

Sport England

Evaluation of Satellite Clubs: FINAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1.0 Introduction

In April 2014, Substance began a two-year evaluation of the satellite club initiative for Sport England. In April 2016, the evaluation was extended for an additional year to provide a further assessment of the effectiveness of satellite clubs, especially regarding:

- 1) The initiative's ability to reach the 'right' audiences
- 2) The role of satellite clubs in influencing organisations to embrace insight-led planning and delivery

This is an executive summary of the final report from the research.

Satellite clubs were launched in 2013 as a part of Sport England's response to the Government's new strategy for youth sport. The aim was to create 5,000 new outposts/extensions of community sports clubs targeted at attracting 300,000 young people aged 11 to 25. The vision was that, by bringing existing sports clubs into educational settings, satellite clubs would create 'bridges' between school and community sport and provide participants with opportunities to 'transition' from satellite clubs to traditional community sports clubs.

In the last three years, the satellite club initiative has been strongly influenced by Sport England's new strategic focus on affecting sporting behaviour change amongst young people and other groups. Culminating in the publication of its new strategy for 2016-21 – *Towards and Active Nation*¹ – Sport England is now increasingly concentrating on understanding and intervening in the factors that influence demand for (as well as the supply of) sport amongst different population groups.

In this context, the satellite club initiative is now a strategic attempt to:

- 1) Influence young people's experience of sport at a crucial period when they are at risk of drifting away from regular sport
- 2) Understand and respond to the specific demands for sport amongst young people
- 3) Shape the way in which sport providers tailor their offers to meet these demands
- 4) Ensure there are sustainable (and desirable) opportunities for participants to play sport at all stages of their lives

This research report has four key objectives:

- 1) To understand and evaluate the success of different organisations in engaging, retaining and achieving outcomes with groups traditionally under-represented in sport, including young people who have low levels of activity
- 2) To understand how effectively County Sports Partnerships and other regional/national partner organisations are helping to translate research and insight into practice at satellite clubs
- 3) To understand if satellite clubs with the most thoroughgoing approaches to strategic and operational planning are delivering demonstrably better results than others
- 4) To evaluate the influence of the strategic and operational debates surrounding satellite clubs on the wider community sport sector

¹ Sport England (2016) *Towards an Active Nation: Strategy 2016-21* (London: Sport England)

To meet these objectives, the evaluation team has conducted:

- 1) A survey of 2,997 satellite club participants between October 2016 and February 2017
- 2) Seven interviews with representatives of County Sports Partnerships and one with a representative of a National Governing Body of Sport (NGB)
- 3) Eight site visits at 'high performing' satellite clubs where there is clear evidence of insight-led approaches to planning and operations being put into practice

2.0 Headline achievements

As of the end of the 2016/17 financial year:²

- 10,458 new satellite clubs have been created (against an original target of 5,000)
- 564,059 participants have attended (against an original target of 300,000)

KEY MESSAGE: More than double the number of satellite clubs originally commissioned by Sport England have been created since April 2013. The number of participants engaged has surpassed Sport England's target by close to 90%.

Facility types

- 67% of satellite clubs (7,010) are located at secondary schools.
- 6% (649) are located at FE colleges (targeting older groups of young people).
- The remainder are located at other educational settings and a range of community and specialist facilities.

Club types

- 16% of clubs (1,706) are targeted specifically at young women.
- 6% of clubs (658) are targeted at young people with disabilities and/or long-term limiting illnesses.

Location

- Since 2013, satellite clubs have been established in every region of England
- Each region accounts for between 16% and 9% of satellite clubs, except for the North East which hosts 5% of clubs. The smaller number of clubs in this region is reflective of the proportion of English schools and colleges located in the North East.

