



Active Dorset



# Healthy Movers across Dorset

Chloe Goldswain (BCP Council – Public Health) & Claire Tabor  
(Active Dorset)

# Dorset



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One system, two 'places' – the area covered by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council, and the area covered by Dorset Council.

## Our Children and Young People:

**30, 366** children and young people living in Dorset are aged 0-4.

**15%** of CYP population.



**51% Female**



**49% Male**

**89.2%** children in **Dorset Council** areas reach the expected level of development at 2 years.

Gross motor skills and personal-social skills have the lowest levels of achievement in 2/2.5year checks.

**70.2%** of children in **BCP** reach the expected level of development at 2 years.

Communication and fine motor skills have the lowest levels of achievement in 2/2.5year checks.





# Hidden challenges



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Significant areas of deprivation



Variations in health due to inequality



Child poverty rates are increasing



Readiness for school varies due to levels of disadvantage



Growing numbers of children with complex needs (SEN)

# The Why



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The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) physical activity guidelines state that children aged 1-5 should aim for 180 minutes of activity a day.

**In 2023/24, only 53.3% of children and young people aged 5-16 in Dorset achieved the recommended physical activity levels.**

*Department of Health and Social Care, 2025*

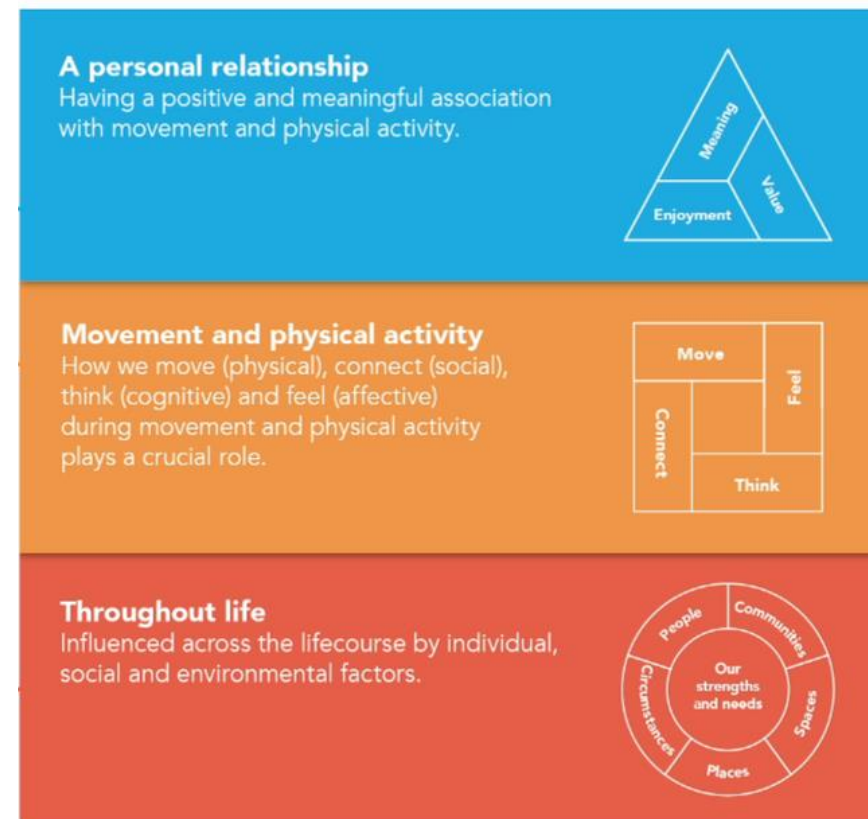
Encouraging physical activity from an early age helps establish lifelong healthy habits and increases the likelihood of remaining active into adolescence and adulthood

Sport England,  
2022



“Being physically active can help to prevent over 20 chronic conditions and diseases and lead healthier and happier lives”...

National Health Service, 2024



Physical literacy is our **relationship** with **movement and physical activity throughout life.**



# Healthy Movers



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Supports physical literacy, self-esteem, and wellbeing in two to five-year-olds. Social and emotional development.

Training and resources for practitioners, early years settings, and families to continue the activities at home

Building examples of evidence-based programmes into our local systems and good practice.

Aligns to local strategies and shared priorities for children and young people.





# Healthy Movers



- **Autumn/Spring 2021/22** - Pilot took place in 18 settings across Dorset. Delivered by the Youth Sport Trust (YST), in partnership with Public Health Dorset (Commissioner) and BCP and Dorset Council Early Years Local Authority colleagues
- Positive outcomes reported. Additional funding secured to roll-out the programme further.
- **2023/25** - Healthy Movers rolled out to 159 settings across Dorset and BCP areas; includes nurseries, preschools, childminders, first schools, libraries, family hubs and Home Start, a charity supporting families with young children
- A collaborative approach adopted, project group includes colleagues from the YST, Public Health, Active Dorset, and Early Years colleagues from both local authorities.
- Early Years Physical Activity officer, hosted by Active Dorset to support with project coordination and delivery.
- Ongoing evaluation through post intervention surveys to the participating settings to track, measure and understand changes on a termly basis.





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# Healthy Movers Impact

# Healthy Movers

Dorset Council and BCP Council

2025 Spring Term

## Participation numbers

159

Settings involved  
with Healthy  
Movers project

295

Practitioners  
now trained

49

New Healthy  
Movers settings

1333

Families  
engaged

24

Staff trained  
at Sunny Days  
Nursery

4495

Children now  
participating

## V Autumn term



Increase of 177  
practitioners  
trained



Increase of 366  
families engaged



Increase of 2051  
children now  
participating

80% of settings said Healthy Movers had a positive impact in the young peoples communication and language.

