

2024-25

Sport RCT IMPACT REPORT

How our work, in conjunction with key partners, has supported the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf to get more active, more often



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Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh.
Mae croeso i chi gyfathrebu â ni yn y Gymraeg / You are welcome to communicate with us in Welsh.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Sport RCT

Sport RCT is part of the Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC Leisure Services Team. We are dedicated to helping the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf become healthier and more active. We work in partnership with facilities, sports clubs, community organisations, businesses, schools and National Governing Bodies. Their support is invaluable to us and the success of our programmes.

This report shares headline data that we report each year to evidence the impact of our work, as well as a collection of written case studies which provide further detail on a number of our key projects. Case studies are titled under one of three headings: Getting children more active, Getting adults more active, and Developing People.

The Team

Further case studies, previous reports and more information on our team can be found on our website: www.sportrct.co.uk



Gavin Bennett



Jodie James



Rachel Davies



Richard Webb



Scott Woodford



Alisha Knapp



Sam Friend



Nick Voleinik



Carly Jones

**164**

sports clubs supported

111

sports clubs accredited

**136**

recreational opportunities offered on our Community Programme

3,192

participants in recreational opportunities

£279,964

grant funding into sports clubs

£982,811

investment into sport in RCT

**185**

international athletes received Gold Cards

**2,643**

new club members

**351**

new club volunteers

120

workforce trained

£164,000

income in to Leisure generated by Health Development

89%

of schools engaged with our programmes

£12,840

funding invested in to school projects

**246**

Super Agers programme participants

**14**

teachers trained

**14,872**

mass participation participants

2,167

Health Development referrals

**16,837**

social media followers

**2,289**

people used our app

**72,787**

website views

**7,850**

supported physical activity sessions

**119**

Young Ambassadors recruited and trained

794

hours volunteered via our volhours app

**1,564**

hours completed through our Leadership Programme

**1,561**

hours delivery by our coaching team

After engaging with our programmes...

91%

of participants felt healthier

**97%**

of participants felt happier

**93%**

of participants felt more confident

**91%**

of participants made new friends

93%

of participants are more active, more often

**96%**

of participants intend to continue being physically active



Getting children more active – Baby Swim Week

Our Baby Swim Week took place from October 14 to 20 2024. Working in partnership with our Leisure Services Team we ran five sessions across 4 different swimming pools. The sessions were free to access, and families also received free swim nappies and a Sport RCT Family Resource Pack. Sessions were aimed at families with children aged 3 months to 4 years old. Through the sessions we hoped to raise awareness of swimming facilities, create a safe space for families, and encourage families to access swimming facilities and develop water confidence.

Sessions were not instructor led, allowing families to play and engage in their own way. This was to encourage those families who may find attending a formal class daunting. The hope was that our sessions would give them an introduction and encourage them to progress to a more formal setting. To support the families in the water we provided the swimming pools with extra toys. The equipment was carefully selected to support baby's development of water confidence, movement, coordination, motor skills and muscle strength. We also played pool themed nurse rhymes during the session to create a calm and engaging atmosphere.

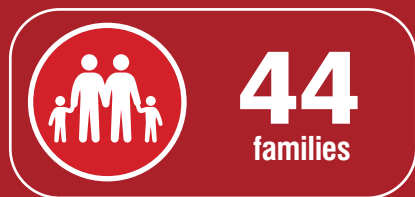
To accompany the sessions, we also developed helpful videos for families which offered advice and guidance on 'what to pack for a baby swimming session' and 'what to do

in the water to develop your baby's confidence'. Sessions were a huge success, with 44 families (104 participants) attending. We had some great feedback from the families who took part. Some families were visibly nervous when first coming in. However, the music we had playing in the background and the toys we had out created a welcoming and calming environment both for the adult and baby. The positive feedback received has led to 7 leisure centres establishing weekly Baby Swim sessions in their pools. We hope to deliver a Baby Swim Week each year.

"Really good idea, as a new parent you can feel quite isolated so having something to go to a mingle with other parents as well as doing something fun with my baby"

"Great session to introduce babies to swimming, lots of toys kept baby happy and engaged"

"I took my 3 month old son. He absolutely loved it and I can't wait to start taking him more regularly every week."



Getting children more active – Tots

We delivered six Tots taster sessions across RCT to: gauge interest, develop a provision, and support the development of physical literacy. With a plan to develop community provision, the sessions were a great way for us to consult with families and learn what they would like to see delivered in their communities. Within a 45-minute session the young people and their families navigated three separate “gardens” each focusing on developing Physical Literacy and Fundamental Movement Skills. The “gardens” were: Movement (obstacle course), Throwing and Catching, and Kicking. The gardens gave the young people and their families a range of opportunities and experiences to explore their movement and develop their physical literacy.

Families that attended also received a Sport RCT Active Family Resource Pack that allowed them to continue their development at home utilising our Movement Matters resource. To make our sessions inclusive and accessible to families in RCT we ensured that our sessions were available at a significantly reduced rate (when compared to other options for this age group). We also removed the sport specific nature of the session, making it more about the experiences and development rather than focusing on a certain sport.

During our consultation families told us that they felt there was a lot for their children to do during the school term but less during school holidays. Because of this feedback we plan to run Tots sessions during every holiday period going forward. With the summer holidays being an extended break, we will develop a block of sessions that will follow a development pathway, ensuring that week on week participants are developing a full physical vocabulary.



