

Welcome to issue IV of the Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) newsletter. This newsletter is designed to give an update on the development of a Regional PARS Level III replacing existing exercise referral schemes and the introduction of the new ICT system to support the management of referrals.



PARS is an regional initiative commissioned by the Public Health Agency (PHA) to provide eligible patients with an opportunity to engage in a 12 week programme of physical activity or exercise under the guidance of a suitably qualified exercise professional which may act as a catalyst to long term behaviour change. The PHA has commissioned PARS across all 11 council areas in approximately 50 centres to allow GPs and other relevant registered health professionals eg Physiotherapists, Dietitians and Mental Health practitioners to make referrals directly to Community and Leisure Centres.

### Referral Route



The PHA, in association with the Northern Ireland General Practitioners Committee (NIGPC) and Business Services Organisation (BSO ITS, has developed a PARS specific referral template on the Clinical Communication Gateway (CCG), to ensure that **ALL** PARS referrals are generated electronically thus reducing the risk of referrals being misplaced and increasing the quality and consistency of the core information being provided.

Practice based staff will automatically have access to the protocols through their own CCG accounts, non-practice based referrers who do not currently have a CCG account should contact the PARS team at [pars@hscni.net](mailto:pars@hscni.net), who will create the account and provide guidance on the creation of referrals.

### COVID-19 and PARS

As we move into a new phase on how we live with Covid-19 and with the majority of restrictions lifted, all council areas are again accepting PARS referrals and while we are not yet at the pre-Covid levels, we are moving in the right direction. Going forward PARS will not necessarily be provided in its traditional format of face to face group based activities as most providers have now developed a hybrid delivery model using a mixture of both face-to-face (where/when practicable and safe) and virtual (online) settings.

For up to date information on service delivery please contact the relevant leisure centre directly.

#### Inclusion Criteria

Clients must:

- Be 19 years or over
- Be Inactive\*
- Be Motivated to change
- Have a BMI  $\geq 25$  and  $< 40$

**AND** have one or more of the following

- Hypertension
- Hyperlipidaemia
- Impaired glucose levels or diabetes
- Family history of heart disease
- Asthma, bronchitis or COPD
- Musculoskeletal conditions
- Psychological/Mental Health Conditions

\*Not currently meeting the guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week

#### Data Quality

With the creation of electronic referrals through the PARS CCG protocols, the quality and consistency of the core client information has increased, however to ensure referrals are actioned in a timely manner it is important that the quality of this core information remains high.



In 2021/22, 5% of all referrals received had no reason for referral, 24% had No BMI, 38% of BMIs supplied were over a year old, 19% had no mobile number and of these 42% had no other contact number.

Any other relevant information which would assist the exercise professional in making a decision on the suitability of the client's participation should also be included.