



# Evaluation of Supplementary Investment for Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport

## Executive Summary for **sportscotland**

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*“Whichever way your sporting life unfolds, we want to ensure you have positive experiences throughout.”*

**sportscotland, Raising the Bar, Corporate Plan 2015/2019**

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

1. This executive summary presents the findings of an evaluation of the Scottish Government's £2 million supplementary investment for Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport (SGBs). The research was commissioned by **sportscotland**.
2. A focus for much of the investment has been to support SGBs to expand their reach to the inactive and under-represented in sport. The one-off supplementary investment for the financial year 2017/18 has been used by SGBs to deliver on three outcomes:
  - expand their reach to the inactive and under-represented in sport, including women, girls, and older people;
  - tackle inequality and discrimination in participation in sport, in particular - lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex (LGBTI) discrimination; and
  - further enhance child protection measures.

The investment has also been used to implement changes to help SGBs reach a higher level of the Equality Standard for Sport.

3. The overall aim of the research was to undertake an independent evaluation to demonstrate and provide evidence on the:
  - impact and outcomes achieved; and
  - project sustainability.
4. The study method included a desk based review. Among other things, this included a review of project background information and monitoring data. Face-to-face and telephone consultations were undertaken with 31 SGBs. In addition, eight consultations were undertaken with **sportscotland** staff and third sector organisations that support under-represented groups. An online survey and five focus groups aimed at project participants were also undertaken.

## Main findings

### Reaching target groups

5. Overall, a fair assessment is that projects and programmes were in the main successful in reaching their intended target group(s). The supplementary investment has supported in excess of 50 projects across SGBs and the projects have engaged a large number of individuals. The investment enabled activities to be accelerated quicker and/or to be implemented on a larger scale than in the absence of the investment.
6. Equalities and Inclusion investment:
  - overall, there was strong performance with many targets met in full or exceeded. Others were close to being met;
  - most activities were aimed at four target groups – women and girls, those living in a deprived area, young people, and disabled people. Fewer projects focussed on reaching older people and the LGBTI community. To a certain extent the same holds true for the inactive and ethnic minorities communities;
  - the projects reached about 11,500 people. Some projects are ongoing and will reach more people over the coming months; and
  - the highest absolute numbers reported for those reached are largely in line with the main target groups identified by SGBs – young people, women and girls, and those living in deprived areas. The exception is disabled people.
7. Transitional Support<sup>1</sup>:
  - much of the project participation activity was aimed at young people and women and girls, followed by disabled people. There were fewer activities aimed at LGBTI, older people, or ethnic minorities; and
  - data shows that about 6,600 people took part.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Much of the investment was used to support enhancements in child protection and for work associated with the Equality Standard of Sport.

8. Some target groups will by their sheer size and visibility (e.g. women and girls, young people) be much easier to reach/engage than others. By targeting, for example women and girls, other target groups will likely have been reached indirectly. This includes older women, women from ethnic minorities communities, etc.
9. That being said, there has been less activity aimed specifically at reaching some target groups. In part this might simply reflect the nature of projects submitted by SGBs and approved by **sportscotland**. It might also reflect a less segmented approach adopted by some SGBs (i.e. approaches that target the general population may inevitably reach specific target groups, for example women, girls, etc).

#### Key factors for success

10. A wide range of success factors emerged from the research. Projects that were part of an existing prioritised action plan were often able to be mobilised quicker and more successfully than others.
11. A key ingredient to success was the extent of collaboration between SGBs and other agencies, groups, clubs and wider partners. Engagement with agencies and organisations with expertise, knowledge and understanding in engaging under-represented groups has helped SGBs to:
  - facilitate better/quicker access to potential participants;
  - ensure that the specific needs of under-represented groups were better understood;
  - leverage in additional resources for project activities (e.g. investment, people, equipment, facilities, venues);
  - achieve (in many cases) better levels of engagement from participants; and
  - save time and effort.
12. Linked to collaboration were success factors such as having “familiar faces and places”. By that we mean using coaches, volunteers, school staff, etc who know some participants already. Additionally, it means project activities being held in local community venues, centres and spaces that participants are familiar with (and can get to easily).

13. A wider range of success factors include:

- links to UK wide programmes often led to wider benefits;
- a mix of approaches to break down barriers;
- building the capacity of the coach and volunteer workforce;
- the existence of developed pathways to different forms of participation - cradle to grave; and
- some activities acted as the initial hook to get individuals interested. This then provided an opportunity to engage in other activities (e.g. vocational training).

#### Project sustainability

14. A fair assessment is that most SGBs have had one eye on the future in terms of ensuring the long-term continuity of provision. Many are continuing to undertake a wide range of actions to support this ambition.

15. The bulk of work undertaken by SGBs through the Transitional Support strand is core to the day-to-day operation of the SGBs (e.g. Child Protection). There is a legal duty and responsibility for this work to continue. Undoubtedly, the investment provided additional resources for SGBs to drive further action and progress. However, in the absence of ongoing additional investment, issues may arise around the extent to which activities can be adequately resourced going forward.

