

# CONSULTATION PLAYBACK

# BALSALL HEATH WEST



Sport  
Birmingham

sāhēlī hub

 **ACTIVE**  
**BIRMINGHAM**

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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.

The logo for Saheli Hub features the word 'saheli' in a lowercase, pink, sans-serif font with a modern, slightly irregular style. The word 'hub' is written to the right of 'saheli' in a similar lowercase, pink, sans-serif font.



# Meet Our Champion

Rabia Khatun - [rabia@saheli.co.uk](mailto:rabia@saheli.co.uk)

## About us:

Saheli Hub is a community-based organisation dedicated to supporting the health, wellbeing, and empowerment of women and men from diverse backgrounds. Our aim is to help people become more physically active and improve their overall health in a culturally appreciative and inclusive environment.

We recognise that cultural values, language, and community connections play an important role in wellbeing. Through our activities, workshops, and community programmes, we create safe and welcoming spaces where participants feel comfortable engaging in physical activity, learning about healthy lifestyles, and building social connections. Our approach focuses on reducing barriers to participation and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to improve their health and wellbeing.

## Key contact:

My name is Rabia and I am the Centre Manager for Saheli Hub. As a Community Champion, I facilitate and co-ordinate activities that provide opportunities for local women and to become more active. My role focuses on supporting people to improve their health and wellbeing by creating inclusive opportunities that are accessible and culturally appropriate for our community.



# Active Birmingham Areas Map

## Anchors and Champions



- LDP Areas (6)** ■
- CAC Areas (17)** ■ ■ ■
- LAP Areas (5)** ■

### Original Anchors (Red/Pink)

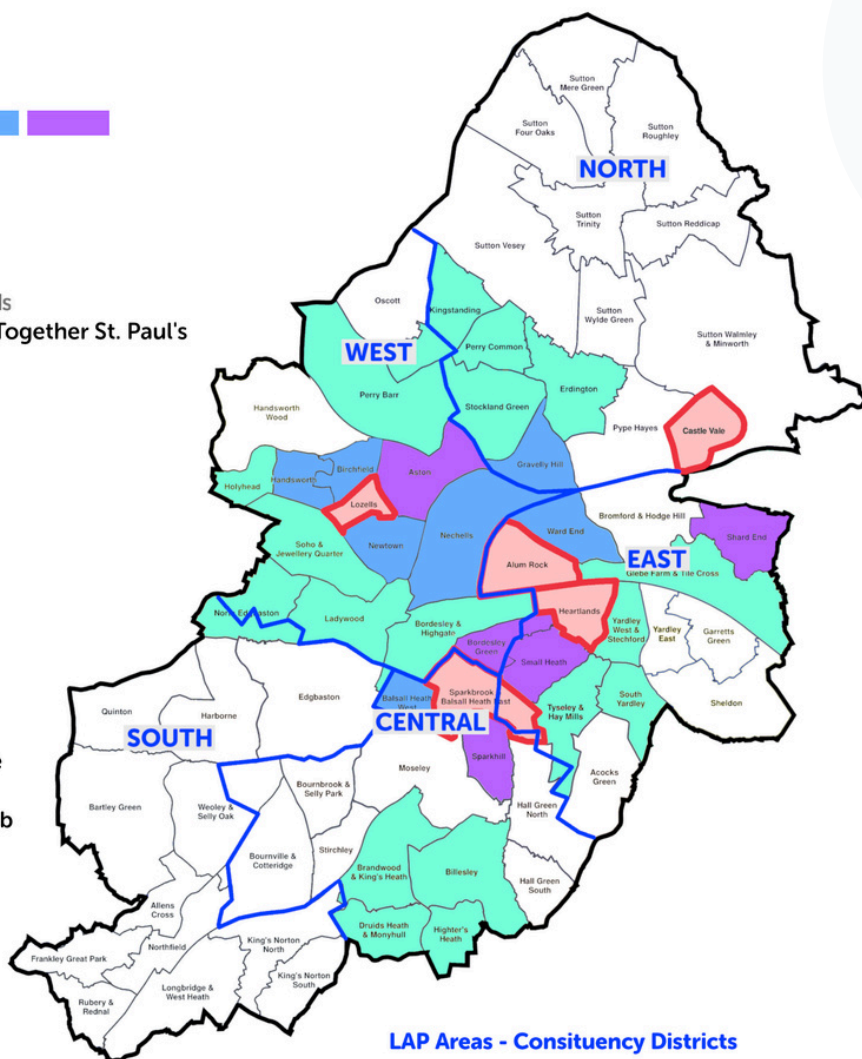
- Alum Rock - OCF
- Lozells - Sports Key, Legacy West Midlands
- Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East - Together St. Paul's
- Castle Vale - The Pioneer Group

