



active
notts

Annual Review

2025/26

MAKING
OUR MOVE



Together with our partners, we are working to address inequality and empower everyone to be active in a way that works for them.

Making our Move – our shared vision and approach to Uniting the Movement in Notts and Derbyshire

describes how we are going about this.

We've been working across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in a number of places and on a range of programmes, some of which we've been leading on and some we've been supporting our partners to lead.

This document gives a snapshot and a brief summary of some of that work, categorised under the five aims listed opposite as well as some district-specific work.



Creating a culture where everyone can be active and move more

This year we were intentional in continuing to shift in how physical activity is understood across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire - so that it's seen as a foundation for wellbeing, social connection and prevention.

Storytelling continued to play a central role in shaping this culture. Films and stories illustrated the many ways people move – and why those ways matter. **Mums on the Move**, for example, began as a small peer-led walking group created by a new mother recovering from post-natal depression.

Over time, it has grown into a sustained community where dozens of women walk weekly with pushchairs, support each other through an online network.

▶ **Mums on the Move**

▶ **The role of community anchor organisations in supporting people to be active**

▶ **Hawtonville Neighbourhood Scan**

▶ **Bulwell Forest Gardens**



TALKING SPACE

#MakingourMove



Sharing Learning and Lived Experience

Talking Space sessions continued to provide a platform for partners to explore issues linked to physical activity, inequality and system change.

Across the year, sessions addressed topics including active practices, racism and micro-aggressions, walkable communities, empowering communities, supporting activity during Ramadan, and active bystander approaches. These open learning spaces brought together partners from health, local government, sport, the voluntary sector and community organisations, creating opportunities to share lived experience and challenge traditional ways of working.

Feedback from participants highlighted the value of hearing directly from people with lived experience and the relevance of these conversations to real-world decision-making.

Links to sessions held in 2025/26 are [here](#)

Investment

Secured **£384,393** in funding from Place Partnership and Place Universal Offer to work with our communities facing greatest inequalities to develop opportunities to be active and move more.

Supported **5 organisations** to secure **£57,184** in funding from Sport England, the National Lottery Community Fund, and Nottinghamshire County Council. Projects include inclusive physical activity and mental health support, including culturally appropriate sessions for Muslim women, and community Walk and Talk sessions. Funding advice and support was given to over **56 organisations** across the county.

We also delivered two specialist funding online sessions on **easyfundraising** and the **Movement Fund**.



MAKING OUR MOVE CELEBRATION

The **Nottinghamshire Celebration Event** provided an opportunity to bring this culture to life. Held in September, it brought together people from community organisations, health, local authorities, education and the voluntary sector, many of whom do not often meet.

Rather than focusing on organisational achievements, the evening centred on people's stories – highlighting lived experience, collaboration and the different ways physical activity supports connection, confidence and wellbeing.

Films and performances from groups such as **Impactd CIC, Nottingham Queens, Men and Women That Matter, Asylum Skatepark** and **Walk Notts** helped to make visible the breadth of activity already happening across Nottinghamshire, particularly within communities who are less likely to see themselves reflected in traditional sport settings.

The event also created space for reflection and connection. Feedback suggested that people left feeling energised, proud and more connected to a wider movement.

Feedback also showed that the event helped partners better understand how their work sits within a bigger system, strengthening relationships that have since continued through place-based partnerships, workforce networks and collaborative bids.



Environmental Sustainability

We have been spending time working out how we can support our environmental sustainability aims and have taken steps this year to share learning around what we can all do to create a positive impact on our environment. We created a resources page on our website sharing hints, tips and small actions.

We also hosted a Movement Fund Workshop in October to highlight how the fund can support environmental sustainability ambitions.

[Click to find out more](#)

[Click to find out more](#)

Enabling children and young people to have positive experiences of being active throughout their childhood

Work with children and young people this year focused on the importance of **enjoyment, safety, belonging and having a positive relationship with being active at a young age, resulting in people choosing to stay active over time.**

The Girls Active programme is an example of this in action. Across participating schools, girls led decisions about what activity looked like for them, from the sports they wanted to try to the spaces they felt comfortable using. In some schools, this resulted in unexpectedly high attendance at newly created clubs; in others, the influence extended beyond activity itself, with girls redesigning changing rooms or stepping into wider leadership roles within school life.

The impact was not just in PE lessons – it was visible in confidence, voice and agency.



Click to find out more

Insight, Data and Tools to Support Change

The Active Lives Young People Survey continued to provide vital insight into how young people feel about physical activity, capturing attitudes, motivations and barriers across our areas. Thousands of responses across Derbyshire gave schools and partners access to tailored reports, supporting evidence-based decision-making and local action.

In 2024-25 there were 4310 responses from young people in Notts.

Alongside this, the **Children and Young People Mapping Tool** was increasingly used by partners to identify need, align provision and reduce duplication. Feedback showed the tool helped organisations work more deliberately with communities and cohorts who need support most, strengthening the collective response to inactivity and inequality.



