



Sport and Physical Activity

Sport and physical activity is a significant economic sector which may itself be a priority for development in many areas. As importantly, sport and physical activity can also be used to help drive economic impact across all other sectors and this chapter helps local areas explore both of these considerations.

Sport and physical activity are at the heart of many people's personal, local and national identities. The UK invented many sports and we take pride in hosting some of the greatest sporting competitions in the world. Sport and physical activity opportunities provide part of the fabric of place, and make places attractive to people to 'work, rest and play' and hence for businesses to base themselves.

As well as mental and physical wellbeing, sport and physical activity supports individual development, nurturing character and teaching important skills such as leadership and teamwork. Being active plays a key role in brain development in early childhood and is also good for longer-term educational attainment. Physical activity can also lessen the costly burden of health and social care. It also brings communities together and fosters cohesion.

Sport supports economic development, contributing £9.8bn to the UK economy in 2017, up 5% on the year before.⁵³

World class sports events not only contribute significantly to GVA but also create connected and cohesive communities and civic pride.

Investing in the growth of the local sport sector will not only provide jobs to significant numbers of people, it will also benefit the wider economy and society more generally by ensuring that people are fit and healthy enough to participate fully in work and local life.

Being fit and healthy benefits economic productivity, resulting in fewer work absences and less illness. In

England, the costs of lost productivity have been estimated at £5.5bn per year from sickness/absence and £1bn per year from the premature death of people of working age.⁵⁴

Physically active employees have lower levels of absenteeism, greater efficiency and are less likely to suffer from stress or depression and are more productive.⁵⁵ 26% of adults in England are inactive (i.e. they do less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week). National data shows that only 18% of children and young people (1.2m) are meeting the current Chief Medical Officer guidelines of taking part in sport and physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day. A further 26% (1.8m) sit just below this threshold, taking part on average for 60+ minutes a day across the week, whilst 33% (2.3m) do less than an average of 30 minutes a day.

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Baseline

Increasingly, the focus of sport policy has been to move beyond assessing participation to assessing how sport and physical activity can be an economic and social good. The following considerations will help develop your evidence base for how people and communities within your area experience sport and physical activity:

- How many people are meaningfully engaged in watching, playing, working and volunteering in sport and physical activities in the local area?
- What are the demographics of these people? What barriers do they face in engaging sport and physical activity?

53 [DCMS Economic Estimates 2017: GVA](#)

54 Department of Health [Start Active, Stay Active](#)

55 [Nuffield white paper report commissioned by Sport England in 2018.](#)

- What are the wider benefits this engagement brings in terms of health, educational attainment, reducing recidivism and promoting social cohesion?
- How productive and sustainable is your local sport sector?

In order to answer these questions for your local area, the following evidence sources can assist:

Produced by Sport England, the [Active lives survey](#) provides metrics on participation and volunteering levels in sport and physical activity, broken down for 9 regions, 44 County Sports Partnerships and 353 local authorities. Active Lives [Online Query Builder](#) is a user-friendly tool that can build a more accurate picture of participation in physical activity across your local area and help you to understand more about the barriers to participation faced by particular groups.

The [Active Lives for Children and Young People Survey](#) provides data for under 16s, again broken down to a local level. This survey reflects a significant shift in policy following the publication of Sport England's Towards an Active Nation strategy (2016). Prior to this Sport England policy only covered children aged 14 upwards. Sport England's remit has changed to now work with children and young people aged five and upwards. This survey provides the most detailed and reliable information on this age group yet.

The [Sport Satellite Account](#) provides figures on the economic value of sport to the UK economy and the number of people employed. This can be used for benchmarking the local sports economy against the national economy. Sport England's [The Economic Value of Sport](#) is a data tool that provides a starting point for understanding the size of the local sport economy, measuring both direct impact on local GVA of sports companies (covering companies that facilitate participation and companies that facilitate spectating), numbers of jobs supported as well as estimations of wider monetary benefits to health, volunteering and wider spending within the local area.

The Sport Industry Research Centre has produced guidance on the [Social Return of Investment of Sports](#), which you can use to understand the wider benefits of investing in sports. Work is currently underway to update this (due by Summer 2019).

These sources will help provide an understanding of these strengths within your local sport sector and participation, as well as considering the challenges.

The Active Lives Survey has shown that participation varies massively across different communities depending on deprivation, and within communities depending on age, ethnicity and a number of other demographic groups. It is important to understand where these differences exist in order to design the best interventions to tackle them.

