

2022-23

Sport RCT

IMPACT REPORT

How our work, in conjunction with key partners, has supported the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf to get more active, more often

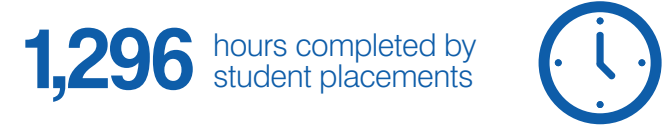
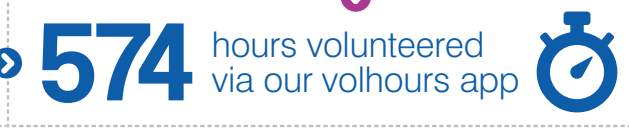
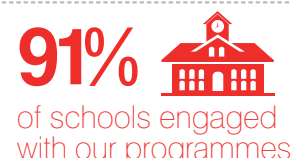


   @sportrct

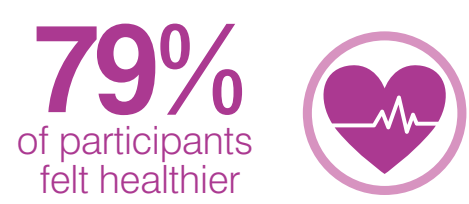
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01443 562202 • sportrct@rctcbc.gov.uk



RHONDDA CYNON TAF



After engaging with our programmes...



Active Baby at Home

Active Baby at Home is a six-week programme aimed at supporting new parents to understand the importance of movement through play in the first 1000 days. It brings adults together to start enjoying playing actively with their baby through everyday routines from birth. Each session is based around a topic highlighting the importance of play and how physical literacy is central to a babies development; contributing to physical and emotional wellbeing.

We partnered with Early Years Wales (EYW) to deliver the programme in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Parent and Toddler group, Rhondda Kindercare were keen to pilot the programme, so we met with them. They have a great reputation in the area as being extremely friendly and welcoming, so we knew it would be a fantastic venue to use. EYW delivered the six-week programme, with the leader of Rhondda Kindercare shadowing the facilitator each week. She then attended an 'Active Baby at Home Train the Trainer' course, allowing her to continue delivering the programme in-house, sustainably.

Six staff from the Resilient Families Nursery Nurse team and the Talk and Play team also attended the training course. We then worked with the two teams who agreed to co-deliver the programme across three sites – Aman

Children and Family Centre, Flying Start Centre Penrhys and Rhydyfelin Children's Integrated Centre. The programme was free to attend at all sites.

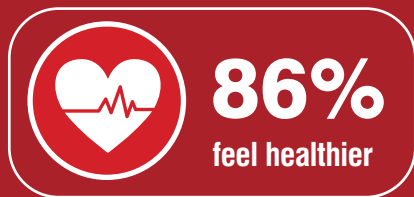
Across the four sites, 29 families have engaged with the programme so far and we are really pleased with how much they have benefitted from taking part. 100% of the families questioned feel happier, are more confident and are now more active, more often. We also received the following feedback:

"It has been great learning how to be active with my baby, especially as a first-time mum"

"Meeting new parents and their babies has helped me so much"

"I have enjoyed all the sessions, particularly the activities and items you can make to help your baby's movement"

"All parents who came to the group said that they now feel more confident to do tummy time more often at home"



Movement Matters Flying Start

Our Movement Matters resource has 30 activity cards, based on six themes. Every activity card has a fun game that can be used to help children practice and improve Fundamental Movement Skills. All Flying Start settings in Rhondda Cynon Taf have Movement Matters resource packs and staff are encouraged to use them regularly with their children. In order to support the Flying Start staff, we developed a training programme which aims to give staff tools and knowledge and build their confidence delivering the games.

We developed a delivery model for the training and piloted it in a few settings. In week 1 we met with staff and gained insight into their level of knowledge and confidence delivering. We delivered activities to the children and staff would observe/assist, while exploring the resource. The next week we delivered more activities, with Flying Start staff taking the lead delivering one game. In week 3 staff took the lead for the whole session and we gave feedback and advice on how to improve. In the last week we observed the staff deliver and answered any final questions they had on the resource.

Feedback from the pilot was positive so we proceeded to roll out the training to more

settings. Once the 4-week training is complete, we remain in contact regularly and offer settings further support if needed. In most settings, we have found that staff have low confidence delivering physical activity as it is something they have not done previously or on a regular basis.

Our training has helped staff improve their confidence and also their knowledge of physical literacy. It has also highlighted how to best utilise their space and how regular objects can be used instead of sports equipment.

46 staff across 11 settings have completed the training so far. At 4 nurseries we have also delivered Stay and Play sessions, where parents are invited to take part with their child. During these sessions we delivered Movement Matters activities, with the aim that parents would play them again, at home. We will continue to deliver this training to more nursery staff, as well as infants and primary school teachers.



