

CONSULTATION PLAYBACK

ASTON



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About Active Birmingham

Active Birmingham is part of the Commonwealth Active Communities Birmingham 2022 Legacy investment aiming to...

- Tackle inactivity in local communities and engage underrepresented groups.
- Support the National Evaluation and Learning Partnership (NELP) who support learning and evaluation of whole systems and placed-based approaches, enhancing understanding of how to address inequalities in physical activity, by capturing and understanding the current conditions within place.
- Share insight and learning from across the system to co-produce solutions.

The initial Birmingham partnership:



The Active Birmingham Approach

Our Vision - *What we want to achieve:*

To create a city where physical activity is the norm; inequalities are reduced; systems are changed to remove barriers; and sport and physical activity is accessible and integrated into daily life.

Our Mission - *Why we exist:*

Using the games as a catalyst we will continue to use an adaptive approach and to tackle inequalities in, and barriers to physical activity by focusing on the 3 key priority areas:

- 1) Building sector integration
- 2) Strengthening community and individual capacities
- 3) Tackling structural inequalities

These are aligned to the NELP conceptual framework interconnected areas where action to address inequalities often takes place.



Meet Our Champion

Antonio Henry - info@madementorscic.com

MADE CIC (Mentoring, Arts, Development & Education) is a community-focused organisation dedicated to empowering young people and strengthening communities through meaningful relationships, creative engagement, and personal development.

We deliver mentoring, youth development, and community programmes that support individuals to build confidence, resilience, and positive life pathways. Our work focuses on early intervention, emotional wellbeing, and providing safe spaces where young people feel heard, valued, and supported.

Through one-to-one mentoring, group programmes, school partnerships, and community outreach, MADE CIC helps young people develop life skills, improve decision-making, and move towards education, employment, and personal growth.

Our approach is relationship-led, trauma-informed, and rooted in real community experience — working alongside families, schools, and partners to create lasting, positive change.



