



# WHY & HOW WE ARE ACTIVE

An evaluation of physical activity in the Pennine Lancashire area



## We wanted to know why and how people are physically active, so we spoke to some people from Pennine Lancashire. This is what we discovered

Mental and physical health can sometimes act as motivators to be physically active. However, people also told us how ill health can get in the way of being active.



Things such as:

- **Addiction**
- **Anxiety**
- **Depression**
- **Illness**
- **Injuries**

Difficult life events and traumatic experiences can also prevent people from being physically active. When life is challenging and people are experiencing a transition, physical activity is often not a priority.

This includes:

- **Leaving school**
- **Starting a job**
- **Dealing with bereavement**
- **Family difficulties**
- **Financial struggles**
- **Domestic abuse**

## So what helps people to be physically active?

Everyone we spoke with had been active in childhood. People who described themselves as physically active adults had often been encouraged to be active as a child. This often changed as people began juggling family and work commitments.

Having supportive networks and relationships is important for people's physical activity levels.

People often became involved with a physical activity through these supportive networks, and encouragement from others was very important.

### Parental influence

Being from an active family

### Activity in childhood

What got me into physical activity has got to be early years and teenage years and my mum saying, go out and play!

### Family and friends



### Physical activity organisers

### Healthcare professionals



### Dogs



This ranged from family members and friends to physical activity organisers, healthcare professionals and even their dogs!

Some people's lives included examples of forced or controlling networks, which were often associated with powerful organisations. These networks were thought to restrict an aspect of life in some way.

For some people, physical activity was about having time for themselves, while for others the social aspect was important.

Feeling safe and that they belonged led to people continuing their involvement in physical activity.

### Juggling work and family life



There's a couple of other people there were in the same boat as me and just learning the machines and I started really enjoying it.



We would like to thank everyone who shared their life stories with us and made this research possible.

We hope this inspires further conversations about the relationships between people's lives and physical activity.

For further information, visit:

