

Exercise by Referral in Derbyshire

Active Derbyshire commissioned Move Consulting to review the Exercise by Referral service in Derbyshire to understand potential for reducing complexity, identifying opportunities to improve and make services more accessible.

System
Integration and
Collaboration

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Based on the report undertaken by Move Consulting, a central theme is the need for greater system integration and collaboration to create a more effective, equitable and accessible Exercise by Referral system. This is a summary of the report findings and considerations regarding system integration and collaboration:

1.0 Establish a Unified System-Wide Pathway

- Create a single, county-wide physical activity pathway that integrates:
 - Exercise by Referral (EbR)
 - Live Life Better Derbyshire (LLBD)
 - Community-based and voluntary sector provision
 - Social prescribing and other health interventions
 - Position EbR as **one “level of support”** within this broader pathway.

2.0 Align Stakeholders Around a Shared Vision

- Develop and agree on a **clear, shared vision and mission** that reflects all partners' roles and contributions.
- Use this vision to:
 - Guide joint service planning and delivery
 - Support consistent messaging across organisations
 - Create accountability among partners

3.0 Strengthen Collaboration Between Sectors

- Facilitate **stronger partnerships** between:
 - Health (e.g. GPs, NHS trusts, mental health services)
 - Public Health
 - Physical activity providers (e.g. leisure centres, instructors)
 - Community organisations and volunteers
- Promote **co-design of interventions** with all stakeholders, including service users.

4.0 Streamline Referral Processes

- Review and refine referral pathways to ensure:
 - Easier access for patients and healthcare professionals
 - Clear guidance on who should be referred and to where
 - Better alignment between EbR and LLBD services
- Support **self-referral and signposting** options alongside clinical referrals.

5.0 Improve Data Sharing and Communication

- Create **shared systems** for data collection and reporting through the Thesus platform.
- Enable **real-time feedback loops** between data collectors, delivery teams and system partners.
- Use **biannual shared reports** to highlight performance, learning and impact across the system.

6.0 Optimise Local Delivery & Maintain Consistency

- Support local teams to tailor delivery to local needs but ensure:
 - A **baseline universal service** offer
 - Shared principles of working (e.g. person-centred, equitable, community-based)
 - Consistency in service quality and user experience

7.0 Leverage Existing Community Assets

- Map and utilise existing **community activities and venues** as part of the pathway.
- Work with local partners to expand activity options beyond gyms and leisure centres (e.g. walking groups, social sport, nature-based activities).

8.0 Expand Capacity for Coordination

- Increase capacity for:
 - **Triaging and signposting** at referral stage
 - **Local coordination roles** (e.g. physical activity navigators or local link workers)
- Consider **multidisciplinary workforce approaches** to support greater integration and resource-sharing.

The report calls for a **joined-up, place-based model** that brings together health, physical activity and community sectors under a unified vision and delivery system. By breaking down silos and enabling better collaboration, Derbyshire can create a **seamless, person-centred pathway** that improves health outcomes and ensures consistent, high-quality support for residents.