



Sport RCT Case Study

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.*”

