

Get Active-Stay Active



 **SPORT**
Northern Ireland
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The lead agency for developing sport in Northern Ireland

This Evaluation Report was commissioned by Sport Northern Ireland to provide a final post project review of the Sport in Our Community Programme (2006-2010). The report also makes recommendations which will help to inform future Sport Northern Ireland policy and programme development.



Foreword

Sport Northern Ireland welcomes this review of the impact of its' Sport in Our Community Programme.

In 2006 the Board of Sport Northern Ireland approved an investment of £4.2m from the Sport Northern Ireland Lottery Fund to deliver the Sport in Our Community Programme.

The programme aimed to support and deliver innovative and creative projects resulting in:

- An increased number of physically literate young people;
- Increased participation in sport and physical activity among underrepresented groups – specifically among people with disabilities;
- A competent sporting workforce;
- Professional, accountable and autonomous sporting organisations; and
- Increased efficiency through improved planning and administration.

Successful applicants were required to demonstrate that their project met at least one of the following cross-cutting themes:

1. Development and improvement of physical literacy;
2. Development of opportunities for people with disabilities; and/or
3. Creation of sport or physical activity in areas of high social need for those who have not previously had a sustained interest in sport or physical activity.

Sport Northern Ireland made 34 investment awards to 30 organisations for a maximum of a four-year period.

On the basis of data provided by projects through annual End of Year Reports, 121,171 people participated in the programme. 44% of programme participants were female and 74% under 16 years of age. During the life of the programme the number of people with disabilities participating in the programme increased from 551 in year in 2006-07 to 2,421 in 2009-10 – a fourfold increase and 6% of the overall reported programme participants.

This report includes a number of case studies and personal stories which demonstrate the positive impact of the programme on the host communities and individual participants. The case studies confirm that projects were successful in engaging the right partners, at the right levels to ensure a focus on delivery.

The evaluation highlights that the Sport in Our Community Programme has *'reached out and engaged with young and old, people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups and has been able to provide a wide range of activities to appeal to those who previously did not participate in sport and physical activity'*.

Evidence has also been provided of individuals sustaining participation including *'participants moving on to new sports or to the next level of programme activities'*.

The report identifies 15 recommendations for further consideration, and state:

"Sport Northern Ireland has implemented a community sport programme that is widely seen as an essential ingredient in a complex mix of interventions that will ultimately help towards the goal of improved health and wellbeing of the population. As a contributor to that goal, but as just one player in the field, Sport Northern Ireland needs to keep its messages to the forefront and maintain its strategic linkages. It would be easy for the improvements brought about by the Sport in Our Community Programme to be lost amongst the range of contributions made by other strategic partners. Bringing the broad community sport project to fruition will require emphasising at every opportunity the role that sport and physical activity play".

Dominic Walsh

Chair

Sport Northern Ireland

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Executive Summary

Purpose

This report details the Final Post Project Review of the Sport in Our Community Programme which operated from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2010. The review team undertaking the evaluation were asked to carry out four key tasks:

1. Design and conduct a survey involving Community Sports Development Officers, participants, coaches, teachers and volunteers involved in the Sport in Our Community Programme;
2. Develop and produce a report against the five programme objectives and nine in-depth case studies against the three cross cutting themes, to identify the enablers of success;
3. Produce a review report detailing the information collected and a comprehensive analysis of the data; and
4. Present conclusions and recommendations to inform future Sport Northern Ireland policy and programme development.

Methodology

The material utilised in the review is drawn from desk research, surveys of all projects, key partners as well as interviews and/or focus group sessions with project staff and consultations with participants from case study projects.

Structure

The findings are structured under the following headings:

- Impact;
- Enablers;
- Lessons; and
- Sustainability.

We finish by considering conclusions and recommendations emerging from the evaluation.

Key Findings

The evaluation has demonstrated that the aims of Sport in Our Community, as set out in the programme business case, have been met and that all projects have successfully delivered activities under one or more of the cross-cutting themes:

- a. Development and improvement of physical literacy;
- b. Development of opportunities for people with disabilities; and/or
- c. Creation of sport and physical activity in areas of high social need for those who have not previously had a sustained interest in sport or physical activity.

As highlighted in the case studies in the report and individual success stories the programme has reached out and engaged with young and old, people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups and has been able to provide a wide range of activities to appeal to those who previously did not participate in sport and physical activity. Sustained participation has manifested in several formats including participants moving on to new sports or to the next level of programme activities.

The infrastructure in host communities has also been strengthened as a direct result of the investment programme. A skilled and competent workforce has been developed. New partnerships developed and engagement with the education and health sectors has been highly successful, leaving a lasting legacy in many areas. Facility development has also enabled increased income to projects, adding to their sustainability. The evidence in the evaluation indicates that case study projects were very successful in engaging with the right partners, at the right levels in partner organisations.

The issue of sustainability remained a challenge for funded projects with some unable to identify or secure further funding, despite direction from Sport Northern Ireland on this issue. Success was however noted by nine of the 14 projects who responded to the host survey.

It is in the context of these findings that the following recommendations have been developed:

RECOMMENDATIONS

(Numbers in brackets refer to section / paragraph numbers)

- REC 1.** Projects that grew out of needs analyses or from the expression of local demand proved to be amongst the most sustainable. **It is recommended that community consultation and joint working with communities should lie at the heart of any new community sport projects.** (6/348)
- REC 2.** Utilising schools to engage with target groups was a highly successful model in this programme. Projects illustrated the potential of incorporating fun based activities alongside healthy eating and growing food. 'The Sports 4 Schools' Programmes also provided excellent opportunities to bring high standards of professional coaching to children in schools to supplement existing levels of PE provision. **It is recommended that the case studies be used as models of good practice in school based projects.** (6/334)
- REC 3.** A number of other successful projects worked hard at promoting relationships with partners across a wide range of agencies and sectors. These have resulted in collaborative projects that have been able to draw down a 'cocktail' of funding. Many of these projects were implemented jointly with other agencies, combining sport and physical activity with other complementary interventions. **It is recommended that this joint or multi-agency approach should be encouraged in future community sport interventions, particularly where it is capable of drawing down additional funding and/or bringing complementary expertise to project implementation.** (6/345, 6/346, 7/356-359, 371)

- REC 4.** The evaluation highlighted several examples of successful projects engaging with hard to reach groups – the 'LORAG Dance Team' provided evidence that engaging hard to reach groups in non-traditional sport and physical activities results in regular participation and also draws in family and community to the facility. Waterside's 'New Age Kurling' project was able to successfully work with older women. Others drew in members of minority ethnic groups. A number of projects were also able to engage people with disabilities, these included 'Hands That Talk Tai Chi'; 'Shine'; 'Sports 4 Schools'; 'Boccia' in Craigavon and Coleraine/ Ballymoney 'Wildcats'. **It is recommended that the case studies be used as models of good practice in engaging hard to reach groups.** (6/335-339)
- REC 5.** The case studies highlighted in the evaluation were also able to demonstrate sustained participation amongst participants as well as some participants utilising their participation as a stepping stone onto further activities. For instance a number of the young men in LORAG had moved from participant to coach (5/134-137); in Craigavon and Coleraine / Ballymoney participants have moved on to a wide range of sports. **It is recommended that sustained participation should be a key objective of future community sport programmes and that consideration is given by Sport Northern Ireland on implementing a tracking system that could capture its incidence and extent.** (6/340,354)
- REC 6.** Projects demonstrated that they could achieve positive impacts on healthy eating; whether this was part of a specific component of a programme or simply a message about water being good for dehydration. **It is recommended that all community based sport and physical activity projects should seek, in cooperation with appropriate partners, to incorporate healthy eating messages within their programmes. The projects included in the evaluation can provide a range of methods of how this can be achieved.** (6/341)
- REC 7.** One of the important legacies of the Sport in Our Community Programme is the skills and resources created within communities, groups and schools. This includes not only those involved in delivery of the projects whether that is coaches or teachers but also in participants, who have become volunteers, referees, etc. **It is recommended that projects that have been successful in leaving legacies should be promoted to new projects as examples of good practice. We also recommend that new community sport projects should, where appropriate, aim to leave a legacy of greater community capacity, particularly in building the capacity of local people to grow and maintain projects after initial funding has ceased.** (6/342-343)
- REC 8.** We also recommend that ongoing support/ refresher training should be provided to projects to ensure new skills are reinforced and that those involved in delivery are kept up-to-date with new practice. (6/352)

- REC 9.** The wider legacy in communities also results from engagement in cross community activities and fundraising activities as well as new skills gained by participants, volunteers and staff. It is evident that the impact of the Sport in Our Community Programme extends beyond increasing participation, developing a skilled workforce and establishing sustainable organisations. Social capital has been strengthened, health and well-being improved, life-skills acquired, pathways to new careers begun. **It is recommended that the stories emanating from the programme should be used to promote community sport amongst a wide range of stakeholders and funders to demonstrate its multiple benefits.** (6/353)
- REC 10.** The key enablers of success identified in the survey are working in partnership with others, the availability of funding, the local Community Sports Development Officers, the availability of facilities / equipment and the skills of staff. **It is recommended that for future programme development these key elements are prioritised.** (7/359, 381)
- REC 11.** The level of mainstreaming of programme activity remains low. In terms of sustainability there are issues around both identifying and accessing funding beyond the life of the programme. **It is recommended that future programmes develop a focussed mainstreaming strategy which incorporates a sustainability and future funding component. It is also recommended that host organisations at a senior level should take responsibility for sustainability.** (7/362, 383)
- REC 12.** Programme success is clear in terms of providing more sport and physical activity opportunities in areas of high social deprivation; improvements in participants' physical ability and improved health and well-being; increased participation amongst a range of underrepresented groups; and increased participant confidence. However elements of the programme for which there is less evidence include changes in diet and nutrition, extended family involvement in physical activity and reductions in alcohol consumption. **It is recommended that future programmes consider whether these under-reported elements remain core elements of activity and / or whether appropriate monitoring systems are in place.** (7/364-366, 387-388)
- REC 13.** Projects stated that the key objectives and themes focussed on were increasing the number of physically literate young people and increasing participation in underrepresented groups. No respondents reported a change in priorities over the course of the programme. **It is therefore recommended that the objectives and themes from this programme remain central to future programme development.** (7/378, 379)
- REC 14.** **It is recommended that the development of activities for new projects should be from a strong base of evidence of need. In doing so projects can target underrepresented groups and deliver activities which will entice them to become involved. Projects should be mindful of the high levels of poverty in Northern Ireland and that access to activities is not prohibited by cost.** (6/348, 350)
- REC 15.** Case study projects have demonstrated that income generation is possible for community based projects. 'Wildcats' and 'LORAG' are two key examples of this. Whilst this is not possible for all projects it is recommended that the models used by the two case studies can be used to illustrate the potential for appropriate current / new projects. (6/351)

Section 1

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

1. FKB Consulting and Dennis McCoy Consulting were appointed in May 2010 to conduct a Final Impact Review of Sport Northern Ireland's Investment in the Sport in Our Community Programme from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2010.
2. Sport Northern Ireland is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the Department for 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".
3. Sport Northern Ireland's vision as the lead organisation for the development of sport in Northern Ireland is of "a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport which contributes to a peaceful, fair and prosperous society."
4. In practice this means Sport Northern Ireland designing and implementing programmes and partnerships that will contribute to the following strategic objectives:
 - Increased participation in sport and physical activity;
 - Improved sporting performances; and
 - Improved efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of sport.
5. Sport Northern Ireland's business plan is designed to provide people, especially young people and underrepresented groups, with pathways and options for lifelong sporting and personal development.
6. Sport Northern Ireland believes that through targeted investment real progress can be made in developing sport and physical recreation in communities. One of the programmes that have been a key part of Sport Northern Ireland's investment is the Sport in our Community Programme.

As detailed in the terms of reference the overall aim of the study is to review the impact and effectiveness of the Sport in Our Community Programme since 1 April 2006. The project aims fall into four broad categories:

- Design and conduct a survey involving Community Sports Development Officers, participants, coaches, teachers and volunteers involved in the Sport in Our Community Programme;
 - Develop and produce a report against the five programme objectives and nine in-depth case studies against the three cross cutting themes, which will identify the enablers of success;
 - Produce a review report detailing the information collected and a comprehensive analysis of the data; and
 - Present conclusions and recommendations for future Sport Northern Ireland policies and programmes.
7. The report is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the methodology used in the evaluation. Section 3 considers the strategic and policy context under which it developed and was implemented. Section 4 details the development and implementation of the programme, with Section 5 detailing the case studies. An overview of the individual projects is presented in Section 6. Section 7 moves on to reflect upon the views of those consulted through the evaluation. Section 8 and 9 present the conclusions and recommendations.

Section 2

METHODOLOGY

8. At the outset of the project we conducted a review of available documentation; this formed the starting point of the desk research. Material on projects such as the application for funding, letter of offer and monitoring data was analysed. This assisted the evaluation team to gain a fuller understanding of the assignment and the context within which it operated.
9. In addition to this we also reviewed relevant strategic documents:
 - Sport Northern Ireland Corporate Plan (2005-08 and 2008-11) and Business Plan (2008-09);
 - 'Sport Matters' – the Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-19;
 - Sport in Our Community Programme Guidance Notes and Application Form; and
 - Sport in Our Community Mid Term Impact Report and Evaluation Report.
10. Moving on to the next stage of evaluation we then consulted with key individuals who were asked to provide their insight into the programme and the context within which it operates.
11. Sport Northern Ireland staff who were consulted at appropriate stages of the assignment comprised:
 - Policy, Planning and Research manager;
 - Participation Manager;
 - Development Officer – Community Sport;
 - Development Officer – Physical Literacy and Play; and
 - Development Assistant – Community Sport.
12. As directed in the terms of reference we conducted case studies of a number of projects. These sessions focused on project specific information, with the starting point being 'what did the project set out to deliver' and 'what has actually been delivered over the course of the funding period'. We were also asked to consider each project's plan for sustainability.
13. The case studies were selected by Sport Northern Ireland staff using criteria under the thematic headings of targeting areas of high social need, developing sporting opportunities for people with a disability and supporting the development of physical literacy. The projects selected included:

Table 1: Case Study projects

Targeting High Social Need
1. Derry City Council – Waterside Neighbourhood Renewal Area
2. Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (including a focus on facility development at Shaftesbury Recreation Centre)
3. Larne Borough Council
4. North Belfast Play Forum
Developing Opportunities for People with a Disability
5. Craigavon Borough Council – Active Inclusion
6. Derry Healthy Cities
Supporting the Development of Physical Literacy
7. North Eastern, South Eastern and Southern Education and Library Boards – Physical Literacy Coordinators
8. Coleraine Borough Council and Ballymoney Borough Council – Wildcats Activ8 Multi-Skills Clubs
9. PlayBoard ¹

14. We also consulted with participants from each case study. The method for engaging with participants was tailored to meet their needs including focus groups and one-to-one interviews.
15. An electronic survey was also conducted with line managers for each funded project and external stakeholders / partners. This was issued in August 2010 (see appendix 2 for survey).
16. In the analysis and reporting we assessed the impact of the programme with regard to a number of key questions framed around the following issues, as noted in the terms of reference:
- Evidence as to the increase in numbers of physically literate people;
 - Evidence of increased participation in sport and physical activity among underrepresented groups; and specifically among people with disabilities;
 - Evidence of a strengthened infrastructure within applicant organisations e.g. in relation to skilled staff and the manner in which organisations operate and are managed in a professional and accountable manner;
 - Evidence of engagement with Sport Northern Ireland Partners / Stakeholders;
 - The contribution to increasing participation amongst underrepresented groups (for example women, older people and ethnic minorities); and
 - The contribution to sport and physical activity in areas of high social deprivation particularly for people who have little history of such participation.

¹ Due to extensive external evaluation already completed we did not conduct any primary research for this project.

Section 3

POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

17. In this section of the report we present a brief overview of the policy and strategy context within which the Sport in Our Community Programme was developed and delivered. As the programme was developed in 2005 and implemented from 2006 to 2010 we have focused on relevant policy and strategy for the period 2005-10.
18. The key document relating to sport in Northern Ireland, Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009-19², was launched by DCAL, in partnership Sport Northern Ireland. It outlines the Government's commitment to sport and physical recreation. *'The Strategy established the key priorities for the future development of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland and informs the direction of future investment³'* underpinning three areas: participation, performance and places. The strategy underpins the development of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland and highlights the need for focussed cross departmental action in relation to initiatives on health, education, the economy and the development of communities.
19. The Strategy proposes a vision of *'a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport'* to be realised through a range of commitments from Government working through Sport Northern Ireland and in partnership with a variety of public, private, sporting and community organisations. It reiterates that the development of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland needs to be cognisant of recent significant advances in sports development thinking. In particular the strategy articulates the Lifelong Learning in Sport and Physical Activity (LISPA) conceptual framework. A key theme in the Strategy is *'the cost of doing nothing'*. Making use of a wide evidence base, the Strategy outlines the impact of increasing levels of obesity and low levels of physical activity.
20. The core strategy which has informed programmes emanating from the Department of Health is Investing for Health (IFH)⁴, the cross-departmental public health strategy, introduced in 2002, which aimed to tackle the wide range of complex and inter-related factors that can impact on the health of the population. The Strategy contained a framework for action based on multi-sectoral partnership working amongst Departments, public bodies, local communities, voluntary bodies, city and district councils and social partners. The Strategy aims to improve life expectancy across the population and to reduce health inequalities with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged in Northern Ireland. The evidence produced in the report is clear and established a direct correlation between poverty, social disadvantage and health:

'Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to achieve the educational qualifications which are the key to improving their social status. People from lower social classes often live and work in more difficult conditions and suffer from poorer mental health⁵.

² Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and Sport Northern Ireland, 'Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009 – 2019'

³ http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/sport/sport_matters.htm

⁴ Investing for Health, 2002 – present and update reports

⁵ Investing for Health, 2002, P6

- 21.** Within the broader health agenda the Fit Futures Task Force (2006)⁶, which was set up to review, inter alia, the factors that impact on the levels of overweight and obesity, recommended that:

'Government Departments and agencies should establish a common vision for physical activity and its role in delivering government objectives. This vision should include agreed targets to increase participation in quality physical activity, including sport and leisure, active play and active travel and improve levels of physical skills among children and young people'.
- 22.** In 2008 the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety established the Obesity Prevention Steering Group (OPSG) to oversee the implementation of Fit Futures and to develop an overarching obesity strategic framework for preventing obesity in the rest of the population. The Steering Group will oversee the work of the Fit Futures Implementation Plan and develop a new Obesity Prevention Framework for Northern Ireland 2011-21 - 'A Fitter Future For All'. This Framework was developed to incorporate all the population of Northern Ireland and will contain short, medium and long term outcomes which will help tackle overweight and obesity throughout the life-course.
- 23.** The OPSG is expanding the Fit Futures recommendations to take into consideration the whole 'life course'. Individual areas such as 'Food and Nutrition' and 'Physical Activity' will also be taken forward by four Advisory Groups in which various health and child-related organisations are members. The engagements highlighted that children and young people are clearly able to identify and suggest approaches and interventions which they believe could be more effective in encouraging and supporting healthy eating and active living.
- 24.** In tandem with a recognition that a high standard of education for all children and young people helps build confidence and enrich lives, Government has recognised the need to ensure an effective match between the skill-sets of employees and the requirements of employers. Within an educational environment there is evidence to suggest that participation in sport and physical recreation contributes to improved academic performance and perceived self-esteem in children and can be an effective vehicle for re-engaging marginalised young people⁷.
- 25.** The role of physical activity in education is also recognised in the revised curriculum⁸ in schools which was developed to ensure that each child is provided with an education experience through which they learn skills for both life and work, an experience in which they enjoy learning and see it as relevant. The revised curriculum enables teachers to tailor what they teach to suit the needs of their pupils. This enables a better preparation of young people for their future through a greater emphasis on developing skills through the new area of 'Learning for Life and Work'. The compulsory elements of the revised curriculum include the key learning areas of citizenship and physical activity.

⁶ <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/ifh-fitfutures.pdf> - Page 91

⁷ Investing for Health, December 2005, 'Fit Futures: Focus on Food, Activity and Young People' Anecdotal evidence from the evaluation by FKB Consulting June 2008 of Derry City Council's School Yoga Programme funded by Sport Northern Ireland; Sport Northern Ireland, February 2008 'Improving Physical Literacy' <http://www.sportni.net/documents/ImprovingPhysicalLiteracy.pdf> Sibley, B A and Etnier, J L 'The relationship between physical activity and cognition in children: a meta-analysis.' Paediatric Exercise Science, 2003, 15, 243-256. (Source: Sport England Value of Sport Monitor)

⁸ <http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/>

26. The commitment to engage with children and young people is further reflected in the 10 year strategy for Children and Young people, Making it R World 2⁹. The Strategy commits to actions which will improve the play environment for children and provide access to play opportunities that will support children to realise their full potential. Complementing the strategy is a Play and Leisure Policy Statement, which aims to improve play and leisure provision for all children and young people aged 0-18 years¹⁰.
27. In the broader health context, following the Review of Public Administration (RPA), the Public Health Agency¹¹ was established in April 2009. It has responsibility for: health protection; health and social well-being improvement, including addressing existing health inequalities; public health support to commissioning and Health and Social Care research. As a result it incorporates responsibilities previously carried out by Health and Social Boards, Health Action Zones and the Health Promotion Agency. The new agency is expected to drive the public health and social well-being agenda, not just with health and social care but with local government, other statutory organisations and community and voluntary sectors.
28. The second key impact of RPA of note is the reorganisation of local government,¹² and as well as the proposals to reduce the number of councils from 26 to 11, RPA called for closer working relationships between councils and other public bodies including Sport Northern Ireland. For Sport Northern Ireland the key driver for this will be the new role of councils to target well-being, providing opportunities for Sport Northern Ireland's investments to be aligned to council's work programmes and other stakeholders through community planning. It is also important to point out that the areas of operation in certain projects within the Sport in Our Community Programme are co-terminus with Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, providing opportunities to link with such programmes and maximise the benefits of funding.
29. An additional strategic area of relevance in this context is a strategy published by the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) entitled Lifetime Opportunities (2006) which addresses the issues of poverty and social exclusion. In accepting that government policy should focus on the different priority needs at different times in peoples' lives, Lifetime opportunities defines specific goals and targets for four key stages in life: Early years (0-4); Children and young people (5-16); Working age adults and older citizens.
30. A related strategy is Ageing in an Inclusive Society: A Strategy for Promoting the Social Inclusion of Older People¹³. The Vision in the Older People's Strategy is:

'To ensure that age related policies and practices create an enabling environment, which offers everyone the opportunity to make informed choices so that they may pursue healthy, active and positive ageing.'

⁹ OFMDFM (2004) Making It R World 2. <http://www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/strategy.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/index/play-and-leisure-policy.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>

¹² The Review of Public Administration (RPA) was put on hold after an emergency Executive meeting on 14 June 2010 failed to agree a way forward. Whilst the changes have been delayed to 2015 Sport Northern Ireland are still working on the 11b model for the investment of the Active Communities Programme.

¹³ OFMDFM,2005, 'Older Peoples Strategy', 'Ageing in an Inclusive Society'

31. The Strategy was accompanied by action plans, key aspects of which included an Older Advisory People's Panel which includes representatives of older people, key voluntary and community organisations and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The Strategy also outlined the role of a Champion for Older People to have a strategic responsibility for co-ordinating actions to improve the lives of older people in Northern Ireland. A review of the first year of the strategy acknowledged the role of Sport Northern Ireland in supporting the development of sport for 'All Older People' module in conjunction with Coaching Northern Ireland, in order to extend the development of training opportunities in sport and physical activity for older people as well as noting the variety of initiatives aimed at increasing physical activity levels of older people¹⁴.
32. Aside from the health and well-being sectors sport and physical activity is also receiving recognition in relation to areas such as community safety. The recent consultation paper (2009) on the proposed community safety strategy for Northern Ireland¹⁵ noted that sport could be used as part of a mentoring programme for young people defined as 'at risk'. Indeed there are some examples of sport being used as part of diversionary programmes, particularly at times of heightened community tension¹⁶.

Key Research

33. A key priority during the development of Sport in Our Community was 'the obesity epidemic'. In Northern Ireland, and the UK as a whole, there has been a significant increase¹⁷ in reported figures, with data from the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) indicating that people are becoming more sedentary¹⁸.
34. Research carried out by DCAL suggests that increasingly busy lifestyles and the ageing nature of the population are key barriers to participation¹⁹. The economic barriers to participation in sport and physical activity are clearly identified in a study by Barnardos on childhood poverty²⁰. Research by DCAL also points to the impact of the recession on sport participation, with 7% of respondents stating that they participated in sports activities or used sports facilities that have an associated financial cost less in the last year than the previous 12 months.²¹ Horgan and Monteith (2009) reported that levels of persistent poverty in Northern Ireland (21 percent before housing costs) is double that in Great Britain (9 percent). Additionally the Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (NIHPS) figures found that 48 percent of children in Northern Ireland were living in poverty at some time over the four-year period (before housing costs) and 21 percent were in poverty for either three or four of the years ('persistent poverty'). As noted in the table below a number of groups remain underrepresented in sport and physical activity participation including females, older people and those with a limiting/ longstanding illness.

