



Culture, Tourism & Sport Board

Agenda

Wednesday, 1 February 2023
10.30 am

Online via Teams

There will be a meeting of the Culture, Tourism & Sport Board at **10.30 am on Wednesday, 1 February 2023** Online via Teams.

LGA Hybrid Meetings

All of our meetings are available to join in person at [18 Smith Square](#) or remotely via videoconference as part of our hybrid approach. We will ask you to confirm in advance if you will be joining each meeting in person or remotely so we can plan accordingly, if you wish to attend the meeting in person, please also remember to confirm whether you have any dietary/accessibility requirements. 18 Smith Square is a Covid-19 secure venue and measures are in place to keep you safe when you attend a meeting or visit the building in person.

[Please see guidance for Members and Visitors to 18 Smith Square here](#)

Catering and Refreshments:

If the meeting is scheduled to take place at lunchtime, a sandwich lunch will be available.

Political Group meetings and pre-meetings for Lead Members:

Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Conservative: | Group Office: 020 7664 3223 | email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk |
| Labour: | Group Office: 020 7664 3263 | email: labgp@lga.gov.uk |
| Independent: | Group Office: 020 7664 3224 | email: independent.group@lga.local.gov.uk |
| Liberal Democrat: | Group Office: 020 7664 3235 | email: libdem@local.gov.uk |

Attendance:

Your attendance, whether it be in person or virtual, will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

LGA Contact:

Alexander Reid
alexander.reid@local.gov.uk

Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

Culture, Tourism & Sport Board – Membership

[Click here for accessible information on membership](#)

| Councillor | Authority |
|--|---|
| Conservative (7) | |
| Cllr Peter Golds CBE (Deputy Chair) | Tower Hamlets Council |
| Cllr Victoria Wilson | Staffordshire County Council |
| Cllr Barry Lewis | Derbyshire County Council |
| Cllr Gary Ridley | Coventry City Council |
| Cllr Phil Seeva | Cornwall Council |
| Cllr Bradley Thomas | Wychavon District Council |
| Cllr Rebecca Poulsen | Bradford City Council |
| Substitutes | |
| Cllr Chris Dey | Enfield London Borough |
| Cllr David Jeffels | North Yorkshire County Council |
| Cllr Neil Jory | West Devon Borough Council |
| Labour (7) | |
| Cllr Shabir Pandor (Deputy Chair) | Kirklees Metropolitan Council |
| Cllr Michael Graham | Wakefield City Council |
| Cllr Afrasiab Anwar | Burnley Borough Council |
| Cllr Richard Henry | Stevenage Borough Council |
| Cllr Becky Gittins | Coventry City Council |
| Cllr Jemima Laing | Plymouth City Council |
| Cllr Kelly Middleton | Telford and Wrekin Council |
| Substitutes | |
| Cllr Lewis Allison | Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council |
| Cllr Luthfur Rahman | Manchester City Council |
| Cllr Jonathan Simpson MBE | Camden London Borough Council |
| Liberal Democrat (2) | |
| Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE (Chair) | Portsmouth City Council |
| Cllr Chris White | City and District of St Albans |
| Substitutes | |
| Cllr Sean MacLeod | Lewes District Council |
| Independent (2) | |
| Cllr Geoff Knight (Vice-Chair) | Lancaster City Council |
| Cllr Julie Jones-Evans | Isle of Wight Council |
| Substitutes | |
| Cllr Natalie McVey | Malvern Hills District Council |
| Cllr James Hall | Swale Borough Council |

Agenda

Culture, Tourism & Sport Board

Wednesday, 1 February 2023

10.30 am

Online via Teams

| Item | Page |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest | |
| 2. Minutes of the last meeting (7th December 2022) | 1 - 6 |
| 3. Workforce Capacity in Local Government | 7 - 24 |
| 4. Update on Sport and Physical Activity Lobbying | 25 - 28 |
| 5. The Chiles Webster Batson Commission on sport and low income neighbourhoods | 29 - 72 |
| 6. Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisation funding | 73 - 78 |
| 7. CTS Annual Conference and LGA Annual Conference (Verbal Update) | |
| 8. Commission on Culture and Local Government | 79 - 82 |
| 9. Outside Bodies | |
| 10. Any Other Business | |
| a) Extraordinary meeting with Stuart Andrew MP, Minister for Sport | |
| b) 21 June Board visit To Plymouth | |

Date of Next Meeting: To be confirmed

Minutes of last Culture, Tourism & Sport Board meeting

Culture, Tourism & Sport Board

Wednesday, 7 December 2022

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A**

| Item | Decisions and actions |
|------|-----------------------|
|------|-----------------------|

| | |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest |
|----------|---|

The Chair welcomed Members, officers and guests to the meeting.

No apologies had been received.

No declarations of interest had been made.

| | |
|----------|------------------------------------|
| 2 | Minutes of the last meeting |
|----------|------------------------------------|

Members were advised that the minutes of the previous meeting would be circulated to them after the meeting.

| | |
|----------|-----------------------|
| 3 | Outside Bodies |
|----------|-----------------------|

The Chair invited Board Members to update the Board on recent activity in relation to their outside body appointments.

Cllr Chris White was in attendance at the Tourism Alliance conference and spoke on the behalf of the LGA in relation to short term lets.

Cllr Richard Henry had been meeting with the London Marathon Trust. It was reported they were moving to have a more diverse board to include those with disabilities and representatives of more diverse communities as well as branch to outside of London.

Cllr Peter Golds attended the launch of the Chiles Webster Batson report into sport for deprived young people which was an impressive presentation. He also attended the first ministerial meeting with Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Sport, Tourism and Civil Society, and Minister for Equalities), which was positive. There was acknowledgement of local government's role in joining up different areas such as sport and leisure with public health and community wellbeing.

Action:

The Chiles, Webster, Batson report to be circulated to Board members.

Decision:

Members **noted** the updates.

4 Lawn Tennis Association

The Chair introduced Tom Gibbins, Head of Education and Community Tennis at the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to summarise the LTA's Break Down Barriers plan.

Aims of the plan included the following:

- Continuing the growth of LTA serves which engages young people to get active and involved in tennis
- A flexible and collaborative approach
- Creating more sustainable and mainstream opportunities
- Delivering targeted interventions to introduce more children and young people to tennis in schools
- Support more children and young people from the indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) 1 – 4 to develop life skills and opportunities while diversifying the workforce.

Members made the following comments:

- How to identify talent in children and support them going forward
- Had role models made an impact
- Were there enough indoor facilities available

In response to queries, Tom made the following comments:

- As part of action 3, there were plans to identify talent in children and young people
- Role models were important to encourage tennis, it was highlighted that role models did not need to be "household names" to inspire young people, and there would be more investment for this in schools
- There was 95 strategic locations considered where there were gaps for potential indoor tennis facilities that would be explored.

Action:

That a letter be written to the LTA endorsing the programme, following consultation with Lead Members of the Board.

Circulate LTA contact details and information on LTA funding streams to Board members.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report

5 Visit England

The Chair invited Lyndsey Turner Swift, Deputy England Director at VisitEngland to give a [presentation](#) and discuss VisitEngland's work on key issues for the visitor economy. Corporate priorities for 2022/23 included, rebuilding international visitor value, building their future, building the English visitor economy, building their influence and building their team.

Members made the following comments:

- The approach to look at tourism geographically was welcomed
- Collaboration with partners and a regional approach has led to good outcomes
- There should be moves to make tourism accessible and affordable

In response, Lyndsey Turner Swift made the following comments:

- Authorities were invited to approach VisitEngland
- Destination Management Organisations had been working closely with communities and residents since the pandemic so they can be part of the place agenda and have support.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

6 Library Strategy

The Chair invited Sheila Bennett, Head of Libraries Strategy and Delivery from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to give a briefing on the public libraries strategy.

- DCMS were looking at what government can do to support public libraries
- They would also consider if there were any obstacles preventing innovation of libraries
- The LGA was one of the three core organisations to be present at all the panel meetings
- Baroness Sanderson would deliver her report by early June 2023 which would then develop a draft government library strategy
- The culture commission had discussed with LGA officials on what work has been done to avoid adding extra burdens on councils

Members made the following comments:

- Libraries in rural areas as well as cities and county towns should be considered
- It was noted the role libraries had played in being warm spaces for residents due to the rise in energy prices
- It was queried if work into encouraging children to read such as summer reading challenges would be explored

- Other uses to libraries such as events and cinemas were suggested as opportunities for innovation in libraries and to help fund them

In response, Sheila Bennett made the following comments:

- It was acknowledged that councils had worked hard to provide warm spaces in libraries
- Politicians were interested and engaged with summer reading challenges to get children to read more
- A briefing was being put together to look at innovation such as cinemas
- It was clarified that school libraries were not within the scope of the strategy however they were keen to explore how public libraries can work with schools
- Members were invited to contact her with any ideas or examples of how to support libraries

Action:

Details of the Deep Dives to be circulated to Board members, and Board members to identify which they can attend.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report with comments made.

7 **New Ministerial Appointments and Autumn Statement**

The Chair invited Ian Leete, Senior Adviser, to give an update. There had been positive engagement with the new culture Minister so far. The Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) would exclude public sector organisations beyond March 2023. It had been raised with government that the public sport and leisure sector were highly vulnerable and funding and support is needed to help stabilise the sector.

Action:

That Ministers and Shadow Ministers within DCMS be invited to a future Board meeting.

Decision:

Members **noted** the update

8 **LGA Business Plan**

The Chair invited Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the LGA Plan 2022-25. The LGA Board signed off a new 3-year business plan which out the direction for the LGA as a whole.

Members raised that consideration should be given to the role certain

parts of the Boards remit feed into other Boards, for example, sports and leisure is part of public health agenda as well as the culture agenda.

Decision:

Members **noted** the LGA Plan 2022-25.

9 Any Other Business

It was suggested that Arts Council England be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board.

Appendix A -Attendance

| Position/Role | Councillor | Authority |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Chairman | Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE | Portsmouth City Council |
| Vice-Chairman | Cllr Geoff Knight | Lancaster City Council |
| Deputy-chairman | Cllr Peter Golds CBE | Tower Hamlets Council |
| | Cllr Shabir Pandor | Kirklees Metropolitan Council |
| Members | Cllr Victoria Wilson | Staffordshire County Council |
| | Cllr Gary Ridley | Coventry City Council |
| | Cllr Rebecca Poulsen | Bradford City Council |
| | Cllr David Jeffels | North Yorkshire County Council |
| | Cllr Michael Graham | Wakefield City Council |
| | Cllr Afrasiab Anwar | Burnley Borough Council |
| | Cllr Richard Henry | Stevenage Borough Council |
| | Cllr Becky Gittins | Coventry City Council |
| | Cllr Jemima Laing | Plymouth City Council |
| | Cllr Kelly Middleton | Telford and Wrekin Council |
| | Cllr Chris White | City and District of St Albans |
| | Cllr Julie Jones-Evans | Isle of Wight Council |
| In Attendance | Tom Gibbins | Lawn Tennis Association |
| | Issy Michelson | Lawn Tennis Association |
| | Lyndsey Turner Swift | VisitEngland |
| | Sheila Bennett | Department for Culture, Media and Sport |
| LGA Officers | Rebecca Cox | |
| | Ian Leete | |
| | Lauren Lucas | |
| | Jacqui Smale | |

Meeting: Culture Tourism and Sport Board

Date: 1 February 2023



Workforce capacity in local government

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This report summarises the LGA's policy and improvement activity to address workforce capacity challenges in local government and seeks the Board's feedback on priorities for future activity.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation

That the Culture Tourism and Sport Board feed back their views of the priority issues for future policy and improvement activity to address workforce capacity challenges and how the LGA delivers those priorities.

Contact details

Contact officer: Naomi Cooke

Position: Head of Workforce

Phone no: 0207 664 3299

Email: naomi.cooke@local.gov.uk

Workforce capacity in local government



Executive summary

1. Councils are experiencing workforce capacity challenges across many services. To enable policy boards to consider specific challenges relating to their terms of reference in the context of the challenges affecting the sector as a whole, all the policy boards will consider substantively the same report, prior to consideration of the issue in the round by Resources Board and Executive Advisory Board.
2. This report includes evidence of recruitment and retention challenges being experienced in libraries and leisure services. Low pay is a factor in all service areas: additional factors are also identified. In addition to sector-wide interventions, the report highlights Government work on strategies for libraries and sport which will include actions on workforce issues. The LGA is delivering a workforce mapping survey on the library, archives, records, information and knowledge sector to inform these, as well as delivering training for new managers and aspiring leaders in arts, culture, libraries, sport and physical activity, funded by Arts Council England and Sports England.
3. The board is asked to consider progress to date, support and policy offers and asks and to advise on priorities for action, while noting that it may be necessary to identify or reprioritise resources accordingly.

Background

4. Core government funding for councils was reduced by £15 billion in cash terms between 2010/11 and 2019/20. Overall, spending by local authorities in England has decreased by £3.4 billion (in real terms at 2020/21 prices). Most services have seen cuts in expenditure, such as planning (reduced by 35 per cent). The only exceptions were children's social care (increased by 28 per cent in real terms), and 'other services' (which in many cases is where councils accounted for the grants they received to deal with the pandemic response).
5. Against these reductions in spending, there have been increases in demand for most services. For example:
 - The number of looked after children increased by 25 per cent¹, those being assessed because they are believed to be at risk of significant harm increased by 99 per cent², and Ofsted noted that the complexity of cases has increased since

¹ www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children#looked-after-children

² https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=8915&mod-period=12&mod-area=E92000001&mod-group=AllRegions_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup

the pandemic began, meaning rising workloads even where the number of children on the caseloads has remained stable³;

- The number of requests for adult social care from new working age clients increased by 11 per cent⁴;
- The number of fly tipping incidents increased by 20 per cent⁵.

It has also been estimated that, due to demographic changes, an estimated 490,000 more people will need to be working across all providers of adult social care in England by 2035⁶.

6. As demands have increased, the size of the local government workforce has decreased. Between 2009 and 2022 the English local government staff headcount fell from 2,254,700 to 1,346,400 (full-time equivalent totals for the same periods falling from 1,584,200 to 1,022,000)⁷. This is only partly explained by academisation, as individual services have been demonstrably reduced: for example, the number of local government adult social services jobs in September 2021 was 115,100, a decrease from 159,400 in September 2011⁸.
7. The only area where staffing has clearly grown over the period is in children and families social workers, where staff levels were 25,515 in December 2011, increasing to 32,502 by September 2021⁹.
8. The picture of reducing staff numbers is worsened by problems with recruitment and retention for those posts which remain. The LGA's most recent research shows that 92 per cent of councils were experiencing recruitment difficulties in at least one occupation and 83 per cent were experiencing retention difficulties in at least one¹⁰. Recruitment problems have affected all types of authority and all types of service. Figure 1 shows, as a proportion of all councils, the most difficult to recruit occupations/ roles:

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-2022-recovering-from-the-covid-19-pandemic/childrens-social-care-2022-recovering-from-the-covid-19-pandemic

⁴ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report/2021-22>

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env24-fly-tipping-incident-and-actions-taken-in-england

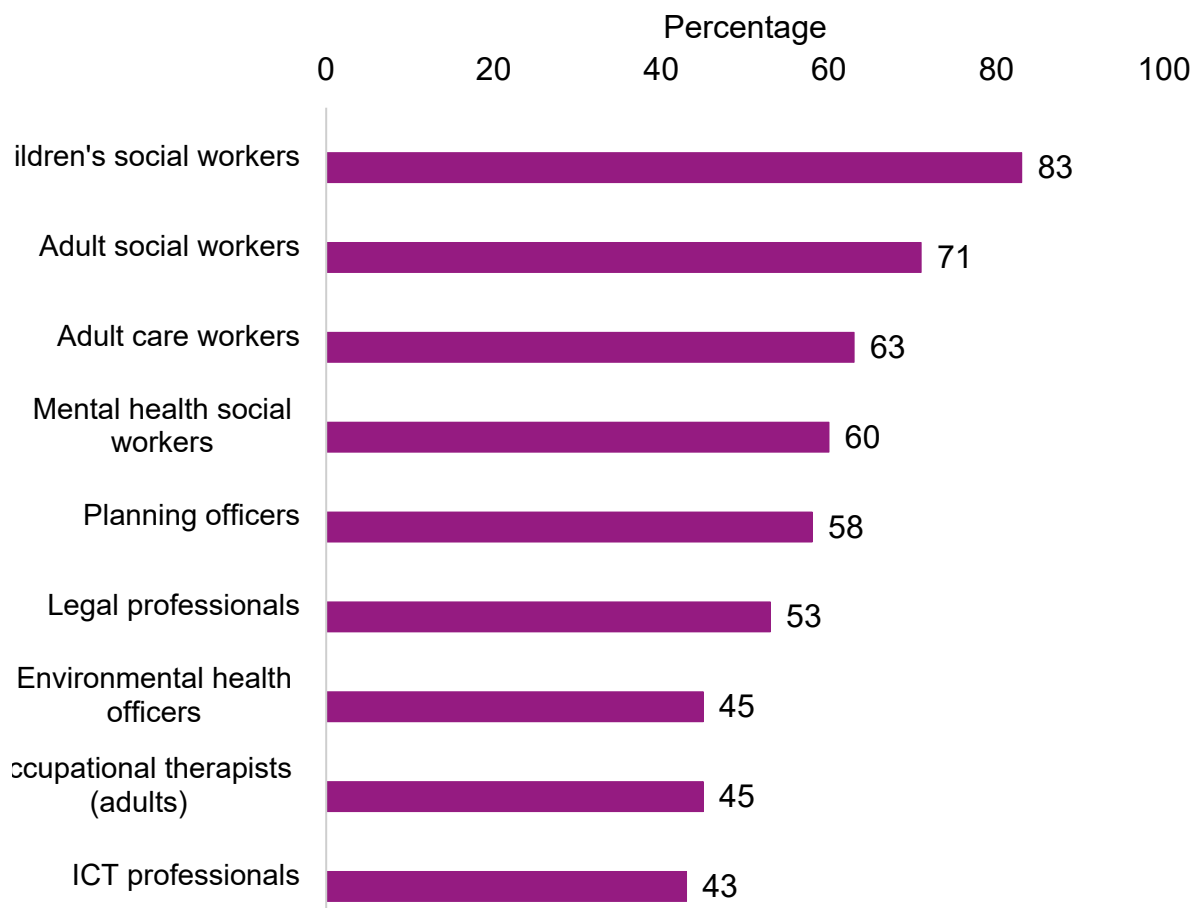
⁶ www.local.gov.uk/our-support/sector-support-offer/care-and-health-improvement/adult-social-care-workforce/asc-reform

⁷ www.local.gov.uk/publications/ons-quarterly-public-sector-employment-survey

⁸ www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/publications/Data-and-publications.aspx

⁹ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-s-social-work-workforce>

¹⁰ LGA Workforce Survey 2021/22 (publication imminent) (2022)



Base: all councils (119 overall, but number varies by occupation/role as the results are calculated for the type of council that holds responsibility for them).
 Source: LGA Workforce Survey 2022