“Very well delivered session. Fantastic idea to give out equipment packs as the parents can duplicate the sessions at home.” Parent

“It was lovely to have the opportunity to take part in a fun and engaging activity with my toddler. The team were very supportive and great at encouraging the children to join in. They also provided great resources with ideas for activities we can do at home.” Parent

“My daughter loved the Tots session, especially the assault course type activities. Seeing her be independent and enjoy herself was so nice.” Parent



6
sessions
delivered



96%
feel healthier



96%
will continue
taking part



46
families
took part



96%
feel more
confident



86%
are now more
active, more often



100%
feel happier



64%
made new friends



Getting children more active – Summer of Fun 2024

Our first Summer of Fun programme in 2023 engaged over 1,000 people, and following an evaluation process we decided to offer the programme again this summer. Our 2024 programme ran for six weeks and offered a variety of sessions and camps for participants aged 2-25 years old and their families. We provided 66 different opportunities, which included a mix of different programmes, sessions, and camps. This year, 40 of the opportunities were at a cost. This allowed us to subsidise the cost of delivering the programme and aimed to cut down on the number of people booking and not turning up. We also implemented a new booking system to improve the booking process for customers and make it more manageable for our team. In total we received 1,340 bookings through our new system.

Our FAW Just Play Football sessions aimed to get boys and girls aged 6-9 years playing and enjoying football and focused on encouraging them to join local football clubs. We also delivered a series of sport specific camps, working in partnership with community sports clubs, to promote them and boost their junior membership. We offered 5 inclusive sports camps in partnership with Cynon Valley PALS and Cambrian Village Trust. Cambrian Village Trust also delivered 3 Multi Sports camps for us. We held a tots roadshow where we

delivered sessions for 2-5 year olds in six different locations. The roadshow was an ideal way for us to gauge demand for long term sessions, consult with families and identify the most popular locations.

We partnered with Cwm Cycling Cynon and Rhondda to offer Ride a Bike days, promoting their hire service, and allowing families to ride for free. In partnership with Leisure for Life and YEPS we provided open access sessions on three Council 3G pitches, allowing young people to turn up and play for free. We also partnered with YEPS to deliver multi-sport sessions at one youth club site.

“My two girls attended the Tots session and came away full of enthusiasm for sport. So much so that they played the games at home as soon as we got in!”

“My daughter had never played netball and wants to join a club. This has made her feel so much more confident and comfortable to join a team.”

“My son couldn't ride a bike without stabilisers before attending the session but is able to now! He has gained so much confidence and now rides around independently.”



Getting children more active – Mass participation

This year we have offered a range of mass participation opportunities to schools, such as virtual fitness sessions, fun runs, sports festivals, tournaments, virtual challenges and focus cluster transition events. These events help us to increase participation, engage with schools, and support clubs to recruit junior members. In total we delivered **26** events and engaged with **14,792** participants.

We have delivered seven virtual sessions this year, including Dance, Boxercise, Yoga and HIIT. With these sessions we are able to remove nearly every barrier to participation. Sessions are free for schools to take part in, no equipment is required, and children can take part from the comfort of their classroom. Some schools struggle to pay for transport to our events and festivals. Virtual sessions remove this problem. In order to reduce costs for other events, we aim to make events more localised, targeting schools that are close to the facility. Where there is no local facility, we try to notify schools well in advance, so they have time to organise transport and cover if required.

We delivered ten sport festivals and tournament this year, in partnership with National Governing Bodies and community sports clubs. This approach means that children have an exit route to continue participating regularly, it provides help with

workforce, and it gives clubs an opportunity to advertise and gain new junior members.

We are aware that for some children attending our events, it's the first time they have played that sport or attended such an event. We aim to make all our events inclusive and fun, providing an opportunity for children to take part in something new, away from stereotypical school sports.



“I love coming and having fun with my friends and I have more confidence.”

Participant

“The children really enjoyed the activity. They looked forward to the events each day and asked as soon as school started - what is today's challenge?!”

Teacher



Getting children more active – Year 7 Intensive Swimming lessons (Ferndale Community School)

Every year, the Council provide a comprehensive primary school swimming programme. Despite this, unfortunately, at the end of school swimming in Year 6, there are some children that fail to reach the required standard. Year 7 intensive swimming lessons give these children the opportunity to catch up, work towards (and hopefully reach) the required standard and most importantly feel safe in and around water.

In September 2023, 59 of the 139 young people moving into Year 7 in Ferndale Community School did not achieve the required standard for swimming (42.44%). 14 of these children were invited to participate in the Year 7 Intensive project, using Ferndale Swimming pool. The group received 8 swimming lessons as part of the project, and they were also invited to attend a crash course during half term. Instructors worked hard to build great relationships with every child, focussing every lesson on fun and confidence.

The staff at Ferndale Swimming Pool and Ferndale Community School were fully committed to the project and have worked hard to make it a success. They found that fun lessons were much more beneficial than structured lessons, as having fun in the water built the groups confidence so much. "Once they have confidence, teaching them to swim becomes so much easier as they're more confident to try things". By the end of the project, **8 out of 14** pupils passed the national curriculum standards.



"It was a pleasure to see all young people make excellent progress from the day they started with us. Every child has improved, whether it's passing the national curriculum, achieving their badges or just improving their confidence in the water."

Swimming Pool Manager

"One child couldn't stand in the pool when he first attended. He had never seen a pool before! But through these lessons, his confidence has grown so much. He's achieved his 5-metre badge and is working towards his 10-metre badge. He now happily plays in the pool with his friends. He hasn't passed the national framework, but the progress he's made is huge"

Swim teacher



14
participants



100%
enjoyed the
swimming lessons



100%
are now more
active, more often



8
achieved the
required standards



100%
feel more
confident



100%
intend to continue
taking part

Getting children more active – YEPS partnership

(Open access sessions)

This year we identified a need to develop stronger relationships with our secondary schools and we wanted to provide more provision and increase participation for young people, so we developed plans to work closer with the YEPS RCT team. The Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) provides the statutory Youth Service for Rhondda Cynon Taf. They have a workforce of qualified staff who offer this service, and their varied provision and support is offered through a variety of mediums and programmes. Since our partnership began, we have created projects addressing anti-social behaviour, supporting pupil voice, developing leadership, and offering physical activity in youth clubs.

