IMPACT REPORT 2022/23





# **Contents**























Over the past year we've concentrated on further integration of services with a clear focus on community health and wellbeing.

From promoting free Go4Less advantage cards for people on low incomes, offering health and wellbeing services in Luton Libraries as well as in our community and leisure centres, adapting our healthy lifestyles programmes to meet local needs through to growing our Energise Luton holiday activity and food programme, we are committed to playing our part in improving life chances in Luton.

To ensure sustainability, we're working hard to grow our income-generating areas and have seen a 10% increase in children learning to swim with us over the past year. Centre memberships are recovering well from the impact of the pandemic closures, with an increase in swim-only memberships. We're investing to offer the best leisure facilities in Luton with in a new gym extension at Inspire: Luton Sports Village and new equipment and refurbishments across the rest of our estate during the past year.

Luton Libraries are flourishing with an expanded offer reaching beyond traditional library services. We've established warm hubs in our libraries and are working with new partners in our Central Library Well and Wise space. A project with the Reading Agency also saw some excellent work being done with local homelessness charities to get 'Quick Read' books distributed to people with no permanent address.

Our commitment to health and wellbeing has seen improved partnerships with primary and secondary care, adapting weight management and exercise referral programmes, for example, to ensure as wide a reach and participation as possible. We've also seen an increased emphasis on social as well as physical support with our Social Prescription and High Intensity Use programmes.

As a key strategic partner in Luton, we are proud to be involved in the town-wide effort to make sure that the health and wellbeing of our community is everyone's business. Our values of teamwork, innovation, inclusivity and excellence underpin everything we do to play our part.

Helen Barnett

Helen Barate

Chief Executive

## **Leisure Centres**

## **Health and Wellbeing in:**



3 leisure centres



2 community centres



1 athletics centre





### **Inspire: Luton Sports Village**

- Investment in a gym extension with 20 stations, an extended weights area and with flexibility to close off the space to meet demand for women-only sessions.
- Investment in new studio cycle bikes.
- Host to regional and local club swimming galas, Luton's School Games competitions.
- Plus a two-day Diwali celebration, a dance competition, and a cat show!



## **Lewsey Sports Park and Lea Manor Recreation Centre**

- Thirty-five customers packed the sports hall to capacity to enjoy a triple workout of new release classes from Les Mills – the first in person event since 2020.
- Investment in an upgrade of the music systems at Lea Manor studio cycle room and dance studio, and Lewsey Sports Park studio cycle room – to make sure we keep the music and the motivation turned up.
- Investment in redecoration and refurbishments throughout Lea Manor.
- We added free off-peak squash court hire to all our memberships to make the most of the great facilities at Lewsey Sports Park.
- New women-only gym and classes on Wednesday afternoons and Friday evenings at Lewsey Sports Park.

### **Swimming and Diving**

- 4 swimming pools across Luton.
- 3,600 children learned to swim nearly 10 per cent more than last year.
- 230 children also learned to dive at Inspire: Luton Sports Village.
- 53 different schools used our swimming pools for school swimming lessons.
- Our swimming pools hosted 17 different swimming clubs and 3 diving clubs.
- Inspire is also host to Luton Tigers canoe polo group, Luton Sub Aqua Club and Dunstable Underwater Hockey Club

# **Community Centres, Athletics and Golf**



## **Hightown Community Sports & Arts Centre**

Regular community and health and wellbeing sessions at Hightown included:

- Hosting Community Choices sessions for adults with learning disabilities.
- Hosting sessions for the local church, St Matthews, and local badminton, basketball and netball clubs.
- NHS Cardiac Rehab and Total Wellbeing Luton sessions including Stop Smoking.
- Luton Foodbank parcel collections.

At Hightown, you'll also find ballet classes, Youth Zone, Tae Kwon Do, short mat bowls, table tennis, chair-based fitness and Line Dancing alongside our group fitness timetable featuring Zumba, Body Blitz, Pilates and Yoga.