Sports

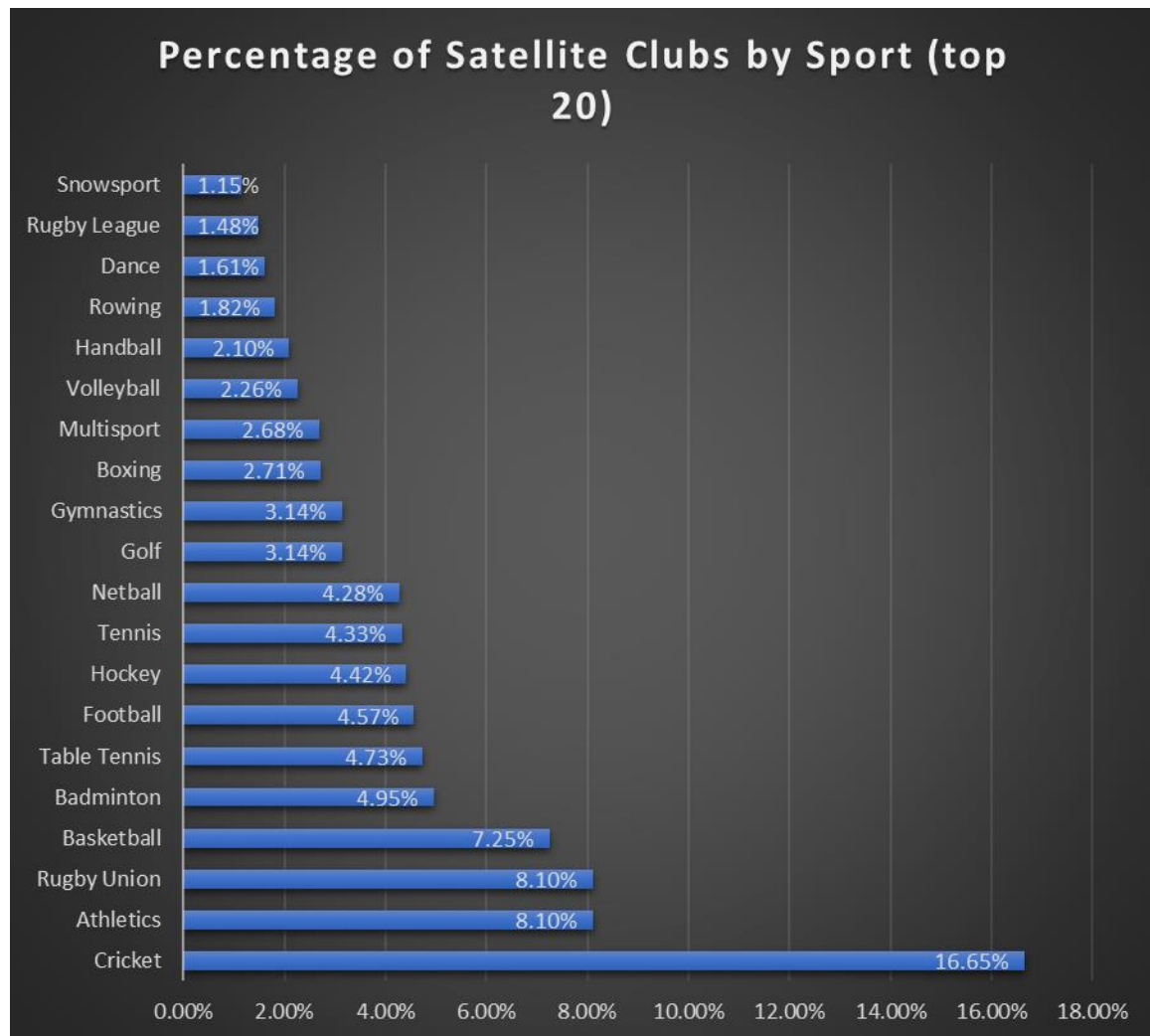
Over 50 different sports are delivered across satellite club network. The most frequently used sports are:

- Cricket (17% of all clubs)³
- Rugby Union (9%)
- Athletics (9%)
- Basketball (7%)
- Badminton (5%)
- Table Tennis (5%)
- Football (5%)

² All data quoted in this section of the report is taken from the satellite club data portal – an online management tool used by CSPs, NGBs, the Premier League Charitable Fund and other partners to report against their key performance indicators.

