

Evaluation of **sportscotland** supported activity: clubs and communities

Executive summary May 2018

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Executive summary

About this report

This evaluation explores the impact of the range of **sportscotland** supported work in the clubs and communities environment. The evaluation was undertaken at the same time as:

- an evaluation of **sportscotland** supported work in the schools and education environment; and
- research exploring **sportscotland**'s contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments, which included a large scale survey with 3,000 responses from club members at **sportscotland** supported clubs.

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

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

The sportscotland range of support

The Clubs and Communities Framework – Working Together – sets out **sportscotland**'s framework for supporting clubs and community organisations. **sportscotland** support in the clubs and communities environment includes:

Programme	Aims	Scale in 2016/17
Community Sport Hubs (CSHs)	Growth in participation Reducing barriers to participation Developing pathways Supporting leadership, volunteering and workforce development	179 CSHs 96 in schools 1,248 clubs involved 155,000 club members 60 CSH officers £1.5 million per annum
Scottish Governing Body for sport (SGB) regional posts	Support club development and growth	638 focus clubs 70,000 club members 50 sportscotland supported SGB regional posts £1.7 million per annum
Programme	Aims	Scale

Direct Club Investment (DCI)	Growth in club membership and developing talent <i>From late 2017 – focus on opportunities for under-represented groups</i>	122 clubs invested in between 2013 and 2017 32,000 club members 187 DCI supported paid posts (part time) £0.78 million per annum
Sport Facilities Fund	Supporting facilities for community recreation, club sport of high performance training and competition	2012/13 to 2016/17 Invested in 232 facilities £28.8 million invested Investment in every local authority in Scotland
Awards for All	Supporting clubs to build healthier, safer, stronger, more equal and more sustainable services which help people have better chances in life	174 awards in 2016/17 £0.9 million in 2016/17
Help for Clubs	Supporting clubs to improve their quality and governance	Guidance online

Participation

Overall, **sportscotland** support has helped clubs and groups increase their membership and participation. In 2016/17 there were more than 200,000 club members involved in clubs supported by **sportscotland** through its CSH, SGB regional post and DCI programmes.

Programme	Main areas of support reported
CSH Overall increase in participation in supported clubs +4%¹	Through raising awareness, supporting links and joint working, access to training and access to facilities
SGB regional posts Overall increase in participation in supported clubs +10%²	Through increasing profile, supporting joint working and targeting specific groups
DCI Overall increase in participation in supported clubs +14%³	Through offering more sessions, increasing staff and volunteers, better access to facilities, more links with partners and lower costs for members
Sport Facilities Fund	Through providing quality places for participation, including for a range of age groups, for disabled people and young women

¹ 2015/16 to 2016/17

² 2015/16 to 2016/17

³ 2015/16 to 2016/17

Awards for All	Through funding training and qualifications for coaches and officials, supporting youth development, better access to facilities and equipment and enabling taster sessions
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Inclusion

Among **sportscotland** supported clubs, there are more male than female participants at both adult and junior level. Overall, there are more than double the number of men than women involved in the supported clubs. The balance is better for the clubs that **sportscotland** actively targets (SGB regional post focus clubs and clubs receiving DCI) at 59 per cent men and 41 per cent women.

Clubs supported by **sportscotland** have also seen membership of young women increase at a faster rate than that of both young men and adults. However, there remain more men than women involved in supported clubs.

sportscotland does not collect monitoring data from clubs on equalities characteristics beyond age and gender. However, the profile of respondents to the club member survey suggested that disabled club members, ethnic minorities and people living in areas of deprivation are relatively under represented when compared to the Scottish population. A full breakdown is available in the [ASOF report](#)⁴.

sportscotland support has helped to build the confidence of clubs and groups in engaging with under-represented groups. Most feel confident engaging with girls and women – but are less confident engaging people from areas of socio-economic deprivation and disabled people.

CSHs and SGB regional posts have helped a little, through offering information, awareness raising and networking opportunities. Clubs which have been able to access additional funding, for example through Awards for All, CSHs and SGB regional posts have been able to support more practical changes around engaging with new groups, providing taster sessions and improving member diversity.

Clubs were very positive about the impact of DCI in helping them to engage with under-represented groups. Successes were often due to targeted support projects working in close partnership with a range of people and service providers in the community. Clubs would like more support with understanding needs and involving under-represented groups. There remain barriers around the cost of participation and transport; access to inclusive facilities and changing rooms; availability of targeted or girls only activities; and access to experienced coaches and volunteers.

Connected clubs and pathways

sportscotland support has helped clubs and community groups to become more connected, both locally and nationally, and has supported the development of pathways and progression opportunities.