Open School Facilities Programme (OSF)



Opening School Facilities (OSF) supported schools across Nottinghamshire to open their spaces for community use, creating local opportunities for children and families to be active closer to home. Funding supported equipment, staffing, training, transport and partnerships with community clubs, enabling a wide variety of activities to take place both during and beyond the school day.

A key focus this year was sustainability, with schools supported to consider how activities could continue beyond the life of the funding. The impact of the work showed that the funding acted as a catalyst for further collaboration between schools, voluntary organisations and local providers. Relationships built through OSF also enabled other programmes, such as Girls Active, Teach Active and School Games.



School Games – Inclusive, Intent-Driven Experiences

School Games events were shaped using local insight and Active Lives data to engage children least likely to be active. Inclusive events for Special Schools, outdoor **Forest Games** for less active Year 3 and 4 pupils, and Year 7 multi-sport events focused on personal achievement rather than competition. They created environments where young people could try new activities without fear of judgement.

Within schools, **Teach Active** continued to embed movement into everyday learning. Teachers reported that Active Maths and English lessons not only increased movement but also improved engagement and classroom behaviour. In areas such as Bassetlaw, where activity levels are lower, targeted training and support helped schools see movement as a teaching tool rather than an additional pressure.

Greater focus was given to children and young people with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities). By bringing together education, inclusion, health and voluntary sector partners, shared challenges became clearer – particularly around workforce confidence and gaps for children educated outside mainstream settings. This collaboration aims to develop more joined-up approach, with inclusive practice placed at the centre rather than treated as a specialist add-on.

[Click to find out more](#)



Working with people and communities who experience the greatest inequality

Working in Place Across Nottinghamshire

Across Nottinghamshire, funding has been used to support **community-led, place-based approaches that embed physical activity into everyday life**. Rather than treating activity as a standalone offer, the focus has been on creating the conditions where moving more becomes part of how people connect, support their wellbeing and access opportunities within their communities. This has been achieved by working alongside local partners and residents to strengthen what already exists, ensuring physical activity is relevant, accessible and shaped by lived experience.

In **Ashfield**, this has meant aligning neighbourhood investment with the **Be Healthy, Be Happy 10-year strategy**, positioning physical activity as a key contributor to mental wellbeing and social connection. There was a strong focus on the community of **Leamington** in Kirkby in Ashfield via the **Place Partnership** work.

Partners have worked together to understand what's needed in Leamington to better support residents to be active and have put together a plan to deliver this within the next stage of the Place Partnership work. To find out more about this work, click [here](#)

In **Bassetlaw**, partners have worked together to embed physical activity into a wider system response to inequality, using community insight to shape future investment through **Place Partnership**. This has translated into practical opportunities such as **school-holiday walking trails and events**, connecting local venues, services and green spaces while making walking and wheeling more visible, social and accessible. The aim in the next year is to develop a full plan co-designed with partners and the community.

Work in **Broxtowe** has been shaped by local insight highlighting barriers to being active, including safety concerns, financial pressures and low confidence, particularly for children and families.

This has led to a clearer focus on creating safe, welcoming opportunities for young people to move more as part of early support and prevention. In **Gedling**, physical activity has been used as a tool to support young people's mental health, with evaluation showing that participation in activity-based support helped build confidence, strengthen relationships and prevent escalation into crisis. This has been complemented by work such as the **Big Green Book collaboration** with schools, encouraging young people to be active in local green spaces, watch the video about the Big Green Book [here](#)

In **Mansfield**, particularly Warsop, partners have used physical activity as a central element of wider health and wellbeing support. **The Warsop Health Hub and Small Steps to Feeling Great** have brought together services and community provision, enabling residents to access activity alongside social connection, mental health support and advice in a single, welcoming space. This work is explained in more detail [here](#)

In **Newark & Sherwood**, work in Hawtonville has focused on understanding how people experience opportunities to be active, with **Active Neighbourhood Scans** and engagement with families highlighting the importance of activity being local, affordable and safe. This has supported a shift towards a more coordinated approach, where physical activity is planned alongside other community priorities to ensure it is part of everyday life rather than an added extra. To find out what a Neighbourhood Scan is and how it can support our communities to be more active, watch [here](#)

In **Nottingham City**, activity has been embedded within trusted community settings to support people least likely to be active. Work across St Ann's, Bulwell and Sneinton has focused on building relationships and enabling organisations to work together to create relevant opportunities. This work forms part of the Place Partnership work in Nottingham which saw significant investment into local communities through trusted local community organisations to codesign a plan to address barriers to inactivity which are unique to each community. To understand this work and the impact so far, click [here](#)



The **Nottingham Queens network** is developing local leaders who are representative of the community and who can deliver activity in ways that reflect the needs and experiences of their communities. This work has supported the development of a more inclusive, diverse workforce based in community.

Insight has been gathered to understand what it truly takes to support a community led workforce, find out more here and the impact for one instructor [here](#)

In **Rushcliffe**, neighbourhood work in Cotgrave has used **resident-led walking routes and mapping** to understand how accessible local environments are for everyday activity, with insights informing practical changes that make it easier for people, particularly older adults and families, to walk and stay active within their community.

