Closing the Gap
Evaluation Report

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation report brings together the findings from 16 evaluation reports carried out with a range of partner organisations that worked with Closing the Gap (CtG). CtG was a Lottery funded project aimed at ensuring young people at risk of social exclusion, resident in Stoke-on-Trent, experienced the same opportunity to take part as other young people in the city. CtG worked in partnership with local organisations engaged with socially excluded young people up to the age of 25, to build and catalyse organisational change as a method of increasing opportunities for participation. Sustainability was fundamental to the programme, ensuring that physical activity interventions were adopted by the partner as a means of achieving their own organisational objectives and improving the lives of targeted young people.

The interventions included in this report are:

- Social Care Residential Units for Looked After Children and Young People (pilot study)
- Treehouse, Crescent, Kingsland and Hope Children’s Centres
- Blackfriars Disability Day Centre
- Compendium Housing Association and the Regeneration Project at Coalville
- Changes Young People (mental health charity)
- Integrated Family Services Unit
- Federation of Stadium Communities, Port Vale Initiative
- Groundwork Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire
- Nacro Services
- North Staffs Young Carers
- Chell Area Family Action Group (CAFAG), North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council (NSREC) and Stanfields and Meir Youth Inclusion Project (YIP)

It is hoped that these findings will provide useful information to guide other providers of sport and physical activity, working with similar groups of young people. In particular this document will be useful because it

- Outlines the aims of the project
- Explains the methodology used to assess the needs of the partner organisations and evaluate the interventions carried out
- Provides evidence to support the argument that sport and physical activity can be a successful tool to increase participation levels, improve understanding of the benefits of sport and physical activity by young people and staff and meet the wider aims of an organisation, such as improved staff and client relationships, re-engaging young people and providing avenues for success and achievement.
There is clear evidence that indicates that regular participation in physical activity can reduce levels of poor health and crime and improves educational attainment and social inclusion\(^1\). However, as Sport England\(^2\) state, such improvements are dependent on sport providers creating opportunities for regular, high quality provision within local communities. Levels of participation in the city are amongst the lowest in the country. Evidence suggests that sport and physical activity opportunities, although increasing, does not lend itself in favour of socially excluded young people, breeding a cycle of exclusion and ultimately impacting many people’s lives. The importance of addressing “social exclusion” remains at the forefront of Government strategy, with responsibility now lying within the Cabinet Office for taking forward the Social Exclusion Action Plan published in 2006 and filtered through local authorities nationwide.

It is expected that levels of participation amongst socially excluded young people are to be lower than the general population; however there are no exact studies undertaken to confirm this theory and no data exist to this effect. Stoke-on-Trent is in the bottom 20% of the most deprived areas in the UK with high levels of obesity, poor health and unemployment. Sport and physical activity participation rates in Stoke-On-Trent are amongst the lowest in the country. Currently 85% of Stoke-On-Trent’s population is not doing the recommended level of sport and activity, which places Stoke-On-Trent in the bottom quarter nationally\(^3\). Tackling the issue of low participation levels in the city is a priority and targets are set to achieve a 30% increase of people undertaking at least 30 minutes of physical activity of at least moderate intensity on three or more days per week by 2012\(^4\). This objective primarily falls on local authority and governing bodies of sport to deliver interventions for the benefit of socially excluded people.

This report focuses on evaluating the work carried out by CtG staff with a variety of community groups catering for at risk young people in Stoke-on-Trent, including Children Centres, organisations working with excluded and disengaged young people, young carers and those in residential social care, an adult disability group and a mental health charity\(^5\). The aim was to increase participation opportunities for young people by facilitating staff to make use of sport to meet the needs of their clients. The findings identified many barriers to participation faced by these young people and the staff and volunteers working with them. In addition to cost and availability of their chosen activities, most of the respondents highlighted the low levels of confidence felt by young people with regards to sport and physical activity. Staff and volunteers also discussed this issue, together with the need to provide local activities and enable the young people to exercise together, in order to reduce isolation and the fear of attending somewhere new alone. The responses from staff, volunteers, young people and management informed the development of a bespoke action plan for the introduction of physical activity at each of the partner organisations. The action plans involved several different types of intervention, including training.
for staff and volunteers to lead physical exercise activities themselves. In addition the setting up of sport and physical activity sessions was facilitated, equipment ordered, support provided for bids to grant agencies and sports policy documents written to maintain good practice. After a period of intervention by Closing the Gap, research was repeated to evaluate the success of each individual project and this report provides an overview of this work.

As CtG took place across numerous contexts, each set of data and action points produced was context specific. This enabled CtG to be analysed both on a discrete level and also on a broad holistic one. Context, Mechanism and Outcome (CMO) was used to facilitate this process. Each context produced its own action points which translated into specific mechanisms for delivery. The success of CtG was measured on both the local and holistic level by measuring the outcomes which each of the mechanisms produced. Measurement was achieved through periodic repetition of the above methods to assess the level of change taking place within the two core groups; organisations and young people.

Although all of the interventions were different the range of mechanisms used by CtG were broadly similar. The common types of interventions implemented were:

- fun days
- taster sessions
- weekly football, multi-sports, aerobics, dance (including liaison with StreetDance projects) and gym sessions
- walking groups
- CSLA and other accreditation for staff and clients,
- staff physical activity
- events to celebrate achievement

Children’s play activities were also included in some Children’s Centres in order to encourage young parents to exercise alongside their children. In addition CtG supported staff at the partner organisations when applying for funding, provided information booklets and directories about local sport and physical activity provision (including local StreetGames projects), signposted staff and young people to local clubs and facilities, provided specialist equipment, arranged for teams to be involved in sporting competition and continued to advise after the intervention period had ended. On occasions externally paid coaches were used to supplement staffing levels in order to sustain an activity.

By analysing the evidence from across the projects included in this work, it is apparent that CtG was able to facilitate a significant cultural change towards the way sport and physical activity was both viewed and utilised within a number of the organisations. When the partner organisation was supportive a range of successful interventions were able to be implemented and remained in
place after the intervention had drawn to a close. However, where staff turnover was very high, communication between CtG and the host organisation was poor or resources were restricted unexpectedly, success was far lower. The success of the interventions was evident from the responses gathered from the final stage EFQMs with senior and management staff at all the partner organisations and young people’s BBaC questionnaires. Policies and strategies had been put in place to ensure sustainability and staff and young people felt they had improved their knowledge and ability to lead sessions. Sport had proved to be a useful tool in reducing anti social behaviour and for making young people aware of what was acceptable and how to manage their behaviour. In addition, because staff and young people often participated together or with staff support, the sessions had led to improved understanding and better relationships between the two groups. Inclusiveness was a central facet to the sessions and, as a result, girls and young women, young parents, young people with disabilities and those with mental health problems were all able to benefit. By the end of the intervention sport and physical activities were sustainable at all the successful interventions, including sports specific and multi-sport sessions and staff, volunteer and young people’s on-going training courses. CtG work had introduced the partner organisations and their clients to a wide range of activities and improved knowledge of what was available in the local community. Young people had become more involved in mainstream and other community based provision, as participants, volunteers and in some cases paid coaches. Partner organisations now had the knowledge and understanding to lead provision and, most importantly, understood that sport and physical activity was an effective tool to help them meet the wider aims of the organisations they worked for.

Ensuring sustainability was essential if successful partnerships were to be achieved and, whilst CtG cannot take sole credit for the positive outcomes, their research clearly illustrates that this intervention is a beneficial method to employ. Closing the Gap has evidently been a much needed and successful programme in Stoke-on-Trent. It was a unique approach taken by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and has established the Closing the Gap programme as an example of best practice for any organisation striving to achieve social inclusion through sport and physical activity.
2. INTRODUCTION

This report considers the work undertaken by Closing the Gap in partnership with a number of organisations working with at risk and socially and economically deprived young people, in order to develop the use of sport and physical activity. It is important to note that it does not analyse every partnership that CtG worked with, as some were not ready for evaluation when this report was written. However, it does discuss 16 organisations covering a range of provision. A list of the partners included in this evaluation report is available in Appendix A and a full list of the partners CtG worked with is in Appendix B. The purpose of this report is to examine the results, identify key themes and illustrate findings. It provides an insight into participation in sport and physical activity in Stoke-on-Trent by these hard to reach groups of young people.

Although each host organisation had its specific target group and aims (see Appendix C) all of them worked to assist young people in improving their confidence and self esteem, to become more employable and in supporting them to develop social and professional skills. This often included working with young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and many of the groups were based in areas that feature in the National ‘Index of Deprivation’. As such they were key target groups for this project and were selected for the intervention programme.

The report is based on the use of the Context, Mechanism & Outcome (CMO) evaluation methodology developed by Pawson & Tilley. CMO is the tool used by CtG to measure its impact across the various contexts (projects) in which it is involved. A specific context can be a single partner organisation, a group of young people or the entire CtG programme. The benefit of exploring contexts on both a holistic and focused level is that it enables the programme’s impact to be examined as the contribution of parts to the whole. For example, the overall performance of CtG may be positive, but certain groups of young people may remain marginalised in terms of perception toward sport. This approach allows for specific mechanisms to be introduced that cater for the needs of a specific target group of young people or partner organisation. The purpose of CMO is to establish whether there is an ‘unequivocal causal relationship between a programme and its outcome’. That is, where some change can be measured following the implementation of a particular programme, it seeks to establish to what extent it was the programme’s activity which caused the identified change, and not some other, unidentified variable. CMO assumes that there is an underlying theory behind the workings of a particular programme or intervention. This theory explains how the particular programme caused any identifiable change. In order to find the underlying theory, it is necessary to configure a series of CMOs for each intervention. A CMO has three core parts: a context, a mechanism and an outcome. The most important aspect of CMO is
the overall context in which the programme takes place. The ‘context’ signifies the precise circumstances into which a particular intervention is introduced at the various project levels. The mechanism is the precise way in which CtG seeks to facilitate change within target groups. Therefore, Context + Mechanism = Outcome.

The following sections outline the context in which the project took place, the methods used to effect change and the outcomes achieved in light of these factors. It will begin by providing the background to the CtG programme and more detail of the CMO methodology, and will establish the wider context of Stoke-on-Trent that the research took place within. It will then discuss the amount of sport and physical activity that was being participated in by young people, staff and volunteers at the partner organisations before the intervention started and the belief, barriers and understanding that they displayed. Following on from this context, the various interventions that were introduced by Closing the Gap will be discussed thematically before an evaluation of the outcomes is presented.
3. OVERVIEW OF THE CLOSING THE GAP PROGRAMME

The “Closing the Gap” (CtG) programme was developed over several years by a strong multi-agency partnership including the City Council, NHS Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire University, the Drug Action Team, Youth Offending Services and a range of other agencies. Several different mechanisms were also used to ensure that the local community were able to have some influence on the final shape of the programme. This process resulted in the following vision being established:

“all young people between the ages of 0 and 25 will have the same opportunity to enjoy the benefits of sport and active recreation irrespective of their personal circumstances, for example who they are or where they live.”

The purpose of this programme was to:

“have unlocked the potential of increased participation in sport and active recreation using this as a vehicle for change when working with young people at risk of social exclusion.”

The central theme of CtG was:

“improving the health, well-being and quality of life of socially excluded young people and those at risk of being so through increased involvement in sport and active recreation.”

Its two overarching outcomes were:

- Raising participation in sport to at least the same average level as young people as a whole in the city; young people within our target group will benefit from improved health, mental well being and enhanced social capital.

- Key organisations have a greater understanding of how sport and active recreation can be used to deliver wider cross-cutting strategic objectives and apply this within their core business.

Key target groups of young people who are at risk of social exclusion or already experiencing social exclusion identified for CtG were as follows:

- Young people exhibiting challenging behaviour
- Young People involved in criminal activity or those at risk of offending
- Young people involved in or vulnerable to becoming involved in drug and alcohol use/misuse
• Young people from black and minority ethnic communities (including asylum seekers, Gypsies and travellers)
• Looked after children and young people
• Young people not in education, employment and training
• Young people at risk of sexual exploitation
• Young parents
• Young people with disabilities including learning difficulties
• Young carers
• Young people from LGBT community
• Young people experiencing unstable housing

Initial estimates showed that there were approximately 11,000 young people within the city who fell within these groups at any one time.

Activity focused on the areas identified below; and took place at both an individual and organisational level:

• Increasing Awareness and Advocacy
• Partnership Development
• Improving Communications and Networking
• Capacity Building
• Learning and Best Practice

Within the areas identified above key priorities of the programme were to encourage and support organisations who:

• have traditionally not used sport as a tool for working with socially excluded young people to test how sport could be used to achieve their wider objectives; are already involved in sport to ensure that they are able to engage with and accommodate the needs of socially excluded young people and those at risk of social exclusion.

In 2004 the partnership was invited by Sport England to apply for funding from the Active England Programme and was successful in securing £889,000 over a period of three and a half years to implement CtG. This was augmented by just under £650,000 from organisations within the partnership, together providing a budget of just over £1,500,000 pounds spread over a five year period. The first CtG staff were appointed in early 2005 and work commenced on the first CtG project in May of that year. This was a pilot study with Social Care Residential Units and was followed by the initial wave of partner organisations in May 2006.
4. CONTEXT

The context for the CtG project falls into three areas all of which are discussed below:

- A wider context that details the environment within which the projects were delivered
- Overview of the roles of the partner organisations and their aims
- Consideration of the capacity and use of sport and physical activity by the host organisations before intervention by Closing the Gap.

4.1 Wider Context

A detailed demographic profile of the city of Stoke-on-Trent is provided in Appendix D. This data paints a picture of Stoke-on-Trent as an extremely deprived city, where unemployment is high and the quality of life is often low. Poor health is a significant issue and the reasons for this can in part be attributed to well known health determinants such as poor housing, low educational attainment and a number of employment related factors. All of this is supported by the city’s position within the English Indices of Deprivation 2004\(^{(7)}\) which identified the city as the 18\(^{th}\) most deprived local authority district out of 354 in England. Further information provided by the Department of Health in their Health Profile for Stoke-on-Trent\(^{(8)}\), suggest teenage pregnancy rates are amongst the highest nationally, almost a quarter of adults are obese, life expectancy is considerably lower than average with deaths from heart disease, stroke and cancer significantly higher than average. GCSE results, drug misuse and violent crime are also significantly worse than the national average. In light of the Chief Medical Officer’s report on the link between activity and health stating that,

“The evidence clearly demonstrates that an inactive lifestyle has a substantial negative impact on both individual and public health”

the low levels of participation in sport and physical activity across the city are of particular concern and can be identified as a factor in the high levels of poor health within the city.

In 2004 the Chief Medical Officer published his report *At least 5 a week\(^{(9)}\)* in which he identifies the positive impacts on physical and mental health that arise from regular participation in sport & active recreation. This report goes on to make clear recommendations regarding the desirable levels of activity as follows:
• “Children & young people should achieve a total of at least 60 minutes of at least moderate intensity activity each day. At least twice a week this should include activities to improve bone health (activities that produce high physical stresses on the bones), muscle strength and flexibility.”

• “For general health benefit, adults should achieve a total of at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on 5 or more days per week.”

When CtG started national levels of participation were low, baseline results released in December 2006 from Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport,[10], a continuous survey of a cross section of private households in England, indicated only 20.9% participated during a typical week, in moderate intensity level sport for at least 30 minutes on at least three separate occasions. The table below is drawn from this survey and shows that during the week prior to the survey taking place, 19.2% of adults from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, 9.5% of adults with a limiting disability, 15.2% of adults from lower socio-economic groups and 18.5% of women participated, indicating considerable variation between groups of the population. According to Sport England, the National Active Peoples Survey 3 (2008/9) indicates only 16.6% of the UK’s adult population participate in sport and activity with moderate intensity level for at least 30 minutes three times per week or more. Comparing this figure locally, 15.2% of the West Midlands population participates at this level, an increase from 14.5% recorded for the 2nd Survey (2007/8).

Participation in moderate intensity level sport by priority group during the past week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Group</th>
<th>At least 3x30</th>
<th>Percentage range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black and minority ethnic</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>17.5 - 20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limiting disability</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.7 - 10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower socio-economic</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>14.4 - 16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17.7 - 19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>20.3 - 21.6</td>
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(95% confidence; Figures rounded to 1 decimal place)

More specific data with regards to participation in sport and physical activity in the city is available from Sport England’s Active People Survey 3 2008/9.[11] This survey reports the percentage of the adult population taking part in 30 minutes of continuous moderate intensity activity on at least three days a week. Key findings are as follows:

• Nationally 21.6% of the adult population aged 16 and over take part regularly in moderate intensity physical activity
• In the West Midlands 20.1% of the adult population aged 16 and over take part regularly in moderate intensity physical activity, an increase from 19.3% recorded for the Active People Survey of 2006.
• The West Midlands saw a statistically significant increase of 36,000 participants to 665,000 adults taking part in at least 3 sessions of sport a week
• In the county of Staffordshire 16.8% of the adult population aged 16 and over take part three times a week in moderate intensity sport and 22.2% in sport and active recreation
• In Stoke-on-Trent 13.4% of the adult population aged 16 and over take part regularly three times a week in moderate intensity sport.

These figures show levels of participation across the county of Staffordshire are comparable to the national average; however levels of participation in moderate levels of sport in Stoke-on-Trent fall well below the national average, in fact Stoke-on-Trent ranks 313th out of the 356 local authorities nationally. This is, however, a clear improvement from its previous ranking of 350th.

The surveys mentioned relate to adult participation and unfortunately there is no data regarding young people’s participation that is comparable in a similar fashion. Several studies have taken place examining young people’s participation, however these tend to focus on activity in school. The Young People and Sport National Survey (2002) identified a consistent percentage of around 13–14% who do not take part in any sport ‘regularly’ in their ‘free time’ (at least 10 times in the previous 12 months) suggesting that it is not only adults who do not participate at national recommended levels sufficient to benefit their health, supporting the need for sport to be installed in young people and continued long into their adult life.

Currently there is no national data which considers the levels of participation from socially excluded young people in sport and physical activity. Levels are expected to be low due to the many barriers to participation they face, however this group of young people have most to gain in terms of raised educational attainment and improved mental and physical health. Closing the Gap, however, initiated a baseline report in 2006 after its first year of working. The results in the report were to act as a baseline for comparison for the duration of the programmes existence. In 2009 ‘Closing the Gap’ undertook another set of research aimed at 1200 young people aged 25 or under at risk of social exclusion resident in Stoke-on-Trent(12). The key objective was to establish their levels of regular participation in sport and active recreation and to provide a unique insight into this hard to reach groups levels of participation within the city of Stoke-on-Trent.

The sample size of the research undertaken is the largest to date with the sample sizes representing each year demonstrated overleaf.
Confidence Interval:

It is vital to know the reliability of the data set that is analysed, this is achieved through the calculation of a confidence interval which determines the range of figures that are most accurate. Confidence intervals are used to indicate the reliability of an estimate. How likely the interval is to contain the parameter is determined by the confidence coefficient. The confidence coefficient in this report is 95%, this is the most commonly used figure in professional reports due to its efficient calculated range and its low percentage of error (being 5%). Increasing the desired confidence coefficient will widen the confidence interval, and lessen the accuracy of data. Using the confidence interval formula it can be assumed that the confidence interval for this data set is 2.8.

As indicated above the latest baseline figures were reported in November 2009 after research was carried out with 1200 respondents. The data set for 2006 is very different to that of 2009 for the under 16 age group. Firstly, 15% of respondents for 2006 undertake no sport or physical activity in a typical week, however this has dropped to only 3% of under 16 respondents in 2009, a massive drop of inactivity levels. The highest percentage of respondents for 2006 undertake 2 days of sport or physical activity but the data for 2009 represents 3 days as being the highest percentage of participation levels. Also a combined 82% of respondents under 16 in 2009 participate in 5 or more days of sport and physical activity in a typical week. In comparison, 2006 figures suggest merely 50% of respondents participate in sport and physical activity for this many days a week. There are significant differences in the comparison of 2006 and 2009 data for the over 16 age group. The highest percentage of respondents for 2006 represented 0 days of sport and physical activity each week at 28%, which differed from 2009 figures of 7% of inactivity, which was the lowest percentage of respondents. The lowest percentage of respondents for 2006 participated in 6 and 7 days of physical activity. 32% of respondents for 2006 met the national recommendations of participating in 3 or more days of sport physical activity each week. This differs from the 70% of respondents in 2009. Respondents under 16 are more likely to engage with organised sport rather than general physical activity whilst the opposite is true for the age group 16-25.

The 2009 data shows that more women participate in physical activity rather than sport and most women (20%) are involved in sport or physical activity on 3 days a week, closely followed by 17% on 2 days a week. 6% engage in sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of completed surveys</th>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>595</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1200</td>
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and physical activity for either 0 or 1 day a week. However, the highest percentage of females participate in 2 days of sport, more than than any other option of sport or physical activity participation. These figures compare to the fact that males participate most commonly for 5 days a week representing 19% of respondents. This is closely followed by 18% of males engaging in sport and physical activity 4 days per week. The lowest number of respondents engage in sport and physical activity 0 days per week representing 3% of male respondents. Males are less likely to participate in physical activity than sport. The highest percentage of males participate in 3 days of sport whilst 26% never participate in physical activity.

4.2 Overview of the host organisations and their aims

All the host organisations were selected because they worked with young people between the ages of 0-25 which, as already discussed, was the target group for the Closing the Gap project. In all cases they wanted to help their clients improve their social and professional skills and, where appropriate, gain the expertise required to enter the job market. Developing social skills such as improving confidence, self esteem and social interaction were all targets that sport and physical activity sessions could contribute to, as was the opportunity to achieve in non academic ways, gain success and achieve recognised qualifications. In some cases the young people who accessed the services were young parents and the work of the Children’s Centres, in particular, was concerned with encouraging parents and children to exercise together and in providing sport and physical activities to a wide range of age groups. The Children’s Centres are subject to government legalisation and in particular were aware that they needed to fulfill the requirements of Every Child Matters (ECM). Sport and physical activity could be used with the work that staff carried out in this area alongside existing healthy eating and general wellbeing projects. Two of the Children’s Centres CtG were involved with were working towards Health Promotion status and, again, it was recognised that physical exercise could and should form part of this strategy.

With regards to the other partners, at the Coalville, Compendium project, the aim was social regeneration that would take place alongside the building of new housing. For Compendium and the Resident’s Association staff and volunteers, the focus was on reducing anti social behaviour and improving relations between different generations on the estate. CtG, however, wanted to widen the understanding of the role sport and physical activity can play in such areas of deprivation. Improving relationships within the wider community was also an important part of the aims of the Federation of Stadium Communities (FSC) Project. Although CtG was working with Port Vale Football Club (PVFC) in this project and it may seem strange that intervention was carried out with a sporting organisation, the focus of the work was on community based provision, not only to improve the local community’s view of the football club’s role in their area but also to increase opportunities for the young people in that location. As
part of a national charity that values the role of sport in improving young people’s confidence and sense of belonging to their local area, sport and physical activity was becoming increasingly valued at Groundwork Stoke and Staffordshire when the intervention took place. In addition the charity aims to improve the local green spaces and encourage local people to use them. Like Groundwork, Nacro and Integrated Family Support Units (IFSU) work to help young people re-engage with education, wider society and employment opportunities, whilst Changes Young People (YP) and Blackfriars Day Centre aim to do the same for young people with mental and physical disabilities. The significant difficulties facing young people caring for others was at the heart of the North Staffs Young Carers (NSYC) project whilst widening opportunities for children living in residential care was one of the aims for staff working at the Social Care Residential Units (SCRU). A more detailed discussion of each organisation is available in Appendix C.

4.3 Physical activity within the host organisations before CtG’s intervention

Prior to each separate intervention, research was carried out to establish the attitudes toward sport and physical activity, experiences and the current level of control felt over their own physical activity, as felt by the clients, staff and volunteers. The Beliefs, Barriers and Control (BBaC) model developed by Suckling\cite{14} provided qualitative data focusing on the experiences and beliefs of staff, volunteers and young people. Data was gathered using a combination of informal interviews and questionnaires and information from young people was obtained through discussions with CtG staff to determine their beliefs, barriers and control with respect to taking part in sport and physical activity. Where appropriate, young parents were asked in a range of informal settings to provide feedback regarding BBaC topics both in relation to their own personal experience and that of their children. Staff working at the host organisations were invited to complete standard anonymous, questionnaires (Appendix E). In particular the organisation’s current policies, beliefs and readiness to use sport and physical activity in their work with young people would be evaluated. An adaptation of the EFQM (European Framework for the Quality Management), focusing on the use of sport and physical activity in the workplace, developed by Staffordshire University, was used as a basis for an interview with the management level staff (Appendix F).

Policies and Strategies

The management staff at all the organisations involved in the CtG project were positive about the inclusion of sport and physical exercise but policies were rarely aimed at engaging young people in these activities. The exception to this was the Children’s Centres, Groundwork and the Integrated Family Support Unit (IFSU) that had to respond to the requirements of Every Child Matters.
This government framework sets out five outcomes that matter most to children and young people. This includes the outcome of ‘Being Healthy’, which is defined as enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle. In addition the Children’s Centres aim to enhance the life chances of children under five years old and empower parents to be an active part in their children’s life and development. However, even in the Children’s Centres, sport and physical activity was not specifically included and the link between existing healthy eating programmes and physical exercise was rarely made. In the case of IFSU, decisions on whether to utilise sport were largely left to individual staff and there wasn’t any written guidance to follow.

Several other organisations were also required to fulfill requirements set out by their respective inspecting bodies. For example, prior to the intervention it was apparent that the leadership of Nacro valued the use of sport and physical activity and, while they did not use it in their work at this time, wanted it to become part of the curriculum. This was partly because OFSTED had noted that it was an area that needed attention and partly because management and staff felt it would be beneficial to their clients. When staff started at the organisation their skills were added to the Nacro database and this information also helped to identify future training needs. In a reflection of the fact that sport and physical activity was not being incorporated in their work, the organisation lacked any policies or strategies relating to exercise. As was the case in all the organisations that CtG worked with, Nacro Services did not have Key Performance Indicators relating to sport or physical activity. This was despite the fact that, in the case of Nacro, staff and management believed taking part would help to achieve their goals and understood its link to social skills and independence. Each young person was provided with individual feedback, which was based on what staff time, qualifications and resources permitted. As staff resources were limited and they lacked knowledge of sport and physical activity, exercise did not form a part of these individual plans.

The lack of understanding about sport and physical activity was often a reason for the absence of formal policies and strategies in this area. For example, at Stanfields Youth Inclusion Project (YIP) the EFQM showed a lack of understanding about how sport and physical activity could be used to meet the organisation’s goals and, consequently, how it did not promote the use of sport within YIP. There were some Key Performance Indicators relating to health and wellbeing but YIP did not understand that sport and physical activity had a part to play in this. Lack of understanding was also evident at North Staffs Racial Equality Council (NSREC). It was clear from the initial EFQM, carried out with the Manager of NSREC that senior management valued the use of sport and physical activity. However the Executive Committee, who were elected members of the community, did not share the management’s enthusiasm. This reflected the wider local population as a whole, as the black and ethnic minority community did not prioritise sport and physical activity. Furthermore sport and physical activities were not included in policies or strategies and the audit of
staff skills that was carried out did not effectively measure existing skills or training needs of staff to include physical activity in their work.

Interestingly, despite the support expressed and the national recognition of the strength of Riverside, one of the partners involved in the social regeneration at Coalville, there was a lack of formal policy and, like all of the organisations that worked with CtG, formal evaluation was not in place for sport and physical activity with young people. It should be noted, however that in the case of Changes YP the framework to do so was in place. Despite there being a Community Development Delivery Plan and a Communication Strategy at Coalville these did not include sport and physical activity, although young people had been consulted on the activities they wanted by the Community Development Officer. Similarly at the Chell Area Family Action Group (CAFAG), despite the fact that the service coordinator had been working on a business plan for some time, there was no mapping specifically aimed at young people.

Despite an expressed belief in the power of sport and physical activity, the Social Care Residential Units also had limited policies relating to its use. Policies & strategies focused on objectives for the young person and not how they could be achieved. If a young person wanted to take part in sport and physical activity, funding was reported to be available through the individual’s personal needs budget, however this was finite and had to cover the many competing needs of each young person.

