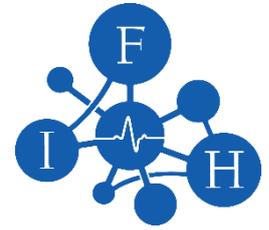




# Active Hastings Annual Report



## 2023-2024



# Active Hastings Headline Figures for 2023/24



**1,227 low cost,** inclusive physical activity sessions were delivered.



**1,444** different residents took part with **9,401** registered visits to sessions.

Winners of the **Community Engagement Award** at the 2023 Sussex Sport and Physical Activity Awards.



**Over 1 in 3**

of the participants live in SOAs that fall within the **5%** most deprived nationally.



**24%** of young people engaging in the programme live in the 1% most deprived SOAs nationally.

**33%** of adult participants stated that they have a disability, long-term health condition or special educational needs.



**11,319** followed Active Hastings on social media.

**81%** of adults and **83%** of young people increased their weekly physical activity levels as a result of taking part in Active Hastings sessions.

**74%** of adults who increased their physical activity levels experienced improvements in their mental health.



**90%** of young people taking part benefited from improvements to their mental health.



**86%** of adults who increased their physical activity levels experienced improvements in their physical health.



## What is Active Hastings?

Active Hastings is a strategic physical activity project, delivered by Hastings Borough Council in partnership with East Sussex County Council Public Health. The project is supported by funding from a range of partners. The main funding partner is Hastings and St Leonards Primary Care Network (PCN), who during 23/24 supported the project alongside Active Sussex, Safer Hastings Partnership, Southern Housing, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, East Sussex County Council, Sport England, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, and Parkinson's UK.

Active Hastings was announced the winner of the Community Engagement Award in 2023's Sussex Sport and Physical Activity Awards. At the same awards, the Active Hastings GP Link Workers were finalists in the Health Improvement Award.

## Aims of the project:

To improve health and wellbeing, and to reduce health inequalities in Hastings by increasing access and participation in physical activity interventions.

To utilise physical activity as a driver for community development and building social capital in Hastings

To develop the physical activity sector in Hastings through effective communication, networking, and capacity building.

To build the physical activity evidence base at a local level.

## 2023/24 Highlights

Between April 2023 and March 2024, the Active Hastings team delivered 1227 low cost, inclusive physical activity sessions. The activities delivered were all aimed at the least active populations, breaking down barriers to participation and achieving long term increases in physical activity levels. Sessions ranged from activities for under 5 who are just beginning to learn fundamental movement skills, through to sessions for our least mobile older populations.

1444 residents took part in Active Hastings led sessions during 23/24, with 9401 registered visits to sessions. 787 of these residents registered with Active Hastings for the first time during this year. Active Hastings strives to engage with new participants each year, while those who have previously engaged and increased their physical activity levels are encouraged to move into mainstream physical activity options, such as those offered by Freedom Leisure, where possible.

The project aims to engage with the least active members of the community, in particular those experiencing the greatest health inequalities. The Active Lives Survey results show a clear correlation between deprivation levels and levels of physical inactivity. This mirrors the correlation between deprivation levels, poor health, and lower life expectancy. Due to these clear relationships, the Active Hastings programme aims to engage residents from the most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs). To do this, marketing is targeted at these areas and the project breaks down barriers that these communities are coming up against, such as transport and costs, by ensuring that venues are carefully selected and are accessible to people living in the priority areas, and charges are kept low. Childcare is also provided at two sessions per week on the Broomgrove Estate. The team also work closely with partners such as the Southern Housing, Children's Services Youth Hub team, health

services and schools to ensure that people living in the priority wards are signposted to Active Hastings activities.

Postcode data, along with other demographic information, is collected at sessions, allowing us to monitor where participants are coming from. Postcode data is available for 1337 of the people who took part in sessions during this period and shows that 1207 of those participants live in Hastings. The majority of the remaining 130 are Rother residents.

The percentage of Hastings participants that live within the 20% most deprived SOAs, are shown in Table 1. The team is successfully engaging people from the most deprived areas, with over 1 in 3 of the participants living in SOAs that fall within the 5% most deprived nationally. The breakdown of participants by ward is shown in Chart 1.

IMD percentage	Percentage of Active Hastings participants living in deprived SOAs April 2023 to March 2024
1%	21%
5%	34%
10%	43%
20%	53%

Table 1: The percentage of Hastings participants that live within the 20% most deprived SOAs (April 2023 to March 2024)