³ The majority of cricket satellite clubs are being delivered through Sport England's investment into the Chance to Shine schools programme which is focused on creating at least 1,250 satellite clubs targeted at young people aged between 11-18.

- Hockey (4%)
- Tennis (4%)
- Netball (4%)



3.0 Reaching the right audiences and producing the right outcomes – the satellite club participant survey 2016/17

Between October 2016 and February 2017, the third national survey of satellite club participants was conducted. As with previous surveys in 2015 and 2016, this provided the research team with evidence in relation to:

- 1) The demographic profile of participants
- 2) Participants' experiences of, and attitudes towards, sport prior to attending satellite clubs
- 3) Participants' motivations for attending
- 4) The experience of attending
- 5) The outcomes achieved by participants

Through comparisons with previous survey results, the 2016/17 survey also provided the research team with an opportunity to understand how the profiles, attitudes and behaviours of participants have changed throughout the life of the satellite club initiative.

Demographic profile

- **Age** - over two-thirds of participants (68%) at satellite clubs in 2016/17 were aged between 11 and 15 (a one percentage point fall from 2015/16). Of the remaining participants, 19% were aged between 16 and 25 (a 2-percentage point increase on 2015/16), with 5% aged over 25 (a 2-percentage point drop).
- **Gender** – around 57% of satellite club participants in 2016/17 were female, with 40% male (the remainder were transgender or unknown). This represents a 10-percentage point increase in the proportion of females attending satellite clubs in 2015/16.
- **Ethnicity** – around 18% of participants in 2016/17 were from Asian, Black or other minority ethnic backgrounds (a 2-percentage point drop from 2015/16). A decreasing proportion came from Asian or Asian British backgrounds (8% in 2016/17 compared with 11% in 2015/16), whilst 78% of participants were from White or White British backgrounds in both years.
- **Disability** – 7% of participants in 2016/17 reported having a disability or a long-term limiting illness (a one percentage point drop from 2015/16).
- **Education and employment status** – 78% of participants in 2016/17 were in school, whilst 18% were in further/higher education or employment. In 2015/16, 83% of participants were in school and only 14% were in further/higher education or in employment

KEY MESSAGE: Satellite clubs continue to attract a broad range of participants to their sessions. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of female participants attending in 2016/17.

Participants' prior relationship with sport

In 2016/17, the proportion of participants saying they played sport 3 times a month or less in 2016/17 was 38%, an 11-percentage point increase on 2015/16.

KEY MESSAGE: There has been a significant increase in the proportion of previously inactive young people attending satellite clubs.

Participants' prior attitudes towards sport

Just over 38% of respondents said they 'loved sport and exercise' and would 'play or train whenever they could' in 2016/17 (a one percentage point increase on 2015/16), and 24% said they 'really liked sport and exercise' but 'struggled to find opportunities to play the sports/activities I like' (again, a one percentage point increase on the previous research period).

The proportion of participants with the most 'negative' prior attitudes towards sport increased from 5% in 2015/16 to 9% in 2016/17.

KEY MESSAGE: Satellite clubs are attracting a greater proportion of participants who had previously negative attitudes towards sport.

Participants' motivations for attending satellite clubs

Respondents to the 2016/17 survey said the most important/very important reasons for initially engaging with a satellite club were:

- The sport being offered was something I wanted to do (92%)
- The venue is near where I live (65%)
- I heard good things about the club from friends and/or family (69%)
- The sessions at the club are free or very affordable (74%)

Of these reasons, only the last one ('sessions at the club are free or very affordable') saw a notable change from 2015/16 (an increase of 8 percentage points).

KEY MESSAGE: An increasing proportion of participants cite financial accessibility as a key factor in motivating their attendance at satellite clubs.

