

2023-24

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

**155**

sports clubs supported

88

sports clubs accredited

**123**

recreational opportunities offered on our Community Programme

3,241

participants in recreational opportunities

£561,930

grant funding into sports clubs

£2,542,546

investment into sport in RCT

**199**

international athletes received Gold Cards

**50**

schools engaged with our foundation programme

24

schools and nurseries trained in Movement Matters

**205**

foundation workforce trained

£155,000

£££

income in to Leisure generated by Health Development

95%

of schools engaged with our programmes

£18,159

funding invested in to school projects

**253**

Super Agers programme participants

**26**

teachers trained

**7,888**

attendances in virtual school events

2,200

Health Development referrals

**16,305**

social media followers

**2,255**

people used our app

**36,591**

people used our website

**8,500**

supported physical activity sessions

**179**

Young Ambassadors recruited and trained

811

hours volunteered via our volhours app

**1,296**

hours completed through our Leadership Programme

**1,598**

hours delivery by our coaching team

After engaging with our programmes...

92%

of participants felt healthier

**97%**

of participants felt happier

**88%**

of participants felt more confident

**82%**

of participants made new friends

95%

of participants are more active, more often

**95%**

of participants intend to continue being physically active



Getting children more active – Summer of Fun 2023

Recent School Sport Survey data identified that community sport participation rates in RCT were lower than the national average, and that less than half of children in RCT enjoyed community sport 'a lot'. The data also showed that 92% of young people in RCT wanted to do more sport. In response to this data, we agreed to prioritise fun across all projects and programmes, and we developed a Summer of Fun programme.

Our Summer of Fun programme ran for six weeks, and offered a programme of fun activities to get children under the age of 11 and their families active. We provided 56 different opportunities, all with a focus on fun. The programme had a mix of different programmes, sessions and events.

Our FAW Just Play Football sessions aimed to get boys and girls aged 6-9 years playing and enjoying football, and focused on encouraging children who were not already members of football clubs to join. We worked with RCT Leisure Services to deliver multi-sport camps in Aberdare, after the venue identified a demand from their local community for junior sports sessions during the school holidays. We delivered a series of sport specific camps, working in partnership with local football and netball camps, to promote the clubs and boost their junior membership. We also partnered with Cwm Cycling Cynon to offer Ride a Bike days, promoting the hire service they have

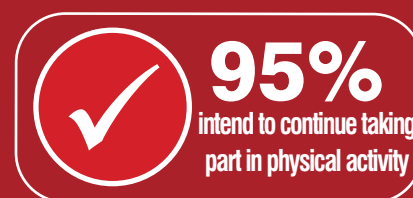
and allowing families to hire and ride for free in a beautiful setting.

Our Outdoor Family Fun events were targeted at families with children aged 2 to 7 and they included an active story trail, balance bikes and sports tots sessions. Families could get active and have fun together, which is important as research shows that children are more likely to be active if their parents and family are active. Families were sent home with a resource pack to allow them to continue being active as a family. 82% of the families said that they were more active as result of using the resource pack. 100% of them said they enjoyed using it and 93% of them said that they will continue using it.

Feedback from the programme was positive and we plan to run a similar programme in 2024.

“We played all the games in the pack and we also used the Outdoor Activities booklet lots”.

“This camp has had a positive impact on my son’s mental well-being.”



Getting children more active – AYP Virtual Sessions

Our AYP team has traditionally delivered many sports festivals and competitions during the school year, for our primary and secondary schools to attend. In 2020, due to the Coronavirus pandemic restrictions, we were unable to deliver our usual events, so we developed a plan to deliver sport and physical activity sessions virtually. Linking with partners, we delivered themed dance and fitness sessions via Zoom. The sessions were so popular that we have continued to run them each year.

This year we decided to increase the number of sessions we were offering. Our sessions have had a variety of themes and activities. Children have enjoyed activities such as dance, boxercise and HITT, and themes have included Christmas, Wear Red for Velindre and the Football World Cup. We have partnered with internal Leisure for Life instructors, as well as external staff.

The sessions have proved very popular with schools. They are free and very easy to complete. Small groups can take part in the classroom, or the whole school can come together in a larger space to take part. No equipment or kit is required, and schools do not need to pay for transport to travel to an event. For us they are also very cost effective. We have large numbers attending each

session, meaning we are able to provide a physical activity session to a large number of children, for a very low cost. We also record the sessions and share them online, allowing schools to complete them at their own convenience.

Our next step is to engage with National Governing Bodies to offer even more activities to our schools. We plan to connect the schools with local community clubs and sessions, creating exit routes and offering free taster sessions in the community via our Golden Ticket scheme.

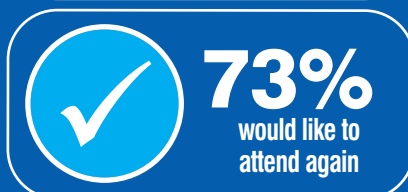


“All of the children were engaged and really enjoyed.”

Teacher

“We really enjoyed the session and look forward to similar events throughout the year.”