The situation was complicated for the Federation of Stadium Communities project where CtG was working with both the FSC and Port Vale Football Club, and specifically the Vale Park Community Initiative (VPCI). Both groups had policies to work with BME groups, Asian women and young people but neither group was specifically concerned with young people, rather than the community as a whole. There was only one member of staff, the VPCI Local Development Officer, who was designated to work with the community and had experience of working with young people.

Probably the most supportive host organisation of the intervention was Changes YP and whilst they also lacked any distinct policies relating to sport and physical activity they were involved in a Living Well project funded by the Primary Care Trust. In addition the provision had its own 12 Steps to Mental Health. The eighth step stated that it was important to ‘Cultivate Healthy Behaviour’. Blackfriars Day Centre was another very supportive partner and despite it being the case once again that there were no existing policies in place to support sport and physical activity, the Manager was keen to introduce more activities in to their work.

The lack of strategies related to sport and physical activity meant that before the CtG intervention there was no long term sustainability for any of the host
organisations to use sport and physical activity as a tool to meet the wider aims of their provision or the needs of their clients.

**Staff and volunteer qualifications**

Although opinions differed, at least some of the staff and volunteers at all partner organisations expressed support for the inclusion of sport and physical activity and some showed an understanding of some of the ways it could benefit their clients. However there was usually a lack of skilled personnel and volunteers to carry out this type of activity. It was also the case that when staff were qualified they were only able to work with certain age groups. Although not in any way unique, the lack of appropriate qualifications was highlighted at CAFAG, where although there was sports qualified staff and young people qualified staff within the organisation, there were no young people staff with sports qualifications and no sports staff with young people qualifications. For example, three members of staff had formal health and fitness qualifications but only with young people over 16 and whilst it was hoped that all staff would gain a YMCA qualification for working with children between 5-16 years old, there was no formal plan for when this would occur. At the Children’s Centres the few qualifications that staff did hold were often to help their work with young children rather than with the young people that the CtG work was targeting. For example, at Treehouse Children’s Centre, a few staff had received ‘Take 5 for Play’ training and one member of staff had a qualification for physical activity work with young children.

Incorporating activity into working practices was clearly hindered by the fact that staff lacked specific qualifications and there was often no one able to support and lead in the development of this area. A major concern for staff at all venues was their lack of training and their subsequent lack of confidence in leading sport and physical activity sessions. At Social Care Residential Units, skills and experience in sport and physical activity were viewed positively at interview, however it was not a prerequisite for the job and it did not form part of the staff development process at that time. Support from management was important to staff, as they believed a lack of direct funding for equipment and resources, alongside departmental rules, regulations and policies, all restricted their ability to use sport and physical activity with the young people in their care. Riverside Housing (Compendium) was recognised nationally as having an expertise in sport and young people and for their understanding that this is critical to the success of the planned regeneration of the area. In addition, the Resident’s Association also valued sport and young people. This had resulted in a youth club being set up by the Resident’s Association and a play area being constructed by Riverside Housing following community consultation. These projects highlighted the positive attitude toward sport and young people and the partnership work between Riverside Housing and the Resident’s Association. However, both parties welcomed new ideas from CtG due to the lack of trained staff to deliver sports programmes and a lack of volunteers,
especially those suitable to work with young people aged between 16 and 25. The lack of time available to work with young people and the pressures on funding meant sport and physical activity was not developed to its full potential. In addition, Compendium’s Development Officer had neither the time nor skills to facilitate young people’s sport and physical activity and required support to expand this area.

Staff turnover at some Children’s Centres also resulted in qualifications being no longer available to management when planning sessions. This was the case at The Hope Children’s Centre. Prior to the intervention beginning it was noted that one member of staff had attended TOPS Training and a bag of TOPS equipment had been purchased. Unfortunately not long after work started at the Centre with CtG this individual left, meaning no one was qualified to use the equipment. Similarly at Changes YP a previous volunteer had been qualified in the Community Sports Leader Award but was no longer at the charity and at the time of the CtG intervention no one had any relevant qualifications. The high turnover of staff and volunteers was a theme that was evident at several of the host organisations, including some of the Children’s Centres and ensuring that training could be sustainable and run in-house on a regular basis would be essential.

The lack of qualified volunteers was also a factor at some of the partner organisations. Whilst some failed to use volunteers at all, others such as Compendium relied heavily on them but they did not have the skills needed to expand sport and physical activity sessions. The sole volunteer who did have a qualification was a female member of the community on the Resident’s Committee who had coaching skills in football. Many volunteers considered themselves too old or too ill to participate in sporting activities. The Resident’s Association had obtained sports equipment (via a Sports Lottery Award) but, due to the lack of appropriate knowledge and confidence, did not utilise them fully. Cricket and football was encouraged in the summer months at the youth club and could be played on the newly completed grass pitch. However, in the winter the club was focused on computer games.

The lack of appropriately qualified staff and the associated low level of knowledge and understanding about sport and physical activity demonstrated meant that young people were not being provided with information about resources, provision or exercise targets. In addition it was impossible for the staff to recognise how best to use sport and physical activity in their work with young people or how to access resources to enable them to do this.

**Facilities and resources**

In addition to the lack of knowledge, skills and confidence that staff had, the question of resources also prevented more physical activity being organised. There was usually a limited budget for developing sport and physical activity
and space and equipment was often constrained. Staff at Kingsland, Hope and Crescent Children’s Centres all stated that the building did not provide them with space to hold sessions and only Treehouse and Crescent had dedicated play spaces. It should also be noted that the outdoor spaces owned by the Centres were aimed at younger children and were not areas that sport could be organised. Staff also mentioned a lack of time to plan sessions, restrictions on crèche places, the cost of using external facilities and the time it took to transport clients as reasons for the lack of sport and activity sessions. In the case of Hope, where the clients included some Muslim women, language barriers, the need to organise single sex sessions and the perception that sport is against religious beliefs were also included in barriers facing staff.

Whilst limited equipment was available at some of the organisations, staff lacked the necessary understanding to use it to its full potential (or even at all). Several other organisations also had limited equipment at their disposal. At Nacro limited kit, training mats, punch bags and football equipment were there but as staff did not understand how to use this, it was unsurprising that it was not a formal part of the curriculum. A lack of appropriate equipment was an issue at Blackfriars Day Centre, as they only had a cricket set and various balls and the school nets to draw upon. Staff across the provision cited the need for new equipment, better knowledge of how to use it and better local facilities if more sport and physical activity was to be introduced.

The lack of space available at the host organisation’s venue was noted at all the organisations involved with CtG. The lack of outdoor space restricted what could be organised at CAFAG, although staff noted that they could access numerous fields nearby. At Blackfriars Day Centre the hall was used for performing arts and the available time at the gym and hydrotherapy pool was allocated to physiotherapy requirements. There was a car park and grass area available and clients were encouraged to go out when they could but this was not a structured part of the provision. Blackfriars did have drivers and three mini buses that the clients could be taken to alternative facilities in but there were no partnerships with local services that they could draw upon. The venues being used for activities with the North Staff Young Carers was certainly contributing to the small amount of physical activity offered. This was especially the case for the group, Macy’s, which took place in the American Clubhouse, Sharks, which was held in a business venue that didn’t have the flexibility to hold private sessions and where alcohol was drunk in close proximity to the young people, and Play Surfers, which was at a public play facility. The layout of the latter restricted any structured activities other than use of the play equipment. The children ran about for the time they were there but not in a structured way. In addition time was restricted because the children had to be picked up, fed and taken back in the two hour session as well as play.

At Coalville, young people listed a series of ways that they felt facilities could be improved, including raising the standard of the pitches available, providing
additional equipment for a number of sports, the organisation of structured team sports and training sessions for different age groups and opportunities for families to participate together. The Resident’s Association was similarly aware that facilities on the estate needed to be improved and their BBaC interviews revealed concern about the state of the pitches and lighting in the winter months. Along with the lack of outdoor lighting, limited equipment was noted as a problem, as was knowledge about what to do indoors when the weather was poor, restricted indoor space, limited time, and a lack of appropriate training in required child protection as well as leading sports sessions. Whilst most volunteer staff were keen to see sport and physical activity offered to young people on the estate, it was apparent that several barriers limited the possibility that significant activity could take place. The youth club was not felt to be big enough for the older children and, in the case of existing groups, the variety of activities on offer had to be restricted.

The development of partnerships was one way that facilities could be accessed by the host organisations. However staff and volunteers often lacked the knowledge of who to approach and how to negotiate use of the provision. In addition antisocial behaviour (or fear of it) sometimes resulted in a reluctance to allow access to local facilities, such as in the case of Compendium, Social Care Residential Units and the Crescent Children’s Centre.

Funding was sometimes available for new services but it was crucial that the organisation could show that the activity was beneficial. Therefore it was clear that monitoring, feedback and evaluation of the activities that CtG introduced would be crucial to help with sustainability.

Staff and volunteer’s participation and barriers to greater involvement

Staff participation levels differed from one host organisation to another and in some cases involvement was very low. However, at Nacro, all staff questioned during the initial BBaCs showed an interest in sport and physical activity and enjoyed a range of activities themselves. However, due to work and family commitments, most staff struggled to do a significant amount and welcomed the fact that they could be physically active as part of their job. They recognised benefits to themselves, including improving fitness, increasing energy and subsequent motivation and general well being. There were far more barriers mentioned, including knowledge of available activities, poor health, time, cost, availability and location of activities and equipment, transport, family responsibilities and available childcare, responsibility at work and concerns about their weight. Some staff also admitted that they didn’t participate because of laziness and low motivation.

At Changes YP, where many of the staff and volunteers were ex-users of the service, the same barriers facing the young people were evident in the BBaCs. In addition to the usual issues of cost, time, work and family commitments, their answers highlight the particular difficulties facing people with mental health
difficulties. One respondent explained that “isolated individuals find it difficult to break into sports clubs.”

**Staff and volunteer’s awareness of barriers facing young people and their beliefs about using sport and physical activity in their work**

The responses from staff and volunteer BBaCs showed differing levels of support for sport and physical activity. At NSREC there was a clear lack of appreciation about its potential use in achieving staff’s aims with young people. While some physical activity did take place, evaluation was weak and there was no long term plan to work to. Similarly at IFSU, where few staff were physically active themselves, there was only a limited awareness about the benefits that such opportunities can have for the young people and staff. With the exception of two members of staff, the benefit of sport for their work was seen to be restricted to promoting interaction and improving health. It is worth noting that one member of staff who didn’t actually participate herself did like sport and appreciated that “sport can play a huge role in achieving objectives through work in reconnecting with the children.” A greater range of benefits were recognised by staff working in Social Care, including that sport could be a useful tool to build relationships with the young people in their care and address issues such as aggression, boredom, criminal activity, sleep problems and self esteem. Common benefits for including sport and physical activity in their work, listed across the venues, were physical health, social interaction, the provision of physical activity in a fun environment, competitive opportunities and, in some cases, the opportunities to gain recognised levels of achievement. One member of staff at CAFAG suggested introducing taster days, fun days, coaching sessions and structured activities in order to increase participation, suggesting some level of knowledge about the common strategies used to interest young people.

Staff at Blackfriars Day Centre recognised that being physically active would be beneficial for themselves and the young people. Although physical activity was not a standard part of all care plans, the manager was already supportive of the idea that sport and physical activity could help with the organisation’s wider aims and, as well as developing knowledge about sport itself, could help teach teamwork, communication, provide fun and show them that they could achieve. In addition, from the start of the programme the Centre Manager expressed the hope that the activities introduced would become sustainable after the partnership with CtG finished. Blackfriars staff felt introducing more sport and physical activity would mentally stimulate the clients, help with mobility, coordination and strength, increase confidence and social skills, facilitate interaction with the world outside the Centre and provide a fun environment. However it was clear that the staff were initially cautious about the extent to which the young people could be active, with “simple skills such as throwing and catching” mentioned several times in relation to what activities would be possible.
The role that sport and physical activity could play in reducing anti social behaviour was also recognised at several host organisations, including Stanfields YIP and most obviously by Compendium and the Resident’s Association at Coalville. At the latter it proved hard for the CtG Programme Champion to remind staff and volunteers that the project was about more than simply reducing instances of crime and poor behaviour.

The role that parents and other significant adults can play in whether a young person is active or not was mentioned by staff at several of the partner organisations, particularly the Children’s Centres and IFSU. In addition staff at Blackfriars recognised that parental concern about their children being physically active and travelling to other venues was a limiting factor in what they could deliver. Parents were noted to be very protective, reluctant to let their children try new activities and unlikely to support the idea of extra activities at weekends or evenings. A key example of this culture was provided by the Centre Manager who had organised a fishing trip the day before the EFQM took place. The trip had been organised in conjunction with Safe Angling For Everyone (SAFE) and parents had given their consent. However on the morning of the trip the parents all cancelled, citing the cold weather.

Concerns about taking young people to external facilities were not restricted to Blackfriars and, in the case of Social Care it was the staff who were reluctant. Staff shortages and concerns over behaviour and risk assessments when taking the young people out of the units meant that where sport and physical activity did take place, it was often restricted to activities in and around the units or within an existing circle of ‘safe’ partners where young people were tolerated. In addition the availability of vehicles and concerns over the risks associated with transporting young people across the city influenced staff. Young people were aware of this reluctance by both staff and parents to take them to places as they quoted it as one of several barriers to their participation. Concern about allowing young people accessing CAFAG’s services to mix with existing users of a gym facility was also apparent. Staff stated that there was some resistance from the local community to young people coming to the gym as there had been some unruly behaviour in the past.

Perhaps in a reflection that all the individuals questioned at Nacro were physically active, there was a consensus among those staff questioned that sport and physical activity would be positive for the young people. In particular it was felt that sports sessions would help them to express determination, increase confidence, self esteem and physical fitness and provide opportunities to interact socially. Nacro had previously held archery sessions, which had been very popular and the emphasis at the time of the initial EFQM was on setting up StreetDance classes. StreetDance was also mentioned by staff at Groundwork who stated they would like to explore the possibility of holding these sessions along with mountain biking. At Changes YP some staff and
volunteers felt that relaxation activities would be more beneficial to their clients than competitive ones. The benefit of relaxation through physical activity was also recognised by staff at NSYC as was the chance to reduce social isolation, let off steam and exercise in a fun environment, increase self esteem and confidence and provide an avenue to non academic achievement. Although not mentioned by the young people at Changes YP, staff and volunteers felt that gender differences were also important with body image viewed as a barrier for some young women, particularly the issues of changing in front of other people and “exposing any part of their body, even their arms.” Staff at Stanfields YIP were aware that girls, especially the older ones, needed to be more active and suggested gymnastics or dance as possible activities. However they stated that there was a lack of a friend’s network between the girls and low confidence also resulted in few participating in sport.

Staff commonly recognised the barriers that the young people listed, including cost, lack of knowledge and understanding, reluctance to use facilities they were not familiar with, a lack of local facilities and an absence of encouragement from family. They also recognised that the low value many of their young people placed on sport and physical activity was a contributory factor to their poor motivation. At Groundwork the local environment was seen as an important reason why young people didn’t access the facilities available. In the words of one member of staff the local environment was seen as being “so rough that they stay inside and play on the computer all day to stay safe.” In addition some activities that were available locally had a stigma attached to them that stopped young people getting involved, such as the Territorial Army. A lack of confidence was also thought to be compounded in the case of some individuals who had poor literacy and numeracy skills, preventing them from understanding what was being advertised as on offer.

Although many staff and volunteers expressed a positive attitude to including sport and physical activity in their work, they listed several barriers to actually being able to do so. These commonly included time to plan and hold sessions, funding and a lack of equipment, the fore mentioned lack of qualifications and, as a result, low confidence, knowledge and understanding levels. It was evident that staff lacked knowledge of what was available locally including potential partnerships and possible financial support. At several organisations they also expressed concern about the necessary health and safety requirements and risk assessments that needed to be carried out before running sport and physical activity sessions. The need to develop staff knowledge and expertise was highlighted at NSYC. In the initial research it was stated that some of the boys had requested a football tournament. Along with basketball and cricket this was turned down as the staff did not feel they could facilitate it. Staff responses in the initial BBaCs suggested they would value training and coaching courses to improve their knowledge of sport and games’ rules, safety issues and knowledge about how to lead physical activity. Such training would also help to address the stafts’ lack of confidence in leading physical exercise.
and provide them with information about what is available to young people outside of the school setting.

At NSYC sport was reported as being available at all sessions and senior staff felt that staff understood that it can build self confidence, self-esteem and trust. However, despite this and the fact that sport was seen to offer a non-academic route in which to excel and develop motor skills and co-ordination, it was not actively encouraged. Staff accepted the assumption without challenge that some groups were more interested than others. As the sessions were young person led, this assumption meant that there was various levels of activity across the provision and young people who were not initially interested were not encouraged to change their attitudes or behaviour. This was particularly true in the case of girls. There were fewer opportunities for girls to participate in alternative physical activity such as dance and female only sessions were not available. The lack of any formal evaluations of sessions meant that staff were not clear what the young people liked, wanted to change and would like to do in the future. As at many of the groups that CtG worked with, some understanding of why sport and physical activity should be included was evident, although an appreciation of how it could meet the wider aims of the association was not apparent. It was essential that if long term planning was to successfully meet any aims set, evaluations would need to be completed by staff after each group or one to one session.

Building young people’s self esteem and confidence was a central part of the work of all the groups CtG worked with. Providing the opportunity for young people to gain accreditation and qualifications in non academic routes was recognised by some staff as a way to do this. It was also viewed as being useful when building initial relationships with young people and as way of showing that staff are interested in the young people’s lives by those working in Social Care Residential Units, Groundwork and Nacro. In addition Groundwork and Changes YP staff recognised that sport can present an opportunity to talk to their clients in a more informal environment and away from their peers. Finally the opportunities to improve numeracy and literacy were recognised by some staff.

It was apparent that the potential resource from volunteers was not being exploited as it should be. At Stanfields and Meir YIP where under staffing was a continual problem when CtG was trying to work with them, volunteers could have provided a vital resource to allow greater opportunities to be provided for young people. At Compendium volunteers ran the youth club and were heavily involved in the regeneration plans but lacked sport and physical activity qualifications. In addition, both the young people and volunteer staff noted that girls’ involvement was further hindered by boys inhibiting their participation. It was suggested that, together with a general need for more volunteers, a female volunteer was crucial for supporting girls’ involvement. At Changes YP, an organisation that was predominantly run by volunteers, many of whom were ex-
users of the service, 15 volunteers were involved at the start of the intervention period and 12 more were in the process of being trained. However no volunteers were involved in sport or physical activity at this time. The team leader for Changes YP explained in the initial EFQM that “volunteers will have had mental health problems themselves and lack the confidence to get involved in sport”.

In several of the Children’s Centres volunteers were used to support activities and administration but not for physical activities. This was also the case at Nacro, where adult volunteers were in supportive roles, such as providing help with English and maths. The potential of using volunteers was, however, recognised by management staff at IFSU. They realised the lack of skills amongst staff was restricting opportunities for young people; indeed this was one of the reasons why they wanted to work with CtG, and expressed the desire for older young people to get involved and for them to volunteer and mentor the younger ones. They did not have the budget or knowledge to develop this so the CtG intervention was an ideal opportunity to explore this option.

It was apparent that the placement of volunteers would be an avenue that CtG could explore with the partner organisation as it would help with the problems such as limited budgets and staff time available for developing sport and physical activity sessions. In addition developing volunteer opportunities would provide personal and professional skill development for the individuals involved. The development of partnerships also needed to be developed within the host organisations.

**Young people’s participation, beliefs about sport and physical activity and barriers to greater involvement**

Despite the barriers that led to low participation rates, the young people were aware of a wide range of team and individual sports and of some of the benefits to being more active. For the young mums at Kingsland Children’s Centre exercise was seen as a way of improving body shape after giving birth and, like other young people questioned, they recognised that it is good for physical health and weight control. Sport was also seen as an avenue for fun, social interaction and improving their social skills. In addition some young people welcomed the chance to learn about team skills and enjoy non competitive opportunities. This last point was important to many of the respondents from NSYC who stated they would get involved if non-competitive, more fun based activities were on offer. This suggested that as long as a variety of activities were provided some of the currently non active young people would be encouraged to participate. This was also the case according to young people responding to BBaCs for the Stanfields YIP and FSC projects. Young people’s BBaCs for the FSC intervention requested hockey, rugby, girls’ football, softball, golf, distance cycling, extreme sports and alternative activities such as
‘stick in the mud’. They also mentioned sports such as skiing, surfing and quad biking suggesting that they had been introduced to expensive activities that they could not afford to participate in regularly. Girls at Stanfields YIP also requested girls’ football to run in addition to the boys’ team that already existed.

The benefits listed by young people at NSYC reflected similar statements made by staff and volunteers and included the role sport can play in improving mental health and decreasing social isolation. The fact that being physically active can help with weight management (or in the case of one girl, keep you thin) was also mentioned by young people attending IFSU, those living in residential care and on the Coalville estate. At Changes YP, the respondents recognised that sport and physical activity can aid relaxation and is beneficial to overall well-being. In addition one young person stated that they thought the social side of being involved was the best aspect of participation, especially the chance to make new friends. This is, of course, important for a group of people commonly facing feelings of isolation. All the young people questioned at IFSU stated that they liked sport and physical activity to some extent. There was awareness that it could be fun, could help you to meet new friends, helped to keep you fit and was felt by one individual to be beneficial for future job opportunities. Many of the young people from Coalville also stated that they enjoyed sport and physical activity and recognised that they needed to be more active than they were. They also felt that if there was more opportunity it would help them to keep out of trouble. For young people living in social care, the potential for sport and physical activity to help them improve anger management was also mentioned.

The young people who attended the Children’s Centres recognised many of the barriers listed by staff, including time due to family commitments and limited numbers of affordable crèche places. They highlighted the importance of local facilities as many did not have private transport and public transport was not always seen as reliable or affordable. At Kingsland Children’s Centre the young people also listed the need to have friends to participate with, the lack of family support, the desire for age appropriate classes and concern that they didn’t have the necessary kit or equipment. At all four Children’s Centres the young people showed low confidence and often poor motivation. The caring responsibilities facing the young people were often cited as being the key reason why they did not participate more outside of school, and associated with this was the fact that they faced a lack of support and encouragement from their families. As the staff had recognised, cost was also an issue, as many of the parents were on benefits and this meant that the young carers often couldn’t access transport, provide necessary equipment and felt they couldn’t join clubs. The reluctance to join clubs was repeated in several of the BBaCs from a variety of projects. As well as the costs involved, or perceived to be involved, young people were reluctant to go without friends and in the case of those living in residential social care facilities, because of the stigma attached to being looked after. This was also identified by both staff and young people as
a barrier to visiting local leisure facilities. Young people were also of the opinion that they were banned from using certain leisure venues. It is also important to note that a simple lack of motivation and, in some cases, interest in sport was a reason for some young people at all the host organisations. One example of this was provided by the young people living in social care who recognised that they could be active if they wanted to but simply preferred not to. It is also worth pointing out that reducing the cost of activities would not always lead to greater involvement. Despite social care staff previously issuing young people with Recreation Key Cards (later known as Energise Plus Cards) that reduce the cost, participation remained low.

Similar barriers were recognised by young people at all the other venues in the project. No doubt partly as a result of the lack of information provided to them, young people attending NSREC felt there was no appropriate provision locally. They were not encouraged to become volunteers and participation by black and ethnic minority young people was low. Some of the young people that were identified were not allowed to take part in certain activities. They did not put this down to their culture, but more to their families and community views. At Nacro the answers suggested that they knew sport and physical sport was good for you and that they were aware that they didn’t do enough exercise. The barriers to participation were listed as low motivation, cost of leisure centres, smoking affecting fitness, a lack of local opportunities and little knowledge of what is available to pass on. At Nacro young people also recognised that their smoking affected their fitness levels and responses indicated that some individuals preferred to smoke or take drugs than exercise. This was also mentioned as a reason for low participation by young people in social care, along with alcohol. Interestingly at Groundwork cost was not seen as a problem for all the young people questioned but they did want to see more local facilities and greater encouragement to participate from family, peers and other adults. The issue of bullying and intimidation from older boys was also mentioned as a barrier by some young people questioned for the IFSU, CAFAG, Compendium and FSC projects.

At all the organisations, young people also revealed a lack of knowledge about local facilities and problems with travelling to leisure centres. For example, in the FSC project, some young people requested activities that their peers were already participating in, illustrating that greater promotion of existing opportunities was required. The limited facilities on the Coalville estate were mentioned by the young people as was the cost implication of travelling elsewhere to participate, the poor quality of the football pitches and an absence of lighting.

The lack of confidence was a particular issue for the young people at Changes YP, due to their mental health issues. Few of the respondents were physically active but many showed an interest in becoming involved, although they doubted whether they would be good enough to join in. The reasons for this
included poor experiences of PE, lack of encouragement or praise about their abilities in the past, concern about trying new activities and thinking that people will laugh at them. In addition, whilst most young people questioned at Changes YP recognised the potential benefits of being active, one respondent saw sport and physical exercise as being something that caused anxiety and would lead to additional stress.

At several of the Children’s Centres and other host organisations the issue of opportunities for girls and young women was a theme of dissatisfaction. Responses indicated that some girls wanted fitness or dance activities or to be provided with single sex football sessions. Intimidation by male participants often contributed to a reluctance to join in mixed sessions.

Despite these barriers, many of the young people showed an awareness of a range of sports and physical activities and some enjoyed participating. For the majority, however, their experience and participation opportunities were through school so if they weren’t at school they were rarely physically active. Although this was an issue at many of the venues CtG worked with, it was particularly evident in the Social Care project. Nevertheless in a few rare cases young people were members of clubs or visited local facilities. For example one girl played sport weekly at a local sports centre and individuals showed an interest in BMX and mountain biking, snooker and pool, golf, paintballing, gym work, dance, trampoline and American Football.

The situation was slightly different for the clients at Blackfriars as their opportunities to participate were significantly shaped by the perceptions of the adults around them. Attitudes of the young people were mixed, with some liking sport and physical activity and others less positive. Furthermore, the enthusiasm of the young people who welcomed sport and physical activity was tempered by the fact that some saw it mainly in terms of therapy / physiotherapy rather than for pleasure. Some of the young people supported the idea of throwing and catching and stated that they liked to play with bats and balls as well. There was little evidence that many of the clients did much exercise away from the Day Centre with the barriers being listed as cost, problems with transport, lack of knowledge about local facilities and the fact that their parents were cautious about what they could do and where they could go.

**Sport and physical activity taking place before the CtG intervention**

Some activities were included at the Children’s Centres before CtG began their programme, including aerobics at Kingsland, soft play at Treehouse, fun days, which included some physical activity at Treehouse and Hope, outdoor play at Treehouse and Crescent and football in the holidays at Hope. It was recognised that whilst staff and management were supportive in theory about the inclusion
of more activities they had not valued it highly enough and that a change in culture would be required if greater sport and physical activity was to become a sustainable part of their provision.

At the Coalville estate, cricket and football was encouraged in the summer months at the youth club and could be played on the newly completed grass pitch. Partnerships had been developed between the Coalville Resident’s Association, Weston Coyney Infants School and the local police. The school has sports facilities but these were not available to the community because of previous trouble. Some activities for young people had also been previously organised by Compendium’s Community Development Officer on the estate, including a Stoke Angling For Everyone (SAFE) course and the promotion of ‘Do it 4 Real’ summer residential camps for teenagers.[15]. The importance of partnerships was also illustrated by Stanfields YIP, which had developed a strong relationship with Dimensions where they were able to use the facilities for free. Positive relationships with schools had also been established via the initial referral process. Dimensions was good as a means to introducing young people to activities, however, it was not a low cost option for them to regularly participate at when no longer part of YIP.

