



ACTIVE OXFORDSHIRE

MOVE TOGETHER

FINAL REPORT

Move Together: Summary

Move Together is an evidence based pathway aiming to provide behavioural support to people across Oxfordshire to move more. It is specifically targeting people who were impacted by Covid-19 and need some help and support to be more active. It offers a person centred approach by listening to people's barriers to being active and providing motivation, signposting and support to get them moving more.

Approach

Move Together is coordinated by a team of District Coordinators based in each of the Council areas of Oxfordshire. Active Oxfordshire provides overall coordination and project management. Move Together has the following elements:

- ☆ Referral (including self-referral) - a wide network of partners across health, social prescribing and the community and voluntary sector can refer a person to the pathway.
- ☆ Initial conversation – an initial conversation takes place with a Move Together Coordinator. They listen to and understand the barriers and motivators a person is experiencing to moving more.
- ☆ Initial suggestions - based on the initial conversation and their knowledge of local activities the coordinator makes some suggestions for activities they might try and couples this with behavioural support. This includes offering some one to one support where this is appropriate.
- ☆ Agreed programme of calls - the coordinator and pathway participant agree how frequently they will stay in touch in order to help with motivation, advice and behavioural support.

The difference it makes

165 people have provided follow up information about the difference the Move Together pathway has made to them. Across the whole of the pathway 50% of participants have a long term health condition. However, this rises to over 90% of people who complete

a 3 month follow up. This strongly suggests the pathway is reaching people with a long term health condition but then, crucially, sustaining their engagement.

The data shows Move Together is having a substantial impact on the people it connects with. The data shows:

- ☆ 69% of participants on the pathway (114 people) have increased the number of minutes in a week they are active at the three month follow up. 78% of participants (129) have maintained or increased the number of minutes they are active.
- ☆ 31% of participants on the pathway (51 people) have moved from inactive (less than 30 minutes a week) to active.
- ☆ 38% of participants (62 people) have decreased their levels of loneliness.
- ☆ 29% have increased their ability to undertake their usual activities. 27% have seen an improvement to their pain or discomfort. 23% have seen an increase to their mobility and 25% an increase to their levels of anxiety as measured by the EQ5D.

Participants on the pathway also highlight what a considerable difference being involved has made to their lives.

'Without Move Together, I wouldn't be going out on my own...it has improved everything, it is hard to put a defining thing on it, it got me out of the house, got me some new friends to have a laugh with, Lisa is one in a million, she is so bubbly, you want to try and do it to please her as much as myself. I think for anyone who needs it, like I needed it, it is a bloody good thing.' Move Together participant

Introduction

In June 2021 Shephard & Moyes Ltd were commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the Move Together Pathway.

Move Together is funded by the Covid Contain Outbreak Management fund, awarded by Oxfordshire County Council, for an initial period of 12 months. The proposal for Move Together highlighted how it would provide an immediate response to supporting Covid-19 outbreak management through integrating, connecting and building on existing pathways, assets and tried and tested ways of working.

Move Together aimed to reach those people who had been most impacted by Covid-19 and to support them on a pathway to being more active and embedding physical activity in their lives. It aimed to build on the principle that everyone benefits from moving more. As set out by the Chief Medical Officer:

'If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat'

Shortly after Move Together launched a consensus statement was released from Sport England, Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine UK, Royal College of General Practitioners and the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities highlighting how the physical benefits of getting active outweigh the risks. The document highlights how 50% of GPs indicated 'a barrier to advising patients about physical activity were concerns by the patient about perceived risks of taking up physical activity'. The consensus statement says:

'The key message is that the risk of adverse events when getting active is low, and that physical activity is safe, even for people living with symptoms of multiple health conditions. Regular physical activity, in combination with standard medical care, has an important role to play in the treatment and prevention of many conditions. Well informed, person centred conversations with healthcare

professionals can reassure people and further reduce this risk.'

Move Together was aiming to get more people moving more. The pathway was built on some key best practice principles, including taking a person centred approach to understanding an individual's barriers and motivations to getting active. It also aimed to be a pathway rather than a destination. In other words the model was built so people moved through, and started being independently active in their own homes or as part of a wider group in the community.