## BREAKDOWN OF RESIDENTS TAKING PART IN ACTIVE HASTINGS SESSIONS BY WARD

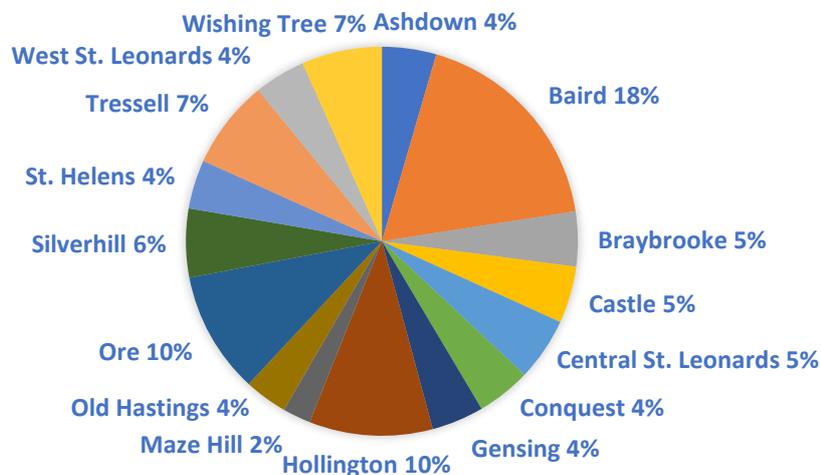


Chart 1: Breakdown of participants by ward (April 2023 to March 2024)

The Active Hastings team deliver over 40 sport and physical activity sessions per week, all at maximum cost of £3 per session. This programme of activities is made up of a mixture of sessions run by the Active Hastings delivery team and external instructors funded through the programme.

Although the activities are open to anyone who wants to attend, all aim to engage with inactive people. During 2023/24, 43% of participants stated that they had not achieved the recommended 150 minutes of activity per week in the 28 days prior to signing up with Active Hastings and 21% had not taken part in a minimum of 30 minutes activity per week in the previous 28 days. If we look at

the stats for the adults separately, levels of inactivity are slightly higher (54% not achieving 150 minutes and 28% not achieving 30 minutes). We believe this is due to most young people being active within school time, although many are not active outside of school.

The annual participant survey showed that participants are successfully increasing their physical activity levels through taking part in the project. 81% of adult respondents stated that they had increased their physical activity, and 83% of respondents stated that they were now achieving the recommended 150 minutes of activity per week. Of those that had increased their physical activity levels, 86% stated that they had experienced improvements in their physical health and 74% experienced improvements in their mental health as a result of taking part. The youth survey, completed by young people and their parents showed similar results, with 83% of young people increasing their physical activity levels. The young people also experienced wider benefits; 83% felt were healthier as a result of taking part, 72% made new friends, 79% grew in confidence and 90% felt that the activity improved their mental health.

As well as monitoring physical activity levels and deprivation, other demographic data is collected. During this period 9% of participants were from an ethnic minority background. This is an increase from the previous year (5%), as a result of working with partners such as Diversity Resource International, and aiming to make our activities and promotion appealing to people from ethnic minority groups. We are keen to increase this percentage over the next 12 months as analysis from the latest Active Lives Adult Survey shows that Mixed and White Other adults continue to have the highest activity levels, while South Asian, Black and those with other ethnic origins are the least likely to be active. We are keen to work with a wide range of organisations to understand the different motivations and barriers for people from different ethnic groups, and support those organisations to reduce inactivity within those groups.

Bridging the gap between male and female participation levels is another key aim of Active Hastings, with 29.2% of women in Hastings reported to be inactive (less than 30 mins of physical activity per week), compared to 23.9% of men (Active Lives Survey 21-22). Active Hastings runs a wide range of activities designed to appeal to women who do not want to take part in traditional sport. During 23/24, 61% of the participants at an Active Hastings session were female. 79% of female respondents to the survey stated that they had increased their physical activity levels through taking part in the sessions, and 80% stated that they were now meeting the recommended 150 minutes per week. While women are a key target group, we are still aware that there is also a need for an increase in physical activity levels in men, and therefore do include specific sessions aimed at men as well. For the men's sessions, we are particularly focusing on the least active demographics, with the greatest health benefits to be gained. Key projects include men's specific weight management sessions and sessions focusing on men's mental health. These sessions will be discussed in more detail later in the report. The participant survey showed that 89% of men taking part in the programme increased their physical activity levels, with 92% now achieving 150 minutes per week of activity.

### **Focus on Long-Term Health Conditions**

Engaging with people with a disability or a long-term health condition is a high priority for Active Hastings. National data and local insight reveal that long term health conditions are a key barrier to participation, but the benefits of physical activity outweigh the risks for people with long term health conditions, even those living with multiple conditions. During 23/24, 33% of adult participants and 15% of young people stated that they had a disability, long-term health condition or special educational needs. This high level of engagement by these groups is due to the targeted nature of

our sessions and the work of the Active Hastings GP Link Workers, focusing on people with life-limiting conditions.

During this year, 145 people were referred to the Active Hastings GP Link Workers by health professionals such as GPs, Occupational Therapists and Wellbeing Coordinators. The programme is open to anyone that the health professionals feel could benefit from being more physically active. It is a support and signposting service, to help patients find the most suitable activities for them. Patients engaging with the GP Link Workers have been referred to a wide variety of activities tailored to their individual needs. Examples of activities include adult weight management courses, 20/20 Health exercise referral programme, chair-based exercise classes, swimming, health memberships with Freedom Leisure, lower back pain classes, walking groups and tai-chi sessions. All patients engaging with the referral service are offered a 6 week follow up, after their initial meeting with the GP Link Worker. Of those that attended 84% had increased their physical activity levels. The percentage of participants who were active for less than 60 minutes per week, decreased from 72% to 8%.