The importance of providing activities at the venues was underlined at Nacro with all respondents stating that when Nacro encouraged or, in the words of one young individual, “made them do football” they enjoyed it. In addition to some adhoc football, the only other physical activities that young people mentioned undertaking were walking and biking. One 15 year old female respondent stated that “I particularly enjoy football as this is a real passion of mine”. However she went on to say that she didn’t belong to a club because she was unaware of any local teams. Nacro’s manager mentioned boxing as one sport that young people had been involved in and there was some basic equipment for this but she went on to say that because of a lack of staff skills such activities had to be carried out with partner organisations. Some football matches had been held between Nacro, the YMCA and the youth offending team but such sessions were carried out on an adhoc basis. Similarly the odd five-a-side football game had been organised but there was no regular programme of activity. CAFAG had its own football goals and a football tournament had been held in the past using hired coaches. However football had not become a regular occurrence because of concerns over insurance and risk assessment.

Groundwork had adopted the basketball ‘Time Out’ project and also had a partnership with Peak Pursuits, which involved outdoor education. ‘Time Out’ allowed some young people at Groundwork to do a small amount of sport and physical activity, as had the occasional trip to a PGL site in Lincolnshire. In addition, informal football games were sometimes held in the local park and the young people were able to play table tennis. However the lack of staff
qualifications and confidence prevented them from implementing competitive or formal sports provision.

As stated earlier, decisions on whether to include physical activity in the young people’s plans was largely left to individual staff at SCRU, IFSU and CAFAG. Senior staff recognised that the lack of staff knowledge and confidence restricted the extent to which sport and physical activity was utilised, although they were happy for individual staff to use sport. One member of staff at IFSU had taken the young people they were in contact with to outdoor activities at Hanley Forest Park and they had also been to Northwood Stadium. A second member of staff had used sport during camping and team building trips with children and recognised its worth in this role. Cluster Three, which IFSU was part off, had some active partnerships including local schools and the ‘Playing For Success’ scheme held at Britannia and Port Vale Football Club. This is where young people can work on their computer skills in a football environment and get a tour of the stadium by way of motivation. In addition, although part of the provision was provided by the Westgate Children’s Centre where IFSU was based rather than by the IFSU itself, there were some physical activities available before the CtG intervention. The Centre’s Outreach team provided swimming sessions for parents and their children to do together and there were children’s bikes and other physical play equipment available in their outdoor area. Family sessions were held at the weekend both indoors and out and physical play was encouraged. Support was also provided with regards to weight management and healthy eating but there was no inclusion of sport and exercise as part of this work.

Despite the lack of formal policies at Changes YP the importance of physical activity had been considered. A swimming club was held every two weeks but participation was undermined by low rates of confidence and a lack of money to spend on leisure. Young people could also access a walking group run by the Adult Service and badminton had been held over the summer months. Walking was also encouraged by staff at Stanfields YIP and opportunities to swim and play football at Dimensions leisure Centre and rounders on a field at the back of the local estate were also provided. A gym project had been organised for the summer holiday but after funding ended the young people all dropped out, underlying the need for cheap or free activities. Some activity was also available to young people attending NSYC. According to the management, games that were included regularly were the parachute, football, basketball, hockey, tennis, pool, table football and garden games. Interestingly the responses provided in the young people’s BBaCs suggested a somewhat narrower range of activities with dodgeball, dancing and gymnastics listed.

It was clear that in the case of all the host organisations, the use of volunteers, additional specialist equipment, time and budget allocation and the confidence of staff would need to be improved if the amount of sustainable sport and physical activity sessions was to be increased.
Summary

In summary similar barriers existed at all of the host organisations that CtG worked with. The lack of qualifications and experience in sport and physical activity meant that nearly all of the staff and volunteers questioned were not confident enough to lead sessions. In addition whilst management at each venue appeared to be supportive of the project and keen to include more sport and physical activities in their work with young people, none of the organisations had specific policies or strategies in place. Staff and volunteer opinions varied but in all cases at least some of them also recognised the potential benefit of including sport and physical activity. Some physical exercise was taking place but very little of it was regular and all the young people questioned wanted more local activities to be organised. Low motivation and limited understanding was expressed by the young people across the partner organisations but many of them appeared open to greater participation opportunities with non competitive activities requested as well as traditional team sports.
5. Mechanism

Due to the low level of activity amongst young people, staff and volunteers prior to the intervention period, the Closing the Gap team recognised that a fundamental culture change was necessary at all the partner organisations if a sustainable use of sport and physical activity was to be implemented. However it was pleasing to note that many of the staff and volunteers appeared to be supportive of the intervention programme. Action plans were completed and agreed by management at the partner organisation. This was based on the evidence collected during the initial BBaC and EFQM’s and outlined a number of different approaches that would be useful to try and increase participation rates. The document set out the key issues identified by staff and young people in relation to their understanding of and attitudes to sport and physical activity, the current skills held by staff, partnerships and resources available to the service and barriers identified prior to the intervention by CtG staff. A summary of issues identified prior to the intervention can be found in Appendix G. Progress was reviewed regularly throughout the intervention period with support as appropriate. In all the CtG interventions, staff and volunteers were given the chance to achieve accreditations and learn valuable social and professional skills as well as physical ones. The following section will outline what was introduced and discuss the challenges experienced during the various interventions. A summary of what activities were introduced by CtG at each host organisation can be found in Appendix H.

5.1 Evaluation of interventions

Introducing our aims and establishing a sport and physical activity culture

Although all of the interventions were different the range of mechanisms used by CtG was broadly similar. The common types of interventions implemented were fun days (including at some of the ultimately unsuccessful), taster sessions, weekly football, aerobics, dance and multi sport sessions for young people, Community Sports Leader Award and other accreditations for staff and clients, staff physical activity and events to celebrate achievement. In addition CtG supported staff at the partner organisations when applying for funding, provided information booklets and directories about local sport and physical activity provision, signposted staff and young people to local clubs and facilities, provided specialist equipment, arranged for teams to be involved in sporting competition and continued to advise after the intervention period had ended. On occasions externally paid coaches were also used to supplement staffing levels in order to sustain an activity.
Establishing Programme and Sports Champions

At all the projects a CtG Programme Champion was identified to liaise with young people, staff and volunteers, to deliver agreed provision and establish sustainable sport and physical activity. Using identified Programme Champions helped CtG to understand the distinctive context that the team were working within and meant that whilst good practice could be transferred from other schemes each project was seen in individual terms. At each of the Children’s Centres the Programme Champion tried to reach out to the local community not already using the Centre as well as existing clients in order to help meet the wider aims of the organisations. For the initial partners involved in the work with CtG it was usual for the Programme Champion to be based on-site and to attend the host organisation venue daily. However this proved to be difficult for CtG to manage and often resulted in a poor quality service being provided. In time all the Programme Champions were based at the CtG offices and travelled out to the service they were working with. This was often incorrectly viewed as a reduction in support and caused tension between the partner organisation and CtG management, a situation that was on occasion made worse by the initial Programme Champions. As will be discussed in the Outcomes section of this report, these misunderstandings and the poor communication between CtG and the partner organisations contributed to the premature ending to the projects with NSREC, CAFAG and YIP.

The importance of the Sports Champion should not be underestimated as they encouraged their fellow staff and clients on a day to day basis and championed the provision of sport to management. If they had a good understanding of the project and were actively involved it was far more likely that the intervention would be a success. In addition to the Programme Champion, at the vast majority of venues, a member of staff from the host organisation was allocated to be a Sports Champion. This individual was responsible for working with the Programme Champion, encouraging participation and supporting the development of sport and physical activities. It was also expected that they would be responsible for leading the area after the intervention ended in order to maintain sustainability. At three organisations the arrangements differed but there was still a person responsible for developing this area of provision. At Kingsland Children’s Centre there was a young person on the Board who was responsible for sport and physical activity and at the Compendium project on the Coalville estate, there was a member of staff responsible for liaising with CtG and promoting sport and physical activity as part of the overall regeneration work. There was a Sports Champion for the NSYC intervention but, because there were because of the multitude of provisions involved in this project, an additional existing member of CtG staff was also appointed to work specifically with the client organisation.
At some projects and especially in the first wave of interventions, the Programme Champion was responsible for more than one organisation. This was the case for the Programme Champion who started to support Crescent Children’s Centre before the intervention ended at Treehouse Children’s Centre. The Programme Champion was initially based on site at Treehouse but, in line with the general change in policy already outlined and also because of staff shortages at CtG, this contact was reduced and he started working with Crescent Children’s Centre as well. In the case of Treehouse and Crescent, however, in contrast to those projects that were not brought to a successful conclusion, the Programme Champion developed a strong relationship with staff and clients and successfully delivered CtG activities. The Manager at the Crescent was aware of the good work that he had carried out with Treehouse and the success of that intervention and was encouraged that similar work could be carried out at her Centre.

In a few instances the Programme Champion changed during the intervention. While this caused a few problems in the early interventions, CtG learnt from its mistakes and subsequent projects were not negatively affected by the change in staff personnel. For instance, at Blackfriars Day Centre, the second Programme Champion had already been working with clients for nearly three months in some of the sports and physical activity sessions and welcomed the opportunity to lead the project. At Crescent Children’s Centre, where the first Programme Champion secured a new post shortly after practical interventions began, CtG managed the change-over smoothly. It was arranged that the departing member of staff would introduce her successor to the Community Development Worker and all staff worked together to ensure the change was understood by clients and staff. The Programme Champion attended two parent forums, explaining his role and the aim of the project. A similar presentation was given to staff at the Centre and he also visited the Crescent Junior School and met with the head teacher. The Community Development Officer and Centre Manager felt that it was crucial for the Programme Champion to have a more visible presence if he was to successfully build relationships with the clients. It was agreed that he would spend two half days based at the Crescent, which was later changed to one full day.

A change to the Programme Champion also occurred at Kingsland Children’s Centre and, as a result, the intervention took place in two phases. Due to short term CtG staff and resource limitations, the initial Programme Champion was not replaced until almost a year after the first phase of (gym) work had been carried out. Not surprisingly the majority of sustainable long term change took place during the second phase of the CtG project. There was, however, always a named Programme Champion in regular contact with staff throughout the project. Both Programme Champions spent considerable time at the Centre and made sure they had a visible presence. This allowed the relationship between staff and clients to successfully develop prior to activities beginning. Following the pattern set at Treehouse and Crescent, CtG staff visited
Kingsland Children’s Centre on many occasions, attended several established groups, including non-physical activity sessions, joined in with existing physical activity provision and carried out the staff and young people BBaCs. This meant that when interventions began, the young people already recognised CtG staff and were used to them being involved in work at the Centre.

**Sport and Physical Activity Sessions, Training and Accreditation**

The majority of the Programme Champion and other CtG coaches’ time was spent on facilitating the establishment of sport and physical activity sessions for staff, volunteers and young people. The following section will outline what these interventions were and provide a brief discussion about their role in improving participation rates and understanding of the benefits of sport and physical activity. It should be noted that more in-depth descriptions of what was introduced at each partner organisation and individual analysis of these methods is available in the separate evaluation reports produced for each of the projects.

- **Fun Days**

Fun Days were held at several venues in order to introduce clients to the CtG intervention and were often part of their holiday provision. They included a range of taster sessions for sports and fun games for a variety of ages with the focus on inclusion. The sessions were multi-activity days and included activities such as simple fun games, basketball shoot outs, trikes, parachute games, penalty shoot outs and football drills led by CtG staff. One of the aims of these introductory sessions was to engage young people in sport and to show how it can be used to recruit more male volunteers. The days also proved to be useful networking, for example at IFSU positive relationships were developed through working alongside a local PE teacher and, more importantly, some of the Support Workers getting involved in some of the games. It was immediately apparent that sport and physical activity would be an avenue to bring staff and young people together in a more informal, fun environment and strengthen relationships.

Fun Days also highlighted the work the various organisations were doing and raised their profile within the local community. This was the case at Compendium, NSYC and Changes YP. Changes Festival of Fun, held in August, aimed to raise awareness of mental health and the benefits of being active. The day consisted of a range of activities including Streetdance, disability sports, 5 a side football, art and crafts and badminton. Consultation with young people about future provision was carried out and the day attracted members and volunteers from Changes YP as well as young people from other local disability organisations. Partner organisations were invited to promote their projects and this also helped to highlight the work Changes YP do in the area.
Taster Sessions (one off and 10 week courses)

Taster days and ten week activity classes were run at several interventions, not only as a way of introducing staff and young people to a wide range of sports, games and physical activities but also to create interest in subsequent CSLA qualifications. In essence they were about showing staff at the partner organisations that sport could work in their setting and to build their confidence in this area of provision. Feedback from CtG staff’s sessional evaluations and their diaries show that the classes were popular for the vast majority of clients and staff and contributed to improved knowledge, confidence, social interaction and physical skills. In addition the groups provided young people with an opportunity to be part of a team, experience leadership roles and have a voice in what physical exercise they undertook. At Blackfriars Day Centre the taster sessions were extended to 15 weeks to allow some clients to gain their Certificate of Prior Learning for the Physical Recreation Section of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. This accreditation provided an avenue for achievement, something that was routinely part of the intervention programmes.

At Changes YP the multi sport sessions differed from the normal pattern in that they were run at a local gym and a qualified gym instructor took the first 45 minutes of the session followed by the Programme Champion’s session covering a range of physical activities. Each participant was given a 10 week fitness plan so they could monitor their progress. 17 young people, staff and volunteers were registered as attending regularly and this helped to ensure the forthcoming CSLA was fully booked with staff and volunteers. Comments from the young people who attended the taster sessions suggested it had helped their physical and mental health. One young woman stated that she had since joined a boxing gym and was attending twice a week. This, she said, helped her to release pent up aggression in a controlled environment. Others were attending the gym to carry out their fitness plans, were walking in their own time and were enjoying their increased fitness, motivation and confidence. Another variation of this mechanism was carried out at Groundwork, where in addition to sports organised at the organisation’s own site, four successful sports and dance taster sessions were run at local schools that the Service worked with.

In the FSC project, which ran several 10 week taster sessions at different locations, some of the venues were selected in response to the need to improve community cohesion. For example at one of the Saturday sessions held at Dimensions, recruitment was helped by a partnership between CtG, the volunteer coaches, the Police Community Service Offices (PCSO) and youth workers. The coordinated approach worked initially as 54 young people ranging from 10-19 years of age attended. Although numbers fluctuated they stabilised in the mid twenties. Part of the reason for the higher numbers was that the structured sessions were put on in an area where young people were known to congregate in large numbers. Unfortunately the high numbers meant more
volunteers were needed. It had been hoped that some of the older players at the Dimensions sessions would be willing to help support the younger ones and perhaps become involved in the volunteer programme. However, instead, they left the structured coaching sessions to participate in a league that a local young man set up elsewhere. As it was not possible to attract more volunteers, despite significant efforts to recruit them, the FSC Dimensions sessions had to stop. A similar situation arose at the Swann Bank Church youth group and at a session held at Ball Green Youth and Adult Centre, both part of the FSC intervention. These were also multi sport ten week taster sessions and it was hoped that the groups would take over the session, especially when feedback proved positive. Unfortunately they lacked a member of staff to do so and the manager of FiC was not interested at this time in developing free community sessions. As a result, it was apparent that they would not become sustainable and the decision was made by FSC and CtG to end both interventions.

More success was achieved at a third multi sport session run by FSC volunteers. Once again very high numbers initially attended (84) and whilst this reduced they remained high. Here, however, the Newford Residents Association supported the scheme and as the intervention progressed they started to run some of the sessions. CtG introduced them to opportunities such as the StreetGames festival and helped the Residents Association and volunteers to plan sessions that incorporated boys and girls of differing ages. Numbers stabilised at between 30 and 40 and as the weather deteriorated the Residents Association moved the session inside to a community centre, leading to continued support by young people. Long term sustainability was ensured when StreetGames took over the project. As StreetGames was able to secure other funding it was also introduced at a FSC organised 10 week taster session held at Port Vale in the FiC building.

In order to help young people access sport and physical activities in the local area, information for other activities was routinely provided at interventions. In addition the Programme Champion negotiated cheaper rates for the organisations and their clients. Despite their efforts greater participation did not always result but in such cases alternative activities would be suggested in order to try and raise interest.

- **Young male football sessions, dads’ football and girls’ football sessions**

Football was, not surprisingly, one of the most regularly requested activities but CtG ensured that multi sport sessions provided a wide range of games and sports. Football for different ages were also run as separate sessions at several of the interventions, including at The Children’s Centres for young dads, which was a key population group they were trying to reach. At the start of the intervention a session was already in existence at Treehouse Children’s Centre but the young men wanted more ownership and numbers attending were low.
This group provides a good example of how the Programme Champion’s role can be to reinvigorate existing activities as well as introducing new ones. It was crucial to support the dads’ involvement in physical activity in order to encourage them to engage with their own children in a similar way. The dads’ football is also a reflection of how sport was able to contribute to the wider aims of the Children’s Centre in that the Programme Champion was able to work with clients on their interaction and social skills. As the intervention period progressed, players were increasingly encouraged to interact with staff and different members of the group and the improved social skills and confidence was reflected in a competitive but friendly spirit. The dads’ football went from strength to strength and included a football tournament during Men’s Health Week, thus contributing to the wider issues that the Centre was involved in. Management support was usually high for the various football sessions, largely because it was a successful way of engaging young men and encouraging their personal development via subsequent qualifications and volunteering. Management decisions taken during the period when CtG interventions took place; namely to start allocating staff and financial resources to various weekly and taster sessions, reflected a growing understanding of their benefits. They also had a positive impact on relationships between staff and clients as it illustrated staff confidence in the group and reinforced their support.

Dads’ football was the only activity that ran throughout the intervention at Hope Children’s Centre and, as at all the venues that incorporated football, was positively received and evidence showed that physical ability, skill, knowledge and social interaction all improved for regular participants. The group was initially supported by the Centre’s Community Development Worker (who subsequently left and was not replaced for over six months) and also a volunteer worker. When participation numbers remained low after several weeks, alternative ways to advertise were tried, including the Children’s Centre newsletter, mail shots, toddler groups and via posters in the Centre and other local venues. Numbers did increase although the frequent change of players meant that players often had different fitness and skill levels throughout the intervention. CtG coaches adapted sessions successfully to respond to the numbers on the day and the type of players that arrived. Issues such as language also needed to be taken into consideration as not all participants spoke English as their first language and some clients were asylum seekers. The coaches succeeded in involving everyone, however, and the weekly feedback reports show that sessions were friendly as well as competitive and that inclusion for all was achieved, including one person with learning difficulties.

It is important not to assume that football will always be welcomed by young men and this was the case at Kingsland Children’s Centre where it proved impossible to establish a group. This was despite efforts to attract young men from a wider area and in spite of initial interest being shown at the Centre’s Fun Day. It is not possible to provide a definitive answer why participation in football
was not achieved. The demographic makeup of some of the areas served by Kingsland Children’s Centre suggest that social and economic deprivation is lower than in some of the other areas where CtG has successfully established physical activity. One issue that should be considered is the facilities available. The only outdoor space is attached to the school and the Programme Champion was unable to gain access to these during the intervention period. Indoor space also proved impossible to access, including at nearby leisure centres as they were already being used to capacity. Perhaps if facilities had been available either at or next to the Children’s Centre, it would have been possible for the Programme Champion to establish more activities for the young men. Once young people see sport being played by their peers it’s more likely that others will join in.

Nevertheless, in the majority of projects football was a successful intervention and attracted young men, including young dads to access the partner organisations. As a result of working with CtG, teams from Hope, Crescent and Treehouse Children’s Centre were entered into local football competitions, initiated by CtG to reach out to young dads and several other partner organisations also developed teams and played other similar local services.

Inclusion was always highlighted by the CtG staff and some girls did join in with the multi sport and football sessions. In addition specific girls’ football sessions were held as part of the FSC project. After securing a central location, numbers began to increase. This session was notable for the fact that two of the female volunteers, developed through the FSC project, were able to run it largely independently from the word go. The Programme Champion provided support with regards to developing their coaching skills and organisation but they successfully ran the sessions and initiated an inter school competition. Coaching sessions continued to be run every two weeks with a tournament competition on the week in-between. As will be discussed later, this initiative ultimately led to a Staff FA supported Development Centre for girls.

- **Weekly multi-sport sessions**

In addition to being part of taster sessions, weekly multi-sport groups were tried at the majority of the intervention projects. CtG staff recognised that it was important to introduce young people to a variety of activities in order to develop their skills and knowledge and respond to the needs of all the clients. A list of the sports and physical activities included in the multi sport sessions is available in Appendix H, footnote 3. At all the interventions more males than females participated but this doesn’t mean that girls and young women were not welcomed. As already discussed inclusion was a central theme of the programme and a wide variety of activities were available at the multi sport sessions. The activities at IFSU were notable for the fact that some girls attended throughout the intervention period and whilst they played football at times, a broader range of activities was therefore provided than at some all
male groups. The mix of age groups that faced the CtG staff was also an issue that needed careful consideration at several of the venues. It became clear that, where resources allowed, separate age appropriate groups needed to be organised and these were duly arranged. Feedback from these sessions illustrated that all age groups benefited and it also helped the coaches to provide activities that the participants responded well to.

**Aerobics**

Aerobics proved popular at several of the partner organisations and in practice was a female only activity, although men were welcome. The exception to this was Hope Children’s Centre, which has a high BME population and where a female only session was organised. Held at the Hope Centre to meet the requirement of a local session, the classes ran for 45 minutes, initially on a Friday morning. An external coach was paid for by CtG and the first five sessions were organised on a weekly basis. Unfortunately despite posters advertising the session and the identified need in the BBaCs, participation was very low. It was clear that the need for additional crèche places was essential and reflected the comments made in each BBaC that CtG carried out. As was illustrated throughout the various interventions, availability of affordable child care can make or break the success of women’s activities in particular. The class was originally held on a Friday, a holy day for the targeted women and it proved impossible for the Programme Champion to secure extra places on a day when the women would use them. This type of knowledge is crucial for staff when working with clients from BME communities and the support of the Children’s Centre staff, if it had been available, would also have allowed greater understanding and organisation of the activity at another, more suitable time. A second group of sessions was planned, supported by the Programme Champion’s successful funding application to *Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent’s Access Fund*. The successful bid for £400 allowed a 15 week course of women’s only aerobics to commence in March 2009 and these were held on a Tuesday to avoid the fore mentioned problems with Friday sessions. The aim of the classes was not only to improve their physical and mental health but also tackle the sense of social isolation that many BME women felt\(^{(16)}\). It was also hoped that by attending this female only class, the women would be encouraged to utilise the Children’s Centre to a higher degree than was currently the case and would also benefit from a new and wider social network.

**Dance, including liaison with StreetDance projects**

StreetDance is a city wide programme and was run by StreetGames with the support of CtG. Once again this was participated in by women only, including young mums, although males were always welcomed. As at the IFSU intervention, links were established with StreetDance in a specific effort to increase participation by girls and in some projects classes for separate age groups were organised. Parents and participants reported high levels of
satisfaction, not least because of the confidence demonstrated by the young people and the pride shown in their performances. It was clear that these sessions were viewed as a fun and challenging environment and an avenue in which to develop personal as well as physical skills. Budget restrictions meant the initial classes at IFSU were stopped but a successful partnership was established with a local school and links were made to curriculum work with Davali dances developed in the StreetDance session. The session was initially funded by CtG but the Head Teacher recognised the positive work being carried out and, after approaches by the CtG Programme Champion, agreed to pay the costs. As a result the class was sustainable and fully independent from CtG before the end of the intervention period. Dance was also included in the Nacro and Groundwork projects as a taster session and regularly in the Changes YP intervention after two volunteers offered to go on a CSLA dance course organised by the Programme Champion.

- **Gym sessions**

Helping young people to access local facilities was one strategy that was employed by CtG staff. This was not only to improve fitness but also to encourage their interaction with young people from other areas. It was also hoped that if the young people were more confident about using external facilities they would continue to do so outside the intervention and encourage others to do the same. Clients were introduced to local facilities at all the successful projects and some interventions included sessions at a local gym. It was apparent that clients required high levels of support and that establishing a routine was key to increasing individuals’ regular attendance as was maintaining facilities such as crèches at external facilities.

- **Walking sessions**

Two of the Children’s Centres introduced walking sessions and at Changes, where one of the staff was already a trained Walk Leader, CtG facilitated a walking club which ran during the Spring and Summer. In an example of how information could be usefully shared between the various projects that CtG were involved with, the Project Champion was also working with Federation Stadium Communities (FSC) on developing walks across the city, including the Hanley area. FSC had a member of staff responsible for producing maps of these walks and the Programme Champion at Changes YP arranged for copies of the relevant ones to be sent to her when complete. In addition the Programme Champion requested that FSC advertised for a trained walk leader to help start the walking group in June at Changes YP and for places for Changes staff or volunteers on any walk leader courses.
• **Children’s play activities, including those for parents and children to do together**

Due to their client group and the focus on working with families that have children under five, these activities were carried out at the Children’s Centres. The emphasis was on showing that physical activity can be fun and provided the opportunity for parents and children to exercise together. Sustainability was encouraged by asking parents to develop their own ideas for new activities and initiate interaction with their children. During the intervention period, the CtG programme ran various activities for children attending the Centres including basketball, tennis, parachute activities and use of bean bags, soft balls and trikes. At Treehouse bikes were also included as it had been noted that parents who were obese were unable to accompany children on bikes and so develop this skill.

At Hope Children’s Centre the Programme Champion attempted to develop play sessions for young children under five and their parents. Although difficult to achieve at first, more parents began to join in with their children’s play. Even better some noted how much they enjoyed playing alongside their children. Unfortunately the groups organised were plagued by low numbers, especially when the under five rule was enforced. The decision was reluctantly made that as no one from the Hope Children’s Centre was able to take over the parent and toddler sessions that there was no point CtG running any more after the end of August. It was proving impossible to do more than simply providing CtG staffed activities and this was not a sustainable group.

• **Staff involvement in young people’s sessions**

Support was provided for staff to widen their expectations of what the young people could do at all the partner organisations. Initially staff often misunderstood the aims of the project and saw CtG staff as being there to lead the sessions independently, releasing partner staff to do other work. However as the work progressed partner staff got significantly involved in the vast majority of the interventions. As the activities became established and staff started to understand the benefits more, they began to get more involved with the groups and in many cases staff participated alongside the young people. In all activities, the volunteers and clients were encouraged to provide ideas and contribute to the programme plans. With regards to sports, the Programme Champion encouraged staff, volunteers and willing clients to be referees, keep score and help with setting up and organising the sessions. In addition the help provided by staff at some of the intervention projects was essential if the young people were to attend. This was particularly the case when sessions were held at external venues and at IFSU and the Social Care projects when staff often provided transport and drove their clients to the venues. Ongoing encouragement from staff was vital in between CtG visits if participation was to be maintained. In the NSYC intervention the groups met monthly and, in the
case of the 15 -18 year old carers, bi-monthly. It was apparent from very early on in the intervention that developing good relationships with the young people was going to be harder than in CtG projects where the Programme Champions and staff saw the young people weekly. In order to start building relationships with the young carers, CtG was also involved in the existing activities at the groups such as arts and crafts. This allowed them to become known by the young carers and ultimately helped when they suggested the young people got involved in sport and physical activity. The positive attitude displayed by the Sports Champion enabled the CtG intervention to be successful far more quickly in some cases than had been anticipated and ensured that it would be sustained once the intervention had ended.

At several intervention projects staff joined in alongside their clients, either as members of a team or group or as a referee. Whilst there in a supporting role to the CtG Programme Champion and to learn how to run the groups, they often joined in the session, either to boost numbers or to encourage their clients to participate. If female staff attended it was noted to be helpful in supporting the involvement of female clients, although the participation of both was lower than males. Staff involvement sometimes resulted in them deciding to become more active themselves and this was illustrated very clearly at Changes YP.

Some sessions were held for staff and young people, including the CSLA courses that are discussed later in this section. At Treehouse the Programme Champion also facilitated a six step personal development programme for staff and clients, working with the Community Development Officer to develop the parents’ course. This was aimed at improving motivation, confidence and self-esteem and encouraging individual’s to raise their expectations of themselves and their family. It was felt that the course complimented the work being carried out with sport and physical activity and would contribute to an overall change in attitudes and help to establish a more confident personal culture at the Centre. The sessions provided a fun and relaxed environment, which allowed the young people to build stronger relationships with the Centre staff. In addition several attendees expressed their determination to become a more positive role model for their children.