### 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)

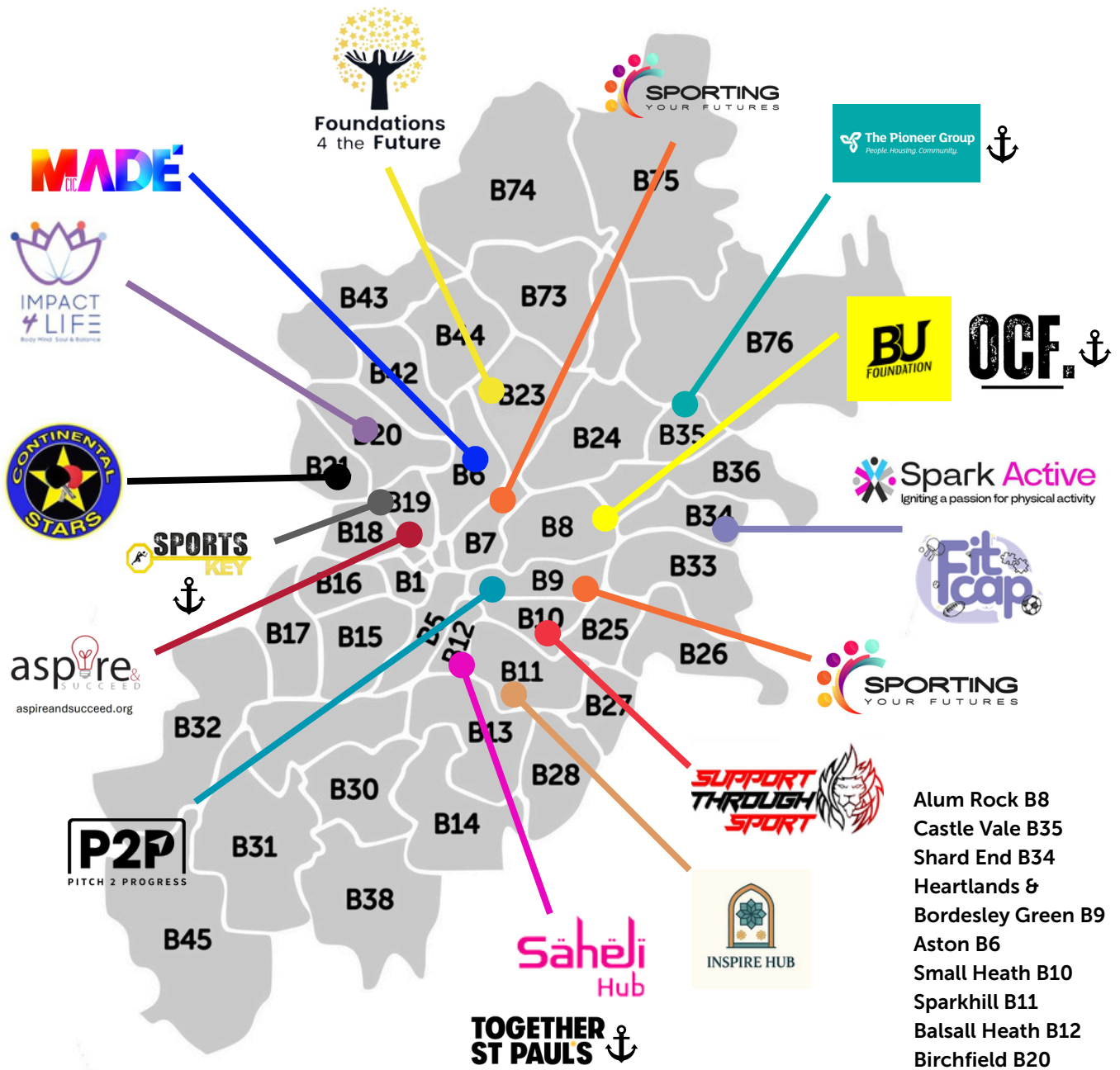
- Balsall Heath West - Saheli Hub
- Birchfield - Impact 4 Life
- Gravelly Hill - Foundations 4 the Future
- Newtown - Aspire & Succeed
- Handsworth - Continental Stars TT Club
- Nechells - Sporting Your Futures
- Ward End - B U Foundation
- Heartlands - Sporting Your Futures




