

ACTIVE GLASGOW

A Physical Activity & Sport Strategy for Glasgow

Draft

FOREWORD

Glasgow is a city that thrives on the energy, resilience, and spirit of its people. For generations, we have faced challenges head-on, turning adversity into opportunity and building a community that values unity and strength. This same determination is what drives our commitment to enhancing the health and well-being of every citizen through physical activity and sport.

Glasgow has always been a city of movement—whether it's through our rich sporting history, our parks and green spaces, or the vibrancy of our streets. Physical activity and sport have the power to transform lives, fostering not only individual health but also community cohesion, pride, and resilience. These benefits are particularly crucial in a city like ours, where the challenges of poverty and inequality are still very real. We believe that by encouraging more of our citizens to be more active, more often, we can make significant strides in tackling these inequalities.

Our city has a proud history of coming together to overcome obstacles, and this strategy is built on that legacy. We know that by working collaboratively—across communities, organisations, and institutions—we can create an environment where physical activity and sport are accessible to all. This is a strategy for the entire city, owned by everyone who calls Glasgow home.

Our successes to date give us confidence that we can achieve even more. From the Commonwealth Games to grassroots sports programmes, Glasgow has shown time and again that when we work together, we can deliver world-class results. This strategy will build on those successes, ensuring that the benefits of physical activity and sport reach every corner of our city.

In the face of ongoing challenges, our commitment remains unwavering. This strategy is a bold step forward in our ongoing journey to make Glasgow a healthier, more active, and more inclusive city. Together, we can create a future where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive through the power of physical activity and sport.

INTRODUCTION

The need for a physical activity and sport strategy?

The benefits of physical activity and sport are clear. Being active leads to healthier, longer, and happier lives. It lowers the risk of disease, boosts mental and physical well-being, and helps close the gap in life expectancy between different communities. Beyond health, an active society strengthens our neighbourhoods, promotes community cohesion, and helps address inequalities in education, employment, the environment, and the economy across Glasgow.

Glasgow is in a great position to lead the way in creating an environment that supports and encourages physical activity. We have fantastic resources—our parks, recreational facilities, heritage, and vibrant communities. Our goal is to build on these strengths and introduce new solutions to overcome barriers to physical activity.

This strategy is designed to spark innovation and requires a collaborative effort. It emphasizes the need for partnerships with our communities and key stakeholders, combining resources to achieve common goals. By working together, we can create a citywide approach that makes it easier for everyone in Glasgow to be more active, more often.

The strategy outlines our high-level goals and is supported by a detailed action plan developed with input from various sectors and organizations. This plan will guide our efforts, measure our progress, and help ensure our success.

Opportunities for alignment and connectivity

Our goal is to create a comprehensive approach that makes regular physical activity accessible and appealing to everyone in Glasgow. To do this, we need to ensure that all aspects of life—social, cultural, economic, and environmental—work together to tackle inactivity and improve people's lives.

This requires large-scale actions that are tailored to our city's unique needs, involving collaboration across various sectors. Local government and key partners play a crucial role in making this happen by integrating physical activity into their work, policies, and strategies. By working together, we can strengthen leadership and create a supportive environment that encourages everyone in Glasgow to be more active, more often.

This strategy has been developed to align and support a wide range of strategies across the city and nationally.

What we know about physical inactivity

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality. People who are insufficiently active have a 20% to 30% increased risk of early death compared to people who are sufficiently active. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of many diseases including heart disease and cancer, stroke, hypertension and diabetes. It reduces the chances of falling in older age, it improves bone health and supports maintenance of a healthy weight. Alongside physical health, it improves mental health and wellbeing, improves cognitive outcomes such as academic performance, builds community cohesion and increases life chances.

In Glasgow, 34% of adults and 31% of children do not meet the recommended physical activity guidelines. Participation in physical activity varies widely due to socio-economic, geographic, and cultural factors. Those most likely to be inactive include:

- Older adults
- Residents of more deprived areas
- Individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions
- People from ethnic minority groups, LGBTQ+ communities, and other inclusion groups
- Women
- Those living in neighbourhoods with limited access to green spaces and inadequate infrastructure

To tackle these challenges, our strategy will focus on innovative solutions to address these disparities and encourage more Glaswegians to be more active, more often.

Our Vision

Glasgow is a city where everyone thrives and our communities flourish through the transformative benefits of inclusive physical activity and sport.

Our Mission

To create a vibrant, city-wide culture where physical activity is a cornerstone of everyday life. A city that enables and empowers everyone to build physical activity and sport into their daily lives.

Our Principles

The strategy has been shaped by cross-sector organisations across the city and is underpinned by a set of agreed principles to guide its implementation.

