

Promoting Physical Activity :
A Strategy for Islington

Preface

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(to be provided)

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1. Introduction

The cost of doing nothing

We are becoming an increasingly inactive society. The changing nature of the work we do and the way we do it, the introduction of computers and of computer games, the impacts of television, DVD and video players, increasing pressures on our parks and open spaces and safety concerns about children playing outdoors : all these have contributed to decreasing levels of physical activity across our society. According to some sources, we now have a population that is less physically active than at any time in history.

And it comes at a cost. There are increasing concerns about the health of the nation and, for the first time ever, the life expectancy of many of our children is lower than that of their parents. In Islington, the situation is particularly serious. Life expectancy is below the national average, the gap between rich and poor is growing and our mortality rates from heart disease and a range of cancers are significantly above the national average. Our children too are being affected and, in a recent project looking at healthy eating and physical activity, the results from one secondary school in the Borough found 50% of the pupils to be overweight or obese. The current high levels of inactivity hit our health, our society and our pockets too. It has been estimated that an increase in physical activity could save more than £144 million in the treatment of coronary heart disease alone. And if all the costs to society of ill-health are taken into account, an increase of 5% in the number of sufficiently active people could save £300 million every year.

.... the benefits of doing something

Changing our lifestyles to include simple physical activities can reduce the chance of having a heart attack by 51%. It can also reduce the chances of contracting cancer and a wide range of other conditions – even the likelihood of needing a hip replacement in later life. This does not necessarily mean engaging in competitive sport – though that would certainly help – but simply taking part in activities like regularly walking the dog, cycling to work, strolling in the park, taking the kids out to play, swimming, gardening or joining a dance class. And the benefits go beyond those of improving our physical health, for becoming more active has also been shown to reduce stress and to contribute to positive mental health and to a sense of general wellbeing. Greater involvement in volunteering and in play, sport and leisure also contributes to social inclusion, to the positive engagement of young people, to reducing levels of anti-social behaviour and to civic pride.

The ProActive Partnership

The Government, the National Health Service and Sport England have all set targets for increasing levels of physical activity across the country. These include targets for older people, for younger people, for people with long term physical conditions and for the community as a whole. In order to determine our response to this, a group of organisations from across Islington have come together to form the ProActive Partnership. They include the Council, the Primary Care Trust, the education services, voluntary organisations, Aquaterra Leisure Trust and Arsenal

Football Club. Together they have produced this strategy document. It considers what we have to achieve and how we should set about it. Most importantly, it introduces a detailed five year Action Plan through which, by working together, we can make Islington truly “proactive”: a Borough that is healthier, more active and more equal.

A Physical Activity Strategy for Islington: Our Aims

The ProActive Partnership is committed to increasing the level of physical activity in all sections of the community in Islington regardless of ability. Our specific objectives are:

- To increase awareness across the community of the benefits of regular physical activity.
- To reduce barriers to participation and to create increased opportunities for physical activity, especially for those in greatest need.
- To improve and expand the provision of accessible resources and facilities for physical activity across the Borough.
- To promote and encourage the voluntary and community infrastructure for sports, play, leisure and physical activity in Islington.
- To support wider policies in transport, planning and development that contribute to a more active society.
- To produce and disseminate up-to-date information on health and physical activity and on opportunities in the Borough.
- To work together as partners to make best use of our resources and to equip staff in all our organisations to promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

2. The Importance of Being Active

Physical Activity : What is it?

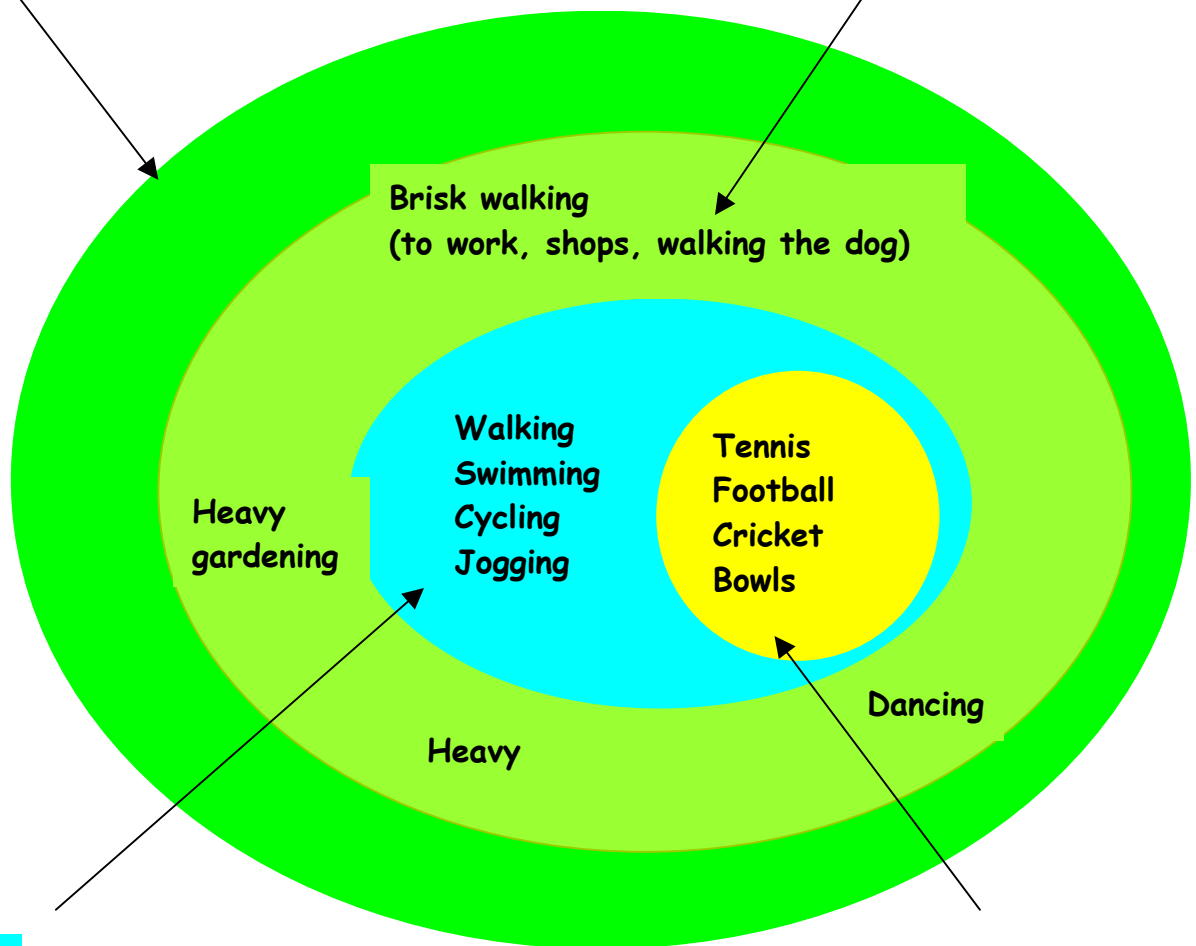
A strategy for increasing physical activity involves far more than the promotion of competitive sport. Health enhancing physical activity covers, in fact, a very wide range - from walking to work or school, physical play, heavy gardening, even heavy housework; through to participation in a football or netball match. And at different times in their lives, different individuals will have different needs and approaches, involving themselves in changing ways. Our diagram below shows the wider inter-relationship of physical activity, exercise and sport.