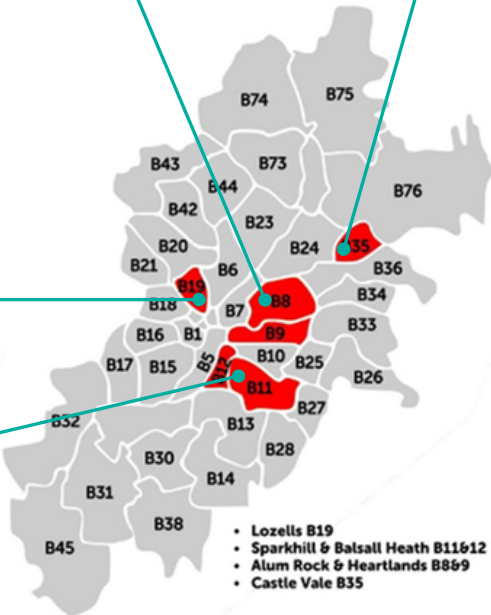
Map of Anchor Locations

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 The Pioneer Group

SPORTS KEY

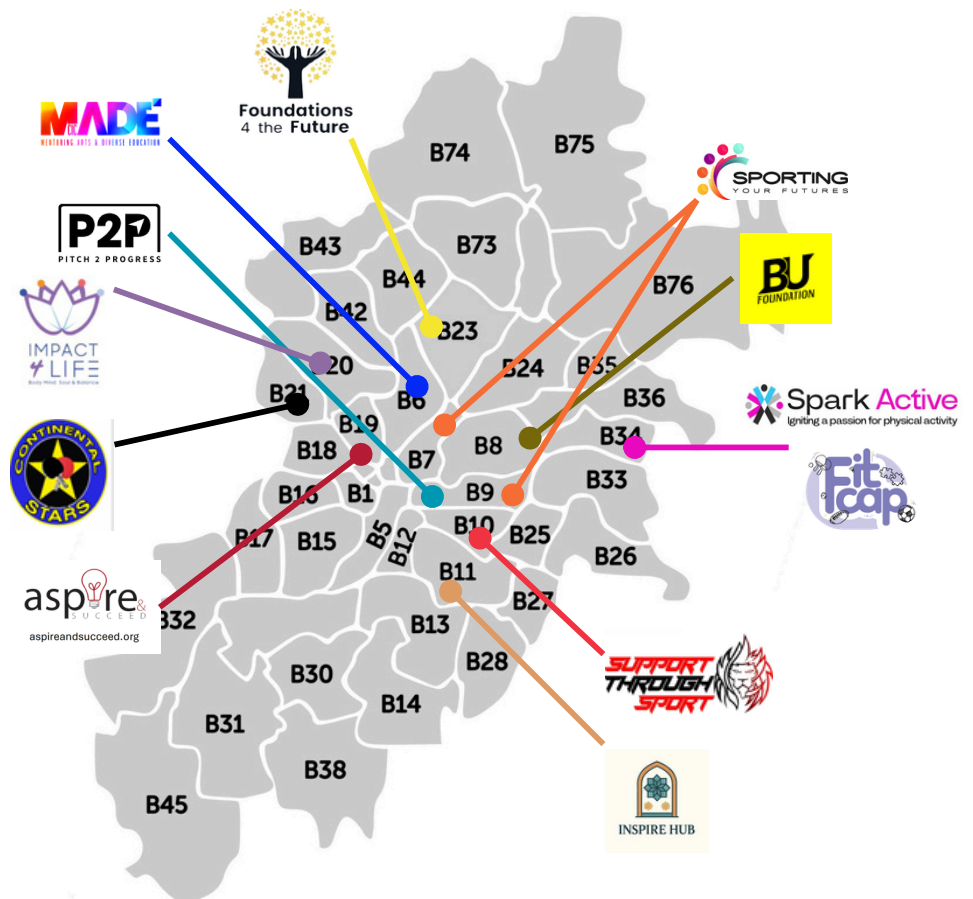
TOGETHER ST PAULS TRUST



ACTIVE BIRMINGHAM

Map of Champion Locations

- Shard End B34
- Heartlands B9
- Bordesley Green B9
- Aston B6
- Small Heath B10
- Sparkhill B11
- Balsall Heath West B12
- Birchfield B20
- Gravelly Hill B23
- Newtown B19
- Handsworth B21
- Nechells B7
- Ward End B8



Active Birmingham Areas Map

Existing areas and areas of potential expansion



- LDP Areas (6) █
- CAC Areas (5) █
- LAP Areas (5) █

Original Anchors (Red/Pink)

