

# Evaluation of **sportscotland** supported activity: clubs and communities

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**Final report**  
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# Executive summary

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## About this report

This evaluation explores the impact of the range of **sportscotland** supported work in the clubs and communities environment. The evaluation was undertaken at the same time as:

- an evaluation of **sportscotland** supported work in the schools and education environment; and
- research exploring **sportscotland**'s contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments, which included a large scale survey with 3,000 responses from club members at **sportscotland** supported clubs.

Key findings from the large scale survey have been highlighted within this report.

This evaluation is part of a series of **sportscotland** wider evaluations being undertaken from 2017 to 2019. These look in depth at how the programmes **sportscotland** deliver alongside partners support the sporting system. They provide insight into what is working well and what could be improved. These will be used to inform **sportscotland**'s next planning cycle.

## The sportscotland range of support

The Clubs and Communities Framework – Working Together – sets out **sportscotland**'s framework for supporting clubs and community organisations. **sportscotland** support in the clubs and communities environment includes:

Programme	Aims	Scale in 2016/17
Community Sport Hubs (CSHs)	Growth in participation Reducing barriers to participation Developing pathways Supporting leadership, volunteering and workforce development	179 CSHs 96 in schools 1,248 clubs involved 155,000 club members 60 CSH officers £1.5 million per annum
Scottish Governing Body for sport (SGB) regional posts	Support club development and growth	638 focus clubs 70,000 club members 50 sportscotland supported SGB regional posts £1.7 million per annum

Programme	Aims	Scale
Direct Club Investment (DCI)	Growth in club membership and developing talent  <i>From late 2017 – focus on opportunities for under-represented groups</i>	122 clubs invested in between 2013 and 2017 32,000 club members 187 DCI supported paid posts (part time) £0.78 million per annum
Sport Facilities Fund	Supporting facilities for community recreation, club sport of high performance training and competition	2012/13 to 2016/17 Invested in 232 facilities £28.8 million invested Investment in every local authority in Scotland
Awards for All	Supporting clubs to build healthier, safer, stronger, more equal and more sustainable services which help people have better chances in life	174 awards in 2016/17  £0.9 million in 2016/17
Help for Clubs	Supporting clubs to improve their quality and governance	Guidance online

## Participation

Overall, **sportscotland** support has helped clubs and groups increase their membership and participation. In 2016/17 there were more than 200,000 club members involved in clubs supported by **sportscotland** through its CSH, SGB regional post and DCI programmes.

Programme	Main areas of support reported
<b>CSH</b> Overall increase in participation in supported clubs <b>+4%</b> <sup>1</sup>	Through raising awareness, supporting links and joint working, access to training and access to facilities
<b>SGB regional posts</b> Overall increase in participation in supported clubs <b>+10%</b> <sup>2</sup>	Through increasing profile, supporting joint working and targeting specific groups
<b>DCI</b> Overall increase in participation in supported clubs <b>+14%</b> <sup>3</sup>	Through offering more sessions, increasing staff and volunteers, better access to facilities, more links with partners and lower costs for members

<sup>1</sup> 2015/16 to 2016/17

<sup>2</sup> 2015/16 to 2016/17

<sup>3</sup> 2015/16 to 2016/17

<b>Sport Facilities Fund</b>	Through providing quality places for participation, including for a range of age groups, for disabled people and young women
<b>Awards for All</b>	Through funding training and qualifications for coaches and officials, supporting youth development, better access to facilities and equipment and enabling taster sessions

## Inclusion

Among **sportscotland** supported clubs, there are more male than female participants at both adult and junior level. Overall, there are more than double the number of men than women involved in the supported clubs. The balance is better for the clubs that **sportscotland** actively targets (SGB regional post focus clubs and clubs receiving DCI) at 59 per cent men and 41 per cent women.

Clubs supported by **sportscotland** have also seen membership of young women increase at a faster rate than that of both young men and adults. However, there remain more men than women involved in supported clubs.

**sportscotland** does not collect monitoring data from clubs on equalities characteristics beyond age and gender. However, the profile of respondents to the club member survey suggested that disabled club members, ethnic minorities and people living in areas of deprivation are relatively under represented when compared to the Scottish population. A full breakdown is available in the [ASOF report](#)<sup>4</sup>.

**sportscotland** support has helped to build the confidence of clubs and groups in engaging with under-represented groups. Most feel confident engaging with girls and women – but are less confident engaging people from areas of socio-economic deprivation and disabled people.

CSHs and SGB regional posts have helped a little, through offering information, awareness raising and networking opportunities. Clubs which have been able to access additional funding, for example through Awards for All, CSHs and SGB regional posts have been able to support more practical changes around engaging with new groups, providing taster sessions and improving member diversity.

Clubs were very positive about the impact of DCI in helping them to engage with under-represented groups. Successes were often due to targeted support projects working in close partnership with a range of people and service providers in the community. Clubs would like more support with understanding needs and involving under-represented groups. There remain barriers around the cost of participation and transport; access to inclusive facilities and changing rooms; availability of targeted or girls only activities; and access to experienced coaches and volunteers.

<sup>4</sup> **sportscotland**'s contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and [clubs and communities environments](#)

## Connected clubs and pathways

sportscotland support has helped clubs and community groups to become more connected, both locally and nationally, and has supported the development of pathways and progression opportunities.

Programme	Main areas of support reported
CSH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improving local connections and networks between clubs, communities, schools and other partners</li><li>• Sharing of facilities, joint training, joint awareness raising, joint events and joint fundraising</li><li>• Sharing of information and ideas</li><li>• Some focus on progression between clubs</li></ul>
SGB regional posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing pathways</li><li>• Enhancing leadership and training opportunities</li></ul>
DCI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing a structured and strategic approach</li><li>• Developing strong pathways</li></ul>

Overall stakeholders believed the range of support offered across programmes largely complemented and enhanced local provision. However, how programmes relate to one another, or support different stages of club development, were perhaps not always clear to people. For example, some felt there was a lack of clarity about the intended outcomes of CSHs – which may reflect a need for greater clarity at a national level, more locally, or perhaps both. Stakeholders also highlighted that, in their experience, CSHs focused more on participation than progression. Given that the CSH programme is designed to focus more on participation than progression, such views may again reflect a lack of clarity about the intended outcomes of the programme.

Some felt that SGB regional posts covered too large an area to help with joint working, or were not well connected to local priorities and networks. Clubs recognised the value of joint work with schools, across sportscotland programmes. However, some felt that there were opportunities to further build on the connections between schools and clubs.

## Organised and sustainable clubs

Clubs across sportscotland supported programmes largely felt support had helped with:

- recruiting and developing staff and volunteers;
- engaging young people as leaders;
- improving how their club is run or organised;
- planning more sustainably; and
- generating new sources of income.

Clubs have seen increases in the number of coaches they work with, with a higher percentage increase in female coaches than male coaches across all three programmes.

Clubs which received DCI support felt able to plan a sustainable approach over time. Having a funded role helped to ease the burden on volunteers. However, there was some concern that the strongest and most business like clubs found it easiest to attract DCI funding.

## Club profile

Clubs felt that **sportscotland** support had helped to increase their profile. CSHs helped to advertise clubs, facilitate school to club links, and make links with other clubs and groups locally. SGB regional posts played a significant role in identifying, sharing and rewarding best practice. DCI helped to support club growth and connections.

## Places for sport and physical activity

Having affordable, accessible and high-quality facilities was an important issue for clubs. Where clubs had received support through the Sport Facilities Fund this was helping to provide opportunities for the club and local community. Clubs have also been supported by CSHs and SGB regional posts to improve access, share resources and make best use of facilities. Many clubs and groups mentioned the lack of suitable facilities as being a barrier to their growth. The main challenges for clubs were around access to facilities, where access was limited, costly or required members to travel long distances.

## Range of support

The range of **sportscotland** support has helped clubs to increase participation, improve their use of facilities, develop better pathways, access training opportunities and build more professional and sustainable organisations. Stakeholders felt that there were opportunities to develop and enhance this range of support through:

- enhanced connections between school and club based work;
- more local flexibility about how some **sportscotland** supported programmes operate;
- consideration (and perhaps articulation) of how clubs at various stages of development are supported; and
- clearer information about the overall intended outcomes and impact of supported programmes.



## Issues for consideration

### 1. The range of support is working well

The range of support in place across the clubs and communities portfolio is working well, and the programmes complement one another. This is particularly evident from the evaluation case studies, where often clubs have received a range of support, which met their needs and added value in different ways.

**Recommendation:** The range of support within the clubs and communities portfolio should be continued.

### 2. Describing the intended outcomes of the range of support

Stakeholders involved in the research at times demonstrated a lack of understanding about the intended outcomes within the range of support, the roles of individual programmes, or the types of clubs prioritised by each programme. **sportscotland** should work to address this through:

- clearly and simply articulating **sportscotland**'s intended outcomes of this range of support – the changes it wishes to bring about - and where each programme fits within this;
- simply describing how the programmes fit together and support different types of club; and
- considering how **sportscotland**'s support to clubs is branded – for example, through creating a single brand for the range of support within the clubs and communities portfolio.

A very simple logic model setting out the intended outcomes of the range of support, and each programme, would help to articulate how different programmes relate to different outcomes or types of clubs. This would help to develop a clearly articulated range of support, which is easy for all stakeholders in the clubs and communities environment to understand.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should clearly and simply articulate the outcomes it wishes to bring about through the clubs and communities portfolio, and where each programme fits within this.

### 3. Scope for more focus on equality and diversity

More men than women are members of sports clubs, and the clubs and groups supported by **sportscotland** work with many more men than women. There is also limited information about the profile of club members in terms of other equality characteristics such as deprivation. In addition, some are unclear about the extent to which the focus is on engaging people in sports, or more widely in physical activity.

This was also reflected through the club member survey, with a lower proportion of respondents having a disability or living in areas of deprivation, compared to the overall Scottish population<sup>5</sup>.

The targeted focus on equality through the DCI programme should help to address this in the future. In addition, there is potential to:

- consider the profile of clubs and club members benefiting from **sportscotland** support, and ensure that certain clubs and groups are not unintentionally under-represented;
- support clubs around understanding and meeting the needs of different groups, including people from areas of socio-economic deprivation, disabled people, women and girls and other equalities groups;
- raise awareness of the funding opportunities available to help introduce targeted activities – including Awards for All and funding through CSHs – in recognition that a small amount of funding helps clubs a lot in this regard;
- consider placing more emphasis on the role that local partners can play in engaging a range of people, across the public and third sector, supported by **sportscotland**;
- continue to build strong links with Active Schools and the ethos of getting people active as well as specifically involved in particular sports;
- ensure that coaches and other deliverers have access to training around inclusion and engaging people with a range of different needs; and
- work with clubs to ensure that information about the diversity of club members is gathered in a proportionate and meaningful way, to allow ongoing identification of areas of success and priorities for development.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should ensure that the clubs and groups it supports are able to work with a range of people with different needs and experiences, and that certain groups are not unintentionally under-represented in the overall profile of membership of the clubs and groups that they work with. This may include building an ethos of getting people active generally, as well as specific involvement in particular sports.

#### **4. Strengthening local links and flexibility**

**sportscotland** programmes in the clubs and communities environment are designed to respond to local needs and opportunities. The programmes offer flexibility around the focus and nature of support provided by delivery partners. However, **sportscotland** is very specific about how funding is used for particular inputs – such as staff posts. Some local authorities felt the impact of the range of support could be strengthened by introducing greater flexibility around how funding is spent locally.

More connection to local priorities, and flexibility about use of resources could be developed through considering a shift towards a more outcome focused approach, with associated targets. This would involve working closely with partners at local and regional level to develop intended outcomes for each programme locally. This

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<sup>5</sup> **sportscotland**'s contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments

could be designed in a way to complement **sportscotland**'s developing focus on a regional way of working.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should consider the benefits and challenges of introducing a more outcomes focused performance arrangement with local authorities coupled with greater flexibility on specific inputs.

## 5. School to club links

Views across both the clubs and communities and schools and education evaluations have been mixed in relation to the effectiveness of school to club links. There were examples where it worked well.

But some in the schools environment found it hard to engage and involve clubs, and some in the clubs environment found it hard to engage and involve schools and others in the schools environment. It was also not always clear where responsibility for developing and sustaining these links lay. There are opportunities to do more to:

- clearly define what is meant by a school-club link;
- refresh and clarify roles and responsibilities for developing school-club links;
- enhance joint working arrangements between **sportscotland** supported staff in the clubs and communities and schools and education environments;
- connect the focus on getting active and physical activity within the school environment through into the work in the clubs and communities environment;
- support clubs to cope with increased demand from school pupils, generated through Active Schools; and
- connect leadership work between the schools and clubs environments.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should work with stakeholders involved in both portfolios to clarify and strengthen work in developing school-club links, building on the strong network of staff in both environments with good relationships with schools, clubs and community groups.

## 6. Developing particular programmes within the portfolio

There are a number of specific issues for consideration within each of the supported programmes:

- **Community Sport Hubs** – The CSH programme is helping to strengthen clubs and linkages, and increase participation in clubs and groups. **sportscotland** and partners are well on track to establish 200 hubs by 2020. However, there are a wide range of models and approaches to delivering CSHs. In some areas, clubs and other stakeholders are finding that the CSH does not have clear aims and intended outcomes; does not fit well with other local structures; and does not have a sense of common purpose or collective voice.

Many clubs are fragile and volunteer led, and find it challenging to find the capacity to be involved in CSHs and attend hub meetings. Clubs need to see tangible outcomes from hub involvement (such as improved access to and

pricing of facilities), and need to have a range of different ways to be involved as a hub member.

This would partly be addressed by the development of clear portfolio and programme outcomes, with local flexibility, as highlighted above. Hubs could also use this national outcomes framework to identify their own intended outcomes, at local level, supported by hub officers.

**Recommendation:** sportscotland should support CSH officers to ensure that the clear, simple intended outcomes for the CSH programme nationally are translated into meaningful outcomes for local hubs – which clearly link with local club priorities.

- **SGB regional posts** – The SGB regional posts provide tailored, face to face, practical support and advice which is valued by clubs and plays an important role. The connection with the SGB is also valued, and the specialist sporting knowledge these roles offer. There is a role for this light touch, regional support in developing clubs and connecting them with further support. However, the support varies in consistency, can be reactive, is not always connected to local priorities and can be spread thinly across wide geographic areas.

Some of these issues may be resolved by clearly articulating the purpose of the posts, why they focus on certain sports, how focus clubs are identified and how this fits with the wider range of support. However, given the suggested variability in delivery and impact, and practical issues associated with these types of posts, **sportscotland** may wish to work with partners to consider how best to improve this.

**Recommendation:** sportscotland should work with partners, at both national and local level, to consider how best to strengthen consistency and overcome practical challenges within the current SGB regional post programme.

- **DCI** – The DCI programme is working well, with positive outcomes. The focus from late 2017 on supporting engagement of under-represented groups should further strengthen this programme, targeting support at areas where clubs and club members may experience particular barriers. As with the other programmes within the range of support, there is a need to support stakeholders in the clubs and communities environment to understand the role of DCI and role it plays within the range of support offered by **sportscotland**. It is also important to recognise that some clubs and groups which may be effective at engaging targeted groups may not be well connected with **sportscotland's** support at the moment (for example, as part of a CSH).

There is also the potential for more work to understand the profile of DCI club members in the future, to help understand the impact of targeted work, and

ensuring that systems are in place at national level to be able to track DCI outcomes beyond increased participation.

**Recommendation:** The focus of DCI activity on targeted work should be promoted, with the role of DCI clearly communicated to stakeholders. Monitoring systems should continue to be developed to evaluate this targeted work.

- **Sport Facilities Fund** – The Sport Facilities Fund is playing an important role in supporting participation and athlete development through developing quality places for sport and physical activity. The other programmes in the clubs and communities environment may benefit from closer strategic connections with the Sports Facilities Fund, where it can complement intended outcomes. In particular, a focus on development of inclusive facilities and changing rooms would help to support club engagement of people with a wide range of needs. Monitoring information should also be further developed to ensure that the link between facilities and enhanced participation can be clearly articulated at national level.

**Recommendation:** The Sport Facilities Fund has the potential to further support key outcomes across the clubs and communities environment, and connections between different programmes and priorities should be strengthened.

# 1. Introduction

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## About this report

1.1 This evaluation explores the impact of the range of **sportscotland** supported work in the clubs and communities environment. It also considers what is achieving this impact, through analysing what is working and why, and what lessons have been learned for the future. The evaluation looks backwards, largely focusing on the five years leading up to 2017/18.

## Connected work

1.2 This evaluation was undertaken at the same time as:

- an evaluation of **sportscotland** supported work in schools and education; and
- research exploring **sportscotland**'s contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments, which included a large scale survey with 3,000 responses from club members at **sportscotland** supported clubs.

1.3 This evaluation is part of a series of **sportscotland** wider evaluations being undertaken from 2017 to 2019. These look in depth at how the programmes **sportscotland** deliver alongside partners support the sporting system. They provide insight into what is working well and what can be improved. These will be used to inform **sportscotland**'s next planning cycle.

## Method

1.4 A detailed description of the evaluation method is included as Appendix One. The main aspects of the method involved:

- an online survey of sports clubs and community groups – with follow up phone interviews with a sample of these;
- an online survey of a small number of strategic stakeholders – with follow up telephone interviews with a small number of local authority sports development leads;
- five discussion groups with **sportscotland** supported staff including Community Sport Hub officers and Scottish Governing Body (SGB) regional posts; and
- eight case studies on clubs, hubs or projects.

- 1.5 The main focus of the fieldwork was exploring the views of clubs and community groups.
- 1.6 This evaluation also draws on regular monitoring and evaluation information collected by **sportscotland** in the clubs and communities environment, including impacts and interventions reports submitted by **sportscotland** supported staff, and monitoring data gathered across the clubs and communities programmes.

## Range of support

- 1.7 It is important to note that the clubs and communities portfolio of support ranges from light touch support and advice across groups of clubs to substantial investment in and support for particular selected clubs. The portfolio has been designed to support different clubs in different ways.
- 1.8 However, it does mean that care needs to be taken when comparing different elements of the programme. This is particularly important for Direct Club Investment (DCI) which involves the award of significant sums of money to a small subset of clubs, which cannot be compared to the broader support offered through programmes like Community Sport Hubs and SGB regional posts.
- 1.9 For this reason, we suggest all readers review the context chapter of this report before considering the findings.

## 2. Context

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### Introduction

2.1 This chapter sets out the main components of **sportscotland's** work in the clubs and communities environment. It describes the aims and purpose of the main programmes of:

- Community Sport Hubs;
- SGB regional posts;
- Direct Club Investment; and
- wider support through Help for Clubs, Awards for All and facilities investment and support.

2.2 It also sets out the priorities within the Clubs and Communities Framework.

### Clubs and communities framework

2.3 The Clubs and Communities Framework – Working Together - sets out **sportscotland's** framework for supporting clubs and community organisations.

2.4 The framework goes beyond traditional club sport, and acknowledges the power of sport as a tool for social change. It is based on the recognition that both clubs and community organisations play an important role. It recognises that clubs play a key role in delivering sporting opportunities within local communities, as well as supporting aspiring athletes to progress and reach their goals. It also emphasises that many community organisations offer less competitive and more recreational sporting opportunities.

2.5 The framework is aimed at professional staff to help them support local volunteers in clubs and community organisations. The professional staff working to develop **sportscotland** supported programmes in the clubs and communities environment use the framework to guide their work with clubs and community organisations. It is built on six priority areas and is underpinned by the Help for Clubs pages on **sportscotland's** website.



These are the enablers in our sporting system for Scotland — the building blocks that make sport possible.



**PEOPLE**



**PLACES**



**PROFILE**

These are the qualities needed by the organisations that make sport possible.



**ORGANISED**



**SUSTAINABLE**



**CONNECTED**

Source: *sportscotland Clubs and Communities Framework*

- 2.6 The framework sets out what world class club and community organisations would look and feel like under each of these priority areas. Professional staff working in the programmes in the clubs and communities portfolio focus on the development and professionalisation of the workforce, in line with this framework.

## Community Sport Hubs

- 2.7 The Community Sport Hub (CSH) programme has been in place since the end of 2009. CSHs are essentially sports clubs working together in a local community, although there are a wide range of delivery models. They aim to provide a home for local sports clubs, bringing people together and involving the local community. CSHs are an integral part of the Scottish Governments 2014 Legacy Plan, which aims to increase the number of people participating in sport across local communities.

- 2.8 CSHs are driven by five guiding principles of:

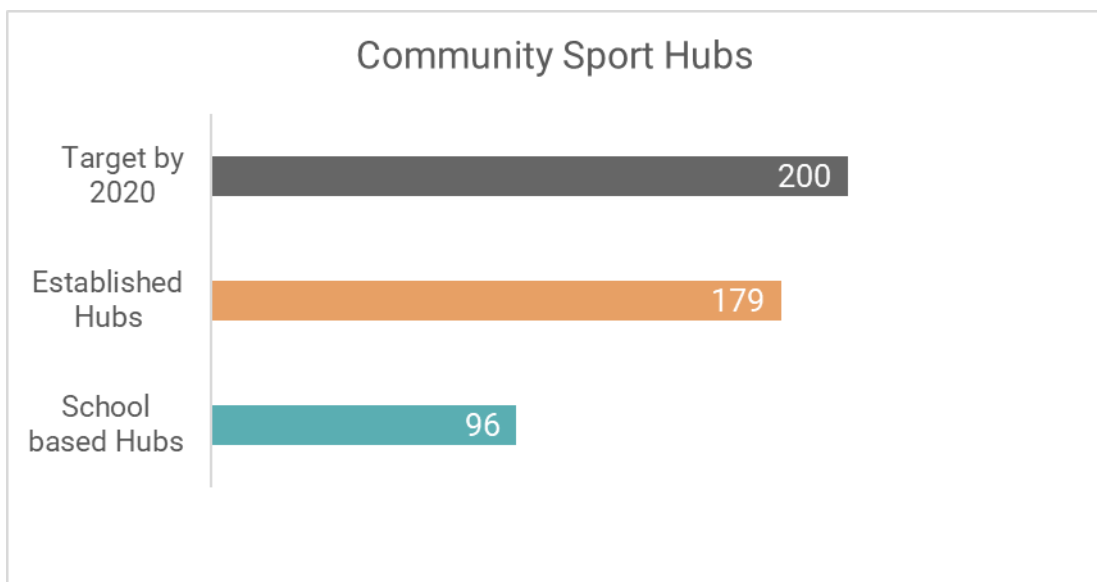
- growth in participation;
- understanding community need;
- supporting community leadership;
- offering a range of sports; and
- ensuring all the right people are working together.

2.9 The CSH programme contributes to **sportscotland**'s overall vision of a world class sporting system through supporting the community sport workforce and volunteers; raising the profile of community sport; and supporting participation, including of those who may experience barriers to participation.

**BUILDING A WORLD CLASS SPORTING SYSTEM FOR EVERYONE IN SCOTLAND**  
**THE FOCUS FOR COMMUNITY SPORT HUBS**

PEOPLE	PARTICIPATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the community sport hub workforce to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours.</li> <li>Recruit, retain and develop volunteers to maintain sustainable community sport hubs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the community to understand local need.</li> <li>Offer a range of sporting opportunities for people to take part in sport.</li> <li>Support and develop effective sporting pathways between schools, education and club sport.</li> <li>Engage with people who may experience barriers to participation to support their inclusion in activity.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support community sport hubs to offer leadership opportunities to young people in a range of roles including decision makers, deliverers/coaches, event/competition organisers and technical officials.</li> </ul>	
PROFILE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise the awareness and profile of community sport hubs in the local community.</li> <li>Share and promote opportunities to participate in community sport hubs.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrate the success of community sport hubs in local communities.</li> </ul>	

2.10 The CSH project has an annual budget of up to £1.5 million. **sportscotland** aimed to establish 150 operational hubs by May 2016, which it exceeded. By the end of 2016/17 there were 179 operational CSHs. Slightly more than half (54%) were based in schools.



Source: 2016/17 figures from Club and Community Sport Update October 2017

2.11 In 2016/17 there were 1,248<sup>6</sup> clubs involved in these hubs – an average of 7 clubs per hub. These clubs worked with approximately 155,000 club

<sup>6</sup> sportscotland monitoring data

members. Clubs involved in CSHs saw membership growth of 4 per cent from 2015/16 to 2016/17.

- 2.12 **sportscotland** and its partners are now working towards a new target of 200 CSHs by 2020, with half of these based in schools. While there is a numerical target in place, the main focus is on ensuring the quality of the hubs and service to the local community. **sportscotland** is also focusing on working in areas of deprivation, to enhance and support the offer within these communities. It has set up a CSH SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) project to help drive this focus.
- 2.13 There is a network of around 60 CSH officers across Scotland which support the development of the local hubs<sup>7</sup>. **sportscotland** provides ongoing support and learning and development opportunities for CSH officers.

## SGB regional posts

- 2.14 SGB regional posts enable governing bodies to work with identified clubs to grow their membership. The programme was agreed at the end of 2012, with a commitment to invest up to £5.41 million over four years. The aim was to support the infrastructure for club development through development staff directly employed by governing bodies.
- 2.15 Since 2012, work has been undertaken to mainstream this approach. SGB regional posts are now also supported through core SGB investment processes, aligned to **sportscotland** investment principles. The network now has around 100 SGB regional posts across 31 sports. Most of these posts (78) work in a focused way with a specific set of clubs. Around 50 posts are directly funded by **sportscotland**.
- 2.16 Together these focused posts work with 638 clubs across 23 different sports<sup>8</sup>. These clubs have approximately 70,000 club members.
- 2.17 Clubs which have received at least two years worth of support have seen membership growth of 10 per cent and growth in the number of coaches of 10 per cent. This is in a context where there have been ongoing challenges by a number of SGBs in recruiting and retaining staff.
- 2.18 **sportscotland** has also provided ongoing support and learning and development opportunities for SGB regional posts. It also actively promotes links with local partners through the Regional Sporting Partnerships. The Regional Sporting Partnerships include **sportscotland**, local authorities, trusts, SGBs, tertiary education, health and other local bodies. They have

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<sup>7</sup> **sportscotland** monitoring data

<sup>8</sup> **sportscotland** monitoring data

been responsible for agreeing and prioritising the needs and ambitions of local sport.

## Direct Club Investment

- 2.19 Direct Club Investment (DCI) is a key part of **sportscotland** support for developing club sport. It is focused on supporting key clubs with a robust business case to grow membership and provide the right environment to develop athletes to performance levels. The DCI funding stream was introduced in 2013, with applications considered by a funding panel which meets twice a year.
- 2.20 DCI provides investment and expertise to support club development over a period of two to four years, with the aim of embedding significant developmental change. It complements the Clubs and Communities Framework, which sets out the six key priority areas for development.
- 2.21 Clubs must identify a clear development need, discuss this within the club and with key partners, and then develop a business case. **sportscotland** provides a template for the business case, which focuses on impact, additionality, high standards, a holistic approach and sustainability. During the DCI period, clubs should plan for independence and sustainability of the ambitions of the project beyond the DCI funding term.
- 2.22 The DCI programme is bespoke, targeted and limited to a reasonably small number of clubs, providing a substantial investment averaging £7,000 a year per club to support club development over a period of two to four years.
- 2.23 **sportscotland** uses the Regional Leadership Groups to consider DCI business cases and make recommendations to the national DCI Panel ensuring all cases align with local and national strategy. The Regional Leadership Groups bring senior decision makers together from across the region. These groups form a key part of **sportscotland's** regional way of working which aims to bring local and national organisations together to develop strong partnerships and collaborate on the strategic and operational delivery of the world class sporting system. **sportscotland** is committed to leading this regional approach across seven regions; Highland & Islands, Grampian, Tayside & Fife, Central, East, West (North) and West (South). DCI endorsement is just one of the functions of the Regional Leadership Groups.
- 2.24 **sportscotland** has provided 123 awards to 122 different clubs across 26 sports between 2013 and October 2017<sup>9</sup>. One club received two awards. Together these clubs have approximately 32,000 club members.

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<sup>9</sup> **sportscotland** monitoring data

2.25 The total investment was just under £3.1 million over four years. This has generated an additional £5.9 million over four years from clubs and local partners<sup>10</sup>. Each club is required to maintain monitoring information and submit information on outcomes, outputs and indicators on a regular basis. Indicators focus on:

- number of active club members;
- number of qualified coaches;
- athlete time spent on task;
- athlete expert coach contact time; and
- growth mindset development.

2.26 Between 2015/16 and 2016/17, clubs supported by DCI have seen membership growth of 14 per cent, and an increase of 15 per cent in the number of coaches<sup>11</sup>.

2.27 Recently, equalities and inclusion has been identified as a key priority for driving further improvement in the system. From November 2017, DCI has been weighted, prioritising projects that provide more and better opportunities for people from disadvantaged communities, girls and women, disabled people and other under-represented groups. DCI will also take into account whether projects demonstrate strong engagement with their community and other sports clubs, and demonstrate established partnership working with local authorities, trusts and SGBs.

## Supported clubs across the portfolio

2.28 Together, the CSH, DCI and SGB regional post programmes support 1,685 clubs<sup>12</sup>. These clubs have over 200,000 members, and over 18,000 coaches<sup>13</sup>. Some clubs are supported through more than one programme. The overlap between the **sportscotland** supported programmes is shown below. Overall 1,032 clubs are only involved in CSHs; 146 are involved in CSHs and also supported by a SGB regional post; 35 are supported through a CSH and DCI; and 35 are supported through all three programmes.

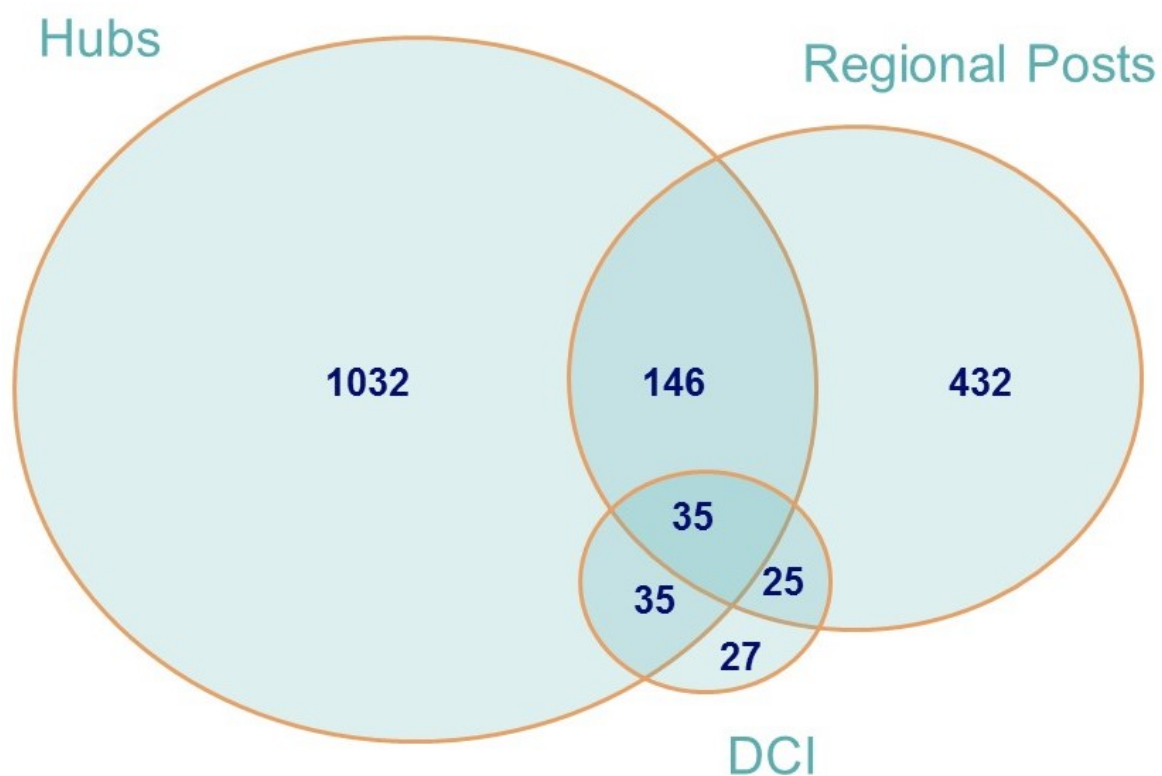
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<sup>10</sup> **sportscotland** monitoring data

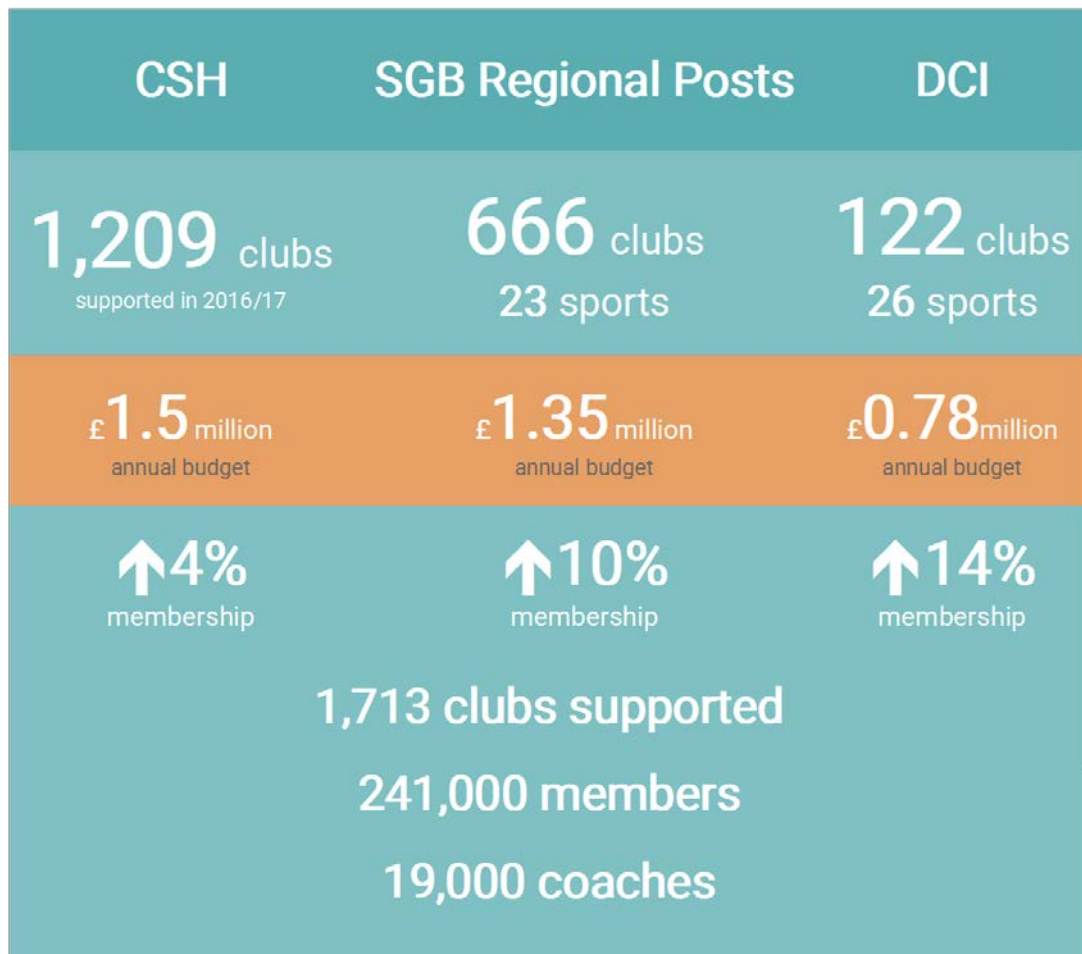
<sup>11</sup> **sportscotland** monitoring data

<sup>12</sup> Not including support provided through Scottish Student Sport, which was not covered in this evaluation

<sup>13</sup> **sportscotland** monitoring data



- 2.29 For SGB regional posts, 432 are only supported through these posts and 25 are supported by both SGB regional posts and DCI. And 27 clubs are only supported by **sportscotland** through DCI.
- 2.30 In 2016/17 **sportscotland** supported clubs in every local authority in Scotland. The number of clubs supported ranged from 9 in Inverclyde to 150 in Highland. Overall, the proportion of clubs receiving investment by local authority is generally broadly comparable to the proportion of the Scottish population in each area.



