

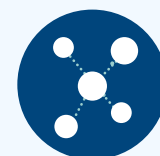
ESSENCE

One page overview of each 'condition' for addressing inequalities in physical activity

SEPTEMBER 2024



Leadership



Policy makers, workforce, volunteers and local people act, and make decisions, both independently and together, to tackle physical activity inequalities.

What does this mean and why is it important?

The conditions for physical activity in a place are often shaped by who makes decisions and who can, or is enabled to act. To reduce inequalities in physical activity, systemic change is needed. This involves joined-up action, decentralised leadership and involves a broad range of people, including strategic leaders, the workforce and local people. This enables a diverse range of people to act in ways that strengthen each other's work, bringing the value of different perspectives, knowledge, and skills for a greater combined impact.

Sector integration of physical activity:

Strategic leadership: Strategic leaders support place based systemic work by using their individual and collective influence to: change policy and practices that build on strengths; support innovation and joined-up action across the system; dismantle processes that hinder systemic work and physical activity; show how physical activity can support broader social outcomes. Leaders cultivate a culture shift to foster distributed leadership and creative ways of working by holding accountability and trusting and enabling others to act.

Shared leadership across sectors: People at all levels, including local people, are enabled to take on roles and act independently within different sectors. This fosters broader participation, new approaches, and greater collective impact. When an increasingly aligned common purpose emerges through the experience of working together, or when we create a vision which speaks to people – both can inspire autonomous actions towards a collective effort. People can influence change across sectors, or upwards, to address challenges.

Strengthening individual and community capacities:

Community leadership: Local people are enabled to create changes that enable people to be physically active. Local people – who have been nurtured, given a platform, or emerged naturally have the skills and the support to act in ways that they see fit. Representatives from the place or interest group, including diverse voices, are influencing, involved in or leading on decisions which create the conditions for physical activity. This approach fosters innovative ways of working with positive impacts within the place.

How can we create distributed and joined-up leadership?

1. **Actions are aligned towards a common purpose:** People act independently in their sectors and places, but their actions reflect the shared purpose or vision for collective change.
2. **Nurtured and skilled leaders:** More people – who choose to lead – across different spaces are nurtured, empowered, supported, and are developing the attributes and skills.
3. **Trust in others decision-making:** Strategic Leaders foster a culture of support and innovation and demonstrate trust in the transfer of decision-making power, whilst holding accountability.
4. **Inclusive decision making and actions:** People and communities, representative and inclusive of diverse groups, are involved in, or make decisions. Strategic leaders advocate and model inclusive decision-making.
5. **Actions are joined-up and supported by others:** People with different roles have spaces to make individual and collective decisions. Within this, there are appropriate channels to join up action, seek support and influence upwards, which are advocated and used.

Reflection questions

- Do we know how people who are most affected by decisions are involved in decision making?
- What counts as decision making? Consultation, influencing or handing over decision making power.
- What are the processes/structures in place to support sharing leadership and decision-making?