

Active England Case Studies

**Regional
Projects
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Introduction



Active England was a £108.5 million programme jointly funded by Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund. It was a national grant programme with three main objectives:

- Create sustainable, innovative multi-activity environments for sport, social and health deprivation;
- Increase participation in sport and physical activity among all the sections of society but particularly those sections of society that are under-represented in sport and physical activity participation; and
- Ensure new ways of working are spread to and adopted by the sports sector and key partners.

Over 240 creative and innovative projects have been funded by Active England. This document has been produced to demonstrate the positive contribution Active England has enabled through out the various Sport England regions. Nine innovative designs and themes have emerged and sample projects have been chosen from all the regions as good practice case studies.

The range of projects funded through Active England is very wide in terms of size, focus and management. Most Active England projects were delivered by three types of bodies:

- Sports clubs, associations or trusts;
- Other charities and voluntary organisations; and
- Local Authorities & NHS Trusts.

Many projects are trying out new approaches and working with new target groups.

Objectives: to create sustainable, innovative multi-activity environments

By March 2007 it was estimated that over 500,000 participants had taken part in a sport or physical activity funded by Active England. Projecting this figure to the end of 2008, over 800,000 will have been involved. This is almost double the original target (set by the projects themselves) and the majority of projects are proving to be self-sustaining in the long-term.

The programme will continue to deliver beyond December 2008. By 2010 it is anticipated that projects will have attracted over one million participants, a figure which will continue to grow.

Regional Case Studies

Project Locations



Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest

Outdoor adventure, innovation and affordability in a parkland setting



In spring 2006, a longstanding project to revitalise Bedgebury Forest in the High Weald of Kent finally reached fruition. As a delivery vehicle for public benefits, The Forestry Commission had been evaluating different ways of diversifying from its traditional role of timber management. It identified leisure and recreation as major areas for potential growth.

Open
365
days of the
year

As part of the initiative, Bedgebury's two thousand acres of largely untapped woodland have now been transformed into a major location for healthy outdoor physical activity, with accessibility for all ages and abilities.

Bedgebury Forest has addressed many important issues often overlooked in similar schemes, and has dramatically transformed itself into a hive of activity within a delightful, exciting and visually stimulating environment. It demonstrates that through strong team organisation and innovative thinking, forest parks can offer much more than the general perception as a place limited to informal walking.

As a result of Active England funding, cycling tracks and eleven large pieces of children's play equipment have been installed throughout the park. Cycle routes have been provided for all abilities from informal cycle paths to professional dirt tracks for those wanting greater physical challenges, working in conjunction with British Cycling. It also offers cycle hire, cycle workshops for repairs and hire of specially adapted all-terrain vehicles for full accessibility to the park including the disabled.

Annual visitor numbers have risen from 40,000 to 200,000 since the new facilities opened in April 2006

A franchise agreement with 'Go Ape' has enabled an exciting course of rope bridges, Tarzan Swings and zip slides up to thirty-five feet above the forest floor, adding significantly to the excitement of walking through the forest.

Bedgebury Forest offers a large number of educational and recreational courses and events eg Nordic walking, family fun runs and archery courses. This provides an introduction to sports and through their wide network of external partners links in with local clubs.

The centre has also established excellent links with GP surgeries offering health walks encouraging the benefits of physical and mental well being.

Admission is based on a one-off fee per car or mini-bus, making it particularly affordable for large groups eg. large families, local groups, OAP groups etc.

Constant planning and organisation of the diverse range of activities coordinated between external partners including British Cycling, Kent County Council Sports Disability Unit, By All Means, TROT (a local riding group), as well as many local schools, charities and community groups and the committed and enthusiastic staff on site undoubtedly reflects upon the new popularity of this park and the large visitor numbers recorded in a relatively short period of time..



