
**Castlereagh Borough Council, Lower Ormeau
Residents Action Group (LORAG) and Greater Village
Regeneration Trust.**

Community Sport Programme, Older and Active
Project Evaluation Report
(August 2008)



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Evaluation Report

Castlereagh Borough Council, Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group and Greater Village Regeneration Trust - Older and Active Programme

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Executive Summary

The Older and Active project emerged as a concept following partnership working between three partnership organisations, namely Castlereagh Borough Council (CBC), Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) and The Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT) - herein after called the Group. The project aimed to combat social exclusion faced by older people in South and East Belfast and Castlereagh using physical activity as a medium. The project was delivered in three distinct catchment areas, which were Castlereagh, the Inner South Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal and the Greater Village areas of South Belfast. It was spread over the course of 18 months and encompassed three separate programmes with the first programme lasting a week and programmes two and three lasting eight weeks each. The project was financially supported by Sport Northern Ireland's Community Sport Programme and attracted supplementary funding through Awards for All.

As each of the partner organisations are funded through Sport NI Community Sport Programme to support salary and programme provision this project is liable for evaluation to assess effectiveness of programme delivery. As part of this process the Group were required to appoint an independent consultant to undertake an evaluation on the Older and Active Project to cover the lifespan of its delivery. Copius Consulting were appointed in late March and completed the evaluation in mid May 2008. The evaluation was a balanced study using the Older and Active Project Group's current monitoring information, supported by consultation with a range of stakeholders namely the partner organisations, project participants and relevant statutory, community and voluntary organisations. There were also a number of benchmarking exercises undertaken to provide some relative information against the programme could be contextualised.

The findings generated from this process will be presented following a logical format and a number of recommendations will be identified for the future delivery of the project over the longer term.

Introduction and Background to Older and Active Project Group

2.1 Introduction to Older and Active Project Group

The Older and Active Project Group emerged as a concept in 2006 following partnership working between three partnership organisations, namely Castlereagh Borough Council (CBC), Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) and the Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT). The aim was to build relationships with isolated older people, encourage participation in a programme of activity within their local community and link participants with other local groups in the greater Belfast area. Initially the three groups linked with Lagan Watersports and Engage with Age to deliver the project, which aimed to address issues of concern that older people identified with as well as create a greater sense of safety and therefore help to alleviate concerns that can cause social exclusion. The short-term aim is to integrate isolated older people into society through the promotion of physical activity, whilst the long-term aim is to enhance lifelong participation and involvement in community / physical activity.

In the three areas in question the total 60+ population equated to some 15,754 residents (as per 2001 Census), many of whom are perceived to be isolated, socially excluded and not physically active.

The partner organisations constituted themselves as the Older and Active Project Group and declared the following mission statement:

“To enhance the health and well being of isolated older people within the Greater Belfast Area and Castlereagh Borough using physical activity as a medium to combat social exclusion.”

Funding was secured through Sport NI to provide a programme of activities and events to those residents who are deemed to be isolated and inactive amongst the 'older' members of the communities.

2.2 The Partner Organisations

Three specific organisations were responsible for the development and delivery of the project, namely Castlereagh Borough Council, Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (herein after called LORAG) and Greater Village Regeneration Trust. (herein after called GVRT) This section will outline a background to each organisation and detail their individual provision.

2.2.1 The Greater Village Regeneration Trust

The Greater Village area of South Belfast is bounded by busy roads, a motorway and a railway line, with seemingly no possibility of expansion in any direction. The pressure on property is immense, and landlords can charge higher rents than they could elsewhere in the City. There are now university students, Filipino nurses, Chinese, Indian and Bangladeshi food retail workers, African students and nurses, and most recently, eastern Europeans living in the area. Housing conditions in many parts of the area are very poor with derelict properties remaining uninhabited and falling into further disrepair leading to associated effects on adjoining properties. The locality is one of the last remaining areas in Belfast to be redeveloped however, recent announcements from the Department of Social Development Minister Margaret Ritchie look to be bringing this to an end.

The Trust was initially established in response to increasing concerns within the area in relation to housing conditions as part of a collective community decision. This approach ensured the facilitation of a more holistic, galvanised approach to the regeneration of the area. The Trust holds key to its performance the development of a community; a basis whereby they can represent community views, values and changing culture. The Trust has focussed its efforts on the developing the area through physical, visual and economic change.

The Trust is currently involved in a range of projects that aim to “*galvanise local efforts to articulate and deliver sustainable regeneration*” in the Greater Village Area of South Belfast which include:

- Community Relations Work
- Sports Development Programmes
- Arts Projects
- Environmental Projects
- Housing Issues
- Economic Development
- Education and Employment
- Youth

2.2.2 Castlereagh Borough Council

Castlereagh Borough Council is situated in a largely urban Borough bordering South and East Belfast. Unusually, it has no natural borough centre, largely consisting of a series of suburbs of Belfast in the Castlereagh Hills to the south-east of the City with a small rural area to the South of the Borough. The main centres of population are Carryduff and Dundonald with a population of nearly 66,500. The Council has a range of statutory responsibilities through its departmental structure that include the following:

- Building Control
- Client Services
- Environmental Health
- Arts

Castlereagh Borough Council takes special pride in the recreational and leisure facilities and services it provides for both residents of and visitors to the Borough. The diversity of activities catered for has, in recent years, provided high quality leisure facilities that include the following:

- The Robinson Centre
- Lough Moss Centre
- The Dundonald International Ice Bowl
- Belvoir Activity Centre
- Castlereagh Hills Golf Centre

The Community Services Department provides a range of services for local communities within the council's geographical area, including:

- Ballyoran Community Centre
- Cregagh Community Centre
- Tullycarnet Community Centre
- Ballybeen Community Centre

Castlereagh Borough Council host a Community Sports Development Officer who is funded through Sport NI's Community Sport Programme and who aims to increase, and therefore provide, physical activity and sporting opportunities within areas of high social need located within the Borough, namely Cregagh, Tullycarnet and Enler. The Council place a key emphasis is put on working in partnership with each other as well as other communities.