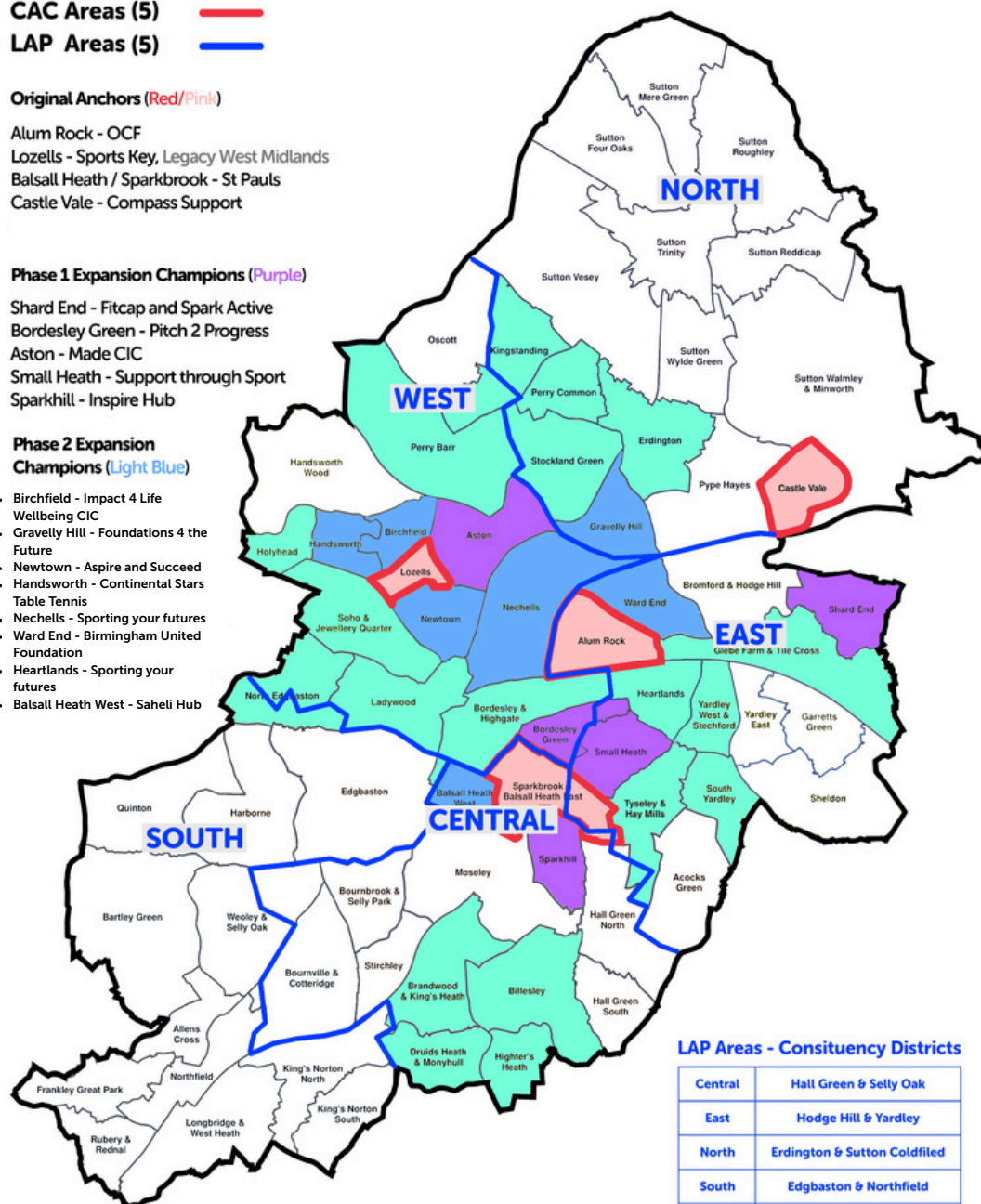
- Alum Rock - OCF
- Lozells - Sports Key, Legacy West Midlands
- Balsall Heath / Sparkbrook - St Pauls
- Castle Vale - Compass Support

Phase 1 Expansion Champions (Purple)

- Shard End - Fitcap and Spark Active
- Bordesley Green - Pitch 2 Progress
- Aston - Made CIC
- Small Heath - Support through Sport
- Sparkhill - Inspire Hub

Phase 2 Expansion Champions (Light Blue)

- Birchfield - Impact 4 Life Wellbeing CIC
- Gravelly Hill - Foundations 4 the Future
- Newtown - Aspire and Succeed
- Handsworth - Continental Stars Table Tennis
- Nechells - Sporting your futures
- Ward End - Birmingham United Foundation
- Heartlands - Sporting your futures
- Balsall Heath West - Saheli Hub



LAP Areas - Constituency Districts

Central	Hall Green & Selly Oak
East	Hodge Hill & Yardley
North	Erdington & Sutton Coldfield
South	Edgbaston & Northfield
West	Ladywood & Perry Barr

Consultation Approach: How and Why?

