

Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 19th September 2023

Agenda item: TBC

Wards: All

Subject: Actively Merton and Borough of Sport

Lead officer: John Morgan, Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Integrated Care and Public Health and Dan Jones, Executive Director of Environment, Civic Pride and Climate.

Lead member: Councillor Peter McCabe, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Sport and Heritage.

Contact officer: Barry Causer, Public Health Lead for Adults, Health Improvement and Health Protection, David Gentles, Head of Sport and Leisure and Gemma Dawson, Deputy Director Merton Health and Care Together (SWL ICS).

Recommendations:

- A. The HWB to note the progress and synergies between Actively Merton and LBM's corporate priority for Merton to become London's Borough of Sport.
 - B. HWB members to agree to support the joint work programmes and promote component parts, including Merton's Big Sports Day.
 - C. HWB member organisations to commit to promote and encourage their workforce to be physically and socially active, as part of their existing workplace health and wellbeing offer.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This paper provides an update on the progress and next steps of the Actively Merton programme and the Borough of Sport, one of Merton Council's corporate priorities alongside civic pride and sustainability.
- 1.2. The paper asks for the support from the Health and Wellbeing Board to promote the activities and programmes including the Borough of Sport activity finder and Merton's Big Sports Day, taking place on Sunday 24th September 2023, and for members to encourage their workforce (staff and volunteers) to be more physically and socially active, as part of their workplace health and wellbeing offer.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Physical inactivity is a risk factor for many non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease (CVD) and dementia and being physically active helps in the management of long-term conditions such as diabetes. All forms of physical activity are good for us; sport, active travel, outdoor activity such as gardening or taking part in a group-based exercise session in a community setting. Being physically active also brings people together, is fun, and has additional benefits to the mental wellbeing of participants and has wider social benefits e.g. the reduction of loneliness.

- 2.2. At first glance physical activity levels in Merton perform well against London figures, however when looking a little closer the number of Merton residents who are inactive or who feel lonely are stark.

	Merton	London	Crude numbers	Notes
Physically active adults (150 mins of moderate physical activity per week 2020/21). Physical Activity - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)	67.3%	64.9%	Merton: 104,395	Older people, ethnic minority groups, those with a disability, those living in areas of deprivation and women and girls are less active. Merton population 19+ years: 155,119
Physically Inactive adults (less than 30 mins activity per week, 2020/21) Physical Activity - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)	20.2%	24.3%	Merton: 31,334	Biggest health gain would be achieved by moving inactive people to be more active. Merton population 19+ years: 155,119
Physically active children and young people (at least 60 mins moderate-vigorous activity per day across the week, 2018/19) Physical Activity - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)	49.6%	46.1%	Merton: 16,194	Merton population 5-16 years: 32,648
Loneliness (adults who feel lonely often or always, Oct 2020-Feb 2021) Loneliness rates and well-being indicators by local authority - Office for National Statistics	11.2%	7.3%	Merton: 18,135	Merton population 16+ years: 162,353

Table One – Activity, inactivity and loneliness levels in Merton.

- 2.3. Approved by the Merton Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2022, Actively Merton supports residents to be more physically active and socially active, in the way that they want it (giving agency/control to residents). The focus on physical and social activity is due to their multiple physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits, ability to contribute to social cohesion and reducing health inequalities and the positive frame of bringing people together to participate in positive and fun activities; rather than asking people not to do something e.g. smoking.
- 2.4. Actively Merton, is a Merton Health and Care Together Committee supported initiative aligned to the Local Health and Care Plan (under the LiveWell workstream) strengthening the focus on prevention. It dovetails strongly with LBM's plans to become London's Borough of Sport and Officers work closely on both programmes, ensuring that they complement each other. This close partnership working will be continued with the implementation of the Borough of Sport governance structures, with Public Health and ICB Officers being members of the Borough of Sport Advisory Group (stakeholders) and the LBMs internal Operational Group ensuring that this close working continues and additional opportunities are identified.

