



Mapping Sports Ministry

Community Sport and Wellbeing Ministry: Developing an evidence base

A research report prepared for the Diocese of Gloucester and Sportily
by Mark Balcar and Andrew Parker
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the current landscape within sports ministry, for the benefit of sport and wellbeing ministry projects and looks to support the Church of England's National Sport and Wellbeing Strategy with new insight and understanding. In so doing, the report presents the findings of desk-based and empirical research into the role of faith-based (Christian) organisations in contemporary social life and their potential contribution to sport and wellbeing agendas. It combines a mapping of policy debates surrounding faith and civil society and mainstream sport and wellbeing with critical analysis of contemporary sports ministry provision by church and para-church organisations.

A central aim of the report is to highlight the current social and political backdrop and to consider the way in which sports ministry activities might lead to the establishment of new worshipping communities, this being a central aim of Sportily, a sports ministry project of the Diocese of Gloucester. Moreover, the report aims to collate evidence from current and relevant best practice in sports ministry to create a stronger evidence-based narrative and rationale for innovative sports ministry approaches.

Developing an evidence base is critical to the establishment of these approaches and for building partnerships, securing funding, and influencing the future success of sport and wellbeing ministry across the Church of England. The report highlights some of the challenges around constructing this evidence-base, in particular, the lack of evidence surrounding the success of sports ministry nationally to delivering new Christians into churches or individuals on a faith journey and clearly articulated theories of change which map sports ministry interventions through to a faith journey or church engagement. The report however, also examines the growing robust evidence base across the community sport, youth and wellbeing sectors. These frameworks alongside the current limited understanding of the success of sports ministry and the creation of new faith journeys towards new worshipping communities will provide a critical and timely step change in sport and wellbeing ministry.

Methodology

The methodology has sought to bring together information from a broad range of external sources including those from the public policy and community sport sector alongside emerging research on sports ministry and other faith journey research. These sources have helped us to identify what evidence exists around the role of faith groups in civil society and the delivery of public policy where it touches on sport and wellbeing. This includes developing a more in-depth understanding of the wider role that sport and

wellbeing ministry might play in supporting public policy objectives and highlighting new delivery opportunities for the Church around wider health and wellbeing agendas.

The research for the report was carried out between October 2020 – May 2021 and was funded by the Diocese of Gloucester. The desk-based element of the research comprised a mixture of policy and secondary-source analysis with the empirical element focusing on one-to-one, semi-structured interviews with sports ministry project leads as part of the development of case studies. The empirical data collection process was selective in order to provide a cross-sectional analysis of current activity in this area.

Whilst the overall aim of the research was to provide a snapshot of the key issues to be considered and addressed by Sportily, it is believed that its findings should be of wider interest and use. Therefore this executive summary is made available in a hope that it will provide insight, support reflection, generate conversation and support further investment in sports ministry.

Key Findings

The Role Of Faith Groups In Civil Society

- The report highlights that there is good research and evidence that faith groups are quietly undertaking significant social action - estimated at £3+ billion annually - and engagement in the community which also provides insight into how churches should best do this.
- There is increasing recognition that faith-based organisations are builders of social capital, social cohesion and, more specifically, their impact on public health continues to be underplayed including wellbeing. There are a great number of health-related activities taking place in and around churches that are so well 'embedded' that they are seldom thought of as interventions or evaluated as such.
- There is an emerging change in attitude by policy makers, funders, charities, and businesses especially local authorities, towards faith-based organisations. They are realising that faith-based organisations have a significant part to play in building better and more cohesive communities and have the assets to do so and should be considered further within the context of civil society policy making - the Churches response to the Covid pandemic has highlighted and potentially accelerated this.
- Within the context of civil society there are potentially opportunities for dioceses to help trail-blaze new approaches to community engagement and develop new partnerships with local and national government to enhance the Church's role within local delivery through the Government's new Levelling Up policy: the Levelling Up White Paper was published in January 2022.

- Problems persist around the general perception that the Church prioritizes proselytising over and above civic contribution and that as an institution, it is 'dying'.
- The evidence suggests that such perceptions need to be challenged and churches must work hard at building trust with public and private agencies by proving the quality of their governance, their ability to successfully deliver outcomes, and their accountability around funding.
- Sport and wellbeing ministry projects should align with policy, evidence-based approaches and outcome frameworks, and be able to meet due diligence requirements and utilize and develop existing insights and theories of change.
- Furthermore, the development and implementation of robust monitoring and evaluation protocols and practices around evidencing project delivery are crucial.
- Any effective progression at diocesan level should be scaled to the national level.

Sport And Wellbeing Ministry In Society

- Sports ministry has a long history in the UK and today this is predominately driven by parachurch organisations.
- While sports ministry continues to evolve and there are pockets of success, it is not clear that sports ministry has grown much in the last thirty years – in fact it may have declined in most areas.
- The sector has generally not connected with mainstream policy around social outcomes and a broader health and wellbeing agenda including, thereby providing effective solutions to a wide range of social issues.
- Research undertaken by the Diocese of London highlights that demand around sports ministry is no longer seen in terms of just 'sport' but as sport and wellbeing ministry 'through sport'. This incorporates a much broader base of community interventions including play, recreation, fitness and social prescribing that have an impact on the long-term health, happiness and satisfaction of individuals and local communities.
- Scripture Union has made one of the most notable contributions in the parachurch sector developing its sports ministry offer, underpinned by its 2014 research evaluating sports ministry.



- Some parachurch organisations have developed new approaches to meet the changing demand from young people, however, they have not effectively evaluated its impact: monitoring and evaluation is still not seen by the sector as a priority and there is little empirical evidence to support the claims parachurch organisations make about their impact, especially faith pathways.
- Two major collaborative campaigns that sought to use major sporting events in the UK - the London Olympics in 2012 and the Rugby World Cup in 2015 - as a tool of community engagement and mission made a significant impact on the sector and the church.
- In undertaking evaluation reports, they have provided vital fresh insight for the sport ministry sector including there is still a demand and enthusiasm for sport and wellbeing ministry from churches but that they need significantly more support than simply the provision of resource and where the sector works together strategically with churches, there is a greater impact. This has been supported by further research by the Diocese of London and Sport England.
- The limitations however, of relying on those parachurch organisations using sport as a tool for mission to drive the development of sport and wellbeing ministry in the church have also been recognised.
- Existing interventions highlight the significant challenges for sport and wellbeing ministry in operating in silos without an overall strategy or framework to address many critical issues nationally to ensure the sectors develops and works effectively with the church.
- The importance of good leadership cannot be underestimated in terms of the development and rejuvenation of sports and wellbeing ministry in future years.
- A major development in sports ministry in the last ten years has been that the Church of England has become much more active since 2012 as it has explored how sport ministry could be better utilized by dioceses and parishes as tool for community engagement, mission, and ministry.
- The Dioceses of London, Gloucester and Norwich, have led the way, alongside the Church of England's first Sport Ambassador and the Seven Pilot Diocese Project all who continue to provide valuable insight and learning for developing sport and wellbeing ministry and leadership at diocesan level.
- The Seven Pilot Diocese Project could potentially provide the Church of England with the critical foundation it needs to transform sport and wellbeing ministry over the next ten years.

The Evidence Base For Community Sport, Youth And Wellbeing

- There are three relevant evidence bases outside sport and wellbeing ministry that should be considered in detail.
- Consideration should also be given to the evidence around the church investing in civil society including the Government's new Levelling-Up policy: a moral, social and economic programme to spread opportunity more equally across the UK.

i. The Evidence Base: Community Sport

- The use of **sport-based activity** to deliver a set of complex social outcomes is now firmly embedded in policy thinking, funding mechanisms and delivery frameworks.
- This is centred on getting more people active especially disadvantaged young people, women and girls, disabled people and ethnic minorities active and to deliver successful outcomes across four key areas: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, and social and community development.
- Research suggests that sporting activity has a broad positive impact on society, and the evidence-base surrounding **sport and social outcomes** is both credible and robust, however these are multifaceted and complex. Findings found that:
 - There is a well-established evidence base that sporting activity improves physical wellbeing and has a whole host of positive impacts on individuals and their lives.
 - Mental health also has a well-established evidence base which can improve life satisfaction and self-esteem and confidence.
 - Likewise, individual development has a substantial evidence base including improving educational attainment improving employability and building character and resilience through volunteering and leadership.
 - While community development is harder to measure there is evidence, particularly around the role of sport and the integration of people of different backgrounds, that sport helps people to interact and builds bridging capital via participating, volunteering and spectating.



- While physical wellbeing has a range of validated and well recognised measures, the outcomes of sport and physical activity does present some measurement challenges: there is an on-going need for evidencing social outcomes through sport and physical activity including the impact of volunteering and around community development, using more consistent forms of measurement.
- From the data researchers were able to provide many critical principles for the successful delivery community sporting interventions including how to target certain groups and tackle a wide range of issues: inactivity, obesity, mental health, and isolation/loneliness; improve community cohesion and integration; build character and resilience; reduce anti-social behaviour and low-level crime; and increase volunteering and employability; poverty, disadvantage, and inequality.

ii. The Evidence Base: Youth

- The evidence base for **youth interventions** has grown significantly in recent years.
- Research suggests that open access youth provision has the potential to significantly improve social and emotional learning skills, social capital/connectedness, and wellbeing for young people, particularly those with most to gain.
- Open access youth work is provision **that a young person may access regardless of their background, needs or position in society** (Robertson 2005). This can include a range of open access services including youth clubs, detached youth work, open access play sessions and targeted sessions for specific groups of young people. The aim is to provide a safe environment where young people have access to informal learning opportunities and information and guidance around a whole range of issues meaning that they are better informed about life choices and the opportunities that are available to them.
- It also shows that higher quality youth provision is related to better outcomes for young people: those attending targeted provision make greater gains across some social outcomes related to social skills, leadership, self-regulation and communication and self-expression than those attending universal provision only.
- Young people relish safe and supportive environments where interventions are inclusive, stimulating, positively challenging and fun.
- Particular attention should be paid to the needs of girls and young women, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Further attention should be given to strengthening the links between youth provision and sporting activity.

- Sport and wellbeing ministry should seek to adopt these practices.

iii. The Evidence Base: Wellbeing

- The evidence base for **wellbeing interventions** is an emerging area that measures ‘how we are doing’ as individuals, communities and as a nation.
- There is already evidence of what works to improve wellbeing which provides a coherent and common approach for determining the efficacy of interventions.
- Wellbeing has a wide range of determinants and there are seven broad dimensions that matter most to people. These dimensions are the natural environment, personal well-being, our relationships, health (good health improves wellbeing and good wellbeing improves health), what we do, where we live, personal finance, the economy, education and skills and governance. Key areas to personal wellbeing include feeling purpose, social relationships, trust and belonging and mental wellbeing.
- There is limited good quality evidence for sport and dance impacts on wellbeing; existing evidence shows that doing activities outdoors can be good for people’s wellbeing but there is limited evidence about the wellbeing of children and very little is about adults and children together in families.
- There is also promising evidence that places and spaces also boost social relations or community wellbeing: community hubs can promote social cohesion by bringing together different social or generational groups; increase social capital and build trust; and interaction between community members; and increase people’s knowledge or skills.
- There is also emerging evidence to suggest that attending and volunteering at church/faitth-based activities increases wellbeing.
- Furthermore, there is also evidence that social prescribing, PE and Sport in schools, opening school facilities, and being active in nature could potentially support the aims and objectives of sport and wellbeing ministry projects.



The Evidence Base For Sport And Wellbeing Ministry

- Sports ministry continues to evolve in the UK and the last decade has witnessed several significant developments which have changed conventional working practices in the sector.
- The best developments have predominately highlighted the need to connect more readily with mainstream policy, and to incorporate and encompass a broader wellbeing agenda thereby providing effective solutions to a wide range of social issues.
- The insight and learning that has emerged from a number of new approaches to sport and wellbeing ministry has not been sufficiently understood or embedded in sector approaches and practise including the broader sector taking a strategic approach to grow and develop the sector through strong partnerships, links to local parishes, workforce and leadership.
- There is a lack of in-depth theological thinking and insight into the practical application and ground-level development of sport, health and wellbeing initiatives in the UK.
- There is also an underlying theological narrative persists which suggests that the Church should not use sporting activity to deliver social outcomes or mission: this reflects the limitations to relying on parachurch organisations using sport as a tool for mission to drive the development of sport and wellbeing ministry.
- Sports ministry finds itself in need of a new theology; one which relates directly to, informs, and emerges organically from practitioner work within the sector.
- Where churches and church leaders fail to promote sport as a 'spiritual good' they deny people of all ages the opportunity to further explore their relationship with God around who they have been (uniquely) designed them to be. For young people in particular, this can be a detriment both to their physical/emotional and spiritual growth. It is up to churches and church leaders to model a positive mindset towards such activities.
- There is evidence to suggest that such theological thinking (and reflection) is emerging and this needs to be developed further.
- The adoption of such thinking and reflection should serve not only to influence and underpin work within and across the sector but to inform theories of change and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- Existing interventions highlight the significant challenges for sport and wellbeing ministry in operating in silos without an overall strategy or framework. Critical key factors need addressing urgently, such as:

- (i) strategic thinking and planning around the development of sport ministry over the next 10-20 years;
 - (ii) the successful monitoring and evaluation of sport and wellbeing ministry projects and campaigns;
 - (iii) the need for evidence-based frameworks for different types of sport and wellbeing ministry models;
 - (iv) understanding of the social outcomes through community sport and partnerships with public bodies to embed this thinking and insights into sport and wellbeing ministry;
 - (v) new models of delivery that are sustainable long term;
 - (vi) the need for evidence-based frameworks for faith pathways, the role of the local church and church schools, and new worshipping communities;
 - (vii) appropriate education, training and continuing professional development for sports ministers and volunteers;
 - (viii) a framework for using major (and other) sporting events as a means for initial (marketing) community engagement and mission;
 - (iv) good quality leadership – a new generation of sports ministers and leaders.
- This has led to the Church of England seeking to find its own path to strategically develop sport and wellbeing ministry at both the diocesan and national level. Good leadership is critical in this respect and the importance of this cannot be underestimated in terms of the development and rejuvenation of sports and wellbeing ministry in future years.
 - There is also a dearth of evidence concerning how best to create pathways into faith or new worshipping communities through sport and wellbeing: while some sport and wellbeing ministries have developed models of engagement these have limited theological basis and are often the basis of the 'live experience' or church growth models.
 - There is some good evidence and insight that the sector can draw on such as the 9Dot Research Faith Journeys Research Report for the Church of England (2018).
 - Further consideration about the theological implications of the Church working with public bodies to understand embrace and frame sport and wellbeing ministry within the public policy framework is required.

- There is some thinking and evidence on how the Church can deliver social outcomes especially around social cohesion but little about how sporting activity can do this.
- As endorsed by mainstream sport, youth or wellbeing policy, sport and wellbeing ministries should seek to develop robust theories of change including the key contribution of sport-specific interventions in the faith journeys of participants.

The Evidence Base For Community Sport And Sport For Development

- The community sport sector – outside of the grass-roots based provision provided by individual National Governing Bodies of sport - has emerged as a significant force in the sports sector through successfully tackling stubborn inactivity levels and achieving more social value.
- This has seen the emergence of a new sport for development sector which often delivers both community sport (as defined by increasing participation/getting and maintain more active people) and social outcomes.
- The community sport and specifically the sport for development sector is mostly made up of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations: sport and wellbeing ministry projects might best fit within this sub-sector.
- Important to note that like the church, VCSE organisations are least understood, inadequately monitored in national data and require further focus by policy and planning makers.
- Several of the social outcomes that the sport for development sector priorities dovetail well within the churches broader remit to tackle poverty and food poverty, develop youth leadership and resilience, and support mental health and mentoring.
- The sport and wellbeing ministry sector already has many of the key evidenced-elements that are required for successful intervention through sport: local placed-based approach, community focus, volunteers and caring about the community and those in it.
- There are many similarities between the sectors: sport and wellbeing ministry finds itself where the community sport and sport for development sector was ten years ago needing to create a more relevant delivery approach, build a stronger evidence base and develop robust theories of change that are refined by impact and outcomes data.
- StreetGames, OnSide Youth Centres, SLQ, Play Gloucester, Youth Sport Trust and the Bromley-by-Bow Centre case-studies provide relevant examples of approaches, models and insight about what works:

they also provide examples of project and programmes that could be adopted and modified to local conditions with the addition of a faith/church dimension.

- Sport and wellbeing ministry projects should explore and assess relevant programmes seeking to build relationships with these organisations/networks to utilise their expertise, resources, and training to build life transformational opportunities for individuals and communities whilst at the same time creating an appropriate and distinctive mission element to their work.
- Sport for development also has its limitations – while academic studies support the using of sport to enhance social capital, social inclusion and youth interventions around mentoring, education, employment/training they also note that some of the claims surrounding the transformative potential of sport can be exaggerated. This is also true of sport ministry.
- The sector continues to work hard to create credible theories of change and expand a more robust evidence base to provide much needed data to support its claims of impact and refine its approach to delivery: organisational evaluations these show that these programmes have specific characteristics, and which are intentionally orientated towards targeted non-sport outcomes deliver more substantial returns and wider community benefit.
- The evidence shows that a good theory of change is the main tool to design a successful programme and is the roadmap for good evaluation and measurement.
- The Sport for Development Coalition's Outcomes and Measurement Framework is helping individual organisations and the sector to improve the way they measure, record, and demonstrate the impact they are making: to improve the sector's evidence base and improve outcomes for young people by outlining of the essential principles of building logic into a theory of change supported by an outcomes-led methodology to designing sport for development programmes and showing the links and assumptions between the immediate changes, longer-term changes and the goal, and the factors that will affect an organisation's ability to reach these.

The Evidence Base from Sports Ministry Case Studies

As part of the research case studies were produced with six organisations all of which concern themselves with the provision of sport and physical activity: Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub, Adventure Plus, Corby Chapel Gym, Kick, Sports Factory and Inspire (Church Children and Families



Football Initiative). Our thanks is expressed to these organisations for their involvement in the research.

- Findings from the empirical case study research highlight community wellbeing outcomes that support existing systematic review evidence, as well as describing additional and unforeseen outcomes, including those that arise from the benefits of more informal spaces - as well as benefits to the organisations responsible for the delivery of the interventions.
- Findings also highlight how important consideration of the local context is, that the response to local needs is often complex, and that community involvement in the delivery of projects is important including planning to successfully improve wellbeing outcomes.
- Case study data also demonstrates that sport and wellbeing ministry projects which adopt sound governance structures, robust approaches to strategic planning, and active and co-creative relationships with local churches and communities, have a firm foundation on which to build sustainable practice.
- However, case study data reveal that the adoption of sound monitoring and evaluation processes are lacking across the sector, hence, there is limited good quality evidence for the impact of sporting interventions on the overall wellbeing of related communities.

Conclusions

- This report concludes that sport and wellbeing ministry projects have the potential to make a valuable contribution to the personal and social development of those with whom they engages.
- While historical evidence suggests that the promotion of sport and wellbeing through faith-based organisations can be effective in not only engaging individuals in sporting activities but also in their wellbeing and faith journeys, the nuances and complexities of contemporary social life require a re-thinking and re-calibration of the way in which this work is designed, implemented and developed.
- Sport and wellbeing interventions can provide a variety of support mechanisms and faith/life-course pathways for those who choose to access such opportunities.
- The report highlights that there is some good research and evidence supporting the churches engagement in the community which also provides insight into how churches should best do this and there is some learning around innovative sports ministry, which, on the whole, has been ignored to date.

- There is lack of in-depth theological thinking and insight into the practical application and ground-level development of sport, health and wellbeing initiatives, to ensure they lead people into faith pathways, new worshipping communities and traditional church – there is some other evidence to suggest how this might be best achieved and the Church of England project is looking to address some of these issues nationally.
- There is a lack of in-depth theological thinking and insight into the practical application and ground-level development of sport, health and wellbeing initiatives in the UK.
- There is also an underlying theological narrative persists which suggests that the Church should not use sporting activity to deliver social outcomes or mission: this reflects the limitations to relying on parachurch organisations using sport as a tool for mission to drive the development of sport and wellbeing ministry: Sports ministry finds itself in need of a new theology.
- There is evidence to suggest that such theological thinking (and reflection) is emerging and this needs to be developed further to not only influence and underpin work within and across the sector but to inform theories of change and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- The sport and wellbeing ministry case studies produced as part of this research provide an important start in better understanding current sport and wellbeing ministry approaches and outcomes however, underline what is found in the reports and literature – there are several fundamental issues and challenges in sports ministry today including the lack of:
 - a) Evidence surrounding the success of sport and wellbeing ministry nationally to delivering new Christians into churches or individuals on a faith journey
 - b) Clearly articulated theories of change which map sport and wellbeing ministry interventions through to a faith journey, new worshipping communities or traditional church engagement
 - c) Replicable models for sport and wellbeing ministry that make the case for its inclusion in mainstream mission and ministry for the whole church
 - d) Joined up thinking between the church sport and wellbeing ministry and public policy objectives to deliver social outcomes.
- More in-depth research is needed to get further insight from the case studies and to expand the study to other parish projects and parachurch work alongside a more systematic review of past evaluations: however, the lack of simple data collection, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and independent evaluations is always going to restrict what insight can be uncovered.

- The report also demonstrates that by embracing insight from wider community sport, youth and wellbeing approaches that the project is highly likely to create a significant base from which to achieve successful engagement with the local communities.
- There is a robust enough evidence base across the community sport, youth and wellbeing sectors to show how community sport organisations impact on a wide range of highly relevant social outcomes.
- To help do this it sports ministry should include wellbeing alongside the delivery of social outcomes and tackling inactivity.
- The evidence shows that a good theory of change is the main tool to design a successful programme and is a roadmap for good evaluation and measurement and these examples, approaches, monitoring and evaluations frameworks, evaluations and theories of change should be used to inspire, draw learning and insight – and potentially partner with the relevant organisations.
- The report concludes that sport and wellbeing ministry cannot continue to evolve successfully without reference to public policy and especially the community sport, wellbeing, youth, and civil society/community cohesion sectors: it should embed itself within this growing and increasingly significant work, help shape these environments, as a key leader and deliverer in the community.
- Exploring these frameworks will provide sport and wellbeing ministry projects with critical insights about what works in a variety of contexts and inform and guide the development of theories of change, that will aid the future development of sports ministry and help to ensure success.
- These will be attractive to funders, partners and policy makers and help sport and wellbeing ministry projects to replicate what works from the outset, avoid mistakes and better articulate vision to a wide range of stakeholders.
- This will be crucial in building partnerships and ultimately in the future success of sport and wellbeing ministry in the Church of England.

Recommendations

Sport and wellbeing ministry projects should:

- Consider assessing and considering what the community sport and sport for development sector has done and is doing – there is significant insight, inspiration and opportunities here.



- Consider the investing in developing a new sport and wellbeing theology that relates directly to, informs, and emerges organically from practitioner work within the sector.
- Consider in depth working out how sport and wellbeing ministry projects can create real pathways into relationship, faith, new worshipping communities and church life – this needs many levels of engagement and approaches and is in its infancy.
- Consider working hard to join up community sport, youth, wellbeing and faith approaches by creating innovative models, theories of change that can be monitored and evaluated, and then communicated.
- Consider working in partnership and communicating with local institutions and organisations to build trust, knowledge and recognition and to be incorporated into local strategic thinking and delivery.

Sportily

Sportily is creating a network of fun-loving sport and activity groups, where all children, young people, and their families can try different sports, make new friends and encounter the Christian faith with others. It was formed in 2021 with the support of the Diocese of Gloucester, by building on the foundations laid by Gloucestershire based sports ministry charity PSALMS, which had been established in 1995.

For more information please see www.sportily.org.uk or contact hello@sportily.org.uk.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research report was commissioned by the Diocese of Gloucester and originally produced with Sportily as the primary audience. It is now made available to support current and possible future sport and wellbeing ministry projects. It provides an overview of this landscape and looks to support the Church of England's National Sport and Wellbeing Strategy with new insight and understanding. In so doing, the report presents the findings of desk-based and empirical research into the role of faith-based (Christian) organisations in contemporary social life and their potential contribution to sport and wellbeing agendas. It combines a mapping of policy debates surrounding faith and civil society and mainstream sport and wellbeing with critical analysis of contemporary sports ministry provision by church and para-church organisations. A central aim of the report is to highlight the social and political backdrop around the way in which sports ministry activities might lead to the establishment of new worshipping communities. Moreover, the report aims to collate evidence from current and relevant best practice in sports ministry to create a stronger evidence-based narrative and rationale for investment in innovative approaches to sport and wellbeing ministry. Developing an evidence base is critical to the establishment of these approaches and for building partnerships, securing funding, and influencing the future success of sport and wellbeing ministry across the Church of England. This report highlights some of the challenges around constructing this evidence-base, in particular, the lack of:

- Evidence surrounding the success of sports ministry nationally to delivering new Christians into churches or individuals on a faith journey;
- Clearly articulated theories of change which map sports ministry interventions through to a faith journey or church engagement;
- Replicable models for sports ministry that make the case for its inclusion in mainstream mission and ministry for the whole church;
- Joined up thinking between the church sport and wellbeing ministry and public policy objectives to deliver social outcomes.

The report also examines the growing robust evidence base across the community sport, youth and wellbeing sectors. It highlights the myriad of synergies that will aid the future development of sports ministry in the UK. These frameworks provide critical insights about what works in a variety of contexts to inform the development of sport and wellbeing ministry theories of change. They also provide important guidance about how to measure these myriads of outcomes which will be attractive to funders, partners and policy makers. In understanding the content of this report readers and decision makers will be able to replicate what works from the outset, avoid mistakes and better articulate a vision for sport and wellbeing ministry to a wide range of stakeholders. It will be crucial in building partnerships, securing funding and ultimately in the future success of sport and wellbeing ministry in the Church of England.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Our methodology has sought to bring together information from a broad range of external sources including those from the public policy and community sport sector alongside emerging research on sports ministry and other faith journey research. These sources have helped us to identify what evidence exists around the role of faith groups in civil society and the delivery of public policy where it touches on sport and wellbeing. This includes developing a more in-depth understanding of the wider role that sport and wellbeing ministry might play in supporting public policy objectives and highlighting new delivery opportunities for the Church around wider health and wellbeing agendas.

The majority of the research for the report was carried out between October 2020 – May 2021 with some additional research carried out in July. It was funded by the Diocese of Gloucester. The desk-based element of the research comprised a mixture of policy and secondary-source analysis with the empirical element focusing on qualitative one-to-one, semi-structured interviews with the leads of six ‘case study’ UK-based sports ministry organisations.¹ The empirical data collection process was selective in order to provide a cross-sectional analysis of current activity in this area. The overall aim of the research was to provide a snapshot of the key issues to be considered and addressed by sport and wellbeing ministry projects in relation to project delivery and outcomes.

Interviews were carried out via telephone/Zoom call and were preceded by the distribution to respondents of a short questionnaire survey concerning the history and profile of their organisations and the nature of the work which they were involved in (see Appendix A). This questionnaire was accompanied by an information sheet about the research itself and a consent form (see Appendix B). Interview discussions were based upon the information submitted by respondents in response to the questionnaire and this was used as a basis for more in-depth conversations about the organisations themselves. Interviews lasted between 60 and 120 minutes during which time space was also provided for organisational leads to provide any supplementary information about the nature of their organisations and to explore any emergent themes arising from the questionnaires. All interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim.

Qualitative data was analysed using a grounded theory approach whereby respondent interpretations of their organisational experiences were explored in detail as were the meanings which they attached to these experiences (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Bryman, 2015). The questioning style during interview was open-ended and, where necessary, further probing took place to clarify responses (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2011). Grounded theory methodology allows for the

¹ By ‘sports ministry’ we mean any faith-related venture (formal or informal) that engages local people and/or communities (churched or otherwise) in anything that might be broadly considered sport and/or physical activity.

systematic analysis of data through a process of open, axial, and selective coding, and the formation of a conceptual narrative that explains the experiences of participants from their perspective (Charmaz, 2014). Data were coded, managed, and organised manually and were subsequently analysed in four stages (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). First, transcripts were read in full to gain an overview of the data. Second, each transcript was individually coded and indexed allowing the different aspects of respondent experience to be captured. Third, these experiences were clustered and inductively rationalized into several over-arching topics which broadly aligned with the structure of the initial questionnaire. The final stage of analysis involved the formal organization of these topics into generic themes according to which the qualitative data are presented. The empirical findings of the research are located and contextualized against the policy and secondary source analysis.

CHAPTER 3: ROLE OF FAITH GROUPS IN CIVIL SOCIETY

i. Introduction

Understanding the role of faith groups within government civil society policy is important context for any significant church-based community activity. This is especially important as the relationship between public policy and funding and faith groups has not been an overly positive one for many years. This is however changing, potentially rapidly because of the Covid-19 pandemic. This chapter explores high-level government policy context to enable sport and wellbeing projects to better understand how they might position themselves strategically within the policy framework by considering how they approach building relationships and partnerships with public bodies, other community charities and funders, and what these agencies might be interested in. Furthermore, the chapter considers the evidence for faith-based community engagement through social action on which projects can base their programme development and how important this is in making the case to public bodies. Finally, it highlights some of the possible changes in the relationship with government and provides evidenced-based insight in how to build these relationships in the longer term.

ii. What Role Do Faith Organisations Play in Civil Society?

It is generally recognised that ‘outside of the faith community, many people are unaware of the contribution and potential of faith-based charities in our society - believing their numbers and influence to be low’.² Faith-based charities, however play a significant role in society making up more than a quarter of the voluntary sector in Great Britain with a combined income of £16bn in England and Wales. This was set out in a series of reports by New Philanthropy Capital to better understand the role of faith-based charities within the charity sector as a part of wider research programme. In its report *Understanding faith-based charities* (2016)³ they highlighted what makes faith-based charities unique, the contribution they make to the wider charity sector, and the challenges and opportunities they face. They established that 27% (49,881) of 187,495 registered charities in Great Britain are faith-based with nearly two-thirds of these are Christian, or of a Christian tradition. In *Faith Matters: Understanding the size, income and focus of faith-based charities* (2016)⁴ their research showed that 23% (£16.3bn) of the charity sector’s income in England and Wales is received by faith-based charities. Like many charities in the sector this income is concentrated in a relatively few large organisations. £13.0bn (80%) of the total income received by faith-

² What a difference a faith makes: Insights on faith-based charities (2016) <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/what-a-difference-a-faith-makes/>

³ <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/what-a-difference-a-faith-makes/>

⁴ https://www.thinknpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Faith-matters_June-20161.pdf

based charities goes to around 1,700 organisations with incomes over £1m per year. The remaining £3.3 billion is shared by over 41,000 charities. The majority of activities that faith-based charities operated were education and training (over 20,000), while others indicated they worked for 'Other charitable purposes (14,769 faith-based charities) and poverty (12,601 faith-based charities. There are around 30,000 sport and 11,000 recreation charities in total and the majority of these are non-faith-based charities. There are only 4,800 faith-based sport charities and 1,855 faith-based recreation charities which makes up making up 16% of the whole sport charity sector and 17% recreation sector.⁵

In a further report, NPC sought to understand the dimension of faith and the role faith plays in a charity. highlighted how faith impacts on the charities operation by identifying the distinctive attributes that faith brings including:

- Faith-based charities are more resilient to changes in the policy and funding environment. They have distinct assets, such as volunteers, physical spaces and networks, combined with their ability to fundraise from within their faith.
- Faith-based charities have unique reach - part of their local community for a long time and are trusted by members of the wider community as well as those they directly help. This trusted position in a community can make faith-based charities uniquely placed to reach groups that are considered 'hard to reach'.
- Faith-based charities persevere can be particularly motivated and remain motivated to help the most vulnerable in society, and persevere with causes others may see as hopeless
- Faith-based charities can deliver culturally appropriate services that consider a person's spiritual needs.
- Faith-based charities also face unique challenges.

The research identified a perception that faith-based charities are only there to help those of their own faith. While they found this to be generally unfounded, this did cause issues with funders not wanting to fund them and beneficiaries not seeking them out. The research also highlighted concerns around proselytising and how this can cause problems with beneficiaries and funders even where a faith-based charity may share their faith but do not see this as a means to convert. They found many faith-based charities merely wanted to increase understanding and grow faith in those who already belong to that faith. NPC suggests that because of the significance of this critical issue, faith-based charities should be aware and ensure they 'spend time considering and clarifying their position'.⁶

5 https://www.thinknpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Faith-matters_June-20161.pdf p 8 & 9

6 <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/what-a-difference-a-faith-makes/> p29

NPC also highlighted that faith is poorly understood among the wider public, the public and private sectors, and the voluntary sector. Low religious literacy and misunderstanding around faith values and a lack of awareness of different beliefs can cause problems and can worsen the challenges highlighted above.

Regardless of these unique issues, NPC asserts that that faith-based charities have huge potential to create impact for their beneficiaries and for society however, generally, society is unappreciative of their strengths and there is active suspicion of them. They concluded that faith is deeply embedded in the charity sector and the voluntary sector needs to understand faith-based charities better as the research highlighted, relatively little is known about faith-based charities as a group. A key and critical finding from the research was that most faith-based charities do not think of themselves as a group or a sub-sector of the voluntary sector however define themselves by the services they provide, as a non -faith-based charity would. However, as NPC state, ultimately, 'it is not about whether a charity is faith-based or non-faith-based, what matters is the impact they are having on the lives of those they seek to help'.⁷

In *What a Difference a Faith Makes* (2016) NPC recommendations provide three good principles to be considered:

1. To understanding and articulating the impact of their work to both faith - and non faith-based audiences including how their association with faith supports effective operations and delivery of services.
2. Collaboration between faith-based and non faith-based charities could lead to a greater impact for beneficiaries. While non faith-based charities should think about how the assets of faith-based charities could help them achieve their mission and sport and wellbeing projects should think about how to leverage these assets for greater impact. Projects also need to consider helping the public sector recognise the unique characteristics and resources they offer, instead of focusing on perceived challenges.
3. To be aware and consider how the role of faith in society is changing and becoming more complex. Some areas are more multicultural and multi-faith, while in other areas there may still be one predominant faith but numbers ascribing to this faith are dropping. Furthermore, the role of spirituality in our society is also changing and the evidence suggests that fewer people are identifying with one particular faith, but people are continuing to consider themselves spiritual. This has an impact on funding and volunteers.⁸

⁷ <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/what-a-difference-a-faith-makes/ p28>

⁸ <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/what-a-difference-a-faith-makes/ p30>

iii. Cinnamon Network Faith Action Audit

At the same time NPC was undertaking this research the Cinnamon Network conducted its first National Faith Action Audit (2016). Analysing data from more than 6,700 churches in 87 villages, towns, and cities across the UK, the research aimed to show the amount of social action by faith-based communities. While the research methodology is not as rigorous as it could be, in undertaking this audit, Cinnamon was able for the first time, highlight something of the value of the church in civil society. In extrapolating the results to reflect around 60,761 faith groups, based on the assumption that if only 46% of them (the same percentage that completed their survey) delivered what the Faith Action Audits' average group did, this would mean that collectively the faith sector gives annually:

- The value of the time given each year is worth £3 billion (including paid staff hours, plus volunteer hours)
- There are around 210,000 social action projects led by churches and faith groups
- These groups are run by 1.8 million volunteers who support 47 million beneficiary interactions each year.
- Just under 119,000 paid staff activities undertaking 74 million paid staff hours and more than 280 million volunteer hours.

These figures only count the time that staff and volunteers directly give in the preparation and delivery of social action projects. The report concluded that if the knock-on benefits of all the combined social action projects were added in (for example the savings to local authorities, or reduction in benefits claimants because of the work of faith groups) then this financial contribution would be considerably larger. This figure would again increase if all the physical resources such as the use of buildings and equipment provided in the delivery of social action projects by local churches and other faith groups were included.

In England, on average each faith group contributed to their local community:

- 8 Social Action projects
- Support for 1,729 beneficiary interactions
- 4 paid staff activities
- 66 volunteer roles
- £107,298 worth of support (paid staff hours, plus volunteer hours calculated using the living wage of £7.85, plus management)

Furthermore, the Audit showed that churches and other faith groups were working to meet a wide range of needs in the community. These included supporting families, children, and young people and those in crisis. Whilst not having concrete evidence, the report suggested that this might reflect the demographics of the members of those faith groups, or the visible needs that volunteers and organisers see around them. It also highlighted there was a plentiful supply of social action project ideas for initiatives working with these groups, and it may be that projects which target them are simpler to implement and run. The categories they used were:

- Giving children a good start in life
- Giving young people and young adults better opportunities and choices
- Supporting families
- Reducing social isolation
- Helping the aged to have better lives
- Helping people to live healthier lives
- Helping people with addiction
- Helping people trapped in trafficking or prostitution
- Supporting people who are in financial crisis
- Alleviating homelessness
- Helping refugees and asylum seekers
- Helping people to build skills and employment
- Helping economic development and enterprise
- Creating safer communities
- Developing more sustainable living
- Building community

While it is difficult to drill down into their findings to isolate the role of sport and wellbeing ministry, within the audit, 'fitness activity' was included as a separate category. However, in the data this was not a high-profile activity when compared to the top four: 'community activity', 'training and education', 'providing meals' and 'religious activities', which had between 4000–6000 individual activities. While this indicates

the limited number of sport ministry projects within church community engagement, it might also reflect that sports ministry was recorded under one of the other 25 activity categories such as 'children and youth' or 'community activity'.

Separately, the Cinnamon Network have four themes which they use to drive the type of project they incubated and develop:

1. Enabling children and young people to flourish
2. Supporting safer, stronger families
3. Building safer, stronger communities
4. Fighting poverty

Mega Fitness is the only sporting activity they have incubated, and this has a middling to low number of related activities, when compared to other recognised activities. It is worth noting that Kick (formerly Kick London) is currently undergoing an assessment to be one of Cinnamon's recommended projects.

The research also highlighted that most faith groups do not partner with any other organisations (62%). Of the 38% that do, the most important partnerships are with other faith or voluntary groups. The report suggests that there were stronger partnerships emerging between faith groups and local authorities and other agencies. Cinnamon concluded that there is significant potential for effective partnerships between faith groups and civic bodies which could have enormous benefits for local communities and recommended that more faith groups worked in partnership.

After a period of reorganisation and reorientating its approach, Cinnamon will be launching its new *Cinnamon Connect* in 2021 to reflect the emerging placed-based approach in community engagement. *Cinnamon Connect* aims to help churches better understand their community by listening and mapping local demand and supply before deciding how to engage. They will also be encouraging churches to work together in hubs or clusters. If appropriate locally, churches will still use one of Cinnamon's 50 franchise projects which have been developed in recent years. *Cinnamon Connect* will provide access to articles, videos and learning. As a part of this re-launch, Cinnamon will also be launching and supporting a new faith audit later in 2021 with a plan to work with local sponsors to run these online and pilots in Ashford, Kent and Sandwell, West Midlands.

iv. Church of England Statistics

The Cinnamon audit data was supplemented by the annual Statistics for Mission survey in 2017, where parishes were asked for the first time for details of social action work, indicated that 13,000 churches run or support more than 33,000 social action projects⁹. The largest area of work was through food banks with 60 per cent (nearly 8,000) churches being involved in either running or supporting them through volunteers, donations and providing venues. Nearly a third of churches (32%) run or support parent and toddler groups; just over a quarter (26%) run lunch clubs; and just over one in five (22%), community cafes. Holiday clubs and breakfast clubs, often providing meals to children from low-income families, are supported or run by nearly 17 per cent of churches.

The findings of the survey also showed that 80 per cent of congregations are involved in one or more forms of social action.

v. Diocesan Community Engagement

In 2013 the Diocese of London published the *Beyond Sunday Report - How the Church of England is helping communities in the Diocese of London*¹⁰ which highlighted the value of church activities in London beyond Sunday services. The report concluded that the Diocese ran over 1000 projects with over 10,000 volunteers, impacting 200,000 people and raising around £17m for these projects. It also highlighted the running of 150 schools educating 53,500 children from all. This simple report provided an important call-card for the Diocese, setting out how involved it was in civil society, its reach across all communities in London and, perhaps most importantly, that the church in London was working hard for the local community.

The value in these audits is that they provide an indication of the level the church engages in social action and that this has significant value to civil society. While the research does not have the granularity to understand the role or reach that sports ministry might have nationally, it does highlight the areas where the church is strongest and potentially is siloed in its approach. It also indicates what social action areas sport and wellbeing ministry projects might want to create links with. As is highlighted in other chapters, sport can successfully make an impact in several of these areas and creating pathways between the provisions could not provide an opportunity to engage with a different audience but strengthen the impact the diocese makes overall.

⁹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/full-extent-church-england-work-support-local-communities>

¹⁰ <https://www.london.anglican.org/mission/beyond-sundays/>

vi. The Government and Faith Groups

Faith Policy

The relationship between government and faith groups is evolving. Within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) there is a growing recognition that faith groups have an important role to play in creating community cohesion and delivering social services and outcomes. MHCLG aims to ‘create great places to live and work, and to give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area’ by taking a place-based approach to building better connections between people in communities to create strong communities. As well as ensuring all young people have opportunities to develop skills, networks, and self-confidence, they support community facilities (including community assets), and through local authorities, provide local sporting provision. Furthermore, the Faith Minister, Lord Stephen Greenhalgh, continues to encourage faith groups to do more, be bold, engage, and work together.

In November 2019, the previous Faith Minister, Lord Bourne, urged people and faith groups across the country to reach out to one another and build local networks to support their communities and to bridge divides and extend understanding. This call came as MHCLG published a new report championing the role faith groups play in their communities and highlighting the valuable interfaith work taking place around the country. The report, *Belief in Communities: Bridging the Divide (2018)*,¹¹ followed Lord Bourne’s second national faith tour, which saw him visit places of worship around the country to better understand their role bringing people of different faiths and backgrounds together. The report states that the work of faith communities and faith-based organisations in local areas is often undervalued¹².

Ministers have also highlighted how many religious institutions, alongside other faith groups from their communities, support the most vulnerable, help make their areas safer and cleaner, and tackle social issues such as loneliness. They have recognised the findings of a report by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) called *Faith matters: Understanding faith-based charities (2016)* that found that a fifth of all charities in the United Kingdom are faith-based, and that faith organisations are often uniquely placed to reach vulnerable communities¹³. Moreover, the report suggests that these organisations can help agencies deliver services in a way which resonates with their congregations more readily than standard services, and in a way which considers a person’s spiritual needs as well. The report also details how interfaith networks can encourage social mixing and play a key role in building strong, resilient communities.

11 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756211/Faith_in_Communities_-_Bridging_the_Divide.pdf

12 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756211/Faith_in_Communities_-_Bridging_the_Divide.pdf

13 <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/understanding-faith-based-charities/>

As the recent Integrated Communities Action Plan (2019)¹⁴ highlighted, there is still more to do to ensure that all communities are open, connected and working to ensure that local communities are a place where everyone matters. The Department sees there is room for individuals and faith institutions to go even further in their contribution to communities and Lord Bourne called for individuals, communities, and religious institutions around the country to:

- Recognise the valuable contribution of faith and belief institutions
- Remain open to understanding those of other faiths and beliefs within your community
- Reach out and establish partnerships with other organisations
- Encourage your faith institutions to join a local interfaith network
- Establish interfaith networks in those areas where they don't already exist

The Action Plan also recognised there are links between social isolation and mental health; and poor health outcomes; and health inequalities and even anti-social behaviour, linking to cross-departmental approaches with Department for Health and Social Care, Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport and the Home Office.

In October 2019, the government announced Colin Bloom as its Faith Engagement Adviser. He was to lead a review into how best the government should engage with faith groups in England and make recommendations to the Communities Secretary about how the government can best celebrate and support the contribution of faith groups, break down barriers and promote acceptance between faiths, and promote shared values while tackling cultures and practices that are harmful.

The initial proposal is to structure the review revolve around four main sections:

1. Are faith groups, places of worship and people of faith a force for good in society?
2. The extent to which government and its agencies have sufficient faith literacy and consider the partnership between faith groups and the State
3. Where harm might be caused through religious or faith-based practices and a review of the government's role in tackling them

¹⁴https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778045/Integrated_Communities_Strategy_Govt_Action_Plan.pdf - This Action Plan followed the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper (March 2018), which the Government published for consultation. The Green Paper set out the Government's vision for building integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities, and set out a range of actions proposed to be taken across Government.

4. Set of recommendations for the government to consider and respond to.

As a part of the independent review, a call for evidence from people of all faiths on the effectiveness of government's engagement with faith groups is intended to provide vital feedback from across England's multi-faith society to inform the root-and-branch review¹⁵. In launching the review Lord Greenhalgh said:

Faith remains at the heart of public life and we fully support the invaluable work being done by people around the country who are inspired by their faith. There has been no greater testament to this than people from all faiths coming together during the pandemic to support the most vulnerable – giving our elderly and isolated neighbours help and support. We do not, however, take this for granted and the independent review will ensure that we are maintaining close and productive relationships with faith groups across the country of all traditions¹⁶.

Colin Bloom supported this by saying that:

England is a successful multi-faith society, and we have some of the strongest protections in the world to allow people to practise their faith or belief. Through this independent review, I am looking to see if we can build on those foundations to ensure that government's engagement with faith groups is as good as it can possibly be¹⁷.

He also suggested that his review will be based on 'hard evidence' and will question whether places of worship and people of faith are a force for good in society and how government can recognise and support their contribution to communities. The review will also be an opportunity for views to be aired on how best to break down barriers and promote acceptance between faith and belief groups, including those of no faith or belief, reviewing opportunities for cooperation between these organisations.

While the public consultation closed in December 2020 there has been no further communication from the department about the review.

vii. Civil Society Policy

With the election of the Conservatives to power in 2010, David Cameron pursued a new approach to civil society through his 'Big Society'¹⁸ policy. This aimed to create a climate that empowered local people and communities, to build a 'big society' that would take power away from politicians and give it to the people. Despite the ups and downs of the political landscape since 2015, the central principle has remained

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-faith-engagement-review-call-for-evidence>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/call-for-views-to-support-comprehensive-faith-engagement-review>

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/call-for-views-to-support-comprehensive-faith-engagement-review>

¹⁸ A political ideology developed in the early 21st Century to 'integrating the free market with a theory of social solidarity based on hierarchy and voluntarism'

consistent: to move the focus away from ‘fixing problems’ to supporting people, organisations, and communities to improve their capabilities to improve society and local communities with the government providing support to those local communities investing in themselves, through long-term relationships rather than short-term transactions.

Today Civil Society (and Youth) sit within DCMS where they aim to ‘support solutions to community challenges from within the community itself’. To support this, they published the Civil Society Strategy (2018)¹⁹ which highlighted ‘how government will work with and for civil society in the long-term to create a country that works for everyone’²⁰. For the purposes of the strategy, ‘civil society refers to individuals and organisations when they act with the primary purpose of creating social value, independent of state control’. By social value they mean ‘enriched lives and a fairer society for all.’ The government believes that social value flows from thriving communities. These are communities with strong financial, physical, and natural resources, and strong connections between people.

The strategy consists of five chapters that each address the ‘five foundations of social value’:

- 1) People - enabling a lifetime of contribution focuses on the role of citizens in civil society, with reference to the role of young people
- 2) Places - empowerment and investment for local communities presents a vision of ‘place’, and the role of government in supporting local communities
- 3) The social sector - supporting charities and social enterprises explains the government’s approach to the core of civil society i.e., the social sector of charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises including mutuals
- 4) The private sector - promoting business, finance, and technology for good outlines the role of business, finance, and technology in civil society
- 5) The public sector - ensuring collaborative commissioning explains how the government sees the future role of civil society organisations in the delivery of public services.

The appointment of Baroness Diana Barran to the role of civil society minister in July 2019 further supported this approach via her three key themes²¹:

- 1) Building better connections between people in communities

19 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732765/Civil_Society_Strategy_-_building_a_future_that_works_for_everyone.pdf

20 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732765/Civil_Society_Strategy_-_building_a_future_that_works_for_everyone.pdf

21 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-civil-society/ourcivilsociety>

- 2) Ensuring all young people have opportunities to develop skills, networks, and self confidence
- 3) Supporting the social sector through an effective commissioning and funding environment all building on the Civil Society Strategy.

Baroness Barran has been clear that the government alone cannot create social value and solve the complex challenges facing society but can bring focus, unlock potential and convene, catalyse, and fund activity to support people within communities who can make a difference. Specific areas to note include:

- Smaller grass roots efforts are linked into larger organisations and everyone from community leaders, faith leaders to local organisers are connected
- Reimagining community spaces so they are linked and offer a diverse range of support and activity including so church can host a café and the people who can organise and connect these places and people have the tools and support to raise awareness around these community initiatives
- Young people co-designing youth programmes
- Expanding youth activity including sporting activity to help young people develop skills and contribute to their communities
- Continuing to encourage effective funding and commissioning environment to enable a sustainable the social sector and help the next generation of public services to take form.

This approach has seen a slow change of direction within the civil society sector especially as it has embraced an evidence-based and a placed-based delivery approach as the government has attempted to build stronger connections between people and places. The impact of Covid-19 has stagnated the further development of government policy in this area. The pandemic, however, has also highlighted how important civil society is to local community and this is quickening the need for further work and support in the area.

viii. Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant

In September 2020, at the Prime Ministers request, Danny Krugar MP published a report calling for a new era of ‘community power’²². The report sets out a vision for a more local, more human, less bureaucratic, less centralised society in which people are supported and empowered to play an active role in their neighbourhoods. Krugar highlights that we are on the cusp of a new era of economic and social policy and

²² <https://www.dannykrugar.org.uk/files/2020-09/Levelling%20Up%20Our%20Communities-Danny%20Kruger.pdf>

that the previous era was governed by economic and social doctrines which have caused us to become the most regionally unequal country in the developed world, with a range of chronic social challenges. He argues that the new era must address these challenges by putting communities at the heart of policy making. The experience of the Covid-19 crisis - the willingness of local people to step forward and collaborate, the flexibility shown by public services and the social commitment of businesses - shows what is possible.

Krugar suggests that what is missing in our current model is community power: 'the role of local people, acting together spontaneously or through enduring institutions, to design and deliver the kind of neighbourhood they want to be part of.' His vision is for a new 'social covenant' comprising "mutual commitment by citizens, civil society, businesses and the state, each to fulfil their discrete responsibilities and to work together for the common good of all". He outlines a wide range of recommendations to give civil society a greater role in 'levelling up' the country. These centre around power, people and places including a new £2 billion endowment, the Levelling Up Communities Fund, for investment in long-term, community-led transformation in left-behind areas, financed through dormant insurance accounts. By creating an economic and social model, Krugar argues that we need a model which has community power, and the civil society that enables it, at its heart. In doing so, we can make great places 'from within' rather than by outside interventions. Within his social model he believes there is a major place for faith communities.

Krugar argues that government should do a new deal with faith communities and that because 'the estrangement of faith-based social action and the public sector is a very bad thing'. He is of the view that faith groups have an enormous amount to offer society and public servants who are too often reluctant to partner with them or contact them to deliver publicly funded services need to change their mind-set and practice.

Krugar outlines that before the welfare state, social support was provided by parishes, and by a patchwork of independent charities, foundations, friendly societies, mutuals, trades unions, cooperatives - and churches. That from 'medieval times until the industrial era the Christian churches were the safety net for most of society' and numerous public services - our modern health, education, and probation systems in particular - and have their origins in Christian institutions.²³ In turn, faith communities generally remain an 'enormous resource for society'. He supports this by stating the size of the Christian church and its reach into local communities highlighting that churches have significant assets to provide support and succour to people in need and already have long-term connections in local communities.

23 <https://www.dannykruger.org.uk/files/2020-09/Levelling%20Up%20Our%20Communities-Danny%20Kruger.pdf> pg35

Furthermore, Krugar believes that the churches' concern for the spiritual wellbeing of individuals and society more generally provides motivation and commitment that often exceeds that of paid professionals. The church, he notes, has deep roots in local communities and are there for the long-term, and have buildings in all communities working at both nationally and at the hyper-local level. These networks are a source of huge resilience and opportunities for the people they seek to help.

His proposal is a simple one: that government 'should be actively supporting the extraordinary work of organisations of all faiths and enable these organisations to extend their practice. To achieve this, he recommends that a new deal with faith communities is created that sees government inviting the country's faith leaders to make a 'grand offer of help on behalf of their communities, in exchange for a reciprocal commitment from the state.' This would see each faith group offer:

- a commitment to mobilise their congregations
- a commitment around their resources to tackle one or more besetting social problems i.e, problem debt, or children in care, or prisoner rehabilitation, or rough sleeping, or something else.

Government on the other hand would, rather than money, provide high-level direction, to all public servants to facilitate the work of the faith groups on the agreed mission or missions. He states that in discussion with church leaders "there was a widespread willingness to work together and with government to tackle a social challenge or challenges in the strategic way described".

Furthermore, he argues that a total of £500 million could be raised over the next five years, on-top of the £900 million committed by the Church of England from its £9 billion endowment. This, of course, is the endowment (which includes Queen Anne's Bounty (1704) used to augment the living of clergy in the poorest parishes in the country and the assets of the former Ecclesiastical Commissioners (1836)) which is managed by The Church Commissioners. Alongside being responsible for clergy pensions (only those accrued up to 1998), and pastoral reorganisations, the Church Commissioners distributes some of its income from this portfolio for mission through the Strategic Development Fund and Diocesan schemes.

The Church Urban Fund is also developing a strategy to support hyper-local, faith-based social action and to determine 'what works' in this space, which could be the basis for a proper system of evaluation and accountability for government. Further work with other funders - which can be as faith-illiterate and faith-phobic as the public sector - would follow.

It is worth noting that Krugar also highlights the challenge with getting good data from civil society organisations. He quotes from a recent NPC report²⁴ that less than half of all charities have the skills to use data to improve their services. His report recommends that government should insist that organisations

²⁴ NPC, 'State of the Sector 2020', March 2020, accessed via: <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/state-of-the-sector-2020/> (14.09.20)

benefiting from public funding or tax relief should publish coherent and comparable data on their activities and outcomes.

The Prime Minister responded to the report thanking Krugar for his work and stating that the Office for Civil Society would be working with him to explore and discuss his recommendations further. To date, however, there has been no further public progress on developing Krugar's ideas into government policy.

A recent funding announcement perhaps begins to make this vision a reality. In April 2020 the Chancellor announced a £750m Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) support package to ensure it could continue their 'vital' work during the coronavirus outbreak. £90m of this funding was made available to launch the Community Match Challenge and to support the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership and support ongoing work helping communities impacted by the Coronavirus outbreak. A list of 19 Community Match Challenge recipients was published September 2020²⁵ including The Church Revitalisation Trust²⁶ and its *Love Your Neighbour* initiative²⁷ which received £4 million.

ix. Love Your Neighbour

Starting with an emergency pop-up food bank in London in late March 2020, *Love Your Neighbour* grew in a few months to become a nationwide alliance of 1,250 churches and other organisations organised into fifty-two *Love Your Neighbour* city and town hubs. The new funding was distributed to these *Hubs*, each offering crisis food provision, money and debt advice, and employment training and support. These services are targeted towards those who fall through the cracks in existing provision, and who are most in need in local communities. *Love Your Neighbour* is expecting to support the provision of over 5 million meals during the funding period reaching and an estimated 27,000 people will be supported through debt and employment services.

Receiving government funding had initial challenges for the churches involved. The level of due diligence to assess whether the churches would be accountable, able to deliver the outcomes, and had the right procedures in place to report back through good monitoring and evaluation was at a level the churches were not accustomed to. While LYN was able to meet all these demands by rapidly developing their backroom capabilities, the impact has been to prove to the government that churches can be professional,

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/comic-relief-greggs-foundation-and-globals-make-some-noise-to-benefit-from-major-coronavirus-charity-match-funding-scheme>

²⁶ The Church Revitalisation Trust is a charity set up in early 2017 by Holy Trinity Brompton to be a catalyst for a momentum of church planting that will see 100 City Centre Resource Churches (CCRCs) planted in strategic cities across the country, bringing revitalisation to the Church and seeing communities transformed.

²⁷ <https://crtrust.org/love-your-neighbour>

effective and deliver quality outcomes in the local community at scale. This has created a new level of trust.

This emerging change of policy towards faith groups has started to be noticed in the mainstream media (albeit often make political points). Fergus Butler-Gallie's article in the Guardian in January 2021 highlights the previous 'fraught relationship' between the Conservatives and the Church of England specifically, arguing that the government is coming to rely on the church to 'step in' to provide additional support in the community to the base level of welfare provided by government. He goes on the question whether the church can support its current provision given its own issues and how long it will be until the 'whole thing collapses'²⁸

x. The Changing Relationship between Faith Groups and Public Bodies

Keeping the Faith

The 2020 report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society, supported by Faith Action, *Keeping the Faith: Partnerships between faith groups and local authorities during and beyond the pandemic*²⁹, reported on the 'changing contours of partnership between local authorities and faith groups and faith-based organisations in the context of responses to COVID-19'. The research explored the amount of partnership working between the two since the pandemic began and assessed the impact this has had on the relationship between local authorities and faith organisations and the longer-term implications for future policy.

The report concluded what is being reflected in the wider policy environment: 'that the pandemic has both significantly increased local authority partnerships with faith groups and opened up a 'new normal' in the relationships between them' with 67% of local authorities report that there has been an increase in partnership working with faith groups since the start of the pandemic. While 'dissenting views' remain, 91% of local authorities describe their experience of partnership with faith groups as 'Very Positive' or 'Positive'. These partnerships have focused on food poverty (78%) and mental health and wellbeing (48%). Furthermore, many councils expect these partnerships to continue and grow beyond the pandemic (76%) with 47% wanting these partnerships to continue, albeit on changed basis after the pandemic.

The report also highlights how faith groups have used 'pioneering inclusive digitally based outreach to communities' that could help to address wider issues of inclusion, participation and belonging for the most isolated, vulnerable and socially marginalised post-Coivd-19. Furthermore, it suggests the role of local

28 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jan/20/conservatives-church-of-england-welfare-tories-state-victorian>

29 https://www.faithandsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/APPG_CovidReport_Full_V4.pdf

authorities evolves as local ‘enablers’ having a role ensuring the co-design of services within a local community. The report also makes several recommendations including appointing a Faiths Commissioner, whose office would work as a non-departmental body under the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (much like the Children’s Commissioner works alongside the Education Department), to help cement and develop these relationships and opportunities. The report also considers establishing a new “Faiths Advisory Council” for liaison between faith groups and central Government to look strategically at ways for faith groups to contribute to the Government’s post-Covid-19 agenda.

The Church in Action

Church Urban Fund recently published its report the *Church in Action – A survey of churches community responses to the pandemic 2020/21*³⁰. While focused on the church and its response to the pandemic, it has some useful insight for sport and wellbeing ministry projects. It highlights that church leaders report that several social problems have become much more widespread in their communities, particularly isolation/loneliness, mental health as well as food poverty, unemployment, and debt. They also highlight that the social and economic effects of the pandemic are not being experienced equally with the most disadvantaged being adversely impacted. The findings, however, provide a useful indication of the demand for support within the local community, some of which sporting activity could help address including poor physical health, mental health, food poverty, isolation and loneliness and crime/anti-social behaviour.

The report also highlights that because of the pandemic, churches are doing more, with nearly 8 in 10 running or actively supporting a food bank or related provision, in some cases for the first time. Thirty-seven of the church leaders surveyed said that their parish was doing more in response to rising need, including the provision of practical, emotional, financial, and digital support and that the pandemic had caused their church to become more outward-looking. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of clergy (65%) now agree that “tackling poverty is a fundamental part of the mission for our church”, up from 54% in 2017 and 44% in 2011.

More significantly, CUF agreed with the Faith Action findings, that there had been notable changes in the closer working relationships with local authorities and charities. Twenty-eight percent of churches said they are now working more closely with local authorities, and 27% said they are now working more closely with local charities. The report concludes that the pandemic is also ‘generating opportunities for the church to partner with local authorities, charities and businesses in a new and fruitful way’ and that church leaders can take these relationships beyond the pandemic and cultivate a more understanding (of community needs) and outwards looking and inclusive church.

30 <https://cuf.org.uk/uploads/resources/Church-In-Action-Report.pdf>

In assessing how churches were responding, the researchers asked whether churches were running or actively supporting a number of activities for their local communities, and how this had been affected by the pandemic. Twenty-two percent of churches said they undertook fitness classes or sport but that these were suspended with a further 15% continuing to run activities but in some sort of modified way. Of the activities listed only Pastoral Support (8%) Foodbanks (18%), activities for older people (14%), activities for families (26%), activities for children (47%) and youth work (53%) were more numerous in the suite of activity churches provided.³¹

xi. The Evolving Policy Landscape

Levelling-Up

In the Queen's Speech of 2021, the government set out the broad framework for their flagship levelling-up policy. In it they suggested that levelling-up 'is about improving living standards and growing the private sector, particularly where it is weak. It is about increasing and spreading opportunity, because while talent is evenly distributed, opportunity is not. It is about improving health, education, and policing, particularly where they are not good enough. It is also about strengthening community and local leadership, restoring pride in place, and improving quality of life in ways that are not just about the economy.'

They articulated that levelling-up means creating new good jobs, boosting training and growing productivity in places that have seen economic decline and the loss of industry – not through a one-size-fits-all approach, but by nurturing different types of economic growth and building on the different strengths that different places have. They also set out several key policy areas that they would be developing including local regeneration and town centre improvement, enterprise and jobs, and skills and education

The central mechanism to deliver this agenda is to not only change the way government invest in local areas but to give communities a stronger voice to take over local assets that might otherwise be lost. This will involve the UK government decentralising power and working more directly with local partners and communities on the basis that they are best placed to understand the needs of their local areas and more closely aligned to the local economic geographies to deliver quickly on the ground.

To support these objectives, they have recently launched three new investment programmes to support communities to engage with the challenges and opportunities. These are:

³¹ Note the question to churches was "Is your church running xyz activity?" and the statistics quoted above are the response to this question with a no.

1. The UK Community Renewal Fund. An additional £220 million funding to help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022. This Fund replaces the European Social Fund and aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches and will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment.
2. The Levelling Up Fund. The £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.
3. The Community Ownership Fund. A £150 million fund to help ensure that communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can support and continue benefiting from the local facilities, community assets and amenities most important to them.³²

The Queens Speech also announced the government's intention to publish a *Levelling-Up White Paper* in the autumn of 2021 to build on actions it is already taking. While the detail need examining, there are potentially opportunities for sport and wellbeing ministry projects through the Community Ownership Fund.

xii. Conclusion

Policy makers are continuing to explore the role faith organisations can play in civil society and how government might best partner with them to make a social impact. Of late, there has been a change in attitude by policy makers and funders towards faith organisations. Aware that one in four UK charities are faith based, that church buildings are increasingly the only low-cost community asset, and the emerging evidence that faith organisations are quietly undertaking significant social action worth more than £3 billion each year³³ is being realised. This evidence-base is still emerging it is helping policy makers realise how important churches are in the community and that they need to be considered within civil society policy making. The Government's Faith Ministers continue to call for faith organisations to do more within the communities they live and serve.