## Hart Hill Community Centre

The centre continues to provide a wide range of activities for the local community including women only dance and fitness, healthy ageing physical activity programmes, 'stay and play' for mums and pre-school children, a youth club and Youth Zone boxing and football sessions.

### **Stockwood Park Athletics Centre**

Stockwood Park Athletics Centre welcomes a huge range of clubs, schools and activities. Use of the track and performance gym is included in our multi-centre membership.

The 400-metre track and infield is the only athletics training facility in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire outside Bedford to the north and St Albans to the South.

We welcome weekly bookings from Luton Athletic Club; Roots2Rings Running Club, Saints Athletics Club and Stopsley Striders.

There are also more leisurely sessions including buggy fitness and Nordic walking as part of our community activity timetable.

The centre also hosted 20 different school bookings, 14 school sports days and 10 Luton School Games events, plus welcoming local football teams for training and matches.



## **Stockwood Park Golf Centre**

Stockwood Park Golf Centre continued to live up to its reputation as one of the best value and best kept municipal courses in the area.

The club continues to attract members. Regular competition days are enthusiastically attended with our clubhouse providing a very popular 19th hole.

The centre had particular success attracting more golf events than last year including both societies from further afield and from local businesses.



## **Adult Weight Management**

We supported nearly **200** people to complete an adult weight management course to help them lead a healthier lifestyle.

#### The Year's Highlights



An expanded service from 4 to 6 sessions per week on our 12 week programme.



Delivery across four different locations in Luton.



Inclusion of Talking Therapies through co-delivery of 'Food for Thought' sessions.

#### **Case Study**

Tom\* was living in supported accommodation and was referred to us with a BMI of over 32 and with severely impaired mobility due to his weight. He relied on a walker to move around.

Tom attended weekly sessions at Lea Manor Recreation Centre, taking part in tailored activity sessions and nutritional workshops to improve his understanding of healthy eating and lifestyle habits.

Tom no longer needs his walker and there's a dramatic improvement in his physical health and mobility. This has also impacted positively on his self-confidence and independence. Tom's family are so impressed by his progress that they have bought him some gym equipment to keep up the good habits.

Tom's feedback was that the programme was a 'great experience', and he is committed to continuing to live a healthier lifestyle.



# Child and Family Weight Management

The team supported nearly 100 children in the community and in schools to complete healthy lifestyles courses.

#### Case Study

Unfortunately, Luton's childhood obesity rates are among the worst in the country. To try to encourage healthier habits, the team introduced a schools Cook and Eat Programme to broaden its reach across the community.

Cook and Eat involves teaching children how to cook easy, home-made meals alongside education about what foods should be prioritised in their day to day diet. Groups of eight to 12 children take part over five weeks. Some schools have also worked with parents and carers to ensure the learning continues at home. Most importantly, the aim of the programme is to teach children that cooking can be fun and encourage them to try new things at home.

'It's been great and we can't wait for the team to re-join us for a second round at the end of April!' – Family worker from St Joseph's Primary School

### **High Intensity Use Programme**

Supporting people to improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life.

Our High Intensity Use (HIU) programme has completed its first year with a full complement of Link Workers. The team works with local Primary Care Networks and wider PCN teams, local Community Mental Health Teams and multi-disciplinary teams and partner agencies supporting people who are flagged as having used Accident and Emergency and 111 services more than 15 times in a 12-month period.

The team can dedicate time to working with each person. Problems are often non-medical and can include housing instability, social isolation, loneliness and deprivation, alongside poor physical and mental health.

#### HIU Link Worker, Amir Hussain:

"The people I meet are usually quite frustrated with visiting A&E as the hospital teams don't have the time to find them the right support. Understandably, they have to prioritise people needing medical treatment.

"That's where HIU programmes are so helpful.
There's no time limit on our contact with people and so we can really gain their trust.

"We don't give up on anyone and can help them to get emotional support along with practical advice on housing, finance and job seeking. Whatever it takes."

## **Long Term Conditions and Exercise Referral**

The past year saw a focus on re-establishing key partnerships following the pandemic. These included mental health in-patient wards, the Keech team and the Luton and Dunstable University Hospital stroke ward team.

