

Sportivate on a large scale

Sheffield International Venues, South Yorkshire

In February 2012 South Yorkshire Sport (SYS) took a unique approach to increasing the number of Sportivate projects in Sheffield. Sheffield International Venues (SIV) in partnership with SYS launched 'Get Sheffield Fit', a city-wide project. The project boasts open marketing, multiple sports and activities running all year round and continuous data capture.

Partner funding supports a full time project manager from SIV as well as enabling extensive training to SIV front line staff who screen and select semi-sporty participants from those that enquire about activities at any of SIV's 9 venues.

The scale of delivery and partnership working of this model challenges the typical approach to delivering Sportivate. This case study examines the key elements that make up this project and tracks progress so far.



Sheffield International Venues Ltd (SIV) is one of the largest sport, leisure and entertainment companies in Europe. There are over 4m visitors each year. SIV plays a key role in supporting the economic, sporting and cultural profile of Sheffield by championing community participation and sports development.

Sportivate delivery on a large scale

The diagram on the right shows the scale of this project. South Yorkshire Sport has invested £42,070 of Sportivate funding to date, with SIV investing ca. £25,000 to partner fund the project. **Partnership working** as well as outreach and community engagement has been crucial, Activity Sheffield, the Sports Development arm of Sheffield City Council, is a key partner, other partners include community clubs, schools, colleges, universities and youth groups.



"We want to help the people of Sheffield lead healthy, active lives and we're passionate about raising activity levels, particularly those that are inactive or need support. For us, this project has helped us to engage over 600 young people in regular physical activity, whilst retaining them into sustained activity at our venues through gym memberships and coached activities. This brings both repeat income and happy customers, sustaining our ability to offer high quality sport and leisure at some of the best venues in the country. At a time when there is so much doom and gloom it's great to be able to offer a quality and affordable programme to young people that utilises the impressive network of city partners."

Rob Womack, Funding and Grants Manager and Lorenzo Clark, Director of Operations

The Sheffield International Venues Sportivate process:



¹³This figure includes all SIV's upfront investment in staff training, process set up and branding and marketing. This has been invested to ensure the suitability of the project. The price per head, whilst high in year one of the project, will decrease each time a new participant signs up. This method creates a brand that can be used beyond Sportivate to increase participation, ³see page 2 for further detail



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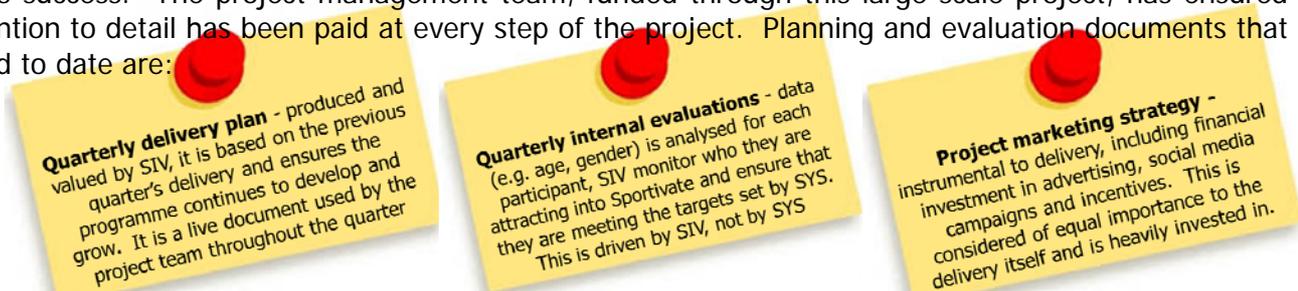
“This innovative project has created an attractive brand, which has engaged large numbers of young people across Sheffield. What is especially pleasing is volume of non-sporty or semi-sporty young people that are accessing leisure facilities who would have not done so previously. SIV have not only seen the value of investing resources to attract and retain new members, but have taken a sport development approach by delivering a range of NGB products ensuring increased participation in sport as opposed to just Gym membership. South Yorkshire Sport will continue to work with this project to track young people’s sporting journey, evidencing how high quality delivering can ensure young people maintain a sporting lifestyle.”

Kathryn Mudge, South Yorkshire Sport

Staff training has been one of the key elements to the successful delivery of a programme of this size and was one of the factors that affected the performance of the project in quarter 1. Sheffield International Venues have large numbers of front line staff who had to be trained on the Get Sheffield Fit programme and had to understand the screening process in particular. Senior management understand the value of the programme to the organisation and as such were fundamental in supporting the mandatory attendance of training for all staff.