Addressing Health Inequalities: We are committed to targeting and reducing health disparities by ensuring equitable access to physical activity and sport opportunities, with a focus on supporting those most affected by health inequalities to improve their overall well-being and quality of life.

Championing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: We are committed to actively addressing and reducing disparities in access to physical activity and sport, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances, has equitable access to participate and benefit from an active lifestyle.

Promoting Environmental Sustainability: We are committed to integrating environmental protection into our physical activity and sport opportunities, ensuring that our programmes and facilities are designed to minimise environmental impact and contribute to the health and sustainability of our natural surroundings.

Fostering Effective Partnerships: We are committed to building strong, collaborative relationships between organisations and communities to maximise the impact of physical activity and sport opportunities, ensuring that all efforts are unified, resourceful, and responsive to local needs.

Evidence-Based Approach and Impact Measurement: We are committed to grounding our physical activity strategy in robust evidence and continuously collecting data to measure and evaluate our impact, ensuring that our initiatives are effective, accountable, and driven by informed decision-making.

Embracing Innovation and New Perspectives: We are committed to fostering a culture of innovation by encouraging creative thinking and exploring new approaches to physical activity, ensuring that we continuously adapt and find effective solutions to meet the needs of our community.

Our Strategic Priorities

1. **Communities, Places and Spaces:** Ensure places and spaces are appropriately designed, created and maintained to provide high quality accessible and sustainable active locations.
2. **Travel:** Create an environment that supports and enables citizens to make active travel a part of their everyday lives.
3. **Sport and Recreation for All:** Provide equitable and high-quality access to inclusive sport and active recreation for all.
4. **Health and Social Care:** Embed physical activity into appropriate, routine NHS health and social care services across the city.
5. **Places of Learning:** Deliver a 'nursery to tertiary' approach to physical activity and sport adopted by all places of learning.
6. **Workplaces:** Develop, implement and support the adoption of a healthy workplace model that enables a more active workforce.
7. **Communication and Public Engagement:** Establish a coordinated communications and public education approach that reinforces the importance of physical activity across the city.
8. **Systems:** Develop collaborative actions that enable a whole city approach to physical activity and sport across Glasgow.

Our impact

The success of our strategy will ultimately be determined by its ability to positively impact the active lives of Glasgow residents. Detailed key indicators are specified in the action plan supporting this strategy

We will measure the strategy's impact through several methods, including:

- **Evaluation of Partnerships:** Assessing the development and effectiveness of key partnerships and relationships across the whole-system impacting on physical activity levels
- **Evidence-Based Changes:** Monitoring and measuring changes in the environment, practices, processes, or policies that are expected to enhance physical activity and sport participation.
- **Participation Metrics:** Tracking evidence-based changes in physical activity levels within targeted communities and groups.

Process Overview

In developing this strategy the **Public Health Scotland (PHS) framework, [A systems-based approach to physical activity in Scotland](#)** has been utilised. This framework aims to improve levels of physical activity at both national and local level and is firmly founded on evidence-based international guidance. It has been used by a number of local authorities in developing physical activity and sport strategies and has been adopted by the Scottish Government.

Using the PHS framework provided a defined process that includes establishing the strategic context, reviewing data and evidence of current participation levels, identifying strengths and weaknesses in the city, identifying the key priorities and developing the programme of actions to build on strengths and address weaknesses.

The process included desk research on existing national and city strategies, a number of workshops and interviews with key stakeholders and partners focusing on specific themes to identify the draft priorities and objectives.

A draft direction of travel document outlining emerging themes and priorities was shared publicly for consultation in September 2024. This asked for feedback on the mission, vision and values as well as the four priority areas and their outcomes identified through the sector research and consultation

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Communities, Places and Spaces

Aim: To create an environment across Glasgow that allows residents to be active through an array of high quality, accessible, and sustainable community places and spaces to be active in.

The objectives to deliver Communities, Places and Spaces:

1. **Effectively engage local communities:** Involve community groups and volunteers to understand how the environment can be enhanced and engage them in decisions on how to design and manage public open spaces, including trails, cycleways, footpaths and towpaths, making them safe, welcoming and accessible for all.
2. **Develop a facilities plan for the city:** Co-develop a clear and well evidenced facilities plan that considers informal spaces for participation, alongside the community and privately run facilities and the local leisure estate. Enabling resources to be directed at key priority groups and those most in need.
3. **Co-location of facilities:** Consider co-location of community facilities to deliver cost effective public services and improve health outcomes.
4. **Enhance universal and targeted physical activity provision:** Work with partners to deliver a range of physical activity and sport interventions that will maximise the benefits of the leisure assets across the city
5. **Maximise the open space infrastructure:** Consider ways to enhance the accessibility, quality and appeal to users of local grey, green and blue spaces, to increase their use. Focus particularly on communities who may not currently use them, for example those with protected characteristics or low-income communities.