We also merged our Exercise Referral programme with our Long Term Conditions programme to create an improved, seamless pathway for people to access support, especially those with multiple conditions.

#### The Year's Highlights

- We supported 453 people to complete exercise courses for long term conditions including cancer, stroke and neurological conditions.
- ✓ 345 people completed an exercise referral course.
- Our annual Stroke networking event at Inspire Sports Village welcomed health professionals and patients during Make May Purple for stroke awareness to educate and improve partnership working for stroke patients in Luton.
- Our timetable of classes for people with long-term conditions expanded to support increased referrals during our busiest year ever.
- Other community sessions have been introduced including sessions at the Hindu lunch club, sessions in sheltered accommodation and at Lewsey Community Centre and the Independent Living Centre.
- Weekly sessions linked to GP surgeries were introduced for targeted groups of patients.
- An exercise class for Keech patients at Lewsey Sports Park now provides a managed introduction to the wider long-term conditions offer.
- A partnership was developed with the University of Bedfordshire working with GPs to support people over 65 to access activities to improve their strength and balance, including swimming and dance.
- Our Hydra Health aquatic rehab programme was expanded to support the volume of referrals.



# Making Every Contact Count (MECC)

The team has seen more engagement with MECC training with the introduction of an online option as well as face to face where possible. Monthly online sessions are now available for companies to promote to their employees, allowing them to complete the one-hour training with minimal disruption to working patterns.

### **NHS Health Checks**

The NHS Health Checks programme faced challenges re-establishing access to eligible customers after the pandemic.

However, partnerships have been established with employers across the town to take NHS Health Checks to work places to improve accessibility and uptake.



### **Stop Smoking**

Our Stop Smoking progamme quitters have reported improved wellbeing and quality of life and a reduction in doctors' appointments for smoking-related health problems. The team's dedicated Stop Smoking advisors support people on their journey and advise on a strategy that will work best for them including offering a choice of medications and locations for clinics.

New year, Stoptober and No Smoking Day in March are key dates when we promote Luton's Stop Smoking service, providing an

when we promote Luton's Stop Smoking Day in March are key dates when we promote Luton's Stop Smoking service, providing an impetus for people to self-refer and take the first step to feel the multiple benefits of a smoke-free life.

#### **Our Stop Smoking Success**

Luton is the 2nd highest in England for carbon monoxide verified four-week quits – the Isle of Wight is first, making Luton the best performing in the East of England and in the Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes area.

### **Adult Social Prescription**

Our adult social prescribing service includes our own team of Link Workers working across all six Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in Luton with a Link Worker also working exclusively with Luton's new eQuality PCN.

Referrals come from multi-disciplinary healthcare teams or via direct requests for support from care coordinators, nurses, psychiatrists and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) colleagues.

2,500
people engaged with our Social
Prescription Service.

90%
of clients reported a reduction in visits to their GP.

The team now works with around 80 partners across Luton to help them support clients in a wide variety of ways. These include many diverse organisations and groups from bowling to yoga, the Disability Resource Centre to Penrose Roots (Social Interest Group), the Alzheimer's Society to Autism Beds, the Luton All Women's Centre to the Salvation Army – and many more!

#### Case Study

Sultana married young and assumed a traditional family role including caring for others. Over the years her health had deteriorated and she had gained weight. Sultana was referred for Social Prescription and the team supported her with wellbeing advice and a three-month gym membership.

As a hijab wearing Muslim, Sultana had not considered joining a mixed-sex gym. But after only a few sessions Sultana felt very supported and started really enjoying doing regular physical activity. She had arthritis in her knees and found that gym-based strength training improved her condition considerably.

Sultana's confidence grew and she joined a local running group and started increasing the distance of her runs. In October 2022 Sultana completed the London Marathon.

"Three years ago I couldn't imagine entering a gym let alone running a marathon. I can truly say this journey has changed my life for the better.

"I have dropped a dress size and lost two inches off my waist. Most importantly I am much healthier and happier with my life now.

