

**Evidence based practice in sport  
development: a Realistic Evaluation of a sport  
and physical activity strategy**

**JOHN DANIELS**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Psychology and Department of Exercise and Sport Science**

**The Manchester Metropolitan University in collaboration with  
Cheshire East Borough Council**

**2015**

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction as background to this thesis</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Research aims and questions .....	7
Outline of the thesis .....	8
<b>Chapter 2</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Evaluation research: exploring its defining characteristics</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Introduction .....	10
The purpose of evaluation research .....	10
Definitions: the differing faces of evaluation .....	13
Current philosophies and future practice of evaluation .....	15
Dimensions of evaluation .....	19
<b>Chapter 3</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Sport development: a challenging environment for evaluation research</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Introduction .....	23
Aligning sport development with evaluation research .....	24
Sport development and ‘toolkits’ for evaluation .....	26
What constitutes ‘value’ in community sport development?.....	32
Critical appraisal of key performance indicators in sport .....	35
<b>Chapter 4</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>The role of the evaluator</b> .....	<b>39</b>
Introduction .....	39
Evaluation approaches .....	39
Internal and external issues .....	42
Towards an external but participatory role .....	43
Exploring the essential skills and attributes of the evaluator.....	45
<b>Chapter 5</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<b>Understanding the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy</b> .....	<b>47</b>
Introduction .....	47
The Strategy setting .....	49

The Strategy aims and outcomes.....	58
Developing programme theory and ‘logic’ .....	62
Models and ‘reality’ .....	68
<b>Chapter 6 .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Towards a methodological approach .....</b>	<b>69</b>
Introduction .....	69
Contextualising the research methodology .....	69
The ‘evaluation research’ approach .....	70
Embracing ‘Realistic Evaluation’ .....	72
Ontological and epistemological considerations .....	74
The research setting .....	76
The research sample .....	79
Methods .....	82
Qualitative: the ‘realistic’ interviews .....	82
Quantitative: explaining outcomes using numbers .....	87
Measuring impact: the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) ....	89
Adminstrating the VIAT survey .....	91
Measuring impact: perceived changes to quality of life .....	92
Administering the RAND-36 ‘Quality of Life’ questionnaire .....	93
Making sense of the data .....	94
Choosing the appropriate statistical tests for the VIAT and Rand-36 questionnaires .....	96
Ethical considerations .....	97
<b>Chapter 7 .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>The Preliminary Interviews: beginning with the end in mind.....</b>	<b>101</b>
Introduction .....	101
About the four Preliminary Interview participants .....	102
Talking about delivery: cautiously persevering in the formative stages of delivery .....	103
The ‘bigger picture’ and thinking strategically .....	113
Theory building: postulating the mechanics of success .....	118
Context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) configurations from the Preliminary Interviews .....	123
<b>Chapter 8 .....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>The Phase Two interviews and the importance of context .....</b>	<b>126</b>
Introduction .....	126
Working with others: partnership complexities .....	127

Becoming familiar with the participants: a mechanisms for change .....	136
Building relationships .....	137
Context-mechanism-outcome configurations for the Phase Two interviews.....	141
<b>Chapter 9 .....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Phase Three interviews: realising and explaining outcomes.....</b>	<b>144</b>
Introduction .....	144
Collecting the participant perspectives of the Volunteer Programme...	146
Important contexts: motivations of the volunteers .....	148
Outcome patterns for the Volunteer Programme .....	158
Perspectives of the Coach Mentors .....	161
Coach mentoring: an informal but empowered process .....	163
Outcome patterns for the Coach Mentoring Programme .....	167
Perspectives of the ‘Sport for All’ disability sports coach.....	169
Participant development and progression .....	170
The role and influence of family .....	173
Outcome patterns for the Disability Sports Programme.....	176
<b>Chapter 10 .....</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Quantitative analysis: strength in numbers? .....</b>	<b>178</b>
Introduction .....	178
Community sport development: national performance measures and their local interpretation.....	179
Sport for All (Hard to Reach).....	181
Improving access for the ‘hard to reach’.....	183
Rural Sport Hub: the challenge of change.....	185
Coaching and Volunteering Hub .....	186
Coaching: where are all the women? .....	187
The Volunteer Programme: safer, stronger communities and a vehicle for developing skills?.....	189
The Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) results .....	191
Descriptive statistics .....	191
Social Capital.....	192
Social capital and programme outcomes .....	194
Physical Capital .....	196
Physical capital and the Volunteer Programme outcomes .....	197
Human Capital .....	197
Human Capital and Volunteer Programme outcomes .....	198

Rural Sports Hub: improving general health and physical capacity .....	200
Quality-of-life and Rural Sports Hub outcomes .....	204
<b>Chapter 11 .....</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>Bringing it all together: Realistic Evaluation and its place in community sport development .....</b>	<b>206</b>
Introduction .....	206
Realistic Evaluation and outcomes: did the Strategy work and if it did, for whom and under what circumstances? .....	206
Revisiting the aims of the research .....	211
Applying and appraising established principles of Realistic Evaluation within the context of a community sport and physical activity strategy .....	211
Informing practitioners of good practice for evaluation at a strategic level .....	218
Informing sports policy locally: the impact of expertise .....	220
Realistic Evaluation and a mixed method approach: what worked? ...	223
Reflections on the research process .....	225
Interview biases and developing the realist(ic) technique .....	229
Implications and future research .....	231
<b>References .....</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>273</b>
Appendix 1 Interview Schedule (Programme Leader) .....	273
Appendix 2 Interview Schedule (Focus Group – Volunteer Programme).....	274
Appendix 3 Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) questionnaire .....	275
Appendix 4 Participant information sheet (Interview).....	283
Appendix 5 Participant information sheet – Questionnaire .....	285
Appendix 6 Extract of an interview .....	287
Appendix 7 RAND-36 Quality of Life Questionnaire .....	290
Appendix 8 – Example of final coding and CMO mapping for one of the themes from the Preliminary Interviews .....	294

# Illustrations

## Figures

Figure 1 The single system of strategic delivery for sport and physical activity (Sport England, 2007b). *LAs = Local Authorities; NGBs = National Governing Bodies; SSPs = School Sport Partnerships.....	51
Figure 2 Logic model for the 'Sport for All Hub' and related programmes.	66
Figure 3 Logic model for the 'Coaching and Volunteering Hub' and related programmes.....	67
Figure 4 The 'ingredients' of a realistic evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 72).....	73
Figure 5 Indices of derivation for Cheshire (ODPM, 2007).	77
Figure 6 Extract of descriptive coding summary table.	95
Figure 7 The participants for the two stages of Preliminary Interviews. ....	102
Figure 8 Thematic map for 'talking about delivery' in the Preliminary Interviews.....	104
Figure 9 Thematic map illustrating initial and secondary interviews from 'the bigger picture' to 'Acknowledging immediate outcomes'.....	114
Figure 10 Thematic map illustrating initial and secondary variations for 'theory building'.....	118
Figure 11 Working with partners theme and related subthemes.....	127
Figure 12 Familiarising with participants theme and related subthemes. ....	137
Figure 13 Thematic map for the Volunteer Programme focus group interviews.	148
Figure 14 Thematic map for the Coach Mentoring Programme.....	162
Figure 15 Thematic map for the interviews with the disability sports coach.....	170

## Tables

Table 1. A comparison of Local Authority participation levels in Cheshire (Sport England, 2006).....	78
Table 2 CMO configurations for the Preliminary Interviews .....	124
Table 3 CMO configurations for the Phase Two interviews .....	142
Table 4 Forms of capital (Smith et al. 2004). .....	147
Table 5 CMO configurations for the Volunteer Programme. ....	160
Table 6 CMO configurations for the Coach Mentoring Programme. ....	168
Table 7 CMO configurations for the Disability Sports Programme.....	176
Table 8 Cumulative key performance indicators for the first two years of the Sport for All hub (Frequencies). ....	182
Table 9 Cumulative key performance indicators for the first two years of the Coaching and Volunteering hub (frequencies).....	186
Table 10. The number of coach mentors from each sport. ....	187
Table 11 National participation figures by gender for the sport involved in the Coach Mentoring programme (Sport England, 2007). ....	188
Table 12 Descriptive information of volunteer respondents .....	193
Table 13 Total mean scores for each capital construct and for all grouping variables. ....	195
Table 14 Characteristics of RAND 36-Item quality-of-life survey respondents .....	201
Table 15 Composite scores for the RAND 36-item quality-of-life survey. ...	202

# Abbreviations

CMO	Context-Mechanism-Outcome
CNBC	Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council
CSN	Community Sport Network
DCMS	Department for Culture Media and Sport
IVR	Institute of Volunteer Research
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LAs	Local Authorities
NGB	National Governing Body
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PESSCL	Physical Education and School Sport Club Links
QoL	Quality of Life
SOAs	Super Output Areas
SSPs	School Sports Partnerships
VIAT	Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit



## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank Professor Christine Horrocks and Dr Barbara Bell. Their honesty and insight have, on every occasion, provided invaluable support and wisdom. I particularly acknowledge their patience in reading and re-reading the draft chapters and providing feedback which was both enabling and empowering. Christine, you provided inspiration when it was needed; you lifted my spirits when times were difficult – I'll especially miss the tales of your Netball experiences in Oldham! So thanks for the timely humour too. I hope we can work together in the future.

Secondly, thanks to the Community Sport Network and in particular Geoff Beadle. His willingness to support this research, despite a major restructure of the Council and a complete overhaul of the Government's sport policy, demonstrated his capacity to lead and learn even in the most difficult of circumstances. You kept calm and we could all carry on. Your team gave up their time to support this research even though many were uncertain about their future within the local authority. In all our meetings together, their only concern was for the people they served. I was proud to be part of that team and privileged to have worked with them. Chris Bridgeman will be truly missed. My appreciation also goes out to the participants of the various programmes, whose honesty and courage, in relating their experiences, has made this research possible.

Finally, the biggest thanks go to my family. Shiona, you are amazing and a constant pillar of support. I could not have done this without your unwavering patience and love. Mum and Dad, your continued faith in me buoyed me in times of difficulty and you were always there to help out whenever I needed you. Arthur, you read the whole thing – twice! For me, you were the third member of the research team. Liv and Isaac, every time you sneaked through the door to say goodnight to me, I was reminded of what really matters. Thanks for your support. I love you all dearly.

## **Abstract**

Local sport and physical activity strategy offer a plan for governing and exploiting resources with the objective of stimulating interest and increasing participation in sport. The impact of 'strategy' can be inconsistent and little is known of the personal and contextual factors that influence strategy effectiveness. Multiple programmes within a local sport and physical activity strategy were evaluated using a mixed method design through interviews and questionnaires with both programme leaders and participants. The data were generated between 2007 and 2012 and analysed using the Realistic Evaluation framework of Pawson and Tilley (1997). The findings show that the Strategy activities offer a foundation for instigating social connectedness and a mechanism for personal and professional development. These mechanisms were triggered when individual, and cultural needs were accommodated. Other outcomes explored within the thesis include the transfer of skills, the creation of safer and stronger communities and the improvement of health and wellbeing. Collectively, the data helped generate explanations or theory for these outcomes and formed useful information upon which strategic decisions were made. Further, there is critical commentary about the research position and its application in a sport development context.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction as background to this thesis

Research and evaluation in sport development has become a growing area of concern for sport policy makers and practitioners seeking to improve their evidence base to support the development of initiatives (Nicholls et al. 2010; Hylton, 2013; Harris and Adams, 2015). Consequently, researchers are increasingly commissioned to evaluate community sport programmes (Hills and Maitland, 2014; Rowland et al. 2012; Curry et al. 2014; Iachini et al. 2014; Bean et al. 2015). This expanding evidence base is adding to the academic credibility of sport development by challenging knowledge and improving our understanding of issues that determine the value and impact of interventions for developing sport (Grix and Carmichael, 2012; Green and Houlihan, 2005), and those targeting broader social issues such as health, crime and regeneration (Coalter, 2013; Krustup and Bangsbo, 2015; Gratton and Henry, 2002). The linkage of sport to broader social outcomes, while not a new idea, has added sophistication to its analysis and expanded the strategies and policies that promote sport. In doing so, the complexity and challenge of evaluating interventions has become increasingly intricate.

Furthermore, sport's increasing social agenda has made conceptualising the *developmental* aspect of the work difficult. Two decades have passed since Collins attempted to *define* the term sport development. Reflecting the participation policy rhetoric of the time, Collins (1995:21) suggested that sport development was:

‘...a process whereby effective processes, systems and structures are set up to enable and encourage people in all or particular groups to take part in sport and recreation or to improve their performance to whatever level they desire.

