

Creating an Active Practice

Barrowford Surgery

Behaviour change | New ways of working | Using spaces differently

The Pendle TaAF team presented the programme to the Pendle East Primary Care Network Leads in May 2023. This included information about the background to the programme, potential benefits, possible actions for staff, and a timetable for development to include patients too. We asked the PCN and Practice Leads to give permission to our Active Practice Champions to consult with staff and develop ideas and this was duly given.

Barrowford Surgery is a small practice based in Barrowford, Lancashire. The practice has 11 staff and a patient list size of approximately 3500 people.

The day after the Practice Leads meeting, the Nurse Practitioner from Barrowford Surgery contacted us to say that they had a good idea – the practice had a clinical room that they were thinking of turning into a gym. This is not to say the clinical room was no longer needed, but the GP recognised the value of this as a benefit to staff.

Staff were involved in developing the idea. The Senior GP, Dr Iain Ashworth began the process by donating gym equipment and then other members of staff decided to do the same. The room was re-decorated, cupboards moved, and is now equipped with an exercise bike, a rowing machine, a cross trainer, weights, dead weights, hula hoop, gym mats, an exercise ball, stepper, abs trainer, dumbbells and exercise bands. The room was made available for staff to use from 1 June 2023.



“ As health champion I have noticed a massive increase in my colleagues mental health and well being since the gym came in to play. And other initiatives that we have come up with, the book club, buddy up walks, the 20 minutes all staff are able to have during their working day to use the gym/read a book go on a walk etc. We've had nothing but good reports from them stating how this has helped them. This all came about by not just input from myself but all our team here at Barrowford. It all couldn't of happened and had the success that it has without them and not forgetting the amazing support from management. Staff have all donated equipment to make the gym happen. It's all about team work here at Barrowford Surgery and I am very proud to be part of such an amazing team! ”

Reception Manager
at Barrowford Surgery



The room is being used regularly by staff, who are 'seeing a massive change in their health' in doing so.

When visiting the practice there is a palpable energy among staff members who are very proud of what they have achieved in a short time and are keen to continue developing new ideas wherever possible.

The practice is looking to allow staff to use the gym before and after work, but also allocating some time for health and well-being for staff during the working day.

The actions so far have contributed to an improvement in motivation and teamwork across the practice.

The practice has gone on to develop a 'Winners Board' which is displayed in their staff room and at the end of each month whoever has used the gym most wins. Staff document the day, time and for how long they have used the gym.

The practice has also started a practice book club and a practice quiz which is held each Friday. The team gets together over lunchtimes and are actively discussing ways to increase activity for staff as well as wider health and well-being to ensure everyone in the practice has an opportunity to be involved in some way.

Supporting the Active Practice

The Creating an Active Practice team have visited the practice on several occasions to share progress and to support with more formal documentation as required e.g. reviewing risk assessments, disclaimers, staff induction information, workout sheets and posters etc. The surgery are also looking to work with Pendle Leisure Trust further to potentially deliver some fitness sessions and support with training.

We are continuing to look at ways in which we can encourage the practice to keep moving forward, such as our Active Practice Springboard, and comms support to share the work they are doing and the impact it is having.

Championing Change

Barrowford is a small but very busy practice with limited space. They could have chosen to use the space as a consultation room again, but they saw the value in using the space differently and investing in their staff well-being. The practice is a great champion of the Active Practice programme sharing their progress and inspiring others to follow their lead.

It is not easy to try and motivate people to change behaviours and to make changes to the culture. Activating local champions and building relationships is essential to progressing change.