Physical activity

'Any bodily movement that results in a substantial increase in energy expenditure over resting'

Health Enhancing Physical Activity

'Health enhancing physical activity is any form of physical activity that benefits health and functional capacity without undue harm or risk'



Exercise

'A type of physical activity performed with the specific objective of improving fitness, physical performance or health'

Sport

'A game or competitive activity'

In Islington we want to get those people who do very little (the outer ring) moving; to get those who are taking some activity more active; and to provide the opportunities for those who excel at sport to make the most of their potential. We also want to prevent people who have been sports 'driven' or highly active from dropping, at other stages of their life, into the outer circle of inactivity. In order to achieve this we need to work as a partnership to ensure that Islington is a borough where everyone is aware of the opportunities to be active, both as a chosen pursuit and as part of their everyday life.

Physical Activity : Why is it important?

The range of negative impacts from insufficient physical activity is dramatic and a lack of physical activity has been identified as one of the ten leading global causes of death, disease and disability. Increased levels of physical activity are now seen as vital to individual physical and mental health and to the health of our society.

Physical Health

Physical inactivity is now considered a primary risk factor in coronary heart disease. Inactive people have more than double the risk of heart attack, whilst appropriate physical activity programmes reduce the risk of mortality after heart attack by about 20%. Physical activity can also help reduce blood pressure in approximately 75% of people with hypertension and can help mitigate the effects of high levels of blood cholesterol.

It is also estimated that one quarter of stroke incidence could be avoided by appropriate exercise and that physical inactivity may be responsible for up to a threefold increase in the risk of stroke among middle aged men.

Inactivity increases the risk of colon cancer by up to three times and is also linked to other cancers, including the development of breast cancer. Obesity is also a risk factor for developing some cancers and this too is reduced by physical activity. Physical activity programmes have also been shown to assist people recovering from breast and other cancers.

Diabetes is a serious condition which can lead to eye problems, blindness and loss of limbs. Physical activity is one of the principal ways to lower blood glucose in type II diabetes and is protective against heart disease for those with type I diabetes.

Weight-bearing physical activity, such as walking, is essential for the normal development and maintenance of a healthy skeleton. It is particularly important during childhood years and will protect against osteoporosis – or brittle bone disease – in later life. It will also reduce the risk of hip fracture by about 50%. Physical activity also contributes to the prevention and management of osteoarthritis and pain in the back, shoulders and knees.

Keeping active and including physical activity in our daily lives has been proven to assist in maintaining flexibility in later life. This is particularly important for everyday activities, such as cutting toenails or reaching for items from cupboards.

Regular activity has been associated with a reduced risk of falls in older people by improving strength, co-ordination and balance. It has also been shown to improve the cognitive function, that is the ability to think clearly.

Obesity contributes to an estimated 9,000 premature deaths a year in England. Nationally, obesity has risen threefold since the 1980s with 24 million adults in the UK now obese or overweight. The proportion of children who are overweight has also increased by 50% in ten years.

The energy balance is the balance between energy the body gains from food and energy expended from activity. The result of too much energy taken in from food and not enough expended is, over time, weight gain that can lead to obesity if not corrected.

Obesity is a life-threatening condition leading to increased cardio-vascular disease, diabetes and increased incidence of certain cancers, especially bowel cancer, and gallbladder disease. It also leads to debilitating health problems, including respiratory difficulties, chronic muscular related problems, skin problems and infertility.

Regular physical activity combined with healthy eating is crucial in the effective management of obesity and can help achieve and maintain appropriate body weight.

Mental health

Exercise releases natural chemicals such as serotonin into the brain and these can have a strong effect on mood : helping to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Regular exercise programmes have been shown to reduce depressive symptoms significantly and to relieve acute anxiety and could, therefore, be utilised alongside conventional therapies.

Evidence also shows that, in both children and adults, physical activity can improve general mental health through reducing stress, increasing self-esteem and self-efficacy and increasing feelings of relaxation. The Mental Health Foundation has specifically recognised the importance of play to children's mental health and its role in helping them to make and consolidate friendships and deal with conflict. These are basic skills children need to become 'emotionally literate' and to increase their resistance to mental health problems.

Exercise also triggers the release of naturally produced chemicals that protect brain cells and keep them performing at top speeds. At any age, exercise boosts energy and concentration and helps provide a restful nights sleep. Being unfit, ironically, often leads to increased tiredness.

