

# CONSULTATION PLAYBACK

## HANDSWORTH



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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

Juliet Bertie - continentalstarstt@gmail.com

## Our Story: More Than Just a Club

Continental Stars Table Tennis is a club led by myself and my husband. For us, this isn't a business, it is a mission rooted in equality, equity, and legacy. Ten years ago, the club's previous owner passed away, leaving behind a request for my husband to carry the torch and ensure the club's success. Today, we are proud to say we are on that path. We don't just call ourselves a club, we are a family where everyone is welcome. Our doors are open every day (except Sundays), with weekly sessions at Holford Drive Community Sports Hub, Great Barr Coop Rooms, Prince Albert School, and various school outreach programmes.

## Why Handsworth? Why Now?

Our involvement in the "Place" for Handsworth project comes from a deeply personal space. Although I haven't lived in Birmingham my whole life, it has been my home for 18 years. Handsworth Park has become my sanctuary, my go to place to walk, de-stress, meditate, and practice grounding. There is something truly special about this landscape.

As a proud member of the Black community, having the chance to view this project through that specific lens was a huge draw for me. We felt it was important to hear from the people who actually live these experiences - the people who matter.

I hope I have been and will continue to be a trusted voice for honesty, openness, and transparency. By working together and sharing our voices, I truly believe we can bring the community closer and rise Handsworth up!



# Active Birmingham Areas Map

## Anchors and Champions



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

### Original Anchors (Red/Pink)

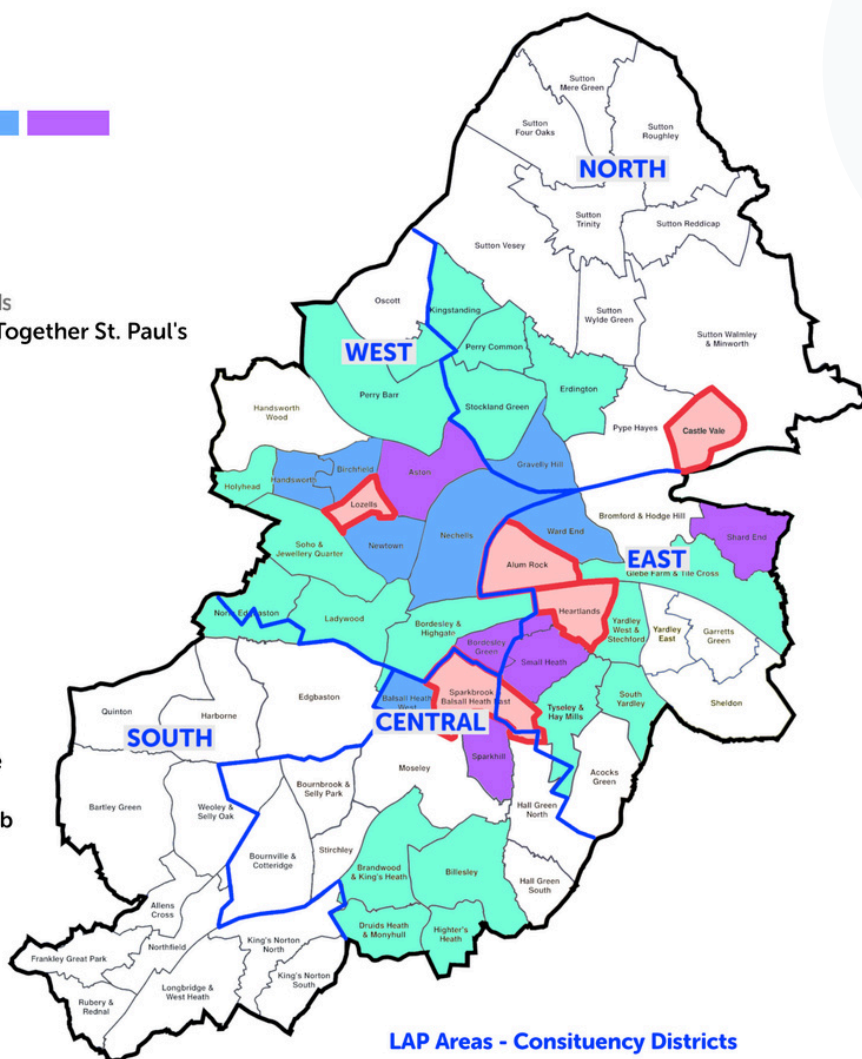
- Alum Rock - OCF
- Lozells - Sports Key, Legacy West Midlands
- Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East - Together St. Paul's
- Castle Vale - The Pioneer Group