The current Covid-19 pandemic is also helping to change the relationship between public funders and faith organisations. Danny Kruger's, recommendation in *Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant*³⁴, to create 'a new deal with faith communities, by which government supports a greater

³² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-levelling-up-and-community-investments>

³³ The Audit also estimated that two million people from faith groups give at least 384 million hours (288 million unpaid) a year to projects to support 48 million people. Many of those they support are some of the most vulnerable in society - [Cinnamon Network Faith Action Audit \(2016\)](#) quoted in [Belief in Communities: bridging the divide](#) - MHCLG - November 2018

³⁴ <https://www.dannykruger.org.uk/communities-report>

role for faith groups in meeting social challenges' has been further supported by the strong initial evidence around the churches' response during the Covid pandemic. This has enhanced an already growing awareness that the impact of faith communities and faith-based organisations in local areas is often undervalued.

As advocates for social justice and a fairer society, the importance of faith-based organisations as builders of social capital and, more specifically, their impact on public health is often underplayed.³⁵ There are a great number of health-related activities taking place in and around churches that are so well 'embedded' they are seldom thought of as interventions or evaluated as such. The same is true for building social cohesion. These were highlighted in relation to sporting activity in the research commissioned by Sport England and the Diocese of London in 2015 (see Crabbe et al, 2015). More recently, research by both Faith Action and the Church Urban Fund supports the assertion that the relationship between local authorities and faith groups is changing as a result of Covid-19. In turn, there is evidence that local authorities, charities, and businesses want to build and deepen their relationship with faith groups to support long-term policy interventions and partnerships.

There is still however, an ideological divide. Concern about working with just one faith group and not others and working with a church persists alongside the general belief that the church is dying. As the NPC reports highlight, faith-based charities can also take action to help better understand and advocate themselves, and in doing so support overarching culture change. This needs to be challenged using the evidence above, local diocesan data where that is available, and the church positioning themselves as champions of the local community and of the social outcomes, they can help support. Furthermore, churches must work hard at building trust with public funders. These funders want to work with known and trusted partners: at a larger scale, successfully navigating the necessary due diligence is often a challenge. Churches need to prove the quality of their governance, ability to successfully deliver outcomes, ensure they have the right procedures in place and able to be accountable for the funding. As the Cinnamon Network evidences, alongside others, faith groups need to build long-lasting relationships and ongoing partnerships with public bodies, and to learn to speak their language to help overcome these challenges and become trusted partners. This will be important when looking for larger amounts of project funding and new funds such as The Community Ownership Fund.

What is encouraging is that Covid-19 has brought government and local authorities and faith organisations closer together. This is creating a new environment where partnership working is more readily accepted and where the culture of mistrust around faith organisations motivations and actions to convert people is being diluted. While the investment in *Love Your Neighbour* is potentially a trail-blazer investment, even if

35 <https://www.faithaction.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FaithAction-Public-Health-Report.pdf> p51

it is successful, the church has much more work to do in the longer term to continue to prove itself to policy makers and funders.

While it is clear from the various reports discussed, the faith community is already doing a huge amount as a part of civil society, this needs to be better measured to help change the culture. It is encouraging that policy makers and others are realising that faith organisations have a significant part to play in building better and more cohesive communities and have the assets needed to do this. Sport and wellbeing ministry projects should take note of these frameworks as they develop monitoring and evaluation protocols.

There are also clear lessons here for sport and wellbeing ministry projects if they are to consider public funding especially in terms of the way that they may seek to build relationships with relevant public authorities, learn their language and approach and embed that into its day-to-day operations.

Furthermore, as projects develop, they should plan to ensure that they are professionally effective in relation to their delivery of quality outcomes in the community by considering what backroom support is needed so that they can be accountable for the funding received, deliver the outcomes agreed and have governance arrangements that are of high quality.

CHAPTER 4: SPORT AND WELLBEING MINISTRY IN SOCIETY

i. Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide a brief an overview of the sports ministry sector in the UK and its broad development over the last ten years. In particular, it explores two important engagements by the sector and the church with two large sporting events, the London 2012 Olympics and the 2015 Rugby World Cup which have been important catalysts in the profile and development of sports ministry in the last ten years. The chapter highlights the important learning that both of these campaigns have provided for the church and for sports ministry alongside a range of other interventions which have been critical in moving the sector forward both theologically and practically. It also charts the slow but steady journey of the Church of England in providing vital leadership for the church especially dioceses to include sports and wellbeing ministry in their strategic mission and community engagement intentions. Finally, the chapter also highlights the work of the Diocese of London with a view to provide much needed insight into one approach to explore sport and wellbeing ministry at a diocesan level, so it can be replicated, at scale, across the broader church.

ii. Sport Ministry in the UK

Sport has long been a part of this UK's national identity and continues to be a significant aspect of cultural and social life³⁶. The development of sports ministry and outreach can be traced back to the late 1800s. Based on Paul's use of athletic metaphors to describe the challenges of a Christian life³⁷, Rousseau's treatise *Emile* (1762) advocated physical education as important for the formation of moral character, and the Muscular Christianity movement originating in England in the mid-19th century had a huge impact across the globe. Using novels such as Tom Brown's School Days (1857), the movement explicitly advocated sport and exercise in Christianity and promoted physical strength and health as well as an active pursuit of Christian ideals in personal life and politics.

From around 1865, the YMCA affirmed the importance of developing the whole individual in spirit, mind, and body helping to drive the concept of physical work through sports, as it reached young men for Christ. As these principles flourished in Victorian society, local churches founded several of England's leading

³⁶ Sport is big business: according to estimates in 2010 sport was worth £33.8 billion to the UK economy, representing 2.7% of the UK GVA and sport related consumer spending was worth £26.6 billion or 3.0% of all UK spending. Attendances at professional sports events in the UK reached 75 million in 2012 and sport dominates the list of most watched television programmes every year – the British public's appetite for sporting events, in absolute terms and relative to its population size, is unmatched anywhere in the world. There are an estimated 151,000 sports clubs in the UK and 22% of the English population are members. 5.6 million people volunteer regularly in sport and of the 24% of adults in England who regularly volunteer 19% of these, volunteer in sport.

³⁷ Acts 20:23-24, 1 Cor 9:22-26 (written to the city that hosted the Isthmian Games), Heb 12:1-3, 2 Timothy 4:7

association football clubs, including Everton (1878), Manchester City (1880) and Southampton (1885), carrying the relationship between sport and church deep into the 20th Century³⁸.

Since then, several individuals and organisations³⁹ have attempted to chart the history of sports ministry in the UK and related commentary has been aptly summarised by Daniels (2021)⁴⁰. Growing out of the momentum of the US sports ministry movement of the post-1945 era, Daniels (2021) suggests that sports ministry in the UK primarily began to take shape in the 1970s via the Christian Sportsmen's Outreach which was launched in 1975, followed by related gatherings at Bisham Abbey in 1976 and Crystal Palace in 1977.⁴¹ By 1980 this group had been formalised as 'Christians in Sport' (CIS)⁴² and in 1988 CIS provided two members of the inaugural Olympic sports chaplaincy team in Seoul in 1988, where several of the GB athletes were Christians⁴³. During the 1990s elite athlete welfare became a priority for CIS whereby focus was placed upon the relationship between faith and athletic vocation. As interest in the sport-faith relationship grew in the UK, further accelerated by preachers like Billy Graham who often used Christian sporting champions to join rallies to encourage young people in their faith. The scope and reach of sports ministry also grew with a number of other organizations adopting strategies in this area.

For example, Youth for Christ (UK) developed further interest in such work and between 1980 and 2010, 35 different Christian sports ministries emerged in the UK (Parker and Weir, 2012). The most influential of these was Sports Chaplaincy Offering Resources and Encouragement (SCORE), an independent organisation established with the support of the Baptist Union of Great Britain in 1991 and renamed Sports Chaplaincy UK (SCUK) in 2011⁴⁴. SCORE initially focussed on professional football, and while chaplaincy has expanded across several other sports, professional football continues to be a significant component of its work in elite sport. SCUK currently provides chaplaincy to the English Premier League, the English Football League Trust, the Professional Footballers Association and the Scottish Football Association. It is estimated that over 50 sports ministry-related organisations now operate in the UK.

38 For more history about how the Church approached sport in the past see A Brief Theology of Sport (2014) - Revd Dr Lincoln Harvey.

39 For further details see:

i. Ladd, T. and Mathisen, J.A. (1999). *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport*. MI: Baker Books.

ii. Parker, A., French, R. and Marturano, N. (2021). Exploring Sports Ministry in the UK: National Trends and Local Expressions. *Journal of Religion and Society*, 23: 1-20.

iii. Parker, A., Watson, N.J. and Meyer, A. (2019). 'Religion in/and/through Sport'. In Maguire, J., Falcous, M. and Liston, K. (Eds.). *The Business and Culture of Sports: Society, Politics, Economy, Environment*, Vol. 3: Community. Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, pp.101-113.

40 Daniels, G.D. (forthcoming). Identity formation in Christian professional footballers: Lifecourse, faith, career. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Gloucestershire, UK.

41 For more on the history of the growth and development of the sports ministry movement in the US and the UK, see Ladd and Matheson (1999) and Parker et al., (2020).

42 Parker, A. and Weir, J.S. (2012). Sport, Spirituality and Protestantism: A historical overview. *Theology*, 115 (4): 253-265.

43 Weir, S. (2016). Sports chaplaincy: A global overview. In A. Parker, N.J. Watson, and J.B. White (Eds.), *Sports Chaplaincy: Trends, Issues and Debates*. London, Routledge, pp. 9-19.

44 Boyers, J. (2016). Sports chaplaincy in the United Kingdom. In A. Parker, N.J. Watson, and J.B. White (Eds.), *Sports Chaplaincy: Trends, Issues and Debates*. London, Routledge, pp. 20-31.

Sports ministry organisations

As a direct result of these early developments, there are now many national sport ministry (parachurch) organisations in the UK which deliver different models of sport, physical activity and wellbeing. A degree of partnership takes place between some of the larger organisations in the sports ministry although anecdotal evidence suggests that a more intentional approach to partnership could lead to the emergence of more efficient working practices and a reduction in instances of duplication/replication.

Many of these organisations provide a similar range of goods and services including: sport and physical activity sessions for congregational members (church sport and recreation), community-based sessions for those not involved in church, school-based offerings (i.e., PE, RE, PSHE, mentoring etc.) and holiday sports camps. These camps offer much needed activity during the school holidays and help tackle the general decline in physical activity among young people. They also help to mitigate the sense of isolation which many children and young people feel, especially those within disadvantaged families. Evidence suggests that such activity can also help to halt a decline in educational attainment over the summer holiday period. There is a growing movement in the UK around the connection between sport, physical activity and food poverty which has seen Scripture Union partner with secular sport provider StreetGames to tackle ‘holiday hunger’ for those on Free School Meals (FSM).

Sports ministry in practice

Historically speaking, the majority of sports ministry organisations in the UK have, at one time or another, allied themselves to UK Sports Ministries (formerly Sports Ministries UK)⁴⁵ which aims to support, encourage and resource Christians who love and/or play sport by facilitating connections across a national network of parachurch organisations. There has traditionally been an annual gathering of UKSM members and related communications and events are presently co-ordinated by Christians in Sport (see: uksportsministries.org). The overall scope and remit of sports ministry in the UK is captured by a number of key organisations in the sector: Christians in Sport, Sports Chaplaincy UK, Scripture Union Sports, Ambassadors Football GB and KICK.⁴⁶

Christians in Sport (CIS): As we have seen, for the best part of 40 years, CIS has sought to serve faith communities through envisioning and equipping them to: (i) effectively support Christians involved in regular sport and physical activity (at all levels), and (ii) help sportspeople explore the Christian message. Via their mantra of ‘pray, play, say’, they wish to see Christians involved in sport praying for those they compete/train/play with and witness to them. CIS have a specific role in facilitating 1-1 and peer group

⁴⁵ <http://uksportsministries.org/category/organisations-list>

⁴⁶ KICK features as one of our case study examples in Chapter 8.

faith-based support for elite athletes and coaches/managers/leaders both nationally and internationally (see: www.christiansinsport.org.uk).

Sports Chaplaincy UK (SCUK): SCUK is a national charity which seeks to train, support and encourage chaplains working within amateur and professional sport. As well as supporting and networking existing chaplains they provide training for new and potential chaplains who are thinking of getting involved in pastoral and spiritual care within sporting contexts. They are also keen to engage with the local church to explore the possibilities of engaging with the wider sports community through chaplaincy. Like CIS, SCUK have a specific role in facilitating 1-1 and peer group faith-based support for elite athletes and coaches/managers/leaders across a range of sports. In recent years their international influence has expanded as a consequence of their work with the Global Sports Chaplaincy Association (GSCA) (see: <https://sportschaplaincy.org.uk>). SCUK are one of the few UK sports ministry organisations to have an intentional focus on disability sport.

Scripture Union Sports (SUS): In recent years, SUS has come to have increasing presence and influence across the UK sports ministry sector by developing, through pilots and research, a strategic approach to *Mission through Sport* with accompanying training materials.⁴⁷ This sees simple and replicable models of sport and physical activity delivery developed in specific geographical areas and regions via the existence of (and in partnership with) existing sport providers and/or interested parties and agencies for local churches to use and shape in school, church and community contexts so that they can engage with their local children, young people and families and share their faith⁴⁸. SUS have established a network of Sports Project Workers who engage with churches and Local Mission Partners (LMPs) to support and mobilise churches in sustainable grass-roots mission (<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk>).⁴⁹ SUS also has a vision to train, equip and support sports ministry/mission workers and since 2016 have been linked with the Cliff College to develop provision in this area (see: <https://cliffcollege.ac.uk>).

Ambassadors Football GB (AFGB): AFGB is an organisations which seeks to partner with local churches in order to facilitate disciple-making mission through sport, helping church partners to work in and with their local neighborhood: (see: gb.ambassadorsfootball.org). A derivative of the original (and international) Ambassadors in Sport brand, a key focus is addressing wider social issues through football especially notions of disadvantage, exclusion, marginalization and vulnerability, education, unemployment and employability homelessness and addiction. In recent years their initiatives have included: Fathers Football (aimed at fathers who work in the night-time economy), Genesis Football (aimed at marginalized and homeless people), Walking Football, Football camps and tournaments, overseas coaching and playing tours

⁴⁷ SUS define *Mission through Sport* as activity that is largely based in the informal recreational sports world, seeking to connect local churches with their own communities through sport but not competing with local sports clubs or replicating the work of other sports ministry organisations.

⁴⁸ Oliver, M. (2021). *Revealing Jesus, Sport and 'Going where the needs are the Greatest'*. Scripture Union, Milton Keynes, UK.

⁴⁹ For more on the practical implementation of SUS strategy in this area see Oliver (2021).

and Goalside all of which use football to engage with local people to build friendship and fellowship, whilst improving health and wellbeing and encouraging a greater involvement in family and community life through mentoring support and educational opportunities.

KICK (formerly Kick London): KICK is a not-for-profit organisation which seeks to transform young peoples' lives with God's love through sport. They deliver PE national curriculum, street dance and solutions focused mentoring as professional services, all with Christian values in schools. They then work to equip local churches to deliver sport (mainly football) or dance-based ministry to local young people in their local area via church-based hubs (academies) which create a bridge from school to church (see Chapter 8).

Despite the myriad of organisations and passionate sports ministry interventions over the past 20 years, on balance, sports ministry has probably witnessed a decline⁵⁰. This has no doubt been amplified by the church having had little to say about sport and exercise in faith especially when parishes have had to face the practical challenges of competing with the rise sport provision for children and young people during Sunday morning services. This has also occurred during a time of declining church attendance rates amongst an erosion of the sanctity of the 'day of rest' (Sunday) and a soaring interest in sport spectatorship in an era of professional sport. The well acknowledged similarities between sport, and church and faith including that that sport fulfils many of the deeper aspects of religion, such as the reproduction of the religious community's social arrangements and an often inextricably passion for a team, beyond its entertainment value, has led many commentators to endorse the popular narrative, that sport is the new religion. Despite knowing a large proportion of church members were involved in sporting activity and fitness, the church generally did not seek, until recently, to undertake any significant strategic sporting activity base ministry leaving this to pockets of provision at local churches, who often working with parachurch organisations. As Gravelling (2014) concluded: "Historically, sport has often provided an opportunity for evangelism, yet there is so much more to sports ministry, which is yet to be fully explored".

iii. Significant Developments in Sports Ministry Since 2012

There have been three major developments from within the sports ministry sector since 2012. These include:

⁵⁰ A lack of reporting and robust data, alongside a sport ministry sector characteristic - also found in the evangelical movement - of upbeat, overly positive messaging, makes this difficult to substantiate one way or the other. While there is plenty of anecdotal evidence that numerous sport ministry approaches withered in the last ten years, there have also be pockets of growth such as with Psalms and The Sports Factory and the delivery of sporting activities and mentoring services in schools funded by the School Sport Premium: however these activities are not able to have specific faith content, even if the approach/lessons are based on Christian principles, delivered by Christians. Overall, most sport Ministry organisations have constantly cited funding issues and limited resources to deliver basic workloads, develop overworked staff or increase staffing levels. Similarly, they have also reported a lack of willing volunteers in churches to organise and deliver parish-based ministry sustainably.

More Than Gold and 2012 London Olympics

The 2012 London Olympics provided the church and parachurch organisations with a much-needed opportunity for re-evaluation. In 2011, Bryan Mason, the then Executive Director of Higher Sports⁵¹, a sports ministry that developed teaching resources for churches wanting to impact their communities with the Christian message, published his book *Beyond the Gold – what every church needs to know about sports ministry*. With an eye on the opportunities afforded by the Olympics, the book contained a wealth of practical suggestions for ways the local church could use sports ministry as tool of evangelism.

The *More than Gold* initiative was born by a number of organisations including the parachurch sport ministry organisations, coming together to help churches engage with the Games and worked as an agency working on behalf of the churches in England. A final non-independent impact report, *More than Gold: 2012 Games Report*, highlighted that a conservative estimate of 500,000 of all ages attended church-organised events, including community festivals. *The More Than Gold Athlete Family Homestay Programme* hosted 280 guests from over 20 nations in 160 homes for 2,000 nights of free hospitality and 300 Games Pastors provided 13,000 hours of voluntary service to travellers at 24 locations including ten major rail stations, two airports, a coach station and key tourist sites. 190 chaplains served as Games Maker chaplains in the Olympic Village and other venues with 23 agencies produced over 45 different resources and distributed over 600,000 copies. *More Than Gold Mission Teams* involved over 2,100 volunteers from more than 40 countries, working with and in about 300 churches.⁵²

As well as providing the context, vision, objectives, and organisational structure for *More Than Gold*, the report includes the responses from each of the 17 different strands of delivery branded under *More than Gold*. This provided a systematic reporting framework including the results of what was learnt and lessons for the future. While the whole *More than Gold* movement can be assessed a 'sports ministry' in its broadest terms including chaplaincy and Games Pastors, the most relevant approach was the sports outreach ambitions. The guiding question for the MTG team was 'How can the UK Christian Community play its part to inspire a new generation to greater sporting activity and achievement? They initially assess delivering this component by:

1. Supporting Christians in sport to live out their faith
2. Supporting churches to deliver sport directly into their communities
3. Deliver sports clinics, camps and holiday clubs during the period of the Games

⁵¹ <https://www.highersports.org>

⁵² https://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/236481/Home/Resources/Evangelisation/Evangelisation_Archive/More_than_Gold/More_than_Gold.aspx

4. Develop Christian Sports Resources that can be used for outreach and ministry to the athletes and the sports fan.

This was refined by the leading organisations who help deliver the sports ministry component including: Youth for Christ, Ambassadors GB, World Sport Ministries, Kick London, Christians in Sport specifically, and Sports Ministries UK. Here they aimed to use sport as an outreach ministry by churches into schools, communities, and sports culture through use of resources in schools, quizzes, camps, clinics, tournaments by envisioning churches on the possibilities sport offers for outreach and to equip churches with the tools, training, and resources in order for them to reach out in and through sport.

With an extremely limited budget, *More Than Gold*, relied on the good will of organisations who embraced the vision. No numerical targets were set however, the team looked to completing a set of resources, develop training and undertake promotion. Even if numerical targets had been agreed, limited resources and the challenging task of managing such a diverse range of organisations and churches, would have meant that the task of collecting and collating data would have been extremely difficult. This is evident in the wider MTG report, which frequently makes this point, as articulated in the message from the CEO, David Willson, at the start of the report:

The immediate results will speak for themselves, but it is unlikely that we will ever know the full extent of the impact the outreach had on people's lives not just in the U.K. but on the thousands of visitors, mission teams and athlete families who were hosted by Christian community in the U.K. Following this introduction is a snap-shot of the size and breadth of the outreach. Although impressive, these statistics will not do justice in communicating the long-term impact of the relationships that have been built along the journey together.

While the report lacks any overarching conclusions about the impact of *More Than Gold*, beyond the fact that it was one of the largest Christian community Games outreach programmes ever delivered by local churches, *More Than Gold*, draw one firm conclusion: that denominations, agencies, churches and individuals working together in partnership to deliver sport ministry in many different forms was significant and would be a lasting legacy.⁵³

The individual sport outreach strand of the report, however, does provide some useful data and more importantly insight for the sports ministry sector. The report highlights that this strand achieved:

- 300 people trained in sports outreach at MTG Tour events
- Over 700 sports quizzes created by CIS were used to reach out to 50,000 people.

⁵³ *More than Gold: 2012 Games Report* pg 3

- Sport in schools – over 100 schools, over 4000 young people.
- Sport in communities – over 100 churches reaching out to more than 4,300 people in their communities through clinics, camps and tournaments.

In the case of the London Diocese, which was the geographical lead for the Games, under the *More Than Gold* brand, 145 parishes and 700 volunteers ran 296 events including community festivals, children's holiday clubs and opened their buildings to offer hospitality to visitors. The Ven. Duncan Green was seconded to the London Organising Committee as a faith adviser and became their head of multi-faith chaplaincy services overseeing chaplaincy services to athletes and officials, staff and volunteers, and the media. While a limited evaluation was undertaken by the Diocese about what it saw as a successful impact by local parishes in the community – unfortunately this report has been lost - , more importantly, this experience strongly influenced the Diocese to include sport as tool of community engagement and mission in the Diocese of London's 2014 strategy, Capital Vision 2020.

The report goes on to highlight that the MTG project not only raised awareness of sports as a viable means of ministry by local churches, but trained hundreds of new people in sports ministry and saw many new churches getting involved in sports outreach. MTG assessed that outreach into schools, some of the camp-based work, and the sports quizzes were successful tools for engagement and that the sports resources they developed alongside the training materials were important support resources. Two significant impacts included:

1. Equipping local youth workers with programmes to use sport and present the Gospel; and
2. People enjoyed doing sporting activity and that this provided a good platform for hearing and even responding, to the Gospel that was shared.

The report also highlights some critical insights for sports ministry in the future alongside the need for partnership:

- Clear vision and communication – this important because the small sports ministry organisations that make up sports ministry in the UK, struggled to own and embrace the project as much as expected. They were usually overworked and busy delivering their own sports ministry
- Leadership – while partnerships formed, a single organisation was required to drive the joined-up vision forward and help ensure that the project remained focused and not distracted as people often wore many hats

- Resourcing – of the Church Sports Teams to support churches to understand and activate sports ministry. The agencies involved were not able to increase their capacity above what they normally delivered
- Sustainable model – more prioritisation on developing the sustainable model especially in relation to how to envision, empower and support the local church to deliver successfully
- Training - a stronger emphasis on training.

Another important lesson from *More Than Gold* was that there seemed to be a large gap between people being interested in sports outreach and getting them to download and use resources and attend appropriate training. This is an important insight in which further understanding, and research is required to help bridge this significant and critical gap.

Furthermore, *More Than Gold* also highlighted that beyond some limited anecdotal evidence, disappointingly no data was collected about what happened to the 300 trained sports ministers, the 50,000 people it reached through the sports quiz nor the links churches created with their local community and whether any of these people came to faith or joined a church. This was a missed opportunity however, some attempt was made to retain and use the data about the churches who had signed up to engage through *More Than Gold*.

Scripture Union Sport - Research Evaluation Final Report

In 2014, Ruth Graveling published an important Scripture Union sponsored report into the state of sports ministry in the UK. As well as setting out a brief history of sports ministry, Graveling highlighted the internationally accepted sports ministry framework to help simplify a complex provision landscape:

In sport – Reaching people who have their identity in sport and sport is their life. This includes training sports people in having positive relationships with team players and competitors, life coaching sports people to represent God in all their behaviour and creatively developing the quality of sport – structures, administration etc.

Through sport – Sport is a powerful global language that enables us to build relationships through playing sport and providing sports opportunities. This creates a platform to proclaim the gospel, develop discipleship and take the church outside its four walls to impact society.

Around sport - This includes indirect sports ministry such as community festivals, big screen events and handing out water to competitors.

Graveling went on to assess the sector concluding that ‘in the wake of the 2012 Olympic Games, there was an excitement and anticipation around sports ministry – those churches and organisations are wanting to

engage more and develop sports ministry at this time'⁵⁴. This report captured the renewed sense of enthusiasm within the church and sport ministry sector to engage through and in sport, while also highlighting many of the issues that required attention to drive sports ministry forward successfully.

For example, her survey of all SU associate trusts, and staff workers highlighted that 100% of those who responded to the survey wanted SU to invest in sports ministry⁵⁵. Fewer than 50% had any form of sports ministry currently taking place in their ministries and 73% did not have any Christian sports camp or holiday in their area. 59% said that sport would enhance and develop their ministry because it would provide more opportunities to reach the unreached. From these findings, Graveling concluded that three key areas needed investment – personnel, training, and resources. She also interviewed over 40 sports ministry practitioners from national organisations, all of whom were keen for SU to engage more in sports ministry especially for SU to take a leading role on 'Through Sports' ministry in the UK.

The key gaps she uncovered from these interviews included training for volunteers, and for current and future sports ministers. Furthermore, she assessed that there were also gaps in resources such as a sports introduction to Christianity, discipleship through sport, information sharing, primary school sports ministry, camps for primary-aged children, addressing mainstream Sunday sport for children and young people, detached sports ministry resources, disability sport and international mission. She also concluded that SU had an opportunity to work strategically with other organisations and advance sports ministry in the UK to new areas: to reach into community for Christ through sport. She recommended this should be done by investing in the national, supported by the regions to drive new and innovative local expressions of sports ministry across the country.

As Scripture Union considered its next steps, Graveling took her expertise from her work at *PSALMS* and founded *The Sports Factory* based at a new HTB church plant, at St Thomas', Norwich. *The Sports Factory* is a subject of a Case Study in Chapter 8.

Engage 2015 and Rugby World Cup

The Rugby World Cup, the third largest global sports tournament, was scheduled to be hosted by England in September and October 2015 (RWC 2015). Following the London Olympics in 2012 and the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014, this was the next major international sporting event to come to the United Kingdom. As early as March 2011 discussions had taken place as to how the UK church, building on these previous two events, might take this opportunity for community involvement and outreach. When *More Than Gold* was closed in November 2012, the Board decided to pass the responsibility for its legacy to Christians in Sport. In early 2013, they contracted Andy Reed and Revd David Chawner (Sports Chaplaincy

⁵⁴ Scripture Union Sport - Research Evaluation Final Report, July 2014, Ruth Graveling and Richard Witham

⁵⁵ The report does not provide the SU survey sample size

UK) with responsibility for that legacy, part of which was mobilising churches for outreach around RWC 2015. This was the first attempt in the UK to run a national Christian ecumenical and multi-agency campaign around a “single sport” (as opposed to a multi-sport) event. As such, *Engage 2015* was unique and a pioneer venture.

Engage 2015, was a partnership of denominations and parachurch agencies created to provide a range of ideas and resource for local churches across the UK to participate in community outreach around RWC 2015. Collectively, they believed that the Rugby World Cup was “a wonderful way for God’s people to show his love and prayer needs to be at the heart of it all.”⁵⁶ While *Engage 2015* had no official status at Rugby World Cup 2015 it sought to “demonstrate God’s love” within the game and the rugby community.

The structure that developed was small scale, with a light touch, and strong on social media. In this, *Engage 2015* pioneered a different approach to the previously accepted large scale and centrally driven structure as employed by *More Than Gold*. A loosely constituted Advisory Group, was formed and accountable to Christians in Sport and their Trustees. Christians in Sport played an important role not only initiating the campaign but funding the first 18 months of activity. They drew in a range of partners including: the Church of England, Baptist Union of Great Britain, Salvation Army, United Reform Church, Churches Together, Christian Vision for Men, and Scripture Union⁵⁷.

Engage 2015 was formulated as a campaign offering ideas and resources through which churches could ‘engage’ with their local communities in outreach around the competition, building closer relationships and sharing God’s love in Christ. Local churches were encouraged to organise activities in their own name, perhaps as part of a joint local initiative with other churches, under the banner of *Engage 2015*, or “Festival of Rugby” – the national initiative sponsored by the tournament organising body, England Rugby 2015 – adapting the resources and ideas to their local context.⁵⁸ In this way *Engage 2015* differed from many sports ministries who offer their own programmes for local churches to adopt, and it sought to pool the resources of various Christian agencies to present a menu of ideas and resources specifically designed to fit the ongoing outreach programme of a local church.

They created the resource pack, *The Game of Life*, to help Christians and churches run mission and outreach activities relating to the tournament, including video testimonies and presentations by Christian players past and present (cost £3). A copy of Luke/Acts together with extracts from the player testimonies

⁵⁶ *Engage 2015* Final Report, David Chawner, 2016

⁵⁷ Full list: Church of England, John Paul 2nd Foundation for Sport, Baptist Union of Great Britain, Salvation Army, Methodist Church, United Reform Church, Congregational Federation, Churches Together in England, Christians in Sport, Christian Vision for Men, Scripture Union Baptist Men’s Movement, M Power, Fusion Youth & Community, HOPE, Biblica Europe, St Andrews Bookshop, Passion for Sport, Table Talk, Vidan Lawnes, Tenpast Events, Operation Mobilisation (OM), Youth with a Mission (YWAM), The Boys Brigade, Christian Publishing & Outreach (CPO), Greater Europe Mission and Christian Copyright Licensing International.

⁵⁸ *Engage 2015* Final Report, David Chawner, 2016

was also available (£1 per copy or £40 per 100 or £300 per 1000). Furthermore, partner churches championed prayer initiatives (including global prayer waves two years before the event) and organised a service of thanksgiving to mark the beginning of the tournament at All Hallows Church, Twickenham. This was attended by more than 300 people including representatives from professional rugby clubs such as London Welsh, London Scottish and Harlequins, and members of the Rugby Football Union and the Rugby World Cup organisers. The Area Dean of Hounslow, the Revd Richard Frank, led the prayers, and the Bishop of Stepney, the Rt Revd Adrian Newman, gave a short address to celebrate the Christian community within the sport, and its Christian roots⁵⁹.

All the activity was expertly supported by a comprehensive social media and traditional media campaign provided by a professional communications company, Vidan Lawnes, that achieved a high level of coverage across a range of media platforms.

Significantly, *Engage 2015* invested in evaluating the impact of their campaign and in doing so provided useful insight into sport ministry and how the church might use major sporting events as a tool of mission. In the final report published in 2016, they estimated that there were:

- 100+ screening of games
- 100 Sports Quizzes
- 30 worship related RWC events
- Around 20 events involving tag/touch rugby some with local rugby clubs
- 16 guest events with meals
- 11 community festivals
- 50+ children related events
- 7 other type events – including Sweaty Church, activities in the official Fan Zones, and a school prayer space
- Numbers attending events varied from 10 to over 200
- The website had 7,000 visits and 6,000 users
- There were also 15,000 plays of the videos on YouTube & Facebook⁶⁰

⁵⁹ <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/18-september/news/uk/prayer-to-be-passed-on-as-rugby-world-cup-kicks-off>

⁶⁰ *Engage 2015* Final Report, David Chawner, 2016

To further evaluate the impact of the campaign, they also undertook a survey of participating and non-participating churches receiving responses from 99 churches. From these, they drew several conclusions. Whilst only a handful of respondents reported conversions, relationships had been built with new contacts and developed with fringe contacts, twelve months after the event these churches still had ongoing contact with around 100 individuals. Extrapolating the data across 300 participating churches suggests at least 1,000 contacts were made and maintained.

Churches were also asked to assess how their involvement with *Engage 2015* had influenced their view of the possibilities of mission around sport. Eighty-eight percent indicated that it had been an influence – graded from “some” to “a lot”. Of the remaining 12% some were already committed to mission around sport. Eighty-five percent were already planning to participate in further outreach around sport. Among churches that had not previously been involved with sports outreach, 75% said that they were planning to be involved again in the future. Given the involvement of 300 churches, this could indicate around 75 churches newly committed to this form of outreach. Like in the London Diocese and More Than Gold, the data shows that there is generally a high-level enthusiasm for using sports ministry as a form of outreach (see also Graveling, 2014).

Data from the 66 churches who did not participate in *Engage 2015* provided useful insight into how the Church needs to improve to grow sports ministry. Responses indicated that:

- Over 50% cited a lack of awareness
- Over 25% cited a lack of time/human resources
- And only around 20% cited lack of interest

This data was supported by the experience of the *Engage 2015* team when presenting ideas and resources to church leaders in that the most difficult task was to gather them together. The Team reported that once aware of the possibilities, churches generally left enthused.

The *Engage 2015* evaluation report concluded, that given the simple governance structure which had been put in place, two “theoretically” part time staff, several volunteers, and a budget of £77,000 the impact of the initiative provided value for money.

Overall *Engage 2015* delivered an impressive multi-faith approach with a significant media and social media presence: with limited resources - and using the right personnel - it made an impact not only by engaging churches interest in the Rugby World Cup 2015 (and sport more generally) but in its reach. Its lack of standardised monitoring and evaluation, however, makes it hard to assess its impact to any significant degree or the level of resource required to achieve what it did. Nevertheless, the evaluation report adds to the evidence base for the potential adoption of a similar approach in relation to sport

ministry campaigns in the future. It also provides important insight for the sports ministry sector and church wanting to develop sports ministry especially those interested in creating faith pathways. It highlights yet again, that within the church, there is a strong latent belief and enthusiasm for sports ministry as a tool of mission and community engagement, but that this needs additional national and regional stimulus, planning and work beyond simply providing resources for the church to use.

Church of England and Sport Ministry

The next major development within sport ministry came not from the parachurch organisations but from within the Church of England. Evolving from renewed interest in sports ministry because of '*More than Gold*', and recognising the need for strategic leadership, the Diocese of London organised the first significant National Church of England Consultation on sports ministry at Loughborough University in February 2014. It was 'felt that the Church of England was still, in many senses, too much "on the side-lines" and consequently the conference was an attempt to take the *More than Gold* legacy forward by encouraging the Church of England to "be in the game" as much as possible.' Representatives from 31 dioceses assembled for the consultation, with many dioceses sending two or even three delegates. The objective of the consultation was to provide the Church of England both with a framework for engagement in sport and to build the case for this engagement. The day was organised around three main themes:

1. Building a case for the Church's engagement with sport
2. Thinking through some key aspects of sports engagement
3. Forward thinking around how the national and local Church can engage

The delegates heard several speakers including from Sport England, Christians in Sport and Professor Andrew Parker (University of Gloucestershire) who challenged the church to do sports initiatives 'excellently' and 'distinctively', highlighting the significance of monitoring and evaluating as a way to provide key evidence of the benefit the Church is providing. Former Loughborough MP and sports Andy Reed highlighted the opportunity around the 2015 Rugby World Cup. The broad conclusion from the day was that sport could, once again, play a significant role within the Church of England as tool of mission and way to engage local communities. The importance of diocesan sports vision casting and consultations and capturing and sharing best practice and effective sports mission initiatives was critical to taking forward this vision. Diocesan representatives agreed to action two next steps and report back at the next conference. Every delegate was given a sports whistle to remind them of this promise.

Church of England's First Sports Ambassador

A significant outcome from the conference was the appointment of Tony Porter, Bishop of Sherwood, as the Archbishops' Sport Ambassador in December 2014 to help facilitate the process within the Church of

England of giving deeper soil to sports mission within dioceses and parishes. His initial focus was on three areas:

- Host a national conference in early 2016 to keep building momentum
- Supporting strategic gatherings within dioceses, (being small meetings with key influencers) or a wider diocesan conference
- Bringing together the key ambassadors within the dioceses on 4th June 2015 for a day to review progress and discuss future plans.⁶¹

Inspired by other developments he also aspired to assess what sports ministry research was being undertaken (Diocese of London), sign posting resources (Christian in Sport), deepening theology (Theos, Lincoln Harvey, and the Inaugural Global Congress on Sport and Christianity at York St John University) and effective communication both inspiring the church and also furthering the argument that sports ministry had a place in supporting ministry and mission in the Church of England.

With limited resources to fund this work, Bishop Tony turned to Christians in Sport, with whom he had been closely associated over many years, to provide the secretariat. This took this opportunity in a new and more limited direction that generally reflected a CIS approach and resulted in few of his original aims being fulfilled. Nevertheless, he pushed Bishops hard to ensure his annual conference had representatives from every diocese in the Church of England. These days, (often hosted as separate North (See of York) and South (See of Canterbury)) provided inspiration and collective support alongside practical input from/for those delivering sport ministry, especially those of CIS, and a number of note-worthy keynote talks from:

2016 - The Archbishop of Canterbury - *'The Power and Influence of Sport'* and Stuart Pearce

2017 - Bishop Philip North - *'The Gift of Sport: social justice, belonging and mission'*

2018 - The Revd Pete Nicholas - *'A Team to Change the World'*

While this approach achieved little overall change or any visible increase in sports ministry provision, they did help to inspire and support those already delivering sports ministry and created a loose sports ministry network within the Church of England. While he also created a platform from which senior clergy could provide clear leadership and support for the sports ministry sector and its role in mission and community engagement, this lacked an obvious well-understand strategic approach – resources did not enable such an output. What these conferences also highlighted, was simply providing good practical resources, such as Christians in Sports' [Ready Set Go](#), to parishes or dioceses, or expecting dioceses to proactively include

⁶¹ Tony Porter - Letter to all Bishops – emailed 10th December 2014

sports ministry in its strategic plans was not enough. Something more structured and intentional was required to bridge the gap between sports ministry as a good idea and actual creating good new provision.

It was announced in 2019 Bishop Tony would retire and Libby Lane, Bishop of Derby was appointed as the new Bishop of Sport in 2020⁶².

Diocese of London's Capital Vision 2020

The Capital Vision 2020 strategy invited the people of the Diocese of London to share a vision of a Church for London that was Christ-centred and outward looking. It sought its members to become more confident in speaking and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ, more compassionate in serving communities with the love of God the Father and more creative in reaching new people and places in the power of the Spirit. Built into the ten specific areas of Capital Vision was a direct aim to engage more closely through sport.

Over the six years that Capital Vision Sport ran (2014-2020), the Diocese made a significant contribution to the development of sports ministry as the first Church of England diocese to explore how it could be used to better engage the local community and meet the needs of that community within the framework of the wider public sport and wellbeing policy. As well as publishing a diocesan strategy⁶³ for sports ministry, Capital Vision produced several important reports including a Sport England⁶⁴ funded research and evaluation project (Crabbe et al, 2015) that assessed what activity was happening across the diocese, the opportunities, and the attitudes to sports ministry. The research concluded that an average weekly throughput attendance at sport and physical activity sessions (parish activity, schools and church halls) was between 40,000 and 50,000 people⁶⁵ and that the church community was already offering a diverse range of sport and physical activities to wide group of people from age groups across the life spectrum, including older people and women and girls both high-priority target groups for Sport England, from a variety of facility types both within and beyond the church estate, without distinct interventions. Much of this activity was led by third party groups or individuals, was informal and unorganized. The research also provided 10 case studies to illustrate this.⁶⁶ The insight this research provided was invaluable to the Diocese in planning its approach and Sport England identified the significant potential resource that church buildings offered within local communities which are often low-cost facilities yet lacking in use. It also showed, for the first time, that church-based sport and wellbeing ministry was playing an important role in delivering government policy around increasing activity and social outcomes.

Two key aspects of the Capital Vision strategy were to develop partnerships with parachurch sports

62 <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/13-march/news/uk/the-bishop-of-derby-speaks-of-sport-s-opportunity-for-church>

63 'The mission was to create, build and support a vibrant, engaged and sustainable local sport and physical activity ministry that helps parishes to build Christian witness and community in, and through sport and physical activity'. The basic principle was to ultimately to deliver local, asset-based approach and in using various local models create an overarching framework for engagement.

64 Sport England is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, to help people and communities get a sporting habit for life.

65 <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/20150129-sport-and-the-church-in-london-research-summary-final-se.pdf>

66 Sport England and Diocese of London Research Summary: <https://www.sportengland.org/research/understanding-audiences/faith/>

ministry organisations to enhance delivery and to create and deliver two pilot sport and wellbeing hubs to help make the case for sport and wellbeing ministry as a useful tool in local mission to the Diocese. While Capital Vision made some progress on the former, this strategy was revised part way through when it was clear that most of the parachurch organisations did not have enough resource to engage with the Diocese at scale nor to tackle several fundamental issues at the heart of sport and wellbeing ministry: workforce, training provision and career pathways alongside joined-up strategic sector leadership.

The second strategy was more successful. Two pilot sports and wellbeing hubs were successfully launched and funded. The Hoxton Sport and Wellbeing Hub completed its three-year pilot, and an evaluation was produced in 2020 (for further discussion, see Chapter 8). The second, *Activate*, a sports and wellbeing hub created by the parishes of the Hampton Deanery undertook a year of research and business planning, with its official launch being disrupted by Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. *Activate* is a part of the Church of England's Seven Pilot Diocese Project and continues to develop and innovate creating links with a wider group of stakeholders.

The Diocese also tackled the general concern that many people assumed that 'sport' required a particular skill set or interest that they simply did not have or that it was only for the young, especially young men. Based in the work of Revd Jackie Cameron MD, in her *The Bodies of Christ* Report (2018) the Diocese aimed to recapture the theology of physical activity, health and wellbeing: to recognise that care of the body is an integral part of Christian faith and that having fun through sport is equally importantly theologically: that as Christians, we should simply 'play or move' because it is fun and a natural response of being a created being. To this end, the Diocese advocated a sport activity for all approach, looking to break down traditional approaches and views to sporting ministry. Their approach is also reflected in the [short video](#) they made in 2018.

Capital Vision 2020 formally closed in December 2020. While the Diocese is currently still evaluating its success⁶⁷, many important insights and lessons have already been understood while many others are yet to be properly assessed. Three key insights are already clear: (i) any approach need to be long -term, probably ten-years; (ii) a diocese needs to be strategic and have the full backing of diocesan senior staff and Bishops – this need to be supported with appropriate funding especially a lead person based in the diocese who can link and partners with other aspects of the diocese work such as discipleship, mission and schools; and (iii) a place-based approach is best, however there are significant challenges with a parish-based model - even where parishes or even groups of churches are highly motivated and experienced - getting ministry off the ground, ensuring it include best practise and has strong faith pathways/links back into church, and

⁶⁷ The Diocese has decided – to date - not to undertake a final piece of evaluation work covering the insight and learning from the 6 years of the Sport Priority.

sustaining it: issues include leadership, project management including monitoring and evaluating, fundraising, communications and workforce.

Alongside three years of annual update/evaluation reports, the Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub, commissioned an independent evaluation report in 2020⁶⁸ as Diocesan funding for the project came to an end: this was completed in November 2021 and has many useful insights and learning for the diocese and the sector. *Activate* has also produced several internal reports (including an initial piece of research and mapping, a strategy and business plan), using a former professional management consultant, that mapped their plans, outlines its approach and strategy. They have also developed a basic monitoring and evaluation framework which will be developed further in 2022 working in partnerships with Centre for Church Planting and Growth and potentially St Mary's University, Twickenham. A further internal evaluation is currently being drafted to assess *Activate's* development to date. These reports (not yet public) will provide vital insight for the wider church and attempts to scale these projects further⁶⁹.

What is clear is that there was a significant interest and need both within parishes, church schools and public bodies for the church to engage their local community through sport and wellbeing activity. In turn, it has been recognised that creating place-based approach is challenging and needs leadership, expertise and drive, but where this happens, the rewards are good and public funders are very interested in what churches can deliver. The need for strong monitoring and evaluation of projects, however, remains a significant challenge and one that must be addressed if sport and wellbeing ministry is to become more sustainable. Furthermore, the right training for sports ministers and volunteers is critical including helping parishes embed new approaches, the theology of sport and wellbeing ministry, project management, fundraising and monitoring and evaluation. Both require standardised national approaches. Finally, despite best intentions, more work is needed to ensure that sport and wellbeing ministry is deeply rooted in a local church. Provision requires a strong, well-researched framework for intentional faith pathways, and to the local church or in creating new worshipping communities. These ideally would be created nationally, so they can be scaled up, if sport and wellbeing ministry is going to flourish and make a significant impact.

While the diocese has developed a new Capital Vision strategy for 2030, unfortunately they took a new approach, and it did not include any specific mention of sport and wellbeing ministry. However, the Diocese remains confident in its belief that sport and wellbeing could be a significant tool in helping churches engage and support their local community and mission. This will take time. The Diocese continues to support and explore how *Activate*⁷⁰ can create a new worshipping community and whether

68 Hoxton Sports Hub External Evaluation, Matthew Wilson, Goodlabs, 2020.

69 These reports need to be systematically assessed alongside other evaluations

70 This project has an independent governance structure as a charity and is supported by a stipendiary pioneer minister, appointed by the Bishop of Kensington, with the support of his, Kensington Area Council. It has also been successful at securing public funding and Christian Trusts.

this can be replicated in other deaneries. Whatever happens, the London Diocese has laid some important and significant foundations for sports ministry in the future like the need for central diocesan strategic coordination and thinking, the huge opportunities for the church especially in linking its delivery to social outcomes, and the importance of broadening traditional sports ministry to include health and wellbeing.

The Diocese of Gloucester and sports ministry: From PSALMS to Sportily

For some time, the Diocese of Gloucester has had a presence in the sports ministry sector as a consequence of the work of PSALMS⁷¹. PSALMS began in Painswick in 2005, and gradually developed its scope and reach in the region its original aim being to ‘engage young people in lively and realistic dialogue about the Christian faith in whatever world they find themselves, whether the sporting world or any other’⁷². PSALMS aimed to model fresh expressions of church in the community so it could “create church – out there”⁷³ and to build ‘church’ in the schools, in the sports clubs and in the community so young people could share in the Good News. Their approach was based on the reality that young people were not drawn to services and church buildings that catered for the generations above them. The Charity, led by a Board of Trustee, initially employed two employees (Sports Youth Minister and a Schools’ and Children’s Worker) to deliver sporting activity in Painswick.

Success was rapid. Within a year they were regularly engaging 30, 11–14-year-olds in weekly activities, some of whom come through the rugby and tennis clubs, and 50 young people took part in their first three-day holiday club. They also established thriving lunchtime and after-school clubs in all three local primary schools. These young people also made Christian commitments for the first time and 14 of them went on Christian camps and holidays, and others saw their faith grow. In 2008 the staff team comprised three sports ministers (including Ruth Graveling) and a specialist Children’s Worker which saw the geographical expansion in sport and school’s ministry developing in Minchinhampton, Nailsworth, Stonehouse, Stroud and Thameshead as well as the Beacon Benefice centred on Painswick.

The period between 2009-2011 witnessed a re-branding and further expansion both in terms of staffing and activities especially in terms of partnerships with local churches including new projects in Bisley, Chalford and Eastcombe. They also took this opportunity to refocus their approach to ensure they were supporting and encouraging local churches of all Christian denominations in reaching out to their communities through sport. They specifically targeted engagement with young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds in rural or semi-rural areas. PSALMS also ensured they worked with young people of all faiths and none.⁷⁴ With an enlarged geographical reach, they also undertook further

71 PSALMS stood for the Painswick and Stroud Area Local Ministries and was the initial sport project. As it expanded projects took the name of each local church until a 2009 rebranding brought them all under Psalms.

72 Marsh, I. (2021). The Story of PSALMS 2005-2021. Painswick, Gloucester, UK.

73 The Story of PSALMS - 2005-2021, Psalms, 2021

74 <https://psalms.uk.net/psalms-centre-of-excellence/>

(internal) re-branding with the PSALMS acronym now standing for: Putting Sport Alongside Local Ministries in order to reflect the wider geographical influence of the organisation. All sites also used branded activities: Pulsar for primary schools, Club Pulse and Pulse+ with teenagers⁷⁵. Residential experiences⁷⁶ also played a central role in the approach PSALMS took as these had an important impact on the lives of children and young people, and often a place they encounter God. PSALMS put value on both facilitating witness and discipleship of young people.

This was followed in 2011-2013 with the recruitment of its first team of interns. By 2014 PSALMS hosted three salaried sports ministers working with three interns, and the launch of Pulse Games and Active RE establishing it as a major youth ministry in Gloucestershire. PSALMS also developed new partnerships with local churches to run the first Fun Days at Stratford Park in Stroud (including bouncy castles, human table football, crazy games, face painting and refreshments) and the Stonehouse Live event. These events attracted almost two thousand families and children, mostly who did not attend church. These continued to grow, and the 2014 Fun Day attracted an estimated 3,500. With over 20 churches and organisations, and some 160 volunteers, they were able to effectively create 'church' in the community with an appropriate level of evangelism: they saw people come to faith and begin to engage with their local churches.

The impact of PSALMS has also played a significant role in the wider development of sport ministry. Scripture Union noticed their success with young people and began to explore how they could develop a similar offer through Ruth Gravelling's 2014 report. Furthermore, the Diocese of Gloucester also saw the impact that PSALMS was having locally and as it grew, they developed a more formal partnership (including with Scripture Union) to successfully create a Centre of Excellence. A Director of Sports Ministry was employed in 2017. They initiated monitoring and evaluation of their work⁷⁷ and developed the ability to undertake strategic work to understand how churches might better serve and reach young people. These annual evaluations provide important data and insights for the diocese and sports ministry more widely⁷⁸. PSALMS continued to recruit, train, and equip both young leaders and adult volunteers⁷⁹ and by 2021, the team included eight sports ministers whose role was to encourage, equip and enable local churches to reach out to their communities through sport in mission.

As PSALMS became more closely aligned with the Diocese of Gloucester's wider planning to develop new models of sports ministry, its organisational structures transitioned into those of the Diocese itself initially via the OneLife strategy and ultimately embedded within the Sportily project (see Marsh, 2021) in 2022.

⁷⁵ A full list of Psalms activities can be found at <https://psalms.uk.net/what-we-do/>

⁷⁶ These residential visits included TRAC, Pulsar weekend, Viney Hill, Soul Survivor and South Africa

⁷⁷ <https://psalms.uk.net/resources/documents/>

⁷⁸ These reports need to be systematically assessed alongside other evaluations

⁷⁹ <https://psalms.uk.net/who-we-are/>

Other Denominations – The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has been investing in sports and wellbeing ministry for several years. Recognising the ‘transformational ability of sport and exercise emotionally, socially and spiritually’ they have continued to embed sport in their broad offer. Their vision is to continue to share the gospel, see lives transformed and disciples made through sport⁸⁰. Their strategy includes developing and piloting varied expressions of cross cutting sports mission especially where there is existing desire or activity; to equip, empower, educate, and encourage the grassroots church to create sports mission legacy in their churches; to explore mental health, well-being and sport as an important feature of discipleship; and communicate the transformational possibilities that Sport to inspire them to get involved. They currently have five strategic priorities:

1. To provide relevant engagement opportunities for local churches and corps
2. To measure the impact and effectiveness of all engagement interventions
3. To evidence how sport fitness and well-being interconnect
4. Develop training and educational opportunities and measure their effectiveness and impact
5. Develop sports mission leaders and report on their effectiveness.

The SA has already made progress increasing its voice and influence in the sports ministry sector through their work with SU and CoE on the Commonwealth Games KITBAG and in within the SA though creating new and relevant resources for sports mission including DIRT, VENTURE, ATHLOS. They host a Sport, Faith & Life (formally Sport & Christianity) training weekend, created online forums to provoke thinking around exercise, fitness, faith, and well-being- journey within the SA and created of a Sports Mission Learning Community.

They are continuing to develop programmes at local, Divisional and Territorial level. At local level they support well designed and fun sporting activity as a method of building friendships, empowering individuals bring together communities, creating teams, boosting confidence, and helping people fighting addictions. Their offer to the community includes exercise and well-being activities in their churches for all ages, backgrounds, and abilities such as Zumba, Pilates, Personal training, Football, Taekwondo, Rugby, and weight management programmes⁸¹. SA uses such sport ministry to ‘disciple and connect with ordinary local people’ and provide opportunities to explore Christianity. Like many organisations they produce

80 Correspondence with Rob Moye, Territorial Sports Mission Lead, The Salvation Army, United Kingdom and Ireland Territory, 2022.

81 <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sport-and-exercise>

contemporary [discipleship videos](#) as a wide-reaching tool for sports mission, which focus on effective ways of transforming communities through sport.

Furthermore, they are linking SWM with their Lifehouse centres⁸² where Football teams often play an integral role in breaking the cycle of homelessness through developing life skills, forging friendships, and providing discipline. They host a UK-wide football tournament, the Partnership Trophy, which sees teams from the Lifehouses compete in five-a-side games. Teams have gone to compete in the [Homeless World Cup](#), bringing together people from 74 nations through the power of football, to challenge perceptions and transform lives.

One the SA regional areas in Manchester have created a local community sport and youth club supported by the Greater Manchester Police (GMP), S4B (housing association), and Manchester Young Community Champions. The clubs aim at tackling a local anti-social behaviour in the area by providing activity for local young people. GMP provides two Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) to attend each week to join in with activities in a model is widely used in the community sport sector. Attracting more than 90 children aged 8–14 years up to 40 children attend each week and while sport focused the club also uses other activities including arts and crafts, litter picking and planting bulbs. All these activities aim to teach life skills and provide a wider life context. It runs as an all faith and no faith venue, and while there is no Christian teaching it is based on Christian morals. This approach helps break down any barriers⁸³.

Rob Moye, Territorial Sports Mission Lead, is currently writing a report about their sports and wellbeing ministry, its activities, approach and impact. This will be available after Easter 2022.

Other Voices

Throughout this period, other voices have suggested new thinking and approaches. Professor Andrew Parker (an academic working in the sport for development sector and with sports ministry parachurch organisations) and Mark Balcar (working in the sport for development sector and the delivery of Sports Priority of London's Capital Vision 2020), brought expertise from the mainstream community sport sector, having concluded that, while sports ministry had been undertaken with a significant amount of passion, creating pockets of good delivery, the sector as a whole has much to learn from the broader community sport sector. This sector - or more specifically the sport for development sector - with which sports ministry is most closely aligned, has undergone significant professionalisation under pressure from the Government and Sport England. As well as agreeing with Graveling (2014) about the need for renewed training and development practitioners in sports ministry, Balcar and Parker also suggest that the sports

⁸² <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/homelessness/lifehouses>

⁸³ <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sport-and-exercise>

ministry sector could learn from the insights of community sport organisations to deliver sporting activity in a new, demand-led way for all people.

Furthermore, they suggest that the limited monitoring and evaluation of sport ministry outcomes (now a matter of best practice in community sport) had had a negative impact on the sports ministry sector in relation to the traction it deserved and needed. Moreover, they argued that getting the attention of senior clergy through creating robust theories of change and providing evidence that sports ministry intentionally led to faith journeys or a process of discipleship (i.e., in and through ‘church settings’) has further inhibited the sector’s development.

Two significant theological sport ministry books were also published in the last ten years: Revd Dr Lincoln Harvey, *‘A Brief Theology of Sport’*, 2014 and Dr Robert Ellis, *The Games People Play*, 2014 . In addition, the Think Tank Theos, in partnership with the Bible Society and Christians in Sport, published *‘The State of Play’*. These resources are discussed in Chapter Six. In the hope of encouraging further dialogue between academic and practitioner audiences Professor Andrew Parker and Dr Nick Watson, also in collaboration with The Bible Society, launched the *Inaugural Global Congress on Sport and Christianity*⁸⁴ hosted at York St John University in August 2016. The event drew nearly 200 participants from 24 different nations. Best-selling author, activist, and scholar Tony Campolo delivered the opening address, setting the tone for posing questions and seeking answers in sport through the lens of authentic Christian faith. Other keynotes lectures and more than 80 additional presentations were given by scholars and practitioners, each providing new insights and reflections on the culture of sport as it relates Christian thought and life. The second iteration of which was organised by Dr Brian Bolt (Calvin College) and Dr Chad Carlson (Hope College) and hosted by Calvin College, Grand Rapids, US in October 2019.⁸⁵

These conferences resulted in several books and articles were produced providing a vast resource of research and thinking. These include:

Books:

- Parker, A., Watson, N.J. and White, J.B. (eds.) (2016) *Sports Chaplaincy: Trends, Issues and Debates* (Preface, John Swinton), London: Routledge. See: <https://www.routledge.com/Sports-Chaplaincy-Trends-Issues-and-Debates/Parker-Watson-White/p/book/9781472414045>
- Adogame, A., Watson, N.J. and Parker, A. (eds.) (2019) *Global Perspectives on Sports and Christianity*. London: Routledge. See: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Perspectives-Christianity-Routledge-Research-Culture/dp/1138828521>

⁸⁴ <https://www.sportsthinktank.com/blog/2016/02/global-congress-to-address-spirituality-and-ethics-in-sports>

⁸⁵ This second iteration spawned the SPORT.FAITH.LIFE brand which now provides oversight for future events via an Organizing Committee structure. The third Global Congress on Sport and Christianity is due to be hosted by Ridley Hall, Cambridge, UK, 18th-21st August 2022.

- Hargaden, K., Brock, B., Watson, N.J., and Swinton, J. (eds.) (2020). *Theological Reflections on Disability Sport*, Routledge.

Journal ‘special editions’:

- *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media and Politics* (Guest eds. Dr Tom Gibbons and Stuart Braye). Christian Sociological Perspectives on Sport.
- *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* (Guest eds. Professors Scott Kretchmar and John White). Ethical and Social Issues in Sports: Christian Reflections.
- *Journal of Religion and Society* (Guest ed. Professor Ft. Patrick Kelly): Catholicism and Sport.
- *International Journal of the History of Sport* (Guest ed. Professor Rob Hess). Historical Perspectives on Sports and Christianity. See: <http://explore.tandfonline.com/cfp/pgas/fhsp-call-for-christianity-sport-historical-perspectives>
- *Practical Theology* (Guest editors. Professors Stephen Waller and Rob Hardin). Sport Chaplaincy. See: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/yprt20/9/3?nav=tocList>
- *Studies in World Christianity* (Guest ed. Dr Afe Adogame). Global Perspectives in Sports and Christianity. See: <http://www.eupublishing.com/toc/swc/21/3>
- *Journal of Religion and Disability* (Guest ed. Dr. Brian Brock, Dr Nick, J. Watson, Prof John Swinton and Kevin Hard Hargaden). Theology of Disability Sport.
- *Journal of the Christian Society for Kinesiology and Leisure Studies* (Guest eds., Professor Dan Czech and Professor Diane Wiese-Bjornstal)

Electronic and print media:

- Watson, N.J. (2016) Global Congress to Address Spirituality and Ethics in Sport, Invited Essay, Sport Think-Tank (Patron, Lord Coe), March. See: <http://www.sportsthinktank.com/blog/2016/02/global-congress-to-address-spirituality-and-ethics-in-sports>
- Watson, N.J. (2016) Where the Track Leads from Rio: As the Olympic participants head home from Rio, Nick Watson Explores the Growing Relationship between Sport and the Churches, *The Church Times* (Readership, 65,000), 26th September: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2016/26-august/features/features/where-the-track-leads-from-rio>

- Watson, N.J. (2016) Sport Church and Modern Culture: Congress Asks Critical Questions, Invited Essay, Church of England, Diocese of London, March. See: <http://www.london.anglican.org/event/2016/08/24/sport-church-and-modern-culture-global-congress-asks-critical-questions/>

These interventions perhaps highlight the importance of the sports ministry sector and any new Church of England approach, to consider partnerships with the wider sector in developing sport and wellbeing ministry in the future. In doing so, the sector and church will be able to develop in a more robust approach that is better able to address many of the systemic issues currently facing it.

Church of England's Sport and Wellbeing Project

Further evidence of the growing momentum around sport as a form of outreach and ministry is the Church of England's recently launched 'Sport and Wellbeing' initiative. Since its inception, the Church of England's national sport and wellbeing project has sought to facilitate a greater strategic approach to sport and wellbeing ministry between dioceses and sports ministry organisations. Viewing sport and wellbeing as central to its wider missional strategy (i.e., to be a church for 'all people in every place'), this venture aims to locate the Church as a legitimate contributor to wider debates (faith-based and secular) in this area whilst, at the same time, promoting sport as a key component of diocesan plans for mission, evangelism, and church planting.

Launched in February 2020 alongside the appointment of a designated Bishop for Sport, a National Project Officer, and the selection of seven dioceses as 'pilot' implementation sites, the initiative operates under the auspices of the Church of England's broader Evangelism and Discipleship strategy in line with the following key objectives: (i) to expand the outward facing profile of the Church by connecting with individuals and communities which prove hard to reach (with the potential of long-term growth for existing and new congregations); (ii) to see the growth and development of younger congregations (given that sport offers the potential to bring churches into contact with more young people); (iii) to develop an integrated schools outreach programme through Physical Education (PE) and Religious Education (RE) via primary schools as part of the Church of England's *Growing Faith* initiative;⁸⁶ (iv) to create innovative ways of mission and evangelism by meeting the needs of local communities (e.g., mental health, physical health, loneliness, youth violence, etc.) through sport and physical activity; and (v) to create a pipeline of

⁸⁶ For further information see: Archbishop of Canterbury's Quinquennial Goals of growing the church and contributing to the common good, Renewal and Reform's emphasis on 'a growing Church for all people and for all places' (<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform>) and the House of Bishops' focus on 'Growing Faith' in young people (<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/general-synod-commends-resources-help-families-pray-home>). The 'Sport and Wellbeing' National Project Officer role is a three-year, full-time position (2020-2023) funded by the Laing Trust (<https://www.laingfamilytrusts.org.uk/>). The Bishop of Derby, Libby Lane, was announced as the newly designated lead Bishop for Sport in February 2020 taking over from the previous incumbent Bishop Tony Porter (Bishop of Sherwood, Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham).

trained leaders in sport/wellbeing to ensure the long-term sustainability of work in this area.⁸⁷ In terms of society at large, it is widely accepted that sport can serve as a transformational tool with the potential to change individual lives and communities (see Morgan and Parker, 2017; Morgan et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2020; Parker et al., 2019). By the same token, the Church of England recognises that these transformational processes can be harnessed and mobilised within the context of the sport/faith relationship.