Later, and in the era reflected in this research, Hylton and Bramham (2008:2) proposed that sport development is:

‘...more accurately a term used to describe policies, processes and practices that form an integral feature of the work involved in providing positive sporting experiences’

If these definitions differ in any way, it is in their outcomes. Collins' (1995) definition refers to increased participation and performance while Hylton and Bramham (2008) suggest positive sporting experiences. The latter definition is according to Houlihan (2011) more reflective of the sports policy of its time when the then current sports Minister, Richard Caborn, challenged sport to address other government agendas including '...health, greater social inclusion...and producing world class talent for our 2012 athletes and beyond' (ISPAL, 2006, cited in Hylton and Bramham, 2008:3). As Houlihan (2011) suggests, sport development is highly contested in terms of its objectives. This research represents a unique period in sport development activities and outcomes. Policy placed an emphasis on both increases in participation and focused on sport's contribution to broader social agenda. Thus, both definitions are useful and both will underpin the use of the term *sport development* throughout the thesis.

Within the aforementioned attempts to define sport development are the references to *processes, systems and practices*. Inevitably, with a broader social agenda, sport will rely on the inputs of different communities such as health and education and the local population itself. These communities, referred to as 'stakeholders' in this thesis, will have differing perspectives and values regarding the outcomes of sport development activity. There are varied interpretations of what constitutes value in sport and physical activity programmes. Among the perspectives given in the literature is that of the population who may place great value on the ways in which a programme is delivered, and has focussed on issues which the community itself has identified (Ashley and Bartlett, 2001). Further, there are the perspectives of the practitioners who need to be able to criticise with reasonable confidence the success of a programme in relation to its objectives (Rossi et al. 2004). The evidence becomes a form of feedback on which to base future developments and in order to make decisions regarding allocation of resources and be accountable to programme funders. Finally, there are the perspectives of academics who need to be able to analyse success to progress understanding in terms of cause and effect in interventions (Nichols, 2004; Coalter, 2007).

According to Clarke and Dawson (1999), this creates a problem in that everyone thinks they are an expert. In different ways, researchers and practitioners do bring their own form of expertise. However, researchers often bring a more academic and

critical stance towards sport development work (Harris and Adams, 2015) which, according to Nicholls et al. (2010) does little to fulfil practitioner needs. In sport, this lack of synergy has slowed progress for the development of a rigorous and useful evidence base (Harris and Adams, 2015). Thanks to the myriad of approaches to evaluation research, there is the potential to work together and evaluate better. Approaches that acknowledge and embrace the academic and practitioner relationships stand a far better chance of producing useful information than those that do not (Nichols, 2010; Edwards, 2015).

Evaluation research is not a new science. However, community sport development is a relatively new concept and belongs to a minor and discretionary policy area. Paradoxically, Coalter (2013) questions sport development's capacity to embrace research and practice inferring that sport neither has the expertise nor budget to support 'good quality' evaluation research but is increasingly reliant on such work to survive. Surprisingly, sport development has survived very well on the tacit belief that it can make a difference to people's lives beyond winning medals and trophies (Coalter, 2010; 2013; Kay, 2009). Coalter (2007:1) refers to this as '*...sport's mythopoeic status*' and the assumption of sport's positive social outcomes. However, with increasing pressures on budgets and having been challenged by two governments to improve its evidence base, both community sport development and the research community are under increased scrutiny to justify development through sport. Recent theory has focussed less on outcomes and more on the process-based information used to explain programme outcomes and clarify what it was about programmes that made them work (Coalter, 2007). According to Hills and Maitland (2014:167) this has the potential to tap into practitioner and participant knowledge and '*...lend itself to stronger research protocols*'.

This thesis will explore both the notion of process-based and outcome evaluations at the level of a community sport and physical activity strategy. This will add to our understanding of the application of evaluation research in sport, which is normally limited to single cases or programmes. Rather than acknowledge evaluation as a divisive issue for sport, an *evaluation research* approach was used. This term is aligned with Rossi et al. (2004) and describes the research as both a political and academic activity in that it has to have stakeholder relevance and satisfy learning/understanding at a philosophical level.

At the epistemological level, *learning* (about the impact of the interventions) is sought through using a *theory-based evaluation* (logical reasoning) (Weiss, 1998). More specifically, interpretation of impact and effect through use of *critical realism* (Bhaskar, 2008). The research is not purely a hermeneutic exercise. Evaluation seeks to explain phenomena through a number of different sources. With this in mind, a mixed method design was used as a means of between-methods triangulation of results to strengthen the dependability and rigour of the data. Further, a mixed method would help determine and understand the critical realities about social, organisational and policy environments in which community programmes often reside (Chatterji, 2004). Thus, differing levels and types of data will be required because ‘...social reality is stratified’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:64) and the evaluation will need to capture how differing social actors such as programme leaders and programme participants perceive their worldview, which is embedded in their social reality (Nichols, 2005).

To this end, this thesis represents a collaborative effort between the researcher and a local Community Sport Network (CSN) that spanned seven years from 2006 to 2013. A full year before the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (referred to from this point forward as ‘the Strategy’) was published, the researcher was involved in the both the formation of the Network itself and the development of the Strategy. This way, the evaluation was seen to be done *with* the network and not *at* them. This latter issue, of a facilitatory role, is explored in more detail in Chapter 4. Further, evaluation was included in the terms of reference for the CSN and consequently became an integral part of the delivery of the Strategy. This ensured that the group was beginning with the end in mind and evaluation could not be reduced to an afterthought. Coalter (2007:1) suggested that this is often the case in sport where there is an ‘...over-concentration on outputs’ at the expense of understanding how and why such outputs are realised.

## **Research aims and questions**

### **The aims of this research were to:**

1. apply and appraise established principles of Realistic Evaluation within the context of a community sport and physical activity strategy,

2. inform practitioners of good practice for evaluation at a strategic level and,
3. inform sports policy locally.

### **Key research questions**

1. In what ways might established models of evaluation best be applied to a sport development context at the strategic level?
2. What theories may best explain the outcomes of local sports programmes?
3. How will evaluation research impact on the quality of the community sports strategy delivery?

### **Outline of the thesis**

Much of this thesis follows an archetypal structure to rationalise the research, develop the research process and explain the research findings. The initial chapters provide a detailed and critical review of the literature. This starts in Chapter Two with a historical, developmental and conceptual acknowledgment of evaluation as a research domain in its own right. The purpose of evaluation is outlined and current philosophies and future practice are considered.

Chapter Three further explores evaluation research and acknowledges this type of research in the context of sport development. The chapter introduces sport policy as a key driver for the consideration for evidence-based decision making and discusses community sport development's attempts to embrace a research culture.

Chapter Four appraises the role of the evaluator. The evaluation relied heavily on the researcher becoming part of a strategic network. The purpose of this chapter was to consider the tensions an evaluator may experience and the positions they can take in order to manage an evaluation effectively. As the thesis relied heavily upon a community sport development as its context, examples of issues from the profession are presented.

Chapter Five presents a full and complete description of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy being evaluated. The chapter starts by describing the Strategy setting and considers its overarching themes and outcomes. The concept of

'programme theory' is outlined with specific reference to logic models and postures mechanism that may explain how programme activities may meet their intended outcomes.

Chapter Six presents the methodological background to this thesis and the study methods. Based on the breadth, and complexity of the Strategy and the desire for robust research, the chapter explains the choice for a mixed method design under a Realistic Evaluation framework (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) explaining the 'context, mechanism, outcome' constructs upon which the framework is based.

Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine give a detailed thematic analysis of the interview data in three distinct phases. The Preliminary Interviews capture the experiences and thoughts of the programme leaders during the inauguration of the Strategy. The Phase Two Interviews provided a detailed understanding of how the programmes within the Strategy change and function following initial implementation. Finally, the Phase Three interviews allowed the participants and programme leaders to explain the extent to which the Strategy programmes achieved their desired outcomes.

Chapter Ten explores the Strategy outcomes at a quantitative level from the use of validated questionnaires. The chapter considers the impact of volunteering on forms of capital and participation in exercise sessions on quality of life.

Chapter Eleven presents the overall discussion of the findings through both the qualitative and quantitative findings and also considers the fulfilment of the research aims and questions acknowledged earlier in this chapter.



## Chapter 2

# Evaluation research: exploring its defining characteristics

### Introduction

Generational changes in conceptualising evaluation research have broadened interpretations and exposed the differences between evaluation and other similar research domains. This chapter will review the literature and propose key issues in evaluation research in terms of its purpose, defining characteristics, practice and place in the context of the current research.

### The purpose of evaluation research

Over a period of several decades, there have been a number of interpretations of evaluation each approach signalling the beliefs and ideals of its time. Included in these approaches are the outcome, objective based evaluations (Tyler, 1942), goal free evaluations (Scriven, 1996) positivist evaluation (Campbell, 1984), the constructivist approach proposed by Cronbach et al. (1980), Patton's utilisation-focussed evaluation (1986) and Guba and Lincoln's 'fourth generation' evaluation (1989). More recently, Pawson and Tilley (1997) advocated a 'Realistic Evaluation' approach. Further analyses of these approaches are given attention throughout this chapter. However, it is worth noting that these epistemological models act only to provide criteria on which the relevance and validity of a particular body of knowledge is judged. Central to epistemology is the understanding that there are no given criteria for comparing one against the other (Fishman, 1991).

Since its academic inception in an education system tasked with demonstrating results and measuring achievements against predetermined objectives (Tyler, 1942) the concept of evaluation has undergone *generational* change (Lincoln, 1989). Some have attempted to define evaluation in a given setting (Rossi et al. 2004), others take a more pluralist approach and avoid definition (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Scriven, 1996). Weiss's (1972:1) analogy personifies this by describing evaluation as '...an elastic word that stretches to cover many judgements of many

kinds'. Key to any interpretation then is the context within which the evaluation exists and the purpose of the evaluation and that both context and purpose can change in the lifespan of an evaluation. Guba and Lincoln (1989) acknowledge this and eloquently argue that defining evaluation is difficult and only adds to the argument of what it is as opposed to solving the mystery forever. Such complexities are derived from differing beliefs and are crucial as they deepen our understanding of evaluation and therefore enhance practice (Scriven, 1996). We can hardly wait for a magic formula; instead we should accept complexity, continue the debate and in Clarke and Dawson's (1999:62) words, evaluate '...according to the nature and context of the evaluation situation'.

Understanding the nature and context of an evaluation should allow us to conceptualise what evaluation seeks to do (Patton, 2002). Fundamentally, evaluation tries to ascertain the worth or value of something (Rossi et al. 2004). There are many different interpretations of what represents 'value'. Chelmsky (2006) placed value into three categories. The first, '*accountability*' suggests value be placed on satisfying funders and stakeholders and is aligned with early approaches to evaluation in that judgement is placed on achievement of agreed goals and objectives. Accountability is also found in later theories and referred to as *responsive* or *constructivist* because they are sensitive to multiple-stakeholder needs and the environment within which the programme may exist (Cronbach et al. 1980). Critics of early approaches are wary that selection of objectives may be open to bias and may change from their original settings (Marra, 2000). Further, not all objectives can be evaluated (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). Advocates recognised that policy and programme interests of sponsors are acknowledged which would yield maximally useful results (Weiss, 1997; Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

Chelmsky's second category is '*knowledge*'. This is where value is placed not only on what is worthy but *why* it is worthy. Similarly, Weiss (1972) advocated a 'theory-based' approach. The belief is that this approach was based on a theory or philosophy grounded on intuition, experience and knowledge. In epistemological terms, this notion implies that evaluation and the knowledge gained is idiographic; that is, it is '...sensitive to the distinctiveness of the individual case' (Fishman, 1991:356). Emphasis lies on qualitative, interpretation and experiential meaning and feeling is captured by the hermeneutic paradigm. This is important if evaluation

is to record the different realities of those involved at different levels of local programmes (Nichols, 2005). The limitations here are that this paradigm stops short of how to use this knowledge. If the purpose of an evaluation is to take action based on evidence then knowledge construction and utility underpin the *pragmatic paradigm*. Here, impetus lies with searching for feasible solutions to complex problems in a natural setting. Unlike the hermeneutic paradigm, the pragmatic approach still recognises quantification. Performance indicators are valued but as opposed to just theory building and generating knowledge, the pragmatic paradigm emphasises problem solution and practical programme building (Fishman, 1991).

In practice, the Tylerian concept of evaluation may have embodied an important notion in evaluation through the comparison of results with goals but its potential for facilitating improvement was never reached (McCoy and Hargie, 2001). Distinct phases in the evolution of evaluation were recognised by Guba and Lincoln (1989). They were described as the *measurement* phase in which evaluation's purpose was to test; *description*, when the evaluation acknowledged programme strengths and limitation using objectives; and *judgement* where evaluation would credit worth or value to a programme beyond the boundaries of objectives and would use knowledge to facilitate change.

In developing a knowledge base the evaluator can better comprehend the relationship between activities within an intervention and its impact thus developing ways in which to structure an evaluation. This concept is more aligned with Pawson and Tilley's (1997) *Realistic Evaluation* approach where the clarification of programme theory is the pre-requisite to sound evaluation. The difficulties of this approach are attributed to the knowledge availability. To overcome this, Weiss (1997) suggests that refinement of theory and clarification of programme premise should be sought from a variety of sources including talking to stakeholders, intervention administrators and practitioners.

