

ACTIVE HASTINGS

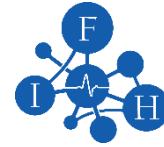


CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



Active Hastings

Annual Report 2025-2026



Active Hastings Headline Figures for 2025/26



1,616 low cost, inclusive physical activity sessions were delivered.



2,218 different residents took part with **16,639** registered visits to sessions.

Winners of the **Health Improvement Award**



at the 2025 Sussex Sport and Physical Activity Awards.

Over 1 in 4 of the participants live in SOAs that fall within the **5%** most deprived nationally.



47% of young people engaging in the Street Sport programme live in the **1%** most deprived SOAs nationally.

43% of adult participants stated that they have a disability, long-term health condition or special educational needs.



Over 10,000 people followed Active Hastings on social media.

203 people from over **90** organisations formed the Active Hastings Partnership



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



83% of adults and **89%** of young people increased their weekly physical activity levels, as a result of taking part in Active Hastings sessions.



91% of adults who increased their physical activity levels experienced improvements in their physical health.

97% of young people taking part benefited from improvements to their mental health.

93% of members rated the overall usefulness of the Active Hastings Partnership as either Excellent or Good.

What do Active Hastings participants say?

Below is a snapshot of selected comments from participants surveyed throughout 2025/26, highlighting the wider impact of the physical activity sessions:

It has been interesting to meet people with neurological conditions and share experiences. I have improved my balance and am starting to feel more confident to try different activities. It has helped me to understand why my body does certain things and I have learnt how to lift myself off the floor with a better technique than before.

Neurogym is something I look forward to and we all have a laugh.

Weighted Neuro Gym Participant

I was recently diagnosed with a type of inflammatory arthritis making it very difficult for me to exercise using gym equipment. This made me depressed, so I thought I would try a more gentle, chair based exercise. I really enjoyed it and it didn't exacerbate my condition, and that cheered me up enormously.

Chair-based Yoga Participant

As an older man that still wants to play sport, the yoga sessions have enabled me to do just that. It keeps me flexible so I can enjoy other sporting activities.

Yoga for Men's Health Participant

I have exercised weekly and lost 5 stone in weight. I feel in control and no longer feel like I am failing at everything.

GLP-1 Course and Creating a Healthier You Participant

My knee strength has improved, I used to dislocate them easily, but the exercise has helped to strengthen them.

Creating a Healthier You Participant

It has improved my fine motor skills. I am now able to pick up a cup and enjoy a hot drink.....first time for 10 years! I can also carry my dinner into my living room. My hands are less shaky. My friends and family have noticed.

Weighted Neuro Gym Participant

It maintains my level of fitness, my condition is degenerative so need to maintain what I can do for as long as I can.

Exercise for Neurological Conditions Participant

My blood pressure has stabilised. My blood tests showed pre-diabetic and are now clear. My cholesterol is lower (still working on getting it lower). My level of fitness is better.

Downs Farm Weight Loss Group Participant

I have anxiety and depression which really affects me, doing boxercise really helps both my mental and physical health.

Boxercise Participant

I have renewed connections with people I knew years ago and have met many lovely new people. We talk about our exercise experiences, our personal lives and more. As someone who is fairly shy and can find interaction tricky, the opportunity to socialise makes me happy.

Over 50s Aerobics and Pilates Participant

I didn't realise how bad my balance was until I started this class. I'm pleased to say that it has made a big difference to my balance, strength & awareness of trips etc.

Move It or Lose It Participant

Enjoyable activity and social contact very valuable in improving mood and beating anxiety and depression.

Walking Football Participant

It's very helpful for my long term illness. The constant pain has decreased. I chose this class as I am not able to pay.

Chair-based Yoga Participant

Keeps me supple a flexible to garden and dance.

Over 50s Aerobics Participant

It's fantastic to sit and have a coffee with the other class members afterwards, it's a really lovely, welcoming group. Great for my mental health, I've made friends here and feel part of a community.

Pilates and Lattes Participant

I find the classes really calming. I suffer from anxiety and depression and the classes help me to feel more grounded and improve my sense of well-being and sense of self-worth. The teacher's personality and skills are central to this - she is a gifted teacher.

Qigong Participant

I can walk further without getting so tired. I have been inspired to follow the Couch to 5K using the App and can now run about 20 minutes without stopping. I couldn't have managed 60 seconds 6 months ago. My blood pressure has now stabilised on a low dose of medication and my sleep is slowly improving. The weight loss is slow but progressing.

Downs Farm Weight Loss Group Participant

I was very depressed, in the wrong job at a very difficult time. I had been suicidal at times. This is the first time I had been given tools at flab-u-less to take charge. Heidi encouraged me to seek mental health support, which I did. I have made friends through the various groups and feel so much better now. Life is good.

Flab-u-less Participant

What is Active Hastings?

Active Hastings is a strategic physical activity partnership led by Hastings Borough Council and delivered collaboratively with East Sussex County Council Public Health and a wide network of local, regional and national partners. Through strong cross-sector collaboration, Active Hastings works to coordinate and strengthen the delivery of physical activity opportunities across Hastings and St Leonards, creating connected networks that support shared priorities around health, wellbeing, community safety and inclusion.

Partnership working is central to the programme's approach — bringing together local government, health services, community organisations, schools, clubs, voluntary groups, physical activity providers and funding bodies to ensure activities are accessible, targeted and aligned to strategic aims. By coordinating provision, sharing insight and developing sustainable partnerships, Active Hastings helps create a more joined-up and effective physical activity system for local communities.

The project is funded through a range of partners, with primary support in 2025/26 from Hastings Borough Council, East Sussex County Council Public Health, and the Hastings and St Leonards Primary Care Network (PCN). Additional support during this period came from Active Sussex, the Safer Hastings Partnership, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, East Sussex County Council's HAF team, Parkinson's UK, The National Lottery and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (Million Hours Fund).

2026 marks a significant milestone for Active Hastings, as the programme celebrates its 20th anniversary. Over the past two decades, Active Hastings has evolved into a trusted and impactful initiative, working at the heart of local communities to reduce inequalities and improve health outcomes through physical activity. This anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on the programme's achievements, recognise the partnerships and communities that have shaped its journey, and look ahead to the next phase of its development.

Project Aims:

- **Improve health and wellbeing** and reduce health inequalities in Hastings by increasing access to, and participation in, physical activity initiatives.
- **Leverage physical activity** as a tool for community development and to strengthen social capital across Hastings.
- **Support the growth of the local physical activity sector** through effective communication, networking, and capacity building.
- **Strengthen the local evidence base** for physical activity by gathering and analysing relevant data and outcomes.

The Active Hastings team were delighted to win the Health Improvement Award at the 2025 Sussex Sport and Physical Activity Awards. The award recognises individuals or small teams who have taken action to target health inequalities, improve the health outcomes of communities through physical activity and shifted the culture of traditional healthcare towards a focus on prevention and/or rehabilitation, supporting the ongoing priorities of local statutory organisations (e.g. NHS, Public Health, Adult Social Care & Health) to achieve better health outcomes for residents.