This is the second report we have produced for the Move Together pathway to support an ongoing process of learning and reflection. For the interim report we provided a detailed analysis of what was happening in each of the Districts and provided more detail on the context and background for the pathway. For this report, we have focused on the implementation of the pathway across the whole of Oxfordshire and the difference it is making to the people it is engaging. All data is presented about the Move Together pathway as a whole. A copy of the interim report is available from Active Oxfordshire.

The Model

Movement for all

In our interim report we set out the foundations on which the Move Together pathway is built and the issue it is setting out to tackle. This included the following key points critical to the development of the Move Together pathway:

- ☆ Inactivity is the cause of significant health risk factors as well as being a cheap and effective solution to the problem. The challenge is that while many projects appear to work on the surface they fail to deliver the long term changes that will result in an increase in levels of physical activity.
- ☆ Habit is known to play an important role in physical activity, but where interventions take place over a fixed period, in a fixed place, but don't build the capacity of a person to be more active, the chances of a change being sustained become much less. Our own experience is that transitions (bereavement, family change, new job, retirement etc) are all points when physical activity habits can change. This is not always a negative change and often represents an opportunity for new habits to form.
- ☆ The emerging data from Sport England suggests the recovery of physical activity levels from Covid-19 is uneven. Those groups who were inactive before Covid-19 continue to be inactive and the recovery to previous activity levels is slower.
- ☆ Research undertaken as part of the interim report highlighted how people were experiencing a loss of confidence in being active alongside mental health and personal motivation to be active as key barriers and challenges.

Underpinning all of this is the importance of moving more, regardless of the current health state. A consensus statement has also been

released from Sport England, Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine UK, Royal College of General Practitioners and the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities highlighting how the physical benefits of getting active outweigh the risks.

'The key message is that the risk of adverse events when getting active is low, and that physical activity is safe, even for people living with symptoms of multiple health conditions. Regular physical activity, in combination with standard medical care, has an important role to play in the treatment and prevention of many conditions. Well informed, person centred conversations with healthcare professionals can reassure people and further reduce this risk.'

Spotlight on....motivating people

A Move Together participant found out about the pathway following an operation.

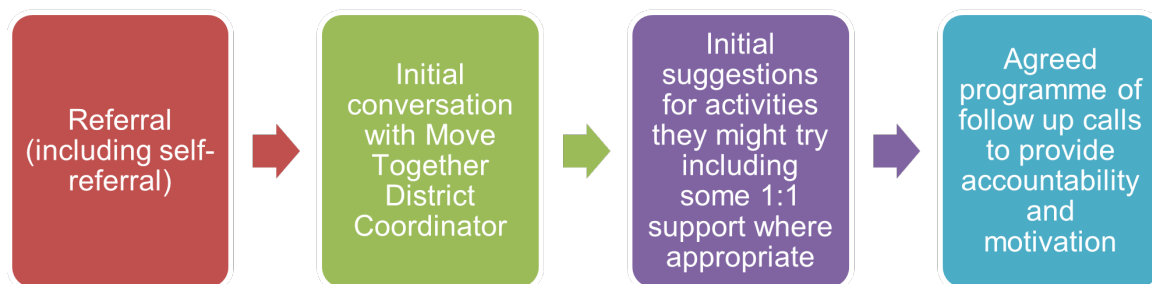
'I found it so difficult to motivate myself to do the exercises, it was so easy not to do them. But I got a phone call and this person came round. He was a really nice person and came to my house to help with exercises. He identified the three best exercises I needed to do to strengthen my legs. Each week he came and he increased the amount of exercises I was doing.

I have kept it up as there were only three exercises, it was easier to do them. It's strengthened my various muscles and gave me more confidence in walking without a walking stick.

The encouragement was fantastic, the encouragement made me do it, seeing the progress, which made me feel good after failing at physio. Living on your own you need somebody to do it with or to show you what to do.'

The model

At the heart of the Move Together pathway is a simple and straightforward approach to tackling a complex and multi-faceted issue and is shown below.



The key feature of the Move Together pathway is that it works in a person centred way. It seeks to understand the individual circumstances a person faces and then to work with them to overcome barriers or increase motivation. The aim is to provide people with a pathway into sustainable physical activity they can continue themselves after the initial period of support has ended. This length of support can vary and is tailored to the specific needs of the person who has joined the pathway.