3 ACTIVELY MERTON

Introduction

- 3.1. Since HWB approval of the approach to Actively Merton in November 2022, there has been significant progress, including successfully identifying the funding for and implementing Beat the Street in Merton. This universal programme was a good catalyst for further action, with significant engagement across Merton and positive outcomes, particularly when looking through an equity lens e.g. 38% of participants self-reporting that they are physically inactive.
- 3.2. The success of Beat the Street, as part of Actively Merton, also showcased the added value that effective partnerships in Merton, including the Health and Wellbeing Board and Merton Health and Care Together Committee, can bring to local priorities.

Small grants

- 3.3. To maintain the momentum built up from Beat the Street and to extend opportunities to be physically and socially active over the summer period, an Actively Merton small grants programme was developed which awarded 14 grants to local organisations valued at £14,948. The provision of these grants had a dual purpose, firstly to increase the number of local opportunities for physical and social activity between July and September, but also to ask local organisations to engage with participants to understand any barriers and facilitators to being more active in Merton. These grants included (see appendix one for more details)
- a) A grant of £980 to the Commonsides Community Development Trust to deliver a 'Day of dance' open to all ages and designed to appeal to local people over 50 who are not currently taking regular exercise. The day will

have three different types of dance e.g. line dancing, salsa and Zumba gold.

- b) A grant of £1,000 to the Northeast Mitcham Community Association to develop sessions that have a social element and a physical activity component.
- c) A grant of £1,000 to the Inner Strength Network to engage women and girls in physical activity and art and writing sessions with survivors of domestic abuse aimed at preventing social isolation.
- d) A grant of £996 to the Ethnic Minority Centre to deliver a six-week talk, coffee and indoor bowling programme targeting ethnic minority communities, people over 50 years of age, those with disabilities and those whose voices are not heard.

3.4. This insight will be critical to the next steps of both programmes (Actively Merton and Borough of Sport) and insight and lessons will be shared.

ParkPlay

3.5. Play is a crucial component of a child's development including developing communication, learning and importantly is fun. It is also a key aspect of developing physical literacy and can be intergenerational in nature. Working across Actively Merton and Borough of Sport, funding has been identified to bring [ParkPlay](#) to Merton. This will bring two hours of free community play to Cannons in Mitcham, taking place every Saturday morning from late September 2023.

3.6. Evaluation from other areas shows that ParkPlay has proved particularly good at engaging children and adults who can't afford traditional sport; don't have the right clothes or equipment; feel excluded from physical activity; have special needs; are inactive; and come from low socio-economic groups. Overall, 57% of ParkPlayers are women and girls, 78% are inactive or fairly active (average 39%); 74% say their family activity has increased; 81% agree that ParkPlay has improved their mental wellbeing and 99% of ParkPlayers say they would recommend to a friend.

Engagement and lived experience.

3.7. Recognising the importance of voice, lived experience and to take communities with us on the Actively Merton journey, a community event took place in late June 2023, which brought providers, partners, and organisations from across Merton together. This workshop shared and discussed the learning from the Beat the Street initiative, considered a framework for action developed by London Sport (see appendix two), and heard about LBM's Borough of Sport corporate priority.

3.8. The second part of the workshop session discussed assets in Merton and the barriers and facilitators to activity by key groups that are less physically active e.g. women and girls, older people and residents with a disability. The initial high-level findings of these discussions will be built upon as we move forward e.g. recognising the different barriers and facilitators that residents with mental and physical disabilities have, are as follows, (additional detail in appendix three).

- a) Older people. Barriers include variation in provision across Merton, transport to and from sessions and lack of toilet provision/availability. Opportunities include working with community organisations, increasing activity levels of care home residents, promoting independence and an approach to active ageing and supporting carers and residents with dementia to be physically active.
- b) Women and Girls. Barriers include personal safety, money/income and a lack of women only opportunities. Opportunities include working with community organisations, child friendly intergenerational classes and/or childcare provision, activities that include a social element and identification and promotion of female role models.
- c) Residents with a disability. Barriers include challenges accessing leisure provision and lack of provision and awareness. Opportunities include working with community organisations and engaging and supporting carers, social workers and services to promote social and physical activity opportunities.

