

# Physical Activity Policy



**GREAT YARMOUTH**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Approved by Health and Safety (HOD)s Group 12 February  
2009.**

**Approved CMG 8 April 2009**

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Group**

## Background

Physical activity is essential for good health and contributes to positive well-being. Many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society – such as coronary heart disease, strokes, obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), colorectal cancer, stress, anxiety, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and low back pain – are associated with *physical inactivity*.

For general health benefit, adults should achieve **a total of at least 30 minutes a day** of at least moderate intensity physical activity **on 5 or more days of the week**. The 30 minutes of physical activity can be achieved either by doing all the daily activity in one session, or through several shorter bouts of activity of 10 minutes or more. The total activity includes any activity undertaken, whether during leisure, while at work or travelling. Physical activity includes activities such as walking, housework, cycling, gardening, dancing and housework, as well as participation in sport and formal exercise. However, only 3 out of 10 people in England participate in the minimum levels of activity necessary to promote health.

The workplace is an important setting in which people can increase their levels of activity to benefit their health and protect against illness.

Physical activity helps people to manage stress, back pain, weight and medical conditions.

Physically active employees also report less illness and recover more quickly from the illnesses they do get.

Employees engaged in physical activity initiatives have reported greater enjoyment of their work, improved concentration and mental alertness and improved cooperation and rapport with colleagues.

## Aim of the policy

Great Yarmouth borough Council recognises the importance of its staff and to this end has written this policy to promote and encourage employee participation in regular moderate intensity physical activity with the aim of helping to provide:

- Healthier and more energetic staff
- Better physical activity habits among staff
- Less sickness and long-term health problems linked to physical inactivity
- Reduced absenteeism

## Objectives

### **To raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity the Council will:**

- Provide details of activities provided by the Council for both staff and the general public on the Fit For Business section of the Intranet
- Provide educational leaflets and resources on physical activity
- Provide staff courses and seminars on the benefits of activity and risks of inactivity
- Hold wellbeing promotional events.

### **To support employees in becoming more active in a variety of ways the Council will:**

- Encourage employees to make active choices through the use of promotional and motivational resources, for example encouraging them to walk or cycle all or part of the way to work, or to use the stairs instead of the lift
- Map out walking trails or routes within the local area and publicise them with times and distances on the intranet
- Provide information on local sports and leisure facilities, classes and clubs and, where possible, negotiate favourable rates
- Establish a lunchtime activity like walking, yoga and health eating
- Provide corporate memberships at local authority facilities.

### **To remove barriers and enable staff to be active in and around work the Council will:**

- Provide flexible working hours to allow for physical activity before, during and after work where possible
- Provide incentives to staff who walk or cycle to meetings, e.g. paying activity mileage
- Provide safe storage racks for bicycles
- Provide showering and/or changing facilities where possible in existing properties or ensure these facilities are included in new office accommodation.

## Review and monitoring

The policy, data and reports will be reviewed by the Fit for Business Group and circulated to management.

All employees will be made aware of the physical activity policy and the facilities available. The physical activity policy will be included in the employee information and induction packs.

The policy will be reviewed six months from implementation and then annually after that.