Senscot on behalf of Sport Social Enterprise Network Members

Sport for Everyone

Senscot is the national representative agency supporting the development of Social Enterprise Networks in Scotland. The SENs is the name Senscot gives to our work with Social Enterprise Networks (SENs) - both thematic and geographical in Scotland. There are more than 22 SENs operating across Scotland - 6 thematic and 16 geographically based - connecting over 1200 social enterprises. http://www.senscot.net/

The Sport SEN established in 2010 has a network of 150 members. It continues to grow from strength to strength. The aim of the network is to support the sustainability of sport social enterprises at a grassroots level. Helping ensure members are informed, encouraged and supported.

It is widely recognised that sport social enterprises make a significant difference in their communities. In recognition of this Senscot champion our members as ‘sport for change’ organisations that regularly deliver a range of social impacts for individuals and communities.

1. **Can you provide examples where a community based approach has been successful in removing barriers to participation in sport and physical activity?**

There are numerous examples of Sport Social Enterprises who have engaged extensively with local communities to increase participation in sport and physical activity. Some examples of this were provided in a Sport for Change Research Report commissioned by The Robertson Trust. *Published February 2017.*

- **Spartans Community Football Academy** aims to encourage young people to be the best that they can be. As part of its work, it runs an ‘alternative school’ for young people at risk of leaving school. This school uses sport as the subject matter, and supports young people to achieve national qualifications. It also runs an afterschool club where young people are rewarded with football games if they come in and do their homework first.

- **Kilwinning Community Sports Hub** runs programmes to address social issues. It works with Street Soccer Scotland to support people using drugs and alcohol through their recovery, through football opportunities. It also runs a youth employment programme, offering training, experience and qualifications in grounds maintenance. This involves working in partnership with local employers. The Hub also runs a breakfast club and afterschool clubs for school age children, providing both food and physical activity.

- **Street Fit Scotland** uses fitness and exercise as a tool to engage people to reduce isolation and to support their mental health, as well as addressing long term physical health needs. The Street Fit programme delivers fitness classes involving Boxercise and circuit training. It brings about positive change in relation to confidence, mental health, physical health, behaviour, engagement
with staff and communities, and employability skills. An external evaluation has been undertaken to show the impact of the programme.

- **The Crags** delivers a range of sport for change initiatives. It partners with Street Sport Scotland and Street Fit to deliver some activities. It runs a youth volunteer programme (with 24 young people) offering education and volunteering opportunities. It runs diversionary activities and outreach work with schools. It also uses its facilities to address homelessness, among other social issues.

Engaging with Local Authority, Community Councils and local/national groups is key to enabling organisations to identify local and national priorities that influence their own programmes and in turn identify outcomes and tangible measures. Understanding the social impacts and how to measure/represent them can be a challenge.

Cumnock Juniors Community Enterprise (CJCE) commented - We see the role of national organisations such as SENSCOT as being crucial in providing a platform to encourage engagement in a structured way across Scotland. A collective process/toolkit for identifying and consistently measuring performance and outcomes would be added value to most organisations.

Located in an area at or near the “Most Deprived” end of the SIMD scale, CJCE engage with a range of stakeholders/service providers, particularly in identifying the needs of, designing and providing suitable sporting opportunities to, those with disability and other disadvantaged backgrounds.

Reported barriers encountered:

- Matching our resource availability with times that suit service users, caterers, teachers..
- Sustainability (financial) to protect programmes, particularly where grant funded.
- Maintaining “affordability” approach to ensure participation of those who suffer financial hardship.
- Depending upon schools for indoor facilities (holiday periods, random needs, costs)
- Maintaining a portfolio of coaches’ skills to build self-confidence in service users.
- Objective and subjective measures of success/value.