Active Family Resource Packs

We wanted to get families in Rhondda Cynon Taf more physically active, so we developed a resource pack, which would support them to be physically active together, at home. The resource pack consisted of activity ideas and some basic equipment. The activities were fun games that were easy to play, suitable for a home environment, possible to play with just one child and didn't require a lot of equipment. The target group for the project was families with children between 2 and 7 years of age.

We decided to engage with families by targeting specific schools and nursery settings. We selected 11 schools/nursery settings that were either in a deprived area, in an isolated area or had a low number of children participating in physical activity. The 11 settings helped us to promote the project to their families and we also offered some resource packs to members of our closed Facebook group, Physical Activity for 0-7's.

205 families signed up to the project via our online form. During sign up we collected information from each family such as their physical activity levels, the sports club/physical activity sessions they attend and any barriers to participation. This information helped us to support the families and baseline data would also help us to

measure the impact of the project.

We delivered the packs to the families via the schools/nursery settings and one month later we sent out a follow up form to measure impact. As can be seen from the statistics below, over 80% of participating families felt happier, healthier and more confident as a result of using the packs. They also stated that they were more active and intended to continue being active. In addition, 100% of families said that they enjoyed using the packs and that they would sign up again.



"We enjoyed using the pack, especially when we went on holiday as it was easy to pack and take with us."

"My son asked every day to play the games"

"My daughter became more confident and even started thinking of ways to adapt the games to make them more challenging"

"We enjoyed having more family time"



UEFA Playmakers - Hawthorn Primary School

This initiative, created by UEFA and Disney inspires more girls to see the fun in football and physical activity. The programme aims to introduce girls aged 5-8 to football by providing an environment designed for them that focuses on fun, friends, and football. Sessions mix fun football activities with Disney storytelling. The FAW Trust lead on the delivery of the programme in Wales. We were given the opportunity to deliver the programme to a small number of primary schools. Hawthorn Primary School asked to take part and we supported them to start an extracurricular Playmaker club.

One teacher completed the FAW Disney Playmakers training and was given a Playmakers coaching guide and lots of equipment to get the sessions started. The coaching guide includes chapters of a story from a well-known Disney movie and the activities relate to the storyline. Each session ends with a cliff hanger and sets the scene for the next session. Each girl takes home an adventure passport which links the school sessions with their family at home. The passport has tasks to complete at home with friends and family.

Sessions started in May and 27 girls have taken part, with an average attendance each week of 20. Most of the girls are brand new to football, only 3 of them have played before at a club. Feedback from the girls has been really positive. They enjoyed working with others, learning new skills, and trying a new sport. The teacher involved in the project was impressed with the coaching guide and saw the programme as a fantastic way to get girls engaged in sport:



I felt it was a really good opportunity for the girls in our school to take part in some physical activity. When I was in school, I had a really negative experience with any kind of sport. I didn't know anything about football. For me as a teacher, it's important that children have a positive attitude to anything. I thought this was a really good and fun opportunity to get children engaged in sport.



SS Gabriel and Raphael Catholic Primary School

Four pupils from SS Gabriel and Raphael Catholic Primary School were nominated to be Bronze Young Ambassadors. After attending our conference, they returned to school and developed a project to improve the health, wellbeing, and fitness levels of their peers. They wanted to encourage non-active pupils to become active during breaktime, and they identified a need to improve their school yard. The yard is small, and they found that football dominated playtimes and stopped other children from being active. They believed that organising the yard into sections would give all children equal and safe opportunities to take part.

They designed and conducted a survey to find out what the rest of the school thought. Using the results, they developed a plan to improve the yard and get more children taking part in physical activity during playtime. They arranged Play Maker training for themselves and others in Year 5 and 6, creating a team of leaders to deliver activities. The leaders researched different yard games and created game cards. Using these cards they delivered taster sessions to different year groups, exploring new ways that the yard could be utilised. They also completed an audit of the school's sports equipment and created a wish list. To fund their wish list, they applied to our School Fund and received £215 for new equipment.

The Young Ambassadors now manage the equipment cupboard and set up activity areas in the yard every breaktime. As a result, 70 children now participate in sport and physical activity regularly during breaktime. To ensure the project was working and achieving its aims, the YA's conducted an evaluation survey. 82% of children said that they enjoyed playtime more now. When asked if the new equipment had changed playtime 45% answered extremely and 39% said a lot.

The Young Ambassadors also arranged and delivered a training workshop for their teachers. They give regular updates in the school newsletter and report progress to the school's governing body. We meet the YA's regularly to get updates on their project and to offer our support. Being Young Ambassadors has massively improved their confidence, and they have developed key skills such as leadership, organisation, teamwork, and communication. The Ambassadors have relished the responsibility and have loved the opportunity to encourage others to get active. They are determined for their project to continue next year and are now focussed on recruiting and mentoring the next generation of Ambassadors. This project is a fantastic example of how the Young Ambassador programme can benefit a school.



Caegarw Primary School Balance Bike project



We met with the school to develop a project as part of our Foundation School Fund. This fund allows focus schools to apply for funding to develop projects for children in the infants' classes (nursery to year 2). The Fund was set up to encourage schools to focus more on their physical activity provision for this age group.