Teacher



Getting children more active – Cwmclydach Primary School

Each year schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf are encouraged to apply to our Sport RCT School Fund. The School Fund supports schools to develop new projects which aim to get more children, more active, more often. In the 22/23 academic year we granted £18,000 of funding to 57 schools. Cwmclydach Primary School received £242 to establish a new, challenging after-school club called 'Clwb Chwarae'.

Before applying to us, teachers spoke with Year 5 and 6 pupils to develop a project. Together they decided upon a new multi-sports club. They decided on a multi-sports club because they wanted to try various sports and activities, not just the traditional sports that are usually offered. The children were also keen to improve their Welsh language skills, so they created 'Clwb Cymraeg', a sports club that would also promote the Welsh language.

They used the funding to purchase new equipment and they developed sessions that would develop their co-ordination, fundamental skills, and gross motor skills. The sessions started and children were given lots of opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills through fun and engaging games. Children were able to work collaboratively with others which allowed

them to develop relationships and increase their confidence.

Year 6 pupils were also asked to lead elements of the club to improve their confidence and leadership skills.

The new equipment was also introduced during play time, along with a bank of Welsh yard games, that were developed by the school's Criw Cymraeg. A year later, Clwb Chwarae is still running and twice as many children are now taking part.

Year 6 children's confidence levels improved significantly after the experience of leading games and activities during the club.

Teacher



Getting children more active - Aberaman Ladies and Girls Football Club

The club set out to grow their junior section, so they contacted us for support. We completed the Sport RCT Club Accreditation with them and developed a plan to promote the club in their local community. We contacted local schools and organised for the club to deliver taster sessions every Wednesday. Club volunteers delivered fun football sessions to over **130** girls in **8** primary schools, focusing on skill development. Our golden tickets were used by the club to pass on key club information and invite the girls along to a free training session. The response from the primary schools was very positive, so we worked with the club to organise a Girls football festival. All 8 schools supported the festival, and the day was a great success.

During this time the club were also successful in becoming an FAW Huddle provider, allowing them to further expand the provision they were offering to womens and girls in the area. To support the club's further growth, we invited them to deliver a girls only football camp as part of our 2023 Summer of Fun. **37** girls attended the camp and we received great feedback.

In total, the club gained over **50** new girls who now regularly attend their Huddle and/or team training sessions. The club plan to continue working with their local schools and aim to expand and grow further within their local community.



“We loved having the club come into our school. The girls loved it and we would definitely welcome them back.”

Teacher, Cwmbach Community Primary School

“The best session we have had in the school for a long time. We loved the games and drills.”

Child

“Great session for my daughter. We love the Huddle programme because it's all girls.”

Parent



Getting children more active – Church Village Netball Club

We were approached by a community member that wanted to start a brand-new junior netball club in Church Village. Natalie wanted to provide fun, weekly, accessible netball sessions in her local community, so we supported her to establish the club. Once she had club governance documents and a bank account, and had registered with Wales Netball, we took her through our Sport RCT Club Accreditation and began applying to the Sport Wales Be Active Wales Fund. The club was successful in receiving **£1,968** which allowed them to purchase equipment, upskill coaches and pay initial facility hire costs.

We supported the club with marketing materials, which were distributed in the local schools and wider community and the club launched social media channels to spread the word even further. **20** participants attended the first session, and as the weeks progressed their numbers grew and grew. Soon they had enough members to start competitive teams at Under 12's and Under 16's, so they entered the league and secured local sponsors to help them to purchase kit. The two teams are thriving and the club hope to add further age groups in the future. Most of the girls had not played team sport before. A lot of parents have commented that their girls have grown in confidence, both on and off the court, through making friends and learning new skills.

More recently the club has started a Back to Netball session, which is aimed at adults that want to play socially with no commitment. The session has been really popular, and they now have a team playing weekly in a senior league. The women have commented that Back to Netball gives them an opportunity to be physically active whilst having fun, meeting new friends and playing a sport they love.

“I enjoy going to netball with Natalie. She is a very positive person and makes it easy and fun for us. I am a very shy person and don't like making new friends but Natalie always encourages me and now I have lovely friends.”

Junior player

“I have met a great bunch of girls who I call my friends. I really love being back at netball, learning new skills and applying them to game time. Love having a more active life without going to the dreaded gym!”

Back to Netball player



Getting children more active – Tonypandy Darts Academy

The Tonypandy Darts Academy was set up in April 2022 by a local man that realised there were no other clubs in the area providing an opportunity for young people to play darts. They began weekly sessions for young people aged 8 to 18 years, and soon had around **10** junior members. They contacted us for advice and support, and we helped them to access new equipment. The equipment allowed them to provide quality sessions to their current members and gave them the opportunity to welcome even more.

The club has been developing well over the last 18 months, seeing numbers grow to over **40** juniors. There are **8** active volunteers supporting the sessions, and they have established four leagues, which provide competitive opportunities for their members, aiding their development. Following a boost over Christmas, with the publicity of the World Championships, the club came to us for further support, and we helped them to access additional equipment, allowing them to expand their offer. They can now provide additional opportunities for their members to play darts more regularly at a bigger venue.

Some of the young people have benefited massively from joining the club. One parent explained how her son wouldn't leave his bedroom, due to being low on confidence.