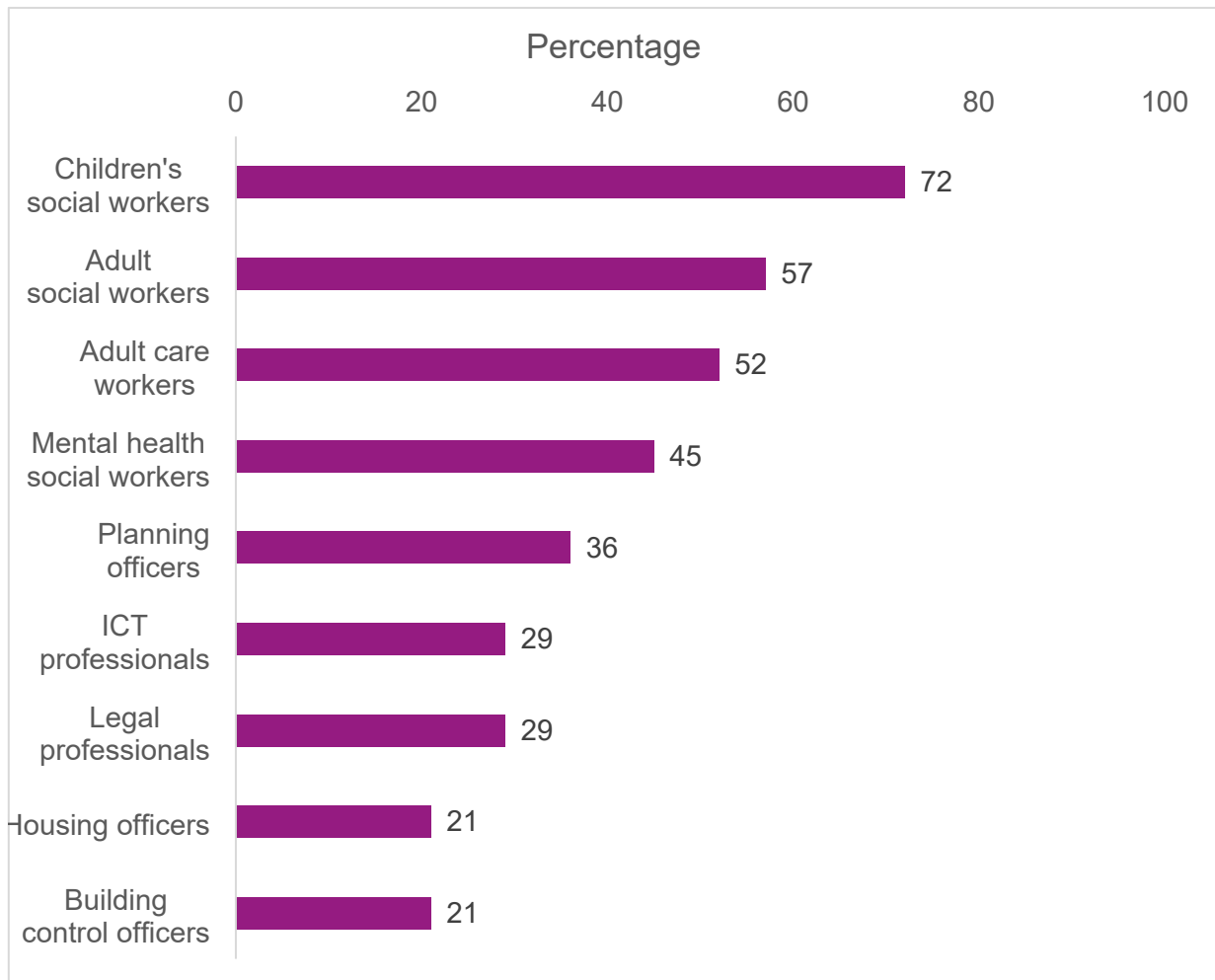
9. A further survey showed that 63 per cent of councils had experienced difficulties recruiting or retaining LGV/ HGV drivers over the past year or anticipated such difficulties¹¹. From our discussions with the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers, it is also clear that trading standards services are experiencing challenges in recruitment.
10. The vacancy rate for children and family social workers was 16.7 per cent in September 2021¹², and 94 per cent of local authorities in early 2022 found it difficult or very difficult to fill vacancies for experienced children’s social workers¹³. The number of vacancies across all providers of adult social care increased by 52 per cent in 2021/22, by 55,000 to 165,000¹⁴.
11. Figure 2 shows that, as a proportion of all councils which run the service, the most difficult to retain occupations/ roles are often those which are challenging to recruit:

¹¹ www.local.gov.uk/publications/local-highways-weather-resilience-survey-2022

¹² <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-s-social-work-workforce>

¹³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1123954/Childrens_services_Survey_Wave_6_Dec22.pdf

¹⁴ www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector/The-state-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-2022.pdf



Base: all councils (119 overall, but number varies by occupation/role as the results are calculated for the type of council that holds responsibility for them).

Source: LGA Workforce Survey 20/22

12. Analysis of insights and research from services experiencing capacity challenges has identified the following causes (this is not a comprehensive list):
- i) **Low pay:** this is a factor in all service areas. In some areas of the country, the affordability of housing and availability of public transport impacts on the ability of councils to recruit.
 - ii) **Better hours and working conditions elsewhere:** this is a motivation for social care and public health workers, for example, who have also reported feeling burnt out and stressed. There is a perception of a lack of parity of esteem compared to the NHS workforce. Post COVID-19, planners and environmental health officers are also reported to be taking early retirement and leaving the profession and can find work in the private sector. There are also recruitment and retention challenges in housing and homelessness services where officers now have increased workloads due to Homes for Ukraine and other resettlement schemes. Some planners choose to work for agencies where they feel less personally visible in the context of politically charged decision-making and children's social workers value the flexibility provided by agency work.
 - iii) **Reductions in staffing and other budgets** have led to reductions in supervision, support, learning and development as well as increased workloads. While some

measures (such as moratoriums on training and recruitment freezes) were intended to be temporary in the early years of austerity, these have become permanent with long-term consequences. These can all impact on staff retention and the ability for professionals to develop additional expertise. Similarly, pressure on manager time is sometimes seen as a disincentive to taking on apprentices or other more junior roles.

- iv) **Local government is not perceived as an attractive career.** Other sectors are perceived as providing more attractive career options in light of the above, with a perceived lack of appreciation and recognition and either low public profile or negative perceptions arising from financial challenges and service failures in the sector generally. Some planners and children's social workers are exposed to significant public criticism, including via social media, without right of reply.

13. Recruitment and retention challenges are leading to the following further impacts and consequences:

- i) Because councils are seeking to recruit from an increasingly limited pool of officers, they are **using market supplement payments** (which were not necessarily budgeted for) to support recruitment and retention. Eighty-one per cent of councils pay them for some occupations¹⁵;
- ii) Councils are increasingly **relying on agency staff** to fill gaps:
- Sixteen per cent of children's social workers are agency staff and proportions in some councils are at 48 per cent¹⁶ (this does not include where agencies provide entire 'project teams');
 - The Planning Advisory Service has found that some planning services have up to 80 per cent of their staff provided by agencies;
 - Twenty per cent of London authorities reported routinely using agency staff to meet capacity needs in place-shaping services¹⁷.

High turnover of social workers and residential workers and reliance on agency staff can lead to a lack of stability in relationships for children and their families¹⁸. Recent analysis for the DfE estimated that the additional cost of employing agency staff means that there is a loss of over £100 million per year that could be better spent on front-line activity to support children and families¹⁹.

- iii) It can be **difficult to recruit managers** with the required skills and experience; and pay restraint is acting as a disincentive for people to seek promotion to supervisory roles. The reduction in staff numbers can lead to bigger portfolios for managers, making it difficult for them to find time to use their skills effectively.

¹⁵ LGA Workforce Survey 2022 (publication imminent)

¹⁶ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/454afee-eb35-4226-5de6-08dad5210ff4>

¹⁷ www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/advice-and-guidance/helping-london-authorities-deliver-placeshaping-capacity-survey

¹⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202122-education-childrens-services-and-skills

¹⁹ <https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/final-report/>

Newly qualified staff now make up a greater proportion of posts in children's social care²⁰: since newly qualified staff require more oversight and support, this places additional work on managers and may introduce risk when expertise and practical experience is needed to make effective decisions about children and their families²¹.

Ninety per cent of councils reported at least one capability gap in their management team and 83 per cent reported at least one capacity issue²².

- iv) Around 40 to 50 per cent of councils have consistently reported minor **disruption to their services** as a result of not having the right staff (in numbers or skills to meet demand) to run normal services. Around 10 to 20 per cent reported moderate or severe disruption for the same reason²³.

Disruption due to staffing issues has tended to affect key services, most notably those that require professional qualifications. The most recent research showed that the most disrupted services for single tier and county councils were:

- Directly employed adult social care (74 per cent)
- Schools (70 per cent)
- Children's services (58 per cent)
- Public health (52 per cent)

For district and single tier councils, the most disrupted services were:

- Doorstep collection of household waste (45 per cent)
- Environmental health (33 per cent)
- Planning (31 per cent)

- v) There are also **direct negative consequences** both for staff as individuals and for councils' ability to deliver services and/or introduce new operating models:

- Two-fifths of Heads of Human Resources (HR) said that there was a moderate and 11 per cent said there was a high risk that workforce capacity may negatively affect their council's ability to deliver services²⁴;

²⁰ www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-2022-recovering-from-the-covid-19-pandemic/childrens-social-care-2022-recovering-from-the-covid-19-pandemic

²¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-review-into-the-murders-of-arthur-labinjo-hughes-and-star-hobson

²² LGA Workforce Survey 2022 (publication imminent). A capability gap was defined as 'the council has managers, but they require additional training and development/support to close their skills gap'. A capacity gap was defined as 'the council has managers with these skills, but they have no capacity to utilise them effectively'.

²³ www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-workforce-survey-research-reports. These regular surveys were conducted fortnightly during the pandemic in 2020, then monthly until January 2022.

²⁴ www.local.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-workforce-survey-week-ending-14-january-2022

- Two-thirds of adult and children’s social workers in January 2022 said they were experiencing deteriorating mental health because of their roles²⁵;
- Ofsted has noted that children’s social care workloads are high and the demands of an already challenging job can be unsustainable. In the year leading up to September 2021, 9 per cent of all local authority children’s social workers left local authority social work, an increase from 7 per cent the previous year²⁶;
- Thirty-one per cent of Heads of Environmental Services said that some services had been stopped in their authority over the last six years, with many reducing services to the statutory minimum²⁷;
- There is a loss of specialist expertise in a number of areas of local regulatory services, with many officers now taking on generalist roles as councils are unable to carry specialist posts within their headcounts: in some places there is concern about the predominance of food work over other areas of regulation²⁸;
- Given the responses given to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health workforce survey²⁹, it may be expected that work currently underway to review housing conditions (particularly in the private rented sector) will place further pressure on already-strained capacity in environmental health, with both environmental health and trading standards facing challenges to effectively deliver their broad range of responsibilities, and concern about the future pipeline of officers in each service;
- The King’s Fund argues that COVID-19 has made enormous demands on Directors of Public Health and their (usually small) teams and many are exhausted³⁰. This has implications for the full range of public health systems and functions, including emergency planning³¹;
- Seventy per cent of local planning authorities surveyed by the Royal Town Planning Institute said that they had had difficulty recruiting enforcement officers over the past five years³²;
- Thirty-eight per cent of local planning authorities reported that they could not administer and deliver new ‘No Net Loss/ Net Gain’ and Biodiversity Offsetting policies and, of these, 62 per cent identified lack of staffing resource as the reason³³. A lack of in-house ecological expertise is cited as a major obstacle.
- Heads of library services at a Libraries Connected basecamp reported that libraries have limited ability to respond to corporate priorities such as climate

²⁵ <https://campaigncollective.org/2022/01/25/social-workers-case-loads-putting-vulnerable-at-risk/>

²⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202122-education-childrens-services-and-skills

²⁷ www.cieh.org/policy/campaigns/workforce-survey-england/

²⁸ Identified by a cross-government task and finish group convened by DLUHC post-pandemic looking at issues in local regulatory services

²⁹ www.cieh.org/policy/campaigns/workforce-survey-england/

³⁰ www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2021/08/public-health-workforce

³¹ www.fph.org.uk/media/3031/fph_systems_and_function-final-v2.pdf

³² www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2022/november/planning-enforcement-resourcing/

³³ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/LPA-Survey-Full-Report-Aug-23-2021-FINAL.pdf>

change and the cost of living, despite councils increasingly seeing libraries as a trusted core delivery vehicle for providing community support and engagement.

- The Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Association advises that leisure centres have typically covered their own running costs and generated a surplus for councils, but staff shortages, particularly for lifeguards (reported by 73 per cent of employers), are forcing them to move to shorter opening hours or close (50 per cent of employers with shortages)³⁴. This is compromising a business model that is already under pressure from reduced footfall post-COVID-19. Libraries are similarly affected: individual staff sickness now often leads to branch closures as there is no replacement pool of staff to redeploy. This is affecting public opinion of the stability and reliability of these universal and very visible council services.
- The Grenfell Tower disaster and subsequent revelations about the state of the built environment dramatically illustrated the important role of effective building control regulation. Local Authority Building Control (LABC) reports that there are very few council building control departments which have a full complement of staff. Those who do are likely to be operating a reduced establishment than in previous years because of pressure on budgets. As a result, councils regularly have to resort to agency staff: LABC estimate that 50 per cent of London Boroughs have used an agency surveyor at some point over the last twelve months³⁵. LABC and Government funding has provided training to improve competence, but the advent of the new post-Grenfell regulatory system will put additional – as yet unquantified – stress on council teams with oversight from what will in effect be a new inspectorate (HSE). HSE has noted under-resourcing of teams as a key risk to good practice, and therefore good outcomes, following research into current operation and practices of the profession³⁶.
- Revenues and Benefits services have faced considerable change and uncertainty throughout the implementation of wide-ranging welfare reforms and the administration of vital support throughout the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis – often and very short notice and with evolving funding, policy and partnership arrangements. The LGA has heard, through attendance at DWP engagement forums with Revenues and Benefits practitioners, that this has impacted on recruitment, retention, morale and capacity and placed considerable pressure on these services.

14. The cost of living crisis is increasing the scale of the challenge. Nearly all (95 per cent) of the respondents to a Homecare Association Survey said that their staff had expressed anxiety about the rising cost of living and 21 per cent reported that staff were looking for work elsewhere because they cannot afford fuel and other costs: this may impact on councils' ability to commission services from social care providers.

³⁴ Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity Employer Pulse Check 2021 (unpublished)

³⁵ Views supplied to the LGA by LABC

³⁶ www.hse.gov.uk/research/insight/building-control-pubn-summary.pdf

Increasing pay rates for tradespeople lead to consequences not only for councils' ability to let contracts for maintenance and construction work but also contracts being handed back prior to completion.

15. This in turn will put pressure on national negotiations for the annual pay awards for local government workers, compounding a pre-existing issue for the sector from a rapidly escalating National Living Wage (NLW). Last year the NLW increased by 9.7 per cent to take effect on 1 April 2023: forecasts from the Low Pay Commission (who recommend the NLW level to Government) suggest that for April 2024 the NLW could increase a further 8.8 per cent to £11.35. The high proportion of local government staff who are at or near this point means that a significant proportion of any pay award has and will continue to be consumed by legal compliance with the NLW. Without additional funding to meet this cost there will be no capacity to meet the pay-related challenges of those further up the pay scale – the specialists and professionals referenced in this paper. In fact, their pay position is likely to worsen in comparison with the wider public sector and private sector.

Progress to date

16. The LGA and our partners have had some success in highlighting the scale and nature of workforce capacity issues in the sector. For example:
 - i) The National Employers for local government took the unprecedented step in 2022 of writing to the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) when they made their final pay offer to the trade unions, highlighting the need for additional funding to meet the NLW cost. Government declined to recognise the issue and the particular position of local government within the public sector in relation to the NLW. The additional funding made available from 2023/24 may assist with the challenge of meeting the NLW cost in 2023/4 but leaves the cumulative cost highlighted in 2022 unmet: it is therefore unlikely that this will provide much support for councils in meeting their workforce capacity challenges. While the 9.2 per cent increase in local government core spending power announced in the 2023/24 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement will help councils deal with inflationary and other cost pressures, the LGA will continue to make the case for the underlying and existing pressures that remain. Many councils will also see much lower increases in Core Spending Power in the next financial year;
 - ii) In its December 2021 white paper on adult social care, the Government announced £500 million for measures to support the adult social care workforce;
 - iii) In the November 2022 Autumn Statement, the Government announced its intention to publish a comprehensive workforce plan for the NHS. In response, the LGA has stressed the need to expand the scope of the plan to include the adult social care workforce;
 - iv) In the Autumn Statement, the Government also announced it would delay the rollout of adult social care charging reform in light of concerns from the sector that underfunded reforms would have exacerbated significant ongoing financial and workforce pressures;

- v) The Government has announced its intention to consult on increases to planning fees to improve capacity in the local planning system;
 - vi) In its August 2020 'Planning for the Future' white paper the Government announced its commitment to developing a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the sector;
 - vii) New Government strategies on libraries and sport are being developed. The Government has committed that these will include actions on workforce issues, while the LGA has been commissioned to deliver a workforce mapping survey on the library, archives, records, information and knowledge sector to inform these.
17. The experience of the regulatory services task and finish group, in 2021, however, offers some indication of the possible challenges. The LGA was successful during COVID-19 in highlighting the demands on regulatory services and implications for the future pipeline of officers, leading to the creation of the task and finish group and cross-Whitehall engagement with a proposal for a £15 million regulatory services apprenticeship fund, which achieved some support. The proposal was not subsequently approved and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has subsequently stepped back from the role it was playing on regulatory services. While the Food Standards Agency is continuing to look at this issue, there are challenges linked to the split interest in environmental health and trading standards across different Government departments.
18. The LGA continues to work with professional and regional bodies and to meet with relevant Government departments, to discuss relevant issues and possible solutions.
19. However, in comparison to significant Government investment in recruitment campaigns for professions such as teaching and defence, there has been minimal investment in local government as a 'brand'. Successive years of reductions in Government funding and significant challenges have diminished the attractiveness of the sector as an employer. Given the wide variety of professions employed in local government, the potential to make a difference to local communities and places, and the pride experienced by many working in the sector, there is potential to promote the value and benefits of a career in local government sector, with the aim of appealing both to those entering their professions and to those seeking a career change.

Policy offers and asks

20. Local government has a number of workforce capacity policy offers and asks, which are relevant to the priorities in the [LGA business plan 2022-25](#), as set out below.

A sustainable financial future – continue to highlight the cost pressures on all council services and press for longer term funding that reflects current and future demand for services.

Councils need more resources to undertake workforce planning so they can make better use of public resources and engage effectively with the skills system in the UK in the future

21. The reduction in funding to local government for over a decade has prevented long-term investment in the workforce, with funds reprioritised to solve immediate challenges. Due to high attrition rates and scarcity of skills in key occupational areas councils are now facing a perfect storm of a lack of supply (from the UK skills system) and a lack of long-term investment. Working with further and higher education sectors, learning and training routes can be built back in skill shortage areas for local government. This can only be done effectively if councils can project their workforce needs through effective workforce planning over a one to five year period.
22. As large employers covering the entire country, councils are strategically placed to create local employment opportunities where they have skills needs: targeted investment would enable councils to help level up skills gaps through their own employment and training pathways, boosting their local economy and therefore building back capacity. This starts with better workforce planning across each place, working in partnership with employers and training providers.

Councils need extra funding to enable provision of placements, supervision, apprenticeships and training for professions and service areas experiencing capacity challenges

23. In light of the challenge to recruit specialist and technical roles, many councils are looking to develop their existing staff to close their immediate skills gaps, i.e. to 'grow their own' talent. In the context of significant budget reductions, there is little funding or capacity to support this. The LGA is pressing Government to provide similar investment in training and development programmes to that provided in other parts of the public sector, to address specific skill shortages now in children's services, regulatory services and waste management.

Councils need funding for professional bursary schemes to boost capacity in skill shortage areas and to attract and retain professional talent

24. Many of the local government skill shortage areas (including those in statutory services) require graduate or professional qualifications to enter and progress in that career. Investment in bursary schemes such as [the NHS](#) and those for schools ([Teach First](#)) delivers much needed skills to those sectors. The LGA is working with the Government and professional bodies to identify the key success factors and support required and press for short term targeted funding in the system to boost supply of much needed undergraduate, postgraduate and professional bursary schemes designed specifically for local government.

