

CONSULTATION PLAYBACK

BIRCHFIELD



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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

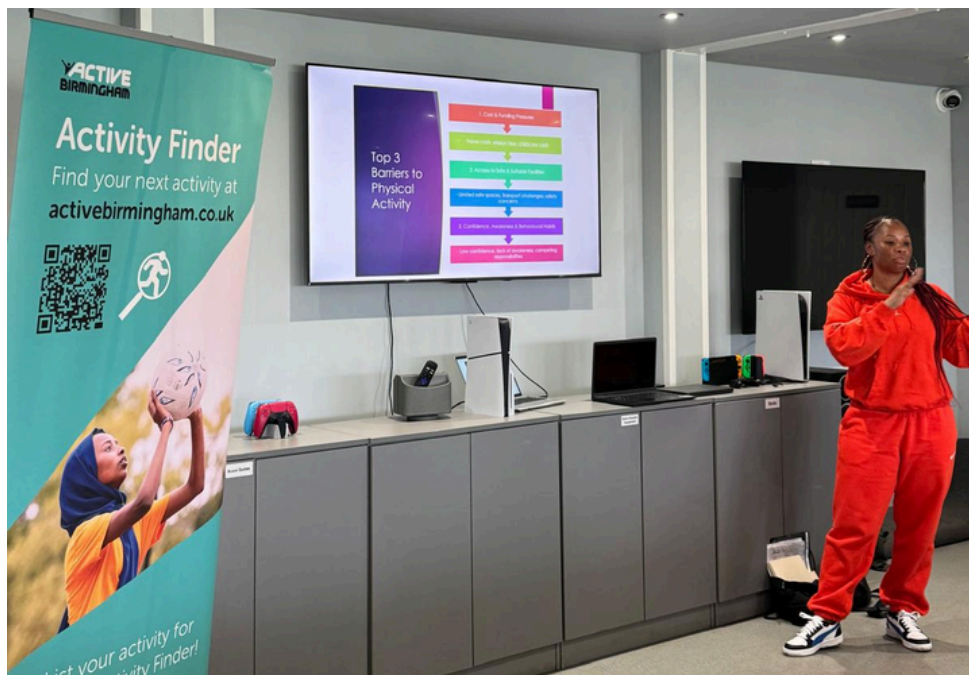
Shamala Antonio - info@impact4life.org.uk

Introduction to Impact 4Life Wellbeing CIC:

Impact 4Life Wellbeing CIC is a multi award-winning Birmingham-based organisation delivering inclusive, community-led fitness, health and wellbeing programmes. We work with diverse and underserved communities to improve physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, reduce health inequalities, and create accessible opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to lead healthier, more active lives.

Champion Introduction:

Hi, I'm Shamala, an award-winning entrepreneur, Founder of Impact 4Life Wellbeing CIC and an Active Birmingham Champion. I'm passionate about bringing people and organisations together to break down barriers to physical activity, reduce health inequalities, and create inclusive opportunities for communities to move more and feel better. I'm really looking forward to connecting and collaborating.



Active Birmingham Areas Map

Anchors and Champions



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

Original Anchors (Red/Pink)

