Sport for Everyone
Active Aberdeen Partnership

Participation

Phase 1 of the Committee inquiry found evidence of barriers to participation across age and gender. Barriers included caring/family commitments, shortage of suitable nearby facilities and cost. As mentioned above, Phase 2 of the Committee inquiry seeks to consider community based approaches to removing barriers to participation in sport and physical activity.

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 many examples of this through the Active Aberdeen Partnership (AAP), which is the strategic group of key partners developing sport & physical activity across Aberdeen City. Below are just a few examples:

- The AAP have successfully developed and delivered the Golden Games across Aberdeen City, which is a free physical activity festival for older adults. The Golden Games were developed in 2011 in recognition of our ever growing older population and the need to take an innovative, creative, asset based and future focused approach to tackling the projected increased pressures on services due to the ageing population. This means concentrating on what people can do, rather than what they can’t do.

- The Games were initially developed to illustrate that older adults would take part in regular physical activities if they were the right activities, in the right locations, at the right times. The Games are now the main conduit for older adults to try an activity for the first time and then become involved in that activity or similar activities on a regular, long term basis.

- The Games have grown from 5 activities delivered over 2 days with 80 participants taking part in 2011, to 84 activities delivered over 7 days, with more than 500 people taking part and over 18000 bookings for 2017. A range of activity opportunities, accessible to all, included: seated exercise classes, learn to dive sessions, footgolf, table tennis and the Care Home Pentathlon.

- After seven years the Golden Games has significantly raised the profile of ‘active ageing’ in Aberdeen. The on-going collaboration with existing and new partners has led to the creation of extensive new physical activity programmes, all of which are based on feedback from over 65’s living in Aberdeen and recognise the multitude of benefits that physical activity can bring to someone’s physical health, mental health and overall wellbeing.

- The Golden Games tackle the stigma of ageing and that is important, not only for the whole population, but that Older People have a positive image of themselves and also give other older people the confidence to take part.
• The Active Schools programme in Aberdeen works closely with school communities right across the City and has been at the forefront of driving an increase in participation levels. These results can be evidenced through the sportscotland Active Schools Monitoring Online (ASMO) system. This has shown year on year increases in the number of sessions and distinct participants that are participating in the extra curricular school programme. The nature of Active Schools, with having a coordinator working with a cluster of schools and also being based in that community, means that programmes and opportunities are led by the community and also developed for the needs of the community. These are identified by the close relationships that the Active Schools Coordinator forms with schools, the community and local stakeholders.

• RGU’s Streetsport programme provides free opportunities for young people across Aberdeen to engage in positive activity using a range of different programmes. By using mobile arenas in areas that have a lack of free use facilities, Streetsport are able to target young people living in the top 20% on the SIMD to participate more often.

• RGU Sport provide a programme of activity based around attracting the local community to take part in sport & physical activity. These include the over 60’s Forever active programme and Teen Gym.

2. **What were the key ingredients to that success?**
   • True, open partnership working across statutory, third sector and research institutions
   • Feedback from participants about what/where/when activity is delivered
   • Sustained funding (longer than 3 years)
   • Having a coordinator working and based within a community area

3. **Were there any approaches that were particularly successful in increasing participation among certain social groups, like women, ethnic minorities, certain age-groups?**
   • Older adults
   • People with long term conditions
   • Young people in SIMD areas
   • Girls – active girls committee, Streetsport StreetDance programme

4. **To what extent are these approaches unique to a particular area and set of circumstances, or replicable in other parts of the country?**
   • The key element to this is the partnership approach which can be replicated across the country if partners are open and flexible to working together towards one clear aim and set of objectives, in a truly collaborative way.
   • The active girls committee in Aberdeen is the first of its kind but can be replicated across Scotland with the right people involved.

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)?
   - Time
   - Awareness of appropriate roles and opportunities
   - Access to training
   - Cost of training

6. How might these barriers be overcome?
   - Coordinated approach to opportunities available in the City
   - Ensuring the roles are clear and defined
   - Strong support structures in place, including induction, ongoing CPD
     and 1-2-1’s
   - Ensure volunteers understand the impact that their role can/does have
     on an organisation or communities aims, objectives and goals

7. What are the challenges in retaining volunteers beyond the short term?
   - Time/other commitments
   - Lack of recognition or development opportunities

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?
   - Club Sport Aberdeen is the new network for club sport in Aberdeen,
     launching in August 2017. This will be reliant on volunteers to drive the
     network forward and be led by a volunteer committee. The AAP is
     supporting this initiative and sharing good practice from other areas
     and ‘lessons learnt’ from the current sports council.

9. Can you provide examples of innovative joint working between clubs
   and public bodies that are utilising available sources of funding?
   - There are a couple of clubs that have accessed funding through
     sportscotland for direct club investment, targeting membership or
     performance, and also help with facility development. However, we
     hope that this will be an area of expansion with the development of
     Club Sport Aberdeen.

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?
   - This is not great across Aberdeen City just now but we have a working group looking to improve policy and school access, with a common sense approach to who is best placed to operate the school estate outwith school hours.

11. In what ways has access to the school estate for communities improved in recent years?
   - We haven’t seen much improvement. The only improvement has been where Sport Aberdeen have taken on the management of school facilities (e.g. 3G pitches) and this has gone hand in hand with improved procedures to ensure the right people are on the right facility at the right time.

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.
   - Out of date systems for bookings are still being used, with no on-line options. This means people cannot see the availability across the estate and can only put a booking in for an individual school. If this is not available the process needs to be repeated and this is very frustrating for users/potential users. The issue of janitorial cover is still an issue and many facilities remain closed outwith school hours due to budget reductions.

13. How might these barriers be overcome?
   - AAP to develop policy and procedure to ensure a simple process is in place across all facilities.
   - Third party to operate the estate outwith school hours or more community keyholders, where appropriate. This needs to go hand-in-hand with policy change.

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:
   - Community benefits and Participation rates
   - Simple way is to look at facility development and investment, along with access barriers.
   - The active legacy was beneficial in the build up to 2014 but since then the good work and ideas have fallen away due to lack of proper ongoing support. Many good ideas were simply not sustainable from a community aspect, causing participation numbers to drop in the aftermath of 2014.
   - Information from users as to whether they are taking part due to CWG or other reasons.
Additionally:

15. To what extent are the new facilities being used to maximum capacity?
   
   - Common sense approach not being taken by some facilities which negates maximum usage.

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?