South Tyneside Place Based Expansion

Quarterly insights pack (November 2025)

RISE.

Introduction

- This pack contains insights gathered between July and October 2025 as part of the ongoing place-based expansion work in South Tyneside.

- The insights in this pack reflect the current scope of engagement with local organisations and community leaders. Engagement at this stage is more developed in some priority localities than others.

- These insights should therefore be seen as representing an emerging and evolving picture of the barriers to and enablers of physical activity in South Tyneside.

- Insights are organised by theme and by barriers and enablers.

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Methodology

- The Rise Active Community Engagement Lead in South Tyneside logs a summary of each meeting with individuals and organisations, recording key data including:

  - Individual/organisation's target communities (where applicable).
  - Locality (i.e. all South Tyneside or a specific target locality).
  - Key topics discussed, including barriers to and enablers of physical activity.

- These logs pertain to 40 conversations/group discussions held between July and October 2025.

- Logs are collated and analysed by the Rise Research and Insight Manager (Place).

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Accessibility and inclusion

Enablers

- VCSE organisations are offering physical activity opportunities tailored to the needs of their service users, for example carers, older people, people living with dementia and women from ethnically diverse communities.

- Individuals who engage with these activities cite the importance of being challenged in a safe, non-judgemental environment.

- One community organisation received support from a local councillor to secure a safer and more accessible environment for gardening activities.

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Accessibility and inclusion

Barriers

- Women from South Asian communities facing barriers around personal safety, language, discrimination on public transport, and intergenerational and cultural stigma around physical activity.

- Digital exclusion is a barrier to promoting physical activity opportunities, especially to older residents.

- 'Gym-timidation' can deter residents from accessing conventional leisure services.

- Group activities can be overwhelming for people with dementia, especially if lacking in structure and dementia-friendly features such as flat footpaths and accessible facilities. Individuals with dementia can be overlooked in community planning and provision.

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Children and young people

Enablers

- Place partners are collaborating to develop an active uniform pilot in two primary schools.

- Local schools are being supported by journey planning tools to take an active travel approach to school trips.

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Children and young people

Barriers

- Lack of parks/outdoor play areas designed for older children/young people.

- Infrastructure elements like 'No Ball Games' signage can act as barriers, making children and young people feel they are breaking rules and contributing to the perception of play as antisocial behaviour.

- General lack of services and suitable play areas in Horsley Hill as well as a multi-use games area being repeatedly vandalised.

- Many families in Biddick Hall have play equipment in their gardens, reflecting lack of play areas and green spaces.

- Need for educational opportunities for children who cannot be accommodated in mainstream settings due to exclusion or Emotionally Based School Avoidance.

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Inequality and cost of living

Barriers

- Many low-income residents in the Woodbine and Coston Drive areas rarely leave their estates as key amenities are within walking distance. This leads to places like the beach and Marine Parks being more frequently used by visitors.

- Barriers accessing activity sessions faced by families experiencing poverty, complex needs, and low literacy/digital skills include: accessing digital timetables, purchasing/preparing kits, arranging transport, and intimidation of entering spaces often dominated by more affluent families.

- Individuals with substance use issues are not engaging with fitness programmes due to the pressures of being in a crisis state.

- Some residents are concerned that being seen to be physically active will affect their benefit eligibility.

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Transport

Enablers

- Police operations are reducing rates of antisocial behaviour in South Shields town centre and the Transport Interchange and are using knife arches to reduce the carrying of harmful weapons on public transport.

- South Tyneside Air project aims to facilitate public access to air quality data.

Barriers

- Perceptions of public transport being unsafe (despite positive trends in data)discourages residents to travel via public transport, walking or cycling.

- Poverty remains a major barrier to accessing public transport, despite transport providers offering discount schemes.

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Processes as barriers

- Community organisations that manage local assets face the challenge of navigating a fast-paced external funding environment on the one hand and slower paced local authority planning processes on the other. This can lead to organisations losing out on funding opportunities which in turn affect their plans for long term sustainability.

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