



Sport and Physical Activity Workforce Network

26th April, 2022

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SPORT**



David Reader
Strategic Advisor, London Sport
Supporting Network Members



We're hybrid!



- Free tea/coffee
- Free WiFi – ‘House of Sport Guest’
- Networking space

Welcome – David Reader, *London Sport*

Today's Session Outline

- 14.00-14.10 Welcome and Session Outline- **David Reader**, *London Sport*
- 14.10-15.15 Innovation for the sport workforce - **Dr Lindsay Findlay-King**, Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Northumbria University.
Dr Fiona Reid, Bayfirth Research/**Stephanie Mallender**, Sport England
- 15.15-15.25 Break
- 15.25-15.55 Together Fund - **Alex Gibbons**, *London Sport*
- 15.55 Concluding thoughts

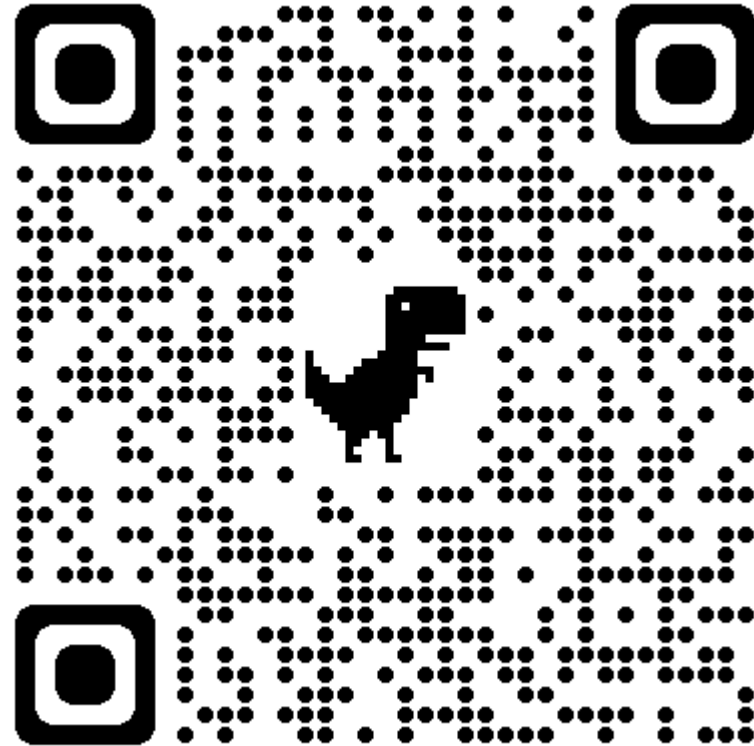
Sport and Physical Activity Workforce Network

We want to support the sport and physical activity workforce sector as best we can and one way in which we are going to do that is to establish a new Network for all those that are responsible for a sport and physical activity workforce.

'Workforce Leaders'

What's in it?

- ✓ Insight and support through workforce related talks, presentations and workshops.
- ✓ A platform to share and discuss ideas, explore workforce sector issues, etc.
- ✓ Discussion on future opportunities for the workforce.
- ✓ An opportunity to shape future activity of the Network.
- ✓ Practical ways in which to personally develop and become a better workforce leader.



Who can get involved?

- Those who are responsible for a sport and physical activity workforce – volunteers or paid staff.
- Do you co-ordinate, recruit, deploy a SPA workforce?
- Those who have a special interest in sport and physical activity workforce issues
- Those who are seeking to develop a career in this area



Temperature Check

- What are the most pressing issues you are seeing as the workforce return to activity?
- https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=nHkhZz1jYki1ZLm4_F7Kg0JkSgTN2n9Em1E9IN56kU9URENZQkpISVVCU1dJN09RTjFPVE8zSkxHUS4u



Innovation for the sport workforce

Lessons learnt from: Innovation during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Volunteers and Voluntary Sports Organisations in England

Bayfirth
Research



Northumbria
University
NEWCASTLE

Dr Lindsay Findlay-King,
Department of Sport and Exercise
Sciences, Northumbria University

 @LFKnorth

London Sport and Physical
Activity Workforce
Network

26th April 2022

About me



Strategic lead on this project
Academic and Research Consultant.
Principal lecturer in Sport Management.
Full time academic for 25 years at
Northumbria University.
Main research interests – sport volunteering
during covid, voluntary organisations and
community asset transfer in sport, volunteer
recruitment and experience, sport
volunteering and diversity.
Chair of U.K. Sports Volunteering Research
Network (SVRN).
Open water swimmer.
Various volunteer roles – sport and Girl
Guiding UK.



Sports Volunteering
Research Network

Our take on Innovation



Doing something new or different

- New to the person or organisation

Can be:

- Incremental
- Radical
- Revolution

Dynamic Process

Innovation question garden



Why is innovation important to you personally?



Why do you want to develop innovation among your workforce?

Dr Lindsay
Findlay-
King

Dr Fiona
Reid

Dr Geoff
Nichols

Dr Chris
Mills

Research team

Sports Volunteers, Innovation and Covid-19 Aims of the Research



To understand how and why volunteers have innovated since February 2020 and the barriers to and facilitators of this process.



To identify innovative practices and share this learning.



To highlight any new practices that make volunteering more inclusive.



To capture knowledge of how to rebuild better in terms of sports volunteering and community sports clubs.

