



Take the Lead on Your Health

A Guide

Your Health, Your Decisions, Your Life

A Practical 'Pocket Guide' for the Public

This pocket guide is designed to accompany the full 'Take the Lead on Your Health Guide' which explores the topics here in greater detail.

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This Guide is for educational and informational purposes only. It is intended to support understanding of health coaching, lifestyle and health behaviour change, and professional standards and does not constitute medical, clinical or therapeutic advice or treatment.

Always consult your GP or another qualified healthcare professional for personalised advice about your health or medical conditions.

Why this guide?

With healthcare constantly changing, knowing where to find **trusted guidance** is more important than ever.

Health and wellbeing coaching is one option, but you might be wondering:

- **What** is a health coach?
- **How** is a health coach trained?
- Is it **effective**?
- Who can I **trust**?

Not all 'health coaches' are equal.

This guide will help you:

- **Understand** what health coaching really is
- See how it fits into the **wider health and wellbeing landscape**
- Know why qualifications, credentials and professional standards **matter**
- Find a **qualified** health and wellbeing coach you can **trust**

Take control. **Make informed choices.** Lead your health journey with **confidence.**

Why Taking the Lead Matters



- Health is shaped by **daily habits, routines** and **choices**
- **Lifestyle factors** strongly influence long-term health outcomes
- Many people feel **overwhelmed** by conflicting health advice
- Health coaching helps people make informed, **sustainable changes**
- Focus on prevention, **self-management** and confidence



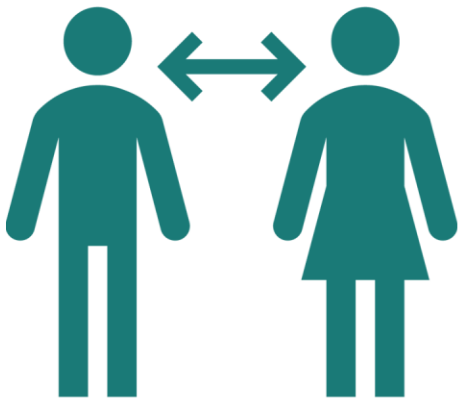
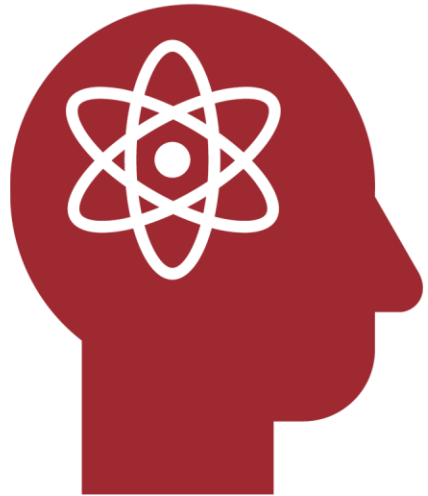
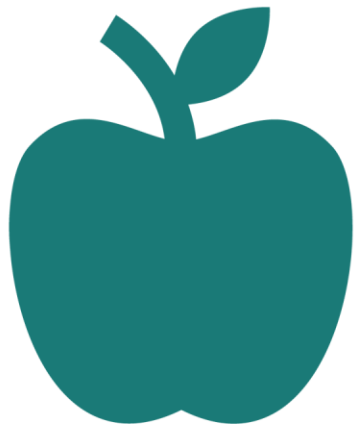
The Growing Challenge

- 1 in 3 adults in England lives with multiple long-term conditions
- Lifestyle factors contribute to over 40% of premature deaths
- Chronic pain, anxiety, depression and diabetes are rising
- Poor lifestyle patterns can reduce healthy life expectancy by up to 10 years
- Prevention can reduce pressure on NHS services



Prevention Works

- Type 2 diabetes risk can be reduced by 50–60%
- Cardiovascular disease risk can fall by 20–30%
- Better sleep, movement and social connection improve mental wellbeing
- Small, consistent habits create lasting health benefits
- Supported behaviour change improves long-term success



What Does 'Taking the Lead' Mean?

- Building **health literacy** and **understanding** health information
- Making practical choices that fit **real life**
- Creating **realistic** and **sustainable** healthy habits
- Improving energy, mood, **resilience** and confidence
- Taking **small achievable steps** instead of aiming for perfection



Why Health Behaviour Change Is Hard

- **Habits** are shaped by routines, stress and environment
- **Motivation** naturally rises and falls
- Information alone rarely changes **behaviour**
- Small changes are more **sustainable** than drastic overhauls
- Support and **accountability** improve success

What is Health and Wellbeing Coaching?

