

Support for Local Authorities and Leisure Service Providers

Internal: Local, LDP, Core Cities, Active Partnerships, Capital

External: LGA, CLOA, UKActive, CLUK, Active Partnerships

Sport England is seeking to provide support to Local Authorities and their service delivery partners to assist with the challenge of sustaining and re-designing sport and physical activity services impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. We will endeavor to assist Authorities and their service delivery partners where it is needed to provide capacity to work through the current challenges with the aim of being in a strong position to meet the challenge of re-opening services/facilities when restrictions are eased. The support forms part of our strategic response to support the sector to ensure it comes through this period in as strong position as possible.

Local Authorities invest around £1bn annually into community sport and physical activity. This investment provides an essential foundation of local facilities and services that enable communities to access sport and physical activity and realise the physical and mental health benefits which accrue. Working together at this time to determine a way through the immediate threats to service continuity will enable this sector to be able to re-open a service which is important to communities and delivers incredible levels of social value.

We have been working with DCMS, and sector bodies including the LGA, CLOA, APSE, CLUK, UKActive to ensure that community sport and physical activity can survive this uncertain period alongside other vital public services. This support is designed to help implement the sector guidance from the LGA and wider sector bodies.

We are keen to understand the challenges you are facing to address the immediate issues of impact on revenue loss and costs associated with sustaining leisure service providers and / or planning for the re-opening phase. We have developed an offer of support that seeks to provide some assistance through advice, guidance and funding of consultant support. This can be utilised flexibly to suit local requirements including where Local Authorities and leisure providers are working collaboratively and pooling resources. Leisure Trusts and operators providing services independently to local communities or through a Local Authority are also able to access this support. We will need to consider requests in terms of need and may not be able to support all requests but will be as supportive as possible. Access for support will be via an initial conversation with Sport England to explore the scope of the work followed by a short letter of application.

We recognise that as the restrictions are lifted longer-term support will also be required as Local Authorities respond to emerging community needs and strategic priorities. Support and guidance for strategic outcomes planning, leisure services redesign and capital investment is available and can be implemented flexibly based on local requirements.

Sport England has also set aside funding to support the sector while the restrictions are being lifted to help organisations get back to delivery. We will work with Local Authorities and leisure providers to determine how resources can be deployed to assist in reopening, re-purposing facilities and repositioning services so that delivery is most effective as we emerge from lock down.

In addition to the consultant support we will gather and collate as much intelligence as possible to assist provide examples of good practice and shared learning on these issues. The information will also be used to inform our plans to assist the sector moving forward. Please contact us through any of the means above or by emailing facilitiesupport@sportengland.org