16. For those projects aimed at increasing reach and participation in sport and capacity building activities<sup>2</sup> sustainability was at the forefront of project design. This was with a view to laying the right foundations for projects to continue when SGBs take a step back. This included, among other things:

- the design, development and distribution of guides/resource packs to those who eventually lead sessions/activities;
- advice, training and/or mentoring support to individuals to develop the skills and confidence to deliver sessions/activities;
- charging a small fee to support delivery costs;
- increasing the number of coaches and volunteers engaged in delivery;

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<sup>2</sup> Primarily Equalities and Inclusion but also Transition Support.

- use of discounted (or free) venues;
  - partnership arrangements to share costs or to ultimately transfer the burden of delivery; and
  - actively seeking alternative investment to help sustain and develop programmes in the future. Some SGBs have already secured investment.
17. Ensuring sustainability in the long term across all SGBs could be strengthened by a much more structured, systematic and collaborative approach. This includes how SGBs develop, manage, and deliver activities and programmes in relation to child protection and equalities issues. This would ensure best use of limited resources, avoid unnecessary duplication, and create economies of scale.

#### Changes seen in physical activity rates

18. Evidence for changes in physical activity levels largely comes from the participants survey and focus groups. It should be noted that responses to surveys was limited. It is not robust or representative, and the findings need to be reviewed in this context.
19. There are, however, some positive signs from the evaluation that projects have led to sustained or increased physical activity levels for participants. The main feedback was that participation had encouraged people to be more active more often, and the less active to be more physically active.
20. Increased physical activity is one of a number of benefits and impacts participants achieved. Evaluation evidence highlighted that participants place particular value on benefits over and above changes to their physical activity levels:
- a key point raised in the young people survey was that participation was fun. They enjoyed taking part with their friends and/or meeting new people;
  - all young people that responded to the survey reported that taking part in sport and physical activity makes them feel healthy, confident, and helped them to make new friends. Teenagers further reported that it made them feel included and interested to try other things;
  - the fun element of participation also came out strongly in the adults survey. As did increased fitness and weight loss (both 71%); and

- wider benefits reported by 78%+ of adults included that participation in sport and physical activity makes adults feel healthy, close to other people, optimistic about the future, and included.

### Barriers encountered

21. Barriers encountered were examined from two perspectives, including those faced by:

- SGBs in the management and delivery of supported projects; and
- under-represented groups.

22. Firstly, the reality for SGBs was that in many cases the investment did not result in 12-months activity. The investment was awarded in summer 2017 (not April). This resulted in a condensed delivery period until the end of March 2018. Although a few projects are ongoing. Equalities and Inclusion investment awarded to SGBs was typically less than requested, leading to a period of project re-scoping.

23. Wider constraints that impacted on delivery included:

- short-term nature of the investment, and time taken to recruit staff and for them to take up post;
- developing partnerships takes time, in particular in new geographic areas. This includes identifying the “right” person to speak to; working through other agencies’ decision making process and timescales; varied levels of buy-in, support, and responsiveness;
- element of competition with other sports (and other service providers). For example where project activities focussed on the same geographic areas and/or same target groups;
- difficulties in data capture among SGBs. This included where delivery was through another organisation (e.g. clubs, schools, etc); and
- poor weather over the winter months effected outdoors sports and training.

24. Further, each SGB has largely co-ordinated its projects in isolation from other SGBs. This poses barriers and challenges in terms of co-ordinating programmes, activities, engagement with partners, processes, and achieving things at scale with any consistency. There is a potential risk of duplication of effort.



25. Secondly, there is clear evidence from the evaluation that the various projects supported have sought to break down barriers. This has been achieved through a mix of approaches, including but not limited to:

- increasing awareness of, and improving opportunities to, participate in sport;
- tailored activities in safe, welcoming, accessible, and inclusive venues;
- fun, social and positive recreational experiences of sport;
- changing attitudes and perceptions of individual sports;
- developing role models;
- training, mentoring, and support for coaches and volunteers; and
- signing up to the LGBT Charter.

#### Child protection and equality standard for sport

26. The provision of Transitional Support investment allowed SGBs to continue with much of their ongoing work to further enhance existing child protection measures. This included adapting existing arrangements in response to the new Standards.

27. The new Standards were only recently launched at the same time of the consultation process for the evaluation. Many SGBs were still at relatively early stages in what was expected to be a longer-term process.

28. The investment has also been used in other ways. This included capacity building activities designed to enhance the skills, knowledge and experience of coaches and volunteers. It also included the development and strengthening of administrative and governance tools that underpin child safety and wellbeing arrangements.

29. It is perhaps too early to assess the impact of these activities. However, good progress has, and will continue to be made. Among other things, key areas of activity included:

- SGB involvement in the initial pilot which resulted in the new Standards;
- employing a part-time Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer;
- bringing in specialist consultancy support to further enhance existing arrangements and ensure compliance with the new Standards; and
- training needs analysis, action plan development, and training.