Ridley Hall – Sports Ministry Training Course

A central component of the Church of England's sport and wellbeing project is the provision of bespoke training and education for sports ministers. Since 2020, Ridley Hall, Cambridge has established a suite of courses designed to facilitate an educational pathway for those with an interest in this area - from non-accredited, online 'taster' courses, to fully-fledged undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. In September 2019, in line with the strategic aims of the Church of England SWB Advisory Board, Ridley launched a Certificate in Higher Education (Cert HE) in Theology, Ministry and Mission as a training route for all those working in sports ministry, chaplaincy and wellbeing. As a specialist offering, this a unique, ecumenical, placement-based course in theology and sports ministry. In May 2021, Ridley also launched the online Ridley Award which is aimed at a global market as a 'taster' course in this area. A Foundation Award encompassing elements of the Cert HE is also available. Under the leadership of Fiona Green (Assistant Principal) and Robin Barden, Director of Innovations), the sports ministry team at Ridley constitutes Andrew Parker, Rob French and Graham Daniels.

In consultation with others in the sector, these courses have been specifically designed to mesh with existing training and CPD provision (both regional and national) offered by parachurch sports ministry organisations thereby creating much needed synergies between practitioner experience and theological education. With the overall aim of growing a generation of sports ministry leaders to facilitate the future needs of the church both in the UK and beyond, leadership development represents a key aspect of Ridley course delivery (based on a servant leadership model) as does the creation of a legitimate and professionalized career trajectory for sports ministers. There are very few courses of this nature globally, however; both Parker and Daniels have experience of delivering related provision previously (Parker at the University of Gloucestershire and Daniels at All Nations College). The Ridley courses involve elements of both.

87 The initiative is Chaired by Revd Canon Dave Male, Director of the Church of England's Evangelism and Discipleship strategy. The training and equipping of sports ministry leaders is to be serviced via a suite of degree-level courses at Ridley Hall theological college, Cambridge, UK. The seven 'pilot' dioceses are: Gloucester, Norwich, Birmingham, Kensington Area, Blackburn, Guilford and Rochester (see: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/church-england-backs-sports-ministry>)

Other Training Provision

In terms of existing courses of study in related fields, St Padarn's Institute Cardiff (Cardiff University) deliver an MTh in Chaplaincy Studies with specialism in sports chaplaincy which Parker oversees. Parker is also a visiting scholar at the Faith and Sport Institute, Baylor University (US) where a similar suite of sports ministry/chaplaincy courses is being developed. Daniels is National Director of Christians in Sport (CIS) and a national and international leader in sports ministry practice and is currently undertaking a PhD in the area.

Sports Ministry Training, Workforce and Careers

Workforce development and professionalization, however, remains a key issue for UK sports ministry going forward. Ministry training both lay and clergy is a complex area and is going through a significant period of change with many of the traditional higher education and vocational training providers colleges struggling to attract student numbers. At the same time, bespoke, private colleges are on the rise like the recently created St Mellitus College in London. Traditionally, sports ministry has been delivered by those passionate about sport and/or young people with some background in sport or youth but with little, if any, expertise or formal training in sport and wellbeing. What training has been available has often been provided by the parachurch organisations and limited to short course input or continuing professional development (CPD) with a focus on practitioner delivery. Local churches and parishes have then been left to supplement this input. What this means is that there is not only a lack of expertise in the sector around the area of sport and wellbeing, but also in theological education and spiritual formation. In turn, there is limited career pathway for sports ministers resulting in the loss of vital skills-base and passion for this aspect of the Kingdom.

This approach is clearly not sustainable given that the sector relies heavily on its volunteer workforce who need support and ongoing training. Sports ministers and sports ministry leaders need to be equipped to do more than simply run SWM sessions including skills around strategic planning, research and mapping, project management, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation, entrepreneurship, discipleship, and communication. They also need on-going input in these areas via structured and accessible programmes of CPD.

At a wider level, there is a need for sports ministers to engage more broadly with mainstream debates concerning sport and wellbeing (i.e., government agendas etc.) in order to widen their horizons around place-based approaches, engaging hard to reach people and the delivery of appropriate fun and inclusive sporting activity, that tackles inactivity and inequality, and delivers social outcomes. These skills that can be learnt from the community sport sector. Sports ministers are also in need of input around the initiation of faith journeys and how to transition individuals from SWM activity into new worshipping communities.

In addition, the sports ministry sector needs a significant influx of workers to fulfil the potential for SMW, including training on engaging local communities through wellbeing including social prescribing, wellbeing days and retreats. Furthermore, there remains a dearth of leaders (including from diverse backgrounds) who go on to make the leap between being a talented and passionate sports ministry practitioner to leading SWM in a diocese or in partnership with local authorities, secular bodies, and organisations, and even funders.

Ridley Hall is increasingly filling a vacuum in SWM training and providing training and education in these areas. However, without an increase in the number of well trained and well supported sport and wellbeing ministers the potential and vision (to train and equip a generation of sports ministers and sports ministry leaders to service the needs of the church in the UK and beyond) for SWM in the UK cannot be realised.

The Church of England is aware of these needs and has embraced Ridley as their preferred training partner. Part of this role is to carry out ongoing analysis of key training issues and to develop an appropriate educational offer for parishes and dioceses (among others). Funding for training and development is a significant challenge and colleges like Ridley also need a critical mass to make courses viable. It will take all stakeholders involved in SWM to budget and invest intentionally in this area in order that the SWM vision to be met. This includes others within the church leading, for example, pioneer ministry and developing new worshipping communities, which are well suited to SWM. These parts of the church need to embrace and support SWM to help deliver their objectives through well trained and supported leaders.

The SWM vision will also depend on the establishment of key partnerships. The Church of England's Seven Pilot Diocese Project is attempting this through its Learning Community programme. These sessions will be held at Ridley Hall in order to cross-fertilise with Ridley sports ministry students and tutors. Within all of this, it is essential that better partnerships are also engendered between Ridley Hall, the CoE SWM Learning Community, and the parachurch organisations to ensure a strategic and co-ordinated approach to sports ministry training per se.

The Church of England's New Vision

The Church of England launched its new vision in 2020. This encapsulates the Church's calling to be a Christ-centred and Jesus-shaped church that is simpler, humbler, and bolder. It identifies three strategic priorities for the Church around being a church of missionary disciples, a church where the mixed ecology of many forms of church are the norm, and a church which is younger and more diverse. How it is lived out, through their mission and ministry, will be up to these local communities to develop as they engage with the vision and strategy work.⁸⁸ The vision also re-states the reality of what it means

⁸⁸ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/emerging-church-england/vision-church-england-2020s>

to be the Church of England which includes the values of all the parishes, chaplaincies, church schools, church plants, religious communities, fresh expressions and mission initiatives, messy churches, food banks and refugee ministries.

It is yet to be determined how this new framework will practically support sport and wellbeing ministry and the Seven Pilot Diocese Project, however it is encouraging that in principle, good sport and wellbeing ministry, can help the church achieve its strategic aims especially in a more diverse expression of church life – a mixed ecology including new worshipping communities and fresh expressions working alongside the parish system - and to be younger and more diverse.⁸⁹

iv. Conclusion

Sport Ministry continues to evolve, and the last decade has witnessed several significant developments which have begun to influence conventional working practices in this sector. Demand around sports ministry is no longer seen in terms of just 'sport' but as sport and wellbeing ministry 'through sport' that potentially incorporates a much broader base of community interventions. Furthermore, a more inclusive vision for sports ministry which encompasses sporting activity for all that has fun at its core has created a new foundation from which to develop and re-calibrate the scope and remit of sports ministry. This has coincided with national policymakers piloting appropriately designed community sporting activity provision as an effective solution to help increase the nation's activity levels and tackle a wide range of social issues including loneliness, mental health, holiday hunger, community integration and to improve the nation's health and wellbeing. In turn, this has highlighted a potentially significant, theologically based⁹⁰, mission field for the church and created an exciting new drive to further develop and refresh sports and wellbeing ministry nationally.

Most of the parachurch organisations have developed their approach in the last ten years, and while KICK has seen its school's provision appreciably grow, Scripture Union has made the most notable contribution in developing its sports ministry in this time, underpinned by its 2014 research evaluating sports ministry. Monitoring and evaluation however, is still not seen by the sector as a priority and there is still little empirical evidence to support the claims parachurch organisations make about their impact, especially faith pathways. Significant learning and insight did emerge from two large collaborative campaigns that sought to use major sporting events in the UK as a tool of community engagement and mission, highlighting the importance of undertaking monitoring and evaluation even at a simple level. This evidence supports the conclusion of others working in the sector, illustrating critical strategic issues that need to be

⁸⁹ For further detail on the Church of England Sport and Wellbeing initiative see Parker and Marturano (2020).

⁹⁰ Jackie Cameron and Mark Balcar, *Bodies of Christ: health, sport and whole-person ministry*, Diocese of London, December 2018

addressed to ensure the sectors develops and works effectively with the church. While both campaigns sought to help the parachurch organisations and the church work in partnership this has not been sustained outside of the campaign. What both campaigns have achieved is to inspire the Church of England about the potential of sports ministry.

The largest development in sport and wellbeing ministry in the last ten years has been the engagement of the Church of England. The work undertaken by the Diocese of London has begun to show what is possible when a strategic and informed approach is taken, and limited funding is provided to help support a diocesan lead, research, networks and partnerships , and new pilot models. This approach also provided robust evidence to the widely held view that there is a demand and enthusiasm for sport and wellbeing ministry from churches but that they need significantly more support than simply the provision of resources. In their own way and at differing levels of quality evaluation these insights also support the belief that sport and wellbeing ministry does work at its most basic level. However, that with more resource and more joined up thinking and approach much more could be achieved.

These interventions have highlighted the significant challenges for sport and wellbeing ministry in operating in silos without an overall strategy or framework and despite the hard work of those involved, the limitations of the impact of this approach have been recognised. While there is much to build upon several critical key factors need addressing urgently:

- Strategic thinking and planning of the development of sport ministry over the next 10-20 years
- The successful monitoring and evaluation of sports and wellbeing projects and campaigns
- The need for evidence-based frameworks for the different types of sport and wellbeing ministry models
- Understanding of the social outcomes through community sport and partnerships with public bodies to embed this thinking and insights into sport and wellbeing ministry
- New models of delivery that are sustainable long term
- The need for evidence-based frameworks for faith pathways, the role of the local church and church schools and new worshipping communities
- Appropriate education, training and continuing professional development for sports ministers and volunteers
- A framework for using major sports events and other sporting events as a broad means for initial (marketing) community engagement and mission.

The limitations of relying on those parachurch organisations using sport as a tool for mission to drive the development of sport and wellbeing ministry have also been recognised. This has led to the Church of England seeking to find its own path to strategically develop sports and wellbeing ministry at both the diocesan and national level. This is long-term approach, still in its infancy, however two aspects of this projects are critical: (i) working with seven dioceses who are developing their own approaches and models for sport and wellbeing ministry that can be potentially scaled and replicated in the future; and (ii) the partnership with Ridley Hall to begin to tackle workforce and training issues. This approach by the Church has been supported by several other voices who have made an important contribution to related debates. This has been especially important in thinking through the theological implications of in the church working with public bodies to understand embrace and frame sport and wellbeing ministry within the public policy framework.

Finally, the evolving partnership between local sports ministry organisation PSALMS, Scripture Union and the Diocese of Gloucester and subsequent creation of Sportily, has been a significant development in sport and wellbeing ministry in the Church of England. Embracing a place-based, local-asset approach that embraces a wider public policy agenda, with significant diocesan investment to develop a strategy that aims to scale and replicate the model, modifying it to include local community hubs and developing new worshipping communities, using the right experts, if successful, will potentially create a one of the strongest models for the rest of the church. That this is also being attempted in both the London and Norwich diocese, albeit at a lesser scale, is likely to provide the Church of England with the fundamental shift needed to fulfil the potential for sport and wellbeing ministry in the UK.

While progress is slow, there are many reasons for optimism given that sports and wellbeing ministry is in a very different place than it was 10 years ago in the UK. It has the base from which to build more quickly, however the insights and learnings from the previous decade must be acknowledged, utilised and where challenges exist, these need to be tackled strategically. Good leadership is critical and the importance of this cannot be underestimated in terms of the development and rejuvenation of sports and wellbeing ministry in future years.

CHAPTER 5: THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR COMMUNITY SPORT, YOUTH AND WELLBEING

i. Introduction

This Chapter outlines the evidence base around community sport and wellbeing projects. It does this by using several key reports. The Revd Jackie Cameron MD report *Bodies of Christ: health, sport and whole-person ministry* (2018) sets the scene for the church by focusing on the current health crisis in the UK making the case that 'sports ministry' should also include health and wellbeing outcomes. Since the publication of its 2015 strategy document, *A Sporting Future*, Sport England has enhanced its understanding of the current evidence base that supports how sporting activity can deliver the social outcomes that government wants. In its *Review of the Evidence on the Outcomes of Sport and Physical Activity – a rapid evidence review* (2017) report, Sport England sets out that evidence of the impact of community sport and the implications for the sector.

As the youth sector has looked to undergo a similar journey to that which community sport has undertaken over the last 10 years, the government has also attempted to collect data and report on what works. Based on these findings, there is now a sound evidence-base from which researchers can provide organisations with the key implications in delivering successful youth provision. A new area of policy development is wellbeing. Given Cameron's (2018) conclusions about the churches potential role in supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals and the community, there are obvious synergies here that sport and wellbeing ministry projects should consider, to provide it with new tools of engagement and understanding with its own congregation, local community, and society. The What Works Centre – Wellbeing, has undertaken a wide-ranging evidence review providing a series of reports highlighting the implications for those organisations wanting to improve wellbeing. Three reports from the Centre will be particularly useful for sport and wellbeing ministry projects: *Sport, Dance and Young People*, *Family and Outdoor Recreation* and *Places, and Spaces, People and Wellbeing*.

The chapter also discusses additional specific evidence areas, such as the impact of PE and Sport in and around schools before looking at what evidence there is in Gloucestershire which specifically focuses on physical inactivity and related health issues. Finally, the chapter note some of the rapidly changing areas policy development which will impact on One Life in the longer term.

ii. Scale of the Health and Inactivity Problem

There are many reports that outline the scale of the problems facing UK society. Each highlights its own flavour with some taking a general approach, others a deep-dive into a particular issue. Statistics are not always consistent and are constantly changing.

The one report that is particularly useful for sport and wellbeing ministry projects is the Diocese of London's *Bodies of Christ: health, sport and whole-person ministry* (2018) by Revd Jackie Cameron MD. Cameron provides an overview of the wide social issues that sport can help to tackle with a specific focus on health and wellbeing within the context of the policy framework. She also provides a uniquely Christian and medical perspective. Cameron offers a theological argument, alongside setting out scale of the issues, for why health and wellbeing should be of significant interest to the church. She asserts that sport ministry should broaden its scope to include inventions that address health and wellbeing issues alongside mission not only because society needs the church to help tackle the health crisis but theologically, we should be compelled to and that it will also help to broaden the appeal and attraction of sport ministry.

The Current Health Crisis

Cameron's report sets out the contemporary health crisis and highlights the growing consensus by health and government leaders around the need for preventative action. This approach has continued to gain momentum as the 'only way to avert - or at least slowdown - the growing (and often related) epidemics of diabetes, cancer, obesity, heart disease, depression, and other ills that are sapping life, productivity, and joy from millions of people throughout this country and the wider world.' As Cameron comments:

"Physical inactivity, poor diet, social isolation and socioeconomic disparities are strong contributors to this suffering but also provide practical targets for preventive efforts. As followers of Jesus the Healer, we are uniquely equipped to become a significant force for promoting physical, emotional, and spiritual health and healing."

Cameron goes on to set out the issues and challenges surrounding such preventive measures by taking Public Health England's priorities as a guide⁹¹, while being mindful of the unique needs of people at various times in their lives. In so doing, she explores how physical activity and sport can address some of the most pressing health needs and reach people who might otherwise suffer from isolation and poor health in silence. These include diet, obesity and physical exercise, and mental health and wellbeing. She notes that from a cost-benefit perspective, targeting the *least* active people (those who currently engage in physical

⁹¹ Cameron (2018_ p 20 from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-wellbeing-introduction-to-the-directorate/health-and-wellbeing-introduction-to-the-directorate>. Accessed 23 April 2017

activity for less than 30 minutes per week) is likely to produce the greatest reduction in chronic disease and the biggest gains in health and biggest decreases in spending.

With just a small amount of activity (two minutes of brisk walking or exercises such as squats or lunges) achieving a moderate amount of daily physical activity can wake body systems up and lead to improved blood flow, increased energy and concentration levels and many other immediate and longer-term health benefits. Yet Cameron also highlights that sporting activity is not enough in and of itself for everyone. She stresses how often women and girls, and those from different cultures or faiths, and those with physical, emotional, or other disabilities may not have a universally accepted positive attitude to sport. This can be for a wide variety of reasons such as feeling that they will be judged because their bodies do not look or function in the way they think they ought to, or because time spent at the gym or doing sport is time that should be spent on family or others, or because they have never done it before and simply do not know where or how or with whom to start. Furthermore, some ethnic or faith groups may disapprove of or at least be wary of women and girls' involvement in sport. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests when sport and physical activity is delivered appropriately both girls and women not only engage but take up the habit for life.

Importantly Cameron discusses the clear and significant health inequalities in relation to physical inactivity according to income, gender, age, ethnicity, and disability. In summary, across the UK:

1. Physical activity is higher in men at all ages;
2. Physical activity declines significantly with increasing age for both men and women;
3. Physical activity is lower in low-income households;
4. Certain ethnic groups have lower levels of physical activity, for example in England, physical activity is lower for black or minority ethnic groups, except for African-Caribbean and Irish populations;
5. Boys are more active than girls;
6. Girls are more likely than boys to *reduce* their activity levels as they move from childhood to adolescence.⁹²

Cameron points out that social deprivation is associated with reduced life expectancy and with reduced disability-free life expectancy (DFLE). Across England, men, and women “experiencing the greatest deprivation spent the greatest proportion of their lives with a limiting illness or disability, and this proportion increased over time.” This data led Smith et al to the stark conclusion that “males and females

92 SASA, p.14.

at birth and at age ⁶⁵ in the less deprived areas could expect longer, healthier lives than their counterparts in more deprived areas in both 2001-04 and 2005-08. This analysis suggests that the inequality in DFLE between deprived and affluent area clusters has *increased* during the first decade of the 21st century.” ⁹³

Cameron also highlights that physical characteristics - ‘the built environment’ - and perceived safety of neighbourhoods also influences residents’ physical activity and participation in sport. For example, older adults living in areas of high-deprivation were less likely to go for outdoor walks due to safety concerns and walking routes that were unattractive and poorly maintained and/or difficult to navigate. As one report concludes, the evidence indicates that improvements in perceived neighbourhood safety, pedestrian infrastructure and environmental aesthetic especially in high-deprivation areas should be encouraged to improve outdoor walking levels.⁹⁴

Exploring the impact of body image, bullying and other weight-related distress, Cameron highlights that, not surprisingly, obesity and overweight increase the risk of poor body image and increase the risk of being bullied. She highlights results from the What About YOUth (WAY) Survey (2014) which showed that 46% of 15-year-old girls and 23% of boys thought that they were “too fat” and of those, 34% said that others had made fun of them because of their weight. Only 6% of those who thought that they were the “right size” reported weight-related bullying. ⁹⁵ We know from media outlets that body image dissatisfaction is rampant and appears to be getting worse in line with the growth of social media. Such issues have the potential to undermine self-confidence, increase the risk of depression and anxiety, and lead to decreased participation in physical activity and sport and a reluctance to participate in social events.

More recently research has identified holiday hunger, isolation, and inactivity gap in poorer communities where children go hungry, highlighting a dramatic shift in eating patterns of poorer families when *Free School Meals* are not provided: parents skip meals, and often select less healthy and ‘value’ options to save money on food⁹⁶. To tackle this issue the Department for Education have recently invested £220m in the roll out of the Holiday Activity and Hunger programme from 2021. While not as well understood, initial evidence suggests that this type of programme can positively impact children’s educational achievement which can, especially in disadvantaged areas, suffer over holiday periods, as it takes four to six weeks for the children affected to recover. Hence, the summer learning gap further deepens inequality.

In her conclusion Cameron states:

When people engage in physical activity and sport together, new friendships can form. And all of these positive experiences in physical activity and sport may increase the likelihood of long-term

93 Smith MP et al. *Health Stat Q*. 2010 Winter;(48):36-57. Inequalities in disability-free life expectancy by re deprivation: England, 2001-04 & 2005-08.

94 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5201320/>). (Razieh Sandieh, et al. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2016 Dec; 13(12): 1179.

Published online 2016 Nov 25. doi: [10.3390/ijerph13121179](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph13121179); PMID: PMC5201320 Older Adults’ Outdoor Walking: Inequalities in Neighbourhood Safety, Pedestrian Infrastructure and Aesthetics.

95 HSCIC 2016, p. 19.

96 <https://www.kelloggs.co.uk/content/dam/europe/kelloggs/b/pdf/HOLIDAY+HUNGER+REPORT.pdf>

adherence and involvement and therefore, increase the possibility of healthier and happier lives.⁹⁷ As Christians, we should care about all aspects of health and well-being because God made us physical and emotional and social and spiritual beings, and each of these aspects of our lives in turn help us to encounter and to love and to serve God and one another. When we reach out to our neighbours through physical activity and sport and play offered in or through the Church, we may well create further opportunities to share the hope that we have in ways that are courteous and respectful—and hopefully, inspiring, healthful and fun as well.

iii. Public Policy Framework Sport, Youth and Wellbeing

As Balcar (2020) has noted in his previous report for the Diocese of Gloucester regarding the sport policy landscape, the Government's overarching grassroots and community sport objective is simply, to tackle, head-on, the flatlining levels of sports participation and a high level of inactivity. Alongside this it recognises that community sport has a growing importance in delivering physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, and social and community development. The government continues to have a fundamental and strong interest in using sport and physical activity to tackle inactivity, obesity, mental health, and isolation/loneliness; improve community cohesion and integration; build character and resilience; reduce anti-social behaviour and low-level crime; and increase volunteering and employability.

Overview of the Policy Landscape

In their 2015 report *A Sporting Future*, DCMS put the delivery of these 'social outcomes' at the heart of its funding framework⁹⁸. This strategy represented an important policy milestone in seeking to maximise the wider social and economic value of sport. The ambition of the strategy to 'redefine' what success means, with a focus five key social outcomes, was impactful. A broad range of stakeholders across the sector aligned components of their strategic focus towards these outcomes. Sport England's response, *Towards an Active Nation* (2016) sought to ensure that everyone in England, regardless of age, background, or ability, feels able to take part in sport or activity⁹⁹.

The Education Department (DfE) is responsible for quality PE and school sport and has identified sport as one of the five key foundations for building character (resilience, determination, self-belief, and fair play)¹⁰⁰. The Department is driving the delivery of more after-school activity and providing holiday activity

97 SASA, p.19.

98 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf

99 <https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here>

100 DfE, DCMS, DHSC, July 2019. 'School Sport and Activity Action Plan' [Accessed via:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/848082/Schoolsportandactivityactionplan.pdf]

and healthy meals for disadvantaged children and young people through its new Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF).

As discussed in Chapter Three, civil society policy also plays a significant role here as government aims to support local solutions to community challenges from within communities themselves. Believing that moving the focus away from fixing problems to supporting people, organisations, and communities to improve their capabilities (in line with 'Big Society' ideals) would appear to be a useful way forward, and the government will be supporting long term relationships rather than short-term transactions. Social action (including volunteering), youth, loneliness and owning community assets are priorities.

This interlinks with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) policy which aims, to 'create great places to live and work, and to give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area'. The Education Department also advocates taking a place-based approach to building better connections between people in communities in order to create strong communities. As well as ensuring all young people have opportunities to develop skills, networks, and self-confidence, the Department supports community facilities including community assets, and local authorities providing local sporting provision. As highlighted in Chapter Three, there is also a growing recognition and belief amongst politicians and policy makers that faith groups have an important role to play in enhancing communities and delivering social outcomes. Through the Faith Minister, the Department continues to encourage faith groups to do more, be bold, engage and work together.

MHCLG is also responsible for housing and continues to drive a social objective within new housing developments to support a communities' health and social wellbeing including healthy lifestyles through better design and access to sporting facilities. The Archbishop of Canterbury has supported this approach and his recently published, *Commission on Housing Church and Community* (2019) attempts to re-imagine housing to ensure that it incorporates good community, mission, and ministry: that new developments embed core values and practices linked to good financial, physical mental, spiritual and relational health including new leisure facilities and supporting sustained good health and wellbeing¹⁰¹.

A new overarching policy priority is the government's levelling-up agenda. Here government aims to ensure that no community is left behind and that a sense of inclusivity is generated across socio-economic groups. To achieve this, they are changing the way that they support local economic growth, regenerate town centres and high streets, support individuals into employment, improve local transport links, and invest in local culture, while giving communities a stronger voice to take over local assets that might otherwise be lost¹⁰². To support these objectives, the government have launched three new investment programmes to support communities right across the country including the new £150 million Community

101 <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/priorities/archbishops-commission-housing-church-and-community>

102 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-levelling-up-and-community-investments>

Ownership Fund to support the retention of local facilities, community assets and amenities. The prospectus for this fund is due to be published in June 2021. The policy already has its critics and sceptics, who may be proven right.

While the policy concept to get more people active is simple, supporting social outcomes across the remits and responsibilities of many departments and arms-length bodies means the policy, funding and the delivery landscape is complex, inconsistent, and not joined up enough. This landscape is however, shifting again at all levels of government and within parliament: from Select Committees in both the Commons and Lords considering the future of sporting policy to the Prime Minister's levelling up agenda; from the new Sport England strategy to the formation of the new Office of Health Prevention; and of course, the ongoing impact of Covid-19.

vi. What Does Sport Contribute to Public Policy?

While sport and physical activity has long been associated with entertainment and leisure, it was not until 2015 that wider social outcomes came into focus, beyond achieving increasing participation numbers. Nevertheless, over many years there have been a multitude of reports and evaluations produced by academics and organisations about the impact of their sporting activity.¹⁰³ Some of these are nothing more than public relation pieces, while others are more serious research studies, adding to the evidence base. Even so, many argue that the community sports sector still has much more to do to define its outcomes, collect better data, and monitor and evaluate its approaches especially when compared to, for example, the health sector.

In 2017, Sport England attempted to bring together evidence on the contribution that engagement in community sport and physical activity (participating, volunteering, and spectating) makes, aligned to the five outcomes (These are physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, and economic development) identified in governments *Sporting Future* strategy¹⁰⁴. With evidence dispersed across different fields, the researchers highlighted it was, so far, only possible to take a partial view of the available evidence; knowing what works best, and where the link to outcomes lies, are to date, under-explored. The review however, sought to address this partial view of available evidence by reviewing the evidence across all five outcomes to enable a comparative approach, to inform future funding and delivery programmes, as well as guiding future research aimed at addressing gaps in the evidence base.

¹⁰³ See the Sport Think Tank library of reports over the years <https://www.sportsthinktank.com>

¹⁰⁴ Sport England: *Review of the Evidence on the Outcomes of Sport and Physical Activity – a rapid evidence review* (May 2017).

The report provided a significant improvement in the understanding of the evidence base around how engaging in sport and physical activity can contribute to the five outcomes. It also provided policies and funding approaches to be designed and measured based on current evidence and best practice, while at the same time providing a rich resource for the development of new activity programmes. The report put forward useful frameworks for programmes by not only helping them to demonstrate to others how sport and physical activity might contribute to social outcomes but, in addition, by informing how projects should be established to maximise the impact on the outcomes.

The report notes that the general factors that increase effectiveness include inclusive approaches, appropriate environments, and continuing engagement. However, much of the evidence is very specific, and therefore should be explored in more depth. The authors also sought to create and share an evaluation framework to help the whole sector 'to implement more consistent and proportionate evaluation arrangements.'

Summary of the Evidence

The findings around each outcome area are summarised below (taken from the summary report).¹⁰⁵

Physical wellbeing had, as expected, a very well-established evidence base, and the most robust perhaps in part because the measurement of physical wellbeing outcomes is supported by well-established and often validated measurement tools (compared to 'softer' outcomes like self-esteem or social skills). A large amount of evidence pointed to the beneficial impacts of sport and physical activity on physical wellbeing, in terms of prevention of ill health (including cancer, stroke, type 2 diabetes and heart disease), therapeutic and management effects (particularly for people affected by cancer), improvements in strength, balance, gait and motor skills (with the literature tending to focus on older or younger people as well as on rehabilitative contexts) and maintaining a healthy body weight. Other physical wellbeing outcomes evidenced included improved quality of sleep, increased energy levels, healthy early years development, reduced risky behaviours such as smoking, reduced mortality, effective pain management and improved quality of life in ageing.

Factors influencing the effectiveness of interventions for physical wellbeing were often specific to particular interventions or subgroups of participants as was the case across all the outcome areas. However, several generic characteristics of successful interventions were identified. For example, more intense and sustained activity leads to greater physical wellbeing benefits; taking part in a range of physical activity types generates greater benefit than one type (resistance, aerobic, weight bearing); certain benefits may only be realised from physical activity as part of a wider healthy lifestyle.

¹⁰⁵ Sport England: *Review of the Evidence on the Outcomes of Sport and Physical Activity – a rapid evidence review* (May 2017) pg 98-100

Mental wellbeing also has a large and well-established evidence base, although challenges around the varied definitions used in this area and the subjective nature of measures were noted. Many authors highlighted the difficulty of claiming causality between sport and physical activity and mental wellbeing outcomes. That said, there was much evidence that they contributed to enjoyment or happiness, or more broadly to life satisfaction. Often the element of social interaction was cited as central to this. Volunteers and sports fans also experienced increased life satisfaction, associated with having a sense of purpose and pride. Self-esteem and confidence were found to increase through short-and long-term participation or volunteering, because of the opportunity to develop new skills and relationships. There was general agreement that sport and physical activity have the potential to reduce anxiety and depression symptoms, with most evidence on this focusing on specific subgroups.

Other positive outcomes for mental wellbeing included improved cognitive functioning, benefits for people with dementia, and impacts around emotion regulation. Factors influencing the effectiveness of interventions for mental wellbeing were specific to particular interventions and subgroups of participants, most often older adults. Common factors were incorporating social interaction into programmes, encouraging regularity and duration of engagement, and interventions involving physical activity alongside other support such as counselling.

Individual development has a substantial evidence base which reflects the growing interest in this relationship. It included evidence of improved educational attainment, either directly (improved grades, school engagement, behaviour, and reduced absenteeism) or indirectly (by enhancing skills such as self-control and concentration, team-working and time management). Positive impacts on employability were discussed in terms of employment opportunities, earnings, job performance and job satisfaction. The evidence on NEETs found positive impacts of sport participation or volunteering in terms of employability, but only a very small number of sources addressed it. A substantial body of evidence finds a positive association between sport and physical activity and self-efficacy (for example, motivation, goal setting and commitment), for groups including the elderly people and disaffected young people.

Other outcomes in individual development were an increased willingness to volunteer and the development of soft skills (such as integrity, responsibility, and leadership). Factors present in more successful interventions in relation to individual development were wide ranging and specific. Some themes that occurred more than once were the longer duration of engagement, and the integration of physical activity with strategies such as self-reflection (reflecting on what has been learned through taking part).

Community development is one of the hardest outcomes to evidence, because the concepts involved – social capital, trust, networks – are notoriously hard to define and measure. That said, there was some compelling evidence particularly around the role of sport and the integration of migrants. Sport was widely

seen as a potential conduit for people of different backgrounds to interact, building bridging capital, via participating, volunteering and spectating. Though the majority of the evidence-related to migrants and sport as an opportunity to adapt to differences between their country of origin and their host country ('acculturation'), it also covered bridging divides between men and women, homeless people and those who are not homeless, and people with different employment backgrounds. Equally interesting was the small body of literature on sport and bonding capital, which suggested that sport helps to build bonds and relational skills between members of communities.

There was some evidence focusing on volunteers, in which their motivations and outcomes overlapped both the personal and the community level – for example, volunteers-built links and bonded with others which increased their sense of community and citizenship. A key factor associated with interventions that have successful outcomes at the community level was offering types of opportunities that are appropriate and appealing, especially for children and young people, and considering the wider context of their lives (sport and physical activity alone will not necessarily lead to outcomes, because of other influencing factors).

Economic development yielded a variety of sources in terms of breadth and depth, despite making up a relatively small proportion of the sources identified. Some larger papers included complex economic data and explanations on econometric modelling/analysis techniques. There was some evidence on the direct impact of the sport sector on the economy (largely in terms of gross value added or job creation), and more evidence on the indirect impact of participation in sport and physical activity on the economy (reduced healthcare costs due to a healthier population, reduced crime, or improved employability).

Only a small number of sources looked at the economic value to the UK or local economies of sports as an industry, e.g. the value of gyms, clubs and other facilities; of clothing and retail; of spectating/broadcasting of non-major events. Sport England provides an excellent, clear, and concise summary of the evidence which is at **Annex A**.

Further research

The Sport England 2017 report also highlights areas for further research some of which the Diocese of Gloucester may want to consider in designing its monitoring and evaluation framework. These include:

- Evidence for physical wellbeing through volunteering and whether volunteering leads to positive outcomes in terms of physical wellbeing;
- Evidence around community development; there is uncertainty about the direction of causality between sport and physical activity and community development and a lack of conclusive evidence for the impact of different types of activity on social capital;

- Longitudinal studies to explore the long-term impacts of sports on mental wellbeing, or to consider the sustainability of interventions including consideration of the underlying constructs beneath broad brush terms like anxiety

vii. General Characteristics of Successful Interventions

One of the most significant outcomes from this evidence review was that the researchers were able to distil the general characteristics of successful interventions. This provided a critical foundation upon which any community sport intervention looking to deliver social outcomes and its monitoring and evaluation framework should be based. The research found that factors that make an intervention effective were not always clearly linked to specific outcomes, rather they were around what makes for successful interventions with a particular subgroup, or in general. These findings are listed below.

1. Children and Young People

The evidence for successful intervention design for children and young people commonly mentions the role of others and training for practitioners to support them in delivering physical activity programmes. Both structured and unstructured activities were identified as having value:

- Structured activities for 30–45 minutes for five or six days a week over a year
- Unstructured activities could promote physical activity, including the use of play and regular activity breaks during the day.

Having fun was seen as a key feature of children and young people's participation in physical activity. Equipment and a supported physical environment are important to supporting children and young people to participate in physical activity.

2. Older People

Some themes emerged across the recommendations for interventions designed for older people. These included that programmes should be informed by qualified practitioners with experience of working with older people. There was varied evidence on individual- versus group-based activities where some evidence suggested that individual programmes, carried out either at home or within the community, had positive effects for older people; whilst other evidence pointed to group- based activities being effective. While there is likely to be new learning emerging here given that much activity moved online during lockdown, the research suggested that non-face-to-face programmes could have benefits of older people, with clear instructions to guide the activities.

3. Long-Term Conditions

There was evidence on what works for a number of specific conditions, such as:

- Cancer: individualised physical activity programmes for individuals with a cancer diagnosis could have a positive impact; however, activities should be considerate of the potential health side effects and should not include high intensity exercise which could exacerbate symptoms;
- Rheumatoid arthritis: social networks could be used to promote participation in physical activity for people with rheumatoid arthritis. It is recommended that activities should be individualised taking into account the specific barriers and limitations individuals might have.
- Heart disease: Programmes delivered outdoors promoted formal and informal physical activity and increased the amount of physical activity undertaken by individuals.

4. Inactive People

Interventions to promote physical activity among inactive populations recommended that interventions should be designed with the specific participant group in mind and focus on collaboration across agencies to ensure the intervention is delivered in a flexible and adaptive way.

5. Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

It was noted in several narrative reviews and one mixed method study that programmes attempting to reduce crime through sport should form part of a wider programme of activities. Research for sportscotland found that sporting programmes can only achieve outcomes if they are concerned with the broader context of participants' everyday lives.

6. Other Considerations

Some additional factors to consider across successful intervention characteristics included the potential of social networks to drive forward physical activity behaviour and promote a check-in and monitoring system. As mentioned in relation to some specific groups, evidence also suggests the general value of individually tailored programmes which included goal setting and incorporated community support. Examples include: the setting up of a buddy system, a 'contract' with another person to meet goals, and/or the use of phone calls and discussion groups.

viii. What Does the Research Tell the Sector?

The evidence review identifies a wide range of insight across the five outcomes and areas where more work is needed.

The overall conclusion from the review is that the evidence that sport and physical activity can improve physical health and wellbeing is widely accepted and that the causal links can often be conclusively drawn. Likewise, the association between mental wellbeing and sport and physical activity is also well evidenced, but here the precise mechanisms and relationships are less well understood. In the areas of individual development, and community development, more positive evidence is needed. Furthermore, the research is heavily dominated on sports participation over volunteers and spectators. At a more theological level the church should be able to offer more insight into the role of spectating, although with some further work it maybe also possible to offer more practical insight as to the parallels between sporting spectatorship and church attendance.

The review also underlines the ongoing need for ‘evidencing outcomes through new ways of, and greater consistency in, measuring impact’. While physical wellbeing has a range of validated and well recognised measures, the outcomes of sport and physical activity have historically presented serious challenges in terms of measurement. As the review states, ‘many authors reflect on the difficulties of asserting causal links between activities and outcomes’. It goes on to assert the need to establish shared definitions for outcomes areas (e.g. ‘self-efficacy’, ‘social trust’ and ‘social value’), to run a search for existing validated measures to assess whether they are ‘fit for purpose’, and if they are not, to design and validate new tools. For the Diocese, added outcomes around faith journeys and/or church engagement (in whatever form) will also be an important objective. This will be challenging, for as existing research in community sport suggests, the ‘further away the type of impact is from the individual, the harder it will be to measure (and to attribute, as the number of confounding variables increases exponentially).’

Another interesting conclusion of the review was that a lot of ‘what works’ learning is highly specific and lacks the appeal of a simple set of ‘rules’ for what works. This reinforces what the authors found in that there is much work in trying to understand the evidence when having an eye on designing a successful intervention programme and monitoring and evaluation framework.

A final piece of insight for community sport is the importance of ‘considering individuals in the broader context of their everyday lives, and how sport and physical activity fits into this as one of many contributing factors to wellbeing on personal, social and community levels’. The review stresses that ‘sport and physical activity should not be viewed as a magic bullet for ill health, unhappiness, isolation or conflict and that understanding what it is about these activities that addresses these things and how they are situated within the ‘layers of influence’ that determine outcomes for an individual’. It is clear in the

evidence that social interaction is the significant aspect of sport in generating outcomes. Therefore, programmes and projects should consider how to integrate this sustainably into their interventions in order to maximise positive connections and greater understanding between individuals, families, friends and colleagues, communities and wider society. The authors suggest that projects and programmes need to ask themselves how they can: 'use sport and physical activity as a conduit for cultural awareness; promote a cycle of engagement across generations; and place sport and physical activity at the heart of a healthy lifestyle, with multi- dimensional benefits.'

ix. Social Return on Investment in Community Sport and Physical Activity

Building on this foundation and other previous work, Sport England commissioned economists at the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University to quantify the economic and social return on investment for sport and physical activity.¹⁰⁶ The resulting research (Sport England, 2020) provides a 'snapshot' of the role and significance of sport in England in 2017/18 including sports participation, volunteering, and spectating. It measures three key indicators of economic activity; (i) consumer expenditure on sport, (ii) sport-related Gross Value Added (GVA) and (iii) sport-related employment.

In 2019, sport directly contributed £17.0 billion or 0.9% of Gross Value Add (GVA) to the economy¹⁰⁷ and accounted for 1.7% of all employment¹⁰⁸. When expanding the scope of the definition of the sport to include linked industries (for example, sport advertising and sport-related construction), for which figures were last compiled in 2016, the sport-related GVA was estimated to be £37.3 billion or 2.1 per cent of total UK GVA, and sport-related employment was 1.2 million, or 3.7 per cent of total UK employment¹⁰⁹. While not insignificant, these figures do not capture the full extent of the contribution of the sector, or its nascent potential.

The findings of Sport England's report show that the combined economic and social value of taking part in sport and physical activity in England in 2017/18, considering physical health benefits, mental wellbeing uplifts and economic development was £85.5bn. When measured against the £21.85 billion costs of

¹⁰⁶ Sport England: *Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England* (August 2020).

¹⁰⁷ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, (2020). *DCMS Economic Estimates 2019 (provisional): Gross Value Add*, Published 10 December 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-economic-estimates-2019-gross-value-added/dcms-economic-estimates-2019-provisional-gross-value-added>

¹⁰⁸ This figure incorporates only standard industrial classification codes which are predominately sport. The uses a more comprehensive measure of sport which considers the contribution of sport across a range of industries (for example, sport advertising and sport-related construction). The DCMS Sport Satellite Account which is based on the EU agreed Vilnius definition and utilises a wider definition of sport is currently being compiled. It will likely suggest a more substantial contribution to overall employment. See Department of Culture, Media and Sport, (2020). *DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2019: Employment*, Published 30 April 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-2019-employment/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-2019-employment>

¹⁰⁹ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, (2020). *UK Sport Satellite Account 2012- 2016*, released 31 January 2018. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/676504/SportSatelliteAccount2016.pdf

engagement and providing sport and physical activity opportunities, for every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity, a return on investment (ROI) of £3.91 was created for individuals and society in 2017/18.¹¹⁰

What is significant in the report is the social value sport adds – from the prevention of medical conditions and 30 million fewer GP visits due to improved health. The research highlights that the impact of physical and mental health was worth £9.5 billion including:

- Heart disease and stroke prevented (150,000 cases) = Value: £1 billion
- Diabetes prevented (900,000 cases) = Value: £3.6 billion
- Cancer prevented (8,500 cases) = Value: £460 million
- Dementia prevented (93,000 cases) = Value: £3.5 billion
- Depression prevented (375,000 cases) = Value: £110 million
- Fewer GP visits (30,000,000) = Value: £450 million
- Reduced use of psychotherapy services (33,000,000) = Value: £670 million
- Hip fractures prevented (21,000) = Value: £800 million
- Back pain cases prevented (1,500,000) = Value: £410 million
- Against the number of Sports injuries caused (280,000) = Cost: -£1.5 billion

In keeping with a key government priority, the report also highlights how sport has a pivotal role to play in levelling up communities by bridging the gap between the ‘have and have nots.’ The table below details how sport and physical activity also helps to create further social value through individual development and stronger and safer communities:

Table 2: Sport and physical activity’s social value through individual development and stronger and safer communities

¹¹⁰ Sport England: *Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England* (August 2020).

Mental wellbeing impact generated	Individual development impact generated	Social & community development
Improved life satisfaction through participation for 24 million people Value: £31.2 billion	Improved educational attainment Value: £4.5 million	10,000 fewer crime incidents Value: £38.6 million
Improved life satisfaction through volunteering for 3.9 million people Value: £10.5 billion	Increased earnings Value: £277.5 million	The replacement value of work by volunteers Value: £5.7 billion
		Enhanced social capital Value: £14.2 billion
£42 billion Mental wellbeing impact generated	£282 million Individual development impact generated	£20 billion Social community development impact generated

It is widely accepted that the people who are the least likely to be active in England are often the most likely to have ill-health and be affected by unemployment.¹¹¹ Studies show that people often want to be active but are held back by where they live in the country, their income, their ethnicity, their gender, or the fact they are disabled. Sport England's new strategy launched in January 2021 aims specifically to help these groups take part in sport and physical activity so that everyone in society can share equally in its benefits.

Economic importance of community sport and physical activity

In 2017/18, consumers in England spent £25,144m on sport and physical activity, of which 54% or £13,693m was related to community participation. Since 2010, this represents an increase of 24% (current prices) and 7% (constant prices).

¹¹¹ Michael Marmot, Jessica Allen, Tammy Boyce, Peter Goldblatt, Joana Morrison (2020) HEALTH EQUITY IN ENGLAND: THE MARMOT REVIEW 10 YEARS ON - <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/marmot-review-10-years-on/the-marmot-review-10-years-on-executive-summary.pdf>

Sport-related economic activity generated £23,894m Gross Value Added in 2017/18, of which 58% or £13,887m was related to community participation¹¹². Since 2010, the value of all sport related GVA has increased 18% in current prices. This represents an increase of 2% in real terms (constant prices) over this period.

The sport economy in England generated 287,874 jobs in community sport, which is 60% of the total amount of jobs created in sport - 479,530 in total in 2017/18¹¹³. Overall, sport-related employment accounts for 2.4% of total employment in England. It has increased by 9% since 2010. The share of sport-related employment has increased from 2.3% in 2010, to 2.4% in 2017/18

The report provides the sector with a significant piece of evidence to demonstrate that sport and physical activity generates vital social and economic value and contributes to the five outcomes in the government's sport strategy (Sport England, 2015).

x. The Impact of Coronavirus Lockdown on Activity Levels

Emerging data on the impact of Covid-19 on activity levels is starting to show a concerning picture.

Research commissioned by the Youth Sports Trust in February 2021 found that 69% of parents believe that their children are less physically active now compared to a year ago, before the Coronavirus pandemic¹¹⁴. Only 15% said their children's activity levels had not changed and 12% thought their children were now more active. When asked about their children's activity levels, 79% of parents reported that their children were currently doing less than 60 minutes every day. Only 60% said their children were active, but for 30 minutes or less. A further 11% said their children were currently doing no activity at all.

The research also suggested that 81% of parents thought that schools should be ensuring that pupils are physically active for at least 30 minutes every day while in school, with similar numbers (78%) calling for schools to provide at least two hours per week of physical education to every pupil. Of further concern is that the research also found a lack of awareness among parents as to how much physical activity children should be doing: only 38% of parents were aware of the daily 60-minute target, with 44% believing the target to be 30 minutes or less.

The YST, in a hastily prepared report publish a set of finding that summarised the key evidence relating to the impact of Coronavirus disease restrictions on children and young people (2020)¹¹⁵. Amongst a wide range of measures that included young people's mental health and concerns, physical activity during

112 With the Commercial sector providing £7.0 billion; the Public sector £3.7 billion; and the Voluntary / Third sector £3.1 billion.

113 With the Commercial sector providing 139,000 jobs; the Public sector 102,000 jobs; and the Voluntary / Third sector 45,000 jobs

114 <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/news-insight/news/majority-of-parents-say-their-children-are-less-active-than-before-lockdown>

115 <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/media/4ckfvnyd/the-impact-of-covid-restrictions-on-children-and-young-people.pdf>

lockdown, and the post lockdown impact, the research found that: More than two-fifths (41%) of children and young people aged 8-24 say that they are lonelier now than before restrictions were put in place. More than one-third say they are more worried (38%), sadder (37%) or more stressed (34%), and a third report that they have had more trouble sleeping. Boredom (51%), worry (28%) and feeling trapped (26%) are the top three emotions experienced by children and young people.

Sport England's Active Lives Adult Survey published in late April 2021 saw 710,000 fewer active adults between November 2019 and November 2020 compared to the same period 12 months previously¹¹⁶. While arguing that the 'majority of physically active adults in England managed to maintain their habits despite the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic', Sport England also highlighted the first eight months of Coronavirus restrictions, as well as the storms that had a huge impact on outdoor activity in early 2020, which also led to a worrying increase in the number of people who were inactive – 1.2m (+2.6%) more inactive adults taking part in less than an average of 30 minutes a week or nothing at all, taking the total number of inactive adults in England to 12.3m (27.1% of the population).

The evidence shows that while the restrictions associated with the pandemic had an unprecedented impact on activity levels, thanks in part to the support of the sport and physical activity sector, many people were able to adapt and find ways to return to activity as restrictions eased. What is interesting is that not all groups or demographics were affected equally, with women, young people aged 16-24, over 75s, disabled people and people with long-term health conditions, and those from Black, Asian, and other minority ethnic backgrounds most negatively impacted beyond the initial lockdown period. This shows that these groups which are generally had to get active are more likely to stop being active when external factors prevent or inhibit that.

xi. Other Highly Relevant Policy Areas

While it is natural to focus on sporting activity here several highly relevant policy areas which are closely related to sport are developing their own evidence base. Furthermore, sport and wellbeing ministry needs to change radically from the past. While much can be developed from current best practise and more borrowed from community sport, to undertake this change, it will need to develop its own framework that encapsulate its highly unique and complex nature and that of the church within a community, and its own

¹¹⁶ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/impact-coronavirus-activity-levels-revealed>

interests beyond the increasing theological importance of lifting individual and congregational health and wellbeing alongside spiritual health, into youth and mission.

xii. Youth Engagement Evidence-Base

The government has not had any discernible overarching youth strategy for many years. While most of the funding for youth activities comes through local authorities who are responsible for allocating funding to youth services in line with local need, the government has nevertheless invested heavily in several areas which have also looked to build a solid evidence base as to how to best engage young people.

The National Citizenship Service

Founded in 2010, the National Citizenship Service (NCS), now under Royal Charter, is a voluntary, personal, and social development programme for 16–17-year-olds in England undertaken in the school holidays. It aims to improve social cohesion, social mobility, and social engagement, and ultimately inspire young people into lifelong social action¹¹⁷. A supply chain of over 100 organisations is involved in delivering the NCS at a regional level. There have been several studies undertaken about NCS and its work including: an evaluation of its short-term impact on young people (2013)¹¹⁸; an evaluation of National Citizen Service from its 2012 summer and autumn NCS programmes;¹¹⁹ and options for the evaluation of its long-term outcomes.¹²⁰

Youth Investment Fund

The other cornerstone of the youth policy was the Youth Investment Fund (YIF). The YIF operated from 2017 until 2020 to provide new opportunities for young people to get involved in their communities. It also aimed to support the personal development of young people, building their confidence, and supporting their transition to becoming happy, healthy and economically active adults¹²¹. In total 90 grantees were funded for three years to deliver a range of activities including traditional open access provision, sports, arts, social action, support services and training. New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) and The Centre for Youth Impact lead a consortium of learning partners to develop and promote understanding about the impact of open-access youth work.¹²²

117 <http://wearencs.com>

118 <https://natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/evaluation-of-national-citizen-service-pilots/>

119 <https://pearsfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/NCS-Evaluation-Report-2012.pdf>

120 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734751/Options_for_evaluation_of_long-term_outcomes_of_the_NCS_-_Final_Report_06-04-2018.pdf

121 <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/youth-investment-fund>

122 <https://yiflearning.org>

They produced eight papers exploring the learning from the investment. The latest of these was published in May 2021 and makes a significant contribution to understanding how open access youth provision supports the development of young people and the who what and how youth work impacts on young people and which factors contribute to the impact of youth provision and in what ways. While the report highlights the limitations of the data, it is the best evaluation to date of youth provision in the country. A key finding of the research was that ‘open access youth provision has the potential to significantly improve social and emotional learning skills, social connectedness, and wellbeing for young people, particularly those with most to gain’.

The impact of YIF provision was measured using 21 outcomes, broadly categorised into the following areas:

1. Self-confidence and personal locus of control (defined as the tendency to take responsibility for self-actions and successes)
2. Leadership
3. Social skills
4. Self-regulation
5. Communication and self-expression
6. Social connectedness
7. Happiness and wellbeing¹²³

Researchers found that young people attending YIF provision made greater improvements in most outcome domains related to social skills, self-confidence, leadership, communication and self-expression, social connectedness and happiness and wellbeing. Those with low social and emotional learning (SEL) skill profiles made greater gains than those with high SEL skill profiles with SEL skills being linked with longer term impacts such as improved mental and physical health, educational attainment, finding and sustaining employment, positive long-term relationships, and life satisfaction.

The report also showed that higher quality youth provision is related to better outcomes for young people: those attending targeted provision made greater gains across some social outcomes related to social skills, leadership, self-regulation and communication and self-expression than those attending universal provision only. This is an important distinction and underlines why clearly targeted provision against

¹²³ The Youth Investment Fund Learning Project - Executive summary: Findings from a shared evaluation of open access youth provision Summary of Insight Paper Seven - May 2021, NPC

outcomes is the right approach to undertake. This said, universal provision did however provide an significant foundation in reaching and engaging with young people locally acting as a funnel to identity and connect with young people who may need a more targeted approach.

The evaluation also highlights that young people value high quality youth provision in their lives. This includes ensuring that they experience a safe and supportive environment; and interventions, and activities are stimulating, positively challenging and fun. Particular attention should be given to the needs of girls and young women, especially from ethnic minority backgrounds, as there is a gender bias towards males. The study also highlighted that around a fifth of young people were reporting poor wellbeing: 21% experienced high psychological distress or risk of depression and 40% reported feeling lonely at least occasionally

More broadly, the NPC felt the YIF Learning evaluation framework 'established a credible and potentially powerful approach to understanding what works, for whom and in what circumstances in open access youth provision'. They assessed that thinking beyond the outcomes yielded more insightful and useful learning. The researchers noted that most local organisations or projects found collecting outcomes data overtime difficult and challenging impacting on the quality of any evaluation. They reflected that given this situation is not likely to change in the near future, a flexible approach in gathering many data types as possible (they collected five), could provide a good understanding of the impacts.

Based on the evidence, NPC made several recommendations for youth organisations, funders and future research and evaluation that the Diocese of Gloucester should consider further. For example:

Youth Organisations:

1. Continue to provide a broad offer to meet the varied needs of young people but identify those who may be excluded;
2. Continue to listen to young people and embed systematic collection of feedback into practice;
3. Think beyond outcomes when evaluating the work - Quality of provision and young people's experiences play a critical role in developing social and emotional skills. Capturing data on these aspects of the provision gives a much fuller picture of how and why change might be happening for young people;
4. Consider how measuring low social and emotional learning (SEL) skills can usefully be integrated into practice to support better understanding of young people's needs and development areas. Understanding the 'profile' of groups that an organisation works with is vitally important for quality and equity;

5. Consider using shared approaches and frameworks for evaluation.

Funders and future research and evaluation:

1. The findings and those of others suggest open access youth provision is a powerful way to support young people to thrive both now and, in the future, to manage the transition into adulthood, and to grow into healthy and happy adults, through developing SEL skills and positive relationships;
2. Organisations need support to focus on continuous learning about their practice as well as impact evaluation;
3. Make it easy for organisations to collect and share honest numbers;
4. Support shared evaluation by championing common frameworks and aligning the reporting expectations. This shift requires funding for infrastructure support for learning, development and evaluation, and a change in how funding is perceived to incentivise organisations taking an individual approach;
5. Be clear about what is being monitored and measured, and how it will contribute to the evaluation. Use the data you gather to help the sector improve by making it publicly available, sharing what you've learnt and what you're going to do differently as a result;
6. Align evaluation approaches with youth work practices;
7. Make the data collection process useful and aligned with practice as part of an assess-plan-improve cycle;
8. Allow more time for capacity building work;
9. Impact evaluation matters but needs to be sector-wide with a longitudinal approach.

It is worth noting that the researchers, like previous researchers, also found evaluating open access youth provision to be more challenging and complex than they expected, because of the varied ways in which young people engage with provision; i.e., potential misalignment between evaluation approaches and practice; and the practical challenges of collecting data with and from young people. They concluded that the informal nature and variety inherent in open access youth provision makes it impossible to identify a simple 'best practice' way for grant holders to collect data from the young people they engage. They highlighted three key lessons:

1. Some data collection should have been mandatory;
2. Evaluation preparations should have started before service delivery;

3. Contextual variations presented challenges for designing shared measurement tools.¹²⁴

However, in working with 89 youth organisations they were able to develop a shared theory of change for open access youth provision. Amongst the wide variety of ‘activity characteristics’ which the researchers looked at were the use of detached or building spaces including youth or community centres and sports centres and outdoor provision where the space is organised and coordinated e.g., sports facilities or field trips. In terms of assessing the characteristics within the activity type, this included street/outreach with detached mobile units taking sports sessions out into the communities and open/group/drop-in activity included sports provision for young people, an adventure playground on an estate and weekly youth clubs offering a range of activities including sports, games, and summer holiday programmes.

In creating a shared theory of change, they were able to identify common elements of provision across different settings (e.g., communities of organisations or bodies of practice) that are working towards similar goals.¹²⁵ From these shared measurement practices, they hoped to ‘improve understanding of collective quality and impact by building a sector-wide picture’ including build a larger evidence base, ‘support learning across organisations’ and ‘to inform funding and policy decisions, as well as the development of services and provision’. The report also provides a cost efficient and consistent approach that organisations can use. The user guide developed, is the basis for a shared understanding of youth provision, whilst remaining flexible to allow for the different possible pathways through which youth organisations support positive change for young people. Importantly, this is aligned to the Youth Work National Occupational Standards, which set out the key purpose of youth work in order to ‘enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential’. It is intended for use across the youth sector with both providers and funders.¹²⁶

Case Study: Access to Sports Project

Another report highlighted several case studies including, the Access to Sports Project.¹²⁷ Access is a community-led sports development charity based in East London which works in partnership with other local agencies including youth services, housing associations, and council housing estates. The case study data from this project highlighted several key elements in relation to youth provision using sport:

Be accessible: The free open access nature of provision is important, as it attracts young people whose parents might otherwise not be able to afford similar sessions elsewhere especially

¹²⁴ <https://youthimpact.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/YIF-IP6-Looking-Back-Looking-Forward-1-2.pdf>

¹²⁵ https://youthimpact.uk/sites/default/files/2021-05/YIF%20ToC_user%20guide_Final%20May%2021.pdf p7

¹²⁶ https://youthimpact.uk/sites/default/files/2021-05/YIF%20ToC_user%20guide_Final%20May%2021.pdf

¹²⁷ <https://youthimpact.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/YIF-IP5-YIF-case-study-process-evaluation-2.pdf> p51

expensive sports facilities which they believe are not for them. Sport often provides an easy entry-point for getting young people involved in sessions, especially when combined with other incentives such as social activities and training opportunities. Making a wide range of activities available also ensures that the offer is as attractive as possible to the largest number of young people in the area and operating in a variety of locations, venues and offer some detached work increases accessibility, particularly when young people (or their parents) may not feel safe entering certain geographical locations. This flexibility allows intervention providers to go to where young people are most comfortable and helps to establish a sense of community near their homes.

Build ongoing trusted relationships: These activities are delivered by regular coaches enabling them to build a rapport with young people over time, and who are often from the local area themselves, making it easier for young people to relate to them and build a strong connection, i.e., shared experience. Young people reported that their coaches were understanding and easy to talk to about personal issues, and that they encouraged them to do their best and made them feel appreciated. Activities are youth-led and there is an open and welcoming atmosphere for all. Sessions are targeted to the needs of both individuals and the group, using sports as a tool to address underlying worries, issues or concerns that young people may be experiencing.

Professional and personal development for staff: professional learning and development among the staff team is vital as is a strong team working approach across the sport coaching staff to learn from each other and co-ordinate and link up various programmes, and to problem-solve.

Collaboration and partnerships: working closely with other local partner organisations, for example, by offering 'taster' sessions in schools, working closely with Tenants Associations on various housing estates, and with the local police force and youth service providers is crucial to success. This not only enables the effective signposting and referral of young people to/from these partner organisations, but also offers them the ability to access some of the limited green and open spaces and local venues they can use to offer sports activities for young people.

Simulating the economic benefits of youth work

In another paper in the series, *Simulating the Economic Benefits of Youth Work*¹²⁸, NPC researchers looked at the value of investing in the social and emotional development of young people. While they agreed that few people dispute that investing in young people's social and emotional development to make them healthy, sociable, confident, conscientious, and productive young people is good for society today and for its future, they posed the question, how much is it worth spending on youth services to develop such skills? While recognising, once again, that the data are not as robust and credible as they would like the

128 *Simulating the economic benefits of youth work*- The Youth Investment Fund: Learning and Insight Paper Eight, May 2021, NPC

research team concluded that there is likely to be a positive return to society from investing in open access youth provision.

The report suggests that investment in high quality open access youth services can potentially generate positive financial and economic returns that accumulate over the long-term, namely, when the participants become 42 years old.¹²⁹ The young people themselves are the main beneficiaries with approximately 65% of the economic benefits accruing to them because people with higher levels of social and emotional skills have higher levels of employment and income. The report also concludes that over the 25-year period, the UK Exchequer may receive back between £3 and £13 for every £1 invested in these specific youth services. Again, this is because higher social and emotional skills are associated with higher incomes and employment, and hence higher tax payments, and lower use of public services such as health services.

Youth Futures Foundation

Established in December 2019, Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation to improve employment outcomes for young people from marginalised backgrounds.¹³⁰ The foundation launched with an initial endowment of £90m from the Reclaim Fund. Their focus is youth unemployment, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic with young people accounting for greatest share of the fall in employment in 2020 and hundreds of thousands of young people currently out of work. The YFF investment programme is designed to find, fund, support and evaluate promising practice that tackles the root causes of youth unemployment for young people from marginalised backgrounds. Its focus is on three main priorities over the next three years:

1. **Changing the youth employment system:** by working in partnership with organisations, policy makers and young people to address structural and systemic barriers;
2. **Creating opportunities with employers:** to recruit and retain more young people from marginalised backgrounds;
3. **Building capacity with practitioners:** to support and train more young people from marginalised backgrounds to be ready for work.

Youth Endowment Fund

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) is a charity that aims to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence.¹³¹ They do this through funding, supporting, and evaluating promising interventions working with 10–14-year-olds in England and Wales. Building a consensus and an evidence base of what

¹²⁹ Based on research by Professor Goodman, Institute of Education at University College London, 2015.

¹³⁰ <https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/about-us/>

¹³¹ <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/our-work/>

works to prevent young people becoming involved in violence and putting this knowledge into practice is critical to their mission. They have several themed funding rounds¹³² that focus on placed-based, specific areas where violent crime is high, and they can build partnerships with local people and organisations to create and test approaches aimed at addressing local challenges. They are also supporting targeted projects that work and do not fit into their themes.

Their funding themes are based on the evidence which suggest young people need:

1. **A supportive home** - through family therapy or parenting classes, helping parents and carers make a difference to children at risk of becoming involved in violence;
2. **A safe, positive place to learn** - keeping children engaged in their education helps to keep them safe from involvement in violence;
3. **A safe neighbourhood - strong friendships** - and safe places to go in their neighbourhood means that children and young people can keep safe including opportunities to take part in a sports teams or the chance to make art or music;
4. **Social skills and good mental health**
5. **Adults they trust** - including a teacher, youth worker, sport coach, mentor, or friend of the family;
6. **Opportunities** - whether it is employment, training, or education;
7. **Another chance** - If a young person gets into trouble, is arrested, or convicted of a crime, they need a route to take an alternative path and avoid a cycle of re-offending.

Current Policy Developments

In the Spending Review 2020, Treasury initiated a review of programmes to support youth services. Led by DCMS this is intended to set policy direction for the out-of-school agenda, focusing on programmes currently in scope of DCMS, with a particular focus on levelling-up opportunities. This will also inform future funding including Youth Investment Fund and National Citizenship Service (NCS) programme, leading in to the next 3-year Spending Review in the autumn. DCMS carried out the review in the spring and the recommendations are expected alongside the Spending Review in the autumn.