Councils can improve the responsiveness of the national employment and skills system

25. [Work Local](#) is the LGA's longstanding, ambitious yet realistic vision for progressive devolution and integration of employment and skills services. The campaign sets out:
- how a centrally driven and fragmented approach is suboptimal and costly;
 - how a place-based system, coordinated by local government has the potential to support more people into work and result in increases in residents' skills and employment outcomes at less cost.

Councils need flexibilities in implementing apprenticeships

26. Councils employ approximately 27,000 apprentices across all levels of the workforce from new starters to individuals on graduate apprentice schemes into skill shortage areas. The apprenticeship route offers councils the ability to create development and training pathways into roles at all levels but more flexibility is needed in how the apprenticeship levy can be spent. Since the introduction of the levy in 2019 (£150 million per annum for councils in England), councils have transferred £3.25 million per month unspent to HMRC and this figure is increasing. The LGA has operated an apprenticeship support programme to help councils maximise their levy spend, transfer their levy to other employers and build capacity to grow more apprentice schemes and create more apprentice standards that are needed by councils.
27. The LGA is seeking increased flexibilities in how the apprenticeship levy can be spent: currently the levy can only be used to pay for training. Councils report they would use levy to fund extra capacity in their council to better manage the levy process and to backfill wages when staff on apprenticeships attend training.
28. Council-maintained schools have been disproportionately affected by the levy as they were unable to spend it effectively since the relevant standards did not exist. The LGA has supported the development of apprenticeship standards in schools but much more needs to be done to use the levy to create new apprenticeship routes for higher teaching assistants, teachers and SEND roles.

Councils need investment to support economic development

29. Councils' economic development (ED) teams promote prosperity amongst communities, residents, and businesses, and have latterly been entrusted as 'lead authority' to work with Government to determine how multiple economic growth-related funding streams, are targeted in local areas. The Chief Economic Development Officers Society (CEDOS) published a report³⁷ earlier this year which identified recruitment challenges and skills gaps in light of changing demands on the service.
30. The LGA has commissioned Shared Intelligence (Si) to build on CEDOS' research and engage different parts of local government through our partner organisations. Si's report, due in March 2023, will capture skills and capacity challenges ED teams face in delivering local and national priorities and suggestions for further support to enable ED teams to deliver more. Interim findings will be presented to the City Regions and People and Places Boards in January, and we will explore links with the EEHT Board. Based on the outcome of this project, more detailed support may be required.

We are currently also planning to commission research into capacity and priorities, and to develop recommendations for the future of revenues and benefits services, to ensure the right support and safety net underpins inclusive local economies.

³⁷ www.cedos.org/future-of-economic-development-research/

Putting people first – the reform of adult social care gives councils the resources to address their funding pressures.

Councils need a ten-year workforce strategy for health and adult social care

31. The Autumn Statement included a commitment for the publication of a comprehensive workforce plan for the NHS in 2023, including independently verified forecasts for categories of professionals required. In response, we have called for this plan to be extended to include the non-NHS health workforce commissioned or directly employed by councils, the adult social care workforce and those in the community and voluntary sector without whose support the NHS would not be able to operate. We are willing to work with the Government to achieve this, alongside ADASS and other representatives of care and support service users, employers, workers, inspectors and commissioners. This plan should include investment in training, qualifications and support; career pathways and development; effective workforce planning across the whole social care workforce and staff recognition, value and reward. This would enable a holistic view of the needs of the whole workforce, for example enabling social care workers to access resources to aid retention such as NHS Wellbeing Hubs.

Councils need an independent review of care worker pay

32. The social care workforce must be developed in a manner equivalent to the NHS as part of a stable, sustainable solution to long-term funding problems. This must involve 'parity of esteem' for social care staff with their NHS colleagues. Research and deliberation is needed on the coordination of terms and conditions and the introduction of an effective mechanism for implementation and uprating pay. To achieve those aims with a reasonable degree of consensus across the sector, we continue to urge Government to commission an independent review to promptly review the existing pay levels in the sector and the mechanism for ensuring they support the recruitment and retention of the high-quality workforce the public requires.

Councils need financial support to address significant challenges in adult social care recruitment and retention

33. The LGA argues that, although additional funding for adult social care announced in the Autumn Statement is welcome, it falls significantly short of the £13 billion we have called for to address the severity of the pressure facing the service: this includes £3 billion towards tackling significant recruitment and retention problems by increasing care worker pay. While we have produced [guidance to support social care providers to maximise opportunities from overseas recruitment](#), financial support is also required to meet additional costs associated with this route (approximately £6,000 per person).

Councils need a knowledge and skills framework for adult social care

34. The LGA welcomed the commitment in 'People at the Heart of Care', the adult social care reform white paper, to a knowledge and skills framework to support career structure and progression and now calls for its implementation. This framework should be across health and care to enable people to maximise opportunities and build knowledge and understanding of different roles (subject to the current pay differential

between health and care being addressed so that the current one-way flow of staff from social care to health is ceased).

Councils need the removal of barriers to swift ‘onboarding’ of new staff

35. Capacity gaps in adult social care are being exacerbated by lengthy Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) processes and a lack of portability of existing checks. It is proposed to seek the support of DLUHC to convene relevant Government departments and professional bodies to consider revisions to processes to reduce lengthy recruitment periods and additional costs.

Putting people first – councils have the powers and funding to meet the needs of all local children and people.

Councils can support Government to review national rules on agency usage in children’s social care

36. We are already supporting councils to reduce the use of agency social work, which is costly and works against providing stable professional relationships for children and families. We are recommending that Government takes consistent action to control the agency market and malpractice, particularly in relation to the growing prevalence of managed teams in the market which is leading to concerns about a lack of vetting assurance associated with these teams, and a reduction in the availability of agency social workers for ‘standard’ appointments.

Councils need a holistic workforce strategy for children and family services

37. The scale of the challenge, and the interrelationships across all elements of children and family services, requires a holistic strategy. We are calling on the Department for Education, in consultation with the sector, to develop a shared 10-year workforce strategy and a sustainable approach to pay with clear actions at national, system, place and provider level. This will help the sector plan for and attract the right people we need to meet demand, create new entry routes into social work, focus on prevention rather than crisis, enable us to reward people appropriately and set out explicit skills and competency frameworks.

Championing climate change and local environments – deliver a waste and resource system that meets local needs

Councils need long-term policy and funding certainty to invest in climate change response and a national technical assistance strategy

38. Councils have some influence over 80 per cent of local greenhouse gas emissions, through housing, transport and energy solutions. All private and public sector partners are learning and growing experience around climate change mitigation and adaptation. Councils are no different, but messy and uncertain funding and policy environment can make it difficult for councils to invest in the technical, financial and managerial experience to lead the local long-term effort, and support from Local Net Zero Hubs is patchy at best. Councils need clarity so they can invest in their capacity,

and a strategy to pool to technical assistance locally, sub-nationally and nationally which councils can draw on.

Councils need a resources and skills strategy for planning and place-making

39. The LGA welcomes the commitment in 'Planning for the Future', the planning white paper, to a comprehensive resource and skills strategy for the planning sector and now calls for its urgent implementation. As outlined earlier in this report there is considerable concern from councils about their already stretched capacity and recruitment and retention challenges. Councils will need the necessary resources to upskill officers to implement reforms to the planning system to ensure they are equipped to create great communities through community engagement and proactive place-making.

Councils want to work with government and industry to grow the environmental skills to deliver the Environment Act

40. Public concern with environmental quality will grow and the Environment Act introduces a range of ambitious policy reforms that councils want to help succeed. Councils are encountering real challenges in finding and recruiting the skills in preparing for their duties around Bio-Diversity Net Gain, the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, wider nature recovery, and wider waste and recycling policy reforms. In particular, the government, industry and councils should work together grow the number of ecologists across all partners and ensure that local government is an attractive to new ecologists.

Councils need the removal of barriers to recruitment and retention of HGV drivers

41. Forty-one per cent of councils state that allowing renewal of the certificate of professional competence (CPC) at no cost to drivers would help to alleviate HGV driver shortages³⁸. We therefore propose to call on the Department for Transport to remove CPC renewal costs to aid recruitment and retention of workers in the sector.

Improvement and support offers

42. The LGA currently provides the following advice and support to councils which can assist with recruitment and retention challenges:

- i) Resources to help local government employers to address recruitment and retention challenges, accessed via the [LGA website](#).
- ii) Information and best practice sharing (including new ways of working) with local authorities' HR professionals;
- iii) Targeted 'employee healthcheck' surveys for qualified social workers, occupational therapists and non-registered social care practitioners supporting the delivery of social care to inform workforce planning and support;

³⁸ www.local.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-workforce-survey-week-ending-14-january-2022

- iv) Tools and consultancy to support councils to make efficient use of staffing resources and workforce planning;
 - v) Training to support new managers and aspiring leaders in arts, culture, libraries, sport and physical activity, funded on a rolling basis by Arts Council England and Sport England.
43. The LGA has identified a number of additional support offers that it could provide to councils, subject to the identification of funding. These could include:
- i) developing a recruitment campaign for local government
 - ii) research into career pathways to inform planning of qualifications and training provision
 - iii) development of apprenticeship pathways into skills shortage areas
 - iv) development of returners programmes and support for early careers
 - vi) further collation and promotion of best practice to the sector.

LGA political governance

44. The Resources Board has the overall lead for workforce support as well as the policy lead for financial sustainability in the sector and the capacity and capability of the finance workforce. Each LGA policy board considers workforce issues as relevant to their terms of reference and in particular:
- Children and Young People Board: children's social care;
 - Community Wellbeing Board: adult social care;
 - Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board: waste, climate change, housing, planning;
 - Safer and Stronger Communities: regulatory services such as environmental health and trading standards (these services also support the objectives of other boards);
 - Culture, Tourism and Sport: Libraries, leisure centres and parks;
 - City Regions Board: economic development, employment and skills;
 - People and Places Board: economic development, employment and skills.

The Improvement and Innovation Board also has a role in overseeing the delivery of workforce improvement support activity funded by DLUHC.

45. All of the above boards are therefore asked to consider this report and provide feedback on priority issues related to this theme. Following the Resources Board discussion, the expectation is that Executive Advisory Board will then be asked to consider the LGA's work on the theme in the round.

Implications for Wales

46. Wales faces very similar issues with workforce capacity as are evident in England. Through the workforce team's regular engagement the WLGA feeds into discussions and the sharing of good practice and experience. The working assumption used is that any steps to improve capacity in England would also be applicable in Wales, taking note of relevant responsibility devolution.

Financial implications

47. The LGA activities listed at paragraph 42 will be implemented within existing budgets. Improvement and support proposals references at paragraph 43 are subject to negotiation with DLUHC as part of the 2023/4 sector support programme.

Equalities implications

48. Capacity gaps in councils' workforce have the potential to have negative impacts on people with protected characteristics: for example, an inability to meet demand for adult social care can impact older people and people with disabilities.
49. Addressing equalities considerations is a crucial part of work to maximise the potential pool of local government workers and aid retention: support to councils to consider equalities good practice is an important part of the workforce provided by the LGA.
50. By working with councils and with relevant professional bodies, the LGA will target its policy and improvement work to address workforce capacity challenges towards those service areas where it is most needed, with particular consideration of impacts on people with protected characteristics.

Next steps

51. A report incorporating feedback from policy boards will be brought to Executive Advisory Board for consideration on 9th March 2023.



Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Rt Hon Michael Gove
Secretary of State for Levelling up,
housing and communities (DLUHC)
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Cc Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Cc Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

23 January 2023

Dear Chancellor and Secretary of State,

Urgent support for public sport and leisure through crisis and transformation

We write as the lead organisations representing local authorities in England. Our members are responsible for the country's public sport and leisure infrastructure, which is facing an extraordinary financial crisis due to the ongoing impacts from COVID-19, the cost of living and the energy crisis. In light of these pressures, we have significant concerns about the decision to exclude swimming pools and leisure centres from the list of sectors eligible for extra support under the [Energy and Trade Intensive Industries scheme](#) and the [Energy Bills Discount Scheme](#).

Since 2019, evidence from our leisure providers shows energy bills have risen by 300 per cent. During the pandemic councils across the country invested £159 million to keep facilities afloat, alongside £144 million of provider reserves, and in addition to the Government's welcome £100 million national leisure recovery fund. This money now risks being wasted if we allow these facilities to close. At the close of this letter we set out three clear actions Government can take.

This is not a call for a hand-out. Councils and their partners have been working together to transform facilities into assets fit to meet the challenges of the future, whether co-locating with GP surgeries to create wellness hubs, retrofitting with solar panels and heat pumps, or energy-efficient newbuilds that boost participation and cost less to run. Many Levelling Up Fund bids from councils are aimed at continuing this transformation and Government has chosen to invest in many of these bids. But if council-run and commissioned facilities, including Trusts and Community Interest Companies (CiCs), close because of unaffordable running costs, these transformations will not happen and a core plank of the levelling up approach will fail. (See annex for case studies)

Without further Government support a November survey by Ukactive showed that 40 per cent of council areas will likely see leisure centres close or services reduce before 31 March 2023. Three quarters (74 per cent) of council areas are classified as 'unsecure', meaning there is risk of closure or reduced services before 31 March 2024. Many provider contracts also have legally binding schedules that transfer the risk of energy price increases to their



local authority meaning pressures will likely come to a head at the end of this financial year, affecting council budgets for 2023/24.

Facility closures will undermine the Government's commitment to support vulnerable communities, protect vital public services, tackle inequalities and grow the economy.

Leisure centres and swimming pools are more than a lifestyle choice, they are a vital service because:

- They provide affordable opportunities for communities to be active and healthy with 8.9 million users annually and 165 million unique visits; and are especially important for users in more deprived areas, where data tells us users prefer to exercise in a leisure centre over other informal settings.
- People's health and wellbeing, and therefore NHS performance relies on leisure facilities. Leisure centres deliver two thirds of cancer rehabilitation services and 79 per cent of social prescribing initiatives. Swimming alone saves health system £357 million per year according to research by Sheffield Hallam University and Swim England.
- 72 per cent of schools use public swimming pools to deliver their statutory responsibility for learn to swim and the water safety curriculum. And 75 per cent of grassroots sports clubs rely on public leisure centres to operate.
- Being physically active prevents many serious physical and mental health conditions, calculated to save £9.5 billion per year (Sport England). Of this amount, £5.2 billion is in healthcare savings and £1.7 billion is in social care savings, while a further £20 billion of value comes from stronger and safer communities.
- They provide an estimated 585,000 jobs in the UK, in particular offering career opportunities for young people who make up a large proportion of the paid workforce: 45 per cent are aged 16-24 and 21 per cent are aged 25-34.

Many councils have commissioned out leisure services helping to deliver improved outcomes. 94 per cent of councils report using leisure centres in schemes to tackle health inequalities and 97 per cent of councils and leisure providers wish to commission these services to do more. [Recent health economics research](#) shows that an increase in healthy life expectancy by 3.7 years could be achieved over a decade if leisure centres were used to deliver a national physical activity improvement scheme (DCN). Leisure providers have done a sterling job delivering these outcomes; providers operate on small profit margins, ploughing money back into the service to support communities, but this has left them vulnerable and unable to do more.

The failure to identify support for the sector will be the final straw for certain facilities and services across the country – especially for swimming pools, which cannot be replaced by limited private sector provision and where Sport England data shows swimmers do not transfer to another form of activity. Leisure, sport and swimming pool closures on a national level will unequivocally damage our national health, the economy and will increase pressure on the health service. Action taken now will be far more cost-effective and will prevent costly knock-on impacts for society and the public purse in the long-term.

We therefore urge the Government to act swiftly with three key measures:

1. Reclassify pools and leisure centres as energy intensive in the Energy Bills Discount Scheme so they can access the higher level of energy price discount.



2. Set out what tangible support it will provide to the wider sector – including gyms and sports facilities – to help navigate the energy crisis across 2023 so that service restrictions and facility closures can be minimised.
3. Set out a “plan for the growth” for the sector by aligning the proposed new Sports Strategy with the Spring Budget to unlock the potential of the sector to support the economic, health, and social wellbeing of the nation.

Our members stand ready to work in partnership with Government to prevent further closures and accelerate our progress towards a sustainable leisure network.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson
 Chair, Culture, Tourism and Sport Board,
 Local Government Association and
 Leader, Portsmouth City Council

Professor Jim McManus
 President, Association of Directors of
 Public Health

Mo Baines
 Chief Executive, Association for Public
 Service Excellence

Cllr Linda Taylor
 County Councils Network Unitary
 Spokesperson and Leader, Cornwall
 Council

Debbie Kaye
 Chair, Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers
 Association

Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen
 Chairman, District Councils' Network and
 Leader, Breckland Council

Cllr Elizabeth Campbell
 Executive member for London's Future:
 Business, Economy and Culture, London
 Councils and Leader, Royal Borough of
 Kensington and Chelsea

Sir Stephen Houghton CBE
 Chair, Special Interest Group of
 Metropolitan Authorities and Leader,
 Barnsley Council

William Benson Solace Spokesperson for
 Finance and Chief Executive, Tunbridge
 Wells Borough Council



Annex: Case studies

- Innovative partnership between GPs and leisure centres like East Riding of Yorkshire Council's award-winning Live Well exercise on-referral programme can help to combat obesity and reduce the need for expensive bariatric operations. In East Riding of Yorkshire, the programme has **saved the NHS £2.5 million** in eight years.
- Exeter City Council opened the UK's first leisure centre to be built to Passivhaus standards. It replaces the 50-year-old swimming pool and is climate proofed until 2080. It is expected to **save up to 70 per cent** on annual energy costs, use **50 per cent less** water, reduce running costs and receive **500,000 annual visitors**. Over **1,000 people** helped to design, construct and deliver the build. Creating eight jobs for apprentices, 15 jobs for new entrants, one graduate job and 35 work placements, eight of which went to recipients not in education. The workforce has been upskilled on environmentally friendly building practices to support its implementation in future builds. **£340,320** has been generated in social impact through skills and employment.
- The Sands Centre project in Cumbria is co-locating musculoskeletal (MSK) services and creating integrated care pathways between leisure providers and their NHS counterparts. These outpatient services have been moved into communities to free up bed space in acute hospital, bringing disparate services under one roof. The co-location has resulted in a **50 per cent increase in capacity** for MSK services locally. Longer term savings for the wider healthcare economy are expected as a result of positive impacts upon population health and wellbeing. Helping to reduce demand on NHS Community and Secondary Care services and mental health services.
- The City of York partnership developed a health and wellbeing hub in Burnholme, York. It has helped to regenerate the area which has significant pockets of deprivation, deliver improved services for the local community and is helping to reduce pressures on GP services and unplanned admissions. It has refurbished the existing leisure facility, co-located a care home which will deliver **80 additional residential care bed spaces** and deliver £500,000 capital receipt. It includes a medical centre, onsite social prescribing and exercise on prescription and has delivered **81 new housing units**, 40 per cent of which are affordable homes.
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council have a well-developed GP exercise referral scheme. Their leisure team have supplemented this with further outreach work, creating a network of volunteer Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors from within the community. These ambassadors support participants who access the referral scheme and introducing them to accessible exercise sessions run at leisure facilities.
- Cherwell District Council's FAST family programme, delivered with Active Oxfordshire and supported by Sport England, works with local schools to provide families with physical activity sessions delivered in 12-week blocks by the council's Youth Activators. It has seen a huge impact for the **3500 families** registered, recording a **30 per cent increase** in adult and children's physical activity levels. The expanded project now caters for **1220** further families outside of the district.



