



HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN

2021-2022

Stroud District Council

Community Health & Wellbeing Team

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WHY WRITE A HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN?

Supporting the health and wellbeing of residents is a fundamental reason for the existence of district councils.

Stroud District Council creates a Health and Wellbeing Plan to pull together the golden thread of health and wellbeing that runs throughout the work of the council.

While this document cannot mention every piece of work that impacts wellbeing, it does include some of our key priorities in supporting Stroud residents through the COVID 19 pandemic and where we intend to focus our support for a healthy recovery.

WHY THIS YEAR'S HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN IS DIFFERENT.

In the past Stroud District Council has written a three year Health & Wellbeing Plan. This year we have experienced such unprecedented change through the COVID 19 pandemic that we will write a one year plan to focus on short term priorities. Over 2021 we will review the changing pandemic situation and make longer term plans for next year.

In addition, in 2021 the Council is carrying out a thorough Leisure and Wellbeing Review. This will shape our future wellbeing plans and will be incorporated into the next Health & Wellbeing Plan.

PRIORITIES FOR 2021-2022

Stroud District Council have the following five Health and Wellbeing priorities for 2021-2022:

**Continue
COVID
response and
recovery**

**Learn from
Leisure &
Wellbeing
Review**

**Develop
Community
Hubs**

**Improve
Mental
Health**

**Reduce barriers
to physical
activity**

Underpinning all of our work will be and an improved health and wellbeing communication strategy and promotion of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing.

5 WAYS TO WELLBEING



PRIORITY 1

2020 was a year like no other. Responding to the COVID 19 pandemic has superseded most of the day to day work of the Community Health & Wellbeing Team and many other Council Services. Stroud District Council pulled together key staff into a Community Response Team to coordinate support for residents.

**Continue
COVID
response and
recovery**

CONNECTING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO THOSE IN NEED

The first lock down spurred established and new community groups to check on neighbours, organising deliveries and support for those who couldn't leave their homes. District Councils were asked to work with Gloucestershire County Council to connect people in need with local volunteers who could help them. Our COVID Community Response team created a map of support groups and responded to daily requests for help. The team also rang more than 14,000 people on our list of most vulnerable residents and connected them to local support groups where needed.



FEEDING STROUD DISTRICT

One of the most urgent concerns throughout the pandemic has been access to food. Some people weren't able to go food shopping because they had to shield due to health conditions, some had to isolate after a positive COVID test and some found themselves unable to afford food after losing work. The COVID Community Response team worked closely with the Government Food Parcel scheme, Stroud District Foodbank, The Long Table and local community food charities to get food to the people who needed it. When volunteers were unable to help, Neighbourhood Wardens delivered emergency food, toiletries and baby supplies.

In 2020 'Holiday Hunger' for children became especially urgent against the backdrop of increased food poverty and the closure of normal holiday activities due to COVID. Stroud District Council worked with local businesses and charities to supply nutritious food over the holidays in key areas of the district.

COVID FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

At the start of the pandemic, in recognition of the incredible work being done on the ground, Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud District Council each gave £50k to support groups helping the community in Stroud.



All COVID support groups in the district were invited apply. To date 68 groups have been funded for a range of equipment and activities including IT to provide services online, creative packs for families, social activities for people living alone.

The pandemic also inspired a number of charitable funders in Gloucestershire to work together and allocate a special COVID fund for the Voluntary Sector. Stroud District Council sits on the new Gloucestershire Funders Panel to support any applications from Stroud organisations. Since June 2020, the fortnightly panel has funded 68 organisations for COVID support work in Stroud to a total of £69,000.

SUPPORT WITH BENEFITS AND BUSINESS GRANTS

From increased demand for Universal Credit, COVID Business grants or self-isolation payments for those with COVID-19, Stroud District Council's Revenue and Benefits team has dealt with unprecedented numbers of customers in 2020. Each claim comes with a list of criteria and detailed checking and customers are often anxious about their financial situation or confused by unfamiliar processes. This government grant scheme is likely to continue as the financial impact of the pandemic is felt by Stroud residents for some time.

PROTECTING HOMELESS PEOPLE

Being safely 'locked down' at home only works for those who have a home. The COVID-19 lockdowns have been a challenge for those living in insecure housing or on the streets. Stroud District Council's Housing Strategy & Housing Advice team helped to secure COVID-19 safe temporary accommodation for homeless people throughout the pandemic. Some temporary accommodation options were not appropriate due to the inability to self-isolate between occupants. In addition, some individuals were cautious of entering unfamiliar accommodation or travelling to a different neighbourhood to be safely housed. The Housing Strategy and Housing Advice team worked hard in partnership with agencies across the County and Stroud's Neighbourhood Wardens to ensure every homeless person was made safe.