Anyone can access the Move Together pathway. It was set up to provide specific support to people as part of the recovery from Covid-19. However, it has quickly evolved to being a pathway that not only supports people with the recovery from Covid-19 but also supports those with long term health conditions.

The initial funding for Move Together ran for 12 months. Referrals to the pathway were initially slow (understandable for a new offer) but with the distribution of a letter to all people in Oxfordshire who had shielded in September 2021, referrals to the pathway increased. At the time of this report 1,011 people have connected with the pathway. Although numbers do fluctuate, depending on the marketing activity that has happened in any one District (for example Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire included a leaflet as part of the Council Tax letter leading to a spike in referrals), around 100 referrals join the pathway each month. This has remained remarkably steady throughout the 12 months

once the pathway became established.

The health service is the most important referral partner with close to 50% of referrals coming from this source. The feedback from referral partners about Move Together indicates the pathway is easy to engage with.

Initial contact

Following the referral an initial contact is made with the participant. This allows the beginnings of a relationship to build with the participant.

'They were really pleasant and helpful, Mark explained what it was all about and we agreed and set up some phone calls...we discussed all kinds of things.' Move Together participant

Since the mid-point evaluation this initial contact discussion has evolved. The Districts have become clearer about what the content of this discussion should focus on and how to ensure information is captured and the relationship begins to build.

Next steps

The next steps is where Move Together becomes a fully flexible person centred programme. Move Together can offer telephone support, signposting and motivation but it is also flexible and allows an offer of one to one support in people's homes where this is appropriate and needed.

'We don't advertise the one to one sessions to all of our participants because we would be

inundated, we kind of highlight through those initial phone calls people that might be more housebound, that might have more mental health issues and they might be in need of that one to one support.' District

For most of the Districts this is something new they are able to offer and they recognise how valuable this is at allowing them to reach a different range of people.

'We realise there is maybe a generation of people we have missed through not going to them and supporting them.' District

For some people who connect with the pathway, moving more will be easier if it is part of an existing community activity. To support this Move Together also has a strand of work that supports community development activity around sport and physical activity.

The amount of this that takes place varies by District. This reflects the amount already taking place. For example, in Oxford City there is a vibrant community offer, in contrast in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse the community physical activity offer was largely Council led prior to Covid-19 and has been much slower to re-start. This means more community development work is needed in some Districts than others.

In large parts of Oxfordshire rurality is the issue and trying to set up sessions with unknown levels of demand in the community is a challenge. To overcome this, in West Oxfordshire they have been offering one to one visits. As they build up a relationship with the people they are supporting, they invite a group with similar abilities to a community class, allowing them to reach several people at once. This has many benefits. It helps establish a new community offer, provides more social opportunities for people and increases the frequency of connections and the opportunity for people to be active.

In Cherwell they are working to set up seated exercise groups in supported accommodation and this is being done in a sustainable way. The Move Together team provide mentoring

and support to volunteers who take over the session once it has been set up and established. This has a huge range of benefits as it allows the team to be constantly setting up new activities. They work in partnership with the Royal Voluntary Service who in turn provide the support to volunteers.

In Oxford City they have established a Facebook group. This provides people who are on the pathway with a network of people to connect to and those that have graduated with the opportunity to stay connected and to continue to receive support from the programme.

Spotlight on....using volunteers to develop delivery

One volunteer found out about Move Together through the village Facebook group and was offered the opportunity to do a seated exercise training course. They were motivated by the opportunity to help out with something they felt passionate about.

'I wanted to volunteer but I hadn't seen things that I fancied doing and thought this might be a good thing to do, I thought I might enjoy that'

The group of volunteers had the training course and an opportunity to meet up on a regular basis whilst waiting to take over a session. Two volunteers run each session. Alongside providing moral support to each other, this model ensures the session can be covered if one of the volunteers is unavailable.

The sessions in the supported accommodation provide a regular opportunity for the residents to come together. They use the equipment that is available in the Move Together pack and are encouraged and motivated to build the exercises into their daily routines and habits. Although the exercise is important, the social opportunity is also an important feature.