LAP Areas - Constituency Districts

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

# Map of Anchor and Champion Locations



- Alum Rock B8
- Castle Vale B35
- Shard End B34
- Heartlands & Bordesley Green B9
- Aston B6
- Small Heath B10
- Sparkhill B11
- Balsall Heath B12
- Birchfield B20
- Gravelly Hill B23
- Newtown B19
- Handsworth B21
- Nechells B7
- Ward End B8
- Lozells B19

 Indicates Original Anchor Organisation

# 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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# Saheli Hub summary of consultation approach, benefits and outcomes

- Organisations were invited to a networking opportunity and to participate in a group consultation, those that could not attend, had a 1-1 via Teams. 1-1s were easier to stay on track with the survey questions but there were some wider benefits to bringing the group together. Inviting organisations to enjoy some food and to connect worked well.
- It was helpful to explain to organisations what Active Birmingham is, Saheli Hubs role and how all the organisations' answers will support.
- The approach allowed time for organisations to come together, share insights and create spaces for honest conversations.
- Saheli Hub was able to reflect on the differences and challenges that other organisations face.
- There was sharing of information including funding opportunities - also ask for connectors to share more funding opportunities in good time and potentially a WhatsApp group could support.
- There was a lot of agreement on the barrier and enablers that were in place.
- There has been brokering of new relationships and discussions around ways to connect services.
- There is the potential to use the survey ongoing to build evidence around the nine conditions.
- There is potential to reach out to other identified partners that were not able to engage at this time and for peer support from anchors and champions.
- Some organisations required some simplification of language for the survey tool.
- Saheli Hub are connected to Together St Pauls who are Anchor for Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East and lead for Central LAP supporting further connectivity.
- The Activity Finder is a good tool to understand what is on and there is opportunity to promote this further to organisations and participants.

# Saheli Hub summary of consultation approach, benefits and outcomes

## Balsall Heath West : Top barriers & enablers to physical activity

### Top 3 Barriers

1. Limited Funding & Resources - Not enough funding or capacity to run regular, consistent physical-activity sessions.
2. Lack of Culturally Appropriate & Women-Only Opportunities - Limited access to activities that feel safe, appropriate, and welcoming for women and girls.
3. Low Confidence, Safety Concerns & Inadequate Spaces - Residents report low confidence, concerns about safety, and a lack of suitable, well-maintained spaces to be active.

### Top 3 Enablers

1. Trusted Local Organisations & Familiar Community Spaces - People are more likely to engage when activities are delivered by organisations they know and trust.
2. Free or Low-Cost Activities in Safe, Accessible Places - Affordable sessions in clean, welcoming environments significantly increase participation.
3. Community-Designed Activities Programmes shaped by local feedback — rather than imposed top-down — are better attended and more sustainable.

