

Bury

Transcript

Eve: Welcome to Series two of the GM Moving Podcast, where we share with you stories of how people and partners across Greater Manchester are creating the conditions for active lives for all. I'm Eve Strategic Director at Greater Sport, leading, supporting, and connecting GM Moving, Greater Manchester's Movement for movement.

Supported by investment from Sport England, Greater Manchester partners have been taking a whole system, place-based approach to embed physical activity into everything, to enable sustained behaviour change for happier, healthier, more connected communities and active lives for all. In each episode, we share stories of what this looks like in action in each of the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester.

Today, I'm back in Manchester Central Library this time with Jackie, Local Pilot lead in Bury, and am rejoined by Nicole, one of my colleagues at Greater Sport, who supports the Local Pilot network.

The latest Active Lives results for Bury show that 75% of adults in Bury are active for at least 30 minutes a week. The good news is this is up slightly from 12 months ago, suggesting some positive signs of recovery in activity levels after the worst impacts of the pandemic.

Activity levels are lower, however, in some population groups to include a wider than average disability gap in Bury of over 31%. And, less than 40% of children and young people in Bury are achieving an average of 60 minutes of physical activity.

You can learn more about Bury's activity levels related to key demographic data such as gender, age, and disability on the GM Moving website.

Bury's Local Pilot is working in the Radcliffe area, with of a focus on young people, families, people out of work, and people in work, but a risk of worklessness and people age 40 to 60 with or at risk of long-term health.

In this episode, Jackie shares her learning of what it takes to better engage people and communities in physical activity, to include shifting investment and governance, going to people where they are rather than expecting them to come to you, putting conversations rather than money first, upskilling the workforce and helping translate the principle that everyone is a leader into practice.

I start by asking Jackie to tell us how she likes to keep moving...

Jackie: My patterns have changed significantly since I've had a child. I used to be very active, very sporty in my younger years. It was easier when my daughter was in a pram. I could almost move around a little bit more easier. But when you have a family, I think sometimes you work out how to integrate moving more slightly different in your daily lives. But I want to be a good role model for my daughter, and I think that's important. So we try and integrate moving more. That might be going out for a walk after school. I try and encourage her to be as active as possible and just try and take the opportunities and just enjoy what she does. That might be going to gymnastics or that might be playing football, but I want her to try, and I want to expose her to as many opportunities as possible. I think from my perspective now as a parent, I think it's really important to lead by example. I would encourage her to lead a healthy lifestyle. I think I've been quite heavily influenced by my Mum who's very active.

Eve: Let's hear more about your Mum now. So how does your mom like to stay active?

Jackie: She's active. She has an allotment. I think again it was quite difficult for her. She was a lone parent. So again she had two children, again for her just trying to keep her children active, but yeah, she has an allotment and she's extremely busy, and that gets her daily steps in, and that's just her outlet not just for her to be physically active, but also for mental health as well. And I think that's important. I can see it with my own daughter when sometimes I pick her up from school. She might have a really long day. She's only five, but I can see she might be just wanting to release some energy, and I think that's important as well that you recognise that as a parent. So, yeah, I want to lead by example.

Nicole: I totally agree with that, and I think the podcasts I've been on has definitely reflected that. I think everyone who's had children has reflected on the importance of finding new ways to be active. I started cycling to Teddy's Nursery. So I put him on the back of the bike, and I've got an E-bike and I live in Glossop so it's very hilly.

I completely get where you're coming from and agree with you when you're trying to set that good example. And as a family we are really conscious of making sure that on our weekend we are spending as much time as possible going to like the local pocket parks or taking him to the park or out in the garden doing some gardening. Just making sure that we are showing him that that's just a normal everyday part of what we do as a family spending time together.

Jackie: That family time is really important. My daughter's had a scooter for a couple of years and it's so much fun!

Nicole: Yes.

Jackie: I actually love the experience of being on a scooter. It becomes a little bit competitive, but again, it's a different way of moving, but it's fun and it brings the family together. I think that's important despite the risks and the worries of falling off. But that's part of being active isn't it. There are gonna be risks associated, but it could be fun.

Eve: Tell us a little bit more about Bury and the Local Pilot, so what's the focus of the Local Pilot in Bury?

Jackie: Since the Local Pilot for us started back in 2018 it has evolved massively. Originally we went into it focused too much around the governance and it being too rigid about just making sure we had all the right partners sat around the table. And that has evolved massively, and I think that's important to recognise.

