
Active Schools Evaluation

Report by ODS Consulting
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Putting sport first

sportscotland
the national agency for sport

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Executive Summary

About this report

This report sets out findings from the 2014 evaluation of Active Schools. Active Schools is **sportscotland's** flagship programme. It aims to ensure that there are more and higher quality opportunities to participate in sports (and wider play, dance and exercise activities) within schools. It involves approximately £12.5 million investment per year. The vast majority of funding goes into staffing – to ensure that a network of Active Schools Managers and Coordinators is in place at local level.

This evaluation involved telephone interviews with Active Schools managers in all 32 local authority areas in Scotland; an online survey of Active Schools coordinators, teachers and wider stakeholders including clubs, deliverers, parents and partners; and eight focus group discussions with pupils.

Activities and opportunities

In 2013/14, pupils made 5.8 million visits to Active Schools supported sessions – an increase of 15 per cent from 2012/13. Most commonly, a balance of supply and demand drove how Active Schools supported opportunities and activities developed. Supply was affected by:

- the availability and profile of volunteers to deliver Active Schools supported activities;
- links with local clubs – providing a source of deliverers, and a pathway from school to club based activity; and
- practical constraints such as facilities, geography, travel and transport.

Most Active Schools teams balanced supply with demand - exploring demand through consultation with pupils and teachers, and testing demand through taster sessions. In some areas, Active Schools teams felt that the Commonwealth Games 2014 had helped to stimulate demand in new sports and activities. There was a strong message that Active Schools supported activities and opportunities worked best when they developed in a way which suited local circumstances, needs, culture and history.

Teachers, pupils, Active Schools teams and wider stakeholders generally rated the quality of Active Schools supported opportunities and activities highly. Pupils involved in this research were extremely positive about the Active Schools supported opportunities they had been able to access, and the quality of those delivering the activities. However, some Active Schools Managers and teachers felt that quality could vary significantly depending on the deliverer.

Recommendation 1: The Active Schools programme achieves its core aim. It is recommended that the programme of supporting more and better opportunities is continued, to allow the next generation of children and young people to benefit from its activities.

National initiatives

sportscotland runs a number of national initiatives, in partnership with other organisations, within the Active Schools programme. Overall, most Active Schools teams were positive about national initiatives.

Young Ambassadors, a programme designed to support young people to motivate and inspire other young people to get involved in sport, was largely seen as having a very positive impact on young people. It was seen as linking well with Active Schools aims, and with the Curriculum for Excellence. Activity to promote leadership among young people was often highlighted as a key success of Active Schools locally. However, some Active Schools teams were unsure about the Lead 2014 programme, with many feeling it overlapped a little with Young Ambassadors, and was less clear in its aims.

In terms of other national initiatives:

- There was strong support for **YDance**, which supports young women to become dance leaders. Many felt that it was a high quality programme, and led to many young women volunteering to deliver dance activities.
- There was mixed experience of **ClubGolf**. While it is clear that the programme works well in some areas, most Active Schools teams expressed concerns about the programme in terms of the difficulties building strong pathways to local golf clubs; and involvement of Active Schools teams in directly delivering ClubGolf in some areas.
- **Sports Relief** was largely seen as a programme led by schools – with limited involvement from Active Schools teams.

Recommendation 2: Leadership should remain a key priority within Active Schools. Consideration should be given to amalgamating or better linking the range of leadership initiatives in place. Guidance on selecting young people for leadership initiatives should be clear that a range of young people should be given these opportunities. Figures on involvement in Active Schools leadership programmes should be collated and analysed nationally.

Recommendation 3: The approach to promoting golf to school pupils should be reviewed after September 2014. Consideration should be given as to whether a national programme is needed, or whether there should be more local flexibility as with other sports.

Recommendation 4: National initiatives should continue to have a role in Active Schools. However, consideration should be given to the number of initiatives; the flexibility local Active Schools teams should have in implementing these; and the lead in time. Active Schools Managers should continue to be involved in developing and piloting new national initiatives.

Links between schools and clubs

In 2013/14, 93 per cent of all schools had at least one link to a local club. The strength and nature of these links varied substantially. However, many were felt to be strong. There was agreement that good quality links should:

- involve the club having a direct presence in the school;
- involve a genuine relationship between committed and enthusiastic individuals at both the school and club;
- be based on trust, communication and positive relationships;
- be long term – a pathway approach over primary and secondary school; and
- be self-sustaining, after initial development.

There were many examples of how strong links between schools and clubs had provided young people with opportunities to become involved in new sports, with some going on to compete at high level. However, a small number of pupils involved in this research highlighted that they would like to go on to clubs simply to stay active and learn, rather than to compete.

Recommendation 5: There should be an ongoing focus on developing links from schools to clubs. Where possible, links should be made with a mix of competitive clubs and community clubs or classes – to provide opportunities at all levels. **sportscotland** should develop a system to gather both quantitative and qualitative information about the number of young people who go on to be involved in clubs, their achievements and the impact on their lives.

Encouraging participation

This evaluation explored participation in Active Schools supported activity among under-represented groups – girls and young women; and pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN). The vast majority of Active Schools teams used local data to identify and target those who were not participating in Active Schools supported activities. General barriers to participation for all included:

- **Transport** – Where young people are bussed to and from school, Active Schools teams are experiencing real challenges in finding suitable times to schedule activities.
- **Fees for activities** – In a minority of areas (at least five) very small charges were made for Active Schools supported activities. But these can be too much for some pupils.
- **Disadvantage** – A significant proportion of Active Schools teams highlighted that a different approach was needed to encourage participation in disadvantaged areas.
- **Facilities** – Some Active Schools teams, particularly in remote rural areas, reported significant challenges around facilities.

Active Schools teams had tried a range of methods to address these barriers.

Participation of girls and young women

There was very strong agreement across all stakeholders that introducing girls only activities made a big difference in encouraging participation of girls and young women. In addition, there were clear messages that:

- activities for girls should be based on consultation;
- a range of activities should be available – including team sports and individual activities; and
- peer support and leadership opportunities can build confidence, provide role models and provide opportunities for girls who are not traditionally sporty.

While many highlighted significant successes in engaging girls and young women, it was felt that this was an area which required ongoing attention to sustain and increase participation levels.

Participation of young people with additional support needs

Active Schools teams used a wide range of approaches to engage and involve young people with Additional Support Needs. Generally, approaches targeted at schools for young people with ASN were felt to work well, but there were some challenges to involving young people with ASN in mainstream schools:

- **Identifying pupils** - The biggest challenge was that most Active Schools teams did not know whether pupils at mainstream schools had ASN, and so couldn't assess participation levels, introduce additional support, or plan targeted activities based on needs.
- **Parental permission** – Active Schools teams found some resistance to ASN specific activities, as pupils were often at mainstream schools due to a desire to integrate and not be singled out.
- **Transport, facilities and resources** – Sometimes, activity required specialist equipment, facilities, transport to a central venue, or one to one support.

Recommendation 6: Active Schools should continue a targeted element to its work. Girls and young people with ASN should continue to be a priority. Girls only activities should be promoted as a key way of engaging girls. Active Schools teams should be supported to gather evidence about participation of young people with ASN in Active Schools supported activities (perhaps through parental consent forms) to gather a baseline of evidence of participation. This would help to inform future approaches to supporting people with ASN. **sportscotland** should consider introducing young people living in areas of deprivation as a further target group.

Delivery and coordination

Active Schools Delivery

In 2013/14, over 20,000 individuals contributed to delivering Active Schools supported activities and opportunities – with the vast majority (84%) doing so on a voluntary basis. This included teachers and other school staff, pupils, parents, club coaches, students, sessional coaches and others. Most Active Schools teams felt that the balance between paid and unpaid deliverers in their area was good, but felt that ongoing work was required to maintain volunteering levels.

Deliverers were supported in a wide range of ways. Overall, wider stakeholders such as parents, coaches and students were more positive than teachers about the support they were offered. Over half of wider stakeholders felt the support was very good, compared to just over a third of teachers. Generally, Active Schools Managers felt that deliverers largely had the skills they required – but some felt that volunteer standards were variable.

Active Schools Coordination

Generally, Active Schools Managers were very positive about the skills and experience of their team. There were very few management issues. However, the majority of Active Schools teams found that it was challenging to attract high quality Active Schools Coordinators. It was felt that this was due to a lack of understanding about the Coordinator role, resulting in many recently qualified graduates applying.

Many felt that it was difficult for young people to get relevant experience which would help them to obtain an Active Schools Coordinator position.

Coordinators generally felt that the support they received from the local authority and **sportscotland** was moderate to good. However, almost all felt that there was a need for additional training or support, including training on skills such as people and project management; systems such as IT and database skills; and more opportunities for networking and sharing experiences.

Recommendation 7: Working in partnership with local authorities, **sportscotland** should consider options for piloting a new approach to ensuring that young people engaged in sport and Active Schools through school and university can progress into the Active Schools workforce.

Impact of Active Schools

There are strong indications from a range of stakeholders that Active Schools has resulted in young people:

- developing positive attitudes to sport and health;
- feeling happier – in themselves, and about their body image;
- developing sporting skills – in a range of sports, or in their specialist sport;
- having more confidence and making friends;
- understanding more about inclusion and equality;
- having more positive role models;
- being inspired; and
- considering and progressing in careers in sport.

The research suggests that Active Schools has had a positive impact on attitudes to sport and health; confidence; volunteering and leadership opportunities; and the culture and ethos of schools. It has also contributed to changing school culture and ethos around sport and health. Some schools have seen improved behaviour and attendance as a result and others have seen more teacher and pupil joint working. Schools felt that Active Schools strongly contributed to the health and wellbeing outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence.

Section 1 | Introduction

1.1 About this report

This report sets out findings from the evaluation of Active Schools. Active Schools is **sportscotland's** flagship programme. It aims to ensure that there are more and higher quality opportunities to participate in sports (and wider play, dance and exercise activities) within schools. It also aims to build partnerships with clubs and community organisations, to create a 'pathway' for pupils to continue their participation in sport.

1.2 Evaluation aims

This evaluation had three core aims:

- **to explore the impact of Active Schools**
 - how pupils are affected by participating in activity;
 - the role of Active Schools in motivating and inspiring pupils;
 - the volunteering and leadership opportunities for pupils and teachers;
 - the impact on the culture and ethos of the school; and
 - the connections between physical education, school sport and club sport.

- **to explore the quality of Active Schools**
 - the quality of opportunities to participate;
 - the quality of the workforce of deliverers; and
 - the quality of the links between schools and clubs.

- **to collect learning and examples of best practice**
 - to explore what is working well, and investigate any challenges; and
 - to look for areas which require more emphasis or focus in future.

The evaluation also explicitly set out to explore participation among under-represented groups – girls and young women; and pupils with Additional Support Needs.

1.3 Method

This evaluation involved six main stages:

- **Desktop review of monitoring information – sportscotland** gather and analyse comprehensive monitoring information on Active Schools. Given the strong and substantial amount of monitoring information already available, this evaluation was designed to complement this – focusing on more qualitative issues around the quality and impact of Active Schools. To inform this, we undertook a light touch review of the information, to help to set the context for the qualitative evaluation and to help shape the research tools used.
- **Telephone interviews with Active Schools Managers** – We held interviews with the Active Schools Manager in each local authority area. These were very detailed interviews, exploring a wide range of issues including the factors influencing Active Schools supported opportunities and activities; activity to measure and encourage participation of under-represented groups; views on teams of Coordinators and deliverers; detail on links between schools and clubs; and views on the impact of Active Schools.
- **Online survey of Active Schools Coordinators** – We ran an online survey of Active Schools Coordinators, distributed through Active Schools Managers. The survey was distributed to almost all of the 430 Coordinators, and 201 survey responses were received.
- **Online survey of teachers** – We ran an online survey of teachers, distributed to all schools in Scotland. There are over 2,600 schools in Scotland, and we received 365 survey responses from teachers. These responses were from teachers in at least 218 different schools.
- **Online survey of wider stakeholders** – We ran an online survey of wider stakeholders involved in Active Schools. This included deliverers (paid and unpaid); and partners and other key stakeholders – such as local sports clubs; representatives from sports governing bodies; and parents. The survey was distributed locally, through Active Schools Managers and Coordinators. A total of 299 survey responses were received.
- **Focus groups with pupils** – We held eight focus groups with pupils, to discuss views on Active Schools supported activity, and the impact it has on their lives. These groups involved pupils at primary, secondary and Additional Support Needs schools in a mix of geographies across Scotland. Two of the eight groups were with girls only (one at a primary school and one at a secondary school). One of the groups was with pupils with Additional Support

Needs only. Active Schools Managers were asked to suggest schools, which may be interested in participating in the research, and assisted with setting up the focus groups locally. These focus groups mainly attracted young people who were sporty and heavily involved in Active Schools supported activity – such as Young Ambassadors. However, the groups also involved a minority of pupils who had become newly involved in sport through Active Schools.

On completion of the fieldwork, we collated the information and analysed it. Qualitative information from interviews and surveys – on experiences, attitudes and views – was organised using a system of ‘manual thematic coding’. The notes of interviews were carefully read, and key themes highlighted – so that common themes could be grouped together and analysed collectively.

This report sets out our findings. It includes verbatim quotes, to demonstrate key points. These have been carefully selected to demonstrate and provide a flavour of views – and are not intended to summarise all views. The report also includes short case study examples of innovative or successful approaches. These have been agreed with the Active Schools Manager in each area, to ensure that they accurately reflect practice.

Section 2 | Context

2.1 About Active Schools

sportscotland is the national government agency for sport. It has one clear aim of “developing and supporting a world class sporting system at all levels”¹. It focuses on six main work areas. One of these is school sport.

“Our goal is to ensure there are more and higher quality opportunities to participate in sport within schools and that these opportunities are well connected to and supported by other local and national partners.”²

Active Schools is **sportscotland**’s flagship programme within school sport. It was set up in 2004 – following on from two **sportscotland** initiatives, which ran in the 1990s, designed to get pupils more active³.

The main purpose of Active Schools is to introduce “more and better opportunities for young people in sport”. **sportscotland** manages the programme. It works in partnership with all 32 local authorities to invest in and support the network of Active Schools Managers and Coordinators, who work with primary, secondary and Additional Support Needs (ASN) schools across Scotland. Every local authority in Scotland is committed to delivering the programme in its schools.

The core aims of Active Schools are:

- to ensure there are more and higher quality opportunities to participate in sport within schools;
- to build capacity through the recruitment, retention and development of volunteers who deliver sport; and
- to motivate and inspire young people to participate in sport.

Active Schools also aims to assist with the transition from school sport into club sport and develop pathways into sport, to encourage longer-term participation. While the focus is on sport, Active Schools also connects with the wider landscapes of play, dance, exercise and active living.

