

## ACTIVE AGEING

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"At Age UK we encourage anything that keeps older people healthy and socially engaged and recognise that physical activity can play a key part in making this possible. We encourage leisure facilities and physical activity clubs to be inclusive of older people and to offer adapted sports and equipment where possible. Many of our local Age UKs are working with older people and organisations across the country to help older people to be as healthy and active as they can."

Fig 12.

## YOUNG AT HEART

*Underused space and resources in the daytime should be utilised to provide regular free or subsidised activity sessions targeted at older people.*





## INTRODUCTION

Remaining active throughout life is a vital part of ageing well. All types of physical activity – from walking and gardening, to dedicated exercise classes – can improve mobility, protect against ill-health, enhance mental wellbeing and lower the risk of cognitive decline, as well as keep individuals more independent for longer.

The *Five Year Forward View*, a roadmap outlining how the NHS can remain sustainable while still providing for an ageing population, highlighted the need to encourage healthy lifestyles in people of all ages, to prevent the development of lifestyle related non-communicable diseases. Ensuring older people have opportunities and the motivation to be active is therefore paramount to securing the future of the NHS.

Local authorities, health practitioners and fitness operators all have a role to play in supporting people to be active well into old age: from broad measures ensuring the local community is easily accessible by foot, to providing specifically targeted activity opportunities for older people in collaboration with the active leisure sector.

## ALL CARE HOMES IN THE UK SHOULD INTRODUCE AN EVIDENCE-BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTION.



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**1 Regular activity offers many physical and mental health benefits and contributes toward a long, healthy and independent life. Encouraging and enabling older people to be active in their community should therefore be a priority for government, local authorities and the activity sector.**

>> An activity analysis should be carried out within the physical activity sections of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Health and Wellbeing Strategies. The analysis should focus on the local area's accessibility and suitability for older people, with specific recommendations and actions around building local partnerships to cater for the individual needs of older residents.

>> Local authorities, leisure operators and local community groups should work together to utilise underused space and resources in the daytime to provide regular free or subsidised activity sessions targeted at older people, with evidence-based programmes underpinned by staff and facilitators with appropriate skills and training.

>> Sport England, sports funding bodies and the wider active leisure sector, in partnership with community groups, should establish at a national level the ability to foster local partnerships. Campaigns such as *Change4Life* and *This Girl Can* have provided national direction that inspires local action. Similar efforts would be welcomed to promote activity in later years, underpinned by programmes to develop and train volunteers to lead and inspire physical activity programmes and initiatives among older adults at a local level.

>> To reduce the usage of social care services, all care homes in the UK should introduce an evidenced-based physical activity behavioural intervention, in partnership with the physical activity sector and local health groups. Care homes should be supported with a specific 'what works' programme to raise the understanding of the equipment and programmes that have the strongest impact in relation to activity levels and increased independence.