2.31 It is worth noting that the resources in terms of personnel and the geographies covered vary considerably between the programmes. A network of 60 CSH officers supports more than 1,200 clubs - with support focused on local areas. SGB regional posts support more than 600 clubs across wide geographies and regions. Around 50 posts are directly funded by **sportscotland**, although the programme is designed to also provide support to a wider network of SGB posts – around 100 in total. DCI funding largely goes towards hiring people to support the club on an individual basis - and each club receives an average of £7,000 per year.

## Other support

### Sport Facilities Fund

2.32 The Sport Facilities Fund is **sportscotland**'s main facilities investment programme, investing in facilities suitable for community recreation, club sport or high performance training or competition. From 2012/13 to 2016/17 this has included a total investment of £28.8 million. The fund is for capital expenditure only, and prioritises investment where need and impact are greatest, and outcomes are clear.

- 2.33 The guidelines and priorities for the Sport Facilities Fund are currently being reviewed. However, the most recent guidance from 2012 sets out the key criteria and priorities for the past five years. Among its priorities, those relevant to the clubs and communities environment include:
- facilities for outdoor or adventure sport;
  - projects which demonstrate the CSH philosophy or create community access; and
  - pitches, floodlighting, tennis courts and changing accommodation – in line with strategic priorities, local authority strategies and SGB strategies.
- 2.34 Local authorities and leisure trusts are eligible to apply for the funding. For public bodies, funding should be additional to planned expenditure – not a replacement for it. All applicants are normally expected to meet at least 25 per cent of the project costs. In areas of deprivation, or within ten minutes walking distance of an area of deprivation, the minimum contribution is reduced to 10 per cent of the project costs. In order to qualify, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that at least 70 per cent of the members and or users of the facility are residents of deprived areas. This does not apply to projects led by local authorities.
- 2.35 Between 2001 and 2017 the Sport Facilities Fund has included investment and support in 457 facilities in the clubs and communities environment. As at late 2017, 381 of these projects were completed, 39 were onsite and 37 were authorised and ready to progress. A further 170 applications were in various stages of consideration<sup>14</sup>.
- 2.36 Facilities were funded in every local authority in Scotland. The number of facilities per authority ranged from 3 in Clackmannanshire to 43 in Highland.
- 2.37 **sportscotland** also provides broader support to local authorities, trusts, SGBs and clubs to improve strategic planning and design outcomes. It has also published design guidance on pitch and court markings, pitches and pavilions and outdoor facilities.

#### Awards for All

- 2.38 The Awards for All programme is administered by the Big Lottery Fund and is funded by **sportscotland**, with £500,000 of investment provided in 2017/18. It offers grant awards for clubs and community groups of between £500 and £10,000. It is intended to be an easy way for organisations to access small amounts of funding. Overall, across the Awards for All programme, applications have a 74 per cent success rate. The programme is focused on support for organisations who have not received funding in the past three years. Creative Scotland is also a partner, providing funding for arts focused organisations.

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<sup>14</sup> [sportscotland monitoring data](#)



### Help for Clubs

2.39 The Help for Clubs website provides a range of information, guidance and tools to help clubs to improve their governance and the quality of their offering. The Clubs First Development Tool has been designed to support clubs of all sizes to establish where they are performing well and where they can develop. Up to October 2017, 213 clubs used the tool to analyse their status and explore how to improve and develop.

### Sport for Change

2.40 Sport for Change is an approach that uses sport and physical activity intentionally to bring about positive benefits for individuals and communities to address specific needs. **sportscotland** is working with the Scottish Government and The Robertson Trust to create a greater awareness and understanding of the Sport for Change approach across the sporting sector, and beyond. An action plan is being developed with key partners to integrate the Sport for Change approach within club and community sport.

### 3. Participants in clubs

#### Chapter summary

Overall, **sportscotland** support had helped clubs and groups to increase membership and participation.

Most of those involved in the CSH programme felt it had helped to improve participation through raising awareness, better links, access to facilities and training. Clubs involved in CSHs saw a membership growth of 4 per cent from 2015/16 to 2016/17.

Most of those who had received support through the SGB regional posts supported by **sportscotland** felt that these had helped to increase participation, through increasing their profile, supporting partnership working, enabling access to training and enabling targeting of specific groups. **sportscotland** data shows that clubs which have received at least two years worth of support through SGB regional posts have seen a membership growth of 10 per cent<sup>15</sup>. However, some strategic stakeholders felt that support was variable and mixed.

Strategic stakeholders generally felt that DCI had a significant impact on participation. Almost all clubs which had received DCI funding felt it had helped to increase membership and participation through enabling them to offer more sessions, with more staff and volunteers, better access to facilities, more links with partners, and lower costs for members.

For some, DCI support was the catalyst for significant, sustainable change in participation and membership levels. **sportscotland** figures show that overall, clubs supported by DCI have seen membership growth of 14 per cent<sup>16</sup>.

Many recipients of Award for All funding felt it had increased participation through funding training and qualifications for coaches and officials; supporting youth development; enabling access to facilities and equipment; and enabling taster sessions and events.

Some clubs which received funding through the Sport Facilities Fund highlighted that this enabled increased participation for a range of participants – including a range of age groups, for disabled people and for girls and young women.

Results from the club member survey<sup>17</sup> show that 60 per cent of club members (both adults and young people) were more active because of the club.

<sup>15</sup> **sportscotland** monitoring data

<sup>16</sup> **sportscotland** monitoring data

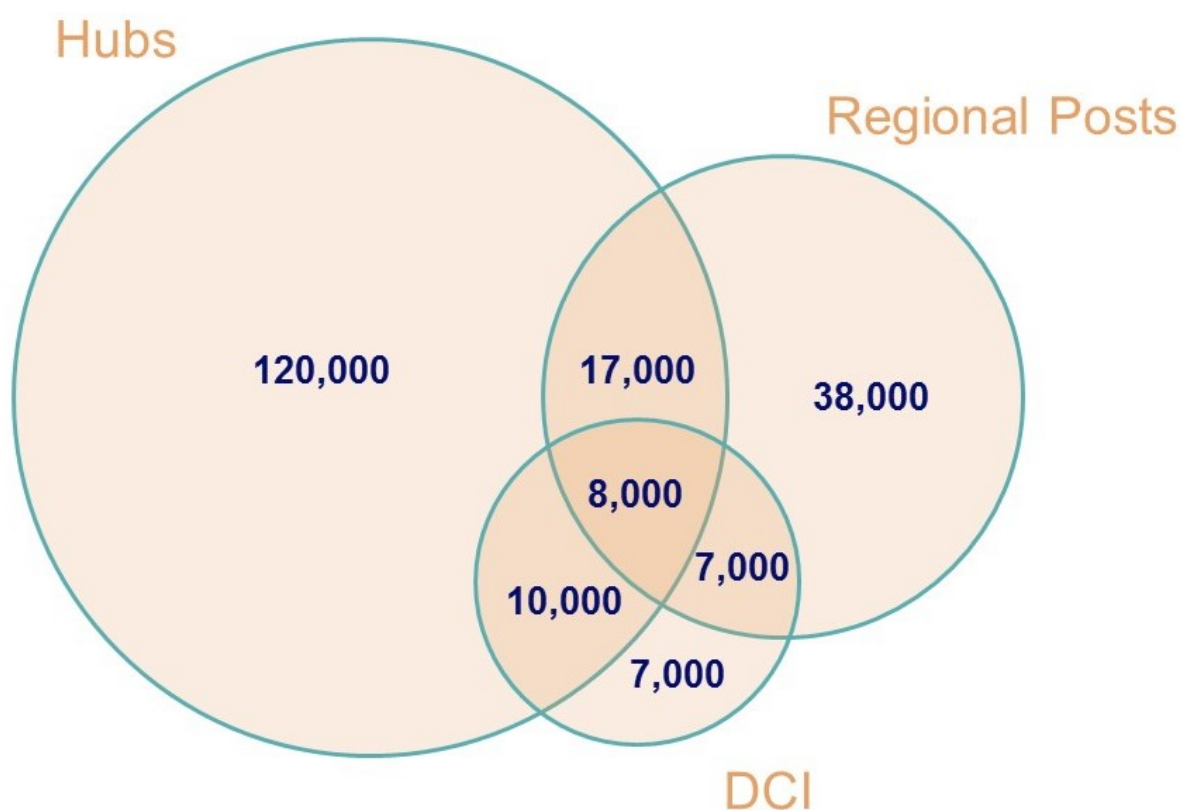
<sup>17</sup> [sportscotland's contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments](#)

## Introduction

- 3.1 This chapter explores the impact of the range of **sportscotland** support on the people involved in clubs and community organisations. It explores the impact of support in relation to increasing the number of people involved in clubs. The core programmes of CSHs, DCI and SGB regional posts all focus on increasing club membership as an important element of their work.

## Participants across supported clubs

- 3.2 Across the CSH, SGB regional post and DCI supported clubs, there were more than 200,000 club members. Most (155,000) were members of clubs supported by CSHs. This included 120,000 members of clubs only supported by CSHs; 17,000 members of clubs supported by CSHs and SGB regional posts; 10,000 members of clubs supported by CSHs and DCI; and 8,000 members of clubs supported across all three programmes.



- 3.3 Clubs supported by SGB regional posts had a total of 70,000 members, including 38,000 members of clubs only supported by SGB regional posts; 7,000 members of clubs supported by SGB regional posts and DCI; 17,000 members of clubs supported by SGB regional posts and CSHs; and 8,000 members of clubs supported by all three programmes.

- 3.4 Clubs supported by DCI had a total of 32,000 members, including 7,000 members of clubs only supported by DCI; 7,000 supported by DCI and SGB regional posts; 10,000 supported by DCI and CSHs; and 8,000 supported by all three programmes.

## Impact of CSHs

- 3.5 Clubs involved in CSHs saw a membership growth of 4 per cent from 2015/16 to 2016/17. Two thirds of clubs and community groups responding to the online survey who were part of a CSH felt that this had helped to improve participation generally. They gave a range of examples of how it had helped with:

- raising awareness of clubs and sports within local communities;
- signposting and joint activities like running taster sessions;
- providing equipment and facilities;
- increasing let availability which allows for more participants to become involved;
- providing training, development and support to clubs;
- providing funding and signposting to other sources of funding;
- increasing partnership working and links with schools; and
- attracting and training volunteers.

**“Working with the hub has given us access to the hub leaders programmes which have been valuable to our leaders, finding new potential leaders who are now qualified coaches.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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### Example – Increasing participation through the CSH

One climbing club received support through the CSH to support members to achieve a climbing award. The club now has enough trained supervisors to run an additional club night each week, and to increase participation in competitions. Another club involved in a CSH was able to reduce barriers to transport and travel in rural areas, through accessing training for local coaches.

*Source: Evaluation survey/ interviews*

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### Example – Increasing participation through the CSH

One gymnastics club received support from the CSH officer to access affordable facilities for short time slots. This allowed the club to offer short sessions, introducing people to the sport gradually. The CSH also supported training for coaches and volunteers at the club.

*Source: Evaluation survey/ interviews*

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### Example – Increasing participation through the CSH

A football club was supported by the CSH officer to negotiate the prices paid for local facilities. This has allowed the club to offer extra training sessions on all weather pitches, book slots in advance to plan for the year ahead, and offer membership at an affordable rate.

“We wouldn’t be able to run at the current prices without the discounted facilities.”

Sports club

*Source: Evaluation survey/ interviews*

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- 3.6 Some respondents felt they could not comment and others said that they didn’t feel it had an impact as it was not clear what the purpose and role of a CSH was. This is explored further in Chapter Five.
- 3.7 Strategic stakeholders also commented on the role of CSHs in increasing participation. Many felt that CSHs had a real impact on participation through enabling the provision of more and higher quality opportunities, and encouraging networking, collaboration and idea sharing between partners.
- 3.8 However, some highlighted concerns that the CSH programme put pressure on club leaders who were often volunteers, and felt that volunteer fatigue was impacting on the effectiveness of the programme due to the extra work and time commitments created. A small number also felt that they were in the early stages of CSHs and had yet to see the true impact. A few felt that it was hard to measure increases in participation and identify the contribution of CSHs to membership levels.

## Impact of SGB regional posts

- 3.9 **sportscotland** data shows that clubs which have received at least two years worth of support have seen a membership growth of 10 per cent and a growth in the number of coaches of 10 per cent<sup>18</sup>. This is in a context where there have been ongoing challenges by a number of SGBs in recruiting and retaining staff.
- 3.10 Views on the impact of SGB regional posts supported by **sportscotland** were mixed.
- 3.11 Some strategic stakeholders felt that these posts had made a big impact in terms of providing more participation opportunities, providing higher quality opportunities, and strengthening clubs, participation opportunities and pathways. Most SGBs involved in the research felt that the posts were beneficial, providing focused officers who were able to offer time and expertise to clubs. SGBs felt that this helped to support clubs to become

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<sup>18</sup> **sportscotland Club** and Community Sport Update 25 October 2017

stronger organisations; better connected – particularly with SGBs; increase participation; and identify talent.

“...with such a large amount of clubs to support, the regional posts have really assisted with developing and then offering solutions to the many issues being faced by our clubs.”

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 3.12 However, many strategic stakeholders highlighted that support was variable, and felt that the areas covered were so large that it could be challenging to have an impact. One SGB felt that the posts did not work well, because the sport was too complex for staff to be able to effectively consult and develop the infrastructure of the sport on a regional basis. Some felt that the posts worked best when there was a clear strategy in place, agreed by **sportscotland** and the sports governing body.

“Some regional posts have been great and have helped strengthen clubs greatly whereas other posts have been non-existent in some local authority areas or have had very little impact. Some regions are so geographically vast that it is difficult for these posts to make a great impact.”

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

“The regional posts have been the weakest contributor of the options provided, however there is only so much one officer can do within a region. Expectations were maybe unrealistic.”

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 3.13 133 clubs and community groups responding to the online survey had received support from a **sportscotland** funded SGB regional post in the past few years. Most believed that the posts had supported them to increase participation, but a small number (29) said that it was either too early to say or they felt that the post had not directly or specifically had an impact on participation.

- 3.14 Overall, those who had received support felt that it had helped to:

- increase the profile of their sport and club;
- increase club membership at all ages and across different levels and abilities;
- support partnership working, networking and links with schools;
- support access to other support which helped increase participation – such as DCI funding;
- encourage volunteers to take up coaching roles and receive training – increasing the capacity of the club; and
- help to target groups that clubs had previously found harder to engage with.

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### Example – SGB regional posts increasing participation

One club saw an increase in membership of 350 per cent as a result of support. The club received intelligence which helped it to increase its income. This has allowed it to recruit more coaches, resulting in a more extensive programme. The club has been able to offer new sessions, new activities and new disciplines as a result of support and assistance.

*Source: Evaluation survey/ interviews*

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- 3.15 However, some clubs which had received support through SGB regional posts agreed with strategic stakeholders that officers were spread too thinly, and expected to cover large geographical areas. A few also felt that support was there if you asked for it, but they would welcome more proactive support and regular contact. Some wanted to see more proactive communication, support and information and advice and more clarity of roles around the SGB regional posts. Challenges were spread across different sports and different local authority areas. However, clubs in rural areas in particular highlighted the size of the geographical areas covered by some of these SGB regional posts.

## Impact of DCI

- 3.16 **sportscotland** figures show that overall, clubs supported by DCI have seen membership growth of 14 per cent, and an increase of 15 per cent in the number of coaches<sup>19</sup>.
- 3.17 Almost all of those who had received DCI funding and responded to the club survey felt that it had helped them to increase membership and participation. There were a wide range of ways in which barriers to increased participation had been tackled through DCI, including:
- enabling clubs to offer more taster sessions;
  - enabling clubs to offer targeted participation sessions;
  - increasing the number of staff and volunteers to deliver sessions;
  - improving quality of and access to facilities;
  - supporting more linkages with other clubs, schools and communities; and
  - reducing the cost of participation for members.

**“DCI has funded our part-time talent manager to run a performance programme for our best athletes, and this has become a selling point of our club to aspiring basketball players.”**

Community organisation (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“It has given far more players the opportunity to play by supporting coaches financially. This allows us to keep the cost of subs down, as all money brought in**

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<sup>19</sup> **sportscotland Club** and Community Sport Update 25 October 2017

goes toward pitch costs and registration to the NGB. Without this financial support club subs would have to be increased, which would impact on the numbers participating in the club.”

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 3.18 For some, the DCI support was the catalyst or a key factor in a range of support received to increase participation. DCI is set up to bring in relevant regional partners to support the club collectively.

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#### Example – DCI as a catalyst for increased participation

One club indicated that DCI was the catalyst that transformed its sport locally. The DCI enabled the club to attract match funding from a major sponsor and the Big Lottery. The funding and support enabled the club to increase the range of opportunities available. Over 18 months, participation grew from 50 members to almost 500 members. The club is on track to meet its target of 1,000 members within the next three years.

“None of this would have happened without the DCI grant. I cannot praise the DCI programme enough. It is outstanding.”

Sports club

*Source: Evaluation survey and case study*

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- 3.19 Strategic stakeholders also felt that DCI had a key impact on increasing participation. When asked about the range of sportscotland support, many felt that it was DCI funding which had the most impact on participation. Some highlighted the importance of having a dedicated employee (not a volunteer) to focus on participation, and undertake targeted work.

“DCI posts, without a doubt. The clubs know better than anyone about what they need to increase participation and membership and the post holders have engaged well with Active Schools, supporting the priorities of both the club and the AS programme.”

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

“I think DCI investment has particularly helped develop clubs. In order for clubs to grow they often need a dedicated resource to help with front line delivery and DCI has certainly helped with this.”

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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#### Example – DCI increasing participation

DCI funding supported a swimming club to more than double the membership of its junior section, from 70 to 169 over three years. More information is available in a case study on this club, included as Appendix Two.

Another shinty club used DCI funding to support club members to become foundation level coaches and gain child protection training. This allowed club members to offer tasters in schools and has helped to increase youth membership significantly from around 5 junior players to 30. The club now has a development plan for youth

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development and can plan wider club development knowing that there are young players ready to feed into the club.

“Putting a structure in place for the youth team has helped secure the future of the club.”

Sports club

*Source: Evaluation survey and case study*

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### **Example – DCI increasing participation and club activity**

DCI support of £6,500 has allowed an orienteering club to fund a Development Officer for one and half days per week. Alongside financial investment, the club has received funding through sportscotland around governance, operations, recruiting staff and training.

“This support has been really excellent.”

Sports club

The Development Officer has developed and coordinated a programme of events. Club membership has increased and the number of events the club runs has tripled in two years. Having a Development Officer gave the club more capacity to talk to potential members and translate that into memberships. The club hopes to become self-sustaining after DCI funding has finished, and has already been successful in securing small grants from the governing body, windfarms and the Forestry Commission.

*Source: Evaluation survey/ interviews*

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## **Impact of other sportscotland support**

3.20 Almost 150 recipients of Awards for All funding commented on its impact within the online survey for clubs and community groups. Clubs and groups highlighted that Awards for All funding had helped to increase participation in their club through:

- funding training and qualifications for coaches, club officials and umpires;
- supporting youth development, junior training sessions and schools coaching programmes;
- supporting the development of new or extended activities;
- enabling events and taster sessions;
- enabling access to new and additional facilities;
- providing more equipment and kit; and
- increasing awareness of the club.

3.21 In a few cases, this small amount of funding had been the catalyst for wider, longer term change in terms of participation levels.

“It supplied a small amount of equipment at a key stage in the DCI project. More importantly it opened the door to the People’s Project that has really transformed our sport in (our local authority area).”

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

“We have been able to run a Duathlon with over 200 competitors and promoted people to take up a sport.”

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 3.22 Strategic stakeholders also indicated that Awards for All provided funding which enabled clubs to access training, equipment and other support which has helped them to increase participation.

“Awards for All has helped clubs in obtaining the equipment and training they need to support young people in our sport, which in turn has created new opportunities and made it more financially accessible in some cases.”

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 3.23 Some strategic stakeholders also highlighted the importance of the Sport Facilities Fund in providing the infrastructure for participation opportunities. Many clubs and groups mentioned the lack of suitable facilities as being a barrier to their growth. Some clubs which received funding through the Sport Facilities Fund highlighted that this enabled increased participation for a range of participants – including a range of age groups, for disabled people and for girls and young women. Some also highlighted that all weather surfaces and lighting increased participation through allowing year round use of facilities.

## Club member activity levels

- 3.24 Our survey of 3,000 members of **sportscotland** supported clubs and community groups found that:

- Most adult club members (85%) responding to the survey were classed as ‘active’ – doing at least 150 minutes of activity a week. This was an increase from just over half (54%) before they joined the club. The number of days and amount of time spent doing physical activity on these days also increased when adults joined sportscotland supported clubs.
- Most young club members (61%) were classed as ‘active’ in relation to guidelines for young people – doing at least 420 minutes of activity a week. This compares to less than half (40%) of school pupils responding to the survey.
- Overall, 60 per cent of club members (both adults and young people) stated that they were more active because of the club.

## 4. Inclusion and equality

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### Chapter summary

Most clubs and groups felt confident engaging with girls and women. However, they were slightly less confident around engaging people from areas of socio-economic deprivation and disabled people. Almost a fifth felt that they were not at all able to engage with disabled people through their club or group. Clubs and groups highlighted that they would like more support with understanding needs and consulting with under-represented groups.

**sportscotland** support has helped to build the confidence of clubs and groups in engaging with under-represented groups.

Most felt that being involved in a CSH or having SGB regional support helped a little with engaging under-represented groups. Predominantly, CSHs and SGB regional support were able to offer information, awareness and networking opportunities.

Where clubs were able to source additional funding, CSHs and SGB regional posts were able to support more practical changes, with tangible outcomes. Some clubs had successfully engaged with new groups, or improved diversity. Many clubs had delivered taster sessions to disabled people, or people with additional support needs, often with support from SGB regional posts.

Clubs and groups were very positive about the impact of DCI in helping them to engage with under-represented groups. Successes were often due to targeted support projects working in close partnership with a range of people and service providers in the community.

Some clubs highlighted the value of girls or women only activities, and some felt that work with Active Schools had helped to involve more girls and young women in club and community sport.

Many felt that the main barriers related to cost of participation, access to inclusive facilities and changing rooms, time and venues for girls only activities, access to experienced coaches and volunteers and transport.

**sportscotland** does not collect monitoring data on equalities characteristics beyond age and gender. However, the profile of respondents to the club member survey suggested that disabled people, ethnic minorities and people living in areas of deprivation were relatively underrepresented when compared to the Scottish population. A full breakdown is available in the [ASOF report](#)<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> **sportscotland's** contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments

## Introduction

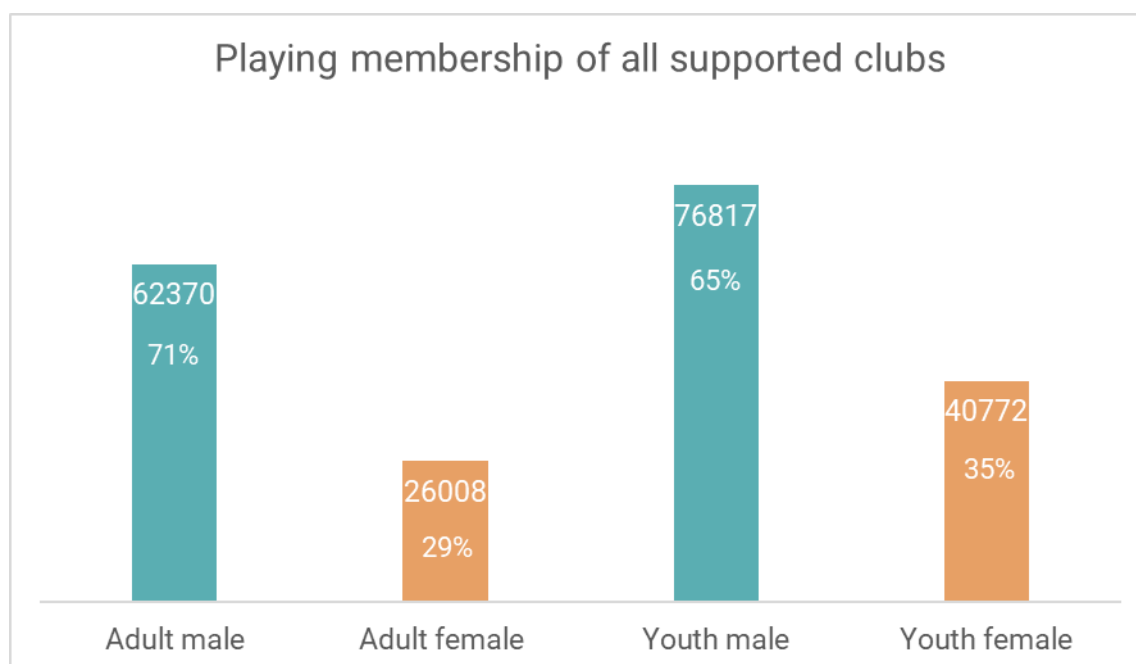
4.1 This chapter considers the profile of participants involved in the clubs and communities environment. It also considers this in relation to the Clubs and Communities Framework, which highlights the importance of clubs:

- being inclusive, open to everyone and aiming to attract under-represented groups; and
- seeking to understand the needs of all members and participants.

4.2 This chapter also highlights some key findings from the large scale survey of club members across Scotland<sup>21</sup>.

## Profile of participants

4.3 Among supported clubs, there are more male than female participants at both adult and junior level. Overall there are more than double the number of adult male members than adult female members in clubs, and almost twice as many youth male members as youth female members.

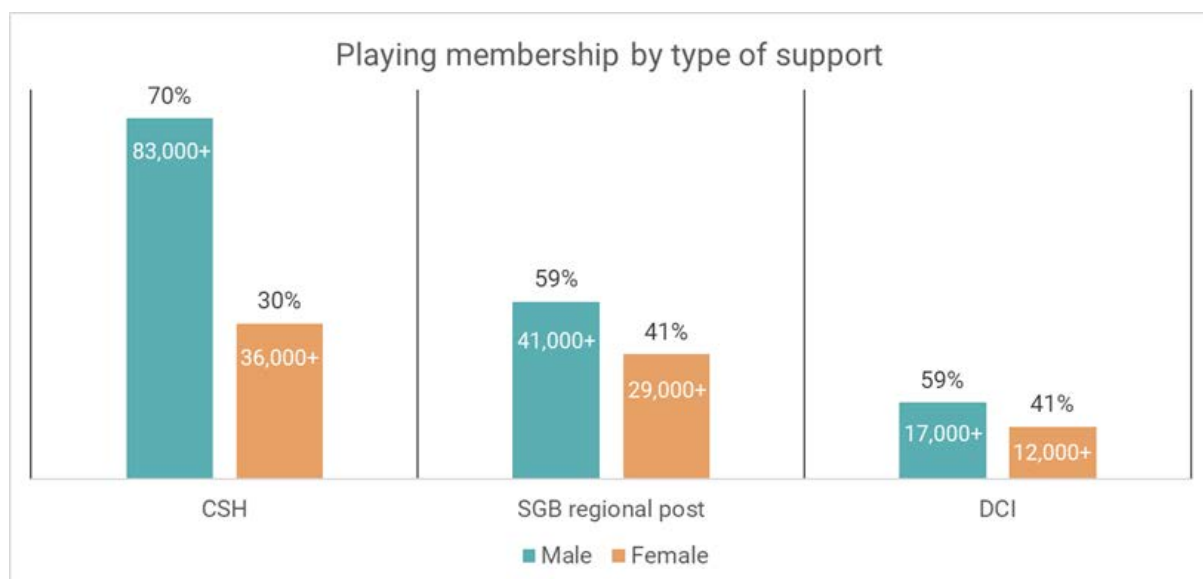


Source: 2016/17 **sportscotland** monitoring information

4.4 The profile of membership varied greatly from club to club, and also varied somewhat by the type of support that clubs had received. This is in part due to the design of **sportscotland** programmes in the clubs and communities environment – with support targeted at different types of club at different

<sup>21</sup> **sportscotland's** contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments

stages in their development. For example, if football is excluded, overall female membership in supported clubs increases slightly to 37 per cent.



- 4.5 Clubs supported by a CSH showed a broadly similar pattern of membership to the overall membership, with around double male membership at both adult and youth level. If football clubs are excluded for CHSs, the balance within hubs shifts slightly to 64 per cent male and 36 per cent female.
- 4.6 Clubs supported by SGB regional posts and with DCI funding had a more balanced split between men and women, but still had more males than females at both adult and youth level. DCI funded clubs in particular had a better balance of young men and young women at youth level. This may be due to the focus on increasing participation and building a strong base of players that was encouraged through the DCI programme.
- 4.7 Comparing membership levels across 2015/16 and 2016/17 shows that clubs supported by **sportscotland** have seen membership of young women increase at a faster rate than that of both young men and adults. For clubs that these figures are available, youth female membership increased by ten per cent, compared with six per cent for young males and adult females, and five per cent for adult males.
- 4.8 The main focus of the club member survey was to explore the contribution to the ASOF outcomes. However, the survey also highlights useful findings in relation to equality and inclusion. In terms of club member survey respondents:
- overall 8 per cent of respondents said they were disabled;
  - most adult respondents (90%) were white Scottish or white other British;
  - most adults (91%) said they were heterosexual/ straight;

- most adults (58%) said they did not belong to any religion, religious denomination or body; and
  - most respondents were from the least deprived parts of Scotland – with a relatively small proportion (7%) from the 20 per cent most deprived parts of Scotland.
- 4.9 The survey found that most club members increased their physical activity since joining a **sportscotland** supported club. Further analysis showed that club membership increased activity levels across all equalities characteristics.
- 4.10 Club members also showed similar reasons for joining sports clubs across different equalities characteristics – with the exception of age. Younger members aged 18 to 24 were significantly more likely to wish to improve their skills and challenge themselves than older club members.
- 4.11 There were some differences in levels of membership of multiple clubs. While just over a third (35%) of club members responding to the survey were members of multiple clubs, this reduced to 31 per cent for respondents with a disability and 26 per cent for respondents living in the most deprived areas<sup>22</sup>. Young people and older people were also more likely to be members of other clubs than 16 to 34 year olds.
- 4.12 Almost half (49%) of all club members felt that being involved in sport and physical activity at their club had helped them to be more active more widely, and over a third (36%) stated it had helped them get more interested in other sports clubs or groups. People living in the most deprived areas were more likely to say that they had become more interested in other sports clubs or groups as a result of their club activity (39%). Women were more likely than men to say that being involved in club activity had helped them to be more active outside the club (53% for women compared with 45% for men).
- 4.13 For more detail, refer to the separate report on [sportscotland's contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments](#).

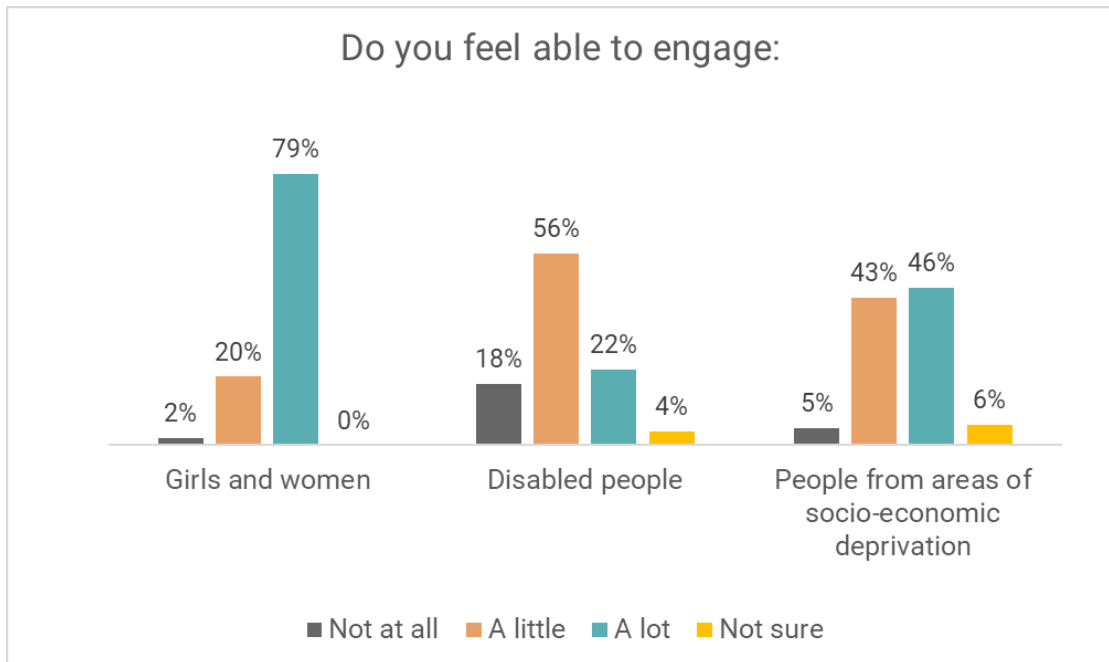
## Involving a range of members

- 4.14 We asked all clubs and community groups which completed the online survey about the extent to which they felt that their club or community group was able to engage with girls and women, disabled people and people from areas of socio-economic deprivation.
- 4.15 Overall, respondents were most confident about engaging girls and women, quite confident about engaging people from areas of socio-economic deprivation, and least confident about engaging disabled people. It is worth

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<sup>22</sup> Living in the 20% most deprived datazones, based on the SIMD

noting that the survey of club members found that a relatively small proportion were disabled (8%) or from the most deprived areas (7%).



- 4.16 There were no major differences in terms of the size of the club, when the club had been set up or whether it had received DCI funding. It appeared that members of CSHs were slightly less confident about their ability to engage with different groups than those who were not. Community organisations were more confident than sports clubs around engaging with people from areas of socio-economic deprivation.
- 4.17 Clubs and community groups highlighted that understanding needs was a key area that they would like to receive support with in the future. Many would like more support to consult with under-represented groups, or help with accessing statistics on local populations.
- 4.18 Strategic stakeholders largely felt that **sportscotland** support had helped clubs to reduce barriers to participation. Over half (58%) felt that it had, but a third (36%) were unsure and a minority (16%) felt that it had not helped reduce barriers. Most felt that the support had helped clubs to become more inclusive, for example through introducing broader offerings, reaching a wider range of participants, and developing disability sport programmes. Some felt that connections with schools, and the Active Schools programme in particular, were helping a lot in this regard – particularly around targeting girls.
- 4.19 However, some strategic stakeholders still felt that there were ongoing barriers to participation – particularly around cost. Some felt that the issues were complex, and clubs needed time to get to the bottom of them. And a

few felt that there was more focus on increasing participation generally, rather than targeting activity at reducing barriers.