- **Staff only sport and physical activity sessions**

At all of the organisations a central aspect of the CtG programme was to encourage the staff to become more physically active and to have a greater understanding of the benefits of doing so. Unless the staff viewed sport and physical activity positively and recognised the wide benefits it could have for them and for their work, establishing a sustainable and changed culture would be impossible. Frustration in getting staff activities established was a common feature for Programme Champions in many of the intervention programmes. Despite many staff expressing support for becoming more active in their initial BBaGs, the reality was often less enthusiastic. Cost, work and family
commitments were usually blamed for a lack of time and energy to get involved and as a result activities often took longer to become established than hoped or failed to be a success at all. As with client activity rates, this was more apparent with female staff, however, the Programme Champions were able to facilitate netball sessions, develop aerobic classes and introduce staff to local leisure centres. In addition some staff, including women, were motivated to join a local club and / or take up activities that they had previously enjoyed. In addition they began to exercise more with their families.

- **Staff, volunteer and young people’s training and qualifications**

CtG facilitated a small number of staff and young people from various partner organisations to attend Football Level 1 coaching courses whilst others were helped to achieve first aid and walk leader qualifications. In addition, to ensure that all participants were able to enjoy a feeling of achievement, various Stoke-on-Trent Youth Achievement Awards Be Healthy Certificates were achieved through attendance at the CtG led sessions. Where staff were being introduced to the benefits of sport and physical activity and needed more introductory information, such as at the NSYC intervention, Sport as a Tool for Working with Young People was held. This included guidance to how a sport links in with the aims and requirements of Every Child Matters, using sport as effective youth work, effective leadership and motivational skills, addressing barriers, risk assessment and information on discounted entry fees. The course was written and accredited by CtG via OCN to fill a clear gap in the provision of accredited courses available. NSCA staff also followed the Introduction to Sport course, which meant they received a resource pack outlining rules, available equipment, information about gym visits and details on a range of sports.

CtG also ran a Volunteer Management Training session at PVFC during its FSC intervention. This was also open to other organisations that it was working with, including the Children’s Centres and Compendium. In the case of FSC, the idea behind the training was that staff could be recruited from FSC and PVFC and they would then manage volunteers leading to a sustainable volunteer programme. The training course itself was very highly rated by the participants who all felt it provided relevant information and documentation that would be of use in their work environment. Attendees agreed that it improved their knowledge, was interactive and that CtG offered good ongoing support. Unfortunately as far as the FSC project was concerned, the Volunteer Management Training did not lead to management staff taking on responsibility for mentoring or developing volunteers and, in the case of Port Vale, the club did not engage sufficiently in recruiting and retaining the volunteers. As a result of the lack of cooperation by the FIC manager the hoped for outcome, as discussed above, did not materialise.
• **CSLA Courses**

CSLA courses included an introduction to a range of sports and physical activities, rules, health and safety, coaching, refereeing and officiating information, support on how to set up and run sessions and the opportunity for attendees to evaluate sessions they had planned and led. In addition visits to local facilities were often included and information provided on local clubs, facilities and volunteer opportunities. In order to ensure sustainability of physical activity once the CtG programme had ended, staff and volunteers completed Level 1 CSLA at all the interventions that were completed except Treehouse Children’s Centre (where it was planned as part of future provision) and SCRU. At some venues Level 2 and Tutor Training courses were also completed, as CtG facilitated these where interest was high enough.

The lack of qualifications staff and volunteers had and their associated low levels of confidence were the main barrier to increasing sport and physical activity sessions, so CSLA courses were often held soon after the start of the intervention. In some projects more than one course was held and several host organisations started paying from their own budgets to ensure regular CSLA courses remained part of their provision after the intervention ended. Not all young people showed an interest in gaining qualifications but a significant number of clients drawn from across the intervention projects did successfully achieve CSLA qualifications. Comments drawn from CtG weekly and session feedback forms show that staff, volunteers and young people were consistently more confident about leading and participating in a wider range of sports, games and physical activities as a result of these courses. Social as well as physical skills were improved as was knowledge about local facilities, health and safety, ways to amend activities for different ages and abilities and when facilities were limited. In addition the fact that staff, volunteers and young people often attended side by side facilitated better relationships between adults and young people and helped the clients to feel the staff were investing in them.

A CSLA was also organised for Detached Youth Workers and another for a group of young Czech Slovaks Gypsy children living in the area as part of the NSREC intervention. The latter group also carried out two Young Leaders Awards. NSREC supported these activities, especially for the Czech Slovaks and helped to ensure funding remained in place, which provided 10 free places, equipment, room hire and a translator. Childcare was also provided by a NSREC member of staff. The course concentrated on dance and the group was so successful that they performed at the Children’s Fund ‘Children Make a Difference Show’ and at a nearby school.
• **Other certificates and awards gained and events to celebrate young people’s achievements**

Presentation evenings were also a common mechanism employed by CtG to highlight achievements made by young people in sport and physical activity. A range of awards were presented to individual clients across the intervention projects; Emergency First Aid, the CSLA Level 1 and 2, The Duke of Edinburgh’s Awards Access Credits and the Stoke on Trent Youth Achievement Awards Be Healthy Certificate. In the case of young carers under 11 there was no existing accreditation scheme that could be administered. Therefore the NSYC Department developed their own in-house certificate of achievement and 50 certificates were presented to children from Sharks, Play Surfers, Blurton and Moorland Road groups. In this way all the children and young people across the various interventions were encouraged to view sport as a non-academic route to achievement and they were provided with an avenue for developing self esteem and confidence. At the city wide Volunteer Awards evening 14 volunteers from FSC attended with their families and received StreetGames certificates as well as CSLAs. It is worth noting that the StreetGames and the CtG Volunteer of the year categories were won by individuals recruited at the FSC project.

• **Development of volunteers**

The use of volunteers was viewed as important to the delivery of a range of sessions organised and certainly if sustainability was to be maintained. This was because all of the organisations were concerned about staffing levels and many felt they were understaffed for the existing provision they offered. Budgets were also tight, meaning that paying for external coaches was not an option, certainly not until funding was secured. If volunteers and staff could be trained to deliver sport and physical activity then more sessions could be offered. In addition the use of volunteers enabled the host organisation to offer young people the chance to develop personal and professional skills. These included leadership and coaching experience, self esteem and confidence, communication and improved social interaction. There were numerous examples of volunteers benefiting from this opportunity, as indeed there were of staff who were also able to widen their knowledge and skills. Several young people became involved in city wide sport and physical activity schemes and some gained coaching qualifications and achieved paid employment. It is important to note that both male and female volunteers were successfully developed at many of the intervention projects and were involved in supporting a wide range of activities. Whilst it remained true across the projects that more male volunteers were attracted to volunteering in football related groups, some got involved in a wider range of sessions once they started to help. This included activities run for younger children and, at the Children’s Centres, family sessions.
At FSC and Coalville, all the activities were run by volunteers. It is worth noting that one of the FSC volunteers enabled a multi-sport session to be introduced at Stanfields YIP, one of the few interventions at that project. At Coalville CtG was mostly involved with working with the volunteers who ran the youth club and other youth activities. Although a member of Riverside and subsequently Compendium staff was responsible for developing opportunities as part of the regeneration work, it was the volunteers who ran the sessions already in existence and who were crucial to staffing additional sessions introduced by CtG. The Residents Association and Compendium were focused on reducing anti-social behaviour and saw sport and physical activity’s main role as tackling these incidents. When volunteers became involved in the sport and physical activity sessions it often facilitated better relationships across the generations living on the estate.

**Additional support by CtG to increase the chance of sustainability**

In addition to the sport and physical activity sessions introduced, Programme Champions supported the host organisations via a range of mechanisms. One of the key barriers to organising more sport and physical activity had been identified as a lack of equipment. Accordingly at the start of every intervention CtG provided a range of equipment so that sessions could run. During the project applications to funding bodies were made for in order to ensure that the partner organisations had their own equipment but in some cases CtG provided long term loans of equipment to ensure the sustainability of sessions. Successful funding applications were regularly made to **Sport Across Staffordshire** and similar organisations in order provide new equipment and to fund coaches, training, transport and access to venues.

The development of partnerships was also an important part of the intervention. It was sometimes the case that in the past discussions between staff at the host organisations and local facilities had not been successful but that CtG staff, who already had strong working relationships with provision in the area, could reassure facility managers negotiating both access to facilities and improved pricing structures. Young people and staff were introduced to local facilities and, as part of the CSLA, were taken to visit some available provision. In addition, in an attempt to reduce the barrier of cost, reduced rates were negotiated at external facilities and Energise Cards (previously known as Key Recreation Cards) were given out.

The Programme Champions provided action plans at the start of the project, health and safety information, sport policy documents at the end of the intervention, information about volunteering across the city and directories of facilities. Where evaluation of sessions was not already part of the partner organisation’s working practices, CtG provided support to set this up and helped them to include information about sport and physical activity in the information they provided for their clients. Staff audits were sometimes also
carried out at the start of the project, allowing staff and management to recognise the often previously untapped knowledge and abilities they had available to them and highlighting areas of need. This allowed staff and volunteers to support young people who wanted to join local clubs and access local provision.

The Programme Champion also provided guidance on how to use a range of sports equipment, what activities it was possible for adults to participate in and for parents and children to do together, how to run these and what was available in the local area. Advice was provided to Outreach workers and those working with young children. CtG staff helped carry out risk assessments, which were a noted barrier for staff in the initial research and, when needed, helped to plan activities for children to do during school holidays.

On occasions paid coaches and additional CtG staff were provided to ensure physical activities and sports took place. This was required when numbers were higher than expected or the young people's challenging behaviour necessitated high staff ratios. In addition the CtG Programme Champion at Kingsland Children's Centre stepped in on a short term basis when the Outreach worker was injured and unable to teach her regular badminton class. As her work was successfully engaging female clients, especially young mums who are a traditionally hard group to reach, Centre staff were keen to see it continue. Leading the session provided the Programme Champion with an opportunity to work with a volunteer and to support her in developing her skills so she could help sustain the activity long term. In addition, the Programme Champion introduced some fun activities and other sports, enabling him to expose the young people to a wider range of sports. The value Centre staff were placing on exercise was underlined by the fact that when the 10 week block of classes changed day at the Wallace Sport and Education Centre, they worked hard to provide crèche facilities when none were originally available.

**Common issues that impacted on the mechanisms**

Several factors limited the amount of activity carried out by young people, the range of sessions that CtG were able to organise successfully and the number of people that got involved. In the case of young mothers the availability of free or cheap child care was essential if women were to participate. Some staff did recognise this but it was difficult for the Children’s Centres to provide enough spaces. It wasn’t just young mothers that the Programme Champions found hard to engage but female clients in general. At Compendium the Programme Champion included dodgeball, parachute games and rounders but there was little female interest expressed. A female coach was also used who, it was felt, would be approachable for the local girls but again this did not lead to improved participation or communication. Nevertheless some success was recorded. In addition to the already mentioned dance and aerobics classes, widening the range of sports offered often had a positive impact on female participation rates.
as did including non competitive activities. At the Ball Green Youth Club, organised for young carers (NSYC), the only sport that was regularly played before the intervention was cricket, mostly by boys. Once rounders was introduced, following a suggestion by CtG staff, about 90% of the young people got involved.

Understanding the distinct nature of the community in which you are working is crucial if any intervention is to be successful. In addition, timings of sessions were important. During the school holidays attendance at the Children’s Centre was lower and therefore plans to involve parents in physical activity was unlikely to have achieved its aims. In addition young people at Nacro did not have to attend during the summer holidays or during year 11 at Groundwork, however at both organisations some chose to participate in the sport and physical activity sessions running. Knowledge about religious and cultural requirements was also important.

Unsurprisingly considering some of the Programmes target groups, poor behaviour by young people participating in the CtG sessions and, on some occasions, watching, remained a challenge at many of the interventions, although evidence showed that in general behavior improved as the programme progressed. At Compendium, vandalism on the Coaville estate left the project without any football goals for some time and, on occasions, resulted in a session ending early. It was also a problem at IFSU’s Fun Days and remained the case throughout this intervention. It was made clear by CtG staff at all projects that instances of bullying, aggression and poor behaviour would not be tolerated, in order to ensure the sport and physical activity sessions were viewed as a safe and positive environment for all. Staff support was essential on these occasions and whilst every effort was made to integrate the young people positively and keep them participating, on extreme occasions individuals had to be excluded, usually just for a short time. For example at IFSU a ‘sin bin’ was operated and players were banned until their behaviour improved. It was pleasing to note that in most cases the young people returned to the sports sessions having recognised that they had behaved unacceptably, often apologising to the other young people involved and the staff. Furthermore, at IFSU, it was reported that two young people who were known to be bullies at school had mixed well, joining in with a competitive but friendly game and displaying cooperative behaviour throughout. In this project sport proved to be a really good tool for highlighting to young people what is acceptable and helping them develop ways to manage their behaviour. Such understanding played a big part in why behaviour generally improved over time, which was an important outcome for many partners as it helped to enhance staff and young people relationships.

Despite the limitations discussed, it is fair to say that many of the young people involved in the sport and physical activity sessions gained a range of skills. There were examples of young people starting to exercise independently at
local leisure centres and of joining clubs. In addition to physical developments and knowledge about the rules and skills required, there were numerous examples of young people gaining in confidence and self-esteem, learning to act in a supportive and cooperative manner and experiencing an opportunity to achieve. Potential areas of tension like racism and sexism and between different groups of young people in the local community were apparent in the sessions at some venues and sport provided an avenue to challenge these issues. For example, as a result of some racist chanting aimed at a CtG member of staff at Coalville, the Programme Champion used his own sessions to challenge such behaviour and was involved in discussions with Outreach Youth Workers in order to provide anti racism sessions.

Improving social cohesion was one of the reasons behind the work at IFSU which was based at Westfield Children’s Centre. From the start of the intervention, although the activities were initially aimed at the young people accessing IFSU’s provision, other young people from the local area attended, especially if they were accessing the Children’s Centre. As a general rule, 50% of young people were from the local community and 50% were in contact with an Integrated Family Support Worker. This meant a higher number participated in the sessions and helped to promote cooperation and integration of different groups of young people, especially between groups of white and Asian young men. Such integration had another important outcome for the partner organisations as many of the young people they supported were isolated. The integrated sessions offered an opportunity for young people to have a more “normal” / mainstream experience but still receive support. High levels of satisfaction for the male and female young people were recorded throughout the intervention. Even when the weather was inclement the majority were keen to carry on with the sports organised and although facilities were restricted to an uncovered, outdoor tarmac pitch, this very rarely resulted in a session being cancelled.

The venues and facilities available at the host organisations were always a factor in what activities were organised. Whilst it was possible, in some cases, to use local facilities, this was not always the case. If alternative facilities were used it was often the case that the partner organisation had to provide financial support to pay for the sessions and where budgets were tight there was a limit to what could be offered. In addition if there was only an outdoor space to utilise the weather played a significant part in why numbers fluctuated at sessions. The size of venues was a common limitation as was the lack of indoor space but CtG Programme Champions proved successful at amending sessions and ensuring that inclusive and accessible activities were always run. Where alternative venues were possible, schools, leisure centres and church halls were sometimes used, as were sports grounds adjacent to partner organisation buildings.
The problem of securing available local space was a significant problem at the Hope Centre. The success of the football group was undermined by communication problems between the Centre and the Hope Church that owned the sports hall where the young dad's football was held. On several occasions during the intervention the hall was double booked with the CtG coach not notified until he arrived for the session. Although, as the intervention progressed, he was able to contact regular participants by phone, cancelled sessions do tend to have a negative impact on the development of trust and client’s motivation levels. Due to its work with CtG, NSYC staff understood the importance of introducing more sport and physical activity and were supportive of a change of venue to allow greater physical activity to take place at most groups. Several other outcomes of CtG work with this partner were also achieved including reduced costs and improved catering options, moving from junk food to the provision of healthy options.

Changes to management staff and staff turnover impacted on several interventions. Understaffing meant communication proved hard to establish at FSC, especially after the VCPI Local Development Officer, who was CtG's link with FSC, resigned. Although he was replaced some time later that member of staff concentrated on the healthy walks initiative and had little impact on the CtG intervention. The lack of available staff at FSC and PVFC who were available to work on CtG led projects meant several events included in the action plan were not able to carried out. This included a young people's football tournament. The planned volunteer scheme at FSC was also undermined significantly by the non cooperation of the PVF Football in the Community (FiC) scheme manager. The club tended to leave all community engagement activity to FiC but due to FiC being a charity and needing to meet its own costs from income the programme manager was largely focused on other things and activity such as community engagement was a low priority as it was perceived to be a cost not a benefit.

Summary

In conclusion, by the end of the intervention period it was clear that sport and physical activity had been recognised by staff members at all the successful interventions as an integral part of their work. A subtle but very important point was that the partner organisations came to realise that sport was an effective way to deliver their own work objectives. They understood that including sport was an effective tool to help them do their job and were now able to deliver appropriate sessions to meet their key aims. More detail on these issues is included in the following section of this report. Less success had been achieved at Hope Children’s Centre and at NSREC, CAFAG and YIP the projects had not been taken any further than starting a few interventions.
6. OUTCOME

Taking into account the findings presented in the context section of this document and the CtG baseline research on physical activity levels of their target groups, it is clear that Stoke-on-Trent is a very deprived city where poor health is a central concern. The preliminary interviews with staff and young people and the initial work undertaken by CtG sought to establish what barriers to participation existed in this type of provision for young people and to support a number of changes in policy and working practices to address this. The findings show that in the majority of cases a successful change to the culture of the partner organisation was achieved. Unfortunately three of the early interventions (NSREC, CAFAG and YIP) were not able to be progressed to a conclusion and in one project, Hope Children’s Centre, it was not possible to introduce successful interventions. After all the projects CtG continued to provide informal support but maintaining the higher level of participation and sustaining good practice was the responsibility of the partner organisation staff. This section will discuss the successful outcomes before explaining why the project was not brought to a positive conclusion in all cases.

Sport and physical activity post intervention as reported by staff and young people attending their provision

As the intervention work drew to a close, management staff EFQMs and staff and young people BBaCs were carried out at each of the projects that reached completion. Like the first stage research this established the attitudes toward sport and physical activity, experiences and the current level of control felt over their own physical activity, as felt by the clients, staff and volunteers. In particular it attempted to measure how these had changed during the project with CtG. Evidence of the outcomes will be drawn from the research carried out with young people, volunteers and senior staff from all of the intervention projects, together with CtG Programme Champion’s sessional and weekly diary evaluations. Please note that where individuals are referred to all names have been changed to protect their identity.

Several positive outcomes were noted across the successful interventions, the most important being that a change in the culture had been achieved. There was now an understanding of how the organisation could benefit in terms of sport delivering its core goals, whatever these were, rather than the intrinsic benefits of sport. This recognition included, for staff, a recognition that sport and physical activity could meet the wider aims of the organisation, meaning that long term sustainability of physical exercise as part of the planned provision is far more likely.

Staff at Blackfriars Day Centre, IFSU, SCRU, Compendium, Nacro, Groundwork, NSYC, FSC, Changes YP and Crescent, Kingsland and
Treehouse Children’s Centres, all recognised the benefits of the intervention programme and how sport and physical activity could be used positively in their work with young people. Evidence collected from EFQMs showed that links between sport and physical activity and the provision’s wider aims were often understood for the first time and that the level of understanding would not have been achieved without the CtG intervention. Staff at Treehouse Children’s Centre, Nacro, IFSU and Changes YP expressed this improved understanding most clearly in their second stage EFQM and BBaCs

“We have got specific targets around health, and health and sport are linked together and you can separate those out into healthy eating, but it’s not just about that, it’s about confidence, it’s about raising self-esteem, so everything really links into physical activity, it’s the feel-good factor isn’t it. And also it’s fun and that’s what we are trying to achieve for the parents”. (Treehouse Children’s Centre Deputy Manager)

“Sport and physical activity can play a role in achieving objectives at work as my job is to increase the confidence of my clients, increase their fitness levels and get them qualifications. The sports sessions we do at Nacro fulfill all these objectives”. (Staff member)

“The CtG did exactly what we wanted it to do. In fact it went further. We didn’t expect it to be sustainable so quickly…. There will always be a need for sport and physical activity here as it is an ideal tool to use with dysfunctional families. Our goals and targets are more about self esteem and confidence and I believe that all our targets were met and the sessions did exactly what we were hoping for.” (Senior IFSU staff)

“Everything we do is about improving mental health; this is linked directly with physical health. We could meet all our goals through the use of sport .... Goals include links between mental and physical health, confidence, social interaction and engagement with young people.” (Changes YP Team Leader)

At Groundwork, the three staff members questioned all demonstrated an appreciation of the role sport and physical activity can play

“There are a number of benefits that young people get through sport. These are communication, team work, exercise and stress relief.”

“We regularly use sport as a means of teambuilding, confidence building and providing physical fitness and healthy lifestyle
awareness, and sometimes just purely to have fun with the young people.”

“Team building, social interaction, following instructions are all benefits that the young people gain through sport. For some of these young people it will be the only sports and physical activity they do…” (Staff BBaCs)

As at many of the organisations, prior to the intervention staff at IFSU were not actively encouraged to utilise sport and physical activity and whether they did or not was left to the individual staff member. By the time the second stage research was carried out sport and physical activity was more formally recognised as part of the unit’s provision and staff were encouraged to take it into consideration when planning activities and to recognise its worth.

In an illustration of the improved value being placed on the role of sport and physical activity several of the partner organisations established a member of staff as the lead for this area of provision. Probably the clearest example of how staff motivation was reignited by the intervention work was provided at Changes YP. With support from the Programme Champion one member of staff started attending Longton Ladies Rugby Club and decided to follow a far healthier lifestyle in general, losing two and half stone in weight, trying to stop smoking, attending the gym regularly and swimming and walking regularly with her children. She also began volunteering with StreetGames projects and was the newly identified lead for sport and physical activity at Changes YP.

In addition, in a few of the organisations new members of staff were appointed to develop activities further. In a deliberate change to their recruitment policy, FSC have taken on more staff and more of them are focused on physical activity. Following the intervention NSYC appointed a new part time member of staff who had a sports degree and had undergone sports leadership courses. All groups were routinely offered sports and physical activity as part of their regular provision. Crescent had identified that they needed a male member of staff to maintain activities introduced by CtG and, accordingly, a Community Development Worker (CDW) was appointed at the end of the intervention work. IFSU also appointed a CDW with the aim to reestablish some of the sessions introduced by CtG and to extend provision further. At SCRU staff became increasingly amenable to using sport and physical activity and management were convinced of its role by the end of the pilot intervention. They nominated a member of staff within each residential unit to lead on activities and a Deputy Manager was identified to take a lead on the whole activity agenda. This indicates the importance now placed upon participation and suggests sustainability for its future use within the service. The Deputy Manager was responsible to track and review the sport and physical policy and to build it into recruitment, induction and training for residential social workers. Clearly
management had come to believe that sport should be included in mandatory continuous professional development.

Staff members' recognition of the value of sport and physical activity as a tool in their work is one of the most significant outcomes gained. For SCRU it has resulted in a strong belief within the residential units that sport and physical activity can deliver key work objectives and improve staff and young people's day to day experiences. This above all else is the factor most likely to ensure long term sustainability of all the approaches developed by CtG, as it is now seen to be possible to facilitate and provide real benefit to everyone involved.

Whilst initial research indicated some understanding of sport and physical activity benefits, without full staff and management support the action required to unlock its potential will not happen. The change that took place at many of the interventions is also illustrated by the Changes YP Team Leader who said, “the work with CtG has just made sport really accessible and shown how powerful it can be.” At Treehouse Children’s Centre the positive reaction of the clients illustrated the potential that sport and physical activity had for young parents, a key population group that they were trying to reach.

“… its not just about the activities, its about having that quality time for themselves without the children hanging around, and I think that with any of the groups, where there is an element of activity based work going on, its about that time for the parents to be by themselves. It’s building relationships as well because with the parents you get little pockets of people meeting socially outside, it’s the social aspect.”

As a result of their positive reaction to the activities introduced, more parents began to encourage other clients to also attend and this support from their peer group is likely to have a significant influence on the behaviour of other service users. At Treehouse, the Community Development Officer noted how some of the parents started to arrange their own physical activity programmes and made the decision to attend sessions like netball and the gym. In some cases they were exercising two or three times a week by the end of the intervention period. Some BBaCs were carried out with a group of mothers from Treehouse Children’s Centre parents’ forum. The development of a culture of activity is reflected in their responses, which support earlier arguments that sport and physical activity is now recognised in positive terms by more clients. With the exception of one mother who was struggling with her diabetes, all the respondents were physically active, participating in spinning and aerobics at Willfield Leisure Centre, dancing, taking part in walking sessions at the Children’s Centre and attending the weekly parent group.

By the end of the intervention sport and physical activities were sustainable at all the successful interventions. In addition women’s only aerobics was also available at Hope Children’s Centre and was running sustainably at the end of
the intervention period. For details of what each partner organisation was offering by the end of the intervention period please refer to Appendix I. In the initial EFQM at Treehouse Children’s Centre the management team stated that sport was not valued highly enough by the staff but at the second stage EFQM they were able to report that “most of the groups we do have, there’s an element always of physical activity.” CSLA qualifications were included in the regular provision offered and staff at Groundwork, Nacro, Changes YP, IFSU and Blackfriars Day Centre were qualified CSLA Tutors, meaning that they could run future courses in-house. Young people from Changes YP, Treehouse Children’s Centre, SCRU and Blackfriars Day Centre were attending local facilities and teams had been established at SCRU, Nacro, Compendium, IFSU, Changes YP, FSC and Crescent and Treehouse Children’s Centres. Summer and fun day activities routinely included sport and physical activity and staff were encouraged at far more of the services to think about incorporating physical exercise into trips with young people. One example of this was provided by the Senior Young Carers Development Worker at Kingsland Children’s Centre:

“We encourage staff to look outside the box, take a young person instead of McDonalds to a game of badminton. The boys particularly enjoy being active on one to ones.”

Even at Hope Children’s Centre where regular activities had failed to be set up, the Community Development Officer stated that he always tried to make trips educational with some physical exercise incorporated. Links had also been made with Wild Play run by Staffordshire Wildlife, which encourages families to be active in the local environment.

Evidence from Kingsland Children’s Centre shows that while support improved significantly, at the end of the intervention budgets were still tight and money was not always been provided to support physical activity. The initial Programme Champion at Kingsland Children’s Centre had planned to establish classes at the Wallace Sport and Education Centre, along with one of the Kingsland staff. However, the cost was prohibitive for both an activity room and in the case of crèche provision. When a partner organisation lacks any facilities of their own and is unable to access local provision at schools and other venues they are very limited in what they can offer their clients. Activities such as walking, led by a trained member of staff, are therefore essential if physical activity is to be introduced.

Staff at the Children’s Centres reported that it was not always possible to attract young parents and other clients to sessions if they were solely sport and physical activity. They therefore started to include physical activity into other sessions they were running and this seemed to be more acceptable. It also had the positive outcome of providing times that young parents could exercise alone but also, on other occasions, alongside their children. For example at
Treehouse Children’s Centres physical activity became central to the ‘stay and play’ sessions at the indoor facility in the Centre, incorporated into the childcare and nursery provision and also fed into work with clients to encourage them to walk to the shops and to buy healthy food. Similar work was also conducted at Kingsland Children’s Centre where several new groups were established after the intervention. A weekly class called Time to Tumble was organised at the Wallace Sport and Education Centre, which encouraged parents and children to “stay fit and healthy while having fun together”. In addition staff had organised a weekly Bums and Tums aerobics session and transport was being provided to a Teens and Tums session run at a neighbouring Children’s Centre.

The dads’ football groups were particularly successful in encouraging more males to access the Children’s Centres and the weekly football sessions for all age groups across the interventions led to more males becoming volunteers and taking an interest in the intervention project. Interaction between dads and their children was facilitated as was the attendance of males on CSLA and FA coaching awards, leading to the development of leadership skills and other social and professional competencies. At Crescent the dads’ group enjoyed the football so much that they decided to put on another session on Sundays themselves, with one of the participants leading it. They also considered joining the Sunday League but decided against it as they didn’t want to form a committee. The football sessions at Crescent were sustainable by the end of the intervention, having moved inside during the winter months. Unlike at some activities at the interventions, the participants were prepared to pay for a weekly session. One participant, quoted in The Sentinel, stated that as he was his children’s main carer he appreciated the opportunity to meet other local young men, improve his social life, gain a better level of fitness and “generally feel better about myself.” This was supported by a fellow participant who noted he felt healthier and better for having time to get out and be active with other dads.