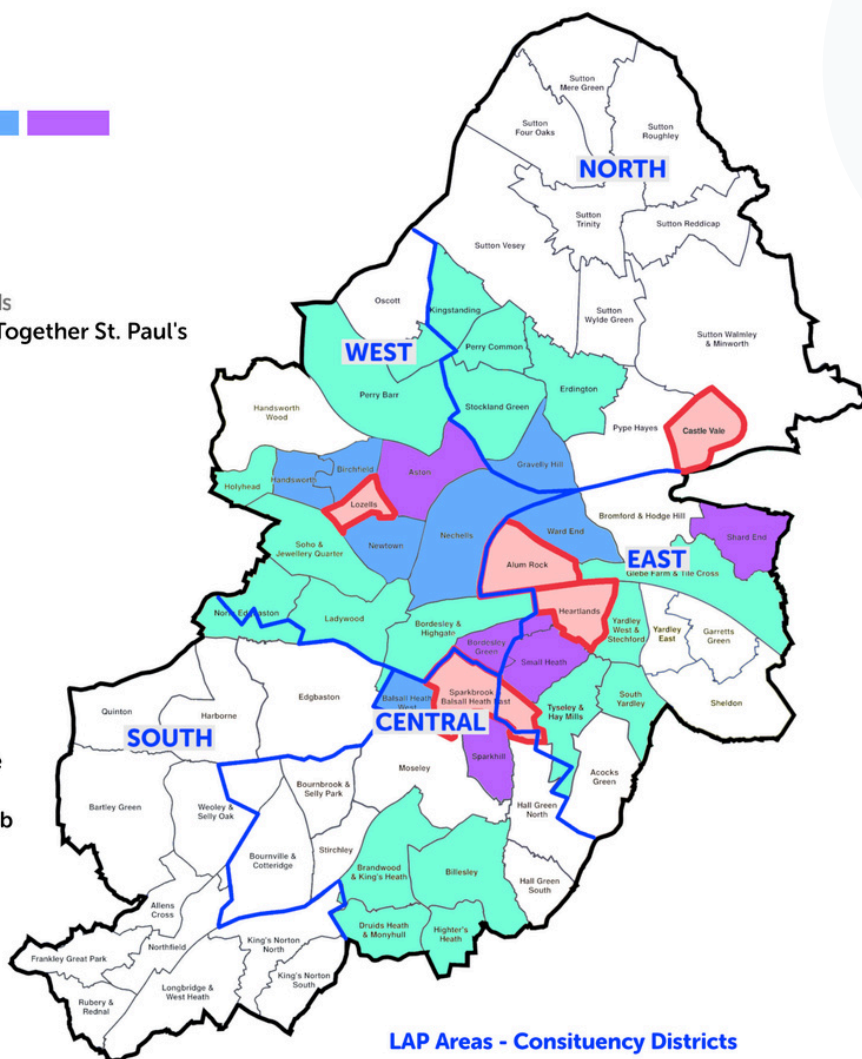
- Alum Rock - OCF
- Lozells - Sports Key, Legacy West Midlands
- Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East - Together St. Paul's
- Castle Vale - The Pioneer Group

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)

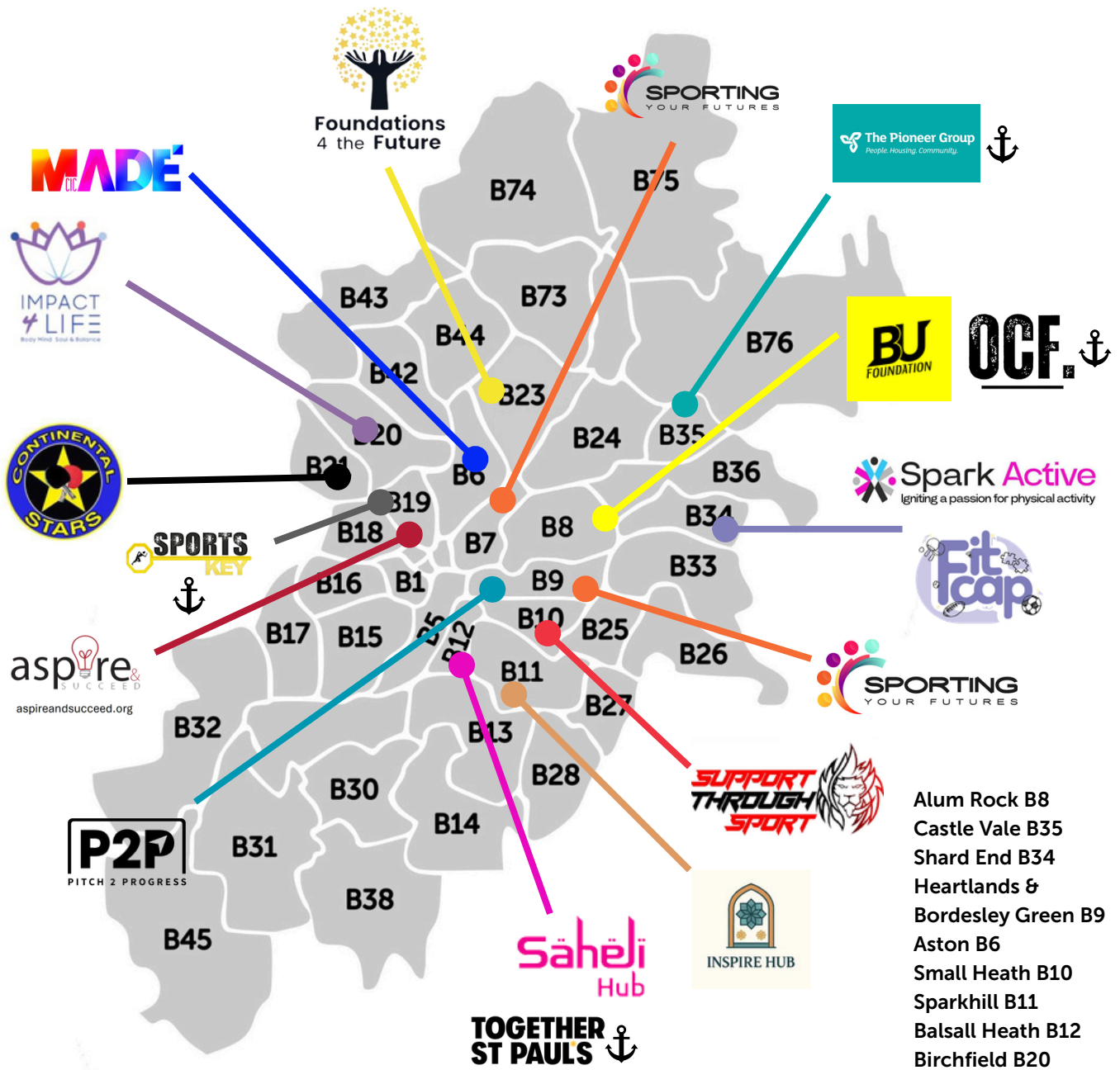
- Balsall Heath West - Saheli Hub
- Birchfield - Impact 4 Life
- Gravelly Hill - Foundations 4 the Future
- Newtown - Aspire & Succeed
- Handsworth - Continental Stars TT Club
- Nechells - Sporting Your Futures
- Ward End - B U Foundation
- Heartlands - Sporting Your Futures