132 <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/funding/themes/>

xiii. Wellbeing Policy

An emerging area of policy making is wellbeing. This is simply about ‘how we are doing’ as individuals, communities and as a nation and how sustainable this is for the future. Wellbeing economics is used to describe social welfare or social value in government appraisal. It is how we experience life as whole, how external conditions affect our lives, and how we function in society. It touches on the work of all departments and most policy providing a ‘lens’ to help make sense of complex policy goals and impacts. Wellbeing is an essential complement to purely economic measures of success, particularly Gross Domestic Product. Countries such as New Zealand, have embedded a measure of wellbeing into all policy making driven by the Treasury, and this is something Parliamentarians are beginning to seriously consider in the UK.

The What Works Wellbeing Centre has been researching what matters for wellbeing¹³³. There is already evidence of what works to improve wellbeing, and how to measure impact. Wellbeing evidence can contribute a coherent and common approach for determining the efficacy of different policies and interventions including accessing what impact sport, dance and young people, family and outdoor recreation, and places and spaces including community hubs have on wellbeing.

Wellbeing has a wide range of determinants, and the UK has settled on seven broad dimensions which matter most to people. These are: (i) the natural environment, (ii) personal well-being, (iii) our relationships, (iv) health (good health improves wellbeing and good wellbeing improves health), (v) what we do, where we live, personal finance, the (vi) economy, education and skills and (vii) governance¹³⁴. Personal wellbeing is a particularly important dimension which is defined as how satisfied people are with their lives; the sense that what they do in life is worthwhile, the day-to-day emotional experiences (happiness and anxiety) and wider mental wellbeing. Wellbeing also changes over the life course with those aged 40-59 the least satisfied and those 16-19 and 65-85 the most satisfied.

Around 4.4% of people in the UK have low life satisfaction (or 2.3m people) and around 10.4m have high anxiety. Around 1% of people in the UK (over half a million) have low wellbeing who have the following characteristics: very bad or bad health; economically inactive or with long term illness or disability; being middle aged; being single separated widowed or divorced; being renters; having no or basic education.¹³⁵ Loneliness is also a crucial issue which happens when there is gap between the number of and quality of

¹³³ <https://whatworkswellbeing.org>

¹³⁴ <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/about-wellbeing/what-is-wellbeing/>

¹³⁵ <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/who-is-at-risk-of-low-wellbeing/>

social relationships people have and those that they want. Loneliness is subjective and experienced and is different from social isolation. Social isolation is objective and based on the number of people in someone's social network:

- 1 in 20 adults in the UK report feeling lonely "often" or "always" with young people and women more likely to feel this;
- People in poor health or who have conditions they describe as "limiting" are at particularly at risk of feeling lonely more often;
- Renters feel lonelier than homeowners and people who live alone are at greater risk of feeling lonely more often.

The national wellbeing framework looks at 43 indicators (see ONS Dashboard for the 43 Indicators¹³⁶) covering the ten dimensions of people's lives and the Office for National Statistics reports on national wellbeing quarterly.¹³⁷ Known as the ONS4, it measures life satisfaction, happiness, our sense of feeling worthwhile (purpose), and anxiety. In their rapid evidence assessment of impact evaluations that use the personal wellbeing measures for ONS4 to systematically identify and summarise evidence from evaluations that use wellbeing frameworks and standardised measures, the What Works Centre covered a wide range of intervention types to evaluate effectiveness. In sifting through over 7000 studies, they only included 28 of these studies and found 11 had statistically significant impact for at least one of the ONS4 measures. Of the 11 studies included three were based on social prescribing, which had a moderate evidence strength to enhance wellbeing, and more importantly, three community sport/ and physical activity studies which only had a low evidence strength.¹³⁸

The Centre however, reports that an increasing number of organisations, across a wide range of interventions are now using the ONS4 measures to evaluate the effectiveness of a wide range of intervention types. These include community-centred approaches, volunteering, physical activity, social prescribing, psychological interventions, social care support, skills training, advice and support, arts and culture, and housing improvement and neighbourhood design.¹³⁹ Key areas of measurement include personal wellbeing measures (feeling purpose and mental health); social relationships, trust and belonging and mental wellbeing.

A vital part of the Centre's work is to influence how policy is made. While this includes areas of less interest to sport and wellbeing ministry projects such as, stable employment and low unemployment,

¹³⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuresofnationalwellbeingdashboard/2018-04-25>

¹³⁷ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/internationalcomparisons2019>

¹³⁸ <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/ons-personal-wellbeing-findings-in-impact-evaluations/>

¹³⁹ <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/ons4-evaluations-what-works-to-improve-personal-wellbeing/>

promoting balanced, stable economic growth and treating citizens with respect, other areas all have a resonance, including:

- Encouraging citizen-led action and participation to happen in a meaningful way
- Creating good social connections and reasonable work-life balance to allow time with friends, family and for leisure.
- Supporting parents in their parenting, their relationships and mother's mental health.
- Building social and emotional skills in schools; life and work skills such as: character, resilience, empathy, self-control, perseverance, gratitude & savouring, cope with shocks.
- Relationships and communities
- Promoting volunteering, giving, and culture.
- Connections – develop opportunities for building social connections, to help address loneliness.
- Liveability – create a built environment that is sociable and is connected to the natural world, and creating opportunities to know neighbours

What Works Wellbeing has also published a series of reports looking at specific interventions and what impact they have including four areas of interest to sport and wellbeing ministry projects:

1. Sport, Dance and Young People

A systematic review by the What Works Centre (2017) investigated how taking part in sport and dance affects the subjective wellbeing of healthy young people between 15 and 24 years.¹⁴⁰ They concluded that there is limited good quality evidence for sport and dance impacts on wellbeing. The evidence shows that depending on the type of activity and the way it is delivered, taking part is associated with wellbeing improvements connected to:

- Social connectedness
- Pleasure
- Sense of purpose
- Confidence

¹⁴⁰ https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/dance-sport-wellbeing-briefing-22june_0239492300.pdf

- Happiness
- Relaxation
- Creative skills and experience
- Interpersonal skills
- Aspiration and ambition

It is also important to note however that taking part in these activities can be associated with negative wellbeing in participants, and this is connected to participant concerns about competency and capability.

The Centre also pointed to further research which showed that it matters where people are and whether they are alone or with others.¹⁴¹ On average, across all activities including sport, those who were alone demonstrated lower happiness, higher anxiety, and lower sense of purpose. The survey confirmed that being outdoors is better for young people's wellbeing than being inside. Analysis of subjective wellbeing survey data showed that young people who take part in physical activity rate their overall wellbeing higher; are happier in general; and find their life more worthwhile. These findings are especially strong for those who take part on a weekly basis. However, having a job has greater links to higher overall wellbeing than exercise. While there may be some evidence to suggest that physical activity is not the factor causing the increased life satisfaction over a lifetime - it may be the knock-on effect of being physically healthier, or simply that happier young people are participating in the first place - other evidence also shows if you consider how young people feel 'in the moment' they are participating, physical activity has a stronger link than employment, on moment-to-moment experiences. Therefore, the researchers were confident that physical activity increases wellbeing increasing during exercise, then reduces again afterwards.

The researchers also highlighted there is only 'limited good quality evidence, and very little conducted in the UK' to build the evidence base on wellbeing in culture and sport to help to understand what works for wellbeing, for whom, when and where. Like in the youth sector they recommend embedding evaluation into commissioning of sport and dance programmes, as well as design and delivery. That wellbeing evidence is funded through programme evaluations and these need to be fit for purpose: 'high enough quality to draw conclusions, but appropriate for the size of the programme and the questions that need to be answered'. Furthermore, that consistent evaluation questions are needed across the sector to compare the impacts of different approaches and programmes.

2. Family and Outdoor Recreation

¹⁴¹ https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/dance-sport-wellbeing-briefing-22june_0239492300.pdf p3

In sifting through 135 studies from UK, Norway, Singapore, Ireland, Canada, Thailand, Australia, 15 were included in the What Works Centre report.¹⁴² This existing evidence shows that doing activities outdoors can be good for people's wellbeing. It can make people feel happier, and more satisfied with life, or less anxious and depressed. However, most of the evidence is about the individual wellbeing of adults, a small amount is about the wellbeing of children and very little is about adults and children together in families. A range of outdoor activities have the potential to improve subjective wellbeing for diverse families. The impacts of outdoor activities for families on wellbeing are:

- The idea of self (self-identity, worth, value)
- Social bonding
- The abstraction/feelings (escapism, sensorial, relaxation)

The main findings of the review concluded:

- Taking part in outdoor recreation with families has no significant effect on children's quality of life;
- Taking part in outdoor recreation with families has no significant effect on self-esteem and other measures of psychological wellbeing;
- Taking part in outdoor recreation with families improves self-competence learning and identity through family connection to nature;
- Taking part in outdoor recreation with families improves wellbeing via escapism, relaxation, and sensory experience;
- Taking part in outdoor recreation with families improves social bonding as a family.

While the overall evidence base was quite limited in terms of number of studies and quality, especially when looking at quantitative studies, this lack of evidence does not necessarily mean that there are no wellbeing benefits from taking part in outdoor physical activity with family members. Indeed, it was clear that some types of outdoor family-based activity can enhance wellbeing.

Analysis of survey data shows that people's enjoyment of the outdoors is enhanced when they are spending time with family and friends, in and particular with partners. In the UK, people spending time outdoors had a positive effect on their enjoyment. It also found that people enjoy spending time with both family and friends, more than spending time alone. Further analysis showed that, on average, UK residents, reported enjoying their time outdoors with relatives more than with friends. Within the family, partners had the largest rise in enjoyment in comparison with children and parents. This is supported by

¹⁴² https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Outdoor-Rec-briefing-FINAL_0131689800.pdf

evidence from the US which found that being outdoors is enhanced when spending time with friends and family. Specifically, people are happiest when outdoors with their partners.

Like in other areas, the researchers highlight the need for more research. Nevertheless, they conclude that there is a case for promoting outdoor recreation, especially as a family-orientated activity at a national level by local authorities and national agencies. In turn, they suggest that working with informal and formal parent networks may provide 'opportunities to reach and engage families in outdoor activities' providing a tailored community focused and locally available opportunities. The evidence base for wellbeing in the outdoors requires well-designed, rigorous, and appropriate research methods which are underpinned by relevant theory and which use established methods of analysis. Furthermore, a programme of wellbeing evaluation training should be developed and promoted.

3. Places, Spaces, People and Wellbeing

The places where people live, work, and spend time with those who they know, met and encounter in these places, all clearly have an impact on their wellbeing. What happens in those spaces whether it is crime, deprivation, and/or social fragmentation all impact an individual's wellbeing regardless of whether these things affect someone directly. The role of community wellbeing is therefore critical.

What Works Wellbeing undertook a further systematic review of the evidence of projects, programmes and other interventions that aim to boost social relations or community wellbeing by making changes to community places and spaces.¹⁴³ Having sifted through 21,335 studies they used just 51 as the mainstay of the review itself. They concluded that while there is promising evidence in this area (based on a larger number of poor-quality evidence) they uncovered few high-quality studies. While they were able to conclude that a range of approaches to community infrastructure can be used to boost social relations and wellbeing in a community, giving people involved a range of options, they were unable to make strong recommendations about which approach to support since the studies have not compared one approach to another.

Nevertheless, the review usefully found promising evidence about ways of doing things that are more likely to lead to success, and ways of doing things that are probably not helpful. These facilitators and barriers to success were common themes across all the interventions. Interestingly for the Diocese of Gloucester, this review covered a wider range of approaches to community relations, many of which churches already engage. These included:

- **Community hubs** - community centres or community anchor organisations focused on health and wellbeing that can be either locality-based or work as a network. Community hubs, such as healthy

¹⁴³ https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Places-spaces-people-wellbeing-May2018V2_0119660900.pdf

living centres, typically provide multiple activities and services that address health or the wider determinants of health, most of which are open to the wider community;

- **Events** – temporary (or seasonal) events that take place at a community level, such as festivals, markets, art events, street parties, concerts. Events can range from a one-off activity to a regular, sometimes weekly, occurrence;
- **Neighbourhood design** - the scale, form or function of buildings and open space.
- **Green and blue space** - any natural green space: parks, woodland, gardens; or blue space: rivers, canals, or the coast;
- **Place-making** - the role of arts, culture, and heritage in helping to shape the places where we live;
- **Alternative use of space** - temporary changes to the way that people interact with a space, such as closure of streets for children to play; a 'civic game' that involved collecting items from different places; public art installations; a 'pop-up park';
- **Urban regeneration** - the process of improving derelict or dilapidated districts of a city, typically through redevelopment;
- **Community development** - a long-term value-based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality, and inclusion.

In addition, the report provides a series of outcomes for each of the different interventions and what activities can generate specific outcomes.

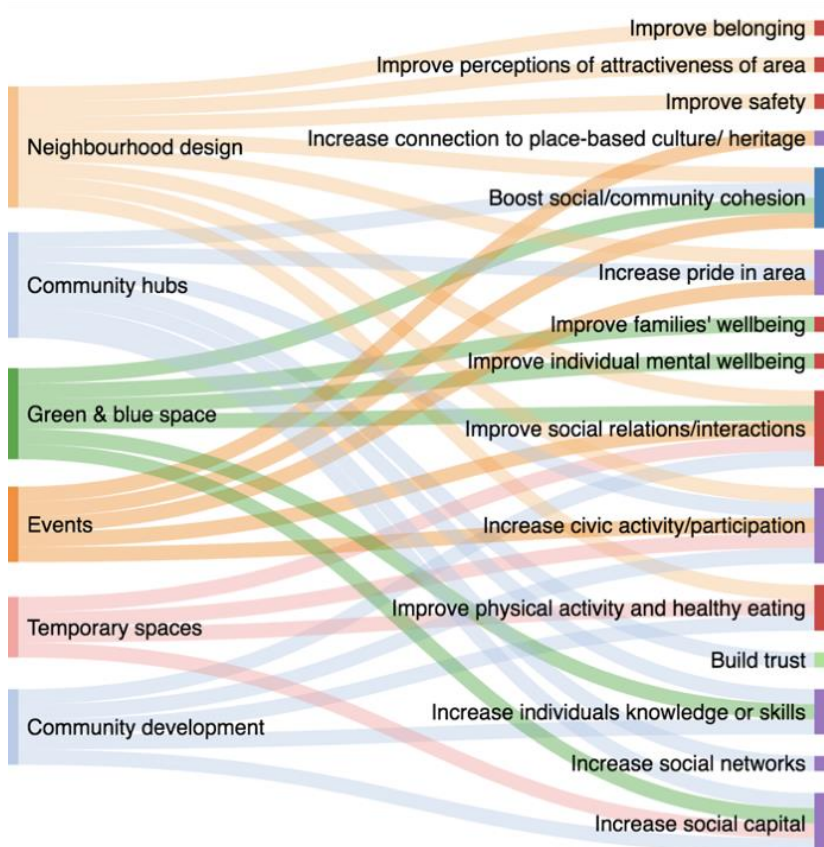


Figure 1. Impact of an event or temporary space likely to have on the local area

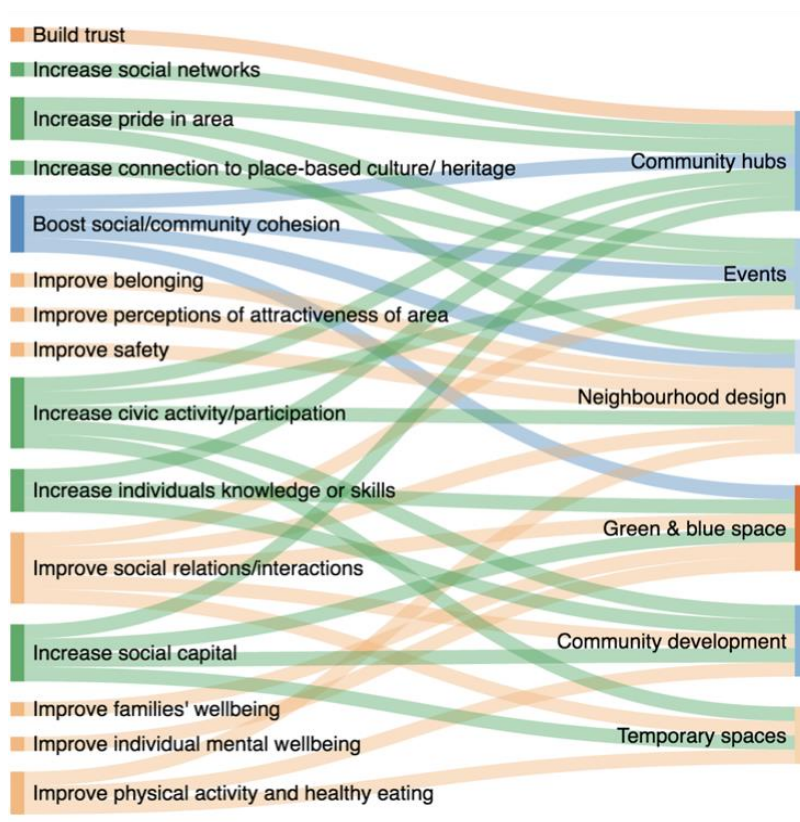


Figure 2. What activities can generate specific community outcomes

In terms of the evidence, they found for each of the community interventions, the What Works Centre report highlights the key evidence for each:

Community hubs

- Community hubs may promote social cohesion through the mixing of different social, age or generational groups;
- Community hubs may increase social capital and build trust between people in communities;
- Community hubs may increase wider social networks and interaction between community members;
- Community hubs may increase community members' sense of pride in their local area;
- Changes to community hubs may increase civic participation;
- Community hubs can increase individuals' knowledge or skills.

The report also states that qualitative evidence found that activities - including temporary street pedestrianisation, community gardening - changes to church services, and civic games, created opportunities for people from different ethnic groups or different age groups to interact.

Community development

- Community development projects can increase opportunities for social interaction between different ethnic and age groups;
- Community development projects can increase social capital in the community;
- Community development projects may lead to increased civic participation.
- Community development projects may lead to improved individual behaviour in terms of physical activity and healthy eating;
- Community development projects may lead to improved knowledge and skills among community members.

Temporary events

- Events may improve social relations in a community by providing a 'hub' for people to meet;
- Events can improve community cohesion by providing a neutral space for different groups to socialise;

- Events may increase community members' sense of pride in their local area;
- Events may provide opportunities to connect to place- based culture or heritage;
- Events may increase engagement in civic activity;
- The evidence also showed that events having the potential to create feelings of exclusion among the wider community.

The qualitative evidence found that events can create a sense of belonging and pride. Local festivals have been associated with an increased sense of belonging and place attachment among the host community (Black, 2016). Festivals were opportunities for showing off the unique or special qualities of the town or village (Black, 2016; McLean & Rahder, 2013) and celebrating shared identity (Black, 2016; McLean & Rahder, 2013; Whitford & Ruhanen, 2013; Yuen & Glover, 2005). Events can also contribute to consolidation, integration (Black, 2016), and reconciliation (Whitford & Ruhanen, 2013, p. 54); "a celebration of the community coming together".

Local neighbourhood design

- Changes to neighbourhood design may increase social cohesion by bringing together people from different ages and social backgrounds;
- Community-led neighbourhood design projects have the potential to improve social relations;
- Changes to neighbourhood design may positively affect sense of belonging and pride in a community;
- Changes to neighbourhood design improve community members' perceptions about the attractiveness of the area;
- Changes to neighbourhood design may increase civic activity;
- Changes to neighbourhood design may lead to increases in physical activity, as well as other health benefits.

The two studies in the review that showed no impact on social relations were both 'top down' urban renewal projects. Here evidence suggests that it is important for community members to have an opportunity to be involved in organisation and planning of changes to places and spaces.

Green and blue space

- Green and blue space interventions that provide the opportunity to participate in activities or meetings can improve social interactions;
- Green and blue space interventions may increase community cohesion by encouraging mixing of different cultural and socioeconomic groups;
- Improvements to green & blue space may lead to increased social networks, social interactions and bonding and bridging social capital;
- Green space changes can improve family wellbeing by providing something for families to do together;
- Improvements to green and blue space are associated with increased civic activity;
- Improvements to green and blue space may results in positive behavioural change, encouraging physical activity and healthy eating;
- Changes to green and blue space may have a positive effect on community members' skills and knowledge.

Green and blue space were found to increase community cohesion by encouraging a mixing of different cultural and socioeconomic groups. The act of community gardening was shown to bring people together and to foster intergroup relationships (Mangadu et al., 2016; Porter & McIlvaine-Newsad, 2013). The installation of an accessible trail through woodland, including information about a forest, contributed to solidarity and tolerance and therefore social integration (Vering, 2006). The process of making changes to a green or blue space was also found to create cohesion. For example, the organising committee of a new skate park used the project as an opportunity to create better understanding between the group, local young people, and the community (Shipway, 2016). In turn, community gardens were found to increase a sense of community and positive social interactions (Mangadu et al., 2016; Ohmer et al., 2009).

The researchers go on to make several useful recommendations to funders, commissioners and community groups, leaders and residents, which provide a set of principles from which to build their provision. Funders need to be aware of:

- **Accessibility** - Changes to places and spaces should be accessible in terms of ability, attitude, culture, finance, transport, and location;
- **Involvement** - Community members should have the opportunity to be involved in organisation and planning of changes to places and spaces;

- **Potential exclusion** - Some changes, particularly those intended to celebrate a local community, may have the potential to leave some community members feeling excluded;
- **Sustainability** - It is important to look at outcomes in the long-term, and sustainability;
- **Marginalised groups** - Changes which involve a group-based activity or other reason to interact may be more successful at removing barriers to participation for marginalised groups.

Community groups, leaders and residents need to:

- **Provide an accessible, comfortable, safe, and friendly environment.**
- **Remove barriers to inclusion**, and actively reach out to the wider community, particularly when changes are designed to celebrate a particular section of the community.
- **Involve skilled community facilitators** to ensure that all sectors of the community are represented, and consensus can be reached.
- **Consider involving volunteers** as a way of boosting long-term sustainability.

Evidence for Wellbeing from Case Study Research

To further the insight into Community Hub and Green Space, What Works published another report providing the real-world evidence for the enhancement of wellbeing based on practice-based, case study evidence.¹⁴⁴ This research identified community wellbeing outcomes that support the findings from systematic review evidence, as well as describing additional and unforeseen outcomes, including those that arise from the benefits of more informal spaces that may not have been the subject of formal evaluations, as well as benefits to the organisations responsible for the delivery of the interventions.

These studies highlighted how important a consideration of the local context is, that the response to local needs is often complex, and that community involvement in the delivery of projects is important including planning to successfully improve wellbeing outcomes.

On **community infrastructure projects** in general the practice-based case studies provided significant information on:

- **What such interventions look like in practice:** Case study evidence can explain the development of community infrastructure projects over time, why they were needed, a sense of the 'journey' and who was involved in the inception and delivery of projects. Details on how projects have been set up, including costs and funding, their sustainability and how they are run in specific contexts,

144 <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/community-hubs-green-space-April2021.pdf>

effectively provide illustrative examples of the kinds of interventions that the systematic review findings refer to and what this could look like in different settings;

- **The importance of context and community involvement:** Case studies identified clear themes around understanding and addressing local needs, co-production, organisational learning, safe spaces, and collaborative working;
- **Importance of informal spaces:** Case studies provided insight into the value of more informal spaces for community wellbeing outcomes, aside from the more formally delivered interventions that might be the focus of more structured evaluations.

On **Community Hubs:** further evidence found in practice-based case studies that these could deliver further community wellbeing outcomes from those mentioned in the original research including:

- Boosting social/community cohesion
- Increasing pride in the area
- Increases in civic activity/participation
- Building trust
- Increases in individuals' knowledge/skills
- Increasing social networks
- Increase in social capital

Specific to the delivery of community hubs, practice-based case studies highlighted:

- Additional community wellbeing benefits: community empowerment, new groups in the community forming;
- Additional individual wellbeing benefits: from opportunities for social interactions and improvements in mental health;
- Organisational benefits: opportunities for networking and partnership, raising organisational profiles, improved access to commissions/funding;
- Delivery: Multiple activities developed, organised/ delivered by range of stakeholders with a variety of learning techniques used to develop and sustain projects;
- Unforeseen outcomes: new informal support networks in the community, creation of skills training programmes, 'peer-led' becoming widely appreciated, asset-transfer programme developed,

reduction in health and social inequalities as community hubs support disadvantaged communities.

Similarly further research into **green space** also highlighted enhanced community wellbeing outcomes including: Improved individual mental wellbeing; Improved social relations/interactions; and increase individuals' knowledge/skills. The case studies also highlighted that green spaces:

- Strengthened organisational capacity, new partnerships, and increased influence or organisational profile;
- Delivered multiple and layered interventions developed in response to local need and to reach disadvantaged groups, effectively reduce wellbeing inequalities and achieve broad aims of wellbeing and empowerment;
- Identified key mechanisms including building connections and partnerships, asset-based approaches, adapting to local need, community participation and co-production.

It is worth noting that the latest policy update from the Civil Society Directorate, highlighted that a Faith Action case study: Community Resources for Change (CRC) is a grassroots charity gathering volunteers to improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of Barking and Dagenham.¹⁴⁵ Founded in a church setting, the Charity now operates as a series of 'connecting spaces' including a coffee shop and community drop-in centre. It seeks to develop social connections and friendships to address loneliness and prevent crisis. It also provides support and advice for other faith communities and voluntary sector organisations across the UK.

xiv. Other Significant Evidence Bases

Social Prescribing

The What Works Centre report also highlights a number of evidence-informed social prescribing models including PERMA developed by the Wellbeing and Resilience Centre and South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute; and Plus Five Ways to Wellbeing developed by the New Economics Foundation.¹⁴⁶ In February 2021, they also started the two-year WELLCOMM programme, to increase the understanding of the relationship between community engagement and wellbeing at a population level. While there is strong theoretical literature on why community engagement is crucial to how people survive and thrive, there remains a paucity of high-quality, large-scale, and longitudinal research on which

¹⁴⁵ <http://communityresources.co.uk>

¹⁴⁶ <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/category/social-prescribing-models/#>

community activities affect people's wellbeing, whether they be arts engagement, volunteering, or sport and who is most likely to benefit. The project aims to analyse what the benefits of community engagement are for wellbeing, who benefits most, and how to encourage community engagement amongst different populations.

School Sport

The School Sport Action Plan (July 2019) set out how the Education Department, DCMS and Department for Health are working together to ensure 'all young people have the opportunity to live healthy and active lives'.¹⁴⁷ The plan identifies that sport and physical activity improves young people's physical and mental wellbeing and helps them to develop important skill like team work and leadership. A positive experience of sport and physical activity through physical literacy and education build a lifetime habit of participation and have wide benefits of pupils and schools improving behaviour as well as enhancing learning an academic achievement. The Education department also identified sport as one of the five foundations for building character, 'helping young people develop resilience determinations and self-belief, and instilling values and virtues such as friendship and fair play. It can also help connect young people to their peers tackling loneliness and social isolation and building stronger communities. The report goes on to identify some of the challenges including growing obesity levels and stubborn inequalities and the key driver of the plan: to ensure all children and young peoples have access to at least 60mins of physical activity every day (where 33% of children and young people currently do less than 30mins per day).

Various reports over the years have underpinned the Government thinking about school sport policy. The Education Department published the Evidence on Physical Education and Sport in School in 2013 noting the national and international evidence on physical education and sport in primary and secondary schools and sets out the latest statistics from the surveys of the day assessing what was happening in schools.¹⁴⁸ Amongst the evidence in the report, the reasons cited by 6-11 year olds for not enjoying school sport or exercise included: beliefs that their physique was not suited to sport, embarrassment at not being good enough and letting the team down, frustration at not understanding the rules, and boredom (Mason, 1995). Bad weather and wanting to spend time doing other things such as seeing friends, playing computer games or watching television were common reasons for not taking part in physical activity *after* school (Brockman et al., 2011; Burrows et al., 1999; Mason, 1995; Mulivhill et al., 2000; Tuxworth, 1997).

Furthermore, fun and enjoyment were reported as the main reasons that pupils take part in physical activity alongside being with friends and the sense of belonging to a team and achieving also encouraged pupils to take part (Brockman et al., 2011; Burrows et al., 1999; Mason, 1995; Mulivhill et al, 2000;

¹⁴⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/848082/School_sport_and_activity_action_plan.pdf

¹⁴⁸ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/226505/Evidence_on_physical_education_and_sport_in_schools.pdf

Tuxworth, 1997). The report also cited Gorely et al. (2011) who highlighted that girls' participation in PE and sport declines over time identifying that to encourage girls to be more active: having a genuine choice of activities, having girls-only sessions, including more friendly competition and fun, ensuring teachers are positive/encouraging, changing boys' attitudes to girls in sport, and increasing girls' confidence. The barriers of taking part in PE and sport for pupils with disabilities include: inaccessible facilities and equipment; staff without adequate training; and inadequate, non-compliant, or otherwise inaccessible programs and curricula (Auxter et al., 2010; Rimmer, 2008; Rimmer and Rowland, 2007; Stanish, 2010).

The report also outlines the physical benefits of physical activity in childhood include greater bone strength and positive movement skill development (Bass, 2000; Fisher et al., 2005; Kemper et al., 2000). There is also evidence that physical activity is linked to better cognitive functioning (Sibley and Etnier, 2003). There is also evidence that physical activity has a positive effect on mental health in children, including reducing anxiety and depression and improving mood (e.g. Ahn and Fedewa, 2011; Mutrie and Parfitt, 1998). However, there is some evidence that for pupils who do not enjoy physical activity it can have a negative impact on self-esteem and mood (Biddle, 1999; Hellison, 1973). There is some evidence to indicate that physical activity is linked to improved concentration and behaviour in the classroom (Budde et al., 2008; QCA, 2007; Raviv and Low, 1990; Tuckman and Hinkle, 1986).

Overall, the evidence on the relationship between time spent on PE and sport and attainment is mixed. Some evidence shows that increased time in PE has a positive relationship with attainment while some evidence reports that there is no relationship between the two. However, overall the evidence suggests that there is no negative association between increased time spent on PE and sport and attainment; despite the reduced teaching time, studies have shown that pupils have equal or enhanced grades. Increasing physical activity lessons from twice a week to daily has been reported to have a significant effect on primary pupils' academic achievement in maths, reading and writing (Ericsson, 2008) and in secondary pupils, performance in certain sports including football, netball, athletics and hockey have been found to be positively associated with higher GCSE scores in maths and English (Dexter, 1999). Despite numerous positive findings, some studies, particularly at secondary level, have found that physical activity has no impact on attainment (Dollman et al., 2006; Melnick et al., 1992; Tremblay et al., 2000).

Overall, the evidence on pupils taking part in extra-curricular sport suggests that it has a positive impact or no impact on attainment. There is no negative association, though. Generally the evidence suggests that participation in school team sports, for secondary pupils, has a positive impact on attainment, but this is not conclusive and some studies have reported no association (Fox et al., 2010; Stephens and Schaben, 2002; Yin and Moore, 2004; Hawkins and Mulkey, 2005). For secondary pupils, there is some evidence that extra-curricular physical activity is associated with positive academic attitudes and better attendance and homework completion rates (Darling, 2005; Fredricks and Eccles, 2006; Harrison and Narayan, 2003).

This general positive approach was again set out in Public Health England's guidance, *The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment* (2014) which draw on a rapid review approach that provides a broad, succinct scope of the scientific evidence.¹⁴⁹ The research evidence shows that education and health are closely linked.¹⁵⁰ The guidance clearly states that 'promoting the health and wellbeing of pupils and students within schools and colleges has the potential to improve their educational outcomes *and* their health and wellbeing outcomes'. It also says that the complexity of the interrelationships between outcomes makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about causality. The briefing goes on to summarise the key evidence that highlights the link between health and wellbeing and educational attainment underlining the value for schools of promoting health and wellbeing as an integral part of a school effectiveness strategy and highlights the important contribution of a whole-school approach.

Key points from the evidence included:

1. Pupils with better health and wellbeing are likely to achieve better academically.
2. Effective social and emotional competencies are associated with greater health and wellbeing, and better achievement.
3. The culture, ethos and environment of a school influences the health and wellbeing of pupils and their readiness to learn.
4. A positive association exists between academic attainment and physical activity levels of pupils.

In 2015 the Youth Sport Trust published the YST National PE, School Sport and Physical Activity Survey Report¹⁵¹ outlined the findings of their first school survey. These results highlighted that 97% of primary schools and 85% of secondary schools actively encouraged physical activity as part of the school day and that this had a positive impact on students to their life skills (confidence, resilience, resourcefulness, teamwork, communication skills). Ninety-one percent considered that it makes a positive contribution to achievement, 70% to behaviour and truancy and 69% to attainment. The report also suggests that much more was needed especially as there is some indication of some decline including the time that pupils were given PE per week and that school links with community (or other) sport clubs had declined significantly.

In the YSTs 2018 Report about the PE Provision on Secondary Schools showed that too many young people were inactive, childhood obesity was getting worse and mental health issues were increasing. Only 22% of

149 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/370686/HT_briefing_layoutvFINALvii.pdf

150 Bradley B and Greene A (2013). Do health and education agencies in the United States share responsibility for academic achievement and health? A review of 25 years of evidence about the relationship of adolescents' academic achievement and health behaviours. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52 (5), 523-32 and Suhrcke M, de Paz Nieves C (2011). The impact on health and health behaviours on educational outcomes in high income countries: a review of the evidence. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe

151 [https://www.sportsthinktank.com/uploads/yst-\(2015\)-school-sport-and-pe-survey-report-19.pdf](https://www.sportsthinktank.com/uploads/yst-(2015)-school-sport-and-pe-survey-report-19.pdf)

children aged 5 to 15 in England getting 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous activity with 40% doing less than 30 minutes per day. The report also highlighted that there was increased pressure on schools to deliver academic results therefore narrowing the curriculum towards accountable measures such as Ofsted and SATS. This was alongside the fact that many schools were also reducing the amount of time allocated for physical education at break times. One of the key changes that PE teachers thought was needed included a better understanding of the value of PE and a healthy lifestyle from senior leaders and governors in schools and including health and wellbeing measure as a part of the school accountability.

Extracurricular Activities

As a part of the Education Department's pilot 2018 investment in 12 Opportunity Areas, areas identified as social mobility 'cold spots' with the objective of promoting social mobility through enhancing the life chances of those from disadvantaged backgrounds, they commissioned the Essential Life Skills (ELS) programme in 2018. This was intended to enable children and young people aged 5 -18 years to participate in regular extracurricular activities. The ELS programme was based on a growing body of evidence that links, including resilience, self-efficacy, and other emotional and social skills, with improved educational, labour market and wellbeing outcomes. Designing provision to ensure children from all backgrounds can take part and access the benefits engagement in extracurricular activity can offer is an important consideration from this perspective.

Funding supported a wide range of activities including sports, arts, debating and information technology. Projects were typically delivered within term time and some activities during the school holidays as well as being delivered in residential settings or at weekends. Provision was designed to promote development of life skills such as, teamwork and resilience, building on a growing body of evidence that links such skills with improved educational, labour market and wellbeing outcomes.¹⁵² Evidence suggests that extracurricular activities can play a key role in building these skills and can benefit all pupils, including improving outcomes around attainment.¹⁵³ However, there is evidence that wealthier children and those in private schools are more likely to access and utilise extracurricular provision relative to their less socio-economic advantaged peers.¹⁵⁴

The ELS evaluation highlighted that sports, outdoor/adventure and arts focused projects were the most common activities.¹⁵⁵ The report highlights that there were high levels of engagement and attendance particularly amongst disadvantaged pupils and that barriers to participation included confidence and negative preconceptions about extracurricular activities. Parental engagement, logistical and financial

¹⁵² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942568/ELS_what_works_paper.pdf

¹⁵³ Cunha, F., Heckman, J. J., & Schennach, S. M. (2010). Estimating the technology of cognitive and non- cognitive skill formation. *Econometrica*, Vol 78 (No 3), 883-931.

¹⁵⁴ Sutton Trust (2014). 'Research Brief: Extra-curricular Inequality'

¹⁵⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942557/ELS_Process_Evaluation.pdf

constraints also represented significant barriers all that could be overcome through proactive and effective communication with pupils and parents and tailoring activities to the needs of pupils and support with transport and costs.

The evidence suggested that the programme achieved its aims to a significant level: young people reported beneficial outcomes relating to confidence, resilience building relationships and social and emotional intelligence. The regular structure of the provision encouraged commitment and organisational skills. Furthermore, new partnerships were formed and there was evidence of community level outcomes including bringing young people of different ages and backgrounds together who would not usually do so, together, and helping to build a sense of community. Overall, the researchers thought the ELS programme was a positive intervention providing insight into routes to participating in positive activities outside of school.

Opening School Facilities

The Department for Education invested £1.6m into the Active Partnership Network in 2019-2020 as a test and learn project to better understand the barriers and drivers of schools to open their doors during evenings, weekends and holiday periods for community use. Twenty-three Active Partnerships (including Active Gloucestershire) worked directly with 230 targeted primary and secondary schools and Sport England over the 15-month lifespan of the project. The learnings from the test and learn project have been summarised in Opening School Facilities Final project report February 2021.¹⁵⁶

This report highlights important insights into a school's motivation to open their doors for community use: to strengthen links to their local community and to become a community hub. The project also highlights the importance of school leadership teams having a clear vision and mission to open their facilities during evenings and weekends to support the wellbeing of both their pupils and their local community. The research indicated that there is also a clear correlation between a school having a strong extra-curricular or holiday programme and their likelihood to open their doors after 3pm for the remainder of the year. This is a significant finding. The report also highlights the need to work together to change the narrative around the value of opening school facilities from income generation to being a way to strengthen a school's links to their local community and support clubs, community organisations, families and individuals to access these facilities more easily out of school hours.

¹⁵⁶ Active Partnerships (2021), Opening School Facilities Final project report
https://www.activepartnerships.org/sites/default/files/ACTIVE%20PARTNERSHIPS%20OSF%20REPORT_short_0221-compressed.pdf

Being Active in Nature

A recent study by the University of East Anglia¹⁵⁷, looking at evidence from more than 140 studies, involving more than 290 million people, concluded that populations with higher levels of greenspace exposure are also more likely to report good overall health. The research found that sunshine naturally increases serotonin and physical activity produces endorphins, which boosts mood and reduces pain. In addition, it found that exposure to green space significantly reduces stress by decreasing levels of salivary cortisol, a physiological marker of stress.

In analysing how the health of people with little access to green spaces (defined as open, undeveloped land with natural vegetation as well as urban greenspaces, which included urban parks and street greenery) compared to that of people with the highest amounts of exposure, they found that spending time in, or living close to, natural green spaces is associated with diverse and significant health benefits. It reduces the risk of type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, premature death, and preterm birth, and increases sleep duration.

The report states that given that the research shows that the size of these benefits can be enough to have a meaningful clinical impact, doctors and other healthcare professionals should be encouraged to recommend that patients spend more time in greenspace and natural areas.

In recognising the benefits of nature-based intervention and activities, Sport England are working with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, Natural England, Public Health England and the National Academy for Social Prescribing as part of a cross-government project aimed at tackling and preventing mental health challenges through green social prescribing. Seven test sites will explore the impact of outdoor, nature-based activities such as walking, cycling, community gardening and food growing projects.

xv. The Evolving Policy Landscape

New Office for Health Promotion

As a result of the faltering response by Public Health England to the pandemic, the government decided to dissolve it and divide its responsibilities into new bodies more fit for purpose. In March 2021 they announced the New Office for Health Promotion to lead national efforts to improve and level up the health of the nation by tackling obesity and nutrition, improving mental health, and promoting physical activity.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/07/180706102842.htm>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-office-for-health-promotion-to-drive-improvement-of-nations-health>

The new Office combines Public Health England's health improvement expertise with existing Department of Health and Social Care health policy capabilities, to promote and deliver better health to communities nationwide. The Office's remit will be to systematically tackle the top preventable risk factors causing death and ill health in the UK, by designing, implementing, and tracking delivery policy across government.

Sitting within the Department of Health and Social Care it will enable more joined-up, sustained action between national and local government, the NHS and cross-government, where much of the wider determinants of health sit. As the evidence shows, a large proportion of people's health outcomes (around 80%) are not related to the healthcare they receive but due to wider preventable risk factors such as diet, smoking, exercise. The new Office will help inform a new cross-government agenda which will look to track these wider determinants of health and implement policies in other departments where appropriate.

Sport England's New Strategy - Uniting a Movement 2021

In January 2021 Sport England published its high level 10-year vision 'to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity'¹⁵⁹ which seeks to create 'a nation of more equal inclusive and connected communities. A country where live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives.' They state that being active is an effective and sustainable way to achieve this and that, based on the reports above, the existing 'evidence is overwhelming'. The strategy is designed to tackle the nation's obesity problem and the underlying inequalities that inhibit a healthier and happier nation by investing "in sport and physical activity to make it a normal part of life for everyone in England, regardless of who you are"

As Dr Mathew Dowling – Cambridge Centre for Sport and Exercise Sciences, Anglia Ruskin University – in his article for the Sports Think Tank points out:

The starting point for any new strategy for sport and physical activity needs to accept the fact that previous policies to tackle inactivity and solve the obesity crisis have failed. Participation has remained largely stagnant for the past 50 years or so and it is clear that we aren't getting any healthier or happier. The fact is self-evident Sport England's own participation figures collected through the Active Lives Survey (previously the Active People Survey) over the years¹⁶⁰.

As Dr Dowling goes on to observe, Sport England has openly acknowledged this in *Uniting a Movement*.

As this strategic direction was based on '18 months consulting extensively with a wide range of partners and other stakeholders in the sector', it is reasonable to suggest that there has been a significant re-alignment in the sector towards success for sport and recreation being defined by its wider social impact.

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.sportsthinktank.com/academic-spotlight2/2021/03/unitingamovement-a-critical-commentary-on-sport-englands-latest-strategy>

The impact however, that the *Sporting Future* strategy has had on actors in other sectors outside of sport and recreation, and across government, is less clear. Nevertheless, as Balcar (2020) argues, numerous government departments have included community sport as an effective tool to deliver relevant social outcomes to their policy objectives.

What is significant about this strategy is the renewed determination to tackle inequalities in being active based on background, gender, finance, and postcode. To tackle these inequalities, Sport England are seeking to remove existing barriers to being active and to be part of helping to address many of the issues and challenges in society. To do this they recognise that they need to work with other organisations locally and nationally and lead them and the rest for the sports and activity sector in advocating for 'movement, sport and physical activity'. This is encouraging for the Diocese of Gloucester however, as Dowling points out, one notable omission from the new Sport England strategy is that it does not indicate who they will work with. As he reflects, 'this is more likely by design rather than accident as it effectively gives the public body an 'open-door policy' for it to work with 'just about anybody' who can demonstrate they can get people more physically active'. While this will raise expectations amongst a wider group of stakeholders and potential deliverers it will also mean that Sport England is likely, given the unlikely economic environment to realising a significant financial increase in resourcing, to have to make some seriously challenging funding decisions in the coming year, and in doing so risk disillusioning a movement. It is therefore also likely that they will want to develop new innovative partnerships with large national organisations to get more people active especially people traditional delivery routes cannot reach. Successful partnerships with the National Trust, the Forestry Commission, the RSPB, the Canal and River Trust have proven the value of this approach.

Sport England also identify five big issues and opportunities that have the most potential for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity which are:

1. Recover and Reinvent – from Covid;
2. Connecting Communities – ability to make better places to live and bring people together;
3. Positive Experiences for Children and Young People – as foundations for a long happy life;
4. Connecting with Health and Wellbeing – so more people have an active life;
5. Active Environments – creating and protecting places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

The Strategy highlights an important balance – it is important to find the right blend of national and local, reflecting that local communities know best how to engage their people whilst the support and insight from national organisations are also crucial. Another guiding principle that sport and wellbeing ministry

projects should consider is the concept of universal proportionalism¹⁶¹, where Sport England will invest more in areas where the level of need greater.

Sport and wellbeing ministry projects should also assess and measure themselves against the five approaches which underpin the Sport England Strategy, which are:

1. Effective Investment Models – that stimulate demand, provide opportunities to get active, enable innovation, encourage collaboration, reduce inequalities and enable greater sustainability;
2. Realising the Power of People and Leadership – to help others get active;
3. Applying Innovation and Digital – to help overcome that people’s expectations and time use is changing;
4. High Quality Data, Insight and Learning – to create a shared understanding of the challenges;
5. Good Governance – and commitment to the positive, effective safe delivery of opportunities.

xvi. Conclusion

We can see in Cameron’s (2018) work that there is a growing national health crisis which needs a strong preventative action to avert - or at least slowdown - the growing (and often related) epidemics of diabetes, cancer, obesity, heart disease, depression, and other ills that significantly impact people’s wellbeing and productivity. Physical inactivity, poor diet, social isolation, and socioeconomic disparities are strong contributors to this suffering but also provide practical targets for preventive efforts. As she robustly argues, as followers of Jesus the Healer, Christians are uniquely equipped to become a significant force for promoting physical, emotional, and spiritual health and healing. A broadening of a traditionally narrowly focus sport ministry sector to incorporate wellbeing – sport and wellbeing ministry - is a simple way to reorientate the churches thinking and approach. In doing so it will not only retake the churches historic place caring for the whole physical body but its mind and soul while creating a significantly more diverse and attractive new way to engage the community where they are at.

In assessing the policy-base the use of sport activity to deliver a set of complex social outcomes including health and wellbeing is now firmly embedded in policy thinking, funding mechanisms and delivery

161 Universal Proportionalism is a term used by Prof Michael Marmot in his landmark report into health inequalities ‘Fair Society. Healthy Lives’ (2010) “Focusing solely on the most disadvantaged will not reduce health inequalities sufficiently. To reduce the steepness of the social gradient in health, actions must be universal, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage. We call this proportionate universalism.” See Martyn Allison’s Report for the STT (2021) for a full explanation in relation to the sport sector: [spothttps://www.sportsthinktank.com/uploads/proportionate-universalism-martyn-allison-march-2021-5188-final.pdf](https://www.sportsthinktank.com/uploads/proportionate-universalism-martyn-allison-march-2021-5188-final.pdf)

frameworks. While these are not perfect or even ideal in some cases, the outcomes that are well established include physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, and social and community development. Within these there are a multitude of issues that sport can help tackle including inactivity, obesity, mental health, and isolation/loneliness; improve community cohesion and integration; build character and resilience; reduce anti-social behaviour and low-level crime; and increase volunteering and employability. Furthermore, sporting activity has impact in many places from schools, after-school activities and interventions, civil society, and in the places, people live and community buildings. It also can help to tackle issues of poverty, disadvantage, and inequality.

The best assessment of the current evidence-base to what and how sport does this, was Sport England's 2017 rapid evidence review. The researchers noted that with evidence dispersed across different fields, it is only possible to take a partial view of the available evidence, and that knowing what works best, and where the link to outcomes lies, remains largely under-explored. The report however, provided useful frameworks for programmes by not only helping them to demonstrate to others how sport and physical activity contribute to social outcomes but instead informing how projects should be established to maximise the impact on outcomes. The findings found that there is a well-established evidence base that sporting activity improves physical wellbeing and has a whole host of positive impacts on individuals and their lives. Mental health also has a well-established evidence base which can improve life satisfaction and self-esteem and confidence. Likewise, individual development has a substantial evidence base including improving educational attainment improving employability and building character and resilience through volunteering and leadership. While community development is harder to measure there is evidence, particularly around the role of sport and the integration of people of different backgrounds, that sport helps people to interact and builds bridging capital via participating, volunteering and spectating.¹⁶²

While showing that sporting activity has a broad positive impact on society, the report shows that there are also many areas where further evidence is needed including the impact of volunteering and around community development. In turn there is uncertainty about the direction of causality between sport and physical activity and community development and a lack of conclusive evidence for the impact of different types of activity on social capital.

From this data researchers were able to gather the general characteristics of successful community sporting interventions. These will be critical to sport and wellbeing ministry projects as they develop old approaches and create new ones, especially where they want to target children and young peoples and different groups with their communities. This will also be important as each project intentionally assesses

¹⁶² Bridging social capital is a type of social capital that describes connections that link people across a cleavage that typically divides society (such as race, or class, or religion). It is associations that 'bridge' between communities, groups, or organisations (<https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/what-is-bridging-social-capital/>)

which social outcomes they will look to deliver. The report also underlines the on-going need for 'evidencing outcomes through new ways of, and greater consistency in, measuring impact'. While physical wellbeing has a range of validated and well recognised measures, the outcomes of sport and physical activity have presented serious challenges in terms of measurement. As the report states, 'many authors reflect on the difficulties of asserting causal links between activities and outcomes'. It asserts the need to establish shared definitions for outcomes areas (e.g. 'self-efficacy', 'social trust' and 'social value'), to run a search for existing validated measures to assess whether they are 'fit for purpose', and if they are not, to design and validate new tools. For the Diocese, added outcomes around a faith journey or church engagement (in whatever form) will also be an important objective. This will be challenging, for as the research into community sport suggests, the 'further away the type of impact is from the individual, the harder it will be to measure (and to attribute, as the number of confounding variables increases exponentially).'

The evidence base for youth interventions has grown significantly in recent years. This is based on the delivery of projects supported by the Youth Investment Fund to deliver a range of activities including traditional open access provision, sports, arts, social action, support services and training. These projects provide new opportunities for young people to get involved in their communities and supported the personal development young people, build their confidence, and supported their transition to becoming happy, healthy, and economically active adults. While the Youth Impact report highlights the limitation of the evaluation data, it is the best evaluation to date of youth provision in the country. This research found that open access youth provision has the potential to significantly improve social and emotional learning skills, social connectedness, and wellbeing for young people, particularly those with most to gain. It also showed that higher quality youth provision is related to better outcomes for young people: those attending targeted provision (rather than universal provision) made greater gains across some social outcomes related to social skills, leadership, self-regulation and communication and self-expression than those attending universal provision only.

Furthermore, young people flourish in safe and supportive environments when the activities on offer stimulating, positively challenging and fun. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of girls and young women, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds, as there is a gender bias towards males. As with the Sport England survey, Youth Impact researchers were able to gather the general characteristics of successful youth interventions creating a shared theory of change including key elements of a sport specific intervention. They also make recommendations for youth organisations, funders and future research and evaluation that the diocese should consider further.

Led by the What Works Wellbeing Centre there is already evidence of what works to improve wellbeing, and how to measure impact. Wellbeing evidence can contribute a coherent and common approach for

determining the efficacy of different policies and interventions including accessing what impact sport, dance and young people, family and outdoor recreation, and places and spaces including community hubs have on wellbeing. Wellbeing has a wide range of determinants and there are seven broad dimensions that matter most to people. These dimensions are the natural environment, personal well-being, our relationships, health (good health improves wellbeing and good wellbeing improves health), what we do, where we live, personal finance, the economy, education and skills and governance. Key areas to personal wellbeing include feeling purpose, social relationships, trust and belonging and mental wellbeing.

The evidence overall needs to be developed further: there is limited good quality evidence for sport and dance impacts on wellbeing; existing evidence shows that doing activities outdoors can be good for people's wellbeing but there is limited evidence about the wellbeing of children and very little is about adults and children together in families.

What Works Wellbeing undertook a further systematic review of the evidence of projects, programmes and other interventions that aim to boost social relations or community wellbeing by making changes to community places and spaces. They concluded that while there is promising evidence in this area, they uncovered few high-quality studies. Nevertheless, community hubs can promote social cohesion by bringing together different social or generational groups; increase social capital and build trust; and interaction between community members; and increase people's knowledge or skills. They also increase wider social networks. Furthermore, changes to neighbourhood design can positively affect sense of belonging and pride in a community. They also concluded that green and blue space interventions that provide the opportunity to participate in activities or gatherings can improve social interactions; increase social networks social interactions and bonding and bridging social capital; increase physical activity and healthy eating; and improve community members' skills and knowledge. Interventions that provide a focal point, or targeted group activity, may help to promote social cohesion between different groups; and overcome barriers that may prevent some people (in marginalised groups) from taking part.

While they were able to conclude that a range of approaches to community infrastructure can be used to boost social relations and wellbeing in a community, giving people involved a range of options, they were unable to make a strong recommendation about which approach to support as the studies have not compared one approach to another. Nevertheless, the review usefully found promising evidence about ways of doing things that are more likely to lead to success, and ways of doing things that are probably not helpful.

The discussion in this chapter has also touched upon the evidence-base around social prescribing, PE and Sport and schools, opening school facilities, and being active in nature. This highlights key areas that sport and wellbeing ministry projects might wish to explore in more detail as sources of potentially significant interventions that are shown to have an impact.

There is a vast amount of data and evidence that sport and wellbeing ministry projects can assess and consider around sport and wellbeing. Overall, the evidence base for a community sport social outcome-based approach is good, Sport can make a significant contribution to the life of an individual, a community and a region. There is a good understanding of broadly what works in terms of the intersections between sporting activity, youth interventions and wellbeing through community hub and other interventions. Being intentional by focusing on all the relevant outcomes at the start is critical. One of the challenges is that the evidence base is constantly growing and that projects need to be aware of the evidence gaps with a view to help to plugging these.

Finally, what we can conclude that policy and the evidence-base is constantly moving, developing, and evolving. Given this has continued to be a challenge during the writing of this report and that there are currently numerous evidence and policy-based decisions that will be made in the coming six months. Given the impact sporting activity can have across the social outcomes, youth and wellbeing framework agenda when placed within a local church community, sport and wellbeing ministry projects should also potentially look to influence the strategic approach by engaging with the key organisations, with a view to creating partnerships and pilot approaches that enhance the evidence-base through monitoring and evaluating using agreed methods and frameworks.

CHAPTER 6: EVIDENCE-BASE FOR SPORT AND WELLBEING MINISTRY

i. Introduction

This chapter is broken into three sections to provide an overview of the thinking about the theology of sports ministry and any theologically-based work that considers the churches role to deliver the broader social outcomes set out in the policy framework. It offers an overview of the theologies of sport and play as provided by academic literature alongside more recent contributions to understanding sport and wellbeing ministry. It assesses the recent contributions from think tanks, discussing the different views about moralism of sporting missional activity and views about mission and proselytism. It also discusses the theological arguments for widen sports ministry to include both sports and wellbeing in today's climate (public health challenges only enhanced by covid) and the policy framework.

The second section reviews several of the limited number of models that could be used to inform the development a unique mission or faith journey model for sport and wellbeing ministry projects. This includes any emerging approaches centred around new worshipping communities, a key strategy for church growth within the Church of England, and the faith journeys research undertaken by marketing company Nine Dot.

Finally, the third section looks at the reports and studies that assess the role of the church in delivering social outcomes. These are relevant to sports and wellbeing ministry within the context of using community sport to deliver health and wellbeing, mental health and social cohesion outcomes.

ii. Theologies of Sport and Play: An Overview

The relationship between Christianity and sport (and play) has long since been of interest to academic scholars from a range of disciplines and backgrounds. Perhaps most influential has been the seminal work of Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga (1950) which has provided a common starting point for others. Huizinga (1950) argued that play carried a sacred or spiritual dimension, yet it was Rahner (1972), a Jesuit catholic theologian, who added theological foundation to the concept of play by locating God the Creator as the 'ultimate player'. A series of philosophical and theological studies followed, all of which are indebted to the protestant theologian Tillich (1886-1965), who pioneered the theological analysis of culture in the 20th century (Johnston, 2013; Grimshaw, 2013). Collectively these writers variously commented on the role of play in understanding God's creation and mission, the evolution of civilization, human interactions and the relationship between (and significance of) play, games and sports (see Johnston, 1983; Moltmann, 1972) and how Christian athletes may view playful sport as a form of worship;

an expression of devotion and love toward God (Neale, 1969). In turn, these authors (and others) agree that play can be characterized by a sense of freedom and autonomy, a celebratory and spontaneous spirit, creativity, joy, intrinsic enjoyment (the autotelic), a transcendence of ego-boundaries and a feeling of psychic (and spiritual) holistic integration. Arguably, it is Johnston's book, *The Christian at Play* (1983), which provides one of the most comprehensive overviews on this topic.¹⁶³

Charting the theological reflection of play from Augustine (354-430c.) and other Church fathers through to the modern era, Johnston (1983) provides a biblical model of play, an exploration of leisure, work, play and sport and the differing theological options that have emerged. Johnston is optimistic about 'Christians at play' but acknowledges the Church's sometimes suspicious and ambivalent attitude toward play, pleasure and sport. He also argues that protestant "... evangelical Christians are so prone to instrumentalize everything" (p.ix), including play, that modern commercialised sport has lost its playfulness, and thus its sacred roots.

This claim has been at the centre of related scholarly work since the late 1960s, especially in the US, and leading Catholic voices, such as Novak (1967/1994), point to the protestant work-ethic (rooted in individualistic Calvinistic doctrine) and Marxist ideology as the major forces that have transformed sport into a soul-less utilitarian endeavour (see Overman, 1997). In the 1970s and 80s, for example, a series of Marxist (some would say polemic) critiques of modern sport emerged suggesting that, in mirroring the exploitative traits of capitalism, sport had lost its way, coming to be characterized by tropes of rationality, quantification, bureaucracy, commercialism, greed and the quest for personal glory (see Brohm, 1978; Hoch, 1972; Rigauer, 1981). Another reason why sport may be perceived to have lost its playfulness is the historical trajectory of Cartesian dualism in western theology and the theory and practice of physical education (i.e., the mind-body split).

Several scholars have presented frameworks for thinking about sport in relation to holistic Judea-Christian and Pauline theology (Hopsicker and Kretchmar, 2008; Watson, 2007; White, 2012b). Pieper (1948/1998, 1965) has been arguably the most important thinker from the Catholic community with regards to orthodox theological understandings of leisure, play, work, and recreation. Drawing mainly on Aquinas (1225-1274c.), Pieper extols the worth and necessity of leisure and play and attacks the 'cult of work' that has embroiled western industrialized civilization, by presenting a holistic theological anthropology that views the body as inherently good and spiritual. Pieper's thesis has significantly influenced protestant accounts of sport and play, as well as recent analyses of play by Catholic sports scholars that have helped counter the theological error of dualism in western theology and the study and understanding of sport (see Kelly, 2011; Sing, 2011, 2004). The Greek dualistic philosophy of Plato, as used especially in the writings of

¹⁶³ For an extended version of the present discussion see Watson and Parker (2014).

Church father Origen (182-251c.), have been influential in denigrating the sacredness of the body and thus sport and physical education in the last two millennia (Wilson, 1989).

Writers from across the traditions have advocated the sacrament of the 'present', in which a person may experience God in a bodily way, i.e., via a sense of wholeness, centeredness and peace (Merton, 1948; Quoist, 1965; Williams, 2003). This disposition (based on the 'presence' of the Holy Spirit) allows for negative experience and feelings from the past, and fears of the future, to be surrendered to God. More recent sport psychology research has demonstrated that heightened levels of competitive-anxiety - largely due to personality traits, external influences, past poor-performance, and fear of failure - most often results in maladaptive stress, a reduced sense of overall well-being and resultant decrements in performance (Weinberg and Gould, 2011c). Indeed, longitudinal studies have shown that being able to stay in the 'present' is a key factor in attaining 'flow states' (Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). The tendency to dichotomize subjective, playful sporting experience and sport psychology has not gone without critique (see Ravizza, 2002, 1984) yet Cooper (1998) and Murphy and White (1995) have made a series of claims that athletes' reports of 'being-in-the-zone', 'in the moment', and/or 'in flow', are in some way spiritual, religious and/or transcendent experiences. Although some psychologists (i.e. Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) and catholic scholars (see Hastings, 2004; Kelly, 2011) have noted parallels between 'flow' experiences and the meditative and contemplative practices of catholic communities (e.g., Jesuit and Ignation), Christian scholars have critiqued this body of work for its philosophical naivety, whilst, at the same time, championing the good of these sporting experiences in themselves (Higgs, 1983; Higgs and Braswell, 2004; Hoffman, 1992b, 1992c; Watson, 2007b).

In particular, these writers, ask whether so-called 'spiritual experiences' and the use and interpretation of sporting metaphors, such as 'sporting spirit', in traditional and alternative/extreme sports (see O'Gorman, 2010a; Watson, 2007b), lead the athlete to a deeper commitment to God. Latterly, debates relating to theologies of sport and play have focused on a range of diverse agendas from the recovery of the play ethic in modern sport (Hoffman, 2010a) to the potential prophetic message of disability sport (see Watson, 2012a 2012b; Watson and Parker, 2012b). Amidst all of this, the theology of sport landscape has changed markedly in more recent years because of the work of Robert Ellis (2014) and Lincoln Harvey (2014). Positing somewhat diverse theological standpoints, these scholars have instigated a re-calibration of the way in which the relationship between Christianity and sport may be viewed and conceptualised.

Grounded in a small-scale empirical work around sports players and fans, Ellis (2014) claims that participation in sport can be legitimately conceived as 'man' partaking in God's playful creativity. Writing with an explicit intention to construct a new theology of sport, Ellis critiques much existing work in the field for its preoccupation with 'play' - as opposed to 'sport' - emphasising the bureaucratized, institutionalised and competitive/contested nature of the latter. Presenting a chronological (if somewhat

partial/selective) analysis of the history of sporting experience from both a business/consumerist and cultural politics perspective, Ellis examines sport in line with three main themes (or historical responses): (i) as a vehicle for communion with the divine; (ii) as a frivolous exercise (i.e., as a distraction from the serious business of living); and (iii) as a means of character-building and moral improvement. Alongside discussion of key Biblical themes such as play and creation and the Pauline (sporting) metaphors, Ellis acknowledges the transcendent nature of sport (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). In agreement with some of those before him (i.e., Johnston, 1983; Hoffman, 2010; Krattenmaker, 2010), one of the most important observations that Ellis makes is that modern-day sports ministry (and sports chaplaincy) organisations often adopt a somewhat instrumental approach to their engagement with the wider sporting world; i.e., prioritizing evangelism over pastoral care and thus negating a more authentic, holistic and prophetic perspective.