During 23/24, we have launched several new weekly physical activity sessions for adults with long term health conditions. Five of the activities delivered this year were funded by Sport England's Together Fund, through Active Sussex.

Yoga for Lower Back Pain and Chair-based yoga classes received funding from this programme. 94 people have benefited from these yoga classes, with 39% of participants stating that they have a long-term health condition or disability. The sessions cater for a people with a wide range of conditions, such as Arthritis, COPD, Hypertension, Fibromyalgia, Alzheimer's, and hip replacements. 75% of participants stated that they had experienced improvements in their physical health as a result of taking part, stating improvements such as increased mobility, reduced blood pressure, ability to walk further and less pain. Many also highlighted mental health benefits such as reduced anxiety, increased positivity and confidence, and an enjoyment of the social interaction that the session provides. Initially, the Yoga for Lower Back was run as a drop-in session. However, following feedback from the participants and the instructor, it was felt that 9-week courses would be more beneficial. These will continue in 24/25. The chair-based exercise class is regularly fully booked, which has enabled it to become self-sustaining. Due to the popularity, we will be launching a second weekly class in 24/25.

"My knees are a lot better, and my back is fine now as I am carrying on doing the yoga to maintain these issues."

**Yoga for Lower Back Pain Participant**

"I have COPD the breathing element of Yoga has really helped with this, also I have found it has lowered my blood pressure and bolstered my energy after the sessions. Also, my joints are freer moving."

**Chair-based Exercise Participant**

The Together Fund also enabled three Men: Mind and Muscle courses to run during 23/24. These 8-week courses support men aged 30-59 with mild to moderate mental health conditions, referred by their GP. The sessions include a 45-minute mental health discussion with Natalie from Believe in You, followed by a 45-minute exercise session led by Richard Pringle from RPCC. 32 men benefited from the courses during this period, with all participants reporting improvements in areas of their mental health. Participants reported feeling more positive and equipped with coping strategies and the tools they needed to manage their mental health. Due to the positive effect of the Men: Mind and Muscle courses, Women: Wellbeing and Workout courses were also launched, and 24 women took part during 2023.

"Natalie and Rich were both superb, full of relatable advice and zero judgement. Provided support and a safe space, I am really grateful to them both."

**Men: Mind and Muscle Participant**

The Together Fund also supported the launch of Men's Yoga, aimed at improving men's mental health, as well as strength and flexibility. The sessions aim to break down the barriers that men often have to taking part in yoga, where the expectation is that the sessions will be predominately aimed at women. 27 men took part in the sessions this year, with around 10-15 attending each week. Of those that responded to our follow up survey, all stated that they had increased their physical activity levels and attributed this to the class. 90% of the participants attributed improvements in their physical health to the classes. 60% also experienced improvements in their

"I particularly liked it as it's a men focused class; no super bendy women intimidating!

**Yoga for Men's Health Participant**

mental health, stating that they feel calmer, more able to relax, and have a more positive outlook. One participant stated, "It's without doubt the best thing I've ever done in terms of mental health as long as you totally commit to it, ignore all your male 'programming' since birth and you'll reap the rewards."

During 23/24, 15 women took part in an educational course teaching women about their pelvic floor and exercises to strengthen it. There was an additional focus on the effects of menopause on the pelvic floor.

Regular weekly sessions launched previously have also continued to run and provide benefits for residents. Sessions that are particularly benefitting people with long term health conditions include walking football, over 50s aerobics, Parkinson's exercise classes, New Aged Kurling for adults with disabilities, and Age-Friendly Activity and Social Mornings. Active Hastings also provided a regular instructor for the Oasis older people activity sessions at Broomgrove Community Centre. All of these sessions are having a significant impact on the physical health of our community, with participants reporting benefits including weight loss, pain reduction, improved mobility, falls prevention, and reduced blood pressure. The mental health benefits are equally important, with many participants reporting reductions in anxiety, depression, social isolation, and loneliness. Research has linked social isolation and loneliness to higher risks for a variety of physical and mental conditions: high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease, and even death, so the benefits of providing opportunities for social interaction, should not be underestimated. Participants at the sessions are supporting each other to ensure that this is not an issue for them. For example, at the Four Courts Age Friendly Activity sessions, where many of the participants live alone and don't have much family locally, one participant has allocated herself the role of birthday secretary and ensures that all participants

"I chose Active Hastings because it gave me the incentive to get out of my depression since the loss of my dear missus."

**Age-Friendly Activities Participant**

receive a card on their birthday, signed by the rest of the group. The group also have a Christmas get together, to ensure that all participants enjoy the festive season, particular those that may be alone on Christmas day. These are just a couple of examples of the sorts of community spirit and support for each other, that is happening across all the groups that Active Hastings works with.

During this year, funding was secured to support the development of a second session to engage people with Young Onset Parkinson's. To maximise the potential of the session, it was decided to open this session up to people with neurological conditions such as: Early Onset Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis and Fibromyalgia. This weighted exercise class, is designed to improve range of movement, balance, strength, cardiovascular fitness, and coordination. The aim is to provide an appropriate session for people who are younger or more physically able than the participants at the current Parkinson's sessions. This was a gap that was highlighted by the East Sussex Young Parkinson's group. The sessions will launch in early 24/25.

