

# Yorkshire Sport Foundation – Supplementary written evidence (NPS0027)

## Submission by Nigel Harrison, on behalf of Yorkshire Sport Foundation

### Introduction

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 I reported to the House of Lords Committee to give an oral submission to the enquiry. This written response expands on the answers given at the oral submission in addition to providing further specific details that were asked for arising out of the discussion.

Yorkshire Sport Foundation is one of the 42 Active Partnerships in England covering the 3.6 million population of West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire.

1 *How can local delivery, including funding structures, of sport and recreation be improved to ensure that people of all ages and abilities are able to lead an active lifestyle? For example, how successfully do local authorities and other bodies such as Active Partnerships, Leisure Trusts, local sports clubs and charities work together, and how might coordination be improved?*

We believe that if we are to increase physical activity levels then we need to ensure that physical activity becomes 'everybody's business' through a whole systems approach. This means we want to encourage local social entrepreneurship where agencies and individuals are finding ways in which to embed physical activity into the way they work and live. As a result, there will be a wide range of opportunities available at a local level.

For this to work well there needs to be a strong connectivity with strong values, communication, support, sharing of good practice and joint working taking place. Part of this is co-ordination but it is more about connectivity.

For that to be successful we need capacity, structures and ways of working that will provide that connectivity. That means at a community/neighbourhood level and at policy making level.

We have found the engagement, and sometimes employment, of community champions to be particularly fruitful as can be seen [here](#) relating to a programme we are operating in the Dearne Valley at a neighbourhood level.

During the oral submission I was asked to give further information on assessing success of the work in Bradford which I described as a good example. Further details can be seen in the appendix where both quantitative and qualitative measures are being employed. As part of the larger Born in Bradford study baseline data has been gathered on children's activity levels and patterns. This will be regularly updated to assess progress using a separate control group as comparison. The process evaluation will, amongst other things, gather evidence of the level of connectivity within the area.

For main agencies, as those described in the question, we believe in our area that this should be done at a local authority district level and as such, we

support District Activity Partnerships (more information [here](#)) which provides the structures that provide for the connectivity between the agencies to take place. Each provides leadership for physical activity in their area and have strategic plans in place that are collectively owned by the agencies involved. As an Active Partnership we are flexible in how we provide 'backbone support' appropriate to local need; in many we are the main players in providing that support, in others, that is provided by the local authority. We have developed an increasingly sophisticated way of measuring the impact of this work, part of which relates to using local Active Lives data. I was asked to confirm the Active Lives data for Bradford which I have done so again in the appendix. Where this works well the agencies are working extremely collaboratively with organisational boundaries becoming increasingly blurred.

At the moment funding streams, from various government and non-government agencies, tend to drop into the local structures through different sources and organisations. The structures we have developed allow for good communication between agencies to strive towards ensuring those resources are appropriate for local need. However, it could be much more efficient and effective if we could start with the needs of the local place in the first place and single (or fewer) funding streams were made available to fund those plans. Sport England's Local Delivery Pilots are offering a good template of how this could work.

*2 How can children and young people be encouraged to participate in sport and recreation both at school and outside school and lead an active lifestyle?*

There needs to be a place based approach with strong connectivity between all those influencers on children and young people activity patterns such as schools, faith settings, families, sporting organisations and others. This is the approach of the JU:MP programme in Bardford (one of the Local Delivery Pilots) with further details to be found [here](#).

In relation to schools we have worked with academics and practitioners to develop the 'Creating Active Schools Framework' ([here](#)) which takes a whole schools approach to activity so that physical activity and schools' policy and practice is embedded throughout. We are supporting head teachers in schools throughout our area and it is starting to have an impact on the way schools perceive physical activity. An example of this is explained in the podcast [here](#) (episode four) by Matt Carbutt (Principal at Orchard Primary Academy). We believe there is tremendous potential to use this framework more extensively.

Embedded within the framework is the 'COM-B' behavioural change model which aims to ensure that all children have the foundations skills, abilities and motivation to be active throughout their life. Increasing measurement of these factors will support this approach. There is also a huge role for those working in Early Years which is often overlooked in national strategies relating to sport and recreation.

The Primary School Sports Premium continues to provide essential funding to support the work although better monitoring would ensure the funding is restricted to PE and Physical Activity.

Anecdotally, we are hearing consistent stories of the reduction of time available for PE and School Sport, particularly within secondary schools, which is of major concern. Whilst it is not of Yorkshire Sport Foundation's core work we do believe this should be addressed as a matter of urgency as it will have ramifications for long term activity levels and, in turn, population health.

*3 How can adults of all ages and backgrounds, particularly those from under-represented groups, including women and girls, ethnic minorities, disabled people, older people, and those from less affluent Backgrounds, be encouraged to lead more activity lifestyles?*

There are numerous examples of targeted projects and programmes that have been successful and some example of those we have been involved with, can be found here: [Levelling the Field \(women in crisis\)](#); [Mums](#); [those on low incomes](#) ; and [disabled people](#).

If successful these can have life-changing effects on the people involved and are valuable, however, they don't address population level inequalities.