# Consultation Findings



## 1. Identifying Barriers and Enablers

### Barriers

- Limited accessibility for vulnerable populations, particularly children.
- Cultural and gender norms prevent some women from participating in mixed-gender or male-led classes; socially isolated individuals are less likely to engage.
- Preconceived attitudes toward healthy eating and physical activity limit participation.
- Low confidence or fear of trying new activities in unfamiliar environments.
- Lack of funding restricts the provision of classes and services.
- Broader structural barriers:
  - Cycling not a cultural norm for some groups
  - Low visibility of physical activity in the community
  - Safety concerns (road traffic, feeling unsafe at night)
  - Lack of secure bike storage
  - Youth disengagement and high screen time
  - Poor health linked to housing and deprivation
  - Benefit sanctions and financial hardship
  - Refugee/asylum status limiting access to public funds
  - Domestic abuse and violence
  - Digital exclusion limiting access to services
- Cost of activities
- Lack of safe local spaces
- Mental health challenges

### Enablers

- Women-only sessions led by female instructors increase comfort and participation.
- Free or low-cost public spaces (parks, community centres) encourage engagement.
- Familiar locations and trusted local organisations build confidence and regular participation.
- Culturally appropriate provision (women-only, men-only, family groups).
- Positive role models and visible local participation encourage engagement.
- Community-led initiatives, such as cycle training and access to bikes, support practical participation.

# Consultation Findings



## 2. Organisational Policies, Processes, and Structures

### Data Capture & Insight

- Attendance data tracked by age, gender, and postcode.
- Informal feedback from participants and families complements surveys and evaluation forms.
- Evidence captured includes links between poor housing, health outcomes, and social deprivation.
- University-supported research helps identify granular barriers and inequalities.
- Some organisations capture data through public surveys, feedback discussions, or focus groups.
- Learning is shared with partners (schools, local council, community leaders) to inform planning.

### Partnerships & Engagement

- Organisations engage with multiple grassroots groups, schools, parks, community forums, and faith centres.

Partnership working includes:

- Police and council services (Occupational Therapy, referral pathways)
- Health and lifestyle support providers
- Neighbourhood collaboration groups and alliances

Engagement includes:

- Regular conversations with families, discussions with schools, and feedback loops from community members.

### Operational Policies

- Safeguarding procedures, risk assessments, and DBS checks for staff and volunteers.
- Partnership agreements and structured forums support shared planning and community oversight.

# Consultation Findings



## 3. Capacity and Capability

### Skills & Attributes

- Staff/volunteers require basic health and wellbeing knowledge, cultural competence, and community trust-building.
- Key skills: safeguarding, youth engagement, trauma awareness, outreach, coaching, first aid, health advocacy.
- Trustworthiness and local credibility are critical for engagement.
- Staff must be able to adapt to cultural and gender sensitivities in sessions.

### Gaps & Challenges

- Limited specialist physical activity expertise; physical activity is often secondary to other service delivery.
- Insufficient capacity due to small staffing, funding pressures, and competing priorities.
- Gaps include youth engagement (screen time reduction), healthy eating promotion, and trauma-informed practice.
- Limited indoor space, rising costs, and infrastructure constraints.

### Tools & Resources

- Practical activity-based resources: bicycles, cycle training, local space management.
- Guidance from local authorities, safeguarding training, FA training resources, and community networks.
- Emphasis on lived experience as a tool to encourage engagement



## 4. Collaboration

### Approaches & Benefits

- Collaborative initiatives with local organisations deliver culturally and socially inclusive physical activity and wellbeing sessions (e.g. cycling, Tai Chi, cooking workshops.)
- Collaboration supports wider reach, resource sharing, and lifestyle change.

### Challenges

- Limited time and staff capacity restrict partnership development.
- Infrastructure constraints and safety concerns reduce participation.
- Alignment of timelines and avoiding tokenistic engagement.

### Networks

- Local networks include women-focused groups, community forums, schools, parks, parents, local leaders, and grassroots sports networks.
- Alliances and collaborative forums support neighbourhood planning, event delivery, and wider engagement.

# Consultation Findings



## 5. Leadership

### Distributed Leadership

- Leadership is shared via membership voting, steering groups, volunteer roles, and community advisory boards.
- Programmes support young people's leadership development, fostering future community leaders.

### Local Influence

- Community members influence activity design through feedback, discussions, and session input.
- Local leaders include faith leaders, school staff, youth mentors, and ward representatives.

### Barriers & Enablers

- Engagement fatigue and limited time availability.
- Barriers: feeling disconnected from formal representatives, limited inclusivity, and demographic representation gaps.
- Enablers: distributed leadership models, inclusive representation, and collaboration across organisations.