This summer we came together to address resident's concerns about the lack of free access to our new artificial pitch facilities. Along with YEPS and Leisure for Life, we agreed a plan that provided free open access sessions at three Council 3G pitches. The sessions allowed us to create safe spaces and provide equipment and a workforce so that young people could engage in a variety of activities, including sports, fitness sessions, wellbeing sessions and mental health workshops. The sessions were

unstructured so that the young people could take the lead and have fun with friends and peers from school.

Since the open access sessions, numbers have increased in youth clubs across the board and more young people are accessing YEPS provision which in the long run we hope will reduce the reports of anti-social behaviour. We plan to offer these sessions again in the spring and summer half terms, as well as the summer holidays each year, and hope to include more facilities in the project.

“This partnership has allowed young people to access leisure facilities regularly and safely. Allowing us access to the facilities over a long time has improved the well-being of the young people and given them opportunities to be in safe places, not in trouble, and more opportunities to be physically active.”
YEPS Co-ordinator



Getting children more active – Llantrisant Squash Club

During a meeting between Sport RCT and Squash Wales it was agreed that additional support was needed to develop junior squash in the area and Llantrisant Squash Club had shown an interest in restarting their junior section. Squash Wales set up a meeting for us and the club to discuss ideas and develop a plan. We used the Sport RCT Accreditation to check that the club had everything in place and then supported them to apply for a Sport Wales Be Active Wales Fund. The club were successfully awarded £922 to support the launch of a new junior section. The funding allowed them to purchase equipment, complete coach education, and pay initial facility hire. After some social media promotion, sessions started and quickly grew in popularity.

As well as establishing weekly sessions, the club has also delivered junior squash camps during every school holiday. The camps have welcomed new children to try the sport and provided existing junior members with additional hours to practice. We supported the club with marketing materials to promote both the weekly sessions and the school holiday camps. Due to the success of their camps and marketing, the club have added an additional hour per week which allows them to provide coaching to even more juniors, offering coaching specific for beginners as well as

supporting those developing and progressing to the next level. The growth of their junior membership has had a positive impact on the senior section of the club, with parents and other family members getting involved. The club are fully committed to developing their junior section, to maintain a pathway for their local community to enjoy squash, and to ensure that the club is sustainable for many years to come.



“The support from Scott has been extremely helpful in promoting and setting up the junior section. Without the financial support it would not have been possible, and the extra support and advice have been great and a valuable insight.” Club Treasurer

“It’s wonderful to see the development in the children. I’m so proud of their progress. 3 young boys are now attending a regional academy development squad.” Club coach

“My son wasn’t really into football or rugby, so this has been great to get him playing with the other children. He’s made some good friends and enjoys going every week.” Parent



Getting children more active – Dare Valley Flyers Netball

At the end of 2023, we were contacted by Lindsay, a local mother that was trying to find a netball club for her daughter. All local clubs were at capacity, with waiting lists, and there was nowhere for her daughter to play. After speaking to other parents in the same position, she realised the demand for another netball club in Aberdare, and with their support, she decided to start one.

We met Lindsay to offer advice and guidance. First, we focussed on governance, supporting her to build a committee and develop governing documents. With a little bit of social media promotion and word of mouth, the club soon had a full committee and two coaches. Next, we helped them to apply for grants to fund their start-up costs. A £2,268 Sport Wales Be Active Wales grant allowed the club to purchase equipment and storage, pay initial facility hire and book coach education courses. They also received £2,000 from Pen Y Cymoedd Community Fund, which funded further coach and umpire development. As a result, the club now have 6 volunteers qualified in coaching and umpiring. To fund playing kit the committee approached local businesses and secured sponsorship.

The club delivered its first taster session, and 35 children attended and registered.

We supported the club with more marketing materials, social media promotion and arranged school taster sessions. The club delivered sessions in 5 schools, handing out golden tickets to 80 local children. They also attended a local primary school netball league to promote the club and deliver a fun session. The club has now been running for 6 months and has almost doubled in size. They have 3 teams, over 70 players registered, and 8 active volunteers. Their head coach, a young student, was recently awarded Sport RCT Volunteer of the Month for her hard work.



“I love netball and being part of a team and making new friends.”

Player

“It's made me more confident and active, and I've loved meeting new people”

Player

“The club has made us better netball players and helps with confidence. It has a big impact on our friendships.”



Getting children and adults more active – Ton Pentre AFC

Through his business 'Next Level' Gavin Jenkins started a weekly football session at Pentre 3G for boys and girls aged 5-12 years. The sessions were aimed at those who had a desire to play football but were unable to join a local club due to waiting lists. After just a few weeks over 50 children had joined. Ton Pentre AFC, the club closest to the 3G, who had never had any junior provision in its 168 years of running, contacted Gavin and asked if he would be willing to start their first ever junior section.

Gavin joined the club as a junior coach and completed training alongside other coaches and committee members. The club then worked with the FAW to ensure that they had the correct governance in place and applied to our Club Accreditation Scheme. We began working with the club, supporting them to apply for grants to fund start up costs. We also funded some additional coaching courses and essential equipment. 56 juniors have registered with the club, and they now have their first ever mini teams playing weekly in the Rhondda District Junior League at Under 5's, Under 6's and Under 7's. The club plan to continue building on the mini and junior section, adding other age groups, and hope to join the FAW's Huddle initiative.

Gavin was also keen to start a walking football session at the club, so he applied to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, who funded facility hire for some weekly sessions. We supported with some equipment and online promotion. Sessions started and they average 10 participants each week. The sessions give participants a chance to socialise while also staying fit and healthy.

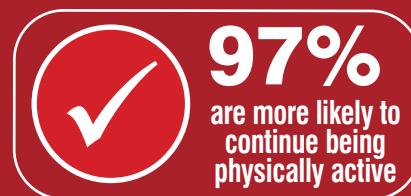


"The club have made my son extremely happy, he loves coming to football training and matches, the coaches are amazing and I wouldn't want to be at any other club, well done to them all for their hard work."

Parent of pups player

"I've made new friends and it's more than just physical it's helped me mentally and socially."

Walking football player



Getting adults more active - Aberdare and District Rifle League & Cynon Valley Open Shooting

Our team was contacted by Matthew, the chair of the Aberdare and District Air Rifle League, who was looking for support to access funding. The league was aiming to increase membership and get a wider range of people to participate in rifle shooting. We met with Matthew and first addressed governance. We used the Sport RCT Club Accreditation Scheme as a framework to develop their structure, introduce a safeguarding policy and update their National Governing Body affiliation. This ensured that they had everything in place to welcome new members and expand their existing offer. We then supported them to apply for a Sport Wales Be Active Wales Fund which they were awarded. They received £9,944 for essential equipment and training, which has allowed them to increase the numbers at their sessions and provide safe and suitable equipment for participants to use.

The league has also started a new 'Cynon Valley Open Shooting' session to welcome new people to try the sport for the first time. All the equipment is provided along with one-to-one coaching. The session has welcomed over 50 new participants, which has potentially been influenced by the high profile of shooting at the 2024 Olympic Games. Shooting is very inclusive and

something that anyone regardless of their age, gender or ability can try. The club see a wide range of people from different backgrounds attend, and their new equipment, which is ambidextrous and available at different weights, now means that anyone who attends can take part and use the rifles safely.

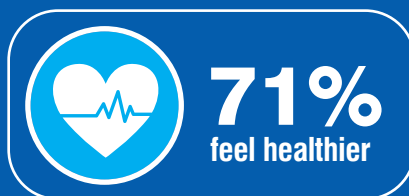
The league plan to continue their promotion and welcome even more members. They also hope to train experienced members with coach education courses, increasing the number of coaches at sessions.



"It brings together lots of people who don't usually play sport or join clubs. It's organised so well everyone's able to shoot safely with the help of instructors and experienced members."

"I have been unemployed for over a year, as such my mental health has suffered. Joining the club has given me a reason to get out of the house and be more sociable. After a few weeks my wife joined me and it's great to be doing an activity together. We have joined a local team and play in the league."

"I've loved trying something new. The sessions are so fun and welcoming for us beginners. They couldn't be more safe or supportive."



Getting adults more active – Rhondda Womens Rounders League

MyRounders leagues offer men and women aged 16+ an opportunity to come together to enjoy and play social rounders. The MyRounders founder Julie set up the first league in South West Wales in 2022. She was new to the area, having moved from England just before Covid lockdown, and wanted to meet people through sport. Just two and a half years later MyRounders have 6,000 registered players, 26 leagues running over 16 venues, and over 100 trained umpires.

Julie was keen to establish a league in RCT, and she began talking to Rebecca (a Rhondda resident that was playing in the Neath league). They pulled together a plan, and with some financial support from us, three taster sessions were organised for October 2024. The taster sessions went really well, and soon the league had six teams ready to play. The new Rhondda women's league officially started on the 7th of November 2024. Players can join the league with a group of friends, as a team, or join as an individual.

Once the league was established, Rebecca started a weekly training session, open to players from all teams. Our Community Sport fund helped to cover initial facility hire, and we also provided start up equipment. The sessions are a great opportunity for the

teams to train and play together, outside of the competitive league format. An average of 25 women attend each week.

112 women currently take part in the league, and 21% of those were inactive before joining. They told us that rounders appealed to them because of the fun, social and inclusive nature of the sessions.

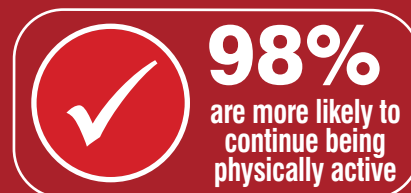


“Rounders to me, means friendship. We have become such a close group who all support and encourage one another. I feel like my team mates are people I’ve known for a lifetime. Accepting all our quirks. It’s so inclusive and accepting of everyone.”

Player

“It brings back so many memories from my childhood! Joining rounders has been so much fun. I’ve made new friendships and the girls are just lush; encouraging and supportive. I am growing in confidence each week and have learned so much about the game.”

Player



Getting adults more active - Pontypridd Pen Dragons Women's Touch Rugby

Our team was contacted by Amy, an ex-rugby player that wished to set up Rhondda Cynon Taf's first women's touch rugby team. We supported her with essential equipment and 10 week facility hire in Hawthorn. We developed marketing materials, using the group's chosen name and logo, and shared the graphics on social media to help recruit members. Sessions started and numbers grew gradually over a couple of months. The group developed a relationship with Pontypridd RFC and relocated to Sardis Road for training and matches. The partnership has provided them with a new home and a long term base, with a clubhouse for social events.

We recently funded a coach education course for one of their volunteers to gain a Level 1 qualification with the WRU. This has allowed them to progress their training sessions now that they are playing regular matches and becoming more competitive. The team train twice a week, as well as playing in regular matches, festivals and competitions. In future they plan to offer mixed sessions during the summer months, providing an opportunity for males to join in and play touch rugby locally.

When establishing the group Amy hoped to attract ex-rugby players who are unable to play full contact as well as women looking for

a new sport to become more active. The group currently has 40 members, and a good mix of both target groups. 32% of members were inactive prior to joining the team. The group welcome women of all ages and abilities, and no previous experience of rugby is required. The group have developed a strong bond and have created a real family atmosphere with members making friends for life.



"Our team simply would not exist without the support offered from Scott and Lee. Sport RCT have been there every step of the way, and we look forward to working with them in the future"

Organiser

"The fun side, the fitness side, and the social side all come together to create such a positive experience. It's been amazing to be a part of something so enjoyable and uplifting!"

Player



Getting adults more active – Upper Rhondda Vets FC

Our team was contacted by Nathan, an ex-footballer, who through managing the Play Yard in Treorchy, had identified a strong demand for vets football in the Rhondda. Nathan, along with the support of others, was keen to set up an over 40's team that could welcome players from across the valley. We worked with Nathan to complete the Sport RCT Club Accreditation which ensured that the club had the appropriate governance in place to operate. We then helped him to apply to the Sport Wales Be Active Wales Fund, which enabled them to purchase essential equipment, train volunteers with coach education courses and pay for some initial facility hire. Through Nathan's hard work and our support, the club was established, and training sessions began. They soon had enough players to enter the over 40's Wales Veteran Football League, so they applied for additional funding to purchase a playing kit. This extra funding was also used to introduce a second training session, which has allowed more men to take part.

The club now has over 80 men registered, with some that just enjoy training recreationally, and others that love the competitive side of the league matches. The club hope to continue growing and are considering starting a second over 40's team and new over 45's team next year. Long term

they would love to have teams playing in all age categories in the vets league, from over 40's to over 65's. Veterans' football is growing quickly across South Wales and men over 40 are enjoying the social and mental benefits as well as the chance to get physically active. Many members have commented on how it has improved their physical and mental health but has also reconnected them with old friends and enhanced their social life.



"The support we have received from Sport RCT has been second to none. Knowing that we can turn to them for support, should we need it, has given us the confidence and assurance to be ambitious with our plans for the future of the club." Club

"The club has transformed my physical and mental health. I am more active than I have been in years and have got more involved in social activities, making new friends in the process. It's a great feeling to experience being part of a team and a community again." Player

"At the age of 44 I didn't think I would be going back to football. It's been great catching up with people I used to play football with over 30 years ago." Player



85
participants



94%
are now more
active, more often



100%
intend to continue
being active



100%
feel healthier



89%
feel more
confident



100%
feel happier



100%
made new friends



Getting adults more active – Female Carers Project

There are over 3,000 registered carers in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Caring is often very hard work and stressful, and carers often make major sacrifices to look after the person they care for, which can impact on their personal time, social life, and health. We developed this project to provide carers in RCT with an opportunity to become physically active, and to help lower their social isolation.

We worked in partnership with RCT Carers Support Project and Leisure for Life to offer carers free mentoring and coaching, and discounted leisure membership. Nine women joined the project and we worked with them closely over five sessions. Most of the group had not been to a gym before, or for a very long time, and others had been put off gyms because of previous negative experiences. At our first meeting we discussed the project, answered questions, alleviated any concerns, and visited the leisure centre to familiarise the group with the gym environment. During the visit we showed the group the facilities and introduced them to staff, which reduced their anxiety. The following weeks went well, with the group enjoying the sessions and growing in confidence. The group have continued to access the gym at their discounted rate and we are available for support if needed.

The project has had a huge positive impact on participants, increasing their physical activity levels, confidence, and self-esteem. It has given them an opportunity to enjoy some respite, having an hour to themselves to escape and switch off from their duties. They

have also had the chance to meet and spend time with other carers, making new friends in a welcoming environment.



“I enjoyed the project because it has given me more confidence. I feel much better in myself. Never thought I would say this, but I now love the gym and can’t wait for my next visit there.”

“I never thought I’d enter a gym again after my first experience. It was a very positive experience this time. I am more confident and look forward to it.”

“The Gym sessions have made a huge difference to my wellbeing. I feel more fit, I got the confidence to go on my own and I feel more relaxed than before.”

“I loved going as a group. We all motivate each other. It has helped me so much. Today I went early on my own which I would never in a million years thought I would do.”



Getting adults more active – St Margarets RC Primary School Fitbit project

Our Fitbit programme blends modern technology and physical activity, aiming to get people more active. We work with groups that are looking to increase their physical activity levels and improve their general wellbeing. Participants are given Fitbit devices to track their daily steps and we support them over an 8-week period. Those that complete the course are allowed to keep the device long term.

For this project we worked with a group of parents at St Margarets RC Primary school, that were identified by Communities for Work+ staff and the school's Family Engagement Officer. The group of 12 people (11 females and 1 male) had varying ages and backgrounds, but one common goal – to improve their health and wellbeing.

At our first meeting we established baseline fitness levels for each person, which helped us to prescribe individual goals and challenges. We used the following weekly sessions to mentor individuals, set tailored targets, and discuss their progress and any difficulties they had encountered that week. The weather was particularly bad during this period, which was initially a struggle, but the group persevered and worked hard to overcome the challenge.

Over the 8-week period all participants increased their step count. The group total for week one was 548,980. In the final week, the group achieved an impressive total of 1,000,000. This was an average increase of 37,585 per person. Participants benefitted in many ways, physically, mentally, and socially. One individual quit smoking, and many of them commented that they are now more active as a family. Now that the project has finished, the group intend to continue meeting weekly and organising group walks. Every member of the group has joined their local leisure centre, and one has joined Weight Watchers to continue their weight loss journey.



"This project has helped them all in so many ways. Whether that being in confidence, health, wellbeing, making friendships, becoming a better 'you', becoming more active, losing weight, being more sociable - it has been wonderful!"

Family Engagement Officer

"The doctor has told me, to tell you that you saved my life" Participant

"I'm feeling a lot better in myself. I have dropped 2 dress sizes." Participant



Getting adults more active - RCT Joint Care Programme

The Joint Care Programme is a tailored programme to improve the mobility and function for people with knee or hip pain. The programme also provides information about healthier eating, including cookery sessions, and many previous participants have become a healthier weight. The aim is for patients to improve their mobility and joint function and hopefully remove the need for surgery. The Joint Care Programme is funded by Cwm Taf University Health Board and is delivered at 4 leisure facilities within Rhondda Cynon Taf. A total of 27 programmes are supported each year by the programme and sessions are delivered by qualified exercise professionals.

A 12-week programme was delivered at Rhondda Sports Centre to 11 service users. Each were referred by a medical professional due to an ongoing chronic medical condition e.g. Arthritis, Obesity etc. The weekly sessions were delivered by a member of the RCT Health Development Team and were a mixture of lower intensity physical activity opportunities and healthy eating advice (Based on the Foodwise for life programme). Concessionary membership to the RCT Leisure for Life scheme is provided to all service users with the aim of more people becoming more active, more often. The idea is that both during and following completion of the formal programme service users attend

additional sessions to achieve the Chief Medical Officers Physical Activity Guidance (CMO PA) of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week. The majority of service users are making regular use of the sessions afforded to them and are considered physically active in the longer term (Action Stage) of The Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983).



"I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in this programme, excellent mentors/instructors, motivating me to make better choices towards achieving a healthier lifestyle. The sessions have improved my confidence and knowledge, which will help me to continue making these changes for the long-term."

"I feel more confident with both the exercise and food element. The course has taught me to eat more regularly, which is something I found difficult to put into place around a busy schedule. The sessions have helped my confidence to step foot into a gym, something I never thought would be possible."



Developing people – Porth Community School Young Ambassadors

Each year we identify focus schools to work with closely. This year the Porth schools were identified as a focus cluster for our team, and one main area that we decided to prioritise was leadership. The Young Ambassador programme aims to develop the leadership skills of young people, so we decided to use the programme to create a team of young leaders and role models, that would help us to increase participation.

After an initial meeting with the school, a group of young females were identified to be part of the programme. They worked with us to design and develop a dodgeball project to increase participation within their school. They attended our Dragon's Den event and pitched their idea to obtain funding. We supported their idea, and the project began. They have since delivered a weekly dodgeball club for their peers and have also assisted in the delivery of a club to primary school aged children in their community school. Some of the group has also ventured out into the community and delivered dodgeball sessions in another local primary school.

At the end of the academic year, we held a Celebration Event to thank all Young Ambassadors for their hard work and dedication. The girls from Porth volunteered to be part of our delivery team for the day, providing fun activities and games. To thank them we paid for them all to complete Level 1

and 2 coach education courses with British Dodgeball. This year the group have also supported our primary school festivals and delivered at our Rhondda Young Ambassador conference.

It has been fantastic to see the girls grow in confidence and take on new opportunities and challenges. Thanks to their hard work, girls' participation has increased in their school, which is a fantastic achievement. The Young Ambassador programme empowers young leaders to have a voice and make changes for the better within their school and community. We will continue to work with the girls and hope to see them join our Sport RCT coaching team in the future.



"I am so proud of all the girls they are fantastic for our school and the community. We are excited to get the cluster provision off the ground and get us all working together and get more experiences for our girls." Teacher

"I feel I have become more confident. I am shy and think that the coaching has helped me to not be so shy anymore." Young Ambassador

"I love what we have been doing and working with my old primary school." Young Ambassador



12
leaders recruited



74%
feel healthier



100%
intend to continue taking part



108
opportunities created



91%
feel more confident



66%
are now more active, more often



720
hours delivered



88%
feel happier



Developing people – Ysgol Hen Felin

The Young Ambassador programme aims to develop the leadership skills of young people. Ysgol Hen Felin has been part of the Young Ambassador programme for the past 5 years with pupils transitioning from Bronze to Silver in that time. Whilst delivering training to a group of ambassadors at Ysgol Hen Felin two boys really excelled and stood out to us.

At a meeting with their teacher, these two ambassadors suggested that they would like to gain a qualification in football coaching and deliver a sport specific session in school. We funded the boys to complete their FAW Leaders qualification. They completed the qualification online, working through one module a week. With the support of their teacher, they created session plans and asked us to identify a local primary school where they could deliver sessions. We arranged a placement with YGG Ynyswen. We chose a Welsh medium school to encourage the boys to use the Welsh language in their delivery. Their teacher led the sessions initially, with the ambassadors supporting her. Over the weeks their confidence grew, and they led parts of the session with the teacher observing. Having delivered as a pair, they also started to deliver independently, as the weeks progressed. Over the year they delivered 30 sessions and 60 children from various age groups attended.

It has been noticeable that since becoming Young Ambassadors, completing the

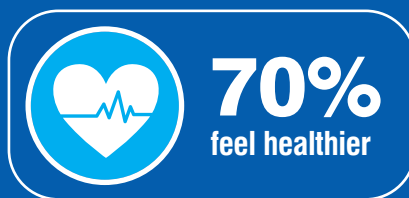
qualification, and delivering the coaching sessions both the boys have developed their independence and leadership, becoming leaders within their friendship groups, and at their work experience. It has massively developed their confidence, and they are more independent, socialising more with peers, school staff, and the community. They are both graduating this year and transitioning to college, but they plan to continue coaching in the community. Both boys attend RCT Tigers Pan Disability Football club, where they are now delivering alongside the club coaches.

“My confidence has grown & I have enjoyed pursuing my hobby in football.” Young Ambassador

“I Loved becoming a coach and working with young talented children.” Young Ambassador

“It has been wonderful working in collaboration with a local primary school, Sport RCT and the FAW. Both boys have developed strong communication skills, and their willingness to listen, learn from mistakes, and lead by example has fostered a culture of trust and camaraderie, making them exemplary leaders. They have learnt skills which they will be able to transfer into a whole range of other areas as young adults with ALN.” Ysgol Hen Felin Deputy Headteacher

“Our children love the training sessions. The coaches have been very supportive and encouraging. We look forward to more experiences in 2024/25” YGG Ynyswen Headteacher



Developing people – Food and Fun 2024

Food and Fun is a national, fully funded Welsh Government programme administered by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). It is a school-based education programme that provides food and nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children during the school summer holidays. This year the project took place in 12 primary schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf, including 3 special schools.

In preparation for Food & Fun this year we trained 70 Food & Fun facilitation staff using eight new activity cards that we developed. The cards follow the Food & Fun nutrition sessions and offer ways for the sessions to be delivered using physical activity. The training gave staff hands on experience and demonstrated how physical activity can be used to support the delivery of key nutrition messages.

We then supported the delivery of the programme by training and deploying eight Sport RCT coaches to deliver 144 hours of quality structured sport and physical activity across the twelve settings. Our coaches introduced non-traditional sports such as Archery, and we partnered with the LTA to provide each school with a free LTA serves Tennis set. This equipment has remained in the schools to ensure other pupils get the chance to try tennis. To celebrate Paris 2024,

we used the Olympic games as a theme for our activities and as a catalyst to excite the children. In total, our physical activity sessions were attended by 321 children. The children loved engaging with our sessions and many of them asked for details of local sports clubs as they were keen to do more sport outside of school.



“Every day my son came out with interesting facts of the day about nutrition or the new games he had played.”

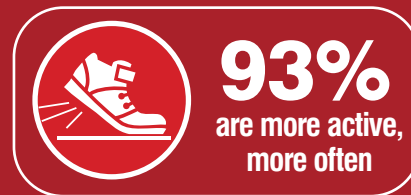
Parent

“Nice seeing the children enjoy themselves. Good opportunity for the children to try new foods, learn and be active!”

Staff member

“I’ve really enjoyed the activities with everyone.”

Child



Developing people – Casual Coaching Team

Our casual coaching team provides us with a workforce to get more people, more active, more often. We have recently redesigned our coach recruitment process to create a more reliable workforce that can help meet the needs of our team, our partners and our communities.

In recent years we noticed a decline in applications from coaches, and that those applying lacked experience and the level of qualifications we were used to. One possible explanation for this could be the impact of the covid pandemic, as we typically recruit young coaches from college and university. The covid pandemic significantly affected these institutions and inhibited sports students from gaining the usual hands-on experience. Historically we had only employed coaches with a level 2 qualification or above, but with a lack of applications we altered our criteria. We adapted into a person-centred approach and recruited and invested in young coaches with passion and motivation to develop.

We provided opportunities for formal and informal training, coaching, mentoring, and peer support, and created a learning environment for them to grow and succeed. There were some challenges as mistakes were made by new coaches that lacked the experience and expertise of previous coaches, but over time the frustrations decreased as the

coaches' confidence and skill sets grew. This new approach has created a strong coaching team that can deliver in a range of different environments to a range of ages and abilities. This has created more opportunities for residents to be physically active. We are generating more partnerships and receiving more requests for coaches to support them on projects, particularly within our most deprived communities. We have also seen an increase in the number of coaches moving into full time employment within our sector.



"The children really enjoyed the sessions. I took away some very good fun ideas. The children always look forward to the session when you tell them Sport RCT are joining us!" Partner – RCT PIPYN

"Sport RCT coaches are credit to themselves. They have helped us with events and projects, and have been nothing but professional, and have created a fantastic environment." Partner - Teacher

"The pleasure I get as a coach is very rewarding. Giving young people ownership of the sessions, playing with friends, seeing them smile, engage, and respect each other and respect the staff." Coach

"Working with Sport RCT has been an experience where I can continue to develop a wide range of coaching and development skills." Coach



1561
hours delivered



42
training
opportunities



7
coaches now in
full time
employment



437
sessions
delivered



13
partners



£25,752
income generated



6
new partners



Developing People – PIPYN

PIPYN is a healthy lifestyle intervention designed and delivered by Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB Public Health Dietetic Team and funded by local primary care (GP) clusters. PIPYN targets children aged 3-7 years and their families in the most deprived areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, to support improved behaviours that reduce the risk of overweight and obesity. We have collaborated with local Public Health Dietitians to support the delivery of active play sessions and promote access to community-based sports services.

We supported the Active Annie sessions which consisted of individual and family physical activity and play. We designed sessions tailored to individual needs, using our Movement Matters resource, with the hope that families would play the games at home afterwards. We trained our casual coaching team and armed them with knowledge of the activity, and local area. Whilst delivering the sessions, coaches were able to educate families about local clubs and opportunities, encouraging them to start the journey of becoming physically active together. Since the Active Annie sessions, families have been playing the games at home, using household objects and encouraging the children to be creative.

We encouraged the families to access free support, helping them to build healthy habits. PIPYN includes topics such as eating healthy

on a budget, meal planning, affordable food, good shopping habits, nutritious recipes, screen time, active play, family play, and more. PIPYN families are offered a package of interactive, fun family sessions tailored to support their needs. Many of the participants were inactive and stated cost as a barrier to their inactivity. Before the project started, we worked with the PIPYN team to ensure that our resources were accessible for families. The team adapted their website, adding content such as our virtual fitness session videos, Movement matters resource, walking routes and sports club map. These resources will help the families to stay active with a range of low/no cost options.

“The coaches were really enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Some of our families were new to the area and they were able to direct them to local sports activities. They had a professional and friendly approach with the parents and our staff, and were able to engage with the children. We value the relationship that has formed and we look forward to continuing this partnership.” RCT PIPYN

“I really liked how Ethan delivered the class. He engaged lovely with the boys. The Dice game was really interactive and they loved playing the floor is lava.” Parent



Developing people – Focus Clusters

Each year we select focus schools, and we provide additional support, projects, and funding to get young people more active. Schools are selected based on factors such as deprivation and engagement in our programmes. This year we adapted our delivery of focus schools and decided to target focus clusters, which for the first time included both primary and secondary schools. We felt that this approach would build relationships between the schools, and us, which would improve opportunities for children and young people to become physically active.