The strength of the partnerships, community relationships, and long-term foundations developed through Active Hastings and wider local collaboration were further recognised in 2025 with Hastings being selected by Sport England as one of a small number of areas nationally to be part of the Place Expansion programme. Building on many years of locally led work to tackle inactivity and inequalities, the programme will bring additional investment, partnership opportunities, and strategic support to help create the conditions for more residents to lead active, healthy lives. The selection reflects the collective efforts of local organisations, communities, and partners across Hastings, demonstrating both the strength of existing work and the readiness of the town to deliver long-term system-wide change.

2025/26 Highlights

Between April 2025 and March 2026, the Active Hastings team delivered 1,616 low cost, inclusive physical activity sessions across Hastings and St Leonards. The programme is specifically designed to engage the least active residents and those experiencing the greatest health inequalities, helping to break down barriers to participation and support long-term increases in physical activity levels. Sessions ranged from early years activities that develop fundamental movement skills in under 5s, through to specialist sessions supporting older adults and residents with limited mobility to remain active and socially connected.

During 2025/26, a total of 2,218 residents participated in Active Hastings-led activities, generating 16,639 registered attendances — an increase from 1,904 participants and 13,856 attendances in 2024/25. Of these participants, 1,044 registered with Active Hastings for the first time, demonstrating the programme's continued success in engaging new audiences and reaching residents who may not otherwise access physical activity opportunities.

A key focus of the programme is supporting inactive residents to become more physically active, while also encouraging existing participants to progress into mainstream or independent opportunities, including sessions delivered by local leisure providers, clubs, and community organisations, where appropriate.

The programme continues to prioritise communities experiencing the highest levels of deprivation and poorest health outcomes. Evidence from the Active Lives Survey consistently demonstrates a strong relationship between deprivation, physical inactivity, and reduced life expectancy. In response, Active Hastings targets provision within priority neighbourhoods and works to ensure that residents facing the greatest barriers to participation can access affordable and welcoming opportunities to be active.

To support this approach, the team works closely with a wide range of local partners, including housing providers, health services, community safety teams, schools, the Children's Services Youth Hub team, and community and voluntary sector organisations. These partnerships help ensure residents are effectively signposted into local activities and receive support to access appropriate sessions.

Activities are delivered in carefully selected, accessible venues located within or close to priority communities and are designed to be affordable for all. In January 2025, we introduced a sliding scale payment model to further reduce financial barriers and widen access to our sessions, and this approach has continued throughout 2025/26.

All activities have a suggested maximum donation of £3, with lower-cost and free options available for anyone who needs them, offered on a trust basis, with no questions asked and no judgement. The response to this approach has been overwhelmingly positive. It has helped remove cost as a barrier not only for those receiving income-related benefits, but also for individuals and families on lower incomes who may have limited disposable income.

This dignity-based approach helps reduce the stigma that can sometimes be associated with concessionary pricing or accessing subsidised activities. By removing the need for participants to prove eligibility or disclose personal financial circumstances, the model creates a more welcoming, inclusive and respectful environment where people feel comfortable accessing support when needed.

Importantly, this model has remained financially sustainable. Most participants choose to pay the suggested donation where they can, meaning the increased accessibility has not come at the expense of programme viability. Overall, the benefits of this inclusive approach have significantly outweighed any impact on income, enabling us to reach more people and better support those who need it most.

Across the year, the Active Hastings team delivered more than 40 sport and physical activity sessions each week through a combination of directly delivered activities and sessions led by external instructors funded through the programme. The full range of activities delivered during 2025/26 is outlined in Table 1 below.

| Activities focusing on people with a long-term health condition | |
|---|---|
| Chair-Based Yoga (3 per week) | Flab-U-Less weight management course for women with a BMI over 30. |
| Parkinson's Exercise Class | Lean in to it weight management course for men and women with a BMI over 30. |
| New Age Kurling and Boccia for adults with physical and/or learning disabilities | *Downs Farm Weight Loss Group |
| Weighted Neuro Exercise Class | *GLP-1 weight management course |
| Seated Strength Exercise (2 per week) | *Inclusive Studio Sports/Games for adults with physical and/or learning disabilities |
| Age-Friendly Activity and Social Morning | *Exercise for Neurological Conditions |
| Walking Football (2 per week) | *Cancer Rehab Classes |
| Flexi-Balance | *Strength and Balance at the Mosque |
| Creating a Healthier You (Weight management programme for adults with a BMI over 30, and diabetes and/or hypertension) (2 per week) | *Meet the Instructor – online sessions for weight management, strength training and GLP1 – Q&As |
| WaistBand of Brothers weight management course for men with a BMI over 30. | |
| Activities for adults | |
| Pilates and Lattes (3 per week) | Yoga for Men's Health |
| Boxercise | Over 50s Aerobics |
| Move It or Lose It | Zumba |
| Qigong | Coffee mornings and taster events for older people |
| | |
| Activities for young people | |
| Volleyball | Tribe Rugby |
| Street Sport sessions (6 per week) | Family Fun Days and Discover and Try Days |
| StreetDance | Hollington Youth Hub Sports |
| Junior Muay Thai | *Mini-Movers |
| WildCats Girls Football | *FA Squad Girls |
| Under 5s Stay and Play | *Multi-Sports with the Mosque |
| Home-Education Athletics | *Stronger Together Gym Sessions |
| Holiday Activity and Food Programme | *Discovery and Try Days |
| Free holiday programmes including rounders, tennis, cricket, rugby, street dance, muay tai, table tennis and family street sports | *Home Ed Street Dance |
| | *Urban Football |

*New sessions launched or piloted in 25/26

Postcode and demographic data are collected across all sessions to help monitor participation, understand geographic reach, and ensure the programme is effectively engaging residents living within priority communities. Of the 2,218 participants who took part in Active Hastings activities during 2025/26, postcode data was available for 1,996 individuals. Analysis shows that 1,765 participants were Hastings residents, with the majority of the remaining 231 participants living within neighbouring Rother.

Table 2 highlights the percentage of Hastings participants living within the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) nationally. The data demonstrates the programme's continued success in engaging residents experiencing the highest levels of deprivation and health inequality, with more than one in four participants living within neighbourhoods ranked among the 5% most deprived areas nationally.

| IMD percentage | Percentage of Active Hastings participants living in deprived SOAs April 2025 to March 2026 |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1% | 13% |
| 5% | 28% |
| 10% | 39% |
| 20% | 49% |

Table 2: The percentage of Hastings participants that live within the 20% most deprived SOAs (April 2025 to March 2026)

Funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has played a significant role in strengthening Active Hastings' presence within North-East Hastings over the past three years. Initially focused on the Broomgrove Estate in Baird Ward, this targeted place-based work expanded further during 2025/26 to include the Downs Farm area in Ore Ward, enabling deeper engagement with residents and communities facing some of the borough's greatest inequalities.

