

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

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



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HEALTH

About the Commission Chairs

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

Brendan Batson OBE

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

Charlie Webster

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

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

Executive Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Commission focused on five key questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Question 4: What do funding bodies and strategists expect?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Introduction

Aims of Commission

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

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

The Commission inquiry focused on five key questions:

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

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

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

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

Terms:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Commission Process

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 1: Roundtable information

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

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

The Impact of Covid-19

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

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

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

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

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

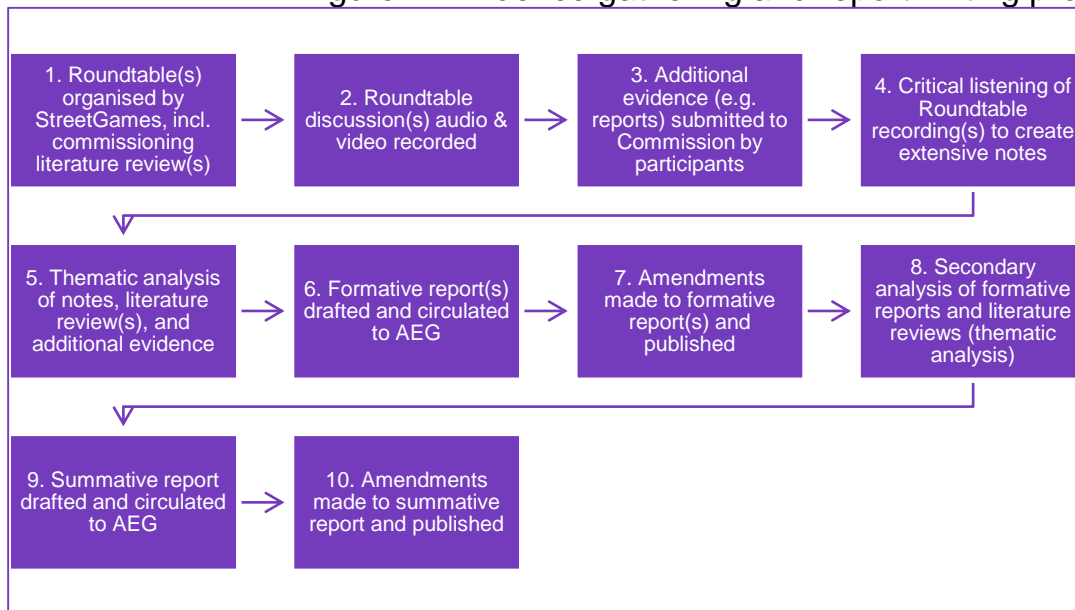
Table 2: Original vs Revised Roundtables

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

Report writing methodology

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

Figure 1: Evidence gathering and report writing process



Report structure

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

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

Introduction key points:

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

Commission findings

1. Context/life circumstances

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is already being done about C&YPs physical activity

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

Context / Life Circumstances - Key Points:

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

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

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

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

Features of LTOs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 2: Key elements of an LTO



Benefits of LTOs to C&YP in disadvantaged neighbourhoods

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

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

Benefits for **individuals** include:

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

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

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

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

Case study: The impact of Kitchen Social

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

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

Because of the scheme, community hubs have successfully:

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

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

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

The impact of Covid-19 on LTOs

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

Response

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

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

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

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

Revised activities included:

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

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

Effect on LTOs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Benefits of sports participation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Possible negative consequences

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Societal factors affecting participation include:

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

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

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

How sport is delivered

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

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

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

Key Points:

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

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

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

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

Universal and targeted provision

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

Tailored provision

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

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

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

People

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Place-based approaches

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

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

Other valuable strategies when working with disadvantaged neighbourhoods are:

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

The ideal ingredients were described by one Roundtable participant as:

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

Long-term support

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

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

Co-production

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

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

Partnership working and collaboration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Funding

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Improvements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Monitoring and evaluation

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

Specific issues identified include:

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

Base-line assessments were criticised for:

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

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

Possible Improvements

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

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

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

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

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

Key Learnings

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

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

During the Commission process we quickly learnt that:

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

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

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

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

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

The benefits of LTOs for individuals include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations

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

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

⁶ <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-12/Active%20Lives%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%20Survey%20Academic%20Year%202020-21%20Report.pdf?VersionId=3jpdwfb5WB4PNtKJGxwbyu5Y2nuRFMBV>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Appendix 1: Report writing methodology

Formative Reports (x5)

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

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

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

Final Summative Report

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

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