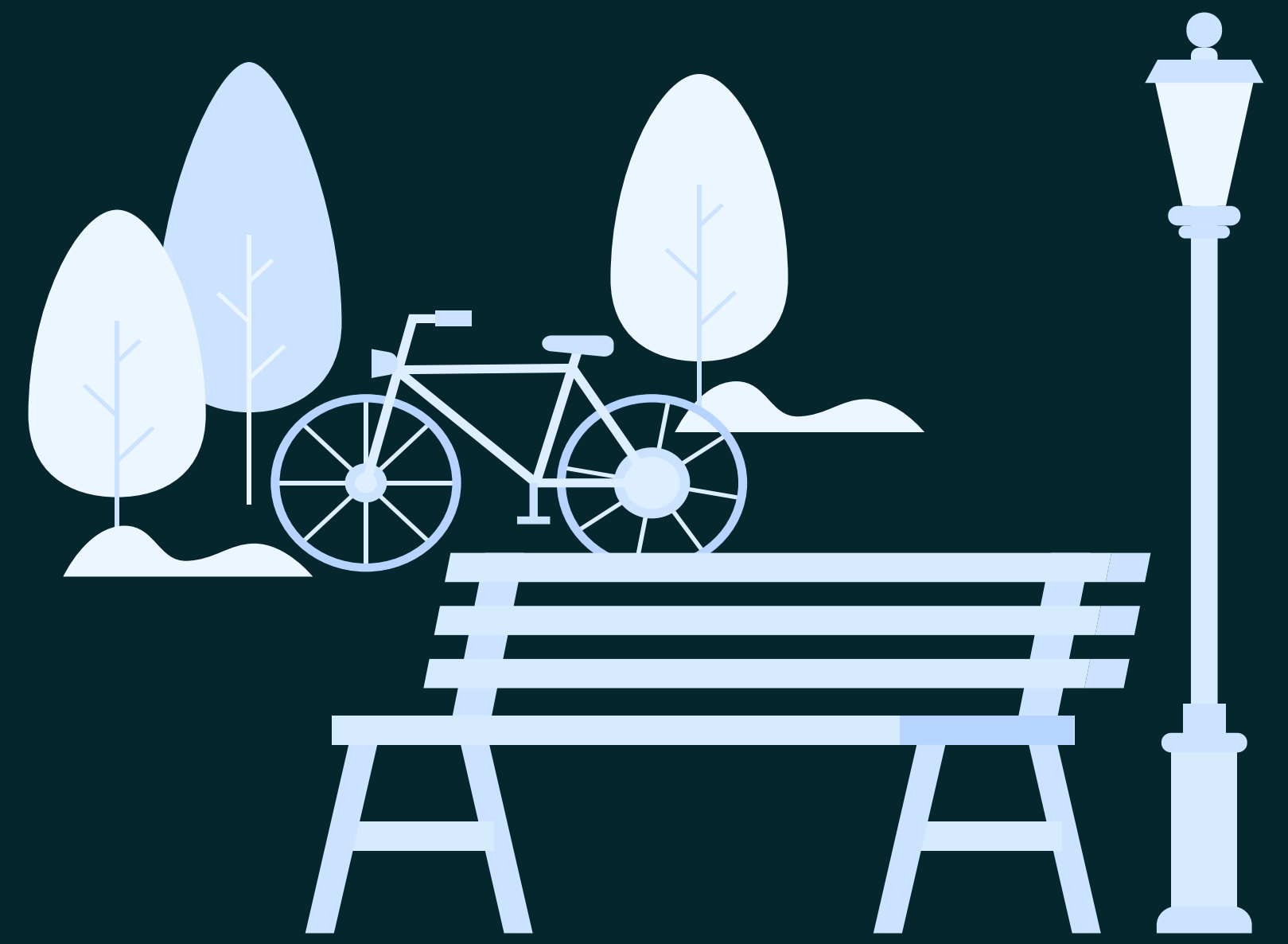


Community Engagement Learning Bolton



What has been happening?

There have been some promising opportunities arising in Bolton, particularly in directing a Community Field Force to support health promotion, including physical activity. This has come about as a result of government level investment due to COVID, and a claimed shift in emphasis in public health towards community engagement, based on learning from the local partnerships.

Gathering Insight

Focus groups were held with members of the local community to discuss how physical activity is perceived, exploring opportunities for engagement, and the language that is used in promotional activities. Discussions also took place around the usefulness of a 'buddying' system, as well as how to engage carers and others who could help to promote physical activity.

This bottom-up approach ensured that activities that were provided were in demand and would be well attended. Local voluntary and community sector organisations were asked to produce an insight report which is now consistently being used as a document to check and challenge the work of the Bolton LP.

Cultural norms / ideologies

Policy

Physical environment

Organisations & institutions

Social environment

Individual

Context

Physical inactivity remains stubbornly high in the local area

Intervention

Engage community to gather insight & provide activities that meet their needs

Then

Community members engage in more physical activity

Because

Activities are more likely to be appealing and barriers have been removed

Responding to the Insight

A ground up approach in COVID emergency surge response (seen by the Home Office as a way of working to replicate in other situations) provides the principles of the LP as a driver of the response. The model presented primarily focusses on **distributed leadership** and **community development**.