RECOVERY WORK STREAMS



Stroud District Council has developed four priority work streams to help our district recover post-COVID 19.

- Community and Wellbeing
- Economy, Market Towns and Rural Vitality
- Environment and Climate
- Housing and Homelessness

These priority work streams will guide future wellbeing work across the Council. Further details can be found on our website.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO FOOD

The developing network around food in the Stroud District will be supported through a new Food Strategy for the district. This will include working with food surplus organisations, climate and food growing charities, community groups, schools and agencies working with families.

As a continuation of 'Holiday Hunger' work, Stroud District Council will work with pre-school settings to provide food vouchers to under 5s who are missed by Free School Meals provision. This programme will be expanded with a Holiday Activity and Food programme for children in the 2021 school holidays.

STAYING COVID SAFE

Stroud District Council's Environmental Health team have been working on the front line, supporting businesses to stay open safely. As Government rules and restrictions changed quickly and frequently, Officers helped businesses understand how to protect employees and the public.

SUPPORTING OUR VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

The Voluntary and Community Sector in Stroud is vibrant and hard working. Our VCS forum, Know Your Patch Network is co-hosted by Stroud District Council and GL11 Community Hub and is one of the busiest in the county. We have a reputation for sharing good practice and supporting community organisations to develop.

The community response to the pandemic illustrated just how strong Stroud District's Voluntary and Community Sector is. Whether they are small local groups of volunteers, larger Hubs with paid staff or charities offering specialist support, Stroud District Council believes that the key to future wellbeing is through strong, well connected community organisations. A number of priorities in this Health & Wellbeing Plan support this work and will be continued in future recovery plans.

PRIORITY 2

Stroud District Council is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of the residents and visitors to the District. With COVID-19 having such a detrimental effect on physical and mental health there could not have been a better time to embark on a new Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy.

At the end of 2020 we commissioned consultants to undertake a Leisure and Wellbeing Review in order to formulate a new 20-year strategy to meet the ever-changing needs of our local communities.

**Learn from
Leisure &
Wellbeing
Review**

LEISURE & WELLBEING STRATEGY

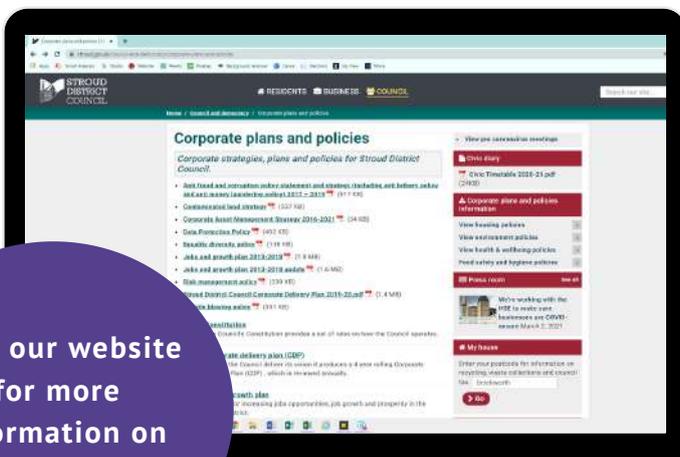
This review will explore:

- All council leisure and wellbeing assets including; Stratford Park Leisure Centre including the outdoor pool, Museum in the Park, Stratford Park, and The Pulse (Dursley)
- What Stroud District residents really want through consultation, discussions, specialist focus groups and surveys.
- Investment opportunities for development, growth, new programmes and partnerships.
- Community assets and how we can work more closely with our community hubs to provide meaningful leisure and wellbeing activities on the doorstep of our market towns and rural villages.
- How residents young and old could become more active both inside our facilities and outside in our beautiful district.

LEISURE & WELLBEING STRATEGY CONT.

- Ways to tackle the inequalities linked with some activities and removing the barriers to ensure we deliver an environment which genuinely meets the needs of the district.
- How active travel can be encouraged through walking, cycling and use of our improving canal network. This would support us in becoming carbon neutral, a key priority for the council.
- How to make our green spaces, parks, common land and woodlands more accessible with better infrastructure to enable active travel.

The review is due to finish in July 2021 when we will launch our new Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy. The new Strategy will lay out our offer for active lifestyles, overcoming barriers to activity, working with our natural environment and supporting Stroud District to become one of the most active districts in the country.