"Thank you Naz for introducing me to the word of fitness."



**Active Luton Impact Report 2022/23** 



### **Children and Young People's Social Prescription**

Life Hacks, our Young Persons Social Prescription programme, is aimed at children and young people aged 11 to 18 who would benefit from additional support to improve their health and wellbeing, social isolation or financial hardship.

Dedicated Link Workers provide support and coordinate up to 12 weeks' access to community activities - this might be physical activity, social or support groups, creative groups, education or training opportunities or advice from specialist services.

#### Case Study

Paul\* was an 18-year old referred to the service by his GP for low mood and sadness. He explained that he had felt this way for several years, but that it had become worse since leaving school. He was attending college, but comfort ate and stayed up late playing video games.

Paul's Link Worker built a rapport with him and they discussed his feelings and also some goals for him. Coping strategies included journaling to verbalise his feelings, building structure into his day and prioritising some exercise – he enjoyed cycling. Paul was also supported with resources including links to Young Minds and wellbeing webinars.

Paul found that regular cycling and better sleep patterns helped him to become more active and he also found that being outside had a positive impact on his mind-set

Paul finished college feeling positive and looking forward to a job he had secured for the summer. He discussed future goals and career aspirations with his Link Worker who was able to support with information for him to follow up.

# **Luton Libraries**

### Highlights of the year

- Refreshed children's area with new sensory resources for children with special educational needs and disabilities at the Central Library.
- Training for childminders and other professionals from early years settings provided for over 70 local people.
- Our team attended Energise Luton holiday camps for children on free school meals to spread the joy of reading.
- Outreach activities included sessions for the Park Town Dad's group and sessions at Wardown Arboretum, Stopsley Rainbow Group, Beds Fire Service, CCS Baby Weigh and many more.
- The first Luton Literature Festival in September saw the team visiting the Hat Factory to take part in the celebrations.
- Baby weighing moved to the Central and Marsh Farm libraries in partnership with Flying Start.
- Warm hubs were established at Luton Central Library, Leagrave and Marsh Farm libraries and at Lewsey Community Centre, supported by the library team.
- The Well and Wise centre at Luton Central welcomed more health partners than ever including Total Wellbeing Luton's Health Checks and Stop Smoking clinics, Women's Aid, the Shaw Trust and Autism Bedfordshire.
- ✓ The first volunteer Digital Champion joined the library team to support customers using our digital services.
- Work with Natural England included setting up green hubs at Luton Central and Stopsley libraries.

"Thank you for taking the time to order my books. They look really interesting."



280,000

visits to our libraries.

87% up on 2021-22.

11,000

active borrowers.

12% up on 2021-22.

322,000

items were issued in the libraries.

0ver **76,000** digital issues.

schools visited over 50 times during the year.



## **Lifelong Learning for all the Community**

A huge rise in visits to our libraries has been achieved through our community's enthusiasm to get back to their favourite sessions like Rhyme Time and also with innovative new sessions and partnerships making the most of our public buildings and superb library resources.

Regular reader promotions ensured that we keep people engaged – from Reading Well collections distributed to local GPs and community groups, the Active Luton Reading Challenge, the Big Jubilee Read and a visit by the Children's Laureate, Joseph Coelho, as part of his nationwide tour, to name but a few.

Our public PCs and printers are a vital resource for the community, with our team playing a key part in supporting customers to make the most of our free resources.

"Thank you for your advice and help, much appreciated"

"Thank you for all the information you gave me it will come in handy. Really appreciate it."











### **Children and Families**

The top activity for children and families remained Bookstart Rhyme Time, followed by Bookstart Story Time.

Our libraries also hosted happy baby groups, Family Fun Time and Library Games clubs, in addition to Summer Reading Challenge events and school visits.

Over **3,400** attendances by children at the Bookstart Rhyme Time Sessions.

Over **700** attendances by children at the Bookstart Story Time Sessions.

# **Summer Reading Challenge**

Nearly **2,000** children joined in the fun to promote reading over the school summer holidays.