This sustained investment reflects a long-term commitment to addressing inactivity and health inequalities at a hyper-local level, ensuring that activities, engagement approaches, and partnerships are shaped around the specific needs and priorities of local communities.

The impact of this targeted approach is clearly reflected in the ward-level participant breakdown shown in Chart 1, which demonstrates the programme's continued success in reaching and engaging residents within priority neighbourhoods across North-East Hastings.

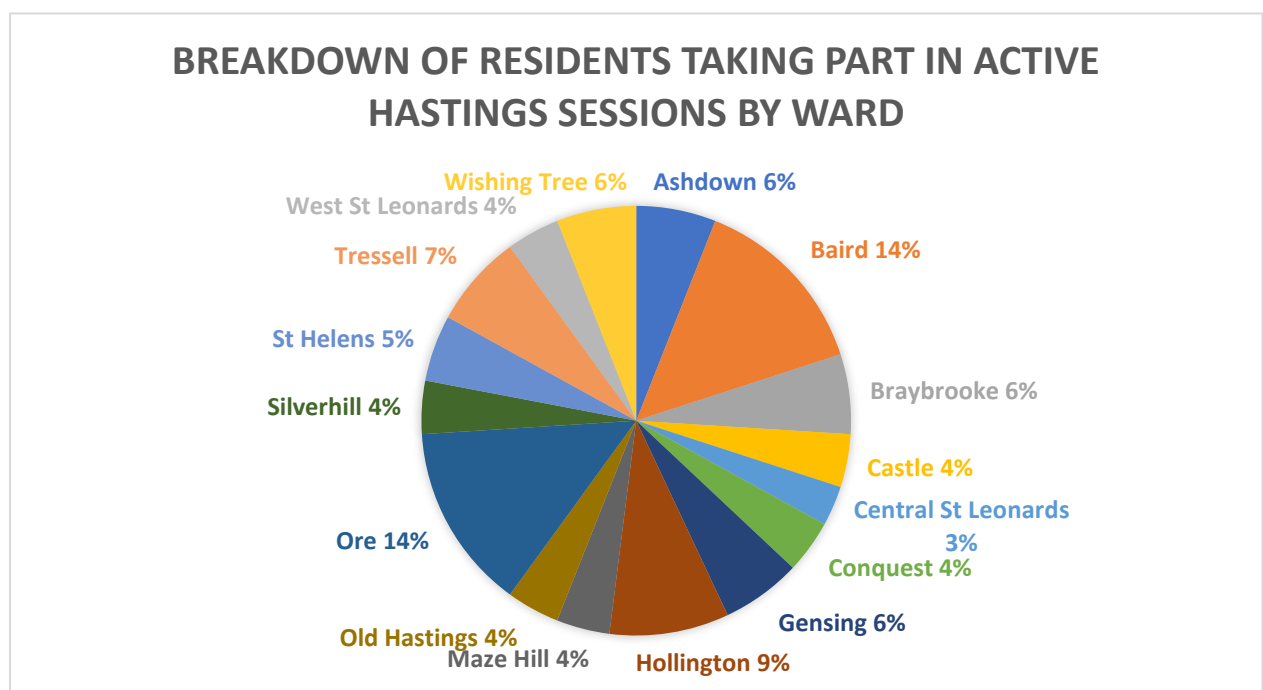


Chart 1: Breakdown of participants by ward (April 2025 to March 2026)

While all Active Hastings activities are open to everyone, the programme is specifically designed to engage residents who are currently inactive or facing the greatest barriers to being physically active. During 2025/26, 43% of all participants (adults and children/young people) reported not achieving the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week in the 28 days prior to registering with the programme. In addition, 23% reported completing less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week during that period.

Levels of inactivity were higher among adult participants, demonstrating the programme's success in reaching those most at risk of poor health outcomes associated with inactivity. Among adults registering with Active Hastings:

- 53% were not achieving 150 minutes of physical activity per week
- 27% were completing less than 30 minutes of activity per week

Annual participant survey findings continue to demonstrate the positive impact of the programme on residents' physical activity levels, health, and wellbeing. Among adult respondents:

- 83% reported becoming more physically active
- 84% stated they were now achieving the recommended 150 minutes of activity per week

- 91% of those increasing activity levels reported improvements in physical health
- 74% reported improvements in mental wellbeing as a direct result of participation

Notably, 96% of adults living in the most deprived areas (20% most deprived) stated that they were now achieving 150 minutes of physical activity per week.

The youth survey, completed by young people and parents/carers, reflected similarly strong outcomes:

- 89% of young participants increased their physical activity levels
- 89% reported feeling healthier
- 82% made new friends through the sessions
- 92% reported increased confidence
- 97% said participation had improved their mental wellbeing

Alongside physical activity levels and deprivation data, Active Hastings also monitors a broader range of demographic information to better understand who the programme is reaching and identify gaps in provision.

During 2025/26, 10% of participants identified as being from ethnically diverse communities slightly higher than the overall Hastings population figure of 8.5%. This reflects the programme's continued progress in engaging diverse communities across the town, while remaining an important area of focus for further development and inclusion.

Active Hastings provided support for Progress Network, a community-led programme that supports ethnically diverse communities in Central St Leonards. Targeted funding was provided to enable their youth football sessions to continue throughout the winter months, ensuring consistent provision for young people during a traditionally challenging period. In addition, sponsorship funding was secured to provide new kits for participants, helping to foster a stronger sense of identity, belonging, and pride among the young people involved. Alongside this, the team worked collaboratively with Progress Network to encourage young people to broaden their engagement with sport and physical activity, including the delivery of two taster sessions with Hastings & Bexhill Rugby Club.

We have also begun developing a new partnership with the local Mosque, introducing physical activity into existing youth sessions on a monthly basis. In parallel, we have launched a strength and balance class for older community members. Taking place within the mosque, these sessions have been carefully adapted to reflect the needs of participants, for example, being flexible with timings to align with changing prayer times, helping to ensure activities are both respectful and accessible. In addition to this, the GP Link Worker delivered talks to raise the benefits of physical activity and to highlight local opportunities, in partnership with Diversity Resource International to the DRI network, including Chinese, Arabic-speaking, and Pakistani communities, with translators supporting accessibility.

Looking ahead to 2026/27 and beyond, we aim to further strengthen our relationships with Hastings' diverse communities through continued work with both the Mosque and Progress Network. Working alongside Active Sussex, ethnically diverse communities have been identified as a key priority within the Sport England Place Expansion Programme Development Award. Activity under this programme will focus on deepening our understanding of the different motivations, needs, and barriers experienced by people from different ethnic backgrounds. This insight will be critical in shaping future programme design and supporting the case for continued investment from Sport England, ensuring that provision is inclusive, relevant, and responsive to local communities.