....Bedgebury won the 2007 "Tourism" South East Sports award



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Creating an active nation through sport

Salmon Youth Centre

Regeneration, volunteering and
youth community partnerships

The centre
has been
established
since 1906

www.salmoncentre.co.uk

“

I know what an excellent job they do for local young people. A purpose-built youth centre would be a beacon for the community in Bermondsey and for youth work nationwide

”

Simon Hughes

MP for Bermondsey and North Southwark

The Salmon Youth Centre is a unique project. It is based in Bermondsey in the heart of South London and had to address all the challenges of a tight urban city site. The project is a great example of regeneration partnership of what can be achieved through neighbourhood renewal.

The climbing wall is made out of 6 panels each weighing 1 tonne. When complete it will be the highest and largest climbing wall in South London

Established in Bermondsey since 1906, over time the Salmon Youth facilities had become old, inaccessible to the disabled and in severe need of updating. The Salmon Youth centre has worked hard with a local housing trust to devise a plan that would provide new exciting community facilities and also provide space for the of the area.

The result has been an exciting new facility which was completed 12th February 2008 and is a haven of activity for the local community.

It has a wide range of facilities which cross over many interests. The sporting aspects of the project offer a 4-court sports hall, dance/performing arts studios, changing rooms, bike workshops and bike stores, health & fitness suite (planned for a later phase), social facilities, and an exciting adventurous external rooftop climbing wall.

The other complementary elements of the building are recording studios, a youth club, meeting rooms, IT suites, key worker flats, volunteer accommodation and offices. The project really provides opportunities for a diverse range of interests and can attract a diverse user group.

As well as receiving Active England funding the facility has many key partners who have also invested; The Hyde housing trust, London Development Agency, Southwark Council, Arts Council of England Tudor Trust, and the Garfield Weston Trust.

The sports work is run by three full time sports coaches and a full time sports manager based at the centre. Numerous volunteers give their time freely to help run the work. The work of the volunteers is crucial to the success and financial stability of the project. SYC also work in partnership with a number of organisations who help to deliver a wide menu of sporting activities for their members.

The centre runs the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and also takes young people out of the city on many adventure sporting activity weekends. Something that might otherwise never be experienced.

Future partnerships are constantly being developed and the centre is currently in discussions with the Royal marines whom are based locally and keen to be involved in the climbing aspects of the facility.



.....The work undertaken at Salmon Youth Centre is overseen and directed by a team of unpaid Directors and Trustees



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Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre

Increasing participation and access
to outdoor and adventurous activities

780

**courses provided
in the first year**



Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre is an attractive new outdoor activities centre on the outskirts of Norwich in Norfolk. Set in 280 acres of beautiful country park the centre is a public amenity that is being used by a wide variety of groups including schools, youth groups, sports clubs and families. Built on a quarry that supplied aggregate for much of the recent construction in the city, this successful regeneration project was jointly funded by Sport England, Big Lottery Fund and Norfolk County Council in partnership with Whitlingham Charitable Trust and The Broads Authority

www.whitlinghamoec.co.uk

Open 7 days a week

With the benefits of its stunning rural setting located so close to the City, Whitlingham OEC has gained considerable popularity since it opened in Aug 2005 drawing large numbers of participants from all aspects of the local and regional community.

The location at Whitlingham Country Park offers the perfect spot for family outings as the combination of outdoor and adventurous activities at the centre blends perfectly with the quiet ethos of the park. A new visitors' centre in the park with a café, information point and toilet facilities offers another draw to visitors wanting to experience the outdoors.

.....Links to schools and college curriculum

A key focus of the centre is to increase participation in the activities on offer, but also to identify progression routes. Many of the participants using the centre come with little or no experience so it's an ideal place to try something new and with the recent addition of a huge range of coaching courses, Whitlingham OEC can justly provide a beginner to advance level of course. Activities at the centre include Sailing, Windsurfing, Kayaking, Canoeing, Sculling, Raft Building, Archery, Climbing, Orienteering and Off Road Biking.

Managed by Norfolk County Council's Children's Services Department, the centre also works closely with social care, pupil referral units, and offers a key stage 4 engagement programme to maximise inclusion in education. Whitlingham OEC is an approved Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and British Canoe Union (BCU) training centre and is also licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS) and every member of staff is NGB qualified to deliver their activity. Centre management and staff are working hard to enable more and more of the activities to be fully accessible regardless of physical ability and the venue is registered as a Sailability centre with the RYA.