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



billy

Impact 4Life Wellbeing CIC summary of consultation approach, benefits and outcomes

- It has been good to identify and get the views and perspectives on barriers and enablers to physical activity in Birchfield and to put them at the forefront of the work that we are doing. To ensure that services and activities are more accessible.
- It has supported a process for organisations to share their views and to get their voices heard. Also to understand more about Active Birmingham and ways to connect.
- Community capacity and time challenges have demanded both persistence and flexibility - key was ensuring the value of the approach was understood.
- It was important to offer alternative ways to engage in the consultation e.g. email survey and complete in own time, online or via face to face meetings.
- The survey tool supported to collate insight, was useful to email, however quite wordy so I adapted / created a shorter version that worked better for place/organisations capacity requirements and got more detailed responses and better outcomes. Would use for future projects.
- The Active Birmingham stakeholder comms tool was useful to share with participants in the early stages for better understanding of the role of the champion and value of work to place.
- It has been useful to have connector support for brokering new relationships and to allow flex with the initial plans. Also to discuss ideas, share knowledge and insight and any challenges with approaches or outcomes.
- It was helpful to connect and share knowledge with champions and AB partners at the Ops Meeting.
- Through the delivery of the consultation I have deepened my understanding of the role of a Champion.
- Large organisations and smaller organisations are facing some similar challenges on different scales but important to reflect on that.
- Would welcome more facilitated opportunities for peer support with anchors / a champion network - to learn from those who have already gone through the process.
- There is opportunity to further promote the Activity Finder and connect place organisations to the Ops Meetings through the reconvening of the group and consultation playback process.
- Through attendance at future Ops Group meetings there is still the opportunity to amplify community voice, promote Birchfield activities and for collaboration around shared goals and delivery.

Impact 4 Life summary of consultation approach, benefits and outcomes

Top 3 Enablers

- Free or low-cost local provision. Being delivered at the right venues.
- Trusted relationships and representation - familiar instructors, welcoming environments.
- Strong partnership & referral pathways - GP surgeries, social prescribers, community leads.