Visit our website for more information on our key priorities

PRIORITY 3

At the start of the pandemic, the community response in helping their neighbours was an immense support. However, as more complex situations were uncovered by well-meaning residents and the lockdowns continued, Stroud District Council became concerned about volunteer burnout and small community groups taking on more than they could manage.

Develop Community Hubs



In response, Creative Sustainability CIC approached Gloucestershire Funders to fund a piece of research into what resources local community groups needed to keep supporting their residents. Through a series of workshops and interviews, issues like volunteer training, dealing with safeguarding, working with other services and governance were highlighted. Creative Sustainability then created a self-assessment questionnaire to help groups identify their strengths and area for development.

The questionnaire helps groups to work out if they are happy working at the level they are at or would like to grow and offer more services and opportunities.

The self-assessment questionnaire was tested with 50 community groups at a Know Your Patch online forum and feedback will be used to complete the tool ready for use by the new Hubs Mentor in 2021.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING GRANTS

In parallel to the work on supporting Community Hubs, Stroud District Council update the Community Investment Grant in response to the essential work being done by the voluntary sector for the community's wellbeing.

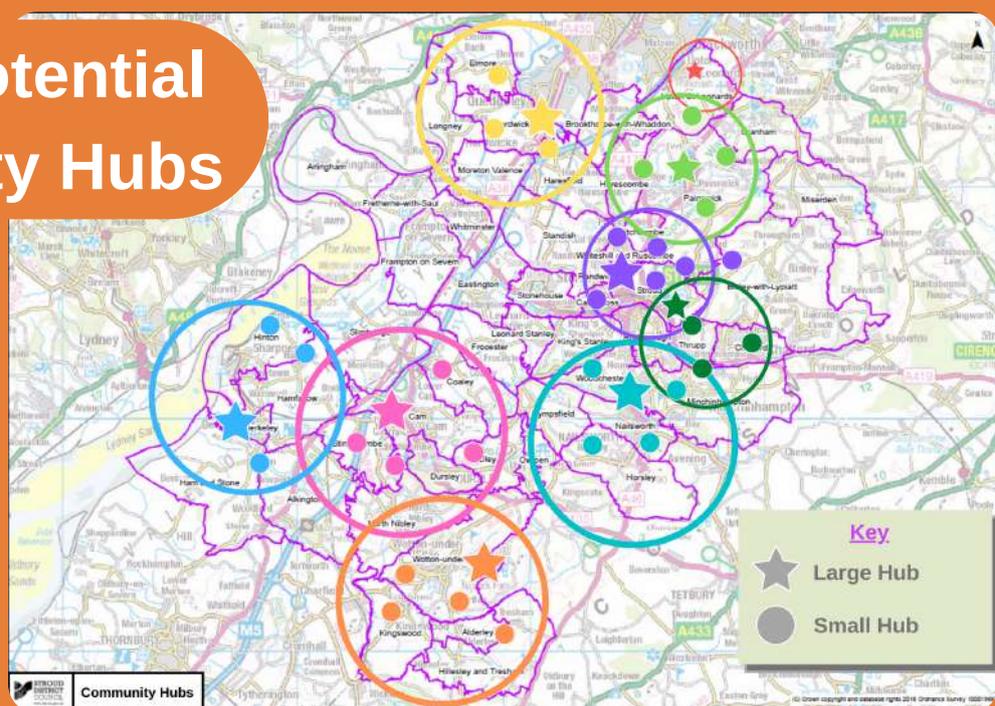
The grant criteria were re-written to align with the Community Recovery work stream priorities and the new application process was promoted widely throughout the voluntary sector. A new decision panel was formed to include expertise on housing, community, wellbeing, young people, arts, culture and climate. In total 68 bids were taken to panel and a total of £172,200 awarded. In addition to the Community Wellbeing grant, community organisations looking for advice will be signposted to alternative funding streams throughout 2021.

NEW HUBS MENTOR

Using funding from Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire County Council, a new Hubs Mentor will be recruited by Creative Sustainability CIC in Spring 2021.