2.2.3 Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG)

LORAG was formed in 1987 to support the residents and community of Lower Ormeau, and was founded with the following specific objectives:

- To build the self-confidence of local residents to develop activities to meet their needs;
- To improve the educational attainment of children, young people and adults in the area;
- To support local parents in their parenting role at all stages of the family circle;
- To increase social interaction, getting individuals and groups together and increasing user involvement in community projects, thereby reducing individual feelings of isolation by providing a community focus for the area and a place for people to meet;
- To improve the ability of local residents to compete for and obtain training and job opportunities;
- To respond to local poverty, housing and environmental issues and to further improve the image of the area;
- To involve relevant statutory and voluntary agencies in participation and partnership in the work of the group and in turn to feed in the views of local residents to policy makers; and
- To work in partnership with other local communities to achieve these aims where appropriate.

Since 2000, LORAG has had responsibility for the day-to-day management and development of the Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre, which is owned, maintained and leased by Belfast City Council. LORAG is implementing a social economy model in a range of projects to support the further development and financial stability of the Centre, staff and projects.

LORAG's current provision is varied and extensive and includes:

- Youth Project and After School Project delivering diversionary activities, after school clubs and drop-in services to young people aged 5 - 25 years, 40 hours per week;
- The Sports Development Team delivers sport, health, education and tackles social issues through sport for all ages, across Inner South Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal area;
- Sure Start provides support and crèche facilities for families with children up to 4 years, 20 hours per week;
- GEMS offer employment and training advice, 4 hours per week;
- Housing Executive offer housing support and advice, 4 hours per week;
- Highway to Health deliver a range of health services at the site; and
- Rooms are available to hire for sports, functions, meetings and social events.

2.3 Older and Active Project Objectives

The Group identified a number of aims and objectives for the project which are outlined below:

- I. To increase the participation of older people in physical activities
- II. To encourage older people to avail of local facilities such as leisure and community centre's, helping to combat feelings of isolation
- III. To provide an opportunity to enjoy physical activity in a planned event encouraging active enjoyment of the physical activities
- IV. To provide opportunities for older peoples groups and individuals to network and build relationships with community, voluntary and statutory bodies working in their area
- V. To develop partnership working between local voluntary, community and statutory bodies from Castlereagh and Belfast. Thus strengthening and developing programmes of activities targeted towards older people
- VI. Helping to create through partnership working, long term involvement and sustainability, of physical activity for older people

- VII. Maintaining a cross community link that demonstrates good relations with similar partnerships arrangements, helping create a good practice model
- VIII. To provide an event with activities that are reflective of the wants and needs of local participants
- IX. To ensure involvement of older people within the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Terms of Reference and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the terms of reference agreed by Sport NI and the Older and Active Project Group. It also outlines the methodology and actions that have been taken to gather the raw data and complete the evaluation.

3.2 Terms of Reference

As an integral part of the Sport NI Community Sport Programme, The Older and Active Project Group has been tasked with appointing an independent evaluator to critique and report on the programme. The following terms of reference were agreed prior to the commencement of the project:

- To provide both quantitative and qualitative information that will indicate whether the aims and objectives have been met
- To assist in securing funding for the long term implementation of the project
- To analyse how the project could be improved and expanded
- To provide a list of recommendations to help any future interventions achieve long term objectives

3.3 Evaluation Methodology

Copius Consulting, in developing a framework for the evaluation objectives, agreed the following methodology with the Older and Active Project Group.

Agreed Methodology	Work Undertaken
Develop an understanding of the overall project and it's aims and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation meeting with three key delivery partners to clearly identify evaluation parameters and aims / objectives • Conducted desk research with reference to the project background and familiarisation with the project delivery areas. • Carried out individual consultation with three delivery organisations (LORAG, GVRT & CBC)
Develop an understanding of the objectives of the programme Funder in financing the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted desktop research to define Funder objectives and overall financial provision • Carried out consultation with three delivery agents (LORAG, GVRT & CBC) with specific regard to the financial support from key Funders - Awards for All and Sport NI
Develop and understanding of how the project has been delivered and it's impact in terms of local provision, opportunity and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted focus group with participants from three areas focusing on the key impacts for individuals • Carried out individual case studies with one participant from each delivery area • Conducted detailed consultation with three delivery partners (LORAG, GVRT & CBC) • Conducted individual consultation with key delivery agents (i.e. Highway to Health) focusing on the delivery from their perspective • Carried out consultation with key Political representatives

	for the local constituencies
Develop an understanding of the effectiveness of the project in achieving it's aims and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted detailed review of delivery partner Funder reports • Conducted focused consultation with key delivery partners (LORAG, GVRT & CBC) • Reviewed participant monitoring and evaluation reports • Collated information gathered relating to agreed project aims and objectives outlining specific
Provide an overview of the financial side of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted detailed review of budgeted and actual expenditure against programme delivery to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the project • Conducted extensive financial analysis of income and expenditure reports
Develop a set of recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathered evidence throughout the duration of the project • Benchmarked this project with other community development projects in the area • Provided a detailed list of project recommendations to help any future interventions achieve their long term objectives
Conclusions - provide a brief overview of the full report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a brief overview of the full report with immediate actions and finalised report conclusions detailing specific positives / negatives of the project

3.4 Presentation Findings

The findings of the project are detailed over the next four chapters. Sport NI's Community Sport Programme is outlined firstly, as a means of highlighting specific areas that the project will meet, before critiquing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Older and Active Project. A qualitative overview of the findings is presented before a chapter designated to future suggestions and recommendations is presented in chapter 8.

3.5 Conclusion

The Research Design and Presentation has been developed specifically to help the Older and Active Project Group make more informed decisions about its future for their project.

The staff members of the project agreed the Research Methodology, and their input into the evaluation has enabled them to really effectively assess the project delivery.

Sport NI Community Sport Programme

4.1 Introduction

This section gives some specific information about Sport Northern Ireland before developing a more in depth presentation of the Community Sport Programme aims, which they currently manage.

4.2 Sport NI

Sport NI is a Non - Departmental Public Body of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and is charged with the development of sport in Northern Ireland. DCAL's vision is of a "confident, creative, informed and vibrant community."