With the aim of helping us understand our love for sport and what makes it such a powerful popular cultural pre-occupation, Harvey (2014) offers a less empirically grounded account than that of Ellis yet one which acknowledges some of the key tropes of Christianity and sport/play debates. Noting that the relationship between sport and the Church has not always been one of blissful congruity, Harvey's central argument is that, theologically speaking, we should view sport/play as a 'radically unnecessary but internally meaningful' activity, i.e., as an autotelic venture (an end in itself). Comparing the autotelicity of sport with the autotelicity of creation (i.e., unnecessary yet meaningful), Harvey argues that when we play, we express our 'deepest identity as freely loved into existence by God'. In this view, the historical popularity of sport is intimately connected to the fact that such pursuits mesh with our very existence; we love sport 'because it reverberates with who we are as created beings' (Dailey, 2016). Positing sport as both a social (and theological) 'good' and 'bad', Harvey goes on to reiterate the sentiments of other writers who have critiqued the use of sport by the church for purely missional (read: instrumental) reasons suggesting that such an approach is tantamount to 'corruption'. A further key observation for Harvey surrounds the relationship between sport and worship. It would be fair to say that there is a well-established argument in the sport/Christianity literature concerning the way in which the outworking of God-given sporting gifts may constitute a form of worship but Harvey disputes this. For him the two should not be conflated or confused. Perhaps equally controversial is Harvey's treatment of professionalized sport. Adopting a fervent belief in the legitimacy and authenticity of a bygone age (when sporting participation was a pastime and not 'work'), he argues that amateur sport is 'true sport' whereas professional sport is 'corruption'. While such a view is interesting, it would appear at best unrealistic and a worst divisive especially given the embedded (and accepted) nature of professional sport in popular culture and the number of Christians who ply their trade in the elite sporting world in the belief that this is both their vocation and their calling.

Of course, collectively such theological postulations are useful in the sense that they provide frameworks around which we might analyse and interrogate the Christianity/sport relationship. Yet they do little to explain or connect our everyday sporting experiences to our faith journeys. Moreover, their pre-occupation with traditional notions of 'sport' and 'play' fail to resonate with broader conceptions of health, fitness and wellbeing, a topic with which Cameron and Balcar (2018) have more recently engaged.

Cameron and Balcar (2018) have more recently critiqued the reluctance of the church to champion issues relating to physical activity, health and wellbeing arguing that a passion and appreciation for physical health should be 'a central concern of Christian mission at [the] personal, parish and local community and diocesan level'. Focusing primarily on secondary source materials, they adopt an altogether more dialogical frame of reference bringing together broader societal issues (i.e., the health implications of physical inactivity), government policy agendas, and theological reflection to propose what they see as a 'new approach' to the relationship between faith, health and wellbeing whereby the church serves as "a significant force for promoting physical, emotional and spiritual health and healing whilst fulfilling the churches traditional enthusiasm and action to tackle social justice and inequalities." (p.9). Such engagement, they argue, has benefits both for Christians themselves (in relation to their own lives and ministries) and for their communities (both inside and outside of the church). In addition, they offer case study examples of best practice highlighting ways in which parishes might engage with broader health and wellbeing agendas.

Cameron and Balcar (2018) conclude that in order to facilitate the potential of sport as an effective tool of community engagement and mission, the church must embrace more intentionally the broader physical activity agenda at a personal, parish/community and diocesan/regional level. In turn, they suggest that in order to embed this work across the entirety of its audiences, the church must: (i) raise awareness, knowledge and debate about the body and the creative Christian responses to physical, emotional and social well-being needs; (ii) create a framework for parish and school engagement with relevant models, resources and support; (iii) work with para-church, government and secular organisations to help us focus more on physical activity health and wellbeing in a broad range of contexts, and (iv) support clergy and laity in pursuing health and wellbeing.

Give us our Ball Back: Reclaiming Sport for the Common Good (2012)

Paul Bickley and Sam Tomlin's short report, Give Us Our Ball Back (2012)¹⁶⁴ explored the wider role of sport as governments, inter-governmental organisations and NGOs use it to deliver economic growth, increase participation and delivering social outcomes. It looks to assess the claims made on behalf of sport, which it believes is "being set up to over-promise and under-deliver". In agreement with Harvey (2014), they point

164 <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2012/06/25/give-us-our-ball-back>

out that against all the positive impact it can make ‘sport is just as capable of making us bad as it is of making us good. It is just as likely to promote and excuse conflict as it is to reconcile.’ They highlight a growing body of evidence which suggests that sport can powerfully shape behaviour negatively from high school sport and increases in adult drink driving to power sports and anti-social behaviour. This goes against how men like the Revd Charles Kingsley, motivated by a holistic Christian theology thought sport could be used to train character. Therefore, the context in which sport is conducted is highly influential and this is also seen in evidence from many community sport projects.

Bickley and Tomlin also assess sport and reconciliation and the economy and health: here they highlight that despite the former chief Medical Officers statement that “If a medication existed which had a similar effect [to physical activity], it would be regarded as a wonder drug or miracle cure” participation in the England was stagnant¹⁶⁵, in part because the biggest factor in affecting participation is general life circumstance. They conclude with a theological appraisal of sport as an unnecessary and playful, yet serious, activity that does not require utilitarian justification (see also Harvey, 2014). Against the prevailing winds, they recommend that sport should be released from the demands of ‘public utility’ to allow it to return to its ‘rightful place in society – that of contributing to a full, happy and meaningful life’. They argue that other benefits will come naturally and do not need to be manipulated. Sport should be valued for what it is, fun and wellbeing based on the intrinsic motivation and desire to want to play or watch for the exhilaration, excitement and sense of challenge sport inspires at all levels.

The State of Play

On the back of the 2012 report, Paul Bickley (from Theos for Christians in Sport and The Bible Society) published a further report, *The State of Play* (2014).¹⁶⁶ This reviewed the growing body of literature which sought to explore the connections between religion and sport providing a theological account of sport via interviews with Christian professional athletes, chaplains and others working in the field.

Like his 2012 report, Bickley (with Tomlin) leans heavily on the notion of the perceived belief, often by football fans, that there is a growing ethical crisis in the world of sport and that sport is increasingly subjected to a range of extrinsic concerns – especially market and public policy demands. In doing so he asks, what is an authentic Christian response to the growing significance of sport? He highlights the joy and

¹⁶⁵ At the time of writing, seven million (or just 16.3%) adults in England were reported as active (participating in sport three times a week for 30 minutes at moderate intensity) in 2010-11, down marginally on 2008-09 figures. The argument here was that despite £450m being channelled into the national governing bodies over four years with the aim of encouraging a million more people to be active by 2013, the return of only 109,000 new active people had rightly been described as ‘poor value for money’ and disappointing. Seventeen of the twenty-one governing bodies in receipt of this money saw a decrease in once-a-week participation.

¹⁶⁶ https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/Reportfiles/The_State_of_Play.pdf

possibility of transcendent, 'godward', experience, as well as its sheer popularity, also open it to the possibility of 'idolatry' of players and concludes that these can combine to create an environment where athletes are under pressure to act as societal role models, but also to achieve sporting success, sometimes resulting in high profile accounts of poor behaviour on and off the field of play.

His theological underpinnings also lean heavily on Harvey's (2014) notion work that sport has derived from play and 'the loss of the sense of play is a theology's concern.' He contends that current sporting activity lends itself to a form of idolatry for both players and spectators and takes this further by suggesting that this is what is at the root of an increasing ethical disorder of sport and its institutions.

To reinforce his argument, he maps this onto the experience of players - their sense of identify purpose and fear of failure - and explores chaplaincy as an authentic Christian response to the sporting environment highlighting the welfare needs of players. This leads him to concluding that chaplaincy offers a 'symbol that a sporting vocation can exist, but that sporting success should not be idolised.': that an athlete or player are an authentic representation of Christian engagement with sport. As he says, "Though they are not missionaries, their work is missional; not proselytism, but evangelical" in this there is an interesting insight into how sport and wellbeing ministry projects might balance the mission and faith pathway aspect of its approach. Bickley argues that an authentic theological response to sport is to celebrate it but calls for reflection on what other acts can be celebrated to limit the importance of sport. He also discusses what Christian players and spectators could do differently and mentions sport on Sundays. While he does not suggest undertaking any sort of "moralism" about playing or not, sport on a Sunday, he does ask whether Christians should draw certain lines in relation to faith. In doing this would also help sport to be free from the expectations that make it something else and help it main a sense of 'play', and in doing the joy and possibility of transcendent, 'godward', experience.

Finally, he offers Christians and non-Christians alike, a common-sense view of sport, what he calls, sporting decalogue, that suggests:

1. Don't take sport too seriously – it shouldn't be the source of your identity.
2. Don't make sporting idols. Players are human beings, not gods. Perfection isn't the essence of sport.
3. Don't try to say that God is on your side.
4. Do things that are nothing to do with sport. The best of your time belongs to God, your family and your neighbour.
5. Honour your competitor – there's no game without them.

6. Play to win, but not at any cost. Sport is not more important than the people that play it. It is not good to behave on the pitch or track in ways that it is bad to behave in the street.
7. Don't deliberately harm your body or anyone else's.
8. Acknowledge that you or your team will sometimes lose, and that failure is as important as success.
9. Don't abuse or attack the player on the basis of their race, nationality, sexuality. Talk about the performance, not the person.
10. Find a sport you love to play, and play it. Play for the sake of the game, not for what it can give you

This provides a useful set of values for any Christian sports lover or sports ministry.

iii. Current Sports Ministry and Theological Frameworks of Mission

There appears to be little in the way of well sourced and evidenced theological frameworks for sport and wellbeing ministry. This perhaps explains why there are significant limitations with current models and ongoing debate about the best way to ensure sports ministry goes beyond delivering positive social outcomes into mission. As is stated previously, the current macro framework is the 'In Sport' and 'Through Sport' models operating at as a classification for how an organisation approached mission through sports and wellbeing. This can range from those who utilized a relationship model where the leader is a Christian and builds trust with individuals to speak into their lives. Others simply use sporting activities as an opportunity to highlight or advertise their faith church, hoping it will be a conversation starter.

Others use the Bible's teachings during sporting sessions to underpin sport/life/character teamwork related messages. This can be done in a very gentle, if not disguised manner, or a moderate level direct Bible talk with a prayer, through to preaching to it participants. There are significant challenges for parachurch organisations, in how they provide effective pathways back into the local church or youth group where they aren't not connected to local parishes or host events at a national level. Geography is an issue. Nevertheless, it is critical that the sector creates well thought through and evidenced pathways from sporting and wellbeing activity into church life and or a commitment to Christ for the future success of sports and wellbeing ministry.

This is not to say that sports ministry does not have a theological underpinning. It appears that many sport ministry organisations' mission value based on the 'lived experience' of individuals. This is often shared through the dissemination of information years after a model has begun. Brian Mason's *Beyond the Gold* -

what every church needs to know about Sport Ministry (2011) and Jon Cox's *Life to the Max: Inspiring Young People in their Adventure of Faith* (2014) are examples of this. While not extensively researched, several organisations also loosely base their approach on hybrid models, again often developed through lived experience rather than theological or academic research. For example, PSALMS has developed its *People Progress* approach, loosely basing this on the work of Rick Warren.

Model Circles of Commitment

In his ground-breaking book *the Purpose Driven Church* (1995), Warren describes the history of the development of his church's growth. He argues that church growth comes when a church is healthy and balancing the five purposes of church: worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship and discipleship. Firstly, he identifies that people move through the purposes like the bases of a baseball diamond: fellowship (baptism), discipleship (small groups), ministry (service) and finally evangelism (making disciples through mission).

His second model focuses on five concentric 'circles of commitment' as a person completes their pathway with Christ into faith. These are: community (the lowest level of commitment i.e. none), crowd (anyone who shows up both believers and non-believers'), congregation (official members), committed (those dedicated to growing in discipleship) and core (those who are involved in ministry). Warren argues that it is important to recognise where individuals fall in these categories and develop processes to move them from the outside in – from community to core.

Warren's model is based on the successful growth of his church and therefore not directly applicable to sport and wellbeing ministry, which often sits alongside church life or is delivered by external organisations. It does however highlight many important elements that a sport and wellbeing ministry should consider as it develops its missional approach. Simply put, that a pathway is required to move individuals from not believing to believing. Furthermore, Warren's model raises the question: which of the circles or all of them, should a sport and wellbeing ministry take responsibility for? Even if it does not seek to achieve all of the elements and stages of the faith journey represented in the model, it should be aware of these and seek others, like the local church, to ensure they can continue moving an individual from one circle to the next. Finally, sport and wellbeing ministry ultimately provides an opportunity for an individual to lead as a core member.

In having modelled how he moves people through the faith journey, Warren also provides some useful insights to consider:

- He argues that the ministry must really care and do this by listening – love leads to trust

- Too often the core of an organisation is small and under pressure can lose its sense of mission: to recruit new people
- When working with the community, build a bridge between the community and/or church/mission. In designing these bridges make sure that they focus on the community needs not those already connected.
- Support the congregation and the core through training and leadership development
- It takes time to build and move through the circles – do not rush; go slow
- The welcome to the community, crowd and congregation needs to be warm and uplifting: make them feel special.
- Assimilation is key to moving people from awareness to attendance at events to active membership: being a part of the community rather than an institution is important.
- Create opportunities to build relationships – friendships are key to retaining individual members.
- Residentials play an important role cultivating new friendships.

PSALMS Ministry Approach

Using its years of experience delivering sport ministry in Gloucestershire, in 2018, Psalms set out its theological principles in a document entitled *Sports Ministry and Fresh Expressions*¹⁶⁷. From its inception, Psalms has sought to create fresh expressions of church or missional activity of an existing worshipping community and this is reiterated by Williams and French in this document where their 'hope is that in developing sports ministries they will be engaging deeply with God's purposes in and through sport rather than adding Christianity as an extra to a sporting activity'¹⁶⁸.

This document was not a theory of change to take young people from sport into faith but a helpful attempt to connect to the limited theology available - they cite Greg Smith, *Sports Theology: playing inside out* (2010), Jeremy Treat, *More Than A Game* (Themelios, December 2015)¹⁶⁹ and Robert Ellis, *The Games People Play* (2014) - with sports ministry in so far as it related to Psalms approach.¹⁷⁰ Psalms approach is simply, to be inclusive - sport for everyone – that whatever the sporting activity - informal play, games, competitive sport - this should be fun, and to naturally put Christianity and faith at the heart of all their

¹⁶⁷ Cate Williams and Rob French, *Sports Ministry and Fresh Expressions*, Diocese of Gloucester, 2018; <https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Sports-ministry-and-Fresh-Expressions.pdf>

¹⁶⁸ Cate Williams and Rob French, *Sports Ministry and Fresh Expressions*, Diocese of Gloucester, 2018

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/more-than-a-game-theology-of-sport/>

¹⁷⁰ Cate Williams and Rob French, *Sports Ministry and Fresh Expressions*, Diocese of Gloucester, 2018.

activity. To this end, they highlight how sport can align with theological principles and set a framework from which Psalms can operate.

Like many sports ministers, Williams and French begin by highlighting Paul's words in Hebrews 12.1 about the need to 'strip down all the things that weigh us down and trip us and run, with endurance, the race God has set before us'. In doing so, they remind us that where God is present in life, it will be 'healthy and life-giving' but that this will also focus attention on, other parts maybe out of alignment with God, and these need to be tackled. They go on to suggest that this provides a useful framework for starting sports ministry by asking three key questions in mapping a local area:

1. What motivates people to do sport?
2. Where is God already at work?
3. How can we speak Good News in a way that connects?

From this, they briefly explore six theologically-based approaches that can inform how sports ministry is delivered.

Firstly, being incarnate: ¹⁷¹ God created a good physical world and came into that world in the form of Jesus and therefore we are physical beings who should look after our physical bodies as a natural part of faith. Secondly, that within the act of creation there is a sense of fun and play and that Jesus puts children in the centre of his ministry, therefore sporting activity should appreciate and encourage a sense of fun, joy and play. Thirdly, that as God made us to be relational, a theology founded in the interaction between Father, Son and Spirit, then sporting activity must also be relational and community based, something team sport does by its very nature. Where team sport is less important, they highlight fourthly, how outdoor sports and recreation help us connect with the natural world as an important part of faith, modelled by Jesus who used nature in his parables and always sought quiet space in nature. As Williams and French argue sport can play a significant role in working-out creation theology through: all creation praises (Psalm 148); all creation is held in Christ and redeemed through the cross (Colossians 1); there is a connection between human salvation and that of all creation (Romans 8).

Fifthly, Williams and French highlight the role sport can play in bringing out the best in everyone, regardless of skill or ability, while also enabling people to maximise their God-given physical abilities through elite sporting competition. Sixthly, they also warn that sport has a tendency to lead to idolatry and therefore sports ministry needs to be on its guard, to help people find the right balance, and to ensure sport remains as a celebrated part of life in God, by putting God first. Finally, they offer some further resources about using sport to develop fresh expressions of church highlighting the need to listen to

¹⁷¹ God in human form in the person of Jesus

individuals and communities, understand their concerns and passions while needs asking God for wisdom and discernment.

KICK Ministry Model

Another example of a values-based sports ministry is Kick (formerly Kick London). Their 'mission is to transform young people's lives with God's love through sport and support'. They do this through values-driven physical education, street dance, mentoring, chaplaincy in schools and community KICK Academies. Their model puts leadership at the heart of ministry to ensure that their Christian ethos is lived out in the core values and behaviour of their leaders. This is summarised in the six progression pathways: Explore, Establish, Consolidate, Drive, Influence and Mastery.

Kick has a growing role in UK schools delivering Solutions Focus Mentoring which is not allowed to introduce faith elements however they are also developing alongside this chaplaincy services to schools that include: assemblies, drop-in sessions, lessons, events Christian Unions and church liaison.

Through their various approaches Kick aim to transform the young person from personal development and transform their community through making a social impact and to see them grasp life's purpose with real spiritual change. This journey is not monitored or evaluated but and expressed in their theory of change model (see below). This seems to have been developed through experience and not based in any other Christian mission model.

Leaving aside their schools work, which a number of sport ministry organisations undertake, perhaps of most significance, is that Kick's model does attempt to link participants back to parish life beyond seeing any spiritual change in the young people they engage. While there is no significant evidence to underpin the model and only limited anecdotal evidence at best, in theory at least, the model does identify a pathway between the school engagement to afterschool sporting activity and into the church as a significant aspect of its Kicks impact.

As the model illustrates, Kick's school coaches signpost young people to their local Kick Academy which provide a physical space and point of referral/connection between the school and the local church. The Academy provides the church with a platform to engage the young people in the community. Ideally the Kick coach is also involved in the after-school provision through the Academy to provide vital continuity while involving volunteers from the church, however this must be paid for by the school or church. The Kick Academy also provide Christian content by illustrating a sporting theme such as teamwork or fair play, with an inspirational thought from the Bible and then putting their learning into practise with matches/routines. The Kick Model is explored further in the Case Studies in Chapter Eight.



Figure 3. KICK's Theory of Change

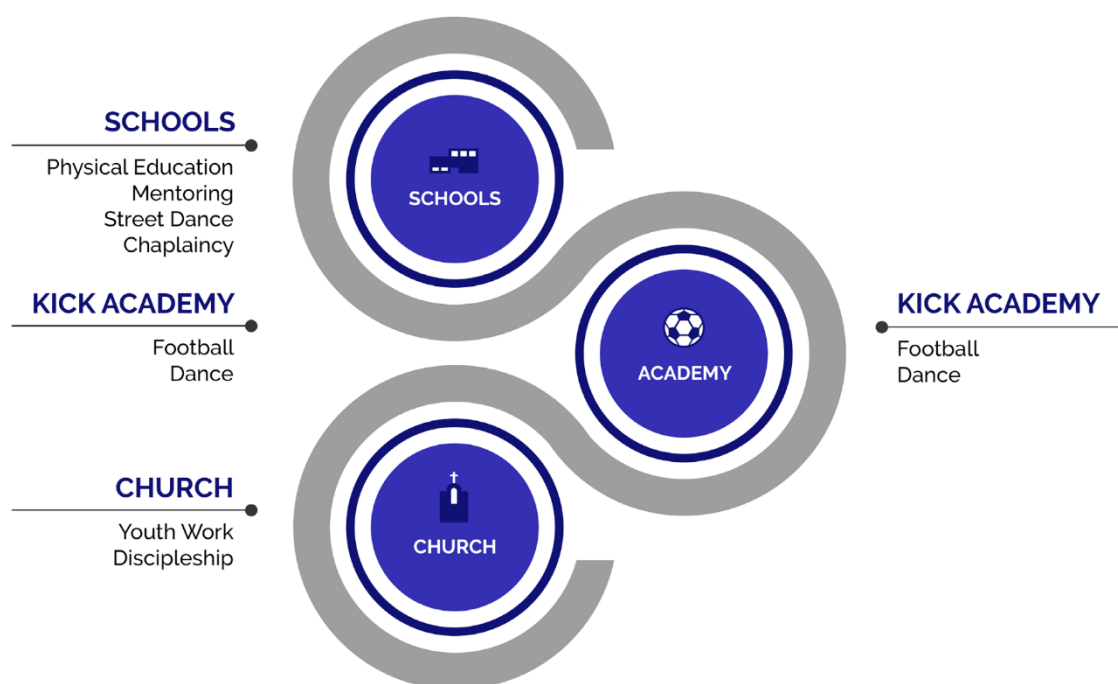


Figure 4. KICKs Sport Ministry Pathway Model

It is these sorts of pathways that seem to provide the best model for mission. Again, while monitoring through data collection is limited, the Hoxton Sports Hub has shown how this model can work successfully when an organisation provides a clear pathway from the sporting activity with limited Christian input through a church-based youth 'hangout', youth group and youth service. The Hoxton Model is explored further in the Case Studies in Chapter Eight.

Scripture Union Ministry Model

While not a specific SWM model, Scripture Union has developed a new central ministry model for all its work aimed to reaching the 95% of all under 18s not in church. Their *Revealing Jesus* mission framework has been developed to help churches to connect with young people and provide discipleship. They have initiated a campaign to inspire and ignite 'passionate volunteer Faith Guides to walk alongside young people on their journey of faith' in the long-term¹⁷² and for churches to develop 'Grow Communities to provide relevant and culturally appropriate opportunities for young people to meet regularly with their peers, to worship and grow together'.¹⁷³ Together, Faith Guides, and the churches that commission them, develop Grow Communities. Scripture Union are underpinning this approach with support, training and resources including to enable churches to use sport¹⁷⁴ to grow church communities.¹⁷⁵

The approach is based on their research and experience that 'children and young people thrive in relevant and culturally appropriate worshipping communities that are designed around them, their needs and their interests'¹⁷⁶. It also reflects their insight that 'while each child and young person is different, most go through the same stages as they become and grow as a Christian: Connect, Explore, Respond and Grow'

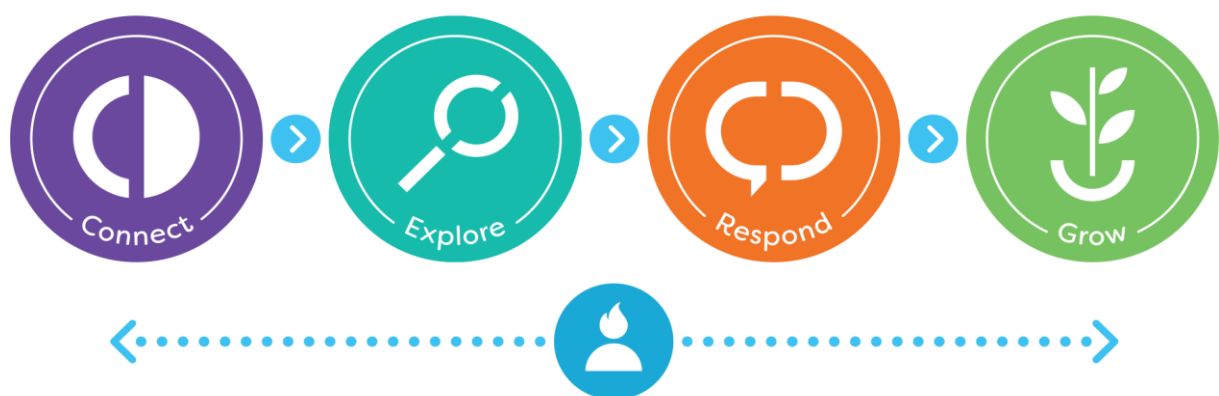


Figure 5: Scripture Union - the four stages of the faith journey

As can be seen in Figure 5, there are four stages to the model which provide a logical progression of a faith journey towards a commitment or near commitment and involvement in a new worshipping community:

¹⁷² <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/what-we-dorevealing-jesus-mission-framework/faith-guides>

¹⁷³ <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/grow-communities>

¹⁷⁴ <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/what-we-do/mission-through-sport>

¹⁷⁵ <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/grow-communities>

¹⁷⁶ <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/grow-communities>

Connect helps young people to see and understand how Jesus connects with their world through light-touch activities of common interest. This allows the church to engage with their world in a relevant and reliable way with a Christian identity and is the stage that SWM provides an activity of common interest relevant to the young people.

Explore is the phase when young people show more interest in the Christian faith and want to gain an understanding from the Bible about Jesus, the Bible itself and the Christian faith through their Faith Guide.

Respond is the phase for further exploration of the Christian faith and a clear invitation and opportunity to respond to Jesus. This can be a single moment or happen over time.

Grow is the phase to provide time and space, within a supportive Christian community, to grow in their faith and to express it in worship in environment they feel comfortable.

This model provides a helpful guide for SWM highlighting the path young people take towards faith. It usefully highlights the need for people in the church to guide young people over time and the need for new relevant worshipping communities that young people may need to engage in ‘the Church’ in the long term: places their new faith can be nurtured and developed. It reflects the work of 9Dot Research’s *Faith Journeys for the Church of England* (2018). The model also points to the role that SWM can play in reaching young people not in church by providing activities that young people want. There is, of course, potential for SWM to also be the setting in which relevant worshipping communities can be created but this is not explicit in Scripture Union’s high-level model. This model warrants further investigation for initiatives aimed at children and young people, including assessing the evidence base from which it is built. It will also be interesting to see, over the next ten years, as this model is rolled out, how successful it is in driving young people to faith.

iv. A Vision for the Church of England in the 2020s

There is growing understanding that new worshipping communities could play a vital role here.¹⁷⁷ This approach is included in the new vision for the Church of England in its recently published *A Vision for the Church of England in the 2020s* by The Most Revd Stephen Cottrell.¹⁷⁸ In it he states that a mixed ecology of church is biblical and will be the norm in the future – that ‘we will probably need a greater and more

¹⁷⁷ The report ‘From Anecdote to Evidence’ provides a summary of the findings from the Church Growth Research Programme including that growth is found in Fresh Expression of Church- <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/church-growth-research-programme/anecdote-evidence>. It also provides some useful insight about which factors are associated with growth including: context, leadership, clear mission and purpose, reflecting and learning, being able to adapt and change, assigning roles to lay people and clergy, actively engaging children and teenagers and those who might not go to church, being welcoming and following up with visitors, being committed to nurturing new and existing Christians and having vision for growth.

¹⁷⁸ *A Vision for the church of England in the 2020s*, The Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, November 2020

diverse expression of church life'. He adds that this is a sign of the how the Holy Spirit has been leading the Church and that these expressions nearly always arise out of a healthy flourishing parish ministry. In the accompanying document, *A Theological reflection on our emerging vision and priorities* he points out that the church needs to learn that, as Rowen Williams argues in his Preface to the Mission-shaped Church (2004), 'Church is what happens when people encounter the risen Jesus'. This is an important guide to sports and wellbeing ministry if it wants to be a new worshipping community that is diverse in 'rhythm and style'.

Fresh Expression and new worshipping communities

As the Church of England, continues to explore Fresh Expressions (FX) of Church including new worshipping communities (new worshipping communities), the Evangelism and Discipleship Team is looking at the ways the learning from the twenty years of the ecumenical FX movement can further develop the missional culture across our parishes, deaneries and dioceses.¹⁷⁹ With FXs accounting for 15% of the Churches congregations with around 50,000 members¹⁸⁰, it is keen to grow these contextual forms of church arising out of a local community. This approach, however, is not supported by everyone in the Church.¹⁸¹ Many have argued in recent years about the burden and negative impact of imposed 'managerialism' on parishes, and disagree with the analysis that theological training, church building and ordained leadership are limiting growth in the Church.^{182 183} With new plans to expand FX churches there is renewed concern about detrimental impact on the parish system particularly diverting more resources from parishes to FXs.¹⁸⁴ As Rev. Canon Dr Frog Orr-Ewing notes in his recent article (2021), the argument is around 'Parochialism verses Managerialism' or in effect, local verse national: a similar discussion is happening in government policy about how to deliver a placed-based approach effectively and successfully to ensure levelling up happens.

To aid the Church of England desired growth, the Evangelism and Discipleship Team is co-ordinating the implementation of the FX Greenhouse project across ten dioceses in the next five years. This is designed to connect teams of people with others who are also finding new ways to share the Good News with their community and grow a fresh expression of church that enables them to grow in their faith.

Greenhouse ethos is based on 10 practices:

1. Be Part of a team

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/fresh-expressions-church-england>

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/Fresh%20Expressions%20State%20of%20Play%20Report%202019.pdf>

¹⁸¹ <https://unherd.com/2021/07/the-church-is-abandoning-its-flock/>

¹⁸² <https://www.psephizo.com/life-ministry/do-we-need-to-save-the-parish/>

¹⁸³ <https://unherd.com/2021/08/the-church-is-on-the-brink-of-revolt/>

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.psephizo.com/life-ministry/do-we-need-to-save-the-parish/>

2. Be ready to learn – as a community of practice or learning community
3. Be yourself – it is not about following a prescribed route but about discerning the path to take
4. Be supportive
5. Be focused – based on the ‘Listening First Missional Journey’ (see below)
6. Be open - commitment to being reflective and open to change and a willingness to learn
7. Be present and listening
8. Be creative
9. Be supported
10. Be excited! - Growing a fresh expression will be a great adventure

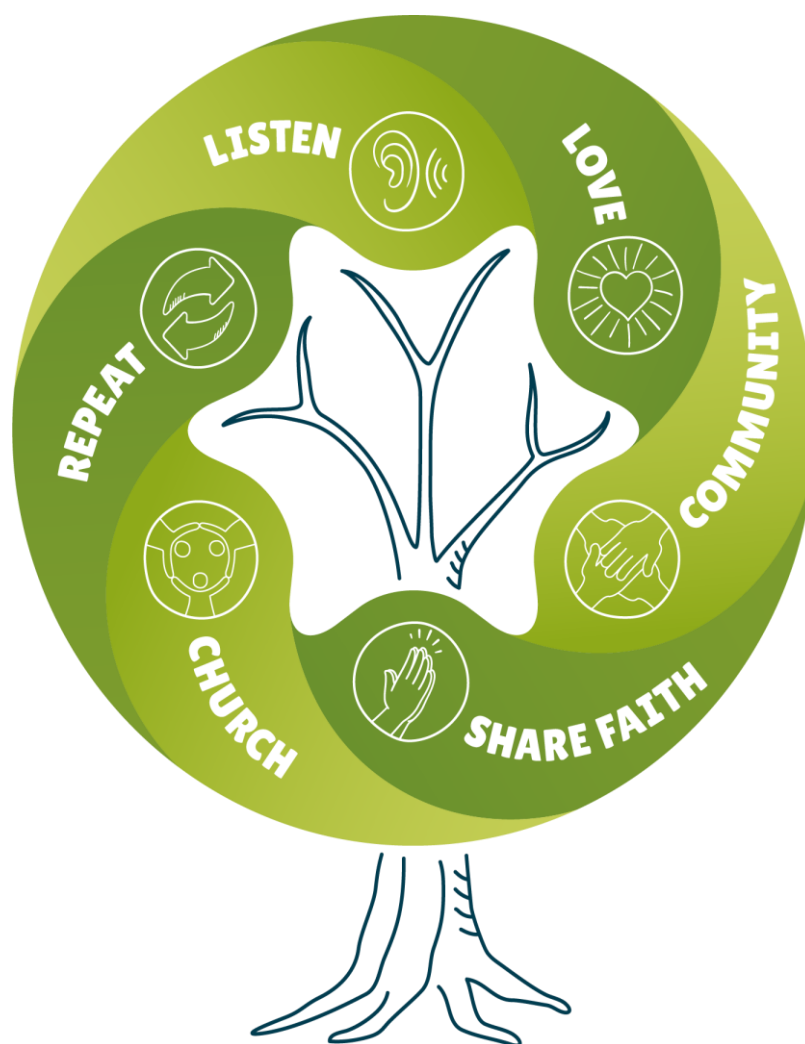


Figure 5: Fresh Expressions GreenHouse Project – The ‘Loving First Missional Journey’

As a part of this work, they have worked with a Christian research organisation, Eido, to devise The Fruitfulness Framework which is a new (June 2021) tool to help leaders measure and improve the health and impact of their FX Community.¹⁸⁵ The framework looks beyond simply counting numbers of people but seeks to gain a deeper understanding of a members life including their relationship with God.¹⁸⁶ This allows leaders to assess the depth of their FX's impact, improve that impact, compare with other FXs and support funding bids.

While it is very early days for this measurement tool (they were offering an initial free trial) sports and wellbeing ministry is a hybrid model – sport, wellbeing, and faith together. If successful, it will have participants who are drawn to it from all three directions and it will need to measure a little across them all including sport, social and faith outcomes.

New worshipping communities and Sport

In the Diocese of London, under its Capital Vision 2020, the diocese set a goal of creating or renewing 100 new worshipping communities across the Capital. Lead by the Bishop of Islington and his team at the Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication, they have worked with every tradition, size, and model of church to support leaders and church teams across London, England and beyond as they look to multiply disciples, churches and networks. The Gregory Centre has developed a church planting pipeline using the key steps: to identify church planting opportunities and to develop these ideas through training, coaching and resourcing financially. The Centre not only offers individual consultations with those wanting to plant and grow new churches but also provide resources; sharing useful documents and stories of what God is doing in London and beyond alongside a new Pioneer School (with CMS) to train lay pioneers including the skills, knowledge and understanding to launch and lead pioneer expressions of church (such as missional communities), or community projects (including entrepreneurship).

In a report that assessed the impact of the Gregory Centre and progress towards the 100 new new worshipping communities in London under Capital Vision, the report concluded, in the majority of cases, new worshipping communities are growing rapidly. Whilst a few started as early as 2013, most started in the last three years (2017-2019). It also explored the learning and insight that had been found in its work to date.¹⁸⁷ One of the key messages was the need for ongoing communication and strong management of relationships to ensure the support of other churches or at least to win them over in time. This would help reinforce the message that the centre offers different models of multiplication. The report also pointed out the importance of the resourcing of new worshipping communities strategies including buildings, money and expertise encompassing training new leaders who go on to lead new communities. (e.g. Pioneer

¹⁸⁵ <https://www.eidoresearch.com/fruitfulness-framework?fbclid=IwAR03OorN2g0yzcAZQT1pkXSOKeubRiQt4l2hILYvh063jHYc5-rlHz7xoQU>

¹⁸⁶ The full questionnaire can be viewed here: Fruitfulness Framework - Eido Research (example) (alchemer.com)

¹⁸⁷ new worshipping communities and Capital Vision 2020 Interim evaluation findings developed for and with the Gregory Centre, Rev Liz Clutterbuck and Andy Schofield for the TI Group, 2020.

School & Estates Course.), the sharing of expertise in local areas, and the financial resources for new worshipping communities to employ staff needed for growth. Seeing what is working on the ground and turning it into replicable models is also a vital part of developing NEC.

Alongside this new worshipping communities that are a part of a strong established network also seem to flourish more quickly. IN London these are the new worshipping communities supported by Church Revitalisation Trust, New Wine and a new emerging network with the catholic tradition HeartEdge. In measuring maturity, researchers used peoples willing to give support new worshipping communities financially. From data analysis done by the Gregory Centre for 2013-2018, the report highlights that there is a correlation between new worshipping communities with increased giving with Parish giving across the Diocese increasing by a third and Parish giving within the entities associated with new worshipping communities having doubled. Some of the wider learning for developing a new worshipping communities approach further included more debate around ecclesiology to support a diversity of planting models, a shift from opportunity to strategy is needed and the challenge to ensure new worshipping communities go where the need is. This also requires greater strategic thought within the diocese and beyond it. The report also highlighted more work was needed to assess what had not worked: to understand the context and characteristics about why some people invested initially in developing a new worshipping communities but either did not start one or stopped early. Greater strategic thought both within the diocese and beyond it was also recommended.

In terms of what role sport and wellbeing activity could be a new worshipping communities, the DoL's Sports Priority explored how a sport-based activity 'group' could be developed as a new worshipping community using the diocesan definition of new worshipping communities: that it is a group of 20 or more, worshipping regularly together (at least monthly) for at least 6 months. This has progress slowly over a number of years.

The first workable example of this is being developed in the new Activate Church¹⁸⁸ project in the Hampton Deanery under the Bishop of Kensington.¹⁸⁹ This pilot pioneering sport and wellbeing programme aims to enhance community, wellbeing and faith through sporting activity and fitness. It was created by 10 Anglican and ecumenical partner churches around the Royal Park of Bushy Park in Teddington, working closely with the diocese. It is being led by a stipendiary Minister with access to a church building as a separate charity under a Bishops Mission Order.

Under the new Capital Vision 2030 vision it is likely that within the new worshipping communities strand to multiply new worshipping communities across the Capital, may include a sport theme for the creation of further new worshipping communities in London. While these are early days and Activate has much work

188 <https://www.activatechurch.org.uk>

189 <https://www.london.anglican.org/articles/87-new-worshipping-communities/>

to do to develop itself as a 'new worshipping communities' and its own community-based faith pathways this is encouraging for sport and wellbeing ministry, it would be used as a template for any new communities. With a new Capital Vision recently published which includes the growth of new worshipping communities, further thinking and work will needed alongside the Centre for Church Planting and Growth to help Activate develop a number of a new worshipping communities itself and then replicate this approach with other potential sport-base new worshipping communities.

Faith Journeys for the Church of England

In 2018, Benita Hewitt, market researcher and founder of 9Dot Research published *Faith Journeys for the Church of England*¹⁹⁰. This report should be carefully considered by the sport and wellbeing ministry sector as it provides critical insights to faith journeys, currently one of the weakest aspects of what sport and wellbeing ministry does. Hewitt based her conclusions on many years of research with psychologists and sociologists studying religious conversion and a wide variety of organisations including Westminster City Council, Alpha, Tear Fund, Evangelical Alliance, The Bible Society, Christian Research, Church Urban Fund, Scripture Union, Care for the Family and many others. She quotes Rowen Williams to highlight that every faith journey is unique and usually complex with multiple influences motivation and barriers: "It takes time to be a Christian. There are things that instantly make sense and make a difference and there are things that slowly, and sometimes rather painfully, find their way into your mind and heart"

She goes on to highlight that conducting and analysing research relating to faith journeys is challenging and definitions also impact results, as does how a researcher goes about understanding faith. This is further complicated by denominations and styles of churchmanship which in-turn guides what it means to be Christian or how to how to be one. She also highlights that this even more complicated because a person's assessment of when they are on their journey of faith may be in fact inaccurate (perception is commonly over or under-stated) and of course that people's faith fluctuates yearly, monthly, daily if not hourly. These are important points, perhaps illustrating why the sport ministry has struggled to define its mission models let alone monitor and evaluate them.

This is where Hewitt's research provides the sports ministry sector with much insight. By focusing on the whole Christian faith journey from the first moment to the point where someone can be described as Christ-like, she argues that there are some common stages that can be perceived:

1. Context – awareness experience and relationships
2. Catalyst

¹⁹⁰ <https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f3ecfb22c3ee/content/pages/documents/1594134314.pdf>

3. Initial engagement
4. Ongoing engagement
5. Belief, Commitment and Belonging
6. Transformation

She highlights that each stage is a part of a continuum providing a foundation for the next and that the greatest number of people are at the Context stage with every reducing number moving through to transformation. She also suggests that people can go backwards as well as forward and whole stages can be transposed or omitted. Her research also tackles the debate about sudden verse gradual conversion. Here she is clear that this process to being Christlike usually takes many years and involves all the stages and it is believed that that this process is increasingly common. Useful she concludes that here are typical characteristics of those people on a gradual faith journey which include:

- The person is fairly passive, an external influence is causing the change
- It is more emotional than rational
- There is a dramatic change in the person
- Behaviour change follows belief change
- The impact of the change is profound, so the change is more likely to be permanent

Here she highlights that the church ‘needs to walk beside people as they journey, discipling and encouraging, as well as supporting and reassuring during any setbacks.’

As Hewitt unpacks her findings there are some clear synergies where sports and wellbeing ministry has the potential to develop faith journeys and key conclusions that should shape how sports ministry is undertaken. The context for someone’s life is important with key influences includes family and friends, their communities, and the activities they are involved – “in the context of their lives people tend to be defined by their hopes and fears whilst being sustained by love”. Hewitt argues that today, ‘the public face of the church is often focussed on worship/churchgoing and this influences perceptions of what it is to be a Christian and especially the young define themselves as having no religion as they do not or want to participate in worship’. It is here that sport and wellbeing ministry could have a significant impact, helping to redefine the churches’ ‘face’: one that is interested in supporting the health and wellbeing of the local community and individuals, and creating attractive inclusive and fun sporting activity for youth. This would help the church and Christians move the narrative as a people of action into a more positive and increasing vital area of modern life.

Hewitt also argues that 'the church needs to be present in people's lives' especially those of children and adolescents as their 'worldviews of church and faith tend to be formed' at this time. Simply "if a young person develops a strong personal faith, it is likely to be a foundation throughout their lives'. In this case, Hewitt advocates a strong focus on young people.

Her research also indicates that initial engagement has to be positive and nurturing which is especially important for sport and wellbeing ministry which is often the first touch point with 'the church' for the unchurched. Experiences generating 'positive memories' can be achieved by being "welcoming, offering generous hospitality, helping to give people hope and helping to allaying fears". As Hewitt argues, "a negative experience, or even an experience which fails to nurture, can take people back to the context stage, sometimes delaying active engagement for many years or even a lifetime." As can be seen in the approach by the community sport sector, having fun, with friends and food can be a winning approach.

Furthermore, Hewitt's research indicates that sport and wellbeing ministry should be 'intentional about nurturing faith journeys' and 'incarnate, so that people might have the chance to experience the love of God'. She argues that the 'church needs to be aware of these catalytic moments and recognise the potential in every opportunity to nurture faith journeys'. Broadly, this is a challenge for current sports and wellbeing ministry especially where sports ministry is conducted with limited, on the ground, partnerships with the church.

There are also some important insights that Hewitt offers after a positive initial engagement with the Christian faith. In the stage of 'ongoing active engagement', there is usually a period of intentional activity which involves behavioural change where individuals 'are often searching for meaning and purpose and are particularly attracted by seeing the love of God in practice'. She identifies three main styles of engagement:

- Relational - This style of engagement has a female bias. It involves building relationships with other Christians, opening the opportunity to be disciplined by others.
- Experiential - This style of engagement involves practicing being a Christian – going to church, prayer, Bible engagement, small group activity - whatever is relevant in the individual's context.
- Intellectual/rational - This style of engagement has a male bias. It is often self-motivated and done largely in isolation with minimal direct influence from the church or other Christians.

While she is careful to point out that most people will prefer a style of engagement, they will often experience all styles of engagement, there is gender bias within these styles. This is particularly important for sports and wellbeing ministry which often has a strong gender (male) bias in its approach, even if this is only perceived. This conclusion is also important to note, as sport and wellbeing ministries consider how

best to engage individuals at this stage of discipleship either themselves or in partnership with the local church. What is

encouraging for sport and wellbeing ministry is Hewitt's assertion that 'the church needs to offer a range of ways to engage, nurturing faith in different styles' to 'allow individuals to explore faith in ways that will lead them to find purpose and meaning, in ways that are most likely to lead to commitment and transformation'. This links well with the principle of developing new worshipping sport and wellbeing communities. Furthermore, initial evidence also suggest that leading sport and wellbeing ministry is in itself a successful pathway to deepening an individual's faith and commitment whilst providing an excellent framework for discipleship.

The stage following this period of active engagement leads to belief, belonging and commitment where an individual may be 'confident with their faith and feel they belong to a Christian community, or want to more actively belong to a community'. Hewitt also believes that it is not until this stage, that there is often a public declaration of faith from which individual can also feel confident in talking to others about their faith. Again, this provides sport and wellbeing ministry with some significant considerations. What is clear is that an individual is unlikely to move from attending a sporting activity straight into church or church life; the exception to this is, from limited evidence, is where an individual may already have had a strong link to the church and the sporting activity has been an opportunity to reengage with church life. As a result, sport and wellbeing ministry and or the church must have a gradual pathway in which individual showing interest in faith can travel. This is likely to be more important for young people. The limited evidence from Hoxton Hub in London shows that a series of stepping-stones moving the individual closer to faith is a successful approach.

Hewitt goes on to highlight another important insight at this critical stage. As a person's worldview context is changing so significantly, "if the belonging and commitment is largely based on a strong relationship with a local church then the faith journey could be damaged if that local church moves outside their usual context. Belonging needs to be to The Church, as well as A Church. There needs to be a strong personal relationship with the living God, that can be sustained without the relationship with the local church." Once this stage is moved through transformation occurs and the individual becomes an active follower of Jesus Christ and the opportunity for a sport and wellbeing ministry is to recruit them into leadership of others on this journey. As Hewitt states, research shows that 'the desire to be active is strong and if they are not nurtured and used well in their local context, they may become disillusioned and either step back or move elsewhere.'

Finally, Hewitt cites research by Christian Research, about influences on faith journeys. This shows that people and relationships have the most influence on a person's faith journey. 'Young children are most likely to be influenced positively by their parents and grandparents. As they get older there is the

opportunity for children's workers (or equivalent) to influence, and then youth leaders and Christian friends as they move into adolescence. However, parents, non-Christian friends and siblings can also be a constant negative influence on a young person's faith journey.' The strongest positive short-term influences on young people are from attending Christian festivals or events.

As adults, 'the strongest encouragements to a faith journey are found in other people – Christian friends, church communities and families. However, the strongest discouragements to faith journeys are also found in other people – parents, spouses, church communities and friends. Alongside learning from other sport and wellbeing ministries, these are important considerations as new sport and wellbeing ministries consider how best to create missional models and frameworks. What is clear is that sport and wellbeing ministries need to do undertake much more research into what they do and how they do it and test this for success.

v. Church and Social Outcomes

Given the general lack of strict theological thinking in this space, it is worth including several reports looking at the church and its role in deliver wider social outcomes that related to sporting activity. These not only provide a further evidence base through a religious lens but often offer a practical guide for churches wanting to engage in their communities. These studies and reports focus on wellbeing, mental health, social cohesion and finally sport and wellbeing.

Church and Wellbeing

In 2016, Theos published a report *Religion and Well-being: Assessing the evidence that evaluated the evidence from nearly 140 academic studies over the last 30+ years to assess whether religion good for wellbeing?*¹⁹¹ examining the relationship between religion and well-being. Across most of these studies, the data show a positive correlation between religion and well-being. This study not only collates these data but aims to clarify the nature of the relationship between religion and well-being. A key aspect of this study is understanding how religion and wellbeing have been understood in the academic literature and surveys and concluding that while precise categorisations are still open to interpretation there are broadly five conceptions of religion and four of well-being. These are:

- Religion: religious affiliation, subjective religiosity, religious belief, religious group participation, and religious personal participation

191 <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/archive/files/Reports/Executive%20Religion%20and%20well-being%20combined%201.pdf>

- Wellbeing: subjective well-being, mental health, physical health, and health supporting behaviours

While the strict relationship between church and wellbeing maybe of limited use to sport and wellbeing ministry projects the conclusions of this report highlight an important context for the project especially if wellbeing is considered as measure of success of individual or a communities' engagement as set out in a previous chapter. It also provides more evidence as to why churches should consider more consideration of wellbeing and how sporting activity - and more broadly wellbeing - could play a significant role supporting this agenda.

What the researchers found was that the data showed that the picture is not simply that 'religion' is good for 'wellbeing' but rather one in which certain aspects of religion are better correlated with certain aspects of well-being. While social religious participation evidenced the strongest positive correlation across all measures of well-being, many of the studies evidenced a straightforward, strong positive correlation between personal religious participation and wellbeing, most notably mental health.

However, looser degrees of religious engagement such as subjective religiosity and religious affiliation had a largely positive, but more varied, and sometimes weak impact on the different measures of wellbeing including particularly in the categories of physical health and health supporting behaviours. Higher levels of involvement in religion are more beneficial to mental health overall. Within the category of physical health, religion (in different guises) quite evidently is a way of offsetting the effects of poor health, and consequently promoting a better sense of wellbeing. Essentially having an active, genuine, regular faith has greater and the largest impact on wellbeing.

What is significant is that the researchers found that social participation provides the strongest positive correlation across all measures of wellbeing. The evidence shows that regular religious service attendance has the biggest impact on wellbeing although a lower level of attendance and other types of participation such a volunteering also has some effect. While this report pictures an extremely complex picture once one moves beyond the simple principle that religion is good for wellbeing, its insights are important. They provide a strong base from which to build an approach in both generally supporting a social church-based activity to increase wellbeing and in considering what a new worshipping community might look like to effectively continue to enhancing wellbeing. It also provides a foundation from which to add physical activity and other social outcomes to further improve an individual and community's wellbeing.

Church, Sport and Wellbeing

Published in March 2021, Iulian Gramatki and Will Watt's, report *Faith, Hoops and Charity*¹⁹² measured the health and wellbeing benefits of weekly religious attendance and physical activity alongside previous

¹⁹² <https://www.stateoflife.org/our-work>

work on volunteering. This research provides strong evidence of a positive association between personal wellbeing and attending religious services, as well as between personal wellbeing and participation in sport and physical activity. While by their own acknowledgement, wellbeing valuation has its limitations, they remain confident (while awaiting peer review) that their work adds to the development of research in the field and stimulate debate. Their findings showed that attending church every week has the same wellbeing benefit as playing sport and physical activity. Furthermore, if you are both physically active and attend church in the same week, you stand to get double the benefit; and in addition, if you also volunteer you enjoy three times the wellbeing benefit. As volunteering is integral to the provision of both sport and church, the best investment to benefit an individual's wellbeing is go to church, play sport, and volunteer once a week.

As these authors state, if an individual did all three of these activities, every week, it would be the equivalent in wellbeing terms of an unemployed person finding a job or self-employed work. This is strong evidence for why sport and wellbeing ministry should be developed at pace and with confidence.

In their conclusion, Gramatki and Will Watt briefly discuss theory of change behind the positive wellbeing effect of religion because of religious services attendance from the literature. In doing so they cite Koenig and Larson (2001) who note that religious involvement may enhance well-being through

- a) promoting and optimistic and positive worldview and improving one's sense of meaning;
- b) promoting forgiveness, mercy, kindness, support and care for one another in religious teachings;
- c) the social support networks gained from regular religious services attendance - having a community to be part of and able to rely upon in times of need, as well as actively participating in its life.

They also highlight that religious involvement can create 'negative wellbeing through inducing guilt, shame and fear for those who do not conform to religious standards or social convention of their religious community, thus leading to social isolation and low self-esteem'. They to counter this argument they point to their study 'in which the positive pathways dominate the negative ones'.

They go on to argue that as well as the health benefits from sport and physical activity, 'a strong component of its wellbeing benefits is also the social aspect. Citing Frijters and Krekel (2021), they point out that 'having an active social life and good quality of relationships' is agreed as one of the most important drivers of personal wellbeing. They further expand this argument citing evidence from the Sported report (2019) that showed that being a member of a sports club is positively associated with life

satisfaction as well as social connections, trust, community cohesion and self-efficacy.¹⁹³ Furthermore, Birdsall-Strong et al. (2019) suggest that ‘playing a team sport is much more beneficial to wellbeing compared to practising an individual sport or physical activity, and that the impacts seemed to be more beneficial for girls than boys’.

The National Churches Trust commissioned State of Life, who published *Faith, Hoops and Charity* mentioned above, to measure the social and economic value of church buildings. *The House of Good* (2020) highlights that there is no long-term strategic national or government funding to help church buildings stay open and in good repair.¹⁹⁴ That these buildings rely on charity ad hoc grants and fundraising, even though they do not only benefit those who worship in them but bring communities together and help them thrive.

The report argues that churches host food banks, youth groups, drug and alcohol support clinics, after-school care, mental health counselling, and a growing number of essential activities and services that ‘stop vulnerable people falling through the cracks’ Their research, at conservative valuation, shows that the total economic and social value that church buildings generate in the UK is at least £12.4billion per year. This value could be as high as £62.8billion. The authors describe this as the ‘Halo Effect’ which includes: the market value of the events and activities that take place inside church buildings; and the harder to measure impacts, such as the huge wellbeing benefit from the different activities and services provided inside church buildings all which enhance local communities and improve lives. Significantly they argue, that with such economic impact, churches and the church is a place to start rebuilding communities and look after vulnerable people. Sport and wellbeing has an important role here.

Church and Health

Following their research into the effectiveness of church-led initiatives that support police forces across the UK working in partnership with Police Forces (see below) Cinnamon undertook further research to assess the effectiveness of church-led strategies which have been developed to offset pressures within the health service. *Now Someone Knows My Name: a study of church-led projects in assisting health outcomes* (2018)¹⁹⁵ was based on ten projects, eight of which were within the Cinnamon Network including Mega Fitness (which is highlighted as a case study¹⁹⁶) mentioned previously. The sample initiatives worked within the areas of general health and wellbeing, mental health, perinatal care, loneliness and isolation, dementia and A&E response. Simmons (2018) provides a short literature review across all these health areas.

193 In Sport We Trust: Full Technical Report. London, UK, 2020 - <https://sported.org.uk/in-sport-we-trust/>

194 <https://www.stateoflife.org/our-work>

195 <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/4-Cinnamon-Health-Research-Article.pdf>

196 <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/3-Cinnamon-Health-Research.pdf> p6

They highlight challenges within the health services even with total healthcare expenditure in 2013, in the UK being £150.6 billion, rising to £191.7 billion in 2016, which is 9.8% of GDP.¹⁹⁷ These pressures included:

- In 2015 the NHS dealt with over 1 million patients every 36 hours.
- In 2015/16 40% more operations were completed by the NHS compared to 2005/06.
- There were 16.3 million total hospital admissions in 2015/16, 28% more than a decade earlier.

The report asserts that the Church has much to offer in response and are well placed to help with access to volunteers, premises and, in many cases, the trust of the community. They also have a long-term commitment to the communities they are based in, through which they can offer sustainable solutions. Using the case studies, the researchers found that the church could respond to issues around: General Health and Wellbeing including obesity and diabetes, Loneliness, Dementia, Mental Health, Perinatal Care and Accident and Emergency. The research concluded that the cost effectiveness of working with the voluntary sector cannot be underestimated, and faith-based health practices can have a significant effect in supplementing local health services (Garland, 2017). Furthermore, that this can be done within a local church for relatively low cost (less than £2,000), which will enable most of them not only to begin practice, but also to sustain for the next year as well.

The research found four recurring themes irrespective of who was being interviewed. The themes were: value for money, giving the gift of time, holistic health care, and creating community. Three of these are highly relevant for sport and wellbeing ministry projects looking to contribute increasingly over time to holistic health care. The main unique selling point of these projects is not only that they are low-cost, but that they offer holistic health care for all individuals at a time of constrained budgets, and more importantly, they create community and belonging at a time when isolation and loneliness is at an all-time high. The report made several recommendations for those churches delivering initiatives including strategic partnerships with universities, local communities, other churches were an important element in a successful approach. It also recommended that more support, advice and advocacy was required to highlight the role the church could play and how it could best do this.

It is worth noting, at this point, the work of the Guild of Health and St Raphael established in 1915.¹⁹⁸ As wide group of experts who seek to explore the links between faith and health, primarily but not exclusively from a Christian perspective, the Guild members are dedicated to promoting, supporting and practicing Christ's ministry of healing as an integral part of the life and worship of the Church. Originating from within

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/3-Cinnamon-Health-Research.pdf> Sources: Department of Health, NHS Digital

¹⁹⁸ <https://gohealth.org.uk/about-us/>

the Anglican Communion, it expanded to include members from other Churches and became ecumenical in outlook.

Their aim is always to promote Christ's ministry of healing - looking not just for physical healing, but for the healing of the whole person as well as the healing of communities and of God's creation itself. Prayer for healing is at the heart of the Guild's work, as are the sacraments of healing - anointing and the sacramental act of the laying on of hands – with members making use of other healing actions as well such as listening and silence, counselling, informal liturgies and simple symbolic actions. In all its activities the Guild work closely with members of the medical profession and others engaged in the work of healing.

The Guild also engages in extensive theological education and research, in particular through its periodical, *Chrism*. Past editions have dealt with diverse topics such as Children and Healing, Touch in a Fearful Society, Animals and Healing, A Theology of Health for Today, M.E. (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome), Dementia, Genetic Engineering and Healing, Alcohol and Substance Abuse.

Church and Mental Health

In the report, *Christianity and Mental Health: Theology, Activities, Potential* (2017) Theos explored what Christian groups are doing to address mental health today and asked what can (and what should) Christians do in this field?¹⁹⁹ It highlights the stark problem in the UK which shows that:

- Almost ten million British adults are diagnosed with at least one mental health problem each year.
- Around one in four adults in the UK have been diagnosed with at least one mental health problem over their lifetime.
- Mixed anxiety and depression causes an estimated one fifth of all days lost from work in Britain
- In 2014, 19.7% of people in the UK aged 16 and over showed some symptoms of anxiety or depression, including 22.5% of women.

The report attempts to map the contemporary landscape, and to raise questions for future research. It is positioned as a first step: to contribute towards clarifying, equipping, guiding, and inspiring serious Christian engagement with mental health problems in the UK today.

The report's first conclusion is that a 'careful re-appraisal of how the Bible is used on this topic is needed. This would help to build an authentic Christian language of mental health from the perspective of sufferers and move the church on from simple 'raising awareness of different mental health issues' to supporting

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/archive/files/Christianity%20and%20Mental%20Health%20FINAL%20COPY%20FOR%20WEB.pdf>

sufferers find a legitimately biblical and theological language to verbalise their own experiences'. It also found that a more systematic study, that would comprehensively map Christian initiatives, was needed.

Where there are Christian initiatives, the evidence suggests that religious belief aids resilience in responding to traumatic events and leads to faster recovery from mental health problems. Furthermore, effective Christian initiatives can reduce the burden on the NHS or social services, serving a public good. It found that some of the most effective work was done with young people where Christian groups were working in schools and had developed means of identifying possible mental health problems at an early stage, as well as training other staff to do the same. Mental health in the clergy is a major concern, and an increasing number of schemes and strategies were designed with a specifically clerical focus.

It is also important to note that the researchers highlighted those relationships with statutory and secular bodies were sometimes challenging. Encouraging, Christian groups had continued to work across many areas, often in close partnership with local government, secular charities or NHS trusts. They also highlighted that there was a lack of a strategy or much joined up thinking from churches and their structures, and that communication and networking were continuing problems. Furthermore, while there was recognition of the importance of measuring impact, many initiatives found the expectations of secular bodies and sometimes church bodies to be too onerous not to truly reflective of the work being done.

To this end, they recommend that because impact and measurement is going to remain important future work on designing measurable impact assessment tools for Christian projects would be beneficial to many, particularly smaller projects. Greater networking and cohesion between Christians are also necessary to prevent overlaps and developing a strategy which could be more effective in some areas than the piecemeal efforts that presently exist. This would also create a mechanism to share best practice and maximise the limited resources to be as effective as possible. Interestingly they also argue that more work is needed to make the positive case for spirituality, and more specifically religion, in helping with mental health. There is a growing evidence base that religion and spirituality can be beneficial for recovery and wellbeing and that people want their spiritual and religious needs addressed within the medical and care sectors, but there is still a sense in which secular bodies have been wary about embracing such opportunities.

Church and Police

Cinnamon's Police and Church Partnership Working report (2015-16)²⁰⁰ draws on research conducted in Sussex, including Chichester where Hampshire Police and Hampshire County Council have partnered with

200 <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CFA-Research-v-1.1.1.pdf>

City Angels, a group of trained volunteers from the city's churches, to tackle anti-social behaviour. They report that according to Sussex Police crime data, on a Saturday night when the Angels are on patrol:

- Anti-social behaviour is reduced by up to 79%
- Violent crime is reduced by up to 67%
- Violent crime leading to injury is reduced by up to 82%

"Cinnamon Network is making an important contribution to the collaborative work between churches and police forces. These partnerships are a great example of community policing and it is encouraging to see the extent of the work and the plans to grow it." Sara Thornton, Chair of National Police and Chief's Council

The report includes a brief overview of the literature around faith-based social action providing a useful summary of the evolution of faith-based social actions from the philanthropists of the 18th and 19th centuries to the present Trussell Trust and Christians Against Poverty.²⁰¹ It also cites Cnann and Cutis (2013) who argue that religious congregations especially Christian ones, will be delivering more faith based social action in the future and Dinham and Shaw, (2012) who highlight how complicated it is to effectively measure the impact of faith-based social action. The research also highlights the project's methods and concludes that good partnerships between local authorities and church can have a real impact in society. There is strong body of evidence within the community sport sector for local organisations, potentially like churches, can use sporting activity to have a similar impact. Such an approach is currently being developed in Bristol.

The report also concludes that further overall research is needed to measure the effectiveness of church-based social action projects in delivering the objectives of local councils, health authorities, as well as prisons and the secure estate. It also notes that research into developing community social action projects which fulfil demands of the policy agenda are required including where churches engage in mental health, health provision and education.

The Church and Social Cohesion

It is worth noting the Theos report (2020) *The Church and Social Cohesion; Connecting Communities and Serving People*²⁰² which was an 18-month investigation into the impact of churches on social cohesion which consulted 361 individuals across 13 local authorities within England. While not directly related to sport, social cohesion is one of the social outcomes that sport is often delivering in local communities. Furthermore, as sport and wellbeing ministry projects develop, social cohesion should become an

201 <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CFA-Research-v-1.1.pdf> pg 8-9

202 <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/The-Church-and-Social-Cohesion.pdf>

important aspect of what they can deliver given that, social cohesion is about ‘the strength of our collective relationships’ and affects every aspect of an individual and communities’ lives. The report concludes that a society which embraces the role of churches as key stakeholders in cohesion ‘will be a more rounded one, more comfortable with difference, and more confident in its underlying unity. It will be more cohesive – both at a local level and beyond.’

The report highlights that to achieve the cohesion required by a community time and effort is required especially as society has become more culturally and ethnically diverse, older less equal and more geographically mobile. The researchers concluded that the ‘nation’s churches have the potential to offer this time and effort in abundance, but that neither the churches’ community contribution nor its wider potential have been considered in detail by policy makers.’ At the same time, the report notes, ‘churches are often unaware of the wider support available for their community engagement and therefore there is huge potential for more collaboration between churches and secular organisations interested in cohesion, who are often having the same conversation without realising it because they are using different language’.

The researchers found that churches are often working quietly to enhance their communities, and this was driven by practising Christians who are more likely to make charitable donations and volunteer regularly for a local charitable initiative. Their motivations are significant for this community engagement which highlighted the outworking of their faith convictions based in theologically grounded reflections including: following Christ’s example, the call to be “salt and light” in the community, bringing the marginalised to the centre, building the ‘Kingdom of God’, and loving your neighbour.

