

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.

Workforce
Development

February 2025

Based on the report undertaken by Move Consulting, workforce development is identified as a key area for consideration to strengthen the existing Exercise by Referral service. This is a summary of the report findings and considerations regarding workforce development:

1.0 Workforce Qualifications & Training

- Need for a **more flexible workforce** beyond Exercise Referral Instructors to support different levels of activity intervention.
- Recognition of **CIMSPA's role** in setting training standards and pathways.
- Need for **more training in behaviour change techniques** to improve long-term physical activity adherence.
- Expansion of **specialist qualifications** to support diverse conditions, including mental health, neurological conditions and obesity.
- Consideration of a **multi-disciplinary team approach**, combining fitness instructors, healthcare professionals and community activity leaders.

2.0 Workforce Accessibility & Deployment

- Current policies are too **risk-averse**, limiting service provision based on qualification levels rather than need.
- **Demand outweighs supply**, causing delays in service delivery.
- **Review of workforce pathways needed** to allow **lower-qualified professionals** to provide basic activity support.
- **Utilisation of community-based resources** (volunteers, social prescribers) to expand service accessibility.

3.0 Consistency & Standardisation

- Need for a **standardised workforce framework** to ensure service quality.
- Potential for **peer-led learning and mentorship programs** among professionals.

4.0 Staff Retention & Capacity Building

- **High staff turnover and capacity challenges** are barriers to long-term service stability.
- Financial and logistical barriers to **training and qualification** need to be addressed.
- **Workforce development funding** needed to upskill existing staff and attract new professionals.

5.0 Expanding Referral Pathways & Training for Healthcare Providers

- **Better education for healthcare professionals** to improve referral rates and reduce inconsistencies.
- **Integration of physical activity training** into healthcare professionals' CPD programs such as Physical Activity Clinical Champions training.