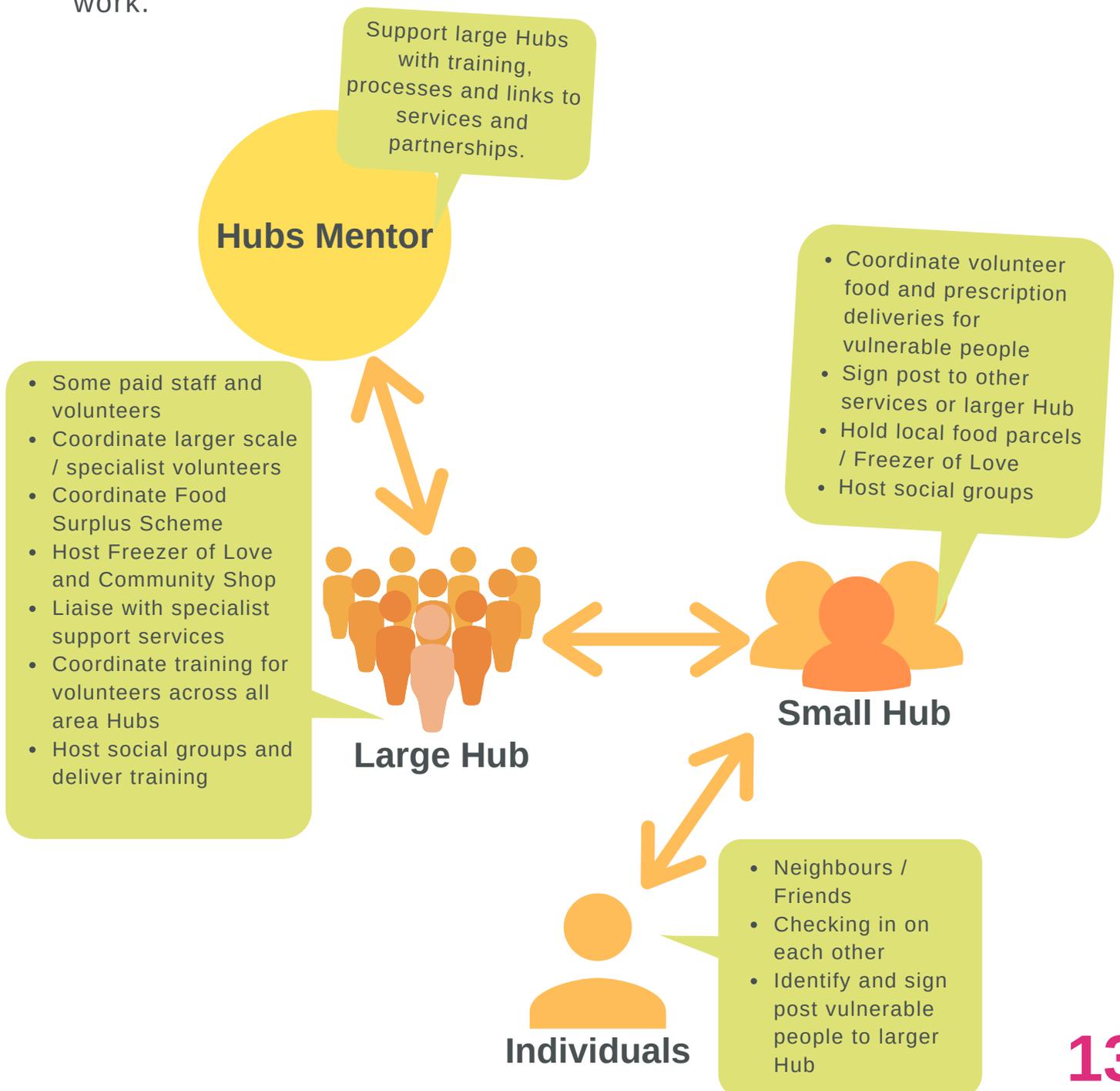
This new role will further develop the self-assessment questionnaire piloted in 2020 and will use it to work with new community groups and potential Hubs across the District.

Map of Potential Community Hubs



The new Hubs model will create a stronger network of support for community groups and residents across the district:

- Small village Hubs are networked to larger town Hubs for more support and access to services
- Communities develop their own Hubs at a pace that suits them
- Some Hubs will have building, some will be virtual, some will offer specialist services
- Hub model will help protect volunteers from overwhelm and burn out
- District Hub Mentor will support emerging Hubs
- All organisations will be offered training in strengths-based community work.



PRIORITY 4

The impact of the pandemic on mental health has been felt by more people than those who have actually contracted the virus. Anxiety, grief, financial worries, insecure housing, lack of food and uncertainty about the future have been felt by many of us at some point in the last year.

**Improve
Mental
Health**

As a District Council we have worked on some of the fundamental issues causing the most distress:

- ensuring people get the welfare payments and grants they are entitled to
- supporting the distribution of food
- providing housing advice and preventing homelessness

We have also worked with Mental Health partners to bring more resources into our district, including counselling and better training for the voluntary sector.

We are trying to tackle loneliness and social isolation through better social connections by supporting Community Hubs.