Reducing inequalities in participation between men and women has also remained a longstanding priority for Active Hastings. This priority is reflected within Active Hastings participation data, with women accounting for 64% of all participants during 2025/26. Survey findings from female participants showed:

- 83% reported increasing their physical activity levels
- 82% stated they were now achieving the recommended 150 minutes of activity per week

While women continue to represent a key target group, Active Hastings also recognises the growing need to support inactive men, particularly those facing poor health outcomes or social isolation. The programme therefore includes targeted sessions aimed specifically at men, including men's weight management programmes and activities focused on improving mental wellbeing and social connection.

Survey responses from male participants also demonstrated strong outcomes:

86% increased their physical activity levels

90% reported achieving the recommended 150 minutes of activity per week

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 25/26, 43% of adult participants and 16% 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 Worker.

Physical Activity Sessions

During 2025/26, a variety of weekly physical activity sessions were delivered for adults with long-term health conditions and disabilities. These included chair-based yoga, seated strength exercises, walking football, New Age Kurling, Age-Friendly Activity and Social Mornings, Exercise for Parkinson's and a gym-based weighted exercise class for with neurological conditions.

With additional funding from Parkinson's UK, a second dedicated exercise class was launched for people living with neurological conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and Fibromyalgia. The programme was specifically designed to improve range of movement, balance, strength, cardiovascular fitness, coordination, and confidence in everyday movement.

During the year, 59 adults with neurological conditions participated across the range of specialist neurological exercise sessions delivered, generating a total of 667 attendances. Participants reported a range of positive physical, social, and emotional outcomes as a result of taking part. These included improvements in fine motor skills and hand control, increased confidence with balance and mobility, greater independence in daily tasks such as carrying drinks and meals, and reduced shakiness. Participants also described feeling more confident to try other activities, gaining a better understanding of how their body responds to movement, and learning safer techniques for getting up from the floor. In addition to the physical benefits, many valued the opportunity to meet others living with similar conditions, share experiences, and take part in an activity they looked forward to each week.

In addition, a cancer rehabilitation exercise class was introduced this year. Although the programme initially ran for several weeks, it was not possible to sustain delivery due to the instructor's availability and inconsistent attendance. This reflects wider challenges experienced across similar programmes locally. We would like to revisit this area of work in the future, recognising that it will require sufficient time, funding, and dedicated staffing capacity to effectively establish and embed sustainable provision.

Throughout the year, we also continued to prioritise strength and balance activities to support adults to age well and reduce the risk of falls. Sessions were designed to appeal to a broad audience and included Qigong, walking football, over 50s aerobics, seated strength and yoga classes, and Pilates. In addition, coffee mornings were held at Broomgrove, Downs Farm and Four Courts Community Centres, providing opportunities for older residents to socialise and access information about local activities and services, with a particular focus on strength and balance opportunities. The October events were delivered in partnership with East Sussex County Council Public Health who provided a slipper swap initiative, helping older people access safer, better-fitting slippers to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls at home.

As previously highlighted, we also worked in partnership with Hastings Mosque to develop new sessions for older members of the community. Participants shared that they were increasingly experiencing difficulties with everyday movements that were affecting both daily life and prayer, including rising from the floor, maintaining balance, and bending to put on shoes. These challenges can impact independence, confidence, and overall levels of activity.

In response, Active Hastings worked collaboratively with community members to co-design a simple, culturally appropriate solution. Seated exercise sessions were introduced following Friday prayers at the mosque, helping to reduce barriers such as transport and timing, while also providing a familiar and supportive environment that encourages regular participation.

Participant feedback highlights the positive impact of the sessions at the mosque, particularly in relation to physical health, wellbeing, and social connection:

- “I look forward to this exercise session as it is fun but also challenging”
- “It has helped with my back pain as I am a taxi driver and sit for long periods”
- “I feel good for three days after exercise class, but then I stiffen up again. Perhaps we should have two classes?”
- “I like that it brings all ages together not just elders, and we laugh a lot.”

We also developed intergenerational physical activity opportunities, bringing together participants from our over 50s aerobics class and children from Jigsaw Nursery. These sessions created a shared space where different generations could engage in movement-based activities together in a fun and supportive environment. Activities were adapted to be accessible and enjoyable for all ages, encouraging interaction, laughter, and mutual learning. The sessions helped to strengthen community connections, reduce social isolation among older adults, and provide early years children with positive experiences of physical activity alongside older role models. Feedback from participants and staff highlighted the joy and energy these sessions generated, and we will continue to explore opportunities to build on this work in the future.

The programmes targeting adults living with long-term health conditions make a meaningful difference to participants’ physical health, mental wellbeing, and overall quality of life. Feedback consistently highlights improvements in mobility, strength, balance, independence, and the ability to manage long-term conditions more effectively.

Alongside physical improvements, participants report significant benefits to confidence and emotional wellbeing. Many describe feeling more positive, motivated, and capable in managing daily activities, as well as experiencing improved energy levels and reduced anxiety linked to their conditions.

A key strength of the programme is the role of social connection embedded within sessions, which helps reduce isolation and build supportive peer networks. Many participants value the opportunity to meet others with similar experiences, share challenges, and build friendships in a safe and welcoming environment. This social element is often as important as the physical activity itself in supporting sustained engagement.

Social interaction is integrated into sessions in both structured and informal ways. Many classes include time for participants to stay for tea or coffee after activities, while others build social time directly into the session design. For example, groups such as Parkinson’s exercise sessions, Age-Friendly Activity classes, Pilates and Lattes, and neurological condition sessions are all designed to include regular opportunities for participants to connect with one another.

In addition, several groups host informal celebrations and social events throughout the year, including Christmas lunches and birthday celebrations within classes. These moments help strengthen relationships between participants and create a strong sense of community belonging.

Together, these social and physical elements play an important role in reducing loneliness and isolation, improving wellbeing, and supporting people to remain engaged in regular physical activity over time.

GP Link Worker Support

The Active Hastings GP Link Worker continues to play a vital role in supporting individuals living with long-term health conditions to access suitable physical activity and wellbeing opportunities tailored to their individual needs. During 2025/26, 119 people were referred into the programme, with 87 engaging directly with the GP Link Worker for personalised support and guidance.

Referrals are received from a wide range of health and wellbeing professionals, including GPs, Occupational Therapists, Wellbeing Coordinators, Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Paramedic Practitioners and Mental Health Nurses, alongside self-referrals from local residents.

Alongside delivering personalised support to residents, the GP Link Worker has developed into a strategic connector across the local health, physical activity and voluntary sector system. The role acts as a key bridge between primary care, community organisations and activity providers, bringing partners together to improve communication, strengthen referral pathways and develop a more coordinated approach to supporting residents with long-term health conditions.

Through regular partnership engagement and extensive knowledge of local provision, the GP Link Worker helps map gaps in activity and wellbeing opportunities across Hastings and the surrounding area, identifying where additional support, programmes or targeted interventions may be required. This intelligence-led approach helps ensure local services continue to evolve in response to community need, while improving connectivity across the wider health and wellbeing system.

