Information and guidelines for Scarborough Borough Council

Exercise Referral Schemes
Introduction

This document provides information about the GP exercise referral schemes that are available at Scarborough Sports Centre and Whitby Leisure Centre.

It will provide background information about the scheme and an outline the referral criteria, exclusion criteria and the process of referral.

The detrimental effects of an inactive lifestyle are increasingly apparent and it is widely recognised that inactivity can elevate the risk of developing a wide range of health problems, such as; type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, hypertension, cancer, stroke, obesity, and osteoporosis (Department of Health, 2004).

There are a number of key national documents which provide further information about the benefits of an active lifestyle:

- Be Active, Be Healthy: A plan to get the nation moving (Department of Health, 2009)
- Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: a cross governmental strategy for England (Department of Health, 2008)
- At least 5 a week: Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health (Department of Health, 2004)

On average, an inactive person spends 38% more days in hospital than an active person, and has 5.5% more family physician visits, 13% more specialist services and 12% more nurse visits than an active individual (Department of Health, 2009). The risk of coronary heart disease amongst sedentary people is nearly two-fold (Department of Health, 2000).

Health professionals can play a significant role in supporting individuals to change their lifestyle. One in four people in England say they would be more active if they were so advised by a doctor or nurse (Department of Health, 2009).
Background
An exercise referral allows Primary Health Care professionals to refer individuals with a variety of medical conditions and a history of sedentary lifestyle, who would never normally consider participating in regular physical activity, to a short-term, personalised programme of physical activity. The aim of this short-term intervention is to promote long-term adherence, by encouraging lifestyle changes, through which more physical activity will be incorporated into their lives.

The scheme may be seen as an alternative or an adjunct to the prescription of drugs for certain conditions, and may contribute to a reduction in patient attendance in primary care.

Exercise referral relies heavily on the professionals involved as powerful motivators in encouraging an individual to take up the supervised exercise programme, and indeed, to continue with physical activity in the long-term.

For health professionals, the schemes offer a practical approach in the promotion of physical activity, with a view to preventing and managing a range of medical conditions.

Aims of our GP exercise referral scheme
- To allow individuals who have a range of mild to moderate physical or mental health problems to participate in a structured physical activity programme in a safe environment.
- To offer a programme of physical activity, which looks at the individual needs of the referred patient rather than a general approach to certain target groups.
- To raise awareness of the physical, psychological and social benefits of physical activity with individuals who are not normally physically active.
- To promote long-term participation in regular physical activity by developing the individuals confidence in being active.
- To improve participants health, well being and quality of life.

Ethical and legal responsibility
A National Quality Assurance Framework (Department of Health, 2001) sets out guidelines for exercise referral, with the aim of raising standards and improving the quality of local schemes across the country.
It is recommended that all professionals involved with exercise referrals schemes familiarise themselves with this document as it sets out clear roles and responsibilities for each individual. Please refer to the full document, which can be found at www.doh.gov.uk.

The following points are taken from pages 12-16 of the National Quality Assurance Framework (DH, 2001):

- All professionals involved in exercise referral have a duty of care.

- Where the health professional is concerned, the law would expect reasonable care and skill to be shown in undertaking an assessment of the risks and benefits to the patient exercising. The assessment should take account of past and present medical status, family history and medication.

- The role of the health professional is to make a referral into a system which is quality assured and to retain overall clinical responsibility for the individual patient. By making a referral to an appropriate person or dedicated facility where qualified exercise staff is available, the health professional is NOT assuming responsibility for the administration or delivery of the exercise programme.

- The health professional is responsible for ensuring meaningful transfer of relevant information to the exercise leader. The health professional must make a professional judgement as to what information must be disclosed to the exercise leader to enable them to tailor a safe and effective exercise programme that will meet the needs of the patient.

- When the individual is specifically referred for exercise by the health professional, responsibility for safe and effective management, design and delivery of the exercise programme passes to the exercise professional.