Thirdly, value is placed on *development* where the focus of evaluation is to try to better or improve something. It is here the pragmatic paradigm holds strong ground for evaluation. This talk of *stakeholders*, *objectives* and *accountability* is rife within evaluation texts and demonstrates that as opposed to evolving from an academic perspective, our current understanding of evaluation was, according to Rossi et al.

(2004), born from practitioners tasked with evidencing success or failure in three fields:

1. Education – in programmes targeting literacy development
2. Public Health – in programmes designed to reduce disease
3. Occupational training programmes

Perhaps undermined by the need for accountability and obscured by creating knowledge is what Nevo (1983:119) referred to as the ‘...third function of evaluation’, its ability to inform on a psychological or socio-political level. Here emphasis is placed less on meeting goals and targets and more on evaluation’s influence. That in simply executing an evaluation, we change the way an intervention is delivered. For example, Nevo (1983) alludes to the raised awareness of a programme’s activities, motivation of stakeholders and improvements in shared working. While Nevo (1983) paints a positive light of this *third purpose* other authors (Taut and Brauns, 2003) remind us that evaluation can have more detrimental psychosocial consequences such as fear and personalisation. Whatever the consequences, all authors relating to this purpose, (Patton, 2002, Abma and Widdershoven, 2008) agreed that we cannot ignore this aspect of evaluation. Perhaps Levine and Levine (cited in Clarke and Dawson, 1999:16) gave the social context of evaluation its greatest credence suggesting that:

...social context modifies and influences the process of the research, the inferential process, the final report, the participants and the varied uses to which the evaluation may be put.

### **Definitions: the differing faces of evaluation**

It is only in the last twenty to thirty years that academics have given any attention to evaluation. Scriven (1996:395) noted that evaluation is a ‘...very young discipline – although it is a very old practice’. This is evident in the various definitions that have been offered:

Program evaluation is the use of social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social programs in ways that are adapted to the political and organisational environments to inform social action to improve social conditions. (Rossi et al. 2004:16).

Evaluation research includes the design of social programmes, the ongoing monitoring of how well programmes are functioning, the assessment of programme impact and the analysis of the program benefits relative to their costs (Berk and Rossi, 1990:12).

The systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualisation, design and implementation and utility of social intervention programs (Rossi and Freeman, 1989:18).

To measure the effects of a programme against the goals it set out to accomplish as a means of contributing to subsequent decision making about the programme and improving future programming (Weiss, 1972:4).

The study of merit, worth or significance of various entities (Scriven, 1996: 401).

Because of these practice-based beginnings, many definitions conceptualise evaluation by describing the process of evaluating. While the elemental activities of evaluation are captured within some definitions, there remain fundamental differences that require explanation in order that a greater understanding of the term is possible. This is certainly the case with the Rossi et al. (2004) explanation where evaluation is contextualised in a programme or policy. The setting for the evaluation is also determined and in most cases the programme is embedded in a social context. There are key themes apparent; that evaluation is about the application of knowledge and less about defining moments of knowledge production. This theme is significant and is captured in Scriven's (1996) philosophical stance. Here the study of an entity suggests evaluation should deepen our understanding of it without the constraints of set objectives. The use of the terms *merit*, *worth* and *significance* are far removed from notions of *success*, *improvement* and *effectiveness* apparent in other conceptualisations of evaluation. Thus, while seemingly vague, Scriven does imply some acknowledgement of utility in that the entity is of worth to someone, or something.

Despite the acknowledgement that evaluation is a *type of research*, many authors are of the view that evaluation, as a research process, is fundamentally different from more traditional research approaches (Rossi et al. 2004, McCoy and Hargie, 2001, Berk, 1995). Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985:151) suggested that the

'...purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve'. More recently, Weiss supported this learning philosophy stating that the purpose of evaluation was not the pursuit of '...truth or certainty, its aim is to improve programming and policy making' (1997:516).

Clearly, the concepts of evaluation and research are terms used interchangeably in the aforementioned definitions and this creates tension among theorists. Some go so far as to distinguish between the terms rather than accept any overlap. For example, Patton's (1986:15) utilisation of findings is explicit in the concept of evaluation where the focus lies with '...meeting the information needs of specific decision makers' and that with research impetus lies with '...generalisability, causality and credibility within the research community'. Similarly, Cordray and Lipsay (1987:19) see evaluation and research as serving a different purpose in the context of evaluation studies. They distinguished evaluation studies according to their intent as follows:

**Programme Evaluation:** concerned with a service-oriented practical mode of enquiry that primarily has evaluative intent.

**Programme Research:** an applied social science study of social programmes with no pretensions to be evaluative, responsive or useful (at least in the short term).

It is clear that evaluation will remain a contested term that is used in a multitude of contexts, settings and circumstances. The purpose of this chapter is not to try to propose a single sentence definition but to demonstrate an understanding through capturing the various practices of evaluation. To this end, the following section outlines the various dimensions of evaluation that need to be understood in order to make the design choice in this research well considered and informed.

## **Current philosophies and future practice of evaluation**

The central tenet of current evaluation theory and practice is that evaluation should facilitate change (utilisation) and create learning environments (knowledge). More recent evaluation practices have tried to bring about this change through more *participatory* forms of evaluation (Hart, et al. 2009; Suárez-Herrera et al. 2009). This approach is based on the belief that evaluation should be an integral part of the

programme and that this allows key stakeholders to maximise their impact. Hart et al. (2009:290) emphasised that evaluation had to be perceived as something that was done *with* the programme or intervention rather than ‘...done to it’. They rationalised this approach by embracing Weiss’ (1972) philosophy that participatory research is theory based, as it would attempt to explain how and why programmes might work as well as attempting to understand the stakeholder values and context. Further, participatory evaluation acts to enhance stakeholder relationships due to the constant collaboration. Finally, that collaboration between the stakeholders would improve capacity for experiential learning and sharing of knowledge through all levels of representation allowing improved policy coherence (Frisby et al. 2004).

While this approach has its strengths, there is a danger of *casting the net too widely* in terms of stakeholder participation and the evaluation exercise could become far too resource intensive. This is particularly salient in the current research setting where there is a broad mix of stakeholders representing very different communities. Time and effort needs to be taken to provide ways through which seldom heard groups can be involved as far as possible (Sixsmith and Daniels, 2011). Additionally, this approach assumes that stakeholders are capable of building knowledge and have the experience required to inform choice. Pawson and Tilley (1997) and later, O’Sullivan and D’Agostino (2002) suggested that the evaluator’s role should be to organise theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence as a prerequisite for participatory, theory based evaluation. Politically, there could also be problems with stakeholder consensus and the inevitable time constraints this could place on the programme (Mercier, 1997).

This *participatory* approach, while not new, risks shifting attention away from the intervention or programme and toward the effectiveness of those developing and delivering it. Thus, Pawson and Tilley (1997:160) consider stakeholder involvement and rather than offer a formula for participatory research, they propose making key distinctions between ‘...who may know what’ about a programme’. In their ‘...division of expertise’, Pawson and Tilley (1997:161) suggest three distinct stakeholder groups:

1. the subjects: who are sensitised to what it is about a programme that encourages participants to change. In this thesis, this group are referred to as the *participants*,
2. the practitioners: who can help develop new and refine existing theories about a programme and will be able to put such theories into practice. In this research, practitioners were referred to as programme leaders
3. and the evaluator who will propose (realistic) theories. That is, theories that are based on outcomes triggered by particular mechanisms under particular circumstances. A more comprehensive description of this configuration is offered later in this chapter and in Chapter 5. The evaluator will bring a different pool of knowledge based on previous evaluations in similar settings and from broader social science theory (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

Conlin and Stirrat (2008) argue that due to the complexity of programme context and the increasing number of stakeholders the 'programme model' of evaluation, while still important, may not be sustainable. They demonstrate that change, brought about by (short term) programmes where evaluation may focus on *outcomes* set out in a *logical framework*, gives little impetus to *impact assessment* which requires greater time to emerge and would only have been observed if the evaluator was looking beyond programme outcomes and policy coherence.

Furthermore, current thinking allows for greater focus on progress and process as opposed to the more traditional notion of 'end-game' evaluation (Rossi et al. 2004). This latter point is significant as it goes some way in explaining the emerging dimensions of evaluation. If in the past, evaluation was an intervention afterthought, the current and future practice is realising the potential of learning from process and delivery (Royse et al. 2015; Evans et al. 2014). Consequently, evaluation research has become multidimensional. This may add to the complexity of evaluation but it also gives the evaluator richer information and, according to Clarke and Dawson (1999), gives greater sensitivity to complex and dynamic social arenas.

Pawson and Tilley developed this line of thinking and founded the evaluation approach used in this research known as 'Realistic Evaluation' (1997). This concept of evaluation has its roots in the writings of Hesse (1974), Lakatos and Musgrave (1970) and Bhaskar (1975). Realistic Evaluation avoids the more traditionalist view



of evaluation and reignites the ongoing debate of what constitutes evidence and how we determine the value of something. The premise is that Realistic Evaluation relies on the power of explanation in contributing to knowledge or as they put it ‘...generative causation’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:57) through the rudiments of *context*, *mechanisms* and *outcomes* (CMO). This notion of *generative causation* tasks the evaluator to explain what changes have taken place (*outcomes*) how the changes took place (*mechanisms*) and to acknowledge what circumstances (*contexts*) influence this change. This would produce knowledge on what is worthy, who it is worthy to and under what circumstances.

Realistic Evaluation represents the human influence on wider social processes and is further explained and illustrated in Chapter 5. Recent evaluation philosophy personifies this as it recognises a programme not as a set of activities but challenges its place, its past, personnel and future development (Gargani and Donaldson, 2011). For example, Alexander et al. (2005) conducted a Realistic Evaluation on the mechanisms of a cardiac rehabilitation programme. Their study concluded that behaviour change could be explained (by the participants) through social (camaraderie) and body-focussed (knowledge of physical limits) mechanisms and that these mechanisms would only be triggered when the rehabilitation setting was perceived to be safe. Here impetus is placed not on reaching the goal of behaviour change, nor is there mention of the activities underpinning the rehabilitations process, but in trying to explain how the cardiac rehabilitation programme may change behaviour and in what particular context on a human level.

Some theorists question the concept of Realistic Evaluation (Pedersen and Reiper, 2008) if only because of its infancy as a concept and therefore its limited application thus far. Davis (2005) suggests that the approach needs to be adapted to extend its utilisation beyond local projects and towards informing politics and policy – where informed change can reach furthest. Herein lies the difficulty of conceptualising evaluation as a discrete academic practice and the complexities that make a stand-alone definition near impossible. Evaluation, according to Bezzi (2006) exists as a domain. The matter of *doing* an evaluation is less about the object or as Scriven (1981:58) put it the ‘evaluand’ (programme) ontology and more about what we [the evaluators] ‘...observe the stakeholders say, what they are able to account for and what we are able to understand’. If the programme and its logic rationalise the

myriad of methodological approaches and techniques, and the findings (however they be presented) are expressed and understood with critical approval then they belong to this domain and personify evaluation.

As the future for evaluation presses on, the one common denominator among current theorists is that evaluation should avoid any pre-packaged model that will simplify our understanding of social learning and change. However, this has to be accepted by policy-makers and funding bodies or, in reference to earlier rhetoric, valued. Further, there is no place for a paradigm war for scientific approaches to evaluation research. This debate has been had (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, 2009; Denzin and Giardina, 2008) and the general conclusion is that evaluation can call upon a range of methodological approaches, experimental or otherwise *should the shoe fit*. The 'gold standard' for evaluation may be different from one approach to the next in a given and changing context but if it is agreed to be useful in determining worth, facilitating learning and generating knowledge then it is evaluative in every sense of the word. This pragmatic approach to evaluation was significant for the current research design in that any *prescribed* notion of evaluation was rejected in favour of thinking more carefully about what particular evaluation approach may work best in this research setting.

### **Dimensions of evaluation**

As previously discussed, evaluation approaches attempt to broaden the concept of evaluation in order that it captures not just the end result but places attention on the programme itself and emphasises the importance of evaluation before and during a given programme. Scriven (1967) is often credited with distinguishing the types of evaluation in his use of the terms formative and summative evaluation. These terms are important as they change the audience considered (Rossi et al. 2004) or the relative contributions of the *divisions of expertise* (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) in the evaluation. For example, subjects or programme participants are more able to explain the realities of programme outcome patterns than practitioners or programme leaders (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) and therefore are better able to contribute to summative evaluation research. Butterfoss and Francisco (2004) also acknowledge the importance of audience but refer to the level of evaluation as opposed to its type. With levels of evaluation, impetus lies less on simply when

evaluation takes place and more on whom the evaluation is useful to at given times during the delivery of the programme. This is significant especially when several key stakeholders (coalitions) are involved in the evaluation of an intervention or strategy, as is the case in this research.

