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## Find out more

By understanding and addressing men's unique needs, community-based services can increase male participation and improve overall health outcomes. There's more information in the toolkit including some examples of where this has been done well.

To find out more about the research, for a copy of the research report and the toolkit please contact: [linksforlife@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:linksforlife@sunderland.gov.uk)

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## 5. Embed diversity and inclusion

Different groups of men face unique challenges. To create an inclusive environment:

- Review service user demographics and adapt approaches for diverse groups.
- Simplify forms, offer multiple contact options, and support the digitally excluded.

## 6. Foster a sense of achievement

Research demonstrates that for men, achieving a sense of accomplishment is crucial. This can be done by:

- Acknowledging and celebrating success
- Engaging and recognising volunteers

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## 3. Provide positive first experiences

A positive first interaction increases the likelihood of men returning and consistently engaging with services. Strategies include:

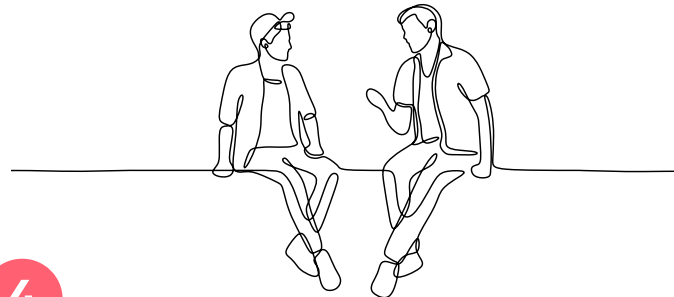
- Offering practical joining advice and using meet-and-greet systems.
- Providing taster sessions, follow-up support, and consistent staff.

## 4. Be flexible and accessible

Men often face work and family barriers to accessing services. Making services more accessible involves:

- Offering flexible scheduling and drop-in appointments in comfortable, familiar locations.
- Partnering with other services and attending local events like sports events to increase visibility and awareness.

# Making services more meaningful for men



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## 1. Develop health literacy

Men generally have a narrower view of health and limited awareness of health benefits. To address this:

- Create easy-to-understand, male-oriented resources using positive messaging.
- Involve families in health campaigns and collaborate with local clubs and workplaces.

## 2. Design of services

Services designed to address barriers such as societal expectations and stigma around seeking help can make it easier for men to seek help and build trust. This could be by:

- Ensuring visibility of male staff/volunteers
- Incorporating practical activities appealing to men and gather ongoing feedback.

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## Background and objectives

Research shows that men in Sunderland engage with health promotion and community-based initiatives at a lower rate than women. This trend is consistent across the country. Sunderland City Council aimed to understand this disparity and to support services in increasing male engagement. Stand were commissioned to conduct this research to:

- Gather insights from stakeholders and local men.
- Develop a practical toolkit to help health promotion and community-based services encourage greater participation from men.
- Share these insights and toolkit with Sunderland partners and health promotion and community-based services.

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## Research and insight-gathering

Research included a literature review to understand national and local perspectives and identify practical recommendations.

Insight was gathered through engagement with Sunderland City Council stakeholders and its partners in Sunderland.

Local Sunderland men were engaged through focus groups and interviews to understand their experiences and perceptions of health promotion and community-based services, barriers to engagement and what would encourage them to access these services.

Many of the experiences of men and organisations locally corresponded to the findings of the national research.

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## Toolkit

A toolkit has been developed for local organisations to effectively address men's needs in accessing services. Its primary focus is to attract more men to health and support services, and emphasising the involvement of family and friends. Six areas of focus are addressed in the toolkit:

- Develop health literacy
- Design of services
- Provide positive first experiences
- Be flexible and accessible
- Embed diversity and inclusion
- Foster a sense of achievement