Public health strategies in Bolton previously focussed on providing advice and guidance; they are now waking up to the ideas of community engagement and community empowerment for delivery.

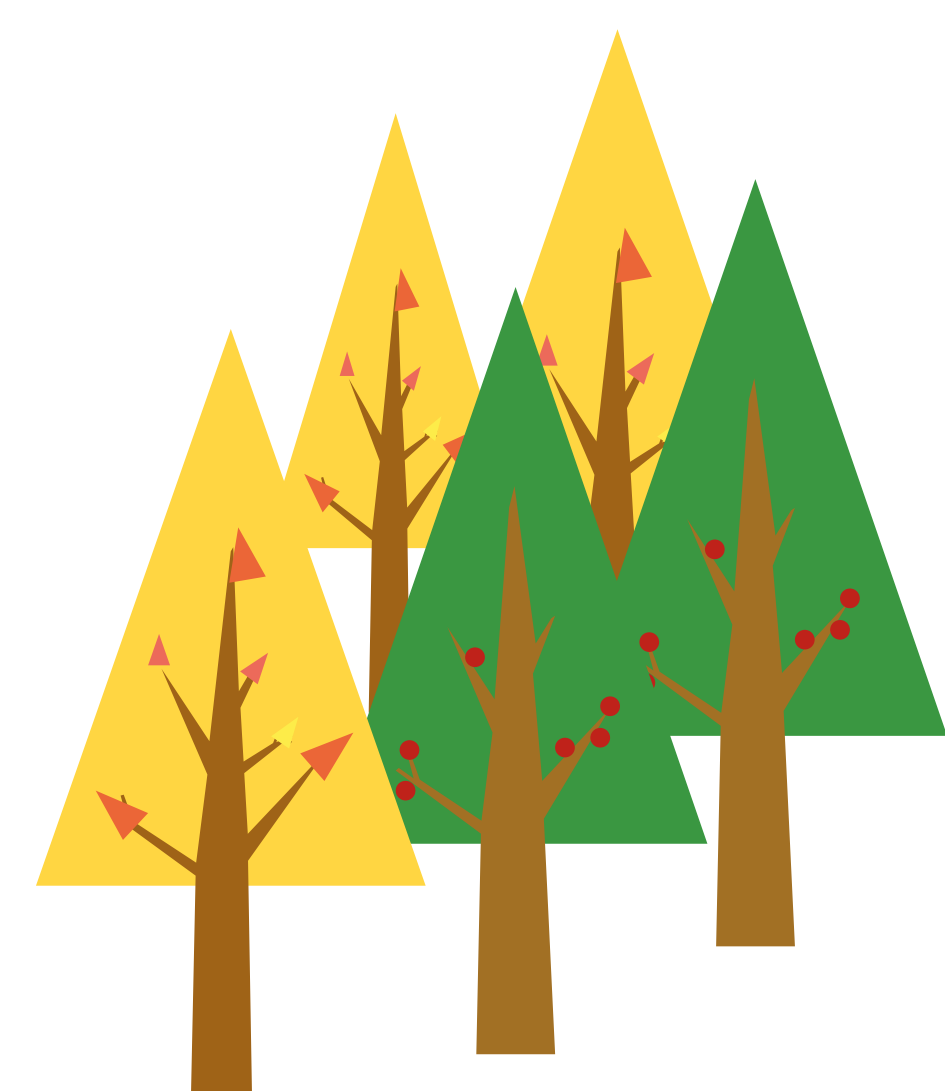
Identifying change – we now have greater insight to the people behind the numbers. The future of public health is now seen as being **IN** communities, rather than delivered externally. We hope to refine and use this model across public health and use Community Engagement Officers with physical activity as part of their role.

There is an ongoing commitment to learning around physical activity, producing deep dives to understand barriers.

Covid-19 provided opportunities to make connections with local primary care organisations, we hope to continue to build these relationships going forward, working towards a common goal.

We feel a real need for Bolton to capitalise on our work over the next 12 months, as we now have a model that we can test with new approaches. One year might not be enough time to fully build trust within the community, but we can fully establish our ways of working and move from an approach centering on key individuals, to one with the whole system working in sync.

Lots of individuals have changed their role as a result of COVID, meaning that relationships which took time to build have been broken and need to be rebuilt



Next Steps

We see our asset-based approach as the future of public health in Bolton. Moving forwards we hope to strengthen our offer by engaging more people from the community, more organisations from the voluntary and community sector, and more local groups to deliver physical activity in the area.

We also hope to investigate how our new models of working and delivery can be applied in other areas of public health. We know that physical activity could potentially improve the lives of people struggling with addiction, unemployment, loneliness, and a wide range of other issues, so we hope to expand our network to reach these people.