Further, in acknowledging types or levels of evaluation there is an inevitable consequence for the role of the evaluator, the type of data collected and the nature and frequency of the utilisation of the findings (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). Scriven (1996) describes formative evaluation as guiding programme improvement through feedback. Similarly, Patton (1986:66) proposed that formative evaluations ‘...tend to be action oriented’. The formative evaluator is concerned with programme processes (Clarke, 1999; Rossi et al. 2004) and documents what was done and how many people were reached and the function of the coalition with regards to its intentions (Butterfloss and Francisco, 2004). From an ontological perspective, this is significant given the methodology considered for this research. Learning about programme process and function would support a Realistic Evaluation insofar as important details about context and mechanism can be recorded during programme implementation. This would help to test and refine programme theory and explain how and why certain outcomes were triggered (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Perhaps formative evaluation is easier to grasp when compared to our understanding of summative evaluation which, according to Patton (1986:66) tends to be ‘...conclusion-oriented’. Given that the current thinking on evaluation is about improvement, what stakeholders do and say, and importantly, a process of learning and changing, it is hardly surprising that formative evaluation is a growth area of evaluation practice.

Summative evaluation is concerned with determining the effectiveness of something based on the achievement of stated objectives and actions and is primarily determined at the end of a project or intervention (Rossi et al. 2004). Consequently, the evaluator may distance themselves from the planning, and delivery of a project (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). This distance contrasts the current trend in evaluation where participation is of utmost importance and the evaluation is integral to the conceptualisation, planning and delivery of a programme (Fetterman et al. 2014; Suarez-Balcazar and Harper, 2014; Aragon et al. 2014).

This relationship between the types of evaluation is significant. Scriven (1996) is quick to note that formative evaluation is not exclusively process-oriented. For example, a project may have short-term goals or performance indicators that may preclude summative failures. Additionally, it is inevitable that evaluators will express preference for one type over the other. In contrast, Scriven (1996) acknowledges a much closer relationship where formative evaluation is worth nothing at all unless it at least supports a summative evaluation. Far from demonstrating a bias, Scriven proposes a more pragmatic view in asserting that each is valuable in the appropriate circumstances.

Critics of typecasting evaluation allude to the numerous settings and contexts for evaluation that cannot be categorised into a dichotomy. Patton (1982) clearly recognises the oversimplification where evaluations are used to generate knowledge to improve understanding of programmes and that this knowledge may not be used to change the programme or even score its performance. Instead, it clarifies how they think about something. Several evaluation theorists (Chen, 1997; Patton, 1982; Rossi and Freeman, 1993) have offered a more comprehensive typology. Each defined in terms of the evaluation purpose and the stage of evaluation application relative to the programme timeline. In offering more comprehensive typologies there is a risk of terminology misinterpretation. Some theorists suggest that formative evaluation is a 'front end' (Patton, 1982:44) or diagnostic (Rossi et al. 2004) exercise performed as a needs analysis or feasibility study and before an intervention takes place. There is no mention of process here. However, there is utility in that it informs decisions at the planning and implementation stages. Importantly, Patton (1982) acknowledged that however many types of evaluation there may be, the phases should not be treated as mutually exclusive. For example, process evaluations can explain summative findings (Clarke and Dawson, 1999; Saunders et al. 2005) and process findings can help refine outcomes that may then redefine the overall indicators for the success of an intervention.

Implicit in evaluation theory is that evaluation research is a cyclical process and that any summative exercise should act only to redefine outcomes or re-establish the need for an intervention or policy. This interpretation would give some argument to summative findings as diagnostic in their utility. We undermine the usefulness of

evaluation if we assume the programme (or evaluand) always has an end point and so must be sensitive to the sustainability of a project based on evaluation findings. Reaching (or not reaching) targets and satisfying outcomes is not normally the basis for *terminating* an intervention. These *phased* dimensions of Evaluation Research are acknowledged throughout the literature. Often and unnervingly referred to as *model approaches* – that is to say ideological models – almost all concepts of evaluation are defined by their systematic application and order therefore suggesting that evaluation has some temporal identity.

This is important given the longitudinal nature of the current research design, which is outlined in Chapter 5. According to Robson et al. (2013), a strategy or plan, such as the one evaluated in this research, will have short, medium and long term outcomes. The activities set about to deliver on strategic outcomes will evolve and change. However, as Robson and Partington (2013, as cited in Hylton, 2013:144) acknowledge through ‘contingency theory’, a good plan will accommodate the uncertainties of its environment. This is particularly important in sport development where the uncertainties of dealing with cross-cutting agendas such as health, regeneration and social inclusion are widely acknowledged in the literature (Coaffee and Shaw, 2005; Coalter, 2007b, 2013; Mackintosh, 2014; Collins, 2010a, 2014). Thus, a good evaluation will need to capture the realities of this environment with its complex and changing circumstances. A matter discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

# Chapter 3

## Sport development: a challenging environment for evaluation research

### Introduction

Over the past 10 years there has been a steady increase in the volume of research that is important to the field of Sport Development. This expanding research base is adding to the academic credibility of sport development by challenging knowledge and improving understanding of issues that determine the value and impact of interventions for sport's sake and those targeting broader social issues, for example health (Lechner, 2009), crime (Nichols, 2010) and regeneration (Gratton and Henry, 2002). This evolutionary change in the interpretation of the concept of sport development was proposed with the publication of *Game Plan: a strategy for delivering the Government's sport and physical activity objectives*. (Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2002).

The linkage of sport to a much broader agenda, while not a new idea, has added sophistication to its analysis and expanded the strategies and policies that promote sport. In doing so, the complexity and challenge of evaluating interventions has become increasingly intricate. There is very limited guidance for research and evaluation in sport and physical activity development and the debate continues as to what constitutes good practice (Collins, 1999; Coalter, 2007a). The purpose of this chapter is to provide a critical appraisal of the progress of evaluation in Sport Development and identify current difficulties in the process before considering future directions and recommendations for research and evaluation in the field. Given the context of the research, the term 'community sport development' will be used as it best describes the place of the local sport and physical activity strategy under evaluation.

## **Aligning sport development with evaluation research**

When the New Labour government challenged sport to modernise in 2002 it was no surprise that central to the modernisation process was the development of an evidence-based culture:

The greatest challenge in assessing the state of sport and physical activity has been the lack of reliable data.....although this does not invalidate the case for action; it weakens our ability to develop evidence-based policy intervention (Department of Culture Media and Sport/ Strategy Unit, 2002: 22).

At the time, the Government was investing more money into sport and physical activity than any government preceding them (Oakley and Green, 2001). In 2005, the Government revised their contribution thanks to a successful Olympic bid (Grix and Carmichael, 2012) which, combined with Lottery funding, resulted in over £300 million investment between 2009 and 2012 (the main empirical phase of this research). This, according to Grix and Carmichael (2012:73) would normally demand ‘...a great deal of explanation and justification’. Sport was seen as having many social benefits including health, education and social order (Coalter, 2007). Sport’s wider acclaim is not new, at least from a policy perspective.

Sports policy’s beginnings, in the late 1960s, were a response to a rapidly evolving social, economic and cultural climate giving rise to increased access to leisure (Houlihan and White, 2002). The government at the time responded by improving and increasing facilities and opportunities for leisure activities (Coalter, 2007). Policy progressed from the rhetoric of supply and demand and quickly ensured that there was equity in the provision of sport and active recreation as ‘...participation patterns were dominated by advantaged sections of the population’ (Hylton and Bramham, 2008:78). Policy targets were based on need. This gave rise to the notion of *recreational welfare* (Coalter, 2007) and sport’s broader potential was aligned with reducing boredom, frustration and delinquency among young people. Driven by ideology there were very few attempts to evaluate policies and strategy beyond participation and demographic measures. As recently as in the last decade there is very little evidence to suggest that sport could help contribute to addressing society’s ills (Collins, 2014). Perhaps the government at the time simply threw down

its gauntlet and challenged sport's policy makers, funders, strategists and academics to 'go forth and explore'.

Few, from an academic perspective, have risen to the challenge particularly towards evidence that may inform strategic agencies, and local delivery agents on what interventions may work and may best explain why they work. Collins and Kay (2003:248) alerted academia to the '...descriptive, atheoretical, short term, output related' evaluations that lacked context. Thus, where evaluations of sports programmes did exist, few of them were converting the principles of rigour that personified evaluation in the previous chapter and underline the demands of the government outlined in this one.

Policy makers under the same government seemingly lost momentum as the only reference to reaffirm an evidence base in sport came some six years later in the DCMS's *Passion for Excellence* policy that simply stated:

...the sector will now develop a better mechanism for improving the overall evidence base by better co-ordinating the collection of impact evidence (DCMS, 2008:16).

This suggests that efforts to create an evidence base were poor both in terms of the methods utilised and the objects to which the methods were used. Sport simply wasn't ready, nor did it have the resources to embed a *research culture* into its everyday operations. This is hardly surprising in a small and discretionary service. Relative to core departments such as Health and Education, sport development was a new concept and despite huge government investment was, and remains, governed at '...arms-length' (Oakley and Green, 2001:74) with quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization (QUANGO) leadership.

Coalter (2007) acknowledged the investment in *evidence-based policy making* in more centralised government departments such as Health with its National Institute for Clinical Evidence (NICE) and the Centre for Evidence-Informed Education Policy and Practice (EPPI Centre) in Education. By contrast, in sport, several reviews were actioned by key government organisations including the Policy Action Team and Strategy Unit (DCMS, 2002) to ascertain the current status quo with regards to evidence based practice in sport. Most of the reports were in agreement that little



evidence was of any use, nor did it inform practitioners with any explanation as to why sport was (or was not) achieving its goals or outcomes.

### **Sport development and 'toolkits' for evaluation**

Sport Development was delivering programmes with the end in mind. According to Coalter (2007b), programme processes and function were often ignored. Further, unlike the aforementioned departments, no research authority was put in place to ensure the rigour and reliability of methodological approaches and designs for gathering and making sense of any evidence collected (Coalter, 2007b). Instead, it was the funding bodies who stepped in and published the '*how to*' guides. One of the first attempts was Sport England's (Dugdill and Stratton, 2007) *Practitioners' Guide*. Written by experts in evaluating programmes in physical activity and health, the guide promotes the use of theoretical frameworks with which several projects can be aligned. This, it was claimed, would deal more efficiently with the numerous organisations that may have an interest in the results obtained (Dugdill and Stratton, 2007). The Guide was representative of the 'joint working' agenda of the New Labour Government and also reflected the health and physical activity context laid out by the DCMS in their *Game Plan* publication (DCMS, 2002).

The document placed importance on '...measuring progress towards meeting expressed aims and objectives' (Dugdill and Stratton, 2007:3). This suggests an outcome driven evaluation philosophy that was less concerned with important programme process. Later, the document does acknowledge that 'outcome evaluation, on its own is not sufficient' (Dugdill and Stratton, 2007:5) but stops short of explaining how process measures and the power of explanation might be addressed on a scientific or systematic level. There is some acknowledgement of qualitative techniques relative to a plethora of techniques that *measure* physical activity levels. For example, there is reference to health indicators such as heart rate monitoring and GPS tracking, none of which would assist practitioners with the functioning of a programme or help us determine worth beyond health indicators. This, in the political backdrop of health being only one of several broader social agendas for sport along with crime reduction and education (DCMS, 2002). In addition, the wider academic community was advocating more social forms of enquiry for programme evaluation (Berk and Rossi, 2004; Patton 2005, 2008; Clarke

and Dawson, 1999) particularly where sports programmes were involved (Mackintosh et al, 2014a; Coalter, 2007; Hylton et al. 2005)

The Guide also acknowledges that there were ‘..limited skills and resources’ (Dugdill and Stratton, 2007:3) for evaluation but later refers to careful choices in methods and data collection as important. While it was right to pose the readiness of the sector to evaluate, it would have been wrong to undermine the requirements of a rigorous and systematic evaluation. Without *experts* in evaluation research, sufficient funding for evaluation or an independent body to scrutinise evaluation efforts, the authors were left with little choice. The dichotomous relationship between evaluations needs and sports development’s inability to supply were clearly acknowledged as limitations.

Further, the language of the Guide does not align well with current evaluation and sport development philosophy. The guidance acknowledged the importance of interventions *for* participants but fails to involve the participants in the process of evaluation. That is, the evaluation is done *at* participants and not *with* them. While other participatory forms of Evaluation Research may be more resource intensive and rely on the skills of the researcher, its use is well founded. Weiss (1972) places impetus on stakeholder values inherent in the process of change and Long and Darts’ (2001) thinking implies that stakeholder relationships are integral to the quality of the evaluation.

Sport England (2008) published a far more detailed ‘Toolkit’. Despite the increased detail, the information was strategic in nature. Consequently, practitioners were fed information about managing and monitoring a project in order that Sport England could ascertain what interventions give greatest gain for a given investment. There was no evidence of any academic engagement which was so apparent in its previous publication (Sport England, 2007). Explicit information was given on how to capture *hard indicators* and even templates that offered exact measures of key performance indicators (KPIs) such as increased sports participation and improved education. Capturing *soft indicators* required visiting an external website and the only support for ‘wider outcomes’ such as improvements in well-being and improved education was an acknowledgement that they ‘...would not be easy to measure’ (Sport England, 2008:3). Of significance for this research, the Toolkit fails to

acknowledge any notion of programme theory (Weiss, 1998) as a valuable tool in explaining how and why a programme may or may not work. Further, it overlooks the role of the practitioner and the participant who may be the most qualified in explaining the *mechanisms* and *contexts* associated with such *outcomes*. While it may be difficult to measure such outcomes this should not stop community sport from employing approaches to provide evidence that may best explain how changes in employment status or health happen. In the same vein, while the Government did not have a good evidence base for sport, this should not ‘...invalidate the case for action’ (DCMS, 2002:22).