3.9. These insights are being used, alongside the existing evidence base, including NICE guidance and Quality Standards, to develop an action plan for Actively Merton, along 3 themes.

- a) Menu of opportunities i.e. the BoS Activity Finder – pulling together and raising awareness of existing physical and social activities, across the life-course and a range of physical activities, social activities and assets in Merton.
- b) Connecting – working through existing networks across Merton to connect residents to physical and social activities (using the menu of opportunities), either informally connecting through existing conversations, the use of digital connections and the provision of training to key front-line staff e.g. health and social care staff, social prescribers and volunteers.
- c) Communications and awareness raising – of the benefits of physical and social activity and opportunities in a visible and recognisable way. Active promotion of local role models, with a focus on inactive groups and communities.

3.10. Evaluation is a key thread of Actively Merton, ensuring an action learning approach and will run alongside delivery ensuring continuous improvement and iterative learning. An application is being made to the National Institute for Health and Care Research's Public Health Intervention Responsiveness Studies Team (PHIRST) to work with a network of academics on the evaluation of the programme, with the decision of the application expected in November 2023.

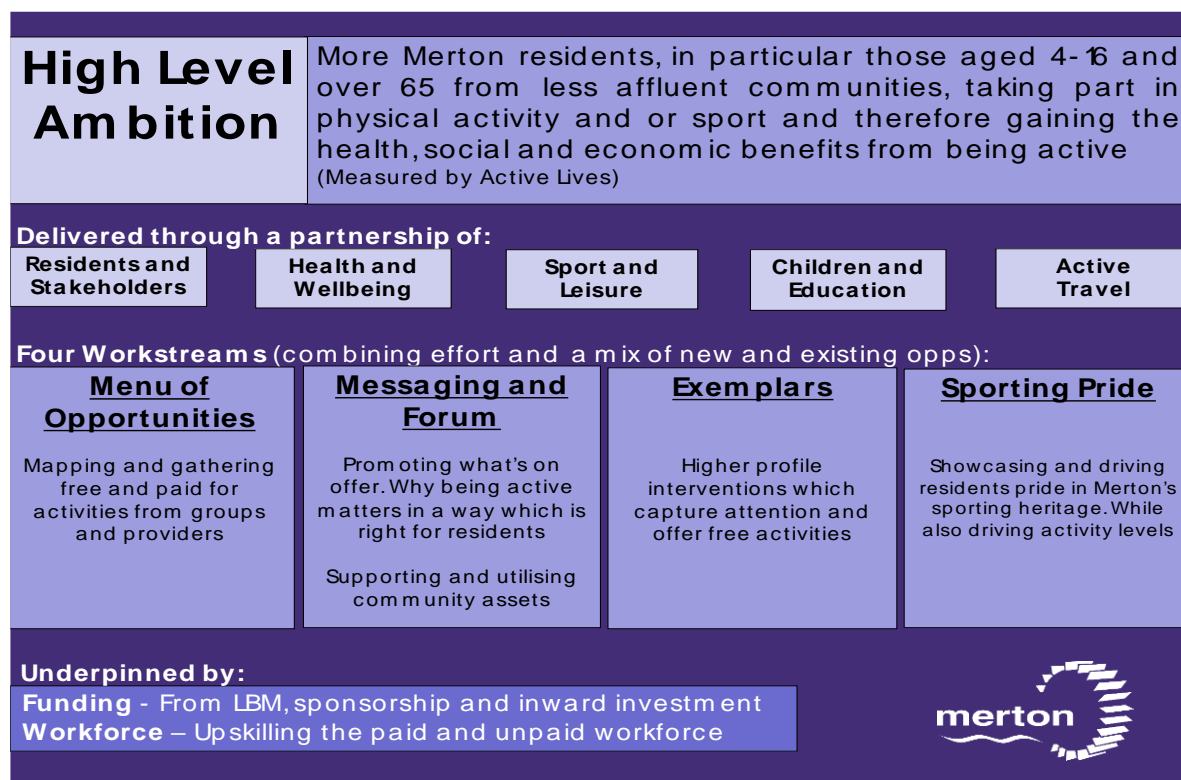
4 BOROUGH OF SPORT

4.1. The LBM Cabinet approved the plans for Merton to become London's Borough of Sport (BoS) in June 2023. As one of three Corporate Priorities, the programme focusses on getting more residents, in particular, but not only, 4 to 16-year-olds, the over 65s and the less affluent, more physically

active; putting Merton on the map for Sport; and celebrating the borough's sporting heritage.