**314** children and **192** adults attended **29** different sessions around the Gadgeteers theme.

Gadgeteers assemblies in schools reached **10,820** children across Luton in preparation for the Summer Reading Challenge.

There were 2 author events; 2 kinetic science events, 2 Gadgeteers magic shows, 5 Gadgeteers sessions with Explore Learning and 18 craft sessions led by our library team!

## **Home Library Service**

The home library service saw its highest increase in deliveries in the first quarter of the year for nearly four years. It visited readers in their own homes and in care homes in 17 out of 19 wards across Luton.

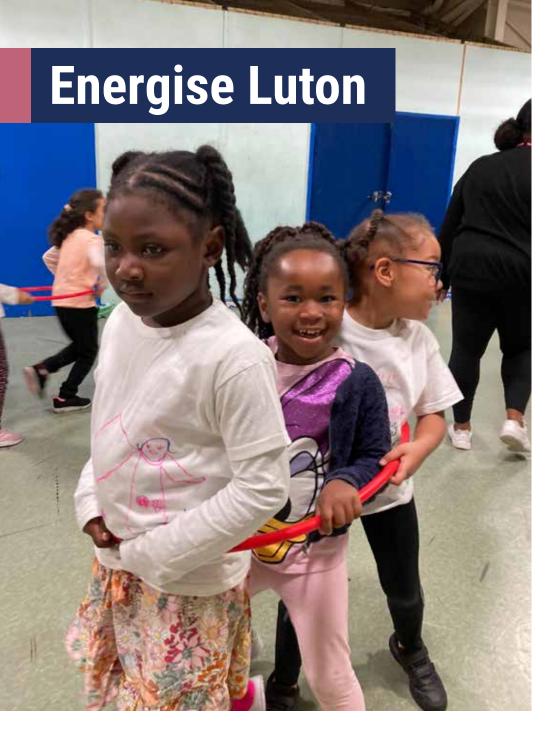
New partnerships have been established with other local support organisations including Sight Concern and Keech to ensure that we reach as many readers who can't access the library buildings or get online for digital services as possible.

## **Thriving Communities**

The Thriving Communities programme, offering library-based creative activities and an opportunity to socialise, included yoga, Pilates, Creative Crafts and Knit and Natter.

The programme is part of the wider Luton Social Prescribing offer to support people with non-medical problems to improve their quality of life and connect with others.

Over 80 sessions were held over the year attended by over 40 regular participants.



Energise Luton is Luton's Holiday Activity and Food programme, funded by the Department for Education. It is part of a movement to ensure that children on free school meals enjoy healthy and enriching experiences during the longer school holidays. It's about having fun, making friends, eating together and being active in a huge variety of ways so that there's something for every child or young person.

Activities offered included boxing, athletics, face painting, storytelling, swimming, cook and eat workshops, singing, music, dance and drama, bouncy castles, art and crafts and much more!

We also signposted families in need working in partnership with Luton Council, the Luton Foodbank and The Level Trust.

**8.105** free places were made available at the holiday camps across the year.

spaces were taken up by children on free school meals or from low income families.

young people with free gym passes made over 1,100 visits to our gyms during the school holidays, supporting their physical and emotional wellbeing.

different camps were provided across Luton with a concentration in our most deprived wards.

We worked with 55 different providers including schools, sports, faith and community groups, performing arts and dance schools and even childminders.

90 free places provided for children to have half-term swimming lessons following summer camps.

73%

of these were primary school children. The remaining 27% were secondary school children. 15%

of children and young people attending had special educational needs and disabilities. **.35%** 

of Luton's children who are eligible for and claiming free school meals attended.

## What the children said:

"I have been able to make new friends and reconnect with a friend that I have not seen since primary school."

"This programme has allowed me to go places that I have never been able to go before."





# Children were asked: How has Energise Luton helped your confidence?

"Because the teachers were very nice."

"Because I made friends."

"Because I felt nervous and became braver."



## **Active Education**

Our Active Education team of qualified teachers works with Luton's schools to develop PE and physical activity, not just in PE lessons, but also by incorporating physical activity into the whole school day to support children in their overall development.

