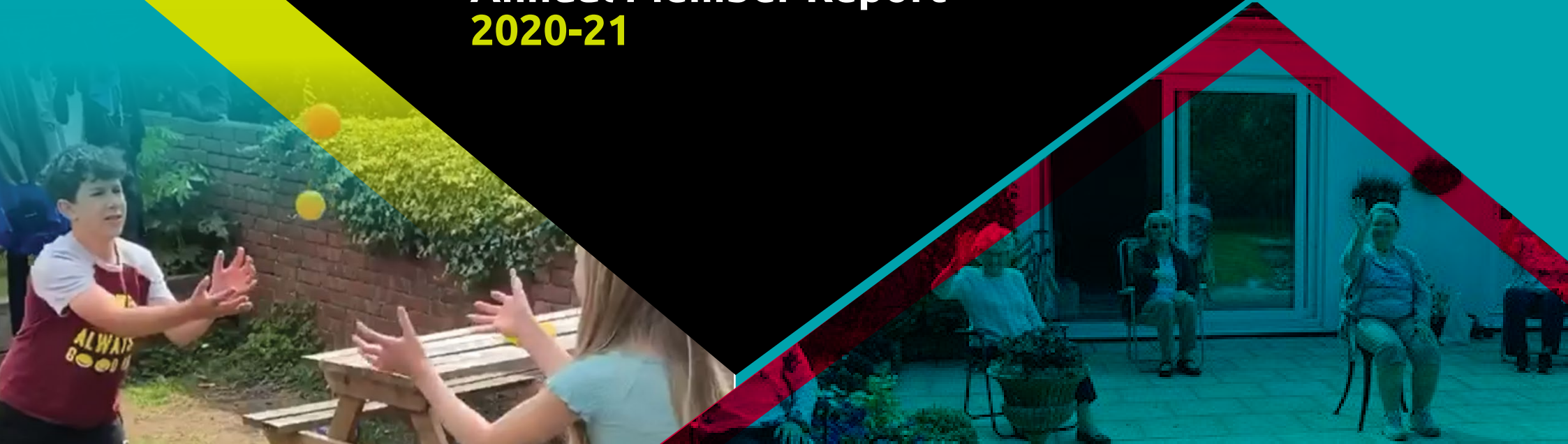


Active Partnerships



Annual Member Report 2020-21





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2020-21 reflecting on an unprecedented year

Through what was a challenging year for everyone, the strength of the network shone through as we showed our resilience and adaptability in continuing to create the conditions for an active nation.

Active Partnerships continued to play an important role in working alongside partners to address the factors preventing people from being physically active. In many cases this took us into new spaces, places and partnerships as we plugged gaps and sought to be as helpful as possible at a time when the health and wellbeing of our population was the highest priority for the country.

The network was an asset to support us all to progress our local priorities and acted as a safe space to share challenges, comfort each other and connect with colleagues at a time when human contact was discouraged.

> Key factors that have influenced our work in 2020/21





Some of the highlights and progress we have made **as a network** over the last 12 months include:

> Connecting and learning together

People and places across the country connecting more regularly and meaningfully, with online meetings supporting us to share and explore learning from our places more quickly and easily.

Active Lancashire collaborated with both Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership and Active Suffolk to share the ingredients of their Challenge Through Sport Initiative, a behaviour change programme for people in recovery. This collaboration has helped to forge partnerships and unlock resources to support people suffering from substance and alcohol misuse, mental health issues, gambling issues and isolation.

> Deeper and broader connections into communities

By having a key role in a pandemic to support the health of our communities, it deepened connections between people. From those struggling the most to remain active and the hyper-local community groups they trust, to system partners and funders and organisations that typically haven't worked together before.

David Watson, Chief Executive at North Yorkshire Sport said;

“Driving positive change through physical activity and sport is at the core of what we do, and it's now more important than ever to help our local community make positive changes to improve their health and wellbeing.”



Deeper and broader connections into communities



Staying active at home



Reducing negative impact on under represented groups



Supporting those working with young people



Encouraging Active Travel



Some of the highlights and progress we have made **as a network** over the last 12 months include:

> A series of causes that we deeply care about

A number of social issues have emerged from within localities that many are passionate about addressing through the power of sport and physical activity.