Social health

Increased participation in organised physical activities contributes significantly to social cohesion in a society that is becoming increasingly fragmented. It provides safe spaces for physical activity for children, increased opportunities to meet and mix

for more transient sections of our community – including students and other young people – and helps reduce isolation and loneliness amongst older people.

A wide range of opportunities for physical activities, drawing on a wide range of cultures and tradition, also contributes to social inclusion and to positive engagement with young people and forms one of a range of strategies for reducing anti-social behaviour. Participation in sport, play and voluntary activities associated with sports and sports clubs, all contribute to community involvement and to civic pride and an engaged and active Borough is a major determinant in its regeneration.

3. The Context

National, Regional and Local Policy Promoting Physical Activity

The increasing recognition of the importance of physical activity in promoting good health and in contributing to educational outcomes, crime reduction and social inclusion is reflected in an increasing number of policies and performance indicators being set at national, regional and local level. It is also reflected in the much broader approach now being adopted by organisations, such as Sport England. This section sets out some key elements of the emerging policy framework promoting sport, leisure and increased physical activity.

Government Health Targets

The Government's White Paper "Choosing Health" was published in November 2004 and sets out a commitment to increasing the health of the population. The White Paper includes tackling obesity as one of its key areas of concern and identifies lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating as the two main contributory factors. The Choosing Health delivery plan, therefore, recommends an incremental increase of 1% a year in physical activity levels across the entire population. Specific measures within this include:

- Children and young people to take part in 60 minutes physical activity of at least moderate intensity every day. This should include activities that improve bone health, muscle strength and flexibility at least twice a week.
- Adults to take part in 30 minutes moderate intensity physical activity on at least 5 days a week.

For the NHS and Social Care, the framework for the future is set out in National Standards : Local Action, the health standards and planning framework for 2005 – 2008.

The national priorities for these three years are based on the Department of Health Public Service Agreement (PSA). They cover four broad priority areas:

- Patient user experience
- Access to services
- Long term conditions
- Health and well being of the population.

Both of the last two are areas where physical activity can be part of a treatment plan and can act as a preventative measure against a variety of diseases.

The PSA for the Department of Health also set a number of specific targets. These include:

- To halt the year-on-year increase in obesity in children under 11 by 2010 and to place this within the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole.

- To increase life expectancy to 78.6 years for men and 82.5 years for women by 2010.
- To reduce mortality rates from heart disease and stroke by at least 40% and from cancer by at least 20%, in people under 75 by 2010.
- To improve health outcomes for people with long-term conditions by offering a personalised care plan for vulnerable people at risk.
- To improve the quality of life and independence of older people by increasing the number of those able to live at home by March 2006.

The Audit Office report 'Tackling Child Obesity – First Steps', published in February 2006, examines the need for government departments to co-operate in tackling what it describes as a complex public health issue that is a growing threat to children's health and a drain on both current and future National Health resources. It puts equal emphasis on play and sport in tackling childhood obesity.

Draft obesity guidance from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence, due to be published in final form in November 2006, recognises that the environment in which people live may influence their ability to maintain a healthy weight, especially access to safe spaces for play and physical activity. It calls on local authorities to address the provision of cleaner, safer streets, and of safe spaces such as parks and playgrounds. It also calls on head teachers and school governors to undertake assessments of the school environment and of the impact of school policies on physical activity.

Targets for Schools

Further PSA targets have been adopted for schools by the Department for Education and Science. These are:

- To increase the proportion of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours a week on PE and high quality sport from 25% in 2002 to 75% by 2006 and 85% by 2008.
- To ensure that by 2010 all pupils will have the opportunity to do two hours of sport a week in school hours and three hours of sport a week outside of school hours.
- To increase the number of maintained schools in school sports partnerships to 100% by September 2006.
- To have at least 400 sports specialist schools and academies by 2006.

The 1997 White Paper on Excellence in Schools set out the Government's intention for half of the country's schools to have achieved Healthy School status by 2006 and for all schools to have achieved it, or be working towards it, by 2009. The Government also intends that all schools should have an active School Travel Plan by 2008.

Targets for local authorities

Through the Audit Commission, central Government now uses the Comprehensive Performance Assessment to measure performance by local authorities. This covers a wide range of performance indicators across areas such as housing and the

environment and also now includes a “culture block” containing the indicators for sport and physical activity. These are:

- The percentage of adults participating in at least thirty minutes’ moderate intensity sport and active recreation on three or more days a week.
- The percentage of the population volunteering in sport and active recreation for at least one hour a week.
- The percentage of the population that is within 20 minutes by foot from a range of three different sports facilities, of which one has achieved a quality assured status.
- Representative use of leisure facilities by:
 - people from the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups
 - young people aged 11 – 19 years
 - people from black and minority ethnic groups
 - people aged over 60
 - disabled people under 60.
- Resident satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities.

Facilities will also be measured for value for money by levels of subsidy per visit and by visits per square metre.

Sports and Physical Activity for all

“Game Plan”, published in 2002, sets out the Government’s Strategy for delivering its national sport and physical activity objectives. It sets out a vision for sport and physical activity in 2020 – to increase significantly levels of sport and physical activity, particularly among disadvantaged groups, and to achieve sustained levels of success in international competition.

The strategy addresses three broad areas:

- Increasing Grassroots Participation. Based on the health benefits of sport and the growing cost of inactivity, it sets a target of 70% of the population to take part in 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week by 2020.
- Improving International Performance. Focussing on the national “feel good” factor associated with sporting success, it sets a target for British and English teams and individuals to sustain rankings within the “Top Five” for a range of popular sports.
- “Hosting Mega Events”. This sets out the need for a 20-year strategy for supporting such events and for securing central Government involvement from an early stage in order to ensure proper assessment of risks and benefits.

Through a ‘Public Service Agreement’ the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has set out what it intends to achieve for the population as a whole. This is:

- To increase the take up of cultural and sporting opportunities by adults and young people aged 16 and above from priority groups by :

- Increasing the number who participate in active sports at least 12 times a year by 33%
- Increasing the number who engages in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity level sport at least three times a week by 3%.