¹⁴ <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/ageingreport-2.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.communitysafetyni.gov.uk/documents/TOGETHERSTRONGER.SAFER.PDF>

¹⁶ <http://www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk/news/100/>

¹⁷ <http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProjects/Obesity/Obesity.asp>

¹⁸ Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Inquiry into Obesity http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/health/2007mandate/reports/report10_09_10R_.htm

¹⁹ http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/sports_bulletin_final-2.pdf

²⁰ DCAL (2003), 'Barriers to Participation in Culture, Arts and Leisure'

²¹ http://www.barnardos.org.uk/it_doesnt_happen_here_ni-2.pdf

²¹ http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/economic_downturn_-_omnibus_may_2009_-_report_results_-_final-6.pdf

Table 2: Participation in any sport during last 12 months (2008/9)²²

Profile of respondent	% of respondents participating	Base number of respondents
All respondents	45	3138
Male	54	1291
Female	39	1847
Aged 16-24	68	276
Aged 25-34	64	482
Aged 35-44	57	613
Aged 45-54	48	528
Aged 55-64	34	502
Aged 65+	19	737
Catholic	43	1248
Protestant	46	1698
Other religion/none	50	168
Has limiting longstanding illness	22	813
Does not have limiting longstanding illness	53	2324

The research outlined above informed both the development of the Sport in Our Community Programme and its implementation. A summary of all key strategic publications and research it outlined below:

²² Source: http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/sports_bulletin_final-2.pdf

Table 3: Summary of Key Strategies and Research

Strategy / Policy Area	Key Theme / Focus
'Sport Matters': The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009-19	The Strategy established the key priorities for the future development of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland and informs the direction of future investment underpinning three areas: participation, performance and places.
Investing for Health (IFH)	The evidence produced in the report established a direct correlation between poverty, social disadvantage and health.
Fit Futures Task Force	Aimed to establish a vision which would include 'agreed targets to increase participation in quality physical activity, including sport and leisure, active play and active travel and improve levels of physical skills among children and young people'.
Obesity Prevention Steering Group	To oversee the implementation of Fit Futures and to develop an overarching obesity strategic framework for preventing obesity in the rest of the population. The Steering Group will oversee the work of the Fit Futures Implementation Plan and develop a new Obesity Prevention Framework for Northern Ireland 2011-21 - 'A Fitter Future For All'.
Revised Curriculum	The revised curriculum enables teachers to tailor what they teach to suit the needs of their pupils. This enables a better preparation of young people for their future through a greater emphasis on developing skills through the new area of 'Learning for Life and Work'. The compulsory elements of the revised curriculum include the key learning areas of citizenship and physical activity.
Making it R World 2	The Strategy commits to actions which will improve the play environment for children and provide access to play opportunities that will support children to realise their full potential. Complementing the strategy is a Play and Leisure Policy Statement, which aims to improve play and leisure provision for all children and young people aged 0-18 years.
Public Health Agency	Has responsibility for health protection; health and social well-being improvement, including addressing existing health inequalities; public health support to commissioning and Health and Social Care research. The agency is expected to drive the public health and social well-being agenda.
Review of Public Administration	RPA called for closer working relationships between councils and other public bodies including Sport Northern Ireland. For Sport Northern Ireland the key driver for this will be the new role of councils to target well-being, providing opportunities for Sport Northern Ireland's investments to be aligned to council's work programmes and other stakeholders through community planning. There is also an important link between the Sport in Our Community Programme areas and Neighbourhood Renewal areas.
Lifetime Opportunities	Addresses the issues of poverty and social exclusion. Lifetime Opportunities defines specific goals and targets for four key stages in life: Early years (0-4); Children and young people (5-16); Working age adults and older citizens.

Table 3 continued

Strategy / Policy Area	Key Theme / Focus
Ageing in an Inclusive Society: A Strategy for Promoting the Social Inclusion of Older People	‘To ensure that age related policies and practices create an enabling environment, which offers everyone the opportunity to make informed choices so that they may pursue healthy, active and positive ageing.’ A review of the strategy acknowledged the role of Sport Northern Ireland in supporting the development of a sport for “All Older People” module in conjunction with Coaching Northern Ireland, in order to extend the development of training opportunities in sport and physical activity for older people as well as noting the variety of initiatives aimed at increasing physical activity levels of older people.
Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, ‘Barriers to Participation in Culture, Arts and Leisure’	Noted that increasingly busy lifestyles and the ageing nature of the population are key barriers to participation.
Northern Ireland Office Community Safety Unit ‘Together. Stronger. Safer. Community Safety in Northern Ireland: A Consultation Paper’	Identified the value of sport as part of a mentoring programme for young people defined as ‘at risk’, including examples of sport being used as part of diversionary programmes, particularly at times of heightened community tension.
Barnardos Northern Ireland, ‘It Doesn’t Happen Here, The Reality of Child Poverty in Northern Ireland’	There are currently 100,000 children living in officially defined levels of poverty in communities across Northern Ireland with a further group living in severe poverty; around 44,000 children and young people will be missing out on regular items that the rest of the community see as essential and poverty will have a particularly devastating effect on them.
Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, ‘Cultural and leisure activities and events: Impact of the economic downturn on participation and attendance’	Noted the impact of the recession on sport participation, with 7% of respondents stating that they participated in sports activities or used sports facilities that have an associated financial cost less in the last year than the previous 12 months.
Joseph Rowntree Foundation ‘What Can We Do to Tackle Child Poverty’	The level of persistent poverty in Northern Ireland (21 percent before housing costs) is double that in Great Britain (9 percent). Additionally the Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (NIHPS) figures found that 48 percent of children in Northern Ireland were living in poverty at some time over the four-year period (before housing costs) and 21 percent were in poverty for either three or four of the years (‘persistent poverty’).
Government Office for Science, ‘Foresight: Tackling Obesities, Future Choices-Project Report’	Analysis by the government’s Foresight programme shows that over half of the UK adult population could be obese by 2050. The NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity are projected to double to £10 billion per year by 2050. The wider costs to society and business are estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year (at today’s prices).

Sport Northern Ireland

In this section we consider publications produced by Sport Northern Ireland.

35. The Sport Northern Ireland Corporate Plan 2005-2008 and Business Plan set out Sport Northern Ireland's key principles, approaches and priorities within which community sport developed. Sport Northern Ireland's corporate vision is '*A culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport which contributes to a peaceful, fair and prosperous society*'.
36. The Corporate Plan (2008-11) considers both the strategic context and the influences on Sport Northern Ireland's investment in sport, which incorporates the broader government agenda in relation to public health. It notes that '*sport plays a crucial role in improving health, education and confidence*'.
37. In the Corporate Plan 2008-11 Sport Northern Ireland recognises that with limited financial resources it may not be able to impact on the broader priorities within the Programme for Government but it can impact through sport on contributing to the themes and priorities of the programme. It is also noted that through Building a Better Future: Budget 2008-11 and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-18 a total of £112.3m for DCAL is highlighted, as are a number of Public Service Agreements which DCAL has in relation to sport.
38. The Corporate Plan 2008-2011 complements DCAL's strategic objectives:
 - To help ensure the success of the Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation;
 - To realise benefits for Northern Ireland from 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and ensure a sustainable legacy;
 - To help build a modern and efficient infrastructure; and
 - To deliver DCAL related reforms intended by the Review of Public Administration.
39. Sport Northern Ireland has also produced 'Improving Physical Literacy²³' which highlights evidence that physical literacy programmes have outcomes beyond the physical, including personal, social and cognitive. Improving Physical Literacy suggests that, whilst empirical correlations are difficult to establish, there is evidence which suggests that in the case of young children, physical literacy programmes can lead to high self-esteem, high levels of confidence, loyalty to school and teachers, positive reinforcement, parental support and good health, leading in turn to academic achievement.

Community Sport

40. The development of the community sport policy and the associated programmes of Community Sport and Sport in Our Community grew out of recognition by Sport Northern Ireland that targeted work was needed to engage with communities in areas where sports participation was low.
41. The Community Sport Programme was first piloted between 2003-2005, followed by the Community Sport Programme (2005-2008) which 'specifically aimed to improve the health and well-being of those communities most at risk of low levels of participation in sport and physical recreation.²⁴' The Sport in Our Community Programme was launched in 2006 and ran for four years, funded through the Sport Northern Ireland Lottery fund to the value of £4.2 million.

²³ Sport Northern Ireland, February 2008, 'Improving Physical Literacy' <http://www.sportni.net/documents/ImprovingPhysicalLiteracy.pdf>

²⁴ Sport Northern Ireland, December 2008, 'Community Sport Programme – Impact Review'

- 42.** The Sport in Our Community Investment Programme Report²⁵, reported the contribution made by the projects at the mid term stage, towards both the achievement of Sport Northern Ireland's core business objectives, and other key governmental targets including tackling obesity and addressing other public health issues, increasing social capital, alleviating community tension and reducing crime. Highlights of the report include the Belfast Mobile Sports Team, a partnership of projects working across Belfast, which ran a summer Mobile Sports Teams Programme delivered to over 2,250 young people aged eight to 16 years old. The programme delivered a structured healthy living and multi-sport coaching programme at youth and community centres across Belfast during a period of heightened tensions.
- 43.** The impact reviews of revenue investment programmes, including Investing in Sport Programme (2003-06), Community Sport Programme (2005-08), and Sport in Our Community Investment Programme (2006-10), allied to the new Sport Strategy, were used to inform and facilitate the consultation exercise 'Increasing Participation – Priorities for Future Revenue Investment' in 2009. The consultation exercise focussed on the implementation of a policy for increasing sustained participation through further developing effective working partnerships with Sport Northern Ireland's key stakeholders. Sport Northern Ireland identified seven key areas, ranging from Themes for Investment, to the Application and Award Process, which were outlined in the Consultation Guidance Note, and designed to assist Sport Northern Ireland to develop its investment priorities for increasing sustained participation.
- 44.** The Active People: Healthy Communities²⁶ report identified a range of impacts from the two programmes, including:
- Social e.g. changes in socialisation, increases in social community participation and a widening of social and support networks;
 - Psychological e.g. improved body image, a decrease in feelings of social isolation, increased confidence and increased self-esteem;
 - Physical e.g. weight loss, decreased blood pressure, improved strength, fitness and stamina, and increased mobility; and
 - Behavioural e.g. healthy eating, taking exercise regularly, engaging in a wider range of social activities because of increased fitness and improved self-esteem.
- 45.** The table below outlines reflections from two previous evaluations as an illustration of the lessons learned from the development of community sport since 2003. The lessons are drawn from the pilot Community Sport Programme (2003-2005)²⁷ and the Impact Evaluation of The Sport in Our Community Programme completed in 2009²⁸.

²⁵ <http://www.sportni.net/Publications/documents/SportinOurCommunityfinal.pdf>

²⁶ Sport Northern Ireland, '2010, Active People: Healthy Communities – The impact of Community Sport Investment on Public Health'

²⁷ <http://www.sportni.net/NR/rdonlyres/826C04D1-D71D-4DC7-9395-EBFDDC2C5D01/0/PilotCommunitySportProgrammeFinalEvaluation.pdf>

²⁸ FKB Consulting, 2009, Impact Evaluation of Sport Northern Ireland's Sport in Our Community Programme

Table 4: Key Learnings from Previous Programmes

Pilot Community Sport	SOC Mid Term
Programmes should have clear, realistic and achievable objectives with an emphasis on quality not quantity.	Programme aims were devised to meet overarching themes for Sport Northern Ireland and were drawn up in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.
Finding the right approach – an emphasis on ‘soft’ approaches is needed to engage with hard to reach groups.	This soft approach was embedded into the practice of SOC projects, building on good practice and experience of the CSDOs.
Increasing the duration of funding – due to delays in recruiting staff, a three-year programme resulted in 19 to 27 months of actual delivery; lead in time to develop relationships was thus limited.	The SOC Programme funding was for a period of four years. In addition as a number of projects were also funded through the CSP, projects were able to build upon partnerships and relationships with target communities to ensure successful delivery.
Effective ‘bolt in’ monitoring and evaluation – the monitoring and evaluation system was bolted on to the programme rather than developed within it.	Monitoring and evaluation remained an issue for some projects, with problems with IT hindering their views of the usefulness of the system. Some felt the system was not capable of demonstrating project success and quality of delivery. The system did however simplify the monitoring details collected from participants.
Needs assessment was seen as key to successful project outcomes, delivering what the community wants not a pre-designed programme.	Delivery of the SOC Programme was firmly embedded within a community development perspective, focusing on needs assessment.
CSDO / capacity – the success of the programme was conditional upon the commitment of CSDO’s and support they were given.	<p>The continuity of staff in a number of projects from previous funding programmes enabled successful development of projects. The significant commitment of project staff to the work was evident.</p> <p>A wide range of training sessions were provided to project staff to build on their skills base.</p>
An holistic / integrated approach was needed in working with stakeholders on common / related goals.	Partnership working became a key feature of the SOC programme, with projects emphasising these were enablers of success. The time invested in the partnerships was noted as being considerable and very fruitful.
Adequate guidance and direction – non challenge element of funding was problematic, resulting in lack of buy-in amongst some host organisations.	The challenge element to project funding was introduced. This largely ensured buy-in from host organisations although some problems were noted. It was noted that some host organisations needed to pay further attention to the sustainability of projects.
Emphasis on building infrastructure for disability sports was needed.	It was recognised that a more strategic approach to improving disability provision should be explored. Sport Northern Ireland’s strategic approach is through the implementation of its Disability Mainstreaming Policy which is supported through the investment in DSNI.

Lottery Programmes

46. The key funding source for Sport in Our Community is through Sport Northern Ireland's Lottery Fund. There is no 'stand alone' strategy document for the distribution of Lottery funding, with Lottery funded programmes contributing to Sport Northern Ireland's corporate outcomes.
47. Additionally, Sport Northern Ireland's Lottery funding is distributed in accordance with the National Lottery Distribution Policy (2002) issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport:
 - Distributed to meet national and local priorities;
 - Invested in addition to, rather than replacing, existing programmes and resources being delivered through sporting partners including local government, private sector and voluntary sector;
 - Available to all who wish to participate, across Northern Ireland;
 - Used to target investment where there is a particular need, such as areas of high social need and underrepresented groups;
 - Supportive of safe sport for all and used to promote ethical and equitable sport; and
 - Exploited to make sure that the benefits of Lottery investment are sustainable.

Summary

48. In this section of the report we have considered the strategic and policy context in relation to community sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland both from Sport Northern Ireland's perspective and from the perspective of central government. The review of strategic, research and policy documents all highlight the need for a community based sport programme. In the strategic and policy context the interconnectedness of sport and physical activity has been demonstrated. Sport is ever more related to the government agenda in relation to health and well-being with particular regard to obesity and to older people, education and social exclusion, with particular regard to areas of deprivation and disability.
49. It is from within this wider strategic context that Sport Northern Ireland developed and implemented the Sport in our Community Programme, described in detail in the following pages.

Section 4

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 50.** In considering the development and implementation of the Sport in Our Community Programme we have utilised the following sources of information:
- Proposals for Funding Community Sport Beyond 2006 (Sport Northern Ireland Board Paper);
 - Sport in Our Community Programme Guidance Notes and Application Form;
 - Mid term evaluation report;
 - The Mid Term Impact Report; and
 - End of Year Monitoring reports.
- 51.** This information was also supplemented by consultations with Sport Northern Ireland staff and stakeholders where relevant.

Project Development

- 52.** The Sport in Our Community Programme grew out of learning gained from previous programmes and was further informed by several months of consultation with the broad sporting community. The new programme was devised with recognition of the changes within the strategic environment. These changes included:
- Recognition of the role of the third sector in delivering strategic objectives;
 - The need for long-term, outcome focused funding programmes;
 - The need for investment in the third sector to help modernise it;
 - The Review of Public Administration with its focus on accountability, partnership, efficiency and effectiveness;
 - Growing public concern over the rise in obesity levels;
 - The development of the long-term athlete development model; and
 - The need to work towards mainstreaming provision for disability sport.
- 53.** Learning gained from previous programmes included the need for:
- Investment in the sporting workforce;
 - Investment in volunteers;
 - Investment in the infrastructure of organisations with regard to programme and staff management;
 - SMART targets to be linked to areas of targeting social need and underrepresented groups;
 - A robust and consistent monitoring and evaluation framework ; and
 - Programme costs to compliment investment in posts.

- 54.** The consultation process for the new programme entailed face-to-face meetings with and written submission from, a range of interested stakeholders including:
- Lisburn City Council;
 - Derry City Council;
 - Armagh and District City Council;
 - Craigavon Borough Council;
 - North East Area Partnership;
 - NI Sport – Sports Development Network;
 - Volunteer Development Agency;
 - Creggan Country Park;
 - Disability Sports Northern Ireland;
 - East Belfast Partnership Board;
 - Belfast Community Sports Development Network; and
 - PlayBoard NI.
- 55.** On the basis of the strategic review, a review of previous programmes and consultation with key stakeholders Sport Northern Ireland drew up a series of proposals, which were then submitted to the Sport Northern Ireland Development Committee for consideration. The committee approved the proposals and agreed the overall aim of the new investment programme, which was to support and deliver innovative and creative projects resulting in:
- An increased number of physically literate young people;
 - Increased participation in sport and physical activity among underrepresented groups and specifically among people with disabilities;
 - A competent sporting workforce;
 - Professional, accountable and autonomous sporting organisations; and
 - An increased efficiency through improved planning and administration.
- 56.** A total investment of £3.6m was allocated to Sport Northern Ireland’s Lottery Fund to deliver the Sport in Our Community Investment Programme from 1 April 2006-31 March 2010. As a result of a number of award uplifts, this figure increased to £4.2m.
- 57.** Once the new investment programme was approved staff then drew-up guidance notes, an application form and details of the assessment process.

Application Stage

- 58.** The application form identified the outcomes and themes of the Sport In Our Community Programme, with successful applicants to the programme having to demonstrate that their project met at least one of the following three cross-cutting themes:
1. Development and improvement of physical literacy;
 2. Development of opportunities for people with disabilities; and/or
 3. Creation of sport or physical activity in areas of high social need for those who have not previously had a sustained interest in sport or physical activity.

59. Applicants were also required to demonstrate an appropriate level of project pre-planning in relation to:

- Potential beneficiaries;
- Participant typologies;
- A consultation programme;
- Results of consultation;
- Need assessment for project;
- A breakdown of project outcomes, targets, milestones and timescale;
- Monitoring and evaluation methodology;
- Detailed information of project personnel;
- Partnerships and the roles partners perform; and
- Financial details including a sustainability plan.

60. The accompanying Guidance Notes indicated that applicants could be either a statutory organisation or a voluntary/community umbrella organisation that can demonstrate it represents the interests of a significant number of groups e.g. local community forum, local sports advisory councils'. Individual clubs and schools were not eligible to apply. Organisations developing sport specific projects were advised to contact the appropriate governing body for advice and guidance.

61. No upper limit was set for funding though a lower limit of £5,000 was given. The programme focus was to be on increasing participation amongst underrepresented groups and three main types of activity (not all had to be covered by applicants) were outlined as appropriate, as noted in the cross cutting themes outlined above.

62. Projects could apply for funding for up to four years between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2010 to cover revenue costs, start up and running costs, materials and small items of capital equipment. The guidance notes provided further detail as to the nature and extent of partnership working projects were expected to demonstrate; highlighted Sport Northern Ireland's commitment to sports equity and clarified the requirements of project sustainability plans. Additional guidance was given on the application and assessment process including the following timeline:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| • Investment Fund opened | 4 November 2005 |
| • Closing date for completed application | 16 December 2005 |
| • Council decision | 7 February 2006 |
| • Written notification | 17 February 2006 |

63. Finally, guidance for potentially successful and unsuccessful applicants was given, including a brief overview of Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. Appendices include examples of projects, a consultation checklist, a partnership agreement and development plans.

Implementation

- 64.** Following the open application and assessment process, thirty four investment awards were made to thirty organisations for a maximum of a four year period to 31 March 2010. Negotiations with some projects as to budgetary details and targets were carried out in advance of letters of offers being issued. Twenty-three applications were rejected based on the criteria set out in the guidance documents.
- 65.** Eleven of the thirty four investments were awarded to projects funded through Sport Northern Ireland's Community Sport Programme (2005-08), which commenced during the third year (2008-09) of the Sport in Our Community Programme. The table overleaf provides an overview of each of the successful applicants.

Table 5: Funded Projects

Boys' Brigade (Belfast Battalion)	The Boys Brigade is a uniformed organisation for boys aged six-18.
Brownlow Campus Sports Trust	Brownlow Campus Sports Trust was a partnership between Craigavon Borough Council and other local organisations. The award was transferred to Craigavon Borough Council from 1 July 2008.
Cookstown and District Sports Forum	Membership of the Forum represents the views of a wide range of sporting clubs and organisations within the local area.
Craigavon Sports Advisory Council	Craigavon Sports Advisory Council is a voluntary organisation that acts as an independent advisor to Craigavon Borough Council.
Derry Healthy Cities	Derry Healthy Cities is a partnership working to improve the health and well-being of the people who live and work in Derry, Limavady, Strabane and Foyle.
Greater Shankill Partnership	The Greater Shankill Partnership is involved with welfare and regeneration programmes across the Belfast area.
Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)	GVRT works to deliver sustainable regeneration, and consists of representatives from the local community, business, political and statutory sectors.
Lower Ormeau Resident's Action Group (LORAG)	LORAG represents the residents of the Lower Ormeau Road and is based at Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre.
North Belfast Play Forum	The North Belfast Play Forum represents the diversity of the local community and manages the multi-sports facility at the Waterworks site.
North Belfast Sport Forum	The North Belfast Sports Forum was set-up to address the social and economic problems in the area using sport as a medium to bring cross-community groups together.
Old Library Trust	The Old Library Trust Healthy Living Centre is a neighbourhood health project based in the Creggan estate in Derry.
PlayBoard NI	PlayBoard is the leading agency for children's play in Northern Ireland, working to improve the quality of children's lives by increasing their opportunity to play.

Southern Sports Partnership	The Southern Sports Partnership is an area partnership representative of each of the Local Authorities within the area, the Southern Education and Library Board and Sport Northern Ireland.
Sport North East	Sport North East is an area partnership representative of each of the nine Local Authorities within the area, the North Eastern Education and Library Board and Sport Northern Ireland.
Sport South East	Sport South East is a sports development partnership representative of each of the five Local Authorities within the area as well as the South Eastern Education and Library Board and Sport Northern Ireland.
Upper Springfield Development Trust	Upper Springfield Development Trust is guided by five themed areas of work: Community relations, community safety, personal development and capacity building, community regeneration and health and well-being.
Youth Sport Omagh	Youth Sport Omagh is a voluntary cross-community group which has worked for the past 10 to 15 years in the promotion and coaching of field sports for young people in Omagh.
Ballymena Borough Council	In addition to investments in the community and voluntary sector organisations listed above, the Sport in Our Community Programme invests in these local District Councils, Education and Library Boards and University of Ulster.
Ballymoney Borough Council	
Castlereagh Borough Council	
Coleraine Borough Council	
Craigavon Borough Council (2 awards)	
Derry City Council (4 awards)	
Larne Borough Council	
Lisburn City Council	
North Eastern Education and Library Board	
Omagh District Council	
South Eastern Education and Library Board	
Southern Education and Library Board	
University of Ulster	

- 66. Once projects had received their letter of offer recruitment of staff took place in instances where new posts had been created. A project management system commenced once projects became 'live'. This included collation of monitoring data, quarterly progress meetings with Sport Northern Ireland, completion of end of year monitoring reports as well as financial returns.
- 67. Staff from funded projects were also invited to attend various training events over the life-span of the programme. Some of these related to the monitoring system which was revised on a number of occasions, following feedback from projects. Other training and support events included:

Table 6: Training Provided

TRAINING PROVIDED FOR CSDO'S 2006-10
<p>Physical Literacy Seminar 11 CSDO's attended this seminar, held at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick. Funded Officers also attended Northern Ireland Physical Literacy forums held once or twice a year.</p>
<p>Community Sport Disability Action Planning Disability Sports Northern Ireland (DSNI) facilitated a session which highlighted opportunities for further developing participation for people with disabilities. As an outcome of the session, in September 2007, Sport Northern Ireland in partnership with DSNI hosted five regional 'Community Sport Disability Action Planning Sessions' to coordinate activities. These sessions were held in Craigavon, Omagh, Belfast, Ballymena and Castlereagh and Regional Action Plans were developed for each area enabling groups to combine resources and maximise opportunities.</p>
<p>Midnight Street Soccer North Belfast Play Forum facilitated a training session for all CSDO's on the Midnight Street Soccer Programme. This included short presentations from other CSDO's detailing how they put the programme into practise, problems which arose and how they were overcome. As a result five projects funded through the Community Sport Programme began delivery of a Midnight Street Soccer Programme in their area.</p>
<p>Performance Pathway Training Sport Northern Ireland's Performance Sport Manager and Talent Identification Officer delivered training highlighting methods of talent identification and effective communication with governing bodies of sport.</p>
<p>Extended Schooldays Information Session This training was facilitated by Sport Northern Ireland and presentations were made by GVRT and Derry City Council, along with an update from the Southern Education and Library Board and the Regional Training Unit.</p>
<p>Effective Development Officer Training 16 CSDO's attended two days of training, delivered by Sport Northern Ireland.</p>

TRAINING PROVIDED FOR CSDO'S 2006-10

Playing Your Part Seminar

Over 140 delegates attended a two day Sports Development Conference, facilitated by Sport Northern Ireland.

