

## **Bright spots, physical activity investments that work: Active Everyday, Sheffield's physical activity service for all people living with and beyond cancer**

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## **Bright Spots: Physical Activity Investments that Work**

### **Active Everyday: Sheffield's Physical Activity service for all people living with and beyond cancer**

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#### **Conflicts of Interest**

None.

## **Programme Card**

### **Country/locality/coverage**

Sheffield, South Yorkshire, United Kingdom which has a total estimated population of 551, 800.

### **Target population**

The estimated 18,235 people in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, United Kingdom who are currently living with or beyond cancer. This number is expected to increase to 28,450 people by 2030.

### **What modes/types/domains of physical activity does the program promote?**

Functional physical activity sessions in community venues aimed at improving rehabilitation and recovery.

### **Which of the 7 best investments the program addresses?**

Community wide programs and Healthcare

### **What sectors does it involve?**

The project involves health professionals and exercise specialists by embedding physical activity within routine cancer care and developing a pathway that bridges the gap between clinical services and community physical activity opportunities.

### **Estimated program reach**

The programme has engaged over 300 people so far.

### **What is special about this program?**

The programme aims to integrate a pragmatic physical activity service for people affected by cancer within existing services enabling all patients to be supported to move more for health and wellbeing benefits.

## **Background**

There are now an estimated 2.5 million people living with cancer in the UK, with this figure projected to rise to 4 million by 2030 [1]. Cancer and its treatment can negatively impact physical and psychological well-being [2]. Regular physical activity throughout the cancer journey can preserve or improve physical function, quality of life, cardiorespiratory fitness, and weight management [3]. That said, physical activity levels generally drop once a person has been diagnosed and ultimately remain low post treatment unless they are given advice on how to be more active more often [4].

Active Everyday is a physical activity referral programme for people living with and beyond cancer in Sheffield, United Kingdom (UK). The programme represents a new pragmatic approach to supporting patient's physical activity needs throughout their cancer journey. The pathway connects clinical care with community physical activity provision. All patients referred to the programme, receive personalised behaviour change support enabling them to discuss their unique needs, aspirations and concerns regarding physical activity, healthy lifestyles and sport. Assistance is provided to promote realistic and incremental behavioural changes and appropriately signpost to PA opportunities that currently exist city-wide.

## **Why is this novel?**

Scientific evidence for the beneficial effects of physical activity for people affected by cancer is building rapidly, yet the most effective way to deliver a physical activity service for cancer patients is largely unknown. Recognising there is not a 'one size fits all' approach, Active Everyday provides easy access for physical activity support for all people affected by cancer and adopts a flexible and tailored approach to physical activity service provision. Enabling individuals to have choice is imperative in ensuring person-centred care. Often, when trying to increase physical activity levels, people affected by cancer are looking for reassurance and encouragement that what they are doing is safe and beneficial to their recovery. To help provide this support the Active Everyday programme provides access to exercise and cancer specialists positioned in health and leisure facilities across Sheffield, to enable safe and structured support.

## **What are the successes?**

Active Everyday has received referrals from over 250 people affected by cancer (Mean age 57 years old; 62% Female, 38% Male; 39% Breast cancer, 7% colorectal, 7% lung, 11% Prostate). Improvements have been observed in patient's quality of life, measured through the EQ-5D [5]

with an average of 184 additional minutes per week spent being physically active to accrue a health benefit [6]. In depth, qualitative interviews with programme participants have provided critical insight for future service delivery, as highlighted by the programme video.

The aim of AE is to create a culture of physical activity for people affected by cancer in Sheffield. Achieving this depends upon the support and engagement from all strategic partners across the health and leisure and sport sectors. A critical success of this programme has been its ability to unite key strategic city partners to work collaboratively to achieve a shared goal; a holistic pathway of physical activity provision for people affected by cancer. This is highlighted through the successful integration of Active Everyday in Sheffield's primary care, physical activity referral service. This marks the first time that cancer has been recognised as a condition within this scheme, and Active Everyday is now a core member of the executive management group.

Recognising the value of Sport and its capability to attract and engage with communities, AE has formed relationships with professional sports teams. An example of this has been the development of Fans Fighting Cancer (Fans FC), a progressive physical activity programme for people affected by cancer centred on walking football, in association with Sheffield United Community Foundation.

### **Lessons learnt**

The behavioural change component of Active Everyday is crucial. Delivery must be flexible, continually responding to patient need. This means delivering the intervention in locations appropriate for patients such as coffee shops, community venues, and cancer support centres. Patients value the one-to-one support; they feel listened to and empowered to drive their own care.

Clinical endorsement of the importance of being physical activity during and after a cancer diagnosis is a powerful influence on an individual's behaviour. Clinical champions are important for advocating a culture of physical activity. Champions can motivate colleagues to integrate AE referrals into their routine practice. It is important to have a simple and clear referral pathway not constrained to just clinical services, but all organisations that cancer patients could come into contact with. A comprehensive marketing and communications strategy is required to optimise public and professional awareness of AE.

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