Launched in September 2005 the “Everyday Sport” initiative is a high profile campaign run by Sport England to increase the level of activity in those who are least active in the community. The aim is to bring physical activity into everyday lives, by encouraging partners to sign up to the campaign and by giving a central lead on activities. It also provides a web facility for information on how to take part in activities. The campaign promotes the government 30 minutes a day target for adult participation.

Linked to this campaign, Sport England and the Strategic Health Authority have jointly funded a post across the five adjacent London Boroughs of Enfield, Haringey, Camden, Barnet and Islington. Islington is the host Borough for this post, which is intended to encourage increases in physical activity, to make best uses of open spaces and to share best practice.

The London Plan for Sport and Physical Activity, published by Sport England in 2004, set itself the aim of “working for an active and successful sporting capital 2004 – 2008”. In doing so, it addressed six key themes:

- Maximising opportunities for sport and physical activity through effective and sustainable partnerships.
- Helping to overcome barriers and enabling excluded or hard-to-reach groups to take part.
- Providing opportunities and incentives for people in workplace settings to build activity into their daily routine.
- Helping children and young people make physical activity part of their everyday life.
- Developing the potential within organisations and individuals to achieve personal and sporting success.
- Changing attitudes by raising awareness of the economic, educational, social and health benefits of sport and physical activity.

The plan identifies the changes that are needed over an initial four-year period measured success by getting around 288,000 more people involved in sport and physical activity over that period; an average of 1% per year up to 2008.

The Plan also aims to increase participation by all under-represented groups and to ensure that the structures are in place to allow everyone to realise their potential, whether in school, at a club or at their workplace.

There is a clear need to change the way sport is managed in London and the Plan establishes Sub Regional Sport and Activity Partnerships for north, south, east, west and central London. Islington falls into the central “sub-region” alongside Camden, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth, Lambeth and Southwark.

The Partnerships are intended to draw together mutually interested agencies to provide locally determined solutions to collectively increasing participation and widen access to sport and physical activity for the whole community. Core funding of £150,000 a year for each partnership up to March 2009 will be allocated by the London Sports Board against annual business plans, although there is a recognition that additional funding will need to be identified. The proposed “delivery” structure for sport and physical activity suggests that Community Sports and Physical Activity Networks (C-SPANS) should be established within each sub-regional partnership. The Islington ProActive group has been cited by Sport England as a positive example of such a group.

Transport and Health

The 1998 Government White Paper, “A New Deal for Transport : Better for Everyone”, set out a policy for a sustainable integrated transport strategy for England and acknowledged the impact of different modes of transport on people’s health. It outlines ways of providing safe, accessible networks for walking and cycling and for reducing reliance on cars, especially in urban areas. It also required local authorities to include proposals for making walking easier, safer, more viable and more attractive in Local Transport Plans.

The Government’s 2004 document “Walking and Cycling : An Action Plan” promotes increased levels of walking and cycling in England, whilst the National Cycling Strategy provides a framework for increasing the number of journeys made by bike. It sets targets to quadruple cycle use against 1996 figures by 2012. It is intended that this should be achieved at the expense of private car usage whilst reducing risks to cyclists from traffic injuries.

At a London level, the Mayor’s Transport Strategy includes a key policy to create and promote a connected, safe, convenient and attractive environment that encourages people to walk and that enriches their experience of being out and about, making London one of the most walking friendly cities for pedestrians by 2015. Flowing from this, the Walking Plan for London, released in 2004, provides a detailed framework for implementing and monitoring the proposals for walking within the Mayor’s strategy with the aim of seeing more people making walking their first choice for short journeys and travelling longer distances by a combination of walking and public transport.

In addition to this, the headline target of the London Cycling Action Plan is to achieve at least an 80% increase in cycling levels by 2010 and a 200% increase by 2020 compared to cycling levels in 2000.

4. Islington : the state of the Borough's health

The population of Islington

In 2004 there were just under 180,000 people living in Islington. Of these, approximately 51% were women, a proportion that grows to nearly 61% in the over 75 age group. Since 1996 our population has grown by 2.2% - a further 3,881 people – and according to the GLA will increase by 10.5% by 2011. This would bring the total population of the Borough to nearly 199,000.

Each year in Islington:

- there are approximately 2,600 births. These are expected to increase by about 8% by 2011.
- there are approximately 1,200 deaths. While this reflects a fall in line with national trends, the rates for those between 15 and 64 is 39% above the national average.
- approximately 20,900 people move into the Borough, 20 to 30% of them from outside the UK.
- approximately 22,600 people move out of the Borough.

In addition to natural growth and changes by migration, the Government decision to identify Islington as an “area of opportunity” means that homes for an additional 30,000 people will need to be provided over the next ten years. This will pose significant challenges to services and to the infrastructure of the Borough. In addition to its residents, Islington also attracts a large number of visitors coming in to work or study in the Borough or to visit it as a tourist destination.

The population of Islington:

- is younger than the national average with a particularly large proportion (43.4%) in the 20 – 39 age group.
- has a declining number of older people with only 9.6% of over 65's as opposed to the national average of 16%. It should be noted however that the proportion of ethnic minority people among the older population is increasing.
- is made up of many different ethnic groups with one quarter of its people defining themselves as non-white. Black Caribbean, Black African and Bangladeshi people constitute the largest non-white ethnic groups. This population is relatively young with 35% under 20 years old compared with 20% of the white population.
- includes 3,800 people receiving incapacity benefit and 1,100 with severe disability allowance. Overall it is estimated that 15% of the Islington population has some sort of disability: a total of some 27,000 people.

Islington is a borough of extreme contrasts. Its population is characterised by residents with extreme wealth and residents in poverty, often living in close proximity. Overall, Islington is the sixth most deprived borough in England and the third most deprived in London. All of its wards fall into the 40% most deprived wards in England, as measured by the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

5.8% of Islington's population is unemployed, which is higher than the average for London of 4.4% as well as the national average of 3.4%. The highest rates of

unemployment are among the 16 to 24 years old with the wards worst affected being Finsbury Park and Holloway.

