Department for Culture Media & Sport

DCMS Grassroots Facilities Evaluation

Second Interim Evaluation Report

August 2025

Contents

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities (MSGF) Programme Interim Evaluation Findings, May 2025

Department for Culture Media & Sport

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

4,912

Facilities received funding through the MSGF Programme.

£314.5m

Total funding committed from FY21/22 to FY24/25.

£9.14

The highest funding per capita was in the North East, whilst London received the least funding per capita at £1.00 per capita.

87%

of funding in England delivered to date outside London and the South-East (over £220m).

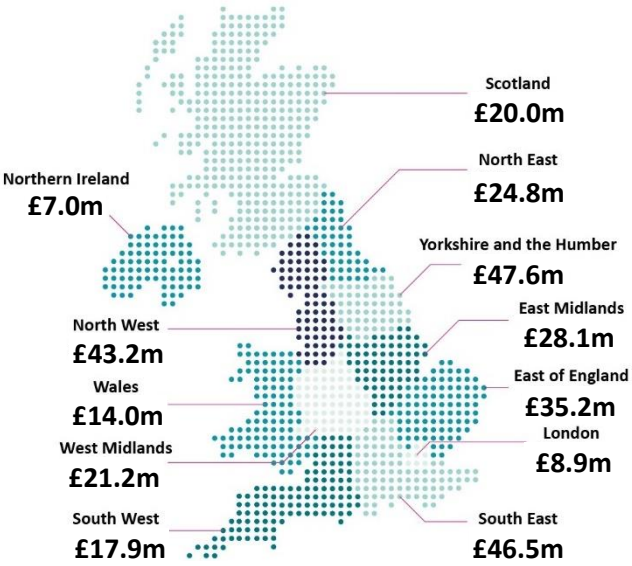
£67,500

Average grant size of the MSGF Programme

53%

of investment in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland delivered in deprived areas.

MSGF – Total Commitment by region.

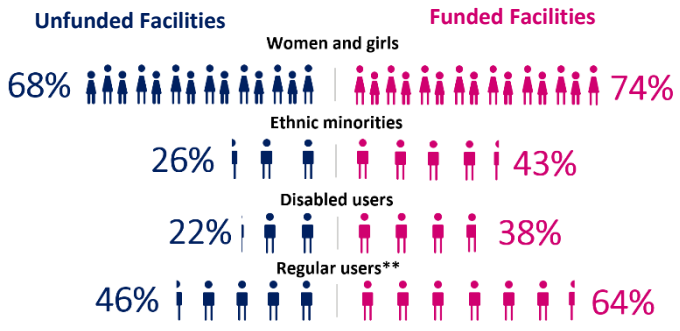


"There's improved frequency of use from new and old players… we had probably about four teams and now we've got 11 teams"
MSGF Facility Manager

OUTCOMES

Overall participation changes since April 2021

Percentage of facilities reporting an increase in physical activity since April 2021 for these groups



*** users who attended a facility before the MSGF Programme began and currently attend at least once a month.*

Significant impacts on participation since April 2021 identified for:

Artificial Grass Pitches

Facility Infrastructure
e.g. changing rooms, clubhouses, lighting, car parks

Note: Econometric analysis showed a statistically significant relationship for these project types, though this is an interim finding and subject to change in the final report.

VALUE FOR MONEY ANALYSIS

Estimate of total economy Net Present Value (NPV)*

£321.9m

Low Scenario	High Scenario

Estimated additional users as a result of MSGF at this stage of evaluation

156,691 | **338,348**

Estimated additional volunteers as a result of MSGF at this stage of evaluation

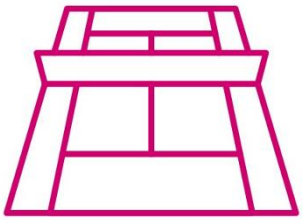
4,753 | **6,957**

** This is the central estimate. The total economy NPV also has a Low/ High scenario estimate. These figures are interim findings at this stage of the evaluation and will continue to be refined ahead of the final report.*

Park Tennis Court Renovation (PTCR) Programme Emerging Findings To Date (May 2025)

Department for Culture Media & Sport

PROGRAMME DELIVERY



2,625

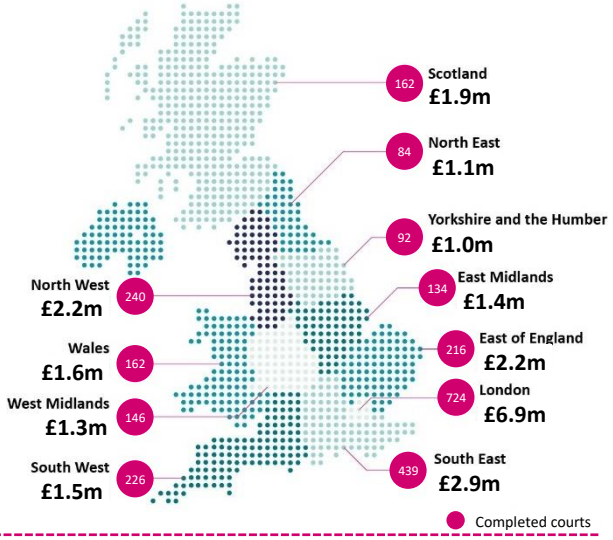
court renovations had been completed, as of February 2025.

£0.77

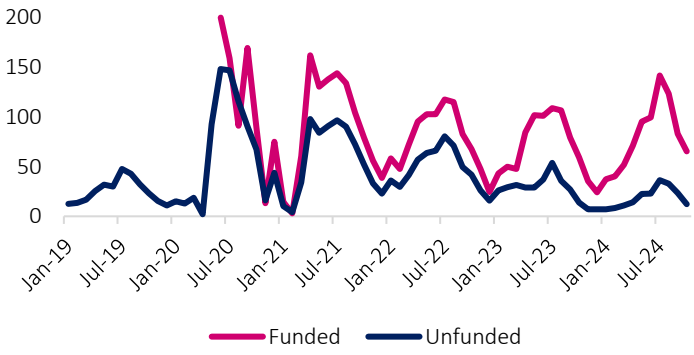
Aligning with the existing geographical distribution of courts, the highest funding per capita was in London, whilst Yorkshire and the Humber received the least funding per capita at £0.17 per capita.

"We're making a difference within those harder to reach areas because we're breaking down that barrier of equipment and access in local communities."
PTCR Delivery Partner

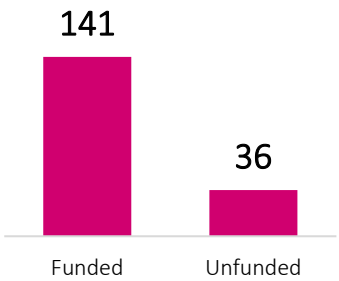
PTCR – Total Commitment by region.



Bookings Per Venue Per Court by Funded/Unfunded Venues



Bookings Per Venue Per Court, July 2024



"There's been far more people playing here, even during winter months, which is very rare."
PTCR Venue User

Bookings by Sustained Users Per Venue Per Court, July 2024

Funded Venues **Unfunded Venues**

36 12

Bookings by New Users Per Venue Per Court, July 2024

Funded Venues **Unfunded Venues**

37 13

VALUE FOR MONEY ANALYSIS

Estimate of total economy Net Present Value (NPV)*

£25.3m

Estimated additional users as a result of PTCR at this stage of evaluation

Low Scenario	High Scenario
141,492	**303,102**

** This is the central estimate. The total economy NPV also has a Low/ High scenario estimate. These figures are interim findings at this stage of the evaluation and will continue to be refined ahead of the final report.*

Executive Summary

Introduction and Overview

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned Deloitte in August 2023 to conduct a comprehensive process, impact, and economic evaluation of two of its key funding Programmes: the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities (MSGF) Programme, also incorporating the Lionesses Futures Fund (LFF), and the Park Tennis Court Renovation (PTCR) Programme. The initial interim evaluation report, published on 8th October 2024, provided context and background on these Programmes and outlined the evaluation schedule.

A wave of data collection was completed ahead of the first interim evaluation report in early 2024, and this second interim report builds upon those findings following a second phase of fieldwork carried out in early 2025, particularly on emerging insights related to impact and economic evaluation. Further findings will be reported throughout the evaluation process, culminating in a final evaluation report currently scheduled for April 2026.[1]

The objectives of the overarching evaluation of the Programmes remain unchanged; to monitor their outputs, outcomes, and assess their impact and Value for Money (VfM). An overarching research question was set:

"To what extent have the Programmes delivered improvements to facilities in need of investment and created a positive impact on physical activity within these facilities in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland?"

The evaluation utilises a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Programmes. Additional primary data collection included in this report is set out below:

- Facility Survey: a 2nd wave with 425 responses (total of 972 responses)
- User Survey: a 2nd wave with 745 responses (total of 2,967 responses)
- Household Survey: a 2nd wave with 3,284 responses (total of 8,412 responses)
- Stakeholder Interviews: 17 interviews with key Programme stakeholders (total of 51)
- Case studies: case studies were undertaken at an additional 8 sites (total of 18 case studies)

The MSGF Programme represents a £329.0 million investment in grassroots sports facilities between 2021 and 2025, with an additional £98 million announced for 2025/26. As of FY24/25, Scotland was allocated £20.1 million, Wales £13.9 million, and Northern Ireland £7.0 million.[2] In FY25/26, Scotland has been allocated an additional £8.6 million, Wales an additional £6.1 million, and Northern Ireland an additional £3.0 million.

The LFF, incorporated as part of the MSGF Programme, represents a £30.0 million investment in grassroots sports facilities to support the development of 30 new artificial grass pitches (AGPs) along with various secondary facility improvements. The LFF's primary focus is on prioritising women's and girls' football teams, with success measures focusing on improving female sport participation, priority access for female team sessions and creating safe and welcoming spaces to play. As of March 2025, delivery is still in early phases.

The PTCR Programme received total funding of £29.1 million across three periods: pre-22, FY22/23, and FY23/24. This funding was supplemented by £11.1 million from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) Tennis Foundation and £7.0 million from Local Authorities. As of February 2025, the PTCR Programme had renovated 2,625 tennis courts across 818 parks across England, Wales and Scotland.

[1] Final evaluation report timings are subject to change
[2] MSGF Programme monitoring data and business case documentation

Process Evaluation: Interim Findings

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme:

Delivery of the Programme between February 2024 and February 2025 was viewed positively by stakeholders, with continued successful project delivery and strengthened relationships between DCMS and Delivery Partners. While application processes remained largely consistent, areas for improvement, such as refining the definition of multi-sport projects and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) metric, were identified and are being considered for future funding rounds. Challenges related to financial year allocations were largely mitigated by stakeholders' flexibility, and improved communication, clearer work structures, and digital tools enhanced collaboration. Strong organisational stakeholder relationships mitigated the impact of staff turnover at DCMS, which did not materially affect Programme administration or governance

Programme monitoring was generally effective, though feedback on the reporting tool varied, highlighting the benefits of potential automation and improved platform compatibility. Stakeholders perceived the Programme as hugely successful in achieving its objectives, particularly in sustaining participation, although emphasised the importance of robust quantitative data to support these claims. Anecdotal evidence continued to suggest positive impacts on women and girls' participation due to improved facility quality and accessibility, and these improvements have helped to maintain existing participation, especially in men's football. The Programme's efficiency and effectiveness will continue to be monitored over the next 12 months, with further data collection informing the final evaluation report.

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme:

Stakeholders felt the Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme had progressed efficiently and effectively over the past 12 months, culminating in a successful Programme closure process. Stakeholders consistently praised the strengthened relationships and collaborative efforts between DCMS and the LTA, highlighting the iterative improvements to processes and reporting as key strengths. This collaborative approach, combined with the LTA's experience and established governance structures, contributed to a smooth and efficient delivery process.

Delivery targets were on track to be met, demonstrating the Programme's effectiveness in renovating a significant number of tennis courts across the UK. While isolated instances of vandalism and damage were reported, the LTA and Local Authorities responded promptly with appropriate mitigation strategies. The continued engagement, professionalism, and expertise of the LTA played a crucial role in supporting DCMS to successfully deliver and implement the programme.

Although further data collection and analysis are needed to fully understand the long-term impacts and outcomes, particularly regarding participation, anecdotal evidence from stakeholders strongly suggested positive changes, especially for women, girls, and young people. The Programme's success in distributing funding to deprived areas and implementing the LTA's digital booking platform further contributed to its overall positive impact. The proactive approach to benefits realisation management, including lessons learned sessions and ongoing monitoring, was perceived as a critical component of the Programme's legacy.

Lionesses Futures Fund

This initial process evaluation of the Lionesses Futures Fund highlighted the successes and challenges encountered during its early implementation. Capitalising on the momentum of the Lionesses' achievements presented a valuable and point-in-time opportunity to boost women and girls' football participation. This necessitated rapid Programme development and delivery within a constrained timeframe. The collaborative efforts between stakeholders, including DCMS and the Football Foundation, were crucial in establishing a robust framework with clear objectives and success measures focused on expanding accessible facilities, prioritising playing opportunities, and fostering safe and welcoming environments.

While the expedited setup presented challenges, including internal administration demands, stakeholders generally agreed that the approach was proportionate and appropriate in the context. Leveraging the Football Foundation's existing project pipeline was an efficient and effective approach for selecting facilities, although it was perceived that it may have limited the applicant pool to select facilities from. The lack of comprehensive data on demand for women and girls' participation was identified as a key challenge in gauging potential impact and justifying site selection. However, success measures provided a framework for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.

The positive and collaborative relationships between stakeholders, despite the demanding timelines, facilitated effective communication and coordination. The Programme's monitoring process, aligned with existing Football Foundation procedures, minimised additional burden on stakeholders. Stakeholders also reported that learnings from the Lionesses Futures Fund, particularly regarding the focus on women and girls' participation, were already being integrated into the Football Foundation's core pipeline and future delivery approach.

Further data collection and analysis, including surveys, case studies, and stakeholder interviews, will be conducted over the next 12 months to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the Programme's impact and inform the final evaluation report.

Impact Evaluation: Interim Findings

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme:

- Overall Participation & New Users: Funded facilities were more likely to report growth in overall participation, with 92% reporting increases compared to 79% of unfunded facilities. This difference was statistically significant at the 5% level. The magnitude of growth was also greater, averaging 14% at funded facilities compared to 10% at unfunded facilities, and the difference between these two means was also statistically significant at the 5% level. Funded facilities were also more successful at attracting new users (78% versus 66% for unfunded facilities). Note that these statistical comparisons performed do not account for other exogenous factors that may drive participation.
- Participation by Project Type: New or upgraded artificial grass pitch (AGP) projects and facility infrastructure projects did show a statistically significant positive correlation with increased sports participation, accounting for exogenous factors, increasing by 52.2% and 62.5% on average per year respectively.
- User Base & Sustained Participation:[3] Funded facilities reported a larger overall user base (median 750 versus 300 for unfunded facilities) and higher sustained participation (64% reporting increased regular users versus 46% for unfunded facilities).
- Meeting User Needs & Accessibility: While a greater proportion of unfunded facilities reported increased accessibility for different groups[4] or sports (72% versus 64%) and longer open hours (60% versus 52%), a larger share of users at funded facilities across most Home Nations reported that the facility met their needs (with a more pronounced difference in Scotland). These mixed findings require further exploration in the final report.
- Health & Volunteering: A positive correlation exists between participation frequency and self-reported health status, and volunteering rates are higher among respondents associated with funded facilities (69% versus 46% for unfunded facilities). While these are positive indicators, they do not establish causality.
- Programme Additionality & Further Research: A causal link between the Programme and levels of participation at funded facilities, controlling for exogenous factors, has not been established, though quasi-

[3] Sustained participation is defined differently for each Programme. For the MSGF Programme, sustained participation is defined as participation by regular users, who are users who attended a facility before the MSGF Programme began and currently attend at least once a month. For the PTCR Programme, sustained participation is defined as participation by users who visit the facility at least four times a year.
[4] Different groups as defined here can describe a broad range of possible groups. This report also offers more detailed participation findings for specific groups such as ethnic minorities, women and girls, and disabled users.

experimental statistical methods have been applied to assess this relationship. The analysis acknowledges limitations, including the lack of pre-Programme data, limited sample size, reliance on self-reported data, and potential unobserved confounding factors. Mitigations for these limitations will be explored ahead of the final evaluation report. Additionally, further investigation is needed to understand the impact of different project types, multi-sport usage, capacity trends, and regional variations on participation.

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme:

- Overall Trends: The expanded dataset allows for more robust analysis. An upward trend in bookings is observed, with a small peak in 2021. Since this, total bookings have increased by 39,307 and unique bookings increased by 41,013 in 2024. These figures were likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns during this period.
- Bookings, New Users: Funded venues have higher bookings per court and attract more new bookers, especially during peak seasons. This is a positive indicator but can only be shown descriptively at this stage.
- Regional Variation & Gender Gap: Regional variations in bookings per court exist, and a gender gap in booking data requires further investigation. These factors need to be considered when assessing the Programme's impact, and do not on their own demonstrate causality.
- Sustained Participation & Active Lives Data: Sustained participation is higher at funded venues. Active Lives Survey data provides context but has limitations and does not establish causality. The final report will look to include more data sources to further inform findings on participation, including assessing the LTA's Tracker Survey.
- Participation by IMD: Comparing the sum of bookings 12 months pre- and post- refurbishment in different regions of deprivations, post-refurbishment tennis participation on average increased more in lower IMD deciles (39%) compared to higher IMD deciles (30%), suggesting the Programme successfully targeted and benefited more deprived communities.
- Further Research on Participation: While the data is more comprehensive, it does not yet confirm a causal relationship between the Programme and increased participation, though quasi-experimental statistical methods have been applied to assess this relationship. The analysis acknowledges limitations, including challenges in achieving optimal balance during matching due to the limited number of unfunded venues and other methodological limitations. Strategies to mitigate these limitations will be explored in preparation for the final evaluation report.

Impact Evaluation Observations

Table 1: Impact Evaluation Observations

#	Observations	Applicability
1	Continuing to review and refine data collected via primary surveys, particularly questions relating to participation and impacts over time will be important over the next 12 months. This may improve the evidence base for assumptions made and improve the quality of data used to demonstrate the extent to which the Programme has met its objectives.	MSGF (including LFF)
2	Improvements to the quality and quantity of post-award assurance monitoring data will enable a more accurate and evidence-led estimation of the impacts of the Programme in the long-term. DCMS and Delivery Partners can work jointly to embed post-award assurance data into current reporting processes and leverage work already underway in this area to minimise burden on administrators and facilities.	MSGF (including LFF), PTCR & Future Programmes

#	Observations	Applicability
3	How facility managers and users are incentivised to complete surveys and provide data could be explored to improve response rates and increase the sample size available for descriptive and econometric analysis. A larger sample size will improve the ability of the evaluation to identify more granular impacts and increase the overall quality and robustness of analysis undertaken.	MSGF (including LFF)
4	Alternative and additional analytical approaches may be considered to improve the quality of econometric analysis, such as imputation, to account for missing values for key variables. Steering Group members will be consulted on updates to the design and methodology underpinning analysis.	MSGF (including LFF) & PTCR

Economic Evaluation: Interim Findings

At this stage, Social Cost Benefit Analysis (SCBA) for the MSGF Programme focused on benefits derived from participation and volunteering impacts and compared them against costs associated with the Programme. For the PTCR Programme, the SCBA focused on just the benefits derived from participation. To inform the calculation of benefits, the analysis drew on the descriptive findings for each Programme. To monetise outcomes, Sport England's Social Return on Investment (SROI) model was employed and estimates for social values of participation and volunteering applied.

In line with best practice, indicative ranges (alongside central estimates) are provided to reflect the uncertainty surrounding the Programme's impacts at this point in time. Additionally, it should be noted that while most model inputs are evidence-based, some assumptions currently lack quantitative support. Further data collection will be undertaken to strengthen the benefits calculation and refine these estimates before the final report.

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

As set out in the following table, the estimated discounted total economy Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) is between 1.01 and 2.28 (central estimate: 1.54). The estimated discounted DCMS BCR, considering only DCMS costs, is estimated between 1.79 and 4.05 (central estimate: 2.73).

Table 2: Monetary outputs from value for money analysis of the MSGF Programme

Item	Low	Central	High
Estimated Discounted Costs		**£597.7m**	
DCMS grants		£333.4m	
Partner contributions		£144.5m	
Resource costs		£9.8m	
Maintenance costs		£110.0m	
Estimated Discounted Benefits	**£602.2m**	**£919.6m**	**£1.4bn**
Participation	£553.9m	£858.5m	£1.3bn
Volunteering	£48.3m	£61.1m	£75.9m
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Net Present Benefits (NPV)	**£4.5m**	**£321.9m**	**£764.8m**
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	**1.01**	**1.54**	**2.28**
Estimated Discounted DCMS Benefit Cost Ratio (DCMS BCR)	**1.79**	**2.73**	**4.05**

Source: Value for money analysis

The economic evaluation estimates the number of additional sport participants and volunteers based on the evidence collected through the evaluation as a result of the MSGF Programme. These are set out below:

Table 3: Participation outputs from value for money analysis of the MSGF Programme

Participation	Low	Central	High
Additional Visits	499,842	676,015	891,780
Additional Users	156,691	234,312	338,348
Additional Users Moving Physical Activity Categories	50,195	75,061	108,389
Inactive -> Fairly Active	19,933	29,807	43,041
Inactive -> Active	11,768	17,598	25,412
Fairly Active -> Active	18,494	27,656	39,934
Additional Volunteers	4,754	5,808	6,957

Source: Value for money analysis. The number of additional users is the number of additional visits after controlling for displacement and repeat attendees

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

As set out in the following table, the estimated discounted total economy Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) is between 1.15 and 2.23 (central estimate: 1.65). The estimated discounted DCMS BCR, considering only DCMS costs, is estimated between 2.01 and 3.88 (central estimate: 2.87).

Table 4: Monetary outputs from value for money analysis of the PTCR Programme

Item	Low	Central	High
Estimated Discounted Costs		£39.1m	
DCMS grants		£21.9m	
Partner contributions		£14.3m	
Resource costs		£2.9m	
Estimated Discounted Benefits – Participation	£45.1m	£64.4m	£87.0m
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Net Present Benefits (NPV)	£6.0m	£25.3m	£48.0m
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	1.15	1.65	2.23
Estimated Discounted DCMS Benefit Cost Ratio (DCMS BCR)	2.01	2.87	3.88

Source: Value for money analysis

The economic evaluation estimates the number of additional sport participants based on the evidence collected through the evaluation as a result of the PTCR Programme. These are set out below:

Table 5: Participation outputs from value for money analysis of the PTCR Programme

Participation	Low	Central	High
Additional Visits	345,417	416,125	493,298
Additional Users	141,492	213,069	303,102
Additional Users Moving Physical Activity Categories	5,195	7,821	11,124
Inactive -> Fairly Active	4,138	6,230	8,862
Inactive -> Active	193	291	414
Fairly Active -> Active	863	1,300	1,849

Source: Value for money analysis. The number of additional users is the number of additional visits after controlling for unique bookers and displacement

Interim Conclusions & Next Steps

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

The findings presented in this interim report suggest a positive association between funding and increased overall and sustained participation, with funded facilities reporting higher participation rates than unfunded facilities. While descriptive analysis pointed to this positive trend, more rigorous econometric analysis has not yet confirmed a statistically significant causal link between funding and increased participation in the aggregate. However, the analysis did show statistical significance between participation and specific project types (e.g. AGPs and facility infrastructure). Further data collection and analysis are needed to fully understand the Programme's impact on specific demographics, including under-represented groups, and to determine the additionality of participation – that is, the extent to which observed increases are attributable to the Programme. The initial economic evaluation, based on estimated increases in participation and volunteering, suggests a positive Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR), but these figures are preliminary and will be further refined in the final evaluation report.

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

Evidence from booking data indicates increased overall participation at funded venues compared to unfunded venues, with higher rates of both new users and sustained users. However, econometric analysis has not yet confirmed a statistically significant causal link between the Programme and increased participation. Further investigation is needed to understand regional and gender disparities in participation, as well as the long-term impacts of court renovations on sustained engagement with tennis. The interim economic evaluation, focusing solely on participation benefits, suggests a positive BCR, but this assessment is preliminary and will also be further refined in the final evaluation report.

Lionesses Futures Fund

The initial process evaluation highlights both the successes and challenges encountered during the early implementation of the fund. The Lionesses' achievements presented a valuable opportunity to boost women and girls' football participation, and leveraging the Football Foundation's existing project pipeline was efficient and effective approach to facility selection. Further data collection and analysis, including surveys, case studies, and stakeholder interviews, are planned over the next 12 months to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the Programme's long-term effects on participation.

Future Evaluation Activity & Next Steps

Future evaluation activity over the next year will prioritise enhancing data and the underpinning evidence base, in terms of both quality and quantity. This will facilitate a deeper understanding of Programme impacts and outcomes, particularly through causal analysis, and enable more detailed analysis of participation trends for underrepresented groups (women and girls, ethnic minorities, and disabled people). Future data collection will include additional survey waves, qualitative data (case studies and interviews), and a broadened economic evaluation encompassing a wider range of outcomes for a more comprehensive assessment of Programme impact and value for money. Iterative improvements and updates to data collection and analytical approaches will also be explored to improve the precision and accuracy of quantitative estimates throughout the final evaluation report.

Table 6: MSGF Impact Evaluation Key Findings Matrix

MSGF Data Source	Overall Participation	Sustained Participation	Breakdowns of Participation	Local Community Outcomes	Other Outcomes
Facility Survey	92% of funded facilities reported an increase in participation in both direction and magnitude, compared with 79% of unfunded sites since April 2021. Whilst this difference was statistically significant at the 5% level, robust causal analysis, accounting for exogenous factors, was unable to establish significance between the funding and changes in overall participation. However, new or upgraded artificial grass pitch (AGP) projects and facility infrastructure projects did show a statistically significant positive correlation with increased sports participation, increasing by 52.2% and 62.5% on average per year respectively.	64% of regular users at funded facilities reported an increase in participation, compared to 46% at unfunded sites.	Funded facilities demonstrate a greater increase in usage across various demographics. 74% of funded facilities reported increased use by women and girls since April 2021, compared to 68% of unfunded facilities. This trend continues with ethnic minorities (43% for funded facilities versus 26% for unfunded facilities) and disabled users (38% for funded facilities versus 22% for unfunded facilities).	A larger proportion of unfunded facilities (72%) reported increased access for different groups or sports compared to funded facilities (64%). Regarding open/playable hours, a larger proportion of unfunded facilities (60%) reported being open for longer, while a larger proportion of funded facilities (48%) reported no change in open/playable hours.	The Programme aligns with the government's intention to address regional inequalities through delivering on the Programme target of delivering at least 50% of total funding in deprived areas. Facility managers reported anecdotal evidence of improved environmental outcomes.
User Survey	User survey findings will not inform causal analysis, but descriptive analysis suggests a higher proportion of funded users (88%) visiting their local facility at least once a month relative to unfunded users (83%).	Descriptive analysis shows that among users who first attended before April 2021, 90% of those at funded facilities visit at least monthly, compared to 86% at unfunded facilities.	Descriptive analysis suggests a higher proportion of funded users visiting their local facility at least once a month relative to unfunded users in each Home Nation, with the biggest difference between the groups in England (84% versus 72%).	A higher share of users of funded facilities across all four Home Nations indicated that the facility either fully or partially meets their needs. However, the difference between funded and unfunded facility users is small, with the exception of Scotland where the difference is more pronounced (99% versus 85%).	N/A
Household Survey	Household survey findings will not inform causal analysis, and the sample size of respondents using the facilities was small (<20%) and therefore comparative descriptive analysis was not presented.	N/A	N/A	Households near funded and unfunded sites reported similar levels of wellbeing. Older and wealthier users tend to have better wellbeing and higher levels of life satisfaction.	N/A
Case Studies	Funded sites reported experiencing or expecting to experience large uplifts in participation.	Facility managers suggested participation was expected to be sustained at their site, and that demand was increasing over time.	Facility managers across all nations reported anecdotal growth in participation, particularly from younger people and women and girls.	Facility managers presented numerous examples of funding improving 'pride in place' in the local community and improved accessibility for underrepresented groups.	Facility managers gave anecdotal evidence that funding had facilitated improvements in educational and environmental outcomes.
Interviews	Interviewees were confident that participation had improved, particularly those 'closest to the pitch'. Substantial uplifts in the women and girls' game were also emphasised. Further work is needed to understand the additionality of this participation however.	Mixed views were shared by stakeholders, although most generally were confident that the Programme had led to increases in participation that would be sustained over the medium to long term.	N/A	Benefits to the community through improvements made to local clubs and facilities were highlighted as a significant positive of the Programme by interviewees across Delivery Partners.	Improvement of inter-organisational relationships with DCMS, between the Delivery Partners, and between Delivery Partners and the local facilities and clubs. Stakeholders suggested that the Programme has met its original objectives as set out in the business case, although some felt that there was more work to be done to eliminate the postcode lottery for quality sporting facilities
Secondary Data Sources	Football and general activity levels over the last 12 months have shown a slight, non-significant increase in adults, but remained unchanged in children, according to recent Sport England surveys.	N/A	Adult activity levels saw a slight, non-significant rise for men and women, but stabilised for disabled and older adults. However, the gap in activity levels between different socioeconomic groups widened. Children's activity levels remained unchanged across gender and disability, but significantly increased among children from wealthier families.	Volunteering levels amongst adults have seen a small increase in the last 12 months but are still down over the longer term. Frequency of volunteering also increased slightly over the last 12 months.	N/A

Table 7: PTCR Impact Evaluation Key Findings Matrix

PTCR Data Source	Overall Participation	Sustained Participation	Breakdowns of Participation	Local Community Impacts	Other Impacts
LTA Booking Data	Booking data from 2019-2024 showed an overall upward trend in both total and unique bookings, with a notable surge in 2020 likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funded venues consistently showed higher bookings per court than unfunded venues. The average funded venue saw 34% more bookings in the 12 months post-refurbishment. The staggered Difference-in-Differences (DiD) analysis, which assesses the statistical significance of the impact of Programme funding on the magnitude of change in participation, did not reveal statistically significant impacts. This will be revisited in the final report, and further analysis is planned to explore sustained participation and new user participation.	Funded venues also showed higher levels of sustained participation (defined as at least four bookings in a rolling 12-month period), further supporting the positive impact of funding.	Bookings per venue per court varied greatly by region, with the South & South West and London showing the highest activity, while Wales and the North exhibited the lowest. Male bookings consistently outnumbered female bookings (63-66% versus 32-35%), indicating a gender gap in tennis participation, although the gender gap in national survey data of tennis participants shows a narrowing gap over time. Post-refurbishment tennis participation on average increased more in lower IMD deciles (39%) compared to higher IMD deciles (30%), suggesting the program successfully targeted and benefited more deprived communities.	N/A	N/A
Case Studies	Facility managers from case study sites reported substantial increases in participation in tennis at the sites, including rapid growth driven by the ability to offer an expanded coaching offering.	Participation outcomes are believed to be sustained by stakeholders, although evidence was anecdotal.	Case study activity in this report covered two sites in England. However, the previous report covered a site in England and a site in Wales, and both reported similar positive impacts.	Facility managers report that the refurbishment of the tennis courts has led to a cleaner, more valued community space, increased volunteerism, and deterred vandalism. This has also provided justification for charging for court use, enhancing financial sustainability and fostering a more vibrant and socially connected community.	Increased paid court bookings have generated revenue for park sustainability, according to facility managers. This success has prompted plans for a new pavilion and the provision of free tennis sessions. Additional funding has also bolstered coaching capacity and increased usage by local schools.
Interviews	Stakeholders felt there has been significant increases in participation. An example was provided which saw a substantial rise in court bookings. The LTA estimates a national participation increase of 528,415, approaching the target of 500,000 to one million.	Optimism exists regarding the sustainability of increased participation, supported by financial planning for ongoing maintenance and the establishment of sinking funds in approximately 80% of Local Authorities.	Uplifts in participation were noted among women and girls, and young people, although precise figures were not provided. An example was cited which noted a new offering for inclusive tennis sessions for children with learning difficulties and summer holiday events.	Stakeholders suggested the Programme has fostered positive community impacts through initiatives such as Free Park Tennis, which provides free weekly sessions and encourages social interaction and exercise. Targeted discounts, free slots, and access for schools further enhance community engagement.	N/A
Secondary Data Sources	In the Active Lives Survey 23/24, participation by adults and children in tennis has not significantly changed over the last 12 months.	N/A	Adult activity levels saw a slight, non-significant rise for men and women, but stabilised for disabled and older adults. However, the gap in activity levels between different socioeconomic groups widened. Children's activity levels remained unchanged across gender and disability, but significantly increased among children from wealthier families.	N/A	N/A

Table 8: Evidence Against Evaluation Questions

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
EQ1	**Have the new/improved facilities resulted in additional participation in sport at the facility and local areas?**	EQ1.1	Have the Programmes created a significant change in participation in the funded areas?	**MSGF & PTCR:** With the current evidence and the econometric analysis undertaken in this interim report, whilst there is descriptive and anecdotal evidence of improvements in participation in funded areas, there is currently no evidence of a significant impact on participation across all facilities as a result of the MSGF or PTCR Programmes when controlling for exogenous factors. However, larger projects did show a statistically significant positive correlation with increased sports participation - see EQ1.6 for more information. This assessment will be revisited in the final report, incorporating additional evidence for a more precise causal estimation.
		EQ1.2	To what extent have the Programmes delivered sustained increases in participation in the funded areas?	**MSGF & PTCR:** With the current evidence available in this interim report, no causal analysis has been undertaken as to the degree to which participation increases have been sustained for any Programme. However, descriptive analysis suggests positive impacts on sustained participation for the MSGF and PTCR Programmes, with improved outcomes at funded facilities relative to unfunded facilities.
		EQ1.3	To what extent do the renovated facilities meet local demand and increase user satisfaction?	**MSGF:** a higher share of users of funded facilities across all four Home Nations indicated that the facility either fully or partially meets their needs. **PTCR:** the large increases in use of funded facilities post-refurbishment (relative to pre-refurbishment) indicate that the Programme has helped meet local demand for tennis facilities. Anecdotal evidence from users as part of case study activity suggest the improvement in the quality of the tennis provision in the area has greatly improved their playing experience and encourages participation.
		EQ1.4	Have the Programmes helped the facilities become financially sustainable?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Anecdotal evidence from qualitative data collection indicated that the MSGF and PTCR Programmes have been critical to helping facilities become financially sustainable, at least in the short-to-medium term. The establishment of sinking funds for 766 of 990 projects (77%) was cited as being crucial for covering future maintenance costs and to ensure that court charging is affordable. Some concerns were raised by facility managers to the degree to which any improvements would be maintained into the long-term.
		EQ1.5	Has the type of sport played at a funded facility impacted participation?	**MSGF:** For the MSGF Programme, anecdotal evidence from interviews suggested that multi-sport projects have been successful in increasing sports participation. However, there is not a large enough sample size of impacts from primary data collection of non-football sports to complete an analysis of the impact of sport played on participation.

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
				PTCR: This evaluation question is not relevant for the PTCR Programme as it refurbishes park tennis courts where the only played sport is tennis.
		EQ1.6	Has the type of facility investment impacted participation?	**MSGF:** Whilst no evidence was found of the Programme on overall participation, new or upgraded artificial grass pitch (AGP) projects and facility infrastructure projects did show a statistically significant positive correlation with increased sports participation, increasing by 52.2% and 62.5% on average per year respectively. **PTCR:** no statistically significant relationships were found when econometric regressions were run on the booking data filtered for project types.
EQ2	**Does the investment in facilities have an impact on participation levels from underrepresented groups and within deprived areas?**	EQ2.1	What has been the effect of the Programmes on sport participation levels amongst underrepresented groups (women, older adults[5], lower socio-economic groups[6], people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups)?	**MSGF:** Funded facilities demonstrate a greater increase in usage across various demographics. 74% of funded facilities reported increased use by women and girls since April 2021, compared to 68% of unfunded facilities. This trend continues with ethnic minorities (43% for funded facilities versus 26% for unfunded facilities) and disabled users (38% for funded facilities versus 22% for unfunded facilities). **PTCR:** Bookings by men consistently outnumbered bookings by women (63-66% versus 32-35%). Anecdotal evidence through interview activity suggested that uplifts in participation were noted among women and girls, and young people, although precise figures were not provided. An example was cited which noted a new offering for inclusive tennis sessions for children with learning difficulties and summer holiday events.
		EQ2.2	What has been the effect of the additional Lioness Funding on football participation levels amongst women and girls? (England only)	**LFF:** Recognising that delivery of the LFF is ongoing, it is too early for evidence to be available. However, the established LFF success measures aim to closely monitor these outcomes, so evidence should be available by the final report on this outcome.
		EQ2.3	To what extent have the Programmes delivered sustained increases in participation amongst underrepresented groups (women, older adults, lower socio-economic groups, people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups) in the funded areas?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Recognising limited sample sizes at this stage, particularly for the MSGF Programme, this outcome will be investigated in the final report.

[5] According to Sport England, this refers to individuals aged 55+ (Adults' activity levels in England bounce back to pre-pandemic levels | Sport England)

[6] As defined in the feasibility report, these are individuals living in deprived areas. Deprived areas are regions within IMD 1-5. More detail is outlined here: English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
		EQ2.4	To what extent has the additional Lionesses Futures Fund delivered sustained increases in participation in football participation levels amongst women and girls? (England only)	**LFF:** Recognising that delivery of the LFF is ongoing, it is too early for evidence to be available. However, the established LFF success measures aim to closely monitor these outcomes, so evidence should be available by the final report on this outcome.
		EQ2.5	To what extent has the Lionesses Futures Fund increased the number of new female participants?[7] (England only)	**LFF:** Recognising that delivery of the LFF is ongoing, it is too early for evidence to be available. However, the established LFF success measures aim to closely monitor these outcomes, so evidence should be available by the final report on this outcome.
		EQ2.6	What has been the effect of the Programmes on sport participation levels amongst different regions and smaller geographies?*	**MSGF:** Funded facilities were more likely to report increased participation in three of the four Home Nations, the exception being Scotland (89% versus 94%). However, It should be noted that these proportions are influenced by both the populations in scope, and the sample size available that responded to the question within the facility survey. **PTCR:** Bookings per venue per court varied greatly by region, with the South & South West and London showing the highest activity, while Wales and the North exhibited the lowest.
		EQ2.7	To what extent have the Programmes delivered sustained increases in participation amongst different regions and smaller geographies?*	**MSGF & PTCR:** Recognising limited sample sizes at this stage, particularly for the MSGF Programme, this outcome will be investigated will be investigated in the final report.
		EQ2.8	Have the Programmes created accessible facilities?	**MSGF:** Case study interviews highlighted the important role that the funding has had in increasing accessibility for underrepresented groups, new participants, and sports, and for allowing for longer opening hours. These results currently slightly differ to outcomes from surveying, where unfunded facilities reported marginally better outcomes than funded facilities. **PTCR:** Given the nature of the projects completed, particularly court refurbishments, this has allowed for previously unusable facilities to be accessible to all. The installation of online booking systems facilitates reduced barriers to participation, and volunteering offers such as the Free Park Tennis Programme were cited in interviews as helping bring new groups into park tennis.

[7] New female participants are defined as female users of the facility that joined since the funding materialised at the site.

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
EQ3	**Do the new/improved facilities increase awareness of sports, and/or improve the perception of activity in local communities (e.g. quality of life, pride in place, community cohesion) for individuals?**	EQ3.1	Have the Programmes improved local educational achievement through school level sport participation at facilities?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Case studies of facilities funded by the MSGF and PTCR Programmes provided anecdotal evidence of improved links with local schools, including many citing the Programme as crucial to helping establish free-use agreements to boost participation. Whilst there is research that increased physical activity is associated with improved academic performance, there is no data currently collected related to this evaluation question.
		EQ3.2	Have the Programmes aligned with the government's Opportunities Mission?[8]	**MSGF:** The Programme shows good alignment with the aim of reducing regional inequalities. The North East, understood to be a higher priority region, received the highest funding per capita (£9.14). London, a lower priority region, received both the lowest total funding amount (£8.9 million) and lowest funding per capita (£1.00). **PTCR:** London had the highest number of renovated courts (724), whilst the North East region received funding for the lowest number of courts. However, this is likely representative of the distribution of courts already in the UK.
		EQ3.3	To what extent have the Programmes improved metrics of community cohesion, social network size, and pride in place?	**MSGF & PTCR:** there is currently no clear trend in the data at this stage. Anecdotal evidence through case studies suggests the Programmes have improved a sense of community spirit and led to an increase in pride in place, although a very small number reported isolated instances of vandalism. More evidence is needed over a longer timeframe to assess progress against this question, which will be explored in the final report.
		EQ3.4	To what extent have the Programmes improved metrics of mental wellbeing and physical health within the local community?	**MSGF:** there are no clear trends from survey data between the funding and mental wellbeing. However, there are trends in physical health, where more frequent activity as a result of increased participation at funded facilities is associated with improved self-reported health. **PTCR:** whilst there is no primary data evidence directly linking the Programme to improved mental and physical health outcomes, the link between physical activity and these outcomes is well established, and funded venues have seen large rises in bookings since refurbishments took place. Therefore, it is likely that the Programme has played a role in improving mental and physical health amongst additional tennis participants.
		EQ3.5	Have the Programmes been associated with local/regional crime rates?	**MSGF/PTCR:** Building on the back of improved pride in place outcomes for funded facilities, case study evidence suggests that the Programme may have supported in reducing crime rates around funded facilities. Some facilities still reported incidents

[8] Break Down Barriers to Opportunity - GOV.UK

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
				of vandalism (across both Programmes), although there were isolated. More evidence is needed over a longer timeframe to assess progress against this question, which will be explored in the final report.
		EQ3.6	What have been the environmental outcomes of the Programmes' activities?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Case studies suggested the funded projects have contributed to reducing emissions, including referencing the installation of more efficient LED floodlighting at funded facilities or venues. However, there is a lack of available data to comprehensively answer this sub-evaluation question at present, and more evidence is needed to assess progress, which will be explored in the final report.
		EQ3.7	How have the Programmes impacted the UK's pipeline for players into professional sport?	**MSGF & PTCR:** limited evidence was provided for both Programmes through case study interviews relating to this evaluation question. An example was provided of improved links with local academies, although there is no evidence of an increase in the pipeline moving into professional sport. More evidence is needed over a longer timeframe to assess progress against this question, which will be explored in the final report.
		EQ3.8	Have the Programmes increased the number of sport teams, volunteers, and number of workers specialising in grassroots sport at the funded facilities?	**MSGF:** 72% of funded facilities reported an increased number of sports teams since April 2021 compared to 64% of unfunded facilities. A noticeably larger proportion of facility users associated with funded facilities (69%) reported having volunteered since April 2021 compared to this associated with unfunded facilities (46%). There aren't any clear trends currently on the number of works specialising in grassroots sport, and this will be explored more detail in the final report. **PTCR:** the number of sports teams is not relevant for the PTCR Programme. There have been anecdotal evidence shared of the benefits of the funding on enhancing a site's volunteering offering, including through the LTA's Free Park Tennis initiative. Although this may have improved the number of workers specialising in grassroots sport at funded venues, similar to MSGF, there isn't any clear evidence at this stage of the evaluation, and this will be explore in the final report.
EQ4	**Have the Programmes improved collaborative working and available evidence?**	EQ4.1	How have the Programmes impacted the evidence base for future evaluations?	**MSGF & PTCR:** The data collected through the MSGF & PTCR Programmes has improved the evidence base on sports participation (including by under-represented groups), building on two waves of primary data collection for the MSGF Programme and two cuts of tennis booking data for the PTCR Programme.
		EQ4.2	How have the Programmes strengthened the relationships between funded facilities and DPs?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Case studies of facilities funded by the Programme have shown strong collaboration between funded facilities and DPs.

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
		EQ4.3	Have the Programmes increased collaboration across the four devolved nations?	**MSGF:** DCMS and Delivery Partners have strengthened and improved relationships, maintaining the enthusiasm and professionalism that has characterised working relationships. Collaboration was more efficient and created less burden for all parties, although internal changes at DCMS required upskilling of new staff and some periods of vacancy for particular roles. **PTCR:** this evaluation question is less relevant for the PTCR Programme where there is only one Delivery Partner.
EQ5	**Has the Lionesses Futures Fund achieved its intended outcomes?**	EQ5.1	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund increased the number of women's football teams?	**LFF:** Recognising that delivery of the LFF is ongoing, it is too early for evidence to be available against each of these evaluation questions. However, the established LFF success measures aim to closely monitor these outcomes, so evidence should be available by the final report on these outcomes.
		EQ5.2	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund increased the number of female-only sessions and number of peak time sessions for females?	
		EQ5.3	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund increased the number of renovated or new female changing rooms?	
		EQ5.4	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund helped to establish a full player pathway for girls?	
		EQ5.5	To what extent do Lionesses Futures Fund facilities meet the needs of female users?	
EQ6	**Has the Lionesses Futures Fund helped to create safe and welcoming spaces for women and girl users to play?**	EQ6.1	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund improved the appropriateness of toilets and changing facilities at LFF sites?	
		EQ6.2	To what extent do female participants at the funded facilities feel safer and more welcome?	

1. Introduction & Background

1.1. Introduction

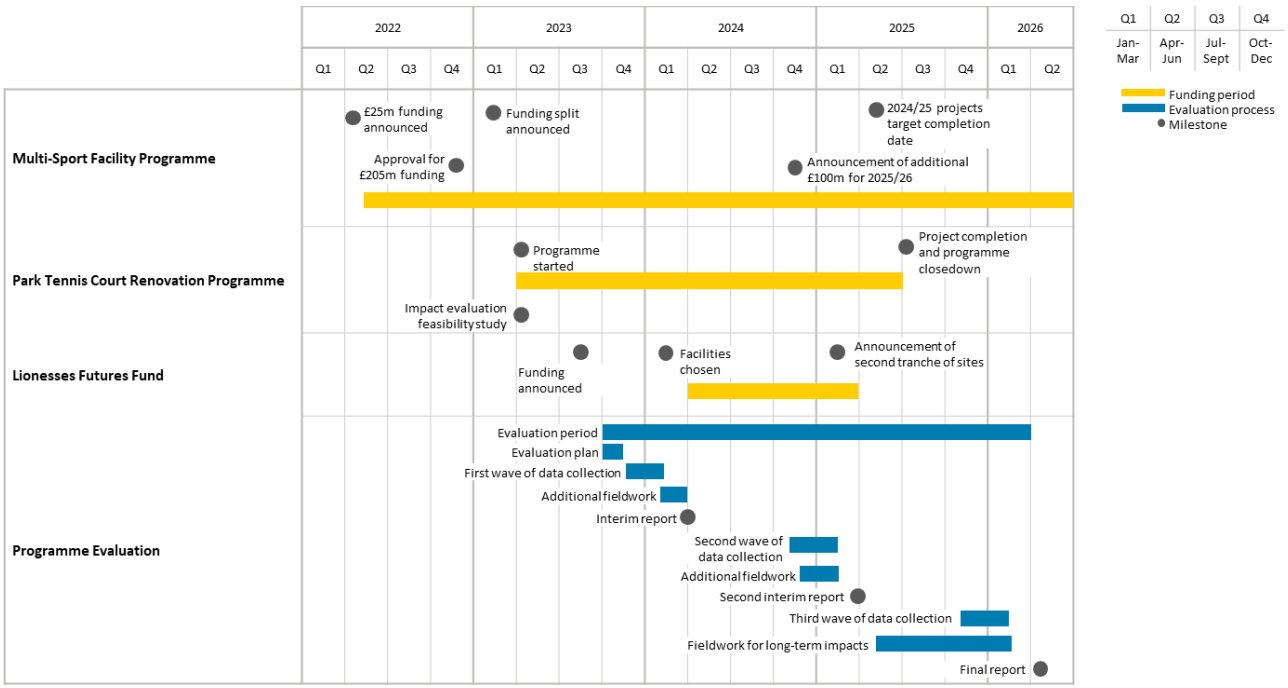
The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned Deloitte in August 2023, to conduct a comprehensive process, impact, and economic evaluation of two key funding Programmes delivered by DCMS, namely the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities (MSGF) and the Park Tennis Court Renovation (PTCR) Programmes. The Lionesses Futures Fund has also been incorporated into the scope of the evaluation, as part of the MSGF Programme.[9] Furthermore, on 21st March 2025, an additional £100 million of funding was announced to extend the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme.[10]

The initial interim evaluation report, published on 8th October 2024, provides further context and background on the Programmes in scope, as well as the schedule of evaluation activity that has been developed. This is the second interim evaluation report, building on the findings set out previously given newly available data and evidence. This report focuses on emerging findings across the first two phases of fieldwork, with a particular focus on presenting available data, evidence and insights regarding the impact and economic evaluation. Findings will be further reported over the course of the evaluation process, with an additional final evaluation report planned for Spring 2026.[11] The extension of the MSGF Programme is out of scope for this interim report but will be incorporated into the final evaluation report.

1.2. Programme and Evaluation Timelines

Figure 1 below outlines the timelines for the Programmes in scope as well as the expected timelines associated with evaluation activity. Two waves of data collection activity have been conducted, with one further wave planned in early 2026.

Figure 1: Programme and Evaluation Timelines



Source: Multi-Sport Facilities, Park Tennis Court Renovation and Lionesses Futures Fund Programmes' timelines based on documents shared by DCMS. Calendar years. Assumptions of final report timelines subject to change.

[9] Further information regarding the delivery is in Section 3.3.
[10] £100 million to revamp local sports facilities across UK - GOV.UK
[11] Final evaluation report timings are subject to change.

1.3. Report Structure

Table 9 highlights the sections in this report and provides a summary of the content:

Table 9: Summary of Report Structure

Section No.	Report section	Content
2	Methodology	• Sets out the latest updates to inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, as well as the key evaluation questions considered • Discusses the latest data collection and fieldwork updates • Summarises the methodological approach utilised for the evaluation.
3	Programme Information	• Provides an updated overview of the MSGF and PTCR Programmes, including the Lionesses Futures Fund. • Outlines the allocation of resources across the four Home Nations and details on the overall funding commitments, including progress against delivery targets and key performance indicators ("KPIs").
4	Process Evaluation Interim Findings	• Considers whether the Programmes have been implemented as intended and resulted in the desired outputs, and the extent to which they have been delivered in an efficient and effective manner. • Builds on the previous evaluation, focusing on the last 12 months of activity, and providing early process evaluation findings for the Lionesses Futures Fund.
5	Impact Evaluation Interim Findings	• Assesses the extent to which the Programmes have met their intended objectives, impacts and outcomes, using descriptive analysis to compare funded and unfunded samples, with the aid of booking data, survey data, Programme monitoring data and secondary sources. • Also uses quasi-experimental methods to assess the extent to which there is evidence of a causal effect of the Programmes on participation and physical activity.
6	Economic Evaluation Interim Findings	• Details the methodology and approach developed to conduct the economic evaluation, including key assumptions, limitations and caveats at this stage of the interim evaluation. • Estimates the costs to DCMS and total costs to the economy associated with each of the Programmes. • Estimates some of the quantified benefits of the Programmes, focusing on participation and changes to physical activity of participants at this stage, with the final evaluation report considering additional, wider socioeconomic benefits. • Sets out an indicative range of quantified costs and benefits, including a Net Present Social Value (NPSV) and Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) range.
7	Conclusion	• Summarises the key findings of this interim evaluation report and sets out the next steps for further data collection and analysis ahead of the final evaluation report.
	Annexures	• Annex 1 – Abbreviations and Glossary • Annex 2 – Technical Annex • Annex 3 – Case studies • Annex 4 – Wave 2 Survey Response Rates • Annex 5-8 – Wave 2 Survey Scripts (Facility, User, Household) • Annex 9-10 – Economic Evaluation Assumptions Log

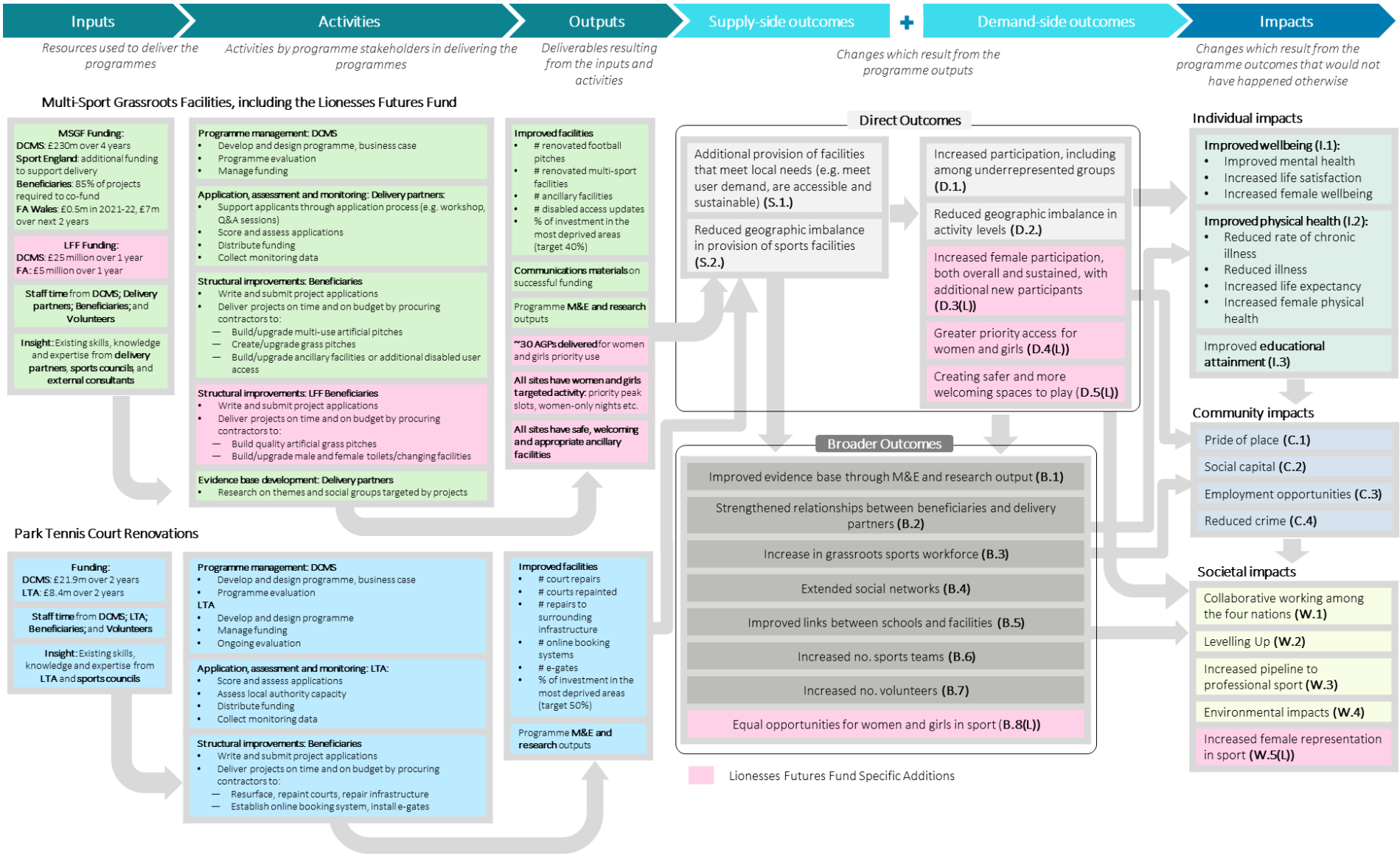
2. Methodology

2.1. Theory of Change, Objectives and Evaluation Questions

The Theory of Change for the Programmes describes the causal process through which the Programmes are intended to deliver their outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The Theory of Change has been refined and updated based on the iteration of the logic model available in the feasibility study as well as additional evidence gathered since the first interim report. *Figure 2* below sets out a logic model visually representing this Theory of Change, clearly identifying the relevant outputs, outcomes and impacts that will need to be assessed. Whilst the evaluation won't be able to address all outcomes and impacts from the Theory of Change, it will test some hypothesised relationships causally[12] whilst conducting descriptive analysis to assess the contribution of other factors to outcomes of interest. The Theory of Change will be iterated and adapted as and when new information and evidence becomes available ahead of the final report

[12] The relationships that will be tested causally are shown in the causal evaluation questions shown in Section 3.3 of the previous interim report: Interim evaluation of Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities and Park Tennis Court Renovation programmes.