PROMOTING WELLBEING & HOW TO ACCESS HELP

In 2021 the Community Health & Wellbeing team will improve our public health messaging with a new focus on digital communication. Our focus will be simple to follow information about what we can do to help ourselves and where we can go for help when we need it. We will promote the 5 Ways to Wellbeing and make it easier for people to navigate the multitude of health services we have in the district.

The Community Hub model promotes better mental health through:

- Local connection and informal support provided by volunteers and like-minded people
- Targeted support for 'marginalised' people – Hubs ensure everyone is welcome and reach out to those who find it hard to maintain relationships and social networks.
- Easier access to all wellbeing services like health, social care, debt and food.
- Training and supervision for Hubs so staff and volunteers are better qualified and supported to deal with mental health and emotional distress.



TALK & LISTEN,
BE THERE,
FEEL CONNECTED



DO WHAT YOU CAN,
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,
MOVE YOUR MOOD



REMEMBER
THE SIMPLE
THINGS THAT
GIVE YOU JOY



EMBRACE NEW
EXPERIENCES,
SEE OPPORTUNITIES,
SURPRISE YOURSELF

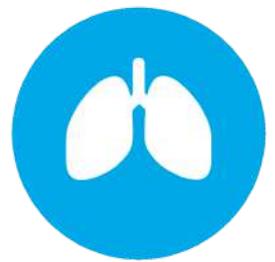


Your time,
your words,
your presence

PRIORITY 5

The Healthy Lifestyles Scheme aims is to support people to be more active in a safe way to benefit both their physical and mental health. The scheme offers exercise classes in Better Balance, Cardiac Rehab Phase IV, Respiratory Rehab and Living with and beyond Cancer.

**Reduce barriers
to physical
activity**



At the start on the pandemic, all participant on the scheme were sent a 30-day exercise plan so they could continue to exercise at home. As the lockdown continued all of the classes were moved online and delivered via zoom from the instructors living rooms. The classes saw 644 attendances over the 16 weeks they were delivered online. In September the classes return with socially distanced face to face classes. Participants were offered the option to purchase equipment packs which included hand weights, resistances bands and Pilates mats as equipment was no longer able to be shared during classes. We then entered another lockdown and our participants found themselves back participating in classes from their front rooms but this time with the addition of their equipment packs.

STROLLING IN THE STROUD DISTRICT



Strolling in Stroud district offers volunteer led health walks in various locations across the district. Following a short pause due to lockdown the walks restarted in August and the walkers couldn't be happier to get back out within their community to enjoy friendly conversation, outdoors. For some, walking in crowded 'beauty spots' during the pandemic was stressful. Joining a Health Walk, knowing that the leader will not book too many walkers and will ensure safety and social distancing allowed them to exercise with other people and enjoy the outdoors.

BEING ACTIVE

Due to Covid-19, people have been out walking and exploring the area near them like never before. This is our opportunity as a district to raise awareness of what is available locally as well as providing opportunities for people to be physically active near where they live.

Sport England has a vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity over the next 10 years. They are supporting our Gloucestershire vision through 'We Can Move,' a social action movement of people committed to getting Gloucestershire physically active.

Stroud District Council are working with Active Gloucestershire 'We Can 'Move' in the Stroud District.

Our longer term plans will be shaped by what comes out of our Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy later in 2021.



**we
can
move**

Our short term plans for 2021 include: -

- Mummy, Buggy & Me are a new addition to our Mummy & Me activities, a scheme we started in 2019 to help new mothers bond with their babies and each other and try some gentle exercise. Mummy, Buggy & Me will be outdoor exercise classes in the beauty of Stratford Park.
- Tai Chi for balance and wellbeing classes combine safe and effective exercises for a healthy body and mind and consists of controlled flowing movements and breathing. These movements improve muscular strength and stability and can increase range of movement, all important to daily health.
- Choose 2 Move are light to moderate physical activity classes designed for people with mobility limitations.
- A new Long COVID programme (Post-COVID syndrome) is run in with Stroud District Council, health professionals and community organisations and include 5 elements: - Support Groups, Physical Activity, Volunteering, Self-Management and Training
- GROW (Green Recreation Outdoor Wellbeing) brings together opportunities district wide that enable people to be physically active outdoors like health walks, gardening projects and canal or environmental volunteering

Let's not forget our Leisure Centres and the part they play in reducing the barriers to physical activity. During each lockdown they provided Facebook Live, pre-recorded and live streaming into your home. The reopening of these centres will see the return of group exercise, swimming, the gym and sporting opportunities making physical activity even more accessible than ever.