The school wanted to increase the number of children within their school that were able to ride a bike. They wanted the younger pupils to have access to balance bikes to help them develop their physical literacy. Improving their fundamental movement skills, confidence and motivation will help them to be active and cycle later in life. As part of the funding, they received balance bikes and helmets, as well as training for their teacher. Following the

training, they set up an after-school balance bike club. They limited the club to 5 pupils to ensure each child received lots of attention to develop their skills and confidence. Sessions ran for 6 weeks and involved a mixture of activities on and off the bike. Some children had never been on a bike before.

At the final session, the children's families were invited for the children to showcase what they had learnt. The school have also been running a balance bike rental scheme at the school, allowing families to rent them for weekends and school holidays. When asked, 100% of the children told us that they enjoyed the club, feel more confident riding a bike and want to keep riding a bike.

“It’s been great to see the children’s confidence increase, and their skills improve every week”
Teacher

“She’s had a balance bike for a while but has never shown much interest, but since this club she’s using it all the time”
Parent

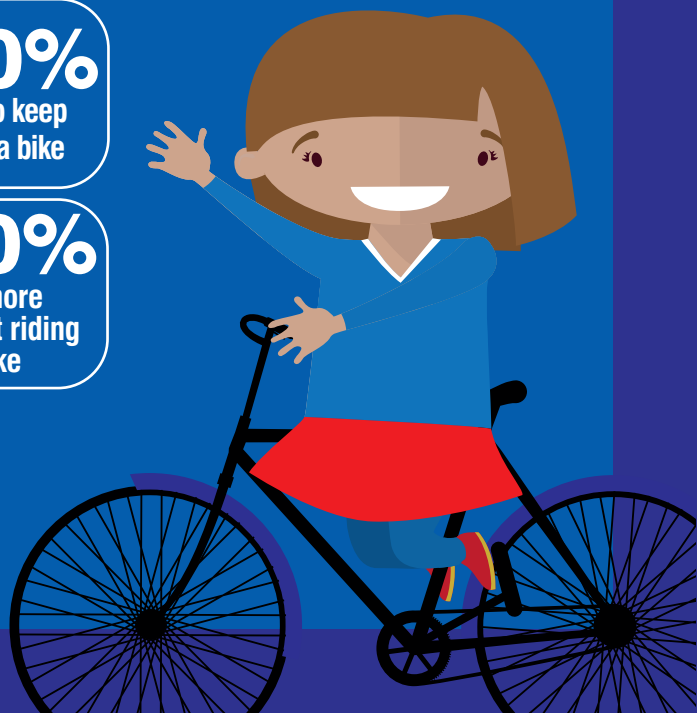
 **5**
children took part

 **6**
sessions were delivered

 **100%**
enjoyed the club

 **100%**
want to keep riding a bike

 **100%**
feel more confident riding a bike



Ynyshir Primary School Student Placement project

Each year we link with the University of South Wales and provide placements for their sport students. We work with students in Year 2 to offer placements in schools, as part of one of their course modules. During the 22/23 academic year we worked with 22 students, who completed 1470 hours, across 10 different primary schools, engaging over 550 children.

Three students were placed in to Ynyshir Primary School to complete a sport and physical activity project. They developed a project in partnership with the school which aimed to increase the participation levels of children in Year 2 and 3. The school identified that these year groups were doing significantly less than others when it came to physical activity. The students used creative themes to develop and deliver multi-sport sessions that focused on confidence. The sessions aimed to improve Fundamental Movement skills, while getting the children involved in and enjoying physical activity.

Using story telling the students delivered activities which introduced the children to various objects, skills, games and equipment. The students also introduced some sport related games to improve the children's knowledge of key sports. They designed the

sessions so that the emphasis was on fun and the children would feel less pressure while playing. To meet targets of the National Curriculum, the students also included literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving tasks within their sessions.

The children enjoyed the sessions, and their confidence grew each week. The school were very pleased with the project and teachers have seen a big impact on the children. School Sport Survey 2022 results showed that only 38% of the school's year 3 students participated in sports outside of the curriculum. Following the project, 21 participants out of 44 have already joined new sports groups outside of school. This demonstrates the success of the placement and that the students are enjoying being more active.

“Thursdays are my favourite day because I know you're coming in” - Child

“You have really helped bring some children out of their shell. They wouldn't have got involved before but now they are really into it” - Teacher



Gwaunfarren Primary School Student Placement project

In partnerships with Active Merthyr, we placed three students in to Gwaunfarren Primary School to complete a sport and physical activity project. They developed a project in partnership with the school which aimed to introduce Fundamental Movement skills (FMS) to Year 1 children. To develop the children's understanding of FMS the students explained and demonstrated key skills and highlighted the correct techniques. They delivered fun multi-sport sessions, using a variety of equipment and activities. Students used storylines to keep the children engaged and as active as possible. The children enjoyed the stories and had fun using their imagination. Throughout the project the students placed emphasis on the health benefits associated with being physically active, and hoped to educate the children and encourage them to be active regularly.