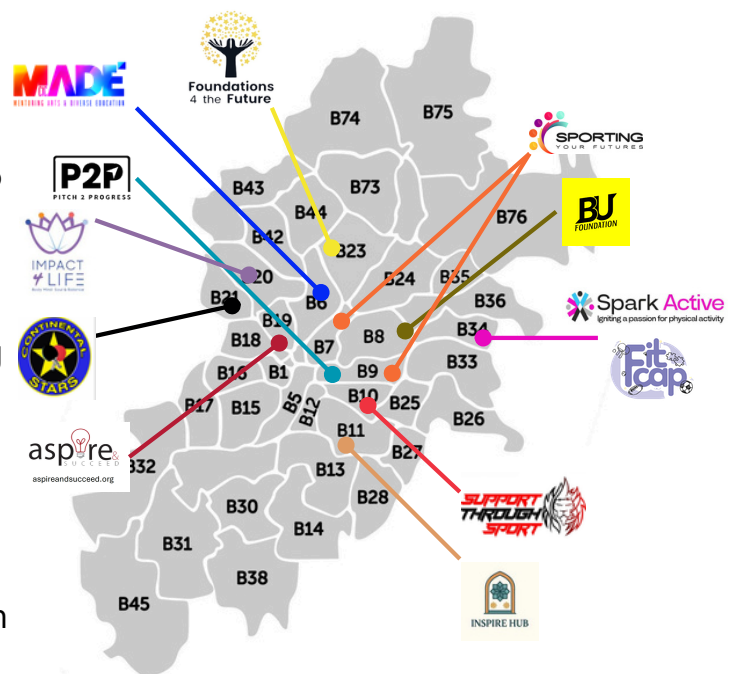
Why Consultation Was Needed?

To ensure that Active Birmingham's approach reflects real local needs, we needed to undertake consultation in priority wards. The aim was to measure the needs and capacity of providers in each place, so that investment and resources are directed to the right areas and priorities.

The consultation enabled us to:

- Gather community-led insight to inform local delivery plans.
- Understand the current landscape of provision, gaps, and opportunities.
- Identify the barriers and enablers to physical activity across different communities.
- Build a stronger evidence base to guide place-based decision-making and ensure our actions are targeted, equitable, and sustainable.

This approach ensures that future investment and collaboration are driven by lived experience and grounded in what matters most to people and providers in each place.



Why Anchors and Champions delivered the Consultation?

Our Active Birmingham Anchor Organisations and Champions were the natural starting point for community consultation. The anchors and champions are trusted organisations and associated individuals who are already embedded within their communities. Due to the ‘frontline’ work carried out by these organisations, they are uniquely positioned to understand the needs and priorities of their local communities, and are ideally suited to connect with people at a grassroots level.

Anchors and champions were selected to lead the consultation because:

- They are trusted people with deep relationships with and credibility in their neighbourhoods.
- They form an integral part of their community and have been shaped by it
- They exist to benefit their local people.
- They enable authentic and honest conversations, ensuring that insight gathered is genuine and reflects real community priorities.
- They can bridge the gap between system and community, building trust and understanding on both sides. For example they can translate system language and concepts (eg. the Maturity Matrix or National Evaluation tools) into terms that are meaningful and accessible to local people.
- By empowering anchors to lead, the consultation became more inclusive, culturally relevant, and grounded in the realities of place, strengthening local ownership and buy-in for the next stage of Active Birmingham’s development.



How Anchors and Champions delivered the consultation?

Objectives and Scope

The anchors and champions were asked to:

- Co-design engagement objectives and scope for the community engagement strategy.
- Engage at least five sport & physical activity organisations and a minimum of three cross-sector stakeholders (e.g. local councillors, housing, police, transport) using a survey tool to better understand the conditions helping to address physical activity inequalities in place and to identify the key barriers and enablers.
- Introduce the Active Birmingham approach, brokering connections and opportunities for local organisations to get involved (using a provided slide deck and stakeholder comms).
- Deepen understanding of place, feeding insight into locality action plans and brokering further connections with community groups, networks, and systems partners.

Areas of Exploration

Through workshops, conversations, and local mapping, anchors and champions explored:

- Current context, priorities, and challenges for tackling physical inactivity.
- Barriers and enablers to participation in physical activity.
- Capacity and capability of local workforce, volunteers, and organisations.
- Cultural and social norms that shape wellbeing and physical activity behaviour.
- Assets and environments that support active lifestyles.
- Examples of community-led or co-produced initiatives already working well.
- Levels of cross-sector collaboration and leadership, including key networks and forums.
- Opportunities and gaps for better communication, promotion, and joint working around physical activity and wellbeing.