4.2. The BoS is about sport in its widest sense including walking, cycling, dance – anything that gets residents moving. The call to action is to do one, or one more, physical activity session each week, to unlock the social and health benefits for individuals and communities across Merton.

4.3. The following diagram provides a snapshot of the three-year Borough of Sport plans and its four workstreams.



4.4. Implementation has started and is happening at pace with the formation of the BoS Stakeholder Advisory Group (meeting for the first time on 14th September 2023) that will have representatives from across Merton and includes health colleagues.

4.5. Key actions in the first 18 months of delivery include:

- a) the recruitment of **dedicated officer support** at the council and two community activators. David Gentles the new Head of Sport and Leisure at the LBM took up post Monday 4 September 2023 and prior to this was one of two consultants supporting the council to develop its BoS plans. Recruitment on two additional officers at the Council and two externally hosted activators will begin shortly.
- b) the creation of a **BoS brand**. This is going live at the community launch; Merton's Big Sports Day (Sunday 24 September 2023). This a simple and easily recognisable brand which can be used widely by the council and partners to badge and promote the BoS.
- c) BoS will be publicly launched via **Merton's Big Sports Day** and offer residents a great day out as well as trying something new – with taster sessions in everything from yoga and walking football to basketball,

cricket and tennis. There will be attractions, stalls and local food retailers on-site – and you can come and meet the local coaches and athletes helping to make us London's Borough of Sport. The event will take place at Canons Leisure Centre and Grounds on September 24, between 10am-4pm. A number of BoS initiatives are being announced in the run up to and on the day of the Big Sports Day and are therefore not included in this paper.

- d) the launch of the **BoS Activity Finder** web platform. This will promote what is on offer (free and paid for) and increase awareness and take up. Community, commercial and voluntary providers will be encouraged and supported to upload their offers on the platform. The activity finder will be promoted by local health workforce e.g. link workers, the Community Activators and amplified by local trusted groups and networks. The platform will go live alongside the Merton's Big Sports Day.
- e) exemplar projects to catch attention. The next exemplar will be **ParkPlay**, two hours of community play, every Saturday morning in a park or public space bringing the generations together. It's a safe, welcoming and inclusive way for people to connect and have fun. It's run by the local community for the local community under the guidance of the ParkPlay charity. Funding is in place for two ParkPlays the first of which will be at Canons House and Ground and is in development and will go live in the autumn. There are plans for more ParkPlays and these will be linked to the borough network of Family Hubs; and
- f) a 3-year **BoS small grants fund**. This is in development and will go live during the first year of the BoS plans.

4.6. There will be three levels of measurement. The **Ambition** will be measured through the Sport England Active Lives adults and children's surveys which report once a year. The **BoS Activity Finder** will provide an analytics dashboard that includes data which measures the number of searches, what people are searching for and their demographics. All the **exemplar** initiatives will have an additional level of monitoring and measurement. We would expect activity and volunteering levels to increase, the number of activities on offer and inward investment to both go up and for the sport and physical activity sector to feel better contacted to each other and the council.

5 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1. Officers will continue to work closely on Actively Merton and BoS and will actively seek out opportunities to bring additional investment and programmes to Merton.
- 5.2. In line with the focus on supporting the health and wellbeing of their staff and volunteers, we would ask that Health and Wellbeing Board members promote and encourage their workforce to be physically and socially active, as part of their existing workplace health and wellbeing programmes, by promoting the activities of Actively Merton and the Borough of Sport including the BoS Activity Tracker and Merton's Big Sports Day.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1. NA

7 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 7.1. Discussion and consultation with a number of local groups and organisations has taken place and these informed the approach to the Actively Merton action plan and the Borough of Sport blueprint. These insights will be enhanced by the local organisations who are delivering small grant programmes between July and September 2023.