Less success was achieved at the FSC project where dads’ football was not established. This was due to the lack of support from the FiC manager at Port Vale who never fully understood the aims of the project or the potential benefits to his own organisation. This was despite numerous meetings with FSC and CtG management and ongoing support from FSC for him to get involved with their work and in developing the volunteer scheme. Consequently the project did not provide enough opportunities for the volunteers and they were often placed in existing CtG and StreetGames projects.

Although participation was lower for females across the interventions, it is important to note that girls and women did participate in some cases. At Hope Children’s Centre where few activities had been successful, a women’s only aerobic class provided positive feedback and women were involved in successful weekly netball and aerobics sessions at Treehouse Children’s Centre. The Centre Manager explained the outcomes achieved by these activities
“I suppose in a way a lot of things (the Programme Champion) does is about breaking the mould and the encouragement of local parents to re-engage with sport and physical activity that perhaps they have thought about in the past, may have done in the past, but haven't done for a long time. Especially the women with the netball, the women are loving it … Once they got past that initial ‘oh I'm not doing that’”

“The aerobics class certainly, they've all become very supportive of each other who have all got a whole host of problems really back at home, but at least they all come down and support each other, which is creating independence, which is what we want for everyone.”

Some young women joined in with the structured football sessions and at Compendium three young women gained their football coaching award. In addition specific girls’ football sessions were held as part of the FSC project. Several recruitment drives were undertaken at existing competitions and at schools across the city. Despite interest being high the initial scheme did not attract enough participants and nor did a second group that was held at the Hardman Centre in Milton. It was recognised that the venue did not help as the young people needed transport to be able to attend. After it was moved to Holden Lane numbers slowly increased. This session was notable for the fact that two of the FSC female volunteers were able to run it largely independently from the word go. The Programme Champion provided support with regards to developing their coaching skills and organisation but they successfully developed the sessions and also initiated an inter school competition. Coaching sessions continued to be run every two weeks with a tournament competition on the week in-between. Furthermore a Coaching Development Centre was opened with the idea that girls could be channeled from the schools' league to the Development Centre and then into local clubs. The initial funding for girls’ football had been for 10 weeks and the development of the Development Centre meant that the interest shown could be capitalised on and opportunities for girls in the north of the city could be maintained. It was run by volunteers developed by CtG but who were also involved in the StreetGames work. By the final month of the intervention one new girl a week, on average, was attending the Development Centre and promotion was on going with more girls expected to attend as time went on. The project led to a very successful Sport Unlimited funded girls football project, which was also led by the volunteers who went on to gain paid coaching employment. Eventually the Girls’ Academy was taken over by Staffs FA as a successful initiative.

Hope Children’s Centre proved the exception to all the other completed projects and due to staff shortages and a lack of management support it was not possible to facilitate sustainable activities. This was partly to do with a lack of
understanding displayed by the Community Development Officer (CDO) who felt that the focus on children aged under five did not allow him to develop physical activities for the other clients at the Centre. This was despite some of the young women requesting greater activities and the CDO revealing in the final EFQM that he recognised that families exercising together had a positive impact on all age groups and sport and physical activity could be useful for other aims such as attracting young men to the Children’s Centre.

At the heart of the CtG project is the need for sustainability so that organisations can maintain and extend provision after the intervention project ends. By the time the final BBaCs and EFQM were carried out steps had already been taken to maintain the increased level of activity at several of the partner organisations. In others additional provision was being planned. Staff at NSYC had initiated evaluation procedures that looked at what young people wanted to do, what supervision was needed, what they could introduce in the future and what holiday activities could be sports related. They had also used feedback from the initial CtG young people’s BBaCs to organise ice skating and bowling trips and these had proved particularly successful with young carers who don’t normally get involved. At Treehouse Children’s Centre, greater use was being made of local provision and there was a now a successful relationship with the local Willfield Sports Centre, resulting in reduced rates being offered for gym membership and aerobics classes. In addition staff had arranged for 90 family swim passes for Dimensions fitness classes, which were to be given out to parents. Further partnerships had been developed with schools and a local community centre that was donating football and netball goals they no longer needed. Funding applications were being looked at to enable them to locate this equipment on land adjacent to Treehouse. In a significant development at PVFC the club was supporting the FiC manager to do something that benefits the club and the community. A young person’s gym was planned, which would be open to the community and help to engage local people.

Staff at Crescent Children’s Centre were planning to establish a Saturday morning football session with children and their parents, based at a local school and had also organised a ‘Fun, Food and Fitness’ block of work to run for a month. At the SCRU management had been so convinced by the power of sport and activity that they had taken action to ensure its continued use. Risk assessments were now included in staff training and undertaken to address staff concerns expressed in the initial research, promoting a culture where risk assessments are now used to determine what can be done rather than used as a reason not to do something. Future plans at IFSU included extending links with schools in the clusters to provide more participation opportunities for a greater number of young people, reestablishing some of the unsustainable activities through their work of the newly appointed Community Development Worker and requesting financial support from the budget to make these sessions successful. Summer holiday activities are also planned as is the
training of additional staff. As a result of the CtG work a number of schools had been in touch with IFSU to express their desire to get more involved in StreetDance and StreetGames and to extend the work across the cluster groups. Groundwork also works with schools and they were so pleased with the positive impact that the sport and physical activity sessions had had on their pupils that they had all booked more CSLA courses and StreetDance sessions. Sport and physical activity is also now a firm part of the summer activities that Groundwork organises with the schools they work with. Perhaps the clearest indication of how well these sessions were received is through the choice of activities that the young people selected for their Positive Outcomes programme. The young people are responsible for designing their own summer programme and they all chose to include sport and physical activity.

At several organisations increased confidence and knowledge of what is available in the local areas has resulted in participation opportunities for young people in activities organised by StreetGames, StreetDance and StreetCheer. In the final EFQM the Changes YP Team Leader indicated she was exploring the possibility of entering a team into the StreetGames League as well as looking to participate competitively with other organisations CtG had worked with. This was in contrast to statements made by staff in the initial research when it was stated that non competitive activities were far more preferable. She was also looking to apply for funding to support a planned handball session, open to all staff, volunteers and clients. Funding for additional sports equipment was being sought by Nacro where staff were looking to establish gym sessions and a teenage mums programme. The use of Energise cards was recognised as having had a positive impact on activity rates and staff planned to give out more of these to further encourage participation.

At Treehouse Children’s Centre all staff were now being encouraged to use any relevant sport and physical activity skills in their job. For example, it was reported that one member of staff who had an American Football qualification was planning to start coaching the younger clients and the management staff hoped to enroll him on additional sports coaching courses. One of the Outreach Workers had arranged weight training sessions and parents were now being taken to Willfield to do aerobics and to use the gym. Staff were also trying to incorporate swimming into the work they were doing with various groups of clients at the Centre. It is pleasing to note that crèche time had been allocated to support the growth of physical activity sessions and that efforts were being made to release staff so that they can develop sport and physical activity sessions.

During the intervention period participation in activities running across Stoke-on-Trent were successfully encouraged by CtG in several projects. The fact that the partner organisations were able to enter teams reflected the greater confidence that had been developed in young people and the additional knowledge that staff had. Nacro had already played a few ad hoc matches
against the YMCA but during the intervention this developed into a regular series. They went on to organise matches with Martech, Pace, YMCA, Youth Service and Groundwork. Changes YP attended the StreetGames Festival, which is something they would not have considered before working with CtG. They also entered teams for the first time into competitions

“Changes YP put a team into the early intervention football tournament in the summer that proved to be a turning point for a number of our members. We would never have done it without the support from CtG. We were the only team with female members and we came last but the feeling of accomplishment at the end was amazing. The feeling of team spirit that the Programme Champion instilled is infectious. It has really changed the way a lot of young people view the Service. Some people who you would never have considered to be sporty are really enjoying being more active and have started doing things independently.

We would never have done it before CtG. You would never have imagined that some service users would get involved. It was a critical point; it brought staff and young people together. It was the first experience for some young people of being in a team.”

(Changes YP Team Leader)

Funding is of course essential if provision is to become sustainable, alongside a greater use of volunteers. CtG always provided equipment at the start of the intervention so that sport and activity sessions could be established but successful funding bids or budget ring fencing is required to ensure sustainability. Successful bids were awarded to Hope, Treehouse and Crescent Children’s Centres, Compendium, Blackfriars Day Centre, Nacro and FSU. Sport across Staffordshire was used at several of the intervention projects including for the women only aerobics session arranged at The Hope Children’s Centre and for specialist equipment at Blackfriars Day Centre (£500). Blackfriars were also awarded £2,240 from Vodaphone to extend the equipment available, a bid that was also supported by CtG staff. It is important to note that whilst the specialist equipment was ‘reserved’ for Blackfriars for their Thursday sessions, other disability groups in the locality could access it and, as such, the CtG project should have an impact on a much bigger number of the local disabled population. CtG also helped Changes YP make a successful bid to the already mentioned Austin and Pilkington Trust to fund a dance club and Nacro to apply to Give it Sum and Awards for ALL for sports equipment. At Compendium, the Programme Champion supported the Regeneration Officer and Resident’s Association’s successful application to the National Lottery Awards for all programme. The £2,700 award meant the Resident’s Association could own its own equipment and pay for some coaching after CtG withdrew.
In addition the EFQMs indicated that funding was being allocated by management staff at SCRU. Staff at Changes YP committed a budget to increase the capacity of their annual fun day event after the first one, facilitated by the Programme Champion was so successful. They decided to make the Festival of Fun an annual event in their calendar. NSYC staff made a similar decision and in both cases partner staff were now able to run the day independently, illustrating the significant progress that had been achieved during the intervention. At Treehouse the Deputy Manager agreed to give between £200 - £300 to the dads’ football group for goals, bibs and water bottles. This was seen as vital to the sustainability of the group. At the end of the year, with the group showing continued success, the Manager gave permission for goals to be erected on the spare land adjacent to the Centre. This will encourage the younger children to play and allow informal physical activity to take place more easily. At Crescent Children’s Centre the manager was prepared to fund a football kit for an organised match that was planned as well as contributing to a day out for dads and their children.

As well as resulting in potentially more equipment and organised sessions at SCRU, budgets had been ring fenced, staff rotas reorganised to cover times that sessions were held and additional funding was put in place to support physical activity. Budget allocation was now being provided for sport and physical activity at all the organisations that had successfully developed a culture of physical exercise. In the case of Nacro this support was also evident by management staff within the wider Service

“At first we had a bit of trouble from the Area and Regional Managers to get this money for the venue and for the cost of Sports Leaders’ log books but following on from the benefits that the young people have received through participating in these there is now no problem getting the money and they are very positive about sport… Sport now takes up a big part of the budget.” (Nacro Manager)

Developing a Sport and Physical Activity Policy was another development implemented at many of the successful projects, in order to help staff to understand the inclusion of this type of provision and also to contribute to staff training. None of the partner organisations had a policy prior to the interventions, however, they were developed in conjunction with CtG at SCRU, Hope Children’s Centre, Blackfriars Day Centre, NSYC, IFSU, Changes YP and Groundwork. At IFSU the value of a Sports Policy was evident in that it now forms part of the staff induction programme with new staff. At Compendium the final EFQM revealed that senior staff now recognise that sport and physical activity should be included in any future policies and it should be part of the overall vision of the project.
In addition to the establishment of relevant policies, evaluation procedures for sport and physical activity were lacking prior to the intervention at the majority of the partner organisations. By the end of the project, feedback procedures taking into account the views of young people and evaluation procedures were in place at SCRU, Blackfriars Day Centre, Groundwork, NSYC and Nacro. In the case of Nacro, at the start of the intervention there were no Key Performance Indicators relating to sport but by the final EFQM there were questions included in the organisation’s annual evaluation procedures. Such developments not only reflect the greater importance being attached to sport and physical activities in relation to the wider aims of the organisations but also should contribute to a successful sustainability of activity levels. In addition an important aspect of developing appropriate evaluation was that clients, staff and volunteers should have input into what services are provided. At Treehouse Children’s Centre clients’ feedback forms showed how much they enjoyed the groups and this information, together with evidence of how sport and physical activity had made a difference, was being fed back into the Operational Plan by the Centre’s management staff. This ensures that everyone feels valued and helps to foster a feeling of empowerment for the clients in particular. Similarly, at Compendium, volunteers running the youth club were now using young people’s feedback to inform future provision including, for example, a recent fishing trip organised with SAFE.

In addition to these benefits one of the key outcomes of staff being involved alongside the young people, either as supporting staff or as participants in the exercise sessions and CSLAs, was that this interaction led to significantly improved relationships between staff and clients. Such sessions were identified by staff at many of the organisations as a useful tool to address behaviour issues. At SCRU staff were surprised by how much young people had enjoyed interacting with them through sport and physical activity and sensed that they appreciated the time and effort staff put into the sessions. The importance of staff and young people being able to interact through the more informal environment that sport and physical activity established was expressed by staff and managers at IFSU, Changes YP, NSYC, Blackfriars Day Centre and SCRU. For staff at Changes YP it provided a more indirect way of tackling what are usually intense and difficult topics with young people. Young people were reported to have started to talk to staff for the first time during some of the physical activity sessions, for example whilst participating in a walk. A similar outcome was achieved at Groundwork, where a young man started talking to staff for the first time during one of the CSLA sessions.

In addition, staff often witnessed improved behaviour on the part of the young people, a point that was reiterated most strongly by senior IFSU staff in their EFQM

“Staff always attend the sessions and from this you get a better understanding of the children. You see them and it helps re-
evaluate plans and make future plans of how you will work with these children. They can act in very different ways than in other environments. It gives you an insight into them as an individual. For example, Pete, he is at a special school but he is dedicated to his sport and physical activity sessions. He has made some friends, is focused. It has surprised staff that he has got better at his sport and he is so determined. There are clear improvements with regards to physical skills and also behaviour.” (Senior IFSU staff)

Other children at this organisation had also improved their behaviour. It was noted that after some young people were suspended from sports sessions early on in the intervention there had been none recently. It was reported by staff that in one case this was because the young person “wants to be part of a group and this has improved his social skills.” The improved behaviour of young people was a common theme across the successful interventions and was often initially seen as a key outcome by the wider community, staff and volunteers because of an emphasis on reducing anti social behaviour. This was particularly true at Compendium, where sport was also successfully used to introduce more sensitive topics such as racism and to improve relationships between Detached Youth Workers and local young people. However as been discussed above, the partner organisations did recognise the wider benefits that sport and physical activity can provide as a result of the work with CtG. For example, at IFSU, although staff stated that sport and physical activities were seen to have reduced anti social behaviour and to have subsequently improved relationships between young people and the local community, they illustrated a better understanding of what else can be achieved in the second stage EFQM

“There is a huge impact when they get serious about these (sports) sessions. Attendance at school has improved in some cases, self esteem and confidence is increased, social skills improved. They might be horrendous at school but they have to work together in the sport. It also improves gross motor skills and coordination.” (Senior IFSU staff)

Clearly it was not only physical health that sport and physical activity was recognised as having a positive effect on. Staff now understood that if parents exercise they can positively influence their children and indeed children can influence their parents to join in too. In particular the Centre Manager identified physical activity as being beneficial in their projects aiming to meet workless household targets and with teenage mothers. Sport and physical activity was viewed by the manager as supporting work conducted with Start Up groups that encourage workless households to make positive lifestyle choices. This is because key skills such as confidence and time management can be built into physical activity and sport sessions.
At Blackfriars Day Centre the inclusive nature of the sessions allowed staff, parents and young people to challenge their preconceptions about what the young people could do. By the end of the intervention period both groups had raised their expectations and were happy to use a much wider variety of activities and facilities.

For staff and volunteers at Changes YP not surprisingly it was the links between physical activity and mental health that was at the forefront of their work. The reported outcomes from this intervention were overwhelmingly positive. New ideas were welcomed and physical activity and sport were quickly embedded into the provision and evaluation procedures. Once staff understood the positive impact physical exercise can have they began to incorporate it into their work with young people in all the Wellbeing sessions and workshops they carried out. Confidence and breaking down the isolation so often felt by people facing mental health challenges was the most frequently cited benefit of the activities

“Sport has broken down a lot of barriers for people and brought people together in a different way. It has encouraged young people to do ‘normal’ things that young people (with mental health difficulties) normally don’t do. Everyday acts that young people of their age would do that they just don’t do. It provides them with a feeling of being part of something. It’s just had a really big impact.

The people who got the most out of the CSLA weren’t naturally sporty. ... Sport is ... fun; it is easy to encourage them to be involved. They can be part of a team, they didn’t want to let the others down. The CSLA was very good for this”. (Changes YP Team Leader)

Within the SCRU young people spoke of feeling healthier and less stressed since taking part in activities on a regular basis and one young person claimed that since taking part he had managed to keep out of trouble, something that he had previously found quite difficult. This view was shared by staff in the units. The link between physical activity and improved mental health was also recognised at Nacro and Kingsland Children’s Centre where the Centre Manager explained how their understanding of physical exercise had improved by the end of the intervention

“The work has fed into more things than we would have thought and not just obesity and healthy eating. There has especially been an impact on mental health and we might not have made this link before CtG came here.”

The impact on young people during the intervention period was dramatic in some cases. The Changes YP Team Leader highlighted the case of one young man who never used to go out before getting involved with CtG, apart from to
attend his meeting at the organisation. He has now completed a CSLA course and even led his individual session in a small group. The change in him was described as “significant”. The Team Leader went on to say

“(he) wouldn’t have spoken to you or walked through his own front door but after football he went to the CSLA and even did his own presentation. He is now going to a badminton club twice a week. Sport was a turning point for him”.

Sport and physical activity sessions allowed the young people to gain a range of qualifications, experience and formal accreditations. The presentation ceremonies that were included in many of the interventions underlined this sense of achievement to the young people and this contributed to the positive impact that CtG projects had. It provided an avenue for success and helped to improve self esteem and pride. At Blackfriars Day Centre the very act of receiving the awards was an important step for one client who gained enough confidence during the evening to collect her second and third certificate without the support of her mother. Whilst it was clear that further work to change the outlook and support of some of the absent parents was still required, the feedback of those present reflected just what a positive impact the programme had had on the clients themselves. The mothers of the two clients who had gained the CSLA Awards expressed their pride and one stated that “she never knew how big an achievement he had made until tonight”. Both mothers said that the confidence levels of their sons had significantly improved since being involved in the CSLA course and the Blackfriars sport and physical activity programme. The clients’ own physical activity levels had increased and their enjoyment of sport had improved, to the extent that they were encouraging their families to join in as well. This positive impact was not restricted to the CSLA trained clients. Several family members of other clients who had attended the sports sessions reported to the CtG staff present that they were clearly enjoying the physical activity and that the families themselves now believed that sport and physical activity was an important part of their children’s development. This change of attitude was reflected by the fact that several more volunteers attended sessions following the presentation evening.

Across the successful interventions sport is now seen as providing something additional. It is recognised as an alternative way of reaching out to young people and for some can be a useful way of persuading them to access the organisation and other services that it offers. For Changes YP, football provided an avenue to communicate with the young man mentioned above and to subsequently support him to engage with his community. He is now looking into coaching options via the FSC Port Vale project.

It is important to note that it was not just the naturally sporty young people who participated in the sessions that CtG introduced. Many of the young people stated they liked the sessions because all abilities were welcome. At Blackfriars
Day Centre the manager was unequivocal in her support for the work that CtG had initiated

“They just get so much out of it. I can’t explain what they are like when they come back on a Thursday; they are absolutely buzzing. This also does the staff good as they let rip slightly. All the clients and staff look forward to it and they will be asking me throughout the week, are we going to the Wallace Centre this week?”

Responses by the young people attending Blackfriars supported these comments, with one young man stating that “there isn’t anything on a Thursday that I would change, I really enjoy it.” It wasn’t just the more able bodied clients that benefited from the intervention but also those with more severe disabilities

“There are clients like Sarah who have changed so much, she is a great girl but she can’t communicate, she can’t move apart from her head but she absolutely loves going down to the Wallace Centre and she tries so hard and just lifting her arm up half an inch at the Wallace is a real achievement for her … since then she has asked for a physio and she had asked if she can go swimming on a Friday and she hasn’t swam for eight years, so CtG has had a very big impact on Sarah.

He is a wheelchair user so he can’t join in all the sports at different leisure centres. He also has a learning difficulty. All the (CtG) activities on a Thursday are adapted in order for the wheelchair users to join in. He is given plenty of assistance by staff and volunteers in order for him to participate.” (Centre Manager)

Similar comments were made at IFSU where staff also recognised the benefits of the project for a wide variety of young people. One of the senior Support Workers noted

“Those who have special needs, both physical and learning, including those on the autistic scale are all included and no one is excluded. All engage in the activities and benefit.”

Increasing structured and regular participation opportunities were obviously a central part to the CtG intervention work. Post intervention, young people attending all the successful interventions reported increased opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. It was clear that in part this can be attributed to the organised sessions provided at or by partner organisation staff, initially supported by CtG. When regular, planned sessions are incorporated in to the provision offered, staff and young people are aware of sessions well in advance and the organisation can timetable the required staff and volunteers
and book transport when required. All of these factors will reduce the likelihood of sessions being cancelled. The regularity of activities is also important to maintain increased motivation levels and it is evident that when activities were cancelled young people’s support for them was quickly undermined. This was illustrated at the SCRU when activities were stopped for too long over the Christmas holiday period and also at other provision when a lack of staffing or facilities required sessions to be postponed.

Maintaining funding is also essential. After a positive start to a StreetDance group at IFSU, staff did not allocate continued funding, a fact that they regretted with hindsight. However due to increased understanding and after requests from girls a more successful StreetDance project was established in a joint project between IFSU (in Cluster Three) and Support Workers at Custer Four, based at Thomas Boughey Children’s Centre in Shelton. These staff worked with young people and families at Oakhill Primary School and it was at this venue that the second StreetDance project was held. Classes ran from the summer of 2008 and the project was self sufficient by the end of the CtG intervention. The same instructor was used but, due to the location, it is unlikely that the young people who attended the class at Westfield Children’s Centre would have travelled to the group at Oakhill School. The class regularly attracted 15 girls, although numbers of up to 25 were recorded on occasion. As well as learning new dance steps the girls were given an opportunity to choreograph their own routine and perform.

In several of the projects it is possible to state that the young people’s views towards sport and physical activity changed significantly from the first phase of research. For example, initially young people living in the SCRU felt that the range of opportunities available to them was very limited but in the final research they commented on how much they enjoyed getting out of the units to take part in a variety of activities. Similar feelings were expressed by clients attending Blackfriars Day Centre where the Manager stated that the project had had a positive impact on all the clients involved. Many of the young people expressed the feeling that they were now enjoying sport and physical activity for the first time. The establishment of age appropriate activities was often essential and were duly introduced at IFSU, Compendium and FSU. In addition Children Centre provision was provided for a range of age groups and CSLA courses at some projects were also split into different age groups. This was largely because older young people were often viewed as intimidating, particularly for individuals who did not see themselves as very able. CtG sessions provided everyone with a chance to participate, in a supportive environment where bullying and being left out of the game was not tolerated. One young person at IFSU concluded “I have really taken to sport and wish I had got involved earlier.” His positive experience had led him to do a work placement in sports development and to start thinking about sport as a future career. Similar experiences were expressed by young people across the interventions including one individual at Changes YP who had previously been
unwilling to even talk to anyone let alone lead sessions in his CSLA or volunteer in football projects, as he subsequently did.

As discussed in the mechanism section, CtG introduced a wider range of activities than the young people had previously been exposed to and also allowed the establishment of both competitive and non-competitive sports. By the final BBaCs young people were confident that negative behaviour was unacceptable in the structured sessions. The outcome of this was that by the end of the intervention work the majority of young people recognised sport and physical activity as being an enjoyable way to spend their time rather than a chore. This was borne out by young people in their second stage BBaCs and was clearly an important reason why they attended. There was no doubt that the majority enjoyed the sessions and enjoyed trying a number of activities they hadn’t done before. This sometimes had the result that clients started to attend more willingly, particularly when they had been referred to an organisation

“Monday and Wednesdays there is full attendance which for Nacro is a big thing. When they have to do sport they come in whereas when they are doing job search and basic skills they pull ‘sickies.’” (Nacro Manager)

Once there, of course, staff could discuss a range of issues with the young people and encourage them to engage with their other services.

The establishment of the Coalville “Westport Sports Academy” (Saturday mixed sports sessions) and the experiences gained from that by the CtG staff led to an exciting and very important sporting provision in Stoke-on-Trent as a whole. The Saturday sessions were organised so that the coaches arrived with a bag of equipment and the young people determined what sports and physical activities were offered. The local venue ensured participation was higher by operating a ‘doorstop’ approach, where the activities were taken to the target group rather than expecting them to travel. The success of this intervention in what is a deprived area and includes young people with challenging behaviour alerted CtG staff to the potential of the national StreetGames Programme. The initiative was explored and subsequently adopted across the city, concentrating on other deprived neighbourhoods. The same principle applied as it did at the Coalville sessions, illustrating how that small scale intervention mirrored the work that was later undertaken on a significant scale. Two coaches for each venue took a mixed bag of equipment to the ‘doorstep’ of young people and they influenced the choice of activities undertaken. There were up to 45 sessions a week, supported by paid coaches and a number of the Area Implementation Teams responsible for managing various wards in Stoke-on-Trent. This national project incorporated StreetDance and other initiatives such as StreetCheer and was the biggest sports project of its kind in the country. In 2009/10 the Stoke-on-Trent StreetGames project received £270,000 of funding and is testament to the fact that projects that may not appear to be sustainable
Initially can provide a learning experience and inspiration for staff that can lead to success on a far wider scale.

It was apparent that an important reason that success was achieved at many of the partner organisations was that CtG were able to facilitate activities either at the service's building or in nearby facilities. Young people consistently preferred the familiarity of local sessions and were reluctant to travel far.

"CtG has made sport and physical activity increasingly accessible for us and achievable for the children. If CtG hadn't occurred the young people wouldn't have any physical activity .... CtG has provided a more laid back, fun and all-embracing physical activity session. There is football and other activities provided for children from a mix of ages and groups. It is not strict but neither is it unruly. CtG has come to us, to the Centre, to our doorstep. This has meant access has not been a problem, we struggle to get children to other venues and we are keen to carry on the activities." (IFSU Senior staff)

At some sessions it was possible to extend CtG work to a client group that was wider than the original remit. In addition to meaning that a larger number of young people benefited from the additional physical activity and support offered, it also helped to make sessions more viable when participation numbers were low. In addition one of the identified outcomes of the sport and physical activity sessions has been the improved social cohesion between groups of young people and the opening up of sessions also contributed to this. For example the coming together of staff and young people from all the residential social units to take part in sport and activity twice a week had a positive effect on relationships between all involved. Prior to the CtG intervention young people in one unit rarely mixed with young people from other units and when they did they tended to be aggressive towards one another. However through the organised sessions, new friendships developed and young people started to ring to check that their friends in other units would be attending. Staff also benefited and were able to share experiences and gain support from each other. Similarly, IFSU was part of a cluster working arrangement and good practice was able to be passed on to staff within this cluster and at another cluster that they worked with. The result was that young people from Cluster 3 and 4 were able to participate together and that a copy of the Sports Policy was made available at each cluster that IFSU worked with.

A further example of the way that sport was increasingly recognised as being helpful in fulfilling the wider aims of an organisation was at Changes YP. The Programme Champion met with the British Minority Ethnic (BME) project lead for the organisation who had found it difficult to access the North Staffordshire Afro-Caribbean Association (NORSACA), mainly because of the stigma associated with mental health amongst many BME groups(17). The idea that
was being explored when this report was written was that the sports sessions would be used as a way for the BME project leader to build relationships with the young people attending. In addition mental health messages would be incorporated in the BME work that CtG staff were doing with NORSACCA. It was also hoped that some of the young people that the Changes BME leader was already working with would access the sessions for NORSACCA, for example, the football session. In addition it was planned that regular matches would be arranged between Changes and NORSACCA young people. Further extension work was planned by the team leader who was considering the ways that the good practice established with CtG could be extended to other mental health groups. She explained that at present the link between mental health and physical health is only rarely mentioned so the work with CtG had been groundbreaking. The traditional method of helping people with mental health difficulties is by talking and whilst this is valuable it has been recognised during the intervention that there are other ways to help improve people’s mental health.

The benefit of being physically active themselves was also understood by more staff after the interventions. Staff at all of the organisations CtG worked with often faced stressful situations and reported that taking part in sport helped to reduce this. This was particularly evident at Changes YP, SCRU, and IFSU. A member of staff from IFSU stated that “the CtG sessions have reminded staff that sessions can be fun. It has made us think about the need to get fitter.” At Kingsland Children’s Centre, where activity rates for staff remained disappointingly low, it was nevertheless evident that more staff reported a positive attitude to sport in the second stage research, compared to the initial BBaCs. A wider range of activities were now participated in and even those staff who did not participate recognised that physical activity was beneficial for mental and physical health, improved levels of energy and concentration, increased self esteem and provided an avenue for staff to relax and socialise.

At SCRU, in addition to the twice weekly sessions that they participated in alongside the young people, occasional adhoc sessions were also organised. The Positive Steps unit (which superseded several of the residential units as part of a reorganisation of services for looked after children that took place after the CtG intervention ended) also used sport as part of their one-to-one work with young people. Staff at the residential units, Blackfriars Day Centre, Treehouse Children’s Centre, IFSU and NSYC all stated that they were more active as a result of being involved in the CtG project. Increased confidence meant that many staff were more active both in and outside of work and, by participating to a greater extent alongside the young people, they were better role models. Many staff still felt that time limited their chance to be active outside of work and welcomed the opportunity to participate as part of their job. Children’s Centre staff reported that they would prefer to have activities organised for them straight after work and at the Centre as this increased motivation. Staff feedback had been responded to by management at
Treehouse Children’s Centre where the second stage EFQM revealed that staff were encouraged to attend activities such as aerobics and the gym and lunch time breaks could be moved to allow this to occur.

Lack of motivation had been cited in the initial BBaCs as a key reason why young people participated so infrequently after leaving school. However the intervention successfully managed to challenge such negativity at many of the projects. In the case of young people in SCRU the initial low motivation rates can be contrasted with requests, via their second stage BBaCs, for more opportunities than the twice weekly sessions that had been established. They also wanted the Service to hire additional space at the leisure centres so that a greater range of activities could be offered, including boxing, swimming and dance. It can be argued that the exposure of young people to a wider range of sports and enabling them to be more physically active has had a successful impact on their motivation levels. At all the successful interventions young people and indeed staff reported improved understanding and participation in sport and physical activity. In addition, it was hoped that young people and staff would choose to become more active in their own time using facilities in the wider community, as a result of their improved understanding and enjoyment of sport and physical activity. Results showed this to be the case for young people living in residential care, those attending Blackfriars Day Centre, SCRU, Treehouse Children’s Centre and Changes YP.

An important outcome of the intervention was that these additional physical activities provided an avenue for young people to achieve in non academic routes. This was particularly important where young people were no longer attending school or failed to do so regularly. Changing attitudes of staff at NSYC and Kingsland Children’s Centre meant they particularly valued sport as a way of building positive relationships with boys, especially those that do not do well in the classroom environment. As at many of the organisations sport is now viewed as a way of engaging more boys, and providing an avenue to develop confidence and self esteem, demonstrate their skills and show they can achieve. At many of the organisations, certificates were awarded to all those who attended enough sessions to complete the hours required for a range of Stoke-on-Trent Youth Achievement Awards. In addition, at some of the organisations young people achieved Duke of Edinburgh access credits and first aid qualifications.

It was the CSLA programme, introduced at all the successful interventions that empowered young people and staff to the greatest extent. The benefits it provided were perhaps best summed up by Nacro’s Manager and NYSC’s Senior Development Worker who said

“Before certain young people come here they would have done no physical fitness or activities whatsoever. The Sports Leaders course has given them plenty of benefits that have shown in the
football match. They now all play as a team, encourage, will help out the opposition if they are players short. This would never have happened 12 months ago. The staff and opposition feedback is always positive. The CSLA course and regular football will also increase confidence and self esteem.” (Nacro Manager)

“(Staff) have found the training very helpful. It has made their job easier, they feel more comfortable. Some staff went into training unsure and came out with completely different ideas, what they can do in a short space of time, with limited space. For example (one member of staff) went to a youth forum meeting and she instigated a sports activity that was really good. She wouldn’t have done that before, no way.” (NYSC Senior Development Worker)

It proved a successful tool to use with young people living with mental and physical disabilities, young people in residential care and those taking care of dependents, as well as those displaying challenging behaviour and at risk of exclusion from education. Describing a trip to Centre Parks, the Centre Manager at Blackfriars Day Centre reported that everyone tried new activities and the two CSLA trained clients actively encouraged their peers to extend their choices. The two trained young people participated in raft building, archery, bowls and sword fighting and the Manager attributed this to the confidence they gained from working with CtG and helping to deliver the sports programme. It was interesting to note that in some cases young people who had been displaying particularly challenging behaviour when the interventions started, gained CSLAs and, in some cases, sport and physical activity was viewed as a viable career and study route for the first time. This led to individuals engaging positively with their local communities, gaining further qualifications and experience through volunteering and even paid work as part time coaches. Staff recognised this trend of raised aspirations and showed they understood the importance of supporting the young people using the services where they worked. This outcome at the individual level was highlighted by the Chair of the Resident’s Association at Compendium:

“Volunteering with CtG has changed him; he has got a lot more responsible and mature. A couple of years ago we were very concerned about him and he was on the border of young offending and drugs but his work within sport volunteering …. has really turned him round.”

Individuals at Compendium, Nacro, Crescent and IFSU gained a level 1 football qualification and were accepted as paid coaches at the City Council, whilst at Groundwork one young man, who was on Groundwork’s employment scheme and had been long term unemployed, was accepted as a casual paid coach.
At all the completed projects, including Hope Children’s Centre, staff were also involved in the CSLA and agreed that the courses increased their knowledge about a range of sports and physical activities, enabled them about to lead sessions and introduced them to what else was available in Stoke-on-Trent. Prior to the intervention staff indicated that they lacked the necessary skills, qualifications and confidence to run physical activities. This was no longer the case. The Team Leader for Changes YP perhaps expressed this most clearly when she stated, “CtG has drastically changed the way that Changes YP work. It has had a massive impact (and) raised awareness of what is available.” All of these benefits will help to create sustainability. Another example was provided at the IFSU project. Initially staff had expressed low levels of confidence and ability to lead sessions. However by the end of their time with CtG they felt confident enough to turn down a request from the adjacent Queensbury Youth Club, whose outside pitch IFSU use for sports sessions, to take over the football sessions. It was decided that the existence of volunteers together with the Community Development Workers meant that they could keep it in-house. At NSYC staff reported that as a result of their training the Young Carers Department was able to source new venues that were more suitable for sport and physical activity, re-assess their methods to employ new staff and consider future project proposals. Unfortunately, at Hope Children’s Centre, management did not support the funding of the Community Development Worker to go on further training after the initial CSLA. Although he now understood the benefits of sport and physical activity and was happy to refer young people to CtG and the City Council’s volunteer scheme, the lack of additional training such as football coaching does limit the range of activities he could lead in the future.

The amount of staff trained, like young people, varied from project to project. At NSYC, Crescent and Treehouse Children’s Centres staff audits were carried out during the intervention and this helped identify what the organisations required for sustaining and extending activity. In the case of Crescent, the audit highlighted to managers that the Nursery Manager was able to lead aerobics sessions and she went on to take the weekly session. One of the most successful projects was Changes YP where all but one member of staff was CSLA Level 1 trained by the end of the project and all staff were involved in the sports sessions that CtG organised. It was also planned that all staff would go on a NGB Level 1 Handball qualification, to support the establishment of a session for staff, young people and volunteers. In addition another member of staff was planning to be trained in boxercise.

Interestingly, during the FSC intervention where the Programme Champion faced ongoing difficulties in motivating volunteers to complete their CSLA training, she suggested that the full course may be too much of a commitment for all potential volunteers. Instead she suggested a shorter, less complex option would be useful for those who wanted to get involved but don’t want to pursue coaching as a career. The Programme Champion felt it would be a good
idea to use the less committed volunteers at the established volunteer coaching groups to give them a taster of the scheme, a chance to understand the role of a volunteer and to support the qualified leaders.

Developing volunteer opportunities was a central facet of the interventions which, as well as teaching the young people important social and professional skills provided the partner organisations with additional help to staff the increased amount of activities. Three of the clients at Blackfriars Day Centre for young people with disabilities were able to help with the sessions at the Centre and one young woman who would be too old to attend as a client shortly after the intervention ended was planning to continue to help. In addition one of the CSLA trained clients was undertaking a mixture of paid and volunteer work at Blackfriars, including leading the sports sessions. Clearly working with CtG has helped the Day Centre fulfil their wider aims of improving clients’ social skills and contributed to developing their long term independence.

The value of volunteers was increasingly recognised by CtG as the number of interventions extended. However, the number of volunteers that were able to be inducted varied widely across the different organisations and this should be taken into account. At Compendium volunteers ran most of the sport and physical activity sessions via the Resident’s Association and developing a volunteer programme to organise and lead sessions in a number of venues was at the heart of its work. However at this particular project the difficulty for the CtG Programme Champion was that it was not possible to achieve enough consistent volunteer help to ensure sustainability of a full range of activities. It was also difficult to ensure that volunteers attended relevant training courses or gained experience that could benefit the young people.

It was also expected that volunteers would be responsible for the various groups planned for the FSC, PVFC work. FSC was one of the first interventions that CtG worked with and illustrated very clearly the challenges CtG staff faced when relying on volunteers to staff practical sessions. During this project individuals regularly failed to turn up to required CSLA sessions and sometimes to planned activity sessions. Nevertheless enough people did qualify to allow a series of multi sport sessions to be organised and some of the volunteers gained paid positions from their volunteering work. For example, one became an Assistant Sports Development Officer and another two achieved paid coaching jobs as well as being (casual) administrators.

The volunteer schemes, which should have provided PFVC with a pool of volunteers failed to develop in an independent and sustainable way because of several factors. The club was unable to take on the voluntary scheme because they failed to designate responsibility for the scheme to a member of their staff. The FiC, as a community based charity, should have been the natural partner for CtG and FSC to work with but the issue of staffing was also an factor here. No member of staff was identified as being responsible for managing
volunteers and the manager himself was not interested in running free community sessions. Whilst this was partly to do with his financial requirements it was also due to a lack of understanding about the benefits the scheme would bring to his organisation as well as the participants themselves. In particular FiC would gain from a pool of volunteers trained by CtG as coaches as well as paying participants once the sessions become sustainable. Several meetings were held between the manager, CtG and FSC but this proved to be an ongoing and frustrating part of the intervention. High staff turnover in all the partner groups affected the ability to establish new ideas and achieve management support. The lack of staffing resources proved to be a limitation to the entire intervention but particularly in establishing the volunteer schemes, which were part of the Port Vale Community Engagement Project.

Despite this disappointment, one key development did result from the FSC project. CtG staff realised that the impact a successful volunteer scheme could have on all sorts of projects was enormous. The intervention with FSC allowed them to recognise that developing a city wide volunteer scheme could be hugely beneficial to community based organisations, staff running interventions and indeed the individuals who volunteer their services. As a consequence of working with FSC the Community Sports Volunteer Scheme was developed and this has proved extremely successful, not least for volunteers developed across the interventions CtG has been involved with. About 60 volunteers were registered when this report was written.

Being able to volunteer in sport and physical activity has made the option more attractive to men. At Treehouse Children’s Centre, together with the Sports Champion, male volunteers were recorded as making a real difference to the dads’ football group. The importance of parent volunteers in encouraging other parents to get involved was a continuing theme in the weekly evaluation reports. Volunteers helped to lead the parents’ physical activities and supported the sport and physical activity sessions with the Sports Champion. The personal development of some of the dads’ involved in the successful Treehouse dads’ football group was also apparent when two of them volunteered to be involved with the under 16 football sessions. It was noted that, in the case of one player, since volunteering the relationship with his son had improved. In particular his tendency to speak aggressively to his son had gradually reduced during the sport intervention period. The importance of getting more men involved was highlighted by the Manager at Crescent Children’s Centre:

“Trying to engage dads is key so it was great to have this staffed resource to go out and find people and to have male staff involved. CtG staff have been talking to people in the community and this is the best way to get people’s trust. We will need staff before we can staff the Saturday morning sessions, that’s why
John and Lee (volunteers who started during the CtG intervention) are important to help support and deliver sessions."

It was pleasing to note that once involved some volunteers took on a greater range of responsibilities. For example, they often helped with younger children’s sessions and fun days. At Crescent two males expressed their willingness to work with CtG to support the re-launch of Boogie Kids for toddlers, which was run by Centre staff. In addition to helping with the activities at the services they accessed, young people also went on to volunteer at Stoke Recreation Centre, with StreetGames projects, Football Action and at CtG projects across the city. One young man from the Groundwork project became particularly active in his role as a volunteer. He already had a Level 1 football coaching qualification and was provided with a recruitment form for a job as a casual coach at the City Council. The Programme Champion made himself available to help him fill the form in and he was accepted to work at StreetGames sessions. In addition, after carrying out the necessary number of volunteer hours in order to complete his level 1 qualification, he registered on the Level 2 Sports Leaders course being run with Tunstall Police Station. He volunteered at the StreetGames festival for eight hours and also travelled to Milton Keynes for a Sports Leader’s UK Conference and Fun Day, together with some CtG staff and other Sports Leaders. Two further volunteers were also recruited from Groundwork’s clients.

Prior to the intervention more volunteers were needed at all the partner organisations. By the end of the projects, whilst more work was needed to further increase numbers improvements had been achieved. At Treehouse Children’s Centre, in addition to a number of young dads being involved in the under 16 football, volunteers supported the parent activities and now ran dance workshops as well as the pre-existing ballet and tap classes for children. The most successful development occurred at Blackfriars Day Centre where there were 11 volunteers listed by the end of the intervention and some parents had also started to help out with the Thursday sports sessions. Football had also encouraged volunteers at Nacro and at Crescent Children’s Centre, where one of the young dads gained his level 1 football coaching qualification during the intervention and his father was in the process of also doing so as the intervention came to an end. They both helped to run the sessions during the intervention and continued to do so ensuring its sustainability. Staff at Nacro noted that getting involved in football led to some young people’s motivation increasing enough to allow them to get involved in CSLA courses and developing a leadership role within subsequent football sessions. Increasing volunteers was an ongoing issue at Compendium where the physical activity was run by the entirely volunteer staffed Resident’s Association. The final research showed that regular volunteers were continuing to help with the weekly Saturday sessions as well as at fun days and projects elsewhere in Stoke.
In some cases volunteers were attracted by the non competitive activities, such as at Kingsland where the walking group was supported in this way. Evidence from across the partner organisations reveals that volunteers gained significant skills from their involvement and in many cases this led to increased involvement either at the organisation itself or within other CtG, StreetGames or City Council sports projects. For young people the benefits were not only physical as one of the Support Workers at IFSU clarified:

“We have a couple of young people involved as volunteers in the Monday night football sessions initiated by CtG and they have undergone training with CtG. The football volunteer has developed significantly on a personal level and has grown in confidence and skills. Jack also helps and this is helping his confidence... Sam and Jack have been involved in the younger boys’ football session to increase their confidence.”

Volunteering also provided an avenue for young people to re-engage with their local communities in a positive way, something that was noted particularly at Compendium, IFSU and Changes YP.

In addition to all the practical activities that CtG facilitated the provision of Sports Directories and additional information packs proved to be a useful supporting mechanism for staff and young people at Blackfriars Day Centre, NSYC, IFSU and Nacro. Knowledge about what is available outside the service is crucial if young people are going to extend their participation independently. Prior to the intervention there wasn’t any educational information provided to clients at Treehouse Children’s Centre about the benefits of sport and physical activity. Post intervention, the Centre was actively involved in this area, through a mixture of verbal advice, information boards, newsletters, planned awareness sessions, the establishment of a walking group that incorporated an educational element and the inclusion of sport and physical activity in health promotion work. The recognition that sport and physical activity should be linked with other healthy lifestyle information was also expressed by the newly appointed Outreach Manager at Hope Children’s Centre and she expected to include it in her planned work to gain Health Promoting Children’s Centre status.

Despite the significant improvements seen in participation levels, understanding and value placed on sport and physical activity, some ongoing barriers were identified by some staff and young people in the second stage research process. At Kingsland Children’s Centre staff activity rates remained low at the end of the intervention and it was acknowledged as an area that required further work by the Centre Manager. It should be noted that the fact that she recognised staff should be more active is a positive outcome even if staff activity rates remain disappointing. Some of the barriers noted for staff and young people were common across the different types of provision such as the family and work commitments, safety and cleanliness of local facilities, cost of
accessing external facilities and clubs, lack of personal transport or a perception that public transport was not available, concerns about fitting in due to a lack of knowledge or equipment and, for some, concerns about health. Costs of courses did not need to be high to put people off from continuing. For example at IFSU young people stopped attending a successful dance class that was held at the Children’s Centre where IFSU was based after being asked to contribute a pound. The staff pointed out that for some families who had several young people attending the session that amount was enough to put them off. The Recreation Key Cards helped to alleviate concerns over financial barriers for young people at several of the intervention projects but did not remove it completely. Sometimes this was because young people still perceived that the cost would be too high and the barrier will be further undermined if knowledge of what is available is increased, as discussed already.

Some young people stated in their final BBaCs that they still lacked knowledge of what was available. In addition not all young people showed an improvement in their understanding of the benefits of sport and physical activity. It can be concluded that whilst improvements in this area had been made in all interventions, work needed to be ongoing and greater access to this knowledge needed to be established for young people by staff members. It is expected that the development of partnerships, together with the greater understanding that staff now have of sport and physical activity will result in young people being provided with more information.

High staff turnover was also a limiting factor at several of the interventions, including FSC, Hope Children’s Centre and the three of the projects that did not complete (NSREC, CAFAG and YIP). At Hope this meant sustainable activities could not be created and at FSC, where volunteer led sessions were established, the staff turn over and lack of appropriate staff to work with the Programme Champion slowed initial developments down. In addition the lack of understanding by management staff at both these organisations meant some planned sport and physical activity sessions were not able to be introduced or maintained independently of CtG. In the case of PVFC, the manager of FiC failed to understand the benefits that developing a volunteer coaching resource would have for his organisation as well as the young people involved. As a result and despite efforts by FSC and CtG to work with FiC it was still the case at the end of the intervention that

“there seems to be a block in FiC about the value that volunteers can bring. There is a misunderstanding and a lack of skill set in the FiC team to take on the volunteer scheme. The scheme has always been seen as an imposition with FiC … It is a disappointment that we have not cracked the volunteer scheme.” (FSC National Executive Manager)
Female participation remained lower during the intervention, in a reflection of the baseline figures collected by CtG and indeed national figures. This was illustrated across the interventions including at Treehouse Children’s Centre where it had proved an on going battle to establish a teenage mums’ activity group, despite initial enthusiasm. At Compendium reluctance to support a girls’ football club undermined the possibility of establishing this activity, despite three young women having achieved coaching qualifications in this sport. There was concern from the Resident’s Association volunteers who ran the youth club that the girls would be playing at the same time that they used to attend the club and that this would divert money away from them. Despite on-going discussions to agree that the money would be ploughed back, this activity was never successfully established. In addition, CtG staff attended the youth club to try and gain some feedback from female residents and researched various options to try and attract a higher female participation level. Although some girls attended the organised activities, it remained the case throughout the intervention that far more males attended and many sessions became male only. This situation was also believed to have put off one of the female volunteers who was not comfortable helping with a male only football environment.

What was pleasing, however, was that staff at many of the partner organisations recognised the need to keep working to improve female participation rates and that non competitive as well as competitive activities needed to be offered. Volunteers were involved from early on in the project, including a female volunteer who was able to lead sessions with little assistance from the CtG Programme Champion. One limitation to activity remained the amount of indoor and outdoor space that the partner organisations had available in and around their own buildings and this can be seen as having a greater impact on female participation rates. The lack of indoor space could also be seen as a contributory factor to the lower rates of female participation, as it meant that opportunities for activities such as aerobics and dance were particularly restricted at the host organisation’s own venues.

At IFSU, NSYC, Nacro, Crescent Children’s Centre and Blackfriars Day Centre, the lack of parental support was noted as a continuing barrier although in some cases parents’ views had been successfully challenged. At both IFSU and Blackfriars some parents had started taking their children to sessions and had recognised their achievements. One of the foster parents at IFSU had become a volunteer as had some of the young people’s parents at Blackfriars. This marked a significant change as few parents had previously shown any interest in sport and physical activity for their children. Treehouse, Kingsland and Crescent Children’s Centres and IFSU all recognised the value of including the community in sport and physical planning where appropriate and indeed the role it can play in helping to encourage a wider range of people to access their
services. This outcome was highlighted by the Treehouse Centre Deputy Manager

“… there has been a definite improvement in this area with regards to the social aspect; I mean people wanting to take part, people wanting to have a voice. We have got generations of mindsets to change in this part of Stoke … but there has definitely been a change, an improvement. I think the physical activity over the last two years has improved the channels of communication with the community. (The instructor) can do an aerobics session and start talking about something far more serious because they are relaxed, they are having fun.”

Working with the community was accepted as being particularly important in areas of social tension and towards the end of the intervention at IFSU staff started to discuss when sessions would best fit in with Mosque times with the local Iman. Sport and physical activities were viewed as having a positive impact on behaviour by the community and all sections were happy to see activities extended. The establishment of two-way dialogue with local people can only strengthen this belief and lead to higher participation figures from the community.

It was also pleasing to note that in many cases young people expressed greater confidence. This was partly because many of the young people across the projects had been introduced to local leisure centres and provided with information about clubs and other community based provision. For example, having been introduced and accepted at local centres and having experienced new sports that appealed to them, some young people residing in residential units were now prepared to travel across the city independently to enjoy a game of squash at the weekends. Similar points were made at many of the interventions, including Changes YP where one young man decided to start playing rugby, another had begun playing badminton twice a week at Northwood Stadium and a third swam a lot more regularly and also attended a gym. After initially being reluctant to join in, one young man at Blackfriars Day Centre was referred to a bowls club and went on to regularly attend. Awareness of a range of facilities had increased and crucially, according to the Changes YP Team Leader, participation has

“allowed young people to get involved with ‘normal’ activities that ‘normal’ young people do. (It has meant people) stop treating them like they’re delicate and allowed them to be young people”.

It was clear that for many young people activities organised by the staff at the organisations they access or ideally at that venue remained a key way to increase participation. By the end of the intervention Compendium had a projected participation of 40 people between the ages of 0-24 for the year and
was using *Awards for All* money to help fund coaches. Although some young people are more open to travelling and using a wider range of facilities, many are still more likely to attend activities in their local area and at venues they are familiar with. At Blackfriars Day Centre the fact that activities were successfully adapted and specialist equipment was made available was crucial:

“There are no barriers for me to get involved in sport, if there is any on a Thursday (weekly session) then I just tell you lot (staff and CtG) and you change it for me and everyone else can get involved. I would like to do more sport but I can’t because I find it hard to get to places with no transport and I can’t wheel myself because I have a poorly hand.” *(Young person’s BBaC)*

In all the places that CtG worked, the practice of listening to young people and responding to their concerns meant that activities could be shaped to fit their needs. However, in the case of Blackfriars, concerns remained for the young people with more severe disabilities about how they could access activities not organised by Centre staff.

It should also be noted that the classes for Blackfriars Day Centre were held at the nearby Wallace Sport and Education Centre and were only available one day a week. As a result, whilst all the young people attending the Day Centre will benefit from the staff’s increased enthusiasm and knowledge of such activities, this did mean that if a young person didn’t attend on the day they held physical activity sessions they didn’t participate in the structured sessions. It is recognised that the current practicalities of running the Day Centre mean that it is hard to vary services provided from day to day, not least because some clients prefer a more rigid timetable. However, this does mean that not every client at Blackfriars Day Centre will be exposed to the sport and physical activities organised at the sports centre.

Evidence from the interventions underlines the need to carefully plan the timing of activities so that it allows young people from all backgrounds to access the sessions after school and to participate despite domestic and caring responsibilities. In addition the availability of affordable childcare is central to increasing participation of young mothers. Female participation in general, across the various projects, remained lower than that of males and efforts to provide appropriate activities to attract more girls and young women needs to be an ongoing theme of future provision. Nevertheless the fact that some of the barriers, identified by staff in particular, are of this nature suggests that sport and physical activity have become part of their working practice as their concerns are more operational in nature. It should of course be remembered that the barriers for young people are far from uniform and in part still have an effect on motivation levels.
It was not only the host organisation staff that gained knowledge and professional skills through the training opportunities offered by CtG and through working with their coaches. CtG staff, in particular the Programme Champions, learnt from their involvement in these interventions. At Changes YP training was arranged for CtG staff to learn more about working with people with mental health problems. The Programme Champion also attended a Changes Young People’s session on confidence and self image to improve her understanding of how sport and physical activity could be built into their existing provision. It was concluded that the course would have to be extended from six weeks to seven, allowing a new unit on sport and physical activity to be developed. The Programme Champion also attended the second OCN tutors course held for Changes staff and volunteers. This would enable her to become a volunteer coordinator who could run support groups for young people experiencing mental health problems in the area.

A significant proportion of the sessions they organised and ran at all the interventions were with challenging young people and they were required to ensure that they maintained their engagement with the programme. In addition they were often required to work with mixed sex, age, and ability groups. Numbers at the sessions fluctuated from week to week as did the young people who attended, meaning that knowledge and skill of the attendees varied widely. Other amendments had to be made when working with young people with disabilities who accessed Blackfriars Day Centre. This challenged the identified Programme Champion who, as well as the clients and Day Centre staff, was encouraged to think about what the young people could do and adapt sessions accordingly. This quickly led to a philosophy that sport and physical activity could be a useful tool for work with all clients, not least because it could foster a feeling of achievement and self confidence. The interaction with the clients provided the Programme Champion with a valuable insight into the abilities of disabled young people and challenged him to find new ways of working and teaching physical activities. As a result his knowledge and understanding were continually developed and created a set of transferable skills that can be utilised with other organisations.

In addition the venues that sport and activity took place in at the host organisations was not always ideally suited and the Programme Champions had to be able to amend sessions in order to ensure health and safety as well as participation was maintained. For some staff the liaison with numerous partners and the production of information booklets, action plans and sports policies was further professional development and were skills that they will be able to take with them to future projects. It is important not to underestimate the significance of the staff journey. Developing individuals was an important part of the initial CtG concept in that ‘traditional’ sports workers were not recruited. Instead CtG provided a unique training programme and sought to develop a real hybrid set of skills. The value and success of this approach was
demonstrated by the personal development of many of the staff and the variety of skills and experience they gained as a result of working on this project.

**Evaluation of why Hope Children’s Centre, CAFAG, YIP and NSREC did not reach successful outcomes**

Ultimately it was staff shortages and management changes that undermined the work carried out at Hope Children’s Centre, NSREC, CAFAG and Stanfields and Meir YIP and prevented a coherent project being established. The intervention at Hope Children’s Centre was carried through and significant efforts were made to establish several different sessions but women’s aerobics was the sole group to be successfully maintained. At several points in the intervention there was a lack of staff members for the Programme Champion to work with and senior staff did not sufficiently support the aims of the project. In contrast to the three other Children’s Centres and in particular the more successful Crescent and Treehouse Centres, the Community Development Worker did not help to embed physical exercise sessions into the provision. He did gain a CSLA qualification during the intervention period but failed to understand the ways that he could encourage families to exercise together or that work could be carried out to establish young parents as positive role models for their children. Dads’ football was the only activity that ran throughout the intervention at Hope Children’s Centre but numbers fluctuated significantly and even when there were a reasonable number of participants they were not all young dads. As a result the newly appointed Community Development Worker declined to take over the group at the end of the intervention period. As a result of his lack of cooperation in establishing the project and the absence of management support it was not possible to embed a culture of sport and physical activity at this Children’s Centre.