I think from our perspective, I think when we go back to 2018, there was so much focus also on the investment. So the previous project manager that worked on the Local Pilot did a fantastic job at just trying to take the conversation away from the investment and just recognise that it was important to have conversations first and foremost. So the journey we started out on has completely shifted more so over the last twelve months. Cause I think it's been really important to me in my role as chair to recognise that we are all equal partners trying to strive and deliver better outcomes for the community. Irrespective whether it's me delivering it as part of the services I manage within the local authority, or whether it is a colleague in public health or whether it's working with the voluntary sector, it's been really important that we all work on this as a collaboration.

And I don't wanna give lip service to that. And I think it's really important that resources is a shared responsibility. We work collectively to really try and address some of the barriers that we do know existed in Bury. We've done a lot of testing and learning since 2018, but I think now we're turning a curve because I really feel there's more collective ownership of the Local Pilot, and just in the last six months alone we're starting to see other key local stakeholders partners come to us and put forward recommendations, ideas, proposals, that are gonna really support that particular community to move more. And I think that's important.

Our next meeting for example is just purely focused on encouraging those partners to come to the meeting and talk about what those proposals are. Because thinking about me in my role, I will only deal with a certain cohort of residents that are probably engaged in our services. But I think it's really important to try and have broader conversations with communities that are totally disengaged.

I think if anything the pandemic... I've seen services and I've seen a new way of working in Bury. It's really important that we are engaging with our committees that

are just not engaged at all. We might not be best to have that conversation. It might be best that it's delivered through colleagues in the voluntary sector.

The pandemic alone has really created a different way of working, and working on everybody's strengths as a collective. We're working on a project at the moment where we want to engage more with schools. It's not gonna be us delivering that project. We want the governors, we want the school, we want the whole school approach to adopting a better way of working. But if we can help by investing some resource, some conversation looking at maybe a change in policy. If that's our role then so be it. And I think it's really important that we recognise we can't deliver this in isolation, but it's definitely a different way of working now than it was when we started out back in 2018.

Eve: Just to explain just some of the structures to people listening. So you've described you being a chair and being this partnership, and this growing. Can you just explain to us who the partners are in this partnership? How does that function? And then when you are saying others are joining give us a sense of who it is that's now joining?

Jackie: At the start we had quite a broad range of different stakeholders. For example, public health has always been a really key partner from the start because it's been really important for us to consider the data and the insight locally. What's that telling us rather than just creating opportunities for the sake of it, what's the data and the insight informing us.

We've had different representatives from the voluntary sector. I think that's been important. So we've probably not had a consistent representation from that sector, but I think now we've addressed that to the deputy chair now is from the local Bury VCFA so I work side by side with him and the Bury VCFA to deliver this project. And I think that's an important message that again we wanted to shift away from this isn't the local authority delivering this project. This is a collective approach. And it's taken us time to get there and reposition the Local Pilot. But I think now we've got a very trusted relationship, an open relationship where we can create, we can work side by side on delivering aspects.

We've got representation from Children's Services, so it has evolved and that's fine. Six Town Housing, for example, has been a very key partner. And other colleagues from across the council. But I think we're now in a better position because side by side myself, and the VCFA are very much working collaboratively on this to deliver a better Local Pilot.

Nicole: Brilliant. I think there is an aspect in this work and I've noticed it definitely in the localities I work within. There's an aspect of almost giving up control for some of the organisations that would've traditionally led on this work. So your local authorities,

but there has been, and I think Covid was a real motivator in this, the realisation that you're not necessarily the best person to lead this work. And there's so much strength, and knowledge, and support, and passion within the system. It's really important to be able to give up that control and trust as well, and trust that they're gonna do the right thing.

Jackie: I think the one thing that we've worked really hard on, I would say over the last twelve months is to develop a set of principles, and I think when we go back to the start we very much talk about the Local Pilot. What does the Local Pilot actually mean to communities, and we were finding it quite challenging describing what the Local Pilot was.

So we've shifted massively, now our key vision is just to get people moving more, and I think it's important that we really simplify the language, very much align it back to our broader strategy, which is about encouraging 75% of our population to move more by 2025, how people move that's for us as a collective to address.

But let's simplify the language and keep it simple. And I think that's helped empower the community to come forward with ideas and not be so rigid about a framework for applying for this resource. Come and talk to us. Come and tell us what you think is gonna work. So I think you're right Nicole. We've changed, there's been a big transformation in terms of our outlook, in terms of the project. And just to come back to something else you said everyone is a leader in this. And again, we've had to work hard to position it away from, this isn't just about us delivering it as a local authority. In fact, let's have that dispersed leadership. Everyone is a leader in this.

And I think we've got to the point where we've worked very hard with local community groups to almost design what those principles look like to bring it to life. So if a colleague from public health or a colleague from the voluntary sector or a community group go into a meeting to talk about what is the project everyone is clear and consistent and what would join up in terms of that messaging.