Figure 2: Theory of Change Logic Model



The overarching objectives of the evaluation of the Programmes remain unchanged; to monitor their outputs, outcomes, and assess their impact and Value for Money (VfM). The evaluation therefore aims to:

- **Monitor the overall performance and progress** of the two Programmes;
- To assess **how the Programmes are being implemented**;
- **Investigate the existence of causal links** between investment in grassroots sport and changes in participation and physical activity;
- **Identify lessons learned** to inform current Programme delivery and potential future Programme design and implementation;
- **Demonstrate accountability and transparency** in the allocation of public funding; and
- **Assess the VfM** that the Programmes are providing to the taxpayer.

In order to achieve these objectives, this evaluation is composed of:

- **Process Evaluation**: to understand whether Programme activities have been implemented as intended and resulted in the desired outputs in an efficient and effective manner;
- **Impact Evaluation**: to understand the extent to which the Programmes made a difference in the achievement of the expected outcomes; and
- **VfM/Economic Evaluation**: to understand, in parallel to the process and impact evaluations, the benefits, and costs of the Programmes, and whether the use of resources over the course of implementation has been efficient, effective, and equitable.

An overarching research question was set:

"To what extent have the Programmes delivered improvements to facilities in need of investment and created a positive impact on physical activity within these facilities in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland?"

This remains the key evaluation question, and further sub-questions and detail were set out in the initial interim evaluation report. The Theory of Change and evaluation questions will be iterated and adapted as new information and evidence becomes available.

2.2. Data Collection & Fieldwork

The approach to primary data collection has remained consistent with the approach set out in the initial interim evaluation report. The evaluation utilises a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Programmes. Primary data collection included:

- **Surveys**: For the MSGF Programme, three surveys target different groups: facility managers, users, and households situated near facilities. These surveys gather information on participation, user experiences, perceptions of community impact, and overall wellbeing, across both funded and unfunded facilities.
- **Programme Monitoring Data**: Data collected by DCMS and Delivery Partners across all Programmes tracks project progress, funding allocation, and achievement KPIs. A cut of the delivery and monitoring data was taken on 24th March 2025 as is the version used throughout this report (unless stated otherwise).
- **Stakeholder Interviews**: Interviews with key personnel involved in the Programmes provide insights into the design, implementation, and perceived efficiency and effectiveness of the initiatives.
- **Case Studies**: In-depth analysis of selected facilities offers rich, contextualised information about the Programmes' impact on participation, community engagement, and facility usage. These case study sites

were chosen from a pre-approved list agreed with DCMS and Delivery Partners, ensuring a mix of project types and alignment with Programme KPIs.[13]

- **Secondary data sources** complement primary data by providing contextual information and baseline data on participation trends, demographics, and facility characteristics. These sources include national surveys, publicly available datasets, and reports from relevant organisations.

Further detail on the data collection approach and fieldwork is available in the initial interim evaluation report. The latest survey questionnaires are also contained within Annex 5-8. The additional primary data collection undertaken has been used throughout the process, impact and economic evaluation (See Section 4-6). A summary of the additional; data included in this report is set out below:

- **Facility Survey**: a 2nd wave with 425 responses (total of 972 responses).
- **User Survey**: a 2nd wave with 745 responses (total of 2,967 responses).
- **Household Survey**: a 2nd wave with 3,284 responses (total of 8,412 responses).
- **Stakeholder Interviews**: 17 interviews with key Programme stakeholders (total of 51).
- **Case studies**: case studies were undertaken at an additional 8 sites (total of 18 case studies).

2.3. Process Evaluation Approach

This process evaluation (Section 4) considers the additional information and evidence available following the completion of the second wave of data collection, providing a more complete picture of the Programmes. Whilst the process evaluation, which examines the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programmes' implementation, remains an important component of the overall evaluation, there is a greater focus on the additional insights and findings available across the impact and economic evaluation within this interim evaluation report. The process evaluation considered the additional information available from primary data collection and secondary sources in the last 12 months, to provide insight into any lessons learned that can continue to be implemented and improve delivery of remaining Programme funding and influence the design of future Programmes.

2.4. Impact Evaluation Approach

The impact evaluation (Section 5) utilises the methodology set out in the initial interim evaluation report. With two waves of data collection now complete, the evaluation moves beyond initial descriptive analysis to also use a quasi-experimental approach to consider the Programmes' causal impact on sports participation, in addition to further descriptive analysis of the Programmes. Recognising the differences in Programme design, data availability and hypothesised impacts, the quasi-experimental approach for each Programme has been specially tailored. This is explained in further detail in Section 5 and the Technical Annex.

2.5. Economic Evaluation Approach

Section 6 builds on the methodological foundations set out in the initial interim evaluation report and provides an early indicative estimate of the range of possible costs and benefits of the Programmes, as well as an estimated Net Present Social Value (NPSV) and Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) range. The key assumptions, caveats and limitations informing this analysis are clearly set out with regards to the interim findings available in this report, in addition to further detail on what activity will be undertaken in the final evaluation report. This approach focuses on socioeconomic impacts of changes to participation and physical activity rates, in line with Sport England's Social Return on Investment (SROI) approach. A more comprehensive analysis of wider socioeconomic benefits will be considered in the final evaluation report, to allow outcomes and impacts to have sufficient time to further be realised and increase the quantity and quality of data available.

[13] More detail on the case study selection process is in the previous interim report on page 39: Interim evaluation of Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities and Park Tennis Court Renovation programmes.

3. Programme Overview

This section offers an overview of the current delivery of the MSGF (including the LFF) and PTCR Programmes using the latest available Programme monitoring data[14] to provide a contextual understanding of the basic characteristics of the Programmes before further analysis of the data is presented.

The funding allocations of the MSGF and PTCR Programmes included in this interim report are the latest positions and supersede funding allocations provided in previous reporting.

More generally, the information presented in this section represents a snapshot in time and is regularly updated as the Programmes progress. Within this report, figures and tables will provide source information on the provenance, scale and timeliness of the data used. Insights from this data will also inform other areas of analysis within the report, including the process, impact and economic evaluation sections.

This interim evaluation report specifically considers the scope of the Programmes up to and including FY24/25. Whilst there are ongoing discussions about additional funding that may be available in FY25/26 and beyond as part of the MSGF Programme, this is not in scope of this report.

Where relevant, the final evaluation report will consider additional funding in scope of the Programmes. The PTCR Programme is progressing through programme closure stages and so additional PTCR funding is not expected to come into scope of this evaluation.

3.1. Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

3.1.1. Funding and Resource Allocation

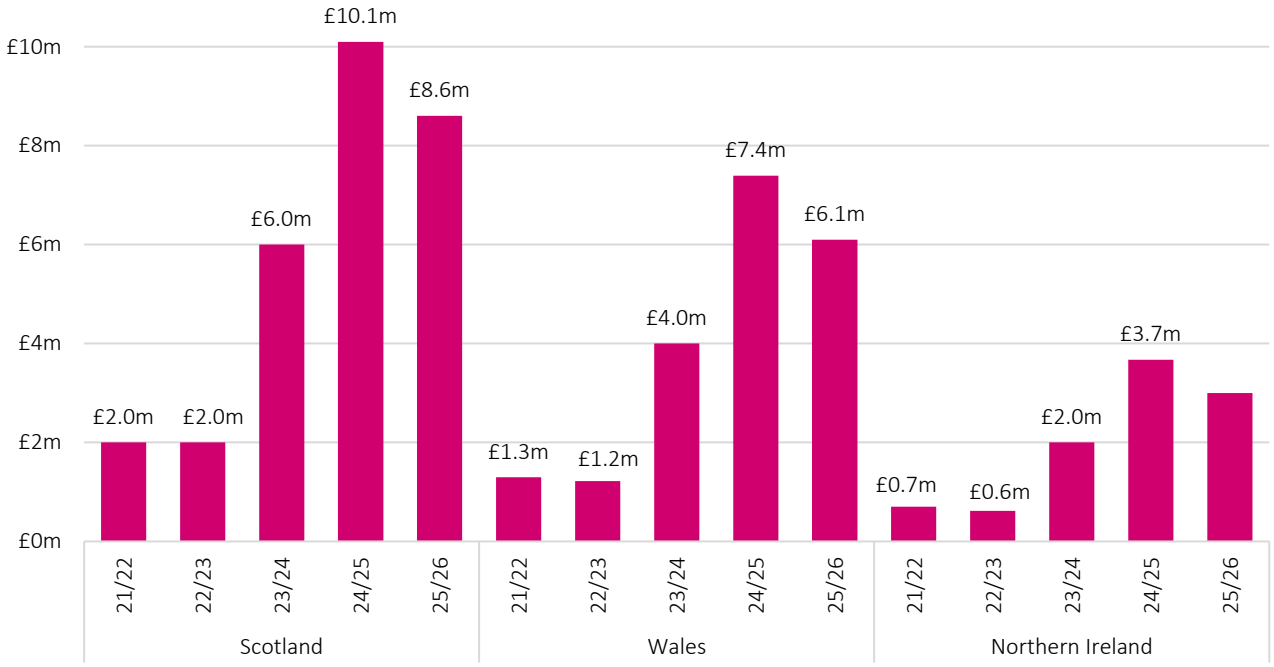
The MSGF Programme represents a £427.0 million investment in grassroots sports facilities between 2021 and 2026. *Figure 3* illustrates the allocation of this funding between FY21/22 and FY25/26 across Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland for each financial year. As of FY24/25, Scotland was allocated £20.1 million, Wales £13.9 million, and Northern Ireland £7.0 million.[15] In FY25/26, Scotland has been allocated an additional £8.6 million, Wales an additional £6.1 million, and Northern Ireland an additional £3.0 million.

It is important to note that these allocated figures reflect only the allocated funding exclusively for the MSGF Programme from DCMS and do not include additional partner investments from other funding sources who contribute to project value and costs. Consequently, the total value of projects across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be higher than is reported in this section.

Additionally, whilst funding allocations are provided for FY25/26, recognising these figures are future values and are therefore subject to revisions by DCMS, they will not be included in this interim report in the impact or economic evaluation. The impact and economic evaluation draw on the amount of grant funding committed instead of the amount of grant funding allocated. Therefore, with the current planned timings for FY25/26, the additional funding will be covered in the impact and economic evaluation the final report.

[14] Dates on which data was provided and accessed are set out within sources for all tables and graphs. It is important to note that data for all Programmes is live and evolving, and so the figures reported in this document are representative only of a specific point in time with regards to these dates.
[15] MSGF Programme monitoring data and business case documentation

Figure 3: MSGF budget allocation for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland across each FY



Source: FY21/22 – FY24/25 Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programmes information based on aggregations of DCMS monitoring data as of 24th March 2025. FY25/26 allocation based on information shared directly from DCMS. Given this is a future allocation, this is subject to change

Figure 4 details the funding allocation for England across the financial years. England's allocation is presented separately due to the way in which funding in this nation is delivered. The MSGF Programme provides funding for the Football Foundation, who also receive funding from partners (the Football Association[16] and the Premier League[17]), making direct comparisons with other regions where Programme funding is delivered directly from DCMS to Delivery Partners who then conduct assessment of the facilities most in need, challenging.

Up to FY24/25, England was allocated £263.0 million by DCMS. Similar to the funding allocations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, these figures reflect only the allocated amount from the MSGF Programme, not the LFF[18], and do not include additional partner investments from the FA or the Premier League as set out above. Consequently, the total value of Football Foundation grants awarded to these projects is higher. In FY25/26, England has been allocated an additional £80.3 million.

[16] https://www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/facilities/funding - accessed on the 25th March 2025
[17] https://www.premierleague.com/footballandcommunity/wider-football/football-foundation - accessed on the 25th March 2025
[18] Please refer to Section 3.3. for a programme overview of the LFF

Figure 4: MSGF financial allocation in England across each FY

Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programmes information based on aggregations of DCMS monitoring data as of 24th March 2025. FY25/26 allocation based on information shared directly from DCMS. Given this is a future allocation, this is subject to change

3.1.2. Funding Committed

3.1.2.1. Funding by Region

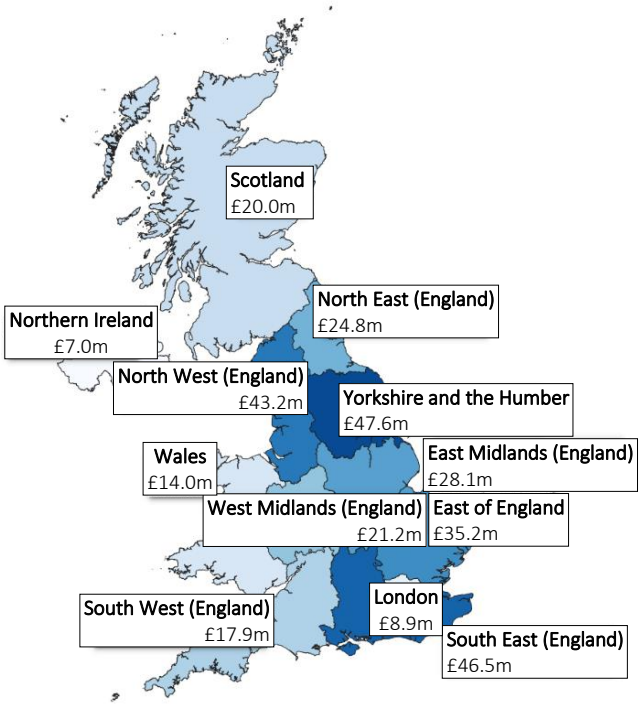
This section provides a breakdown of funding committed by region. The UK is typically split into subdivisions using the International Territorial Level (ITL) geocode standard[19] – analysis here uses the ITL 1 geocode standard, which corresponds to regions of England alongside Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Figure 5 illustrates committed DCMS funding for each ITL 1 region from FY21/22 to FY24/25, as well as the amount of funding per capita for each of the regions (in descending order).

[19] https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/eurostat - accessed on the 25th March 2025

Figure 5: MSGF funding committed between FY21/22 and FY24/25, broken down by Home Nation / region, including funding per capita per region

Home Nation / Region	Funding	Funding Per Capita
North East	£24.8m	£9.14
Yorkshire and the Humber	£47.6m	£8.51
North West	£43.2m	£5.68
East Midlands	£28.1m	£5.62
East of England	£35.2m	£5.45
South East	£46.5m	£4.91
England	£273.5m	£4.74
Wales	£14.0m	£4.43
Northern Ireland	£7.0m	£3.64
Scotland	£20.0m	£3.63
West Midlands	£21.2m	£3.49
South West	£17.9m	£3.09
London	£8.9m	£1.00



Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programmes monitoring data as of 24th March 2025.
Population of UK regions: https://www.statista.com/statistics/294729/uk-population-by-region/ (Accessed 26th March 2025). Grant funding total figures rounded to the nearest £0.1m, and funding per capita figures rounded to the nearest £0.01. The diagram is a heatmap where the colour corresponds to the level of the funding committed in each region.

In England, as of March 2025, DCMS has committed £273.5 million to 4,548 projects since the Programme's inception.[20] Regionally within England, Yorkshire and the Humber received the largest total funding allocation at £49.8 million. The North East received the highest funding per capita (£9.14), and London received both the lowest total funding amount (£8.9 million) and lowest funding per capita (£1.00). Across the devolved nations, a total of £20.0 million has been committed to 107 projects in Scotland (£3.63 per capita), £14.0 million across 176 projects in Wales (£4.43 per capita), and £7.0 million for 81 projects in Northern Ireland (£3.64 per capita).

Table 10: MSGF funding committed and number of projects completed per Home Nation in each FY

Home Nation	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25
England	157	1505	1424	1462
Scotland	17	23	33	34
Wales	17	43	62	54
Northern Ireland	26	28	10	17
Total	217	1599	1529	1567

Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme data as of 24th March 2025. Excludes withdrawn projects.

[20] This excludes withdrawn projects as well as Lionesses Futures Fund projects. The Lionesses Futures Fund projects are covered in Section 3.3.

All three nations experienced a rise in committed funding during FY24/25. While the number of delivered projects also increased, this rise was proportionally smaller than the increase in funding, suggesting a shift towards larger average investment grants values being awarded by Delivery Partners during this financial year.

3.1.2.2. Grant Size

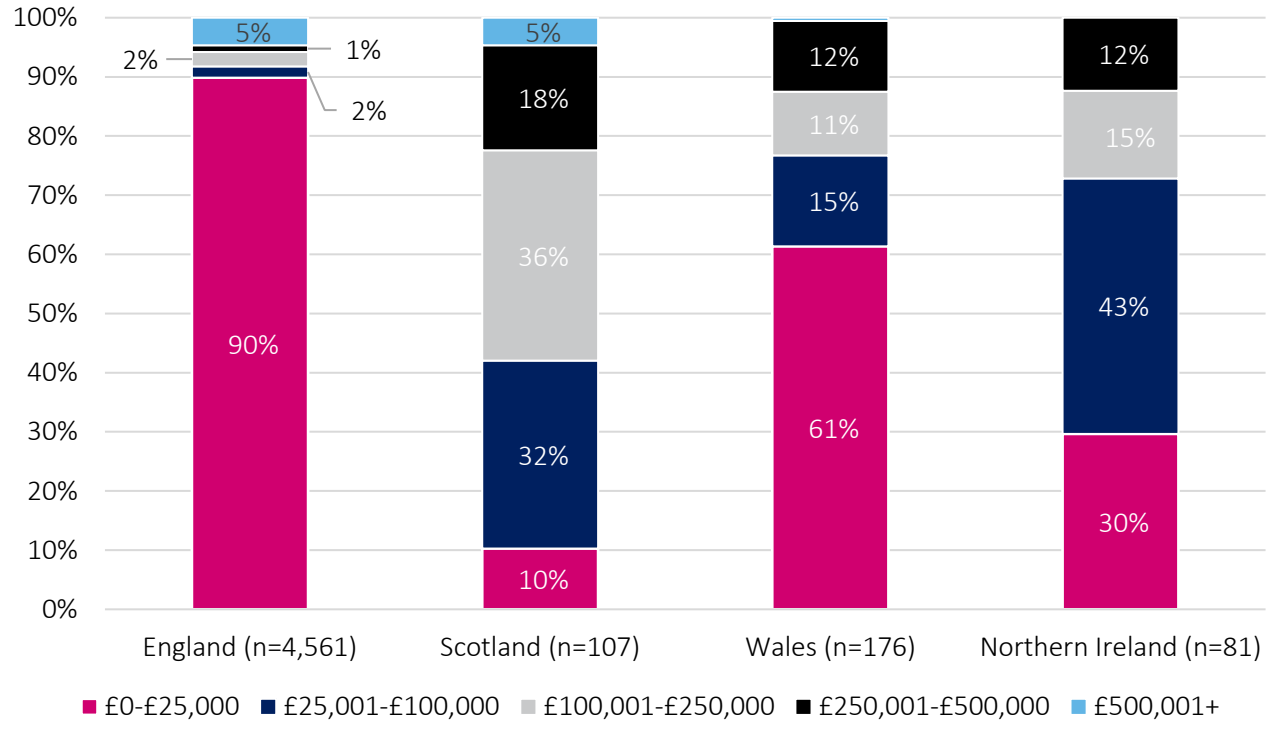
The MSGF Programme funds a diverse range of projects across the Home Nations, with project costs and types tailored to the specific needs of local communities. Delivery Partners establish funding criteria for grant applications, including minimum and maximum award amounts, and applicants must secure matched funding (from an alternative source) before applying to demonstrate project commitment. Consequently, each Home Nation exhibits a unique distribution of grant sizes.

Figure 6 demonstrates this distribution by categorising grant funding into bands: £0-£25,000, £25,001-£100,000, £100,001-£250,000, £250,001-£500,000, and £500,001+. Due to the funding structure and nature of the reporting data provided by the Football Foundation in England, projects represented in this figure also encompass those delivered through partner investments from the FA and the Premier League.

MSGF funded projects have received an average grant size of approximately £67,500. However, this average varies greatly across the Home Nations. Scotland reports the highest average grant size at around £190,000, followed by Northern Ireland (£90,000), Wales (£80,000) and England (£65,000).

The distribution of grant sizes also reveals distinct patterns; England shows a heavy concentration (90%) of projects receiving grants under £25,000, largely attributed to funding partners utilising small grant investment schemes. Wales follows with 61% of projects in this grant range, then Northern Ireland (30%), and Scotland (10%). Scotland stands out with a higher proportion (36%) of grants between £100,001 and £250,000. In contrast, Northern Ireland's most common grant range is £25,001-£100,000 (43%). Notably, Northern Ireland is the only Home Nation without projects exceeding £500,000.

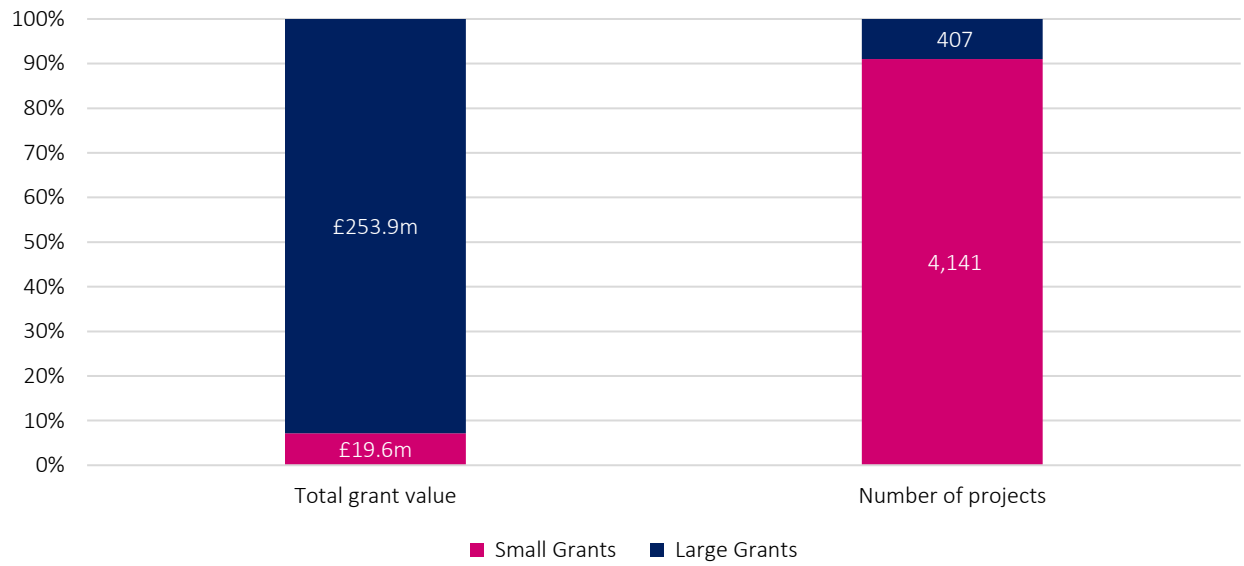
Figure 6: % of projects funded by grant size across Home Nations



Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme data as of 24th March 2025. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

As outlined above, in England, a proportionately large number of smaller grants (under £25,000) were awarded, totalling 4,107 projects. This represents 90% of all funded projects and accounts for £18.0 million of funding, and typically funded improvements such as new goalposts, maintenance, and equipment purchases. Small grant recipients in England received £4,395 on average, whilst large project grant recipients received £590,205. *Figure 7* demonstrates the differences between proportion of funding, and quantum of projects, for both small and large grants.

Figure 7: England - split of small and large grants by total project value and number of projects



Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme data based on DCMS monitoring data as of 24th March 2025.

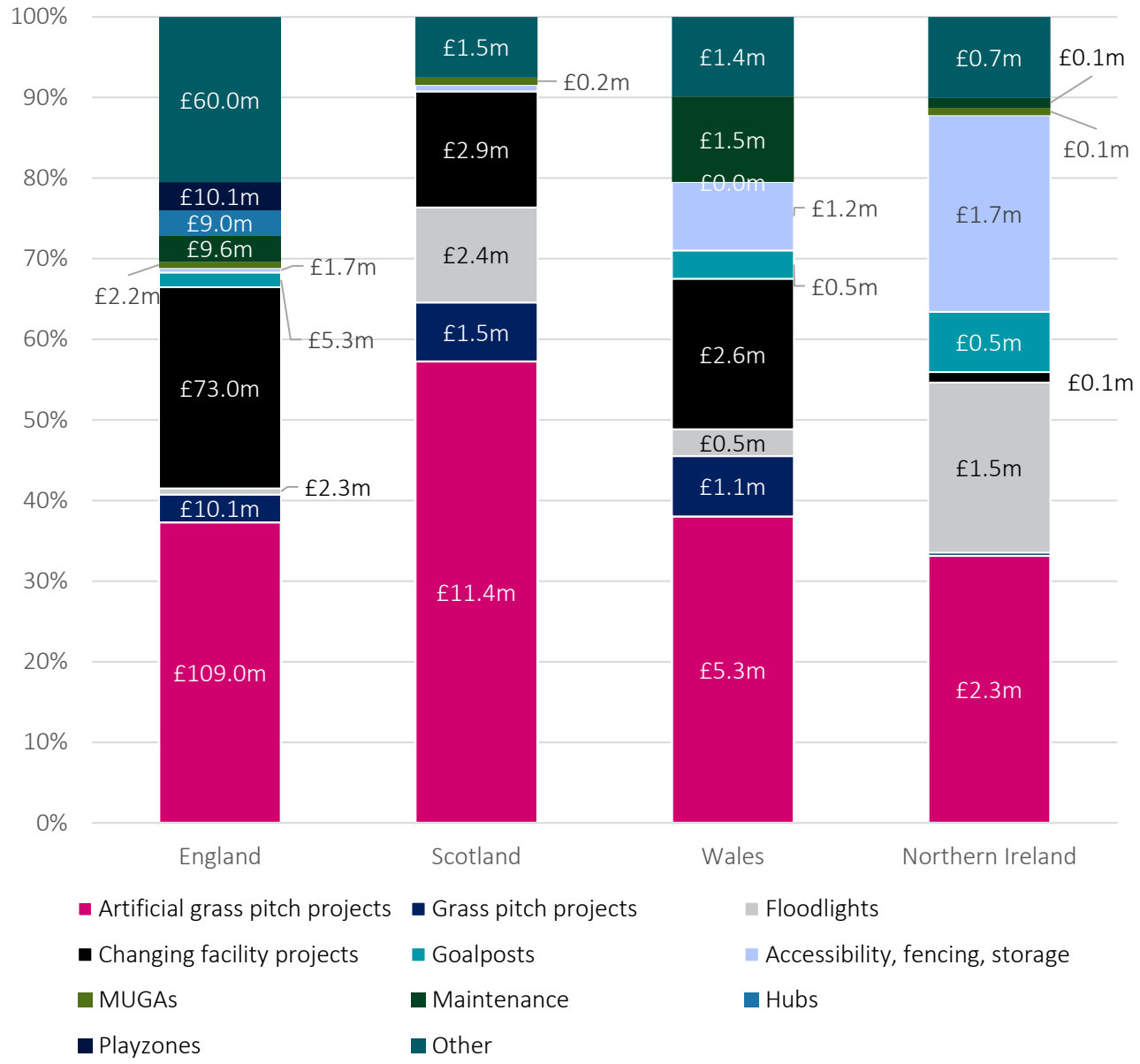
3.1.2.3. Project Type

Figure 8 below illustrates the distribution of projects across various project types. It is important to note that the quality of evidence and information regarding project type has varied across Home Nations and financial years. The data underpinning this allows for projects to fall under multiple project type categories, and consequently the total number of projects displayed for each Home Nation may not align with the total number of projects reported above.

The types of projects funded through the MSGF Programme vary greatly across the Home Nations, reflecting distinct approaches. However, the most consistent theme is the focus on Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) projects, that account for over £125.0 million of funding since FY21/22. Scotland had the highest proportion of AGP projects among the Home Nations, representing over half of their funded projects. AGPs were also the most frequent project type in Northern Ireland and Wales. Conversely, projects focused on accessibility, fencing and storage, and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) received the least funding across all Home Nations.

These variations in project type composition across funding Home Nations highlight potentially differing priorities and needs. The reasons behind these variations are further explored in the process evaluation (Section 4) and consider the extent to which these differences in project type may have led to different outcomes across the Home Nations.

Figure 8: Funding committed by project types across Home Nations



Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme data based on DCMS monitoring data as of 24th March 2025. Totals may not add up due to rounding. One project can cover multiple project types.[21] Therefore, in the absence of more granular grant information, the total grant committed for a given project was divided by the number of project types to avoid double counting.

3.1.2.4. KPI Alignment

Figure 9 summarises performance against the MSGF Programme's 2021-25[22] KPIs in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, based on Programme monitoring data averaged across FY22/23, FY23/24, and FY24/25. The KPIs are outlined below and detailed further in the initial interim evaluation report:

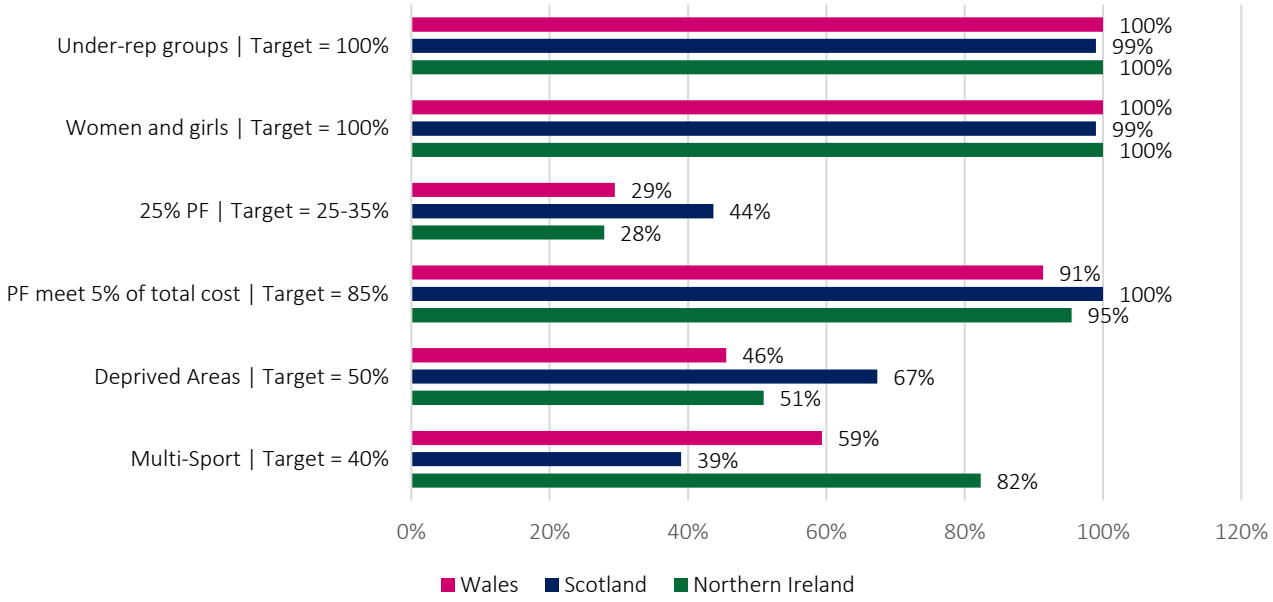
Irish FA, Scottish FA and Cymru Football Foundation KPIs

- **Investment in Multi-Sport Projects**: 40% of total amount of funding to projects with a multi-sport element, i.e. sustained usage by at least one sport in addition to football;

[21] Hubs are multi-sport facilities that aim to meet local need - they contain at least two full-size floodlit 3G pitches, as well as supporting facilities (e.g. car parking, cafés and changing rooms).
[22] The 2025-26 MSGF funding will feature a refined set of KPIs.

- **Investment In Deprived Areas:** 50% of projects that have received funding are located in 40% of the most deprived Local Authorities;
- **Partner Funding Secured**:
  - **1:** 85% of projects commit 5% of partner funding: total amount of projects that have committed partner funding equal to or greater than 5% of the total project cost;
  - **2:** 35% partner funding on average across the Programme: this is an aspirational target combining partner funding across Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, with contributions aggregated to track the average;
- **Women and Girls:** 100% of funding applications demonstrate a clear commitment to ensure their facilities are accessible for women and girls (if they are not already) on an equal basis/to meet demand; and
- **Underrepresented Groups:** 100% of funding applications demonstrate a clear commitment to ensure their facilities are accessible for underrepresented groups (if they are not already) on an equal basis/to meet demand.

Figure 9: Average of FY22/23 and FY23/24 KPI alignment across home nations



Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programmes information based on DCMS monitoring data as of 24th March 2025.
Base: 176 projects in Wales, 107 projects in Scotland, 81 projects in Northern Ireland. PF = Partner Funding

Notably, all three nations secured at least 5% partner funding (funding from an alternative source contributing to the total project funds), exceeding the target. This funding primarily originated from applicants' own resources or other bodies such as sports bodies, local charities, and councils. Among the three nations, Scotland demonstrated the greatest focus on deprived areas, exceeding the target for projects in such locations by 27%. Delivery Partners have demonstrated strong performance in aligning funded projects with the Programme's KPIs as per Programme monitoring data. Further discussion and exploration of the impacts of these funding KPIs are considered as part of the process evaluation in Section 4.

Due to the nature of the reporting data available and differences in KPIs from the other Home Nations, it is not possible to directly compare the KPIs used in delivery by the Foundation (set out below for information):

Football Foundation KPIs

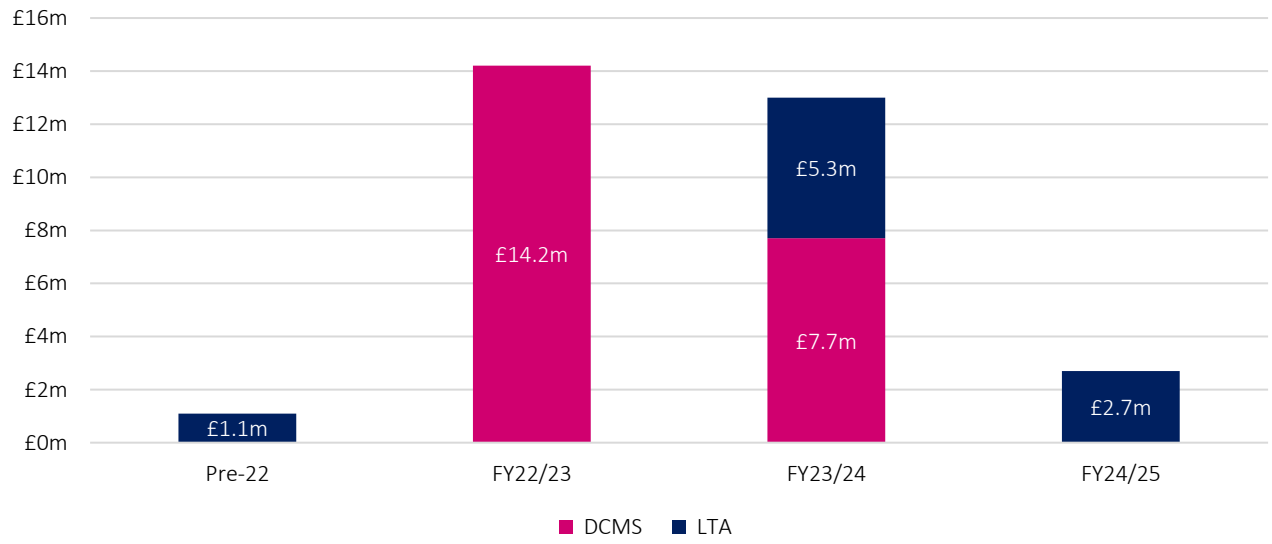
- **Multi-Sport:** A third of the total amount of funding to projects with a multi-sport element, i.e. sustained usage by at least one sport in addition to football;

- **Deprived Areas:** 50% of total funding to projects located in the 40% of most deprived Local Authorities;
- **Women and Girls:** 100% of funding applications demonstrate a clear commitment to ensure their facilities are accessible for women and girls (if they are not already) on an equal basis/to meet demand;
- **Underrepresented Groups:** 75% of projects to engage with underrepresented groups;
- **Clubs and Communities:** 38% of projects to invest in, or benefit, club & community organisations; and
- **On/Off Pitch:** 75% of funding to be allocated towards 'on pitch' items, with a quantified goal of 5,000 new quality pitches to be achieved.

3.2. Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

3.2.1. Funding Allocation

Figure 10: PTCR funding allocation across FYs



Source: Park Tennis Court Renovation delivery data. Accessed 24th March 2025. Please note the figure above excludes £2m of LTA Tennis Foundation funding allocated against procurement/resource.

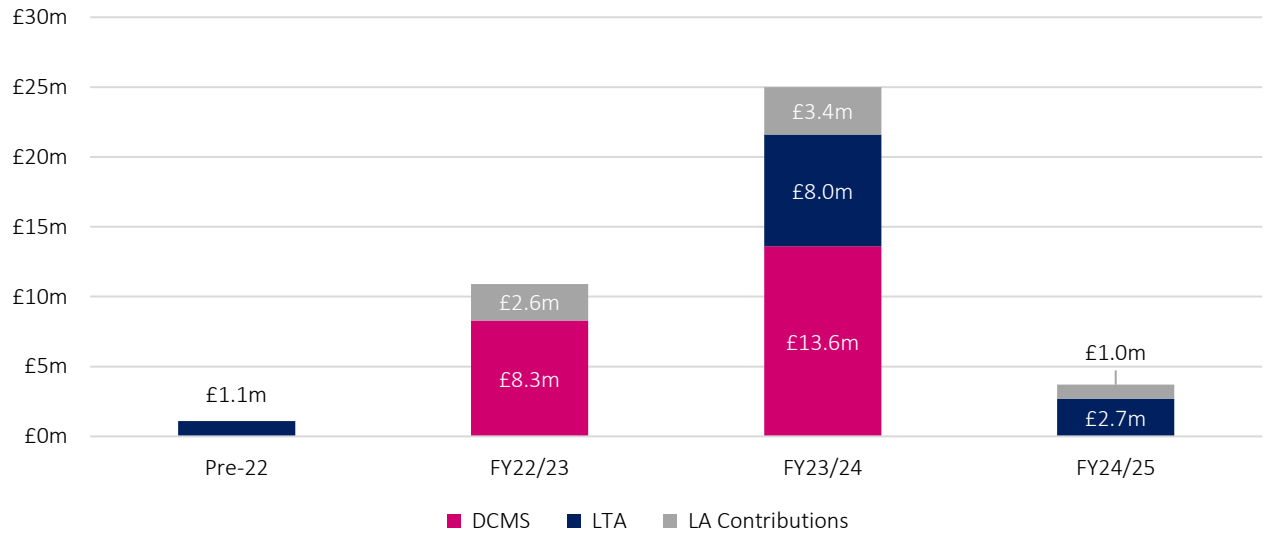
Figure 10 shows the original budget allocation of the PTCR Programme. *Figure 11* below shows the actual budget committed as part of the PTCR Programme. As illustrated in *Figure 10*, the PTCR Programme was allocated total funding of £28.3 million across three periods: pre-22, FY22/23, FY23/24 and FY24/25. The funding allocation saw a substantial increase in FY22/23, with DCMS doubling its contribution to £14.2 million, compared to £7.7 million in FY23/24, resulting in a total DCMS Programme spend of £21.9 million. This funding was supplemented by £5.3 million from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) Tennis Foundation in FY23/24 and £2.7 million in FY24/25, with an additional £2.0 million allocated to procurement / resource.

3.2.2. Funding Committed

3.2.2.1. Funding by Year

Whilst the previous section covered the budget allocated to the PTCR Programme, this section covers the actual costs associated with the Programme between the pre-22 period and FY23/24. *Figure 11* below plots this:

Figure 11: Budget committed to the PTCR Programme as of February 2025



Source: Park Tennis Court Renovation delivery data, accessed 24th March 2025. The timing of the LA contributions were provided separately by DCMS and were accessed on 10th April 2025.

This figure indicates that the total committed DCMS spend remained identical to the original budget – however, the timing of this funding was slightly different, with spending £5.9 million higher in FY22/23 but £5.9 million lower in FY23/24 than originally budgeted. Furthermore, spend by the LTA was £2.7 million higher than originally budgeted in FY23/24. Finally, there was an additional £7.0 million of LA contributions, including £1.0 million in FY24/25, which comes from contributions which form part of wider overall investment into specific areas.

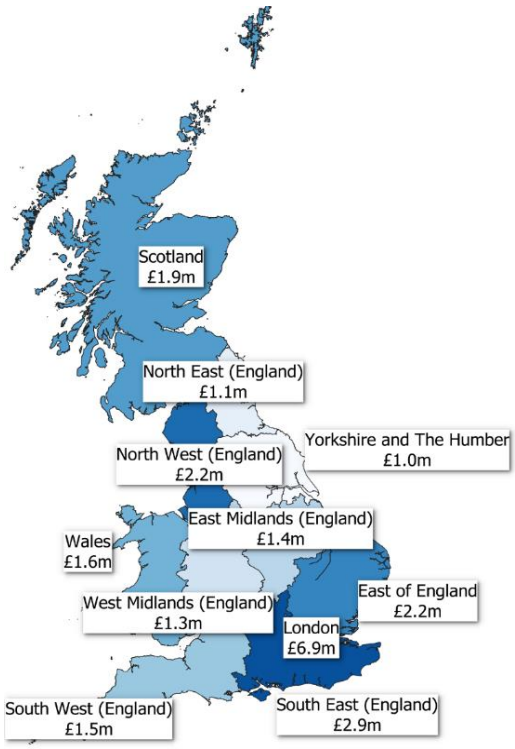
3.2.2.2. Courts Funded by Region

As of February 2025, the PTCR Programme had successfully renovated 2,625 tennis courts across 818 parks in England, according to DCMS and LTA monitoring data. Reflecting the existing geographical distribution of park tennis courts, London had the highest number of renovated courts (724), whilst the North East region received funding for the lowest number of courts. 162 courts in Scotland and Wales were refurbished.

This is summarised in *Figure 12* below, where funding is broken down by regions (ITL 1). This figure also presents the funding per capita received by each region. To note is that the remaining spend on the courts completed at the end of FY24/25 will be outside of London and the South East, which will increase the percentage weighting of investment into these areas.

Figure 12: PTCR - total commitment by Home Nation/region, including funding per capita

Region	Completed Courts	Funding	Funding Per Capita
London	724	£6.9m	£0.77
Wales	162	£1.6m	£0.50
North East	84	£1.1m	£0.40
England (total)	2,301	£20.5m	£0.36
Scotland	162	£1.9m	£0.34
East of England	216	£2.2m	£0.34
South East	439	£2.9m	£0.31
North West	240	£2.2m	£0.29
East Midlands	134	£1.4m	£0.28
South West	226	£1.5m	£0.26
West Midlands	146	£1.3m	£0.21
Yorkshire and the Humber	92	£1.0m	£0.17



Source: Park Tennis Court Renovation delivery data. Accessed 24th March 2025. Population of UK regions: https://www.statista.com/statistics/294729/uk-population-by-region/ (Accessed 26th March 2025). Funding rounded to the nearest £0.1m, and funding per capita figures rounded to the nearest £0.01. The diagram is a heatmap where the colour corresponds to the level of the funding committed in each region.

3.2.2.3. Grant Size

Figure 13 presents the distribution of grant sizes awarded by the PTCR Programme. The majority of funded projects (60%) received grants ranging from £1 to £100,000, while only 6% were granted over £100,000. It's also important to note that a grant size of £0 did not signify a zero-cost project. These projects utilised alternative funding sources or resources not directly allocated through the PTCR Programme, resulting in no attributable costs to the Programme itself. Projects with a grant size of £0, often involving gate installations, online booking systems, or a combination of both, were the most prevalent, representing 34% of all projects. These projects were still however, considered part of the PTCR Programme, and so have been incorporated into the analysis considered in the evaluation and presented in this report. It is important to note that proportion of £0 projects will be lower once all projects have completed, given that the remaining projects to complete are primarily court refurbishments projects.

As discussed in further detail in the initial interim evaluation report, expected average costs were higher than was initially planned, although this was slightly lower in the most recent data (the average cost of court renovations was £29,285 compared to £29,354 at the time of analysis in the previous report). For further information, please see the process evaluation findings in Section 4.

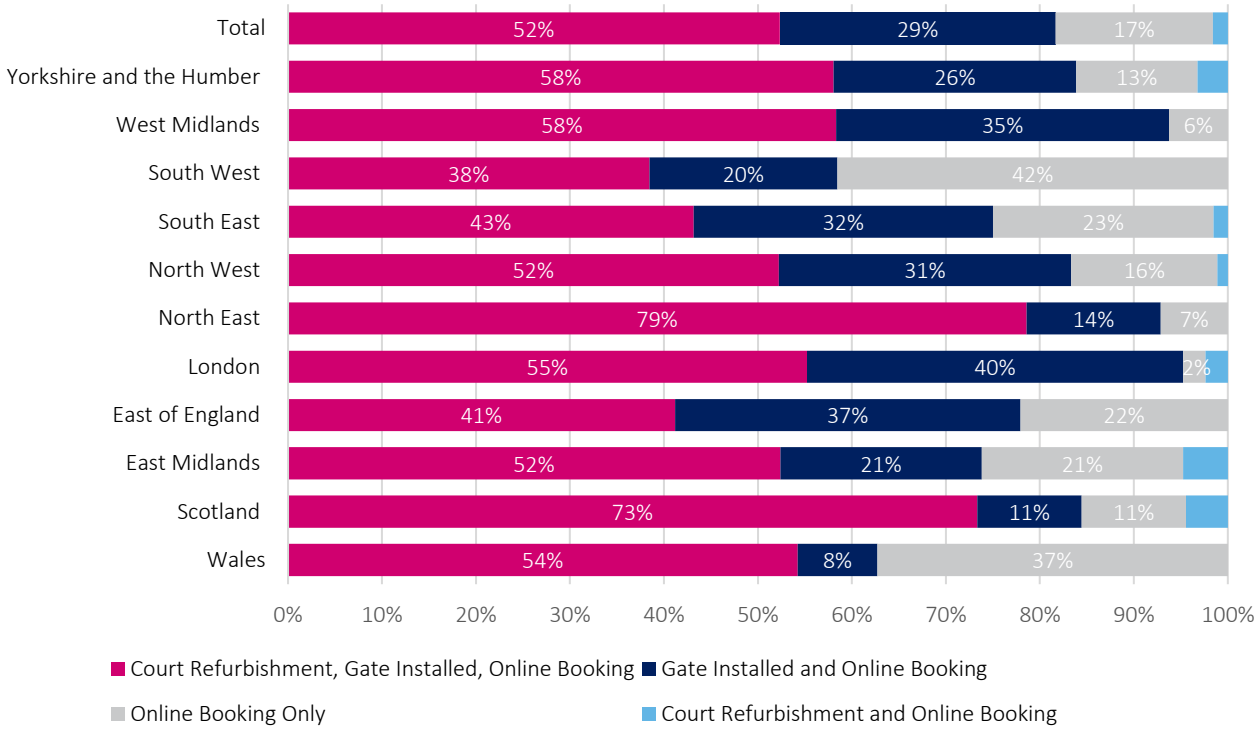
Figure 13: Size of grants awarded through the PTCR Programme

*Source: Park Tennis Court Renovation delivery data. Accessed 24th March 2025. Base n = 818. Includes projects supported by DCMS funding, LTA TF funding, LA contributions or a combination of both/all. Totals may not add up due to rounding. *These projects with £0 cost utilised alternative funding sources or resources not directly allocated through the PTCR Programme, resulting in no attributable costs to the Programme itself although are considered in scope of the Programme*

3.2.2.4. Funded Project Types

Figure 14 provides a breakdown of the types of projects funded by the PTCR Programme across various regions, as of March 2025. Out of 818 completed projects, the most frequent project type was completing a court refurbishment, gate installation, and an online booking system. Conversely, projects involving court refurbishment and an online booking system but excluding gate installation were the least frequent. Combined with the relative few projects involving online booking only, this indicates that only a small proportion of the courts refurbished already had controlled gate access.

Figure 14: PTCR - project type across regions

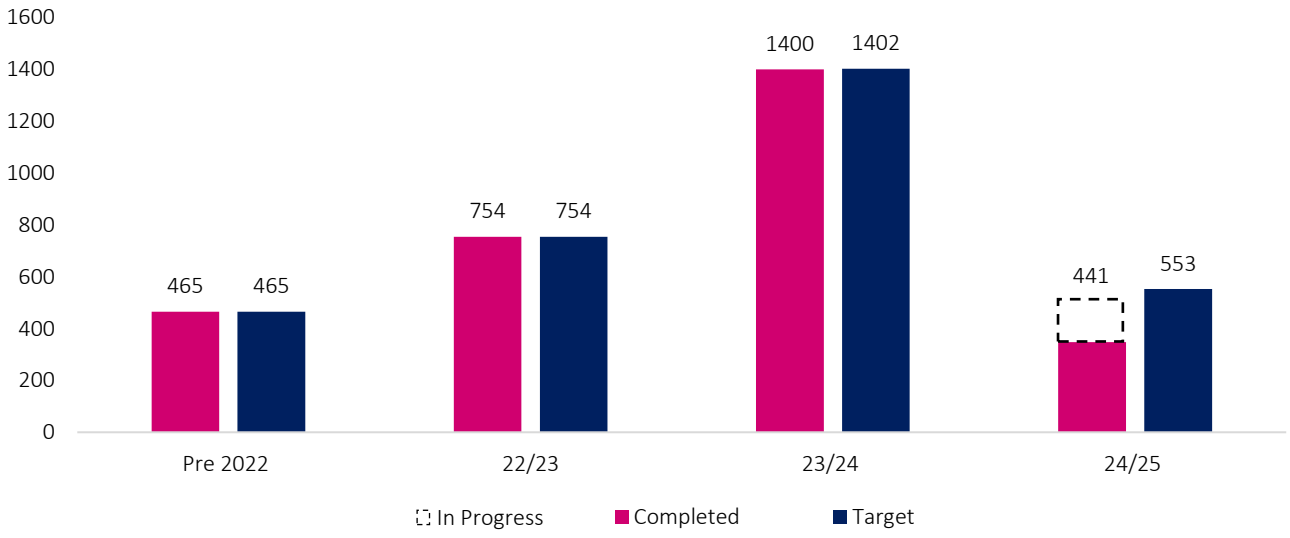


Source: Park Tennis Court Renovation delivery data. Accessed 24th March 2025. Base n = 818. Totals may not add up due to rounding

3.2.2.5. Projects Completed

Figure 15 shows the number of court renovations completed within the PTCR Programme to date, as well as those in progress in FY24/25. The data encompasses each financial year, including the 465 projects successfully completed through the LTA's pre-2022 investment. The graph demonstrates a peak in project delivery and completed projects during FY23/24. As anticipated, the number of completions has subsequently decreased due to the Programme's planned closure. Currently, 441 courts have either been completed or are in the progress of refurbishment out of the 553 target for FY24/25.

Figure 15: Number of courts renovations completed per financial year



Source: Analysis of PTCR Programme Delivery Reports provided by DCMS, based on LTA data. Of the 789 courts in FY24/25, 348 have been successfully completed while 93 are underway and projected to be completed by Programme closure.

3.3. Lionesses Futures Fund

3.3.1. Funding Allocation

The Lionesses Futures Fund (LFF), announced on 29th November 2023[23], represents a £30.0 million investment between 2024 and 2025, with £25.0 million contributed by DCMS and £5.0 million from the FA Group. This funding will support the development of 30 new artificial grass pitches (AGPs) along with various secondary facility improvements. The following sections provide an overview of the current data available on LFF delivery.

3.3.1.1. Projects Funded by Region

Table 11 provides a breakdown of grant sizes awarded to each facility and their corresponding regions within England, using the International Territorial Level (ITL) classification. While funding is relatively evenly distributed across most regions, the North East is the only region without a funded project in the latest available monitoring data. The regions with the highest concentration of projects (four each) are Yorkshire and The Humber, the North West, the South East, and the East of England.

Table 11: Breakdown of LFF funding committed as of March 2025

Region	Number of Grants	Value of Grants
East of England	4	£3.4 million
North West	4	£3.4 million
South East	4	£3.0 million
Yorkshire and The Humber	4	£2.9 million
East Midlands	3	£2.9 million
South West	2	£2.2 million
West Midlands	1	£0.6 million
London	1	£0.6 million
North East	0	£0.0 million

Source: LFF Programme information based on DCMS monitoring data as of 24th March 2025. Grant funding total figures rounded to the nearest £1k.

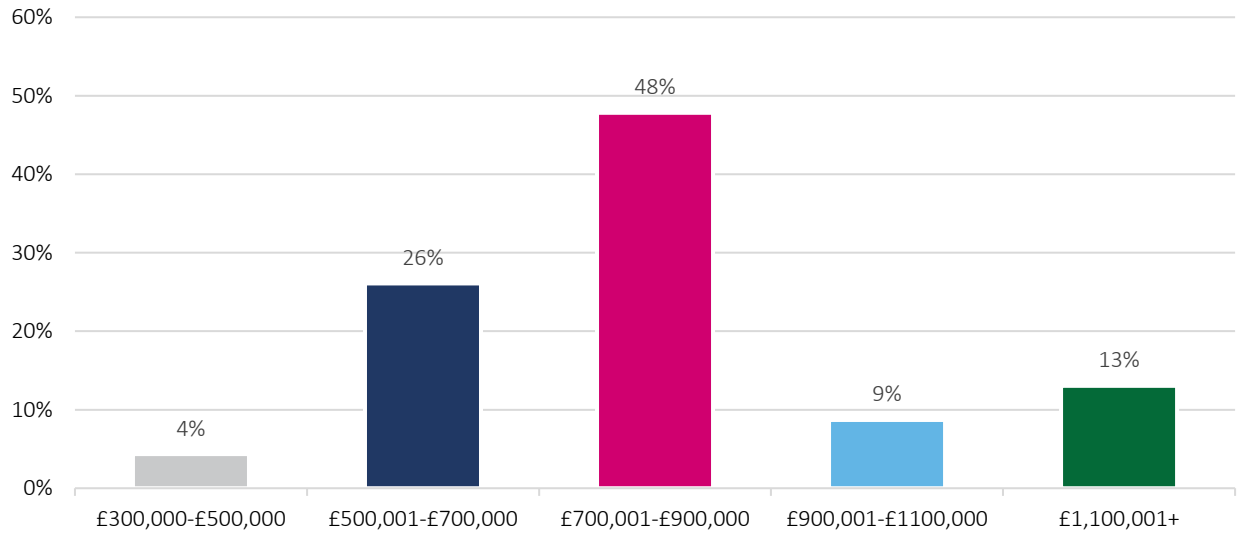
It is also important to note that this monitoring data was shared at a specific point in time and does not yet capture all facilities in scope of LFF funding. Section 4 sets out more detailed findings with regards to the early design and implementation of the Fund, including the plans in place to track progress and share data over the coming months.

3.3.1.2. Grant Size

The LFF specifically funds new AGPs for facilities, as well as a range of secondary facility enhancements. *Figure 16* outlines the distribution of grant funding, splitting it into bands:

[23] https://footballfoundation.org.uk/news/history-making-lionesses-recognised-with-the-lionesses-futures-fund

Figure 16: % of Projects Funded by Grant Size



Source: LFF Programme information based on DCMS monitoring data as of 24th March 2025. Totals may not add up due to rounding

Figure 16 shows the large majority of projects (48%) received £700,001-£900,000 in grant funding. A limited number of projects (4%) received less than £500,001, with the smallest grant size being £399,000. In contrast, the largest grant awarded was c.£1.4 million for a project converting a grass pitch into a full-size stadium and smaller sized 3G pitch. As of March 2025, the Lionesses Futures Fund had funded 23 projects, with an average grant size of c.£825,000.

3.3.1.3. Project Type

The LFF Programme, as previously noted, has funded 23 new AGPs across 23 unique facilities as of March 2025. While the primary focus has been on AGP development, some sites have received additional funding for complementary improvements, such as enhanced changing rooms or upgrades to existing grass pitches. Most of these AGPs will be converted from existing pitches, with one exception where a brand-new site is being developed. Data availability for the purpose of this evaluation is limited given that selection and delivery of funded sites is still underway. As delivery progresses, the evaluation will receive additional monitoring and reporting data from DCMS and the Football Foundation.

3.3.1.4. Success Measures

DCMS and the Football Foundation developed and agreed key success measures for the LFF. These measures encompass a range of objectives related to delivery, participation, priority access, and the creation of safer and more welcoming spaces. The specific targets detailed within these measures provide a framework for assessing the Programme's effectiveness and overall achievement. Throughout 2025, DCMS will also continue to monitor and collect data which will be shared prior to the final report and incorporated into the analysis to assess the performance of funding against these success measures. This will be supplemented by surveying activity, case studies and interviews with relevant Lionesses stakeholders.