¹ Developing and supporting a world class sporting system at all levels, Corporate Plan 2011 – 2015, **sportscotland**

² As above

³ The two initiatives were the School Sport Co-ordinator Programme and the Active Primary School Pilot Programme

2.2 The Active Schools Network

There is a network of Active Schools Managers and Coordinators across Scotland. Each of the 32 local authorities has an Active Schools Manager (or Lead Coordinator) in post, supported by a number of Coordinators. There are 430 Coordinators across Scotland. The number of Coordinators varies significantly by local authority. This is influenced by a range of factors, including the size and population of the local authority, the level of local authority funding provided (in addition to **sportscotland** funding), and the flexible working patterns in place for many Coordinators. In many cases, Coordinators share posts, or have part time positions.

In some cases, Active Schools Managers have additional responsibilities beyond Active Schools – but related to physical education, school or community sport. Where Managers have significant additional responsibilities, **sportscotland** works with the local authority to ensure that Senior Coordinators are in post to support with the management of the Active Schools team.

The way in which Active Schools teams are organised varies. The most commonly used arrangements are based around a school cluster. A school cluster normally comprises of a secondary school, and all associated primary schools. In most cases, a Coordinator is responsible for all of the schools in the cluster - the secondary school and all associated primaries. More rarely, Coordinators just work with the secondary schools, or the primary schools, but not both.

In most cases, there is a mix of different types of arrangements in place within the one authority. In addition, Active Schools Coordinators may lead on a particular area of work – such as leadership; working with girls; or sport for children with Additional Support Needs.

2.3 Role of Active Schools teams

Active Schools teams are responsible for coordinating and enabling Active Schools supported activity at a local level. Active Schools supported activity is primarily delivered by volunteers. The role of Active Schools teams is to:

- increase the quality and range of sport opportunities offered before and after school, and during lunch;
- develop effective pathways between school and sports clubs to support the transition from school to club sport;
- recruit, retain and develop a network of volunteers, coaches, leaders and teachers who deliver opportunities in school sport and club sport;

- increase the number of young people engaging in volunteering as sport leaders and coaches in both school and club settings;
- increase participation among under-represented groups, including girls and young women and children and young people with a disability;
- work in partnership with education and sports development staff to ensure Active Schools supported opportunities are connected to physical education, school sport and club sport;
- deliver programmes designed to profile sport and motivate children and young people to get involved with Glasgow 2014 and the Ryder Cup 2014; and
- support the development and delivery of **sportscotland** led initiatives including Positive Coaching Scotland and Community Sport Hubs.

This means that Active Schools teams are involved in a wide range of activities – including:

- planning Active Schools supported opportunities strategically and operationally;
- supporting and coordinating others to deliver Active Schools supported activities and opportunities;
- building partnerships and relationships; and
- consulting with key stakeholders including pupils, parents, teachers and clubs, and recruiting, sustaining and supporting volunteers.

Active Schools teams are employed either by local authorities or by leisure trusts. In recent years, a number of Active Schools teams have moved from the local authority to the leisure trust. Within local authorities, Active Schools teams can sit within different Services – including community; education; sport and leisure; children; and culture. Often Active Schools teams sit within wider teams promoting physical activity, physical education, sports and outdoor learning.

2.4 Role of sportscotland

sportscotland supports Active Schools at a national level. It works in partnership with local authorities to invest in and support the Active Schools staffing network of Active Schools Managers and Coordinators. **sportscotland** has a partnership agreement with each local authority, and commitment to deliver Active Schools is an integral part of this. Active Schools has been managed by **sportscotland** and successfully delivered by every local authority in Scotland since 2004.

sportscotland has a team of Partnership Managers, who work with local authorities and partners to:

- support the development of integrated school and community plans incorporating Active Schools;
- work with local partners to invest in and maintain the Active Schools staffing structure;
- provide leadership, training and support;
- monitor and evaluate the impact of Active Schools; and
- raise the profile of Active Schools.

sportscotland runs a number of national initiatives, in partnership with other organisations, within the Active Schools programme. These include:

- **Young Ambassadors** – This is a programme for young people in school between the ages of 14 and 17, run in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust. Their role is to motivate and inspire other young people from primary and secondary schools across Scotland, to get involved in sport and generate enthusiasm for major games.
- **Lead 2014** – This programme runs in partnership between **sportscotland**, the Youth Sport Trust and Glasgow 2014. It aims to build the next generation of sports leaders. It involves regional conferences with young people aged 14 and over at secondary schools who have leadership potential, and local activity to build these leadership and volunteering skills.
- **Active Girls** – This is a Scottish Government funded programme managed by **sportscotland** and delivered in partnership with Ydance, Youth Scotland and the Youth Sport Trust. The aim is to increase the participation of girls and young women in physical education (PE), sport and physical activity. There are three key programmes. Fit for Girls provides bespoke training for education providers; Ydance provides opportunities for young women and the teachers who work with them to get involved in dance; and Girls on the Move is designed to increase physical activity levels.
- **Sport Relief** – Comic Relief, a registered charity working across the UK, runs this programme. The Scottish Government and **sportscotland** work in partnership with Comic Relief to support the delivery of their Sport Relief programme in Scotland, supporting activity through the Active Schools network.

- **ClubGolf** – This was initiated in 2003, in partnership with the Scottish Golf Union, as part of Scotland’s successful Ryder Cup 2014 bid. It aims to ensure that every child in Scotland has the opportunity to experience golf, will be welcomed into the sport, and will be encouraged to reach their full potential.

Active Schools teams are asked to support with the development and delivery of these national initiatives.

2.5 Funding

The Active Schools programme involves approximately £12.5 million investment per year. The vast majority of funding goes into staffing – to ensure that the network of Managers and Coordinators is in place at local level. Approximately 75 per cent of funding is provided by **sportscotland** and 25 per cent by local authorities – and this varies at local level. Active Schools has been funded in tranches, with the current funding phase running 2011 to 2015.

2.6 Monitoring

Active Schools data is collated nationally using the Active Schools Monitoring Online (ASMO) system. It gathers information about participation in Active Schools supported activities; the deliverers involved in Active Schools supported activities; and the links between schools and clubs. It collates information on sport or physical activity supported by Active Schools which takes place out of school time periods – including before school, at lunchtime, after school, in the evening or at the weekend.

sportscotland has issued clear guidance about how Active Schools supported activities and opportunities are defined, for the purposes of ASMO. Active Schools may support activities and opportunities through:

- buying equipment;
- recruiting or training deliverers;
- promotion or signposting;
- securing a facility;
- coordinating after school activity;
- securing funding; or
- creating or developing a pathway for community opportunities.

The ASMO information is made available at school level; Active Schools Coordinator level; local authority level and national level.

Section 3 | Activities and opportunities

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the number, range and quality of the activities and opportunities supported by Active Schools. It draws on national monitoring data, as well as views of Active Schools Managers, Active Schools Coordinators, teachers, wider stakeholders and pupils

3.2 National figures

The Active Schools Monitoring Online (ASMO) system provides a strong indication of the number, range and type of Active Schools supported activities and opportunities. To provide an indication of the scale of activity, in 2013/14 (academic year):

- pupils made 5.8 million visits to Active Schools supported sessions;
- there were over 36,700 blocks of activity sessions – running for an average of just over eight weeks and totalling over 312,000 activity sessions;
- over 20,000 people were involved in delivering Active Schools supported activity – delivering an average of 16 sessions each during the academic year; and
- there were over 21,000 links made between schools and clubs – with over 2,500 clubs in Scotland having a link with at least one school.

From 2012/13 to 2013/14, Active Schools supported activity increased. The number of activity sessions and activity blocks increased by 14 per cent; the number of pupil visits to these sessions increased by 15 per cent; and the number of individuals delivering Active Schools supported activity increased by 5 per cent⁴. However, boys and young men have consistently made up a slightly higher proportion of all pupil visits to Active Schools supported activity than girls and young women, from 2010 to 2013. The proportion of visits to Active Schools supported activity made by girls and young women has remained broadly static at 47 per cent in 2010 and 46 per cent in 2011 to 2013.

Across Scotland, slightly more activity takes place at primary school. Approximately 3.5 million of the visits to Active Schools supported sessions were made by primary school pupils; and 2.4 million visits were made by secondary school pupils. Some Active Schools supported activities are not recorded in these figures – for example, curricular activity, leadership activity, and one off events.

⁴ Data on 'distinct deliverers' (the number of individuals delivering Active Schools supported activity) was not collated nationally before 2011.

3.3 Drivers for opportunities and activities

Across Scotland, the most common types of activity supported by Active Schools include football, dance and movement, netball, basketball, athletics, badminton, rugby, hockey, multisports and gymnastics. However, the way in which these activities are planned and delivered varies significantly.

Discussion with Active Schools Managers as part of this research highlighted that most commonly, a balance of supply and demand drove the way in which Active Schools supported opportunities and activities developed. Some Managers felt that ideally, activity should be demand led, based on what pupils want to do. But others emphasised the need for strong pathways, and stressed the role of Active Schools in stimulating demand for different activities.

The factors identified by Active Schools Managers as impacting on supply included:

- **Availability and profile of volunteers** – Many emphasised that Active Schools was dependent on the commitment, skills and expertise of volunteers. Many highlighted that they would never turn away volunteers interested in a specific activity. Others stressed that the profile of their volunteers strongly influenced the way they planned activities locally. For example, areas with a large number of student volunteers planned activities differently than those mainly working with club deliverers or teachers.
- **Local clubs and pathways** – Most Active Schools Managers highlighted that they would not wish to develop activities without having a strong pathway through to club and community sport. Some emphasised that existing strong clubs made it easier to develop Active Schools supported activity in certain places – including more affluent areas and more urban areas – where there tended to be more clubs in operation.
- **Practical constraints** – A minority of consultees highlighted that practical considerations like facilities, geography, travel and transport severely constrained the activities they could offer. This was a particular issue in very rural and remote areas.

“Active Schools activity is driven by getting the right people in the right place at the right time.”

(Active Schools Manager)

The availability of volunteers was a key factor driving activities in local authority areas where there was a very strong commitment to achieving **sportscotland's** aim that Active Schools supported activity should be free of charge, and that almost all activity should be delivered by unpaid rather than paid deliverers.

“Active Schools is based on goodwill. It is difficult building a programme based on that.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Most Active Schools teams balanced supply with demand, exploring demand through:

- **Speaking with pupils** – This included discussion groups, surveys and meetings with Pupil Councils, Health and Wellbeing Councils and young leaders.
- **Speaking to teachers** – This included authority wide annual events to agree priorities; one-to-one meetings with Head Teachers and PE teachers; consultation with Head Teacher Forums and cluster groups; and informal ongoing discussions throughout the year.
- **Testing demand** – Many Active Schools teams offered taster sessions of different activities, to explore demand before developing wider activities and opportunities in this area.

Many Active Schools teams looked very carefully at the ASMO data gathered by **sportscotland** to help to plan their activities. This provided information about participation, and any gaps in the profile of those taking part. However, some highlighted that matching supply and demand could be a challenge.

“We ask our children and young people what they are interested in, but in the main we look at our sporting pathways – and clubs attached to the schools.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Active Schools supported activity was also strongly impacted by the history and culture of the area, and the sporting culture. Other influences included **sportscotland** and local authority priorities and annual priorities – such as a key drive to link to the Commonwealth Games. A number of consultees highlighted that events such as the Commonwealth Games 2014 helped to stimulate demand in new sports and activities, and many were using this interest as a way to try to introduce new activities and opportunities and broaden demand.

“There is no exact science. It is very much driven by local need and the availability of volunteers and suitable facilities.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Example: Ongoing consultation with pupils, schools, young leaders and parents

In South Lanarkshire, Active Schools supported activities and opportunities are planned based on consultation with pupils, schools, young leaders and parents. The team undertakes ongoing surveys to gather views, across all schools on a regular basis. The findings are then matched with what is available locally.

Example: Making the most of the natural environment

In Argyll and Bute, activities and opportunities need to be driven by local needs and resources. For example, surfing is a core Active Schools supported sport in Tiree, due to the natural environment and opportunities. Some of the remote island schools have very limited facilities, so the Active Schools team have to think of ways to use the natural environment – such as offering activities like Nordic walking.

3.4 Influence of national initiatives

We asked Active Schools Managers and Coordinators, teachers and wider stakeholders about the positive impact they felt national initiatives had on Active Schools supported activity locally.

Young Ambassadors

Generally, Active Schools Managers felt that this programme could have a very positive impact on young people, and was a successful initiative. Over two thirds (71%) of all Active Schools Coordinators involved in this research, and over a third (38%) of the teachers involved felt that it had at least some positive impact on their work locally. It is important to note, however, that this includes teachers at both primary and secondary schools, and that Young Ambassadors is targeted at secondary school age pupils.

Many Active Schools Managers said that Young Ambassadors was a great example of what worked well locally. It was felt that it had a good profile, and was improving and becoming clearer each year. Managers also felt it linked well both with Active Schools aims, and with the Curriculum for Excellence. Many Managers and Coordinators said that the young people involved played key role in assisting with Active Schools supported events and activities – and could make even more use of them.

“It has helped to develop a network of mini Active Schools Coordinators across Scotland. It has been good for young people and the Active Schools programme.”

(Active Schools Manager)

“It is nice to see a systematic, long term approach.”

(Active Schools Manager)

However, some felt that there was a need to do more to maximise the potential of this programme locally. In some areas, consultees felt that it had a significant impact, but only on the very small number of people who were selected as Young Ambassadors – often the most sporty or academic pupils. In addition, others highlighted that there could be overlap with the range of other leadership programmes in operation in schools.

“Whilst they might be the most reliable pupils, they are also the ones that probably don’t need the input.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Example: Young Ambassadors in Midlothian

In Midlothian, the Young Ambassadors programme has been a great success. The Young Ambassadors have acted as role models for their peers, and have also built their own confidence. A lot of the success is due to the opportunities for Young Ambassadors to attend conferences, meeting others and sharing experiences. One of the Young Ambassadors from Midlothian is now on the Young Ambassadors Steering Group for Scotland, and has also been selected to be part of the National Young People’s Sports Panel – a role this young person will carry out for two years.

Example: Young Ambassadors in Shetland

In Shetland, Young Ambassadors has been a key programme. The programme now includes 36 pupils across seven schools, and is felt to have delivered real value. In addition, the Active Schools team now hosts its own local Young Ambassadors conference, as well as sending pupils to the regional conferences.

Lead 2014

While some Active Schools Managers and Coordinators felt that this programme was successful, most felt that it overlapped a little with Young Ambassadors, and was less clear in its aims. While over half of Coordinators involved in the research (56%) said it had some positive impact, most of these said that it only had a little positive impact on their work locally. Just 17 per cent of teachers involved in this research said it had any positive impact on their work locally. Again, it is important to note that this includes both primary and secondary school teachers, and Lead 2014 is targeted at secondary school age pupils.

Stakeholders felt that Lead 2014 worked best when it was closely integrated with Young Ambassadors – otherwise it could be overshadowed by, and too similar to Young Ambassadors. Some felt that the programme was slightly elitist, providing opportunities to only a few. And others felt that its impact was very variable. Some suggested this programme may need a refresh.

Example: Leadership in Highland

In Highland, leadership activities have been very successful – including Young Ambassadors and Lead 2014. It has been particularly effective in rural areas, where they can struggle to recruit volunteers. They often support the young leaders to work alongside parent volunteers, using a buddying system. The Active Schools team plan to set up a Leadership Academy, where young people sign up to deliver a certain number of volunteering hours, and in return receive rewards.

Active Girls

Active Schools Coordinators mainly felt that Active Girls had at least some positive impact on their work locally (63%). Most Active Schools Managers and Coordinators felt that the Ydance initiative had been a huge success. It was seen as very tangible, and helping the young people to access real expertise. Many gave examples of the young dance leaders volunteering to deliver dance activities because of involvement in this programme.

“The quality of the delivery from YDance is phenomenal.”

(Active Schools Manager)

However, in terms of other aspects of Active Girls, most felt that it was a bit unstructured and depended a lot on the level of interest from the secondary school. Some Active Schools teams said that they had not really driven this programme locally.

ClubGolf

Many Active Schools Coordinators felt that ClubGolf had a positive impact on their work locally (68% said it had some or a lot of impact). It is clear that this programme works well in some local areas. However, the vast majority of Active Schools Managers and some Coordinators expressed concerns about this programme and its relationship with Active Schools. There were two main concerns:

- **The pathways** – Many were concerned that some local golf clubs did not want to get involved in the programme, or did not want to encourage young people to use their facilities. Many felt that this lack of pathway meant that the activity was very stand alone, and did not link with wider Active Schools objectives.

- **Delivery** – Many Active Schools teams were delivering ClubGolf directly. They felt that this conflicted with their main role, and made it more difficult to explain their role to schools. It was also felt to be very resource intensive.

In addition, most felt that the 100 per cent target was unrealistic, and some highlighted that the equipment they had required to purchase to run the programme was very expensive. A number of Coordinators also highlighted ClubGolf as one of the least successful Active Schools supported activities – with some suggesting it was difficult to get suitable deliverers.

“ClubGolf. Very difficult to instil confidence in people to run sessions in the sport if they don’t already play.”

(Active Schools Coordinator)

Example: ClubGolf in Orkney

In Orkney, ClubGolf has been a big success. Local golf clubs have been well involved, and the number of children going on to participate in clubs has increased. The initiative has received a lot of support from clubs to support the programme. The Active Schools team is now planning to roll out ‘Extreme Club Golf’ at secondary school level. One young person who participated in ClubGolf went on to join a club, and was identified for specialist coaching from the club professional. He is now at the National Golf Academy.

Example: Challenges around ClubGolf

In one area, the Active Schools team experienced some challenges supporting ClubGolf. It took a significant level of resources (both time and money) to deliver the programme, and was not perceived to offer strong positive outcomes for pupils.

Sports Relief

For teachers, this was the national programme that impacted most on their work – with 55 per cent saying it impacted a little or a lot. It impacted less on the work of Active Schools Coordinators than other programmes. Many Active Schools Managers said that this programme was largely driven by the schools, and the Active Schools teams got involved if requested by the schools. Many said that it didn’t tie in with wider Active Schools work and felt “one off”.

Commonwealth Games 2014

Most Active Schools teams felt that the Commonwealth Games had a major positive impact on their work. It has helped to stimulate demand in new sports, and has also provided funding opportunities for schools. Many were doing a lot of work linked to the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, particularly towards the end of the 2013/14 academic year. Many were promoting initiatives like the ‘Support a Second Team’ initiative; or the ‘Passport Programme’ where children participate in the

Commonwealth Games sports, and get rewards when they complete this. And many were thinking of the legacy beyond the Games – and the potential for a bounce in interest in particular sports.

“It has provided a platform to use other sports – like table tennis and bowls – and a new way to engage young leaders.”

(Active Schools Manager)

A small number of teachers who responded to the survey as part of this research also spontaneously highlighted the impact of the Commonwealth Games, and related activity.

“Legacy events have been excellent opportunities for the children in our small school to compete and meet children from outwith the catchment.”

(Teacher)

Example: Building a Legacy in West Lothian

In West Lothian, the Active Schools team wanted to provide a tangible legacy after the Commonwealth Games 2014. Before the 2013/14 school year, the Active Schools team reviewed all of the school-club pathways. The team decided to work on developing bowling opportunities and pathways. This was because there was a lack of current club links, and good potential in terms of the availability of volunteers and facilities. This approach resulted in many local bowling clubs working in partnership with Active Schools, providing local schools with taster sessions. Junior attendance at bowling clubs has increased (before the Games) and there are hopes that these young people continue to stay involved and progress within the sport in the future.

Other programmes

Most teachers who took part in this research felt that programmes such as Positive Coaching Scotland, National School Sport Week and Community Sport Hubs did not positively impact on their work locally in relation to Active Schools – and many indicated that they did not know about these initiatives. Active Schools Coordinators and Managers saw a stronger positive impact in relation to Community Sport Hubs – with many highlighting the benefits these hubs bring in terms of building relations and links between schools and clubs.

General views on national programmes

Overall, most Active Schools teams were positive about most national initiatives. However, many commented that some national initiatives could appear one off or a “quick hit” – rather than planned and systematic. Some were concerned that national initiatives could actually have a negative impact on their work, where they don’t link clearly with local Active Schools priorities. There was also some concern

that some initiatives run for a few years, lots of effort goes into making them work, and then they are discontinued.

A minority expressed a need for clearer briefings and more information for Active Schools Managers about national initiatives. Some expressed concern about the number of initiatives and impact on workloads – perhaps taking Active Schools teams away from their core aim. And some highlighted that it could be challenging running national programmes in large local authority areas, due to the need for variation to meet different local needs and circumstances.

3.5 Successful opportunities and activities

Active Schools Managers and Coordinators were asked what they felt were the most successful opportunities and activities in their area. Key themes emerged, including:

- **Leadership initiatives** – This was the most commonly mentioned success. It was felt that Young Ambassadors (and Lead 2014 to a lesser extent) had resulted in real inspiration and role models for young people, increasing participation in activity and sport. It had resulted in young people gaining leadership qualifications, going on to study sports, and becoming involved in delivering Active Schools supported activities.

“They tend to be our best coaches. This is a great example of progression.”
(Active Schools Manager)

“I think Young Ambassadors worked well and recruited a network of pupils to encourage participation.”
(Active Schools Coordinator)

- **Range of opportunities** – Active Schools Coordinators generally felt that the most successful aspect of Active Schools has been the range of opportunities and activities that have been made available to children of all ages. This ranged from traditional sports through to other activities like Karate, Judo, dance and Boxercise. Many felt that taster sessions had been particularly successful, motivating young people to try different activities.
- **Development of particular sports** – Many highlighted successes around focusing on one specific sport, and developing activities, links and Sports Forums around this sport. It was felt that this focus could really stimulate demand, and build interest in new sports – particularly beneficial when there was a good pathway for involvement in club sport.

- **Building pathways from schools to clubs** – Most Active Schools Managers and Coordinators provided examples of success in building links between schools and clubs. Generally, these were a success because the club had a presence in the school – delivering taster or after school sessions – and then a clear progression for pupils into the club. Links between schools and clubs are explored in more detail in Chapter Five.

“Most successful Active Schools supported opportunities and activities have been where clubs and schools have worked alongside each other as one to target and create opportunities for pupils.”

(Active Schools Coordinator)

- **Linking with strategic aims** – A number of Active Schools teams highlighted the benefit of linking their activity with wider education and physical activity priorities, and felt that this had resulted in clearer joint aims, partnership working and a higher profile and role for Active Schools.
- **Successes in increasing participation of girls** – The introduction of netball and dance activity in particular increased participation of girls. This is covered in detail in the next chapter.

Many felt that the successful Active Schools supported activities were strongly linked to effective partnership working between Active Schools teams, schools, clubs and other local partners. Some highlighted that the profile and reputation of Active Schools had grown over the past 10 years. It was now a recognised and trusted brand, and this has contributed to its success.

However, when identifying successful approaches, Active Schools Managers highlighted the need to implement approaches which were appropriate to the local circumstances. Many cautioned that no one approach would work everywhere, and there was a need to adapt approaches appropriately.

Example: An integrated approach in Glasgow

In Glasgow, the Active Schools team is part of an integrated approach to sports and physical education. All activities are planned in a holistic way, with staff and partners in the Physical Education, Physical Activity and School Sport (PEPASS) team working together to develop strategies and plans for the city. This means that partners such as Glasgow Life and **sportscotland** can be involved in an integrated way. There is an annual PEPASS conference, which schools are invited to attend. Teachers are asked to choose from a menu of sports and physical activity options, and each school then receives an annual plan based on these opportunities.

Example: Leadership initiatives in Clackmannanshire

In Clackmannanshire, the leadership programme used by the Active Schools team in primary schools has worked very well. The team was keen to get in and work with young people as leaders at an early age. Active Schools team members go to schools and provide primary 5, 6 and 7 pupils with the training they need to be able to assist at clubs for the younger children in the school. Schools have been very keen on the approach, and feedback from schools, parents and pupils has been excellent. The Active Schools team has now seen some of these young leaders coming through as Active Schools Coordinators, high level athletes and sports coaches.

3.6 Least successful opportunities and activities

Many Active Schools Managers and Coordinators highlighted that their approach was always evolving, and they were constantly learning from what worked and what didn't. However, a number of challenges and less successful opportunities were identified, including:

- **Lead 2014** – Identified earlier as an area where there were concerns about duplication with other activities, and a lack of buy in from schools.
- **Delivery** – Some Active Schools teams delivered activities such as Bikeability directly, and were trying to pull back from these historical arrangements. Others had worked to move away from delivery, and found it hard to do so while maintaining positive relationships with schools – as they often highly valued this direct input.
- **Matching demand and supply** – Some reported problems with high demand for some activities, but a lack of local clubs to progress into.
- **Working with secondary schools** – Many found that primary schools and pupils were much more receptive to Active Schools supported activity than secondary schools and pupils. A number of reasons for this were suggested, including the fact that there are often fewer parent volunteers at secondary level; links with Head Teachers can be more challenging in larger schools; and the Curriculum for Excellence putting pressures on secondary school teachers.
- **Targeting** – Some challenges around sharing information between schools and Active Schools teams and effectively targeting 'inactive' young people were identified, and these are covered in detail in Chapter Four.

- **Volunteer recruitment** – Many identified the recruitment of volunteers to deliver Active Schools supported activities and opportunities as a challenge, and this is explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

3.7 Quality of opportunities and activities

Overall, stakeholders involved in Active Schools felt that the quality of supported opportunities and activities was high:

- 74 per cent of teachers said that the quality was good or very good;
- 89 per cent of wider stakeholders said the quality was good or very good; and
- 95 per cent of Active Schools Coordinators said the quality was good or very good.

Where teachers, wider stakeholders and Coordinators rated the quality highly, this was because they felt that:

- Active Schools teams were knowledgeable, enthusiastic, hard working and supportive;
- pupils were able to access a range of high quality activities that were enjoyable and either subsidised or free;
- pupils had access to great coaches and a wide choice of sports and activities;
- activities were well planned and organised; and
- Active Schools had helped to promote a range of inter school activities and competitions, events and festivals to bring pupils together.

Some stakeholders commented that it could be quite difficult to know what was organised by Active Schools, and what was organised by the school – making this question quite difficult for them to answer.

Active Schools Managers also generally felt that they would rate the quality of opportunities and activities highly. Some felt that the Active Schools brand was strong and held in high regard – so it was very important to maintain this.

A significant proportion of Active Schools Managers, however, felt that it was variable – and very dependent on the deliverer. This was a particular challenge in remote rural areas, where there was often very little flexibility in terms of who delivers activities (whether paid or unpaid deliverers). Generally, there was a feeling that paid coaches and students from further and higher education institutions were generally very high quality. There were some issues around quality of parent and teacher volunteers – but concerns about pushing people too strongly to develop their skills further.

“They are a fragile workforce and can’t be put under pressure.”

(Active Schools Manager)

“We want to ensure that Active Schools is attached to high quality activity.”

(Active Schools Manager)

This was echoed by others. One of the main reasons that a minority of stakeholders rated Active Schools poorly was that the quality of delivery was variable. Some teachers felt there were too many young and inexperienced coaches and deliverers – and not enough input from the Coordinators themselves. Some other stakeholders suggested that the time allocated by Coordinators to secondary schools seemed low, when compared to primary schools. A minority of stakeholders felt there were too many ‘taster’ sessions, with not enough follow through.

While some Active Schools teams did not assess quality on an ongoing basis, most did. A range of methods were used, including:

- **Analysis of ASMO information** – This was used to identify participation levels, particularly if there had been a drop off in figures, as this might indicate a problem which needed to be explored.
- **Evaluation and feedback** – Most Active Schools teams issued feedback forms to pupils, parents and teachers on a regular basis, and analysed this to gather views on quality of activities.
- **Observation** – In most areas, Coordinators attend sessions to check quality. Generally, quality is assessed based on the Coordinators own judgement, rather than having a list of factors to consider.
- **Informal feedback from schools** – Most Active Schools teams were confident that their schools would say if they had an issue with quality, and some gave examples of where this had happened and how they had addressed it.

Few Active Schools teams had a clear definition of what constituted a ‘quality’ supported activity or opportunity. Some talked of minimum standards – such as ensuring PVG checks and training had been done; and ensuring practicalities like registers, timekeeping and uniforms were adhered to. However, many indicated that it was very difficult to describe what ‘quality’ looked like, and suggested that quality was largely assessed subjectively and qualitatively - based on the views and experiences of participants, parents and Coordinators.

3.8 Pupil experiences of opportunities and activities

We held eight focus groups with pupils in primary and secondary schools, and one school for pupils with Additional Support Needs. Most pupils recognised the term 'Active Schools', and all knew who their Active Schools Coordinator (ASC) was. All of the pupils said that they liked their ASC, describing them as kind, funny, inspiring and always busy doing things for the pupils.

"He's really inspiring. He makes you want to do more."

(Pupil, Secondary School)

"They organise competitions like football and netball."

(Pupil, Primary School)

"She gets us into competitions, and gets coaches in for different things."

(Pupil, Primary School)

"She comes to assemblies to talk about new events, and she is always putting posters up."

(Pupil, Secondary School)

All of the pupils involved in the research knew that there were lots of sports opportunities and activities within the school – although they didn't always know exactly what was supported by Active Schools. This was particularly the case where teachers were providing many of the Active Schools supported activities. The pupils who took part in the focus groups all felt that the purpose of Active Schools was to have lots of different sports on offer in schools. Pupils mentioned a vast range of activities they had been involved in, and all were very happy with their experiences.

"There's a breakfast club. It's every morning and you get breakfast and then can go dancing."

(Pupil, Primary School)

The pupils who took part in this research all liked the coaches who delivered Active Schools supported activity. The one exception was an outdoor activity course in one school, where the pupils felt the coach was too strict.

"They keep your hopes high, so that if you do it wrong you just try again – they don't moan about it."