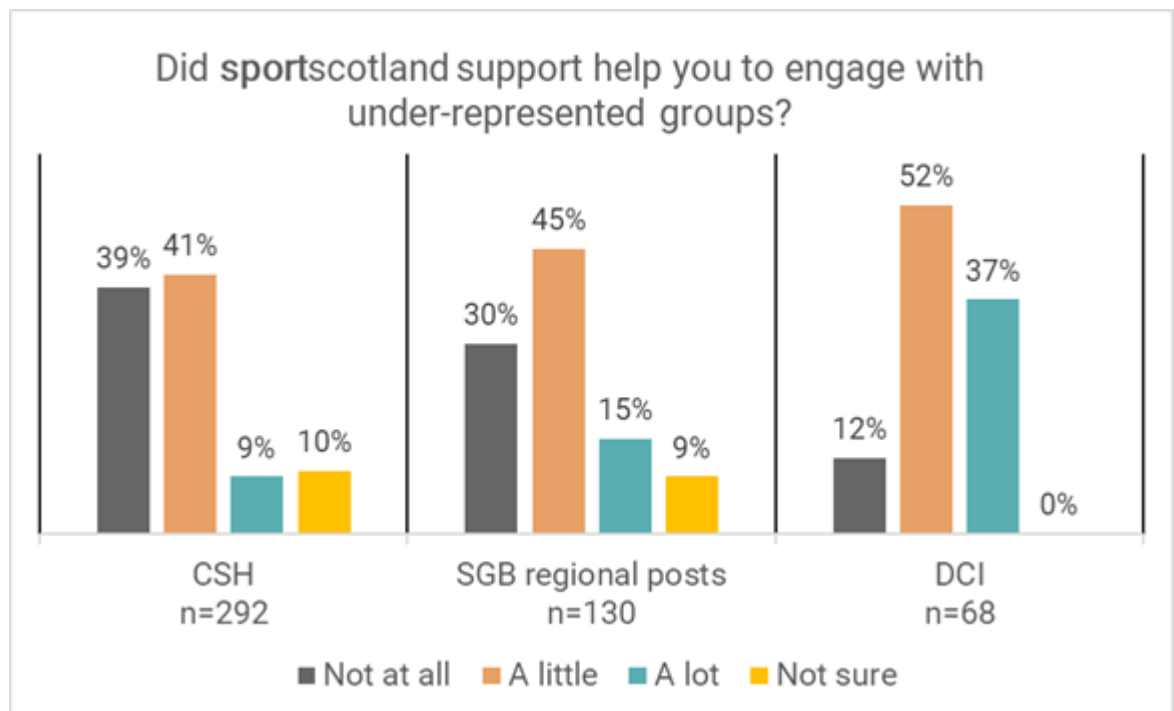
**“I think we still typically look at a broad brushstroke approach to participation in sport, particularly in clubs... the more the merrier. We need to be far more deliberate at reducing barriers.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

## Impact of sportscotland support

4.20 Clubs and groups were asked for their views on whether different elements of **sportscotland** support had helped them to engage effectively with groups under-represented in their sport.

4.21 Respondents had mixed views on whether being part of a Community Sports Hub had helped. Just a small proportion (9%) felt it had helped a lot, but many (41%) felt it had helped a little. Broadly, the same profile was seen for the impact of SGB regional posts. Clubs which had received DCI funding were very positive about the impact of DCI on helping them to engage with under-represented groups such as women, disabled people or minority ethnic people.



### Impact of CSHs

4.22 CSHs have supported clubs to become more inclusive and engage a wider range of people. Hubs have supported clubs to improve knowledge and awareness of equalities issues and improve equalities policies, through training from disability sport organisations. Hubs have also linked clubs with



community organisations, to help diversify membership, and improve awareness of clubs amongst the wider community.

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#### **Example – Improving awareness**

One CSH arranged a Disability Inclusion Course, which was delivered by Scottish Disability Sport and the local leisure trust. This course helped hub members to improve their knowledge and understanding of disability sport and learn to encourage inclusion within their environment.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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#### **Example – Networking with equalities groups**

The "Get Active in Drumchapel" project, helped hub clubs and partners establish links with a range of local groups and organisations such as youth groups, a mental health charity and a charity working with disabled adults. The links to these groups helped to engage people in new activities and identify inactive people in the community.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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- 4.23 More widely, partnership working in the community has helped some clubs to successfully diversify and increase membership, by reaching out to people that wouldn't normally engage in the sport. Some clubs have been supported to take a targeted approach to improving equality, working to attract a specific demographic such as young children, or LGBT people.

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#### **Example - Engaging LGBT people**

One CSH supported clubs to improve awareness of LGBT issues, and work towards becoming more inclusive. Members from a range of clubs, including football, rugby, hockey and netball wore rainbow laces to raise awareness during LGBT history month, and also took part in a social media campaign.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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#### **Example – Targeting particular groups through the CSH**

In one local authority area there are six Community Sport Hubs working with 65 clubs across distinct geographic clusters. The hubs engaged in specific work with target groups in each area, including looked after children; people living in poverty; disabled people; women and girls. The hub has also facilitated a local bursary scheme, offering free club memberships for people who cannot afford to join. Overall, the local authority has seen increased engagement from women and people living in poverty.

*Source: Evaluation survey/ interviews*

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- 4.24 CSHs and CSH Officers have supported clubs to reduce or remove barriers to participation, particularly for those with highest levels of need. This work has been successful when conducted in partnership with other community service providers, working with similar groups of people.

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#### **Example – Reducing cost related barriers to participation**

In one CSH, 55 clubs are providing free places for those who otherwise could not afford to attend. In a partnership with third sector organisations, the majority of hub clubs are

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providing free memberships, coaching, sessions and in some cases equipment to people referred from health providers, schools, social workers and from our looked after and accommodated children support network.

“These people are the most vulnerable in our community and in a number of cases will not even approach a club due to their circumstances.”

CSH officer

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### **Impact of SGB regional posts**

4.25 SGB regional posts have helped clubs to analyse participation in order to improve equality in club membership. For example, one RDM worked closely with minority ethnic groups, faith groups, autistic groups and LGBT groups. They have encouraged clubs to attend community events run by these groups, such as Pride festivals, to increase awareness and reduce perceptions of squash as an elitist sport. One club was supported to install facilities in a local community centre and mosque, which has increased participation from people in the local Muslim community.

“After a recent equality survey, it was confirmed that the demographics of our club membership is made up of older white males. We wish to diversify our membership...”

SGB regional post (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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### **Example – Engaging LGBT people**

One club that was set up using Awards for All funding became the first Netball Club in Scotland to welcome a transgender member into the club. The club worked closely with Netball Scotland to ensure that the transgender club member was able to play in all games, including in the league.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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4.26 Information from SGB regional post reporting indicates that some clubs were successfully accessing funding and support, to engage more people from areas of socio-economic deprivation, or people who otherwise would not be able to attend.

### **Example – Reducing cost related barriers to participation**

A number of boxing clubs in one local authority area have accessed funding to develop sessions for women and young people, and to offer free sessions to those who cannot afford to join the club. Some boxing clubs have started to work in partnership with local authority Activity Agreements, to support disengaged young people. One club received £10,000 from the 'Udecide Northfield' fund to launch a 26-week 'Get Fit for Free' programme, which will offer free boxing training for to up to 200 people.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### **Example – Reducing cost related barriers to participation**

SGB regional posts at Triathlon Scotland supported young people living in areas of deprivation, and disabled people to train and compete. They worked closely with

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partners in Scottish Swimming and Scottish Cycling and a former Paralympic swimmer, to provide accessible and adapted facilities and equipment.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### **Impact of DCI**

4.27 Some clubs and groups responding to the online survey highlighted that DCI funding had supported them to engage effectively with under-represented groups – most often girls and women or disabled people. This included supporting women to come back to sports they had been involved in when they were younger; expanding the range of girls or women only activities offered; and setting up girls or women only academies or athlete development programmes. One DCI club had engaged more boys in a club previously with mostly female membership.

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#### **Example – DCI funding supporting participation in areas of deprivation**

A DCI funded rowing club and a swimming club worked to develop a welcoming and open atmosphere and promote participation in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. Both clubs offered free or reduced cost taster sessions to people in the local area. The clubs both also have a policy of inclusion, and young people from disadvantaged families can be supported through bursary schemes or have membership fees waived.

*Source: case study*

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#### **Example – DCI funding supporting disability sports**

A DCI funded wheelchair sports club has provided a range of sports for wheelchair users, in an area where few wheelchair sports opportunities were available. The club has a varied membership of males and females, aged from seven to fifty-eight. The club welcomes all people, whether they use a wheelchair full-time, part-time, or are able bodied.

*Source: case study*

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### **Impact of other support**

4.28 Clubs and groups noted the importance of accessible facilities in engaging with girls and women and disabled people.

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#### **Example – Sport Facilities funding supporting clubs to involve more women and girls**

Sport Facilities funding for one rugby club has helped the club develop new changing room facilities. There are now separate changing rooms for males and females, allowing men's and women's teams to play at the same time, and facilitating increased engagement from women.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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4.29 One strategic stakeholder felt that there was a specific emphasis on developing world class facilities which provide opportunities which cater for a range of needs. For example, the stakeholder felt that the new facility at Inverclyde enabled able bodied and disabled athletes to train, improve and compete together under one sporting roof – providing equality in participation.

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- 4.30 Recipients of Awards for All funding also highlighted that this support had helped to develop their activities with a wide range of groups, through access to additional facilities, coach training and development activity.

**“Developed our girls section.”**

Community group (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“Paid for additional facilities to take training for children with additional support needs and coach education.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“It has helped us develop new activities (e.g. powerchair football) as well as supporting existing activities to develop further.”**

Community group (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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#### **Example – Supporting disability sport programme**

One strategic stakeholder felt that the Awards for All programme and regional officers had supported local swimming clubs who cater for disabled athletes. The programme is growing very quickly, and there is a joint focus to ensure that all clubs and the overall pathway are fully inclusive.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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#### **Example – Awards for All supporting disability sports**

Awards for All funding supported a disability sports club to run a pilot swimming project and assess the level of demand for this type of programme. The project was successful, and the swimming club now accommodates up to 40 children with disabilities who participate in swimming activities. The club has applied for and received funding through Awards for All a few times, and has found it helpful for testing pilot projects.

**“It is great for that – testing ideas.”**

Sports club

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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#### **Impact of range of support**

- 4.31 Strategic stakeholders were also asked about the impact the range of **sportscotland** support had on reducing barriers to participation for under-represented groups. More than half (58%) felt it had an impact on reducing barriers, while a third (36%) were unsure and a minority (16%) said the support had not had an impact on reducing barriers.
- 4.32 Overall, most strategic stakeholders felt that **sportscotland** support and programmes had helped clubs to feel more inclusive, introduce broader offerings and widen their reach. However, some felt that more could be done to reduce barriers. Some indicated that the issues were complex, and that clubs had limited time to get to the bottom of these issues. Some suggested a more targeted and focused approach was required.
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## Future support needs around inclusion and equality

### General support needs

4.33 Many respondents said that additional support would help them to better engage with women and girls, disabled people and people from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. The types of support required included:

- understanding needs – support to consult with under-represented groups, statistics on different groups in local areas;
- funding and support accessing funding – for employing staff with the role of engaging under-represented groups, and for facilities, equipment, transport, advertising and awareness raising activity, and taster sessions;
- building networks – to enable signposting and connecting with other activities such as Active Schools; and
- guidance – examples and ideas of how to meet needs.

**“The club has a very strong social inclusive ethos based around rugby, but we know we need to challenge ourselves more on what else we could do.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

4.34 A few respondents highlighted that they would like more support specifically from sport governing bodies in relation to engaging under-represented groups.

**“Funding to create a post full or part time to deliver on specific outcomes for these groups.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

### Involving girls and women

4.35 Some clubs and community groups gave specific suggestions about the support they would need to be able to engage with more women and girls. Many felt that sessions specifically for women and girls were very effective. However some felt restricted by the time they had available to offer this, the availability of coaches and a lack of knowledge of how to introduce girls only sessions effectively. Some also highlighted that they needed more appropriate changing facilities to be able to engage girls and women effectively.

**“We have a limited number of girls playing mini rugby and we are trying, with some challenges to get ladies rugby off the ground. However, we have no ladies changing facilities, which we need.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“Girls only coaching sessions for primary schools have shown to be effective at encouraging girls to take part. We need to have the resources in terms of coach time to be able to run these.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 4.36 Some clubs noted that lack of funding restricted their ability to engage people and build a diverse membership. In some areas, clubs have used funding to address these issues, and build an infrastructure that supports equality.
- 4.37 Some strategic stakeholders highlighted the value of linking with the **sportscotland** supported work in the schools and education environment to address some barriers to participation. Some highlighted that closer work with Active Schools had helped to involve more girls and young women in club and community sport.

#### **Involving people from areas of socio-economic deprivation**

- 4.38 Within the online survey, some clubs and community organisations gave specific suggestions about the support they need to better engage people from areas of socio-economic deprivation. The main theme emerging was access to funding and financial support to enable clubs to offer reduced fees for children where parents can't afford to pay, and flexible membership options. Some also felt that transport was a major barrier, making it hard for some people to get involved in their activities. Some felt that they would be able to do more in this field if they worked in partnership with other organisations which focus on this group.

**“Funding for people from deprived areas is the core barrier.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“People from areas of socio-economic deprivation often have lack of access to a car and public transport often does not run during our time slots.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 4.39 Strategic stakeholders largely felt that the main barrier to participation was cost. While a few highlighted approaches which had been taken to reduce the cost of participation or skills development opportunities, many felt that there was little that could be done to reduce the cost of participation. One strategic stakeholder mentioned that the focus of DCI on building sustainable and business-like clubs may actually result in greater costs for members, creating further barriers.

## Involving disabled people

4.40 Within the online survey, some clubs and community organisations gave specific suggestions about the support they would need to better engage disabled people. These included:

- better facilities which are accessible and suitable for disabled people;
- experienced coaches or coach training and development, so that coaches understand the needs of disabled people;
- specialist equipment;
- more volunteers and staff – who are experts, passionate and motivated; and
- access to support as issues arise, for example through links with charitable or voluntary organisations.

**“Finance to provide better facilities.”**

Community organisation (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“To set up a disability pathway we require volunteers that are willing and preferably passionate about disability sport.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“We are currently setting up football groups for walking football and also in talks with local disability groups to see what we can provide.”**

Community organisation (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

## 5. Connected clubs and pathways

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### Chapter summary

**sportscotland** support has helped clubs and community groups to become more connected, both locally and nationally, and has supported the development of pathways and progression opportunities.

Most felt that CSHs had helped to improve connections locally, with community organisations reporting more of an impact than sports clubs. CSHs provided opportunities for clubs to network and share knowledge, improve cooperation between clubs and enhance connections with the local community.

In many cases CSHs had helped with sharing facilities, revising pricing structures for facilities and working collaboratively around access to facilities – although some clubs felt they should have seen more benefits of this nature.

Some clubs involved in CSHs felt it had helped with progression, through supporting training for coaches, access to facilities and links to other clubs. However, some felt that there was more focus on participation than progression within CSHs, or were unsure of the evidence available to suggest that club members were progressing.

In some cases, the CSH also gave clubs a voice locally, through working together. However, some clubs and groups felt that the objectives of the CSH they were involved with were unclear, with no collective aim or ambition. Some felt CSH duplicated other sports networks and put pressure on volunteer led clubs and groups.

Most clubs and groups supported through SGB regional posts felt that this had helped to improve connections both locally and nationally. However, some stakeholders felt that SGB regional posts covered too large an area to help with joint working, or were not connected to local and community priorities and networks.

Most clubs supported by SGB regional posts also felt that this helped with progression in terms of developing pathways, developing player skills and enhanced leadership and training opportunities.

Clubs and local authority officers felt that DCI helped to develop a structured and strategic approach, well connected both locally and nationally. Clubs which had received DCI felt it had helped to develop and support athletes through access to qualified coaches, and develop strong pathways.

Overall, stakeholders believed the range of support was beneficial to creating connected clubs, with **sportscotland** support largely complementing and



enhancing local provision. Many stakeholders felt that the range of support helped with progression, rather than one specific programme.

Clubs recognised the value of joint work with schools, and this work was supported across the range of **sportscotland** programmes. Some clubs and a few strategic stakeholders highlighted that there were opportunities to further build on the connections between schools and clubs.

## Introduction

5.1 This chapter explores the impact of the range of **sportscotland** support in terms of clubs being connected to other clubs, with schools, with supported posts and with local and national priorities. It considers this in relation to the Clubs and Communities Framework, which highlights the importance of clubs:

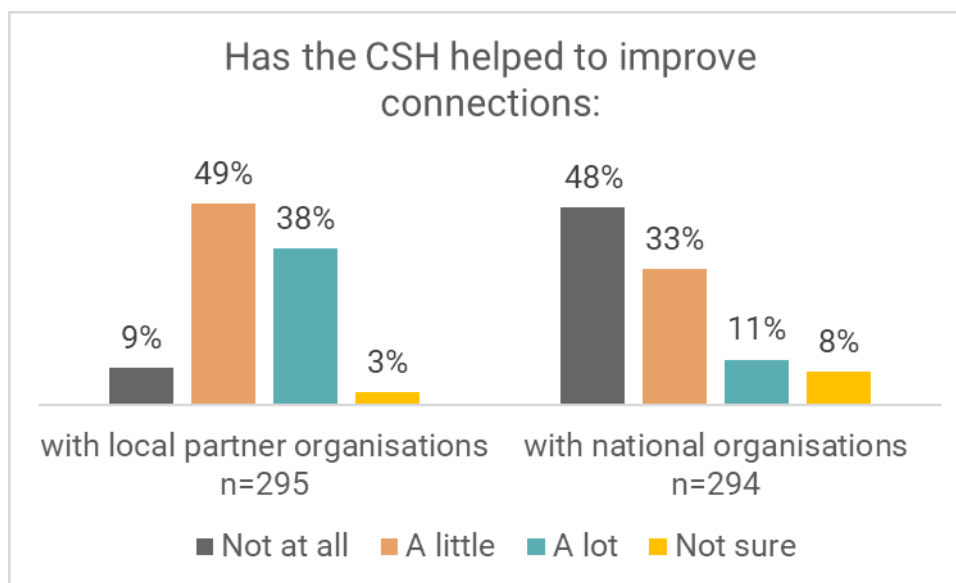
- working in partnership to achieve common goals – including with their governing body, schools, other sports clubs and local businesses;
- offering pathways to help people participate and progress in sport;
- being welcoming and offering recreational opportunities where appropriate; and
- using their expertise, where appropriate, to contribute to Sport for Change.

## Partnerships

### Impact of CSHs

5.2 Of the clubs and community organisations responding to the online survey, most (69%) said that they were a member of a CSH. This is 300 organisations. This varied by local authority – from 86 per cent to 22 per cent.

5.3 Most felt that being a member of a CSH had helped them to improve connections with local partner organisations, either a lot (38%) or a little (49%). While many felt that the CSH had helped improve connections with national organisations a little (33%), a high proportion (58%) felt that it had not helped in this regard or were unsure if it had helped.



5.4 Community organisations were slightly more positive than sports clubs in relation to the impact the CSH had on improving connections both locally and nationally. Clubs which had been set up in the past year were more likely to say this support had helped a lot than others, particularly in terms of creating connections locally.

5.5 Many respondents felt that the CSH had provided opportunities to bring clubs together to network and share knowledge, ideas and learning. In some cases, it had raised awareness about the range of clubs and sports available locally, and improved communication, links and cooperation between clubs and with the local community. Some felt that this had raised the profile of all of the clubs involved.

**“It has provided the platform to bring together all the groups in our local area and reinforced the idea that if we work together we can make some really good things happen.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“Really happy with the hub and delighted to be part of it.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

5.6 In many cases, CSHs had also improved connections between clubs through:

- sharing premises;
- sharing information and ideas;
- joint training and support for members, coaches and volunteers;
- joint advertising and awareness raising activity;
- sharing facilities, equipment, coaches and volunteers;
- joint sporting events; and
- joint fundraising activities and joint work on funding applications.

**“As we do not traditionally share formal sports facilities then our sport doesn't often interact with other clubs. The Community Sport Hub programme has allowed us to do this.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“The hub has helped develop the ability to use the best facilities in our area and engage with leaders... to revise pricing structures that are affordable for our club and our children and parents.”**

Community organisation (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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#### **Example – Bringing clubs together**

One curling club found it extremely useful to share knowledge and receive advice from other CSH members. This has helped rurally isolated members of the local curling club to get involved in other events and activities.

**“The hub officer has done a very, very good job of bringing everybody together.”**

Sports club

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 5.7 Many respondents praised their CSH officer, feeling that they had been very helpful, knowledgeable and experienced. Some had also received developmental support for their club through the CSH officer. Others mentioned that they had learned from other clubs and organisations, sharing expertise – for example around mental health, marketing or other themes.

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#### **Example – Working jointly through the CSH**

One community organisation indicated that it had been working jointly with another hub member around mental health for young members, coaches and volunteers. It found that working together allowed them to be more effective, and engage positively with the community.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 5.8 Some clubs involved in telephone interviews and case studies felt that CSHs helped particularly in small communities, where information sharing, and networking has helped to ensure that club activities do not clash. However, a small number felt that the model may work well in towns and larger communities but didn't work so well in more rural communities where most people involved in sport already knew one another.
- 5.9 Some also mentioned that the CSH gave clubs a voice locally, through working together.

**“It's somebody other than me, sticking their hand up and fighting our corner.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 5.10 However, some clubs felt that the objectives and role of the CSH they were involved with were unclear. Some felt the CSH lacked leadership and
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direction, and some had challenges attracting and retaining members. In some areas, clubs and community organisations highlighted that there was no collective aim or ambition, with clubs still focusing only on their own objectives. Some felt that hubs had little power to bring about change, and seemed to be just a discussion group or networking opportunity.

**“The objective and goals of the hub is not clear. It seems it's a networking opportunity and doesn't really seem to have influence within the local authority to force real change or decisions. Which was one of the original selling points within our hub.”**

Community organisation (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“The hub lacks direction. Many members seem to be in it for their own sport, rather than an overall aim.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“There appears to be a lack of clarity on what a Community Sports Hub actually is.”**

Community organisation (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“Lack of leadership or a focused project. All clubs are not based in the same facility and so it can be quite disjointed. Clubs being involved but solely looking out for their own objectives, which is no fault of the hub but does then impact on its success.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 5.11 Some indicated that there were already sports networks in place in their area which fulfilled a similar purpose. Some felt that it was challenging to make the CSH work when volunteers in clubs were already very stretched in their time commitments, and found it hard to assist with developing the CSH programme. Some reported dwindling attendance at meetings, with clubs finding it hard to get to them (or not a valuable use of their time).

**“Our club has attended every meeting, but there has been very little "buy in" from any of the other local sports clubs.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“We're all doing different sports. We're not relevant to each other.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 5.12 A few suggested that more members of the community should be part of hub governance structures, which in some cases were largely led by clubs, to ensure that CSHs reflect the needs of the wider community.

- 5.13 Some clubs felt that they should have seen more benefits in terms of access to facilities for their club, and pricing arrangements. And some mentioned that they didn't benefit from extra support or training as they could already

fund this themselves, or access it through their governing body. Some felt it would be useful to have clearer guidance on the aim of a CSH.

**“It may help to communicate what is seen as being the aim of being a Community Sports Hub with some examples to show the diversity of approach within the overall aim.”**

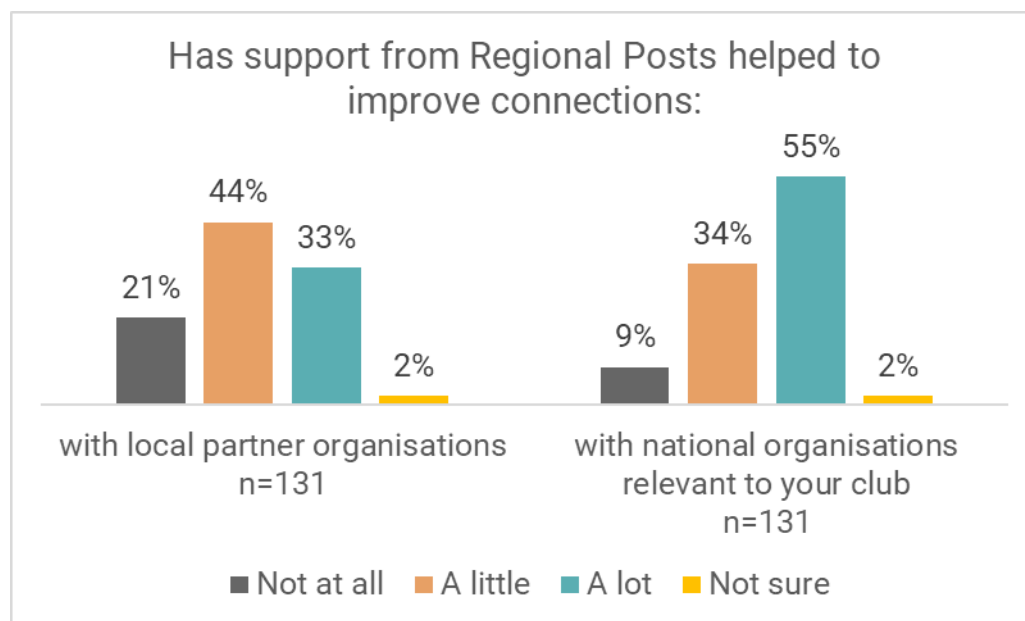
Community organisation (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“There is an awful lot about the hub that is irrelevant to our needs.”**

Sport club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

### Impact of SGB regional posts

5.14 Overall, most of those supported by SGB regional posts funded by sportscotland felt that the support had helped them to improve connections. Over half felt that connections with national organisations had improved a lot, with a further third feeling they had improved a little. And a third felt that connections locally had improved a lot, with almost half feeling they improved a little.



5.15 **sportscotland** staff felt that SGB regional posts helped to improve connections between clubs, helping clubs to unlock physical and learning resources. Staff felt that this approach worked well because it was dedicated, one to one support.

5.16 Some strategic stakeholders were positive about the support provided by SGB regional posts, stating that they had supported and nourished the development of new and existing clubs and link with local and regional pathways. Some felt that this had helped to develop stronger partnerships between local authorities, clubs and SGBs.

- 5.17 However, some strategic stakeholders were concerned that SGB regional posts may not help with joint working. It was felt that the regional areas were too large, and not connected to local authority and community level priorities and networks. A few felt that SGB regional posts were the least useful element within the range of support in the clubs and communities environment.

**“Regional posts are far too stretched covering huge numbers of clubs and huge geographies as well, so are limited with the impact they have.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“Regional posts within Governing Bodies provide support to clubs, and it is important that all those involved within the sporting workforce, including Governing Body and local authority staff communicate effectively to provide effective support and avoid duplication of efforts.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 5.18 Some felt that it was important to ensure accountability for these posts, with clear lines of reporting and monitoring. Many felt that the support could also be very inconsistent and variable in terms of quality and impact.

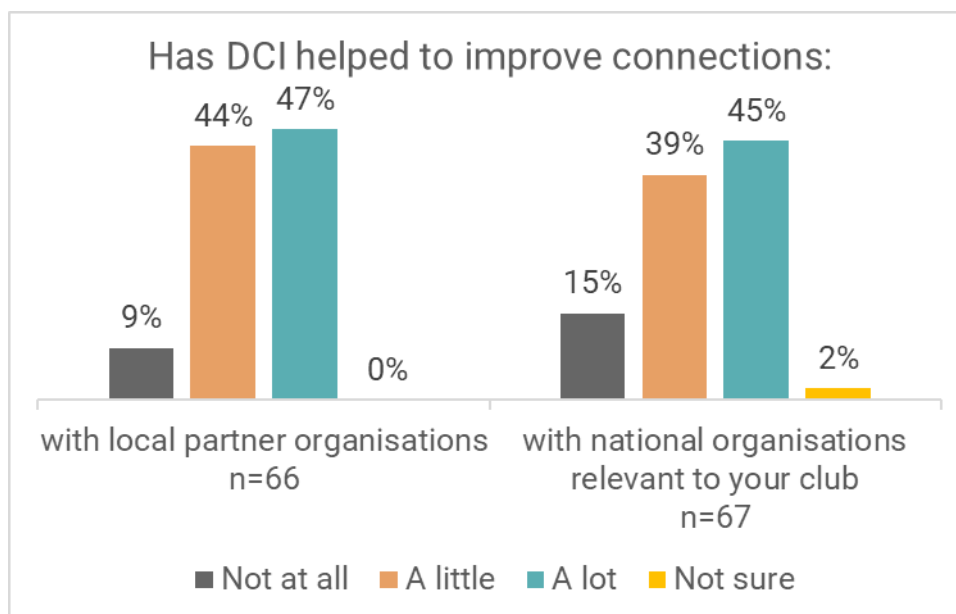
**“The level of support from regional posts is inconsistent ranging from excellent to none.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 5.19 However, the overall aim of the posts was welcomed.

#### Impact of DCI

- 5.20 Clubs and community groups which had investment through DCI largely felt that this had helped to improve connections both locally and nationally. Almost half felt that it had improved connections a lot at both levels.



- 5.21 Local authority sports development leads felt that DCI had been valuable to clubs and local communities. They felt it was very useful to help clubs to take a structured and strategic approach, with better links between local, regional and national level clubs.

**“A brilliant programme. Gives clubs resources, infrastructure and drive to add value to what they currently do and add value to communities.”**

Local authority sports development lead (source: interview)

#### Range of support

- 5.22 Overall, **sportscotland** and local authority staff felt that working in partnership had been very beneficial. Local authorities believed that **sportscotland** programmes worked flexibly to support clubs according to need, and complemented and enhanced local authority provision.

**“Local flexibility to deliver national principles.”**

Local authority sports development lead (source: interview)

**“The invested programmes provide a balanced approach to supporting clubs with different aspects of club needs addressed across the blend of programmes.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 5.23 **sportscotland** staff leading DCI, CSH and regional programmes felt that people from all areas of the portfolio were working together to create a network of local pathways for sport, including schools and clubs. Many felt that clubs were now better at working together - particularly through joint funding applications, joint events and joint marketing activities between clubs. Funded posts and strategic stakeholders echoed this.

**“Collaboration across the programmes is helpful... It is linking people in.”**  
sportscotland staff (source: discussion group)

**“The most significant impact has been the ability to create pathways from school sport to club sport and onwards to international participation.”**  
Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 5.24 Some felt that this was due to the programmes working well together, and to clear national frameworks, which helped provide a focus for partnership work. Others noted that in the past clubs were not so enthusiastic about sharing resources or funding, but that the changing funding landscape had necessitated more joint work. Staff also felt that this joint working had given clubs strength locally, as a collective voice with a shared vision. It has also helped to minimise duplication and increase club awareness of one another, and their goals.

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#### Example – Range of support

One SGB indicated that it had developed greatly with sportscotland support and funding both in SGB regional posts and DCI. The sport has seen a significant increase in affiliated membership, financial investment in sponsorship, new junior developments, increased capacity to deliver its Strategic Plan, increased sporting recognition, and more diverse opportunities for LGBT people and disabled people.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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#### Example – Working jointly across the blend of support

In one area, the CSH programme has given the local authority a framework to work with clubs on both national and local priorities. The CSH programme also led to the development of a local authority Club Development Framework.

*Source: Evaluation survey/ interviews*

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## School and club partnerships

- 5.25 Clubs often mentioned the importance of partnerships with schools, particularly in relation to increasing participation.

#### Impact of CSHs

- 5.26 Over half of CSHs (96) are based in schools. Some clubs highlighted that involvement in a CSH had increased their partnership and links with schools. Being involved in the CSH had helped through:

- raising awareness of the club within schools;
  - connecting clubs with the Active Schools programme;
  - providing training for coaches meaning clubs had more capacity to do outreach work and taster sessions within schools; and
  - connecting clubs with the local leisure trust allowing development work to be coordinated.
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- 5.27 Schools were often seen as familiar facilities, and important in creating a welcoming environment for people to participate in sport. In a few cases, the CSH had resulted in joint communication and awareness raising activity.

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**Example – Joint community sport newsletter**

One CSH joined forces with the PE department at a local school to create a joint sports newsletter. The content is provided by both the school and clubs, with most responsibility being taken by the School Sports Committee. The newsletter is sent electronically to every pupil, parent and teacher affiliated to the school, and to local authority employees.

“This has been a great coup for partnership working as well as improving promotion and increasing the profile of the hubs and clubs.”

CSH officer

*Source: impact and interventions reports*

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- 5.28 Involvement in CSHs had also helped clubs to negotiate access to school facilities. In some cases this involved reciprocal arrangements with schools benefiting from coaching expertise, and clubs benefiting from access to facilities.

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**Example – Improving access to facilities**

One swimming club is a member of two school-based CSHs. Being part of the CSHs has allowed the club to access facilities at a reduced cost. The club provides expert coaching to the schools, which they could not afford otherwise, and in return the club receives priority access to school facilities.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 5.29 Analysis of CSH impact and intervention returns to **sportscotland** highlights the importance of developing school to club links, particularly in terms of developing pathways into the clubs and communities environment. Many gave examples of work undertaken to build and develop these links. However, a few highlighted that it could be challenging to encourage pupils to move from school based to club based settings. A few felt that there was a need for more work around developing meaningful relationships between clubs and schools and clearly defining a school to club link.

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**Example – Increasing participation in disadvantaged areas**

One CSH officer analysed pupil participation in CSH clubs at a local primary school which had a high number of pupils in SIMD deciles one to three. This analysis identified that there were very few pupils who were members of CSH clubs. As a result, one CSH club worked with the school to deliver cricket sessions to p4 to p7 pupils. Following this delivery, six pupils from the school became members of the club.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Example – Supporting schools with education priorities

One CSH helped pupils to achieve the practical element of their higher PE course. Three students were struggling to pass their practical badminton element of higher PE. Through the CSH, the pupils attended a local badminton club in the evening, to work toward the required standard. The club officials and PE teachers liaised around the SQA requirements and priority areas for improvement. After working with the club, all three students progressed to a suitable level to pass the practical element.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Impact of SGB regional posts

- 5.30 SGB regional posts had also supported links with schools. Some clubs highlighted that these posts had helped to develop school to club links focused on engaging and retaining young players and coaches. In a few cases, these links focused on engaging with specific groups such as young women, disabled people or people in disadvantaged areas.
- 5.31 Analysis of SGB regional post reflections on their impacts highlights a wide range of positive developments around school to club links. In many cases, these links have been developed through strong links with Active Schools. However, relationships with Active Schools teams vary by local authority and SGB. Some SGB regional post holders find it challenging to engage effectively and link with Active Schools teams. Some also find it challenging to build links due to a lack of interest from teachers. A few highlighted that perhaps this was because of too much focus from clubs on the competition element. A few find it challenging to manage the capacity of the club with the priorities of Active Schools and CSH programmes, around increasing participation.

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### Example – Links with schools

One RDM mapped all of the schools and education sites within the area of operation of each focus club. This allowed the RDM to support clubs to increase growth and ensure sustainability within their membership through targeting particular schools such as schools for children with additional support needs, or schools with a high proportion of minority ethnic pupils.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Example – Links with schools

One SGB used large scale festivals as a way for RDMs to deliver activities alongside Active schools. This festival involved mass participation opportunities for school pupils, CPD for teachers and assistance from young sport leaders. The SGB has found these festivals to be effective at linking schools and clubs.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Example – Developing disability sport

In partnership with a disability organisation and a local secondary school, an SGB regional post holder organised a festival for pupils with additional support needs. Pupils

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attended the festival and were given information about club sessions running in their local area.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Impact of DCI

5.32 DCI had also helped to enhance club links with schools. In some cases it had enabled the development of strong links with schools, which are direct, vibrant and involve face to face delivery time and networking. DCI funding has provided some clubs with the capacity to grow, recruit from schools and run taster sessions using paid staff. The focus has often been on engaging young people that the club was not previously engaging – including girls and young women and young disabled people. In some cases, clubs have seen substantial growth as a result of DCI funded activity with schools.