2. **What were the key ingredients to that success?**

From feedback received from social enterprises some of the key success factors include:

- A team of dedicated and motivated staff and volunteers
- Understanding community needs and individual barriers to participation
- Having the right mix of skills and backgrounds on SE Boards
- Involving staff, volunteers and participants in the design and delivery of activities
- Having an inclusive approach with all sections of the community
- Working in collaboration with a range of stakeholders
- Having a clear business plan and approach

Also, sustainability in terms of staff/volunteers and the costs of this and providing facilities, equipment etc. This is particularly true where programmes are initially funded...what then? This is a key dilemma but one which is suited to the Social Enterprise model to address.

3. **Were there any approaches that were particularly successful in increasing participation among certain social groups, like women, ethnic minorities, certain age-groups?**

Generally, sport social enterprises, take a ‘Sport for Change’ approach. This usually involves providing sport and physical activity programmes for under-represented groups.

There is an overarching ethos of ensuring that the activity is affordable to all sections of the community. This has contributed towards seeing an increase in participation from all social groups.

Street Fit Scotland provide outdoor fitness for socially disadvantaged adults 16 plus. This is not only a fitness session but also a social outlet for people who experience or have experienced homelessness/social isolation and poor mental health. The course also includes advice on health, diet and Nutritionist and how a good diet can provide better physical and mental health.

Cumnock Juniors Community Enterprise, has increased disability participation by taking their programmes into social groups e.g. learning disability groups. They have found that integrating programmes into their weekly activities, and often using the locations familiar to them, e.g. delivering weekly Boccia and Zumba classes in local social clubs, has been effective in reducing barriers.

4. **To what extent are these approaches unique to a particular area and set of circumstances, or replicable in other parts of the country?**

There are often approaches that are specific to a specific community or group. This is quite often the case in SIMD areas, where projects have been developed to engage with people who traditionally don’t participate in physical activity. Either because of affordability issues, lack of resources or opportunities.

There are many common approaches that can be replicated in other parts of the country these include:

- Understanding community needs –the importance of community involvement and local ownership of activities.
• Environment and approach – the environment is very important, in terms of creating a welcoming, inclusive and safe space
• Joint working – working in partnership with other local organisations is critical to long term success

Community and volunteers

Phase 1 heard from the Scottish Sports Association that “another significant legacy opportunity from the Games was converting the unparalleled interest in volunteering at the Games (50,811 applications in total) into sustained volunteering interest; to date our understanding is that this supported conversion has been minimal.”

The Session 4 Committee Inquiry into Community sport also highlighted the importance (and challenges) of retaining volunteers by ensuring adequate training and development opportunities.

5. What are the barriers facing volunteers, (either those wanting to volunteer for the first time or sustaining ongoing volunteering)?

Volunteers are the back bone of many sport social enterprises, dedicated and committed individuals. However, there can often be an overreliance on volunteers. Particularly were key roles fall to a small number of people. Also, it can be very difficult to sustain a project, if you don’t have the right balance of people - paid staff and unpaid volunteers.

Volunteers are hugely welcomed by their respective projects. They should however receive more recognition and support ie the right level of mentoring and development or a recognised qualification/certificate gained from their learning and experience.

Organisations need to ensure that programmes and activities are sustainable. This both attracts and retains staff/volunteers through the attraction of continued experience, learning transferrable skills and making a difference.

It can be difficult to provide the right degree of mentoring and support to volunteers – since they themselves are often thrown into the activity, with little previous experience of others to help them.

6. How might these barriers be overcome?

Ultimately funding or income streams can help achieve the right balance between paid and unpaid volunteers

Creating a proper personal development and learning structure that is accessible and easily adopted by projects. Recognising the achievement of volunteers and providing a platform for volunteers to have career progression, for those wishing a career pathway.

The role of national organisations is important to provide platforms for volunteers to have the opportunity to network and share experiences/frustrations/best practice with peers.
7. **What are the challenges in retaining volunteers beyond the short term?**

Competing priorities and volunteer ‘burn out’ over reliance on a few people to undertake essential project work.