(Pupil, Secondary School)

"I liked that they were really organized. There were no last minute changes."

(Pupil, Primary School)

“I liked how they taught us. It was about different techniques and how to hold the bat. I went to a tournament and got through the first round.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

Most pupils involved in this research understood that the ASC didn't normally deliver activities. However, at one school, the pupils felt that their ASC didn't spend enough time at their school – and wanted the ASC to be more visible at activities and events.

“He (the ASC) likes to schedule other people to run the classes, who are good at it.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

Many young girls spoke about their experiences of Ydance and dancing competitions, which all had greatly enjoyed. Some dancing activities involved a number of schools coming together – a community club – and this was highly praised.

“We did a dancing competition with ten schools, and we practiced every Tuesday. We learned all the new steps. It was great, performing; the worst thing was that we didn't win!”

(Pupil, Additional Support Needs)

“It's good that there are people from other schools. It's quite cool as you get to be their friends.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

Young Ambassadors and other sports leaders involved in this research were positive about their involvement. Older primary school pupils were proud to be sport leaders. They were actively involved in supporting younger pupils, through supporting them to play games in a zoned off area in the playground. Younger pupils in this school were keen to be involved in the future. Secondary school pupils were also very positive, particularly about Young Ambassadors. However, some young people who were sports leaders in primary school felt that they hadn't had the chance to do anything differently, and weren't sure how to motivate and inspire other young people.

“We teach wee ones dancing – the primary ones and twos.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

“It gives us a chance to organise and lead events.”

(Pupil, Secondary School)

“We learned about how to conduct yourself, and how to make a good impression and how to encourage young people into sport.”

(Pupil, Secondary School)

Many young people felt a real connection with the younger pupils that they supported, and were proud to see them integrate and develop.

“Last week, when the P7s came up we did a sports day as part of their induction.”
(Pupil, Secondary School)

“The last game we had was junior and seniors basketball all mixed together, it was absolutely awesome... to see them progress and see them do so well, I felt like a mum, so proud.”
(Pupil, Secondary School)

Only pupils at the ASN school said they would change anything about Active Schools. They would like more Active Schools supported opportunities. Some said that they hadn't been able to do so much activity recently, as there wasn't money for buses to get people to and from activities. This meant that activities like football with other schools, which had happened once a month had now stopped.

Section 4 | Encouraging participation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores approaches to encouraging participation in Active Schools. It draws on the telephone interviews with Active Schools Managers; the surveys of Active Schools Coordinators, teachers and wider stakeholders; and the discussion groups with pupils across Scotland.

4.2 Identifying non-participants

Active Schools Managers and Coordinators were asked if and how they identify those who are not taking part in Active Schools supported activity, and target them appropriately.

The vast majority of Active Schools teams used the information from ASMO, to identify ‘distinct participants’. This provided teams with a clear idea of which young people are not participating, by school. In some areas, Active Schools teams used this information to meet with teachers or Head Teachers with a spreadsheet setting out who was and wasn’t involved – and talk about the reasons that individuals may not have been involved in Active Schools supported activity. Most Active Schools teams which took this approach would then try to encourage involvement based on this intelligence – through a range of approaches including writing to parents; meeting with parents; speaking with children; issuing tailored invitations to young people; and reviewing charges. However, some were unable to use the information in this way, due to data protection issues.

Generally, Active Schools teams felt that this approach to identifying and targeting non-participants was much easier at primary school than secondary schools, due to having closer relationships with pupils and parents at primary level.

Many Active Schools teams highlighted that they now had “phenomenal” data at their fingertips – simplifying a process, which used to be onerous and time consuming. However, others recognised the potential of ASMO data but had not yet been able to analyse and use it in this way. In some areas, particularly where the Active Schools team was based in a Trust, the Active Schools teams didn’t have access to all the data they needed to be able to match ASMO distinct participant data with the school register. One Trust indicated that Coordinators kept manual class lists, and compared these with ASMO data – but this was resource intensive.

In at least 19 of the 32 areas, Active Schools teams supplemented ASMO data with pupil surveys exploring activity levels and reasons – or used local surveys of physical activity to help to identify priorities. And some Active Schools teams were working jointly with other partners to identify who was not active across a wide range of activities beyond Active Schools, and how to target non-participants. It was felt that this should build a stronger picture of which children were active in other ways – for example out with Active Schools or through their lifestyle such as crofting, fishing or farming.

Example: Consultation in Fife

In Fife, the Active Schools team ran a number of discussion groups for pupils who were not engaged in Active Schools supported activity or who had low self-esteem. From this, they developed a number of tailored programmes which have since delivered great results. They plan to continue with this targeted approach, rather than a blanket approach.

Example: Consultation in Stirling

In 2012/13, the Stirling Active Schools team surveyed all pupils in one year group across schools in their area. The aim was to understand which pupils didn't take part in any activity, and why. Those who were identified as not taking part in activities were personally invited to try an activity class. A number of pupils who would not normally engage in sport became involved as a result, which was a key achievement.

Most Active Schools teams felt that it was very important to identify non-participants. Some felt that the ASMO system strongly influenced their priorities locally – with a strong focus on girls, and less on other priorities like obesity or disadvantage. Some highlighted that tackling obesity could be very sensitive, and required joint work with the NHS and other partners – which was often in its early stages.

“We are taking a softly, softly approach. We can only take it so far.”

(Active Schools Manager)

In most areas, there was a strong focus on identifying those who may face barriers to participation, and ensuring that they could be involved. However, in one area, there was a suggestion that Active Schools should focus on activity for the majority, and that specialist organisations should do targeted work with people with Additional Support Needs and other under-represented groups.

Example: Second clubs in Perth and Kinross

In Perth and Kinross, Active Schools identified that in some schools the same, sporty young people were involved in many of the school teams and extracurricular opportunities. So they have worked with these schools to set up 'second clubs' to give others a chance to take part. Another approach is to have clubs on at the same time so that young people have to choose one or the other – freeing up space for others to join. This has resulted in an increase in the number of distinct participants taking part in extracurricular school sport.

Example: Supporting young people in care

In East Lothian, the Active Schools team worked very closely with Corporate Parenting, to identify young people at school who are in care. The Active Schools team cross checks these names with the names of pupils involved in Active Schools supported activity. This year, the team found that while overall about 40 per cent of pupils were engaged in Active Schools, this fell to about 30 per cent for pupils in care. They do this each year, to make sure that they can provide individual support to those in care who are not engaging. Sometimes there can be challenges such as access to transport.

4.3 Measuring participation of people with additional support needs

Most Active Schools teams did not measure participation levels for people with Additional Support Needs. Some measured this within ASN schools, but not in mainstream schools. There were significant challenges in identifying pupils with ASN, so that participation levels could be tracked. Many found that schools would not share information on pupils with registered Additional Support Needs. Some also found that there were differences between how a school would legally define a child with ASN, compared with the Active Schools team. And others highlighted that even once it is known whether a child has ASN or not, the Active Schools team would still benefit from knowing whether this was a physical disability, mental health issue, learning disability or other – so that they could target activities and support appropriately. Some Active Schools teams also found that within mainstream schools, there could be an ethos of not wishing to label and target young people with registered ASN.

“We have found that it is difficult to know who the children are. The schools are not willing to share this information.”

(Active Schools Manager)

However, there were some examples of Active Schools teams measuring participation of people with ASN. For example, in one area, the parental consent form for Active Schools supported activities gathered information about whether pupils had ASN. This information is then collated and analysed, to inform future activity.

Example: Identifying People with ASN in Scottish Borders

In Scottish Borders, the Active Schools team works with the Disability Development Officer to identify the number of young people with Additional Support Needs at schools, at the beginning of each school year. The Active Schools team then develops tailored approaches for young people, particularly around curriculum festivals. The difficulties faced by Active Schools Coordinators are around children from mainstream classes accessing these events. There are a number of reasons that contribute to this. Firstly, budgetary constraints mean that releasing support staff from school for one or two children is sometimes not easy. Secondly, there is perhaps an element of uncertainty from Coordinators and teaching staff about children being labelled as having a disability and so teachers avoid possible conflict with parents by not passing on information.

4.4 Barriers to participation for people with additional support needs

Active Schools teams, teachers and wider stakeholders were asked whether they felt young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) faced barriers to participating in Active Schools supported activities. A number of key barriers were identified, including:

- lack of Active Schools supported activities for young disabled people;
- lack of information about what is available;
- challenges getting young people to and from activities;
- challenges integrating and including people within mainstream clubs;
- lack of expertise among sports coaches in working with disabled young people; and
- lack of funding, facilities and equipment to provide the right support to enable young people to participate.

“Some of the coaches find it difficult to include and support the children in the activities.”

(Teacher)

“I feel there aren’t enough fully trained coaches and specialised equipment put in place for people with disabilities.”

(Wider Stakeholder)

4.5 Encouraging participation of people with additional support needs

Despite not being able to identify all young people with ASN, most Active Schools teams tried to encourage participation of young people with ASN. Where there were ASN schools in the local authority area, Active Schools teams worked with these. Often, one Active Schools Coordinator had lead responsibility for working with these schools – and it was felt that this approach worked very well.

The approach to working with pupils with ASN in mainstream schools was more varied. Some put on specific opportunities for these pupils, while others worked to ensure that pupils could be engaged in all activities and opportunities at the school. Generally, it was felt that both of these approaches could work very well. Some used a mix of approaches – using initial targeted opportunities with the aim of integrating children into a mainstream pathway.

“Inclusive opportunities where children can attend mainstream sessions with additional support work well.”

(Active Schools Coordinator)

“I think (targeted activity for young people with ASN) is important as they perform better in groups with their own ability, and can build up the skills to then join local clubs with able bodied children, and not feel so out of place and far behind.”

(Active Schools Coordinator)

A number of consultees also mentioned developing new classes in sports (such as Boccia) where all young people, including people with ASN, could compete and progress into competitions. It was felt that this made the sport more meaningful, and bred confidence.

While some approaches worked very well, Active Schools teams found that there could be a wide range of challenges including:

- **Transport and facilities** – In some areas, many activities for pupils with ASN involved bringing people to suitable central activities. It could be difficult to identify suitable facilities, and to identify funding for transport.
- **Resources** – Sometimes there was a need for one-to-one support for some pupils, and the resources were not always available for this.
- **Parental permission** – Often, where pupils were at mainstream schools it was due to a desire to integrate and not be singled out. Active Schools teams found that this meant parents sometimes denied permission for pupils to take part in activities specifically for pupils with ASN.

Many Active Schools teams felt that their work in ASN schools worked well, but in mainstream schools, felt there was more to be done to ensure that ASN pupils could participate fully. Some had run training courses to help volunteers work with young people with ASN, but many felt that this could be a challenge for many volunteers. As a result, sometimes Active Schools Coordinators delivered ASN specific activities – either as a mentoring opportunity for other volunteers, or as the only deliverers. It was recognised that there was a need to build skills and expertise around this area.

Example: Measuring participants with ASN in Moray

In Moray, the Active Schools team has started measuring the number of participants with Additional Support Needs. They gather this information through the parent consent form, which is very comprehensive. The team records anyone that the parent considers to have an Additional Support Need within this system. The Active Schools team then supports the development and delivery of targeted activities, such as cycling for young people with development coordination disorders, which is open to all schools. This is led by Active Schools Coordinators, who will also mentor teachers in the delivery of this activity. The team also works closely with Occupational Therapists, to identify children in schools who may benefit from taking part in this type.

Example: Disability talent day in Dumfries and Galloway

In Dumfries and Galloway, the Active Schools team organised a disability talent day, with support from Scottish Disability Sport and the local college. This helped to identify people (of all ages) with talent, and to signpost them to places where they could get support to participate in mainstream clubs.

Example: Club development in Midlothian

In Midlothian, the approach to involving children with Additional Support Needs is made easier due to an ongoing focus on developing opportunities, across Midlothian Council. Over the past ten years, Midlothian Council has supported the development of the Loanhead Dolphins and the Beeslack Allstars (multisport). The Disability Sports Development Officer, and an Active Schools Coordinator with a remit for promoting opportunities for children with Additional Support Needs work closely with Lothian Disability Sport. However, it remains difficult to identify and target pupils with Additional Support Needs in mainstream school – as parents often don't want their children to be singled out or targeted.

Example: Encouraging participation in Western Isles

In Western Isles, the Active Schools team works in partnership with the NHS, Social Work and Children First, to deliver the 'Activ8' programme. This involves a range of partners supporting children who are identified as having any kind of issue related to participation in sport and activity – including obesity; sight problems; issues with movement skills. Each session normally involves up to 14 young people.

4.6 Barriers to participation of girls and young women

Active Schools teams, teachers and wider stakeholders were asked whether they felt girls and young women faced barriers to participating in Active Schools supported activities. The key barriers related to participation in activity and sport in general, including:

- lack of self-esteem;
- need for peer support;
- gender stereotypes;
- having to participate alongside boys – who may be more comfortable with physical contact;
- cultural barriers to mixed activities – particularly for Muslim girls and young women; and
- less motivation and interest in competitive sport.

It was strongly felt that these challenges became most problematic at secondary school level. Some challenges specifically around Active Schools were highlighted, including:

- a stronger focus on pathways into football and rugby clubs for boys than for girls – both by the school and Active Schools; and
- a need for more female role models and leaders.

4.7 Encouraging Participation of Girls and Young Women

Encouraging the participation of girls and young women was a key priority for Active Schools teams. There was very strong agreement across all stakeholders that introducing girls only activities made a big difference.

“Girls only activities are a great opportunity for them to feel more relaxed, as well as positive female role models leading sports sessions.”

(Teacher)

“Doing an all girls sport ensures that the girls are all in the sport together, they are all encouraged to support each other and help each other along the way.”

(Wider Stakeholder)

“The introduction of girls only sessions within my academy has dramatically increased participation levels.”

(Active Schools Coordinator)

There were also a number of clear messages about what works in engaging girls:

- **Consultation** – There was strong agreement that it was vital to ask girls what they wanted to do. Many Active Schools teams highlighted that activities introduced as a result of consultation were much more successful.

“We need to listen to girls, and let them tell us what they want. Team sports are not always popular with girls who are not currently engaged.”

(Active Schools Manager)

- **Range of activities** – Many Active Schools teams said that team sports and coaching were often less of a priority for girls, and consultation had found a real interest in individual activities, fitness activities, and activities to build self-esteem and body image. However, at the same time, some teams had found that team activities like girls football and girls netball had been extremely successful. Active Schools teams highlighted the need for different opportunities to be available.
- **Peer support and leadership** – Many highlighted the value of peer support. YDance was highlighted as a real success, building the confidence of girls while providing role models and leaders for other girls. Active Schools teams gave examples of older girls supporting younger girls to take part in competitions and events, which gave the younger girls the confidence to get involved. Some felt that leadership opportunities gave girls who were not traditionally sporty the chance to get involved.

“We also need to look at the infrastructure. Who are our role models? We need to identify and use more female coaches and encourage female young ambassadors.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Many highlighted significant successes in their engagement with girls and young women. But some felt that this was still a big issue in their area. A minority of Active Schools teams felt they had done “everything we could think of” but participation of girls and young women was still a challenge. Some highlighted real barriers around body image and self confidence, and others felt that schools were not receptive to girls only activities – feeling that activities should be for all.

In some cases, Active Schools teams had to work hard to convince schools that girls only activities were needed, and made a real difference to participation levels. In addition, some Active Schools teams raised concerns that the girls who were becoming involved were generally the most active and sporty – and that their activities may be missing those who were less likely to participate in sport generally.

“It can be mainly girls who have played football for years, and not many new ones. I’m not sure it is really adding value.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Example: Supporting girls football in Clackmannanshire

In Clackmannanshire, the Active Schools team has worked hard to support girls football. The local football team previously had a very small girls section. The Active Schools team worked with the girls only Football Academy locally, to develop three new girls teams – almost a full pathway for girls in the Clackmannanshire area. This makes a big difference as girls interested in football used to have to travel, but can now access good quality coaching locally.

Example: Supporting netball in Inverclyde

In Inverclyde, participation of girls in Active Schools supported activity is relatively high. The Active Schools team has a partnership with the local netball club, and “engagement of girls is excellent”. There are primary and secondary leagues, clubs and festivals. There is a good connect between the leagues and local clubs, with a good flow of young people into clubs. It is felt that this approach works because of the interest in competitive sport, and a strong focus on a specific sport. There is also support through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses on working with girls for coaches, support staff and teachers.

Example: Girls Only Activities in Edinburgh

Girls only activities in Edinburgh have seen a strong boost in attendance. This is as a result of focus groups and working with PE departments to establish what interests girls. Activities such as body balance, yoga and pilates fitness classes were high priorities.

The Active Schools team has worked jointly with other partners to develop initiatives targeting girls. For example, it worked with Edinburgh Leisure to develop a ‘Health 4 U’ project to address low physical activity trends among girls aged 13 to 15. The programme aims to encourage a new culture of understanding the relationship between girls’ physical, mental, emotional and social health.

4.8 General barriers to encouraging participation

Active Schools teams also highlighted a wide range of general barriers to encouraging participation in opportunities and activities. Many said that much was dependent on the attitudes and priorities of schools, meaning that there were different barriers in different places. However, four key barriers emerged:

- **Transport** – Where young people are bussed to and from school, Active Schools teams are experiencing real challenges finding suitable times to schedule activities. This is a particular issue in rural areas; in schools for pupils with Additional Support Needs; and in schools which cover large areas (including amalgamated schools and denominational schools where pupils have to travel further). Pupils arrive in time for class, and leave immediately after. Lunch break is often shorter due to new school timetables, leaving little time for out of school activity. Some Active Schools teams have tried to negotiate for some buses to stay behind, but with no success. Those who are able to stay behind are those who have the means and parental or financial support to enable them to organise alternative transport.

“Staying on for after school activity means forfeiting your free transport home.”
(Active Schools Manager)

- **Fees for activities** – In at least five of the 32 areas, very small charges were made for some Active Schools supported activities. However, these can be too much for some pupils. Active Schools teams have used various approaches, including not charging specific groups (like young people in care) or area based charging policies (like not charging in disadvantaged areas) to address this.
- **Disadvantage** – Eight of the 32 Active Schools Managers (25%) highlighted that a different approach was needed to encourage participation in disadvantaged areas. The attitudes of pupils and parents towards health and activity could be very different, and difficult to tackle. Some teams had worked with nursery children (and their parents) to try to promote positive attitudes and build relationships from a very early age. Some felt that disadvantaged areas should be identified by **sportscotland** as a key target group, so that activity would be focused in these areas.
- **Facilities** – Some Active Schools teams, particularly in remote rural areas, reported significant challenges around facilities. In some areas, Active Schools teams had addressed this by encouraging outdoor activities, like Nordic Walking. However, there was some concern that in order for volunteers to run outdoor activity – like mountain biking – they often needed

very high level qualifications. This meant that in some areas, Active Schools could not make the most of the outdoor environment.

Other barriers included general societal attitudes; attracting the least sporty individuals; availability of deliverers; covering a very large or remote geographical area; supporting transition from primary to secondary activity. Some Active Schools teams reported great success in addressing some of these barriers, including:

- engaging non-sporty young people as leaders rather than participants;
- compulsory lunchtime clubs to encourage all young people to take part; and
- building close relationships with teachers to plan suitable activities.

4.9 Pupil views on barriers and enablers to participation

Most of the pupils involved in this research indicated that they were very interested in sports – which will impact on their views on barriers and enablers to participation in Active Schools. However, many recognised that Active Schools helped to encourage those who were not already sporty to get active – for example through taster sessions on new sports.

“It gets people involved and those people who might not normally get involved.”
(Pupil, Secondary School)

Pupils had chosen to get involved in Active Schools supported activity for many different reasons. Most often, they took part in activities because it would help them to develop their skills in a sport they already liked; or because they would get to try new sports.

“I liked football anyway. If you went to this football activity, you had a chance of being picked for the school team for a tournament.”
(Pupil, Primary School)

“I chose to go to Spectacular Sports because I didn’t know what would be in it. It was a surprise, like a new challenge.”
(Pupil, Primary School)

Pupils heard about Active Schools supported activity through letters home, the school bulletin, posters, Active Schools Coordinators, assemblies, teachers and word of mouth. Generally, pupils liked that you could choose what to get involved in.

“I liked that they encouraged you to do it, but you are not forced to do it.”
(Pupil, Primary School)

One pupil with Additional Support Needs said that Active Schools had opened up new possibilities for him, allowing him to access a sports chair – as PE in a wheelchair could be a real challenge. He was very keen to participate and make the most of any opportunities like this. He was very happy to have tried out new activities that he hadn't done before, like tennis, badminton and boccia.

Three senior pupils at an ASN school said that they had been on sports leaders courses, around dance and all sports. They had been invited to take part, and felt that their experience was excellent.

Pupils reported very few barriers to participating in Active Schools supported activity. Most felt that they would go whether their friends took part or not – and were happy to try out new activities. However, a minority felt that there were barriers around parental consent (people forget to get their parents to fill these in); or clashes with other activities in school (like music activities or other sports). In addition, pupils at one school felt that their school was restricting their informal play and activity due to rules about which sports could be played during break times.

Section 5 | Links between schools and clubs

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how Active Schools teams have supported links between schools and clubs.

5.2 Types of links

sportscotland collates data on the type and number of school to club links as part of the ASMO data. This highlights that across Scotland, in 2013/14; almost all schools (93%)⁵ had at least one link to a local club. There were 2,579 different clubs with at least one link to a school. The data highlights that these links take many different forms. Most have a promotional element (including flyers and posters) or involve taster sessions. However, there is also a range of ongoing links, including regular extracurricular or curricular activity; a holiday programme; formal relationships or links (where a written agreement is in place) and club volunteers at the school.

Example: Building Club Links in East Lothian

In East Lothian, there has been a real increase in interest and demand for trampolining in recent years. The Active Schools team has developed a great link with Edinburgh City Trampoline Club and has set up a formal agreement between the club, schools and the Active Schools team. A key part of this is an agreement about maintaining the trampolines, which is costly and is shared between the partners. Some people like trampolining because it is an individual activity, rather than a team sport.

We explored the nature and quality of these links with Active Schools teams, teachers, wider stakeholders and pupils. Most examples of the links between schools and clubs focused on direct delivery by clubs in schools – followed by encouragement to join the club. The range of links described included:

- **Direct delivery in schools** – Generally this was blocks of activity delivered by club coaches and volunteers. The examples given were mainly outwith the curriculum, but some were within school time. Some worked with teachers to ensure that their delivery linked to the Curriculum for Excellence. Most examples were of clubs doing this as volunteers, but some were paid (particularly commercial clubs).

⁵ There are approximately 2,650 schools in Scotland, and 2,456 schools with at least one link in 2013/14

- **Mentoring support for teacher deliverers** – There were examples of clubs training teachers to deliver Active Schools supported activities, and providing mentoring on an ongoing basis.
- **Pathways of activities** – Many examples included a range of coordinated and structured links, including direct delivery in schools; tasters, events and festivals; and encouragement to join the club.
- **School club teams** – In some cases, the club team is the school team – with the club undertaking all the support for this. In other cases, clubs are involved in supporting inter school leagues.
- **Sports forums** – In a number of cases, there were forums established around specific sports, or a range of sports, involving schools, clubs and other partners. This allowed for joint planning between all partners.
- **Open doors visits** – Some examples were given of clubs working with schools to support pupils to visit their facilities. This was particularly common for local bowling clubs, which were often close to schools.

In many cases, Active Schools teams emphasised that the focus was on developing pathways, with clear links from school to club or community activity. In some cases, Active Schools teams highlighted that they build demand for activities thinking there is a strong pathway in place, and then have to stop to build the capacity of clubs if demand is high.

“It is not just about numbers and distributing flyers. The focus should be on developing sustainable links.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Example: Building club links in Falkirk

In Falkirk, the local basketball club has established links with both primary and secondary schools across the local authority area. The club has created pathways so that primary school children can join their junior section, and is also promoting a School of Basketball within secondary schools. The school of basketball is a partnership between the local club (Falkirk Fury) and a local secondary school (Falkirk High) where the club provides coaches to come in and work with pupils before and after school, the pupils are identified through the primary school pathway and are then selected for the school of basketball. The club also provides a pathway for those children either into the club set up or towards a recreational pathway through Falkirk Community Trust. It is the clubs aim to develop more centres throughout Falkirk in the coming years.

Active Schools teams felt that the strength and nature of links between schools and clubs varied substantially. In a small minority of areas, Active Schools teams felt that they were the main connection with the club, rather than an individual within the school – generally because school staff tended to be too busy. Most felt that links were stronger when there was a strong connection between an individual in the school and the club, rather than the Coordinator and the club.

“In our area, we currently have five strong school to club links, and 20 okay school to club links.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Example: Building club links in Borders

In Scottish Borders, a local commercially run judo club offers a free judo morning as part of the Commonwealth Passport scheme. As part of this, they hand out flyers inviting children to come to the club. This means that young people get opportunities, and clubs get the chance to promote their sport and increase membership. The direct interface between the club coaches and the children is a really strong link as children who then wish to move onto the club already know the faces who will coach them on a regular basis.

Example: Building club links in Angus

In Angus, a local curling club went into schools to offer taster sessions of ‘new age’ curling. The Young Ambassadors from Forfar Academy attended an introductory coaching course, and then started to run after school clubs at Forfar curling rink, and 30 children attended these sessions.

5.3 Characteristics of a good quality link

There was strong agreement about the characteristics of a good quality link between a school and club. It should:

- involve the club having a direct presence in the school – in particular, many teachers emphasised the importance of club visibility in the school;
- be based on benefits for both parties, and a shared vision;
- be well planned;
- involve a genuine relationship between committed and enthusiastic individuals at both the school and club;
- require clubs to meet minimum standards;
- be based on trust, communication and positive relationships;
- be long term – a pathway approach over a primary and secondary school within a cluster;
- be self-sustaining, after initial development; and

- be in the best interest of the children and young people – supporting them to develop and to have fun.

“It needs people in the school with a real interest and passion.”

(Active Schools Manager)

“Coaches feel welcomed into the school; pupils feel welcomed at the club; and achievements are celebrated in both school and club.”

(Teacher)

“Children have the opportunity to move seamlessly from school based activities to local clubs.”

(Wider Stakeholder)

Example: Minimum standards for clubs in Fife

In Fife, there is a Fife Club Accreditation Scheme. This ensures that clubs have minimum standards. The Active Schools team only works with accredited clubs or community groups.

Pupils talked of good links between schools and clubs, and knowing lots of their peers at local clubs.

“Even though I only knew a few people, you see people there when you go and you meet hundreds of folk.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

Many of the young people involved in this research were already involved in sports clubs (and a vast range of other clubs) before taking part in Active Schools supported activity. However, some had got involved in new clubs as a result. Sometimes Active Schools had stimulated interest in a new activity, and encouraged pupils to join new clubs. Other times, Active Schools had helped the pupils to branch out within a discipline they were already interested in – like dancing – and joint clubs offering different types of activity within this.

There were also examples of clubs proactively seeking involvement from school pupils, on an individualised basis. For example, two secondary school girls had been offered the opportunity to play football for Hibernian Football Club, after being scouted at Active Schools supported activities.

5.4 Barriers to involvement in clubs

Again, there was strong agreement about the barriers to involvement in local sports clubs including:

- **Affordability** – In some areas, fees, clothing and equipment were identified as barriers to involvement.
- **Transport** – This included availability and cost, particularly in rural areas.
- **Time constraints** – It was felt that many young people lead busy lives, and are often already over-committed.
- **Parental support** – There was some concern that parental support was required to support children to travel to and participate in clubs, and this could be a challenge if parents were busy or apathetic.
- **Confidence** – Some mentioned a fear of the unknown, particularly if the young people don't have friends attending the same club.
- **Competition** – In some cases, young people may like to continue the activity as a leisure activity, while the focus of many clubs is on competition and only accepting the most talented young people.
- **Access to clubs** – This was a particular issue in rural areas (but not exclusively) where respondents felt that there could be long waiting lists for clubs, which were operating at capacity.

“One of the barriers that we have moving children into clubs is that there are not always clubs on the doorstep.”

(Active Schools Coordinator)

“Some clubs only want the ‘best’ players and are not open to the masses.”

(Active Schools Coordinator)

Pupils generally felt that links were good. However, there were some concerns. In particular, a small number of pupils indicated that they had gone to clubs, but had stopped because the focus was on competing rather than learning a new sport.

“I wanted to learn to swim, not race.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

5.5 Measuring progression

Four of the 32 Active Schools teams were measuring progression from school activities to clubs. In these areas, there was generally a mixed approach to gathering this information – based on what suited the club best. Another area did some tracking, but felt this wasn't comprehensive, and another had tried to measure progression but found this was too resource intensive for clubs and the Active Schools team. Those who had tried to track progression had often found that this was easier for some clubs (such as rugby clubs which had good monitoring systems) than others.

The majority of Active Schools teams did not track progression. However, many felt that there could be opportunities to do so in the future – through Community Sports Hubs; initiatives similar to the Commonwealth Games passport programme; and club accreditation schemes. However, some cautioned that this could be very resource intensive. Some emphasised the importance of capturing the qualitative impact on individuals as a result of progression to clubs, and not just the number of people who have progressed.

Example: Measuring progression in Inverclyde

In Inverclyde, the Active Schools team measures how many young people are progressing into club activities. The clubs are required to measure progression as a condition of the support from Active Schools (which can involve support accessing funding and increasing membership). Each club does this in different ways, and with varying levels of success. One example that works well is a dance club that provides pupils taking part in Active Schools supported activities with a voucher for a free dance lesson – and the club simply collects the vouchers.

Example: Measuring progression in South Lanarkshire

In South Lanarkshire, the Active Schools team tried to implement a system which would track every young person who progressed from Active Schools supported activities into clubs. However, this was very resource intensive for all involved. Now, they pick a few key clubs to track each year. For example, they know that a taster event they did recently led to 13 new dance club members and 24 new rugby club members.

5.6 Impact of good links

When commenting on the impact of good links between clubs and schools, most gave examples of individuals who had become involved in a new sport, and continued to compete at a high level. Almost all Active Schools teams gave examples of this happening as a result of participation in Active Schools. Other impacts included:

- young people feeling more comfortable joining clubs;
- sustaining clubs and club membership;
- connecting schools and clubs to the wider community; and
- young people having access to a wide range of opportunities and activities.

Section 6 | Delivery and coordination

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores views on the way in which Active Schools is delivered and coordinated.

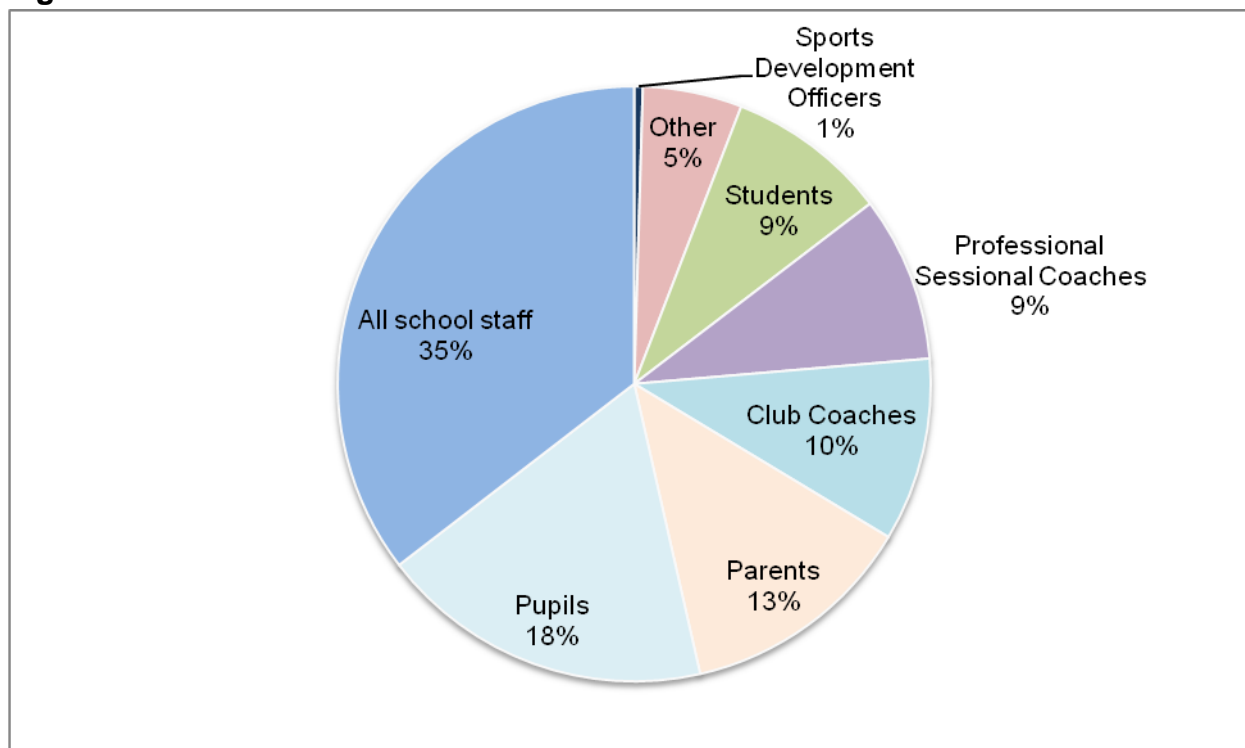
6.2 Profile of deliverers

Deliverers are people who coach or lead Active Schools supported activity sessions, or assist in coaching or leading these sessions. Across Scotland, the profile of deliverers is:

Deliverer Type⁶	Paid	Voluntary	Total
<i>Non PE Teachers</i>	224	4,773	4,997
<i>PE Specialists</i>	211	1,300	1,511
<i>Other School Staff</i>	70	787	857
All school staff	515	6,860	7,375
Pupils	28	4,015	4,043
Parents	20	2,235	2,255
Professional Sessional Coaches	1,606	265	1,871
Club Coaches	758	1,249	2,007
Students	127	1,577	1,704
Sports Development Officers	104	0	104
Other	114	979	1,093
Total	3,262	17,180	20,442

⁶ National Term Report for 2013/14 Academic Year, [sportscotland](http://sportscotland.org.uk)

Figure 6.1: Profile of deliverers



The majority of deliverers are teachers, volunteering to assist with Active Schools on an unpaid basis. Pupil and parent volunteers also make up a considerable proportion of deliverers. Where professional sessional coaches are used, these tend to be paid, and club coaches are largely volunteers. Students from further and higher education institutions also contribute strongly to delivery.

In addition to these deliverers, there may be a range of other volunteers essential for activities to run – such as officials, bus drivers and people who wash kits. These volunteers are not included in the above figures.

Example: Senior pupils as deliverers in Edinburgh

In Edinburgh, the number of senior pupils assisting with the delivery of Active Schools supported activities has increased. Often, local club coaches or sessional paid coaches lead the sessions and mentor the senior pupils. The senior pupils involved are generally studying the Community Sports Leader course, or are involved in the Young Ambassadors programme and keen to gain qualifications in sports coaching. Senior pupils have also helped with the delivery of curricular work such as Bikeability and ClubGolf.

6.3 Attracting and retaining deliverers

Active Schools Managers were asked about their approach to attracting and retaining deliverers. Most had clear policies and processes in place for checking and training deliverers, and took an organic approach to recruitment, adapting their

strategy to the local circumstances. In some areas, Active Schools teams were building on a strong culture of volunteering, and in others, volunteering levels were lower.

While the vast majority of Active Schools team had a clear strategy of aiming for a very high proportion of volunteer deliverers, some indicated that they were happy paying for deliverers where required (for example to bring in specialist skills). A minority said that they would like to use more paid deliverers, if they had the funding.

“There is no one size fits all... it very much depends on the local area.”
(Active Schools Manager)

The core pools of deliverers were:

- **Young people** – This was a core pool of volunteers, through young people supporting and coaching others. Many highlighted that the “carrot” of free qualifications helped to engage and involve young people.
- **Students** – Where there were local further and higher education institutions, Active Schools teams generally found these to be a core source of volunteers. In some cases, there were agreements in place with colleges that students would be required to volunteer as part of their course. Generally, Active Schools teams found that these volunteers were high quality, although some reported slight issues with reliability.
- **Parents** – Parents were encouraged to get involved through letters through after school clubs and other means. Many Active Schools teams reported that it was harder to get parents involved in secondary than primary activity – as often secondary sports are seen as more formal and intimidating for parent volunteers. It was felt that this was largely due to the need for more specialist sports knowledge at this level.
- **Teachers** – Teachers were encouraged through offers to pay for CPD training events; targeting new teachers to encourage building new skills; and links with colleges to ensure that teachers volunteer as part of their qualification.
- **Support staff** – In some areas, school support staff such as janitors were a core source of support. However, some reported that this had changed recently, as for example, janitors were replaced by maintenance contractors.

Some Active Schools teams said that they took a coordinated approach to recruiting volunteers around sport and activity, working jointly with other local authority teams and other partners. This approach was seen as very beneficial, pooling effort and providing a coordinated approach.

Most felt that the balance between paid and unpaid deliverers was good, but highlighted that ongoing work was required to maintain volunteering levels. Most areas said that attracting volunteers was an ongoing challenge, but some said it was a little easier this year due to the effect of the Commonwealth Games 2014.

However, in some areas Active Schools teams were seeing a combination of external factors hugely impacting on their ability to attract volunteers. For example, in one rural area teachers were less likely to volunteer due to relations with education being poor as a result of school closures, and janitors were being replaced by maintenance contracts – which dramatically reduced the pool of volunteers.

A number of Active Schools teams highlighted that different strategies to recruiting deliverers were needed in different areas or for different activities. For example, many highlighted that it could be hard to attract parent volunteers in disadvantaged areas and in remote rural areas (where the pool of potential volunteers was very small). And others highlighted that targeted work with girls or pupils with Additional Support Needs could require specialist skills, and may require more paid deliverers.

Example: Paid deliverers in Clackmannanshire

In Clackmannanshire, there is a deliberate strategy to have a number of paid deliverers. As Active Schools was developing, schools were very concerned that a programme delivered by volunteers may result in issues with quality, commitment and reliability. A workforce of sessional workers was therefore developed to work alongside volunteers. The Active Schools team feel that this ensures reliability and control, and also provides a route for volunteers to move on and become paid deliverers once they have completed training.

Example: Targeting new teachers in East Renfrewshire

In East Renfrewshire, the Active Schools team targets new teachers and probationary teachers at the start of every term, to encourage them to volunteer for Active Schools supported activity. There is a Collegiate Agreement in place, and teachers are expected to deliver a certain amount of extracurricular activity. This approach has been very successful.

Example: Working with students in Dundee

In Dundee, the Active Schools team have set up partnership agreements with the local further and higher education establishments (Abertay University and Dundee & Angus College). Each year, approximately 400 students volunteer from Abertay University – with every first and second year sports student required to take up an Active Schools work placement. All students come for a week of training in sports leadership at the start of the year, and then deliver a programme of activity for primary school pupils. Some choose to continue in years 3 and 4 of their studies – specialising and becoming involved in particular activities. A further 120 students from Dundee and Angus College undertake work placements through after school club delivery or delivering Bikeability training. In addition, the Active Schools team works with newly qualified teachers as part of their training programme, to help them to develop sport delivery skills.

Retention

Active Schools teams highlighted that their pool of deliverers was dynamic and ever changing. Most were unsure what proportion of deliverers they retained each year, but some suggested it could be between 50 and 80 per cent. Most felt that teachers tended to continue each year; parents continued until their child left school; and young people and students moved on as they left education – often moving out of the area, but then coming back later in many instances.

We asked teachers and wider stakeholders who had previously delivered Active Schools supported activity, but no longer did so, what the reasons for this were. In many cases, teachers said that they had been promoted or their role or remit had changed. However, a large number of them said that workload pressures meant that they had to stop volunteering – often as a result of changes to the curriculum and national qualifications.

For wider stakeholders, the main reasons for ceasing involvement were due to children leaving school, and adults changing jobs meaning it was no longer logistically possible to volunteer. Only two stakeholders said that they had stopped due to not feeling comfortable with their responsibilities through Active Schools. One had concerns about pupil safety and what to do if there were accidents, and another felt that their role was unmanageable.

“The amount of kids became way too high and unmanageable plus the kids had very little respect for me and it was no longer fun to do.”

(Wider Stakeholder)

6.4 Skills and expertise of deliverers

Generally, Active Schools Managers felt that the deliverers had the skills that were required. Many highlighted that they were enthusiastic, and involved for the right reasons. However, some felt that paid deliverers were higher quality, and that volunteer standards were variable.

“Active Schools is a volunteer driven programme. If more comprehensive service is required, then the number of paid coaches needs to be increased.”

(Active Schools Manager)

“Development and retention is where the real work is.”

(Active Schools Manager)

In particular, Active Schools Managers highlighted that parents and young people could need a lot of support – but were worth investing in.

“Not always – especially with young people, but they have to start somewhere. We need to be realistic about what to expect from them – not expect too much. We want them to get the bug from an early age.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Some felt that teachers, particularly those who had been taught for a long time, often didn't want to develop their skills. As a result, some Active Schools teams targeted new or probationary teachers, to try to get them involved and interested early.

Example: Supporting Young People to Volunteer

In Renfrewshire, the Active Schools team supports the delivery of the Renfrewshire School of Sport Education. The programme has been running since 2004, and offers young people a 20 week leadership programme. Once they have completed the course, young people are expected to commit to delivering a certain amount of volunteering. It provides 5,500 hours of volunteering in a year. Up to 70 per cent of young people who graduate from the school of sport education continue to volunteer. Many go on to study sport. More recently, six have become Active Schools Coordinators and two are now PE teachers. One young person with Additional Support Needs discovered a particular talent in table tennis through the Renfrewshire School of Sport Education, and now represents Great Britain.

6.5 Support for deliverers

Active Schools deliverers are supported in a wide range of ways, including:

- **Induction support** – This often involved initial training and shadowing for a number of sessions.
- **Ongoing mentoring** – This involved informal support from Active Schools Coordinators on a regular basis, including attending some sessions and supporting deliverers.
- **Joint delivery opportunities** – This could involve for example, delivering activity jointly with a qualified coach or buddy, to help to develop skills.
- **Access to CPD** – In some areas Active Schools teams paid for CPD to encourage teachers to participate, and offering twilight CPD sessions.
- **Access to wider training** – In many cases Active Schools teams supported access to training and sports coaching awards from governing bodies, sports development officers and others (although some highlighted the cost and time commitment could be high).
- **Volunteering awards** – These awards recognised the contributions of volunteers and provided an opportunity for sharing experiences.

In one area, the Active Schools team highlighted that it did exit questionnaires with all deliverers, to help to inform future support.