**“We are on track to have increased membership by 200% by the end of year 3 of the project. The DCI funding allowed us to employ part time coaches to provide good level coaching and leadership in the local schools which brought about this increase in membership.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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### Example – Links with Active Schools

A volleyball club has close links with local schools. By using DCI to employ additional coaches, and working with Active Schools to run more sessions, the club has successfully developed a full and robust pathway from early years through to performance level.

*Source: case study*

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### Impact of other support

5.33 Other programmes such as Awards for All had helped some clubs to introduce development programmes in schools and to purchase transportable equipment for their work in schools.

5.34 More widely, a few clubs highlighted the importance of linking with Active Schools to increase and widen their membership. In particular, clubs had worked with Active Schools to engage girls and young women and young disabled people in their activities, building on the links established through Active Schools. Often, work with Active Schools was encouraged and supported by CSHs, SGB regional posts or DCI funded posts.

**“The link between the schools and our club has been significantly improved because of the close working relationship between our head of development and Active Schools coordinators. This would not have been so successful without DCI funding.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

## Future priorities

- 5.35 Clubs recognised the value of joint work with schools. Some clubs and a few strategic stakeholders highlighted that there were opportunities to further build on the connections between schools and clubs, with schools being an important part of the participation pathway.
- 5.36 For the future, clubs indicated that they needed help with resources to enable them to run taster sessions and more outreach work in schools. Some indicated that this was challenging due to having very limited numbers of paid coaches, and a reliance on volunteers. A few indicated that they were developing young people as leaders to assist with this.
- 5.37 A few highlighted that school to club recruitment could still be challenging, and that better links between schools and clubs were needed. A few indicated that to meet increased demand from young people through schools they would need better access to high quality facilities.

**“Better school to club links are needed.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

## Pathways and progression

### Impact of CSH

- 5.38 Over 200 clubs and community organisations commented in the online survey on whether being part of the CSH has helped people to progress in their chosen sport. More than half said no, the CSH had not helped people to progress. Some did not give a reason, but where they did this was largely because they felt it was too early to see any change or they did not have any evidence of this. A few said that clubs felt they already had strong pathways.

**“No – the club already has strong links with age group performance pathways and the local cricket development group therefore no support was needed in this area.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 5.39 Respondents who felt the CSH had helped people to progress in their chosen sport mentioned that it:
- enabled them to access high quality training for coaches, which enabled people to continue to develop and progress;
  - improved access to facilities, allowing additional training slots and all weather training, allowing people to continue to develop;
  - helped clubs to see the potential skills of those participating in other sports and clubs, and how these might link with their club;
  - fostered and encouraged links between recreational and club activity;

- encouraged more people to become involved – although how they then progress depends very much on the individual; and
- helped generally with developing club short, medium and long term outcomes.

**“Using the facilities gained with the sports hub help, we have been able to offer additional training slots and all weather pitches mean that training and games are unlikely to be cancelled ensuring children can continue to develop.”**

Community organisation (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“We did have a local swimming gala at our hub and I was invited along to promote the club. It was apparent that the gap between club swimmers and those not in the club is so vast.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“Recreation gymnasts in the hub sessions have developed their interest and passion for the sport and developed into competitive gymnasts.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“Yes it has allowed us all to create a clear vision with goals and objectives in the short, medium and long term.”**

Community organisation (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

#### Impact of SGB regional posts

5.40 One-hundred and sixteen clubs which had received support from a SGB regional post, funded by **sportscotland**, commented on the impact of these posts on progression. Most (84%) said that it had helped people to progress in their chosen sport, through greater participation, more targeted sessions and better retention of members. The posts had helped with progression through:

- **developing leadership and training opportunities** – with support around recruitment of coaches and more training, education and support for coaches and volunteers at all levels; and
- **developing more structured links to pathways** – with links to competition opportunities at local, national and international level, as well as links with schools and other partners.

**“The face to face support has met and exceeded expectations.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

5.41 Some clubs highlighted that the regional support was often part of a wider range of support accessed, including other **sportscotland** support, and support from other organisations and partners.

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### Example – Impact of regional post

Through support from a sportscotland funded Regional Development Officer, a volleyball club has developed coach skills, to enable them to better support young volleyball athletes. This has included mentoring of DCI coaches, and access to coaching courses to allow coaches to progress in their qualifications.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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### Example – Impact of regional post

Through support from a sportscotland funded Regional Development Officer, a squash club has been made more aware of regional and national tournaments. Club members now have better knowledge of competition opportunities.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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## Impact of DCI

5.42 Most clubs and groups responding to the online survey who had received DCI said that it had helped people to develop and progress in their chosen sport. This was due to:

- ensuring that performance athletes had more time to develop and hone their skills at the club;
- enhancing the quality of coaching and mentoring;
- increasing the pool of coaching staff; and
- enabling the development of more teams and more opportunities to play.

5.43 Many felt that as a result there had been a real improvement in member skills. Some clubs indicated that DCI meant that they had more members playing and achieving at elite level and more on performance pathways. Some said that more were being graded or participating in competitions as a result. And some highlighted that the new opportunities were providing people with a chance to return to sport after a period of being less involved.

**“Access to regular, top quality coaching, particularly in schools and other community venues is developing talented youngsters. The DCI investment has created a pathway for youngsters to develop their skills and compete at higher levels. Again this is an outstanding success story.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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### Example – DCI and developing club structures

One badminton club received DCI funding to structure the club into three distinct sections – performance, development and grassroots. The restructuring has helped the club to develop players at each level and the club now facilitates its own regional event.

“It has helped the club create a structure.”

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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### Example – DCI and developing a Youth Academy

A rugby club received DCI funding to develop a new youth academy. The youth academy has supported young people to develop their skills and progress to playing at regional and national level. Youth academy athletes have been recognised for their achievements through prestigious awards, such as the McPhail Award, and international sports scholarships.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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### Impact of blend of support

- 5.44 Strategic stakeholders were also asked whether overall, **sportscotland** support had helped to improve progression in sport. Over half (58%) felt that it had helped, a third (32%) were not sure and a minority (11%) felt that it hadn't helped.
- 5.45 Strategic stakeholders who were positive about the impact of the support on progression generally felt that it was the blend of support that had helped, rather than one specific programme. Some said that when professionals were in place to support clubs, particularly through DCI and SGB regional posts, clubs had time to think about progression and pathways. Strategic stakeholders felt that both DCI and SGB regional posts had allowed a focus on talent, the development of players as athletes, the development of pathways to regional and national level, and the development of coaching skills to support members.
- 5.46 Strategic stakeholders who said that **sportscotland** support had not helped to improve progression, or who weren't sure, gave a range of reasons. Some felt that the support mainly got people participating, and were unsure about the evidence available to suggest that they were progressing. Some felt that the focus of programmes like CSHs had largely been participation to date, and a few said that work on progression had been slow. Some were unsure what progression meant, suggesting that while people may have been moved on from school to club settings they were unsure of whether their individual skills had developed.

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### Example – Links with the leisure trust

A netball club has worked closely with the local leisure trust to develop a clear pathway for participants. The leisure trust provides netball to primary school pupils and a Bounce Back to Netball programme for adults. The club completes this pathway by providing sessions for under 13s, under 15s, under 17s and a senior team. The club and trust work in close partnership to ensure that people in the community are aware of the pathway and range of opportunities available.

*Source: case study*

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### Example – Achievements at performance level

Two members of a volleyball club were chosen to play for Scotland at the Commonwealth Youth Games 2017. The team played through to the semi-finals. Four young people from the club also played for the Scotland East team at the UK School

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Games. The boys won a gold medal and the girls won a bronze medal. The club received support from **sportscotland** through DCI and a Regional Development Manager.

*Source: case study*

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## A welcoming environment

### Impact of CSHs

5.47 There is evidence from reports from CSH officers that hubs have supported clubs to create a welcoming environment and encourage people in the community to join in a new activity or transition into club sport, particularly in areas of deprivation. Clubs have worked to build relationships with people in the community, and to use well known, accessible facilities, such as schools, to provide a familiar environment.

**“Yes. They are the focus for physical activity within our area. Even if a community member doesn’t really have a sport in mind they know that if they visit the hub, they might find an opportunity to undertake an activity they might enjoy.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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### Example – Using familiar facilities

One CSH has representation from member clubs based in the five per cent most deprived areas in Scotland. The hub has used a local high school for provision, which created a welcoming environment to new participants, and allowed the hub to be visible to the wider community.

*Source: impact and interventions report*

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### Example – Engaging with the local community

One CSH has learned the importance of creating a welcoming and sociable atmosphere that encourages people to join in. The hub found that the best way to achieve this was by working closely with local people, who understood the community and its needs.

“The role of local people to help understand the community cannot be underplayed, their knowledge and 'can do attitude' was pivotal to the success of the project.”

Hub officer

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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### Example – Creating a family environment

One CSH worked to address barriers to families participating in club sport – including lack of childcare, transport, finance and confidence. To address these issues, the CSH set up a Family Club in partnership with the local authority adult learning team. Through the Family Club, the CSH provides weekly sports and activities for the whole family to take part in. Participants can move freely between three activities, but mainly they have done cooking and crafts, followed by an hour of sports activity.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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## Impact of SGB regional posts

- 5.48 Evidence from SGB regional posts also demonstrates how clubs have worked to engage with members with a range of different needs. For example, SGB regional posts have supported clubs to engage with disabled people and people with additional support needs.

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### Example – SGB regional post support to create a welcoming environment

One regional post supported clubs to engage people with autism. One club delivered introductory sessions, in partnership with parents, to allow young people with autism to try the sport in a safe, friendly, understanding and supportive environment. Another regional post worked to ensure that clubs were inclusive and accessible, offering a range of options for those who want to play for fun and those who want to compete.

“The main aim... is to be as inclusive as possible and allow everyone the time to grow in the different avenues of participation... If competing’s not for them the hub sessions are fun, enjoyable and a great place to learn...”

SGB regional post

*Source: impact and interventions reports*

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## Impact of DCI

- 5.49 There is also evidence that DCI has helped to create a welcoming environment, through engaging new members and creating fun and non-competitive opportunities.

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### Example – DCI support to create a welcoming environment

In one club, the DCI coach has worked hard to ensure that entry level swimming sessions are fun and engaging. The environment aims to be welcoming, with both non-competitive and competitive options. The DCI coach has also taken time to engage with parents and guardians, to answer queries and ensure that they understand what the club can offer. This has helped maintain attendance and retain membership, as well as improving morale.

“I’ve tried to create an environment where kids are happy to come along. They’re coming because they want to come, because they find it enjoyable.”

DCI coach

*Source: impact and interventions reports*

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## Sport for Change

- 5.50 Sport for Change is an approach that uses sport and physical activity intentionally to bring about positive benefits for individuals and communities to address specific needs. **sportscotland** is in the initial stages of looking at this area and what can be implemented across its clubs and communities work. **sportscotland** is also working with the Scottish Government and The Robertson Trust to create greater awareness and understanding of the Sport for Change approach across the sporting sector, and beyond. An action plan

is being developed with partners to integrate the Sport for Change approach within club and community sport more widely.

- 5.51 This evaluation did not explicitly explore the use of Sport for Change. However, there was some evidence that in some areas connections were being made between physical activity and sport and attainment. There were also examples of unintentional positive consequences which came about because of participation in sport. These unintentional consequences included increased confidence; intergenerational social interaction; leadership, training and employment opportunities; and mental health benefits.

**"I do think the kids gain from it by mixing with older people – that intergenerational interaction."**

Sport club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**"You learn a range of life skills. I am now much better at managing my time. This has helped with my studying."**

DCI coach (source: case study)

**"It gives you a chance to take on new roles and get experience."**

Club member, primary school (source: case study)

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#### **Example – Supporting mental health and wellbeing**

Beyond providing sports opportunities, a DCI funded wheelchair sports club has had an indirect effect on the mental health and wellbeing of club members. The club provides a space for people to socialise, make new friends and play as equals. Many young people attending the club reported that they did not get the chance to participate in sports at school, and were usually asked to assist the teacher, or keep score. The club has helped connect people and create a wide network of people with a shared enthusiasm for wheelchair sports

"Some of the social, softer outcomes were very surprising. I didn't go into it thinking that's what this will do, I just wanted to offer sport. I didn't consider that it could have that kind of impact."

Vice chair

*Source: case study*

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#### **Example – Confidence, skills and relationships**

Playing with the volleyball club has helped club members to develop confidence, skills and relationships. Young people said that they enjoyed coming to the club and it had given them the encouragement they needed to try new activities and join other sports clubs.

"It has made me more confident to go to other clubs and try new sports."

Club member, primary school

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Young people developed a wide range of skills through regular training and events, including discipline, organisation and punctuality. The support from club coaches helped some young people become more confident, and encouraged their continued participation in positive activities.

“Everyone gets the opportunity to coach, that’s a huge confidence builder.”

DCI coach

*Source: case study*

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### **Example – Confidence, skills and relationships**

One club has undertaken focused work to get inactive people active. It hopes to continue this work through joint work with Link Practitioners at GP practices. Link Practitioners work directly with people and communities to tackle health inequalities. The club feels that it could provide a friendly and accessible way for people to improve their health through becoming more physically active. It envisages particular benefits for people with dementia.

*Source: case study*

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5.52 Results from the club members survey found that club members were positive about the development of their sporting and physical activity skills through their club:

- most (89%) felt it had helped them to get better at sport or other activities;
- most (84%) felt it had helped them to be more confident in sport or physical activity; and
- most (79%) felt it had helped them to learn a new skill.

5.53 More widely, being involved in the club had also supported a wider interest in activity and sport for some:

- almost half (49%) of all club members felt that being involved in sport and physical activity at their club had helped them to be more active more widely;
- over a third (36%) felt that being involved in the club had helped them get more interested in other sports clubs or groups;
- just over a third (35%) of club members responding to the survey were members of multiple clubs.

5.54 Involvement in clubs supported by **sportscotland** had also brought about wider change for many club members:

- almost all felt that taking part in sport and physical activity had helped them to feel healthy (ranging from 92% for adults to 100% for under 18s);

- most felt that it had helped them to feel included and helped them make friends; and
- most felt that it had helped them to feel more confident – particularly under 18s where almost all felt this.

5.55 For more detail, refer to the separate report on [sportscotland's contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments](#).

## 6. Organised and sustainable clubs

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### Chapter summary

Clubs and groups across the **sportscotland** supported programmes largely felt this had helped with:

- recruiting staff and volunteers;
- developing the knowledge and skills of volunteers;
- engaging young people as leaders – as coaches, officials, young decision makers;
- improving how their club runs or is organised;
- planning more sustainably; and
- generating new sources of income.

Clubs involved in CSHs, supported by SGB regional posts and supported by DCI saw increases in the number of coaches they worked with. Across all three programmes, the percentage increase in female coaches was higher than for male coaches.

Clubs and groups involved in CSHs saw some impact in terms of developing an organised and sustainable club – with support around business planning, funding applications and training.

Clubs and groups supported through SGB regional posts were supported around business planning, organisational structures, policies and procedures and self-assessment of performance. Some were supported to access funding from **sportscotland** and others.

Clubs which had received DCI support were positive about the long term nature of DCI, which many felt enabled clubs to plan a sustainable approach over time. Having a funded role also helped to ease the burden on volunteers, and allow a focused approach to planning, coaching and club development. There was, however, some concern that the strongest and most business-like clubs found it easiest to attract DCI funding.

## Introduction

6.1 This chapter explores the impact of the range of **sportscotland** support in terms of clubs being organised, sustainable and led by skilled people. It considers this in relation to the Clubs and Communities Framework, which highlights the importance of clubs:

- having leaders, employees, volunteers and coaches with the skills and knowledge to run their organisation and fulfil their roles;
- empowering and supporting young people as leaders where appropriate;
- having good governance – a diverse committee, an appropriate legal structure, clear policies and procedures, clear roles and responsibilities and clear plans for succession in key roles;
- having good planning processes – a clear vision, a long term approach to development and clear approaches to ensure the wellbeing, safety and protection of all participants;
- having sound financial planning – including financial management, understanding of support available and rationale for receiving investment;
- thinking about quality – focusing on the quality of what they offer to members; and
- understanding the contribution they make.

6.2 **sportscotland** has also commissioned an evaluation which specifically focuses on coaching and volunteering, which allows a more extensive focus on these issues. This evaluation is [available here](#).

## People: Coaches, staff and volunteers

### Coaches

6.3 **sportscotland** gathers detailed information on the number and profile of coaches in the clubs and communities environment. **sportscotland** analysis shows that:

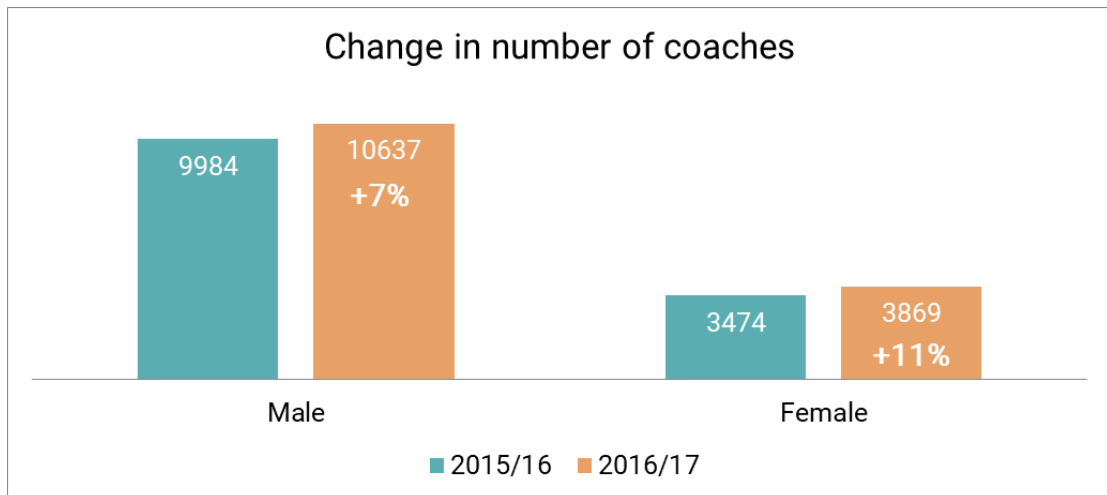
- clubs involved in CSHs have seen an increase of five per cent in the number of coaches;
- clubs supported by SGB regional posts (for at least two years) have seen a ten per cent increase in the number of coaches; and
- clubs supported by DCI have seen an increase of 15 per cent in the number of coaches they work with<sup>23</sup>.

6.4 This is in a context where there have been ongoing challenges by a number of SGBs in recruiting and retaining staff.

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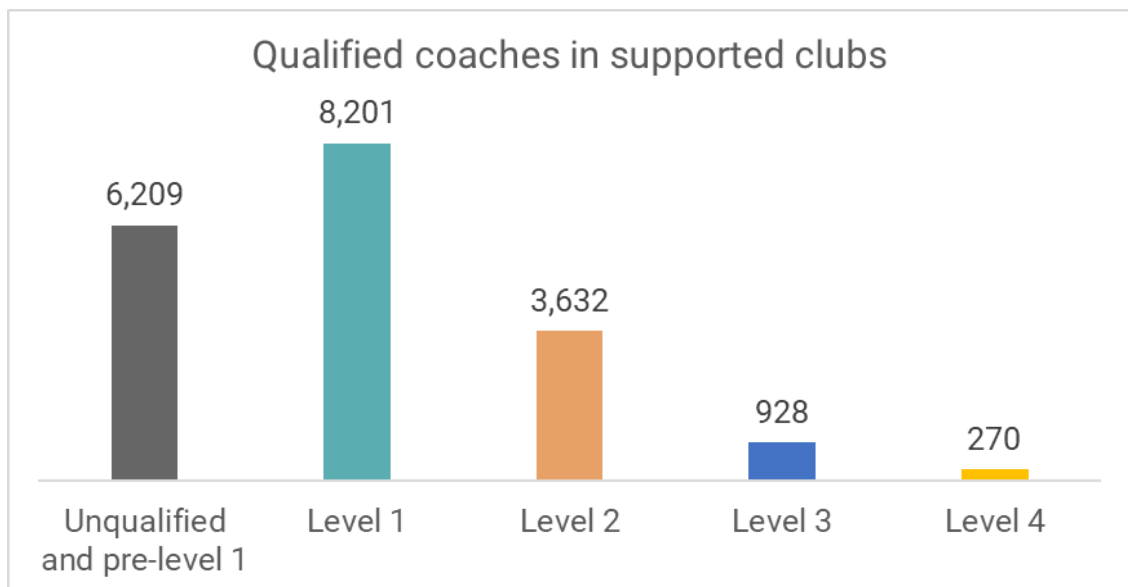
<sup>23</sup> [sportscotland monitoring data](#)

6.5 Across all three programmes, the percentage increase in female coaches was higher than for male coaches. This was particularly evident in DCI supported clubs, where the percentage increase in female coaches was more than twice as high as the increase in male coaches. However, the overall number of male coaches in supported clubs remained higher than the number of female coaches.



Source: **sportscotland** monitoring data

6.6 Overall, supported clubs are largely working with coaches with coaching qualifications.

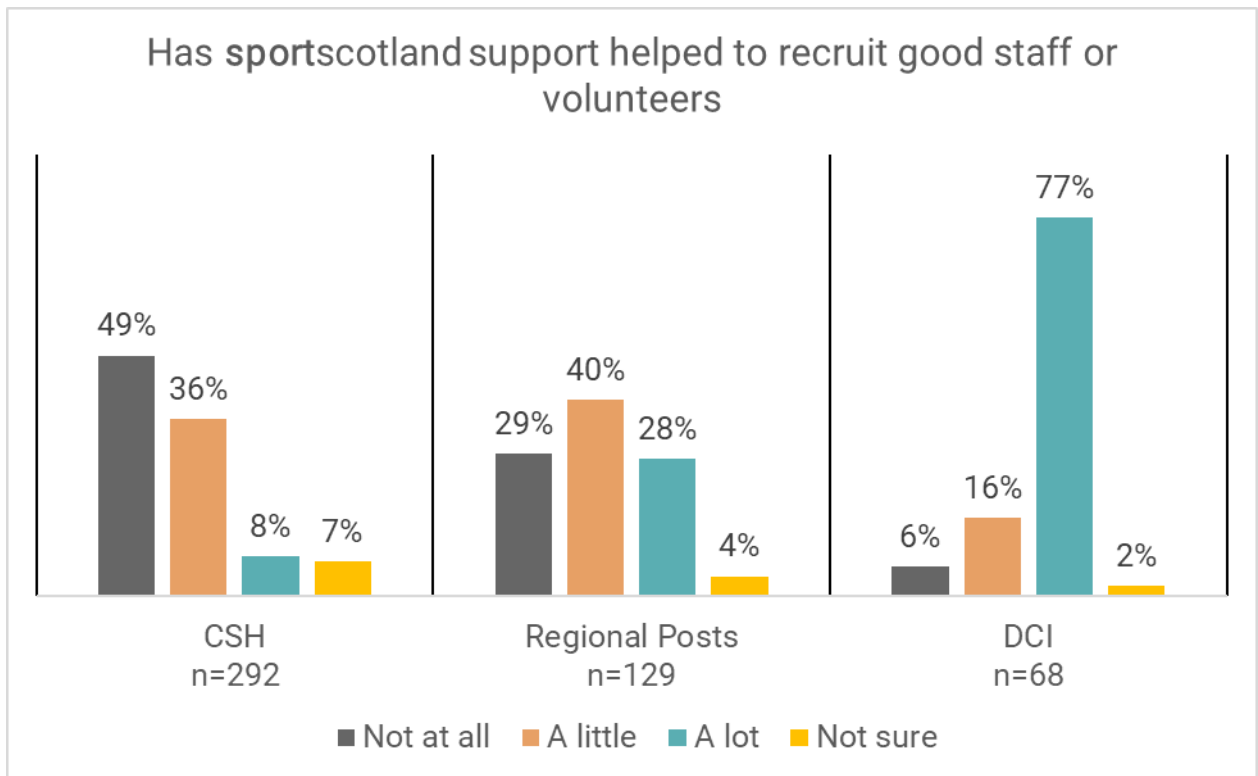


Source: **sportscotland** monitoring data

### Impact of sportscotland support

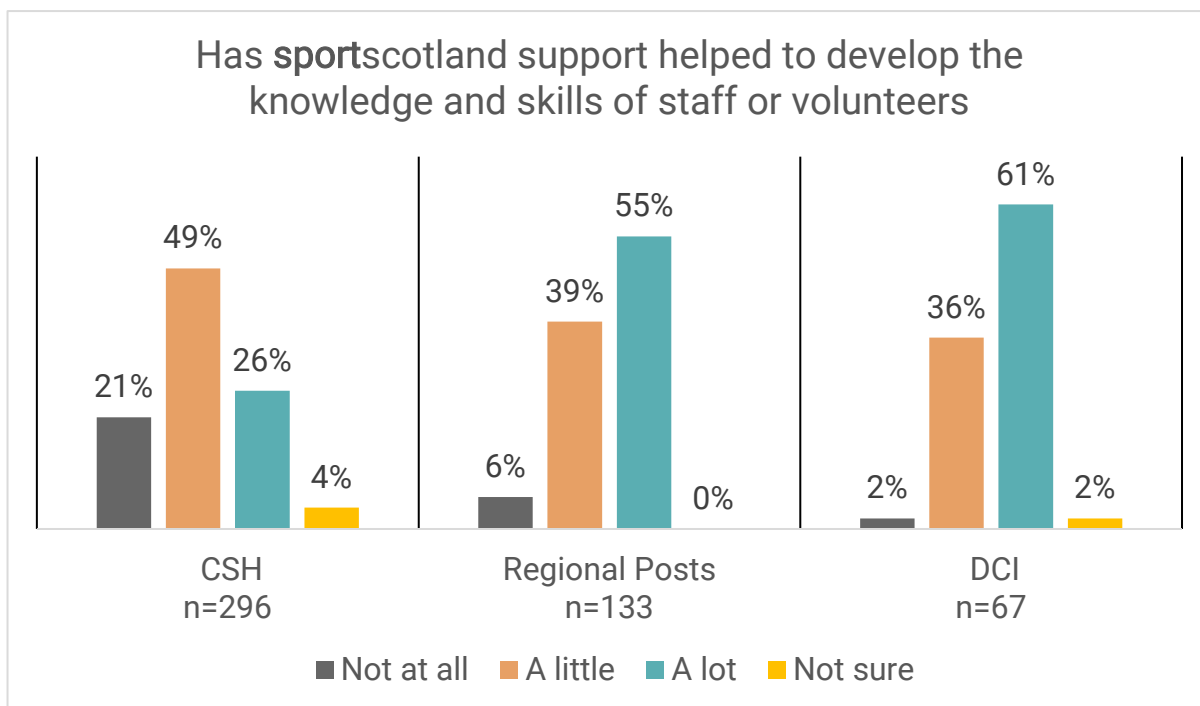
6.7 Clubs and groups responding to the online survey were asked whether **sportscotland** support had helped them to recruit good staff or volunteers. This went beyond coaches, to also explore other staff and volunteers.

6.8 Generally, clubs felt that support had helped them to recruit good staff or volunteers. This was particularly evident within clubs which had received DCI.



6.9 Generally, survey respondents felt that **sportscotland** support had helped with developing the knowledge and skills of staff or volunteers. This was particularly evident among clubs which had received SGB regional post support, or DCI – with more than half feeling it helped a lot, and the rest mainly feeling it helped a little. However, three quarters of CSH members indicated that they felt the CSH had helped develop the knowledge and skills of volunteers either a lot or a little.





6.10 There were also some examples of clubs developing their coaches through other **sportscotland** support, such as Awards for All.

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#### Example – Impact of Awards for All

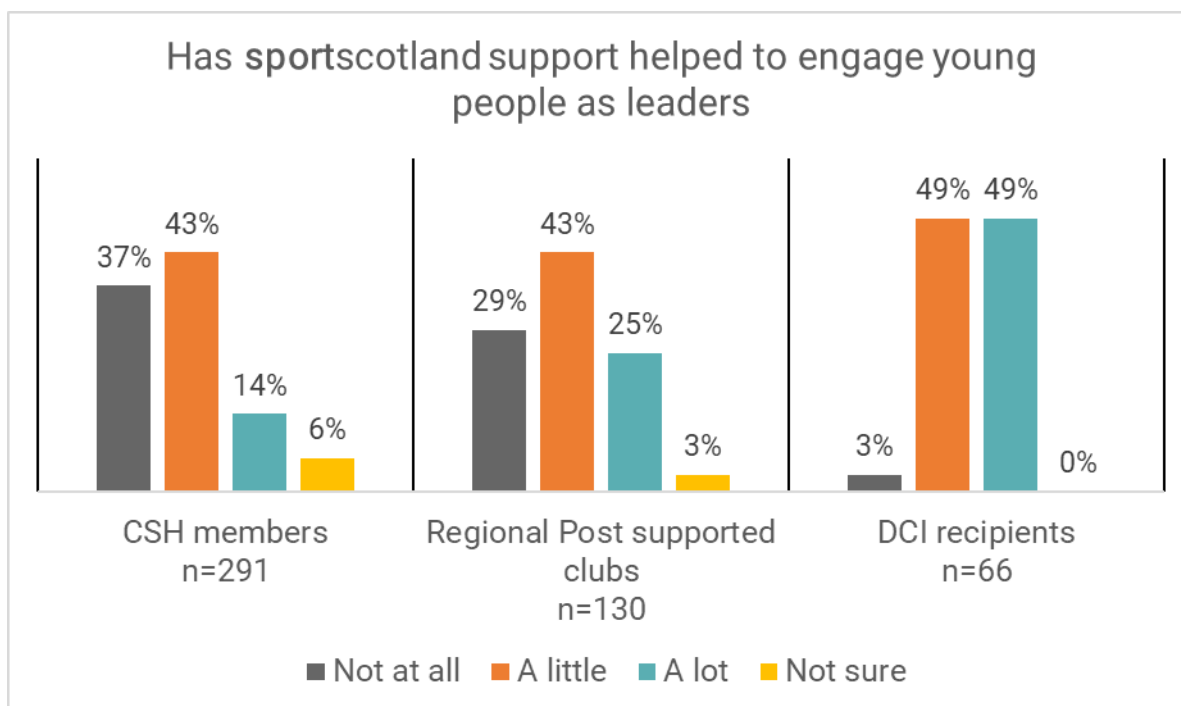
Awards for All funding allowed a triathlon club to train eight members to UKCC level one, and one member to UKCC levels two and three. This has had a significant impact on the club and club members. The club now has a high ratio of coaches to members – around one to ten – and feels more sustainable for long term growth and development.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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## People: Young people as leaders

6.11 Clubs and groups largely felt that **sportscotland** support had helped them to engage with young people as leaders. This was particularly evident among clubs which had received DCI, and those which had received SGB regional post support.



### Impact of CSHs

- 6.12 Most CSH members felt that the hub had helped a little or a lot in terms of engaging with young people as leaders. This included young people developing their coaching and officiating skills, being involved in hub decision making processes, and leading consultations with other young people, to inform future hub activities and priorities.
- 6.13 **sportscotland** monitoring information gathered from CSH officers highlights a wide range of examples of hubs working with clubs to support the development of young people as leaders in the clubs and communities environment. This included working with a range of clubs to offer learning and development opportunities for coaches and officials, including training and work experience.

**“The CSH's are building stronger ties with the schools in their areas to provide more opportunities to their pupils as both players and volunteers.”**

CSH officer (source: impacts and interventions reports)

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#### Example – Developing coaching skills of young people as leaders through CSHs

One CSH officer liaised with SGBs, schools and clubs to host a coach education week. This offered a variety of qualifications to senior pupils and clubs in the local area. Sixty people gained qualifications in a range of fields including athletics, swimming, lifeguarding, volleyball and basketball. These leaders have supported club, CSH and Active Schools programmes. The project provided opportunities for senior pupils to gain qualifications and experience of working with local clubs, and created a good leadership pathway from school to club.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Example – Young people building school to club links as leaders through CSHs

One CSH supported the training of 17 new young hockey leaders for a local club. These young people now help to work with local schools, increase the club profile and increase membership numbers. Volunteers and leaders were recruited through a CSH school volunteer networking event. The CSH aims to engage with university students in the future, connecting them with the CSH events programme.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Example – Young people developing their officiating skills through CSHs

One club involved in a CSH highlighted that it had allowed young people access to local courses supporting them to become hockey leaders, coaches and umpires. These courses were also supported by Active Schools and the local authority. The volunteer coaches and umpires have then been able to improve the quality of play of the members of the club.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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### Example – Young people gaining work experience and qualifications through CSHs

In one area, school pupils were asked to provide information about their club membership to inform the development of CSH in the area. This led to a project that provided senior pupils with opportunities to gain work experience and qualifications through local clubs.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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## Impact of SGB regional posts

6.14 SGB regional posts had often supported clubs to develop young people as leaders. This included:

- delivering training so that young people can deliver activities to primary school pupils and support school sport competition;
- supporting young people from disadvantaged areas to train as sports leaders, and develop skills in enterprise and leadership; and
- empowering young people to become leaders and engage their peers in club sport.

6.15 A number of SGB regional post holders noted that this helped, in the longer term, to support workforce development for local clubs. Much of this work took place with young people from areas of deprivation, or young people who had become disengaged from sport (or education more widely).

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### Example – Young people as leaders through SGB regional post support

One SGB regional post holder supported young people to deliver activities to P6 and P7 pupils. The aim is to embed the sport in local schools, and to introduce disadvantaged young people to the sport.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Example – Young people as leaders through SGB regional post support

One SGB regional post holder supported a leadership programme to help understand why young people were leaving club sport, often around the age of 12. The programme aims to empower young people and to encourage them to engage their peers in club sport.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Example – Young people as leaders through SGB regional post support

One SGB regional post holder worked with clubs and Active Schools to develop coaching and leadership opportunities for young people. The project has led to a new group of young volunteers in an area of high demand for the sport. Young people felt that it improved their confidence and belief in their ability to lead.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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## Impact of DCI

- 6.16 Generally, DCI had impacted through providing funding to enable clubs to employ young people as coaches, or provide additional training opportunities. This had often had a positive impact on levels of participation, as well as building the skills of young coaches.

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### Example – Young people as leaders through DCI

City of Edinburgh Volleyball Club supported young people to develop as leaders by employing them as club coaches through DCI funding. Another club in receipt of DCI funding employed young women and coaches, delivering introductory fencing sessions to school pupils. The DCI coaches are all talented athletes, and the paid coaching opportunity has supported them to develop as coaches, leaders and role models within the club.

*Source: case study*

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## Good governance and planning

- 6.17 Strategic stakeholders felt strongly that the blend of **sportscotland** support helped clubs and groups to build strong organisations and plan effectively, through a mix of support and challenge.

**“The experienced staff from the CSH, regional posts and other specialists bring challenge and support to the sport/ club and the people in the club to help them develop, re-structure, change direction, be more organised and ambitious.”**

*Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)*

- 6.18 As well as highlighting the role of the supported programmes, explored in more detail below, some strategic stakeholders also mentioned the value of the Help for Clubs website.