Meeting: Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

Date: 7 December 2022

The Chiles Webster Batson Commission on sport and low income neighbourhoods

Purpose of report

For direction

Summary

The [Chiles Webster Batson Commission](#) explored the importance of sport for young people and their communities, and the role that sport can play in supporting low-income neighbourhoods. It has made a number of recommendations relevant to local government.

The report will be presented by Jane Ashworth, Vice President of StreetGames, and Mark Lawrie, Chief Executive of StreetGames.

Is this report confidential?

No

Recommendation/s

Board members are to note the report and share their thoughts on how we can share the findings more widely and support councils to implement the recommendations.

Contact details

Contact officer: Samantha Ramanah

Position: Adviser – Sport, leisure, physical activity, parks and green spaces

Phone no: 07887 503 136

Email: Samantha.Ramanah@local.gov.uk

The Chiles Webster Batson Commission on sport and low income neighbourhoods

Background

1. The purpose of the [Chiles Webster Batson Commission](#) was to explore the importance of sport for young people and their communities, and the role that sport can play in supporting low-income neighbourhoods. Its key objective was to identify, highlight and amplify the voices of community-based sports organisations.
2. It was an independent and evidence led commission and has focused on listening to the lived and often unheard experiences of children and young people in low-income areas and the neighbourhood level organisations that work to support them.
3. The commission is chaired by:
 - 3.1. Adrian Chiles: a journalist, a radio and television presenter, and a lifelong Baggies fan. He is well known for his work with The One Show and Match of the Day, and is a regular contributor to The Guardian.
 - 3.2. Brendan Batson OBE: a successful football career as a player before serving as the deputy chief executive of the Professional Footballers Association.
 - 3.3. Charlie Webster: a broadcaster, writer and campaigner with a background in elite junior athletics. Born in Sheffield, she made history as the first female presenter of Boxing coverage, and has presented major events such as the Olympics and Wimbledon.
4. The inquiry process ran from January 2020 to mid-2021 and a summative report was published in January 2022. The Commission hosted five round-tables that focused on the following key questions:
 - 4.1. What role do neighbourhood organisations play in social change?
 - 4.2. Why does sport matter to children and young people in left behind neighbourhoods?
 - 4.3. How is sport used by these community organisations as a lever to deliver wider social change?
 - 4.4. What do neighbourhood organisations have to say about what works?

The Commission process and findings were overseen and developed by a team of academics from Leeds Beckett University, in collaboration with the Commission chairs.
5. The LGA was a member of the Expert Advisory Group to the Commission and Councillor Peter Golds presented at the launch of the report.

Commission findings and recommendations

Findings

6. The commission found that children and young people (CYP) from disadvantaged areas continue to be excluded from sport. This is evidenced by data on participation rates and by testimony heard from Roundtable participants.
7. It found that recent strategies to promote participation among this group have largely been unsuccessful because they have been too 'top down' in their development and delivery and have not taken account of the specific needs and preferences of CYP

across diverse communities. Exceptions, such as StreetGames' Doorstep Sport have been successful because they have proactively addressed the barriers that CYP in disadvantaged communities face to participation in sport and been delivered in ways that appeal to those CYP.

8. To enable CYP living in disadvantaged communities to take part in sport and physical activity how they would like, the Commission recommended that provision needs to be built around the needs and assets of individuals and neighbourhoods, using place-based and person-centred approaches. Locally trusted organisations (LTOs) are ideally placed to support this endeavour. They understand local places, have the reach into communities, are trusted by local people, and are connected into local networks. These findings support the emphasis of Sport England's current Uniting the Movement strategy.
9. Working with and supporting LTOs at a strategic level and in the delivery of provision is a practical action to support the aspirations of Uniting the Movement. However, just doing more with LTOs is not a panacea. CYP living in disadvantaged areas continue to be affected – disproportionately compared to their more well-off peers – by broader social issues (e.g. housing, employment, local authority budget cuts) that not only impact on their participation in sport but also their health and wellbeing in general, which need to be addressed. Inequalities in sports participation are a reflection of inequalities in society.

Recommendations

10. The commission made 24 recommendations aimed at policy makers, funders, LTOs and researchers. These focus on building provision around the needs and assets of individuals and neighbourhoods, using place-based and person-centred approaches.
11. A number of these are areas where local government can make a positive impact to this agenda. The top eight recommendations for local government can be found below (see points 11.1 - 11.8). The full list of recommendations can be found on page 28 in Appendix C.
 - 11.1 Work towards a model that provides long-term consistent funding for LTOs who are best able to reach and engage CYP.
 - 11.2 Ensure sport for CYP is included in post-Covid recovery strategies / programmes.
 - 11.3 Think ambitiously about how sport for CYP can have a positive impact on a wide range of government agendas (e.g. Obesity, Levelling Up, mental health) and departments (health, education, crime). Develop a business case for connecting these together.
 - 11.4 Understand the limitations of sport to mitigate the risks associated for CYP living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. Work with others to take action to address the underlying causes of low participation i.e. income, housing / employment, and education.
 - 11.5 Have greater clarity of purpose re. what organisations are trying to achieve by involving CYP in sport. If this does not yield immediate benefits it will require courage from local leaders.
 - 11.6 Improve capabilities of LTOs via training and skills development e.g. bid writing, financial planning, public health.
 - 11.7 Establish connections between sport workforces in LTOs and statutory services such as public health so they can work together to improve effectiveness.

11.8 Judge success based on what is realistic for organisations to affect in the shorter term i.e. intermediary outcomes. These could include reach, engagement, participation.

Implications for Wales

12. The commission's work covers both England and Wales, with Roundtable participants drawn from both.

Implications for equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

13. EDI is an important priority for the Board and is incorporated throughout its programme of work, including through its publications such as the upcoming sport and leisure briefings.
14. The Commission's focus on the social outcomes that can be achieved through sport and physical activity directly addresses the Board's objective to advocate for sport and leisure services, and improve accessibility and inclusivity within communities.
15. Encouraging the adoption and implementation of some or all of Commission's recommendations would widen the accessibility of services and the enhance their impact.

Financial Implications

16. Work will be undertaken within the Board's budget.

Next steps

17. The Board is asked for its views on the recommendations, and to identify how it can best support councils to learn from and implement relevant recommendations locally.
18. Board members are asked to identify local examples of effective practice and partnerships that could be developed as case studies or presentations as part of the LGA's leadership development programmes.

Meeting: -

Date: -

ANNEX C

Please see the document titled appendix c in the folder



**Chiles Webster Batson Commission
on Sport and Low-Income
Neighbourhoods**

SUMMATIVE
Report
JANUARY 2022

Prepared by Kris Southby & Jenny Woodward
Centre for Health Promotion Research,
School of Health, Leeds Beckett University



**CHILES WEBSTER BATSON
COMMISSION**
SPORT AND LOW INCOME NEIGHBOURHOODS



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HEALTH

About the Commission Chairs

Adrian Chiles

Adrian Chiles is a journalist, a radio and television presenter, and a lifelong Baggies fan. He is well known for his work with The One Show and Match of the Day, and is a regular contributor to The Guardian.

Brendan Batson OBE

Brendon Batson OBE had a successful football career as a player before serving as the deputy chief executive of the Professional Footballers Association. He received an OBE for services to football.

Charlie Webster

Charlie Webster is a broadcaster, writer and campaigner with a background in elite junior athletics. Born in Sheffield, she made history as the first female presenter of Boxing coverage, and has presented major events such as the Olympics and Wimbledon.

She is an active campaigner who works to raise awareness of domestic and sexual abuse in childhood and the dangers of malaria after contracting the deadly parasite.

Executive Summary

The Chiles Webster Batson Commission asked questions about the relationship between disadvantaged neighbourhoods and recreational, informal sport of the type that young people warm to because it is designed to be fun. It aimed to shine a light on the importance of such sport for many low-income young people and show the positive role that neighbourhood organisations¹ play in supporting low income areas to become happier, better networked, enriched, more active places to live.

The Commission took as a starting point the interconnectivity between life in a low-income neighbourhood and low rates of participation in sport and physical activity. Limited access to sport and physical activity is a feature of growing up poor in 21st century Britain. 72% of the demographic cohort do not attain the CMO's physical activity guidelines of one hour a day of enhanced physical activity. Only 16% are members of a sports club and just 14% visit leisure centres.

This under-representation of low-income young people in the sports system is not best explained by reference to personal choice. Rather, there is a structural inadequacy in our sports system which results in the exclusion of low-income young people. Traditional sports provision, like a tennis or rugby club, is less accessible to low income families than to more affluent families for reasons of geography, and the tendency of such clubs to market themselves to people in their own image. It is the same with gym membership where the cost is frequently prohibitive. The problem of under-representation is made more chronic by young people's tendency to prefer sociable sports to the solo sports and activities, like jogging or walking. Such sociable activities tend to require an organiser and often require kit, indoor space or marked-up outdoor space. In other words, sociable sports need organisation and resources which the sports system does not supply.

The Commission recognised that missing out on an active lifestyle increases the deficits endured by children and young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It is likely that in comparison to the lives of their more affluent peers, young people growing up in low income areas connect with fewer positive role models; enjoy fewer opportunities to take a leadership and organising role and have fewer opportunities to exercise and develop their problem-solving skills. Appropriately organised sport offers these opportunities in abundance.

¹ The term Neighbourhood Organisation was subsequently replaced by Locally Trusted Organisation. See the definition on page 15

Disadvantaged young people miss out on the positive properties of sport in the context of lives lived with higher rates of exposure to violence, poorer mental health, higher rates of food insecurity and a lack of safe spaces. It is ironic that those neighbourhoods most in need of the benefits of well organised sport, run by wise and relatable role-models, are those which struggle most to access it.

To respect the importance of the neighbourhood organisations which do provide opportunities to take part in fun-sport, and reap the associated benefits, the Commission adopted an approach which amplified their voices and combined that with hard academic evidence. Such twin-tracking allowed Commissioners to comprehensively assess the strengths, challenges and opportunities for this specialised, and generally under-appreciated, corner of the sporting landscape. This approach also embraced Asset Based Community Development theory which privileges strategies that make the target community the actor in driving change and not the recipient of external, top-down impositions – no matter how benign. To hear of the 'lived experience' of the neighbourhood organisations enriched the Commissions understanding of what works and why.

The Commission intended to visit about 10 neighbourhood organisations to see their work in-situ and talk with the leaders and the young participants. Covid restrictions all but prevented these visits. Zoom gatherings substituted for the planned programme in a 'make-do' spirit. Undoubtedly, this reduced the input of the organisations' leaders and the young participants.

However, there were advantages in the Commission operating during the pandemic. It did highlight the importance of the neighbourhood organisations to their community. Driven by commitment to their patch (and operating with their lean structures and decision making powers close to the ground) these organisations rapidly became important to pandemic relief interventions. The Commission saw at first hand their flexibility and importance to neighbourhood life on a scale that reached far beyond sport.

The Commission focused on five key questions:

Question one: What role do neighbourhood organisations play in social change?

The Commission looked at how neighbourhoods developed effective responses to the sporting deficit and found there are many types of organisations which change their neighbourhood by filling gaps created by the absence of the officially recognised sports system. These sporting assets tend to sit outside the traditional sports system and they tend not to affiliate to a National Governing Body of Sport. Most offer many kinds of fun, informal sport and seldom offer a traditional sports club diet of skills and drills sessions in the week followed by a weekend match. These assets are so important to understanding the sporting landscape in low income communities that they are a category of their own: The Locally Trusted Organisation (LTO). For the rest of this document, they are referred to as LTOs.

Evidence to the Commission shows LTOs, and the people who run them, are a vital part of the sporting ecosystem. They are uniquely effective at activating those children and young people which the traditional sports system would classify as 'hard to reach'. 70% of LTOs participants do not take part in any other sports groups outside the school or college setting. The experience of the LTOs gives reason to think that more low-income families would be drawn into activity if their neighbourhood benefited from an LTO which offered the right kind of activities, at the right price and at the right time. Their in-depth understanding of the local area means they can tailor provision to what communities need and want – as opposed to what funders think is important.

The Commission heard and saw these LTOs do more than mobilise inactive neighbourhoods. They were described as being "critical to the social fabric" of the area and occupying a unique position. They offer greater benefits than providers 'parachuted' into an area to deliver a particular activity. Many are, in effect, resource centres with a specialism. That specialism might be a sport (as in a boxing or football club), but it is more likely to be youth work, or community safety or public health, or the LTO might be a community centre, or a faith group. Access to sport via an LTO matters because its volunteers and staff tend to build positive relationships through sport with local families and become sign posters, confidants, and walking resource centres and advice hubs.

Also, LTOs provide value for money by leveraging in other resources, such as donations, grants, providing volunteering opportunities and other community support.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, when The Commission took place, the importance of the LTO was abundantly clear. The LTOs' local knowledge became useful to those authorities concerned to reach areas most likely to be worst hit by Covid-19. The LTOs became food parcel deliverers, support agencies for teenagers and their families, and visitors to isolated people. Their excellent local standing, strong networks and commitment to go the extra mile for their area made them natural leaders in pandemic relief.

LTOs vary greatly - in terms of their structure, legal standing, physical assets and resources, and even their primary missions. They can be youth centres, community safety or health projects, or community halls. They tend to be voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector (VCSE) organisations though some schools, councils and housing associations may have features of an LTO. Very few traditional sports clubs enjoy LTOs status in low income areas.

Question 2: Why does sport matter to children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods?

Low take up of sport and active lifestyles, is not a choice made freely. Geographical, financial and cultural factors position many families outside the UK's traditional sporting systems. This increases the number of young people with nothing to do and nowhere to go.

Associated feelings of exclusion may also be generated by our system which offers sport in a style the young people find unattractive and not 'for people like them'. The Commission found that many girls in particular feel self-conscious about participating in physical activity, especially if their friends aren't involved. Some feel that many traditional team sports – such as football and basketball – are for 'tom boys', and it matters that they are not so branded. They know they should be active for health reasons – it does matter to them, but social pressures can prove a powerful barrier to participation. These young women will become active providing the offer is developed and presented in the right way.

On the flip side of this exclusion, there is well evidenced benefits for children and young people from participating in sport. The most direct benefits include improved mental and physical health and wellbeing. Positive mental health outcomes associated with sport participation include improved physical self-perceptions (competence, appearance, fitness), life satisfaction, happiness, quality of life, emotional experiences, reduced levels of anxiety and/or depression, and reduced loneliness.

Sport and physical activity have a positive benefit on physical health directly, and can encourage broader positive lifestyle choices such as striving for a healthier diet. Delivered in the right way, sport can also be a powerful tool for personal development, helping to teach key skills such as teamwork, understanding and self-discipline.

The Commission heard that LTOs provide young people with more than sport. The members do things together which cannot be so easily done alone or in a family with limited resources: they are youth clubs; they are advice centres; they go on trips; they celebrate sporting events and provide opportunities for volunteering.

For many young people, LTOs are a lifeline, offering programs and activities that appeal to a broad cross-section, not just the naturally sporty. Come rain or shine, in car parks and scout huts, these clubs provide young people with somewhere to go and something to do. Without them, neighbourhoods would be poorer and more isolating places.

Question 3: What do neighbourhood organisations have to say about what works?

Developing provision around the needs, experiences and personalities of C&YP is important, much more important than sticking to the rules and conventions of a sport. There needs to be a good quality

conversation between the participants and the organisers in an attempt to co-produce ensure the sports offer.

An LTO makes use of the assets in the neighbourhood. Some will have access to indoor space and might chose to offer dance; others may have a floodlit games area and be able to play football or another ball game in the evenings, all year round.

LTOs are sure that having the right sports coaches and people involved in organising and delivering sport is vital. Coaches and leaders with lived experience of growing up in a low income neighbourhood are particularly valuable as they can be positive, relatable role models, providing inspiration to the C&YP.

Other important attributes for people involved in delivering sport to C&YP are:

- Being adaptable
- Being authoritative but not authoritarian
- Passionate people committed to the community
- Having experience working with C&YP (who may exhibit 'challenging behaviour')
- Being trained in mental health first aid and / or trauma informed approaches

Question 4: What do funding bodies and strategists expect?

LTOs tend to live hand to mouth: securing funding is an ever-present worry. Participants in the LTOs tend to be short of money and unable to pay memberships fees or anything more than a very small weekly sub. LTOs are not willing to raise subs. for fear of driving away young people without a pound in their pocket. So, LTOs fund themselves through some traditional fund-raising, like raffles and bag-packing at a supermarket. But this does not raise enough to pay wages and run activities. Grant funding has to be applied for and this comes from both sporting and non-sports funders. Most income comes from non-sporting sources.

Funding for both universal provision and targeted provision can be important in an LTO's funding cocktail. By targeted provision, LTOs mean provision for people who are referred to them by other agencies. These might be referrals from the police, or medics. Universal provision is open to all but is geographically targeted on a neighbourhood.

Funding reductions and more acute issues emerging in the lives of low income neighbourhoods are leading to opportunities for universal approaches being phased out. This means that many children and young people in disadvantaged areas that still need support to participate in sport are missing out because they do not fulfil narrow criteria for being involved. Funders are keenest to pay for the most deprived, or the most troubled or the most at risk of crime to benefit from the LTO. But this means that the preventative element of sport participation – to stop things getting worse – is diminished.

Pre-Covid, government austerity led to support services for C&YP being cut and access thresholds raised. LTOs are therefore having to deal with the impact of wider social issues on C&YP. Many are supporting individuals with a high level of mental health or social needs – something they may not have the expertise for.

The pandemic has worsened the funding situation for many LTOs. Funders switched their focus to help organisations respond to the crisis, meaning medium term funding has reduced. As many LTOs burned through funding reserves in order to provide immediate community relief in the wake of the pandemic, this has left many organisations financially insecure.

LTOs also find the funding system is too top-down and like a straight-jacket; that short term funding cuts against well planned interventions; that project funding ignores their need for core funding and that competitive application processes are a drain on resources.

Question 5: What are the implications for future social and-sports policy?

Children and young people from disadvantaged areas continue to be excluded from sport. Historically, strategies to promote participation among this group have largely been unsuccessful because they

have often been too ‘top down’ in their development and delivery and have not taken account of the specific needs and preferences of diverse communities.

To enable children and young people living in disadvantaged communities to take part in sport and physical activity, provision needs to be built around the needs and assets of individuals and neighbourhoods, using place-based and person-centred approaches. Locally trusted organisations (LTOs) are ideally placed to support this endeavour. They understand local places, have the reach into communities, are trusted by local people, and are connected into local networks.

C&YP living in disadvantaged areas continue to be affected – disproportionately compared to their more well-off peers – by broader social issues (e.g. housing, employment, local authority budget cuts) that not only impact on their participation in sport but also their health and wellbeing in general. Inequalities in sports participation both fuel and reflect inequalities in society.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 7 |
| Aims of Commission..... | 7 |
| Why this is important: persistent and growing inequalities in sports participation | 7 |
| Commission Process..... | 8 |
| Table 1: Roundtable information | 9 |
| The Impact of Covid-19 | 9 |
| Table 2: Original vs Revised Roundtables..... | 10 |
| Report writing methodology | 10 |
| Figure 1: Evidence gathering and report writing process | 10 |
| Report structure..... | 10 |
| Commission findings | 12 |
| 1. Context/life circumstances | 12 |
| 2. What role do Locally Trusted Organisations play in social change? | 15 |
| Figure 2: Key elements of an LTO..... | 17 |
| 3. Why does sport matter to children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods?..... | 20 |
| 4. What do Locally Trusted Organisations have to say about ‘what works’? | 24 |
| 5. What do commissioners expect (for their money)? | 27 |
| Key Learnings | 31 |
| Conclusion and recommendations..... | 33 |
| References..... | 36 |
| Appendix 1: Report writing methodology | 37 |

Introduction

Aims of Commission

The Chiles Webster Batson Commission (the Commission) has examined how and why neighbourhood organisations use sport to mitigate against the health and social inequalities that impact on children and young people (C&YP) in disadvantaged areas across England and Wales.

