

# Guidance for commissioners, service providers, clinicians and social prescribing link-workers

The following guidance is designed to assist those involved in making decisions and recommendations, both to individuals and organisations, on the use of technologies to support physical activity. It sets out a number of key considerations and questions to ask about technologies or technology-enabled programmes and services to help ensure they are targeted, acceptable to users and effective in promoting and sustaining increased physical activity.

## Understand the nature of activity and inactivity in your area

Understanding patterns of inactivity is the foundation for developing tailored programmes:

- Who is completely inactive?
- Who is not doing enough?
- Who is active but only at light intensity?
- What specific groups or communities have particular needs?

## Target those who are least active

Those who are least active have the greatest health risks, and it only takes a small increase in activity to deliver significant benefits, especially in those who are least active. The least active may benefit from using technologies aimed at reducing sitting time.

## Partner with workplaces

The workplace is a key site for reaching people, given how long people spend there and the extent of sedentary behaviour at work. Working in partnership with local employers to help them design programmes that lead to sustained increases in physical activity could be a cost-effective strategy.

## Understand people's wants and needs

- What is important to them and will help motivate them to be more active? What are the right 'hooks'?
- What are the barriers?
- These insights can inform not only what services you commission but how you communicate and promote them.

## Involve people to ensure technology and technology-enabled programmes meet their needs

- Has this technology or programme been designed with the involvement of the target users, considering their needs and goals?
- Has it been designed with the involvement of clinicians and/or physical activity practitioners?
- Does the technology or programme incorporate behaviour change techniques e.g. how does it give people feedback about their activity? How does it give them encouragement?

## The role of face-to-face support

For target groups that want or need ongoing support from a real person, consider how this can be made cost-effective through programmes that combine an element of face-to-face support with remote delivery and/or remote contact with a real person, such as a physiotherapist or personal trainer in a local gym.

## Provide appropriate training for those involved in delivery

Ensure that clinicians, social prescribing link-workers and those delivering prescribed activities (e.g. fitness trainers in a local gym) are suitably trained and informed about the evidence for how technologies can be used effectively to support increased activity and habit-formation, how best to combine personal support with the use of technologies, and how to select technologies that are suited to a particular individual's needs.

## Tailor your messaging

Tailor messaging to the motivations of different groups. Do they want to be healthier, happier, or sleep better? Does 'doing more sport' appeal, or 'being more active', or just 'moving more' rather than 'exercising'?