A draft action plan was written for CAFAG and a fun day carried out with sport and physical activity included but no other sessions were organised. In the case of CAFAG staff shortages at CtG also contributed to the ultimate failure to progress. When the initial Programme Champion, who had been working well with the group, left CtG shortly after the first links had been made CtG was not in a position to replace her for some time. The time lags between the initial stages meant there was no momentum to the project and, after reviewing all the planned projects, it was decided not to continue with this partnership. In the case of NSREC it was staff shortages at the host organisation that undermined initial progress. The significant period of time that the NSREC youth work team, who should have worked with CtG, was not available certainly did not help embed a sport and physical activity culture.

Although staff and management turnover also occurred at other more successful interventions, none have been subject to so many changes or to such a significant lack of staff identified to support a CtG project as at YIP.
Crucially as the work progressed Stanfields YIP was subject to reduced funding and existing staff pressures became acerbated. This led to a lack of staff available to CtG and the high turnover of senior staff meant implementing appropriate training was impossible. As a result, whilst existing staff lacked the necessary skills to develop sport and physical activity, CtG was unable to change the situation. The same pattern developed at Meir when CtG transferred work there in an attempt to maintain the intervention with a YIP organisation. Unfortunately the ongoing staff and budget limitations led to both Stanfields and Meir YIP closing.

With this in mind, it is, however, important to look at what else caused problems at Stanfields YIP. It was unfortunate that at the same time that there were delays in replacing the management, CtG staff started to reduce their attendance to every two to three weeks. This is in line with their policy of making sure that the partner organisation do not become overly reliant on CtG staff and starts to develop control over the intervention activities. As part of this process one member of staff was present from CtG as opposed to the two or three previously. This coincided with the staff problems and changes at the host organisation and it could be argued that, together, they contributed to having a negative impact on the project. With the benefit of hindsight, subsequent projects have shown that CtG need to retain a high profile and level of participation for a longer period of time in order to increase the chance of sustainability. It has become clear that partner organisations, however keen initially, often struggle to maintain the activities once CtG withdraw their staff. Whilst in this case CtG still attended every two to three weeks the decision may have contributed to the non completion of the partnership project.

The misunderstandings over how much time a Programme Champion would spend with the partner organisation and where they would be based was a central reason for the poorer relationship between CtG staff and these three partnership organisations. Senior staff had expected the Programme Champion to be based for three years at the partner organisation whilst the project was completed and were unhappy when CtG staff were moved back to the council building after a period of time. It was also never intended that a Programme Champion would work full time on a single project for three years but clearly communication of the way the interventions would be managed needed to be clearer in the first wave of projects. Weaknesses in the first Programme Champions and by the initial CtG Operational Manager were also responsible for misleading partner organisations about how much support they could expect.

In addition, as indeed was the case at several successful projects, staff at the host organisations were unhappy about how long it took for the action plan to be completed and activities to start after the initial research. This was partly because staff did not always understand the importance of the first stage research, partly to do with staffing problems at CtG and also because of a lack
of efficiency on the part of some of the early Programme Champions. When Programme Champions began to be located at the CtG offices rather than in the field and when they changed during an intervention this was interpreted as CtG reducing their level of service, even though in reality it actually improved the support provided. It is important to note that CtG staff and managers learnt from the problems encountered in these first projects and changed working practices to allow the successful completion of the vast majority of the interventions carried out.

Conclusions

Closing the Gap took place within the context of greater government support for a range of interventions expected to improve the health of the nation. It is evident from the data collected for the CtG baseline figures that all target groups had dramatic improvements in their participation rates between 2006 and 2009. It is not possible to argue that CtG was solely responsible for this, however it can be assumed that they contributed significantly. The CtG intervention targeted the “at risk” groups directly and worked with large numbers of staff and hard to reach young people. The intervention was focussed on establishing sustainable cultural change and facilitating greater sport and physical activity provision. Whilst many of the partner organisations were receptive to the CtG message as a result of government aims, they were not able to deliver services in this area due to a lack of knowledge and understanding about the ways that sport and physical activity could be used to meet the wider aims of their organisation and clients. After CtG interventions a new culture emerged, reflected in the comments by a senior staff member at NCYC:

“The involvement that we had with Closing the Gap has enriched the structure that we have in place for sports and physical activities. Through staff training and the Champions at each session, it has helped to introduce more of a variety to the activities that we previously planned or the clubs and groups, by helping staff members to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to maintain this. Closing the Gap has helped the Young Carers Department to source new venues for groups and helped us to re-look at the methods used to employ new staff and future project proposals. The Closing the Gap team have had a very positive impact on Young Carers and staff alike.”

By working with CtG, partner organisations were able to adapt their approach, access training and funding opportunities and incorporate sport and physical activity successfully. For example, CtG’s baseline data shows that, on average, females participate the same amount as males, which is in contrast to the national trend. CtG can take some credit for the equal participation rates due to the large numbers of females that are targeted through the partner
organisations, the level of skill team members have towards encouraging young females and offering a wide range of activities such as StreetDance and aerobics to suit their needs.

In most of the interventions it took some time for staff to recognise the benefits of sport and physical activity and the perseverance of the Programme Champion has been crucial to the successful completion of the projects. At all the successful interventions a new culture of physical activity was established and this was reflected in the staff’s increasing role in providing physical activities for their clients and also in their own involvement in more sport. Sustainability of some of the activities was evident from the final stage BBaCs and EFQMs and from the diaries and reports submitted by CtG coaching staff and Programme Champions.

The benefits of training volunteers, staff and young people was clear as it allowed partner organisations to run their own sessions and young people to develop leadership and organisational skills. Recognised qualifications were gained leading, in some cases, to volunteer and paid employment opportunities. The fact that staff and young people often participated together in training and other leisure sessions meant that relationships between the two groups improved:

“The ‘Using Sport as a Tool’ training helped young carers’ staff to gain the skills/knowledge and more importantly to lead a wider variety of sports activities at their clubs/group. This has been extremely beneficial because it has helped staff to build positive relationships with young carers and be a positive role model through their own participation. The training also helped the Department to recognise skills and experience that the team members have that could be utilised during sessions. Besides this, the training itself was enjoyed by all and was a wonderful day for team building.” (NSYC, Senior Staff Member)

It has proved important that CtG kept in contact with the partner organisations after formal intervention work was completed and that on-going support was given in areas of information and training opportunities. For their part the partner organisations must strive to gain leadership and ownership of activities established at their provision and remain committed to sustainability of services facilitated by CtG

“CtG came along two years ago and there has been a definite improvement in this area with regards to the social aspect; I mean people wanting to take part, people wanting to have a voice. We have got generations of mindsets to change in this part of Stoke ... and in Bentilee the people are quite hard to work with, but there has definitely been a change, an improvement. I think the
physical activity since (the Programme Champion has been here) over the last two years has improved the channels of communications with the community. He can do an aerobics session and start talking about something far more serious because they are relaxed, they’re having fun …” (Treehouse Children’s Centre Deputy Manager)

At the end of the intervention period the majority of staff and young people were enthusiastic about maintaining the use of sport and physical activity in their work because

- The inclusive and fun environment allows young people of all abilities and experience to participate, learning new skills;
- It’s an invaluable tool in creating positive relationships between staff, volunteers, young people and the wider community;
- It contributes to a feeling of community, particularly through the development of fun days and via the facilitation of teams made up of young people from the local area;
- It helps to increase confidence and self esteem and to translate this confidence to their lives as a whole;
- It has provided an avenue for staff to gain additional skills that can be used to benefit the young people they work with;
- It has allowed the development of new partnerships that can be used to increase the amount of provision for young people;
- CSLA and CSLA Tutor Training has enabled young people, volunteers and staff to develop transferable personal and professional skills;
- It develops young people’s knowledge about healthy lifestyles and their recognition that sport and physical activity can be fun;
- It develops physical and social skills in young people;
- It helps to improve participation rates for all family members and can encourage parents to exercise with their children;
- It provides an alternative avenue for young men to become involved in volunteer programmes;
- It helps to encourage socially isolation young people to leave their homes and attend available provision;
- It encourages interaction with the wider community and can develop independence;
- It provides an avenue for achievement, empowerment and self control over one aspect of the clients’ lives;
- Young people, staff and volunteers have expressed how much better they feel after becoming physically active and how participation helps them to manage their mental health difficulties;
- It can successfully challenge pre-conceptions about what the young people accessing the partner organisations can participate in and raises expectations of staff, volunteers, parents and young people;
• It helps organisations to work together, develop partnerships and share good practice and resources;
• It makes an organisation more attractive to referrals and helps to promote their work;
• It contributes to positive life choices being made by young mothers and workless households;
• It allows the discussion of wider aims and sensitive cultural issues to be discussed via the informal environment of sport;
• It illustrates strengths and weaknesses within an organisation and allows them to develop future policies, strategies and budgets to include sport and physical activity.

In conclusion significant improvements of participation amongst young people at risk of social exclusion in Stoke-on-Trent have been recorded in CtG research. In addition positive interaction between staff and young people has been achieved and anti-social behavior has been seen to decrease. Ensuring sustainability is essential if successful partnerships are to be achieved and, whilst CtG cannot take sole credit for the positive outcomes, the figures clearly illustrate that this intervention is a beneficial method to employ. Closing the Gap has evidently been a much needed and successful programme in Stoke-on-Trent. It was a unique approach taken by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and has established the Closing the Gap programme as an example of best practice for any organisation striving to achieve social inclusion through sport and physical activity.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICES WORKING WITH HARD TO REACH AND SOCIALLY EXCLUDED YOUNG PEOPLE

The analysis of data collected to evaluate the CtG interventions with partner organisations has highlighted some useful recommendations for other service providers in similar sectors. These should provide some guidance for similar projects:

1. That each project is treated as a separate case study and whilst good practice can be transferred it is not possible to generalise about the needs of young people. As a result the same intervention work cannot simply be reproduced and instead it is crucial that a Programme Champion works with staff, volunteers and young people to assess the particular needs of the clients at each organisation;

2. That sport and physical activity should be incorporated into the provision offered to children and young people that access support services and that it is considered as an effective tool where the quality of staff relationships with young people is important;

3. That the potential of sport and physical activity continues to be recognised and a variety of sessions are offered to encourage participation of all clients, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity;

4. It has been our experience that sport and physical activity sessions provide a relaxed environment where clients feel able to open up and discuss more serious issues. Talking in an informal setting can increase the trust between staff and service users and this level of engagement can improve the quality of the relationship between client and staff members;

5. It has been our experience that young peoples’ motivation to participate is closely linked to the quality of relationships that they have with the staff that work with them, as a result their motivation has grown considerably as the quality of these relationships has improved. Participation in sport & physical activity programmes has provided an excellent mechanism to help develop the strength of this relationship;

6. That appropriate crèche and childcare support is provided to allow young parents and teenage mothers to participate in more sport and physical activities;

7. That the importance of sport and physical activity arranged by the organisation itself is recognised as beneficial to widening participation. This is partly due to financial restrictions and also young people’s reluctance to go elsewhere without support;

8. That young people are more likely to access local facilities if support is offered by staff;

9. That young people should be empowered to participate in the planning of sport and physical activity programmes;
10. That staff and volunteers are given the opportunity to undergo relevant training in order to provide a range of activities and sustain a high quality of provision;

11. That staff training is focused on whenever a new sport or physical activity intervention is developed;

12. Hold regular meetings and provide consistent points of contact at all levels with individuals who are able to ensure the co-ordination of sport and physical activity interventions;

13. Make sure that systems are developed and utilised to ensure that all staff are both initially fully briefed about interventions and remain so throughout the whole process;

14. That partnerships are made with other local organisations working with difficult to reach young people, in order to reduce costs, share good practice and to improve participation opportunities for young people.
OBSERVATIONS OF INTEREST TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

1. Physical activity and sport can provide a relaxed environment in which a wide range of more serious topics can be discussed with clients and relationships between staff and clients strengthened.

2. To establish a culture of physical activity, as demonstrated in this paper, is a time consuming process. The CtG staff resources were crucial to this process and their continuing support, albeit on a more informal basis in most cases, is essential for the long term sustainability of the activities.

3. A consistent core team and the trust that can be developed between clients, staff, volunteers and the project workers is essential to developing the sport and physical activity programme.

4. It must be remembered at all times that sport and physical activity is a tool to achieving the wider objectives of the partner organisation and all sessions must be planned and evaluated accordingly. A ‘sport for sports sake’ approach is not appropriate and will not help the intervention to become embedded in the everyday work of the organisation.

5. Appropriate qualifications and experience for staff and volunteers are essential to maintain sustainability. Costs need to be kept to a minimum and activities publicised better to people in the local area, who may well start to access the venues through the attraction of sport and physical activity sessions.

6. Working to bring about significant cultural change can bring significant satisfaction to the staff leading the intervention programme and can extend their professional and personal skills. In particular, transferable skills and development of good practice can be used in future work with other organisations. In this way, the partnership can be a learning experience for all involved in the programme and can be a positive process for the organisation leading the intervention, as well as the one who is being supported.

7. Funding restrictions are recognised and partnerships with other local sports and physical activity facilities are essential if good practice and resources are to be fully utilised in this sector of provision.

8. Not all local authorities have an identified generic Sports Development Officer, however, it is recognised that this resource would only add to any intervention programme and would allow the steps taken to be further extended once the intervention has been completed.
### Appendix A  Partner organisations and dates of the intervention projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host organisation</th>
<th>Date intervention started</th>
<th>Date intervention ended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Care Residential Units for Looked After Children and Young People - Pilot Project</td>
<td>May 2005</td>
<td>December 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of Stadium Communities</td>
<td>January 2006</td>
<td>July 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treehouse Children’s Centre</td>
<td>May 2006</td>
<td>January 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compendium Housing Association and the Regeneration Project in Coalville</td>
<td>May 2006</td>
<td>November 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Staffs Young Carers</td>
<td>October 2006</td>
<td>March 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsland Children’s Centre</td>
<td>October 2006</td>
<td>December 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Children’s Centre</td>
<td>October 2006</td>
<td>February 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackfriars Day Centre</td>
<td>November 2006</td>
<td>January 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hope Children’s Centre</td>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>May 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Family Support Unit</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>November 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nacro Services</td>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>August 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundwork Stoke</td>
<td>September 2008</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>November 2008</td>
<td>November 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chell Area Family Action Group, Stanfields and Meir Youth Inclusion Project and North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council</td>
<td>All started May 2006</td>
<td>Not completed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B   All the partner organisations CtG has worked with

1. Staffordshire University Students Union
2. Youth Offending Services
3. Shelton Day Centre
4. Riverside Training (Adult Social Care)
5. Treehouse Children’s Centre
6. Crescent Children’s Centre
7. Kingslands Children’s Centre
8. Blackfriars Day Centre
9. Integrated Family Support Unit
10. Brighter Futures
11. Further Options
12. Project Management
13. Bucknall Police
14. Tunstall Police
15. Bucknall Early Intervention Team
16. Stokes Young Peoples Team (leaving care)
17. Changes YP
18. Unity
19. Nacro
20. Groundwork
21. Coalville Residents Association (Compendium)
22. Hope Children’s Centre
23. Swann Bank Methodist Church
24. Youth Services (disability work)
25. North Staffordshire Young Carers
26. Wallace Sport and Education Centre
27. North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council
28. Federation of Stadium Communities –Port Vale Initiative
29. Norsaca
30. Galaxy
31. Newford Residents Association
32. Hanley YMCA
33. Young Peoples Social Care - residential units
34. Crossroads
35. Stansfield & Meir Youth Inclusion Project
36. Queensberry Youth Club
37. CAFAG

Evaluations done.
Incomplete
Partnerships not projects
Projects not ready for evaluation when this report was written
Appendix C  Profile for each organisation included in this evaluation report, listed alphabetically.

Please note that this information was correct when the original evaluation was carried out. As a result profiles and aims are included for organisations that subsequently folded, such as CAFAG, NSREC and Stanfields and Meir YIP.

Background to Blackfriars Day Centre and its aims

The centre is based in Bucknall in Stoke-on-Trent and is predominantly for physically disabled young adults and those with moderate learning difficulties aged 18-25. The aim of the centre is to improve their life skills, increase their community awareness and enhance independent living skills. Developing the client’s confidence and self-esteem is central to the centre’s aims, in order to facilitate the young people’s transition into the wider community. As part of this work, help is provided with the young people’s career prospects as well as caring for their personal needs. The centre’s primary aim is to support the transition from education to adult services.

Blackfriars Day Centre can cater for 20 young people a day and each client has a specific care plan, which is developed by the Day Centre manager along with the client, parents and social workers. A number of activities are provided via a structured day, including hydrotherapy/swimming, physiotherapy and multi gym work, recreational and educational use of computers, art and craft, sewing, health and beauty, access to books, woodwork, gardening and games. There is also a sensory room and quiet room. In addition the Centre offers links to the wider community and outside agencies, including, since the intervention by Closing the Gap, the use of the Wallace Centre for sports and physical activities. The Centre is client centred, in that the young people are encouraged to discuss their needs with the staff and request activities that they are interested in doing.

Background to Changes and its aims

Changes provides an opportunity for those suffering from mental distress to move from isolation, withdrawal and dependency to becoming active and contributing members of their immediate and wider community. The organisation is led by volunteers and is based on a mentor system. Changes YP offers support to young people aged between 13 – 25 years of age and can help with any issues that impact on mental well-being, whether it be exam stress, bullying, depression, family issues or drug use. Young people who have benefited from the service are encouraged to train as volunteers and support young people experiencing mental health problems. Changes Young People offer support meetings as well as social events to help increase self esteem and act as a supportive, social network. As stated on its website, Changes
works to a 12 step programme, based on a traditional 12 step philosophy, encompassing up-to-date self-help techniques and members' own knowledge and experience. The Executive Committee is open to all members over the age of 18 and Changes YP is a user led, young person focused and demographic organisation. There is a project lead for each strand of Changes, including Changes Young People, which was the section that CtG were working with. The project leaders are supported by a specially trained volunteer coordinator and are there simply to facilitate the members' meetings. 

Background to Children’s Centres and their aims

Although in 2007 the Labour Government underlined its commitment to have a Centre in every community by 2010, the first phase of Children’s Centres were mostly established in the 20% most disadvantaged wards in England. Local Authorities have strategic responsibility for the Children’s Centres, which aim to build on existing good practice to tackle child poverty and social exclusion. As such, they provide a multi-agency provision of flexible and integrated services to support children under five and their families. In particular their goals are concerned with providing early learning; affordable, flexible care for children from birth; family support; health services; outreach services to children and families not attending the Centres and support for access to training and employment advice. The Labour Government hoped that providing quality, integrated health, education, care and family support services would not only improve the future chances of the individual families but also the wider community in which the Centres are based. In January 2008 the Labour Government published a £372 million strategy, Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross – Government Strategy for England, which aimed to help everyone to lead healthier lives. Concern about obesity was central to this document as was the recognition that the early years, food and schools, sport and physical activity, planning, transport and the health service all have their part to play in creating a healthy society. Identifying at risk families early and making physical activity part of everyone’s lifestyle choices were viewed as essential practices to be developed. As part of their remit, Sure Start Children’s Centres have been charged with tackling obesity by providing information on diet and nutrition, organising physical activity and active play and promoting breastfeeding.

In a reflection of the national aims for such provision, Children’s Centres work with local families, a significant proportion of who are young parents. In particular they are charged with tackling issues such as obesity, social isolation and educational and training weaknesses. National guidelines for Children’s Centres state they should have a partnership Board that is 50% parents and 50% professionals. It is the parents who drive the Centre’s provision, prioritising services and suggesting which initiatives are to be introduced. The requirements of Every Child Matters and the Sure Start Practice Guide are central to the services that are provided, as is the work that they have undertaken in order to gain health promotion accreditation.
Background to the role of Chell Area Family Action Group (CAFAG)

CAFAG was a registered charity and limited company by guarantee established in 1998. It was located within the Chell area, based at Whitfield Valley Centre, alongside a doctor’s surgery. The organisation hosted a variety of services to the local area of which Chell, Fegg Hayes, Packmoor, Norton, and Bradeley provided the main geographical focus. One of the services offered was a gym, used by a wide age range across the neighbourhood including the young people that were in Closing the Gap’s target group.

Background to the Coalville housing estate and Compendium’s Role

“Coalville,” as the estate is locally known, is a large estate situated on the outskirts of Weston Coyney, where the residents rely heavily on public transport. After the Coal Board sold off the houses, almost 30% of the residents bought their homes and the rest were acquired by absent private landlords. In March 2007 the Government agency, Renew North Staffordshire, began work to regenerate the area, subsequently to be known as Weston Heights. The project was run by residential development company, Compendium, who were charged with replacing the old housing stock with 278 new homes.

In the mid 1980’s the concrete used in the construction of the properties was found to be defective. This rendered the houses “unmortgageable”. As a consequence means tested grants were made available to owner occupiers to meet the costs required to return the properties to a mortgageable standard. However, approximately 256 were sold largely to private investors which resulted in the ill-management of some tenancies. In the 1990’s residents became concerned over the declining quality and image of the estate and the detrimental effect this was having on the housing market. As a result the Coalville Partnership was formed which consisted of The Coalville Resident's Association, Renew North Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Riverside Housing and The Compendium Group. The estate was targeted for drastic regeneration and remodeling.

A Community Development Worker began the process of building up community capacity on the estate and through this the Coalville Partnership hoped to supply the long term sustainability of physical development on the estate. This led to the securing of £140,000 for a brand new play area and protected green space, whilst the community also received funds to develop a youth club. Throughout the intervention period by CtG, and indeed afterwards, a Regeneration Officer continued to communicate with residents to ensure they felt able to participate in the regeneration process. In addition to Compendium, the Resident’s Association is central to the organisation of activities for local people. Their constitution includes the objective ‘To arrange events and activities for the benefit of residents living in the Coalville estate’.
Background to the role of Federation Stadium Communities (FSC) and its aims

The Federation of Stadium Communities was founded in 1991 by delegates of various inner city groups and resident’s associations around the UK in order to improve the lives of the communities that live near to sports stadia. As stated on the FSC’s webpage, “The majority of professional sport stadia are located in areas of deprivation, characterised by low skills and training, poor access to services, poor health, high disability, crime, a poor environment and significant or high, minority ethnic populations”. Receiving funding from the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit and The Community Fund, the FSC aims to provide information and advice to voluntary organisations and community groups in order to improve their effectiveness and share good practice. It is hoped that strong relationships will be developed between community and club so that all benefit, as reflected in the FSC’s mission statement, which is to improve the quality of life of all population groups in stadium neighbourhoods. Problems can range from traffic congestion, parking, noise, litter, glare from lights and racist and anti-social behaviour. The Federation notes that the facilities at stadiums can include meeting rooms, community halls, office and retail space, IT suites, restaurants, fitness centres and after school study groups, all of which can be opened up to benefit the local community by supporting health and well being, education and employment initiatives. Although the FSC does not focus on any one section of the population to the exclusion of others, in 2008 it launched a programme in partnership with the Men’s Health Forum aimed at reaching men who are reluctant to discuss their health. It is hoped that by developing ‘Healthy Stadia’ clubs can help to tackle social exclusion, poor health and reach hard to engage groups. As part of this work, communities should be able to have a better understanding of what it means to enjoy healthier lifestyles whether they are using the ground to play or watch sport(23).

In summary, the objectives of FSC are as follows:

- To ensure that the interests of all the population groups are promptly taken into account, and positively engaged when plans and programmes for sports stadia are made.
- To encourage and assist the formation of constructive partnerships (liaison groups) between sports clubs, local communities, local authorities and other parties.
- To identify and develop ways in which clubs can help to address social, educational and economic disadvantage in their immediate neighbourhood.
- To devise initiatives that can bring mutual benefit to clubs and local communities.
- To identify and develop initiatives to alleviate match day problems.
- To research, identify and promote good practice, nationally and internationally.
• To provide support and information for sports stadia neighbourhoods, mentoring individuals to have their voices heard.
• To promote equal opportunities at all times.

Vale Park Initiative, later known as Vale Park Community Initiative (VPCI), was founded in 2005 and funded by Coalfields Regeneration Trust, The Big Lottery and The Co-operative Foundation. In a similar way to the Federation of Stadium Communities, its focus is on improving the lives of people living within the neighbourhoods around the football ground. VPCI’s aim is to use the “power of sport to tackle inequalities in health, education and employment for all populations groups”. The VPCI states that it has been successful in reaching its aim by working with the club, Primary Care Trust and other local agencies (one of which is CtG). Schemes that the initiative is involved with include an oral history project, a partnership with Port Vale Football in the Community (known as FiTC or FiC) and Staffordshire Connexions to deliver two courser for young people within the Not in Education, Employment or Training category, healthy walks projects, a graffiti project, Valiants Against Racism Community Cohesion football tournaments, anti-racism theatre projects, community cycle rides (in conjunction with the City Council) and the development of a volunteer scheme in partnership with CtG. They have also organised a Port Vale Open Day for the local area and set up a PVFC player ambassador scheme (24).

Background to Groundwork and its aims

Groundwork Stoke and Staffordshire was formed in 1995 and is part of a national environmental regeneration charity making sustainable development a reality in communities which are in need of investment and support. It is a skilled organisation dedicated to the regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire and, in line with Groundwork UK, their projects embrace six themes:

• Community which aims at building stronger neighbourhoods
• Education which aims at learning, citizenship and sustainability
• Employment which aims at training for work and stimulating enterprise
• Land which aims at training for work and stimulating enterprise
• Land which aims at re-connecting people with their surroundings
• Business which aims at integrating the economy and the environment
• Youth which aims at realising young people’s potential

In addition to their work to make local people access green spaces and community leisure facilities, Groundwork have developed partnerships that have provided sporting opportunities. For example, tennis courses were arranged in February 2008 which also allowed some of the youngsters to work towards the Community Sports Leader Award. Coaching in football, basketball and general fitness was also provided. Such work reflected the Chief Executive’s belief that sport is not just about providing young people with
somewhere to go but can also help with confidence and a sense of belonging to the community[25]. In March 2009 Groundwork UK offered a job coordinating volunteers for the area of sport. The ‘Sporting Chances’ programme, funded by the Football Foundation, enables young people across Coventry to train as volunteer sports coaches in their local neighbourhoods.

The value of sport is recognised by Groundwork UK as a useful part of their work with young people who display challenging behaviour, are at risk of offending and drug use/use and are not in education, employment or training. At Groundwork Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, CtG worked mainly with the youth section, which works with young people aged between 7-18 who are not attending school. The youth sector is a small team made up of youth workers, a learning support worker and a team leader. There are about 60 young people on average who are in contact or connected to Groundwork UK although the number can vary greatly. Groundwork’s youth projects help young people take a more active role in the area where they live and encourages them to take greater responsibility for their own environment. One project they run is ‘Securing a Future for Everyone’ (S.A.F.E.) that engages key stage four pupils in capacity building, basic skills and life skills. This is a term time programme that runs two and half days a week of which one day is spent doing outdoor activities such as orienteering or gardening and the rest of the time is spent doing practical activities at Groundwork like team building, group work, sports and accredited learning[26].

Background to the Integrated Family Support Unit (IFSU) and their aims

The Integrated Family Support Unit (IFSU) is a city wide Stoke-on-Trent City Council service aimed at “making dysfunctional families functional”. The teams are split across four clusters, each of which has a manager and three workers. There is also a team leader for all the team workers, which enables good practice to be transferred across the service and regular team meetings within each Cluster. The staff deal with young people aged 19 and under and their families. Their specific aims and objectives are to build relationships with children and families, help teach the children to control their anger and emotions and to help them achieve and attain.