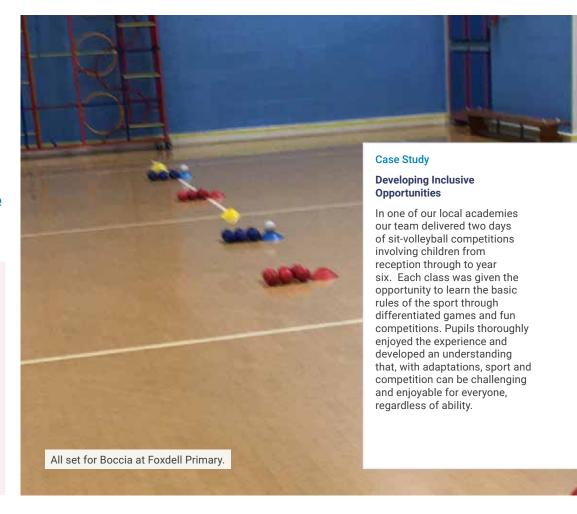
### **Professional Development for School Staff**

Over 400 learners from schools benefitted from our professional development opportunities.

#### **Case Study**

Foxdell Primary School has an ongoing programme of support from Active Education and, with our help, introduced a new scheme of work for its PE curriculum. As well as running training days for staff, Active Education's team supported Foxdell's teachers to embed high quality teaching in their lessons with great feedback about the expert guidance and friendly support offered.

"It's great to see some PE teaching in action." - Foxdell teacher



### **Courses for Individuals**

We have reinstated courses for individual delegates and ran half-day workshops for delivering athletics, gymnastics and high quality PE. Gymnastics continued to be the most popular with 30 delegates from 10 different schools attending our courses throughout the year.

### **Learning Outside the Classroom**

Last year saw yet another increase in the number of educational visits being undertaken by schools which reached pre-pandemic levels. 5, 364 school visits were approved via the online approval system managed by Active Education, of which 76 were residential and eight were overseas. Over 161, 000 children and young people benefitted from taking part.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

In partnership with Total Wellbeing Luton, Active Education delivers sessions in schools to teach children how to lead healthy lifestyles. This covers subjects such as the importance of physical activity, healthy eating and balanced diet, emotional wellbeing, healthy sleep patterns and managing screen time. The blend of classroom work and practical activities are proving highly engaging. Children are enjoying setting healthy targets and challenges that they can achieve in their own time.



# **Active Training and Development**

Over
1,700

Atternal candidates received training during the year.

29%
were under 18 years old.
One third were male and two thirds female.

49% were from diverse ethnicities.

Active Luton team members were supported with apprenticeships and career development programmes.



### **The Year's Highlights**

- Over 1,100 candidates were trained in First Aid.
- Over 290 candidates were trained in aquatic and lifesaving skills.
- Over 140 candidates completed aquatic rescue courses.
- 73 of these are working for Active Luton.
- 47 candidates completed Activity Leadership qualifications.
- 27 are currently employed with Active Luton.
- We trained over 30 Mental Health Champions to support our teams.

### **Community Led Local Development (CLLD)**

CLLD is a European Social Fund to target deprived areas with building employment skills.

Most of our work this year concentrated on 18–25year olds not in employment or education. Our team delivered over 370 interventions to support over 50 candidates, providing training and career development opportunities, working in partnership with other local organisations and charities.