The vision for Sport NI is embedded in DCAL's vision: Through sport, to contribute to an inclusive, confident, creative, informed and vibrant community."

Sport NI's role is to provide a vision and strategic leadership for sport. It is committed to targeting support and delivering tangible outcomes that benefit the sporting community and wider society. Sport NI values the important contribution made by the community, voluntary and statutory sectors to sport in Northern Ireland and work closely with these sectors to build capacity and sustainability in development. Sport NI designs and implements programmes and partnerships that contribute to the following objectives:

- Increased participation in sport and physical activity
- Improved sporting performances
- Improved efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of sport

In the attainment of Sport NI's strategic objectives, the following Corporate Outcomes will be realised.

1. Professional, accountable and autonomous sporting organisations
2. Increased levels of spectators attending sporting events
3. Increased participation in sport and physical activity especially among under represented groups
4. Increased number of athletes with improved sporting performance
5. Contribution to broader government priorities
6. Increased efficiency and effectiveness in the attainment of corporate outcomes

Sport NI's business is designed to provide people, especially young people and under represented groups, with pathways and options for lifelong sporting and personal development

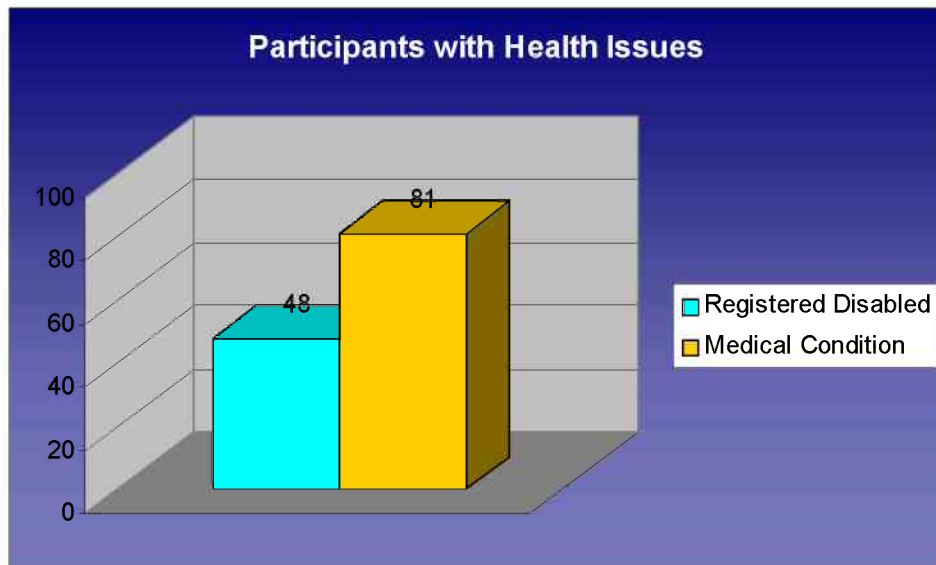
4.3 Community Sport Programme

In 2003 Sport NI secured £2.4 Million from the Big Lottery Fund to deliver the Community Sport Programme with the specific aim of improving the health and well being of those communities most at risk of low levels of participation in sport and physical recreation. The Community Sport Programme aims to improve the health and well being of individuals and build community cohesion through increased participation of children, young people and adults in areas of high social need and groups traditionally marginalised in sport and physical activity and in particular:

Sport NI, Community Sport Programmes Aims	How Older and Active Project Achieves Community Sport Programme Aims
To increase the levels of sustained participation in sport and physical activity among under represented groups	The Older and Active Project targeted older people and aimed to an increase their participation in sport and physical activity. The project ran three separate programmes throughout a period of 18 months. 74% of participants took part in sport either occasionally or never. 82% said they would continue to be involved in some of the activities they experienced as part of the programme. 69% of participants were female.
To improve the health and well being of programme participants	The project ran three separate programmes over the space of 18 months, with 48% of participants being registered as disabled and 81% stating they had a

	<p>medical condition. The Project increased the frequency of activity whilst holding educational seminars on a range of health issues. The project also involved a number of complimentary therapies. All of the participants consulted indicated that their health improved as a direct result of their participation, which may have presented itself as greater ability to be physically active, a reduction in reliance on medication and improved mental health (self confidence, self esteem etc).</p>
<p>To develop capacity and build community participation and cohesion</p>	<p>The Project took place in areas of high social need and crossed the political divide, working in the Lower Ormeau, Greater Village area and parts of Castlereagh. The project also had a social aspect accomplished through guest speakers, bus trips and the provision of lunch. These activities encouraged participants to not only meet and make new friends in their own communities but across other traditionally polarised communities, thus building intra and inter community cohesion</p>
<p>To establish and support the development of structures to sustain longer provision for the Community Sport Programme across NI</p>	<p>The newly established Project group was an amalgamation of three organisations, LORAG, GVRT and Castlereagh Borough Council aims to develop infrastructure to support this coordinated delivery. Additionally, the project has led to the establishment of specific groups within two of the current participants areas, which operate separately from the overall programme. This model can be viewed as an example of best practice and as such could be used as a framework for implementation across NI and potentially mainstreamed.</p>

Graphical Representation of Figures listed above:



Sport NI believes that by investing in community sport, real progress can be made in meeting Sport NI's Corporate Plan outcomes, which include:

- Increased number of physically literate young people;
- Increased participation in sport and physical activity among under represented groups;
- A competent sporting workforce;
- Professional, accountable and autonomous sporting organisations; and
- Increased efficiency through improved planning and administration;

4.4 Conclusion

With specific reference to the Older and Active programme it is evidently clear that this can meet a range of Community Sport Programme objectives thus assisting Sport NI achieve their overarching policy aims.

