There is a significant body of evidence that physical activity and sport contributes to positive individual and societal outcomes. It can improve our physical and mental wellbeing, it helps us develop as individuals and it can bring people and communities together. Despite this, over 38% of people living in Suffolk are either inactive or insufficiently active to benefit their health and wellbeing.

Our research

In order to develop this strategy, insight in relation to Suffolk’s Workforce has been gathered and interpreted from a number of sources including:

• Stakeholder Surveys
• On-going Stakeholder consultation
• Workforce Surveys
• Focus Groups
• Economic Assessment of the Sector
• Physical Activity Needs Assessment
Introduction

In the context of broader public health reforms, the Government has recognised the significant contribution of physical activity and exercise to the health and well-being of individuals and communities across the country, and the role it can play in reducing the financial cost of inactivity.

Sport England has responded to the challenges laid down in the Government’s Strategy – Sporting Future and has set out a bold vision in its own Strategy – Towards an Active Nation. This articulates a significant change in direction and way of working.

In seeking to deliver the strategy and its priorities, the development of a workforce that can meet the needs and expectations of a broad range of current and potential participants will be essential.

Since 2016, Sport England has launched three complementary strategies focusing on how the sector values and develops all of the people who support sport and physical activity:

- Coaching in an Active Nation
- Volunteering in an Active Nation
- Working in an Active Nation

Suffolk’s unique geography and demography will continue to provide significant challenges at a local level. In response to these, the Health and Well-being Board for Suffolk has recognised the importance of physical activity and in its first Ten Year Strategy: 2012-2022, highlighted increasing physical activity levels as a key priority. Physical activity has the potential to contribute to all four of the Health and Well-being Board’s priority areas and through Suffolk’s collective Most Active County ambition has established a Strategic Group to drive this agenda forward.

The Most Active County collaboration is the primary network of organisations in Suffolk committed to addressing inactivity. Recognising that the inactivity agenda is beyond the scope of any single agency, it aims to bring added value to the good work being done by many organisations across Suffolk to address the inactivity challenge.

A wide-range of local organisations support the Most Active County ambition and deliver interventions across three priority themes:

- Physical and Mental Well-being;
- Behaviour Change, Communications and Information;
- Environment, Economic Development and Infrastructure.

“In order to maximise the impact that reducing physical inactivity can have on Suffolk’s wider challenges, it will be essential to develop a workforce that is fit for the future – a workforce capable of meeting the needs of the community and supporting our collective Most Active County ambitions.”

Understanding Suffolk’s Workforce Needs

There is a significant body of evidence that physical activity and sport contribute to positive individual and societal outcomes.

It can improve our physical and mental well-being, helps us develop as individuals and it can bring people and communities together. Despite this, over 38% of people living in Suffolk are either inactive or insufficiently active to benefit their health and well-being.

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Taken from Working in an Active Nation, Sport England, September 2018
The current workforce picture

**Traditional Workforce: Professional Workforce**
- The Sports and Physical Activity Sector has grown at a faster rate between 2011 and 2016 than both England and the East Region. It is the fastest growing employment sector in Suffolk during this period.
- Sector Activity is distributed across the county but is clustered around the main towns.
- 10,000 people are employed in the sector in 700 businesses, generating £270m Gross Value Added (GVA) per annum.
- Only 2% of professional workforce respondents are CIMSPA members.
- Only 50% of leisure centre employees have full-time contracts.
- Employers report a skills and competencies gap at entry level into the sector, particularly from Further Education Colleges. Courses in leisure facility operation tend to focus on technical skills rather than people / management skills.

**Traditional Workforce: Clubs / Coaches / Volunteers**
- Only 50% of clubs are aware of ClubMatters.
- Only 48% of clubs cater for people with disabilities.
- 57% of coaches have been coaching for over 10 years.
- Only 65% of coaches feel they have enough expertise to positively engage inactive people.
- 58% of coaches are Level 2.
- 51% of all coaches would like to gain more qualifications.
- Coaches working with under-represented groups:
  - 45% work with BAME groups.
  - 31% work with disabled people.
  - 18% work with people with long-term conditions.

**NEW Workforce: Health, Education and the Workplace**
- Only a small proportion of the clubs in Suffolk are clubmark accredited.
- Only 2% of professional workforce respondents are CIMSPA members.
- Only 48% of clubs cater for people with disabilities.
- 57% of coaches have been coaching for over 10 years.
- Only 65% of coaches feel they have enough expertise to positively engage inactive people.
- 51% of all coaches would like to gain more qualifications.

**HEALTHCARE WORKERS**
- 36% didn’t mention physical activity at all in a week of patient consultations.
- 49% lacked knowledge of the recommended levels of physical activity.
- 67% lacked the confidence to advise or prescribe physical activity to their patients.
- 85% had received no training in physical activity.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**
- 88% thought that PE was important.
- 53% would welcome more professional development.
- 28% did not feel adequately qualified to deliver PE.