Top 3 Barriers

- Cost & funding pressures - travel costs, session fees, childcare cost.
- Access to safe & suitable facilities - limited safe spaces, transport challenges and safety concerns.
- Confidence, awareness & behavioural habits - low confidence, lack of awareness, competing responsibilities.

Key insight

Participation increases when activities are:

- Affordable
- Local and safe
- Inclusive and culturally relevant
- Delivered by trusted providers
- Tailored to community need

Consultation Findings



1. Identifying Barriers and Enablers

Barriers

- Financial barriers including the cost of sessions, equipment, transport, and facility hire.
- Limited access to suitable sports halls and activity spaces.
- Facilities sometimes cancelled at short notice, disrupting activity delivery.
- Some spaces are poorly maintained or unsafe, including dirty floors or hazardous equipment.
- Accessibility issues such as lack of wheelchair access or appropriate entrances.
- Travel costs preventing people from attending activities.
- Organisations needing to purchase equipment for participants.
- Time pressures due to work commitments, childcare responsibilities, and household duties.
- Volunteers often run organisations alongside full-time employment, limiting their capacity.
- Limited awareness among community members about available activities.
- Lack of confidence among some individuals to try new activities or attend unfamiliar venues.
- Cultural and language barriers affecting participation among some communities.
- Some minority groups struggling to find safe and inclusive activity spaces.
- Environmental barriers including safety concerns in outdoor spaces, particularly in the evening.
- Weather and seasonal factors affecting outdoor participation.

Enablers

- Social opportunities that allow participants to meet new people and build confidence.
- Free or low-cost activities that reduce financial barriers.
- Activities delivered at convenient times and in accessible locations.
- Programmes designed around participant needs and interests.
- Familiar and trusted environments that make people feel comfortable attending.
- Representation and culturally inclusive delivery where participants see people like themselves involved.

Strong community networks sharing information about opportunities through:

- word of mouth
- social media
- community services
- healthcare and social support networks
- Activities that are enjoyable, flexible, and engaging.
- Safe, welcoming environments where participants feel accepted and not judged.

Consultation Findings



2. Organisational Policies, Processes, and Structures

Workforce and Delivery Structures

- Programmes are delivered by qualified staff and trained facilitators.
- Staff often have qualifications in sport, fitness, wellbeing, or youth engagement.
- Some organisations bring in external specialists to deliver specific sessions or programmes.

Staff teams may include individuals trained in:

- mental health first aid
- safeguarding
- disability inclusion
- sport and fitness instruction.

Insight and Data Collection

Organisations gather information about participation and wellbeing through:

- surveys and questionnaires
- attendance logs
- feedback forms
- programme evaluations
- conversations with participants and families
- newsletters and project updates.

Safeguarding and Governance

Many organisations maintain strong safeguarding structures including:

- background-checked staff and volunteers
- safeguarding training
- clear policies and procedures to protect participants.

Consultation Findings



3. Capacity and Capability

Existing Skills and Expertise

- Sports coaching qualifications across multiple disciplines.
- Leadership and project management experience.
- Mental health first aid training.
- Mentoring and youth work expertise.
- Safeguarding knowledge and experience working with vulnerable groups.
- First aid and trauma awareness training.
- Experience delivering community wellbeing programmes.
- Person-centred approaches that prioritise empathy, communication, and participant needs.

Additional Skills and Tools Used

- Digital tools and online resources to support programme planning and learning.
- Collaboration with local health professionals and community organisations.
- Use of wellbeing journals, monitoring tools, and partnerships to track participant progress.

Skills and Training Needs

- Further training in emerging or non-traditional physical activities such as dance, yoga, and fitness classes.
- Additional mental health and wellbeing training.
- Food hygiene and health-related training where activities include community meals or events.
- Additional facilitation and coaching skills.



4. Collaboration

Challenges in Collaboration

- Limited time for volunteer-led organisations to participate fully in partnerships.
- Different organisational timelines and priorities.
- Communication gaps between partners.
- Difficulty accessing schools or advertising activities effectively.
- Administrative differences such as payment processes and governance requirements.

Types of Partnerships

- Community organisations and grassroots groups.
- Schools and educational settings.
- Housing providers and supported accommodation services.
- Healthcare and social support organisations.
- Faith groups and local community institutions.
- Universities and research organisations.
- Other sport and physical activity providers.