The academy has helped him to make friends and gain confidence and now he's much more outgoing. One junior member has been selected to represent Glamorgan County and is quickly progressing along the player pathway due to their high performances.



“Many thanks to Sport RCT for their support accessing funding for new equipment. This has allowed us to have more young people playing darts at any given time and the reason we can keep growing our numbers!”

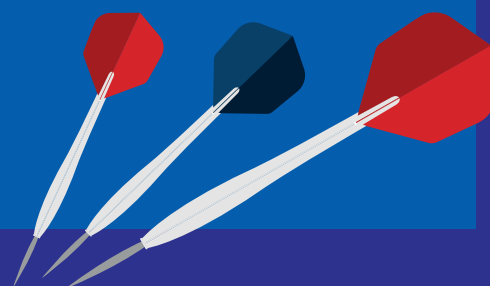
Team Leader

“Amazing club - it has brought on my son in many ways physically, socially and academically - his maths is now amazing! Fantastic club and set up!”

Parent

“Become more confident. Made new friends. Looking to progress to try and play at a good standard.”

Junior member



Getting children more active – Rhondda District Football League Mini and Juniors

The Rhondda District Football League (RDFL) Committee came to us for help to establish weekly mini and junior football festivals for their twelve clubs. There were no structured weekly games within the Rhondda, with clubs organising adhoc friendlies against each other, or travelling out of the area. The RDFL wanted to offer local children the opportunity to play regular football, without having to travel out of the area. The weekly festivals would also help the league to ensure that clubs were adhering to the FAW guidance for small-sided games. We worked with the league committee and the Council's parks team to identify local facilities that were suitable for all clubs. In partnership with the FAW we were also able to support the RDFL with equipment, to support the new festivals.

From September 2023, weekly festivals were organised for Under 6's, 7's, 8's and 9's from the twelve clubs across the Rhondda. The new format has given teams and their players a structured weekly routine, and all children are playing more football. The clubs have loved playing regularly against local teams, and the children have developed friendships with players from other clubs. As well as the physical benefits of playing football, coaches

have noticed their players' social skills and confidence improve.

Mini football in the Rhondda is now far more accessible and the league has seen a growth in player registration as a result. Next season the league plan to introduce more weekly festivals for the Under 10 and Under 11 age groups.



***"I enjoy playing football.
I have made friends from
outside of my school
and it's given me
confidence to go and
make new friends."***

***"I enjoying playing with my
friends and competing
against other teams to
better myself."***



150
participants



100%
are now more
active, more often



100%
intend to continue
taking part



100%
feel healthier



100%
feel more
confident



100%
feel happier



100%
made new friends



Getting adults more active – Walking Month Challenge

To celebrate Walking Month and encourage residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf to walk more, we organised and launched a Walking Month Challenge. The challenge encouraged participants to get outside and walk as much as possible throughout the month of May. 64 participants signed up online and were asked to submit their miles to us weekly and join our 'Walk Sport RCT' Facebook group. The Facebook group is a forum where we share route videos and maps, promote walking groups, and encourage members to share their own routes and photos. We gained 58 new group members from the challenge.

On sign up, participants were asked some questions to gain a baseline of their physical activity levels. 5% of participants were inactive, with 26% of participants stating they were physically active (for 30 minutes or more) 0-2 days per week. Interestingly, 75% of the people that signed up were female, and 68% were aged 30-59.

We shared regular emails and social media posts with participants to encourage them and keep them motivated. Each week they were asked if the challenge was motivating them to walk more than they would normally. Over the month, 82% of responses answered yes. We also asked for feedback to better understand how the challenge was benefiting

them. Many of the participants commented on a positive impact on their well-being - "it helps me with my depression and anxiety a lot", "Pushing myself to go on a walk every day has helped me notice the positive effect on my wellbeing - just taking the time for myself has been so rewarding". Others noted that they were making healthy changes to their lifestyle and routine – "walking more than using buses", "making effort to meet daily step goals by taking the stairs, parking away from buildings etc".

49 participants completed the challenge, submitting their miles every week and in total, the group walked 6,706 miles. Our final email to the participants encouraged them to keep walking, shared details of local walking groups and promoted our Community Sport Programme. Our post-challenge evaluation form gave us the following insight for the future.

- **97% would like to take part again**
- **68% would like to do this type of challenge 2-3 times a year**
- **69% were motivated because they were 'held accountable and had to submit miles weekly'**



Getting adults more active – Recreational Netball

Recreational sport is perfect for those that are low in confidence, new to the sport, unable to commit to regular training, and/or not looking for serious or competitive sport. Walking and 'Back to' Netball have grown massively in popularity in recent years, and we have been seeking out opportunities to develop sessions across RCT and provide opportunities for people to get involved. We identified areas that were lacking opportunities and have worked with key individuals to improve provision and engage more people into the sport of netball.

We are currently supporting five recreational netball sessions, including Walking Netball sessions in Llantwit Fardre and Pontypridd, and Back to Netball sessions in Ystrad, Abercynon and Church Village.

We helped to establish a Walking Netball club in Llantwit Fardre back in 2018, in partnership with the Glamorgan Federation of WI's and Wales Netball. The sessions are still running, and we have recently supported the group to become 'Llantwit Dragons Walking Netball'. Following demand, a local woman started up the Walking Netball Warriors in Pontypridd. They hold weekly sessions, providing a safe and friendly environment for those who aren't looking to join a netball club.

