Evaluation of sportscotland supported activity: schools and education

Final report
May 2018

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Executive summary

About this report

This evaluation explores the impact of the blend of **sport**scotland supported work in the schools and education environment. The evaluation was undertaken at the same time as:

- an evaluation of **sport**scotland supported work with clubs and communities; and
- research exploring **sport**scotland's contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework (ASOF): schools and education and clubs and communities environments, which included a large scale survey with almost 15,000 responses from school pupils across Scotland.

Key findings from the ASOF survey have been highlighted within this report.

This evaluation is part of a series of **sport**scotland wider evaluations being undertaken from 2017 to 2019. These look in depth at how the programmes **sport**scotland deliver alongside partners support the sporting system. They provide insight into what is working well and what can be improved. These will be used to inform **sport**scotland's next planning cycle.

The **sport**scotland blend of support

sportscotland support in the schools and education environment includes:

Programme	Aims	Scale in 2016/17
Active Schools	To provide more and higher quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before school, during lunchtime and after school, and to develop effective pathways between schools and sports clubs in the local community.	All schools in Scotland More than 400 Active Schools Managers and Coordinators More than 23,000 deliverers Almost 294,000 participants
Active Girls	To increase opportunities for girls and young women to participate and lead in sport and physical activity	780 Active Girls participants

School Sport Award	To encourage schools to continuously improve PE and school sport	632 schools with School Sport Awards
School sport competition	To support the development of secondary school sport competition	17 School Sport Competition Officers across Scotland, linked to Active Schools networks
Competition organiser training	To equip young people with the skills to undertake the role of an event or competition organiser	300 participants
Young Ambassadors	To develop young people as leaders in sport, motivate and inspire others and influence school sport	643 Young Ambassadors
Young People's Sport Panel	To represent the views of young people nationally	15 young people
Facilities support	To develop high quality places for sport and activity	20 schools, £5.4 million - between 2003 and 2017

Participation

In 2016/17, almost 294,000 children and young people took part in Active Schools activity. This is an average of 43 per cent of the school roll. Levels of participation are highest at primary schools (53%) and schools for children with additional support needs (51%), and lower for secondary schools (30%). In 2016/17, over 1,700 young people were involved in **sport**scotland supported leadership opportunities.

Quality of opportunities

Generally, young people, parents, teachers and the Active Schools network rated the quality of **sport**scotland supported opportunities in schools highly. It was seen to:

- increase the number and variety of sport and activity opportunities;
- build the capacity of deliverers;
- support a culture of activity in schools and communities; and
- be well organised and informed by young people's views.

Teachers felt that Active Schools provided inclusive and wide ranging opportunities which increased the participation of young people in sport and physical activity, including non-sporty pupils. Teachers also largely felt that Active Schools work responded to the needs of schools and pupils, taking targeted approaches as required – for example for girls or young people with additional support needs.

Quality of people

The Active Schools programme was seen by many as underpinning the other **sport**scotland supported work in schools. Pupils and teachers believed Active Schools teams to be enthusiastic, responsive, innovative and organised.

The skills of Active Schools deliverers were generally rated highly. However, there were some concerns about the reliance on volunteers creating a cycle of deliverers, and a lack of consistency in deliverer skills. Active Schools teams largely felt effective at recruiting and retaining volunteers, but some found this challenging – particularly in rural or disadvantaged areas.

Inclusion

Active Schools was largely seen to provide inclusive opportunities which were accessible to a range of young people. Active Schools teams have worked hard to engage girls and young women, people with additional support needs and young people from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. In schools for young people with additional support needs, the proportion of pupils participating has increased since 2011 to over 50 per cent – which is higher than the national average. Schools with high levels of deprivation are also slightly more likely to have high levels of Active Schools participation than those with low levels of deprivation.

However, more young men than young women take part in Active Schools activity, and young men also generally take part more often. Over time, the gap in participation between young men and women has remained broadly stable. Between 2011 and 2016, young men visited Active Schools sessions 16 per cent more than young women – although this varies by local authority. This is the equivalent of 8,600 more visits by young men than young women each week, over six years. Local authority areas with high levels of Active Schools participation overall were more likely to have higher levels of young men participating than young women.

In contrast, more young women than young men take part in **sport**scotland leadership opportunities. More than half of Young Ambassadors, competition organiser training participants and members of the Young People's Sport Panel were young women.

Successful approaches to engaging under-represented groups often included:

- speaking to young people to find out what they want to do;
- accessing data and information about needs;
- having strong role models;
- introducing less competitive activities;
- having targeted sessions or small group work;
- building deliverer skills to support everyone – particularly pupils with ASN;

- Active Schools Coordinators with a specific role around tackling inequalities;
- removing any financial barriers to participation; and
- working jointly with others, including public and third sector organisations.

The large scale survey of school pupils found that levels of participation in Active Schools activities were broadly similar across different equalities characteristics. However, secondary pupils, disabled pupils and young men spent a marginally higher average time at Active Schools activities. The survey found that Active Schools has a positive contribution to the physical activity levels of disabled participants in mainstream schools and people living in the most deprived communities.

Leadership

The Young Ambassadors programme was viewed positively, with ambassadors seen as great role models and an excellent resource for schools. Young Ambassadors broadly had a positive experience, and felt well supported both locally and nationally. Some Young Ambassadors already held other leadership roles, and may have been less likely to benefit from the role than some other pupils. Young Ambassadors often found it hard to balance their role with their other responsibilities – particularly in S5 and S6.

Potential future improvements to the programme included:

- more sustainability – involving young people earlier in their school lives, and sustaining this into the community;
- more accessibility – with more opportunities and clearer application and selection processes within schools; and
- better links – some areas had developed broader leadership programmes which they felt were more accessible, sustainable and impactful.

Profile and connections

Most felt that **sport**scotland supported work in schools had helped to build the profile of school sport. Active Schools was largely seen as a high profile programme, with Young Ambassadors and the School Sport Award also contributing to the school ethos and culture around sport and activity.

Most felt that **sport**scotland supported work in schools, particularly Active Schools, aligned well with wider outcomes in the schools and education environment – particularly health and wellbeing priorities. However, some felt that with so much going on within the education environment, the Active Schools agenda could get lost, and that there was scope to look more closely at how Active Schools could be linked to wider learning.

It was also felt that there was a good fit with sport and physical activity strategies at national and local level. However, some felt that there was a need to focus more clearly on national priorities around supporting inactive people to become more active.

School to club links

There were mixed views on the effectiveness of school to club links. While deliverers and strategic stakeholders were largely positive about links, some Active Schools teams found that there were barriers to building links – such as a limited number of local clubs, lack of interest from local clubs, cost, travel and challenges quantifying links and connections.

While most felt that **sport**scotland struck a good balance between supporting school and club sport, some felt that there was more of a focus on schools than clubs.

Places for sport and physical activity

Based on a small number of interviews, the experience of schools and local authorities which had accessed funding through the Sport Facilities Fund was broadly positive, and most were content with the support provided by **sport**scotland. Recipients of funding were very positive about the impact of the new facilities. This included greater use and access; better health and safety; enhanced school to club pathways and links; development of more sustainable sport clubs; development of interest in new sports; and supporting a more vibrant school PE department.

More generally, some areas for improving facilities to enhance activities in schools were identified, including:

- availability – with halls often being in other usage or unavailable outside school hours; and
- changing facilities – which could put some young women off participating in school sport activities.

Impact on young people

Young people felt that Active Schools had enabled them to try new sports, have more choice of activity, and feel more confident about trying new activities. Pupils said that without Active Schools, they may have done other sports, spent time on other interests or been more sedentary. Active Schools participants who responded to the school survey were also positive about the development of their sporting and physical activity skills through their involvement in Active Schools.

Young people responding to the survey reported feeling healthy, confident and interested in new things because of taking part in sport and physical activity. Active Schools participants felt more positive about all of these areas than pupils who did not take part in Active Schools. This was reflected in interviews with young people, particularly those with additional support needs.

Pupils involved in leadership roles learned many life skills around confidence, leadership, organisation, communication, decision making, team working and public speaking. Some felt more confident at school or more confident going on to further learning opportunities. Many teachers felt that, Active Schools participation and leadership activity helped some pupils to become more involved in and engaged with learning, with behaviour improving and a consequent impact on attainment. Some went on to volunteer, coach or officiate and some found an interest and passion for sport that they wanted to carry through into their career.

Programme specific findings

This evaluation explored the whole schools and education portfolio. The strengths and weaknesses of the Active Schools programme and associated leadership work have been explored above. The strengths and potential areas for development of other **sport**scotland supported work in schools include:

- **Active Girls** – This programme is helping to raise the profile of sport for young women, and providing leadership opportunities and role models. However, there is potential for more follow up after Active Girls events, to encourage sustained participation.
- **School Sport Award** – This programme is having a positive impact on the quality of opportunities and building a culture of sport and activity in schools. However, there is potential for more work to encourage buy-in from schools, and greater consideration of how to ensure the Bronze and Silver level awards are accessible to all schools, while still having robust standards in place.
- **School Sport Competition** – Competition opportunities were highly rated and seen as well supported. However, they were seen as of variable quality and some felt more could be done to introduce more structured opportunities and pathways.
- **Sports Facilities Fund (schools)** – Funding recipients were positive about the support provided, and the impact that new facilities had for schools, clubs and communities.

Issues for consideration

1.   Active Schools performs a critical role

The Active Schools programme is providing a range of high quality opportunities for young people to be active. It is achieving its aim of providing more and higher quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before and after school, and at lunchtime. The Active Schools network of staff is also providing a key role in holding together the range of **sport**scotland supported programmes in the schools and education environment, and creating a real sense of a blend of support.

Recommendation: The Active Schools programme, and associated blend of supported programmes in the schools and education environment, should be continued.

2.   Scope for more focused and targeted activity

The Active Schools programme involved a high proportion of young people – an average of 43 per cent of the school roll. Much work has been done to engage a range of different young people in Active Schools. Teachers valued that the programme could adapt to needs, and target as required.

However, the programme involves more young men than young women. And young people who are already active may find it easier to become involved in Active Schools activities than those who are not active. There is a risk that a continued focus on growing participant numbers increases the gaps between young men and women, and those who are active and those who are not.

There is scope to consider a stronger focus on ensuring that Active Schools provides opportunities for people less likely to be active or more likely to experience poor health outcomes. This could include young women, young people from disadvantaged areas, young people who are not active and young disabled people in mainstream schools.

It could be possible to balance both the universal and targeted components of the programme. However, it is important to recognise that a stronger focus on targeted activity may result in a reduction of the overall number of young people involved in Active Schools.

Recommendation: sportscotland should consider refocusing the aims of the Active Schools programme to be less focused on overall participation numbers, and more focused on the range of participants involved – particularly those less likely to be active.

3. Contributing to wider education outcomes

The Active Schools programme is seen to link well with wider education outcomes, particularly the health and wellbeing priorities embedded within Curriculum for Excellence and the national priority of closing the poverty related attainment gap. However, the connections being made at local level vary between local authorities and schools – and can be complex for Active Schools teams to negotiate.

There is scope for **sport**scotland to clearly articulate the potential contribution that sport and physical activity can make to attainment – focusing on health and wellbeing and engagement with learning. This would help Active Schools teams to articulate this at local level, with teachers and local authorities. This message would fit well with a more targeted approach, particularly for young people from disadvantaged areas, articulated above. It would also require careful consideration of approaches to any charging for Active Schools activities at local level.

Recommendation: **sport**scotland should consider developing information which supports Active Schools teams at a local level to clearly articulate the potential contribution that sport and physical activity can make to attainment – focusing on health and wellbeing and engagement with learning.

4. Building consistency in quality

Active Schools delivery relies strongly on volunteer deliverers, with support and management from the Active Schools network. This enables the programme to have its reach and range. However, there is some evidence that deliverer turnover and differences in skills levels between deliverers can impact on the quality of experience. **sport**scotland may wish to consider:

- clearly articulating a clear focus on quality of experience rather than quantity – which would fit well with the targeted approach suggested above;
- a clear definition of a quality experience – building on existing work exploring what makes a quality deliverer, but also exploring what makes a quality experience for participants and other stakeholders such as schools;
- support and encouragement for Active Schools teams to gather feedback from young people during and after sessions – in a simple way; and
- an increased focus on qualitative information about quality and impact of Active Schools.

Some rural areas face particular barriers to delivering a range of quality opportunities – with challenges around transport, timing of sessions, access to facilities and access to skilled coaches. It is important to recognise that these barriers exist, and that innovative and smaller scale approaches may need to be taken.

Recommendation: sportscotland should consider clearly articulating the focus of Active Schools on quality rather than quantity, and clearly defining what makes a quality experience within the schools environment.

5. Opportunities for young leaders

The young leaders' programmes are viewed positively. However, **sport**scotland should consider:

- accessibility – some schools still need support with developing clear selection processes, with guidance on target groups and intended outcomes;
- sustainability – it is worth considering whether schools should be encouraged to select young people as Young Ambassadors earlier in their school lives, and how young people can be supported to sustain this into the community (potentially through links to the clubs and communities environment); and
- the intended outcomes – including intended outcomes for young people (such as enhanced confidence and skills development) and intended outcomes more widely (such as developing a pool of skilled deliverers to achieve Active Schools objectives).

Recommendation: sportscotland should consider the accessibility, sustainability and intended outcomes of the young leaders opportunities.

6. School to club links

Views across both the schools and education and clubs and communities evaluations have been mixed in relation to the effectiveness of school to club links. There were examples where it worked well.

But some in the schools environment found it hard to engage and involve clubs, and some in the clubs environment found it hard to engage and involve schools and others in the schools environment. It was also not always clear where responsibility for developing and sustaining these links lay. There are opportunities to do more to:

- clearly define what is meant by a school-club link;
- refresh and clarify roles and responsibilities for developing school-club links;
- enhance joint working arrangements between **sport**scotland supported staff in the clubs and communities and schools and education environments;
- connect the focus on getting active and physical activity within the school environment through into the work in the clubs and communities portfolio;
- support clubs to cope with increased demand from school pupils, generated through Active Schools; and
- connect leadership work between the schools and clubs environments.

Recommendation: sportscotland should work with stakeholders involved in both portfolios to clarify and strengthen work in developing school-club links, building on the strong network of staff in both environments with good relationships with schools, clubs and community groups.

7.   Wider areas for development

There are a number of other ways in which **sport**scotland supported programmes could be further developed, in light of the above recommendations:

- there is potential to link targeted Active Schools work with girls and young women more clearly with the Active Girls brand – to give a clear sense of a link between events, role models and activities within schools;
- there is potential to profile the real value of the School Sport Award to schools – perhaps through very short case studies on the impact on schools – and consider a more streamlined approach to Bronze and Silver awards;
- consideration could be given to a more consistent approach to developing and supporting competition opportunities across the country, to ensure that pupils in all areas have access to structured opportunities and pathways which are suitable to their local area; and
- stronger linkages could be made between evidence about the facilities related barriers to Active Schools work and the investment decisions made in relation to Sports Facilities Fund awards in schools.

We recognise that development around some of these areas is already ongoing.

1. Introduction

About this report

1.1   This evaluation explores the impact of the blend of **sport**scotland supported work in the schools and education environment. It also explores what is achieving this impact, through exploring what is working and why, and what lessons have been learned for the future.

1.2   Broadly, the range of **sport**scotland supported work in schools includes Active Schools, Active Girls, School Sport Award, work developing young leaders, school sport competition support and training, and support with developing school facilities for sport and physical activity. The evaluation looks backwards, largely focusing on the five years leading up to 2017/18.

Connected work

1.3   This evaluation was undertaken at the same time as:

- an evaluation of **sport**scotland supported work with clubs and communities; and
- research exploring **sport**scotland's contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments, including a large scale survey with over 15,000 responses from school pupils across Scotland.

1.4   Key findings from the large scale survey of school pupils have been highlighted within this report.

1.5   This evaluation is part of a series of **sport**scotland wider evaluations being undertaken from 2017 to 2019. These look in depth at how the programmes **sport**scotland deliver alongside partners support the sporting system. They provide insight into what is working well and what can be improved. These will be used to inform **sport**scotland's next planning cycle.

1.6   This evaluation also draws on regular monitoring and evaluation information collected by **sport**scotland in the schools and education environment, including impacts and interventions reports submitted by **sport**scotland supported staff, and monitoring data gathered across the schools and education programmes.

2.   Context

Introduction

2.1   This chapter sets out the main components of **sport**scotland's work in schools. It describes the aims and purpose of the main programmes of:

- Active Schools;
- Active Girls;
- School Sport Award;
- school sport competition;
- young leaders; and
- school sport facilities.

Active Schools

2.2   **sport**scotland works in partnership with all 32 local authorities to invest in and support the Active Schools Network. The Network consists of over 400 Active Schools Coordinators (ASCs) and Active Schools Managers (ASMs) dedicated to developing and supporting the delivery of quality sporting opportunities for children and young people.

2.3   Active Schools aims to provide more and higher quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before school, during lunchtime and after school, and to develop effective pathways between schools and sports clubs in the local community. It provides opportunities for children and young people to get involved and stay involved in sport.

2.4   ASCs work with primary, secondary and additional support needs schools to increase the number and diversity of children and young people taking part in Active Schools activities.

2.5   In 2016/17 a network of 23,000 people delivered Active Schools across Scotland. Most (86%) were volunteers – including teachers, other school staff, parents, students, sports coaches and senior pupils. In 2016/17 around 370,000 activity sessions were delivered, and more than 2,700 clubs linked with schools to ensure that children were able to stay involved in sport and physical activity beyond school.

2.6   Active Schools contributes towards **sport**scotland's overarching priority of building a world class sporting system for everyone in Scotland, as set out below.

BUILDING A WORLD CLASS SPORTING SYSTEM FOR EVERYONE IN SCOTLAND
ACTIVE SCHOOLS PRIORITIES

PEOPLE

- Grow and develop a network of people to deliver opportunities within schools ensuring they have the confidence, skills and knowledge to deliver quality sporting opportunities.
- Recruit, retain and develop volunteers to deliver opportunities in schools.

- Provide support and leadership opportunities in a range of roles including: deliverers/ coaches, event competition organisers, technical officials, decision makers and ambassadors.

PARTICIPATION

- Increase the number and diversity of children and young people participating in Active Schools activities.
- Provide more and higher quality opportunities to participate in sport in schools (before school, during lunchtime and after school).
- Engage with children and young people who may experience barriers to participation to support their inclusion in activity.
- Support and develop effective pathways between schools and clubs to improve the transition of children and young people from schools to clubs.

PROFILE

- Share and promote opportunities to participate, lead and volunteer in sport.

- Raise awareness and understanding of Active Schools and impact amongst key stakeholders and the wider community.

2.7   **sport**scotland aims for Active Schools activities to be free to parents and children. While this approach is provided as guidance, some schools extend and widen their after school activity provision, which can require a charge. Local authorities are funded to deliver the outcomes of Active Schools and, with schools, they ultimately make decisions on any charges made to parents and children.

2.8   The Active Schools network plays an important role in delivering the national programmes of Active Schools, School Sport Award, school sport competition and young leaders (explored in detail below).

Active Girls

2.9   The Active Girls programme operates both in schools and more widely in clubs and communities. It aims to:

- increase opportunities for girls and young women to participate in sport and physical activity;
- improve access to leadership opportunities and roles for girls and young women in school and community sport;
- increase recognition of the power of girls to motivate and inspire their peers and provide more opportunities to do so; and
- enhance the knowledge and understanding of the workforce delivering PE, sport and physical activity to girls and young women.

2.10   The Active Girls programme involves joint work with:

- Youth Sport Trust – around developing the workforce; and
- Youth Scotland – around focused work with communities and clubs through Community Sport Hubs and clubs supported by **sport**scotland.

School Sport Award

2.11   The **sport**scotland School Sport Award aims to encourage schools to continuously improve PE and school sport opportunities, through:

- encouraging schools to self reflect and continuously improve;
- putting young people at the forefront of the decision making and planning of PE and sport in their school;
- helping schools to increase young people's opportunities and engagement in PE and school sport;
- helping schools to put PE and school sport at the heart of their planning, practice and ethos; and
- recognising and celebrating successful PE and school sport models.

2.12   The School Sport Award programme is funded by the National Lottery. It focuses on nine core areas:

- **PE** – all pupils should have access to two hours or two periods of physical education each week;
- **school sport** – all pupils should have access to a range of quality extra-curricular sports and activities before, during and after school;
- **competition and performance** – there should be opportunities to compete and perform in events, festivals and competitions;
- **leadership** – there should be opportunities for pupils to lead, coach, officiate and influence sport in their schools;
- **pathways** – there should be clear pathways to a range of community sport opportunities;
- **career long professional learning** – there should be a choice of quality development opportunities on offer for all staff and volunteer deliverers;
- **recognition and awards** – for the staff and volunteers who give up their time to support, organise or deliver extra-curricular sport and physical activity opportunities;
- **celebrating sport** – at all levels including participation, performance, spectating, leading, coaching and officiating; and
- **access to school facilities** – in secondary schools only, there should be strong links to local clubs and preferential access to school facilities for these organisations.

2.13   Schools can gain awards at gold, silver and bronze level. At September 2017 there were 632 schools with School Sport Awards (out of 2,400 schools in Scotland).

Image from sportscotland website

School sport competition

2.14　A network of approximately 17 School Sport Competition Officers (SSCOs) support the development of school sport competition across schools in Scotland. The SSCO post is funded to focus on school sport competition in secondary schools – although some areas have expanded this to primary schools.

2.15　The SSCO network is supported by Active Schools teams and club support posts, who are also supporting school sport competition. There is a strong focus on supporting joint working, building school to club links, engaging young people and identifying and addressing barriers to participation. One of the main aims is to work in partnership with local authorities to provide a clearly defined and sustainable school sport competition landscape.

Young leaders

Young Ambassadors

2.16　The Young Ambassadors programme aims to develop young people as leaders in sport. Each secondary school in Scotland is invited to select two young people as Young Ambassadors to promote sport, and motivate and inspire other young people to get involved in sport in their schools, clubs and local communities.

2.17　The Young Ambassadors programme began in 2012. The key role of a Young Ambassador is to promote sport by motivating and inspiring other young people to get involved in sport, and to influence six aspects of school sport:

- extra-curricular sport provision;
- links to community sport opportunities;
- opportunities for competition;
- celebration of pupil achievements in sport;
- leadership opportunities for young people; and
- PE in schools.

2.18   Each year, new Young Ambassadors attend a national conference which is delivered regionally and is hosted by **sport**scotland. This helps them to understand their role; equip them with ideas and resources; and instil confidence and inspiration to undertake their role. Each year a Young Ambassador Conference Team of approximately 30 young people has a key role in delivering workshops at these conferences. Supporting and mentoring Young Ambassadors is also a large part of the Active Schools Coordinators' role.

Competition organiser training

2.19   Competition organiser training focuses on developing young people's skills around planning, organising and delivering events and competitions. The competition organiser training programme began in November 2016. A total of 80 Active Schools Coordinators and School Sport Competition Officers have received competition organiser tutor training, allowing them to then deliver training locally to young people in schools and communities.

2.20   The aim is to equip young people with the skills, knowledge and understanding to undertake the role of event or competition organiser. It enables young people to experience and identify the essential aspects of well-organised, safe, fun, fair and inclusive intra-school competition. The training is intended for secondary school pupils aged 14 plus.

Young People's Sport Panel

2.21   The Young People's Sport Panel is a programme led by **sport**scotland in partnership with Young Scot. A group of young people are chosen from across Scotland to represent the views of young people. Central to the programme is the principle that their views are heard and valued and they have the opportunity to influence decision making and drive change. The work of the Panel is aligned to two main aims:

- to influence and shape the future of sport in Scotland; and
- to raise the profile of sport.

2.22   This has consisted of opportunities including consultation; involvement in working groups and events; developing information and content for sharing online; and social media engagement. In addition, the sport panel has established working groups focused on women and girls and disability sport participation. The current panel is in place until summer 2018.

School sport facilities

2.23   The Sport Facilities Fund is **sport**scotland's main facilities investment programme, investing in facilities suitable for community recreation, club sport or high performance training or competition. From 2012/13 to 2016/17 this has included a total investment of £28.8 million. The fund is for capital expenditure only, and prioritises investment where need and impact are greatest, and outcomes are clear.

2.24   The guidelines and priorities for the Sport Facilities Fund are currently being reviewed. However, the most recent guidance from 2012 sets out the key criteria and priorities for the past five years. Among its priorities, the fund focuses on:

- sports halls which demonstrate good school to club links;
- projects which demonstrate the community sport hub philosophy; and
- upgrades to facilities which are likely to increase community access or range of sports.

2.25   Local authorities and leisure trust are eligible to apply for the funding. For public bodies, funding should be additional to planned expenditure – not a replacement for it. All applicants are normally expected to meet at least 25 per cent of the project costs.

2.26   Between 2003 and 2017 it has included investment and support in 20 schools – with a further four applications in progress in 2017/18. This has included investment in facilities such as all weather pitches, playing fields, climbing walls, swimming pools and sports complexes. The total investment in school facilities through the Sport Facilities Fund over this time was £5.4 million. Five were categorised as small projects (less than £100,000), and 15 were larger projects of £100,000 or more. The awards ranged from £10,000 to £1 million. The awards were made in 15 local authority areas.

2.27   **sport**scotland also provides broader support and design guidance around school sport facilities. It has three design guides for schools – for primary schools, secondary schools and for sports pitches. These design guides describe how school sport facilities can be designed to meet the requirements both of the school and the wider community, and advice on how these facilities can be maintained. The guides for primary and secondary schools were originally published in 2004, and the school playing fields guidance was produced in 2007.

3.   Participation: Activities and participants

Chapter summary

In 2016/17, almost 294,000 children and young people took part in Active Schools activity. This is an average of 43 per cent of the school roll. Participation levels are varied across Scotland, from 29 per cent to 65 per cent of the school roll.

Levels of participation are lower at secondary schools (30%) compared with both primary schools (53%) and schools for children with additional support needs (51%).

More young men than young women took part – at 44.4 per cent of the male school roll, and 41.9 per cent of the female school roll. The gap largely exists at secondary school level – with 32 per cent of the male school roll participating compared with 27 per cent of the female school roll.

Areas with high levels of participation[1] also generally had a higher average number of visits per participant. However, areas with higher levels of participation are more likely to have more young men taking part in Active Schools activities than young women.

Since 2011, the number of distinct participants in Active Schools activity has increased each year. The increase between 2011 and 2016 was 33 per cent.

Over the same time period, there has been an increase of 52 per cent in the number of participation sessions. So more young people are doing more activity through Active Schools.

Comparison of Active Schools participation levels between schools with a Gold School Sport Award and those with no Award shows that participation levels are slightly higher among Gold Award schools. Schools with Gold Awards are less likely to have low participation levels in Active Schools of less than 20 per cent of all pupils, and more likely to have 50 to 80 per cent of their pupils participating.

In 2016/17, over 1,700 young people were involved **sport**scotland supported leadership opportunities.

The survey of almost 15,000 school pupils found that levels of activity are higher for Active Schools participants. Over half (57%) of Active Schools participants are 'active' – meeting the Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines.

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[1] For the purposes of this analysis, the authorities were classed into high (more than 46%), average (40 to 46%) and low (less than 40%) levels of participation.

Introduction

3.1   This chapter explores the activities offered through **sport**scotland supported work in schools, and the number of participants in these activities. It particularly focuses on strands of work which involve direct participation of young people including Active Schools and young leaders.

3.2   This chapter also draws on findings relating to physical activity participation levels taken from the large scale survey of school pupils, undertaken across Scotland.

3.3   The profile of participants, and the successes and challenges of engaging with a range of young people with different characteristics, is explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

Active Schools

Active Schools aims around participation

3.4   Active Schools has a clear aim of increasing participation in sport and physical activity. As part of its work, it aims to:

- increase the number of children and young people participating in Active Schools activities; and
- provide more opportunities to participate in sport in schools (before school, during lunchtime and after school).