**TOP 3 PRIORITIES FOR CLUBS:**
1. Increasing membership
2. Clubmark
3. Recruiting female and younger players

**Suffolk has the highest level of days lost from work anywhere in the East of England**

**Volunteers in clubs are predominantly male.**

**Most Volunteering is done on a weekly basis for 1 or 2 hours per week.**

**The sector lacks the confidence, knowledge and awareness of the benefits of physical activity for people with certain long-term health conditions.**
Developing a Workforce Fit for the Future

In developing Suffolk’s Workforce Strategy, a wide range of partners and stakeholders were consulted to obtain the true picture of Suffolk’s collective future workforce needs.

This approach has taken us in a slightly new direction, with new opportunities that might not have been identified without their input.

 Behaviour change and the workforce
In recent years there has been a positive shift that has brought greater emphasis on meeting the needs of our ‘customers’. Historically that has meant meeting the needs of active people, but if we are to achieve Suffolk’s shared aspiration of becoming the Most Active County, it is critical that the needs of less active people are also supported and prioritised.

The traditional workforce generally limits its impact to those that have already gone through the behaviour change process to the point that they are about to become active or are seeking to maintain an active life; and those that choose to take part in led or facilitated activities.

“There is a need to broaden the role of the workforce so that more people are supported, both into activity and in keeping them active.”

### Stages of behaviour change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of behaviour change</th>
<th>How the workforce can support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not on my radar</td>
<td><strong>Pre-contemplation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about it</td>
<td><strong>Contemplation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning to do something soon</td>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting started</td>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick with it</td>
<td><strong>Maintenance</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Inquiring
- Nudging
- Educating
- Communicating the benefits
- Nudging
- Educating
- Communicating the benefits
- Motivating
- Signposting
- Informing
- Reassuring
- Regularly communicating to avoid drop off
- Reassuring
- Building confidence
- Reflecting, being receptive to feedback
- Adapting delivery
- Pre-empting drop off
- Providing triggers for re-engagement

**Engaging Inactive People**

If we are to raise activity levels, the greatest challenge for people living in Suffolk and the greatest opportunities for the workforce, lie in the journey to activity. The Active Lives Survey 2017/18 shows that over 38% of people living in Suffolk are not active enough to benefit their health and well-being with women, adults from lower socio-economic groups, disabled people, older people and adults from some ethnic groups being traditionally under-represented.

Building the motivation, knowledge and confidence to become more active and go through the journey to activity is a key function of the workforce. For inactive people living in Suffolk, this new function for the workforce considers who is best placed and equipped to perform that function – acknowledging that this may not be our existing workforce, but that there are people in other sectors with the potential to support more people in Suffolk to lead active lives.

This wider workforce will make a significant contribution to the collaborative aspiration of making Suffolk England’s Most Active County and to addressing the challenges facing Suffolk over the next few years.

A more highly-skilled, motivated and diverse workforce meeting the physical activity needs of Suffolk will impact on many sectors such as economy and skills, educational attainment and aspiration and health.

Ensuring that the workforce is representative of the community it serves is a critical element of the Strategy. Having “people like me” in the workforce can be a critical link in the chain as they have an in-depth understanding of the physical, social and psychological barriers to entry coupled with a genuine passion and commitment to serve others by enabling them to enjoy the benefits that they have experienced for themselves.

### Strategic Priorities

1. **A broader workforce enabling people in Suffolk to lead active lives**

2. **A workforce that better meets the physical activity needs of everyone in Suffolk**

Over 38% of people living in Suffolk are not active enough to benefit their health and well-being.
Developing a Workforce Fit for the Future - the plan of action

Developing a Workforce Fit for the Future will deliver a fundamental shift in who makes up the physical activity and sport workforce, and how that workforce supports people living in Suffolk communities to live active lives.

**ACTIONS**

Training & Professional development • Communication • Insight • Funding • Leadership

**OUTCOMES**

A more skilled and confident workforce, better equipped to support inactive customers

A more diverse workforce reflective of Suffolk’s community

A thriving infrastructure of clubs, coaches and volunteers

A broader workforce enabling people in Suffolk to lead active lives

A workforce that better meets the physical activity needs of everyone in Suffolk

A workforce enabling the people of Suffolk to lead active lives

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

To develop a highly-skilled, motivated and diverse workforce equipped to meet the physical activity needs of Suffolk communities
A Broader and Better Workforce

To develop a workforce that can encourage people living in Suffolk to live more active lives, there is a real need to broaden who we define as the physical activity and sport workforce, and what it is we need to do.