30. A number of SGBs have used the Transitional Support investment to help retain or achieve a higher level of the Equality Standard of Sport. In the main this has been to achieve a higher level. The activities undertaken with the investment in pursuit of the Equality Standard for Sport is ongoing. While there has been considerable work progressed to increase knowledge and understanding and to raise awareness, it is perhaps too early to assess impact. SGBs reported that benefits have been achieved through this work. This spans, for example, higher profile, increased skills, knowledge and understanding among staff, and volunteers, improved documentation and literature, and more robust systems and processes.
31. Timescales for use of the supplementary investment perhaps did not lend itself to a more joined-up and co-ordinated approach across SGBs. This is something that could be considered in the long-term as there are likely to be economies of scale.

#### Impacts and outcomes

32. The need to be able to evidence impact is increasing. The evaluation found that some SGBs found this challenging. This relates to levels of appropriate skills, knowledge and capacity. Each SGB undertakes monitoring and evaluation in its own way. As such a consistent approach to methods and tools used, etc is lacking. This presents challenges when trying to assess impact at a programme level and across all SGBs.

#### Recommendations

33. The following section sets out recommendations for consideration by **sportscotland**. The recommendations relate to the national agency for sport, however, some are also relevant for SGBs and/or affiliated clubs. It sets out the recommendations which are most pertinent. There are wider recommendations identified within the main report.

#### Reaching target groups

34. **sportscotland** and SGBs should give consideration to how best to support more activities aimed at specific target groups. This includes LGBTI, ethnic minorities' communities, and older people (where appropriate).
35. SGBs cannot address issues of under-representation in sport equally, and this is related to many different factors. The scale of the "ask" by Scottish Government and **sportscotland** therefore needs to be appropriate and relative to the scale of the SGB.

Further, there needs to be recognition that some sports are culturally and/or physically more difficult to introduce and develop among certain target groups.

#### Changes in physical activity rates

36. In order to more clearly and robustly evidence the extent to which projects are leading to an increase in physical activity levels, a systematic and consistent approach should be developed. This would allow SGBs to capture baseline and ongoing data (at scale) among participants. This should not, however, be the only measure of success. Qualitative benefits and impacts should also be routinely captured.

#### Key factors for success

37. Building on existing good practice, **sportscotland** should consider taking a strategic lead at a national level in developing and sustaining a multi-agency approach with key agencies and organisations. This includes those organisations that have specialist expertise, knowledge and understanding of under-represented groups. This would avoid the situation where all SGBs are targeting the same partners and target groups, leading to dilution of resources and impact.
38. **sportscotland** should consider ways to share the learning from this evaluation on success factors. This includes with SGBs and wider stakeholders. This should, however, extend beyond success factors and cover barriers, monitoring and evaluation, child protection, etc.
39. Driving participants through a curriculum or rigid programme is often counterproductive when dealing with some under-represented groups. This should be reflected in coaching and volunteer development programmes to ensure that programme activities and delivery are more flexible. This would ensure that activities are centred on the needs of individuals and target groups.

#### Barriers encountered

40. Cultural differences can influence participation. This issue needs to be explored in more depth to better understand how this impacts upon participation in sport and physical activity. Importantly, this would help identify the most appropriate ways of addressing under-representation

### Project sustainability

41. SGB activities to build the capacity of others, including the volunteer workforce to support delivery at a local level works well in practice. It suggests a greater role for SGBs as an enabler rather than deliverer of activity. This should include a more systematic and consistent approach to the development of resource guides/packs/CPD resources, etc. It should also include consideration to what more can be done to ease/incentivise a diverse range of volunteers to become involved.
42. A lack of long-term and sustained investment and resources can impact negatively on participation in sport and physical activity among the inactive and under-represented groups. Activities to engage these groups (and sustain involvement) can be both time consuming and resource intensive. The Scottish Government and **sportscotland** (and SGBs) should consider how more sustainable investment streams can be developed to build on the momentum achieved to date.
43. **sportscotland** and SGBs should jointly explore opportunities to further develop sponsorship and Corporate Social Responsibility investments to support the further development of equalities and inclusion activities.
44. **sportscotland** and SGBs should consider whether there is scope for increased engagement with its counterparts across the UK to work collaboratively to address issues of under-representation in sport.
45. Consideration should be given to identifying and achieving potential wider economies of scale in project delivery across SGBs (e.g. negotiating access to facilities via a framework agreement with operators).

### Monitoring and evaluation

46. **sportscotland** should give consideration to establishing a systematic and consistent way of SGBs recording data to allow a more robust measurement of participation/reach among target groups. Any framework should extend beyond outputs to capture outcomes and impacts, and should be developed in partnership with SGBs.
47. Consideration should be given to the development of partnerships to help build the capacity of SGBs in the area of monitoring and evaluation (e.g. Evaluation Support Scotland).