Table 12 sets out the success measures agreed that the Football Foundation will regularly report to DCMS on in the coming months.

Table 12: Success measures for the Lionesses Programme

Category	Title	Success measure	Anticipated Performance with time frames
Participation	Female participants	Number of female participants at the facility	Added to monthly performance pack; compared to agreed Programme of Usage
	Sustained participation	% of women and girls returning to the site over a 6 monthly basis	*[Need to set target]*
	New participants	Number of additional (i.e. new) female participants	To be determined as part of evaluation plans
	AGPs	Number of new quality pitches	30 delivered by [date TBC]
Delivery	AGP delivery milestones within this	Application submitted	30 by October 2024
		Grants confirmed	30 by 31 March 2025
		Sites started	30 by 30 Jun 2025
		Sites operational	30 by 31 Dec 2025
Priority Access	Team sessions	% of facilities with 30% female team sessions (all hours outside of curricular bookings)	100%
	High demand/peak slots	% of facilities with 50% 'high demand'/peak slots used by women and girls (18:00-21:00, Mon-Fri - Sep-April)	50%
		% of female users reporting sufficient availability for their needs	Defined in evaluation plans
		% of facilities with over 30% 'high demand'/peak slots used by women (18:00-21:00, Mon-Fri - Sep-April)	100%
	W&G only evenings	Number of facilities offering 1 or more W&G only evening(s) (18:00-21:00)	Target set by Plan Of Usage
		Number of facilities offering more than 1 W&G only evening (18:00-21:00)	Target set by Plan Of Usage
	Player Pathway	Number of clubs/education settings with a full player pathway	100%
Safe, welcoming spaces	High quality facilities	Number of sites with appropriate male and female toilets/changing facilities	30
	W&G lead	Number of sites with a W&G lead in place	30
	Safe and welcoming rating	% of female participants reporting safe/welcoming at the site	To be determine in evaluation plans

Source: LFF Programme information based on DCMS monitoring data as of 23rd February 2025.

4. Process Evaluation: Interim Findings

This chapter considers both the MSGF and PTCR Programmes and the learnings from design, delivery and implementation explored through this process evaluation. This work builds upon the information, data, and evidence presented in the initial interim report. Its purpose is to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the Programmes in delivering intended outputs and outcomes, and to identify learnings applicable to their future delivery and future Government funding.

It is also important to note that this interim evaluation only considered the initial design and set-up of the Lionesses Futures Fund, part of the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme, recognising that delivery is still in early phases and impacts and outcomes will have yet to fully materialise. This focused on the early set-up of the Programme, communication and coordination between stakeholders, and the approach to Programme monitoring and reporting, and further analysis and evaluation will be conducted and included within the final evaluation report.

The interim findings for the MSGF Programme and their applicability to particular stakeholders recognising the responsibilities across the Delivery Partner landscape, is indicated next to each thematic heading.

Process Evaluation: Key Headline Findings

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

- Application Process: **Approaches to the application process remained broadly consistent** across the Home Nations over the past 12 months. These continued to iteratively improve, with a focus on flexibility according to each Home Nations' specific needs, although **stakeholders continued to raise considerations about improvement to KPIs**, particularly those on multi-sport and deprivation which were felt to need the most refinement. (E/S/W/NI)

- Stakeholder Relationships: **DCMS and Delivery Partners have strengthened and improved relationships**, maintaining the enthusiasm and professionalism that has characterised working relationships. Collaboration was more efficient and created less burden for all parties, although **internal changes at DCMS required upskilling of new staff and some periods of vacancy** for particular roles. (E/S/W/NI)

- Programme Monitoring: Processes are largely unchanged in the last 12 months, with **mixed views from stakeholders on the suitability of some of the reporting tools** in place. Some suggested the potential **benefits of increased automation and improved system compatibility** could reduce workload and improve reliability and accuracy of data. (S/W/NI)

- Project Delivery: **Delivery continued at pace** in all Home Nations, with stakeholders noting **increased effectiveness and efficiency given improved experience** of project delivery. (S/W/NI)

- Perceived Achievement of Outcomes: Stakeholders again universally agreed that **participation and physical activity had increased at funded facilities, particularly for women and girls**. Similarly to the previous interim report's findings, stakeholders suggested that **impacts may have benefitted existing players in particular** but were clear on the need for causal analysis to draw conclusions. (E/S/W/NI)

- Future Delivery: Stakeholders emphasised the **importance of supporting the development of the wider ecosystem**, of which capital investment in grassroots sports facilities is a key component. Stakeholders felt that funding that could compliment facility improvements **(e.g. workforce, community relationships and targeted Programme initiatives for particular groups)** could further encourage participation. (E/S/W/NI)

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

- Initial Needs Based Assessment: Previous concerns regarding experience of technical staff and potential financial risks had been resolved, with project delivery progressing at pace over the last 12 months.
- Stakeholder Relationships: Stakeholders were clear on the benefits of engaging with the LTA and the valuable experience they had developed in leading large scale, high-volume capital investment projects. LTA and DCMS staff believed **relationships had continued to be a core success of the Programme and enabled more efficient and effective Programme administration.**
- Project Delivery: Project delivery has continued to be perceived as efficient and effective, with a continued **high volume of court renovations completed within a constrained period of time**. Isolated **instances of vandalism have been handled quickly and professionally**, and had no financial impact on the Programme.
- Programme Monitoring Data: Programme monitoring has **continued to be efficient and effective**, supported by strong communication and transparency between DCMS and the LTA.
- Perceived Achievement of Outcomes: Stakeholders cited LTA evidence of increased participation, including booking data and primary surveys of participants and venues. **Causal analysis was suggested to be a critical next step in demonstrating success of the Programmes**.
- Programme Closure: Programme closure has been smooth and efficient, with **positive conclusions from an internal DCMS review focused on Programme closure processes**. Stakeholders did acknowledge that more comprehensive planning could have decreased the length of the closure period.

Lionesses Futures Fund

- Fund design and implementation: **Success measures were developed at an early stage** that shaped facility selection and enabled monitoring data and reporting processes to be agreed, although it was noted that **striking the balance between achievability and ambition was challenging**.
- Facility Selection: Funding was announced at short notice, and this had a **material impact on DCMS and the Football Foundations' ability to select appropriate facilities to receive funding**. An approach with further planning might have enabled an improved project pipeline, potentially leading to greater impacts.
- Stakeholder Relationships: Stakeholder **relationships developed through the MSGF Programme were invaluable** and allowed for more effective communication. The burden of requests during the development of the **DCMS business case on stakeholders created strain but was successfully delivered and approved.** Appointing **designated individuals as central points of contact** worked well in enabling this.
- Programme Monitoring: Programme monitoring was at an early stage, but **processes had been built into existing reporting**, improving efficiency and effectiveness.
- Incorporating learnings: Stakeholders emphasised the value of further integrating Programme learnings and objectives with the wider MSGF Programme. This had already been seen in delivery of core elements of women and girls' initiatives by some stakeholders.

4.1. The Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

4.1.1. Application Process

This section considers the application processes and awarding of funding across the Home Nations, and how this has developed over the last 12 months. Each Delivery Partner in the Home Nations maintained their own approach in determining which facilities would be granted Programme funding. The importance of this flexibility was re-emphasised by stakeholders, given the differing scale and maturity of funding infrastructure across the responsible organisations, and enabled Home Nations to tailor and adapt their decision-making. Further detail on these specific applications processes is detailed in the initial interim evaluation report.

Whilst these processes have predominantly remained the same, and the iterative improvements highlighted previously by stakeholders are continuing to have benefit, stakeholders have also considered additional ways in which these could be improved going forwards.

4.1.1.1. Multi-Sport

The applicability and eligibility of 'multi-sport' projects was raised on a number of occasions and acknowledged as an area that both DCMS and Delivery Partners will continue to look to refine. Stakeholders noted the difficulty in evaluating applications that predicted multi-sport usage above that of other projects, that may not have necessarily delivered the predicted level of multi-sport. Stakeholders perceived a risk that this could disproportionately influence selection of projects that received funding based on stronger predicted outcomes rather than realistic delivery.

"What constitutes a multi-sport project? Is it one hour a week, five hours a week, 10 hours? Some clubs fluffed it up and made it look more than it was so they got more marks than they should have." (Delivery Partner)

Others also noted that particular projects that excelled in one KPI but fell short in another (e.g. a core focus on women and girls' usage but less focus on multi-sport), could lead to examples of projects that may have substantially benefitted particular demographics or target participants, not receiving funding in favour of projects with broader aims. These projects with less singular focus inherently had a strategic advantage in the application process over more focused projects, even if the potential benefits of the more focused projects may have been larger. Stakeholders suggested that this led to difficulties in ensuring consistent scoring approaches, within nations as well as across the wider portfolio.

4.1.1.2. Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

One of the current KPIs by which applications are assessed is to ensure that at least 50% of funding is distributed to areas with an IMD of 4 or below. Whilst this has been achieved, stakeholders considered this metric too broad, particularly given the varying levels of deprivation within the geographic granularity of this metric. Stakeholders suggested this KPI considering the IMD alone would not appropriately capture deprivation levels. It was highlighted that this metric also did not consider the characteristics of those actually attending a facility, and that there were numerous anecdotal examples of a facility existing in a less deprived area that actually hosted many individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Stakeholders suggested there could be value in leveraging Delivery Partners understanding of local need during the project selection process, but also emphasised proportionality and the importance of not over-restricting funding with overly complex or burdensome rules, and to maintain a level of flexibility to mitigate risks of geographical clustering of projects.

"And statistically how we look at what classes as a deprived area could be reviewed, and trying to make sure that we're not disadvantaging particular areas or groups that may have been identified during this Programme" (DCMS)

4.1.1.3. Project Eligibility

Stakeholders also suggested that lessons had been learned with regards to eligibility of projects and their ability to start work, with some project delays being created as a result of further planning or permissions that were required before work could begin at certain sites. As a result, stakeholders suggested that conversations were underway to consider introducing initial specific eligibility checks to confirm applicants meet the application criteria with regards to consents and planning permission before proceeding to the full application. This would prevent unnecessary time and effort being spent on a full application process by both the applicant and the Delivery Partner and allow focus on eligible projects and delivering funding as effectively and efficiently as possible.

4.1.1.4. Financial Year allocations

Delivery Partner staff re-iterated the challenge of allocating and delivering funding within financial year allocations[24]. This included the differing timelines of the football season and financial year calendars, in combination with often poor weather conditions over the winter period, making delivery by the end of the financial year challenging.

"What they have adapted to is an evidence of spend rather [than] project completion by the 31st of March, which has been really beneficial to us" (Delivery Partner)

Delivery Partners noted the flexibility that DCMS showed however, in enabling work to continue where appropriate and being supportive in the completion of funded projects. Adjustments allowed facilities to demonstrate expenditure through expected spend and plans, rather than requiring all funds to be spent during the financial year, with final completion deadlines extended from March to June.

Observation: consider and review the assessment criteria applied to future application processes for funding, including the relative weighting of KPIs compared to one another (DCMS)

4.1.2. Stakeholder Relationships

This section focuses on the relationships between DCMS and Delivery Partners, and how these have evolved over the previous 12 months. Overall, stakeholders were consistent in their characterisation of positive and productive working relationships supported by strong communication, collaboration and a shared commitment to achieving optimal outcomes.

The initial interim evaluation report outlined findings from Delivery Partners with regards to resourcing and capacity within each organisation. In the previous 12 months, stakeholders reported that workloads had become more manageable. This improvement was attributed in part to the additional resource funding[25], as well as clearer asks of Delivery Partners from DCMS, with more time allowed for responses, recognising the findings previously highlighted on this point. Both Delivery Partners and DCMS emphasised the importance of close communication and periodic reviews of resource requirements to maintain this progress.

The frequency of requests also reduced due to DCMS having a better understanding of specific Programme priorities and demands, allowing DCMS staff to manage internal and external stakeholders, which in turn reduced the burden on Delivery Partners. Clearer work structures and the adoption of digital tools such as Trello and Microsoft's live updates (Microsoft Loop) further increased efficiency.

[24] Financial year allocations refer to governmental rules of spend allocated within a financial year by the end of that period. This is further set out as part of Managing Public Money https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money

[25] As noted in the initial interim report, additional resource funding was given to the Scottish Football Association, the Irish Football Association, and the Cymru Football Foundation to employ additional staff members.

"There's been no issue at all. If anything, it's just very positive communication across the two teams" (Delivery Partner)

Whilst Delivery Partners were clear that the overall process and burden of requests for information from DCMS had improved, many still thought this would benefit from further improvement, and organisations should continue to frequently communicate and share challenges or blockers as they emerge.

4.1.2.1. Resourcing

There have not been substantial changes to DCMS's overall resource administering the Programme, and over the course of the Programme resourcing has increased, but DCMS and Delivery Partners did acknowledge the impact of staff churn within the DCMS team. Whilst no material impacts on delivery were experienced, the onboarding of new staff with limited knowledge of the Programme required time and capacity from existing staff in DCMS and Delivery Partner organisations. Whilst organisational stakeholder relationships were still strong, at the working-level staff needed to become familiar with ways of working and appropriate contact points, which again took some adjustment from both DCMS and Delivery Partners.

Within DCMS, there was a period of vacancy for some roles that provided some resourcing challenges, which necessitated a shift in wider team resourcing to accommodate urgent demands for a period of approximately two months. However, stakeholders reported that this was handled well and again had no material impact on the administration or governance of the Programme.

Internally within organisations, stakeholders consistently reported improvements in internal communication throughout the Programme. The value of collaborating across different internal teams for enhanced understanding and context was also emphasised; in particular, the finance department in DCMS were highlighted as a key team that the delivery team had developed closer working relationships with. This allowed the organisation to better manage any under or over-spends, the distribution of funding and upcoming allocations.

4.1.2.2. Departmental change

DCMS staff also noted the change in Government and the period of departmental change that followed this in onboarding new Ministers and their teams, but noted positive relationships were maintained. It was also suggested that in the months following this, staff and Ministers have continued to utilise their positive relationships with the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as the Programme's benefits have had further time to materialise and be recognised in these areas, supporting further conversations regarding current and future delivery of funding.

Observation: DCMS and Delivery Partners communication on resourcing is important to maintain effective delivery and governance of the Programme. (DCMS & S/W/NI)

4.1.3. Programme Monitoring

This section focuses on ongoing monitoring and reporting processes and project delivery within the Programme over the last 12 months. While Programme monitoring and delivery processes remained largely unchanged and were generally perceived as working well, feedback on the use of the reporting tool continued to be mixed. Some stakeholders commented on its usefulness, particularly as a reference document and the flexibility that it provided them in updating in real-time. However, others considered it an additional burden that duplicated their own internal reporting and believed it could be further streamlined.

"[The reporting tool] acts as a good reference point for us" (Delivery Partner)

Furthermore, stakeholders suggested the potential benefits of increased automation and improved system compatibility to reduce workload. Stakeholders suggested that there had been instances where Google and Microsoft platform compatibility issues had created delays or errors within documents, creating challenges when collaborating. The same consideration for future Programmes was highlighted, both the DCMS team and Delivery Partners expressed an interest for a standardised and professional delivery monitoring platform. They believe a more intuitive interface and a user-friendly platform would streamline data input, minimising burden on all parties and encouraging more frequent and accurate updates.

4.1.4. Project Delivery

This section evaluates project delivery progress across the Programme. Overall, project delivery continued smoothly, with a high volume of projects completed in the past year. In particular, Delivery Partners noted increased efficiency due to this being the Programme's fourth year.

Project delivery continued throughout the last 12 months, with stakeholders noting that this had remained a stable and consistent process. As highlighted in Section 3 and Section 5, delivery continued across all Home Nations. One additional point of note however, was discussions around unintended consequences at funded sites, particularly vandalism. Whilst only experienced very infrequently, it is something some stakeholders highlighted as a rare consequence of the Programme. On those few sites it has affected, there is a risk that this may have contributed to a decrease in participation due to sites being damaged and individuals feeling less safe, in addition to the time and cost incurred by facilities, volunteers, and the taxpayer, to repair this damage. Stakeholders have suggested that Delivery Partners and volunteers were quick to implement repairs and adapt approaches based on learnings from other facilities where vandalism has declined since receipt of funding, and that communication and collaboration with the community was key in preserving the long-term quality of the facilities.

“There was also reported vandalism at a very small number of MSGF sites, but the issues have since been resolved.” (DCMS)

Observation: address interoperability between platforms to create a single source of truth and streamline data entry and reporting processes (DCMS)

4.1.5. Perceptions of Achievement of Outcomes

This section discusses stakeholders’ overall perception of the extent to which the Programme has met its intended objectives and outcomes. It is important to note that this is also further explored as part of the impact evaluation in this interim report, in Section 7, and that this section specifically focuses on anecdotal views provided by stakeholders as part of interviews and case studies. Overall, stakeholders have perceived the Programme’s impacts over the last 12 months as remaining positive, aligning with the findings of the initial interim evaluation report and the Programme’s original objectives as outlined in the business case. This was again primarily anecdotally evidenced, with a consistent acknowledgement of the difficulty of confirming the exact impact without individual participation data or causal analysis. This was also true for breakdowns of participation for women and girls, ethnic minority groups and other groups funding was focused on supporting. Regarding other funding allocation KPIs, stakeholders generally thought these had all been met, although some felt that there was more work to be done to fully eliminate the postcode lottery for quality sports facilities.

"We’re all really quite proud of what we've achieved" (Delivery Partner)

“We've got a lot of anecdotal and qualitative information that suggests that participation is increasing and improving, but I don't think we've got enough data yet” (DCMS)

Case Study: Underhill Park (Mumbles Community Association)

Underhill Park, located near Swansea, received funding to construct a **full-size all-weather dual-use 3G pitch** to help maintain and increase usage from the local community.

Before the pitch was constructed, **teams used low-quality grass pitches**, and many **games had to be postponed due to the impacts of the weather**. The development of the all-weather pitch has enabled significantly more training and matches to go ahead. Local teams have reported the increasing training and enhanced quality of the playing surface has created a positive impact on their performance in local matches.

Additionally, specific design features of the pitch have also been useful for increasing participation. The **floodlighting included with the pitch enables it to be open later**, facilitating an increase in usage. Furthermore, the decision to ensure a full-size pitch was constructed instead of smaller pitch size alternatives has allowed an **increased number of teams to be accommodated at the site**. 33 different football teams from Mumbles Rangers and Newton Athletic train each week during the season, plus 12 different rugby teams from Mumbles Rugby club. Facility managers suggested that this number of teams could only be accommodated because of the size of the pitch which enables multiple teams to train at the same time.

Together with the pitch, **previously renovated changing and café facilities have increased interest in football and rugby participation**, and stakeholders highlighted the impact seen particularly amongst women and girls. **The Mumbles Rangers Girls' team is now able to regularly train and host games on the pitch**. The site is now also able to operate 'pay and play' sessions for young people during school holidays as well as host sessions for **Football Fun Factory and summer 'huddles', increasing participation of children**. Stakeholders suggested the positive impacts of the pitch had impacted participation fundamentally, and in a sustainable way for the local community.

Whilst there was limited evidence available to stakeholders that demonstrated increased participation of new individuals, stakeholders suggested anecdotal examples of this, in particular the perceived increase in participation amongst women and girls. They indicated that investment had increased session frequency, facility accessibility and geographical reach, all of which are expected to contribute to attracting new participants.

There was also a prevalent perception that sustained and retained participation had been most positively impacted. Stakeholders viewed the funding as overwhelmingly positive in this regard, noting though that this was not an explicit objective of the Programme. Delivery Partners suggested that retaining participation was a core achievement of the Programme that risked being under-recognised based on its current objectives. Particularly in the context of men's football where participation is already generally considered high, there can be limited opportunities to substantially increase participation. Thus, retaining a player base and improving the experience of participants attending a site can be core to maintaining physical activity rates in an area, and preventing the costs of people ceasing their participation and the negative consequences of this at an individual and societal level.

Many interviewees and case study participants outlined the contrasting landscape for women and girls, where the potential for increased participation and overall growth remained high. Enabling facilities to be considered as safe and welcoming venues is a core part of improving this participation and ensuring its retention, and stakeholders were hugely positive about the direct anecdotal impacts of this. They suggested that women and girls tend to be more discerning about the environment in which they play and are more likely to be deterred by less appealing facilities. This is further evidenced by Sport England research[26], which found that access to good quality changing facilities can remove barriers to female participation in sport. Again, however, stakeholders acknowledged the need for causal quantitative evidence in determining the extent to which increases in participation could be associated with the funding directly.

[26] https://www.sportengland.org/news-and-inspiration/guidance-help-make-leisure-facilities-safer-women-and-girls

"Whenever you go out, you clearly see the increase in young girls. There's a rise in more girls getting involved." (Delivery Partner)

Other stakeholders commented on the funding's importance to facilities located in more deprived areas of the UK, for example, by facilitating opportunities for children to engage in sports through providing a free space to play between the end of the school day and the start of training sessions, at the weekends and during school holidays. Initiatives in these communities have had genuine benefits on community cohesion and pride in place for many residents, and there are many anecdotal examples of noticeable decreases in vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Delivery Partners highlighted the role of active involvement from the community and local residents in the development of projects to maximise the impacts of these collaborative efforts in achieving meaningful change. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of maintaining strong, long-term relationships with facilities to effectively monitor the Programme and track funding benefits. One Delivery Partner detailed their ongoing plans for implementing post-award assurance and the recent culture shift within the organisation towards demonstrating the funding impacts.

Observation: continue ongoing work to improve post-award assurance with beneficiaries of funding to enable better understanding of the achievement of objectives, outcomes, and impacts. (DCMS & E/S/W/NI)

4.1.6. Future Delivery

Whilst there are ongoing discussions regarding the future funding landscape for grassroots sports facilities, stakeholders are actively discussing ideas and improvements for any potential future funding, that were discussed as part of interviews and case studies. In addition to the assessment criteria points discussed in Section 4.1.1, stakeholders also suggested there could be greater emphasis on other aspects of the sports ecosystem which support additional participation in future funding opportunities. Delivery Partners highlighted the use of workforce and Programme initiatives alongside grant funding of capital infrastructure as being core parts of this ecosystem that would support additional participation.

"In terms of factors that influence participation growth - facilities is one big factor, but it is not the only factor." (Delivery Partner)

Many case study participants also highlighted the value of engagement from Delivery Partners and central government in local communities, and ensuring the impacts of funding were visible and accessible to all. There were a number of spillover benefits from funding that stakeholders felt could be more of a focus in future funding, for example projects occurring in local parks having spillover effects for park usage and maintenance.

4.1.7. Conclusion

Overall, stakeholders have broadly viewed the past year of the Programme positively, highlighting successful project delivery and strong DCMS and Delivery Partner relationships. While application processes remained largely consistent, areas for improvement were identified and implemented. Whilst discussions continued regarding the most appropriate assessment criteria and definitions for evaluation of projects, these were highlighted in the initial interim evaluation report and continue to be reviewed by DCMS and Delivery Partners as part of future funding considerations.

Challenges related to financial year allocations have improved, with DCMS's flexibility in allowing evidence of expected spend rather than full expenditure within the financial year critical for delivery in many instances. Improved communication, clearer work structures, and digital tools enhanced stakeholder collaboration, although, staff turnover within DCMS necessitated ongoing onboarding and adjustments. Programme monitoring processes functioned well overall, though feedback on the reporting tool remained mixed, with

suggestions for increased automation and improved platform compatibility. Isolated incidents of vandalism at funded sites were noted, but community involvement and proactive repairs mitigated the impact.

Stakeholders therefore perceived the overall Programme as remarkably successful in achieving its objectives, particularly in sustaining participation, though acknowledging the lack of robust quantitative data available at this stage. Anecdotal evidence particularly suggests positive impacts on women and girls' participation, attributed to greatly improved quality and accessibility of facilities. particularly, attributed to greatly improved facility quality and accessibility of facilities. Retaining existing participation, particularly in men's football, was also highlighted as a key achievement. Finally, future funding considerations included greater emphasis on supporting the broader sports ecosystem, such as workforce development, and highlighting the spillover benefits of projects within local communities.

4.1.8. Next Steps

The Programme's funding and its impacts will continue to be monitored by DCMS and Delivery Partners over the next 12 months, and interviews and case studies will be re-conducted ahead of the final evaluation report. Additional monitoring data and survey data will also be available to support any additional conclusions and findings.

4.2. The Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

4.2.1. Initial Needs Based Assessment

This section considers additional evidence and observations on the initial needs-based assessment conducted when selecting the venues in scope. Since previous data collection undertaken for the initial interim report, the process for identifying and selecting venues with courts in need of intervention remained unchanged.

Stakeholders, including the LTA and DCMS, clearly re-emphasised the benefits of this process and the value brought to this by the LTA. The established governance processes, structure of the organisation and the experience and knowledge of delivery developed by the organisation were cited by multiple stakeholders as significantly contributing to the efficient and effective delivery of the Programme.

Initial concerns were raised (by both LTA and DCMS staff) regarding the detail in technical surveys conducted by contractors, particularly given the volume of work across numerous venues. While some projects incurred higher costs due to initial desktop assessments and reliance on local knowledge, leading to underestimation of work required as court conditions further deteriorated between assessment and commencement of works, stakeholders reported that mitigations were implemented. Subsequent technical visits ensured accurate assessments, and this issue has not been raised as a challenge in subsequent months.

As part of the previous interim report, some stakeholders also noted the financial risk taken on by the LTA as part of the initial needs-based assessment. Financial risks could be incurred based only on an agreement in principle with the local authority or council, who could remove their support at any stage and potentially lead to unnecessary expense. However, despite the risk, again there was no evidence of this occurring during delivery of the Programme based on information provided by DCMS or the LTA.

Sites that were chosen were deemed to be the most potentially impactful based on several criteria and KPIs[27]:

- Participation: whether it was expected that sites would deliver additional participants, including those from under-represented groups;
- Deprivation: whether the facility falls into the top five IMD deciles;
- Booking system: whether the facility will be accessible to book on the LTA's digital booking platform ClubSpark;
- Free weekly tennis offer: whether the facility will be able to participate in the LTA's Free Park Tennis Programme; and
- Programmed activity: whether the facility is able to deliver activities such as group coaching or flexible competition.

A small number of stakeholders felt that the Programme could have either been more ambitious or more targeted in its focus on deprivation in particular. Whilst the KPI defined was clear and achievable, leading to effective funding distribution to some deprived areas, some felt that more could have been done in defining this KPI at such a level as to encourage greater focus on participation in deprived areas, as well as areas outside of Greater London and the South. For example, the funding per capita in London was £0.77 (£6.9 million spent in total), whereas the region with the lowest funding per capita was Yorkshire and the Humber with £0.17 (only £1.0 million committed in total). However, it is important to note that the flexibility in the regional spend of the Programme was constrained by the geographical distribution of existing park tennis courts, and that the Programme has no influence over this.

Observation: continue to review the way in which technical resource is involved in capital investment Programmes, particularly within earlier stages of design, planning and development of a Programme.

[27] As set out in the PTCR business case developed by DCMS

4.2.2. Stakeholder Relationships

This section highlights the relationships between DCMS, the LTA and wider stakeholders, specifically focusing on the impacts on Programme delivery. Overall, collaboration has been consistently positive with strong communication, effective teamwork and a shared dedication to achieving the best results throughout the previous 12 months, building on the existing strong relationships in place.

Both DCMS and LTA stakeholders emphasised strong internal communication and collaboration throughout the Programme, particularly once initial challenges had been overcome (these are highlighted in the previous interim report). The transparency between organisations was highlighted as a key strength by all stakeholders, meaning any emerging risks or issues could be handled quickly and efficiently. This was enabled by the internal structures and creation of a dedicated team within the LTA, who were able to use their experience and knowledge to facilitate efficient delivery. These staff were also provided targeted training to deliver the Programme successfully in a number of key areas (e.g. communications, technical assurance, leadership etc).

Given the latest phase of the Programme, and activity reducing over the last few months, stakeholders noted their reduction in communication, but were clear this was solely due to the status of the Programme and proportionate to the amount of engagement required. Previous concerns noted in the initial interim evaluation report with regards to short-notice requests for information and evidence had reduced in frequency and scale, primarily as a result of the Programme's status, but also as a result of improved efficiency and knowledge of stakeholders from both DCMS and the LTA, who were able to strengthen their ongoing working relationships over the past 12 months.

"It's remained a really strong stakeholder relationship between DCMS, Delivery Partners, very transparent in their reporting of delivery progress." (DCMS)

Whilst communication with contractors responsible for conducting refurbishment works has been largely positive, stakeholders anecdotally mentioned there have been a few isolated instances of challenges, primarily where contractors were employed across multiple sites. Changes in weather conditions and the seasonal dependency of the refurbishment activity has occasionally led to contractors starting work at a different facility than originally planned, without informing the site. Stakeholders shared examples where, in some instances, participants were using the courts when the contractors arrived. To address this however, the LTA identified this issue and worked quickly to develop a construction work schedule to keep Local Authorities up to date and contacted with any proposed changes to timings of works.

"If it's raining in one area of the country, they go somewhere else, but the challenge that we have is trying to get local authorities aware that actually you're going to have someone turning up at very short notice." (Delivery Partner)

Observation: maintain strong relationships developed between DCMS and LTA staff, in order to support ongoing data and knowledge sharing, and to facilitate robust benefits realisation management in the longer term.

4.2.3. Project Delivery

This section focuses on the efficiency and effectiveness of court renovations delivered through the Programme. Stakeholders again emphasised the strength of the Programme resource in place to deliver, from both the LTA and DCMS's perspective, and agreed that the knowledge and experience of stakeholders was critical to successful delivery, and minimising risks and issues that may occur. Resource demands from both DCMS and the LTA decreased within the last 12 months, given the Programme closure processes underway and the redeployment of delivery staff within the LTA. DCMS staff also noted the decreased internal demands from senior management and Ministers. Stakeholders noted the consistent presence of primary DCMS and LTA

contacts enabling smooth and efficient delivery during the last 12 months, although competing pressures internally within DCMS did at times lead to a reprioritisation of resource onto other urgent internal matters.

A small number of stakeholders, similarly to the findings described in the initial interim evaluation report, identified challenges relating to the allocation of funding within one financial year and poor weather conditions occasionally delaying construction and subsequently project completions. It was agreed however, that stakeholders had worked together to mitigate the risks resulting from this and had adapted their approaches to maximise the impact of delivery within the constraints of the funding mechanism.

During stakeholder interviews and case studies, a small number of isolated instances of vandalism were reported at recently refurbished venues, and the subsequent impacts on the number of participants, staff resources and budgets. Whilst important to be clear that these incidences were very few and far between, with the vast majority of sites not experiencing these issues, those venues that did experience vandalism were likely to see repeated instances of damaged equipment and infrastructure. The LTA worked closely with impacted venues and the relevant Local Authorities, to repair, refurbish or replace broken locks and entry gates, as well as occurrences of graffitiing over courts, signage, and fencing. In addition to the costs associated with these issues, stakeholders were also required to invest time and effort communicating and coordinating when addressing the issues. In the first instance the financial responsibility was that of the Local Authority, although the LTA and contractors worked with Local Authorities to support where required. DCMS did not provide further funding for these repairs.

"[With regard to vandalism] Luckily it's been very, very isolated and we've been able to work well with local authorities to put remedies in place." (Delivery Partner)

Various mitigation strategies were implemented to curb vandalism, including enhanced gate security, open-door policies and increased signage. While some sites observed a decrease in vandalism following these interventions, others, experienced persistent issues despite mitigation efforts. Stakeholders felt that this may impact participation and would also impact those LAs ability to sustain and maintain the courts in future where revenues were unable to be collected.

"Our first starting point when we have vandalism is trying to understand what's happening, what people are doing, what they're vandalising, then try and find a solution around that to see if we continue sort of operating them on a booking closed basis, if not the last port of call that we have is we might have to just leave some sites that are open without a gate or with a gate, but no sort of locking mechanism." (Delivery Partner)

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of knowledge sharing, suggesting that the Programme could benefit from insights gained through the successful implementation of some of the MSGF facilities, where vandalism has reportedly declined since investments were delivered. By understanding these learnings, venues that have refurbished courts through the Programme can further minimise the occurrence and impacts of vandalism.

Observation: ongoing Programme monitoring and data sharing could consider reporting of instances of vandalism or damage, to enable the LTA and DCMS to understand these impacts at a Programme level

4.2.4. Programme Monitoring

This section considers the Programme monitoring and reporting processes in place, and specifically how these processes have changed over the last 12 months. Overall, stakeholders have reported that Programme monitoring has consistently functioned effectively and efficiently. The LTA has continued to share monthly 'delivery reports' containing key Programme information, which have been described as clear and concise. This process has been iteratively improved through the collaborative effort of all parties in agreeing the template,

ensuring it meets the specific needs of DCMS whilst being part of a smooth and consistent reporting process for the LTA (e.g. similar reports are shared with the LTA's Tennis Board and the Tennis Foundation). This enables the reports to serve as the primary data monitoring tool across organisations, streamlining data management and harmonising understanding of stakeholders.

Another significant strength highlighted was the inclusion of an emerging issues and potential risks section within the delivery reports. This proactive risk management initiative allowed for the timely identification and mitigation of potential concerns, promoting transparency and control.

"They'll flag anything that could be going to escalate from a risk to an issue" (DCMS)

In regard to further developing the approach, stakeholders emphasised the importance of enhancing automation and improving system interoperability to streamline workflows and reduce manual effort further. The current difference between Google and Microsoft platforms has introduced some difficulties in collaborative work. Specifically, transferring spreadsheets between these platforms has occasionally led to technical glitches and an increased risk of human error.

Observation: ongoing Programme monitoring and data sharing could consider reporting of instances of vandalism or damage, to enable the LTA and DCMS to understand these impacts at a Programme level

4.2.5. Perceptions of Achievement of Outcomes

This section discusses stakeholders' perception of the extent to which the Programme has met its intended objectives and outcomes. This section considers the anecdotal views provided through interviews and case studies, but the achievement of outcomes is further explored as part of the impact evaluation in Section 5.

Overall, stakeholders continued to describe the Programme's impacts as hugely positive in a number of ways, consistent with the initial interim evaluation report. These positive impacts included uplifts in participation, particularly among women and girls, and young people. With regards to impacts on participation for example, many stakeholders referenced booking data and survey data that has been collected by ClubSpark and the LTA.

"The aim was to increase the annual participation in parks players by 500,000 to one million across Great Britain. The LTA said in terms of their forecasts, it's 528,415 based on their analysis of participation rates." (DCMS)

Whilst interviewees and case study participants noted the absence of explicit causal evidence of the impacts of the Programme at this stage, these individuals were keen to stress the material impacts they had anecdotally experienced. Stakeholders shared stories of users that had benefitted from the funding, and increasing use of the courts from colleagues and close contacts who regularly frequented the renovated sites themselves.

"In Newcastle, we invested in about eight sites. Prior, they had 1,000 people on their parks database. They're now, within 12 months, at 5,000 on the parks database. They have had roughly 12,000 bookings and they're averaging nearly four bookings per day across those eight courts. There's visual impact, there's social impact, so we're starting to see the free parks tennis sessions running on a regular basis and we're starting to see some workforce development as well. So that's where you see the whole rounded offer in Newcastle has gone from here to here." (Delivery Partner)

Case Study: Spencer Park – Participation Perceptions

Spencer Park, located near Coventry, received funding to resurface their tennis courts and install a new fence. Stakeholders observed a notable rise in participation following the refurbishment, attributed to improved court quality, enhanced visibility, and the online booking system.

Memberships increased from 172 in April 2022 to 231 in April 2024, whilst total bookings jumped from 1,894 in June 2023 – March 2024, to 4,060 from April 2024 to present day. The high-quality courts and clearer signage attracted new players and enabled existing users to attend more frequently.

The local primary school has also benefitted from free access to the courts. For example, one of the lunchtime sessions is dedicated to inclusive tennis for children with learning difficulties. The venue also organises inclusive events during the summer holidays, further broadening access and participation.

Since the success of the funding, the site has been commissioned to upgrade the pavilion which houses a café and provides space for other sporting activities.

All KPIs have been achieved or are on track to be achieved as of this evaluation period - these relate to renovating 3,000 courts, allocating funding to deprived areas and implementing the LTA digital booking platform.

Furthermore, to encourage greater participation, initiatives such as Free Park Tennis[28] have provided the local community the chance to meet new people and enjoy exercise through a free one-hour session every weekend at selected venues. Stakeholders noted the anecdotal evidence of this also providing real benefits to communities, and specifically encouraging additional participation from participants not previously engaged in tennis. Other examples of similar initiatives include targeted discounts and dedicated free slots, as well as access for schools and after-school clubs being offered by some Local Authorities.

"We're making a difference within those harder to reach areas because we're breaking down that barrier of equipment and [making sessions] free." (Delivery Partner)

Stakeholders again noted the achievement of delivering the volume of court refurbishments, recognising the prior inexperience of both DCMS and LTA in delivering large-scale grant-funded capital projects, particularly across so many Local Authorities and areas of the UK and given the short-notice at which the Programme was announced and required to begin delivery.

"To deliver that amount of funding, that amount of court improvements within two years has been a really great job by Government and by the LTA." (DCMS)

Others also commented on the success of participation increases within areas of deprivation, suggesting an uplift of 8% in areas with IMD level 1-5 when compared to IMD areas 6-10[29]. LTA and DCMS staff were again optimistic about the ability for venues to continue to deliver and sustain the increased participation anecdotally experienced, of both new and existing users. Interviewees and case study participants were positive about the level of thought and planning that they had been supported to incorporate into the future financial sustainability of the venues, through sinking funds and ongoing regular maintenance. LTA stakeholders suggested that approximately 80% of Local Authorities now have some kind of income generation to maintain sinking funds.

Observation: whilst initial anecdotal evidence clearly suggests positive impacts for participation, further data collection is required to understand the extent to which participation changes can be attributed to funding

[28] https://www.lta.org.uk/play/free-park-tennis/
[29] Evidence provided by LTA stakeholders

4.2.6. Programme Closure

The PTCR Programme has entered Programme closure as planned. DCMS and the LTA have worked together closely to make this process smooth and efficient, conducting lessons learned sessions and agreeing future ways of working for ongoing monitoring and reporting on the Programme's longer-term impacts and outcomes.

Stakeholders acknowledged the relative ease and overall success of the Programme closure, citing the evidence of a 'Green' rating from an internal DCMS review conducted in alignment with an Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Gate 5 process[30]. Whilst closure has been undertaken within the context of resourcing constraints and compressed timelines, the success and strengths of the Programme's approach to benefits realisation is clear from the internal report produced. Both the LTA and DCMS recognise the importance of benefits management and implementing a robust benefits realisation plan. DCMS will continue to receive participation and booking data from the LTA, in addition to less frequent reporting updates.

LTA stakeholders noted a longer-term ambition to consider future support for additional upgrades at other facilities that may further increase participation, such as floodlight installations or funding for other types of racquet sports (e.g. padel).

Observation: Programme closure has been undertaken robustly and successfully. DCMS should consider how the successful closure of the PTCR Programme can inform and streamline the closure process for other programmes

4.2.7. Conclusion

Overall, the continued delivery, implementation and closure of the Programme has progressed efficiently and effectively within the last 12 months. Stakeholders have cited strengthened relationships and collaboration across organisations, and the iterative improvements made to process and reporting, as being key strengths.

Delivery targets are on track to be met and despite a small number of isolated instances of vandalism and damage to venues, mitigations have been put in place with clear evidence of prompt response from the LTA and Local Authorities. Continued engagement, professionalism and experience of the LTA has enabled DCMS to demonstrate evidence of the Programme's delivery and implementation. Whilst stakeholders are keen to see further data and evidence describing the longer-term impacts and outcomes, particularly for participation, anecdotally stakeholders were clear about the positive impacts the Programme was perceived to have.

[30] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ogc-gateway-review-5-operations-review-guidance-and-templates

4.3. Lionesses Futures Fund

The Lionesses Futures Fund was announced on 29th November 2023[31]. Recognising that delivery is still in early phases and impacts and outcomes will have yet to fully materialise, an early light-touch process evaluation has been undertaken, specifically focusing on the early set-up of the Programme, communication and coordination between stakeholders, and the approach to Programme monitoring and reporting.

Further analysis and evaluation will be conducted, including surveying, case studies and interviews with key stakeholders, which will be incorporated into the final evaluation report.

4.3.1. Fund Design and Implementation

This section considers the early design and set-up of the Fund, how the funding was initiated, the application process in place and success measures used to evidence achievement of outcomes. It aims to understand how effective these processes have been and identify any opportunities to enhance efficiency for future iterations of other Programmes.

The Lionesses Futures Fund was launched in England following the success of the women's national team achievements in the 2022 Euros[32] and 2023 World Cup[33]. Whilst stakeholders noted the timeliness of the funding announcement, it meant that internal administration and set-up was required to be expedited. Stakeholders emphasised the potential benefits and strategic rationale to launch the Fund with this timing and to capitalise on the Lionesses' success, but also acknowledged the timelines for delivery. Coupled with a fast-approaching financial year-end, there were consequently tight turnaround times in order to successfully establish the Fund for delivery of projects in the next financial year.

"This is an opportunity for government to be able to demonstrate their support to the Lionesses and provide a real legacy as a result of the achievements that they've made" (Delivery Partner)

The funding was announced with the clear aim to boost women and girls' participation in football, particularly at the grassroots level. To track progress and ensure accountability, a set of success measures were agreed amongst stakeholders. These measures focused on three core objectives:

1) Expanding the number of facilities accessible to women and girls;
2) Prioritising their access to playing opportunities; and
3) Fostering safe and welcoming environments for participation.

The success measures agreed focused on four key themes of participation, delivery, priority access and safe, welcoming spaces:

[31] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lionesses-trailblazing-success-recognised-with-30-million-fund
[32] https://www.englandfootball.com/england/womens-senior-team/fixtures-results/2022/England-germany-match-page-uefa-womens-euro-2022-final-831-july-2022
[33] https://www.uefa.com/womensworldcup/news/0283-1875771227a4-a16a8fe208d4-1000--england-at-the-2023-women-s-world-cup-fixtures-results-squ/

Table 13: Lionesses Futures Fund success measures

Theme	Metric
Participation	• Number of female participants at the facility • % of women and girls returning to the site over a six-monthly basis • Number of additional participants (i.e. new female participants)
Delivery	• Number of new quality pitches delivered • Number of applications submitted • Number of grants confirmed • Number of sites where construction has started • Number of sites that are operational
Priority access	• Percentage of facilities with 30% female team sessions (all hours outside of curricular bookings) • Percentage of facilities with 50% 'high demand'/peak slots used by women and girls (18:00-21:00, Mon-Fri - Sep-April) • Percentage of facilities with over 30% 'high demand'/peak slots used by women (18:00-21:00, Mon-Fri - Sep-April) • Number of facilities offering one or more women and girls only evening(s) (18:00-21:00) • Number of facilities offering more than one women and girls only evening (18:00-21:00) • Number of clubs/education settings with a full player pathway
Safe, welcoming spaces	• Number of sites with appropriate male and female toilets/changing facilities • Number of sites with a women and girls lead in place. For example, an individual, group or committee that leads on the women and girls initiatives. • % of female users reporting sufficient availability for their needs • % of female participants reporting they feel safe and welcomed at the site

Source: DCMS Lionesses Futures Fund documentation

Stakeholders including the Football Foundation, the Premier League, the Football Association and DCMS worked together to develop ambitious yet attainable goals, in the context of the objectives of the announcement, but recognising the realities of feasibility and delivery within a constrained timeframe. Strong communication and collaboration were noted by interviewees as critical in enabling a robust and fair set of success measures to be established.

"They were achievable, but I definitely think they were ambitious at the same time." (Delivery Partner)

4.3.2. Facility Selection

The process of selecting the facilities to receive funding drew from the Football Foundation's already established pipeline of potential projects. Whilst all the projects had to meet robust criteria related to women and girls' participation, feasibility and deliverability within the limited timeframe also became key factors in the process of selecting sites. Stakeholders acknowledged the necessity of this approach given the time constraints, although a small number expressed concerns that it might have limited the applicant pool and potentially constrained the ambition of individual projects. Overall, however, stakeholders agreed that even with a longer and more extensive selection process, this would have been unlikely to have drastically altered the projects selected.

Stakeholders cited that gauging the potential success and impacts of the funding at particular sites was complicated by a lack of comprehensive data on women and girls' football participation. This data gap made it

difficult to definitively quantify demand across England, and the areas in which supply was likely to have the most proportionate impact, and was cited by stakeholders as a key point challenged through the business case process internally within DCMS.

"There was kind of a lot of push back on how we can prove that we're going to build sites in places that women actually use the slots and they don't end up empty. How they've selected those sites, like why out of all the sites in their pipeline have they picked those 30? That's where we got the most pushback on our end" (DCMS)

4.3.3. Stakeholder Relationships

This section focuses on stakeholder relationships and how communication and collaboration enabled effective and efficient early phases of the Fund. Stakeholders emphasised the positive and collaborative relationship between the Football Foundation, DCMS and other organisations, despite some challenging timelines and the urgency of implementation and delivery. The accelerated nature of the Programme led to a period of more intense information requests and tight turnaround times. However, the organisations established a streamlined communication channel, designating dedicated individuals as central points of contact. This approach fostered efficient communication, enabling clear prioritisation of requests and minimising burden and competing requests wherever possible.

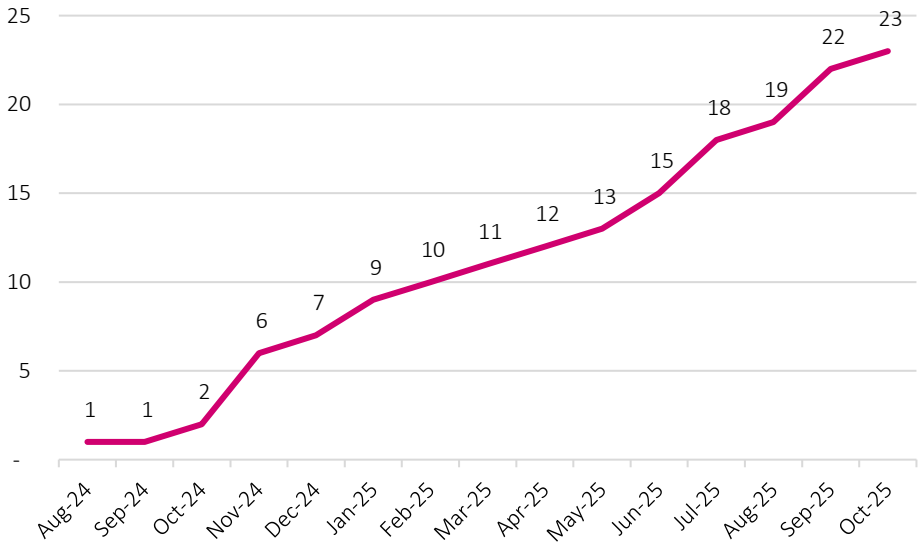
"We learned a lot […] including the importance and benefit of a single point of contact" (DCMS)

4.3.4. Programme Monitoring

The monitoring process in place again aligned with the approach for the MSGF Programme, and the pipeline and reporting processes in place within the Football Foundation. This consistency was highlighted as a strength by stakeholders, as it did not require any additional resource, time or understanding from Fund stakeholders who were familiar with existing delivery.

"Monitoring is coupled up into the same package, so it works and critically isn't an additional burden" (DCMS)

Figure 17: Estimated completion date of LFF projects as of March 2025

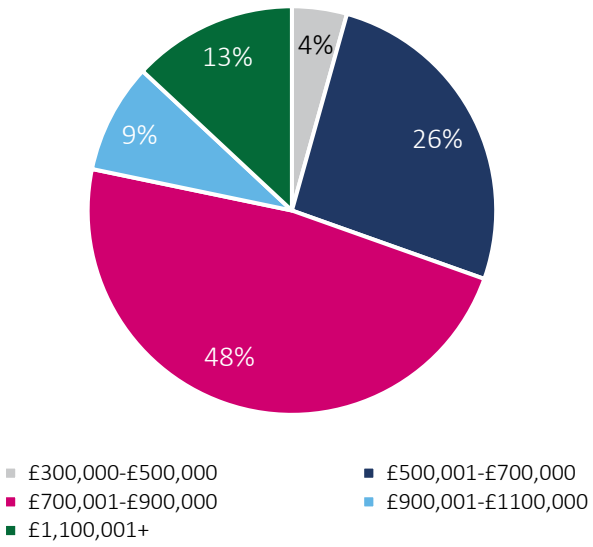


Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programmes information based on DCMS monitoring data as of 24th March 2025.

The LFF projects have completion dates ranging from August 2024 to October 2025. By March 2025, about half of the projects (11) were finished. Grant amounts range from approximately £400,000 to £1.4 million, with

nearly half (48%) falling between £700,001 and £900,000. The average grant value across all projects is £826,472. The sites currently under construction are, on average, those with a higher grant and project value.

Figure 18: Grant sizes of the LFF projects as of March 2025



Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme data as of 24th March 2025.

4.3.5. Incorporating Learnings Into Other Programmes

Whilst the Lionesses Futures Fund specifically focused on distribution of funding in a one-year period, stakeholders emphasised the value of focusing on specific women and girls, and that this had impacted the design of criteria used for the Football Foundation's core pipeline. Steps have already been taken to embed some of these objectives, ensuring ongoing support for their development becomes standard practice. It was also suggested that lessons learnt would be applied to future tournaments and events to maximise their impact.

4.3.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this early initial process evaluation of the Lionesses Futures Fund highlights both the successes and challenges encountered during its early implementation. Capitalising on the momentum of the Lionesses' achievements presented a unique opportunity to boost women and girls' football participation, but also necessitated rapid Programme development and delivery within a constrained timeframe. The collaborative efforts between stakeholders, including DCMS and the Football Foundation, were instrumental in establishing a robust framework with clear objectives and success measures.

While the expedited setup presented challenges, particularly regarding internal administration and potentially limiting the pool of eligible facilities, the overall consensus among stakeholders suggests that the approach was appropriate given the circumstances. The final evaluation report will consider additional data and evidence from surveys, case studies, and stakeholder interviews undertaken over the next 12 months to share additional insights and conclusions.

4.4. Process Evaluation Observations

Building on the key recommendations included in the previous interim report, there are further considerations arising from the process evaluation can help to inform and improve remaining delivery of the Programmes as well as future Programmes carried out by DCMS. These are set out below:

Table 14: Observations from the process evaluation

#	Observations	Applicability
1	**Consider and review the assessment criteria applied to future application processes for funding**, including the **relative weighting of KPIs** compared to one another	MSGF (DCMS)
2	**DCMS and Delivery Partners communication** on **resourcing** is **important** to **maintain effective delivery and governance** of the Programme	MSGF (DCMS & S/W/NI)
3	**Address interoperability between platforms** to create a **single source of truth** and **streamline data entry and reporting processes**	MSGF (DCMS)
4	Continue ongoing work to **improve post-award assurance** with beneficiaries of funding to enable **better understanding of the achievement of objectives, outcomes, and impacts**	MSGF (DCMS & E/S/W/NI)
5	Continue to **review the way in which technical resource** is involved in **capital investment Programmes**, particularly **within earlier stages of design, planning and development** of a Programme.	PTCR & future Programmes
6	**Maintain strong relationships developed between DCMS and LTA staff**, in order to **support ongoing data and knowledge sharing**, and to **facilitate robust benefits realisation management** in the longer term.	PTCR & future Programmes
7	**Ongoing Programme monitoring and data sharing** could consider **reporting of instances of vandalism or damage**, to enable the LTA and DCMS to understand these **impacts at a Programme level**	PTCR & future Programmes
8	Whilst **initial anecdotal evidence** clearly suggests **positive impacts for participation**, **further data collection is required** to understand the **extent to which participation changes can be attributed to funding**	PTCR & future Programmes
9	**Programme closure** has been **undertaken robustly and successfully.** DCMS should consider how the successful closure of the PTCR Programme **can inform and streamline the closure process for other programmes**	Future Programmes

5. Impact Evaluation: Interim Findings

This section discusses the emerging findings from the latest available data and evidence with regards to the impacts of the MSGF and PTCR Programmes up to March 2025. Building on the emerging findings set out in the initial interim evaluation report, it considers both descriptive impacts available from survey data, monitoring data and secondary sources, as well as econometric analysis aligning with the approach set out in the initial interim evaluation report, and further explained below.

Changes in overall and sustained participation, along with wider impacts on local communities (including accessibility, mental and physical wellbeing, and pride in place), are assessed. However, participation is the key metric in the econometric approach used to determine the extent to which changes in participation can be causally linked to Programme funding.

Impact Evaluation: Key Emerging Findings

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

- **Descriptive evidence of greater increases in overall participation observed in funded facilities relative to unfunded facilities, but no evidence of causality based on the current data available:** A higher proportion of funded facilities (92%) reported increased overall participation since April 2021 compared to unfunded facilities (79%), and this difference was significant at the 5% level. This positive trend aligns with previous findings. Furthermore, funded facilities reported greater increases in participation; 14% reported growth exceeding 51% since April 2021, compared to only 5% of unfunded facilities. The average participation increase was also higher at funded facilities (14%) than at unfunded facilities (10%), and this difference was also significant at the 5% level. When performing analysis using statistical matching and accounting for exogenous factors influencing participation, the current data analysis has not yet established a causal link between the Programme and increased participation. The analysis acknowledges limitations, including the lack of pre-Programme data, limited sample size, reliance on self-reported data, and potential unobserved confounding factors. This will be revisited as more data becomes available for the final report.
- **Funded facilities attract more new users and have a larger user base relative to unfunded facilities:** In addition to increased overall participation, funded facilities also reported a higher proportion of new users (78% versus 66% for unfunded facilities). This suggests the Programme is effectively attracting new participants. Furthermore, funded facilities tend to have a larger overall user base, with a median capacity of 750 compared to 300 for unfunded facilities.
- **Reported sustained participation is higher at funded facilities relative to unfunded facilities:** A larger proportion of funded facilities (64%) reported an increase in regular users compared to unfunded facilities (46%). This, along with a lower proportion of funded facilities reporting unchanged regular user numbers (17% versus 35% for unfunded facilities), suggests a potential positive association between funding and sustained participation.
- **Mixed findings on facility accessibility, but funded facilities better meet user needs relative to unfunded facilities:** While unfunded facilities reported higher rates of increased access for different groups and longer open hours, users of funded facilities across all Home Nations reported higher satisfaction with facilities meeting their needs. This suggests that while access may be improving at unfunded facilities, funded facilities are better catering to the specific needs of their users.
- **Positive correlation between participation, self-reported health, and volunteering at funded facilities:** Household survey data revealed a positive correlation between participation frequency and self-reported health status. Furthermore, the user survey indicates a higher proportion of respondents associated with funded facilities reported volunteering compared to those associated with unfunded facilities (69% versus 46%).
- **Relationship between IMD and physical activity:** In England, users attending facilities in more deprived areas reported greater increases in physical activity.

- **Further investigation needed for other impacts**: Further investigation is needed to understand participation changes by project type and multi-sport facility usage, as well as capacity trends and their potential impact on long-term participation growth. Regional variations in overall participation were also observed, with England showing the most pronounced difference between funded and unfunded facilities.