In considering the elements of a churches’ community engagement through the asset-based community development model, the report highlights six church-based assets:

1. Buildings
2. Networks
3. Leadership
4. Volunteers
5. Convening power
6. Vision

While all of these are relevant to a successful sporting ministry, it is worth noting in particular that the researchers highlighted the importance of buildings. These are vital gathering points for community activity, offered cheaply or for free, and (unlike many statutory services) scattered equally throughout our

communities rather than being concentrated only in busy metropolitan centres. With a general decline of community space over many years the cohesion impact of this physical space is significant: 'Churches can become community hubs and local landmarks which encourage positive feelings of solidarity in their neighbourhoods; they are places of hope and welcome for many of the most vulnerable in society'.

Furthermore, church networks also play an important cohesion role as critical antidote to social inclusion and loneliness. In turn, the report highlights the often negative and divisive nature of church-schools and they suggest that these should work within their communities and alongside local authorities to be inclusive and engage with the local community. It is also worth noting the church leadership in a community and in providing a vision to unite community action and drive it forward has great power. These findings have clear ramifications for sport and wellbeing ministry projects highlighting the importance of good communication locally to help both the delivery of objectives and the potential to change lives.

The report also considers how effectively churches might work with other organisations to drive social cohesion. Here the authors discuss the importance and effectiveness of interfaith work and ecumenical engagement where they suggest that the impact is often greater where churches of different traditions work together, despite these partnerships not always being straight forward. Furthermore, while churches often are left out of conversations about social cohesion by local authorities, it is important to note that not everyone welcomes the churches' role in service delivery; fears about proselytism and the exemptions which religious groups enjoy from the Equality Act 2010 are key here. However, most churches think carefully about the right level of evangelism and it remains important that they do.

The report concludes with three main recommendations for churches and policymakers. Firstly, that churches recognise the insights that a needs-based and asset-based community development approach will help them to consider ways in which existing resources can be used more effectively. Churches most 'successfully serve their neighbourhoods where they capitalise on this natural strength— so where they want to start something new, they should first consider what is already going on in the neighbourhood, what the community needs, and what the congregation will support. In other words, their engagement should be tailored to the community in which the churches sits' while also understanding, realistically, what their resources are. This can include questioning how a: Are church rental prices affordable? Can the congregation take on leadership roles? What can be done to release the natural assets of the church into service and make churches more accessible to individuals in the community?

Secondly, that churches can bring both bridging and bonding capital to help create true cohesion where not everyone might agree but in one that everyone feels they have a stake as long as the church takes care in mitigating to ensure it is clearly inclusive in its practises.

Thirdly, that churches recognise and are recognised for what they uniquely offer. To that end, local churches can be: “an economic and relational lifeline to individuals and groups; it can be an effective convenor of local stakeholder relationships, and a powerhouse of both paid and unpaid time; it can raise passionate leaders from within the community, who have the networks to understand what is really going on, and the vision to see potential where others do not.”

On the back of this report Theos has helpfully published two supporting documents: *Nurturing Social Cohesion: Why it matters and what your church can do about*; and *Nurturing Social Cohesion: A how-to guide for engaging churches*²⁰³. Within the first of these they outline the ten principles for nurturing social cohesion based on the research to help churches promote social cohesion in the local community and beyond. The insights are much broader than just social cohesion and can be used to help guide any engagement with the local community. These include:

1. Do what the community needs
2. Communicate what you are doing
3. Work with what you already have
4. If you have a church building, consider how it can be used by the wider community
5. Leadership matter – but engage the whole congregation
6. Look beyond your church
7. Dialogue is the foundation of strong community relationships – but doing something together involves more people
8. Show others that you understand your legal responsibilities
9. Prioritise inclusion and diversity
10. Don't just be 'the helper'

The second document, while pitched at policy makers and funders, provides some useful context and background for sport and wellbeing ministry projects from which they may base their own arguments and insights to consider as they develop their offer. The eight principles which they discuss include:²⁰⁴

1. Social cohesion is important long before the next crisis

203 https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/FCGHowTo_churches_5.pdf

204 https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/FCGHowTo_policymakers_digital.pdf

2. Bonding and bridging capital are both important
3. Understand the full range of likely church assets when you are looking to engage
4. Get to know the full range of churches in your area
5. The best person to engage with in a church might not be the official leader
6. Acknowledge the challenges that churches might be facing as a barrier to their engagement
7. Concerns around proselytism are overplayed
8. But don't expect churches to function like secular organisations – they're not!

Practical Help – Social Action Toolkit

The Cinnamon Network has developed toolkits to help churches access the knowledge they need to engage and transform local community. The resources help parishes explore a variety of aspects of community development to start effective social action initiatives in a range of community settings. Based on the insight and learnings from 30 churches at various stages of their community transformation journey through social action their Guide to Church-Led Community Transformation guides provide a sensible framework to develop a community led response.²⁰⁵ Importantly these acknowledge that every community is different, so helps churches to understand what will be transformational in their unique local community rather than imposing a single model on a church. The guides help to identify where the needs and resources are, and how to begin the work of community transformation. To do this, they help churches and communities explore:

- Community – What are the needs of the community?
- Church – What resources and skills does the church have?
- Civic - How do you work with local partners?
- Choice – What should a church going to do in response?

They also cover key issues such as undertaking a community mapping exercise and skills audit, measuring impact, sustainability and training leaders.

²⁰⁵ <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/How-To-Final-Version.pdf>

Church and Social Action

In 2020, Theos published an important report *Growing Good: Growth, Social Action and Discipleship in the Church of England*²⁰⁶. This final report of the GRA:CE Project by Hannah Rich focuses on the inter-relationship between church growth, social action and discipleship. Helpfully they begin the report by attempting to define what it meant by each of the research terms in turn. Measuring church growth remains a significant issue within the church and there is still strong resistance to it in some quarters. Citing the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, Rich highlights the benefit of measuring 'growth in transformation' - beyond just numbers (bums on seats) and impact (disciples being made and hearts changed) but a mixture of both alongside transformative impact of social action on individuals and community.²⁰⁷ By bringing these three together, she suggests the church will offer 'a richer understanding of growth, rooted in local church experience as well as quantitative rigour, which leads the church to the 'what' and 'how' of growth measurement'. She also argues that it is important that this is measured and well.

Rich goes on to surmise that discipleship was the most contentious and challenging to define of the three elements. Agreeing with David Goodhew's finding that "there remains significant confusion and inaction with regard to Christian initiation and promotion of discipleship, which needs to be overcome" she explores this with a view to determining how this supports growth.²⁰⁸ Reflecting on Christian discipleship she assesses the importance that to identify as a follower of Jesus is to seek to model his character in all of life and not just to adhere intellectually to Christianity as a set of beliefs: that growth is linked therefore to 'intentionally nurturing disciples' and the second of the core Five Marks of Mission – 'to teach, baptise and nurture new believers'. Rich concludes that discipleship "as an ongoing process by which people grow in Christian learning and practice through following Jesus and becoming more like him. Considered in relationship to social action, this practical element is particularly important." Importantly, she also argues, like Hewitt in her Faith Pathway research, 'that discipleship is not a linear process and embracing life's complexity is an important aspect of church life'. Furthermore, she recognises the journey towards faith may begin long before a person acknowledges themselves as a Christian and that this does not necessarily start with a faith commitment however 'discipleship, ultimately, involves a recognition of who Jesus is'. Therefore, it is critical to recognise is that where this might happen, it is likely to 'occur organically through practical participation in the life of the church'. Furthermore, she also acknowledges that being 'Christ-like' is a lifelong process in which discipleship plays a critical role for all Christians.

206 <https://cuf.org.uk/uploads/resources/CUF-GRACE-Report-2020.pdf>

207 Stephen Cottrell in Beth Green, Angus Ritchie, Tim Thorlby, *Church Growth in East London: A Grassroots View* (London: Centre for Theology and Community, 2016), p. 38.

208 David Goodhew with Ben Kautzer and Joe Moffatt, *Amalgamations, Team Ministries and the Growth of the Church* (Durham: Durham University Research Report, 2013).

Defining social action was easier and Rich leans on the Cabinet Office definition: “people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities”, highlighting the wide spectrum of engagement from formal volunteering schemes through to informal, relational forms of social action.²⁰⁹ Rich, however, takes this further in assessing that ‘Christian social action can be seen as distinct from its civic equivalents in some ways’. She concludes that while ‘much of the churches social action looks like distinct interventions on particular social issues’ it is in fact, more than this, in that it is an ‘expression and extension of the presence of church community life, that creates vital informal structures in care, across a wide breadth of activity’.

Furthermore, she concludes there are ‘differences in the character and motivation’ because of it is often an expression of ‘the two greatest commandments – loving God and loving neighbour simultaneously.’ As Rich point out, a previous ‘Theos/CUF report described congregational social action as relational, incarnational and spiritual.’²¹⁰ and it is this integrated approach is what differentiates church social action from statutory services such as job centres. To support the argument, she also cites the 2012 report from The Church Urban Fund which found that ‘relationally focused projects that “treat people with intrinsic worth” are most effective at breaking down barriers between churches, community stakeholders and service users.’²¹¹ She concludes that “congregational social action therefore is the collective activity of congregations to establish means of support or effect social change in ways consistent with Christian social witness.”

In exploring these definitions, Rich begins to provide the church with a broader understanding of church-base social action and the foundations of a much-needed compelling case for not only identifying and enhancing its social action in its broadest sense but identifying that it provides vehicle and conduit to church growth in both numerical term and perhaps more importantly as a tool of discipleship both before a person makes a commitment to Christ and long after. Supported by extensive qualitative and quantitative research, including over 350 interviews in over 60 parish communities across England and new analysis of existing parish data the report also highlights a paradox facing the Church of England. While it is doing more social action because of demand and expectation, at the same time, church attendance has continued to decline (attendance at Church of England services fell by between 15% and 20% from 2009-2019). It argues therefore that ‘while the national church is increasingly reliant on its social action it is less and less spiritually connected to it’.

209 Cabinet Office, Social action: harnessing the potential - discussion paper (2015), available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-action-harnessing-the-potential.

210 Paul Bickley, *Good Neighbours: How Churches Help Communities Flourish* (London: Church Urban Fund and Theos, 2014).

211 Church Urban Fund, *Growing Church through Social Action: A study of actively-engaged and growing churches* (2012), available online at: www.cuf.org.uk/sites/default/files/PDFs/Research/Quantitative_report_FINAL2.pdf https://cuf.org.uk/uploads/resources/Growing-Church-through-social-action-quantitative-new_2012.pdf

Nevertheless, the report suggests that this makes social action even more important for the future of the church. As the evidence indicates, it can be a 'route to church growth in both numerical and spiritual terms'. Congregations that build new and wider networks in the local community, can see people start a faith journey and join the church. While the research does not provide a 'single, infallible way to grow a church', it does identify a set of 'characteristics shared amongst churches that are growing numerically, and flourishing through their engagement in social action, and helping people grow in their faith'. While these characteristics are recognizable from the work of Psalms and others, they underpin this lived-experience and provide an enhanced framework based on the evidence in this report for sport and wellbeing ministry projects to utilize immediately. They include:

- Churches connected to their local area including through social action
- Churches visible or recognised as being active in giving to their community.
- Congregational culture that is open to its community (or the reverse to hinder it)
- A parishes longevity: consistent and stable activity or engagement in meeting the needs of a community
- Churches hospitality and generosity: communicates genuine willingness to engage with and invest in the community as it is
- Churches adaptability and ability to embrace of life's complexities and also able to demonstrate adaptability in discipleship and worship: these are critical to cultivating to meaningful relationships and are often found in congregations that undertake social action.

Fundamentally, sport and wellbeing ministry should see itself as social action especially when delivered through the secular lens of sport and social outcomes (see Chapter below). While the report also offers several short case studies from foodbank activity it also showcases, Messy Church (p17), and more helpfully St Johns' Hoxton, London - one of the Capital Vision 2020 Sports projects – Saturday youth football activities (p47) to support this.

Given the issues around the evidence base for sport and wellbeing ministry mission success, perhaps most significantly for sport and wellbeing ministry projects is this report indicates that 'participation in social action can offer a practical route into faith for people who were not previously part of the church community and might not have considered exploring faith before. It provides a route for people to reconsider the church and their beliefs, but it also often leads to people re-engaging with Christian faith'. It is important for sport and wellbeing ministry projects to consider volunteering in church-based projects or activities is critical in supporting this finding.

Furthermore, what makes social action most successful is when it enables congregations to develop meaningful relationships with new people outside the church bubble. This is not a new paradigm for sport ministry practitioners, however the report helpfully underlines this as a critical in church growth and personal growth, while highlighting that these faith journeys are not always linear or straightforward. The report goes on to make several important wider recommendations for the Church of England, however, these are also worth sport and wellbeing ministry projects considering. These include:

1. Existing measures do not adequately capture the contextual and local factors or the changing shape of church life - social action should be captured
2. Congregations and church leaders should be equipped to think about social action, discipleship and church growth in an integrated way rather than as three independent concepts
3. Training of ordained and lay leadership as well as the preaching in church should include the integrated concept of social action and sport and wellbeing ministry
4. Social action projects, or in this case sport and wellbeing ministry, should be a primary vehicle of invitation to the community alongside other invitations, with the expectation that new local relationships can grow through it.

vi. Conclusion

The overview of the academic writing about sports ministry provides sport and wellbeing ministry projects with a solid foundation of the theological reflections of leisure, work, play and sport and the differing theological options that have emerged. Most recently these differences have been highlighted in the works of Ellis (2014) and Harvey (2014). Ellis argues for more thinking about sport rather than play and explores the role of sport as a vehicle for communion with the divine, as a frivolous exercise and most importantly as a means of character-building and moral improvement. He also observes that current sports ministry needs to adopt a much stronger prioritisation of pastoral care rather than just evangelism.

This is supported by the work of Cameron and Balcar (2018) who argue for a new approach to the relationship between faith, health and wellbeing whereby the church serves as “a significant force for promoting physical, emotional and spiritual health and healing whilst fulfilling the churches traditional enthusiasm and action to tackle social justice and inequalities.” Amongst other conclusions, they suggest that new frameworks for parish and school engagement with relevant models, resources and support are required that these are best achieved by working with government and secular organisations. These approaches and framework are explained in previous chapters.

While Theos' reports into sport are less empirical, they offer a certain perspective on the role of sport and faith in society particularly around the role of professional sport. These provide useful questions about Christian understanding and actions in a sporting context providing a set of values for Christians who love sport. These are a useful reminder and template for managers and leaders in sports ministry and those that train them, that while sport and faith can successfully co-exist, Christians must, as with all aspects of life, be cautious that an unhealthy passion for sport can create risks to one own faith and as an example to those without faith.

It is encouraging that the Church of England is highly supportive of mixed ecology of church and actively encouraging the development of new worshipping communities. While this mixed ecology is not universal supported and, in some quarters, there is increasing hostility to this supplementing the traditional parish system with new churches, the early evidence from the Diocese of London's new worshipping communities strategy shows these churches are working and growing at a significant rate.

While the broad framework in the literature around 'In Sport' and 'Through Sport' is well accepted, in assessing the current models underpinning sport ministry it appears there is little in the way of well sourced and evidenced theological frameworks. Although the research was limited, it appears that most sports ministry organisations models are based on the 'lived experience' and developed over time through trial and error. Alongside several books that set out these approaches, two sports ministry organisations, Psalms and Kick, have stated theoretic models, the latter based on Rick Warren's Circles of Commitment. The central common theme from these models, which is also reflected in the Faith Journeys research and in the work of The Sports Factory and Hoxton Hub (see Case Studies), is that any missional engagement will need to draw participants slowly into church life and this is best done or will involve taking them on journey that will have several stages of engagement through a series of intermediary activities.

With the general lack of proven sports ministry mission models and faith pathways, 9Dot Research's *Faith Journeys for the Church of England* (2018) provides some significant insights from which to develop sport and wellbeing ministry approaches and theories of change. The research highlights the challenges in modern mission and the need understand faith as journey over five stages, with each stage providing a foundation for the next: that this number reduces as people move through each phase. This is evident in current sports ministry practice such as the Sports Factory, although this is mostly base on observation (see Case Studies).

Furthermore, the evidence here concludes that sport and wellbeing ministry projects will need to be intentional about nurturing faith journeys supporting the approach taken by Inspire Church in London (see Case Studies) and will need to be incarnate, so that people might have the chance to experience the love of God. The evidence also shows that sport and wellbeing ministry projects should have a gradual pathway in which individuals showing interest in faith can travel and this is especially important for young people.

This approach, albeit with limited evidence, is reflected in that taken by the Hoxton Hub in London (see Case Studies) which created a number of stepping-stones for young people, moving them closer to towards Christian teaching and church.

Hewitt's research also highlights two final points which are also reflected in the research into community sport and social outcomes. Firstly, once people start to engage, they want to be active in that environment/community and this keeps them moving on the faith pathway however, only if they are nurtured and used effectively. Secondly, that people and relationships have the most influence on a person's faith journey. These insights suggest that sport and wellbeing ministry projects need to put significant consideration into volunteering, leadership training: that it has a distinct policy and pathway that those attending its activities are encouraged into helping and leading both as volunteers and especially where this involves young people, as a potential 'career path' and all that involves. Whilst Hoxton only has limited evidence, this was one of the unexpected outcomes of its sports ministry after only two years (see Case Study). Furthermore sport and wellbeing ministry projects must ensure that their own leaders and staff are well and appropriately trained and developed in not only sports coaching and delivery but in pastoring and discipleship. The fruits of this can be seen in the approach by Adventure+ (see Case Study) and reflects the outlook of Ridley College

There is a growing body of research looking at the complex links between religion and wellbeing. This highlights that while social religious participation shows the strongest evidence across the measures of wellbeing, many of the studies evidenced strong positive relationship between personal religious participation and wellbeing, most notably mental health. It is clear that social participation provides the strongest positive correlation across all measures of wellbeing and therefore regular religious service attendance has the biggest impact on wellbeing although a lower level of attendance and other types of participation such a volunteering also has some effect. This is seen in other evidence which shows that having an active social life and good quality of relationships is one of the most important drivers of personal wellbeing. Other studies take this further by showing that being a member of a sports club is positively associated with life satisfaction as well as social connections, trust, community cohesion and self-efficacy and playing a team sport is much more beneficial to wellbeing compared to practising an individual sport or physical activity, and that the impacts seemed to be more beneficial for girls than boys.

More recent research potential shows that there is strong evidence of a positive association between personal wellbeing and attending religious services, as well as between personal wellbeing and participation in sport and physical activity. These findings indicate that attending church every week has the same wellbeing benefit as playing sport and physical activity and if you attend church play sport and volunteer stand to triple the benefit. In conclusion the authors note that the combination of having an optimistic and positive viewpoint, the promotion of forgiveness, mercy kindness, in a

caring and supportive environment, alongside the social support networks that come from attending church and volunteering has a significant impact. While this evidence-base needs further work, this starts to show some compelling evidence for why sport and wellbeing ministry should be developed at pace and with confidence.

There is also evidence to suggest that the Church has something to offer in response to ongoing health crisis and could respond to issues around: general health and wellbeing including obesity and diabetes, loneliness, dementia, mental health, perinatal care and accident and emergency. It is well placed to help with access to volunteers, premises, and the trust of the community. Researchers also note the Church also has a long-term commitment to the communities they are based in, through which they can offer sustainable solutions. This approach is supported by the work of the Guild of Health and St Raphael who promote, support and practice Christ's ministry of healing as an integral part of the life and worship of the Church and undertake extensive research into these healing practices alongside the medical professionals.

There is also a growing evidence base to suggest that communities which include churches as key stakeholders in community social cohesion will be more rounded, accepting of difference and confident in its ability to be useful both at a local level and beyond. As the evidence from research into community sport and youth, churches also must approach provision through a needs-based and asset-based community development approach (which includes buildings, networks, leadership, volunteers, convening power and vision) that will help them to consider ways in which existing resources can be used more effectively. Buildings do play an important role in the evidence base as vital gathering points for community activity, offered cheaply or for free, and scattered equally throughout the community.

With many community services hosted in churches the evidence suggests that total economic and social value that church buildings generate in the UK is at least £12.4billion per year and could be as high as £62.8billion. Importantly the research tends to agree that churches can bring both bridging and bonding capital to help create true cohesion, but the church must take care in mitigating to ensure it is clearly inclusive. Evidence also suggests that churches should collaborate widely including with other local organisations and interfaith and they will also need to work hard at winning over local authorities to be a part of the local system

In recent years the development of useful tool kits to help churches consider creating social action approaches has provided some much-needed insight. These should be helpful to sport and wellbeing ministry projects by providing understanding and highlighting key issues and elephant traps to be avoided. Key lessons include ensuring provision is demand led, wider community communication is significant and good leadership matters, as does using the whole congregation. Sport and wellbeing ministry projects will have to be alive to proselytism thinking deeply and communicating clearly about its approach to mitigate

the challenge that this brings to faith-based engagement and mission. Getting the right level of evangelism is crucial.

Finally, while there is a significant gap in theological thinking and insight around the practical application and ground level development of sport, health and wellbeing initiatives and data and theories of change about how best to create pathways into faith, there is, however, enough good supporting evidence and a solid theological base from which sport and wellbeing ministry projects can draw insights from to help shape their own specific models across the myriad of approaches they will develop. These will also need to be joined up and consider how best to draw participants into new worshipping communities (new worshipping communities) and church.

CHAPTER 7: EVIDENCE-BASE FOR COMMUNITY SPORT AND SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT

i. Introduction

Over the last ten years the community sport sector has undergone a significant transformation. It has found itself at the forefront of sports agenda as policy makers and others have sought to use it to achieve both an increase in those participating in sporting activity and its positive contribution to wider social objectives. This has seen delivery becoming more formalised and professionalised as funders and others have required stronger insight, evidence-based frameworks and theories of change. This has helped to justify the long-advocated claims of the broader sector about the important impact of both grassroots and community sports to justify, even excuse, the excesses of modern professional sport. In producing what was asked of it, the community sport sector not only is influencing traditional grassroots (NGB clubs) and leisure sectors towards its approach, but it is also on the cusp of being at the heart of the governments sports policy (and funding) alongside Olympic and Paralympic success, and even other departmental strategies to tackle key social and health issues in society.

The enhancing of the role of community sport has also resulted in the emergence of a new sub-sector: sport for development. Traditionally this approach operated in the international development environment however, it has an increasingly significant domestic agenda. This is often merged with traditional community sport focusing on getting more people active and playing sport. Sports ministry has much to learn from best of both community sport and the sport for development sectors including being demand lead. Its insights and theories of change can provide and supplement current knowledge in the sports ministry sector with robust approaches to delivery and emerging frameworks and tools for monitoring and evaluating. When integrated with equally robust faith pathways, church engagement and the development of new worshipping community's insight and approaches, this will provide much needed evidence for the sport ministry sectors impact and success; to make a strong case for further investment which might not only include church funders but public funders as they look for ways to scale long-term community sport delivery through local community organisations.

ii. Community Sport and Sport for Development Sector

In 2002 the Government published its landmark report *Game Plan* which set out a twenty-year vision for sport across the nation.²¹² It acknowledged that in terms of participation levels, comparable countries had more people playing sport. Only 32% of adults in England took 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week, as recommended by health professionals. It also recognised there were also great disparities within the population with the lowest participation rates amongst those with lower incomes. The report made clear that there was strong, systematic evidence of a direct link between regular physical activity and improved health for people of all ages. It recognised that the whole of Government knew the value of sport: ‘its value in improving health and tackling obesity; giving young people confidence and purpose, to divert them from drugs and crime; and in providing lessons for life’. The report concludes that Government must get more people playing sport, across the whole population, focusing on the most economically disadvantaged groups, along with school leavers, women and older people.

While delivering increased participation in sport remains a priority for the Government, the approach in *Game Plan* has evolved into wanting more people active (through whatever activity not just sport), especially those who will benefit most from that activity and to use targeted sporting approaches to achieve other policy objectives. This was best articulated in its most recent government sport strategy in 2015 and in Sport England’s latest strategy in 2021 (see Chapter Six). The use of sport to achieve ‘social outcomes’ has emerged alongside getting more people active as the twin aims of Government policy.

In this time, the UK has developed significant expertise in delivering social outcomes through community and grassroots sport.²¹³ This has also seen an increase in understandings of how to get ‘hard to reach’ groups into an active lifestyle. Research shows that to reach these groups, sport must engage with multiple social issues, challenges and barriers. As both the grass-roots and community sport sectors have looked to enhance their targeted delivery of these wider policy aims, a new sector has begun to emerge: sport for development. Sport for development is the use of sport as a tool for development of personal, community, national and international development objectives. It is also interested in how sport can be used as a tool for addressing some of the challenges that arise in the community especially poverty. While not a new approach,²¹⁴ sport had been largely underestimated as a major tool in humanitarian programmes and was rarely used in a systematic way²¹⁵.

212 http://www.gamesmonitor.org.uk/files/game_plan_report.pdf

213 These terms are often used interchangeably, however it is generally understood that community sport is provision provided within the community in a range of setting by a range of organisation, whereas grassroots sport is usually delivered via a National Governing Body affiliated sports club.

214 It had been used in an ad hoc way to reach international development-related objectives as far back as the 1920s - The UN International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Olympic Committee signed an agreement to collaborate as far back as 1922

215 <https://www.sportanddev.org/en/learn-more/history-sport-and-development>

As the community and grass roots sport has evolved through/into a sport for development approach, this has created a complex landscape that is often misunderstood. Nevertheless, what has emerged over the last ten year is a broader sector that has created theories of change, for sports often instinctive delivery, and gathered data through good monitoring and evaluation processes to create an evidence-base that starts to prove the assumptions about impact. This has produced a stronger policy understanding about the positive role that sporting activity can play within society especially local place-based organisations and programmes.

iii. Sport for Development: An Overview

As the Sport for Development Coalition highlighted in its evidence to the House of Lord's Select Committee on Sport and Recreation (2020),²¹⁶ learning from international contexts and multilateral approaches has identified that sport can credibly contribute to 36 of 169 overall targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.²¹⁷ At the same time, in a domestic context, sport is now seen as also being able to enhance economic growth,²¹⁸ employability and skills development, especially among young people,²¹⁹ reduce offending and recidivism,²²⁰ and mental health and wellbeing.²²¹ Ten years of refining provision has created a wealth of lived-approaches in a wide variety of circumstances to a targeted groups in society achieving a mass of social outcomes as well simply getting more people active for life. This has ensured an even stronger recognition of the role of the sector has in contributing to specific societal and whole of government priorities.

This is also reflected in the academic literature which, points out that one of the ways in which the sport for development sector has been viewed by politicians and policy makers is as a mechanism for the resolution of social ills. For example, delinquency and anti-social behaviour (ASB) has long been regarded as a problem in UK society (see Bateman, 2020) and, in response, regional and national strategies have adopted a range of approaches including the structuring of youth interventions around mentoring,

216 <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/23095/pdf/>

217 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]. (2017). *Kazan Action Plan, Outcome document of the Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI)*, Kazan, Russia, Retrieved from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000252725>

218 Hafner, Marco, Erez Yerushalmi, M. Stepanek, W. D. Phillips, J. Pollard, A. Deshpande, M. Whitmore, F. Millard, S. Subel, and C. Van Stolk, (2019). *The economic benefits of a more physically active population*. Rand Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR4291.html

219 Eurostat. (2019). *Employment in sport*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Employment_in_sport#C2.A0.25_of_workers_in_sport_employment_are_aged_15.E2.80.9329; and, Theeboom, M., Colater, F., Truyens, J., Soendgen, N., Gonzalez- Valles, E., Vukasinovic, N. and Vanden Berghe, S., (2017). *Study on the Contribution of Sport to the Employability of Young People in the Context of the Europe 2020 Strategy*. European Commission. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1d46884f-b542-11e7-837e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>;

220 Meek, R. (2018). *A Sporting Chance: An Independent Review of Sport in Youth and Adult Prisons*. August 2018, Ministry of Justice. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733184/a-sporting-chance-an-independent-review-sport-in-justice.pdf; and, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, (2019). *Changing Lives: the social impact of participation in culture and sport*. Eleventh Report of Session 2017-19, 7 May 2019.

221 Peirce, N., Lester, C., Seth, A., and Turner, P. (2018). *The Role of Physical Activity and Sport in Mental Health*, Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine UK. Joint Position Statement with the Sports and Exercise Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. https://www.fsem.ac.uk/position_statement/the-role-of-physical-activity-and-sport-in-mental-health

education, employment/training, and resettlement packages (see HM Government, 2018; Nacro, 2020). Since the 1960s UK government policy has consistently promoted sport and physical activity as a tool for tackling youth crime and a well-rehearsed argument in the academic literature is that sport, leisure and arts-based activities may present some kind of remedy for anti-social behaviour and re/offending. Nichols (2007) argues that sport has the potential to reduce youth crime in three ways: (i) as a distraction or as a surveillance mechanism, (ii) as cognitive behavioural therapy; and (iii) as a 'hook' or relationship strategy. Indeed, there is a plethora of evidence documenting the benefits of sport and physical activity for young people in line with these assertions (Ekeland et al., 2005; Busseri, 2010; Morgan et al., 2019).

However, some have noted that claims surrounding the transformative potential of sport may be exaggerated (see Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011; Coalter, 2015; Woods et al., 2017). In this sense, it is generally acknowledged that the provision of such activities is not enough to prevent the occurrence of social problems but that they can be used, both within custodial and community settings, to generate positive change in marginalised young people thereby alleviating criminal and/or anti-social behaviour (Meek, 2012; Meek et al., 2012; Parker, Meek and Lewis, 2014).²²² In turn, they can work effectively if intervention occurs before these behaviours take root (Farrington and Welsh, 2007), and/or when provided alongside wider support mechanisms (Muncie, 2009). Collectively, such research findings highlight the extent to which both the personal and social aspects of sport may positively impact marginalised young people by promoting attributes such as self-confidence, self-esteem and a range of interpersonal skills, whilst at the same time having the capacity to nurture an enhanced sense of active citizenship (see Muncie, 2009; Morgan and Parker, 2017; Parker et al., 2019). To this end, many youth interventions include sport, physical activity and arts-based activities as a tool for engagement often combining these with broader programmes of employment, education and training (see, for example, Parker et al., 2018).

Social inclusion

Of course, the marginalisation and social exclusion of individuals - especially young people - continues to be a major challenge at the global level (see Pique, Vea and Strecker, 2016) and issues concerning un/employment dominate related debates. This has consequences for those who are categorised as not in education, employment or training (NEET). In their analysis of such debates, Morgan and Parker (2017) utilise the work of Strathdee (2013) to explain how attempts to resolve the crisis of NEET young people have traditionally incorporated three types of approach: (i) 'motivational' strategies (which attempt to encourage the identified population to re/enter the workforce, primarily through skill development); (ii) 'punishing' strategies (which aim to force young people into paid employment by reducing welfare

²²² The terms 'marginalised', 'vulnerable', 'at risk' and 'hard to reach' are used throughout to denote those young people who find themselves excluded from the societal mainstream (including social support services) and who have limited control over their life chances and resources. Such individuals are often vulnerable in terms of their ability to anticipate and cope with key life events and are therefore 'at risk' of succumbing to further experiences of exclusion.

dependency or by increasing the negative connotations attached to being NEET), or (iii) 'bridging' strategies (which aim to generate social connections that may enable marginalised young people to increase their social capital in relation to employment networks and opportunities).

Morgan and Parker (2017) argue that being classified as NEET can bring with it a sense of stigma relating to being anti-aspirational, irresponsible and/or negligent in terms of one's social/civic duties (see also Yates and Payne, 2006; Winlow and Hall, 2013). Highlighting some of the broader difficulties that disadvantaged young people may face, Morgan and Parker (2017) suggest that rather than focusing on academic achievement and paid employment as the basis for personal 'worth', strategies to re/engage marginalised youth should look to more informal structures of recognition such as verbal expressions of praise, trust and acceptance (see also Levitas, 2005; Whittaker, 2010). Morgan and Parker (2017) go on to argue that at an interpersonal level, acceptance and recognition from individuals within socially valued institutions (e.g. corporate or charitable organisations), has the potential to enhance self-worth through the acknowledgement of strengths and qualities which fall outside of more conventional spheres of recognition (i.e., school, college, academic achievement) whilst also facilitating a sense of 'belonging' in relation to more traditional life-course pathways (i.e., education, employment and training). Showcasing qualitative findings from two small-scale, UK-based sporting interventions, Morgan and Parker (2017) demonstrate how positive interpersonal relationships may enhance both the sporting and wider personal experiences of NEET young people especially via mentor/mentee interactions. In particular, they demonstrate how an emphasis on the establishment of trusting relationships by coaches and/or project leaders may have a significant impact on young people in relation to feelings of recognition, acceptance and belonging and which may, in turn, enhance social inclusion.

Social capital

It is widely acknowledged that such forms of recognition, acceptance and trust also have the potential to impact one's social capital, i.e., the value which social networks can bring in relation to social mobility (see Coleman 1988). One of the best-known discussions on this topic is that of Putnam (2000) who suggests that there are three distinct types of social capital: 'bridging', 'linking', and 'bonding'. In sum, 'bridging' social capital refers to the social connections that are constructed across and between horizontal social divisions, (i.e., membership of a specific, communal activity – such as sport - may provide a context within which such horizontal ties are created). 'Linking' social capital provides greater opportunities to enact social mobility by promoting vertical connections between diverse social divisions, (i.e., the potential of an activity to attract participants from different social class backgrounds allows the possibility of marginalised young people gaining greater access and opportunity within mainstream social settings). 'Bonding', social capital relates to a sharpening of relationships within a particular social group as a consequence of the

exclusion of others, thus controlling the quantity and quality of the social ties that promote social capital (see Putnam, 2000).

Given their wide appeal, Morgan et al. (2020) suggest that interventions concerning sport, physical activity and the performing arts offer significant opportunities to participants for the accumulation of social capital due to their ability to bring people together. Meek et al. (2012) for example, found that combining sport with educational provision was a successful way of engaging marginalised youth in education and/or training activity leading to increased employability and enhanced social networks. Similarly, Hughes (2005) found that arts-based interventions may be used to engage those 'at risk' and help them into education, employment and training whilst at the same time facilitating the development of transferable skills such as communication and teamwork (see also Lonie, 2011). In turn, Morgan et al. (2020) conclude that sport, physical activity and performing arts interventions offer a platform to enhance social capital as a consequence of their potential to promote community cohesion (see also Kelly 2017; Parker et al. 2018).

Mentoring

A further component of such interventions is that of mentoring. As we have seen, recent research has highlighted the importance of mentoring in relation to the establishment of trusting relationships within the context of coach/mentee interactions. Morgan and Parker (2017) argue that critical to successful mentoring within this context is the generation of positive (trusting) interpersonal relationships with project staff and that when successful, these relationships have the potential to enhance the sporting and wider personal experiences of the young people concerned. The underlying philosophy behind these interactions differs significantly from traditional forms of mentoring where the mentor is often someone who is relatively unfamiliar with (and disconnected from) the personal and social circumstances of the mentee in question (see Coalter, 2013, 2015). In this alternative model, interactional engagement is based on an altogether more tangible peer-mentoring scenario where 'shared experience' provides the bedrock upon which trusting relationships can be built and where regularity, frequency and consistency (of provision) are paramount (see also Parker et al., 2012; Parker et al., 2018).

Of course, recognition of the impact of high-quality models of mentoring amongst marginalised and vulnerable populations is nothing new (see Liao and Sanchez, 2019; Lund et al, 2019). Pryce (2012) for example has argued that in order to build meaningful relationships with young people in school settings, mentors must demonstrate a genuine desire to learn about their mentees (i.e., 'what makes them tick') and respond in an authentic and empathetic way (see also Spencer, 2012; Spencer et al., 2018). Others have emphasised the specific benefits of 'informal' (naturally occurring) mentoring where young people experience an element of control and autonomy over the choice of mentor (as opposed to more structured processes where mentors are formally 'assigned'). Important too are mentoring approaches that provide encouragement, support and role modeling (emotional and practical) in non-hierarchical ways

(see Meltzer et al. 2018). For example, Schwartz et al's (2016) pilot study of the Connected Scholars Programme (CSP) in the US found that when young people were encouraged to build relationships with a range of adults around the enhancement of their academic and career goals (i.e., college tutors, programme staff, and mentors) without the need to create formal mentoring relationships, this increased the value that students placed upon social capital whilst at the same time enhancing their knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy (see also Shier et al. 2018). The quality of mentoring provision (i.e., the closeness of the relationship between mentor and mentee) is especially critical where specific vulnerabilities are evident. For those in care or leaving care, for instance, authenticity, consistency of provision and longitudinal investment on the part of the mentor can serve to mitigate wider experiences of rejection and disappointment and aid not only the physical and mental health needs of the mentee but also emotional and cognitive development including social capital (see Spencer, 2010; Aherns et al., 2008, 2011).

iv. Current Assessment of the Sector

In such a fast moving and evolving sector it is worth looking beyond academic assessment to those on the fringes of policy making and 'lived experience' who play an important role helping to both define and influence policy making. The most recent overview of the delivery of social outcomes through sporting activity was published in December 2020, by the conservative think tank, The Centre for Social Justice. A *Level Playing Field: Equalising access to sport and exercise for young people after Covid-19* who argued:

*"At the individual level, sport is a protective factor against ills of the body and mind and helps to keep people healthy. At a local level, sport is often the glue that holds communities together. At a societal level, sports can function as a weapon for social justice and transformation, contributing to positive long-term outcomes for individuals, for the community and especially for young people".*²²³

This report goes much wider than the current evidence base and better reflects how the sector see itself and where others believe it should be making an impact. Like Cameron (2018) (see Chapter Five), they assert, physical activity and sports should be 'viewed by government as integral part of a healthy lifestyle, lowering an individual's risk of serious poor physical health and supporting better mental health, rather than a standalone panacea to the complex realities of the obesity crisis'. The report outlines the scale the public policy issues, and the challenges public authorities face in tackling them, helpfully categorising these into six areas:

²²³ The Centre for Social Justice, December 2020. *A Level Playing Field: Equalising access to sport and exercise for young people after Covid-19* p1

1. Saving Lives

Physical activity is critical in tackling the obesity crisis including childhood obesity which is a serious public health threat in the UK, with evidence suggesting that obesity in childhood makes a person significantly more likely to experience obesity and other health problems in later life. The latest government statistics for 2018-19 reveal that two thirds of adults in England are overweight or obese, as well as one in three primary school age children²²⁴ and people that are insufficiently active have a 20 to 30 per cent increased risk of death compared to those that are sufficiently active²²⁵. They add, that for children living in the most deprived areas, obesity prevalence is more than double that of those living in the least deprived areas and that obesity is also a generational affair, with children of overweight parents more likely to be obese than children whose parents are a healthy weight.²²⁶

The report cites Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People survey which shows that one third of children are achieving less than half of the Chief Medical Officer's guideline of 60 minutes of daily activity²²⁷. The government's 2019 School Sport Activity Action plan found that 32.9 per cent of children and young people do less than 30 minutes of activity per day²²⁸.

Furthermore, CSJ cite the increasing evidence to support the link between physical activity and good mental health²²⁹. Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of depression, cognitive decline and delay the onset of dementia²³⁰. In adults experiencing depression, daily physical activity can reduce depression by 20 to 30 per cent²³¹. Physical activity is also a mood enhancer and stress reliever²³². Sport is therefore crucial in an age where 83 per cent of young people report that the COVID-19 pandemic has made their mental health - and their opportunities for physical exercise - worse²³³.

Sports charity, Made by Sport, found that children and young people participating in in-school sports and clubs are 5.6 times more likely to report high resilience levels and 20 per cent less likely to suffer

224 NHS, 2020. 'Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet, England, 2020: Part 3' [Accessed via: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-obesity-physical-activity-and-diet/england-2020/part-3-adult-obesity-copy>]

225 World Health Organisation, February 2018. 'Physical activity: Key facts' [Accessed via: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity#:~:text=and%20weight%20control.>]

226 NHS, May 2020. 'Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet, England, 2020: Part 4' [Accessed via: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-obesity-physical-activity-and-diet/england-2020/part-4-childhood-obesity-copy>]

227 Sport England, December 2019. 'Active Lives children and young people survey: Academic year 2018/19' [Accessed via: <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-01/active-lives-children-survey-academic-year-18-19.pdf?cVMsdnpBoqROViY61iUjpQY6WcRyhtGs>]

228 DfE, DCMS, DHSC, July 2019. 'School Sport and Activity Action Plan' [Accessed via:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/848082/Schoolsportandactivityactionplan.pdf]

229 World Health Organisation, 2019. 'Motion for your mind: Physical activity for mental health promotion, protection and care' [Accessed via: https://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/403182/WHO-Motion-for-your-mind-ENG.pdf]

230 World Health Organisation, 2020. '#HealthyatHome - Physical activity' [Accessed via: <https://www.who.int/news-room/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---physical-activity>]

231 Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine UK. 'The role of physical activity and sport in mental health' [Accessed via: <https://www.fsem.ac.uk/position-statement/the-role-of-physical-activity-and-sport-in-mental-health/#:~:text=Physical%20activity%20has%20been%20>]

232 Mental Health Foundation, 2015. 'How to look after your mental health using exercise' [Accessed via: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/How%20to...exercise.pdf>]

233 Sport for Development Coalition, July 2020. Impact of Covid 19 on the sport for development sector [Accessed via: <https://www.flipsnack.com/CS2020magazine/impact-of-covid-19-on-the-sport-for-development-sector-v2.html>]

from a mental health disorder; and 25 per cent less likely to be at risk of anxiety and 11 per cent less likely to self-harm (girls²³⁴).

As many commentators are also noting, the impact of inactivity has compounded the impact of Covid-19 where nearly 8 per cent of critically ill ICU patients were morbidly obese compared with 2.9 per cent of the population -has no doubt shaped the current national campaign to tackle obesity.²³⁵

2. Strengthening Communities

Community sport helps to build community and build civic pride. People that volunteer are more likely to feel that they belong in their area²³⁶ and are less likely to feel lonely,²³⁷ whilst those that regularly turn up and experience live sport, especially when they support a specific team or athlete, enjoy greater community engagement.²³⁸ Research has found that “engaging in the life of the community enables people to experience a sense of purposeful participation, mitigating a sedentary lifestyle.”²³⁹ Focus group participants explained that, in the absence of community centre sports such as bowls and seated yoga, they would otherwise be “at home, drinking, bored” or “alone at home with no one to talk to.”²⁴⁰

3. Serving Society

Disadvantaged people are notably less likely to be engaged in physical activity, yet participation in sport can contribute effectively to tackling social exclusion. In 2015, Sport England recorded a discrepancy of 25.9 per cent to 39.1 per cent between lower and higher socio-economic groups respectively in weekly sports participation.²⁴¹ The Active Lives Survey published in October 2017 showed that the socio-economic gap had not yet closed (with 10.4 percentage points between the same groups).²⁴²

Households with the lowest incomes are the least active and suffer the highest obesity rates.²⁴³ NHS data shows that 35 per cent of children in the least affluent families do fewer than 30 minutes of activity a day compared to 22 per cent of children from the most affluent families.²⁴⁴ There is a gender disparity in the levels of youth participation in sport, too. According to Sport England’s Active Lives

234 Made by Sport PowerPoint shared with the Centre for Social Justice

235 Department of Health and Social Care, July 2020. ‘New obesity strategy unveiled as country urged to lose weight to beat coronavirus (COVID-19) and protect the NHS’ [Accessed via: [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-obesity-strategy-unveiled-as-country-urged-to-lose-weight-to-beat-](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-obesity-strategy-unveiled-as-country-urged-to-lose-weight-to-beat-coronavirus)

236 HM Government, December 2015. ‘Sporting Future: A new strategy for an active nation’ [Accessed via: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/SportingFutureACCESSIBLE.pdf]

237 Ibid

238 Sport England, April 2020. ‘Active Lives adult survey November 2018/18 report’ [Accessed via: <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-04/Active%20Lives%20Adult%20November%2018-19%20Report..pdf>] HM Government, December 2015. ‘Sporting Future: A new strategy for an active nation’ [Accessed via: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/SportingFutureACCESSIBLE.pdf]

239 Centre for Social Justice, 2019. ‘Community capital: How purposeful participation empowers humans to flourish’ [Accessed via: <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CSJ-Community-Capital-Report-final-version.pdf>] p4

240 Ibid. p 4

241 CSJ analysis of Sport England, Sport and Physical Activity Levels amongst adults aged 16+, Oct 2017, Table 1 [Accessed via: www.sportengland.org/media/12451/tables-1-4levels-ofactivity.xlsx]

242 CSJ analysis of Sport England, Sport and Physical Activity Levels amongst adults aged 16+, Oct 2017, Table 1 [Accessed via: www.sportengland.org/media/12451/tables-1-4_levels-ofactivity.xlsx]

243 StreetGames & Centre for Economics and Business Research, April 2014. ‘The inactivity time bomb: The economic cost of physical inactivity in young people’ [Accessed via: <https://network.streetgames.org/sites/default/files/The-Inactivity-TimeBomb-StreetGames-Cebr-report-April-2014.pdf>]

244 NHS, May 2020. ‘Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet, England, 2020 Part 5’ [Accessed via: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-obesity-physical-activity-and-diet/england-2020/part-5-adult-physical-activity-copy>]

Survey, boys are more likely to be active than girls with a gap of 319,200 between the numbers of boys who achieve the recommended amount of sport and physical activity (51 per cent or 1.8m) and the number of girls that do (43 per cent or 1.5m).²⁴⁵

4. Crime Prevention and Reengagement

Findings from a recent DCMS committee report focussing on the social impact of participation in culture and sport found that (i) reoffending rates can be reduced through access to sport or cultural programmes, (ii) involvement in the arts and sports provides a constructive influence on young people with positive role models and (iii) participation in sport positively influences educational attainment.²⁴⁶

Sports can help to steer young people away from the lure of gang culture and other criminal activity by offering an “alternative community that is available and willing to offer them comprehensive support”.²⁴⁷ With some 60,000 young people aged 10-17 identifying as a gang members or knowing a gang member who is a relative, engagement in sports before formal involvement with the criminal justice system is crucial.²⁴⁸ Fight 4 Peace’s 12 month martial arts programme, for example, resulted in 165 crimes being avoided, delivering an estimated £1 million worth of savings to the public purse and an additional £2.5 million worth of lifetime education and employment impacts.²⁴⁹

Sport is an equally powerful rehabilitative tool, with organisations such as the Saracens Rugby Club’s Sport’s Foundation programme Get Onside reducing reoffending rates for prisoners at HMP Feltham Young Offenders Institute to 25 per cent below the national average of 40%.²⁵⁰ The Premier League’s ‘Kicks’ programme, meanwhile, has seen significant reductions in anti-social behaviour in the areas where it was delivered.²⁵¹ Research by the CSJ showed that seven out of ten teenagers and parents say that anti-social behaviour is due primarily to boredom.²⁵²

5. Educational Attainment

Sports can help to engage young people more fully in their education. According to a study by Sheffield Hallam University, nine in ten teachers think that being active improves pupil behaviour and school

245 Sport England, December 2019. ‘Latest activity figures on children and young people published’ [Accessed via: <https://www.sportengland.org/news/active-lives-children-and-young-people-survey-academic-year-201819-report-published>]

246 DCMS, May 2019. ‘Committee publishes report on the social impact of participation in culture and sport’ [Accessed via: <https://old.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/digital-culture-media-and-sport-committee/news/social-impact-report-published-17-19/>]

247 Centre for Social Justice, August 2018. ‘It can be stopped: A proven blueprint to stop violence and tackle gang and related offending in London and beyond’ [Accessed via: <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CSJJ6499-Gangs-Report-180911-FINAL-WEB.pdf>]

248 National Youth Agency, May 2020. ‘Gangs and exploitation: A youth work response to Covid-19’ [Accessed via: <https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NYA-Hidden-in-Plain-Sight-1.pdf>]

249 House of Commons and DCMS, May 2019. Changing lives: the social impact of participation in culture and sport’ [Accessed via: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcmds/734/734.pdf>]

250 Ibid.

251 Premier League Kicks [Accessed via: <https://www.premierleague.com/communities/programmes/community-programmes/pl-kicks>]

252 Centre for Social Justice March 2015. ‘Sport for Social Good: Revisiting More than a Game’ [Accessed via: www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CSJJ3207Sports-Paper03.15WEB.pdf].

work.²⁵³ Educational charity Football Beyond Borders (FBB), for example, works with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who are passionate about football, but at risk of school exclusion, to help them complete their education and transition successfully into adulthood.²⁵⁴

Last year, FBB reached 612 students across 37 projects working in schools across London, Essex and the North West. 95 per cent of participants completed the academic year and 72 per cent improved their behaviour in school.²⁵⁵ Keeping young people in school is a vital protective factor against exploitation, crime and unemployment. FBB uses a football coaching curriculum delivered in the classroom and on the pitch that allows them to tap into young people's passions "to create transformative learning experiences and develop key social and emotional competencies."²⁵⁶ In 2017, DCMS found that underachieving young people participating in extra-curricular activities linked to sport could increase their numeracy skills, on average, by 29 per cent above those who did not participate in sport.²⁵⁷

The Boxing Academy, Hackney, is an alternative provision free school offering a boxing ethos with classes of eight students assigned a dedicated boxer who acts as a mentor, teacher and coach. A high-quality academic curriculum is offered alongside daily boxing training resulting in 100 per cent of leavers going on to higher education or apprenticeships.²⁵⁸ Likewise, Dallaglio Rugby Works places coaches in schools for excluded pupils and harnesses the values of rugby to develop a wide range of essential skills. Rugby coaches lead weekly small groups of 8-10 young people helping them to develop their soft skills, increasing their engagement with school, developing their communication and guiding them onto a suitable career path.²⁵⁹ This three-year programme focuses on developing life skills, raising aspirations and physical and emotional wellbeing.²⁶⁰ 82 per cent of their young people are in education, employment or training 12 months after leaving school.²⁶¹ In contrast, nationally, just half of pupils leaving alternative provision are in education, employment or training after finishing their GCSEs.²⁶²

6. World of Work

Successful sports interventions such as the ones described above equip young people to go on to participate fully in civic life. Physically active young people show increased levels of teamwork (7.3x),

253 Sport England, October 2020. 'Physical activity can help children catch up on missed work' [Accessed via: <https://www.sportengland.org/news/physical-activity-can-help-children-catch-missed-work>]

254 Football Beyond Borders [Accessed via: <https://www.footballbeyondborders.org/what-we-do/fbb-schools-boys/>]

255 Football Beyond Borders, 2019. 'Impact report 2018-2019' [Accessed via: <https://www.footballbeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/201819-Impact-Report-1-1.pdf>]

256 Ibid.

257 DCMS, 2010. 'The Culture and Sport Evidence Programme (CASE), Understanding the drivers, impact and value of engagement in culture and sport, London [Accessed via: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/71231/CASE-supersummaryFINAL-19-July2010.pdf]

258 Hackney Boxing Academy [Accessed via: <https://www.learningtrust.co.uk/content/boxing-academy>]

259 Dallaglio RugbyWorks [Accessed via: <https://www.dallaglorugbyworks.com/what-we-do/rugbyworks>]

260 Dallaglio, 2020. 2020-2023 RugbyWorks strategic framework overview [Accessed via: <https://www.dallaglorugbyworks.com/images/what-we-do/our-261>

261 Dallaglio RugbyWorks, 2020. 'Annual review 2018/19' [Accessed via: <https://www.dallaglorugbyworks.com/images/what-we-do/impact/dallaglio-rugbyworks-annual-review-2018-2019.pdf>]

262 Centre for Social Justice, May 2020. 'Warming the cold spots of alternative provision: A manifesto for system improvement' [Accessed via: <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/library/warming-the-cold-spots-of-alternative-provision-a-manifesto-for-system-improvement>]

resilience (5.6x), leadership (6.7x for girls and 5.4x for boys) and communication skills (5.4x) - skills that are crucial to workplace success.²⁶³ At a societal level, life skills gained from sports contribute £1.4 billion of GDP growth in the form of educational performance and soft skills.²⁶⁴

Participation in sport is associated with an 11 per cent increase in the likelihood of having looked for a job in the last four weeks among people who are unemployed. And the data collected in a study of 25 European countries suggests that there is a direct causal link between an individual's sport participation and their employment status, especially for males.²⁶⁵

vi. The Development of a Sector and Key Insights

The Sport for Development Coalition has recently argued in its evidence to the House of Lord Select Committee on Sport and Recreation (2020), 'effectively evaluating the level to which the outcomes set out in the *Sporting Future* strategy have been achieved is also challenging'²⁶⁶. The last progress report against the 25 Key Performance Indicator's (KPIs) set out to measure government's strategy implementation was in 2018. As the Coalition points out 'the breadth of the outcomes at the core of the strategy, makes success hard to define and measure, particularly in relation to individual and community development'. They go on to argue that if the government wants to maximise the wider social value of sport and recreation, and mobilise support from across communities, institutions and policy makers, then a more targeted articulation of outcomes (and associated results frameworks) is required.

As set out in Chapter Five, there is a growing and accepted evidence base that shows policy, programming and interventions delivered through purpose-driven organisations, that have 'specific characteristics' and which are 'intentionally orientated' towards targeted non-sport outcomes deliver more substantial returns and wider community benefit.²⁶⁷ Characteristics that have been shown to deliver wider impact include: increased regularity and duration of delivery; the integration of self-reflection and personal development activities; incorporating social interaction; and linked counselling or signposting.²⁶⁸

263 Made by Sport PowerPoint shared with the Centre for Social Justice

264 Made by Sport PowerPoint shared with the Centre for Social Justice

265 DCMS, April 2014. 'Quantifying the Social Impacts of Culture and Sport [Accessed via:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304896/Quantifying_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf; G Kavetsos,

'The impact of physical activity on employment', *Journal of Socio- Economics*, vol 40, no 6, Dec 2011, pp775-9 [Accessed via:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2011.08.011>]

266 Evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Sport and Recreation, March 2021. <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/482/national-plan-for-sport-and-recreation-committee/publications/written-evidence/?SearchTerm=sport+for+development+coalition&DateFrom=&DateTo=&SessionId=>

267 Laureus Sport for Good and Commonwealth Secretariat. (2018). *Sport for Development: The Road to Evidence*.

<https://www.sportanddev.org/en/document/research-and-project-evaluations/sport-development-road-evidence>; Schulenkorf, N., Sherry, E., & Rowe, K.

(2016). Sport for development: An integrated literature review. *Journal of Sport Management*, 30(1), 22-39.; and, Sport for Development Coalition (2015) *Sport for Development Outcomes and Measurement Framework*, https://londonfundors.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/SfD%20Framework_0.pdf

268 Sport England. (2017). *Review of the Evidence of Outcomes of Sport and Physical Activity: A Rapid Evidence Review*. <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/sport-outcomes-evidence-review-report-summary.pdf>

Strategic approaches shown to be more impactful include: locally led and place-based approaches; collective-impact and cross-sector collaboration; and robust planning, monitoring and evaluation approaches that extend beyond participation and focus on contributions to wider social outcomes. These strategies are a common feature of the approach taken by organisations in the Sport for Development Coalition.

Prioritising these ‘specific characteristics’ and ‘intentionality’ in programming approaches and intervention design has also been shown to be most successful in seeking to mobilise cross-sector funding for sport and recreation-based approaches. For example:

- The partnership between the Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice and London Marathon Charitable Trust leading to the Youth Justice Board supporting the implementation of the sport-based ‘Levelling the Playing Field’ project aimed at tackling over representation of black, Asian or minority ethnic children in the youth justice system.²⁶⁹ The Alliance’s review of sport in youth and adult prisons also resulted in a £1.8million commitment from Government to enhance physical activity and educational opportunities in the criminal justice system, including through sport-based projects and community partnerships.²⁷⁰
- The provision of £2.1million from the Department of Work and Pensions and Education and Skills Funding Agency to Street League to support its sport and employment programmes. This supports the provision of employability services in some of the UK’s most disadvantaged communities in which sport plays a crucial role in the wrap-around support offered to develop essential skills for the workplace and support young people gain qualifications.
- Between July 2018 and December 2020, StreetGames helped secure £10.7 million of external funding for locally trusted sport organisations harnessing the power of sport to create positive change in the lives of disadvantaged young people across the UK.²⁷¹ 85 per cent of this funding was from non-sport sources.

Ultimately, the Coalition argues that ‘the scope of sport and recreation policy can continue to extend beyond active lifestyles’ and in doing so it increasingly offers value for government, for civil society and private sector actors, and for communities at large. However, fundamental to this approach are ‘cross-government plans, alongside commitment across relevant sectors, to fully mobilising the assets across the

²⁶⁹ Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. (2020). *Business Plan 2020/21*.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884764/YJB_Business_Plan_2020-21.pdf

²⁷⁰ Ministry of Justice. (2018). *Government response to ‘A Sporting Chance’ - An Independent Review of Sport in Youth and Adult Prisons*.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733311/a-sporting-chance-govt-response.pdf

²⁷¹ StreetGames. (2020). *StreetGames Funding and Sustainability Report*.

https://network.streetgames.org/sites/default/files/Sustainability%20Lead%20Research_Final.pdf

sport and physical activity ecosystem to maximise the sector's contribution to the social and economic development'.

This highlights one of the key challenges for community sport delivering social outcomes: that through sport, the limits of what it can deliver to achieve social outcomes seem to be never ending. This is to the credit of the sport sector who continuously innovate, and also a reflection that the sector often delivers first and considers impacts later. The nature of the sector is also competitive and this thirst for innovation and desire to help people in the local context has spawned a fragmented sector where too often every organisation does its monitoring and evaluation differently. This also reflects the fact that there are many public and other funders increasingly investing in social outcomes, each with their own monitoring and evaluation frameworks further fragmenting the sector.

As the Coalition points out in its evidence to the Lords Committee, a focus on wider social outcomes across sport and recreation policy has had substantial implications for monitoring systems and evaluation processes. They highlight that Sport England's Active Lives survey,²⁷² has made a significant impact in understanding of the inequalities in physical activity levels, volunteering and the workforce; and in the association between activity levels and nationally validated measures for physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, and social and community development. However, they argue that a key 'challenge facing sport and recreation policy makers is having to make decisions at a macro policy and strategic level, only using generalised population level data or granular research and evaluation that draw on small sample sizes, that is focused on singular interventions and/or applies limited methodological detail and rigour'.²⁷³

The Coalition argues that sport, recreation and physical activity is not homogenous and there is a need for the opportunities and challenges associated with using different sports and physical activities to contribute to wider social outcomes to be better understood.²⁷⁴ While there have been numerous (limited) attempts to monitor and evaluate specific interventions, this is still not enough. The Coalition is therefore supporting collective measurement across its own network using a standardised survey tool, analysis process and reporting mechanism.²⁷⁵ The use of this tool will be implemented as one component of organisations' wider context - and institution - specific monitoring, evaluation and learning systems. The tool aims to provide a better understanding of the association and comparison between national data, drawing on

272 Sport England. (2021). *Active Lives Survey*. <https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives?section=overview>

273 Fujiwara, D, Kudrna, L, Dolan, P. (2014). *Quantifying the Social Impacts of Culture and Sport*.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304896/Quantifying_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf)

[file/304896/Quantifying_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304896/Quantifying_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf); and, Keane et al. (2019) 'Methods for Quantifying the Social and Economic Value of Sport and Active Recreation: A Critical Review'. *Sport in Society*, DOI: 10.1080/17430437.2019.1567497

274 Svensson, P., Woods, H. (2017). A systematic overview of sport for development and peace organisations. *Journal of Sport for Development*. 5(9): 36-48.

275 Sport for Development Coalition. (2021). *Impact Portal*. <https://sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org/data-impact-portals>

official data sets and validated questions,^{276 277 278} and the outcomes reported by participants in collective, segmented and individual interventions across the sector. The aim is to provide a deeper understanding of the association between types of interventions and measures of wider outcomes.

Outcomes and Measurement Framework

The Sport for Development Coalition published its Outcomes and Measurement Framework in October 2015²⁷⁹. This document was a fundamental step towards improving the sector's evidence base and to the sharing of key learning and understanding of how best to improve outcomes for young people. The Framework used existing evidence to outline the wide range of outcomes that sport can influence providing advice on how to design sport for development programmes, reflecting the new 2015 Sports Strategy. As has been mentioned above, the sector often faced challenges in demonstrating the impact of its work, and the guide was created to support this by clearly showing the wider benefits, over and above simply participation. In doing so it promoted and shared a consistent measurement of impact to further strengthen the evidence base for sport for development.

Its framework helps organisations articulate the value of their programmes and impact by linking short-, medium- and long-term positive life outcomes enabling organisations to be consistent with others in programme design approach, language and measurement as well as clarifying the key outcomes mapping them against government policy. In presenting the potential range of outcomes that a Sport for Development programme could deliver and helping to decide what success should look like for the young people taking part, the framework provides an outcomes model that aims to reflect a series of changes to young peoples' lives. It does this across two continuous sequences - from intrinsic to extrinsic, and from individual to social. The two sequences reflect the strong evidence that links emotional skills and behaviours to positive outcomes in later adult life.

The Coalition also argues that a Theory of Change is the main tool to design a successful programme and the framework provides an outline of the essential principles of building logic into a Theory of Change. This is supported as an outcomes-led methodology to designing Sport for Development programmes. It helps to show the links and assumptions between the immediate changes, longer-term changes and the ultimate goal, and the factors that will affect an organisation's ability to reach these. As the Framework argues, effectively, a good Theory of Change is the roadmap for evaluation and measurement.

276 Understanding Society. (2021). *The UK Household Longitudinal Study*. <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/>

277 Warwick Medical School. (2021). *The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales – WEMWBS*. <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/>

278 Office of National Statistics. (2021). *Personal well-being in the UK: April 2019 to March 2020*.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2019tomarch2020>

279 <https://sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org/sites/default/files/user/SfD%20Outcomes%20and%20Measurement%20Framework.pdf>

Finally, the framework provides a collection of tools to help measure the outcomes in the Theory of Change. The majority of tools in provided help to understand what changed (impact evaluation) as a result of the programme and help understand the economic benefits of the programme (economic evaluation). It is worth noting that the tools or not designed to help understand why young people changes and how – this should be measured through process evaluations with surveys, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

By way of example, the report also provides four theories of change from four different but well-respected organisations:

1. Sported - sporteducate Theory of Change
2. StreetGames - Theory of Change
3. London Youth - Getting Ready Theory of Change
4. Dame Kelly Holmes Trust - Get on Track Theory of Change

Impact Portal

More recently the Coalition has taken this learning and developed, with State of Life, a new Impact Portal which includes a Collective Survey Tool and Reporting Dashboard.²⁸⁰ The Collective Survey Tool and Reporting Dashboard has been developed to help individual organisations and the sector as a whole improve the way they measure, record and demonstrate the impact they are making. Currently, several sector organisations are piloting this for the Coalition. This underlines one of the critical points that sport and wellbeing ministry projects, and the Church of England, should heed: create a standard way of measuring and articulating what it is doing. Furthermore, where it is relevant, that it should use the current frameworks within the wide sector rather than creating its own and then develop from this the relevant faith pathways, church and new worshipping communities measures.