**“Help for Clubs website is useful. I certainly use it to support clubs.”**

*Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)*

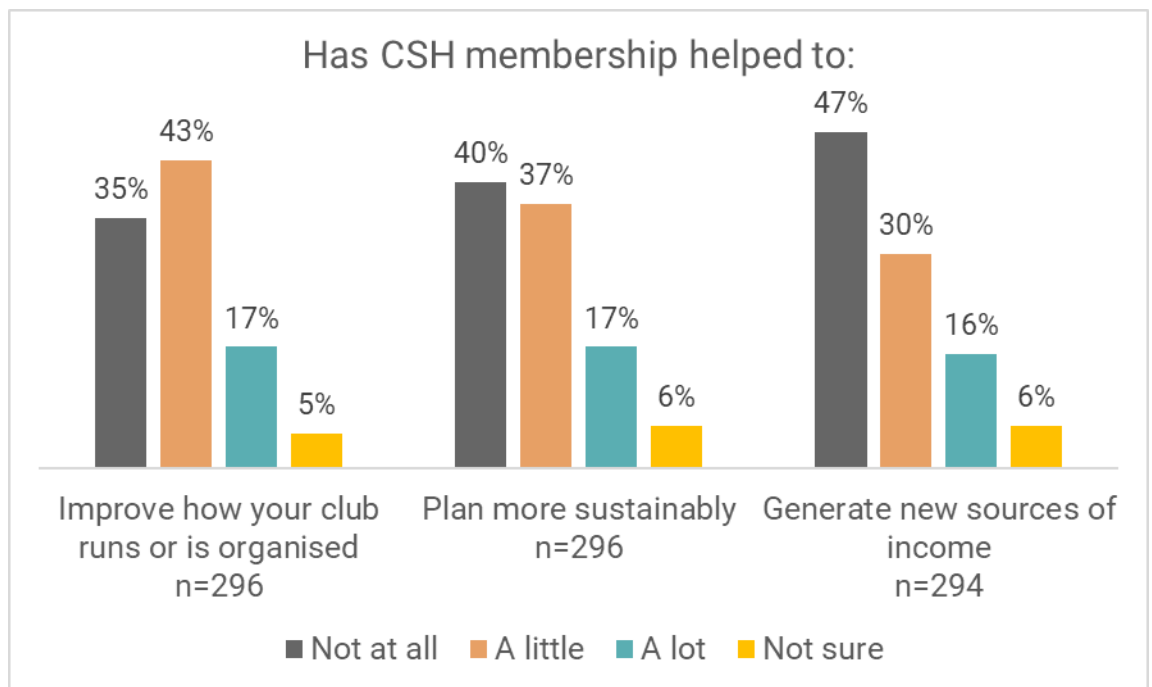
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“Help for Clubs is used a great deal by all of the officers for templates and advice on governance issues.”

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

### Impact of CSHs

6.19 Clubs involved in CSHs largely felt that it had helped the club to improve how it runs and plan more sustainably. Many also felt it had helped them to generate new sources of income. Clubs which had been set up in the past year were more likely to say this support had helped a lot than those who had been established for longer.



6.20 There were examples of clubs and groups being supported by CSH officers to plan for the future; agree priorities for the future; submit funding applications; access further support; access training in topics such as child protection and equalities; and gain accreditation through governing bodies or local authorities.

“I have led a planning workshop... where we have identified the priorities of the clubs, based on the 5 outcomes identified by sportscotland for the hubs...The next step is to identify, plan and deliver specific joint projects that they believe will help the hubs and clubs grow.”

CSH officer (source: impacts and interventions reports)

### Example – CSH organisational support to clubs

One CSH officer focused on consolidating clubs over a year long period, helping to build sustainability and capacity. Several clubs have been supported to obtain local accreditation, as this has shown to help with governance, sustainability and club development.

Source: impact and intervention reports

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### Example – CSH organisational support to clubs

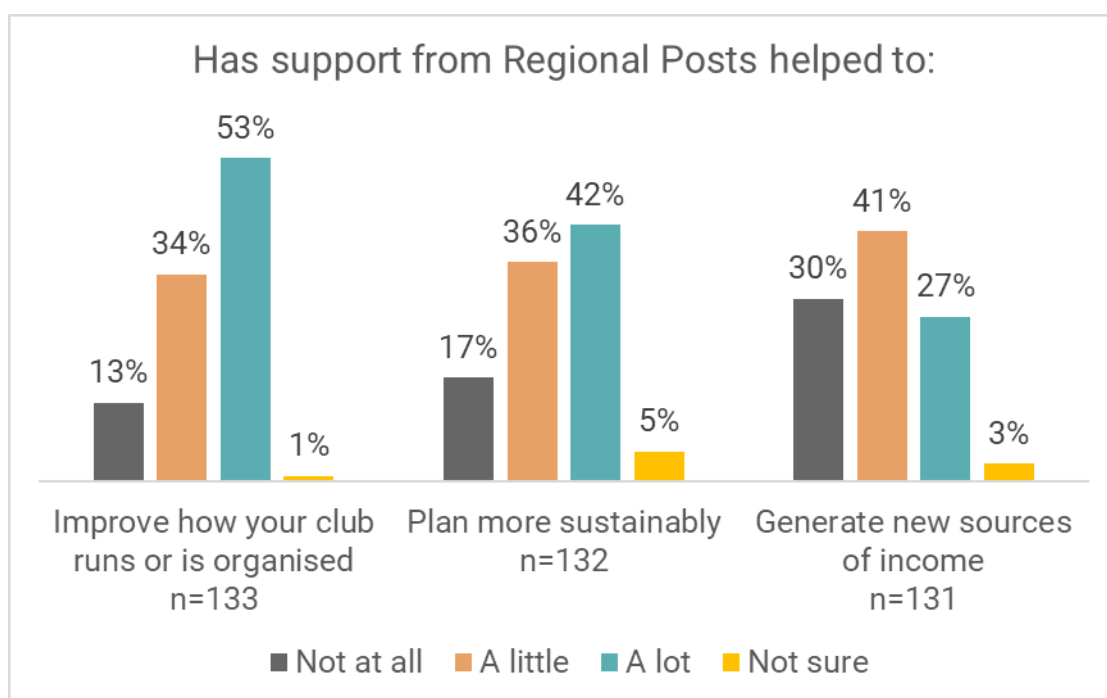
One CSH plans to appoint a general manager for the hub, which was previously led by volunteers. The manager will lead on five areas of development, including governance, management and finances. This will include support on income generation, and ensuring that the foundations of the club enable it to operate in a smooth and transparent manner.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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### Impact of SGB regional posts

6.21 Most clubs and groups felt that support from SGB regional posts had helped them to improve how their club runs or is organised. Many felt able to plan more sustainably, and to access new sources of income.



6.22 Regional post holders had supported clubs to plan for the future, and consider the options available to them. In many cases clubs were supported to apply for funding from **sportscotland** – including DCI, Sport Facilities Fund and Awards for All – and from other funders. Clubs were supported to develop business plans, both through direct support from regional post holders and through signposting to relevant conferences, workshops and training sessions.

**“Whilst [the club] decided to leave their DCI plan for the time being the exercise was useful in allowing the committee to consider what options they wanted in the future for the club and the culture they wanted to create.”**

SGB regional post (source: case study)

6.23 Some clubs have been supported to improve their membership payment arrangements, by offering online payment facilities. This has proved to be beneficial for members, and club treasurers.

“This is of enormous assistance to the club Treasurer in time saved... payment speeds have much improved, with almost 90% of term fees being received within the first two weeks of this term (unheard of in the past).”

SGB regional post (source: case study)

- 6.24 Regional post holders had also helped clubs to formalise their aims and objectives; develop their organisational structure; develop their policies and procedures; gain accreditation through governing body or local authority schemes; self-assess their performance and develop priorities for improvement. Some clubs have also been supported to reflect on their existing practice and make changes based on the needs of members.
- 6.25 A brief review of the impact and interventions reports submitted by SGB regional post holders highlights that many refer to achievements around supporting club governance, organisation and planning. Of the 70 SGB regional post holders reporting on achievements, 25 specifically mention achievements around club planning; 20 specifically mention achievements around governance; and 10 mention achievements around recruitment. These reports highlight that SGB regional posts have helped clubs to plan, review, develop strategies, gain accreditation, access funding, consider their governance arrangements, and consider organisational structure – including developing active committees and establishing appropriate legal status for the organisation.

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#### Example – RDM business planning

One sportscotland funded Regional Development Manager (RDM) worked with an athletics club to develop a business plan. The club is now undergoing the processes required to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. In order to make this transition smooth, the RDM supported the club to link with other clubs that had already been through the process, to enable information sharing and learning. The RDM also helped the club to access further support from sportscotland and the sports governing body.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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#### Example – RDM business planning

One sportscotland funded Regional Development Manager supported 76 clubs with governance and recruitment issues, and helped 10 clubs to develop Business Plans. The post holder also supported clubs to undertake governance reviews, and reported that clubs embraced the support and engaged well.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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#### Example – RDM business planning

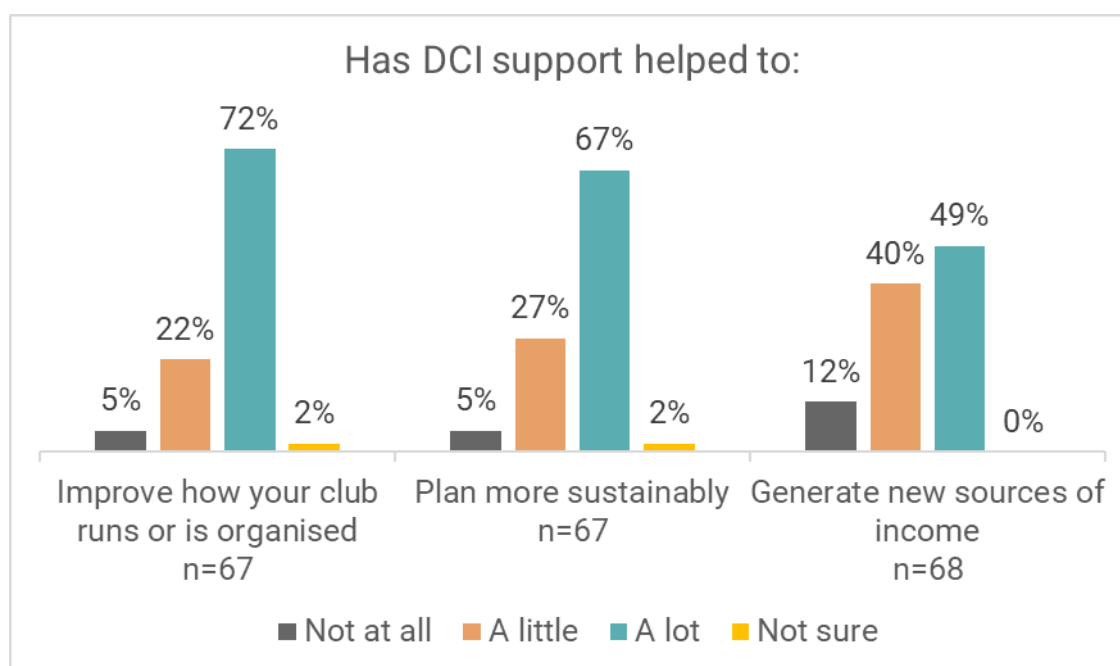
One sportscotland funded Regional Development Manager supported clubs to improve their sustainability through developing active committees, reducing dependence on a small number of coaches who previously drove the organisation.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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## Impact of DCI

6.26 Clubs and groups which had received DCI were very positive about the impact on club organisation, planning, sustainability and income. For many, the DCI funding had enabled them to recruit staff to support with coordinating and developing their club, as well as coaching and supporting members. Having a funded role has helped many to ease the burden on club committee members, who are most often volunteers.



6.27 Clubs and groups were positive about the long term nature of DCI, which many felt enabled clubs to plan a sustainable approach over the longer term. Strategic stakeholders agreed that through this support, some clubs had become sustainable.

**“The financial support without doubt has allowed the club to develop and expand in to an organised and well managed organisation.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“There have been some examples within the local area of DCI projects that have become financially sustainable.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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### Example – Managing growth and building sustainability

A wheelchair sports club, which was run by volunteers, used DCI funding to employ a club coordinator. The club grew at a very quick rate, which the volunteers found difficult to manage. The coordinator will be responsible for managing the growth and development of the club in a structured way.

*Source: case study*

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### Example – DCI supporting sustainable growth

A swimming club received DCI funding to enhance and expand the club's Masters swimming programme. The support has resulted in a development plan to increase weekly sessions and pool time, and to recruit a dedicated coach and to grow participation in the programme. Over four years of funding, the Masters membership has grown from around 30 members to 79 members. The club now has the largest Masters membership in Scotland.

The Masters programme is now self-sustaining through member fees which will make it sustainable beyond the DCI funded period.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 6.28 While clubs and groups were largely very happy with the DCI programme, some did have concerns about their ability to sustain activity and support beyond the funding period. Some would have liked more support on alternative funding sources, or more funding support through DCI. One club mentioned that it was important that SGB regional post support continued beyond the DCI period, as this had been extremely valuable for club development.
- 6.29 A few would appreciate more learning opportunities including regional events, networking opportunities, and access to professionals and experts to support club development. And a few felt that the programme was too bureaucratic, and paperwork was repetitive.

**“My one reservation relates to the length of time of the programme. It needs to be designed to allow repeat or extension (we are currently in our last year). My case would be that progress is reflected by a 'stairway' system of improvement and once you have reached the initial 'plateau' there needs to be scope for a re-injection of initiative and resources to kick on to the next plateau.”**

*Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)*

- 6.30 Some were concerned that DCI was a very valuable investment, but that certain clubs were not able to access it. For example, a strategic stakeholder in a rural area felt that the lack of drive from clubs and the fact that most clubs were not set up in a business structure made it hard for clubs to apply for the funding. There was a feeling from some that clubs may suffer because they don't have the capacity to be more business-like or take on responsibility for being an employer, and concern that some smaller and more informal clubs may be getting left behind. A few felt that this could create a divide between stronger and weaker clubs.

## 7. Club profile

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### Chapter summary

Clubs felt that support from CSHs, SGB regional posts and DCI funding helped to increase profile. Predominantly, clubs were supported to increase profile through networking, advertising and improved communication.

Hubs helped to advertise clubs, facilitate school to club links, and make links with other clubs and groups at local level. SGB regional posts played a significant role in identifying, sharing and rewarding best practice, by nominating clubs for local or SGB awards. DCI helped to support club growth and connections.

### Introduction

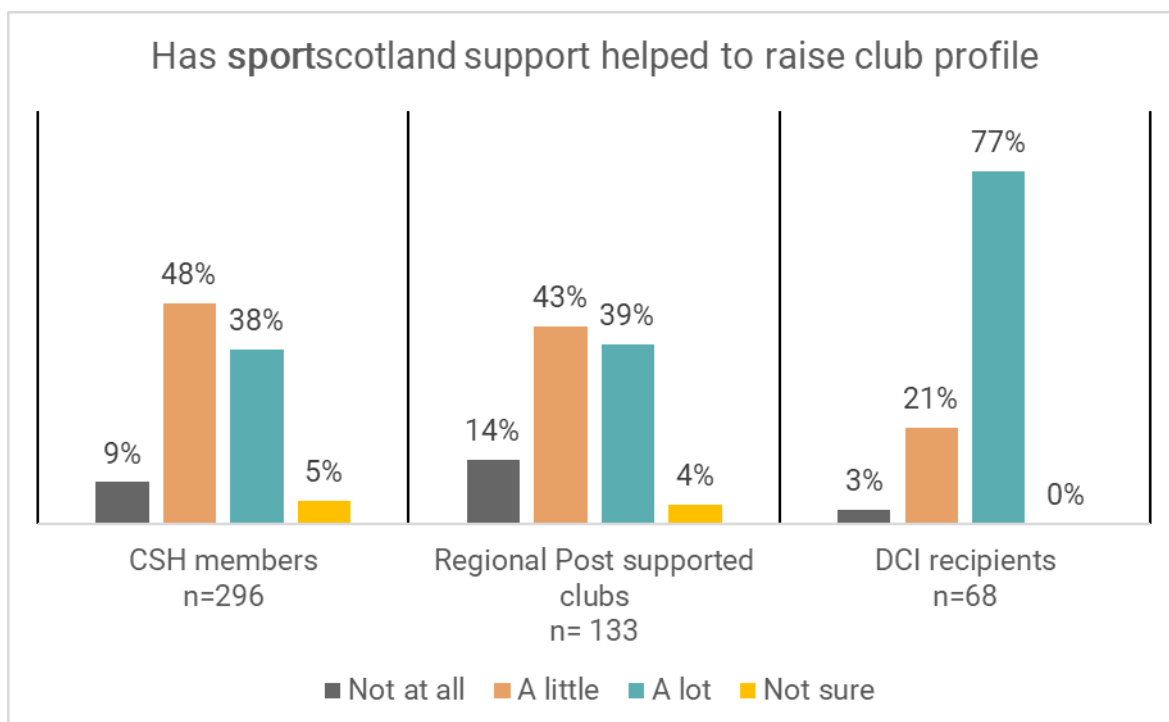
7.1 This chapter explores the impact of the range of **sportscotland** support on the profile of clubs in local communities. It considers this in relation to the Clubs and Communities Framework, which highlights the importance of clubs:

- understanding their audiences and communicating effectively;
- providing accessible information about the opportunities they offer;
- working with local partners to promote their activities;
- evidencing inclusion and diversity of under-represented groups; and
- identifying, sharing and rewarding best practice.

7.2 This chapter focuses on profile, communication, information and best practice. The theme around inclusion and diversity is covered in detail in Chapter Four, and the theme around working with local partners is covered in detail in Chapter Five.

### Club profile and communication

7.3 Clubs and groups which had received DCI funding were very positive about its impact on raising the profile of the club. Most felt it had helped a lot. Almost all clubs involved in CSHs felt that it had helped them to raise the profile of their club in the local area, either a lot or a little, and a similar profile was seen for clubs supported by SGB regional posts.



7.4 Some strategic stakeholders also commented on the impact of **sportscotland** support on the profile of clubs and sport more generally. For example, in one local authority area the sports development lead felt that **sportscotland** programmes had given clubs a focus and profile which placed them well in terms of the local agenda around physical activity and tackling inequality.

#### Impact of CSHs

7.5 Clubs and groups highlighted the role of CSHs in raising awareness of clubs in the local community. CSHs have helped to advertise clubs, facilitate school to club links, and make links with other clubs and groups at local level. This has all had an impact on membership and participation.

**“The CSH is raising the profile of the club in schools.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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#### Example – Impact of CSH

Involvement in the CSH encouraged one karate club to run taster sessions in local primary schools. As a result, the club’s membership has doubled. The club now has around 50 members and is running additional classes.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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7.6 In addition, a few clubs felt that working together, as a collective, through the CSH gave clubs a stronger voice in the community – particularly when negotiating with facilities managers, leisure trusts and local authorities. It has also enabled signposting arrangements, and increased connections to local communities.

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### Example – Impact of CSH

Support from a CSH officer helped a football club to signpost to other relevant people and opportunities, and to put in place reciprocal signposting arrangements.

“It has allowed us to grow in a more organised way, and to get the name of the club out into the community.”

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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### Example – Increasing awareness

In one local authority area, members of local community councils were invited to attend CSH meetings. The hub officer hopes that that bringing together community clubs and community councils will increase awareness of all the activities available in the area, and facilitate partnership working.

*Source: impact and intervention reports*

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- 7.7 In some cases, membership of CSHs has changed how clubs operate and made them more inclusive, offering a range of participation, progression and high performance opportunities.

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### Example – CSH supporting clubs to be part of the community

A swimming club found that being part of the CSHs has raised its profile in the community. The club had previously been seen as exclusive, because it didn't offer swimming lessons and mostly focused on competitive swimming. Now the club does offer lessons and swimming in schools in a non-competitive environment, and can demonstrate that it is giving back to the community. Membership of the CSHs has also improved pathways into swimming for young people. School based activities have helped some young people get into competitive swimming clubs, after attending club run school swimming clubs.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 7.8 Some CSHs have produced written materials such as leaflets and newsletters providing information to local communities on club events. The newsletters have helped share information widely and increase the profile of hubs and clubs. Hub officers have also promoted clubs through community sport websites, social media and prominently placed banners in the local communities.

### Impact of SGB regional posts

- 7.9 Clubs responding to our survey felt that support from SGB regional posts helped to raise the profile of their club. SGB regional posts have supported clubs to develop their online presence through workshops and training. They also supported clubs to improve their documentation, making club policies more accessible to members.

- 7.10 Data from SGB regional post holders found that clubs were increasingly using social media to promote themselves and communicate with audiences. Clubs have branched out from their own websites and Facebook pages to using Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

**“Clubs are now looking at how they operate, best practice and also how they are communicating with their members and wider community.”**

SGB regional post (source: impacts and interventions reports)

- 7.11 One SGB regional post holder worked in partnership with the Forestry Commission to promote sport and outdoor activity to the local communities. They supported clubs to work with a range of local organisations, including schools, disability groups, youth focused charities and scouting groups.

**“Through this engagement, we have signposted progression pathways at surrounding climbing centres as well as promoting our clubs.”**

SGB regional post (source: impacts and interventions reports)

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#### Example – Increased profile and rapid pace of growth

A DCI funded swimming club experienced a rapid pace of growth following well publicised spring and summer holiday programmes. The increased profile of the club and increased awareness resulted in participation at some sessions tripling from 10 to 30.

“At some points it becomes very big, very quickly, especially after the summer programme.”

DCI coach

*Source: case study*

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#### Example – Increased club profile

A DCI funded volleyball club has been documented in local media for its achievements working in schools and for its performance in competitions. This has helped to raise the clubs profile in the local community and in the volleyball community. Having a high profile in the community and significant investment from **sportscotland** also allowed the club to leverage good access to facilities.

*Source: case study*

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## Identifying, sharing and rewarding best practice

### Impact of CSHs

- 7.12 Being part of a CSH network helped clubs to share ideas and best practice. Some clubs mentioned that they found it useful to learn from other in different sports, but with similar issues.

**“Networking with other clubs in the area is always interesting and ‘good practice’ sharing is valuable.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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- 7.13 Some members of CSHs felt that being part of a CSH gave them standing and legitimacy in the community, which encouraged donations and sponsorship.

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#### Example – Rewarding best practice - CSH

One club felt that being part of the CSH helped them to become well recognised in the community. The club felt that this contributed toward the club receiving donations of £15,000 worth of equipment and £10,000 sponsorship funds for two club members.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 7.14 In some areas, the CSH Officer had an important role in engaging hub members to network and begin a dialogue around shared learning. A few hub members said that although there were opportunities to learn from other hub members, they did not always have the capacity to follow up and develop these ideas.

#### Impact of SGB regional posts

- 7.15 Close working with SGB regional posts has helped clubs to look closely at good practice within their sport. SGB regional posts have encouraged clubs to join quality mark programmes that support development of robust practice and policies.
- 7.16 The graded levels of quality mark (e.g. bronze, silver, gold) have encouraged clubs to maintain high standards, and to set goals for further development where possible.
- 7.17 Support from SGB regional posts have helped clubs to be recognised for their achievements, with SGB regional post holders nominating clubs for local and national awards, and drawing clubs to the attention of the governing body.

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#### Example – Rewarding best practice – SGB regional posts

Working with a Regional Development Officer has helped a volleyball club to develop a strong reputation in the local community. The club was recognised for its achievements, winning the Local Club of the Year in 2016 at the sportscotland Scottish Sport Awards.

*Source: case study*

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#### Impact of DCI

- 7.18 Clubs which had received DCI funding indicated that their profile had increased locally, largely through increasing participation. The overall increase in club size, as a result of DCI funding, gave some clubs an increased presence in their community. DCI funding also helped some clubs to organise or attend community events, which helped increase their profile in the community. Increased profile and awareness has helped some clubs to leverage additional funding, attract sponsorship and receive donations. Some clubs also highlighted that their profile had increased nationally, through developing pathways.
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- 7.19 Clubs felt that the process of applying for DCI helped them to think about their policies and practices. A few clubs that were not successful in their initial DCI application said that the early stages helped them identify where the club could improve, and how best practice could be achieved. Looking critically at the club, from an investor perspective encouraged them to achieve recognition for good practice, often through accreditation or quality marks.

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**Example – Rewarding best practice - DCI**

A swimming club received DCI funding from 2014 to 2018. It was recognised by Scottish Swimming as having the highest membership growth of any swimming club in Scotland, and was nominated for Club of the Year in 2017.

*Source: case study*

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- 7.20 Where clubs used DCI funding for additional staff, this additionality helped clubs to make the changes required to achieve their goals, and to demonstrate best practice. For some clubs, DCI funding helped embed an ethos of sustainable, high quality development which clubs were keen to maintain, beyond the funding period.

## 8. Places

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### Chapter summary

Having affordable, accessible and high-quality facilities was an important issue for clubs.

Where clubs had received support through the Sport Facilities Fund, this was greatly appreciated and was helping to provide opportunities for the club and the local community. Clubs have also been supported by CSHs and SGB regional posts to improve access, share resources and make the best use of local facilities.

The main challenges for clubs were around access to facilities, where facilities access was limited, costly or required members to travel long distances.

### Introduction

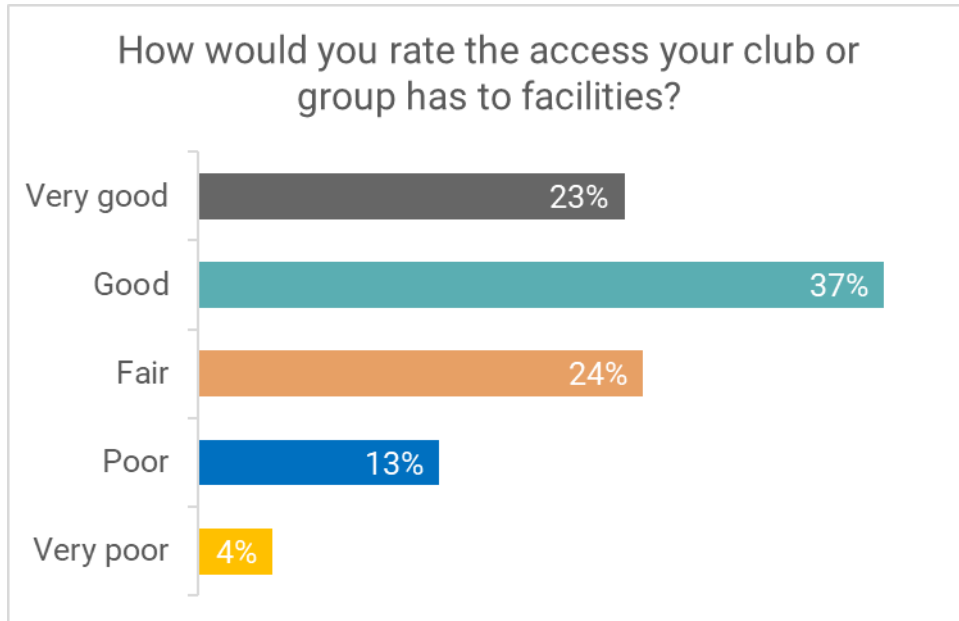
8.1 This chapter explores the impact of the range of **sportscotland** support in terms places for sport and physical activity in the clubs and communities environment. It considers this in relation to the Clubs and Communities Framework, which highlights the importance of clubs:

- understanding facility needs – through engaging with members and the local community;
- developing realistic facility plans – that link with their overall development plan;
- being creative and willing to work with others; and
- ensuring that facilities are accessible, inclusive and affordable to everyone.

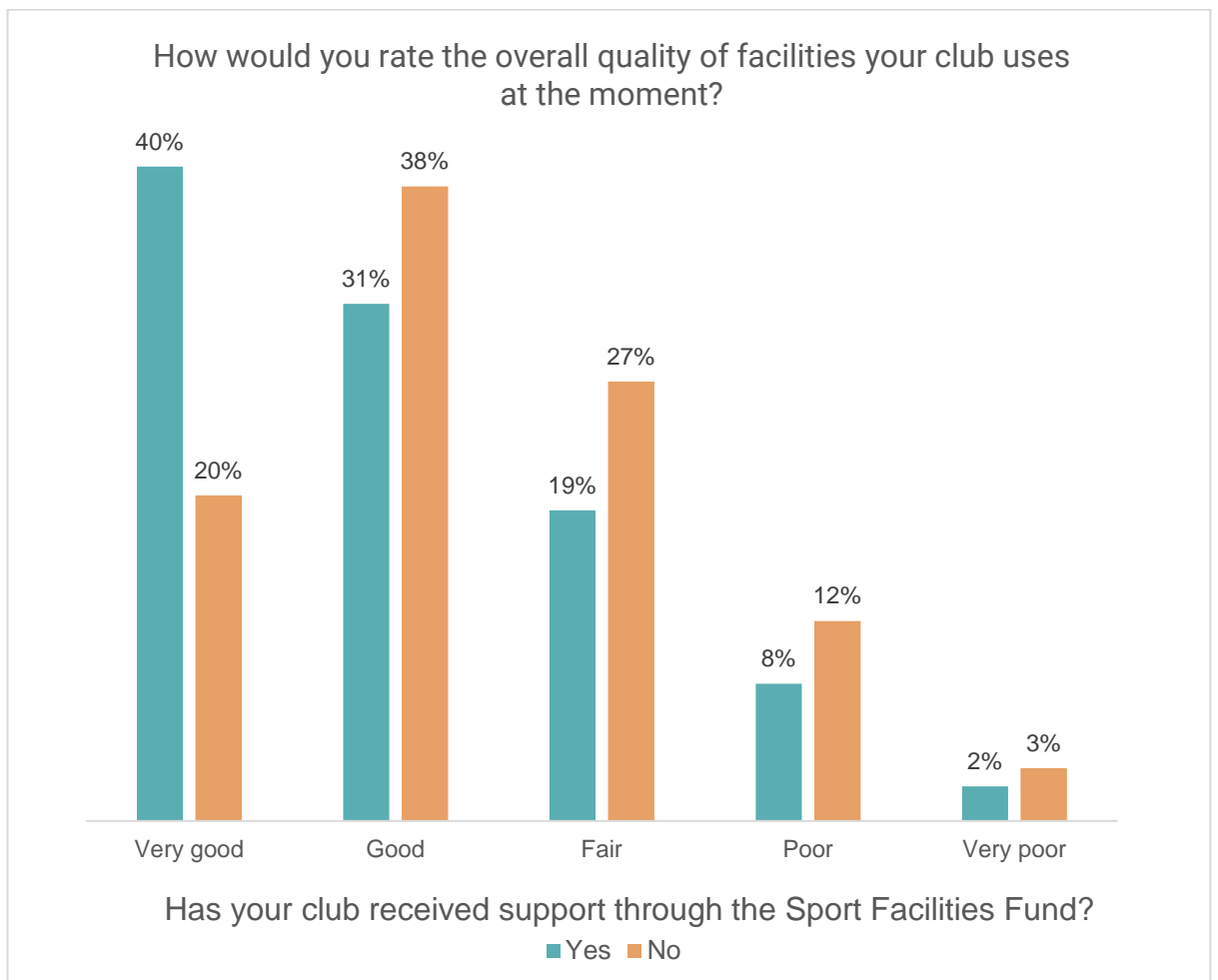
### Access to facilities

8.2 Clubs and groups responding to the online survey were asked generally how they would rate their access to facilities at the moment. Over half (60%) were broadly happy with their facilities. A further quarter felt that their facilities were fair (24%). Almost a fifth rated their facilities poor or very poor.





8.3 There were no major differences in views on facilities depending on whether clubs were members of CSHs or not. The 48 survey respondents who had accessed funding through the Sport Facilities Fund were much more likely to rate their facilities as very good, compared to those who had not.



- 8.4 Some of those who mentioned that the quality of facilities was poor or very poor said that there was a lack of suitable facilities for their club. Others talked about facilities being poorly maintained, with a lack of investment. Some also mentioned challenges finding storage for equipment, inappropriate changing and toilet facilities, and challenges around access for disabled people.
- 8.5 Although a small proportion rated the quality of facilities poorly, many (around 320 respondents) highlighted barriers to accessing facilities. The main barriers mentioned were:
- high cost of hiring facilities – which meant some could not use high quality facilities, such as all-weather outdoor surfaces;
  - problems relating to administration and management of facilities – including issues with allocation across clubs and balancing this with access by the general public, and issues around bureaucracy of booking some venues;
  - geographical location – distance to and from facilities in rural areas, and issues around a lack of transport and cost of transport; and
  - the weather affecting outdoor facilities/playing surfaces.
- 8.6 Clubs in rural areas often said that they were unable to access events, competitions, networking events because of the time and cost involved in travelling. This prevented coaches, athletes and volunteers from accessing development opportunities.
- 8.7 Many clubs and groups mentioned the lack of suitable facilities as being a barrier to their growth – with clubs unable to meet demand for places due to issues around access to facilities.

**“The programming of facilities does not reflect the needs of sports clubs.”**

Community group (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 8.8 In some areas, facilities have not been well managed, and schedules have not been coordinated effectively. In one area, a new high quality multi-sports facility has been unable to host showcase events because of a lack of a strategic approach to programming.
- 8.9 **sportscotland** staff also recognised the challenges around accessing facilities for clubs in remote and rural areas.

## Understanding facility needs and developing plans

- 8.10 A number of respondents to the online survey (78) had received some support from the **sportscotland** facilities team. Of these, most (48) had gone on to access funding. A few clubs and groups indicated that they were in the early stages of the support, and were not yet able to talk about impact.

8.11 Clubs and groups indicated that they had received support with:

- identifying needs and resources;
- planning and designing facilities – including providing guidance, advice on new surfaces and enabling communication between the club and the SGB;
- applying for funding - including the Sport Facilities Fund and other sources of funding;
- legal matters; and
- maintenance and contractors.

**“We are looking at developing our own facility and are receiving very helpful advice from the facilities team.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

8.12 Most clubs and groups were very positive about the advice, support and help offered by the facilities team. Where clubs had met with the **sportscotland** facilities team before submitting an application, they felt well supported and confident in their applications. Some clubs worked closely with **sportscotland** and other funders throughout the development of facilities, and the expert knowledge from the facilities team was appreciated. For one club, having support from **sportscotland** and a SGB regional post ensured that facilities were developed to a high standard.

8.13 One club mentioned that it would have liked more support to appoint contractors to build the new facility. Two clubs felt that advice was unclear or contradictory and would welcome better communication. **sportscotland** emphasised the value of early engagement on facilities issues when progressing sports development projects.

8.14 Some clubs felt that the application process was lengthy, complex and daunting, and would welcome more support from **sportscotland** in the early stages of application. However, some clubs highlighted the important role of the RDM and CSH officer in supporting clubs to apply for Sport Facilities funding.

**“Those funding forms take expertise and mostly volunteers are applying.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

**“You need to have knowledge of the funding landscape and expertise in completing funding application forms.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

8.15 Clubs receiving Sport Facilities funding were usually supported by a range of funders contributing varying amounts. Clubs felt that funding opportunities were limited, and often highly competitive. Stakeholders and facilities staff noted that the funding landscape had changed in recent years, and that

sometimes, **sportscotland** funding was being used to develop facilities that, prior to budget cuts, would have been funded by local authorities.

**“Sport Facility Fund provides an opportunity to deliver projects in partnership. In the current financial climate there is less capital money for LAs to deliver sporting facility projects so the fund from sportscotland either adds value to allocations identified within capital plans or supports community enabled projects.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 8.16 Stakeholders also felt that Sport Facilities funding was crucial to continue building the infrastructure required to grow sport and increase participation.

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#### **Example – Sport Facilities funding as a catalyst for sustainability**

One club felt that the investment through the Sport Facilities Fund had a significant impact on the club and its sustainability. The funding enabled the club to invest in facilities which it would otherwise have had to close down. The guidance provided by **sportscotland** was seen as excellent, both in terms of technical and financial advice. The club felt well supported through complex processes to access funding. It felt that the support offered by **sportscotland** in this instance was more specialist and relevant than that provided by its governing body.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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## **Creativity and joint working**

- 8.17 Negotiating access to facilities has encouraged creativity and joint working between clubs and particularly amongst CSH members, or where CSHs were facility-based.

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#### **Example – Working together to develop new facilities**

In one area, three clubs have come together, forming a CSH, in order to work jointly and develop a water sports facility in Loch Lomond. Through the CSH Officer, the clubs have been able to access additional support around planning and the facility, and has supported the clubs to work with the local authority. The clubs felt that the CSH Officer played a critical role in the early stages of facility planning, due to his experience of the funding landscape.

