



Active Partnerships

Engaging Communities, Transforming Lives

Impact Report 2021-22





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Introduction

Deepening our connections and clarifying our role within the Movement

Throughout 2021-22 a wide range of social issues and challenges such as Covid-19, racism, cost of living rises and the acceleration of climate change continued to create barriers for large parts of society to access sport and physical activity opportunities.

As a network we deepened our understanding and our relationships around challenges like these to further identify how sport and physical activity can help to transform lives and improve society. We continued to connect, influence and drive change to create a more joined-up approach that will help make active lives a social norm for everyone.

The Active Partnerships national team works within and around the network to connect, enable and support the network to maximise its strengths and resources to drive collective impact.

Much of our time over the last 12 months was spent working with colleagues across organisations and sectors to help advance shared local priorities as the influences on the health of our communities continued to be varied and fast moving.

Another big area of focus for us in 2021-22 was reviewing and strengthening our purpose as a network, the role and governance of the national team and our relationship with Sport England.

Following the launch of Uniting the Movement, we took the time to discuss, explore ideas and identify how we want to move forward together.

The process gave us strategic unity, increased clarity of roles, strengthened relationships with extended workforce and Sport England colleagues and led to an exciting ambition that sets out: *In 10 years' time, we want the full, collective potential of Active Partnerships, Sport England and wider system partners to be realised; to advocate as one voice on the issues that matter; to work as one team around a shared purpose; and to act as a network of leaders with diverse specialist skills.around a shared purpose; and to act as a network of leaders with diverse specialist skills.*

This short document seeks to celebrate the development and impact of the Active Partnerships network over the last 12 months. And through this specifically bring to life the 'connect, enable and support' role of the national team to help build shared understanding and inspire ideas moving forward on how we could collectively grow our impact.





National Sector Partners Group (NSPG)

The national team worked with NSPG members representing the sport, recreation and physical activity sector to support the sector to work together and amplify common messages to policy makers. The group produced joint submissions regarding the **Spring Statement**, **Comprehensive Spending Review**, PE and School Sport, Public sector leisure and the Covid Recovery Fund.

Skills Development

Work with CIMSPA grew across a number of Active Partnerships through the **Skills Pilot programme**, connecting local and national opportunities, working with and capturing employer's needs, enhancing networks, supporting the sector and local networks to align to the changing skills landscape and with the opportunities this presents to the sector. The national team sat on the CIMSPA Professional Development Board & CIMSPA Community Sport Professional Development Committee to strengthen connections across these strands.

Public Leisure

Active Partnerships worked with Sport England and local partners to roll out and maximise the data produced by **Moving Communities** to support the recovery of public gyms and leisure centres. The national team sat on the Moving Communities Board, helping to connect opportunities and link with and influence the wider debates around the future of public leisure.

Active Environments

The national team worked with extended workforce colleagues from Active Norfolk and Active Together, Town and Country Planning Association and wider stakeholders to establish an Active Environments Steering Group (AESG). A programme of networking, learning, mentoring and community of practice activities was implemented to support Active Partnerships to define their role and refine their work across the Active Environments theme. A course designed with the British Association for Sustainable Sport helped colleagues to understand the issues and steer their organisations towards a more sustainable footing. Active Partnerships also identified **actions as a result of COP22**. The AESG provides representation to the TCPA 20-Minute Neighbourhoods National Coalition and will contribute to Sport England's review of Active Design in 2022.

Climate Change

Colleagues from Active Humber represented the network on the newly formed Sport Environment and Climate Coalition (SECC). This was formed in recognition of greater collective action being needed to help the sport, recreation and physical activity sector become more environmentally sustainable and aware of climate change. The group produced the **SECC commitment** and Active Partnerships contributed to the **partners position statement** calling for widespread investment in decarbonising the vital community level leisure facilities. The national team provided back office support to help this cause grow.

Connect

- we bring people together across organisations and sectors

Closing the gaps between people and organisations at all levels helps us to work more collaboratively as a collective.

It helps us to advocate with one voice and influence the things that really matter to communities experiencing the greatest inequalities.

It helps people to work together better within the network, across organisations and across sectors and to align priorities and resources around shared priorities. Examples of related activities include:





Together Fund

Active Partnerships worked with each other, Sport England and more than 30 national partners to help **£20m of National Lottery Funding** reach people whose ability to be physically active was being disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The national team and extended workforce colleagues from Active Partners Trust and Active Devon sat on the Sport England working group administering the Fund, helping to make connections with other place-based work and grow the collaborative ways of working and learning culture.

