

Expansion of a leading CF exercise programme: collaborative partnership between a UK fitness provider and five UK CF centres

Topic-Physiotherapy

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Objectives: A public-private partnership between a UK fitness provider (NH) and a CF unit was started in 2011 as an innovative solution to current healthcare service limitations. The collaboration aims to facilitate safe, effective independent exercise for children and young people (CYP) with CF outside of the clinical setting as current participation in exercise is variable. The programme includes free gym membership, complimentary personal training (PT) for 5-17 year olds and swimming for under 5s. This study reports on the expansion to a further four CF units.

Methods: Partnerships between NH and CF units were created. Online training modules, developed by NH and the NH CF working group, provide information on the organisation of the programme to all NH member-facing staff, and educate NH PTs on the safe and effective delivery of exercise training to CYP with CF. These modules are accredited. CF teams recommend the programme during hospital appointments and a standardised procedure of referral is followed. Online self-referral is also available.

Results: Over the period 2011-2017, the number of NH centres delivering the programme has increased from 5 to 36, >110 PT and >40 other NH employees have received training. Participation has increased to 155 CYP, with >2700 independent supervised exercise sessions being undertaken.

Conclusions: The success of the programme demonstrates how innovative approaches can facilitate exercise for CYP with CF. The programme's growth evidences the scalability whilst maintaining quality. Feedback from CYP and their parents has been very positive. Accredited online training modules have enabled quick and efficient expansion of the programme, whilst maintaining standardisation. Regular OMs added in 2017 will allow further analysis of the impact of the programme. Future plans include expansion to 16 CF units and to offer >800 CYP access to specialist PT at 112 NH centres by 2020.