The service also simplifies the referral process for busy health professionals by providing a single, trusted point of access into a wide range of community-based physical activity opportunities and support services. With increasing pressures on primary care services, many health professionals do not have the time or specialist knowledge required to identify appropriate local activities for patients with different health conditions and needs. The GP Link Worker model helps remove these barriers by offering a straightforward referral pathway and personalised support for patients following referral.

The GP Link Worker is a qualified Exercise Referral Specialist with extensive knowledge of long-term health conditions and the role physical activity can play in supporting prevention, rehabilitation, symptom management, confidence, and overall wellbeing. This specialist expertise helps ensure that residents are connected to safe, appropriate, and accessible opportunities tailored to their individual circumstances, abilities, and goals.

Participants have been connected to a broad and inclusive range of activities and services including walking sports, adult weight management courses, chair-based exercise classes, swimming, health memberships with Freedom Leisure, pulmonary rehabilitation classes, health walks and the 20/20 Health Exercise Referral Programme.

Alongside physical activity opportunities, the programme also supports wider health and wellbeing through reciprocal referrals to partner organisations and community services, including local Parkinson's support groups, the MS Society, the MSK community partnership, HVA community groups, Health in Mind NHS Talking Therapies, One You East Sussex healthy lifestyle services, St Michael's Hospice and the Sara Lee Trust.

Beyond helping individuals access an initial activity or service, the GP Link Worker provides ongoing support to help participants remain engaged and transition into appropriate opportunities as their needs and confidence develop over time. Two examples of this support are outlined below.

Participant Example – Supporting Recovery Following Knee Replacement

One participant was referred following a total knee replacement, with goals focused on improving flexibility and mobility. They initially joined a chair yoga group at St Leonards Studio and were also connected with a local personal trainer who specialises in supporting people with long-term health conditions. After three months, the participant reconnected with the GP Link Worker to explore gym-based exercise opportunities. Support was then provided to access a reduced-cost gym membership through Freedom Leisure, enabling them to continue progressing their physical activity independently.

Participant Example – Building Confidence and Social Connection

A participant living with Parkinson's was supported to attend her first exercise session and accompanied to a local Parkinson's community support group. Through attending the group, she was encouraged by meeting others living with similar experiences and discovered that another member lived nearby. They exchanged contact details, helping to build both confidence and valuable social connections within the community. She is now a regular participant.

The project continues to be a vital part of the preventative health and wellbeing system across Hastings and the surrounding area. Through strategic partnership working, effective referral pathways and a detailed understanding of local need, the GP Link Worker helps create a more connected, responsive and inclusive support network for residents living with long-term health conditions.

This collaborative and system-led approach not only increases confidence and participation in physical activity, but also helps reduce barriers to engagement, tackle social isolation and support sustainable lifestyle changes that improve long-term health and wellbeing outcomes.

Adult Weight Management Programmes

The Active Hastings Adult Weight Management Programme has continued to support adults living with obesity (BMI over 30), including many participants managing additional long-term health conditions. The programme combines structured 12-week courses with ongoing weekly support through the "Creating a Healthier You" drop-in sessions, led by a Level 4 qualified Exercise Referral, Obesity and Diabetes instructor. This specialist expertise enables the team to safely and effectively support participants with a BMI over 40 and those with complex health needs.

During 2025/26, six 12-week programmes were delivered, including the women-only Flab-u-less course, the men-only WaistBand of Brothers programme, and the mixed-gender Lean In To It course. A notable area of innovation this year was the development of a new 12-week programme specifically for individuals using GLP-1 weight loss medications, designed to support sustainable lifestyle change alongside medical treatment. The programme focused on nutrition, strength training, behaviour change, and maintaining lean muscle mass to support long-term weight management beyond medication use. This represents a significant and responsive development in the local weight management offer, reflecting emerging clinical need and national trends in obesity management.

Across all programmes, participants reported a range of wider benefits beyond weight loss, including improved physical activity levels, increased confidence, better mobility, reduced social isolation, and improvements in mental wellbeing. Of the 134 participants engaged during the year, 45% were living with at least one additional long-term health condition, including hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, COPD, arthritis, and mental health conditions.

Participant Example – Sustained Weight Loss and Return to Activity

One participant lost 12.5kg during a 12-week programme and reported a significant increase in confidence and physical ability. As a result, she returned to attending water aerobics sessions three times a week at Summerfields Leisure Centre—something she had previously lacked the confidence to do—while also increasing her daily walking and overall activity levels.

Many participants have continued their health journeys beyond the initial programme. Some have progressed into ongoing support sessions such as "Creating a Healthier You," while others have transitioned into community-based activities including circuit training, parkrun, tennis, and informal walking groups. These pathways demonstrate the programme's role in supporting long-term behaviour change rather than short-term intervention alone.

The Lean In To It programme also supported wider family engagement, with several participants attending alongside partners or family members, helping to reinforce healthy lifestyle changes within the home environment and strengthen long-term support networks.

Alongside structured programmes, weekly drop-in sessions continue to provide an important ongoing support mechanism. These sessions offer continuity, accountability, and peer support, helping participants maintain progress and remain engaged in a non-judgemental and supportive environment.

This year also saw the introduction of the Downs Farm Weight Loss Group, a community-based drop-in session designed to improve accessibility for residents in an area experiencing higher levels of deprivation and health inequality. Attendance has steadily grown, with strong engagement from individuals who may find structured programmes more difficult to access.

Targeted outreach also continued through online Q&A sessions and in-person education events delivered in partnership with local GP practices and the Primary Care Network. These sessions supported residents to make informed decisions about weight management, including both medical and lifestyle approaches.

Overall, the programme continues to demonstrate strong outcomes in physical health, mental wellbeing, and sustained behaviour change. However, its wider impact lies in building confidence, reducing isolation, and supporting long-term engagement in physical activity through accessible, community-based pathways.

Activities for Children and Young People

A varied programme of weekly activities for children and young people has taken place throughout the year, with 442 sessions delivered across Hastings and St Leonards. The programme is focused primarily within the borough's most deprived communities, where many young people experience a range of overlapping challenges, including:

- Limited access to affordable activities and safe recreational spaces
- Higher levels of anti-social behaviour and community safety concerns
- Financial pressures within households
- Barriers to transport and wider opportunities
- Lower engagement with traditional education or structured provision

These challenges can have a significant impact on physical activity levels, confidence, wellbeing, and future opportunities. In this context, regular, free, and locally accessible activities play an important role in increasing participation and supporting positive outcomes for children and young people.

Weekly activities included Street Sport sessions, dance classes, gym sessions, Muay Thai, girls' football, home education sessions, and sport-specific activities such as rugby and volleyball. During school holidays, Active Hastings worked in partnership with local organisations to provide free holiday activity programmes, Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) sessions, and family taster events, helping young people remain active, engaged, and socially connected throughout the year.