The lead coach from the Walking Netball Warriors was keen to start up a 'Back to

Netball' session locally so we helped her to establish sessions in Abercynon back in 2022. The sessions have been popular, and they now have a team that train weekly and play regular friendlies. In 2023 we identified a lack of recreational netball in the Rhondda area. We delivered a taster session, which went well, and organised sessions to run for 10 weeks. After the ten-week block, the group were keen for the sessions to continue, so a small number of the women took responsibility of the group. Over 15 women now attend each week, with over 30 having attended at least once. Finally, having supported the creation of a junior netball club in Church Village, we have now supported them to start a 'Back to' session each week. The session is well attended, especially amongst the parents of their junior players. Across the five sessions there are over **90** women participating in recreational netball sessions each week.

"I really enjoy getting active in a no pressure environment. Something I didn't expect was how great it feels being a part of a group of women, it's made me realise how important it is."



Getting adults more active – Mountain Ash YMCA 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.

Following on from the success of our first Fitbit group in Mountain Ash, we embarked on a second project with the Communities for Work Plus team. They identified a group of eight people who had all expressed interest in developing their health and well-being by increasing their physical activity levels. The group in its makeup was very different to the first group, with a mix of ages and genders, and some attending with friends or family members. Each week we met the group for mentoring and monitoring sessions. We take a person-centred approach as each individual arrived with different expectations and needs. We gave them personal and group challenges which kept them motivated and developed a strong team dynamic.

Despite starting off the programme in very different stages, all participants reported improvements and improved their well-being. One gentleman who works full time struggled

to fit in physical activity around working shifts. Now he has more of a balanced lifestyle and uses his time off to get out and about, enjoying local green spaces, which helps him to de-stress from work. His wife, who has a number of health-related issues, did really well to manage her condition, listen to her body and gradually improve her steps each week. Their daughter, who also attended, made the biggest improvement. Achieving the weekly targets set helped her to grow in confidence and this resulted in her joining the gym, which was a pleasant surprise to her parents. All 8 participants completed the 8-week course and it was great to see them using physical activity as a tool to explore their local surroundings and break up their day in a healthy way, whilst actively looking for employment.



“This project has made me aware I’m able to walk a little more. Making me a happier and healthy person.”

“Tracking my steps and being part of the group has motivated me. I was surprised how much I could do.”



Getting adults more active – Trerobart Primary 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.

We worked with a group of parents at Trerobart Primary school that were attending an RCT Work & Skills weekly coffee morning. The group expressed interest in our Fitbit project as they were looking for support to improve their well-being. The group of women had varying ages and physical activity levels, all with different reasons for joining the course.

We loaned the individuals Fitbit devices and provided them with a logbook to monitor their step count each day. Those that completed the course would be allowed to keep the device long term. Each week we attended the coffee morning sessions to meet with the group. We discussed their progress and any difficulties they had encountered that week. Each individual was then given a personal target for the following week.

Over a 10-week period the participants increased their step count by 383,590 which

was an increase on average of 38,359 per person. Participants commented that the project had motivated them to get more active, held them accountable, given them both structure and flexibility, and improved their understanding. They enjoyed having personal goals and seeing their own progression.

Following their completion of the Fitbit programme, the group asked us to help them establish a Family fitness session at the school. They were proud of their progress and wanted to challenge themselves further to improve their health and wellbeing. Holding the session at the school and making it a family session removed some barriers such as travel and childcare.



***“If it wasn’t for this project
I’d have never had the
confidence to join the local
women’s rugby team.”***

***“This project has got me out of
the house after being stuck in
the house for a year.”***



Getting adults more active – The 60+ Active Leisure Scheme at Sobell Leisure Centre

The 60+ Active Leisure Scheme has been introduced across Wales to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices and to reduce health inequalities and social isolation for the 60+ years age group. The scheme is funded by Sport Wales which has invested more than £1 million nationally with the aim of supporting the 60+ years population in Wales to live longer, better and happier lives by improving physical activity levels, confidence, strength and balance. Presently in RCT 78% of adults above 60 years are not achieving the Chief Medical Officers (CMO) guidance of **150** minutes of moderate physical activity on a weekly basis. We currently have **36** sessions weekly running across **6** leisure facilities within the County Borough.

Sobell Leisure Centre offer **13** classes as part of their 60+ Active Leisure Scheme: Low Impact Omnia (x3), Yoga (x5), Strength and Balance (x2), Boxercise (1) and Aqua Aerobics (x2). Whilst being open to everyone, the 60+ ALS classes are a great exit route for those finishing the National Exercise Referral Scheme. Staff work closely with the NERS team and ensure that the classes align with them in difficulty, being both challenging and suitable for those attending. The exit route classes allow us to support NERS clients to remain active long term and provide them with an opportunity to exercise safely. This supports them to manage their health

condition and enjoy a range of health benefits, while achieving their recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week.

As well as health benefits, participants enjoy the social side of the classes, and have formed strong social groups. Some meet regularly outside class, and attend social events such as coffee mornings, that are organised by the staff.