.....
Equitable and anti racist society



.....
Changing the culture around an ageing society



.....
Limiting the negative impact of climate change



.....
Supporting vulnerable young people and families

“A steering group was established to lead on the racial equality work across the Active Partnerships. The groups focus is to work to build a shared understanding of issues, what our role, potential influence and responsibility is as an individual, organisation and network around issues of race... learning and acting together, it is powerful as it came out of the network, that it is something we wanted to do together and the national team provided support to enable that.”

Steve Nelson, CEO, Wesport

> System leadership as the activity for navigating complexity

A greater focus on, and understanding of, the complexity of physical inactivity and the inequalities within this led to an even more deliberate approach to system leadership as the activity for helping us all to affect change.

Active Dorset Active Ageing Project



The project takes a system change approach to embedding physical activity, with a focus on the 55+ age group.



Tackling Inequalities Fund



Collaboration, trusted relationships, insight and knowledge gathered through placed based working, were key to ensuring Active Partnerships reached those in need via TIF.



Creating Active School Framework



The CAS Framework was developed by an international group of experts and Yorkshire Sport Foundation, to promote a whole systems approach to school improvement.



National Development Group



A space for colleagues to be future thinking and explore the connections, opportunities and implications influencing our efforts to create the conditions for an active nation.





The national team and Board continued to play a role in supporting and enabling the network to thrive through:

> Understanding the context of people and place

An increased focus on connecting with Active Partnerships via 1:1s deepening our understanding of the context in which each operates and thereby improving our ability to connect people to each other.

“One of my ambitions was to raise the learning culture in CDS. Graeme and Ali were very important in helping with this, something I couldn't have done with a small staff team. I couldn't have done what I have in the last 8 months without the support of colleagues to talk to, share ideas with, develop ideas and then get the job done.”

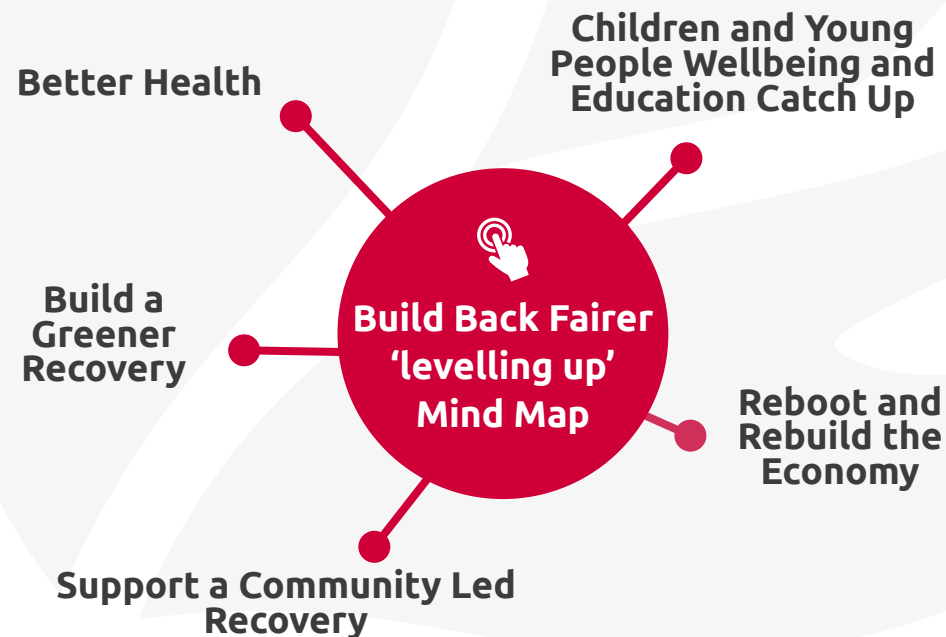
Maxine Rhodes CEO County Durham Sport (joined network in 2020)



We have used the hub to connect Active Partnerships together with the number of hub posts increasing significantly over the last 12 months.