Although long term health conditions are a priority focus for us, the wider programme aims to engage with anyone who is not meeting the recommended weekly physical activity guidelines. During this period, we have continued to deliver activities such as our very popular Pilates and Lattes class, Couch to 5K courses in partnership with Heart and Soul Runners, Active Pregnancy walks and Ladies that Lift courses.

“The classes are fantastic for my mental health and my condition of osteoporosis. Eugenie is a wonderful, patient professional teacher.”  
**Pilates and Lattes Participant**

During this year, we also launched several sessions at Broomgrove Community Centre, supported by UK Shared Prosperity funding that has been awarded to Hastings Borough Council. These include Pilates, Boxercise, Age-Friendly Activity sessions and Stay and Play sessions for families with children under 5. These sessions aim to engage residents of the estate and a free creche facility is provided for the Pilates and Boxercise classes. This project also included several one-off engagement events, working closely with partners such as ESCC Public Health, the Family Hub, Southern Housing, Oasis, Hastings Voluntary Action and St Michael's Hospice, to engage and consult with residents of the estate. During 23/24, 180 residents of the Broomgrove Estate took part in an Active Hastings led activity. Of these 180, 131 attended an Active Hastings Activity for the first time in 23/24.

## Adult Weight Management Programmes

The Active Hastings Adult Weight Management programme continued this year, with four 12-week courses delivered throughout the year. These courses were a mixture of WaistBand of Brothers for men only, and Flab-U-Less for women only. During 23/24, 54 people took part in the programme. The 12-week course for adults with a BMI over 30, provides participants with a good understanding of healthy eating and weight-loss, alongside behaviour change techniques and appropriate physical activity opportunities.

“The classes really helped to change my mind set to one of long-term healthy eating, rather than diets that only last a short term.”  
**Creating a Healthier You participant**

“Having attended many weight loss classes through Weight Watchers and Slimming World in the past, I have always been very disappointed when the weight crept back on. With this class it hasn't!  
**Flab-U-Less participant**

During this year, we also launched two new weekly classes, called Creating a Healthier You, which provide an exercise class for people living with obesity alongside diabetes and/or hypertension. These sessions were funded by NHS Sussex to increase referrals to the NHS Digital Weight Management programme and were initially funded to run until the end of March 2024. However, due to their popularity, these will continue into 24/25, with one class self-funded through participant fees and the other funded by the UK Shared Prosperity funding in Broomgrove. During 23/24 46 people took part in the weekly drop-in sessions.

“I completed the Race for Life last year which was a great achievement for me at 73.”  
**Flab-U-Less participant**

Participants on the weight management programmes have reported a range of physical and mental health benefits to taking part, including weight loss, reduced hypertension, joint problems and anxiety, and increased energy and confidence, improved sleep, and feeling fitter during everyday activities. One participant even managed to cycle 250 miles across Cambodia after losing weight on the Flab-u-less course. All participants attending the course are encouraged to go on to take part in other initiatives following the course. All are introduced to the offers from One You East Sussex and Freedom Leisure, as well as the activities run by Active Hastings and our partners. Many of the participants continue to stay involved in the activities offered by Active Hastings.

"I have lost around 2 stone and feel much better and more confident. I have also fallen back to a pre-diabetic level."

**WaistBand of Brothers participant**

## Activities for Young People and Families

The Youth Link Worker, funded by Hastings and St Leonards PCN is the strategic lead for youth physical activity within the team. During this period, she has continued to map the local provision for young people and create new partnerships with local physical activity providers and strategic partners. During this year, 585 young people took part in an activity organised by Active Hastings. The annual survey of parents and young people showed that had the young people not been attending the Active Hastings session, 68% of them would have been taking part in a sedentary activity instead. As previously stated, 83% of respondents confirmed that the sessions had increased the physical activity levels of their child, and there were clear benefits to their physical and mental wellbeing.

During this year, the Youth Link Worker, alongside other members of the youth delivery team, have worked on several projects. Examples of the work carried out are highlighted below:

Consultation highlighted a gap in opportunities for young people who wanted to play volleyball locally, with the closest club being in Eastbourne. Active Hastings have worked with Sussex Volleyball to introduce local opportunities. Initially, five sessions, followed by a tournament, were held in January and February. 24 young people took part in the sessions, and due to the popularity, an additional two sessions were delivered in March and Sussex Volleyball have committed funding for the venue for a further two sessions to take place in April. In March, a Go Spike Activator course was delivered in Hastings, funded by Active Hastings' Workforce Development fund, which provided local coaches and volunteers with the basic skills to deliver volleyball sessions. During 24/25, we will be looking at how those skills can be utilised to create sustainability for the volleyball sessions.