Priority 2: Travel

Aim: To support the implementation of Glasgow's Active Travel Strategy, to make walking, wheeling and cycling the first and natural choice for everyday journeys, for Glasgow citizens.

The objectives to deliver Travel:

1. **Ensure delivery of the [Glasgow Active Travel Strategy](#) and the [Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme](#)** dovetails with the wider physical activity and sport needs of the city. This includes a commitment to invest resources to ensure more walking, wheeling, and cycling across the city.
2. **Improve accessibility and connectivity:** Ensure new and refurbished footways, footpaths and cycle routes link to existing infrastructure, making it as easy as possible for people to walk, wheel and cycle.
3. **Prioritise active travel in infrastructure development:** Ensure pedestrians, cyclists, and users of other modes of active transport are given the highest priority when developing or maintaining streets and roads.
4. **Collaborate on behavioural change programmes:** Partners to deliver targeted and relevant behavioural changes initiative that effectively address barriers to active travel.
5. **Communication and signage:** Ensure events and programmes include communications strategies to publicise the available walking or cycle routes and wayfinding to motivate people to use them. Include information that people with impairments will require.

Priority 3: Sport and Recreational for All

Aim: To work in partnership across the city to create equitable access to high quality, inclusive sport and active recreation for all Glasgow residents.

The objectives to deliver Sport and Recreation for All:

1. **Enhance Support for Sports Clubs and Organisations:** Collaborate with sports clubs and community organisations to understand and support their needs to develop and maintain sustainable sport and active recreation opportunities in local communities and create sustainable development pathways.
2. **Engage Inactive Communities:** Engage and listen to under-represented communities to understand the barriers to active recreation and sport.
3. **Provide Accessible and Sustainable Facilities:** Ensure active recreation and sport facilities are accessible, sustainable, and meet the needs of all residents, especially the inactive and those under-represented.
4. **Provide Sustainable and Inclusive Opportunities:** Work with communities to design and deliver truly inclusive sport and active recreation opportunities, that meet the needs of all, through both universal and targeted provision.
5. **Develop the Workforce:** Enable and empower staff and volunteers within sports clubs and community and public sector organisations through delivery of a

programme of training and development to build their capacity and capability in engaging and motivating citizens through inclusive and equitable opportunities.

6. **Deliver Mass Participation Events:** Ensure that community-wide, mass participation events which can encourage people to participate in sports and recreation are connected to ongoing local sport and active recreation provision and not just one-time occurrences.

Priority 4: Health and Social Care

Aim: To embed the promotion and delivery of a consistent approach to physical activity across health and social care provision in Glasgow.

The objectives to deliver Health and Social Care:

1. **Integrate physical activity into the health and social care systems:** Ensure physical activity is embedded into NHS strategic plans and the work of the Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership.
2. **Develop the health and social care workforce:** Ensure staff are appropriately empowered to promote physical activity across care and ensure staff are upskilled to support the promotion of physical activity to service users.
3. **Integrate physical activity into clinical pathways:** Implement systems that integrate physical activity into appropriate clinical pathways, ensuring physical activity discussions are built into appropriate clinical assessment to deliver programmes of brief-advice and follow up.
4. **Multi-level physical activity interventions:** Continuation and expansion of the delivery of physical activity referral schemes for people who are sedentary and have an existing health condition that can be improved or managed through physical activity.
5. **Physical activity promotion across health and social care:** Integrate consistent active lifestyle messages across health and social care providers to ensure staff are provided with sufficient resources. This will enable signposting for patients and staff to opportunities to increase physical activity.

Outcome 5: Places of Learning

Aim: To ensure a whole Educational Systems Approach to Physical Activity and Sport is a fundamental part of the learning pathway across early years, schools and further and higher education settings in Glasgow.

The objectives to deliver Places of Learning:

1. **Embed physical activity into the curriculum:** Ensure physical activity and sport is integrated into the learning experiences at all levels, from early years to higher education, with equality of access to the range of sports and physical activity programmes offered. Focus on quality physical education, active learning methods and consistently promoting the benefits of physical activity and sport across the curriculum.
2. **Create and enhance active learning environments:** Promote and maintain spaces that support physical activity and sport including active classrooms, playgrounds, sports facilities and nature-based areas. Collaborate with education

providers and local community organisations to maximise the shared use of facilities such as playing fields, games halls, dance studios and swimming pools. Promote and support active travel initiatives to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling to educational settings.