The health of Islington

Out of all the London Boroughs, Islington has the fifth lowest life expectancy for men and fourth lowest for women. At 73.4 years, the life expectancy for men compares with 75.7 across London as a whole and 76 nationally. For women, the local life expectancy of 79 compares with a London and national average of 80.6.

According to different surveys, the prevalence of obesity in Islington is between 17% and 20.5%. This is below the national average of 21.4%. Just under half of our Islington children are estimated to receive three or more fruit and vegetable items a day, compared to the national figure of 37%. Among adults, however, the consumption of five or more fruit and vegetable items, estimated at 21.4%, is below the national average of 24%.

Statistics about the Borough's health reveal that:

- coronary heart disease is the commonest cause of death. It accounts for 19% of all deaths in the Borough with the highest rates – some 40% above the national average – being in the Holloway and Tollington wards.
- there are 470 stroke admissions every year.
- there are 665 cancer registrations every year with lung, breast, prostate and colorectal cancers accounting for 50% of these.
- deaths from cancer in the under 75 age group are 28% above the national average.
- an estimated 8,000 people suffer from diabetes. Eighteen people a year die from this cause, some 42% above the national average.

In 2004 there were 608 mental health admissions among Islington residents. Some 30% of these (182) were due to psychoactive substance use, 23.5% (143) to mood disorders and 21% (128) to schizophrenia and delusional disorders.

There are 27% more men and 26% more women with long term limiting illnesses in Islington than the England average. All wards have a higher proportion of people with reported long-term illness than the England average, except for Highbury East and St Mary's. Improving the management of people with long-term conditions is now at centre stage of NHS policy. Self care and self management are recognised as key elements in the response of health economies to long term conditions, and physical activity is one of the mechanisms which will assist in this process.

Physical activity in Islington

Children

Information from heights and weights of children entering primary and secondary schools in Islington provides some startling statistics. Nearly one-fifth (19.4%) of children between 4 and 5 years old were overweight or obese in 2002, with 9% being either obese or very obese. By the time children were entering secondary school at

11 to 12 years old, the proportion of children overweight or obese (measured in 2003) had grown to over a third (36.4%), with 20% being either obese or very obese.

National statistics suggest that only 55% of boys and 39% of girls achieve the levels of physical activity set out in government targets and that there was a decline of 24% in the average distance walked by children between 1985 and 2000. The limited information we have about levels of activity among children in Islington is based on two sources. First, we have data on achievement in Islington schools against the target of at least two hours of PE and out-of-hours school sport a week. At 58% this was considerably below the national target of 70% though, starting from a baseline of 49%, it did show a higher than average rate of increase.

In the north of the Borough, the “Staying Alive” project provides data for 8 schools which supports national data on low levels of physical activity among children. Over 50% of the children in this sample were overweight or obese; 16% of them disliked PE and only 54% of the secondary school children achieved even 30 minutes physical activity a day – half the time set in national targets.

Adults

The Allied Dunbar National Fitness Survey, conducted in 1999, revealed that only 32% of adults in England take 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week, compared to 57% of Australians and 70% of Finns. The 2003 Health Survey for England provides more detailed information and shows that 37% of men and 24% of women meet currently recommended physical activity targets. Levels of activity also decrease markedly with age from 53% in men and 30% in women between 16 and 24 to 8% in men and 3% in women over 75. The Health Survey booster in Camden and Islington, conducted in 1999, enables a comparison of local and national data. This shows that whilst the figures for women in Islington are very similar to the national profile, men in the Borough are less physically active than the average for England and Wales. Overall, 68% of men in Islington and 73% of women do not do sufficient physical activity.

Whilst we have no specific data for ethnic minority groups in Islington, data shows that nationally ethnic participation in sport and physical activity is 6% below the national average. Highest levels of physical activity are achieved among black Caribbean people and these are very similar to the national average but Asian communities are significantly below average with lowest levels of participation among Bangladeshi and Chinese communities. Data from ethnic minority groups also shows the same trends as in the white population for a decline in activity as age increases and lower levels of activity among women.

No separate data is available for levels of physical activity among the 15% of the Borough’s population with physical disabilities.

Older People

National statistics show that there is a sharp decline in physical activity among older age groups and that 74% of men and 83% of women aged 50 and over do not participate in enough physical activity to benefit their health.

According to the Allied Dunbar National Fitness Survey :

- 26% of men and 34% of women over 70 are unable to walk a quarter of a mile on their own;
- 20% of women and 14% of men over the age of 50 do not have the flexibility to wash their hair comfortably;
- 32% of men and 28% of women aged 65 to 74 had insufficient strength in their legs to rise from a low chair without using their arms.

About 666 people over 65 live in residential care in Islington and overall about four in five residents in care homes are inactive, compared with two in five in the same age group in the general population. These statistics, combined with the increased percentage of less active ethnic minority people amongst the Borough's older population, will have implications for support services from both Health and Social Care.

5. Targets for an Active Islington

Among the wide range of targets outlined in Section 3 of this Strategy, ProActive has chosen as its focus a specific target within each age group, together with a target for facilities, in order to monitor the impacts of its Action Plan. These targets are in line with those adopted in the health section of Islington's Local Area Agreement.

Children and young people

"By 2010 100% of pupils in each year group to participate in at least 2 hours of high quality PE and out of hours sport in a typical week."

Year	Target : %	Target : Number
2005	58%	13,050
2006	70%	15,750
2007	80%	18,000
2008	85%	19,125
2009	93%	20,925
2010	100%	22,500

How will it be measured? Annual national PESSCL survey (PE, School sports, Club links).

Adults

"To increase the number of adults who take part in thirty minutes of moderate activity on five days a week, by 1% a year."