The Survey Tool

- The National Evaluation and Learning Partnership (NELP) have identified a number of features or ‘conditions’ that may be necessary for place-based approaches to address inequalities in physical activity.
- The framework for the questions helped to engage partners and places with the 9 conditions for change
- The purpose of the questionnaire / survey is to better understand the conditions helping to address physical activity inequalities in place and to identify the key barriers and enablers.



Click [here](#) to access more info on the NELP Conceptual Model or scan the QR code



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Consultation Findings



1. Identifying Barriers and Enablers

Barriers

- Low awareness of existing physical activity opportunities across Aston.
- Residents not engaging with activities, creating a pre-engagement barrier to feedback.
- Cost of activities, sessions, and facility hire.
- Low confidence and fear of intimidation, particularly in gym-based environments.
- Lack of familiarity with physical activity settings and equipment.
- Cultural and religious norms limiting participation, especially for women in mixed spaces.
- Limited promotion and inconsistent marketing of available provision.

Enablers

- Trusted relationships between organisations and community members.
- Word-of-mouth promotion within local communities.
- Free or low-cost, locally delivered activities.
- Safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments.
- Women-only sessions and culturally sensitive provision.
- Social, enjoyable activities that prioritise connection as well as physical activity.
- Local delivery in familiar and accessible settings



2. Organisational Policies, Processes, and Structures

- Safeguarding policies exist but are inconsistently applied.
- Limited understanding of safeguarding concepts such as professional curiosity.
- Policies are often theoretical rather than embedded in day-to-day practice.
- Smaller organisations lack clear templates and guidance.
- Few formal place-based policies are in place.
- Learning and compliance processes are largely informal.

Consultation Findings



3. Capacity and Capability

- Organisations have strong community engagement skills.

Gaps exist in technical skills, including:

- Safeguarding implementation
- Digital marketing and promotion
- Bid writing
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Limited confidence in delivering inclusive and alternative fitness approaches.
- Demand for practical, hands-on, locally delivered training.
- Networking opportunities seen as critical to ongoing peer support.



4. Collaboration

- Partnerships are mainly ad hoc or event-based.
- No regular Aston-wide forum for physical activity organisations.
- Limited coordination and shared learning between organisations.
- Minimal resource sharing (venues, equipment, expertise).
- Lack of an ongoing communication platform to sustain collaboration.



5. Leadership

- Leadership concentrated in one or two individuals within organisations.
- High dependency on key individuals creates organisational fragility.
- Limited succession planning or distributed leadership models.
- Feedback from communities is mostly informal.
- Few formal mechanisms for community voice or co-leadership.
- Opportunity to connect emerging leaders with experienced mentors.



6. Community-Led Action

- Community feedback informs delivery informally.
- Limited structured co-design with system partners.
- High demand for successful programmes exceeds funded capacity.
- Short-term funding restricts sustainability of effective activities.
- Programmes often end despite clear evidence of success.
- Coalition bids and pooled resources seen as a solution for continuity.

Consultation Findings



7. Cultures and Practices

- Social, friendly, and welcoming atmospheres encourage participation.
- Strong emphasis on relationship-based engagement.
- Volunteers play a central role in delivery.
- Volunteer burnout is a recurring issue.
- Expansion of programmes often not matched with additional support.
- Need for better volunteer care and recognition.



8. Built and Natural Environments

- Limited availability of affordable and suitable venues.
- Competition for space across the local area.
- Reliance on organisations' own venues restricts scale.
- Free spaces are rare and difficult to secure.
- Cost of venue hire is a major barrier.
- Need for shared space directories and small adaptation budgets.



9. Embedded Learning

- Learning is shared internally within organisations.
- Knowledge exchange between organisations is minimal.
- Learning is largely informal and relationship-led.
- Trust is seen as a prerequisite for sharing learning.
- Limited use of structured learning or evaluation frameworks.
- Stronger networks could support more consistent embedded learning.