The Research Process



Qualitative Research
through surveys

In-depth interviews:
13 NSOs

Snapshot Surveys :
74 CSOs

In-depth Case
Studies : 8 CSOs



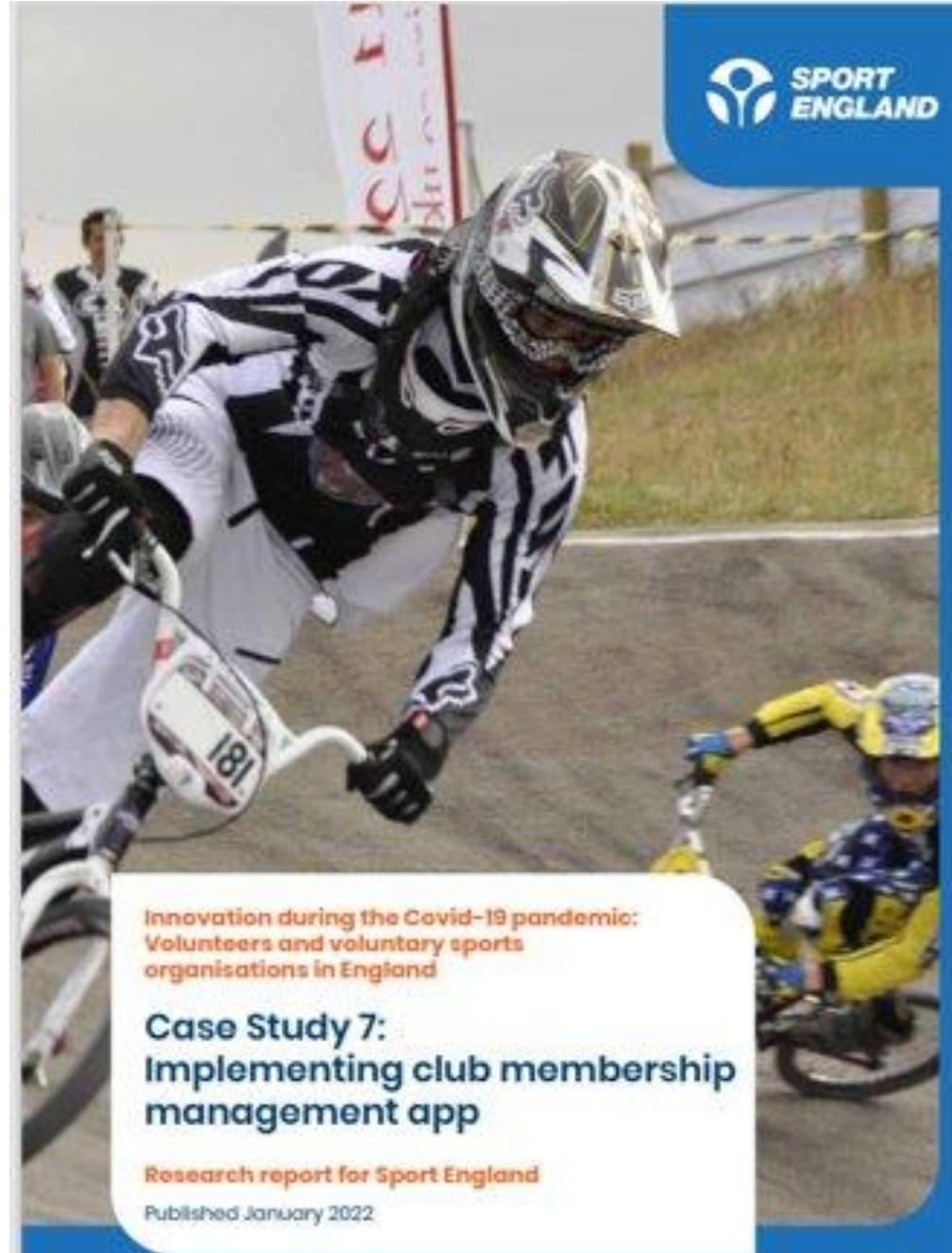
90 organisations and volunteers
participated

Types of Innovation

Sport changes	Going digital	Meeting wider community needs	Volunteer recruitment and retention	Volunteer training	Relationship between NSOs and CSOs
Rules of sport	Online sport & non-sport sessions	Food deliveries	Online	Especially online	Closer (NSOs felt)
Venues	Online booking	Outreach activities	Recognition	Not only local	Regular contact through forums (for some)
Restrictions on club activities	Virtual committee meetings	Time to plan	Younger	Covid Officer role	Important role of developing sport specific guidelines
Move to online	Digital and online payment systems	Opening up facilities	Different roles		
	Social media and website				

"We used to have anybody could just turn up and we'd find a bike and a helmet and gloves and see how they got on but, because of covid restrictions, we had to set up a more formal process. "

"With the app in place, members seem more willing to put themselves forward for roles. It has increased the pool of volunteers and reduced reliance on the same few volunteers to man BMX racing events/sessions."



Some Types of Innovations

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Click to add text

"Buddy Up" Scheme

11 buddy groups were formed in the netball club to support 150 players

Playing netball was restricted, so club set up online challenges for the buddy groups.

Players reported feeling more connected to the club when they were able to return to play.



**Innovation during the Covid-19 pandemic:
Volunteers and voluntary sports
organisations in England**

**Case Study 2:
Forming buddy groups
to enhance engagement**

Research report for Sport England
Published January 2022

Some Types of Innovations

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Click to add text

New outdoor venue – new form of the sport

Men in Sheds Group Supporting archery club

Membership has quadrupled as a result of the new outdoor archery course.

"[Covid-19] focused the innovation. Previously, we were a bit scatter gun, you know, it'd be nice to do this, nice to do that. Then, all of a sudden, we knew we needed to do this."