While delivering sessions the students found that some of the younger children were struggling with some of the basic Fundamental Movement skills. This could be due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns. Knowing the importance of FMS, the students were proud to see the impact that their sessions were having, in developing these key skills. The students

plan to make multi-sport activity cards for school staff, which will allow them to continue the sessions long term.

The students also delivered extra-curricular clubs which engaged children from other year groups. This allowed the students to gain extra experience, coaching children with a range of ages and abilities. Their sessions were enjoyed by all of the children and the school were very happy with the success of the placement.



*I enjoy
Thursdays
because I get
to do this.*



Caegarw Primary School Student Placement project

Three students were placed in to Caegarw Primary School to complete a sport and physical activity project. They developed a project in partnership with the school which had two aims: introduce the children to the sport of Badminton and support the children to learn or develop vital skills such as Communication, Physical Literacy and Fundamental Movement skills. They decided to focus on badminton because it was a sport that the school would not normally offer.

They delivered sessions to 44 children in Year 4 and 5. Initially the students focused on the fundamental movement skills throwing and catching, using different sized balls and bean bags. Then they introduced a racquet and focused on striking a ball. As the sessions progressed, they introduced new skills, linked to badminton and familiarised the children with badminton equipment. All sessions were inclusive and used fun games to teach skills such as hand eye coordination and ball control. The children were then introduced to the rules of badminton, and they began playing matches. All of the children enjoyed the sessions and improved in confidence each week. The hope is that the children will now have the skills and confidence to play

badminton again, either in school or in their community at a club or with family.

The students were really impressed with how quickly the children developed and they loved to watch them supporting each other, showing great leadership and teamwork skills. The students learnt that focusing on the Fundamental Movement skills first was vital, as it impacted the children's ability to learn the skills and rules of badminton. The students also learnt that adaptability is very important as a coach. When coaching at a school there can be a lack of equipment and space, and a wide range of abilities within the group. Being able to adapt sessions and vary exercises to challenge everyone is key to allow for improvement.

“*The year 5 class said they love the sessions*”
“*I really enjoy taking part with my friends*”



Mountain Ash Comprehensive School Student Placement project

Three students were placed into Mountain Ash Comprehensive School to complete a sport and physical activity project. The aim of the project was to increase the participation levels of girls in Year 7 and 8, improving their physical and mental health. The school asked them to introduce new sports to the girls and build their confidence.

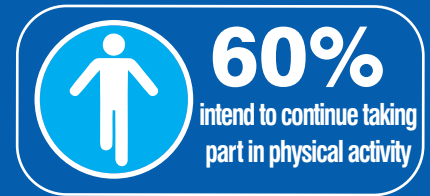
The students started by delivering a girl's football extra-curricular club. There was demand for football amongst the girls, and it was something that was not currently offered by the school. The students used fun activities to develop skills, and they were impressed with how quickly the girls developed. As a result of the sessions, the students helped form a Year 8 girls school football team. The students also started helping with PE lessons and began coaching the Year 9 boys football team.

In the second term, the students continued offering opportunities for Year 7 and 8 girls to get active, and they introduced new sports such as Volleyball, Benchball and Tchuckball. The girls loved trying new sports and learning new skills, and they grew in confidence as the weeks progressed. The school were really pleased with the success of the project. The

students were able to create a safe and comfortable place for the girls to take part in sport and they provided them with a lot of new experiences. The students learnt a lot from the placement, particularly around managing behaviour while coaching and building confidence amongst participants.



Coming to the lunchtime sessions has definitely made me more confident playing football and more confident in myself.



Penrhiwceiber Primary

Each year we offer schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf the opportunity to apply for funding to deliver a project. PE Coordinators and Young Ambassadors were encouraged to use pupil voice to develop a project that would benefit their school and get more children, more active, more often. This year we granted £18,000 funding to 57 schools.

Penrhiwceiber Primary applied to our school fund with the aim of establishing a new after school rugby club. They received £250 in funding, which allowed them to purchase training equipment such as balls and tackle bags. The brand-new equipment made the children feel special and proud to be a part of the club. It was also paramount in helping them to develop the correct tackling technique.

17 children attended the after-school rugby club and loved the sessions. As a result the school were able to create a team and hold joint training sessions and matches with Abercynon Community school. A mix of pupils attended. Some had played rugby outside of school, but many had never played before. The equipment helped build enthusiasm for the sport of rugby and helped accelerate the development of skills so much that many of the pupils who had not played rugby before joined local rugby teams. One girl in particular has developed greatly and is now playing for the Timbers.



I wasn't sure about rugby to start, now I want to play it all the time!



Llwyncrwn Primary School

The Llwyncrwn Bronze Young Ambassadors decided that they wanted to engage more children in exercise throughout school, so they worked with their teachers to develop a project and apply to our school fund. They wanted to create something inclusive so that all children could take part. They discussed some previous whole school events and recognised that these events were inclusive, enjoyable, and easy to run so they decided to develop something similar.

The Ambassadors planned a project where each class was challenged to go for a walk every day. They wanted to engage children and teachers by making it competitive, with the class that covers the most distance or walks for the longest amount of time each month winning a certificate produced by them. They applied to our school fund as they needed to purchase equipment such as stop watches and trundle wheels. The challenge started and staff were encouraged to take their classes out for around 10-15 minutes per day. Classes averaged around 40 minutes of additional exercise per week.

The Bronze Ambassadors visited each class every Friday afternoon to collect weekly class data, and this data was used to inform the monthly winner. The competitive element of the idea not only drove the engagement but

also gave opportunity for cross curricular numeracy skills to be used, as children recorded their time/distance daily.

The project achieved its aims, being inclusive for all classes and pupils and increasing their physical activity, with all children completing 30 - 75 minutes of additional exercise per week.



It has been fantastic to see our Bronze Ambassadors design and implement an inclusive project that has positively impacted all children throughout our school. The Bronze Ambassador scheme kick-started the children's ideas and the School Fund ensured that we were able to successfully apply their vision as intended.



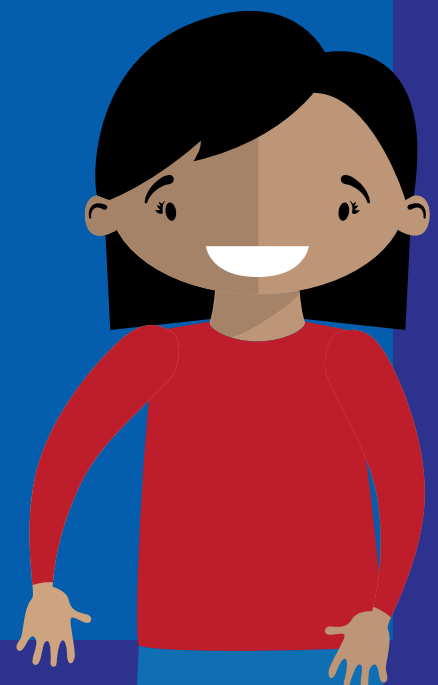
293
children took part



£246
of funding



30-75 minutes
of additional exercise per week



Tonysguboriau Primary

Tonysguboriau Primary Bronze Young Ambassadors worked with their teachers to apply to our school fund. They required £200 funding for equipment, which would help them to establish a Parkour club after school. The club would focus on jumping and moving, and give an alternative to the team based sports that the school normally offered as extra-curricular activities. During the application process their idea evolved slightly to incorporate more of a gymnastics element, with the suggestion of a member of staff attending a coaching course.

With Covid restrictions still in place within school, the club could not run as an extra-curricular activity, so the Ambassadors adapted their plans and incorporated them into lessons. The Ambassadors led a series of lessons for Year 6 initially and then began delivering to younger age groups focusing on jumping, landing and moving across equipment in different ways.

The four Ambassadors developed their confidence in leading class sessions, gained an understanding into planning lessons and developed a sense of responsibility for looking after and coaching the pupils under them. In total they delivered sessions to 90 pupils, across Year 3, 4 and 6.

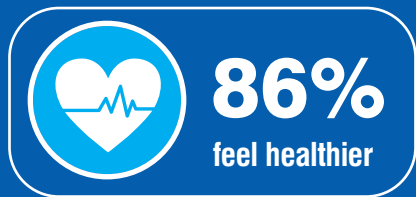
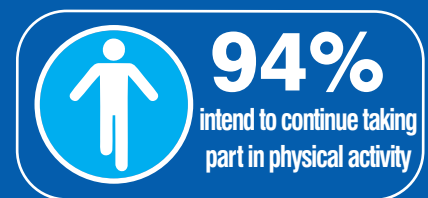


YGG Tonyrefail

Teachers and Bronze Young Ambassadors at YGG Tonyrefail applied to our school fund for £250. Their application focused on the development of Yard Games for all pupils to participate in from Nursery to Year 6. School Sport Survey results had showed that 46% of pupils in the school were eager to participate in more sport if they had the chance.

This project aimed to develop the Welsh Language skills of the children and improve their fitness at the same time. Children were given the opportunity to devise their own school yard games using equipment and resources that were purchased with the grant funding. They also used the equipment to implement a series of Yard Games that were developed in collaboration with the Central South Consortium and Siarter Iaith (Language Charter).

Pupils spend around an hour of their time in the schoolyard every day as part of their playtime and lunchtime sessions. This project gave them opportunities to plan and implement games in the yard during these times, helping them to develop their teamwork, communication in Welsh and English and to learn how to play fairly with others.



Ysgol Hen Felin

Ysgol Hen Felin applied to our school fund to improve their outdoor play provision. They aimed to deliver meaningful playground activities by training staff and Young Ambassadors and purchasing new equipment. They wanted to develop their complex needs playground area, which would allow children of all abilities and developmental stages to play in the same space. They received over £700 in funding and their project began.

During an INSET day we delivered training to staff, and we visited the school again to deliver Play Leader training to their Young Ambassadors. A variety of new equipment was purchased, including specialist inclusive play equipment and happy feet mats for their most complex learners.

