



Tackling Physical Inactivity

Enablers for implementing a Whole Systems Approach

Together
an Active
Future
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Within the United Kingdom, physical inactivity remains a substantial public health concern. Despite various national and regional interventions, physical inactivity has increased, suggesting that efforts of the last decade may not have been wholly effective. This may be because interventions have failed to address the complexity of socio-cultural and environmental factors. Recognising this gap, multi-component whole systems approaches to tackling physical inactivity have emerged.

The Whole Systems Approach initiative:

Together an Active Future (TaAF) is an initiative within East Lancashire that attempts to reduce levels of physical inactivity by involving all systems and promoting a greater focus on place-based approaches. TaAF is a Place Partner funded by Sport England.

Aim of this study: explore the key enablers for the successful implementation of whole systems approaches to reducing levels of physical inactivity.

What we did

Approach: We used a qualitative research approach, staying close to the data (Interpretative Description).

Data Collection: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 32 stakeholders from diverse systems, including employees from local authority, leisure trusts, community and faith organisations, the National Health Service, local government and schools.

Participants: Recruited if they had been involved in efforts to reduce inactivity across East Lancashire and had worked collaboratively with the TaAF initiative.

Data Analysis: We generated themes from the data

What we found

Shared Goals

A need for a collective vision among stakeholders

Active Networks

Enabling resource sharing and knowledge exchange

Enablers

Supportive Leadership

Offering capacity to develop new partnerships

Relationship Building

Highlighting the importance of establishing trust and collaboration

Passionate Individuals

Emphasising the role of enthusiastic individuals

Recommendations

- Future Whole Systems Approach initiatives should prioritise relationship building, leadership that focus on collaborative ways of working, and encourages passionate individuals to develop new partnerships.
- Establishing a shared vision and developing active networks helps accelerate the progress of the work through resource sharing and knowledge exchange.