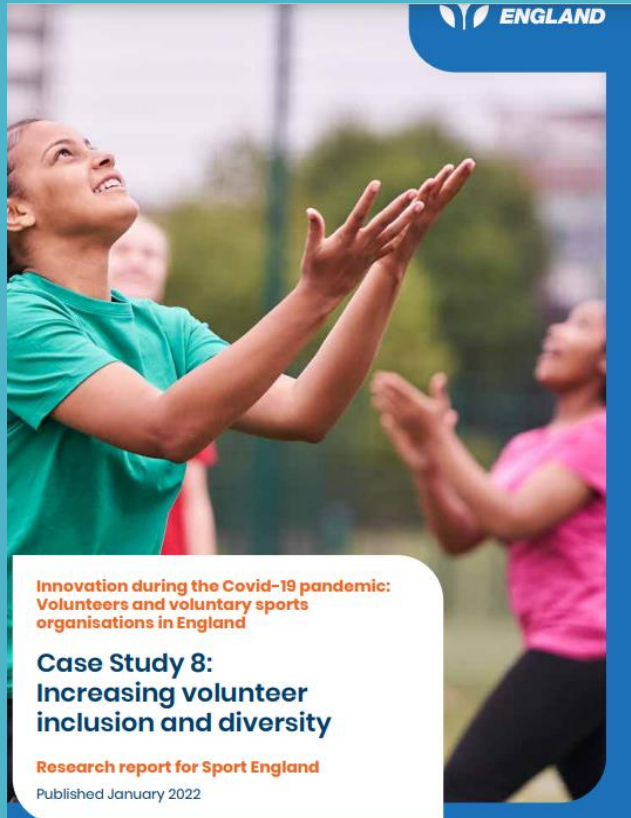


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Click to add text

Case Study 8 – Increasing Diversity in Volunteering



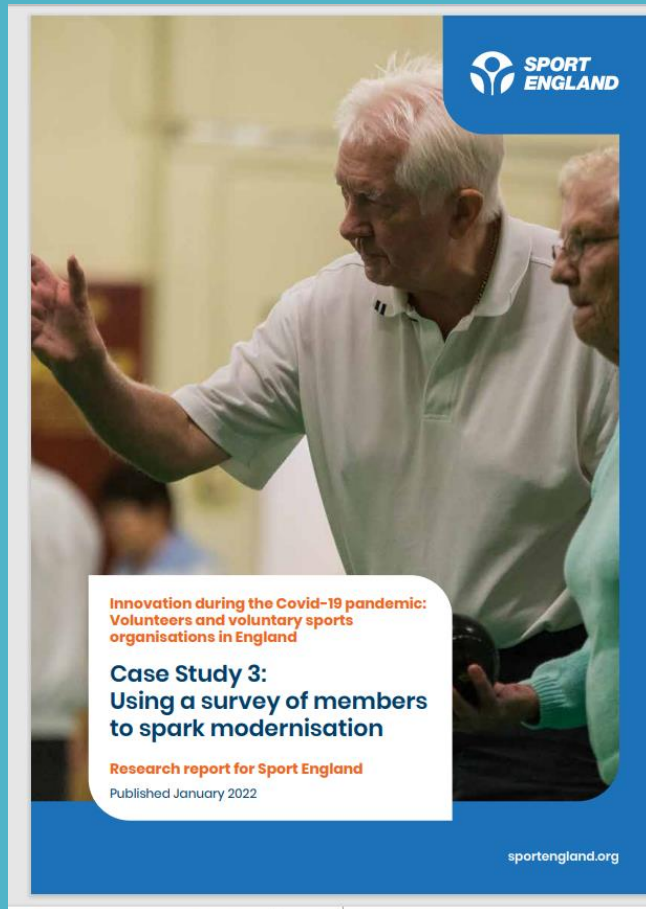
"Covid provided a window of opportunity to introduce the change. It was something I had been thinking about, but I didn't know how. How would I go about it? How do I manage it? But because there was this whole concept of bubbles, it was "Oh, wow, that's how I'll do it". It's only a limited number in the bubble and so that's how I'm going to do it....If there was no pandemic, I think it would have just been a concept, and it would have been "ah, we'll think about this".

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Click to add text

Digital Exclusion



Some of the most elderly volunteers stepped down from their volunteering duties because they were either reluctant or unable to use the technology.

"The biggest challenge was for the Green Stewards who had always just taken the money off people, put it in a bag and put it in the safe. Suddenly, it's right, could you click this on the computer to say that they've paid... but I mean honestly it, it's really hard ... we lost a lot of green stewards because they didn't make that leap. "

Significant Innovations Continue?



Many say the innovation is now
accepted normal practice (52/74)



Just over half say continue after
pandemic

Lessons from the cases



Eight short case studies that showcase innovative practices in sports volunteering:

Case Study 1: Introducing technology to enhance participation

Case Study 2: Forming buddy groups to enhance engagement

Case Study 3: Using a survey of members to spark modernisation

Case Study 4: Using social media to attract new members

Case Study 5: Purchasing own land to offer an outdoor format of the sport

Case Study 6: Getting involved in the local community

Case Study 7: Implementing club membership management app

Case Study 8: Increasing Volunteer Inclusion and Diversity

Sport England
21 Bloomsbury Street
London WC1B 3HF

sportengland.org

Bayfirth
Research

Case Study 3: Using a survey of members to spark modernisation

Sport: Bowls

Size of club: 130 (although had been as high as 280 pre-covid)

No of volunteers: 30

Own premises/land: No, lease property

Age Range: Average age is 75

Paid staff: None

What is the innovation?

During the Covid-19 lockdown the club conducted a survey of member satisfaction. The survey sought views on the club and recommendations for taking the club forward (looking forward to post-lockdown). Members responded and suggested that the club should modernise. For example, some members asked that the club implement an online bookings and payments system.

As a result of the feedback, the club took steps to implement changes. As well as implementing online bookings and payment system, they also upgraded their website. The new website sought to present a more vibrant image of the club, with the showcasing of the activities and events within the club (e.g. leagues, open sessions, social events).

Why was this innovation implemented?

The club realised that the membership of the club was predominantly older, white and middle class. There were major concerns that older members would not return to the sport after the Covid-19 pandemic. The club realised that it had to attract new members if it was to have a long-term future. The member survey provided a mechanism for opening up the debate. For example:

“It was the questionnaire that highlighted how dated [the website] was, and then it was undoubtedly Covid that provided the leverage to move it forward.”

What impact did this innovation have on the club as a whole?

The online booking and payment system streamlined the booking process and made accounting easier. It also meant that the club was able to comply with UK government Covid-19 regulations when they re-opened after the lockdown. For example, they could take online payments and therefore avoid using cash.

What impact did this innovation have on sports volunteers?

Although the club's volunteer base shrank, the implementation of technology meant volunteers could be more efficient. An enormous amount of time was saved by not having to make bookings manually and handling cash.

Some of the most elderly volunteers stepped down from their volunteering duties because they were either reluctant or unable to use the technology. For example, the club lost a lot of Green Stewards who had previously been involved in managing bookings and payments.

“The biggest challenge was for the Green Stewards who had always just taken the money of people put it in a bag and put it in the safe. Suddenly, it's right, could you click this on the computer to say that they've paid... but I mean honestly it, it's really hard ... we lost a lot of green stewards because they didn't make that leap.”

What were the challenges of implementing this innovation?

There was resistance within the club to the changes. As one volunteer in favour of the changes said, 'it's been hard'. Even though some members have since accepted the changes once they saw it operate in practice, their acceptance was still 'grudging'.

“ [Given the choice], I think some would still go back.... the older ones would be happy to see it go back.”

There were also challenges in bringing volunteers on board with the changes. Some volunteers stepped down. That said, good communication helped to keep as many volunteers on board as possible:

“Don't underestimate the impact on your traditional volunteer and you might need to think about a new way of managing volunteers, which we have done.... Where its volunteers, you have to be mindful that it presents real challenges because people could just walk away. They can say "I don't want to do this anymore". So, I think it's about bringing people with you. It's really important that you communicate as you do it, so that everyone's in the loop as much as you can while you're developing it and what the aims are why you're doing it. Set out why we're doing this...and why it will be good for the club. I think you've got to win the hearts and minds of your volunteers.”

For those volunteers that remained, it was also important to provide them with training. For example, the club provided training on how to use the new technology.

What prevented this innovation from happening before Covid-19 restrictions?

The volunteer demographic and a hesitancy to adopt change, especially digital technology were a barrier to change. It was difficult to build any sort of consensus for change.

Case Study 8: Increasing volunteer inclusion and diversity

Sport: Cricket

Size of club: 300

No of volunteers: Unknown for whole club, although 5 female volunteers for girls group

Own premises/land: No, lease playing field from an independent school

Age Range: 5-75

Paid staff: Coaches

What is the innovation?

The club created a new role of 'team manager' for its girls' cricket sessions. The role was created to assist the team coach with non-coaching aspects of delivery and offer general support and assistance to the girls. The club encouraged Mums and other females to fill these roles, even if they did not know anything about the sport of cricket.

Why was this innovation implemented?

The role was created to ensure Covid-19 requirements were adhered to. In particular, there was a requirement to operate coaching sessions in small groups and to enforce hand sanitising and social distance rules. Furthermore, the new role was designed to recruit more women as volunteers and raise the profile of women within the sport.

What impact did this innovation have on the club as a whole?

The involvement of more women as team managers has created a positive, nurturing and supportive role for the girls in the cricket team.

What impact did this innovation have on sports volunteers?

The innovation helped to recruit new female volunteers for the club. It has also increased the 'visibility of women in the game' and helped to overcome the perception that cricket is 'a dad's game'.

"More women are now saying 'ah there is a role for me to play here, okay, let me get involved'."

What were the challenges faced when implementing this innovation?

There was some resistance from established coaches and other volunteers who felt that team managers should know more about the sport. Since cricket has hitherto been a male dominated sport, much of this resistance came from male

club members. The challenge was overcome by making the team manager a supportive role, not a coaching role.

What prevented this innovation from happening before Covid-19 restrictions?

There was a desire to create a similar role prior to Covid-19, however there was uncertainty about how to implement it. The requirement for small group sessions provided a window of opportunity to introduce the change.

"It was something I had been thinking about, but I didn't know how. How would I go about it? How do I manage it? But because there was this whole concept of bubbles, it was 'Oh, wow, that's how I'll do it'. It's only a limited number in the bubble and so that's how I'm going to do it...If there was no pandemic, I think it would have just been a concept, and it would have been 'ah, we'll think about this'."



Reflections on Innovation



Embracing Innovation



Capacity



Policy directives or local level

Embracing Innovation

Pandemic safety restrictions, opportunity, do things differently, think strategically

- *"covid... provided the leverage, if you like, to move it forward."*
- *"This is something we had been considering doing for some time but had never found time to implement."*

Quick decisions, positive or tolerated attitude to change

Big bang, softly-softly, valuing club/club future, social benefits

Capacity to Innovate

Enthusiasm, time, energy, persuasion, technical skills (for digital – confident ability to use technology), patience

- *"Where it's volunteers ...it does present real challenges because people could just walk away, you know? They can say 'I don't want to do this anymore'. So, I think bringing people with you, it's really important, ... so that everyone's in the loop as much as you can while you're developing it and you know what the aims are why you're doing it."*

Win over others – risk of volunteer loss

Policy directives or local level

Top down – interpretation and adapt to local context

Safety – guidance and compliance

Technology and communications – some guidance

Otherwise, local level solutions to locally identified problems

Will only take on board NSO guidance if see local value

Ownership of the solution influences the commitment to seeing it through.

Recommendations



Linked to innovations that were identified:

- *Digital skills development, communication, volunteer development*

Linked to the process of innovation:

- *Conditions conducive to innovation, creating norms, networks, space and supporting tools*

Recommendations



Stand out innovations that would be replicated/scaled up and evaluated

- NSO online peer support forum
- NSO digital inclusivity tools
- CSO focus on wellbeing and mental health of volunteers and members
- Softer approaches to develop innovation take up- wanting to do what they experience (dropping digital ideas)
- Process of innovation with reluctant fellow volunteers e.g., CSO revamp

Conclusions

Volunteers can be effective innovators when they and their organisations see the problem to be overcome requires a new solution.

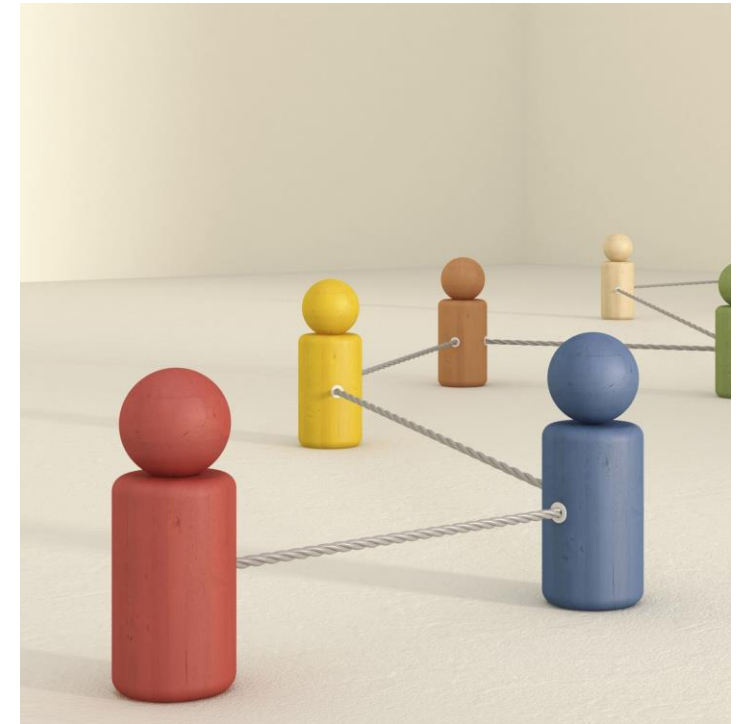


The pandemic created conditions conducive to innovation;

- Justification for and tolerance of, change
- A need for different ways of doing things
- The cohesion of volunteers in a crisis
- Ability to make quick decisions
- Seeing immediate benefit of actions
- Use of national-level support but also ownership of creative local solutions

Creating an innovation culture

- Consider how innovation could be presented as the norm, and how having innovated already can be a stepping-stone.
- Form a network of innovation champions to support others with how to; achieve change, bring others on board, use skills of persuasion.
- Form a mentoring, peer working group for leaders looking to achieve major change in CSOs and keep them connected.
- Consider how to create space for volunteers to create and innovate perhaps by supporting volunteer sabbaticals or projects.
- Offer support with how to create and innovate as simple tools for development, how to make a case to others, ideas or templates.



Reports

The reports and case studies can be found at:

[summary report](#)

[full report](#)

With case studies also available [stand alone.](#)



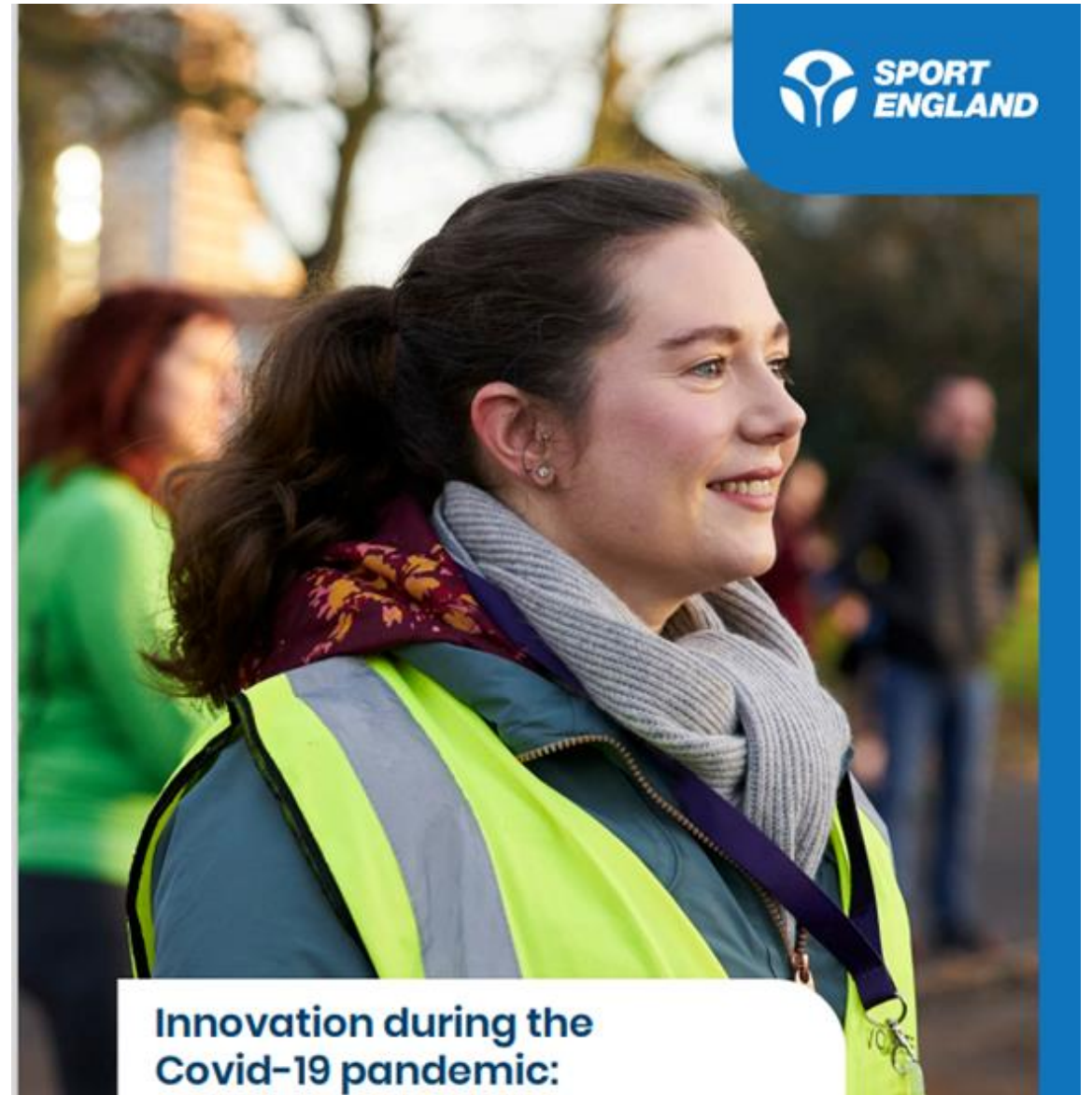
**Innovation during the
Covid-19 pandemic:
Volunteers and voluntary
sports organisations in England**

Summary report

Research for Sport England

Published January 2022

Questions



**Innovation during the
Covid-19 pandemic:**

Discussion

Suggested questions

- What interests you from the research?
- Is there innovation from during the pandemic, within your workforce, that you want to keep and how can this be achieved?
- What innovation in workforce do you want to develop?
- What helps workforce innovation?
- What are the challenges with innovation and how can you address these?
- What are your main workforce challenges and how can innovation be used to address these?
- How could peer networking, across the sport workforce, enhance and support innovation?

Contacts – Please get in touch with us with any comments or questions.

The research on which this workshop is based was commissioned by Sport England and carried out by Bayfirth Research Ltd and associates from Northumbria and Sheffield Universities.

Research Team:

Dr Lindsay Findlay-King : lindsay.findlay-king@northumbria.ac.uk

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Dr Geoff Nichols: g.nichols@sheffield.ac.uk

Dr Fiona Reid : fiona.reid@bayfirth.co.uk

SVRN link for information or to join our network:

<https://sports-volunteer-research-network.org.uk/>

Twitter: @svrnUK



Sport and Physical Activity Workforce Network

– *10 min break*

18th November, 2021

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Together Fund London Workforce Network

Alex Gibbons
26th April 2022



Introduction

The Together Fund is an evolution of the Tackling Inequalities Fund, targeting these under-represented groups:

- Lower socio-economic groups
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities
- Disabled people
- People with long-term health conditions.

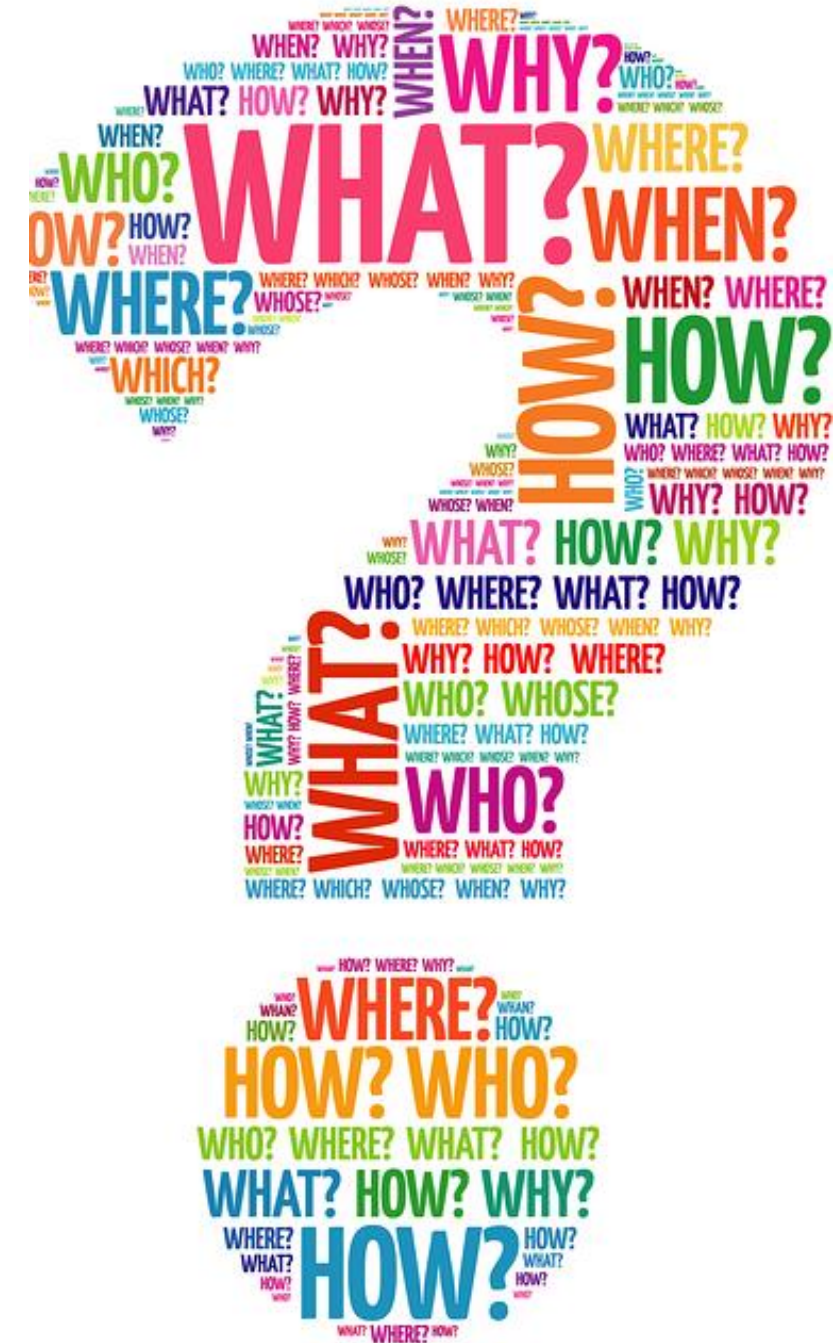


Community Engagement

- Supporting community organisations to reach and engage their audience in movement/physical activity – **creating a line of sight to movement/physical activity/sport**
- Increasingly focus on supporting organisations to **recover and grow** in this period whilst acknowledging in some instances there will still need to be some support for **immediate hardship**. We trust in our partners to make the judgement of what is needed and where in this regard.