All of the classes have proved very popular, and the leisure centre have recruited lots of new members, aged over 60, that use the centre regularly. Participants tend to prefer the 60+ classes because they are happier in a class with people of a similar ability and age.



You think of the gym, and you think of super fit people, and you think ‘oh that’s not for me, I’m not super fit’. But you come in and you start going and there’s so many older people there it’s unbelievable. I didn’t think it was going to be like it is.



13 classes per week



Average of **122** people per week



Average of **267** participations per week



Getting adults more active – Aqua Aerobics

The Aqua Aerobics project was developed from a weekly SuperAgers Chair Aerobics session we were delivering in Maerdy Community centre with The Fern Partnership. Those attending the session told us that they wanted to challenge themselves more and wanted to try Aqua Aerobics. The group were proactive and created a list of 20 people within the local area who would be interested to try the activity. We worked with Ferndale Swimming Pool to secure a suitable timeslot and as the group developed a relationship with the chair aerobics instructor, they wanted them to deliver the Aqua Aerobics sessions also. We took the opportunity to upskill the instructor and other leisure operational staff with an Aqua Aerobics qualification.

The sessions had a great start and since April 1st 2023, 23 female older adults from the Ferndale area have attended. The numbers now average 17 attending each week. The sessions are low impact and allow each person to go at their own pace. The sessions are not only an opportunity to be active but also a social opportunity. Many attendees said that since the pandemic they haven't been going out and doing things like they were before, and this session has given them the confidence to start socialising more. They have created a friendship group, and this has become just as important as the physical

activity. They are a great support network, and everyone checks in on each other and encourages each other.

We recently asked the group for feedback. They all thought that the sessions were excellent and they requested an extra session a week. We are now working with the Fern Partnership and Leisure Services to establish a second session.



“I had a knee operation 18 months ago. I find it helps and I feel better meeting people. I enjoy the hot shower”

“It’s a great way to exercise as I have had 2 hip replacements and 2 spinal operations. I really enjoy the sessions and find them beneficial”

“It’s good fun and a good way to exercise”

“I feel more confident in the water, and I feel better after the session with less aches and pains”



National Exercise Referral Scheme

The National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) in Rhondda Cynon Taf provides those that are not active, with a health condition, an opportunity exercise safely. There are NERS supervised exercise sessions available at 5 leisure centres.

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“Having suffered chronic back pain for more than two years and exploring several options to ease my symptoms, I was referred to the NERS team. I cannot express how much this programme has helped me! My fitness level has improved so much.”

Mary

“I had a stroke whilst undergoing emergency life saving open heart surgery. Attending the scheme’s classes has been extremely beneficial and uplifting. I leave each class with a feeling of contented fatigue. With each passing week I find that I have achieved something extra, and I am now undertaking exercises that were beyond me at the start. The scheme has also given me the confidence and motivation to carry out tasks that I thought were beyond me. I’ve started playing bowls again!”

Alan

“15 months ago I was on 2 crutches to be mobile. 14 months ago I had a total cemented knee replacement. Today I jogged. Mel has helped me not only to improve my strength and balance but she also helped me to regain my confidence.”

Carole

“I was referred to NERS by my consultant after breaking my left femur in a cycling incident. I thoroughly enjoyed the programme. The reduced cost makes the programme available to all. I enjoyed being in a small class because the exercises could be tailored to meet my requirements.”

Darryl

“Following a cardiac incident, I was recommended for the rehabilitation programme. I cannot speak highly enough of this programme and the excellent professionalism of the trainers. The programme has been invaluable to help me rebuild my confidence and general fitness.”

Bryan

“I was referred to the NERS scheme by my GP, as I have the onset of arthritis. I cannot praise both Corbin and Jake enough for their coaching and encouragement and I have not only lost weight but my flexibility has improved immensely.”

Graham



Cynllun Atgyfeirio Cleifion
I Wneud Ymarfer Corff Cymru
Wales National Exercise
Referral Scheme (NERS)

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Developing people – Play Move Thrive at Cwmclydach Primary School

Early Years Wales approached us with an idea to offer Play Move Thrive training to school teachers in RCT. Play Move Thrive aims to provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to support children to be 'fully physical' in the curriculum for Wales. Early Years Wales explained that the training would help our schools to embed movement throughout the whole school day, using areas and resources that they already had. We loved how PMT used movement to enhance learning and engage children, so we organised the training, and invited Nursery and Reception teachers to attend. A lot of our schools were asking for help getting children active in the early years, specifically during wetter months, and we believed that PMT could really help them.

We held three courses and 43 teachers/teaching staff attended from 33 different primary schools. The training gave teachers an understanding of why movement is important, but also a wealth of ideas to implement in the classroom.

Rebecca from Cwmclydach Primary School completed the training, and found it informative, beneficial and fun. The training improved her understanding and increased her confidence. Since the training she has introduced subtle changes in the classroom, all with the aim of providing learners with an environment in which they can actively develop their physical skills. She has altered the layout of her classroom to allow learners

to move freely throughout the day. Rebecca has evaluated the school resources and used them to develop physical skills in the classroom. The school hasn't needed to purchase any extra equipment. They have used areas, equipment and resources that were already available to them, but in a new, insightful way. The activities have impacted massively on the engagement of learners. They want to participate in the activities and often ask for them. By introducing multi-sensory, physical activities in class, Rebecca has seen changes in learners' behaviour as they are engaged in activities that are interesting to them and, most importantly, are fun.