During 2025/26, 693 young people participated in Active Hastings youth activities (excluding school-based activities and family events), generating a total of 3,564 attendances. Findings from the annual survey of parents and young people highlighted the importance of this provision, with 80% reporting that, without the sessions, their child would otherwise have been taking part in sedentary activities. In addition, 89% of respondents stated that participation had increased their child's physical activity levels, alongside clear improvements in both physical and mental wellbeing.

Active Hastings' youth work continues to be led and coordinated by the Active Hastings Youth Development Officer, whose role is central to building strong partnerships and ensuring activities are shaped around the needs and voices of local young people. Working closely with youth services, schools, community safety partners, local sports clubs, and voluntary and community organisations, the role helps strengthen pathways into positive activities for young people who may otherwise face barriers to participation. A key priority is ensuring provision successfully engages those who are least active, underrepresented, or at greater risk of social isolation or anti-social behaviour, with young people actively encouraged to influence the design and delivery of sessions through ongoing consultation and feedback. The Youth Development Officer also supports the ongoing development of the local workforce by identifying training needs for coaches and activity

providers, promoting inclusive and trauma-informed approaches to delivery, and creating opportunities for young volunteers and leaders to gain experience, confidence, and skills through involvement in community sport and physical activity programmes.

Street Sport

The Active Hastings Street Sport programme continued to provide free, doorstep sports sessions within some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Hastings and St Leonards. Operating in areas including Baird, Tressell, Ore, and Hollington, the programme delivers consistent, visible, and trusted youth provision directly within communities where opportunities can often be limited.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, the Street Sport programme engaged 189 young people aged up to 17, generating 1,093 attendances. The programme adopts a multi-sport, youth-led approach based on the 'Play Their Way' ethos, ensuring activities are shaped around the interests, needs, and voices of the young people attending.

Alongside increasing physical activity and improving health outcomes, Street Sport supports young people to develop essential life skills, including communication, motivation, self-esteem, leadership, teamwork, and respect. Coaches actively encourage participation from young people who may be disengaged from education, at risk of negative behaviours, or living with special educational needs or disabilities, helping to create a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment. The sessions also provide valuable opportunities for social connection, contributing positively to confidence, mental wellbeing, and a sense of belonging.

The programme continues to successfully engage young people living within areas of high deprivation. Across all youth provision:

- 22% of participants live within the 1% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally
- 52% live within the 5% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally

Street Sport demonstrates particularly strong engagement within these communities:

- 47% of participants live within neighbourhoods ranked among the 1% most deprived nationally
- 63% live within the 5% most deprived areas nationally

The programme is also reaching young people who are currently less active:

- 28% of participants reported not meeting recommended physical activity levels
- 14% were taking part in less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week
- 14% identified as having a long-term health condition, special educational needs, or a disability

From March 2026, young people involved in Street Sport were also encouraged to attend new sessions funded through the Million Hours programme, focused on engaging young people from Tressell and Castle wards. Between March and October 2026, an additional 270 hours of youth provision will be delivered.

New activities introduced through this programme include:

- Additional Street Sport sessions in Farley Bank and the town centre
- Teen gym sessions
- A Friday evening youth session at The Firs

To ensure accessibility, taxi transport is provided for young people living within the most deprived wards. Delivered in partnership with local community and statutory organisations, the programme aims to reduce barriers between young people and local services, provide positive activities and trusted role models, and reduce the risk of involvement in anti-social behaviour. The sessions also create opportunities for young

people to build stronger relationships within their communities and access support at an earlier stage where needed.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

Young people in receipt of benefit-related free school meals were also encouraged to participate in Active Hastings Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) sessions, funded by East Sussex County Council through the national HAF programme.

Across the year, the team delivered 10 sessions, each providing four hours of sport and craft activities alongside a nutritious meal. A total of 151 different young people participated, with 215 free meals provided.

Of those taking part:

- 37% live within the 1% most deprived Super Output Areas nationally
- 70% live within the 10% most deprived areas nationally
- 20% have a long-term health condition, special educational needs, or a disability

The programme also provided wider support for families. Any leftover fruit or sandwiches were sent home with participants, helping to reduce food waste while offering additional support to households experiencing ongoing cost-of-living pressures. Through a partnership with the National Literacy Trust, every child also received a free book, helping to encourage reading for pleasure, improve literacy confidence, and add further educational value to the sessions beyond physical activity provision. During the Easter programme, children additionally received Easter eggs kindly donated by Balfour Beatty.

Alongside securing funding for Active Hastings' own HAF delivery, additional funding was successfully obtained for Project Rewild, enabling the organisation to deliver a further 12 HAF sessions throughout the year. Looking ahead, funding has already been secured for both Active Hastings and Project Rewild to continue delivering HAF sessions during the Easter, Summer, and Christmas holidays in 2026.

Working in Partnership with Schools

Active Hastings continues to work closely with local schools, the School Games Organiser (SGO), national governing bodies, and community sports clubs to create opportunities for children and young people to become more active, develop new skills, and access positive sporting experiences.

Throughout the year, a wide range of targeted school-based activities, festivals, and taster sessions were delivered to support participation in sport and physical activity, particularly among groups who are traditionally less active or underrepresented in community sport.

At Ore Village Primary School, Happy Hockey delivered a series of hockey sessions for Year 3 pupils, introducing children to the sport in a fun and engaging environment while developing fundamental movement skills, teamwork, and confidence.

In partnership with Hastings and Bexhill Rugby Club, 196 Year 5 and 6 pupils from schools across the borough took part in a tag rugby festival. Additional girls-only taster sessions were delivered within schools for Year 5 and 6 pupils to encourage greater female participation in rugby and provide positive first experiences of the sport.

As part of celebrations linked to the Women's Rugby World Cup, Active Hastings supported the delivery of RugbyFest at Hastings and Bexhill Rugby Football Club, where 75 girls from 10 schools attended a day of rugby activities and engagement. The event aimed to inspire more girls to participate in sport and included support from the RFU, who provided craft packs featuring bracelet making, colouring activities, and origami.

Further rugby development work included Rugby School Roadshows delivered within two secondary schools — Bexhill Academy and Claverham Community College — with coaches from Hastings and Bexhill Rugby Club delivering girls-only sessions designed to build confidence, introduce new skills, and strengthen pathways into community sport.

Inclusive opportunities also remained a priority throughout the year. Active Hastings supported the delivery of a Comets Inclusive Football Festival in partnership with Sussex County FA, helping to provide accessible football opportunities for young people with disabilities and additional needs in a supportive and inclusive environment.

The team also supported the introduction of an after-school volleyball club at St Leonards Academy, helping to broaden the range of sports available to young people locally and encouraging continued participation beyond curriculum PE.

Family Activities and Early Years Provision

In addition to youth-focused activities, Active Hastings has continued to deliver family and early years sessions designed to encourage children and adults to be active together, while also supporting social connection, wellbeing, and healthy lifestyles within local communities.

