



# South Gloucestershire **SportsPound**

Year two quarterly report

January 2017 – March 2017

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# 1. Background

**1.1.** The SportsPound project is a three year physical activity intervention programme delivered by South Gloucestershire Council's Community Sport team.

**1.2.** South Gloucestershire Council launched this project in October 2015 with £171,324 funding from Sport England, and the project commenced in earnest on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016.



**1.3.** The aim of SportsPound is to engage and participate with over **5,000** inactive people aged 14+ into regular activity, with an overall throughput target of **42,248** by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018.

**1.4.** In year one our participation target is 1,150 people newly engaged in moderate sport or physical activity and a throughput of 9,200.

**1.5.** Following a slow start in the first half of the year, it was clear that the project was not going to achieve the targets for participation and throughput. The project team has maintained regular contact with Sport England and a further review of performance was undertaken by Sport England in December 2016. A decision was made to reduce the overall project target to **3,000 participants** and an annual target of **550** newly engaged for year one (throughput 1,500) and this report covers the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.

**1.6.** The bid submitted to Sport England included three key elements:

1. **Recruiting an activity workforce to develop a participation ‘pathway’** – our team of four SportsPound Activators are based in a range of community settings which includes libraries, cafes, sports clubs and social enterprises. It is their role to engage with local people to find out where activity gaps exist and how best to fill them. Community groups are supported in developing their own activities with start-up funding covering set-up costs.
2. **Creating an activity ‘currency’** – the SportsPound voucher can be exchanged for free entry to over 250 local activities which will improve levels of health. Those eligible will receive SportsPound vouchers giving access to eight free sessions at any of the activities listed on our website, from **aerobics and ante and postnatal fitness to Zumba**. Our unique selling point is that we encourage the organisations by paying them to refer to the project, plus we also pay a bonus where the participant is still active twelve weeks after commencement. It is this commitment to behaviour change which sets our scheme apart from other similar referral programmes.
3. **Building a referring and providing network** - over seventy agencies are now referring people to SportsPound activities run by over fifty different organisations in a diverse range of community settings.

**1.7.** To bring the project together, a project board meet up on six monthly basis to review performance against the set targets and to guide and steer the direction of the project. The board is ultimately responsible for its delivery, approving all major plans and authorising any changes from previously agreed plans.

## 2. Strategic Highlights

**2. SportsPound brand;** A great deal of energy and resource was invested into the development of SportsPound as a concept. This took many months of input from the team of Activators, and as a result SportsPound is becoming a recognised brand amongst partners, residents and communities as a multi-faceted project that can help deliver shared health aims.

Every activity, venue and agent provider involved in SportsPound is vetted and further helps to add credibility and reliability to the programme. This has enabled us to develop loyalty and trust from partners and participants, something which can be seen in the stories posted on social media. This notion of a SportsPound 'family' aligns clearly with Sport England insight confirming the importance of a support network.

**2.1. Accessibility through SportsPound website;** The rationale for developing the website was to remove as many of the barriers to participation as possible. Whilst the nominator network still plays a key role in supporting participants, the process to help inactive people from referral to receipt of vouchers is simplified through the use of a site that people can register to. Over 90% of all registrations are now online and 70% of registrations come via tablet or smartphone. The site enables more people to access the project when they feel ready to do so and help towards increasing the likelihood of behaviour change taking place.

**2.2. Comprehensive offer based on local need.** The programme currently includes over 200 different activities and was initially based on insight gained from Sport England market segmentation. For most communities there is a 'core offer' including 'back to' and 'walk to' programmes, along with post-natal classes as well as Zumba, dance activity, boot camp activities, swimming and recreational running. There is also a fitness suite offer for those wishing to exercise indoors. Overall there is good geographical coverage with a varied network of nominators and providers, plus many signposting stakeholders.

**2.3. The power of SportsPound -** Further evidence of the strength of this partnership is the collaboration with the Active Centre newsletter which generated nearly 1,000 website hits in one day (Thursday 3rd January 2017).

# 3. Performance

## 3.1. Year 1 performance against targets

- The priority in year one Q1 and Q2 focussed on the recruited SportsPound Activator team to get to know their localities and to establish a strong network of local people to nominate (refer) to the project. They identified local needs to help create a strong offer. As a result, a 'nil' target was set for Q1.
- Q2 uptake was much slower than anticipated, with less than 20% of the participation achieved (63 people engaged against a target of 370), in spite of the exhaustive research and insight that went into the development of the project.
- Furthermore, this was mirrored by low figures for throughput which showed only 216 sessions attended and led to a change in focus from the team who worked tirelessly to boost uptake with 186 newly engaged and a throughput of 426 for Q3 (2.2 sessions attended per participant).
- Feedback obtained in Q3 through social media and ongoing consultation with partners identified four main issues causing low uptake:

**Issue/obstacle 1** – Difficulties with registration processes caused a delay in issuing and receipt of vouchers as well as leading to a loss of interest/motivation from potential participants.