At best, the Toolkit serves as a project monitoring template and despite its name has little usefulness from an evaluative perspective. Again, there are lessons to be learned in basic terminology. In this case, the terms evaluation and monitoring cannot be used so interchangeably. We could assume that the strategic lead for sport simply did not have the resources to fully appreciate the potential of evaluation research in community sport development and so could not support rigorous evaluation. According to Wholey et al. (2010:210) this promotes ‘...quick and dirty’ monitoring exercises which are a more achievable means of determining the worth of programmes. This is true in Sport, a minor and discretionary policy area (Collins, 2010a). For example, Long et al. (cited in Nichols, 2004) acknowledged the importance of resources saying that evidence was lacking, because they [practitioners] do not have the funds or skills to conduct their own evaluation, and a higher priority is to assure next year’s funding to allow them to continue. Further, a significant amount of funding for a community sports strategy comes from Sport England and so on a political level a funding body is more likely to be driven by accountability and value for money (Clarke and Dawson, 1999) as opposed to changing behaviour, or improving society. It is likely that a combination of the outlined issues may best explain why Sport is seemingly lagging behind its counterparts such as Health and Education in providing reliable evidence base for practice.

In a more positive light, such toolkits are crucial. If, as Collins (1999) suggested, the most basic forms of evidence are not being gathered appropriately then any guidance should be welcomed. The toolkits do provide a more strategic approach

to the development and delivery of interventions. They offer illustrative frameworks on how to make sense of practice in order that we can best collect relevant information. At least with guides and toolkits, practitioners are better able to consider beginning a programme with the end in mind (even though the end may never be realised). If evaluation is indeed reliant on embedding a research culture within the sports services sectors then it will inevitably take time (and investment) for Sport to truly embrace evaluation research. More recently, Sport England (2012: online) suggested a variety of approaches for the ‘...best possible evidence for decision-making’. In its supporting documents for the Value of Sport Monitor (Sport England, 2014:2) there is less prescription of methods and more an acknowledgement of scientific principles such as ‘appropriateness of methods, sampling techniques, validity and reliability’. This is a positive development for evaluation research in sport development and more aligned with the philosophies acknowledged in the previous chapter.

To better understand how we may apply the principles of evaluation within a community sport development context - we must first understand the concept of sport development and how it may be aligned to evaluation research. To revisit Collins’ thinking (1995:21), sport development is a term used to describe:

...a process whereby effective opportunities, processes, systems and structures are set up to enable and encourage people in all or particular groups and areas to take part in sport for recreation or to improve their performance to whatever level they desire.

From an evaluation perspective these characteristics are significant as they acknowledge that whatever activities or structures are put into place, they have an apparent effect on those groups encouraged to take part. Further, Collins (1995) suggests that sport development is a process, indicating that sport development is a means to an end and not an outcome in its own right. Activities are directed towards ‘enabling’ people to take action thus indicating sport development is not something done *on* or *to* people but *with* them. These above all other characteristics demonstrate, at least from Collins’ perspective, that sport development values its function and not just its intended outcomes. This is an important consideration of

the methodological design used in this research, where process and systems formed an integral part of programme theory.

More recent notions of sport development are according to Houlihan (2010:4), more '...normative and moralistic' that is the impetus is less on opportunity *per se* and more on targeting other social agenda such as health, education and crime. This gives better alignment between sport and programme evaluation the latter being characterised around *social programmes* (Rossi et al. 2004; Berk and Rossi, 1990). Hylton and Bramham (2008) describe sport development as providing positive sporting experiences implying it is not just the taking part that counts but that there is much more to be gained from participating in sport. They also describe the notion of community sport development, recognising that it is a contested term but one which is characterised by addressing social and political concerns and not simply placing sport in a community. Like Collins (1995), Bramham and Hylton (2008) also recognise *process* and *practice* and so recognise that sport development is action oriented and applied as opposed to a theoretical notion.

Houlihan (2011) noted the changes in our conceptualisation of sport development and attributed the changes to time and context. Time and context are implicit in more recent approaches to evaluation research (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Time is as constant in sport as it is any domain. However, few sectors beyond sport can boast such rapid changes in context and setting. In recent years sports policy has coped with an economic downturn, a change in Government and a successful Olympic Games. Sport Development is constantly referred to, in the literature, as a place of shifting goalposts by those who work within the sector and was once referred to as a '...crowded policy space' by Houlihan (2000:171). This presents a challenge to both the practitioner in terms of setting long term and realistic goals and the evaluator who may be tasked with measuring the extent to which goals have been met. Further, practitioners would have to be sensitive to the shift in policy and still provide valuable evidence upon which strategy or intervention decisions will be made. Coalter (2007:90) reaffirms that when sport has a developmental context – sport as a tool for social good - then the evaluation should be developmental and focus not just on what was achieved but contribute to the functioning of the intervention or strategy. In his words '...it is not 'sport' that is the key, but the way in which it is provided and experienced'.

Long and Dart (2001:72) advocated the development focussed evaluation in his work with 'at risk' youth, stating:

...we were keen to look beyond reoffending rates and tried to develop a more qualitative appreciation of what the project was achieving by tapping into the experiences of those at the heart of the scheme.

This supports the notion that proximity with programme delivery and participants was key to the strength of the evidence. According to Clarke and Dawson (1999) this may enrich the data due to an improved relationship between the researchers and those involved with the scheme. Participatory forms of evaluation research are overlooked in the aforementioned toolkits and guides published for Sport.

Coalter (2007) still recognises the value of outcomes but places equal value on what is done in trying to achieve or change them. Both evaluation theorists and sport policy researchers agree that outcomes are often poorly constructed and understood. Policy makers once referred to sport as some 'cure all' for society's ills; that sports policy was an anti-drugs policy, an education policy and a crime prevention policy (DCMS, 2002). These are bold statements and if local strategy has to be aligned with such policy rhetoric in order that funding and support are accessible, it is easy to see why so many interventions are set up to fail. According to Coalter (2007), we will never be able to establish causal links between sport and such outcomes. So what then, is the alternative? The good examples are composed of small projects aimed at a few participants (Nichols, 2001) and national campaigns targeting large populations (Bell, 2004; Hills and Maitland, 2014). Interestingly, the same authors criticising various attempts to evaluate in sport, have sought alternative methods such as theory driven evaluations for nearly a decade so why hasn't sport's governance acknowledged their approaches and perspectives in the policy documents? One criticism may be that it is sport's funders who drive the evaluation. At this level, the evaluation becomes accountability oriented and value for money or satisfying long-term participation targets could be the most important outcomes. According to Rossi et al. (2004:227) outcome indicators are valuable source of information for programme decision makers. However, they '...must be developed and used carefully'. Beyond being appropriate (Coalter, 2007a), Pawson

and Tilley (1997:217) suggest that outcomes should not be 'inspected simply in order to see if a program works' but used in a theory testing role to discover what mechanisms and contexts triggered the outcomes (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:217). Coalter (2013:37) supports this thinking and calls for an evaluation process in Sport that '...persue[s] *understanding* via participatory, process-centred and formative evaluation. Such approaches are considered in detail in the proceeding chapters and a very relevant to the position taken in this research.

### **What constitutes 'value' in community sport development?**

There are varied interpretations of what constitutes value in sport and physical activity programmes depending on Pawson and Tilley's (1997:160) 'divisions of expertise'. Among the perspectives given in the literature is that of the population who may place great value on the ways in which a programme is delivered (Chelimsky and Shadish, 1997; Clark, 2005). Such evaluations are focussed on issues which the community itself has identified. Further, practitioners involved in sport development need to be able to criticise with reasonable confidence the success of a programme in relation to its objectives. This evidence then serves as a form of feedback on which to base future developments and decision making regarding allocation of resources and so be accountable to programme funders (accountability). Then there is the view of academics who need to be able to analyse success as it relates to progressing our understanding (knowledge) of how the outcomes of a programme may be attained (Coalter, 2007; Nichols, 2004).

These *divisions of value* have become apparent because sport's wide appeal has brought a variety of stakeholders who have an interest in the purpose and quality of sport development. From an academic perspective, Mackintosh et al. (2014a) explain that there is a very narrow field of understanding of evaluation research in sport. Moreover, Coalter (2013:47) suggests any guidance has, until relatively recently, seemed to avoid qualitative methods of enquiry and that evaluation may be '...too scientific' for an audience with little formal training in evaluation. Either there are too few experts in the social sciences willing to work with sport or sport policy is still 'end-game evaluating' and demanding truth and certainty over development and understanding (Coalter, 2007; 2013). According to Nicholls et al. (2010:249) this '...lack of co-creation of knowledge, the politics of partnerships and

donor-driven priorities have subjugated sport for development practitioners' knowledge' and this has fuelled a lack of discourse on how sport provides a robust evidence base.

The previous government set out to develop an understanding of qualitative enquiry (Cabinet Office, 2003). According to Denzin and Giardina (2008:65) there was little progress and despite a 167-page report that read like '...an introductory text on qualitative research', there was an absence of the realities of doing qualitative research. Perhaps Denzin and Giardina (2008:65) put it best stating simply that '...defining what counts as science is not the state's business'. Maybe this was the thinking of academics such as Bell (2004), Nichols (2004), Green (2000), Long (2008) and Coalter (2007b). Not *playing by the political rules* meant adopting an approach that may not have fitted well with sport's governing bodies but, for the first time, raised the awareness of intervention matters beyond truth and certainty without compromising development and quality.

Defining quality in community sport development is difficult. Fink (2014) noted that many people know quality when they see it but find it almost impossible to define. Harvey and Newton (2004) explained that this is attributed to *quality* being personal and socially constructed and that each construct is based on attributes that will vary between stakeholders. Selection of attributes is based on personal (or organisational) values and judgements (Watty, 2003). Consequently, quality is a construct of values and judgements connected with what we think the purpose of sport development to be. The complex interplay of organisations (normally lead by the public sector, delivered in combination with the voluntary sector and increasingly with the private sector) makes tensions inevitable. The evaluator is tasked with making key decisions on whom the evidence will serve best. Dominant among the perspectives of what constitutes value in sport are the perspectives of the funders and policy makers. The strategic lead for sport in England implies evidence is *impact* (broader social agenda) oriented and is valued on three levels (Sport England, 2012):

- I. Value for money and benchmarking performance
- II. Focused Evaluation
- III. Novelty and Innovation of testing new ideas on an interventional level.



The notion of value for money is measurable and should be valued especially as the advocating organisation also has a remit to provide funding for community sport; good returns on investment are valued outcomes in sport development. Benchmarking performance can be ascertained on many levels but here it is implicit in the satisfaction of predetermined outcome measures such as key performance indicators and so performance against cost is easily calculated. Cost benefit is referred to on an academic level in evaluation literature (Berk and Rossi, 1990, Fink, 2014; Frew et al. 2014). Here we see the harmony between the values of academia and those of practitioners. However, Clarke and Dawson (1999) suggest that cost-benefit evaluations are best applied when there are clearly identifiable outcomes. In sport, this may include the total number of participants on a programme or the number of life-years saved by a particular lifestyle programme. This is a far cry from Coalter's (2013:34) rhetoric of sport's '...limited focus programmes and broad gauge outcomes. In this context, it is, according to Coalter (2013:40) '...very difficult to attribute any measured change to a single component – sport'.

The same cannot be said for the remaining two levels. It is not clear what is meant by '*focused evaluation*'. We could refer to the evaluation process itself being rigorous and systematic or that focus describes where the impetus of the evaluation should be, for example, the intervention (in terms of function and quality) or the intervention outcomes (improvements in well-being, education, employment) or both. However, the context of focused evaluation relates to forming case studies which demonstrate good practice and 'what works'. This is more a collection point for case study material; not an approach to evaluation. On inspection, very little of the case study material demonstrates the academic rigour advocated in the Value of Sport monitor (Sport England, 2013b) – that is not to say the case studies ignored the advice, nor does it render any case study material useless. Coalter (2013:47) has acknowledged the '...simple and always positive testimonial approach of beloved practitioners' that have perpetuated community sport development programmes for over three decades. However, it does acknowledge that the joint working between evaluation experts and the wider sport development fraternity, apparent in Sport England's published guides previously, may have been lost (temporarily).

Novelty and innovation could be interpreted as the methodological design and approach to programme evaluation. However, there is only reference to innovation on an interventional level. Again, any inference to evaluation approaches is absent. It seems sport development does place value beyond the boundaries of accountability. There are fleeting glances to placing value on 'why' interventions may work (Sport England, 2006:5). The agency has collaborated with academia and produced a portal for peer reviewed research papers that theoretically underpin the notion of sport in development (Sport England, 2015). This is significant as community sport acknowledged its anecdotal origins as limiting its evidence base - but not its action (DCMS, 2008). Now practitioners can better rationalise projects and evaluators can explain associations between a programme's intended outcomes and its activities (Weiss, 1998). Knowledge and understanding are valued outcomes in sport development.

