

PARTNER EVENT

Stories that Move



Key Presentation Slides

Leap Partner Event
October 2025

Welcome and Introduction

Mark Ormerod Leap CEO



@Leap_BMK



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Ice Breaker

In pairs or trios each person shares a 2 minute story about a moment of impact in your personal or professional life.

Prompts:

1. A time you saw someone's confidence grow
2. A breakthrough moment in your programme
3. A decision you made that changed your week / month / year / life
4. A moment of resilience – when someone overcame a challenge
5. A moment that sparked a ripple effect in the community



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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

BRYAN WRIGHT

Founding Director at
Yellowyoyo



yellowyoyo

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

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THE
POWER OF
STORYTELLING



"People will forget what you said.
People will forget what you did.
But people will never forget how you
made them feel."

Maya Angelou, 1993

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WE'VE ALWAYS
TOLD STORIES



THE
POWER OF
STORYTELLING

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Bryan Wright, Founding Director at Yellowyoyo began by shared his favourite quote from Maya Angelou. He explaining the essence of storytelling and creating emotional connections that last. Humans have always told stories, from cave walls to campfires, storytelling was survival and carried lessons, warnings, and hope. Today, the tools have changed to Netflix, TikTok, and Instagram, but the instinct to share stories remains as strong as ever.

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Bryan invited us to think about our own “sliding door moments” those life-changing decisions or chance encounters. These moments are storytelling gold because they carry tension, choice, and consequence. Bryan then shared his own sliding door moment that had shaped his career. He then explained the science behind storytelling:

“Here’s what’s extraordinary. When I share those stories, something fascinating happens in your brain. You’re not just hearing words. You’re experiencing them. This isn’t just poetic – it’s biological. When I tell you a vivid story, your brain synchronises with mine. Scientists call this neural coupling. When the storyteller’s and listener’s brains light up in synchrony”

He revealed that stories trigger oxytocin and dopamine — chemicals linked to trust, empathy, and pleasure. That’s why we binge-watch, turn pages, and crave “just one more episode.” Stories have changed our biochemistry.

“When I tell you a vivid story, your brain synchronises with mine. Scientists call this neural coupling. When the storyteller’s and listener’s brains light up in synchrony. It’s as though, for a few moments, our brains are literally in rhythm. Your neurons mirror mine as you imagine the scenes I describe. Stories create shared experience chemically. You’re not just listening, you’re experiencing it.”

“They are, quite literally, how we connect. Stories change our biochemistry. So when Leap talks about Stories That Move, it’s not just a metaphor – it’s neuroscience. We’re talking about a human connection that’s been moving people, minds and societies for tens of thousands of years”



WE CAN'T GET
ENOUGH OF THEM

2.5 & 3.5 MILLION

THE
POWER OF
STORYTELLING

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“Every year, somewhere between 2.5 and 3.5 million new book titles are published globally. That’s about 9,000 new stories every single day. So, if it takes me one minute to walk across this stage and back, eight new stories will have been published somewhere in the world. And that’s before we even count streaming series, YouTube videos, podcasts, blogs, LinkedIn and social media posts. We are surrounded by stories. Constantly. They shape how we see the world and sometimes, how the world sees us.”

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE
LONG



**For sale.
Baby shoes.
Never worn.**

THE
POWER OF
STORYTELLING



Bryan shared Ernest Hemingway's famous six-word story: "For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn." In just six words, it evokes loss and humanity. He compared this to brand storytelling: Nike's "Just do it", Apple's "Think different", and L'Oréal's "Because you're worth it." Simple words, deep meaning. Bryan explained why stories are so powerful:

"Each one is a simple distilled story of identity and captures an entire belief system – in just a few words. They have become cultural shorthand for action, innovation, self-worth. That's the power of simplicity when emotion is baked-in."

He shared examples of storytelling in action: John Lewis Christmas ads that sell feeling, and Sport England's This Girl Can, which made movement possible for millions of women.

"Over 10 years It has proved to be a piece of storytelling that didn't just increase participation in sport – it changed behaviour. It made movement feel possible for millions of women who'd been told they weren't "sporty." It wasn't the data that did that. It was the stories using insights from real women. They used mantras like 'I kick balls. Deal with it.' That's as powerful as Ernest Hemingway's 6-word story."





Data + Story =
ACTION

Bryan stressed that data convinces, but stories move, and together, they compel.