### 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)

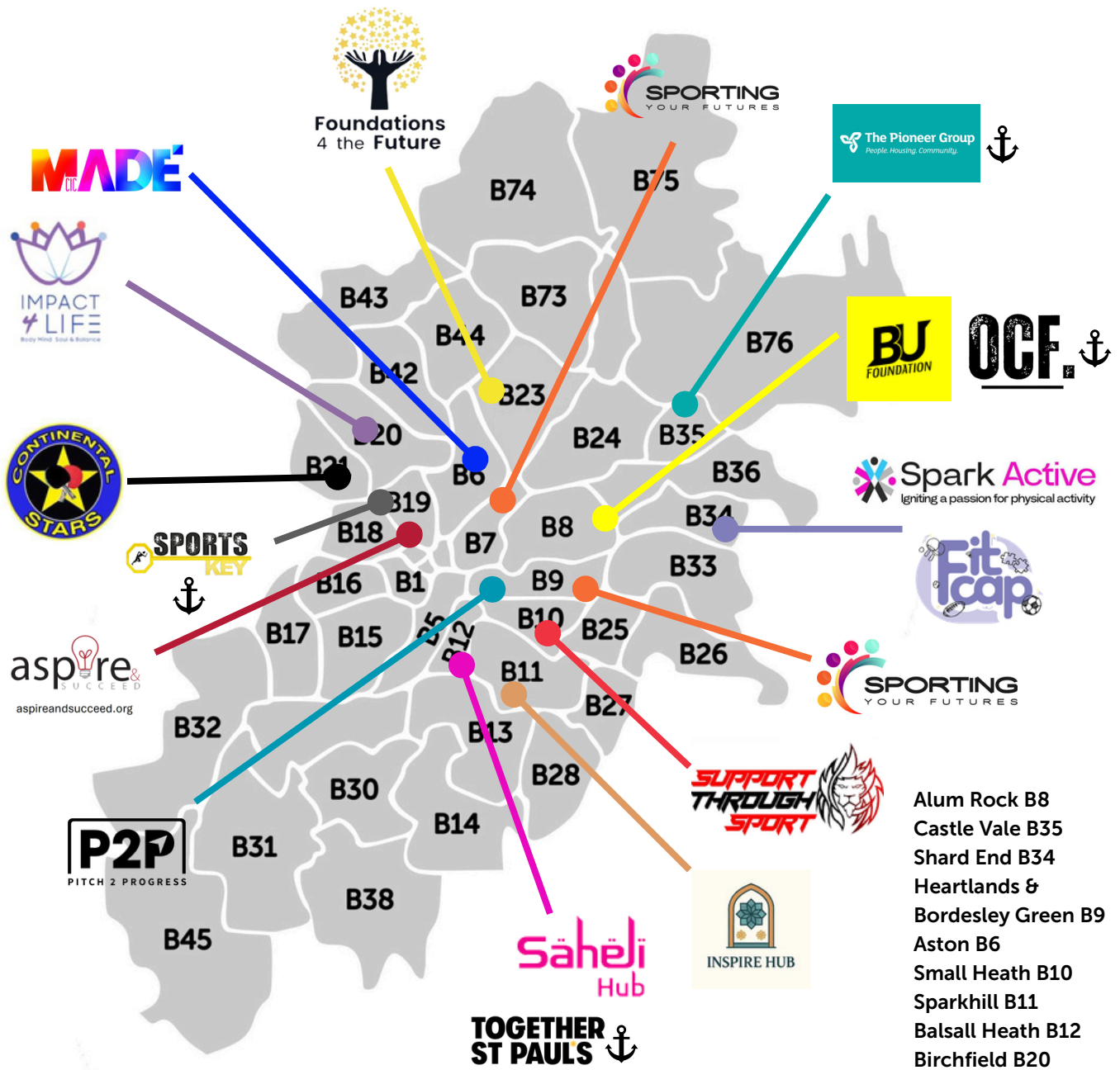
- Balsall Heath West - Saheli Hub
- Birchfield - Impact 4 Life
- Gravelly Hill - Foundations 4 the Future
- Newtown - Aspire & Succeed
- Handsworth - Continental Stars TT Club
- Nechells - Sporting Your Futures
- Ward End - B U Foundation
- Heartlands - Sporting Your Futures



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

# Continental Stars summary of consultation approach, benefits and outcomes

- Strong focus on connecting the Handsworth landscape for collaboration and dialogue among diverse groups/organisations through this process.
- Targeted demographics: captured specific feedback from the black community which included women, mothers and young children.
- Important to be authentic, build trust, show sensitivity and to collaborate on how organisations wanted to engage.
- Required the ability to pivot - for example moving a consultation to a cross-sector session at Handsworth Fire Station - helping create a trusting environment for dialogue.
- Face-to-face allowed for better interactions and to build trust. Felt the survey tool and framework too complex, people want quick ways to input/be heard. Further opportunity to explore more accessible formats for quick fire questions - apps, MS forms, WhatsApp.
- Invested time with wider club members to see and experience what other organisations do, showing up is important and builds trust.
- Engagement methods included the opportunity for others to participate in club activities- to build skills in table tennis whilst supporting conversations. This worked well.
- Organisations want to know why you want their data and already feel they have shared their data. Emphasised this is a collaborative approach involving local organisations/people of Handsworth who know what's happening on the ground.
- Still a lot of silo working due time constraints and funding.
- Enabled us to promote what we do, deepen our level of understanding of the great work others are doing in the community and share some of the learning and draw connections between those engaged.
- Enabled upskilling of club members/volunteers and also leaning further into their strengths -we have a 'super connector' who supported brokering of relationships.
- Activity Finder / promotional tools not always a priority - concerns about increasing participation too much for small organisations that either don't want to or haven't capacity to scale. Opportunity to address concerns further and share more of the benefits and value.
- Difficult/hesitant to state top 3 barriers and enablers - important to consider not just the most prominent as something that could make a big difference could get missed.
- Blue sky thinking required for greater outcomes for place.

# Continental Stars summary of consultation approach, benefits and outcomes

## Top 3 Barriers

### What is holding the community back?

1. The “Silo Effect” Organisations are working in isolation. Information isn’t shared effectively, meaning groups operating just around the corner from each other remain disconnected.
2. Infrastructure problems beyond safety concerns, physical barriers such as broken leisure-centre lockers, damaged or narrow pavements, and streets congested with bins and rubbish discourage participation.
3. The Life-Skills Gap - The closure of Holyhead Road Youth Centre has left a significant void. Young girls, in particular, are entering adulthood without essential life skills (budgeting, trauma-informed support, completing paperwork), creating a cycle of unmet basic needs.

## Top 3 Enablers

### What actually gets people through the door?

1. Relationships - First Fitness - At Twinsane, fitness is the by-product. The real hook is the sense of community - young people see themselves reflected in others and build new friendship groups.
2. Authentic Leadership - Trust grows when local, relatable leaders simplify the jargon and build genuine connections, rather than relying on formal, corporate-style programmes.
3. Safe Time in Nature - Spaces like Handsworth Park and Crick Gardens CIC are valued as therapeutic escapes. When these areas are clean and well-maintained, they become safe havens for reflection and mental wellbeing.