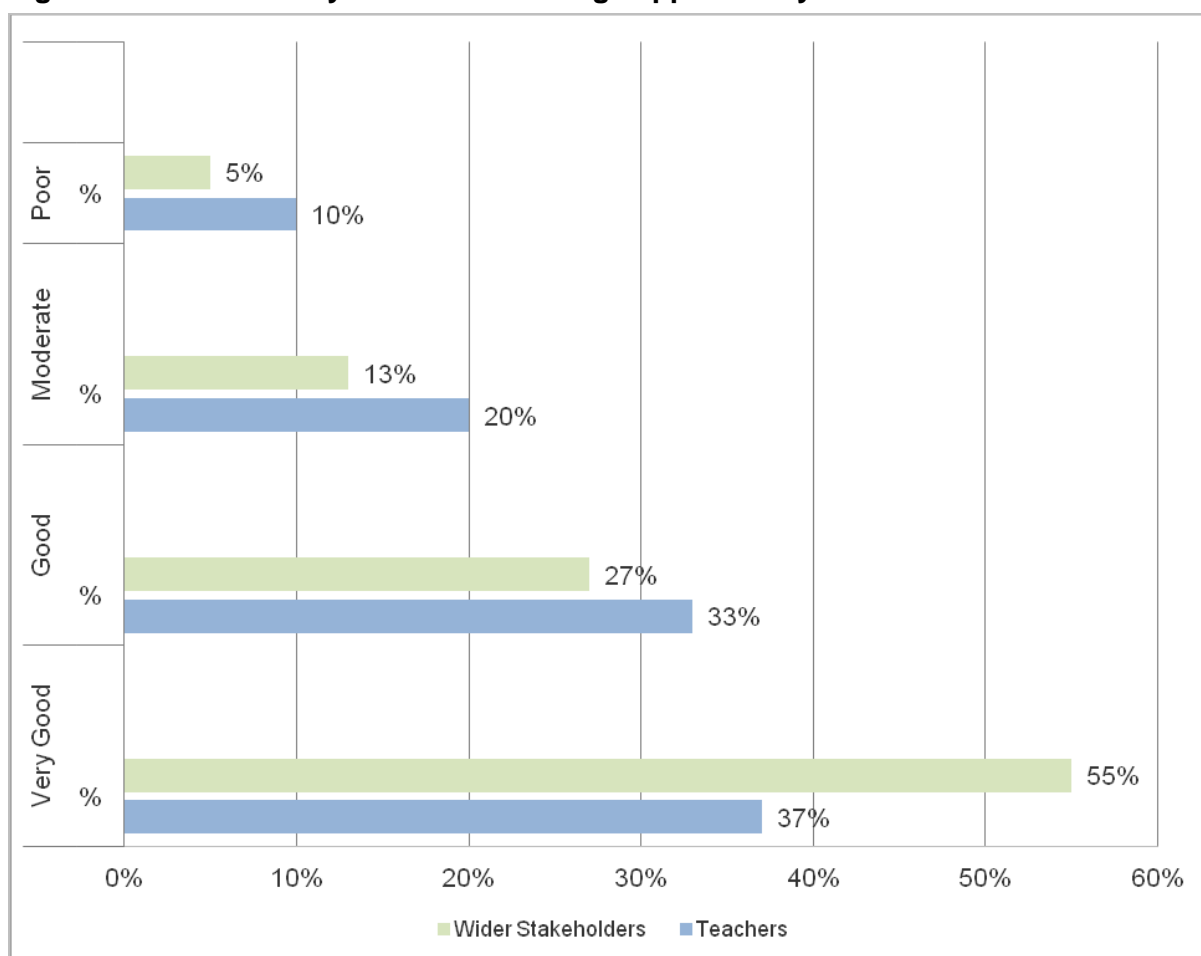
While most Active Schools teams felt that their approach was comprehensive, a small minority felt that training was “a bit piece meal”, and could be better coordinated.

“Invest in them, value them. It’s time consuming, but it is valuable.”

(Active Schools Manager)

We asked teachers and wider stakeholders (including parents, coaches, students and others) how they felt about the training and support that they were offered to enable them to deliver Active Schools supported activity. Wider stakeholders were more positive than teachers about the support they were offered. Over half of wider stakeholders felt the support was very good, compared to just over a third of teachers. In addition, one in ten teachers thought that the support they were offered was poor.

Figure 6.2: How would you rate the training support that you have been offered?



“There is a great level of available courses including 'refresher' courses.”
Wider Stakeholder

We asked respondents to tell us more about how they felt about the training and support, and what more was needed. Many said that they would like more training on topics such as sports First Aid, coaching and umpiring, and mentoring children with Additional Support Needs. However, others said that they had been offered this type of support, but had been unable to take it up.

Many teachers and wider stakeholders said that they would like a bit more help with paying for training.

“I realise it is hard to get volunteers but when a good volunteer comes along - extra funding or training should be given to keep them involved.”
Wider Stakeholder

Some volunteer deliverers said that they would appreciate more help from the teachers at school, feeling that they had little involvement. Some indicated that they

would like to understand how the schools run their classes, so that they could apply similar teaching techniques – particularly around discipline and rewards, which weren't fully covered in coaching.

Many teachers said that they weren't fully aware of the range of training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities that were available – and they weren't always at times and locations that suited teachers. However, many teachers also said that they didn't need access to specialist training, as they already had the skills required.

Example: Rewarding volunteering

In Aberdeen, the Active Schools team is introducing a mobile phone application based reward scheme for volunteers. Using a smart phone, volunteers will be able to gain points every time they volunteer. Once they have collected enough points, they will then be able to trade these in for rewards like iTunes vouchers.

6.6 Active Schools teams

Active Schools supported activity is coordinated and led by a team of Active Schools Managers and Coordinators. Teams are organised in a way that suits local circumstances, budgets, priorities and geographies. Generally teams are structured to cover a cluster of schools (often a secondary school and feeder primaries), while also having thematic remits. Many indicated that they had recently moved to a vertical model, or planned to, in order to better link primary and secondary activities. This was not always appropriate (for example in very large clusters which needed more than one ASC or in very large rural areas), and Active Schools teams often used a mix of different arrangements to suit the local circumstances.

Each Active Schools team will have in place a partnership agreement with **sportscotland**, covering the four year funding term. It will also develop an annual plan, working with **sportscotland**. In addition, teams will produce plans for individual schools or clusters of schools, to drive the Coordinator's work for the year. The teams use the ASMO data and feedback from pupils and parents to drive these plans, as well as working closely with teachers. Action Plans are reviewed regularly, through joint meetings between Coordinators and Managers, using ASMO data as a key way of understanding progress.

“ASMO is a fabulous tool. It gives a clear picture of what is happening on the ground.”

(Active Schools Manager)

Example: Developing annual plans in North Lanarkshire

In North Lanarkshire, the Active Schools Manager delivers an annual plan, working with **sportscotland**. From this, the whole team is set Key Performance Indicators. Each Active Schools Coordinator is responsible for delivering against these targets, and performance is reviewed each term. The annual plan links to North Lanarkshire's Health and Wellbeing Plan, and ultimately to the Single Outcome Agreement for the local authority area.

6.7 Recruiting Active Schools coordinators

While some Active Schools teams found it easy to attract high quality Active Schools Coordinators, the majority found that it was challenging. Most areas received very high volumes of applications, but few of the applicants were suitable for interview. Those who were interviewed were often found to be unsuitable, and there were examples of having to interview a number of times to fill posts.

There were a number of reasons for this. Active Schools Managers felt that the main reason was a lack of understanding about the Active Schools Coordinator role. This resulted in many recently qualified graduates applying, and people with coaching experience. However, few applicants had experience of project management, partnership working and coordination. Many felt that very inexperienced people were applying for what was a fairly senior position.

“It's not a graduate job. It's not about coaching sport.”

(Active Schools Manager)

“This is about coordinating, negotiating, building relationships, planning, communicating, facilitating...”

(Active Schools Manager)

In addition, the temporary (and often part time) nature of jobs was also a barrier. Active Schools Managers found it particularly hard to get maternity cover, and cover in very remote, rural areas (often only needed on a part time basis). Managers also noted a significant amount of turnover of Active Schools Coordinators across the country, and felt that a lack of consistency in salary and role may be contributing to this. In one very remote rural area, the requirement for a degree was severely limiting the pool of applicants.

Many Active Schools Managers felt that the way that Active Schools teams were structured made it difficult to build a pool of qualified staff who were able to progress within Active Schools. Many felt it was difficult for people to get relevant experience, which would help, in obtaining an Active Schools Coordinator position. Some Managers suggested there was a need for apprenticeship or trainee positions so that

people could build their skills after graduating – and one area was keen to introduce Active Schools Assistant posts if funding continued beyond 2015. Some were working with young people to involve them in Active Schools through Modern Apprenticeship positions.

Example: Modern apprentices in East Ayrshire

In East Ayrshire, the Active Schools team works in partnership with Job Centre Plus, to run a modern apprenticeship scheme. This involves two people for 18 months. It offers the opportunity for young people to build their skills, and also provides the Active Schools Coordinators with the opportunity to build management skills – through leading on recruiting, training and supporting the modern apprentices.

Example: Promoting volunteering in Perth and Kinross

In Perth and Kinross, the Active Schools team has done a lot of work to engage senior pupils as leaders and volunteers in school and community sport. Over the past three years, the number of young volunteers has increased from 150 in 2011 to 370 in 2014. Active Schools has worked in partnership with Sports Development, Perth College and the local leisure trust to put in place a coach and volunteer development pathway for young people that includes a range of opportunities from introductory level governing body coaching and officiating awards to employment through Modern Apprenticeships.

Managers also felt there was a big jump between Coordinator and Manager roles. This resulted in many Coordinators having limited career progression options, resulting in some becoming a bit “stale” and over comfortable in their role. In one area, the Active Schools Manager was ensuring that all ASCs went through management training, so they could make the most of any opportunities to progress.

“There is nothing above the ASC level, and nothing below.”

(Active Schools Manager)

6.8 Active Schools coordinators skills

Generally, Active Schools Managers were very positive about the skills and experience of their team. Core strengths of teams included:

- a strong and supportive team;
- a mix of skills and expertise in a range of sports;
- strong skills in engaging with schools;
- commitment and passion;
- ability to inspire and motivate people; and
- strong partnership working skills.

Managers felt that the key skills requiring development were around planning, coordination, project management, IT, data analysis and using an information based approach. Many felt that the role of an ASC had changed in recent years, with more focus on data, and these skills needed to be learned over time.

We asked Active Schools Coordinators to rate the training and support they have received from the local authority, and from **sportscotland**. Generally, Coordinators felt support was moderate to good. Some indicated that support varied considerably depending on the **sportscotland** Partnership Manager in place for their area, and some felt that **sportscotland** could do more to share good practice across the country.

Table 6.2 How would you rate the training support that you have been offered?

	Very Good		Good		Moderate		Poor	
Support from the local authority	53	27%	90	45%	52	26%	4	2%
Support from sportscotland	23	12%	82	41%	85	43%	9	5%

Active Schools Coordinators were asked about additional training or support that might be beneficial to support them in their current roles. Almost four fifths of respondents offered suggestions around this, including:

- **Skills based training** – Additional training in project management; people management; time management; presentation skills; social media training; working with children with Additional Support Needs; and First Aid training.
- **Systems based training** - IT and database skills; and training on the use of **sportscotland**'s ASMO and HUBSMO systems, were areas that could support Coordinators in their current role.
- **Financial training** – Some felt that in-house financial and budgeting systems, including invoicing and payment methods; and making grant applications would be beneficial.
- **Networking** – A number of Coordinators mentioned more national and regional workshops and events to share and exchange information and best practice, including some kind of national conference for Active Schools Coordinators.
- **Coaching support** – Some mentioned more tailored support for sport specific development training and mentoring e.g. Positive Coaching Scotland would help to support their current role.

6.9 Management issues

We asked Active Schools Managers about any management issues in relation to their team. Most said that there were no management issues, or very few. The key themes to emerge were:

- managing part time staff with flexible working hours;
- managing staff based in diverse locations – particularly across large geographic areas; and
- balancing priorities – between schools, the local authority and **sportscotland**.

Managers felt that it was often good for ASCs to be based in schools, as they built strong links and relationships. However, this made it harder to share experiences and priorities, and could mean that ASCs find it harder to resist pressure from teachers to directly deliver activities, or shift towards school priorities. Being based in schools could also be isolating for ASCs. One Active Schools Manager was trying to develop neighbourhood bases for ASCs, so that Coordinators from the same area could form a local team.

Finally, Active Schools teams based in a Leisure Trust highlighted that sometimes they lost the connection to education and strategic decision making that could help to integrate Active Schools in wider activity. However, some felt that in a Trust they could make decisions more quickly, and be more flexible.

Example: Team working in South Ayrshire

In South Ayrshire, the Active Schools Coordinators all have a school base, but also have a base from a central office in Ayr. This means that they can build links with the schools, while also sharing ideas and organising work in a joint way as a team. Each Active Schools Coordinator also has a thematic lead for a particular area – including marketing; coach education; Additional Support Needs; volunteering; and legacy from the Commonwealth Games.

Section 7 | Impact of Active Schools

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the difference that Active Schools has made. It is based on the views of Active Schools teams, teachers, pupils and wider stakeholders. It explores:

- impact on attitudes towards sport and physical activity;
- impact on pupil confidence and self-esteem;
- impact on volunteering and leadership opportunities; and
- impact on culture and ethos of schools.

7.2 Impact on attitudes towards sport and physical activity

We asked stakeholders about the extent to which they felt Active Schools had impacted on attitudes towards sport and physical activity. Active Schools Coordinators and wider stakeholders felt strongly that it had impacted a lot, while teachers felt that it had at least some impact. In discussions, Active Schools Managers generally said that they felt it should have had an impact, but that it was hard to evidence.

Table 7.1 Impact on attitudes towards sport and physical activity

	Not at all		A little		Some		A lot		Not Sure	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teachers	14	4	30	9	92	28	190	57	6	2
ASCs	0	0	3	2	26	17	124	81	0	0
Wider Stakeholders	1	<1	12	4	61	21	201	71	10	4

A Positive Attitude towards Sport and Health

Many felt that that Active Schools had developed a more positive attitude towards sports, with young people seeing the benefits of staying active in an enjoyable way.

“[Active Schools] keeps the kids busy doing sports after school, keeps them off the computer games and it lets them meet up with class mates and also make new friends.”

(Wider Stakeholder)

Many pupils involved in the research spoke of sport making them feel happy. This was both through participation in sport, and because it made people feel happier about their body image.

“It’s just games, it makes you feel happy.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

“Sport makes you happy. After you win in a competition, you’re like ‘yes!’”

(Pupil, Primary School)

Some pupils felt that Active Schools made a big difference to them, as without this opportunity, they may not take part in sport – and this would affect their health.

“(I’m happier) because I know I’m not fat, and I’m not going to get fat.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

A number of teachers commented that because of the inclusive approach adopted by Active Schools, it provided some pupils who were less engaged with school, with the opportunity to achieve success. Other teachers said that it had helped to develop team-building skills, encouraging the ethos of the team and wider school involvement.

Increased opportunities

Stakeholders felt that Active Schools had resulted in more young people taking part in sporting activities, particularly those who wouldn’t normally have these opportunities. Many felt that it had made a significant difference in disadvantaged areas, where the previous opportunities to take part in sport may have been more limited – or financially impossible.

Some highlighted that Active Schools was of particular value because it catered for all levels of ability, was relaxed and fun, and involved a wide range of sports. Many teachers said that they were aware of children who had tried new sports through Active Schools, gone on to take up the sport, and some were now involved at club level.

“[Active Schools] encourages children that don’t have the opportunity to participate in sporting activities to get involved.”

(Wider Stakeholder)

“Active Schools provide a starting point for many pupils to develop an interest and enjoyment of many different sports they might not otherwise have been able to try, and can support clubs by giving taster sessions and information.”

(Wider Stakeholder)

“We are now a very active school with lots of sporting activities taking place before, during and after school. Many parents now help and this is definitely due to the support and encouragement of the Active School staff.”

(Teacher)

Developing sporting skills

Many pupils felt that they had developed their skills in their favourite sport(s), and had been able to access opportunities, which supported them in competing at a high level.

“Makes you better at sport so you can go on and play at a higher level.”

(Pupil, Secondary School)

“It makes you feel like an athlete feels, and what they’re going through.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

“Now I can put together routines, and I have learned new tricks in football and dancing.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

Many other stakeholders felt that as a result, more young people were attending local sports clubs. Some local clubs highlighted the growth in membership that had taken place as a result of Active Schools.