We believe a more locally driven community approach to be essential backed up by national and local policy. Across West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire we have identified those areas where most inequalities exist and have targeted much of our resources towards them. The [Active Burngreave](#) approach was first established in 2017 through Comic Relief and Sport England funding which enabled a community champion to be employed supported by one our Managers. We have learnt a tremendous amount about genuine community development through the process, especially the concept of community ownership and involvement from the start. We have followed this approach up with [other areas](#) of Yorkshire all looking different appropriate to local needs. The one-to-one contacts and networks of the community champions, who understand their area, are fundamental to enabling people to be active.

If we are to reduce inequalities, then we need a national commitment to providing resources that reach and make an impact into communities.

*4 Sporting Future; A New Strategy for an Active Nation, the Government's 2015 sports strategy, outlines five outcome priorities ... are these the right priorities and how successful has the government been in measuring and delivering these outcomes to date?*

We believe that these are the right outcomes and have helped us frame our work over since 2015. Whilst recognising they are all integrated, more emphasis has been placed on health outcomes and will continue to do so on the back of the pandemic, however, we should not ignore the important community and economic outcomes that physical activity and sport can contribute towards.

Going forward we need to add climate change to this list of outcomes through increasing physical activity.

It has not been easy to measure the impact of physical activity and sport interventions on societal outcomes as there are so many other factors in play. At a project level we have gathered some evidence we can point to, for example, increasing mental health, reduction in GP visits / medication etc. but we have collectively not found a way yet to address this at population level. Simply, relating activity levels to measures such as 'happiness factors' is too crude and ignores the plethora of socio-economic factors that are involved.

5 *Is government capturing an accurate picture of how people participate in sport and recreation activities in its data collection? How could this be improved?*

At a national level the Active Lives data is a tremendous resource from which we can detect national patterns. We must be cautious in any voluntary survey that there could be a natural bias in the replies as those with most interest in physical activity may be more ready and willing to take the survey. Nevertheless, the consistency from year to year would suggest that comparisons can be made.

Due to sample size, it is less reliable, and therefore less useful, the more local the data becomes. As a result, it is rarely used at a local level to drive progress or otherwise.

We must collectively find ways of addressing this as there is a lot of data being gathered e.g. in schools, health settings, sports provision but is not being co-ordinated to give a triangulated picture of activity changes. We have attempted to address this on numerous occasions but have found it difficult due to data protection and other issues.

Whilst giving a picture the national Active Lives data doesn't give us 'real time' time data which, with better use of technology such as smartphone and wearables, we should be able to capitalise on. We are unsure whether this work is being undertaken with these major technology companies is taking place but is something we would strongly advocate. There may not be a single 'catch all' method but triangulation of data would give a better picture than we currently have.

10 *Should there be a national plan for sport and recreation? Why/why not?*

At the moment there seems to be two 'heads' and two strategies for physical activity and sport; one led by Public Health England and one by Sport England. In this regard it has felt like we are connecting with local public health partners despite of national planning approaches rather than because of it. We are sure this will improve through the new Sport England strategy. There needs to be a single plan and approach.

Of more importance to the plan is the commitment that Government has to physical activity across all its activity. During the pandemic we have seen this commitment to exercise with rules on restrictions and public statements made. We know that policies in health, education, transport, and planning will have more of an effect on activity levels and the current commitment needs following through in these.

## Appendix 1 JU:MP Programme Evaluation (Bradford)

A critical aspect of system-based approaches is not expecting interventions to create effective behaviour change working in isolation. There is no one single solution to create sustained behaviour change for C&YP at a population level. The places they live, the places they go, the way they travel, the people they see, the organisations they interact with, the things that are of interest to them, and the challenges they have to overcome will be different for different C&YP. In the JU:MP programme we want all C&YP to be supported to be physically active through increasing their capabilities, opportunities and motivation. This means that policy and strategy, community engagement, and activities need to be implemented across different settings and sectors concurrently.

### 1 Process Evaluation

The overall aim of the process evaluation is to understand the mechanisms through which JU:MP influences physical activity behaviour in C&YP. The objectives of the process evaluation are: (1) to document the strategic and neighbourhood-level design, delivery and evaluation processes of the JU:MP programme, (2) to examine the *feasibility* and *acceptability* of the strategic and neighbourhood level design, delivery and evaluation of the JU:MP programme by understanding the barriers and facilitators and contextual factors influencing design, delivery and evaluation, and (3) to understand the *impact* and experiences of the JU:MP programme including developing an understanding of what works, for whom, and in what context. The process evaluation of JU:MP includes three distinct packages of work:

- (1) Strategic-level evaluation: focused on understanding the views and actions of the strategic leadership team in relation to delivery of the overarching JU:MP programme, views and actions related to the overarching development, delivery and evaluation of JU:MP programmes of the various partners leading these programmes, and an evaluation of JU:MP strategic-influencing work. This study has received ethical approval from Leeds Beckett University and is ongoing.
- (2) Neighbourhood-level evaluation: focused on understanding the views and actions of stakeholders (e.g. representatives from local organisations, and children and families) involved in co-producing the neighbourhood action plans and implementing JU:MP programmes at the neighbourhood-level. This study has received ethical approval from the University of Bradford and is ongoing.
- (3) End user evaluation: focused on understanding the views, actions and experiences of the local children and families in receipt of the JU:MP programme. This will be linked with the control trial, including questionnaires to understand mechanisms underpinning the effect of the intervention, and in-depth qualitative methods to understand lived experiences.

### 2 Effectiveness Evaluation

The purpose of the population level evaluation is to assess whether there has been a systematic change in physical activity levels of children across the whole LDP area. The population level evaluation will use data from children in the Born in Bradford (BiB) birth cohort study. The BiB study is a world leading birth cohort following the lives of 13,500 children who were born at the Bradford Royal Infirmary between 2007-2011. We will use data from the cohort at age 7-11

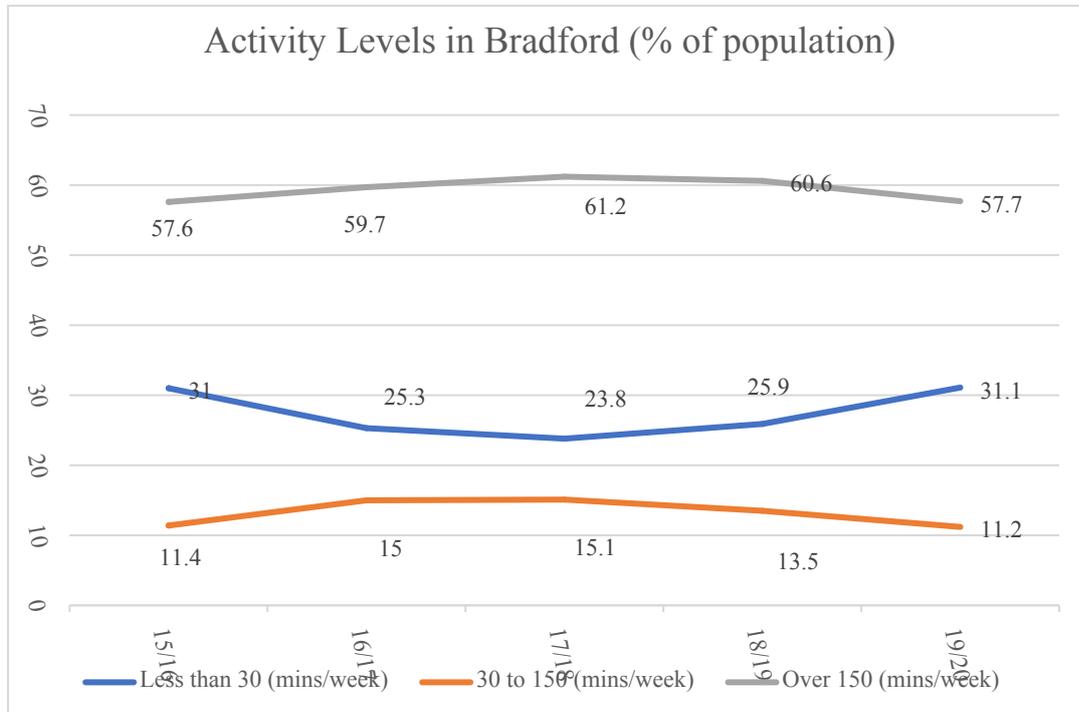
(baseline, already collected, see Appendix 3) and then again at age 13-15 to assess the effectiveness of JU:MP at a population level over the full timeframe of the LDP (2019 - 2024). This study will be able to show whether the JU:MP programme has successfully improved physical activity and wider outcomes (health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes) for children as they transition into adolescence by 2025. What is absolutely unique about working with the BiB Cohort is the opportunity for further follow-ups as the C&YP move into adulthood. BiB will work with the Cohort into adulthood, following their health, wellbeing, social and economic outcomes. Thus, we will be able to see whether there is a long term impact of JU:MP and whole systems change upon their lives for many years to come, not just within the life of the LDP project.

The base-line data has commenced with early results including 1429 children showing:

- Sedentary time – 489 minutes (51% awake time)
- Light physical activity (e.g. slow walking) – 407 minutes (44% awake time)
- Moderate physical activity (e.g. brisk walking) – 36 minutes (4% awake time)
- Vigorous physical activity (e.g. sprinting) – 10 minutes (1% awake time)
- Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) – 46 minutes (5% awake time)
- Number of children averagely meeting guidelines of 60 minutes of MVPA every day:
  - Meeting guidelines – 331 children (23%)
  - Not meeting guidelines – 1098 (77%)

## Appendix 2 Bradford District Active Lives Results

At the evidence meeting I was asked about the levels of activity in Bradford and reported that after a positive reduction of the inactivity rate it had recently started to rise again. The actual data, taken from Sport England's Active Lives report is shown below:



NB For the 'less than 30 minutes' and 'over 150 minutes' figures there is a confidence interval of approximately 4% each way, each year.

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