## 6. Community-Led Action

- Services are community-led through trusted spaces, welfare programmes, and partner-run sessions.
- Community ownership includes resident-designed initiatives, participation support, and practical barrier reduction.

### Success Factors

- Accessible, familiar, free locations
- Community involvement and co-design
- Practical support (childcare, travel assistance)
- Visible, locally led initiatives (cycling programmes, park-based sessions)

### Challenges

- Limited resources and volunteer time
- Competing pressures for participants
- Space availability and weather constraints
- Sustaining engagement over time

# Consultation Findings



## 7. Cultures and Practices

### Cultural Awareness

- Cultural norms, gender expectations, and social stigma strongly influence participation.
- Women-only sessions and culturally sensitive delivery increase inclusion.
- Local trusted leaders and community members serve as role models.
- Language barriers and social isolation are obstacles.



## 8. Built and Natural Environments

### Key Spaces & Activation

- Mosques, prayer spaces, warm hubs, schools, parks, and open spaces support structured and informal physical activity.
- Spaces are generally accessible, affordable, and socially supportive.
- Rooms and layouts are adapted to enable safe physical activity.

### Barriers

- Safety concerns (traffic, night-time safety)
- Poor maintenance of parks/play environments
- Limited cycling infrastructure and secure storage
- Cultural discomfort with public spaces

### Enablers

- Free or low-cost spaces
- Social connection through tea/coffee/community groups
- Accessible environments with planned adaptations for inclusivity



## 9. Embedded Learning

### Learning Processes

- Learning embedded through workshops, debriefs, and community feedback.
- Uses practical project insights (e.g., cycling, participation barriers) to improve future delivery.
- Continuous improvement applied even when physical activity is not the primary focus.

### Sharing Learning

- Shared via annual reports, quarterly newsletters, network briefings, and partner updates.
- Learning informs future project planning and community engagement.
- Collaboration with local networks supports knowledge dissemination and practical application.



# Recommendations

## 2. Organisational Policies, Processes and Structures

**Key Insight: Residents experience confusion about available opportunities, and pathways between schools, community venues, and health services are often unclear. Systems for booking venues and monitoring participation are inconsistent.**

- Develop clear local communication systems so residents can easily identify available physical activity opportunities.
- Improve signposting pathways between schools, community venues, health services and activity providers.
- Establish shared monitoring and data collection approaches to better understand participation trends and barriers.
- Strengthen referral systems from health services and community support programmes into physical activity opportunities.
- Improve coordination of venue booking and access processes.
- Encourage organisations to capture feedback and participation data consistently.

## 3. Capacity and Capability

**Key Insight: Staff and volunteers often lack confidence or training to deliver inclusive, community-focused activities, particularly for harder-to-reach groups.**

- Provide training opportunities for staff and volunteers to strengthen inclusive physical activity delivery.
- Develop community activator pathways for local residents to lead or support sessions.
- Support organisations to build volunteer programmes with training and support structures.
- Increase workforce confidence in delivering inclusive activities for diverse communities.
- Provide support to design, evaluate and sustain physical activity programmes.
- Encourage skills development in engaging harder-to-reach groups.



# Recommendations

## 4. Collaboration

**Key Insight: Opportunities for joint working between community organisations, schools, health services, and activity providers are underdeveloped, leading to duplication and gaps in provision.**

- Establish regular local partnership meetings focused on physical activity and community wellbeing.
- Strengthen collaboration between community organisations, schools, health services and activity providers.
- Develop clear referral pathways between community services and activity opportunities.
- Encourage joint programme delivery between organisations.
- Support organisations to share knowledge and good practice through local networks.
- Encourage collaborative funding bids to support sustainable delivery.

## 5. Leadership

**Key Insight: Local leadership exists but is uneven. Residents, young people, and volunteers are underrepresented in shaping activity programmes.**

- Identify and support trusted community members as local activity champions.
- Develop leadership pathways for volunteers and community participants.
- Create opportunities for young people to influence and shape activity programmes.
- Encourage parent involvement and leadership within community activity initiatives.
- Strengthen representation of local residents within decision-making structures.