During 23/24, the team continued to build on the work carried out in 2022/23 around girls' rugby. Hastings and Bexhill Rugby Club's girls' section is now thriving with around 30 girls playing each week, enabling all three age groups (u12, u14 and u16) to enter teams into the Sussex League. Three girls from the u16s have been selected to play for Sussex through the player pathway development programme. The club was also supported to gain funding from Sport England to continue the school's development plan. The club received £2,400 to deliver eight 6 weeks blocks of session to years 5 and 6 and secondary age girls. During the Rugby World cup, Active Hastings also supported Rugby Tots to inspire more young people to get active through rugby. All reception aged children were provided with a free Rugby Tots Activity Book, which is a fun introduction to the sport. We have also continued to work with Sussex FA to deliver a WildCats girls football programme for 5- to 11-year-olds. Thirty-Five girls have benefited from the sessions during this year. The programme is a great stepping stone for children who would like to give football a go, in a relaxed fun environment, before joining a local team, which they are supported to do by our coaches. The girls were provided

“My daughter’s highlight of the week is attending her football classes with Jas and the team. It’s fun, inclusive and my daughter has learnt so many more skills. Her confidence has improved greatly also.”

**Parent of WildCats participant**

with additional inspiration earlier this year, when they were provided by the FA with free tickets to see Lewes Women’s team compete.

We have also continued to work with Defiant Sports to deliver activities for young people with a disability, long term health condition or special educational needs. During this year, 26 young people took part in the sessions, with around 8 attending each week. The development of this session has provided a much-needed opportunity for young people with a

disability or special educational need, who struggle to take part in main-stream sport. Prior to this session, there was no multi-sport activity for them. Feedback from participants, their parents and the coaches has shown that the sessions have had a significant impact on the lives of the young people involved. The sessions have broken down barriers to participation and have enabled the young people to increase their physical activity levels outside of school. Parents have commented that there is nothing else in the area that caters to their children’s needs, and that this session has given the young people something fun to look forward to each week. The session also enables siblings and parents to take part, which has been fantastic for family bonding. Over the course of the project there has been a noticeable change in the confidence of the young people involved in the sessions. Young people who were nervous and unsure about joining in at the beginning, are thriving and joining in confidently now. The sessions follow the ethos of the Play their Way campaign, allowing the young people to decide the structure of the sessions and the activities included. There have been opportunities for the young people to develop their leadership skills, and it has been fantastic to see them growing in confidence with this. We have also seen a significant improvement in the way that the young people work in groups. They are learning to work together, be aware of each other’s needs and support each other to be active.

“The leader has an excellent approach to the young persons, to include and involve them in a wide range of activities. We are happy there is a session for people with disabilities.”

**Parent of Inclusive Sport participant**

The Inclusive Sport session has also helped to create links with the Hollington Youth Hub for the young people and their families. We have seen young people coming through our session going on to join Street Dance classes and Youth Hub sessions at the centre, after becoming comfortable in the venue and with the staff there. We have also created a relationship between Defiant Sports and Hollington Youth Hub, who have since brought Defiant Sports over to the centre to support with their HAF provision.

In September, Active Hastings supported the Basketball World Club Tournament, working with the organiser to promote a youth coaching session as part of the tournament, where young people were able to be coached by international players. To add value to the Opening Schools Facilities programme, we were able to link this project with the basketball work being carried out at St Leonards Academy. US team Kitsap Admirals offered free coaching sessions to pupils at St Leonards Academy including after school sessions and coaching within PE. An additional session at the school was open to young people who do not attend St Leonards Academy. Twenty-five young people attended the community session. Following the success of the project this year, we are planning to work with additional schools in 2024, so that they can benefit from the fantastic opportunities brought to Hastings by the Basketball World Club Tournament.

Other youth activities that took place this year included tennis coaching with Break Point Tennis, Table Tennis with Rother Table Tennis, Athletics for Home Educated young people with Play Sport,

Junior Muay Tai with Siam Boxing Camp, Netball with St Leonards Academy and Street Dance with DanceHub and Funk Fusion Fitness. All of these sessions were aimed at young people who were not taking part in any regular sport of physical activity.

### **Active Hastings Street Sports 2023/24**

Funded through grants from Safer Hastings Partnership and Southern Housing, alongside contributions from Hastings Borough Council and East Sussex County Council Public Health, the Active Hastings Street Sport sessions provide free doorstep sports in the heart of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Hastings and St Leonards. Between April 2023 and March 2024, the Street Sport sessions engaged 171 young people, up to the age of sixteen in doorstep sports, with 1071 attendances at sessions.

All youth activities aim to be inclusive and engage young people from our most deprived areas. Of the participants in the Street Sport sessions, 43% live in neighbourhoods that fall within the 1% most deprived SOAs nationally. 67% of participants live within the 5% most deprived areas nationally. 26% of these participants also stated that they weren't meeting the recommend amount of physical activity each week.

As well as increasing physical activity levels and improving health outcomes, these sessions have proved to be incredibly beneficial socially for the young people. The coaches actively encourage young people who are not engaging in school, or those who are at risk of engaging in negative behaviours, to attend the sessions. While sport is the engagement tool being used, this project has a key focus on developing life skills such as communication, motivation, self-esteem, leadership, respect, and teamwork. It provides opportunities for social interaction as well as physical activity, to improve mental and physical wellbeing, confidence, and self-esteem – all factors which affect the likelihood of young people making poor life choices.