“He’s helped guide us through the maze.”

Sports club

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 8.18 CSHs have brought clubs together to improve communication around use of facilities, and helped clubs share local resources fairly and efficiently.

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### Example – Sharing facilities through the CSH

One sports club indicated that it was working jointly with another hub member to develop new shared tennis and hockey facilities. Another indicated that they had been able to use the local football club ground to play cricket, a sharing of facilities which they had not done before the CSH.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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### Example – Working jointly through the CSH

One new CSH, still at an early stage of development, has been successful in getting clubs to work together. Previously the CSH members (all football clubs) were competing for local playing and training facilities, and now they work together collaboratively to use the facilities available. The clubs now have a better understanding of each other. The CSH committee meets regularly, and joint working and communication has improved.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 8.19 SGB regional posts have also helped clubs negotiate facilities access, particularly where there has been high competition for limited facilities.

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### Example – Facilities in rural areas

A netball club based in a rural area required more time in the local facility, in order to develop the teams and provide more individual coaching. With support from a Regional Development Manager, the club successfully increased facility time from two hours to three hours. This has allowed coaches to spread training sessions over a three hour period, and spend more time supporting individual development.

*Source: case study*

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## Accessible, inclusive and affordable facilities

- 8.20 A number of clubs responding to the online survey (48) had received support through the Sport Facilities Fund. Respondents felt that this funding had resulted in improved playing facilities, surfaces, equipment and changing facilities. In some cases, initial funding from **sportscotland** had encouraged other funders to invest in the facility.
- 8.21 Clubs said that they felt well supported throughout the process, from pre-application advice, attendance at joint funding meetings and site visits.

**“The Sport Facilities funding was crucial to convincing other funders to commit financial support to building our new clubhouse.”**

*Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)*

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### Example – Developing plans

One tennis club received £75,000 of Sport Facilities funding to help it redevelop its courts. **sportscotland** conducted a site visit and engaged in frank, honest discussions about the

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club and its business plans. The club felt it received good advice on planning the redevelopment.

“We got all different levels of advice, information and expertise. We listened to all the advice but when we made decisions as a club, they listened to us. I feel we have learned so much.”

Sports club

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 8.22 Some clubs and groups indicated that the new facilities had benefited not just their members, but the wider community. Others said that new facilities had enabled increased participation for a range of age groups and for disabled people. Some felt that the facilities provided much needed places for sport and physical activity which were otherwise unavailable in a rural area.

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#### **Example – Facilities enabling joint working**

A rugby club developed new, high quality facilities and has shared the new facilities with the local football club and athletics club. The Rugby club used **sportscotland** Sport Facilities funding to develop rugby pitches, a football pitch and an athletics track. The club now offers access to the new pitches and space to store equipment. Between 60 and 70 young people use the new track at the club for athletics training. And the football club uses the new football pitch for training and home games.

Instead of leasing the land to partners, the club asked athletics and football club members to become associate members of the Rugby club. This gives them access to the facilities and the social entitlements of a club member.

The club grounds are also used by the local high school, which has no grass pitches of its own.

“We provide the grounds, changing facilities and social area on every occasion that the high school requires.”

Programme Development Manager

*Source: case study*

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- 8.23 New, or re-developed facilities have helped provide a safer environment for athletes and spectators. High quality pitches and courts have supported athletes to train to a higher standard, and have allowed clubs achieve quality marks and recognition through SGBs.

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#### **Example – Developing plans**

One football club received £120,000 from the Sport Facilities Fund to develop a 3G pitch with shockpads and floodlighting. The shockpads provide a safer playing surface, and should help sustain the pitch for longer. The new pitch has been recognised as a high quality playing field, and the club has been awarded a Legacy Quality mark by the SGB.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 8.24 New facilities have also helped clubs support more people in the community, by providing more space, improved access for disabled people and improved changing facilities.

**“We can cater for everyone because we have our own facility.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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#### **Example – Improving accessibility**

One strategic stakeholder spoke of a new facility in Inverclyde. The facility was purpose built to accommodate disabled and able-bodied athletes, breaking down barriers to participation and encouraging people to train and compete together. This stakeholder felt that organisations should take specific actions to ensure that facilities cater for all needs.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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- 8.25 New recreational facilities, such as clubhouses, have helped clubs generate income, contributing to longer term sustainability.
- 8.26 For one club, running sessions from its own facility has been more cost effective than using the local leisure trust. The club is now able to run sessions, at its own facility, seven days per week. The club has supported the generation of new community groups in the area by allowing them to use the facility free of cost, to help them get started. This has encouraged people that were previously prevented from participating in physical activity, to become active.

**“We allow free use to any new groups to help them get started up removing financial blockages which may have prevented members of our community previously getting involved in football or physical activity.”**

Sports club (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

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#### **Example – Sport Facilities funding as a catalyst for increased participation**

One cricket club has used its new facility to encourage wider participation in the community. The club held festivals encouraging whole family participation. The club also held a women and girls social event, to recruit new female players to the club. Having its own facilities has allowed the club to create a welcoming environment for new comers. Locally, the new facility has been much admired, helping to raise the profile of the club as a prominent club in the area.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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#### **Example – Sport Facilities funding as a catalyst for increased participation**

One club indicated that before investment through the Sport Facilities Fund their tennis courts were virtually unplayable, and membership was very low. As a result of the Sport Facilities Fund investment, the club is now very vibrant with 170 members of all ages. The Sports Facilities Fund allowed the development of new courts and floodlights, meaning that tennis can be played all year round.

*Source: evaluation survey/ interview*

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## 9. Range of support

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### Chapter summary

The range of **sportscotland** support has helped clubs to increase participation, improve their use of facilities, develop better pathways, access training opportunities and build more professional and sustainable organisations.

Stakeholders felt that there were opportunities to develop and enhance this range of support through:

- enhanced connections between school and club based work focused on increasing participation;
- more local flexibility about how some **sportscotland** supported programmes operate;
- consideration of how clubs at every stage are supported – not just those which are stronger and more business-like; and
- clearer information about overall intended outcomes and impact of supported programmes.

### Introduction

9.1 This short chapter summarises the main themes emerging around the impact of the range of support. It explores overall impact, views on the different **sportscotland** programmes, and priorities for future support.

### Overall impact of range of support

9.2 Clubs and community groups were asked about the overall impact of the blend of **sportscotland** support on their organisation. The main themes emerging were:

- increased participation – club growth, increased membership, more sports programmes, reduced costs of participation, improved access to sport and activity and increased member participation in sport;
- improved facilities – with support from **sportscotland** resulting in more, better or higher quality facilities and equipment, with better community access;
- better pathways – including to high performance environments;
- more training opportunities – for coaches, staff and volunteers;
- higher quality opportunities – as a result of access to trained professionals; and
- more professional clubs – run in a structured and sustainable way, with better links with communities and better joint working and networking.



- 9.3 A few said the main impact was access to funding such as DCI or Awards for All.
- 9.4 Strategic stakeholders agreed that clubs were stronger, better organised and with more participation and progression opportunities as a result of **sportscotland** support. Stakeholders were pleased to have the support available, and felt that the range of support took account of many contributing elements within the clubs and communities environment and generally fit well with local and national strategies. However, there was recognition that the range of support worked in different ways in every area, in line with the local context.

**“All programmes have impacted in different ways. It’s situational. There is no science to support clubs and communities.”**

Local authority lead (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 9.5 Importantly, some clubs and strategic stakeholders found it difficult to talk about the ‘blend’ of support. Clubs were able to discuss the programmes they were familiar with, and strategic stakeholders often saw the support as a range of different programmes rather than a coordinated package of support in the clubs and communities environment. Some SGBs talked of the ‘blend’ of support, and the way different programmes complement one another.

**“Regional posts, facilities and DCI work well as a package.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 9.6 The eight case studies show that there are real benefits of the range of support – not just separate programmes. Clubs were positive about the range of support, knowledge and expertise they were able to access through different **sportscotland** programmes.

**“Putting it all together, it’s invaluable, the knowledge and experience. Without all of them, we wouldn’t have the success we’ve had.”**

DCI officer (source: case study)

**“One thing that has been clear in this project is that if you removed any one of these pieces, I don’t think the project would have worked. It really did need everybody.”**

Club lead (source: case study)

- 9.7 One case study showed that a club which was not sport specific found it particularly valuable to be able to access support from a range of different roles.

**“We can pick the brains of all these different people with a wealth of experience.”**  
 Club lead (source: case study)

9.8 For example, development of facilities coupled with DCI support has ensured that spaces are available to allow a focus on growth in participation and athlete development. Support through SGB regional posts has enabled people to develop plans and successfully apply for DCI funding.

## Views on different programmes

9.9 Views on what worked and what didn’t about each of the programmes are set out under relevant themes throughout the report. The main themes emerging from feedback from clubs, funded posts and strategic stakeholders are summarised below.

Community Sport Hubs	
What Worked Well	Areas for Improvement
Access to training opportunities	Capacity of clubs to support CSHs
Place to discuss common issues	Clear aims and intended outcomes for each CSH
Links with local authority staff and other partners	Sense of common purpose/ collective voice
Help with better use of facilities – pricing/ access/ management/ sharing	Hub meetings not always accessible or useful
Clubs working together and sharing ideas	

SGB Regional Posts	
What Worked Well	Areas for Improvement
Strong relationships with the SGB and with <b>sportscotland</b>	Connection to local authority area, priorities, infrastructure
Access to tailored practical support and advice on all issues relating to the club	Wide geographic remits
Face to face support valued – particularly by focus clubs which received more intensive support	Need for bespoke approaches for each local authority area
Availability – some praised for being easily accessible and happy to help	Support at times feels reactive rather than proactive
Knowledge and signposting – specialist knowledge of the sport, the pathway and how to develop it	Desire for more help with coach recruitment and development; accessing funding; and support with engaging under represented groups
Links with quality marks and accreditation	Lack of consistency in support
Support to apply for DCI funding	

Direct Club Investment	
What Worked Well	Areas for Improvement
Long term funding with staggered reduction to encourage sustainability	Concern that focus is on stronger, more business-like clubs
Funding directly for clubs which can be used in a flexible way	Some challenges filling DCI posts/ high turnover of funded posts
Early support from <b>sportscotland</b> to clarify project aims and targets	
Approaches which build management and coordination capacity of clubs – taking pressure off volunteers	
Application process – challenging but helpful even if clubs are not initially successful	

## Future support and priorities

9.10 The main areas that clubs and groups responding to the online survey said that they would like future support with were in relation to:

- accessing funding, including DCI;
- accessing, developing and maintaining facilities – and ensuring these are accessible to both men, women and disabled people;
- attracting and retaining new members, staff, coaches and volunteers;
- child protection and PVG checks;
- community asset transfers;
- retaining members – particularly junior members when they leave school;
- developing a sustainable financial and organisational club model; and
- developing pathways to further and higher levels of performance.

9.11 It was clear that many clubs needed support to enable them to engage effectively with disabled people. Clubs also sought support with understanding community needs, consulting with under-represented groups and building networks and connections to support them to meet needs.

9.12 Most strategic stakeholders were keen that all **sportscotland** supported programmes in the clubs and communities environment continue. However, a number of key themes emerged as explored below.

### School-club balance and connections

9.13 Strategic stakeholders largely felt that the support provided to clubs was positive. However, some felt that **sportscotland** support was weighted towards supporting the schools and education environment.

- 9.14 Some felt that this balance was right, as strong links with Active Schools were very important in strengthening clubs and groups locally. However, some felt that there was a need to be sure that support is provided to clubs to allow them to meet the additional interest in participation which was generated through the schools environment. There was particular concern about the pressure on volunteers within clubs, and the fragility of some clubs as a result.

**“A long term commitment and heavier focus on club and community sport would be beneficial.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 9.15 Some stakeholders also sought more connectivity between the schools and club environments. A few SGBs particularly mentioned challenges building school to club links. Some stakeholders in the clubs and communities environment were unable to comment on work in the schools environment, and a few said they had poor links with Active Schools.
- 9.16 A few stakeholders felt that there should be a focus, across both schools and clubs, on getting people active across whole communities. A few suggested this may involve focusing on involving people who may face barriers to participation in sport. This included clubs, community groups, SGBs and local authority leads for sports development.

**“Club sport is an increasingly important area and is vital. It should be used more effectively going forward to lead wider aspects and outcomes for sport and physical activity.”**

Strategic stakeholder (source: evaluation survey/ interview)

- 9.17 However, a few others felt that supporting physical activity and inactivity more generally was not the role of **sportscotland** support.

#### Local outcomes

- 9.18 A number of strategic stakeholders felt that consideration should be given to introducing more local flexibility around how resources are used at local level. These stakeholders stressed that each local authority area is different, and that while programme delivery could be flexible, the way resources are used could be considered in a more flexible way to account for this. Some felt that some programmes could be quite ‘top down’ and would benefit from greater flexibility and connection to community priorities.
- 9.19 For example, one stakeholder felt that it was restrictive to be required to employ someone in a certain role for a certain amount of time to deliver a **sportscotland** programme, and that there should be more flexibility given based on existing infrastructures within the local area. Another stakeholder said that they would welcome more flexibility in decision making around DCI in their area, to link with local priorities. And another was concerned that

links were not made between the availability of local facilities and sports for development at regional level.

- 9.20 A few felt that this may involve a shift towards thinking about outcomes rather than inputs, and that this approach may help local authorities and partners to think about how to work together more effectively.

#### Supporting clubs at all levels

- 9.21 Stakeholders and clubs greatly welcomed the DCI funding, as direct funding into clubs which brought about very positive outcomes. However, there was some concern that this funding was available to clubs which were already reasonably strong and able to demonstrate a business-like approach.
- 9.22 Some felt that the SGB regional posts and CSH officers played an important role in supporting clubs to take early steps to become more business-like and DCI ready, and some recognised the role of Awards for All and Help for Clubs in supporting clubs at different stages. However, some were concerned about potential gaps emerging between strong clubs able to develop further through DCI support, and weaker clubs less able to access this. More generally, there was concern that many clubs are fragile and very volunteer reliant and that involvement in networks such as CSH may be very difficult for these clubs.

#### Overall aim and impact

- 9.23 Some stakeholders would welcome clearer information about the overall purpose of **sportscotland** supported work in clubs – either individual programmes such as CSH or SGB regional posts, or collectively how to articulate the overall aim and intended impact of work in the clubs and communities environment. Some also felt that there was a need for better information about the impact of this work.

## 10. Key findings and issues for consideration

### Key findings

10.1 The main positive impacts of the range of **sportscotland** support in the clubs and communities portfolio in relation to each of the themes within the Club Sport Framework are set out below.

<p><b>People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attracting more staff – including dedicated employees</li> <li>• Attracting more volunteers – including young leaders</li> <li>• Better trained coaches and staff</li> <li>• Increases in quality of offer to members</li> </ul>	<p><b>Participation outcomes</b></p> <p>Increase in number of members</p> <p>CSH = 4% SGB posts = 10% DCI = 14%</p> <p>Catalyst for change in participation levels</p> <p>Increases across different age groups, levels and abilities</p> <p>New members through taster sessions and new activities</p>
<p><b>Places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased availability and access to facilities</li> <li>• Sharing of premises between clubs</li> <li>• Better understanding of need for facilities</li> <li>• High quality and safe facilities</li> <li>• Infrastructure to enable more participation opportunities</li> <li>• Facilities accessible to a wider range of groups</li> <li>• Clubs able to generate income through facilities</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Profile</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of club sport opportunities</li> <li>• Improved communication, links and cooperation</li> <li>• Leading to increased participation</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Organised and sustainable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced pressure on volunteers</li> <li>• Sustainable and focused approaches to planning and development</li> <li>• New sources of income</li> <li>• Joint fundraising opportunities</li> <li>• Improved self-assessment</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Connected</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint work with schools and other clubs</li> <li>• Better connections at local and national level</li> <li>• Stronger pathways for sport and activity</li> <li>• Sharing of ideas, knowledge and best practice</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Inclusive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced barriers and a welcoming environment</li> <li>• Targeted sessions</li> <li>• Reduced costs of participation</li> <li>• Engagement with under-represented groups</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Progression outcomes</b></p> <p>More time for athletes to develop skills</p> <p>Increased pool of skilled coaches</p> <p>Increased teams and opportunities to progress</p> <p>Better pathways</p> <p>High quality places to develop skills</p>	

## Issues for consideration

### The range of support is working well

10.2 The range of support in place across the clubs and communities portfolio is working well, and the programmes complement one another. This is particularly evident from the evaluation case studies, where often clubs have received a range of support, which met their needs and added value in different ways.

**Recommendation:** The range of support within the clubs and communities portfolio should be continued.

## Describing the intended outcomes of the range of support

10.3 Stakeholders involved in the research at times demonstrated a lack of understanding about the intended outcomes within the range of support, the roles of individual programmes, or the types of clubs prioritised by each programme. **sportscotland** should work to address this through:

- clearly and simply articulating **sportscotland**'s intended outcomes of this range of support – the changes it wishes to bring about - and where each programme fits within this;
- simply describing how the programmes fit together and support different types of club; and
- considering how **sportscotland**'s support to clubs is branded – for example, through creating a single brand for the range of support within the clubs and communities portfolio.

10.4 A very simple logic model setting out the intended outcomes of the range of support, and each programme, would help to articulate how different programmes relate to different outcomes or types of clubs. This would help to develop a clearly articulated range of support, which is easy for all stakeholders in the clubs and communities environment to understand.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should clearly and simply articulate the outcomes it wishes to bring about through the clubs and communities portfolio, and where each programme fits within this.

## Scope for more focus on equality and diversity

10.5 More men than women are members of sports clubs, and the clubs and groups supported by **sportscotland** work with many more men than women. There is also limited information about the profile of club members in terms of other equality characteristics such as deprivation. In addition, some are unclear about the extent to which the focus is on engaging people in sports, or more widely in physical activity.

- 10.6 This was also reflected through the responses received to the club member survey, which had lower response levels from disabled people and areas of deprivation compared with the overall Scottish population.
- 10.7 The targeted focus on equality through the DCI programme should help to address this in the future. In addition, there is potential to:
- consider the profile of clubs and club members benefiting from **sportscotland** support, and ensure that certain clubs and groups are not unintentionally under-represented;
  - support clubs around understanding and meeting the needs of different groups, including people from areas of socio-economic deprivation, disabled people, women and girls and other equalities groups;
  - raise awareness of the funding opportunities available to help introduce targeted activities – including Awards for All and funding through CSHs – in recognition that a small amount of funding helps clubs a lot in this regard;
  - consider placing more emphasis on the role that local partners can play in engaging a range of people, across the public and third sector, supported by **sportscotland**;
  - continue to build strong links with Active Schools and the ethos of getting people active as well as specifically involved in particular sports;
  - ensure that coaches and other deliverers have access to training around inclusion and engaging people with a range of different needs; and
  - work with clubs to ensure that information about the diversity of club members is gathered in a proportionate and meaningful way, to allow ongoing identification of areas of success and priorities for development.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should ensure that the clubs and groups it supports are able to work with a range of people with different needs and experiences, and that certain groups are not unintentionally under-represented in the overall profile of membership of the clubs and groups that they work with. This may include building an ethos of getting people active generally, as well as specific involvement in particular sports.

## Strengthening local links and flexibility

- 10.8 **sportscotland** programmes in the clubs and communities environment are designed to respond to local needs and opportunities. The programmes offer flexibility around the focus and nature of support provided by delivery partners. However, **sportscotland** is very specific about how funding is used for particular inputs – such as staff posts. Some local authorities felt the impact of the range of support could be strengthened by introducing greater flexibility around how funding is spent locally.



10.9 More connection to local priorities, and flexibility about use of resources could be developed through considering a shift towards a more outcome focused approach, with associated targets. This would involve working closely with partners at local and regional level to develop intended outcomes for each programme locally. This could be designed in a way to complement **sportscotland's** developing focus on a regional way of working.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should consider the benefits and challenges of introducing a more outcomes focused performance arrangement with local authorities coupled with greater flexibility on specific inputs.

## School to club links

10.10 Views across both the clubs and communities and schools and education evaluations have been mixed in relation to the effectiveness of school to club links. There were examples where it worked well.

10.11 But some in the schools environment found it hard to engage and involve clubs, and some in the clubs environment found it hard to engage and involve schools and others in the schools environment. It was also not always clear where responsibility for developing and sustaining these links lay. There are opportunities to do more to:

- clearly define what is meant by a school-club link;
- refresh and clarify roles and responsibilities for developing school-club links;
- enhance joint working arrangements between **sportscotland** supported staff in the clubs and communities and schools and education environments;
- connect the focus on getting active and physical activity within the school environment through into the work in the clubs and communities environment;
- support clubs to cope with increased demand from school pupils, generated through Active Schools; and
- connect leadership work between the schools and clubs environments.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should work with stakeholders involved in both portfolios to clarify and strengthen work in developing school-club links, building on the strong network of staff in both environments with good relationships with schools, clubs and community groups.

## Developing particular programmes within the portfolio

10.12 There are a number of specific issues for consideration within each of the supported programmes.

## Community Sport Hubs

10.13 The CSH programme is helping to strengthen clubs and linkages, and increase participation in clubs and groups. **sportscotland** and partners are well on track to establish 200 hubs by 2020. However, there are a wide range of models and approaches to delivering CSHs. In some areas, clubs and other stakeholders are finding that the CSH does not have clear aims and intended outcomes; does not fit well with other local structures; and does not have a sense of common purpose or collective voice.

10.14 Many clubs are fragile and volunteer led, and find it challenging to find the capacity to be involved in CSHs and attend hub meetings. Clubs need to see tangible outcomes from hub involvement (such as improved access to and pricing of facilities), and need to have a range of different ways to be involved as a hub member.

10.15 This would partly be addressed by the development of clear portfolio and programme outcomes, with local flexibility, as highlighted above. Hubs could also use this national outcomes framework to identify their own intended outcomes, at local level, supported by hub officers.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should support CSH officers to ensure that the clear, simple intended outcomes for the CSH programme nationally are translated into meaningful outcomes for local hubs – which clearly link with local club priorities.

## SGB regional posts

10.16 The SGB regional posts provide tailored, face to face, practical support and advice which is valued by clubs and plays an important role. The connection with the SGB is also valued, and the specialist sporting knowledge these roles offer. There is a role for this light touch, regional support in developing clubs and connecting them with further support. However, the support varies in consistency, can be reactive, is not always connected to local priorities and can be spread thinly across wide geographic areas.

10.17 Some of these issues may be resolved by clearly articulating the purpose of the posts, why they focus on certain sports, how focus clubs are identified and how this fits with the wider range of support. However, given the suggested variability in delivery and impact, and practical issues associated with these types of posts, **sportscotland** may wish to work with partners to consider how best to improve this.

**Recommendation:** **sportscotland** should work with partners, at both national and local level, to consider how best to strengthen consistency and overcome practical challenges within the current SGB regional post programme.

## DCI

10.18 The DCI programme is working well, with positive outcomes. The focus from late 2017 on supporting engagement of under-represented groups should further strengthen this programme, targeting support at areas where clubs and club members may experience particular barriers. As with the other programmes within the range of support, there is a need to support stakeholders in the clubs and communities environment to understand the role of DCI and role it plays within the range of support offered by **sportscotland**. It is also important to recognise that some clubs and groups which may be effective at engaging targeted groups may not be well connected with **sportscotland's** support at the moment (for example, as part of a CSH).

10.19 There is also the potential for more work to understand the profile of DCI club members in the future, to help understand the impact of targeted work, and ensuring that systems are in place at national level to be able to track DCI outcomes beyond increased participation.

**Recommendation:** The focus of DCI activity on targeted work should be promoted, with the role of DCI clearly communicated to stakeholders. Monitoring systems should continue to be developed to evaluate this targeted work.

## Sport Facilities Fund

10.20 The Sport Facilities Fund is playing an important role in supporting participation and athlete development through developing quality places for sport and physical activity. The other programmes in the clubs and communities environment may benefit from closer strategic connections with the Sports Facilities Fund, where it can complement intended outcomes. In particular, a focus on development of inclusive facilities and changing rooms would help to support club engagement of people with a wide range of needs. Monitoring information should also be further developed to ensure that the link between facilities and enhanced participation can be clearly articulated at national level.

**Recommendation:** The Sport Facilities Fund has the potential to further support key outcomes across the clubs and communities environment, and connections between different programmes and priorities should be strengthened.

# Appendices

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## Appendix One: Method

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This evaluation involved five main stages:

- a review of background data;
- online surveys;
- telephone interviews;
- discussion groups; and
- reporting.

Our detailed approach is set out below.

### Review of background data

We reviewed a range of contextual information and background data to inform this evaluation. This included:

- **sportscotland** plans, reports and strategies;
- performance data for 2016/17; and
- impacts and interventions information for Community Sport Hub officers and Regional Development Managers.

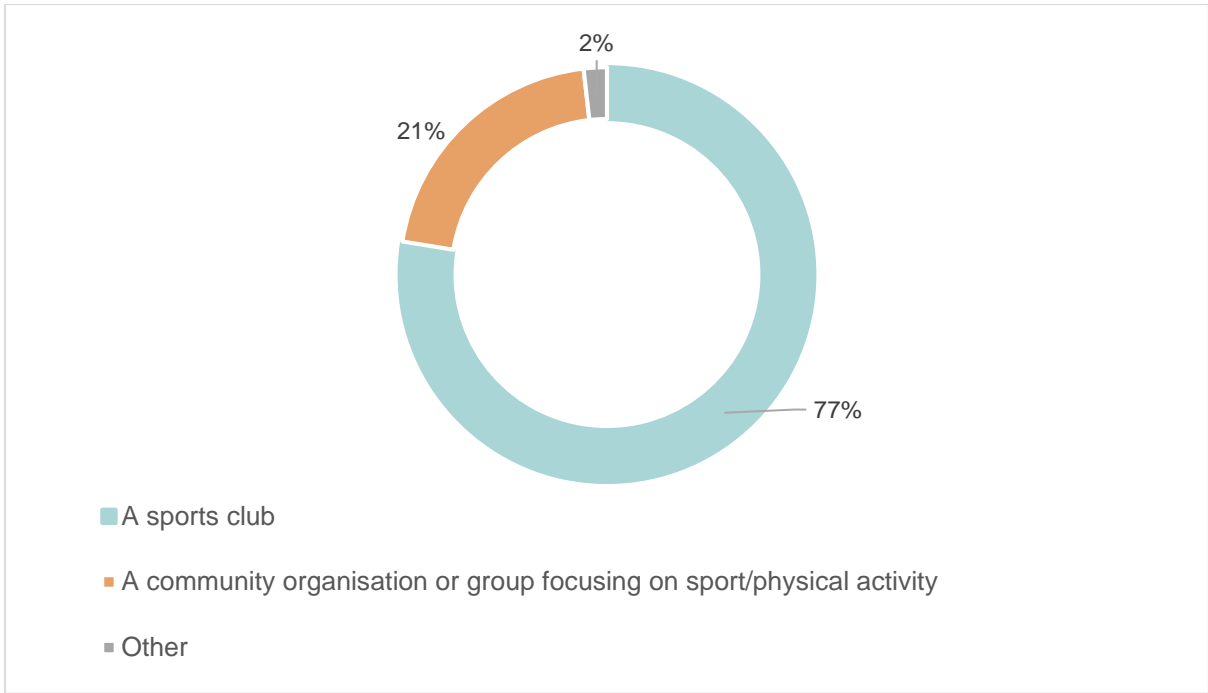
### Online surveys

We gathered the views of a range of key stakeholders through two online surveys.

#### Club and community leaders

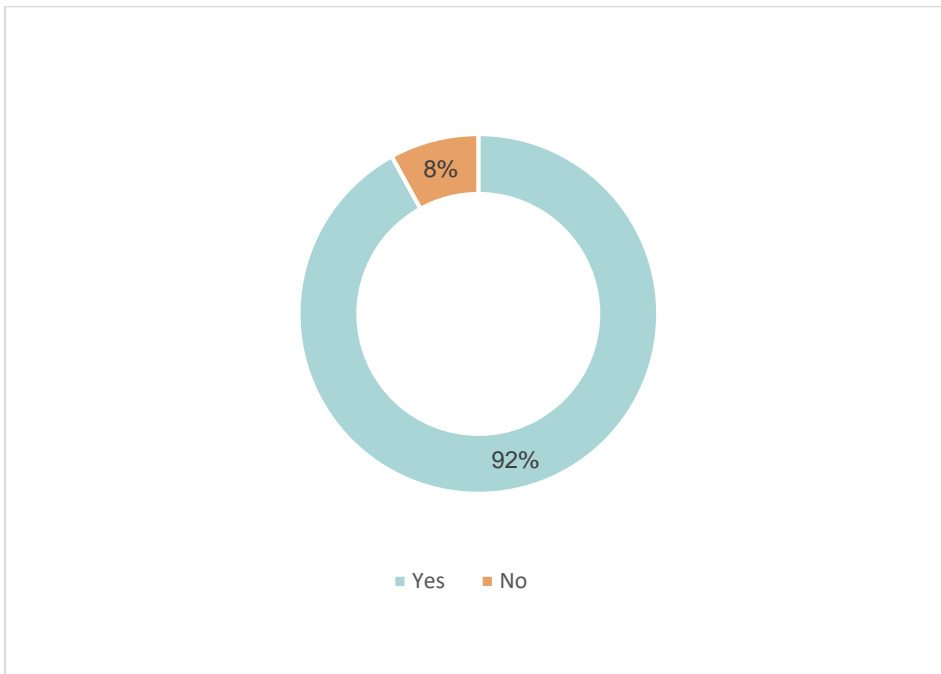
We issued a survey for club and community leaders. This was issued through **sportscotland** supported staff working with club and community organisations, including Community Sport Hub officers, Direct Club Investment officers and Regional Development Managers. There were 433 responses to the survey. Responses were received from clubs based in every local authority area in Scotland, although there were variations in the number of responses received. Responses were received from club chairs, secretaries, board members and staff members.

Most respondents (77%) were sports clubs, a fifth (21%) were community organisation or groups focusing on sport or physical activity, and a small proportion (2%) were 'other' groups.

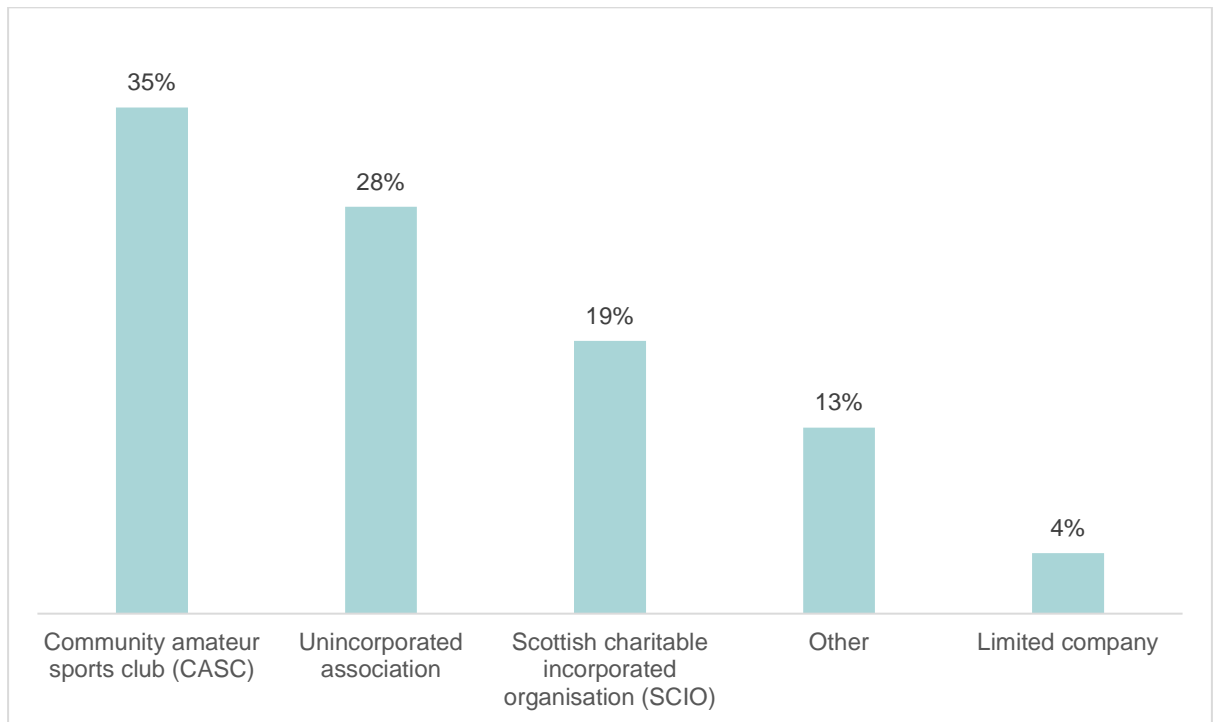


These included after school groups, environmental charities and community organisations with wider aims including sports and physical activity.

Most respondents (92%) indicated that their club or group was registered with the governing body for their sport.



Clubs included community amateur sports clubs (35%), unincorporated associations (28%), Scottish charitable incorporated organisations (19%) and others.



Respondents were involved in a wide range of sports and activities. Football, rugby and tennis were most commonly mentioned, followed by hockey, athletics, badminton, swimming, triathlon, netball, cricket, judo, golf and orienteering. An indication of the range of sports mentioned is provided below, with those mentioned most often in larger font size.



## Strategic stakeholders

We distributed an online survey to strategic stakeholders, identified by **sportscotland**. This included local authority sports development lead and SGBs. This survey explored both views on **sportscotland** supported work with clubs and communities, and work in schools and education (to inform the schools evaluation, happening at the same time). We received 38 responses to this survey, of which 17 were from SGBs.

## Discussion groups

We held discussion groups with a range of stakeholders:

- **sportscotland leads** – We held three discussion groups with **sportscotland** staff, to gain internal perspectives on **sportscotland**'s activities both in schools and education, and clubs and communities. These discussions largely focused on the clubs and communities portfolio, but also explored the connections between schools and clubs to some extent. **sportscotland** identified a mix of staff with varied experiences to participate in three separate discussion groups which brought together key staff involved in local authority partnership working, working with Scottish Governing Bodies and on facilities. The discussion groups involved 21 staff overall.
- **Regional events** – We attended three regional events in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh. **sportscotland** invited a mix of different funded postholders to participate in a short discussion groups with one of our researchers during the lunch break at each event. The discussions included a range of postholders funded through the portfolio's main programmes, including Regional Development Posts from Scottish Governing Bodies, and Community Sport Hub Officers. A total of 19 individuals participated in these discussion groups.

## Interviews

We held 30 follow up telephone interviews with clubs that completed the online survey. These clubs were selected using a matrix which took account of geography, size, sporting focus, length of establishment and type of **sportscotland** support received. These interviews were used to probe the issues emerging from the survey in more depth.

We held two interviews with local authority sport development leads. These interviews were used to follow up on the strategic stakeholder survey, gathering in depth strategic views from those involved in club and community environments within local authorities. These interviewees were selected in discussion with **sportscotland**.



## Case studies

We developed eight case studies on clubs, hubs or projects which had received **sportscotland** support through the clubs and communities portfolio. These case studies were selected to profile different types of support, and to provide a spread in terms of geography, club size, sport and intended outcomes. Each case study involved two to four interviews with a range of relevant stakeholders, including club leaders, Community Sport Hub officers, Active School Coordinators, Regional Development Managers and DCI funded posts.

In two case studies, we held a focus group with club members. One of these groups also involved club coaches. One group was with young people, and one with adults. The case studies are provided at Appendix Two. Examples and learning from the case studies are also included throughout the report.

## Reporting

We analysed all information gathered during the fieldwork stage using robust and consistent methods.