Effectiveness of Project in Achieving its Objectives

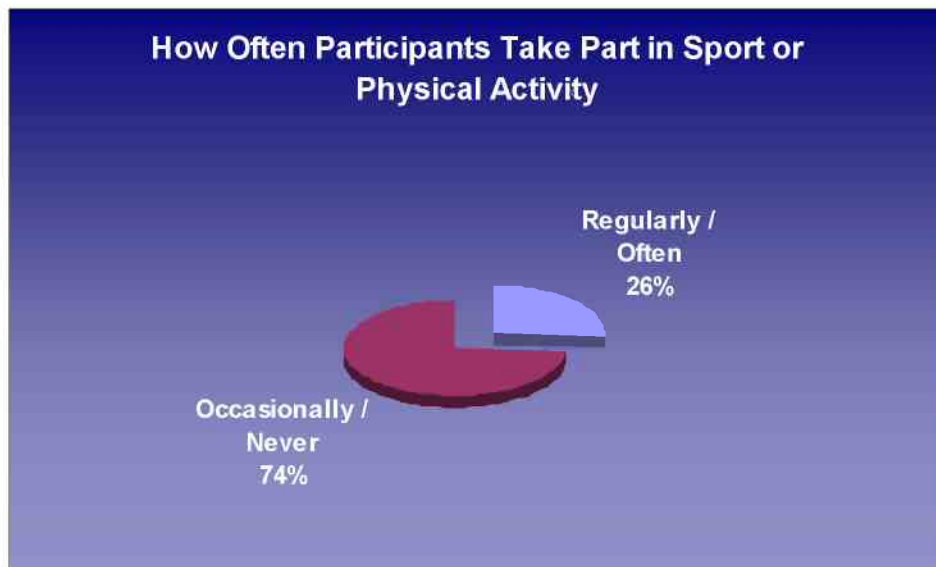
5.1 Introduction

In designing and agreeing the evaluation format, the Older and Active Project Group agreed that the focus and presentation of findings should be targeted at the Older and Active objectives:

5.2.1 Objective 1: *To increase the participation of older people in physical activities*

The Group has achieved this objective by organising a series of events over the course of 18 months, which equated to approximately 168 hours of structured provision. The programme targeted participants who were aged 60+, who were deemed socially excluded and rarely, if ever, took part in any form of sport and / or physical activity.

Evaluation showed 74% of participants stated they either never or only occasionally took part in any form of physical activity. Subsequently, 83% of those evaluated declared that they would continue to take part in some of the new activities they participated in as part of the programme.



The Group varied the physical activity programme on offer to the participants, thus enabling the older people to partake in a range of activities that they may not have been accustomed to. Participant feedback highlighted benefits as improved physical ability, increased mobility and enhanced social interaction.

The Group was also keen to use local facilities wherever possible as a means of increasing accessibility ensuring that a maximum number of local elderly people participated. These facilities were mainly provided as an 'in-kind' contribution for the participating organisation which enabled the Group to concentrate their resources into actual activities and programme delivery.

Consultation with organisers, participants, local community leaders and health care experts highlighted a range of physical benefits gained from participation in the programme including:

- Reduced risk of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes
- Reduced mortality
- Improved strength
- Improved walking ability
- Reduction and control of high blood pressure
- Enhancement of the immune system
- Prevention of osteoporosis
- Weight control and management

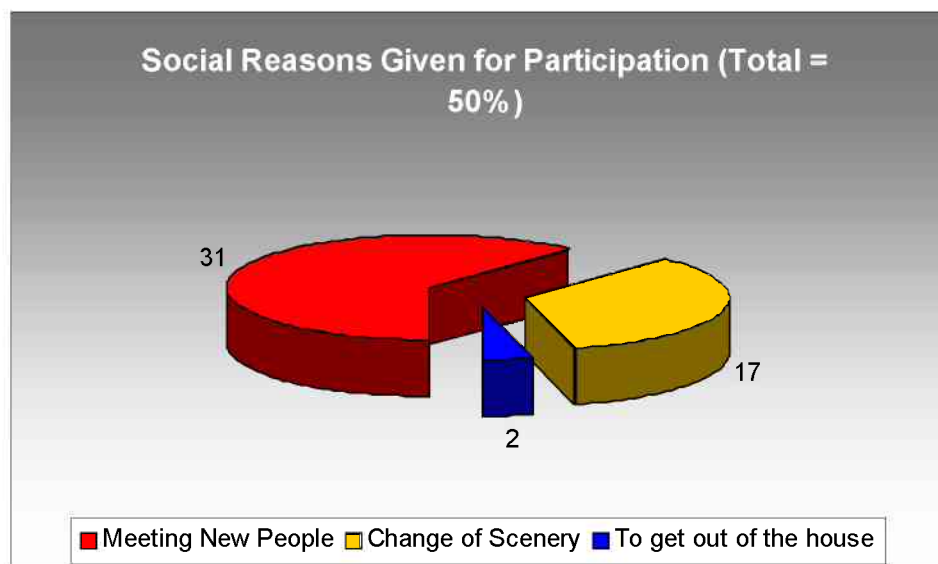
- Reduction in accidental falls
- Improvement in overall fitness levels
- Reduced reliance on / cessation of medication

The Group also addressed the social and economic barriers to participation by providing transport, lunch and the use of local facilities.

5.2.2 Objective 2: To encourage older people to avail of local facilities such as leisure and community centre's, helping to combat feelings of isolation

The Group utilised their extensive local knowledge to assist in meeting this aim. They were able to use a wide range of local facilities and used their programme to combat feelings of isolation. Participants were targeted from outside the existing community groups and activities - those who were identified as the most socially excluded who didn't have access to physical activity.

Where possible there was direct targeting of individuals who were referrals from Engage with Age, who encourage and develop initiatives to reach isolated and excluded senior citizens in South and East Belfast and Castlereagh. The evaluation revealed that 50% of participants became involved in the project for social reasons. ('Meeting new people' - 31%; 'Change of Scenery' - 17%; and 'To get out of the House' - 2%).



