



A Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Aberdeenshire Council 2018-2028

From mountain to sea

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

'WORKING TOGETHER FOR FAIRER BETTER LIVES'

A foreword from Cllr Anne Stirling, Chair of Aberdeenshire Council's Communities Committee

This is an exciting time for Sport & Physical Activity in Aberdeenshire, as we recognise and celebrate the immense diversity across our communities and the significant investment made by Aberdeenshire Council in sport & physical activity infrastructure across our communities.

This strategy for real change will be made possible through the strong partnerships between Aberdeenshire Council, our key partners, third sector organisations and the dedicated and passionate people in our communities.

INTRODUCTION

The benefits of physical activity and sport on your physical and mental health are well documented. A sedentary lifestyle is now recognised as one of the world's biggest killers with sitting being likened to the 'new smoking'.

People who do regular activity have a lower risk of many chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and some cancers. Research also shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing your risk of stress, depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease, helping to save on future health costs.

There is strong evidence that sports participation improves pro-social behaviour and reduces crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly for young men.

In terms of the social impacts from sport, there is evidence that sport is a type of 'social glue' that helps establish a social connectedness and a sense of belonging. Positive outcomes can include reduced social and ethnic tensions, and more collective action and community involvement through sport, particularly volunteering.

Sport also has a positive impact on educational outcomes. Through psychological benefits such as enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, and cognitive benefits such

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as concentration and thinking skills, sport has positive effects on a number of final outcomes, including educational behaviour and attainment.

Sport can achieve a number of impacts simultaneously, making it a highly cost-effective intervention. Many of the links between sport and different social impacts are common, including greater physical competencies, better cognitive skills, better social skills, trust and reciprocity, and identification with social values.

In delivering this strategy and its outcomes, we are driven by Aberdeenshire Council priorities. The key priorities identified as being most relevant to Sport & Physical Activity Services, through the engagement process are:

- **Encourage active lifestyles and promote wellbeing with a focus on obesity and mental health**
- **Provide the best life chances for all our children and young people by raising levels of attainment and achievement**
- **Support the delivery of the Health and Social Care strategic plan**

WHAT IS SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

Sport and Physical activity includes activities such as Active Travel by cycling or walking, going to the gym, playing in the park, gardening, housework and simply just moving around more as well as structured sports and exercise for example football, tennis, swimming etc.

We include all activities and services provided and supported by Aberdeenshire Council's Sport and Physical Activity service both directly and in partnership with our local and national stakeholders.

We include activities and clubs provided by the voluntary and private sector, acknowledging the incredible diversity of provision which exists across the whole of Aberdeenshire.

We also include the wealth of partners, stakeholders and professionals, who produce and provide programmes which will be showcased within our venues and communities as we strive to develop connected and cohesive communities through Sport and Physical Activity.

The strategy also recognises the huge and valued contribution that Aberdeenshire's schools make to the Sport & Physical Activity agenda.



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DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2016 Aberdeenshire's population was 262,190. The population has gradually been increasing since 2001. Households in Aberdeenshire are likely to increase from 108,000 in 2014 to 135,000 by 2039.

On average Aberdeenshire residents are likely to be employed and economically active, live longer and healthier lives and experience less crime than residents of Scotland as a whole. They are also likely to remain relatively healthy for a greater part of their lives however Aberdeenshire is an area of contrasts with areas of deprivation in which 13% of children live in poverty, 39% of households live in fuel poverty and 6% of the total population are categorised as income deprived.

These contrasts, predominantly in the North of the district present challenges around developing sport and physical activity over the next ten years.

Other challenges considered within this strategy are around supporting the increases in population at either end of the age spectrum, the challenges of rural transport and, in some areas of Aberdeenshire, variable digital connectivity can create barriers to economic opportunities, contribute to isolation and have a negative impact on services for an increasingly aging population living in remote areas. In tackling these challenges this strategy recognises that participation in sport & physical activity is a uniquely effective tool for bringing people together and building stronger communities.

