



**CIMSPA PROFESSIONAL STANDARD:  
POPULATION SPECIALISM**

# Working with Inactive People

(FULL STANDARD)

---

**EDITION:** V1.0

---

**PUBLICATION DATE:** May 2019

---

# CIMSPA PROFESSIONAL STANDARD: POPULATION SPECIALISM

## Working with Inactive People

### Contents

	Page
1. Overview.....	3
2. Scope of Working with Inactive People .....	4
3. Summary of knowledge and skills .....	5
4. Product development guidance .....	6
5. Learning and development requirements .....	8
6. Acknowledgements.....	14

### ABOUT THIS STANDARD

This document is a CIMSPA Professional Standard: Population Specialism (full version).

This full version of the standard is available to CIMSPA employer and education partners.

**Published by:**

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity  
Incorporated by Royal Charter  
Charity Registration Number: 1144545  
[www.cimspa.co.uk](http://www.cimspa.co.uk)

Publication Date: May 2019

Edition: V1.0

© The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity



FUNDED PARTNER

# 1. Overview

## **Professional Standard: Population Specialism Working with Inactive People**

This Professional Standard: Population Specialism, Working with Inactive People outlines the essential knowledge and skills that are needed to meet the requirements of the sector minimum deployment standards.

*Note: “Professional Standard: Population Specialism” will be abbreviated throughout this document to “Population Specialism”; the reader should understand this abbreviation as the full title.*

The full version of this standard is available to CIMSPA education and employer partners. It provides guidance for the development of education products that will be endorsed by CIMSPA.

The Working with Inactive People Population Specialism covers job roles that sit within the sport and physical activity sector as part of all industries.

This CIMSPA population specialism allows you to demonstrate your expertise in working with inactive people in a sport and physical activity setting.

### **This Population Specialism can be used as follows:**

1. Combined with an occupation standard to form an educational product: e.g. Occupation: Coach; Population Specialism: Working with Inactive People.
2. Combined with an occupation standard and additional specialism(s) to form an educational product e.g. Occupation: Coach; Population Specialism: Working with Inactive People; Environment Specialism: Working in the Community Environment.
3. As a standalone product that can be completed as continuing professional development: e.g. working with inactive people.

### **Endorsed qualification logo**

Qualifications that meet the requirements of this CIMSPA Professional Standard will display this official CIMSPA endorsement logo.



## 2. Scope of the Working with Inactive People Professional Standard: Population Specialism

This Population Specialism supports inactive individuals and groups; it aims to enable front line delivery of physical activity with the tools to be able to engage the most inactive people in society and change their inactive behaviour. This includes:

- Core population: Inactive people.
  - Those doing nothing.
  - Those doing >30 mins a week but light intensity.
  - Those doing <30 mins a week moderate intensity.

Individuals that meet this standard will:

### **UNDERSTAND:**

- The enabling factors to support individuals and groups participating in physical activity.
- How to support people engaging with physical activity for the first time or after a prolonged period of inactivity.
- How to sustain levels of physical activity and common effective solutions to reduce sedentary lifestyle behaviours.

### **HAVE DEMONSTRATED:**

- The ability to create an inclusive and engaging environment for people/groups new to activity.
- The ability to identify strategies to understand and connect with people/groups to improve the likelihood of sustained activity.
- The ability to recognise opportunities to reduce sedentary lifestyle behaviours.

### **Activities could include:**

- Ensuring people have a greater understanding of the benefits of maintaining regular physical activity.
- Engaging previously inactive people to take part in regular physical activity.
- Physical activity to help individuals learn a new skill.
- Instructing individuals to improve their health and fitness.
- Delivering sport or fitness activities for fun and enjoyment.
- Supporting people to maintain regular engagement in physical activity.

This Professional Standard outlines the population specialism's knowledge and skills.