Recommendations

2. Organisational Policies, Processes, and Structures

- Embed inclusive and culturally sensitive design principles into organisational policies and delivery guidance.
- Develop simple templates to support clear communication of activities, expectations, and participant journeys.
- Provide guidance to help organisations communicate safeguarding, accessibility, and inclusion clearly to participants.
- Ensure promotional and engagement approaches align with safeguarding and equality responsibilities.

3. Capacity and Capability

- Invest in simple, accessible marketing support for grassroots organisations.
- Build digital marketing and community promotion skills into capacity-building workshops.
- Support organisations to confidently describe activities in clear, non-technical language.
- Strengthen workforce confidence in engaging new and underrepresented participants.
- Provide practical tools to support inclusive promotion and outreach.

4. Collaboration

- Coordinate promotion of activities through an Aston-wide forum to reduce duplication and improve reach.
- Encourage joint marketing and shared messaging across organisations.
- Use shared platforms to amplify word-of-mouth promotion and trusted community messaging.
- Support collective approaches to engaging underrepresented groups.
- Share good practice on inclusive engagement across organisations.

5. Leadership

- Encourage leaders to prioritise visibility, inclusion, and accessibility in strategic planning.
- Support leaders to act as advocates and champions within their communities.
- Embed responsibility for inclusive promotion across leadership teams, not just individuals.
- Use mentoring to strengthen confidence in leading inclusive engagement approaches.

Recommendations

6. Community-Led Action

- Use community connectors to shape how activities are promoted and described.
- Involve community members in co-designing inclusive and culturally appropriate sessions.
- Ensure promotion reflects lived experience and local language.
- Strengthen community ownership of outreach and engagement activity.

7. Cultures and Practices

- Maintain welcoming, non-intimidating cultures that are reinforced through clear communication.
- Ensure first-time participant experiences are friendly, supportive, and well-signposted.
- Promote social connection as part of activity marketing.
- Reinforce inclusive practice through everyday interactions and messaging.