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

- **Expanded dataset facilitates comprehensive assessment of impacts:** This report leverages a substantially larger dataset of park tennis bookings (2.4 million across 214 venues, including 186 funded and 28 unfunded) compared to the previous report (383,000 bookings across 78 venues). This expanded scope allows for a more robust and nuanced evaluation of the Programme's impact, utilising both descriptive analysis and econometric modelling.
- **Overall participation demonstrates an upward trend, influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic:** Analysis reveals a general upward trend in total and unique bookings from 2019 to 2024, with a notable surge in 2020 attributed to the pandemic and tennis's suitability for social distancing. Post-pandemic, participation plateaued before rising again in 2024.
- **Descriptive evidence of greater increases in bookings at funded venues relative to unfunded venues:** Funded venues consistently exhibit higher bookings per court, suggesting a positive correlation with the Programme. For example, in July 2024, there was around 141 bookings per venue per court at funded venues whereas only 36 bookings per venue per court at unfunded venues. However, the structural difference in average court numbers between funded and unfunded venues must be considered. While the available data does not currently demonstrate a causal link between the Programme and increased participation, further analysis will be conducted as more data is gathered for the final report.
- **Funding linked to increased participation by new users:** Funded venues consistently attract a higher number of new bookers (identified by unique "contact ID") per court, especially during peak seasons, compared to unfunded venues (July 2024: around 37 bookings per court per venue by new users at funded venues versus around 13 for unfunded venues). This suggests the Programme is effectively attracting new participants to tennis, aligning with its core objectives.
- **Regional variations in participation observed, highlighting potential disparities:** Total bookings per venue per court vary greatly across regions, with the South & South West and London experiencing the highest activity, contrasting with lower numbers in Wales and the North. This regional variation warrants further investigation to understand underlying factors related to demand, court availability, and accessibility.
- **Post-refurbishment increases in participation at funded facilities were larger at more deprived facilities:** There was an overall average 34% increase in bookings at funded venues in the 12 months following refurbishment. Comparing the sum of bookings 12 months pre- and post- refurbishment in different regions of deprivations, post-refurbishment tennis participation on average increased more in lower IMD deciles (39%) compared to higher IMD deciles (30%), suggesting the program successfully targeted and benefited more deprived communities.
- **Gender gap in participation identified, requiring further research into underlying causes:** A gender gap potentially exists in tennis participation, evident in both booking data (63-66% male, 32-35% female, 2019-2024) and national survey data, although the latter shows a narrowing gap over time. Further research is needed to understand and address underlying barriers to female participation.
- **Funding associated with increased sustained participation, indicating positive long-term impact:** Sustained participation (4+ bookings in a rolling 12-month period) is consistently higher at funded venues, particularly during peak seasons. Relative to the peak of the most recent summer available in the booking data (July 2024), there was around 36 bookings per venue per court at funded venues by sustained bookers relative to around 12 at unfunded venues. This indicates a positive association between funding and long-term engagement with tennis. The increase in sustained users at "Later Funded" venues after funding further supports this positive long-term impact.
- **Secondary data analysis from the Active Lives Survey provides valuable context but has limitations:** The Active Lives Survey reveals fluctuating participation trends in England, with a decline followed by a pandemic-related rebound. While this provides valuable context, limitations of self-reported data and the lack of specific information on park venue usage should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Table 15: MSGF Key Findings Matrix

MSGF Data Source	Overall Participation	Sustained Participation	Breakdowns of Participation	Local Community Outcomes	Other Outcomes
Facility Survey	92% of funded facilities reported an increase in participation in both direction and magnitude, compared with 79% of unfunded sites since April 2021. Whilst this difference was statistically significant at the 5% level, robust causal analysis, accounting for exogenous factors, was unable to establish significance between the funding and changes in overall participation. However, new or upgraded artificial grass pitch (AGP) projects and facility infrastructure projects did show a statistically significant positive correlation with increased sports participation, increasing by 52.2% and 62.5% on average per year respectively.	64% of regular users at funded facilities reported an increase in participation, compared to 46% at unfunded sites.	Funded facilities demonstrate a greater increase in usage across various demographics. 74% of funded facilities reported increased use by women and girls since April 2021, compared to 68% of unfunded facilities. This trend continues with ethnic minorities (43% for funded facilities versus 26% for unfunded facilities) and disabled users (38% for funded facilities versus 22% for unfunded facilities).	A larger proportion of unfunded facilities (72%) reported increased access for different groups or sports compared to funded facilities (64%). Regarding open/playable hours, a larger proportion of unfunded facilities (60%) reported being open for longer, while a larger proportion of funded facilities (48%) reported no change in open/playable hours.	The Programme aligns with the government's intention to address regional inequalities through delivering on the Programme target of delivering at least 50% of total funding in deprived areas. Facility managers reported anecdotal evidence of improved environmental outcomes.
User Survey	User survey findings will not inform causal analysis, but descriptive analysis suggests a higher proportion of funded users (88%) visiting their local facility at least once a month relative to unfunded users (83%).	Descriptive analysis shows that among users who first attended before April 2021, 90% of those at funded facilities visit at least monthly, compared to 86% at unfunded facilities.	Descriptive analysis suggests a higher proportion of funded users visiting their local facility at least once a month relative to unfunded users in each Home Nation, with the biggest difference between the groups in England (84% versus 72%).	A higher share of users of funded facilities across all four Home Nations indicated that the facility either fully or partially meets their needs. However, the difference between funded and unfunded facility users is small, with the exception of Scotland where the difference is more pronounced (99% versus 85%).	N/A
Household Survey	Household survey findings will not inform causal analysis, and the sample size of respondents using the facilities was small (<20%) and therefore comparative descriptive analysis was not presented.	N/A	N/A	Households near funded and unfunded sites reported similar levels of wellbeing. Older and wealthier users tend to have better wellbeing and higher levels of life satisfaction.	N/A
Case Studies	Funded sites reported experiencing or expecting to experience large uplifts in participation.	Facility managers suggested participation was expected to be sustained at their site, and that demand was increasing over time.	Facility managers across all nations reported anecdotal growth in participation, particularly from younger people and women and girls.	Facility managers presented numerous examples of funding improving 'pride in place' in the local community and improved accessibility for underrepresented groups.	Facility managers gave anecdotal evidence that funding had facilitated improvements in educational and environmental outcomes.
Interviews	Interviewees were confident that participation had improved, particularly those 'closest to the pitch'. Substantial uplifts in the women and girls' game were also emphasised. Further work is needed to understand the additionality of this participation however.	Mixed views were shared by stakeholders, although most generally were confident that the Programme had led to increases in participation that would be sustained over the medium to long term.	N/A	Benefits to the community through improvements made to local clubs and facilities were highlighted as a significant positive of the Programme by interviewees across Delivery Partners.	Improvement of inter-organisational relationships with DCMS, between the Delivery Partners, and between Delivery Partners and the local facilities and clubs. Stakeholders suggested that the Programme has met its original objectives as set out in the business case, although some felt that there was more work to be done to eliminate the postcode lottery for quality sporting facilities
Secondary Data Sources	Football and general activity levels over the last 12 months have shown a slight, non-significant increase in adults, but remained unchanged in children, according to recent Sport England surveys.	N/A	Adult activity levels saw a slight, non-significant rise for men and women, but stabilised for disabled and older adults. However, the gap in activity levels between different socioeconomic groups widened. Children's activity levels remained unchanged across gender and disability, but significantly increased among children from wealthier families.	Volunteering levels amongst adults have seen a small increase in the last 12 months but are still down over the longer term. Frequency of volunteering also increased slightly over the last 12 months.	N/A

Table 16: PTCR Key Findings Matrix

PTCR Data Source	Overall Participation	Sustained Participation	Breakdowns of Participation	Local Community Impacts	Other Impacts
LTA Booking Data	Booking data from 2019-2024 showed an overall upward trend in both total and unique bookings, with a notable surge in 2020 likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funded venues consistently showed higher bookings per court than unfunded venues. The average funded venue saw 34% more bookings in the 12 months post-refurbishment. The staggered Difference-in-Differences (DiD) analysis, which assesses the statistical significance of the impact of Programme funding on the magnitude of change in participation, did not reveal statistically significant impacts. This will be revisited in the final report, and further analysis is planned to explore sustained participation and new user participation.	Funded venues also showed higher levels of sustained participation (defined as at least four bookings in a rolling 12-month period), further supporting the positive impact of funding.	Bookings per venue per court varied greatly by region, with the South & South West and London showing the highest activity, while Wales and the North exhibited the lowest. Male bookings consistently outnumbered female bookings (63-66% versus 32-35%), indicating a gender gap in tennis participation, although the gender gap in national survey data of tennis participants shows a narrowing gap over time. Post-refurbishment tennis participation on average increased more in lower IMD deciles (39%) compared to higher IMD deciles (30%), suggesting the program successfully targeted and benefited more deprived communities.	N/A	N/A
Case Studies	Facility managers from case study sites reported substantial increases in participation in tennis at the sites, including rapid growth driven by the ability to offer an expanded coaching offering.	Participation outcomes are believed to be sustained by stakeholders, although evidence was anecdotal.	Case study activity in this report covered two sites in England. However, the previous report covered a site in England and a site in Wales, and both reported similar positive impacts.	Facility managers report that the refurbishment of the tennis courts has led to a cleaner, more valued community space, increased volunteerism, and deterred vandalism. This has also provided justification for charging for court use, enhancing financial sustainability and fostering a more vibrant and socially connected community.	Increased paid court bookings have generated revenue for park sustainability, according to facility managers. This success has prompted plans for a new pavilion and the provision of free tennis sessions. Additional funding has also bolstered coaching capacity and increased usage by local schools.
Interviews	Stakeholders felt there has been significant increases in participation. An example was provided which saw a substantial rise in court bookings. The LTA estimates a national participation increase of 528,415, approaching the target of 500,000 to one million.	Optimism exists regarding the sustainability of increased participation, supported by financial planning for ongoing maintenance and the establishment of sinking funds in approximately 80% of Local Authorities.	Uplifts in participation were noted among women and girls, and young people, although precise figures were not provided. An example was cited which noted a new offering for inclusive tennis sessions for children with learning difficulties and summer holiday events.	Stakeholders suggested the Programme has fostered positive community impacts through initiatives such as Free Park Tennis, which provides free weekly sessions and encourages social interaction and exercise. Targeted discounts, free slots, and access for schools further enhance community engagement.	N/A
Secondary Data Sources	In the Active Lives Survey 23/24, participation by adults and children in tennis has not significantly changed over the last 12 months.	N/A	Adult activity levels saw a slight, non-significant rise for men and women, but stabilised for disabled and older adults. However, the gap in activity levels between different socioeconomic groups widened. Children's activity levels remained unchanged across gender and disability, but significantly increased among children from wealthier families.	N/A	N/A

5.1. Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

This section considers the data and evidence available to understand the extent to which the MSGF Programme has met its current intended objectives, impacts and outcomes. It initially focuses on a descriptive analysis of survey (facility, user and household) and secondary source data, before undertaking a quasi-experimental econometric approach to determine whether participation changes can be attributed to Programme funding at this stage.

5.1.1. Findings from Descriptive Analysis

5.1.1.1. Overall Participation

This section analyses to what extent MSGF funding has impacted *overall* participation at funded facilities. It draws on evidence collected through two waves of data from the facility survey distributed to managers of both funded and unfunded facilities.

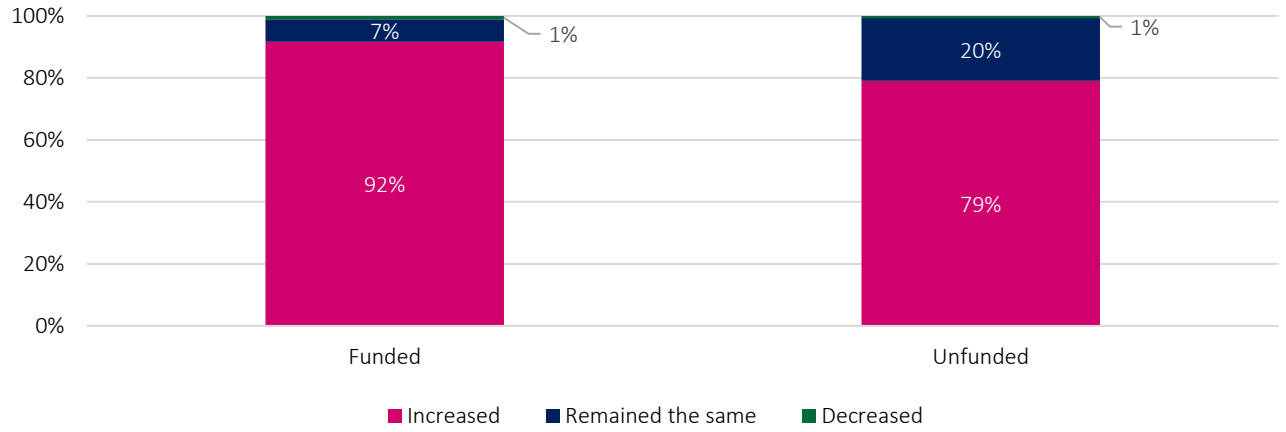
Directional Changes in Overall Participation

To understand participation trends, facilities were asked to compare their current (as of February 2025) participation levels to those of April 2021. This analysis included data from both Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the survey, consistent with the approach taken throughout Section 5.1.1 of this report.

When comparing current participation levels to April 2021, the majority of funded and unfunded facilities reported an increase in participation. *Figure 19* shows that 92% of facilities receiving funding through the MSGF Programme saw increased participation, compared to 79% of unfunded facilities. This difference was primarily due to a larger proportion of unfunded facilities reporting unchanged participation levels (20% compared to 7% of funded facilities), while the proportion reporting decreased participation was approximately the same (1%) for both groups. A chi-squared test was performed compare the proportions of funded and unfunded facilities reporting an increase in participation, and there was a statistically significant difference at the 5% level (p=0.034) in the proportion of funded facilities reporting an increase in participation. This provides strong evidence to suggest that funding contributed to increased participation.

This trend of higher participation increases in funded facilities aligns with findings from the previous interim report. Notably, both funded and unfunded facilities saw further growth in the number of respondents reporting increased participation since the last report (10% and 13% respectively). Further investigation into the longer-term trends is required to determine how participation at both funded and unfunded sites changes over time.

Figure 19: Overall Participation Changes



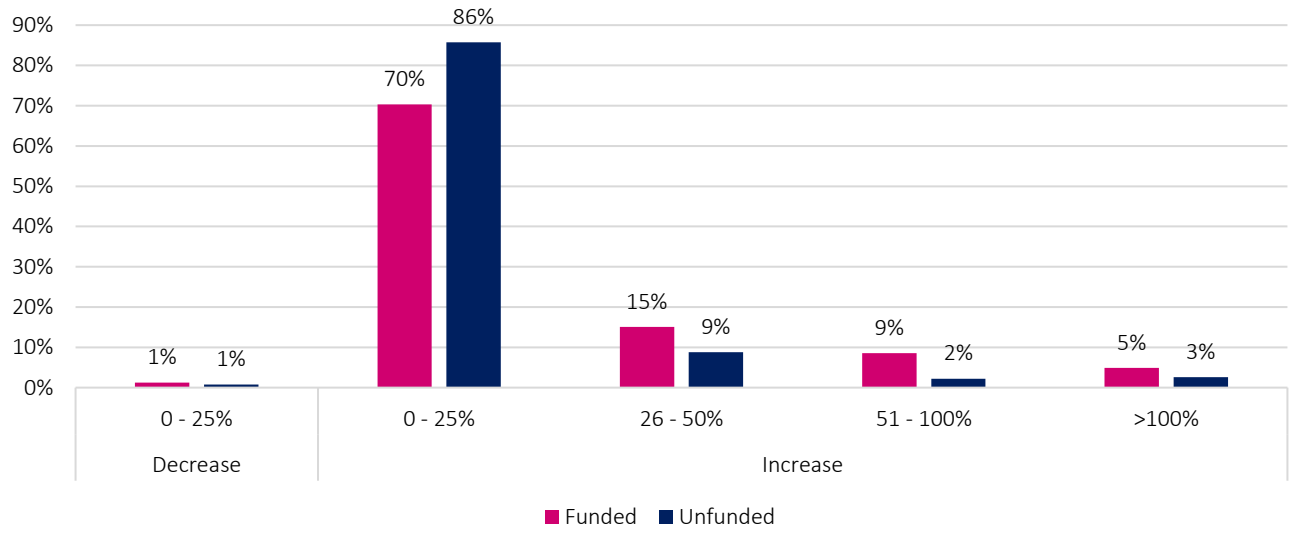
Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Excludes 17 respondents who answered, "Don't know" and 70 respondents who didn't answer.
Base: n = 264 (funded facilities) and 296 (unfunded facilities)

A small proportion of funded facilities (17 facilities, representing 7% of the sample) were unable to provide information on how their participation levels had changed since April 2021. Whilst a small proportion of the population, having a complete and comprehensive dataset is important to accurately assess the Programme's impact on these facilities. The analysis set out in further parts of Section 5 is influenced by response rates to specific questions, and so these should be considered carefully when inferring impact and conclusions.

Magnitude of Changes in Overall Participation

Facility managers also reported the *magnitude* of the participation changes as shown in *Figure 20*. Facility managers had the option of reporting banded or exact estimates, which have been aggregated together and reported below. Notably, funded facilities reported a higher proportion of substantial participation increases, with 14% of these facilities experiencing growth rate greater than 51% over the period, compared to only 5% of unfunded facilities. Conversely, unfunded facilities were more concentrated in the 0-25% increase category (86% versus 70% for funded facilities), with decreases in participation minimal across both groups.

Figure 20: Reported Change in Participation since April 2021 at Funded and Unfunded Facilities

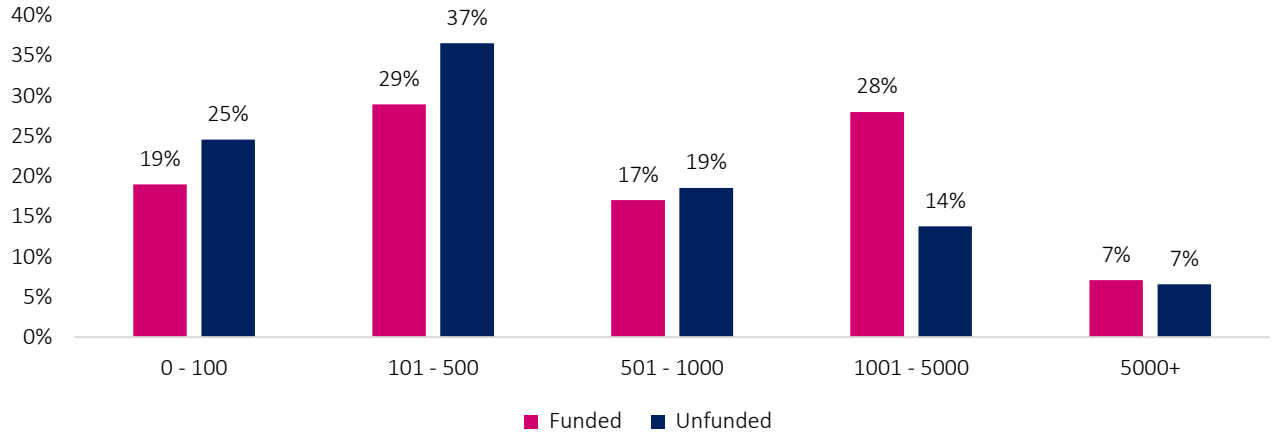


Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Excludes 17 respondents who answered, "Don't know" and 70 respondents who didn't answer.
Base: n = 246 (funded facilities) and 273 (unfunded facilities). Totals may not add up due to rounding.

The *average* percentage change in participation reported by a funded facility was 14%, around 4% higher than the 10% average change observed in unfunded facilities. When completing a Welch two sample t-test, the difference was statistically significant at the 5% level (p=0.048). This provides strong evidence that funded facilities experienced a statistically significantly higher average annual percentage change in participation.

Alongside this, facility mangers also provided data on the number of users participating in sport at the facility within the most recent month, categorised into banded ranges, shown below in *Figure 21*. The median capacity size for funded sites was 750, compared to only 300 for unfunded facilities.

Figure 21: Number of Users at Facilities in the Last Month



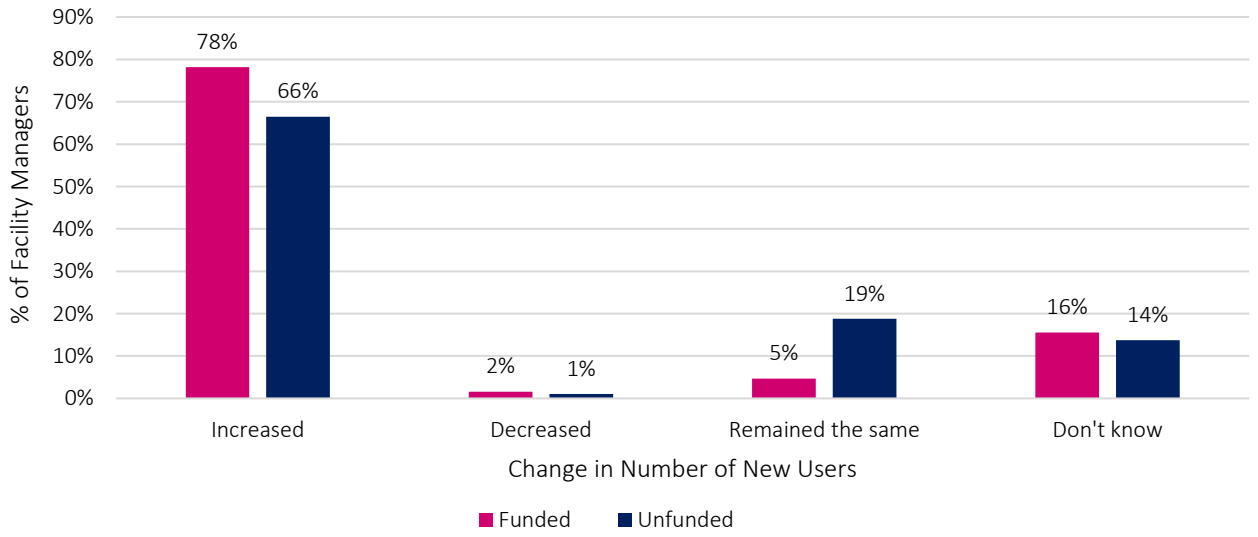
Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Base: n = 311 (funded facilities) and 167 (unfunded facilities). Totals may not add up due to rounding.

A larger proportion of funded facilities (28%) reported user numbers within the 1,001-5,000 range, compared to only 14% of unfunded facilities. In contrast, unfunded facilities were more highly represented in the 501-1,000 user category, with 37% falling within this range (compared to 29% of funded facilities). This suggests that the Programme may be contributing to larger *absolute* increases in participation, although does not account for structural characteristic differences (e.g. size and capacity) in the funded and unfunded samples.

Additional New Users

Additionality of *new* users (users that are new to the facility and attend either frequently or infrequently) participating in sport or physical activity at the funded facilities was a KPI for the Programme. As shown in *Figure 22*, a higher proportion of funded facilities (78%) reported an increase in new users compared to unfunded facilities (66%). This difference aligns with trends found earlier in the section, suggesting the Programme may have had a positive impact on the number of new users. Funded facilities have also seen a substantial increase (from 64% to 78%) in those reporting new users since the previous interim evaluation report, which could suggest that the Programme's impact on attracting new participants may become more pronounced over time.

Figure 22: Percentage of facility managers reporting a change in the number of new users since April 2021



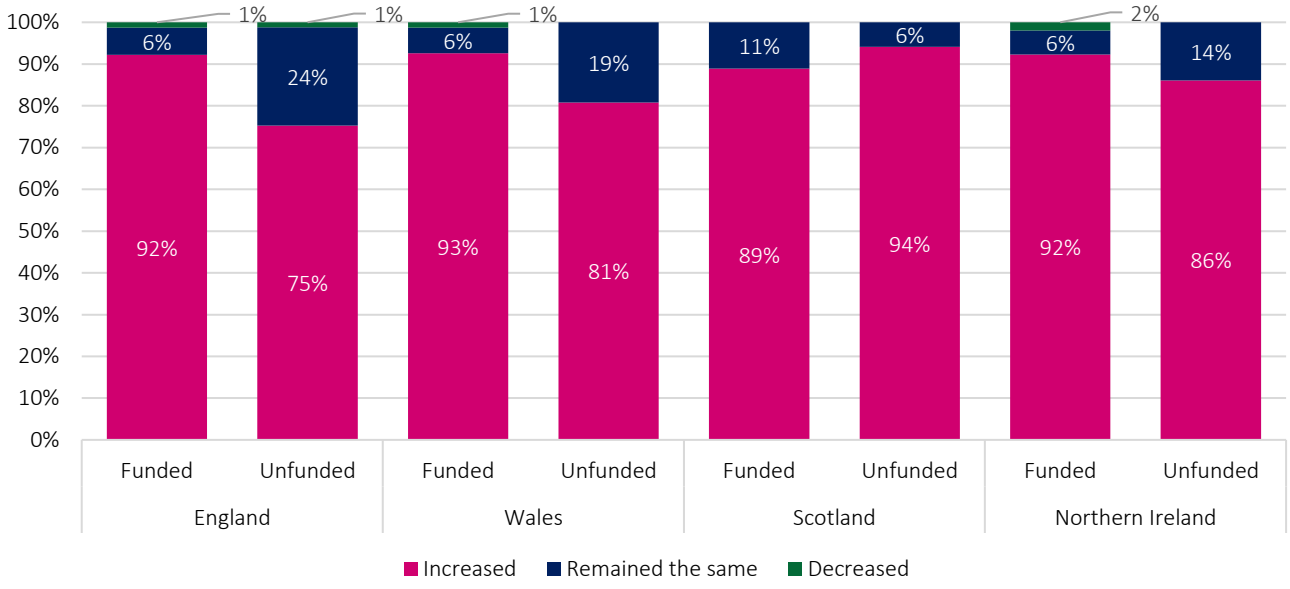
Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Base: n = 321 (funded facilities) and 197 (unfunded facilities). Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Overall Participation by Geography

To understand potential regional variations in the Programme's impact, this section examines participation outcomes across the four Home Nations. Further analysis of geographical differences is also presented as part of the econometric analysis undertaken.

Trends in reporting directional changes in participation are most pronounced in England, with a 17% difference between those reporting increased participation across funded and unfunded facilities. *Figure 23* also shows funded facilities were more likely to report increased participation in three of the four Home Nations, the exception being Scotland (89% versus 94%). It should be noted however, that these proportions are influenced by both the populations in scope, and the sample size available that responded to the question within the facility survey. The small sample sizes in Scotland, particularly for unfunded facilities (only 15), mean that the findings on participation there should be interpreted with caution.[34]

Figure 23: Proportion of facilities reporting participation changes since April 2021 by Home Nation

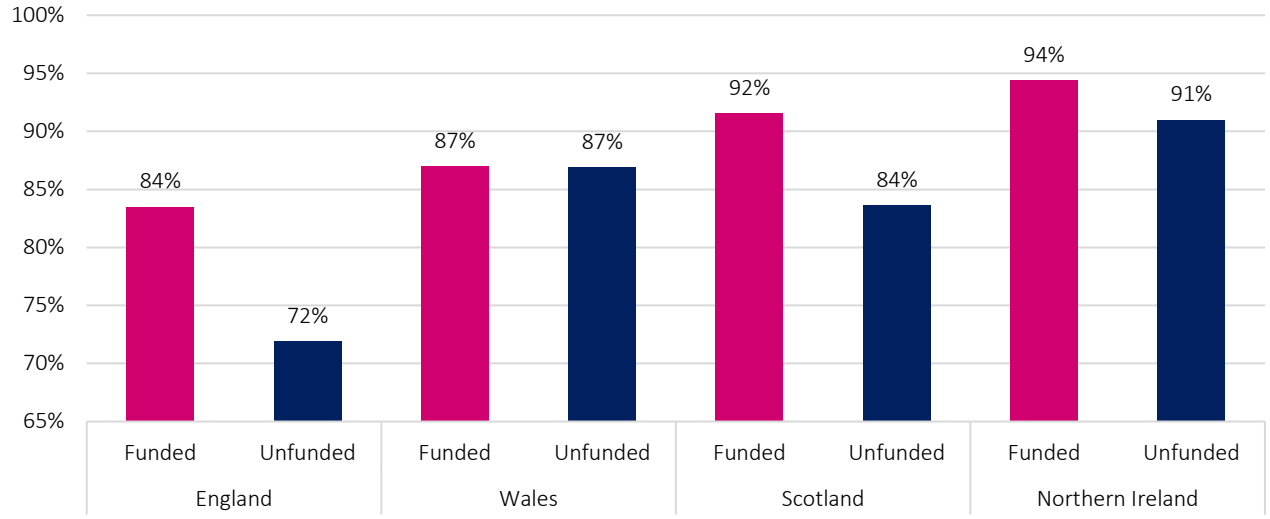


Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Totals may not add up due to rounding. Base: n = 66 | 114 (England funded | unfunded); 69 | 54 (Wales funded | unfunded); 44 | 15 (Scotland funded | unfunded) and 48 | 30 (Northern Ireland funded | unfunded)

Figure 24 below reports the proportion of users at funded and unfunded facilities who attend at least once a month. In all of the Home Nations, a higher proportion of users at funded facilities attend at least once a month relative to unfunded facilities. The greatest difference between these groups is in England (84% versus 72%) whilst the difference is smallest in Wales (both around 87%, with funded being marginally higher).

[34] The small samples here for Scotland mean that the data is less likely to be representative of the total population of funded and unfunded facilities in Scotland, limiting the generalisability of the results.

Figure 24: Proportion of users attending at least once a month by Home Nation



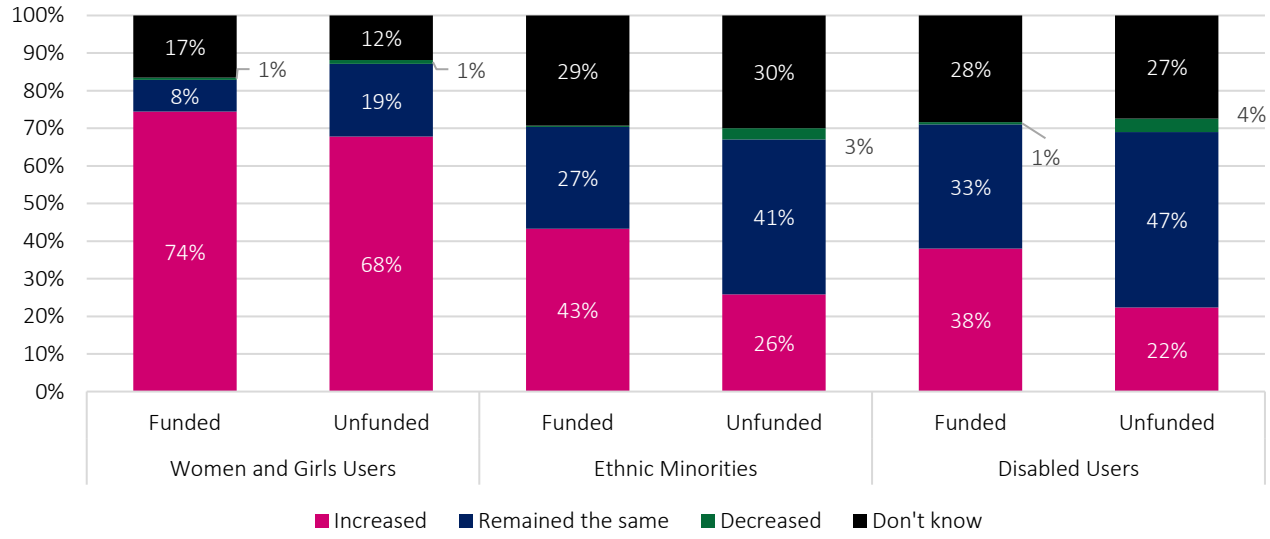
Source: Analysis of user survey data. Totals may not add up due to rounding. Base: n = 485 | 178 (England funded | unfunded); 254 | 84 (Wales funded | unfunded); 390 | 116 (Scotland funded | unfunded) and 178 | 222 (Northern Ireland funded | unfunded)

Overall participation by Underrepresented Groups

Understanding the Programme's impact on the participation of underrepresented groups is a key part of the evaluation's objectives and the evaluation questions developed[35]. *Figure 25* provides a comparative view of how participation trends among various underrepresented groups have differed between funded and unfunded facilities since April 2021.

For women and girls, 74% of funded facilities reported an increase, compared to 68% of unfunded projects. A similar trend is observed for ethnic minorities, as well as for disabled users. This again indicatively suggests that funding across all three demographics contributed to increasing participation in grassroots sport.

Figure 25: Change in participation by underrepresented groups since April 2021 by funded and unfunded facilities



Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Excludes 124 | 129 (women and girls | ethnic minorities and disabled users) respondents who didn't answer. Base: n = 321 (funded facilities) and 202 (unfunded facilities).

[35] See the initial interim evaluation report for further detail on evaluation questions and underrepresented groups

Overall Participation by Type of Project

Table 17 presents a comparison of sample sizes between funded and unfunded facilities who report participation changes as well as the project type. It is challenging to break down participation changes by project type at this stage, primarily due to the limited sample sizes in many breakdowns. In many cases, types of investment had response rates of fewer than 10 projects. As a result, consideration of this should be taken in interpreting conclusions on changes in participation at this stage. Greater sample sizes will be required from future data collection to determine the extent to which the type of funding may have contributed to these changes.

Table 17: Change in Participation by Type of Facility Investment

Type of Project	Funded Projects	Unfunded Projects
Grass Pitch (GP)	8	2
Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP)	84	11
Grass Pitch + Facilities / Equipment / Maintenance	9	7
Artificial Grass Pitch + Facilities / Equipment / Maintenance	27	7
Facilities / Equipment / Maintenance	126	72
Grass Pitch + Artificial Grass Pitch	2	N/A

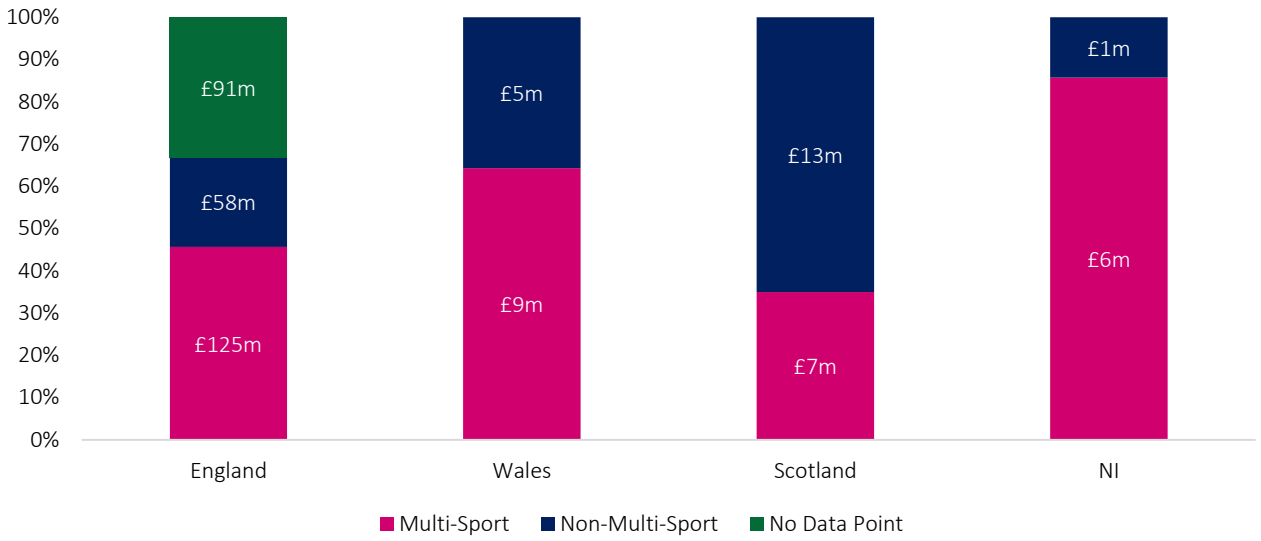
Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Project types including a "+" indicates that multiple project types were selected. Base: n = 256 (funded facilities), n = 99 (unfunded facilities). Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Figure 26 provides a breakdown of funding for facilities that featured multi-sport and non-multi-sport usage across the Home Nations. Wales allocated £9 million to multi-sport facilities (63%) and £5 million for non-multi-sport facilities (37%). Scotland allocated a smaller proportion (33%, or £7 million) and £13 million for non-multi-sport facilities (67%). Whilst Northern Ireland received the smallest amount of funding, it allocated more than 90% of this (£6 million) to multi-sport facilities (91%) and £1 million for non-multi-sport facilities (9%).

It is important to note that due to the number of small grants (under £25k) delivered in England, 33% of the total funding amount in England was not assigned a multi-sport indicator within reporting data since these grants are not attributed a multi-sport value by design. Since the focus of these grants are different to the large grants delivered in England, it can be assumed that the majority of these instances do not have a multi-sport dynamic. Due to this unique characteristic of the England dataset, findings cannot be directly compared to other Home Nations. However, of the large grants with their assigned multi-sport indicator, over two thirds did feature multi-sport usage.

In total, £147 million (47%) of funding was allocated to multi-sport facilities and £77 million (24%) to non-multi-sport facilities across all regions, totalling £315 million. Whilst this is a substantially larger sample than available in the initial interim evaluation report, in order to indicatively understand overall trends in participation by multi-sport usage in funded and unfunded facilities, additional data collection is required.

Figure 26: Funded multi-sport and non-multi-sport facilities



Source: Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programmes data as of 24th March 2025. In England, only projects with a grant value over 25k were considered. Note: in England, Under25k grants are not assigned a multi-sport indicator, meaning a large proportion of funding in England (33%) did not have a specific data point indicating if the project was a Multi-Sport or Non-Multi-Sport facility.

Reported Changes to Capacity

To gauge the potential impact of the Programme on improving facility capacity, facilities were asked whether the funding led to increased capacity for existing groups and sports participation. While not a direct measure of demand, it's reasonable to infer that capacity increases often stem from a need to accommodate existing resource pressures. Capacity is defined as the number of individuals able to directly participate in sport at any one time.

Of the 223 funded facilities responding to this question, 52% reported increased capacity, while 48% experienced no change, as shown in *Table 18*. The percentage of funded facilities reporting increased capacity has decreased from 64% in the previous interim report. This is likely attributable to the larger sample size, rather than indicating a trend. This represents a decrease from the previous interim report, where 64% of funded facilities reported increased capacity, although is likely a feature of larger samples size rather than something that can be clearly inferred in terms of trends in capacity changes. However, this will be further explored through additional data collection. If there is further evidence that facilities are approaching full capacity, it could hinder the Programme's long-term goal of attracting new participants and increasing participation.

Table 18: Survey Responses to Changes in Capacity

Reported Increase in Capacity?	Number of responses	%
Yes	115	52%
No	108	48%

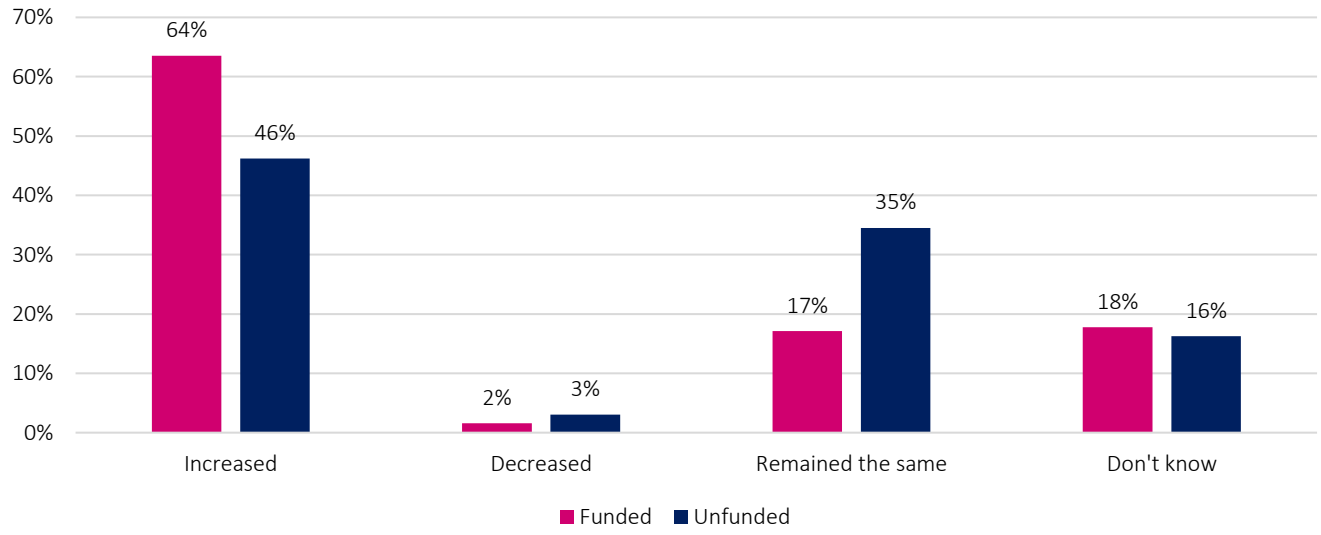
Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Excludes 168 respondents who didn't answer. Base: n = 223 (funded facilities). Capacity in this context is capacity for existing groups and sports

5.1.1.2. Sustained Participation

Figure 27 illustrates the reported change by facility managers in regular users at funded and unfunded facilities since April 2021. For the MSGF Programme, regular users are defined as users who attended a facility before the MSGF Programme began and currently attend at least once a month. A larger proportion of funded facilities (64%) reported an increase in regular users compared to unfunded facilities (46%).

Notably, a substantial proportion of unfunded facilities (35%) reported their regular user numbers remained the same, compared to a smaller proportion (17%) of funded facilities. The "Don't know" responses were relatively similar for both funded (18%) and unfunded (16%) facilities. This data suggests a potential positive association between funding and increased regular user numbers, although further analysis is needed to confirm a causal link.

Figure 27: Change in Regular Users



Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Base: n = 321 (funded facilities) and 197 (unfunded facilities Funded facility managers selected "Don't know" if funded projects were yet to complete. Excludes 60 respondents who didn't answer)

Whilst the data suggests a potential positive correlation between funding and increased regular user numbers in the short and medium term, as projects delivered by funding continue to mature, the longer-term trends in sustained participation will need to be closely monitored. The relatively lower percentage of funded facilities reporting unchanged user numbers might indicate a greater dynamism or responsiveness to changing demand, which could be positive in the long-run if managed effectively. However, it could also suggest a vulnerability to fluctuations if funding or support diminishes over time.

For unfunded facilities, the higher proportion of unfunded facilities reporting unchanged regular user numbers could indicate a more stable, albeit potentially less dynamic, user base. This stability could be a strength in the long-term, particularly if these facilities can leverage existing community connections and resources. However, the lack of funding might limit their capacity to adapt to changing needs or expand their reach to new users.

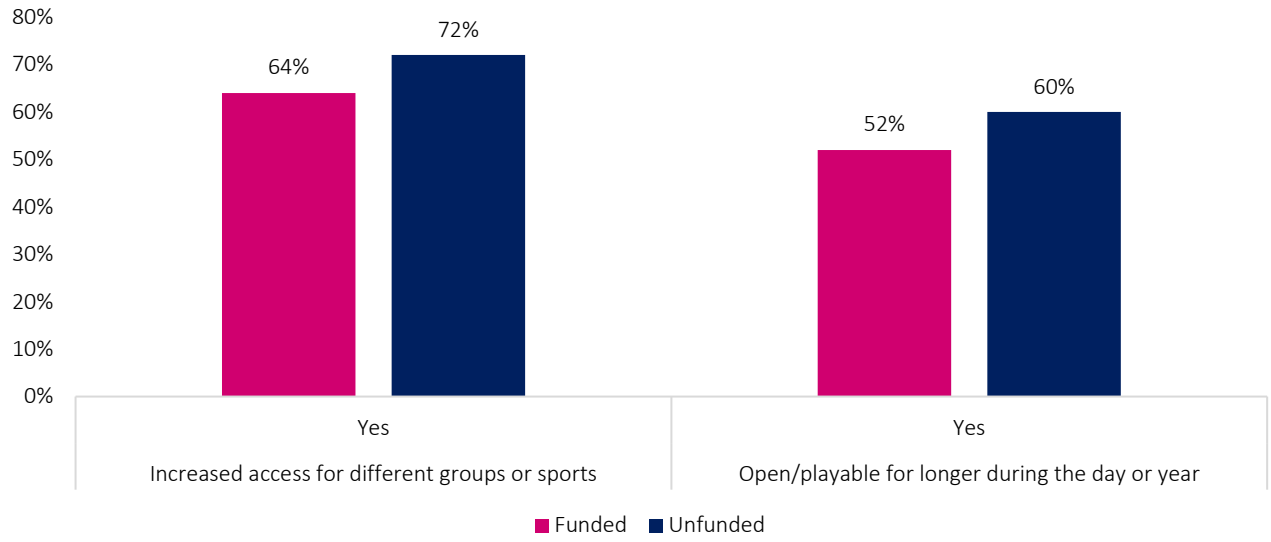
Overall, long-term trends in sustained participation will depend on a complex interplay of factors, including ongoing investment, community engagement, program quality, and accessibility. Further research and causal analysis will help to better understand the long-term outcomes of funding on participation, and so at this stage drawing definitive conclusions about long-term trends based on this snapshot of data should be avoided.

5.1.1.3. Local Community Outcomes

Accessibility and meeting the needs of users

Figure 28 considers facility accessibility across funded and unfunded facilities. A larger proportion of unfunded facilities (72%) reported increased access for different groups or sports compared to funded facilities (64%). Regarding open/playable hours, a larger proportion of unfunded facilities (60%) reported being open for longer, while a larger proportion of funded facilities (48%) reported no change in open/playable hours.

Figure 28: Facility Accessibility



Source: Analysis of facility survey data. Base: n = 331 (funded facilities) and 256 (unfunded facilities)

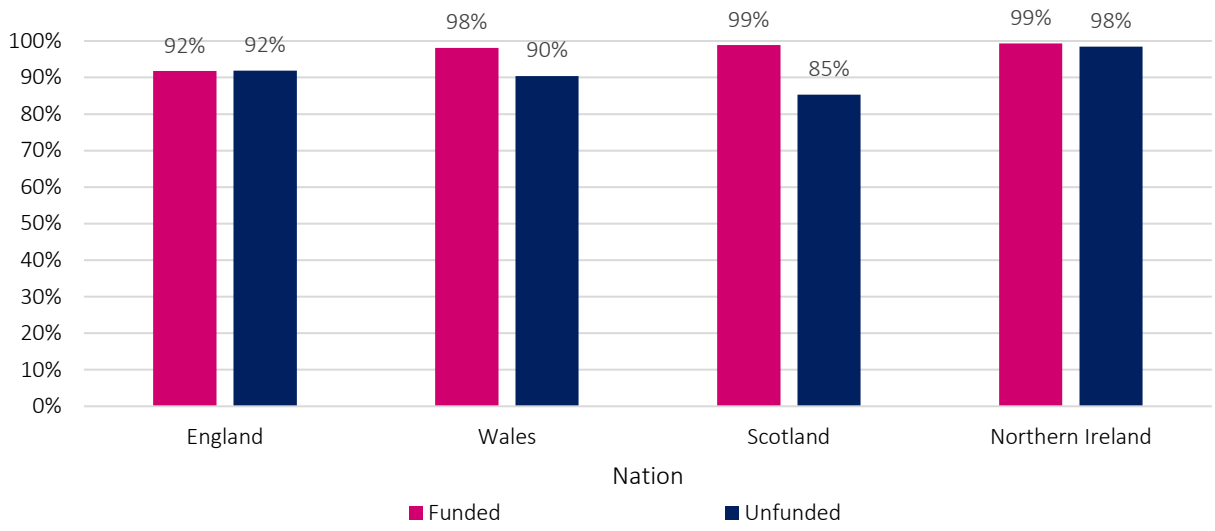
These findings don't necessarily align with qualitative evidence shared during case studies of the importance of the funding in increasing a site's multi-sport offer, or allowing it to open for longer hours (for instance, if floodlights were funded). There are potential explanations for these results:

- As a condition of funding, funded sites are required to outline their usage plan (for instance, a Programme of Use (PoU) in England) in more detail than typically available for an unfunded site, and therefore may to some degree be more restricted in terms of 'flexibility' of all users feeling their needs have been met.
- Funded facilities have already accounted for high levels of sports and/or groups, so there is less potential for growth in activity or accessibility.
- These questions offer a relatively narrow view of accessibility which doesn't align with other types of accessibility.

Regardless, further investigation is needed to understand the factors contributing to these differences and to identify the most effective strategies for improving accessibility, and ultimately participation, at both funded and unfunded facilities.

Figure 29 demonstrates that a higher share of users of funded facilities across all four Home Nations indicated that the facility either fully or partially meets their needs. However, the difference between funded and unfunded facility users is small, with the exception of Scotland where the difference is more pronounced (99% versus 85%). Stakeholder interviews and case studies have suggested that improved accessibility is beneficial in improving participation, and so the data suggests that funded facilities may have been more likely to experience increased participation as a result of better meeting the needs of users.

Figure 29: User Survey Responses: "Does the facility [you attend] either fully or partially meet your needs?"

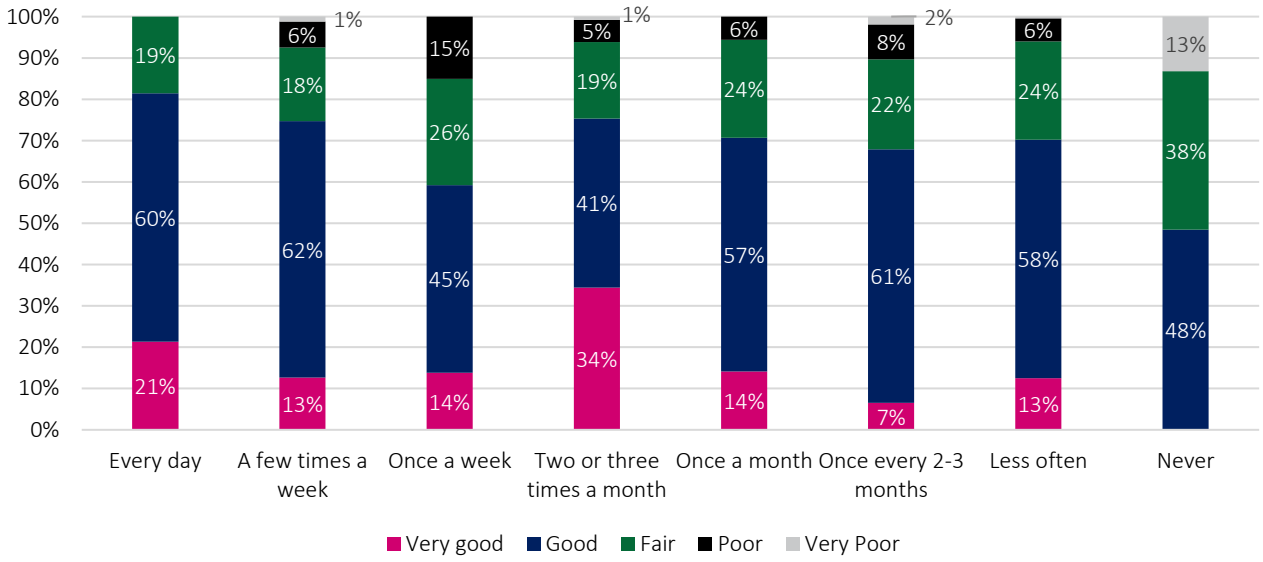


Source: Analysis of user survey data. Base: n = 412 | 136 (England funded | unfunded); 210 | 73 (Wales funded | unfunded); 346 | 95 (Scotland funded | unfunded) and 154 | 191 (Northern Ireland funded | unfunded). Excludes 22 respondents who answered "Other".

Self-report health outcomes

Figure 30 explores the relationship between frequency of participation at a facility and self-reported health status.

Figure 30: Self-reported health split by frequency of participation



Source: Analysis of household survey data from household living near funded facilities. Base: n = 393. Excludes 1 respondent who answered, "Don't know".

Several interesting trends emerge:

- **Higher Frequency, Better Health**: Respondents who participate daily or a few times a week report predominantly "very good" or "good" health. As frequency decreases, the proportion reporting "fair," "poor," or "very poor" health increases. This suggests a positive correlation between regular participation and perceived health status.
- **"Good" Health Dominates**: Across all frequency categories, the largest proportion of respondents report "good" health. This is most pronounced in the "every day", "a few times a week, "and "once every 2-3

months" categories. This could indicate a generally healthy population within the sample, or more likely may reflect limitations in a self-reported health measure.

- Infrequent Participation and Fair Health: The "once a week" and "two or three times a month" categories show a notable proportion of respondents reporting "fair" health (26% and 19% respectively). This suggests that even infrequent participation might be associated with a moderate level of perceived health benefit.
- Low Participation, Poorer Health: Respondents who participate less often or never show a higher proportion reporting "poor" or "very poor" health. This aligns with the link between lack of participation and poorer health outcomes[36].

Volunteering

Volunteering is also an important theorised impact of the Programme's funding. *Table 19* presents the proportion of respondents responding to the user survey that have volunteered at a local facility at least once since April 2021, broken down by funded and unfunded status. A noticeably larger proportion of respondents associated with funded facilities (69%) reported having volunteered compared to those associated with unfunded facilities (46%).

This difference suggests a potential positive correlation between facility funding and volunteering rates. Several factors could contribute to this trend. Funded facilities may have more resources available to support volunteer programmes, including training, equipment, and dedicated staff. New or improved facilities might also generate greater community enthusiasm and attract more volunteers. Additionally, funded projects may be more likely to actively recruit and promote volunteer opportunities.

However, it may also be the case that unfunded facilities responding may be less reliant on volunteers due to different operational models or community dynamics for example, and so caution should be applied when inferring causal attribution to funding on the amount of volunteering at facilities. It will be important to investigate the motivations and barriers to volunteering where possible, as well as the perceived benefits for both volunteers and the facilities they serve, to better understand the role of Programme funding.

Table 19: User survey – Proportion of respondents who have volunteered at a local facility at least once

Volunteered (Yes/No)	Funded	Unfunded
Yes	69	46
No	31	54

Source: Analysis of user survey data. Base: n = 584. Excludes 18 respondents who answered, "Prefer not to say".

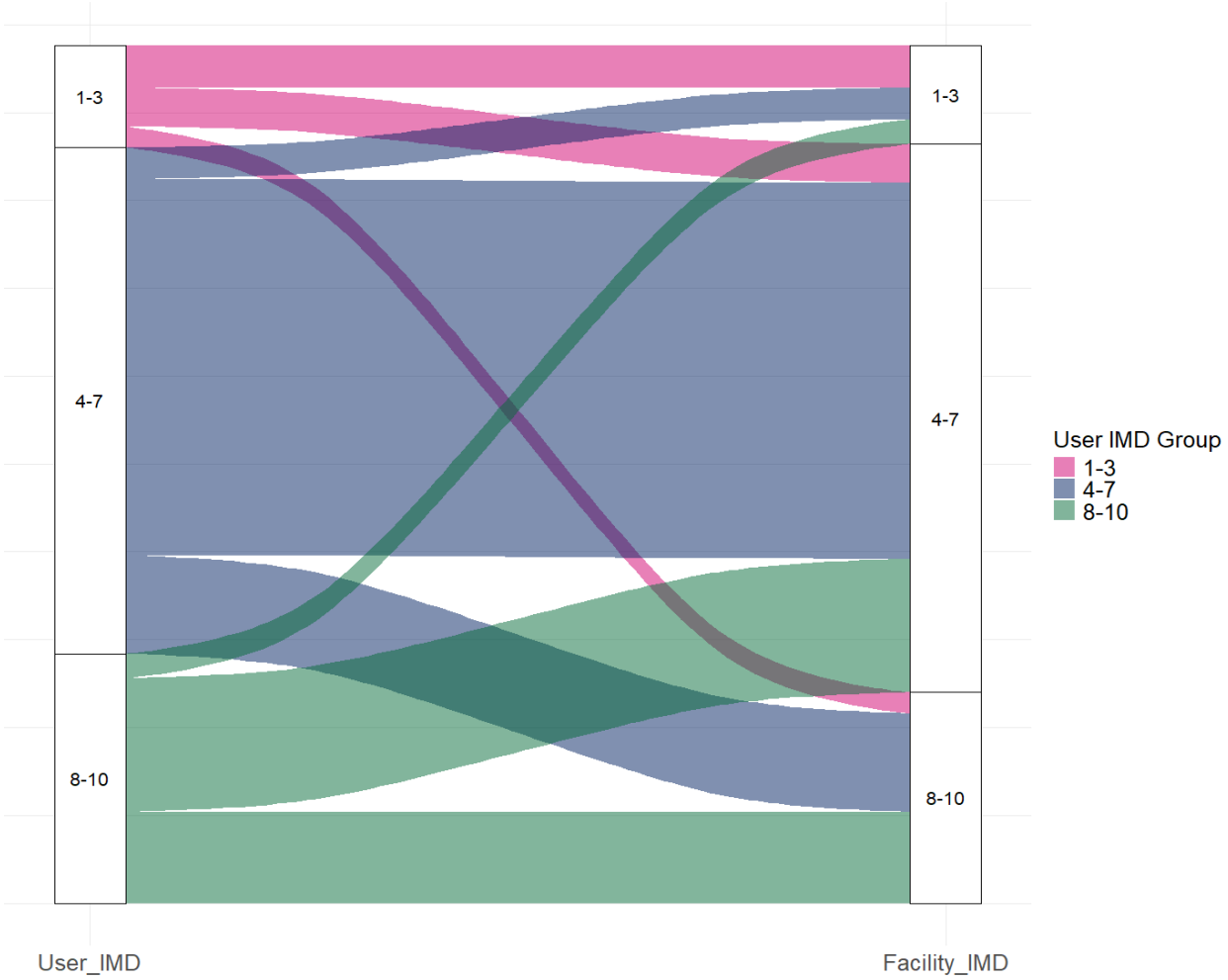
5.1.1.4. Other Outcomes

IMD of users and facilities

Figure 31 visualises the relationship between the IMD decile of users home address and the IMD decile of the facilities they attend. This analysis was conducted for England only, due to the nature of IMD reporting and geographical categorisation across the Home Nations.