The population is aging and by 2035 the number of resident age 65+ will have increased by 65% to 75,000. Whilst life expectancy is increasing, increasing age can be accompanied by increasing health conditions such as stroke or dementia, and the general frailty that naturally comes with old age. Physical activity will help to reduce the impact and support the potential for longer quality of life.

Aberdeenshire's child population is also above the Scottish national average and growing steadily with a predicted rise of 13.8% of 0 -15 year olds between 2012 and 2037.

Families are increasing generally and added to that is the fact that inward migration also accounts for part of this growth with families from Eastern Europe moving to work in the district to work in local industries. 5.5% of the Aberdeenshire population belong to an ethnic minority and 0.1% to the gypsy traveler community.

In Aberdeenshire, the percentage of school leavers moving in to further education, training or employment is 95.5% which is 1.8% above the national average.



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Aberdeenshire also has a strong volunteer base with approximately 32% of adults in Aberdeenshire volunteering each year through formal volunteering. Over and above that are all the 'informal' volunteers who help out at clubs, events, community activities, social groups etc. performing a valuable social service to our communities.

Through the delivery of the strategy we will embrace the population changes, take into account the challenges of the geographical and economical differences and rural communities to ensure a fair and equitable provision of services across the district.

HOW WE DEVELOPED THE STRATEGY

This strategy has been developed through an engagement process called "The Big Listen". We talked to:

- Elected members
- The public
- Local sport and community organisations
- Public partners such as the NHS and the Cairngorms National Park Authority
- National development agencies
- Staff

As well as online engagement and paper surveys, two "Big Listen" events were also held across Culture and Sport facilities in Aberdeenshire. As a result some 5,440 comments were captured.

What we learned from this extensive engagement process has informed the strategic outcomes and actions which follow.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Strategic Outcome 1:

We will help the people of Aberdeenshire to live longer, healthier lives with a focus on reducing obesity and improving mental health and wellbeing

- We will encourage and support the inactive to be more active
- We will work to achieve sustainable, positive health outcomes for people living in Aberdeenshire.
- We will promote social connections and reduce social isolation by bringing people together to participate in sport & physical activities in their community.
- We will improve opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport

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- We will actively support the provision of a wide diversity of activities and sports for all ages and abilities

Strategic Outcome 2:

We will promote diversity and tackle inequalities

- We will reduce barriers to participation in Physical Activity & Sport
- We will actively engage with disadvantaged groups to increase their access to, and participation in, Sport & Physical Activity
- We will focus on looked after young people, low income families, carers and people with a disability, long term physical or mental health condition, older adults and overweight or obese children

Strategic Outcome 3:

We will use Sport & Physical Activity to build stronger communities

- We will support local community groups to grow and sustain their sport & physical activity provision
- We will support local economic regeneration, focusing on the North coast communities of Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Banff and Macduff.
- We will work with communities to support the development of sport & physical activity infrastructure, maximising access to additional resources.
- We will make use of our natural landscape and environment to enable people to be active

Strategic Outcome 4:

We will support people to reach their potential by providing opportunities for wider achievement

- We will help children and young people to obtain a broad range of skills and capacities to achieve and succeed.
- We will support volunteering, modern apprenticeships, accredited learning and other initiatives to support people into work.



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HOW WILL WE DELIVER THE STRATEGY?

- Through strong and meaningful Sport & Physical Activity partnerships which maximise opportunities and resources.
- Through focusing our resources to deliver the services our communities will need in the future; rationalising our estate and investing in and developing venues and facilities.
- Through support to a strong and dynamic third and voluntary sector.
- Through ongoing engagement across our communities in the planning and delivery of services.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'VE SUCCEEDED?

- There will be an increase in people participating in, and benefiting from, Sport & Physical Activity
- The Council and its partners will develop detailed action plans with measurable outcomes which will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- A detailed review of the strategy will be undertaken every five years.



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IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE, OR BECOME INVOLVED IN DELIVERING ON ABERDEENSHIRE'S SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH...

This Sport and Physical Activity Strategy sees us embarking on a ten year journey. If you or your organisation can contribute to the success of the strategy, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch at:

cultureandsport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk