



# Love sport

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An evaluation of Sanctuary Group's sport and physical activity programme

*July 2018*

Supported by:



*Love sport: an evaluation of  
Sanctuary Group's sport and  
physical activity programme,  
Frances Harkin and Christina  
Knudsen, HACT*

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# Foreword

Sanctuary was established nearly 50 years ago to provide housing and care to those who need it. We only exist to meet that social purpose and we recognise that providing housing goes beyond bricks and mortar to supporting the aspirations of our residents to develop successful and sustainable communities.

Our Love Sport programme, which launched in 2015, was designed in conjunction with Sport England to evidence how partnership working can successfully facilitate participation in physical activity at a grassroots level. We were delighted to work with Sport England, and by accessing our established community networks, local knowledge and insight, combined with their expertise, we have been able to engage with people who are perceived to be 'hard to reach'.

Through this programme, we had the opportunity to run new and different physical activities, in neighbourhoods across the country and to test approaches to engagement, activity and evaluation which gave us some important learning points.

By working with a broad range of community partners, from youth groups to wellbeing experts, we were able to gather a deeper understanding of the people we are reaching, what interests them, what motivates them to become active and what helps them to maintain an active lifestyle.

We also had the opportunity to challenge ourselves to engage people who do not traditionally take part in local community activities. This helped us to understand the approaches that work best and the results confirmed our belief in the importance of working with trusted local partners, people who are known to and respected by the local community.

This report, coupled with on-going learning through our community partnerships, will help to shape our approach to community engagement, partnerships and co-design in the future so that we can continue to have a positive impact on people's lives.

**Marie-Claire Wattison**

Head of Community Investment  
Sanctuary Group

## Contents

Foreword	3
Executive summary	5
Introduction	7
Background context	7
Sanctuary and Love Sport	7
Selecting the areas for Love Sport delivery	9
Evaluating the Love Sport programme	11
Quantitative research element	12
Qualitative research element	15
Engagement and impact of Love Sport	17
Activity profiles	17
Engagement	17
Motivation to take part	23
Wider impact	24
Social impact	30
Summary of Love Sport achievements	31
Delivering Love Sport	33
Community anchors and assets	33
Relationships	34
Catalysts	35
Key learning and recommendations for the housing sector	36
Programme implementation and delivery	36
Consider the target audience	36
Work in partnership	38
Data collection	38
Conclusions	41
Delivering sport and physical activity in the housing sector	41
Strategic alignment between the housing and sport sectors	41
Appendix	43

# Summary

The benefits of physical activity for health, wellbeing and individual and social development are well documented and increasingly recognised by policy makers and funding bodies across different sectors including government, health and housing. For housing providers, the delivery of community programmes involving physical activity are becoming more widespread due to the benefits these activities can have in supporting the development of residents and communities and contributing towards numerous individual, social, economic and health outcomes. Recognising these benefits, Sanctuary, in partnership with Sport England, established Love Sport, a programme that encompasses a variety of activities delivered by numerous delivery partners and is intended to get more people engaged in sport and physical activity.

Sanctuary uses an asset-based community development approach to deliver Love Sport. This approach involves 'doing with' rather than 'doing to' and focuses upon harnessing local people, knowledge and experiences to enhance the sustainable development of communities. Providing a local face for the organisation, local Sanctuary teams are key community anchors that can utilise their community knowledge and relationships with a wide range of delivery partners to establish effective and sustainable activities that will benefit residents. By working with communities and supporting local community partners Sanctuary can engage more people

in their community investment activities, helping them to embed change and reinforce existing relationships.

Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, this evaluation examines outcomes for participants, the social impact generated and looks to evaluate the delivery approaches taken by community partners to create a holistic picture of the Love Sport programme and understand what works well and what doesn't. The assessment of outcomes and social impact for the programme is based upon data collected for twelve activities delivered in five Love Sport locations across England: Banbury, Chester, Sheffield, Torbay and Hackney, between February 2016 and September 2017.

## Key findings

Love Sport activities engaged a total of 689 participants, including male and female participants of different ages who travelled a range of distances to attend activities. On average, these participants attended 50% of scheduled activity sessions.

After participating in the Love Sport programme:

- 41% of participants reported continuing with physical activity
- 15% of participants reported having greater confidence in themselves
- 13% of participants reported a greater feeling of belonging to their local neighbourhood

When looking specifically at social impact generated by the Love Sport programme:

- 442 people of different ages frequently attended a Love Sport activity
- 87 participants moved to a position of high confidence
- 72 participants moved to a higher position of feeling belonging to the neighbourhood
- Combined, these twelve activities created a social value total of £2,595,504.

The above findings demonstrate the impact Love Sport had for the communities engaged by the programme but this report also highlights the broader benefits for participants and their motivation for engagement. Improving fitness, meeting new people and losing weight were selected by participants as being the three main motivations for taking part in Love Sport activities. However, it is not just about health and fitness for many people, rather it is more often about seeking company with like-minded people and being active and socialising in an informal and relaxed environment. Community partners indicated that this improved participant's self-confidence, which in turn increased their sense of connectedness to their community giving them the confidence to volunteer or take part in other activities.

### **Key learning**

The evaluation highlights key recommendations that should be considered by housing providers when designing and implementing community investment programmes, particularly those with the

engagement of people in physical activity at its core:

- Making activities flexible and inclusive to enhance participant numbers and impact.
- Using appropriate techniques and methods to engage participants.
- Identifying and address barriers to participation.
- Identifying and work with the 'right fit' partner for the local context.
- Ensuring clarity about timepoint, purpose and responsibilities for data collection.

The evaluation also highlights the benefits that the provision of physical activity interventions has numerous benefits for housing providers, including:

- Improving the health and wellbeing of social housing residents.
- Facilitating engagement with adults and young people who may otherwise not engage.
- Raising profile in local areas, enhancing the level of trust and communication between organisations and their residents.
- Supporting social and community development.
- Contributing towards capacity building amongst local assets, including residents and community partners, to support long term and sustainable community development.

Ultimately, sport and physical activity interventions go beyond making people healthier, with positive benefits and impacts for those taking part, their families, communities and their housing providers.

# Introduction

## Background context

The benefits of physical activity for health, wellbeing and individual and social development are well documented and increasingly recognised by policy makers and funding bodies. This became evident with the release of *Sporting Futures: A New Strategy for An Active Nation* in December 2015 and Sport England's subsequent funding strategy in spring 2016, both of which focus upon the social, economic and wellbeing benefits of participating in sport and physical activity.<sup>1</sup> Historically, there has been an emphasis upon elite sports, whereas a core output for these strategies is the intention to get more people regularly and meaningfully engaged in sport, physical activity and volunteering.

There is also a greater emphasis upon engaging people and communities from all backgrounds, particularly those who encounter barriers to participating in sport and physical activity and are often hard to reach such as:

- women;
- older people;
- people with disabilities; and
- people from lower socio-economic groups.

The role that social housing providers can play in engaging people in sport and physical activity is poorly understood, yet the potential for the housing sector to support the delivery of the Government and Sport England's sport strategies is significant. As asset and neighbourhood based social enterprises, social housing providers work closely with groups identified as a priority for engagement, particularly children and families, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, older and vulnerable people, all of whom tend to be less active and are often the hardest to engage in sport and physical activity. Through investment, of resources and funding, social housing providers are already reaching Sport England's target groups on a day to day basis.

There is increasing recognition within the social housing sector as to the role that sport and physical activity interventions can play in supporting the positive development of residents and communities. For instance, sporting initiatives have the potential to have significant impact, contributing towards numerous individual, social, economic and health outcomes. With all of this in mind, Sanctuary, in partnership with Sport England, established Love Sport.

## Sanctuary and Love Sport

Sanctuary Group provides housing and care to more than 200,000 people in England and Scotland. Beyond the provision of housing, it places a significant emphasis upon

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<sup>1</sup>: see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sporting-future-a-new-strategy-for-an-active-nation>;  
<https://www.sportengland.org/news-and-features/news/2016/may/19/sport-england-triples-investment-in-tackling-inactivity/>;  
<https://www.sportengland.org/media/10629/sport-england-towards-an-active-nation.pdf>

devoting skills and resources to enhancing the lives of Sanctuary residents through its Community Investment programme.<sup>2</sup> It does this by investing in community led initiatives that support the aspirations and needs of residents by working in partnership with local groups to build capacity within communities. The Love Sport programme sits within this wider investment in communities and is intended to get more people living in targeted locations to engage in sport and physical activity.

Established in partnership with Sport England, under Sport England's New Market Development funding stream, Love Sport is jointly funded by Sanctuary and Sport England with an investment of £532,000 over a five-year period. Sport England is interested in exploring and understanding the value of experimentation and working with non-traditional partners, such as housing providers, to deliver sporting and physical activity interventions.

At the same time, Sanctuary recognises the potential to engage and improve the physical wellbeing of customers through a localised network of community based groups and organisations. Together Sport England and Sanctuary are keen to understand how their partnership works in practice to bring benefits to people and

communities who are least likely to take part in regular physical activity.

There are a wide range of individual localised Love Sport activities delivered by local community partners, with different target audiences, within the overarching Love Sport programme. The programme commenced in January 2015 and has evolved rapidly and is due to finish in March 2019.

Love Sport is managed centrally by a programme coordinator and business apprentice, who oversee programme development and delivery as well as data collection procedures, based at Sanctuary. They work with local staff and organisations to translate the vision for Love Sport on the ground, an approach that recognises the value and necessity of local insights for engaging people in sport and physical activity.

This knowledge has been gained through existing neighbourhood development practices and an ethos of partnership working with community partners already working in the communities. This also ensures that the programme is both locally responsive and aligns to Sanctuary's Community Investment strategy.