### **Critical appraisal of key performance indicators in sport**

There is little use for an academic perspective if evaluation policy and guidance are replete with notions of accountability and meeting performance indicators. According to Houlihan and Green (2009:688) the strategic lead for community sport (Sport England) had:

...adopted the business techniques of performance management and key performance indicators in order to provide measureable outcomes upon which its 'performance' might be judged.

The assumption was that the 'indicators' provided evidence of the drive for a particular agenda such as increasing the number of women participating in sport. This level of accountability was part of New Labour's 'modernisation' agenda for sport in their 'Game Plan' (DCMS, 2002). During this time, local authorities were being driven by performance management systems as they were the lead agency in local community sports programmes (Grix and Phillpotts, 2011; Hylton, 2013).

Key performance indicators (KPIs) typically capture quantitative data and give information relating to programme outputs (Robson, et al. 2013). While the data can be useful, the context of their use needs to be considered, as does recognition of their limitations. For example, KPIs can be useful if considered with a broader range

of evidence in a comprehensive evaluation strategy where social issues may be addressed (Parmenter, 2010; Hylton, 2013). However, on their own, they can oversimplify complex social programmes, such as a community sports intervention, to a small number of indicators. This 'belief' in numbers is removed from the realities of front line sport development work and often ignores the social phenomena that involve many overlapping factors that cannot meaningfully be reduced to a number of quantitative indicators and may take many years to be realised (Robson, et al. 2013; Coalter, 2007).

Further, KPIs tend to be fixed and subject to a rigid management system (Mannion and Braithwaite, 2012; Frey et al. 2013). As previously mentioned, sport is a dynamic policy field and the environment and the communities sport serves are constantly changing. Thus, there should be opportunity for indicators to be changed or reviewed in order that they are better aligned with the realities of delivering local programmes (Parmenter, 2010; Richard et al. 2009). In reality, many programmes are penalized for shifting targets and being more responsive (Scriven, 1996). In sport, the need to satisfy key performance indicators has been described as a 'contractual' obligation where performance measures are centrally controlled, immovable objects upon which most funding decisions are made (Houlihan and Green, 2009).

In a discretionary policy area such as sport, there seems to be little room for manoeuvre with regard to performance measures. However, Sport England is demonstrating encouraging signs that key performance indicators should be included as part of a parcel of measures for developing and improving local sports programmes. Sport England's "value of sport monitor" a themed research archive for sport development (Sport England, 2013b: online) suggests a variety of approaches for the '...best possible evidence for decision-making' demonstrating that sport development should include key performance measures within its evidence remit but should also look beyond the numbers to try and fully explain and understand the impact of the work done. Similarly, Coalter (2010: 566) refers to 'the balance of probabilities' suggesting that evaluation and the collection (and use) of evidence is influenced by political and experiential factors. Thus, a Realistic Evaluation will allow KPIs to be considered as they are an integral part of the

performance management 'system' within which sport development in the UK currently operates.

At the time of writing, there was a complete absence of data regarding participant experiences or quality of provision in the archived (Focussed Evaluation) evidence. The point being that measuring participation key performance indicators is important but it will tell us nothing about associations with crime reduction, social cohesion or education or about what constitutes good practice in the design and implementation of sport development interventions. Further review of Sport England's case study material demonstrated a lack of evidence for innovative methodology, challenging notions of systematic rigour or generation of a robust evidence base. This may be a formatting issue and does not mean that key evaluation principles are not being adhered to, they just seem absent in the way the case studies are submitted. How then can policy accept such cases as ones 'that work'? Moreover, there seemed to be a culture for demonstrating success when there is also a clear mandate for what does not work, even in the absence of being able to explain why.

While there now seems to be consultation between the academic research community and the policy makers, the relationship seems fractious. This imposes a risk or in Donovan's words '...the limited consultation between policy makers and the research evaluation community has led to a lack of policy learning (2011:175). Moreover, too much focus on KPIs and an accountability approach to evaluation will not establish programmes required to improve our understanding for the mechanisms of change (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). This fragmented relationship was noted by Johnson et al. (2004:1) as constrained by 'methodological weakness' and a philistine attitude of key stakeholders towards academic research. This latter issue, the relationship between the research and practitioner communities is significant. Particularly in the case of this thesis where Realistic Evaluation requires '...divisions of expertise' (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:160) which includes the knowledge, and experiences of the evaluator. As Pawson and Tilley (1997:160) explain, '...there is no pat formula in making suggestions with regards to the location of [evaluators]'. This suggests that the position of the evaluator within the evaluation research can change and will differ from programme to programme depending on the evaluator's relationship with and expertise within the different programme domains. Moreover, their location may change according to the needs of the

evaluation (Rossi et al. 2004). According to Clarke and Dawson (1999) such issues can be resolved by quickly establishing the role, approach and position of the evaluator early in (and throughout) the evaluation. This matter is now discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

# Chapter 4

## The role of the evaluator

### Introduction

Evidence then takes many guises. In this research, impetus lies with the power of explanation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997); the logical reasoning that best explains which mechanisms trigger which outcomes and under what circumstances. In order that the evaluator is able to do this, the roles and positions of the evaluator must be considered. The initial challenge for the evaluator is their ‘...orientations to primary stakeholders’ (Rossi et al. 2004: 398). As implied in an earlier chapter, there are several perspectives through which the evaluator may approach the evaluation. The purpose of this chapter is to consider these approaches with the current research setting in mind. Initially, the chapter will critically appraise the evaluator’s position in a community sport development setting. Later, the attributes of the evaluator required for dealing with the context specific issues are discussed.

### Evaluation approaches

Some evaluations will direct activities to assisting the project or strategy management in order that they improve their delivery or individual programmes. Several in the field refer to this as the evaluator being an educator (Morabito, 2002; Wholey, 2010; Wise, 1980). This view has a very narrow focus and, according to Clarke and Dawson (1999) renders the evaluator to a technical assistant. Further, what may be deemed as something good about a programme in the manager’s eyes may not be given the same positive outlook by others involved within the programme. The extreme version of such a perspective is when the evaluator should serve the purpose of those that fund activities, adopting their concepts and outcomes. This certainly seems the case in sport (Coalter, 2007; Grix and Phillpots, 2011).

Here (in sport) the mantra seems to be, not ‘evidence-based policy making’, but ‘policy-based evidence making’ (Belfiore and Bennett, 2010). This is the result of outcome-based measures aligned with national performance indicators and the

installation of Audit Commissions and national Policy Action Team targets for participation in sport. According to Collins (2010a: 27), this risked a culture in the sport sector of ‘...what can’t be measured, doesn’t matter’. Consequently, the evaluator adopted the role of ‘programme monitor’ responsible for an ‘...intensely politicised exercise’ (Long, 2008: 251) where judgements about programme success were made purely on numerical outcomes without offering any explanation on why or how such outcomes became apparent.

Others such as Campbell (1984, cited in Clarke and Dawson, 1999), prefer a *methodologist* role for an evaluator where rigorous scientific method is put in place to produce strong causal deductions. However, Luo (2010) posits that a methodologist role places too much emphasis on the programme outcomes and the evaluator risks missing significant factors of value such as which elements of the programme work and which do not. Such metaphors are useful in our understandings of the role of an evaluator but they tend to ignore the realities of evaluating. Luo (2010) and Skolits et al. (2009) suggests that evaluators often have different roles at different stages of the evaluation. For example, they may be a methodologist during data collection and an educator during data dissemination.

On a very basic level, the literature is clear about the evaluator’s role and perspective. Scriven’s (1986, cited in Clarke and Dawson, 1999) early writings maintained that it is the evaluator’s job to value and determine the worth of a programme. Fournier (2005:40) explained that ‘...it is the value features that distinguish evaluation from other types of enquiry’. However, these simple assertions are open to interpretation. Hence, the act of valuing is seen in so many different ways and has prompted so much debate over the years. Rossi et al. (2004) believed that an evaluation should be sensitive to the perspectives of all primary stakeholders – if possible. Some, including Weiss (1998); Suarez and Harper (2014) go further and suggest that the evaluator should not act alone and include others in the valuing process. While each perspective has its own merits, perhaps Rossi et al. (2004) summate best in saying that the evaluator has to be assertive and make clear from the onset from which perspective the evaluation is being undertaken and why. According to Luo (2010) and Alkin et al. (2012) the familiarity with the different roles of an evaluator allows one to take a more flexible approach

to conducting evaluations according to the specific contexts and nature of social programmes, available resources and different client expectations.

Considering the context of this research, evaluation is relatively new and poorly understood (Long, 2008; Coalter, 2013), stakeholders are numerous and can represent the private, public and voluntary sectors (Robson et al. 2013). This in itself poses several challenges for the evaluator. How do evaluators manage their role as an intermediary of sport development work? How do they cope with conflict of interests, fear and multiple approaches and ideals to the delivery of sports programmes? Much has been written about such challenges. Taut and Brauns (2003) gave psychological perspectives to evaluation by exploring the resistance from individuals, particularly programme staff, to evaluation. Of significance were their theories relating to personalisation and attitudes towards evaluation, conflict and power. Personalisation is a result of the relationships between staff and programmes. Bonoma (as cited in Taut and Brauns, 2003: 248) explains that:

Evaluation can mean critical judgements; since programmes are the brainchild of humans, often of the humans staffing or administering the evaluated unit, it is these humans who are ultimately being judged.

Long (2008) personifies such behaviour in sport development describing evaluation being conducted by 'outsiders' and alluding to a state of mistrust between sport development professionals and research. However, Mackintosh (2012:117) recognises that the sport development professional is changing from one in a '...tracksuit to one in a suit', suggesting a more managerial and 'reflective practitioner role'. A review of resources relating to sport development job descriptions (Sports Development, 2009; National Careers Service, 2014; Prospects, 2012) demonstrated that monitoring and evaluation were typical within the role of those working in the profession. In time, this could facilitate a research process in sport development and make it far easier for the evaluator to conduct evaluations and gather rich and meaningful data about sport development programmes. However, Mackintosh (2012:119) urges caution and reminds us of the infancy and negative perception of the evaluation research process in the sector:



For many of these [sport development] practitioners, evidence-based practise was viewed as a top-down, target chasing [act] rather than developing research evidence to inform practise in a more meaningful way.

### **Internal and external issues**

Further, embracing evaluation in the profession does not mean that the issues relating to fear and personalisation will go away. Indeed, having evaluation specialists within the sector could threaten the role or existence of an 'external' evaluator. Local sport development programmes may become internally evaluated. This could further politicise the research exercise and may compromise the validity and impact of the evaluation.

According to Clarke and Dawson (1999) there are fundamental distinctions made between external and internal evaluation roles. An external evaluator is typically commissioned by a network, agency or funding body to deliver an evaluation on the agency's behalf. For example, a community sport development network running a series of local programmes to increase participation in sport may employ an outside consultant to determine the worth of the different activities and services they deliver. This may be a pre-requisite to funding required by a funding body or it may be required by the network independently of the funding agent. Patton (1986:309) personifies the external evaluator as someone '...who has no long term, ongoing position within the programme or organisation being evaluated'. The internal evaluator may be an organisation employee who conducts evaluation at their manager's request. While the methods used and the problems encountered are similar, the roles are distinguished by the relationship the evaluator has with the evaluand or programme. This has implications for the respective evaluator roles. Internal evaluators may have the same skills and experience as those working from an external position. However, if, as in the sport sector, all the evaluator is required to do is a 'black box' or monitoring exercise, the potential of such skills and experience is never realised (Patton, 1986; Mowles 2014).

Despite this polemic, and as influential as the organisational context is in determining the role of the evaluator, Clarke and Dawson (1999) offer a compromise between the two roles as most beneficial to the evaluator. This offers a unique perspective as it would combine the strengths of both positions and effectively null

many of the disadvantages. Hall et al. (2014) explain the timing of the evaluator's interception is key and requires groundwork by the evaluator long before any formal evaluation takes place. Thus, should the evaluator learn the ways of the organisation or network and become familiar with their aims and objectives – in this case the provision of better sport development programmes - then the role can be defined as '...an involved, collaborating participant in the evaluation' (Mathison, 1994, cited in Clarke and Dawson, 1999:22). In addition, a facilitatory role can empower all stakeholders to have a voice in the evaluation.

### **Towards an external but participatory role**

In an evaluation, conflict arises when stakeholders pursue differing interests. This is bound to happen in partnerships and those networks that exist in sport are no different (Harris and Houlihan, 2014). In sport, conflict of interest may be more apparent as power is diffused away from a top-down, hierarchical delivery of policy to one of governance through a series of networks in which '...a variety of interests are represented' through agents with an unequal stake in the development process (Grix and Phillpots, 2011:4). Further, King (2013) suggests that in sport development, the current 'cooperative' framework puts communities in the driving seat of local provision, based on bespoke services tailored to local factors.