[36] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6572041/

Figure 31: User Survey - Relationship between the IMD decile of users and the IMD decile of facilities attended



Source: Analysis of user survey data. Only considers users in England for IMD calculations. Users provided shortened postcodes for anonymity, so the IMD of each user is based on the most common IMD decile from local authorities covered by the shortened postcode. N=248.

The diagram reveals a general trend of users attending facilities in similar IMD deciles to those of their home address, indicated by the thicker flows connecting corresponding deciles on the left (user IMD) and right (facility IMD) sides of the diagram. For example, a substantial proportion of users in the least deprived deciles (8-10) attend facilities also located in the least deprived deciles. Similarly, users in the most deprived deciles (1-3) predominantly attend facilities in the most deprived deciles.

However, there are also notable cross-decile flows. Users in the middle deciles (4-7) appear to attend facilities across a wider range of IMD deciles, including both more and less deprived areas. There is also very limited flow of more deprived users (1-3) to less deprived facilities (8-10), and similarly in reverse. This suggests that while proximity and similarity in deprivation levels of facilities within travel distances likely play a role in facility choice, other factors may also influence where users choose to participate. This could include facility type, programme and session availability, transport accessibility, and social networks. Further analysis is needed to explore these factors and to understand the implications of cross-decile attendance on overall participation trends.

IMD and travel times

Table 20 presents travel durations for users based on the IMD decile of their home. *Table 22* presents travel durations for users who attend facilities located in each IMD decile (irrespective of IMD decile of their home).

*Table 20: User Survey - Travel Durations by **User** IMD Decile*

User IMD Decile	Travel duration by users who live in these IMD deciles (mins)
1-3	12.1
4-7	11.0
8-10	15.3

Source: Analysis of user survey data. Only considers users and facilities in England for IMD calculations. Users provided shortened postcodes for anonymity, so the IMD of each user is based on the most common IMD decile from local authorities covered by the shortened postcode. N=248.

*Table 21: User Survey - Travel Durations by **Facility** IMD Decile*

Facility IMD Decile	Travel duration by users who attend facilities located in these IMD deciles (mins)
1-3	18.5
4-7	10.5
8-10	14.7

Source: Analysis of user survey data. Only considers users and facilities in England for IMD calculations. The facility IMD decile was calculated from the postcode provided in DCMS delivery data. N=248.

Table 20 shows that users residing in the least deprived areas (IMD 8-10) had the longest average travel time from their residence (15.3 minutes). However, *Table 22* shows that facilities located in the most deprived areas tended to have the longest average journey times out of facilities located in each IMD decile group (18.5 minutes). Several potential explanations exist:

- **Users who live in wealthier areas travel further from home:** This may reflect greater willingness and ability to travel, potentially due to increased access to private transport. *Table 22* supports this, showing a higher prevalence of car use among residents of wealthier areas. It may also indicate fewer local club options in these areas, potentially due to specialisation (e.g., elite academies), necessitating travel for more general options.

Table 22: User Survey - Travel Type by IMD Decile of Users

IMD Decile (of user)	Car	Walking	Cycling	Public transport	Other
1-3	79%	17%	3%	0%	0%
4-7	81%	17%	1%	1%	1%
8-10	86%	12%	0%	0%	1%

Source: Analysis of user survey data. Only considers users in England for IMD calculations. Users provided shortened postcodes for anonymity, so the IMD of each user is based on the most common IMD decile from local authorities covered by the shortened postcode. N=248.

- **Facilities in more deprived areas attract users from further afield:** This could suggest that clubs in more deprived areas serve a wider catchment area. These clubs might offer more affordable or accessible services, attracting individuals from less affluent areas who are willing to travel for these opportunities. It could also indicate a lack of equivalent facilities in the surrounding areas, forcing users to travel to these centrally located clubs. Another possibility is that these clubs have developed a strong reputation or specialisation that draws participants from a broader geographic area.

These findings have potential implications for:

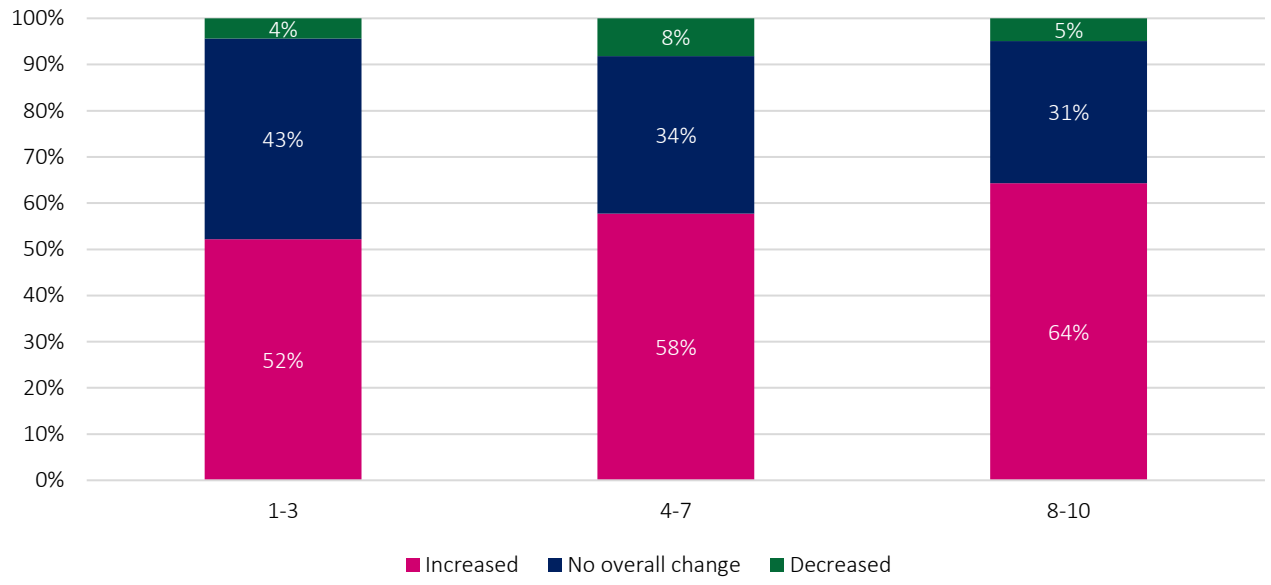
- **Investment and resource allocation:** While more affluent areas may contain a larger number of clubs, data suggests that deprived areas, despite having fewer options, potentially experience relatively high facility popularity. This could indicate a divergence in resource allocation, with additional investment needed in underserved communities whose facilities may be experiencing excess demand. Further investigation is warranted to explore the socio-economic factors contributing to this imbalance.

- **Transport infrastructure:** Travel time disparities may be exacerbated by inadequate transport infrastructure. Longer travel times to and from deprived areas suggest poorer public transport links, creating a significant barrier to participation for residents. This highlights the need for investment in accessible and reliable public transport to ensure equitable access for all communities.

Further analysis is required to fully understand the complex relationship between deprivation and facility access. This analysis is limited by data quality and volume, which will be addressed through additional surveying activity for the final report.

IMD and self-reported level of physical activity

Figure 32: User survey – change in overall level of physical activity by IMD decile of facility



Source: Analysis of user survey data. Only considers users in England for IMD calculations.

Figure 32 displays the change in overall level of self-reported physical activity from the user survey, by IMD decile of the facility. A clear trend emerges: users attending facilities in England in less deprived areas (higher IMD deciles) report greater increases in physical activity.

Specifically, 64% of users attending facilities in the least deprived decile (8-10) reported increased physical activity, compared to 58% in the mid-range decile (4-7) and 52% in the most deprived decile (1-3). The proportion reporting no overall change in physical activity decreases as facility IMD decile increases, from 43% in the most deprived decile (1-3) to 34% in the mid-range decile (4-7) and 31% in the least deprived decile (8-10).

This suggests that facilities in less deprived areas may be experiencing a greater impact on increasing physical activity levels among their users. This may be as a result of serving populations with lower baseline levels of physical activity, providing greater opportunity for improvement, or that facilities in less deprived areas are more accessible and affordable. It may also be the case, for example, that funded projects in less deprived areas deliver different types of projects to those in funded areas. For instance, in less deprived areas, projects might benefit those who are predominantly already active (e.g. more specialised equipment), leading to increases in intensity or diversity of physical activity. In more deprived areas, investments might focus on increasing participation among those currently inactive (e.g. increasing the offer of more basic sporting facilities). Therefore, the "increased physical activity" metric may reflect different impacts across contexts, hindering

direct comparison. Further analysis of the next data collection wave, including disaggregating impacts on new and existing users by facility IMD decile, will help clarify these findings.

5.1.2. Findings from Econometric Analysis

This section of the report utilises primary survey data to determine whether causal evidence is available to attribute impacts on participation to the funding delivered by the MSGF Programme.

The core purpose of this econometric analysis is to test the hypothesis that Programme funding will have had an impact on the level of participation at facilities that received funding and demonstrate a statistically significant difference in participation when compared with facilities that did not receive funding.

Participation at unfunded facilities can be used as a proxy for what would have happened to the funded facilities had they not received any Programme funding, and are referred to as the counterfactual. However, the funded and unfunded facilities may systematically differ from each other. Hence, participation has to be assessed between the most comparable funded and unfunded facilities. Each Delivery Partner across the four Home Nations employed different application processes for selecting projects to receive funding. While all four Delivery Partners used a panel assessment, the steps leading up to that assessment varied significantly, reflecting different approaches to project identification, application processes, and pre-assessment methods. Applicants were assessed against a broadly similar set of KPIs, such as whether the project was in a deprived area, whether there was a multi-sport component, and whether the project would support under-represented groups and women and girls sports participation.[37] The approach described below builds on the initial interim evaluation report and its accompanying Technical Annex, that set out the design and methodology underpinning the analysis in detail. Please refer to these documents, in addition to the Technical Annex of this report for further detail. This section is broken down into the following:

- Data: an explanation of the data available for analysis
- Matching: a summary of the matching approach to enable a comparison of funded and unfunded facilities
- Econometric analysis for changes in participation: presenting the emerging outputs from econometric analysis, in addition to a summary of sensitivity and robustness checks undertaken
- Limitations: summarising relevant limitations and caveats at this stage of the evaluation
- Next steps: a summary of additional data collection and analysis to be conducted and presented in the final evaluation report.

The Technical Annex sets out in further detail the methodological steps undertaken as part of the report, as well as a number of sensitivities and robustness checks undertaken.

5.1.2.1. Data

The MSGF survey data utilised a combined dataset of the first and second waves of responses, comprising a total of 542 facilities, of which 269 were funded, and 273 not funded by the Programme. The key variables relevant to the econometric analysis are shown in *Table 23*. The variable types for each can be found in the Technical Annex.

Table 23: Key survey variables used in econometric analysis

Variable Name	Source
Nation	Monitoring data
Postcode	Monitoring data
Local Authority	Monitoring data
Financial Year of funding application	Monitoring data

[37] More information on the MSGF selection process is in Section 6 of the first interim report: Interim evaluation of Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities and Park Tennis Court Renovation programmes. This includes the funding assessment criteria in Section 6.1.2.

Variable Name	Source
Project Cost (£)	Monitoring data
Project type	Survey data
Directional change in overall number of users, new users and regular users	Survey data
Overall percentage change in participation from Apr 2021 to Feb 2025	Survey data
Multisport facility identifier	Survey data
Funding status	Survey data
Project status	Survey data
Directional change in participation as a result of construction[38]	Survey data
Number of users in the past month	Survey data

This data was supplemented by two additionally created variables:

- A variable indicating whether the facility received funding (1 denoting funded facilities and 0 denoting unfunded facilities), and
- A variable representing the calendar year of funding, derived from the financial year in the Programme Reporting data.

5.1.2.2. Matching

A number of matching techniques were considered as part of the development of the econometric approach to develop a robust approach to appropriately compare funded and unfunded facilities. 'Nearest Neighbour Matching' (NNM) was identified as the most relevant statistical matching method to enable comparability between funded and unfunded facilities in the subsequent econometric analysis.[39]

For each funded facility, this method identified the closest unfunded facility based on a set of matching variables and a pre-defined distance measure called a '*caliper*'[40] to improve the balance in the distributions of the variables between the funded and unfunded groups. When matching with a caliper, a funded facility is only matched to an unfunded facility if their distance lies within the specified caliper distance. If no unfunded facility falls within the caliper distance for a particular funded facility, that funded facility is left unmatched. This exercise therefore created matched pairs that are similar in terms of observed characteristics, making the estimation of participation outcomes more reliable. For England, the unfunded group comprises facilities belonging to the Football Foundation's pipeline. Facilities in the pipeline were chosen for future investment and were therefore deemed to be the most comparable to the funded facilities across observable and unobservable characteristics.

The analysis relies on a sample of facilities who voluntarily provided information via surveys. This self-selection might mean that the sample is not representative of the overall distribution of facilities funded by the Programme nationwide or across other factors.

Matching was undertaken on the sample available for analysis to compare the most similar funded and unfunded facilities. The following variables were selected for matching, along with their respective rationales which are set out in *Table 24* below.

[38] Only for relevant facilities depending on the status of their project.

[39] The matching methodologies employed for the MSGF and PTCR programmes as part of this evaluation align with the matching approach set out in feasibility study (pg.72). The feasibility study concluded that Propensity Score Matching (PSM), which comprises a range of statistical matching techniques such as Nearest Neighbour Matching (NNM), k:1 (many-to-one) matching and 1:1 matching (matching without replacement) are the most appropriate to be undertaken prior to the regression analysis.

[40] The caliper is defined as a maximum allowable distance between the funded and unfunded facilities (the treated and control units) It is often expressed as a multiple of the standard deviation of the distance metric (e.g., 0.25 standard deviations from the mean of the matching variable).

Table 24: Matching variables summary

Matching variable	Sub-categories of matching variable	Rationale for inclusion
Nation	• England • Wales • Scotland • Northern Ireland	Variation in the selection process and criteria used to award funding to applicant facilities
Project status	• Completed • Under construction/delivery in progress • Not yet started/ongoing/under construction	Comparison of projects at similar stages of development between funded and unfunded facilities.
Local authority population density	• Not applicable; population density was merged with the survey data from secondary sources such as statistical websites[41]	Accounting for local demographic distribution (urban versus rural areas) and indirectly capturing for the socio-economic characteristics of the area
Number of users in the past month	• N/A	Proxy for size and average volume of visitation to facilities

A number of specifications of Nearest Neighbour Matching (NNM) were run to test the sensitivities of the balance achieved between the funded and unfunded facilities based on the set of matching variables. Specifically, matching was undertaken with and without replacement:

- **Matching with replacement** means that a facility from the unfunded group of facilities can be matched to multiple facilities belonging to the funded group. Therefore, some unfunded facilities might be used as a match for a funded facility more than once, thereby increasing the sample size of matched facilities, but also potentially over-representing certain characteristics or matching variables.
- When **matching without replacement** however, each unfunded facility is used only once. This creates a one-to-one match which theoretically could produce a closer match and avoids over-representation of matching variables but might lead to a smaller matched sample and potentially discard some funded facilities that did not get matched. This approach minimises bias by reducing the observed differences between the funded and unfunded facilities.

Matching was also carried out across pre-defined calipers (distance metrics) to compare the precision or closeness of matches obtained. The details of the variations in matching specifications and the resulting composition of the respective matched samples derived are summarised in *Table 25* below:

Table 25: Matching specifications and balance summary

Option	Matching specification	Caliper	# Matched facilities	Balance (Standardised Mean Difference)
1	Without replacement	0.25	Funded: 82 of 243 Unfunded: 82 of 82 Total sample size: 164	3.411
2	With replacement	0.25	Funded: 243 of 243 Unfunded: 38 of 82 Total sample size: 281	0.038
3	**With replacement**	**0.1**	**Funded: 215 of 243**	**0.011**

[41] Sources for local authority population density by nation: a) England (ONS) b) Wales (StatsWales) c) Scotland (Scotland's Census (2022)) and d) Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Census 2021 and Northern Ireland Local Authority area in sq.km)

Option	Matching specification	Caliper	# Matched facilities	Balance (Standardised Mean Difference)
			Unfunded: 38 of 82 **Total sample size: 253**	
4	With replacement	0.05	Funded: 192 of 243 Unfunded: 38 of 82 Total sample size: 230	0.006

Source: econometric analysis of MSGF facility survey data. Balance was rounded to 3DP

The table above compares the results derived from the specifications run, showing that Option 3 was the preferred approach taken forwards into subsequent analysis. Both Option 3 and 4 are reasonable matching specifications to take forward, and show a proportionately good number of facilities being matched, and a low standardised mean difference (SMD) – the decision was taken to progress with Option 3, as this allowed for a 9% larger sample of funded facilities to be included in the analysis. Please refer to the Technical Annex for the more detailed breakdown of the means, SMD, variance ratios and the respective empirical Cumulative Distribution Functions (eCDFs) for the matching variables before and after matching.

The average local authority population density after matching is 851 for the funded facilities and 608 for unfunded facilities. The mean of number of users in the past month is 1,843 for the funded and 920 for the unfunded facilities.

5.1.2.3. Summary Statistics

Before conducting the econometric regression modelling, descriptive statistics were generated from the facilities dataset used for the matching analysis to provide an overview of the variables in scope. This included examining their distribution, central tendency (mean, median), dispersion (standard deviation, range), and conducting simple t-tests to compare if there are any statistically significant differences in the means of key variables between funded and unfunded facilities (denoted by the p-values)[42].

Table 26: Summary statistics of facility level data

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Min	Max	p-value	Interpretation
Average annual % change (April 2021-Feb 2025)	13.6%	18.9%	8.4%	-18.2%	188.9%	0.2894	Not significant
Users	1,704	1,971	750	0	8,832	0.001	Significant
Total Percentage change (April 2021 to February 2025)	41.4%	24.8%	50%	1%	75%	0.6834	Not significant
Local authority population density	814.8	1244.1	279.5	9.2	6,086	0.2622	Not significant

Source: econometric analysis of MSGF facility survey data. Sample size (N)= 253 facilities. Variables are available for both funded and unfunded facilities unless otherwise specified in the variable column.

Considering project cost from *Table 26* above, it can be inferred that there was high variance with a large standard deviation relative to the mean. The differences between the mean and median, as well as a maximum

[42] P-values assess the strength of evidence against the **null hypothesis**, determining **statistical significance** in relationships between variables. With a commonly accepted threshold of $p < 0.05$, one can reject the null hypothesis, implying less than a 5% probability of observed data occurring by chance.

value of c.£28m shows the variance in scale of projects funded by the MSGF Programme[43]. The small p-value suggested a statistically significant difference in project costs between the funded and unfunded facilities.

The *average* annual reported percentage change in participation from April 2021 to February 2025 is positive (13.6%) but with considerable variation, evidenced from the range (an 18% decrease to a 188% increase). However, there is no statistically significant difference. The *total* reported percentage change in participation over the period April 2021 to February 2025 exhibited similar characteristics. It is positive on average (41.4%), but the large standard deviation suggests substantial variation in this change across facilities and the p-value indicates no statistically significant difference between the funded and unfunded.

Table 27: Descriptive breakdowns of variables used in regression analysis

Variable	Categories	% breakdowns of categories
Facility type	Funded	85%
	Unfunded	15%
Nation	England	25.7%
	Wales	32.0%
	Scotland	18.6%
	Northern Ireland	23.7%
Project type	AGP	36.8%
	GP	7.5%
	Facilities	43.9%
	Equipment	20.9%
	Maintenance	5.1%
	Other	8.3%
Project status	Completed	84.6%
	Not yet started	9.09%
	Under construction/delivery in progress	6.32%
Funding status (funded only)	Received funding in full	47.8%
	Partially received funding	32.8%
	Yet to receive funding	4.4%
	Not asked	15.0%
Change in participation (only for sites undergoing construction)	Increased	1.2%
	Decreased	0.4%
	Not asked (not applicable, no construction)	98.4%
Multisport indicator (funded only)	Multisport facilities	32.4%
	Non-Multisport facilities	22.5%
	Not applicable	1.2%
	Not asked	43.9%

[43] It is important to note that project cost captures the full cost of a project, not just the funding received through the MSGF Programme. This was deemed a more appropriate variable as the proportion of funding that was granted by the MSGF Programme may not have adequately captured the true cost and scale of projects, and thus not been comparable to the level of impact delivered in that facility.

Source: econometric analysis of MSGF facility survey data. Sample size (N)= 253 facilities. Variables are available for both funded and unfunded facilities unless otherwise specified in the variable column

The proportional splits between the sub-groups forming the categorical variables have been summarised in *Table 27*. The sample is more skewed towards funded facilities (85% of the 253 facilities) following nearest neighbour matching. However, across the four nations, the distribution is more balanced. The highest proportion of project types are Facilities and AGPs with c. 44% and c. 37% facilities reported receiving funding for these investments. Approximately 85% of projects from surveyed facilities have been completed as of February 2025.

5.1.2.4. Magnitude of Change in Participation

A staggered Difference-in-Differences (DiD) methodology, as discussed in further detail in the Technical Annex and initial interim evaluation report, was considered to analyse the statistical significance of the impact of Programme funding on the magnitude of change in participation. It compares the change in an outcome (e.g., participation) of a funded group of facilities to the change in the same outcome in a group that was not funded by the Programme. This is done with the aim to isolate the impact of the Programme by comparing changes over time between the funded and unfunded groups.

However, at this stage of the evaluation, an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was deemed to be the most appropriate method for assessing the impact of the MSGF Programme on the reported percentage change in participation at facilities. An OLS regression finds the “best-fitting” straight line relationship between two variables. Both difference-in-differences (DiD) and ordinary least squares (OLS) regression are common statistical methods used to draw evidence-based conclusions. Crucially, both allow for statistical inference to determine the significance of the Programme on participation. However, an OLS was used for three main reasons:

- The outcome variable being quantified (participation) was continuous and not categorical in nature[44]; and
- Insufficient data on pre-MSGF participation trends and post-MSGF year-on-year changes in participation prevents reliable imputation at this stage. Given the current data quality, imputation would create additional noise within the self-reported recall data , potentially compromising the robustness of estimates. Therefore, the staggered DiD model is not feasible in this case.
- The OLS regression aims to estimate the Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE). However, the staggered DiD model is better as it controls for time variant observable characteristics and time invariant unobservable characteristics that impact participation within both groups in the same manner.

Please see Technical Annex for a more detailed breakdown of the OLS regression approach and its components.[45]

Three specifications of OLS regression were completed:

- A basic specification which regressed just the treatment indicator (whether the facility is funded or unfunded) on participation.
- A parsimonious specification which regressed several key covariates on participation.
- A full specification which regressed all relevant covariates on participation.

[44] OLS regressions model the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables and is widely recognised for providing efficient and unbiased estimates of these relationships.

[45] This approach aims to find the "best-fitting" linear equation that describes the relationship between the variables being examined. This "best fit" is determined by minimizing the sum of the squared differences between the observed values of the dependent variable and the values predicted by the model. These differences are known as residuals. By squaring the residuals, OLS emphasizes larger errors and ensures positive and negative errors don't cancel each other out.

The covariates considered included:

- A binary indicator variable denoting whether the facility is funded or unfunded.
- Year of being awarded the funding.
- Binary variables representing each of project type.
- Project cost.
- A binary indicator denoting whether participation has been impacted by construction (if applicable).
- A binary multisport indicator.

Standard errors were clustered at the facility level to account for correlation among participants within the same funded facility.

The basic and full specification regressions are reported in the Technical Annex, and the main specification considered in this section in the parsimonious specification.[46] The regression equation with this specification is outlined below:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * Funding\ Year\ 2022_i + \beta_2 * Funding\ Year\ 2023_i + \beta_3 * Funding\ Year\ 2024_i + \beta_4 \\ * Funding\ Year\ 2025_i + +\beta_5 * Project\ Status\_Not\ yet\ started_i + +\beta_6 \\ * Project\ Status\_Under\ Construction_{\ i} + +\beta_7 * Project\ Type\_AGP\_No_i + +\beta_8 \\ * Project\ Type\_GP\_No_i + \beta_9 * Project\ Type\_Facilities\_No_i + \beta_{10} \\ * Project\ Type\_Equipment\_No_i + \beta_{11} * Project\ Type\_Maintenance\_No_i + \beta_{12} \\ * Project\ Type\_Other\_No_i + \beta_{13} * Project\ Cost_i + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned}$$

where:

Y: The dependent variable (Percentage change in participation).

β_0: The intercept (the value of Y when all other variables are zero).

$\beta_1 - \beta_{13}$: The regression coefficients for each predictor variable. These represent the change in Y associated with a one-unit change in the predictor, holding all other variables constant.

$Funding\_Year\_XXXX$: Binary variables (0 or 1) for the Financial Year (FY) in which the funding was awarded to a facility. For instance, 'Funded in 2022' indicates that the facility received funding in FY 2021-2022. Similarly 2025 implies that the facility received funding in FY 2024-2025.

$Project\_Status\_XXXX$: Binary variables for the project statuses "Not yet started" and "Under construction / delivery in progress." "Completed" is the base category.

$Project\_Type\_XXXX\_No$: Binary variables for the project types. "No" indicates the absence of that project type. The base categories are "Yes" for each type. If a project is not of a certain type, the corresponding "No" variable is coded as 1.

$Project\_Cost$: A continuous variable representing the project cost.

ε: The error term, representing the unexplained variation in Y.

i: Representing each facility.

[46] Please note that numerous permutations of covariates or control variables (with a larger or fewer number of covariates) under a range of specifications of this model were tested. Estimates and confidence intervals were broadly similar with each specification.

The outputs of this specification are reported below. The regression specification is further detailed in the Technical Annex, including a "full" specification incorporating all relevant covariates.

Table 28: OLS Regression Outputs

Variable	Estimate	Std. Error	Lower CI	Upper CI	t-value	Pr (>|t|)
(Intercept)	0.65	0.26	0.13	1.16	2.48	0.01*
Funded in 2022	-0.55	0.31	-1.16	0.06	-1.78	0.08
Funded in 2023	-0.51	0.28	-1.06	0.04	-1.81	0.07
Funded in 2024	-0.27	0.29	-0.84	0.30	-0.93	0.35
Funded in 2025	-0.52	0.40	-1.32	0.28	-1.29	0.20
Project not yet started	-0.32	0.33	-0.98	0.34	-0.96	0.34
Project under construction / delivery in progress	-0.42	0.39	-1.18	0.34	-1.08	0.28
Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP)	0.52	0.22	0.09	0.96	2.37	0.02*
Grass Pitch	0.05	0.35	-0.65	0.74	0.13	0.90
Facilities	0.63	0.20	0.23	1.03	3.08	0.00**
Equipment	0.08	0.24	-0.39	0.54	0.33	0.74
Maintenance	-0.01	0.40	-0.79	0.78	-0.01	0.99
Other	-0.07	0.32	-0.69	0.55	-0.22	0.83
Project Cost (£m)	-0.02	0.05	-0.12	0.08	-0.39	0.70

Notes:
CI = Confidence Intervals
*Significance levels: 0 "***" , 0.001 "**", 0.01 "*", 0.05 "." , 0.1 " "*
Residual standard error: 1.328 on 229 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.063, Adjusted R-squared: 0.010
F-statistic: 1.192 on 13 and 229 DF, p-value: 0.286

Source: analysis of MSGF facility survey data. Sample size (N) = 243 (Facilities that responded "Don't know" and "Not asked" were dropped from the analysis)

Analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between new or upgraded AGP projects and increased sports participation. AGP projects were associated with a 52.2% increase in annual participation. Similarly, facility infrastructure projects, such as new or upgraded changing rooms, clubhouses, lighting, and car parks, correlated with a significant 62.5% rise in annual participation. AGPs are typically some of the largest investments made among all the other project types, and so statistical significance of this project type aligns with the qualitative evidence shared during stakeholder interview and case studies.

However, several other factors showed no statistically significant relationship with participation growth at this stage. Neither the year of funding nor project status (not yet started, under construction, or delivered) statistically significantly influenced participation changes. Other project types, including grass pitches, equipment upgrades, maintenance work, and unspecified projects, also lacked a statistically significant link to participation growth from the available survey data. Project cost, too, appeared statistically insignificant in driving participation changes.

The model's low R-squared value of 0.063 (adjusted R-squared of 0.010) indicated that the included predictors explained only a small portion of the variation in participation. Several reasons can lead to a low R-squared such as omitted variables (for example, accessibility of facility to public transport services, number of existing pitches for unfunded facilities, opening hours, number of practice slots for teams per week, partnerships with schools, training academies or professional sporting bodies). This is the most important reason as important predictors may not be included in the model due to data constraints. Issues commonly encountered when analysing survey data related to the self-reported nature of participation estimates is the second most important reason. This creates recall bias and noise in the data (creates variability in the dependent variable that is unexplainable by

any predictor and measurement errors that could obscure the true relationship between variables). However, the non-significant F-statistic further underscored the model's limited explanatory power. Therefore, while AGP and facility infrastructure projects demonstrate statistically significant relationships with increasing sports participation, further investigation and model refinement will be undertaken ahead of the final evaluation report to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers of participation growth. This includes considering incorporating additional variables such as pre-MSGF participation for more recently funded facilities via surveys or data available with Delivery Partners, or exploring alternative model specifications such as the staggered DiD model if sufficient pre-MSGF participation can be collected.

An alternative specification of the OLS regression which includes both the binary indicator for whether the facility was funded or not under the MSGF Programme and the year of funding variables after removing the intercept term was additionally run. The overall effect of the Programme denoted by the coefficient of the binary indicator was not significant. Please see full breakdown of the results in the Technical Annex.

5.1.2.5. Sensitivity Analysis

To ensure the reliability and validity of our core regression findings, several robustness checks using alternative model specifications were conducted. These included:

- Testing multiple OLS specifications, including a full specification containing all the covariates being considered in the analysis. The analysis found that the results were similar between the full specification and the core specification of the model outlined in Section 5.1.2.4.
- Conducting multinomial logit regressions on the directional change in participation ("Increased", "Decreased", and "Remained the same") since April 2021. The analysis was unable to establish statistical significance attributing changes in participation to Programme funding.

Further information and findings from both of these sensitivities are provided in the Technical Annex.

5.1.2.6. Limitations

This analysis is subject to limitations that should be considered when interpreting results. These limitations and potential mitigations were discussed in detail previously in the initial interim evaluation report, accounting for the practical challenges around the data available and the most robust approach possible in this context.

Methodology: As outlined above, the staggered Difference-in-Differences (DiD) methodology was not adopted to investigate causal links between this Programme and participation at this stage, owing to the lack of comparable pre-MSGF Programme data on participation to visually and statistically evidence the validity of the parallel trends assumption underpinning this methodology[47]. Additional primary data collection and transformation of secondary sources (e.g. Active Lives or Active Places Power) will be explored in further detail ahead of the final evaluation report to potentially address this challenge.

Sample Size: The limited overall sample size for the funded and unfunded groups may also restrict the generalisability of the findings and reduce the statistical power of the analysis. There is also a risk that controlling for too many covariate variables with a proportionately small dataset (i.e. a low number of observations) can lead to overfitting of the regression model specification[48]. Therefore, it is important to consider the trade-off between the degrees of freedom and parameter variables considered (the ratio of observations to the number of covariates). The evaluation will continue to review approaches to improve response rates to surveys, particularly the facility survey, from which the key variables for econometric analysis have been derived.

[47] The funded and unfunded facilities displaying parallel trends in the outcome variable (participation) prior to the MSGF Programme is a key pre-requisite for the validity of the Difference-in-Differences econometric identification strategy and makes the case to proceed with regression analysis using this methodology. The underlying principle behind this assumption is that the funded and unfunded facilities in the absence of the Programme, would have followed parallel trends prior to and after the Programme, meaning that it is solely the Programme that would cause a divergence in the participation outcomes between the two groups.

[48] Overfitting occurs when the model is too complex and fits the noise in the data rather than the underlying relationship between variables.

Self-reported data: Survey data included in this analysis was reliant on self-reported estimates of changes in participation, which creates a risk of measurement error that could introduce bias into the estimates found. Recall bias and the cognitive difficulty in recollecting changes in participation from a number of years ago is an inherent limitation of collecting data by survey. As a result, questions have been simplified in order to improve the ability of facility managers to recall information and share this for the purposes of analysis. Given there is no clear evidence of over-, or under-reporting of data available, this must be recognised as a potential limitation of survey data, but data has not been manipulated to attempt to address this at this stage.

Missing data: Facility managers had the ability to not answer, or skip, certain questions in the survey, which meant that there were specific questions relevant to the econometric analysis that contained missing values. This was particularly the case for variables such as "number of users in the past month", and "project cost", and as a result, limited the level of analysis that could be conducted using these variables. The "Financial year of receiving Programme funding" variable from the Programme Reporting data was also found to have several missing values. It was therefore necessary for facilities with missing values across these variables to be dropped for the purpose of conducting the matching and regression analyses. The resulting dataset, as outlined above, comprised 325 facilities (243 funded facilities and 82 unfunded facilities).

Unobservable differences in characteristics: While observable variables pertaining to facility and project characteristics expected to drive participation were made available through the Programme reporting data and collected via the survey, the possibility of unobserved confounding factors influencing participation cannot be entirely ruled out. Despite these limitations, this analysis provides valuable insights into participation and informing next steps with regards to the Programme.

5.2. Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

This interim evaluation report utilises a substantially larger dataset of park tennis booking data when compared to the initial interim report. Data covering online bookings made using the ClubSpark[49] platform for this phase of the evaluation was shared by the LTA on 12th December 2024. This data encompasses 214 tennis venues, both funded and unfunded, of which 186 received investments from the PTCR Programme, while 28 did not receive any PTCR funding. A total of approximately 2.4 million bookings, each identified by a unique "booking ID", were made by approximately 335,000 users, each identified by a "contact ID".

It is important to note that the primary driver behind having proportionally fewer unfunded venues in the data available for analysis is that unfunded venues were less likely to have online booking systems in place at sites to capture participation. This analysis used booking data from approximately 20% of venues receiving PTCR Programme funding to date. 58% of funded venues received gates and online booking systems; the remainder (funded only in 2023) received more substantial investments in the form of court refurbishments. Booking data for each venue includes at least 12 months pre and post PTCR investment, reflecting the seasonal nature of tennis.

This means that more booking data will become available from existing and newly refurbished venues in the next phase of the evaluation; this will further increase the sample size available for analysis. Therefore, the findings from the descriptive analysis and econometrics analysis presented in subsequent sub-sections of this report are interim and not final. The final outputs of the evaluation will capture more comprehensively the outcomes of the Programme from an augmented number of venues over a longer time period.

When compared with the sample previously analysed (383,000 bookings across 78 venues), this expanded dataset facilitates a more comprehensive assessment of the Programme's impacts and outcomes. This report will consider the evaluation questions in scope through descriptive and econometric analysis, as detailed below.

5.2.1. Findings from Descriptive Analysis

5.2.1.1. Overall Participation Trends

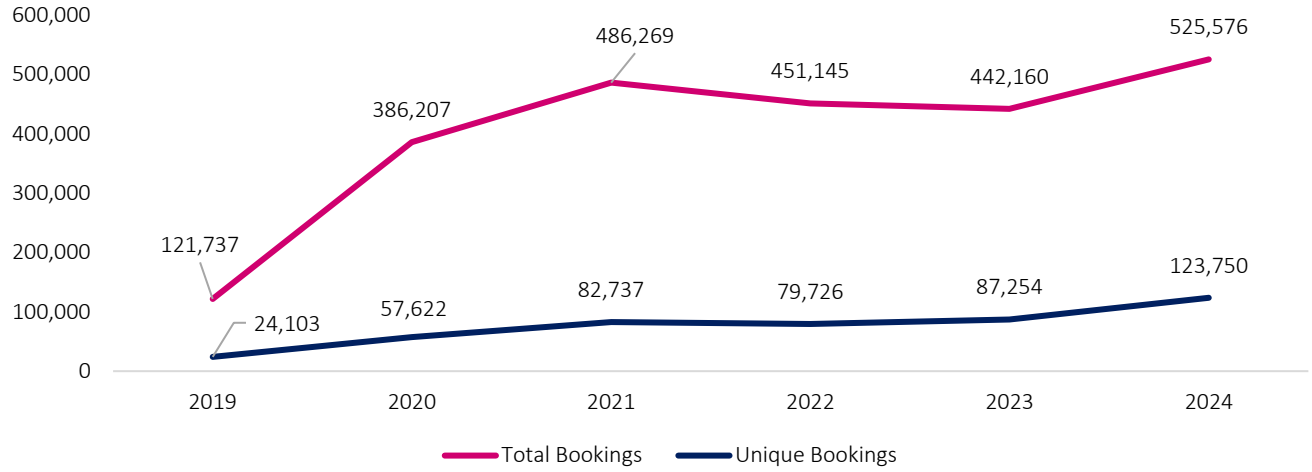
Participation trends over time

Figure 33 plots the annual number of total and unique bookings. The plot illustrates an upward trend in the total and unique number of bookings, with a small peak in both in 2021. Since this, total bookings have increased by 39,307 and unique bookings increased by 41,013 in 2024.

This surge can likely be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. As a non-team, minimal-contact sport requiring few players, tennis adhered to social distancing restrictions, potentially driving increased participation. Following the pandemic, participation plateaued in 2022 and 2023 before spiking again in 2024. This trend is mirrored in the number of unique bookings, which increased annually except for a slight decrease in 2022 and 2023.

[49] https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/

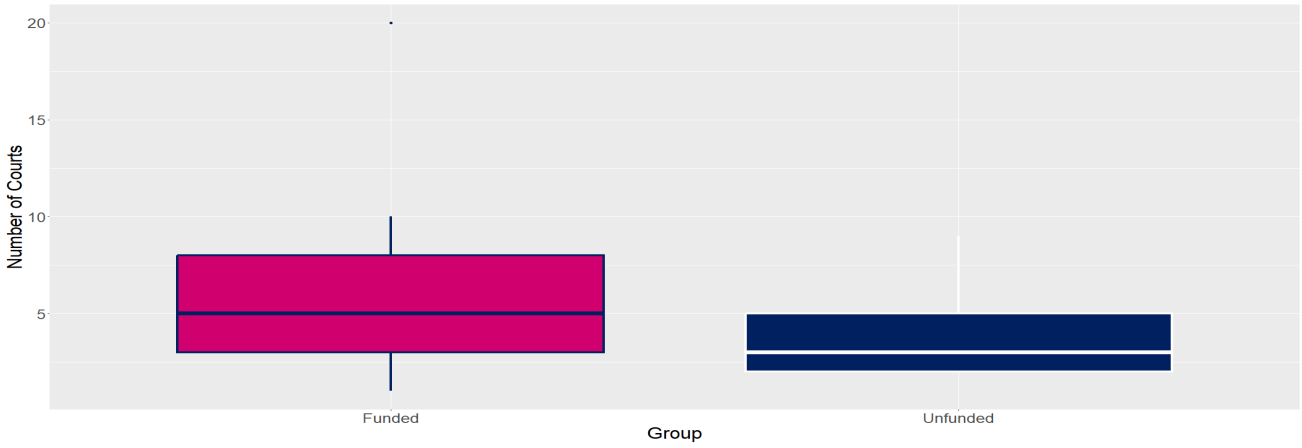
Figure 33: Total and Unique Bookings (2019 – 2024)



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data. Unique bookings are the number of bookings made by different people.

Before analysing booking data, particularly when comparing funded and unfunded venues, it is important to acknowledge the difference in the average number of courts within each group. *Figure 34*, a boxplot depicting the court distribution, reveals that funded venues tend to be larger than their unfunded counterparts.

Figure 34: Distribution of Number of Courts Per Venue, by Funded and Unfunded Venues



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

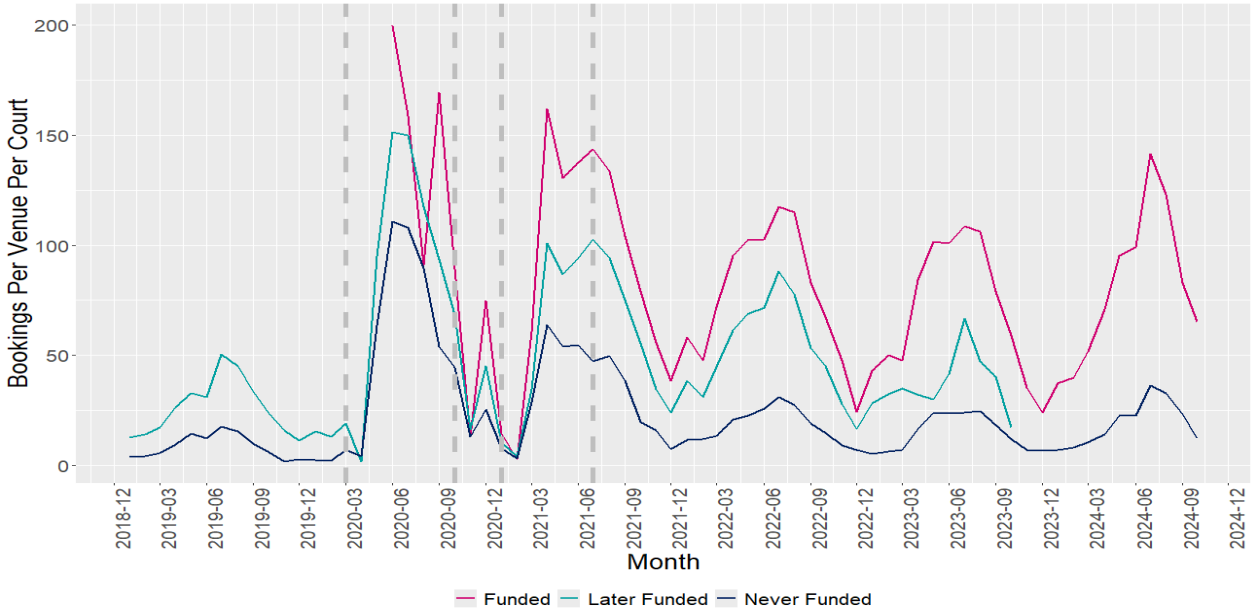
On average, funded venues possess 5.8 courts compared to 3.4 courts at unfunded venues. This larger variance in funded venues is driven by a small number of large-volume venues, such as Wimbledon Park, which contains 20 courts at the site. As a result, it is important for further analysis to be considered at the court level, as solely assessing outcomes at the venue level would not take into account these structural differences in the samples.

Funded, Later Funded, and Never Funded

Whilst *Figure 33* presents annual participation figures, *Figure 35* below presents figures on a monthly basis. This chart in particular focuses on total monthly bookings at three types of venues, calculated at the per court level. The lines represent the following distinct groups of venues:

- **"Never Funded" (dark blue line):** Includes the 28 unfunded venues that never receive funding.
- **"Later Funded" (light blue line):** Includes all funded venues before their refurbishment date. This covers 186 venues initially but decreases over time as funding is received.
- **"Funded" (pink line):** Includes all funded venues from when they receive PTCR funding.

Figure 35: Distribution of Number of Booking Per Venue Per Court, by Funded and Unfunded Venues



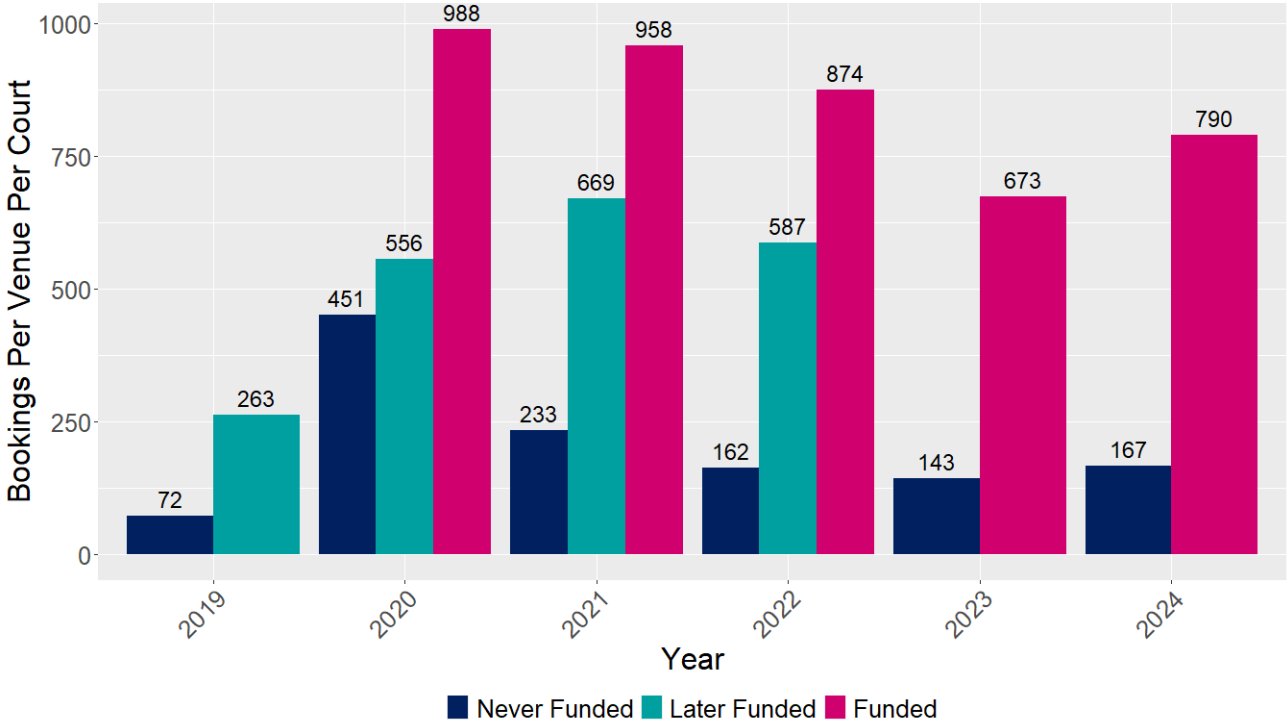
Source: Analysis of LTA booking data. The vertical dashed grey lines mark key milestones during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK – the first lockdown, the second lockdown, the third lockdown, and the removal of limits on social contact - IfG UK Lockdowns and Measures

Splitting the sample by three groups allows comparison of trends over time, whilst taking into account the date at which funding has been received for funded venues. Similarly to the yearly figures, 2020 presents a substantial spike relative to the peaks in all other years covered by the booking data. At the peak in Summer 2020, on average, the booking data shows that funded sites were getting just over 152 bookings per venue per court, representing around 5 bookings per day per court.

Relative to the peak of the most recent summer available in the booking data (July 2024), the peak of bookings on average at funded courts was around 141 bookings per venue per court, whilst the number of bookings at unfunded venues was around 36 bookings per venue per court. Whilst funded venues consistently had higher average booking per venue per court, the trends in participation are consistent across the three groups.

Additionally, the "Later Funded" venues appear to have consistently higher bookings that the "Never Funded" venues. This implies that facilities that received court refurbishments through the PTCR Programme may already have been experiencing higher use before the refurbishment than those that did not get funded. Whilst there are many potential explanations for this, including the possibility of structural differences between funded and unfunded facilities, caution should be taken in interpreting this due the relatively small number of venues in each group , particularly for the "Never Funded" group with 28 venues and the "Later Funded" group towards the end of 2023 when few venues are left to be funded in the data. This finding will be reassessed at the time of the final report when additional participation data is available.

Figure 36: Distribution of Number of Bookings Per Venue Per Court, by Funded and Unfunded Venues



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

Figure 36 averages the monthly booking data for each of the three groups from 2019 to 2024. It suggests a correlation between funding and court usage.

- Funded Venues: These consistently show the highest booking numbers, indicating strong demand. The peak in 2020 (988 bookings per venue per court) is likely attributed to increased interest in outdoor activities during the pandemic. While bookings slightly decreased in subsequent years, they remain substantially higher than the other two categories.
- Later Funded Venues: This group demonstrates the pre-funding trends for facilities that later receive PTCR funding. It indicates that average bookings per venue per court increase after receiving funding.
- Never Funded Venues: This category shows the lowest booking numbers throughout the period. The slight increase from 2019 to 2020 could be due to the pandemic effect, but the overall low figures suggest a potential lack of demand, that could be due to a number of factors (e.g. region, state of courts, etc.).

Post refurbishment uplift

Finally, the total number of bookings 12 months before the refurbishment for funded projects was compared against the total number of bookings 12 months after the refurbishment, and an overall percentage change computed. It was computed that there was an overall average 34% increase in bookings at funded venues in the 12 months following refurbishment.[50]

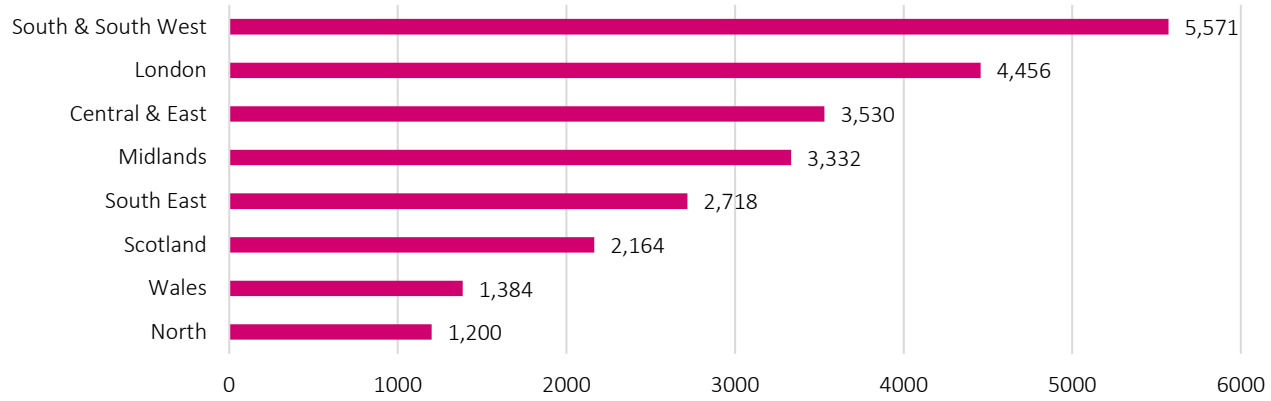
5.2.1.2. Participation Trends by Region

Figure 37 illustrates the total bookings per venue per court across different regions between 2019 and 2024. The South and South West region demonstrates the highest number of bookings per venue per court, reaching 5,571. London follows with 4,456 bookings, indicating substantial activity in these two regions. Wales and the

[50] Given unfunded venues don't have a date of refurbishment, it is challenging to create a similar pre/post comparison for this group. As a result, a comparison has not been provided at this stage.

North exhibit the lowest booking numbers, with 1,384 and 1,200 respectively. This suggests a potential disparity in either demand or court availability in these regions compared to others.

Figure 37: Total bookings per venue per court across regions between 2019-2024



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

5.2.1.3. Participation Trends by Gender

Understanding the underlying gender balance of participation is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote inclusivity and encourage greater participation in tennis for those groups most in need. As noted by the LTA, park tennis venues have higher rates of participation amongst women and girls;[51] therefore, it is important to understand if upgrading park tennis courts has contributed to the Programme's goal of reducing participation inequalities and ensuring the sport's long-term viability. *Figure 38* presents the percentage of tennis court bookings by gender from 2019 to 2024. Crucially, this is data on the gender of the *booker*, not the *participants*. Therefore, the actual distribution of tennis participants by gender may be different. The data shows that male bookings consistently dominate, hovering between 63% and 66%, while female bookings remain lower, ranging from 32% to 35%. Bookings by other genders or those with unspecified gender account for less than 4% of the total.

Assuming the split of genders by bookers is a reasonable proxy for the split of genders by participants, this data suggests a potential gender gap in park tennis participation. While the slight increase in female bookings from 32% to 35% is positive, the disparity remains large.

Figure 38: Proportion of bookings made by male and females, 2019 - 2024

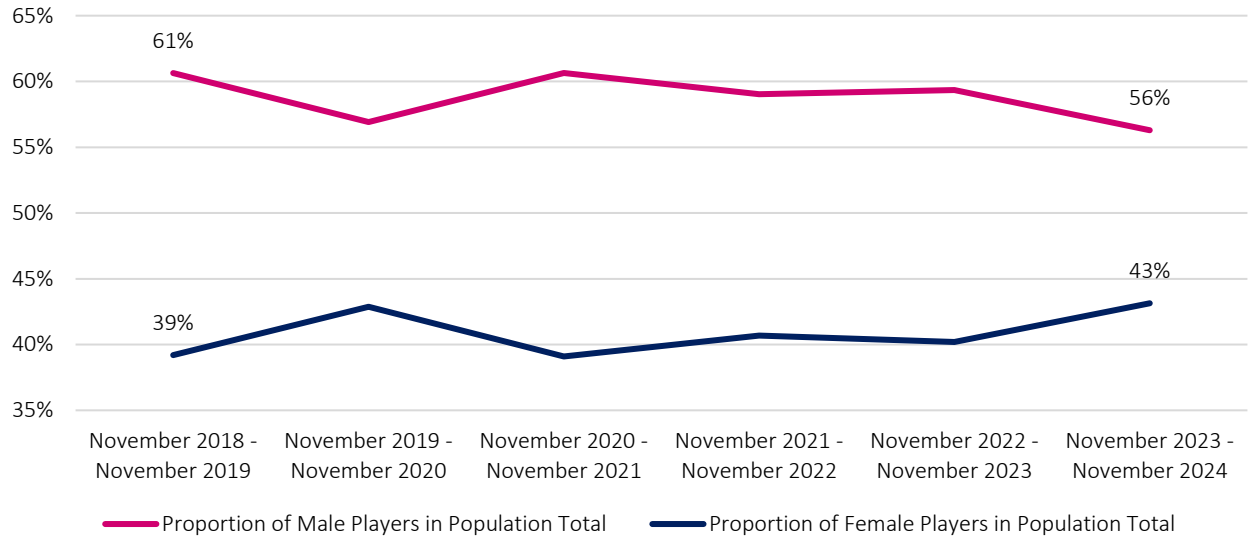
Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

[51] https://www.lta.org.uk/what-we-do/park-tennis-project/

However, qualitative evidence from interviews and case studies with stakeholders involved in the Programme and close to its impacts suggests that funded venues have experienced strong female participation, with some noting a shift in the demographic towards female participation as a result of the Programme. Findings related to female participation will be further investigated as part of the final evaluation report. This will include reviewing additional data sources, where available.

This analysis of the gender of the booker from the booking data can also be compared against trends from Sport England's Active Lives Survey, which is an annual survey conducted in England which assesses the number of people playing sport and taking part in physical activity over time. Information on participation by gender is collected, and the trend in participation in tennis by gender is shown in *Figure 39*:

Figure 39: Proportion of England adult tennis population total by gender (Active Lives Survey)



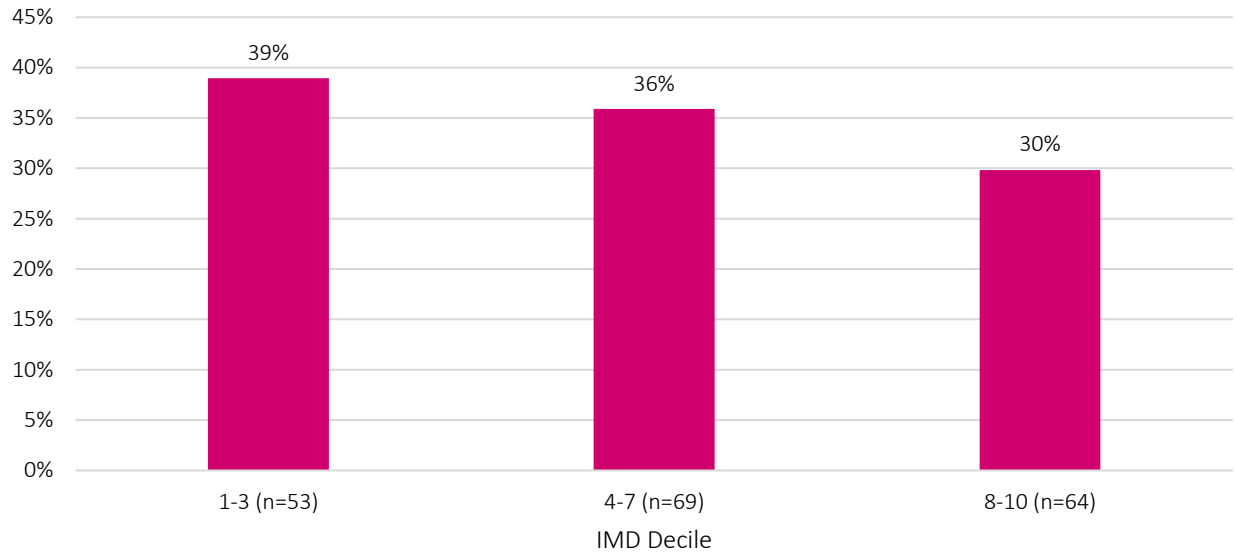
Source: Analysis of Sport England Active Lives Survey. Note that this population total computation was computed for England only. A tennis participant is defined as someone aged 16+ who took part in tennis at least twice in the last 28 days.