And I think that's really helped and we've spent an awful lot of time over the last, I would say six months having more engagement. Not having as many structured meetings, let's have around the table. I'd rather have more productive outcomes to meetings rather than feeling we've got this formal governance in place. So a massive shift. And Jane Gardeners helped massively with that to reset and to reprioritise those conversations that are important.

Eve: Right. So do you want to explain Jane Gardener's role in all of this?

Jackie: So Jane is on secondment from Greater Sport, but she's currently working on as a project manager for the Local Pilot for two days a week. And also with her coming in

it's helped massively because I didn't expect Jane to deliver this on her own. It's just not feasible on two days a week. So again that's enabled us to reset this a little bit more clear in the sense of her job is to empower and to connect those conversations. Her job isn't to deliver this. Her job is just to bring those conversations together which she's done really successfully. We've had two workshops over the last six months and that's been important. Again that's been led independently. Again, we don't want this perception that it's been delivered and led by the local authority. Everyone has contributed significantly to those workshops to the point where we've now developed a set of principles. And we've almost got a clear timeframe and a clear plan of action that we want to deliver against over the next twelve months.

Eve: So there's a clarity, there's a clear and simple vision about people being supported to move more?

Jackie: Yeah.

Eve: There's a clarity of an action plan. There's less rigidity around governance instructors and coming together and having good conversations, and there's, let it go.

Jackie: it's okay to test and learn and fail. And if it fails there's still massive learning that we can take from that. And at first that probably didn't sit very comfortably with me at the start of this journey. You have this responsibility for this investment, and you want to deliver outcomes at pace and a scale, but that's not always feasible. Let's take the learning whether it's good or bad, as long as we're feeding that learning back into the process.

We can discuss it as a group or we can learn from that, but other projects can learn from that experience as well. And we're also learning from the other Local Pilots. Things like the wayfinding what we found locally is actually one of the biggest barriers is people knowing where to go.

And Radcliffe, for example, there's so many incredible green spaces that are located in and across Radcliffe alone. But we want to connect people and to make it easier for people to know where to be active. It isn't just about going to the local gym, it's about those local green spaces, parks. We've seen an awful lot of investment in our green spaces in Bury. Whether it be from improving the tennis course, whether it be from just looking at trails. I think it's really important that we can support the community to find out where they can move more.

Eve: Great.

Nicole: I'd say as well just to come back onto what you said about that test and learn and to embracing that failure, I think for me that's a real indicator of the maturity of a

system or a place and the journey that they've been on with this work. I think being able to accept that and accept that sometimes things not working is just part of how things go, but there's so much valuable learning that you can take from that. And also just really embracing it and almost poking it and picking at it and examining it.

I think traditionally there's been a bit of a tendency to sweep it under the carpet a little bit and, and to be like, okay, that didn't work onto the next thing, quick, quick, quick. Whereas now there's more time, there's more space to think so why hasn't this worked? And almost unpick those threads and take that key learning and enable you to go into the next thing with that insight and that knowledge and that confidence.

Eve: So given that have you got an example of something where it hasn't worked and you've picked and you've prodded at it and you've learned from it and you've moved on?

Jackie: Active travel we've had to work really hard at, I would say not just post pandemic. We've seen a massive shift in people's behaviours. So we wanted to build on that really. So we've created locally for Bury a walking and cycling forum. But I think one of the key challenges, I think one is about information and signposting, and wayfinding, so communities know where they can be active, but what we didn't recognise was actually some key fundamental barriers.

People and certain communities were really struggling to access facilities in terms of bikes. So we've learned massively. We've worked through another colleague locally and TFGM, we're looking at putting some Bike Hubs right in the heart of the Pilot areas. And I think recognising that actually we wanna increase Bury people walking and cycling.

And we've seen that change through the pandemic, but for certain families, certain individuals, even access to helmets, even access to bikes. So what we've done actually, we've actually put the Bike Hub in Radcliffe near the library. So actually somebody can go into the library. They can't just get a book. They can actually hire a bike, and I think that's important. Certainly in Bury people seeing libraries as accessible.

So again, we all be supporting a different population by putting the Bike Hub in the library. We're not only upskilling that workforce to better have better conversation with communities to move more. What we're actually also doing is overcoming a barrier. We could have put it at the leisure centre, but actually would be engaging with people that are already active. We're trying to do things differently and test different ways of working. We're also for example gonna start loaning out balls from libraries. So again we're trying to diversify what we deliver within a local building.

Eve: So is that Bike Hub working as a bike library?