3.5   Active Schools also aims to increase the diversity of participants and reduce barriers to inclusion. This is explored in Chapter Six. It also aims to support participation in clubs, through improving the transition of children and young people from schools to clubs. This is explored in Chapters Nine and Ten which focus on connections and links.

Active Schools participation levels

3.6   The most recent data for Active Schools participation covers the 2016/17 academic year. This highlights that 293,878 distinct participants took part in Active Schools activity. This is an average of 43 per cent of the school roll.

3.7   More young men than young women took part – at 44 per cent of the male school roll, and 42 per cent of the female school roll. The gap largely exists at secondary school level – with 32 per cent of the male school roll participating compared with 27 per cent of the female school roll. Overall in 2016/17, 13,700 more young men took part than young women. This is explored further in Chapter Six.

3.8   In 2016/17 there were 368,074 Active Schools activity sessions. There were more than 6.8 million participation sessions, meaning that an average of 18 to 19 young participants attended each activity session.

Active Schools participation by stage

3.9   Participation levels are quite different between primary and secondary schools. While 53 per cent of primary pupils took part in Active Schools activity in 2016/17, this reduces to 30 per cent for secondary school pupils. Participation rates are reasonably high in schools for children with additional support needs, at 51 per cent.

Active Schools participation across Scotland

3.10   The rates of participation across Scotland are varied, from 29 per cent to 65 per cent of the school roll. Eleven local authorities have levels which are below the average of 43 per cent. These authorities are spread across the country and are in both urban and rural areas. Two local authorities have rates of 43 per cent, and 19 have levels of more than 43 per cent.

3.11   Areas with high levels of participation[2] also generally had a higher average number of visits per participant. The average number of visits per participant was:

- 27 visits in areas with high numbers of distinct participants;
- 22 in areas with average numbers of distinct participants; and
- 23 in areas with low numbers of distinct participants.

3.12   However, areas with higher levels of participation are more likely to have many more young men taking part in Active Schools activities than young women. More than two thirds (69%) of authorities with high levels of participation have a difference of more than two per cent between male and female participation. This reduces to less than a third (30%) for those with broadly average rates of participation, and just a fifth (22%) for those with low levels of participation.

3.13   Local authority areas with high levels of participation were also slightly more likely to offer opportunities across a range of times – including lunch times and after school, as well as some opportunities in the evenings or at weekends.

3.14   Authorities with high levels of deprivation have very varied levels of participation. For example, of the nine attainment challenge authorities (which have the highest levels of deprivation in Scotland), three have higher than average levels of participation; four have average levels; and two have lower than average levels.

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[2] For the purposes of this analysis, the authorities were classed into high (more than 46%), average (40 to 46%) and low (less than 40%) levels of participation.

3.15   Between 2011 and 2016, Active Schools opportunities have offered 122 different types of activity. The number of activity clubs has grown from approximately 28,000 in 2011, to 43,500 in 2016. Across Active Schools provision in 2016/17, the top ten activities were:
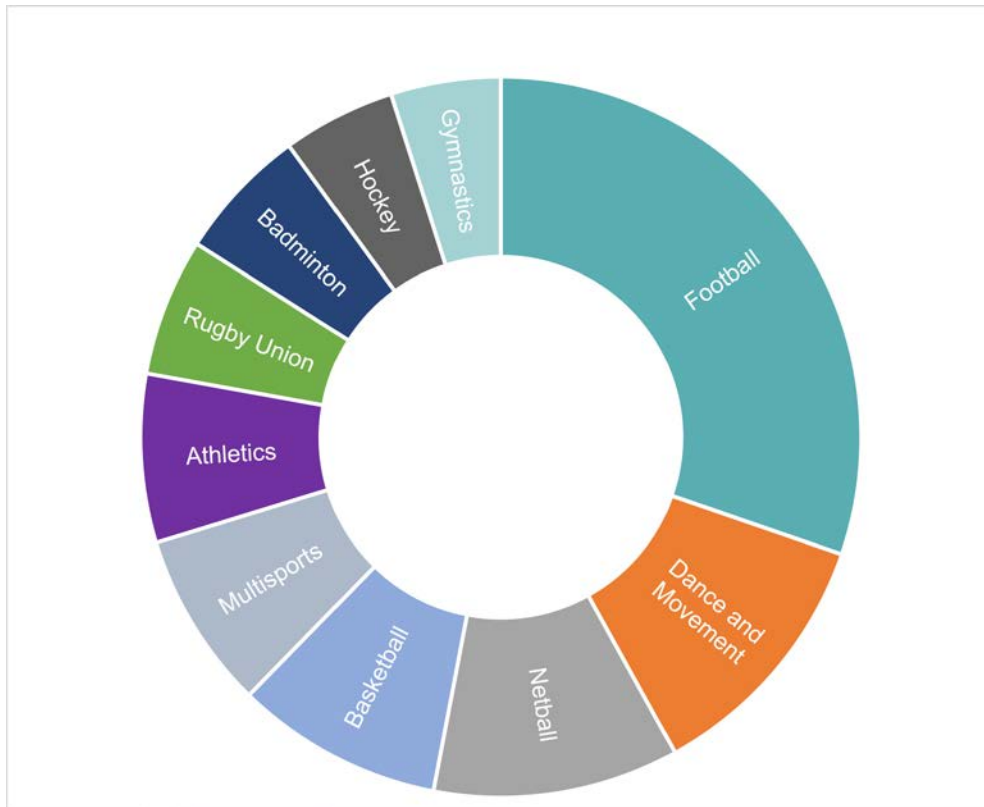
Active Schools trends in participation

3.16   Since 2011, the number of distinct participants in Active Schools activity has been gathered and analysed nationally. The data suggests that the number of participants has increased each year. In 2011, almost 222,000 young people participated in Active Schools activity. This increased to almost 294,000 in 2016. This is an increase of 33 per cent.

3.17   However, it is important to note that the processes for collecting this data were first introduced in 2011. New processes for data collection were being embedded in the first few years.
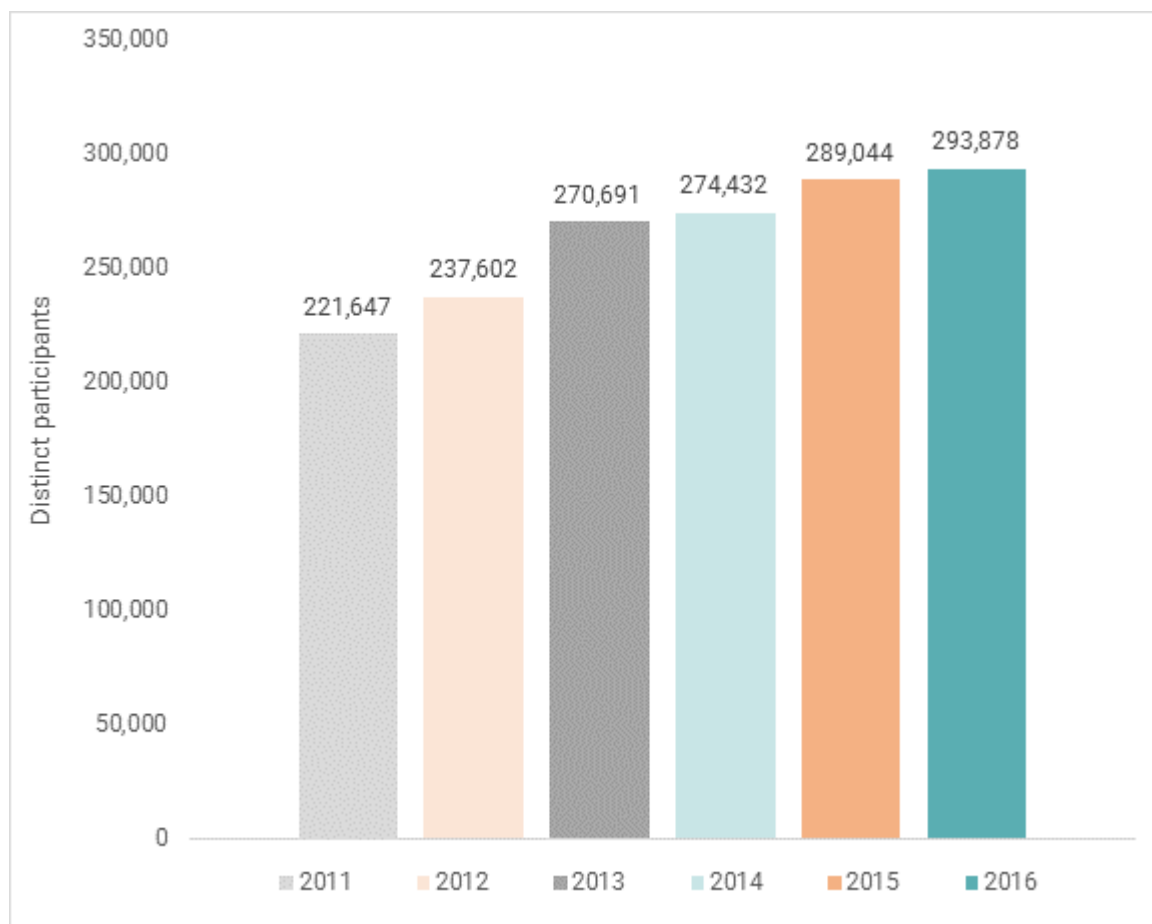
3.18   Over the same time period, there has been an increase of 52 per cent in the number of participation sessions. So more young people are doing more activity through Active Schools.

Physical activity levels

3.19   The survey of school pupils collected information on when, where and for how long pupils are physically active. Results found that more than half (57%) of Active Schools participants are 'active', meeting the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines[3].

3.20   Even excluding the time spent participating in Active Schools activity, almost half (46%) of Active Schools participants are 'active'. This compares with a third (35%) for those who do not participate in Active Schools. This suggests that Active Schools activities are making a positive contribution to children's activity levels.

3.21   Almost a fifth (16%) of Active Schools participants are 'inactive' and this rises to almost a third (29%) if time spent in Active Schools is not included. This means that 13 per cent are no longer inactive due to their Active Schools activity.

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[3] Child physical activity: Active = average 60+ mins per day; Some activity = average 30-59 mins per day; Inactive = average <30 mins per day (Source: Chief Medical Officer physical activity guidelines)

3.22   In addition, Active Schools participants in both primary and secondary schools have lower levels of inactivity. While almost half (43%) of secondary pupils not taking part in Active Schools were classed as 'inactive', this reduced to 14 per cent for Active Schools participants. A similar pattern was seen for primary pupils.

3.23   Active Schools participants indicated that they spent an average of almost two hours a week on Active Schools activities. These participants also spent more time being active in all other locations.

Young leaders

Young leaders' participation levels

3.24   Through **sport**scotland work in schools, young people are also able to participate in a range of sport and physical activity related leadership opportunities. In 2016/17, over 1,700 young people were involved in these leadership opportunities.

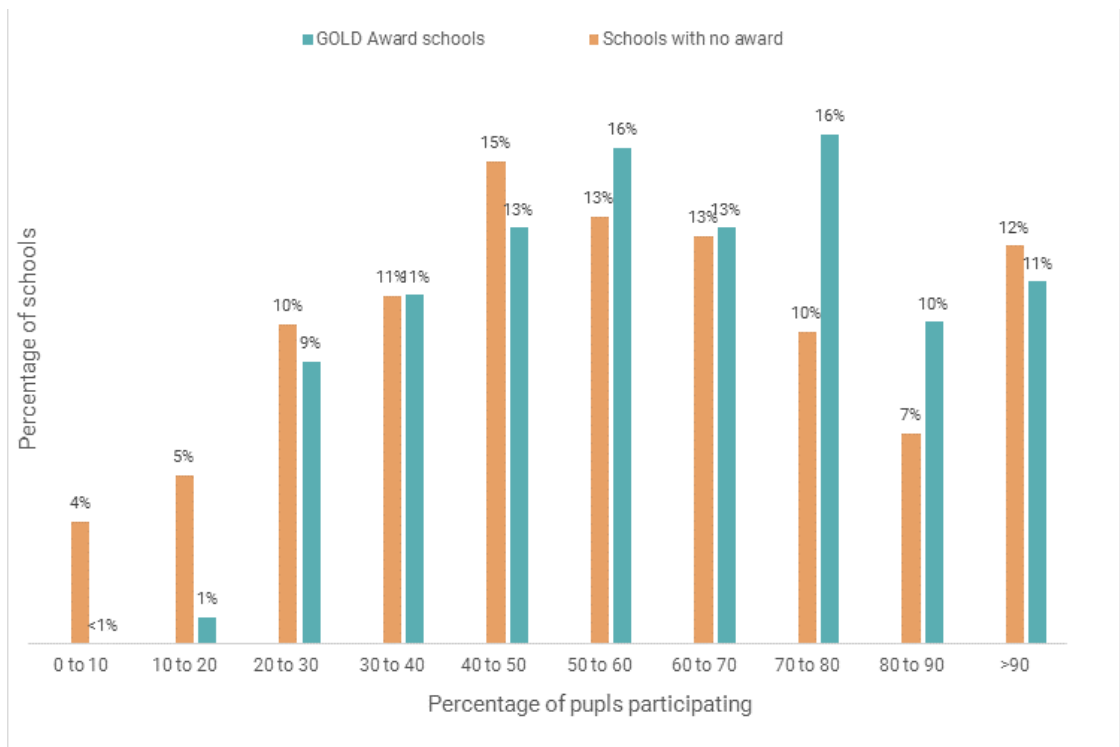| Participants on leadership opportunities	2016/17
Active Girls	780
Young Ambassadors	643
Competition Organiser Training	300
Young People's Sport Panel	15
Total	**1,738**

Note: All figures relate to the financial year apart from Active Girls which covers the academic year

3.25   Each secondary school in Scotland is encouraged to identify two Young Ambassadors. There are approximately 360 secondary schools in Scotland, meaning that on average, secondary schools have 1.8 Young Ambassadors. More than 90 per cent of secondary schools are involved in the programme. The number of Young Ambassadors and the proportion of secondary schools involved has remained broadly stable since 2012/13 when the system of two ambassadors per secondary school was introduced.

School Sport Award

3.26   There are 632 schools in Scotland with a School Sport Award. When **sport**scotland assesses these schools, it is expected that in schools with School Sport Awards around 40 per cent of primary pupils and 30 per cent of secondary pupils regularly take part in sport and physical activities beyond the school day. This could include Active Schools supported activity. Self-evaluation returns from a sample of schools with School Sport Awards suggest that many of the sport and physical activities within the schools either are, or were previously, supported by Active Schools.

3.27   Comparison of Active Schools participation levels between schools with a Gold School Sport Award and those with no Award shows that participation levels are slightly higher among Gold Award schools. Schools with Gold Awards are less likely to have low participation levels in Active Schools of less than 20 per cent of all pupils, and more likely to have 50 to 80 per cent of their pupils participating. It is important to note, however, that many of the schools without Awards in the lowest participation bracket of 0 to 10 per cent are very small schools, or schools for children with additional support needs.

Chart legend: ■ GOLD Award schools   ■ Schools with no award

Y-axis: Percentage of schools
X-axis: Percentage of pupils participating

Percentage of pupils participating	Schools with no award	GOLD Award schools
0 to 10	4%	<1%
10 to 20	5%	1%
20 to 30	10%	9%
30 to 40	11%	11%
40 to 50	15%	13%
50 to 60	13%	16%
60 to 70	13%	13%
70 to 80	10%	16%
80 to 90	7%	10%
>90	12%	11%

4.   Quality of opportunities

Chapter summary

Generally, stakeholders including pupils, parents, teachers, deliverers and **sport**scotland supported staff rated the quality of **sport**scotland supported opportunities in schools highly, because:

- they increased the number and variety of sport and activity opportunities;
- they built the capacity of deliverers;
- they supported a culture of activity in schools and communities; and
- they were well organised and informed by young people's views.

The Active Schools programme was seen by many as underpinning the other **sport**scotland supported work in schools.

Key barriers to quality related to:

- continuity of deliverers – with some concerns about frequent changes of deliverers and a 'cycle' of volunteers;
- skills of deliverers – with some concern about variable quality between deliverers, and some calls for deliverers with more structured approaches, who are better able to manage behavioural issues and support the needs of different participants more effectively;
- pupil engagement – with some feeling that deliverers needed to listen more to what pupils want to do, and actively engage pupils;
- capacity – with some pupils feeling sessions are crowded or too busy, which some Active Schools teams highlighted related to access to facilities or equipment; and
- particular challenges in rural and island communities around coordination, access to skilled coaches and volunteers, access to facilities and transport.

The School Sport Award was felt to have had some positive impact on quality of opportunities in schools, encouraging a greater focus on sport, connections and pathways. The continuous improvement tool was seen to be useful, where used. However, some strategic stakeholders and Active Schools teams felt there was a lack of buy-in from schools, and that the Award was sometimes seen as too complex and bureaucratic, with a lack of checking of standards at some levels potentially reducing its perceived value.

School sport competition opportunities were rated highly by Active Schools teams and strategic stakeholders, and seen as well supported. However, some felt that more could be done to introduce structured opportunities and pathways, and that quality was variable. While some felt there should be more opportunities, others

felt that there were too many opportunities, with schools stretched in terms of capacity to be involved.

Introduction

4.1　This chapter explores the quality of opportunities and activities offered in **sport**scotland supported work in schools, and how **sport**scotland support has impacted on quality.

Active Schools

Overall views

4.2　**sport**scotland supported staff teams generally felt that they had very positively influenced the quality of opportunities available for pupils to take part in sport and physical activity. School Sport Competition Officers (SSCOs) were also positive about their impact on quality of opportunities.

To what extent have you influenced the quality of opportunities for pupils to take part in sport and physical activities?			
	ASMs	ASCs	SSCOs
Very positively	79%	60%	64%
Quite positively	21%	39%	36%
No influence	-	1%	-
Quite negatively	-	-	-
Very negatively	-	-	-
Base	*28*	*279*	*11*

4.3　The very small number of Active Schools respondents who felt that their work had no influence on the quality of opportunities highlighted that they had been in post for a very short time, they had experienced staffing constraints, or they had not been able to access enough mentors for volunteers or suitable facilities due to being in rural or remote locations.

4.4　Most teachers (72%) felt that Active Schools had been very or quite effective in influencing the quality and range of opportunities. While a fifth (21%) said that it had been quite or very ineffective, many of these teachers then gave comments which suggested that they were very happy with the quality of opportunities and may have misunderstood or misinterpreted the question.

4.5　Those delivering Active Schools activities also generally rated the quality and range of opportunities and activities highly – with 86 per cent of survey respondents believing the quality and range to be good or very good. A minority of deliverers felt that the quality and range of opportunities was fair (12%) or poor (2%).

4.6   Strategic stakeholders were also asked for their views on the extent to which the range of **sport**scotland supported schools and education programmes have increased the number and quality of opportunities to participate, develop and progress in sport and physical activity. Overall, these stakeholders were very positive about the Active Schools programme, with 84 per cent believing that it had impacted a lot, and the remainder feeling it had impacted a little.

"Active Schools are most certainly increasing the opportunities available to schools in sport."

Strategic stakeholder

4.7   Strategic stakeholders said that they had answered in this way because the Active Schools programme underpins the other **sport**scotland supported work in schools, and was central to delivering all the other programmes such as Active Girls, School Sport Award, Young Ambassadors, school sport competition and competition organiser training.

"Active Schools is the key throughout Scotland to increasing the quality of opportunities to participate, develop and progress in sport."

Strategic stakeholder

Positive influences on quality

4.8   Active Schools teams felt that they had positively influenced the quality of opportunities through:

- increasing the number and variety of opportunities;
- building the capacity of deliverers; and
- building a culture of sport within schools and communities.

4.9   Other stakeholders agreed, including pupils, parents and deliverers. Those delivering Active Schools activity also emphasised that activities were well organised, based on what young people want to do, and well supported by Active Schools Coordinators.

"Fantastic resource and the children in the school love having the Active Schools Coordinator."

Deliverer

Increasing the number and variety of opportunities

4.10   Active Schools teams felt strongly that they had positively influenced the quality of opportunities through ensuring the provision of a range of different types of activity. They stressed that many of these opportunities wouldn't otherwise be available. Some highlighted that participation levels have increased, and that there is evidence of young people going on to participate in sport and physical activity both locally and nationally. And some involved in school sport competition said that there were now more competitive

opportunities at schools – supported by both Active Schools and wider activity by governing bodies, sport hubs and clubs.

"Not only are children trying new activities, but continuing participation at a local and sometimes national level."

<div align="right">ASC</div>

4.11   Active Schools deliverers agreed that there was a wide range of opportunities, and that these were high quality because they were well organised, well advertised and based on good consultation and engagement with young people. Deliverers also highlighted that these opportunities were tailored to the needs of different groups, including girls, children with additional support needs and vulnerable young people who would not normally participate.

4.12   Young Ambassadors and other pupils involved in the research were very positive about the quality of activities and opportunities. They also felt that Active Schools had increased the range of sports available. Young people highlighted that Active Schools had brought about lots of new opportunities to try new sports, through taster sessions, clubs and holiday camps.

"I think Active Schools has been great for our school. I have nothing negative to say."

<div align="right">Young Ambassador</div>

"Active Schools came in and created such a range of opportunities for sport, which wasn't available before."

<div align="right">Young Ambassador</div>

Example: Introducing new opportunities
In one island school, a Young Ambassador felt that Active Schools had helped to develop a range of opportunities and activities, and provide new opportunities. For example, the ASC introduced a new sport – lacrosse – through arranging for a coach to visit from the mainland. The Young Ambassador also felt that the opportunities were very well organised through Active Schools.

4.13   Teachers emphasised the impact of Active Schools in:

- providing inclusive and wide ranging opportunities – including sports that schools would not normally be able to offer;
- increasing participation of young people in sport and physical activity, including 'non sporty' pupils;
- responding to needs and introducing targeted approaches as required – for example for girls or young people with additional support needs;
- taking the administrative burden of organising activities, events and clubs; and
- organising competitions, festivals and events.

"Without Active Schools the quality and quantity of school sport would be greatly diminished."

Teacher

"Our Active School's Coordinator has introduced our children to a wealth of different sporting opportunities that our children would never have had the opportunity to try otherwise."

Teacher

4.14 Discussion with a small number of local authority leads also highlighted the key role that Active Schools has to play in developing participation opportunities, with local authority officers believing it to be central to building participation among school pupils.

"Active Schools is the most fundamental thing influencing activity and participation."

Local authority sports development lead

Building capacity

4.15 Active Schools teams felt that they had enhanced the capacity of deliverers, which was seen as critical to enhancing the quality of opportunities. This included support for parents, students and teachers, as well as leadership opportunities for pupils. Teachers also emphasised the value of support and training for themselves, and also for senior pupils and other volunteer deliverers. The quality and skills of deliverers are explored in more detail in Chapter Five.

4.16 Many said that through Young Ambassadors, Sports Leaders and competition organiser training, senior pupils were becoming a valuable resource for schools – involved in both planning and delivery of activities in both primary and secondary schools. Some ASMs also commented on the importance of recruiting the right people to Active Schools teams, and the well trained and well supported teams that have developed to support quality opportunities.

"With all the training opportunities we offer for volunteers I feel that this improves the quality of opportunities for those taking part."

ASC

4.17 Many respondents said that working closely with clubs had helped to build the capacity of deliverers – tapping into coaching expertise, getting clubs involved in schools, and encouraging clubs to help coach and train volunteer deliverers. Deliverers agreed that access to training and support for volunteers, including support from professional coaches, helped to enhance the quality of opportunities.

4.18 Some teachers highlighted the particular role of Active Schools bringing qualified club coaches or specialists into schools in rural or more deprived areas.

Example – School coaching pathway
In one area, the Active Schools team has worked towards the development of an effective coaching pathway for senior pupils. This pathway involves pupils starting off on an apprenticeship scheme in S4. These pupils are given various coaching placements during their S4. Those who show commitment and talent are then considered for places on either the young coach programme, or the young coach academy in S5. Both of these programmes see senior pupils move into specialised coaching placements, with each getting access to a UKCC course in their chosen sport.

Example – Building student capacity
In one area, approximately 100 college and university sports students are involved in Active Schools delivery. This has helped to upskill students, who aim to become coaches. As part of this project, students go on work placements to practice their coaching skills. Over a few years, this has resulted in a more skilled coaching workforce being available locally, which has helped to increase the quality of opportunities delivered.

Building a culture of sport

4.19 Some Active Schools teams felt that they had enhanced the quality of opportunities through building a culture of sport within schools, and building strong links between schools and clubs. This is explored in more detail in Chapters Eight and Nine, which focus on school sport profile and connections.

> "Having been ten years in the post, I feel that the services that I have offered has developed significantly due to better links with local clubs, schools, parents and the whole community."
>
> ASC

4.20 A number of respondents, mainly ASCs, also highlighted the importance of developing effective relationships with school leadership teams, head teachers and PE staff in schools. Some said it was sometimes difficult to get 'buy-in' from staff in some schools, but others gave examples of where school staff were actively involved in promoting and supporting a range of extra-curricular activities.

Barriers to quality

4.21 Key barriers to quality, across Active Schools teams, deliverers, parents and teachers included:

- access to skilled deliverers;
- reliance on volunteer deliverers who are not always qualified coaches;
- access to appropriate facilities and equipment;

- varied quality between schools and areas; and
- challenges sustaining sports in rural and island communities.

4.22   A few teachers and parents suggested that there was a need for training so that deliverers were able to involve children with additional support needs more effectively.

4.23   In the eight pupil discussion groups, pupils highlighted that they largely enjoyed Active Schools sessions. However, there were some suggestions from pupils about improving the quality of sessions including:

- more continuity of deliverers;
- more structured activities, with clear coaching and instruction;
- deliverers listening to pupil views on what activities they want to do;
- providing longer sessions or more time on equipment;
- introducing sessions which are less busy – as a few felt classes could be crowded; and
- considering time clashes – as it can be hard for pupils to do everything they want, and also balance school work, activities in school, and activities out of school.

"It would be good to have someone show you what to do."

Primary pupil

4.24   These issues were echoed by parents, in their survey responses, particularly around continuity of deliverers. In addition, parents highlighted other barriers to quality including behaviour management and connections to follow on opportunities, which some felt were limited.

4.25   A small number of Young Ambassadors felt that there was a stronger focus on early secondary school stages (S1 to S3), with less priority given to participation opportunities for senior pupils. Some felt that this was due to the culture within the school, while others felt that Active Schools opportunities often shifted from participation to leadership or coaching activity as pupils moved up in secondary school.

School Sport Award

4.26   ASCs and SSCOs were asked how effective they felt the School Sport Award programme had been in the schools they work with, in relation to quality of opportunities. The highest proportion felt that it had been quite effective. However a third said it had no impact and some said it had been quite or very ineffective.

The quality of opportunities

4%	7%	32%	45%	12%
Very ineffective	Quite ineffective	No impact	Quite effective	Very effective
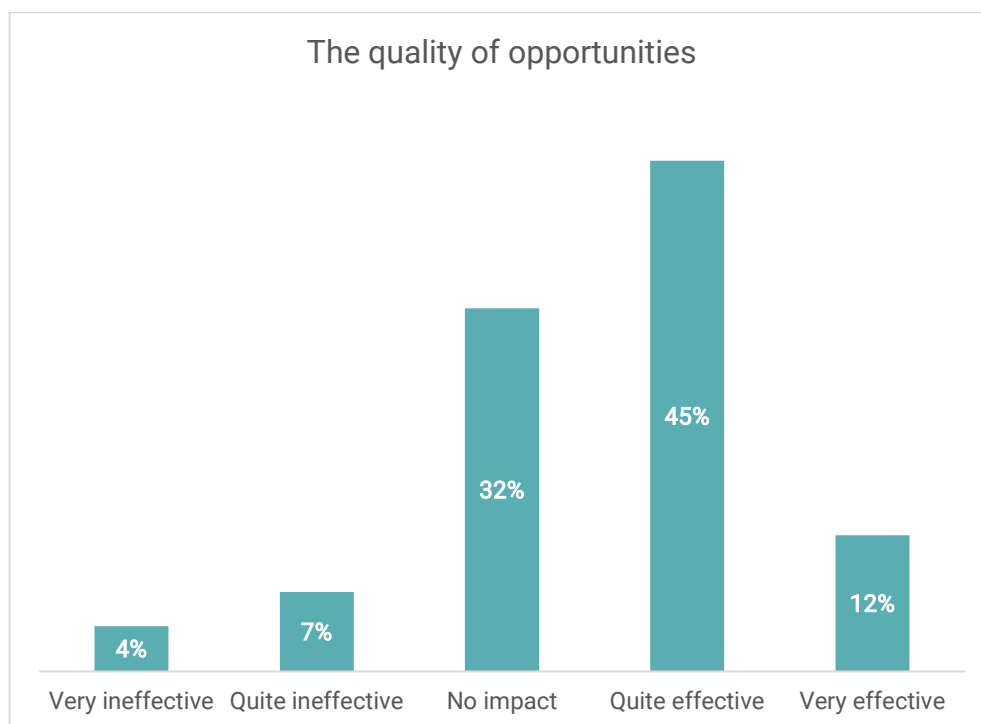
4.27   Strategic stakeholders largely felt that the School Sport Award programme had a little (74%) or a lot (16%) of impact on the number and quality of opportunities to participate, develop and progress in sport.

Positive influences on quality

4.28   ASCs felt that the Schools Sport Awards programme had improved the quality of activities available through:

- encouraging schools to think about the 'bigger picture' and build better links between Active Schools and physical education;
- bringing a real sense of commitment to sport and physical activity within schools;
- providing a clear structure and pathway for schools to develop and deliver a range of activities;
- providing a useful tool that encourages schools to evaluate and review what they are doing, and to identify gaps in provision;
- helping schools to be more focused on what they offer and to look at how they can develop the quality and range of activities they provide;

- providing a focus for discussions with the school about the quality and range of opportunities available;
- helping to raise awareness of the need to provide quality activities for pupils; and
- encouraging staff in schools to run clubs and to attend CPD, helping to improve the quality of the activities that they deliver.

4.29   Teachers who had participated in the School Sport Award programme indicated that it had helped them to improve the pupil voice, involving pupils in School Sport Councils or Committees and providing opportunities for pupils to express their views. Just over a third of teachers responding to the online survey had used the School Sport Award continuous improvement tool. These teachers felt it had helped to:

- self-evaluate, reflect on achievements, highlight gaps, identify areas for improvement and inform future plans;
- track and monitor pupil participation – informing activity to increase future participation levels; and
- provide information on good practice.

"It has enabled us to self-evaluate where we are, where we need to be and what we need to do to get there."

Teacher

"It has made us as a school identify our strengths and acknowledge our weaknesses and think about how we could make improvements."

Teacher

"The School Sport Award is a brilliant tool for continuous improvement in PEPASS. It has allowed us to establish our strengths and celebrate these and also to identify our areas for development and set targets to develop in these areas."

Teacher

Example – Use of the School Sport Award continuous improvement tool
One school was recently awarded a gold School Sport Award. The continuous improvement tool helped the head of PE to really think about what work is being done, and ensure that people receive credit for the work they are doing. The development planning element of the tool was also helpful for thinking about longer term development.

"I think it definitely focused us."

Teacher

4.30   Young Ambassadors who had been involved in the School Sport Award programme were positive about the experience, and proud of their achievements. They often highlighted that achieving the School Sport Award was a joint effort, involving a range of leaders, school staff and Active Schools teams.

Barriers to quality

4.31   Active Schools teams who said that the School Sports Award programme had either had no impact or had been ineffective at improving quality of activities that were available in their schools, gave a range of reasons for this. Some were barriers to becoming involved in the School Sports Award programme, including:

- lack of 'buy-in' from schools, particularly primary schools – either because the benefits of SSA are not clear, or there is a lack of awareness of what the programme is about;
- the application process can put schools off – it is seen as complex, cumbersome and bureaucratic, and too much work for too little reward;
- lack of vetting or assessment for some levels of SSA, which may reduce their perceived value; and
- it is not a priority for some schools, particularly smaller schools, due to resource pressures, and is often seen as 'yet another initiative'.

4.32   In other instances, Active Schools teams felt that there had been no change in quality because:

- the standards have remained the same as they were pre-award;
- some schools have chosen to focus on quantity not quality of activity; and
- it is too early to assess impact.

4.33   A third of teachers who had not used the SSA tool did not know what it was, and a further quarter did not say whether they were aware of it or not. Of those who hadn't used it, ten per cent said they were very aware of it and a quarter said they were quite aware of it. A few teachers felt that the SSA tool was probably geared towards larger urban schools, and did not really work for smaller rural schools that had limited or no access to local clubs.

"For smaller schools it's difficult to achieve the expectations for Gold due to both staff and pupil numbers."

Teacher

4.34   Most strategic stakeholders indicated that they felt it was a good programme with good publicity, but some felt there was a lot of paperwork involved and others wondered if it was closely assessed or more of a box ticking exercise for schools.

School sport competition

4.35   ASCs and SSCOs were asked how they would rate the quality of school sport competition opportunities in the secondary schools they support. Most rated the quality of opportunities as good (49%) or very good (34%). However, some (13%) felt opportunities were fair, and a minority (4%) felt they were quite or very poor.

4.36   Not all local authority areas have support from a SSCO. ASCs working in an area which had an SSCO were slightly more likely to rate the quality of opportunities as very good compared with those with no SSCO.

The quality of school sport competition opportunities

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
SSCO	1%	1%	12%	51%	35%
No SSCO	0%	6%	14%	53%	28%
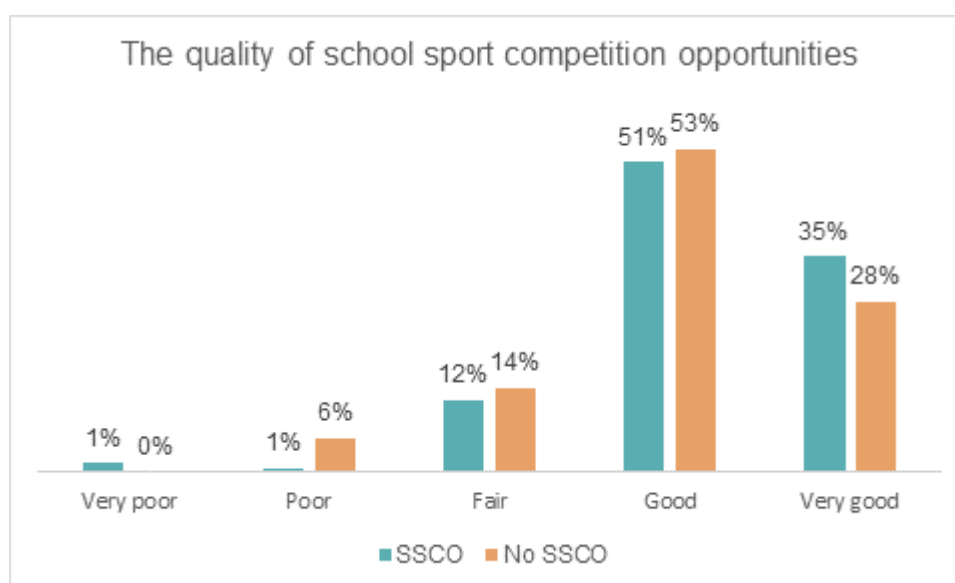
4.37   Strategic stakeholders were reasonably positive about the school sport competition programme, with two thirds (61%) saying it had a lot of impact on the number and quality of opportunities, and the remainder (39%) saying it had a little impact.

"School Sport Competition has most certainly increased the competition in our secondary's as this was more or less non existent prior to this post."
Strategic stakeholder

4.38   Strategic stakeholders were less aware of the competition organiser training programme, with more than a third not knowing about it (37%) and most (58%) saying it had a little impact on the number and quality of opportunities.

Positive influences on quality

4.39   ASCs and SSCOs who felt that the quality of school sport competition opportunities were either very good or good gave a range of reasons for this including:

- partnerships with Scottish governing bodies and local clubs - which ensured that events and competitions were run and delivered to high standards;
- access to School Sport Competition Officers – who were seen as more likely to have access to high quality structured and a well organised competition calendar of events and activities;
- school sport competition opportunities were available for a wide range of sports, from national to local level, and open to a wide age range; and
- some schools had developed more structured approaches to managing their competition events, by developing school sports calendars in partnership with national governing bodies or local clubs.

4.40 Some Young Ambassadors pointed to work that they had done to introduce new competition opportunities.

Example – Young Ambassador work on school sport competition
In one school, Young Ambassadors had introduced an inter-house sports competition to the school. The school had recently introduced a house system, and the sports competition was a good way to bring pupils together in their houses, get them to try a range of sports, and have the opportunity to compete.

"It just feels good because you can see people trying and joining in and enjoying it."

Example – School Sport Competition Officer work on competition
In one area, the SSCO carried out an audit of every secondary school to explore existing opportunities for competition, popular sports and pathways. The SSCO then identified gaps in provision, discussed these with the Active Schools team and identified a number of key sports within which they aimed to increase participation levels, develop sustainable pathways and offer competition opportunities.

Barriers to quality

4.41 **sport**scotland supported staff who felt that the quality of school sport competition opportunities were either fair or poor gave reasons for this including:

- there was scope to develop more structured and supportive pathways from local to regional and national competition events;
- practical barriers - access to quality competition opportunities was often constrained by factors such as time, travel costs, availability of staff and geography;
- variable quality - quality varied from sport to sport, and was very much dependent on who was running the event and the support resources available;

- there seemed to be less competition opportunities available at primary schools, where the focus tends to be on sports festivals rather than competitive events;
- small schools with small PE departments often struggled to support and promote competition opportunities; and
- the quality of the competition events was also down to the motivation of pupils and whether they wanted to take part.

"The national school sport network has not been effective in supporting the agenda to develop improved school and club ownership of school sport competition."

<div align="right">ASM</div>

4.42 While some Active Schools teams felt more could be done to cover a range of sports at different levels, others felt there were sometimes too many opportunities – with schools too stretched to cover all of the events.

4.43 A small number of interviews with teachers (5) explored views on school sport competition, among other issues. A few said that through support from Active Schools, their school sport competition had improved at local and national level. One had pupils competing at international level.

"This has helped to raise the profile of school sport competition at both the local and national level."

<div align="right">Teacher</div>

4.44 However, one teacher at a school in a rural area felt that there was too much focus on competition, which was particularly challenging in rural areas due to transport issues.

"I find it very difficult when Active Schools push competitions, but can't get you there."

<div align="right">Teacher</div>

4.45 In contrast, another school highly valued the practical support from their ASC in raising awareness of events, preparing pupils for competition events, and organising transport if required.

"The contribution made by the School Sports Competition league is huge."

<div align="right">Teacher</div>

Example – Virtual competition in rural areas
In one area, four schools in rural communities were given the opportunity to compete against one another virtually – with no need for travel. This allowed pupils to compete in a structured environment through 'virtual games'. It also helped to raise the profile of

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Active Schools among parents, resulting in some parent volunteers coming forward to run sessions.

Impacts and Interventions Reports

Sustainability of school sport competition

4.46   ASCs, SSCOs and others were asked about their views on the sustainability of the school sport competition landscape. Views were mixed. Most felt that it was either sustainable, or neutral. A few felt that the landscape was very sustainable – just 8% of ASCs.

4.47   Those who were positive about the sustainability of the landscape, felt that sustainability had been built through:

- developing a network of support from a range of different people and organisations, including Active Schools staff, PE staff and other teachers, senior pupils, parents, community sport hubs, local clubs and national governing bodies and regional development;
- developing a range of clubs and activities, with strong pathways to local clubs; and
- building links between local schools.

4.48   Those who were less positive about sustainability often felt that school sport competition was reliant on support from Active Schools staff. It was felt that without this support, many competition events and activities would no longer happen. This was also highlighted as a challenge by those who were positive about sustainability, who highlighted that sustainability was, to an extent, dependent on continued funding for Active Schools and School Sport Competition Officer posts.

5.　Quality of people

Chapter summary

Pupils and teachers were very positive about their ASCs, believing them to be enthusiastic, responsive, innovative and organised.

Most Active Schools deliverers are volunteers (87%). Pupils and teachers make up over half of volunteer deliverers. The number and proportion of pupils delivering Active Schools has increased over time.

Most Active Schools teams feel effective at recruiting and retaining volunteers. However, some found this challenging – particularly in some rural, isolated or disadvantaged areas. Some felt the cycle of volunteers joining and leaving delivery was natural, as pupils, students and parents move on. However a few were concerned about the lack of retention of senior pupils and students as they leave school or college.

The skills of deliverers were generally rated highly. Paid coaches tended to be rated more highly than volunteers. Most felt that deliverers were enthusiastic and dedicated, but that skills varied dependent on the individual.

Different deliverers brought different skills. Professional coaches brought sporting and coaching knowledge; teachers brought class control and behaviour management; and senior pupils related well to other pupils and were very enthusiastic.

Most deliverers were happy with the support they received. Some would like support to be more focused or more in depth.

Introduction

5.1   This chapter explores the impact of **sport**scotland supported work in schools in terms of the quality of those managing, coordinating and delivering activities. It explores quality separately in terms of the Active Schools network of professionals, and the network of deliverers – who are predominantly volunteers.

Active Schools teams

5.2   There is a network of ASMs, ASCs and SSCOs across Scotland. In the eight discussion groups with pupils, young people were very positive about their ASCs, finding them accessible and helpful. Deliverers and Young Ambassadors were also positive about their ASC, and the support provided. ASCs were largely seen to be proactive, visible and supportive. However, in a small number of cases Young Ambassadors felt that ASCs were too busy to support them effectively, and that they would have preferred more face to face contact.

5.3   Most teachers responding to the online survey were positive about the support they received from their Active Schools team. Most (81%) indicated that they valued the support offered by the ASC 'a lot'. Teachers made very positive comments about their ASCs describing them as amazing, enthusiastic, hardworking, approachable, responsive, helpful, flexible, committed, friendly, passionate, inspirational, resourceful, organised and innovative.

5.4   Teachers felt that ASCs were skilled at:

- building positive relationships with schools;
- responding to the needs of schools and pupils;
- recruiting deliverers to run clubs and activities;
- establishing valuable links between schools, clubs and the wider community; and
- dealing with administration and paperwork associated with clubs.

5.5   Many teachers also highlighted the contribution of ASCs to developing valuable life skills for pupils – including organisation, communication skills, confidence and resilience – particularly among less academically focused pupils. Teachers also felt that the ASCs were very good at working jointly with schools, and some said that ASCs were seen as part of the school staff team.

"They are both fantastically enthusiastic and are always willing to do anything for the school."

Teacher

5.6   However, some teachers indicated that they didn't see their ASC very much, were unaware of the Active Schools programme or felt that some ASCs were more effective than others. A few indicated that there had been a high turnover of Active Schools staff resulting in a lack of continuity of provision in schools. These issues emerged from teachers at primary, secondary and ASN schools, and across a range of local authority areas.

5.7   Some teachers were concerned that the focus was now on coordinating support rather than delivering activities. Some (mainly secondary school teachers) felt that there was more focus on primary than secondary school level. Some also suggested that there should be more targeting of Active Schools support at schools in the most disadvantaged areas.

Profile of deliverers

5.8   Across Active Schools provision, most deliverers (87%) are volunteers. This includes teachers, parents, senior pupils and club coaches and officials. In 2016, there were 20,233 voluntary deliverers, and 2,698 paid deliverers. The proportion of deliverers who are volunteers has increased over recent years – from 84 per cent in 2011.

Volunteer deliverers

5.9   Volunteer deliverers include pupils, teachers, parents and students as well as PE specialists and club, professional and sessional coaches. Pupils and teachers make up half of all volunteer deliverers. Since 2001, the proportion of secondary school pupils delivering sessions has increased, and the proportion of teachers has decreased slightly.

Volunteer deliverers		2016		2011 comparison
	Number	%	Number	%
Secondary pupils	5,540	27%	2,776	21%
Teachers	4,616	23%	3,514	27%
Parents	2,694	13%	1,903	14%
Students	1,647	8%	1,398	11%
PE specialists	1,599	8%	1,119	8%
Club coaches	1,560	8%	886	7%
Professional/ sessional coaches	207	1%	214	2%
Other school staff	767	4%	663	5%
Others	1,603	8%	724	5%
Total	20,233		13,197	

5.10   A small proportion of Active Schools deliverers are paid for their input. Most paid deliverers are professional, sessional or club coaches. Over time, the number of club coaches paid for their input has increased.

Paid deliverers		2016	2011 comparison	
	Number	%	Number	%
Professional/ sessional coaches	1,340	45%	1,267	49%
Club coaches	885	30%	495	19%
Teachers	199	7%	230	9%
Sports development officers	128	4%	102	4%
Students	112	4%	96	4%
PE specialists	101	3%	163	6%
Other school staff	81	3%	91	4%
Secondary pupils	38	1%	27	1%
Parents	16	1%	41	2%
Others	68	2%	83	3%
Total	2,968		2,595	

Recruiting and sustaining deliverers

5.11   ASMs, ASCs and SSCOs were asked how effective they felt they were at recruiting and retaining volunteer deliverers.

Recruiting volunteers

5.12   Most ASCs felt that they were good (51%) or very good (20%) at recruiting volunteers, with ASMs feeling very slightly more positive about this than ASCs.

5.13   Many ASCs said that recruiting volunteers was a key part of their role, and ASMs also highlighted that volunteers were crucial to successful delivery of Active Schools. Some said that they had developed their own recruitment strategies and support and development pathways, or had set up working groups to look at this. Others noted that recruitment could vary across schools, and also within local authority areas.

"Over the past couple of months, we have looked at how we recruit volunteers and we have a city wide approach to recruiting volunteers from colleges/universities and we have also updated our Volunteer Handbook."

ASC

5.14   ASCs gave examples of the different ways in which they sought to recruit volunteers, including developing relations with parents, working closely with senior pupils in school, and targeting local colleges and universities. Some found that their pool of volunteers had grown so much that the volume made

the team of volunteers hard to manage. However a few respondents said that they found that it was getting harder to recruit volunteers, as people have less free time.

"Recruiting volunteers can be challenging but rewarding, it often follows word of mouth and other parents recruiting other parents."

ASC

5.15   However some felt that this could be very challenging given other workload, staffing and time pressures. Some ASMs found that PVG costs for volunteers could be a barrier, as Active Schools staff had to ask schools or parents to cover this. A few respondents added that recruiting volunteers in certain areas could be difficult. For example this was a challenge in some rural or island communities, where there was a smaller pool of potential volunteers, and in some disadvantaged areas, where it was sometimes harder to engage with parents.

"My schools are in a SIMD area which I think has impacted on the number of volunteers willing to come forward and who have the confidence to do so."

ASC

Retaining volunteers

5.16   Most ASCs (77%) and ASMs (75%) felt that their team was good or very good at retaining their volunteers. Successful approaches included:

- using incentives like reward schemes;
- valuing and recognising input through ceremonies, celebrations and showcasing good work;
- understanding what volunteers want to get out of their volunteering experience;
- providing access to opportunities for progression and development; and
- formalising approaches to volunteering through clear procedures, approaches or national standards.

"We have a good volunteer pathway and structure giving them benefits of volunteering and they get better rewards with the more hours they volunteer e.g. t-shirt, water bottle, jacket, access to training, money towards a UKCC1."

ASC

"We are good at thanking our volunteers and showcasing their good work - through twitter messages, volunteer of the month case studies, Christmas cards, providing uniform, etc. This helps to retain our volunteers as they feel valued."

ASC

5.17   However, many also commented that retaining volunteers could often be
        challenging, as people's circumstances change. Many said that investing in
        training and development programmes was key to the retention of
        volunteers, as this helped to develop their skills and confidence.

"Retaining volunteers again is a tough challenge but I think by combining that
with offering them development pathways is a key way of retaining them."

ASC

5.18   Some ASMs and ASCs highlighted that the cycle of volunteers was natural,
        as senior pupils and students move on. However, a few were concerned
        about lack of retention of senior pupils or students leaving school or college.

"In my opinion our leadership programmes have a huge dropout and we retain
very few of the secondary school pupils despite a huge commitment to them in
both time and financial (courses, coach education etc.)."

ASC

Skills of deliverers

5.19   ASMs, ASCs and SSCOs were asked to rate the skills of Active Schools
        deliverers, from very poor to very good. Most rated skills as good or very
        good, with only 8 per cent rating the skills of any deliverer as poor or very
        poor.

5.20   Analysis of the responses highlights that overall the skills of club coaches,
        PE specialists and professional or sessional coaches were most likely to be
        rated highly.   The types of deliverer rated highest all had a level of sporting
        expertise, were more likely to be paid for their role and were more likely to
        hold a relevant sporting qualification. Parents, teachers and senior pupils
        were more likely than other groupings to have their skills rated as very poor.

5.21   The vast majority of Active Schools teams acknowledged the important
        contribution made by a wide range of dedicated and enthusiastic deliverers,
        whether professionals or volunteers. Many noted that the quality of delivery
        was generally to a high standard, but was very much dependent on the skills,
        experience and knowledge of individual deliverers.

"All of the people I work with do an excellent job."

ASC

"Everyone brings different skills and knowledge when delivering helping to
create positive and safe environments."

ASC

5.22   However, a few highlighted that it was quite difficult to generalise about one
        particular group of deliverers, due to the variation in individual skills.

Rating the skills and knowledge of deliverers

5.23   Active Schools teams were most likely to rate the skills and knowledge of PE specialists, club coaches, and professional or sessional coaches as very good or good. Most felt that these deliverers were able to offer high quality sessions, as they had the right skills, knowledge and experience, and were most likely to have relevant qualifications and formal coaching qualifications for their sports.

5.24   Some respondents noted that PE specialists were more familiar with the school environment and therefore had better teaching and delivery skills, as well as sports expertise. However, some commented that club, professional or sessional coaches sometimes lacked the experience of working with larger groups of children with a range of abilities, and required support to help them to adapt their coaching approaches, particularly when working with children with additional support needs.

5.25   Active Schools teams were most likely to rate support from parents, teachers and senior pupils, who were often volunteers, as good or fair. Many of these respondents commented that skills, knowledge and experience across these groups of volunteers was more varied, and could be a bit of a "mixed bag".

Teachers

5.26   Many ASCs and ASMs said that support from teachers was valued, but variable. While some teachers were seen as very keen and enthusiastic to get involved in the delivery of sport and physical activity in their schools, others, often at primary school level, were less willing. Respondents felt that this was due to teachers not having any sports training, workload pressures and lack of confidence. However, a few respondents said that even if they sometimes lacked direct experience of teaching sport, class teachers knew their pupils, were good at class control and behaviour management, and with a bit of support could deliver high quality sessions for pupils.

5.27   Local authority education leads also felt that the skills of teachers had developed through Active Schools.

"Active Schools has helped build the confidence and capacity of teachers to run sport and PE sessions."

Local authority education lead

Senior pupils

5.28   Many Active Schools teams commented positively about the role of senior pupils as deliverers, commenting that they tended to be very enthusiastic, passionate, and acted as good role models. A number of respondents highlighted the range of training and support opportunities available to senior pupils in schools, helping them to hone and develop their delivery skills.

"In particular the senior pupils with a bit of training can be just as good as the teachers or coaches and they have lots of enthusiasm and can relate to those they're delivering to more."

ASC

"Our coach education programmes help our senior pupils and teachers become knowledgeable and qualified to deliver specific sports of their interest."

ASC

5.29   However, it was noted that skills, experience and ability differed from pupil to pupil. A few respondents said that although senior pupils may be knowledgeable about sport, they sometimes lacked the ability to lead and control sessions, and needed additional support from staff or the Active Schools team.

"Senior pupils bring great enthusiasm but are sometimes less committed and are understandably less confident with group management."

ASC

5.30   The pupils involved in the eight discussion groups said that they felt very well supported by their ASC. However, some – particularly primary pupils – indicated that they found it hard to manage large groups of young people.

Example – Young leaders

Two primary school pupils in primary 7 were supported to lead an after school football club for p1 to p3 pupils, and a girls only football club. The pupils enjoyed the opportunity, and felt they learned about what a good leader is like. However, they found managing 16 to 20 pupils per session a little challenging.

"It was fun, but hard when they don't listen."

Parents

5.31   Many Active Schools teams felt that parents were a valuable resource. However, many indicated that parents tended to have a wide range of abilities, knowledge and experience.

"Some parents have lots of skill and experience whilst others have little or none and are starting from a very different place."
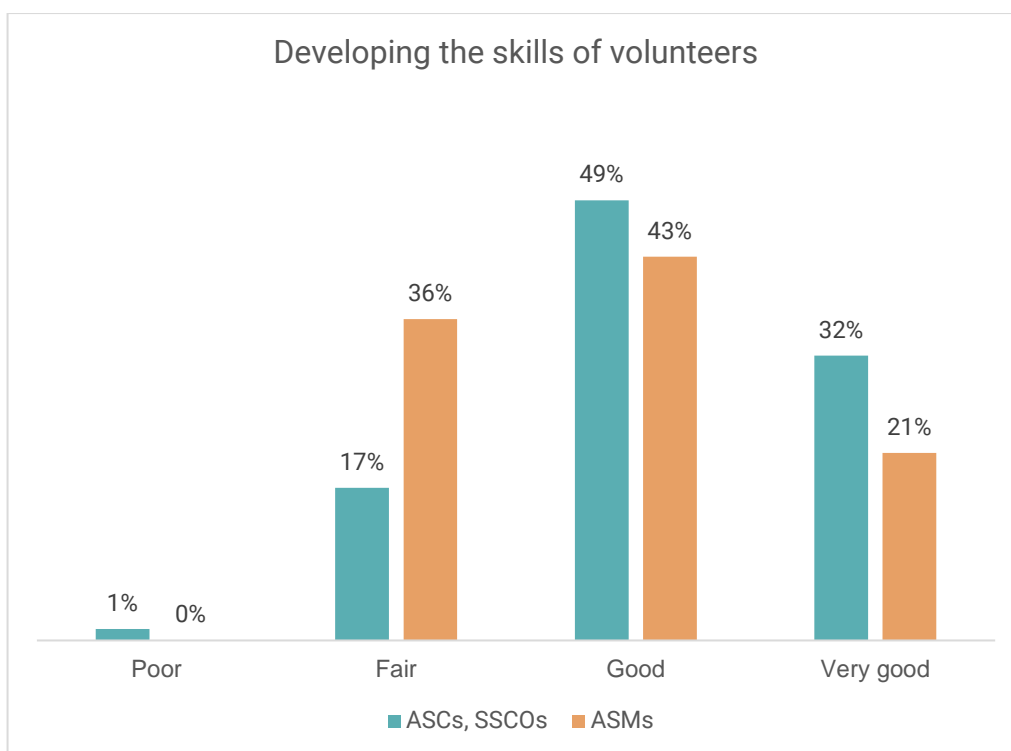
ASC

5.32   Some respondents said it could be hard to recruit parents, sometimes due to geography, because they didn't have the time or interest to get involved, or because they were not aware of the Active Schools activities available in their children's schools. Others said that some parents were really enthusiastic, but did not have the skills or confidence to lead sessions, preferring instead to act in a support role.

"In my experience, parents lack the confidence and experience to deliver activities but often play a huge role in supporting provision through supervisory roles or assisting deliverers."

ASC

Support for deliverers

5.33   ASMs, ASCs and SSCOs were asked how effective they felt they were at developing the skills of volunteers. Most ASCs felt that they were good or very good at this. ASMs broadly agreed, but were slightly less positive, and more likely than ASCs to say their team was 'fair' at this.

Developing the skills of volunteers

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
ASCs, SSCOs	1%	17%	49%	32%
ASMs	0%	36%	43%	21%

Legend: ASCs, SSCOs ■ ASMs

5.34 Many acknowledged the importance of upskilling their volunteers and said that they offered a comprehensive range of opportunities to help their volunteers to develop their skills and to gain relevant qualifications including, for example:

- access to a wide range of coach education programmes and courses, ranging from first aid, safeguarding and child protection and inclusion training, to sport specific training and access to accredited learning and national governing body qualifications;
- providing induction and ongoing tailored training and mentoring support through the Active Schools team; and
- providing supported leadership opportunities for senior pupils in schools and CPD opportunities for teachers and other deliverers.

"All Active Schools coaches and volunteers go through induction processes in schools to ensure they feel comfortable and understand the safety procedures for that school and know the key members of staff."

ASC

"I feel we work very closely with all our deliverers and they all get the same opportunities with our Fit to Coach Programme so their skills and knowledge are high."

ASC

5.35 Some respondents who said that they were either fair or poor at developing their volunteers, gave a number of reasons for this. A few said that
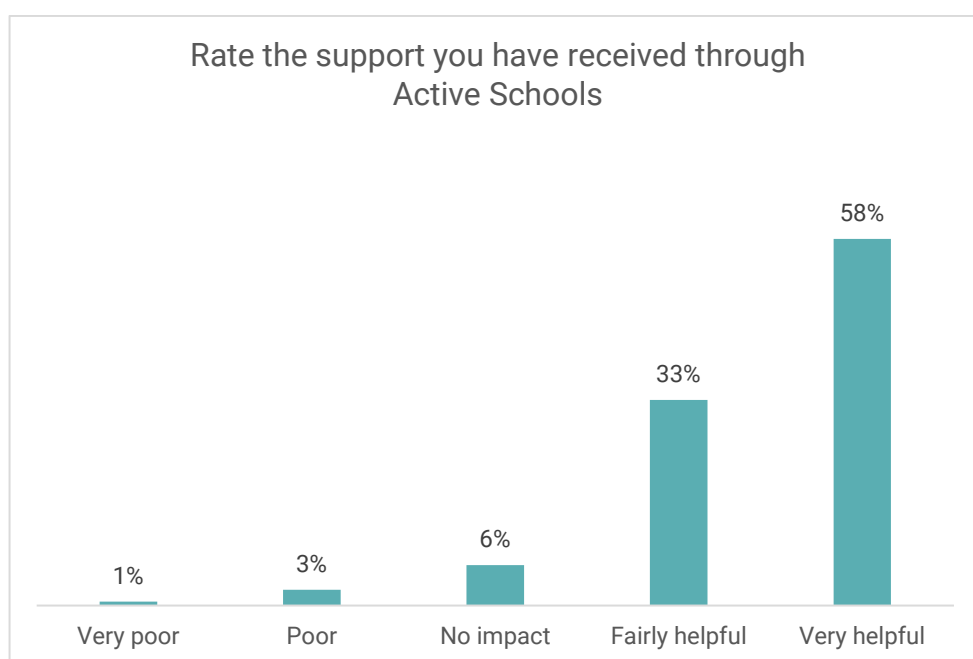
geographical remoteness meant that it was often difficult, time consuming and costly for their volunteers to attend courses, particularly sport specific courses run by national governing bodies. Others said that they would like to do more to develop their volunteers, but pressures on their time or lack of budget made this difficult. One respondent said that volunteers had to pay to go on some of the courses, which acted as a barrier.

5.36   A few ASCs said that some of their professional coaches and parents were less motivated to participate in CPD training and coaching sessions organised by Active Schools teams.

"In my cluster parents tend to assist clubs and although they are offered opportunities to attend CPD they do not always engage."

ASC

5.37   Most Active Schools deliverers felt that the support they received was very or fairly helpful. Professional and sessional coaches, parents and club coaches were most happy with the support they received. Slightly fewer teachers and PE specialists found the support helpful, with a small proportion believing it had no impact.

Rate the support you have received through Active Schools

Very poor	Poor	No impact	Fairly helpful	Very helpful
1%	3%	6%	33%	58%

5.38   Deliverers who said that the support they were given through Active Schools to deliver sport related opportunities and activities was either 'very helpful' or 'fairly helpful' said that this was because:

- the ASCs are very accessible, enthusiastic and encouraging;
- the ASCs help to deal with the administration associated with running clubs and activities e.g. booking halls, issuing club forms, doing PVG

checks, organising transport, arranging referees and table officials for matches and competitions;

- ASCs provide guidance, mentoring support and constructive feedback on the delivery of activity sessions, helping to improve the quality of coaching and delivery; and
- Active Schools provides access to a range of training opportunities, coaching courses and CPD training.

"The support that I have received has been fantastic to help me deliver activities and opportunities."

Deliverer

"They have also provided me with a lot of feedback throughout the years of which I feel has helped my coaching improve significantly."

Deliverer

"Always willing to support me deliver curriculum and non-curriculum based activities. Their expertise in sports is excellent for teachers who require support and are not as confident in that area."

Deliverer

5.39   Respondents who said that the support they were given through Active Schools to deliver sport related opportunities and activities was either 'very poor' 'poor' or had 'no impact' provided the following reasons to support their answers:

- the ASCs are sometimes under too much pressure to be able to provide enough support to deliverers, especially if they cover a wide geographic area;
- the support can be disorganised, with volunteers who are running clubs left with a lot of responsibility e.g. setting up equipment, collecting forms, taking registers or managing behaviour; and
- the support can be one way, with clubs expected to deliver sessions in schools for free, but Active Schools does not provide support in club sessions.

"Our Active Schools Coordinator covers a wide area which means there is little to no input. It was a requirement for children to be registered online however I have had to chase up register and emergency details."

Deliverer

6.   Participation: Inclusion

Chapter summary

More young men than young women take part in Active Schools activity, and young men also generally take part more often. Between 2011 and 2016, young men took part in 16 per cent more visits to Active Schools sessions than young women. However, this varies by local authority.

More young women than young men take part in **sport**scotland leadership opportunities. More than half of Young Ambassadors, competition organiser training participants and members of the Young People's Sport Panel were young women.

Successful approaches to engaging young women, people with ASN and people from deprived areas most often involved:

- speaking to young people to find out what they want to do;
- having strong role models;
- introducing less competitive activities;
- accessing data and information about needs;
- having dedicated staff focused on tackling inequalities;
- small group work; and
- working jointly with others.

For girls and young women, it was also useful to introduce girls only activities and build strong sport leadership opportunities and female role models. For pupils with ASN it was also essential to have deliverers with the right skills and qualifications. For pupils in deprived areas Active Schools teams often worked to remove financial barriers and involve families in activities.

The Active Girls programme had some impact, through helping to raise the profile of sport, provide additional funding, provide leadership opportunities and enable consultation with girls. However, there was a desire for more follow up after Active Girls events to ensure sustained participation.

Barriers to involving under-represented groups included:

- tackling issues around confidence and self esteem;
- availability of preferred activities and suitable facilities;
- availability of positive role models at school and in families;
- targeting activity proactively at certain groups without stigmatisation;
- identifying and supporting pupils with ASN with trained staff; and
- transport and logistical issues for pupils with ASN.

The survey of school pupils found that levels of participation in Active Schools activities were broadly similar across different equalities characteristics. However, secondary pupils, disabled pupils and young men spent a marginally higher average time at Active Schools activities.

The survey found that Active Schools has a positive contribution to the physical activity levels of young disabled participants in mainstream schools, and young people living in the most deprived communities in Scotland.

Introduction

6.1   This chapter explores the profile of participants in **sport**scotland supported activity in schools in relation to diversity, the accessibility of opportunities, and the approaches taken to ensure diversity and inclusion.

6.2   This chapter also draws on findings from connected work involving a large scale survey of school pupils, across Scotland, highlighting key findings in relation to diversity and inclusion.

Participant profile

Girls and young women

6.3   The profile of distinct participants in Active Schools activities highlights that fewer young women participate than young men. In 2016, there were 13,700 fewer young women participating in Active Schools activities than young men. Over time, the gap in participation between young women and young men (based on percentage of the school roll participating) has remained broadly stable at between 2.2 and 2.8 per cent.

Year	Young men % of school roll	Young women % of school roll	Gap
2011	34.5%	32.3%	2.2%
2012	36.9%	34.1%	2.8%
2013	41.7%	39.0%	2.7%
2014	42.1%	39.3%	2.8%
2015	43.9%	41.5%	2.4%
2016	44.4%	41.9%	2.5%

6.4   The gap largely exists at secondary school level – with 32 per cent of the male school roll participating compared with 27 per cent of the female school roll.

6.5   Levels of participation vary by local authority. Based on the percentage of the school roll participating (distinct participants), just over half of all local authority areas have broadly similar levels of participation between young

men and young women[4]. Of these, six have very slightly higher levels of participation of young women than young men – although the difference is very small (between 0.7 and 2.7%).

6.6   However, almost half have higher levels of participation for young men than young women (with the gap in that area being more than 2 per cent). The gaps range from just over 2 per cent to 15 per cent (in one area).

6.7   There is also a difference in the number of visits made to Active Schools sessions between young men and young women. Figures from 2011 to 2016 show that young men took part in 2.7 million more visits to Active Schools than young women over this time, meaning that young men took part in 16 per cent more visits than young women. This is the equivalent of 8,600 more visits by young men than young women each week, over six years.

6.8   Areas with higher levels of Active Schools participation generally are more likely to have both:

- more young men taking part in Active Schools activities than young women; and
- a higher number of visits to Active School sessions per participant.

6.9   More than two thirds of authorities (69%) with high levels of participation have a difference of more than two per cent between male and female distinct participation. This reduces to less than a third (30%) for those with broadly average rates of participation, and just a fifth (22%) for those with low levels of participation.

6.10   In areas with a gap in distinct participation of more than 2 per cent, the average number of sessions attended by participants was 26. In areas with a gap of less than 2 per cent (or with slightly higher numbers of young women than young men), the average number of sessions attended by participants was 23.

6.11   Within young leaders' activity, there were 780 young women participating in Active Girls in 2016/17. In the same time period more than half (58%) of all Young Ambassadors across Scotland were female and more than half (58%) of all competition organiser training participants were female. In addition, two thirds of the Young People's Sport Panel were young women and one third were young men.   This means that young women are more represented than young men in leadership opportunities.

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[4] Calculated as having a gap of 2 per cent or less.

6.12   The large scale survey of almost 15,000 school pupils highlighted that young men were more likely to be classed as 'active' than young women. Just under a third of young women (31%) who do not take part in Active Schools are classed as 'active', compared with over half (55%) of young women who do take part in Active Schools.

People with additional support needs

6.13   Over the evaluation period, the number of young people with additional support needs participating in mainstream Active Schools activity was not monitored at national level.   This information can be complex for Active Schools deliverers and ASCs to access. However, **sport**scotland is extending its data collection for 2017/18, using a phased approach, and this will include information about additional support needs in line with pupil census data. Locally, there has been a shift towards teams gaining access to the data they need to help them to engage with pupils who face barriers to participation.

6.14   For the evaluation period, information is available about the number of young people participating who attend schools for young people with additional support needs.

6.15   Between 2011 and 2016, there were almost 525,000 participation sessions with young people with additional support needs, in specialist schools. The number of participation sessions peaked at just over 100,000 in 2013.

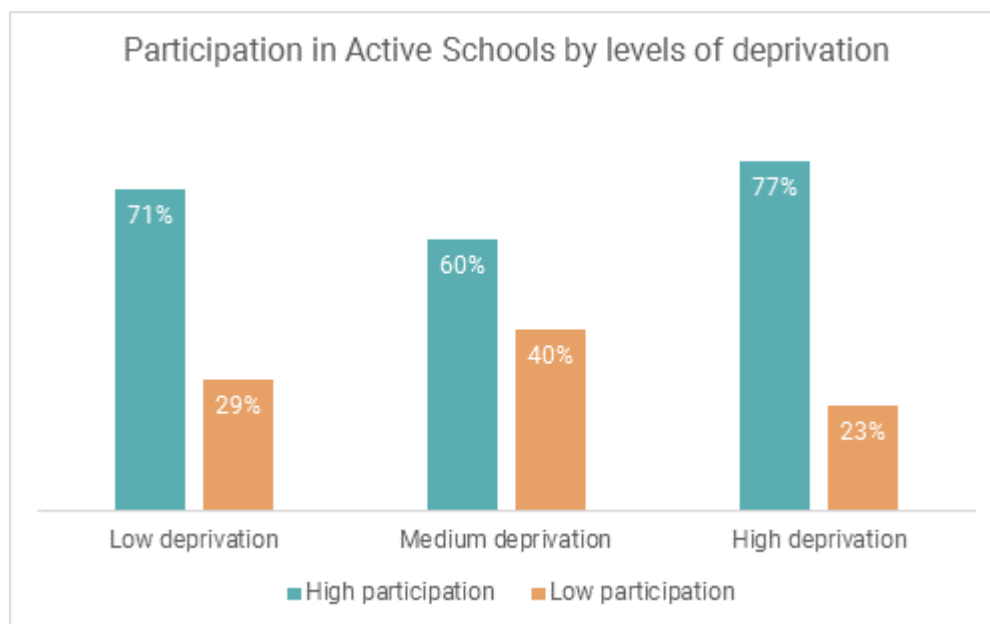| Year	Primary	Secondary	Total
2011	18,640	72,566	91,206
2012	30,424	54,802	85,226
2013	33,067	67,289	100,356
2014	31,129	53,846	84,975
2015	32,671	44,943	77,614
2016	33,063	52,436	85,499
Total	178,994	345,882	524,876

6.16   Between 2011 and 2016, the distinct number of young people from additional support needs schools participating in Active Schools has increased, from 2,100 to over 2,900. The proportion of the school roll participating has also increased – from 36.1 per cent to 50.5 per cent.

Year	Distinct participants from ASN schools	% of ASN school roll
2011	2,147	36.1%
2012	2,577	43.4%
2013	2,825	47.4%
2014	2,742	41.4%
2015	2,686	44.1%
2016	2,923	50.5%

6.17   Overall between 2011 and 2016, 48.9 per cent of young women at schools for people with additional support needs participated in Active Schools compared with 46 per cent of young men. Overall a higher number of young men than young women participated, as there are more young men than young women at additional support needs schools in Scotland.

6.18   The survey of school pupils asked pupils if they felt that any of a list of disabilities applied to them. Most (75%) said that they did not believe any applied to them, and eight per cent identified as having a disability. A relatively high proportion said that they did not know (13%) or would prefer not to say (4%).

6.19   The survey found that over half (59%) of Active Schools participants who identified as disabled were classed as 'active'. This falls to less than half (47%) if the time spent in Active Schools activity is not included. Active Schools is increasing the level of activity and decreasing the level of inactivity for disabled participants in mainstream schools.

Young people living in disadvantaged areas

6.20   Over the evaluation period, information about the number of young people living in disadvantaged areas participating in Active Schools activity was not monitored at national level. However, this information will be gathered for 2017/18, using a phased approach to data collection.

6.21   **sport**scotland has, however, collated information about levels of distinct participation and levels of deprivation within each school, to allow for comparison. Analysis of this data highlights schools with high levels of deprivation were more likely to have high levels of Active Schools participation than those with medium or low levels of deprivation.

Participation in Active Schools by levels of deprivation

	High participation	Low participation
Low deprivation	71%	29%
Medium deprivation	60%	40%
High deprivation	77%	23%

6.22   For this analysis, the categories used were:

- **Levels of Active Schools distinct participation** – High participation is defined as 40% or more of the school roll participating; low participation is defined as less than 40% of the school roll participating. On average, 30% of schools have low participation and 70% have high participation using this measure.
- **Levels of deprivation** – Low deprivation is schools with less than 20% of pupils living in deprived areas[5]; medium deprivation is schools with 20 to 50% of pupils in deprived areas; high deprivation is schools with more than 50% of pupils in deprived areas. It should be noted that most schools have fewer than 20% of pupils living in deprived areas.

6.23   **sport**scotland has also undertaken analysis of schools with a School Sport Award and how this correlates with deprivation. Overall, this shows that schools in both the most and least deprived areas are slightly less likely to have a School Sport Award than those in the middle.
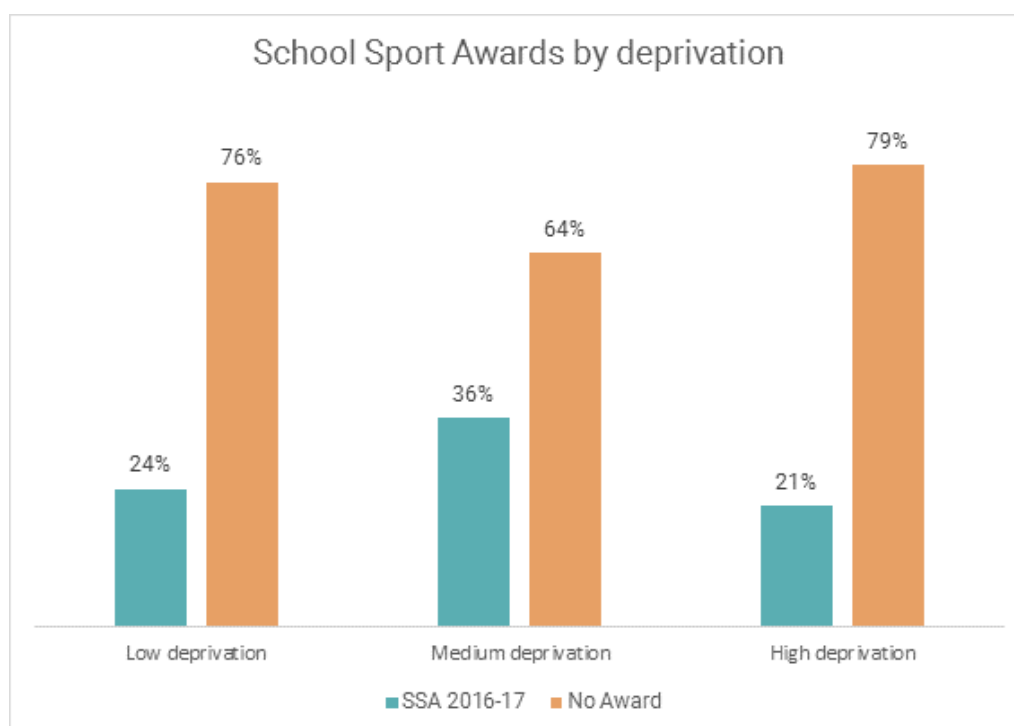
Source: **sport***scotland School Sport Award deprivation data, 2016/17*

6.24   However, more detailed analysis shows that schools where more than 80 per cent of pupils are from the most deprived areas are least likely to have a School Sport Award. While 25 per cent of all schools have a School Sport Award, this decreases to 15 per cent in schools where 80 per cent or more of pupils are living in areas of deprivation. When reviewing this information, it is worth noting that the overall number of schools in Scotland with 80 per

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[5] Defined as the 20 per cent most deprived datazones in Scotland, under the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

cent or more of their pupils living in areas of deprivation is relatively low. Over half of all schools (55 per cent) have less than 20 per cent of their pupils living in the most deprived areas.

6.25   The survey of school pupils had a good response from pupils across different levels of deprivation. Results showed that 18 per cent of Active Schools participants living in the 20 per cent most deprived areas are 'inactive', compared to 42 per cent for those not participating in Active Schools.

6.26   If Active Schools activity time was excluded for these pupils, the proportion of participants from deprived areas classed as 'inactive' would increase from 18 per cent to 30 per cent. Active Schools therefore has a positive contribution to the activity levels of young people in the most deprived communities. Overall, analysis of the activity levels of all pupils highlights that those living in the most deprived 20 per cent of areas in Scotland are most likely to be inactive.

Physical activity levels – equality and inclusion

6.27   Levels of participation in Active Schools activities among the survey respondents were broadly similar across different equalities characteristics. However, secondary pupils, disabled pupils and young men spent a marginally higher average time at Active Schools activities.

6.28   Active Schools participants across equalities characteristics were broadly:

- just as likely to find that participating in Active Schools activity made them want to be more active in the future;
- just as likely to feel more confident about the development of their sport and physical activity skills through Active Schools; and
- just as likely to say that taking part in sport and physical activity generally made them feel happy.

6.29   When reviewing trends across the survey responses, it is worth noting that:

- more responses came from primary pupils (71%) than secondary pupils (29%);
- slightly more young men (53%) than young women (45%) responded;
- eight per cent of pupils stated that they had a disability and a similar proportion said that they did not know;
- most respondents were white Scottish or white or other British, and seven per cent indicated they were from a minority ethnic group; and
- there was a good spread of responses in terms of deprivation, with broadly a fifth of respondents coming from each quintile in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

6.30   For more detail, refer to the separate report on [sportscotland's contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments](#).

# Supporting diversity and inclusion

6.31   As part of this evaluation, through an online survey, ASMs, ASCs, SSCOs and others were asked about:

- how successful they felt their work in schools had been at encouraging inclusion of girls and young women, young people with additional support needs and young people from areas of socio-economic deprivation;
- why they felt this was; and
- whether and how they have worked with any other groups to ensure inclusion.

6.32   Those delivering Active Schools activity were also asked for their views on the extent to which they felt able to engage with these groups.

Skills and confidence of Active Schools teams

6.33   ASCs and SSCOs were asked how successful they felt they had been at including three groups of people – girls and young women, young people with additional support needs and young people from areas of socio-economic deprivation.

ASCs & SSCOs: Encouraging participation of all young people

|	Very unsuccessful	Quite unsuccessful	No impact	Quite successful	Very successful
Inclusion of girls and young women	4%	5%	1%	49%	41%
Inclusion of young people with additional support needs	2%	11%	13%	57%	16%
Inclusion of young people from areas of socio-economic deprivation	4%	6%	16%	43%	31%
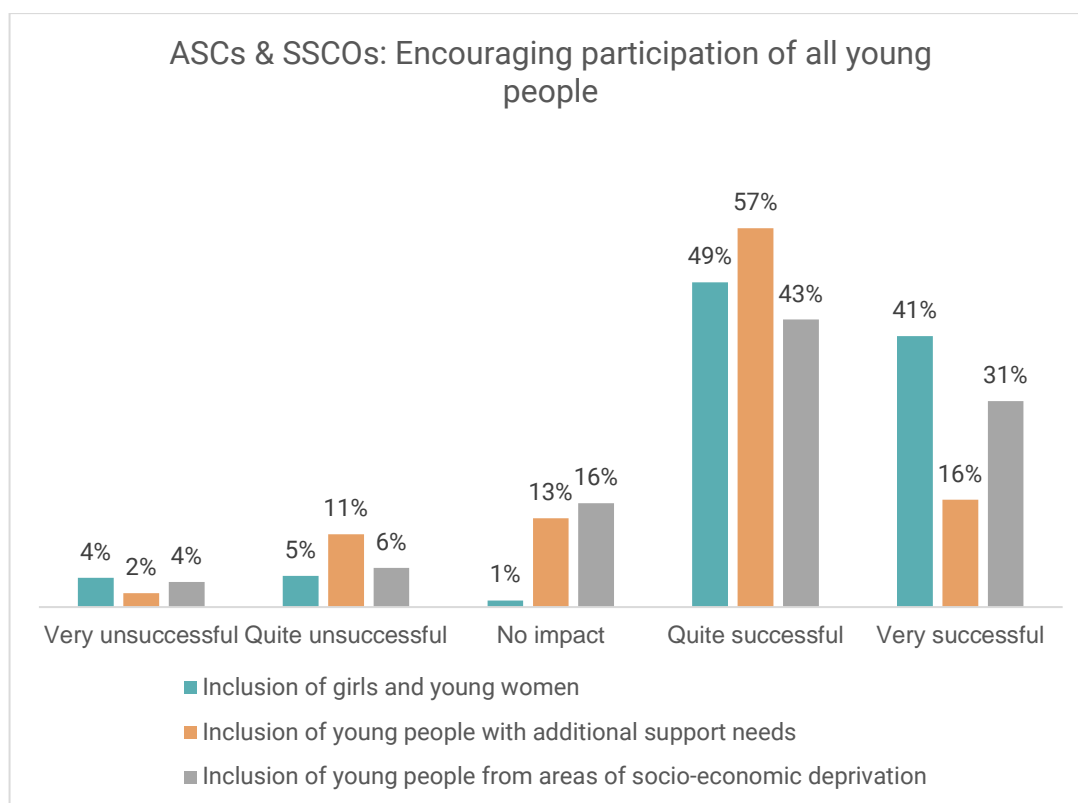
6.34   Overall, respondents were most positive about their work around inclusion of girls and young women. Most ASCs and SSCOs felt that they had been very or quite successful in this area. However, ten per cent felt that they either had no impact or were quite or very unsuccessful. ASMs followed the same broad pattern.

6.35   While most ASCs and SSCOs felt they had been quite or very successful in their inclusion of young people with additional support needs and people from areas of socio-economic deprivation, a quarter felt that they had no impact or had been unsuccessful in this field. ASMs followed the same broad pattern.

Skills and confidence of Active Schools deliverers

6.36   Those delivering Active Schools activity were also asked about how they felt able to engage with girls and young women, young people with additional support needs and young people from areas of socio-economic deprivation.
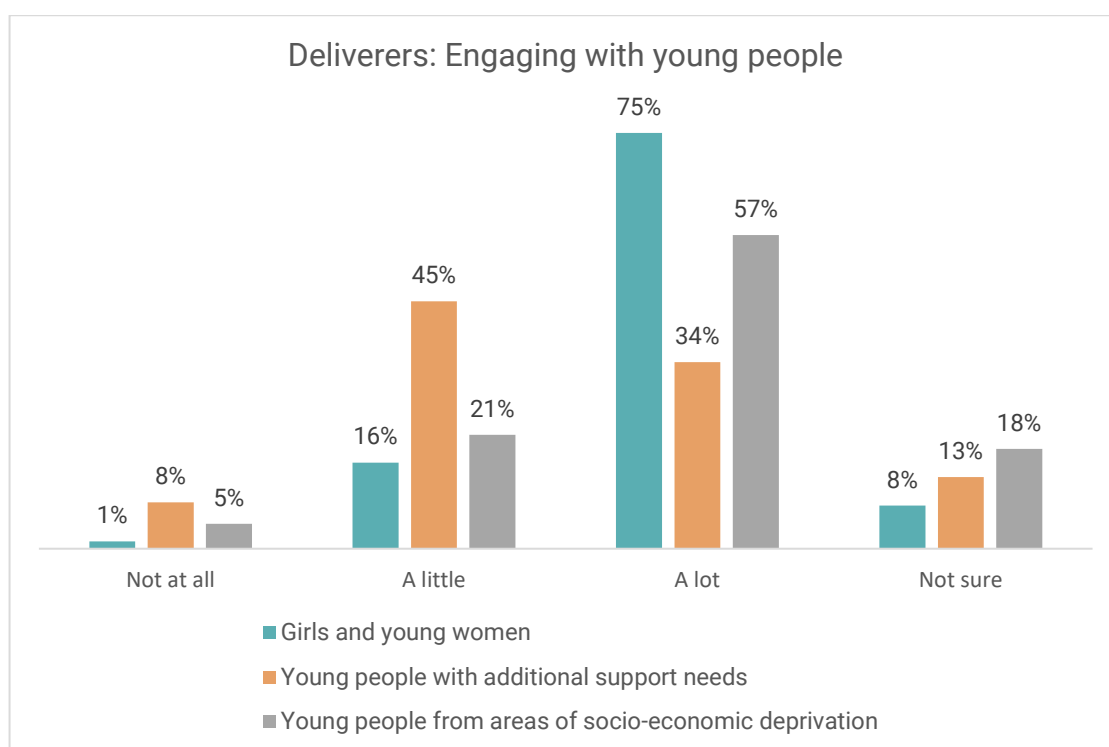
6.37   Deliverers largely felt able to engage with girls and young women a lot. Most deliverers also felt able to engage with young people from areas of socio-economic deprivation a lot. However, just a third of those delivering Active Schools activity said that they felt able to engage with young people with additional support needs a lot.

6.38   Successful approaches highlighted by ASCs, SSCOS, ASMs, teachers, deliverers and young people included:

- introducing girls only activities;
- asking girls what they want to do and using this to develop more tailored programmes of activities;
- introducing sports leadership opportunities;
- developing small scale programmes to encourage inactive girls to get involved in physical activity, building on existing wider interests;
- fostering an environment which is less competitive, with less pressure and space for learning and making mistakes;
- ensuring there is strong female leadership and role models in schools, including working with female deliverers; and
- recognising, rewarding and celebrating participation – for example through treat sessions after completing an activity block.

"Active Schools have provided coaches to help engage more girls in sport, for example netball. This allowed us to target different girls who were not already engaging in sport."

Teacher

"The pupils have been allowed more opportunities such as a girls only fitness class and access to Dance Leaders which wouldn't have happened otherwise."

Teacher

6.39   Respondents felt that these approaches were successful because through this, girls:

- feel more empowered;
- have a say in the activities they want;
- may feel less intimidated by activities that are run by girls and women;
- are inspired by positive role models;
- build their confidence; and
- have the chance to develop their leadership skills around sport, without always having to directly participate or compete.

6.40   Young Ambassadors had often been involved in this work, through gathering views and organising events and clubs. Most felt that this had worked very well, and encouraged more girls to get involved in sport and physical activity. However, in one school the opposite approach had been taken – with a clear message that all sports are for all genders, and an increase in mixed gender sporting activities. This approach had also been successful in encouraging more girls to take part.

Example: Young Ambassadors work to involve girls and young women
In one school, Young Ambassadors organised a survey of girls to find out what they wanted to do. From this it was clear that they wanted girls only activities, and that they didn't want to do competitive sport. As a result, the Young Ambassadors and ASC worked together to offer activities that are fun and less competitive through their Active Girls programme – including Zumba, dance and girls only football.

Example: Active Girls Committee
In one area, a local authority wide Active Girls Committee has been set up for secondary school girls. The committee planned and organised a city-wide event to help raise awareness of activities for girls.

6.41   Some barriers to encouraging girls and young women to participate in sport and physical activity were highlighted, including:

- **apathy (particularly from S2 onwards)** – which some had tried to address through targeting activities at certain groups of inactive girls and building personal relationships through face to face communication;
- **lack of confidence, low self-esteem, peer pressure and fear of being different** – which some had tried to address through showcasing successful active or sporty women, promoting female role models;
- **mixed activities** – which some had addressed through developing a range of girls only activities;
- **lack of availability of preferred activities** (often yoga, fitness, dance and other non-competitive activities) – which some had addressed through consulting with young women to find out what they wanted to do and introducing a fun, relaxed environment that is non-competitive;
- **lack of access to female coaches, deliverers and positive role models** – which ASCs had tried to address through recruiting more female volunteers and encouraging young women to take up leadership opportunities as dance or sports leaders, or Young Ambassadors;
- **lack of time and other competing distractions**;
- **religious and cultural issues**;
- **not enough support from schools to run targeted activities for girls**; and
- **poor changing facilities** - including lack of hairdryers or decent showers.

6.42   These barriers were echoed by pupils at two secondary school discussion groups. Pupils indicated that there were some issues around a lack of confidence and lack of body confidence preventing people from attending. These pupils expressed a preference for girls only activities.

6.43   There were also issues in one school relating to changing facilities not being very good, which some young women said could put them off. Some also said that the lunch breaks at school were very short, and they found there wasn't enough time to go to the club, change and eat lunch.

Impact of Active Girls

6.44   Just under half (43%) of ASCs felt that the Active Girls programme had a quite high or very high impact on their work. However a third said it had no impact, and a quarter said it had a low level of impact on their work.

6.45   Respondents who felt that the Active Girls programme had an impact on their work said that it had enabled them to:

- raise the profile of sport among girls and young women, and increase participation levels – for example through promoting Active Girls days and programmes;
- access additional funding through the Fit for Girls programme, which has enabled teams to buy new equipment for the activities that girls want to do;
- give girls and young women the opportunity to say what they want to do and plan how this can be delivered – for example through local Active Girls committees or working groups;
- provide more leadership opportunities for girls and young women;
- develop female role models and leaders; and
- offer a varied programme of activities for a range of age groups.

6.46   Some of those who said the programme had no or minimal impact said that girls in some schools were already very active in sport, with high participation levels. Some were not engaged with or aware of the programme because they worked with primary schools. However, some suggested improvements were needed including:

- more follow up after Active Girls events, to ensure sustained increases in participation; and
- more focus on getting positive female sports role models to come in to schools to speak to girls and young women about the benefits of sport and physical activity.

Encouraging participation of children and young people with additional support needs

6.47   ASCs, SSCOs and ASMs highlighted approaches which had been successful, including:

- having a dedicated ASC focusing on additional support needs – both in special and mainstream schools;
- using data to identify pupils at mainstream schools with additional support needs and develop a targeted programme of activities for them;

- ensuring that deliverers have the right skills and qualifications, and providing access to training;
- placing an emphasis on inclusion and programmes which are inclusive;
- consulting young people with additional support needs, and their parents or carers, about what they want to do and developing tailored activities;
- developing good links and partnerships, including with teachers and support staff, local clubs, third sector organisations, health professionals and disability development officers;
- setting up clubs for people with additional support needs; and
- actively promoting the range of activities and opportunities available – for example through a calendar of events, through schools, clubs and hubs.

Example: Working with schools for children with additional support needs
Active Schools worked closely with a school for children with ASN to help them to set up new clubs. This included a basketball club, a Boccia club, a skiing club and a running club. Some clubs were developed with support from partners, such as the leisure trust or charitable organisations.

"The clubs on offer at our school have been amazing at getting children to participate in sport. It has had a huge impact on children's confidence levels and their ability to socialise."

Teacher

6.48   However, respondents also mentioned key barriers, including:

- **transport** – which some had addressed through providing activities during the school day;
- **establishing clubs** (when there can be small numbers of young people with additional support needs within a school) – some tried setting up clusters, but this still created transport and logistical issues;
- **identifying children with additional support needs** – which some had addressed through working closely with schools, social work and NHS staff to identify pupils and record needs;
- **lack of additional specialist staff** (as often one to one support is required) – which some had addressed through encouraging learning assistants or personal support assistants to attend sessions, and supporting them to become assistant coaches; and
- **availability of suitably qualified and trained deliverers** – which some addressed through providing additional training opportunities for deliverers and sports leaders or using Pupil Equity Funding to employ sessional coaches to run clubs.

6.49   Deliverers suggested that they may be better able to engage with young people with additional support needs if:

- additional training was provided to deliverers – for example on behaviour management or communication methods;
- specialists were able to come into schools;
- specialist equipment was available; and
- parents were encouraged to help out if they can – and encourage their children to take part in activities.

6.50   Teachers felt that Active Schools teams worked well with staff in schools to identify pupils with additional support needs, engage with these pupils and develop a targeted programme of activities as required. Some indicated that Active Schools had helped to encourage deliverers to adapt their teaching methods or provide additional support so that pupils could participate. Teachers also highlighted that Active Schools provided opportunities outwith school, for example through ASN School Sports events calendars.

"The provision made for young people with ASN is the best I have seen."

Teacher

"Our children with additional support needs are always included in all sports and the teaching of skills adapted for their needs."

Teacher

6.51   Importantly, however, a small proportion of parents felt that Active Schools had not had a positive impact on their child – and issues around the inclusion of children with additional support needs were raised here.

"Staff do not seem to be aware of additional needs and what is required to ensure inclusion."

Parent

6.52   Some Young Ambassadors indicated that they had undertaken work to encourage young people with additional support needs to participate in Active Schools activities, or wider sporting activity.

Example: Young Ambassadors work to involve young people with additional support needs

In one school, Young Ambassadors work as link ambassadors with the local primary school for children with additional support needs. The Young Ambassadors run a dance and movement class after school.

6.53   ASCs, SSCOs and ASMs highlighted successful approaches including:

- using SEEMIS data to identify and target young people from areas of socio-economic deprivation;
- having dedicated staff to build relationships with pupils and their families – finding out what they want to do;
- setting up less traditional and non-competitive activities;
- organising activities that involve the family;
- removing financial barriers by providing free and affordable opportunities – including breakfast and lunch clubs, after school and holiday clubs, and support with free bus passes and sports memberships;
- working in partnership with other providers and community organisations; and
- having positive role models who can work with and inspire young people.

6.54   However, barriers remained including:

- **lack of interest from parents or young people** – which some had addressed through working with families and young people to identify barriers and explore preferred activities;
- **financial and transport costs** (including travel, clothing and equipment) – which some had addressed through focusing on lunch time sessions rather than after school sessions to reduce travel implications;
- **lack of clubs and volunteers** – which some had addressed through encouraging parents to get involved or help to run sessions;
- **lack of positive role models within communities;** and
- **budget pressures** – which some have addressed through accessing additional funding or grants, for example through the Pupil Equity Fund or school hardship fund.

6.55   Deliverers felt that young people required more help with transport to and from activities, as this could be a significant barrier to participation. Some suggested they needed more information to identify young people living in areas of socio-economic deprivation, and others felt that smaller, more tailored sessions would be useful for some young people.

6.56   Teachers indicated that often activities were adapted to ensure that young people living in areas of socio-economic deprivation could attend. Examples given included ensuring that activities were free or low cost; working closely with schools to target young people from areas of socio-economic deprivation; and providing transport to activities that are not held in the local area.

"Lunchtime clubs - where there is no need for the parent to have to facilitate additional drop off and pick ups."

Teacher

6.57   However, a few teachers felt that pupils were not benefiting from Active Schools activities due to barriers around socio-economic deprivation, and activity not being targeted at those who may benefit most. A few teachers were concerned that some Active Schools activities were not free, which could act as a barrier to participation for some pupils. And a few felt that in their schools only a few pupils benefited from Active Schools, believing that activities could be better targeted to help increase participation among certain individuals and groups.

"Still not targeting the right kinds of pupils."

Teacher

6.58   Young Ambassadors indicated that the Active Schools activities were free and open to all. One highlighted that they felt sport was a good way to include pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds because in sport, everybody is equal.

> **Example: Local authority focus on disadvantage**
> In one local authority area, the education lead felt that Active Schools had undergone a significant shift in how it engages with young people from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. It links closely to a city wide approach to increasing physical activity, and shared ambitions between Active Schools and local authority education officers around improvement in outcomes for children in the area.

Encouraging participation of other groups

6.59   A third of ASCs (35%) and over half of ASMs (59%) said that they had worked with other groups to encourage their inclusion. This included looked after children, young carers, young people with drug and alcohol issues, minority ethnic pupils, pupils with English as a second language, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils, and targeted age groups such as S2/S3 girls.

6.60   Across the groups, the key approaches that were successful were:

- **working with young people** – to find out what they want to do, and identify barriers, ensuring that there is dedicated staff time to build relationships and rapport;
- **working jointly with others** – including schools, social work, community learning and development;

- **small group work** – targeted activity with lower adult to pupil ratios; and
- **addressing practical barriers** – particularly transport, through providing after school transport or holding activities during school time.

6.61   Deliverers also highlighted the importance of providing training for deliverers, so that they are more able to work with different groups of young people.

6.62   Approaches which worked less well included:

- approaches which stigmatised young people through direct targeting;
- assuming that young people will turn up – without investing time in building relationships; and
- relying on mainstream activities without targeting these to meet the needs and preferences of young people.

6.63   ASMs also highlighted that deliverers sometimes lack the confidence to deal with behavioural issues. This was also self-reported by ASCs in a small number of annual impacts and interventions returns. The issue was also raised by deliverers, who sought more training on this. And ASMs stressed that this type of work often required access to additional funding and staff resources.

Accessibility of opportunities to all

6.64   Parents were asked about the accessibility of Active Schools opportunities. Most felt that opportunities were very (36%) or quite (34%) accessible. However, 13 per cent felt they were quite inaccessible, and 11 per cent felt they were very inaccessible.   The main themes emerging are highlighted below.

- **Variety** – Many parents felt that the variety of opportunities and activities catered for a wide range of age groups and preferences.
- **Affordability** - Many parents felt that opportunities were very accessible because they were affordable – free or low cost. However, a small number felt that the cost of activities could be prohibitive for some families.
- **Location and timing** – Many parents felt that activities were physically accessible, held in local venues or within easy travel distance, and at convenient times of the day. However, some, particularly parents in rural areas, had concerns about transport, particularly when young people were attending activities at the end of the school day.
- **Capacity** – Some parents felt that there was a lack of provision in some schools or areas, and some felt that there were long waiting lists.
- **Awareness** – Some parents felt that they didn't have enough information about activities, which impacted on their accessibility.

6.65   Parents were also asked specifically about awareness of Active Schools opportunities. Most parents (73%) who responded to the survey were very aware of the opportunities available. Parents said that this was because they were kept well informed by their ASC, and by their children's school. Effective communication methods included:

- leaflets, flyers and programmes;
- regular updates through email, on websites or on social media; and
- information provided in local community centres and sports hubs.

6.66   A quarter of parents (26%) felt a little aware of the available opportunities, and a minority (1%) said they were not at all aware. Some who felt less informed indicated that they were new to the area, or too busy to keep up with what was happening. However, some highlighted a range of issues including:

- communication sometimes being unreliable or at short notice – with people hearing about opportunities by chance, from other parents, or too late to get involved;
- the quality of information varying from school to school – and sometimes depending on whether their child had already signed up for a previous activity;
- some parents not using social media, meaning they missed out on regular communication and updates; and
- some were confused at the difference between activities offered through Active Schools and through others, such as school PE departments or local clubs.

6.67   A few parents said that information was too specific to the opportunities at the school, and they would like to know more about what was happening in the wider area.

6.68   Pupils in eight discussion groups were also asked about their awareness of Active Schools activities. All were active participants in Active Schools, and were well aware of the programme of activities. Most felt that their ASC was visible in school, and used a range of methods to communicate. Communication methods included Facebook, notes to registration classes, visiting classes and speaking with pupils at the school.

6.69   While Young Ambassadors highlighted that Active Schools participation opportunities were generally accessible to all, some raised issues around the accessibility of leadership opportunities. There was some concern that Young Ambassadors could be, in some schools, selected by teachers with no open process. This issue is explored further in Chapter Seven, which focuses on leadership opportunities.

7.   Leadership opportunities

Chapter summary

Stakeholders were broadly positive about the Young Ambassadors programme. Young Ambassadors were seen as great role models, a great resource for schools and schools felt that young people were keen to take part. Young Ambassadors also broadly had a positive experience, and felt well supported both locally and nationally.

While many felt that the Young Ambassadors role was prestigious and sought after, a few teachers said that senior pupils preferred to take on house captain or prefect roles which were more sought after. Some teachers also felt that often Young Ambassadors already held leadership roles, and were already confident and experienced, and less likely to benefit from the role than some other pupils.

Young Ambassadors often found it hard to balance their role with their other responsibilities, particularly in S5 and S6. Some teachers and young people felt that it was very much up to Young Ambassadors to shape their own role, and that more support was needed to enable this. Some Active Schools teams felt that it was time consuming to support Ambassadors, and some suggested having clearer job descriptions and better links to qualifications.

Potential improvements to the programme included:

- more sustainability – with young people becoming involved earlier in their school lives, and efforts being made to sustain this involvement beyond school into the community;
- more accessibility – demand for Young Ambassador places often outstripped supply, and there was an interest in more pupils having the opportunity, coupled with a clearer application and selection process; and
- better links – some areas had developed broader leadership programmes which they felt were more accessible, sustainable and impactful.

Members of the Young People's Sport Panel felt that this was useful and beneficial. However, a few felt there was a need to be clearer about the impact and achievements of the panel.

Stakeholders were generally less aware of competition organiser training, as this was relatively new and still evolving. However it was seen to be accessible and useful, increasing competition opportunities and building the skills of young people.

Introduction

7.1   This chapter explores the effectiveness of **sport**scotland supported work around leadership opportunities for young people in schools and education. It explores how accessible these opportunities are, the experiences of young people taking part, and how young people are applying these experiences. The impact of leadership opportunities is explored in more detail in Chapter Twelve.

7.2   **sport**scotland supported leadership opportunities include:

- Young Ambassadors – with every secondary school in Scotland invited to select two young people to promote sport, motivate and inspire other young people and influence school sport – involving 643 young people in 2016/17;
- competition organiser training – which commenced in November 2016 and focuses on developing young people's skills around planning and delivering events and competitions - involving 300 young people in 2016/17; and
- Young People's Sport Panel – to represent the views of young people nationally – involving 15 young people in 2016/17.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the Young Ambassadors programme

7.3   Strategic stakeholders were broadly positive about the Young Ambassadors programme, with almost half (42%) feeling it had a lot of impact on the quality and number of opportunities to participate, develop and progress in sport and more than half feeling it had a little impact (53%).

7.4   Teachers also felt that the Young Ambassadors programme was effective. Most felt that it was very (47%) or quite (35%) effective. Just 8 per cent felt that it was quite or very ineffective, with the remainder providing a neutral opinion. Teachers broadly felt that the training and opportunities provided through the programme were positive, and that Young Ambassadors were great role models with many pupils keen to take part in the programme.

> "There are some super leaders that have gone on to work with primary pupils."
>
> Teacher

> "Pupils take on this responsibility very seriously and maturely."
>
> Teacher

> "Pupils gain hugely in confidence, communication skills, organisation and commitment."
>
> Teacher

7.5   While most were positive about the programme, some teachers felt that sometimes pupils who would be good Young Ambassadors are instead voted as house captains or prefects, which are often more popular and have greater kudos. For senior pupils, supported study for academic subjects is viewed as of primary importance at this stage, and schools often don't want pupils diverted onto other activities.

7.6   A few teachers also indicated that the pupils selected to be Young Ambassadors were often the pupils who were already confident and had experience of leadership, and may not get the most benefit from the Young Ambassadors training. A few felt that it was very much up to the pupil to develop and shape the role, and some pupils were better at this than others. And a few said that for the programme to be more effective there needed to be more support from Active Schools or school staff to help pupils to become effective leaders.

7.7   One teacher felt that although there was a strong focus on leadership for senior pupils, this was not approached in a sustainable manner with the view of continuing this leadership and volunteering into the community.

7.8   Active Schools Coordinators were asked how effective they found leadership opportunities supported by **sport**scotland at developing young people's leadership skills. ASCs largely felt that the Young Ambassadors programme was quite or very effective at developing young people's leadership skills. ASMs had the same broad profile of responses.

Effectiveness of leadership opportunities

Very ineffective	Quite ineffective	No impact	Quite effective	Very effective
2%	2%	10%	47%	39%

■ Young Ambassadors

7.9   Active Schools teams largely felt that the Young Ambassadors programme was an excellent opportunity to help young people to develop and enhance a range of leadership skills, which would help young people in future learning or work.

"I have seen hundreds of pupils go through leadership and it is fantastic for developing leadership skills, confidence, teamwork, communication skills and volunteering."

ASC

"I feel the Young Ambassadors programme is the best programme we offer through Active Schools."

ASC

7.10 Many felt the programme was effective because it was well established in schools, had a successful track record, and was well supported by leadership teams and staff in many schools. Some felt that the Young Ambassadors had a high profile, and the position was seen as prestigious within schools, with young people acting as role models.

7.11 Some also highlighted the real benefits that Young Ambassadors could bring to schools, and the wider community. Some said they were a great resource for schools, helping to deliver Active Schools activities; encourage and increase participation in sport and physical activity; and ensure that activities were driven by the views of young people.

"I believe it is crucial to have these young people as key role models within the school sport environment, as they have some of the greatest and most accurate views/opinions/ideas of young people."

ASC

"It allows the senior pupils to become a 'face of sport' at school and they are valuable in getting kids who may not participate in something, to do something."

Active Schools Assistant

Example – International links
In one area, the Young Ambassadors programme is strong and active. It is supported by local training, and regular group meetings. Young Ambassadors are also given the opportunity to apply for a coaching programme which involves delivering coaching programmes in partnership with Swedish clubs in Stockholm.

"It beats my expectations. I never thought I would get the opportunity to get to Sweden with the YA programme."

Young Ambassador

7.12   However, a small number of ASMs and ASCs were less positive about the effectiveness of the Young Ambassador programme. The main reasons for this were:

- the programme was only open to a small number of pupils;
- there was overlap with other leadership roles including sports leaders, sports captains and School Sport Councils; and
- a few teams had developed their own leadership programmes which targeted a wider number of pupils or ran for a longer period, which they felt had a bigger impact.

7.13   Some Active Schools teams also said that it could be time consuming to support Young Ambassadors enough to make their post valuable, with some stating that pupils' interest could wane during the school year due to other commitments and pressures, particularly around exam time. A few were concerned that there was little return for investment on Young Ambassadors, as they move on out of school quickly after they have developed their skills.

7.14   A few respondents from Active Schools teams suggested that it may be useful to review the Young Ambassador programme to consider:

- links to coaching qualifications and SQA recognised leadership modules;
- clearer job descriptions for Young Ambassadors, with more clarity and focus; and
- a framework for mentors to use to monitor the progress of Young Ambassadors.

Effectiveness of competition organiser training
7.15   More than half of ASCs and ASMs felt the competition organiser training (COT) programme had been quite or very effective. However, many Active Schools teams were less familiar with this programme, with many saying their approaches were still evolving. More than a quarter of ASCs (27%) and more than a third of ASMs (37%) said that COT had no impact on developing young people's leadership skills.

7.16   Those respondents who felt that COT had been effective in helping young people to develop their leadership skills, said that experience of organising events had given pupils opportunities to plan, deliver and evaluate sports events. Through this, respondents felt that pupils gained skills that would be useful when they went to college or university or started work. Others noted that COT had helped to increase the number of school sport competition events, as once they were trained, pupils were able to manage and deliver a range of events on the school competition calendar.

7.17   A number of Active Schools teams commented that they had been unable to deliver COT courses across their schools for a number of reasons, including lack of training, availability of staff, or time pressures. Some felt that so far the COT programme had had limited impact in their areas, as it was still fairly new to them, and although some had delivered COT courses, often pupils had not had any or many opportunities to put this into practice.

7.18   Some teachers were also less familiar with COT than Young Ambassadors, but half (49%) still rated the programme quite or very effective. Teachers indicated that COT linked well to other available leadership opportunities, such as sports leader's courses. Some felt that COT was very good at helping to build confidence and leadership qualities in specific sport delivery contexts. However, some indicated that they had not heard of the programme.

Accessibility

7.19   Active Schools teams were asked how accessible **sport**scotland supported leadership programmes were, in their view, to all young people – including people with different experiences, characteristics and skills.

Accessibility of Young Ambassadors

7.20   Most Active Schools teams felt that the Young Ambassadors programme was accessible to all pupils. Most ASCs said the programme was quite accessible (45%) or very accessible (35%), with ASMs following a similar profile.

7.21   Many highlighted that there was an open application and interview process. However, some felt that because the programme was often promoted through the PE department, this tended to attract applications from 'sporty' pupils.   Some ASCs also said that the selection process could vary from

school to school, with some schools being more open and transparent than others.

7.22 A small proportion (10%) of ASCs and a higher proportion of ASMs (22%) said that they did not feel that the Young Ambassadors programme was very accessible. The main reason was because numbers were often restricted to two pupils per school. Others felt that there was a bit of bias towards recruiting or selecting the more confident and able pupils, who tended to be academically bright as well as sporty, and often known to staff in the school. As a result of this, some felt that pupils who could benefit from the programme were often overlooked.

"Young Ambassadors tend to be high attainers who are already receiving a wealth of opportunities."

ASC

7.23 Some felt that there was more to be done to ensure that the programme was accessible to a wider range of pupils, including those who were vulnerable or excluded. However, some noted that this would require greater input and support from Active Schools teams and schools staff, which might be challenging.

"There is definitely a need to develop leadership opportunities that would give pupils who wouldn't normally get a chance to get involved and develop their skills."

ASC

7.24 Many Young Ambassadors felt that leadership opportunities were very accessible and open to everyone. However, there were some issues around accessibility. Some Young Ambassadors were nominated by teachers, rather than volunteering or applying for the role. And some were concerned that only a small number of young people had the opportunity to become Young Ambassadors and gain access to the range of related support and opportunities.

"If there are leadership opportunities, only we [Young Ambassadors] are getting them. They should be more widely available."

Young Ambassador

Example – Building a more inclusive leadership system
In one school, the Young Ambassador felt that the process for selection was not very accessible. She was nominated anonymously by teachers. She didn't think this was a good way to become a Young Ambassador, as pupils didn't have a say in whether they wanted to participate or not. She was also selected in S6, which she felt was too late. As a result of her feedback, the school has changed the process for becoming a Young Ambassador. Pupils go through a clear open and transparent application process, and can apply from S3.

7.25   Many Young Ambassadors also felt that they were better able to perform their role in S3 and S4, with time pressures becoming a major barrier in S5 and S6. Some highlighted that in S6 they had to delegate some responsibilities, or focus more on building the skills of others, due to their other priorities – including exams and other leadership roles.

7.26   Most teachers felt that the Young Ambassadors programme was quite (28%) or very (53%) accessible. Most indicated that this was because it was open to all, pupils were very aware of the opportunity, and selection processes were clear and transparent. However, some felt that they could probably identify more pupils who would benefit from the programme, and felt restricted in terms of the number of pupils they were able to put forward each year. Some indicated that demand often exceeded the number of places available, particularly in larger schools. A few teachers also said that Young Ambassadors tended to be chosen by staff, and that places were not open to all pupils. A few teachers also highlighted particular challenges facing pupils from rural and remote areas, as it was difficult and expensive for these pupils to attend training courses in the central belt.

> "We are restricted to the number of students in any one academic year to be put forward for being a sportscotland Young Ambassador - we could probably identify more who would benefit and be effective or would develop greatly through engaging in this programme."
>
> Teacher

7.27   Most parents indicated that they were not aware of **sport**scotland supported leadership opportunities. However, a small number indicated that they were – largely because their child had been a Young Ambassador or young leader.

Accessibility of competition organiser training

7.28   Competition organiser training is a relatively new programme, and the delivery model is flexible locally. As a result, most people felt only able to comment in a limited way on its impact.

7.29   Most ASCs and ASMs felt that the COT programme was quite or very accessible. A few felt that COT courses were more accessible to pupils than the Young Ambassador programme, as they tended to target wider groups of pupils, for example, young leaders or sports leaders. One ASC who worked in a special school thought that the COT training could be adapted and delivered to children with additional support needs. One ASC who worked in a rural area, commented that it was challenging to deliver COT training in remote locations.

> "There is a greater opportunity for pupils to attend COT due to the greater number of spaces available on training."
>
> ASC

> *"The COT is very accessible to all pupils as there is no set requirements for participants and it is dependent on their motivation to put into practice what they have learned on their course."*
>
> <div align="right">ASC</div>

7.30   Teachers had mixed views on the accessibility of COT. While around half thought that the programme was quite or very accessible, a third said it was neither accessible or inaccessible. Some said that they did not know what it was.

7.31   Teachers who felt the programme was accessible said that the programme was linked with other local leadership opportunities. However, some said it was only covered as part of SQA accredited sports leadership courses offered at schools, and some said that COT places appeared to be limited.

Support for young leaders

7.32   Overall, the majority of Young Ambassadors involved in this research were very positive about their experience.

> *"It has definitely met my expectations. I have really enjoyed being a Young Ambassador."*
>
> <div align="right">Young Ambassador</div>

7.33   Many of the Young Ambassadors involved in this research already held other leadership roles, for example a sport team captain, house captain or head boy or girl or a Scout leader. Young Ambassadors generally indicated they were interested in the role because they wanted to build their leadership skills, support others to get involved in sport and build confidence – and most felt they had achieved those aims. This impact is explored in more detail in Chapter Twelve.

7.34   Most Young Ambassadors were very happy with the support they had received and felt supported by school and Active Schools teams.

> *"My mentor has gone above and beyond to support us."*
>
> <div align="right">Young Ambassador</div>

> *"It's 100% good."*
>
> <div align="right">Young Ambassador</div>

> *"I feel like I've had a lot of support from the PE department and from the Active Schools Coordinator. They always come to me with ideas and opportunities."*
>
> <div align="right">Young Ambassador</div>

7.35   Many Young Ambassadors highlighted that the national event at Hampden was useful – allowing them to hear what others were doing, share ideas and experiences, make contacts and develop a network of friends that they will stay in touch with.

"The Hampden event was fabulous. It was really well run."

Young Ambassador

7.36   A small number of Young Ambassadors felt that they did not have enough support. Some suggested that more local follow up to the Hampden event would have been useful, so that Young Ambassadors in the same area could network and exchange experience and best practice. However, in other areas it was clear that there was local follow up – with Young Ambassadors getting the chance to meet up with others across the local authority on a regular basis. Many of the Young Ambassadors were from rural areas, and some felt a bit restricted in terms of opportunities available, as they would need to take a day out of school for events.

7.37   A small minority felt very unsupported – feeling that they were not well supported by either the PE department or the ASC. This meant that a small number of Young Ambassadors felt unsure how to progress their role.

7.38   Members of the Young People's Sport Panel were also largely positive. Participants felt that they had been part of fascinating conversations, which opened their eyes to barriers to participating in sport and physical activity. Members felt that they had built their own skills and made new connections, while also ensuring that the voices of young people were heard.

7.39   Panel members felt that their views were listened to at national level, and used to influence future priorities. For example, panel members had influenced the development of the School Sport Awards, planned activities for the Year of Young People, met the Minister for Sport, presented to the **sport**scotland board, been involved in Olympic homecoming activities and taken part in campaigns around equality and participation for girls and for disabled people. Some panel members were involved in appraising applications submitted to the Sporting Equality Fund.

"I feel I have been able to use social media to engage with young people and to give young people a voice."

Panel member

7.40   Some panel members were positive that local panels were now being set up in different parts of Scotland, helping to strengthen connections between local and national level.

7.41   However, some found it challenging to balance school work with membership of the panel, particularly in S5 when undertaking exams. Some

activities took place during school time, which some found disruptive. Some panel members found that absence levels were high and that panel members didn't always respond to emails, which they found frustrating.

7.42   Some felt that there was too much time spent on panel meetings, and were unsure of what they had achieved.

> "At the Young People's Sport Panel we speak about things, but you never see the finished results. I am not sure what impact I have really had…"
>
> Panel member

7.43   Some panel members felt that **sport**scotland was expecting too much from young people through the five roles of young people it sets out. In particular, some were unsure that involving young people as technical officials was realistic, particularly for under 18s.

Example – Young Ambassadors needing further support
In one school, two Young Ambassadors indicated that they did not feel that they had been supported in their role, or had many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. These Young Ambassadors were selected by a teacher and weren't told much about the role until they got to the national event at Hampden. While this was useful, they do not feel they can progress ideas on their own as they feel there is very little support for sport in the school, and no teachers that will support them. They have also been unable to get support from the ASC.

"We would like to have more contact with the Active Schools Coordinator, so we could have more opportunities for the school."

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8. Building profile

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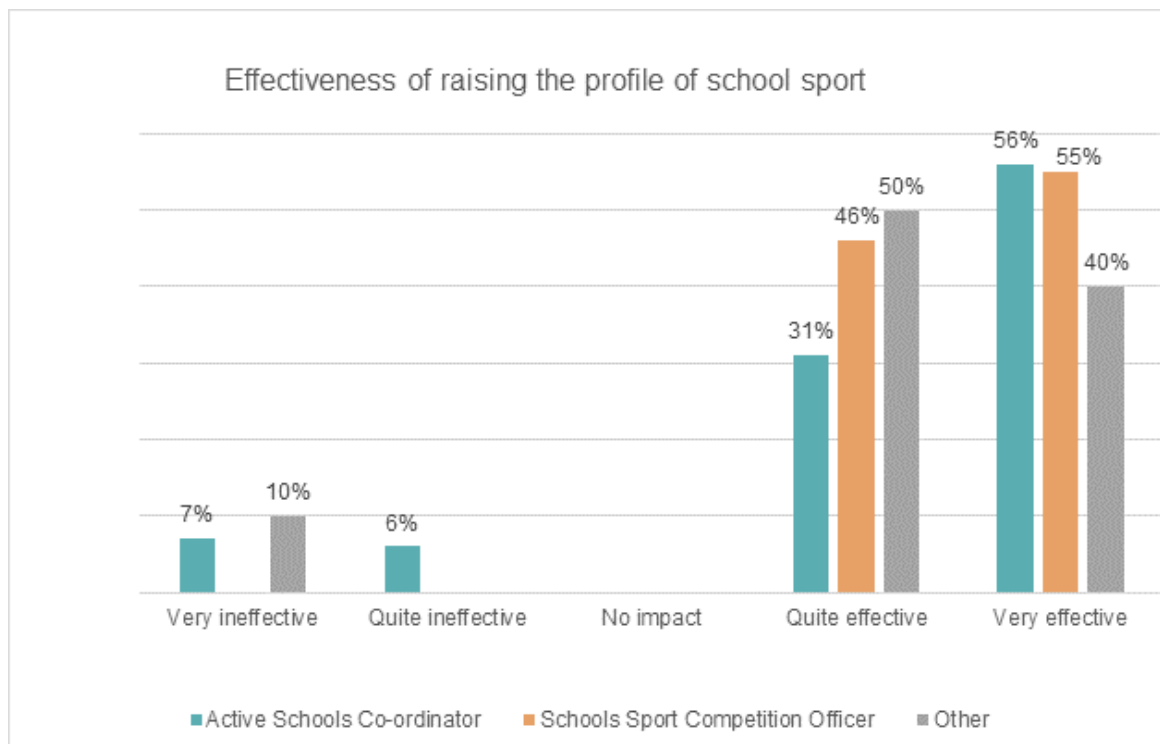
Chapter summary

Most felt that **sport**scotland supported work in schools had helped to build the profile of school sport. Active Schools was largely seen as a high profile programme, with Young Ambassadors playing an important role in contributing to the culture and ethos of the school. The School Sport Award had also helped to build stronger relationships between Active Schools teams and schools, and increase the profile of sport and activity in schools.

</div>

Introduction

8.1   This chapter explores how **sport**scotland supported work in schools has impacted on the profile of school sport.

Profile of school sport

8.2   ASCs and SSCOs were asked how effective they felt their work was in helping to build the profile of school sport. Almost all SSCOs and 'others' felt it had been quite or very effective. However, while most ASCs felt it had been effective, a minority said it had not been effective.

Effectiveness of raising the profile of school sport

	Very ineffective	Quite ineffective	No impact	Quite effective	Very effective
Active Schools Co-ordinator	7%	6%		31%	56%
Schools Sport Competition Officer				46%	55%
Other	10%			50%	40%

8.3   ASCs said that this was a key part of their role, and particularly highlighted their work to build the profile of sport among girls and young women. Some felt that building good relationships with school senior leadership teams and PE staff was key to success, as this helped to build and promote a sports ethos in schools.

8.4   However, some felt that **sport**scotland needed to do more to raise the profile of the Active Schools programme nationally, so that all staff and pupils are aware of the programme and its benefits. A few felt that it would be easier to build the profile of school sport if:

- Active Schools teams were located within Education directorates rather than being part of Sport and Leisure, to help to build stronger links with schools and encourage greater 'buy-in';
- there was a more focused approach to raising the profile of school sport, with support from all (rather than some) national governing bodies and Education Scotland; and
- Active Schools teams had more time to spend on building the profile of schools sport.

8.5   Young Ambassadors also felt that raising the profile of school sport was an important aspect of their role. Most were very positive about the impact of Active Schools, and the Young Ambassadors programme, on the profile of sport within their school. This was often due to Young Ambassadors raising awareness of activities and opportunities across the school, bringing new ideas to the school through sharing experiences with other Young Ambassadors, and recognising sporting achievements and celebrating these.

"The whole school is more supportive of sport, and there's good communication around sport."

Young Ambassador

"I value being part of something that is trying to make a difference to young people and sport. I want others to enjoy sport as much as I do."

Young Ambassador

"I feel that we have really helped other pupils in the school, and sport in the school is so much better."

Young Ambassador

8.6   Almost all teachers felt that Active Schools contributed a lot or a little to the culture and ethos of their school. Teachers indicated that the Active Schools work was high profile and that ASCs were very visible and respected by pupils and teachers. In some schools ASCs were seen as an integral part of the staff team, and helped to promote positive values in schools in relation to fitness, health and wellbeing. ASCs were also seen to be very fair and inclusive, supporting with encouraging and recognising achievement across all pupils.

"The Active Schools agenda is integral to our aims and values and it complements our school ethos."

Teacher

"Its work is embedded in all we do."

Teacher

"Very much part of the school, very visible, makes it clear that sport is for all, not just high achievers."

Teacher

8.7   However, a few teachers saw Active Schools as an add on and not integral to the work of the school.

"It is only a small part of what we do."

Teacher

8.8   Parents also broadly felt that **sport**scotland supported activities had been effective in helping to raise the profile of school sport. Two thirds of parents felt that the activities had been very or quite effective. This was because:

- it had provided new opportunities;
- without Active Schools, some children would have limited access to sport or physical activity;
- it had helped increase participation, and successfully engaged 'inactive' young people such as girls at secondary school level; and
- the opportunities and activities are very accessible and affordable.

"Without Active Schools the children at our local primary would not have had any opportunities to take part in extra-curricular sport locally - this has been a wonderful opportunity for them."

Parent

"The school has been recognised for its sporting achievements, which is mostly down to the activities offered by Active Schools."

Parent

8.9   Parents who were less positive sometimes did not know that Active Schools was supported by **sport**scotland, and did not understand the connection between **sport**scotland and the activities that their children did at school. In addition, some felt that:

- communication about activities was not always good;
- the ability to raise the profile of school sport depended very much on the ASC, and this could vary from school to school;
- others should also be responsible for delivering opportunities for PE and sport in school, not just Active Schools; and
- not enough is done to support children to pursue individual sports, both within and outwith school.

"There is not enough support or opportunities for kids to do extra-curricular sports and the P.E. they get in school is practically non-existent before P4."

Parent

8.10   Strategic stakeholders also felt that **sport**scotland supported work, largely Active Schools, was increasing the profile of sport in schools.

"At the very least it puts the word and concept of 'sport' back into schools and onto the agenda for discussion – which must be a good thing."

Strategic stakeholder

Role of the School Sport Award

8.11   ASCs and SSCOs were asked how the School Sport Award programme impacted on their work with schools. In relation to the profile of school sport, they felt that it provided an opportunity to:

- build stronger relationships, communication and engagement between Active Schools teams and schools, and between different schools;
- raise the profile of Active Schools, with staff and pupils more aware of the role of Active Schools and the activities it delivers; and
- better align school sports programmes and Active Schools programmes.

8.12   Some who felt that the School Sport Award programme had either had no impact or had impacted negatively said that many schools have chosen not to take part in the SSA programme, meaning there has been no impact. And some said that they already had good relations with schools, and this had not changed through SSA. However, a few said that when some schools get their awards they can lose interest, meaning action plans are not followed up. And some said that the SSA programme resulted in additional work for schools, with pressure to evidence positive activities in school action plans.

9.   Connections

Chapter summary

Almost all **sport**scotland supported staff, teachers and strategic stakeholders felt that Active Schools aligned well with wider outcomes in the schools and education environment. In particular, Active Schools was seen to link well with health and wellbeing priorities which are embedded within Curriculum for Excellence, GIRFEC and the focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Some felt that with so much going on within the education environment, the Active Schools agenda could get lost. Some also highlighted that it took time to align plans at school, local authority and national level and that there was scope to look more closely at how Active Schools could be linked to wider learning.

sportscotland supported staff felt that there was a good fit with national sport and physical activity strategies at local and national level. However, some said that there was a need to focus more clearly on national priorities around supporting inactive people to become more active.
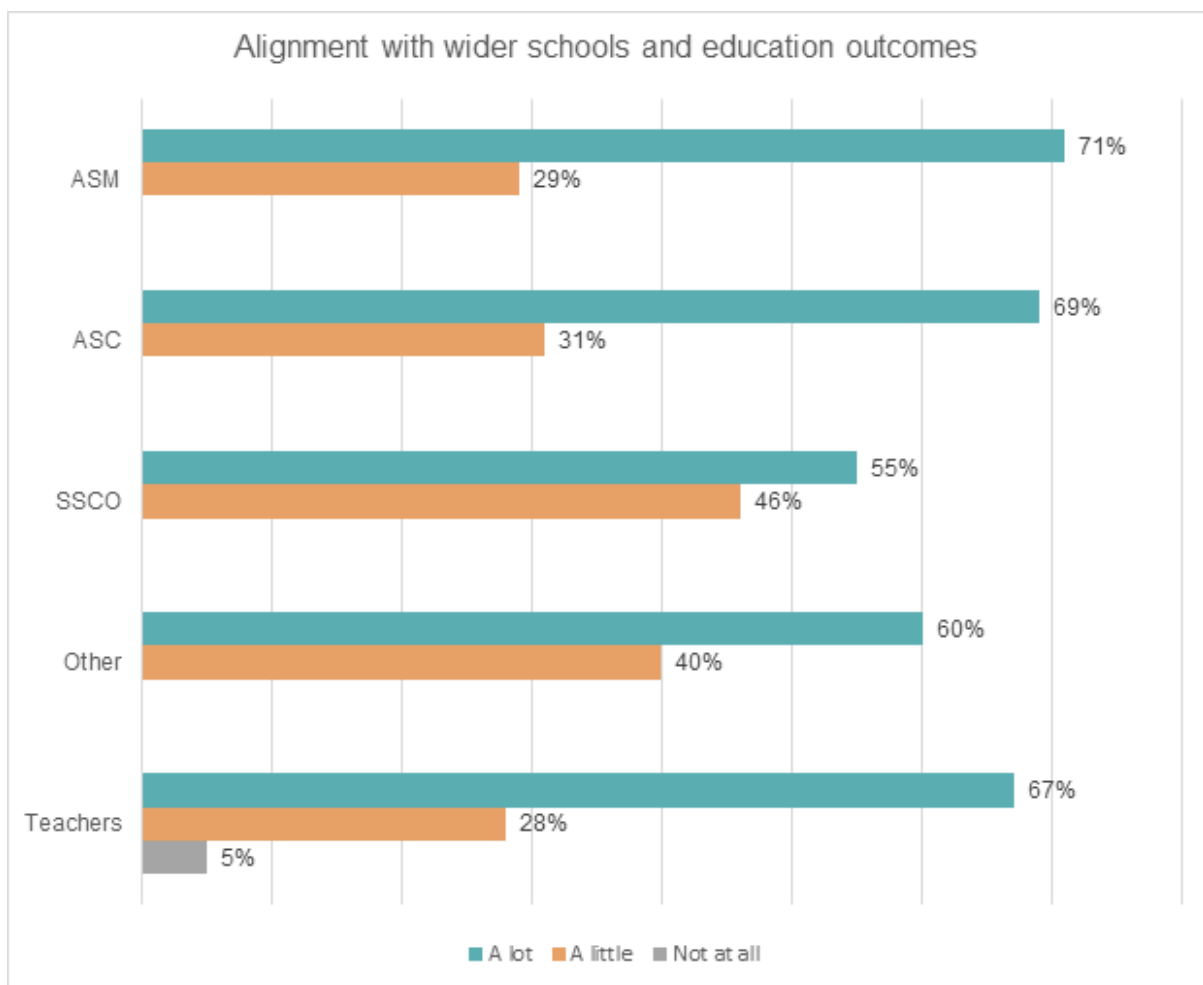
Stakeholders felt that support for Active Schools should continue, but that there should be more of a focus on a longer term approach to planning and linking with the strategic priorities of tackling the attainment gap and supporting inactive people to become active.

Introduction

9.1   This chapter explores how **sport**scotland supported work in schools connects with wider outcomes in the schools and education environment, and wider outcomes around sport and physical activity.

Alignment with education outcomes

9.2   Active Schools teams, SSCOs and teachers were asked about the extent to which they feel Active Schools aligns with wider outcomes in the schools and education environment. All **sport**scotland supported staff and almost all teachers felt that Active Schools aligned to some extent, with most feeling that the work aligned a lot. However, five per cent of teachers felt that it did not align at all.

Alignment with wider schools and education outcomes

Role	A lot	A little	Not at all
ASM	71%	29%	
ASC	69%	31%	
SSCO	55%	46%	
Other	60%	40%	
Teachers	67%	28%	5%

Legend: ■ A lot ■ A little ■ Not at all

9.3   **sport**scotland supported staff and most teachers said that there was a clear alignment with Curriculum for Excellence outcomes (particularly in relation to health and wellbeing), GIRFEC, the Scottish Attainment Challenge, work to close the poverty related attainment gap and the Developing Young Workforce agenda. A few ASMs and ASCs highlighted the proven links between sport and physical activity and educational attainment, stating that Active Schools had a key role to play in both raising attainment and also closing the attainment gap.

9.4   Teachers also highlighted that the work aligned with themes around positive choices, nurture, outdoor learning and improving attainment. Some teachers said that Active Schools provided a platform to engage parents and senior pupils.

"Many schools have worked with their ASCs to look at how sport and physical activity programmes can close the gap and invested PEF (Pupil Equity Fund) funding to deliver on this agenda."

ASM

"Sport can bridge the attainment gap."

Teacher

9.5   Many ASCs and teachers highlighted that leadership opportunities were helping pupils to become confident individuals and responsible citizens.

9.6   A number of ASMs who felt that there was good alignment with wider outcomes said that they had strong partnerships with their education colleagues and with schools. Some said that they were part of the Education and Children's Services departments, and this had helped to ensure close alignment of priorities and plans. Many ASCs gave examples of Active Schools teams being fully involved in wider school planning – for example around core PE Significant Aspects of Learning plans, cross curricular learning, school development and improvement plans, and wider education directorate plans.

9.7   The main reason for Active Schools teams feeling that activities were not very aligned related to a lack of integration between the Active Schools remit and the wider schools and education actions plans, for example, in relation to Pupil Equity Fund plans. Some felt that there was so much happening within the education environment, that the Active Schools agenda could sometimes get lost and it could be hard to see its fit with wider priorities and outcomes. Some also commented that schools did not always understand or value the role and contribution that Active Schools played in children's education. A few felt that alignment could be easier at primary school level than at secondary school level.

9.8   Teachers agreed that there was so much going on in schools that it could be challenging to make these links. Some felt that some ASCs didn't understand how schools operated on a day to day basis and were unaware of some of the pressures that schools were under.

9.9   Some Active Schools teams also highlighted that it took time to align plans at school, local authority and national level, and some felt that there was more scope to look at how Active Schools activities can be more closely linked to wider learning. Some teachers said that they were unaware of the links between Active Schools and wider education outcomes, or that their main focus was on raising attainment, and that because of this they had less focus on improving opportunities for sport and physical activities.

9.10   A small number of strategic stakeholders, including national and local education leads, were asked for their views on alignment between **sport**scotland supported work in schools and wider outcomes in the schools and education environment. Locally, Active Schools was seen as an integral part of education provision in schools.

9.11   However, one stakeholder felt that **sport**scotland work could be more closely aligned to priorities around closing the attainment gap and inequality, as all partners working in the education environment should be working towards these aims. Another suggested that there was scope for more engagement and sharing of good practice between Directors of Education across Scotland, to use sport to contribute to all aspects of children's learning.

Example – Integration with attainment aims
In one local authority area, the authority works in close partnership with **sport**scotland. The authority uses sport as a driver for improvement, and a key part of its strategy to raise attainment. ASCs have received training in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy, so that they are using the same language as teachers in the activities that they are delivering for pupils. This helps to contribute to children's learning and make connections with teachers. Teachers value the role of ASCs as they see them contributing to the attainment agenda.

*"**sport**scotland has been totally responsive, and prepared to listen."*
Local authority education lead

Fit with sport and physical activity strategies

9.12   ASMs were asked about how **sport**scotland supported programmes for both schools and clubs fit with strategies for sport and physical activity at local and national level. Most said there was a good fit.

9.13   In relation to national level links, some ASMs highlighted the links to the National Improvement Framework and the Active Scotland Framework.

9.14 At the local level, some ASMs said that their plans linked to community plans and local plans, where the aim was to support healthy and sustainable communities. Others commented that they were still developing their local strategies, or that their strategies for sport and physical activity were reflected in Education Business Plans or School Improvement Plans.

"Hubs and Active Schools are at the centre of our local community strategy to allow communities to develop sustainable opportunities through sport and physical activity."

ASM

9.15 Strategic stakeholders broadly agreed that there was a good fit between **sport**scotland supported programmes and national and local priorities. However, strategic stakeholders felt that programmes which were locally led and more flexible – such as Active Schools and Community Sports Hubs – were better able to fit with local priorities. Some emphasised that all local authorities are unique, and a few sought further flexibility in adapting programmes to fit with the local context. Where mentioned, this was largely in relation to the specific use of the resource available at local level.

"The locally based Active Schools and CSH programmes seem to have the greatest effect/ combination."

Strategic stakeholder

9.16 Finally, a few strategic stakeholders felt that there appeared to be a gap in understanding between **sport**scotland and the Scottish Government. While one stakeholder felt that the Scottish Government had 'changed the goalposts' around the focus on physical activity, a few said that there was a need to focus more on getting the inactive active, and linking with the health and wellbeing agenda. Some felt that there was a need for **sport**scotland to have a clearer aim about the purpose of its work, to avoid funding declining, while a few highlighted the need to better evidence to decision makers that **sport**scotland supported work is making a difference.

"There is no clear idea of the ultimate aim and therefore the strategies don't tie in well together. There seems to be a mixture of sporting participation and development, along with participation and health benefits, along with targeting less engaged groups. All these things are valid and good to do but the strategies are not clear."

Strategic stakeholder

Future support

9.17 ASMs and strategic stakeholders identified a number of priorities for the future.

9.18   Firstly, most stakeholders felt strongly that the Active Schools programme should be continued, ideally with longer term funding to allow effective resource planning. Many felt that Active Schools was the glue that held together the other **sport**scotland supported programmes in schools.

9.19   In terms of developing the Active Schools programme, some stakeholders suggested a greater focus on:

- targeting activities towards people who are inactive or come from deprived areas or challenging backgrounds;
- alignment with the attainment agenda, the core priority within schools;
- physical activity as well as sport; and
- enhanced quality and consistency of monitoring and reporting – moving away from numbers towards qualitative information about experiences and impact.

"You never know if funding will be continued, this constrains what you can do and makes it hard to be ambitious."

Strategic stakeholder

9.20   Some suggested that there was scope to place more focus on leadership, and to develop a simpler and more organised school sport competition programme.

9.21   More generally, some felt that there should be more flexibility at local level, with resources and responsibilities devolved to local authorities and local partnerships to ensure linkages with local priorities.

10. School to club links

Chapter summary

There were mixed views on the effectiveness of school to club links, with some finding this difficult to quantify and others experiencing practical barriers to building links. Deliverers and strategic stakeholders were largely positive about links, believing that Active Schools teams had strong relationships with clubs and ensured that clubs linked with schools were appropriately run and safe.

While most felt that **sport**scotland struck a good balance between supporting school and club sport, some felt that there was more of a focus on schools than clubs. Some felt that this was reasonable, as Active Schools underpinned much of **sport**scotland's work.
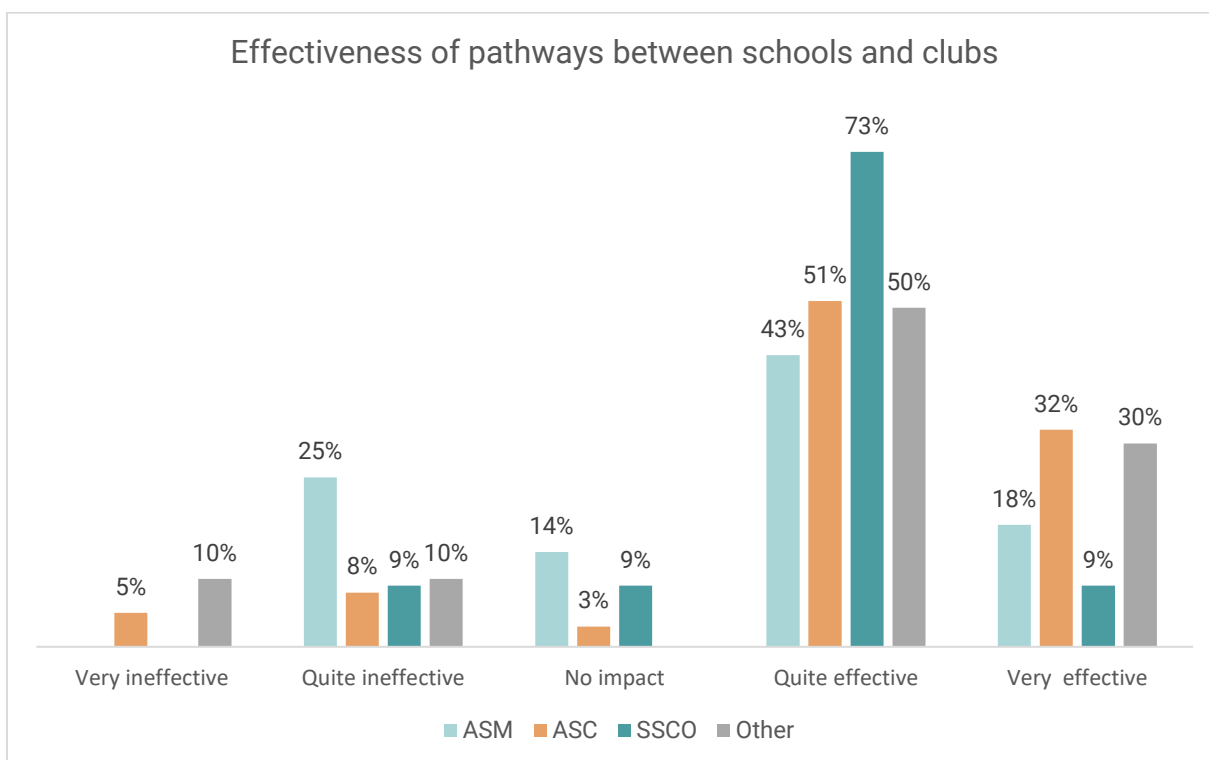
Introduction

10.1   This chapter explores how **sport**scotland supported work in schools has impacted on the development of effective links between schools and clubs.

School to club links

10.2   In 2016/17 there were more than 2,700 clubs linking with schools. Each club often linked with more than one school, in different ways. Over 41,000 links of different natures were recorded between schools and clubs in 2016/17. This included more than:

- 2,800 regular curricular links;
- 3,300 volunteering links;
- 5,800 holiday programme links;
- 9,700 taster session links;
- 11,300 regular extra-curricular links; and
- 36,000 promotional links.

10.3   The number of school to club links varies between local authority. This may depend on a range of factors including the size of the local authority and the number of local clubs in existence.