### 3. Summary of knowledge and skills

#### Working with inactive people

Topic	Knowledge and understanding	Skills
<b>Specific target groups that are identified as inactive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How individuals are classified as being inactive, the barriers that stop them being physically active and the enablers to maintain regular physical activity habits.</li></ul>	
<b>Benefits of being physically active</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The different benefits of being physically active and the affects that these have on the person, physically and psychologically.</li><li>• The societal and economic benefits of a physically active nation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can tailor and utilise key messages to emphasise rationale for their physical activity delivery.</li></ul>
<b>Motivation for activity design and to enable behaviour change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How an individual can be motivated to participate in physical activity.</li><li>• How to recognise differing types and changes in motivation.</li><li>• How to align physical activity to an inactive person's motivations and amend in line with their changing motivation levels.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can add stimulus to an individual's level of motivation.</li></ul>
<b>Strategies and activities targeted at inactive people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How different strategies and activities can encourage individuals to participate in physical activities.</li><li>• How to create a positive environment that is attractive to inactive people.</li><li>• How to plan and prepare inclusive, safe and effective sessions tailored to the needs of inactive people.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can utilise appropriate strategies to keep people engaged.</li><li>• Can create a positive environment that attracts inactive people.</li><li>• Can plan, prepare, deliver and continually evaluate inclusive, safe and fun sessions for inactive people, using appropriate equipment and methods, encouraging continuous participation.</li><li>• Show how to select and adapt appropriate activities to engage inactive people.</li><li>• Can enable and motivate inactive individuals to raise their activity levels.</li></ul>

## 4. Product development guidance

This section is aimed at organisations developing formal educational products mapping to this Population Specialism. The guidance should be considered in the development of all educational products seeking CIMSPA endorsement.

The CIMSPA Professional Development Board (PDB) has agreed any of the formal educational products listed in the table below can be developed for the Population Specialism, Working with Inactive People. Where evidence that all elements of the Population Specialism are included, CIMSPA endorsement can be sought.

<b>Educational product</b>	<b>Mapping requirements</b>	<b>Professional Standard Population Specialism achieved on attainment?</b>
Regulated vocational qualification	Fully mapped	YES
Apprenticeship programme	Fully mapped	YES
HE programme/modules	Fully mapped	YES
CPD programme/modules	Partially mapped	NO

All formal educational products that are seeking CIMSPA endorsement must be submitted to CIMSPA and should include all elements outlined in the Population Specialism and assessed in line with the intention of the standard.

Education providers seeking CIMSPA endorsement for a product against this Population Specialism are asked to consider the following:

- a) They determine and justify the level of the product they have developed, in line with regulator guidance. To ensure parity, the level for all educational products that fully map to this Professional Standard should be the same.

The level assigned is determined by leading awarding organisations currently offering qualifications in the sector in which this specialism resides.

This is not a first-to-post exercise but one in which education providers are invited to submit their levelled units/full qualification for review as part of the CIMSPA endorsement process.

Once agreed by CIMSPA, all subsequent fully-mapped educational products must conform to the level set for this Population Specialism.

Level descriptors set out the generic knowledge and skills associated with the typical holder of a qualification at a given level and it should be ensured that educational products fully mapping to this Population Specialism are a 'best-fit' for the level assigned.

Their quality assurance meets the appropriate regulator's guidance, including: internal and external quality assurance, staffing requirements and assessment generation and evidence.

- b) They determine the total qualification time for the qualification/unit and outline the minimum requirements for practical assessment.

- c) They stipulate practical assessment must be conducted, where practically possible, in a real-world environment. For example, 'on the job' or at work. For someone working with inactive people in a sport and physical activity environment this could include for example: parks, gardens, open spaces, sports halls, swimming pools, outdoors, or other appropriate spaces.
- d) Where possible they should work with inactive individuals for a prolonged period of time, enough to demonstrate improvement.

Where possible a practical end-point assessment is conducted with 'real participants'.

The use of peers for an end-point practical assessment is not deemed appropriate.

Reasonable adjustments can be applied where specific circumstances make this unviable.

## 5. Learning and development requirements (LDRs)

The LDRs outline the key areas of learning and assessment that should be contained within any educational product seeking CIMSPA endorsement against a Professional Standard. There are 4 key areas of learning and development for the Population Specialism: Working with Inactive People, of which all areas are interconnected and mandatory. The key areas are:

1. Specific target groups that are identified as inactive.
2. Benefits of being physically active.
3. Motivation for activity design.
4. Strategies and activities targeted at inactive people.

N.B. Examples (e.g.) are given within the LDRs to provide an overview of the knowledge and skills most relevant to this Population Specialism. It is not mandatory to assess learners against 100% of the examples provided, however, sufficient coverage to ensure occupational competence on achievement must be ensured. This will be reviewed as part of the CIMSPA endorsement process.