Integrating physical activity into integrated care systems (ICS)

Integrating physical activity into the work of ICSs and networks was a significant priority locally and nationally. Colleagues from across the national team and a range of Active Partnerships worked with Sport England's Health and Inactivity Team to develop a shared ambition for our work together. Active Oxfordshire's strategic health lead was seconded to the national team to provide capacity and expertise to help understand, support and strengthen connections across related opportunities and networks, including the Everyone Active Everyday Steering Group, Moving Health Care Professionals Advisory Group, Activating NHS Systems Design Group, National Deconditioning Group and National Falls Prevention Group.

Sport for Development (SfD)

The network had representatives on each of the sub-groups of the SfD Coalition and the national team helped chair the communications group. We work with other members to enable the Coalition to achieve its full potential and amplifying core messages to policy makers about the positive social impact of sport and physical activity in changing lives. We provided evidence and contributed to policy papers and town hall discussions, including the **Mental health report**, which led to Energise Me presenting at the All Party Parliamentary Group on Mental Health and Wesport supporting the town hall discussion on employability.

Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Active Partnerships continued to test and learn around MEL approaches. Through working more closely with communities, new processes emerged with an increased focus on learning and explaining how and why change is happening. The national team sought to connect and grow thinking by strengthening relationships with academic institutions, sat on cross-sector groups exploring new approaches, were members of Sport England's local delivery internal evaluation group and supported the recruitment of Sport England's National Evaluation and Learning Partner consortium with the aim of strengthening capacity and capability in places to undertake MEL.

Connect - continued



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Enable -

we create the conditions for great things to happen

Working as a network is a commitment to supporting each other to be as good as we all possibly can. It's about building outwards to create alliances with each other and with partners who share our vision and the causes we want to address. And working innovatively to maximise the collective expertise and experience.

This means we all play different roles at different times, ranging from convening people, to leading from behind, to facilitating discussions that influence change, to letting go of structures and testing new ways of working. This enables the network to thrive.

Examples of related activities include:



Enabling the network to thrive by supporting opportunities that advance local priorities

Live Longer Better >

The **cultural revolution around inclusive healthy active ageing** continued to grow, with over 1,700 people attending thought leadership events and relationships strengthened with key local and national agencies working on active ageing. The national team, supported by a secondment from Active Oxfordshire, project managed the programme and influenced the agenda across organisations and sectors. £200,000 of investment from Sport England and £60,000 from Centre for Ageing Better was secured to take forward the programme over the next 2 years and strengthen our approach to evaluation and learning

Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) >

Active Partnerships worked alongside a range of local and national partners seeking to alleviate food poverty and inactivity through the HAF programme and HAF alliance. The national team secured Sport England funding and project managed a social media project working with Active Partnerships to target specific families. Learning events for all Partnerships to share insight, learnings and challenges were organised in partnership with StreetGames.

Young People Forward >

Funded by the London Marathon Charitable Trust, six Active Partnerships connected with networks supporting young people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness to **maximise the potential of physical activity to improve their lives.** 722 young people were engaged, connecting with 49 organisations working with young people. Active Lancashire's Operations Manager was seconded to the national team to project manage the programme and use their experience and connections in this field to grow opportunities and relationships.

Inclusive and sustainable economic growth and prosperity >

A new community of practice was formed around how physical activity and sport adds value to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and prosperity. The strengths and expertise within the network was explored and shared to create connections between Active Partnerships. Active Together seconded their Economy & Sport Growth Manager one day a week to the national team to coordinate this area of work to support connectivity, influence and development of this agenda.

OpenActive >

Active Partnerships worked with local partners to open data to enable more people to identify suitable opportunities to be active. The national team worked with **OpenActive** and Active Partnerships staff to create a platform to share best practice and learning opportunities and provided a space to tackle shared challenges around the use of open data.

Children and Young People (CYP) >

A national steering group for CYP helped support colleagues across the network to share ideas and learnings. Two learning communities were established for Early Years and Maternity, involving Active Partnerships and a wide range of partners. The national team supported the development of the learning communities, connecting national partners and supporting the groups to identify and address priorities.



Enable - continued



“ Putting physical inactivity and inequalities at the heart of our work opened up thinking about governance and funding processes (eg, methods for distributing resources to community groups, models of governance and assurance). ”

Enabling the network to thrive by supporting opportunities that advance local priorities

Active Workplaces >

Active Partnerships worked with local employers to support the health and wellbeing of their employees. The national team supported and provided Workplace Movement 'train the trainer' sessions and the learning community expanded to share learning and connect with the economic development agenda. Working with Sport England, Workplace Movement was included within the **Active Employee** Toolkit, supported the development plans for workplace pilots and strengthened connections between colleagues.