> Maintaining energy and momentum around the shared purpose

Active Partnerships were drawn into new roles to support the pandemic response, established new networks and relationships, and there were at time questions around mission drift. Through our regular and varied touchpoints with colleagues, including CEO meetings, themed and project groups, we sought to maintain energy and support understanding of how the learning from these new experiences was contributing to and strengthening our efforts to create the conditions for an active nation. To help people take the time to look ahead and see how the chaotic nature of the pandemic was creating opportunities for positive long term change.





The national team and Board continued to play a role in supporting and enabling the network to thrive through:

> Developing our system leadership skills, behaviours & mindsets

Within complex systems, effective leadership can come from anywhere, mobilising the widest range of resources and intervening to create ripples of change across a range of settings and stakeholders. It is leadership viewed not as a role (something you are) but as an activity (something you do).

System Leadership Learning Programme

The innovative programme was created to equip staff at all levels with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to work to become effective system leaders. 39 Active Partnerships are taking part, comprising 17 sessions over 7 months with expert input, peer learning, skills sessions and on-demand content.

Link to learning material.

Measurement, Evaluation & Learning

As our understanding of complexity has developed, so have our approaches to measurement, evaluation and learning. **Read More.**

E-Convention

The convention explored a number of key themes connected to 'building back better and fairer', and sought to help understand the perspectives of key system partners, and debate the collaborative action that will generate sustainable and transformational change. **Link to learning materials.**





The national team and Board continued to play a role in supporting and enabling the network to thrive through:

> Supporting opportunities that advance local priorities

Continue to work alongside local and national partners to support areas identified as local priorities



Young people at risk of homelessness

Worked with 6 Active Partnerships in a community of practice to support 600 young people and 42 local organisations to support young people at risk of homelessness.



Business Development

Our business development service worked with Active Partnerships to unlock new partnerships and resources towards our mission including £600,000 from the London Marathon Community Trust, and £35,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund for our social prescribing project.



Social Prescribing and Health

Mapped and identified opportunities, challenges and ambitions of Active Partnerships resulting in the development of a bespoke learning programme alongside a more generic health related learning programme working with and supported by Sport England colleagues.



Opening Schools Facilities

Led the test and learn pilots involving 23 Active Partnerships, resulting in an additional £10.1 million investment from Sport England and the development of case studies.



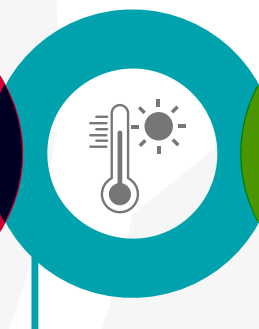
Live Longer Better Active Ageing

Working alongside Active Oxfordshire and Optimal Ageing to design and deliver an innovative system change programme comprising professional development, peer learning, thought leadership events, national partner engagement / advocacy, 1-1 support and an online resource bank.



OpenActive

Working with OpenActive to create a platform for Active Partnerships from which best practice can be shared, learning opportunities provided and a space to tackle existing and upcoming challenges around the use of open data, enabling Partnerships to deliver OpenActive effectively and with ease.



Active Environments & Climate Change

Supporting Active Partnerships prioritising these areas facilitating: community of learning sessions, thought leadership workshops, peer mentoring, engagement / advocacy with national partners and induction for new starters.



Economic growth and recovery

Explored the contribution of sport and physical activity to inclusive economic recovery and growth including a pilot with CIMSPA & 6 Active Partnerships to create sector skills plans.





The national team and Board continued to play a role in supporting and enabling the network to thrive through:

> Bringing out the best of the network

As our approach to how we connect and learn evolved in the online world, it encouraged us to support others to take the lead on network wide activity, to promote more dynamic and self-owned learning structures and for everyone to benefit from the experience and expertise that exists around specific topics and strands of work.

- **Racial Equality Commitment**

Over the last year, we have worked together as a learning community in order to build a more in depth understanding of the issue in our communities and to agree tangible actions to address racism and racial inequalities to make a difference at national and local levels. We recently launched the network commitment to galvanise action across the network.