- Where the exercise professional and the manager of the facility are concerned, the law would expect reasonable care and skill to be shown in minimising any potential risks involved in participation of the exercise programme.
Please note that both of the Scarborough Borough Council schemes are facilitated by instructors who hold the Wright Foundation Exercise Referral Qualification, which has been recognised by REPS as a quality training provider.

**Referral criteria**

Exercise referral schemes aim to improve the physical and mental health of participants. Though they are aimed at people with a range of existing, low to moderate risk medical conditions, they should also be viewed as a way of preventing such conditions. The scheme is available to patients who meet the following essential criteria:

- Sedentary or physically inactive (less than 30 minutes activity per week)
- Aged 16 years or above
- Would benefit from being more physically active
- Keen to do facility based exercise

The following mild to moderate health problems are recommended reasons for referral onto the scheme:

- Overweight/ Obesity (BMI 25 and above)
- Hypertension
- Mild to moderate mental health problems (e.g. depression, anxiety or stress)
- Diabetes I and II
- Osteoarthritis/ Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Asthma
- Post physiotherapy musculoskeletal conditions e.g. knee, hip, shoulder etc
- COPD (Coronary Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)
- Family history of heart disease

If you have a patient that does not fit these criteria but you feel that they could benefit from participating in our exercise referral scheme, please contact us and we can discuss whether or not it is an option.

This scheme is not appropriate for high risk individuals. Clinical judgement will be important but usually individuals with the following will not be suitable for referral:

- Unstable angina
- Unstable hypertension or
- Unstable diabetes
- Severe coronary heart disease or early post myocardial infarction/coronary artery bypass graft/angioplasty
- Unstable and or severe mental health problem
- Late stages of pregnancy

Please note that the instructor will contact the referring health professional if they require further advice or clarification on any medical condition or medication. Exercise instructors reserve the right to refuse to support any patient whom they feel unqualified or unconfident to deal with.

Making a referral
We accept referrals from health professionals who:
- have knowledge of the patients medical history, current health status and medication
- can make a clinical judgement as to the suitability of the scheme for the patient
- can provide the necessary information about the patient (e.g. address, telephone number, date of birth, blood pressure).

Any health professional who refers a patient to the scheme must inform the patients GP via an individually agreed protocol.

Cost arrangements
Individuals who have been referred by a health professional through the scheme pay £25 to participate on the scheme and this is a one off fee. This covers a 10 week period from induction to completion, during which the patient has unlimited access to the gym. Also included is the opportunity to participate in an Easyline group exercise class if appropriate, which will also be facilitated by the qualified GP exercise referral instructor.

There is no cost implication to the health professional for making an exercise referral.
The referral process

Individuals are referred to the Exercise Referral Scheme via a referral form (Appendix 1), which is completed by the health professional and then sent directly to the exercise facility by the health professional. The patient is also given an information leaflet outlining the details of the scheme (Appendix 2).

The referral form must clearly state relevant information about the patients’ health status including baseline blood pressure (BP), heart rate (HR) and current medication. The information on the form will be used to design the exercise programme and it is the responsibility of the health professional to pass on all relevant information as part of their duty of care.

The facility will arrange a convenient appointment time for an initial consultation with the GP referral trained exercise professional and at this consultation appropriate fitness assessments will be completed.

At the consultation, the patient will be asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 3), which will act as a contract between the provider and the patient, confirming that the patient wishes to take part in the scheme and that they have had relevant information passed on to them, that the potential risks involved have been explained by the exercise instructor and that they will in turn communicate any changes in condition or treatment to the exercise professional and also inform them if they wish to change their programme be it frequency of activity, intensity of activity or duration of activity.

The consent form states that if at any time the patient should feel undue pain, shortness of breath or experience excessive discomfort that they should stop the activity and inform an exercise professional of the symptoms. The form also advises them that they are free to leave the scheme at any time but should inform their exercise professional if they wish to do so.

