



MULTI-SPORT ACTIVITY  
AND FACILITIES FUND  
PROGRAMME:  
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND  
LEARNING APPROACH

June 2024

# MEL key audiences

| Audience   | Area(s) of interest  |
|--|--|
| Participants from priority groups  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of increased and sustainable participation from priority groups/intersectionality in physical activity, which projects are leading to sustained behaviour change/increased activity levels for which priority groups</li> </ul>  |
| Sport England  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the AP investment is adding value and contributing to their strategic priorities/outcomes, lessons about what is/isn't working and why</li> <li>Learning about the approach taken and investment processes: lessons for next phases and future programmes</li> <li>Where a project sits within place deepening and place expansion areas – how does it contribute to the findings and lessons for the wider place. And how does the place work take into consideration the contribution and lessons from this programme.</li> </ul> |
| Active Partnerships National Organisation multi-sport activation and facility fund team                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which this programme is contributing to APNO strategic objectives</li> <li>Learning and sharing lessons across the Network</li> <li>Understanding the impact of the programme locally and nationally</li> </ul>   |
| Active Partnership regional multi-sport network leads  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which their role(s) is adding value at the national and local level</li> </ul>  |
| NGBs and clubs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the programme is adding value and making a difference to their sport (i.e. national, regional and/or sub-regional)</li> </ul>   |
| Local Active Partnerships  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact, variation across areas, what is/isn't working and why, lessons learnt, value and contribution of the AP role locally, how their work is contributing, what good community engagement looks like and how to put it into practice</li> </ul>  |
| Funded projects/NGBs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How their project contributes to area-wide outcomes, reducing inequalities, lessons from similar projects being delivered in other areas</li> </ul>   |
| DCMS   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High level impact (covered by Deloitte evaluation)</li> </ul>   |
| Football Foundation, LTA Parks Tennis, England Hockey, netball, basketball, rugby league, cricket, rugby union | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How has the investment increased and diversified visitor numbers/activity levels to their new facilities? What's the learning to inform future investments/ways of working?</li> </ul>  |

# Theory of Change development

## Activities (priority workstreams)

- **Additional resources into the APNO team** for programme management and support, to oversee regional lead roles, oversee national relationships, maximise learning and connect with wider opportunities (e.g. OSF, social prescribing)
- Investment into **NGB capacity**: netball, basketball and rugby league to identify where funding is needed, support development of projects
- **Multi-sport Activity and Facilities Flexi Fund (revenue funding)** This will be administered to local projects through two models (full onward granting and hybrid) to be tested in initial test phase followed by wider roll out.
- **Additional roles: 6x Regional Leads**, seconded 2 days per week from the AP Network to provide connectivity, coherence and communication across all areas
- **Individual APs** will identify where funding is needed, support development of projects/applications and undertake post award assurance for revenue fund), encourage **local collaboration**

## Outputs

- No of new roles created (national and regional)
- No of connections made/support provided by regional leads
- Number of Active Partnerships submitting projects to access the grant funding
- Number of projects awarded
- Number of priority places benefitting from delivery
- Number of different sports involved
- No of people using existing facilities through new funded projects
- Breakdown of priority groups engaged

## Change mechanisms

- Rooted in community engagement
- Fit for purpose, high quality leadership, governance, direction and development of programme
- Strong connection between programme strategy and operations
- AP roles at three levels work to connect, strengthen and enable [3 roles] priority areas and priority groups to engage
- NGB roles to connect, strengthen, enable and engage
- Effective local partnership working and collaboration
- Good practice and 'what works and what doesn't work' is identified and shared across the network and among partners to inform decision-making.
- Multi-sport sites are used in innovative ways allowing communities to engage on their terms.

# Theory of Change development (cont..)

## Short-term

- **Increased awareness** among local communities of available facilities and opportunities for participation
- **Increased opportunities** for local communities to become active
- **High quality, targeted project applications to Multi-sports Activity and Facilities revenue grant** and effective project management
- Local partners feel **connected and supported** by the AP network
- Increased **collaborative working** between local partners
- **Sharing good practice** and what is working well at all levels across the network to inform decision-making, and what good community engagement looks like.

## Medium-term

- Facilities are perceived **as safe, accessible and easy to use** by priority groups
- Safe, accessible and welcome spaces are **used by a wider range of communities**
- **Stronger local partnerships** and improved partnership working
- Improved **evidence-informed decision making** among partners across the network
- Local and national partners **value the role community engagement** and co-production can play in effective decision-making / targeted investment.
- **Community engagement practice improves** across AP network.
- **Communities are able** to engage in physical activity on their own terms, feeling that the facilities are for them

## Longer-term

The Multi-sport investment will **contribute to Uniting the Movement outcomes**:

- **Increasing levels of physical activity**
  - **Decreasing levels of inactivity**
  - **Narrowing the inequalities** within levels of physical activity/inactivity
  - **Improving the experience** of sport and physical activity for children and young people
- And...
- **Connecting and strengthening** local communities
  - **Catalyst for change** – a sector that understands the value of co-developed, locally led, participant centred community engagement and embeds into future ways of working.