'I think the benefit of it is socially as well, there are the physical side of things, they benefit from doing the movement but it is the social element that is important'

Reach

Move Together has reached 1,011 people. It has been a consistent feature of Move Together that it has reached more females than males and it is clear the pathway is continuing to attract more female participants. With:

☆ 72% female participants.

☆ 28% male participants.

Move Together is also, in general, reaching older people with 69% of participants over 50. Across those who have connected with Move Together, 83% (738) identify they have been negatively impacted by Covid-19. This is shown by the feedback from participants on the pathway.

'[I am] unable to go anywhere and was alone for most of it. Hip concern has got worse, I can't bend down and pick things up off the floor or get down onto the floor.' Move Together participant

'My self esteem and confidence has been affected terribly. I have had bouts of anxiousness and depression which my family have supported me with.' Move Together participant

Move Together has also successfully reached a large number of people with long term health conditions:

☆ 40% (400) of people on the database identify they have a long term condition that lasts 12 months or more.

☆ 51% (511) have at least one health condition.

☆ 28% (287) have two or more health conditions.

☆ 18% of people identify they have a mental health problem and 16% identify obesity as their health condition.

Move Together also uses EQ5D to understand

in more detail the quality of life of participants. It helps show over a third of participants who provide information have moderate or worse issues with pain, mobility and anxiety.

Around a quarter of participants often experience some aspect of loneliness and over half experience some aspect of loneliness some of the time.

Move Together is also reaching inactive people with 39% of people connecting with the pathway classed as inactive.

Over 45% of participants on the pathway were motivated to join because they wanted support to move more. A further 18% wanted to move more but had a condition (for example a long term health condition) where they felt they would benefit from specific advice and support. A further 15% were looking to improve their mental health and over 15% were looking to lose weight. But it is the narrative feedback that helps illustrate the specific challenges those connecting with Move Together face.

'My motivation? The fact I hadn't done any exercise or done anything or seen anyone for the best part of two years, I hadn't hardly seen a soul for two years.' Move Together participant

'Because I feel dreadful, my mental and physical health have suffered due to having to shield, I'm really down in the dumps and have no idea how to get myself out of this rut.' Move Together participant

Activities and outcomes

148 out of 165 of the people who have completed a follow up have one or more health conditions. This represents 90% of people who have completed a 3 month follow up and compares to an overall total on the database of 50%. This strongly suggests the pathway is working for people with long term health conditions who want to make changes to their health.

587 people have been signposted or provided with an activity. Over 75% of participants are signposted to multiple and different sessions or ways to be active.

The insight we have collected from participants suggests there are some key features of the pathway that help them engage and then motivates them to remain engaged.

Staff that listen and care

The feedback from Move Together participants is they valued being listened to by the Move Together coordinators.

'I suffered from really bad depression.. anyone can be a doctor, they just say the same thing, give up smoking and lose weight, I was sectioned a few years ago, before then I went to the doctors about it, they said give up smoking and lose weight...when the first call came through I thought it would be the same as normal...give up smoking, lose weight. I thought it would be another tick box but thought let's just see how it goes. But Hayley stepped up to the plate. She has been helpful from the moment we started, everything she said she would do she has done...I can't speak highly enough of that course...someone actually listening and understanding and there is someone there helping you...listening and appreciating and not feeding me BS.' Move Together participant

'I wanted to go out, wanted to start exercising, but there was a block that I don't believe in it... then Move Together got in touch with me... had this lovely lady, Hayley, she is amazing and

persevered with me. She kept calling me, she sent me some booklets I look at every day, then I chose to do Slimming World and got it free for 12 weeks which was a really good incentive.' Move Together participant

Regular contact and supporting reflection

Participants also told us how important the regular contact was for helping them reflect on what they had done and the progress they had made. This could then act as a motivator for doing more or continuing a programme of sessions.

'We set up a once a month conversation, that was really helpful, good for refreshing about what I was doing if I had got stuck in a rut. It helped with reflecting back on behaviour. It was good to know there was someone who could be your motivator, you have done this, you have done that, you just need to do a bit more.' Move Together participant

'Mark was really, really good, very positive, when he rang me, he suggested maybe doing a reflection booklet to reflect on my activities for the week. Yes, I might have had a bad week in terms of what I have done, but what could I do next week to change and influence that.' Move Together participant

Chunking the exercises

Move Together participants also highlighted how important the support was for helping them to understand what they should be focusing on.