The programme utilised a range of facilities including:

- Shaftesbury Recreation Centre
- Cregagh Community Centre
- Charter Youth Club
- Lagan Watersports Centre
- Short Strand Community Centre
- The Ozone Sports Complex
- The Odyssey
- Ballyoran Community Centre
- Donegall Pass Community Centre
- Markets Community Centre
- Ballynafeigh Community House

The amount of facilities used and the use of the same across the two areas, improved the public services provision for older people with regards to the provision of recreational activities tailored to their need. Use of facilities such as these enabled the group to break down perceived barriers to participation that including:

- Community safety
- Access / location of the activity
- Social support
- Previous negative experiences

As facilities throughout South Belfast and Castlereagh were utilised participants had the opportunity to avail of facilities outside their locality. This promoted further social integration and enabled many of the participants to form new friendships and widen their social networks outside of their usual environment. By becoming involved in the project the participants were able to find out more about what was on offer in their local community. This helped to develop an interest in becoming more active, more regularly. It is widely recognised that the loss of independence is a significant area of concern amongst older people. As such the social aspect of this project cannot be underestimated - an important feeling amongst participants which included:

- Empowerment
- Enhanced Social Integration
- Formation of new friends

- The widening of social networks
- Promotion of a new and positive image for older people
- Provision of opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment

Some participants of the focus group declared that they, “Would be sitting in the house alone otherwise; there was a very important social aspect to the programme”, and that the activities were the only social activity they were involved in. Thus emphasised / encapsulated the importance of the social aspect of the programme in breaking down those feelings of isolation amongst the older members of society.

The project helped isolated older people build relationships and take part on a range of activities primarily within their community, and across other communities. They were able to link up with other participants from other groups and address common issues thus alleviating concerns that in themselves cause social exclusion.

It is the intention of the Group to develop this programme and build on its success by establishing an Older Peoples Inclusion Network, which will include community, voluntary and statutory agencies working together to address issues identified throughout the course of programmes such as this one.

5.2.3 Objective 3: To provide an opportunity to enjoy physical activity in a planned event encouraging active enjoyment of the physical activities

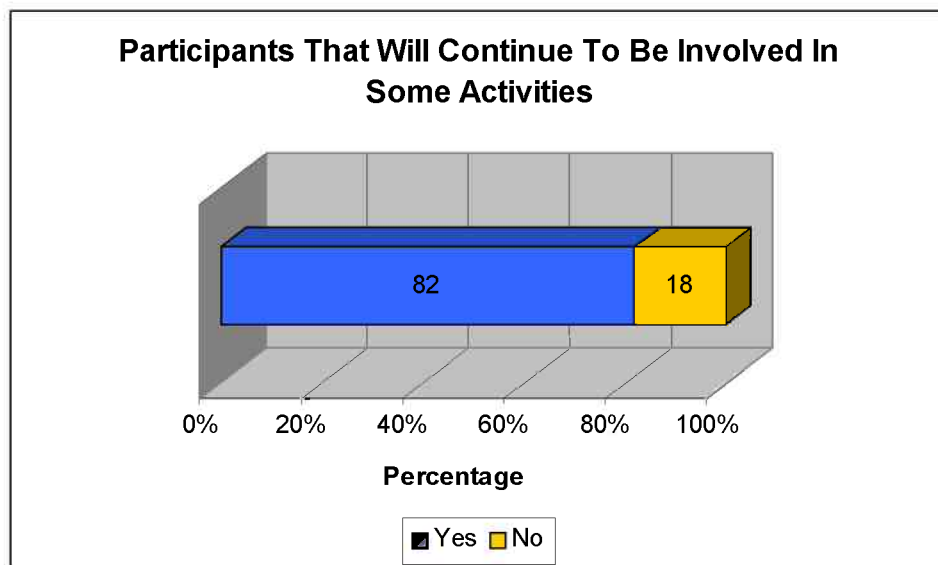
The Group was able to meet this objective in a number of ways, particularly through initial consultation, actual programme delivery and effective monitoring and evaluation. These enabled organisers to devise and deliver a programme based on needs of older people and not perceived needs. As many older people believe physical activity is no longer appropriate, the Group had to work on the promotion of physical activity as being of benefit to the participants in three ways:

1. Physically
2. Mentally
3. Socially

The nature and focus of the programmes were determined by pre project consultation conducted by the Group with ongoing monitoring and evaluation informing progress and future delivery. Focus group evaluation highlighted participants' views regarding the programmes as:

- Brilliant
- Good Fun
- Well organised
- Really enjoyable
- Very worthwhile

In order to maximise the potential of the project, the Group had three set programmes of activities over the course of the lifespan of the project. The first programme was over the course of one week; the second over eight weeks; and the third was one day a week for eight weeks. The evaluation showed that 97% believed that the organisation and preparation was very good, all respondents indicated they enjoyed themselves and 82% stated they were willing to continue with new activities.



The activities were not just physical in nature but also included the promotion of good mental and physical health through a series of talks and the provision of complimentary therapies such as reflexology, tai chi and hand massage.

Additionally, respondents supported this highly positive view by commenting that delivery staff often assisted participants outside of just the programme delivery.

CASESTUDY 1: 75 year old female, participant in Donegall Pass Programme

This lady has been involved in the programme from the beginning and really enjoys every aspect of what's offered. *"At the beginning I only knew one lady, only because she went to the same hairdressers but now I have made at least 15 new friends and can't wait for the meeting days to see everybody. My family tell me that I have a better social life than them because I'm constantly meeting people in the street that I know from the programme"*.

5.2.4 Objective 4: To provide opportunities for older peoples groups and individuals to network and build relationships with community, voluntary and statutory bodies working in their area

The Group met this objective as networking and relationship building became as an important part of the programme as the physical activities.

Through involvement in the programme, participants were able to develop new and build existing relationships. An integral element of this was the organisation of a Networking and Information Day, which helped to link participants with the local community as well as providing other service agencies the chance to raise awareness of their work and what they had to offer older people. Such was the success of this provision the Group aims to take this a stage further by, in partnership, developing an Older Peoples Inclusion Network that will include community, voluntary and statutory agencies working to address issues raised throughout the duration of these types of programmes.

In addition, the project itself was viewed as an example of good practice for other groups working with older people and incorporated a range of partners who were consulted regarding the programme content and provided valuable input via information seminars and educational talks.

The contact with the three partner organisations has had a positive effect on all concerned as that has added a cross community dimension to the project and enabled older people to network with senior citizens from another community and with whom they have so much in common. This has included a number of talks on health related issues such as Diabetes and Mental Health issues, which were facilitated by issue based groups such as Engage with Age and South Belfast Highway to Health and enabled participants to network and engage with these

agencies. In total twenty-three such organisations were involved in the programme - a full list of these organisations can be found at appendix 1.