Sailing equipment and tuition can be hired for as little as £5/hr

Courses offered at the centre range from 3hr tasters to a 40hr week which can be spread over a number of sessions and if booked as private tuition can be taken at a time to suit you. When considering the full range of accredited activity courses, coaching qualifications, first aid and shore based navigation courses the diversity at Whitlingham OEC is impressive.

The combination of the beautiful location, site regeneration, exciting architecture, partnership links and diverse range of services offered at affordable prices make Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre a marked success. A sporting hub, a fun learning environment with an inclusive outlook for all to enjoy, this centre is already highly commended and with the passion expressed by its staff it can only go from strength to strength.

.....over 1500 NGB accreditations have been awarded



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X-site Skate Park, Skegness

Trends in adrenalin sports, youth,
indoor secure environments

Local enthusiasts 'Skegness Skaters' wanted a safe and secure indoor skate park and collaborated to form Lincolnshire Extreme Sports Association, a non-profit making group with the express aim of owning and operating a custom made community skating facility within the seaside resort. With the help of the council, Active England Funding and regeneration bodies, after six years of planning on a strip of isolated land between the beach and a car park, their dream was finally realised in 2006 when X-site opened.



Reported
crime rate
reduced by
17%

Open 5 days a week during term time and 7 days a week during the school holidays

Only sheer determination and the will to succeed overcame the difficulties of obtaining planning and funding for the scheme. With the first indoor phase fully operational, now further funding is in place for the phase 2 outdoor concrete street plaza which is due to open in March 2008 for skating, in-lining and BMX .

Crucially, X-site provides a secure and controlled venue for children whilst also providing a sense of independence for the mainly 10-18 year old members. Street gang culture associations with skateboarding has been addressed by creating a place for community mixing and socialising through common interests and activity. This includes community police officers who attend the centre, establishing comfortable relationships with the youngsters on an informal level.

Staff are also specially trained to organise events and care for 8-15 year olds in a hangout club proving so popular, funding is being raised for a large portakabin to cope with the current demand. With some skaters over 50, the facility also embraces a broad age group spectrum making it an ideal family venue.

Within just over a year since opening the new facilities in 2006, there are already approximately 670 annual and 6000 monthly members

The popularity of this relatively simple concept and the advantages of its holiday resort location have secured its long term survival, sustainability and continued expansion. Management style, youth trust, great communication and continual assessment are all important factors in achieving their impressive membership numbers, with internal structures and layouts changed regularly to maintain interest.

For under £1.5m the project offers excellent value for money

As a result of their continued interest in new branding, sponsorship ideas and competitions and their combination of professionalism, business and management style, X-site now shares its experience with other councils and groups regarding good practice in the creation and management of a successful centre whilst retaining a deep enthusiasm and passion for their sporting activities. This scheme demonstrates a new wave of adrenalin sports facilities proving highly successful.

Already the only indoor skateboarding venue in Lincolnshire, with phase 2 completed will be Europe's first indoor and outdoor purpose built facility!



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Creating an active nation through sport

“Mission: Active Future”

Education, sports, arts, culture and learning through environments



20,000
children
participated
to date

www.eureka.org.uk

“

I think ‘Mission: Active Future’ is one of the most interesting and exciting projects that I have seen in the last ten years because it is targeted directly at the group we want to get to. It works with 6-11 year olds, the age group that we want to engage before inactivity sets in and it becomes hard to ignite their interest. Innovative projects like Mission: Active Future will have a positive impact on children who find clubs and more formal sporting structures off-putting.... My congratulations to Eureka! and Sport England

Lord Coe

”

“Mission: Active Future” (M:AF) is an Active England funded project conceived and developed by the Eureka! The Museum for Children set in the heart of Halifax. A futuristic articulated lorry trailer opens out hydraulically transforming into an interactive exhibition which is taken to schools, road shows and communities, importantly including those in more remote rural locations which would normally have limited access. During each 1-2 week stay, the unique interactive experience aims to attract and inspire the imaginations of 6-11 year olds through a virtual journey in 2105AD where the entire population has become inactive and lazy.