Year	Estimated number of inactive adults (16 – 64) in Islington	Target reduction
2006	105,119	1,051
2007	104,068	1,041
2008	103,027	1,030
2009	101,997	1,020
2010	100,977	1,010
2011	99,967	1,000
2012	98,967	990

How will it be measured? Three yearly "Health Survey for England" with annual booster surveys for Islington whenever possible.

Older People

“To increase the number of older people taking part in the Borough’s ‘Everactive’ programme by at least 1% a year”

Year	Number participating
2005	49,413
2006	49,907
2007	50,401
2008	50,895
2009	51,389
2010	51,883

How will it be measured? Monitoring of attendance figures. Target to be reviewed in 2008.

Facilities

“100% of Islington residents to be within 20 minutes by foot from a range of three different sports facilities of which at least one has achieved a quality assured status.”

How will it be measured? Through an annual facilities mapping exercise.

Assumptions

Actual numbers are provided for indicative purposes and are based on the following assumptions:

- Figures are calculated on 1% annual decrease in the inactive population
- Figures bases on an assumed success in meeting the previous year’s 1% target
- Figures based on current population levels without factoring in growth
- Figures based on a mean between male and female data

6. ProActive Islington

The Barriers to Physical Activity

The previous section demonstrates just how high are the targets we have to reach; and just how demanding is the task of achieving them. The cost factor, however, is even higher – in terms of the Borough's declining health, the impacts on our society and the spiralling costs of our health and social care services.

Organisations across Islington have worked together to identify the barriers that deter or prevent people in Islington from becoming more active. The key factors are seen as:

- the physical infrastructure : more, better and accessible facilities
- cost: including the cost of facilities and of equipment
- lack of time
- lack of confidence
- lack of interest / awareness of benefits
- cultural and gender barriers
- childcare issues

A survey of users of leisure centres asking what would make them use the facilities more often produced the following result : 16% more time, 16% lower charges, 11% cleaner buildings, 7% better parking, 5% bigger gyms, 5% a wider range of activities. 33% of respondents indicated that nothing would make them use facilities more. The Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy also analyses barriers to walking and cycling. These can be summarised as:

- concerns related to road safety;
- concerns related to poor design and management of the built environment;
- lack of facilities and connectivity;
- fear of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- lack of awareness of benefits.

What Works Well : 'the Finnish experience'

Finland is one of the leading countries in Europe for physical activity. 64% of women and 60% of men engage in physical activity and sports at least twice a week. 40% of Finnish children and youth are active in sports clubs and 93% of the boys and 91% of the girls say they are interested in sports. This is the result of a concerted effort in Finland to promote activity and sport across the population, which has its roots in the Helsinki Olympics of 1952.

Voluntary activities form the basis of the Finnish sports culture, with over 500,000 volunteers and leaders. This translates to 10% of the population taking part in voluntary work in sports in their leisure time. Sports activities are organised mainly by sports clubs and federations with over 20% of the population (1.1 millions Finns) in membership. Most of the funding of sports clubs comes from members and parents.

The most popular sport overall is cycling. Among boys, the most popular sports are football and floorball and, among girls, swimming and musical sports, such as gymnastics and dance. The emphasis in the clubs is on amateur sport and less than 3% of the sports clubs have professional athletes.

Whilst the population composition and climate are very different between Islington and Finland, the Finnish example demonstrates that concerted efforts to increase physical activity do produce results and lead to a healthier population.

An Action Plan for Increasing Physical Activity Across the Borough

The national long-term vision for sport and physical activity is to significantly increase levels of sport and physical activity by 2020, particularly among disadvantaged groups, through encouraging a mass participation culture with as much emphasis on physical activity as on competitive sport.

In Islington, we realise that this cannot be achieved without a very broad approach involving a wide range of partners. We aim to work towards a Borough

- with a wide range of first class facilities
- with a high level of community involvement and a strong and growing voluntary sector
- with a “playgroup to pensioner” approach of promoting physical activity among every age group
- with an understanding throughout the health services of the significance of physical activity to good health
- with local authority policies across a wide range of services, including traffic and transportation, promoting physical activity
- with an understanding of the importance of physical activity to employee welfare and productivity
- where efforts are targeted towards those groups most in need
- where best use is made of national and local sporting events and opportunities
- where our work is regularly informed by appropriate research, analysis and understanding.

In order to lay the foundations of such an approach, organisations across the Borough have come together to form the ProActive Partnership. They include Council services, health services, Aquaterra Leisure, Arsenal Football Club and voluntary organisations. The group, which also includes a representative from Sport England, has overseen the production of this Strategy and will be launching both a six-year Action Plan and a wider Borough sports, leisure and physical activity partnership, the “ProActive Forum”.

Despite the high-level importance given to the promotion of physical activity, no additional funding has yet been identified for this purpose by central government. The Action Plan, therefore, aims to make best use of existing resources and joint approaches. This is assisted by Islington’s Local Area Agreement under which NRF funding will be made available for the achievement of physical activity targets.

The Local Area Agreement also enables the pooling of funding from a variety of other sources.

The Action Plan drawn up by the partnership identifies key opportunities and activities up to 2012. It also outlines which organisations will lead on each action, what outcomes are being sought and what resources are currently available. The Plan covers ten key objectives and these are summarised below.

Objective One : Promoting a Strategic Approach

This section deals with the need to develop an overarching strategic approach. It includes developing the role of the ProActive Partnership to promote joint fundraising and mutual support, to provide advice to others, to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan and to monitor its impacts. It also covers the need to carry the message to other agencies and to ensure that our objectives inform policy-making at the highest levels. It sets out proposals to ensure that our work is properly informed by research, analysis and the collection of appropriate information and that what we are doing is linked to other key strategies in the Borough.

Objective Two : Providing First Class Facilities

For its size, Islington is well served with indoor leisure provision with a total of seven leisure centres and swimming pools run on the Council's behalf by the Aquaterra Leisure Trust. There is also a wide range of other facilities, including kick-about areas on estates, school sports halls and swimming pools, adventure playgrounds, a number of club facilities and an increasing number of private gyms. The Regents Canal is a key feature of the Borough providing a range of opportunities for physical activity. Islington is also the home of Arsenal Football Club and its landmark new stadium, which will be opened in July 2006.