5.2.5 Objective 5: To develop partnership working between local voluntary, community and statutory bodies from Castlereagh and Belfast. Thus strengthening and developing programmes of activities targeted towards older people

This objective was met on a number of different levels. The project is in itself a partnership working arrangement between voluntary and statutory groups with Castlereagh Borough Council, LORAG and Greater Village Regeneration Trust the three organising agencies. Additionally a range of agencies became involved in the delivery throughout the duration of the programme that were used to help broaden the scope of activities delivered to older people in the areas in question. Initially Engage with Age provided guidance and direction to programme content, however, their involvement lasted until the end of the first programme as a change in priority provision meant resources were directed elsewhere.

New partnerships have evolved naturally over the course of the eighteen months in question namely South Belfast Highway To Health who have become a partner organisation providing important strategic input regarding programme delivery and activity provision. The group has looked to the statutory agencies to provide a range of services that have added an educational and informative aspect to their work. A major success of the project was the deliverance of complementary therapies and information seminars addressing a range of issues affecting older people.

These were mainly delivered by voluntary organisations and have been recognised by participants as having a valuable input into the programme itself. Some responses from the participant's focus group included that they:

- 'Learned more from diabetes chat than I would have from my doctor'
- 'Got new fire alarms fitted as a result of the Fire Service visit'
- 'Look out for what the contents of tinned food is now that we had the nutritional talk'.

A number of local community organisations have now developed working relationships as a result of the project. These relationships have also added a good relations aspect to the project as groups from differing communities have come together to plan, deliver and host events for all the participants whatever their political or religious make up. A list of

organisations that the group has worked with in delivering the programme can be found at appendix 1.

Additionally, a Networking and Information Day was organised with the aim of linking participants with the local community as well as providing other service agencies the chance to raise awareness of their work and what they had to offer older people. This aspect of the programme was so successful the Group now aim to develop an Older Peoples Inclusion Network that will include community, voluntary and statutory agencies working to address issues raised throughout the duration of these types of programmes.

5.2.6 Objective 6: Helping to create through partnership working, long term involvement and sustainability, of physical activity for older people

This objective has been partially met. There has been some excellent work delivered and effective relationships established with, for example, the Fire Service and the PSNI. However, as the project aims to create Physical, Psychological and Mental benefits it has lacked input from the local Health and Social Services Trust who could have contributed to the programme through financial support or the provision of physical resources. The programme's long-term sustainability is questionable as it relies heavily on the financial support received indirectly through the Community Sport Programme.

The individual member groups have attempted to address this with LORAG, GVRT and South Belfast Highway to Health endeavouring to include this provision within their respective draft Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Action Plans that would be an important step in ensuring sustainability.

The programme has clearly demonstrated a demand for this type of activity within these three areas to the extent where it has provided a much needed kick start for the establishment of two stand alone groups in the Markets and Donegal pass areas of South Belfast. The Older and Active programme has enabled these elderly people to secure facility usage and activity provision outside of that delivered as part of the programme.

Long-term involvement of all participatory bodies is essential to maintain the programme and the Group has made several partnership arrangements work for the benefit of the project. They have delivered a range of physical activities and therapies through their partnerships with South Belfast Highway to Health, local community organisations and other voluntary organisations, which have been well received by their intended audience. Additionally, with a

key focus on sustainability the group has had some success in building relationships rather than partnerships with the statutory agencies tasked with responsibilities for older people.

5.2.7 Objective 7: *Maintaining a cross community link that demonstrates good relations with similar partnerships arrangements, helping create a good practice model*

This objective was met as the Group was established on a cross community basis and is one of the mainstays of the activities and programmes organised. The Group initially set up a series of events and programmes for older people within their own community; however the second stage of the project brought people from different communities together to participate in physical activities and educational seminars.

Evaluation highlighted that participants had met and developed relationships with people outside of the communities who they would never have met previously. In a large number of cases this was a key aspect of their participation in the programme.

The Group has also developed effective working relationships with similar bodies in the areas in question that also operate on a cross community basis namely Inner South Belfast and South West Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships.

Interestingly the two newly established groups, based in the Markets and Donegall Pass areas, of the City, have developed working relationship between themselves and Belfast City Council whose facilities they use. Local Councillor and Community worker within the Village area of South Belfast Cllr Bob Stoker advocated the expansion of the project to cover the greater Belfast area such was the success of the cross community initiatives alone. He believed that the project showed a common bond could be developed by the participants, regardless of their religious or political background.

5.2.8 Objective 8: *To provide an event with activities that are reflective of the wants and needs of local participants*

The Group endeavoured to deliver a programme which met identified demand for this target population. To achieve this consultation with key groups, stakeholders and the older people themselves, was conducted prior to the programme delivery to determine the nature and content of the programme. To assess delivery against agreed objectives and as a means of

gauging feedback from participants ongoing monitoring and evaluation was carried out. Information gathered from these exercises informed future delivery ensuring the programme delivered was based on demand and participants were content with the programme schedule.

One statement from one participant (outlined below) as part of the feedback from the focus group encapsulates the feeling of inclusion and provides firm evidence that adequate steps were taken to achieve this objective:

“We feel that we are important - they ask us what we want rather than just delivering what they think we would want.”

The project was able to attract such numbers of participants because the Group consulted with older people prior to the first programme taking place. 72% of participants surveyed stated they became involved due to the “interesting activities, meeting new people and because it sounded enjoyable”.