The team are experienced at working with young people with a variety of special educational needs and have supported many young people with additional needs to take part in the activities. These sessions support several young people who are not able to engage in traditional sports clubs, due to behavioural issues. Where children are removed from mainstream sports clubs for poor behaviour, our team will work with the young person to improve their behaviour to enable them to continue taking part. The young people understand the clear guidelines for taking part and the consequences for not participating in an appropriate way and are supported to take part positively. Through these sessions we aim to provide positive role models and encourage the young people to make good life choices. Although many of the children struggle with their behaviour and choices, particularly outside of our sessions, the consistency of us turning up every week, being positive role models, and giving the children, many of whom are from large families, positive attention and providing them with fun, active experiences, will have a hugely positive impact on them in the long run.

The sessions also provide a safe space for the young people, and parents are reassured by our presence. In some of the areas that the sessions take place, some children are not allowed out to play outside if our staff are not there. Having our team embedded in the neighbourhood has also enabled us to support community safety initiatives, providing information to the correct authorities to make changes in the area, such as cutting back bushes where drug use is taking place.

A full Street Sport report, including case studies is available for more details, email [activehastings@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:activehastings@hastings.gov.uk) for a copy.

During the school Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays, the team delivered 13 holiday activity and food (HAF) sessions, which provided 4 hours of sport and craft activities and a meal to young people in receipt of benefit-related free school meals. 162 different young people took part in these sessions, and 259 free meals were provided. Of these participants, 32% live within areas that fall

Staff are amazing. My son finds these days so much fun, and I feel safe leaving him there.

**Parent of a HAF participant**

within the 1% most deprived SOAs nationally. 63% live within the 10% most deprived areas nationally. The children benefited greatly from these sessions, with many joining in even when it was pouring down with rain. The free lunches were met with a lot of excitement, as many families are struggling to provide nutritious food during the holidays. Any leftover fruit or sandwiches were sent home with the children. These sessions were funded by East Sussex County Council as part of the national HAF programme. During the Christmas HAF sessions,

Active Hastings partnered with the National Literacy Trust, to ensure that all children were provided with a book to take home. This is a relationship that will continue throughout 2024/25. As well as drawing down funding for our own sessions, we were also successful at gaining funding for Project Rewild, who ran a further 12 sessions throughout the year. During this year, we were also successful at securing funding for Active Hastings and Project Rewild to deliver HAF sessions during the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays in 2024.

Honestly, these sessions and your staff are just amazing. [My son] loved them. He tried a new food due to the fact that lunch was provided and that's a massive breakthrough for him.

**Parent of a HAF participant**

As previously mentioned, additional funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has enabled more sessions for young people and families at Broomgrove Community Centre. Fun days for the estate were organised in August and December, with the aim of engaging with families and consulting them about the activities they would like to see in their area. Despite clashing with the Women's World Cup final, over 60 residents attended the summer fun day, and over 130 attended the Christmas event. The events brought together a variety of partners including Big Local, Sussex Police, Xtrax, Hastings Commons, Southern Housing, Hastings Voluntary Association, Siam Boxing Camp, Oasis, Hastings Museum and a community chef, and enabled partners to engage with residents and consult on local issues, needs and aspirations for the area. The provision of a healthy lunch was a particular draw for residents, many of whom stayed for the entirety of the event, taking part in sports and physical activities with the Active Hastings team and Siam Boxing Camp, fossil making with Hastings museum, spray painting with Xtrax and Hastings Commons, Badge making with HVAs Men's Health Project, learning how to make a healthy veggie chilli with the community chef, and creating smoothies with Active Hastings' smoothie bike, and at Christmas, of course, a visit from Father Christmas, where all children were gifted a book. Feedback gained during the summer event highlighted a need for more activities to engage teenagers in positive activities. The young people consulted were keen for a boxing style class and activities on a Friday evening. The Friday evening activities requested were specifically to replace the previously funded activity in which they were provided with taxis to attend an Active Hastings session at Summerfields Leisure Centre. This session was known as The Friday Night Project. In response to this feedback, a Junior Muay Thai session was launched in partnership with Siam Boxing Camp and a replacement Friday Night Project at Broomgrove Community Centre now takes place on the first Friday of every month, where the young people can try their hands at sports, crafts and cooking. We have also worked with Hastings Commons to bring in funding through the Million Hours Fund to deliver 5 more sessions at Summerfields Leisure Centre in 2024/25.

A Stay and Play session for under 5s was launched in September. Physical activities and craft activities are available for the children and their parents, and the children are provided with a free fruit snack. Soundcastle run music workshops as part of the session fortnightly.

