**The Case for Physical Activity for IAPT Buckinghamshire**

**Background:**

* Being inactive is responsible for 1 in 6 deaths in the UK (equal to smoking).
* Around 1 in 3 (34%) men and 1 in 2 (42%) women are not active enough for good health in England.
* Being physically active is widely considered a miracle cure, able to prevent or manage over 20 different conditions including depression and decrease all-cause mortality by 30%.
* 1 in 4 people would be more active if advised by a healthcare professional.1

**Evidence:**

There is increasing evidence that getting active can lower the risk of depression, reduce stress and anxiety, improve sleep, lift self-esteem, improve mood, and slow dementia and cognitive decline.2

NICE guidelines state that physical activity should be one of the first interventions recommended by healthcare professions for mild and moderate depression. Research has shown that physical activity is effective as a standalone treatment for depression, or in combination with medication and/or psychological therapy. This applies to adults with and without long-term physical health conditions.3

There is strong evidence showing a 20-30% reduction in depression in adults who are physically active. Moderate evidence shows that physical activity can reduce levels of anxiety and distress in people with mild symptoms by 20-30%.4

A recent evidence review by the Facility of Sport and Exercise Medicine’s Moving Medicine Initiative found strong evidence that physical activity improves mood and scores on validated depression screening tools, with a high quality of evidence:

“*High quality studies and reviews, including a Cochrane review, support the improvement of scores on standardised depression outcome measures. Schuch et al. evaluated the anti-depressant effects of exercise in older adults and found 8 RCTs which showed a significant benefit on depression (standardised mean difference = -0.90, and 95% Confidence Interval) measured with validated screening tools (e.g. Hamilton Depression Scale, Beck Depression Inventory, etc.).  The same group published a meta-analysis including all adult patients with a major depressive disorder participating in RCTs.  The evidence revealed a significant improvement in depression with exercise (SMD -1.11, 95% CI 0.79 – 1.43).*”5

**Wider context:**

* Being active is one of the 5 ways to wellbeing, created by the New Economics Foundation
* The Get Set Go Active programme (2014-2017) by Mind and Sport England designed and delivered physical activity projects for people with mental health problems across England. Bucks is a Get Set to Go area with training already rolled out for 150 and counting deliverers, with numerous sessions established across the county specifically for residents living with a moderate and severe mental health conditions.
* [IAPT services in Sheffield](http://iaptsheffield.shsc.nhs.uk/physical-activity-resources/) have incorporated physical activity into their offer and IAPT Haringey have recently received Sport England funding to build activity into their services.

**References**:

1. [Guidance: Physical Activity - Applying All Our Health, Public Health England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health)
2. [Physical activity and your mental health, Mind UK](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/physical-activity-and-your-mental-health/#.Xdahqlf7SUm) and [Let’s Get Physical, Mental Health Foundation 2013 report](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/lets-get-physical-report.pdf)
3. [NICE Guidelines](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance) [CG90, CG91, CG123] and [IAPT for LTC Implementation Guide](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/nccmh/nccmh-iapt-ltc-full-implementation-guidance.pdf?sfvrsn=de824ea4_4)
4. [Start Active Stay Active, CMO 2011 Report](https://www.sportengland.org/media/2928/dh_128210.pdf) and [Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine Position Statement](https://www.fsem.ac.uk/position_statement/the-role-of-physical-activity-and-sport-in-mental-health/)
5. [Moving Medicine: Benefits of PA on depression (Improves Mood) Evidence Review](https://movingmedicine.ac.uk/disease/depression/?current_page=the-more-minutes-consultation&subpage=explore-benefits) including [Cochrane review](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24026850) (2013)