for new grants and seek to develop corporate and commercial partnerships to support our mission.
- Effective and efficient grant distribution of centrally funded schemes to local organisations, ensuring investment is targeted where need is greatest.
- Securing new investment to support the sport and physical activity sector in Norfolk to grow and thrive.



Insight, impact and learning

It is vital that we know where to direct our energy and resources and whether our work has made a difference. We will:

- Use insight and data to target our resources and investment to areas of greatest need and where we can have the most impact.
- Amplify youth voice to inform our work with children and young people.
- Seek out and listen to the views of communities and underrepresented groups.
- Evaluate the impact of our programmes, wherever possible reporting against CORE20Plus5 demographic characteristics.
- Quantify our impact by applying the Sport England Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation to all relevant programmes.
- Increase awareness of our impact through our annual Impact report, social media activity, briefings to senior leaders and programme of regular events to engage key stakeholders.
- Enhance use of outputs from internal Reflection & Learning sessions to continuously improve our work.



People and workforce

Delivery of this strategy relies upon the passion, skill and expertise of the Active Norfolk Team. We will continue to invest in developing our staff to achieve their potential and create a high performing and resilient team. Our People Plan sets out the detail of how we will do this. It will be especially important as we navigate a period of significant change in our local system, with local government reorganisation, devolution, and ICB restructuring all taking place during the first years of this strategy.

As well as our own staff, we will provide development and training opportunities to the wider workforce in our system, including:

- System leadership through Place Partnerships.
- Physical activity Champions training for health and social care workforce.
- Safeguarding and inclusive practice training for clubs, activity providers and schools.
- Training for community leaders and volunteers to lead physical activities within their communities, for example: health walks and seated exercise classes.



Be part of Norfolk Moves our 'movement for movement'

How you can get involved:

Statutory organisations

Get in touch to discuss opportunities for collaboration and innovation

- ✓ Spread the word. Share with your staff and networks
- ✓ Pledge your commitment to the 'Norfolk Moves Charter'
- ✓ Sign up for our quarterly briefings which share the latest news, local impact stories, research and policy developments in physical activity

Voluntary and community organisations and clubs

- ✓ Already removing barriers to physical activity? Pledge your commitment to the 'Norfolk Moves Charter'
- ✓ Sign up for our quarterly briefings which share the latest news, local impact stories, research and policy developments in physical activity
- ✓ Find out how we can support you to access new funding
- ✓ Register your activities on Every Move, our free online activity finder
- ✓ Become a Big Norfolk Holiday Fun provider
- ✓ Become an Active NoW referral provider
- ✓ Access training and support for safeguarding and inclusion

Find out more by scanning the
QR code or at www.activenorfolk.org
to get involved ...



Members of the public

- ✓ Experiencing barriers to physical activity? Contribute to our focus groups
- ✓ Find a new activity on our online activity finder, Every Move
- ✓ Book a Big Norfolk Holiday Fun activity (eligibility rules apply)

Children & Young People

- ✓ Tell your family and teachers how important physical activity is for your health and wellbeing
- ✓ Get active with your friends and family
- ✓ Participate in the annual Active Lives Children and Young People Survey

Get involved.





www.activenorfolk.org