6 Key Together Fund Questions

1. Will this investment impact upon at least one of the **four priority audiences**?
2. Has the requirement arisen as a direct result of this community group or audience being **adversely affected as a result of COVID-19**?
3. **What issues does the funding help to resolve** in improving access to take part in sport and physical activity for the target audience?
4. Will this investment help a community group **to recover and grow or continue to survive as a result of hardship**? If hardship, please set out in the application how this investment will enable the community organisation to continue beyond the immediacy of this short-term investment.
5. Is this project directly funding the provision of physical activity or if not, **how will it support the delivery of physical activity in the immediate future**?
6. Will the funding go directly to a **trusted community organisation** rather than be directly delivered by the National Partner or Active Partnership?



Overview and funding criteria

Launch mid-May

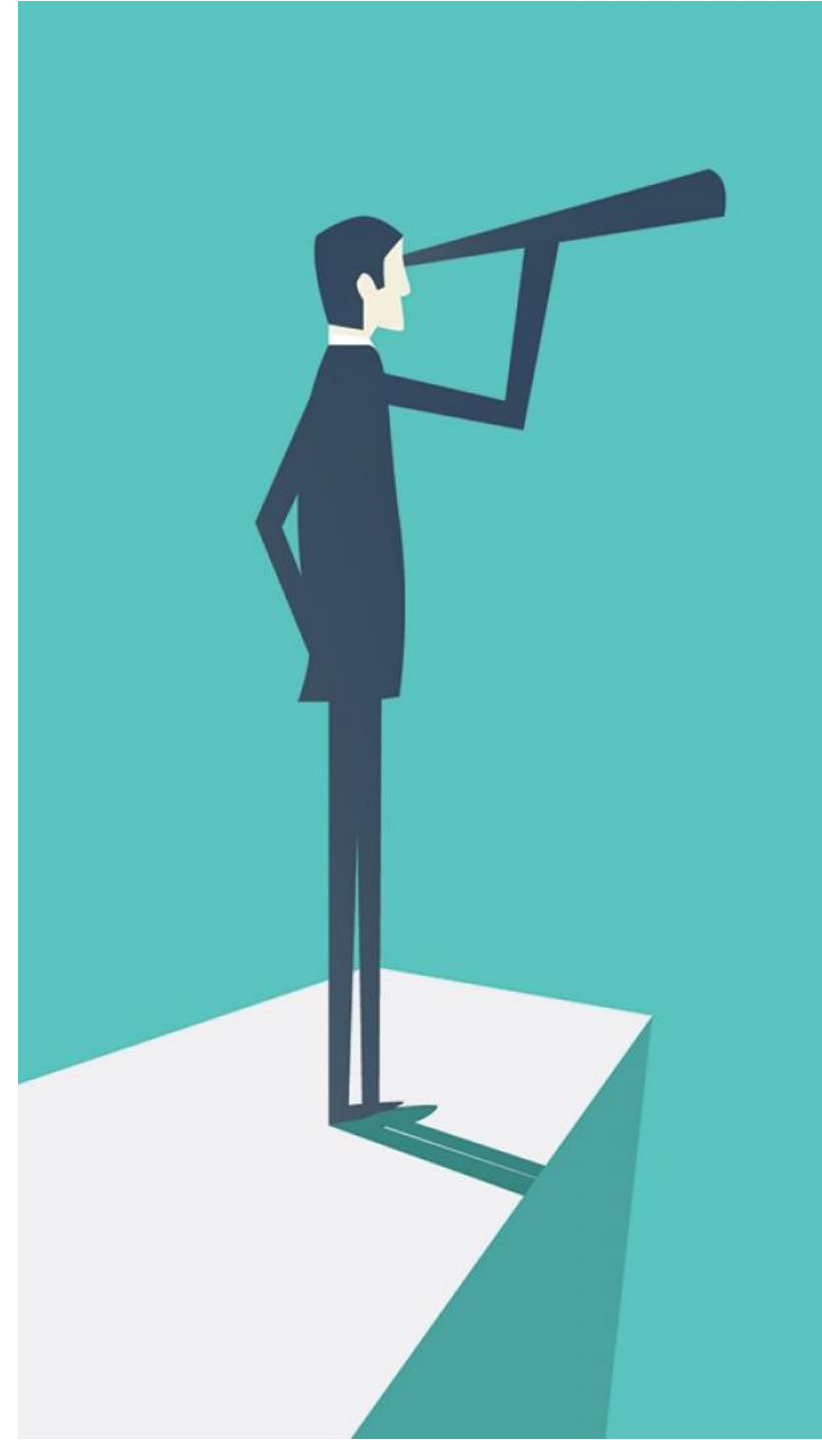
Maximum £10k per project

Funding must reach community organisations

Funding period up to March'23

More emphasis on evaluation and learning

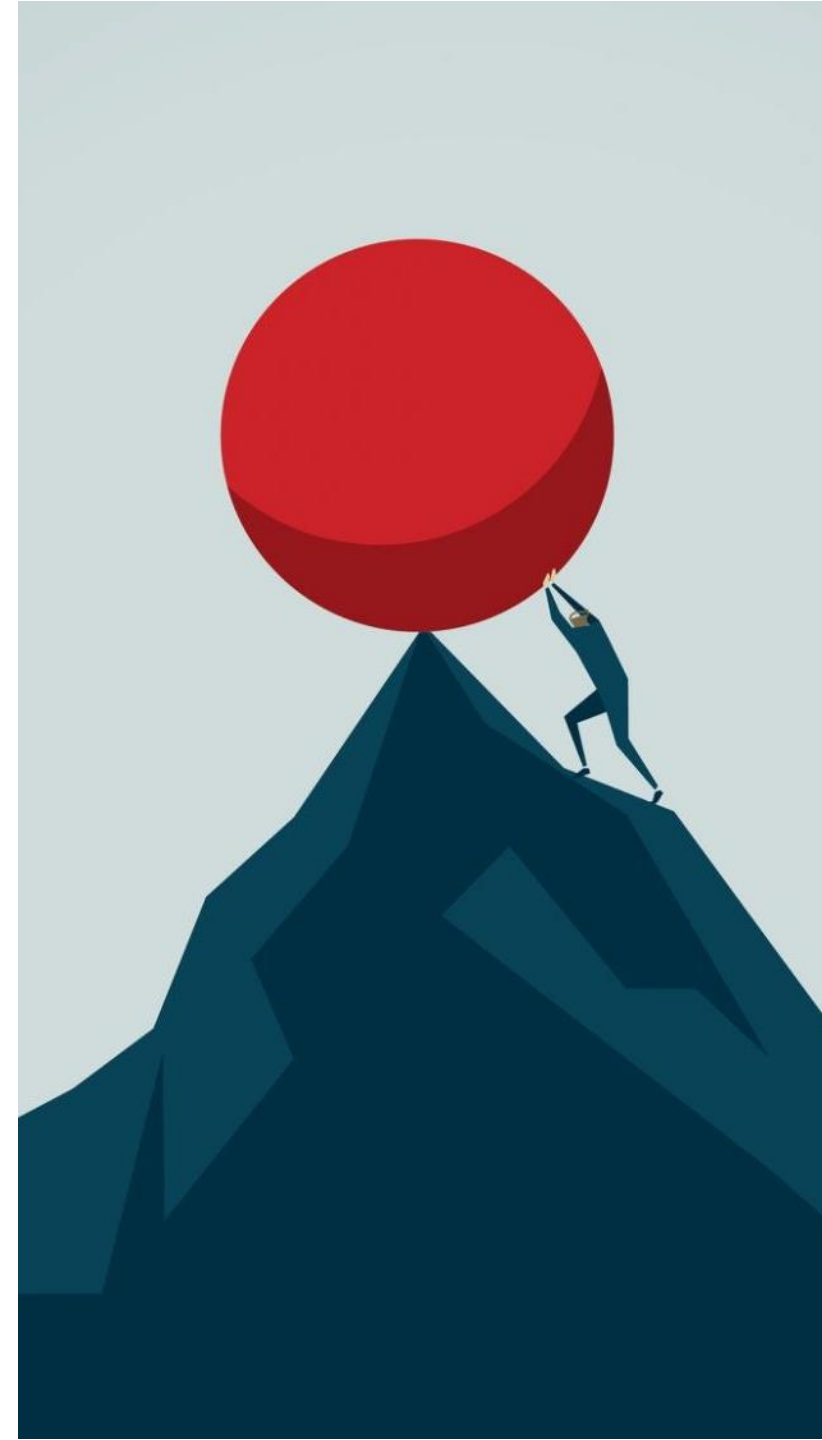
More emphasis on workforce (resilience)...



Resilience

“In supporting community organisations to recover and grow, we are keen to support further resilience work including opportunities to develop teams/workforce.

This could include volunteering/coaching and leadership. We want to invest in ways that help strengthen the role community organisations play.”