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<sup>2</sup>:<https://www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk/community-investment>



### **Selecting the areas for Love Sport delivery**

To underpin the delivery of Love Sport and capitalise on existing networks and relationships between communities and Sanctuary staff, six areas with existing community investment activity were chosen; Banbury, Chester, Sheffield, Torbay, Hackney and Rochford. Beyond these six main areas of delivery, Love Sport activities were also delivered in Ely and Scarborough. These areas all contain significant densities of Sanctuary owned homes and high rates of health and economic deprivation.

These six locations also align with the organisation's neighbourhood model, where Sanctuary have a large density of residents and a local neighbourhood team coordinate community action, meaning there is a context in which to build networks and develop relationships with community partners.

This evaluation focuses upon five areas: Banbury, Chester, Sheffield, Torbay and Hackney (see page 10)

Inequalities in economic and health factors have an adverse impact upon social housing residents and their families, with economically and health deprived individuals more likely to require additional and substantial support from health and support agencies, including housing providers.

Rates of childhood and adult obesity, physical inactivity and IMD (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) scores are also particularly high in these areas, with key issues such as:<sup>3</sup>

- Higher than average numbers of people living in neighbourhoods with poor levels of health;
- Higher than expected incidences of cancer, especially breast, colorectal, and lung cancer;
- Higher than expected incidences of mortality related to stroke, coronary disease and circulatory disease;
- Lower than average levels of healthy eating levels;
- Higher than average levels of binge drinking;
- Above average rates of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants;
- Above average rates of working age, between 16-64, (DWP) benefit claimants;<sup>4</sup>
- High rates of children living in 'out of work' households;
- Above average incidences of anti-social behaviour.

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3: These indicators are an aggregate for Cherwell, Cheshire, Sheffield and Torbay and do not reflect social housing residents in England generally. The average is in comparison to the England national average rather than UK or local area average. The indicators are drawn from HACT's Community Insight tool

4: Working age DWP Benefits are benefits payable to all people of working age (16-64) who need additional financial support due to low income, worklessness, poor health, caring responsibilities, bereavement or disability. The main working-age benefits are: Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support.

Figure 1: This evaluation focuses upon five areas: Banbury, Chester, Sheffield, Torbay and Hackney. These five areas are plotted on a map in the below image.



People living in social housing are also more likely to face barriers to participation in physical activity. A recent study from Street Games and London School of Economics asserts that cost is the biggest barrier to participation in sport and physical activity for young people living in the UK.<sup>5</sup> Taking into consideration costs associated with youth sport programmes, both direct (membership fees, equipment, jerseys etc.) and indirect (travel cost, taking time off work, etc.), engaging in sport and physical activity is an additional expense that many living within social housing and the Love Sport locations are unable to afford. Through consultation with residents, Sanctuary identified that money is a significant barrier and the average family has very little room in their household budget for healthy activities. The likelihood of people in these communities being active can therefore be quite low.

Sanctuary concluded that the levels of health and economic deprivation in these areas, compounded by economic barriers demonstrated an urgent need for an accessible intervention that promotes physical activity. Improving access to sport and physical activity, as well as making activities and projects inclusive and open to all, is likely to increase participation and have a positive impact upon health and wellbeing.

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5: Living the Goal Posts: Poverty and access to sport for young people, [http://www.streetgames.org/sites/default/files/StreetGames\\_Report\\_3%2012%2015\\_final%20with%20cover.pdf](http://www.streetgames.org/sites/default/files/StreetGames_Report_3%2012%2015_final%20with%20cover.pdf)

## **Evaluating the Love Sport programme**

Sanctuary aims to focus its investment to enhance the lives of their residents and is motivated to ensure accountability and transparency with all the work that it does in communities. It commissioned HACT to carry out an independent evaluation of the Love Sport programme, to consider the outcomes of interest for both Sanctuary, community partners and other housing providers. The evaluation is intended to:

- Understand the impact of activities upon individuals taking part, including social impact, to attribute value to the personal outcomes experienced by individuals beyond health benefits;
- Explore which activities have or haven't worked in different contexts, and why;
- Feed into broader service and community investment planning at Sanctuary as well as funding decisions at Sport England;
- Review the strategic case (or not) for Sanctuary and the social housing sector to engage in supporting physical activity within its communities; and
- Contribute towards an evidence base for delivering and supporting these types of interventions in the social housing sector.

To address these considerations, HACT and Sanctuary worked in collaboration to develop an evaluation framework using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to consider a cross section of Love Sport activities during the third and fourth year of the programme (January 2016 – January

2018) to capture and analyse data from a range of Love Sport participants.

### **Quantitative research element**

HACT met with key Sanctuary staff to define the aims and objectives of the Love Sport programme. Based on this, a standardised survey was designed to collect demographic information and outcome measures that could be used to measure the social value and wider impact of the Love Sport programme.

Participants completed the survey at two time points:

- Pre-survey - prior to participation at registration
- Post-survey - post-participation in the activity (approximately four weeks after the completion of the Love Sport activity cycle)

In addition to this, participant attendance records were collected by Love Sport community partners (see page 13).

### **Participant profiling**

Collecting participant demographic data provided an understanding of the profile of customers reached through the programme and the breakdown of characteristics such as gender and age.

### **Social value**

It is widely recognised that physical activities have other, often unquantifiable, benefits beyond health impacts. By measuring social impact, value can be attributed to the personal impact experienced by Love Sport participants.

To measure the social value generated, this evaluation used values from the UK Social Value Bank, which contains wellbeing values in monetary terms derived from the wellbeing valuation approach.<sup>6</sup> Three outcomes were selected from the UK Social Value Bank that reflect the aims of the Love Sport programme:

**1. Frequent moderate exercise**

**2. High confidence**

**3. Feeling belonging to the neighbourhood**

Each value requires a slightly different approach in how they are applied. Frequent moderate exercise is an activity value where

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<sup>6</sup>: Wellbeing valuation measures the success of a social intervention by how much it increases people's wellbeing. Rather than asking people how much something has improved their life, which can introduce psychological complexities and extensive data collection, wellbeing valuation analyses existing datasets of national surveys that instead reveal effects of wellbeing in a robust way. This can be valued by determining the equivalent amount of money needed to increase someone's wellbeing by the same amount. For more details on the wellbeing valuation approach and how the values were derived, see: Trotter, L., Vine, J., Leach, M. and Fujiwara, D. (2014) Measuring the Social Impact of Community Investment: A Guide to using the Wellbeing Valuation Approach. London: HACT.

Figure 2: Pre and post-survey records

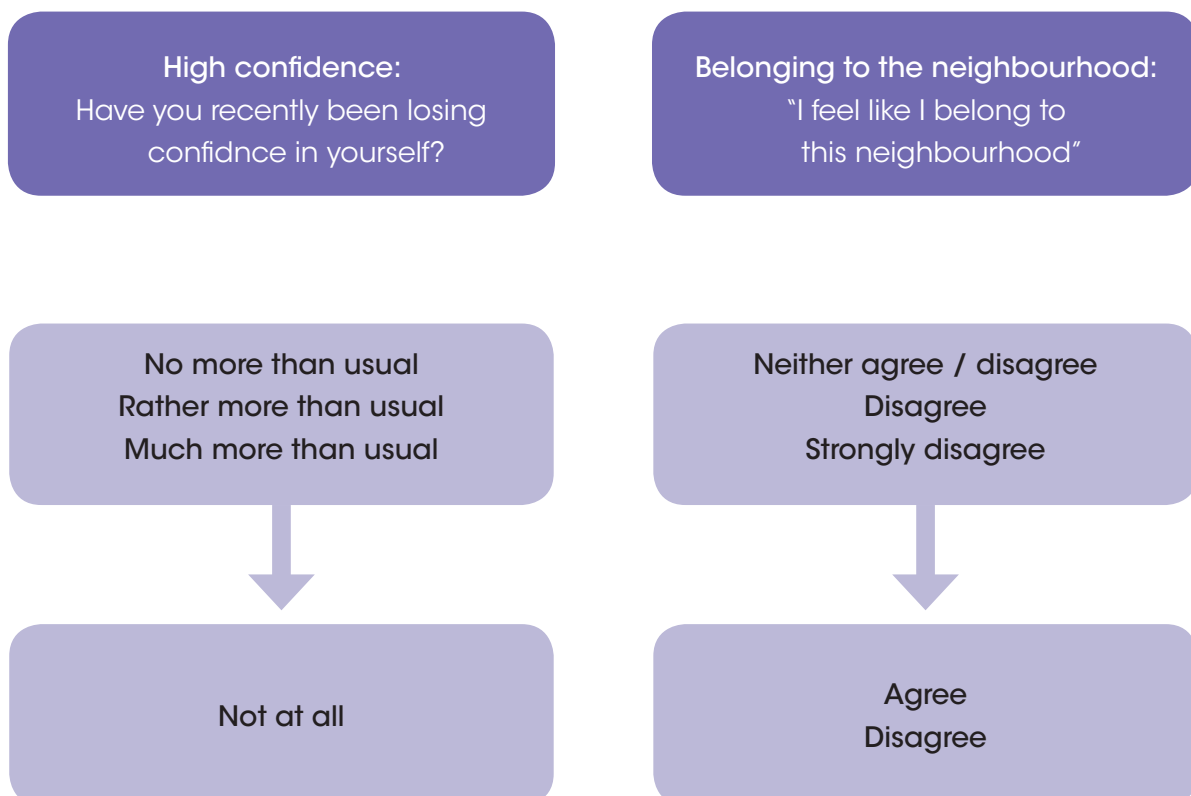
<p><i>Pre-survey</i></p> <p>Basic demographic information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender (Male, Female);</li> <li>• Age group (Under 25, 25-49, 50+);</li> <li>• Tenant – ‘Are you a Sanctuary resident?’;</li> <li>• Location – Address and Postcode.</li> </ul> <p>Physical activity levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active before – ‘Apart from this activity, in the past four weeks have you taken part in any exercise or physical activity that raised your heart rate and made you break a sweat?’</li> <li>• Amount of physical activity – ‘On average, how many minutes of physical activity per week do you take part in?’</li> </ul> <p>Social value questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Confidence – ‘Have you recently been losing confidence in yourself?’;</li> <li>• Feel belonging to neighbourhood - ‘I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood’</li> </ul> <p>Motivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your personal goals for taking part in the Love Sport programme?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Post-survey</i></p> <p>Physical activity levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active since the activity ended – ‘Since the Love Sport programme ended, have you taken part in any exercise or physical activity that raised your heart rate and made you break a sweat?’</li> <li>• Amount of physical activity – ‘On average how many minutes of physical activity per week do you take part in?’</li> </ul> <p>Social value questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Confidence – ‘Have you recently been losing confidence in yourself?’;</li> <li>• Feel belonging to neighbourhood – ‘I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood’</li> </ul> <p>Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you meet your personal goal for the Love Sport programme, if so, which one?</li> </ul>
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the social value is obtained by the person simply participating regularly in a project or activity. The average amount of social impact per person for this value is **£4,179** and is measured using records of attendance.

High confidence and feeling belonging to the neighbourhood are both outcome values generated by asking participants to answer questions both prior-to and post-

participation in an activity or project. These questions mirror questions used in national surveys and are therefore in line with how the values have been derived, ensuring a robust application. Applying the value is based on a significant progress up a scale, as shown in figure 1. The average amount of social impact per person for high confidence is **£13,080** and **£3,753** for feeling belonging to the neighbourhood.

Figure 3: Social value questions and required movement



As well as looking at high confidence and feeling belonging to the neighbourhood in the context of social value, the evaluation examines the movement of participants along the question scales in more detail to understand the direction and magnitude of participant movement.

#### *Retaining participation in physical activity*

This evaluation considered retention in physical activity in the context of social value as well as investigating the percentage of participants who continued to be physically active after participating in Love Sport. Retainment in physical activity is measured four weeks after the Love Sport activity ended and demonstrates behavioural change which will have continued positive benefits for the individual.

#### *Motivation and goal achievement*

The motivation for taking part in a Love Sport activity, as well as understanding whether participants managed to achieve this goal was also examined. This provides insights that can be used to inform future delivery.

#### **Qualitative research element**

Qualitative research is particularly useful in exploring and understanding people's behaviour, needs and experiences as well as the impact a service or intervention has upon their behaviour and experiences. It adds more descriptive information than other types of engagement, allowing participants and partners to give more nuanced and detailed

responses to the programme, particularly with regards to what may, or may not, have worked in terms of improving the numbers of people participating in sport and physical activities.

A deeper understanding of the overall Love Sport programme has been gained from using a range of qualitative research methods including:

- Semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with Sanctuary Neighbourhood teams as well as local community partners, and
- Participant observations, which were undertaken at four projects and activities to form focused case studies to add contextual detail about the projects in practice and benefits to individuals as well as provide insights into the implementation and impact of Love Sport in greater detail.

The case studies included in this report were selected to explore the diversity of local community partners, projects and local contexts and include:

- Activate Banbury in Banbury, Cherwell;
- Ballroom Dancing in Blacon, Chester;
- Mindful Movement in Shiregreen, Sheffield; and
- Funky Mondays in Paignton, Torbay.

The qualitative data has been analysed using a thematic approach with open coding to explore key themes and issues.

### *Graphic facilitation*

Alongside, and complementary to, the HACT evaluation, Sanctuary commissioned Julia Hayes (Inclusion Creativa) and her associate, Cara Holland (Graphic Change) to consult with participants who accessed Love Sport-funded activities using a more relaxed and informal approach. Using visual methods, they aimed to capture the journey of participants and their perspectives on the impact of activities, barriers to participation, supportive factors that encouraged their participation and suggestions for future programmes.

In total, Julia and Cara consulted with fifty-eight people. Using a semi-structured interview, Julia and Cara visually captured participant's views on the group they had accessed, the changes it had led to and their hopes for future programmes. This included individual drawings for participants as well as group responses and will be used as supplementary evidence. Excerpts of the graphics will feature in the report to exemplify points, and complete graphic images are included in the Appendix.

This evaluation draws upon the quantitative and qualitative research conducted by HACT, as well as the research undertaken by Inclusion Creativa and Graphic Change, to create a holistic picture of the impact generated by the Love Sport programme. It also explores what social housing providers and community partners should consider for successful project delivery in terms of

investment, resource and approach. This is important in analysing the programme, as it provides an understanding of the results and contributes to more effective future programmes in this space.



# Engagement and impact of Love Sport

This section explores the reach of Love Sport activities and the impact the programme has had on participants. The results presented in this section are based upon data received for 689 participants who took part in twelve Love Sport activities between February 2016 and September 2017. All data received has been cleansed and sense checked before any analysis has been conducted.

## Activity profiles

The charts on pages 18-19 show the profiles of twelve Love Sport activities as well as key characteristics of participants, including age and gender of participants and whether they are Sanctuary tenants or not.

## Engagement

Love Sport actively targeted and engaged a diverse range of people. Using the data collected we can examine certain characteristics in more detail to examine its reach and engagement.

### Gender

51% of participants  
were female

The twelve activities engaged both male and female participants relatively equally. As the participant numbers for both Activate Banbury and So-Fly Football were large, this can skew the results. By applying equal weights to the twelve activities we can account for this and results show that the

activities tended to engage more female participants (65%) than male overall.

There was variation across activities with some tending to engage more participants of one gender than others. These differences may be explained by the type of activity on offer and the perceptions that are widely held about these activities.

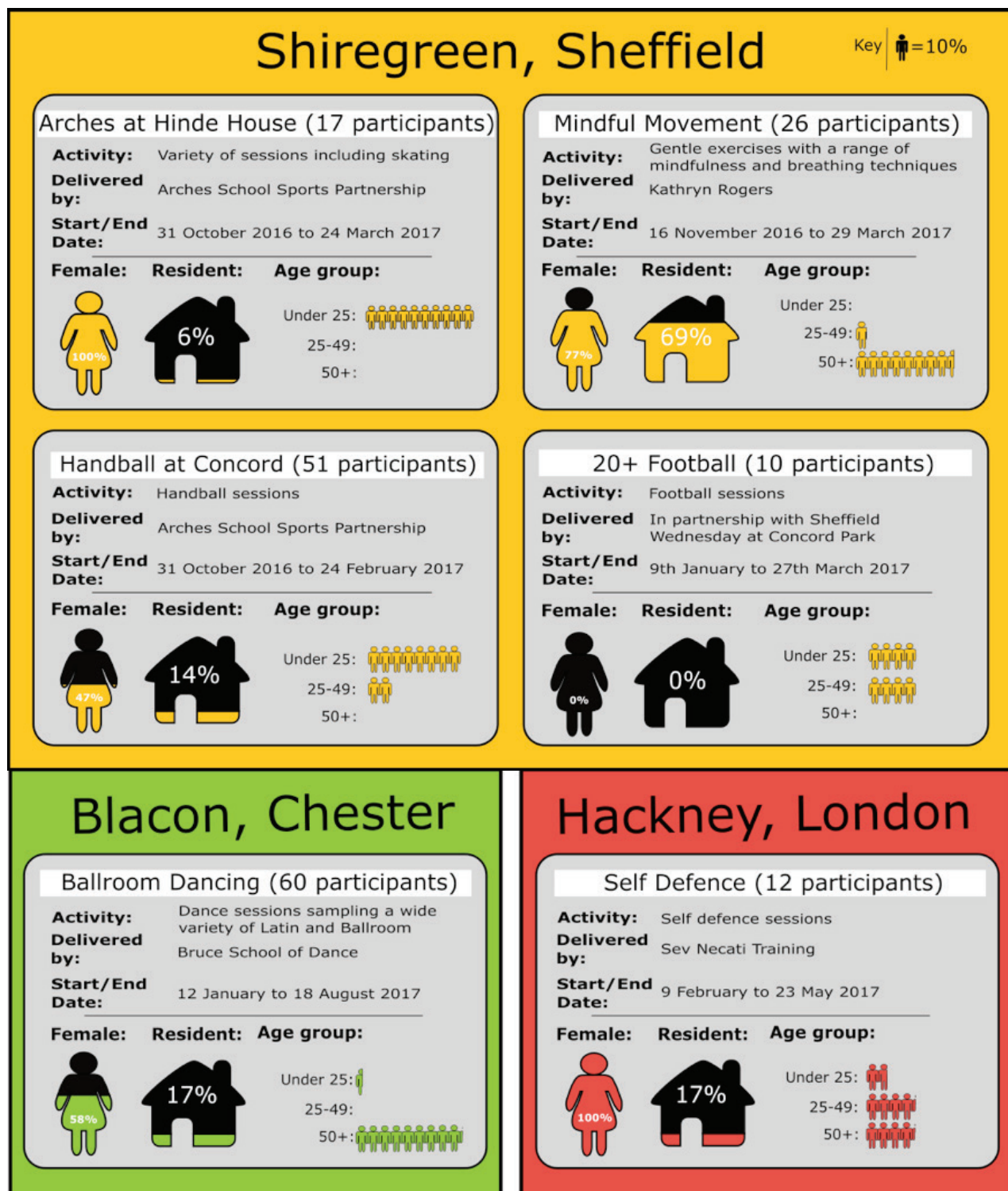
### Age:

64% were under 25  
11% were aged 25-49  
24% were aged 50 or over

The twelve activities engaged participants of all ages. Overall, most participants who attended one of the twelve Love Sport activities were under the age of 25 years. However, when applying equal weights to the twelve activities to consider the skewing effect of larger participant groups, there was a more even split across age groups; 39% under 25, 20% aged 25-49 and 36% aged 50 or over. However, the 25-49 group remained under-represented.

There was variation across activities with some activities tending to engage a specific age group. This demonstrates that Love Sport activities have successfully engaged intended target groups. For example, mindful movement and ballroom dancing are both activities aimed at older people, whereas activate Banbury, so-fly football and arches

Figure 4: profiles of twelve Love Sport activities as well as key characteristics of participants, including age and gender of participants and whether they are Sanctuary tenants or not.

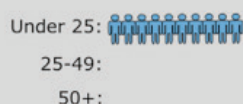


## Paignton, Torbay

### So-Fly Football (217 participants)

**Activity:** Football sessions  
**Delivered by:** So-Fly C.I.C  
**Start/End Date:** 25 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

**Female:** **Resident:** **Age group:**



### Retirement Living Scheme (34 participants)

**Activity:** Gentle chair based exercises  
**Delivered by:** Samantha Wright  
**Start/End Date:** 28 March to 1 September 2017

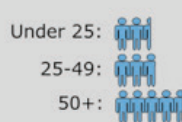
**Female:** **Resident:** **Age group:**



### Fitness and Food (37 participants)

**Activity:** Martial arts fitness teamed with healthy eating sessions  
**Delivered by:** Imagine Multicultural Group in partnership with Bret  
**Start/End Date:** 9 March to 11 September 2017

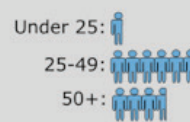
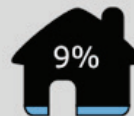
**Female:** **Resident:** **Age group:**



### Chelston Zumba (66 participants)

**Activity:** Zumba classes  
**Delivered by:** Chelston Action Group  
**Start/End Date:** 22 February 2016 to 31 March 2017

**Female:** **Resident:** **Age group:**

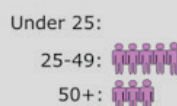


## Banbury, Cherwell

### Sunrise Fitness (17 participants)

**Activity:** Zumba and yoga sessions  
**Delivered by:** In partnership with Banbury based leisure centre and sole trader, Ildiko  
**Start/End Date:** 30 March to 4 August 2017

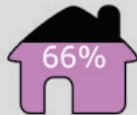
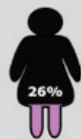
**Female:** **Resident:** **Age group:**



### Activate Banbury (140 participants)

**Activity:** Multi-sports sessions  
**Delivered by:** Cherwell District Council's Recreation and Sport Youth Activators  
**Start/End Date:** 1 May 2016 to 31 March 2017

**Female:** **Resident:** **Age group:**



at Hinde House are activities all aimed at younger people.

#### **Tenants**

48% of participants  
were Sanctuary tenants

All twelve activities engaged both Sanctuary tenants as well as non-tenants from the wider community with most engaging small proportions of tenants. To account for the skewing effect of the activities with larger participant groups, equal weights were applied to the twelve activities, revealing activities tended to engage more non-tenants (63%) than tenants.

Activities, such as retirement living scheme and mindful movement, engaged more Sanctuary tenants (>65%) than others. This makes sense as these activities are delivered within a supported housing or retirement living scheme meaning there is a receptive audience in a fixed location and an opportunity to promote activities in communal areas.

#### **Distance travelled to attend activities**

On average, the distance  
travelled by participants was  
10 minutes or less

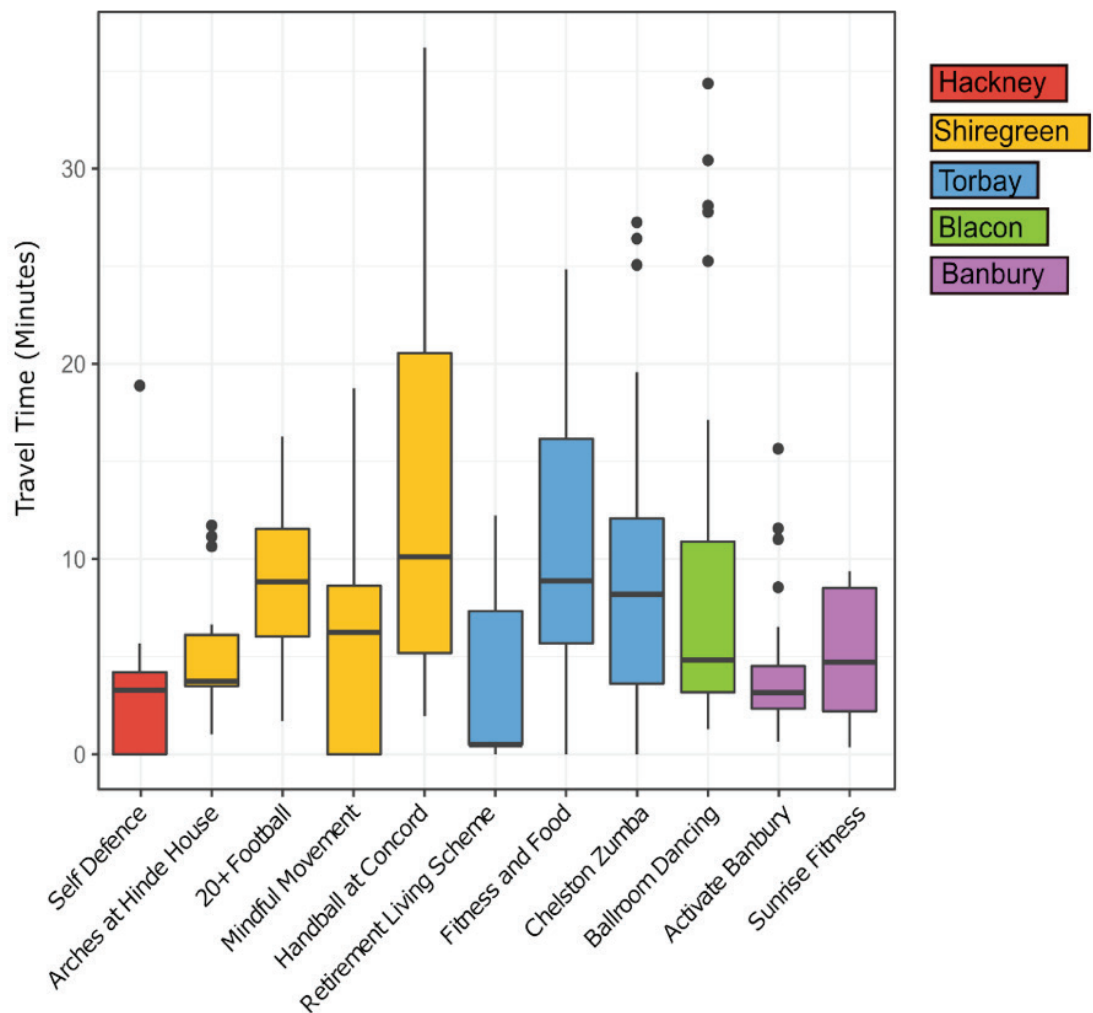
By looking at the distance that participants have travelled to attend activity sessions, we can explore the reach of Love Sport activities in more detail. It is recognised that participants will be using different modes of travel to attend the activities, such as public transport or walking. To provide a consistent comparison across activities, a measure of the time taken to drive in a car between the participant's home address and the activity venue has been used.

On average, the distance travelled by participants is 10 minutes or less, indicating that most participants live locally to venues (see figure 5, page 21)

There are numerous factors that can affect engagement with activities, but the proximity of venues to home addresses appears to be a key factor, compounded by access to transport. Interviews with community partners highlighted that younger and older people are more likely to attend local venues due to available travel options. For instance, the Retirement Living Scheme has a very low median travel time, however, the activity was delivered in four venues, with participants living in nearby Sanctuary owned retirement schemes.

Many Love Sport funded activities are place based and fixed to a location, whereas others move between venues to engage a wider range of participants. For instance, Cherwell District Council provide Activate

Figure 5: Travel times for each activity represented as a box plot; the coloured box indicating the range of travel times for most participants in the activity and the dark line indicating the median (middle) amount of time to travel. The lines extending from the colour boxes show the skew of the data, signifying the range of time to travel for each activity. The dots above are outliers, which are times that are significantly different to others in the groups.





Banbury sessions in different locations on a cyclical basis to encourage more young people to participate in physical activity. Most of those participating in Active Banbury sessions travelled for less than 10 minutes, indicating that more local people attend activity sessions. This reinforces the idea that the location of the activity is a key driver of engagement levels, with few participants travelling between localities. With many local young people living in rural areas, they often encounter issues with limited transport options and inability to walk to venues and facilities offering sport and physical activity.

Cherwell District Council reported a reluctance amongst many local parents to allow their children to join sessions in parks and other open green spaces on their own

because of concerns over safety. With that in mind, it actively uses parks and green spaces in local estates as well as facilities in local schools to provide lots of options for young people to take part. Staff also encourage parents to take part in sessions to address safety concerns and establish connections with the local community.

In contrast, Mindful Movement and Ballroom Dancing are both delivered in dedicated community centres that function as hubs for residents living in the immediate vicinity. These venues are also used to host a range of other activities, such as the local Women's Institute and cake sales. This increases the potential outreach for both activities as residents are already using the venue. This is a key consideration for community partner

*Figure 6: Participants taking part in a mindful movement session at the local community centre*



Kathryn Rogers, who schedules the Mindful Movement sessions to coincide with the ending of the social café in the same venue to engage a wider audience. This demonstrates that locating activities within the local community and timetabling them alongside existing community activities rather than as standalone often boosts attendance.

Neighbourhood team members and community partners alike highlighted the impact that geographic and community boundaries have upon people's perceptions of an activity and willingness to attend. People are often unlikely to travel beyond their immediate community unless they are familiar with the location or the community partner, and therefore see value in participating.

An existing local profile and links with the community has a positive impact upon engagement, with Kathryn Rogers

suggesting that 'the community is suspicious of outsiders'. Kathryn and the Bruce School of Dance teacher have both worked locally for several years while also delivering similar activities elsewhere making them well known beyond the local vicinity of the venue for the Love Sport funded activity. This is evident in the distance that Love Sport participants are travelling with Ballroom dancing attracting people living over 20 minutes drive away.

### **Motivation to take part**

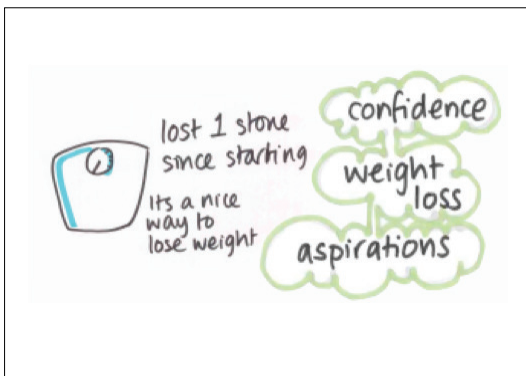
Sanctuary is keen to understand the goals that motivate people to take part in Love Sport activities. This provides a deeper understanding of why people engage as well as inform future delivery by commissioning activities that meet the needs of residents. Sanctuary asked activity participants in the pre-survey to share their motivations for attending an activity, with participants across the twelve activities choosing similar combinations of personal goals.

The top three goals included: improve fitness, meet new people and lose weight. Interestingly, these were also the most popular goals that participants reported achieving after the activity cycle had finished. In addition to these top three goals, participants also reported a range of other personal goals, including learning a new skill, enjoyment, aiding recovery from injury, stress management and preparing for a competitive event.



*Snapshot 1 is a combined excerpt of images 2 and 3 (in appendix) showing participants' thoughts on travelling to activity venues*

There is some variation in personal goals, with learning a new skill cited as a popular personal goal for Handball and Self-defence participants, which makes sense as these are skilled activities requiring participants to learn new skills and techniques.



*Snapshot 2 is a combined excerpt of images 1 and 7 (in appendix) showing participants' motivation for taking part*

A top personal goal for participants in So-Fly Football, was having fun with friends with the social element of So-Fly CIC activities also a common theme in interviews with So-Fly CIC's Director (Jordan), local Sanctuary staff and testimonials provided by parents and young people. Jordan cites the flexibility of sessions to allow people to socialise and 'just chat' alongside the young people actively playing table tennis or football as being as an important part of what he wants to offer local young people.

This indicates that removing the pressure to actively participate and creating an environment where people can relax and be themselves is an important factor for successfully engaging with young people. Sanctuary staff and community partners alike highlighted the need to take a flexible approach to delivery, such as offering an open door or drop-in policy and identifying different ways to capture the intended audience, and providing inclusive activities that cater for different abilities to entice people to engage and participate.

### **Wider impact**

A key focus for this evaluation is the impact of participating in Love Sport funded activities, with key areas of interest being the extent to which:

1. Participants regularly attended activities;
2. Participants continued engaging in some form of physical activity after the activity has finished;
3. Participant's confidence levels improved; and
4. Participant's sense of belonging to their neighbourhood improved.

#### **1: Regular attendance**

On average, participants attended 50% of the scheduled activity sessions



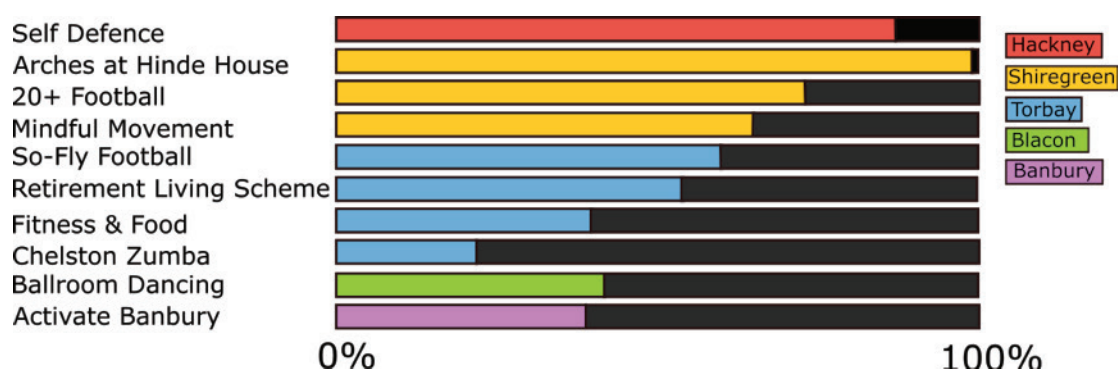
Attendance levels can be used to determine whether participants are attending regularly or on a one-off basis. This information can be used to inform delivery of Love Sport activities ensuring that they respond to participant needs. With most activities lasting for twelve weeks and some for longer, we have used the total percentage of sessions attended rather than the number of sessions to measure outcomes to ensure consistent comparison.

Overall, on average participants attend 50% of available activity sessions. This is based on data from ten activities.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>: Handball at Concord and Sunrise Fitness are not included as attendance records for these activities were not available at the time of analysis.

Figure 7 illustrates variation across activities in terms of the percentage of sessions attended on average. Activity cycles that lasted longer than twelve weeks, such as Chelston Zumba and Ballroom Dancing, tended to have higher numbers of participants, often more than thirty-five people, and less than average attendance levels. In large groups people are often less concerned about not turning up for sessions as their absence is more likely to go unnoticed than in smaller groups. So-Fly football is the exception to this, with high participant numbers as well as higher attendance levels. The team nature of the activity contributes towards a level of team-spirit that could encourage people to continue participating on a regular basis.

Figure 7: Breakdown of average attendance percentage by activity and location



## 2: Retaining participation in physical activity

41% of participants reported continuing with physical activity after attending the Love Sport programme

Retention in physical activity demonstrates behavioural change which will have continued positive benefits for the individual. Using the pre- and post-survey responses to the question: 'Have you taken part in any exercise or physical activity that raised your heart rate and made you break a sweat?', we can investigate whether participants continued with physical activity post Love Sport.

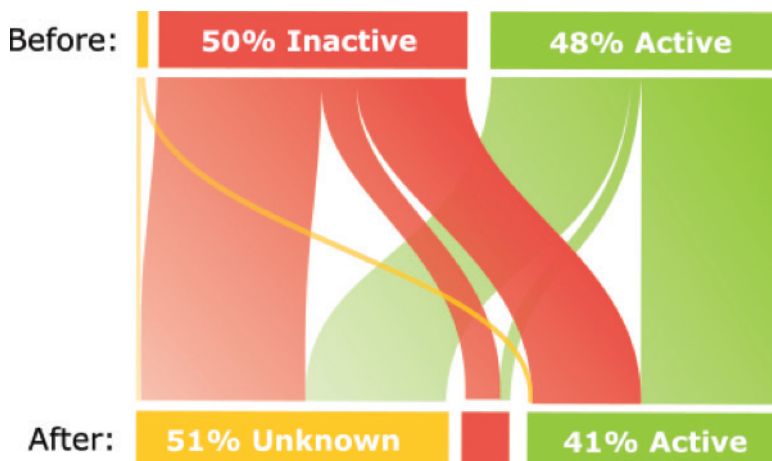
Inactive people are an important target group; however, activities have generally attracted people who have been involved in some form of physical activity prior to Love Sport. This is

reflected in the data with approximately half of all participants reporting that they were active before attending. When looking at rates of retention in physical activity:

- 41% of participants continued engaging in some form of physical activity at least once within four weeks of the Love Sport activity finishing.
- Of those who continued physical activity, 54% reported being active prior to taking part.

Of greater interest is the positive movement of participants from inactivity to activity. Figure 4 illustrates that 18% of participants achieved this positive movement at the time of survey. However, we cannot determine the degree to which participants have continued to sustain this engagement in physical activity. The movement is unknown for 51% of participants due to partial or no information about activity levels.

Figure 8: Movement in engaging in physical activity before and after the programme



Most participants in the twelve activities remained at the same level of physical activity after participation, however there is variation. For instance, a high proportion of So-Fly football participants (45%) reported positive movement from inactivity to activity. So-Fly CIC deliver a range of programmes across Torbay and work in partnership with other organisations in the local area, thereby increasing opportunities for participants to continue engaging in physical activity post participation.

Well-known and respected within the local community, So-Fly staff can also follow up with participants to encourage them to continue to be physically active highlighting

the role that community partners play in maintaining physical activity. A smaller proportion (<6%) of Ballroom Dancing participants moved from inactivity to activity. Ballroom Dancing attracted large numbers of older, which may affect their ability to continue being physically active once the Ballroom Dancing sessions finish.

*Figure 9: Participants taking part in ballroom dancing*



### 3: High confidence

15% of participants reported having greater confidence in themselves after attending the Love Sport programme

Changes in confidence levels provides an indication of an individual's personal development. Using the before and after survey responses to the "Have you recently been losing confidence in yourself" question we can investigate the confidence change of Love Sport participants.

Approximately a quarter of participants across all twelve activities reported having high confidence before attending the Love Sport programme. After taking part,

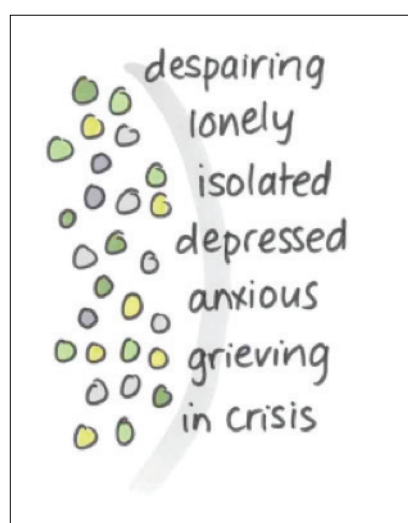
- 28%, stayed at the same level,
- 15% showed improvements,
- 4% showed deterioration.

The movement is unknown for 53% of participants due to partial or no information about confidence levels.

Interviews with Sanctuary staff, local partners and participants highlighted a range of needs and issues participants face prior to taking part in activities, including suicidal feelings, depression and loneliness, and the impact participation has had in addressing these. This is supported in the data, which demonstrates that Mindful Movement participants experienced low levels of confidence prior to

taking part, with some experiencing a positive increase in confidence after participation.

