Fighting Inactivity
Tackling Inequality

2020-21 Impact Report:
Our COVID-19 response & renewal

activeoxfordshire.org

Active Oxfordshire
Reflecting on this extraordinary, devastating year is quite a task. On one hand, we’ve seen Oxfordshire hit hard by the unparalleled impact of COVID-19, with existing health and social inequalities exacerbated, sports clubs and facilities shut down and children’s activity levels at an all-time low. But we’ve also seen the very best of Oxfordshire in action: the launch of Oxfordshire All In, where we played a key role; our Bikes for Key Workers scheme, which donated over 500 bikes to our key worker heroes and heroines; and the creation of Active Reach, funded by Sport England’s Tackling Inequalities Fund and supporting people hit hardest by COVID-19 to improve their health, wellbeing and life chances.

As always, partnership working is at the heart of everything we do. Results from our latest Partner Survey show that 91% of respondents rated our staff team & relationship management as good or excellent and 87% of respondents confirmed that they were highly likely to recommend AO to another organisation.

I’d like to extend sincere thanks to Sport England, our principal funder, for their continued support and the additional COVID-19 related funding that has enabled us to reach those in greatest need. Thanks also to Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire CCG for their ongoing investment to create a healthier, more active county, to our partners and to our dedicated board of trustees and staff team.

We have come a long way in the last 12 months, but there is so much more to do. Please join us in fighting inactivity and tackling inequality, together.

To begin on a positive note, there is cause for celebration. Recent Active Lives data from Sport England shows that Oxfordshire is not only the least inactive county but the most active county, too. This is a strong step forward and clearly shows the power of partnership working. But we must dig deeper to see the real picture playing out across our county, where inequalities are hidden but stark.

We are shocked and horrified that inactivity levels are three times higher in our poorest areas compared to our wealthiest, and that only 25% of children in Cowley can swim compared to 84% in North Oxford. COVID-19 has sharpened our focus on reaching those in greatest need: 80% of our resource and interventions are now focused on Oxfordshire’s wards of highest deprivation.

In this extraordinary year, we have responded to COVID-19 with agility and determination. We have adapted our current offers, strengthened links with partners and played a more active, strategic enabler role across the county. We have maintained a strong focus on our Three Pillars Healthy Active Children, Healthy Place Shaping and Healthy for Life, and helped secure over £1.1 million of additional funding for Oxfordshire to help the most vulnerable people as part of a pro-active response to Covid.

We must keep the momentum going. Please join us in our mission to build back fairer and create an active, healthy, and equal county.

Our 10 Ambitions for an Active Oxfordshire:

1. We want **every** adult and child in Oxfordshire to have an equal chance at an active, healthy life
2. We want to help reduce health inequalities by increasing activity levels in the top 10 most deprived wards
3. We want **every** child to be able to swim and cycle safely
4. We want **every** child to have 60 active minutes a day
5. We want to increase walking & cycling levels across the county
6. We want to recruit an army of new Active Ambassadors and Activators
7. We want to dramatically increase activity levels in older people
8. We want people with long term health conditions to have their own pathway to a more active life
9. We want to work with partners to fight inactivity and tackle inequality
10. We want to create a truly inclusive playing field for Oxfordshire, increasing participation from disabled people, diverse ethnic communities and women/girls
This is why our work matters more than ever before:

As a result of COVID-19:

1 in 4 older people are unable to walk as far as before

34% of older adults say their anxiety is worse or much worse than before COVID-19

Children’s activity levels fell to an all-time low

Only 1/2 of our children and young people are getting enough activity

More than 25% of Oxfordshire’s children are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school

Inactivity is 3 times higher in our poorest areas compared to our wealthiest

One third of adults aged 65 years and over are inactive and this age group is expected to grow by 50% by 2038, compared to 47% nationally

Sources: Sport England Active Lives data; Public Health England Health Profiles; Oxfordshire County Council JSNA; Age UK impact of COVID-19 report.
COVID-19: Active Oxfordshire’s response in 2020-21

Oxfordshire All In formed and Emergency Support Fund opens for Oxfordshire sports clubs

MARCH

Over £450,000 emergency funding awarded to Oxfordshire’s sports & community clubs

MAY

Street Tag launches in Cherwell, expanding county-wide & resulting in 1 billion steps walked

AUGUST

Funding received to continue Go Active Get Healthy physical activity pathway for people with Type 2 Diabetes

OCTOBER

Over 650 local people engaged through Active Reach. 13,000 children take part in Virtual School Games cross country run

DECEMBER

500th bike donated to our key worker heroes and heroines

FEBRUARY

Bikes for Key Workers launches, Sport England awards first round of £50,000 funding to launch "Active Reach" targeted at Blackbird Leys

APRIL

100th bike donated to Oxfordshire’s key workers; Leadership Summit brings together over 45 leaders to fight inactivity together

JUNE-JULY

Active 60 campaign launched to highlight crisis in children’s activity levels

SEPTEMBER

Active Reach receives extra £50k funding, expands into Banbury and Abingdon. Live Longer Better movement launches: step change in getting older people active.

