



# CREATING AN ACTIVE BIRMINGHAM STRATEGY

Birmingham Physical Activity Strategy  
2024-2034

A BOLDER **HEALTHIER** BIRMINGHAM



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# FOREWORD

Being active and enjoying physical activity has many benefits for our physical and mental health. Physically active people are less likely to suffer from health conditions such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. In addition, being physically active has a positive impact on our mental wellbeing. It is important that we build activity into our daily lives from early years through to older age.

However, in Birmingham not everyone is meeting the daily recommendations for physical activity. Across the city there are also health inequalities that exist, with some communities and wards not being as active as others and therefore not experiencing the benefits that come from being active. For this reason, we are working in partnership with stakeholders from across the city through the Creating An Active City Forum. This will support all people living in Birmingham to become more active and to create places that ensure being active is an easy choice.

This strategy sets out our vision for Birmingham to be an active city and how we will enable everyone to move more, creating a bolder, healthier city. The strategy provides a framework for collective action, working across a wide range of partners and communities, putting them at the heart of action. As a partnership we will work together over the next ten years to break down the barriers faced within our communities and create opportunities for large scale, lasting change. The legacy from the Commonwealth Games, the new regional transport plans, and work to create beautiful green spaces in the city all make a huge contribution to supporting local people to build physical activity into their everyday lives. However, we can and should be doing more. Together we can drive the bold changes needed to prioritise physical activity to enable everyone in our city to be active at every age and ability.



Cllr Mariam Khan

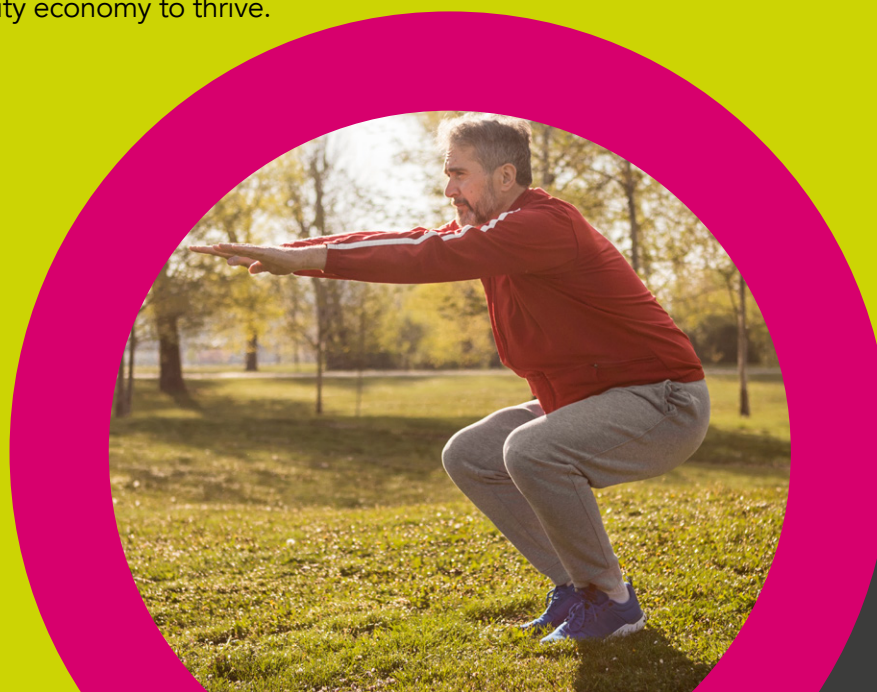
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mariam Khan'.

# INTRODUCTION

Birmingham is a wonderfully diverse city, with a vibrant and growing population. It has a well-established and varied physical activity landscape including a wealth of community groups, clubs and facilities, physical activity providers, community organisations and venues. In addition, Birmingham has a rich sporting heritage ranging from top international athletics, world championship snooker, international badminton, and most recently Birmingham hosted the 2022 Commonwealth Games. There is lots to celebrate and build upon in the city.

Birmingham has ambitious plans which play an instrumental role in developing a more active city; the clean air zone in the city centre, which has led to the innovative Low Traffic Neighbourhoods scheme has created spaces and places that are more accessible and safer enabling people to be more active in different ways. This has provided an increased focus on active travel, supporting people to walk and cycle in their local communities. Through the Future Parks Accelerator, the City of Nature Alliance has been established to implement the work that the accelerator identified. It is anticipated that over the next 25 years, this Alliance will help deliver Birmingham's vision to become a 'City of Nature'.

In contrast, Birmingham is the 7th most deprived local authority in the country, and the most deprived authority in the West Midlands. Across Birmingham there are stark inequalities that exist between neighbourhoods relating to health outcomes, living conditions and life chances. Through the creation of opportunities and an environment that supports people to build activity into everyday life we have an opportunity to address these inequalities. By prioritising physical activity, we have the potential to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents, contribute to our climate change ambitions and support our city economy to thrive.



# BACKGROUND

## Why do we need a physical activity strategy?

Physical Activity is important to all of us. There is clear evidence that being active regularly can reduce symptoms and complications for people with health conditions. The Chief Medical Officer recommends that all adults should be achieving at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week and minimise the amount of time they are sedentary.

Not everyone within the city is meeting the daily recommendations for physical activity. There are also several inequalities that exist across the city, with some communities and wards being less active than others and therefore not experiencing the many benefits that come from being active. We can and should be doing more; together we can drive the bold changes needed to prioritise physical activity and sport so everyone in our city can be active and enjoy the benefits this brings.

This citywide, co-produced strategy captures how we will work together to create a movement across the city to enable everyone to be active at every age and ability by building physical activity into everyday life and making it an easier choice.