# Continental Stars summary of consultation approach, benefits and outcomes

## Case Study Example – Crick Gardens CIC & Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

### Engagement Through Contribution

A therapeutic, “adventure-playground” style environment that works particularly well for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Observations showed young people taking initiative - cutting wood, composting, helping each other - without being prompted, thriving in a non-judgemental space.

Barrier: Time for parents. Even when children want to engage, mothers often feel too rushed by daily pressures to participate themselves.

## Case Study Example – Twinsane & The Women’s Agenda

### Addressing the Root Causes

Beyond Exercise: Insights from Twinsane show that women aren’t just seeking a gym - they are asking for life-skills support.

Specific Needs: Financial budgeting, trauma processing, and navigating system paperwork are as essential to wellbeing as physical activity.

Environmental Factor: Participants noted that “upbeat” areas receive better green-space investment than Handsworth, creating a perception of being left behind - even though they value Handsworth Park highly.

# Consultation Findings



## 1. Identifying Barriers and Enablers

### Barriers

- First-step engagement remains a significant barrier, even where provision exists.
- Lower participation among older Southeast Asian women and mothers.
- Low confidence and cultural concerns limit initial engagement.
- Lack of visible role models reduces willingness to attend.
- Awareness of opportunities is often low, particularly without trusted promotion.
- Concerns around appropriateness of mixed environments impact participation.

### Enablers

- Trusted, familiar environments increase likelihood of engagement.
- Delivery in faith-adjacent or culturally relevant spaces supports participation.
- Women-only sessions provide safe and accessible entry points.
- Visibility of local role models builds confidence and trust.



## 2. Organisational Policies, Processes, and Structures

### Data Capture

- Attendance patterns, retention levels, and parental engagement are monitored to understand participation trends.
- Feedback is gathered from parents, young people, coaches, volunteers, and community members.
- Observations during sessions help identify which groups engage regularly and where participation declines.
- Surveys, community consultations, and feedback from park users help identify local needs and priorities.
- Membership surveys and informal conversations with families and participants provide insight into barriers and motivations.
- Findings are reviewed internally and shared with partners to shape programme delivery and future projects.
- Organisations operate through place-based partnerships with schools, community groups, youth organisations, and local facilities.
- These partnerships enable shared knowledge of community needs and barriers to participation.
- Information about activities and opportunities is promoted through community networks and social media.
- Regular communication with partners supports joint planning and coordinated delivery of activities.
- Engagement with grant funders and sponsors helps align community needs with programme delivery.

# Consultation Findings



## 3. Capacity and Capability

- Strong cultural competence and lived experience across workforce.
- Existing entry-level coaching capacity within the community.

### Gaps in:

1. Advanced coaching qualifications
  2. Safeguarding confidence in practice
  3. Bid writing and impact measurement
- Limited digital skills and online engagement capability.
  - Volunteer burnout is a recurring issue.
  - Preference for peer-led, practical learning approaches.
  - Limited access to ongoing support post-training.



## 4. Collaboration

- Collaboration is largely informal and relationship-based.
- Strong value placed on peer learning and shared delivery experiences.
- Trust is a key enabler of collaboration.
- Limited formal or structured collaboration mechanisms.
- Reflective spaces (e.g. conversations, focus groups) support shared learning.
- Collaboration is more effective where there is visible follow-up action.



## 5. Leadership

- Leadership is often informal and community-based. Roles include; Activity Leaders and Group Coordinators.
- Formal leadership pathways are limited or less accessible.
- Leadership development is often unstructured and experience-based.
- Volunteer capacity affects leadership sustainability.
- Mentoring from trusted individuals is highly valued.
- Limited structured pathways for women and young people



## 6. Community-Led Action

- Delivery is culturally responsive and shaped by local need.