Islington is proud that its leisure services have achieved the highest satisfaction rating of any in London, but this should not disguise the fact that our current leisure estate faces several significant problems. Firstly, many of our leisure centres are now ageing, with a rapid deterioration in physical condition and a need to invest more and more money just to keep them useable. And secondly, public open space in Islington – including parks, pitches and sports facilities – is in short supply and, where they do exist, outdoor facilities in both parks and housing estates have suffered from a long-running lack of investment. The Action Plan details what work is already underway to renovate our leisure estate, to draw up longer-term plans and to develop a more joined-up approach to the improvement of facilities in parks, playgrounds and adventure playgrounds, schools, housing estates, clubs and leisure centres. It also recognises that access is a key issue and that all our facilities, both indoor and outdoor, should be fully accessible and provide a welcoming culture for people with disabilities and long-term conditions. Our aim is to provide an overall leisure estate that is first class, fit for purpose and future proof.

Objective Three : Promoting Community Participation

Physical facilities, however good, are not enough. Increasing levels of involvement also demand a community infrastructure able to bring about a culture of participation. Key to this is a strong and active network of voluntary sector clubs and associations. The Islington Council sports website lists over 100 such organisations available to residents in the Borough. Many of them, however, operate from outside Islington and less than a handful have their own venue. Whilst some support is available to help obtain funding or secure important information, the Action Plan identifies the development of a stronger club structure in Islington as a key priority for the future. Alongside this, it promotes an increased emphasis on volunteering. Volunteering in sports, leisure and physical activity programmes helps to strengthen community links and to increase opportunities for others. It also provides a means of physical activity for the participants themselves. The Olympic opportunity, discussed further in Objective Ten, will measurably increase the range of volunteering opportunities available to Islington residents.

Objective Four : Planning for children and young people

Life-long physical activity starts with children's play.

All the abilities and skills from kicking to throwing begin at this time, including a sense of balance, of co-ordination and of calibration. In their playing, children discover the natural aptitudes that will lead on to more sophisticated physical activity such as game playing and organised sport. During these early years, the opportunity to play in a safe environment is crucial to child development.

All the available evidence, however, shows that levels of physical activity among children and young people are declining and that levels of unfit, overweight and obesity are increasing at an alarming rate.

The Action Plan, therefore, identifies work with children and young people as a crucial area for development. It calls for full participation in the preparation of the Borough's play strategy, which will release £606,400 from the Big lottery fund for play improvements, and for an extension of the valuable outreach work currently being undertaken by youth services, leisure providers, clubs and voluntary organisations to ensure that physical activity and good health become a habit for children and young people alike.

Objective Five : Working with schools

Schools represent such a key element in the promotion of physical activity among children and young people that this element has been afforded a section of its own in the Action Plan. Working through CEA, the Council's education provider, and in particular through the Islington School Sport Co-Ordinator Programme, our aims are encapsulated within the objectives of the Islington partnership development plan. They are to bring about:

- increased participation in high quality physical education

- increased participation in high quality out of school hours learning
- increased participation in high quality informal physical activity
- increased participation in high quality competition and performance
- improved attitude, behaviour and attendance in PE, sport and the whole school
- increased attainment and achievement in and through PE, out of school learning and sport.

Objective Six : Enabling an active community

Promoting an active community also involves putting in place the structures that will enable and encourage people to live their everyday lives in a more active way. This means encouraging walking and cycling through safer streets and greener routes and a culture that promotes these activities as everyday ways to get to work, to entertainment or to the shops. Our Action Plan supports the Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy and calls for improved facilities, more information and shared awareness on approaches that will simultaneously lead to a healthier environment and healthier citizens.

Objective Seven : Promoting the healthy workplace

Between the ages of 18 – 65, we spend the majority of our waking time at work. The introduction of new technologies and changing practices means that, for many, work has become deskbound and inactive. The workplace can be seen, however, as a place of opportunity with a “captive” audience. In our strategy, we set out to promote a policy of “*healthy workplaces*” for Islington. This can be rolled out in a variety of ways to suit both large and small businesses and organisations. It will include activity initiatives, like encouraging use of stairs rather than the lift, inter workplace sporting events, and Work Fit promotional campaigns via the internet. More activities will be added to the Action Plan as evidence of good practice becomes available.

Workplaces in Islington can also promote healthier lifestyles by adopting a travel plan. Travel plans are a package of measures designed to manage an organisation's transport impacts. They are aimed at promoting greener, healthier travel options such as walking and cycling. Islington is part of a network of boroughs working to promote planning to large and small organisations. Our Strategy supports the Council's award-winning A1 Travel Plan project and workplace travel planning in general as a means of promoting healthier travel.

Objective Eight : Tackling ill-health

Islington's Primary Care Trust, in line with Department of Health initiatives such as “Choosing Activity”, has recognised the clear role for exercise in improving and maintaining the health of the local population. Physical activity is important for everyone because it improves wellbeing and prevents many diseases. However, it is also important therapeutically. People with a number of specific conditions directly benefit from physical activity. These include people with lower back pain, other musculoskeletal disorders and mental health disorders such as depression and

anxiety. People who have established heart disease, for example those who have suffered a heart attack, also benefit from graded exercise programmes.

People who are obese may also benefit from physical activity and this is best combined with other activities such as diet modification and goal setting. Similarly, people at higher risk of coronary heart disease may benefit from a physical exercise programme. These people are not “ill” and it may be unhelpful to offer them conventional treatment as such.

In order to provide services for these specific client groups, the health service, in conjunction with its partners, needs to provide a flexible and integrated range of services. This Strategy includes actions to ensure that all staff working in health care within the Borough recognises these aims. It also seeks to ensure that this information is passed on to the local community to encourage people to use exercise as an effective way of improving their health.

Objective Nine : Planning for older people

A growing body of evidence suggests that diseases and conditions which are the primary cause of loss of function and independence in later life are preventable, and that physical activity plays a key role in this.