3. **Develop a Skilled and Confident Workforce:** Build the capacity of staff, learners and volunteers to deliver high-quality physical activity, sport, and physical education experiences throughout the day. Provide targeted training and resources to overcome barriers to participation and ensure inclusive opportunities for both structured and unstructured physical activity across curricular and extracurricular programs
4. **Strengthen family, community and partnership engagement:** Build strong partnerships among staff, learners, parents, carers, and the wider community to support the implementation of high-quality policies, programmes, and infrastructure. Maximise the use of resources and facilities through shared access, enhancing community involvement in physical activity and sport.
5. **Promote Inclusivity and Lifelong Active Lifestyles:** Ensure all physical activity and sport opportunities are adaptable and accessible, meeting the diverse needs, abilities, and cultural backgrounds of all learners. Educate learners on the lifelong benefits of physical activity and sport and equip them with the skills and knowledge to maintain active, healthy lifestyles beyond their time in education.

Priority 6: Workplaces

Aim: To work collaboratively with employers across the city to create the conditions and foster a culture that will empower employees to move more in their working day.

The objectives to deliver Workplaces:

1. **Physically active workplace planning:** Support the development of organisation wide plans or policy to encourage and support employees to be more physically active. Ensure these are based on consultation with the workforce and ensure staff are involved in planning.
2. **Developing an active culture:** Support leaders throughout organisations in creating a culture of activity throughout the workplace, where moving becomes the norm.
3. **Active travel to work:** Work collaboratively with the active travel team to support organisations to create an infrastructure and culture that encourages and enables employees to walk, wheel and cycle to or from work and as part of their working day.
4. **Develop multi-component programmes:** Support employers to introduce organisation wide, multi component programmes that support and encourage employees to be physically active as part of the working day.
5. **Effective communication:** Support the dissemination of information on how and why to be physically active, through signage within workplaces and signposting to local opportunities.

Priority 7: Communication and Public Engagement

Aim: To establish coordinated communications and public engagement efforts as an integral component of the system-based approach to physical activity.

The objectives to deliver Communications and Public Engagement:

1. **Advocate for physical activity:** Increase awareness and knowledge of the importance of Physical Activity and Sport, targeting key audiences including high-level leaders, policymakers, elected members, community leaders and the media across the city.
2. **Build organisational consensus across anchor institutions:** Adopt an approach to the development of consistent active lifestyle messages, establishing governance arrangements between communications teams.
3. **Build a public consensus:** Support and expand ongoing communication efforts to strengthen public consensus around the importance of physical activity.
4. **Social marketing campaigns:** Utilise a wide range of media to communicate consistent and clear messages about physical activity to Glasgow residents. The messages will be framed positively and tailored to intended recipients utilising social marketing principles.
5. **Accessible communications:** We will consider accessibility, equality, diversity and inclusion in the planning of communications and ensure actions are taken to engage the least active population groups.
6. **Public education:** Deliver integrated approaches to public education on the importance of physical activity and ensure messaging campaigns are underpinned by a supportive infrastructure and other opportunities for physical activity within local communities.

Priority 8: Systems

Aim: To ensure partners across Glasgow are united through our shared passion and ambition for a more active city and that we work collaboratively, using shared resources, to make it easier for residents to be more active, with physical activity featuring in key policy decisions.

A whole system approach to physical activity involves considering the interconnected factors that influence an individual's ability to engage in and maintain regular physical activity. This approach recognises that physical activity is not just a matter of personal choice but is shaped by a wide range of influences, including environmental, social, economic, and policy factors. It involves collaboration across sectors, such as healthcare, education, urban planning, and community organisations, to create environments and policies that support and encourage active lifestyles. By addressing these wider determinants, a whole system approach aims to create sustainable, long-term improvements in population-level physical activity.

The objectives to deliver a System:

1. **Develop effective governance arrangements:** Ensure clear accountability for strategic implantation of the strategy.
2. **Work collaboratively:** Establish an Active Glasgow partnership, aligned to the Public Health Oversight Board.
3. **Build common priorities across the city:** Activating networks of expertise across all sectors, to embed physical activity into local decision making and place planning and strengthen joint finance mechanisms.

4. **Deliver a Physical Activity in All policy approach:** Ensure that all policy documents consider the impact of the policy on physical activity and use existing health impact assessment tools to assess in advance what impact policies are likely to have on physical activity levels.
5. **Develop the workforce:** Enable learning and development opportunities across the partnership to increase the understanding of physical activity and its relationship to policy development for improving health, social and economic population outcomes.
6. **Establish robust evaluation systems:** Develop a city-wide monitoring and evaluation system that assesses the process of implementing the strategy and its impact on communities.

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