### Examples include:

1. Women-only sessions
  2. Faith-sensitive activities (e.g. Ramadan delivery)
- Strong reliance on trusted local leaders and relationships.
  - Engagement approaches are largely informal.
  - Limited marketing and visibility of provision.
  - Low use of digital tools for engagement and promotion.
  - Learning is often shared through peer and mentor relationships.

# Consultation Findings



## 7. Cultures and Practices

- Strong community trust and cultural relevance underpin delivery.
- Activities reflect local norms, values, and expectations.
- Cultural considerations shape participation patterns.
- Social and mental wellbeing are often supported through informal activity.
- Delivery quality is strong but visibility is low.

### Growth is limited by:

1. Volunteer fatigue
2. Funding constraints
3. Facility challenges



## 8. Built and Natural Environments

- Limited access to appropriate facilities is a key challenge.
- Seasonal impact is significant. Winter reduces activity by 50–70%
- Some provision is delivered outside the area due to lack of space.

### Existing facilities may be:

1. Poor quality
  2. Unavailable
- Shared spaces do not fully meet local demand.
  - Delivery depends on accessible, safe, and suitable environments.



## 9. Embedded Learning

### Learning is primarily:

1. Informal
  2. Experience-based
- Limited use of structured evaluation or planning frameworks.
  - Risk of knowledge loss when individuals leave.
  - Learning is not consistently shared across organisations.
  - Limited access to shared tools or systems.
  - Peer learning is valued but not formally embedded.

# Recommendations

## 2. Organisational Policies, Processes, and Structures

**Key Insight: Policies exist but are not consistently embedded in practice, and insight is not systematically captured or shared.**

- Embed safeguarding and governance into day-to-day delivery practice, not just policy documentation.
- Provide simple, consistent templates for monitoring, evaluation, and insight capture.
- Introduce light-touch systems that reduce admin burden while improving data consistency.
- Strengthen understanding of applied safeguarding, including professional curiosity.
- Improve feedback loops so communities can see how their input informs delivery.
- Align data collection approaches to enable shared learning across organisations.
- Ensure systems are flexible and realistic for evening and weekend delivery models.

## 3. Capacity and Capability

**Key Insight: Strong community-led delivery is in place, but there are gaps in technical skills, digital capability, and sustainable workforce support.**

- Develop advanced coaching and skills progression pathways within the community.
- Provide practical safeguarding training linked to real delivery scenarios.
- Build capacity in:
  1. Bid writing
  2. Impact measurement
  3. Basic monitoring and evaluation
- Deliver hands-on digital skills support, including social media and communication tools.
- Establish peer-led learning and mentoring opportunities.
- Provide ongoing post-training support to embed learning into practice.
- Address volunteer burnout through:
  1. Structured support
  2. Recognition
  3. Sustainable delivery planning

# Recommendations

## 4. Collaboration

**Key Insight: Collaboration is relationship-based and valued, but lacks consistent structure and coordination.**

- Establish regular, informal peer learning spaces to strengthen collaboration.
- Create simple, place-based coordination mechanisms to align delivery.
- Encourage sharing of:
  1. Delivery models
  2. Safeguarding approaches
  3. Engagement strategies
- Build collaboration through trusted relationships and local networks.
- Ensure collaboration leads to visible actions and shared outcomes.
- Reduce duplication through better communication and shared planning.

## 5. Leadership

**Key Insight: Leadership is strong but informal, with limited structured pathways and reliance on a small number of individuals.**

- Develop flexible and accessible leadership pathways beyond formal qualifications.
- Support informal community leaders to grow into more structured roles.
- Expand mentoring opportunities using trusted and experienced leaders.
- Create targeted leadership development for:
  1. Women
  2. Young people
- Build leadership confidence through practical, experience-based learning.
- Reduce reliance on a small number of individuals by broadening leadership capacity.