“And for those of you here today those working in charities, social enterprises, community organisations this is especially relevant. You don’t sell products. You create change, and change is invisible until you tell its story. Numbers tell part of it “We supported 10,000 families.”, “83% of participants improved wellbeing.” but those numbers come alive when we show one family. One participant. “Sarah hadn’t left her house for six months. Now she leads the warm-up in her class.”

That’s impact you can feel. The data proves your impact. The story humanises it. One speaks to the head. The other goes straight to the heart. Together, they make change believable and unforgettable. Head + Heart - You need both to move a body.”

Evidence gives credibility; stories give meaning. When combined, they influence funders, policymakers, and communities turning insight into action.



DATA + STORY =
ACTION



People **BELIEVE IT,**
REMEMBER IT
& **ACT ON IT.**

THE
POWER OF
STORYT

SLIDING DOOR
MOMENTS



They are **AUTHENTIC,**
EMOTIONAL & often
LIFE CHANGING

THE
POWER OF
STORYTELLING



Bryan emphasizes the importance of capturing those sliding-door moments in our work, as they serve as evidence of transformation.

“They are authentic, emotional and often life changing. They’re not just PR – they’re proof of transformation and of purpose. Capture them, Protect them, Share them. Because they are your gold. They show what transformation looks like and if you tell them well it will inspire others to take part too.”





Practical ideas for **BETTER STORYTELLING**

IDEAS FOR BETTER STORYTELLING



- Collect the **INGREDIENTS**
- Look for the **CHANGE**
- Blend evidence with **EMOTION**
- Ask one **QUESTION**

THE
POWER OF
STORYTELLING

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Bryan shared four habits for better storytelling: collect the ingredients (data, quotes, images), look for the change (before and after), blend evidence with emotion, and ask: *“Does this story make people feel something?”*

Bryan returned to Maya Angelou’s quote and reminded us that stories make people feel. They bridge information and inspiration, turning numbers into lives changed. His final message: *“ Use your story. Share your story. Because when people feel something, that’s when change truly happens”.*

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

KATHRYN HOLDING

Head of Evidence and Impact
at Active Oxfordshire

Working together to fight
inactivity and tackle inequality



Kathryn Holding
Head of Evidence and Impact



Strategic priorities



Healthy Active Children

- Low-income families
- Disabled young people
- Teenage girls
- Mental Health and Wellbeing



Healthy Active Adults

- Long Term Health Conditions
- People at risk of falls
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Adults with disabilities



Healthy Active Neighbourhoods

- Enabling active travel
- Priority neighbourhood focus
- Co-production with priority neighbourhoods
- Increasing access to green spaces

Kathryn Holding, Head of Impact and Evidence at Active Oxfordshire, spoke about the importance of data and evaluation in driving change. She began by explaining her role in overseeing evaluations across all programmes, including Move Together, which supports inactive adults with long-term conditions to become more active. Kathryn highlighted that Active Oxfordshire also runs initiatives for children, families facing barriers, and healthy active neighbourhoods — all designed to empower communities to make their own decisions about physical activity.

“ We work with communities, learning from them, working with them and more and more, empowering them to make their own decision on how to make their communities more active.”

She focused on Move Together, describing it as a programme that provides behavioural support and coaching to help people transition from inactivity (less than 30 minutes of moderate activity per week) to sustainable movement.

MOVE Together



MOVE
Together

Move Together provides **behavioural support**, motivation and signposting to people in Oxfordshire to empower them to **move more**.

The pathway is for **inactive adults** with or at risk of **long-term physical and/or mental health conditions**. This includes adults with disabilities and pregnant and postnatal women.

The pathway is funded by Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Board, Oxfordshire County Council Public Health & city and district councils.

It is coordinated by Active Oxfordshire in partnership with Oxfordshire's District Councils.

Participants are referred through healthcare professionals such as GP surgeries or self-referral, and the programme uses personalised conversations, signposting, and follow-up coaching calls to ensure lasting change. Kathryn emphasized that the impact is real: people who engage with Move Together maintain their activity levels a year later.

Our Approach to Evaluation

MOVE
Together



Evidence informed

Underpinned by evidence on the need, and on the expected benefits



Collaborative

Part of everything we do, and part of how we work with partners. Embedded in our processes



Outcomes focused

Focused on identifying the change for individuals and including voices, stories and ensuring reach.