“I run a thriving Judo club, which has increased membership by 20% following an Active Schools programme.”

(Wider Stakeholder)

Without Active Schools

If not involved in Active Schools supported activity, most of the pupils involved in this research said they would be doing sport anyway – maybe by themselves or informally with friends. Pupils said if they weren’t doing sport they would play outside, dance (learning from YouTube), cycle and run. But pupils mainly said that they preferred the opportunities to do activities jointly with others, through Active Schools – and valued the links through to clubs.

“I was already doing most sports, then the school did it, so it wasn’t new to me.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

“I would still go to some other clubs, but I wouldn’t know about all of them.”

(Pupil, Primary School)

“If it’s not in a club it’s not as much fun.”

(Pupil, Secondary School)

7.3 Impact on pupil confidence, self esteem and inspiration

We asked stakeholders what impact Active Schools had on pupil motivation, confidence and self-esteem. Most felt that it had a lot of impact – with Active Schools Coordinators the most positive, and teachers the least.

Table 7.2 Impact on pupil motivation, confidence and self-esteem

	Not at all		A little		Some		A lot		Not Sure	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teachers	20	6%	30	9%	101	30%	175	53%	6	2
ASCs	0	-	1	1%	38	25%	113	74%	1	1
Wider Stakeholders	0	-	13	5%	74	26%	178	63%	19	7

Increasing confidence

Pupils, teachers and wider stakeholders all gave examples of how they felt Active Schools had increased their confidence. Pupils involved in this research said that they had developed confidence in themselves and their abilities, and also confidence in supporting and leading others in sport.

“All the dance competition is about performance, and it makes me more confident.”
(Pupil, Primary School)

“The opportunities make you feel more confident, and more comfortable coaching.”
(Pupil, Secondary School)

Other stakeholders had seen the difference to pupils, as a result of Active Schools.

“From my own experience I believe that because of the opportunities given to pupils through Active Schools clubs they are much more mature, confident and self-empowered.”
(Wider Stakeholder)

“I think it has allowed more pupils in school to come out of their shells and realise their potential, giving them a confidence boost.”
(Wider Stakeholder)

Example: Building confidence

In North Ayrshire, the Active Schools team undertakes local research on the impact of Active Schools supported activity. In the first annual survey, 65 per cent of respondents said that their confidence levels had increased as a result of playing sport.

Making friends and understanding others

Many pupils (and other stakeholders) talked of the social aspects of Active Schools, believing that it helped them to make friends with others – both from their own school and from other schools.

“You feel like you are part of a team, and you can communicate a bit more.”
(Pupil, ASN School)

“The children mix with other children whom they wouldn't normally.”
(Wider Stakeholder)

Some pupils highlighted that Active Schools had helped them to understand the diverse needs of people who take part in sport, and had encouraged them to think about sport in a more inclusive way.

“It changes the way you think. I would try to involve everyone when playing games now.”
(Pupil, Primary School)

However, some Active Schools Managers were concerned about how qualitative information like this was captured – suggesting there was a national focus on statistical information rather than qualitative data.

“How are we capturing the soft indicators? How do we know that little Johnny's confidence has gone sky high? We need to do more to measure impact.”
(Active Schools Manager)

7.4 Impact on Volunteering and Leadership Opportunities

Most stakeholders felt that Active Schools had some or a lot of impact on volunteering and leadership opportunities.

Table 7.3 Impact on opportunities for volunteering and leadership

	Not at all		A little		Some		A lot		Not Sure	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teachers	26	8	44	13	105	32	134	40	23	7
ASCs	0	0	0	0	12	8	140	92	0	0
Wider Stakeholders	4	1	13	5	82	29	155	55	29	10

Again, Active Schools Coordinators were the most positive, and teachers the least. However, many teachers said that Active Schools had been successful in promoting sporting role models, some of whom had spoken at school assemblies and had helped to inspire pupils.

“It also is there as an example of good sporting role models and highlights sport and exercise are both important and central to daily life.”

(Teacher)

Interest in a career in sport

Young people involved in the leadership programmes were generally extremely positive about them. For some young people, particularly those who had been involved in leadership activities, Active Schools stimulated interest in a career in sport, and helped pupils to gain the experience and qualifications they needed.

“I would like to do more refereeing in the future. I would definitely take part in more opportunities to organise sports.”

(Pupil, ASN School)

“I love doing sport, so will take any opportunities to get into coaching. I would like a career in coaching.”

(Pupil, Secondary School)

“You get a lot of opportunities – I got my SFA coaching card, which I wouldn’t have been able to do without Active Schools.”

(Pupil, Secondary School)

Many wider stakeholders highlighted the benefits of the various leadership programmes. For example, some felt that Young Ambassadors had provided young people with opportunities to gain leadership and sports qualifications, as well as the chance to get valuable practical experience helping out in schools, after school clubs and at sports festivals. There was agreement that this gave young people the motivation and drive to reach their potential, as well as building their confidence and self-esteem.

“For example, Sports Ambassadors have grown in confidence and their commitment has carried over into academic aspects of their school career.”

(Wider Stakeholders)

“The kids are all engaged, impassioned and inspired. This is the power of sport.”

(Active Schools Coordinator)

7.5 Impact on culture and ethos of schools

Teachers, Active Schools Coordinators and wider stakeholder all agreed that Active Schools had a positive impact on the culture and ethos of schools. In discussion, Active Schools Managers agreed that the impact had been positive – and linked very well with health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence. Many felt that there had been more of an impact at primary than secondary school level.

Table 7.4 Impact on ethos and culture of schools

	Not at all		A little		Some		A lot		Not Sure	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teachers	16	5%	35	11%	91	28%	172	52%	14	4%
ASCs	0	-	5	3%	50	33%	95	63%	2	1%
Wider Stakeholders	3	1%	20	7%	77	27%	149	53%	34	12%

Many teachers involved in this research provided detailed commentary on how the ethos and culture of their schools had changed as a result of Active Schools.

Positive culture and attitudes

Many teachers said that Active Schools had contributed to creating a more positive atmosphere in schools – with pupils being more enthusiastic and taking pride in their schools. Some said that Active Schools helped to recognise and celebrate success more widely, beyond purely academic achievement. Others said that Active Schools supported leadership programmes had created enthusiastic and responsible young leaders, who were enjoying leading and coaching younger pupils within schools.

“Pupil enthusiasm and involvement impacts on creating a positive ethos within the school.”

(Teacher)

A few teachers said that they were aware that there had been improvements in behaviour, attendance and self-esteem in their schools – linked both to Active Schools and a wider focus on health and wellbeing. Some said that Active Schools supported activity linked closely to health and wellbeing priorities for schools, and was helping to contribute to positive outcomes in these areas.

“Our exclusion rates have gone from the highest in the city to about 12 days a year (currently). That sums up the improvement in behaviour, self-esteem, ethos and attitude.”

(Teacher)

Better teamworking

A number of teachers said that involvement in sport and activities through Active Schools had helped to develop better teamwork between pupils, and with teachers. Some felt that pupils had a better understanding of what constituted good sports behaviour, and were applying this in other aspects of school life and beyond. Others said that it had encouraged new friendships, as a result of pupils participating in clubs and different activities.

“Children understanding team work and learning how to show discipline.”

(Teacher)

A more inclusive approach

Some teachers said that working with Active Schools had helped schools to develop more inclusive approaches, providing opportunities for all pupils regardless of ability. The ‘can do’, ‘have a go’ approach has been adopted in many schools and respondents said that this has provided opportunities for achievement for many pupils, helping them to build their confidence and achieve their potential.

“Contributes to perception that we are interested in the whole child, not just their academic prowess...a more 'holistic' approach.”

(Teacher)

Example: School financial contribution in Aberdeenshire

In Aberdeenshire, schools make a contribution to Active Schools of approximately £2.50 per pupil. This is understood to be unique in Scotland. This demonstrates the value schools place on Active Schools – with it being seen as an integral part of schools in Aberdeenshire.

Example: Impact on school ethos in East Renfrewshire

In East Renfrewshire, there is a strong feeling that Active Schools has had an impact on the culture and ethos of schools. For example, all of the schools now have tracksuits as part of the school uniform, even the teachers. Sport is seen as just as important as any other part of the curriculum.

Section 8 | Key findings and recommendations

8.1 Impact

There are strong indications from a range of stakeholders that Active Schools has resulted in young people:

- developing positive attitudes to sport and health;
- feeling happier – in themselves, and about their body image;
- developing sporting skills – in a range of sports, or in their specialist sport;
- having more confidence and making friends;
- understanding more about inclusion and equality;
- having more positive role models;
- being inspired; and
- considering and progressing in careers in sport.

The research suggests that Active Schools has had a positive impact on attitudes to sport and health; confidence; volunteering and leadership opportunities; and the culture and ethos of schools.

It has also contributed to changing school culture and ethos around sport and health. Some schools have seen improved behaviour and attendance as a result and others have seen more teacher and pupil joint working. Schools felt that Active Schools strongly contributed to the health and wellbeing outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence.

8.2 More and better opportunities

Active Schools has achieved its core aim of introducing “more and better” opportunities for young people in sport. There is clear statistical evidence about the number of additional opportunities and activities, and qualitative evidence from teachers, pupils and wider stakeholders about the range of opportunities available. There is strong agreement that the quality of Active Schools supported activities is high, and pupils enjoy the activities and like the coaches and delivery style.

Recommendation 1: The Active Schools programme achieves its core aim. It is recommended that the programme of supporting more and better opportunities is continued, to allow the next generation of children and young people to benefit from its activities.

8.3 Leadership opportunities

Leadership opportunities have been a real success. Feedback from Active Schools teams, parents, pupils, teachers and wider stakeholders indicates that leadership opportunities are highly valued - particularly Young Ambassadors and YDance. These initiatives fit well with the Health and Wellbeing experiences and outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence, which are an increasing priority for schools. Leaders become Active Schools deliverers, and so provide benefits not just for the leaders themselves, but for many more young people.

However, there is some concern about the range of different leadership initiatives for young people. It is felt that there is particular overlap between Young Ambassadors and Lead 2014, and that these initiatives work best when used jointly in a coordinated way. There is also some concern about the selection processes for these initiatives, and whether they generally benefit the most advantaged young people.

Recommendation 2: Leadership should remain a key priority within Active Schools. Consideration should be given to amalgamating or better linking the range of leadership initiatives in place. Guidance on selecting young people for leadership initiatives should be clear that a range of young people should be given these opportunities. Figures on involvement in Active Schools leadership programmes should be collated and analysed nationally.

8.4 Other national initiatives

National initiatives have been generally well received. However, there is some concern that all initiatives don't always work for all areas.

There are significant concerns about ClubGolf and its relationship to Active Schools. It is working well in some areas, but not in others. The approach is not flexible to local circumstances – and local demand and needs - which is what works well about many other Active Schools approaches.

Recommendation 3: The approach to promoting golf to school pupils should be reviewed after September 2014. Consideration should be given as to whether a national programme is needed, or whether there should be more local flexibility as with other sports.

Recommendation 4: National initiatives should continue to have a role in Active Schools. However, consideration should be given to the number of initiatives; the flexibility local Active Schools teams should have in implementing these; and the lead in time. Active Schools Managers should continue to be involved in developing and piloting new national initiatives.

8.5 Links

Active Schools is playing a key role in encouraging positive transitions from school to club sport. There is strong anecdotal evidence that many links are strong, and are having a positive impact in relation to:

- young people feeling more comfortable joining clubs;
- young people having access to a wide range of opportunities and activities;
- young people being able to develop specialist skills and a career in sport;
- sustaining clubs and club memberships; and
- connecting schools and clubs to the wider community.

Active Schools teams are clear that the quality of links does vary, with some very strong links and others slightly weaker. There is strong agreement that a good quality school to club link involves the club delivering directly in the school; and planned opportunities for pupils to progress to the club if desired. Strong school to club links are based on good relationships, a shared vision, a long term approach and mutual benefit for schools and clubs.

Recommendation 5: There should be an ongoing focus on developing links from schools to clubs. Where possible, links should be made with a mix of competitive clubs and community clubs or classes – to provide opportunities at all levels. **sportscotland** should develop a system to gather both quantitative and qualitative information about the number of young people who go on to be involved in clubs, their achievements and the impact on their lives.

8.6 Targeting under-represented groups

There is consensus that the ASMO data is invaluable for targeting under-represented groups. However, there are some skills gaps in using this data with Active Schools teams. There are also some issues in matching ASMO data with education data, particularly where Active Schools teams are based within Trusts.

Activity to target girls has been a real success in some areas. There is very clear evidence that girls only activities make a difference – particularly when based on consultation and when offering opportunities for peer support and leadership.

However, there is a need for a continued focus on girls' participation, as nationally girls' participation remains slightly lower than boys.

Activity to support young people with ASN in specialist ASN schools has generally worked well. However, many Active Schools teams have struggled to identify whether they are managing to involve young people with ASN in mainstream schools, due to challenges understanding the number of young people with ASN in each school. There are data sharing issues, and concerns about labelling young people with ASN.

Active Schools teams have responded to the national priorities of girls and young people with ASN, and targeted activity to these themes. However, this research identified that around a quarter of Active Schools Managers feel that people living in areas of deprivation should also be a priority – given the significant issues around health and physical activity.

Recommendation 6: Active Schools should continue a targeted element to its work. Girls and young people with ASN should continue to be a priority. Girls only activities should be promoted as a key way of engaging girls. Active Schools teams should be supported to gather evidence about participation of young people with ASN in Active Schools supported activities (perhaps through parental consent forms) to gather a baseline of evidence of participation. This would help to inform future approaches to supporting people with ASN. **sportscotland** should consider introducing young people living in areas of deprivation as a further target group.

8.7 Delivery and coordination

Volunteers form the core of the pool of deliverers – with teachers, pupils, parents, students and club coaches the main contributors. Often paid coaches are used for specialist sports or targeted activity with girls and people with ASN. Active Schools teams have generally found it easier to get volunteers at primary school level, compared with secondary level.

Most Active Schools teams were very happy with the balance of paid and unpaid deliverers in their area. Deliverers were broadly comfortable with their role, and the support provided is highly valued. However, a small minority need more support, and need to be made aware of the support and training opportunities that are available.

Active Schools Coordinators generally have the skills required to do their job very well – but there is perhaps a need for further skills development around IT, project management, data analysis and using an information based approach. This is a

particular issue as the role of the ASC becomes more focused on using ASMO to inform local approaches.

Most Active Schools Managers have found it hard to recruit skilled and experienced Active Schools Coordinators. There is some lack of understanding of the role, and some difficulty in potential Coordinators gaining relevant experience – due to a lack of similar roles in Scotland. There is a very good pathway for young people to develop their skills in coordinating and leading sport through schools and university, but then few options for going on to develop these skills in the workplace.

Recommendation 7: Working in partnership with local authorities, **sportscotland** should consider options for piloting a new approach to ensuring that young people engaged in sport and Active Schools through school and university can progress into the Active Schools workforce.