Baur et al. (2010) also warns of stakeholder conflict, particularly for those in vulnerable situations who may withdraw from the evaluation or not trust other stakeholders. In sport, this could be manifested at the level of the participants themselves and the distrust of their local Council or within and between the organisations that make the Community Sport Networks (CSN). Rossi et al. (2004:419) advise a cautionary message to evaluators to avoid getting involved in such matters or in their own words '...[the evaluator's role] is not of judge and jury', Baur et al. (2010) advocates a more intimate approach where the evaluator guides and facilitates conditions for dialogue between stakeholders. This would encourage the various stakeholders to appreciate each other's viewpoint and come to a consensus concerning the focus of the evaluation (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). This more participatory approach is receiving much attention in more recent evaluation literature and is a position utilised in this research. Sharkey and Sharples (2008:364) refer to the negotiation skills required of an evaluator. Once again, multiple

stakeholder involvement is recognised as an important factor to a useful evaluation but crucially, evaluation is recognised as something done 'with' rather than 'on' communities.

This participatory role for the evaluator is not a new concept. Guba and Lincoln (1989) presented such a framework in their *fourth generation evaluation* which suggested a more collaborative and pluralistic approach by the evaluator. Such approaches are becoming commonplace among evaluation researchers. Braithwaite et al. (2013) employed a participatory approach in their evaluation of the Healthy Start project. While they acknowledge that more training and development was required to reach the potential of participatory approaches to evaluation they concluded the approach as a reliable and credible method that dispels the perception of the evaluator as a *visiting expert* with a *black box* way of thinking and capitalises on community intelligence. In this research, a participatory role was used as according to Suárez-Herrera et al. (2014) they allow the *real world* experiences of key stakeholders to be captured and more accurately represented.

A recent study by Holt et al. (2013) rationalised a participatory evaluation approach based on its effectiveness on research conducted with young people. The study also reported that this approach was open, fluid and responsive [to community needs] and therefore gave a unique reality of the context of the project under evaluation. Further, the approach was deemed as appropriate when researchers seek to understand the experiences of those involved; particularly those vulnerable groups typically targeted by sport development programmes. According to Suarez et al. (2014) such approaches are important to the evaluator as they strengthen the relationship between academia and community; ensuring the relevancy of the research questions and increasing the capacity for data collection synthesis and analysis.

Delivering a successful participatory approach requires skill on the part of the evaluator. Stake and Turnbull (cited in Luo, 2010) referred to this as a 'facilitator' role. Here the evaluator would need to establish for whom the evaluation will be used and should include minority stakeholders to ensure justice and fairness. The evaluator should spend time involved with the programme or programmes and provide accurate accounts of them through use of case studies and qualitative

enquiry (Stake, 1981 cited in Clarke and Dawson, 1999). Case studies were rationalised as they can ‘...reflect on the complexities of the reality...and are useful in ‘theory building’ (Luo, 2010:45). This is noteworthy as it recognises the role of facilitator both as a participatory exercise to enrich data and a key process in developing the epistemological position used in the current evaluation. Further, a facilitator role, at least according to Stake (1983) removes the evaluator from the conflict other than as an observer and reporter. Thus, the onus is placed on the stakeholders to resolve the issue (Shadish, 1991, cited in Luo, 2010).

### **Exploring the essential skills and attributes of the evaluator**

So far, collaborative efforts have been seen in a relatively positive light. However, several authors have demonstrated limitations to the approach that the evaluator must acknowledge. A recurring theme in the literature is the ability of the evaluator to negotiate (Sharkey and Sharples, 2008; Minkler, 2004). Tensions between evaluator and stakeholder and between the stakeholders themselves must be managed in order that the evaluation can glean meaningful data. Excellent communication skills are paramount in this process. The evaluator must also learn and appreciate the power relations between stakeholders. Further, they must be able to understand where interests lie and how the dynamics between agents or stakeholders may play out. For example, in community sport development one party (local government) delegates a task to another party (voluntary sports club) for the achievement of some desirable goals (which may be set by the central government or by the community itself)– for example, increasing participation in sport. In delegating this task, the first party is now dependant on a second party to achieve the desired result. The principle agent cannot assume that the secondary agent shares the same interest and so the targets may be undermined. The principle agent does not know if the secondary agent is maximising their efforts towards a common goal.

This is the reality of multiple stakeholder led programmes. Rather than control the dynamics, the evaluator has a responsibility to examine such relationships and must make clear from the onset, their position in the context of multiple stakeholder groups. For such diversity is according to behavioural theorists, healthy and is strongly associated with ‘learning’ or in social psychology, ‘social learning’ (Bandura,

1986). The idea that interaction between people representing differing ideals and perspectives can lead to the generation of new insights is generally accepted in the literature (Muller-Merbach, 2004; Hisschemöller, 2005) and has been considered more recently in sport (Van Bussel and Doherty, 2015). However, the evaluator must position themselves very carefully to allow such constructive dialogue to take place, an issue dealt with later in the thesis (see chapter 11) based on Pawson and Tilley's (1997) notion of the 'realist interview'. Further, such learning may not take place from dialogue and instead may be a consequence of stakeholder actions. The evaluator has to value such interactions.

A key concern here is that not all stakeholders will support such pragmatic approaches. Rossi et al. (2004) embrace this notion and fully accept that instead of the role of the evaluator dictating the nature of the evaluation, conversely, the evaluation will shape the role of the evaluator – which may change over the time of the evaluation. Viewed in this way, the role would be reactive and call upon the theories outlined above if and when the context of the evaluation requires them. As such, Rossi's reflexive position on evaluation is closest to reality, '...since evaluation by nature is very context-based' (Luo, 2010:46). Thus, in this research an adaptive evaluator role ensued were the different needs of the evaluation dictated the role of the evaluator and the realities of delivering the Strategy would not be compromised.

Given that community sport development policy is currently shaped by local people through 'cooperative' policy frameworks (King, 2012), it would seem fitting, and timely, that the evaluator adopt a pragmatic and reflexive role that appreciates the context with which the sport development activities are delivered. This way, the evaluator is not seen as a seeker of truth and cause but as part of the cooperation in determining the realities of community sports programmes. In addition, the evaluator is more likely to be able to explain the social paradigms associated with local need as opposed to a governance narrative where value for money may be the evaluator's beck and call. Given that evaluation can be perceived in such a negative way (Taut and Brauns, 2003; Baur et al. 2010), the evaluator would manage expectation and become an educator, not just about the workings of a programme, but also about evaluation as a practice.

# Chapter 5

## Understanding the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

### Introduction

This chapter will provide a full and complete description of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. Evaluation theorist would refer to this chapter as the *evaluand description* (Saunders, 2006; Rossie et al. 2004, Clarke and Dawson, 1999). Indeed, Rossi et al. (2004:72) explain that ‘...the foundation for formulating appropriate and realistic evaluation questions is a detailed and complete programme description’. As this research attempted to transcend the programme level, this chapter will give a complete and full description of the CSN Strategy. The chapter will begin by contextualising the Strategy in relation to how it was formed and delivered across the Borough. Key strategic outcomes will then be acknowledged in terms of how the research design and aims will add value and help better understand the Strategy and its impact. Guiding the chapter are two fundamental questions:

**Review question 1:** what does the strategy represent in terms of its vision for sport and physical activity in relation to:

- its actors (stakeholders),
- the wider policy objectives (regional and national),
- theoretical notions of sport development, and
- the design and delivery of a local sport policy?

**Review question 2:** to what extent are the aims of the Strategy evaluable and how may this help develop the methodological approach?

Question 1 reflects an interest in the content and setting of the Strategy. Question 2 reflects the importance of the investigatory setting within which the author has placed the Strategy as part of the wider PhD research.

According to Bochel and Duncan (2007), the term *strategy* can be used in many different ways. It can represent ‘...the direction and scope of an organisation over the long term’ (Johnson et al. 2008:3). Robinson (2004:75) proposes that the strategic plan needs to consider objectives for a service and interestingly, ‘...the way the services should be delivered and whom the services should be targeting’. This supports the thinking behind Pawson and Tilley’s (1997) Realistic Evaluation and will, according to The Audit Commission (2002:19) ‘...deliver sport and recreational services that are appropriate to their local context’. Noting context is also aligned with realist thinking. Thus, a strategy represents more than targeting outcomes and becomes immersed in local circumstances, for example sports participation issues and local demographic trends such as employment and health. Moore (2000) states that an organisation or group can have a strategy when its leaders and stakeholders have committed themselves to a particular vision regarding their role and sustainability in the immediate future. Unlike the for-profit organisations where the shared vision would include financial targets and some interpretation of the organisation and its competitors, non-profit and governmental departments, such as those represented in this research, are usually described and documented in terms of a mission and the particular activities that act to serve the mission (Bryce, 1992). In sport development, the same principles such as *having a shared vision and explicit objectives* and thinking *long term* are shared. However, Robson et al. (2013:15) are mindful of the realities of delivering community sport and suggest strategy should ‘...channel new activity and be flexible enough to respond to new circumstances and challenges that arise over time’.

The processes of developing strategy are complex and are often iterative in nature (Bochel and Duncan, 2007). Strategic plans and their associated activities tend to move through a number of phases and often contain multiple goals as opposed to a single bottom line. This affirms that strategy development and delivery are far from linear processes and are shaped by unexpected events and political pressures (Strategy Unit, 2004). Robson et al. (2013) refer to Mintzberg and Waters’ (1998) approaches to strategy and suggest that most sport development strategy use a *consensus-based* approach. That is, they are emergent and form from discussions between the different interest groups within and between organisations. The current Strategy used in this research is consensus-based as it relies on the involvement of

a range of stakeholders for its implementation. However, as is noted later in this chapter, this is not always a straightforward task in sport development. From a policy perspective, the Strategy Unit (2004:3) acknowledge that non-profit strategies are far less transparent and accountable than strategy in other areas of industry. They argue that good strategies in non-profit sectors should be:

- clear about objectives and priorities,
- underpinned by a rich understanding of causes, trends, opportunities and threats,
- based on a realistic understanding of the capacities of those involved in its delivery,
- creative, and
- developed with and communicated to all those with a stake (financial or through implementation).

Creating a strategy using the aforementioned *frameworks* and thinking is useful but does not always reflect the realities of developing and delivering a strategy. In sport development, Robson et al. (2013:229) acknowledge challenges such as ‘short-termism’ and reactive approaches to planning; reliance on part-time staff making staffing of programmes inconsistent and significantly, the poor monitoring and evaluation of interventions resulting in lack of learning. Further, Lindsey (2006) warned of the complexity of partnership work in sport development and its impact on strategy development. For example, Houlihan and Lindsey (2008:239) acknowledge the ‘...general congestion’ in the policy area where stakeholders are divergent and will have competing interests with limited sources of funding.

Previous chapters have acknowledged that notions of sport development are complex and create significant challenges for evaluators in terms of gathering evidence. This is significant for community sport strategy, as interventions need to be understood if they are to be used effectively in seeking to use an evidence-base in community sport development.

### **The Strategy setting**

In line with national, regional and local strategy, there is a requirement for local actors for sport and physical activity to produce a working strategic document in



order that there is a shared vision and framework from which all parties are able to work (Audit Commission, 2002). The local governance involved in this research had developed such a strategy previously in 1997. The current strategy, launched in April 2007, was different in that it recognised for the first time that no one agency should be responsible for the development and delivery of community sport and physical activity objectives (Community Sport Network, 2007).

In pursuance of a shared vision for the Borough, a Community Sport Network (CSN) was founded and representation was sought from the statutory, community and voluntary sectors. According to Hylton and Bramham (2008) such networks are an attempt to rationalise the fragmented structure of sport in to a new delivery system and are essentially an alliance of local providers hosted by a lead organisation such as the Local Authority. Together, these representatives considered their direction for the Strategy and in doing so remained sensitive to the changing structures that govern sport and physical activity. This included several overlapping agendas outlined in the Framework for Sport (Sport England, 2004a) and later in their Regional Plan for Sport 2004-2008 (Sport England, 2004b). The earlier policy encouraged local authorities to ‘...take the lead’ (Sport England, 2004a:20) individually or in partnership with neighbouring authorities, for overseeing the strategic planning for structured sport, physical education and lifelong learning through sport and informal recreational activities. Involving all the sectors within their geographic boundaries and partnerships with other regional local authorities would help ‘...share priorities’ for the communities (Sport England, 2004a:19).

The Strategy also recognised the successful London Olympic bid and acknowledged that the same network would be responsible for:

...the identification of talent and the provision of quality facilities and personnel in order that everyone would have the opportunity to reach their sporting potential (CSN, 2007:4)

This multi-agency delivery of local and national priorities is illustrated in Figure 1 and was developed through a ‘Single System’ (Hylton and Bramham, 2008:36) which was coordinated regionally by the County Sports Partnerships (CSPs).