The school started various sports clubs during breaktime for their older learners. As it is difficult for them to attend sports clubs after school, due to transport, having quality opportunities at breaktime is very important. This way they can still access high quality extra-curricular activities. The Young Ambassadors visited the Key Stage 2 playgrounds each week and supported the younger children to learn and improve their play skills. These sessions also helped the Young Ambassadors to complete the volunteering part of their Duke of Edinburgh training.

Their playground is now a place where children and young people can enjoy spending time, be physically active, interact with their natural surroundings, experience change, take risks, feel safe and of course play, whether it is alone or with others. It is a nurturing environment which is fully inclusive and ensures that no-one is left out!



£ **£719**
funding granted

 **6**
Young Ambassadors
trained

 **50**
staff trained

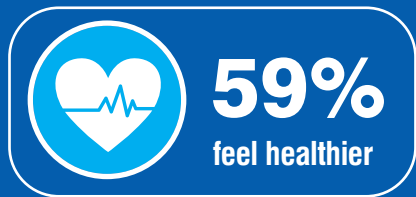
 **113**
young people
have enjoyed the
playground activities



Cardinal Newman

Cardinal Newman applied to our School Fund for equipment to help establish a new after school netball club. The netball club was aimed at all pupils, both boys and girls, and aimed to give them the best experience and encourage them to continue playing regularly. The staff hoped that the club would build friendships, develop skills and increase the confidence of participants on and off the court.

The club ran every Thursday after school and sessions worked on the pupils' understanding of the rules, developing their tactical play and their shooting technique. As well as learning to play, the pupils expressed interest in learning to umpire. All pupils had the opportunity to umpire and this helped them to better understand the game. The teachers organised many games against other schools, as well as inter-school tournaments.



St John Baptist Church in Wales High School – Netball club

The school's Gold Young Ambassadors became aware of a strong demand for an after-school netball club. They knew that school staff would be unable to start a new club due to other commitments, so decided to start one themselves. They identified a need for training and approached us for support. We were happy to support their coach education, so we funded Netball Leaders courses for them.

Once trained the Ambassadors started a Netball club for Year 7, 8 and 9. The after-school club runs every week, and 29 Key Stage 3 pupils regularly attend. The participants really enjoy the club, as it allows them to develop their skills, enjoy time with peers and keep active.

Delivering the club has allowed the Gold Young Ambassadors to develop crucial skills such as leadership, communication, organisation, and behaviour management. The experience and qualification gained will support them in future, allowing them to progress with their coaching outside of school.

The project has also inspired 8 younger pupils to sign up as new Bronze + Young Ambassadors. Motivated by the senior YA's, they signed up and now attend the netball club to shadow the Gold Ambassadors. They plan to complete the Netball Leaders training themselves and take on the delivery of the club from September.

At our recent Dragon's Den event the Gold Ambassadors requested £750 for equipment to deliver a 'glow in the dark' netball club. The use of fluorescent lamps mean that the balls and bibs light up in the dark, adding an extra bit of fun to every session. The funding request was granted, and the students are hoping to start the new club soon.



“Leading the club has really helped me to develop my coaching and leadership skills”

Coach

“Since joining the netball club, I have grown in confidence and joined other clubs”

Participant



Rhondda Dragons Dodgeball Club

Rhondda Dragons Dodgeball Club had been running for 5 years with adults only, when they decided to establish a junior section. The Sport Wales School Survey results from 2022 showed a latent demand for dodgeball and the club were keen to introduce children to the sport. They knew that a junior section would help them to grow their club membership and their youth pathway. Dodgeball is an inclusive sport for children to take part in and a great way to get children active while having fun.

We supported the club to apply for a Sport Wales Be Active Wales grant. The funding allowed them to purchase equipment, book the first block of facility hire and upskill coaches with training courses. Initially numbers were low, so our AYP team offered to help promote the club with local primary schools. Our AYP officer contacted the local schools and arranged taster sessions for the club to promote themselves. We also promoted the club online and shared flyers locally.

The number of children attending the sessions grew and the sessions became sustainable. To continue growing the sport, we worked with the club to arrange a primary school dodgeball tournament. We linked with a local secondary school and arranged a Dodgeball Leaders course for some of their sports students. The students supported us to deliver the primary school tournament and have agreed to

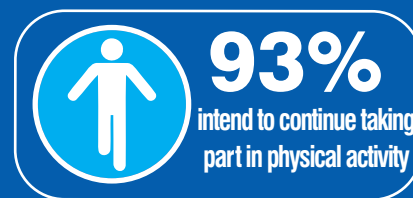
volunteer as coaches to support the club's junior sessions. The primary school children loved the tournament and all the schools have asked us to run another next year.

Every week the children are developing key skills such as teamwork, hand-eye coordination, and communication. The sessions are aimed at children from 6 to 12 years of age, giving parents with more than one child the opportunity to attend one session with all of their children, and giving siblings an opportunity to share a hobby. The club has big plans to continue growing and hopes to establish sustainable junior and youth sections, which will feed their adult teams.