Orienteering Workshop

12 CSDO's and others working in this field attended this workshop, delivered in partnership with the British Orienteering Federation and Sport Northern Ireland.

'Fit for Play' – Developing Fundamental Movement Skills Through Play

24 Sports Development Officers and others working in the field of developing physical literacy in young people attended this one day Seminar, delivered in partnership with PlayBoard and Sport Northern Ireland.

Active for Health Conference

More than 160 delegates attended this conference supporting the development of physical recreation as a primary health tool delivered jointly by Health Promotion Agency (now Public Health Agency) and Sport Northern Ireland.

Derry City Council Fit Futures – Active Schools – Yoga Project

41 delegates attended this seminar where the findings from the project level evaluation were presented.

Young People's Health Seminar

Delivered by Sport Northern Ireland in partnership with PHA.

Investment Conference

200 delegates attended this conference where new Sport Northern Ireland Investment programmes were launched - Active Communities, Places for Sport and Investing in Performance Sport.

Mental Health First Aid Training

16 delegates attended this training delivered by the Public Health Agency.

Pre Consultation Seminar – Increasing Participation – Future Investment Priorities

48 funded CSDO's and their Line Managers attended this pre consultation event to discuss future investment priorities.

Increasing Participation – Future Investment Priorities Consultation Review

42 funded CSDO's and their Line Managers attended the consultation review and update on Sport Northern Ireland policy direction.

Increasing Participation – Progress Through Partnership Seminar

60 delegates attended this seminar focusing on building partnerships and delivering sustainable legacies through volunteering.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 68.** A detailed monitoring and evaluation system was implemented at the early stages of the programme. This included the requirement to gather detailed information on all participants including:
- Age;
 - Gender;
 - Address;
 - Previous fitness / activity levels;
 - Current fitness / activity levels;
 - Previous sports / activities played / participated in;
 - Current sports / activities played / participated in
 - Community background;
 - Disability;
 - Ethnic Origin; and
 - Nationality.
- 69.** As discussed above the monitoring system was further refined to exclude collection of data in relation to:
- Previous fitness / activity levels;
 - Current fitness activity / levels;
 - Previous sports / activities played / participated in; and
 - Current sports / activities played / participated in.
- 70.** Monitoring data was collated by projects and returned to Sport Northern Ireland quarterly. An end of year report summarising key activities was also returned to Sport Northern Ireland on an annual basis. The first two years of data were analysed by Sport Northern Ireland staff and produced as a publication: Sport in Our Community Investment Programme Report – October 2008.

Sustainability

71. As part of funding arrangements projects were all required to keep a clear focus on the sustainability of their work from early stages. This was a focus in project reports to Sport Northern Ireland, projects progress meetings with Sport Northern Ireland and a key issue highlighted in the mid term review, which noted that the intention of Sport Northern Ireland had in some respects been to fund programme activity during a 'demonstration' period after which provision would be mainstreamed. To facilitate this Sport Northern Ireland engaged with a range of external bodies including the Department of Social Development, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Department of Education and the Department of Health, Public Services and Public Health to highlight the successes and impacts in tangible terms of demonstration programmes. The mid term review did however point to the impact of the challenging funding environment as an inhibitor to projects seeking to mainstream their work.

Summary

72. Within this section of the report we have provided an overview of the development and implementation of the Sport in Our Community Investment Programme. In reviewing the previous section and this section it is clear that the programme was designed to meet the needs of the changing strategic environment, taking on board both the views of stakeholders and the lessons learned from previous programmes.

Section 5

CASE STUDIES

73. In the following section of the report we report on each case study focusing on a number of key areas:

- Overall descriptor of the project;
- Exemplar projects within each project;
- Impact of the projects;
- Personal story;
- Key enablers; and
- Lessons and sustainability.

The case studies are presented in the following order:

Table 7 Case Studies

Targeting High Social Need
1. Derry City Council – Waterside Neighbourhood Renewal Area
2. Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group
3. Larne Borough Council
4. North Belfast Play Forum
Developing Opportunities for People with a Disability
5. Craigavon Borough Council – Active Inclusion
6. Derry Healthy Cities
Supporting the Development of Physical Literacy
7. North Eastern, South Eastern and Southern Education and Library Boards– Physical Literacy Coordinators
8. Coleraine Borough Council and Ballymoney Borough Council – Wildcats Activ8 Multi-Skills Clubs
9. PlayBoard

DERRY CITY COUNCIL

WATERSIDE NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL AREA

- 74.** The Waterside area of Derry contains a mix of economic and social conditions with some relatively affluent areas and pockets of high deprivation and social need. The Victoria Ward, for example, is ranked 39th most deprived in the Noble Index of Multiple deprivation and Ebrington has a rank of 83rd (out of the 586 electoral wards in Northern Ireland). In 2003, parts of the Waterside became a Neighbourhood Renewal area, covering the areas of Top of the Hill, Irish Street, Clooney, Tullyally, Curryneirin and part of Caw.³⁰
- 75.** The Waterside Community Sport Programme aims to improve the health and well-being of individuals and build community cohesion through the increased participation of children, young people and adults in areas of high social need and groups traditionally marginalized in sport and physical activity. The investment from Sport Northern Ireland for the project led by Derry City Council amounted to £79,344.

Exemplar Projects

Personal Development Through Sport – Youth Leadership and Mentoring

- 76.** This programme identified and trained volunteers and workers from local communities to help develop a cadre of leaders and coaches who would support their communities over time and leave a legacy of the Community Sport Programme. Accredited training courses were delivered to a range of local people to enable them to lead groups in social and leisure activities. The programme encouraged cross community participation and specific training was identified through consultation with the Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership Board.
- 77.** The programme aims were to encourage and empower the participants to:
- Make healthier choices;
 - Develop education and skills; and
 - Promote mental health and emotional well-being to young people.

New Age Kurling 50+

- 78.** The New Age Kurling 50+ clubs were developed by the Waterside Community Sport Programme in partnership with the Irish Street Youth and Community Association and Tullyalley and District Development Group. The Community Sport Programme purchased the equipment for the groups and provided weekly coaching. The clubs play individually and in tournaments, with competition taking place between Wards in the Waterside, adding an inter-community dimension to the project. The Community Sport Programme also provided training in inclusive games and encouraged volunteers to become part of the programme.
- 79.** The project is aimed at improving the health and well-being of participants, improving physical and social interaction between areas in the Waterside and its aims conjoin with those of the Waterside Neighbourhood Renewal Plan. It is hoped that a Waterside New Age Kurling league can eventually be developed.

³⁰ Demographic data on all project areas has been supplied by the projects themselves.

Impacts

- 80.** Personal Development Through Sport - Youth Leadership and Mentoring – 12 young people have undergone accredited training through this programme achieving success in a number of courses including:
- Basic First Aid (Red Cross);
 - Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport (Sport Northern Ireland);
 - Western Education and Library Board (WELB) Basic Outdoor Leadership Training (Residential);
 - Western Education and Library Board Intermediate Outdoor Leadership training (Residential);
 - Canoeing 2 Star Award (British Canoe Union);
 - Foundation Safety and Rescue Training and Test (British Canoe Union);
 - Level 1 Coach Instructors Award (British Canoe Union); and
 - Soccer Referee Training (Irish Football Association).
- 81.** These young people now form a resource hub for their communities and those who are trained can also train others, spreading their skills across a range of different activities. While three of the participants achieved Level 1 canoeing another completed Canoeing 2 Star Award, Foundation Safety and Rescue Training and Test and passed his Level 1 British Canoe Coach Award. This participant is now an instructor and leader (his story is provided in the next section).
- 82.** By skilling members of the local community in this way, the programme is clearly achieving its aims to develop capacity within the community. This capacity is already encouraging further participation in canoeing in the Gobnascale and adjoining communities. The newly trained instructor/leader is now taking people between the ages of five and 65 canoeing, assisted by others who have also achieved their Star 2 Canoeing Award through the programme. The instructor/leader is now seen by others in the community as an example of what is possible through application and hard work. The visible success of this local young man, known by his peers and other young people, is empowering others to think that the same is possible for them too, and, as such, he has become a very relevant, positive role model in the area.
- 83.** There are practical outcomes too of skilling local people in this way. The Whistle project no longer needs to identify and hire outside instructors. They gain by employing his skills within, and for the benefit of the local Gobnascale community. The group can also source some additional income by charging other groups for this service. Much of the instructors work is geared to both the local and adjoining communities, helping to bridge the community divide and build relationships between young people from different backgrounds. This bridging element has been further embedded by inviting schools from across the city to take part under the leadership of the newly qualified instructor, making the activities inter communal as well as cross community.
- 84.** The Youth Mentoring Programme has thus been able to achieve its goals of developing the education and skills of local people. It also contributes to the wider goals of the Waterside Community Sport Programme of building capacity within the community, promoting cohesion through its cross community and inter-communal activities and developing the capacity to sustain longer term provision of community sport.

- 85.** The New Age Kurling 50+ Programme was developed in response to an expressed local need which was an important element in its success. In the first instance, the Community Sport Development Officer (CSDO) was approached by the Irish Street Youth and Community Association. The Association already had some organised activity, for example, their lunch club and armchair aerobics, but wanted further physical activity that was within their range of ability. Through consultation with the CSDO, the members decided that they would like to try New Age Kurling. The group now has 15 regular participants. Since then, the programme has been introduced to neighbouring Tullyalley.
- 86.** People of all abilities from the Waterside have been able to become involved in this programme. In physical activity terms the participants are gaining in fitness and the programme is helping to increase movement skills, coordination, balance and general strength all of which are important to this age group in retaining good levels of mobility and protecting against falls.
- 87.** In addition to enjoying the physical aspects of the exercise, participants comment on the 'good craic' and the opportunities to have "companionship and meet new friends". This social aspect of the programme is important to participants and has benefits in terms of their mood, confidence and sociability.
- 88.** There is also strong cross community significance to the two areas in which the Waterside New Age Kurling began. Irish Street and Tullyalley form part of one of the city's three interface areas, Tullyalley / Currynieran and Gobnascale / Irish Street. The interface is one where the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme encourages greater social and physical interaction. The participants have created positive friendships across the interface and, in addition to playing each other in league encounters, they have gone on several outings together, thus promoting confidence building between the two communities on the interface.

Personal Story

- 89.** Donal was a participant in the Youth Leadership and Mentoring Programme. When he left school, Donal undertook a number of volunteering activities. Amongst other things, he tried his hand at canoeing. He then went on to become trained as a baker, a job that he worked at for a number of years before being made redundant around 18 months ago. Unemployment came as a shock to Donal. By his own account he lost his way for a time and suffered from depression. He felt unable to better his situation and his sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem suffered badly.
- 90.** Having had a history of volunteering, Donal eventually decided to use his free time to help out at the 'Whistle Project' in Gobnascale. Through this association, and encouraged by the project leader, he applied to join the Youth Leadership and Mentoring Programme.
- 91.** Although Donal had tried canoeing before, by his own admission the sport had changed significantly since he had last sat in a canoe. But it was clear to him that he wanted to rediscover the sport and use it to gain a skill that would move him forward in life, a skill that would allow him to help others. He first undertook basic courses in child protection, then Star 2 Canoeing Award, Foundation Safety and Rescue Training and finally a Level 1 Coach Instructors Award. Donal is now a fully qualified instructor and leader. He is now leading young people canoeing and has a great sense of pride in having achieved his new qualification.

- 92.** Donal is becoming well known to the local children who look at him with some awe - a neighbour, a local man, trained and skilled and able to lead them in an exciting activity. Clearly he is a great role model to them and an inspiration.
- 93.** Donal says that taking the courses gave him a sense of purpose again after the shock of becoming unemployed. As the courses started to improve his skills and confidence, his feeling of self-worth also improved. Donal says that the training and his achievement have:

"...changed my life... I feel useful again and I can use my skills to give children an opportunity to try something new that they wouldn't otherwise have the chance of trying – as I never did when I was a child."

Key Enablers

- 94.** Working within the Waterside Neighbourhood Renewal area means that there is interdisciplinary and inter-agency support and joint action. There is also a joined up approach that seeks to achieve social, economic and community gains. The Waterside Community Sport Programme has become an integral part of delivering on the aims of Neighbourhood Renewal and has been able to achieve greater success than it would have working in isolation.
- 95.** The CSDO places great store upon working along with the Waterside community to establish what they need and has worked very effectively within the general framework of Community Sport to develop individual activities that fit with the Neighbourhood Renewal themes. Her approach of meeting need, rather than forcing a policy of 'one size fits all' is a key enabler to success in the Waterside Programme. This can clearly be seen in the New Age Kurling Programme, for example, where the CSDO's determination to take on board what people really wanted and to listen to their needs has been a major contributor to both uptake and success.
- 96.** Working with well established local groups has also been an enabler. For example, the CSDO has worked alongside key existing community groups, such as the Whistle Project and the Irish Street Youth and Community Association. These on the ground partnerships, have been crucial to developing and delivering activities that are relevant to local communities and which are taken up by communities in good numbers.
- 97.** The commitment of those who work and volunteer in these community partnerships has also been important in delivering successful outcomes. For example, the leader of the Whistle Project identified strong candidates for the Youth Leadership and Mentoring Programme and was instrumental in keeping these participants on board and encouraging them to achieve further success. The personal commitments made by these participants, their determination to succeed and their 'stickability' has also been a crucial factor in helping them to maximise the opportunities that the Community Sport Programme has offered to them.

Lessons and Sustainability

- 98.** The Community Sport Programme aims to leave a legacy, which will sustain sport and physical activity into the future. Improving the skills of local people to undertake coaching and leadership is clearly an essential element as it makes communities less reliant on external funding and gives them the capacity to be self-sufficient. The newly qualified canoeing coach and leader in Gobnascale is an excellent example of this. His skills will expand the range of activities that the Whistle Project can offer and will make it less reliant on bought in help to sustain its work.
- 99.** Mentoring participants through programmes such as the Youth Leadership and Mentoring Programme also leaves a capacity within the community to train and develop others. The impact does not end with one individual because they live in and form part of the community; their newly found skills are also readily transferable to others.
- 100.** Relatively small strategic investments are also helping with sustainability in the Waterside. For example, Sport Northern Ireland funding enabled the 3G pitch at the Whistle Project to be resurfaced. This in turn means that the project can attract users from a wider area and help to sustain itself through participant fee generation.
- 101.** The New Age Kurling 50+ has an in-built sustainability because the groups involved have taken ownership of their projects. The equipment bought through Sport Northern Ireland funding remains in place and interest appears to be growing. Some participants have been trained as instructors, so they can train others without having to bring in paid help. The New Age Kurling project is a good example of creating activity that people want and need. Much of its sustainability comes from the fact that the groups involved have been helped through the Waterside Community Sport Programme to realise their own priorities, not to have 'made to measure' programmes foisted on them.
- 102.** The lesson from the Waterside projects is that sustainability comes from helping people to grow their capabilities, skilling them and helping them to find sport and physical activity that suits their needs, and leaving them with enough capacity and aspiration to continue for themselves.

LOWER ORMEAU RESIDENTS' ACTION GROUP (LORAG)

DEVELOPMENT OF SHAFTSBURY COMMUNITY AND RECREATION CENTRE

- 103.** The Lower Ormeau area is part of Inner South Belfast, an area which contains a population of 6,699 people, 17% of which are under the age of 16, with an additional 14% being 60 or over. Almost a quarter of the population (24%) have a long standing / limiting illness or disability. A large part of the area is within the Shaftesbury ward which is ranked in the top 10% most deprived wards in Northern Ireland.
- 104.** This case study is focused on the development of sporting facilities. The sport and health facility at the Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre opened in January 2010. It is run by LORAG on behalf of Belfast City Council. Further to the £70,741 invested in LORAG for the Sport in Our Community Programme, the facility received additional funding of £1.8m from Sport Northern Ireland for the redevelopment of the facility and £155,000 to support the post of Community Sports Development Officer for five years. The new facility includes a state of the art 3rd generation synthetic grass pitch, fitness suite and dance studio, along with new reception and changing areas.

- 105.** The facility sets out to deliver a range of services that meets both local needs and attracts participants from right across Belfast. The objectives of the sports facility at Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre are to:
- Provide a hub to increase participation in sport and physical activity in areas of social disadvantage;
 - Develop physical activity / health and well-being opportunities in local communities centres and clubs;
 - Develop volunteers in local communities;
 - Bring physical activities and sport to the community;
 - Promote coach education and employment through sport; and
 - Encourage partnership working between various agencies to combat social problems through sport and physical activity.

The Old Firm Alliance Programme

- 106.** The Old Firm Alliance Programme is run in partnership with Rangers and Celtic Football Clubs. Part of the project rationale is to demonstrate that traditionally opposing clubs can work together and that therefore, traditionally opposed communities, such as nationalists and unionists can work together too. The programme was organised by the Belfast Community Sports Development Network, of which LORAG is a member. Funded by the International Fund for Ireland, with support from Rangers Football Club and Celtic Football Club, through the Old Firm Alliance.
- 107.** With many young people in Belfast supporting either Celtic or Rangers, the Clubs are a very appropriate medium through which to deliver messages about cultural diversity, social inclusion and community and personal development. Twelve schools are currently engaged in the programme drawing more than 300 children from Primary 5 classes upwards. In order to embed the cross-community nature of the project, schools are twinned on a cross-community basis, for example St Malachy's Maintained Primary School is twinned with Blythefield Controlled Primary School.
- 108.** The Shaftesbury facility enables LORAG to play a key role in the Old Firm Alliance, which has just completed the first six months of a three year programme. In terms of meeting local needs, this project engages young people from South Belfast with sport, physical activity and team playing all within a local and cross-community setting. In one sense this is utilising sport to achieve community and societal gain, but whilst they are learning about each other's communities and cultures the programme delivers significant physical activity to children. In a wider context, the Old Firm Alliance project is an example of how the Shaftesbury facility is enabling LORAG to use sport to build trust, challenge entrenched ways of thinking and create cooperative ways of working. This is also helping to create and sustain collective and partnership working with other agencies across Belfast to tackle sectarianism and promote cultural diversity and social inclusion.

The Older and Active Programme

- 109.** The Older and Active Programme is a partnership between the Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT), South Belfast Highway to Health, LORAG and Castlereagh Borough Council. Funding for the

programme has been sourced from Sport Northern Ireland and Belfast City Council. The programme consists of a number of eight-week programmes which move around different partner venues during the year and the Shaftesbury centre enables LORAG to play a full part in these activities.

- 110.** The half day sessions initially catered for a range of activities including Boccia, Tai Chi and Yoga. As the number of participants grew, the needs of local people became further embedded, and the programme content was shaped by the older people. In addition to the initial activities, the group also undertake New Age Kurling, classes on community safety and home safety, therapy days, physiotherapy sessions and social events. The sessions involve all aspects of health nutrition, fitness, exercise and creating an awareness of the impact of good diet and exercise on health.
- 111.** The Older and Active Programme at the Shaftesbury Centre has successfully engaged with otherwise isolated older people in an area where health indicators are generally poor. Staff commented that there had been no activity at all for senior citizens in the area before the programme. Not only are these people much more engaged in physical activity, but they are now less socially isolated and feel much more connected to the community around them.
- 112.** Feedback from participants is very positive, not only in terms of the content of the programme but the extent to which it has helped to break down barriers for older people going to the leisure centre and taking part in organised group activity.
- 113.** There is also a cross community aspect to the programme whereby local people come together once a month with people from the largely Protestant Village area of South Belfast.
- 114.** As the programme has grown to meet the needs of local people in the LORAG area, a Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary disease group (COPD) has been established. This grew from the membership of the Older and Active Programme run at the Shaftesbury Centre and is specifically designed to meet the needs of local residents.

Impacts

- 115.** Since its relatively recent opening, the Shaftesbury facility has had a huge influence on local people; not least in terms of community confidence. As one interviewee said:
"just having a facility like this in our area, makes people feel that we are worth something, that we are as deserving as anyone else."
- 116.** The facility and its staff have immediately engaged with the community and, in turn, have been able to engage local people in sport, physical activity and other organised activities in much greater numbers. Many of these are people who would not otherwise have had an opportunity locally to become engaged in any kind of sport or physical activity.
- 117.** Local people make up the bulk of centre users and see the Shaftesbury Centre as a leisure complex and as a community facility. The organisation and timetabling of activities are managed to maximise the opportunities for people to use community services and to become engaged in sport and physical activity. For example, if a mum leaves off a child at Surestart, she can participate in the Bums and Tums Programme which begins around the same time of the morning.

118. Local sports clubs make extensive use of the 3G pitch which is booked solid every evening from 4.00pm to 10.00pm. The facility is also used by many people who work nearby with local office workers often coming for lunchtime sessions, adding a valuable source of income to the Centre.
119. The facility reaches out to an ethnically diverse local population. South Belfast has the most varied ethnic mix in Northern Ireland and the facility is heavily used by, for example, the Chinese community, whilst Romanian communities have used the facility for information sharing days.
120. Programmes are being delivered across the demographic spectrum including pre-school children, older children, youth, hard to reach people, young parents, older people and people with health problems.
121. For young people, the youth drop in centre is always accessible when the local schools are shut. This is especially important for many young people from disadvantaged families who might not be able to afford to participate in activities outside their local area. The drop in centre provides a facility that takes young people off the streets and enables fitness training and organised activity to take place alongside delivering educational messages on diet and alcohol and drug awareness. The summer scheme for school age children also provides organised activity during the summer months and out of this has grown a dance team which now has its own trained instructor. The scheme also provides alternatives for young people and involves them in organised activity at a time of the evening when they may otherwise be attracted to anti-social activities. All these activities provide positive growing experiences for the young people as well as contributing to healthy living, fitness and sports opportunities.
122. The LORAG Dance Team grew out of the Shaftesbury Centre's summer scheme. Teenage girls who had not previously participated in LORAG activities identified dance as an activity that they would like to be involved in. Dance sessions were initially run for a period of six weeks with a 'bought-in' facilitator. The sessions became very popular and to make its delivery more cost effective, a local person was trained to continue delivering the programme. This facilitator now tutors the dance team, which has been running for a year, and since January 2010 is delivered in the newly opened dance studio.
123. Whilst dance started out primarily as a girls activity there are now 40 members in total with an approximate equal number of boys and girls. There are two dance teams, one for eight years olds and under and the other for nine to 18 year olds. There are two classes per week for each team lasting an hour and a half. The team have named themselves 'Identity', and are a fully fledged club that now enters competitions. The dance style is 'hip hop'.
124. As the instructor is local and is male, he has been a good role model for the boy members. Having the male instructor and the hip hop dance style was noted by the CSDO as a major factor in attracting boys to the activity. As well as the benefits to health and getting exercise, the instructor has made the children aware of the benefits of re-hydrating with water (no other drinks are allowed) and of the benefits of stretching and warm up and cool down. The young people are getting to know how their body works and are learning to work as a team and to work cooperatively *"because if they don't then the dance doesn't work ...It got them listening learning and growing as individuals as well as working as a team."*
125. The confidence of the children has grown – the project manager commented that they dance together in the park and in front of their families whereas before they would have been too embarrassed. Entering and doing well in competitions has also boosted their self-esteem and their confidence. As the project manager said *"Often they are very nervous but they do it anyway ...they are only here twice a week but they are dancing all the time."*

- 126.** As a consequence of the dance team's success, parents and local people are involved in fundraising for the teams and in providing transport to competitions. More people also know about the centre as a result of their children's involvement and more parents use the gym as a result. The CSDO also commented that in relation to the females involved in the dance team, *"It got them listening, learning and growing as individuals as well as a team."*
- 127.** In another example of meeting local need, the Centre has just introduced a programme aimed at supporting patients in South Belfast with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. The programme will promote physical activity, exercise and good dietary practice amongst COPD patients in South Belfast.
- 128.** LORAG programmes run at the Shaftesbury Centre are engaging target groups, many of whom would otherwise not be involved in any form of sport, physical activity or organised group behaviour. This is clearly leading to higher levels of physical activity as well as helping these groups to learn the value of team work, sharing and building trust with others.
- 129.** The emergence of the 'Identity' dance team within LORAG shows how initial engagement with young people at a general level can later lead to activities that are more fully aligned with their skills and personal wishes. The dance classes and dance team encourage balance and coordination and make a big contribution to the physical literacy of the participants.
- 130.** Other hard to reach groups who would not normally be involved in sport or physical activity are becoming engaged through LORAG programmes at the Shaftesbury Centre. As we reported above, a number of young mothers have started to use the gym facility whilst their children are being looked after in the adjoining crèche facility. The Older and Active group began with 15 people and numbers have now swelled to 25 amongst this traditionally hard to reach group. As a result, these older people feel less isolated and more involved in the community.
- 131.** Ethnic minority groups are frequent users of the Shaftesbury Centre, particularly people from the Chinese and Romanian communities.
- 132.** The LORAG sport and physical activity programme run at the Shaftesbury Centre is primarily aimed at local people and makes a significant contribution to providing greater opportunities for involvement in an area of high social deprivation. By actively engaging with hard to reach groups, LORAG is targeting people who have little history in sport, physical activity or activities that are focused on healthy living. The Older and Active group, for example were able to have a health check, learn about good nutrition, take part in a one hour exercise class and a one hour session on healthy living, nutrition and finance.
- 133.** Inappropriate alcohol consumption has been identified by LORAG as an issue amongst certain groups within the local community. This is being addressed by creating a greater awareness of the impact of alcohol upon healthy lifestyles through programmes including the Older and Active Programmes. The latter works in partnership with other local clubs to give healthy messages about drugs and alcohol in a manner that is appropriate to the target group.