Across all areas, the work demonstrates that when funding is used to **strengthen relationships, listen to communities and shape environments**, physical activity becomes a natural and sustainable part of daily life. Whether through walking groups, youth engagement, community hubs or improved local environments, moving more is increasingly supporting better health, stronger connections and more resilient communities across Nottinghamshire.



Maximising the potential of being active to improve physical and mental health

This year saw further progress in embedding physical activity within health systems - as part of how prevention, early intervention and recovery are understood.

The development of the **Active Practice Charter Toolkit** provided healthcare professionals with practical ways to integrate movement into everyday environments and conversations. We produced and shared a two-page version of the Active Practice Charter toolkit for health and care professionals as a result of Walk Notts feeding back to the Mid Notts Health Inequalities Oversight Group.

Walking messages are now included in Mid Notts Snippets newsletters, bingo cards shared in care homes and materials included in the MSK toolkit.

The learning is that healthcare professionals like to have tangible hooks - the bingo cards, dementia flyers, Active Practices Charter - around which we can engage them to understand how walking and being active can be integrated into their physical spaces and patient messaging.



Embedding key messaging about being active and walking being uploaded to the SISU Health Check Machines located in Boots stores

Walking resources tailored to dementia, maternity and heart health were designed to support staff to feel more confident having conversations about activity even within time-pressured settings.

Ripple Effect Mapping strengthened understanding of how activity contributes to mental health at individual and system levels.

In Gedling, evaluation of a youth mental health pilot highlighted how trusted relationships developed through physical activity helped young people build confidence, engage earlier with support, and in some cases avoid crisis escalation.

These insights shifted conversations with partners from whether activity “works” to how early intervention can reduce pressure in the system.

Place-based health partnerships such as **Active Hearts** in St Ann's and **Small Steps to Feeling Great** in Warsop continued to demonstrate how physical activity complements social connection, peer support and self-management of long-term conditions.



Creating accessible, safe, and inclusive places and environments for physical activity



Active Environment Network – Connecting People, Place and Movement

Work on active environments this year focused on how

people move through their neighbourhoods – and how design, safety and inclusion shape everyday decisions.

At a strategic level, the commissioning of an **Active Design Workforce** Training Package reflects a commitment to long-term change. By working with planning, transport, regeneration and parks teams, this initiative aims to ensure that movement, accessibility and inclusion are embedded into everyday decision-making across the built environment, rather than retrofitted later.

The Active Environment Network provided a growing space for partners involved in planning, transport, housing, leisure, health and community development to come together.

Workshops and conferences explored themes such as safe open spaces, community activity hubs, embedding movement into planning policy, and connecting nature and movement, with a new **Notts Nature and Health network** created by partners.

By bringing different sectors together, the Active Environment Network helped build shared understanding of how environments influence behaviour and health.

Community voice featured strongly, reinforcing the need to design places that feel safe, welcoming and relevant to local needs.

A conference in October provided an in-person opportunity to connect, learn and share good practice, with key speakers from East Midlands County Combined Authority, Nottinghamshire's Police and Crime Commissioner and representatives from planning and health in local authorities.

Click to find out more

Here are some of the subjects covered:

-  **Connectivity and Active Travel**
-  **The Importance of Play in Creating Positive Physical Activity Experiences for Children**
-  **How Can Green Infrastructure reduce Health Inequality**





Throughout the year, **Walk Notts** has continued to position walking and wheeling as simple, inclusive ways for people to move more in their everyday lives, particularly in communities experiencing the greatest inequalities and low levels of physical activity.

walk notts festival

The **Walk Notts Festival** acted as a catalyst, sparking hundreds of locally led walks and activities across Nottinghamshire, from buggy walks and workplace step challenges to faith-led trails and walking meetings.

What made the festival distinctive was how it enabled organisations and residents to adapt walking to what mattered locally – supporting

social connection, mental health and access to services. This approach helped normalise walking as part of daily routines rather than a formal intervention. Media coverage, storytelling and filmed case studies ensured these experiences were visible beyond the festival itself, influencing partners' thinking about how small, place-based actions can create meaningful change.

Alongside this, Walk Notts played an increasingly strategic role, connecting community insight to system decision-making. **Active Neighbourhood Scans** in areas such as **Hawtonville, Arnold, Leamington, Nottingham City** and **Cotgrave** brought residents, planners and service providers together to experience local routes firsthand, highlighting practical barriers and opportunities that may not have been picked up through consultation.

Learning from this work fed into local transport and planning conversations and wider discussions about accessibility, safety and inclusion. Walk Notts also strengthened its influence by embedding walking within health, education and workforce settings – from supporting family hubs and healthcare professionals with practical walking resources, to engaging future public health leaders through university teaching and 'netwalks'.

Conversations with regional and national decision-makers, including the Mayor of EMCCA and Active Travel Minister, ensured that the voices and experiences of Nottinghamshire residents informed broader policy and investment discussions, reinforcing walking and wheeling as essential to healthier, happier communities.

Click to find
out more