"This training has deepened my understanding of the importance of physical activity on young children's physical, emotional and sensory development."

"I found the physical activities I participated in impactful and have since started 'good morning sun' and a sensory walk. This has been impactful on my ALN students."

"We developed a bank of ideas that we could run with as soon as we got back to the classroom. I love that we don't need to spend any money to create the movement activities suggested."



Developing people - Llwyncrwn Primary School

Each year schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf are encouraged to apply to our Sport RCT School Fund. The School Fund supports schools to develop new projects which aim to get more children, more active, more often. In the 22/23 academic year we granted £18,000 of funding to 57 schools. Llwyncrwn Primary School received £250 to deliver their “On the Move Morning and Active Afternoons” project.

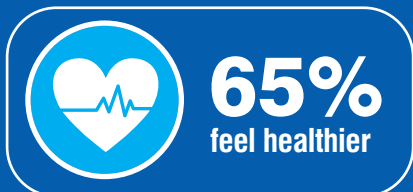
Two Young Ambassadors from the school developed a plan to improve breaktimes, by introducing PlayMakers. They wanted to create a PlayMaker zone on the yard, allowing the PlayMakers to deliver physical activities every morning. They branded the project as “On the Move Mornings”, with the hope of encouraging those disengaged from physical activity, lonely or bored to come and give it a go. We supported the school to deliver the training to all Year 5 and 6 children.

The Young Ambassadors also introduced “Active Afternoons” where they selected equipment that each class could use on the yard to get physically active. The equipment was paired with fun and exciting games to engage the children to take part. They made sure that all games were inclusive as they wanted as many children as possible to take part.

All children in the juniors have access to the PlayMaker zone daily, and children in Year 2 receive a weekly session from the PlayMakers team, meaning that 185 children benefit from the project. 15 sessions per week mean that children now have more options at breaktime and are getting more physical activity into their day. School staff have commented that playtimes are calmer, as a result.



Children recognise that they now have a place to go if they feel left out, they can engage in a safe, fun space where they can participate in physical activity alongside their peers. “On the Move Mornings” and “Active Afternoon” have increased pupil well-being both mentally and physically!



Developing people – Movement Matters in Cwmbach Primary

Cwmbach Community Primary School contacted us asking for support. They wanted to offer more physical activity opportunities to their foundation phase learners. They were also looking for some whole school teacher training that would help them with their fundamental movement skills development. They wanted to embed movement and physical activity across the school day and use it to engage learners in other subjects. We showed them the Movement Matters resource and offered to upskill staff with our training programme.

We developed our Movement Matters resource in 2019. The resource has 30 activity cards, based on six themes. Every activity card has a fun game that can be used to help children practice and improve Fundamental Movement Skills. The resource has been shared with our nurseries and schools, as well as the wider public. Last year, we developed a training programme to give nursery and school staff the tools, knowledge and confidence required to deliver the games to their children.

One of our team visited the school and delivered an hour's training session to 14 of their teachers. We familiarised them with the resource and showed them how to set up and deliver the games. We discussed a variety of ways to make the games easier or harder, and explained how they could adapt them for different ages and abilities. With the teachers

we explored how the games can be used to develop other skills such as literacy and numeracy, and discussed how this could help with engagement and attainment in the classroom.

Following the training, the teachers now feel more confident to deliver the games and develop fundamental movement skills during PE and across the wider school day. Learners are really enjoying the games, and often ask to play them. Teachers especially like how easy it is to integrate literacy and numeracy into the games, offering children a more engaging way to learn.



“The training gave us lots of new ideas. We rely on the same warm ups or activities, and it was nice to see the activities in the resource pack based on different themes that many foundation phase provisions engage in. Staff could follow the instructions really easily, but also take it forward in their own way.”

“When you think of times tables at school it can be very boring. This makes it a bit more interesting, and there's a competitive edge to it as well. Also, with the children working together, those children that struggle a little bit more are able to join in with the counting, even if they don't know because they can copy and repeat. So, it covers all bases and is really effective.”



Developing people - Capcoch Primary School Build 'n' Balance Project

Working in partnership with the RCT Road Safety team we developed a project to offer balance bike training and resources to primary schools. We provided the RCT Road Safety team with 20 balance bikes and asked them to pilot the project in a number of our focus schools.

The team deliver two half day training sessions to each school, simultaneously educating the children, and training the teachers so that they have the knowledge to continue sessions long term. The training involves 'prepare to ride' activities which work on balance, coordination and confidence, and time on the balance bikes learning to ride. Following the training, balance bikes and resources are left at the school for 6-8 weeks.

Capcoch Primary had contacted us, looking to start a project around balance, coordination, and confidence, so we arranged for them to receive the training, resources, and bikes. Following the training the teachers quickly realised how much the balance bikes were helping to develop the balance and coordination of children in the foundation stage. They had noticed post-pandemic that many children had delayed physical development and they wanted to make sure they were providing opportunities for children to work on these skills and their confidence. For them to have their own equipment, and be able to deliver the sessions long term, they decided to submit a School Fund application to us. Their

application was successful and we provided them with £500 of balance bike equipment.