Personal Story 1

- 134.** Two young men from the Lower Ormeau area have benefited greatly from LORAG sport programmes to the extent that both were involved in coaching at the Shaftesbury Centre in the summer of 2010. Gerard has been associated with LORAG for a number of years. Throughout that time, he received a great deal of support and encouragement from the CSDO as he grew in confidence and began to develop his abilities and talents towards becoming a sports coach. A few years younger, Michael has received similar help and support as he gradually realised that sport was a way of developing as a person and potentially forming a basis for a career.
- 135.** Michael and Gerard have taken different routes along the coaching and sports development paths. Having started with basic courses on child protection, Gerard went on to take a HND in sport and finally an Honours Degree in Sports Studies. Throughout this time Gerard kept close association with LORAG, with regular involvement in its activities, ongoing mentoring support from the CSDO and undertaking one of his degree placements there. Having graduated with Honours, Gerard has now obtained a graduate internship with LORAG at the Shaftesbury Centre supported through the BCSDN Sportopps Programme.
- 136.** Until becoming involved in LORAG sports activities, Michael had never been involved in structured sport or any other kind of structured activity. He was a young man unsure of his future. He first became involved in sport through LORAG Midnight Soccer, eventually seeking advice from the CSDO on how to develop sport and physical activity as a pathway to personal and career development. He began by undertaking child protection and first aid courses at the local college and is now taking a level one sports coaching award. Michael says the last few years have been a very positive experience for him. From a disadvantaged background, he has found his way along a personal development path that is steering him towards being a positive role model for his peers and a productive member of the community. With a wry reference to what might have been had he not started along this path, Michael said:
- "I wouldn't like to think what I would be doing today if it hadn't been for the opportunities that LORAG and Ronan have given me to develop through sport."*
- 137.** This summer Michael assisted the coaches in the Shaftesbury Centre to gain further experience and to develop personal relationships with the local young people.

Personal Story 2

- 138.** Dolores is 'over 65' and is a keen advocate of the activities that LORAG offers. At the Older and Active project she takes part in Boccia and other activities, such as armchair aerobics. After the activities she and her fellow participants *"usually have a wee cup of tea and a bit of a dance."*
- 139.** The 'Older and Active' project has been a real 'bonus' for Dolores. As she says: *"I can't wait to get out to it."* She has suffered poor health for some time and takes various medications. She feels that the activities and exercises have really helped her level of fitness and she feels much more flexible now. Dolores could not dance before being involved in the project but now really looks forward to *"a wee dance."* She and her fellow participants are given advice on diet and nutrition and Dolores states that she now eats well.

- 140.** A number of Dolores' neighbours who are also senior citizens use the fitness suite at LORAG. One, who is 76, uses it every day as do an elderly married couple. Dolores herself now feels able to explore this part of the centre and feels ready to take on some further exercise. *"After the holidays we are going to ask Ronan to take our group to the fitness suite and we'll start on simple things."*
- 141.** Dolores was adamant that she could not have contemplated undertaking such a level of physical exercise a few months ago. With growing confidence and having established a basic level of fitness, she now feels that she can progress to using the fitness suite. She has also begun to enjoy the social side of LORAG activities and its cross community aspect. For example a group from Donegall Pass visited the Shaftesbury Centre and a film, produced in the 1970's was shown of Cooke Street in the Ormeau area, Dolores was surprised and delighted that she herself appeared in the film. She said *"It was a good bonding ...People from the Pass were delighted...It was a very positive thing."*

Key Enablers

- 142.** It is clear that the very existence of the Shaftesbury Centre has enabled local people to feel valued and worthy of the investment of public funds. It has provided a great boost to the confidence of people in the area. The fitness suite, modern changing facilities, dance studio and the 3G Pitch are daily reminders to local people that they have a great facility to utilise and in itself that seems to be enabling and encouraging strong local engagement.
- 143.** Central to LORAG's success in building usage of the new facilities has been its firm roots in the local area and the needs of the local community. At the same time, it has had the vision to embed local solutions to need in a wider Belfast context, forging productive partnerships with fellow community groups and sports delivery agencies.
- 144.** Working with, through, and as part of the Belfast Community Sports Development Network has created many opportunities for LORAG to promote sustainable and active communities. This has led to stronger, combined applications for funding, and has helped to ensure that applications and services are not wastefully replicated. It has also brought together a broader base of facilities and expertise than LORAG could have provided in its own. The completion of the sports and physical activity facilities at the Shaftesbury Centre enables LORAG to play a key role in this partnership working and to ensure that people from the Lower Ormeau area have a full opportunity to be included in the activities that take place locally and wider afield.
- 145.** In terms of meeting local need and engaging hard to reach groups of people, another key enabler of success has been LORAG's ability to identify community need and adapt to changes in those needs quickly. LORAG's strength is to embed physical activity and sport within a framework of community development and local need, building trust with local people and providing sport and physical activities that deliver appropriately to local people.

Lessons and Sustainability

- 146.** LORAG manage the facility on behalf of Belfast City Council. As a Council maintained facility its long term sustainability seems assured. Sustainability is also bolstered by income from clubs using the 3G pitch and other facilities, by local workers paying to use the gym on an occasional basis and by gym memberships.
- 147.** The exemplar projects described above are certainly sustainable over the next few years at least. The Older and Active basket of funders appears secure for now, whilst International Fund for Ireland funding supports the Old Firm Alliance project which is six months in to a three-year programme. The coaches from Celtic and Rangers football clubs have expressed their ongoing commitment to the project as have the locally participating schools.
- 148.** Locally, the efforts of LORAG to make the Shaftesbury Centre meet local needs seems likely to pay off in continued engagement by the local community. In broader terms, LORAG's partnership with BCSDN creates efficiencies in terms of expertise, and resources as well as ensuring that projects are not wastefully replicated. All of this is likely to contribute significantly to longer term sustainability.

LARNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

- 149.** The Larne Borough Council area ranks on average, 14th on the Noble Multiple Index of Deprivation (where 1 is the most, and 26th the least deprived). Across the Borough there are significant pockets of deprivation in the areas of Antiville, Ballyloran, Seacourt, Central and Craigyhill, which are in the top third of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. In addition, Carnlough, Glynn, Glenarm and Kilwaughter areas are dispersed from the main areas of population and lie in the top 30% of deprivation on the measure of 'proximity to services'.
- 150.** Larne Borough Council's Community Sport Development Team, funded initially by the Sport in Our Community Programme runs a range of projects aimed at getting people more active and improving the quality of life of residents by increasing the number and proportion of people who participate regularly in sport and health related physical exercise. The funding package from Sport Northern Ireland for the programme amounted to £53,283.
- 151.** Typical programmes delivered in Larne include the Active Choice GP Referral Programme, Ballyloran Sport and Physical Activity Programme, the Ladies Activity Morning, Craigyhill Community Soccer Programme, the wider Midnight Soccer Programme and the Full of Beans Activity Programme. The last two mentioned feature as exemplar projects in this case study.

Exemplar Projects

Full of Beans

- 152.** The Full of Beans project was a partnership between Larne Borough Council with Sport Northern Ireland funding and from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust under the Northern Investing for Health Partnership. Larne Borough Council's Environmental Health Officers helped to deliver the project along with the CSDO and the multi-skills coach. The programme was targeted at 8 to 10 year olds.

- 153.** The aim of the project was to tackle childhood obesity, low participation in physical activity and promote healthy eating. Six Primary Schools in the Borough with the highest social need were identified and 130 children from these schools participated.
- 154.** Environmental Health Officers provided information about healthy eating and organised growing plots in the school grounds where the children could grow their vegetables. The multi-skills coach went into the schools over a period of ten weeks providing two classes of activity per week for the six schools. The coaching activity aimed to educate the teachers as well as the children by running the 'Skills 4 Sport' coaching course for PE and non PE teachers. Schools were also provided with multi-skills equipment as part of the project.

Midnight Street Soccer Programme

- 155.** Midnight Soccer has been used to engage young people in physical activity in the Larne area for some time. The current programme operates from 8 pm to 11 pm and is targeted at those aged 13 to 18. The 2010 programme is being delivered by Larne Borough Council's Sports Development coaching team, in partnership with the Youth Outreach Worker, the local Community Safety Partnership, the PSNI and the Youth Justice Agency. The programme aims to get young people more involved in physical activity and provide a diversion from alcohol and drugs abuse as well as from other anti social behaviours. In addition to playing football, there are elements to the programme that promote a healthy lifestyle, including workshops on alcohol and drug abuse as well as nutrition, healthy eating and sex education.

Impacts

- 156.** The Full of Beans project has succeeded in encouraging primary school children to take a greater interest in health, healthy eating, the sources of their food and physical activity. One of the primary school teachers stated that the different levels and types of activity available to children have had a big impact. The children had not realised previously that taking exercise or being involved in sport does not have to mean *'going and playing a whole game of football'*. There is a much greater realisation, in both children and teachers, that there are many different types of games and probably one to suit every child. The coaching and training delivered in the 'Full of Beans' project has encouraged children who might not play what their teacher called 'the usual sports' to see that games and physical activity can be for them too.
157. The multi-skills coach commented that there had been a big improvement in physical literacy amongst the children who participated in the programme. At the outset, movements among the children were poor, many could not catch or throw and didn't know how to position their bodies to do either of these activities effectively. Some children had never played as a member of a team before. The coach has seen big improvements in the children's reactions, hand /eye co ordination, balance and movement. He has also has seen an improvement in cooperative activity, for example, passing a ball between players.
158. Having been given training by the multi-skills coach, the teachers at the participating schools are better equipped to take children for physical exercise now that they have a knowledge of basic skills. The schools involved are now very proactive in promoting healthy eating and healthy lunch boxes.

- 159.** Teachers are convinced, from what the children say in class, that the messages about healthy eating and physical exercise have been discussed at home. Teachers notice that the children's lunch boxes appear to be healthier - evidence that the messages from the Full of Beans Programme have permeated beyond the school and into the wider family arena.
- 160.** There is also anecdotal evidence that some of the children involved in the Full of Beans Programme are now taking other opportunities for organised physical activity. For example the numbers attending the Larne Wildcats multi-skills club for five to 11 year olds increased around the time that the Full of Beans project was in operation.
- 161.** One of the teachers whom we interviewed stated that the main legacy of the Full of Beans project is the linkages created in children's minds... *"the link between health, physical activity and nutrition and the importance of these things in supporting a healthy body and a healthy life"*.
- 162.** The multi-skills equipment has been retained by the schools thus creating opportunities for a wide set of physical activities to be undertaken in the future.
- 163.** The Midnight Soccer Programme is expanding within Larne Borough. The initial programme was run in the Craigyhill area, which is a pocket of high deprivation within the town, in conjunction with the Youth Outreach worker. Building on that programme, Midnight Soccer is now offered at three different venues within Larne - the Linn Road Mini Pitch, Greenland Multi Sports Arena, and The Cliff Complex, Seacourt. Participation is growing and there are now around 55 regular attendees with new participants appearing each week. This is essentially a diversionary programme whose benefits are primarily in reducing unhealthy, risky and anti-social behaviour by offering alternative activity at high risk periods of the week when the opportunities for underage drinking and anti-social behaviour are at their highest.
- 164.** The CSDO commented that there are a number of significant social and community benefits deriving from the programme. For example, new peer relationships are being formed, built around healthy activity, and better relationships are being formed between the young people and 'sources of authority', Larne Borough Council and the PSNI.
- 165.** Seacourt Midnight Soccer is beginning to attract parents to go along to support the young people. Some young women also attend and, although they tend not to take active part in the football, some have been signposted to Larne Ladies Group and have taken up other physical activity.
- 166.** The Midnight Soccer activities in Larne have also had wider impacts in the community. For example, the multi-skills coach stated that the programme has contributed significantly to pride in the community, particularly in the Seacourt area. Whilst it is clear from the interviews with Council staff that more capacity building is needed in Craigyhill where parents tend to be younger and need more support; there is also evidence that gaining the involvement and confidence of community leaders both formal and informal has been invaluable for the success of the project itself, and the wider inclusion of community leaders in an area of disadvantage. By bringing both formal and informal leaders into discussions about diversionary behaviour and Midnight Soccer, the capacity of the community to represent its views has been enhanced. The programme has also led to greater volunteering and the productive involvement of local people in a community activity, particularly in the Midnight Soccer Programme at The Factory.

Personal Story

- 167.** Gary is a multi-skills coach with Larne Borough Council Community Sport Development Team. In the past, Gary has played for Bolton Wanderers and Wolves and he now plays regularly for Ballymena United. Earlier this year he was shortlisted for a coach of the year award.
- 168.** Gary believes the opportunity to put into practice his multi-skills coaching qualifications has been part of the exciting developmental journey that is opening up new opportunities not just in coaching, but in his wider life.
- 169.** Gary finds going in and out of schools as a multi-skills coach is much more demanding, but ultimately more satisfying, than coaching football alone. The projects that Gary has been involved in as a multi-skills coach have helped him to develop his own abilities at breaking down sports activities into their component movements and skills. He gets tremendous satisfaction at seeing children who may not be the best in their class at a specific sport, joining in, having fun and deriving satisfaction from being physically active.

"I've learned a lot of patience," he says "I can see people now as individuals and I am much better at learning what each one is capable of."

- 170.** Gary feels that he has grown his personal skills just as much as he has developed his coaching abilities. He feels he is much better at relating to people now – in ways he couldn't before.

"I've grown a lot as a person," he says. "As well as having gained a qualification, I now have the privilege of using it every day, working right across the community and across all age groups and abilities. That makes the work here personally very satisfying."

Key Enablers

- 171.** The local nature of the Full of Beans project has been a key enabler to its success. One teacher commented that the children could relate to the CSDO and the coaches because they would see them around their locality and they could relate what they were being taught during coaching to real local people rather than to something more abstract from standard curriculum materials.
- 172.** Collaborative working is another of the key enablers to Larne Borough Council's community sport activities and the Community Sports Development Team are leveraging input from a range of partners. The Full of Beans project, for example, involved an internal Council partnership between the Community Sport Development Team and the Environmental Health Officers. External partnerships were formed with six local primary schools and partner funding came from the Northern Investing for Health Partnership. This is an excellent example of partnership between disciplines in delivering the programme and partnership between funders who have shared aims.

173. Similarly so, the Midnight Soccer Programme in Larne involves an internal partnership between the Community Sport Development Team and the Youth Outreach Worker. Additional partnerships both in funding and delivery have been formed with the local Community Safety Partnership, the PSNI and the Youth Justice Agency. This collaborative, multi-agency approach creates significant capacity for the delivery of such a programme, but it also produces payback to all the agencies involved. For example, the PSNI gain unique opportunities for interaction with young participants and the chance to build trust and confidence between themselves and the young people who are involved. The programme helps to deliver key objectives for the Youth Justice Agency, which sees the programme as enhancing youth provision at key points in the week with the potential to contribute to crime diversion.

Lessons and Sustainability

- 174.** The Full of Beans Project has been completed for now. The gardens planted as part of the project remain and should continue to provide opportunities for children to learn where their food comes from. The training provided by the multi-skills coach to the teachers is a continuing resource and the equipment provided to schools also remains in place for future use.
- 175.** The CSDO is looking at the possibility of organising a forum for coaches and head teachers to progress a continuation and expansion of projects such as Full of Beans. He also believes that greater parental involvement will be important in sustaining any future programme and he intends to work more closely with both parents and teachers to get parents more involved.
- 176.** Some communities are able to 'go it alone' with Midnight Soccer, thus allowing the programme to be offered elsewhere in the Borough. For example the Youth Outreach Worker is due to leave the programme at Seacourt and the community is able to take the programme forward themselves – largely because volunteers have come forward and the confidence of the community has been built to the point where they are prepared to take it on. In the Factory, community volunteers have played a big part and only one coach now needs to be provided by the Council, again releasing resources to run the programme elsewhere.
- 177.** There are also some threats to the sustainability of some of the Midnight Soccer Programmes in the Borough. As a cohort of young people grow older and move away from the project a new group takes over, giving rise to some problems. For example in Craigyhill a large group that had attended the project has now grown older and there are now very few young people who seem to be interested. Efforts now have to be put into working with the community to re-engage. In this case the Community Development Worker has put together a steering group to try to reinvigorate interest in the programme.
- 178.** It needs to be recognised that, in this kind of work, there is a continual need to keep communities involved and to retain their confidence and capacity. The example of Midnight Soccer in Craigyhill shows that the continuing support of a community for a programme like this can never be taken for granted. Whilst there are other examples from the Larne Borough of local people taking ownership of the Midnight Soccer Programme for themselves, it is clear that there will always be a need to support communities to enable them to actively participate in community sport initiatives.

- 179.** The Community Sport Development Team in Larne plan to continue to harness the power of collaborative working, seeking partnerships with funders and with other delivery agencies. This multi-dimensional approach seems to work extremely well in what is a relatively small area where partnerships and professional relationships are sustainable over the longer term.

NORTH BELFAST PLAY FORUM - SPORTS 4 SCHOOLS

- 180.** North Belfast contains a population of 66,302, 29.9% of which are under the age of 19. The area is characterised by severe levels of social and economic deprivation and is deeply segregated with 24 known 'interface areas'. The disadvantage suffered has had an adverse effect on the development of communities and individuals, especially young people, and has been compounded by the lack of provision in the area. Of the 14 North Belfast Partnership wards, eight are considered to be Core Regeneration Areas, and two are Additional Regeneration Areas. Six of the wards (Crumlin, St. Anne's, New Lodge, Ardoyne, Waterworks and Duncairn) are within the 14 most deprived wards in Belfast and the top 3.5% of deprived wards in Northern Ireland.
- 181.** North Belfast Play Forum is a community organisation set up in 1995 on the site of unused tennis courts at the Waterworks in North Belfast. In 2001 a new facility was built by Belfast City Council and North Belfast Play Forum successfully tendered for its management. A facilities management agreement is in place with Belfast City Council and the Play Forum currently has two full time and two part time members of staff. The facility is run on behalf of, and with input from, the local community.

Exemplar Programmes

Sports 4 Schools

- 182.** Sport Northern Ireland invested £28,000 in North Belfast Play Forum over a four year period to deliver the Sports 4 Schools Project. The Forum had already been carrying out a pilot programme with a limited number of schools, however the Sport Northern Ireland funding allowed the programme to be rolled out to around 300 children across twelve schools, ten of which were in North Belfast and two of which were in South Belfast. Three of the schools were on the Department of Education's list of lowest achieving schools.
- 183.** The original agreement was to deliver three sports in the programme plus a healthy living element. After consultation with schools, a Gaelic games component was added to increase the number of sports to five; Hurling, Gaelic Football, Soccer, Rugby and Basketball. The programme was delivered to Primary 5 pupils at Key Stage 2. The programme ran for blocks of six weeks, five times per year.
- 184.** The Sports 4 Schools project was based around Fundamental Movement Skills which uses fun type games for children to enable them to develop their physical and social skills as well as working as a team. The Fundamental Movement Skills are tailored to the age of the target group. This approach focuses on skills, fitness and fun rather than on competition and winning.
- 185.** Fair Play Festivals were held at the end of each six-week block which gave participants the opportunity to meet children from other schools. The Festivals brought a cross community component to the project and helped to reinforce the mutual understanding element of the schools' curriculum.

Impacts

- 186.** Many Primary Schools in Northern Ireland do not have dedicated PE teachers and rely on PE coordinators to manage sport and physical activity within the school. As a result, the level of PE in the schools is variable and there is a risk that some children will not receive a high quality experience. The Sports 4 Schools project brought a high quality sporting activity programme and skilled coaches into the participating schools thereby complementing existing PE provision. As one coach commented:
- “The state of physical activity in schools was really bad at the beginning of the project and as the programme really got going we could begin to see the improvements made by the children.”*
- 187.** As the Sports 4 Schools Programme taught the fundamental skills of movement and sport, it was able to engage children who had previously undertaken little or no physical activity at all. Many of these children found, for the first time, that sport and physical activity could be fun. The children were shown activities that they could do at home, in their own back gardens, for example, passing, jumping, crossover punches and throwing. This successfully encouraged children to continue with the activities outside of the school and provided opportunities for their parents to become involved.
- 188.** At the end of each six week block of coaching there was an assessment and comparison of how children had progressed through the programme. The coaches and teachers observed significant improvements in most of the children. The main areas of improvement were in balance, coordination, team play and the enthusiasm for sport and physical activity. Teachers and coaches also report that the children were drinking more water and were often bringing bottled water to school in place of fizzy drinks.
- 189.** The biggest improvements were seen in girls who had no previous interest in physical activity. It was thought especially important for these children to get enjoyment from the programme and there was encouraging and positive feedback from the children on a weekly basis. The children were pleased to be able to demonstrate their achievements to the coaches.
- 190.** One girl who is an amputee was taught to play basketball with one hand. She was taught how to catch the ball, run with the ball and now plays for the school team. One of the coaches said, *“If you were to ask this young lady nowadays if she has a disability she would say that she hasn’t a disability at all.”*
- 191.** When potential was seen in any of the children, the coaches contacted local sports clubs with a view to getting the young person into a club environment. The same coach commented, *“It’s a success story if you can get a young person into a club environment because they’ll carry that on through their lives.”*

- 192.** As a result of the increased enthusiasm for sport and physical activity a further programme was started on Sundays in some of the all-girls schools. The same coaches that taught in the Sports 4 Schools Programme attended and this proved to be a popular activity that attracted regular participation.
- 193.** Teachers were able to observe the quality of the sports coaching that North Belfast Play Forum were delivering and the coaching that the children were given. The teachers were energised and enthused by what they saw and were able to improve their own PE teaching skills as a result. Some asked for copies of the manuals so that they could improve their knowledge and skills further.

Personal Story

- 194.** A teacher from Holy Family Primary School in North Belfast talks about his schools involvement with the North Belfast Play Forum:

"We were invited to take part by coaches from the Waterworks Sports Facility/ Play Forum. The varied programme of activities and coaching has been ongoing for a period of four years. Basketball, Tag-rugby and Soccer programmes were specifically aimed for P5. Years 6 and 7 received Gaelic and Hurling coaching."

- 195.** When asked about the schools overall view of the project the teacher's enthusiasm shone through:

"The benefits of this coaching for our children cannot be understated!"

Other points made by this teacher include:

- Participation – All children could participate and achieve;
- Self-esteem – All children were encouraged and supported in each programme regardless of their sporting ability;
- Achievement – Children felt that they had achieved in sport through the fun and engaging activities planned and delivered through the Waterworks;
- Fun – All programmes encouraged fun and enjoyment of sport regardless of gender or ability;
- Healthy living – All programmes encouraged the children to be active, fit and lead a healthy lifestyle; and
- Success – Children were invited to participate in a tournament at the end of each coaching programme which provided the children with an opportunity to showcase their talents and to play fairly.

196. The impact on staff was also positive:

"...these programmes enhanced the professional development of our staff. The teachers could experience an effective coach and their coaching techniques...the teachers were encouraged and inspired by the coaches and the programmes." He also commented that the programme complimented the healthy initiatives in the school "...We are a healthy school. These programmes certainly aligned with our policy and provided a fun and meaningful context in which to encourage and teach the benefits of staying fit, active and healthy."

197. It is evident that involvement in the project had been a hugely positive experience for the school:

"We as a school cannot praise enough these programmes, their benefits and what they do for our children. We are very grateful to the Waterworks for providing these excellent programmes and above all helping our children grow and develop... I would like to pay tribute to all the excellent coaches who have provided these brilliant opportunities for our children. Each coach developed a very positive rapport with our children and worked hard to benefit all children...The legacy of the project is the children! They have had a positive experience of sport, opportunities to develop personally, opportunities to have fun, develop their understanding of healthy living and to grow in confidence and self-esteem."

Key Enablers

- 198.** A great deal of effort and time was expended at the start of the programme in building trust, breaking down barriers and getting the engagement of the schools. This hard work has resulted in excellent relationships between all the partners involved.
- 199.** From September 2007 a revised curriculum in Northern Ireland introduced Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) into primary schools. This proved to be an enabler in engaging schools in the Sports 4 Schools Programme as it facilitated schools in meeting their PDMU objectives by taking part in the Fair Play Festivals.
- 200.** A further key factor in the success of the Sports 4 Schools Programme was the standard of the coaching provided by the North Belfast Play Forum. One of the multi-skills coaches is currently studying for a sports degree at the University of Ulster and has previously completed a four-year course on teaching methods and dealing with conflict through sports. This level of skill and knowledge has greatly contributed to the success of the programme.
- 201.** Finally, delivering the programme in a fun way was an enabler to engaging children whose interest might otherwise have been hard to reach, *"We had a lot of fun with it and the children have benefited. We made it fun – we didn't make it competitive – we didn't keep scores."*

Lessons and Sustainability

202. The funding from Sport Northern Ireland has now come to an end and, in the absence of alternative funding, the programme is not sustainable in its present form. North Belfast Play Forum will return to its previous format and deliver to only two schools at a time. They will cluster the schools by delivering the programme first to two girls schools from each community and then to two boys schools. There is some uncertainty as to whether even this level will be sustainable in the future as the programme's delivery is dependent on the continuation of funding in some form.