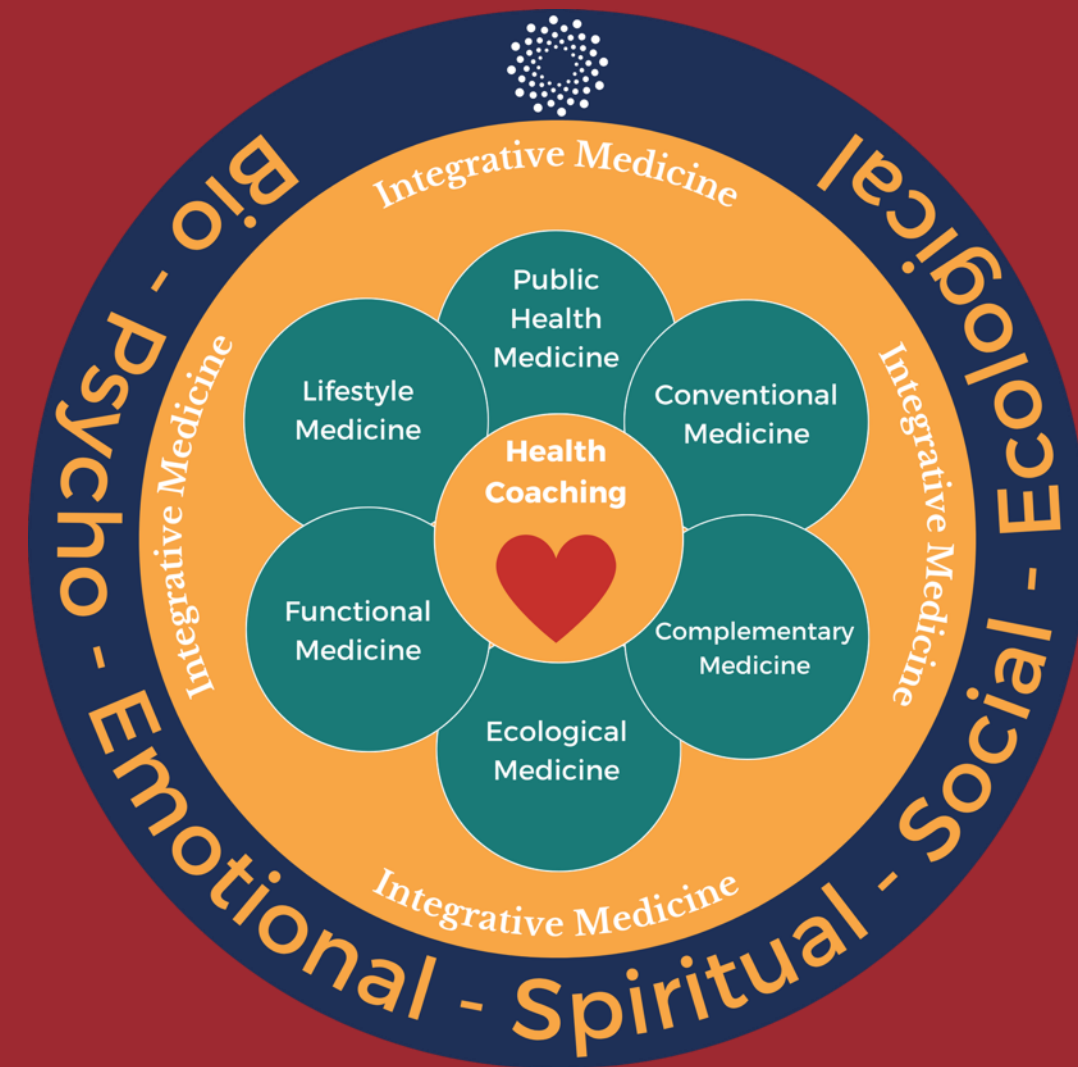
- A structured, **evidence-informed** and **non-clinical** approach
- Supports **lifestyle and behaviour change**
- Focuses on **self-empowerment** and goal setting
- **Complements** clinical care but does not replace it
- Helps people turn advice into **practical action**

A photograph of two hands, one from a darker-skinned person and one from a lighter-skinned person, clasped together in a supportive grip. The background is a soft, out-of-focus sunset or sunrise sky with warm orange and pink tones.

