

Inspired Facilities



West of England Schools Sailing Association



CASE STUDY THEMES

- Increased throughput
- Inclusive activities
- Improved community engagement
- Sourced other funding as a result of project

PROJECT SUMMARY

Summary

Upgrade work to a watersports centre to improve the facilities and access, particularly for disabled participants.

Facility name	West of England Schools Sailing Association
Lead organisation	West of England Schools Sailing Association
Organisation type	Formally constituted association and registered charity
Location	Bristol, South West
Sport	Sailing & Yachting, Water Skiing, Canoeing, Rowing
Total project cost	£60,500
Inspired facilities funding	£50,000 (77% of total)
Other funding sources	West of England Schools Sailing Association (£9,500), Bristol City Council (£800), RYA (£200).
Tender process	Competitive tender
Contract type	Design and build
Start and end date	02/01/2012 - 01/03/2012
Duration of capital works	2 months

Achieved outcomes

- Increased participation in watersports activities
- Improved accessibility to watersports activities



Introduction

The West of England Schools Sailing Association was awarded £50,000 from Sport England to upgrade their watersports centre and improve the facilities and access, particularly for disabled participants, some of whom were previously unable to use the facility. The watersports centre, which has operated from Bristol City Docks for around 40 years, provides open access watersports activity to the public and specialises in organising sessions for young people and disability groups including those with physical, emotional and cognitive disabilities.

The Project

The previous design of the building limited use of the watersports centre as the main entrance was not wheelchair accessible. The facilities were also inadequate and did not provide a changing area or a separate disabled toilet, which was an inconvenience for users. Further to this, the volunteers wanted to improve the user experience, creating a more attractive and engaging atmosphere for people who use the centre, whilst also creating space for the educational element of their outreach work. Specifically, the bid submitted to Sport England was intended to create a more visible entrance and allow the installation of changing and shower facilities, a gallery kitchen and 3 training rooms. The project aimed to transform the look, feel and accessibility of the facility to improve the experience of its users and create an all-inclusive watersports centre.



Outcomes

The Facility

The capital investment of £50,000 made by Sport England was supplemented by partnership funding of £10,500 to enable the following upgrades to take place:

- Three training rooms - £20,500
- Shower facilities - £18,000
- Installation of gallery kitchen - £11,500
- New entrance - £9,000
- Planning and consultation fees - £1,000

As a result of the funding, the facility now has a disabled ramp which connects to the main entrance, with an automatic door which opens directly into the reception area. The facility is also now open from 9am to 8pm, whereas previously it only opened when a group booked a specific time, contributing to a four-fold increase in participation in 2014.

Gill Hannan, the Administrator of All Aboard Watersports, the charity and co-operative who manage the facility, said:

"The main outcome of this funding has been to fully integrate young people with disabilities into the watersports centre".

If the funding had not materialised, then the watersports centre would have only been able to continue to offer sailing to smaller groups of participants at certain times and would not have been fully accessible.

Sports Participation

Throughput figures are only available for participation in rowing, canoeing and sailing, but they demonstrate significant growth, with 4,386 visits to the centre between January and June 2014, a significant increase on the throughput of 1,500 for the year prior to the upgrade taking place.

	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Target	-	2,000	3,000	3,500	4,000	4,500
Actual	1,500	4,386 (6mths)	No data	No data	No data	No data

Lead Organisation and Partners

The charity All-Aboard currently operates the watersports centre and, although the initial recommendation to apply for Inspired Facilities funding came from the Sports Development team at Bristol City Council, the project was planned and delivered by facility staff.

Partnerships have been forged to maximise both the quality and quantity of activity provided at the centre. For example, the Royal Yachting Association allows the facility to be used as a Sailability Centre. Facilities are only given this award if they are accessible and able to provide sailing to at least 9 categories of disability. The funding has also enabled them to work closely with Sport England to identify other potential funding sources, including Sportivate, to fund specific projects whilst also using the Community Sport Activation Fund to develop community rowing, sailing and canoeing. This enables the centre to employ three community sport activators. In terms of sustainability, the association has appointed a Business Development Manager and a Watersports Manager who are employed to increase the number of visits to the facility, whilst also identifying other potential opportunities which are now possible because of the improvements made.

Local Community

Since its refurbishment, the facility has become a hub for community use, partly because of the improved accessibility, but also because of the introduction of 3 training rooms which accommodate community groups and additional catering facilities. The rooms have also been used by schools and disability organisations for educational activities.

Sport England investment has not only enabled them to run such activities and increased their capacity to deliver, but has also allowed the club to raise awareness of their offer. The improved facilities drew significant local publicity particularly as they were part of the Olympic Torch and Commonwealth Baton relays, both of which were broadcast on television and local radio.

The most rewarding aspect of the facility upgrade, according to the project lead, is the impact it has had on young people with disabilities, including young people from the Bristol School Academy Horizon group who attend the facility over a 6 week period.

"It gives them (young people) a great feeling that they can achieve what they thought was beyond their scope; that's what we get most reward from, watching their confidence grow".

In future, the aim is to further engage more disability groups which is challenging when considering many of these young people are from low income backgrounds and require transport to access the facility. The watersports centre is in a much better position now to support young people to overcome such barriers to participation.

Key Findings

- Improving the accessibility of the facility has enabled the centre to widen participation and enhance the number of opportunities for local people to take part in watersports activity:
 - Disabled people, particularly wheelchair users, are now able to access the site and participate in a range of watersports activity.
 - The facility is now multi-purpose and the newly refurbished catering/meeting facilities can be used by community groups, increasing the number of users of the facility.
 - The facility can now facilitate educational workshops to support community groups and funded projects/outreach activities.
 - Working with such groups provides opportunities for partnership funding to be used to develop activity within the facility.
- More people have been employed within the facility to help increase participation and generate income, because of the opportunities that the improvements have provided.
- The upgraded facility has improved the experience for current users whilst also attracting new users to attend which has had a positive impact on the participation figures.