Community partners also revealed that activities often supported participant's mental and physical health, making them more confident, more connected and more physically active. For instance, one Mindful Movement participant recounted the moment they realised they had to do something different to avoid feeling suicidal during the graphic facilitation work. The activity has made them feel safe and understood, and as a result, it improved health and increased connection to others. This demonstrates that motivation to participate in a Love Sport activity is not just about improving health and fitness, rather it is often about seeking company and building confidence.



*Snapshot 3 is an excerpt of image 1 (in appendix) showing issues participants' may be facing prior to taking part*

#### 4: Neighbourhood belonging

13% of participants reported a greater feeling of belonging to their local neighbourhood after attending the Love Sport programme

A sense of neighbourhood belonging is an indication of community cohesion in the local area. Using the before and after survey responses to the 'I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood' question we can investigate the change in participant's neighbourhood belonging.

Approximately a quarter of participants felt a sense of belonging to their local neighbourhood before taking part in a Love Sport activity. After attending an activity,

- 30% of participants remained at the same level,
- 13% showed improvement,
- 4% showed deterioration.

The movement is unknown for 52%, due to receiving partial or no neighbourhood belonging information.

During interviews with community partners and participants also revealed the positive impact that activities had upon the lives of participants, including giving them a sense of connectedness and confidence to volunteer with other activities and projects. For example, So-Fly CIC uses its extensive links

to individuals and organisations in the local area to 'tap into other resources and signpost people onto other activities' as people are more likely to participate in a programme or activity if they are already involved in something similar.

This can be described as the 'ripple effect', where people become more confident in their abilities and taking part in activities and as a result become motivated to continue being physically active and participate in other activities and projects, some of which may be delivered by the same community partners.



*Snapshot 4 is a combined excerpt of images 1 and 5 (in appendix) showing the way in which activities have supported community cohesion*

## Social impact

Love Sport has also generated benefits that usually cannot be quantified beyond measurable health impacts. Social impact measurement allows value to be attributed to the personal impact experienced by individuals. Accurate attendance records and pre-/post-survey completion are required to measure social value, and therefore results are based solely on available data. As we are unable to know whether Love Sport participants may have taken part in physical activity anyway, the question of cause and effect is an issue. To tackle this, a deadweight adjustment ('what would have happened anyway') is applied to prevent over claiming.

Across the twelve activities for which we have data, results reveal:

- £1,489,256 of social impact was created through 442 people of different ages; frequently attending a Love Sport activity
- 87 participants moved to a position of high confidence created £897,344;
- 72 participants moved to a position of feeling belonging to the neighbourhood created £208,904;
- Together, this created a social value total of £2,595,504.

Using the Love Sport funding for each of the twelve activities we can understand the return on investment, as shown in figure 10.

Figure 10: Movement in engaging in physical activity before and after the programme



This equates to £19.35 of social impact generated per £1 invested. When accounting for funding spent, you can see that from a social value viewpoint the Love Sport programme has more than paid for itself. The amount of social impact generated significantly exceeds the amount of funding that was spent by Sanctuary and Sport England.

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### **Summary of Love Sport achievements**

Love Sport has successfully engaged a diverse range of people. For the twelve activities examined within this evaluation:

- 64% of participants regularly attended a Love Sport activity;
- 18% successfully moving from being inactive to active;
- 15% reported greater confidence in themselves;
- 13% reported a greater feeling of belonging to the neighbourhood; and
- £2,595,504 of social value was created.

Whilst some participants experience positive moment in terms of these outcomes, most remained at the same outcome level post Love Sport, with a small minority reporting

negative movement. However, this does not fully capture participants' experience of Love Sport. For example, community partners highlighted the role that activities can play in providing opportunities to socialise with likeminded people in an informal and relaxed environment.



# Delivering Love Sport

Sanctuary and Sport England recognise that people do not make choices about physical activity in a vacuum; the environment in which they live and work has a significant impact on their likelihood of engaging in physical activity. Each of the neighbourhoods that Sanctuary works in has its own infrastructure of anchors, assets, catalysts and inter-relationships, all of which influence engagement with local projects such as Love Sport. Sanctuary uses an asset based community development approach to deliver Love Sport.

## **Community anchors and assets**

As a housing provider, Sanctuary works closely with local communities on a day-to-day basis, including vulnerable people and those from lower socio-economic groups. This positions the organisation as a community anchor, which can identify and mobilise individual and community assets and catalysts to support sustainable community development.

Providing a local face for the organisation, Neighbourhood Partnership teams are a key community resource who place emphasis upon consulting people living and working in the local area using forums, social media, newsletters and informal gatherings to capture insights about the needs of the community. This is a key factor for programme success, as without this knowledge it can be challenging to ‘know what is going to work’. Involving people

in decisions about what happens in the neighbourhood also provides the community with a sense of ownership and can encourage people to become involved in activities, and as a result more physically active.

Understanding the needs of residents is particularly relevant when considering participation costs. Love Sport activities vary, from free of charge to a nominal fee, with Sanctuary staff and community partners alike highlighting the need to use insights about issues facing local communities to inform delivery and activity costs. Ballroom Dancing participants are seemingly happy to pay as the community partner charges a fee to attend similar sessions elsewhere. Whereas So-Fly CIC is keen to avoid introducing a participation fee as ‘even finding a spare 50p can be a challenge for local families’, which would then prevent many local people from availing of opportunities that can make an impact upon their lives.

Conversely, there are also concerns over the value people place upon free activities and the impact this may have upon their commitment to attend, as free activities are often seen as being of a lesser quality. Kathryn Rogers, who delivers the Mindful Movement activity suggests that “we often make assumptions about people’s willingness to pay”. It is important to have an open and honest conversation with participants to ensure that they understand issues around expectations and sustainability of activities.



## Relationships

Sanctuary uses a neighbourhood model for community investment that places emphasis upon developing relationships with local organisations and networks to improve the lives of residents and communities. One Neighbourhood Partnership Manager described their role as putting a jigsaw puzzle together, using their extensive community knowledge and links to make decisions about which activities to support with Love Sport programme funding and work closely with community partners to implement and monitor the success of activities. It also involves the sharing of knowledge and communicating who is doing what and where, as well as ‘enhancing capacity to sustain projects after Love Sport funding finishes’.

Sanctuary works with a diverse range of community partners, including public sector organisations; charitable organisations; social enterprises; community groups and individuals, all of which have a range of invaluable skills, knowledge and resources that benefit local communities. Having the ‘right fit’ partner is a significant determinant of successful delivery, with Neighbourhood Partnership Managers pointing to local knowledge and an understanding of how activities meet with Sanctuary Community Investment strategy as desirable characteristics. Establishing connections with these partners can take many years to build, validate and reaffirm.

Sanctuary’s flexibility in terms of delivery and its outlook encourages community partners to raise challenges, for example, around participation numbers, earlier on rather than at the end of projects, enhance the likelihood of sustainability post Love Sport. This ensures that partners are open to adapting activities where they are not successful. This demonstrates that positive, supportive and honest relationships between community partners and Sanctuary are important for the successful delivery of activities. However, local staff recognise the negative impact that staff turnover can have upon these relationships:

*“It could pose challenges as the relationship is with the individual [Sanctuary staff member] and not with Sanctuary. If that [Sanctuary] person leaves, they take that relationship and trust with them. It will take time to build that up again.”*

Neighbourhood Partnership Manager

Local Sanctuary staff are increasingly supporting the establishment of positive relationships between community partners and other members of Sanctuary staff, including those who are not based locally such as the Love Sport programme coordinator. This will contribute towards sustainable community development preventing the loss of links and connections.

## Catalysts

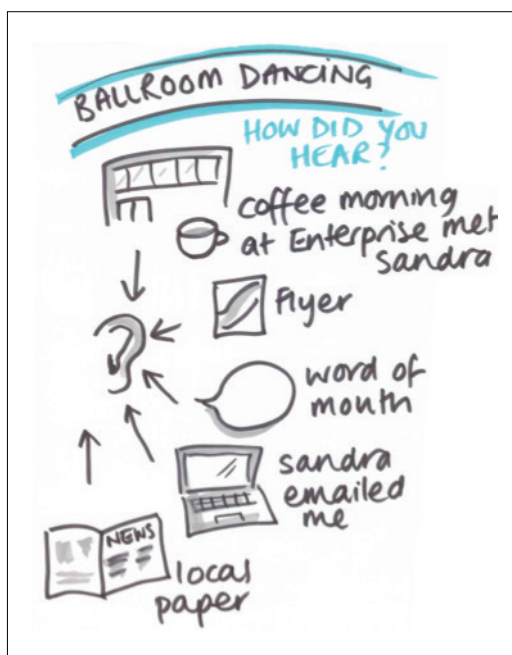
Sanctuary staff and community partners use a range of methods and techniques to promote Love Sport activities, including posters, social media campaigns and taster sessions, with word of mouth considered to be most effective. Community partners highlighted the role that community catalysts have in raising the profile of activities and promoting them to others in the community by word of mouth.

In some neighbourhoods, these catalysts may be Sanctuary staff such as Sandra, a local staff member in Blacon, who reaches out to people in the community to encourage participation in Ballroom Dancing sessions. In other neighbourhoods, the catalyst may be a community member who is well known and trusted. For instance, staff working in the venues where So-Fly delivered the Funky Monday sessions promoted the sessions by word of mouth, with participant numbers increasing during the activity cycle. So-Fly also posts photographs and lively captions during sessions on social media to encourage young people to attend.

A key theme that emerged in interviews was the limitations of promotional materials, with the information shared in posters and online often not reaching the target audience, and subsequently having an impact upon attendance rates.