⁴ **sportscotland**'s contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and [clubs and communities environments](#)

Programme	Main areas of support reported
CSH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving local connections and networks between clubs, communities, schools and other partners • Sharing of facilities, joint training, joint awareness raising, joint events and joint fundraising • Sharing of information and ideas • Some focus on progression between clubs
SGB regional posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing pathways • Enhancing leadership and training opportunities
DCI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a structured and strategic approach • Developing strong pathways

Overall stakeholders believed the range of support offered across programmes largely complemented and enhanced local provision. However, how programmes relate to one another, or support different stages of club development, were perhaps not always clear to people. For example, some felt there was a lack of clarity about the intended outcomes of CSHs – which may reflect a need for greater clarity at a national level, more locally, or perhaps both. Stakeholders also highlighted that, in their experience, CSHs focused more on participation than progression. Given that the CSH programme is designed to focus more on participation than progression, such views may again reflect a lack of clarity about the intended outcomes of the programme.

Some felt that SGB regional posts covered too large an area to help with joint working, or were not well connected to local priorities and networks. Clubs recognised the value of joint work with schools, across **sportscotland** programmes. However, some felt that there were opportunities to further build on the connections between schools and clubs.

Organised and sustainable clubs

Clubs across **sportscotland** supported programmes largely felt support had helped with:

- recruiting and developing staff and volunteers;
- engaging young people as leaders;
- improving how their club is run or organised;
- planning more sustainably; and
- generating new sources of income.

Clubs have seen increases in the number of coaches they work with, with a higher percentage increase in female coaches than male coaches across all three programmes.

Clubs which received DCI support felt able to plan a sustainable approach over time. Having a funded role helped to ease the burden on volunteers. However, there was some concern that the strongest and most business like clubs found it easiest to attract DCI funding.

Club profile

Clubs felt that **sportscotland** support had helped to increase their profile. CSHs helped to advertise clubs, facilitate school to club links, and make links with other clubs and groups locally. SGB regional posts played a significant role in identifying, sharing and rewarding best practice. DCI helped to support club growth and connections.

Places for sport and physical activity

Having affordable, accessible and high-quality facilities was an important issue for clubs. Where clubs had received support through the Sport Facilities Fund this was helping to provide opportunities for the club and local community. Clubs have also been supported by CSHs and SGB regional posts to improve access, share resources and make best use of facilities. Many clubs and groups mentioned the lack of suitable facilities as being a barrier to their growth. The main challenges for clubs were around access to facilities, where access was limited, costly or required members to travel long distances.

Range of support

The range of **sportscotland** support has helped clubs to increase participation, improve their use of facilities, develop better pathways, access training opportunities and build more professional and sustainable organisations. Stakeholders felt that there were opportunities to develop and enhance this range of support through:

- enhanced connections between school and club based work;
- more local flexibility about how some **sportscotland** supported programmes operate;
- consideration (and perhaps articulation) of how clubs at various stages of development are supported; and
- clearer information about the overall intended outcomes and impact of supported programmes.

Issues for consideration

1. The range of support is working well

The range of support in place across the clubs and communities portfolio is working well, and the programmes complement one another. This is particularly evident from the evaluation case studies, where often clubs have received a range of support, which met their needs and added value in different ways.

Recommendation: The range of support within the clubs and communities portfolio should be continued.

2. Describing the intended outcomes of the range of support

Stakeholders involved in the research at times demonstrated a lack of understanding about the intended outcomes within the range of support, the roles of individual programmes, or the types of clubs prioritised by each programme. **sportscotland** should work to address this through:

- clearly and simply articulating **sportscotland**'s intended outcomes of this range of support – the changes it wishes to bring about - and where each programme fits within this;
- simply describing how the programmes fit together and support different types of club; and
- considering how **sportscotland**'s support to clubs is branded – for example, through creating a single brand for the range of support within the clubs and communities portfolio.

A very simple logic model setting out the intended outcomes of the range of support, and each programme, would help to articulate how different programmes relate to different outcomes or types of clubs. This would help to develop a clearly articulated range of support, which is easy for all stakeholders in the clubs and communities environment to understand.

Recommendation: **sportscotland** should clearly and simply articulate the outcomes it wishes to bring about through the clubs and communities portfolio, and where each programme fits within this.

3. Scope for more focus on equality and diversity

More men than women are members of sports clubs, and the clubs and groups supported by **sportscotland** work with many more men than women. There is also limited information about the profile of club members in terms of other equality characteristics such as deprivation. In addition, some are unclear about the extent to which the focus is on engaging people in sports, or more widely in physical activity.

This was also reflected through the club member survey, with a lower proportion of respondents having a disability or living in areas of deprivation, compared to the overall Scottish population⁵.

The targeted focus on equality through the DCI programme should help to address this in the future. In addition, there is potential to:

- consider the profile of clubs and club members benefiting from **sportscotland** support, and ensure that certain clubs and groups are not unintentionally under-represented;
- support clubs around understanding and meeting the needs of different groups, including people from areas of socio-economic deprivation, disabled people, women and girls and other equalities groups;
- raise awareness of the funding opportunities available to help introduce targeted activities – including Awards for All and funding through CSHs – in recognition that a small amount of funding helps clubs a lot in this regard;

⁵ **sportscotland**'s contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework: schools and education and clubs and communities environments

- consider placing more emphasis on the role that local partners can play in engaging a range of people, across the public and third sector, supported by **sportscotland**;
- continue to build strong links with Active Schools and the ethos of getting people active as well as specifically involved in particular sports;
- ensure that coaches and other deliverers have access to training around inclusion and engaging people with a range of different needs; and
- work with clubs to ensure that information about the diversity of club members is gathered in a proportionate and meaningful way, to allow ongoing identification of areas of success and priorities for development.