How Health Coaching Supports Change

- Uses **behavioural science** and **positive psychology**
- Encourages **reflection** and **self-awareness**
- **Supports** motivation, confidence and accountability
- Creates personalised, **realistic** action plans
- Tracks **progress** and adapts strategies over time

Lifestyle Medicine & Whole-Person Health



- Focuses on **prevention** and **long-term wellbeing**
- **Six key pillars:** nutrition, movement, sleep, stress, social connection and reducing harmful substances
- **Health** areas are **interconnected**
- **Small improvements** in one area often improve others
- Whole-person health considers **physical, mental, emotional and social** wellbeing



Why Professional Standards Matter

- UKIHCA Health Coaches meet **recognised standards**
- Training includes **evidence-based** behaviour change approaches
- Health coaches complete **supervision** and **continuing professional development**
- Health coaches work within **defined professional boundaries**
- Always seek **qualified, insured and credentialled** support

How do UKIHCA Health Coaches differ from other types of coaching roles?

UKIHCA Health Coaches are trained specifically in **evidence-based health behaviour change**, lifestyle interventions, and the science of wellbeing, often completing a **minimum 600-hour accredited programme**.

Coaching Type	Focus	Limitations
Life Coaching	Personal goals, motivation, fulfilment	Not designed for clinical populations, long-term conditions, or safeguarding contexts
Career Coaching	Employability, transitions, skills	Does not address health-related drivers of work capability, absence, or burnout
Business Coaching	Business growth, decision-making, productivity and operational performance	Focuses on commercial outcomes rather than health, wellbeing or lifestyle complexity
Executive Coaching	High-performing individuals, organisational impact	Assumes stability, resources, and privilege; not designed for population health or inequality
UKIHCA-RHC or Full Member	Health behaviour change, lifestyle support, whole health & wellbeing complexity	Evidence-based, sector-ready, system-level, works safely across healthcare, communities, workplaces, and education



Where do UKIHCA Health Coaches practice?

UKIHCA Health Coaches are **uniquely complementary** not only within the **healthcare and community support services**, but also across:

- workplaces
- sports
- leisure & physical activity settings
- all levels of education

What Health Coaches Do and Don't Do



- Help people **clarify goals** and **build healthy habits**
- Provide **support, reflection** and **accountability**
- Work **alongside** GPs and healthcare professionals
- **Support** people to apply clinical advice in daily life
- **DO NOT** diagnose, prescribe or provide medical treatment



Taking Your Next Steps

- Start with one **realistic health change**
- **Focus on progress** rather than perfection
- Build habits **gradually and consistently**
- Seek **structured support** where needed
- Explore working with a **UKIHCA Health Coach**

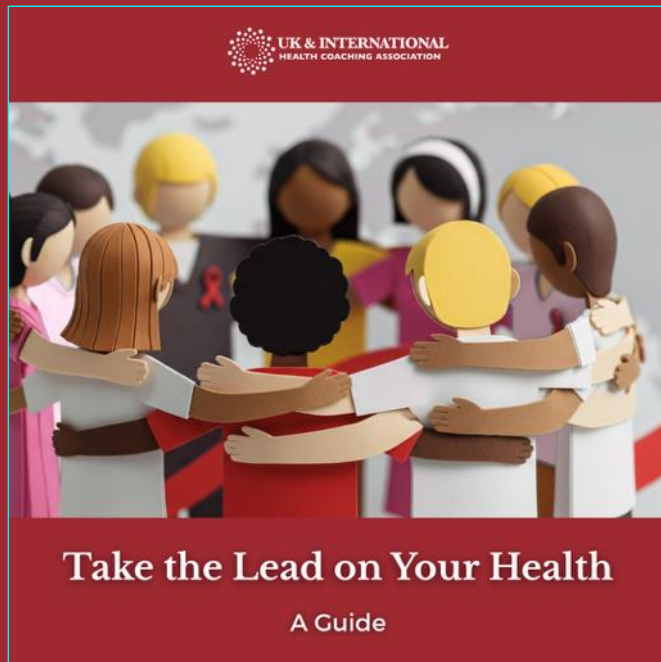


Key Takeaways

- Health improvement is built through **small, sustainable actions**
- **Prevention** and **self-management** can improve **quality of life**
- Health coaching **supports** confidence, motivation and accountability
- Whole-person health and wellbeing involves **mind, body and environment**
- Everyone deserves **access to trusted, evidence-informed support**



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