8 TIMETABLE

- 8.1. NA

9 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Investment for Actively Merton and BoS has been secured and additional funding opportunities will be applied for in the coming months.

10 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. NA

11 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. Increasing physical and social activity levels, in the way that residents want it, will help reduce inequalities across Merton.
- 11.2. Action plans for the programmes will look at activities through an ‘equity lens’ aiming to increase activity levels of the most inactive communities.

12 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. NA

13 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. NA

14 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- 14.1. Appendix one – small grants provided by Actively Merton.
- 14.2. Appendix two – London Sport Framework – from inactive to active.
- 14.3. Appendix three – Findings of Actively Merton insight workshop

15 BACKGROUND PAPERS

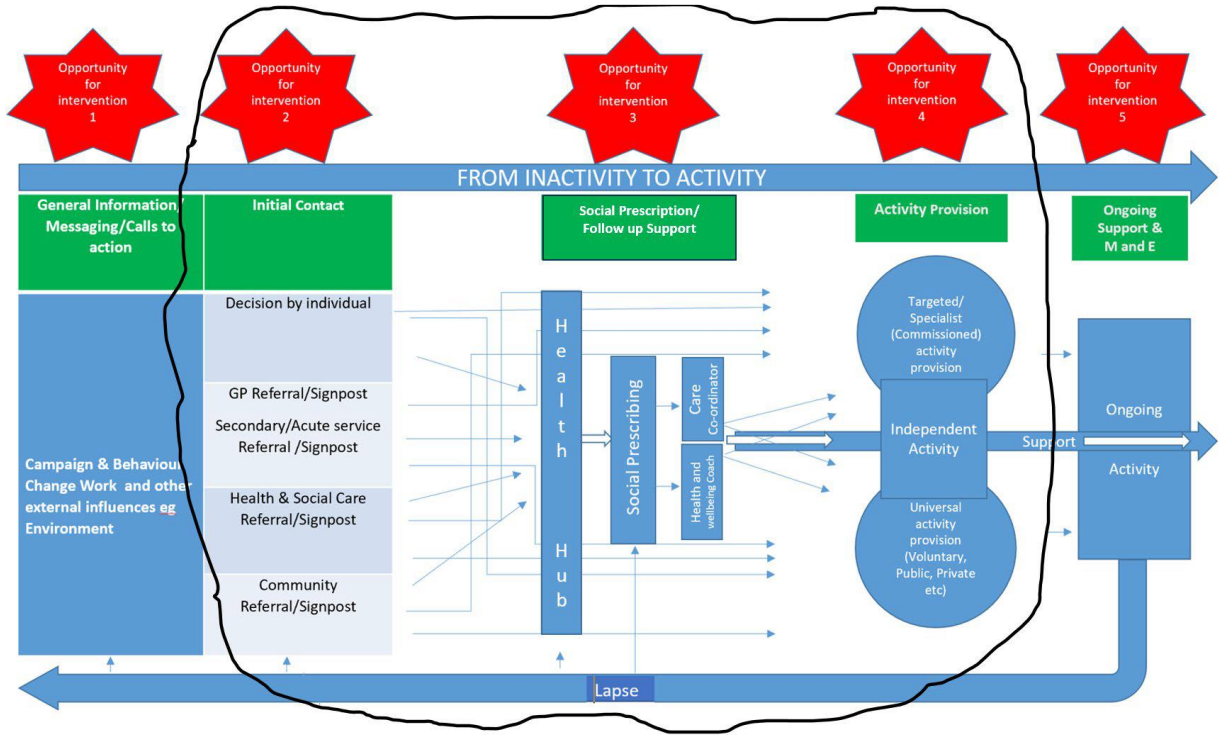
- 15.1. NA

Appendix One – Small grants provided by Actively Merton

Application	Organisation	Activity Description Summary
1	Age UK Merton	Monthly sports mornings for older people with a range of fun sports such as indoor golf, quoits and bowling. Engage clients in fun and accessible activities alongside discussion with them about barriers and issues that they face. Will offer refreshments as well as the sports activities.
2	Wimbledon Guild	Will gather insight by holding focus groups with several of our social groups all of which are attended by people ages 50+: - Men's Space – a group of older men who meet every Friday. - Ladies before lunch – a group of mainly older Muslim women - Food for thought group – we hold regular talks on different topics for a group of older people - Hold 121 phones calls with 20-25 older people who attend our social and exercise activities.
3	St. Georges (Paediatrics)	Mindfulness and Yoga Session - Psychology Session (What is Burn Out, Moral Injury, how to cope under pressure) - Nutritionist (The importance of good food) - Health check (Currently awaiting Occupational Health feedback/Support) - Dermatology (The effects of Stress on the skin and your body) - Debriefing/Time to talk session
4	Sherwood Park Hall	New mums' fitness and mindfulness to combat PND. The funds would provide these services of 15 sessions over a 3-month period as well as printing flyers and social media advertising.
5	Five A-Side	There are 3 sessions in our outreach workshop. - Session 1 Healthy diet and heritage. - Session 2 Healthy eating and heritage - Session 3 Physical well-being and heritage.
6	Ethnic Minority Centre	6-week project: "Talk and Coffee morning followed by Indoor Bowling":
7	Media Management London	Four yoga sessions lasting 45-50 minutes each at a regular weekly slot will provide physical exercise as well as a chance to socialise with others joining the class.
8	Turning Point Academy (Health and fitness for women)	Walks in green spaces. Breathwork and mindfulness, nutrition workshops, stretching and toning and other similar outdoor and indoor activities.