Figure 39 suggests that there may be a gender gap in tennis participation, although contrary to the trend shown in *Figure 38*, this gap has been reducing over time. The proportion of men in the England tennis population fell from 61% in 2018/19 to 56% in 2023/24, whilst the proportion of women increased from 39% in 2018/19 to 43% in 2023/24. Comparing the values in *Figure 38* and *Figure 39* shows that the proportion of bookings by men in the booking data is slightly higher than the proportion of men in the playing population. This may suggest that men are more likely to book tennis than women. However, this conclusion is limited by the comparability of the datasets. The booking data only covers park tennis participants at funded and unfunded sites across the UK, while the Active Lives Survey includes tennis participation at all courts in England.

5.2.1.4. Participation Trends by IMD Decile

Figure 40 compares descriptively whether there were any differences in pre and post participation at funded venues in each IMD decile grouping (1-3, 4-7, 8-10). The total number of bookings 12 months before the refurbishment for each project in each IMD grouping was compared against the total number of bookings 12 months after the refurbishment, and a percentage change computed. The figure shows that venues in the lower IMD deciles experienced a greater uplift in participation after the refurbishment relative to venues in higher IMD deciles, suggesting the Programme has met its objectives of particularly benefitted those in more deprived areas.

Figure 40: Change in the Total Pre and Post Bookings at Venues by IMD



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data. Compares the 12 months of bookings before refurbishments for venues in each IMD and compares it to the 12 months of bookings after the refurbishment.

5.2.1.5. Quality of Courts at Funded & Unfunded Venues

The quality of courts at funded and unfunded venues may be an important factor that influences the demand at venues across the UK[52]. There is a stark contrast in court conditions between funded and unfunded venues, as shown in *Figure 41*, which likely has substantial implications for participation.

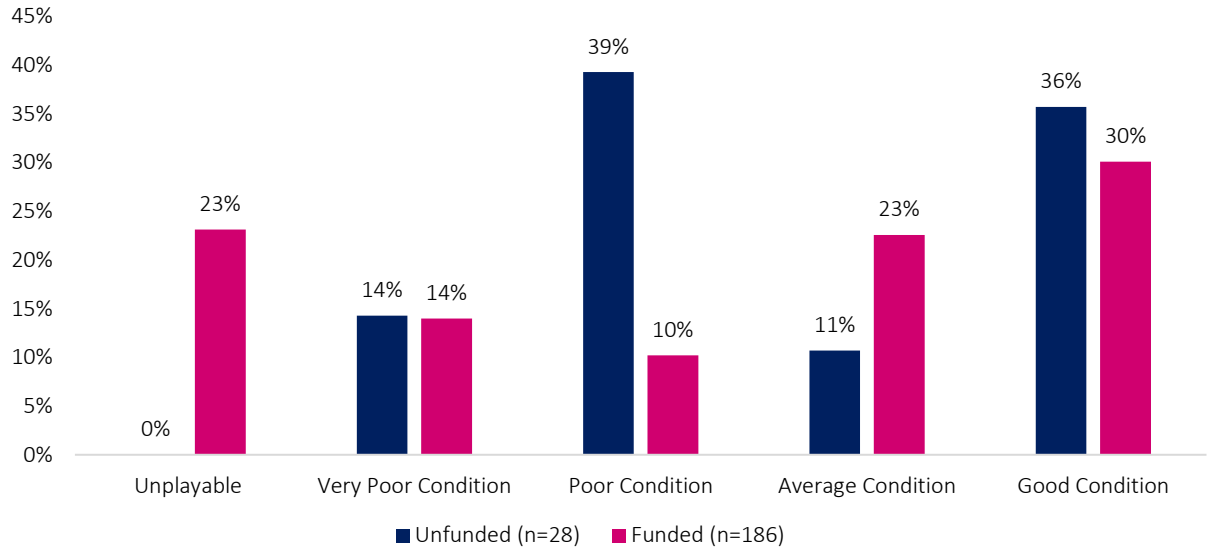
Unfunded courts disproportionately feature 'poor' conditions. 39% of unfunded courts are in poor condition, compared to only 10% of funded courts. A further 14% of unfunded courts are in very poor condition, and none of the funded courts fall into this category. This disparity likely creates a major barrier to participation for those reliant on unfunded facilities. However, 'unplayable' courts (23% unfunded versus 0% funded) likely completely eliminate access, while poor or very poor conditions may only deter participation. Stakeholder interviews and case study evidence suggests that low quality courts can increase safety concerns, reduce enjoyment, and create a perception of neglect.

The data suggests there is a considerable opportunity to increase participation by improving the condition of courts. Bringing these courts up to an acceptable standard could unlock latent demand within communities. The relatively high proportion of funded courts in 'unplayable', 'very poor' or 'poor' condition suggests a substantial opportunity to meet the need for quality facilities.

The disparity also highlights potential capacity issues. Even if demand is stimulated by improving courts, the existing capacity of courts might be insufficient to accommodate increased participation. This suggests a need for not only refurbishment, but potentially also for the creation of new facilities, particularly in areas heavily reliant on unfunded venues.

[52] The quality of courts is a characteristic shared as part of the data made available by the LTA. This is an assessment of the playing condition of the courts by LTA staff in conjunction with technical assessors contracted as part of the PTCR Programme.

Figure 41: Proportion of funded and unfunded venues by quality of courts, prior to any funding



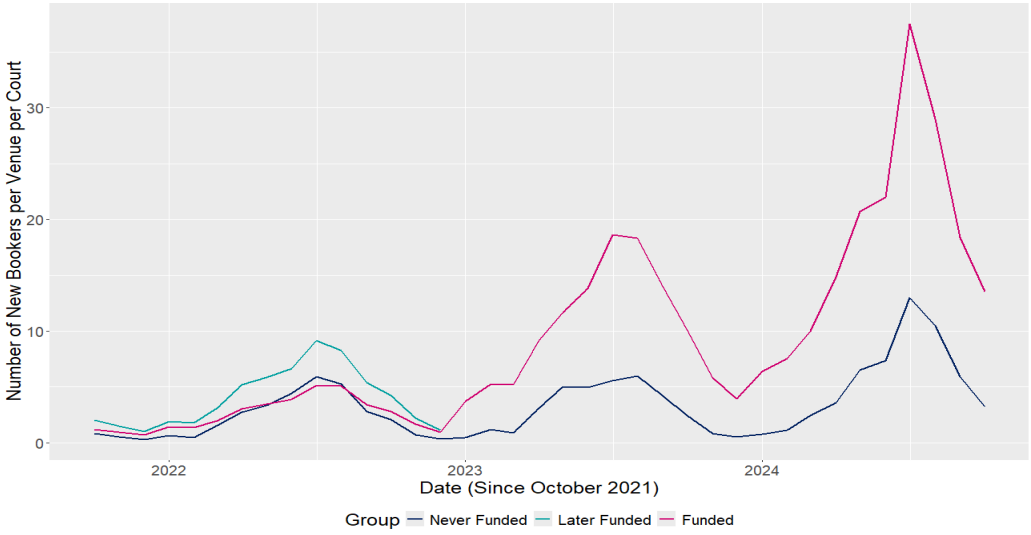
Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

5.2.1.6. Participation by New Users

Understanding the extent to which participation can be considered additional is critical to understanding the impact of PTCR funding on participation. In the context of the Programme, additional participation by new users has been assessed by examining the volume of new *"ContactID"s* that feature once a particular venue has been funded. This data is available from booking data shared by the LTA collected through their ClubSpark system.

Figure 42 displays the number of new bookers per month per venue per court after October 2021, specifically focusing on users who have never booked before. The data is segmented into three groups: "Never Funded," "Later Funded," and "Funded" venues.

Figure 42: New monthly bookers per venue per court



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

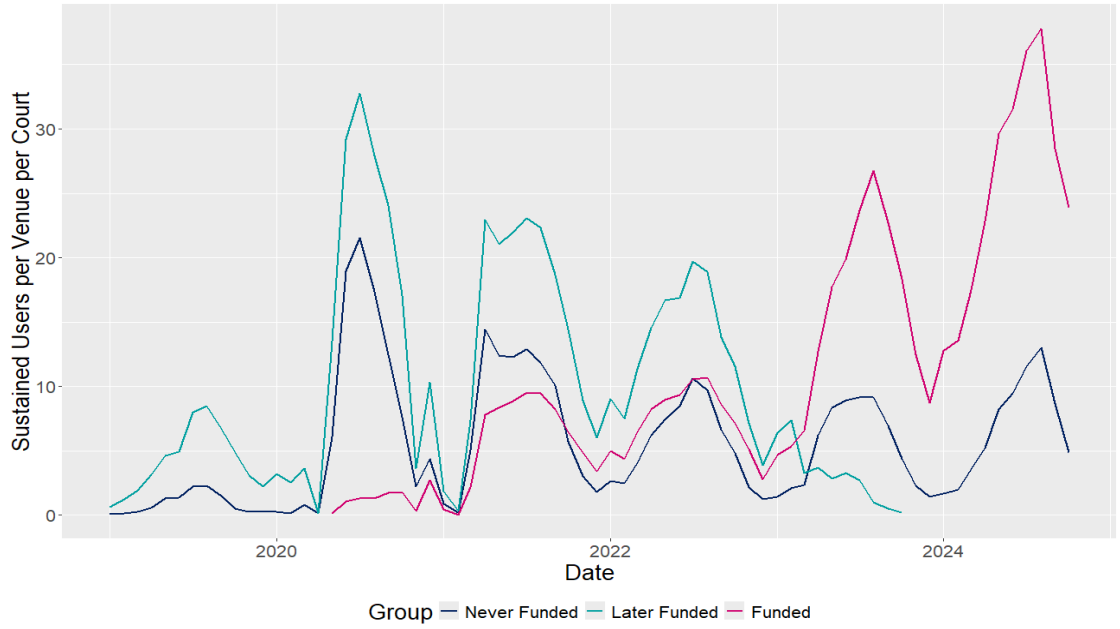
Funded venues (including both "Funded" and "Later Funded") consistently show a higher number of new bookers compared to "Never Funded" venues, especially during peak periods. Interestingly, up until 2023, "Later Funded" venues appear to attract more new bookers than "Funded" venues – however, this is likely a

result of small sample sizes in the "Later Funded" group as fewer facilities are left to be refurbished. Relative to the peak of the most recent summer available in the booking data (July 2024), there was around 37 bookings per venue per court at funded venues by new bookers compared to around 13 bookings per venue per court at unfunded venues by new bookers. Whilst again all three groups exhibit some degree of seasonality, with peaks and troughs likely corresponding to seasonal variations, funding appears to be related to the number of new bookers beyond seasonal factors alone.

5.2.1.7. Sustained Participation

A core component of this evaluation is to consider not only the extent to which participation has been 'additional', but also the extent to which is has been sustained. With regards to the PTCR Programme, a user is considered to be sustained if they have made at least four bookings of a court in a rolling 12-month period. *Figure 43* outlines the sustained users per venue per court over time, using a rolling 12-month window.

Figure 43: Sustained users per venue per court (rolling 12-month window)



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

All three groups exhibit cyclical patterns, as with other monthly booking data presented, reflecting seasonal variations in tennis participation. Peaks generally occur in the summer months, while troughs are observed during the winter. Funded venues consistently demonstrate higher sustained usage compared to the other two groups, suggesting a positive correlation between funding and sustained participation. Relative to the peak of the most recent summer available in the booking data (July 2024), there was around 36 bookings per venue per court at funded venues by sustained bookers relative to around 12 at unfunded venues.

The "Later Funded" group shows a noticeable increase in sustained users in the funded venues group from 2023 onwards, suggesting whilst there may be a slight delay in benefits beginning to materialise, after the point of funding, sustained participation does increase. This indicates that funding can positively impact participation even when introduced later, but earlier investment may yield greater benefits. Unfunded venues consistently exhibit the lowest sustained usage. Although they show seasonal fluctuations, overall sustained usage per venue per court remains lower than funded venues. The data therefore indicatively suggests a potential relationship between funded venues and the level of sustained participation.

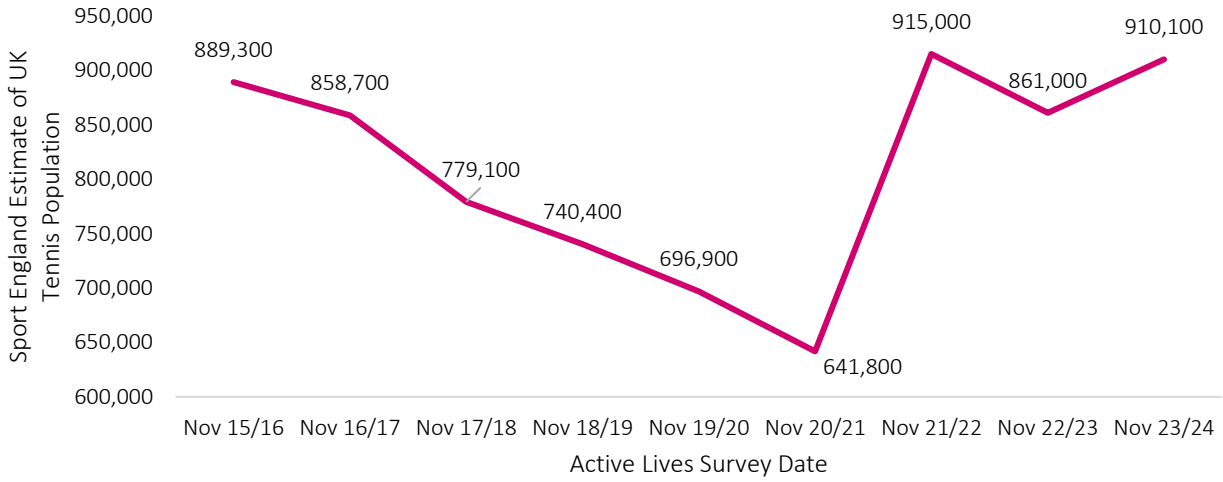
5.2.1.8. Secondary Data Analysis

Considering secondary sources of data to understand the wider context of these descriptive findings, the Active Lives Survey[53] is a comprehensive source of sports participation and physical activity data across England.

Figure 44 illustrates the estimated total population playing tennis in the UK from November 2015 to November 2024. The data, reveals a fluctuating trend in participation. Initially, from November 2015, there is steadily declining participation across England, reaching a low point of 641,800 participants in November 2021. The initial downward trend from 2015 to 2021 could be attributed to various factors, including the quality and condition of park venues, but also economic conditions or changing leisure preferences for example.

The LTA acknowledged the substantial increase from 2020/2021 to 2021/2022 in participation and suggested this is likely as a result of the Covid pandemic and participation in tennis aligning with social distancing rules and preferences of individuals[54]. It is also important to understand the limitations of the Active Lives Survey as a data source. As a survey, it relies on self-reported data, which can be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias. The level of data granularity also doesn't allow for disaggregation between those playing tennis in park venues compared to other locations. Therefore, while the graph provides valuable insights into overall trends, it's important to interpret the data with caution and contextually consider these limitations.

Figure 44: Population Total of England Playing Tennis (2016 – 2024)



Source: Active Lives Survey 23/24. Participation in tennis is defined by Sport England as participating in tennis at least twice in the last 28 days. Population totals are created using ONS mid-2015, mid-2022, and mid-2023 population estimates and 2021 census data.

Whilst the Active Lives Survey does provide some useful overall trends, it does have some limitations in this context. It reports on England-wide tennis participation but lacks specific park tennis court usage data and excludes the rest of the UK, unlike the PTCR Programme. The LTA Adult Participation Tracker survey, which is designed by the LTA and distributed by YouGov, addresses some of these limitations by covering tennis participation at a more granular level. The LTA Adult Participation Tracker, a YouGov survey running since 2016, annually collects data from approximately 18,000 adults (aged 16+) on their tennis participation. Monthly surveys of roughly 1,500 participants assess playing frequency (weekly, twice-monthly, monthly, annually), venues (parks, clubs, leisure centres, etc.), and attitudes towards tennis. Twelve-month averages are used to account for seasonality. Park court participation is calculated by multiplying the percentage of past-year players (10.98% in Nov 2022-Oct 2023) by the proportion who played in parks (37.6% in the same period), resulting in an estimated 2.1 million park court players in the UK adult population.

[53] https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/data/active-lives

[54] https://www.lta.org.uk/news/new-sport-england-data-shows-big-rise-in-tennis-participation/#:~:text=This%20is%20the%20highest%20figure,the%20impact%20of%20the%20pandemic.

The LTA compares the number of players between spring 2025 and spring 2022 to suggest the PTCR Programme has added 520,000 park tennis participants since its inception in Spring 2022. However, this pre-post estimate doesn't control for external factors and may overstate the Programme's impact. The econometric analysis in this report offers a more robust, quasi-experimental approach to isolate the Programme's effect. Furthermore, the survey scales findings to the adult population (52 million), assuming all adults can participate in park tennis, a potentially strong assumption given limitations due to disability, age, and access to park tennis facilities.

The LTA has also launched another survey, the Park Tennis Booker Survey. As of the 10th June, the survey has received over 1,600 responses over three waves, and asks users about their experiences with park programmes, booking park courts, and park refurbishment impacts. However, this survey does have some limitations. The sample sizes are relatively low at this stage as a result of a response rate of around 11% across the first two waves. Furthermore, the survey was first carried out in October 2024, so it may miss the impacts at venues funded earlier by the PTCR Programme.

Data from the Park Tennis Booker survey as well as the LTA Adult Participation tracker will be considered by the final report when additional data is expected to be available.

5.2.2. Findings from Econometric Analysis

Ahead of conducting econometric analysis, this section first considered the distribution of participation (defined by bookings made at funded and unfunded venues) and identified trends in the booking data made by users of tennis venues. This was then followed by the econometric analysis where the staggered difference-in-differences regression model was identified as the most appropriate methodology to control for key variables, to allow for analysis of any causal link between the PTCR Programme and tennis participation. Additional econometric specifications have also been run to test the sensitivity of the results obtained from the core regression specification. Further detail on the approach and outputs are set out in the Technical Annex.

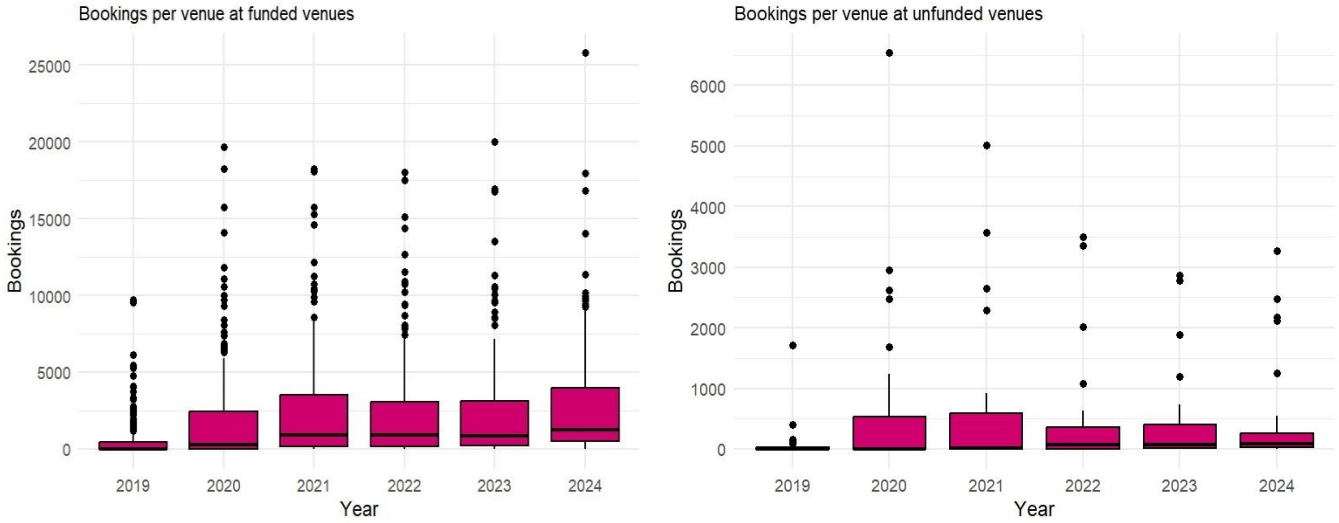
It is also is important to set out the context around the process undertaken by the LTA to select venues for funding. The selection process began with the LTA identifying potential sites for funding and collaborating with local authorities to create shortlists. Contractors then conducted technical assessments to define the scope for renovation, followed by cost estimations from the LTA. Final selection of projects for PTCR funding was determined by the LTA's finance team and funding panel, using pre-defined KPIs encompassing participation rates, deprivation indices, booking systems, and programmed activities. Subsequently, local authorities selected the operational and management structure for the renovated courts.

5.2.2.1. Trends in Participation

Booking data by year

Boxplots were created to visualise i) the distribution of the total c. 2.4 million bookings across funded and unfunded venues from 2019 to 2024; and ii) the distribution of bookings by year of funding.

Figure 45: Bookings per venue at funded and unfunded venues (2019-2024)



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data. Note the different scale on the axis of each chart.

The horizontal line inside each of the boxes denotes the median value of bookings per venue. The median value for 2019 and 2020 is much lower in the box, which implies that the data was more positively skewed for these years relative to other years. The height of the box represents the Inter Quartile Range (IQR) within the booking data for each year (i.e. the middle 50% of bookings).

The whiskers of the boxplot represent the range of values of bookings and extend to 1.5 times the value of the IQR. Given the proportion of total bookings made that are close to zero, these whiskers only range upwards, as

the number of bookings cannot take up negative values. The data points that fall outside the whiskers are plotted as individual dots and contain a high level of variance; they typically represent similar venues in each year that are systematically larger than the majority of other venues considered in the analysis.

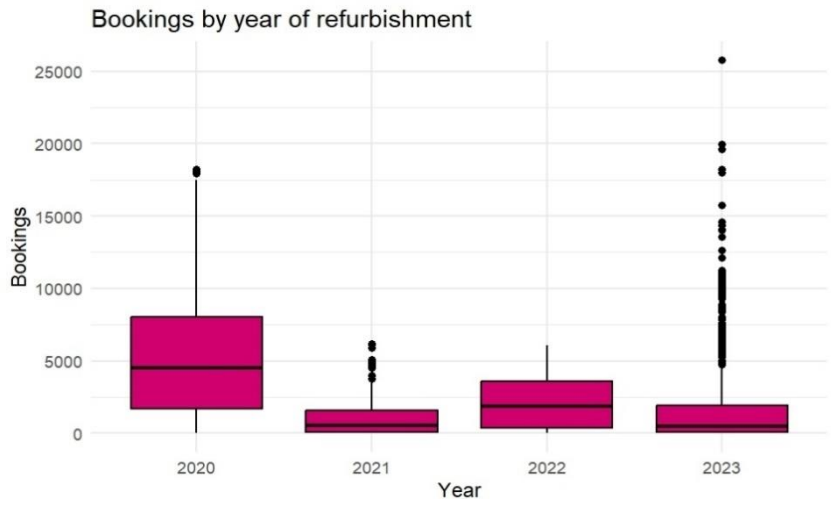
Among the 28 unfunded venues, 2020 and 2021 had the largest variance in bookings denoted by the height of the boxplot and the spread of outlier values. Again, the lower position of the median within each boxplot across the years suggests positive skewness of the booking data. Outliers in annual bookings made per venue as seen in the boxplots in *Figure 45* were also removed to reflect the distribution of bookings net of the extreme values across the wide range in magnitude of bookings (estimated as greater than 1.5 times the Inter Quartile Range), presented in the Technical Annex.

Year of refurbishment

When analysing bookings by the year in which funded venues received their funding (from 2020-2023), those venues funded in 2020 presented the largest IQR. These box plots are heavily influenced by the volume of data available. Bookings at the venues funded in 2023 represented the largest group (136 venues), and also included a range of project interventions, including full court refurbishments, gate installations and installation of online booking systems.[55]

This difference in IQR for 2020 warranted further investigation, as despite a small sample of data, the IQR was large, and the median substantially larger than for 2021 and 2022. This may have been as a result of external factors such as Covid, explained more below.

Figure 46: Bookings made at funded venues, by year of refurbishment (2020-2023)



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

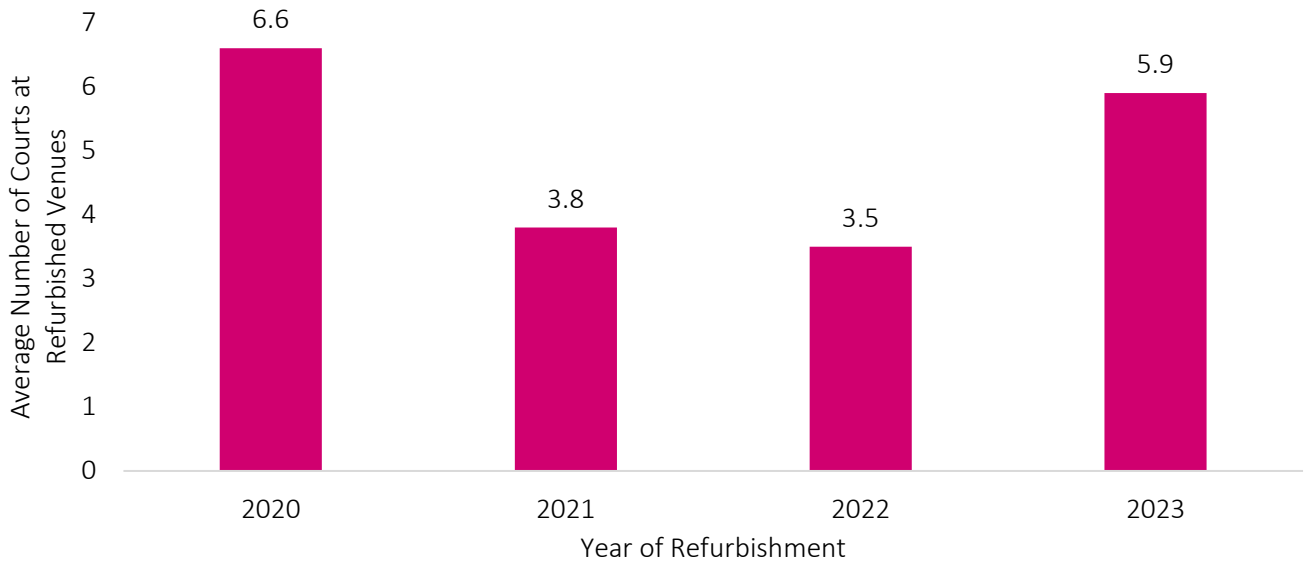
N=2,335,956 bookings at 214 venues of which 19 were funded in 2020, 21 in 2021, 10 in 2022 and 136 in 2023.

Capacity of venues

The characteristics of these venues were further investigated to determine whether they are inherently different to venues funded in other years. On average, the number of courts or the capacity of venues funded in 2020 was higher at 6.6 courts per venue in comparison to 4.4 courts per venue for those funded from 2021 to 2023.

[55] Whilst there are a number of points outside of the IQR for 2023, they are within X of the mean and therefore are included in the analysis going forward. Please see the output section of the impacts of removing these on the results and the impacts this has on significant findings.

Figure 47: Bar chart showing the average number of courts at refurbished venues



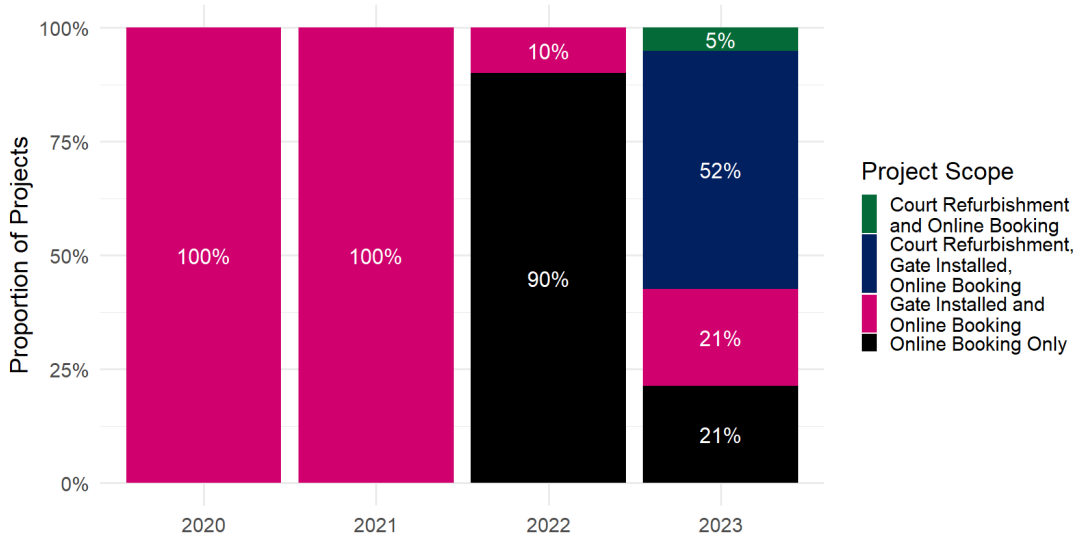
Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

Type of refurbishment (project type)

In 2020, venues mainly underwent installation of gates or online booking systems and were funded through LTA funding prior to the official announcment of the PTCR Programme. This may suggest that these venues are systematically "different" in terms of their characteristics when compared to those awarded PTCR funding from 2021 onwards, as they may have undergone a different selection process and were assessed based on alternative criteria.

Figure 48 illustrates the changing proportions of court refurbishment project types over the years 2020-2023. In 2020 and 2021, all projects focused exclusively on "Court Refurbishment and Online Booking". In 2022 however, the majority (90%) of projects were still "Court Refurbishment and Online Bookings" but 10% were "Gate Installed and Online Booking". By 2023, the project scope diversified substantially, and included court refurbishments for the first time.

Figure 48: Distribution of project types, by year



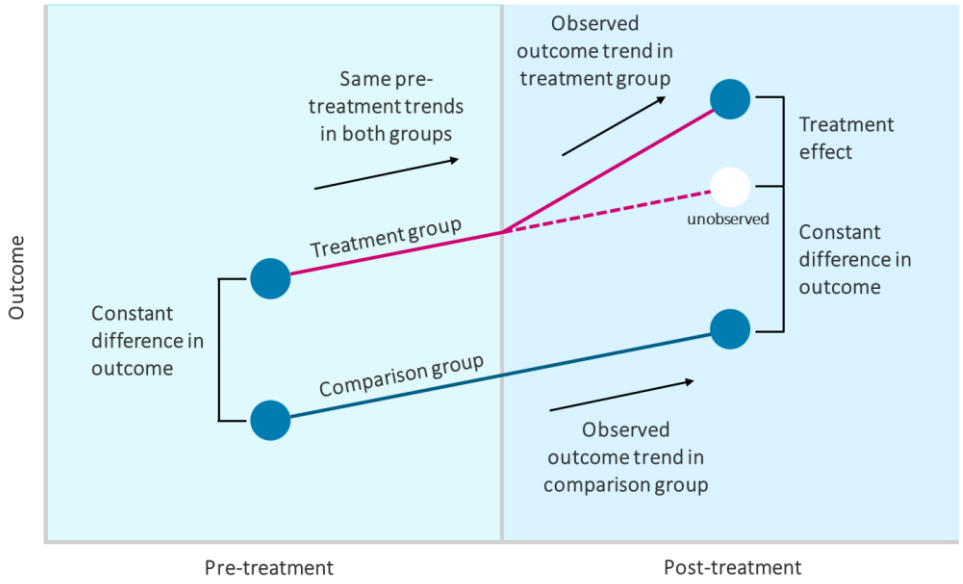
Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

5.2.2.2. Validity of the Parallel Trends Assumption

Prior to conducting the econometric analysis, it was also necessary to assess whether the proposed methodology of the Staggered Difference-in-Differences (DiD) would be appropriate. A core assumption of this approach is the 'parallel trends assumption', as shown in *Figure 49* below:

The parallel trends assumption states that, in the absence of the treatment (the PTCR Programme), the funded and unfunded venues (treatment and control groups) would have followed similar trends in participation over time. Any pre-existing differences between the groups would have remained consistent had the PTCR Programme not occurred. *Figure 49* presents a 'standard' DiD model to demonstrate this assumption.

Figure 49: Visualisation of a difference-in-difference approach

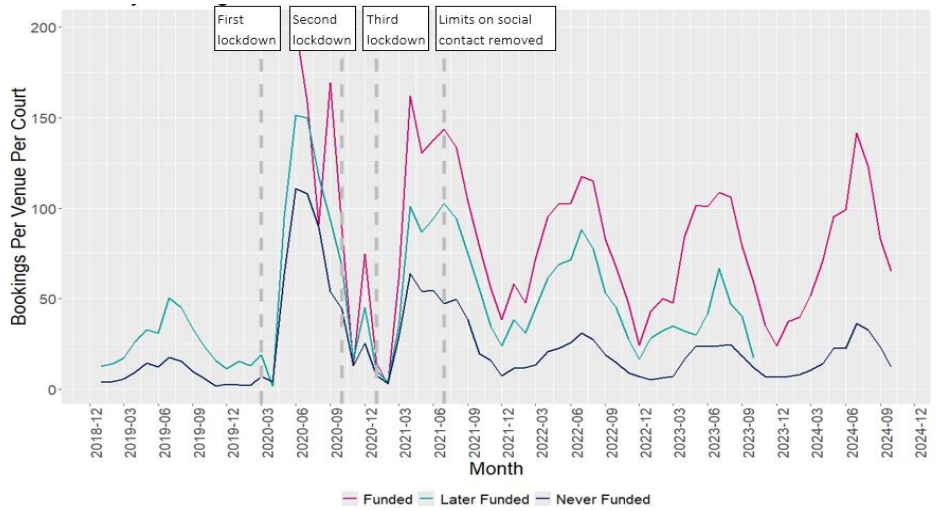


Satisfying this assumption enables the analysis to isolate the effect of the Programme, by comparing the change in outcomes between the funded and unfunded groups after the Programme intervention. If the parallel trends assumption is not validated, it is not possible to confidently state that any difference in changes, if observed, can be attributed to the PTCR Programme, as this may be due to pre-existing differences in trends before the commencement of the Programme. It should also be noted of course that time variant impacts may also affect the difference between funded and unfunded venues; this is further detailed in the Technical Annex.

Figure 50 below presents a version of this using monthly booking data to enable visual inspection. The three lines represent three distinct groups of venues:

- **"Never Funded" (represented by the dark blue line):** includes the 28 unfunded venues or those venues that will never receive any form of PTCR funding.
- **"Later Funded" (represented by the light blue line):** includes all funded venues before their refurbishment date. This covers 186 venues at first but the number of funded venues under this group begins to progressively diminish over time once they begin to receive PTCR funding.
- **"Funded" (represented by the pink line):** Includes all funded venues from when they actually receive PTCR funding, on or after their refurbishment date.

Figure 50: Trends in monthly bookings per venue per court including venues funded in 2020



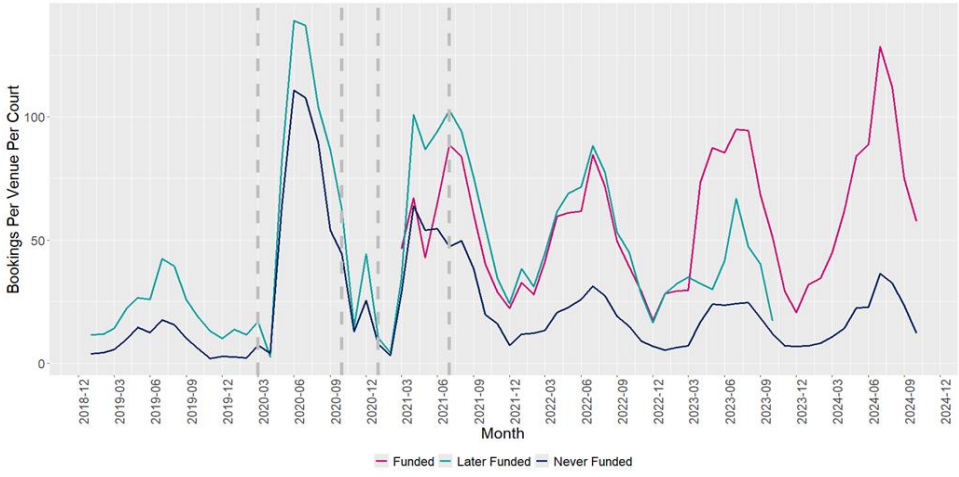
Source: Analysis of LTA booking data. The vertical dashed grey lines mark key milestones during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK – the first lockdown, the second lockdown, the third lockdown, and the removal of limits on social contact - IfG UK Lockdowns and Measures

Figure 50 above presents monthly bookings per venue, per court. This has been presented 'per court' to control for the average funded venue being larger than the average unfunded venue, which would have skewed the presentation of these bookings at the venue level.

In 2019, the never funded and later funded venues follow broadly the same trends before the PTCR Programme and following the introduction of the Programme. For funded venues, there is more variance in the data in 2020. This variance is likely as a result of the COVD-19 pandemic, and drives the higher spike in bookings between March and September 2020, given that tennis participation complied with social distancing rules and was an outdoor activity; this line begins to align with trends in the later funded and never funded venues just ahead of the third lockdown in 2020. It is likely therefore that venues funded in 2020 may be distorting the underlying trends.

When all bookings made at venues funded in 2020 are dropped from the analysis, the never funded and later funded groups continue to follow parallel trends (Figure 51). The funded venues also align with this, which implies that the parallel trend assumption is visually satisfied.[56]

Figure 51: Trends in monthly bookings per venue per court excluding venues funded in 2020



[56] The visualisation of parallel trends and regression analysis was also conducted on the matched dataset of funded and unfunded venues for the pre-PTCR Programme participation, and analysis did not reject the parallel trends assumption.

Source: Analysis of LTA booking data. The vertical dashed grey lines mark key milestones during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK – the first lockdown, the second lockdown, the third lockdown, and the removal of limits on social contact - IfG UK Lockdowns and Measures

5.2.2.3. Matching

Statistical matching was used to create more comparable funded (treatment) and unfunded (control) groups, thereby reducing bias in the assessment of the PTCR Programme's impact on participation. The Nearest Neighbour Matching (NNM) technique was employed to create balanced groups (that isolate the effect of the Programme and reduces bias due to observed characteristics) for comparison when evaluating the impact of a programme or intervention.

In the context of data available for analysis, the sample was more heavily skewed towards the funded venues, comprising 186 funded venues and 28 unfunded venues. The NNM method facilitated the creation of a more precise estimate of the impact of the Programme on participation by reducing variance between the two groups, thereby increasing the potential to detect statistically significant effects (if any).

This was done through identifying the funded venues that were the "closest match" or resemble each unfunded venue across a range of relevant characteristics called covariate or matching variables. This "closeness" is typically measured by a distance measure or "caliper" between the values of the matching variables. Only unfunded facilities within the caliper distance are considered as potential matches for a funded facility; the nearest neighbour within the caliper is then selected as the final match[57]. The steps undertaken were as follows:

a. **Identifying the matching variables or covariates:** The detailed summary of the variables identified and accompanying rationale for inclusion in the analysis is set out in *Table 29* below.

Table 29: Matching variables summary

Matching variable	Sub-categories of matching variable	Rationale for inclusion
Region	• England (Midlands, North, London, South East, South and South West and Central and East) • Wales • Scotland	Variation in the selection process and criteria used to award funding to applicant facilities
IMD	NA (numerical discrete variable)	Capturing differences in the level of deprivation and socio-economic characteristics of the local authority area where a venue is located
Total number of courts	NA (numerical discrete variable)	Proxy for size or capacity of the venue
Pre-PTCR Programme participation	NA (numerical discrete variable)	Accounting for previous trends in participation in terms of total number of bookings made in the year(s) preceding award of PTCR funding at a venue
Local authority population density	Not applicable; population density was merged with the survey data from secondary sources such as statistical websites[58]	Accounting for local demographic distribution (urban versus rural areas) and indirectly capturing for the socio-economic characteristics of the area

[57] Please see Section 5.1.2 for further detail explaining Nearest Neighbour Matching and caliper distances.
[58] Sources for local authority population density by nation: a) England (ONS) b) Wales (StatsWales) and c) Scotland (Scotland's Census (2022))

b. **Defining the matching specifications:** Matching with and without replacement (please refer to Section 5.1.2.2. for a detailed explanation of these terms) and defining the caliper distance for each specification to test the sensitivity of balance achieved between the matching variables.

c. **Estimating the Standardised Mean Difference (SMD):** This is the distance or balance between the values of the covariates between the funded and unfunded groups. An SMD equal to 0 implies excellent balance and an SMD close to 0 denotes good balance.

Table 30: Matching specifications and balance summary

Option	Matching specification	Caliper	Matching variables	# Matched facilities	Balance (Standardised Mean Difference)
1	Without replacement	0.25	• Region • Total number of courts • Local authority population density • Pre-PTCR participation • State of courts	Funded: 186 of 186 Unfunded: 15 of 28 Total sample size: 201	0.012
2	With replacement	0.25	• Region • Total number of courts • Local authority population density • Pre-PTCR participation • State of courts	Funded: 28 of 186 Unfunded: 28 of 28 Total sample size: 56	3.0046
3	With replacement	0.1	• Region • Total number of courts • Local authority population density • Pre-PTCR participation • State of courts	Funded: 162 of 186 Unfunded: 15 of 28 Total sample size: 177	0.0205
4	**With replacement**	**0.1**	• Region • Total number of courts • Local authority population density • Pre-PTCR participation	Funded: 155 of 186 Unfunded: 15 of 28 Total sample size: 170	**0.0070**
5	With replacement	0.05	• Region • Total number of courts • Local authority population density • Pre-PTCR participation • State of courts	Funded: 142 of 186 Unfunded: 12 of 28 Total sample size: 154	0.0250

Sources: Analysis of LTA booking data and secondary data on local authority population density from UK statistical websites

Table 30 sets out a comparison between the matching variations undertaken and results produced, comparing the results derived from the five specifications run. This was specifically run on the full sample data (not yet excluding bookings made at venues funded in 2020 from the analysis). Option 4 was the preferred specification, with a reasonably strict caliper defined as 0.1 (0.1 standard deviations from mean), that produced relatively good balance in comparison to the other specifications. This specification has been therefore taken forwards into subsequent econometric analysis.

However, it is important to note that this specification, along with a number of the other specifications run, may be limited by the low power of the sample of unfunded venues available for comparison, as only 15 unfunded venues of the total of 28 were matched to 155 funded venues. Alternate matching methods (k:1 and Coarsened Exact Matching) were also tested; the results from matching analysis obtained from these approaches did not vary in terms of the size and composition of the matched sample derived.

At this point, venues funded in 2020 were excluded from the sample[59], recognising the trends previously outlined in Section 5.2.3.1 and 5.2.3.2. The summary statistics given below are therefore presented with these venues excluded.

5.2.2.4. Summary Statistics

Similar to the MSGF Programme, before conducting the econometric regression modelling, descriptive statistics were generated from the facilities dataset used for the matching analysis, to provide an overview of the variables in scope. This included examining their distribution, central tendency (mean, median), dispersion (standard deviation, range), and conducting simple t-tests to compare if there are any statistically significant differences in the means of key variables between funded and unfunded venues (denoted by the p-values). Please refer to Section 5.2.1.3. for a detailed explanation around the interpretation of p-values.

Table 31: Summary statistics of matched LTA booking data sample

Interpretation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Min	Max	p-value	Interpretation
Total Bookings (Per Venue)	10690.4	15616.1	4513.5	51.0	102616.0	0.000	Significant
Total Number of Courts (Per Venue)	3.3	2.1	3.0	1.0	20.0	0.000	Significant
IMD Decile	5.7	2.7	6.0	1.0	10.0	0.192	Not significant
Local authority Population Density	3284.7	2483.5	2746.0	48.0	12156.0	0.000	Significant
Pre-PTCR Bookings	5697.4	9893.9	1588.5	0.0	56850.0	0.000	Significant

Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

Sample size (N)= 156 facilities. Bookings at venues funded in 2020 were excluded from the sample.

The mean values for the variables described in this table such as Total bookings (per venue), Total Number of Courts (per venue) and IMD Decile have been set out in the Descriptive Analysis section. The mean values for Local authority Population Density is 3,607 for the funded facilities and 2,287 for the unfunded facilities. Similarly, this is 5,855 for the Pre-PTCR bookings at funded facilities and 1,224 at unfunded facilities.

Considering the total number of bookings per venue from *Table 26* above, the large difference between the mean and median indicates a skewed distribution. Furthermore, there was a huge range in bookings, varying between 51 and 102,616. Similarly, the standard deviation of the total number of courts was relatively high compared to the mean, indicating variability in the number of courts at different locations.

Analysis revealed no statistically significant difference in average IMD decile between funded and unfunded venues at the 5% significant level (p = 0.192). Whilst the funding was targeted at areas with higher deprivation, so recognising the limited sample size of booking data, the difference might become statistically significant when more data is available.

The table below shows a descriptive breakdown of the categorical variables available in the regression analysis. The booking data showed the highest regional representation in London (32.1%), while Wales had the lowest (1.3%). Just over 15% of venues in the booking data had a Free Park Tennis offer. In terms of the project type, "Court Refurbishment, Gate Installed, Online Booking" is the most common (37.8%), followed by "Gate Installed

[59] The visualisation of parallel trends and regression analysis was also conducted on the matched dataset of funded and unfunded venues for the pre-PTCR Programme participation, and analysis did not reject the parallel trends assumption.

and Online Booking" (26.3%). A small percentage (9.6%) had "No intervention", indicating these venues were control courts. 28.2% of courts were in "Good Condition," while a large portion were in various states of disrepair (e.g. "Unplayable" (23.1%)).

Table 32: Descriptive breakdowns of variables used in regression analysis

Variable	Categories	% breakdowns of categories
Region	London	32.1%
	North	19.9%
	South & South West	19.9%
	Midlands	12.2%
	South East	7.1%
	Scotland	5.1%
	Central & East	2.6%
	Wales	1.3%
Free Park Tennis	No programme	84.6%
	Free Park Tennis Programme	9.0%
	Free Session - other	6.4%
Project Type	Court Refurb., Gate Installed, Online Booking	37.8%
	Gate Installed and Online Booking	26.3%
	Online Booking Only	21.8%
	No intervention	9.6%
	Court Refurbishment and Online Booking	4.5%
Court Condition	Good Condition	28.2%
	Unplayable	23.1%
	Average Condition	21.2%
	Very Poor Condition	15.4%
	Poor Condition	12.2%

Source: Analysis of LTA booking data

Sample size (N)= 156 facilities. Bookings at venues funded in 2020 were excluded from the sample.

5.2.2.5. Staggered DiD Regression Analysis

The staggered Difference-in-Differences (DiD) model is an extension of the traditional DiD model. It estimates the impact of an intervention introduced at different time periods for different groups or individuals. It compares changes over time between groups that started the intervention earlier and those that started later (have not yet started the intervention or never received the intervention).

The model determines whether the outcomes anticipated from this intervention can be attributed to the intervention by isolating its impact from other observable factors that might change over time. The model estimates the "Group Time Average Treatment Effect" (ATE) which is the average effect of the intervention on a group of units over a specific time period, considering that they might have started the interventions at different times. It averages the impact of the intervention across everyone in the group and across the time they have been exposed to it.

This analysis was undertaken in alignment with the staggered DiD methodology set out by Callaway and Sant Anna (2021)[60]. There are two approaches towards estimating the treatment effect:

[60] Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021)

a) **Comparing funded venues with "never funded" venues:** This relies on 'clean' control of unfunded venues and presumes that (i) a large enough "never-funded" group is available in the data, and (ii) these units are "similar enough" to the eventually funded units such that they can be used as a valid comparison group.
b) **Comparing funded venues with "not yet or later funded" venues:** Where the conditions set out in a) are not satisfied, an alternative parallel trends assumption can be adopted. This uses the not-yet funded units as valid comparators, and typically uses more venues and increases the power of the sample when constructing comparison groups.

Option b) has been selected as the main specification for the regression analysis to follow owing to the limited data available within the "never funded" group of venues. The model specification outlined under Option a) have also been run solely comparing the funded against the 28 never funded venues for reference and have been reported in the Annex.

5.2.2.6. Results from Core Staggered DiD Model Specifications

Table 33: Staggered DiD regressions on participation (excluding bookings made at venues refurbished in 2020)

Group	Time	ATT (g,t)	Std. Error	95%: Simultaneous Confidence Bands	
2021	2020	-400.80	408.15	-1509.69	708.10
2021	2021	-209.28	583.61	-1794.88	1376.32
2021	2022	90.49	620.69	-1595.83	1776.80
2021	2023	723.36	669.19	-1094.73	2541.45
2021	2024	747.75	696.62	-1144.88	2640.37
2022	2020	418.66	825.33	-1823.64	2660.95
2022	2021	-384.45	1162.82	-3543.68	2774.77
2022	2022	-341.47	1111.11	-3360.19	2677.25
2022	2023	-60.69	1090.71	-3023.99	2902.62
2022	2024	30.28	1161.89	-3126.41	3186.97
2023	2020	227.74	465.51	-1036.99	1492.47
2023	2021	617.49	752.28	-1426.34	2661.33
2023	2022	24.42	738.16	-1981.05	2029.89
2023	2023	69.92	580.81	-1508.07	1647.90
2023	2024	595.98	612.55	-1068.24	2260.20

Source: Analysis of LTA booking data
*Significance codes: * Confidence band does not cover 0*
P value for pre-test of parallel trends assumption: 0.11016
Control group: "Not-yet-treated", Anticipation periods: 0
Estimation Method: Doubly Robust

An explainer of what each column of the staggered DiD regression results table (*Table 32*) represents is set out below:

- **Group**: This identifies the year in which the funded facilities received PTCR Programme funding.
- **Time**: This indicates the year in which the booking was made at a court for a funded or unfunded venue.
- **Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (group-time) (ATT (g,t)):** This is the estimated average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) for the specific year of funding (g) at a given year (t). It represents the difference in participation (bookings made) between the funded and unfunded venues.
- **Standard Error**: This is the standard error of the ATT estimate, indicating the precision of the estimate. The standard error measures the variability or uncertainty in an estimate of a population parameter (like a mean or an effect size). It denotes by how much the sample estimate of participation is likely to vary from the

true population value of participation. A smaller standard error indicates a more precise estimate and is calculated based on the standard deviation of the sample and the sample size.

- 95% Simultaneous Confidence Bands: These represent the range within which the true ATT is likely to fall with 95% confidence, considering the multiple comparisons being made across different groups and time periods. It accounts for the increased chance of finding a statistically significant result by chance when making multiple comparisons.

The coefficients of interest in *Table 33* are presented under the ATT (g,t) column. *Table 33* expresses the ATT in terms of the absolute number of bookings made at funded and unfunded venues, excluding the bookings made at venues refurbished in 2020 owing to the higher-than-normal bookings during the COVID-19 pandemic and these venues being inherently different to the venues funded following the announcement of PTCR funding.[61]

The ATT regression coefficients can be interpreted as the *"The difference between the mean change in outcomes over time experienced by the funded facilities that received the Programme investment in a particular year (Group column) adjusted by the mean change in outcomes over time (Time column) experienced by units in the untreated group"*[62].

For example, the coefficient 90.49 in *Table 33* is the average difference in the number of bookings made by users at venues funded in 2021, when compared with unfunded venues in the year 2022 (i.e. venues funded in 2021 had 90 more bookings than the unfunded venues in the year 2022). However, this is not statistically significant.

Other ATT estimates in this regression specification, by year of receiving the funding and over time, are also not significant. The findings are also characterised by very large standard errors and wide confidence intervals, which suggests that there is a lot of variance and noise in the distribution of bookings across venues, driven by the limited sample of venues available for analysis as seen in the boxplot graphs plotted in 5.2.2.1.

Results from the logarithmic form of the results and results from an additional specification of the Staggered DiD regression which has removed outliers in volume of bookings per venue (those funded in 2021, 2022 and 2023) within each year are presented in the Technical Annex.

5.2.2.7. Sensitivity Analysis

Robustness checks are essential to assess the reliability and validity of the findings from the core regression analysis above. To determine whether the results obtained are robust and whether significance can be detected, alternate model specifications were run which included:

- Staggered DiD including 2020 funded venues: Running the staggered DiD regressions to include bookings made at venues funded in 2020 was run to provide a comparison of what the results would show when considering the full sample of facilities available for analysis. The reported difference in participation between the venues funded in 2020 and the unfunded venues was larger than for the specification in *Table 33* excluding those bookings, however, there was still no statistical significance found.

- Court refurbishments only: Running regressions for only venues that received funding for court refurbishments against the unfunded venues (excluding those venues that underwent online booking system and gate installations from the funded group). The rationale for this specification was to trim down the sample to include those venues where the maximum net positive difference in participation between the funded and unfunded venues would expect to be observed. However, this reduced sample also did not generate any evidence of significance.

- Augmenting the unfunded sample: Augmenting the group of unfunded venues to include venues which received funding for minor interventions such as gate installations or online booking systems in 2020 and

[61] These specifications were also run excluding values that deviated substantially from the mean, and no difference in outputs were observed.
[62] *Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021)*

2021 (the period prior to the announcement of PTCR funding) and comparing this group with venues that received funding for court refurbishments in 2023. The objective was to increase the sample size of the unfunded group to allow for a meaningful comparison; however, this did not provide any evidence that the Programme had a significant impact on participation.

- Pooled staggered DiD: Running a pooled staggered DiD regression specification to produce one estimator of the Average Treatment Effect (ATT) of the Programme. This was done in order to address the challenge of under-powered funding year by time estimation of the ATT. The time variable was combined to form three groups; 2019, 2021 (including bookings made in the year 2020 and 2021) and 2024 (including bookings made in the years 2022, 2023 and 2024). However, this specification does not yield any significant estimates.

The detailed breakdowns of the checks mentioned are reported in the Technical Annex.

5.2.2.8. Limitations

While this analysis provides insights on the Programme, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that were discussed in the first interim evaluation report. It details these limitations, potential mitigating strategies, and the rationale for the chosen methodology, given the available data and practical constraints.

Sample size: The sample available for analysis is heavily skewed towards the funded venues, comprising 186 versus only 28 unfunded venues. The challenge around having a low number of venues is that the variation is high and thus the power or identification can be insufficient to be able to detect an effect of the Programme participation if any. Confidence intervals are also wide representing this variation and may need to be adjusted. Therefore, the analysis is limited by the data in terms of the number of venues as well as the variety of project types (specifically venues that received funding for major interventions such as court refurbishments). As the quality and volume of data made available for analysis is dependent on stakeholders, the next phase of the evaluation will focus on continuing to request for a larger dataset.

Parallel trends: The key underlying assumption forming the pre-requisite for the staggered DiD was initially not met when including the bookings made at the venues funded in 2020.

Unobservable differences in characteristics: While observable variables pertaining to venue and project characteristics expected to drive participation were made available through the real-time booking data from the LTA, the possibility of unobserved confounding factors influencing participation cannot be entirely ruled out. Despite these limitations, this analysis provides valuable insights into participation and informing next steps with regards to the Programme.

5.3. Impact Evaluation Observations & Next Steps

Table 34 summarises the key findings and recommendations from the provided text, focusing on the impact of both the MSGF and PTCR Programmes. It highlights areas of success, identifies challenges, and suggests areas to consider for further investigation, particularly related to improving the robustness of the causality process which attempts to establish a causal link between the Programmes and increased participation. Designated owners will review each observation, considering its implications for future delivery.