For online surveys, a quantitative analysis of closed responses was undertaken using SNAP software and Excel. This enabled comparison of responses between respondent groups. Any similarities, trends or divergences were identified and reported. A rich, qualitative analysis was undertaken using manual thematic coding. Although we have access to powerful qualitative analysis software, we find that the best way to identify themes, issues and views is through reading each open response carefully, manually coding responses into key themes emerging, and reporting on these themes and the different views within this. We also used analysis software to search for key themes within the survey, to help us to select participants in follow up interviews or discussion groups.

For discussion groups and interviews, we used a qualitative approach to analysis – again using manual thematic coding as described above.

Within the report, we used a broad qualitative scale to describe the proportion of people who commented on particular themes and topics:

- one/ an individual – a point raised by just one person;
- a few – just two or three people;
- some – less than half of respondents in that category; and
- most – more than half of respondents in that category.

When summarising survey findings within bulleted lists, the points are listed broadly in order of frequency mentioned.

## Club member survey

At the same time as conducting this evaluation, Research Resource and Research Scotland also conducted research exploring **sportscotland's** contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments. This included a survey of club members in clubs supported by sportscotland, which received 3,000 responses. Key findings from the survey have been highlighted within this report, to strengthen the discussion. A full breakdown of the results and methodology is available in the [ASOF report](#).

## Appendix Two: Case Studies

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1. [North Ayrshire Swimming Club](#)
2. [Biggar Rugby Club](#)
3. [Ullapool Community Sport Hub](#)
4. [City of Edinburgh Volleyball Club](#)
5. [Avon Netball Club](#)
6. [Dundee Dragons Wheelchair Sports Club](#)
7. [Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association](#)
8. [Haddington Table Tennis Club](#)

# North Ayrshire Swimming Club

## Themes explored

This case study explores the themes of:

- increasing junior membership; and
- improving club culture.

## Introduction

This case study focuses on North Ayrshire Swimming Club's Direct Club Investment project. It was developed following discussions with the DCI officer, DCI coach, SGB regional post and Community Sport Hub Officer.

Through **sportscotland**, the club has received Direct Club Investment, support from a SGB regional post, and is part of KA Leisure Community Sports Hub.

## DCI at North Ayrshire Swimming Club

The aim of DCI funding for North Ayrshire Swimming Club was to increase participation of new swimmers and to increase overall club membership, over a period of four years. The club received £27,000 in total, which was distributed from 2014 to 2017. There was no funding in 2018 to allow the club to demonstrate sustainability. Prior to DCI funding, the club had a stronger focus on performance swimmers than entry level swimmers.

The DCI funding was used to fund the roles of a part-time DCI officer and a part-time DCI coach. The DCI officer was responsible for increasing club membership, and the DCI coach delivered swimming sessions to the new participants.

The DCI officer and DCI coach took the following actions to achieve the project aims:

- running spring and summer holiday sessions, at special introductory rates;
- setting up and running a swimming club in Arran;
- incorporating the synchronised swimming club into the main club;
- increasing awareness of the club through social media;
- increasing awareness of the club through local authority information packs;
- developing a strong partnership with KA Leisure; and
- targeting public swimming sessions to recruit talented swimmers.

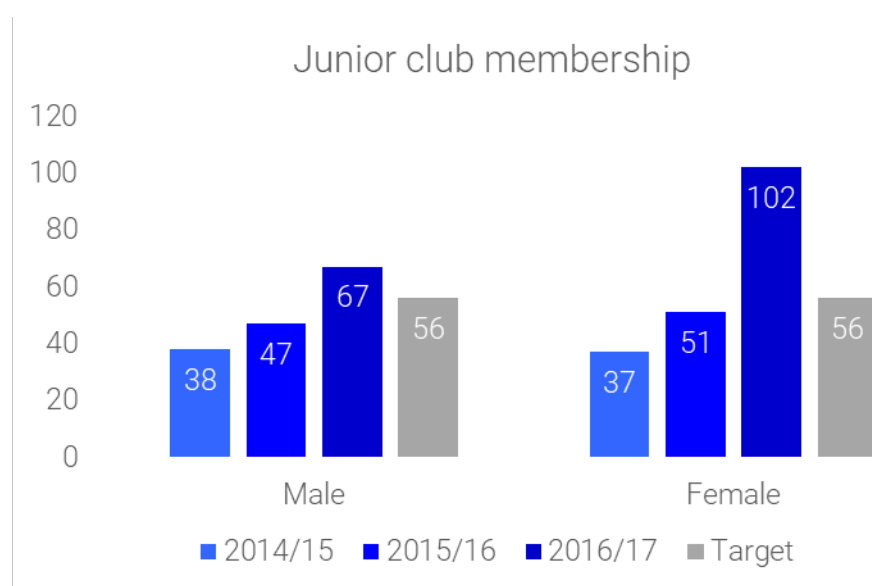
## Impact

### Increased membership

In the first three years of the project, the club has successfully increased junior membership from 75 to 169. Targets for both male and female junior participation have been exceeded, with a particularly significant growth in female membership.

“The growth has been more than I thought it was going to be.”

DCI officer



### Club culture

The focus on increasing membership at entry level has resulted in a shift in club culture. The DCI coach and DCI officer felt that the club has become more open and welcoming, understanding the importance of the pathway leading up to performance level sport. The DCI funding has also allowed the club to dedicate time to manage and monitor membership at different levels.

“Before people thought you had to be a really good swimmer to join the club, but now we’re saying, come and try it.”

DCI coach

“It’s certainly given a small club an opportunity to push forward and expand, and do something for the community and get kids active and swimming.”

DCI coach

### Club management

Having clear priorities and targets has also helped improve club management and organisation. The club now has a clear structure that encourages new membership

and facilitates progression. The DCI officer feels that there are now defined roles within the committee and that the club has a clear direction for progress.

“The biggest thing is that everybody is going in the same direction and all our roles are more clearly defined. Everybody understands what they’re supposed to be doing and when they’re supposed to be doing it.”

DCI officer

“I now have a wider view. I think more about what effect something would have on the club, and take a lot of careful consideration before making decisions.”

DCI officer

### **Club recognition**

The club has been recognised for its achievements, and in 2017 was nominated for Scottish Swimming Club of the Year. Scottish Swimming also recognised that the club had the highest membership growth of any Scottish Swimming Club. This level of recognition from the governing body has boosted the club’s profile significantly.

“For what we’ve achieved in a short space of time, we’ve done really, really well.”

DCI coach

## **What worked well**

### **Partnership with KA Leisure**

The DCI officer developed a strong relationship with the KA Leisure Facilities Manager to ensure good access to pools. The partnership involved an agreement to increase pool space in line with membership growth. This allowed the club to focus on recruiting new club members, without concern for restricted access to facilities.

The DCI coach employed by the club also works for KA Leisure, delivering the ‘Learn to Swim’ and ‘Club ready’ swimming programmes. This link between the club and KA Leisure has helped facilitate strong partnership work and encouraged young people to continue swimming through the club.

“It’s very rare for a club and the local authority to have that kind of relationship.”

SGB regional post

### **Benefitting from a range of support**

The DCI Officer felt positive about the level of support offered by **sportscotland**, the SGB regional post and the Community Sports Hub.

“I’ve found the hub very informative. I’ve found it useful to be part of the hub with so many different clubs.”

DCI officer

“There’s certainly been a good network of support.”

DCI coach

The DCI officer also noted that although it was not always ideal to have to seek support from different people, having a range of support from different sources was valuable and helped the club develop successfully.

“At the time you think, I’ve got to go here for this, and there for that...but looking at it now, it was very beneficial because everybody has a different way of looking at things and expertise in different areas. In their own individual ways, they’re all beneficial.”

DCI officer

“Putting it all together, it’s invaluable, the knowledge and experience. Without all of them, we wouldn’t have the success we’ve had.”

DCI officer

“The support and information has been very, very good. You have to seek it out, but it’s there.”

DCI officer

### **Focus on entry level membership**

Having an entry level programme in place has helped complete the swimming pathway in the area, bridging the gap between the local authority ‘Learn to Swim’ programme and performance swimming.

The cost of entry level swimming sessions at the club is set at a slightly cheaper rate than the ‘Learn to Swim’ programme, aiming to offer good value for money for those wishing to continue swimming.

To encourage participation from all people in the community, the club offers a free trial period and reduced membership fees for those who would not otherwise be able to participate.

### **Creating a welcoming environment**

The DCI coach has tried to ensure that entry level swimming sessions are fun and engaging. The environment aims to be welcoming, and sessions have been designed to provide competitive and non-competitive options. The DCI coach has also taken time to engage with parents and guardians, to address any queries and

ensure that they understand what the club can offer. This has helped maintain attendance and retain membership.

“I’ve tried to create an environment where kids are happy to come along. They’re coming because they want to come, because they find it enjoyable.”

DCI coach

The DCI officer and coach also noted that there has been an improvement in attendance and morale at swim meets.

“There is more camaraderie and team spirit.”

DCI coach

### **Support from the SGB regional post**

The club has worked closely with a sportscotland funded SGB regional post from Scottish Swimming from the outset. The DCI officer found that the SGB regional post was usually the first port of call, and was always able to guide and signpost the club to the right information.

The SGB regional post helped the club with its DCI application, and to achieve Swim Mark and Swim Mark 2 club accreditation through the Scottish Swimming. This process included training on governance and club management, and relevant qualifications in safeguarding and child protection. The SGB regional post also supported some committee members to complete team managers courses at level one and two.

“The SGB regional post has been fantastic from start to finish. He was very good at educating us on how swimming works.”

DCI officer

## **Challenges**

### **Arran swimming club**

The DCI officer set up a new swimming club on Arran, which ran as part of North Ayrshire Swimming Club for over a year. The distance and difficulty travelling to and from the island, made it challenging to manage the club remotely, so the DCI officer was not able to continue working on Arran. However, the club was so successful that it is still running, under local management.



### **Rapid pace of growth**

One of the challenges for the DCI coach has been managing the high level of interest and fast pace of growth, particularly after spring and summer holiday programmes. Participation at some sessions has increased from 8-10 participants to 20-30.

“At some points it becomes very big, very quickly, especially after the summer programme.”

DCI coach

A waiting list has been considered, however the coach felt that this might deter some people from returning. Instead, the growth has been managed by using additional pool space, and making use of two new swimming pools in the locality.

### **Club volunteers**

The club has struggled to gain and retain volunteers. However, support from the SGB regional post has helped the club think about new target groups for volunteer recruitment, such as college and university students. In addition, the DCI coach completed a Poolside Helper Educator training course and is now training six parents to become poolside helpers.

### **Staff changes**

During the period of DCI funding, there was an unexpected change in staff when the head coach resigned. The SGB regional post provided support to help the club decide how best to recruit a new head coach and make better use of its finances. Following support and advice from the SGB regional post, the club determined that it had sufficient funds to hire a full-time coach, rather than a part time coach. This helped attract a high calibre of coach and a good number of applications, some coming from international applicants.

### **What's next?**

The club has been very successful in its DCI project and is now looking to the future. A range of ideas for future club development have been put forward. These include developing the synchronised swimming team, recruiting and developing volunteer coaches, introducing water polo and working with young people with additional support needs. As the club moves into the final year of the DCI project, these plans will be further discussed and developed.

“We've pretty much achieved what we wanted to with DCI and now we'll be reflecting and thinking about what we're going to do next.”

DCI officer

## Themes explored

This case study explores the themes of:

- facility development; and
- increased opportunities for talent development

## Introduction

This case study focuses on the development of Biggar Rugby Club. It was developed following discussions with the Development Programme Manager, Youth Academy Manager (DCI funded post) and the Community Sport Hub Officer.

Through **sportscotland**, the club has received support from Direct Club Investment and the Sports Facilities Fund. It is also a member of a Community Sports Hub.

## DCI at Biggar Rugby Club

The club received DCI funding of £37,000 from 2014 to 2018. The aim of the DCI project was to nurture talent and develop athletes through a Youth Academy. The funding has been used to employ a full-time Academy Manager, a range of part-time specialist skills coaches and specialist training resources.

Previously, from 2009 to 2011, the club had run a high performance talent academy, but was unable to develop it without further funding.

**“We would never have been able to re-energise it, had it not been for the sportscotland funding.”**

**Programme Development Manager**

The Performance Academy was set up to improve talent and support promising athletes aged 14 to 20. Since it was set up in 2014, the number of young people at the Academy has increased from 16 to 46 athletes, meeting and exceeding the target to reach 45 young people by the fourth year of delivery.

The Academy supports young people that have shown the skills and aptitude required to progress to performance level sport. Young people joining the Academy are usually approaching the level where they might be selected to play regionally.

The athletes spend at least 18 hours per week on individual and group training. The Academy provides physical and mental training through a range of specialist coaches including a conditioning coach, a mental skills trainer and a nutritionist. The Academy has also purchased specialist equipment including: speed gates, heart rate monitors, video cameras and performance analysis software.

Athletes at the Academy are required to spend time on a range of training tasks including:

- squad training;
- group training;
- individual training;
- matches;
- conditioning sessions;
- analysis and reflection; and
- goal setting and reviews.

The Academy has a strong focus on developing mental skills, such as resilience and positive attitudes towards learning from mistakes. Athletes are encouraged and supported to develop a growth mindset. All matches are filmed, and athletes are encouraged to watch the footage to analyse, self-evaluate and improve their performance.

## Facilities development

When the club was founded, in 1975, it owned no facilities and members played on a local equestrian show field. Over the years, the club has purchased the surrounding land, converting some of into playing surfaces and building a clubhouse.

In 2015, Sports Facilities Funding of £350,000 from **sportscotland** was used to part-fund the second phase of the club's facility development programme. This involved converting unused land into two rugby pitches and a football pitch. The development was successfully completed in 2017.

Prior to the development, the club was unable to use this land over winter, as most of the ground was unusable after heavy rain. Instead the club sourced alternative, indoor facilities in which to train, which at one point included riding stables.

The new pitches are fully lit and sand based, providing better drainage and less risk of freezing. One of the new pitches also has been marked with a track around the edge, for athletics.

## Community Sports Hub

Through the Community Sports Hub (CSH), the club has been supported to achieve Bronze Club SL accreditation – an accreditation programme run by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture. The CSH has also provided training and accreditation in First Aid and Child Protection and Safeguarding to around 20 members of the club.

The hub has played an important role in facilitating partnerships between the Rugby club and other hub members. Through the hub networking opportunities, the club has developed partnerships with two sports clubs and local schools.

“A lot of sharing goes on within the Community Sport Hub community, they all collaborate with one another.”

CSH Officer

## Partnership work

Through networking at the CSH, the club has developed a good partnership with Law and District Athletics Club and Biggar United Football Club – sharing facilities and providing space to store equipment. Between 60 and 70 young people use the new track at the club for athletics training. And the football club uses the new football pitch for training and home games.

Instead of leasing the land to partners, the club asked athletics and football club members to become associate members of the Rugby club. This gives them access to the facilities and the social entitlements of a club member.

Having Club SL accreditation has allowed the club to offer rugby taster sessions at the local primary school. The club grounds are also used by the local high school, which has no grass pitches of its own.

“We provide the grounds, changing facilities and social area on every occasion that the high school requires.”

Programme Development Manager

## Impact of the Youth Academy

The Academy has helped nurture many young players into performance sport. The club is now playing in the top national youth league in Scotland, and is one of only three clubs with both boys and girls teams in the top national division – the National Presidents Conference. Prior to receiving DCI funding, the club had U15, U16 and U18 teams playing in the Edinburgh District League, with U13 and U14 teams playing friendly fixtures.

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The Programme Development Manager feels that players in the academy are also playing at a higher level than they would have without the academy.

“We wouldn’t have been able to get to this level without all of the support.”

Programme Development Manager

One of the athletes from the Academy is now an international, professional rugby player. Twenty-seven athletes have progressed to playing regionally and seven have started attending the BT Sport Scottish Rugby Academy. The BT Sport Scottish Rugby Academy delivers training for more advanced players and provides a connection between clubs and professional rugby. Players within the Youth Academy are normally at stage one of the sport, players attending the BT Sport Scottish Rugby Academy have reached stage two.

One female athlete from the Youth Academy recently won a rugby scholarship to a prestigious American university. Two athletes from the club have been awarded the John McPhail Rugby Scholarship, which will provide them with a five-month training experience in South Africa.

Seeing the achievements of the Academy has increased motivation amongst younger club members.

“I do not believe that we would have achieved anywhere near the number of representative players without the specialised academy. The level of expertise and the time spent with individuals just would not have been available.”

Programme Development Manager

## Impact of facilities development

Since the new facilities were completed in 2017, there have been fewer cancellations and the playing season has been less interrupted than previous years. In the first winter since the pitch development there has only been one weekend when the club was unable to play outdoors.

The high quality pitches allow for a better quality of training for players and coaches, and contribute to physical infrastructure of the club.

“We’d owned that land for 30 years previously but hadn’t been able to do anything because we didn’t have the funding. Now we have well developed grounds, which, if well maintained, will be there forever.”

Programme Development Manager

## Wider impact

The new facilities and Youth Academy have helped to raise the profile of the club and increase club membership. Some members have moved from other clubs to be part of the Youth Academy and to use the high quality facilities at Biggar Rugby Club. In turn, the increased membership has led to an increase in parent volunteers. The club has become more involved in the community, generally, by having a presence at local festivals and galas.

“More people are involved in a different capacity, like helping out with events, and this has helped developed the community ethos in the club.”

CSH Officer

The wider business community has become aware of the investment in the club and the achievements of its members, leading to increased interest in sponsorship opportunities.

“There’s a perception in the business community that rugby is done well in Biggar and has been well invested in.”

Programme Development Manager

## What worked well

Having access to local training opportunities through the Community Sports Hub was beneficial, as Biggar is a small rural community and club members are not always able to access training outwith the town.

The club also appreciated the support it had received from **sportscotland**, prior to submitting an application for DCI. The **sportscotland** workshops on DCI provided a useful networking opportunity, and a chance to hear how other clubs had managed difficult issues.

“The resources within **sportscotland** helped us to look at what was required and what were models of best practice i.e. other clubs that had been DCI funded.”

Programme Development Manager

The focus on growth mindset and reflection with athletes has worked well. The approach was a new idea for many coaches, and it has been challenging to get all coaches on board. However, this approach has helped demonstrate that the Academy is about increased learning opportunities for athletes, as well as improving performance and winning games.

Club members that also train with the BT Sport Academy have benefited from the new facilities at Biggar, as some of their training can be done at the club. This reduces the amount of time that they spend travelling away from home.

## Challenges

### Recruiting staff

Initially, it was difficult to find the right person to run the Youth Academy at the club. Three people have taken on the role, and the club feels that the current Youth Academy leader is a good fit for the position.

### Monitoring and evaluation

At times, the club has felt that the monitoring and evaluation requirements from **sportscotland** were hard to manage, and that the proforma spreadsheet was difficult to use.

### Age appropriate training

For a lot of the training sessions, players are grouped by their field position, rather than age. This has led to challenges delivering mental training to young people of different ages, and the club has struggled to find specific guidance on how to manage this.

[“What works for a 20-year-old in terms of mental training, isn’t right for a 14-year-old.”](#)

[Programme Development Manager](#)

### Maintaining engagement with young members

Within the youth academy, there have been challenges around engaging young people in individual training requirements. Some of the very young members are still predominantly playing for enjoyment, and are not thinking seriously about developing a career in rugby. Supporting these young people to take responsibility for individual training has been a challenge.

Some young people that have been supported by the club or the CSH will inevitably leave Biggar, to pursue further and higher education opportunities. For the CSH Officer, there are challenges around how to sustainably invest in local clubs and people, when many will leave the area and not return.

### What’s next?

The immediate priority for the club is to establish a plan for sustainability after DCI funding is complete, to keep the programme going. The club is hoping to adopt

approaches taken by similar clubs, which have received funding through corporate sponsorship.





# Ullapool Community Sports Hub

## Themes explored

This case study explores the themes of:

- partnership working; and
- providing opportunities in a rural area.

## About the hub

This case study focuses on Ullapool Community Sports Hub (CSH), which was set up in 2015. Initially, there was a high level of interest from a range of local community clubs, groups and non-sporting groups. Sports/physical activity groups represented in the hub include: martial arts, sailing, golf, swimming, dance, football, mountain biking, climbing and skateboarding. Highlife Highland, Active Schools and the local secondary school are also members of the hub.

The hub is managed by a CSH officer. Since inception in 2015, the hub has had two CSH officers, the most recent being appointed in July 2017. This CSH officer is now working on engaging with hub members, expanding the hub to include more health and wellbeing groups, and developing connections with the wider community through groups for older people and early years groups.

This case study was developed following discussions with the CSH officer and three hub members.

## Support through the hub

Hub members meet at regular hub meetings, organised at least once per quarter by the CSH officer. These meetings provide a forum for members to meet and discuss their needs, and for the CSH officer to assess how best to meet them.

The aim of the hub is to increase participation in sport and physical activity in the community and create opportunities for people to progress. The CSH officer has found that the best way to make use of resources and engage the most people has been to provide generic training that applies to lots of clubs.

[“We tend to run local, on the ground opportunities, that will benefit the widest range of people.”](#)

CSH Officer

The CSH officer has delivered a range of in house workshops at hub meetings. Topics included:

- funding;
- social media and digital media;
- web presence and profile;
- equality and inclusion; and
- club promotion and profile raising.

The hub has also signposted and funded externally delivered courses, including:

- First Aid;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- Coach Connect;
- Climbing Wall Award; and
- Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) training.

## Successes

### Bringing people together

Some hub members are involved in multiple community clubs and groups and were already working in partnership before the Hub was initiated. The hub meetings have helped facilitate more discussion and information sharing and members have realised that there are many common issues, which could be tackled jointly.

["It's provided a chance to get to know each other, and to get to know that we have a lot of common issues."](#)

Hub member

One of the key issues in the area was that clubs and groups were running concurrently. With such a small population, timetable clashes significantly reduce the already small numbers of potential participants. Bringing people together through hub meeting has helped prevent further overlapping.

Through the hub, the head teacher of the local secondary school has offered use of the school's new artificial grass pitch to hub members and the wider community, to encourage more informal non-competitive sport. It is hoped that this will provide further opportunities for target groups, such as inactive children, to take part in physical activity more regularly.

Using hub resources, the CSH officer helped to set up a temporary skate park in the town over the summer holidays, which was well received by young people in the community. This skate park made use of unused equipment and made people in the community aware that these resources were available.

## Training opportunities

Generic training opportunities, such as First Aid and Safeguarding and Child Protection have been well received. These training courses are relevant to a wider range of clubs and groups, and were well attended.

“The generic things are helpful because they help to get people together.”

Hub member

The hub also funded a Climbing Wall Award qualification for seven members of the Rock Climbing and Mountaineering club. The Climbing Wall Award trains and assesses candidates in the skills required to supervise climbers. This has helped the Rock Climbing and Mountaineering club to run an additional club night each week and increase participation in competitions, as there are more trained climbers that can supervise participants.

Locally, a lack of qualified minibus drivers was raised as a significant issue that was limiting opportunities for the community to participate in sport and physical activity both at home and away, especially those with mobility issues and disabilities. The CSH officer addressed this issue by arranging training as soon as possible and has also arranged further training for members requiring MiDAS Module Two: Accessible Certificate (minibuses with tail lifts/wheelchair users). The CSH officer felt that addressing the issue and providing a quick turnaround helped encourage continued engagement with the hub and helped to overcome a significant barrier to participation in sport and physical activity within the Ullapool community.

## Challenges

### Rurality

Ullapool is a fishing town around 50 miles north west of Inverness, and endures the inevitable challenges of a small, rural town. There are limited people who are willing and available to take on volunteering roles in coaching or committees. It can also be difficult to reach the minimum numbers required to run courses. Although opportunities can be accessed in Inverness, accessing these opportunities can be difficult due to long travel distances and limited transport facilities. On one occasion, a training session that had been funded and organised by the hub was cancelled due to poor uptake.

The CSH officer works between five hubs in the region, and is not always able to be present in the local community. Sometimes this has led to a sense of disconnect between the hub and the hub members. The CSH officer is working to engage more proactively with the local community, by meeting people whenever possible, and making her face known.

## Understanding the role of a CSH

There have also been some challenges in engagement with local groups, due to perceptions of what a CSH is, and what benefits it will bring.

“I think the sports clubs here didn’t really understand what they could have been taking up.”

Hub member

One hub member noted that use of the term ‘sport’ in the name might exclude community groups that do not define their activity as sport.

## Accessibility of the hub and hub meetings

Hub members mentioned that there have been some challenges in engaging local groups. Some members have been unable to attend hub meetings because they were scheduled after 5pm, when many clubs and groups deliver their activities. A few hub members also noted that they would like more regular opportunities to meet.

Since the initial hub meeting in 2015, the number of members attending hub meetings has dropped significantly, with only two or three members in attendance sometimes. The CSH officer has worked to improve engagement with hub members and the wider community by attending local meetings and events, and providing regular updates on hub activities.

## What’s next?

The CSH officer is developing a local events calendar to raise awareness of what is available in the local area. Hub members have said that going forward they would also like to have an updated development plan in place, to give the hub a clear focus for 2018/2019. The hub is due to publish an updated Development Framework Plan in January 2018.

The CSH officer is working closely with the CSH officers in other regions to facilitate inter-hub partnerships. She is also hoping to run a workshop with a representative from **sportscotland** to talk to hub members about funding and support opportunities, from a **sportscotland** perspective.

“This is where the **sportscotland** funded post really comes into its own.”

CSH officer

“Our partnership with **sportscotland** means that we can utilise resources that would otherwise be unavailable or less accessible to our hub members and allows us to keep the focus on the local needs within each hub community.”

CSH officer

The CSH Officer is currently working with the Ullapool Youth Development Team and High Life Highland Facilities to help organise and participate in the upcoming Health & Wellbeing Day in March 2018. The Community Sport Hub will have a stall, host a workshop session and have Community Sport Hub Brochures available, which will be handed out on the day as part of a ‘goody bag’ to everyone who attends the event.

# City of Edinburgh Volleyball Club

## Themes explored

This case study explores the themes of:

- increasing junior membership;
- developing a sports pathway; and
- raising club profile.

## Introduction

This case study focuses on City of Edinburgh Volleyball Club's Direct Club Investment project. It was developed following discussions with the club lead, Active Schools Coordinator, SGB regional post, two club coaches and eight club members.

Through **sportscotland**, the club has received Direct Club Investment and support from a **sportscotland** funded regional post.

## DCI at City of Edinburgh Volleyball Club

City of Edinburgh Volleyball Club received £34,000 to deliver a DCI project from 2015 to 2019. The aim of the project was to increase participation, increase club membership and develop the sporting pathway for volleyball in the area. More widely, the club also hoped to provide training, qualifications and employment that would help develop the young workforce.

The club has used the DCI funding to fund six part-time coach positions for young people aged 16 to 20. The coaches were trained to UKCC level 1 and 2 and received training in child protection and safeguarding, first aid and officiating as part of the Active Schools 'Fit to Coach' programme.

The club used the additional coaches to run volleyball sessions for school pupils and junior club members.

**"One of the biggest factors in growing the club is the number of coaches available when you need them."**

**Club lead**

The club chose to recruit young people, some of whom were still attending school, to work as part-time coaches for the club. Most of the DCI coaches have been young

people aged 16 to 20. Since 2015, ten young people have been employed as DCI coaches, with some having to leave the role when they moved away for university.

The coaches deliver club sessions every Friday after school, on school premises, as well as partnering with Active Schools Queensferry to deliver five weekly sessions in three of the cluster primary schools for P1-3 and P4-P7. Using school facilities keeps the cost of lets to a minimum, and makes the session easily accessible for pupils and parents.

In addition, the club runs a summer camp for three days during the summer holidays. The camp delivers an intensive training programme to young people, equivalent to around 12 weeks of regular training sessions. It also provides an opportunity for DCI coaches to develop their coaching and mentoring skills in a different environment.

## Club-school links

The club has worked in close partnership with schools, through the Active Schools Coordinator.

The club's development of coaches has also provided the Active Schools Coordinator with access to more trained coaches to deliver Active Schools volleyball sessions. The Active Schools Coordinator employed the DCI coaches through Active Schools, to deliver after school volleyball sessions when the club sessions were not running. These sessions include early years 'baby volleyball', after school sessions for primary and secondary pupils and holiday camps.

"It's strengthened partnerships because it gave us a focal point. Everyone feels a sense of responsibility to make it successful. It was a focus for everybody's energy."  
Club lead

By delivering Active Schools and club sessions using the same coaches, young people were easily signposted to further opportunities, and made seamless transitions from school sport to club sport. Young people have been recruited to the club through the Active Schools pathway, through word-of-mouth and after attending the holiday camps.

"I really enjoyed the Active Schools taster session, and wanted to play at the club."  
Club member (Primary school)

"The school and club are well blended."  
Active Schools Coordinator

## Support from the SGB regional post

Support from a SGB regional post from the Scottish Volleyball Association helped the club from the outset. The club received support to submit a successful bid for DCI and provide coach education opportunities through the Scottish Volleyball Association.

From the outset, the SGB regional post felt that the club was in a good position to focus on development. It had similar aims to the governing body around increasing membership, raising the profile of the sport and increasing sustainability of local clubs.

“What I’m trying to achieve in the region, they’re trying to do locally.”

SGB regional post

The SGB regional post also helped the club to envision the DCI project. During the first year of DCI funding, City of Edinburgh Volleyball Club was a priority club, and the SGB regional post was able to be physically present at club sessions to help mentor the new coaches. This was valuable for the club, and allowed the SGB regional post to see club development in action.

“It was crucial to have the RDO [SGB regional post] support at the right time.”

Club lead

“The club has been really receptive of support from the governing body and I’ve been really inspired by their progress.”

SGB regional post

## Impact on the club

### Increased club activity and membership

Since receiving DCI funding, club membership has almost tripled, from 54 to 150 members. The additional coaches funded through DCI have allowed the club to provide enough sessions to meet demand.

“Without the funding it wouldn’t be possible. Now we can hire coaches and build a programme, knowing that we have coaches available.”

Club lead

The club has met its targets to increase participation of junior members. This is already having a positive impact on the number of players now competing for the



club. The club has maintained its boys team and has growing from having one girls team at U16 Scottish Volleyball league three girls teams, by year three of the funding.

Young people felt that the club was active and thriving, and provided them with lots of opportunities to participate and develop.

“There is always something going on. There are holiday camps and tournaments at the end of every term.”

Club member (Secondary school)

Through the increased junior membership, the club has also been able to recruit parents as volunteer members. These volunteers have been fundraising, attending match days, helping with catering and filling committee positions. The growth in membership has also resulted in increased revenue for the club.

### **Fully developed pathway**

By employing additional coaches and working with Active Schools to run more sessions, the club has successfully developed a full and robust pathway from early years through to performance level. Early years and primary school activities are largely delivered by Active Schools, in partnership with the club. The club runs weekly training for pupils from P4 to S4, based in schools. For those wishing to pursue the sport further, the club offers further training and competition opportunities for pupils from S2 to S6.

Having a good number of trained and qualified coaches has provided the club with a more sustainable workforce for future development.

‘I’m now using them as a model for club development.’

SGB regional post

### **Increased club profile**

The club has been documented in local media for its achievements working in schools and for its performance in competitions. This has helped to raise the clubs profile in the local community and in the volleyball community.

The SGB regional post encouraged the club to get involved with award programmes, and the club was awarded the Active Schools Edinburgh Most Engaged Club 2016 and Local Club of the Year in 2016 at the **sportscotland** Scottish Sport Awards. In the same year, the club lead was awarded an Edinburgh Local Hero Award for his contribution to local sport.

Having a high profile in the community and significant investment from sportscotland also allowed the club to leverage good access to facilities.

### **Achievement at performance level**

The club has a number of players achieving at national and international level. It has developed a good reputation in the volleyball community and coaches felt that the club supported them to play at a high level.

Two club members, that came to the club through the school-club pathway, were chosen to play for Scotland at the Commonwealth Youth Games in Bahamas, in July 2017. The team played through to the semi-finals and narrowly missed a medal position.

Fourteen young people from the club also played for the Scotland East team at the UK School Games. The boys team won a gold medal and girls team won a bronze medal, with the girls achieving a medal position for the first time.

“The club has a lot to be proud of.”

Active Schools Coordinator

## **Impact on young people**

### **Employment, leadership and training**

The DCI funding has supported ten young people to become qualified, employed coaches for the club. Young people that were recruited as DCI coaches were supported to achieve relevant coaching qualifications and coach education. Overall, DCI coaches felt they had been well supported, and that they had developed transferable skills that were benefiting them outside of the club.

“You learn a range of life skills. I am now much better at managing my time. This has helped with my studying.”

DCI coach

“It provides a real focus, but you have to work hard. It’s great for building your motivation and resilience.”

DCI coach

Because of their qualifications and experience, the DCI coaches are often asked to help coach other sports at school – giving them even more experience in a wider range of sports. As well as delivering Active Schools sessions, one of the DCI coaches is also employed to coach the volleyball Junior National League.

Throughout training sessions, club members are given opportunities to referee matches and lead as team captains. Young people said that they enjoyed these opportunities to take on leadership roles.

“It gives you a chance to take on new roles and get experience.”

Club member (Primary school)

“At the club, everyone is encouraged to give something back to the club, whether coaching or refereeing.”

DCI coach

### **Increased skills and confidence**

The club has provided the opportunity for club members to develop confidence, skills and relationships. Young people said that they enjoyed coming to the club as it helped them keep fit, improve their skills and improve their confidence. For a few young people, joining this club has given them the encouragement they needed to try new sports and even join other sports clubs.

“It has made me more confident to go to other clubs and try new sports.”

Club member (Primary school)

“It has helped me to get active and stay fit.”

Club member (Primary school)

Some young people said that playing with the club helped them feel more focused in day to day life, and had helped them do better at school.

“I am more switched on with my school work.”

Club member (Secondary school)

Young people developed a wide range of skills through regular training and events, including discipline, organisation and punctuality. The support from club coaches has helped some young people become more confident, and encouraged their continued participation in positive activities.

“Everyone gets the opportunity to coach, that’s a huge confidence builder.”

DCI coach

“One young person is now an ambassador for the sport. I just don’t think that she would be as confident and helpful a young person without volleyball. Volleyball has opened up so many doors for her.”

Active Schools Coordinator

“They do a really good job of empowering young people in the club.”

SGB regional post

“For kids from disrupted families, volleyball has kept them on the right path through the element of mentorship and teaching them some things that they’re just not getting at home.”

Active Schools Coordinator

## **Relationships**

Some young people said that they enjoyed the social aspects of playing with the club, such as building relationships, making new friends and being part of a team. They also enjoyed the opportunities it provided to meet new people and interact with people of different ages.

“It was a great way to meet new friends from different years in the school.”

Club member (Secondary school)

“I have become more sociable and am able to engage more with people.”

Club member (Secondary school)

“I like being part of a team and part of the club.”

Club member (Primary school)

“I have met new friends at the club that I wouldn’t otherwise have met. I also got to know the PE staff and the Active Schools Coordinator better.”

Club member (Secondary school)

“Everyone knows everyone at the club, it’s like a big family.”

DCI coach

## **What worked well**

### **Employing young people**

The coaches employed through DCI funding have all been young people - senior school pupils or college/university students. These coaches have proven to be popular with the younger players as they can relate to young people easily. The DCI coaches have also acted as role models for the younger club members, as they are only a few years older than the club members themselves, but are playing and competing in the sport at a high level. The good rapport between coaches and players has helped maintain good levels of membership and regular attendance at training sessions.

### **Accessibility of the club**

Being closely linked to Active Schools and having a strong presence in the community has made the club easily accessible. Young people also felt that it was easy to join as the club had a welcoming atmosphere, there were no initial trials, and anyone could join.

### **The blend of support**

The club lead felt that having a mix of support from the SGB regional post, Active Schools and DCI contributed to the success of the project and the extent of club development.