Consultation Findings



5. Leadership

Local Leadership Roles

- Coaches and activity facilitators who support community participation.
- Community leaders and facilitators running workshops or activity sessions.
- Youth participants influencing and encouraging their peers.
- Staff working within housing, wellbeing, or community settings.
- Trustees or committee members leading local organisations.

Leadership Approaches

- Some organisations operate democratic leadership structures where members vote on leadership roles.
- Leadership pathways can emerge through coaching roles, volunteering, and peer influence.
- Community leaders help represent local voices and shape programme direction.

Challenges

- Some organisations report difficulty being recognised or taken seriously within wider sport systems.
- Lack of clear leadership development pathways within some communities.
- Limited access to mentors who can support leadership development.



6. Community-Led Action

Current Approaches

- Community members contribute to programme design through polls, feedback, and discussions.
- Ongoing feedback gathered through:
 1. surveys
 2. focus groups
 3. attendance registers
 4. informal conversations.
 5. Youth voice initiatives influence the design of activities and programmes.
- Community meetings provide space for residents to share ideas and priorities.

What Makes Community Projects Successful

- Flexible programmes that respond to participant feedback.
- Welcoming and social environments.
- Free or low-cost access to activities.
- Delivery by trusted community facilitators.

Challenges

- Difficulty advertising activities and reaching new participants.
- Volunteer capacity constraints.
- High turnover of participants in temporary housing settings.
- Ensuring activities remain inclusive for diverse communities.

Consultation Findings



7. Cultures and Practices

Cultural Considerations

- Diverse staff teams help support inclusive engagement.
- Cultural awareness and bilingual staff or interpreters help overcome language barriers.
- Programmes must reflect the needs and experiences of different communities.

Effective Practices

- Flexible and responsive programming that adapts to participant needs.
- Activities that combine wellbeing, creativity, and sport.
- Trusted facilitators who understand community contexts.
- Social environments that encourage participation.

Challenges

- Ensuring expectations are managed so that community voices are heard and followed by visible action.
- Meeting diverse needs with limited resources.



8. Built and Natural Environments

Challenges

- Limited access to sports halls or indoor activity spaces.
- Short-notice cancellations of booked facilities.
- Poor maintenance of some venues.
- Accessibility barriers for disabled participants.
- Limited availability of affordable spaces during peak times.
- Transport barriers preventing people from reaching venues.
- Safety concerns in some outdoor areas.



9. Embedded Learning

Monitoring and Evaluation Methods

- Attendance tracking.
- Surveys and questionnaires.
- Participant feedback forms.
- Informal conversations with participants.
- Internal reflections by staff and volunteers.
- Case studies and impact reports.
- Baseline studies and wellbeing assessments.

Learning and Sharing

- Programme insights shared through:
 1. newsletters
 2. social media updates
 3. reports to funders
 4. discussions with partners
 5. peer learning networks.

Recommendations

2. Organisational Policies, Processes, and Structures

Key Insight: Organisations have strong safeguarding and staff structures, but accessibility, awareness, and responsive delivery can be improved.

- Maintain qualified, trained staff across sport, wellbeing, and youth engagement disciplines.
- Continue strong safeguarding policies and training for staff and volunteers.
- Implement consistent participation and wellbeing data collection using surveys, attendance logs, and feedback forms.
- Improve communication systems to share programme information and evaluation outcomes.
- Develop processes for integrating external specialists to enhance programme diversity.
- Schedule activities at times convenient for participants, considering work, childcare, and household responsibilities.
- Promote accessible venues and facilities for participants, including those with disabilities.
- Ensure clear information and promotion to raise community awareness of opportunities.

3. Capacity and Capability

Key Insight: Staff have core coaching, safeguarding, and wellbeing skills, but confidence and cultural competency affect participant engagement.

- Provide training in emerging activities such as dance, yoga, and fitness classes.
- Increase mental health and wellbeing training for staff and volunteers.
- Develop food hygiene and health-related training where activities include meals or events.
- Offer additional facilitation and coaching skill development.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to adopt person-centred approaches, prioritising empathy and communication.
- Equip staff with skills to support participants lacking confidence to try new activities.
- Strengthen cultural awareness and inclusive delivery skills for engagement with minority groups.