Project planning, delivery and reporting

The extensive amount of information that has been collected and interpreted throughout this project has been an essential factor in its success. The project management team, funded through this large scale project, has ensured that meticulous attention to detail has been paid at every step of the project. Planning and evaluation documents that have been developed to date are:



Quarterly delivery plan - produced and valued by SIV, it is based on the previous quarter's delivery and ensures the programme continues to develop and grow. It is a live document used by the project team throughout the quarter

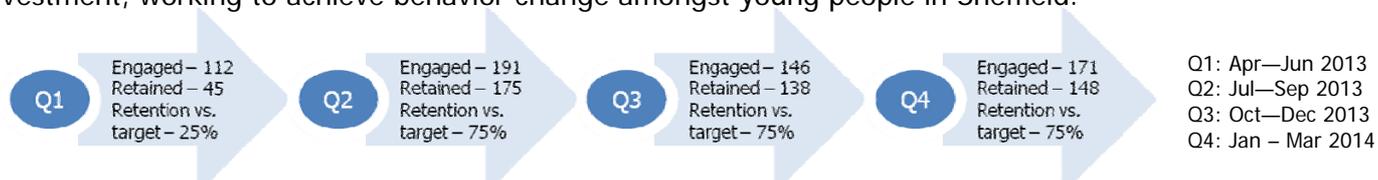
Quarterly internal evaluations - data (e.g. age, gender) is analysed for each participant, SIV monitor who they are attracting into Sportivate and ensure that they are meeting the targets set by SYS. This is driven by SIV, not by SYS

Project marketing strategy - instrumental to delivery, including financial investment in advertising, social media campaigns and incentives. This is considered of equal importance to the delivery itself and is heavily invested in.

Sheffield International Venues have committed fully to this project and it is this commitment that has enabled the delivery of such a large programme. Despite the issues facing the company (common to all leisure providers) such as venue closures, redundancies and multiple pressures on staff, SIV have continued to deliver and invest in a brand and delivery mechanism that they believe has the power to affect a change in participation. Sheffield International Venues are using Sportivate as a mechanism to drive business, as well as to reach a demographic that is notoriously hard to engage, in order to meet their leisure provider contractual obligations.

The leisure management system already used by SIV to capture customer data enables the successful monitoring of this programme. By filling out a Lifecard registration form, participants can be tracked every time they enter any SIV centre (more detail on the legacy and sustainability of this project will be covered in the next Sportivate case study).

The KPIs for the project so far can be seen below. The programme did not achieve its target (75% of young people sustained in sport 3 months after taking part) in quarter 1. This was due to the concentrated investment in the long term development of the programme. The dramatic increase in quarters 2 and 3 is testament to the value of the long term investment, working to achieve behavior change amongst young people in Sheffield.



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'The strategy for this project has been to implement an umbrella brand to communicate and raise awareness of the products available and drive participation for the overall scheme.'

From the Q2 project review by Sheffield International Venues

Using mass marketing and social media to promote the project

One hundred per cent of GSF participants are semi-sporty. The open marketing and screening process make this project truly innovative. The Get Sheffield Fit brand enabled all Sportivate activity to be **marketed under one banner**. The blanket marketing approach attracts people to the programme with **posters on trams, leaflets and social media**, all signposting directly to sport and leisure centres. Google analytics shows a direct correlation between the investment in advertising and the increase in SIV website and social media page views. There is a full marketing plan for the project. Screening takes place when young people make contact with a venue. SIV staff **assess whether they qualify for Sportivate** (depending on their age and sportiness). If they don't qualify, they are introduced to the mainstream programme available through each SIV centre. If they are eligible, they are booked onto the activity of their choice. The scale of the project makes the system viable.



The conversion rate of enquiries to activities was 40-50% at the end of Q2

SIV has seen various **positive press releases**, media and social media coverage of this project. At a time when major press coverage around SIV is largely negative due to venue closures and financial pressures, this showcases the work they do and will continue to do to achieve their charitable objectives. This has been assisted through working with **Sporting Champions**, who have visited sessions, increasing press coverage and helping to promote the project through their own social networks.

Sportivate



Case study developed by the impact study team at **Sport Structures Ltd**



Thank you to South Yorkshire Sport and Sheffield International Venues for their support in developing this case study.