NOVEMBER

277 health and social workers trained in promoting physical activity

JANUARY

£155,000 total funding now in place for Active Reach; £363,000 funding awarded to support vulnerable people to increase physical activity levels

MARCH

We have helped to generate an additional £1.1 million of COVID-19 response funding to fight inactivity and tackle inequality across Oxfordshire.

We worked with over 85 partners across multiple sectors to increase activity levels.
Our renewed approach and ambitions

COVID-19 has made it crystal clear that while we may have all been in the same storm, we are most certainly not in the same boat. Our focus, now more than ever, is to take a place-based approach to increasing activity levels. We will concentrate on the top ten wards of highest deprivation, working with local communities to tackle systemic inequalities.

We are stronger together

In 2020-21, we worked with over 85 partners to create a more active, healthy, and equal Oxfordshire, including:

The 10 most deprived wards in Oxfordshire

1. North Oxford
2. South Oxford
3. East Oxford
4. West Oxford
5. Woodstock
6. Headington
7. Cowley
8. Headington
9. Headington
10. Headington

Over the last 12 months we have challenged ourselves to become a more equal, diverse, and inclusive organisation. We want to be known as an organisation that is explicitly anti-racism and to adopt a similar approach with other forms of prejudice and discrimination.
At the heart of our strategic plan for 2020-24, Fighting Inactivity, Tackling Inequality, is our **Three Pillars**. These core strategic priorities shape our interventions and direction of travel for the future:

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Healthy Active Children

Over the last 12 months, we worked tirelessly through partners to help children and young people stay active in the most challenging of times:

Ready Set Go

Active Oxfordshire funds and supports Ready Set Go, a collaborative campaign run by Oxford Hub that ensures every child in Oxford can learn to swim and ride a bike and supports families to be active together. Over the last 12 months, 120 people have been referred to the programme and have received a combination of cycles, D-locks, lights, and tuition through partners, Wheels for All.

“...We cycle to school twice a week (they want to cycle more often). We cycle on the weekends. It’s really brought us together as a family.”

Ready Set Go participant

Adapting our offer to keep children & young people active

With schools, sports clubs & leisure providers forced to close during lockdowns, activity levels for children fell to an all-time low. We launched our Active 60 campaign in September 2020, to ensure that every child in Oxfordshire achieves 60 active minutes, every day.

Here’s how we made a difference:

Healthy Active Children: Virtual Conference.

We ran 16 virtual workshops for over 95 delegates with our most diverse audience ever. Our content included the power of sport to tackle anti-social behaviours and overcoming barriers to cycling and water safety.

Virtual School Games: We launched our Virtual School Games to help keep children active. Activities on offer included Cross Country, Quad Kids, Indoor rowing, Crossbar challenge, Dance, Rugby League, Tennis, Cricket and Tri-Golf.

Healthy Active Children: Virtual Conference.

166 Oxfordshire schools signed up

13,000 Children & young people took part in the Virtual Cross-Country run in December 2020

Our Active 60 campaign remains a key priority, with a particular focus on wards of highest deprivation and increasing rates of swimming and cycling across the county.
Healthy Place Shaping

During 2020-21 we have continued our place based, collaborative approach to creating sustainable, healthy and well-connected communities.

We received £155,000 of funding from Sport England’s Tackling Inequalities Fund, to help local people most affected by COVID-19 to get active and improve their health, wellbeing, and life chances.

We took a community-led approach: we deliberately worked with community-based organisations and local co-ordinators who understand their people and place. We focused on areas of highest deprivation & inactivity in Oxfordshire.

Active Reach was set up to help people hit hardest by COVID-19, including those with long-term health conditions, ethnically diverse communities, older people & people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Activities have included online classes, bike libraries, sports holiday schemes, young leaders’ training programmes, seated exercises, virtual walks and exercise sessions combined with mental health advice. Our first phase alone supported 378 participants.

We’ve worked with 29 partners across Oxfordshire and helped over 650 people to increase their activity levels.