For a number of years, Islington has had in place both the older people’s strategy, “Live Long and Prosper”, and a vibrant older people’s network. Following a Council Older People’s Pledge in 2000, the Borough also has in place an extensive programme for the over 60s, including an outreach programme of free dance and exercise classes, free walking sessions, free swimming, free water aerobic classes and reduced prices for gyms and other facilities.

The Strategy, especially through its targets for the Everactive programme, seeks to build on these initiatives so that physical activity can become a lifelong, and life enhancing, experience.

Objective Ten : Sports development and the Olympic opportunity

Although our Strategy is committed to promoting a broad definition of physical activity, organised sport, the development of sporting ability and the encouragement of sporting excellence remain important components. Within the Borough, a range of organisations, including Arsenal, Access 2 Sport and Aquaterra, are engaged in sports development activities and events, such as the London Heathrow Youth Games and the Mini Marathon, help provide a focus for this work. There has also been considerable growth in estate-based sports activity programmes and these provide good examples of the positive influence sport can have on a whole community : in reducing anti-social behaviour, in capacity building among adults and in the training of young people as instructors and coaches. Our Strategy calls for a more co-ordinated approach between the range of different providers – a process that the existence of ProActive is already bringing about. It also points out the need to create area-based projects across the Borough, to enable more local people to take part in sports training and to create clear pathways for sport, from grassroots

beginners through to top class performers. In all of this, the re-establishment of a vibrant Sport Islington is seen as an essential next step.

The greatest opportunity for this work, and for the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles in general, comes from the successful bid to stage the 2012 Olympics in London.

Islington played an active role in supporting the London bid with its own programme of sporting events and local press promotions: and two Islington sites have already been earmarked as training facilities for the Games.

As our Action Plan shows, all of the partners engaged with ProActive are committed to use the opportunity of the Olympics to promote good health; but also to maximise funding opportunities and the contribution of the Games to cultural activity, regeneration, volunteering, civic pride, positive youth engagement and the improvement of the Borough's leisure estate. In addition, the Paralympics provide opportunities for improving accessibility, for highlighting the achievement of local athletes with disabilities and for achieving increased provision and increased participation for all.

The ProActive Partners

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Further Information

Health

Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier DoH White paper November 2004
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/07/92/04120792.pdf>

Choosing activity: a physical activity action plan DoH March 2005
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/57/10/04105710.pdf>

Choosing a better diet: a food and health action plan DoH March 2005
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/57/09/04105709.pdf>

British Heart Foundation
<http://www.bhf.org.uk/publications/search.asp>

Get active!
<http://www.bhf.org.uk/publications/uploaded/g12getactive.pdf>

Social benefits of physical activity
<http://www.50plushealth.co.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1600&ArticleAction=print>

<http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Resource+Library/Publications/Social+Benefits+of+Sport.htm>

Sport

Game Plan 2002
http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/work_areas/sport/sport.pdf

Sport England
<http://www.sportengland.org/>

- Everyday sport
<http://www.everydaysport.com/>
- London plan for sport
http://www.sportengland.org/london_plan_spread-2.pdf

Transport

Walking and cycling: an action plan 2004
http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_sustravel/documents/page/dft_sustravel_029200.hcsp

Schools

Healthy Schools programme
<http://wiredforhealth.gov.uk/home.php?catid=872>

London

The London Plan
<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/>

Islington

Local Area Agreement

- <http://www.islington.gov.uk/Community/MyNeighbourhood/islingtonstrategicpartnership/laa.asp>
- http://www.islington.gov.uk/DownloadableDocuments/CommunityandLiving/pdf/laa/isp_theme_group_indicators.pdf

Quotes for insertion in final document

What they say about Exercise on Referral

“At 78 I had never considered using a gym. However, after a session of physiotherapy I was referred to the Exercise on Referral scheme. The programme has helped me very much with my back problems and fitness in general. I can now walk much quicker without getting tired and generally feel much better.”

Nora O'Donnell

What they say about the “Staying Alive” Project

“I like doing the Staying Alive Project because it's exciting and it makes you healthier and you have fun doing all sorts of sports”

10 yr old girl – Pooles Park Primary School

“ ... I used to be indoors all the time and never do any exercise and since I came out walking I feel better, I lose weight and I love it!”

Marion Pierce, 60+ member – now a trained walk leader

“ ... there's loads of us that smoke and drink and if we didn't do all this healthy stuff, we'd be still sitting on the flippin' street drinking and stuff again ..

Young woman, Market Estate Youth Project

“We like this football thing because it gets us out of the flats and to play football, because we like sports and ... it's fun!”

Young woman, Elthorne evening football sessions

What they say about the Walks Programme

“I know that our members found the walks to be really enjoyable and interesting. Not only were they 'healthy' and they provided an opportunity for social contact, but people were fascinated to find out things about Islington they never knew before – the wildlife, the history, the little squares”

Thank you.

Neeru Aggarwal, Islington Alzheimers Society

“The programme is great and really exciting. It brings a lot of people into the walks.”

Robin King, Stuart Low Trust

“I really enjoyed the walk. It brought back lots of memories”

Len, aged 64, Elfrida Society

“I've lived in Islington for over 70 years and never knew this park existed.”

Autumn Amble walker, talking about Battishill Street Gardens

What they say about Estate sports projects

“If we didn’t have sports, we’d be bored in our flats. It’s fun to do and keeps you healthy.”

Jonathan, 10, Six Acres Estate

“I like sports on the estate because we would be bored in the flats if it wasn’t here and if it was anywhere else we wouldn’t be allowed to go.”

Joshua, 9, Andover Estate

“If we didn’t have sports we would be out in the streets, sports is really important; we can get out of the flats and stop being bored.”

Zach, Andover Estate

“I think sport is a good thing for young people it helps them learn more about sports, and get them to where they are going to. I want to become a basketball player.”

Volkan, 10, Six Acres Estate