Effectiveness of pathways between schools and clubs

10.4   **sport**scotland supported staff were asked about their views on the effectiveness of their work in developing pathways for pupils between schools and clubs. Views were mixed. While more than half, across all groups, felt that links had been either very or quite effective, a relatively high proportion of ASMs indicated that they believed work in this area had been quite ineffective.

Effectiveness of pathways between schools and clubs

	Very ineffective	Quite ineffective	No impact	Quite effective	Very effective
ASM		25%	14%	43%	18%
ASC	5%	8%	3%	51%	32%
SSCO		9%	9%	73%	9%
Other	10%	10%		50%	30%

10.5   ASMs who were positive about the effectiveness of work around pathways stressed the key role played by Active Schools in developing strong links. Many ASMs and ASCs felt that Community Sport Hubs had helped to strengthen links between local clubs and schools. Others highlighted that Direct Club Investment (DCI) had given clubs resources which enabled them to develop links with schools. ASCs indicated that activities such as getting clubs to deliver taster sessions and clubs in schools, developing club accreditation schemes, supporting the development of junior club sections and enabling information sharing about clubs had been effective.

"Active Schools staff have acted as a main link between schools and clubs and provide specialist knowledge of the local sporting landscape, without which, many school staff would not know what is on their doorstep and available to children/parents."

ASM

10.6   However, a few of these ASMs qualified their responses by saying that although things had improved over the years, more could be done to get schools and clubs to work more closely together.

10.7   Some ASMs and ASCs who felt that there had been no or limited impact said that it was difficult to quantify links and connections, as distinct participation information was not always collected by clubs. And some ASCs indicated that in some areas, particularly in rural and island communities, there may not be many local clubs for young people to join.

10.8   Some felt that there was a lack of interest from local clubs, even in some cases where they are supported by Community Sport Hub officers. And some said that there was a lack of focus and support from some national governing bodies, which did not help with developing school to club links. ASCs often highlighted practical barriers, such as cost and travel. Some found it hard to get clubs to come into school during the day, as many club coaches are volunteers and are at work. Many emphasised that building effective relationships with clubs was time consuming, both for Active Schools teams and clubs. Some said this was made easier if clubs had their own development officers.

10.9   Deliverers were largely positive about the development of school to club links, with most (62%) believing Active Schools to be very or quite effective in helping to improve connections between school sport and club sport. Again, deliverers pointed to the strong knowledge of and relationships with local clubs that ASCs have. Some felt that connections could be particularly good where schools and clubs share facilities.

10.10   Those who were less positive largely felt this was where there were fewer clubs to progress to, a lack of information about local clubs, or financial or travel barriers to children participating in clubs. Some felt that the focus on competition and selecting the most talented players to take part in clubs put children off ongoing involvement. Deliverers also stressed that there needed

to be ongoing support to ensure that young people are made welcome at clubs, and want to stay there longer term. Some felt that more intensive promotion and support was needed for more vulnerable young people.

"Not enough kids are making it through in to long term sport as they are put off by clubs' selective attitude to selecting the best players for their own reasons."

Deliverer

10.11   Parents were also asked about connections between school and club sport. Views were mixed:

- around half thought links were quite strong (31%) or very strong (17%);
- around a quarter thought links were quite weak (16%) or very weak (8%); and
- around a fifth did not know (21%) and the remainder said neither strong nor weak.

10.12   Where parents thought links were strong, this was because:

- ASCs had good relations with local clubs;
- clubs came into schools to deliver taster sessions, coach activities or run events; or
- ASCs promoted local clubs to pupils when they were trying out different sports.

10.13   Some parents gave examples of their children moving on to join clubs in their local area as a result of support and encouragement from the Active Schools team. However, parents noted that success could vary from area to area, and dependent on the relationships and capacity of clubs, schools and ASCs.

"The Active Schools coordinator has a great relationship with external clubs and continually seeks to add new sports to allow greater choice and participation in the cluster."

Parent

10.14   Some parents said that they either didn't know enough about school to club connections, or there were not enough clubs in their local area to be able to comment in a meaningful way.

10.15   Strategic stakeholders were also positive about the development of pathways between schools and clubs, with 89 per cent feeling that this was quite or very effective. Some felt that Active Schools built and strengthened links, and also ensured that the clubs that were linked with schools were appropriately run and safe. However, one stakeholder felt that it was wrong to assume that clubs were ready and structured to work with the range of

school children who may progress to their club, and that more work was required to support clubs.

"The focus for Active Schools to create more and better quality links between schools and clubs has meant that more young people are transitioning into clubs."

<div align="right">

Strategic stakeholder

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Connecting physical education, school sport and club sport

10.16   ASMs, ASCs, SSCOs and others were asked how effective they felt their work had been at connecting physical education, school sport and club sport. Overall, respondents were positive – with more than three quarters across all respondent groups believing their work had been quite or very effective.

10.17   Respondents who felt their work had been effective felt that they had:

- developed good partnership working with Active Schools, PE staff and local clubs;
- developed clear PEPAS strategies at local authority level, with delivery supported by PE lead officers and PEPAS teams;
- created links between primary and secondary school teachers, so that pupils understand the sports they can do in secondary school;
- developed competitive school sport opportunities, working with clubs and national governing bodies to develop events, festivals and competitions;
- supported leadership programmes; and
- used the School Sport Award programme to develop a more focused and joined up approach to physical education, school sport and club sport.

"We have adopted a connected approach in that all sporting opportunities offered to schools must have a pathway into local sports clubs/sessions/organisations."

<div align="right">

ASM

</div>

10.18   Some respondents who were less positive highlighted that it could be hard to build partnership working where there was a lack of buy-in from local authority teams, at school level, or from within PE departments. Others highlighted that the strength of connection varied from school to school, and cluster to cluster. Connections were often seen to be weaker at primary school level where there were fewer PE specialists and teachers were stretched for time.

10.19   Most teachers were positive about the connections that Active Schools had helped to develop between PE, school sport and club sport. Two thirds (66%) said Active Schools had been very or quite effective at improving connections in this field. Many said that ASCs played a key role in making these links.

"Active Schools is the glue that sticks it all together and combines them - it would be very disjointed if Active Schools wasn't there."

Teacher

10.20   Some teachers talked about links with clubs. They felt that ASCs were able to use their networks to make links, and were good at getting coaches from clubs to come into schools to run taster sessions, coach at after school clubs or to run events and festivals. Other teachers highlighted the strong partnerships that existed between ASCs and staff in PE departments, where activities were planned and organised jointly. Active Schools Co-ordinators had also helped to upskill teachers, providing support and CPD training to help build teachers' confidence to deliver quality PE sessions in schools.

"They have helped create links with clubs we would not otherwise be linked to such as Basketball, badminton and golf."

Teacher

"We have achieved our sportscotland silver award this year and I think this reflects the engagement of the PE, school and club sport in our community."

Teacher

10.21   Some teachers also said that Community Sports Hubs had also helped to encourage and develop more effective links between school sport and local clubs, there are regular meeting at the Sports Hubs with local clubs, Active Schools, PE staff and staff from community learning teams.

10.22   A fifth of teachers felt that Active Schools had been quite or very ineffective at linking PE, school and club sport. Some said they didn't know enough about this to be able to comment in a meaningful way. However, some said that their PE department led on this and that Active Schools did not have a role at their school. Others commented that it tended to be the same pupils who went on to join clubs, and Active Schools did not really impact on this. Some teachers said that communication between Active Schools and schools could be better, as schools were sometimes not aware of what was available through Active Schools.

"There have been links created between the clubs and school but the impact of this has been minimal i.e. very few pupils join a club because of a taster session in school."

Teacher

10.23 Strategic stakeholders largely felt that **sport**scotland support was effective at linking PE, school and club sport. Stakeholders felt that pathways between schools, clubs and hubs had developed and strengthened. However, some felt that more could be done around physical activity and tackling perceptions of sport as an elitist or exclusive activity. And one stakeholder was concerned that there was a need for more monitoring of club activity to ensure that young people are having safe, positive experiences when they move from school to club activity.

"Pupils are having a lot of brilliant experiences around sport, but it should be widened to physical activity."

Strategic stakeholder

Supporting both schools and clubs

10.24 ASMs were asked for their views on the combination of support from **sport**scotland for both schools and clubs. Some respondents felt that the approach was fairly balanced.

"I do believe that **sport**scotland have found a good balance between school and community sport."

ASM

10.25 Some felt that it was difficult to strike the right balance in terms of the support available, with schools probably benefiting more than clubs. Many ASMs said that the support for schools had been fantastic and very successful and had had a big impact on schools and the opportunities available to pupils. Others noted the close alignment with national programmes and strategies, for example, PEPAS, and also Curriculum for Excellence. One ASM felt that the lack of investment in the PE Lead Officer network and the School Sport Competition network might impact negatively on PEPAS.

10.26 A few ASMs felt that more 'buy-in' was required from senior leadership teams in schools, and also from PE staff, as Active Schools teams did not feel that they could directly influence PE in schools. Others highlighted that the Active Schools staff resource was sometimes stretched, and there were often tensions balancing targeted and universal approaches, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

"Good - though feel as part of the contract with LAs there could be more conditions attached to ensure SMT commitment with education."

ASM

10.27 Strategic stakeholders were also asked about this blend of support. Most felt that the blend was broadly right, but that there was more focus on schools than clubs. Some felt that schools received hands on support, while

clubs received funding and guidance. However, some emphasised that the Active Schools network underpinned much of **sport**scotland's other work – particularly in schools and education.

"The financial support from sportscotland towards Active Schools has been the most significant factor over the last 10 years, which has allowed school and club sport to develop across the nation. Without this funding and the staff that it supports there would be no-one left to deliver on the other programme areas. Therefore, the continued support for Active Schools is the main priority…"

Strategic stakeholder

10.28   A few felt that there should be greater alignment between Active Schools and Community Sports Hubs, with more of a focus on building active communities – linking schools and club activity. Some **sport**scotland staff felt that this linkage was already happening to some extent, in some areas, but that more could be done to develop these connections.

"It would be beneficial to identify the best way locally to support school and community sport across Active Schools and CSHs as a collective rather than focus on them as individual programmes."

Strategic stakeholder

"Clubs and school worlds are merging between programmes."

***sport**scotland staff member*

11. Provision and quality of places

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Chapter summary

The experience of schools and local authorities which had accessed funding through the Sport Facilities Fund was broadly positive.

Schools and local authorities were largely content with the support provided by **sport**scotland around the Facilities Fund. However, a small number would have liked more support or more timely feedback.

Most believed that **sport**scotland provided access to expertise that wouldn't have been available within the authority – or that it complemented existing expertise.

Schools and local authorities believed that without **sport**scotland investment facilities may not have been developed, or would not have happened to the same scale or standard.

Recipients of funding through the Facilities Fund were very positive about its impact. The range of impacts included greater use and access; better health and safety; increased community participation in sport; enhanced school to club pathways and links; development of more sustainable community sport clubs; improved access for disabled people; the development of an interest in new sports; and a more vibrant school PE department.

Generally, schools and local authority officers felt that facilities were accessible and popular. Some had arrangements in place to ensure that young people were able to use the facilities in an affordable way, or to ensure that bookings for young people took priority over adults.

More generally, some facility related barriers to the Active Schools programme were identified. Teachers and Active Schools teams highlighted concerns about access to gym halls, which are often used for other purposes and may not be available in the evenings due to lack of janitorial cover or competing for access with wider community usage. Some young women highlighted that poor quality changing facilities can put some people off participating in school sport activities.

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Introduction

11.1   This chapter explores how **sport**scotland support has impacted on access to quality places in schools for sport and physical activity. It explores the impact of **sport**scotland support around the planning and design of spaces, and investment in school facilities. It also explores any evidence available about the groups benefiting from this support.

11.2   This chapter is based on eight interviews with school staff, local authority officers and others involved in the development of school facilities for sport and physical activity.

11.3   Between 2003 and 2017, the Sport Facilities Fund has supported 20 schools. **sport**scotland also provides broader support and design guidance around school sport facilities. It has three design guides for schools – for primary schools, secondary schools and for sports pitches.

Experiences of support

11.4   The experiences of schools and local authorities which had accessed funding through the Sport Facilities Fund was positive overall. Schools and local authorities were broadly content with the support provided by **sport**scotland. This included application advice, and support with planning and designing the new facilities. Respondents had support from **sport**scotland through advising on applications, commenting on plans, advising on layout and surfaces, liaison with other partners and consultants, and attending planning and design meetings and site visits.

11.5   The eight schools and local authorities interviewed had approached **sport**scotland for support for a range of different reasons, including:

- existing facilities were becoming run down and required improvement;
- new schools were being built and additional funding was needed to assist with developing sporting facilities; or
- working with partners including clubs and community groups had identified a need for new or improved facilities.

11.6   Two of the local authority officers indicated that they would have liked more support from **sport**scotland, beyond financial investment. One felt that support with planning and design was "a bit mixed" and another would have liked more timely feedback about plans submitted – as modifications were requested to the facilities design after the build had begun. Both of these local authorities also consulted governing bodies of sport and other contractors about the more detailed aspects of specifications.

11.7   Most participants believed that **sport**scotland provided access to expertise that wouldn't have been available within the local authority. Schools also indicated that those involved in the technical planning (consultants or local authorities) made use of **sport**scotland guidance. However, two local authority officers felt that the relevant expertise was available within their authority – and that **sport**scotland guidance was useful and complemented this. Both believed that building and maintaining a relationship with **sport**scotland was just as important as accessing its expertise.

11.8   One school found that the pre-application process was complex, and suggested that this be simplified. However, they found that the process became clearer with support from **sport**scotland.

11.9   Schools believed without the additional investment, and support, provided by **sport**scotland, the development of the facilities would not have been possible, or would have been much smaller scale. Local authority officials felt that the facilities would not have been developed to the same scale or standard, believing that **sport**scotland investment resulted in higher quality and more flexible facilities. One headteacher also felt that **sport**scotland's investment gave the project credibility, and encouraged other partners to invest.

Example – Level of investment
In one school, the total cost of developing a 3G pitch was £400,000. The school received £66,750 from **sport**scotland. This is 17 per cent of the total cost. Other costs were met by a UK government Covenant Fund grant and funding from the local authority. The development of the 3G pitch would not have gone ahead without **sport**scotland support. Even with other funding in place, the school needed additional investment.

Example – Level of investment
In one school, **sport**scotland provided initial helpful advice at application stage. **sport**scotland then provided technical advice about the development of the 3G pitch, and signposted the school to an individual within the SFA who was able to provide very clear advice. In addition, a local authority planning officer helped with suggestions. This support positively impacted on the standard of facility developed. Through **sport**scotland

and its links to other organisations, the school was able to access expertise that was not available within the school or local authority.

"They were very helpful."

<div align="right">School staff member</div>

Example – Standard of facilities
In one school, the total cost of developing a new swimming pool was £500,000. sportscotland requested that a moveable floor was included. While this required additional funding to be sourced by the council, it resulted in a multi-use, flexible pool that can be used for a wide range of groups. For example, the floor can be adjusted to suit traditional, toddler and antenatal swimming activities.

"It has increased capacity and we can do more targeted work with particular groups."

<div align="right">Local authority officer</div>

Impact

11.10   Recipients of funding through the Facilities Fund were very positive about its impact. The impact depended on the school, and the facility developed. However, the range of impacts highlighted included:

- greater access and use – for example being able to use pitches in any weather, enabling more predictable training sessions and competitions, and enabling flexible or multi-use of facilities for different activities and groups;
- better health and safety – both for players and spectators;
- increased community participation in sport – with facilities available evenings and weekends, having more capacity and more spaces to play;
- enhanced school to club pathways and links – clubs and schools sharing use of facilities;
- development of more sustainable community sports clubs – with income for facilities being used to invest in the club;
- improved access for disabled people – seeing increased usage for people with additional support needs;
- an interest in new sports – for example, climbing or swimming; and
- a more vibrant PE department, able to offer wide range of sport and physical activities.

"It is a big asset to the school... The impact has been quite amazing."

<div align="right">School staff member (3G pitch)</div>

"The whole community has access to the new facilities and usage has doubled."

<div align="right">Local authority officer (swimming pool)</div>

"On a nightly basis the pitches are full of youngsters playing and enjoying sport which, as a bottom line, is the best advert of all."

School staff member (3G pitch)

"It has improved club capacity. The additional space has resolved unmet demand."

Local authority officer, (range of facilities)

"It is always playable and provides a much drier, warmer surface for the younger pupils. If involved in football and/ or rugby for example, pupils still fall but are able to resume without being wet or drenched in clinging mud."

School staff member (3G pitch)

Example – Impact

In one school, a new climbing wall has encouraged more young people to try climbing through PE lessons. Some are continuing to climb outside of PE and are getting coaching in climbing. Four teachers (in a very small school) have become qualified to coach on the climbing wall and can now run lunchtime sessions for pupils.

Example – Impact

In one school, the development of new facilities was undertaken jointly with a local basketball club. The school and basketball club worked closely with Active Schools from application stage. Because of the new facility, the club was able to develop a coaching programme and offer Twilight Basketball sessions. This enhanced what the school could offer in terms of a pathway for young people, and the club membership grew significantly.

11.11   One school had some concerns about maintenance of a new swimming pool with state of the art facilities, which would require regular investment. However, some felt the new facilities were more sustainable because of lower running costs and higher revenues – particularly 3G pitches. In one case, the new facilities were some distance from the school which somewhat restricted usage.

Example – Sustainability

In one school, sportscotland investment meant that instead of surfacing a new pitch with a traditional synthetic surface, a 3G surface was used. This would have been much cheaper, but would not have generated the revenue possible from the 3G surface. The new state of the art facilities are rented out to other schools, clubs and community groups and the revenue means that the Trust managing the pitch is "more than breaking even."

11.12   Generally, schools and local authority officers felt that facilities were accessible, but popular. Some schools had arrangements in place to ensure that bookings for young people took priority over adults. One new facility charged much less for young people to use the facilities than adults, which has resulted in 90 per cent of community bookings being for young people.
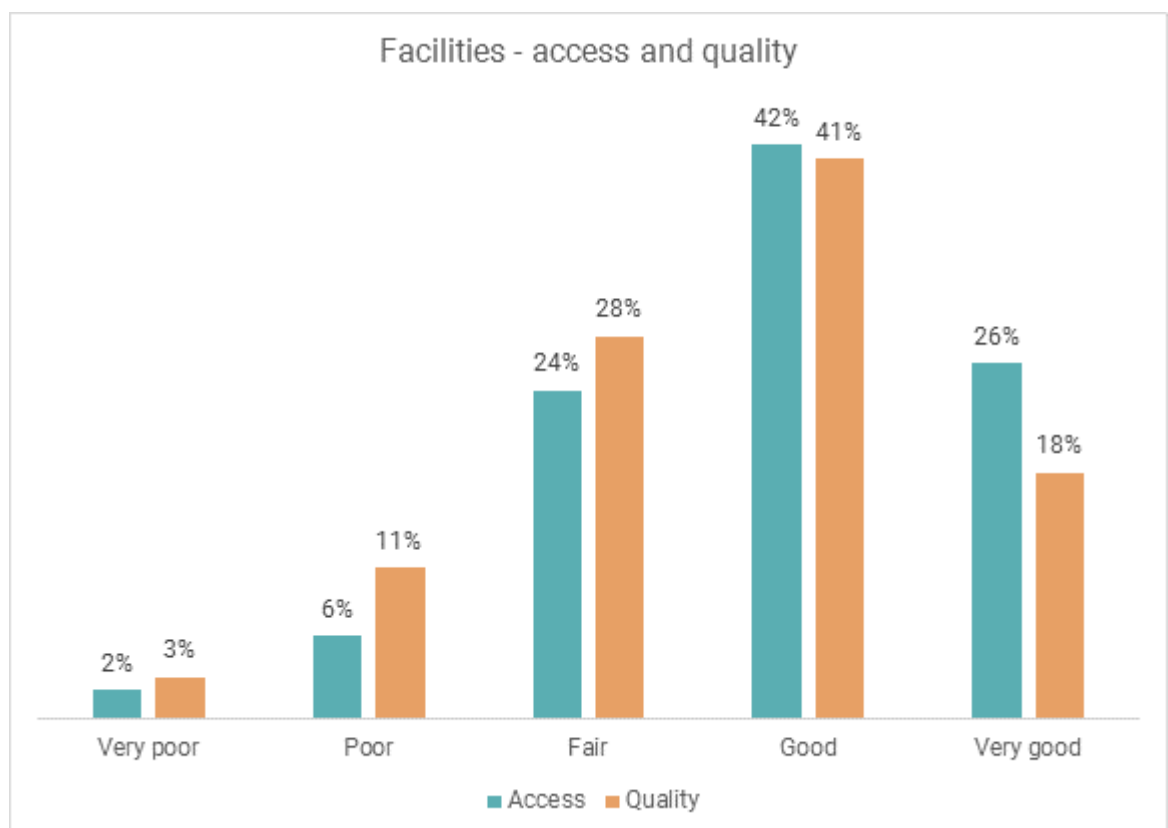
Example – Access

In one school, community representatives helped to design guidelines for fair use of the new 3G pitch. The facility can be accessed by the wider community in the evenings and weekends, and priority is given to certain groups. The facility is also used for games, sports and festivals.

The facility is owned by the local authority, and managed by the school at no cost. The school has a ten year lease for the pitch. The fees charged for community use go back into the development and maintenance of the facility.

Wider views on facilities

11.13   Overall, ASCs and SSCOs rated the quality of the facilities in the schools they support reasonably highly. Most (59%) felt that the quality was good or very good. Access to facilities was also rated highly, with most (68%) feeling that access to facilities was either good or very good.

Facilities - access and quality

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
Access	2%	6%	24%	42%	26%
Quality	3%	11%	28%	41%	18%

11.14   However, ASCs highlighted some barriers to running Active Schools programmes which relate to facilities. The main issues related to the availability of facilities. The key concerns were:

- halls being used for other school uses – at lunchtimes and for assemblies;
- lack of access to primary schools after school – due to lack of janitorial cover or other staff to provide access; and
- competing for access to facilities – when facilities are in community use and can be popular with other sports clubs or after school care.

11.15   Some also highlighted that the nature and quality of facilities could make access more restricted. For example, not having flood lights can restrict hours of usage for outdoor pitches, and not having all weather surfaces can make some pitches unplayable in winter.

11.16   In addition, ASCs highlighted particular issues around a general lack of facilities in smaller towns, villages and rural areas. Where facilities are available, a lack of transport can make it very hard for people to access facilities in remote and rural areas. Some ASCs also felt that facilities in primary schools, particularly older schools could sometimes be limited. For example, some gym halls are small and don't have the necessary equipment.

11.17   In one of the eight discussion groups with pupils, secondary school girls highlighted that when changing facilities are not very good, this can put some girls off participating in school sporting activities.

11.18   School staff also highlighted issues around high demand for facilities. Halls are often used for other uses – assemblies, shows, drama, exams, etc – and this puts pressure on their use. Existing facilities also often require upgrading to improve changing facilities (particular issue – often needing major investment), to maintain quality. There were also some issues with older facilities around access.

"Structurally the school's facilities aren't great for young people with disabilities, but we do what we can."

School staff member

"Access to our hall - we would like to host more clubs but can only hold one each night. With two hours of PE expected for each child, timetabling the hall is challenging."

Teacher

"We have one gym hall and it is used constantly - another space for sport would benefit us."

Teacher

12. Impact on young people

Chapter summary

Pupils felt that Active Schools had enabled them to try new sports they may not otherwise have had the chance to; introduced more choice of activity; made them feel more confident about trying other activities; and created a positive culture around sport and physical activity within many schools. A few young women said that being part of Active Schools gave them the confidence to join a sports club that they wouldn't have otherwise.

Pupils said that otherwise they may have done other sports, spent time on other interests, or be more sedentary. A few pupils in remote and rural areas felt that without Active Schools they wouldn't have many other opportunities to do sport and physical activity.

Pupils felt that Active Schools activities made them feel happy. In particular, many of the pupils involved who had additional support needs said that Active Schools activities, and sport more generally, helped them to feel confident, happy and healthy. Pupils also made new friends which could help with the transition from primary to secondary school and break down barriers between social groups.

Pupils who were leading activities learned many life skills around confidence, leadership, organisation, time management, communication, decision making, team work and public speaking. Some felt more confident at school, or more confident going on to further learning opportunities. Some gained leadership and coaching qualifications through Active Schools.

Teachers also highlighted that pupils were developing life skills through leadership opportunities. Many felt that it helped some pupils to become more involved in and engaged with learning, with behaviour improving and a consequent impact on attainment.

Some pupils went on to volunteer in the community, coaching or officiating. Parents and Active Schools teams felt this contributed to strong communities with young people as active citizens.

Some involved in leadership opportunities found that it helped to inform their future education and career choices. Some Young Ambassadors found an interest and passion for sport that they now wanted to carry through into their career.

The large scale survey of almost 15,000 school pupils found that Active Schools participants who responded were positive about the development of their sporting and physical activity skills through their involvement in Active Schools. Active Schools respondents reported feeling healthy, included, confident and interested in

new things as a result of taking part in sport and physical activity. Active Schools participants felt more positive about all of these areas than pupils who did not participate in Active Schools.

Introduction

12.1   This chapter explores how children and young people have benefited from participating in Active Schools. It draws views gathered through eight focus group discussions; interviews with Young Ambassadors and the Young People's Sport Panel, and online surveys of parents, teachers and **sport**scotland supported staff.

12.2   This chapter also draws on findings from the large scale survey of school pupils, undertaken across Scotland, highlighting key findings in relation to impact of Active Schools participation on young people.

Sporting interest and skills

12.3   Most of the pupils involved in the eight discussion groups were already sporty, and involved in a range of other activities outwith Active Schools. However, pupils felt that Active Schools had:

- enabled them to try new sports that they may not have had the opportunity to try otherwise;
- introduced more choice of activity;
- created a positive culture around sport and physical activity in the school; and
- made them feel more confident about trying new sports and physical activities.

"It allows us to try a wider variety of sports that we would not normally do."
Secondary pupil

12.4   Parents also felt that the affordable nature of the opportunity meant that pupils were able to try out more new sports and activities than they would otherwise. Active Schools teams highlighted the access to enjoyable, fun and varied opportunities which helped them to engage more with sport and physical activity.

"The range of opportunities delivered and organised through Active Schools, working with volunteers and local community clubs, has provided young people with the opportunities to experience sports they may never have had the opportunity to do so."
ASM

> *"It is great to try new sports without a big financial outlay."*
>
> <div align="right">Parent</div>

12.5   Many of the young people involved in the focus groups said that they were members of sports clubs in the community, and that they would have joined sports clubs without any involvement of Active Schools. However, a few young women said that being part of Active Schools gave them more confidence to join another sports club.

> *"Active Schools gives you that bigger bit of confidence to go and join a club."*
>
> <div align="right">Primary pupil, female</div>

> *"Because of Active Schools I am happy to give everything a go."*
>
> <div align="right">Secondary pupil, female</div>

12.6   Some parents also indicated that their children developed a confidence and passion for sport through Active Schools, and went on to join local clubs. Teachers also highlighted the links developed with local clubs.

> *"My daughter has developed a passion for football and sports in general through joining Active Schools."*
>
> <div align="right">Parent</div>

12.7   Some pupils said that without Active Schools involvement they would be more sedentary or "lazy" - playing on electronic gadgets, watching TV or playing board games. But some said they would do other sports like swimming, trampolining, horse riding, ice skating, going out on their bike, going to the park, going for walks, or doing sport outwith school. Some would spend more time on other interests, like musical instruments or playing with their pets. Some parents also said that Active Schools provided a good alternative to gadgets and computer games – helping to keep children active and with a long term interest in sport.

12.8   A few pupils in rural and remote areas felt that without Active Schools they would not have many other opportunities to do sport and physical activity. A few teachers at ASN schools also felt that without Active Schools, pupils may not have any other opportunities to take part in any physical activity or exercise.