Agreeing objectives

When developing a strategy for sport and physical activity within a local area, you may wish to consider adapting the participation targets for 2020 agreed with Sport England. These are an increase in the number of people being regularly active across the English population by over 500,000, including an increase in the number of women by at least 250,000 and an increase in the number of people from lower socio-economic groups being active by 100,000. The aim is that this will pave the way for a major step change in engagement by 2025 and Sport England will propose targets for additional increases in participation by 2025 before 2021.

The five outcomes identified in the government's [Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation](#) are: Physical wellbeing; Mental wellbeing; Individual development; Social and community development; Economic development.

Your developed baseline should help you reach achievable objectives for each of these different areas. The Sporting Future measurement dashboard provides further data which might be a helpful reference. The latest copy of this can be found [here](#).

Designing interventions

There are a wide range of interventions that can be used to grow the sport and physical activity sector, tackle inactivity and drive engagement in sport and physical activity as a means to supporting the local economy. Plans should be based on sound evidence and insight. They must understand and cater for the needs of local people.

It is increasingly recognised that a place based 'whole system' approach that encourages a more active everyday lifestyle through a combination of physical, policy and social design, underpinned by collaborative leadership, behaviour change principles and community understanding is key to tackling inactivity. For example new housing and infrastructure developments offer an unrivalled opportunity to start creating physical environments

that encourage physical activity by design through high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure.

The [Sports Outcomes Evidence Review](#), produced by Sports England should be used as an introduction to understanding the strength of evidence supporting the outcomes of sporting interventions. This will give you an idea of the key risks and opportunities involved in designing certain interventions.

You should also consider the wider benefits of investment of any intervention that you plan. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has developed an [online tool for demonstrating the return-on-investment](#) of interventions encouraging physical activity that can help when developing interventions.



Case studies: Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub, West Warrington

Funded with a £1.5 million National Lottery grant through Sport England's Strategic Facilities Fund, Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub in West Warrington is a flagship wellness hub which replaced an old leisure centre with new sport and leisure facilities, a vibrant learning and cultural centre, plus GP and other primary health care services. It is next to a secondary school so the pupils there also benefit from new sporting opportunities on their doorstep. Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub has been designed to accommodate people with specific health and lifestyle, needs, for example it is the first Dementia accredited building in the UK.



Case studies: Campus Skatepark – Bristol

Sport England's Community Asset Fund is a programme dedicated to enhancing the spaces in a local community that give people the opportunity to be active. It helps sports clubs or community organisations with great ideas that will make a difference to the places where people play sport and get active. This could be by taking over existing underused facilities in a community for example, or making improvements to existing experiences, projects or facilities. With the help of Sport England funding, as well as investment from a range of other sources including crowd-funding, founders Andre Seidel and Tim Nokes have transformed a disused swimming pool into Campus Pool, a vibrant indoor skatepark with reception area, skate shop and café. The skatepark provides 200 free annual memberships to young people from local deprived areas, and reduced entry fees. The café is highly-valued by the wider community, offering parents and toddlers a space to meet and enjoy coffee and a friendly atmosphere.

Examples of interventions that may contribute to Local Industrial Strategy priorities:

- **Employability:** programmes to enhance sport and physical activity contribution to supporting those currently outside the labour market through engagement, health and skills improvement and opportunities to get involved in work experience, volunteering and training which will help them be more prepared for employment.
- **Productivity:** creating more healthy, motivated and productive workforce through programmes to promote Active Work Places.
- **Active Aging:** Responding to the Aging Society, through initiatives for active aging and early preventative work through workplace health initiatives.
- **Technology:** Exploring how wearable technology from the sport and physical activity sector and opening up participation data could meet the AI and Data grand challenge around preventative health.
- **Housing Growth Infrastructure & Active Design:** building sport and physical activity into the new homes, towns and infrastructure to encourage active local environments.

Further information on Sport England funds can be found [here](#).

You should also consider working with your local Active Partnerships. Active Partnerships work at a local level to create the conditions for an active nation, and use the power of sport to improve lives, and will be able to work with you to maximise the social and economic impact of the sector.

Monitoring progress

As the Sporting Future Strategy has shown, monitoring strategies should consider the best ways to measure economic, social and personal outcomes within the local area. Strategies should attempt to measure both the direct economic impacts of interventions on the local sports economy (i.e. regional GVA, numbers of jobs supported), as well as the wider benefits of increased participation in physical activity on the local economy and the public sector. The [Sport England Question Bank](#) provides an understanding of what sort of outcomes metrics should be measured.



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