Sported Community Pulse

North West
October 2023

90 responses

Headlines

- **91% are confident** (extremely or fairly) that **their group will exist in six months' time**.
- Key challenges currently facing young people are **their mental health** (45%) and **not having enough money** (40%). A quarter of groups also said young people face longer-term **poverty/inequality** (26%), **no/poor safe spaces and facilities** (25%) and **a lack of opportunities/activities** (25%).
- **Securing funding** is the most common priority over the next six months for groups (83%), with other high priorities including **engaging new participants** (72%), **planning for the future** (57%), and **volunteer recruitment/retention** (56%). More than half of groups also said **retaining participants** is a priority (54%).
- Leaders' scores for **their mental health** are similar to our England-wide findings (7.5/10 compared to 7.4 across the nation), with scores for the mental health of their **staff/volunteers** identical to England (7.3). The score for **young people** is slightly below that of England (6.1 compared to 6.3).
- Two-thirds of respondents agree (definitely or tend to) that **they personally can influence decisions affecting their local area** (66%).
- More than three-quarters of groups (79%) said the **lack of representation of minoritised groups** within sport **impacts on young people from their community taking part** (to a great extent or somewhat).
- 82% of groups told us **they get inactive young people active**.
- Around half reported **young people in their communities are fairly active** (53% said their young people get an average of 30-59 minutes of physical activity a day), with 40% saying **young people are less active** (less than an average of 30 minutes). 7% said young people in their area are **active** (average of 60+ minutes per day).
- The most common response when asked what more local or national government could do to support their group was encouraging funders to **make applying for funding easier/more accessible** (92%).
- **The majority of groups don't work with sports councils** (60%), with the most likely connection being that they help groups get funding (19%).
- Just over a third of groups are **supported in delivering activities by sports governing bodies** (37%) with around a quarter getting help with funding from them (27%).
- **Relationships with local councils are mixed** – a third are helped to get funding (33%), a quarter are funded (24%), and a similar proportion supported to deliver by them (23%). A quarter don't work with councils (28%).
- A third of **groups don't work with local businesses** (32%), with businesses most likely to fund groups if there is a connection (31%).
- Around half of **respondents don't work with leisure trusts/commercial space providers** (49%), with just over a third of groups saying these organisations help them deliver activities (36%).
- About a third of groups are **helped in getting funding by charities beyond Sported** (36%), with a quarter supported to deliver activities (28%) or directly funded by these organisations (23%).
- Nearly half of **groups don't work with voluntary/community sector umbrella organisations** (42%), though one in five are helped to get funding by them (21%).
- Three-quarters of groups told us **Sported helps them get funding** (74%).

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Summary (cont.)

- Successful relationships with partner organisations are based on regular and effective communication, openness and honesty, an understanding of their needs/situation, shared values/goals, flexibility of approach and simplicity of processes, and the willingness of external organisations to listen to smaller groups in their communities.

- Groups would like to see corporates offer funding for different needs (especially facilities/capital/running costs, not just projects) and commit to longer-term support that emphasises organisational sustainability as much as project-based work. Visiting groups and being more aware of their activities would also be welcome.

- The best ways to get young people active include offering affordable activities, creating inclusive environments (for young people of all backgrounds and abilities), delivering fun non-competitive sessions with lots of encouragement and a variety of different activities.

Cost-of-Living

- 94% are concerned (extremely or fairly) about **the impact of cost-of-living increases on their group**.

- 91% are concerned (extremely or fairly) about its **impact on their young people**.

- Nearly every group (93%) has **made a change in response to cost-of-living increases**, with the most common being **subsidised equipment/kit for their young people** (56%). Over half of groups have provided free memberships (55%).

- The most common experience for groups over the last six months in relation to cost-of-living increases has been **a significant rise in utility bills** (66%), followed by the **use of reserves/reduction in budget surplus** (64%). A similar number of groups have faced a **reduction in financial support from external funding streams** (60%).

- The most-expected experiences over the next six months are a **reduction in financial support from external funding streams** (34%) and a **significant increase in fees for using a facility** (34%). A third of groups expect to **use reserves/have a reduction in budget surplus** (33%) and face **an increase in the cost of their Public Liability Insurance** (33%).

- Group leaders say their young people are most likely to have experienced **challenges with home/family life** (63%) and **social isolation** (63%) as a result of cost-of-living increases in the last six months. Nearly as many have faced **reduced mental wellbeing** (62%), **reduction in disposable incomes** (60%), and being **unable to afford travel costs** (60%).

- Young people are most likely to be **unable to afford activities/subs at their group** as a result of cost-of-living increases in the next six months (36%). Nearly as many are likely **to disengage from/reduce their participation in sport** (32%) and a quarter are expected to be **unable to afford travel costs** (28%).

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