

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**September 2022**

## **Free Swimming for Pregnant Women**



Pregnant women living in South Gloucestershire can continue to access free swimming as part of the partnership scheme between Circadian Trust, (who operate Active Lifestyle Centres) and South Gloucestershire Council.

Swimming is a highly beneficial way to stay active during pregnancy and can be performed safely in all three trimesters. Widely recognised as a low-impact method of aerobic exercise, swimming provides a more comfortable environment for expectant mothers to maintain their physical health – as the water keeps them cool and supports the additional weight.

In addition, maintaining a healthy weight and staying active during pregnancy has many health benefits including, improved health-related quality of life, and a reduction in health-related complications for mother and baby.

Following a successful pilot, where 460 women accessed the scheme, it will be extended, enabling people to continue to be empowered to make healthy choices, and contribute to achieving a healthier population.

This scheme will also help to tackle the effects of maternal obesity, where it is recognised that obesity during pregnancy increases the risk of adverse health outcomes for both mother and child. What's

more, obesity during pregnancy increases the risk of life-long health problems in children, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.

To be eligible for the scheme, women will need to visit their local Active Lifestyle Centre and present their Maternity Notebook (Yellow Book), or Maternity Exemption Certificate, or Matb1, (issued by their doctor or midwife), and will need to show proof of address before their first session.

Women can come in for a swim during any of the public sessions. Eligibility for free swimming ends 3-weeks after their due date.

Residents who are registered with a South Gloucestershire GP surgery, but live just outside the county, will also be considered eligible. In these cases, proof of registration with the GP surgery will also need to be shown to be signed up.

Mark Crutchley, Chief Executive at Circadian Trust, said: “We are delighted by the success of the pilot scheme. There are a vast number of physical and mental health benefits to exercising during pregnancy. So far, women who have participated in the scheme have benefited from over 1,700 free-swimming sessions.”

“As a charitable trust with health and wellbeing at its core, we’re committed to making exercise accessible to all. The successful uptake of this scheme means we can continue to offer this service to our local communities.”

Franklin Owusu-Antwi, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equality of Opportunity, said: “We are committed to helping our residents at key moments in their lives, to encourage an active and healthy lifestyle and we are very pleased to be able to offer this free service for all pregnant women in South Gloucestershire. It’s hoped that by supporting expectant mothers to be active at this critical stage, they will continue to exercise regularly with their child in their early years.”

There are five Active Lifestyle Centres operated by Circadian Trust across South Gloucestershire – in Bradley Stoke, Kingswood, Longwell Green, Thornbury and Yate – and eligible customers will be able to access the sessions at any of the Centres. For more details on the swimming facilities, please visit: <https://activecentres.org/facilities/swimming/>

**ENDS**

*Photo caption: ...*

**Notes to editor:**

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**About Circadian Trust**

- Circadian Trust operates five Active Lifestyle Centres across South Gloucestershire in Bradley Stoke, Kingswood, Longwell Green, Thornbury and Yate and is a company and charity.

Working in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council, the community strategy and overall shared philosophy is to contribute to the improved health, cultural and social wellbeing of the local community improving quality of life.

- Working in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council, any profit made by the Trust is reinvested to improve facilities, equipment and services for its customers.
- For more information, visit: [www.activecentres.org/about-us](http://www.activecentres.org/about-us)