This reflects the Groups work in ensuring activities were planned based on participant’s needs. Health seminars focused on issues that the older people had raised or identified in their registration forms. Diabetes seminars, for example, were arranged because of the prevalence of Type 2 diabetes amongst older people involved in the project. This element of the programme was particularly popular amongst participants during the various consultation meetings and focus groups. Commenting on this aspect some people indicated they:

- Have come off medication as a result (i.e. anti depressants)
- Learned practical information about relevant issues (i.e. medical advice; fire safety; personal safety, etc)
- Believed that it was Educational with the advice based talks
- We’re able to learn practical things from each-other and guest presentations / speakers (i.e. diabetes; PSNI; Fire Service, etc)
- Learned more from diabetes chat than I would have from my doctor
- Got new fire alarms fitted as a result of the Fire Service visit
- Look out for what the contents of tinned food is now that we had the nutritional talk

CASESTUDY 2: 84 year old male, participant in Castlereagh Programme

“There is a big social part to the programme and I have met so many people that I wouldn’t have had the chance to before. This has really helped me because there aren’t that many shops in the area and those that are there are expensive. Because they asked us what we want they have brought us to St George’s Market sometimes to do our shopping which saves me money.”

5.2.9 Objective 9: To ensure involvement of older people within the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

This objective was met as the group involved older people in the planning of the programmes and as previously outlined in Objective 8 consulted participants to determine the nature of the programme content. An integral part of the programme delivery was the monitoring and evaluation conducted in assessing progress. All component organisations within the Group conducted individual monitoring and evaluation. However, it is important to consider that midway through delivery a new member of staff inherited the programme and did not have access to key information relating to monitoring and evaluation. As such this information was unavailable.

Efficiency in Delivering Project Objectives

6.1 Introduction

This section gives a brief overview of the funding that was made available through Sport NI's Community Sport Programme, and any additional funders, and the efficiencies with which the money has been spent on achieving project objectives.

6.2 Budget and Analysis of Expenditure

Sport NI through its Community Sport Programme has supplied the financial resources, mainly through salary funding awards, to enable the Older and Active programme to be implemented throughout the three designated areas (Lower Ormeau, Greater Village and Castlereagh). Awards for All also part funded the initial delivery of the programme across the three areas. Other organisations were also involved in the delivery, some of which provided in kind contributions to the programme, namely South Belfast Highway to Health and Age Concern.

Each individual organisation controlled and managed the salary awards for the Community Sports Development Officers, but Castlereagh coordinated the management of the Awards for All award on behalf of the partnership. The following table provides an up to date analysis on the financial budget of the project, the financial support from the Sport NI Community Sport Programme and Awards for All, and the total amount spent on each particular element of the programme delivery.

The budget for the two programmes was funded as follows:

Partners	£2,767.82
Awards for All	£7,585.82
Sport NI	£5,000
Combined Total Budget	£15,353.64

The breakdown of the expenditure elements over the three years was as follows:

	% of overall spend	Awards For All	Sport NI	Partners	Combined total
Venue Hire	3%	£451.20	-	In kind	£451.20
Catering	17%	£1,360	-	£1,576.25	£2,936.25
Equipment	13%	£2,032	-	-	£2,032
Coaching / Therapists	10%	£1,320	-	£450	£1,770
Marketing	7%	£1,200	-	-	£1,200
Public Liability Insurance	3%	£562.08	-	-	£562.08
Transport	8%	£600	-	£600	£1,200
Entertainment	5%	-	-	£810	£810
Arts & Crafts	5%	£60	-	£810	£870
Project Evaluation	29%	-	£5,000	-	£5,000
Total	100%	£7,585.28	£5,000	£4,246.25	£16,831.53

6.3 Conclusion

This section presents information related to the allocation of the Older and Active Programme budget and the efficiency with which it has been managed. There was a slight overspend in the catering; coaching / therapists; arts & crafts; and transport elements of the programme but these additional costs were contributed by the various project partners - this figure totalled £1,478.43. Overall the spend against the budget allocation was effectively managed and didn't stray too much from the expected levels.

Other Qualitative Findings from Consultation

7.1 Introduction

In addition to the Programme Aims and Objectives, Staff within the three key delivery organisations were keen to develop a better understanding of the following areas:

- Quality of Experience
- Social Inclusion
- Programme publicity
- Programme Partnerships
- Access to key services
- Programme Deliverers and staff

7.2 Quality of Experience

Consultation highlighted a range of benefits and quality of life enhancing aspects of the programme. It is evident that participants gained much enjoyment from the various activities incorporated within the programme, as many of them stated the fun and enjoyment they gained from participating. This was further supported by the range of activities offered and the response to those, for example, the provision of lunch negated the need for participants to incur the cost of organising their own and provided some with the only meal they got that day.

The fact that the activities were delivered locally was also a major benefit to participants, and additionally, for those that couldn't get their own way to event venues transport was provided. All consultees indicated that this alleviated some of the barriers they are faced with when attempting to participate in activity.

The educational seminars provided practical assistance to participants, which was of huge benefit. This element of the programme in conjunction with the educational based trips improved the mental as well as the physical health of participants.

7.3 Social Inclusion

The consultees stated that this was the key reason for their participation in the programme stating that they would have very little to do otherwise, with many indicating they would be confined to their homes.

Additionally, the activities provided locally and incorporating the other area groups was of immense benefit to participants as friendships made had continued outside of attending the programme. The activities involving other area groups gave participants the opportunity to meet and interact with others outside of their own communities, which added significant value to the overall good relations aspect of the programme.

7.4 Project Publicity and Development

It was felt that the project didn't receive as much publicity as participants felt it deserved. As such they proposed that further work should be carried out to promote the programme across the Belfast / Greater Belfast and further a field. Participants felt that the benefits gained through their involvement as well as the professional organisation and delivery of the programme should be showcased as an example of best practice and should be promoted as such.

A logical progression from the programme promotion outside of the current geographical delivery areas was the roll out of the programme within other areas of Northern Ireland. There was a strong feeling amongst the participants that this should be the case as the programme could benefit elderly people in other areas. Additionally, participants felt that was merit in exploring the possibility of providing this programme during the summer months as all believed that the break in the delivery was too long.

7.5 Access to Key Services

As a result of the programme residents had identified a need to gain access to key services that were not available in their locality. For example, access to local groceries and food stores to purchase their weekly groceries at a reasonable cost. This was not funded or formed part of the initial programme but was would not have been highlighted had the programme not been available. As a result the South Belfast Highway to Health has now taken the responsibility to provide participants with the opportunity to visit St George's market on a weekly basis.

