PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

What’s the issue?

“Whatever a person’s age, there is good scientific evidence that being physically active can help them lead a healthier and happier life” [132]. Lack of physical activity may increase the risk of obesity and its associated health risks, but there is increasing evidence that lack of physical activity and inactivity is a major risk factor in its own right “increasing the risk of circulatory disease, diabetes, dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, stroke, and some cancers. There is also strong evidence that physical activity promotes mental wellbeing, boosting self-esteem, mood, sleep quality, and energy, as well as easing stress and anxiety” [132]. Prior to 2012, it was recommended that adults undertook moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes on at least five occasions per week. In 2012, the guidelines changed slightly to ‘bouts’ of moderate physical activity lasting 10 (rather than 30) minutes or more but still totalling 2.5 hours weekly (or 1.25 hours of vigorous physical activity weekly). It was recommended that muscle-strengthening physical activity was also undertaken at least twice weekly. Young people should be active for at least one hour daily.

What’s our situation?

From the Active People Survey 2015, 54.9% of Hull adults were physically active (fulfilling national guidelines of 150 minutes or more of moderate physical activity per week) compared to 57.0% for England (compared with 43.8% in 2012 for Hull), and a further 33.8% of Hull adults were physically inactive (fewer than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week) compared to 28.7% for England (compared to 36.1% in 2012 for Hull) [26, 95]. It is possible that the results are biased for Hull as only 536 people were surveyed in Hull. From the local adult Prevalence Survey 2014 [66], far fewer people fulfilled the national physical activity guidelines (41.4%) and this was lower for women (36.5%) compared to men (47.2%). This means that around 122,100 people (aged 16+) across Hull are not fulfilling the national physical activity guidelines.

In the local Young People Health and Lifestyle Survey 2016 [86], 44% of male and 24% of female secondary school pupils in Hull engaged in sufficient physical activity to fulfil national guidelines (at least one hour daily).

For more detailed information, see the JSNA Toolkit: Exercise report.

What are the strategic needs?

It is necessary to work together to create an environment that promotes physical activity and active transport in everyday settings for all ages, and ensure people understand the benefit of positive life choices and know how to access information and seek early support to change. It should be recognised that different approaches and support are required for different people, and any specific problems or changes that are required should not be dealt with in isolation, but by considering the needs of each individual separately. The life course whole systems approach (see the JSNA section on overweight and obesity, www.hullpublichealth.org/jsna2017.html#c28) aims to make physical activity the norm with support across all ages but focusing on life’s transition points and the early years to promote physical activity and embed good habits. Hull’s local strategy “Active Hull” [133] has a number of priority themes: (i) children, young people and families; (ii) active travel; (iii) not just sport – active living; (iv) reaching communities; (v) places and spaces; and (vi) Hull as a sporting destination. “Active Hull” has four cross cutting themes: (a) working together; (b) skills and employability; (c) communications and marketing; and (d) research, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation.

The way services are commissioned and delivered, and the way in which neighbourhoods are designed and change can influence health and wellbeing, as well as changing health inequalities. The impact on health should be considered as part of the process of commissioning and planning.
For example, the provision of green spaces and parks, and increasing and improving cycle routes throughout the city.

References