203. The programme itself has been developed and fine tuned and is ready to be implemented if funding continues.

"We got the finished article in the last year – it was near enough perfect at the end. We put in a lot of work to make the schools understand the benefits to the children. The relationships with the schools is fantastic as they know the value of the programme. If we had more funding they could roll out the finished article now from day one."

204. The Sports 4 Schools Programme has left a legacy with the teachers who have been enthused and encouraged and who have learned some of the skills base to continue.

"Teachers have watched us deliver and they have seen the value of what we did and have learned from us."

205. It has also left a legacy with the children who have developed their physical and motor skills in a way that they would not otherwise have done. Furthermore the programme has paved the way for some children to go on to participate at club level who may not have had the opportunity before.

206. Finally the programme has left a legacy with North Belfast Play Forum, whose profile with local children, parents, teachers and Education Boards has been enhanced. This is likely to lead to further partnerships and joint programmes in the future, provided that appropriate funding can be secured. It is worth noting that the Belfast Education and Library Board was not highlighted as a significant stakeholder in the development and delivery of the project, presenting thus a potential development opportunity for the project in the future.

CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL - ACTIVE INCLUSION

- 207.** Around 20% of Northern Ireland's population experiences some form of disability. Participation in sport and physical recreation by people with disabilities is low, with just 10% participating at least once per week. Eighty-five percent of people with disabilities in Northern Ireland do not participate at all in sport and physical recreation³¹.
- 208.** Craigavon Borough Council's Community Sport Active Inclusion Programme has focused on delivery of programmes targeting older people and those with a disability. The Council works with a range of statutory bodies and local groups, for example, the Sport and Leisure Users Group (SLUG). SLUG is a forum that facilitates people with disabilities to raise issues about access to leisure and physical activity. It also works with local statutory agencies to assist programme planning and to disseminate local information about activities. Sport Northern Ireland invested a total £50,533 in the Active Inclusion project through the Sport in Our Community Programme.

Exemplar Projects

Shine

- 209.** In 2007, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust identified a gap in sports provision for children with disabilities during the summer holidays. The Trust was keen to establish a specific scheme for children with disabilities, focussed on physical activity, which would also include their siblings.
- 210.** The first pilot scheme was delivered in the summer of 2007 at Craigavon Leisure Centre for 35 children and young people. Since then an annual summer scheme caters for children with learning and physical disabilities between the ages of seven and 15. The programme is jointly delivered by a partnership that includes Craigavon Borough Council and Mencap with support from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Sport Northern Ireland's Sport in our Community Programme.
- 211.** The Community Sports Development Officer (CSDO) in Craigavon Borough Council is responsible for organisation, planning and delivering quality specialist coaching sessions for the scheme. Typical activities each summer include Soccer, Badminton, Gaelic Games, Swimming, Dance, Aerobics, Volleyball, Golf and Outdoor Pursuits.
- 212.** The Shine Programme provides access to sport and physical activity to participants who may not have been able to take part before. It also gives them access to quality coaching from coaches who are experienced in including people with disabilities. There is a social aspect to the programme too as participants spend time away from their usual carers and in the company of new people.

³¹ Sport Northern Ireland and Disability Sports NI (2008) Access to Sports Facilities for People with Disabilities. Design Guidelines.

Boccia

213. Boccia is promoted by the CSDO in Craigavon Borough Council through the monthly Pan Disability Boccia League. The aims for the League are to create opportunities for people to meet others, to be active and to develop their skills so that they can play in the league and meet other people. A further aim of the project was to train the disability group leaders to deliver the programme so that the sport could be played on a regular basis in their own centres. The group activity leaders were offered coaching in Boccia Level 1. Those who took the course represented a range of local groups including those that deal with brain injury and mental health service users. The coaching will enable the activity leaders to undertake refereeing and to promote Boccia throughout the Southern Board area.

Impacts

Shine

- 214.** To date Shine has been very successful in attracting and maintaining participation. Both the young people involved and their siblings enjoy participating in the scheme. This is demonstrated by their enthusiasm and their return to the programme year after year. Furthermore, the project provides a welcome support for families caring for the young people. For most of these families it is the only summer provision they can access throughout the school holidays.
- 215.** Comments from parents have included:
- "the scheme gave my child a lot of independence."*
- "it gives him the opportunity to meet with other children and mix with them as during the summer he has little opportunity to do so."*
- "it helped my child to learn to participate with others."*
- 216.** The only criticism of the programme has been that it takes place for a very short time and only once over the summer period. Feedback from parents suggests that the scheme would have a more positive impact if it ran more than once per year. It is also difficult to measure any physical benefits from such a short programme.
- 217.** Despite the short length of the programme it has provided an opportunity to promote leisure activities to families who may have difficulty accessing general leisure and recreational provision. The CSDO commented that it was evident that participants are happy with the programme, particularly as they can try sports that they have never tried before – the CSDO is aware that new activities need to be introduced each year to keep the programme fresh. Participants also get to meet people both non disabled and disabled, helping to break down barriers and provide opportunities for integration.
- 218.** The Shine Programme also enables coaches to expand their experience in working with children with a disability. Further positive impacts are improved relations with other agencies especially with Mencap and Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

Boccia

- 219.** Participants in the Pan Disability Boccia League have developed their skills in playing the sport and have also reaped the benefits of being part of a wider social network. The impacts of this social networking upon confidence, mood and self-esteem are not to be underrated. As one participant told us:

“the physical aspect of life is very important to me as a disabled person but it is the social aspect that is really good and has built my confidence”.

- 220.** Others have been able to develop skills both physical and social and as they grow in confidence they have been able, with the help of coaches, to develop the necessary skills to enable them to take a more active part through refereeing. Many of the Boccia players are now able to compete with others in the league and group leaders are able to deliver Boccia in their own centres.

- 221.** As the numbers participating have increased, local health professionals have begun to see the potential benefits for their patients and the CSDO reports an increasing number of referrals from health practitioners.

- 222.** Some participants have broadened their physical activities because of their experience in Boccia. One coach said that participants often go on to have ‘taster’ sessions at the gym and the wide range available gives them a chance to do things they never did before. He commented:

“There are a lot of spin offs from Boccia to other activities such as cycling and walking as well as interests in nutrition and health.”

“As their body image improves so does their health and they take a greater interest in health issues and their own health.”

Personal Story

- 223.** Andrew was once non disabled but in his own words ‘never sporty’. A few years ago, Andrew suffered a brain tumour and as a result is deaf in one ear. He also has a speech impairment, poor balance and has difficulty with fine motor movement and general mobility. He uses a wheelchair to get about.

- 224.** After his illness, Andrew became very introverted. He was aware of his impairments and was extremely shy about socialising. He lacked confidence in general and placed a very low value upon himself and his abilities.

- 225.** Andrew first came into contact with the Craigavon CSDO five years ago through Fit 4 Life, a programme for adults with a disability that offers tailored one on one exercise. He took these first tentative steps towards exercise because of a need to maintain his strength:

“physically developing my upper body strength is paramount for me as a wheelchair user.”

226. As his basic fitness began to improve, Andrew got involved in Boccia. As well as helping him with fitness, Boccia opened the door to a new circle of people and he began to feel more comfortable socialising with others. His confidence and self-esteem began to improve and he began playing in the Boccia league whose competitive aspect he very much enjoyed. He also gained a lot of information from the CSDO on diet and nutrition which he recognised as important alongside physical activity in healthy living.

"I was 18½ stone and am keen to keep my weight down but I still like the occasional Mars bar!"

227. Andrew is now firmly established as a regular Boccia player. Taking part in both the physical and social sides of Boccia has improved his confidence to such an extent that he now enjoys many other activities in the leisure centre. On the morning we met him he was on his way to the gym, where he goes twice a week to work out with new found friends.

228. Andrew's new found confidence and self-esteem, which he puts down to his involvement in Boccia and other community sport activities, have also enabled him to take an active role in the Sports Leisure User Group (SLUG). His involvement in this group has recently culminated in his recent appointment as chairperson of SLUG.

Key Enablers

Shine

229. Many of the projects led by the CSDOs in Craigavon have a health related link and very strong partnerships have been built between Craigavon Borough Council's community sport team, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Mencap. These partnerships have proved to be key enablers in jointly developing and delivering projects. For example, organisations involved with disabled children are keen to make referrals for each Shine summer scheme. The health partners see the benefits for both the children and the families in an area of high deprivation and the Shine summer scheme has become an indispensable tool for the health professionals to enable not only the children to access physical activity but also for parents to experience and benefit from some respite.

230. Success breeds success and the positive impacts of the Shine Programme have been transmitted by word of mouth to other families whose children then become participants.

231. The skills base of the coaches and their knowledge of working with disabled children is also a key enabler to providing a quality coaching service and an enjoyable and fun experience. This grows as each year passes and the ability of coaches to adapt and change the programme contributes towards its continued success.

Boccia

- 232.** As with the Shine Programme, there has been close partnership working with health professionals who have become key enablers and now refer participants to Boccia.
- 233.** The perseverance of the Community Sport team was also crucial with the group at whom Boccia is aimed. Putting effort into building trust with participants was key to enabling a successful programme as the self-esteem and confidence of the target group was so low and many felt that a leisure centre was not a place for them. Continuity of the CSDO post has helped build relationships and has made a significant difference in developing programmes such as Boccia that truly meet local needs.
- 234.** The expertise of coaches in delivering the programme and their knowledge and understanding of the needs of disabled people was also a very important contributor to the success of the programme.

Lessons and Sustainability

Shine

- 235.** The programme grew from an identified gap in needs provision for learning and physically disabled children and their families. It appears to be an object lesson in developing programmes that genuinely meet the needs of local people.
- 236.** The programme now has 35 regular participants and although funding has to be found each year for the programme it has been so popular and successful that it seems likely that Craigavon Borough Council will continue to fund it. The programme would however benefit from being repeated at intervals throughout the year so that the physical and social impacts could be enjoyed for longer periods. This has the potential to provide improved quality of life for their participants and their families.
- 237.** Whether or not the Shine Programme is sustainable, there is a coaching legacy. Coaches have learned to deliver programmes to people with a disability and have gained new sets of skills and insight to their target group.

Boccia

- 238.** As health professionals see the benefits of Boccia, they do not hesitate to refer patients and numbers of those interested in the sport has increased. On the demand side, the project seems likely to remain relevant to local needs in the future. On the supply side, Boccia participants have been trained to carry out refereeing, thereby contributing to the self-sustainability of the sport and Active Community Coaches are now trained to deliver quality coaching to participants, a resource that will continue into the future.

DERRY HEALTHY CITIES – TARGETING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- 239.** Derry Healthy Cities (DHC) was set up in 1992 to promote the concept of 'health for all' by acting as a catalyst for positive change in local, economic, environmental and cultural policies that affect people's health. It is part of a network of healthy cities that have adopted the principles of the World Health Organization's Health for All Strategy.
- 240.** DHC works in partnership with a range of sectors, agencies and providers to promote improvements in health and a long-term reduction in health inequalities. Its work extends to Derry / Londonderry, Limavady, Strabane and Foyle. These are areas with significant deprivation and 19% to 23% of the population with a long term limiting illness, health problem or disability. In relation to multiple deprivation, the district council areas of Strabane, Derry and Limavady rank 2nd, 3rd and 7th respectively out of the 26 local government areas in Northern Ireland.
- 241.** In 2005, a Derry Healthy Cities Press Release summed up its achievements to date as follows:
- "DHC was the birthplace of projects such as the Derry Cycle Forum, the Derry Children's Commission, and the City Health Plan. In more recent years DHC has engaged over 2000 men in Men's Health MOT's, led on the development of workplace health initiatives, provided support to countless community health initiatives, developed urban play space, provided physical activity opportunities for the disabled and co-ordinated development of a collective approach to the regions alcohol culture."*³²
- 242.** Since then Derry Healthy Cities has been involved in a widening range of projects and in 2010 was successful in achieving membership of the World Health Organisation's European Network of Healthy Cities. It received an investment of £77,040 from Sport Northern Ireland through the Sport in Our Community Programme.

Exemplar Projects

North West Lifelong Learning Association Armchair Aerobics

- 243.** As part of the Older Men's Project, staff at the North West Lifelong Learning Association (NWLLA) were trained to provide armchair aerobics to disabled people who attended computer courses (men and women). This was a novel partnership that took an existing non-community sport project and bolted on a component related to physical activity and well-being. The existing project was a computer class run in Limavady by NWLLA. This is a beginner's class aimed at older people for whom traditional computer courses carry a chill factor as they are usually housed within formal educational settings or are inaccessible because of the distance to travel.
- 244.** The idea for the aerobics came from the class coordinator who had read about similar exercise sessions taking place in Japan before workers operated machinery. Those sessions had resulted in better fitness and fewer accidents at work. The coordinator felt that the fitness activity could benefit those attending the computer class in terms of their concentration. He also hoped that introducing an exercise session to what is a captive audience could bring physical activity to older people who might not otherwise have attempted it. It was also hoped that the exercise could directly benefit the class participants by helping to combat Repetitive Strain Syndrome and by getting blood flow moving.

³² Mayor acknowledges fifteen years of Healthy Cities, Derry City Council, 3rd May 2005

245. Participants coming to the computer class were invited to take part in ten minutes armchair aerobics before starting work on their computers. A number of these participants had disabilities – one had suffered a stroke, whilst another had a heart problem and others had difficulties with mobility.

Hands That Talk Tai Chi

246. Hands that Talk seeks to improve the quality of life for deaf people, promote social inclusion and equal opportunities, provide access to education, services and employment, improve communication between deaf and hearing people and help eliminate discrimination against deaf people. Foyle Active Futures, an initiative of Derry Healthy Cities, supported a project in partnership with Hands That Talk that provided interpreter services to enable people with hearing disabilities to take part in physical activities. The Derry Healthy Cities Community Sports Development Officer undertook a needs assessment evaluation with members of the group and identified Tai Chi as a physical activity they would like to take part in. The Tai Chi class was attended by 14 people over a 12-week period.

247. Sign language interpretation was provided for the group. Sessions were provided that explained the benefits of Tai Chi for both physical and mental health and there were practical sessions of Tai Chi movements.

248. The support from Derry Healthy Cities enabled participation by deaf participants who otherwise would not have been able to take part in existing Tai Chi sessions and is a good example of how small provision can assist access to people with disabilities who would otherwise find the barriers to participation to be insurmountable.

Impacts

North West Lifelong Learning Association Armchair Aerobics

249. This project reached a group of people, some of whom had little or no other access to exercise or physical activity. Measurements taken from the group before and after participation showed improvements in blood pressure, resting heart rate and peak flow.

250. The project was novel to the extent that it built on a physical activity component to an already existing class. However, to some extent this was seen as negative by some of the class members. Their view was that they signed up to take a computer class, which they much enjoyed, and spending 10 to 15 minutes on armchair aerobics at the beginning of each session ate into what they called their 'valuable computer time'. Furthermore, whilst some in the class had disabilities and some took little or no exercise, others were already leading active lives. For these more active participants, the sense of being kept away from their computers was at its strongest.

251. In spite of these negatives, some of the participants were clearly benefiting from the exercise. One participant thought that the armchair aerobics had added to her knowledge of how to take mild, but effective exercise and said that she now did the exercises at home. In particular, she found the ankle and wrist movements to be beneficial. Another said that she enjoyed the exercise, but would have liked to spend more time doing them. Therein lies the ambiguity in the participants' reaction. Whilst most were getting some benefits and some would have liked to do more armchair aerobics, the preciousness of their computer time was paramount. Whilst it would have appeared an excellent and innovative idea to build the physical activity component in to an already existing class, the competition for time was frustrating for most where the computer training was their priority. For this group a separate armchair aerobics class, held at a separate time would probably be more appropriate.

Hands That Talk Tai Chi

252. By providing interpreter services for Hands That Talk Tai Chi, Derry Healthy Cities enabled a group of people with hearing impairments to participate in physical activity. These were people who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to be involved, indeed 14% of the group had not taken part in any physical activity prior to the Tai Chi classes.

253. Impacts on the participants varied with some saying that it was a good way to cope with the effects of stress in their lives. Some participants felt that their sleep patterns improved and there was general agreement that the classes increased participants' health and fitness. Others commented that they had lost weight and that their blood pressure had 'improved', whilst another talks of having achieved an inner strength that helps her through the bad days.

254. One participant enjoyed the Tai Chi so much that she undertook training in Qigong and is now able to take classes herself. Because this woman is herself hearing impaired, she is able to deliver classes very effectively to others with similar disabilities and her qualification has enabled the class to continue with great empathy between instructor and participants.

Key Enablers

255. The Derry Healthy Cities initiative has formed excellent partnerships across a range of sectors and with a wide range of agencies. This partnership working has been a key enabler of its success and has been underpinned by skilled staff who understand the needs of the people and the area. The ability of these staff to network effectively and to match need to appropriate providers has also been key to the success of DHC.

256. The partnerships and networks that have been formed by the efforts of Derry Healthy Cities have also resulted in agencies coming together to provide various sources of funding. This has helped many projects, which would have been unsustainable by any one individual funder, get off the ground with the support of multiple financial inputs.

257. Creating and delivering an appropriate programme of activity has enabled projects to be successful and to deliver the right outcomes for their participants. Undertaking needs assessments and designing physical activity that is tuned to those needs has been important in this respect and the Hands That Talk Tai Chi project is a good example of this approach.

Lessons and Sustainability

- 258.** There are different and contrasting lessons to be learned from the two example projects above. Hands That Talk Tai Chi was delivered after a needs assessment and discussions with the group about what physical activity might suit them. This resulted in a very successful project that participants enjoyed because it was matched to their needs. NWLLA Armchair Aerobics, however was bolted on to an existing activity because the staff felt that the participants would benefit from it. With different members of the latter group saying things like: “it just wasted our computer time” and “leave it as a separate thing, we don’t want it eating into our IT time”; it is clear that encouraging a captive audience to participate in physical activity as part of an existing, non physical activity, project does not always result in the best outcomes. The lesson here is that prior consultation and building physical activity programmes around the expressed needs of the target group results in greater impacts and generally better outcomes.
- 259.** Hands That Talk Tai Chi clearly engaged its target group more effectively than NWLLA Armchair Aerobics and left a greater legacy. The emergence of a Tai Chi instructor from the Hands that Talk group is a good example of empowering people to help themselves and their group. Whilst there is a legacy in NWLLA in terms of the training that the instructors received, its usefulness here is less, partly because the legacy is not owned by the members of the group themselves and partly because the target group do not want to continue with Armchair Aerobics as part of their IT project. The lesson here is that engagement with a group and the skilling of its members, as with Hands that Talk, is much more effective than displacing a much liked activity, NWLLA IT, with one that was never the original reason for people joining the group.
- 260.** Having said that, the NWLLA Armchair Aerobics was, after all, a pilot project, run at least in part to test out an idea. What it has produced in some of the participants is the desire for further physical activity. It has also shown that it would be better to provide opportunities for this, outside of the IT project. We also feel that there would have been more positive comments about the impact of the Armchair Aerobics if the displacement of IT time had not been such a hot issue with the group.
- 261.** Further, members of the NWLLA group expressed dissatisfaction at what they called “the lack of opportunities” to undertake physical exercise within or near to Limavady, especially during the summer months when they felt that children’s activities displaced them from their local leisure centre. Given the expressed wish to continue physical activity and the perceived lack of opportunity to do so, Limavady over 50s may be a group for whom more targeted opportunities for physical activity would be appropriate.

NORTHERN, SOUTHERN and SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION and LIBRARY BOARDS

- 262.** Physical Literacy (PL) has been formally described as *“the ability to use body management, locomotor and object control skills in a competent manner with the capacity to apply them with confidence in settings which may lead to sustained involvement in sport and physical recreation.”*³³
- 263.** Adopting a Physical Literacy approach allows professionals to work with young people in developing core movement skills without forcing them into a narrower skill set that might be associated with a particular sport. Physical Literacy coaches typically support individuals to develop their Physical Literacy at novice, intermediate and advanced levels. At novice level, the role of a Physical Literacy Coach is typically to support the individual through a series of stages where they first gain a basic awareness of what a set of movement tasks requires, then develop an idea of how the task is performed, then experiment with how their body can move and ultimately find more efficient ways of performing the task. Intermediate and advanced levels follow similar progressive development suited to the particular level being followed.
- 264.** In Northern Ireland, Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) are taught as a means of developing PL in children. FMS is endorsed by all five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) as part of the revised primary school curriculum in Northern Ireland. In Years 1 and 2 Physical Development and Movement exposes children to FMS that improve balance, co-ordination, control, locomotion and manipulation.
- 265.** To help promote the development of FMS and PL, Sport Northern Ireland provided funding totalling £465,575 for Physical Literacy Coordinators in three Education and Library Boards - North Eastern, South Eastern and Southern. Teachers attended courses in FMS and were then supported in developing and delivering a Physical Literacy programme in their schools.

Exemplar Projects

Supporting the Development of Physical Literacy

- 266.** Physical Literacy Coordinators have provided a wide range of support and help to teachers within schools in their Boards. The key area is supporting the dissemination and delivery of the FMS Programme. Typical activities have included, ensuring that FMS is incorporated in the School Development Plan, holding planning meetings and delivering information to teachers throughout the school.
- 267.** Most primary schools do not have dedicated PE teachers, therefore in developing a School Plan, Physical Literacy Coordinators usually work with the school's PE coordinator to produce the plan that takes into account Fundamental Movement Skills in an educationally relevant system from Year 1 through to Year 7. The aim is to ensure that each child is taught all 22 movement skills in a range of different situations, including explicit skill teaching, applying the skill to teacher organised activities and applying their skill to familiar sports and competitive situations. This ensures that each child is equipped with the skills to take part confidently and successfully.

³³ Delaney, Brian J.; Donnelly, Paul; News, John; and Haughey, Tandy J. Improving Physical Literacy, Sport Northern Ireland, February 2008

- 268.** Teachers have the opportunity to receive two days of training in FMS. The Physically Literacy Coordinators then support teachers to incorporate FMS into their PE lessons. For example, discussion sessions are held with teachers to support them in lesson organisation and management and to answer their questions about the 22 Fundamental Movement Skills. The support and discussion meetings also provide an opportunity to discuss which area of learning will be used to deliver FMS, for example, games, dance, gymnastics or athletics. The Physical Literacy Coordinator can also use these sessions to assess the needs of an individual school, for example, the available space and equipment.
- 269.** Coordinators also monitor their activities to ensure that they are delivering the kind of support that teachers need in order to produce the required FMS outcomes. For instance, teachers are encouraged to use observation sheets as a form of assessment of children's ability and as a guide to the general skill level of each class. Teachers use this observation as a baseline as to where to pitch their lesson and what level of skill the children are working to within their given activities.
- 270.** Coordinators are also responsible for developing and supporting links between physical activity in schools and the community. For example, coordinators have liaised with the Sports Partnerships within their area on the delivery of multi-skills and talent identification programmes. They have encouraged local organisations in the area to put up posters in schools advertising their clubs e.g. Wildcats, local GAA clubs and boxing clubs and have met with PE Co-ordinators in schools to develop more links between community clubs and encourage more afterschool activities. Other activities have included looking at playground layout to see if better use can be made to enable the extension of FMS into the playground and to encourage children to be more active in their play. In developing links with partners and the wider community, Physical Literacy Coordinators have also put schools in touch with relevant local partners such as the Youth Sport Trust and other organisations.
- 271.** The three Physical Literacy Coordinators also support each other to share good practice and to continuously develop the implementation and development of the course.

Impacts

- 272.** There has been a very clear impact on the children who have been involved. Children have become much more aware of their movement abilities and motor skills and are more able to participate in physical activities because of these improvements. As one teacher said, "the children loved it...it opened up opportunities for them using wall bars and ropes that we never knew existed before."
- 273.** One teacher has seen marked improvements amongst some of the children in her school. She gave the example of a girl who was 'heavy for her age'. When presented with the exercises this child refused point blank at first to attempt any kind of activity. *"This was a child who never seemed to have her PE kit with her! She was self-conscious at her perceived lack of ability."* However, the teacher persevered with the child, encouraged and supported her to the point where the child began to realise that she could undertake the movements and was actually quite good at them. *"Now she brings her PE kit with her every day, she looks forward to PE and has started to play netball."*

- 274.** One of the teachers reported that cooperative play and team playing have also seen marked improvements and children see themselves as part of a team which they don't want to let down. She has also observed a wider family involvement. For example when children took home FMS literature, including a range of activities which could be done inside and outside the home, parents began to work on the skills with the children at home.
- 275.** Some of the teachers involved feel that they have developed both personally and professionally because of their involvement in the FMS and Physical Literacy programmes. For example, teachers stated that they enjoyed their involvement and the support of the Physical Literacy Coordinator. They found it a refreshing recap for ideas for gymnastics lessons. Teachers felt that the support provided by the Physical Literacy Coordinator helped them to integrate FMS teaching successfully into their PE lessons and now have the confidence to continue to do so.