- **Marcomms Taskforce**

The marketing officers are developing a taskforce approach to future work to enhance collaboration, share resources and make the most of the assets, experiences, skills and practice that exists around marketing in the network. This approach has been used to work with the Sport England campaigns team to ensure national messaging reflected the needs of local communities, it supported the recent social media blackout, launch of Racial Equality Commitment and ongoing work with This Girl Can.



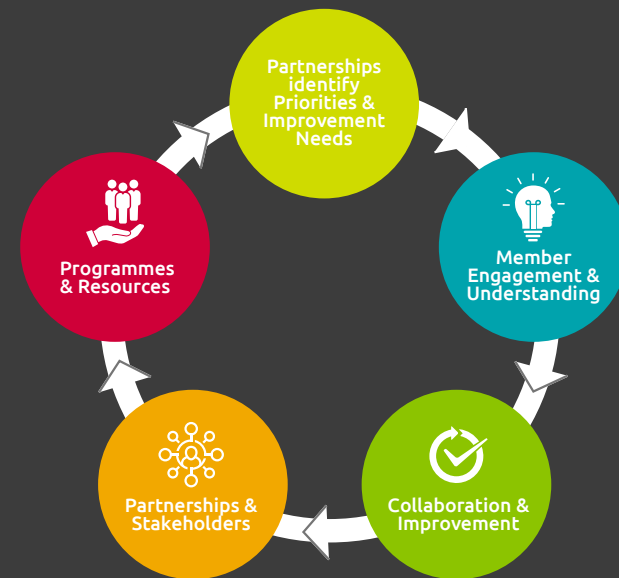
- **Holiday and Food Programme**

Building on the success of the 2019 pilot, the programme was expanded to all top tier authorities in England in November 2020. Active Partnerships have worked alongside a range of partners seeking to alleviate inequalities, food poverty and inactivity and are part of the recently established Holiday Activities and Food Alliance.



> Helping partners to think more place based. Connectivity to link national and local agendas.

In line with our operating model (see below) we have created new partnerships throughout our work to encourage place-based approaches and encourage a more joined up systems approach locally and nationally. Examples include work with Age UK and the Centre for Aging Better in our Live Longer Better community of practice; StreetGames on the Holiday Activities & Food project; UK Active on the opening schools facilities project; BASIS on our climate change work; the LEP Network on our economy work; and the National Academy of Social Prescribing to create sustainable support for Partnerships in this area.





2021-22 – looking to the year ahead

There will undoubtedly be a period of renewal, rebuild and repair as we move out of the pandemic. We have exciting opportunities to all work alongside Sport England in building the future together around how we Unite the Movement in place. Health structures continue to transition and undoubtedly priorities will change and emerge.

> As a network, to accelerate our efforts over the next 12 months to create the conditions for an active nation we will:

- Work alongside Sport England to Unite the Movement in place, developing a new relationship that is based on trust and shared responsibility for what we are trying to achieve.
- Continue to be anti-racist and establish momentum behind the role that sport can play in tackling climate change.
- Develop our system leadership capacity and capability as a way of working to navigate the complexity of physical inactivity.
- Continue the journey to become an effective learning network, that connects dynamically around how change happens and why, and articulate this into accessible and transferable knowledge that can support each other.



> The national team and Board will seek to continue supporting and enabling the network to thrive by focusing on:

- Enabling the ‘causes’ that people and places are passionate about using the power of sport and physical activity.
- By connecting with people in their place to understand their context, connect the network to itself and explore how we grow and spread the learning that exists around how we create the conditions for an active nation together.
- Being part of the work alongside all colleagues to explore and develop how we ‘Unite the Movement’ in place and how the national team can create value in supporting and enabling this to happen.
- Using this transition year, as an opportunity to explore together as a network how we strengthen and refresh the purpose, values, and approach of the network where needed.
- Ensure high quality management and delivery of, and maximise the learning from, projects we have been commissioned to support, or invested in, including; system leadership programme, Live Longer Better, social prescribing, HAF and Young People Forward.

If you would like to know more about how the national team and Board plan to support the network over the next 12 months, please [click here](#).