

Gateshead Place Based Expansion

Quarterly insights pack (July 2025)

Introduction

- This pack contains insights gathered between February and June 2025 as part of the ongoing place-based expansion work in Gateshead.
- 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. Physical activity is not necessarily the focus of initial discussions.
- These insights should therefore be seen as representing an emerging and fragmentary picture of physical activity in Gateshead. Given the broader scope of some discussions, the enablers and barriers identified do not always directly relate to physical activity.

Methodology

- The Rise Active Community Engagement Lead in Gateshead 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 Gateshead or a specific target locality).
 - Key topics discussed, including barriers to and enablers of physical activity.
- These logs pertain to 28 conversations held between February and June 2025.
- Logs are collated and thematically analysed by the Rise Research and Insight Manger (Place).

Key themes identified: enablers of physical activity

Theme	Definition
1. Proactive outreach and/or relationship building.	Organisations and services engaging directly with individuals to support and facilitate their initial interaction with physical activity-related services.
2. Empowering communities.	Organisations and services providing local communities with the skills, knowledge, resources and other assets to exercise greater control over the enablers to physical activity.
3. Joined up working.	Organisations and services collaborating and communicating around shared physical activity-related interests and goals.
4. Community hubs	The role played by designated community hubs in promoting awareness of/access to physical activity opportunities.

Key themes identified: barriers to physical activity

Theme	Definition
1. Antisocial behaviour	The perception that antisocial behaviour taking place in or around green spaces, play areas, et cetera is deterring residents from using them for physical activity.
2. Processes as barriers.	Established organisational processes, policies or other ways of working acting as barriers by unintentionally hindering actions or efforts to increase physical activity.
3. Local authority-community relations.	Perceived lack of communication and/or strained relationships between local authority and communities hinder efforts to increase physical activity.
4. Siloed working.	Organisations and departments working independently of one another without effective communication and/or collaboration.

Key themes identified: groups and communities

1. Migrant communities.
2. Women and girls.
3. Ethnically diverse communities.

Top five themes

1. Proactive outreach and relationship building

2. Antisocial behaviour

3. Empowering communities

4. Joined up working

5. Processes as barriers

Themes by localities: Gateshead

Locality	Themes identified
Dunston and Teams	Built environment, drugs and alcohol, antisocial behaviour, migrant communities, joined up working, proactive outreach/relationship building, siloed working, women and girls, processes as barriers, local authority-community relations, lack of capacity, unintended outcomes, empowering communities, grassroots activity, mental ill health, men.
Felling	Community hubs, grassroots activity, processes as barriers, antisocial behaviour, local authority-community relations, empowering communities, mental ill health, proactive outreach/relationship building, men.
Beacon Lough and Wrekenton	Community hub, communication issues.

Spotlight on enablers

Proactive outreach and relationship building

- LA and VCSEs attribute low engagement with available activities (e.g. HAF programme, courses, walks) to a 'fear of the unknown' effect.
- LAs and VCSE organisations are aware that, where there is staff/volunteer capacity to undertake 1-2-1 outreach work to support individuals through initial introduction phase, this can improve engagement and participation in activities.
- Example of practice: A community centre taking a flexible, encouraging 1-2-1 approach to engaging individuals with activities.

Spotlight on enablers

Joined up working and community hubs

- VCSE organisations using community events and festivals as ways of bringing together organisations in sector around a common theme.
- Example of practice: A community centre bringing together statutory and community services under one roof.

Empowering communities

- LAs recognise that the less empowered and represented a local community is within the system, the less likely their issues relating to green spaces etc. will be addressed.
- Community Asset Transfer processes are often being reviewed and improved based on learning and practice, helping to ensure that communities are equipped with the tools and support they need to succeed.
- A drug and alcohol service providing opportunities for individuals in recovery to study, train and upskill.

Spotlight on barriers

Antisocial behaviour

- Littering, crime, drug and alcohol-related antisocial behaviour in parks/green spaces deterring their use by wider community.
- GP surgery in Teams reported that many residents who live on the other side of the motorway will not take appointments after 4pm in the winter due to fear of using the underpass in the dark.

Processes as barriers

- VCSE organisations that struggle to meet HAF criteria or find application process difficult have been funding and organising their own activities and food provision.

Spotlight on barriers

Siloed working

- Smaller community organisations working within same sector find themselves competing for funding rather than collaborating.
- Breakdown in relationships between community groups leads to missed opportunities for collaboration.
- Individual organisations within a collaborative networks (e.g. school and community groups) acting unilaterally to the disadvantage of other members.

Spotlight on barriers

Local authority-community relations

- Residents not always aware of free family events and activities organised by LA.
- LA staff aware that public health awareness campaigns do not always reach target communities.
- Community organisations aware that residents may be sceptical of consultation exercises when they have previously given feedback but not perceived this to have led to meaningful change.
- An organisation representing ethnically diverse communities reported lack of response from LA when requesting support with promoting events and accessing spaces to host activities.

Spotlight on key groups

Migrant communities

- Children in asylum hotel are limited to playing football in the hotel carpark.
- Asylum seeker and refugee parents unaware of free opportunities for children to be physically active after school.
- A group of refugee men expressed an interest in playing football but do not have access to pitches in Gateshead and some fear using public transport to get to Newcastle.

Women and girls

- A women's charity observe that barriers to physical activity vary by individual but include mental ill health and reluctance to take part in group activities.

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