Regular

MEL is something that we do on a regular basis so that we are constantly learning



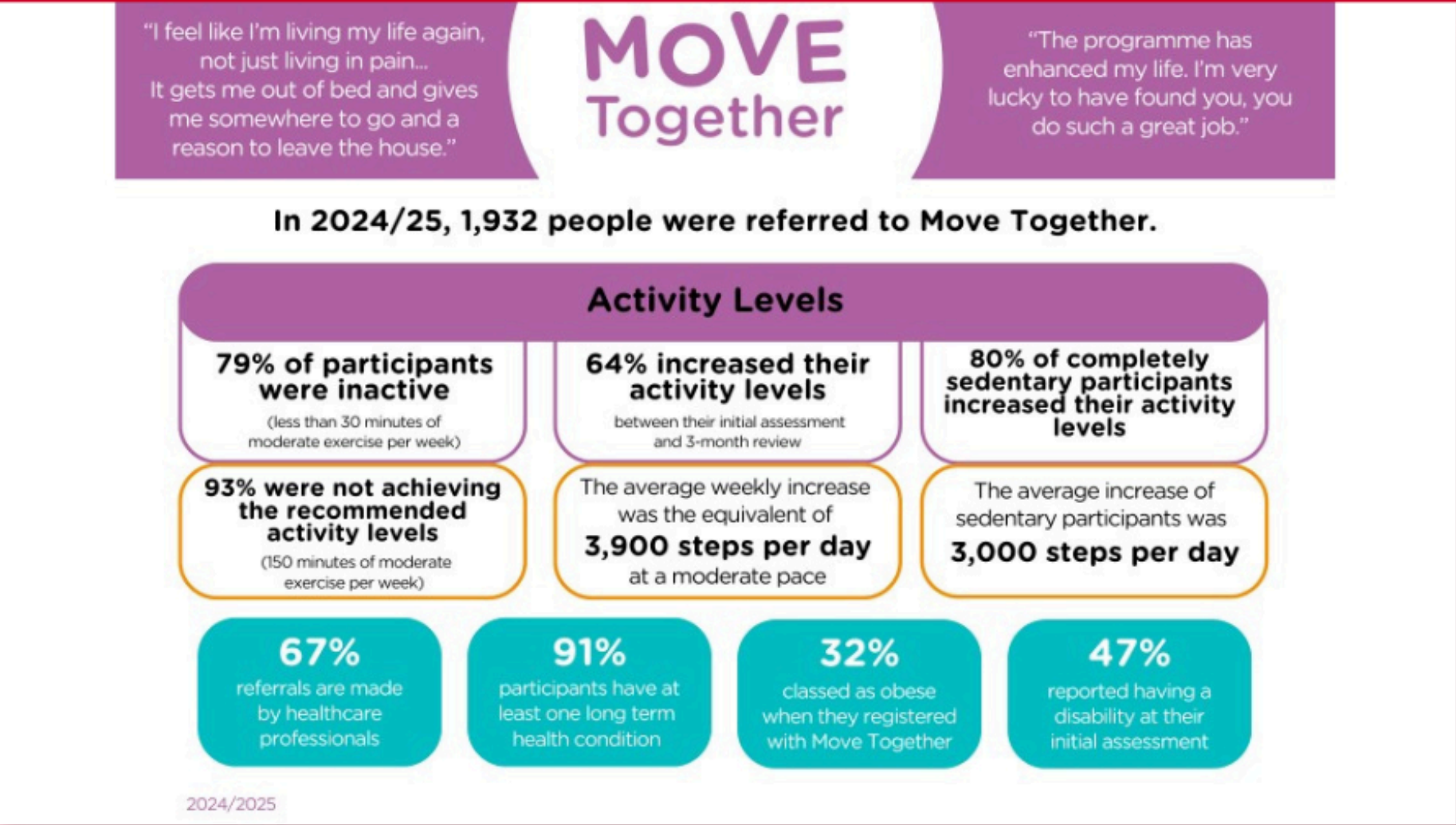
Accessible

Our monitoring, evaluation and learning is available to commissioners, partners, staff and participants and should be understandable.

Kathryn also outlined Active Oxfordshire's evaluation approach, which is evidence-informed, collaborative, focused on outcomes, regularly monitored and accessible to all. From the start, programmes are designed using research and clear objectives. Evaluation isn't just her responsibility; it involves everyone working on the programme to understand what success looks like and how to measure it. Beyond counting participants and sessions, Kathryn stressed the importance of capturing stories and qualitative data to show real-life impact because numbers alone don't tell the full story.