“She sees her friends and sees the new ones she's made through the club. She has a stutter and being here helps as she is talking and interacting with other children.” Parent

“It's been great being able to bring all three of my children from age 3 to 11 to join in a sport together, make new friends and have a safe place to go.” Parent



AFC Penrhawceiber Mini and Juniors

In the summer of 2022, AFC Penrhawceiber decided to add girls-only teams to their Mini and Junior section. They felt that there was a lack of female football opportunities in the Lower Cynon, and that their club was in a good position to be able to fill the gap. They had always welcomed girls into their mixed Mini and Junior teams, and they had 4 girls registered with them, but they had never offered girls-only teams, so it was a new challenge for them. Penrhawceiber is one of the most socially deprived areas in South Wales and the club knew that sport gave children in their local community a purpose and something to focus their time and energy on.

Club volunteers spread the word via social media that they were recruiting girls aged 7-12 years and they organised some initial taster training sessions. To their delight, 35 girls turned up! Coaches from their mixed teams stepped in to take sessions and the club advertised new coaching roles to parents and people from the local community. The club now have 62 girls registered, four teams in the league (Under 8's - Under 12's) and 8 new trained coaches.

To keep attracting new girls to football, the club linked with us to become an FAW Huddle provider. Huddle aims to introduce girls to football in a fun, relaxed, sociable and friendly way to ensure they have a positive first experience of football. We supported them with Huddle equipment and covered ten weeks of facility hire to get them started. They deliver a free session every week open to girls that want to give football a try! When ready these girls transition into their teams to continue their football journey.

“Some of the girls that came along said that they didn't feel comfortable playing in the mixed environment, with the boys.”

“I like meeting new friends, playing matches and learning new skills.”



Junior Recreational Sport Sessions

Working in partnership with National Governing Bodies we delivered a range of community based junior sport sessions for children aged 2-9 years old. The sessions gave children an introduction to sport in the community and provided them with more opportunities to be active and develop physical literacy skills. We worked with the FAW to deliver Footie Families, Welsh Athletics to deliver Starting Blocs and Netball Wales to deliver Netball Tots. Sessions were held in Aberdare, Llantwit Fardre, Gilfach Goch, Ystrad and Tylorstown. Each of the sessions were based around having fun and learning new skills alongside other children and families.

Our community coaches attended training for each of the programmes, and our AYP team linked with local schools to promote the sessions. Sessions were well attended, with 191 children attending in total. Using the three different sport programmes we were able to deliver a range of sessions to foundation age children who may have had limited opportunities to take part in sport locally. Some community sport clubs are unable to take children until they reach the age of 5 or 6, so these foundation programmes allow us to provide children with the opportunity to learn new skills, make new friends and get experience in a sport session environment at

an early age. The hope is that they move into community clubs as they develop their confidence and skills, and they continue participating in sport for life.

When delivering these programmes our coaches learnt the importance of fun and variety, in order to keep children of this age constantly engaged. When faced with a range of ages and abilities, they needed to adapt sessions to make them more challenging or less structured to cater for children at different stages of learning. Delivering in 10 week blocks allowed the coaches to plan programmes focusing on different skills each session. In future, we would look to deliver the blocks with breaks in between, rather than continuous sessions, in order to avoid repetition of sessions.



“My child has enjoyed every session and grown in confidence”

“I have enjoyed coming to the sessions and taking part with my son, he is learning new skills every week and I’m taking some ideas home with me to play with him during the week too”



Hot Steppers Walking Football

The Hot Steppers are a Ladies Walking Football group from Tonyrefail. Set up in September 2021, they are a group that encourage all levels of players, from complete beginners to those who have played previously. They are all about having fun, keeping fit, and enjoying football.

Their founder, Jo wanted to play women's walking football locally. She was unable to find a session, so she set about starting her own! There were no women's only walking football sessions running anywhere in Rhondda Cynon Taf but she was sure that there would be demand out there. She used social media, Whatsapp groups, and her family and friends to help spread the word. Jo identified a local venue and sessions began. The group borrowed equipment and all chipped in to cover the facility hire cost. The women that attended loved the sessions and numbers began to increase.

Soon we heard about the group and how well they were doing. We got in touch and offered our support! We provided some funding for equipment and facility hire and started advertising the session as part of our Community Sport Programme. The group has done incredibly well in a short space of time. They have appointed a coach and they have all improved their fitness and skills. More

importantly than that they have made new friendships and developed a strong family ethos. The social aspect is just as important to them as the football. That being said, they love the game and are enjoying the competitive element. They have a playing kit, 3 ladies are completing coach education training and the team have entered the Wales Women Walking Football Federation Welsh League. Most of the members are completely new to football and have loved discovering a new hobby. Five members have been selected to play for the Wales Over 40's and Over 60's squads.