Creating sustainable, dynamic and inclusive programmes!

8. **What examples are there of good practice to encourage and maintain volunteers in community sport and are there lessons to learn from other sectors around attracting and retaining Volunteers in sport?**

The vast majority of sports clubs in Scotland are voluntary organisations, and the majority of coaches involved in grassroots participation, work in a voluntary capacity. Importantly volunteering can also play an important role in creating new networks and relationships, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds who might not otherwise have met.

Full-time volunteering programmes in the social care sector have been successful in reducing inequalities and social isolation. From supporting an individual to live independently in their own home or to study at university.

This is done through a flexible support role of 35 hours per week for 6 to 12 months. Volunteer support can be paid for through personal health budgets and direct payments.

An example, Equi-Power (Equine assisted learning for disadvantaged and disabled people), provides UKCC Coaching qualifications, this includes dedicated blocks of coaching. Ensuring their volunteers gain valuable experience and achieve a recognised qualification. Providing the time and resources to effectively support volunteers, ensures that their input is valued and recognised.

9. **Can you provide examples of innovative joint working between clubs and public bodies that are utilising available sources of funding?**

An example of joint work is an education programme between Broxburn United Sports Club and local schools to promote Health, Sport and Education. Working with primary schools, the children are actively involved in a project covering: Children’s Mental Health, Importance of Water, Food Nutrition, Physical Activity and Oral Health. They also participate in physical sessions to raise their heart rate and fitness.

Spartans Community Football Academy work in partnership with the local Police to bring their portable pitches to communities.

Cumnock Juniors Community Enterprise “School to Club” approach has been successful. East Ayrshire Council operates a Disability Sports Partnership that is a platform for clubs who provide disability sports to work to an agenda across the region and to share best practice. Recently, CJCE collaborated with EAC Vibrant Communities to submit a funding proposal for All-ability Cycling to NHS Ayrshire &
Arran. This approach avoided any cross-over/conflict with local authority plans and used their experience and skills effectively to ensure that funders can be sure that funding is well directed on local priorities and provides best return on the investment.

**School estate**

The Committee has heard evidence during phase 1 that there remain on-going difficulties in communities accessing the school estate. Similar problems were raised by the Session 4 Health and Sport Committee in its 2013 report on Community Sport. These include problems around janitorial time out of school hours and issues around PPP (Public Private Partnership) contracts. The Committee is interested in hearing views as to what the problems are and solutions for how they might be overcome.

10. To what extent is the school estate currently being used effectively to increase opportunities for sport and physical activity participation?

An issue encountered is around planning for new schools. It is government policy to provide sports facilities when building new schools. However, in some of our SE’s experience there has been insufficient dialogue/engagement with the local community. The provision of new facilities has a potential negative impact on existing facilities by diverting much needed, and planned for, revenue. This can lose the benefit of many hard-earned programmes introduced by sports organisations for the community.

Scottish Government should include the need for full consultation with all sports groups and risk-assessments conducted to ensure that there is no detrimental effect on these organisations that in turn impacts the essential good work they undertake in the community.

*Please note Senscot are not submitting collated responses to questions 11-17. However, individual members may have submitted their own responses.*

11. In what ways has access to the school estate for communities improved in recent years?

12. What are the remaining barriers to use of the school estate? Please also note any particular issues around term-time compared with school holiday time.

13. How might these barriers be overcome?

**Commonwealth Games Legacy**

A key driver in Scotland's bid to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games was to achieve an "Active Legacy" through excellent sporting infrastructure increasing access to sport and increased levels of sporting activity across Scotland.

14. How would you assess the active legacy of the Commonwealth Games for:
Additionally:

15. To what extent are the new facilities being used to maximum capacity?
16. Are there any examples of innovative uses of the new facilities benefitting the community?

17. Is the physical infrastructure built for the Commonwealth Games being used effectively to increase opportunities for sport and physical activity; and increasing rates of sport and physical activity participation?