

**active** *ve* **NoW**

Supporting people in Norfolk and Waveney to be more active

# Referral Guide

## *Severe Mental Illness (SMI)*

# What is Active NoW?

**Active NoW enables health and care professionals to refer people for exercise and physical activity.**

A central co-ordination hub identifies suitable activity through a personalised triage service. The programme, which launched January 2023, has since expanded to encompass those who are living with a stable SMI diagnosis. The aim is to:

- Provide people with a range of activities.
- Tailor a programme based on the level of experience and need.
- Support people to manage their SMI.

## Who is it for?

Active NoW is aimed at inactive people who do less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise each week. Referred individuals must have a stable SMI diagnosis and should only be referred during their SMI health check in primary care settings.

## Who can refer?

Any healthcare professional with access to a patient's medical records, conducting SMI health checks in primary care settings, is eligible to refer individuals to SMI-related activities.

## Are self-referrals accepted?

Self-referrals are not currently available, but we hope to explore self-referrals in the future.

# How does it work?

**Referrals can be made within SystmOne/EMIS or made using the Active NoW Online Referral Form.**

Only healthcare professionals carrying out SMI health checks in primary care are able to make a SMI-related referral to Active NoW.

## Identify

If a patient attending their SMI health check can benefit from doing more physical activity and their condition is stabilised, they are suitable for an Active NoW referral.

## Triage and assessment

Our expert team will assess and triage the referred person via a phone call, working with them to identify their needs and the most appropriate physical activity opportunity for them.

## Physical activity programme

The referral will be shared with the agreed physical activity provider who will contact the person to arrange a start date and initial assessment.

## Evaluation

Some providers will use functional fitness test exercises to measure the individual's progress, and the Active NoW team will circulate a survey to the individual after 6 months to evaluate the programme.

# Why increase activity levels?

**Undertaking regular physical activity can be beneficial for people living with a SMI and can help them manage their condition.**

Even small increases in activity levels can play a role in reducing the risk of mental illness becoming unstable.

## Benefits

**Improves mood and energy levels**



**Increases confidence and self-esteem**



**Reduces stress, anxiety, and intrusive thoughts**



**Aids better sleep**



**Reduces the risk of depression**



**Increases opportunity for social interaction**



## How to discuss?

Initiating a conversation about physical activity in a non-judgemental and respectful manner can help maintain the individual's active participation in the discussion and decision-making process.

### Talking to patients and clients

- Discuss the wider benefits to physical activity such as overall wellbeing and social interactions.
- Have engaging, comfortable conversations that increase patients' confidence.
- Help people find motivation by understanding what matters to them in maintaining a social and active lifestyle.

### Conversation starters

- Would it be OK to spend a minute talking about something that a patient living with a SMI finds useful?
- Have you considered how physical activity might aid you in maintaining a social and active lifestyle?
- Many people find that moving more helps them manage their condition and symptoms, as well as improving their general wellbeing. I wonder what you make of that?
- Would you be interested in talking a little more about how physical activity might help with your health and wellbeing?

## Programme Offer

The Active NoW team is continually expanding our list of services to which we can refer or provide information to patients or clients. We offer a range of activity options as part of the programme, although the availability of these choices depends on the individual's district of residence and their specific needs.

- **Community Classes:** Individuals may receive referrals for community-based activities, including parkrun, well-being walks, and exercise sessions led by local providers.
  - **1-2-1 Home Visits:** In some areas, personalised sessions are provided through home-based visits.
  - **Online Resources:** Individuals will also receive the opportunity to utilise digital tools, including the exercise referral app known as EXI. EXI brings together exercise science, behaviour modification techniques, data presentation, and motivators to provide secure, tailored physical activity recommendations that individuals are more likely to adhere to.
  - **Leisure Operators:** Exercise referral schemes are accessible through leisure operators in every council district. These schemes encompass either exercise referral classes or supervised gym access, facilitated by an exercise referral instructor. This option generally grants access to all other amenities at the centre.
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### Cost

The cost for Active NoW patients or clients will differ based on the chosen option. Typically, the activities will be free or at a significantly discounted rate.

## Testimonials and Quotes

Read below what health and care professionals have said about the Active NoW service.

### Wellbeing Service

“I think the scheme is really helpful for our patients who just need that motivation and extra assistance.”

### East Coast Community Healthcare CIC

“The referral form is a breeze to use and doesn’t take up too much clinical time, which is crucial to clinicians.”

### East Coast Community Healthcare CIC

“The referral process is very clear and easy to follow. It is easy to contact the Active NoW team directly to discuss any issues.”

## Start Referring NoW

Referrals can be made within SystmOne/EMIS to prevent the need for clinicians to manually input patient data. In addition, referrals can also be made using the Active NoW Online Referral Form. Scan the QR code to get started.

Resources are available to help you to promote the service to your patients and clients. Scan the QR code below.





Scan to read more on how  
you can start referring

[improvinglivesnw.org.uk/active-now](https://improvinglivesnw.org.uk/active-now)