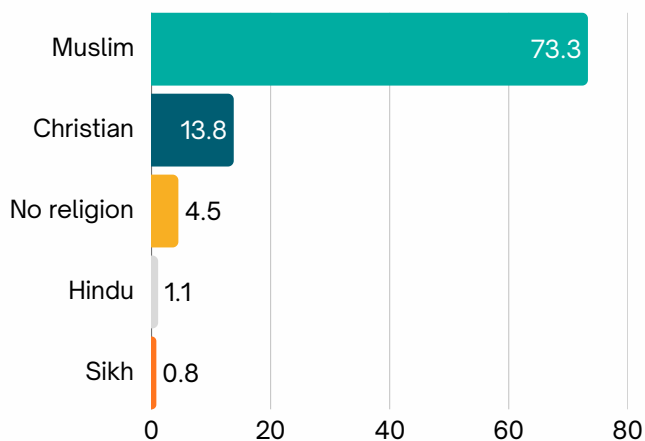
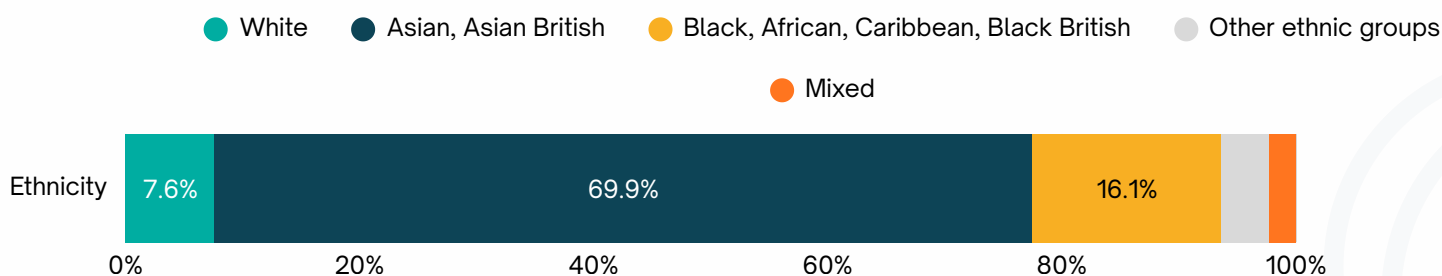
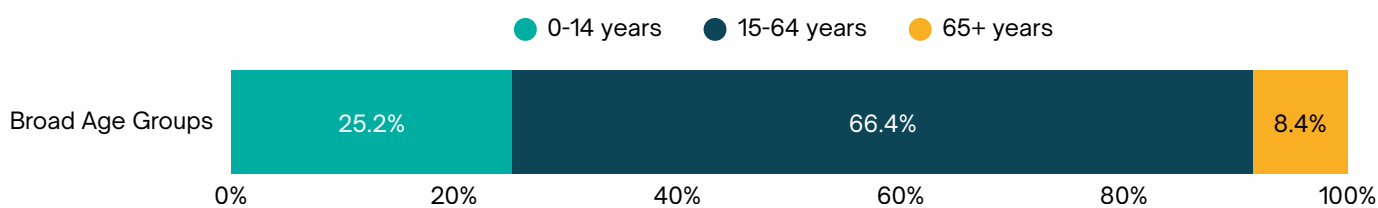
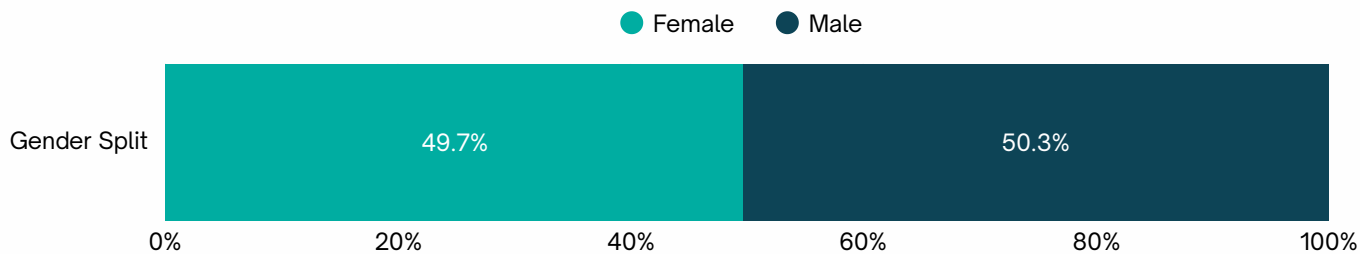
8. Built and Natural Environments

- Clearly communicate how venues are used to create safe, inclusive, and culturally appropriate spaces.
- Promote venue adaptations (e.g. women-only spaces, privacy screens) as part of activity marketing.
- Use promotion to reassure participants about accessibility, safety, and comfort.

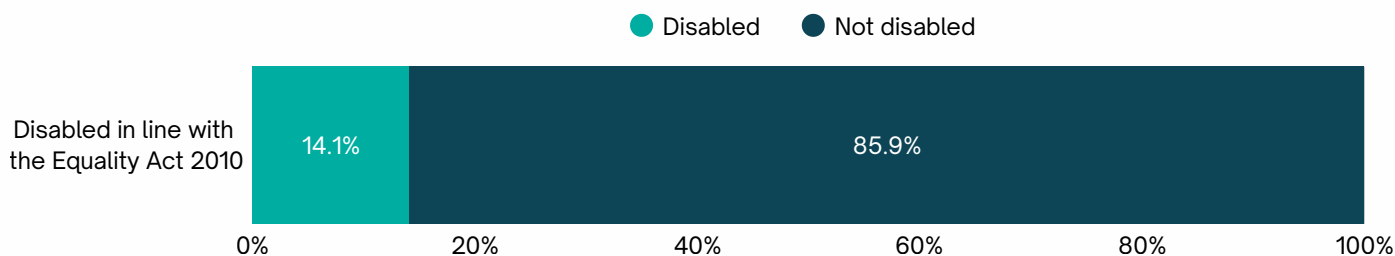
9. Embedded Learning

- Capture and share learning on what promotional approaches increase participation.
- Use peer networks to share successful engagement and outreach practice.
- Encourage reflection on how activities are described and promoted.
- Embed learning on inclusion and visibility into ongoing improvement cycles.