The Commission believes in the power of sport to support social movements and bring about social change. It is concerned with inequality and especially the inequality in certain neighbourhoods that prevents C&YP adopting an active lifestyle.

The Commission inquiry focused on five key questions:

1. What role do neighbourhood organisations² play in social change?
2. Why does sport matter to children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods?
3. What do neighbourhood organisations have to say about what works?
4. What do commissioners expect?
5. What are the implications for future social and economic policy?

StreetGames is the Secretariat to the Commission, supporting the process of bringing experts (academics, practitioners, policy makers, commissioners) and C&YP together to fulfil the aims of the inquiry.

This final report summarises the information from five Roundtables. Each of these drew on existing evidence (scientific papers and practice reports), discussions, testimony and lived experience to identify what is working and why.

The principal audience for the report is the Commission Board, Expert Advisory Group (EAG), and StreetGames. It should be used as a basis for the Commission to make policy recommendations and to influence others.

Terms:

- *Sport* – this can be any way people choose to be active. It includes informal sport, fitness and exercise to music, not just formal, rules-based games.
- *Locally Trusted Organisations* (LTOs) – these are groups based in local neighbourhoods, often run by communities themselves. They tend to be small, with limited budgets and resources. Some focus on a single sport (e.g. football or boxing clubs), whilst others offer a range of informal sport, generally non-competitive. All have a broad remit of engaging with disadvantaged C&YP and providing local people with a place to go and something to do: community betterment is their 'raison d'être'. They often sit outside the governing body structure of sports.
- *Children & Young People* (C&YP) – generally between the ages of 8 and 18 years, though there is some flexibility around this.
- *Disadvantaged neighbourhoods* – areas of low-income that experience multiple and overlapping disadvantages that can discourage C&YP people from having an active lifestyle.

Why this is important: Persistent and growing inequalities in sports participation

Governments in the United Kingdom from across the political spectrum have been actively trying to increase participation in sport and physical activity for the best part of seventy years^(11, 14). The motivation for this has moved back and forth overtime between the idea of sport for sports sake – where taking part is seen as intrinsically good and should be available to everyone – and sport as a

² The term Neighbourhood Organisation was subsequently replaced by Locally Trusted Organisation. See the definition on this page.

tool for helping to fix social issues. Current policy, launched in 2021 – *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*⁽²⁾ – sets out the government’s ambitions to address high levels of inactivity in the country and increase participation in sport. The strategy makes clear a link between sport and social benefit, with outcomes relating to physical and mental wellbeing alongside individual, community and economic development being central.

However, despite the positive words and intentions, attempts to significantly and sustainably boost participation have had mixed success. The ‘Wolfenden gap’ – the drop-off in sports participation after people leave school – persists. Of particular concern is participation among people living in socially disadvantaged areas, people from ethnically diverse communities, and people with disabilities, who are all less likely to be physically active⁽¹⁾. For many people, and particularly people experiencing social disadvantage, routes to sports participation have actually got worse not better over the past decade – first because of national government ‘austerity’ policies⁽¹⁴⁾ and then because of Covid-19⁽⁶⁾. Children and young people from the least affluent families are less active than they were before the pandemic, while those from the most affluent families have stayed active – widening the inequality that already existed⁽⁷⁾. Sport England’s most recent Active Lives Children & Young People Survey reported that children and young people from the least affluent families remain the least active, with activity levels down 3.4% amongst those from the least affluent families compared to pre-pandemic – while remaining unchanged for those from the most affluent families – widening the activity gap between the poorest and the rest.

An issue is that interventions and strategies to promote participation have generally failed to take account of the diverse needs and preferences of disparate communities. Sport policy is one of many drivers affecting participation, alongside things like health, education, housing, and transport. Sport England’s most recent strategy – *Uniting the Movement*⁽⁸⁾ – sets out a vision to reimagine how sport and physical activity is kept central to people’s lives. The strategy maintains previous rhetoric about the social value of sports participation. Crucially though there is more (and explicit) emphasis than has previously been seen on addressing inequalities and collaborative working between sectors and with communities.

Crucially, while inequality of access to sport and sporting facilities has been widely recognised in public discourse as being a contributing factor to health inequality, less widely discussed in the fact that **lack of access to sport is an inequality in and of itself**. The health benefits of sport and physical activity – both mental and physical – are well known, but sport is not merely a means to an end but a leveller in its own right. The pro-social benefits of having regular and affordable access to sport extend beyond the realm of public health to include confidence building, the development of new social networks, learning new skills and – in the case of place-based community sport – strengthening the ties that bind the wider community.

Commission Process

The Commission is comprised of the Commission Board, an Expert Advisory Group (EAG), and a series of Roundtables. The inquiry process ran from January 2020 to mid-2021.

The Commission Board is the public face of the Commission, producing and promoting the final, summative report. The Board comprises three Chairs – Adrian Chiles, Charlie Webster, and Brendon Batson OBE – senior policy makers, charity executives plus the Chairs of each Roundtable.

The EAG’s role has been to act as a ‘critical friend’ throughout the process, reviewing and advising on the approaches used to gather evidence, analyse results and produce recommendations. The EAG is chaired by Professor Jane South and includes academics and representatives from government departments.

Five Roundtables took place, each organised around a pre-agreed topic and chaired by an expert in that area. See Table 1 below. Attendance was by invitation and ranged from 13 to 39 people.

For Roundtables 1, 2, 4 and 5, a specially commissioned literature review was conducted. This formed the basis of the initial discussions. Further discussions led by the Chair then took place

drawing on the expertise and lived experience of participants. Relevant reports were also submitted by participants.

The findings from Roundtables 1,2,4 and 5 are summarised in a formative report. Each report provides a comprehensive, concise and accessible summary of the evidence presented. Findings from Roundtable 3 are summarised in two documents: 'The Experience of Coronavirus Lockdown in Low Income Areas of England and Wales' and 'From Agile to Fragile: Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on the financial position of community organisations'. The two reports are referred to here as 'RT3 Report I' and 'RT3 Report II' respectively.

Table 1: Roundtable information

| Roundtable | Theme / Formative Reports | Discussion Date, Format & Chair | Report Link | Literature Reviews |
|------------|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| 1 | Community Safety | 28 th January 2020 In-person Hardyal Dhindsa | Available here³ | Walpole et al. (2019). Safer together through sport creating partnerships for positive change. Walpole et al (2020) Safer together through sport: creating partnerships for positive change – literature review summary update. |
| 2 | The Holiday Gap | 14 th October 2020 Virtual Adrian Chiles, | Available here | Shinwell et al (2020). Holiday Provision in the UK: Literature Review |
| 3 | The Impact of Covid-19 | April & May 2020 Virtual Roundtables and survey Charlie Webster | Available here | The experience of the Coronavirus Lockdown in low-income areas of England & Wales (Report 1) From Agile to Fragile: Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on the financial position of community organisations (Report II) |
| 4 | Growing Participation | 3rd March 2021 Virtual Brendon Batson | Available here | Shibli et al. (2020) Chiles Commission Evidence Review: Growing Participation |
| 5 | Health and Wellbeing | 28 th May 2021 Virtual Dr William Bird | Available here | Mansfield (2021). Evidence Review: Community Sport, Health & Wellbeing |

³ <https://sportcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/BCW-Commission-Report-RT1.pdf>

The Impact of Covid-19

Roundtables were initially intended to include a visit to an LTO to uncover and amplify the lived but often unheard experiences of C&YP and the organisations that work to support them. This would then be followed by a face-to-face discussion.

Roundtable 1, on the topic of Community Safety, followed this format featuring a visit to Carney's Community Boxing Club followed by a group discussion at the House of Lords, Chaired by then Derbyshire PCC Hardyal Dhindsa.

The format of Roundtables 2-5 was adapted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions on travel and social interactions imposed in March 2020. Changes included:

- Moving the Roundtable discussions from face-to-face conversations to online
- Discontinuing site visits
- Reducing the number of Roundtables from six to five and revising some of the topics. A Roundtable on 'The Impact of Covid-19' was added whilst those on the themes of 'Inclusion' and 'Social Action' did not go ahead (although these themes are picked up in the 'Growing Participation' and 'Holiday Gap' Roundtables) See Table 2.

This change in format – from face to face to virtual – made it more difficult to involve LTOs and Young People in discussions and to hear their voices. Attempts were made instead to utilise existing reports and evaluations. These were provided for RT2.

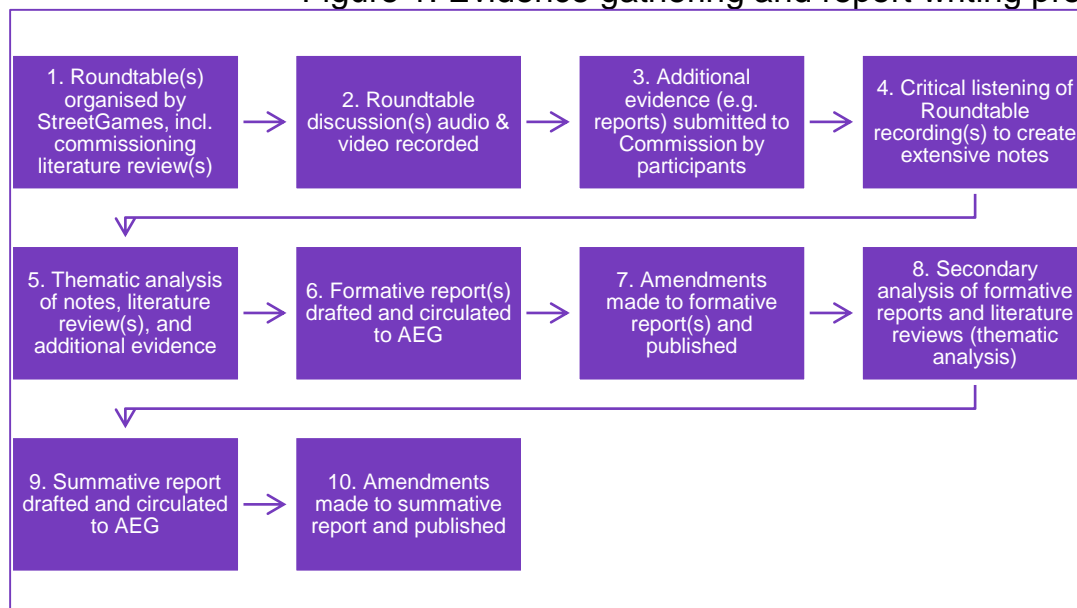
Table 2: Original vs Revised Roundtables

| Original Roundtables (location) | Revised Roundtables |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Community Safety (London) | Community Safety (London) |
| Holiday Gap (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) | Holiday Gap (Online) |
| Health and Wellbeing (Sheffield) | The Impact of Covid-19 (Online) |
| Inclusion (Cardiff) | Growing Participation (Online) |
| Social Action (N/A) | Health and Wellbeing (Online) |
| Growing Participation (N/A) | |

Report writing methodology

How the evidence was gathered from each Roundtable and reported in formative reports, leading to this summative report, is summarised in Figure 1. The approach taken ensured that the findings are valid reflections of the discussions and the evidence reviews. Additional detail about the methodology is available in Appendix 1.

Figure 1: Evidence gathering and report writing process



Report structure

This report is structured to answer the five Commission questions. For context, evidence about the life circumstances of C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is also described.

This report draws together and summarises the breadth of evidence gathered during the five Roundtables. Where possible, the source of evidence is indicated – whether it is from a literature review or from the Roundtable discussions (denoted by RT) – and a page number. The Roundtables were conducted using ‘Chatham House rules’ and so quotes are not attributed to individuals. For further details readers can refer to the supporting formative reports.

Introduction key points:

- The Commission examined how sport, delivered by locally trusted organisations, can help improve the lives of children & young people living in disadvantaged areas.
- StreetGames brought together experts from voluntary sector / community organisations, local government, funders and universities to take part.
- Five Roundtables took place, covering the following topics: Community Safety, the Holiday Gap, the Impact of Covid-19, Participation (in sport), and Health & Wellbeing.
- A review of existing evidence (scientific papers and reports) was produced for every Roundtable. Discussions, chaired by relevant experts, took place in person (RT1) or virtually (RTs 2-5).
- A report was produced at the end of each Roundtable. All reports and reviews are available at <https://sportcommission.org/resources/>
- This final report presents key cross-cutting themes from all the Roundtables.

Commission findings

1. Context/life circumstances

This section underpins many of the discussions in the Roundtables and is fundamental to understanding the findings.

Reduced access to sport and physical activity is one important feature in the lives of young people growing up in a low-income neighbourhood. There are many other issues which shape these young lives.

The framing circumstances of young people's lives issues discussed during the Roundtables include:

- **Poverty** - Around 4.1 million children (under 18 years old) – almost 30% of all children – in the UK live in poverty and this number is growing. The figure is higher among particular groups: 45% of children from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) families are growing up in poverty and 47% of children from lone-parent families are. Approximately 70% of children living in poverty are from families in-work (RT2 Literature Review, p3-4).
- **Violence** - C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are at a higher risk of being both the victims and the perpetrators of violence (RT1 Literature Reviews (2019, pp3-4, 2020, p5)), RT1 Formative Report, p3).

“Typically those involved in serious youth violence are often both perpetrators and victims, it's unusual to be one without the other” (RT1 Formative Report, p3).

The consequences for young people are profound – both in the short and long-term. The LTO visited in RT1, had lost five people to knife crime in three years (RT1 Presentation). Whilst participants in RT1 discussed how being involved in violence or gangs has catastrophic, long-term consequences on physical and mental health and on future life opportunities (RT1 Literature Review, 2020, p5)

These consequences impact not just on the YP involved but also their communities and society as a whole – as such *“it should matter to all of us”* (RT1 discussion). The LTO visited in RT1 said how one young person they worked with had, by the age of 18, cost society over £1 million, whilst another family, in the year before their involvement with the LTO, had cost society £286,000. ⁴

- **Mental health** - C&YP living in disadvantaged communities are at particular risk of experiencing mental health challenges as a result of being exposed to 'Adverse Childhood Experiences' (RT1 Literature Reviews (2019, pp3&5, 2020, p5)). In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic adversely affected C&YP's mental health with those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods affected the most (RT3 Formative Report, p.5; RT5 Formative Report, p3). This stemmed from fears and anxiety for themselves and their loved-ones, the enforced social isolation, and unfavourable living conditions.

“Young people with parents working on the frontline where was their support – their mental health is deteriorating quickly because they are terrified that their parents are going to die or bring illness home. They didn't want to articulate those fears to their own parents because they have enough to worry about but they express it to them.” (LTO participating in RT3 discussion)

- **Diet** - C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods often lack access to healthy and nutritious food. Around 20% of children under 15 years old live-in households where there is not enough money to buy adequate food and 4% of UK children do not eat three meals a day (RT2 Evidence Review,

⁴ Estimated using the Department of Education negative costing calculator tool (2012), cited by the LTO visited in RT1

p5). 'Food poverty' affects up to 2 million children whose parents are in work (RT2 Evidence Review, p7) and low-income families would need to spend nearly three quarters of their income on food to comply with UK Government guidance on healthy eating (RT2 Evidence Review, p6). This issue becomes more severe during school holidays when the 'safety net' of school food is removed (RT2 Formative Report, p3).

- **Negative stereotyping** - C&YP are openly stereotyped and stigmatised in a way that would not be acceptable with other characteristics, e.g. gender or ethnicity (RT1 Formative Report, p3)
- **Space** - C&YP living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods can lack access to good quality spaces where they feel safe and can relax. This relates to living in unsafe areas and, more recently, Covid-19 creating a sense of fear about leaving their rooms/homes (RT3 Formative Report, p5; RT5 Formative Report, pp3&4). The impact of poor-quality housing, including overcrowding in multi-generational households, on health and wellbeing was discussed in RT5 (Formative Report, p3)

“(We) Predominantly work with the BME community so currently have lots of issues with overcrowding, 10 or 12 people living in one house and grandparents living with children and grandchildren in large intergenerational households. Lots of having no gardens, not being able to get to the park at one point.” (LTO participating in RT3 discussion)

- **Relationships & role models** - C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods may lack stability in their family and other personal relationships. A lack of positive role models in their communities and their everyday life can push C&YP towards more negative role models (RT1 Formative Report, p4). The LTO visited in RT1 gave the example of one young person who had had over 40 social workers, the only consistent adult in their life being their drug dealer.

Overall, the challenges associated with living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are **complex and overlapping**. They operate at a number of different levels - individual, family and societal. For example, there are multiple risk factors associated with C&YP getting involved in offending or gangs (RT1 Literature Reviews (2019, pp3-4, 2020, pp4-5)) and numerous links between poverty, housing, and poorer mental health (RT5 Formative Report, p3).

“(There is) no one reason why young people get involved, lots of complex reasons that interplay. And we also know that serious youth violence is very much aligned with poverty, both at home and in neighbourhoods” (RT1 discussion)

Some C&YP are particularly **vulnerable**. Participants expressed concern that 'looked after' C&YP and those who have been excluded from school are at a higher risk of crime, violence, and being groomed to join gangs (RT1 Formative Report, p4).

“These kids that are going missing and being moved around, those are the children that gangs are targeting” (RT1 discussion)

Girls who enter gangs are more likely to have experienced physical and sexual abuse and may join for protection, a sense of family and to escape trauma (RT1 Literature Review, 2020, p5).

The Commission heard that government enforced '**austerity**' – described as a “*trail of destruction*” by one LTO participating in RT1– has, over the last 10 years, increased the challenges for C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (RT1, Formative Report, p12). Changes to the welfare and benefit system have increased child poverty (RT2 Literature Review, p4) and families are facing rising living costs (e.g. for housing and childcare). Low paid, precarious employment has increased, while local authority services have reduced.

The Commission heard evidence from Roundtables 2-5 that the **Covid-19 pandemic** has increased the challenges facing C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Its impact has been to shine a

spotlight on, and exacerbate, issues that already existed, leading to a deepening of existing inequalities. This was described as “*the pandemic within the pandemic*” and a “*dire emergency*” (RT5 Formative Report, p3).

“One parent had suddenly found herself out of work and navigating Universal Credit, no money has come through yet because of the delays but she recently had to get three prescriptions– that comes to £30 and they didn’t have the money – forced to choose between food and medicine. Universal Credit taking weeks on end and the bills don’t stop.” (LTO participating in RT3 discussion)

“The closed space has brought out some very nasty sides of people and in ways children might have been shielded from when they are at school. That’s a challenging one to deal with because you can’t go and knock on the door, it all has to be on the phone, and you go to bed thinking ‘God, is that child safe?’” (LTO participating in RT3 discussion).

What is already being done about C&YPs physical activity

The Commission heard that agencies charged with governing, maintaining and increasing participation in sport, such as national governing bodies (NGBs) and Sport England, have adopted a range of strategies to increase participation among target groups. These include Change4Life, Places People Play, and Positive Futures (RT4 Literature Review, p21). There is ongoing funding to measure outputs via the Active People Survey (Sport England, 2006-2014) and the Active Lives Survey (Sport England, 2015-ongoing) However, whilst policies recognise the value of sport to physical and mental wellbeing alongside individual, community and economic development, inequalities in sport participation persist. A key theme from across all the Roundtables was that more needs to be done to reduce these inequalities (for example RT4 Formative Report, pp7-8). Surely there must be references to Wales here?