As a result of visiting the Mission: Active Future trailer 10,000 children have maintained activity log books to submit for awards

The excellent outreach work developed to increase participation and awareness of the links between health, diet, physical activity and education uses technology as an exciting medium in a high-tech and innovative way. The themes explored through 16 physically interactive features how their bodies work, what they eat and what exercise can help them “get fit for the future” to lead healthier lifestyles. The beautifully produced log books and information packs provide each child with an eight week log of activity linked to an awards system. With interactive web, the benefits then extend far beyond the day/week trip to hopefully establish a routine element in a child’s everyday lifestyle.



With Active England funding in excess of £660,000 over five years, the project was realised with the support of its many partners such as The Peter Harrison Foundation, Northgate plc, West Yorkshire Grants, The Truckitts, Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales, The Craven Trust and The Sir

George Martin Trust and assisted by the University of Bath, IFI, Leeds Metropolitan University, University of Sheffield, Liverpool John Moores University, University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, Scope and also various local junior and primary schools.

Eureka is successful in having not only the ability to take the M:AF trailer out on the road to the more remote rural locations but also in the grounds of the museum, adding to the long term sustainability as an exhibit. This was achieved through the careful and imaginative planning and excellent project management provided by Eureka, the collaboration with partners and close work with many local schools.

The M:AF concept has been taken to China: within 1 week 400 children participated

M:AF aims to go national in 2008 and the equally exciting website enables children who have participated to maintain links with the initiative.

.....Mission: Active Future visited over 50 different venues reaching over 20,000 children between Feb 2006 and Oct 2007



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Creating an active nation through sport

Wellnessonwheels Mobile Gym

Achieving sustainability and affordability of novel ideas in rural settings



'Wellness on Wheels' (WOW!) is an exciting and innovative specially built mobile gym unit jointly developed by Wear Valley District Council, County Durham Primary Care Trust, Sport England and Technogym through the Active England programme.

The pilot scheme has been in operation since June 2005 and promotes the benefits of physical activity encouraging lifestyle changes within local communities. Key objectives were to overcome the barrier of transport for people in both isolated rural and deprived areas and encourage a more sustainably active lifestyle through exercise. The scheme has been highly successful in achieving this.

Open
7days/wk
& admission
FREE

www.wellnessonwheels.co.uk

The WOW! concept comprised a 44-foot trailer equipped with Techno gym fitness equipment and Techno gym wellness system, which records and monitors the users fitness etc. On board the WOW! Trailer is 17 work stations some of which are IFI accredited; plasma television screens play stations, wellness system and a team of qualified fitness instructors. An additional support trailer provides a consultation room, toilet area and staff room. The installation features all the mod cons of a private gym or health club with a professional feel.

After gaining exposure initially at a number of one-off events, 10 week stints in any one place proved to be the most beneficial period to allow people to see the difference that active recreation can make to their lives whilst also limiting relocation costs. Once hooked, people are signposted to other opportunities. WOW! compliments other local initiatives e.g. the SAZ funded community physical activity coordinators, and is very popular with schools despite the majority of participants being aged between 30-70 years.

....in the fifteen months since opening WOW! in June 2006 , 2413 members have used the facility for exercising

Unlike traditional research methods assessing local user needs prior to building a permanent sports or activity centre, the WOW! project adopts an alternative approach. The mobile gym simultaneously captivates audiences increasing participation whilst also providing both a research database and a temporary testing provision for a multitude of areas. This more accurately informs where permanent gyms can be most beneficially located and has contributed significantly to the success of built venues. The initial project has spawned many other "WOW!" legacy gyms across the region. The mobile gym acts as a consultation tool to establish the demand and potential locations for permanent local facilities, which volunteers are trained to run themselves. "WOW!" provides equipment worth £15,000 to the host community with a 12 months reimbursement period. The WOW! trailer success has led to five permanent legacy projects and a further seven scheduled for 2009, continuing the sustained benefit enjoyed by individuals and communities from the data, research, marketing and training support provided at a relatively low cost

"WOW! also compliments activities offered by schools, community based physical activity programmes delivered by the Wear Valley Sport Action Zone funded Community Physical Activity Co-coordinators, Positive Futures, LEAP Initiative and the GP referral programme. It also links in with the district councils' 'Walking the Way to Health' and their programme of 'special events' providing a focal point for physical activity through mass participation opportunities.