The exercise professional will countersign the consent form to sign that he/she has explained relevant information about the scheme. The patient should understand the risks and benefits of exercise.
A 10-week programme of physical activity is developed that will be tailored specifically to the needs of the individual and medical conditions they may have as detailed on the referral form. The programme of physical activity for each patient is based on information from the referral form and information gained at the initial assessment, the reason for referral, and goals of the referred patient.

The individual continues with the exercise programme for a 10 week period, attending as often as they wish (usually 2 times a week). Individuals are booked in with the exercise professional on the first three visits and are then assessed at mid point and at the end of the programme.

The programme of physical activity will be updated and modified as necessary throughout the 10 weeks. The patient will have a responsibility to inform the exercise instructor and GP, if at any time during the programme their physical and or psychological condition changes.

At the end of the 10-week programme, the basic fitness assessments are repeated. Scarborough Borough Council offers an incentive scheme to encourage continued attendance and advice on continuing with other types of physical activity independently will also be offered.

In some cases, the GP may consider issuing a repeat referral to an individual. A repeat referral can be given to the patient if negotiated with the GP, the leisure facility and the patient.

Please see appendix 4 for a brief overview of the exercise referral process.

**Contact details**

Scarborough Sport and Leisure Centre
Filey Road
Scarborough
YO11 2TP
Tel: 01723 360262

Whitby Leisure Centre
West Cliff
Whitby
YO21 3EN
Tel: 01947 604640
EXERCISE REFERRAL SCHEME – REFERRAL FORM

PATIENT DETAILS
Surname            First Name
Address             Contact Number

REASON FOR REFERRAL (Please tick as appropriate)
Overweight BMI > 25 – 29.9
Obese BMI ≥ 30
Diabetes Type I
Diabetes Type II
Psychological Conditions (mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress)
Specify ...............................................

Obese BMI ≥ 30
Long Term Sedentary Lifestyle
Diabetes Type II
Asthma

Other reason for referral (Please print clearly)

SIGNIFICANT MEDICAL HISTORY (Please print clearly)

CURRENT MEDICATION (Please print clearly)

POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF CURRENT MEDICATION AND/OR DIAGNOSES ON PATIENT'S SAFE/COMFORTABLE CONDUCT OF EXERCISE

.........Heart Rate not an indicator of exercise intensity

BLOOD PRESSURE/HEART RATE

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The above information is correct at date of referral; there is no known reason why this patient cannot exercise under the direction of a GP exercise referral trained instructor; and I have read and understood the Memorandum of Understanding for exercise referral schemes in North Yorkshire and York and the Information and Guidelines for Scarborough Borough Council referral schemes

GP/Health Professional SIGNATURE       PRINT NAME

Patient’s declaration – I have not withheld any relevant information and will advise my GP/Nurse of any changes to my health. I also agree to the information being used by healthcare personnel for monitoring/evaluation purposes

Signature of Patient

DATE OF REFERRAL ...

This form to be posted to the leisure facility by the referring GP or Health Professional and a copy should be retained for the patient notes.
What do I do at the end of the programme?

At the end of the 10 week period you will repeat any physical assessments that you took at the start of the fitness programme to see how you have improved.

There are various membership options and concessionary rates available to continue with the fitness regime.

We would encourage you to maintain your physical activity levels.

You can also speak to your instructor who will be happy to give you ideas on how to stay healthy and active outside of the gym.

Any problems

Please call the exercise leader at Scarborough Sports Centre who will be happy to discuss any concerns you may have about your ability to participate in the scheme.

opening times

Monday - Friday
8.30am - 10.30pm
Sat 9.00am - 7.30pm
Sun 9.00am - 7.30pm

Further Information

Contact : Martin Russell
Tel: 01723 360262

A joint initiative between your GP/Health professional and Scarborough Sports Centre
Why be physically active?