The children have loved having equipment that allows them to be creative by building their own balance tracks. The equipment we provided can be easily moved around the school so children are able to create their own activities. Each class in the school have access to the equipment weekly, and it is available during break time. The bikes are used daily by the nursery and reception classes to help build their confidence and skills.

***"The younger children have improved their balance and confidence. It's improved their spatial awareness moving around the classroom, and we've also noticed improvements in their walking (balancing), jumping and decision making. It's also been great for children with additional learning needs that have Individual Development Plans as we allocate separate time for them to use the equipment. Some of these children struggle in a large class environment, but are benefiting from using the equipment."** Teacher*



£500
funding
awarded



100%
feel more
confident



100%
will continue
to take part



169
participants



100%
feel happier

Developing People - Penygawsi Primary School

Each year schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf are encouraged to apply to our Sport RCT School Fund. The School Fund supports schools to develop new projects which aim to get more children, more active, more often. In the 22/23 academic year we granted £18,000 of funding to 57 schools. Penygawsi Primary School received £250 to deliver their "Get Active" project.

The Penygawsi Primary Young Ambassadors identified that their daily mile sessions were being disrupted by the ongoing building works of their new school. They had limited areas to carry out their physical activity "brain break" so they came up with an idea to replace the Daily Mile with a new idea, called "Get Active". After consulting with their peers, they proposed a carousel of physical activities for the pupils to participate in using PE equipment.

These physical activities incorporated a range of skills such as football skills, throwing and catching techniques, along with teamwork and listening skills. The funding was used to purchase new equipment for the project, such as balls, skipping ropes, tennis rackets and cones. Whilst waiting for the equipment to arrive the Young Ambassadors started planning activities for Foundation Phase and KS2. They created a timetable for each class to use the equipment daily.

The project has been a huge success. The children enjoy having a physical activity based break away from lessons and class work. Teachers have found that since starting

the "Get Active" sessions the children are more engaged and focused when they return to class. The Young Ambassadors are now working hard to incorporate the rest of school in the project, from Nursery to Year 6!

"Everybody asks the teacher, "when is it Get Active?", as it is our favourite part of the day."

"When we get back to class, we are ready to learn."

"It is great to have so much equipment, so we can all be active at the same time."



Developing people – the ‘Become a Community Coach’ programme

Since the pandemic we have noticed a lack of workforce across the sports sector. In partnership with the RCT Work and Skills team we facilitated a six-week training course, with the aim of increasing the community coaching workforce in RCT. The training consisted of both theory and practical modules, and was delivered by us, and several internal and external partners. Participants received training and mentoring, as well as an opportunity to progress onto employment.

The course was targeted at individuals with an interest in sport, that were actively seeking employment. We tailored our delivery to suit the needs of the group and incorporated a range of sport specific and essential qualifications which would allow them to coach in community settings.

Seven individuals enrolled on to the coaching programme, with **5** completing the course. As part of the course participants were given the chance to obtain **6** qualifications each. To achieve two of the qualifications our participants were required to complete an online training course and exam. The Communities for Work+ Chromebook scheme allowed us to provide all participants with tablets to complete the qualification.

All participants increased in confidence, and improved skills such as communication, teamwork and leadership. All five individuals that completed the course were asked to join our casual workforce. Three have joined our Coaching team and two are now members of our Play You Part team. All five of them will play a vital role in helping us to get more people, more active, more often, across Rhondda Cynon Taf. We plan to run the programme again, allowing us to grow our workforce even further.



“Day 1 of the course I was very nervous. I didn’t know anyone, and I was concerned about what people would have thought of me. 6 weeks later and my last session and it has been such an amazing experience and the friends I have made throughout the course has been lovely.”

“Coming on day one I was on edge. I was supposed to come with my sister, but she couldn’t make it, so I had to step outside my comfort zone to come on my own and I am so happy that I did.”



Developing People – Aqua Natal Yoga

We have worked in partnership with the Public Health Specialist Midwife for Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board over the last few years to develop our Made for Mams programme. We both recognised the benefits of training midwives to take classes and decided to explore this as a progression for the programme. We felt that midwives were best placed to deliver sessions, as they would be able to signpost pregnant women to the sessions during their appointments and visits, their hospital midwifery departments would know more about the sessions, and the pregnant women would feel a familiarity and trust with the midwives, compared to other instructors they did not know. Permission was granted for six midwives to be trained to deliver classes as part of their role, and they were chosen following an application process. We sourced an Aqua Natal Yoga training course provider and arranged a private Aqua Natal Yoga course for the midwives to attend. Two staff members from Bridgend Local Authority also completed the course. We then liaised with RCT Leisure Services to identify suitable venues which had availability to host the new Aqua Natal Yoga sessions. We opted to timetable the classes in the evening, to make them accessible to those working during the day. Hawthorn Swimming Pool and Rhondda Sports Centre were selected as venues and we began advertising the classes via our social media channels, the CTMUBH Bump Talk Facebook Group and by

community midwife appointments. Feedback has shown this marketing approach worked well as participants found out about the classes from all three places.