How can you apply for funding?

Funding Approach - Commissioned Projects

- Approach us with your idea!
- We're very keen to fund resilience projects linked to workforce and will prioritise suitable projects that come from this network
- We'll prioritise projects that are replicable and scalable
- Accepting applications from May
- Application via "Applied"

Funding Approach - Commissioned Projects



Enfield



Haringey



Hillingdon



K&C



Redbridge



Southwark



Westminster



Hackney



Lewisham

Funding Approach – Open Round

- Open late June/early July
- Round to be focused on a chosen theme (to be agreed and shared in coming weeks)
- Support package (inc. guidance and dummy applications)
- New organisations encouraged



Funding Approach – Devolved Funding

- Agreement with strategic partner
- Potential to secure more than £10k and reach community organisations within strategic partner's network



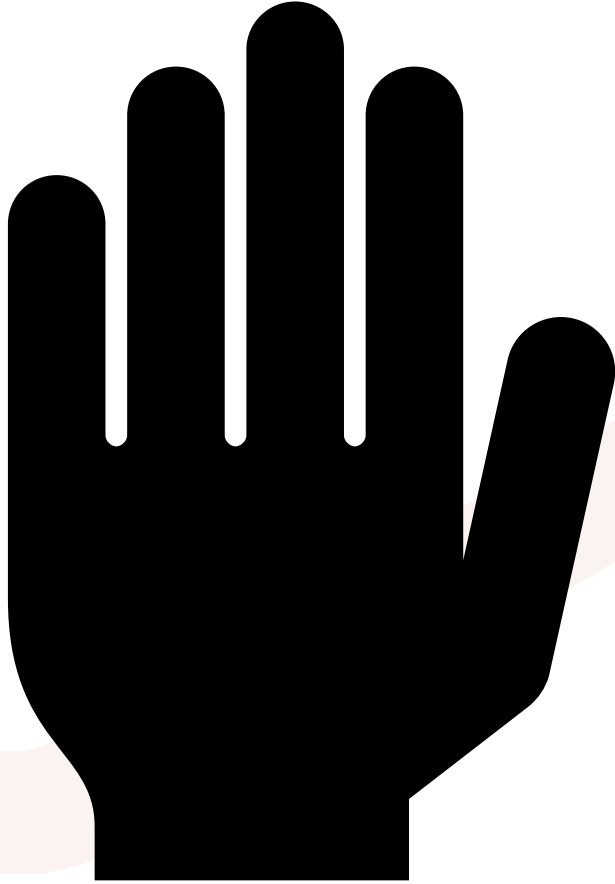
Decision-making process

- London Sport approval
- Sport England sign off





Make sure you register your interest...



https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=nHkhZz1jYki1ZLm4_F7Kg0JkSgTN2n9Em1E9IN56kU9UOEZaODY4REo1TDIaRzBCNU5XODNJNfc4NC4u



Thanks for attending



Make sure you are registered



Tell your colleagues



Share your thoughts

The logo for London Sport is a white shield-shaped emblem with a pointed bottom. Inside the shield, the words "LONDON" and "SPORT" are stacked vertically in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The background of the entire image is a solid red color.

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