Kathryn moved on to share how data insights have sharpened the focus of the Move Together pathway. Originally designed for people who were clinically extremely vulnerable, analysis revealed that the programme has been most effective for individuals with long-term health conditions and older adults. As a result, the pathway now prioritises groups such as people with chronic conditions, those affected by depression and anxiety, people living in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, and adults over 60 who need improved strength and fitness to reduce fall risk.

Kathryn shared key improvements from the test phase, including introducing a standardised delivery model across districts with clear KPIs and an evaluation framework to ensure consistency and better outcomes. Kathryn emphasised the role of data and evaluation in driving improvement, supported by an online database and future studies with Oxford University to demonstrate health and economic impact.



She showcased the impact and value of Move Together. The programme generated a social value gain of £1.44 million, delivering a return of £3.70 for every £1 invested.

“ If someone gets moving, gets out of their house, and does something different, they use less healthcare resources. They might use slightly less care resources and they might get more active in their community. There is knock on economic implications. We recently pulled together case studies of people who got back to work because of ‘Move Together’. They might start going out more and putting money back into the community by taking part in things.”

"I have cancer and am experiencing more symptoms of this over time but MT is helping me to get out, be more active and help with a sense of purpose. I have started Yoga Therapy online (last week) and am really pleased about this. I attend two weekly group walks and attended walk leader training and this has helped with a sense of purpose."

"I am now exercising more daily and am now aware of the importance of exercising with my health condition and am going to start a disabled swimming group called the swans and am looking into other outdoor disability activities as the weather starts to warm up."

"I feel fitter and am less prone to becoming breathless when working hard/continuously, e.g. when climbing the 98 steps up from the bottom garden to the top at Upton House (Nat. Trust). I used to have to stop 2 or 3 times to get my breath back. I can now do the whole flight in one go, although I am a bit breathless still by the time I reach the top. Simply fitter all round."

"Knowing you are part of a genuine program which helps you to make the changes in your life to have a positive impact on both your physical and mental health. All the support that I have received and the PT sessions were amazing and have really helped me in showing me what I can do to keep it going independently after they finished."

Transferrable- steps of evaluation

- Evidence should under pin the aims of the project
- Think through the questions you want to answer at the start of the project.
 - Who is the project aiming to benefit and why?
 - How many people will it support?
 - How will they find their way to the project?
 - How is it expected the project will develop?
 - What change is the project aiming to achieve for participants?
 - What wider changes are expected?
 - Which changes are we most interested in, which are commissioners most interested in?
 - How will we know that change is being achieved? What can we collect or measure?



Kathryn closed by emphasising the power of stories in proving real-life impact. She shared that reviewing thousands of participant comments revealed how Move Together changes lives from gaining confidence and moving more to playing with grandchildren and doing things they couldn't before. Stories, she explained, make outcomes tangible and human. Kathryn encouraged partners to use transferable steps of evaluation: define what you aim to achieve, identify the questions you need answered, build an evaluation framework, and compare data before and after. Combining case studies with outcome measures and building strong relationships is key to demonstrating meaningful change.

Evaluation uses lots of different types of information and it has to be everyone's business



Outcomes focused

Reach is not a measure of outcome. Outcomes are the changes people and systems experience

- Do they feel better?
- Have they experienced any change in their mental wellbeing?
- Did they find the project useful?
- Would they recommend it to a friend or family member?
- Has it had any impact on their day to day lives?
- Has it changed their behaviour e.g. cycling more, going to the GP less?
- Have referrers or key professionals seen benefits?

Compare before and after if possible

You can use standardized tools to help (e.g. EQ5-D)

You might need to use other people's information as well, for example you might need partner data

Use mixed methodology



MOVE
Together

Table Discussion.....

Use post it notes and flip chart paper to record the below.

How do you currently use stories in your work—or wish you could?

What were your reflections on what we heard from Bryan and Kathryn?

Who are the key audiences you're trying to influence with your stories? And what do you want them to do?

What barriers do you face when trying to tell stories about your work?

What's one story you think needs to be told more often in our sector?

How can we work together to build a stronger culture of storytelling for impact?

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Impact Confidence Snapshot

Reflect on where your organisation is with each element of capturing impact.

Discuss with your table.

Complete the worksheet.

Take a photo of worksheet for your records, but please **leave original here**. We'll use it to inform future support in this area.

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Partner Events 2026

Wednesday 25th February 2026
1045-1300 (Aston Clinton)

Wednesday 17th June 2026
1045-1300 (Aston Clinton)

Wednesday 14th October 2026
1045-1300 (Milton Keynes venue)



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Summary and Close

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