Table 34: Impact Evaluation Observations

#	Observations	Applicability
1	Over the next 12 months, it will be important to continue reviewing and refining data from primary surveys, paying particular attention to questions about participation and long-term impacts. This may improve the evidence base for assumptions made and improve the quality of data used to demonstrate the extent to which the Programme has met its objectives.	MSGF (including LFF)
2	Improving the quality and quantity of post-award assurance monitoring data will allow for a more precise and evidence-based long-term impact assessment of the Programme. DCMS and Delivery Partners can work jointly to embed post-award assurance data into current reporting processes and leverage work already underway in this area to minimise burden on administrators and facilities.	MSGF (including LFF), PTCR & Future Programmes
3	Exploring how facility managers and users are incentivised to complete surveys and provide data could improve response rates and increase the sample size for descriptive and econometric analysis. A larger sample size will improve the ability of the evaluation to identify more granular impacts and increase the overall quality and robustness of analysis undertaken.	MSGF (including LFF)
4	Alternative and additional analytical approaches, such as imputation to address missing values in key variables, could be considered to enhance the quality of the econometric analysis. Steering Group members will be consulted on updates to the design and methodology underpinning analysis.	MSGF (including LFF) & PTCR

6. Economic Evaluation: Interim Findings

Economic Evaluation: Key Emerging Findings

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

- At this stage, Social Cost Benefit Analysis (SCBA) for the MSGF Programme **focuses on benefits derived from participation and volunteering impacts** and compares them against costs.
- To quantify benefits, **primary data collected through surveys was utilised**. To monetise outcomes, **Sport England's Social Return on Investment (SROI) model was used** and estimates for social values of participation and volunteering applied. Costs in scope were **grant costs, estimated resource costs and estimated maintenance costs.**
- In line with best practice, **indicative ranges (alongside central estimates) are provided to reflect the uncertainty** surrounding the Programme's impacts at this point in time. Further analysis will be undertaken to **refine these estimates ahead of the final evaluation report**.
- **Total discounted Programme costs are estimated at £618.2 million**. This comprises £333.4 million in DCMS grant costs, £144.5 million in matched partner contributions, £9.8 million in resource costs, and £110.0 million in estimated maintenance costs.
- **The total estimated discounted benefits for the MSGF Programme range from £602.3 million to £1.4 billion (central estimate: £919.8 million)**.
    - The total discounted benefits from *increased participation* are estimated between £554.1 million and £1.3 billion (central estimate: £858.7 million).
    - Benefits from *increased volunteering* are estimated between £48.3 million and £75.9 million (central estimate: £61.1 million).
- **This results in a discounted total economy Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) between 1.01 and 2.28 (central estimate: 1.54).** The discounted DCMS BCR, considering only costs to DCMS, is estimated between 1.79 and 4.05 (central estimate: 2.73).
- Adjusting the number of additional visits for displacement and repeat attendees, the estimated number of additional participants **ranges from 156,691 to 338,348 (central estimate: 234,312).**
- This increased participation translates to an **estimated shift of between 50,195 and 108,389 individuals across the Chief Medical Officer's physical activity categories (central estimate: 75,061).** Of these, between 30,262 and 65,346 (central estimate: 45,254) transitioned from inactive or fairly active, to active.
- **The MSGF Programme is estimated to have increased monthly sporting volunteers by between 291 and 425 (central estimate: 355) and weekly sporting volunteers by between 4,463 and 6,532 (central estimate: 5,453).**

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

- At this stage, Social Cost Benefit Analysis (SCBA) for the PTCR Programme **focuses solely on benefits derived from participation** and compares them against costs associated with the Programme.

Economic Evaluation: Key Emerging Findings

- To quantify benefits, **data from the LTA's booking data was utilised**. To monetise outcomes, **Sport England's Social Return on Investment (SROI) model was used** and estimates for social values of participation and volunteering applied. Costs in scope were **grant costs and estimated resource costs.**
- In the same way as MSGF, in line with best practice, **indicative ranges (alongside central estimates) are provided to reflect the uncertainty** surrounding the Programme's impacts at this point in time. Further analysis will be undertaken to **refine these estimates ahead of the final evaluation report**.
- **Total discounted Programme costs are estimated at** £39.1 million. This comprises £21.9 million in DCMS grant costs, £14.3 million in matched partner contributions and £2.9 million in resource costs.
- **The total estimated discounted benefits for the PTCR Programme range from £45.1 million to £87.0 million (central estimate: £64.4 million)**.
- **This results in a discounted total economy Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) between 1.15 and 2.23 (central estimate: 1.65).** The discounted DCMS BCR, considering only DCMS costs, is estimated between 2.01 and 3.88 (central estimate: 2.87).
- Accounting the number of additional visits for **displacement and repeat bookers**, the estimated number of **additional participants ranges from 141,696 to 303,540 (central estimate: 213,378).**
- This increased participation translates to an **estimated shift of between 5,195 and 11,124 individuals** across the categories of physical activity used within the Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines (central estimate: 7,821). Of these, **between 1,057 and 2,262 (central estimate: 1,591)** transitioned from **inactive or fairly active to active**.

6.1. Overview

The Value for Money (VfM) assessment of MSGF and PTCR has been performed, leveraging findings from the impact evaluation for both Programmes, which draw on data collected through extensive primary data collection (MSGF) as well as detailed administrative booking data (PTCR). A Social Cost Benefit Analysis (SCBA) was completed, which compares the costs of MSGF and PTCR – in terms of grants and resource costs – to the benefits of the Programmes estimated and quantified through the impact analysis presented in Section 7. Benefits were monetised using Sport England's Social Return on Investment (SROI) Model, which uses a variety of indicators which measure the value of 16 social outcomes created by sport and physical activity, these include health, wellbeing, volunteering, and education. The SROI model also estimates the costs of providing opportunities for sport and physical activity[63].

It is important to note that the VfM analysis did not include all of the costs and benefits associated with MSGF and PTCR at this stage, recognising additional delivery is ongoing, and benefits may yet to have fully materialised at all facilities and venues. Therefore, these estimates should be seen as an indicative estimate only. This interim report also only considered benefits derived from participation (both Programmes) and volunteering (MSGF only), reflecting the currently available evidence in this interim evaluation report.

[63] https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/research/social-value-and-return-investment-sport-and-physical-activity

Wherever possible, data and evidence were used to underpin any assumptions required as part of the economic analysis. Some parts of this approach relied on assumptions due to a lack of appropriate data or relevant information at this point in time. A number of these assumptions were tested through sensitivity analysis.

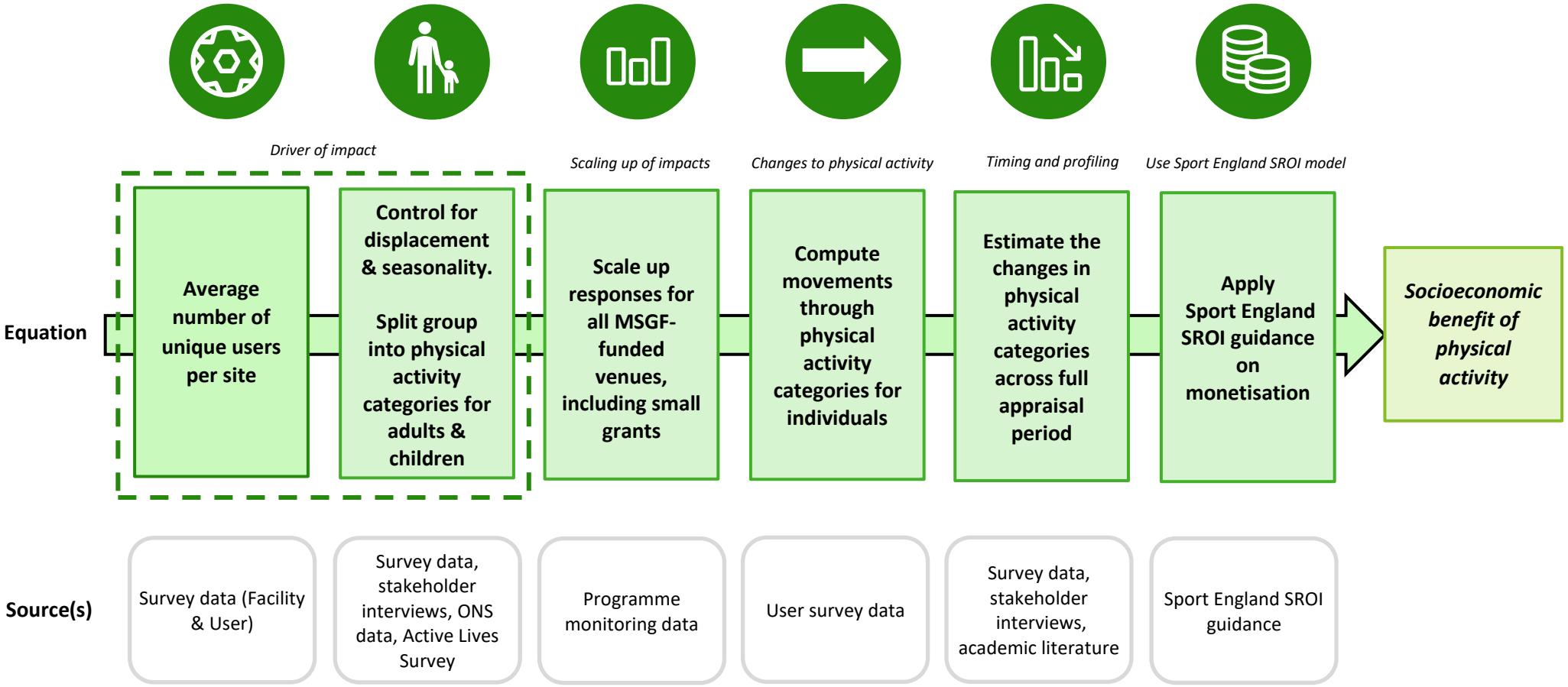
In accordance with the feasibility study and evaluation plans, a comprehensive 3-E's (Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness) assessment will be presented in the final evaluation report to holistically assess the Programme's success in achieving its objectives, impacts and longer-term outcomes.

6.2. Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

6.2.1. Approach to Monetising Sports Participation

The figure below illustrates the participation modelling approach employed in the value-for-money analysis of the MSGF Programme. A detailed explanation of each step follows.

Figure 52: Summary of MSGF Economic Modelling Approach

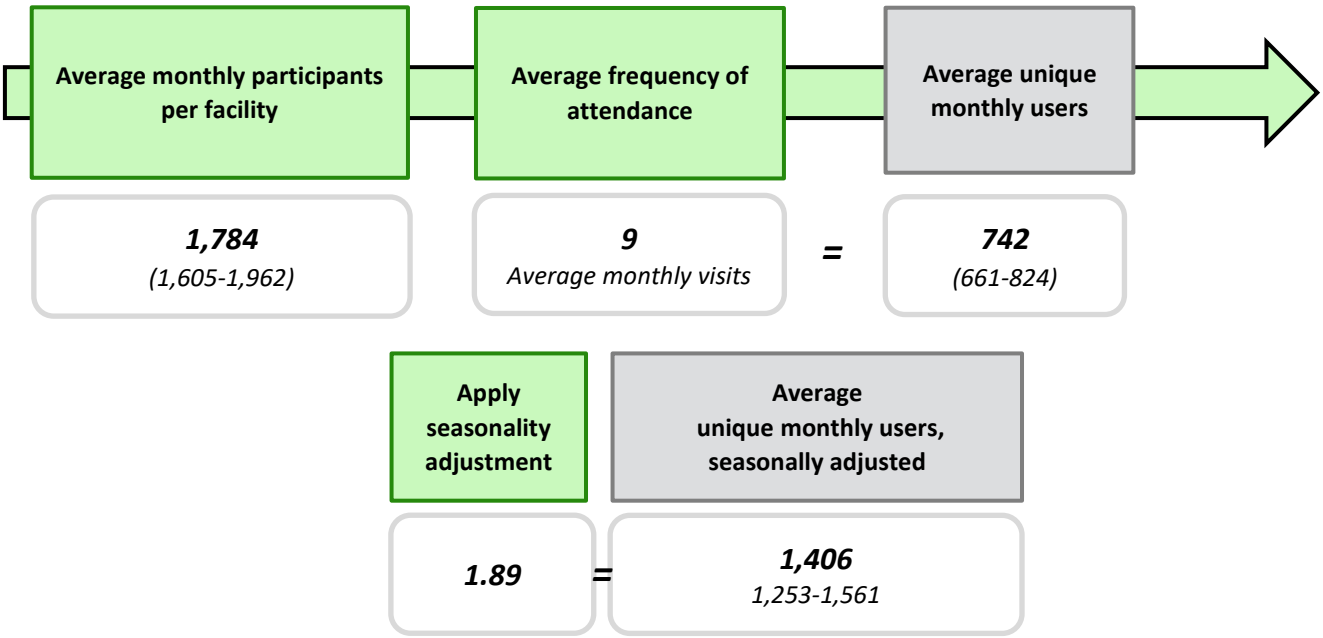


Estimate the total number of users at funded sites in a given month

To estimate user populations at funded facilities, analysis utilised data from the survey of facilities conducted in March 2024 and February 2025[64]. However, this estimate does not account for how many of these participants can be considered 'unique'. In other words, it does not account for individuals who may attend a facility more than once in the period i.e. the same participant can be responsible for multiple 'participations', and so this overstates the total number of 'unique' participants who may have benefitted from changing their level of participation and physical activity. Therefore, to appropriately assess the monetised benefits of additional participants, the number of additional participants must be 'unique'.

In addition to the above, the time at which survey data has been collected must be considered. When asking facility managers about participation in the most recent month, facility managers will have based responses on attendance in January or February. Typically, these are months with worse weather and playing conditions, and so seasonal variations in sports participation were accounted for. This was achieved by applying a scaling factor, calculated as the ratio of the 20-year mean hours of sun in January and February, compared to the 20-year mean for all other months[65]. This factor was then applied to the average monthly number of unique users at funded facilities.

Figure 53: Estimating the number of additional unique participants per funded facilities



Accounting for Displacement and Additionality

To subsequently understand the degree to which the volume of participation estimated above was additional, it was necessary to understand the role of displacement of physical activity. Displacement of physical activity is defined as occurring when an individual substitutes their involvement in current physical activity with involvement in participation at a funded facility. Given that this is the transfer of physical activity from one type to another, it is not 'additional' and does not generate any social value, and hence no monetised value. The analysis also considered the additionality of activity i.e. the extent to which activity occurring was not previously occurring elsewhere, or at the current site, and it is incrementally more than was previously occurring.

[64] The relevant survey question used was: "Thinking back to the past month, how many users visited your facility?". This question was asked in both March 2024 and February 2025.
[65] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/energy-trends-section-7-weather

There are three key groups that were considered as 'additional' participation at funded venues:

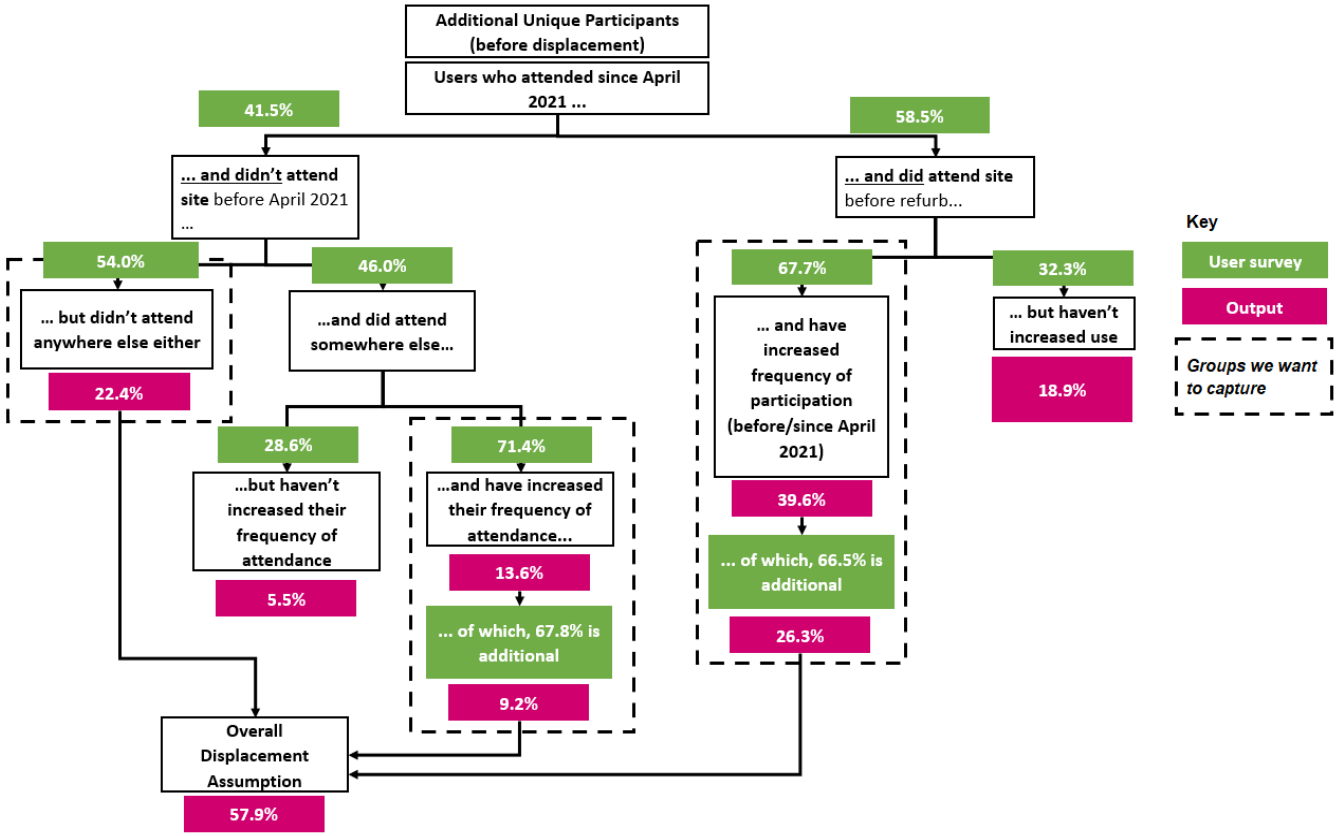
1. *New Users (No Prior Facility Use):* this group includes users who meet all the following criteria:
   - *Have* attended the funded facility since April 2021.
   - *Did not* attend the funded facility before April 2021.
   - *Did not* attend any other sporting facilities before April 2021.

2. *New Users (Displaced but More Active):* this group includes users who meet all the following criteria:
   - *Have* attended the funded facility since April 2021.
   - *Did not* attend the funded facility before April 2021.
   - *Did* attend a different sporting facility before April 2021.
   - *Has increased* their overall frequency of sports attendance since April 2021[66].

3. *Existing Users (More Active):* this group includes users who meet all the following criteria:
   - *Have* attended the funded facility since April 2021.
   - *Did* attend the funded facility before April 2021.
   - *Has increased* their frequency of attendance at the funded facility since April 2021[67].

The figure below presents a tree diagram setting out characteristics of users at MSGF-funded venues.

Figure 54: MSGF Displacement Assumption

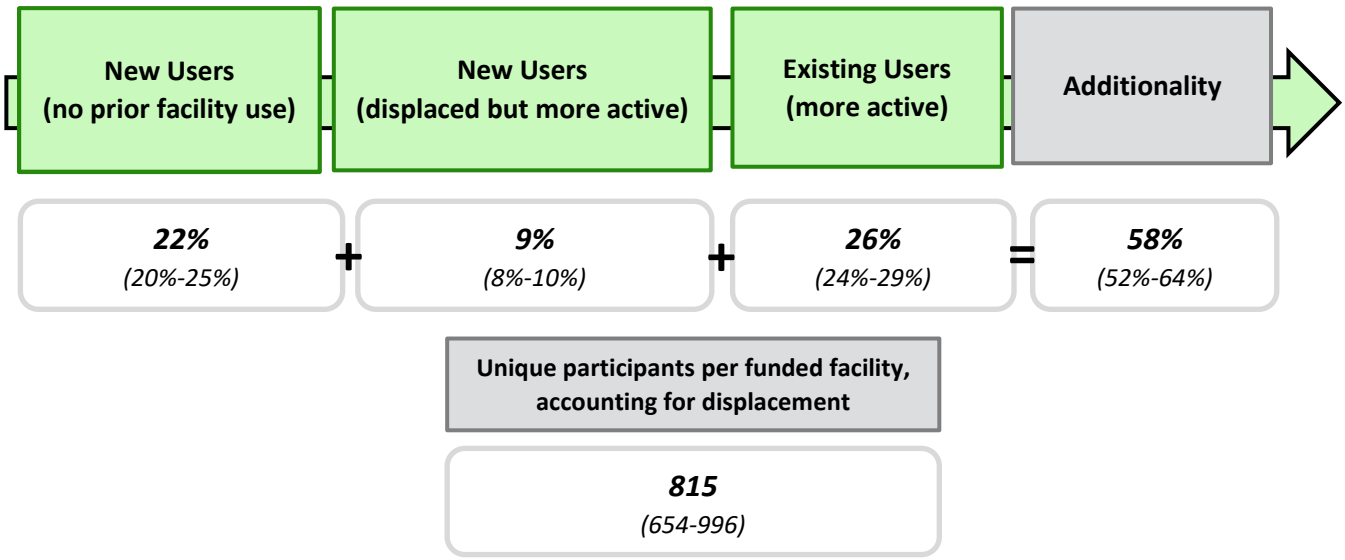


Source: Analysis of user survey data

[66] For example, if a user attended another facility nine times a month before April 2021 and now attends the funded facility ten times a month, only one visit out of the ten is counted as additional.
[67] For example, if a user attended the facility nine times a month before April 2021 and now attends the funded facility ten times a month, only one visit out of the ten is counted as additional.

Taking the three key groups outlined above, this led to an assumption that 58% (central estimate) of unique participants can be considered additional, as set out in the boxes below.

Figure 55: Estimating displacement and additionality of participation



Accounting for the net participation at funded facilities versus unfunded facilities

Taking the unique participants per funded facility and accounting for displacement from above, the analysis then considered what proportion of participation was above the level at unfunded facilities. When conducting the quasi-experimental impact analysis set out in Section 5.2.1, statistical significance was not established at this stage, and so it was not possible to use the findings of this analysis as inputs into the economic modelling.

Instead, this "net" difference was estimated as the percentage increase in participation at funded facilities after controlling for participation increases at unfunded facilities (as a proxy for what would have been the trend at funded facilities in the absence of data).

Figure 56: Diagram showing the calculation of the annual change in participation at funded facilities

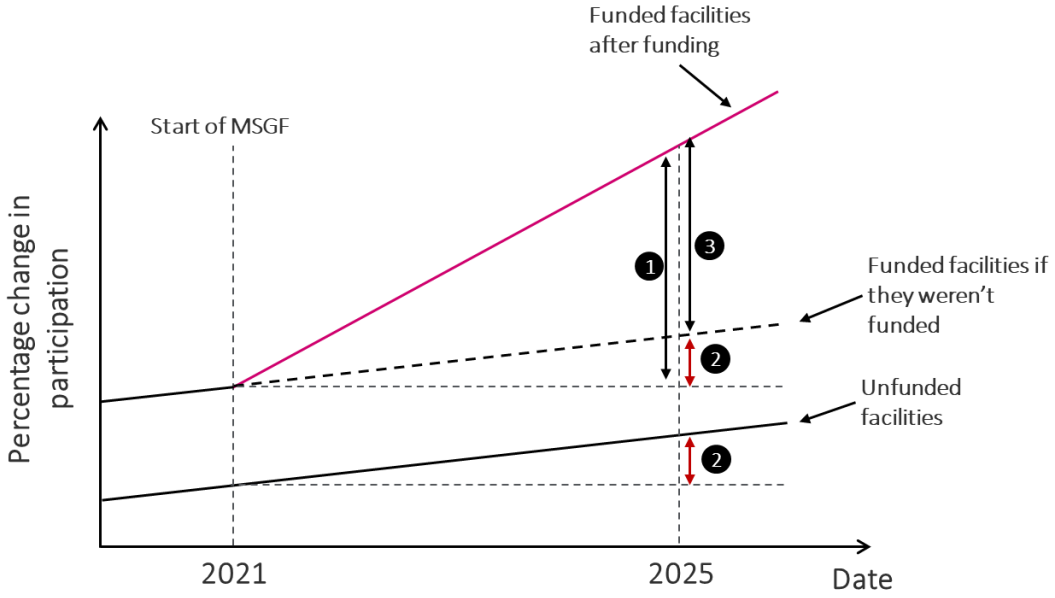


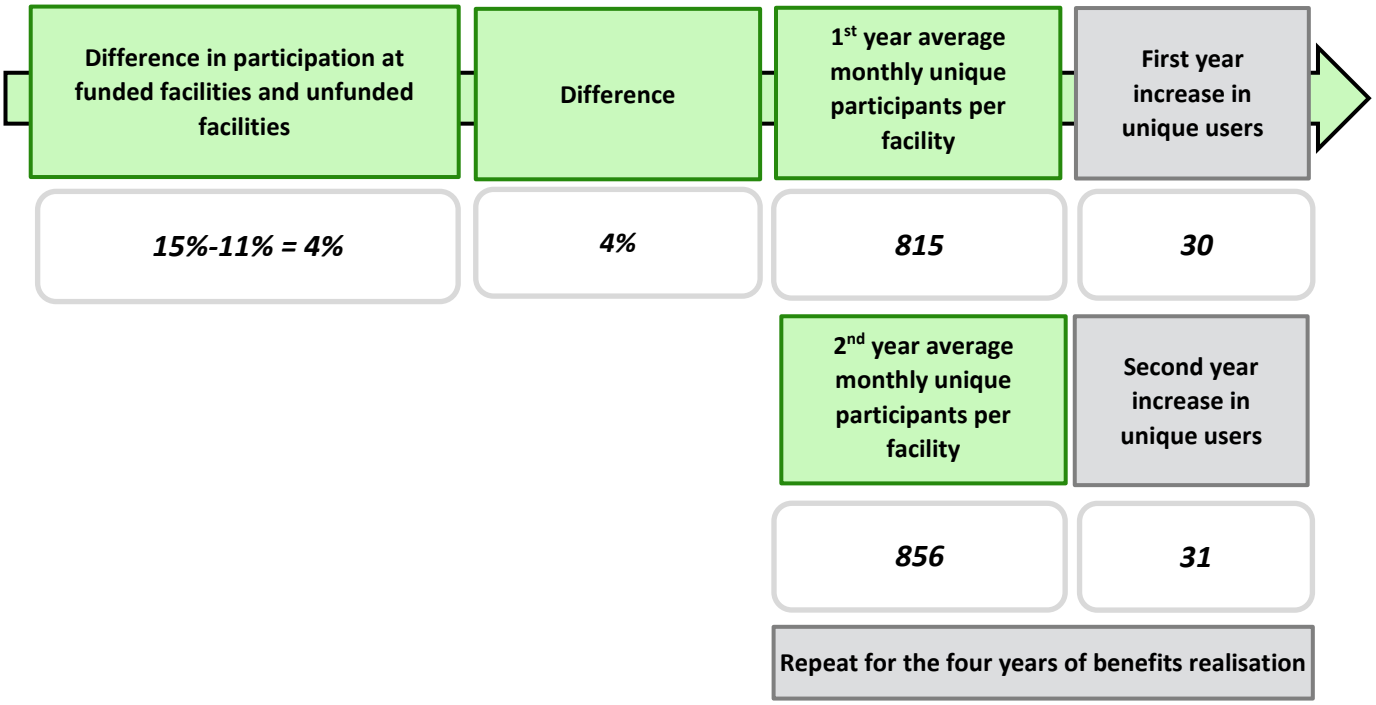
Figure 56 illustrates this process. Managers at funded facilities reported the change indicated by (1). However, to isolate the impact attributable to the funding (3), the trend (2) before funding must be taken into account. Subtracting (2) from (1) provides the magnitude of this net additional increase.

Facility managers specifically responded to the question *"What was the net change in the overall number of users of your facility?"*. It is important to note that due to the risk of recall bias and confirmation bias, it was decided that asking managers to estimate what had happened annually over this period, or what may have happened hypothetically in the absence of funding, would not have been appropriate and may have provided low-quality data.

Stakeholder interviews with DCMS and Delivery Partner staff suggested that benefits (including participation) typically take up to four years to fully materialise. Therefore, this participation uplift was assumed to compound over four years following the funding date for facilities in each financial year based on this perspective shared by stakeholders[68] .

The steps in this section are summarised in the boxes below:

Figure 57: Accounting for net funded versus unfunded impact



Split into adults and children and then into physical activity categories

Delivery Partner data, corroborated by Active Lives Survey data, provided estimates of adult and child participant proportions for each nation. These estimates were weighted by the proportion of projects funded in each nation, excluding small grants in England ("Under 25K" grant type). This allowed the participation change to be segmented into adults and children.

These groups were further categorised into physical activity categories representative of the general population, assumed to reflect participants' pre-uplift activity levels, establishing a baseline for tracking changes

[68] These years are FY21/22, FY22/23, FY23/24, and FY24/25. For example, with 100 average monthly unique users (accounting for displacement and seasonality) and a 9% net participation uplift, the uplift over four years would be: Year 1: 100*1.09 = 109, Year 2: 109*1.09 = 118.8, Year 3: 118.8*1.09 = 129.5, Year 4: 129.5*1.09 = 141.1

in activity (detailed in the "*Physical activity shifting*" section below). For adults, the latest (23-24) Active Lives Adult Survey[69] was used. For children, the latest (23-24) Active Lives Children and Young People Survey[70] was used. Whilst these datasets are specific to England, the activity category distributions were assumed to be similar across the Home Nations. The definitions for the physical activity categories are displayed below:

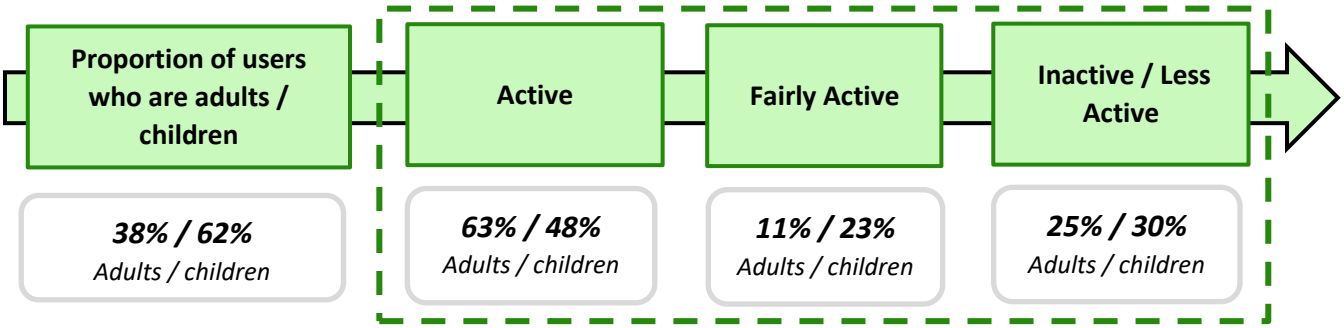
Table 35: Sport England's Physical Activity Categories

Category	Adult	Child
Active	Doing 150+ minutes of 'moderate equivalent intensity' physical activity per week	Doing an average of 60+ minutes of physical activity a day
Fairly Active	Doing 30 - 149 minutes of 'moderate equivalent intensity' physical activity a week	Doing an average of 30-59 minutes of physical activity a day
Inactive / Less Active	Doing less than 30 minutes of 'moderate equivalent intensity' physical activity a week	Doing less than an average of 30 minutes of activity a day

Source: Social Value of Sport - Primary Value Report

The values used in the model are provided in the boxes below:

Figure 58: Splitting additional participants by age and physical activity category



Accounting for survey data

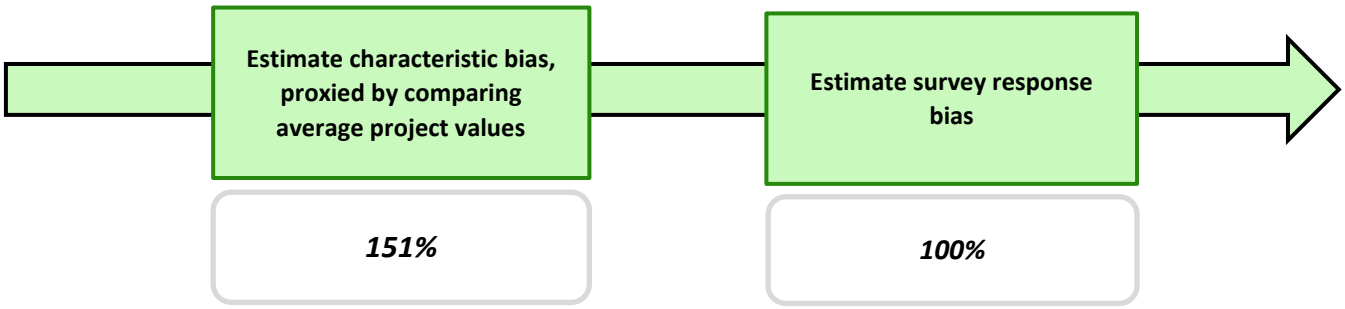
Survey data are subject to potential limitations that could influence findings. Two key factors consequently considered in the economic evaluation were the characteristics of the sample compared to the population of facilities, and the risk of survey response bias.

Those facility managers responding to the facility survey may differ in terms of their characteristics from the overall MSGF Programme facility population, which could lead to unrepresentative survey findings being incorporated into analysis. To mitigate this, the analysis used the ratio of the average project value for surveyed projects, against the average project value for all funded projects within each nation (excluding "Under 25K" grants in England), to scale the findings accordingly.

Additionally, survey response bias, where facilities may over- or under-report impacts, was also possible, despite the survey design aiming to discourage this. Due to the lack of evidence on response bias in this or similar sporting surveys at this stage of the evaluation, this was assumed to have a negligible impact, either positively or negatively.

[69] Active Lives Adult Survey 23-24 Tables 1-5 - Levels of Activity
[70] Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 23-24 Tables 1-6 - Levels of Activity

Figure 59: Steps involved in applying survey response biases



Scaling up for all MSGF Programme grants

Participation uplifts have been calculated at the per-facility level. It was therefore necessary to scale these figures to encompass all funded facilities in each financial year. Participation impacts were scaled by the number of projects funded in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and England ("Over 25K" grants only) for each financial year.

Table 36: Number of funded projects in each financial year

FY	England (Large Grants)	England (Small Grants)	NI	Scotland	Wales	Total
FY21/22	83	74	26	17	17	217
FY22/23	104	1,401	28	23	43	1599
FY23/24	82	1,342	10	33	62	1529
FY24/25	161	1,324	17	34	54	1590
Total	430	4,141	81	107	176	4935

Source: DCMS / DP delivery data, as of 24th March 2025

Larger grants in England (>£25k) represented the majority of the value of grant commitments in the region and comprised a small proportion of the total number of grants. As of March 2025, there were 430 active "Over 25K" grants in England (FY21/22-FY24/25) totalling £272.9 million, compared to 4,141 active "Under 25K" grants totalling £19.6 million.

For these smaller grants in England ("Under 25K"), benefits were scaled using a proportion of the per-site participation uplifts from larger grants. While these projects were smaller in value, stakeholder interviews emphasised their importance for participation and the disproportionate impact they would often have. This proportion was estimated to be 10% of the average impact of a 'larger' grant[71].

Large and small grant participation impacts were then combined to estimate the total uplift in unique participants across the Programme, accounting for displacement and seasonal variations.

[71] For example, a typical "Under 25K" project may have involved investment in goalposts. This assumption implies that the summed impacts of investing in 10 sets of goalposts across 10 sites would have a similar impact to an AGP or grass pitch investment. Further activity will consider improving the evidence base for this factor in the final evaluation report.

Physical activity shifting

The hypothesised impact of the funding was that those who are participating at funded facilities will increase their physical activity level above their baseline physical activity level. By generating a distribution of baseline activity of participants in each physical activity category, and then estimating a distribution of the amount of sport individuals play, it was possible to estimate how many participants will move physical activity category as a result.

To estimate participant exercise duration, a user survey question based on the Short Active Lives Survey[72] was asked to respondents. This yields the following activity distribution:

Table 37: % of respondents whose typical sport/fitness activity/dance session lasted

Measurement	Proportion	Duration (mins)
Up to and including 45 minutes	11%	30
45 minutes but less than or equal to 75 minutes	47%	60
75 minutes but less than or equal to 105 minutes	24%	90
105 minutes but less than or equal to 135 minutes	10%	120
More than 135 minutes but less than or equal to 360 minutes	8%	180

Source: Analysis of MSGF user survey data

The next step estimated the distribution of user attendance frequency at funded facilities. This is derived from the user survey question: "*On average, how often have you used/visited the facility in the last six months?*". The resulting distribution is presented in *Table 38*, with assumed weekly frequencies of attendance used in the model reported below:

Table 38: Frequency of Attendance

	Once a year	Every other month	Every month	Once every two weeks	Once every week	More than once a week
Proportion of Users	2%	2%	4%	9%	27%	57%
Assumed Weekly Frequency	0.003	0.13	0.25	0.5	1	3

Source: Analysis of MSGF user survey data

The above was incorporated into the model and enabled calculations of 'shifts' of individuals between physical activity categories based on their baseline level, and how much sport they additionally engaged in. This was repeated for adults and children.

Monetisation of shifts in physical activity levels

Using the volumes of adult and child participations who have changed physical activity levels in each financial year the monetisable benefits of this were calculated.

Table 39 below shows the Sport England estimated social value generated by moving through the physical activity categories used within the Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines. Values for adults includes both 'primary' and 'secondary' values of sport. Sport England state that the primary value of sport is the "direct

[72] How many minutes did you usually spend doing sport, fitness activities, or dance on each day that you did the activity?"

benefit and value to individuals through greater wellbeing", whilst the secondary value is the "wider value to society, including the state".

The primary value considers wellbeing improvements and volunteering support through individuals feeling happier and healthier, enabling them to lead higher quality lives which positively impacts society. The secondary value considers impacts on health outcomes and money saved by the NHS due to sport and physical activity reducing the risk of serious health conditions. Sport England suggest that there are only primary value benefits for children. Recognising that value in the published Sport England report were in 2023 prices, these have been adjusted in line with inflation to March 2025 prices.

Table 39: Social value of moving physical activity category (March 2025 prices)

Movement of Category	Adult	Child
Fairly Active -> Active	£1,426.55	£1,030.00
Inactive -> Active	£2,899.45	£4,223.00
Inactive -> Fairly Active	£1,472.90	£3,193.00

Sources: Social Value of Sport - Primary Value Report, Social Value of Sport - Secondary Value Report, prices adjusted using Inflation calculator | Bank of England

Once four years of benefits have materialised, the additional participants were assumed to 'drop-out' each year after the year the benefits are fully realised at a rate of 18%, compounded annually. A study published in 2022 on retention and drop-out across age groups in community club-based sport suggested that there is a 44.7% drop-off rate in sport after three years. When converting to an annual compounded rate, this was equivalent to ~18%/year, which was the figure incorporated into this analysis.

Aligning with HMT guidance and in the context of the Programme, the evaluation considered a 14-year appraisal period (this accounts for the four-year rolling funding window, with an additional 10 years to enable a comprehensive assessment of longer-term impacts and outcomes). Future costs and benefits were then discounted at 3.5%, in line with Green Book guidance[73].

6.2.2. Approach to Monetising Sports Volunteering

The overall methodology to estimate the monetisable benefit of volunteering as a result of the MSGF Programme was similar to the participation benefit. The facility survey asked respondents for the number of volunteers at funded facilities over the past month and the percentage change in volunteer numbers since the funding was delivered.

Considering this average increase since facilities were funded allowed for the calculation of the average annual number of volunteers and the average annual increase in volunteer numbers. Similar to participation trends, stakeholder interviews suggest that the full benefits of the investment accrued over four years. Therefore, additional volunteers were projected over the four years following the funding date for facilities funded in each financial year.

Similarly to the impact of participation, the calculations in this section were computed as the per-facility level. These were therefore scaled from the per-site volunteering impacts up to the number of projects funded in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and England ("Over 25K" grants only) for each financial year. For smaller

[73] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-green-book-and-accompanying-guidance-and-documents

grants ("Under 25K"), given the small size of these grants and the typical project types of these grants (e.g. goalposts, machinery), it was assumed that there are no volunteering impacts.

Similar to *Table 39* which reports the social value for shifting physical activity categories, below shows the Sport England estimated social value generated through sports volunteering on either a monthly or weekly basis, inflated to March 2025 prices.

Table 40: Social value of sports volunteering (March 2025)

Frequency of Volunteering	Social Value
Monthly	£1,030.00
Weekly	£2,163.00

Sources: Social Value of Sport - Primary Value Report, Social Value of Sport - Secondary Value Report, prices adjusted using Inflation calculator \| Bank of England

The volunteering impacts were then modelled identically to participation, with the first four years with increased volunteers being modelled for facilities funded in each financial year. Volunteer numbers then decreased at 18% per year for the remainder of the appraisal period.

6.2.3. Costs

The primary costs associated with the MSGF Programme between FY21/22 and FY24/25 were grant disbursements across each Home Nation. As of DCMS and Delivery Partner delivery data[74], the total grant value committed was £333.4 million, supporting 4,935 projects. Partner funding from the Premier League, the Football Association, FA Wales, and the Welsh Government contributed an additional £114.5 million.

Total Delivery Partner resource and staff costs were estimated at £7.9 million. This included £1.5 million from DCMS to support Delivery Partners in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland with grant administration and delivery.[75] The Football Foundation (the Delivery Partner in England), received no separate resource funding from DCMS. The remaining £6.4 million of resource was based on FTE and resource estimates provided by Delivery Partners, inclusive of estimated pension contributions and National Insurance contributions. Internal DCMS resource costs, estimated at £1.9 million, were also based on FTE per grade estimates provided by DCMS.

Finally, maintenance costs, derived from DCMS economic case documentation, represented the estimated annual upkeep for funded AGPs (artificial grass pitches) and grass pitches. These figures were adjusted for inflation and multiplied by the number of pitches funded annually.

As part of the final evaluation report, further costs potentially in scope of the Programme will be considered.

6.2.4. Findings

In line with best practice, ranges of outputs (alongside central estimates) are provided to reflect the uncertainty surrounding the Programme's impacts at this stage. The low / high scenarios flex the key central scenario assumptions by either 10% or 20% depending on the degree of confidence and data availability in the value. Sensitivities relating to particular inputs and assumptions are presented in Section 6.2.5, and the exact assumption values for each scenario are presented in the Annex.

[74] As of data shared on 24th March 2025. To note that this includes included 23 committed Lionesses Futures Fund projects in the total DCMS grant costs at this stage. However, its important to recognise the focus of these projects is on improving women and girls participation, which generates additional social value not currently considered in the analysis. When more data becomes available by the final report on the impacts on women and girls participation at these sites, this will be considered in the economic evaluation.
[75] Based on DCMS delivery data as of 24th March 2025.

Table 41 shows the number of additional participants estimated through the value for money analysis, controlling for various factors that influence the output such as displacement and considering repeat bookers:

Table 41: Summary of estimated number of additional participants as a result of the PTCR Programme

Additional Participants	Low	Central	High
Before adjusting for displacement and repeat attendees	499,842	676,015	891,780
After adjusting for displacement and repeat attendees	156,691	234,312	338,348

Source: Value for money analysis

Out of these additional participants, *Table 43Table 42* below presents the movement of individuals between physical activity categories. Shifts generating social value are highlighted in green.

Table 42: Summary of estimated movements by additional participants through physical activity category as a result of the MSGF Programme

Previous Category	New Category	Low	Central	High
Inactive	Inactive	11,974	17,906	25,856
	Fairly Active	19,933	29,807	43,041
	Active	11,768	17,598	25,412
Fairly Active	Fairly Active	10,213	15,273	22,054
	Active	18,494	27,656	39,934
Active	Active	84,308	126,072	182,049

Source: Value for money analysis. Note: shifts highlighted in green generate social value and are monetised using Sport England's SROI model

Table 43 presents the value-for-money modelling outputs across various scenarios, including estimated total economy and DCMS BCRs.

Table 43: Outputs from value for money analysis of the MSGF Programme

Item	Low	Central	High
Estimated Discounted Costs		**£597.7m**	
DCMS grants		£333.4m	
Partner contributions		£144.5m	
Resource costs		£9.8m	
Maintenance costs		£110.0m	
Estimated Discounted Benefits	**£602.2m**	**£919.6m**	**£1.4bn**
Participation	£553.9m	£858.5m	£1.3bn
Volunteering	£48.3m	£61.1m	£75.9m
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Net Present Benefits (NPV)	**£4.5m**	**£321.9m**	**£764.8m**
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	**1.01**	**1.54**	**2.28**
Estimated Discounted DCMS Benefit Cost Ratio (DCMS BCR)	**1.79**	**2.73**	**4.05**

Source: Value for money analysis

The total estimated discounted benefits for the MSGF Programme range from £602.2 million to £1.4 billion (central estimate: £919.6 million). The total discounted benefits from *increased participation* were estimated between £553.9 million and £1.3 billion (central estimate: £858.5 million). Benefits from *increased volunteering* were estimated between £48.3 million and £75.9 million (central estimate: £61.1 million).

This results in a discounted total economy Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) between 1.01 and 2.28 (central estimate: 1.54). The discounted DCMS BCR, considering only DCMS costs, were estimated between 1.79 and 4.05 (central estimate: 2.73).

Regarding volunteering, the MSGF Programme was estimated to have increased monthly sporting volunteers by between 291 and 425 (central estimate: 355) and weekly sporting volunteers by between 4,463 and 6,532 (central estimate: 5,453).

6.2.5. Sensitivity Analysis

Sensitivity analysis was utilised for key inputs and assumptions to demonstrate their potential impact on final outputs. The economic modelling at this stage primarily drew on evidence from the available administrative booking data, however, where key assumptions were made, these were tested as set out below.

Seasonality Adjustments

Sunlight hours were utilised as a proxy for the profiling of participation across time. It is expected that individuals play more sport when there is more sunlight, and better weather as a result. As a result of the uncertainty in this assumption, a sensitivity of +/-25% of the central estimate value was conducted, to account for annual changes in the average level of sunlight, and/or adverse infrequent weather conditions:

Table 44: Sensitivity analysis of the MSGF seasonality factor

Sensitivity	Seasonality Factor	Total Monetised Benefit	BCR (Total Economy)	BCR (DCMS ROI)
High	2.37	£1134.5m	1.90	3.37
Central	1.89	£919.8m	1.54	2.73
Low	1.42	£705.1m	1.18	2.09

Source: Value for money analysis

The outputs were sensitive to this seasonality adjustment, although varied less than the +/-25% sensitivity applied to the input. The final evaluation report will consider additional ways in which to account for seasonality as part of the analysis.

Displacement Assumptions

Displacement was a core driver of the number of unique additional participants estimated to have participated in the Programme, and therefore a core driver of the outputs. MSGF user survey data provided specific data points to inform the headline displacement assumptions. However, to account for uncertainty in these estimates, a sensitivity analysis of +/-25% was used, with the resultant impacts on the central estimate:

Table 45: Sensitivity analysis of the MSGF displacement factor

Sensitivity	Displacement Factor	Total Monetised Benefit	BCR (Total Economy)	BCR (DCMS ROI)
High	82%	£1263.3m	2.11	3.75
Central	58%	£919.8m	1.54	2.73
Low	35%	£576.3m	0.96	1.71

Source: Value for money analysis

Outputs scaled directly with the applied sensitivity, highlighting the importance of this assumption. The final evaluation report will continue to consider additional data that may become available to estimate displacement over the next 12 months, working with relevant stakeholders from Delivery Partners and DCMS.

Scaling of benefits from large grants to small grants

Small grants were estimated to have an average impact of 10% of a large grant. Recognising the assumption was based on qualitative evidence from stakeholder interviews and case studies, a sensitivity of +/-100% was applied, which includes the scenario or removing any impacts generated by small grants (i.e. 0% impact):

Table 46: Sensitivity analysis of the MSGF small grants scaling factor

Sensitivity	Small Grants Scaling Factor	Total Monetised Benefit	BCR (Total Economy)	BCR (DCMS ROI)
High	20%	£1211.7m	2.03	3.60
Central	10%	£919.8m	1.54	2.73
Low	0%	£628.0m	1.05	1.86

Source: Value for money analysis

These results exhibit large sensitivity to the impact of small grants, with the BCR substantially changing between excluding small grant benefits and applying a 20% scaling factor. However, even in an extreme scenario of assuming no benefits from small grants, the Programme still delivered positive BCRs. The final evaluation report will continue to consider additional data that may become available to estimate the impacts of small grants over the next 12 months.

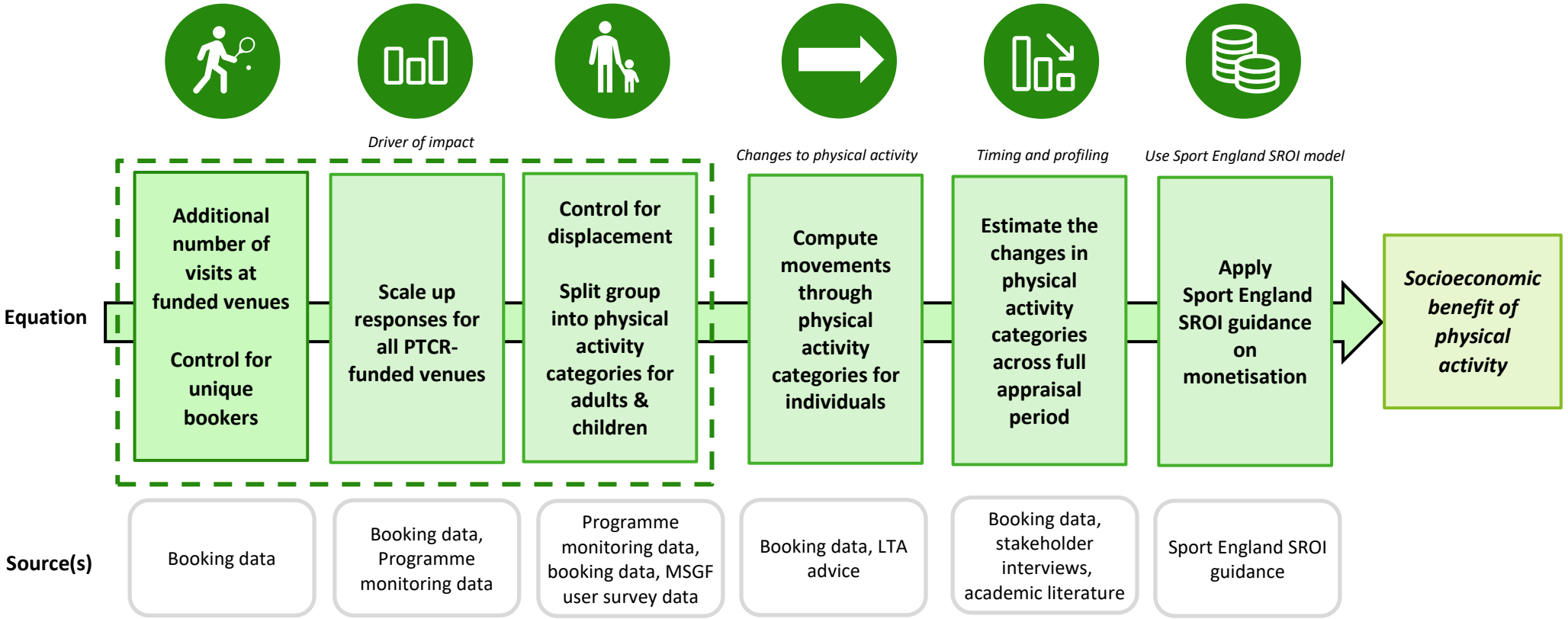
6.3. Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

As with the approach for the economic evaluation of the MSGF Programme, this section focuses on the direct benefit from increased participation in tennis on physical activity rates of participants. The final evaluation report will consider additional variables that could be quantified and/or monetised.

6.3.1. Approach to Monetising Benefits of Participation in Tennis

The figure below illustrates the participation modelling approach employed in the value-for-money analysis of the PTCR Programme. A detailed explanation of each step follows.

Figure 60: Summary of PTCR Economic Modelling Approach



Estimate the additional number of visits at funded venues

The first step of the approach involved estimating the change in the number of visits at funded venues, net of unfunded venues. When conducting the quasi-experimental impact analysis set out in Section 5.2.2, statistical significance was not established at this stage, and so it was not possible to use the findings of this analysis as inputs into the economic modelling. Instead, outputs from descriptive analysis of booking data were used to calculate the *average change in the number of bookings* at funded venues, 12 months after funding was received.

An individual booking collected through ClubSpark booking data leads to, on average, 2.7 tennis participants[76] attending a venue. Therefore, the number of bookings was multiplied by this figure to estimate the *average change in the number of visits* per venue.

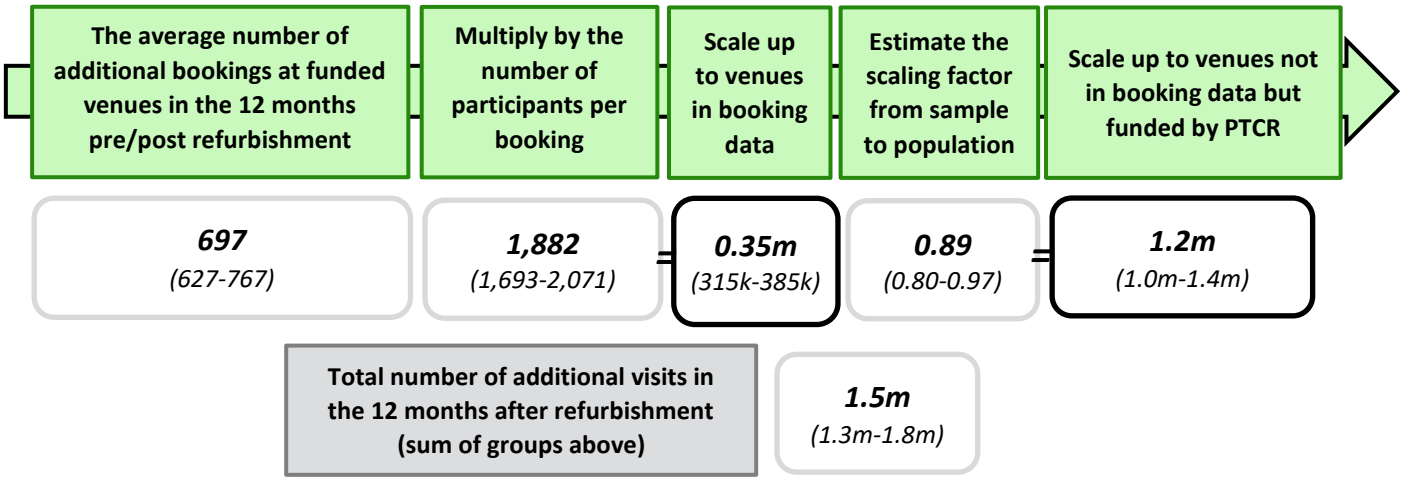
It is also important to recognise that booking data was only available for a sample of funded venues at this stage[77]. As of the LTA's 31st January 2025 report[78], 186 tennis venues were present in the ClubSpark booking data, compared to 903 venues with completed PTCR-funded refurbishments. Therefore the estimate of the average change in the number of participants per venue was scaled to estimate the impact for all funded venues in scope of the PTCR Programme.

How this sample of data is scaled to cover the population of funded venues depended on the extent to which the characteristics of the sample reflect the characteristics of the broader population. The average number of courts at a venue was used as a proxy for comparing the characteristics of the sample against the population[79].

This is a ratio of the average number of courts at a venue as per Programme monitoring data, compared to the average number of courts at venues within the booking data[80]. In the central estimate, this was set at 0.89, recognising that booking data was reported for slightly larger courts on average.

This calculation is set out in Figure *61* below, to show the estimated change in the number of participants per venue, accounting for the factors explained in this section. This presents the central estimates and indicative ranges developed; further details and assumptions are available in Annex 10.