Jackie: It will be.

Eve: Yes, it will be. So we've got great growing numbers, haven't we, of bike libraries across Greater Manchester, and how brilliant that it's actually in a library as people say as well?

Nicole: I think we quite often talk about those wider partners that can enable physical activity and trying to position moving and moving more into spaces that maybe traditionally they haven't been seen as that. So somewhere like the library is a great way. And also the wider opportunities that someone being in that library loads of different services and there's loads of different opportunities for things like every contact counts and that kind of thing. So yeah, I think it's a fantastic idea.

Jackie: For me simple things like bike maintenance are as important. Somebody might own the bike, but it might have been in their shed for a couple of years. So we've got to give the confidence to the workforce but the community to be able to maintain their bike safely. So yeah it's not just a physical here's the bike, we want to be able to maintain those bikes as well moving forward so future generations can benefit from that.

Eve: So who are you linking with in terms of partners to increase bike maintenance experience and things like that?

Jackie: So we're working very closely with TFGM, Transport for Greater Manchester. We're working quite closely as well with the National Cycling Academy. I think that's important. And other community groups empowering other local community groups, drop skill and roll out this training.

But also it's a great test and learn. We've got a new building / hub opening in 2024, so I think it's really important that we can lift and shift this model to other settings.

We're also about to put in a Bike Hub outside Bury Library as well. Right in the town centre. Again, make it easy for people to access these facilities. So lots of different community groups as well as public services.

Eve: Brilliant. So that was an example of where there's been challenges, but it turned out to be a very positive story. Are there any particular barriers and challenges that you are still hitting against consistently?

Jackie: When you talk about inequalities I still feel we're probably not having conversations with communities that are disengaged. We're trying our best through key stakeholders. But actually we've got to work differently. We've got to try and really engage individuals, communities that are disengaged from services. We recognise in

Radcliffe it's one of the wards with the highest levels of deprivation. And we've seen that broader, those inequalities have broadened through the pandemic. We've seen a massive impact on physical activity levels again, so how do we reach out to the women? How do we reach out where there are still barriers, how do we reach out to other communities to address those inequalities? I think it's really important.

So we've still got a lot of learning to do. That's not necessarily us having that conversation. Again. I would see us working very closely with key groups, Corrie Gardeners, for example, in the community. They're better placed to have those conversations. Swimming abilities have been massively affected through the pandemic.

So how can we have those conversations with schools? How can we reach those individuals that are still massively affected? I think part of it is down to marketing, part of it's maybe about technology. Can we use technology to engage with communities more effectively?

Eve: And is there anything different about the leadership and the workforce? And people and what they need to do differently if we are going to get better at meeting people where they're at and going to them. And as you say, really involving and engaging people who currently aren't active?

Jackie: Just to give example we had a workshop in Radcliffe. About eight weeks ago now, and the way we delivered that we actually went out onto the streets to have conversations.

So again we're not just sat in a room thinking about how we can engage. What we wanted to do was actually go out into the community and try and have those conversations. It was really interesting. I've never had that approach before. So again it was giving us confidence to have those organic conversations with individuals that just might be passing or in a shop or just in different settings than we would ordinarily expect to see, but also working with colleagues, whether that be Six Town Housing, for example how can we reach those tenants?

I think it's going to, rather than expecting communities to come to you and have that conversation. I think it just gave us a different perspective on what people thought about the project. What does it mean to somebody in a community rather than consulting in the traditional ways?

Eve: Great. So lots of key learnings there. Any other particular examples or stories that you'd like to point to where there's been again rich learning or joy or frustration?

Jackie: I think for me even pre-pandemic, but more so post, what we found through active lives is that children have been massively affected. I think one of the challenges

we've still got to overcome is again with childhood obesity, not just those children that are inactive, again we're seeing major inequalities. Our approach is very different now. So pre the pandemic, we tried a project called You Only Live Once. And that's about getting referrals from GPs or getting referrals from key stakeholders to support children to move more and live healthier lifestyles. But now our approach is we're actually presenting to the head teachers for next week because actually it's got to be a whole school approach.

It's not just about working with health professionals. Actually, what we've recognised through active lives and the latest data is children are moving less within schools and outside of the school setting. So children spend an awful lot of their time within the school setting. So what can we do and how can we work as a whole school approach and how can we, through the Local Pilot, support those schools. To access some of the resources through the Local Pilot to support them, to encourage not just their pupils to move more, but their workforce. I think it's just about doing things differently.

Nicole: You actually know from the data that children from less affluent families are more likely to be inactive in school. It just blows my mind really. But loads of different contexts and reasons behind that, but it just shows that those inequalities are insidious and can affect all aspects of a person's life.