9	Commonside Community Development Trust	Day of dance for the community with lunch and a weekly breakfast and exercise club.
10	NEMCA	Lunch Club with befriending and workshop activities.
11	Inner Strength Network	Wellbeing for Girls and Women. Coaching and support through Movement Therapy and Art and Writing sessions.
12	Polish Families Association	Walking and exploring trip for Ukraine Refuge, including transport and refreshments.
13	Merton Plus	Health and Wellbeing activity, including discussion and provision of creche at some sessions.
14	Togetherness Community Centre	Group engagement activities for 50+ BAME adults.

Appendix Two – London Sport Framework – from Inactive to Active



Appendix Three – High level insights from the Actively Merton workshop (June 2023)

Women & Girls	Older People	People with disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety is a key barrier, which could be solved by creating women only spaces • Money is a barrier, it has to be affordable. • Simple tracking ideas are really good incentive, e.g, step counters or promotion of free apps • women only gym in the borough, or women only sessions or classes, not currently in Merton, people have to go out of borough • Child friendly classes, the opportunity to bring children or childcare available for children while people exercise. • Social element, such as cycling, women cycling group • Focused group for menopausal women around that age group • Identify female role models or female facilitators and instructors to be the role models • Female football, cricket and rugby clubs • Opportunity to do walking and be more active in a non competitive sport way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and encouraging shared care plans that encourage independence • Cross generational work linking young people with older people • Variety in provision, ensuring there are some individual activities as well as group activities. • Improving access to community transport to reduce social isolation for older people • Thinking about people residing in care homes, how to connect them to their communities more • Greater understanding/ mapping specifically of transport options for older people to identify gaps or access needs • Dementia friendly expansion, ensuring what is available is dementia friendly • Greater support for carers and volunteers, what more can we offer them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to access leisure centres, what more can be done to expand access? • Helping people with disability and LTC understand the benefits of being physically active • Supporting local networks, carers networks, local befriending and volunteering services • Organising more community-based activities as this is more cost effective and best way of socialising. • Engaging social workers, service providers and district nurses • Engaging GPs to promote and refer to physical activity • Campaigning and promoting disability sports • Promoting NHS website that has tips and routines for people with disability • Engaging social prescribers and VCSE more widely • Encouraging and providing opportunities for disabled people and people with long term condition to be active

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