This commendable project should be carefully considered by other partners and councils as an informative and highly successful tool.

.....Following WOW!'s trailer success, 5 legacy projects have resulted with a further 7 scheduled for 2009



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Creating an active nation through sport



Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre

Regeneration, crime reduction,
community partnerships, youth
and the elderly

Woodhouse Park is the 64th poorest ward in England with a mortality rate 61% higher than the national average. The main challenges and concerns of the area were mainly twofold: the high levels of nuisance and crime from youths and the higher than average elderly population suffering from relatively inactive lifestyles and poor public transport infrastructure.

**Crime
down 14%**
(since 2005)
**Youth Nuisance
significantly
reduced**

Manchester City Council addressed these issues by developing a partnership with the Willow Park Housing Trust in a joint venture to amalgamate the separate youth and community centres previously in run down buildings into a single community hub. With Manchester City Council, Sport England, Willow Park Housing Trust and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund as key funders, the resulting Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre is an impressive new facility providing a 4-court sports hall, changing rooms, dance studio, boxing gymnasium, community hall, meeting/consultation rooms, youth activity areas and provision for catering. The adjacent floodlit synthetic multi-use games area within an existing green space encompassing four multi-use games pitches, a hard court play area and a community garden provides a beacon and focus to the streetscape.

The diverse range of activities depend upon the committed 70 volunteers recruited so far (2007)

With Woodhouse Park Family Centre links for smaller children, youth groups, activity groups for the elderly and partnerships with e.g. local radio stations, the thriving facility is succeeding in creating a unique platform for all ages to work and recreate together. A dedicated management team, Manchester Youth service and community volunteers ensure a packed programme of weekly events providing daily courses for activities ranging from cheerleading and lacrosse to line dancing and wrestling. Crucial to this success was recognising the value of combining both professional sports leaders and high numbers of volunteers to encourage participation, with those contributing beyond the call of duty rewarded for their efforts.

15 Volunteers attended the NVQ level 2 Course in Youth and Community

Recently five young local people were given a life time opportunity of travelling to South Africa on a young volunteer's project to enhance personal development through volunteering in schools in the Western Cape. None of this would have been possible before the new centre was established.

Volunteers now have a seat on the Stakeholder Board

This project's great success could not have been achieved without the efforts in forming partnerships agencies with Wythenshawe Regeneration Team; Manchester Youth Service & Connexions; Greater Manchester Police; Manchester Leisure and their local Sport Development section; Manchester City FC 'Football in the Community'; Mancat / Route 43; Woodhouse Park Junior Football Club; Signpost; Playing for Success programme, Extended Schools programme; South Manchester Healthy Living Network; and South Manchester Primary Care Trust.

In 2007, the project was recognised nationally by the Housing Corporation who awarded Willow Park Housing Trust the top Gold Award for its work on community cohesion and health



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Creating an active nation through sport

Saheli Adventure Hub

Women and community links,
outreach, health and education
and the virtual tutor

250
women members
in first two weeks
of opening

The Saheli Women's Group was formed through a 'capacity building' programme by Balsall Heath Forum as they recognised that Asian women were not sufficiently involved in local resident participation. Saheli Women's Group became a registered charity in 2000 and established the needs of local women through a feasibility study which identified the need for a health and fitness centre run by women, for women in a safe and secure environment for all the women in their neighbourhood

www.saheliwg.org.uk

The Active England fund invested £229,000, matched by South Birmingham College, to create the Saheli Adventure Hub facility, together with a further £159,000 revenue funding over 3 years from other sources to support the employment of a full-time centre manager, two part-time senior fitness instructors and two part-time reception staff all of whom are local and reflective of the community they serve. Within two weeks of opening 250 women from the local community became members. Since then 9600 women and 69 girls have accessed the centre making the centre a thriving hub of community life and activity which consistently works to full capacity.

