



Becoming a health literate organisation

Why health literacy?

In Dorset we are working with local system partners to address health inequalities by using movement and physical activity to help improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Dorset.

We have chosen to become a health literate organisation as we recognise how it can contribute to reducing health inequalities. We have also identified how it could be used to help us achieve our aims as an organisation.

We understand the importance of communicating health messages effectively. Through this work, we want to improve the quality of physical activity messaging within the health system. We want to be more inclusive across all aspects of our work.

At a glance



Health literacy principles are becoming business as usual across our organisation



Working to improve our public facing messaging online and at our physical sites



Sharing learning and promoting best practice with other Active Partnerships and local partners

Definitions

Health Literacy

Health literacy is the ability to obtain, read, understand, and use healthcare information in order to make appropriate health decisions and follow instructions for treatment.



Health literate organisation

How well organisations help people find, understand, and use information and services to make good choices about health for themselves and others.



The story so far...



Since the initial Health literacy awareness days and proceeding champion training, we have made good progress with helping to embed health literacy:



One trained health literacy champion (wave 1)

Sept 2023



Brief health literacy Awareness session delivered to the whole team

Nov 2023



Two additional health literacy champions trained (wave 2)

Dec 2023



Reached out to other Active Partnerships through the national network to understand if others were aware of health literacy

Jan 2024



Active Dorset's Champions met to identify which elements of the checklist were relevant to us becoming a health literate organisation

Jan 2024



Embedded health literacy concepts into our working Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan as business as usual

March 2024



Staff are advocating for health literacy when connecting with stakeholders.

For example health literacy awareness has been added training courses and language guides.

Ongoing

Our reflections



We were engaged by the awareness training, but overwhelmed by what was possible in order to become a health literate organisation.

To overcome this, our approach has been to start with small actions that we are able to influence.



Active Dorset does not provide a public facing health service. We have focused our health literacy work on raising awareness with partner organisations.

However, some elements of health literacy can be applied to our facilities.

We therefore selected elements of the Health Literate Organisation Checklist that were relevant to us to meet our way of working.

We believe we are the only Active Partnership that is working on health literacy in England.

Active Dorset have an opportunity to share learning with other counties.

We have identified how we can use health literacy to meet our organisational aims.

Example: An opportunity to influence the content of patient letters when they are reviewed.

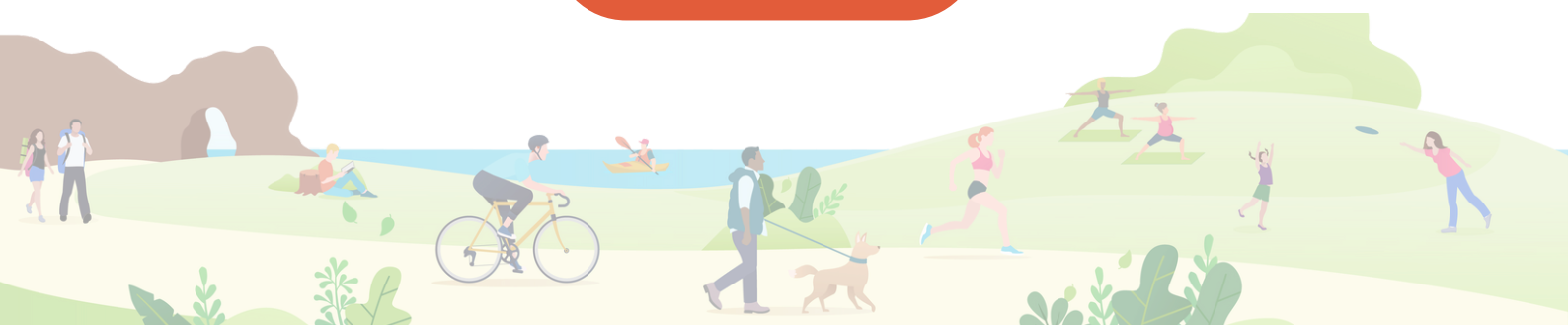
Health literacy can be used as a tool in other areas of our work. It can be used to make communication more inclusive.

Example: Using Chunk and Check when training volunteers with additional needs

Having more than one health literacy champion has helped us to have more discussions to include health literacy in our work.

This includes partner communications and campaigns, training, staff development.

We need to model good behaviour to help influence partner organisations we are working with.



Future plans



We are at the start of our journey with health literacy, and know that there will be more opportunities for us as we develop our work. These new developments will be documented in our future case studies.



Our Health Literacy Champions



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