Context / Life Circumstances - Key Points:

- Addressing participation in sport requires understanding the circumstances of C&YP’s lives
- High rates of poverty, exposure to violence, poor mental health, inadequate diets, negative stereotyping, a lack of safe spaces and positive role models negatively affect the lives of C&YP.
- These factors overlap and affect C&YP living in disadvantaged areas more than those living in affluent areas.
- Austerity has negatively affected C&YP’s lives via increased poverty and reduced services whilst Covid-19 has reinforced existing issues and inequality.
- The value of sport is recognised in policies but more needs to be done to tackle the causes of C&YP’s low participation in sport, especially those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- Reduced access to sport is a feature of low income lives.

2. What role do Locally Trusted Organisations play in social change?

This section focusses on the role of Locally Trusted Organisations (LTOs) and their importance in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It covers LTOs' features, benefits and the impact of the pandemic on these organisations.

There is some overlap with later sections – the emphasis here is on what LTOs *are* doing now, as opposed to what they would *like* to do, which is covered in 'what works' (Section 4).

Features of LTOs

LTOs vary greatly - in terms of their structure, legal standing, physical assets and resources, and even their primary missions. They can be youth centres, community safety or health projects, or community halls. They tend to be voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector (VCSE) organisations though some primary schools could be LTOs. Some council sports units and housing associations also have so many features of an LTO that it would be too formal-minded to exclude them from membership of the category. Very few traditional sports clubs achieve the standing of an LTO within a disadvantaged community – although many such clubs are part of the social fabric of more affluent areas.

Common features of LTO's were discussed across the Roundtables:

- LTOs share a **common desire** to improve the lives of local C&YP and a belief that all C&YP have the potential to contribute positively to society. They are empathetic and seek to provide **non-judgemental** support.
- LTOs are rooted in the community. Their **local** nature means that they are more aware of, and able to respond to, residents' needs.

“The best schemes ... are locally grown, that fit the local need, that react to what happens at a local level and they come from there and they grow from there” (RT1 Formative Report, p5)

Due to being long-term members of communities they have established relationships with local families and organisations and are **trusted** by local people. They can operate in neighbourhoods and **reach** communities that other organisations may struggle to.

“All have the basic pre-condition that they are trusted within their neighbourhood and they have earned the right to effect social change in that neighbourhood” (RT1 Formative Report, p5)

- LTOs are **inclusive**. Commonly these organisations are flexible about who can take part. This is unlike many statutory or commissioned services – one LTO from RT1 described how their commissioning Local Authority imposed limits on age, the length of time participants can be involved and where they lived, which was counter to their own philosophy.

Not excluding C&YP for their behaviour was also a feature of some LTOs. The LTO visited in RT1 did have strict rules and procedures – with consequences for those who broke them (in their case a 'gloves ban' – that excluded them from sparring) but they were still allowed to attend and be part of their 'family'.

Activities are delivered in a way that means all C&YP can take part. However, because of the way they are funded, LTOs can, like other service providers, become overly focused on engaging those who meet certain criteria, such as C&YP in receipt of 'free school meals', to the detriment of others in the neighbourhood (RT2 Formative Report, p.5).

- **Being connected** to other organisations and central to local networks is a key feature of LTOs. (RT1 Formative Report, p5) This enables them to make connections with other local stakeholders

to enhance provision. It also facilitates connections for community members to access other local resources.

Good relationships with schools are beneficial as the LTO engages C&YP in a preventative way and helps ensure continued education for those who may have 'dropped out'. Links to other statutory services, such as social services and law enforcement, are vital but being overtly independent helps maintain trust.

Figure 2: Key elements of an LTO



Benefits of LTOs to C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods

The Commission heard about the particular benefits LTOs can have for C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. They were described as being “*critical to the social fabric*” of the area and occupying a unique position (RT4). They offer greater benefits than providers ‘parachuted’ into an area to deliver a particular activity.

In this section we present the broader benefits of C&YP engaging with a LTO – those specifically relating to sports participation are described in Section 3.

Benefits for **individuals** include:

- LTOs can reach C&YP who may not normally participate in sport. The health and wellbeing benefits of sport (see next section) therefore reach some of the most vulnerable and those who may be put off formal, competitive sport.
- **Positive role models** – LTOs often have staff or volunteers with lived experiences of the issues faced by C&YP. They act as positive role models and provide inspiration.
- **Positive pathways** – LTOs can help C&YP gain skills, confidence and develop a ‘pro-social identity’. This could be by giving them responsibilities within the organisation so they can contribute and helping them access education and training.

Families also benefit as LTOs provide accessible play provision and childcare, reducing pressure on household budgets and enabling parents to work. This is particularly important during school holidays (RT2 Formative Report, p3).

LTOs can benefit **communities** as a whole. Their in-depth understanding of the local area means they can **tailor provision** to what communities need and want – as opposed to what commissioners or funders may think is important.

Many LTOs provide **support that is greater than the contract** and is more of a ‘holistic’ service to communities e.g. supporting C&YP outside of sessions. They also provide value for money by **leveraging in other resources**, such as donations, volunteering and other community support.

Case study: The impact of Kitchen Social

Kitchen Social was launched in 2017 by the Mayor's Fund for London to fund and support a range of different community hubs (schools, youth clubs, community centres, churches) across the city that were already working with children and young people to provide food and activities for low-income families during school holidays. These hubs are LTOs with multiple primary purposes.

Every hub provides a tailored offer to meet the needs of the children and young people they support – so each one is different.

Because of the scheme, community hubs have successfully:

- provided healthy meals to hungry children
- encouraged children to have fun
- engaged children in physical activity and provided a safe place to play
- helped prevent social isolation.

The scheme also impacted the community hubs, helped to build partnerships and develop networks with other organisations, enhanced their reputation and improved engagement within the community.

This case study is based on evidence submitted to Roundtable 2 (see RT Formative Report, p1). For more information on Kitchen Social: <https://www.mayorsfundforlondon.org.uk/kitchen-social/about-us/>

The impact of Covid-19 on LTOs

How LTOs adapted their activities in response to the pandemic's effect on C&YP in disadvantaged areas and the impact of this response on the LTOs themselves is now presented. This was the main topic of Roundtable 3 but also arose in Roundtables 4 & 5.

Response

As the virus began to spread and the UK entered 'lockdown' LTOs were quick to respond, their role changing in line with the needs of their neighbourhoods. Their local knowledge and strong relationships with residents and partner organisations meant they were uniquely placed to reach those needing support and they were often the first-place people turned to.

"When lockdown started we started driving round to work with the kids and then when total lockdown came we moved to digital. Contacting all young people once a week but most vulnerable 2 or 3 times a week. Phoning schools to organise laptops/meal vouchers etc., dropping off food parcels, nappies, whatever needed, we're phoning social services. Families are getting very frustrated by not getting anywhere when trying to get support – so they are doing phone calls for them with schools and authorities. Everyone knows that now so people are coming straight to them for help. They know who the families are and who needs what." (LTO participating in RT3 discussion)

In many instances, LTOs expanded from supporting individual C&YP to entire families (RT3 Report I, p4).

"It's not about the young people anymore, it's about the young people and their families, and the older people and grandparents who have nobody" (LTO participating in RT3 discussion)

Revised activities included:

- 1-2-1 mentoring with C&YP over the phone
- Organising online activities such as workouts/fitness activities, quizzes, and general social events
- Handing out activity packs and sports kit to C&YP to use at home

- Delivering food parcels and other supplies
- Organising phones/computers for C&YP to help with online learning and access to services
- Helping parents and families navigate statutory services such as social services and schools

Effect on LTOs

Reacting so swiftly, taking on such an important role and supporting so many people who were struggling, put immense pressure on LTOs. Finances, particularly those of smaller organisations, were affected by delivering pandemic relief, reductions in funding and reduced income as money making activities such as sports camps / after school clubs were no longer deliverable. At the same time, community need rose (RT3 Report I, p4). As the Roundtables were taking place, many LTOs were concerned about the funding of summer activities and the knock-on effect this would have on C&YP⁵. There were substantial concerns about longer-term sustainability (RT3 Report I, pp6-7).

“Our reserves should be able to keep us going for another month and a half which is not what we want to do, because we want to be able to open straight back up again as soon as we can. What we’re really worried about is what happens after in terms of supporting these kids. The mental health problems are on the rise. Trying to make sure they have the pots of funding in place to be there for people.” (LTO participating in RT3)

LTOs have responded by applying for new funding and government support, reducing activities, and cutting operational costs. Some talked about reducing or cutting their sports offer entirely and replacing it with something more sustainable, despite recognising its importance for C&YP (RT3 Report II, p3). Fundraising challenges included a lack of time, insufficient skills and a lack of information on available funds.

Roundtable participants hoped that LTOs’ value in supporting disadvantaged neighbourhoods had become more apparent over the past 18 months, due to their very visible response to the pandemic and their ability to support complex needs. It was hoped that this increased recognition would be reflected in more generous grant giving and funding in the future.

What role do LTOs play in social change? Key Points.

- LTOs exist to improve the lives of C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- LTOs occupy a unique position in communities. They understand and respond rapidly and flexibly to individual and community needs. They are trusted locally – meaning they can reach people other organisations may struggle to engage with - and are connected to other local organisation.
- C&YP benefit from their involvement with LTOs by being able to access sport (and gain physical and mental health benefits from it), being exposed to positive role models and accessing opportunities for a positive future.
- During Covid-19 LTOs were in an ideal position to respond quickly and flexibly, changing their activities to suit local communities.
- The pandemic has had a negative impact on LTOs’ finances with many concerned about long-term sustainability.

⁵ HAF funding to the end of 2022 has since been announced:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2021>

3. Why does sport matter to children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods?

This section covers the evidence gathered about the benefits of participating in sport – along with some limitations. Factors that affect participation in sport (barriers and enablers) are then discussed. Finally, the importance of providing informal sports provision is raised.

Benefits of sports participation

There is a myriad of well evidenced benefits for C&YP from participating in sport (RT5 Literature Review pp7-10) plus national guidelines for physical activity). Here we will focus on the most direct benefits first, before broadening out to wider benefits.

Individual **health** is improved by participating in sport:

- **Mental health and wellbeing** –positive mental health outcomes associated with sport participation include improved physical self-perceptions (competence, appearance, fitness), life satisfaction, happiness, quality of life, emotional experiences, a sense of meaning/ purpose, reduced levels of anxiety / depression and reduced loneliness (RT5 Literature Review, pp7-10).

Sport can be a safe place for C&YP to make mistakes and build resilience whilst rules help C&YP learn to regulate their behaviour on and off the pitch (RT1, Formative Report, p8)

- **Improved physical health** – Sport is a way of counteracting some negative health behaviours that are prevalent in disadvantaged areas (e.g. poor diet / low activity levels) and encourage more health promoting behaviours (RT1 Formative Report, pp8-9). When C&YP attend sports clubs, they can be more active and eat better food (RT2 Formative Report, p3).

Participation in sport also impacts on other areas of C&YPs' lives:

- **Supporting learning** – C&YP can learn new psychosocial and inter-personal skills like teamwork and co-operation from participating. It can also support C&YP's formal education and training, prevent 'learning loss' during school holidays (RT2 Formative Report, p3) and lead to sports-related qualifications (RT1 Formative Report, p9).
- **Social connections** – Sport can create a sense of affiliation, belonging and community with fellow participants and coaches that can combat feelings of loneliness. It provides opportunities to interact with people outside existing social circles (RT1 Formative Report, pp8-9; RT5 Formative Report, p3).
- **Positive influences** - Sport can divert C&YP away from negative behaviours and influences into more positive activities and places. It can introduce C&YP to new people and provide an environment to be with friends that is safe and supervised (RT1 Formative Report, pp8-9; RT5 Formative Report, p3).

For those at risk of offending, sports participation is identified as fulfilling the 'best response' criteria. It's a diversionary activity outside the youth system that is meaningful, productive and relevant to C&YP's needs (RT1 Literature Reviews (2019, pp8-10, 2020, p9).

While sport participation, in general, can be beneficial, young participants gain many benefits from the sport offered by LTOs. Many C&YP are interested in sport and want to participate, thus being drawn to these organisations. Volunteers and staff can then gradually gain their trust and build a relationship with them, meaning they are able to support them positively in other areas of their lives, further into

the future. Certain sports are more appealing than others. For example, boxing and going ‘sparring’ has credibility with many young men and boys in disadvantaged areas. (RT1, Formative Report, p8)

One participant at the LTO visited in RT1 came from a family with a long history of prolific offending. The 11-year-old boy was illiterate and had been excluded from various schools. He had been issued with ASBOs and was being supported by child and adolescent mental health services. The LTO was able to use his passion for boxing to engage positively with him and his family. With the long-term support of the LTO he re-entered school, gained qualifications, a full-time career and now volunteers at the LTO. (RT1 Formative Report, p3)

Roundtable participants agreed that sport can contribute to a ‘preventative approach’ across a number of agendas (i.e. health, education, crime). It has a ‘social value’ and acts as a stimulus for positive social change for individuals and communities (RT4 Formative Report, p3).

Possible negative consequences

Becoming injured, feeling incompetent or excluded means sport can have a negative impact on mental health. Poorly organised or inappropriately delivered activities, can make C&YP feel humiliated or alienated as a result of failing. This can lead to negative outcomes such as an increased risk of offending (RT1 Literature Review (2019, p10), RT5 Literature Review, p10)).

Sport, on its own, cannot solve all the challenges facing C&YP living in disadvantaged areas (see Section 1). Focusing too much on sport could divert attention away from addressing structural issues such as high rates of poverty and social exclusion.

“[It is] Important to acknowledge that sport is fantastically promising, has so many opportunities but it can’t do it on its own, sport cannot work in isolation.” (RT1 Formative Report, p9)

Barriers and enablers to sport participation for C&YP in disadvantaged communities

A multitude of factors - social, cultural, economic, and environmental - affect C&YPs participation in sport. Overlapping and interacting, they have a cumulative impact (RT4 Formative Report, p3).

The context that C&YP live in, including social, organisational, and environmental factors, are more significant influences on sport participation than individual factors such as their tastes and preferences (RT5 Formative Report, p4; RT 5 Literature Review, pp10-12).

The **cost** of taking part in sport can be a significant barrier to participation, with evidence connecting higher participation rates with higher household income (RT5 Literature Review, pp10-12). Costs can be direct (e.g. entrance / joining / subscription fees), indirect (e.g. travel / parking / childcare / clothing / equipment), as well as opportunity costs such as reduced or lost work hours for parents. Just offering free or low-cost entrance does not remove the cost barrier entirely (RT4 Literature Review, pp.19-20).

Sports facilities and clubs are unevenly distributed across communities. C&YP living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods have access to fewer and poorer quality sport **facilities** compared to those living in more affluent areas, with the amount of space/facilities for sport increasing faster in more affluent neighbourhoods (RT4, Literature Review, pp14-15). Even where facilities do exist, cost and travel barriers exist. Community transport picking up C&YP and taking them to nearby sports facilities is an example of a way of overcoming this barrier (RT5 Formative Report, p4).

Communities in urban and deprived neighbourhoods also have relatively **fewer sports clubs**. Holiday clubs, for example, are less likely to be in neighbourhoods with a greater proportion of ethnic minorities (RT2 Literature Review, p18). C&YP living in disadvantaged areas therefore have a limited choice of sport to take part in, such as boxing, swimming, gymnastics and karate (RT4, Literature Review, p15).

The **environment**, more broadly, is also relevant. C&YP living in deprived areas lack access to spaces they feel safe and can be active in (RT4 Literature Review, pp25-26; RT5, Formative Report, p4).

Austerity cuts to local authority budgets have made it more challenging for C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods to take part in sport. Cuts to youth services mean there are less things for C&YP to participate in. More broadly, a general worsening of the living conditions that allow C&YP to flourish (e.g. feeling safe, good living conditions, well-fed) discouraged participation (All RTs).

Societal factors affecting participation include:

- The **tastes and preferences** of other people in the neighbourhood. C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods can prefer to focus on status and identity, socialising and paying off debts rather than taking part in formal or organised sport.
- **'Sporting capital'** - this includes clubs and local traditions of playing sport. This has declined in disadvantaged communities, making playing sport less socially acceptable and desirable (RT4, Literature Review, p18).
- **Family** and parental support and encouragement to take part in sport as a player, spectator, or volunteer is a big influence on C&YP's participation (RT5 Formative Report, p4)
- **Competition** for C&YP's free time from things like television and video games (RT5 Formative Report, p4).

Psychological factors, leading the individual to think that 'sport is not for me' are also relevant. These include body image concerns, a lack of confidence, a lack of motivation, anxiety, and fears about competence (RT4 Formative Report, p3; RT5 Formative Report, p5)

How **organisations and institutions** are set up can also act as barriers to participation (RT4 Formative Report, p3). 'Allies' and 'gatekeepers' within organisations can have the power to encourage or discourage participation amongst C&YP, whilst many organisations lack the capacity or the skills to engage effectively. Within a neighbourhood there is a **'mixed-market'** for sports provision with a variety of organisations operating - including local and national government, NHS, VCSE, sport governing bodies, and private providers. They have their own agendas, priorities, and ways of working, potentially competing against each other rather than working together to provide the best service for C&YP.

How sport is delivered

Informal vs formal sport was discussed in all Roundtables. Formal sports often receive significant investment, with C&YP being channelled towards them (starting with school PE). Whilst this type of sport suits some C&YP it can discourage many from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (RT5 Literature Review, p12)

More informal sports receive little investment, yet often appeal to those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This is because it can be built around their preferences, with more flexible expectations around, for example, kit and behaviour, lower cost, and teams / competitions are not the emphasis. Examples of this type of provision include StreetGames' 'Doorstep Sport' and Parkrun. The Commission felt that a shift to a more rounded approach to participation and enjoyment, including more investment to support community-led provision, is necessary.

Why does sport matter to children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods?

Key Points:

- Young people want to take part in sport with their friends – it is a valuable social event
- Taking part in sport can improve C&YP's mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Sport can support learning, extend social connections and divert C&YP away from negative influences and towards positive places and people.
- Some benefits come directly from sport, others from engaging with LTOs.
- Sport, on its own, cannot counteract all the challenges associated with living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood.

- Many varied factors affect participation in sport. C&YP living in disadvantaged areas have less good access to sporting facilities and clubs and may lack safe spaces. Cost is also a barrier.
- Some sporting organisations struggle to engage with C&YP in disadvantaged areas.
- Currently sport is provided in an uneven, patchwork way, rather than focusing on what the C&YP in a neighbourhood need.
- Informal sport often appeals more to C&YP in disadvantaged areas, yet it lacks funding and recognition.

4. What do Locally Trusted Organisations have to say about ‘what works’?

This section describes what *could* or *should* be happening to promote sport participation amongst C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Universal and targeted provision

Both **universal** provision (i.e. sport for all C&YP in an area) and **targeted** provision (i.e. more intensive support for at risk C&YP) have an important role. However, funding reductions and more acute issues emerging are leading to universal approaches being phased out. (RT1 Formative Report, pp7-8) This means that many C&YP in disadvantaged areas that still need support to participate in sport are missing out on opportunities because they do not fulfil narrow criteria for being involved (RT2 Formative Report, p5). It also means that the preventative element of sport participation – to stop things getting worse – is lost. It is important to ensure provision reaches the ‘quiet people’ as well as the ‘usual suspects’ (RT5 Formative Report, p5).

Tailored provision

Developing provision around the needs, experiences and personalities of C&YP is important. They will have diverse attitudes and preferences around sport so a generic ‘one size fits all’ approach is not appropriate. There also needs to be a good understanding of the specific barriers to participation that are affecting them, so programmes can address these. (RT5 Formative Report, pp5-6)

The type of sport they might enjoy needs to be explored and understood. Walking and cycling, often seen as an ideal way of meeting physical activity guidelines, can be unsatisfactory for C&YP who very often do them out of necessity, not enjoyment. (RT4 Formative Report, p6; RT5 Formative Report, p3)

Competitive and formal sports may deter some C&YP in disadvantaged areas (see earlier) but Roundtable participants believe that creating opportunities to participate for those that want to be involved in these activities is important.