## Physical activity for adults and older adults

- Benefits health
- Improves sleep
- Maintains healthy weight
- Manages stress
- Improves quality of life

Reduces your chance of

- Type II Diabetes -40%
- Cardiovascular disease -35%
- Falls, depression etc. -30%
- Joint and back pain -25%
- Cancers (colon and breast) -20%

Some is good, more is better

Make a start today: it's never too late

Every minute counts

### Be active

at least

# 150

minutes  
moderate intensity  
per week

increased breathing  
able to talk

OR

or a combination of both

at least

# 75

minutes  
vigorous intensity  
per week

breathing fast  
difficulty talking

Swim  
 Brisk walk  
 Cycle

to keep muscles, bones and joints strong

## Build strength

on at least  
**2** days a week

 Gym  
 Yoga  
 Carry heavy bags

Run  
 Stairs  
 Sport

### Minimise sedentary time

Break up periods of inactivity

### Improve balance

For older adults, to reduce the chance of frailty and falls  
2 days a week

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines 2019

# WHY DO WE NEED A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

There are significant inequalities in physical activity in Birmingham



## UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Inequalities in Physical Activity exist across a number of underrepresented groups



## DEPRIVATION

Physical inactivity is strongly linked to deprivation



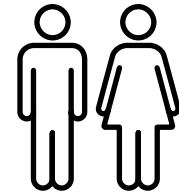
## AGE

You are more likely to be inactive if you are a younger or older person living in the city



## GENDER

Women and girls are more likely to be inactive



People with a disability or long term condition are a third more likely to be inactive compared to people without (44% v 28%)

People from lower socio-economic groups (SEG) are more inactive than those from higher SEG

Children and young people – 2 in 5 (38%) children & young people living in Birmingham are inactive

Overall 1 in 3 (35%) women are inactive compared to 1 in 4 (28%) of men

People from an Asian (excl. Chinese) background are nearly twice as likely to be inactive compared to a white British background (43.1% compared to 26.5%)

The proportion of adults living in IMD1 who are inactive is nearly double (39%) those living in IMD 10 (21%)

Older people - 2 in 5 (39%) of older adults (aged 55 and above) are inactive

Only 1 in 3 (35%) girls are meeting the CMO guidelines for PA compared to nearly 1 in 2 (47%) boys

# HOW WILL WE KNOW THE STRATEGY MAKES A DIFFERENCE?

We want to create Birmingham as an active city, where physical activity is an easy choice. The strategy focuses on developing opportunities for people to build physical activity into everyday life, through active living, active recreation, and active travel. It complements other strategies and plans in place across the city which collectively come together to ensure a whole system approach is taken to increasing physical activity.

Reduce	Increase	Increase	Reduce
Inactivity	Physical activity	Cycling and Walking	Inequalities in physical activity



# HOW IS THE STRATEGY BEING DEVELOPED AND OUR PRINCIPLES ?

The strategy has been co-produced with a wide range of stakeholders who have an interest in and are involved in physical activity across the city. A series of stakeholder meetings, surveys and workshops have been organised to bring people together and to involve them in the development of the strategy and delivery plans.

The principles developed during these conversations are to:

- Implement a whole system approach to physical activity in Birmingham.
- Take a life course approach and focus on the unmet needs using data, intelligence and insight to focus on geographies and communities where inequalities exist.
- Adopt a community centred approach and empower local people to lead, embedding the voice and influence of local people across the system.

- Focus on early help and prevention and ensure interventions are tailored and person-centred.
- Develop local, accessible activity opportunities, built on local community assets.
- Provide senior level commitment to embed physical activity in policy to ensure multiple outcomes are met around health, climate change, air quality through strong strategic collaboration.
- Support a more sustainable, strategic, and joined up approach to funding opportunities.



# STRATEGY VISION AND PRIORITIES



We will create a bold, healthy, and active city where people have access to a wide range of opportunities and a supportive environment to enable them to become more active. Birmingham will be a city where physical activity improves people's lives and the places in which they live.

By working collaboratively with partners from across Birmingham we will inspire, motivate, and make it easier for everyone to be active at every age and ability. Recognising that some people will require more support than others to be active.

**Birmingham will achieve this by focussing on five areas:**

**Active People  
Active Society  
Active Environment  
Active System,  
and Closing the Gap**

# MAKING A PLAN FOR CHANGE:

How partners and people in the city can make things better?

## Active People

By creating and promoting access to physical activity opportunities taking a life course approach across multiple settings we will enable more people to engage in regular activity.





## **Active Environment**

**By creating and protecting the places and spaces that promote and engage people of all ages and abilities in activity we will enable more people to engage in regular activity.**



## **Active Society**

**By changing how we talk about physical activity across the city, building insight and evidence into policy, commissioning, planning decisions and communication messages and marketing campaigns we will enable more people to engage in regular activity.**

## Active System

By creating a more connected system and strengthening our local leadership, governance, partnerships and workforce capabilities we will enable more people to engage in regular activity.



## Closing the gap

**By continuing to develop a better understanding of local barriers and enablers to increase activity across the city and ensure we focus on the least active groups as identified in the Physical Activity Needs Assessment we will enable more people to engage in regular activity.**



# HOW CAN YOU HAVE YOUR SAY?

**We would like to hear what you think about this draft strategy;**

**About Our Vision statement**

**About The Principles by which we will work**

**About Our Priorities**

**And say what A Plan for Action could include**

You could also become part of a virtual Physical Activity Citizen Panel which will shape the Plan of Action in the city

Please use this link to complete a questionnaire which will help us Create an Active Birmingham QR code

Link to BeHeard

We look forward to hearing from you