## 1. Specific target groups that are identified as inactive

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Inactive People must:
K1.1	Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the different groups that are more likely to be inactive for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- People from socially deprived areas.</li><li>- People in key transition periods i.e. leaving education.</li><li>- People with disabilities.</li><li>- Older adults.</li><li>- Young women and girls.</li><li>- Specific cultural groups.</li><li>- People with medical conditions.</li><li>- People in rural communities.</li></ul></li><li>• Describe how the target groups have been identified: e.g. research by national organisations, government agendas, local knowledge, partnership working and funding opportunities.</li><li>• Explain the reasons why the specific target group has been identified to include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Low numbers participating.</li><li>- Traditionally and/or culturally no history of participation.</li><li>- At risk/falling numbers participating.</li><li>- Significant health benefits of increasing participation levels amongst specific groups for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Exercise on referral.</li><li>o Overweight or obese.</li></ul></li><li>- Long term conditions which may be improved with exercise: e.g.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Mental health and wellbeing.</li><li>o Type 2 diabetes.</li></ul></li><li>- Social impact of working with the target group: e.g. young offenders.</li></ul></li></ul>
K1.2	Barriers and enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the barriers and enablers to participation for specific groups for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Lack of access.</li><li>- Cost.</li><li>- Lifestyle changes.</li><li>- Physical limitations.</li><li>- Childcare commitments.</li><li>- Access to facilities.</li><li>- Work-commitments.</li><li>- Travel.</li><li>- Perception.</li><li>- Religious or cultural views.</li><li>- Fear of discrimination.</li></ul></li><li>• Identify where to find information/insight on barriers and enablers to participation for certain participant types for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sports councils, i.e. Sport England tackling inactivity resources.</li><li>- National governing bodies (NGBs).</li><li>- Active partnerships.</li><li>- British universities and colleges sport (BUCS).</li><li>- ukactive</li><li>- Charities i.e. Activity Alliance, Streetgames, Richmond Group.</li></ul></li></ul>

## 2. Benefits of being physically active

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Inactive People must:
K2.1	Benefits to the individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the benefits of participating in physical activity for specific groups.</li></ul>
K2.1.1	Physiological benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the physiological benefits of participating in regular physical activity.</li><li>• Describe the physiological benefits to different types of participants and/or groups through engaging in physical activity. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Improved circulation.</li><li>- Reduced of swelling.</li><li>- Improved posture.</li><li>- Improved sleep patterns.</li><li>- Increased energy levels.</li><li>- Improved control.</li><li>- Increased strength.</li><li>- Improved flexibility.</li><li>- Lower risk of developing chronic diseases and strokes.</li><li>- Maintain healthy weight.</li><li>- Developing strong muscles and bones.</li><li>- Improved complexion.</li><li>- Control weight gain, loss and maintenance.</li><li>- Lowered resting heart rate.</li><li>- Reduced need for medical intervention.</li></ul></li><li>• Identify the appropriate measures of the physiological benefits of physical activity for inactive people.</li></ul>
K2.1.2	Psychological benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the psychological benefits of participating in regular physical activity.</li><li>• Describe the psychological benefits to different types of participants and or groups in engaging in physical activity. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Maintaining some control over a changing body.</li><li>- Improved mood.</li><li>- Having some 'me' time.</li><li>- Focus on ability not disability.</li><li>- Sense of achievement.</li><li>- Relieving stress.</li><li>- Managing illness or injury.</li><li>- Increased confidence.</li><li>- Increased self-esteem.</li><li>- Having fun.</li><li>- Reduced chance of depression.</li><li>- Increased self-worth.</li><li>- Improved self-image.</li><li>- Reduced depression.</li><li>- Better pain management.</li></ul></li><li>• Identify the appropriate measures of the psychological benefits of physical activity for inactive people.</li></ul>

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Knowledge and understanding:</b>	<b>Those Working with Inactive People must:</b>
<b>K2.1.3</b>	Sociological benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the sociological benefits of participating in regular physical activity.</li> <li>• Describe the sociological benefits to different types of participants and or groups in engaging in physical activity for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making friends.</li> <li>- Shared experiences.</li> <li>- Support.</li> <li>- Maintaining independence.</li> <li>- Meeting others and new people.</li> <li>- Getting out of the house.</li> <li>- Interact with a range of different people.</li> <li>- Improve teamwork and cooperation.</li> <li>- Widen social circle.</li> <li>- Support from others.</li> <li>- Interacting with different cultures.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identify the appropriate measures of the sociological benefits of physical activity for inactive people.</li> </ul>
<b>K2.2</b>	Benefits to society and the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the benefits to society of engaging people in physical activity.</li> <li>• Describe the benefits to the economy of having an engaged nation of physically active people.</li> <li>• Identify other nations and regions that benefit from having a culture of people engaged in regular physical activity.</li> </ul>