Recommendations

4. Collaboration

Key Insight: Collaborative partnerships exist but limited awareness, communication gaps, and volunteer capacity hinder reach and participation.

- Strengthen partnerships between community organisations, schools, housing, health, and faith groups.
- Establish shared communication protocols to reduce gaps between partners.
- Coordinate joint promotion and activity advertising to reach new participants.
- Streamline administrative and governance processes to facilitate partnership working.
- Encourage knowledge sharing and resource pooling between organisations.
- Support time-limited volunteer involvement with flexible engagement opportunities.
- Work with partners to overcome travel and transport barriers for participants.

5. Leadership

Key Insight: Leadership emerges through coaches, volunteers, and youth, but recognition, pathways, and support are limited.

- Develop leadership pathways for volunteers, coaches, and young people.
- Support community members to act as local activity champions.
- Provide mentoring and guidance for emerging leaders.
- Encourage representation of local voices in decision-making for programme direction.
- Recognise and validate community leaders' contributions within wider sport and activity networks.
- Empower leaders to advocate for safe, welcoming, and inclusive activity environments.

6. Community-Led Action

Key Insight: Community members contribute ideas, but awareness, confidence, and access barriers limit engagement.

- Support resident co-design and programme feedback initiatives.
- Provide practical support for community members to lead activities, including training and small grants.
- Encourage welcoming, social environments that foster sustained participation.
- Develop strategies to reach new participants, including those in temporary housing or underrepresented communities.
- Ensure flexible programming that adapts to community feedback.
- Use familiar and trusted locations to increase participant confidence.
- Incorporate social opportunities and enjoyable, engaging activities to build participation.

Recommendations

7. Cultures and Practices

Key Insight: Cultural inclusivity, trusted facilitators, and social connection are key enablers, addressing barriers like language, confidence, and cultural fit.

- Maintain diverse staffing teams and bilingual support to overcome cultural and language barriers.
- Deliver flexible programmes that combine wellbeing, creativity, and sport.
- Ensure trusted facilitators lead activities, building participant confidence.
- Promote socially engaging sessions that encourage interaction and belonging.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure community voices translate into visible action.
- Reflect participant needs and interests in programme design to boost engagement.

8. Built and Natural Environments

Key Insight: Limited, unsafe, or inaccessible spaces, plus transport barriers, inhibit participation; familiar, reliable, and safe venues are enablers.

- Increase availability of sports halls and indoor activity spaces, including during peak times.
- Improve venue maintenance, safety, and accessibility, including for disabled participants.
- Develop contingency plans for short-notice cancellations.
- Facilitate affordable access to facilities.
- Enhance transport options and guidance to improve accessibility.
- Promote safe use of outdoor spaces, with lighting and seasonal considerations.
- Deliver activities in familiar and trusted locations to support confidence and attendance.

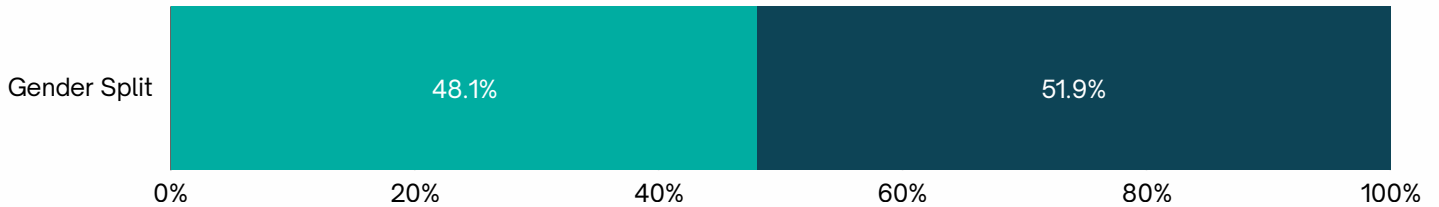
9. Embedded Learning

Key Insight: Monitoring and evaluation are strong, but insights should inform strategies addressing barriers and reinforcing enablers.