Local Insight: Aston



Where 1 is the most deprived and 69 is the least



What is Active Birmingham Doing with the Knowledge?

Empowering Local Voices

- Hosting forums for community insights to shape future projects.
- Amplifying local voices in decision-making.

Enhancing Community Connections

- Community Connector roles (Callam and Katie) to improve collaboration and outreach.
- Updating resource maps to better reflect local assets and needs.

Securing Meaningful Funding

- Investing in tools like the Activity Finder
- Using leftover funds to maximise impact.

Raising Awareness

- Sharing knowledge through platforms like the Council's 'City Observatory'.
- Showcasing successes wherever we can

Encouraging Reflection

- Partnering with organisations such as WMCA, Sheffield Hallam University, and Sport England to gather insights and track progress.
- Helping orgs feedback so decisions are aligned with community priorities.

**ACTIVE
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Activity Finder

activebirmingham.co.uk



Getting more people moving



**ACTIVE
BIRMINGHAM**

Activity Finder

Discover Local Activities

Easily find sports and physical activity sessions near you, filter by sport, activity or location.

Connect and Get Involved

A hub for volunteers and professionals to link with local clubs and community groups.

Free Promotion

Clubs and organisations can list their activities for free to reach more people.

Support Health and Wellbeing

Healthcare and referral agencies can refer patients and service users to local activities for prevention and recovery.

Contact: info@sportbirmingham.org

For help guidance and information



Sign up to the Sport Birmingham Newsletter to discover more about local sport and physical activity



The Active Birmingham Activity Finder allows local sport and physical activity organisations to list their activities for free. It allows members of the public to search for a huge range of activities available in their area.

To access Activity Finder, scan the QR or click the link below. The video link provides guidance on how to list your activity.

activebirmingham.co.uk Click [here](#) for guidance video



Check out Active Birmingham Activity Finder - a fantastic and free way to promote your sport or physical activity organisation.

For more information and support in connection with Activity Finder contact Jacky White, Community Engagement Officer
Email: jacky.white@sportbirmingham.org

Ways to Connect

The Active Birmingham Network hold regular bi-monthly Operations Group Meetings. All network members and stakeholders are warmly welcomed.

The shared values of the Ops Group

- Inclusive
- Connectivity
- Needs Driven
- Co-Designed
- Enabling



The shared purpose of the Ops Group

- Nurture communities to enable and empower them to create opportunities to meet their needs
- To share networks, opportunities and champion each other's work and Active Birmingham
- To influence local place strategies
- To consider target groups / priorities in areas
- To consider our legacy and ensure sustainable outcomes are achieved.
- To encourage communities to be less competitive and more collaborative – connected to funding
- Promote leadership & upskilling – linked to commonwealth legacy
- To connect national offers to local areas based on need (fingertips data)
- To amplify & act on voices of the community (push to influence policy & strategy)

Join the Ops Group Stakeholder Partnership for:

- Invites to bi-monthly face-to-face Ops Meetings
- Active Birmingham updates and playback
- Place-based working and collaboration



For more details about the Ops Group and to join you can get in touch with our Active Birmingham Connectors

Callam Dunne, Development Manager (Youth & Community)

Email: callam.dunne@sportbirmingham.org

Katie Bolam, Activity Manager - Communities & Placemaking

Email: katie.bolam@theaws.org



Further Information



You can learn more about Sport England's place-based strategy [here](#)

Want to know more about your place?
Click [here](#) for Census data

Buddle - Learning and Support for sports clubs and organisations. Click [here](#) for more information.

Get Grants - Funding advice, training and support for sports clubs and organisations. Click [here](#) for more information.

Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) - Supporting the voluntary and community sector. Click [here](#) for more information.

Sport Birmingham website - A broad range of support and information including [funding](#), [events](#) and [community support](#) .

Street Games - national charity transforming young people's lives through sport. Click [here](#) for more information.