

Physical Activity to Improve Health

How Physical Activity Link Workers are supporting individuals in accessing physical activity

LN was referred to Kathy by her physio, who she had been having virtual sessions with for osteoarthritis in both her knees. Her physio felt that LN needed to progress, but was struggling with motivation, and so wondered if Kathy might be able to help.

LN is 64, and in addition to osteoarthritis, has had a triple bypass, has asthma and Type 2 diabetes, which she is on medication for. She has had issues with high blood pressure, although having been on medication it can sometimes drop to be quite low. She also has some balance issues due to dizziness. Her GP had given her a diet plan to try and help her lose weight so that she can reduce and eventually stop her diabetes medication. She had lost 4 stone, but needed to lose more, and needed to build more movement into her daily life, but was finding it hard to know where to start.

Due to the problem with her knees, mobility is quite an issue, so any exercise sessions needed to be suitable and not exacerbate the problem. Kathy suggested the gentle exercise group at Knowle West Healthy Living Centre, Move Together. When Kathy said that she could refer LN and go with her the first time, she decided that she would try it.

Kathy met LN and took her in to the class, and she soon felt more confident to go by herself, so that almost 6 months later it has become a regular part of her weekly routine. It has encouraged her to move more, helped with her weight loss, general fitness and mobility, and improved her confidence and motivation. Her motivation has increased so much that LN asked if she could attend an art class at the Health Park as well, and has been doing more walking. When Kathy saw her a few days ago, LN was heading very swiftly and purposefully into the Move Together class, and feeling very enthusiastic and enjoying her new activities.

LN said that it made a huge difference to have somebody to support and encourage her to make the initial move to try something different. Becoming more active, and having more social interaction and finding new interests, has helped both LN's physical fitness but also her mental wellbeing and sense of purpose.