The experience of attending

Over 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'staff/coaches are really welcoming', whilst between 79% and 89% also agreed or strongly agreed with statements that their clubs welcome people with a wide range of sporting abilities and provide a relaxed and fun atmosphere.

It is notable that 66% of participants stated they agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that 'if I have an opinion about how the club should be run ... I will be listened

to’. This is 10 percentage point increase on 2015/16 and may indicate that satellite clubs are collectively becoming more focused on the needs of young people.

KEY MESSAGE: An increasing proportion of satellite club participants feel they will be listened to if they have an opinion about how their clubs should be run. This may indicate satellite clubs are further embracing Sport England’s call to make sport more ‘customer focused’.

Outcomes for participants – frequency of sports participation

To measure the impact of satellite clubs on participants’ frequency of engagement with sport, the survey asked them ‘since starting to attend sessions at this club/venue, on average how many times do you play sport in a typical month (outside of lessons in school/college)?’.

The results showed that:

- 47% of all respondents increased their activity levels by at least one band as a result of attending satellite clubs: a 10-percentage point increase on results from 2015/16
- Of those who started in the lowest activity bands, 73% increased their activity level: an increase of 5 percentage points on 2015/16
- Of those who started in the middle activity bands - ‘4 or 5 times’ and ‘between 6 and 10 times’ - 57% and 44% of respondents respectively increased their activity levels. In both cases, these results represent an 11-percentage point increase on findings from 2015/16

KEY MESSAGE: Close to half of all participants on the satellite club initiative have increased the frequency of their engagement with sport and/or exercise. For participants who were doing the least sport/exercise before engaging, nearly three-quarters are now engaging in sport or exercise more frequently

To understand which participants, other than those who started with the lowest rates of activity, have benefitted most from attending satellite clubs, the research team compared results based on a range of participant attributes and the profile/types of sessions attended. The best performing groups are listed in the tables below.

Best Performing Demographic Groups	Percentage of all respondents increasing engagement with sport 2016/17	Percentage of all respondents increasing engagement with sport 2015/16
Females	49.03%	38.32%
Participants aged 20 to 25	56.03%	45.83%
White or White British young people	48.99%	38.95%
Young people in employment	56.38%	41.51%
Young people with disabilities or long term limiting conditions	50.79%	44.00%

Best Performing Session/Venue Types	Percentage of all respondents increasing engagement with sport 2016/17	Percentage of all respondents increasing engagement with sport 2015/16
Those paying a fee to attend sessions	52.01%	39.66%
Those attending 'other' types of venues (not educational settings)	50.78%	37.27%

Best Performing Participants based on prior feelings towards sport and exercise	Percentage of all respondents increasing engagement with sport 2016/17	Percentage of all respondents increasing engagement with sport 2015/16
Those who didn't like sport and exercise at all and avoided it wherever possible	67.74%	63.64%
Those who were not that bothered about sport and exercise but would sometimes play to feel healthy, look good or get fit	66.83%	46.88%

Best Performing Participants based on longevity of attendance	Percentage of all respondents increasing engagement with sport 2016/17	Percentage of all respondents increasing engagement with sport 2015/16
Those attending for 3 to 6 months or longer	50.00%	39.71%

KEY MESSAGE: Participants groups who experienced the high rates of behaviour change in 2016/17 include females, older participants, participants with disabilities or long-term limiting illnesses, participants attending sessions in non-educational settings and participants with the most negative prior attitudes towards sport.

Other outcomes for participants

The research team also gathered data on the longer-term outcomes that satellite clubs are helping to deliver for participants.

The headline findings are:

- Over 70% of respondents said they have or will encourage others to play sport
- Around the same proportion say they are playing (or will play) sport more often
- Over two-thirds say they are (or will) exercise more
- Over 60% say they have tried out (or will try out) a new sport

KEY MESSAGE: Satellite clubs are consistently encouraging large proportions of participants to play sport and exercise more, encourage others to play sport and try out new sports.

As a final indication of the effects of satellite clubs on participants' relationship with sport, the research team asked them to say whether they are more or less likely to agree with a series of statements since attending club sessions.