Consultees also highlighted the educational seminars allowed them to gain specific knowledge and assistance for key services such as fire and personal safety, health related information and medical advice that they would have little or no access to previously.

7.6 Project Deliverers and Staff

The participants felt the project staff and organisers didn't get the credit they deserved as not only were they delivering a much needed programme for this often forgotten target group but they would go over and above what was expected of them in doing so. For example, project staff going that extra mile to ensure the clients participation in the programme. Additionally, the personal interest and enthusiasm shown by project staff gave encouragement to participants, which added significant value to the overall programme.

7.7 Conclusion

The above chapter gives some qualitative information on specific areas of the Older and Active programme that the Programme Staff had specifically requested. The above 5 areas are further discussed in the recommendations section (section 8).

Recommendations for the Development of Older and Active Programme

8.1 Introduction

This section presents a number of recommendations that have been based on the evidence gathered and the interviews and focus group discussions carried out throughout the duration of this project.

8.2.1 Recommendation 1: Include the local Health and Social Services Trust

As the project aims to create Physical, Psychological and Mental benefits it lacked the input from the local Health and Social Services Trust. This type of assistance would have added significant benefit to the overall delivery and additional resources may have been available in the form of funding or equipment. To secure this type of support may also alleviate the uncertainty surrounding the future provision of the programme as it is dependant on Public Funding.

8.2.2 Recommendation 2: The Establishment of Effective Financial Management

The evaluation highlighted the lack of adequate financial management with regard to the programme, in that each individual organisation appeared to manage their individual finances with limited coordinated overarching financial management structures in place. This undoubtedly resulted from each organisation managing their own finances. This could be alleviated with the establishment of an Older and Active bank account and designated account responsibility coordinated through one key person.

8.2.3 Recommendation 3: Further Development of the Practical Educational element of the Programme

The educational seminars and practical advice provided by the statutory agencies involved was of immense benefit to participants and was widely acknowledged as a key benefit to their involvement. This element of the provision could be developed and enhanced to include other relevant organisations that would add further value to an already worthwhile programme. Example organisations may include, DHSSPS, NIHE and Health and Social Services Trust.

8.2.4 Recommendation 4: The Expansion of the Programme to other areas of the City and further a field

Consultation highlighted that the programme delivery and content has provided benefits to participants that have been wide-ranging and hugely worthwhile. As such it is viewed a model of best practice by those involved and it is strongly recommended that the appropriate organisations explore the possibility of developing the programme model throughout the Belfast / Greater Belfast area and further a field. It is thought that this provision is only scratching the surface in terms of its potential to positively impact older people's lives and should this programme model be implemented in other areas it would significantly improve the range and number of participants benefiting from this provision.

It is important to note that the Older and Active delivery group have already made strides to address this with a presentation to the Belfast Community Sports Development Network (BCSDN) partner groups in April 2008, with the aim of discussing its expansion to other areas of the City.

8.2.5 Recommendation 5: Community Capacity Building to enhance and improve delivery

It is recommended that a targeted training programme be devised and implemented focusing on developing the capacity of volunteers to deliver the programme activities. This would not only allow the current Development Officers more time to deliver truly development work but would also encourage local volunteers to deliver local activities thus increasing the feeling of community within the area.

Additionally this may provide important employment opportunities for local people through enhanced employability skills as well as developing capacity within clearly disadvantaged communities in which they suffer high unemployment deprivation.

8.2.6 Recommendation 6: Consistency of Administration Procedures across the three participating areas

This evaluation has highlighted the lack of a coordinated practical administration across the three areas / organisations specifically focusing on the registration, record keeping and monitoring and evaluation procedures. It is clear that each organisation is using their individual procedures, which may differ slightly from the other areas. This has led to difficulty in presenting a coordinated view of the programme. This has also highlighted the lack of important health and safety procedures, for example, appropriate registration records for participants, which would be required for evacuation procedures.

It is thus recommended that participating organisations devise and implement effective policies and procedures addressing these issues, which will be used for the purposes of this programme across the three geographical areas.

8.3 Conclusion

The recommendations listed above were based on comments and evidence that was collected during the research gathering. Based on best practice and experience of Community Sports Development the consultants have identified six clear recommendations that the staff and respective Management Committees as well as Sport NI should consider and address at some stage in the near future.

Conclusion

9.1 Conclusion

This evaluation was carried out throughout the months of April, May and June 2008. As part of the Sport NI award, Castlereagh Borough Council, Greater Village Regeneration Trust and LORAG were required to conduct a detailed evaluation process that would allow an independent organisation to make judgement on their Older and Active programme and suggest a number of recommendations for the development of the programme.

This evaluation report goes through a phased approach detailing the history of the project and the methodology with which the research was conducted.

It is clearly evident the programme provided a valuable source of physical activity and social interaction for those who participated. The range of benefits gained by participants from the programme was extensive and wide ranging, including social inclusion, service provision, increased physical activity levels, greater awareness of health related issues and valuable practical assistance with statutory agencies.

It would not be an understatement to suggest that this programme positively changed people's lives and provided them opportunities that they would not have had previously. This has been demonstrated by the formalisation of older people's groups in two of the areas whose aim is to continue some level of delivery in the area.

It is with this in mind that LORAG, GVRT, Castlereagh Borough Council and Sport NI should consider the recommendations, detailed as part of this evaluation, for the future delivery of any such provision in the three areas and beyond.

Appendix 1

Community, Voluntary Statutory Groups involved:

- The partners involved (GVRT, LORAG and CBC)
- South Belfast Highway to Health
- Engage with Age
- Lagan Water Sports
- ROSPA
- Windsor Women's Centre
- Charter Youth Club
- Cregagh CC
- McMullan's Pharmacy and other Pharmacists
- South Belfast Cultural Society
- Belfast City Council Sports Coaches
- VSB
- Short Strand Community Centre
- PSNI
- Home Safety Departments of Castlereagh and Belfast Councils
- Eastern Group
- Donegall Pass Community Forum
- Markets Development Association
- Action Mental Health
- Sandy Row Community Forum
- Ballybeen Improvement Group
- Tullycarnett Healthy Neighbourhood
- Fire Authority
- Diabetes UK