Broadening the workforce means that more organisations, groups and networks that influence the people of Suffolk (particularly those that are less active and harder to reach) will support and promote active lives. More than simply growing the number of coaches and volunteers in Suffolk, broadening the workforce also means recognising functions other than the delivery or facilitation of activity, such as engagement, motivation and building confidence.

To develop a workforce better adapted to the needs of Suffolk requires an improved understanding of the journey from inactivity to activity. This includes the workforce being better adapted to support the people of Suffolk to remain active.

Better meeting the needs of Suffolk will require disciplined action to ensure the workforce is equipped with the right skills and support. This will require a collaborative approach that increases and reprioritises the support and investment that goes into the physical activity and sport workforce.

“Only 65% of coaches feel they have enough expertise to positively engage inactive people.”
The Vision

Considering the two strategic priorities, we have developed a vision for the future physical activity workforce in Suffolk:

To develop a highly-skilled, motivated and diverse workforce equipped to meet the physical activity needs of Suffolk communities.

This vision is underpinned by a number of key thematic aims and detailed objectives set out below:

- **AIMS**
  - To raise skill levels and competencies across the professional health, sport and physical activity workforce
  - To support and develop Suffolk’s infrastructure of clubs, coaches and volunteers
  - To develop a diverse workforce equipped to support individuals and communities to be more active

- **OBJECTIVES**
  - To work with FE colleges and employers to reduce the sector’s skills and competencies gap
  - To increase skill levels and confidence amongst the primary school workforce
  - To work with expert partners to develop specialist training courses and support
  - To increase the number of older working adults and retirees into the sector
  - To increase confidence and awareness of physical activity as a health intervention
  - To develop volunteers and coaches through mentoring and leadership programmes
  - To advocate the benefits of healthy workplaces

Implementing the Plan – A Collaborative Approach

The development of the Suffolk Workforce Strategy has been a collaborative partnership, primarily through the Most Active County Strategic Group. By ensuring the collective input and ownership of the strategy for all stakeholders, we have jointly created a workforce that enables everyone in Suffolk to lead active lives.

Active Suffolk will continue to be the strategic lead organisation for the physical activity and sport workforce in Suffolk, providing ongoing communication, leadership, coordination and resources. The Strategy will act as the catalyst for Workforce Development across the county bringing a more cohesive approach for the many organisations involved in the sector.

Key Partners Critical to the Successful Delivery of the Strategy

- CIMSPA – Employee Partner for Professional Workforce
- Suffolk FE Colleges (West Suffolk, Suffolk One, Suffolk New & Lowestoft Colleges)
- Leisure Operators (Abbeycroft, Places Leisure, Everyone Active, Sentinel Leisure, Ipswich BC)
- Local Authorities – Strategic partners
- Most Active County Strategic Group – To provide collaborative leadership and ownership of the strategy
- Activity Alliance – Inclusion partner
- Clubs, Coaches & Volunteers – Key stakeholders
- Community Action Suffolk – Volunteering
- Suffolk Mind – Mental health & well-being partner
- Suffolk Public Health – Health care sector partner
- Suffolk Chamber of Commerce – Workplace champion partner
- Suffolk Primary Schools – Education partners
- Fit Villages – Rural partner
- OneLife Suffolk – Long Term Health Conditions / Healthy Lifestyles Partner
- Active Suffolk – Strategic Lead
Measuring Success

It is important to be able to understand and measure the impact of the Suffolk Workforce Strategy.

A measurement framework will be developed for the delivery plan emerging from the strategy, which will employ a number of key performance indicators across a range of proxy measures to monitor progress of the overall strategy.

The delivery plan itself will address the key issues arising from the collaborative development of the strategy, with learning and best practice from local interventions being shared across the partnership.

Key success measures will include:

• The number of organisations and individuals engaging with CPD opportunities.
• Changes in attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of levels of skill and competency to engage with inactive people.
• The levels of partner and workforce satisfaction in relation to their opportunity and quality of support for their development.

The adapted logic model for workforce development in Suffolk provides a clear line of sight to both national outcomes from the Government and Sport England as well as a direct link to Suffolk’s local outcomes.

Throughout the lifetime of the workforce strategy it will be essential to capture and share new learning to inform future strategic direction for workforce development. This will be done via annual evaluation reports and stakeholder learning workshop events.

“67% of Volunteers are recruited by word of mouth.”
The development and ethos of this strategic workforce plan has been significantly influenced by:

- Key stakeholders and partners involved in the physical activity and sport, leisure, health, education and voluntary sectors
- Consultation with staff, Most Active County and board members
- Sport England Strategy – Towards an Active Nation
- Sport England – Coaching in an Active Nation
- Sport England – Volunteering in an Active Nation
- Sport England – Working in an Active Nation
- DCMS Strategy – Sporting Future
- Suffolk Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Suffolk Economic Assessment Sector Report
- Joint Strategic Needs Analysis
- Active Suffolk Strategy