People

Having the right **sports coaches and people** involved in organising and delivering sport is vital (RT1 Formative Report, p6; RT4 Formative Report, pp6-7). They are key to promoting **sports participation** among C&YP in disadvantaged communities, being able, for example, to support those who are less confident and may be apprehensive about taking part (RT4 Formative Report, pp6-7). Having lived experience is particularly valuable as they act as **positive role models**, providing inspiration to the C&YP.

The LTO visited in RT1 told the story of one of their participants who had come to them after an accident that had left them as a wheelchair user. After spending time at the LTO he eventually qualified as a gym instructor level 2. He is now able to motivate and inspire other young people with disabilities or those who think they can’t do something. (RT1 Formative Report, p6)

Finally, having people with the right skills involved can enhance the cross-sector impact of community sport (RT5 Literature Review, pp14-15)

Peer-led strategies can be effective at engaging C&YP (RT5 Literature Review, p15). About 25% of Chance to Shine’s Street Cricket coaches are ex-participants and, in evaluations, about 90% of participants said they look up to their coach (RT4 Formative Report, p6).

Other important attributes for people involved in delivering sport to C&YP are:

- Being adaptable
- Being authoritative but not authoritarian
- Passionate people committed to the community
- Having experience working with C&YP (who may exhibit ‘challenging behaviour’)

- Being trained in mental health first aid and / or trauma informed approaches

A key challenge relating to coaches and organisers is a lack of **skills** and training. Primary school teachers, for example, get minimal PE training and therefore often lack confidence teaching sport. Coaches have sport-specific skills, yet they may lack pastoral skills or experience in health promotion work (RT2 Literature Review, p20). Retaining coaches and organisers is an important and significant challenge (RT4 Formative Report, p6).

Volunteers are vital in the provision of sport for C&YP (RT5 Formative Report, p7). They also have a role in empowering and connecting people. A key challenge is recruiting and retaining volunteers. People from disadvantaged neighbourhoods and women are much less likely to be sports volunteers (RT4 Literature Review, p17). They want to feel inspired, supported and valued. Organisers need to be aware of the pressure volunteers can be under.

Place-based approaches

Successfully engaging C&YP in disadvantaged areas requires interventions that reflect the specific constraints and conditions of a 'place' – at a neighbourhood or 'hyper-local' level (RT1 Formative Report, p5; RT4 Formative Report, pp4-5; RT5 Formative Report, pp6-7). These conditions can be deep-set and longstanding. As such, simply transplanting a successful operation from one area to another is not possible. Specific local cultural and social issues need to be addressed. (See RT5 Formative Report, p7 and Literature Review pp19-21).

Boxing clubs, for example, are often prevalent in disadvantaged neighbourhoods because they are low cost, able to adapt to available space and have credibility (RT4 Literature Review, p26). Some communities are unlikely to have specialist sports facilities and so providers must adapt to what is available. Various forms of group exercise (i.e. Zumba, dance, yoga) can be delivered in communities using existing spaces, with little specialist equipment or facilities (RT4 Formative Report, p5).

Other valuable strategies when working with disadvantaged neighbourhoods are:

- Bringing sport to participants - thus reducing travel, time and cost barriers (RT4 Formative Report, p5).
- An informal style of delivery that can flex to participants' needs. Traditional clubs may appear too exclusive (RT4 Formative Report, pp4-5).

The ideal ingredients were described by one Roundtable participant as:

- Right time – not too early in the morning for teenagers
- Right place – within walking distance and in their neighbourhood
- Right people – trusted leaders, from a similar area
- Right price – most LTOs do not charge and if they do then the amount is a small weekly sub.

Long-term support

Providing long-term support to C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is important. Delivery all year rather than following the 'seasons' of many sports, gives participants consistency and encourages retention (RT4 Literature Review, p26).

The LTO visited in RT1 described themselves as like 'a family' with participants given support when they need it, over the long-term. Unlike many statutory services, C&YP are not 'exited' when they reach a certain defined point. (RT1 Formative Report, pp6-7)

Co-production

Producing interventions *with* communities is critical and goes hand-in-hand with a place-based approach (RT4 Formative Report, p5). Co-production appreciates that C&YP (and the people that support them) are the experts in their own lives and in their experiences of sport. Asking them for

solutions is more likely to lead to relevant, appropriate and creative ideas supported by the local community. Local skills and assets can also be tapped into, maximising resources (RT5 Literature Review, p13).

Partnership working and collaboration

Agencies, organisations and communities need to work together towards a common goal of supporting C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (RT1 Literature Review (2019), p10; RT2 Formative Report, p7; RT5 Formative Report, p6). This includes collaboration between different sports agencies/providers and between these and other agencies operating in a local area, such as local authorities, schools, police, social services, housing associations, and VCSE groups.

Schools have a crucial role as they can help establish positive habits and set young people on the path towards more physical activity (RT4 Formative Report, pp5-6). Local authorities are critical as they work across sectors and are at the centre of local networks (RT5 Formative Report, p6).

A 'multi-agency' approach can broaden the offer to C&YP and increase the chance of engaging the 'right' C&YP, build trust between C&YP and institutions, and facilitate the improvement of C&YP's skills, qualifications and behaviours. (RT5 Formative Report, p6).

Partnerships can also enhance access to stable resources, which can help sustain delivery.

Other features of 'what works?' discussed briefly during the Commission include:

- Providing C&YP with challenges that will develop skills, self-efficacy and revise self-identity but are realistic in order to minimise the chance of failure.
- Providing rewards for participating to recognise achievement and build self-confidence.
- Specifically designing activities towards positive health and wellbeing outcomes – hoping or assuming such outcomes will flow from the activity is not sufficient.

What do Locally Trusted Organisations have to say about 'what works'? Key Points.

- Programmes that include all C&YP in a neighbourhood are needed as well as those just for 'at risk' C&YP.
- Programmes need to be designed around and with input from C&YP themselves.
- Having the right people involved can improve reach, participation and provide inspiration. A lack of skills and training is a challenge.
- Locally recruited volunteers, ideally from the ranks of participants, are vital but need more support.
- Programmes need to utilise a neighbourhood's assets.
- Co-producing programmes is likely to lead to more relevant interventions that local communities support.
- Agencies and organisations need to work together in a neighbourhood towards a common goal.

5. What do commissioners expect (for their money)?

This section focuses on two themes that dominated discussions: funding models and the monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

Funding

Funding is an ever-present issue for LTOs. Substantial issues with current funding models were raised, including:

- **Insufficient** funding. This leads to providers having to compromise the quality of service they provide to come within budget (RT2 Formative Report, pp3-4).

Pre-Covid, government austerity led to support services for C&YP being cut and access thresholds raised. LTOs are therefore having to deal with the impact of wider social issues on C&YP. Many are supporting individuals with a **high level of mental health or social needs** – something they may not have the expertise for.

Focusing on more acute issues has led to a **reduction in universal** and preventative interventions (RT1 Formative Report, p8).

The **pandemic** has worsened the funding situation for many LTOs (RT3 Report II, pp2-5). Funders switched their focus to help organisations respond to the crisis, meaning medium term funding has reduced.

- Being overly **prescriptive** or ‘top down.’ This could include only allowing certain ages or people from particular postcodes to attend or limiting the amount of time people can attend for. This runs counter to the approach that works best for C&YP in disadvantaged communities – long-term, inclusive support in a consistent, safe place and co-produced with the community.

A potential positive from the pandemic response is that funders provided more flexible, less prescriptive funding and saw that LTOs can be trusted to meet the needs of communities.

- **Short-term**, project based, funding. This aspect of the current funding model encourages reinvention and novelty – as a proxy for progress - when existing programmes or activities may be working (RT5 Formative Report, p8). It makes it more difficult to retain staff and increases the fragility of organisations, particularly smaller or newer ones.

Fundamentally, short-term funding does not reflect the long-term nature of the work that LTOs are doing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It can take years to build trust with communities and individuals and for programmes to become established.

“Many, many people gave up on [a particular individual] because you couldn’t fix him or turn him around within the space in a year. He came from generations of offending, ..., worklessness, you can’t change that in someone in 1 year, 2 years, 3 years it takes a very, very long time and the message from that really is that people need to invest in the long term.”
(RT1 Formative Report, p9)

- **Competitive tendering** processes are costly, time-consuming and result in an inequitable distribution of funding (RT2 Formative Report, p4) Funding is awarded to organisations with the time, skills and connections to write the best proposals - not necessarily to where it is most needed.

Short term funding, coupled with competitive tendering processes, distract from service delivery.

Improvements

Roundtables called for longer-term funding (5-10 years) to allow time to build trust with communities and for programmes to become established (RT1 Formative Report, pp9-10; RT3 Report II, p2). This would involve moving away from short-term project-based work that requires innovation for its own sake.

There was a call for power to be devolved away from central funders and greater trust placed in local delivery agents to work with communities in the most appropriate way.

Participants felt it was time to move beyond pilot programmes and instead invest in trusted organisations.

An alternative to competitive tendering could be for local areas – perhaps via local authorities - to receive grant funding proportionate to their need.

Increased funding needs to be provided in such a way that it does not lead to generic private-sector providers replacing smaller, local providers. This would reduce many of the benefits identified in Section 2.

Case study: Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) funding in the North East

The Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) fund provides money for free holiday activities and healthy food during school holidays for children in receipt of free school meals. Local Authorities bid to fund activities in their area.

In 2018-2020, the amount of money available was £9million per year to cover the summer holidays. In 2021, the amount was increased to up to £220million to cover Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. However, the scale of the funding has been inadequate to meet demand.

Across the North East of England, HAF funding has facilitated the provision of free holiday activities and healthy food to thousands of children and young people. But many more have missed out. There are almost 93,000 children in receipt of free school meals in the North East, yet in 2018-2020 the scheme only support supported up to 50,000 children a year across the whole country.

The number and value of unsuccessful bids made from local authorities in the North East (11 in 2019 and 7 in 2020) demonstrates the need for a consistent offer of free holiday provision across the region. It is deeply frustrating that the HAF programme has remained a limited, pilot scheme after three years of operation, and that its long-term future remains unclear.

While the funding coming into the North East is welcomed, it is not right that local authorities compete against each other. It is a drain on resources, discourages collaboration, and is a distraction from supporting children and young people. It is also not right that thousands of children miss out on support because they do not meet the threshold for benefits related free school meals but may still be seriously struggling.

Long-term, sustainable funding is – targeted at local communities where disadvantage and child poverty is high but in a way that is accessible to all children who need it. Funding should be devolved to local authorities and VCSE sector organisations working at a local level, who best understand the needs and assets of their communities and local families.

This case study is based on evidence submitted to Roundtable 2 (see RT Formative Report, p1).

Monitoring and evaluation

The importance of monitoring and evaluation was recognised; there needs to be accountability for funds (RT1 Formative Report, p10). However, some of the methods and approaches used were felt to be inappropriate, ineffective, or adversely impacting on LTOs' abilities to deliver (RT1 Formative Report, pp10-12).

Specific issues identified include:

- The assessment time is generally **too short**. Funders may expect to see progress in months but it may take years for an individual to overcome the challenges they face.
- Overly intrusive monitoring acts as a **barrier to engagement**. This is especially true for C&YP distrustful of authority but who are important to engage.
- It often measures the **wrong** things e.g. offending behaviour (when it is recognised relapse will occur) as opposed to those outcomes that LTOs can have an impact on e.g. participation and engagement
- Traditional evaluation is less effective at proving the impact of **prevention** (e.g. a young person not offending).
- The **burden** of doing Monitoring and Evaluation is disproportionately high for small organisations who are not experts in this area.

Base-line assessments were criticised for:

- **Lacking validity** as very often C&YP do not feel able to tell the truth about negative feelings and behaviours at the beginning of their relationships with an organisation. Later on when progress is 'measured' the monitoring data does not present a true reflection of what has happened.
- Being **biased**, as organisations may only do them with those who will not be put off. This is often the less 'challenging' C&YP.

Overall, there is a tension between needing 'proof' that funded organisations are making a difference and appreciating that doing monitoring and evaluation can adversely affect their ability to make this difference. This could be because it puts C&YP off attending, or because organisations' time and effort is diverted away from delivery. Issues of power and trust between funders and providers emerged during discussions.

Possible Improvements

The ideal monitoring and evaluation system needs to allow LTOs, often not expert evaluators, to focus on their key role of supporting and engaging C&YP. It also needs to reflect what they are able to impact on and their style of delivery. Suggested improvements include (RT5 Formative Report, pp8-9):

- Do not ask LTOs to provide evidence that has been gathered elsewhere. Consider instead identifying what ingredients make a successful intervention and then assessing whether these are being provided.
- Having a more long-term perspective - to reflect the work LTOs do
- Measure 'process' type outcomes such as participation and relationships – these are realistic for LTOs to affect
- Co-produce monitoring and evaluation with C&YP and communities to incorporate their stories and voices. Ensure they are involved in designing frameworks that measure what is important in their lives.
- Stakeholders need to agree on the aim of the evaluation
- Involve 'expert' or professional researchers – particularly in the design. This helps ensure validity and gives credibility at a policy level.

- Consider partnership approaches between professional researchers and sport organisations as a way of up-skilling LTOs to self-evaluate.
- Utilise C&YP as ‘peer researchers’ to produce more valid results and build their skills and confidence.
- If flexible, place-based approaches to delivery are utilised, then monitoring and evaluation needs to reflect this.

What do Commissioners expect (for their money)? Key Points:

- Funding models and monitoring and evaluation dominated discussions on commissioning.
- LTOs are working with C&YP experiencing extremely high and multiple-disadvantage – often more than they are equipped to support – and doing less preventative work because insufficient funding brought on by government austerity.
- Funding for LTOs needs to be longer-term (5-10 years) and funding decisions need to be devolved to local decision makers.
- Monitoring and evaluation are necessary but current methods don’t ‘fit’ with the work of LTOs.
- Improvements include having a longer-term perspective, using less intrusive methods and focusing on process / intermediary outcomes that LTOs can realistically achieve.
- Co-production with C&YP, utilising both expert and peer researchers are recommended.
- There needs to be greater trust between LTOs and funders.

Key Learnings

At the outset of the Commission's work we knew that:

- Lack of access to and lower levels of participation in sport are two inequalities experienced by children and young people (CYP) living in low-income communities, and sports policy and national strategy in the UK over the past 70 years have been relatively ineffective in impacting on these inequalities.
- Participation in sport is evidenced to impact upon both physical and mental health. CYP in low-income communities experience higher levels of poor mental health than those in more affluent areas and lower levels of participation. With the multiple social inequalities that CYP in low-income communities experience they have the most to gain from access to and participation in sport.
- Access to and participation in sport unlocks other life-enhancing benefits including developing a range of soft skills, reducing loneliness and isolation, and supporting a pro-social identity.
- Whilst many CYP do not want to access more structured competitive sport those that do are often unable to due to a lack of club infrastructure and lower levels of volunteering in low-income communities.
- There is a positive association between being active and mental wellbeing,
- individual development and social & community development

During the Commission process we quickly learnt that:

The Covid-19 pandemic was having a disproportionate impact on CYP living in low-income communities, exacerbating existing inequalities and levels of need, forcing the organisations working in them to focus on short-term pandemic relief, and widening the gap in access to and participation in sport.

There are established approaches which do engage young people from low-income neighbourhoods and it seems the preferences of this cohort are not too different from other cohorts. Some want to do formal sport with skills and drills. Competition is their driver. Others are keener on casual, amended games and exercise with their friends. Fun is their driver.

We have confirmed that the type of sporting offer which the cohort finds attractive is often delivered by an organisation that is not a pay-and-play provider but one that is well established in the neighbourhood and a trusted part of the local landscape. We have used the acronym LTOs (locally trusted organisations) to describe these diverse organisations with common characteristics:

- Sport and physical activity facilitated or provided by trusted local organisations (LTOs) can close the sporting inequality gap and impact on wider social inequalities faced by young people living in low- income communities including crime and anti-social behaviour, improving health, and addressing the holiday gap.
- LTOs address the multiple inequalities faced by low- income communities and are skilled at understanding and engaging young people.
- LTOs share characteristics that enable their effectiveness including their non-judgemental understanding of CYP and desire to improve their lives; their embedded and trusted role in local neighbourhoods; their ability to respond quickly to local need and engage and support young people.
- LTOs have assets that enable them to increase access to and participation in sport and physical activity including local staff and volunteers that act as positive role models and their ability to offer tailored positive opportunities and pathways for young people in sport, physical activity, and volunteering.
- LTOs take a holistic approach to improving the lives of people in their communities and young people understand the LTO staff are on their side. These relationships are not transactional.

- LTOs are agile and have been historically able to access a range of funding for their work.
- The increase in levels of demand on LTOs during the pandemic have stretched their resources, in some cases to the point where they have used their reserves and are concerned for their future sustainability.
- LTOs risk spending a disproportionate amount of their time on funding applications and reporting requirements due to the shorter-term nature of much of the funding now available to them.

The benefits of LTOs for individuals include:

- LTOs can reach young people who may not normally participate in sport. The health and wellbeing benefits of sport therefore reach some of the most vulnerable and those who may be put off formal, competitive sport.
- LTOs often have staff or volunteers with lived experiences of the issues faced by C&YP. They act as positive role models and provide inspiration, help and support.
- LTOs can help children and young people gain skills, confidence and develop a 'pro-social identity'.

On the delivery of sport and physical activity in low-income communities we have learnt that:

- Sport needs to be delivered in a way that both addresses the range of individual and environmental barriers to access and is shaped to the needs, motivations, and preferences of the participants.
- A flexible, youth-led, informal sporting offer, as opposed to a traditional club-based 'skills and drills' approach is often more effective in engaging CYP in low-income communities.
- Understanding the nature of the activities that work for CYP in their own neighbourhood is important. There is no 'one size fits all'. Some young people do want to play traditional NGB sport and are unable to because of cultural, financial and geographical barriers.
- Young people must both trust the organisation and enjoy the sporting experience offered i.e. the nature of the organisation and people providing sporting opportunities is as important as the way in which that sport is provided
- It is safe to assume young people attend with their friends and attend because their friends are attending.
- Having the right people leading and facilitating activity is crucial both to the initial engagement of CYP and to their ongoing participation and achievement of wider benefits.
- Lower levels of volunteering in low-income communities can be addressed through a 'grow your own' approach, where LTOs support and develop young people as positive local leaders and role models.
- Collaboration and partnership working are vital to ensuring a holistic approach to supporting CYP both with their engagement in sport and physical activity and wider life chances.

On the funding and monitoring of sport and physical activity in low-income communities we learnt that LTOs:

- Face a range of challenges in funding the provision of sport and physical activity in their communities including an overall reduction in the funding available and the increasingly short-term nature of funding opportunities.
- Identify a reduction in funding available for universal or preventative approaches and an increasingly top-down and targeted approach to funding by commissioners.
- See the increasing move towards competitive tendering as part of the public sector approach to commissioning as extremely resource intensive and often beyond the capabilities of LTOs who are best placed to access and support CYP.

- Believe that competitive tendering increases the risk of larger providers being ‘parachuted in’ to local communities without the established trust relationships and deep understanding of the needs of those areas.
- Monitoring expectations of commissioners as often setting unrealistic timescales for achieving change and leading to the wrong focus in terms of delivering outcomes CYP.
- Believe that the trust-based relationship they have with the communities they serve could be better reflected in the relationships between funders/commissioners and LTOs.

Conclusions and recommendations: What are the implications for future social and sports policy?