Jackie: One of the things we're really keen to do is in Radcliffe in particular, there is for example a community centre, there's a food bank, bio diverse housing situation. But what we want to do, it's really important we go have those conversations. So let's go and present ourself to the food bank and see if we can support those families, but have a different conversation with a different community.

But yeah, you're absolutely right. Those inequalities have broadened as a result of the pandemic the latest data is suggesting. So we've got to just try and do things in a different way, look at different solutions, and work with different partners to try and overcome some of these barriers. I think it's really important.

Eve: So what is it about the Local Pilot that has enabled you to test and learn and try and do things differently? I guess you said before that it's hard to sometimes describe what it is to people. Keep thinking about that. So how would you now describe it and say that actually it's supported this work?

Jackie: I think it's about empowering. I think it's really important to empower, and I think the resource helps. It helps those other key stakeholders to really think about and focus their minds in terms of what's gonna work, what interventions, what can we test and learn? But I think it's that collective empowerment that we have to do this together.

I'd rather spend my time on policy change, whether it be looking at the infrastructure and working with colleagues in highways about I don't know investment for walking and cycling. I think it's about policy. I think it's about conversations, and I think it's about us as a collective thinking we have to do this.

Eve: So who is being empowered and who they're being empowered by in this?

Jackie: I think key stakeholders are being empowered now to think about solutions. I think at the start of this venture it was very much about the local authority coming to the Local Pilot steering group to present ideas. So we flipped it on its head massively.

So our next meeting. There aren't any proposals, it's other colleagues that are really coming to present. We've got public health coming to talk about how we can encourage schools to move more. We've got other stakeholders, the voluntary sector coming to talk about what ideas can we deliver to try and so I think we've empowered the broader group.

We were empowering on the back of some of the learning through the pandemic or the community groups to have the confidence to, and it's not even filling out a form. It's not just come and tell us a story, come and talk to us. Here's a bit of an outline structure. Come and talk to us about how actually if we can give you some resource or if we can connect conversations, how's that gonna encourage that particular community to move more.

So our way of approaching this has softened. For me, at the start of the process, it was probably too top heavy in terms of governance filling out forms and let's shift our thinking. Let's make it easier, and give communities confidence to come and just have a conversation. To apply for some funding, if that helps, or to come and talk to us about an idea that we need to work on as a collective. So yeah I think it's the voluntary sector in the main that are gonna be the key driver behind this. I see our role as a facilitator. I don't see our role as delivering this project.

Eve: So thank you for sharing the story so far of the Bury Local Pilot. So what does the future look like?

Jackie: I'd like to get to a point where actually I step away as the chair because actually I would love it. The aspiration for me would be that somebody from the community would almost feel that they can step up and drive the project forward. Really want to shift the balance here. We've brought in the Bury VCFA we've worked really closely with to strengthen that relationship over the last twelve months.

So for me I would absolutely love it at some point if this could be community led with support from whether it be the public sector, the private, the community, I think that

would send a very strong message to the broader community. So whether we are still testing and learning in Radcliffe, whether we lift and shift and take the learning to East Bury, and other highly deprived areas, or we look at Bury there are pockets of inequalities everywhere.

The other thing we're really keen to connect to is that we've got a new strategy. And it's called Let's Do It. It's a new building on the back of the pandemic, and that's very much at the heart of that strategy is very much a neighbourhood model of working. And I think the Local Pilot can work alongside the neighbourhood hubs that have been established on the back of that.

Again, it's public, it's private, it's health, it's the community working side by side to have better conversations. So the future looks bright. We want to lift and shift, and we want to encourage other stakeholders to join us on this journey and not restrict it to a particular area. But if we can look at broadening and deliver better outcomes for the whole of Bury to move more, then I think that's an absolute positive.

Eve: Great. So clear invite there to join in anyone that's listening and to continue to share learning.

Fab. I look forward to coming in having maybe a cycle ride, taking a bike and coming to see for myself.

So yeah, it's been a pleasure. Thank you for your time today. I look forward to seeing what's next.

Jackie: Good. Look forward to meeting you in Bury.

Eve: Thanks for listening. We've heard how moving matters to everyone and how we can all play a role to design moving back into everyday life. We'd love to now hear how you keep moving and the ways you are supporting others to live an active life.

You can contact us on our socials when Facebook and Twitter just search Greater Sport. And don't forget the hashtag GMMovinginAction. Please do share this episode of people and organisations who'll find it useful and joined the movement for movement.

A big thank-you to everyone who's investing in this work and playing their parts to test, to learn and to make this happen.

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