## 6. Community-Led Action

**Key Insight: Residents want to be more involved in co-designing activities, but lack resources, support, or confidence to lead initiatives.**

- Provide small-scale funding or support for resident-led activity initiatives.
- Encourage co-design approaches where residents contribute ideas for new activities.
- Develop volunteer pathways for residents to lead sessions.
- Support communities to develop ownership of local activity spaces.
- Provide practical support to enable volunteers to sustain programmes.

# Recommendations

## 7. Cultures and Practices

**Key Insight: Some residents face cultural, confidence, or inclusivity barriers, particularly women, older adults, and minority groups. Social connection is as important as the activity itself.**

- Introduce female-only activity sessions where barriers exist.
- Promote welcoming and inclusive environments.
- Ensure activities are delivered in trusted community settings.
- Provide training in culturally responsive engagement.
- Encourage delivery models that prioritise social connection alongside physical activity.

## 8. Built and Natural Environments

**Key Insight: Access to facilities and outdoor spaces is limited by availability, cost, safety, and lack of awareness, limiting opportunities for community activity.**

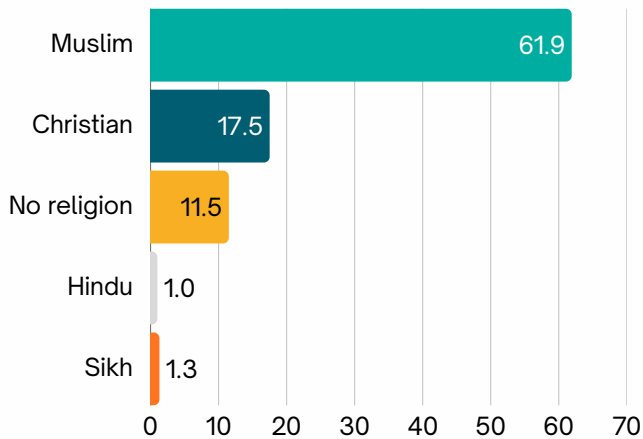
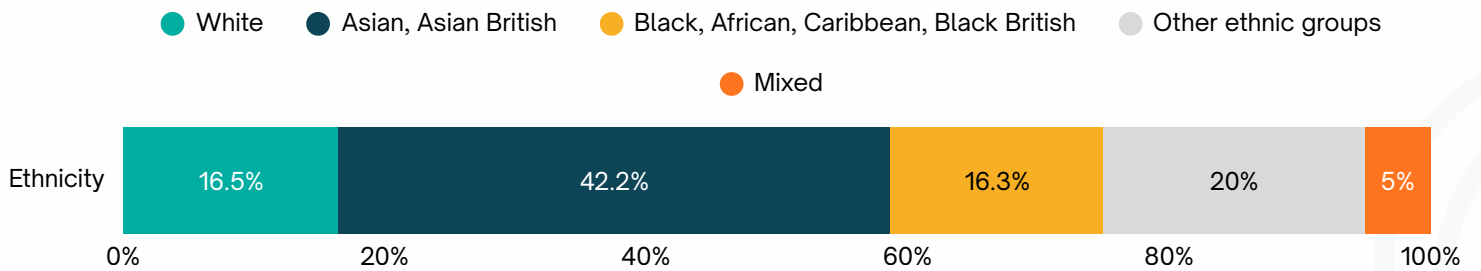
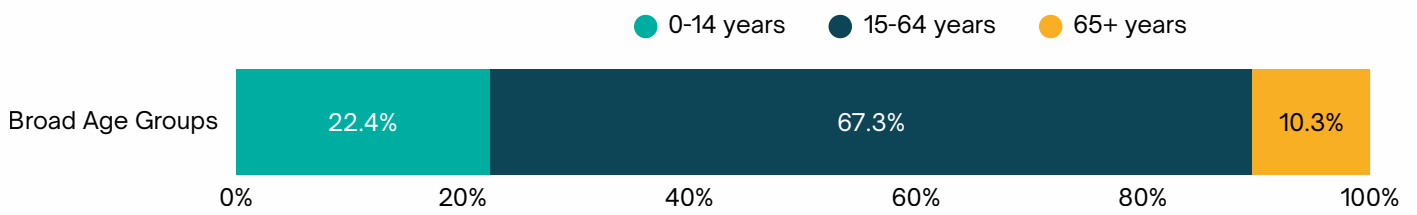
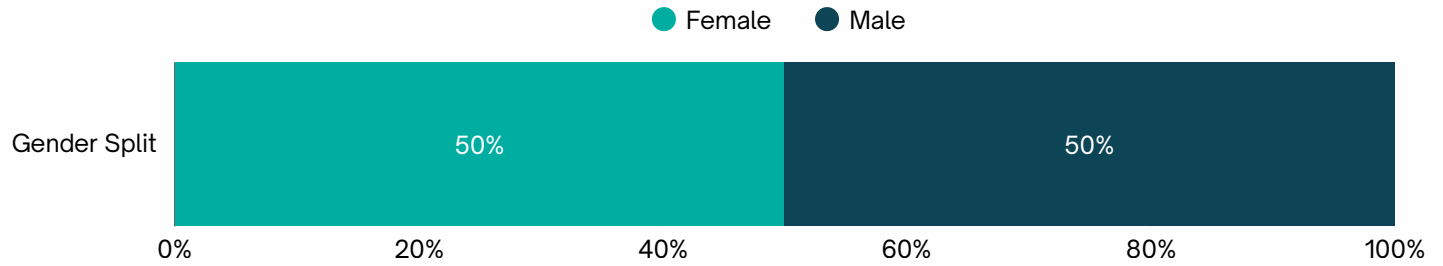
- Increase community access to school facilities outside school hours.
- Support schools as community hubs for physical activity.
- Encourage greater activation of parks and playing fields.
- Address barriers related to facility hire costs.
- Improve coordination and awareness of available local spaces.
- Explore ways to improve safety and accessibility of outdoor spaces.