Community partners play a key role in engaging people in activities and changing their behaviours and attitudes to physical activity. As trusted and well-known individuals and organisations locally, they can draw upon their knowledge of the issues and needs facing communities and identify effective ways to capture their intended audience to support people to become more physically active. However, one community partner acknowledged:

*Behaviours can't be changed overnight and cannot be forced upon a community. To bring change, we need education, education on how to remain active and healthy. We also need trust and that takes time to build.*



Snapshot 5 is a combined excerpt of image 5 (in appendix) showing the different ways participants heard about Ballroom Dancing

Sanctuary recognises that a one-size approach is not appropriate for Love Sport. Utilising the extensive local knowledge and experience of local Sanctuary teams, community groups and other individuals, ensures that Sanctuary is 'doing with' rather than 'doing to' the community. This enables the effective delivery of interventions and sustainable community development. By working with communities, Sanctuary can engage more people in their community investment activities, helping them embed change and reinforce already existing relationships.

# Key learnings and recommendations

Evaluating the Love Sport programme has uncovered key learning that will be useful for the housing sector to consider when designing and implementing community investment programmes, particularly those with the engagement of people in physical activity at its core.

## **Programme implementation and delivery**

### ***Consider the target audience***

- > Ensure that the target audience for activities aligns with the need and demand in the local area.

It is important for both the housing provider and community partners to be aware of issues facing the local community and how an activity may address these effectively. For example, people aged 25-49 are under-represented in the twelve Love Sport activities examined in this evaluation, suggesting that there wasn't a demand for physical activity amongst this age group in the five locations or that available activities were not appropriate for this audience. Part of this could be due to this age group being under-represented within the initial consultation process. Therefore, if trying to engage a particular group of individuals it is important to understand the needs and barriers to physical activity of that focal group and devise activities that meet their needs.

A consideration for housing providers and community partners is understanding the best place and time to run activities, with the use of physical assets within the community such as community centres, and the timetabling of activities alongside existing activities often boosting attendance. Housing providers and community partners also need to be aware of other support services and programmes operating in the same area. Participation numbers and outcomes will likely be impacted if numerous groups are competing for the same target audience leading to a saturation of the market.

- > *Make activities flexible and inclusive to enhance participation numbers and impact.*

Target audiences and delivery plans are an integral part of the planning process; however, it is important that housing providers recognise that programmes need to have some degree of flexibility to be successful. The primary audience for Love Sport activities is tenants aged 14+, however, Sanctuary recognised the limitations of restricting activities to this group and the likely negative effect this would have upon participation numbers and impact of the activities. Therefore, whilst activities are generally aimed at a specific audience, all Love Sport activities were inclusive and open to everyone in the local community. Sanctuary and community partners learnt that it might be necessary to work with ten people who were already active to reach that one inactive person.

Sanctuary actively promotes a flexible approach to Love Sport, supporting community partners to feel comfortable to adapt activities and extend delivery time. Whilst some activities were delivered in twelve-week cycles, others needed longer to engage with participants and have impact. Conversely, longer activity course cycles may also negatively affect regular attendance as people may be unable to commit on a longer-term basis. Therefore, housing providers and community partners should take both considerations into account and actively ask local people during consultations as well as activity participants about their timeframe preferences.

*> Use appropriate techniques and methods to engage people in activities.*

Achieving maximum participation is an important part of the success of a programme, yet promoting and engaging potential participants often requires financial and other types of resource such as staff time. Therefore, the use of appropriate methods to promote activities to target audiences and encourage participation is a key consideration for both housing providers and community partners. The most effective engagement method across the Love Sport programme is word of mouth, whereby current participants and people with a pulse of the ground, including local Sanctuary staff and passionate neighbourhood catalysts, recommend activities to others in the local community.

Traditional methods, such as leaflets and posters, are often not visible to younger people and part-time and full-time workers, whereas older people and people with disabilities are less likely to access materials through social media campaigns and e-newsletters. Understanding the behaviours, language and images your target audience responds to positively is key to delivering appropriate engagement approaches.

*> Identifying and addressing barriers to participation*

Key to successful programme delivery is understanding barriers to participation and how to address these. Prominent barriers identified include commitment, costs and location. Participation fees can be a barrier to engagement, particularly relevant for social housing tenants who tend to be from lower social-economic backgrounds and deprived neighbourhoods and therefore less likely to have disposable income to. When considering cost, there is a balance to be made in terms of ensuring that participants understand and see the value of an activity and removing barriers associated with costs. Love Sport activities vary in terms of participation costs, from free of charge to a nominal fee with most community partners highlighting the need to use local insights about the issues facing local communities to inform delivery and activity costs. Rather than making assumptions about what is feasible, acceptable or appropriate, it is important to directly ask people living and working in the community.

### **Work in partnership**

#### *> Identify and work with the 'right fit' partner for the local context*

Partnership working is an important factor in the successful delivery of a programme. Sanctuary has worked with a range of community partners to deliver Love Sport, with successful delivery of activities often determined by working in partnership with the 'right fit' partner. This type of partner is characterised by Sanctuary staff as having an existing relationship with residents and/or extensive knowledge and insights into the needs of local communities, and an understanding of how best to address these in a way that supports and empowers local people and aligns with Sanctuary's Community Investment strategy. This helps expedite the process between proposal and delivery as less time is needed to embed a relationship and ensure that housing providers and partners are on the same page. Part of this partnership working involves supporting community partners to build their skills and capacity as this will contribute towards long term and sustainable community development.

#### *> Ensure clarity about responsibilities*

It is important for both the housing provider and community partner to fully understand what they are responsible for and address any uncertainty early in the process. Interviews with Sanctuary staff and community partners highlighted the need to ensure clarity about responsibilities and service level agreements.

For smaller community partners who may not have extensive experience of delivering commissioned activities, there can be a tendency to sign agreements without fully reading and understanding what partnership with a housing provider entails. This can lead to difficulties later in the process as outcomes of interest for the housing provider may not be delivered as they were unachievable from the outset.

### **Data collection**

Using learning from the Love Sport programme we recommend that consideration around data collection should be given to the following areas (in no particular order):

#### *> Time point at which to consider the data collection process*

Data collection processes should be considered alongside the development of a programme. Ensuring sufficient time and resource is available for a project is just as important as securing the funding, unfortunately these aspects are often neglected until after a project has been funded and delivered.

The focus for community partners is to deliver the activity and to engage with the participants. Getting participants to complete a registration form can, in some instances, impact on delivery, particularly if participants require assistance to complete the registration form.

If a known challenge is that residents in the delivery area will have difficulty completing a written form then an alternative method of collection needs to be built in and sufficient resource and time is needed upfront to assist with this.

*> Clarity on purpose of data collection*

As with any project involving collecting data from participants, there is naturally going to be a concern as to where their data is going and what it is being used for. A standard data privacy statement was included on the registration form for the Love Sport programme. If participants had any further questions they were informed to contact Sanctuary. In hindsight, it would have been better to provide more detail and tailor the statement to the project or activity to ensure participants understood the purpose of collecting their data. This would enable participants to feel more comfortable providing data as they know how it will be used. An additional consideration would be to think about how to feedback to participants the findings and actions that have emerged because of the data they have provided, closing the feedback loop between the housing provider and its tenants and members of communities in which it works.

Sanctuary and HACT created a brief that explained data collection requirements for community partners and how this data would be used in the evaluation. To encourage compliance with these requirements,

community partners were advised that they would receive individual impact statements detailing the achievements of their activity. This goes in hand with ensuring participants understand the reason behind data collection as it allows a common understanding for all involved parties.

*> Who is collecting the data*

As activity participants are engaging with community partners rather than directly with Sanctuary, it is the community partner with whom participants have built a relationship. Often participants will not know that Sanctuary is supporting the delivery of activities indicating that communications and branding can play a key role in how these activities are perceived. This became an issue when Sanctuary staff used a considerable amount of resource trying to get in contact with participants to improve response rates for the post-activity survey. With Sanctuary being further removed from the participant than the community partner, this made it harder to gain the required feedback from participants as it is easier to ignore the request for data. As much as is possible, having community partners collecting the data is more beneficial as they are the ones who have built the trust with participants. Also setting expectations early on could help with later data collection, such as informing participants that they will be followed up later to gather their feedback and how this information will be used.

> *Importance of local neighbourhood structure*

Local neighbourhood structures, and the position that community partners have within that infrastructure, can support successful data collection. One of the biggest barriers to receiving follow-on feedback from Love Sport participants was due to a data collection time point of four weeks after the activity ended rather than on the last day of delivery. Having a four week time lag was important to understanding physical activity retention rates, but it also meant a reliance on being able to get in contact with participants later.

Within the Love Sport programme, where response rates were good, activity participants had some form of continued engagement with the local community and/or community partners. For example, Torbay has a small number of partners working in the local area, however they are often inter-linked. A project like So-Fly football is often used to engage with residents of the area, build trust and to sign-post residents to additional services in the area. Therefore, once the Love Sport funded activity had ended frequently the community partner had a continued relationship with the attendee and could easily follow-up with them after the 4-week data collection time point. For other activities, contact is often lost with the participant once the programme has ended. Understanding the local area is extremely important and can help to inform the best approach to data collection.



# Conclusions

## **Delivering sport and physical activity in the housing sector**

Love Sport has successfully engaged a wide variety of people, including many from lower socio-economic groups, demonstrating the ability of housing providers to deliver sport and physical activity programmes. The provision of sport and physical activity interventions can create numerous benefits for housing providers, including:

- Providing a means to improve the health and wellbeing of social housing tenants and members of the wider communities in which housing providers work. Healthier people are more likely to be in work, which means that they will be more able to pay rent and require less support.
- Facilitating engagement with adults and young people who may otherwise not engage with their landlord enabling, social housing providers to identify those in need of additional support and signpost support available internally within their organisation from local community and health services.
- Raising their profile in local areas, enhancing the level of trust and communication between these organisations and their tenants.
- Supporting social and community development, with housing providers reporting that these activities encourage intergenerational activity and relationships, inspire community action, aspirations and pride and contribute towards greater social cohesion by reducing anti-social behaviour.