Personal Story

- 276.** Jacqueline is a teacher in Garvagh. She had the opportunity to attend the two day FMS training course and to become the PE coordinator for the school. Being involved in the Physical Literacy Project has given Jacqueline a great lift in terms of her professional development and in terms of her relationships with other teachers in the school.
- 277.** In this school, dance and gymnastics were chosen as the focus of FMS. Along with other teachers, Jacqueline observed the Physical Literacy Coordinator work with the children for five weeks. Jacqueline then chaired a meeting with her colleagues and they put together a vision for what they were trying to achieve in the school through Physical Literacy. Jacqueline felt that it was important to try to pick out the most essential activities for the pupil catchment in her particular school, which is situated in a country area where many children have an active outdoor life.
- 278.** Jacqueline developed notes and other materials for three groups – Year 1 and 2, Year 3, 4 and 5 and Year 6. She tailored the activities for each age group and provided materials to her colleagues that ensured the activities were planned and progressive. In an indication of the schools commitment to this work, the head teacher gave Jacqueline three days away from her classroom duties in order to complete this material.
- 279.** Jacqueline feels that her work on FMS has given her a worthwhile role within the school and has quickened the pace at which she has been able to achieve a value added impact into school activities. Commenting on how her support seems to have helped other teachers, she said:
- “some teachers looked a bit aghast at first at the gymnastics and dance movements that we were asking them to teach. But they have changed their minds now and those who liked the idea have become very enthusiastic.”*
- 280.** Clearly, Jacqueline's own enthusiasm and hard work has helped her colleagues to embrace FMS, to enjoy it and to pass it on successfully to their pupils.
- 281.** Jacqueline has also gained a great deal of confidence from working with her colleagues and supporting them in their implementation of FMS and feels that her new role in the school will help with her professional performance and her assessment against the Performance Review and Staff Development scheme

Key Enablers

- 282.** The three Physical Literacy Coordinators worked closely together and acted as a support mechanism for each other. This partnership working and their sharing of good practice has been a key enabler of the success of the project.
- 283.** The structures and processes employed have also facilitated success. Placing the Physical Literacy Coordinators within the Boards enabled them to tap into the good relationships between the Boards and its schools and to use established mechanisms of communication. If the project had been implemented from outside the Boards, then the project could have suffered from a much longer lead in time in developing relationships.
- 284.** By not attempting to put coaches directly into schools and working instead through PE coordinators just three Physical Literacy Coordinators were able to have an impact on a wide range of schools. This is a very good example of providing just enough supplementary support to schools to help them maximise the abilities and impacts of their own staff and resources.
- 285.** Finally, the enthusiasm of the Physical Literacy Coordinators and the school staff with which they worked made it possible to deliver fun experiences to the children whilst delivering improvements in their movement skills.

Lessons and Sustainability

- 286.** What is clear is that there is a great legacy within the schools that have been part of the project. The PE coordinators who took the FMS training remain as a resource in each school, alongside the willingness of the schools to continue with FMS as part of the curriculum. Having said that, this legacy will diminish quickly over time without training for further teachers, refresher training for those already trained and without the kind of programme development that would only be possible with the continued existence of Physical Literacy Coordinator posts.
- 287.** It has been suggested that future development, especially if Physical Literacy Coordinators are to disappear, should be based around clusters of schools which could provide mutual support and refresher training. However, it seems unlikely that this could be achieved in a resource neutral fashion. Given the proven success of the model of Coordinators placed within Boards, any future resources are most likely to achieve their maximum effect if they are directed at extending the Physical Literacy in schools project rather than developing an alternative set of structures and processes.

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL AND COLERAINE BOROUGH COUNCIL

288. Using the 2001 Census the resident population of Coleraine is 56,315. Of this, 22% were under 16 years old and 18% had a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability. The areas targeted specifically by the Wildcats Programme in Coleraine include the communities living within the Ballysally, Churchland and Cross Glebe wards. All three wards are within the top (most deprived) 20% of electoral wards within the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010. In Ballymoney (resident population 26,894) the project was targeted at two wards Newhill (urban) and Ballyhoe and Corkey. These are the two most deprived wards in the Ballymoney Local Government District. Sport Northern Ireland invested £131,128 in Ballymoney Borough Council and Coleraine Borough Council for the delivery of the Sport in Our Community Programme.

Exemplar Project

Wildcats Activ8 (Multi-Skills Clubs)

- 289.** Wildcats began seven years ago in the Coleraine and Ballymoney Council areas with a pilot project designed to complement PE in Primary schools by teaching basic core movement skills to children. The programme was co-founded by Ballymoney Borough Council and Coleraine Borough Council. The originators of Wildcats had been working closely with a group of seven to 11 year olds and recognised that children of this age were exhibiting poor levels of basic movement skills such as throwing, catching and jumping. Many of these children were not used to playing cooperatively with others and had poor knowledge and limited experience of team working.
- 290.** The absence of such skills was also recognised by performance sport coaches who found that children wanting to enter specific sports did not have the required basic skills. Coaches found themselves having to help young people gain the necessary basic proficiency before they could begin sport specific coaching. The Wildcats Programme set out to address both these needs. Firstly to ensure that children had opportunities to develop proficiency in basic movements and, secondly, to ensure that those who wished to go on to take up a sport had the necessary basic level of movement skill on which to build.
- 291.** Today, the Coleraine / Ballymoney Wildcats Activ8 Programme is an inclusive after school programme built around multi-skills coaching. The Wildcats coaches teach children the ABC of sport: Agility, Balance, and Co-ordination. The programme is delivered in a structured form that also improves co-ordination, body movement, team skills, individual skills, confidence in sport, enjoyment of sport and the ability to adapt multi-skills to specific sports skills. Whilst the core aims of the programme are based on physical skills, it is also aimed at increasing self-confidence, self-esteem, and team working in a fun, safe and challenging way, without a competitive element.
- 292.** The children's progress is evaluated at each stage of the programme in advance of them moving on to the next level. Originally, this was organised around a system of achievement where children became a particular Wildcat for each year in the programme: a Cheetah in year one, a Puma in year two, a Leopard in year three, a Tiger in year four and a Lion, King of the Jungle, in year five. On completion of each year, badges imprinted with the cats were awarded and displayed on an armband along with

Wildcat t-shirts, posters and Wildcat membership cards that had information (a fact-file) about each wildcat. This system of achievement was very popular with children and was an enjoyable motivational tool that added to the whole feeling of belonging to a club.

- 293.** The original Wildcats Programme has now been rolled out across other parts of Northern Ireland. It is currently known as Wildcats Activ8 and also has a strong emphasis on healthy eating and nutrition, reinforced by the school based Activ8 Eatwell Programme. Children keep a diary of what they have been eating and drinking and teachers reinforce the message of healthy eating over a six week period.
- 294.** Wildcats Activ8 has different motivational tools to those in the original programme. Instead of Wildcat badges and fact files on wild cats, there is instead a pathway, which ensures a natural progression for children over a four level process. Children are introduced to fundamental skills for sport during level one – Wildcubs. These skills for sport are further developed during levels two and three which are termed Bronze and Silver. In level four – Gold. These fundamental skills are applied to specific sports within a Multi-Sports Academy. Upon completion of the pathway children can then go on to join a junior sports club or local authority recreational sports club which will enable their continued involvement in sport and physical recreation. As progression continues, sessions begin to focus on individual skills and key sporting elements.

Impacts

- 295.** The Wildcats Programme has received wide recognition:
- Coleraine Borough Council was shortlisted as a finalist in the Change Champion in Practice category at the annual Northern Ireland Local Government Association Awards scheme in January 2010. Regarded as the Oscars of Local Government, the awards aim to reward the very best initiatives of local authorities and recognise the excellent service they deliver;
 - Activ8 has been awarded the London Olympics 2012 Inspire Mark;
 - The two original and founding coaches of Wildcats jointly won the UK Children's Coach of the Year Award 2010 for their contribution and commitment to coaching young people;
 - Wildcats has been recognised as a best practice initiative by Sport Northern Ireland; and
 - The programme has now been rolled out across Northern Ireland and is now run after school and in community leisure centres. Sport Northern Ireland have ensured the availability of specially trained coaches. As one SDO said, *"Wildcats is now operating across 52 different centres where nothing was happening for this age group before Wildcats."*
- 296.** The number of children taking part in Wildcats has grown every year and its popularity is evidenced by sufficient numbers going on from one cohort to the next to maintain each programme level. The coaches see improvements in children's development from day one, not only in the achievement of physical activity but in an increase in confidence:
- "Some children who start the programme are very shy and unsure of their ability, but they quickly draw confidence from the coach and also from the other children and from what they themselves find they can do. They feel part of the group and of the club and this sense of belonging builds their self-esteem."*

- 297.** The healthy eating messages of Wildcats Activ8 appear to have been absorbed by those participating and children now bring water and a healthy snack with them to the club instead of fizzy drinks or sweets.
- 298.** The Wildcats Programme has seen the progression of children through all the levels, some of whom have then moved on to membership of sports clubs that include table tennis, cricket, hockey, rugby and junior football clubs.
- 299.** The Coleraine / Ballymoney Wildcats Programme has been widely inclusive. It has appealed to all children including those with disabilities and has drawn participants from ethnic minority groups in the area, particularly from the Chinese and Indian communities.

Personal Story

- 300.** Matthew has a disability called Dyspraxia that impairs motor coordination in his daily activities. Matthew joined Wildcats whilst at primary school and has been through all five levels of the programme. When Matthew first joined Wildcats he had poor physical coordination and could not catch a ball. At the beginning he was unused to cooperating with other children during physical activity. With a self-deprecating smile he told us:
- "I wasn't too good at sharing so I didn't pass the ball to other people at first!"*
- 301.** Matthew has made big improvements in all aspects of physical movement and coordination and after the first year he was much better at basic skills and team play. As he progressed through the Wildcats stages, Matthew has been able to try a number of sports. He really liked playing hockey and badminton. Although he says he was not too good to begin with he has had the satisfaction of seeing his competence grow over the years.
- 302.** Spurred on by the new found confidence that Wildcats gave him in his physical abilities, Matthew undertook extra exercise every week to help improve his co-ordination. Matthew's school teachers have commented on his growing physical abilities and, in particular, the big improvement when he did PE in school.
- 303.** Matthew has also had opportunities to play Kwik Cricket and basketball and continues to play the latter outside of Wildcats. "I've got a basketball set now", he said proudly.
- 304.** Matthew achieved all the Wildcats badges, cheetah, puma, leopard and tiger and the gold, which replaced the lion level. He keeps all the badges in a special case.
- 305.** For Matthew the Wildcats Programme offered a way of engaging with nondisabled children that was just not possible before. He worked diligently to learn all the rules of the games that he played and turned out to be an excellent team player. He found that he was able to get on well with all the other children and was happy to find that he was well liked. Through these encounters, he has made huge social improvements and made a lot of friends.
- 306.** Matthew's mum is rightly proud of her son's achievements. She says that he can mix well with others in sport now. He didn't like PE at all before Wildcats, but the programme has built up his confidence and he really enjoys sports now.

Key Enablers

- 307.** The success of the Wildcats Programme has been built on a number of levels. Firstly, the target group was well known to the originators in their day to day work and they were able to study the activity skills of young children and so identify the gaps in their skills base. As the programme was built on identified need it is unsurprising that it has been popular with the target age group.
- 308.** The Wildcats Programme was carefully pitched at this target age group. The core idea, (based on different Wildcats, fact cards and t-shirts) showed a firm grasp of what would motivate children to participate, and to progress through the system. The tiered levels of coaching – building year on year, have proved both popular and effective.
- 309.** A further enabler to success has been the very close team working between the coaches, and between coaches and the participants. Getting the support and buy in of parents has also been key as has the inclusive nature of the programme which reaches out to all abilities and backgrounds.
- 310.** Other relationships and partnerships have been central to the success of Wildcats. Both CSDOs have built very good relationships, (formal and informal) with local schools, community associations, sports clubs, the Education and Library Board and Sport North East as well as the Activ8 Eatwell Programme and the Food Standards Agency. The CSDOs frequently deliver advice and guidance for example, by visiting schools and community groups to give taster sessions in basic movement skills. These relationships have led to further funding being sourced, but perhaps more importantly, to two way relationships between the providers and the communities that they serve.

Lessons and Sustainability

- 311.** The programme has evolved into Wildcats Activ8 and been rolled out across Northern Ireland. The Coleraine / Ballymoney programme is now self-financing and runs for ten weeks before Christmas and for ten weeks in the New Year. It costs £25 for a 10-week programme or a child can pay as they go at £2.50 per week. The two methods of paying enable children to become involved on a pay as you go basis without incurring an extra charge for doing so. The sustainability of this model is supported by the fact that each year of the programme is fully subscribed.
- 312.** The Coleraine / Ballymoney CSDOs feel, however, that there is room for further improvement in the programme. They recognise the need to update and evaluate the programme on a regular basis. For example, they have already learnt that the old method of 3 x 8 week blocks was not as effective as the current 2 x 10 week blocks.
- 313.** They also see the need for the programme content to be updated and for some of the exercises to be more tailored to needs and abilities of young children from five years of age. They recognise that coaches need additional training to deliver more effectively to young children and to learn how to make the programme engaging and fun. They also see a role for greater involvement for parents and would like to have a parent's information evening especially when the children 'graduate' from the Wildcats. Parents could then become involved in discussion about which sports clubs their children might go on to join.

314. Finally, the evolution of the original Wildcats Programme into Wildcats Activ8 and its delivery throughout Northern Ireland has further enhanced its sustainability. The content of the programme has developed through Wildcats Activ8 and the delivery times have made it more accessible to more children. Rollout throughout Northern Ireland has also made the programme widely available to young children and the national awards that have been won by the programme and its originators give it the kind of profile that should help to attract new cohorts of participants well into the future. The CSDOs also commented that whilst the changing of levels to Bronze / Silver / Gold was initially welcomed by staff, over time they have noticed that the children's identification with these levels is not as strong as the use of the different Wildcats.

PLAYBOARD

315. PlayBoard is a voluntary, not-for-profit organisation working throughout Northern Ireland. Its vision is of 'A society that respects and values the child's right to play as an intrinsic and essential right of childhood'.³⁴ It is Northern Ireland's only province-wide play organisation and has a strong regional membership base, comprising community groups, day care providers, schools, play trainers and local authorities. Sport Northern Ireland invested £554,896 in PlayBoard for the delivery of Fit for Play.

Exemplar Project

Fit for Play

316. Fit for Play grew from a recognition of the need for an intervention focussed on children which would have a positive impact on their health and well-being; particularly in light of the alarming increases in levels of childhood obesity. The aim of Fit for Play was to *'improve the long-term health and well-being of children by increasing physical play opportunities and healthy eating habits for 4-14 year olds-*.

317. The objectives were to:

- Support playworkers in community based play provision to develop good practice in terms of play, physical activity and diet;
- Provide a training programme for community based playworkers; and
- Provide a Quality Award Scheme for community based play projects.

318. The Fit for Play Programme was based on previous programmes delivered by Playboard (e.g. Out 2 Play) which recognised the need for a training and development programme for those working with children with the aim of improving children's health and well-being. It also addressed the need for an accreditation system for staff working with children in play focused provision such as school age childcare, after school projects, junior youth clubs, and church and uniformed organisations.

319. The programme was designed to meet the needs of key target groups, to reflect good practice and engage meaningfully with all key partners. As an illustration of this approach, the Food 4 Play module was developed in partnership with the then Health Promotion Agency (Public Health Agency) and community dieticians drawn from the Trusts and Western Health Action Zone.

³⁴ <http://www.playboard.org/pages/aims---objectives/>

- 320.** A key element of the programme, alongside training staff, was the Fit for Play Quality Award. The Award was first introduced by PlayBoard in 2003 to assist with reducing the risk of long-term health problems, such as coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer, by targeting children aged four-14 years in mainly disadvantaged areas.
- 321.** The Fit for Play Quality Award comprised three modules; Out 2 Play, Skills 4 Play (a Fundamental Movements training module developed in conjunction with the University of Ulster) and Food 4 Play. Successful completion of the modules allowed the play provider to be assessed for the Fit for Play Quality Award, which then resulted in the award of the quality mark.
- 322.** The criteria which enabled groups to achieve the Fit for Play quality award included:
- A ½ hour physical play / physical activity per session for all children;
 - At least one out of five sessions provided outdoors; and
 - Provision of healthy snacks and drinks (milk and water only) with children being involved in the preparation of food in at least one out of five sessions.

Specific initiatives within the programme included engagement with Early Years Social Workers to up-skill and inform them of the developments within the playwork sector. Training was delivered to every team in Northern Ireland after which follow-up support was offered. In one area for example, the Early Years Social Worker had suggested that the registered and sponsored childminders in the Ballymena area were interested in the training. The training had two purposes; to up-skill the childminders' knowledge and practical skills with a focus on indoor and outdoor play and, secondly, to develop a support network which would build relationships between childminders working in rural settings. Following taster sessions, 14 childminders successfully completed the Skills 4 Play module and received a Certificate of Participation.

- 323.** Childminders who attended the training commented:

"The training gave me new ideas of games to play and how to incorporate play into your everyday routine."

"Playing games that you do not need a lot of equipment for is great."

- 324.** Eleven childminders successfully completed the Food for Play module. Comments included:

"My awareness was raised as to the nutritional content of the food we eat and the healthier choices that are available."

"Making different recipes was a good way of learning and a good way to involve children."

Impact

- 325.** An external evaluation report (covering the period 2004-2006) and a report on the sustainability of Fit for Play prepared in late 2009 highlighted the success of the project.

326. Some of the measurable outcomes noted in previous reports include:

Opportunities for outdoor and physical play and access to only healthy snacks:

- 89% of settings now only provide milk and water;
- 75% of children now play outdoors every day; and
- 83% of children are now more physically active.

Raising the awareness of playworkers and childcare staff regarding children's physical activity needs and the importance of healthy eating:

- Over 50% of workers said their understanding of children's physical activity needs had increased.

Encouraging play projects to provide access to space conducive to physical activity both indoors and out and providing staff with the skill and resources to manage the environment and provide healthy snacks:

- 89% of workers can provide an environment that facilitates active play; and
- 85% of workers said their knowledge of diet and nutrition had increased.

Providing skills development and therefore raising capacity and confidence of workers:

- 88% of workers are more confident; and
- 83% of workers in groups that did not apply for the award changed practices in relation to physical play and achieved higher physical activity levels.

Raising awareness at Health Board level and above to ensure that meeting children's play needs are recognised as crucial to ensuring a reduction in obesity and therefore also in Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke and Cancer:

- 'Fit for Play' was cited as a good practice example in the 'Fit Futures' report.

Recurrent funding provided by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board:

- The EHSSB funding was recurrent over a period of three years up to March 2010. This provided salary costs for one Training and Development Officer.

Personal Story³⁵

327. Y is an after schools club based in school grounds. They were able to take the implementation of their learning further than the quality criteria. Fit for Play advocated time out in the forest where children have access to trees. Y group did not have access to a forest area so they purchased a full size tree! On the day of its arrival the school had to be closed for health and safety reasons while the tree was brought in by a crane and set on a grassy mound in the grounds. The shape of the tree was unusual; when it was lying horizontally a large portion of it was about five feet in the air. The children climb the tree, build dens underneath it and jump off it. A little girl, aged six, said that her aim was to climb up on the tree and shimmy along to the edge and then drop down. She had been trying for several weeks but still hadn't managed to achieve it. All the older children were doing it and she wanted to also. One of the playworkers told us that the child was really determined to do it but had not been able to yet.

³⁵ http://www.playboard.org/downloads/FFP_Final_Evaluation_Report.pdf

“We watched her that day and by the end of the day she finally made it.”

The playworkers had been watching her and made a big fuss of her when she jumped off. This child had been allowed to assess and manage the risk for herself and she slowly pushed her boundaries each time until she could achieve her goal. The playworkers had, through the training, developed the confidence to watch her while letting her make decisions for herself. They knew not to interrupt her play as long as she was safe.

Key Enablers

328. The success of the Fit for Play project is a result of a number of factors. Firstly, there was a clearly identified need for an intervention targeting the physical well-being and eating habits of children in play settings. The training provided a clear pathway of support, information and advice to playworkers and other professionals working with children. As a result of the training, there has been an increase in awareness amongst staff with regard to healthy eating and participation in physical activity as well as acquiring new skills to implement this knowledge.

Lessons and Sustainability

329. The project not only reached its intended target of community based play providers, but also made available both the training and the Quality Award to a range of other organisations and groups, highlighting its wider relevance, its appeal and significance as a model of effective practice.

330. The sustainability report completed in late 2009 reviewed the key outcomes of the programme, considered the strategic and policy context in which the programme operated and consulted with a wide range of stakeholders. It was noted that:

The need and rationale for Fit for Play clearly remains. The impetus given by the concerns around children’s health and well-being, highlighted in the focus upon childhood obesity, still remain a key target for the Executive and the Departments of Health, Education, Culture, Social Development and Rural Development. A single programme is not going to be the only answer, however the work done through an initiative such as Fit for Play offers a model which goes to the heart of the issue and offers a clear and simple solution. Active play clearly makes a difference and if resourced and supported contributes to the health and well-being of children and influences the behaviour of parents, carers and providers.³⁶

331. The authors note, however, that any future programme development is set within a challenging environment, with the impact of the Review of Public Administration and the recession being significant factors.

³⁶ Blueprint (2009) “Fit for Play” – Sustainability Report.

Section 6

OVERALL THEMES EMERGING FROM THE CASE STUDIES

Impacts

- 332.** There are many ways to look at the overall impact of the Sport in Our Community Programme in the case studies presented in this report. In terms of national recognition, there have been awards for excellence with Wildcats coaches receiving Coach of the Year awards and the Wildcats Programme itself receiving the London Olympics 2012 Inspire Mark. On the other hand, local people have demonstrated their own recognition of good projects by, for example, returning year after year as is the case with young participants taking part in annual events like Shine.
- 333.** In researching the case studies, the researchers identified five key components which have impacted positively through the delivery of the Sport in Our Community Programme.

1: Impact upon children and young people

- 334.** Many of the projects in the case studies have given opportunities for children to try out physical activity and build up basic skills. In Larne's Full of Beans project, children who had little history of taking exercise or playing sport have realised that there are many ways of getting involved without having to "play a whole game of football". Approaches like this have broadened the appeal of sport and physical activity to young people and have drawn in those who might not have taken part otherwise. In the Full of Beans project, the coach has witnessed big improvements in the children's abilities and movement skills. In the Physical Literacy projects, teachers have also noted similar improvements and a greater awareness in the children of their movement abilities and motor skills. Both case studies also evidence improvements in cooperative play and team working, as has the Sports 4 Schools Programme in the North Belfast Play Forum. Here, and in the other projects mentioned above, additionality has been delivered to existing programmes by bringing high standards of professional coaching to children in schools to supplement existing levels of PE provision.

2: Engaging hard to reach people

- 335.** The case studies presented in this report contain a number of examples where projects have included 'hard to reach' groups, one of which is young people at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour. LORAG's Midnight Soccer and Old Firm Alliance projects are good examples of drawing in young people who would otherwise have little opportunity to become involved in organised, healthy activity.
- 336.** Women and girls are also a traditionally hard to reach group. One of the biggest impacts in North Belfast Play Forum has been with girls who had no previous interest in sport. In Waterside, the New Age Kurling project has met the needs of older women, whose previous levels of physical activity were low.

- 337.** People with disabilities are also a hard to reach group. Projects, such as Hands That Talk Tai Chi and Shine have provided opportunities for physical activity amongst people previously prevented from taking part because of a lack of opportunity for people with a disability. Coleraine / Ballymoney Wildcats has also included children with disabilities, one of whose stories is included elsewhere in this report. In North Belfast Play Forum, children with disabilities have benefited from the Sports 4 Schools programme. In Craigavon, Boccia has reached out to a wide range of participants, one of whom had a severe disability and who found the programme to be the pathway back to self-confidence and community participation, so much so that he is now actively involved in community organisations.
- 338.** Older People have been engaged by LORAG's Older and Active Programme, which is reaching a group of local people who have little history of engagement in physical activity. The New Age Kurling project in Waterside is also targeted at an older age group.
- 339.** Ethnic Minority groups are also benefiting from the projects in the case study areas. For example, Coleraine / Ballymoney Wildcats is a highly inclusive programme and has drawn participants from Chinese and Indian communities and LORAG's facility is used by local Chinese and Romanian communities.

3: A stepping stone to further and sustained participation

- 340.** There is also evidence amongst the case studies of participants whose initial engagement with sport and physical activity through Sport in Our Community has resulted in them going on to further physical activity. In LORAG, using dance as a means of engaging girls in FMS resulted in the formation of a dance team which now exists as a free standing group, thereby encouraging and providing opportunities for ongoing participation. In Craigavon, some of the Boccia participants have gone on to take part in cycling and walking. The coaches in Coleraine / Ballymoney Wildcats have seen children progress through the programme and go on to become members of sports clubs, taking up sports such as tennis, cricket, hockey, rugby and soccer.

4: Encouraging healthy eating

- 341.** Healthier eating and better nutrition are further examples of lasting impacts of Sport in Our Community projects. A number of the case studies that included children provided evidence that young participants were acting on healthy eating messages, whether that be using water instead of fizzy drinks as observed in North Belfast Play Forum and Wildcats Activ8, taking a greater interest in healthy eating in the Larne Full of Beans project or broader recognition of the value of healthy eating amongst disabled children in Shine. Older participants too, for example those taking part in Boccia in Craigavon, have shown a much greater interest in nutrition and its relationship to good health after participating in the programme.