## 9. Embedded Learning

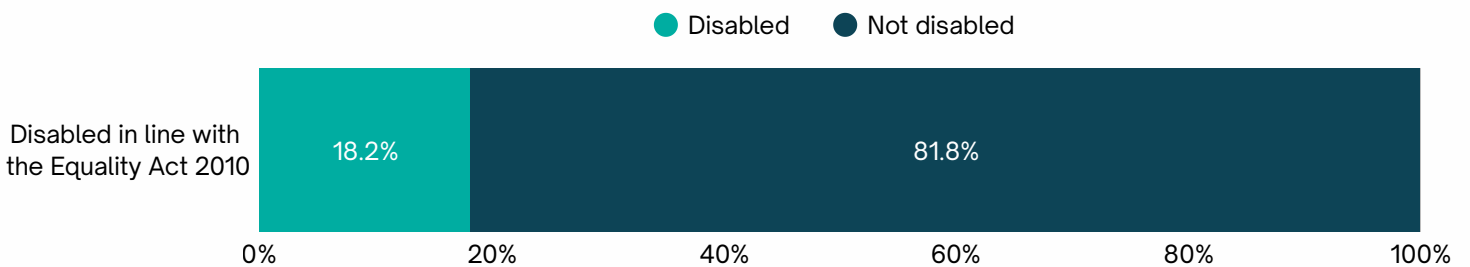
**Key Insight: Organisations capture learning inconsistently, limiting the ability to improve programmes and share good practice.**

- Encourage regular feedback collection from participants and families.
- Develop shared learning opportunities across organisations.
- Support reflection and evaluation processes after programmes or events.
- Strengthen mechanisms for sharing learning through local networks.
- Use insights from community engagement to shape future programme design and funding priorities.

# Local Insight: Balsall Heath West



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.

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# Activity Finder

[activebirmingham.co.uk](http://activebirmingham.co.uk)



Getting more people moving



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## 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](mailto:info@sportbirmingham.org)

For help guidance and information

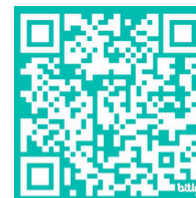
Sign up to the Sport Birmingham Newsletter to discover more about local sport and physical activity



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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:callam.dunne@sportbirmingham.org)

Katie Bolam, Activity Manager - Communities & Placemaking

Email: [katie.bolam@theaws.org](mailto: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.