

Partner Progress and Learning #3

Introduction

This document provides an overview of partner practice and emerging themes that have been identified through examining the partner learning and accountability logs (January – March 2024). It aims to highlight notable practice - not everything. As well as identify sector themes and challenges.

Themes have been drawn from the information that has been gathered. This edition identifies shared practice in the following areas:

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Underrepresented communities in sport
- Disability Sport
- Youth

Partnerships outside of Sport

- Bowls Wales and the Stroke Association
- Welsh Athletics and Mind Cymru
- UDOIT Dance and Girlguiding Cymru

Other examples of notable practice

- Prioritising sporting offers based on data and insight
- Removing barriers to pathway and performance

January - March 2024 Sector Trends

- Considering cost to participation; What Next After the Cost-of-Living Grant?
- Attracting and retaining young coaches
- Connectivity: Digital or In Person coach education?
- Environmental Sustainability

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Underrepresented communities in sport

- Participating in sport during Ramadan.
This was the second Midnight Ramadan event, operated by Foundation for Sports Coaching held at the Sport Wales National Centre (SWNC) which attracted more than 400 people over three nights. Using feedback from 2023 to improve the offer this year, had a dedicated offering for women and girls on Saturday night. The purpose of the programme was to connect with and increase sports participation amongst the Muslim communities in Cardiff, and to showcase SWNC as a welcoming place for everyone. Participants took part in a wide range of sports and had the opportunity to experience the high-performance athlete area with the nutrition team providing a programme geared to the specific [needs of participants](#)

[observing Ramadan.](#)

There was a wide ranging number of partners involved, including many National Governing Bodies, which helped make the event so successful.

Disability Sport

Many of our funded partners have prioritised the development of disability sport offer, using the [Sport Wales 2022 School Sport Survey](#) to understand the level of demand for sport and to improve accessibility. [Disability Sport Wales](#) work closely with many of the partners and helpfully share insight and resources on their website. Over the last quarter examples of partner work include:

- **Inclusion as standard**

Welsh Judo has successfully integrated visually impaired athletes into non-visually impaired events. The ability for Welsh Judo to provide inclusive opportunities at club and events is a positive step forward and supports the inclusion agenda. British Blind Sport produced [A Guide on Supporting Visually Impaired Adults and Children in a Judo Environment](#), which provides helpful advice to other contact and non-contact sports and event organisers.

- **'I'd do more sport if...'**

The 2022 School Sport Survey Report for Boxing notes that of pupils who have unmet demand for Boxing, 5% have a disability or impairment, and 11% have a learning difficulty.

To develop their offer, Welsh Boxing needed to;

1. **Increase awareness of the offer** – they attended Disability Sport Wales' Insport Festival where over 560 people took part in a form of boxing activity.

2. **Increase access to equipment** - Capital investment is being allocated across Wales for wheelchairs, sensory products, visual aids and virtual reality headsets, which enables individuals with a wider range of impairments to take part. This also enables people to connect across multiple sites and share sessions.

- **New game formats**

Cricket Wales delivered its first disability table cricket event and increased awareness of volunteering roles in sport to youth audience.

As a fully inclusive offer of the sport, up to eight people can play on the converted table tennis table, with movable sides which is controlled by the 'fielders'. Cricket Wales worked with a local High School to provide young people who are less engaged in education with volunteering opportunities and event experience.

- **Disability inclusion training as standard**

Newport Live has gained the [Insport Gold](#) accreditation, and have introduced disability inclusion training as standard for all participants in the Playmaker Award. They have also ensured that every member of staff have responsibility for inclusion,

rather than responsibility being with one person.

Youth

Over the last quarter the development of young leaders has been particularly prevalent.

- **Rural Areas**

Developing future leaders & increasing activity in schools: [Young Ambassadors](#) in Powys. 156 young people across Powys primary schools have become Bronze Young Ambassadors (78 boys and 78 girls) through the Youth Sport Trust's programme. Nearly all of the primary schools in have engaged in the programme. This is particularly significant in a rural area, where there is a heavy reliance on extra curricula school provision to enable young people to access sport and physical activity opportunities.

- **Supporting neurodiversity in sport**

Young Ambassador, Lily Morgan, for Hockey Wales has been instrumental in the development of coach development training and resources, to make the sport of hockey more inclusive to young people who are Neuro Diverse. Lily recently launched her own website, neurodiversityinsport.com, as a base for informative videos, a monthly newsletter, and webinars around neurodiversity in sport. The project, which is being driven by Lily, Hockey Wales and Cardiff Met was presented at the [General Hockey assembly in Germany](#).