## 6. Community-Led Action

**Key Insight: Delivery is culturally responsive and trusted but limited by low visibility and marketing capacity.**

- Sustain and expand culturally responsive and faith-sensitive provision.
- Strengthen visibility and awareness of community-led activity.
- Provide simple marketing and promotion tools to grassroots providers.
- Support use of accessible digital platforms for engagement.
- Enable community leaders to capture and share impact and stories.
- Strengthen peer-to-peer learning between local leaders.

# Recommendations

## 7. Cultures and Practices

**Key Insight: Strong culturally relevant delivery exists but is under-recognised and constrained by capacity and funding pressures.**

- Protect and invest in trusted, culturally relevant delivery models.
- Strengthen visibility of high-quality local provision.
- Support organisations to better communicate their impact and offer.
- Maintain focus on inclusive, welcoming, and culturally appropriate environments.
- Provide support to reduce volunteer fatigue and sustain delivery capacity.
- Embed approaches that recognise social and wellbeing outcomes alongside physical activity.

## 8. Built and Natural Environments

**Key Insight: Limited and unsuitable facilities significantly restrict delivery, with strong seasonal impacts.**

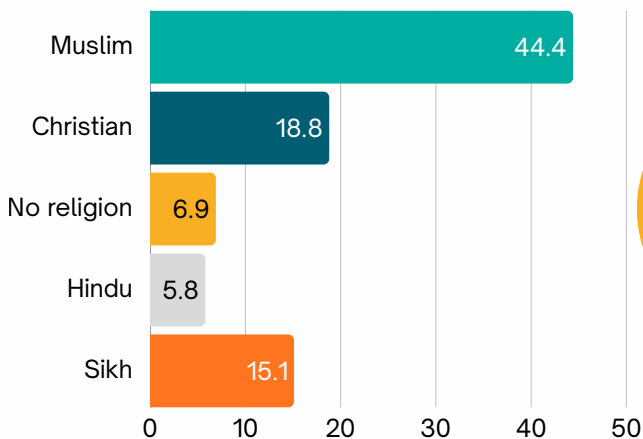
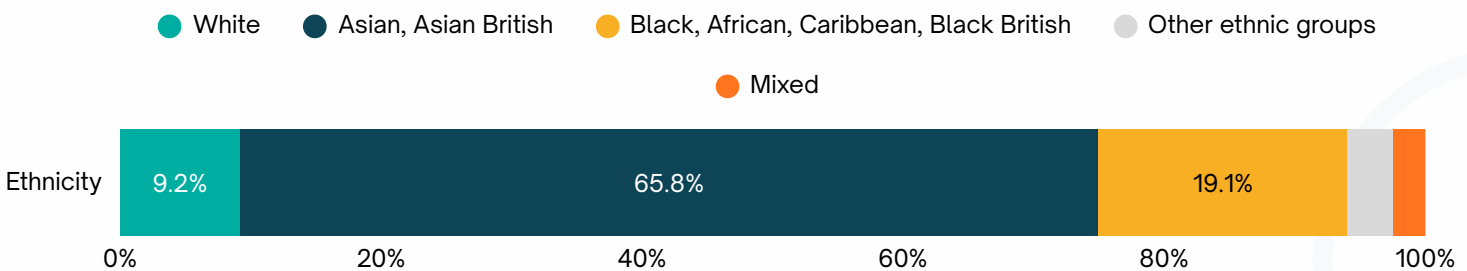
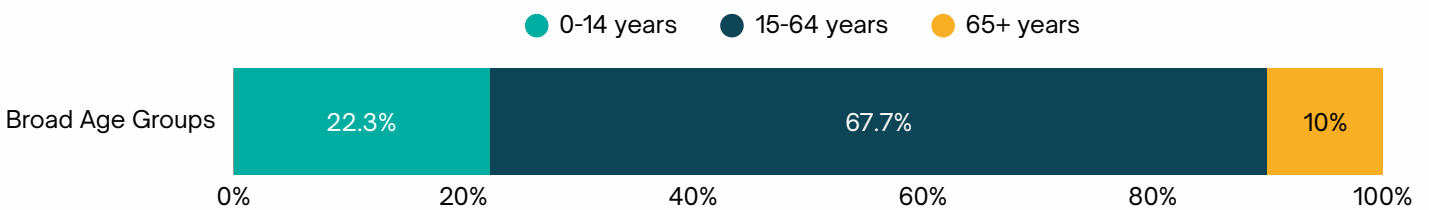
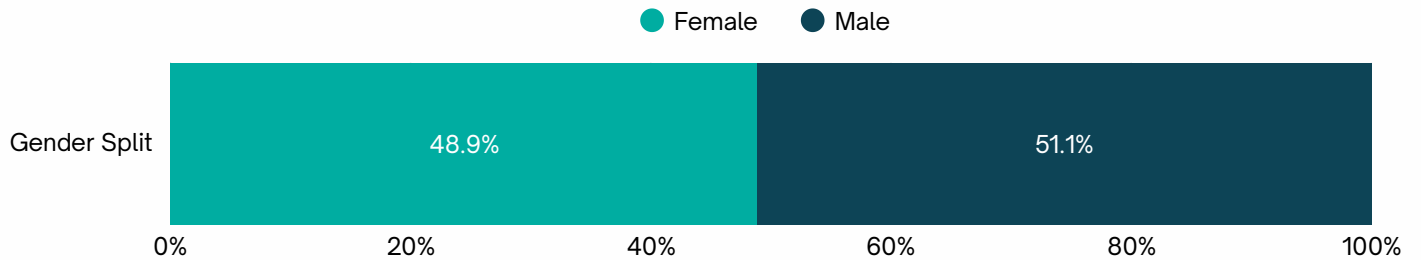
- Invest in facility improvements and maintenance where quality is a barrier.
- Provide dedicated winter provision support to reduce seasonal drop-off.
- Improve coordination and access to existing community spaces.
- Recognise facility access as a key driver of participation and inequality.
- Align facility provision with culturally appropriate and community-led delivery needs.
- Learning

## 9. Embedded Learning

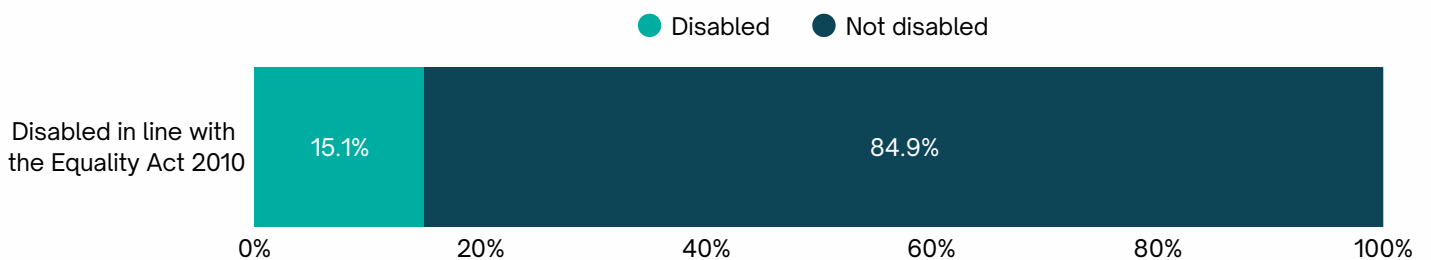
**Key Insight: Learning is informal and not consistently captured or shared, limiting system-wide improvement.**

- Introduce simple, structured learning and reflection processes at session level.
- Develop shared learning systems to connect organisations.
- Encourage peer learning and knowledge exchange as standard practice.
- Capture learning in consistent, accessible formats.
- Reduce knowledge loss through shared storage and documentation approaches.
- Ensure learning is fed back into planning and delivery cycles.

# Local Insight: Handsworth



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](http://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](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.