The Under 5s Stay and Play sessions at Broomgrove Community Centre, delivered in partnership with Musical Beacons, engaged 249 individuals during the year, generating a total of 1,149 attendances. Delivered within one of the most deprived estates in the country, the sessions provided an important opportunity for families with young children to access free, local, and supportive activities within their community.

Sessions included music and movement activities for under 5s, alongside crafts, play opportunities, and healthy snacks. The provision of nutritious snacks encouraged children to try new foods and promoted healthy eating habits from an early age.

In addition to supporting physical activity and social connection, these sessions also contribute to early childhood development and school readiness by helping young children develop communication, coordination, confidence, and social skills through play-based activity. The sessions also provide valuable wellbeing benefits for parents and carers by reducing isolation, building peer support networks, and creating positive opportunities for families to spend time together locally.

Alongside the weekly sessions, Active Hastings also engaged a further 437 people through one-off family engagement events delivered in Hollington, Broomgrove, and Downs Farm as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Pride in Place programmes. These events provided families with opportunities to try a range of free activities available throughout the year and helped introduce residents to ongoing local provision within their communities. Through the partnership with the National Literacy Trust, families attending the sessions were also able to access free books for their children. This added further value to the programme by supporting early language and literacy development and helping families build positive reading habits at home. These events continue to successfully engage families living within areas of high deprivation, with 42% of attendees living within the 5% most deprived Super Output Areas nationally.

Strengthening Engagement Through Communication and Outreach

Raising awareness of the importance of physical activity and promoting local opportunities to be active remain key priorities for the Active Hastings team. Weekly updates are shared via the Hastings Borough Council residents' and staff newsletters, reaching over 32,000 residents. The Active Hastings pages on the Council website continued to see a growth in visitor numbers, with 50,328 visits between April 2025 and March 2026, up from 42,191 the previous year.

Social media engagement remains strong, with a combined following of 10,311 across Facebook and Instagram—an increase of 563 over the reporting period. Facebook performance, in particular, has shown

significant growth, reaching 287,033 users, a 27% increase compared to 225,476 in the same period last year, and generating 1.3 million views overall. Interaction rates have also improved, with content interactions on Facebook rising by 5% to a total of 19,500.

Instagram has experienced notable growth, with reach increasing by 41% to 7,600 compared to 5,400 the previous year, alongside 82,700 total views during the reporting period. Engagement on the platform remains steady, with 1,500 interactions recorded this year.

The main Hastings Borough Council social media channels, with 18,900 followers, also regularly promote Active Hastings content.

This year also saw the launch of the Active Hastings presence on LinkedIn, extending the programme's digital reach into a more professional and strategic space. The platform enables targeted engagement with partners, stakeholders, and sector professionals, supporting wider collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the promotion of Active Hastings at a strategic and organisational level.

These digital platforms not only highlight Active Hastings activities but also amplify partner and national campaigns such as East Sussex County Council's #GettingEastSussexMoving, We Are Undefeatable, This Girl Can, World Parkinson's Day, Volunteers Week, Falls Prevention Week, Social Prescribing Day, Menopause Month, Children's Mental Health Week and NSPCC Keeping Children Safe in Sports Week.

To strengthen communication with partners, a monthly partnership bulletin was introduced last year, providing concise, accessible updates on activities, funding opportunities, campaigns, and key sector news. This has created a consistent and reliable channel for keeping partners informed and aligned.

In addition, targeted bulletins for sports clubs and volunteers have been developed to share relevant funding, training, employment, and volunteering opportunities, ensuring content is tailored to audience needs. These communications currently reach 268 recipients each month, with onward sharing actively encouraged to extend reach across local networks.

Towards the end of the year, these bulletins were migrated to a new platform with enhanced analytics capabilities. This enables tracking of open rates and link clicks, providing valuable insight into audience engagement. Moving forward, this will support a more data-driven approach, allowing content to be refined and targeted to maximise relevance, engagement, and impact.

Partners also receive regular updates via the Hastings and Rother Sports Coach and Physical Activity Instructor Network on Facebook, managed by Active Hastings, which now has a membership of over 200.

Engagement through GP surgeries remains highly effective. Digital displays in surgeries, along with targeted text messages, promote suitable activities to patients based on their health needs—for example, Strength and Balance classes, Exercise Group for Neurological Conditions, Seated Exercise classes, Adult Weight Management and Walking Football, and the We Are Undefeatable campaign. This approach has been particularly successful in reaching adults with long-term health conditions, who feel more confident attending when activities are recommended by their GP. During this period, 27% of participants with a long-term health condition reported hearing about sessions through GP referrals.

Engagement of people with long-term health conditions is further strengthened through talks and interactive sessions within community and healthcare settings, delivered by the GP Link Worker. The service raises awareness of the benefits of physical activity and how individuals can get involved. Examples of talks delivered this year include:

- Cardiac Rehabilitation Phase 3 patients at Conquest Hospital
- Neurological support sessions at St Michael's Hospice
- "Pink Ladies 1066" breast cancer support group
- Older adult community groups such as The A-Team (Salvation Army) and church groups
- Diabetes groups linked with Diabetes UK and Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA)
- Parkinson's groups across Hastings and Bexhill

This outreach approach ensures inclusivity, helping individuals from varied backgrounds feel informed, confident, and supported to take their first steps toward being more active.

The team also promotes programmes and the benefits of physical activity through regular attendance at local events, direct marketing (particularly on the Broomgrove and Downs Farm estates), targeted emails through the Active Hastings participant database and distribution of printed materials to key community locations across the town. Promotion also extends to digital bus stop screens, the front window of Muriel Matters House and the digital display at Summerfields Leisure Centre. Notably, Exercise for Neurological Conditions classes were featured on ITV Meridian News, and the team was given the opportunity to discuss the wider Active Hastings programme on BBC Radio Sussex, as well as discussing the Sport England Place Expansion programme on another occasion.

Partnership Working and System Collaboration

Building strong local partnerships remains a central priority for Active Hastings. The Active Hastings Partnership continues to expand, now comprising 203 members representing more than 90 organisations, compared with 170 members in 2024/25.

Quarterly partnership meetings regularly attract between 25 and 35 attendees from organisations including Hastings Borough Council, ESCC Public Health, Groundwork UK, Education Futures Trust, Hastings and St Leonards PCN, East Sussex MSK Community Partnership, Safer Hastings Partnership, The Conservation Volunteers, Active Sussex, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Dance Hastings, One You East Sussex, and Hastings Voluntary Action.

Partners consistently report that the partnership provides valuable opportunities for networking, sharing information and best practice, receiving updates on local initiatives and funding opportunities, improving awareness of local services available for client referrals, and identifying opportunities to work collaboratively on projects and shared priorities across the borough.