"It's made me realise it's never too late to do what you love"

"Football nights are the best nights, with non-stop laughter and fun"

"I was hooked from the first training session"

"It doesn't matter that I'm not very good, what matters is that I enjoy it and I'm a bit fitter"

"Its been the best decision I've made in a long time"



Indoor Bowls

We developed this project, in partnership with Bowls Wales, to make bowls more accessible and social for the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf. We also wanted to showcase to our Bowls clubs that 'Try Bowls' sessions would help them to engage with a wider audience and ultimately increase their membership. We developed a plan to offer 'try bowls' at three indoor locations. Unfortunately, one location became unavailable as it was used as a vaccination centre.

We met with the other two venues (Taff Ely Indoor Bowls Centre and Rhondda Indoor Bowls) and agreed upon a plan with each. We supported both clubs with facility hire, basic equipment and marketing materials. We promoted the sessions locally and online, and engaged with a number of local partners, such as Pontypridd Town Council and Trivallis. Our National Exercise Referral Team (NERS) supported the sessions and promoted them as an exit route for their clients. We also linked with the Stroke Association, who were happy to provide some adapted equipment.

The sessions run weekly, and they have been well attended. In total, the clubs have gained 34 new participants, with a number of them joining from our NERS scheme. Participants are enjoying the sport of bowls, and the

opportunity to be physically active, but they are also enjoyed the social element. Several attendees have commented that they have wanted to try bowls for a while, but they were unsure how to access sessions, and they didn't have the confidence to approach the clubs. We are pleased that the branding of the sessions gave them the confidence to come along and give it a try.

Some participants have already joined the clubs as members, with Taff Ely Indoor Bowls Club reporting that they have gained 7 new members that are playing competitively in weekly leagues.



"I did not realize I would enjoy the game so much and wish I started playing earlier"

"I've only recently moved into the area and look forward to playing every Wednesday afternoon with other members of the group"



Pickleball

Pickleball is a fun and inclusive sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton and table-tennis. It can be played as singles or doubles using solid paddles and a plastic hollow ball which has a much slower ball speed compared to tennis – making the game playable by everyone regardless of age, ability, or fitness level! Seven years ago, we supported a group in Llantrisant to access Sport Wales funding, which helped them to establish sessions twice a week. Since then, we have been keen to develop Pickleball across RCT and provide opportunities for people to get involved.

We established turn up and play Pickleball sessions at three Leisure Centres. We provided equipment to the centres so that participants did not have to bring their own, and we promoted the weekly sessions, targeting people looking to try the sport in a relaxed environment. The sessions have been well attended with 20-25 people participating at each venue.

During the Coronavirus pandemic a small group of badminton players started playing Pickleball outdoors to keep active; and they soon found a love for the sport and set up Treorchy Badminton and Pickleball Club. The club has been playing ever since, holding weekly sessions at Treorchy Comprehensive School during school term, and relocating to

Rhondda Tennis Club for the school holidays. When we became aware of the club, we got in contact and offered our support with funding and promotion! The club are thriving, with 40 members.

In 2022 we re-engaged with Llantrisant Pickleball Club, and helped them to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic, which saw all their sessions stop. The club are now back to full strength, with around 80 members, an additional evening session, and they are looking forward to supporting the first ever Welsh Pickleball Festival in August.

Pickleball sessions are now available at Llantrisant, Treorchy, Ystrad, Llantwit Fardre and Abercynon, with over 180 people participating weekly. The two clubs in Treorchy and Llantrisant are incredibly friendly and welcoming to new members of all abilities. They offer informal coaching and for those who wish to take it a step further, there are leagues and national competitions.

The pickleball community is like a family to me. I get to play a really fun sport and have made so many friends for life. It has genuinely changed my life.



Our Fitbit programme - Communities for Work Plus Cynon Men's Group

Our Fitbit programme blends modern technology and physical activity, aiming to get people more active. We work with groups that are looking to increase their physical activity levels and improve their general wellbeing. Participants are given Fitbit devices to track their daily steps and we support them over an 8-week period.

For this project we worked in partnership with the Communities for Work Plus team in Mountain Ash. They identified a group of seven men who were receiving support to gain employment. The staff felt the group would also benefit from support to improve their health and wellbeing. Each week we met the group for mentoring and monitoring sessions. We gave them personal and group challenges which kept them motivated and developed a strong team dynamic.

By the end of the 8 weeks every group member had increased their weekly steps by at least 8,000 steps, with one increasing by an incredible 36,000 steps a week. Another member of the group had been suffering from the long effects of Coronavirus and was very inactive before starting the course. The project encouraged him to get active again and changed his way of thinking. As well as

increasing their physical activity and improving their fitness, the project has helped the group in other ways. The staff also feel that the group have improved their employability. Now that the 8 week programme has finished, the group are continuing the project and setting weekly and monthly challenges themselves.



“The more that I did, the better it was for me. My heart rate was better. My confidence is better. I’m talking to more people. It’s been really good.”

“It made a difference. Each time I did it, it got easier. I wouldn’t want to go out for a walk, but then I’d make myself go and I’d come back and feel happy that I’d done it.”



Sport RCT

2022-23

IMPACT REPORT

JN: 52252-15 June 2023

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@sportrct

www.chwaraeonrct.co.uk | www.sportrct.co.uk

01443 562202 • sportrct@rctcbc.gov.uk



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