**Issue 2** – People nominated to the programme who were not ready to change their actual behaviour.

**Issue 3** – The activity offer itself in terms of the activities available included too many traditional sports which were unsuitable for people who are inactive, as well as the format being promote through printed documents resulting in some activities being out of date as soon materials were printed.

**Issue 4** – The leisure centre offer end up being inconsistent, both in terms of the offer it provided which varied greatly between each site and the understanding and buy-in from front line and management staff.

- To help mitigate these obstacles, a range of measures were agreed by the Project board and implemented by the SportsPound team in Q4. The number of registrations for Quarter 4 showed a significant uptake and in December 2016, 921 new participants registered online following the 'soft' launch of the website, in addition many also utilised their first voucher before the New Year.

**3.3.** Conversations with Sport England Case Manager Jim Barrett, have been continuous throughout the year and a review of performance in December 2016 brought the following conclusions:

- The project had experienced early difficulties but shown real commitment to get on track.
- The challenges faced in changing behaviours in such deprived areas are significant and much can be learned from the project (e.g. barriers/challenges, how to overcome and

specific support to individuals).

- The targets originally set (which provided good value for money) were probably rather unrealistic in such a challenging environment.

**3.3.** It was subsequently agreed that ahead of the start of year two the targets would be revised with more realistic targets agreed as long as a good level of value for money is achieved. This involves a reasonable reduction in the participation targets and a slight increase in the participant/throughput ratio from 8 to 9 in year 2 and to 10 in year 3. This is to enable the gathering of evidence from the on-going sustainability of people's participation and the level of on-going behaviour change that has occurred.

**3.4.** The following new targets were agreed:

<b>Targets</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Revised</b>
<b>Participants</b> (number of people using 1+ voucher within the period)	1	1,150	550
	2	3,090	1,500
	3	5,306	3,000
<b>Throughput</b> (total number of sessions attended)	1	9,200	1,500
	2	24,720	13,500
	3	42,448	30,000

**3.5.** Actual performance in Year 1 shows a 75% achievement of target:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>% of target achieved</b>
Cadbury Heath	78	57	74
Filton	72	140	194
Kingswood	120	57	48
Patchway	61	15	24
Staple Hill	85	65	76
Yate & Dodington	134	41	31
Area Wide	0	36	n/a
Total	550	411	75

**3.6.** Going forwards we will collect as much feedback and data from participants after they have used their 8 free vouchers. Sport England recognises that collecting such data itself, poses challenges, but such data and feedback will be important to use to clarify the long term impact of the project on people's behaviours.

**3.7.** Further analysis of performance provides additional insight to inform the plans for Year 2:

**3.8.** To achieve the revised targets for participation and throughput the following issues require further consideration:

- The figure achieved for the average number of sessions attended per participant is significantly higher than anticipated. This distortion masks the poor performance in Year 1 and is due to the revision of the throughput target which dropped from 9,200 to 1,500.
- A conversion rate of 26% (411 participants from 1563 registrations) generated a participation rate of only 75% of the participation target in Year 1. With the participation target for Year 2 nearly doubling to 950, the conversion rate will need to increase to 61% (950 participants from 1563 registrations) in order to achieve the target.
- The rationale for low participation by white males aged 14-25 needs to be established.
- The reasons for higher than anticipated uptake by women aged 26+ needs to be established.
- The number of people with a disability who participate in the project needs to be maintained.
- Less than 50% of uptake came from the Kingswood, Patchway and Yate & Dodington areas, this was significantly lower than other areas and further clarifying will be required to reach our target.
- In Filton we have achieved nearly double our participation target and there are lessons to be learnt from this success in terms of the way the offer is promoted and delivered, as well as how the providing and nominating networks operate so effectively. There are lessons to be learnt from this in terms of the offer as well as the providing and nominating networks.



## 4. Financial Performance

**4.1.** The total cost over three years of the project running from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, is £263,474 and this comprised of:

- £171,324 from Sport England
- £80,000 from Community Sport (South Gloucestershire Council)
- £12,150 in-kind contributions from partners

**4.2.** The CSAF funding cycle is organised around receiving six-monthly payments due on 30<sup>th</sup> June and 31<sup>st</sup> December for each of the three years. Payments are released on satisfactory completion of online monitoring and evaluation reports, along with a verified financial reconciliation.