5: Creating skills and resources in communities

- 342.** Perhaps the greatest impact and potentially the most lasting come from the skills and resources created in communities and groups that have taken part in Sport in Our Community projects. Some of the impacts have been amongst teachers involved in FMS and physical literacy programmes who feel that they have developed both personally and professionally and who now have skills that they can continue to use in their schools. Teachers involved in Sports 4 Schools have been similarly empowered. In PlayBoard, providing skills development has raised the capacity and confidence of workers. In Waterside, community members have been skilled in canoeing and group leadership through the Personal Development Through Sport – Youth Leadership and Mentoring Programme, thereby developing previously unemployed individuals and providing role models for local youth.
- 343.** In Craigavon some Boccia participants have been helped by coaches to develop refereeing skills that will enable them to take a more active part through refereeing and in Hands That Talk Tai Chi, one of the participants has gone on to become a qualified instructor. These outcomes are examples of impacts upon the individuals involved, but there is also evidence of much wider effects upon professional groups and communities that will help to sustain participation and the sharing of expertise well into the future.

Enablers

- 344.** In appraising the case studies, we tried to identify the things that facilitated projects to get off the ground, to keep participants involved or to facilitate success. We term these elements as 'enablers' and set out below the four key elements that seemed common to successful projects.

1: Partnership and collaborative working

- 345.** There is no doubt that collaborative working and the creation of good working relationships and partnerships have been key to the success of the case studies in this report. Derry Healthy Cities is one of the best examples of this. Working to promote relationships with partners across a wide range of agencies and sectors has resulted in collaborative projects that have been able to draw down 'cocktail' funding where no one funder would have been able to provide full support on their own. There are other good examples of collaborative working too. Larne Borough Council, for example, worked closely with local partners and agencies in delivering Full of Beans and Midnight Soccer. In Craigavon, close partnerships have been built up with health professionals who refer clients to programmes such as Boccia. A final example of the effort put into building relationship is North Belfast Play Forum whose staff put in a lot of energy into building relationships with schools and their Boards. This has paid off extremely well and was a key factor in the success of the Sports 4 Schools Programme.

2: Working within existing frameworks

346. In a similar vein, some projects have worked within existing frameworks to ensure more efficient delivery. One example is the Waterside Community Sport Programme, which worked closely with the Waterside Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. This enabled interagency and interdisciplinary working that helped to identify and deliver on projects such as the Personal Development Through Sport – Youth Leadership and Mentoring Programme. Working with the Neighbourhood Renewal team enabled better access to joint funding and provided networking opportunities with communities and individuals who then became participants. The Physical Literacy Programme is another good example of working within existing frameworks. Locating the Physical Literacy Coordinators within the Education and Library Boards made it possible to use existing line management systems and to work through existing communication channels with schools. Working within the Education and Library Board system enabled teachers to be trained in a wide range of schools with the support of just three Sport Northern Ireland funded coordinators.

3: Skills and team working

347. A further key enabler in the case studies were the skills, knowledge and team working of CSDOs, coaches and other Sport Northern Ireland funded staff. For example, the Sports 4 Schools Programme benefited greatly from the level of skill and knowledge of the multi-skills coaches as did Coleraine / Ballymoney Wildcats. In Shine, the coaches developed their abilities together in working with disabled children and the Physical Literacy Coordinators worked closely together and provided mutual support and learning.

4: Creating programmes around identified needs

348. Identifying the needs of communities, and building projects and programmes around those needs facilitated success in a number of areas. The Waterside projects benefited from this approach so that, for example, the Boccia league was developed jointly with those who would eventually benefit from it. LORAG has taken pains to ensure that activities such as the Older and Active Programme were built around what local people needed and wanted. From this the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Group (COPD) has developed in direct response to an identified health need amongst local people. The Wildcats Programme owes much of its success to the need identified by its originators to build basic skill sets amongst children and the Hands That Talk Tai Chi group grew out of a needs assessment carried out by Derry Healthy Cities. All these projects and programmes have been successful in terms of the impacts upon participants and their general popularity, because they were designed with local needs in mind.

Lessons and Sustainability

349. This section looks at the lessons from the case studies in terms of the elements of successful and sustainable projects. We identify, below, the good practice features of projects that have successfully met need, have built community capacity and/or have achieved a stand-alone sustainability for the future.

1: Meeting local need

350. Building programmes around identified local need has contributed to the sustainability of a number of projects. For example, Hands That Talk Tai Chi, implemented after a needs assessment, led to one participant becoming skilled as an instructor thereby creating a resource for the project that helped it to continue. The Shine Programme, which attracts significant numbers of participants' year on year grew from an identified gap in provision for learning and physically disabled children. LORAG's continuing emphasis on meeting local need is driving it forward with new sustainable programmes such as the COPD group mentioned above.

2: Generating income

351. Some programmes are able to generate income, for example Coleraine / Ballymoney Wildcats is able to charge £25 per participant for a ten week programme. LORAG's sustainability is bolstered by income from clubs using the 3G pitch and other facilities, by local workers paying to use the gym on an occasional basis and by gym memberships. Many other projects, however, are not able to charge or generate income in this way and rely on continued funding to remain viable.

3: Creating capacity and legacy

352. The biggest lesson in terms of sustainability is leaving capacity within programmes and communities to continue activities for themselves. For example, the FMS training given to teachers remains as a resource to be used in future years as these teachers continue to deliver physical activities. Similarly, the teachers who took part in the Full of Beans and Sports 4 Schools Programmes received training from the multi-skills coaches and their pupils too will continue to benefit in the future. However, these legacies are likely to diminish over time as teachers retire and move on and may become less useful if teachers do not have the opportunity for ongoing support and refresher training.

353. The empowerment of communities and the skilling of individuals within them is, perhaps, the greatest aid to sustainability. We have referred to a number of examples above where individuals have become skilled in refereeing (Craigavon Boccia) or as instructors (Hands That Talk Tai Chi); or have taken on ownership of their projects as in Waterside New Age Kurling. One of the best individual examples is the training of coaches in the Youth Leadership Mentoring Programme, particularly the coach who is now a qualified instructor and leader. Not only do these coaches provide a continuing resource from within the community that makes projects sustainable, they are living proof to young people in disadvantaged communities that local people can become skilled, can emerge in leadership positions and can make a strong contribution back into the local area.

4: Signposting to clubs

354. There are examples in the case studies of participants going on from 'starter' projects in physical activity and joining sports clubs. In this way, participation in sport and physical activity becomes sustained on a long term basis with people moving from starter projects on to junior and, ultimately, senior clubs. Coleraine / Ballymoney Wildcats, for example, regularly signposts children to appropriate sports clubs in the area. North Belfast Play Forum provides another example; if potential was seen in any of the children, local sports clubs were contacted on their behalf. As the coach commented, *"It's a success story if you can get a young person into a club environment because they'll carry that on through their lives."*

Section 7

VIEWS OF HOST ORGANISATIONS AND PARTNERS

In this section of the report we consider the key themes emanating from the survey of host organisations and wider partners:

Sport in Our Community – Wider Partner Survey

- 355.** The Wider Partner survey was issued to assess both opinions of the Sport in Our Community Programme and its impact on participants. Twenty one responses were analysed.
- 356.** Partnerships formed as a result of the programme developed in a number of different ways as a result of the work of the Community Sports Development Officers and individuals within partner organisations. Local councils were also noted as playing a strategic role in programme implementation. Two respondents indicated that partnerships developed as a result of existing links, for example with the University of Ulster and through the Cookstown Disability Forum and the Mid Ulster Sports Arena. A number of partnerships were formed as a result of local drivers including parental links and the Extended School Programme, as a result of an advert in a local paper, through a local community group and by 'word of mouth'.
- 357.** In terms of project sustainability, sixteen of the twenty one respondents indicated that partnerships and associations developed would continue after the programme had been completed.
- 358.** From those partnerships that will continue, three respondents noted that there would be continuing support from Councils or Trusts, whilst a number of others are still in the process of securing funding. Four projects indicated that future project delivery remains doubtful until lead partner organisations and funding can be sourced.

Key Enablers of Success

- 359.** Working in partnership was identified by respondents as the main enabler of success, closely followed by the availability of funding and the work of local Community Sports Development Officers. The availability of facilities and equipment and the skills of staff were also identified by the majority of respondents as key factors in enabling success. The role of volunteering was only identified as key by a minority of organisations.
- 360.** Fourteen of the twenty one respondents believe that the Sport in Our Community projects are sustainable in the longer term. Nine respondents indicated that funding has been secured from other programmes, whilst eight indicated that funding had not yet been secured.

Table 8: Key Enablers of Success

Key Enablers	Count
Working in partnership with others	20
Availability of funding	19
Local Sports Development Officer	18
Availability of facilities or equipment	16
Skills of staff	16
Volunteering	7
None	0
Other (please specify)	0
Totals	96

(Multiple response question)

Sustainability

361. The information on additional funding sources from projects is limited, with two projects indicating a funding stream from the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, two accessing funding from local councils and one each from the Peace Programme and Police in the community.

Table 9: Funding Sources Identified by Respondents

Funding source	Count
Neighbourhood Renewal – DSD	2
Good Relations fund – District Council	1
Lisburn City Council Festival Grant	1
Peace III – Challenge of Change	1
Police in the community	1

362. Only three respondents indicated that project activity has now become mainstreamed; of the three mainstreamed projects, two indicated that a road race had been integrated into a festival week and a youth football team had been further developed with seventy five young people registered to participate. One project indicated that projects which had been delivered though Sport in Our Community were now delivered by a Council through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. Two projects are still actively seeking to access funding and to develop existing partnerships.

Table 10: Funding beyond the Sport In Our Community Programme

Responses	Yes	No
Unable to secure funding from other programmes	12	6
Unable to identify other sources of funding	11	7
Project now part of mainstream programme	2	15

363. Clearly in terms of sustainability there are major issues around both identifying and accessing funding beyond the life of the Sport in Our Community Programme with only two projects moving into mainstream provision. Two projects indicated that they are still actively pursuing funding, whilst for one, funded through DSD, funding will cease in March 2011.

Table 11: Sport in Our Community- Key Impacts Reported by Respondents

Evidence of Impact	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
More sport and physical activity in areas of high social deprivation	19	0	2	21
Improvement in physical ability amongst participants	16	0	4	20
Improved health and well-being generally	16	0	5	21
Increased participation amongst underrepresented groups (women, older people, ethnic minorities)	14	0	5	19
Positive impacts on confidence and positive body image	12	1	6	19
Strengthened infrastructure within applicant organisations	12	1	6	19
Changes in diet and nutrition	8	1	11	20
Extended family involvement in physical activity	6	3	9	18
Reductions in alcohol consumption	3	2	14	19

364. The key result emanating from the Sport in Our Community Programme relates to success in providing more sport and physical activity opportunities in areas of high social deprivation, which was reported by nineteen organisations. Improvements in participants' physical ability and improved health and well-being were also reported by over three quarters of respondents. Additionally almost three quarters of respondents reported that the programme had increased participation amongst a range of underrepresented groups including women and girls, older people and ethnic minority groups.

- 365.** Almost two thirds of respondents indicated that they had seen positive impacts for participant confidence and positive body image and strengthened infrastructure within applicant organisations. Elements of the programme for which there is less evidence include changes in diet and nutrition, extended family involvement in physical activity and reductions in alcohol consumption.
- 366.** With the exception of the top scoring indicator, there is consistent reporting of 'Don't Know' in the responses, ranging from four (Improvement in physical ability amongst participants) to fourteen (reduction in alcohol consumption), indicating that this data was not collected at project level.
- 367.** Respondents were also asked to provide up to three examples of evidence of impact in project activities (full breakdown in Appendix 3). Whilst many of the responses are project specific, a number of themes emerge from the responses. A number of projects highlighted project activity that has been successful in areas of high socio-economic deprivation:

The project is situated within some of the most disadvantaged communities in Belfast and has managed to encourage participation by all groups...particular the use of the Centre by ethnic minorities has increased significantly and the midnight soccer included some of the most marginalised young people in these communities. (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust)

Deprived areas of Coleraine were targeted for this programme. Young people accessed services and personnel which they would not normally have had access to. (Coleraine Borough Council)

- 368.** Respondents also provided evidence of increased participation levels and increased opportunities to engage in physical activities:

We are now involved in more community activities - classes which provide physical mental and emotional well-being and above all good social 'get togethers' for all ages and abilities. Physical activities e.g. Pilates, dance, armchair aerobics, weekly classes in hall. (Drumlough Community Association)

Children much more interested in participating in sport activities. (Kylemore Nursery School)

The number of sporting activities in these communities increased significantly through the existence of the project. (The Old Library Trust)

- 369.** Two projects highlighted the positive impact on general health and well-being:

Cook-It Programme with Health and Nutrition Toolkit is being implemented. Volunteers are being trained in this soon. (Drumlough Community Association)

Two local youth groups monitored their young people and had data to show improved levels of health and well-being in Portrush and Sunlea. (Coleraine Youth Office)

370. The programme impact at individual level was also evidenced at project level:

Young person who was very withdrawn now more outgoing, feedback from parents etc. (Barnardos)

Reviews attended by staff reflect value of service to young people and their families. (Barnardos)

Young person with autism started using the pool on regular basis after availing of our services.

Previously the young person was unwilling to take a bath – a tremendous change and this account has been given by family member. (Barnardos)

The Sports Development Coaches said in their evaluations for Shape that the fact that the young people participated in a programme over several weeks showed that they engaged more effectively as time went on because they became more confident and had improved self-esteem. (Children with Disabilities Team, Southern Health and Social Care Trust based at Moylinn Resource Centre, Craigavon)

371. Eleven organisations provided key learning points from the programme at organisational level. Six organisations noted the importance of developing a partnership approach to project delivery:

Full community involvement and participation. (Drumlough Community Association)

Working together to ensure the programmes are meeting the needs of the individuals in question. (Cookstown and District Sports Forum)

The value of partnership in maximising skills to respond to need. (Barnardos)

372. The need to develop skills for staff, coaches and leaders was noted as well as the need to ensure physical exercise remains fun.

To always remember by making sport and physical exercise fun that that overcomes many barriers that people with disabilities face. (Children with Disabilities Team, Southern Health and Social Care Trust based at Moylinn Resource Centre, Craigavon)

373. Nine projects provided information on the key learning points from the programme for Sport Northern Ireland and future programme and policy development. In relation to working with people with disabilities, two projects reflected on the need to work closely with those in the disability field as well as highlighting the need to develop provision in this area.

Gaining experience and knowledge from those working in the field of disability in order to offer services / training suited to needs of young people with a range of disabilities and their families. (Barnardos)

374. Others pointed out the need to publicise events and to work closely with Sport Northern Ireland to address need in communities, particularly the need to provide activities for older people. Two projects indicated the need to ensure that funding was strategic, rather than short term.

Short-term funding is not a strategic approach. Investment, whilst much appreciated, needs to be longer term. (Coleraine Youth Office)

375. Five organisations made final comments:

Sport Northern Ireland funding directly to community delivery agents, cuts out the middle man (councils). (Belfast Regeneration Office/ Department of Social Development)

There needs to be a regular partnership meeting involving the wider partners to keep informed of updates and progress. (Age NI)

Longer term funding required. (Belfast Regeneration Office / Department of Social Development)

This was a great opportunity for the local youth service and UUC sports staff to work collaboratively to meet the needs of young people in the area. (Coleraine Youth Office)

Keep up the good work. (Children with Disabilities Team, Southern Health and Social Care Trust based at Moylinn Resource Centre, Craigavon)

Host Organisation Survey

376. The Host Organisation survey was issued to the award recipients to assess their opinions of the Sport in Our Community Programme and of its impact on participants. Fifteen responses were returned, one of which was blank, leaving fourteen to be analysed. Nine of these were host questionnaires, whilst six respondents returned the wider partner questionnaire. As a result not all questions were answered by all respondents.

Objectives and Themes

377. Projects were asked to highlight the programme objectives and thematic areas they set out to tackle in their initial application:

Table 12: Key Programme Objectives and Thematic Areas Covered

Sport in Our Community Programme Objectives	Yes	No
Increased number of physically literate young people	9	0
Increased participation in sport and physical literacy in underrepresented groups	8	1
Competent sporting workforce	5	4
Increased efficiency through improved planning and administration	4	5
Professional accountable and autonomous sporting organisations	3	6

378. For all the respondents the key objective was to increase the number of physically literate young people, followed by increasing participation in sport in underrepresented groups. Just over half of respondent projects concentrated on a competent sporting workforce, whilst just under half focussed on increased efficiency through improved planning and administration and professional accountable and autonomous sporting organisations.

Table 13: Cross Cutting Themes

Sport in Our Community Programme Cross Cutting Themes	Yes	No
Development and improvement of physical literacy	7	2
Development of opportunities for people with disabilities	7	2
Creation of sport or physical activity in areas of high social need for those who have not previously had a sustained interest in sport or physical activity	6	3

379. Seven respondents focussed on developing physical literacy and developing opportunities for people with disabilities and two thirds aimed to produce activities in areas of high social need.

380. No respondents indicated a change in priorities as the projects developed and all nine stated that the project generally achieved what it set out to achieve.

Key Enablers of Success

381. Table 10 below details the key enablers of success highlighted by respondents. The availability of funding was highlighted as the main enabler by all respondents closely followed by working in partnership with others. The skills of staff, the input of local Community Sports Development Officers, the availability of facilities and equipment and the input of volunteers were all recognised as important factors by around half of respondents.

Table 14: Key Enablers of Success

Key Enablers	Count
Availability of funding	14
Working in partnership with others	12
Skills of staff	8
Local Sports Development Officer	7
Availability of facilities or equipment	7
Volunteering	6
Other	2
None	0
Totals	56

(Multiple response question)

Sustainability

382. Nine of the fourteen respondents believe that the Sport in Our Community projects are sustainable in the longer term. For four respondents a single source of funding was identified; for one respondent two sources of funding were identified:

Table 15: Sources of Funding Identified by Respondents

Funding source
Community Safety, Sport Northern Ireland funding
Community Safety Partnership; Big Lottery; potentially Peace III
DSD and Peace III for some aspects of project delivery
Health Trusts
Capacity built up in the community to continue
Partnership with BCDSN and Active Belfast Partnership

- 383.** Five respondents reported that project activity was now part of mainstream programmes; the University of Ulster indicated that the Multi-Skill and Multi-Sport sessions / camps will continue as part of the Junior Elks Programme providing all year round opportunities; Ballymoney Borough Council indicated that the project was now funded by the Council under Sports Development; the Boys Brigade has employed a full time Sports Officer to continue the work of the project; Craigavon Borough Council reported that Community Sports Development is and always has been integrated into mainstream sports development, though there is currently pressure on budgets.
- 384.** When asked to provide reasons why projects are unsustainable four respondents stated that they had been unable to secure funding from other programmes, with another four stating they had been unable to identify other sources of funding.
- 385.** PlayBoard NI indicated that it has “worked with many projects throughout the region with a quality standard award. The monitoring and renewing of the standard can no longer take place due to funding coming to an end and so it is no longer accessible. However, the knowledge of what denotes a quality play project, remains within the sector to those groups who were involved.” North Belfast Play Forum indicated that it would continue to work with two or three schools rather than the eight to twelve schools it had worked with as part of Sport in Our Community.
- 386.** Ballymena Borough Council indicated that due to high costs in running programmes and the lack of facilities at required times the Community Sport Programme will find it hard to survive in the current financial climate. As a result costs are pushed onto the consumer and make places only accessible by those with higher disposable income. The Old Library Trust indicated that to date it had been unable to secure funding from other programmes.

Impact

- 387.** The key result emanating from the Sport in Our Community Programme relates to success in providing more sport and physical activity opportunities in areas of high social deprivation, which was reported by twelve responding organisations. Eleven organisations reported improvements in participants' physical ability and increased participation amongst a range of underrepresented groups including women, older people and ethnic minority groups. Improved health and well-being was also reported by ten respondents.
- 388.** Around half of respondents indicated that they had seen positive impacts for participant confidence and positive body image and in diet and nutrition. Only three organisations reported positive impact on extended family involvement in physical activity and reductions in alcohol consumption.
- 389.** With the exception of the three top scoring indicators, there is consistent reporting of 'Don't Know' in the responses, ranging from four (Improved health and well-being generally) to over eight (Extended family involvement in physical activity), indicating that this data was not collected at project level.

Table 16: Sport in Our Community – Key Impacts Reported by Respondents

Evidence of Impact	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
More sport and physical activity in areas of high social deprivation	12	0	2	14
Improvement in physical ability amongst participants	11	0	2	13
Increased participation amongst underrepresented groups (women, older people, ethnic minorities)	11	0	2	13
Improved health and well-being generally	10	0	4	14
Positive impacts on confidence and positive body image	7	1	4	12
Changes in diet and nutrition	6	1	6	20
Extended family involvement in physical activity	3	1	8	12
Reductions in alcohol consumption	3	1	7	11

- 390.** Respondents were also asked to report on up to three examples of evidence of impact in project activities. Whilst many of the responses are project specific, a number of themes emerge from the responses. A number of projects indicated that project activity has been successful in areas of high socio-economic deprivation:

Table 17: Impact in project activities - Examples of Evidence Reported by Respondents - Examples

Organisation	Evidence base
University of Ulster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in physical abilities noted by coaches and reported by parents in evaluation forms; • Increased participation by underrepresented groups e.g. young people from ethnic minority communities. Information available from monitoring / database information; and • Anecdotal feedback from coaches and parents revealed personal examples of young people developing in confidence and attitude following involvement with programme. Also an improved willingness of individuals to try new activities and become engaged with others in a way they would not have previously.
Ballymoney Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midnight soccer league for 14-17 yr olds impacted on drinking culture; • Ladies aerobics, spin and yoga classes became very popular in Ballymoney area; and • Participation in physical activity is generally greater from youth through to elderly in multi-skills, sport specific classes to cultural games e.g. horse shoe throwing.
Craigavon Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health and well-being supported by a range of project based evidence e.g. 20 referrals from Multiple Sclerosis group participated in activities; • Increased participation – amongst underrepresented groups (women, older people, ethnic minorities): Craigavon has a high population of people from Black and Ethnic Communities; and • More sport and physical activity in areas of high social deprivation e.g. three MUGA Development Programmes were externally funded, and evaluations were completed as a requirement of the funding. These showed an increase in physical activity levels, skill development and social development.
North Belfast Play Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining clubs outside school. Levels of participation up at programmes running at Waterworks Facility.
Old Library Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in physical activity with a wide range of participants achieving and exceeding all targets – evidenced in monitoring and evaluation reports; and • Increased participation of underrepresented groups: including women, older people, people with a disability, people with mental health conditions and people with life limiting conditions (evidenced through monitoring and evaluation reports).
LORAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre.
Castlereagh Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Neighbourhood Police indicated a reduction in anti- social behaviour since the Midnight Soccer Programme running.
Ballymena Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Sport Unit within council now has a Community Sport Assistant and an IFA Grassroots Development Officer, working with the CSDO; infrastructure much improved.

- 391.** Eight organisations indicated that there is evidence of sustained participation by individuals and / or groups targeted through the programme i.e. people are still involved in physical activity after the Sport in Our Community projects have ended.

Table 18: Reported Evidence for Sustained Participation

Evidence for sustained participation	Yes
Increase in club membership	7
Other	5
New clubs established and sustained	3
Increased gym membership	3
Waiting lists for projects	0

- 392.** The main evidence for sustained participation comes through increased club membership. In the 'Other' responses the University of Ulster noted an increase in number of young people becoming annual members of the programme, with young people taking up further opportunities to participate beyond initial involvement e.g. progressing from Multi-Skill to Multi-Sport and into sport specific activities. Boys' Brigade indicated that the demand for the programmes has increased and leaders reporting that they could see the benefits that a structured programme of sport and physical activity can achieve. The Boys Brigade is moving forward with sports development within the Belfast Battalion, currently developing a new sports development strategy B4Sport3.
- 393.** Craigavon Borough Council reported that DV8 participants have joined additional clubs e.g. Kick Boxing Club; the Ethnic Minority Clubs are meeting regularly, with some progressing to become constituted and enter leagues e.g. Piast FC (Polish Football team), Union Lusa FC (Portuguese football team), Craigavon Basketball Club (Lithuanian), Craigavon Eagles Basketball Club (Polish), Craigavon Filipino Badminton Club. The Fit 4 Life Gym Members continue to use the facilities at Craigavon Leisure Centre and many of the programmes are ongoing e.g. Gotcha Boccia League, Midnight Soccer.
- 394.** Omagh District Council reported an increase in community centre activities and that a dedicated officer is required to roll out programmes. PlayBoard is still working with a number of the groups involved with Fit for Play in other areas and children and young people are still accessing more outdoor play opportunities. The South Eastern Education and Library Board noted the long term effects of greater knowledge and understanding of developing FMS and the impact that one designated officer can make in a short period of time.
- 395.** Increased gym membership and new clubs established and sustained were reported by three respondents.