The Saheli project has improved the overall health of women in this community

The Saheli Adventure Hub comprises a small gym with nineteen pieces of equipment, changing rooms, an exercise / aerobic space with fully sprung floor, small office, reception and toilets. There is also a large central space featuring a virtual tutor, a large screen projector playing fitness DVD's. This enables small classes to participate without a separate dance studio and tutor, keeping running costs to a minimum. In addition to indoor activities the centre also organises many outdoor activities such as horse riding, cycling, rambling and fitness walks taking members to exciting new places far beyond their home territory.

250 founder members, 389 participants and 164 health referrals in 2007

The Saheli Centre has been particularly successful in its wide network of partnerships. It provides Exercise and wellness courses run through the Birmingham PCT i.e. GP referrals where individual membership is paid for 3 months. The centre currently boasts an impressive 80% retention rate of GP referrals which is well above national average.

With most members within 5-6 streets radius, the centre has become an integral part of many busy family lives. Offering free induction and programmes, the centre has also widened its services to offer support and advice on housing, local needs, benefits and a signposting service.

9600 women and 69 girls have accessed the centre from 12 to 83 years of age

Always looking to the future, the enthusiastic team behind the centre's success is aiming to link in with the Birmingham City Council Leisure Card Scheme and ultimately strive towards expansion of the centre.

Demand for lifelong learning from users of the Saheli Adventure Hub has resulted in women only courses including fitness and healthy living offered by New Balsall Heath Women's Academy which is situated next to the centre



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Creating an active nation through sport

Knowle West Physical Activity Project, Bristol

Health links, dance, partnerships,
community and deprivation



86
year old manages
20,000+
steps per day

Knowle West is one of the more deprived districts of the Filwood ward of Bristol. Many residents' families reach back for generations and there is a strong sense of community. The Knowle West Physical Activity Project supported with Active England funding was launched in 2005 to act as a bridge between two local communities providing a supportive community hub for the area. The chosen building, a redundant secondary school whose claim to fame after closing down was its use as a stage set for the popular TV series 'Teachers', has been converted into a local opportunities centre, also housing over 50 charities, agencies and other bodies.



www.theparkcentre.com

www.angelsdanceacademy.org.uk

Open 7 days of the week

The facilities provided include a community gym with full disabled access and specialist fitness equipment, a floodlit multi-use games area, a sports hall and a dance studio. With old classrooms easily converted to dance studios and external pitches used for health walks, economies were made by modernising the existing sports facility infrastructure rather than demolishing and rebuilding. Also forming part of a neighbourhood renewal scheme in its residential location, this project demonstrates a good example of realistic, inexpensive, innovative and sustainable regeneration.

The project has been particularly successful in establishing excellent partnerships with the health, college, special needs and education sectors. GP referral success is well above the national average and through its community work, realistic targets, mentoring and reasonable membership

GP referrals achieve 75% completion rate, 35% above national average

fee, high membership numbers have been attained despite the health & fitness suite's relatively small size. Special needs and excluded school groups also benefit enormously from the centre's dedicated support.

Another field of success has been the dance groups established for the younger members of the community. The award-winning 'Angels Dance Academy' are British champions, last year placed fifth overall in the world - incredible results for such early days operated on relatively small budgets.

86 new gym members between April and June 2007

With excellent participant numbers, Knowle West is a progressive project constantly growing and inventing new ideas and initiatives. These include cheerleading in the community, dance leaders' awards, inset training for teachers, summer school, weight management, activity trails, stop smoking groups and drop-in GP sessions.

Without the commitments and enthusiasm of the staff, the centres' success increasing awareness of health & well-being in the community could not have been achieved.

Major popularity with the 'Teen Fit' programme, now 220 attendances

..... The award-winning 'Angels dance academy' are British champions: last year they were placed fifth overall in the world



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