The sessions ran at both venues for 6 weeks, with the midwives working together to share delivery, around their other commitments. We worked with RCT Health Development to include the sessions within their Leisure Health Pathway, allowing us to offer the sessions for £2.50. Feedback from participants has been very positive and as a result we plan to deliver them all year round, in six-week blocks.

Access to classes with knowledgeable professionals should be accessible to all as there are many benefits to staying active while pregnant. The midwives we work with have told us about the demand for these types of classes, and they have seen first-hand the impact that they can have on the women, especially those that are dealing with mental health issues. We hope to see women transitioning, with our support, from these sessions to our post-natal exercise sessions, once they have given birth.

I don't leave the house the rest of the week, this is the only thing I leave the house for and get social interaction. It has really helped me develop confidence and social skills and make new friends. Rhondda participant



Legacy Project - Pontypridd parkrun

In 2013 we were contacted by Allen Bevan, a resident of Pontypridd, about starting a parkrun in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. Allen travelled weekly to Cardiff parkrun and believed there was enough interest locally to start one in RCT. We provided support and funding, working alongside the park and Pontypridd Town Council, and the first event was held on October 12th, 2013, with 176 people taking part.

Since then, the event has gone from strength to strength, attracting new runners and visitors alike. The organisers have developed a tight knit community with a strong family ethos, and have created strong links with local running groups, local community groups, hosting regular takeovers supporting good causes and charities. Park events and global pandemics aside, the parkrun takes place at 9.00am every Saturday morning, it's completely free and people of all ages and running abilities are welcome. On November 11th, 2023, the 400th Pontypridd parkrun took place, with 376 participants and 36 volunteers in attendance.

Over the **400** events that have taken place, **12,129** different people have walked/ran/jogged a total of **459,380km**. Each of those events would not have been possible without the efforts of **1,140** different volunteers. At the **91,876** parkruns that have

been completed, **15,941** personal bests have been achieved. We spoke to 98 people who attend Pontypridd parkrun and asked them why it was so special.



"It's the highlight of the week."

"When I started parkrun, I was an overweight smoker. Now I'm neither."

"I love that I am never judged on my weight, my speed or what I look like. Everyone is supportive and inclusive!"

"It's a great feel-good start to the weekend. Ponty parkrun is incredibly friendly and welcoming and has a real sense of family and community."

"I'm fitter now in my fifties than I have ever been, and it all started with Parkrun."

"For someone who suffers with anxiety, going to parkrun has given me the confidence to enjoy running on a weekly basis, and it certainly helps with mental health!"

"Parkrun helped me cope with my breast cancer treatment."

"I owe so much to Ponty parkrun. It did a lot for my confidence as I now coach and lead groups for my local running club."



12,129
participants



91%
are now more
active, more often



99%
intend to continue
taking part



100%
feel healthier



94%
feel more
confident



1,140
volunteers



100%
feel happier



87%
made new
friends

Legacy Project - Dark in the Park Pontypridd

We started Dark in the Park Pontypridd in January 2019 in partnership with Newydd Housing. The project aimed to increase usage of the park and provide a safe environment for running during the winter months. It initially targeted non-runners, but sessions attracted a mix of running abilities, from beginners to regular runners.

To make the project sustainable we asked volunteers to train as run leaders. 12 volunteers were trained initially, and they began delivering the sessions each week. Since 2019 we have trained an additional 6 volunteers to support the sessions.

The sessions are still running and take place every Wednesday in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. Over 200 sessions have been delivered and in total, 240 different people have engaged with the sessions. The leaders structure the sessions with various groups for different abilities, ensuring that all runners have support and safety, and no one is left to run on their own. Many of the participants have progressed from non-runners to regular runners completing 5ks, 10ks and even half marathons. A lot of the group members regularly attend Pontypridd parkrun which takes place in the same park.

The group is about more than just running, it provides participants with an opportunity to get outdoors in a safe environment, enjoy

some 'me time', discover a new passion, meet new people and get fit.



"I just love it. The ethos, the support, the inclusivity, the acceptance, the warm welcome, the individuals involved & the park. I attend most weeks."

"I've made loads of new friends. I have confidence in my body that I didn't have before. It makes me feel so happy and is the highlight of my week. Every time I run, I am amazed how good it feels - the encouragement the leaders give really spurs me on."



Testimonials

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

I would recommend anyone who is looking to start a new session or new club to get in touch with Sport RCT. They helped with mass promotion of my new club and then helped me through every step of the funding process with Sport Wales. The setting up of the club became a less daunting experience just by reaching out to them.

Natalie Godwin – Church Village Netball Club



Their dedicated team demonstrated exceptional commitment by delivering 'Movement Matters' training to all our staff. As a result, Movement Matters has been seamlessly integrated into our foundation phase, ensuring that every pupil receives regular, high-quality physical activity. Their delivery of whole-school online HIIT sessions has also been a resounding success, enhancing key events such as the football world cup. Sport RCT has proven to be an indispensable partner, enriching our school's physical activity provision immeasurably.

Huw Griffiths, Caegarw Primary 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 2023-24 IMPACT REPORT

JN: 52827-15 May 2024

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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RHONDDA CYNON TAF