'I felt I would benefit from some professional guidance to let me know what exercises I should do...I found it so useful when Lisa the coach comes, she identifies which of the exercises I should be doing and fine tunes the exercises in terms of how many I ought to be doing.' Move Together participant

Signposting to the right activities

It was also clear from participants how important it was for people to be signposted to the right activity in their community. In particular, those activities that are friendly, welcoming and supportive, particularly for people with poor mental health.

'Hayley kept on saying about going to Rose Hill [local gym], I thought shall I, shan't I, then one day I phoned up. They spoke to me that day, she was amazing, I don't know what it was, it just made me feel like I was worth it and they booked me into a session. On the day I got there, they were waiting for me at the door to welcome me. I felt so good when I came back out, I rebooked another one. On that day I was 30 minutes late and said, I just felt like I needed to tell you I couldn't do it today and they said 'up them stairs' and I felt so much better after it.' Move Together Participant

One to one support

For those who are struggling with mobility, transport or mental health issues the one to one visits can be hugely beneficial to help participants in the pathway get started and to build up their strength and balance so they can be more independently active.

'She came back and gave me a regime and went through it very carefully, she is very good, then she started coming back regularly to check I was doing it, then she said she was starting a keep fit club...I have just been today again...two of my friends have enrolled as well.' Move Together Participant

'I found it so difficult to motivate myself to do the exercises...he came to the house to help with the exercises...he helped me identify the three that would be best for me, for strengthening my legs. Each week he increased the amount of exercise we were doing...It was incredible, I was not motivated to do it by myself, I was getting upset and depressed and worried, having someone come round helped me so much in doing the exercises.' Move Together Participant

Resources

For most participants on the pathway, the first step is they are provided with a resource pack. Depending on the pack, this includes exercise cards, resistance bands and other equipment and ideas to help get them started, including a recipe booklet. The pack provides people with a starting point for their activity.

'The book is very good, it isn't frightening, it is persuasive and it is well constructed...it is a professional piece of work.' Move Together participant

Spotlight on....age is no barrier to being active

One Move Together participant found out about the opportunity through a flyer in their Council Tax bill.

'I lost my wife last June through Parkinsons, whilst she was alive she was under the care of physios and all kinds of people came to the house. I regularly did the exercises with her to make sure she did them. Since I lost her I have been very remiss. Until lockdown I had been going to a weekly session run by Age Concern but with lockdown and losing my wife I got very remiss my mobility got less and less.

They came and saw me, they looked at how I was moving around the house and watched me do various things, so they spent some time talking to me and assessing what they thought I needed.

She did a sequence of exercises, she was doing them and me repeating them to show what level I ought to be doing...it had spurred me on, it came at just the right moment for me. Such nice people, I got on with them well and enjoyed them coming, what a wonderful service to offer.'

This 93 year old Move Together participant uses the resources as little tasks to do throughout the day. They are also a recruiter for new participants, telling their friends and wider social circle about the opportunity on offer.

Outcomes

The data collected by Move Together is starting to show the impact being more active and engaged with the pathway is having on the wider physical health of participants. First and foremost Move Together is getting people more active. This is the area where there has been the most significant change, which would be expected from a physical activity focused pathway.

- ☆ 69% of participants on the pathway (114 people) have increased the number of minutes in a week they are active at the three month follow up. 78% of participants (129) have maintained or increased the number of minutes they are active.
- ☆ 31% of participants on the pathway (51 people) have moved from inactive (less than 30 minutes a week) to active.

Feedback from participants on the pathway highlights how the pathway has opened up a wide range of opportunities to be active and has motivated them to take on new and regular opportunities to move more.

