



**REPORT TO:** Environmental Services Portfolio  
Holder's Meeting

23 July 2015

**LEAD OFFICER:** Director, Health and Environmental Services

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## **ACTIVE AND HEALTHY FOR LIFE (EXERCISE REFERRAL) SCHEME**

### **Purpose**

1. To update on the operation of the South Cambridgeshire Active and Healthy for Life scheme over the past six-months, as per the decision of the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder's meeting of 12 December 2014.

### **Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder:
  - (a) Notes the progress and achievements made since December 2014.
  - (b) Notes and comment on the action plan at Appendix 1.
  - (c) Agrees to a further update of the scheme in approximately six months time.

### **Background**

3. The Council has supported an exercise referral scheme since 1995, run along the guidelines laid down in the NHS National Quality Assurance Framework on Exercise Referral.
4. The scheme is designed to initiate long-term lifestyle changes by encouraging an increase in patients' physical activity levels. Depending on the reason for referral to the programme, the scheme aims to achieve the following outcomes:
  - (a) Reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, coronary artery disease, and osteoporosis.
  - (b) Increase joint flexibility, muscle strength, and bone density.
  - (c) Help to control Type 2 diabetes through effective weight loss, and certain disabilities.
  - (d) Improve self-esteem.
  - (e) Lower blood pressure, total cholesterol levels, and help control stress.
  - (f) Increase independence.
  - (g) Promote sustained active lifestyles.
  - (h) Reduce the cost of inactivity across South Cambridgeshire.
  - (i) Be value for money for the Council.
5. The scheme currently operates in ten centres including eight village colleges, Cambourne Sports Centre and Prime Time Fitness, Girton. Registered health professionals (GPs, Practice Nurses etc) make the referrals and the classes are delivered by instructors at a minimum Level 3 on the Register of Exercise Professionals (REPS).

6. The scheme provides referred patients a 12-week supervised course of exercise with initial and final assessments. During the final assessment participants are encouraged to join suitable regular activities provided by the village college sports centre.
7. Following the Portfolio Holder's meeting on 12 December 2014 the management of the scheme was brought in house and a number of changes have been made.

### **Considerations**

8. **Review of the Scheme**  
During September to December 2014 we visited all nine centres delivering the scheme to re-establish a relationship and understand their working practices. This highlighted the lack of communication, direction and support the centres had received over the previous twelve months.
9. From these initial meetings the action plan at Appendix 1 was written to address issues we had uncovered.
10. **Achievements over the past six months**
  - (a) Established a new data collection process in order to accurately monitor the scheme
  - (b) Updated the Referral information leaflet and distributed these to all sports centres.
  - (c) Arranged for sports centre staff to deliver referral leaflets to their local Health Professionals and GPs in order to develop a relationship with them.
  - (d) Held meetings with all sports centres and instructors in October 2014, January 2015, March 2015 and June 2015. These are now regular quarterly meetings.
  - (e) A programme of visits to referring agencies has commenced. Five GP surgeries in the North of the district have been visited so far.
  - (f) Training on a new electronic database was held in March 2015.
  - (g) A revised Service Level Agreement (SLA) and ICT user agreement were produced and issued to all centres.
  - (h) From 1 April 2015 nine of the ten centres received new hardware on which to digitally record client referral information. There have been early teething problems but the majority of centres are using the system successfully.
  - (i) Launched with a successful open day on 16 March 2015 a new centre at Prime Time Fitness in Girton; the tenth centre in the district to offer the scheme.
  - (j) Material has been developed to promote the scheme including a new patient leaflet, improved webpage on the council site, and centre specific pop up banners and leaflets. Sports centres are being encouraged to take an active role in promoting the scheme.
  - (k) In response to feedback from health professionals, changes have been made to the referral form to make it easier to complete. Information for health professionals about the scheme is being revised to make the benefits to patients and to GP practices clearer
11. **Data Analysis**  
During 2014/15 218 clients accessed the scheme. This is a reduction of 17% on the figures presented for 2013-14. Please see Appendix 2 for more analysis.

Figures were lower in every centre except Linton, where a fitness instructor worked especially hard to promote the scheme locally, and Cambourne, where the previous year's figures were unusually low because staffing issues had prevented the scheme operating in the second half of the year.

The decline is consistent with an annual downwards trend in scheme numbers averaging around 10% a year since 2008/9, with the exception of 2013-14 where figures increased slightly.

Possible reasons for this decline could be attributed to:

- (a) The reduction in referrals from Health Professionals
- (b) An increase in options for supporting increased physical activity
- (c) The CHIP (Community Health Improvement Programme) due to early referrals by GPs for weight management
- (d) The healthy walks programmes
- (e) Figures from 2013-14 were artificially high, perhaps because some patients attending repeat sessions, i.e. not new referrals, were included or that 2014-15 included
- (f) The period of change from managing the scheme via a contractor to in-house
- (g) The fact we charge clients as opposed to other schemes in the County which are now free

12. **Referrals**

Referrals to the scheme came from 22 health agencies in the year 2014-15. Referring agencies include GP practices, hospital departments, health professionals, physiotherapies etc. 86% of referrals came from 14 GP practices in South Cambridgeshire, with three practices (Monkfield in Cambourne, Linton and Melbourn) accounting for 57% of referrals.

13. **Reasons for referrals**

Data has been collected showing reasons for referrals for 144 of the 218 appointments. These show the main reasons for referral as high blood pressure, joint/bone problems, obesity, risk of coronary heart disease and muscular skeletal problems.

**Implications**

14. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

***Financial***

15. The cost of running the scheme is currently being operated within budget and the end of year forecast is also within budget.

***Legal***

16. The scheme is run in compliance with the National Quality Assurance Framework (2001) and current best practice.

***Staffing***

17. Carrying out the coordination of the scheme in-house has meant re-prioritising the workload of existing staff. This is currently sufficient to enable the scheme to be managed in in compliance with the National Quality Assurance Framework (2001).

### ***Risk Management***

18. Each centre is required to sign a Service Level Agreement with the Council. The agreement clearly sets out the responsibilities of each partner. A further agreement is also in place regarding the IT hardware (tablets).

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

#### **Aim 1 - Wellbeing**

19. The Active and Healthy for Life scheme contributes to the Council's objective of working with GPs and partners to link health services and improve the health of our communities. The scheme is effective for medium and low risk populations for specific health conditions plus develops social networks of like-minded people.

### **Background Papers**

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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