# Draft evaluation and learning questions

## Overarching

1. What is the learning about 'what works' in engaging priority groups in use of local facilities and increasing/sustaining activity levels? (e.g. community engagement, innovation, application process, equalities review panel, partnership working, trust) – to inform a –playbook' that can we developed over time. How are these lessons most effectively packaged, shared and amplified to improve practice across the Network and among key partners?
2. To what extent and how has the programme led to positive experiences among all priority groups? What lessons can be drawn about what types of activities lead to positive, sustained activity levels among priority groups?
3. How effective was the overall approach/process taken to the design and set-up of this programme and what lessons can be learned to inform future programmes of this kind?
4. How effective was the role of APs at the different levels? How well have they delivered on the mechanisms for change and what can be learned for future roles of this kind?
5. To what extent and how has the programme led to different ways of working in local areas? To what extent and how are local partners working differently as a result?
6. To what extent has the role of Active Partnerships ensured that targeted investment into Football and multi-sport facilities is having an impact on those communities (increased and sustainable activity levels) that need it the most?
7. To what extent and how has the additional capacity within the AP network and among NGBs helped to strengthen and maximise the impact of the targeted investment into community football, tennis and multi-sport facilities, prioritising tackling inactivity, working with under-represented groups and innovations in local delivery?
8. To what extent and how has APs supported Sport England to strengthen the relationship between local and national strategy and delivery, and to connect local resource, intelligence and experience to national programme design, ensuring connectivity with other plans and local need?
9. To what extent and how have local APs role led to high quality applications and project delivery to maximise the use of local facilities and increased and sustained activity levels among priority groups?

# Evaluation design principles



Mix of qualitative and quantitative



Supports ongoing learning and improvement



Complements other MEL approaches and avoids duplication



Clear evidence of the contribution/added value of the AP investment



Phased, developmental approach

# Draft data collection methods

| Data collection method  | Who/when  | Purpose   |
|---|---|---|
| Small number of outputs (e.g. No of people using existing facilities through new funded projects) | Projects submit to APs and APs submit monthly via Smartsheets   | To understand breadth of activity across the programme and how this changes/builds over time  |
| Qualitative documentation and reflection of approach taken of how things have been done           | Reflection sessions/interviews/ripple effect mapping with key partners  | To document the approach taken and learn lessons from the process in terms of what worked well, what didn't work as well and implications for the future    |
| Reflections logs, case studies, reflective practice   | APs submit monthly via Smartsheets, facilitated AP reflection sessions every 6-12 months – APs to encourage reflective practice among clubs/project leads | To document what is/isn't working well, lessons learnt, good practice, extent of engagement, challenges faced and overcome (in collaboration with projects) |
| Data sharing with Football Foundation   | Data collected from FF on participants to facilities via new ticketing system   | To measure the extent to which participation in facilities is changing over time in terms of reach and diversity of participants                            |
| Project level data capture, including participant feedback  | Collected by projects/supported by APs - every 12 months  | To understand perceptions of club/group participants on their experiences/ activity levels and how/why they change over time                                |
| Key partner feedback (national and local) to include SE   | Every 12 months   | Perceptions of added value from AP and NGB role(s), what has worked well and what hasn't worked as well as anticipated through the process                  |
| Ripple effect mapping (or similar methods)  | National and regional leads - supported by external evaluator   | To understand the added value of the national and regional AP roles   |

# Analysis, reporting and learning

- Provide APs and MEL leads (where they exist) with the tools and knowledge to instigate **local-level analysis** at 3-6 monthly intervals to make sense of emerging data and consider what's working well and what isn't working as well as hoped to inform ongoing improvements. This may include ripple effect mapping/contribution analysis (or similar methods), where resources allow.
- **National level analysis** to be conducted by an external evaluation supplier, who will explore trends in the data, undertake a form of contribution analysis (or similar) to determine what is working, in what contexts, for whom and why.
- **Outputs for different audiences** – bespoke reports aimed at different audience needs and areas of interest to maximise learning opportunities. This should include producing outputs for communities in different formats and turning results/lessons into useable outputs for communities, places and partners.
- **Use of Smartsheets**, consistent with other evaluation requirements. Encourage use of Smartsheets to support analysis and learning. 6 monthly reporting cycles will be aligned to that of other evaluations e.g. System Partners evaluation, Place evaluation.
- **National level data and lessons** will be communicated to local APs to inform local-level learning and developments in regular cycles.
- **Learning approaches** (e.g. communities of practice) for local APs and partners to come together to discuss what is/isn't working and share good practice, some facilitated by external evaluation and learning supplier(s), some continuation of learning spaces that already exist. Explore cluster models (e.g. regional). Importance of communication across evaluation strands to avoid duplication/saturation of learning spaces.



# Resources

- **APNO team:** internal resource(s) e.g. MEL strategic lead to lead/provide oversight of national evaluation(s) and coordinate support provision.
- **Sport England:** Darcy Hare, Head of Research and Evaluation providing oversight and high-level support
- **National evaluation supplier:** national level analysis, potentially additional data collection e.g. case studies, support/facilitation among a sample of APs, possibly provide (regional) support (where this doesn't duplicate other support offers) to encourage and help APs with responding to this evaluation where needed.
- **NGBs:** discuss and clarify role of NGBs in data collection (e.g. collecting data from clubs involved)
- **APs:** share learning/work together to assist each other with the evaluation, creating and using examples of good practice.
- **MEL training:** e.g. bite-sized training offer to cover data collection tools, analysis techniques (e.g. ripple effect mapping) and use of data for learning and improvement for APs.

# Ways of working

- **National evaluation suppliers** will be required to collaborate closely in the development of frameworks, tools, ways of working and support provided to align wherever possible. National evaluation suppliers to support the join up of evaluation asks at a local level, join up around support provision and seek efficiencies and alignment of data collection tools, analysis techniques and reporting requirements.
- **Work in close collaboration** e.g. with Football Foundation, Sport England (e.g. place expansion and system partner evaluations) to avoid duplication, and identify opportunities for aligning reporting frameworks, analysis techniques, data collection methods where the same methods/tools can have application across multiple evaluations and data/insight sharing.