Recommendation: **sportscotland** should ensure that the clubs and groups it supports are able to work with a range of people with different needs and experiences, and that certain groups are not unintentionally under-represented in the overall profile of membership of the clubs and groups that they work with. This may include building an ethos of getting people active generally, as well as specific involvement in particular sports.

4. Strengthening local links and flexibility

sportscotland programmes in the clubs and communities environment are designed to respond to local needs and opportunities. The programmes offer flexibility around the focus and nature of support provided by delivery partners. However, **sportscotland** is very specific about how funding is used for particular inputs – such as staff posts. Some local authorities felt the impact of the range of support could be strengthened by introducing greater flexibility around how funding is spent locally.

More connection to local priorities, and flexibility about use of resources could be developed through considering a shift towards a more outcome focused approach, with associated targets. This would involve working closely with partners at local and regional level to develop intended outcomes for each programme locally. This could be designed in a way to complement **sportscotland**'s developing focus on a regional way of working.

Recommendation: **sportscotland** should consider the benefits and challenges of introducing a more outcomes focused performance arrangement with local authorities coupled with greater flexibility on specific inputs.

5. School to club links

Views across both the clubs and communities and schools and education 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 **sportscotland** 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 environment;
- 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.

6. Developing particular programmes within the portfolio

There are a number of specific issues for consideration within each of the supported programmes:

- **Community Sport Hubs** – The CSH programme is helping to strengthen clubs and linkages, and increase participation in clubs and groups. **sportscotland** and partners are well on track to establish 200 hubs by 2020. However, there are a wide range of models and approaches to delivering CSHs. In some areas, clubs and other stakeholders are finding that the CSH does not have clear aims and intended outcomes; does not fit well with other local structures; and does not have a sense of common purpose or collective voice.

Many clubs are fragile and volunteer led, and find it challenging to find the capacity to be involved in CSHs and attend hub meetings. Clubs need to see tangible outcomes from hub involvement (such as improved access to and pricing of facilities), and need to have a range of different ways to be involved as a hub member.

This would partly be addressed by the development of clear portfolio and programme outcomes, with local flexibility, as highlighted above. Hubs could also use this national outcomes framework to identify their own intended outcomes, at local level, supported by hub officers.

Recommendation: **sportscotland** should support CSH officers to ensure that the clear, simple intended outcomes for the CSH programme nationally are translated into meaningful outcomes for local hubs – which clearly link with local club priorities.

- **SGB regional posts** – The SGB regional posts provide tailored, face to face, practical support and advice which is valued by clubs and plays an important role. The connection with the SGB is also valued, and the specialist sporting knowledge these roles offer. There is a role for this light touch, regional support in developing clubs and connecting them with further support. However, the support varies in consistency, can be reactive, is not always connected to local priorities and can be spread thinly across wide geographic areas.

Some of these issues may be resolved by clearly articulating the purpose of the posts, why they focus on certain sports, how focus clubs are identified and how this fits with the wider range of support. However, given the suggested variability in delivery and impact, and practical issues associated with these types of posts, **sportscotland** may wish to work with partners to consider how best to improve this.

Recommendation: **sportscotland** should work with partners, at both national and local level, to consider how best to strengthen consistency and overcome practical challenges within the current SGB regional post programme.

- **DCI** – The DCI programme is working well, with positive outcomes. The focus from late 2017 on supporting engagement of under-represented groups should further strengthen this programme, targeting support at areas where clubs and club members may experience particular barriers. As with the other programmes within the range of support, there is a need to support stakeholders in the clubs and communities environment to understand the role of DCI and role it plays within the range of support offered by **sportscotland**. It is also important to recognise that some clubs and groups which may be effective at engaging targeted groups may not be well connected with **sportscotland**'s support at the moment (for example, as part of a CSH).

There is also the potential for more work to understand the profile of DCI club members in the future, to help understand the impact of targeted work, and ensuring that systems are in place at national level to be able to track DCI outcomes beyond increased participation.

Recommendation: The focus of DCI activity on targeted work should be promoted, with the role of DCI clearly communicated to stakeholders. Monitoring systems should continue to be developed to evaluate this targeted work.

- **Sport Facilities Fund** – The Sport Facilities Fund is playing an important role in supporting participation and athlete development through developing quality places for sport and physical activity. The other programmes in the clubs and communities environment may benefit from closer strategic connections with the Sports Facilities Fund, where it can complement intended outcomes. In particular, a focus on development of inclusive facilities and changing rooms would help to support club engagement of people with a wide range of needs. Monitoring information should also be further developed to ensure that the link between facilities and enhanced participation can be clearly articulated at national level.

Recommendation: The Sport Facilities Fund has the potential to further support key outcomes across the clubs and communities environment, and connections between different programmes and priorities should be strengthened.