### 3. Motivation for activity design

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Knowledge and understanding:</b>	<b>Those Working with Inactive People must:</b>
<b>K3.1</b>	Motivating, influencing and persuading behaviour change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify an individual's motivation for wanting to become physically active.</li> <li>• Identify how different groups of participants will have different motivations.</li> <li>• Identify typical motivations for different types of inactive groups.</li> <li>• Describe how to positively influence participant behaviour.</li> <li>• Describe how people who influence an inactive person or group can play a role in motivation: e.g. family members, carers, teachers, health/social workers.</li> </ul>
<b>K3.2</b>	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe how to adapt communication methods to meet the needs of participants from differing backgrounds, cultures and sport/activity experience etc.</li> </ul>
<b>K3.3</b>	Building relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the importance of building relationships and connecting with inactive people in person or in a group and those who support them: e.g. create a connection, create rapport, create a positive and motivating environment.</li> </ul>

## 4. Strategies and activities targeted at inactive people

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Inactive People must:
K4.1	Initiatives and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a range of local, regional and national initiatives aimed at increasing physical activity levels.</li> <li>Identify the organisations developing initiatives for inactive people relevant to their target markets.</li> <li>Evaluate a range of initiatives targeting inactive people identifying their areas of good practice and areas for improvement.</li> </ul>
K4.2	Activity differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe activities that could be used when planning physical activity sessions for inactive people.</li> <li>Describe appropriate types of activity and how this relates to an inactive person's goals.</li> <li>Describe how activity can be adapted to appeal to an inactive person or group.</li> <li>Describe how to present adapted physical activity to engage inactive people and create an attractive environment for inactive people.</li> </ul>
K4.3	Planning, preparation and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain how to plan inclusive, safe and fun physical activity programmes for individuals that are inactive.</li> <li>Identify the importance of the relationship between programme design and activity delivery in engaging inactive people.</li> <li>Describe the importance of goal setting and regular attendance of physical activity sessions for individuals that are inactive.</li> <li>Describe how to deliver inclusive, safe and fun physical activity sessions for individuals that are inactive.</li> <li>Explain how important it is to have contingency plans and ensuring activities are creative, fun and engaging and pitched at the appropriate level.</li> </ul>
K4.4	Goal setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how goals for inactive people may differ from those of active people.</li> <li>Describe the importance of reviewing your analysis of the participants' level of development and motivation to inform goal setting and session outcomes.</li> </ul>
K4.5	Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities to collate and use feedback from the participants regarding the activities delivered.</li> <li>Identify how to use feedback from participants to promote motivation of inactive participants.</li> </ul>
Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Inactive People must be able to:
S4.1	Activity differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiate activity appropriately to appeal to inactive people.</li> <li>Recognise and implement adaptations to keep people engaged.</li> </ul>
S4.2	Session and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show a clear insight lead rationale for the session and activities used.</li> </ul>
S4.3	Plan, deliver, evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a plan to deliver inclusive, safe and fun physical activity sessions for individuals that are inactive.</li> </ul>

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Skills:</b>	<b>Those Working with Inactive People must be able to:</b>
	Plan, deliver, evaluate continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver inclusive, safe and fun physical activity sessions for individuals that are inactive.</li> <li>• Evaluate inclusive, safe and fun physical activity sessions that promotes the individual returning to participate.</li> </ul>
<b>S4.4</b>	Feedback to promote retention and change behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide effective feedback to participants to motivate participants to return to future physical activity sessions.</li> <li>• Provide effective feedback to participants to enable them to self-regulate their future physical activity participation.</li> <li>• Can analyse, evaluate and reflect on the conversations, progress, changes in behaviour and approach to physical activity from individuals in order to maintain interest and participation levels.</li> </ul>

## 7. Acknowledgements

CIMSPA would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for contributing to the development of this Population Specialism.

### **Members of the Engaging the Inactive Professional Development Committee:**

- Craig Blain and Heather Douglas: UK Coaching (CIMSPA sector partner)
- Hannah Crane: Streetgames (CIMSPA employer partner)
- Kat Southwell: Activity Alliance (CIMSPA sector partner)
- Sarah Stott: Age UK
- Charlie Crane: County Sports Network Partnership (CIMSPA sector partner)
- Matt Holdstock: British Universities Colleges Sport (CIMSPA sector partner)
- Sion Kitson and Tom Burton: Sport England (CIMSPA sector partner)
- Elaine McNish: Swim England (CIMSPA awarding organisation partner)