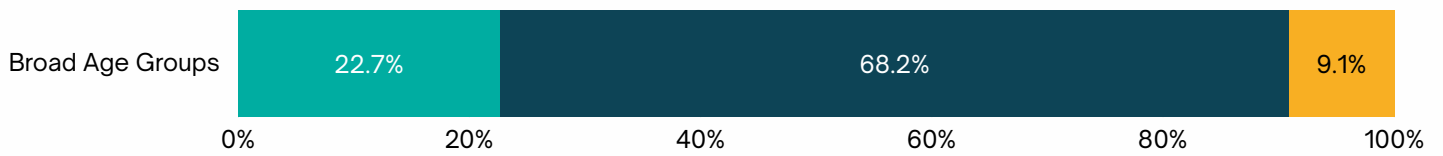
- Standardise attendance and feedback tracking.
- Conduct regular programme reflections and internal evaluations.
- Share insights through newsletters, social media, reports, and peer networks.
- Use baseline and wellbeing assessments to shape programme design.
- Encourage collaborative learning between organisations to adopt effective practices.
- Monitor participant barriers and enablers to inform improvements in scheduling, access, cultural inclusion, and engagement strategies.

Local Insight: Birchfield

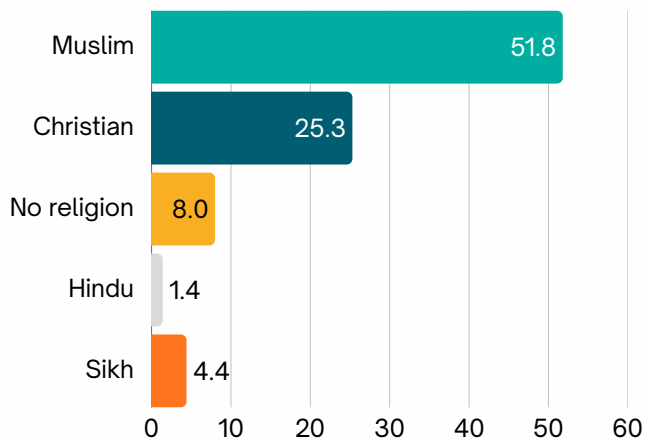
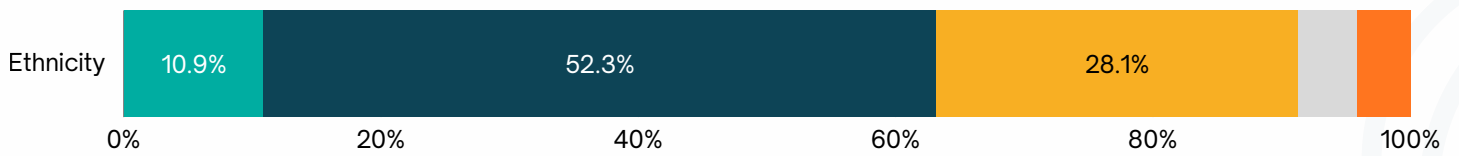
Female Male



0-14 years 15-64 years 65+ years

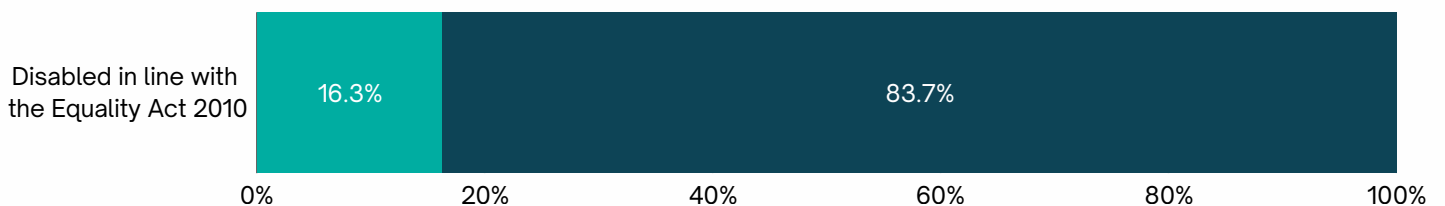


White Asian, Asian British Black, African, Caribbean, Black British Other ethnic groups Mixed



Where 1 is the most deprived and 69 is the least

Disabled Not disabled



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
BIRMINGHAM**

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.