



# Problems and solutions to undertaking regular physical activity and exercise for asylum seekers

## *Background:*

Living as an asylum seeker can mean that daily life is challenging. Individuals may struggle with low mood and experience poor mental health. Regular physical activity can improve mood and therefore mental health and wellbeing.

## *Problems:*

### RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

- Lack of food
- Lack of money
- Lack of knowledge of facilities in the local area
- The weather
- Time
- Lack of childcare

### KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Understanding the phrase 'physical activity' and recommendations

### SOCIAL

- With friends/family
- Alone in the UK
- Cultural influences

### DECISION PROCESS

- Living in limbo

## *Methods:*

We interviewed 36 people (20 women, 16 men) from 16 countries, aged 18-59 and living in Bradford, Leeds, Wakefield and Huddersfield. We asked them about what helps them to exercise and what stops them from exercising (problems).

## *Solutions:*

There are simple steps which individuals can take to increase their physical activity: using stairs instead of a lift; walking faster.

Interventions to encourage more physical activity - for example, a mobile app - could be developed: this app could provide knowledge of local activities and opportunities for asylum seekers to take part in.

In both cases mental health and wellbeing may be improved.

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