The young people in contact with the IFSU exhibit behavioural problems at school or the school has concerns about the young person for various reasons. Schools refer the children to the unit and the extent of the referral and support required is accessed on an individual basis by the Support Worker. The extent of the problems a child possesses is not fully established until an IFSU worker is assigned to visit their family at home. Once the Support Worker is familiar with the family and has built a rapport with them they can then determine what action is best to suit that families needs.
Working in partnership with local schools and Westfield Children's Centre the Integrated Family Support Workers aim to provide supported education for young people excluded from school and to work towards their re-integration. Their role is to provide help with education and social issues that affect young people and their families.

Background to Nacro and its aims

Nacro Services is a national organisational charity, which is led by a Board of Directors. As part of this organisation, the Nacro training centre in Longton works with young people aged 14 -19 who are not in touch with education, training or employment and aims to aid and assist them to obtain qualifications that can lead to employment. At the start of the intervention the organisation helped twenty-five 16 -19 year olds who attended the centre for 16 hours, fifteen young people who were full time and forty part time excluded 14 -16 year olds. The 14 -16 year olds who were excluded on a full time basis attended for 25 hours a week and the part time 14 -16 year olds attended between one and three days a week. Decision making is dependent on the centre but if costs are involved they need to be run by the area manager or, in the case of budgets of £250 or more, by more senior managers. The services provided by each centre is based on what young people want and they are asked to communicate this with staff. There is no national requirement to do sport although some centres choose to if the young people have expressed an interest. Nationally, Nacro has strong links with the youth offending team and is also working with the Football Foundation to try and engage young people in sport and physical activity, although no such projects were being undertaken at Longton. Prior to the intervention beginning Nacro stated that they were particularly interested in working with CtG because although they had introduced a limited amount of football with the young people they worked with, staff recognised that the enthusiasm the young people showed could be harnessed better and sport should be an integral part of their work. In addition they wanted the young people to gain qualifications and training in sport, in order to strengthen their CVs and career options.

Background to the role of North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council (NSREC)

North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council was a diverse voluntary sector organisation. They performed many different roles and through this supported the local Black Minority Ethnic (BME) community. They had a high success rate in the work that they carried out. Closing the Gap aimed to work in partnership with NSREC to promote the benefits of sport and physical activity within the BME community, and to encourage the organisation to use physical activity, where appropriate in its work.

At the start of the intervention, they had a detached youth work team that were in training. Their aim was to offer support across the city to BME young people
who the Council’s Youth Service had been unable to reach. The discrimination team offered advocacy and support to BME people through the rigorous law process, and looked to tackle discrimination in the courts and legal system. There was also a health and social care team that promoted health benefits to the local community, which was mainly aimed at the adult and elderly population. Further support was provided by the training team who offered a comprehensive, yet flexible, training package to corporations and businesses to accommodate the needs of the organisation. The PARINS team co-ordinator was based at Equality House and worked in close partnership with other members of the PARINS team including the Citizens Advice Bureau to improve the experience of reporting incidents by people who have faced racism and discrimination. Due to a restructuring of racial equality services the NSREC was closed.

Background to work undertaken with Social Care Units

Just previous to and whilst CtG were working with the residential care units, Social Care (now called Social Care) underwent dramatic reconfiguration. This was as a direct result of feedback received from inspections, in particular the 2006 Joint Area Review (JAR) (27). This process of reconfiguration provides the backdrop to and a significant influence on the success of the interventions made by CtG.

The July 2000 report from the Department of Health’s Social Care Inspectorate (28) undertook a thorough assessment of social care services in Stoke-on-Trent. Whilst this report’s comments are now somewhat dated, in light of the findings of the 2006 Joint Area Review (discussed below), they are still informative. Some of the most interesting observations included:

“We were concerned that staff did not routinely comply with current policies and procedures and that line managers did not oversee the quality consistently enough” (page 3 paragraph 1.13)

“Stoke-on-Trent had many long serving, committed and motivated staff. The majority of them reported that training was not readily available. Key workers responses to our survey indicated that a significant number had not received training in the past three years in what should be core areas of their work” (page 4, paragraph 1.17)

The February 2006 Joint Area Review considered all services for children and young people within the city and along with a small number of other areas gave special attention to looked after children and social care provision for children. This report identified that:

“Safeguarding arrangements, primarily the council’s children’s social care and the work of the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) are particularly poor in serving vulnerable children including those currently
living in unsafe and unstable environments and those at greatest risk.”
(page 6, paragraph 13)

“There are serious weaknesses in the capacity to improve within the
council’s children’s social care services”
(page 9, paragraph 22)

“Service management within the council is variable. There are good
services in education, but serious capacity and practice problems in
social care result in inadequate provision, putting the most vulnerable
children at risk, these issues have recently been fully recognised and
senior managers are now beginning to address them.”
(page 9, paragraph 22)

Addressing the weaknesses in capacity in children's social care was one of the
reports key recommendations.

Another major issue in the residential units was that, in part as a result of low
moral arising from the inspections identified above, there was a very high level
of staff turnover. During the period that CtG worked with the residential units
this resulted in most units having several different registered managers,
deputies and senior workers. Additionally extensive use of agency staff and
significant movement of other staff between units was noted during this period.
This situation clearly had a significant impact on the work undertaken by CtG.

As well as the work facilitated by CtG, Social Care independently made
significant efforts to improve the quality of residential services during the period
whilst working with CtG. Key developments during this period included:

- The introduction of several small group homes which provided young
  people with a more family like residential care environment.
- The closing of one of the four residential care units and its conversion to
  ‘Positive Steps’ a facility that works with young people in care, at risk of
  entering the care system and their families with a view to preventing
  young people entering care or assisting them to return home.
- The provision of an extensive training programme for residential social
  workers which focused on enhancing the quality of care provided.
- A fundamental review of staff rotas for residential social workers.

Background to the role of Stanfields and Meir Youth Inclusion Project (YIP)

Stanfields YIP based in Haywood Road, was started in 2000 and was managed
by Crime Concern, a charity funded initially by a three year grant from the
Youth Justice Board, Children’s Fund, Single Regeneration Budget and
Connexions. The scheme was widened to Meir in 2005. The project’s aim was
to try and cut anti-social behaviour, truancy and exclusion. It had partnerships
with local schools, Police, Youth Service, Local Education Authority, Youth
Team, Connexions, Social Services and Resident’s Association. Specifically
the project was aimed at young people between 8 and 17 years old who were
thought to be at risk of offending, truancy or social exclusion. Young people stayed with the project for varying times but some were involved for up to four years. They were referred by agencies such as school, families or police and a multi-agency approach was employed to assess each referral. Staff members visited each young person that became involved in YIP and encouraged them to attend, although it was completely voluntary.

As well as providing diversionary activities in order to try and keep young people off the streets and out of trouble, the work was also centred on education and long term behavioural change. Many of the projects were run by NACRO, a crime reducing charity. A wide range of activities was provided for the Junior YIP (8-12 years old) and Senior section (13 -16 years old) including sport, art and fund-raising, workshops about drugs, alcohol and sexual health and excursions. By December 2008, it was reported to have been a great success but required £130,000 to cover costs annually and was struggling to survive after Stoke-on-Trent City Council was told it could no longer use central government funding(29). This organisation did start again but as a community group without regional backing from NACRO.
Appendix D

Demographic Profile of Stoke-on-Trent

The following data is drawn from several sources. Where the source is not explicitly identified it has been drawn from 2001 census data from the Office of National Statistics.

Population and demography

- There were 240,636 people living in 103,196 households in Stoke-on-Trent making the city the 44th largest local authority area, by population, out of 376 across England and Wales.
- There were 25.8 persons per hectare across the city making it the 63rd most densely populated local authority area in England and Wales.
- Average household size was 2.33 persons compared with 2.45 across the West Midlands and 2.40 in England and Wales.
- The age profile is not much different to the regional and national profiles:

Household Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City of Stoke-on-Trent</th>
<th>West Midlands</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% lone parent households</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% single person households</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% married couple households</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Country of Birth

- 96.3% of the population were born in the UK compared to 91.1% across England and Wales.

Ethnicity

- 94.8% described themselves as White compared with 90.9% across England.
- 2.6% described themselves as Pakistani compared with 1.4% across England.
- 0.5% described themselves as Indian compared with 2.1% across England.

Accommodation type
% / (Rank out of 376) | City of Stoke-on-Trent | West Midlands | England and Wales
--- | --- | --- | ---
Terraced | 32.2% / (77th) | 23.9% | 26.0%
Semi Detached | 45.3% / (16th) | 37.7% | 31.6%
Detached | 13.3% / (304th) | 23.8% | 22.8%

**Tenure**

- There were 4,861 vacant household spaces in Stoke-on-Trent. This equated to 4.5% of all properties, compared to 3.1% across the West Midlands, and 3.2% across England and Wales. This was the 41st highest vacancy rate observed across England and Wales.

| % / (Rank out of 376) | City of Stoke-on-Trent | West Midlands | England and Wales
--- | --- | --- | ---
Owner-occupiers | 65.2% / (312th) | 69.6% | 68.9%
Local Authority rented | 19.5% / (55th) | 14.3% | 13.2%
Housing Assoc. rented | 5.0% / (161st) | 6.3% | 6.0%
Private rented | 6.7% / (222nd) | 6.4% | 6.7%

**Household Amenities**

- 5.6% of households were overcrowded compared with 7.0% across England and Wales.
- The average number of rooms per household was 5.03 compared with 5.34 across England and Wales.
- 9.3% of households were without central heating compared to 8.5% across England and Wales.

**Car Ownership**

| % / (Rank out of 376) | City of Stoke on Trent | West Midlands | England and Wales
--- | --- | --- | ---
Households without a car | 34.6% / (44th) | 26.8% | 26.8%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% / (Rank out of 376)</th>
<th>City of Stoke on Trent</th>
<th>West Midlands</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households with two or more cars</td>
<td>20.2% / (333&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cars / 1000 households</td>
<td>901 / (333&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>1105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Travel to Work**

- 9.9% of those working go to work by bus compared to 7.4% across England and Wales, 67.8% go to work by car/van (*), either as a driver or passenger, compared to 61.5% across England and Wales and a further 11.7% walk (10.0% England and Wales).
- (*) – The 150th highest rate of the 376 local authority areas in England and Wales.
- Only 6.2% of people in Stoke-on-Trent work mainly from home (England and Wales 9.2%).

**Industry**

Of all people in employment aged 16-74 Occupation / Socio-Economic classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% / (Rank out of 376)</th>
<th>City of Stoke on Trent</th>
<th>West Midlands</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>27.7% / (8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>7.3% / (150&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and Retail</td>
<td>18.4% / (88&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage and Communication</td>
<td>6.5% / (168&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Real estate</td>
<td>9.8% / (348&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Admin, Education and Health</td>
<td>21.0% / (336&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Economic Activity

Of all persons aged 16-74

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% / (Rank out of 376)</th>
<th>City of Stoke on Trent</th>
<th>West Midlands</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>54.5% / (342&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4.0% / (70&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>14.0% / (204&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after home / family</td>
<td>6.3% / (196&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently sick / disabled</td>
<td>9.6% / (26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% / (Rank out of 376)</th>
<th>City of Stoke on Trent</th>
<th>West Midlands</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional / managerial occupations</td>
<td>15.5% / (374&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-routine occupations</td>
<td>14.1% / (33&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine occupations</td>
<td>16.6% / (2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education and Qualifications

Of all people aged 16-74: 42.9% have no qualifications compared with 29.1% across England and Wales. This is the 6th highest rate of people without any qualifications across England and Wales.

9.9% have degree level qualifications or higher compared with 19.8% across England and Wales. This is the 10th lowest rate of people with degree level

Health

2001 Census data for Stoke-on-Trent identified that:
• 57,522 people, 23.9% of the total had a limiting long-term illness - the 26th highest rate in England and Wales.
• Of the working age population: 19.4% had a limiting long-term illness, compared with 13.6% across England and Wales.
• 12.8% described their health as 'not good' compared with 9.2% across England and Wales – the 23rd highest rate in England and Wales.
• 26,870 people provide unpaid care (11.2% of the total resident population against 10.0% across England and Wales).
• 40% of people providing unpaid care do so for more than 20 hours per week compared to 31.9% across England and Wales.
Appendix E

Site Reference
(Do not complete)

Staff Survey

Please complete the following five short questions as fully as possible. This process will then allow us to understand the context in which both you and the young people you work with currently experience sport & physical activity.

All responses are anonymous and will only be used for the purposes of the Closing the Gap programme

1. What do you think about sport and physical activity and why?

2. Are there any barriers currently limiting your involvement in sport and physical activity?
3. Do you think sport and physical activity can play a role in achieving your day to day work objectives?

4. What currently limits your ability to use sport and physical activity as part of your day today work?

5. In your opinion what could be done to reduce these barriers?
## Appendix F

**EFQM Based Questionnaire: Organisational Assessment**  
**Key:** Sport* = sport and active recreation

### 1. Leadership

1a. Project workers interact with YOUNG PEOPLE about sport*  
1b. Management structure promotes a culture of engaging YOUNG PEOPLE in sport*  
1c. Management structure identifies and champions organisational change

### 2. Policy and Strategy

2a. Policy and strategy are in places that are aimed at engaging YOUNG PEOPLE in sport*  
2b. Policy and strategy are based on information from research, learning and external activities regarding YOUNG PEOPLE and sport*  
2c. Policy and strategy regarding YOUNG PEOPLE and sport*, are developed, reviewed and updated  
2d. Policies and strategies (relating to the above) are communicated and deployed through a framework of key processes  
2e. Ownership of policies and strategies (relating to the above) are clear and defined

### 3. People

3a. People resources are planned, managed and improved toward engaging YOUNG PEOPLE in sport*  
3b. People’s knowledge and competencies (regarding YOUNG PEOPLE and sport*) are identified, developed and sustained  
3c. People are involved in policies and strategies, and there delivery, regarding YOUNG PEOPLE and sport*  
3d. People and the organisation communicate these policies and strategies  
3e. YP involvement as volunteers  
3f. No of volunteers involved in facilitating sport *

### 4. Partnerships and Resources

4a. External partnerships are managed to increase the participation of YOUNG PEOPLE in sport*
5. Processes

5a. Processes are systematically designed and managed to increase the participation of YOUNG PEOPLE in sport*

5b. Processes are improved, as needed, to increase the participation of YOUNG PEOPLE in sport*

5c. Processes are designed and developed based on YP needs and expectations

5d. Processes are evaluated and improved as needed

6. Customer Results

6a. YP perceptions toward sport* are measured

6b. YOUNG PEOPLE show positive results engaging in sport*

6c. Young people are involved in shaping provision

7. Society Results

7a. Society, (YOUNG PEOPLE families, support workers etc) perceptions are being measured

7b. YP representative perceptions are being measured

7c. Society results are showing positive trends

8. Key performance Results

8a. Key performance outcomes are defined in regard to YOUNG PEOPLE and sport*

8b. KPIs are monitored, evaluated and inform policy development

9. Problem Identification

9a. Young people are informed that lack of physical activity is a problem

9b. Young people are offered sport* based solutions (to address physical activity)
### Appendix G  Common barriers to participation identified from the EFQM and BBaC research, prior to CtG interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier to participation identified</th>
<th>Partner Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of policies and strategies</td>
<td>Blackfriars, Changes YP, Compendium, IFSU, FSU, Groundwork, Hope, Crescent, Treehouse and Kingsland Children’s Centres, Nacro, NYSC, CAFAG, Stanfields and Meir YIP, NSREC, SCRU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff / volunteers: lack of time, due to family and/or work commitments</td>
<td>Blackfriars, IFSU, Groundwork, Crescent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/ volunteers: lack of qualifications and confidence</td>
<td>Blackfriars Day Centre, Changes YP, YIP, Compendium, IFSU, FSU, Groundwork, Kingsland, Nacro, NYSC, CAFAG, NSREC, Crescent, Treehouse, SCRU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff: knowledge about local facilities &amp; /or about sport and physical activity</td>
<td>IFSU, Nacro, NYSC, CAFAG, YIP NSREC, Crescent,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/ volunteers: cost</td>
<td>Changes YP, IFSU, Nacro, NYSC, Treehouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of facilities at the partner organisation</td>
<td>Blackfriars, Compendium, Kingsland, Nacro, YIP, NYSC, Crescent,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People: cost</td>
<td>Blackfriars, Changes YP, Compendium, IFSU, YIP, FSU, Groundwork, Hope, Kingsland, Nacro, NYSC, Crescent, Treehouse, SCRU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People: transport</td>
<td>Blackfriars, Compendium, FSU, Kingsland, NYSC, YIP, Crescent, Treehouse, SCRU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People: lack of knowledge about local facilities &amp; / or sport and physical activity</td>
<td>Blackfriars, FSU, Groundwork, Hope, Nacro, YIP CAFAG, NSREC, Crescent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People: lack of parental, peers / significant other’s support</td>
<td>Blackfriars, IFSU, FSU, Kingsland, Nacro, NYSC, YIP,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People: confidence</td>
<td>Changes YP, Groundwork, NYSC, Crescent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People: lack of time, often due to family responsibilities</td>
<td>FSU, Kingsland, NYSC, YIP, Crescent, Treehouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People: low motivation</td>
<td>Hope, IFSU, Nacro, NYSC, SCRU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People: bullying / intimidation by other young people</td>
<td>FSU, Groundwork, YIP, Crescent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix H  Interventions carried out at the partner organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention carried out by CtG</th>
<th>Partner Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dads' football(^1)</td>
<td>Treehouse, Crescent, Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football sessions(^2)</td>
<td>Treehouse, IFSU, Nacro, FSC, YIP, Compendium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football sessions for girls</td>
<td>FSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi sport(^3) activities for young people (including taster sessions)</td>
<td>Treehouse, Crescent, Groundwork, Kingsland, Blackfriars, IFSU, Changes, Groundwork, Compendium, NSYC, Nacro, SCRU, FSC, YIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance for young people</td>
<td>Changes, NSREC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent and child activity groups</td>
<td>Treehouse, Crescent, Hope, NSREC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobics for young people</td>
<td>Crescent, Kingsland, Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym sessions</td>
<td>Kingsland, Changes, SCRU,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking Sessions</td>
<td>Kingsland, Changes, Crescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with StreetGames</td>
<td>Groundwork, FSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with StreetDance(^4)</td>
<td>Crescent, Kingsland, IFSU, Changes, Groundwork, Nacro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People training and achievement accreditation(^5)</td>
<td>Changes, IFSU, Groundwork, NSYC, Nacro, FSC, NSREC, Treehouse, Crescent, Blackfriars, Changes, Compendium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff activities(^6)</td>
<td>Treehouse, Kingsland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff &amp; volunteer training(^7)</td>
<td>NSREC, Treehouse, SCRU, IFSU,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^1\) Football at Hope Children’s Centre was organised as a dads’ football group but became a session for young men in general.

\(^2\) Whilst many of these sessions were open to males and females, in reality few girls joined the group.

\(^3\) Multi sport sessions differed from venue to venue and detail of each intervention can be found in the individual reports written for each organisation. However, they included cricket, basketball, football, badminton, kwik cricket, dodgeball, tennis, rounders, athletics, indoor bowls, various forms of tag, obstacle courses, relays, handball, netball, parachute games, boules, a range of physical games, drills, dance, table tennis, ten pin bowling, circuits, basketball & shuttle runs.

\(^4\) The StreetDance sessions at SCRU were Street Jazz.

\(^5\) Young people were involved in CSLA courses, Football Coaching Awards, First Aid courses and a range of awards from the Stoke Be Healthy programme, run by Stoke City Council. At NSREC the CSLA undertaken was an amended dance CSLA.

\(^6\) Staff activities differed but they included netball, step aerobics, aerobics, and gym sessions.

\(^7\) Staff training sessions were usually CSLA Level 1 and 2 courses & CSLA Tutor courses. In addition, some staff achieved Football Coaching Awards and, at Changes, a Dance CSLA. At NSYC, staff took part in a ‘Sport as a Tool for Working with Young People’ and ‘Introduction to Sport’ courses. SCRU staff also carried out the latter of these two. With the exception of the FA courses, all sessions were run by CtG. At YIP, a staff CSLA was organised but did not happen due to the intervention ending.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of Volunteers</td>
<td>YIP, Blackfriars, IFSU, FSC, Nacro, Compendium, Groundwork, Crescent, Treehouse, Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Days, Open Days &amp; Sports Festivals</td>
<td>Treehouse, Crescent, Kingsland, IFSU, Compendium, NSYC, CAFAG, YIP, NSREC, Nacro, Groundwork, Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energise Cards(^8) / reduced costs negotiated</td>
<td>Kingsland, Nacro, NSREC, Changes, Groundwork, NSYC, Treehouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Directories and Sports Packs (information on facilities and leading CLSA courses)</td>
<td>Blackfriars, IFSU, SCRU, Changes, Nacro, Crescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebration Days</td>
<td>Blackfriars, SCRU, IFSU, Groundwork, NSYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of teams in local competitions and sports festivals</td>
<td>Changes, Crescent, Treehouse, Hope, SCRU, IFSU, Nacro, Crescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CtG support with funding bids</td>
<td>Blackfriars, Changes, NSREC, Hope, Groundwork, Compendium, Crescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of volunteers</td>
<td>IFSU, Blackfriars Day Centre, Changes, Groundwork, Compendium,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Plan(^9)</td>
<td>YIP, CAFAG, NSREC, SCRU, IFSU, Groundwork, Treehouse, Blackfriars, Changes, FSC, Hope, Compendium, NSYC, Nacro, Crescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Audit</td>
<td>Compendium, NSYC, Crescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production of a Sports Policy</td>
<td>NSYC, Groundwork, Nacro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^8\) Before Energise cards were offered, the scheme was known as Recreation Key Cards.

\(^9\) The Action Plan for CAFAG & NSREC was only a draft one as the intervention did not get as far as the host organisation agreeing it.
## APPENDIX I  Outcomes achieved at each partner organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Achieved</th>
<th>Partner Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture of Sport and Physical Activity embedded</td>
<td>Crescent, Treehouse &amp; Kingsland Children’s Centres, Nacro, IFSU, Groundwork, Changes YP, NSYC, SCRU, Blackfriars Day Centre, Compendium &amp; Coalville Resident’s Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and Physical Activity Policies</td>
<td>Hope Children’s Centre, FSC, NSYC, Changes YP, IFSU, Blackfriars Day Centre, SCRU, Groundwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and volunteers sports and physical activity skills audit</td>
<td>NSYC, Crescent Children’s Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people evaluation and feedback procedures feeding into planning</td>
<td>Compendium, NSYC, Nacro, Changes YP, Treehouse Children’s Centre, IFSU, SCRU, Blackfriars Day Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links or signposting young people to StreetDance, StreetGames or StreetCheer Projects</td>
<td>Crescent Children’s Centre, Kingsland Children’s Centre, Groundwork, Compendium, Treehouse &amp; Crescent Children’s Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young dads’ football group</td>
<td>Crescent &amp; Treehouse Children’s Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young peoples’ football groups</td>
<td>Nacro, Treehouse &amp; Crescent Children’s Centre, IFSU, FSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young women only football</td>
<td>FSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobics for young people(^{10, 11})</td>
<td>Hope Children’s Centre, Kingsland Children’s Centre, Crescent Children’s Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobics for staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other regular sport and physical activity sessions (including multi sports and fun days)</td>
<td>NSYC, FSC, Groundwork, Crescent, Treehouse &amp; Kingsland Children’s Centre, Compendium, Changes YP, Blackfriars Day Centre, SCRU,-treehouse &amp; Kingsland Children’s Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking sessions</td>
<td>Treehouse, Crescent, Kingsland &amp; Hope Children’s Centres, FSC, Changes YP, Blackfriars Day Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people accessing external facilities</td>
<td>SCRU, Treehouse Children’s Centre, Changes YP, Blackfriars Day Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational information about benefits of sport and physical activity</td>
<td>Treehouse &amp; Crescent Children’s Centre, Changes YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of volunteers</td>
<td>Crescent Children’s Centre, FSC, IFSU, Changes YP, Nacro, Blackfriars Day Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{10}\) This had been established at Kingsland Children’s Centre prior to the CtG work.  
\(^{11}\) Known as Keep Fit at Crescent Children’s Centre
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding achieved / budget provided by the partner organisation</th>
<th>Groundwork, Treehouse, Kingsland &amp; Crescent Children’s Centre, Changes YP, Blackfriars Day Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSLA qualified young people, staff and / or volunteers</td>
<td>Compendium, Blackfriars Day Centre, SCRU, FSC, Hope, Crescent and Treehouse Children’s Centre, Nacro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSLA Tutor qualified staff and / or volunteers¹²</td>
<td>Hope Children’s Centre, FSC, Nacro, Groundwork, Blackfriars Day Centre, Changes YP,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA coaching qualified young people, staff and / or volunteers¹³</td>
<td>Groundwork, Nacro, Changes YP, IFSU, Blackfriars Day Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional qualifications achieved by young people and / or staff</td>
<td>Nacro, Crescent, Compendium, Nacro, IFSU,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved understanding and / or participation by staff</td>
<td>FSC, Compendium, NSYC, Kingsland &amp; Treehouse Children’s Centre, IFSU, Groundwork, Changes YP, Blackfriars Day Centre, SCRU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved understanding and / or participation by young people</td>
<td>FSC, Compendium, NSYC, Nacro, Groundwork, Treehouse Children’s Centre, Changes YP, IFSU, Blackfriars Day Centre, SCRU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹² Funding had been awarded to Coalville’s Residents Association for training for volunteers in CSLA.
¹³ Funding had been awarded to Coalville’s Residents Association for training for volunteers in FA Level 1 qualifications.

2. Stoke-on-Trent Health Profile (2008) and Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2009), cited in Participation Rates for Sport and Physical activity by Young People at Risk of Social Exclusion in Stoke-on-Trent, November 2009, CtG, Stoke City Council. For a copy please contact Andrew Heaward at Swift house A, Upper Basement, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 or Andrew.Heaward@stoke.gov.uk


6. An individual report has been written for each of the organisations included in this report. For copies of these, contact Andrew Heaward at Swift house A, Upper Basement, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 or Andrew.Heaward@stoke.gov.uk


9. Cited in Participation Rates for Sport and Physical Activity by Young People at Risk of Social Exclusion in Stoke-on-Trent, November 2009


12. Information taken from Sport England’s Active People Survey 3 2008/9
http://www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey.aspx
(accessed 21/05/10)

13. More detail on all the baseline data collected by CtG can be found in their report, *Participation Rates for Sport and Physical activity by Young People at Risk of Social Exclusion in Stoke-on-Trent*, November 2009

14. For more information on the *Every Child Matters* policy details and guidance on implementation and emerging practice see
http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk (accessed 16/03/09)


16. Do it 4 Real summer courses were sponsored by the Big Lottery and run by the Youth Hostels Association. Camps included outdoor and water sports and performing arts. Fifteen young people from Coalville booked their places at camps for summer 2006.

17. The official website for NORSACCA is

18. For more on Changes see http://www.changes.org.uk/ (accessed 2/12/09)

19. This information is drawn from The Standards Site: Children’s Centres
http://www.surestart.gov.uk/surestartsservices/settings/surestartchildrenscentres/ and Sure Start – What’s New?

20. Details on this strategy were drawn from

21. Some of this information was gained through the initial EFQM and some from the blog posted by Stoke-on-Trent City Councillor, Peter Kent-Baguley. (accessed 21/05/09)
22. At the start of the project, Compendium was made up of Riverside Housing and the Lovell Group and the Development Officer that CtG’s Programme Champion was working with came from Riverside Housing.


25. Minister makes a racquet with tennis hopeful youngsters, 19th February 2008, available at http://www.groundwork.org.uk/news/detail/index.asp?id=85 (accessed 21/10/09). For general information on Groundwork UK and other articles referring to various projects with sport that they have been involved with, please go to http://www.groundwork.org (accessed 21/10/09)

26. Information for this section was drawn from material available from Groundwork UK’s website, http://www.groundwork.org and the action plan for this intervention (accessed 21/10/09).


29. For more information see www.thisstaffordshire.co.uk/news/Worried-teens-help-save-estate-lifeline and http://stokechildrensfund.linxdata.net/index.php?Itemid=111&id=62&option=com_content&task=view (accessed 21/05/09). Additional information was taken from the initial EFQM.