Active Reach: the power of the community-led approach

Active Reach: A Very Pretty Pink Bike

One family talk about the difference that Oxford Hub’s support, funded by Active Reach, has made:

“When it came to the lockdown, my oldest two, who are now twelve and ten, got offered to go to a summer school. When they was leaving, they got offered to have bikes given to them, and they were nice enough to give us, the whole family, a bike as well. They weren’t patronising and they didn’t make me feel like a bad parent that I couldn’t provide these things. It wasn’t just the bikes, it was them going to the summer school.

That was a massive help because they got to go and see their friends during a really rubbish time. It was just nice to see my son and my daughter be back to how they were. You could clearly see their mental health took a massive dive with the Covid.

My kids laughed at me when I came back with a pink bike. ‘Cause I am the least girly.

And now I have a very pretty pink bike. I’m heavily tattooed, pierced and everything. So, coming out on this little pink thing, with the little wicker basket. But it gets me to A to B and gets the kids out, so I’m happy either way. It’s good for puddles as well. That was our favourite day when it poured down. There was massive puddles and we just spent, I think it was like forty-five minutes, just racing through them, just speeding through.

We got soaked but it was just fun.”
Bikes for Key Workers

Bikes for Key Workers was launched in April 2020 in partnership with Cyclox and many other local organisations, to help Oxfordshire’s key workers cycle to work, avoid public transport and stay active.

Over 500 bikes have been donated.
£21,000 raised through grants and donations.
2,000 volunteer hours contributed.
55% of key worker recipients said they had not cycled since childhood.
68% of recipients said they would now cycle to work instead of using public transport.

“I want to say a big thank you to everyone involved in the Bikes for Key Workers scheme. Since receiving my bike and having the lessons to get me started, I have cycled to work near-on every time. It’s meant that I can reduce my own infection risk by avoiding the buses and can travel easily between John Radcliffe and Churchill hospitals. I enjoy cycling now and feel healthier because of it. I feel much more confident cycling.”

Rachael Potter

Oxfordshire All In: connecting communities

Active Oxfordshire played a key role in co-ordinating Oxfordshire All In, a powerful movement of individuals, community groups, charities & public bodies who provided incredible front-line support during COVID-19. This movement, which grew to over 500 organisations, is set to leave a strong legacy as our voluntary sector seeks to work stronger together than ever before.

Bikes for Key Workers: Oxfordshire All In

Bikes for Key Workers was launched in April 2020 in partnership with Cyclox and many other local organisations, to help Oxfordshire’s key workers cycle to work, avoid public transport and stay active.

Healthy Place Shaping

Street Tag Oxfordshire

Street Tag turns physical activity into a fun, motivational game for schools, families, individuals and communities. Activity such as walking, running and cycling can be converted into Street Tag points. We have actively encouraged schools and families across Oxfordshire to get on board, with fantastic results:

Over the past 5 months, 7,080 residents in Oxfordshire have joined Street Tag with 1 billion steps taken, 3.5 million virtual tags collected and a staggering 929,125 miles covered by walking, cycling, scooting, and running.

“Keeping our children fit and active is a key priority for us and the Street Tag helped to add a great motivator to families to get walking and clocking up the miles. It was a great surprise to hear that we were one of the winners and was the icing on the cake!”

Lynn Knapp, Windmill Primary School

“I want to say a big thank you to everyone involved in the Bikes for Key Workers scheme. Since receiving my bike and having the lessons to get me started, I have cycled to work near-on every time. It’s meant that I can reduce my own infection risk by avoiding the buses and can travel easily between John Radcliffe and Churchill hospitals. I enjoy cycling now and feel healthier because of it. I feel much more confident cycling.”

Rachael Potter

Healthy Place Shaping
In 2020-21, Active Oxfordshire adapted our usual offer to enable older people, disabled people, people living with long-term health conditions or mental health problems to stay active and protect their health and well-being.

South East Active Mind Network

Active Oxfordshire co-ordinates the South East Active Mind Network, created to bring together organisations from across the sport, physical activity, and mental health sectors.

In 2020/2021 the network supported its 152 organisations to share best practice, provide new learning and increase partnership working. Key achievements include:

- 1168 coaches/volunteers and workforce upskilled in mental health awareness
- 152 Signed up organisations
- Virtual Tweet Chats and Good practice sharing event.

This network played a key role in communicating funding opportunities and campaigns emerging in response to COVID-19.

Live Longer Better

Live Longer Better launched in late 2020 by Active Oxfordshire, Sir Muir Gray and Optimal Ageing, creating a revolutionary movement which now includes 20 Active Partnerships from across the UK.