Governance and Funding Processes >

Putting physical inactivity and inequalities at the heart of our work opened up thinking about governance and funding processes (eg, methods for distributing resources to community groups, models of governance and assurance). The national team convened conversations around this topic, bringing together local and national colleagues across the voluntary sector, local authorities, Active Partnerships and Sport England to drive change together in how we govern and fund in seeking to tackle inequalities. This opened up channels and strengthened connections with Uniting the Movement implementation plan priorities focusing on this area.

Campaigns >

Campaigns - A taskforce group of Active Partnership representatives and the national team have developed closer relationships with SE campaigns team resulting in drop-in sessions being organised, enabling all Partnerships to input into the development of campaigns and liaise with media agencies at an earlier stage, to help ensure campaigns meet the needs of local partners and communities.

Opening Schools Facilities >

23 Active Partnerships were involved in the test and learn pilots, resulting in an additional £10million investment from Sport England. The national team coordinated and managed the pilot, including organising learning events, communication channels and supporting Sport England to develop **case studies**.

Racial Equality >

The network continued to work together to build a more in depth understanding of systemic racism and the issues facing our communities. Seeking to make a difference locally and nationally, the **network commitment** was launched to galvanise action. Active Partnerships joined the **Professional Footballers Association 'On the Board' programme** as part of our work to improve board diversity and a number signed up to the Race Equality Code. The national team supported this work behind the scenes, enabling people with lived experience and capacity to lead.

Supporting Displaced Communities >

Active Partnerships came together to share ideas and learning on how the power of sport and physical activity can be used to welcome, include and embrace refugees from across the world. Active Partnerships committed to **4 coordinated actions**. The national team supported articles that brought to life the work and conversations alongside lead officers at Active Oxfordshire and Sport England.



Supporting Active Partnership Staff

The national team continued to build meaningful relationships with people at all levels across Active Partnerships, Sport England and wider partners. This provided impactful support, drove personal improvement and strengthened cross-organisation collaboration.

CEO forums and various groups were convened, the Hub was administered providing online connectivity, ongoing communications around network activity were provided, and a mentoring programme was coordinated that colleagues across the network accessed to develop their skills. Surveys that supported the network to understand staff and partner satisfaction and financial performance were also project managed.



System leadership

Over 50 colleagues attended an **Applied Systems Leadership Course** that was delivered in partnership with **Collaborate CIC**.

This deepened people's knowledge, strengthened skills and connections with each other and supported the application of learning.

The national team co-ordinated the programme, convened a cross-organisation steering group and facilitated reflection sessions for colleagues between sessions.



Development Group

A group of colleagues with a range of roles across the network and Sport England met every few months to consider as a network our strengths, opportunities, challenges and priorities in creating the conditions for an active nation.

The group adopted a helicopter view of what was happening to try and spot interconnections and how the network can make progress. The group was chaired by Ali Shipway, member of the national board, and supported by the national team, helping to strengthen connections and thinking between the group and board.



Convention

78 presenters from 22 partners and 20 Active Partnerships contributed to the 15 sessions that made up the **Mobilising the Movement** event.

It created a space for the network and partners to celebrate and explore sustainable action and transformational change. The national team project managed the event.

Support

- we help people to achieve their full potential

Learning and development support across the network is diverse, aligning with the diversity of the people, places and priorities across the network.

Organic peer to peer relationships regularly develop, ongoing structured opportunities are provided, and the culture is increasingly one of personal responsibility for supporting ourselves and each other, both within and around the network.

Examples of related activities include:





2022-23

Looking to the year ahead...

Over the next 12 months we will continue to connect, enable and support the network. We will seek to influence change in creating a more joined-up approach to maximising the collective expertise of the network and partners. With the aim of collaboratively removing the barriers that prevent large parts of society accessing sport and physical activity opportunities.

To enable the network to continue to thrive the national team will have a specific focus on:

- Building on the network review, recruiting diverse staff and board members, developing the team and board and refreshing our strategy.
- Building outwards, supporting the growth and integration of the 'blended approach' and system partners.
- Continuing to connect with colleagues across the network, organisations and sectors to advance shared local priorities and influence change.
- Managing and maximising learning from projects we invest in, including Live Longer Better and the Holiday Activities and Food programme. [Active](#)



Active Partnerships

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