A recent partnership evaluation highlighted the positive impact of this joined-up approach. Findings showed that:

- 93% of partners felt the partnership is helping to increase physical activity levels in Hastings;
- 74% felt the partnership had improved collaboration with other local organisations, while the remaining 26% were unsure;
- 87% felt that the partnership adds value to their community work in Hastings;
- 74% felt that the partnership helps them to achieve their organisational goals;
- 100% found the meetings and the monthly partnership bulletins useful or very useful; and
- 93% rated the overall usefulness of the partnership as either Excellent or Good.

A strong example of partnership working in practice during 2025/26 has been the development and delivery of the Urban Football sessions. The project was delivered collaboratively by Active Hastings, the ESCC Youth Team, Hastings Commons, Sussex Police and Play Sport, with additional engagement and support provided by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. All partners regularly attended sessions to build positive relationships with young people in an informal and trusted environment. Initially funded through the Safer Hastings Partnership and later reintroduced through the Million Hours Fund, the sessions provided free, accessible evening activities for young people from across Hastings. 52 young people, aged 12 to 17 took part in the sessions, with Taxi transport arranged to support attendance from priority neighbourhoods. This helped to reduce barriers to participation and ensured young people from different areas of the town could access the positive activities, trusted adults, and wider support services. The project demonstrates the value of coordinated partnership working in creating safe, engaging opportunities for young people while strengthening connections between communities and local services.

In addition to the Active Hastings Partnership, team members also contribute to a range of local and countywide partnerships and networks, helping to strengthen collaboration, share learning, and ensure effective communication between organisations working across health, wellbeing, community development,

and physical activity. These include the East Sussex Healthy Weight Partnership, Hastings Youth Partnership, Active Sussex Children & Young People Forum, Hastings Ageing Well Network, The Safer Hastings Partnership, the Migrant Forum and the Sussex Health Instructor Network. Engagement within these groups helps ensure that the Active Hastings Partnership remains informed by current priorities, emerging evidence, and best practice, while also supporting the wider sharing of local insight and learning across the region.

During 2025/26, Active Hastings also led the development of a new cross-council officer network within Hastings Borough Council, designed to strengthen strategic alignment and encourage greater collaboration across departments. Meeting monthly, the network brings together officers from leisure, planning, regeneration, community safety, parks, housing, and climate change to share updates on current projects, identify opportunities for joint working, and ensure that physical activity, health, and wellbeing are embedded across wider council priorities and decision-making. The network has helped strengthen internal communication, improve coordination between services, and create opportunities to maximise the collective impact of projects and investment across the borough.

Active Hastings also worked closely with Active Sussex to support the development of a successful Development Award application to the Sport England Place Expansion Programme. Acting as the local voice, the team ensured that the needs, insights and lived experiences of Hastings residents and community organisations were clearly represented at this initial stage. Drawing on strong local partnerships, Active Hastings was able to reflect a broad and inclusive picture of physical activity across the town. This collaborative approach ensured the application was aligned with local priorities, inequalities and opportunities. Securing the Development Award will enable a deeper phase of local consultation and engagement, bringing partners and residents together to co-design and shape a full Place Expansion application that is firmly rooted in the needs of Hastings.

Active Hastings sessions and activities have also supported wider community engagement work across the borough. During 2025/26, Active Hastings community sessions were used as opportunities to engage residents in conversations linked to the Pride in Place consultation programme. This helped gather local insight and feedback from a broader range of residents, including people who may be less likely to engage through traditional consultation methods, while also strengthening relationships between communities and the council. The insight gathered through these conversations will help inform future investment decisions and priorities within the Pride in Place programme, alongside wider council initiatives focused on improving community wellbeing, neighbourhoods, and local opportunities for residents.

The Active Hastings team also plays a key role in activating and promoting sports facilities managed by Hastings Borough Council. Following the Sussex win earlier in the year, the Alexandra Park Tennis Courts were named the National Park Venue of the Year in 2025. This recognition followed significant improvements made in 2023, including upgraded courts, the introduction of a new booking system, and the launch of community-focused programming in partnership with Break Point Tennis—all of which were instrumental in securing the award.

Looking Ahead

The majority of projects delivered during 2025/26 will continue into the coming year, with key priorities including:

- **Strengthening and expanding the Active Hastings Partnership** to enhance cross-sector collaboration and deliver a more coordinated, strategic approach to increasing physical activity levels across the town.
- **Reducing inequalities in physical activity participation** by targeting support towards communities experiencing the greatest health, social, and economic disadvantage.
- **Continuing to provide affordable and accessible opportunities** for the least active residents to engage in sport and physical activity, with a particular focus on people living with long-term health conditions and those experiencing significant barriers to participation.

- **Identifying and maximising external funding opportunities** to sustain and grow physical activity provision, prioritising investment in programmes that support underserved communities and residents with long-term health conditions.
- **Developing and supporting the local physical activity workforce** through training, mentoring, and grant opportunities, with an emphasis on building confidence and capability to support residents with additional health and wellbeing needs.
- **Expanding and diversifying opportunities for children and young people** to take part in physical activity and positive enrichment activities that support their physical, mental, and social wellbeing.
- **Supporting the development and delivery of leisure and physical activity capital projects** by providing specialist physical activity insight, supporting community engagement, and helping ensure that future facilities and spaces are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to local community needs.
- **Working closely with Active Sussex and other Place Expansion programme partners** to ensure investment and delivery are shaped by local need, informed by community voice, and aligned with the priorities of Hastings residents and communities.
- **Embedding community insight, co-production, and evidence-led decision making** across programmes to ensure activities remain responsive, inclusive, and impactful.

2025/26 has been a significant year for Active Hastings, marked not only by continued growth in participation and partnership working, but also by increasing recognition of the programme's role within the wider health, wellbeing, and community landscape across Hastings and St Leonards.

Throughout the year, key learning has continued to reinforce the importance of long-term, place-based approaches that are shaped by local insight, trusted relationships, and strong cross-sector collaboration. The programme's success in engaging residents experiencing the greatest health inequalities highlights the value of delivering accessible, community-centred opportunities that are responsive to the needs of local people and communities.

The year has also demonstrated the importance of flexibility and innovation in responding to emerging challenges and opportunities — from developing targeted support for residents using GLP-1 weight loss medications, to expanding engagement with ethnically diverse communities, strengthening intergenerational activity, and embedding physical activity within wider community and neighbourhood initiatives.

Being selected as part of Sport England's Place Expansion Programme represents an important opportunity for Hastings. Building on the strong foundations already established through Active Hastings and local partnership working, the programme provides a platform to further strengthen collaboration, deepen community engagement, and attract additional investment into the town. Crucially, it also creates an opportunity to ensure that residents and communities play a central role in shaping future priorities and solutions.

As Active Hastings enters its twentieth year, the programme remains committed to reducing inequalities, improving health and wellbeing, and creating opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds to lead more active, connected, and healthier lives. Through continued partnership working, community engagement, and investment in local people and places, Active Hastings will continue working towards a long-term vision of a more active, inclusive, and healthier Hastings for all.