The results show that between 71% and 78% of participants in 2016/17 were more likely to agree with the statements that:

- Sport is an important part of my weekly routine
- Sport is good for you and has health benefits
- Sports clubs are good places to meet with friends
- Sport is fun and something I enjoy

KEY MESSAGE: Around three quarters of participants in 2016/17 said that, as a result of attending satellite clubs, they are more likely to agree with a range of statements about the health benefits of sport and its importance in their lives.

4.0 Embracing insight-led planning and delivery – the work of County Sports Partnerships

To meet the objectives of this evaluation, Substance interviewed a series of representatives of CSPs. This was to gather their view of how successfully Sport England's insight and guidance in relation to satellite clubs - and the delivery of community sport more generally - has been put into practice across the initiative

CSPs' interpretations of Sport England's youth insight

When asked about the messages they have taken from Sport England's youth insight - and how these have been promoted to satellite club deliverers - CSP representatives identified the following key principles:

- **All young people are all different** - CSP representatives stated that *the* key message to come from Sport England's recent insight work is that young people have many personality types and relationships with sport. Several interviewees suggested that sports clubs have not traditionally been particularly flexible or responsive in the ways in which they have delivered sport and that, as a result, large numbers of young people have not been able to find sporting experiences suited to them.
- **Sports deliverers must become more focused on the 'needs' of participants/customers** - many of the CSP representatives interviewed stated that Sport England's insight work has helped them to understand that sports providers need to focus their sessions much more on the multiple needs of different types of young people. Other interviewees agreed that 'starting with the young person' was a key strategic learning from Sport England's insight and guidance.
- **Sports deliverers must communicate their 'offers' differently** - several interviewees explained that Sport England's insight work has helped them to identify that deliverers must change the ways in which they communicate the benefits of sport. It was explained that a key learning from Sport England's insight and guidance is that the marketing of satellite clubs and other community sport sessions aimed at young people must foreground the multiple benefits of participation for attendees – not sport itself.

KEY MESSAGE: CSP representatives identified a series of key learnings for the delivery of satellite clubs from Sport England's youth insight work.

Strategic changes CSPs have made because of Sport England's youth insight

The research team asked interviewees about the strategic changes they had made following the publication of Sport England's youth insight work.

- **Changing deliverers' understandings of what satellite clubs are trying to achieve** - interviewees explained that CSPs are encouraging deliverers to understand they are being challenged to take sport out beyond traditional core markets: something that will demand new ways of communicating the benefits and appeal of sport.

- **Changing the selection of sports and activities** - interviewees stated they are now less concerned with the specific sports being delivered across satellite clubs and more interested in what those sports can offer different types of young people. CSPs said they are increasingly challenging deliverers to think about the *effectiveness* (in terms of the delivery of outcomes) of the sports and activities delivered in sessions.
- **Changing the selection of partner delivery organisations** - in line with a greater commitment to flexibility – and using the most appropriate tools to deliver outcomes – several of the CSPs interviewed explained they are also changing the types of delivery organisations with which they are working. Interviewees explained that, whilst they are continuing to work with ‘traditional’ community sports clubs, they are increasingly turning to other types of ‘community’ organisations.

KEY MESSAGE: CSPs have made a series of strategic changes in line with Sport England’s youth insight work.

Practical changes CSPs have made in line with Sport England’s youth insight

The research team asked CSPs about how Sport England’s youth insight had encouraged them to make practical changes to the ways in which they support the development and sustainability of satellite clubs.