Figure 61: Estimating the number of additional participants at funded venues



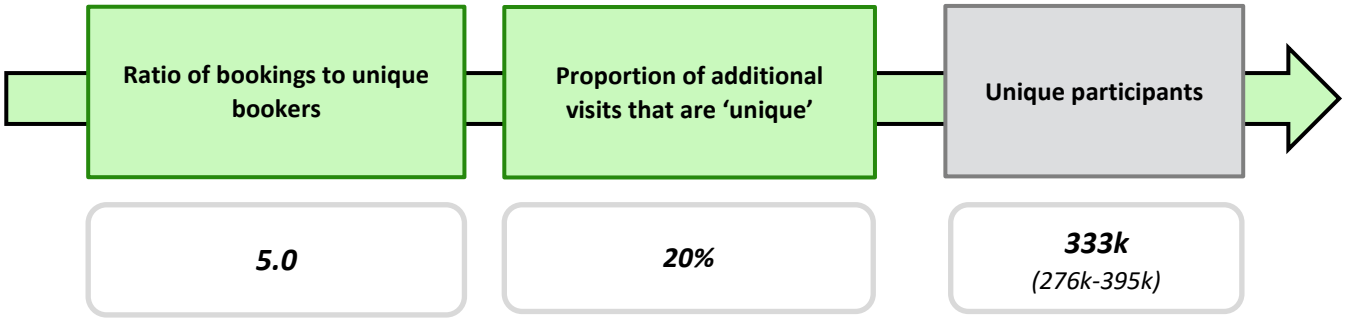
[76] Based on data provided by the LTA.
[77] Further detail on available sample of booking data contained within the descriptive findings of the impact evaluation in Section 5.2.1.
[78] Delivery report data shared by the LTA with DCMS on 31st January 2025.
[79] Larger venues may offer superior ancillary facilities, accessibility, and more frequent maintenance, which systematically impacts booking levels at large venues when compared with smaller venues.
[80] For instance, if there were an average of 4 courts at funded venues in the Programme monitoring data, but an average of 5 courts at funded venues in the booking data, the scaling factor would be 0.8.

Controlling for Unique Bookers

The above steps set out the number of additional tennis visits at venues, but this *does not* account for how many of these visits can be considered 'unique'. In other words, this estimate does not account for visits by individuals who may make more than one booking at a venue in a given period i.e. the *same bookers* can be responsible for *multiple bookings*, and so this inflates the total number of additional participants who may have benefitted from changing their level of participation and physical activity.

Therefore, to appropriately assess the monetised benefits of additional participants[81], the number of additional participants must be 'unique'. This was estimated by taking the total number of visits in each financial year, and comparing this to the number of *"ContactID"s* used to make these bookings[82]. Using the ratio of unique bookers to the total number of bookings in each financial year enabled an estimate of the *total change in the number of unique participants*.

Figure 62: Converting the estimated number of additional participants into additional number of unique participants



Accounting for Displacement and Additionality

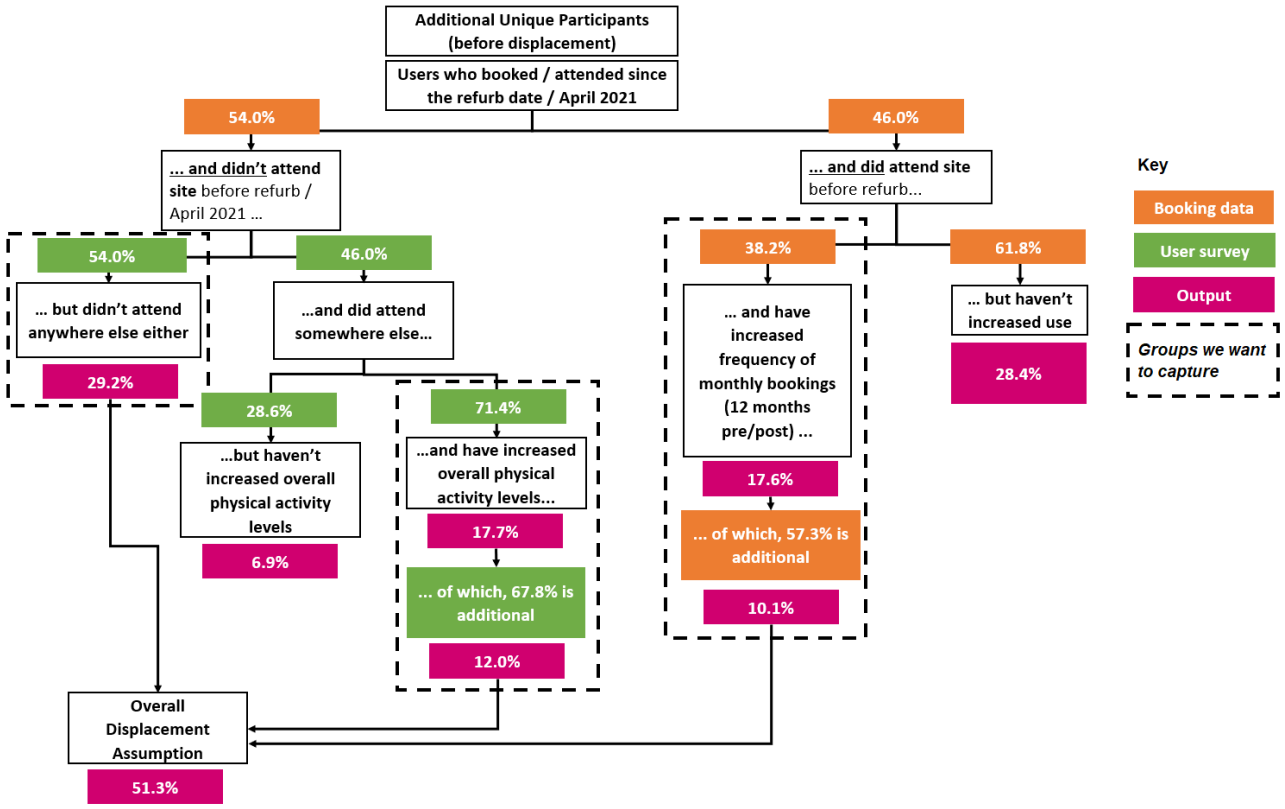
To subsequently understand the degree to which the volume of participation estimated above was additional[83], it was necessary to understand the role of displacement of physical activity. The figure below presents a tree diagram setting out characteristics of users at PTCR funded venues. This uses booking data, alongside MSGF user survey assumptions[84], as data sources to understand what types of participation qualify as additional and not additional (i.e. can be treated as displacement).

There were three key groups that were considered as 'additional' participation at funded venues:

- New Users (no prior facility use): Users who didn't attend the facility before the refurb *but also* didn't attend anywhere else
- New Users (displaced, but more active): Users who didn't attend the facility before the refurb, did attend somewhere else, *but are more active*
- Existing Users (more active): Users who did attend the facility before the refurb *and* are more active

[81] As required for the Sport England SROI model employed in the SCBA.
[82] This is a unique identifier for each booker available as part of the ClubSpark booking dataset provided by the LTA.
[83] Participation being considered additional means that it excludes any participation that would have been expected in the absence of funding.
[84] In the absence of evidence specifically for the PTCR Programme, evidence has been used from the MSGF user survey that asked similar questions, in order to determine the impact of displacement.

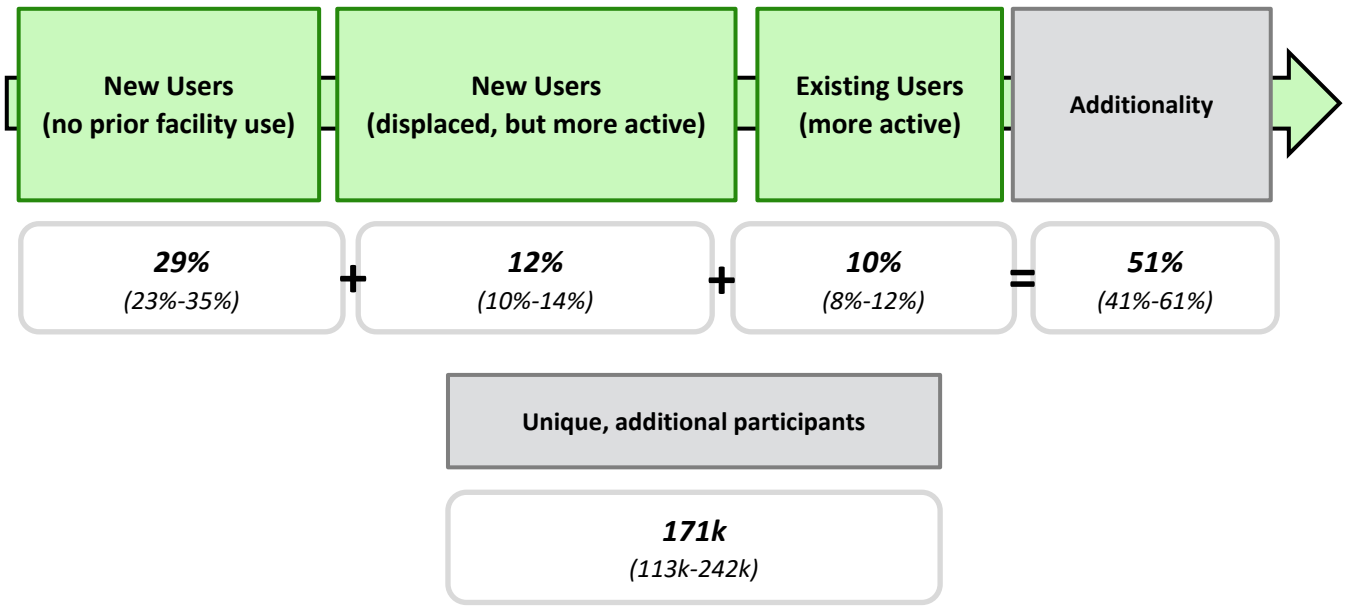
Figure 63: PTCR Displacement Assumptions



Source: Analysis of LTA booking data, MSGF user survey data

Taking the three key groups outlined above, this led to an assumption that 51% (central estimate) of unique participants were additional, as set out in the boxes below.

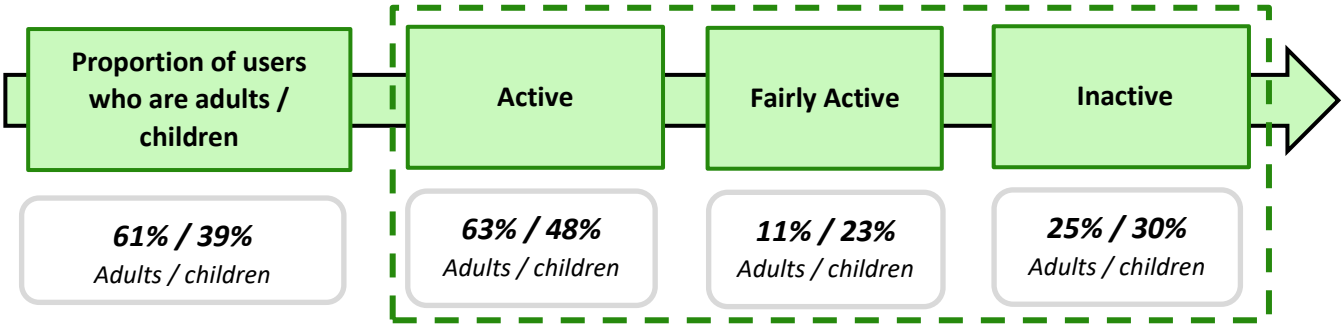
Figure 64: Estimating the impact of displacement and additionality



Estimate the proportions of these participants who are adults or children and their physical activity category

In order to appropriately monetise the benefits of increased participation, the proportion of users who are adults and children was required. Using the population totals from the latest Active Lives Survey 23-24 dataset[85] and the Children and Young People 23-24 dataset[86], participants were categorised into physical activity levels reflecting those of the general population.

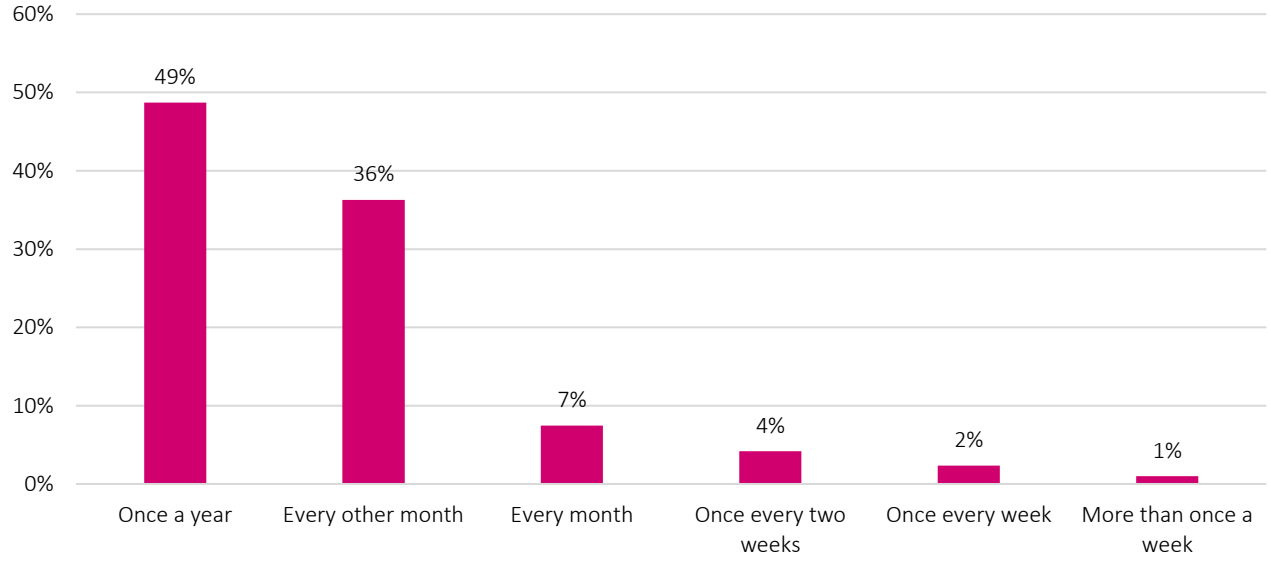
Figure 65: Splitting additional participants by age and physical activity category



Estimate the movements of these participants through the physical activity level categories

The hypothesised impact of the funding is that those who are playing tennis will increase their physical activity level above the baseline set out in the previous step. By generating a distribution of baseline activity of participants in each physical activity category, and then estimating a distribution of the amount of tennis individuals play, it was possible to estimate how many participants will move physical activity category as a result. The assumed weekly frequencies of attendance for each option used in the model are the same as those used in the MSGF model and are reported in *Table 38*.

Figure 66: Distribution of frequency of booking at funded venues



Source: LTA booking data. Weighted average distribution across facilities funded in each financial year

[85] Active Lives Adult Survey 23-24 Tables 1-5 - Levels of Activity
[86] Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 23-24 Tables 1-6 - Levels of Activity

Figure 66 above, in combination with *Table 47* below, allowed the frequency of this participation to be considered alongside the duration of the participation, to estimate the number of additional minutes of physical activity across the distribution of users.

Table 47: Proportion of ClubSpark bookings by length

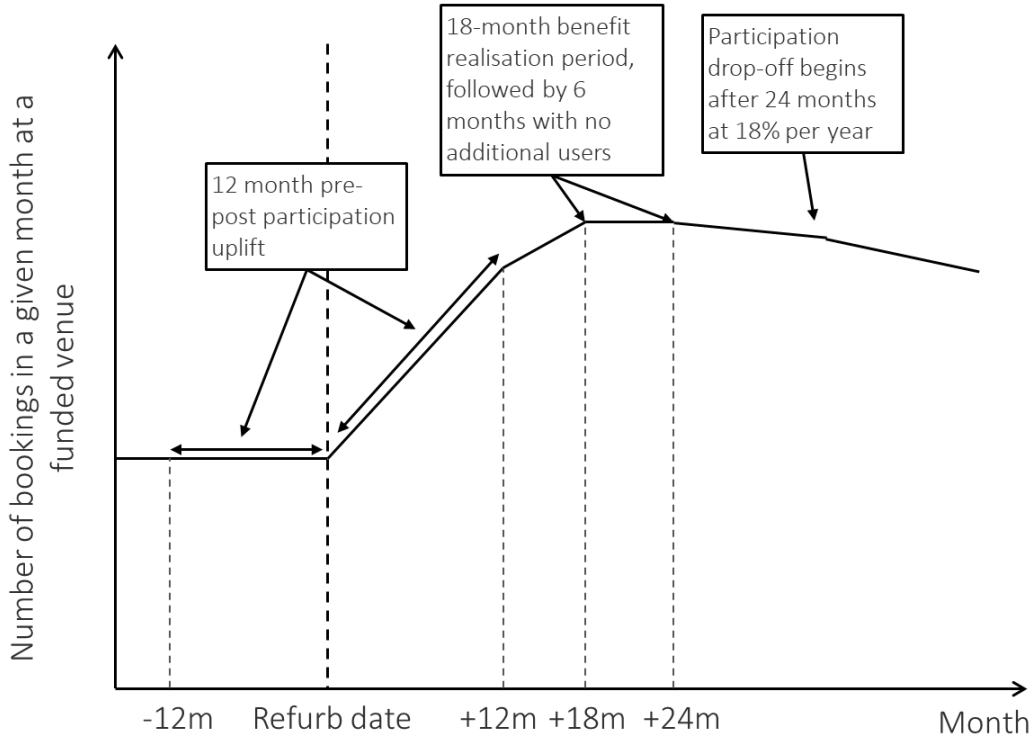
Measurement	Value
Proportion of 60-minute bookings	85%
Proportion of 90-minute bookings	5%
Proportion of 120-minute bookings	15%

Source: LTA stakeholders

Modelling additional participation over time

Based on stakeholder discussions, interviews and case studies conducted as part of the evaluation, it was suggested that it can take between 18-24 months for benefits to be fully realised at a venue. *Figure 67* below presents how this participation uplift over time was modelled, based on the evidence provided by stakeholders. The drop-off in additional users was modelled at 18% per year following a peak in additional users[87].

Figure 67: PTCR Participation Scaling Graph



6.3.2. Costs

As of February 2025, total DCMS grant costs of the Programme stood at £21.9 million[88], delivered in FY22/23 and FY23/24. Before this, the LTA TF delivered £1.1 million in grants in the pre-22 period which were considered in scope of the PTCR Programme. The LTA TF also contributed an additional £6.2 million in FY23/24. Local

[87] https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19406940.2022.2034913#abstract
[88] Based on LTA delivery reports shared by DCMS.

authorities provided a further £7.0 million, between FY22/23 and FY24/25. In total, the Programme received £36.2 million in grants from all funding partners across the lifetime of the Programme, resulting in 903 completed venues as of the LTA's 31st January parks delivery report.

Staffing and resource costs were £2.9 million, £0.6 million of which was internal DCMS costs (to administer, deliver and manage the PTCR Programme) and £2.3 million of LTA resource costs[89].

6.3.3. Findings

In line with best practice, ranges of outputs (alongside central estimates) are provided to reflect the uncertainty at this stage surrounding the Programme's impacts given the available evidence and data. Similar to the MSGF Programme, the low / high scenarios flex the key central scenario assumptions by either 10% or 20% depending on the degree of confidence and data availability in the value. Sensitivities relating to particular variables and assumptions are also presented in Section 6.3.4, and the exact assumption values for each scenario are presented in the Annex.

Table 48 shows the number of additional participants estimated through the value for money analysis, controlling for various factors that influence the output such as displacement and considering repeat bookers:

Table 48: Summary of estimated number of additional participants as a result of the PTCR Programme

Additional Participants	Low	Central	High
Before adjusting for displacement and repeat bookers	345,417	416,125	493,298
After adjusting for displacement and repeat bookers	141,492	213,069	303,102

Source: Value for money analysis

Out of these additional participants, *Table 49* below presents the estimated volume of movement of individuals between physical activity categories. Shifts generating social value, and therefore monetisable benefits, are highlighted in green.

Table 49: Summary of estimated movements by additional participants through physical activity categories as a result of the PTCR Programme

Previous Category	New Category	Low	Central	High
Inactive	Inactive	33,713	50,769	72,223
	Fairly Active	4,138	6,230	8,862
	Active	193	291	414
Fairly Active	Fairly Active	21,341	32,138	45,718
	Active	863	1,300	1,849
Active	Active	81,242	122,341	174,037

Source: Value for money analysis. Note: shifts highlighted in green generate social value and are monetised using Sport England's SROI model

[89] Based on data provided by DCMS and LTA on FTE and total resource costs as of 25th April 2025.

Table 50 presents the resultant value-for-money modelling outputs across each scenario at this stage, including the estimated total economy and DCMS BCRs. It is important to again note that as additional evidence becomes available, this analysis will updated and refined, and presented in the final evaluation report.

Table 50: Outputs from value for money analysis of the PTCR Programme

Item	Low	Central	High
Estimated Discounted Costs		**£39.1m**	
DCMS grants		£21.9m	
Partner contributions		£14.3m	
Resource costs		£2.9m	
Estimated Discounted Benefits – Participation	**£45.1m**	**£64.4m**	**£87.0m**
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Net Present Benefits (NPV)	**£6.0m**	**£25.3m**	**£48.0m**
Estimated Discounted DCMS Benefit Cost Ratio (DCMS BCR)	**2.01**	**2.87**	**3.88**
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	**1.15**	**1.65**	**2.23**

Source: Value for money analysis

The total discounted benefits from increased participation was estimated between £45.1 million and £87.0 million, (central estimate: £64.4 million).

This results in a discounted total economy Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) between 1.15 and 2.23 (central estimate: 1.65). The discounted DCMS BCR, considering only DCMS costs, was estimated between 2.01 and 3.88 (central estimate: 2.87).

6.3.4. Sensitivity Analysis

Sensitivity analysis has been utilised for key inputs and assumptions to demonstrate their potential impact on final outputs. The economic modelling at this stage primarily draws on evidence from the available administrative booking data, however, where key assumptions have been made, these have been tested as set out below.

Displacement Assumptions

As per *Figure 63*, displacement was a core driver of the number of unique additional participants estimated to have participated in tennis, and therefore a core driver of the outputs. Where booking data was unable to provide specific data points or evidence, assumptions were developed using literature, secondary sources and other available data. A key assumption underlying the PTCR displacement estimate was the similarity in behaviour, demographics, and population characteristics between MSGF survey respondents and PTCR Programme participants. This assumption was based on the use of MSGF user survey data. As a result, a sensitivity analysis of +/-50% was conducted to account for this.

Table 51: Sensitivity analysis of the PTCR displacement factor

Sensitivity	Displacement Factor	Total Monetised Benefit	BCR (Total Economy)	BCR (DCMS ROI)
High	85%	£97.9m	2.51	4.36
Central	57%	£65.3m	1.67	2.91
Low	28%	£32.6m	0.84	1.45

Source: Value for money analysis

Outputs scale directly with the applied sensitivity, highlighting the importance of this assumption. The final evaluation report will continue to consider additional data that may become available to estimate displacement

over the next 12 months, and work with relevant stakeholders from the LTA and DCMS to develop a robust evidence base.

Characteristics of the population versus sample

Given the LTA booking data only contained information for a subset of the total funded venues in scope of PTCR, an assumption was applied to assess the degree to which any changes in participation observed in the booking data can be applied to the total number of PTCR funded venues. The number of courts at each venue was chosen as a proxy of this to control for the size of the sites in each group. However, there are other potential factors which could influence participation outcomes between those in the booking data and delivery data (for instance, the court conditions in each group). Given this, a sensitivity of +/-25% was applied to this 'optimism bias':

Table 52: Sensitivity analysis of the PTCR optimism bias

Sensitivity	Optimism bias	Total Monetised Benefit	BCR (Total Economy)	BCR (DCMS ROI)
High	111%	£77.9m	1.99	3.47
Central	89%	£65.3m	1.67	2.91
Low	66%	£52.7m	1.35	2.34

Source: Value for money analysis

The outputs demonstrate some sensitivity to this bias, but all scenarios still deliver a BCR > 1. Given the limited availability of comparable facility characteristics across both datasets, using the number of courts provides a well-evidenced basis for this assumption.

6.4. Evidence of Wider Economic Benefits

From qualitative evidence collected as part of evaluation activity, there has been wider economic benefits generated as a direct result of the Programmes. Although these benefits have been called out in the Theory of Change, due to challenge in monetising and quantifying these impacts, they have not been explicitly included in the value for money analysis above at this stage. Therefore, it is possible that the true benefits of the Programmes may be higher than is reported in the economic evaluation.

Many of these impacts have been covered in previously in the process evaluation (Section 4) and the impact evaluation (Section 5), but they have been acknowledged here in brevity as evidence of wider, non-monetised benefits of the PTCR and MSGF Programmes:

- **Women and girls participation:** anecdotal evidence suggested a perception of immensely positive impacts on women and girls' participation particularly attributed to improved facility quality and accessibility. Whilst Sport England's primary and secondary value reports do indicate a higher potential social value for women participants, at this stage, the analysis focuses on adults and children as the two key groups to monetise benefits for, as set out in the guidance.
- **PTCR only: volunteering:** through case study interviews, there has been qualitative evidence shared that the PTCR Programme delivered improvements in volunteering outcomes, which the economic evaluation does not include currently in scope of the benefits of the Programme. An example provided was the Free Park Tennis Programme, which funds free weekly tennis sessions at select funded sites, increasing their volunteering offer. The evaluation will explore ways to include volunteering quantitatively within the scope of the PTCR economic evaluation in the final report.
- **Pride in place:** facility managers suggested that initiatives in these communities have had genuine benefits on community cohesion and pride in place for many residents, and there have been many anecdotal

examples of noticeable decreases in vandalism and anti-social behaviour, which potentially will have cost-avoidance or financial savings as a result.

- **Improved links with local schools (and spillover impacts):** the quality of facilities that funded sites are able to offer as a result of the Programmes have helped funded sites increase their links with local schools. Many of these sites have free-use agreements in place or are located directly on a school site. Although increased participation by children is considered in the value for money analysis, it is possible that there are wider impacts for school children beyond increased involvement in sport such as increased educational attainment or stronger pipelines into professional sport.
- **Financial sustainability:** with increasing participation and facility usage comes additional revenue. This revenue helps cover the cost of upkeep and maintenance of the facilities, ensuring the benefits from funding can continue into the future. There was anecdotal evidence shared, particularly during case study interviews with facility managers, of how the funding has been "critical" for the financial sustainability of the facility. For instance, with the PTCR Programme, gate installations allow venues to charge for court usage, which allow for a continuous income stream which can be used to pay for ongoing maintenance and any future resurfacing. Additionally, the PTCR Programme has facilitated the effective management of venues by operator businesses, leveraging revenue generated from court bookings.

6.5. Next Steps

The analysis above presents the current approach to quantifying and monetising the benefits and costs of the Programme. This will continue to be refined and updated as additional evidence becomes available over the next 12 months. Whilst there aren't explicit observations or recommendations to make this stage, the list below sets out a number of areas that will be considered to help improve the robustness of the economic evaluation[90]:

- **Strengthening Evidence for Working Assumptions:** While most model inputs are grounded in evidence from the evaluation, some assumptions lack quantitative support. For example, the scaling factor for small versus large grants in the MSGF model, currently supported by qualitative findings, would benefit from quantitative data to enhance the robustness of the benefits calculation.
- **Exploring a Linear Approach to Physical Activity Shifting:** The current model assumes a stepped increase in physical activity levels to generate social value, aligning with Sport England guidance. However, this may overstate the value for marginal increases and understate it for smaller increases within a category. A more linear approach will be explored to determine if it greatly alters the model outputs.
- **Increasing Survey Sample Sizes:** Model outputs currently rely on survey data, and while current sample sizes are sufficient for meaningful results, further data collection in FY25/26 will enhance robustness and enable more granular analysis of participant subgroups with varying social values.
- **Capturing Wider Economic Benefits:** This evaluation has not quantified broader economic benefits related to sport due to limited research. Further work will explore the feasibility of quantifying and monetising these wider benefits for both Programmes before the final report.

[90] The feasibility of incorporating these additional steps will be considered ahead of the final evaluation report

7. Interim Conclusions & Next Steps

7.1. Interim Conclusions from Process Evaluation To Date

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

The past year of the Programme was viewed positively by stakeholders, with successful project delivery and strong relationships between DCMS and Delivery Partners. While application processes remained largely consistent, areas for improvement, such as refining the definition of multi-sport projects and the Index of Multiple Deprivation metric, were identified and are being considered for future funding rounds. Challenges related to financial year allocations were mitigated by DCMS's flexibility, allowing for evidence of expected spend. Improved communication, clearer work structures, and digital tools enhanced collaboration. Strong organisational stakeholder relationships mitigated the impact of staff turnover at DCMS, which did not materially affect Programme administration or governance

Programme monitoring was generally effective, though feedback on the reporting tool varied, highlighting the benefits of potential automation and improved platform compatibility. Stakeholders perceived the Programme as hugely successful in achieving its objectives, particularly in sustaining participation, although robust quantitative data to substantiate this perception is still being gathered. Anecdotal evidence continued to suggest positive impacts on women and girls' participation due to improved facility quality and accessibility, and these improvements have helped to maintain existing participation, especially in men's football. The Programme's efficiency and effectiveness will continue to be monitored over the next 12 months, with further data collection informing the final evaluation report.

Looking ahead, future funding considerations include a greater emphasis on the broader sports ecosystem, such as workforce development, and highlighting the spillover benefits of projects within local communities. The Programme's impact will continue to be monitored over the next 12 months, with further data collection and analysis informing the final evaluation report.

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

Stakeholders believed the Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme has progressed efficiently and effectively over the past 12 months, culminating in a successful Programme closure. Stakeholders consistently praised the strengthened relationships and collaborative efforts between DCMS and the LTA, highlighting the iterative improvements to processes and reporting as key strengths. This collaborative approach, combined with the LTA's experience and established governance structures, contributed to a smooth and efficient delivery process, ultimately achieving a positive endorsement of suitability for closure following internal review.

Delivery targets were on track to be met, demonstrating the Programme's effectiveness in renovating a considerable number of tennis courts across the UK. While isolated instances of vandalism and damage were reported, the LTA and Local Authorities responded promptly with appropriate mitigation strategies. The continued engagement, professionalism, and expertise of the LTA played a crucial role in supporting DCMS to successfully deliver and implement the Programme.

Although further data collection and analysis are needed to fully understand the long-term impacts and outcomes, particularly regarding participation, anecdotal evidence from stakeholders strongly suggests positive changes, especially for women, girls, and young people. The Programme's success in distributing funding to deprived areas and implementing the LTA's digital booking platform further contributes to its overall positive impact. The proactive approach to benefits realisation management, including lessons learned sessions and ongoing monitoring, will ensure the Programme's legacy continues to be tracked and evaluated and help DCMS to continue to better understand the most impactful elements of the Programme. While the LTA's ambition includes exploring future support for additional facility upgrades, such as floodlights and provisions for other

racquet sports, its main strategic focus for the next facility investment work programme is to increase covered court provision to address the significant gap in community-accessible, covered courts across the UK.

Lionesses Futures Fund

This initial process evaluation of the Lionesses Futures Fund highlighted the successes and challenges encountered during its early implementation. Capitalising on the momentum of the Lionesses' achievements presented a valuable, albeit time-sensitive, opportunity to boost women and girls' football participation. This necessitated rapid Programme development and delivery within a constrained timeframe. The collaborative efforts between stakeholders, including DCMS and the Football Foundation, were crucial in establishing a robust framework with clear objectives and success measures focused on expanding accessible facilities, prioritising playing opportunities, and fostering safe and welcoming environments.

While the expedited setup presented challenges, including internal administration demands, stakeholders generally agreed that the approach was proportionate and appropriate in the context. Leveraging the Football Foundation's existing project pipeline was an efficient and effective approach for selecting facilities, although it was perceived that it may have limited the applicant pool to select facilities from. The lack of comprehensive data on demand for women and girls' participation was identified as a key challenge in gauging potential impact and justifying site selection. However, success measures provided a framework for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.

The positive and collaborative relationships between stakeholders, despite the demanding timelines, facilitated effective communication and coordination. The streamlined communication channel, with dedicated points of contact, proved particularly beneficial in managing information requests and ensuring efficient decision-making. The Programme's monitoring process, aligned with existing Football Foundation procedures, minimised additional burden on stakeholders. Importantly, the learnings from the Lionesses Futures Fund, particularly regarding the focus on women and girls' participation, are being integrated into the Football Foundation's core pipeline and future Programme designs.

Further data collection and analysis, including surveys, case studies, and stakeholder interviews, will be conducted over the next 12 months to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the Programme's impact and inform the final evaluation report. This will offer valuable insights into the long-term effects of the Fund and contribute to developing effective strategies for promoting women and girls' participation in football.

7.2. Interim Conclusions from Impact Evaluation

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

This section evaluated the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme (MSGF) and its impact on achieving intended objectives, impacts, and outcomes. The evaluation used descriptive analysis of survey data and a quasi-experimental econometric approach to determine the Programme's causal impact on participation.

Descriptive Analysis Findings:

- Overall Participation: A larger proportion of funded facilities (92%) reported increased overall participation compared to unfunded facilities (79%), with funded facilities also reporting higher magnitudes of increase. This difference was statistically significant at the 5% level. This suggests a positive association between funding and increased participation, although unlike the econometric analysis, the test did not control for exogenous factors which influence participation.
- Sustained Participation: More funded facilities (64%) reported an increase in regular users compared to unfunded facilities (46%), indicating a potential positive impact on sustained participation.
- Local Community Impacts: While a larger proportion of unfunded facilities reported increased access for different groups or sports and longer open hours, a higher share of users at funded facilities reported that

the facility met their needs, particularly in Scotland. Funded facilities also showed a higher proportion of respondents reporting volunteering activity.

- Other Impacts: Analysis of user IMD data in England revealed that users tend to attend facilities in similar IMD deciles to their own, although cross-decile attendance exists. Users attending facilities in more deprived areas reported greater increases in physical activity, suggesting a potentially larger impact of the Programme in these areas.

Econometric Analysis Findings:

The econometric analysis used Nearest Neighbour Matching (NNM) to create comparable groups of funded and unfunded facilities and employed multinomial logistic regressions for directional changes in participation and OLS regressions for magnitude of change.

- Matching: NNM was used to improve comparability between funded and unfunded facilities based on several key variables, including nation, monthly users, project status, and local authority population density.
- Regression Results: While descriptive analysis suggested a positive association between funding and participation, the regression analysis did not identify a statistically significant difference in participation between funded and unfunded facilities in the aggregate. However, New or upgraded artificial grass pitch projects and facility infrastructure projects did show a statistically significant positive correlation with increased sports participation, increasing by 52.2% and 62.5% on average per year respectively.
- Data Limitations: The analysis acknowledges limitations, including the lack of pre-Programme data, limited sample size, reliance on self-reported data, and potential unobserved confounding factors.

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

This interim evaluation report assessed the PTCR Programme using a substantially larger dataset of park tennis booking data compared to the initial report. The data, covering approximately 2.4 million bookings across 214 venues (186 funded, 28 unfunded), allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the Programme's impacts and outcomes.

Descriptive Analysis Findings:

- Overall Participation Trends: Booking data from 2019-2024 showed an overall upward trend in both total and unique bookings, with a notable surge in 2020 likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funded venues consistently showed higher bookings per court than unfunded venues.
- New User Participation: Funded venues consistently attracted more new bookers compared to unfunded venues, suggesting a positive impact of funding on attracting new participants.
- Sustained Participation: Funded venues also showed higher levels of sustained participation (defined as at least four bookings in a rolling 12-month period), further supporting the positive impact of funding.
- Participation by IMD: In the 12 months post-refurbishment, participation on average increased more in lower IMD deciles (39%) compared to higher IMD deciles (30%), suggesting the program successfully targeted and benefited more deprived communities.
- Regional Trends: Bookings per venue per court varied greatly by region, with the South and South West and London showing the highest activity, while Wales and the North exhibited the lowest.
- Gender Trends: Male bookings consistently outnumbered female bookings (63-66% versus 32-35%), indicating a gender gap in tennis participation, although the gender gap in national survey data of tennis participants shows a narrowing gap over time.
- Secondary Data Analysis: The Active Lives Survey data showed a decline in tennis participation in England from 2015-2021, followed by a rebound in 2022, likely influenced by the pandemic.

Econometric Analysis Findings:

A staggered Difference-in-Differences (DiD) model was used to assess the causal impact of the PTCR Programme on participation.

- Variance in Participation: Analysis of booking data revealed variations in participation across funded and unfunded venues and by year of refurbishment. Venues funded in 2020 showed higher booking volumes, potentially due to different project characteristics and selection criteria compared to later funded venues.
- Parallel Trends Assumption: Visual inspection of booking trends suggested that the parallel trends assumption, crucial for the validity of the DiD model, was broadly satisfied, particularly after excluding venues funded in 2020.
- Matching: Nearest Neighbour Matching (NNM) with a 6:1 matching ratio was employed to improve comparability between funded and unfunded venues. However, challenges in achieving optimal balance were noted, particularly due to the limited number of unfunded venues.
- DiD Results: The staggered DiD analysis did not reveal statistically significant impacts of the PTCR Programme on overall participation. Further analysis is planned to explore sustained participation and new user participation.

The evaluation will continue over the next 12 months with additional data collection and analysis to provide more robust conclusions in the final report. Further investigation into the drivers of regional and gender disparities in participation, as well as the long-term impacts of court renovations on sustained participation, will be crucial.

7.3. Interim Conclusions from Economic Evaluation

Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme

At this stage, the Social Cost Benefit Analysis (SCBA) for the MSGF Programme focused on benefits derived from participation and volunteering impacts and compared them against costs associated with the Programme. In line with best practice, indicative ranges (alongside central estimates) are provided to reflect the uncertainty surrounding the Programme's impacts at this point in time. Further analysis will be undertaken to refine these estimates ahead of the final evaluation report.

A multi-step approach combined survey data, stakeholder input, and Sport England's SROI model. Key steps included estimating unique monthly users (adjusting for seasonality), accounting for displacement (58% additionality), calculating net uplift in participation (compounded over four years), splitting participants by age and activity level, addressing biases, scaling up to all funded facilities (including small grants), modelling physical activity shifts, and monetising using the SROI model (with a 14-year appraisal period and 3.5% discount rate). A similar process estimated additional volunteers (over four years), split them by frequency, scaled up impacts (excluding small grants), and applied the same modelling parameters as participation. Costs included grant funding, partner funding, resource costs (Delivery Partner and DCMS), and maintenance costs. User fees were excluded from analysis at this stage recognising the limited evidence available.

As set out in the following table, the estimated discounted total economy Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) is between 1.01 and 2.28 (central estimate: 1.54). The estimated discounted DCMS BCR, considering only DCMS costs, was estimated between 1.79 and 4.05 (central estimate: 2.73).

Table 53: Outputs from value for money analysis of the MSGF Programme

Item	Low	Central	High
Estimated Discounted Costs		**£597.7m**	
DCMS grants		£333.4m	
Partner contributions		£144.5m	
Resource costs		£9.8m	
Maintenance costs		£110.0m	
Estimated Discounted Benefits	**£602.2m**	**£919.6m**	**£1.4bn**
Participation	£553.9m	£858.5m	£1.3bn
Volunteering	£48.3m	£61.1m	£75.9m
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Net Present Benefits (NPV)	**£4.5m**	**£321.9m**	**£764.8m**
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	**1.01**	**1.54**	**2.28**
Estimated Discounted DCMS Benefit Cost Ratio (DCMS BCR)	**1.79**	**2.73**	**4.05**

Source: Value for money analysis

Estimated Additional Participants:

The economic evaluation estimates the number of additional sport participants based on the evidence collected through the evaluation as a result of the MSGF Programme. These are set out below:

- **Considering seasonality but before adjusting for displacement and repeat attendees**: 499,842 - 891,780 additional participants (central estimate: 676,015).
- **Accounting for displacement and repeat attendees:** 156,691 - 338,348 additional unique participants (central estimate: 234,312).
- **Additional participants moving between physical activity categories used within the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines:** 50,195 - 108,389 individuals (central estimate: 75,061).

Park Tennis Court Renovation Programme

For the PTCR Programme, the SCBA focused on the benefits derived from participation only. As with the MSGF value for money assessment, inline with best practice, indicative ranges (alongside central estimates) are provided to reflect the uncertainty surrounding the Programme's impacts at this point in time. Further analysis will be undertaken to refine these estimates ahead of the final evaluation report.

The analysis estimated additional tennis participation using booking data, adjusting for unique bookers and displacement (51% additionality). Participants were categorised by age and activity level (using Active Lives data), and shifts in activity levels were estimated based on booking frequency and duration. A participation uplift model, incorporating an 18% annual drop-off rate, was applied. Costs included grant funding, partner funding and resource costs (Delivery Partner and DCMS). User fees were excluded.

As set out in the following table, the estimated discounted total economy Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) is between 1.15 and 2.23 (central estimate: 1.65). The estimated discounted DCMS BCR, considering only DCMS costs, was estimated between 2.01 and 3.88 (central estimate: 2.87).

Table 54: Outputs from value for money analysis of the PTCR Programme

Item	Low	Central	High
Estimated Discounted Costs		**£39.1m**	
DCMS grants		£21.9m	
Partner contributions		£14.3m	
Resource costs		£2.9m	
Estimated Discounted Benefits – Participation	**£45.1m**	**£64.4m**	**£87.0m**
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Net Present Benefits (NPV)	**£6.0m**	**£25.3m**	**£48.0m**
Estimated Discounted Total Economy Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	**1.15**	**1.65**	**2.23**
Estimated Discounted DCMS Benefit Cost Ratio (DCMS BCR)	**2.01**	**2.87**	**3.88**

Source: Value for money analysis

The economic evaluation estimates the number of additional sport participants based on the evidence collected through the evaluation as a result of the PTCR Programme. These are set out below:

Estimated Additional Participants:

- **Considering unique bookers but before adjusting for displacement:** 345,417 - 493,298 additional sports participants (central estimate: 416,125).
- **Accounting for displacement and repeat bookers:** 141,492 - 303,102 additional sports participants (central estimate: 213,069).
- **Additional participants (accounting for displacement and repeat attendees) moving Sport England's physical activity categories:** 5,195 - 11,124 individuals (central estimate: 7,821).

7.4. Interim Conclusions Against Evaluation Questions

Key evaluation questions and sub-questions were developed and agreed that follow from the overarching research question.[91] LFF-specific evaluations questions were included to ensure coverage of all the Fund's success measures. With the evidence available in this interim report, *Table 55* below summarises the interim findings as they related to each evaluation question. This table will be revisited in the final report as additional findings become available.

Please note that due the ongoing delivery of the LFF and the absence of impact or economic evaluation findings at this stage, interim conclusions from the LFF are not discussed in EQ1-3 and EQ5-6 as these EQs rely on findings from these components of the evaluation. With the planned primary data collection covering the LFF ahead of the final report and the inclusion of the LFF in scope of the impact and economic evaluations, interim conclusions against these EQs will be included in the final report.

[91] More information on the evaluation questions is available in the previous interim report

Table 55: Evidence Against Evaluation Questions

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
EQ1	**Have the new/improved facilities resulted in additional participation in sport at the facility and local areas?**	EQ1.1	Have the Programmes created a significant change in participation in the funded areas?	**MSGF & PTCR:** With the current evidence and the econometric analysis undertaken in this interim report, whilst there is descriptive and anecdotal evidence of improvements in participation in funded areas, there is currently no evidence of a significant impact on participation as a result of the MSGF or PTCR Programmes when controlling for exogenous factors. This assessment will be revisited in the final report, incorporating additional evidence for a more precise causal estimation.
		EQ1.2	To what extent have the Programmes delivered sustained increases in participation in the funded areas?	**MSGF & PTCR:** With the current evidence available in this interim report, no causal analysis has been undertaken as to the degree to which participation increases have been sustained for any Programme. However, descriptive analysis suggests positive impacts on sustained participation for the MSGF and PTCR Programmes, with improved outcomes at funded facilities relative to unfunded facilities.
		EQ1.3	To what extent do the renovated facilities meet local demand and increase user satisfaction?	**MSGF:** a higher share of users of funded facilities across all four Home Nations indicated that the facility either fully or partially meets their needs. **PTCR:** the large increases in use of funded facilities post-refurbishment (relative to pre-refurbishment) indicate that the Programme has helped meet local demand for tennis facilities. Anecdotal evidence from users as part of case study activity suggest the improvement in the quality of the tennis provision in the area has greatly improved their playing experience and encourages participation.
		EQ1.4	Have the Programmes helped the facilities become financially sustainable?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Anecdotal evidence from qualitative data collection indicated that the MSGF and PTCR Programmes have been critical to helping facilities become financially sustainable, at least in the short-to-medium term. The establishment of sinking funds for 766 of 990 projects (77%) was cited as being crucial for covering future maintenance costs and to ensure that court charging is affordable. Some concerns were raised by facility managers to the degree to which any improvements would be maintained into the long-term.
		EQ1.5	Has the type of sport played at a funded facility impacted participation?	**MSGF:** For the MSGF Programme, anecdotal evidence from interviews suggested that multi-sport projects have been successful in increasing sports participation. However, there is not a large enough sample size of impacts from primary data collection of non-football sports to complete an analysis of the impact of sport played on participation. **PTCR:** This evaluation question is not relevant for the PTCR Programme as it refurbishes park tennis courts where the only played sport is tennis.

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
		EQ1.6	Has the type of facility investment impacted participation?	**MSGF:** Whilst no evidence was found of the Programme on overall participation, new or upgraded artificial grass pitch (AGP) projects and facility infrastructure projects did show a statistically significant positive correlation with increased sports participation, increasing by 52.2% and 62.5% on average per year respectively. **PTCR:** no statistically significant relationships were found when econometric regressions were run on the booking data filtered for project types.
EQ2	**Does the investment in facilities have an impact on participation levels from underrepresented groups and within deprived areas?**	EQ2.1	What has been the effect of the Programmes on sport participation levels amongst underrepresented groups (women, older adults[92], lower socio-economic groups[93], people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups)?	**MSGF:** Funded facilities demonstrate a greater increase in usage across various demographics. 74% of funded facilities reported increased use by women and girls since April 2021, compared to 68% of unfunded facilities. This trend continues with ethnic minorities (43% for funded facilities versus 26% for unfunded facilities) and disabled users (38% for funded facilities versus 22% for unfunded facilities). **PTCR:** Bookings by men consistently outnumbered bookings by women (63-66% versus 32-35%). Anecdotal evidence through interview activity suggested that uplifts in participation were noted among women and girls, and young people, although precise figures were not provided. An example was cited which noted a new offering for inclusive tennis sessions for children with learning difficulties and summer holiday events.
		EQ2.2	What has been the effect of the additional Lioness Funding on football participation levels amongst women and girls? (England only)	**LFF:** Recognising that delivery of the LFF is ongoing, it is too early for evidence to be available. However, the established LFF success measures aim to closely monitor these outcomes, so evidence should be available by the final report on this outcome.
		EQ2.3	To what extent have the Programmes delivered sustained increases in participation amongst underrepresented groups (women, older adults, lower socio-economic groups, people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups) in the funded areas?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Recognising limited sample sizes at this stage, particularly for the MSGF Programme, this will be investigated in the final report. A
		EQ2.4	To what extent has the additional Lionesses Futures Fund delivered sustained increases in participation in football participation levels amongst women and girls? (England only)	**LFF:** Recognising that delivery of the LFF is ongoing, it is too early for evidence to be available. However, the established LFF success measures aim to closely monitor these outcomes, so evidence should be available by the final report on this outcome.

[92] According to Sport England, this refers to individuals aged 55+ (Adults' activity levels in England bounce back to pre-pandemic levels | Sport England)
[93] As defined in the feasibility report, these are individuals living in deprived areas. Deprived areas are regions within IMD 1-5. More detail is outlined here: English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
		EQ2.5	To what extent has the Lionesses Futures Fund increased the number of new female participants?[94] (England only)	**LFF:** Recognising that delivery of the LFF is ongoing, it is too early for evidence to be available. However, the established LFF success measures aim to closely monitor these outcomes, so evidence should be available by the final report on this outcome.
		EQ2.6	What has been the effect of the Programmes on sport participation levels amongst different regions and smaller geographies?*	**MSGF:** Funded facilities were more likely to report increased participation in three of the four Home Nations, the exception being Scotland (89% versus 94%). However, It should be noted that these proportions are influenced by both the populations in scope, and the sample size available that responded to the question within the facility survey. **PTCR:** Bookings per venue per court varied greatly by region, with the South & South West and London showing the highest activity, while Wales and the North exhibited the lowest.
		EQ2.7	To what extent have the Programmes delivered sustained increases in participation amongst different regions and smaller geographies?*	**MSGF & PTCR:** Recognising limited sample sizes at this stage, particularly for the MSGF Programme, this will be investigated further in the final report.
		EQ2.8	Have the Programmes created accessible facilities?	**MSGF:** Case study interviews highlighted the important role that the funding has had in increasing accessibility for underrepresented groups, new participants, and sports, and for allowing for longer opening hours. These results currently slightly differ to outcomes from surveying, where unfunded facilities reported marginally better outcomes than funded facilities. **PTCR:** Given the nature of the projects completed, particularly court refurbishments, this has allowed for previously unusable facilities to be accessible to all. The installation of online booking systems facilitates reduced barriers to participation,

[94] New female participants are defined as female users of the facility that joined since the funding materialised at the site.

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
				and volunteering offers such as the Free Park Tennis Programme were cited in interviews as helping bring new groups into park tennis.
EQ3	**Do the new/improved facilities increase awareness of sports, and/or improve the perception of activity in local communities (e.g. quality of life, pride in place, community cohesion) for individuals?**	EQ3.1	Have the Programmes improved local educational achievement through school level sport participation at facilities?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Case studies of facilities funded by the MSGF and PTCR Programmes provided anecdotal evidence of improved links with local schools, including many citing the Programme as crucial to helping establish free-use agreements to boost participation. Whilst there is research that increased physical activity is associated with improved academic performance, there is no data currently collected related to this evaluation question.
		EQ3.2	Have the Programmes aligned with the government's Opportunities Mission?[95]	**MSGF:** The Programme shows good alignment with the aim of reducing regional inequalities. The North East, understood to be a higher priority region, received the highest funding per capita (£9.14). London, a lower priority region, received both the lowest total funding amount (£8.9 million) and lowest funding per capita (£1.00). **PTCR:** London had the highest number of renovated courts (724), whilst the North East region received funding for the lowest number of courts. However, this is likely representative of the distribution of courts already in the UK.
		EQ3.3	To what extent have the Programmes improved metrics of community cohesion, social network size, and pride in place?	**MSGF & PTCR:** there is currently no clear trend in the data on these outcomes. Anecdotal evidence through case studies suggests the Programmes have improved a sense of community spirit and led to an increase in pride in place, although some report isolated instances of vandalism. More evidence is needed over a longer timeframe to assess progress against this question, which will be explored in the final report.
		EQ3.4	To what extent have the Programmes improved metrics of mental wellbeing and physical health within the local community?	**MSGF:** there are no clear trends from survey data between the funding and mental wellbeing. However, there are trends in physical health, where more frequent activity as a result of increased participation at funded facilities is associated with improved self-reported health. **PTCR:** whilst there is no primary data evidence directly linking the Programme to improved mental and physical health outcomes, the link between physical activity and these outcomes is well established, and funded venues have seen large rises in bookings since refurbishments took place. Therefore, it is likely that the Programme has played a role in improving mental and physical health amongst additional tennis participants.

[95] Break Down Barriers to Opportunity - GOV.UK

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
		EQ3.5	Have the Programmes been associated with local/regional crime rates?	**MSGF/PTCR: Building on the back of improved pride in place outcomes for funded facilities,** case study evidence suggests that the Programme may have supported in reducing crime rates around funded facilities. Some facilities still reported incidents of vandalism (across both Programmes), although there were isolated. More evidence is needed over a longer timeframe to assess progress against this question, which will be explored in the final report.
		EQ3.6	What have been the environmental outcomes of the Programmes' activities?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Case studies suggested the funded projects have contributed to reducing emissions, including referencing the installation of more efficient LED floodlighting at funded facilities or venues. However, there is a lack of available data to comprehensively answer this sub-evaluation question at present, and more evidence is needed to assess progress, which will be explored in the final report.
		EQ3.7	How have the Programmes impacted the UK's pipeline for players into professional sport?	**MSGF & PTCR:** limited evidence was provided for both Programmes through case study interviews relating to this evaluation question. An example was provided of improved links with local academies, although there is no evidence of an increase in the pipeline moving into professional sport. More evidence is needed over a longer timeframe to assess progress against this question, which will be explored in the final report.
		EQ3.8	Have the Programmes increased the number of sport teams, volunteers, and number of workers specialising in grassroots sport at the funded facilities?	**MSGF:** 72% of funded facilities reported an increased number of sports teams since April 2021 compared to 64% of unfunded facilities. A noticeably larger proportion of facility users associated with funded facilities (69%) reported having volunteered since April 2021 compared to this associated with unfunded facilities (46%). There aren't any clear trends currently on the number of works specialising in grassroots sport, and this will be explored more detail in the final report. **PTCR:** the number of sports teams is not relevant for the PTCR Programme. There have been anecdotal evidence shared of the benefits of the funding on enhancing a site's volunteering offering, including through the LTA's Free Park Tennis initiative. Although this may have improved the number of workers specialising in grassroots sport at funded venues, similar to MSGF, there isn't any clear evidence at this stage of the evaluation, and this will be explore in the final report.
EQ4	**Have the Programmes improved collaborative working and available evidence?**	EQ4.1	How have the Programmes impacted the evidence base for future evaluations?	**MSGF & PTCR:** The data collected through the MSGF & PTCR Programmes has improved the evidence base on sports participation (including by under-represented groups), building on two waves of primary data collection for the MSGF Programme and two cuts of tennis booking data for the PTCR Programme.

EQ#	Evaluation Question	Sub-EQ#	Sub-Evaluation Question	Evidence
		EQ4.2	How have the Programmes strengthened the relationships between funded facilities and DPs?	**MSGF & PTCR:** Case studies of facilities funded by the Programme have shown strong collaboration between funded facilities and DPs.
		EQ4.3	Have the Programmes increased collaboration across the four devolved nations?	**MSGF:** DCMS and Delivery Partners have strengthened and improved relationships, maintaining the enthusiasm and professionalism that has characterised working relationships. Collaboration was more efficient and created less burden for all parties, although internal changes at DCMS required upskilling of new staff and some periods of vacancy for particular roles. **PTCR:** this evaluation question is less relevant for the PTCR Programme where there is only one Delivery Partner.
EQ5	**Has the Lionesses Futures Fund achieved its intended outcomes?**	EQ5.1	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund increased the number of women's football teams?	**LFF:** Recognising that delivery of the LFF is ongoing, it is too early for evidence to be available against each of these evaluation questions. However, the established LFF success measures aim to closely monitor these outcomes, so evidence should be available by the final report on these outcomes.
		EQ5.2	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund increased the number of female-only sessions and number of peak time sessions for females?	
		EQ5.3	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund increased the number of renovated or new female changing rooms?	
		EQ5.4	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund helped to establish a full player pathway for girls?	
		EQ5.5	To what extent do Lionesses Futures Fund facilities meet the needs of female users?	
EQ6	**Has the Lionesses Futures Fund helped to create safe and welcoming spaces for women and girl users to play?**	EQ6.1	Has the Lionesses Futures Fund improved the appropriateness of toilets and changing facilities at LFF sites?	
		EQ6.2	To what extent do female participants at the funded facilities feel safer and more welcome?	

7.5. Next Steps

Focus of future evaluation activity

As with the previous interim report, future evaluation activity will prioritise enhancing data availability. The expanded dataset will facilitate a deeper understanding of Programme impacts and outcomes, particularly through causal analysis. This is crucial for the Lionesses Futures Fund, given current limited impact evidence. The larger dataset will also enable more detailed analysis of participation trends for underrepresented groups (women and girls, ethnic minorities, and disabled people), involving data disaggregation and targeted analysis to understand specific barriers and facilitators. Future data collection will include additional survey waves, qualitative data (case studies and interviews), and a broadened economic evaluation encompassing a wider range of outcomes for a more comprehensive assessment of Programme impact and value for money. Furthermore, the evidence base for key assumptions (displacement, small grant scaling in MSGF, and booking data sample representativeness in PTCR) will be strengthened through targeted data collection, literature reviews, and expert consultations. Alternative data collection and analytical approaches (e.g. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) for categorical variables, sophisticated matching techniques) will also be explored to improve data reliability and the accuracy of impact estimates.

Additional primary data collection and secondary data analysis ahead of the next interim report includes:

- Surveys: a third iteration of facility, user and household surveys will be undertaken. The appropriateness of particular questions and wording, as well as incentives and distribution methods, will be refined and reviewed ahead of distribution.
- Case Studies: a further six case studies will be conducted across MSGF and PTCR Programmes.
- Interviews: further process evaluation interviews will take place with stakeholders from across both Programmes, as they near and pass the completion points of delivery.
- Programme monitoring and booking data: additional Programme monitoring data is expected to be available ahead of the next evaluation report and this will inform future impact analysis.