Porth, Mountain Ash, and Tonyrefail clusters were selected. All of which are in areas of high deprivation. We tailored our delivery to each cluster and offered hands on support to help them with funding, leadership, and training. We worked with all three to develop mass participation events, where secondary school leaders gained confidence delivering to peers and local primary school children. We mentored and trained the leaders and helped them to plan and organise the events. At these events, we fostered discussions between primary and secondary school staff with the aim of collaborating on more projects moving forward. Each cluster moved into the next phase with different focuses, and we supported them through this.

The Mountain Ash cluster identified that they would benefit from staff training, so we delivered a bespoke training programme to help them increase participation. All staff have returned to school and are implementing their training on the yard. The Porth cluster deployed its young leaders to support after school clubs in local primary schools. The young leaders supported staff to deliver sessions, gained valuable experience, developed skills and grew in confidence.

The project strengthened partnerships in schools that had previously not engaged with us. Introducing a cluster approach has supported the transition of pupils moving from year 6 to secondary school and has strengthened links between schools.



“We want to thank Richard for his support. We are benefiting greatly from the training he delivered to our staff and the support he has offered our pupils.” Primary school

“We were very happy to be chosen to be part of the Sport RCT focus clusters. We wanted to build relationships between us and our local primary schools and think that we have made great strides towards this. Sport RCT has been a great asset to us and our leaders, and we feel that what we have achieved this year we want to expand and improve on next year.” Secondary school



22
schools targeted



90%
of schools engaged



40%
of schools accessed staff training



40%
of schools accessed leadership programme

52 leaders trained as a result

60 staff trained as a result



81%
of schools accessed funding

17 new projects as a result



Developing People – School Fund

Our School Fund supports schools to develop projects and programmes which will get more young people, more active, more often. Schools can apply for between £250 and £750. Projects must focus on at least one of our key themes:

- **Focus on Fun**
- **Family Engagement**
- **Young Ambassadors**
- **Removing Barriers**
- **Foundation**

This year we had 16 schools apply in total for our School Fund, and 13 projects were granted. We saw a range of projects from new after school clubs, lunch time/break time clubs, sensory equipment, young ambassador support & family engagement. Although the number of applications this year was lower than normal, the quality of applications was very high. Applications included youth voice, consultation and a clear rationale for the project. All successful applicants will now deliver their projects, and then submit a Project Completion Report which allows us to measure the impact.

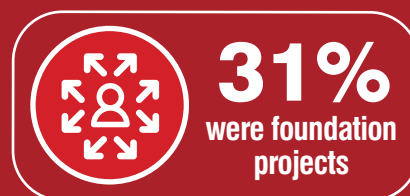
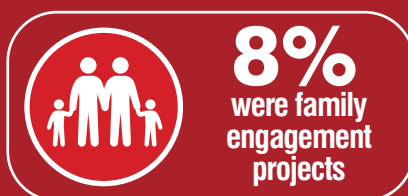


“The equipment has arrived. I cannot thank you enough, the children are so excited to use them and myself and SLT really appreciate it”

Teacher

“That's great news about the application! They are loving badminton at the moment - not sure why badminton in particular but anything that gets them moving!”

Teacher



Legacy Project – Llantrisant Tennis Club

Back in 2019 we filmed a case study with Llantrisant Tennis Club to promote two of their programmes; tennis for kids and cardio tennis. Over the years we have developed a strong partnership with the club, helping them to grow and develop in various ways, supporting them to secure grant funding, and attract new members.

This specific project was aimed at enhancing the existing tennis at Southgate Park. After several meetings the committee approached Rhondda Cynon Taf Council to secure a 'recreational lease' on the 3 courts at the park for an initial period of 1 year. During this year the club were able to explore the benefits of leasing the courts. After the year had passed, the club decided to enter into a recreational lease for a longer period of 10 years. This allowed the club to explore external funding to support the development of the courts. With support from the council's Leisure, Sport & Parks Team and the Community Development Team the club were successful in gaining £110,000 of funding over a period of 3-4 years. This money allowed the club to install an electronic coded gate, new LED Floodlights and to upgrade the 3 tennis courts at the venue from Tarmac to an All Weather Surface.

The club now boasts playing facilities as good as any other club in the country, has increased revenue and their membership has grown from 130 to 175 in the last 12 months. They have three Ladies and Mens teams, and a comprehensive coaching programme for juniors, which provides long term security for the club.

I can safely say that everyone at the club is delighted with the new surface which has delivered on every level. The surface has removed joint fatigue and injuries from slipping and has significantly reduced the amount of court time lost due to bad weather.



£110,000
grant funding secured



175
members



3
courts upgraded



3
club nights per week

Testimonials

We work with a wide variety of local and national partners. These partnerships are vital to the success of our projects.



Funding from Sport RCT has been pivotal in our drive to get cricket equipment into the hands of more girls and ladies. It has enabled us to provide a safe playing environment for the girls by allowing them to use the kit that we received funding for whereas some girls previously may not have been able to afford to do so. Our ladies section is thriving with 10 new members this year, this funding from Sport RCT has allowed us to get new kit and bring more ladies into our club

Tom - Miskin Manor Cricket Club



We were very happy to be chosen to be part of the Sport RCT focus clusters. We wanted to build relationships between us and our local primary schools and think that we have made great strides towards this. Sport RCT has been a great asset to us and our leaders and we feel that what we have achieved this year we want to expand and improve on next year.

Nicola - Porth Community School



YSGOL GYMUNEDOL
PORTH
COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Sport RCT Spotlight

Our monthly Sport RCT Spotlight is a great way for us to highlight fantastic schools, sports clubs, community groups and projects that are getting more people, more active across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Visit www.rctcbc.gov.uk/sportrctteam to find more testimonial quotes and all monthly spotlights.

Sport RCT 2024-25 IMPACT REPORT

JN: 53365-15 April 2025

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh.
Mae croeso i chi gyfathrebu â ni yn y Gymraeg / You are welcome to communicate with us in Welsh.

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