**4.3.** The financial performance for Year 1 is reported as follows:

<b>Annual SportsPound Project Cost Reconciliation 01/01/16 - 31/12/2016</b>					
	<b>Year 1 Budget</b>	<b>Actual Spend to June 2016</b>	<b>Actual Spend July 16 to Dec 16</b>	<b>Year 1 Actual</b>	<b>Year 1 Variance</b>
Staff Costs (incl on costs)	48,606	29,348	33,398	62,746	-14,140
Equipment hire/purchase	1,500	1,323	351	1,674	-174
Hire of facilities	3,480	133	126	259	3,221
Promotion/publicity	1,000	2,184	685	2,869	-1,869
Coaches fees, expenses	10,100	347	453	799	9,301
Transport/travel costs	2,000	115	265	380	1,620
Other (Activator Delivery Budget)	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
Other (Rewards)	<u>7,590</u>	<u>211</u>	<u>654</u>	<u>865</u>	<u>6,725</u>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>79,276</b>	<b>33,660</b>	<b>35,932</b>	<b>69,592</b>	<b>9,684</b>

**4.4.** The above table illustrates that Year 1 delivered an under spend of £9,684. The following explanation is provided for each budget heading with a variance (+/-) £500:

- **Staff Costs (overspend):** There have been significant increases in staffing costs as the Activator team has attempted to increase uptake through promotional events (27 attended over the summer in 2016 alone). In addition, the amount of time spent issuing, collecting and

processing vouchers has led to a significant increase in team administration. A move away from paper registrations (now 90% digital) should see this figure drop significantly in Year 2.

- **Hire of Facilities (underspend):** The providers are underwriting the facility costs and taking payment in voucher rewards. This will change in Year 2 as we look to expand the programme and develop more of a participation pathway linked to transition 'clubs'.
- **Promotion / Publicity (overspend):** Purchase of a gazebo plus promotional 'pop-up' banners were produced to raise the profile of the programme and increase brand awareness. Please note that these materials will last for the duration of the whole project.
- **Coaches Fees / Expenses (underspend):** The model on which the implementation plan was based has not played out fully, with a small portion of activities on offer having been developed from scratch. The Activators have negotiated the redemption of vouchers for existing sessions, and where possible developed links into exit routes. This will change in Year 2 as we look to broaden the offer and establish a range of transition programmes as well.
- **Transport/Travel (underspend):** Following an initial period where Activators were travelling around their neighbourhoods to set up networks, the team have located themselves centrally and reduced their travel and transport budget significantly.
- **Activator delivery budget (underspend):** This underspend will pick up in Year 2 now that the team has established itself within community settings. There is a high level of trust and commitment within each SportsPound community setting and the team is to be tasked with developing exit routes and transition programmes to ensure the project does not stagnate.
- **Rewards (Provider and Nominator- underspend):** Low levels of participation equates to a low level of reward payments being completed in Year 1. A total of £777 (just over 10%) of the rewards budget has been spent which mirrors the low (18%) throughput target achieved (throughput of 1681 against a target of 9,200) and £7,519 of rewards payments were not necessary (this does not include the bonus payments for providers).

**4.5.** An application to Sport England has been made to carry forwards the under spend and develop digital resources to help provide a paper-free voucher system for the SportsPound project.

**4.6.** In Year 2, the focus will be on spending as per the headings agreed in the budget and this will involve the development of a profiled budget for each month and for each quarter, to ensure the delivery budget remains balanced.

## 5. Year 2 and beyond; Opportunities for growth and sustainability

Based on the learning and emerging trends from Year 1, the following priorities will be implemented during Year 2 to ensure targets are achieved:

### **5.1. Development of a clear and sustainable participation pathway;**

- The Activators are now established in their areas and are equipped with the opportunities and gaps in the pathway, and have the autonomy to negotiate offers in the programme to help make the project sustainable beyond 2018.
- Developments to encourage an increase in the uptake by white males aged 14-25 and by women aged 26+ needs greater attention and exploration.
- The inclusion offer is weak and is focused around swimming. In order to maintain or increase the number of people with a disability who participate the offer needs to be broadened.
- We will aim to strengthen links with Circadian Trust sites and develop a generic offer.

### **5.3. Expansion of social media through:**

- Developing social media expertise.
- Continuing with a coordinated campaign including “boosted posts” to coincide with national campaigns to help generate exposure and engagement.

### **5.3. Development of digital platform through:**

- Exploring possible links with the Active Card via the Active Partnership.
- Considering the use of barcode technology to increase engagement e.g. Park Run.

### **5.4. Improve customer focus, conversion and retention;**

- To use the South Gloucestershire Council Corporate Contact Centre to follow up online registrations via SMS, email and phone calls. This will help reduce the ‘lag’ in the registration process and lead to increasing conversion rates.
- We will proactively seek feedback from customers to help expand the insight and understanding to ensure offers are future-proofed. This will be collected through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research to capture data to inform the design of local initiatives and the development of resources to help people participate in exercise.
- Attend key focus events to give the team valuable insight on the behaviours and attitudes to physical activity across different geographical populations.
- Team members to continue to undergo a range of training to better understand the customer base and extend behaviour change skills.
- Get the most out of reporting systems and to use the database to target specific demographic groups/geographical areas as well as seeing gaps in provision.