- Contributing towards capacity building amongst local assets, including residents and community partners, to support long term and sustainable community development.

Ultimately, sport and physical activity interventions go beyond making people healthier, with positive benefits and impacts for those taking part, their families, communities and their housing providers.

## **Strategic alignment between the housing and sport sectors**

There are clear areas of strategic alignment between the government and Sport England's strategies and the priorities and capabilities of housing providers. Housing providers have several characteristics that position them as well placed to work in partnership with the sport sector to deliver sport and physical activity interventions:

### *> Priority groups*

As community anchor organisations, housing providers work with a broad cross-section of the population, predominantly those from lower socio-economic groups, older people, people with disabilities and those who are vulnerable in other ways. These groups are often under-represented in sport and physical activity. Combining efforts with those in day-to-day contact with these groups will deliver greatest engagement, outcome and value.

> *Place and locality-based approaches*

Housing providers are by their very nature locality based, adopting an asset based community development approach to community engagement and empowerment that involves 'doing with' rather than 'doing to'. As insights from interviews with Neighbourhood Partnership teams and community partners have illustrated, housing providers are able to draw upon their extensive local and collective knowledge of needs and issues facing priority groups to target interventions. They also have extensive expertise in building and strengthening relationships with community partners at a local level.

Driving much of the work currently being done in the sport sector is the question: how do we activate the inactive? That is, how can we engage individuals and groups who are not already active in sport and physical activity. Funded in part by Sport England, the Love Sport programme highlights the potential benefits of collaborative partnership working between the housing and sport sectors. It has revealed the extent to which housing providers, Sport England and other organisations within the sport sector are seeking to work with the same individuals - those who face socio-economic and health disadvantages, perceived as the hardest to reach.

> *Wider social outcomes*

Many housing providers already focus upon and measure the social value of interventions and the impact upon residents. They are well-placed to provide the required line of sight from delivering or commissioning sport and physical activity interventions to capturing the wider benefits to individuals. In this current climate of budget cuts and uncertainty, there is an ever-pressing need to look for alternative ways to deliver support services and interventions in both the housing and sport sectors. Collaborative partnership working provides an opportunity to share best practice, learning and evidence about what works, pool resources to reach more people and create meaningful impact.

# Appendix

Educational psychologist Julia Hayes (inclusioncreativa.com) and graphic illustrator Cara Holland (graphicchange.co.uk) regularly combine their skills in facilitation and visual recording to consult with stakeholders at all levels of an organisation. Having worked together as children's participation co-ordinators for Barnardo's, they pursued freelance careers which see Cara illustrating conferences, documents and teaching others how to work more visually, while Julia travels

the world to support NGOs to include the most marginalised in their plans and services. They strongly believe that the use of visuals in team planning and consultations result in plans that better represent and meet the needs of the participants.

The complete graphics created by Julia and Cara are included below and on the following pages. The names of individuals featured in these graphics have all been changed.

Figure 11: Reflecting the general themes of all the stories



Figure 12: Reflecting the individual journey of one mindful movement participant

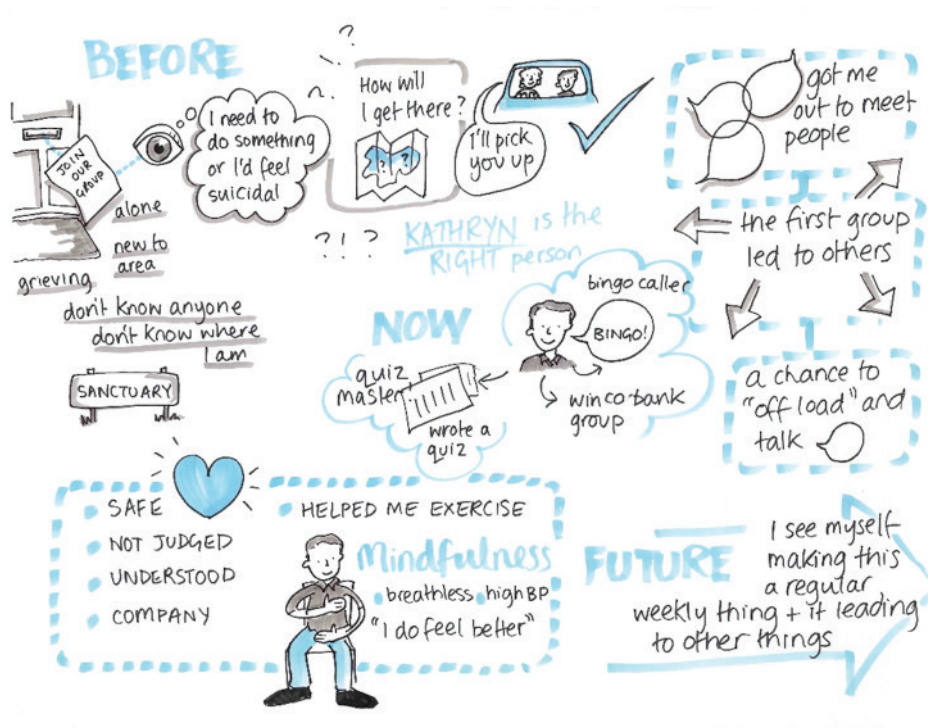


Figure 13: Reflecting the individual journey of one mindful movement participant

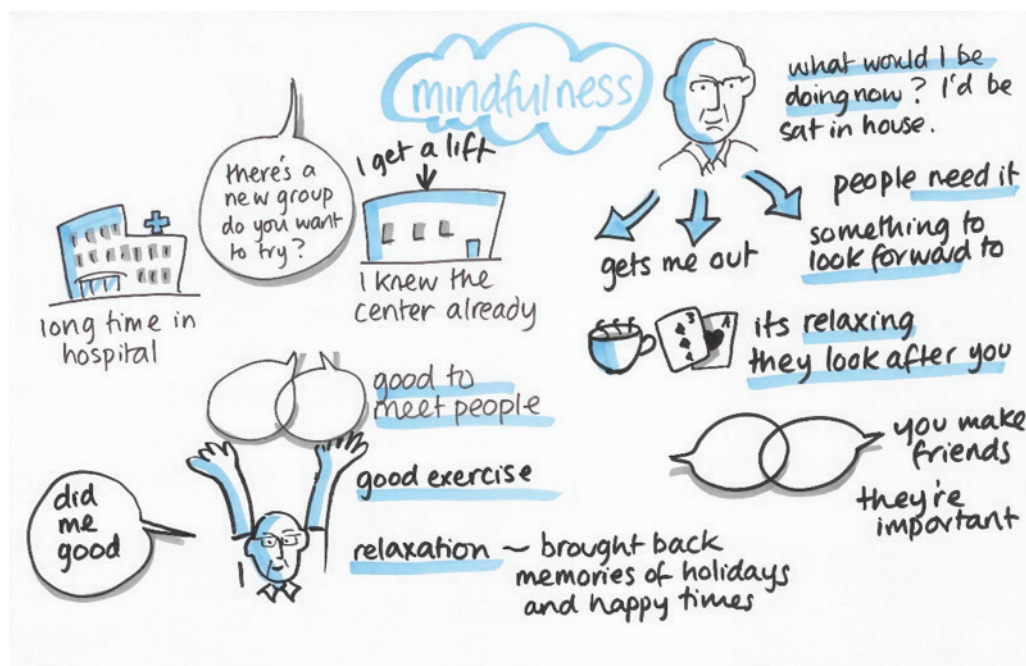




Figure 14: Reflecting the individual journey of one mindful movement participant

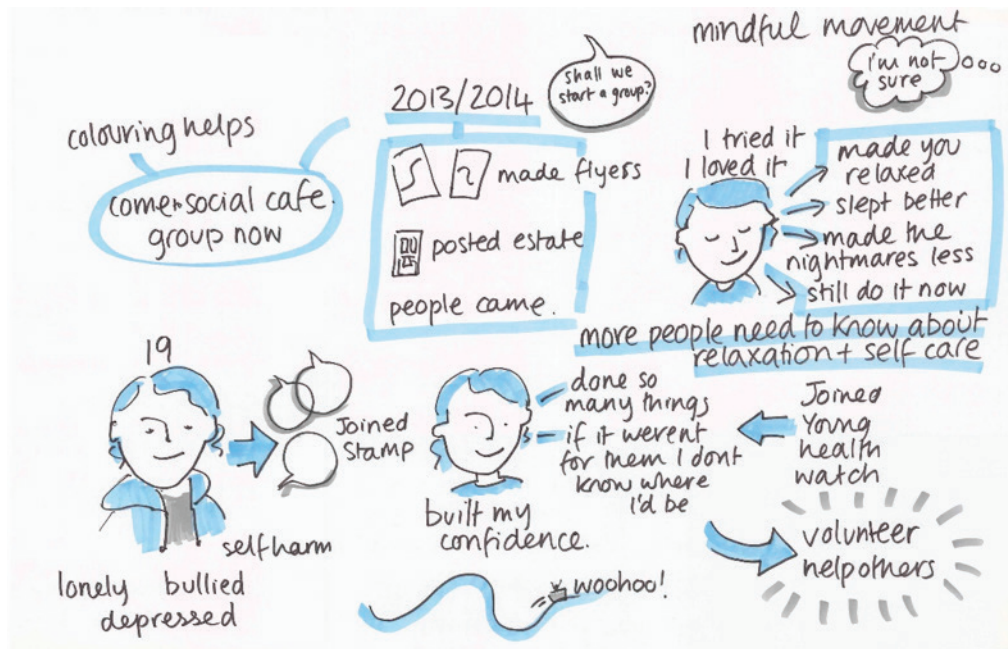


Figure 15: Reflecting the collective journey of a group of ballroom dancing participants



Figure 16: Reflecting the collective journey of a group of retirement living scheme participants



Figure 17: Reflecting the benefits of Love Sport activities









For information about HACT's evaluation  
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## HACT **Insight**

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