#### Case Study

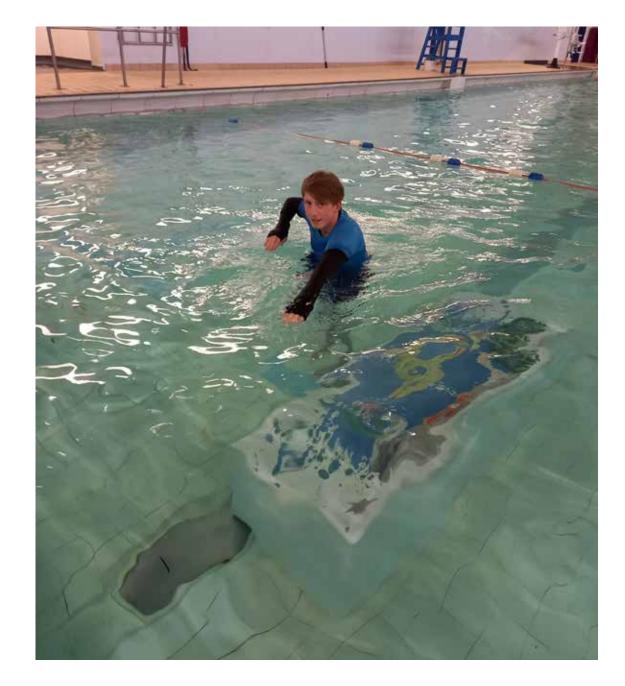
Ciaron dropped out of college at 16. He was 22 when an opportunity came up with the Link CLLD programme. Ciaron was living in Mary Seacole assisted accommodation.

Ciaron was introduced to The Princes Trust and was interested in the swimming programme offered by Active Luton. He gained a Level 1 Swim Teacher and Emergency First Aid at Work qualification. He also accessed additional qualifications and training to improve his employment prospects, including volunteering to gain work experience.

"It was hard to find someone who was willing to give me a chance after being out of work for so long but Active Luton did. The qualifications and training has hugely assisted with this as well as the connection with Active Luton and valuable work experience. I have made new friends and connections by doing so and everyone is so friendly to me."

Ciaran is now working with Active Luton as a Level 1 swimming teacher and an activity leader with the Energise Luton holiday camps.





## Volunteers

Volunteers can increasingly support us in our aim to improve the health and wellbeing of Luton and, in turn, provide local people with opportunities to give back and, in many cases, to gain experience to help them progress into paid employment.

We are placing an increasing emphasis on volunteer engagement and are developing a digital volunteer platform.

In the past year we welcomed volunteers in Luton Libraries, at our golf centre, in our training team and on our Energise Luton holiday camps.



#### Case Study

Maintenance Mates is a hybrid volunteer/work scheme for local people with learning difficulties. Last year our Estates Team benefitted from eight Maintenance Mates supporting with sweeping, cleaning, clearing and general tidying around our centres across Luton, helping to make those vital good first impressions for our team and customers

#### Case Study

Derrick has been volunteering with Active Luton since June 2022. Derrick is 70 and had previously volunteered with St John's Ambulance Service, The Ramblers Society, the Air Cadets and in local schools.

After a 3-year break from volunteering, he approached Active Luton to offer his time and skills. Our training team was delighted to welcome Derrick who has been supporting the team to deliver first aid awareness sessions in schools and accredited first aid courses.

"I am passionate about supporting people to learn this valuable life skill and get great enjoyment in seeing people gain the knowledge and skills that could save a life. I have volunteering in my blood with over 40 years of volunteering experience. I enjoy being active and being part of something, and to be able to give back to the community. I feel that first aid is a life skill and everyone should be able to do first aid/ CPR.

Volunteering also allows me to get out of the house, it gives me social interaction with other of all ages.

I come in and help set up the course with the tutor, support the tutor with delivery and support the candidates to learn the skills. After the course has finished I will help the tutor with the cleaning of the manikins and putting away equipment."



# **Environment and Sustainability**



In support of Luton Council's Luton 2040 strategy, with one of its key aims being to make Luton a carbon neutral town, we have included conducting our business in an environmentally sustainable manner as one of our own priorities in our strategy for 2023-28.

During the past year we have reviewed and strengthened the Active Luton environment policy and embedded it across the organisation, including nominating Active and Sustainable Travel and Green Champions among our teams.

We have also undertaken significant groundwork, including decarbonisation and light surveys and the installation of a data logging system at our biggest energy user, Inspire: Luton Sports Village, all with the aim of informing an action plan to reduce energy usage.



Supporting you and your community activeluton.co.uk