- **Voice of youth in programme creation**

Street Games and Welsh Netball have worked together to create a young activators course called 'Blitz Netball Activator' – 20 young advisors in North Wales have shaped the programme and piloted it. This is a good example of partners involving young people to shape their programmes and activity. The involvement of young people was key to this being successful. Other sport [Activator Workshops](#) are available on Street Games' website.

- **Increasing opportunities for younger leaders**

Torfaen Council have worked with University of Wales Trinity Saint David to deliver a 'Building Foundations Course' for year 10 (14-15 years) Sports Leaders as a trial for a younger cohort, with feedback leading to the course now being trialled by the Young Ambassador steering group.

Partnerships outside of sport

Several organisations have developed partnerships with organisations outside of sport. This has enabled them to leverage support and investment from other sectors, and to demonstrate the power of sport, and the wider health benefits it can bring. Importantly, these partnerships have been driven by data and insight. Some notable examples are:

- Returning to better health following Stroke**
 Bowls Wales has entered a [partnership with the Stroke Association](#), to put stroke survivors in touch with their local bowls club to learn the sport – and take more steps on a return to better health. Working with local clubs, Bowls Wales ran sessions throughout Wales in both traditional settings but also new and non-traditional settings such as Women’s Institute (WI) groups to break stereotypes and engage with new audiences. Ogwr Indoor Bowls club applied to the [Be Active Wales Fund](#) to help with facility hire and equipment to support the sessions with the WI, which now frequently see 20 women playing Bowls.
- Improving mental health with running**
 Welsh Athletics has developed a two-year [partnership with Mind Cymru](#) aimed at improving mental health through the power of running. The aim is to normalise and embed healthy dialogue across Welsh Athletics’ club settings and, initially, 12 champions are being recruited.
- Addressing latent demand with Girl Guiding**
 49% girls in school years 3-6, and 31% in years 7 -11 want to do more dance according to the School Sport Survey so a natural link between [UDOIT Dance and Girlguiding Cymru](#) has become an official partnership. The partnership has produced a street dance challenge pack which has been downloaded 10,000 times by girl guide units. The next step is to create an information pack is being to help communities set up regular street dance clubs.

Other examples of notable practice

- Prioritising sporting offers based on data and insight**
 School Sport Survey data identified a demand for cycling and basketball in the Gwent area. Sport Wales has stimulated a collaboration project with Local Authorities and Basketball, which has been particularly successful and an example of good sports development. Working collaboratively has had a very positive effect on participation opportunities (through school, extracurricular, community and clubs offers), and future workforce by upskilling staff and volunteers.
- Removing barriers to pathway and performance**
 Following recommendations from the ‘Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket’ (ICEC) report, Cricket Wales has been reviewing its pathway selection methods to address challenges around perceived barriers. Pathway innovations include the opportunity for individuals to use digital material to submit performance videos ahead of trials.

January – March 2024 Sector trends

- Considering Cost to Participation; What Next After the Cost-of-Living Grant?**
 Many partners have used cost of living funds from Welsh Government (via Sport Wales) to provide subsidised offers to those where cost is proving a barrier to participate in sport and physical activity. This funding was one off, and in some cases, partners plan to maintain some level of subsidised offer using their own funds. There is a risk that some may not continue this, and therefore it’s not been a

sustainable offer. There is the opportunity for schemes like this to attract sponsorship, and if it could be done across multiple partners it could be an attractive proposition.

- **Attracting and Retaining Young Coaches**

It has emerged that many entry level coach education courses have a minimum attendee age of 16 years. Many young people embark on their leadership journey at the age of 14, and so there is a risk that if they have to wait until the age of 16 to be able to take their first formal coaching qualification, they may lose interest and leave. We need to better understand the reasons and to challenge whether any barriers can be removed.

- **Connectivity: Digital or In Person Coach Education?**

Covid saw the widespread introduction of online coach education courses, and in many cases this has continued. It offers many benefits - accessible, flexible, more sustainable – both financial and environmental. The challenge is that online coach education may result in candidates being less ‘connected’ to the sport. This is only anecdotal, but there is a growing perception that if a candidate feels connected to the sport, they are more likely to give more and become more engaged. There is a risk that sport could lose valuable volunteers if they feel less connected to the sport they are volunteering in.

- **Environmental Sustainability**

A number of partners have identified that they have an interest in, and are working, on environmental sustainability as part of their strategies or workplans. Sport Wales’ business plan focusses on internal work this year. However, as partner’s start to increase activity in this area, we can share and celebrate best practice.

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