²⁸⁰ <https://www.sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org/collective-survey-tool>

V. The Sport For Development Landscape

In its evidence to the Lord's Committee (2020),²⁸¹ the Sport for Development Coalition also sets out the current make-up of the sport for development sector, some of its key insight and issues. This is important for sport and wellbeing ministry projects to help them understand the sector it is working alongside/within and as it shapes its own strategic direction and approach. They highlighted that people's experience of sport and recreation is increasingly varied, multi-layered, and delivered through a mixed economy of goods and services.²⁸² Within this mixed economy model, stakeholders that support participation opportunities can be generally clustered into three broad categories: i) private, public and leisure management contractors; ii) sport clubs affiliated to governing body structures; and, iii) third sector voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. Across these stakeholders the role of VCSE organisations are least understood, inadequately monitored in national data and requires further attention in future policy and planning processes.²⁸³

It is estimated that VCSE sport and recreation organisations make up a significant proportion of the 27,000 charitable organisations in the UK that include 'amateur sport' in the description of their activities. But the actual number of VCSE sport organisations far exceeds this number as there are a range of organisations across the third sector which use sport to achieve their aims, but which do not have amateur sport in their articles.²⁸⁴ This extensive group of organisations have developed, in part, due to local authority cuts during austerity, but also in response to 'big society' and 'localism' agendas, and to meet the needs of the less advantaged communities. For example:

- The 1,000 Locally Trusted Organisations who are part of the StreetGames network "pride themselves on bringing sport to the right people, in the right way, and at the right time, place, and price point to suit their needs (with a focus on) the wellbeing of disadvantaged young people."²⁸⁵
- The 2,500 community groups working with Sported are described as being "deeply rooted within their communities and focused on initiatives that help young people from their community to succeed."²⁸⁶

VCSE sport organisations stand out as being well placed to balance the increasing commercial orientation of the sector. Emerging evidence shows that the importance of the role VCSE sport and recreation

281 Sport for Development Coalition Evidence to the House of Lords Committee on Sports and Recreation, 2020. Supported through the research and inputs from Active Partnerships, the Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice, Laureus Sport for Good, Sported, StreetGames, Street League and the Youth Sport Trust, as well as the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University and the Division of Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences, Brunel University.

282 Sport England. (2020). *Active Lives Online Data*. <https://activelives.sportengland.org/>

283 Charity Commission. (2020). *Register of Charities*. <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/>

284 Godfrey, T. (2020). *Partnerships, Policy and Practice: An examination of organisational capacity within Third Sector Sports Organisations in England* (Doctoral thesis, Loughborough University). https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/thesis/Partnerships_policy_and_practice_an_examination_of_organisational_capacity_within_third_sectorsports_organisations_in_England/12594221/1

285 StreetGames. (n.d.). *About StreetGames*. <https://network.streetgames.org/about-us/about-streetgames>

286 Sported. (n.d.) *About Us*. <https://sported.org.uk/our-work/aboutus/>

organisations play in supporting diverse communities, often poorly engaged by leisure sector and voluntary sport clubs, has been accentuated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.^{287 288} But challenges remain in ensuring many of these organisations can effectively access many funding and grant schemes.²⁸⁹

Placed-based working

Placed-based working is fundamental to the approach taken across the sector. Place-based approaches are characterised by a shift away from centrally dictated siloed policies, towards more holistic solutions, which are defined, generated and delivered locally.²⁹⁰ The importance and value of placed-based approaches is recognised across policy domains. A position paper produced by the University of Sheffield for UK Research and Innovation argued that the UK “needs more place-based types of thinking than almost any other industrialised country”.²⁹¹

In their new strategic plan, Sport England have committed to “expand place-based working by collaborating with more places and their decision-makers on their local priorities and partnership opportunities, helping them use sport and physical activity to deliver the outcomes they want, and their communities need”.²⁹²

This approach draws on learning from Sport England’s Local Delivery Pilots that demonstrated the value of relationship-based investment, coalescing around a shared purpose, prioritising lived experience, the importance of iterative learning, and moreover, that all the influencing factors need to work coherently as a ‘system’.²⁹³

There are several case studies from across the Sport for Development network of the effectiveness of localised, placed-based working:

The Model City London spearheaded by the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, the Mayor of London and Nike supports coalitions of community members and groups to work together to identify local challenges and design sports-based interventions to address them. Funding is directed towards the issues and approaches that coalitions recognise as being important to their area and its residents.²⁹⁴ Across three localities in London, this approach has delivered double

287 Sport for Development Coalition. (2020). *Impact of COVID-19 on the Sport for Development Sector* <https://sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org/research-and-reports>

288 Sport for Development Coalition. (2021). *Adapt, Support, Respond*, Online. <https://sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org/article/adapt-support-respond-coalition-launches-initiative-showcase-sectors-contribution>

289 Chilton, R. (2021). *Does grant funding exclude those it is designed to help?* Sported, January 2021. <https://sported.org.uk/our-work/>

290 Pritchard, N., Clay, T. Yeowell, N. and Boswell, K. (2019). *A Framework for Place-Based Funding*. <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/place/>

291 McCann, P. (2019) *UK research and innovation: A place-based shift*. A paper for UK Research and Innovation https://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Research/CSTI/UKRI_Place/McCann_-

292 Sport England. (2021). *Uniting the Movement: A 10-Year Vision to Transform Lives and Communities Through Sport and Physical Activity*, Online. p23. <https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>.

293 Sport England. (2021). *People and places: The Story of doing it differently*. https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/local-delivery?section=local_delivery_pilots#thestoryofdoingitdifferently-12496

294 Mayor of London. (n.d.) *Model City*. <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/sports/sport-unites/model-city>

figure percentage increases in the number of individuals (+19%) and local organisations (+11%) engaged, as well as a growth in the number of VCSE sport organisations involved in the collective working approach (+10.5%). This is despite many activities being halted, deferred, or adapted to be delivered virtually due to the Coronavirus pandemic.²⁹⁵

Active Burngreave's 'placed-based approach' to reduce inactivity levels in an ethnically diverse inner-city ward of Sheffield put the community "at the centre of all decisions, shaping exactly what delivery looks and feels like".²⁹⁶ This has resulted in the diversity of participant interventions reflecting the diversity of the ward (64% Asian, 10% Somali, 10% Roma/Slovak, 7% Arab, 3% White British) and evaluations showing reduced social isolation, increased understanding of the importance of physical activity, and increases in resilience and aspirations across participants.

StreetGames work with community-led, locally trusted organisations has supported over 20,000 disadvantaged young people deliver almost 400,000 hours of volunteering over the last decade and attain more than 11,000 new qualifications. Thirty-three percent (33%) of these volunteers identify as ethnically diverse.²⁹⁷

The Sport for Development Coalition rightly argues that in embedding place-based working in policy or plans with national scale, the ability to 'deliver locally at scale' through a systems approach is essential. Underpinned by experience in the Coalition, they believe that sustainable, scaled and systemic change on the 'big issues' will happen through locally-led and community driven (placed-based) approaches. To best achieve this Government, funders and others looking for large scale change like a diocese, can best support this process through facilitating shared learning, supporting co-creation and design thinking, and facilitating connectivity within and across communities around common objectives and outcomes.²⁹⁸

Encouragingly for sport and wellbeing ministry projects, there is 'significant potential to grow and develop placed-based working to maximise the positive social impact of sport and recreation' and it is the view of the Coalition that these are even more significant 'to enhance participation and the wider impact of sport and physical activity post the pandemic'. There is however a need to reform funding frameworks and partnerships to fully utilise the value proposition offered through mainstreaming this approach.²⁹⁹ Fundamental to this reform must be a recognition that based on the communities many of these organisations serve, there are constraints on the level to which they can generate additional income and

295 National Development Team for Inclusion. (2020). *Model City London - Phase Two Evaluation Report: Sharing the mid-point of the MCL Journey Summary and Insights #2*. <https://www.laureus.com/getmedia/e654fac0-aed1-4457-8dd0-a5509775a2fc/MCL-summary-4th-Sep-2020-v2.pdf>

296 Active Partnerships. (2018). *Active Burngreave*, Online. <https://www.activepartnerships.org/impact/active-burngreave>

297 StreetGames. (2019). *Lessons of StreetGames Volunteers*. <https://www.streetgames.org/lessons-of-streetgames-young-volunteers>

298 Sport for Development Coalition. (2020). Sport England Strategy Consultation, Discussion paper on the recommendations and inputs from the Sport for Development Coalition, November 2020.

299 Chilton, R. (2021). Does grant funding exclude those it is designed to help? Sported, January 2021. <https://sported.org.uk/our-work/>

therefore an unsuitability of ‘pay to play’ models.³⁰⁰ Equally, it is not compatible with franchise-orientated commissioning and contracting models.

School and Afterschool Sport

It is also worth mentioning the contribution of sport and physical activity ‘in’ and ‘through’ the education systems. The School Sport and Activity Plan, as mentioned by Balcar (2020), is supported by the three key government departments whose engagement is required to maximise the potential of school sport and physical activity (Education; Health and Social Care; and, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport). Through the School Sport Sector Summits, led by the Youth Sport Trust, there is also a diverse network of nearly 50 nationally significant non-government organisations working collaboratively to support implementation. The Coalition alongside many sector partners continue to call for this to be revised significantly. The detrimental effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people’s physical activity, mental health and wellbeing, and educational attainment,³⁰¹ underlines that this is even more important.

For sport and wellbeing ministry projects, there is an opportunity to help the sector strengthen recognition of the importance of a wider range of community sport and physical activity stakeholders in the overall school sport and physical activity system. Like other VCSE sport organisations, the diocese stretches beyond the traditional formal sport bodies and designated service providers who receive most prominence in the current plan. On taking a place-based approach sport and wellbeing ministry projects could deliver elements in the plan that: empower young people; trial innovative new approaches; and increase the provision of after-school sport opportunities.

In particular, the Coalition argues for greater co-ordination and mechanisms to strengthen connections between community organisations and schools. This network would facilitate the sharing of good practice, support coordination and quality assurance, and assist national decision making. In turn, supporting these co-ordinators to understand and effectively engage with VCSE organisations that do not necessarily have sport as their sole purpose will be important.

Furthermore, the investment of £320 million in PE and school sport currently provided through the PE and sport premium for primary schools is supported by evidence showing there is an impact, when invested well, in increasing the proportion of children doing 30 minutes of activity each day, improving teacher knowledge and confidence, and raising the profile of PE and sport in supporting whole school improvement.³⁰² Continuation of this investment, coupled with the enhanced coordination and

300 Godfrey, T., Mason, C., & Downward, P. (2020). *COVID-19 and the resilience of third sector sports organisations in the UK*. Awaiting publication.

301 Youth Sport Trust. (2020). *Evidence Paper: The Impact of COVID-19 Restrictions on Children and Young People*. Loughborough, Youth Sport Trust.

302 Department for Education. (2019). *Primary PE and Sport Premium Survey Research Report*, July 2019.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/816676/Primary_PE_and_Sport_Premium_Survey_research_report.pdf

accountability mechanisms, as outlined above, is essential to the wider sports sector and achieving Government ambitions.

Inequalities

As we have seen, in their new strategic plan, Sport England have committed to tackling inequality within the sport and recreation sector as their main priority for the next ten years. According to ... prior to COVID-19, 62% of adults met physical activity guidelines compared to 56% of black people and 55.1% of Asian people. Equally just 54% of adults from low socio-economic groups (LSEG; NS-SEC 6-8) were classed as active. While 66% of adults with no disability were active, only 44% of disabled adults or those with a long-term health conditions were active. This is also mirrored in the activity levels of children and young people.³⁰³ In most cases these inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

These inequalities extend to customer service experiences, the workforce and leadership of the sector. Sector-led research has shown 40% of BAME participants report a negative customer service when taking part in community sport and leisure, compared to just 14% of white British.³⁰⁴ The paid and volunteer workforce in the sport and recreation sector is disproportionately orientated towards young men; 58% of all volunteers were men, while triple the share of professional roles in the sector are held by men under 25 when compared with the wider workforce. Only 13% of sport volunteers had a disability or long-term health condition (despite representing 21% of the population), and only 11% of sport volunteers were from NS-Sec 6-8 (despite representing 31% of the population).³⁰⁵ Across Sport England and UK Sport funded-bodies, just 5% of board members are BAME compared to 15% of the UK population, 5% of board members declared or consider themselves to have a disability, compared to around 22% of the wider UK population, and 3% of board members identified as being openly LGBT+ compared to 2% of the UK population.³⁰⁶

In framing their strategy, Sport England's commitment to "follow the established concept of 'proportionate universalism'... balancing targeted and universal provision in a way that's proportionate to the level of need" is notable.³⁰⁷ A key principle of proportionate universalism is the targeted supply of interventions and programmes to the needs of the groups concerned to ensure that their needs and any structural disadvantages are met. Critical to this is the adoption of a local approach (both in understanding

303 Sport England. (2020). *Sport for all? Why ethnicity and culture matters in sport and physical activity*. <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-02/Sportforallreport.pdf?tdOpMbTNOs7caOjvMZ0HCRPwsl3jGnFA>

304 Sport and Recreation Alliance. (2018). *Negative customer service threatens BAME sports participation*. <https://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/news/equality%20and%20diversity/negative-customer-service-threatens-bame-sport>

305 Sport England. (2020). *Workforce Data*, presentation to partner organisations, November 2020.

306 Sport England. (2019). *Inclusive boards - Diversity in Sport Governance: Annual Survey 18/19*. <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/diversity-in-sport-governance-full-report.pdf>

307 Sport England. (2021). *Uniting the Movement: A 10-Year Vision to Transform Lives and Communities Through Sport And Physical Activity*, (p23). <https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>.

the need and how to address it) with local stakeholders that are embedded in the community, while also adopting a more national or regional outlook.

There are many examples from the sport for development sector that help in providing a well-informed and evidenced approach to tackling these inequalities³⁰⁸. These include the ‘Tell Your Story’ initiative being supported by home county sport councils as an “opportunity to listen, learn and work with all communities to shape the future of sport across the UK”.³⁰⁹ However, sport and wellbeing ministry projects will want to consider this in more detail both in terms of their own governance structures (support equality, diversity and inclusion – including those aimed at ensuring greater representation of those from diverse ethnic communities, those with a disability or long-term health condition, and female representation on boards),³¹⁰ how they listen to and understand the youth and BAME voice, and in how they can ensure reaches into those communities where inequalities is the greatest.

Disability Sport

With continued disappointing participation figures amongst those with a disability, public institutions have increased their focus on tackling this stubborn inequality. Initially driven by the 2015 sports strategy, Sport England invested and supported a refocusing of disability sport. After 20 years, the former English Federation of Disability Sport became Activity Alliance in April 2018. The Activity Alliance advocates for inclusion in all plans in sport and activity and disabled people to be prioritised, locally and nationally. Working with organisations, groups, and individuals, the Alliance is slowly driving change so that disabled people are not the least active group in society. Their new plan to achieve this was launched in a new strategy in 2021, [Achieving Fairness - our 2021-2024](#) which recognises the need to tackle inactivity and inequality head on.

The Government also published a [National Disability Strategy](#) in 2021 which while recognising that while there had been ‘profound changes in public attitudes towards disability, captured and catalysed by national moments such as the 2012 Paralympic Games’ much more was needed to really understand the differences between disabled people’s everyday experience from non-disabled people. At its heart, the strategy is a vision to is to transform the ‘everyday lives of disabled people and level up opportunity at every stage of disabled people’s lives, as well as in all areas of disabled people’s lives’. This included objectives to improve the opportunity for disabled people to access sport and physical activity to improve wellbeing, health, and tackle isolation.

308 Sport for Development Coalition. (2020). *Spotlight on 2021: End of Year Forum Survey*, collated responses.

309 Storiesmatter. (n.d.) *#TellYourStory: because stories matter*. <https://www.storiesmatter.co.uk/>

310 UK Sport. (2020). *UK Sport and Sport England outline future developments to the Code of Governance for Sport*. <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2020/07/12/review-of-the-code-for-sports-governance>

While the report is a long-term plan to increase cross Government action, it was generally seen as disappointing, not for a lack of vision but its plans to achieve the vision. Policy announcements, however, continue to flow and it is widely expected the new sports strategy, like Sport England's new strategy, will significantly boost action in this area when it is published in 2022. While it may be only the start of significant activity, with these policy priorities in place and funding frameworks looking to tackle inequalities, all sports organisations and delivery organisations need to consider how they can proactively include disabled people. There is an increasing insight, support and resources to help organisations do this.

Some sport for development organisations like Sport Works have a strong record in successfully delivering 'short-breaks provision' disabled young people. This is a growth area and their programmes specifically facilitates the physical, cognitive, and emotional development needed to help improve their confidence and self-esteem as well developing other skills such as social interaction and communication. Provision is also targeted to support parents/carers to enjoy 'respite' and use this time to develop skills and progress towards the labour market. Historically, parachurch sport ministry organisations have been poor on including disabled people in their approaches or delivery, with only SCUK specifically recognising this need. Ability Bow, housed in St Paul's, Old Ford, London provides a useful case study of a community gym that support people with disabilities or long-term health conditions.³¹¹

Funding

As well as arguing for a stronger framework to ensure better delivery and funding, the sector also recognises the challenges of increasingly used 'pay to play' model across the wider sector. While there is a commercial imperative to prioritise sustainability, the risk is the exclusion of access for the community organisations who are often best equipped to engage those groups currently under-represented in sport and recreation. The reality is that for most community sport especially that delivered to the main underrepresented or excluded groups, such as disadvantaged young people and communities, free or almost free provision is critical. It is argued, by the Sport for Development Coalition for example, that a better balanced commercial and public income is required and achieving this will help to foster enhanced collaboration and coordination across stakeholders and ensure all groups in society have opportunities to be active.

Duty of Care

Ensuring that sport recreation is accessible, safe enjoyable and a positive experience for participants is of critical importance to the sports sector. Unfortunately, there is increased understanding and growing evidence of the risks of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, mistreatment, and lack of care in sport and recreation. With incomplete data, and previous slack processes, experts suggest that cases of harm within

³¹¹ <https://www.abilitybow.org>

sport and recreation are widely underreported (see Hemmings, B., Watson, N.J., Parker, A., Clement, D., Arrivinen-Barrow, M., and Oliver, M. (2019). Introduction. In B. Hemmings, N.J. Watson and A. Parker, *Sport, Psychology and Christianity: Welfare, Performance and Consultancy*. London, Routledge, pp.1-9.)

Following Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson's 2018 report about duty of care in sport³¹² the sector has looked to make significant improvements in how it deals with this issue. The *Working Together to Safeguard Children* guidance, revised in 2018, included sports organisations as relevant child safeguarding agencies for the first time. The available resources, tools, and capacity building support on safeguarding in sport are high quality and globally recognised. These should be used not only by NGBs but VCSE sport organisations. The *Code for Sport Governance* includes safeguarding requirements as a condition of funding from Sport England and it is expected these will be strengthened in the future.

vi. Community Sport Case Studies

While it had been our intention to formulate some case studies from around the community sport and sport for development sector, resource has not allowed this. To provide a flavour the following organisations are delivering programmes and projects that may resonate with sport and wellbeing ministry projects.

1. StreetGames

Launched in 2007, StreetGames is one of the leading sport for development charities in the UK. It aims to change the lives of disadvantaged young people and make their communities healthier, safer, and more successful through the power of sport. As an umbrella organisation it works with and supports over 4,000 communities in partnership with over 1,500 Locally Trusted Organisations (LTOs), reaching over 50,000 disadvantaged young people a year. Each self-determining organisation is independently managed and funded. Most are charities, legally constituted community groups or Community Interest Companies – all are embedded in 'hard to reach' communities. They are effective in engaging and operating in disadvantaged communities because they are trusted by the local community - they have 'permission to operate'.

StreetGames argues that while Leisure Centres and traditional sports clubs often do excellent work in their communities, many disadvantaged communities do not have access to them both physically and through cost and culture. Community organisations, however, provide sessions on the 'doorstep' at the right price (usually free) to make it as easy as possible to attend: their primary purpose is to improve their

³¹² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610130/Duty_of_Care_Review_-_April_2017__2.pdf

community. StreetGames are adept at engaging lower-socio economic groups who do not get regularly involved in sport/being active and represent a community-based alternative for those not engaging through school/FE.

StreetGames supports these organisations in maintaining industry standards for safeguarding, insurance, health and safety, and equalities and diversity; and to apply the very latest insights and evidence base to their local conditions. They take a 'place-based' approach, and their core delivery mechanism are Doorstep Sports Clubs (DCSs). These provide sporting activity for the right time, place, price, people, and style and generate social outcomes for disadvantaged youth by design. The benefits, beyond the physical, are accrued through the relationships amongst the youth and with the leader. The leader is half-coach, half youth worker.

This approach was initially tested through the delivery of a £20m pilot programme - funded by Sport England - designed to encourage more young people from disadvantaged areas to get active. An independent report found that these DCS created a £69m pa saving and provided newfound knowledge, skills and opportunities, both for the 1,400-plus organisations involved, and the many thousands of young participants who have since passed through their doors. In sum, StreetGames has been highly effective in creating and developing innovative approaches to community sport provision that tackle specific issues and deliver a range of social outcomes. To highlight a few of these approaches:

a. Community Safety

StreetGames are leading the sector in the use of sport as an early intervention and prevention tool for anti-social behaviour, youth crime and violence. It has developed the main principles of delivering community safety and working in partnership with Police and Crime Commissioners, Police, Youth Justice Board, Youth Offender Teams, and Violent Reduction Units. It is working with the Youth Endowment Fund to create a Theory of Change, practitioner toolkit and quality guidance framework; and advised YEF on their recent funding stream. It supports the Police and Crime Commissioner National Sport, Positive Activity and Youth Crime Prevention Board which is the strategic focal point for using sport as a tool of prevention. StreetGames has developed a theory of change which can be adapted for local needs.³¹³

b. Social Prescribing for Young People

StreetGames is the national lead organisation for Youth Social Prescribing. DHSC funded a pilot project in Brighton and Hove, Luton, Sheffield and Southampton with vulnerable young people, aged 5-25. The pilot's evaluation showed a social return on investment of £5.04 for every £1 spent on youth

³¹³ https://network.streetgames.org/sites/default/files/Sport%20and%20positive%20Outcomes_Theory%20of%20Change091120.pdf

social prescribing (£2.30 : £1 for adult schemes). StreetGames is continuing to develop a fast-growing nationwide network, resources for sports organisation to deliver social prescribing and is working with NHS England to further develop social prescribing for young people through sport clubs across the country. StreetGames has also developed a theory of change around social prescribing which can be adapted for local needs.³¹⁴

c. Fit and Fed (Holiday Activity and Hunger)

StreetGames developed Fit and Fed in 2016 to tackle holiday inactivity, hunger, and isolation. In 2018 the Education Department funded their pilot Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) pilot (2018-20), which included Fit and Fed projects including all of Newcastle's holiday provision. This saw collaborations with the city's Local Authority, police, school and museums, galleries, and theatres as well as local charities and VCS organisations. The programme had a significant impact and as well as helping to reduce and remove the stigma around food poverty, got people and communities active by introducing them to new activities. It even had a positive impact on aspects of ASB in the city.

Alongside nine other organisations, StreetGames has played a central role in the development of the HAF programme which DfE is funding with £220m per year from 2021. Working with the HAF Alliance they have produce guidance and resources about HAF delivery³¹⁵ as well as developing its own Fit and Fed theory of change which can be adapted for local needs³¹⁶.

d. Volunteering, Social Action, and Leadership

At the heart of StreetGames approach is to encourage and support young people to volunteer and lead. In an approach taken from youth groups of old, the StreetGames model is to take young people who attend DCSs and develop them as volunteers and peer leaders. Their Training and Leadership Academy reaches over 5,000 learners per year, through a mixture of short, skills-based, workshops and accredited qualifications in sport, health and community safety.³¹⁷ It has trained over 30, 000 young people to be sports leaders in their communities who have gained over 15, 000 qualifications leading many into further training, education and employment. The Academy also upskills the community sport workforce broadening their skills and knowledge enabling them to reach the hardest to reach groups who are often the most inactive and vulnerable.

StreetGames training is designed to be delivered anywhere, at any time. Courses are delivered by experts in their field, backed up by their extensive research and insight, which ensures that the training is forward-looking and of the highest quality. It provides all the necessary training for any

³¹⁴ <https://network.streetgames.org/our-work-changing-lives-health/youth-social-prescribing>

³¹⁵ <https://www.hafalliance.org/about-haf/>

³¹⁶ See StreetGames: Holiday Activity with Food Programme: What Works (2021) and Fit and Fed – Theory of Change (2020)

³¹⁷ <https://network.streetgames.org/streetgames-training-academy>

community sport leader from managing challenging behaviour to youth mental health aid first, from multi games activators to Fit and Fed activators, and from how to empower women to developing volunteering in community sport settings.³¹⁸

e. Family Activities

StreetGames has been piloting a new approach to activate families in Wales. In finding ways to better understand the relationship between family physical activity levels and social isolation, emotional health and mental wellbeing, StreetGames is developing a highly successful model to engage families, get them active while tackling some of the of simple but practical barriers to being active that poverty brings. This has enhanced community cohesion and put sports coaches at the heart of the community. This approach was highlighted in the Welsh Chief Medical Officer's Special Report on their COVID-19 response, where the Welsh Government, Sport Wales and Public Health Wales worked together, through a £5.4 million Healthy and Active Fund (HaAF), to sustainably increase the physical activity of children and young people, who are currently sedentary or have very low levels of activity, and to improve mental well-being³¹⁹. In March 2021, HaAF published a process evaluation of the national programme covering its development up to 2019, and the programme level theory of change.³²⁰

2. OnSide Youth Centres

OnSide's Youth Zones are designed to give young people aged 8–19 years old (25 for those with a disability) somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to in their leisure time. Their focus is on young people from the most disadvantaged communities to 'occupy their bodies and minds with engaging activities, helping them develop new skills and socialise in a safe, positive and accessible environment.' They have more than 38,000 members who make around 520,000 visits: visits cost 50p, a nutritious hot meal is £1 and annual membership is £5.³²¹

Put simply, the Youth Zones aim to be a 'safe, non-threatening environment where young people can spend time with friends, enjoy a nutritious hot meal, take part in group activities and learn from adult role models.' Their buildings are envisioned to be iconic and inspiring to show the community the value of young people. Both buildings and activities are open to all young people – it's their place – and include dance, arts and crafts, boxing climbing walls, cooking, skate parks, media centre, gyms, outdoor and indoor sports, and recreation areas. Alongside these activities young people have the opportunity to take part in residential trips aimed at boosting confidence and broadening horizons as well as entering inter-Youth

318 <https://network.streetgames.org/training-academy>

319 <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-01/chief-medical-officer-for-wales-special-report.pdf> p.60

320 <https://gov.wales/evaluation-healthy-and-active-fund>

321 <https://www.onsideyouthzones.org/impact/>

Zone events where young people travel, meet and compete with others. They have secured over £11m to develop and roll out innovative national programmes across the network including, for example over 1600 young people completing their Get a Job employability course, with 83% progressing into employment, education or training.

Young people are also able to engage with youth workers away from the pressures of school and family. To this end, OnSide offer one-to-one sessions and targeted programmes - such as employability and mentoring schemes – youth workers help young people to look after their mental health, develop the skills they need for the future – from communications to sexual health.

There are currently 16 open or about to open centres³²². OnSide support these existing Youth Zones to operate effectively and develop new Youth Zones to towns and cities across the country. In developing new Youth Zones, OnSide adopts a total management approach, from supporting local stakeholders, identifying the need in each area for a Youth Zone, through to the completed building and its opening. This includes building design and development, fundraising and marketing, young people's development (including their input to brand identity, transportation, fundraising and the interior design), and stakeholder engagement.

The OnSide Model

The Onside model³²³ reflects that each and every Youth Zone is unique and will have its own challenges especially funding. Therefore, local ownership is a key success factor in ensuring the financial sustainability of each Youth Zone into the future and this is split into capital and revenue. A significant aspect of the Youth Zones is the platform they provide youth and community organisations to work collaboratively with local youth services and other providers from inter-faith groups, through to schools, the police and social service. They help foster effective interagency working and ensure all young people can benefit from the opportunities and support available.

The funding model of OnSide Youth Centres is unique. With the private sector providing half of all funding for Youth Zones, in combination with local authority support. As a result, the facilities foster a high level of general engagement with high quality targeted services that have a significant impact on individual groups and provide a platform for the delivery of other local health and education services. This investment also allows a Youth Zone to provide the very best facilities and services for its users. Furthermore, with business investing, a higher level of financial probity and transparency is required ensuring resources are allocated efficiently, that a social return on investment is demonstrated and sound financial planning ensures sustainability in the long term.

³²² <https://www.onsideyouthzones.org/the-youth-zone-model/our-youth-zones/>

³²³ <https://www.onsideyouthzones.org/the-youth-zone-model/>

It is worth noting that volunteers play a critical role in the Youth Zone's success. With 800 volunteers OnSide have their own Talent Academy to provide the skills needed. This has:

- Supported 45 frontline staff to achieve a Level 3 Diploma in Youth Work Practice in partnership with the National Youth Agency.
- Established an Aspiring Leaders programme that recognises and develops outstanding performers, enhances organisational capability, and grows tomorrow's senior leaders. 87% have been promoted since completing the training.
- Developed a Fundraising Academy which has equipped fundraisers with knowledge and skills to enhance stakeholder management and secure new funding partners.
- Enhanced specialist skills through a series of bespoke masterclasses; including safeguarding training for 120 staff and volunteers, and governance training for 9 Youth Zone Boards.

Impact

OnSide also undertakes robust research to evaluate the impact of its programmes and to build an evidence base, better understand and communicate the impact. It has

commissioned three independent reports into its approach and impact:

1. *OnSide Network - Ambitions and Impact* (2020)

<https://www.onsideyouthzones.org//content/uploads/2021/07/OnSide-Ambition-Impact-.pdf>

2. *Ambitious for Young People - A study of the impact of universal youth provision at OnSide Youth Zones* (2019) -

https://www.onsideyouthzones.org//content/uploads/2021/02/OYZ_Universal_Impact_Report_-_Ambitious_for_Young_People-2.pdf

3. *Defining the Impact of a Youth Zone* (2015)

https://www.onsideyouthzones.org//content/uploads/2021/02/Amion_OnSide_Defining_the_Impact_of_a_Youth_Zone_-_Final_with_exec_summary_-_May_2015-2.pdf

3. SLQ (formerly Sports Leaders)

SLQ is a charity delivering qualifications develop leadership and life skills in young people for over 35 years. They use a range of qualifications and awards using various mediums including Sport, Dance, Lowland Expedition, Maths, Science and English to over 140,000 people a year, through 6,000 schools, colleges and

local authorities³²⁴. As an awarding organisation it provides nationally recognised qualifications that complement other academic programmes, provide opportunities to progress to national governing body coaching qualifications, and offer the potential to gain further education and employment.

SLQs range of nationally recognised qualifications and programmes include: ³²⁵

- **Sports Leadership** - designed to use sport and physical activity to help young people develop and hone their leadership skills whilst helping themselves and others stay active.
- **Dance leadership** – designed to engage less sporty students in physical activity and leadership.
- **The Leadership Skills Programme** - delivered through maths, English and/or science, students will learn and demonstrate basic leadership skills that will help improve their attainment.
- **Expedition Leadership** - Lowland Walk & Expedition Leadership to develop vital leadership skills outdoors and transfer into other areas of their lives.

SLQ also offers a variety of accredited awards to train the workforce, service users and community while not having to commit to a regulated qualification. These awards use leadership activities to teach learners vital life skills. These include³²⁶:

- **Primary Leaders Licence** - package for schools to provide fun and engaging activities that start building leadership skills through physical activity
- **PlayMaker Award** - introduction into leadership for those aged nine and above
- **Go Lead** - nationally recognised and accredited leadership award
- **Women, Get Set, Go!** - a personal development programme, specifically designed for women and girls aged 14 and over.
- **The Young Leader Award** - introduction to leadership, giving young people aged 11 and over knowledge of how to organise and lead small games and activities that can be used as a part of uniformed organisation, community club or sports club sessions.
- **I Can Lead** - a fun, practical and flexible course for learners aged 13 and over that can be completed in a classroom, on the sports field or as an after-school activity

³²⁴ <https://www.sportsleaders.org/about-us/about-slq>

³²⁵ <https://www.sportsleaders.org/qualifications-programmes>

³²⁶ <https://www.sportsleaders.org/accredited-awards>

Working with over 2000 centres, SLQ have built a recognised portfolio of qualifications that claim to boost confidence, aid attainment and develop employability skills. Their qualifications are built on the four P.R.E.P learning principles:

- Practically applied-learning
- Recognised learning
- Experience through volunteering
- Peer-to-Peer delivery

In delivering further training and awards SLQ not only equips those who lead sport and other volunteering provision, it provides opportunities for young people to volunteer and encourages key target groups such as women and girls to participate in sport and physical activity.

4. Youth Sport Trust

Founded in 1995 as a charity by Sir John Beckwith, the Youth Sport Trust's (YST) vision is to change young people's lives through sport. YST quickly established itself as leader in the sport sector especially advocating the importance of delivering quality PE and sport provision in and around schools. They have a long history in not only shaping policy but working with policy makers to improve school PE and sport. In 2002 they were appointed to deliver the Government's PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy and by 2008 they had helped create 450 School Sport Partnerships across England³²⁷.

In 2003, they pioneered using elite world-class athletes as mentors to inspire children through their Athletes Changing Lives programme, hosted the first UK School Games in 2006, and created the National School Sport Week in 2008. Since 2013 they have continued to advocate the PE and Sport Premium for primary schools and their school guide forms part of the National Physical Literacy Framework. In turn, they continue to work through physical education, to bring together communities of educators and equipping them with the training, practical tools, and resources to achieve more for every child including:

- Primary PE and Sport Premium³²⁸
- Character and Leadership³²⁹
- Inclusion³³⁰

³²⁷ <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/about/what-we-do>

³²⁸ <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/resources/primary-pe-sport-premium>

³²⁹ <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/resources/character-and-leadership>

³³⁰ <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/resources/inclusion>

- Physical and Mental Health³³¹

YST are also a leading source of PE and youth sport news, insight and opinion³³² and continue to improve the provision of PE and youth sport by using funding to:

- Train teachers, coaches and young people
- Provide opportunities for young people to enjoy high quality, inclusive sport and play
- Promote the value of PE, sport and play through campaigning and research.

They also have continually created more and more inclusive and innovative programmes directly³³³ that support young people to:

- improve health and wellbeing
- develop character and leadership
- promote inclusion and empathy.

YST's 2018 strategy, *Believing in Every Child's Future*³³⁴ highlighted a potential crisis in young people's wellbeing including their mental health, after a decade characterised by cuts to Physical Education, the growth of social media and increasingly sedentary lifestyles leading to one in five children being classed as obese by the time they leave primary school. Their strategy setting out their plan to tackle this included transforming Physical Education in schools, remove barriers to sport and champion insight. Their 2019/20 Impact report³³⁵ highlighted that they had provided opportunities for over 300,000 young people through their programmes, Furthermore, their athlete mentors, coaches and networks had trained 100,000 young people and 20,000 teachers to lead and deliver inclusive sport and physical education. The Impact Report also showed that they had secured funding of over £11m in 2019/20 from charities, trusts and grant giving bodies, lottery distributors (Sport England £5m) central government contracts (£600k), local government contracts (£583k) and businesses through sponsorships and corporate social responsibility projects.

6. Bromley-by-Bow Centre

While Bromley-by-Bow Centre (BBBC) is not a community sport programme, its community hub model and its links to the local church, provide an interesting case study for sport and wellbeing ministry projects, highlighting what is possible by integrating health and wellbeing into a vibrant community hub alongside sporting activity. Situated in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Bromley-by-Bow has witnessed

331 <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/resources/physical-and-mental-health>

332 <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/news-insight>

333 <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/programmes>

334 <http://strategy.youthsporttrust.org>

335 <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/media/fzndhncr/yst-impact-report-2020-final-digital.pdf>

considerable change and development over many years while enduring some fixed social challenges including the highest levels of child poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, social isolation and low life expectancy.

In 1984, Andrew Mawson ³³⁶ (now Baron Mawson) arrived as the local Baptist Minister at a point when the church had only a handful of members and an expectation that it would close or merge with another congregation. However, instead of closing, he innovated by opening up the church to the community and developing a broad range of community projects including a children's nursery, dance school, community cafe and a series of art studios and workshops³³⁷.

Over the years, BBBC attracted artists and entrepreneurs, and from the 1990s its reputation as a model of community regeneration increased as it grew new projects including family support, social welfare, the arts, social care and learning. The Healthy Living Centre, opened in 1997, was the first of its kind in the UK and allowed the Centre to provide universal services for the community. This attracted the attention of New Labour politicians including Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Its development continued when Helen Matthews took over as minister and Paul Brickell was appointed as Chief Executive. They developed a new cafe, workshops and offices, as well as the Tudor Lodge and Marner Centre in partnership with the newly created [Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association](#) to provide and support opportunities in the neighbourhood HARCA.

Over the last twenty years the BBBC has grown its facilities, including making the café a social enterprise, encompassing a range of available support across the themes of communities, health and wellbeing, and employment, skills, and enterprise. Activities focus on welfare benefits, housing, debt and legal advice, training opportunities and careers advice, art and horticulture, healthy lifestyles and more, tackling social isolation while increasing personal wellbeing. As well as becoming a model in using enterprise as a tool for economic development in deprived communities, it has developed an early social prescribing service which has led the way in supporting the development and growth of social prescribing nationally and internationally.

The Centre remains as it was founded, out of the actions of local people who came together to share their skills, make friends, use the spaces, and better support each other. Along with its GP practice, it attracts around 2,000 people each week making use of the support provided, alongside its café and park and its wide variety of free programmes emphasise the importance of social well-being for positive health outcomes. The delivery of an enhanced wellbeing offer by integrating the community centre and health partnership is the Bromley by Bow Centre's main strategic goal. This ensures the model addresses both the

336 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Mawson,_Baron_Mawson

337 https://www.bbbc.org.uk/about-us/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwvO2lBhCzARIsALw3ASrbpSkNFpv-qzRfCFkTsnSM8CCepbVFcB-QWnQu6oHJ6QGtuKHNDoaAvKqEALw_wcB

medical and social needs of a person at the same time, contributing to the creation of a stronger community where people care for each other more, while celebrating difference.

The Centre has its own Insights team who work across the organisations and community to better understand, develop, and share the Centre's principles, model and learning³³⁸. The team includes community and social researchers who support project evaluation and work on original new community research. They have created a wide range of evaluation reports and tools which are available for other organisations keen to learn from the Centre's experience to recreate similar models in their own communities³³⁹.

vii. Conclusion

As noted above, within the mixed economy model of sports participation provision, organisations can be generally categorised into three broad categories: i) private, public and leisure management contractors; ii) sport clubs affiliated to governing body structures; and, iii) third sector voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. It is important to note that the terms grassroots sport and community are interchangeably used but are in fact generally different. Grassroots sport often simply focuses on a single sport delivered by ii) above while, community sport is much more varied, often multisport focused being delivered by iii) above. It is generally agreed that it is the role of VCSE organisations that are least understood, inadequately monitored in national data and require further focus by policy and planning makers.

It is also generally agreed by researchers, sector organisations and policy makers that the scope of sport and recreation policy can be advanced beyond active lifestyles through increasing participation in grassroots sports by providing a vital offer for government, civil society, and communities in using different sports and physical activities to contribute to wider social outcomes. This has resulted in community sport deliverers emerging as a driving force in the sports sector over the last ten years as they are often adept at tackling inactivity. Furthermore, as policy makers and funders have sought to achieve more social value from their investments, this has also seen the emergence of a sport for development sector which often delivers both community sport (as defined by increasing participation/getting and maintain more active people) and social outcomes through sporting activity.

Increasingly, academic studies support the using of sport to enhance social capital, social inclusion and youth interventions around mentoring, education, employment/training while also noting that some of the

338 <https://www.bbbc.org.uk/insights/>

339 <https://www.bbbc.org.uk/insights/research-and-evaluation/>

claims surrounding the transformative potential of sport can be exaggerated. Sport also has its limitations. Others, such as the CSJ, also supported by sector programme evaluations, argue that physical activity and sports should be an integral part of society's healthy lifestyle and wellbeing alongside a broader role to help tackle numerous and inter-related issues which they categorise into six areas: saving lives, strengthening communities, serving society, crime prevention and reengagement, educational attainment, and the world of work.

The sector has worked hard to create credible theories of change and expand a more robust evidence base to provide much needed data to support its claims of impact and refine its approach to delivery. This is being recognised in both policy making and funding with community sport and sport for development sectors playing a significant role in the future of sports policy to increase activity levels and tackle inequalities and social issues. The community sport and sport for development sectors continue to undergo a substantial transformation and many institutions are helping to shape that change.

There is increasing evidence within the sport for development sector about how best to deliver provision that has a meaningful impact individuals and communities. As set out in Chapter Five, and within this chapter, there is a growing and accepted evidence base that shows policy, programming and interventions delivered through purpose-driven organisations, that have specific characteristics, and which are intentionally orientated towards targeted non-sport outcomes deliver more substantial returns and wider community benefit. Characteristics that have been shown to deliver wider impact include increased regularity and duration of delivery; the integration of self-reflection and personal development activities; incorporating social interaction; and linked counselling or signposting.

Furthermore, the strategic approaches taken over the last ten years have shown to be more impactful sport provision should be locally led and place-based approaches; collective-impact and cross-sector collaboration; and robust planning, monitoring and evaluation approaches that extend beyond participation and focus on contributions to wider social outcomes. Placed-based working is a fundamental approach, characterised by a shift away from centrally dictated siloed policies, towards more holistic solutions, which are defined, generated, and delivered locally. These strategies are a common feature of the approach taken by organisations in the Sport for Development Coalition.

The Sport for Development Coalition's Outcomes and Measurement Framework has helped to improve the sector's evidence base and has enhanced shared learning and collective understandings of how best to improve outcomes for young people. This evidence also suggests that a theory of change is the main tool to design a successful programme. The framework provided organisations with an outline of the essential principles of building logic into a theory of change supported by an outcomes-led methodology to designing sport for development programmes. It helped to show the links and assumptions between the immediate changes, longer-term changes and the goal, and the factors that will affect an organisation's

ability to reach these. The evidence also shows that a good theory of change is the roadmap for good evaluation and measurement. The Coalition's new Collective Survey Tool and Reporting Dashboard is helping individual organisations and the sector to improve the way they measure, record, and demonstrate the impact they are making. Currently, several sector organisations are piloting this for the Coalition.

Researching the current sector landscape, highlights several issues that sport and wellbeing ministry projects should take note of and ensure that they consider in detail. These include the links between school and afterschool sport, tackling inequalities and duty of care.

The transformation of the community sport and sport for development sectors over the last ten years provides sport and wellbeing ministry projects with highly relevant examples from which it can be inspired, draw learning and insight, and engage to support the development and delivery of its approach. The sport ministry sector already has many of the key elements that are required for successful intervention through sport: local placed base approach, community focus, volunteers and caring about the community and those in it. It also has a long history with many of the social outcomes. Indeed, several the social outcomes that the sport for development sector is delivering fit well within the churches broader remit to tackle poverty and food poverty, develop youth leadership and resilience, and support mental health and mentoring. Moreover, many of the programmes created and developed by the sport for development sector could be used by sports ministry sector per se and modified to local conditions with the addition of a faith/church dimension.

Furthermore, the community sport and sport for development sectors are not so saturated that the church could not become a significant player within these sectors thereby mainstreaming its provision. If it can develop sports and wellbeing ministry professionally, incorporating the community sport and sport for development sectors approaches and outcomes, alongside its own missional approach, the potential opportunities, as outlined in Chapters Three and Four, are significant. This potentially would ensure that the church and sports and wellbeing ministry is well placed to benefit from future (secular) policy funding on tackling inequalities and delivering social outcomes.

There are also many similarities between the sectors: sports ministry finds itself where the community sport and sport for development sector was ten years ago needing to build a stronger evidence base and develop robust theories of change that are refined by impact and outcomes data. Therefore, the community sport and sport for development sectors provide sports ministry not only with the tools to make this transition but also with the necessary inspiration for transformation and the rewards thereof.

CHAPTER 8: SPORTS MINISTRY CASE STUDIES

i. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of our empirical research into six case study organisations all of which concern themselves with the provision of sport and physical activity: Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub, Adventure Plus, Corby Chapel Gym, Kick, Sports Factory and Inspire (Church Children and Families Football Initiative). As this research report was originally written for Sportily, they are not featured as a case study. We present the profiles of these organisations in tabulated form in order to highlight the key aspects of their structure, the content and format of their work, and their developmental journey. These profiles are structured around the nine main headings which were used during our interview conversations with organisational leads. These comprise: (ii) overview of the organisation; (iii) staffing, qualifications and training; (iv) funding revenue and partnerships; (v) projects and programmes; (vi) missional approach; (vii) monitoring and evaluation; (viii) current data/demand; (ix) key learning; and (x) next steps. In order to supplement the empirical data on offer, we begin with a general discussion of the main issues in arising under each of these headings.

ii. Overview of the Organisation

The organisations featured have slightly different origins and focus and, in this sense, provide a wide variety of structures and delivery mechanisms. Five have a particular leaning towards youth and young adults (where community engagement via schools is an integral factor), with the other having aspirations in this area. All have direct links with the local church and a broader passion for the connection between sport, physical activity and emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Three of the organisations concerned (Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub, Kick, and Sports Factory) offer a broad menu of sport/physical activity across a range of age groups whilst the other three (Adventure Plus, Corby Chapel Gym, and Inspire) focus on the delivery of particular activities. Only one organisation (Adventure Plus) is geared specifically towards 'outdoor/adventure' activities and would seem to operate on a similar model to that envisaged for the Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre in Gloucestershire. Corby Chapel Gym is the only organisation of the six which has an explicit focus on ex-offenders, criminal justice, and those in recovery from addiction.

iii. Staffing, Qualifications and Training

The development of youth/sports ministry is evident in the majority of the case study organisations although this is more explicit in some than others. All organisations have an identifiable 'lead' figure (not all of whom have previous experience of sports ministry project management) with the majority featuring small numbers of full-time and/or part-time workers. Only two, Adventure Plus and Kick, have 10 or more full-time staff with the latter being the largest of the six organisations in terms of staffing. Both have more sophisticated structures than the other four organisations and appear more corporate in their approach. All six rely to some degree on the engagement of a volunteer workforce. In terms of qualifications and training, all of the case study organisations appear to provide some form of 'in-house' and/or externally validated training/professional development for full and part-time staff and volunteers with one (Kick) providing a higher education pathway. A noticeable feature of all of the organisations on show is the absence of bespoke training and/or development around spiritual formation/theology.

iv. Funding Revenue and Partnerships

Five of the six case study projects received some kind of 'start-up' grant funding in the first instance with four (Adventure Plus, Corby Chapel Gym, Kick, and Sports Factory) deploying an explicit income generation/charging model around membership and/or programme delivery. There is evidence to suggest that all four adopt 'discounted' or 'below market' rates in order to attract business and/or to make their services accessible to a wider audience. Partnerships appear relatively under-developed in the case of Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub, Corby Chapel Gym, Sports Factory and Inspire. However, both Adventure Plus and Kick have taken a more strategic approach to partnership working and this has clearly enhanced their profile and reach.

v. Projects and Programmes

As noted above, at the collective level, the case study organisations cover a wide range of activities for church and unchurched communities, all of which contribute in some way to the physical, emotional and/or spiritual health and wellbeing of participants. For Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub, Corby Chapel Gym, Sports Factory and Inspire programming routinely features: holiday clubs, tournaments, community events, social sport, detached sports outreach, 1-1 mentoring, and work with marginalised and/or disengaged groups and regular weekly events are common. For those organisations with a broader remit, there is evidence of intergenerational delivery also (in contrast, Kick has a specific focus around the

delivery and enhancement of National Curriculum subjects in schools while Adventure Plus offers a range of adventure activities for all ages alongside residential trips and team building events). All of these activities are commonplace across the broader sport development landscape. What appears to be absent from any of the featured organisations is a clear offer around disability sport and this is notable across the UK sports ministry sector as a whole.

vi Missional Approach

All of the case study organisations adopt a ‘relational’ approach to mission and are open in their Christian ethos, beliefs and values. That said, there are differences in the ways in which the faith element of their work is expressed. For example, Corby Chapel Gym periodically runs explicitly evangelistic events and Sports Factory demonstrate a desire to extend their work in this area including that way that they train and equip their staff. However, the remainder opt for a more subtle, incarnational approach. As is common across the UK sports ministry sector, the overall aim for all six organisations was to build trust-based relationships via the various aspects of programme delivery thereby creating sustainable ‘touchpoints’ for on-going conversations and the development faith pathways. Three organisations show evidence of strategic thinking around faith journeys and pathway development (Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub, Adventure Plus, and Kick) although this is an issue that would appear to need a greater level of strategic investment across the board. One organisation (Inspire) demonstrates an altogether more explicit approach to faith development (albeit on a limited scale) which maps a clear pathway between sports ministry activity and church attendance - indicating that when the former is done well and when the relationship between the two is thought through, the church ultimately benefits.

vii Monitoring and Evaluation

As we have seen in previous chapters, UK sports ministry organisations are decidedly under-developed in their monitoring and evaluation practices in comparison to the wider sport development sector and the six case study organisations were no exception in this respect. On the whole, robust systems and processes around data collection are absent and where such systems are in place, quality is inconsistent, hence, there is little evidence available mapping the relationship between programme delivery and social outcomes. Generally speaking, organisational leads are mindful of the need to collect demographic data (age, gender, religion, occupation, economic status) and some have implemented in/formal evaluation mechanisms but on the whole there is a lack of strategic thinking in this area with little, if any, collection or evaluation of data concerning levels of participant wellbeing (e.g., mental health, loneliness, isolation,

character development, leadership ability or educational potential) or the impact of projects and/or programmes on local communities, (e.g., the enhancement of community cohesion). Kick appear to be the only one of the six organisations which has an explicit monitoring and evaluation framework and a robust theory of change.

viii. Current Data/Demand

An overall assessment of the empirical data surrounding the current state of play with regards to organisations concerned reveals that several trends and patterns can be identified. Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub report a strong link between participation in programme delivery and the formation and maintenance of sustainable 'healthy habits' amongst participants, successfully expanding sport ministry into wellbeing. This includes a general improvement in congregational health and the creation of sustainable midweek small groups. Adventure Plus report a high level of participant satisfaction and that 50% of returning young people are non-Christian. However, recent indications suggest that only 26% of customers are BAME. Pre-pandemic data from Corby Chapel Gym indicates that their operations have steadily grown and that from an overall population of approximately 60,000, just under 2600 have been a member of the Gym at some point since its inception with 30% of the membership emanating from an Eastern European background. Kick is by far the largest organisation of the six in terms of both staffing and participant engagement, with a current reach of almost 13,000 young people across all of their services. Their mentoring provision has increased from 22 to 532 participants since 2015. Likewise, Sports Factory has experienced expansion and growth in recent years both in relation to the size of their staff team and the numbers of participants engaged and schools work has played a key role in this. Between 2015-2017, Inspire church report attracting over 70 new people to their church services as a result of engagement through their sports outreach initiative largely via Holiday Club weeks.

ix. Key Learning

Key learning has largely arisen organically/experientially across the six case study organisations although one (Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub) has benefitted from the commissioning of an independent external evaluation in this respect. At a general level, data from all of the organisations confirms that sport and physical activity is an extremely effective vehicle through which to engage both church and unchurched groups and to share the gospel. A key factor in success is having the right project team in place (including volunteers) and equipping/training this team not only in relation to programme delivery but also project succession. The equipping of sports ministers around both spiritual formation (through

validated courses) and high-quality programme delivery (i.e., through recognised coaching qualifications) appears especially important for some. In turn, regular and predictable programme provision appears to have proved fruitful for several organisations. In terms of project sustainability, a number of case study leads allude to the fact that programme development takes time and that there are 'no shortcuts' to relationship building or the generation of faith pathways/journeys.

Evidence from interview conversations also indicates that further strategic thinking (and perhaps training) is needed for organisations around issues such as: monitoring and evaluation, resource/facility management, partnerships and marketing, fundraising, and external evaluation. Kick appear to have developed a model of partnering with other organizations which, they believe, avoids duplication and replication whilst at the same time maximising operational reach and impact.

x. Next Steps

Each of the six case study organisations identify a series of specific priorities in terms of next steps, many of which are directly related to their key learning to date. Common issues arising in this respect are: a renewed focus on strategic planning and business modelling; the continuation and/or development and expansion of programme delivery to meet demand and attract new participant groups; the adoption of a more strategic mind-set around detailed monitoring and evaluation, and business analytics; focused consideration of the commissioning of independent (external) evaluation and applications for grant funding (especially in relation to resource and facility development, longer term business expansion and scaling); and more in-depth thinking around the education and training of staff, relationship building with communities and the local church, and the development of marketing, advertising and fundraising activity.

xi. Conclusion

In sum, what these case study data demonstrate is a strong sense of commonality across the organisations concerned. That is, although they differ in profile and complexion, all six appear to lack capacity and expertise and/or experience in similar areas. The majority of the issues in play here are identified under the final two headings above, but broader reflection reveals that further thinking is especially needed around the following: the theological basis upon which these organisations operate (particularly in relation to missional approach), the explicit articulation of faith journeys and pathways (especially the connection between sports ministry delivery and church engagement), and the broader (and longer-term) transitional processes surrounding sports ministry and the establishment of new worshipping communities. Such thinking is beyond the scope of the present study however, this analysis provides

evidence enough to suggest that further research is needed across a greater number of sports ministry organisations in order to uncover both 'best practice' and persistent challenges in these areas.