By now most of us are aware that we should be doing some sort of regular physical activity to keep us in good health, there are many health benefits to be gained from regular exercise, but its not always easy to know where to start.

Regular physical activity

♦ Helps reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke
♦ Helps to decrease blood pressure
♦ Aids in weight control
♦ Improves muscle strength and tone
♦ Can help reduce stress
♦ Increases energy
♦ Is a good way of meeting like minded people

What is Exercise Referral?

Exercise referral is a scheme, which allows your GP/Health professional to refer you to a programme of physical activity. This programme will enable you to receive expert help from someone trained in exercise referral. They will give you a specially designed programme and will help you work through it at your own pace.

The aim of the scheme is to help you to experience the many benefits that physical activity can have on your health.

You do not have to already be physically active to participate in the scheme. The scheme is designed to help people who are new to exercise or a little out of practice.

What do I do now?

Once you have arranged with your GP/Health professional to join the exercise referral scheme, your contact number and referral form will be sent to the exercise leader.

The exercise leader will then contact you in due course to arrange a first welcome session at the facility to talk about your reason for referral and your past and present exercise experiences. Some basic fitness assessments may be done on this first session.

You will then arrange 2 exercise sessions with your instructor to construct a safe and effective fitness programme for you to do.

How long does the referral last?

The referral covers a period of 10 weeks. Your instructor will advise you how many sessions you should do per week to see noticeable improvements.

How much does it cost?

The cost is £25.00 payable after the first 2 one to one sessions with the instructor. This offers unlimited use of the gym for the full 10 week referral as well as access to some group exercise sessions using the easyline machines.

Wheel chair access

The centre has wheelchair access at the side of the building via an automatic door.
Appendix 3  

**Exercise Referral Scheme Informed consent form**

The exercise programme that you will be following will be individually designed for you by the GP Exercise Referral trained professional. The programme will be based on your present activity and fitness levels and the information given by your GP or Health Professional.

The activities you will be taking part in and potential risks involved will be explained and discussed with you. Please feel free to ask any questions about your programme at any time. Should you wish to alter your activity programme set by your GP Exercise Referral trained professional on any level, be it frequency of activity, intensity of activity or duration of activity or if you wish to try different equipment or activities then you must discuss this with a GP Exercise Referral trained professional before changing your individually designed programme.

If during the programme your physical or emotional condition changes or if your GP or Health Professional changes your medication or treatment programme, it is your responsibility to inform the GP Exercise Referral professional.

If at any time you feel undue pain, shortness of breath or experience excessive discomfort you should STOP the activity and inform the GP Exercise Referral professional of your symptoms. **YOU ARE FREE TO LEAVE THE SCHEME AT ANY TIME.**

_I agree to take part in the exercise programme, which has been individually designed for me by the GP Exercise Referral trained professional and I will inform him/her of any changes in my condition either physically or psychologically as stated above, or if I wish to change my programme in any way._

_The design, purpose, benefits and risks of the programme have been explained to me. I understand that I may withdraw from the scheme at anytime; however, if I do withdraw I will inform the GP Exercise Referral Professional._

Date: ……………Signature of client: …………………………………………………
Print name……………………………………………………………………………………..

Date: ……………Signature of GP Ex Ref Professional: ……………………………
Print name: ……………………………………………………………………………………..
Appendix 4  

**Brief overview of process**

Health professional reads the MOU and Information and Guidelines  
↓  
Health professional completes a referral form for an eligible patient  
↓  
An appointment is made with the Exercise Professional  
↓  
Patient attends an initial consultation at which a consent form is signed and fitness assessments completed  
↓  
An individual exercise programme is developed  
↓  
Patient attends regularly every week  
↓  
Programme updated as necessary  
↓  
Assessment repeated at week 5 and 10  
↓  
Repeat referral issued if appropriate  
↓  
Patient continues with physical activity
References


Department of Health. (2009) Be Active, Be Healthy: A plan to get the nation moving. London: HMSO.