## Opening School Facilities

The Youth Link Worker worked closely with Active Sussex and four local secondary schools (St Leonards Academy, Hastings Academy, Rye College, and Ark Alexandra Academy) to support them to each apply for £10,000 of Opening School Facilities (OSF) funding. The schools were supported through the application process, as well as to deliver the planned projects. As a result of this funding, the following activities have taken place this year:

- St Leonards Academy ran three netball sessions per week, one community session for Years 4-6 and two for St Leonards Academy students. Active Hastings provided the netball instructor and assistant leading on two of the sessions.
- St Leonards Academy worked in partnership with Hoops Legacy delivering 2 basketball sessions per week: one to St Leonards Academy students and one community session for years 7-11.
- Hastings Academy, Ark Alexandra Academy and Rye College delivered gym sessions with the equipment they purchased in year one. Sessions included staff sessions, student sessions, women only and community sessions. They also offered gym sessions during the school holidays, delivered by Play Sport.
- Rye College were able to purchase table tennis tables and offered coaching in February half term.
- Rye College delivered 6 hours lifesaving sessions at Rye swimming pool.
- Ark Alexandra received funding to improve the jumps equipment at the track to be able to offer the facilities to the home education community as well as other users. For the first time Ark Alexandra have allowed the facilities management company, Play Sport to open the track during the school day. Active Hastings are working with Play Sport to deliver a weekly athletics session for home educated young people.

## Workforce Development

Development of the local physical activity workforce is vital to enable the growth of the Active Hastings programme and the local physical activity offer. During this year, the following training has taken place:

- Activity Alliance, Inclusive Activity Programme Course: 21 people took part in the course which aimed to equip participants with the skills to engage disabled people and people with long-term health conditions more effectively in physical activity. Participants included fitness instructors, tennis coaches, dance teachers, conservation leads and disability activity leader and college teachers.
- Go Spike! Volleyball Activator Course, provided by Street Games: 7 new Volleyball Activators were trained, to support the ongoing development on the youth volleyball sessions.
- Pickleball Level 1 Activator Course: 23 sports coaches and volunteers were trained as Pickleball Activators, to support the growth of the weekly Pickleball session at Summerfields Leisure Centre.
- Two instructors were trained as Level 4 Cancer Rehabilitation Instructors.
- One instructor was trained as a Level 3 Exercise for Older Adults Instructor.
- One instructor was trained as a Level 4 Obesity and Diabetes Instructor
- Two members of the Active Hastings team were trained as Literacy Champions, enabling them to support the work of the National Literacy Trust during Active Hastings sessions.

## **Increasing awareness amongst residents and referral organisations of the physical activity opportunities available locally, and building local partnerships**

Raising awareness of the importance of being physically active and local opportunities to be active remains a key priority for the team. Press releases and updates in the Hastings Borough Council residents' and staff newsletters are sent out weekly. The resident newsletter is received by 32,266 residents and the internal newsletter is received by 343 staff and 32 councillors. During this year, a bi-weekly newsletter was created for members of the Active Hastings Partnership, which highlights upcoming activities and events to organisations involved in the partnership. This newsletter is currently sent to 137 partners.

Additionally, targeted text messages were sent out through GP surgeries throughout the year. Examples of the text messages sent out include promotion of the Men: Mind and Muscles courses to men who have consulted with their GP regarding a mental health condition, the Yoga for Lower Back Pain classes for anyone presenting with a back pain issue, and the Creating a Healthier You class to anyone living with obesity, alongside diabetes and/or high blood pressure. The connections with the GP surgeries and the use of the text message service as made a significant difference to engagement levels of people with specific needs. The Men's Weight Management class promoted to men with a BMI over 30, had 22 spaces available, which filled within 24 hours, with a further 28 people remaining on the waiting list. Activities are also promoted on the digital bus stops, digital screen at Summerfields Leisure Centre and TV screens in the surgeries.

As part of the UK Shared Prosperity funding for Broomgrove, we are also carrying out regular direct marketing on the Broomgrove estate. Having a member of the team dedicated to this area, meeting people face to face and telling them about the activities has enabled us to speak to residents about the barriers they are facing with regards to being more physically active and has helped us to increase the confidence that residents have in Active Hastings with regards to improving quality of life in the area.

Social media is an important engagement tool, with Active Hastings having a strong presence on Facebook, Instagram and X. High quality content, created by the Active Hastings Social Marketing and Communications Officer, funded through Hastings and St Leonards PCN, ensures that we are able to connect with our followers and encourage engagement. We have created strong visual content by sharing photos of our participants, alongside a positive quote and featuring our Active Hastings team out and about in the community. By sharing photos of the Active Hastings team, it continues to embed the team into the community and provides a welcoming face to potential new participants.

Social media reach has continued to rise this year, with an organic reach (excluding paid advertising) of 111.9k across Facebook and Instagram between April 2023 and March 2024. This is an increase from the previous year, which saw an organic reach of 65.2k. Residents are also reached through the Hastings Borough Council, which saw the Active Hastings pages visited 28,991 times between April 2023 and March 2024; an increase from 25,705 the previous year.

During this year, an Active Hastings video was created to showcase some of the activities taking place throughout Hastings. The video focused on our natural surroundings and local assets. We worked closely with local providers to ensure the video had a mixture of activities to appeal to multiple audiences. The video, "Getting Hastings Moving", can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/@activehastings3003>.

The Social Marketing and Communications Officer was also involved in the development of the #GettingEastSussexMoving activity campaign, alongside colleagues from East Sussex County Council, Active Sussex, and Active Rother. This East Sussex Healthy Weight Partnership project aims to highlight and celebrate the wide range of fantastic assets across the county, encouraging everyone to be more active. The monthly themed social media posts are localised to Hastings and shared regularly on our social media channels. The assets are also shared to over 80 other organisations through the Active Hastings Partnership.