91% of settings said Healthy Movers had a positive impact in the young peoples confidence to take part in sport and physical activity.

92% of settings said Healthy Movers had a positive impact in the young persons enjoyment of physical activity.

93% of settings said Healthy Movers had a positive impact in the young persons overall happiness.

94% of settings said Healthy Movers had a positive impact in the young persons physical skills, such as balance and object control.



## Practitioner feedback

One setting delivered physical activities now that they had a better understanding of the importance of it. "Most of the children really look forward to the Healthy Movers afternoons and join in enthusiastically!"

"Children have grown so much in their self-confidence since we have embedded this into our practice."

One setting found Healthy Movers particularly useful over the colder winter months to help keep children fit and active when the outdoor time was more limited.



Settings have really enjoyed Healthy Movers and can see the benefits to doing it daily.

46

Bespoke physical literacy/family engagement training sessions delivered.

100%

Of practitioners feel more competent, confident and feel more motivated in their role since taking part in Healthy Movers.





# Sharing best practice and learning



2025 Spring Term

## Sharing good practice | Cohort 2



A school said that by using Healthy Movers they have been able to target specific skills e.g. standing on one leg that some children needed to achieve so were able to spend time focused on these.

One pre-school leader said that their children really enjoy starting on the floor and using a ball to roll around their bodies that helps with their attention and concentration.

A school mentioned that Healthy Movers has been really good for two children that have high level needs. They have been able to adapt, allowing one child to change the trains in Choo Choo to a fire engine in response to his individual needs and interests.

Lego bricks have been used for the hide and seek activity card and the children love it.



## Feedback from 3 bespoke physical literacy training sessions:

"It was a very good and engaging training which taught about Healthy Movers in a holistic way providing examples and different ways to differentiate or extend to work with different children and ages in inclusive ways".

"The tutor was very engaging & really motivating - I couldn't wait to get back to try it with the children. The resources are fantastic, everything you need for each activity on one card".

"It was a wonderful training experience. The tutor put everyone at ease so we were all able to participate and get involved in every aspect of the learning. Lots of fantastic ideas were shared which allowed time to practice the activities".

"It's great to be able to provide our volunteers with some really practical and useful training and know they will take it with them into the homes of the families they support".



## Plans for the summer term



Cohort 3 physical literacy training days planned with at least 50 new practitioners attending.



Follow-up virtual sessions available for all cohort 3 settings as a touch point to find out how they are progressing with Healthy Movers.



Virtual session focused on a "deep dive" of at least two Healthy Movers cards with an opportunity for practitioners to share good practice.



Each Healthy Movers setting will receive a pre-recorded video showing how some of the activities in the toolkit can be delivered. This will allow settings to then share the video with colleagues, to help support their own delivery of Healthy Movers.

## Healthy Movers | Children aged 0-2

Other settings mention that the younger children enjoy more physical objects such as scarves and bubbles and activities with visual resources and equipment, with the need for a tactile object to hold onto which has supported engagement.

One setting said that they have seen brilliant changes during 'waiting times'. When the babies are sat up waiting for lunch the team have been using resources and activities to engage the children, which has resulted in them being much calmer whilst waiting.





# Next steps



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June - December 2025



Cohort 3 Physical Literacy & Family Engagement training.

Power hours and ongoing support for existing settings.

Training offer for 0-19 CYP PHS Colleagues, including Healthy Movers overview and signposting.

Review settings trained to date against areas of need locally.

## Project sustainability

How do we embed the principles of physical literacy and physical activity into policies and processes locally?

What does the offer for our workforce look like beyond the planned programme end?

Youth Sport Trust and Active Dorset to meet with contract manager and commissioning manager (Public Health) to discuss next steps for the project in developing and progressing it's outcomes further and exploring further methods of sustainability for the project.





# Learnings



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- **Flexibility** – ways that are appropriate for the settings, children and families.
- With large settings, **further resources** can be made available, enabling more practitioners to deliver Healthy Movers.
- Once the training has been delivered, each **setting can decide how they're going to use Healthy Movers** to have the biggest impact on their children, families and colleagues.
- **Collaborative working** and **good communication** with colleagues is essential to encourage participation in the project.
- **Regular project group meetings** ensured the project stayed on track.





# References

- Department of Health and Social Care, 2019. [Physical activity guidelines: UK Chief Medical Officers' report - GOV.UK](#)
- Department of Health and Social Care, 2022. [Physical activity: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK](#)
- Department of Health and Social Care, 2025. [Physical Activity - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)
- National Health Service, 2024. [Benefits of exercise - NHS](#)
- Sport England, 2022. [Creating healthy habits at a young age | Sport England](#)
- Sport England, 2022b. [Children and young people | Sport England](#)
- World Health Organisation, 2019. [WHO-NMH-PND-2019.4-eng.pdf](#)

## Links to relevant documents

[Healthy Movers | Active Dorset](#)  
[Healthy Movers - Youth Sport Trust](#)  
<https://www.activedorset.org/latest-news/2024/11/healthy-movers-makes-local-radio>  
Pilot - [Dorset & BCP Executive Summary 2022](#)  
[A Movement for Movement strategy](#)





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**Thank you for listening**

**Any questions?**