

## Health and Wellbeing Board – 10 November 2021

### Public Question

#### **Question from Anna Webb**

Having read the submission of the GP referral scheme members, we would like to know your proposals for keeping this vitally needed service, either at this venue (QE Leisure Centre) or a similar site.

#### **Response from the Director for Public Health**

Thank you for your question to the Health and Wellbeing Board in which you have raised a specific issue relating to provision of exercise referral schemes at QE leisure centre. The Board is not able to comment on this type of provision, and we understand a response has been provided from Dorset Council that highlights the ongoing consultation around the future of leisure provision.

However, the Health and Wellbeing Board fully recognises the importance of physical activity, especially connecting people with opportunities to exercise outdoors. It is a priority within our local strategy to promote healthy lives, and the current focus of effort is on physical activity.

The Board has supported work in Dorset through the prevention at scale programme to improve the number of people able to access outdoor physical activity opportunities through the GP Natural Health service, Stepping into Nature and Active Ageing programmes which has been running for the past few years, supporting thousands of people. While exercise referral schemes may benefit some people, they cannot be provided at the scale required given the number of people who could benefit.

#### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services**

Thank you for your question and your representation on behalf of those attending the GP Referral Scheme at QE Leisure Centre. We are hoping that the consultation will enable us to better understand the potential impacts if we were to withdraw from the management arrangement at the centre, and if necessary consider how we could best respond to the concerns raised by users such as yourselves.

The consultation finished on 7 November and we are really keen to see what has been said and reflect upon this. So, at this stage we are unable to provide a specific response to your question, but can say that we are committed to ensure that moving forward our leisure spend is used effectively to increase people's healthy life expectancy and reduce health inequalities across the whole Dorset Council area.

It's great to hear that the activities that you are currently doing as a group are making a real difference to your health and wellbeing and we will continue to work collaboratively with our health partners to deliver the best possible health outcomes for our residents, and especially for those most in need.

We really want to encourage everyone that has a view on this matter, to share their thoughts through the consultation as this will undoubtedly help us to consider how we best deliver services moving forward.