> *"If Active Schools wasn't here, we wouldn't have as much to do because there isn't much here on the island."*
>
> <div align="right">Primary pupil</div>

12.9   Most (94%) Active Schools participants who responded to the pupil survey felt that doing sport and physical activity made them want to be more active in the future. This applied across all equalities groups. These respondents also felt that being involved in Active Schools had helped them to be more

active outside school (84%) and get more interested in other sports clubs or groups outside school (66%).

12.10   Active Schools survey respondents were also positive about the development of their sporting and physical activity skills through their involvement in Active Schools:

- 83% felt it had helped them to learn a new skill;
- 79% felt it had helped them to get better at sport or other activities; and
- 76% felt it had helped them to be more confident in sport or physical activity.

12.11   When asked what they wanted to achieve through taking part in sport and physical activity, secondary school Active Schools participants most commonly stated that they wanted to be healthy, fit and better at sport. More than three quarters (76%) of respondents believed they were achieving their goals.

Confidence, happiness and friendships

Happiness

12.12   Pupils in the discussion groups indicated that Active Schools made them feel happy.

"It makes me happy."

Primary pupil

"I would be sad if I didn't do sport."

Primary pupil

12.13   In particular, many pupils with additional support needs said that Active Schools activities, and sport more generally, helped them to feel confident, happy and healthy. A few pupils with additional support needs said that without sport they would feel annoyed and angry.

Example – Building happiness and confidence
One pupil with ASN described how she has a lot of energy, and has found sport a useful way to channel and release her energy. She has activities most days, and thrives on the competitive element of sport. Going to sports clubs out of school has helped her to make new friends.

"Without sports I would be very, very annoyed."

Secondary pupil, ASN school

12.14   The inclusive nature of the opportunities and the focus on fun was important to many young people. Parents also emphasised that activity was beneficial because it took place in a fun, enjoyable and familiar environment.

"Anyone can join, you don't need to be sporty."

Secondary pupil

"It's about having fun when doing sport and exercise."

Primary pupil

Confidence and friendships

12.15   Most parents said that the opportunities had been very (78%) or quite (16%) beneficial. Very few (2%) said that they had not been beneficial. Parents felt that children learned new skills through participating in Active Schools, including confidence, opportunities to socialise with other children, and learning about teamwork.

"They are more confident and better able to meet and mix with new peers and staff."

Parent

"Our son's confidence has grown from being a relatively shy individual to now having the confidence to present to an audience of over 500."

Parent

12.16   Some parents also highlighted that through Active Schools activity, pupils from primary and secondary schools mixed, which could make the transition from primary to secondary school easier. Some Active Schools teams highlighted the benefits of developing new social networks with pupils from other schools, and helping young people build better links with their local communities.

12.17   Teachers also highlighted the impact of Active Schools in helping pupils to get to know pupils from other cluster schools, helping with the transition to high school. Many also talked of the impact of leadership opportunities on confidence and self-esteem.

"You see young people develop confidence and skills that may not necessarily be seen in daily school life."

Teacher

"It increases their confidence and they have an opportunity to be a leader in a supported environment.

Teacher

12.18   Pupils who took part in Active Schools activity said that they met new friends and made friendships through this. Young Ambassadors and members of

the Young People's Sport Panel also highlighted the opportunities that the panel provided in terms of social connections and networks.

"It's all about getting fit and active, and meeting new friends."

Primary pupil

12.19   Young Ambassadors also indicated that the opportunity had increased their social circle, and in some cases helped to break down barriers between social groups in the school. Some Young Ambassadors talked about their ability to give presentations in front of large audiences, with confidence. Some highlighted that the process of applying for the role and being interviewed was good experience for the future.

"I have so much more confidence to go out and do things in front of people, and to speak in front of people."

Secondary pupil

12.20   Active Schools deliverers also observed that pupil relationships were developing through participation in sport and activity sessions.

"Pupils are learning to be cooperative and improve their peer relationships."

Deliverer

"We see massive changes in confidence and social interaction in kids who've spent time in our group."

Deliverer

Example – Building confidence
At one school for pupils with ASN, the Young Ambassadors programme has helped to build the confidence and skills of pupils.

"One of the pupils who has now completed the Young Ambassador programme couldn't speak when he first came to school. He is now super confident. He got such a buzz out of the programme."

Teacher

12.21   From the survey of pupils, Active Schools participants were positive about all aspects related to wellbeing. Taking part in sport and physical activity had helped:

- 92 per cent to feel more confident;
- 87 per cent to make friends;
- 98 per cent to feel healthier;
- 91 per cent of secondary pupils feel more included; and
- 88 per cent of secondary pupils feel interested in new things.

12.22 Active Schools participants felt more positive about all these areas than pupils who did not take part in Active Schools. For more detail, refer to the separate report on [sportscotland's contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments](#).

Skills for life and learning

12.23 Pupils also highly valued the experience they gained through volunteering to run activities in schools and local clubs. Pupils who had been involved in delivering Active Schools activity had enjoyed it. Secondary pupils and Young Ambassadors indicated that they learned new skills around confident leadership, organisation, time management, communication, being decisive, team work and public speaking, as well as gaining confidence.

"It's helped me learn how to encourage, motivate and persuade people."

Young Ambassador

12.24 Some felt more confident at school – for example speaking out in class - and others felt more confident going on to further learning opportunities.

"I am applying the learning from the leadership opportunities into my day to day life. This has taught me a greater sense of responsibility and provided me with a number of new skills, like communicating and not being afraid to talk to large groups."

Young Ambassador

"It has made me more confident about leaving home to go to university."

Young Ambassador

12.25 Members of the Young People's Sport Panel also highlighted that the skills they developed around team work, communication and time management would be useful in their future learning and work.

12.26 Active Schools teams highlighted that young people were developing their skills around the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence – confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Deliverers also felt that they saw significant changes in young people when working with them. This included improvement in confidence, social interaction, respect, team work, resilience and motivation to learn. Deliverers also felt that it encouraged young people to be busy and active, with positive distractions outside school and a feeling of being part of something. Some also felt that it provided an opportunity for those who are less academic to feel more connected to school, and could help improve teacher-pupil relations.

> *"Some pupils have been on the school's last warning or in consistent trouble but have thrived whilst out on the bike and always wanting to do more."*
>
> Deliverer

12.27   Teachers also highlighted that pupils were developing their life skills through leadership opportunities available through Active Schools. Teachers talked of the impact on confidence, self esteem and health and wellbeing. In particular, many teachers felt that Active Schools helped some pupils to become more involved and engaged in learning, with behaviour improving and a consequent impact on attainment. Some felt that this was particularly important for less academic pupils, as Active Schools supported them to achieve their potential.

> *"Pupils benefit in both their mental and physical health as well as developing leadership and organisational skills."*
>
> Teacher

> *"We have pupils engaged in and succeeding in sporting activities who don't always achieve in the classroom thanks to the opportunities PEPASS and Active Schools provide in our city."*
>
> Teacher

> *"Pupils blossom when they take on this responsibility- their confidence, literacy and attitudes are all improved."*
>
> Teacher

12.28   Parents of young people who had been involved in leadership opportunities were positive about them, believing that these opportunities support the development of confidence, respect and life skills.

> *"Young role models are vital. Children look up to teenage sports people and I have seen how teenagers grow massively in confidence through sports leadership programmes."*
>
> Parent

Example – Building further opportunities
One Young Ambassador now leads dance classes at school, and at the local dance club. She felt that being a Young Ambassador had helped her to become a school House Captain. The opportunity had built her self confidence and self-esteem, developed her organisational skills, and made her more open to new ideas.

Qualifications

12.29   A number of the pupils in discussion groups had gained leadership and coaching qualifications through Active Schools. This included leadership qualifications (including sports leaders and dance leadership) and sports

specific qualifications. Pupils highly valued the opportunity to gain these qualifications, and felt that their skills had improved.

"It provides a chance to gain experience and get sports related qualifications."

Secondary pupil

"I have become more confident in coaching. It has shown me different ways to teach pupils of different ages and abilities."

Secondary pupil

Example – Young Ambassadors and qualifications
Some Young Ambassadors said that through their involvement, they had been able to achieve Scottish governing body qualifications, for example in swimming, netball and gymnastics. This enabled them to coach and lead sessions in school, in cluster primary schools, and in holiday camps.

Volunteering

12.30   For some, an initial involvement in delivering Active Schools had encouraged more volunteering and coaching activity. Some felt that without Active Schools they would still be participating in sport and leading active lifestyles, but they would not have done the coaching or officiating. Many found this activity particularly rewarding, and said that Active Schools had helped them have opportunities to take the lead.

"Active Schools has supported me to take sport further. I now lead sessions at the local primary school."

Secondary pupil, female

"I do a lot of volunteering out of school, in the local primary school and in local clubs."

Secondary pupil

12.31   Parents and Active Schools teams also felt that these leadership opportunities were helping to contribute to strong communities with young people as active citizens.

"Allows them to make a visible and welcome contribution to their community. Children often respond better to other young people."

Parent

"It's a great experience which helps young people grow to become active citizens and lifelong volunteers."

ASM

Skills for work

12.32   For some, the experience gained through volunteering was very helpful for gaining work related experience, for future careers. Some Young Ambassadors indicated that they had found an interest and passion for sport which they now wanted to carry through into their career.

"The best thing about being involved with Active Schools is gaining new skills that I will be able to use when I go to university, and when I start working. I have gained so much from this."

Young Ambassador

"I have found that it is something I would love to carry out as a career, and within my role as a YA this has offered me so much experience to help me achieve this."

Young Ambassador

12.33   Some Active Schools teams also highlighted that leadership opportunities had helped to inform and influence the future education and career choices of young people, and provided them with useful experience for CVs and personal statements. Some felt that leadership opportunities had fostered an interest in a career around physical activity. However others felt that leadership opportunities had helped young people to develop a wide range of transferrable skills, applicable to many different environments.

"The skills they gain from sports leadership awards and Young Ambassador training are vital, and the skills are transferrable across many different scenarios."

ASC

"Leadership opportunities stand young people in good stead when applying for college and university places as well as work."

ASC

football team and another coaches athletics. Both deliver an Active Schools multi-sport club at a local primary school. The young women felt that the sports leadership and volunteering experience that they got through Active Schools, when they were at school, had helped to influence their career choices.

Example – Gaining work experience
In one school, three senior pupils were doing a Sport and Recreation module at their school. As part of this, they cover sports leadership and are required to undertake 10 hours of volunteering in school and 25 hours in the community. The pupils often come to the ASC to access work experience in local clubs. This programme links with the local authority leadership programme, which pupils are encouraged to take part in throughout primary and secondary school.

Example – Gaining work experience
In one school, a senior pupil with additional support needs has been doing work experience at the local sports centre, organised through the ASC. In the past, she has found it difficult to join clubs because it was hard to make friends. But now, sport is a big part of her life.

13. Blend of support

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Chapter summary

- Those involved in the research were broadly positive about the range of programmes supported by **sport**scotland in the schools and education environment.
- The Active Schools network was seen to underpin **sport**scotland supported work in schools and education (and beyond into the clubs and communities environment in some cases).
- Stakeholders felt strongly that the Active Schools programme should be continued, ideally with longer term funding to allow effective resource planning.
- A few felt that there should be greater alignment between Active Schools and Community Sports Hubs, with more of a focus on building active communities – linking schools and club activity.
- Some stakeholders suggested a greater focus on targeted activities for people who are inactive or come from deprived areas; greater alignment with the attainment agenda; a focus on physical activity as well as sport; and enhanced quality of monitoring and reporting.
- Some suggested there was scope to place more focus on leadership, and to develop a simpler and more organised school sport competition programme.
- Some felt that there should be more flexibility at local level, with resources and responsibilities devolved to local authorities and local partnerships to ensure linkages with local priorities.

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Introduction

13.1   This short chapter summarises the main themes emerging around the impact of the blend of support. It explores views on the different **sport**scotland programmes, and priorities for future support.

Views on different programmes

13.2   Views on what worked and what didn't about each of the programmes are set out under relevant themes throughout the report. The main themes emerging in relation to each programme are summarised below.

Active Schools	
What Worked Well	**Areas for Improvement**
Reach and involvement of pupils	Equality in participation for young women

Quality of activity	Consistency in deliverer skills – with particular need for development around young people with additional support needs
High proportion of pupils in schools for additional support needs engaged	Focus on quality of activity rather than mass participation
Range of opportunities	Potential for more focus on supporting inactive people to become more active
High profile programme underpinning other **sport**scotland supported work in schools	Mixed views on effectiveness of school to club links
Good alignment with wider education and physical activity outcomes	Potential for closer and clearer links with wider learning in schools
Schools with high levels of deprivation were slightly more likely to have high levels of Active Schools participation	Financial barriers to participation in a few cases

Active Girls	
What Worked Well	**Areas for Improvement**
Helped to raise the profile of sport for young women	More follow up after Active Girls events to ensure sustained participation
Provided leadership opportunities and female role models	Further development of role models in schools
Provided additional funding	
Enabled consultation with young women	

School Sport Award	
What Worked Well	**Areas for Improvement**
Positive impact on quality	Buy-in from schools – seen as complex and bureaucratic by some
Building a culture of sport and activity in schools	Checking standards (at Bronze and Silver levels)
Building stronger relationships between Active Schools teams and schools	

School Sport Competition	
What Worked Well	**Areas for Improvement**
Well supported and highly rated	Variable quality (and not all areas have a dedicated School Sport Competition Officer)
	More could be done to introduce structured opportunities and pathways

Leadership	
What Worked Well	**Areas for Improvement**
Inclusion of young women	Sustainability – opportunities earlier in school and later into the community
Role models	Accessibility – potential for more opportunities and clearer application and selection processes
Excellent resource for schools	Links – with broader leadership programmes
Positive experience for young people, prestigious opportunity	More clarity of impact of Young People's Sport Panel at national level
Building a culture of sport and activity in schools	

Sport Facilities Fund – in schools	
What Worked Well	**Areas for Improvement**
Positivity about support provided	Potential for more proactive and timely support on plans
Supported development of new facilities which may not otherwise have been developed to the same scale or standard	More generally, facilities issues are a barrier to delivery for the Active Schools programme
Positive impact on usage, access, safety and school to club links	

Supporting both schools and clubs

13.3 ASMs were asked for their views on the combination of support from **sport**scotland for both schools and clubs. Some respondents felt that the approach was fairly balanced.

> *"I do believe that **sport**scotland have found a good balance between school and community sport."*
>
> ASM

13.4 Some felt that it was difficult to strike the right balance in terms of the support available, with schools probably benefiting more than clubs. Many ASMs said that the support for schools had been fantastic and very successful, and had had a big impact on schools and the opportunities available to pupils. A few highlighted that the Active Schools staff resource was sometimes stretched, and there were often tensions balancing targeted and universal approaches, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

13.5 Strategic stakeholders were also asked about this blend of support. Most felt that the blend was broadly right, but that there was more focus on schools than clubs. A few felt that schools received hands on support, while clubs received funding and guidance. However, some emphasised that the Active Schools network underpinned much of **sport**scotland's other work – particularly in schools and education.

"The financial support from **sport**scotland towards Active Schools has been the most significant factor over the last 10 years, which has allowed school and club sport to develop across the nation. Without this funding and the staff that it supports there would be no-one left to deliver on the other programme areas. Therefore, the continued support for Active Schools is the main priority…"

Strategic stakeholder

13.6 A few felt that there should be greater alignment between Active Schools and Community Sports Hubs, with more of a focus on building active communities – linking schools and club activity. Some **sport**scotland staff felt that this linkage was already happening to some extent, in some areas, but that more could be done to develop these connections. However, a few others felt that supporting physical activity and inactivity more generally was not the role of **sport**scotland support.

"It would be beneficial to identify the best way locally to support school and community sport across Active Schools and CSHs as a collective rather than focus on them as individual programmes."

Strategic stakeholder

"Clubs and school worlds are merging between programmes."

sportscotland staff member

Future support

13.7 ASMs and strategic stakeholders identified a number of priorities for the future.

13.8 Firstly, stakeholders felt strongly that the Active Schools programme should be continued, ideally with longer term funding to allow effective resource planning. Many felt that Active Schools was the glue that held together the other **sport**scotland supported programmes in schools.

13.9   In terms of developing the Active Schools programme, some stakeholders suggested a greater focus on:

- targeting activities towards people who are inactive or come from deprived areas or challenging backgrounds;
- alignment with the attainment agenda, the core priority within schools;
- physical activity as well as sport; and
- enhanced quality and consistency of monitoring and reporting – moving away from numbers towards qualitative information about experiences and impact.

"You never know if funding will be continued, this constrains what you can do and makes it hard to be ambitious."

Strategic stakeholder

13.10   Some suggested that there was scope to place more focus on leadership, and to develop a simpler and more organised school sport competition programme.

13.11   More generally, some felt that there should be more flexibility at local level, with resources and responsibilities devolved to local authorities and local partnerships to ensure linkages with local priorities.

14. Key findings and issues for consideration

Active Schools performs a critical role

14.1 The Active schools programme is providing a range of high quality opportunities for young people to be active. It is achieving its aim of providing more and higher quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before and after school, and at lunchtime.

14.2 The Active Schools network of staff is also providing a key role in holding together the range of **sport**scotland supported programmes in the schools and education environment, and creating a real sense of a blend of support.

Recommendation: The Active Schools programme, and associated blend of supported programmes in the schools and education environment, should be continued.

Scope for more focused and targeted activity

14.3 The Active Schools programme involved a high proportion of young people – an average of 43 per cent of the school roll. Much work has been done to engage a range of different young people in Active Schools. Teachers valued that the programme could adapt to needs, and target as required.

14.4 However, the programme involves more young men than young women. And young people who are already active may find it easier to become involved in Active Schools activities than those who are not active. There is a risk that a continued focus on growing participant numbers increases the gaps between young men and women, and those who are active and those who are not.

14.5 There is scope to consider a stronger focus on ensuring that Active Schools provides opportunities for people less likely to be active or more likely to experience poor health outcomes. This could include young women, young people from disadvantaged areas, young people who are not active and young disabled people in mainstream schools.

14.6 It could be possible to balance both the universal and targeted components of the programme. However, it is important to recognise that a stronger focus on targeted activity may result in a reduction of the overall number of young people involved in Active Schools.

Recommendation: sportscotland should consider refocusing the aims of the Active Schools programme to be less focused on overall participation numbers, and more focused on the range of participants involved – particularly those less likely to be active.

Contributing to wider education outcomes

14.7 The Active Schools programme is seen to link well with wider education outcomes, particularly the health and wellbeing priorities embedded within Curriculum for Excellence and the national priority of closing the poverty related attainment gap. However, the connections being made at local level vary between local authorities and schools – and can be complex for Active Schools teams to negotiate.

14.8 There is scope for **sport**scotland to clearly articulate the potential contribution that sport and physical activity can make to attainment – focusing on health and wellbeing and engagement with learning. This would help Active Schools teams to articulate this at local level, with teachers and local authorities. This message would fit well with a more targeted approach, particularly for young people from disadvantaged areas, articulated above. It would also require careful consideration of approaches to any charging for Active Schools activities at local level.

Recommendation: sportscotland should consider developing information which supports Active Schools teams at a local level to clearly articulate the potential contribution that sport and physical activity can make to attainment – focusing on health and wellbeing and engagement with learning.

Building consistency in quality

14.9 Active Schools delivery relies strongly on volunteer deliverers, with support and management from the Active Schools network. This enables the programme to have its reach and range. However, there is some evidence that deliverer turnover and differences in skills levels between deliverers can impact on the quality of experience. **sport**scotland may wish to consider:

- clearly articulating a clear focus on quality of experience rather than quantity – which would fit well with the targeted approach suggested above;
- a clear definition of a quality experience – building on existing work exploring what makes a quality deliverer, but also exploring what makes a quality experience for participants and other stakeholders such as schools;
- support and encouragement for Active Schools teams to gather feedback from young people during and after sessions – in a simple way; and
- an increased focus on qualitative information about quality and impact of Active Schools.

14.10 Some rural areas face particular barriers to delivering a range of quality opportunities – with challenges around transport, timing of sessions, access to facilities and access to skilled coaches. It is important to recognise that

these barriers exist, and that innovative and smaller scale approaches may need to be taken.

Recommendation: **sport**scotland should consider clearly articulating the focus of Active Schools on quality rather than quantity, and clearly defining what makes a quality experience within the schools environment.

Opportunities for young leaders

14.11 The young leaders programmes are viewed positively. However, **sport**scotland should consider:

- accessibility – some schools still need support with developing clear selection processes, with guidance on target groups and intended outcomes;
- sustainability – it is worth considering whether schools should be encouraged to select young people as Young Ambassadors earlier in their school lives, and how young people can be supported to sustain this into the community (potentially through links to the clubs and communities environment); and
- the intended outcomes – including intended outcomes for young people (such as enhanced confidence and skills development) and intended outcomes more widely (such as developing a pool of skilled deliverers to achieve Active Schools objectives).

Recommendation: **sport**scotland should consider the accessibility, sustainability and intended outcomes of the young leaders opportunities.

School to club links

14.12 Views across both the schools and education and clubs and communities evaluations have been mixed in relation to the effectiveness of school to club links. There were examples where it worked well.

14.13 But some in the schools environment found it hard to engage and involve clubs, and some in the clubs environment found it hard to engage and involve schools and others in the schools environment. It was also not always clear where responsibility for developing and sustaining these links lay. There are opportunities to do more to:

- clearly define what is meant by a school-club link;
- refresh and clarify roles and responsibilities for developing school-club links;
- enhance joint working arrangements between **sport**scotland supported staff in the clubs and communities and schools and education environments;

- connect the focus on getting active and physical activity within the school environment through into the work in the clubs and communities portfolio;
- support clubs to cope with increased demand from school pupils, generated through Active Schools; and
- connect leadership work between the schools and clubs environments.

Recommendation: sportscotland should work with stakeholders involved in both portfolios to clarify and strengthen work in developing school-club links, building on the strong network of staff in both environments with good relationships with schools, clubs and community groups.

Wider areas for development

14.14 There are a number of other ways in which **sport**scotland supported programmes could be further developed, in light of the above recommendations:

- there is potential to link targeted Active Schools work with girls and young women more clearly with the Active Girls brand – to give a clear sense of a link between events, role models and activities within schools;
- there is potential to profile the real value of the School Sport Award to schools – perhaps through very short case studies on the impact on schools – and consider a more streamlined approach to Bronze and Silver awards;
- consideration could be given to a more consistent approach to developing and supporting competition opportunities across the country, to ensure that pupils in all areas have access to structured opportunities and pathways which are suitable to their local area; and
- stronger linkages could be made between evidence about the facilities related barriers to Active Schools work and the investment decisions made in relation to Sports Facilities Fund awards in schools.

14.15 We recognise that development around some of these areas is already ongoing.

Appendix One: Method

Method

This evaluation involved four main stages:

- a review of background data;
- online surveys;
- discussion groups and interviews; and
- reporting.

Our detailed approach is set out below.

Review of background data

We reviewed a range of contextual information and background data to inform this evaluation. This included:

- **sport**scotland plans, reports and strategies;
- information on Active Schools including annual reports, participation data and 'impacts and interventions' information which gathers stories of change and reflections from Active Schools teams on key successes and challenges; and
- information on School Sport Awards, leadership awards and support to schools through the facilities fund.

This information was used to inform this report, and also influenced the design of the online surveys and discussion guides for focus groups and interviews.

Online surveys

We gathered the views of a range of key stakeholders through online surveys of:

- **sportscotland supported staff** – We issued an online survey to all Active Schools Managers (ASMs), Active Schools Coordinators (ASCs) and School Sport Competition Officers (SSCOs) in Scotland, using contact information provided by **sport**scotland. We issued 504 invitations to participate, and received 329 responses. This is a response rate of 65 per cent.

- **Deliverers** – We asked ASMs to circulate an online survey to people delivering Active Schools activities, where possible. We received 159 responses to this survey. Responses were from nine local authority areas, with most coming from three areas where it was clear that ASMs had been able to circulate the survey to deliverers.

- **Parents** – We asked ASMs to circulate an online survey to parents of children and young people participating in Active Schools activities. We received 492 responses to this survey. Responses came from 12 local authority areas.

- **Teachers** – We distributed an online survey to all 2,400 schools in Scotland, using the Scottish Government's school contact database. Active Schools teams also raised awareness of the teacher survey with the schools they worked with, which was very effective in increasing response rates from teachers. We received 579 responses to this survey. Responses came from all 32 local authority areas.

- **Strategic stakeholders** – We distributed an online survey to strategic stakeholders, identified by **sport**scotland. This survey explored both views on school based activity, and **sport**scotland supported work with clubs and communities (to inform the clubs and communities evaluation, happening at the same time and also to help inform how well **sport**scotland's offering across portfolio areas works for stakeholders). We received 19 responses to this survey.

Discussion groups and interviews

We held discussion groups and face to face or telephone interviews with a range of stakeholders:

- **Discussion groups with pupils** – We held eight discussion groups in school settings with children and young people who took part in Active Schools and leadership activities. Each group involved between six and eight young people, and lasted between 20 and 50 minutes. Two groups were held specifically with children with additional support needs, two groups specifically with girls and young women and two groups in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. A total of 62 young people took part in these groups.

- **Interviews with Young Ambassadors** – We held 17 interviews, either face to face or by telephone, with Young Ambassadors. These participants were selected to provide a mix of geographies and levels of involvement. Discussions lasted approximately 30 minutes.

- **Interviews with the Young People's Sport Panel** – We held five telephone interviews with members of the Young People's Sport Panel. Discussions lasted approximately 30 minutes.

- **Interviews with stakeholders** – We held telephone interviews with two national partners working with **sport**scotland around schools and education activity; three local authority education leads; three local authority officers involved in recent school sport facilities work with **sport**scotland and two School Sport Competition Officers. These interviews were targeted at filling gaps in survey

responses, gaining an understanding of local authorities which had received support through the facilities fund, and gaining a local and national partner perspective.

- **Interviews with teachers** – We held eight interviews with teachers. Four were with teachers in schools which had recently received support through **sport**scotland's facilities fund, and five were to explore general perceptions on **sport**scotland supported schools work more broadly.

- **Discussion groups with sportscotland staff** – We held three discussion groups with **sport**scotland staff, to gain internal perspectives on **sport**scotland's activities both in schools and education, and clubs and communities. These discussions largely focused on the clubs and communities' portfolio.

Reporting

We analysed all information gathered during the fieldwork stage using robust and consistent methods.

For online surveys, a quantitative analysis of closed responses was undertaken using SNAP software and Excel. This enabled comparison of responses between respondent groups. Any similarities, trends or divergences were identified and reported.

A rich, qualitative analysis was undertaken using manual thematic coding. Although we have access to powerful qualitative analysis software, we find that the best way to identify themes, issues and views is through reading each open response carefully, manually coding responses into key themes emerging, and reporting on these themes and the different views within this. We also used analysis software to search for key themes within the survey, to help us to select participants for follow up interviews or discussion groups.

For focus groups and interviews, we used a qualitative approach to analysis – again using manual thematic coding as described above. Within the report, we used a broad qualitative scale to describe the proportion of people who commented on particular themes and topics:

- one/ an individual – a point raised by just one person;
- a few – just two or three people;
- some – less than half of respondents in that category; and
- most – more than half of respondents in that category.

When summarising survey findings within bulleted lists, the points are listed broadly in order of frequency mentioned.

Active Scotland Outcomes Framework research

At the same time as conducting this evaluation, Research Resource and Research Scotland also jointly conducted research exploring **sport**scotland's contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments. This included a large scale survey, run by Research Resource, with almost 15,000 responses from school pupils across Scotland. Key findings from the survey have been highlighted within this report, to strengthen the discussion. A full breakdown of the results and methodology is available in the [ASOF report](#).