Case Study 1

Hoxton Sports and Wellbeing Hub

Overview of the Organisation (including structure, foundation and history, vision, mission & strategic objective(s))	<p>Created in 2017 as a three-year pilot project, funded by a grant from the Diocese of London, in fulfilment of its diocesan Capital Vision 2020 strategy initiative. Seeks to serve the local community and engage new people and places through sport and physical activity, to enhance health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Four objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To develop and deliver a programme of sessions geared towards youth and young adults to provide sports and physical activity on a weekly basis;• To ensure a smooth transition in creating a sport and music focused Youth Minister as a part of the new diocesan youth strategy;• To develop and deliver a programme of sessions and classes for adults that provide sports and physical activity on a weekly basis;• To undertaking a research project that assesses and scopes the supply of, and demand for, sport and physical activity in the local community and with other local churches. <p>Three work streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streetlevel Sports (catering to young people from around the area);
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced Life (catering to local adults, especially those with lower levels of fitness); • St John's, Hoxton (holistic approach to church life to support the improvement in the health and wellbeing of all its members).
Staffing including brief outline of staffing levels and structure, FT/PT, qualifications, and training approach.	<p>Led by the Vicar with additional support from his Curate (and supported by the Diocesan Sports Lead working half a day).</p> <p>When launched in 2017, Streetlevel Sports was led by a full-time staff member and experienced youth worker and qualified sports coach, employed to develop youth engagement and pathways into church life. Between 2018-2019 the project was led by another employed worker (young professional footballer) and featured six adult volunteers who were given some training by Kick London and Ambassadors Football GB. They also attended relevant network meetings/conferences including those hosted by the Diocesan Sports Priority. Balanced Life was led by congregation member and professional Personal Trainer. The Shoreditch Trust provided workshops about health and wellbeing which were both informative and built skills.</p>
Funding, Revenue (including approach to charging and Partnerships)	<p>The DoL funded the project from the Sport Priority budget on a tapered model: £28,400 year one, £15,000 year two and £10,000 year three – Total of £53,400 over three years. The majority of the funding was to employ delivery staff. A small percentage (10%) was made available for equipment, marketing and advertising. London Sport provided a small funding grant (£1500) from their Satellite Sports Club fund.</p>
Projects and Programmes including brief outline of main activities, location and setting, target groups.	<p>Streetlevel Sports (SLS): Provision centred on Saturday morning Football and Basketball sessions, grouped by age at the Church school MUGA, next door to the church. These sessions include general fitness training, 'skills and drills' plus participation in competitive games. Occasional entry of the group into football tournaments including Ambassadors London Football Tournament.</p>

	<p>Balanced Life (BL): A wider variety of 6-9 weekly fitness and exercise sessions on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, in the church, church grounds and around the Parish. In response to demand, BL included: Pilates, Dynamic Stretching, Functional Mobility, Beginners and Intermediate Running, Basic and Intermediate Walking, Interval Run, PT Session, Power Bag, Circuit Session, Kettlebell Session, and Functional Movement. Additional 'Taster Sessions' focused on mobility, strength, and cardio. BL also offered: Basic Cooking, Understanding Food and Nutrition, Wellness (covering sleep, stress, RAS) Workshops and an 8-week course - Wellness for Women and Wellness for Men ran throughout the year.</p> <p>One Off Activities: One-off and/or short-run activities included monthly family football events in the local park, badminton sessions and informal 'pick up football' located in MUGA's around the Parish. Church members ran the Shoreditch 10k. Church also hosted sporting activities at local festivals including running a successful youth 5-a-side tournament at the St John's Hoxton Summer Fair. Through participation in the Hackney Foodbank mental health first aid workshop, BL offered guidance on mobility and physical health.</p> <p>Parish Health and Wellbeing: An approach to healthy living as a congregation including: offering healthy food options post services, at meetings and at shared lunches moving away from fried food, sweets cakes and sugary drinks and encouraging more salads, fruit etc; implementing standing and walking meetings including pray walks; hosting the Public Health Authorities annual health check-up at the end of a service; putting on simple five minute stretching/fitness classes before services and events; hosting Save the Date to provide a 'pay as you can' fresh fruit and vegetables and café stall; and talks on being active, diet, sleep and fasting as a normal part of faith and spiritual growth in 'life in all its fullness'.</p>
Missional Approach including brief outline of psychology, faith pathways and impact on individual and church.	<p>Missional approach was relationship-based: building friendship to help demystify church as a place and what happened was also an approach the parish felt most comfortable with. Approach was to create new 'touch points' between St John's and its community enabling people who would not normally encounter the church to do so. Project operated within a complex and sometimes challenging urban parish and was consistent with a relational approach to mission and ministry.</p>

	<p>Created pathway from the SLS into Streetlevel Hangouts (which took place midweek at the church) into youth group and Youth Service provided a faith progression coupled with the secular youth music events run on Saturday nights once a month.</p> <p>BL had organic development with nutritional and fitness classes developing into a weekly small group in which the participants shared their lives faith, prayed, and listened to worship music as part of their fitness classes.</p> <p>Supplemented by others parish community activities which provided marketing opportunities for the hub.</p>
Monitoring and Evaluation Approach including how is the activity evaluated, what data is collected and how?	<p>On-going challenge for the project and despite best attempts data collection and quality inconsistent across all three years and that in investing in one system a significant amount of early data was lost. Therefore, multiple systems used to manage the HSH activity programme. Overall scheduling was administrated using the Church Suite database. This also made it challenging to true picture of the level of engagement both annually and then over the three years.</p>
Evaluation/current data/level of demand	<p>Streetlevel ran over 100 sport sessions and 80 hangouts sessions in 2017 -2019 reaching 73 young people with an average of 15, and over 20 in good weather. The sessions were mainly attended by men but many women did participate. Most of those who attend were healthy and active although Streetlevel was their main place of being active. The midweek 'Hangouts' session drew 11 young people on average with over 20 on some occasions. There was huge demand for football and this could have been run 3 times a week attracting 120 young people a week. Provided significance development opportunity for young people to step up, lead the project and learn new skills, growing in their own abilities and learning valuable management skills.</p> <p>Balanced Life deliberately kept fitness groups to no more than 5. There were issues with obtaining all the database records and only 31 records were available but it's likely that over 50 people engaged over the three years. Participants were aged between 24 and 60 and the mean age was 39. 75% were female and 25% male. 26% indicated that they had health conditions that limited their ability to exercise including several suffering physical pain including back pain, joint pain,</p>

	<p>sciatica, arthritis. 40% reported being under mild stress and over 50% under moderate stress and 60% described their job as 'sedentary'. Evaluated</p> <p>Family Sport attracted on average 20-30 people.</p> <p>Summer Fair 5-a-side football tournament attracted over 30 young people.</p> <p>Summer Table Tennis / Badminton attracted 20 youth weekly.</p> <p>Evaluation said it was an ambitious project that involved the design and delivery of a wide range of health-oriented activities catering to groups with diverse needs and preferences In the context of that ambition. While actual participation was lower than might have been expected, for those who did get involved, outcomes were good. In particular a strong link between participation in the physical activities provided and the formation and maintenance of sustainable 'healthy habits'. One of the subsequent legacies of the project has been the long-term impact on the church. Alongside the general improvement congregational health and their awareness of being fit and active, BL created long lasting midweek small groups and it has raised up new church leaders.</p>
<p>Key Learning including level of demand, insight/impact and what factors have supported the project and what has prevented more success (e.g. include funding, staff skills, volunteers, enthusiasm of participants, timing, project design,</p>	<p>Independent (external) evaluation of the project highlighted the following key learning points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It takes time to develop a project well and even longer to see the first fruits – over three years; • Growth was in individual people not in numbers – and this growth was hard to measure; • On-going tension within the church environment between emerging local gift-lead ministry and external recruitment of people with the right skills;

<p>lack of partners/church links, what advice would they give to others)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even with oversight, guidance and on the job training, staff maybe unable to lead or manage complex aspects of a new project that are inconsistent with the high level of accountability for required results; • The ability to successfully administer the project across different aspects (but particularly in project management, data collection, and M&E required additional expert support from an Operations Manager or central support. This was not available from within the staff team or the congregation and needs to be factored in at the outset; • Projects need not only good M&E and data but an experienced or skilled bid writer/fundraiser specially to make projects sustainable beyond their initial funding, to up to five years, to give it enough time to create the necessary mixed-funding model to make it sustainable in the longer term; • Dearth of low-cost and accessible training to support project management, data collection, monitoring and evaluation, and develop Theories of Change.
<p>Next Steps and Sustainability including what is plan/vision for the future and what is needed for that to happen, and how sustainable is the organisation and its projects and programmes?</p>	<p>St John's to develop a new mission action plan in Summer 2021 and to restructure its approach by incorporating sport and wellbeing within an overall strategy on social justice alongside foodbanks, homelessness, youth employability etc. This will create an umbrella structure around community mission and providing central administration and funding support. Church is committed to its wider redevelopment plans including new sport facilities and sports and wellbeing mission. While SLS and the parishes approach to health and wellbeing continuing with new leaders and the Parish is looking expand into Women's football, students sport and school mums. Balance Life has ceased new delivery with its leader having left. The recruitment of a Parish Operations Manager has already made an impact and will continue to provide critical support to ensure: M&E processes are robust, data is collected regularly and evaluated, marketing and advertising is strengthened, and fundraising is undertaken proactively.</p>

Case Study 2

Adventure Plus



<p>Overview of the Organisation (including structure, foundation and history, vision, mission & strategic objective(s))</p>	<p>Founded in 1990 as an adventure youth work & outdoor education charity, based in Oxfordshire to provide a credible Christian Witness and outreach through adventure and education by taking young people away from peer pressure and other stresses of the home environment (especially city young people out to the country) and into the beauty of God’s creation. A+ has three main approaches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Adventure Plus</u> is the adventure youth work charity that helps young people, families, schools, youth groups and employees realise their potential through adventure holidays, school residentials, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, team building and other events to inspire and encourage young people and adults. 2. <u>Adventure Base</u> to develop a purpose-built facility on the recently purchased 80 acre site, Windmill Farm, to meet demand including ‘indoor camping’, Timber Yurt Village and enhance and expand the range of activities on offer. 3. <u>Windmill Farm</u> residential conference, training and retreat centre: a 50 bed en-suite accommodation and conference hall seating 150. Deliver the Master Plan including a conservation and environmental programmes to help connect urban groups with the countryside and farming locally (where their food is sourced) and teach skills. <p>With a focus on young people they aim meet young people where they are at: geographically, emotionally, spiritually and socially - and journey with them by providing personal challenges within an environment of genuine and generous hospitality.</p>
<p>Staffing including brief outline of staffing levels and</p>	<p>Has high profile Patrons, Board and Senior Management team led by Founder Jon Cox and made up of team leaders across Instructors, Finance, Operations, Administration and Marketing. Has a committed full-time team of 10 highly experienced outdoor</p>

structure, FT/PT, qualifications, and training approach.	<p>education professionals, supported by a well-qualified team of 8 trainee instructors. WFCC has a team of 3 regular staff to manage the centre and look after the guests, with a flexible team of self-employed staff who work as required, servicing rooms and preparing food. Supported by part-time Bid-Writer, Social Media, Fundraiser, Marketing and HR roles. IT is outsourced. Two Hundred volunteers help including young people who have been through A+ courses. Volunteers are critical to make A+ sustainable with the required staff/kids ratios. At least 30 of these volunteers have appropriate multiple sports qualifications.</p> <p>Full time staff are trained as required for each role, and instructors have necessary external NGB coaching qualifications. They use both in-house training especially the gap year training Sept – April and NGB qualifications.</p>
Funding, Revenue (including approach to charging and Partnerships).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not for profit but charge for operational delivery to cover running costs around £300-400k pa (they broadly break even every year). Aim to provide provision for 30% below market rate for most groups and costs vary depending on provision and customer – corporates pay more and church youth group pay less e.g. Church Youth Weekend – £60-100 a head including food. • They fund-raise for new initiatives (the Witney2Westminster Canoe Challenge, the Biennial Charity Ball and Charity Golf Days), and to be able to provide financial assistance for those less able to pay (belief that money should not be a barrier in Christian witness). They currently have eight sponsors (called Co.STARS) and their estimated value is £235,000. • They have several partnerships including the Local Authority, British Canoeing, Rocha UK (ARUK), Christian Residential Network, Christian Aid and a number of CoE schools. In 2015 they worked with 82 different schools, youth groups and charities.
Projects and Programmes including brief outline of main	<p>Adventure Plus: offers a wide range of bespoke adventure activities to suit all ages and abilities for adventure days, residential trips and team building events. The aim is to challenge, encourage, equip and inspire participants. Activities includes: Abseiling, Archery, Bushcraft, Circus Skills, Canoeing, Climbing, Expeditions, Fencing, Kayaking, Climbing Wall, Night Hikes, Mountain Biking, Orienteering, Raft Building, Swimming, Walking and Wide Games. Customers range from a single activity session to fully catered</p>

<p>activities, location and setting, target groups.</p>	<p>activity residentials for entire year groups. A+ also provides team building and ‘Outdoor Management Development’ for adults and the corporate sector, school residential and day adventures, DofE expeditions, youth events, Men’s Adventure Weekends, Christian Retreats (including in France), training events and: <u>With Dad</u> weekends (Father with kids), <u>Aim Adventure Days</u> (taster days for kids); <u>Oxfordshire Canoe Club weekly</u>; and <u>Adventure Club</u> (weekly club for young people aged 8+).</p> <p>Mobile Adventure Provision: anywhere in the county for groups, schools, youth agencies & DoE expeditions & corporate clients.</p> <p>Adventure Impact: Specialist team working with kids aged 8-18 years, who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or who have additional needs including those at risk of exclusion from school, and young offenders.</p> <p>Total Adventure Holidays: holidays for individuals aged 8-17. Based on Canadian summer camp programmes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA Ski (ages 13+) – A winter sports adventure week for experienced skiers & boarders, and novice skiers in Switzerland. • TA Easter (ages 8-11) – daily activities from canoeing, climbing, biking, archery, bush craft with the Roadshow each afternoon. • TA Beacon (ages 8-12) – summer holiday week of challenging and fun activities in a positive Christian environment. • TA Peak (ages 12-15) – week for teenagers with a mix of adventure and challenges alongside the ‘adventure of faith’ • Adventures in Worship – for young musicians who feel inspired to develop their worship skills. • Senior Campers (ages 16-17) – A week (or 3) of adventurous activity and team building, and training. <p>DisTIL™: Discipleship Training, Instructor Leadership programme is the A+ training Gap Year.</p> <p>GAP Plus: Second year of DisTIL to achieve higher levels of outdoor leadership and qualifications and experience leading to job.</p>
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	<p>Internships: Bespoke Internship Year for those who have graduated in a relevant degree.</p> <p>All activities can be hosted at the Adventure Base or one of their Associate Centres, or at school, club or community event and also at any location: from the Dorset coast to the to the mountains of North Wales or the Highlands of Scotland.</p>
<p>Missional Approach including brief outline of psychology, faith pathways and impact on individual and church.</p>	<p>Jon Cox sets out his vision and impact on young people in his book <i>Life to The Max</i>. Ethos is for the team to be ‘credible witnesses’ to everyone while balancing the fact that their clients are all from difficult backgrounds and faith levels. They are clear about being a Christian centre, provide appropriate faith-based input and build relationships with clients via Christian instructors and staff that: 1. Create the trust to have further conversations about Christ during the activities or in the bar in the evening 2. Get clients to come back to one of the more overt Christian adventure holiday camps/ adventure weekend etc where they host Bible-based roadshows. Their approach is based on the principle of building great relationship though excellent provision and being able to bring God into the conversation.</p> <p>They deliver Christian content as appropriate to the group such as Assemblies for school groups will have a Christian thought and other courses/activities will have a thought from a Christian perspective relevant to the activity eg the River Briefing includes a short Christ-focused message. Their Christian Summer Camps host a youth service which is appropriate for unchurched. The ‘TA Roadshow’ is a high energy mix of games, drama, music, video and an evening thought – unpacking the Christian faith in a relevant way for the age range and backgrounds of the young people. This includes a 6 min Bible based theme talk i.e. on you are special, you are loved. Explicit intention not to create ‘emotional hype’ just so they can count new commitment to Christ.</p> <p>This approach means they attract non-Christian as well as Christians. This mix is important as it creates a more naturally environment and the residential experience provides a successful framework for talking about faith.</p> <p>Where Christian groups attend the A+ leaders link with those leaders to discuss the young people’s faith however where people do not have church links their staff still try to link them into local churches since Christ Youth Contact Service stopped.</p>

<p>Monitoring and Evaluation</p> <p>Approach including how is the activity evaluated, what data is collected and how?</p>	<p>A+ collect some information including demographic data (age, gender, religion, occupation, economic status) and impact through evaluation sheets but on the whole, there is no formal data collection across social outcomes.</p> <p>They monitor impact through inference using individual stories and daily leader's meetings discuss the young people in their care and their faith levels. It is extremely hard to measure a faith journey as it changes from one day to the next but use a return visit as an indication of a successful impact. They are currently drafting ten young people user profiles looking at their journey over the years including the Christian impact.</p> <p>Aware they need to collect more data including standardising information collected across youth work and SMW and maintain the long-term contacts with the young people who have gone through the centre.</p>
<p>Evaluation/current data/level of demand</p>	<p>In 2019 they had 10,000 customers. Data highlights two major periods of stagnation in numerical growth (1995 – 2000 at around 1000) and then from 2006- 2016 at 6000. The move to Windmill Farm in 2017 with all its facilities has had a significant impact with growth seeing this increase to 10,000 in 2019. This is expected to keep growing and they are considering new ways develop the site further to allow for this growth.</p> <p>Data from feedback sheets (2018/19) indicates that 94% of guests thought their experience was Excellent or Good.</p> <p>They have good mix of Christian and non-Christian young people with around 50-60% do not have a faith or church background with 50% of the young people who come back are non-Christian. Indications from limited and incomplete 2020 data shows that 33% of customers were Christians and 67% were not. 21% came from rural environments while 79% came from urban areas.</p> <p>Data from 2020 indicates that 65% of customers were of secondary age, 25% were adults and 10% primary children. 74% were white, 17% Asian and 9% BAME. They estimate that around 10-15% of the young people attending the summer camps are from disadvantaged background.</p>

<p>Key Learning including level of demand, insight/impact and what factors have supported the project and what has prevented more success (e.g. include funding, staff skills, volunteers, enthusiasm of participants, timing, project design, lack of partners/church links, what advice would they give to others)</p>	<p>A+ providing an important opportunity for Christians and non-Christians alike to gaze on the beauty of the natural environment created by God, leads to worship. The A+ principle of “Out There, In Him”. People can learn from the character of God from the outdoors both theologically and practically e.g. water, rock to help us reset our direction tackle issues in our lives and enhance our health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Cultivating the right team especially with a Christian faith (where relevant) and succession planning is challenging: having interns ensure A+ can train new staff in the right way for the business.</p> <p>Facility capacity is critical to growing and meeting demand. Quality of facilities is also important.</p> <p>Better marketing and developing a strong network of churches is critical (just appointed a Marketing Manager)</p> <p>Having fundraising expertise and time to develop funding proposals especially for new initiatives (just appointed a Fundraising manager). Good data collection is important in supporting good fundraising.</p>
<p>Next Steps and Sustainability including what is plan/vision for the future and what is needed for that to happen, and how sustainable is the organisation and its projects and programmes?</p>	<p>Plan to develop new programmes to meet demand and attract new customers including Active Retreats (including Wild Camping and Gite/Yurt base) in UK and France for adults to enhance mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>They also have an ambition and demand to develop satellite bases to ensure A+ is never too far from main urban centres and local Pupil Referral Units.</p> <p>The main focus is on developing the new facilities so they can double their users to over 20,000. The vision is to create an outstanding AdventureBase which will include; indoor camping facilities, an all-weather open adventure zone, inland coastering experience, a lake and underground caving maze, and new Activity Zone which will include areas for urban sports, multiuse sports area, archery ranges, woodland for bushcraft, mountain bike trail and free standing climbing tower. This will be available to young</p>

	people throughout the year and will also provide an additional resource/attraction for guests at the Conference Centre and the local community.
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Case Study 3

Corby Chapel Gym



<p>Overview of the Organisation (including structure, foundation and history, vision, mission & strategic objective(s))</p>	<p>Launched in 2017 as a 'Fresh Expression' out of The Church of the Epiphany in partnership with The Church of St John the Baptist in Corby, Northamptonshire. Seeks to serve marginalised and disadvantaged members of the community especially: ex-offenders, and those in recovery from addiction and/or with mental health issues. Followed on from a previous project focusing on combat sport and calisthenics. The initial brief was to put to use an empty church building for mission focusing on the un-churched.</p> <p>Key objective:</p> <p>To be a place 'Where lives can change' by contributing to the physical, psychological and spiritual health of the town of Corby. The particular strategic focus is around the three main areas of: young people, those involved in criminality, those struggling with mental health issues.</p>
<p>Staffing including brief outline of staffing levels and structure, FT/PT, qualifications, and training approach.</p>	<p>Led by the Vicar of The Church of the Epiphany, Paul Frost, with support from a full-time Gym Manager, two full-time Receptionists, and a Development Worker.</p> <p>Chapel Gym is now a stand-alone legal entity as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with five trustees (constituting the Standing Committee of the Church of St John the Baptist). Two of the trustees are designated as 'Managing Trustees' who have a more hands-on role within the gym. In total, the Gym employs seven people (3 full-time, 4</p>

	<p>part-time) and additionally sub-contracts its combat sports to a separate club. There are also four self-employed Personal Trainers working from the Gym.</p> <p>Responsibilities: The Gym Manager has overall responsibility for running the Gym. The Receptionists have responsibility for staffing Reception, Gym membership, and monitoring Gym activities. The Development Worker has responsibility for assisting the running of social action projects, and building relationship with partner charities/organisations;</p> <p>Qualifications: Personal Trainers need a Level 3 Personal Training certificate, first aid, and safeguarding training. Reception staff both have first aid certification and have the option to undertake a Level 2 Gym Instructors course. Fitness and Combat part are delivered by Personal Trainers or combat instructors. Mentoring is provided by church volunteers and clergy.</p>
Funding, Revenue (including approach to charging and Partnerships).	<p>To date, the Gym has been self-funding by way of its charging/fee structure and has worked hard to become financially sustainable. The longer term vision is to develop the youth fitness aspect of the work and to further develop a mentoring offer alongside this but the present equipment is not always suitable for use by young people (U16s). Resistance m/c and building on the mentoring work. In turn, some of the Gym's activities do not come under the remit of Sport England, i.e., Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and other combat activities.</p> <p>Fees are intentionally competitive in comparison to other local providers and take into account the socio-demographic of the target audience. Normal Gym members pay a monthly membership of £18 by Direct Debit). There are discounted rates for Over 50s and those on certain government benefits. All partnership work and projects are provided free of charge. At any one time 10% of members are training for free. The Gym does not allow 'finance to prevent fitness'.</p>

<p>Projects and Programmes including brief outline of main activities, location and setting, target groups.</p>	<p>HomeStart partnership: delivery of a family fitness sessions (two six-week courses per year on Saturday mornings);</p> <p>Corby Mind Partnership: delivery of a fitness programme for service-users (two eight-week courses per year on Wednesday afternoons);</p> <p>Northamptonshire YOS: fitness provision and informal mentoring of service users (a combination of half-term courses and 1-1 work);</p> <p>‘No Tapping Out’: a six week course combining fitness with mentoring for young adults on edge of crime (one six-week course per year);</p> <p>Programme for ex-prisoners: free membership with weekly pastoral catch up (on-going);</p> <p>Contact with prisoners: regular emails and visits for ex-gym members currently in prison (on-going);</p> <p>Children’s Thai boxing: free weekly provision (two evening sessions per week on Monday and Wednesday).</p> <p>The Chapel Gym occupies a town centre location in Corby within walking distance of three deprived estates and facilities comprise a free weights area, a cardiovascular area, a calisthenics rig, a large matted area, a bag area, and a boxing ring.</p>
<p>Missional Approach including brief outline of psychology, faith pathways and impact on individual and church.</p>	<p>The Gym’s <i>modus operandi</i> is to provide an environment where ‘physical change’ can lead to ‘psychological change’ and ‘spiritual change’. Anecdotal evidence suggests that both the physical and psychological change happens if members maintain engagement and training for a minimum of three months (three months free gym membership is offered to anyone on a programme/project). The spiritual change happens through relationship with church ministry staff and volunteers; this is a longer term process.</p> <p>The Gym occasionally runs explicitly evangelistic events (e.g. Tough Talk) and frequently publicises church services. The Gym ‘Chapel’ is used for weekly prayer. The Rector is regularly ‘visible’ at the Gym and there is a volunteer ‘Sports Minister’</p>

	<p>present for four sessions per week. When running programmes/projects, staff are clear about their Christian motivations but talk about issues of faith only when asked. Most of the progress made has been 'organic' and heavily reliant on relationships. Of late there has been a move to a more strategic approach to faith engagement and exploration.</p>
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation Approach including how is the activity evaluated, what data is collected and how?</p>	<p>This is an on-going challenge – and an aspiration. There is no formal monitoring and evaluation of projects or programmes although there is informal monitoring of those who engage. For programmes specifically targeting those who would not normally attend a gym there is between 10-20% longer term gym use. No collection or evaluation of data concerning levels of participant wellbeing, e.g., mental health, loneliness, isolation, character development, leadership ability or educational potential. Likewise, no formal collection of data concerning the assessment of the impact of projects or programmes on the local community, e.g., the enhancement of community cohesion, or the impact on anti-social behaviour or crime. Similarly, no formal collection of data concerning spiritual wellness, level of faith, church engagement or a person's faith journey, although there are positive anecdotal 'stories' of members in this respect.</p>
<p>Evaluation/current data/level of demand</p>	<p>Within Corby, the impact of the Chapel Gym is considerable especially for men aged between 16-30 and there are clear links with the majority of criminal activity in the town. The Gym is one of the few places in the community/town where men of different ethnic/racial backgrounds build relationships.</p> <p>Prior to the COVID pandemic, there were 1100 active members, 70% of whom used the Gym on a weekly basis. There is regular, active and close engagement with 200-250 members through project and programme work. In a town with a population of approximately 60,000, just under 2600 have been a member of the Gym at some point. In terms of basic demographic information, the Gym membership system records age, address, and gender. Membership is approximately 75% male, 70% under 30, 30% Eastern European. Corby is predominantly working class, and the Gym primarily appeals to those of a lower socio-economic status. The 'branded' gyms in the town service the more affluent service user.</p>

<p>Key Learning including level of demand, insight/impact and what factors have supported the project and what has prevented more success (e.g. include funding, staff skills, volunteers, enthusiasm of participants, timing, project design, lack of partners/church links, what advice would they give to others)</p>	<p>There has been no independent (external) evaluation of the project as a whole. The Chapel Gym has steadily grown in terms of its impact, measured by the number of programmes that it runs and the overall membership. Through its various projects and programmes the leadership team have developed a great deal of experience of engaging with men from working class backgrounds and those on the edge of society. There is a sound knowledge base around how to run a sustainable fitness facility of this nature. In turn, the leadership team have gained a great deal of experience of building relationships with those from very different social backgrounds from most Christians. They have also built strong relationships with fighters and martial artists and have developed unique insight into these ‘unlicensed’ sports.</p> <p>There are no shortcuts to relationship building. Staff have created a level playing field in terms of evangelism. The Gym creates a different power dynamic where local people see the church as their territory and this changes the environment for evangelism. Likewise, there is no ‘magic bullet’ in terms of faith journeys but a need to be strategic about this by encouraging more Christians to work in the Gym to make the pathway into church an easier one. People do not feel out of place when they come to the church. However, 45% members are eastern European but none of these have made the transition into church there is a need to be more strategic about this. There is also a need to think more strategically about introductory interventions (but not Alpha).</p>
<p>Next Steps and Sustainability including what is plan/vision for the future and what is needed for that to happen, and how sustainable is the organisation and its projects and programmes?</p>	<p>Further funding is needed to develop and expand the planned project work with young people. The main issue here is a lack of ‘professional’ expertise in strategic planning, business planning, and bid-writing. As a community there are significant skills shortage in these areas and professional skill sets are lacking.</p> <p>To date, there has been a lack of focus on detailed monitoring and evaluation data because there has been no urgent need for funding from grant making bodies. However, there will be a much more strategic mind-set around this going forward given that funding is needed for back-office functions, including fund raising and new ventures: post-prison, addiction, and mental health.</p>

There is currently no need to market the Gym but certain audiences are now being turned away due to lack of provision, e.g., youth. There are potential relationships/partnerships with the local Youth Offending Team (YoT). Peterborough Prison is a remand prison and therefore hold a transient population but there is a potential opportunity to 'pick up' ex-residents, bring them into the Corby area, and offer them three months free membership as they come out of prison.

Measuring impact is an area for development. Funding is needed to have an analytics system and to pay for an external (independent) evaluation. And this needs to go into a funding bid.

Case Study 4

Kick



<p>Overview of the Organisation (including structure, foundation and history, vision, mission & strategic objective(s))</p>	<p>Kick London was granted Charitable Status in 2003 as an extension of Youth for Christ’s vision of a ‘Kick’ football ministry in London. In 2004, their first coach was appointed with the support of a local Church, Holy Trinity Richmond. Presence established in Croydon in 2005 and from 2006 Kick has moved into boroughs across London and beyond. Re-brand and appointment of a CEO in 2014.</p> <p>Key objective:</p> <p>To transform young people’s lives, with God’s love, through sport and support via values-driven physical education, street dance, mentoring, chaplaincy in schools and community KICK Academies to impact a sense of hopelessness.</p>
<p>Staffing including brief outline of staffing levels and structure, FT/PT, qualifications, and training approach</p>	<p>Led by CEO, Joe Lowther, they currently employ 57 staff (21 full-time, 13 part-time, 21 sessional, and 2 interns) as coaches, mentors and/or school chaplains.</p> <p>Qualifications: all coaches are Football Association qualified and also fulfil through internal continuing professional development and training. Twelve coaches have successfully fulfilled PGCE/QTS at Canterbury Christchurch University.</p>
<p>Funding, Revenue (including approach to charging and Partnerships).</p>	<p>Kick charge schools for the professional services which are provided by their team of professional coaches. They then use generated funds to train volunteers to run allied work in local churches. Funding is currently a key issue given Kick’s aspiration to expand to 15 UK regions in the next 15 years employing 5,500 coaches.</p>

	<p>Kick has built collaborative and strategic partnerships with schools and churches and other sports governing bodies and sports ministry organisations such as: Sports Chaplaincy UK, Ambassadors Football GB, Scripture Union, and Youth for Christ. Some work with the Football Association and the Rugby Football Union. Links with and dioceses are new and growing.</p>
<p>Projects and Programmes including brief outline of main activities, location and setting, target groups.</p>	<p>Kick engage young people from diverse ages and environments working across Infant, Primary, Secondary, Pupil Referral Units and Special Schools. Kick activities are structured around three main products/sites:</p> <p>Schools: the provision/deliver of professional services to schools via National Curriculum Physical Education, Transformational Street Dance, Solutions Focused Mentoring, and Schools-based Chaplaincy;</p> <p>Kick Academies: building upon their schools work, Kick establish relationships with local churches to equip them to offer additional provision at weekends. Kick Academies are seen as an innovative tool for the Church, providing resources to deliver high quality sport/dance coaching, games/matches, performances and sports ministry with each session being linked to a theme from the Bible;</p> <p>Churches: in order to service wider and on-going sporting activities in church contexts, Kick train and equip church-based volunteers with the aim of providing a sustainable solution for churches to deliver local sports ministry encompassing youth work and discipleship.</p>
<p>Missional Approach including brief outline of psychology, faith pathways and impact on individual and church.</p>	<p>Kick's mission is to transform young people's lives with God's love, through sport and support. They do this by going into schools to deliver professional sports provision 'laced' with Christian values whilst working with churches to innovatively share the Good News. They believe that true transformation occurs through personal development which, in turn, can lead to social impact in communities and authentic spiritual change.</p>

	<p>They believe that their work can lead to lives being awakened to new purpose, freedom and direction via a new-found security and identity. This then sees new skills and abilities developed and realised, plus improved health and wellbeing leading to a new-found sense of self-worth. This change in behaviour leads to a positive attitude, a keenness to build intentional relationships and have a new desire to connect with others. Introducing young people to the Christian faith offers a new-found knowledge and awareness of God's love for them outlining the meaning of life. Seeing young people disciplined and mature into those who seek God to serve others (rather than simply receiving) not only transforms the life of the individual but also those around them. Kick want to see families changed, communities blessed, and our nation reached with the transformational message of the Gospel. Defining the transformed life comes under three key aims: (i) to see real personal development in young people; (ii) to see real social impact in and by young people; and (iii) to see young people spiritually transformed.</p>
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation Approach including how is the activity evaluated, what data is collected and how?</p>	<p>Kick have an explicit monitoring and evaluation framework which comprises four main elements: (i) case studies of young people's progress completed by coaches (termly); (ii) quantitative 'dashboard' data on attendance (reviewed half-termly); (iii) a case study and mentoring survey completed by young people(termly) (with additional focus groups informing delivery); and (iv) a spiritual impact survey completed by young people (termly) with case studies from Kick Academies (and with additional focus groups informing delivery).</p>
<p>Evaluation/current data/level of demand</p>	<p>Kick currently engages nearly 13,000 beneficiaries (young people) per week across 70 schools (12,408 young people) and 23 Kick Academies (572 young people) offering 32 different sports and dance disciplines. They deliver around 350 PE lessons per month, 170 school clubs, and 11 school assemblies. Their mentoring provision has grown from 22 learners in 2015 to 532 in June 2021. Kick sits between public, voluntary and private sectors and appears well placed to respond with a dynamic solution to see young people hear about Christ. Their vision is to scale in order to reach a generation of young people and make a transformational difference. These aspirations are in line with opportunities to partner with</p>

	<p>organizations in a number of new geographical areas such as: the East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, North East, North West and London.</p> <p>The demand around Kick services has increased significantly as a consequence of the COVID pandemic and Key Worker provision has been repositioned remotely to meet demand especially in the areas of mentoring and chaplaincy.</p>
<p>Key Learning including level of demand, insight/impact and what factors have supported the project and what has prevented more success (e.g. include funding, staff skills, volunteers, enthusiasm of participants, timing, project design, lack of partners/church links, what advice would they give to others)</p>	<p>Kick have developed a model of partnering with other organizations which, they believe, avoids duplication and replication by working with the right partner(s) to carry out the right work by positioning branches of Kick to interface with other organizations.</p> <p>Since inception there has been no independent (external) evaluation of Kick. The organization has steadily grown in terms of its impact, measured by the number of programmes that it runs, the number of schools and churches that it partners with, and the number of young people that it engages.</p> <p>In terms of current plans to scale, Kick are committed to establishing a 'branch-based' operational model as they move into new cities and regions using a 'Hub and Spoke' approach to manage these branches with a core services department in London facilitating HR, finance, quality and chaplaincy. They intend to employ a Director of Development, who will lead on sales to schools and churches, as well as line manage local branch managers in the new geographical areas. Longer term, Kick aim to establish Regional and Satellite branches as they grow their reach. This will enable them to grow more quickly and in new locations, responding to need/demand, and enabling deeper impact in key cities. It is envisaged that Regional branches will have more infrastructure and that Satellites will operate more like outposts in less developed locations.</p>
<p>Next Steps and Sustainability including what is plan/vision for the</p>	<p>Further funding is needed around the planned scaling process and there is a need for a more strategic approach to this going forward.</p>

<p>future and what is needed for that to happen, and how sustainable is the organisation and its projects and programmes?</p>	<p>There is a particular need around start-up costs in the first 1-3 years of expansions prior to the establishment of sustainable income streams.</p> <p>To date, there has been a focus on internal monitoring and evaluation. However, independent (external) evaluation of provision is needed and would be timely.</p> <p>There is also a need to further clarify the needs of the organization going forward in relation to the education and training of coaches and discussions are on-going with potential providers. A focus on theological/spiritual formation is a key fact in this respect.</p>
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Case Study 5

Sports Factory

THE
SPORTS
FACTORY

<p>Overview of the Organisation (including structure, foundation and history, vision, mission & strategic objective(s))</p>	<p>The Sports Factory was formally launched in 2014 in connection with St Thomas' Church (STN), Norwich. The initiative was led by Ruth Anderson who had undertaken similar project work elsewhere.</p> <p>Aim:</p> <p>Sports Factory are passionate about sharing sport with people and want to see lives changed as a result of engagement with sport, faith and the church.</p> <p>Vision:</p> <p>To establish a centre/hub for sports ministry where people can be trained and equipped in how to do sports ministry practically via experiential learning and project work projects ('on the job').</p>
<p>Staffing including brief outline of staffing levels and structure, FT/PT, qualifications, and training approach.</p>	<p>Led by Founder and Director, Ruth Anderson, with one part-time (Director) and five full-time members of staff (comprising one post headed Sports Minister and Schools, one post dedicated to Sports Factory Youth, and three Trainee Sports Ministers). In 2019 Sports Factory formally became part of the Diocese of Norwich and staff are now contracted to the Diocese.</p> <p>Qualifications: All staff have either a teaching degree or Level 2 qualification, plus first aid, and all have undertaken the Sports Factory in-house training programme. In addition, there is an annual programme of continuing professional development and a weekly slot dedicated to staff training.</p>

Funding, Revenue (including approach to charging and Partnerships).	<p>The mainstay of Sports Factory work is currently funded via the Diocese of Norwich. There is a small amount of income generation from programmes and events which cover costs and this is supplemented by voluntary contributions. Fees for Monday Night football are £2 per session but there is a charge for the facility. Fees for Holiday Club covers incurred costs. Schools are charged for coaching at £25 per session re PE, RE and after school clubs. Sports Factory work with four or five schools at any one time.</p> <p>Main partnerships are with local schools, churches and national sports ministry organisations There are some connections with Active Norfolk.</p>
Projects and Programmes including brief outline of main activities, location and setting, target groups.	<p>Sports factory run holiday clubs, community events, sports coaching academies, social sport, detached sports outreach, football cage activities and work with disengaged young people. Their regular weekly offering is as follows: Monday Night Football (weekly); Sports Connect Group; Tuesday Night Netball; Pilates; Wednesday Night Running; and Fab and Fit (Over 50s). In 2020, the Sports Factory began work in two new geographical areas in line with Diocesan strategy.</p> <p>The target audience for Sports Factory programmes and events is anyone in the areas in which they work and their activities take place in rural and urban (town centre/city) environments via schools, MUGAs, parks, church halls, leisure centres. Programmes and events are advertised via the Sports Factory website, social media, word of mouth recommendation.</p>
Missional Approach including brief outline of psychology, faith pathways and impact on individual and church.	<p>Sports Factory have their own internal methodologies and frameworks based for programme delivery and staff training and delivery. These are based on casting vision and an aspirational team culture whilst at the same time providing realistic opportunities for staff to put these concepts and ideas into action. Staff training is heavily geared towards a one-to-one mentoring model and a culture of team working, encouragement and accountability. Staff are especially encouraged in their giftings and in developing specific areas of expertise. The centre of the Sports Factory missional approach is the local</p>

	church based on Thessalonians 1:8 whereby opportunities to develop faith journeys and pathways are explicit via all of their programmes and events.
Monitoring and Evaluation Approach including how is the activity evaluated, what data is collected and how?	<p>This is an on-going challenge – and an aspiration. There is no formal monitoring and evaluation of projects or programmes although there is informal monitoring of those who engage and collection of legally required data around basic medical history/fitness levels and emergency contact details. There are regular (weekly) informal discussions of programme delivery via staff Team Meetings including aspects of strategic development. Formal strategy discussions would normally take place at the beginning of the school year.</p> <p>No collection or evaluation of data concerning levels of participant wellbeing, e.g., mental health, loneliness, isolation, character development, leadership ability or educational potential. Likewise, no formal collection of data concerning the assessment of the impact of projects or programmes on the local community, e.g., the enhancement of community cohesion, or the impact on anti-social behaviour or crime. Similarly, no formal collection of data concerning spiritual wellness, level of faith, church engagement or a person's faith journey.</p> <p>There is an aspiration to establish a <i>Learning Community</i> where staff and key stakeholders would go away on retreat together every six months with local clergy and key volunteers (for each separate geographical location/area) to review/plan plus some teaching; discipleship, mission, team building.</p>
Evaluation/current data/level of demand	<p>Programme impact appears consistent: people attend regularly and come back and there are positive anecdotal 'stories' of members in this respect. Fitness programmes engage 10-30 people per week in terms of fitness activities – probably 6-8 per week. Programmes also reach a wider number of people through association usually via informal connections between age groups and through invitation – which is a key part of the strategy especially through schools work. Demand has changed markedly since the inception of the overall project with growth of the size of the staff team and of their faith, skills and capabilities.</p>

<p>Key Learning including level of demand, insight/impact and what factors have supported the project and what has prevented more success (e.g. include funding, staff skills, volunteers, enthusiasm of participants, timing, project design, lack of partners/church links, what advice would they give to others)</p>	<p>There is a lot of good work going on in sports ministry but not in partnership with other people and there is a significant gap in: (i) the provision of training for sports ministers, and (ii) in bespoke qualifications (including a need for embedded National Governing Body Level 2 qualifications);</p> <p>Sports ministry has a tendency to focus on the development of relationships but often avoids direct evangelism, e.g., being bold enough to tell people about Jesus - especially within schools. In this connect, 'doing life' means proximity around people and relationships and sharing the Gospel. There seems to be a tendency across the sector to <i>hide</i> behind schools work. The evangelistic side of the training is critical and new/emerging training pathways should address this.</p>
<p>Next Steps and Sustainability including what is plan/vision for the future and what is needed for that to happen, and how sustainable is the organisation and its projects and programmes?</p>	<p>To date, there has been a lack of focus on detailed monitoring and evaluation data. Measuring impact is an area for development. Funding is needed to have an analytics system and to pay for an external (independent) evaluation.</p> <p>The main barrier to development and expansion is funding and the freedom to use this to best effect</p> <p>Sports Factory model could be scaled if supported by the local church. <i>Active RE</i> is in demand from schools.</p>

Case Study 6

Inspire Church Children and Families Football Initiative³⁴⁰

<p>Overview of the Organisation (including structure, foundation and history, vision, mission & strategic objective(s))</p>	<p>Inspire Church established a football initiative among children and families at Inspire Church in 2014. Working under a Bishop's Mission Order, Inspire Church exercised its ministry around Old Street, London (EC1) specifically the parishes of St. Giles Cripplegate and St. Clement King's Square. The vision of the church was to be a united and diverse community inspiring London with the good news of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>A key aspect of the mission plan was to engage the local area with sport and a key part of this was football among local children. Firstly, Inspire recognised that 'Churches with a large percentage of children, especially those with well-resourced strategies for children's ministry, have grown much better than the average' (Another Capital Idea Church Growth in the Diocese of London 2003-2010 p.4). Secondly, they saw the great potential that sports ministry had as a way to serve the local children and as an engagement strategy. Thirdly, they avoided duplicating initiatives that were already provided locally such as youth provision through organisations like Arsenal in the Community; and fourthly they capitalised on the huge popularity of football and aim to target the need for children's initiatives.</p>
<p>Staffing including brief outline of staffing levels and structure, FT/PT, qualifications, and training approach.</p>	<p>Employed a part-time sport ministry worker who built partnerships and relationships, delivered sessions and coordinated and trained volunteers. They assessed that every football session required at least two and ideally three volunteers, usually on a rota of doing alternative weeks so typically 4-6 volunteers.</p>

³⁴⁰ Unfortunately Inspire were not available for interview however given their evidence about impact on church it wanted inclusion as a case study. This information is taken from two reports: Inspire Church Children and Families Football Initiative Best Practice Guide – 2018 and The Bishop of London's Mission Fund: 2016 Review of the Inspire London Mission Initiative, Community Sport Outreach – Old Street Area, The London Diocesan Fund.

Funding, Revenue (including approach to charging and Partnerships).	<p>Secured funding (£34,000 over three years) from the Bishop of London’s Mission Fund to pay for the sports minister. The Church supported other costs.</p> <p>They connected with local partners, particularly St. Luke’s Primary School where they started sports sessions linking with the children to advertise the Sunday morning football. Having carefully timed these not to clash with the parish church services at St. Clement and St. Giles. They also partnered with Christians in Sport and Ambassador’s Football for practical support.</p>
Projects and Programmes including brief outline of main activities, location and setting, target groups.	<p>The engagement included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weekly lunchtime sports provision at St Luke’s C of E Primary School working with 50+ children 2. Sunday morning “Inspire: Football” group (with 15 children and their families involved regularly) with football coaching and accessible Christian teaching each week. 3. Inspire Holiday Club - a 4-day community Holiday Club with 20 (2015) growing to 60 (2017) children participating in either football or craft-related activities, as well as an opportunity to explore the Christian faith and witness a Christian environment. The club ran with two different streams in which the young people could participate: football and creative (drama and craft). 4. Night of Champions - an after-school multi-game tournament for Y6’s at the Primary School with a short Christian talk. Over 90% attendance among Y6 and overwhelmingly positive response from teachers and pupils.
Missional Approach including brief outline of psychology, faith	<p>Inspire’s ethos was to ensure there was a clear integration in the football initiative between the football and the gospel. Consequently, every training session included a structured in a ‘coach’s corner’ slot where the children had a water break and one of the core claims of Jesus Christ was presented (often using accessible sporting metaphors). They were open with</p>

<p>pathways and impact on individual and church.</p>	<p>the parents about this aspect of the football program and found that the parents were positive about giving the children the chance to explore the Christian faith in a relevant way.</p> <p>The initiative was supported by being integrated with other initiatives including debt counselling initiatives, annual 'Help Portrait' event providing free professional quality photos for community members, elderly visiting and Christianity Explored courses.</p> <p>Alongside the regular weekly football sessions, the year culminated with an Inspire soccer school: A week of football and sports initiatives and bible teaching with a 'celebration service' on Sunday at Inspire Church. Over three years this proved a great way to both round off the year, catalyse more involvement, and introduce the families to Inspire church.</p> <p>An example of how they integrated faith and sport was the 2017 holiday club. The day started with prayer and then the first session. The football stream had a technical session first each day and the creative stream varied between making crafts such as t-shirts and tote bags to baking. The children all came together after the first session for a snack and meeting. During the meetings they looked at five episodes from the life of Jesus in Luke's gospel under the theme 'upside down'; thinking about how the gospel of Jesus Christ is often contrary to what we might think and how Jesus came to turn the world and our lives back the right way again. After the main meeting the children went into small groups to discuss what they had just heard.</p> <p>Then the young people would go to their next activity sessions; those in the football stream would take part in small-sided games and competitions and those in the creative stream had either a drama session or made a craft including a banner that was used at the awards ceremony on the Sunday. The day ended with group prayer and parents came along early each day to watch the last of the football, enjoy refreshments and chat to each other and members of the hospitality team.</p> <p>They also had former professional football player, Linvoy Primus, come to share his Christian testimony during the meeting who also joined in some of the football coaching. Another important highlight was watching the leaders get 'gunged'. The</p>
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	<p>week concluded with an all-age church service on the Sunday following the holiday club with over 150 people at the service including many families of the children. There was an award ceremony for both the football and creative streams and they concluded their 'Upside-Down' series by unpacking the story of the Prodigal Son with help from a few children in the audience.</p>
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation Approach including how is the activity evaluated, what data is collected and how?</p>	<p>Inspire undertook simple M&E including measurement of the impact on the church life over three years. The method used is not known.</p>
<p>Evaluation/current data/level of demand</p>	<p>Having set and measured missional objectives they assessed the initiative having had the following impact (2015-17):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attracted over 70 new people attended church services at Inspire Church because of engagement through the sports outreach. Many of these directly because of the Holiday Club weeks. 2. Attracted 20-30 new children to 'Kingdom Kids' Church Children's group. 3. The 10-15 who regularly attended Inspire Football have grown in understanding of the Christian faith and most have expressed a desire to 'be on God's team' in response to the teaching received. Most of these children had no prior church background.
<p>Key Learning including level of demand, insight/impact and what factors have supported the project and what has prevented more</p>	<p>The M&E supported their belief that sport was an excellent way of engaging with the local community. It helped formed links across demographics, a useful and effective means to engage a wide range of people (pupils, teachers, children and parents) and to build relationships of trust and goodwill in the community. By encouraging parents to attend the sessions the project formed good links with not just the children but families in the local area. They also learnt that that it takes</p>

<p>success (e.g. include funding, staff skills, volunteers, enthusiasm of participants, timing, project design, lack of partners/church links, what advice would they give to others)</p>	<p>time to build trust with the local community but that by being committed for the medium to long-term the links do come and discipleship pathways into church are established.</p> <p>Furthermore, it highlighted that a year-round approach though weekly provision and holiday clubs, not only complemented each other well, but led to a deepening of the relationships with local families. This in turn led to the children inviting new friends to join in too. The continuing support and encouragement of the local Primary School Head Teacher was critical.</p> <p>As the evidence shows, they concluded that sport was an extremely good vehicle to share the Christian faith in word and deed. Not only did the project see 70 new people engage with the church and 20-30 kids attend their children's programme but they observed how having an integrated approach of sports programmes with clear gospel content has helped children who might not attend church explore the gospel for themselves. They also saw many more opportunities to expand this work to reach more families and encourage discipleship further.</p> <p>A key learning from the project was to training up a team of volunteers to continue it once staff funding for the role finished. After two years in his role, the leader went to undergo ordination training however, he had left behind a core team of four volunteers took the work forward. While the work on Sundays continued to grow steadily, if not spectacularly, the key to the longevity and growth of the work was the training and empowering of volunteers.</p> <p>In addition, having the right employed team was also critical. The project leader was inspiring and a quality sports and youth worker. The vicar overseeing the project, understood through his previous professional background, the significance of robust project planning and delivery, alongside monitoring and evaluating what they did. Furthermore, alongside this, he also worked for Christians in Sport, which influenced and ensured the project had a strong missional approach which embedded not only a faith element in the provision but creating pathways into church activities.</p>
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<p>Next Steps and Sustainability</p> <p>including what is plan/vision for the future and what is needed for that to happen, and how sustainable is the organisation and its projects and programmes?</p>	<p>In 2018, Inspire Church merged with the parish church of St James, Clerkenwell and Inspire Football continues to reach children in their new local community.</p>
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CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

There has been a noticeable change in attitude by policy makers, funders, charities and businesses towards **faith-based organisations** in line with emerging evidence that these organisations are quietly undertaking significant social action (estimated at more than £3 billion each year). Hence, churches need to be considered further within the context of civil society policy making. The Covid-19 pandemic (and the Church's response to this) is helping to change existing culture in this respect and Love Your Neighbour is a good example of where state and faith can work together towards common aims. The importance of faith-based organisations as builders of social capital, social cohesion and, more specifically, their impact on public health continues to be underplayed. There are a great number of health-related activities taking place in and around churches that are so well 'embedded' that they are seldom thought of as interventions or evaluated as such.

While problems persist around the general (public) perception that the Church prioritizes proselytising over and above civic contribution and that as an institution it is 'dying', such perceptions need to be challenged and churches must work hard at building trust with public (and private) agencies by proving the quality of their governance, their ability to successfully deliver outcomes, and their accountability around funding.

While it is encouraging that policy makers and others are realising that faith-based organisations have a significant part to play in building better and more cohesive communities and have the assets to do so, the development and implementation of robust monitoring and evaluation protocols and practices around evidencing project delivery are crucial. Alongside this shift the work of Danny Krugar and others such as Faith Action and the levelling up agenda, should see a further softening in government policy and commitment to work with faith organisations in the future as they look to transform local communities. The Church has to be prepared to align with policy, evidence-based approaches and outcome frameworks, and be able to meet due diligence requirements.

Within the context of civil society, if approached in the right way, there are emerging opportunities for dioceses to help trail-blaze new approaches to community engagement and the development of partnerships with local and national government to enhance the Church's role within local communities and for those individuals and families within them. Effective progression in this area at the diocesan level should be scaled to the national level.

Sports ministry continues to evolve in the UK and the last decade has witnessed several significant developments which have changed conventional working practices in the sector. However, in order to connect more readily with mainstream policy, sports ministry must be seen to incorporate and

encompasses a broader wellbeing agenda thereby providing effective solutions to a wide range of social issues. Good leadership is critical in this respect and the importance of this cannot be underestimated in terms of the development and rejuvenation of sports and wellbeing ministry in future years.

Significant **learning and insight** have also emerged from campaigns that have sought to use major sporting events in the UK as a tool for community engagement and mission. These have provided robust evidence that there is a demand and enthusiasm for sport and wellbeing ministry from churches but that they need significantly more support than simply the provision of resource. Existing interventions highlight the significant challenges for sport and wellbeing ministry in operating in silos without an overall strategy or framework. Critical key factors need addressing urgently, such as: (i) strategic thinking and planning around the development of sport ministry over the next 10-20 years; (ii) the successful monitoring and evaluation of sports and wellbeing projects and campaigns; (iii) the need for evidence-based frameworks for different types of sport and wellbeing ministry models; (iv) understanding of the social outcomes through community sport and partnerships with public bodies to embed this thinking and insights into sport and wellbeing ministry ; (v) new models of delivery that are sustainable long term; (vi) the need for evidence-based frameworks for faith pathways, the role of the local church and church schools, and new worshipping communities; (vii) appropriate education, training and continuing professional development for sports ministers and volunteers; (viii) a framework for using major (and other) sporting events as a means for initial (marketing) community engagement and mission.

As we have seen, existing theological offerings around sport provide a series of frameworks via which we might analyse and interrogate the sport/Christianity relationship. However, they do little to explain or connect everyday sporting experiences to faith journeys. In turn, their pre-occupation with traditional notions of 'sport' and 'play' fail to connect with broader conceptions of physical activity, health, fitness and wellbeing. In this sense, there is a **lack of in-depth theological thinking and insight** into the practical application and ground-level development of sport, health and wellbeing initiatives in the UK and sports ministry per se. Moreover, underlying theological narratives persist which militate against the connection between Church and sport. Drawing on outdated assumptions concerning the 'un-spiritual' nature of sporting activity, many churches still negate the inclusion and development of sporting activity as part of wider worship. Likewise, they fail to see the potential of such activity in relation to the delivery of social and/or missional outcomes. Where churches and church leaders fail to promote sport as a 'spiritual good' they deny people of all ages the opportunity to further explore their relationship with God around who He has (uniquely) designed them to be. For young people, this can be a detriment both to their physical/emotional and spiritual growth. It is up to churches and church leaders to model a positive mindset towards such activities. In order to combat this kind of anti-sport narrative, more recently the

Church of England has sought to find ways to strategically develop sport and wellbeing ministry at both the diocesan and national level and on-going support is needed around this initiative.

In sum sports ministry finds itself in need of a new theology; one which relates directly to, informs, and emerges organically from practitioner work within the sector. There is evidence to suggest that such theological thinking (and reflection) is emerging on three main fronts. The first concerns the work of Daniels (2021) in relation to elite/professional sport. Developing the work of Null (2008; 2021) Daniels argues for a theology of sport that recognises the prevalence and power of a performance-driven mindset in sport and seeks to juxtapose this with the personal and collective benefits of faith-based identity. Whilst such work would only seem to have relevance at the elite level, it should be recognised and acknowledged that performance-based narratives shape the identity of many sports participants irrespective of competence and level. The second relates specifically to the work of sports chaplains and is based on the work of Whitmore and Parker (2020). Following Bosch (1994), these authors adopt a missiological approach to the work of the sports chaplain arguing that critical to any pastoral engagement in sporting contexts is the adoption of an incarnational mindset and a 'ministry of presence' around the facilitation of pastoral and spiritual care, trusting relationships, and long term personal investment. Again, there are wider lessons and implications here for sports ministry more broadly especially ways in which church members might seek to encourage and 'journey' with those who have a love for sport. Finally, and perhaps most pertinent to the present discussion, is theological thinking adopted by Cameron and Balcar (2018). These authors advocate the championing of physical activity, health and wellbeing as a central concern of Christian mission whereby the church serves to promote physical, emotional and spiritual health and healing whilst addressing social justice and inequalities. Cameron and Balcar (2018) conclude that in order to facilitate the potential of sport as an effective tool of community engagement and mission, the church must embrace more intentionally the world of sport and physical activity by: (i) raising awareness, knowledge and debate about the body and the creative Christian responses to physical, emotional and social well-being needs; (ii) creating a framework for parish and school engagement with relevant models, resources and support; (iii) working with parachurch, government and secular organisations to help us focus more on physical activity health and wellbeing in a broad range of contexts, and (iv) supporting clergy and laity in pursuing health and wellbeing.

Building on all of the above, sports ministry as a sector may wish to take some time to reflect upon its theological standpoint. There is a need for a theology which encompasses sports ministry in its entirety in terms of the range and levels of activity on offer. Such reflection should include consideration not only of how sport is perceived and presented in and around church contexts but how new worshipping communities might be generated through sport. In this sense, robust theological thinking is needed to influence and underpin wider work within and across the sector and to inform theories of change and

monitoring and evaluation frameworks. A major omission in sports ministry is its historic inability to connect with mainstream sporting debates and policy development and gains will only be made in this area as and when related activities are robustly evaluated and theoretically and theologically informed. There is a need for an over-arching theory of change for the sector as a whole and, in addition, individual sports ministry organisations need to develop bespoke theories of change which accurately depict their own work. To this end, as sports ministry adopts a more strategic and coherent approach in terms of its alignment and engagement with wider agendas, it must do so in accordance with a clear set of theological ideas.

The use of **sport-based activity** to deliver a set of complex social outcomes is now firmly embedded in policy thinking, funding mechanisms and delivery frameworks. This is alongside the ongoing desire to get more people, especially the inactive and hard to reach inactive, active. Outcomes that are well established include physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, and social and community development. Within these there are a multitude of issues that sport can help address and facilitate including inactivity, obesity, mental health, and isolation/loneliness; improve community cohesion and integration; build character and resilience; reduce anti-social behaviour and low-level crime; and increase volunteering and employability. Furthermore, sporting activity has impact in many social spaces from schools and after-school environments, civil society and in the places we live, and through community buildings. It also can help to tackle issues of poverty, disadvantage, and inequality. There is some thinking and evidence on how the Church can deliver social outcomes especially around social cohesion but little about how sporting activity can do this.

While the evidence-base surrounding **sport and social outcomes** is both credible and robust (providing many critical principles for successful delivery), these are multifaceted and complex. There is therefore an on-going need for evidencing outcomes using more consistent forms of measurement and for projects and programmes to explore how they can use sport and physical activity as a conduit to promote cultural awareness and cycles of engagement across generations, and to place sport and physical activity at the heart of healthy lifestyles with multi- dimensional benefits

The evidence base for **youth interventions** has grown significantly in recent years. Research suggests that open access youth provision has the potential to significantly improve social and emotional learning skills, social capital/connectedness, and wellbeing for young people, particularly those with most to gain. It also shows that higher quality youth provision is related to better outcomes for young people: those attending targeted provision make greater gains across some social outcomes related to social skills, leadership, self-regulation and communication and self-expression than those attending universal provision only. Sport and wellbeing ministry should seek to adopt these practices.

Young people relish safe and supportive environments where interventions are inclusive, stimulating, positively challenging and fun. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of girls and young women, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds. As endorsed by mainstream sport policy, sport and wellbeing ministries should seek to develop robust theories of change including the key contribution of sport-specific interventions in the faith journeys of participants. At present there is a dearth of evidence concerning how best to create pathways into faith through sport.

The evidence base for **wellbeing interventions** is an emerging area that measures ‘how we are doing’ as individuals, communities and as a nation. There is already evidence of ‘what works’ to improve wellbeing, and how to measure impact - including the impact of: sport and dance on young people, outdoor recreation on family life, and places and spaces to boost social relations or community wellbeing including the positive role of community hubs. There are also emerging evidence to suggest that attending and volunteering at church/faith-based activities increases wellbeing

Findings from our **empirical case study research** highlight community wellbeing outcomes that support existing systematic review evidence, as well as describing additional and unforeseen outcomes, including those that arise from the benefits of more informal spaces - as well as benefits to the organisations responsible for the delivery of the interventions. Findings also highlight how important consideration of the local context is, that the response to local needs is often complex, and that community involvement in the delivery of projects is important including planning to successfully improve wellbeing outcomes. Case study data also demonstrates that sports ministry (and wellbeing) projects which adopt sound governance structures, robust approaches to strategic planning, and active and co-creative relationships with local churches and communities, have a firm foundation on which to build sustainable practice. However, case study data reveal that the adoption of sound monitoring and evaluation processes are lacking across the sector, hence, there is limited good quality evidence for the impact of sporting interventions on the overall wellbeing of related communities.

In conclusion

This report concludes that sport and wellbeing ministry has the potential to successfully play a role in a myriad of aims set out by the Church of England from helping it grow younger and more diverse, to enhancing social justice ambitions, through to creating new and different local church communities. Through community sport and wellbeing activity, the church also has the potential to enhance its valuable contribution to the personal and social development of those with whom it engages and in doing so, help tackle stubborn public policy issues. In addition, sporting interventions can provide a variety of support mechanisms and faith/life-course pathways for those who choose to access such opportunities. While historical evidence suggests that the promotion of sport through faith-based organisations can be effective

in not only engaging individuals in sporting activities but also in their wellbeing and faith journeys, the nuances and complexities of contemporary social life require a re-thinking and re-calibration of the way in which this work is designed, implemented and developed.

The report also demonstrates that by embracing insight from wider community sport, youth and wellbeing approaches, the church has the potential to create a significant base from which to achieve successful engagement with local communities. Research undertaken by the community sport and sport for development sectors highlights how insight-based community sporting activity can initially attract children and young people from diverse communities, from which other social outcomes and activities for families and those communities can be developed. Many dioceses and parishes already engage significant numbers of people in numerous ways and, as this report suggests, current sport and wellbeing ministry has multi-faceted synergies with a range of social outcomes: community sport and physical activity, health and wellbeing, schools, youth, community, civil society, and faith. These are all areas which dioceses, and the Church of England could (and should want to) engage with through sport and wellbeing ministry. If done well, faith-based sport and wellbeing provision should intuitively have a much deeper desire and understanding to deliver 'social' as well as 'missional' outcomes and a clear focus on youth, families and the disadvantaged.

This is, in our view, is at the core of the embryonic investment by a handful of dioceses (such as Gloucester, Norwich and London) in sport and wellbeing ministry, which are attempting to bring together broader public policy objectives alongside diocesan community engagement and missional aims. If these dioceses and parishes intentionally work to create links between community sport and wellbeing activity, and a community presence (through local facilities, schools, and even new housing developments), whilst at the same time intentionally encouraging social action (including volunteering and leadership, alongside the local church and Christian belief), this has the potential to result in a powerful transformation of society. Working in tandem, the sport and wellbeing sector and the Church of England, have the opportunity to not only tackle some of the most pressing issues in society, especially poverty related issues, build stronger local communities, and enhance personal wellbeing (physical, mental and spiritual), but also to create new opportunities for faith journeys, fresh expressions, new worshipping communities, and stronger churches communities. Much more is required however, over the longer-term (ten years at least) to develop proven successful approaches and models which are underpinned by strong theories of change.

Similarly, sport and wellbeing organisations outside of the Church of England should consider working (more) closely with dioceses and parishes to establish simple, effective co-designed pathways for sport and wellbeing activity in order for these to be embedded into appropriate church contexts (in all their forms) thereby further facilitating effective, intentional faith pathways. This will be beneficial to both the church

and these wider organisations creating new markets and demand alongside developing a workforce, both in number and expertise, and related career trajectories.

To be credible however, the Church of England, dioceses and sports ministry organisations must understand and utilise the evidence-base, insight, and outcomes frameworks outlined in this report in order to create clear strategies and objectives in this area, in turn, operationalising this evidence to underpin the establishment of new missional-based theories of change. This should begin with learning from community sport, youth, and civil society organisations, about how to use sport and wellbeing activity to successfully engage local communities and how to deliver social outcomes. A critical element that is routinely absent from discussions around sport and wellbeing ministry is the intentional development of faith journeys and new worshipping communities/church, and these need to be developed alongside sporting engagement. This task is challenging given the limited evidence base and insight currently available. Nevertheless, as this report suggests, there are some strong pointers towards the direction of travel required. These should be assessed and developed further and where successful, replicated. Providing dioceses and the Church of England with the right foundations in this area could lead to the development of fresh expressions and new worshipping communities and provide critical lessons and insight into leadership around innovative approaches to sport and wellbeing ministry.

The Church of England and leading dioceses will need to develop this approach in the short to medium-term by utilising a multitude of methods of engagement, i.e., holiday clubs, community sport, schools work, fitness classes and activities, outdoor adventurous activities, and chaplaincy. While such strategies should always begin with placed-based approaches, we see a strong argument for the Church of England and dioceses to work with the wider sport and wellbeing sector and new missional ventures, to create these approaches and to dovetail them with diocesan visions and strategies, and, perhaps more importantly, with the emerging vision and strategy of the Church of England. Such work will need to be monitored, evaluated, developed, and refined in the coming years at various levels. It is our belief that in undertaking this work, the Church of England has the potential to enhance its growing reputation in the sector and, over time, to emerge as a national leader in how faith-based organisations can care, support, and enhance their local communities through sport and wellbeing ministry, whilst also transforming how people of all ages respond to the compelling Good News of Jesus Christ.

ANNEXES:

ANNEX A - Key Social Outcomes that can be delivered through sporting activity

1. The four core social outcomes of community sport are:

a. Physical Wellbeing including:

- Reducing inactivity by targeting inactive people to get them active for life
- Tackling obesity and other health conditions such as Type-2 Diabetes
- Using Social Prescribing to encourage being active and enhance wellbeing alongside other non-sporting interventions for those needing support
- Local health priorities

b. Mental Health including:

- Reducing stress and anxiety
- Building confidence and self esteem
- Increasing the number of volunteers who help others
- Helping with mild clinical depression
- Increasing enjoyment and happiness
- Tackling loneliness by developing social connections

c. Individual Development including:

- Improving educational behaviour and attainment
- Building confidence and self esteem
- Building character and resilience
- Developing soft skills such as integrity, responsibility, team working and leadership
- Improving behaviours and skills leading to training and employment
- Increasing social action and volunteering

- d. Social and Community Development including:
- Building stronger communities by bringing together people from different backgrounds
 - Improving community links and cohesion
 - Building social capital through volunteering
 - Preventing serious youth violence
 - Preventing Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Tackling extremism
 - Helping to rehabilitate prisoners and young offenders
2. Developing local community facilities including using outdoor parks, canals, rivers, forests and outdoor recreation centres to support an active lifestyle that:
- a. Are more customer focused and help more inactive people get active especially from target groups
 - b. Are in community ownership
 - c. Ensure communities have access to new leisure facilities and supporting sustained good health and wellbeing through active design
 - d. See new housing developments reimagined core values and practices linked to good financial, physical mental, spiritual and relational health.
3. Engages with young people that:
- a. Creates a youth voice
 - b. Creates new youth provision with youth at the heart of the programme design – what do young people want to do
 - c. Creates social links
 - d. Develops youth leadership
 - e. Encourages youth volunteering and create improved pathways into employment especially for disadvantaged young people
 - f. Creates new Youth Centres

4. Supports a School Sport and PE provision that:

- a. Provides quality sporting provision (in and around school day) helping children and young people met the Chief Medical Officers guidelines for activity every week
- b. Provide quality and affordable holiday provision (activity and food)
- c. Opens sporting facilities for community use.

ANNEX B - Summary of the Evidence³⁴¹

‘Physical wellbeing. The contribution of sport and physical activity is widely accepted and robustly evidenced, and causality established using validated measurement tools.

- There is good evidence for the *prevention of ill health, therapeutic and management effects*, improvements in *strength, balance, gait and motor skills*, and maintaining a *healthy weight*.
- Other outcomes include improved *sleep*, increased *energy*, healthy *early years development*, reduced *risky behaviours* such as smoking, reduced *mortality*, effective *pain management* and improved *quality of life in ageing*.

Characteristics of successful interventions:

- More *intense and sustained activity* leads to greater benefits.
- Taking part in a *range of activity types* (resistance, aerobic, weight bearing) increases the benefits compared to a single type.
- Certain benefits may only be realised from physical activity as *part of a wider healthy lifestyle*.

Mental wellbeing. There is a strong association between taking part in sport and physical activity and positive mental wellbeing outcomes, but the causal mechanisms are less well understood. There are challenges around the varied definitions used in the field, and the subjective nature of measures.

- There is much evidence that sport and physical activity contributes to *enjoyment, happiness*, and *life satisfaction*. Social interaction is central to this.

³⁴¹ <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/sport-outcomes-evidence-review-report.pdf>

- *Self-esteem and confidence* can increase through the opportunity to develop new skills and relationships.
- There is potential to *reduce anxiety and depression* symptoms.
- Other outcomes include improved *cognitive functioning*, benefits for people with *dementia*, and impacts around *emotion regulation*.

Characteristics of successful interventions:

- Incorporating *social interaction*.
- Increased *regularity and duration*.
- Interventions involving *sport or physical activity alongside other support*, such as counselling.

Further research: more *longitudinal studies* exploring long-term impacts and the sustainability of interventions are needed. Greater *specificity in definitions and concepts* would enable better understanding of the relationships being measured and the transfer of findings into practice.

Individual development. There is a substantial evidence base that indicates the potential for positive outcomes from taking part or volunteering, particularly for young people, but the wider set of circumstances around an individual will determine effectiveness in relation to these outcomes.

- Evidence was identified for improved *educational attainment*, either directly (improved grades and behaviour) or indirectly (enhanced skills like concentration and teamwork).
- There are positive impacts on *employability* (employment opportunities, earnings, job performance and satisfaction), including (limited) evidence on *NEETs*.
- Sport can promote *self-efficacy* (motivation and commitment), for groups including elderly people and disaffected young people.
- Other outcomes are an increased *willingness to volunteer* and development of *soft skills* (such as integrity, responsibility, and leadership).

Characteristics of successful interventions:

- *Longer duration* of engagement.
- Integration of sport and physical activity with *strategies such as self-reflection*.

Further research could shed light on the links between sport and *anti-social behaviour*. In some circumstances it can promote anti-social behaviour through competition and increased alcohol consumption, but in other situations it may also be related to better self-control – associated with reduced alcohol consumption and drug use.

Social and community development. Outcomes can be defined in relation to a range of concepts that are often challenging to evidence (such as social capital, trust and networks). Many of which are positively associated with participation or volunteering, but the effectiveness of any intervention is dependent on a broader set of conditions.

- Sport acts as a conduit for *people of different backgrounds* to interact, can bridge divides between groups such as men and women and people with different employment backgrounds, and play a key role in the integration of *migrants*.
- A small body of literature on *bonding capital* suggests that sport helps to build relationships within communities.
- For *volunteers*, motivations and outcomes overlap at the personal and the community level (for example, bonding with others increases a sense of community and citizenship).

Characteristics of successful interventions:

- Offering *appropriate and appealing types of opportunities*, especially for children and young people.
- Considering the wider context of people's lives.

Further research: current research is characterised by uncertainty about causality between sport and social and community development; *more effective measures* for these outcomes are sorely needed.

Economic development. There is a variety of sources in terms of breadth and depth, despite making up a small proportion of the sources reviewed. The sources use a wide variety of techniques to calculate economic value, and it is not possible to accurately assess the strength of the evidence base without a critical appraisal of the full range of these methods (outside the scope of this review).

- There was some evidence on the *direct impact* of the sport sector on the economy, largely in terms of *gross value added* and *job creation*.
- There was more evidence on the *indirect impacts* (*reduced healthcare costs* due to a healthier population, *reduced crime*, *improved employability*).

Further research could focus on critically evaluating the range of methods used to calculate the economic value of sport, with a view to *recommending a standardised approach*. We need a shared understanding of how to monetise social outcomes, e.g. health and crime. Current research appears to be dominated by major events, with little coverage of *economic impacts at local and community level* which will be of interest to local commissioners and providers. ‘