“One thing that has been clear in this project is that if you removed any one of these pieces, I don’t think the project would have worked. It really did need everybody.”

Club lead

### **Ringfenced funding**

For the club, having funds allocated specifically for coaches helped reduce the pressure of fundraising. It gave the club freedom to focus on development and to use any additional funds more flexibly. It has also allowed the club to offer competitive rates for membership and reduce the burden of cost on members.

“The funds that we do raise can be used elsewhere because DCI is earmarked for the coaches.”

Club lead

### **Challenges**

Initially the club spent some time deciding on a clear vision and streamlining the project before it was up and running. However, all partners agreed that the initial effort and continued hard work to maintain the club’s growth and development has been valuable.

“[Were there any challenges?] Honestly, not much. It is a joy to work with the club.”

Active Schools Coordinator

### **What’s next?**

The club will continue to deliver junior sessions through DCI funded coaches until 2019. The club has started to think about longer term sustainability and will be developing these plans in the coming years. As well as maintaining membership levels, the club would also like to focus on providing more competition opportunities for junior members.

“We are working very hard on the sustainability of this project and already the next question is what can all of the partners including **sportscotland** do when the project ends in 2019 to build further on the highly significant success we have all achieved together.”

Club lead



## Themes explored

This case study explores the themes of:

- improving access to facilities; and
- club development in a rural area.

## Introduction

This case study focuses on the development of Avon Netball Club. It was developed following discussions with the Head Coach of the club, the SGB regional post and the Sports Development Officer for South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture.

The club has received support from a **sportscotland** funded SGB regional post.

## Background

Avon Netball Club was established in 2013 by two sisters that had enjoyed local netball sessions and wished to further develop netball in their area. The club is run by a volunteer team, led by the two sisters who coach the teams.

The local area, Strathaven, is served by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, which delivers primary school netball and Bounce Back to Netball sessions. However, there was a gap in the pathway for young people and adults wishing to continue playing netball and compete in the sport.

## Support from the SGB regional post

### Club development

With support from the SGB regional post from Netball Scotland, the club has developed from a small local club into a thriving club with regional and national players. As the club has grown, the senior players (aged 16 and 17) have been encouraged to coach the juniors, providing them with an opportunity for training and employment.

“One thing they’re really good at is not just developing players, but developing coaches. They have started using older players to coach the juniors.”

Sports Development Officer

The SGB regional post has provided support through:

- training to improve club governance;
- negotiating access to facilities;
- signposting coaching and umpiring qualifications;
- signposting competition opportunities;
- signposting relevant funding opportunities; and
- providing a quarterly newsletter.

## Improving facilities access through partnership work

One of the main areas that the SGB regional post supported the club with was around access to facilities. The club had grown and was at full capacity, unable to take on more members without additional time in the hall. In order to continue developing, the club needed to increase its facility access from two hours to three hours.

*“The club has become a victim of its own success.”*

SGB regional post

Obtaining a continuous three-hour let at a local facility was important for the club, as many members would be unable to attend if training sessions were moved to another location.

The club had access to the hall for two hours each week, during which time it had to deliver sessions to three distinct groups of players. This was managed by running sessions concurrently, with coaches managing more than one squad at a time. The space in the hall was not large, and the coach felt that running two sessions simultaneously was not comfortable for participants, and posed potential safety issues. Delivering three shorter sessions over the two-hour period would not allow enough time for in-depth training and performance development.

The club faced significant challenges increasing their facility let from two to three hours. After careful negotiation between the club, SGB regional post, Sports Development Officer and the other clubs, Avon Netball Club was able to secure a continuous three-hour let at a local facility. Several other clubs that used the hall were moved to different time slots to accommodate the netball club.

The club worked in close partnership with the Sports Development Officer from South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, which has provided good access to high quality facilities. In 2015, the facilities were upgraded to include international netball posts, further supporting the development of the club.



The Sports Development Officer has offered training and employment opportunities to club coaches. This has allowed them to use their existing skills and gain new skills in other areas, through the ACE (Arts Culture Exercise) programme. Young people have been trained to deliver other sports, such as football, or to work as play workers in early years.

“It’s a great opportunity. It gives them competency based skills.”

Sports Development Officer

The high degree of partnership work between the club, the SGB regional post and the Sports Development Officer has been key to the successful growth and development of the club and club members.

“It is a great example of a club, and a great partnership.”

Sports Development Officer

## Impact

### Improved training and coaching

The support from the SGB regional post, and the additional hour of facility access has had a significant impact on the club. It has been able to develop membership, and provide opportunities for individuals to excel in the sport. The club now has 100 members.

“The extra hour has allowed more time for players with coaches, and more individual coaching. It’s definitely benefiting them in matches.”

Head Coach

“We can now give everyone coaching and quality feedback.”

Head Coach

Club members are now more aware of the opportunities they have, not just to play netball, but also to compete, coach and umpire in the sport.

“The club has gone from strength to strength.”

Head Coach

### Completing the pathway

Players in the club, and people in the community are now more aware of the netball pathway. They can see that there is a clear route from playing in the club to playing at district level and then in the national squads. Similarly, club members are now more aware of the coaching pathway from club level to national level.

### **Success at performance level**

When the club was first started the head coach set a long term goal for the club to play in the Netball Premier League (NPL), and in 2017, the senior team won the Lanarkshire League competition. The club now plays in the Glasgow Netball Premier League and is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out of 10.

“For a small club that was only established five years ago, to get into the NPL was a goal achieved.”

Head Coach

Overall, the club has had good success at competitions and tournaments. The club supports players to attend trials for district and national squads. In 2017, seven players from Avon Netball Club played in the national Netball Europe Under 17's tournament, which took place in Northern Ireland.

“The girls had been at the club from when it started, and we saw them getting better because they took on board the coaching and advice...Avon started that journey for them.”

Head Coach

### **What worked well**

The SGB regional post has particularly strong links with netball in the local area, as she lives in the area and has a wealth of local knowledge and connections. The SGB regional post also had a pre-existing relationship with the Sports Development Officers, having been responsible for instigating the netball sessions at South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, around ten years earlier.

Despite the club's relatively rural location, the SGB regional post was easily accessible and able to provide close contact and support whenever needed.

The expertise of the SGB regional post was highly valued. Although the club has a dedicated committee, nobody in the club had expert knowledge in netball.

“We're lucky to have her as an SGB regional post because she makes things happen...we can't thank her enough.”

Head Coach

### **Challenges**

#### **Rapid pace of growth**

At times, the club has struggled with capacity to keep up with the fast pace of growth, particularly in terms of managing facilities and resources. There has been a high demand but limited capacity and scope for growth. Support from the SGB regional post and Sports Development Officer helped manage this growth.

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## **Recruiting and retaining coaches and umpires**

The SGB regional post has been able to signpost the club to all relevant training opportunities. As the club grows, it will require more coaches and umpires to deliver sessions. Coaching and coach education training have been well received, although it has been difficult to find volunteers that are willing and able to dedicate the time required to coach a team. And very few players or volunteers are keen to train in umpiring.

In addition, the challenge facing many rural clubs is that talented young people often leave the area to pursue further or higher education. This means that the club only has use of their skills for a few years, before it has to invest in training another member.

“Being a rural community, when young people reach a certain age, they go off to Uni and play away, so we don’t get much out of their coach education. The challenge is around keeping hold of that talent.”

SGB regional post

## **What’s next?**

The club hopes to continue its success at performance level. In the near future, the club is working towards developing its workforce to support training and reduce the burden on the two head coaches. A number of parent volunteers at the club have shown an interest in coaching the junior team, and the club will be supporting them to develop the relevant skills and qualifications required.

“For me, it is to continue that success and develop the club workforce.”

Head Coach

# Dundee Dragons Wheelchair Sports Club

## Themes explored

This case study explores the themes of:

- increasing opportunities for disability sport; and
- managing club growth and development.

## Introduction

This case study focuses on Direct Club Investment and Regional Development support at Dundee Dragons Wheelchair Sports Club. It was developed following discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of the club, and the SGB regional post from Badminton Scotland.

Through **sportscotland**, the club has received Direct Club Investment and support from two **sportscotland** funded SGB regional posts – Badminton Scotland and Scottish Disability Sport. The club is also a member of a Community Sports Hub.

## Background

Dundee Dragons Wheelchair Sports Club was set up by the current Chair in response to a lack of local opportunities to play active wheelchair sports in the area. Dundee is served by a range of disability and non-disability sports organisations, however none offered the opportunity to play wheelchair team sports regularly, or at a competitive level.

“I wanted to be more active and to learn new sports.”

Club member

“I wanted to meet other people in wheelchairs.”

Club member

Since the club began in 2013 as a wheelchair Rugby League club it has grown its membership and the range of sports that it offers. In addition to rugby, the club now offers weekly sessions in basketball, tennis, badminton, curling and quad rugby. It has also delivered taster sessions of Archery, American football, Handball, and has considered the adaptation of Australian Rules Football into sessions. The club is open to disabled and able-bodied people of all ages, with membership age ranging from seven to 58, with most members aged under 17.

The club has been well received in the local area, revealing a high demand for wheelchair sports opportunities, particularly from young people. The club is often

praised by members and their families for providing an opportunity for young wheelchair users and disabled persons to engage in physical activity, as they often do not have these opportunities at school.

## DCI at Dundee Dragons

The club has grown in membership a lot faster than expected. It now has more than 60 members, and is regularly receiving enquiries and new members. Managing this growth alongside full-time jobs was becoming impractical for the Chair and Vice Chair, both of whom support the club voluntarily.

“The club was growing and it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep on top of everything, and keep driving the club forward.”

Vice Chair

“We know that there is demand and potential to grow, grow, grow. The only thing that stops us is volunteer hours and money.”

Chair

In order to continue expanding and providing opportunities for members, the club applied for DCI to fund a part-time Club Coordinator. The role would involve day-to-day management of the club, managing volunteers and liaising with partners. The role would be supported by the volunteers in the management committee, who would continue with their existing responsibilities. The overall aims of the DCI project were to:

- increase participation;
- provide a participation to performance pathway; and
- empower people to play sport to the level that they want.

The process of applying for and receiving DCI funding took two and half years, but the club felt that it was a fair process. The Chair felt well supported by **sportscotland**, and also received additional support from a Development Manager at Basketball Scotland.

“It looked very daunting at the beginning, from my perspective. But it was fairly straightforward.”

Chair

“I’m really pleasantly surprised with the level of hands on assistance we’ve had.”

Vice Chair

The Club received £27,000 DCI funding, for a project running from 2017 to 2020. The club is still in its first year of DCI funding and has employed two Club Coordinators, both of whom had to leave the role unexpectedly. The club is currently advertising to

fill the position and hopes that the next Coordinator will remain with the project to completion.

## **Support from a Badminton Scotland SGB regional post**

The club was approached by a sportscotland funded SGB regional post from Badminton Scotland. She was based in the sports centre that the club trains in, and offered the club opportunities to try wheelchair badminton. The SGB regional post arranged taster sessions and high quality coaching and training from experts in the sport, including a team GB para badminton coach. She also supported three members to complete a UKCC level 1 coaching qualification.

Two club members showed an aptitude for the sport and were provided with additional training from an international para badminton player, and were signposted to further opportunities to progress in the sport.

## **Community Sports Hub**

The club is part of Caird Park Community Sports Hub. The hub has offered club members numerous training opportunities, including: coach education, first aid, child protection training and workshops on volunteer recruitment. These have been useful, however club members have said that they feel more comfortable attending this type of training through an organisation that they are already familiar with, such as Scottish Disability Sport, than through the hub.

In the future the club hopes to access further training around business planning, marketing, management of information and professionalisation of club services. Membership of the hub has allowed the club to be involved in consultations for the development of a new Regional Performance Centre in the area. The Chair felt that the clubs views were taken into account, particularly around designing the space to be accessible and to include suitable storage facilities for wheelchair sports equipment.

## **Impact on the club**

### **Organisation and management**

Although the DCI support has been in place for less than a year, the club already feels that it is better organised and has better communication, both internally and with partners.

With the funding in place for a Club Coordinator, the club now has scope to develop a clear progression plan, for structured growth and development.

“We know where we want to go and we’re aware of the actions we need to put in place to achieve those goals.”

Vice Chair

The most recent Club Coordinator accessed support from Sported, which helped the club examine its outcomes and impact. The committee is now taking an outcomes focused approach to development - taking careful consideration of what they want to achieve and how to get there.

“We give greater consideration to what we want to do and why we’re doing it... We’re growing, and now we’re growing in a more co-ordinated manner.”

Vice Chair

### **Increased awareness and recognition**

Since applying for and receiving DCI, the club feels closer to **sportscotland**, and feels that adaptive sports are being recognised and valued at national level.

### **Impact on club members**

#### **Increased opportunities**

Working with the **sportscotland** funded SGB regional posts from Badminton Scotland, Scottish Disability Sport and other governing bodies, has helped the club provide more opportunities for club members. It has provided more opportunities for members to compete and has helped meet their requests for variety at the club. It has also allowed club members to see the progression pathway opportunities in different sports.

Since the DCI project started, two young people from the club have set off on GB pathways for quad rugby and basketball.

“I think it’s made a massive difference.”

Chair

#### **Increased levels of activity**

Club members said that they enjoyed attending the club, and tried to attend both sessions if they could. They felt well supported by the coaches and enjoyed playing with both disabled people and able-bodied people.

“It has made me more active, I have now joined the local gym. It helps to build my strength and stamina.”

“It gives you a purpose, and an opportunity to play sport.”

“I’ve learnt how to play new sports.”

“I am more active, and getting faster at playing sport.”

Club members

Club members also talked about their activity performance level, with the club supporting people to play regionally and nationally.

“I have played in the Scottish rugby team and taken part in the six nations tournament.”

“I have played basketball for Scotland.”

Club members

### **Personal and social development**

For some club members, Dundee Dragons has been a place to meet people and make new friends. Some members felt that coming to the club had helped them with personal as well as physical development, particularly around confidence and social interaction. One young club member said that he was keen to go to college to do and HND in Sport and Development, and hopes to get a formal coaching qualification.

“It gave me confidence to go back to swimming. I didn’t feel so frightened about getting out of my chair.”

“I have become more confident, because I have realised that I can take part in sport.”

“It helps me keep my life level.”

Club members

Beyond providing sports opportunities, the club has had an indirect effect on the mental health and wellbeing of club members. The club provides a space for people to socialise, make new friends and play as equals. Many young people attending the club reported that they did not get the chance to participate in sports at school, and were usually asked to assist the teacher, or keep score.

“There were not many opportunities apart from swimming, it was difficult to get involved in sport at school due to health and safety reasons.”

Club member

### **A sense of community**

Some club members travel to the club from over an hour away, as they do not have opportunities in their local area. This has helped connect people and create a wide network of people with a shared enthusiasm for wheelchair sports. For one club member, the club provided an important focal point in her life, at a time when she felt particularly vulnerable and isolated.

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“It gives me back my sense of worth and self-belief. I look forward to going to the club every week.”

“Dundee Dragons is like a wee community, it’s not just about playing sport, it’s about spending time with your friends.”

Club members

“Some of the social, softer outcomes were very surprising. I didn’t go into it thinking that’s what this will do, I just wanted to offer sport. I didn’t consider that it could have that kind of impact.”

Vice Chair

## What worked well?

The club has engaged with a number of SGB regional posts, the local Community Sports Hub and **sportscotland**. Partnerships were formed in various ways. In some cases, a formal procedure derived from a more informal development of relationships, such as applying for DCI funding. Whereas the relationship with other partners followed more formal membership and project application processes. Many of the partnerships developed organically through informal discussions, signposting and the use of individual and group networking.

Working with a range of different people and organisations has been valuable, particularly because Dundee Dragons is not a sport specific club.

“We can pick the brains of all these different people with a wealth of experience.”

Vice Chair

“When we’ve asked for help, it’s been there, whether it was something generic or specific.”

Vice Chair

## What could be better?

The club would like more support around governance and club management, as it develops and grows its membership. The committee has not asked for any specific support yet, and will be working on developing club governance further once a new Club Coordinator is appointed.

## What’s next?

Overall, the club is very happy with the progress it has made in a short period of time. Going forward, the club is hoping to develop more partnerships and diversify the

range of sports at the club to increase opportunities for club members. The club is hoping to continue growing its membership and developing more professional governance structures. The club will also be seeking further support from **sportscotland** through the Awards for All funding programme. In the future, the club hopes to be able to develop a Quad rugby structure and team to progress to playing nationally.

“It’s been such a positive experience. Without it we wouldn’t have been able to make the progress that we’ve made, or that we hope to make. It’s been a universally positive experience.”

Chair

# Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association

## Themes explored

This case study explores the themes of:

- facility development;
- increasing junior membership; and
- improving club-school links in disadvantaged areas.

## Introduction

This case study focuses on support provided to Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association (ASRA) through DCI and the Sports Facilities Fund. It was developed following discussions with the Pathways Development Coach, the club lead, the Facilities Development Manager and the SGB regional post.

Through **sportscotland**, the club has received Sports Facilities Funding, Direct Club Investment and support from a **sportscotland** funded SGB regional post.

## Sports Facilities Funding at ASRA

ASRA received funding of £100,000 in 2012, to extend the club boathouse and create an annexe.

The extension was required to provide more storage, as the club had grown in size. The club now has space to store additional boats and has an indoor training space with equipment for land based training, strengthening and conditioning.

The overall budget for the facility development was £422,000. The project was funded through **sportscotland's** Sports Facilities Fund, the Robertson Trust, Aberdeen Asset Management, donations and club contributions (cash and in kind). This was the fourth successful application that the club had made to the Sports Facilities Fund, with previous projects funded in 1998, 2001 and 2002.

The club has a strong volunteer base that helped to fundraise around £15,000 for the facility development. Volunteers also donated labour and expertise. The project was planned and managed the club lead who had professional expertise in planning. During the construction of the annexe, parent volunteers supported the project by volunteering labour and expertise in construction, plumbing and joinery.

## DCI funding at ASRA

ASRA received £40,000 through DCI, to fund a full-time Pathways Development Coach, from 2014 to 2018. The aims of the Development Coach were to:

- increase club membership;
- change perceptions of elitism in rowing; and
- support progression to regional and national competitive events.

The DCI funding built on an earlier, lottery funded programme that the club had previously developed.

The Pathways Development Coach has worked with S1 and S2 pupils across 12 secondary schools in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Schools were involved on a rolling basis, with the Development Coach visiting three to four schools per term.

The club is based on the banks of the River Dee and backs onto Torry, an area of multiple deprivation. The club was aware that few members came from the local area and wanted to increase its connections to the local community. To encourage more participation from people in the local area, the club targeted four schools in areas of deprivation. Pupils from these schools were also offered free membership to the club, if they chose to join. In 2017, the club also ran separate taster sessions for girls, to encourage more female participation.

Following the taster sessions pupils were invited to participate in a free, 12-week rowing course known as Dry Start/Wet Start. This involved:

- indoor training (4-6 weeks);
- outdoor training (4-6 weeks); and
- the summer inter-school regatta.

Pupils on the Dry Start/Wet Start course attend the club boathouse for training, allowing them to become familiar with the environment and to meet club members. At the end of the course, pupils can continue rowing, as club members.

Over the four years of DCI funding, the club has engaged with around 1,000 young people through taster sessions. Between 200 - 300 young people attended indoor (Dry Start) sessions and around 150 - 200 continued on to outdoor (Wet Start) training.

## Partnership work

The Pathways Development Coach has worked in close partnership with schools and Universities to develop the pre- and post-club pathways. In schools, he has liaised

with PE staff and Active Schools Coordinators to arrange taster sessions at lunchtime or during PE classes.

He has also worked with representatives from Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen to develop pathways that will encourage talented rowers to stay in the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire regions.

## Support from SGB regional post

The SGB regional post has supported the Pathways Development Coach to gain UKCC level 2 qualifications, and to become a qualified strengthening and conditioning coach.

Working with the SGB regional post has increased his exposure to other coaches, and to new coaching techniques.

*“It gives you more tools for your toolbox.”*

Pathways Development Coach

## Impact

### Increased participation and membership

Overall membership of the club has increased, due to the new boathouse annexe and the DCI funded project. The new facility has allowed the club to accommodate more young people in land and water based rowing activities. In particular, it has allowed young people to sustain their engagement with the club through indoor training, even when weather conditions are unfavourable.

The new annexe has also helped the club progress towards its aims to engage with a wider demographic – allowing young people with no previous rowing experience to begin training on land before progressing to water based activities.

*“If we hadn’t built the annexe we would have had limitations on the numbers of young people coming to the club...we wouldn’t have seen the success that we’ve had.”*

Club lead

During the period of DCI funding, the schools programme has increased club membership from 133 to 451. The club lead felt that the club was retaining new members better, and that the level of attainment amongst new members was higher because the club offers a structured programme and a has a skilled, enthusiastic

Development Coach. The new members have also helped increase the number parent volunteers supporting the club.

### **Community connections**

The opportunity to try something new has been welcomed by schools and pupils, and has helped the club forge strong connections in the community. The club has built a good reputation in the community and has earned respect from young people, primarily through the Development Coach and his relationships with young people. Despite vandalism and graffiti being quite common in the area, the club's new extension has not been damaged or vandalised.

### **Increased awareness**

Overall, the Development Coach felt that there was now increased awareness of the club, and of the sport in the local area. He also felt that there was less stigma around the sport, and that perceptions of who can get involved in rowing were changing.

*"The club has increased awareness of the sport and opportunities in rowing."*

*SGB regional post*

*"We're getting the sport out to people. Through the schools programme we're reaching hundreds of young people."*

*Pathways Development Coach*

### **Achievements at performance level**

Young people that have come through the schools programme have gone on to achieve regionally and nationally at performance level. The club has five members that are in the Scotland Under 18 squad, three young people trialling for Team GB and two that have already played for Team GB. Last year one club member won a Gold medal in the Great Britain vs France tournament.

### **What worked well**

#### **Experience in facility development**

The club had previous experience of facility development projects with **sportscotland** through three successful past projects. The past experience helped, as the club was knowledgeable and familiar with the application process and had a well developed relationship with Sports Facilities Fund staff. The project ran relatively smoothly from application to completion, and the club required little oversight from **sportscotland**.

#### **Targeting S1 and S2**

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The club only works with secondary school pupils, from S1 to S6. Targeting S1 and S2 pupils gives the club the longest period of time with athletes, and also with parent volunteers, who usually fall away from the club once their children have left.

### **Recruiting former pupils**

In first few years of delivery, the Development Coach recruited former club members that had been pupils at local schools to help run the courses in their former schools. They acted as role models for the pupils, and were also able to get good buy in from the staff as they were well known in the community.

### **Providing additional opportunities**

The Development Coach noticed that some pupils were arriving at the club 3.30pm, well before the Dry Start/Wet Start training sessions began at 5pm, so he started running extra training to occupy them, and to fill this time with a positive activity.

### **Providing opportunities at all levels**

The club has taken an open approach to working with young people, offering opportunities at all levels. Pupils can attend just to have fun and spend time on the water, to improve their health and well being, or to pursue competitive sport. The club also encourages young people to develop wider skills, such as team work and leadership. This open approach has made the club feel less intimidating, and more accessible, particularly to pupils who would never have considered trying the sport.

### **Finding the right person for the role**

The personality of the Development Coach and his ability to develop rapport with young people had a significant impact on encouraging participation, and changing the perception that rowing is not accessible to people from all backgrounds.

“He is young and can communicate with the kids very well. He’s very relatable, and fun.”

SGB regional post

## **Challenges**

### **Developing facilities within budget restrictions**

The only significant challenge in the facility development was planning a project that would fit within the limitations of the budget. Although some desirable features were not able to be included in the final design, the annexe was completed to a high standard. The club was able to make best use of the available funds by utilising volunteers and contributing a significant portion of construction costs in kind.

### **Continued engagement with pupils from target schools**

Although some young people from target area have taken part in the programme, it has been difficult to move this into longer term participation, particularly young people from the target schools in areas of deprivation.

### **Transport**

The taster sessions have been easily accessible to young people, as they take place at school during the school day. The Dry Start/Wet Start programme runs after school, at the club, and there have been difficulties in managing the logistics of transport. Pupils generally have to make their own way to the club, with most being driven in by parents.

### **What's next**

The club hopes to continue delivering a schools programme, to sustain the success of the DCI project. In order to continue delivering the project beyond 2018, the club has generated fund from donations, the local authority and has fundraised around £15,000.

The club is hoping to work more closely with the University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University to develop the post-school pathway, develop rowing at university level and encourage people to stay in Aberdeen.

The club is well equipped and fully accessible but has no disabled members at present. The club has started working with Scottish Rowing to develop para sport at the club.



# Haddington Table Tennis Club

## Themes explored

This case study explores the themes of:

- increasing club membership;
- developing club-school links; and
- developing a sports pathway.

## Introduction

This case study focuses on the development of Haddington Table Tennis Club. It was developed following discussions with the club lead, DCI coach, club coach, ten club members (focusing on people who were previously inactive) and three support workers.

Through **sportscotland**, the club has received Awards for All funding, Direct Club Investment and is part of Haddington Community Sports Hub.

## Development of the club through Awards for All and DCI

Since 2012, Haddington Table Tennis Club has grown from a small local club with just two tables, to one of the largest clubs in Scotland, working across East Lothian with a thriving junior programme.

The club first received support in the form of advice from Haddington Community Sports Hub. The Community Sports Hub officer supported the club to make a successful bid for £1,960 from Awards for All. This funding was used to purchase three new tables for the club, so it could begin running a junior section.

The club lead developed a five-year development plan for the club and conducted an audit of table tennis equipment in partnership with the local authority and Active Schools. This audit found that most primary schools and community centres did not have any table tennis equipment. It also found that one sports centre had a large number of tables but was no longer using them. The club was able to acquire ten tables from the sports centre, free of charge, and these were placed into local primary schools that did not have equipment. The club then made another successful bid to Awards for All, to help fund nets, bats and balls. This supported the successful application for a DCI grant.

In 2016 the club was chosen by Table Tennis Scotland to run a Community Table Tennis pilot project, funded by Big Lottery Investing in Ideas. This established the over 50s and additional support needs classes, which have helped the club increase membership.

The growth of the club, and increased activity in schools and the community helped the club to successfully bid for £50,000 from the Big Lottery People's Project. These funds helped the club develop an extensive primary school programme by providing table tennis equipment for 26 primary schools in the local authority, as well as running after school clubs in five secondary schools. The equipment is owned by Haddington Table Tennis club and is on loan to the schools for as long as they continue to use it. Eight community venues across East Lothian have also received equipment on loan and are becoming the venues for new community clubs.

Installing equipment into primary schools allowed the club to begin running taster sessions with P4 - P7 pupils, in partnership with Active Schools.

The club also runs Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training sessions for primary and secondary school teachers, both class teachers and PE teachers. The sessions train them to run their own clubs and provide them with a basic eight-week delivery plan that is closely aligned to the Curriculum for Excellence. Over 60 teachers have completed an introductory table tennis course, and some have started running their own clubs before and after school, and also at lunchtime.

["It's vastly more efficient for us to train teachers."](#)

Club lead

In 2016, the club was awarded £30,000 DCI funding, which will be distributed over four years. The funding has allowed the club to employ a part-time Development Officer to work with players of all ages and capabilities. The aim of this project was to ensure that young people playing table tennis at school had community club opportunities to progress on to. The Development Officer runs weekly junior club sessions in Haddington. Initially young people travelled to the club from across East Lothian, as there were local clubs for them to attend. The junior club has proved popular and Haddington Table Tennis Club has facilitated the development of four new table tennis clubs across the authority, supporting further membership growth.

["The main theme of the junior and after school club sessions is fun, whilst learning the basics of table tennis."](#)

DCI coach

The club has targeted various adult groups through older people's supported living homes, and days care centres for people with learning disabilities. The club delivered taster sessions directly to these groups, and in some cases, provided equipment for the groups to use in their own venues. The club also runs dedicated weekly sessions for these groups, bringing them together in a community setting.

## Impact

### Increased participation and increased membership

The club has seen increased participation and membership from adults and young people. Adult membership at the club has increased from 33 to 124 members, since the DCI project started. Around a quarter of members are disabled or have a long term health condition, and more than half are over 50 years old.

The club has engaged between 1,500 and 2,000 pupils through primary school taster sessions. 200-300 young people are playing table tennis regularly through weekly sessions in school. And community clubs are delivering to around 80 young people each week.

### Developing a pathway

The club has successfully developed pathways for people in the community to play table tennis. Young people can start by attending taster sessions in their school, and then progress to lunchtime and after school clubs. Those who are especially interested can attend a junior club within their local community, where there are more opportunities to train and compete. There are now four new junior table tennis clubs running across East Lothian. Adults can also join the club through friendly, informal sessions, where they can play at a level of intensity that suits them.

"Giving the kids goals, like Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates, lets them see what level they are at and what they can strive for."

DCI coach

At present, Haddington Table Tennis Club manages all of these clubs. Once the clubs have been deemed to be viable and can run independently, they will sit alongside Haddington Table Tennis Club under the overarching umbrella of Table Tennis East Lothian.

"Everywhere that we've gone into schools, there's a pathway, and a club."

Club lead

### **Getting inactive people active**

The growth of over 50s classes has helped many people that were previously inactive, to become active. Some of the club members we spoke with said if they were not coming to the club, they would be sitting at home, and would not be engaged in any other physical activity.

“It’s enabled me to maintain a level of fitness.”

“I feel like I’m losing weight.”

Club members

“It’s been really good for him. This is the only activity he has.”

Support worker

### **Improved health and wellbeing**

The nature of table tennis has allowed members to play at different levels of intensity, depending on their abilities. This has been particularly beneficial for members with physical impairments and people who had not been active for many years. One club member said that it was a good option for him when he was recovering from an operation, as he could control the level of exertion.

“It helped me to recover after surgery.”

“It feels like I’m getting healthy.”

Club members

“This level of exercise is spot on for him.”

Support worker

Some club members said that they felt their mental health had improved since they started attending the club, and this was one of the key reasons that they continued to return each week.

“It cheers you up.”

“It gets you out of a rut.”

Club members

One new club member had recently been diagnosed with dementia. He found out about the club at a dementia support group. He lives in a rural area and had begun to feel isolated from people, and very low in his mood. Initially, he wasn’t sure what

the club would do for him, but after two sessions he felt that the club had already had significant positive impact on his mood. He enjoys coming to the club for the sport, and also for the chance to do something active with other people.

“The social aspect is as important to me as the physical.”

Club member

### **Social interaction and confidence**

Many of the club members we spoke with commented on the value of the club as a social hub, where they could meet and interact with other people. Club members felt that it was a good place to make friends and share feelings.

“We’ve all got our problems...and this is a place to share them and talk about them.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever laughed as much.”

“The company is the most important thing.”

Club members

One coach, who initially joined the club as a playing member, felt that working with the club had helped her to become more confident, particularly around talking to new people. She felt that she had made a lot of close friends through the club, with people of all ages, and now felt part of a community in Haddington.

### **Training and volunteering**

The club has encouraged adult members to train and work as volunteer coaches at the club, supporting them to achieve a UKCC level 1 coaching qualification. Within the first two years of DCI funding, the club has trained 26 people as volunteer coaches, already exceeding its four-year target of 24. Volunteer coaches have committed their time to support the club, supporting delivery in new community clubs across the local authority. In addition to the Development Officer, three other coaches have progressed to paid coaching positions, delivering taster sessions in primary schools and running club sessions in the community.

### **Success at competition level**

Prior to support from **sportscotland**, the club had one team in Division 4 of the Edinburgh League. Since receiving support and developing the club it now has five teams playing in Divisions 1, 2 and 4, including one team in Division 4 that is comprised entirely of junior players aged 12-16.

The club has hosted the East Lothian Open and also the Edinburgh Junior league competition for the past two years, providing younger players a chance to compete.

Recently, three junior club members were selected to represent Scotland at the Primary Schools International Championships 2018.

“Developing the elite side of table tennis in East Lothian is very much in our plans, and establishing an Academy where the players from all over East Lothian can meet and train together is crucial to the performance aspect of TT East Lothian.”

DCI coach

## What worked well

### Partnership with Active Schools

The club has benefited from developing a strong partnership with Active Schools. This partnership has supported the development of table tennis groups in all primary schools and a number of secondary schools in East Lothian, and has helped encourage schools to continue providing table tennis opportunities beyond the taster sessions, particularly through after school clubs.

### Using young people as role models

The club has encouraged young people to take on leadership positions where possible. Six young people have been supported to take on leadership roles within clubs, where they can help other members develop their skills. The school-based activity has also provided opportunities for senior pupils to help run lunchtime table tennis clubs.

“These young leaders are our future. The younger kids respond so well to them.”

DCI coach

### Creating a welcoming environment

The club lead noted that the club has a diverse membership. Although East Lothian has a predominantly White Scottish population, around twenty per cent of club members identify as non-White British. The club has also targeted various groups in the community, such as adults with learning disabilities and older people living in supported accommodation.

“What it is that’s attracting them is that this is a sport that they’ve played before, and they’ve made friends through the club.”

Club lead

Club members said that they felt Haddington provided an open and friendly environment, and they felt welcomed from their first visit, regardless of whether they had any previous experience of the sport.

“I just walked in and they were very encouraging.”

“You’re not made to feel new or different.”

Club members

“I feel like I can let loose and just be myself in the club.”

Club coach

Support workers noted that the club provided people opportunities to play with people at a similar level to themselves, and provided genuine opportunities to play, compete and win.

“It gives him a chance to win.”

Support worker

## Challenges

### Female participation

The club has struggled to grow female membership as quickly as male membership. On occasion, club sessions became fiercely competitive, which some of the female players found off putting. The club lead has worked to address this with creative solutions. For example, during some sessions, players will all play seated rather than standing, or will all play with their non-dominant hand. This has helped relax the atmosphere, however the club is still working on increasing female membership overall. The club also hosted a successful Ladies Table Tennis night, and more are planned. A pilot scheme which invited all P4-7 girls from the major primary schools around Haddington for tasters at a central venue was another success, and a small percentage decided to attend after school and junior club sessions as a direct result of these.

### Capacity at venues

As the club has grown, it has struggled with limited capacity in community venues and has to spend significant funds on venue hire. To address this issue, the club has started planning for its own dedicated table tennis venue in Haddington.

### Progression from taster sessions to club sessions

One coach felt that the club had initially struggled to engage young people in community club sessions following the school-based tasters. Sometimes this was because pupils had other activities that clashed with club sessions, or because they did not perceive table tennis to be a highly active sport. The club has worked to improve this by delivering table tennis performances at school assemblies,

highlighting how intense the sport can be, and demonstrating some of the tricks that can be incorporated into the game.

“It’s important that the kids get the ‘wow’ factor from Table Tennis and are inspired by seeing it played at the highest level.”

DCI Coach

## What’s next?

The club hopes to continue growing the profile of table tennis across East Lothian by showing people how accessible the sport is to people of any age and ability. The club is hoping to continue growing adult membership by working with Link Practitioners at GP practices. Link Practitioners work directly with people and communities to tackle health inequalities. The club feels that table tennis could provide a friendly and accessible way for people to become more physically active, particularly for those with dementia.

One of the club members will be making friendly introductory phone calls to people before they come to the club, to encourage participation and reduce barriers to engagement. The club is also planning to introduce family table tennis sessions, to encourage participation from all age groups.

In the longer term, the club is hoping to develop its own dedicated table tennis facility in Haddington. The club has initiated discussions with **sportscotland**’s Sports Facilities Fund team to begin planning the facility and to ensure that the space will be practical and accessible. Having a dedicated facility would help the club reduce the cost of venue hire and ensure the whole programme can be sustainable. It would also allow the club to run more targeted sessions if required, for example, more over 50’s sessions during the week, or girls only classes.