

**Together  
an Active  
Future**



# Finding the right support to make a change.

Up & Active Case Study



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## Case study 05 Sharon

Sharon is a single mum, with two lovely daughters. Caring for her girls is a big part of Sharon's life, as they both need a lot of support. One of them is house bound with chronic illnesses and the other has ADHD and Asperger's.

As a child, Sharon wasn't very active, and she didn't enjoy sports in school. Later in her life, she had periods when she visited the local sports centre, but her responsibilities as a carer meant that she had to spend most of her time at home.

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"Then as I got older life revolved around children. Did have a spell about 10 or 11 years ago when the girls were growing up and I did join the local sports centre. But then circumstances changed, and my daughter became quite ill, and I had to take her out of school, and she was bed ridden for about two years, so I did have a breakdown, so I left work and actually stayed at home with her."

Sharon used to be a teacher, but it was hard to keep a good work-life balance and care for her daughters. Her blood pressure and cholesterol were high, and she was putting on unwanted weight. Her mental health was strained too.

At this point, Sharon decided to make changes to her lifestyle and find a more flexible job. She found new roles supporting children with special needs and adults with learning difficulties. She also joined the 'Up and Active' programme at her local sports centre, which she had read about on a Facebook post.

She began attending the 'Up and Active' sessions with a friend. Having a friend's encouragement and company helped her take the first step. The friendliness of staff members also made a huge difference and motivated her to keep attending the sessions. In particular, Sharon felt that the programme worker she interacted with was a great role model, and kept her inspired to engage in physical activity.

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"It was her general demeanour, really, it wasn't that she was too pushy, she just knew when to push at the right time. She was normal, wasn't like a gym bunny, she was an everyday mum, she had her own struggles at home, single parent. It sort of resonated with me cos she had dyslexia and so has one of my children and she openly shared that."

Joining that initial 12-week programme has had a big impact on Sharon on and her lifestyle. She went on to pay for another 12 weeks programme and is now an active gym member. She noticed improvements to her mental health and started to enjoy the buzz of attending the sessions regularly. Her whole lifestyle changed for the better.

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"I now feel like I need to do something on a daily basis, to actually be active. I try and go at least 3 times a week now, whether it's a workout in the gym, attending a class or an aqua jog session. My whole life has changed really!"

**Up and Active** is a network that promotes physical activity around Pennine Lancashire. It connects people with initiatives that get them active and are happening in their local area, including physical challenges, volunteering opportunities, and training courses.

TaAF has supported Up and Active with funding for staff development, and has helped them improve leadership, coordination, and data management capabilities.