Children and young people (C&YP) from disadvantaged areas continue to be excluded from sport. We know this because the data on participation rates tell us it is so⁶ and because of testimony from Roundtable participants for this Commission. Recent strategies to promote participation among this group have largely been unsuccessful because they have been too ‘top down’ in their development and delivery and have not taken account of the specific needs and preferences of C&YP across diverse communities. Exceptions, such as StreetGames’ *Doorstep Sport* have been successful because they have proactively addressed the barriers that C&YP in disadvantaged communities face to participation in sport and been delivered in ways that appeal to those C&YP.

To enable C&YP living in disadvantaged communities to take part in sport and physical activity how they would like, provision needs to be built around the needs and assets of individuals and neighbourhoods, using place-based and person-centred approaches. Locally trusted organisations (LTOs) are ideally placed to support this endeavour. They understand local places, have the reach into communities, are trusted by local people, and are connected into local networks. These findings support the emphasis of Sport England’s current *Uniting the Movement* strategy.

Working with and supporting LTOs at a strategic level and in the delivery of provision is a practical action to support the aspirations of *Uniting the Movement*. However, just doing more with LTOs is not a panacea. C&YP living in disadvantaged areas continue to be affected – disproportionately compared to their more well-off peers – by broader social issues (e.g. housing, employment, local authority budget cuts) that not only impact on their participation in sport but also their health and wellbeing in general, which need to be addressed. Inequalities in sports participation are a reflection of inequalities in society.

Recommendations

This section presents recommendations for the Commission, based on the evidence gathered, that support the overall aspiration of building provision around the needs and assets of individuals and neighbourhoods, using place-based and person-centred approaches.

Recommendations are split into those relating to funding, policy, practice, and research and evaluation. The right-hand columns denote which type of organisation the recommendations are most relevant to.

⁶ <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-12/Active%20Lives%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%20Survey%20Academic%20Year%202020-21%20Report.pdf?VersionId=3jpdwfbWB4PNtKJGxwbyu5Y2nuRFMBV>

| Funding Recommendations | | LTOs | Funders / Governing Bodies | Policy Makers | Researchers |
|--------------------------------|--|------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Understand LTOs are valuable neighbourhood assets. Work towards a culture where LTOs are trusted to deliver, including recognising that successful LTOs operate in a multiplicity of ways, rather than being prescriptive. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 | Place more decision-making power at a local level. | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 3 | Work towards a model that provides long-term consistent funding for LTOs who are best able to reach and engage C&YP. | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 4 | Join up funding locally for projects that are delivering multiple outcomes. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 5 | Distribute funding to neighbourhoods based on need, rather than relying on a bidding process that favours larger, more sophisticated organisations. | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 6 | Communicate funding opportunities to smaller LTOs (e.g. Webinars on grant rounds) | | ✓ | | |
| 7 | Appreciate that informal sport may be more appropriate than formal sport for some C&YP. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

| Policy Recommendations | | LTOs | Funders / Governing Bodies | Policy Makers | Researchers |
|-------------------------------|--|------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 8 | Embed participation as a guiding principal throughout your organisation, as opposed to it being the remit of one person or team. Work with other stakeholders in a strategic, joined up way, in order to align agendas. | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 9 | Recognise, articulate, and advocate the power of LTOs to reactivate and change narratives around neighbourhoods. | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 10 | Think ambitiously about how sport for C&YP can have a positive impact on a wide range of government agendas (e.g. Obesity, Levelling Up, mental health) and departments (health, education, crime). Develop a business case for connecting these together. | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 11 | Ensure sport for C&YP is included in post-Covid recovery strategies / programmes. | | ✓ | ✓ | |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|--|
| 12 | Understand the limitations of sport to mitigate the risks associated for C&YP living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. Work with others to take action to address the underlying causes of low participation i.e. income, housing / employment, and education. | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 13 | Have greater clarity of purpose re what organisations are trying to achieve by involving C&YP in sport. If this does not yield immediate benefits it will require courage from local leaders. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

| Practice Recommendations | | LTOs | Funders / Governing Bodies | Policy Makers | Researchers |
|---------------------------------|---|------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 14 | Work in partnership with other local stakeholders to ensure a 'joined up' service for C&YP in a neighbourhood. | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 15 | Use existing evidence of what works to engage C&YP more effectively | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 16 | Establish ways to share knowledge and good practice between LTOs – a network or alliance to support people and organisations. | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 17 | Develop a unified voice for LTOs to lobby policy and decision makers – so that the unique value of these organisations is appreciated. | ✓ | | | |
| 18 | Appreciate the crucial role of volunteers. Focus on how best to develop and support them to create sustainable networks. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 19 | Improve capabilities of LTOs via training and skills development e.g. bid writing, financial planning, public health | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 20 | Establish connections between sport workforces in LTOs and statutory services such as public health so they can work together to improve effectiveness. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

| Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Recommendations | | LTOs | Funders / Governing Bodies | Policy Makers | Researchers |
|--|--|------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 21 | Evaluate in a way that is less intrusive to C&YP and organisations | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 22 | Judge success based on what is realistic for organisations to affect in the shorter term i.e. intermediary outcomes. These could include reach, engagement, participation. | | ✓ | ✓ | |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Recognise personal stories / first-person accounts from C&YP, as evidence. | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 24 | Develop a more robust evidence base that is specific to C&YP and their participation in sport in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementation and impact of holiday provision. • information / a national database on provision. • consistent ways of measuring rates of participation • understanding multiple and overlapping barriers to participation e.g. cultural diversity • roles / complexity of volunteering • longitudinal studies of impact • understanding the effect and impact of living in particular situations • causal mechanisms between community sport and improved mental health and wellbeing | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

References

1. Audickas L. Sport Participation in England. London; 2017.
2. Department for Digital C, Media and Sport,. Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation. London; 2015.
3. Mansfield L. Chiles-Webster-Baston Commission 2020-21: Evidence Review. Community Sport, Health and Wellbeing. London; 2021.
4. Shibli S, Barrett D, Storey R, Goldsmith S. Chiles Commission Evidence Review: Growing Participation. Sheffield; 2020.
5. Shinwell J, Mann E, Defeyter G. Holiday Provision in the UK: Literature Review. Newcastle; 2020.
6. Sport England. Active Lives Adult Survey: November 2019/20 Report. London; 2021.
7. Sport England. Active Lives Children and Young People Survey: Academic Year 2020-21. London; 2021.
8. Sport England. Uniting the Movement: a 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. London; 2021.
9. Streetgames. The Batson Chiles Webster Commission on Sport and Low Income Neighbourhoods. From Agile to Fragile: Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on the financial position of community organisations. Manchester; 2021.
10. Streetgames. The Experience of the Coronavirus Lockdown in Low-Income Areas of England and Wales. Manchester; 2021.
11. Tacon R. Sport policy and the structure of sport in the UK. Managing Sport Business: Routledge; 2018. p. 58-76.

12. Walpole C, Mason C, Case S, Downward P. Safer Together Through Sport: Creating Partnerships for Positive Change. Literature Review Summary Update - January 2020. Loughborough; 2020.
13. Walpole C, Mason C, Case S, Downward P. Safer Together: Creating Partnerships for Positive Change. Loughborough; 2019.
14. Widdop P, King N, Parnell D, Cutts D, Millward P. Austerity, policy and sport participation in England. International journal of sport policy and politics. 2018;10(1):7-24.

Appendix 1: Report writing methodology

Formative Reports (x5)

Each Roundtable discussion was recorded. Participants were informed beforehand of this and the fact that their anonymised contributions could feature in the reports produced. This process received the approval of LBU's ethics process. The authors undertook critical listening of the recordings, taking extensive notes. A thematic analysis was then conducted with the authors drawing out key themes. These were then compared to the evidence review and any additional reports that had been provided.

The themes were then presented in the formative reports, draft versions of which were circulated for comments to ensure validity. Final versions of each of these reports are available (see Table 1). Please note this process differed for Roundtable 3 – StreetGames undertook the analysis and report writing as this was an additional theme introduced due to Covid-19.

The change in Roundtable format, necessitated by the Covid crisis, did impact on the data collected. A high level of attendance was maintained in all the Roundtables which was positive. However, having to hold the discussions on-line and not being able to visit LTOs reduced the scope to practically demonstrate impact in local communities and made discussions less free-flowing.

Final Summative Report

This summary report is based on a 'secondary analysis' of the five formative reports and the literature reviews produced for each Roundtable. The latter were included in this analysis to ensure any themes identified in the scientific literature, but not featured in the Roundtable discussions, were incorporated.

Each document was read and pieces of information that would help to answer the Commission's five key questions (see above) highlighted (i.e. thematic coding). Highlighted pieces of information – or 'codes' – were then grouped together with other similar codes to create overarching 'themes'. To complete the report, a short description of each theme and how it helped to answer the questions was written. This process was carried out by the authors. The coding was done using the computer programme NVivo 12.

Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisation funding

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper provides an overview of Arts Council England (ACE)'s latest National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding round as background to a presentation from Laura Dyer, Deputy Chief Executive of ACE. It also sets out initial plans for further engagement between ACE and the LGA. The CTS Board is asked to note the paper and share their views on the NPO decision making process.

Is this report confidential? Yes No

Recommendation/s

That CTS Board Members note the contents of the report and share their views on the NPO round.

Action/s

Officers will incorporate the Board's views as they develop their Shared Statement of Purpose with ACE.

Contact officer: Lauren Lucas
Position: Adviser- Culture, Tourism and Sport
Phone no: 0207 664 3323
Email: lauren.lucas@local.gov.uk

Commission on Culture and Local Government

Background

Let's Create

1. In January 2020, Arts Council England (ACE) published their strategy '[Let's Create](#)', which set out their vision and priorities for the next ten years. The LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board fed into the development of this strategy at several points and welcomed its publication, because of its recognition of the important role of local government in a place and its culture and its renewed focus on museums, libraries and 'every day' creative activity.
2. ACE's vision puts at its core three outcomes (creative people, cultural communities and a creative and cultural country) which will improve the cultural offer across the country for everyone. It also sets out four Investment Principles:
3. The strategy will be supported by a series of Delivery Plans, the first of which was published in 2021. It outlines a three-pronged approach to working in place:
 - 3.1 a universal offer that is accessible to all parts of the country ;
 - 3.2 continued work in places where joint investment in culture and opportunity to work with our partners and other arm's length bodies across heritage, sport, film, tourism and civil society are relatively high;
 - 3.3 priority places in which cultural engagement and ACE current investment are too low, and where, as a result, opportunities for creative and cultural engagement are underdeveloped.
4. Fifty-four places across England were selected as 'priority places'. They will remain their priority places for the duration of the Delivery Plan 2021-24. ACE will study local strategic plans and consult with key stakeholders in each place, including communities, local authorities, and cultural organisations, to understand their aspirations and how they connect with the Delivery Plan for 2021-24.
5. Priority places have been identified at local authority district level. Priority places have been selected by comparison with other places in their area, not other places nationally. To establish priority places, every local authority was given a score for **need** and **opportunity based across a range of metrics**. Need was defined by engagement and investment levels, plus other data sources, and opportunity (the capacity and ambition at this moment in time to increase engagement) was defined by a scored set of prompts.

Levelling Up

6. The Government has placed culture as an important pillar in its policies on levelling up. In February 2022, then Secretary of State for Culture Nadine Dorries announced her intention to address the 'historic imbalance' of arts funding: in previous years London has received around a third of all funding.

7. The government's Levelling-Up White Paper confirmed 100 per cent of ACE's budget uplift must be spent outside London to "significantly increasing cultural spending outside the capital", which was followed by confirmation funding redistributed away from London would be focused towards LUCP. The additional amount invested outside London by 2025 would be £75.5m: this included a £43.5m uplift to the Arts Council's programme funding from DCMS, £16m to be moved out of London in 2023/24, and a further £16m moved out of London in 2024/25. The CTS Board has previously called for a wider distribution of funding across the country.
8. Following the publication of the Priority Places list, ACE worked with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to identify an expanded list of 109 local authority areas, all outside of Greater London, which will be the focus for additional Arts Council England engagement and investment. These are called the **Levelling Up for Culture Places**.

National Portfolio Organisations

9. National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) are a group of arts and cultural organisations that get regular funding from ACE. The previous NPO funding programme ran from 2018 to 2022. A [new programme of investment](#) for 2023-26 was announced in November 2022.
10. Applications to be part of this programme were open between January and May 2022. You can read more about the application process [here](#). Applications were particularly high, with submissions from more than double the number of NPOs that ACE invest in. They received a total of 1,730 applications, requesting just over £2 billion over the three-year investment period. More details about the volume of applications and money distributed are available [on the ACE website](#).
11. Each application was taken on its own merits and all decisions were taken by ACE, involving a complex balancing process across region and art form.
12. Decisions were announced on the 4th November 2022:
 - 12.1 ACE is investing £446 million each year from 2023 to 2026. That investment will be made in 990 museums, libraries and arts organisations across the country. This includes 276 organisations that will be joining the programme.
 - 12.2 Funding for organisations outside of London is increasing by nearly £45 million each year.
 - 12.3 The Arts Council's Levelling Up for Culture Places will see a 95 per cent increase in investment, with 78 designated towns and cities to receive £43.5 million annually, for the next three years.
 - 12.4 There will be a 20 per cent increase in organisations delivering creative and cultural activity for children and young people.

13. Newcomers to the portfolio include Blackpool Illuminations (to commission contemporary artists, and support talent development for a network of light festivals and artists across the North); Unlimited in Yorkshire (who commission work by disabled artists including visual arts and theatre); The Postal Museum (which hosts interactive displays including tours of London's hidden tunnels on the Mail Rail), and intoBodmin (a community arts organisation in an old library building in the heart of Cornwall).
14. Arts Professional magazine has published [detailed analysis](#) of the NPO statistics, including helpful maps of the investment by local authority area. Some of the areas to benefit are as follows:
- 14.1 The largest increase will be seen in Croydon, an ACE Priority Place, where investment is increasing from £102,205 in 2018/19 to £1,168,980 in 2023/24. The increase results from the area gaining three new NPOs, with an additional two existing NPOs moving into the area.
- 14.2 Wigan is expected to see the second largest increase. An LUCP and Priority Place, investment in the area is increasing from £113,490 to £1,497,278 a year, due to two new NPOs, while one existing NPO now has its base in the area.
- 14.3 North Devon, also an LUCP and Priority Place, received the third largest increase, from £95,894 to £1,254,758 a year, after receiving two new NPOs, one of which (North Devon Theatres) will be receiving £1m per annum.
15. In total, **42 local authorities are set to see NPO funding in their area more than double**, with 29 of these located in LUCP and 23 including areas in ACE's Priority Places.
16. **41 local authorities represented in the 2023/26 portfolio that were not included in the last round of funding**. Around half (21) of these local authorities are listed in ACE's Levelling Up for Culture Places, while 15 feature in ACE's Priority Places.
17. The majority of bidders in England for the UK City of Culture 2025 title received sizeable uplifts in NPO funding in Arts Council England's (ACE) new national portfolio, [according to Arts Professional analysis](#). They compared the NPO funding received by eight areas of England that applied to be the next City of Culture in 2021/22 (Bradford, Cornwall, County Durham, Derby, Medway, Southampton, Wakefield and Wolverhampton) with what they are set to receive in 2023/24. Their analysis found seven of the eight areas will see their funding increase, while all have at least new one organisation based in their area joining the portfolio.
18. Arts Professional has also highlighted the [regional implications](#) for the new funding round. More money is still ring-fenced for the capital than anywhere else in the country, equating to around a third of the total portfolio. However, for the first time, the North of England is set to become the region with the most NPOs.

19. The number of NPOs increases in all regions outside the capital.

Implications for Wales

18. Arts Council England does not fund organisations in Wales as culture is a devolved matter.

Implications for inclusion, diversity and equality

19. 'Inclusivity and Relevance' is one of ACE's four 'Investment Principles' and they provide regular reporting on the [diversity and inclusion implications](#) of their work. Their [latest report](#) was published in July 2022.

Financial Implications

20. None

Next steps: Shared Statement of Purpose

21. The LGA and Arts Council England jointly signed a Shared Statement of Purpose in 2016, which set out:

- 21.1. Our shared partnership – how our partnership adds value to councils.
- 21.2. Our shared ambition – how the agreement helps to achieve our respective corporate priorities.
- 21.3. The context within which we are operating – the key economic and political trends that are shaping our partnership and how we support councils.
- 21.4. How we will work together – a set of shared principles that cover a place based approach, funding, leadership and support.
- 21.5. What we will do and actions – how we will monitor and keep the agreement relevant, and a summary of our 2016/17 joint improvement offer for councils

22. This statement was due for renewal in 2020. Because of the context of COVID-19, we instead jointly signed a [joint statement of response to the pandemic](#) between Arts Council England and local authority partners.

23. We are now developing a more detailed shared statement to set out our plans for collaboration over the next three years and will be bringing this back to the Board later in the year.

Meeting: CTS Board

Date: 1 February 2023



Commission on Culture and Local Government

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper aims to update members on progress of the Commission, including a summary of the launch event and progress on regional roadshows.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation/s

That the CTS Board Members note the contents of the report and share their views.

Contact details

Contact officer: Jacqueline Smale

Position: NGDP Graduate

Phone no: +447770688395

Email: jacqueline.smale@local.gov.uk

Commission on Culture and Local Government



Launch

1. The Commission on Culture and Local Government was launched on 8 December 2022, with a hybrid event hosted at 18 Smith Square.
2. Chaired by Baroness Lola Young, presentations included a video message from Lord Neil Mendoza, Bobby Seagull, Cllr Vernon-Jackson, Val Birchall and Abby Symonds of the ACE Youth Council. Lord Parkinson, Minister for Arts and Culture, provided a Government response to the report, welcoming the recommendations.
3. There was attendance from organisations across cultural sector, including: Making Music, Creative UK, CultureRunner, National Centre for Creative Health, Mercury Theatre (Colchester), Art Fund, Vision Redbridge Culture and Leisure, Amanda King Associates (arts consultant), CLOA, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, DCMS, Museums Association, Shared Intelligence, Arts Council England, Yeme Architect Ltd.
4. We had 220 people signed-up to attend, with 70 of those being in-person.
5. The feedback survey showed that 92.68% of attendees were very or fairly satisfied with the event.

Comms

6. The Commission has received significant positive interaction online.
 - 6.1. In the lead up to the launch, we posted our four short films focusing on the themes of the commission weekly. They received **32,494** combined impressions, **887** combined engagements and **4,127** combined video views.
 - 6.2. The launch posts on the LGA's corporate Twitter received **49,554** impressions and **977** engagements, placing them in the top 10 posts of the year.
 - 6.3. Event coverage on the CTS Twitter **received 20,167** impressions **and 566** engagements.
 - 6.4. The Cornerstones of Culture report has so far **gained 2,868** total page views and **2,215** unique page views. The report was the 6th most viewed webpage on the website during the week of its launch.
 - 6.5. We sent out two bulletins on launch day – to the advisory group and CTS bulletin subscribers – which drove 1/3 of the traffic to the report.

Press Pickup

7. Press pickup included:
 - 7.1. Local Government Chronicle – [Chair of LGA culture board criticises 'disconnect' with DCMS](#)
 - 7.2. The Stage – [Report outlines recommendations for local councils to improve arts access](#)
 - 7.3. Arts Professional – [Cornerstones of culture | ArtsProfessional](#)

Financial Implications

8. None

Equalities Implications

9. We will ensure a diverse group of voices are represented at the regional roadshows, and will aim to use accessible venues.

Next Steps

10. We are currently planning regional roadshows to share the findings of the report across the country.
 - 10.1. We are planning for these to be in Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle.
 - 10.2. This will be co-produced with local cultural partners.