Live Longer Better is designed to capture the issues faced by older people and create a step change in how organisations can work together to improve the health and quality of life for our older population, through physical activity. Three major national events have now been organised with over 600 delegates attending in total.

Live Longer Better will help create a population-based personalised system for older and more vulnerable people designed to reduce the need for health and social care. We are pleased to be working in partnership on the new “Oxfordshire Way” with our colleagues in Adult and Social Care and the VCSE.

Go Active Get Healthy – Diabetes

Go Active Get Healthy Diabetes (GAGH-D) is a community-based initiative supporting patients with Type 2 Diabetes to self-manage their condition through increasing activity levels. Diversifying the offer was critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people with diabetes were at higher risk from coronavirus.

A programme of individualised support was developed based on patient-choice, including online virtual activity sessions, digital support through the EXi App, safe activity in the community and offline home activity packs. Each home activity resource pack included an activity book advising on exercise at various levels, therabands, a step counter and a personal progress card.

“The home exercise pack is very useful as I don’t really use technology and found the exercise instruction cards easy to use. I really found receiving the pack encouraging. I was very grateful and it’s nice to know someone cared and was thinking about me during the lockdown period. I continue with home exercises most days and walk often.”

GAGH-D participant

Healthy for Life
Active Medicine

Active Medicine facilitates physical activity workforce training across Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire to give health & social care professionals and volunteers the training & information they need to promote physical activity.

During 2020-21:

- **688** health & social care professionals trained across 3 counties
- **276** healthcare workers
- **318** residents facing roles
- **94** social prescribers

Training for healthcare workers showed that:

- **94%** agreed they felt more knowledgeable about benefits of physical activity
- **92%** felt more confident in their skills to support someone to be more active

"I will definitely ask more about physical activity and feel more confident in signposting patients."

Nurse, Hospital Trust

Active Ambassadors

Everyone should have their voice heard in the fight against inactivity.

In December 2020, we launched our Active Ambassadors movement so that people with lived experience of facing barriers to activity could have their voice heard. Since then, we have recruited our first 15 Ambassadors, who have already done an incredible job feeding into our strategy and development, speaking at events, and sharing their insight and experience. Developing our Active Ambassadors programme will be a key priority for Active Oxfordshire going forwards.

"For me, being active is of the utmost importance, not only for my physical wellbeing but for my mental wellbeing as well. After experiencing limited opportunities to physical activity as a teenager, I decided that as an adult I would do all I could to find ways, both out in the community and at home, to stay as active as I can within my capabilities. I’m very proud to be an Active Ambassador."

Phoebe Gubbins
Building back better and fairer: our direction of travel

COVID-19 has sharpened our focus and renewed our determination to fight inactivity and tackle inequality. Here’s a snapshot of our future developments & direction:


✅ We will work with schools in areas of highest deprivation across Oxfordshire to open their school facilities to help children & their families increase activity levels and support the Holiday Activities and Food initiative to enable young people to be healthy and active through the school holidays.

✅ We will continue to grow our Active Ambassadors scheme and increase our focus on equality, diversity & inclusion.

✅ Active Reach will expand into new areas across Oxfordshire to reach vulnerable older people.

✅ We will strengthen our Active 60 campaign so that every child & young person in Oxfordshire achieves 60 active minutes, every day.

✅ We will invite innovation and new ways of thinking, such as the Life Chances initiative where we are part of the largest Social Impact Bond in the world.

✅ We will build on the powerful Live Longer Better movement, working with partners across the County to create a step change in physical activity opportunity for older people so they live longer better.

Get Involved

If you would like to be part of our journey fighting inactivity and tackling inequality, we’d be delighted to start a conversation. Here’s how you can get involved:

- Talk to us about how we can work in partnership to increase activity levels across Oxfordshire
- Share our messages, information, and resources to help people in the greatest need get active
- Join our Active 60 campaign to ensure that every child in Oxfordshire has 60 active minutes, every day
- Get in touch if you are a local parish or town council, a large scale developer or community organisation interested in creating environments that support active travel & healthier neighbourhoods
- Work with us to support the development of a Physical Activity pathway for patients at risk of cardiovascular disease or with Long Term Health Conditions.
- Join our cross-sector approach to provide activity opportunities for older people
- Become an Active Ambassador & share your lived experience expertise.

Healthy Active Children
Contact Josh Lenthall: joshlenthall@activeoxfordshire.org

Healthy Place Shaping
Contact Matt Roebuck: mattroebuck@activeoxfordshire.org

Healthy for Life
Contact Annie Holden: annieholden@activeoxfordshire.org

Active Ambassadors
Contact Helen Mariner: helenmariner@activeoxfordshire.org