During this year, we launched a “Did you know” campaign, which features members of the Active Hastings team alongside public health messaging. The aim of this campaign is to raise awareness of recommended levels of physical activity, as well as the benefits of being active. The Active Hastings social media pages are also used to amplify national campaigns, such as NSPCC: Keeping your child safe in sport, Hate Crime Awareness Week, We are Undefeatable, Childrens Mental Health Week, Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel event, World Menopause Day and Time to Talk day.



The team have also regularly attended events to promote the programme and the wider opportunities for people to be active. Examples of the events attended include the HVA Men’s Celebration event, Education Futures Trust family event, Ageing Well in Hastings event, and talks with Menopause and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome support groups. We are looking forward to attending and running more events over the next few months to continue raise the profile of physical activity locally.

During this year, the Youth Link Worker and Social Marketing and Communications Officer worked with Care for the Carers to launch a campaign aimed at making sport and physical activity clubs more accessible for young carers. The campaign strived to break down barriers many young carers face when participating in physical activity, by ensuring staff and volunteers are young carer aware. Clubs joining the pledge, which included Hastings Futsal, Hollington Gymnastics Club, Abbey Dance Academy, Hasting Priory Cricket Club, Siam Boxing Camp and Hastings Athletic FC, were featured in a social marketing campaign, which aimed to raise awareness of these needs. This campaign was revisited throughout the year and will continue in 24/25.

Building local partnerships is a key priority for Active Hastings. The Active Hastings Partnership continues to grow and evolve year on year. There are currently 137 people on the Active Hastings Partnership group, from over 80 different organisations. The impact of the PCN funded project on the overall Active Hastings Partnership has been evident this year, with a significant increase in the number of healthcare professionals joining the partnership group. Quarterly meetings of the partnership continue to take place, with an average of 25 people attending the meetings to receive updates and to make use of the networking opportunity.

Members of the Active Hastings team are also represented on several local and county partnerships, to ensure that those attending the Active Hastings Partnership are kept up to date with wider information, and so that information from the partnership can be shared more widely. Examples of the partnerships that Active Hastings team members are involved in include the East Sussex Healthy

Weight Partnership, Hastings Youth Partnership, Active Sussex Children & Young People Forum, Hastings Ageing Well Network, and the Sussex Health Instructor Network.

As well as working in partnership with external organisations to develop activities, a range of other support is provided by the team. Examples of the type of support provided include during this period include:

- Signposting participants to other organisations that are appropriate to their needs.
- Signposting instructors and clubs to appropriate funding opportunities and supporting with bid writing or checking where required.
- Providing advice to other funding partners regarding Hastings based projects, e.g., providing advice to the Community Safety Manager for sport themed applications to the JAG fund, or linking Active Sussex to appropriate instructors for their specific funding pots.
- Providing marketing support to local projects by connecting them with appropriate local services e.g., housing associations, mental health partners etc, and through our social media channels.
- Providing advice and support to other organisations.

#### Key focuses for 2024/25:

- Continue to facilitate and develop the Active Hastings Partnership and the Hastings and Rother Coach Network.
- Refresh of the Hastings Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
- Source and secure funding for all areas of the programme, with a focus on activities for adults with long term health conditions, children and young people, the Adult Weight Management programme.
- Continue to provide affordable and accessible opportunities for the least active groups to access sport and physical activity, with a particular focus on participants with long term health conditions or other barriers to physical activity.
- Continue to develop the local physical activity workforce through training grants and support for session development, with a particular focus on participants with long term health conditions.
- Continue to create new opportunities for young people to be physically active and take part in positive enrichment activities.
- Reduce holiday inactivity and hunger in areas of high deprivation through a HAF funded holiday programme during the Christmas holidays.
- Continually improve access to information through social media and expansion of the database on the new Active Hastings website. Creation of a bi-monthly newsletter, highlighting a wide range of activities on offer.





Instructors and participants from Siam Boxing camp pledge to support the young carers campaign.



Coaches and volunteers took part in a Volleyball Activator course delivered by Street Games.



Young People in Hollington are encouraged to attend Street Dance classes instead of hanging around outside the Youth Centre



Children living on the Broomgrove Estate are provided with free books as part of a partnership with the National Literacy Trust.



Children were introduced to tennis on the newly refurbished tennis courts through a free course with Break Point Tennis.



Local coaches and volunteers took part in the Pickleball Level 1 Activator Course



## WALK FOR PARKINSON'S

Heather from the Active Hastings team and members from her Parkinson's exercise class and their family and friends completed the 6 miles walk and raised an amazing £2,000 for Parkinson's UK



During the Rugby World Cup, all reception aged children were provided with a free Rugby Tots Activity Book



Adults with Parkinson's were encouraged to stay active through the weekly Parkinson's exercise classes.



35 girls joined the Weetabix WildCats, giving them a fun introduction to football.



Active Hastings were awarded the Community Engagement Award at the Sussex Sport and Physical Activity Awards, pictured here with the other award winners.

Photo credit: Active Sussex



Sarah, the Active Hastings Youth Link Worker and Jade from DanceHub attended the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's event to talk about our weekly Street Dance class.