- **Changes to the club planning process** - CSPs explained that, as part of the satellite club planning process, they now require stakeholders to identify the specific youth personality types the club will be targeting.
- **Improved club support and guidance** - several interviewees explained they had created a range of easy-to-consume support materials and guides for clubs to encourage them to stay true to the focus the satellite club intervention
- **Coach/staff development** – many CSPs explained they provide a range of workshops and other support to coaches/other club staff to help communicate the full range of issues emanating from the youth insight work.
- **Guidance on marketing and communication** - all CSPs explained they had increasingly concentrated their support resources on working with satellite clubs on communications and messaging.
- **Increasing focus on treating young people as partners and full stakeholders** - most CSPs explained they have introduced a series of initiatives to more formally recognise young people as key stakeholders in the design and running of satellite clubs.
- **Increasing investment in quality management** - all CSPs explained they continue to invest an increase amount of time and resource in quality managing satellite clubs.
- **Developing further opportunities for feedback** - as part of the development of quality management processes, CSPs explained they are trying to develop new opportunities for clubs to feedback more consistently on their experiences of applying insight to their work.

KEY MESSAGE: In line with Sport England’s youth insight work, CSPs have made a series of practical changes to the ways in which they plan, support and quality manage satellite clubs.

5.0 Messages from the frontline – emergent trends in the delivery of satellite clubs

One of the key objectives for this evaluation was to evaluate if satellite clubs with the most thoroughgoing approaches to strategic and operational planning are delivering demonstrably better results than others. To meet this objective, the research team conducted eight case study visits to satellite clubs deemed to be ‘high performers’ by CSPs and NGBs.

Below are six key trends that emerged from the case studies conducted as part of the 2016/17 evaluation.

The usefulness of organisations committed to delivering outcomes

From visiting satellite clubs run by community organisations focused on delivering outcomes, it is clear they offer a different approach to running sport sessions for young people (different from the approaches frequently taken by traditional sport providers). The organisations and their staff were familiar with concepts surrounding programme design and (informally at least) ‘theories of change’ so were very comfortable delivering sessions focused explicitly on behaviour change.

Utilising organisations whose prime focus is on engaging ‘hard to reach’ young people

Two organisations visited by the research team specialise in engaging (what are often viewed as) ‘hard to reach’ groups. The primary objectives of both organisations are concerned with engaging young people ‘on their own terms’ and designing services that will keep previously disengaged young people coming back. As a result, the organisations are both comfortable with ideas relating to (for instance) ‘co-designing’ services with participants and have staff with great experience of delivering flexibly.

The importance of treating young people as stakeholders

Many of the sites visited had a clear and demonstrable commitment to involving young people as key stakeholders. Approaches to this varied, with some clubs simply providing participants with informal (but nonetheless important) opportunities for discussion and feedback on the look, feel and content of the sessions they attend. Other clubs had more formal volunteering and mentoring progression routes embedded into their models which are designed to ensure participants can take on increasingly levels of responsibility for the nature and content of session.

Satellite clubs as primarily social spaces

In nearly all the case study sites visited, participants talked about satellite clubs as primarily social spaces where they can relax, have fun with friends and ‘take things at their own pace’. Even participants who identified themselves as ‘serious’ about sport explained that attending a satellite club session ‘never feels like hard work’ because they are encouraged to ‘concentrate on the fun-side of sport’ and ‘try out loads of different things’.

Working with (but going beyond) established models of delivery

Since the start of the satellite club initiative in 2013, several NGBs have developed new 'products' or variations of their sport which are designed to be more attractive and/or accessible to specific population groups. Whilst these developments have been welcome – inasmuch as they are based on an assessment of what sports need to do to engage greater numbers of participants – they do not necessarily fit with the vision of truly customer focused sport. During a case study visit to a taekwondo club, however, the research team saw an excellent example of how a new standardised approach to delivering sport to female participants had been further developed to ensure it was appropriate for meeting the aims of the satellite club initiative.

The nature and importance of strategic and operational support

Staff at the satellite clubs visited by the research team were asked about the nature and importance of the support and guidance they receive from CSPs and NGBs. From the interviews conducted, it appears that, whilst NGBs are often important partners in satellite clubs at the set-up stage, they frequently do not maintain strategic input once the club is operational. In contrast, interviewees explained that CSPs have ongoing roles in terms of shaping the approaches and cultures of satellite clubs: support that is often valued highly by those receiving it.