Key Learning Points Reported by Respondents

- 396.** The University of Ulster noted the importance of effective monitoring and evaluation of programmes and their participants, the practical lessons learned in the delivery of Fundamentals programmes to young people with wide ranging abilities and the importance of parental understanding and support of programme objectives.
- 397.** For Ballymoney Borough Council a key learning point is working with and getting 'buy in' from the community. For the Boys Brigade it was key, when working with volunteers, to keep things simple for the benefit of the leaders who are helping to deliver the programmes. Not all the volunteers are from a sporting background so developing a coach education programme was important to inform and train leaders in sports e.g. Skills 4 Sport was a popular course as it allowed leaders to gain a base knowledge to deliver our multi-skills programme. Working in partnership with other organisations was also the key to the successful delivery of the Boys Brigade sports development strategy.
- 398.** Craigavon Borough Council identified the importance of engaging with the target groups early in the process. Realistic timescales should be set in relation to what can be achieved when working within community development. Time was needed to build trust. It was important to have ownership and support both from within the community and within their own organisation (officers and council members). Multi-disciplinary programmes were especially successful, where partners with a range of key skills were involved, for example, community, youth, health, social work and sports development.
- 399.** PlayBoard suggested that robust evidence gathering should begin on day one and the South Eastern Education and Library Board suggested that a key learning point was more cooperation with Education Authorities. Ballymena Borough Council regard the ground work in networking and partnership as vital to the success of the programme, whilst noting that this can be difficult to achieve as most organisations have their own agenda to satisfy. Castlereagh Borough Council indicated that due to the experience gained by the Community Sports Development Officer future sports projects will be successfully organised and importantly they will be monitored and evaluated properly. For the Old Library Trust having appropriately qualified staff in place and working in partnership with other key agencies in sports and physical activity is important. Additionally, key features include the design and delivery of physical activity programmes tailored to participants' capacities and the need for monitoring and evaluation of targets and outcomes on an ongoing basis. For LORAG the key is a focus on sustainability and a community development approach.

Key learning from the programme for Sport Northern Ireland and the development of future policies and programmes

- 400.** Ballymoney Borough Council noted that working with Sports Development Officers in Councils is a very effective way to deliver programmes to the community which builds on existing relationships with community leaders. For PlayBoard, a technical issue within the programme relates to the recording systems and the database which PlayBoard suggests need both simplified and made more flexible / adaptable to all physical activity and not simply sport related activity.
- 401.** For the University of Ulster the need to ensure that all aspects of programmes are designed to produce maximum impact and benefit to partners and ultimately programme participants. The Boys Brigade noted that the longevity of the Sport in Our Community programme over four years was a key factor to the successful delivery of the programme in that it allowed the Sports Development Officer to develop individual programmes, to build relationships with leaders, coaches, volunteers and to create partnerships with other organisations. The long term funding of the programme was regarded as an indication of Sport Northern Ireland's commitment, a feature also noted by Lisburn City Council.
- 402.** Craigavon Borough Council suggested that it takes the long term funding commitment through Investing in Sport, Community Sport and Sport in Our Community Programmes to make things happen over a longer period of time. Evidence of success is now available e.g. groups have become more independent and self-sufficient facilitating project officers to engage with new projects. To seriously address health and well-being, sustained and long term funding needs to be secured from a range of funders facilitating a 'joined up' policy and the requisite commitment of funding to address levels of inactivity and obesity. Castlereagh Borough Council also suggested that Sport Northern Ireland should concentrate more on the sustainability of projects rather than focusing on the numbers of participants involved in programmes. Also it was suggested that, as part of project sustainability, that sports development officers could offer training and advice to local people involved in aspects of project delivery to enable them to run community based projects after Sport Northern Ireland funding comes to an end.
- 403.** Accessibility was an issue noted by two projects; North Belfast Play Forum noted the necessity of more funding for schools based programmes as some schools are reliant on Sport Northern Ireland funded programmes to access quality sports coaching. The Old Library Trust highlighted the issue that many people are denied access to sports and physical activity as a result of both the culture of competitive sports and individual life experiences. Projects asserted that sporting activities need to be opened up to underrepresented groups.

Section 8

CONCLUSIONS

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME AIMS AND CROSS CUTTING THEMES

- 404.** This programme set out to support and deliver innovative and creative projects resulting in:
- An increased number of physically literate young people;
 - Increased participation in sport and physical activity among underrepresented groups; and specifically among people with disabilities;
 - A competent sporting workforce;
 - Professional, accountable and autonomous sporting organisations; and
 - An increased efficiency through improved planning and administration.
- 405.** Successful applicants to the programme demonstrated that their project met at least one of the following three cross-cutting themes:
1. Development and improvement of physical literacy;
 2. Development of opportunities for people with disabilities; and/or
 3. Creation of sport and physical activity in areas of high social need for those who have not previously had a sustained interest in sport or physical activity.
- 406.** The evaluation has demonstrated that the aims of the Sport in Our Community have been met and that all projects have successfully delivered activities under one or more of the cross-cutting themes. The impact evaluation conducted in 2009³⁷ noted a series of key achievements including a well developed community sport infrastructure across the province and closer links to health and physical activity. It also noted, a series of area specific achievements which included enabling a very positive interaction between Sport Northern Ireland and the voluntary and community sector where previously it had been negative (Derry) and successful partnership working in all areas with Belfast highlighted as a particular success.
- 407.** The issue of sustainability was also a key focus in the 2009 impact evaluation which noted that despite the challenging environment emanating from the impact of RPA that a number of projects had been able to secure additional funding and achieve mainstreaming of activities. As noted in previous sections of this report in the latter stages of the programme sustainability remained a challenge for funded projects with some unable to identify or secure further funding. Success was however noted by nine of the 14 projects who responded to the host survey.
- 408.** From a strategic point of view, as noted in the 2009 impact evaluation, as the programme developed the definition of community sport broadened to include both health and well-being benefits and also to address social exclusion.

³⁷ FKB Consulting (2009) An Impact Evaluation of Sport Northern Ireland's Sport in Our Community Programme.

409. The table below repeats the key issues identified in Table 4 Section 3 with respect to the 2009 impact evaluation and the evaluation of the pilot community sport programme in consideration of the findings of this final evaluation of Sport in Our Community. Specifically it highlights a number of issues which have changed and developed following external evaluations, consultation with stakeholders and internal discussions at Sport Northern Ireland which have all informed development of community sport programmes.

Table 19: Reflection on Previous Evaluation

Pilot Community Sport	SOC Mid Term	SOC Final Impact
Programmes should have clear, realistic and achievable objectives with an emphasis on quality not quantity.	Programme aims were devised to meet overarching themes for Sport Northern Ireland and were drawn up in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.	No change from SOC mid term evaluation
Finding the right approach – an emphasis on ‘soft’ approaches is need to engage with hard to reach groups.	This soft approach was embedded into the practice of SOC projects, building on good practice and experience of the CSDOs.	The final evaluation provided several examples of the success of projects in engaging with a wide range of hard to reach groups. Particular success was noted in relation to older people, females, those with a disability and those living in areas of high deprivation.
Increasing the duration of funding – due to delays in recruiting staff, a three-year programme resulted in 19 to 27 months of actual delivery; lead in time to develop relationships was thus limited.	The SOC Programme funding was for a period of 4 years. In addition as a number of projects were also funded through the CSP, projects were able to build upon partnerships and relationships with target communities to ensure successful delivery.	The partnerships between projects as well as with stakeholders were key enablers to a series of successful outcomes. The Wildcats Activ8 Programme and LORAG are prime examples of this, sharing resources and expertise. Partnerships with stakeholders have enabled impact on community safety, good relations and health projects in particular.
Effective ‘bolt in’ monitoring and evaluation – the monitoring and evaluation system was bolted on to the programme rather than developed within it.	Monitoring and evaluation remained an issue for some projects, with problems with IT hindering their views of the usefulness of the system. Some felt the system was not capable of demonstrating project success and quality of deliver. The system did however simplify the monitoring details collected from participants.	Monitoring and evaluation was not explored in the final evaluation as the focus was specifically on impact of the programme. It is worth noting however that none of those who took part in the final evaluation mentioned monitoring and evaluation as a barrier or challenge.

Pilot Community Sport	SOC Mid Term	SOC Final Impact
<p>Needs assessment was seen as key to successful project outcomes, delivering what the community wants not a pre-designed programme.</p>	<p>Delivery of the SOC Programme was firmly embedded within a community development perspective, focusing on needs assessment.</p>	<p>Meeting the needs of local communities was a recurring theme in the case studies and survey with stakeholders and host organisations. Delivery of activities was also enhanced by the project staff's detailed knowledge of each area and target group as well as the knowledge project's gained from partnership working.</p>
<p>CSDO / capacity – the success of the programme was conditional upon the commitment of CSDO's and support they were given.</p>	<p>The continuity of staff in a number of projects from previous funding programmes enabled successful development of projects. The significant commitment of project staff to the work was evident.</p> <p>A wide range of training sessions were provided to project staff to build on their skills base.</p>	<p>The commitment of project staff to community sport is highly commendable. Their enthusiasm and energy added significant value to project activities.</p> <p>The support they received through Sport Northern Ireland added further to project staffs professional skills and expertise.</p>
<p>A holistic / integrated approach was needed in working with stakeholders on common/ related goals.</p>	<p>Partnership working became a key feature of the SOC Programme, with projects emphasising these were enablers of success. The time invested in the partnerships was noted as being considerable and very fruitful.</p> <p>Some difficulties were noted with partners in the health sector, which appeared to stem from the view that the sports sector was not a 'professional' sector.</p>	<p>As noted above the projects ability to engage with a wide range of partners resulted in impact not only on physical activity but also health, community safety and good relations amongst others.</p> <p>Difficulties within the health sector with regard to professionalisation were largely overcome.</p>
<p>Adequate guidance and direction – non challenge element of funding was problematic, resulting in lack of buy in amongst some host organisations</p>	<p>The challenge element to project funding was introduced. This largely ensured buy-in from host organisations although some problems were noted. It was noted that some host organisations needed to pay further attention to the sustainability of projects.</p>	<p>No change from SOC mid term evaluation</p>

Pilot Community Sport	SOC Mid Term	SOC Final Impact
Emphasis on building infrastructure for disability sports was needed	It was recognised that a more strategic approach to improving disability provision should be explored. Sport Northern Ireland strategic approach is through the implementation of its Disability Mainstreaming Policy which is supported through the investment in Disability Sports NI.	No change from SOC mid term evaluation

- 410.** In relation to the final evaluation we can paraphrase many of the strategic aims of community sport as tackling the health and well-being of those communities most at risk of low levels of participation in sport and physical recreation, whether this is because of high levels of deprivation, demography, low social capital, disinterest or disengagement. The broad aims include increasing general levels of participation, generating an interest in sport and physical activity in individuals that might be sustained across a whole lifetime and having impacts on a range of lifestyle and health indicators such as obesity, fitness levels, diet, nutrition and a range of health problems.
- 411.** In this context there is little room for the 'quick fix'. With 25% of school age children suffering from obesity, for example, it is clear that such situations cannot be rectified within 12-week programmes – an issue highlighted in the 2009 impact evaluation. Sport and physical activity can impact significantly on health and well-being, but this has to be viewed as a long term intervention that should not be assessed across the typically short timeframes of government spending reviews.
- 412.** The strategic shift that took Sport Northern Ireland towards the twin tracks of elite sport on the one hand and sport in the service of community development and improvements in health and lifestyle on the other is to be applauded. But the Sport in our Community Programme cannot be expected to deliver population level outcomes along the same timeframe as elite athlete progression and this must be recognised in future strategic discussions. 'Short-termism' in community sport will lead to unrealistic targets for population level change across two or three year timescales. This kind of thinking needs to be replaced by a new strategic realism, acknowledging that communities with a long-term history of low participation in sport and physical activity will not evidence quick improvements in their health and well-being as some kind of 'magic fix'. There will be many individuals who do evidence such improvement and who are in the vanguard for their communities, thus providing evidence that the Sport in our Community approach is working well and achieving the right impacts. Many such examples of individual change are reported above, but impacting on whole communities is a longer term task and the ultimate goal.

- 413.** Neither will generations that already carry the negative health and well-being consequences of poor diet, lifelong inactivity and non-participation in sport be turned around in a dramatic manner. We can certainly expect to see some improvements in individuals amongst older generations with low levels of physical activity with regard to existing conditions and we have been able to identify examples in this report. The most lasting impacts of the Sport in our Community Programme, however, are likely to be seen in the longer term. For younger generations, we can expect to see incremental improvement across a number of years, provided that the increase in participation brought about by the Sport in our Community Programme is sustained. This should ultimately lead to improvements in health indicators at population level, but this is a long term project that requires a similarly long term strategic and funding commitment.
- 414.** Along this road, community sport strategy needs to remain focused on the core issues of improving the health and well-being of those communities at greatest risk through greater levels of sustained participation in sport and physical activity. At this point in time, this means continuing to engage with women, girls, older people, people with disabilities, pre-school children, older children, youth and young parents in pursuit of improvements in levels of obesity, fitness, diet, nutrition and a range of health problems.
- 415.** We should also comment on the essential interplay between sport, competitive sport, and sports clubs on the one hand, and sport and physical activity as contributors to community development and community health on the other. Whilst the emphasis on health and well-being is easily justifiable in community sport interventions along with an emphasis on physical activity, community sport initiatives such as the Sport in our Community Programme are also about sport in its purest sense. Some of the headline achievements of community sport may lie in the nature of health and well-being, but community sport is also capable of engaging people in sport for the first time and maintaining their participation through sport development, club membership and lifelong participation. It is also capable of playing a significant role in talent identification. This dual aspect of the Sport in Our Community Programme is one of its great strengths and needs to be held at the centre of its future strategic direction.
- 416.** Finally, Sport Northern Ireland has implemented a community sport programme that is widely seen as an essential ingredient in a complex mix of interventions that will ultimately help towards the goal of improved health and well-being of the population. As a contributor to that goal, but as just one player in the field, Sport Northern Ireland needs to keep its messages to the forefront and maintain its strategic linkages. It would be easy for the improvements brought about by the Sport in Our Community Programme to be lost amongst the range of contributions made by other strategic partners. Bringing the broad community sport project to fruition will require emphasising at every opportunity the role that sport and physical activity play.

Section 9

RECOMMENDATIONS

(Numbers in brackets refer to section / paragraph numbers)

- REC 1.** Projects that grew out of needs analysis or from the expression of local demand proved to be amongst the most sustainable. **It is recommended that community consultation and joint working with communities should lie at the heart of any new community sport projects.** (6/348)
- REC 2.** Utilising schools to engage with target groups was a highly successful model in this programme. Projects illustrated the potential of incorporating fun based activities alongside healthy eating and growing food. The Sports 4 Schools Programmes also provided excellent opportunities to bring high standards of professional coaching to children in schools to supplement existing levels of PE provision. **It is recommended that the case studies be used as models of good practice in school based projects.** (6/334)
- REC 3.** A number of other successful projects worked hard at promoting relationships with partners across a wide range of agencies and sectors. These have resulted in collaborative projects that have been able to draw down a 'cocktail' of funding. Many of these projects were implemented jointly with other agencies, combining sport and physical activity with other complementary interventions. **It is recommended that this joint or multi-agency approach should be encouraged in future community sport interventions, particularly where it is capable of drawing down additional funding and/or bringing complementary expertise to project implementation.** (6/345, 6/346, 7/356-359, 371)
- REC 4.** The evaluation highlighted several examples of successful projects engaging with hard to reach groups – the LORAG Dance Team provided evidence that engaging hard to reach groups in non-traditional sport and physical activities results in regular participation and also draws in family and community to the facility. Waterside's New Age Kurling project was able to successfully work with older women. Others drew in members of minority ethnic groups. A number of projects also were also able to engage people with disabilities, these included Hands That Talk Tai Chi; Shine; Sports 4 Schools; Boccia in Craigavon and Coleraine / Ballymoney Wildcats. **It is recommended that the case studies be used as models of good practice in engaging hard to reach groups.** (6/335 - 339)
- REC 5.** The case studies highlighted in the evaluation were also able to demonstrate sustained participation amongst participants as well as some participants utilising their participation as a stepping stone onto further activities. For instance a number of the young men in LORAG had moved from participant to coach (5/134-137); in Craigavon and Coleraine / Ballymoney participants have moved on to a wide range of sports. **It is recommended that sustained participation should be a key objective of future community sport programmes and that consideration is given by Sport Northern Ireland on implementing a tracking system that could capture its incidence and extent.** (6/340,354)

- REC 6.** Projects demonstrated that they could achieve positive impacts on healthy eating; whether this was part of a specific component of a programme or simply a message about water being good for dehydration. **It is recommended that all community based sport and physical activity projects should seek, in cooperation with appropriate partners, to incorporate healthy eating messages within their programmes. The projects included in the evaluation can provide a range of methods of how this can be achieved.** (6/341)
- REC 7.** One of the important legacies of the Sport in Our Community Programme is the skills and resources created within communities, groups and schools. This includes not only those involved in delivery of the projects whether that is coaches or teachers but also in participants, who have become volunteers, referees etc. **It is recommended that projects that have been successful in leaving legacies should be promoted to new projects as examples of good practice. We also recommend that new community sport projects should, where appropriate, aim to leave a legacy of greater community capacity, particularly in building the capacity of local people to grow and maintain projects after initial funding has ceased.** (6/342-343)
- REC 8.** **We also recommend that ongoing support / refresher training should be provided to projects to ensure new skills are reinforced and that those involved in delivery are kept up-to-date with new practice.** (6/352)
- REC 9.** The wider legacy in communities also results from engagement in cross community activities and fundraising activities as well as new skills gained by participants, volunteers and staff. It is evident that the impact of the Sport in Our Community Programme extends beyond increasing participation, developing a skilled workforce and establishing sustainable organisations. Social capital has been strengthened, health and well-being improved, life-skills acquired, pathways to new careers begun. **It is recommended that the stories emanating from the programme should be used to promote community sport amongst a wide range of stakeholders and funders to demonstrate its multiple benefits.** (6/353)
- REC 10.** The key enablers of success identified in the survey are working in partnership with others, the availability of funding, the local Community Sports Development Officers, the availability of facilities / equipment and the skills of staff. **It is recommended that for future programme development these key elements are prioritised.** (7/359, 381)
- REC 11.** The level of mainstreaming of programme activity remains low. In terms of sustainability there are issues around both identifying and accessing funding beyond the life of the programme. **It is recommended that future programmes develop a focussed mainstreaming strategy which incorporates a sustainability and future funding component. It is also recommended that host organisations at a senior level should take responsibility for sustainability.** (7/362, 383)

- REC 12.** Programme success is clear in terms of providing more sport and physical activity opportunities in areas of high social deprivation; improvements in participants' physical ability and improved health and well-being; increased participation amongst a range of underrepresented groups; and increased participant confidence. However elements of the programme for which there is less evidence include changes in diet and nutrition, extended family involvement in physical activity and reductions in alcohol consumption. **It is recommended that future programmes consider whether these under-reported elements remain core elements of activity and / or whether appropriate monitoring systems are in place.** (7/364-366, 387-388)
- REC 13.** Projects stated that the key objectives and themes focussed on were increasing the number of physically literate young people and increasing participation in underrepresented groups. No respondents reported a change in priorities over the course of the programme. **It is therefore recommended that the objectives and themes from this programme remain central to future programme development.** (7/378, 379)
- REC 14.** **It is recommended that the development of activities for new projects should be from a strong base of evidence of need. In doing so projects can target underrepresented groups and deliver activities which will entice them to become involved. Projects should be mindful of the high levels of poverty in Northern Ireland and that access to activities is not prohibited by cost.** (6/348, 350)
- REC 15.** Case study projects have demonstrated that income generation is possible for community based projects. Wildcats and LORAG are two key examples of this. Whilst this is not possible for all projects it is recommended that the models used by the two case studies can be used to illustrate the potential for appropriate current / new projects. (6/351)

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Appendix 1

Individuals consulted for the evaluation (participants from each project remain anonymous)

Name	Organisation
John News	Sport Northern Ireland
Paul Donnelly	Sport Northern Ireland
Angharad Bunt	Sport Northern Ireland
Melanie McKee	Sport Northern Ireland
Anne Lowden	Sport Northern Ireland
Louise Allen	Derry City Council - Waterside Neighbourhood Renewal Area
Ronan McKenna	Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group
Niall Curneen	Larne Borough Council
Billy Wylie	North Belfast Play Forum
Claire Weir	Craigavon Borough Council - Active Inclusion
Kieran McCartney	Derry Healthy Cities
Stephen McCartney John Fall	Coleraine Borough Council and Ballymoney Borough Council – Wildcats Activ8 Multi-Skills Clubs

Appendix 2

FINAL EVALUATION - WIDER PARTNER QUESTIONNAIRE

Sport Northern Ireland has appointed FKB/Dennis McCoy Consulting to complete a final evaluation of the Sport in Our Community Programme (2006-2010). The evaluation comprises desk research, face to face interviews, focus groups, and this email questionnaire survey with partner organisations. As a stakeholder with Sport in Our Community projects we are interested in your opinions about the programme and its impact on the projects. We would be grateful if you could read each of the questions below and give a brief answer to each in the box provided. Your views are very important to Sport Northern Ireland and will help to inform future programmes and funding.

WHAT IS THE NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION?

SECTION 1

1. Thinking about the projects that your organisation worked with or was associated with, how did those partnerships come about?

2. Are these partnerships or associations likely to continue after the Sport in Our Community projects come to an end?

Tick Yes or No

Yes

No

3. Please tell us how the partnerships will continue or why the partnerships will not continue:

SECTION 2

4. Which, if any, of the following have been key enablers to success?

Please tick all that apply

- Working in partnership with others
 - Availability of funding
 - Availability of facilities or equipment
 - Volunteering
 - Skills of staff
 - Local Sports Development Officer
 - None
 - Other (please specify)
-
-

SECTION 3

5. In your opinion, are the Sport in Our Community projects sustainable in the longer term?

Tick Yes or No

- Yes - If yes, please say how the projects are sustainable at Q6 below.
- No - If no, please say why the projects are not sustainable at Q11 below.

6. How are the projects sustainable?

Funding has been secured from other programmes:

Tick Yes or No

- Yes
- No

If yes please provide details of funding source :

7. Project now part of mainstream programme :

Tick Yes or No

Yes

No

If yes please provide details of mainstream programme :

Other please state:

8. Why are the projects not sustainable?

Unable to secure funding from other programmes:

Tick Yes or No

Yes

No

Unable to identify other sources:

Tick Yes or No

Yes

No

Project now part of mainstream programme :

Tick Yes or No

Yes

No

Other ... please state :

SECTION 4

9.	Yes	No	Don't Know
Is there evidence of an improvement in physical ability amongst participants:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence of increased participation amongst underrepresented groups (women, older people, ethnic minorities):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence of more sport and physical activity in areas of high social deprivation:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence of improved health and well-being generally:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence of extended family involvement in physical activity:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence of changes in diet and nutrition:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence of reductions in alcohol consumption:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence of positive impacts on confidence and positive body image:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence of strengthened infrastructure within applicant organisations:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 5

10. In your opinion, what are the key learning points from the programme for your organisation's future projects?

11. In your opinion, what are the key learning points from the Programme for Sport Northern Ireland and the development of future policies and programmes?

12. If there is anything else that you would like to add, please do so below:

Appendix 3

EXAMPLES FROM QUESTIONS 15 – 17

Please provide three examples of evidence of the above, indicating whether the evidence comes from monitoring data, previous evaluations or other sources. (7/363)

13. Example 1.
Physical activities e.g. Pilates, dance armchair aerobics-weekly classes in hall.
Two nights training every week.
In the Disability Outreach Programme, one overweight young adult participated in all the sessions for numerous weeks, yet did not attend school on Fridays because he refused to take part in P.E. class. He said that no-one laughed at him in the outreach programme and he did not have to wear shorts - this was his comment in his evaluation of the SHAPE Programme.
Children much more interested in participating in sport activities.
Fit Futures carried out a study with local primary school and University of Ulster.
Young person who was very withdrawn now more outgoing , feedback from parents etc.
The project is situated within some of the most disadvantaged communities in Belfast and has managed to encourage participation by all groups. To give just two examples, in particular the use of the Centre by ethnic minorities has increased significantly and the 'Midnight Soccer' included some of the most marginalised young people in these communities.
Monitoring data.
Deprived areas of Coleraine were targeted for this programme. Young people accessed services and personnel which they would not normally have had access to.
Soccer training. Brings young people together. Male / Female. Catholic / Protestant.
Council facility.

14. Example 2.

Cook-It Programme with Health and Nutrition Toolkit is being implemented. Volunteers are being trained in this soon.

football match on Saturday morning.

All the SHAPE participants on the Disability Outreach Programme said in their evaluations that they had never had the opportunity to do as many new sports activities before and they had learnt new skills.

Team work strengthened - children and staff.

Continues participation of young people who would not normally have got involved in physical activities.

Reviews attended by staff reflect value of service to young people and their families.

The number of sporting activities in these communities increased significantly through the existence of the project.

Two local youth groups monitored their young people and had data to show improved levels of health and well-being, Portrush and Sunlea.

15. Example 3.

We are now involved in more community activities -classes which provide physical mental and emotional well-being and above all good social get togethers for all ages and abilities.

The Sports Development Coaches said in their evaluations for Shape that the fact that the young people participated in a programme over several weeks showed that they engaged more effectively as time went on because they became more confident and had improved self-esteem. Also those who were not particularly competitive actually became so in certain activities.

Awareness of healthy lifestyles being raised as result of the programme.

Young person with autism started using the pool on regular basis after availing of our services. Previously the young person was unwilling to take a bath - a tremendous change and this account has been given by family member.

From my knowledge of the project and the community it is evident that the infrastructure of the project through its work with the local community organisation has increased the community infrastructure, with more success in attracting additional resources and more local involvement.

Sport Northern Ireland is the leading public body for the development of sport in Northern Ireland. Its corporate vision is: *“a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport which contributes to a peaceful, fair and prosperous society”*.

Sport Northern Ireland promotes the benefits of lifelong participation in sport and physical activity and the value of an active lifestyle for all.

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