'I have started cycling on a Friday morning, and have re-joined pilates...doing things at home really helped, I got the booklet and the pedometer, the calls gave me the impetus to keep going. Then I got 12 weeks at a slimming club, that is coming to an end and I am going to sign up for another 12 weeks. It has given me the impetus to restart things I had given up.' Move Together participant

'I got out walking, when Covid hit I was 23 stone, I am now 16 stone and I am now out bike riding. I felt I am going to show willing and I am going to do my bit.' Move Together participant

'I have kept it up, as there was only three, it was easier to do them, not page after page. It's strengthened my various muscles and has given me the confidence in walking without a walking stick. He said to me 'I bet you can walk to the centre'. I thought I am going to try it, I walked there and back, he was really pleased...if I am given a challenge I do try

and do that challenge, it was only because of him, if I hadn't had that encouragement. The encouragement was fantastic.' Move Together participant

Move Together is also showing a positive impact on participants' wider wellbeing. The follow up data on loneliness shows that 38% of participants (62 people) have decreased their levels of loneliness. This is a hugely valuable finding as it helps to show how the pathway is giving people the skills to connect with each other.

'It's started getting me out of the house on my own, I wasn't doing that before...but going to Move Together prompted me to get a gym membership, from the classes I've been to with Lisa, I now go to the gym on Monday for an hour and on Wednesday I go to the pool...I've gone from doing nowt, to three sessions a week. It gave me the spark I needed.' Move Together Participant

Participants in the pathway really value the person centred approach and the support they receive.

'This is money well spent, it is one thing the government did right, if other people have benefited as much as I am, I thought it was a brilliant programme.' Move Together participant

'Without Move Together, I wouldn't be going out on my own...it has improved everything, it is hard to put a defining thing on it, it got me out of the house, got me some new friends to have a laugh with, Lisa is one in a million, she is so bubbly, you want to try and do it to please her as much as myself. I think for anyone who needs it, like I needed it, it is a bloody good thing.' Move Together participant

'It might surprise you, it does motivate you and it is just based around you, nobody is judging you at all.' Move Together participant

'I can't think how I can improve it. It is really good, I do feel privileged to be on it and the friends I have recruited onto it, they are thrilled, they really enjoy it.' Move Together participant

Year 1 Findings

Move Together has been fully operational for just under a year. The approach is evidence based. It recognises that everyone, regardless of their current health state can move more and so offers a universal service that is open to anyone. It is built on NICE guidelines for how to encourage behaviour change, including allowing time for a person centred approach. Those involved in its delivery have undertaken a continuous process of reflection and improvement to ensure the pathway is meeting the needs of the people of Oxfordshire.

As this report has shown, people engaging with Move Together are moving more but they also feel better. They are more connected, more mobile and more motivated. They are also being given the tools they need to be active into the future. Not everyone who takes part benefits. Around 50% of people who connect to the pathway don't stay engaged in a meaningful way (it should be noted this can be because a simple piece of signposting has helped them). But what is interesting is that of those that do stay engaged and complete a 3 month follow up, over 90% have at least one long term health condition. The evidence from year one of Move Together is it helps people with long term health conditions move more, 69% of participants are moving more and a further 11% have maintained their levels of activity.

Move Together has shown that creating a stand alone pathway to support people to move more in Oxfordshire has a number of strengths. In particular, it helps people with long term health conditions to move more. However, there is some key learning for others to take from the experiences of the Move Together pathway.

- ☆ Providing a pathway not a destination – ensuring there is a mechanism for transitioning out of the pathway into either independent physical activity or as part of a community offer.
- ☆ Recognising that systems matter – different demographics and geography will influence how a pathway like Move Together operates. Community development work needs to be embedded into a pathway like this to ensure there are appropriate opportunities for people to connect to. Time is also needed at the start (and ongoing) to build referral networks.
- ☆ One to ones – they are a hugely valuable part of the offer but should be reserved for those who will benefit most from it. The resources and phone calls provide people with the opportunity to take the first step themselves and this can sometimes be the most powerful step towards change.
- ☆ Long term solution - although the long term impact of Move Together is not known there are indications that its approach of upskilling and empowering people to move more has the potential to embed these important features. Most importantly however, Move Together helps people feel better and this can create a positive feedback cycle that then encourages people to do more.

If you are interested in finding out more about Move Together, or would like to get more involved you can visit the website <https://www.getoxfordshireactive.org/move-together> or contact Richard Claydon on richardclaydon@activeoxfordshire.org. A more detailed version of the evaluation report is also available from Active Oxfordshire.