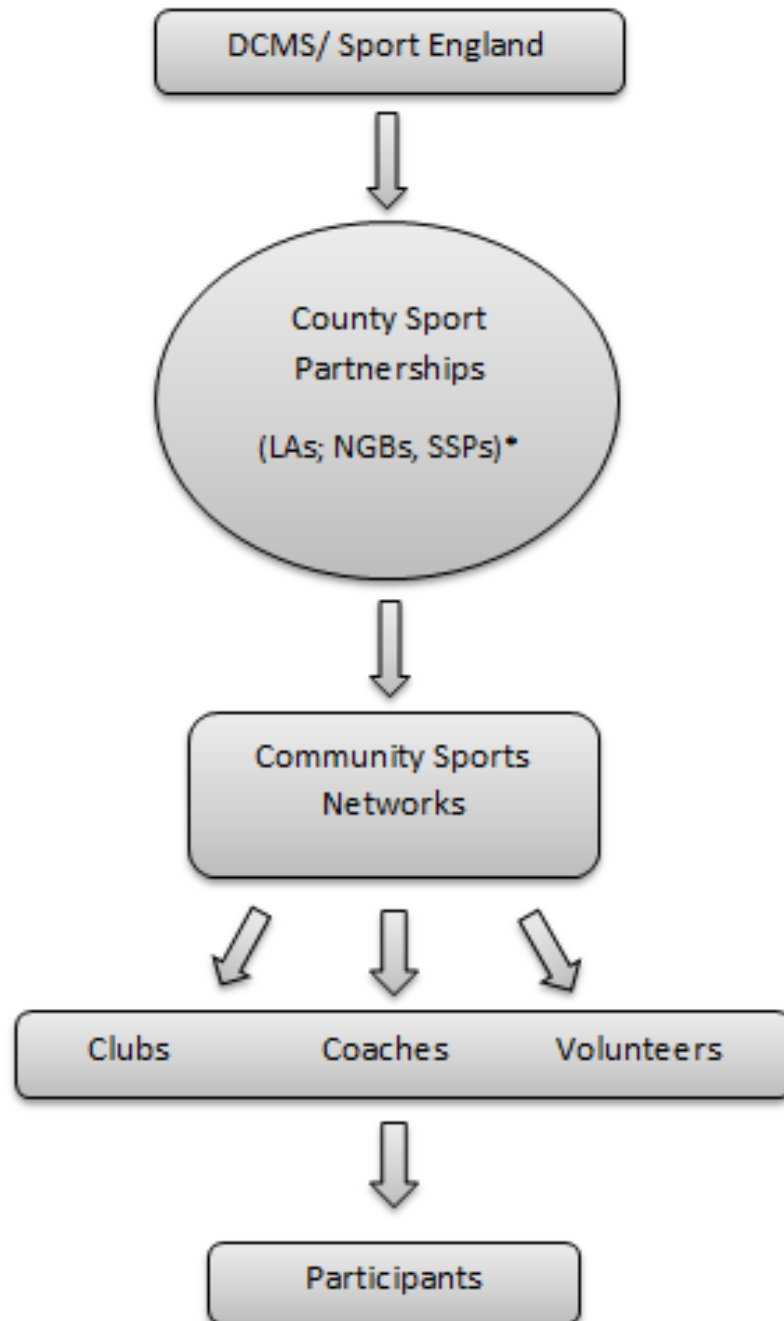


Figure 1 The single system of strategic delivery for sport and physical activity (Sport England, 2007b). \*LAs = Local Authorities; NGBs = National Governing Bodies; SSPs = School Sport Partnerships.

At a very basic level, these groups are a locally coordinated network whose core functions are to:

- raise participation in sport and physical activity (1% per annum),
- widen access to opportunities in sport and physical activity, and
- promote wider social benefits of sport and physical activity.

Physical activity was included in the title of the Strategy as it was identified at one of the inaugural meetings (CSN, 2007) as an aspect that people understand, a notion debated by several authors (Collins, 2010a; Coalter, 2007b; Green, 2000; Coakley and Dunning, 2000). Coalter et al. (2000:5) argued that ‘...among many of the least active and least healthy groups, the promotion of a more active lifestyle may be a more useful strategy than offering only traditional sports’. Thus suggesting that this approach is more sensitive to personal need and social circumstance. On a political level, the inclusion of physical activity aligned the CSN’s activity with other strategic teams in the region citing that ‘...the Health, Children’s and Young People’s Panel, Culture and Leisure Panels...involve sport and physical activity’ (CSN, 2007:6).

The Strategy further embraced this notion of sport with physical activity, health and social development by utilising - as a term for reference - the Council of Europe’s Sport Charter definition of sport as:

...all forms of physical activity which through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels (Council of Europe, 1992:2).

This notion of sport formed the tenet of Sport England’s national strategy at the time (Sport England, 2004) and the rationale for this wide and inclusive definition was to reduce the perception of the public and health care professionals that sport was for the ‘sporty’ involving team games and competition (Bloyce and Smith, 2009; Billington, 2005). This is significant for the current research as it demonstrates the Strategy’s alignment with sport’s broader social appeal. According to Coalter

(2007:167) this would require ‘...more inclusive approaches to the world of evidence and understanding of programme theories’ to be considered by policymakers and practitioners.

Such a broad conceptualisation of sport makes related strategy formation more complex as strategies (including the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy in this research) are designed with several overriding aims in mind such as improvements in infrastructure, wellbeing and professional development. These strategies guide interventions that may target individual families, communities, organisations or a combination and often relate to national and regional targets for policy teams or other environmental components such as the available funding streams.

The current strategy is no exception. It recognises and considers:

...the strategic policies which influence it...existing policies from within the organisations, from the relevant partners and externally by identifying the implications from strategies and policies of key government departments and other agencies involved in developing sport (CSN, 2007:11).

This is rationalised later as a positive and proactive response to the sport policy at the time that needed to ‘...ensure that these delivery partners...are working to the same agenda’ (Department of Culture Media and Sport [DCMS], 2002:189).

The Strategy made further reference to the DCMS’ “Game Plan” (2002) and Sport England’s strategic interpretation of it “The Framework for Sport in England” (2004) as it was felt important ‘...to take into consideration...the implications from strategies and policies of key government departments and other agencies involved in developing sport and physical activity’ (CSN, 2007:11). Robson et al. (2013) argue that this politicises strategy and forces practitioners to base strategy on policy decisions, some of which the practitioners may not agree with. However, Clarke and Dawson (1999) suggest that this political influence needs to be acknowledged in the evaluation as the government and their partner organisations such as Sport England, have a stake in the Strategy. Consequently, this research required levels of data that would be useful to policy makers and practitioners. This helped the research acknowledge evaluation as a ‘...rational exercise in a political context (Weiss, 1993:94). Moreover, Patton (2002) suggested that in recognising the

political context, there is a greater case for the evaluation's utility as the approach advocates the collaboration between researchers and the funders or users of the research.

Within the Strategy, there are references to Sports Coach UK policies in developing a world class coaching system indicating the Strategy's commitment to the development of sport at a competitive level and the development of sporting potential. The Youth Matters policy published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2005) indicates a focus on youth development through sport by empowering young people to contribute to their communities and creating more inclusive means of access to activities. Further links to young people were the implications considered from the Physical Education and School Sports Club Link Strategy (DfES/ DCMS, 2002). This policy aimed to enhance the take up of sporting opportunities by 5-16 year olds by increasing the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours per week on physical education and sport within and beyond the school curriculum. Later, this was increased to a '...new five hour offer' (Sport England/ Youth Sport Trust, 2009). Schools would provide at least three hours within the curriculum and an additional two hours outside the curriculum for five to sixteen year olds. This focus on young people was, according to Flintoff (2013) a necessary Government move to resolve growing concerns about youth dropping out of sport after leaving school. Interestingly, during the research period the concerns become so great that the then Culture Secretary, James Hunt, commented that:

...our bold approach will see money going to organisations that deliver on youth participation, but also withdrawn quickly from those which fail to meet agreed objectives (Hunt, 2012: online).

Thus, this evaluation research would have to be mindful of the changing priorities of government and capture how the Community Sport Network and their Strategy absorbed the shifting direction of sport policy over the period of its delivery and remained sensitive to the political needs of funders and policy makers. As previously mentioned, Robson et al. (2013) explain that more reflexive strategy are generally more successful. Moreover, according to Bailey et al. (2009:201) recognising the

political process gives further credence for a theory-based, evaluation research position which allows for:

...a clarification process [that] is valuable to all parties, particularly in making explicit powerful assumptions that may or may not be widely shared, understood or agreed.

According to Coalter (2013), *understanding* such assumptions is important in determining the success (or not) of sports programmes and should be explicit in the evaluation design.

The Strategy acknowledged the Health White Paper: Choosing Activity: A Physical Activity Action Plan (Department of Health, 2005) which referred to sport but focused on the wider environmental strategies for increasing activity levels. Local Area Agreements were cited to recognise that somehow, amongst all the national agendas, funding structures were in place that encouraged communities to ‘...have a voice’ (CSN, 2007:13). Supporting this bottom-up approach to agenda setting was acknowledged in The Prosperous Communities White Paper (Communities and Local Government, 2006) which encouraged the development of community leaders and proposed structural changes between central and local governance to make the process of establishing community need easier. This latter point is an important one for this research. For example, Coalter (2013:59) suggests that when too much importance is placed on policy rhetoric (which is fine for building partnerships and alliances) there is a tendency to overlook the impact of participation on individuals, or the ‘...presumed processes and mechanisms involved’. Thus, this evaluation addressed the balance of data towards a variety of stakeholder expectations and needs including remaining sensitive to policy demands and local contextual factors such as sports infrastructure, participation rates and demographic data.

Finally, on a regional level, the Strategy considered the North-West Plan for Sport (Sport England, 2004) from which the deliverable themes of the CSN document originated and upon which the agenda for the Strategy was set. Having such a broad base of support for the Strategy should be welcomed. It offers an ‘...economy of remedies’ (Coalter, et al. 1986:92) or in Realistic Evaluation terms, a greater

population upon which new and existing theories about programmes can be confirmed, refuted or refined. However, the assumption that everyone will pull in the same direction and agree to the agenda may not be practically possible as the partners may struggle to contend with their own ideals and aims pulling the Strategy and associated agenda in different directions (Robson et al. 2013). Nevertheless, the agenda was set and agreed. This is significant and is considered in the research design discussed later in Chapter 5. The 'evaluand' (Strategy) is not a script for all to follow to the last page – human (community) nature does not allow for this. Instead, the Strategy is an agreement – pure and simple – a mechanism driven by changing ideals and contexts and therefore becomes dated on publication. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Robson et al. (2013) recognise that sport strategy need to be reflexive. Macmillan and Tampoe (2000:188) claim '...a good strategy is one that can be implemented'. Thus, if a strategy remains active, as opposed to remaining on a shelf, then the realities of its delivery can be recorded, understood and explained by those involved in its implementation.

From a theoretical position this is significant. According to Danermark et al. (2002) Critical Realism recognises that what we start with we *know* because we have experienced it and even measured it (empirical realism) where we 'end up' is totally unknown and causes are realized on the way (critical realism); or as Robson et al. (2013:96) suggest '...getting things done[using a strategy as a means thereto], needs to be grounded in the realities of experience'. This thinking is the foundation of Pawson and Tilley's (1997) Realistic Evaluation where the interplay of *context*, *mechanism* and *outcome* allow evaluations to develop an understanding of what works, for whom and under what circumstances. Moreover, their theory recognises that circumstances may change *as a result* of a strategy (*mechanism*). Interestingly, the notion of *realising along the way* is important in sport. Coalter (2013) suggests that evaluations often overlook process and focus on outcomes most of which are based on the tacit knowledge that sport can improve communities. For example, community sport development is not simply placing sport in a community and it would be wrong to place total emphasis on sporting goals as development suggests a broader social agenda.

Before the strategic aims and objectives of the CSN are acknowledged, the Strategy is underpinned by policy context and then considers the regional trends, needs (in relation to sport and physical activity) and demography. The CSN also amalgamated a number of 'consultation' documents. The consultation activities are listed below, and included:

- stakeholder consultation interviews with individual agencies, minutes from meetings,
- an open space consultation highlighting sport and active recreation and reviewing an in-depth independent consultation on open spaces in the borough,
- a sport and physical activity questionnaire sent to all contacts via clubs/organisations and departments,
- a sports club database to access a number of clubs, volunteers, facilities information,
- the Active People Survey interim report conducted by Sport England to determine baselines of activity in adults,
- the Physical Education and School Sports Club Links (PESSCL) monitoring form for information gathered from the Schools Sports Partnership and,
- a quality of life survey - annual survey conducted at a local level which includes rates of physical activity taken by adults in the area.

The CSN acknowledged the 'extensive' consultation but were equally sensitive to its shortcomings citing 'equity and diversity' as the 'obvious gap' in the data analysis (CSN, 2007:22). The CSN agreed to ensure that issues relating to equity be a focus of the action planning process. Again, we are reminded of the *inclusive* policy rhetoric of the time and Sport England's (2004:34) challenge to '...test and promote new sport and activity offers to potential participants who are hard to reach or demonstrate significant barriers to participation'. Moreover, understanding why such participants avoid or remove themselves from sport and learning what mechanisms and circumstances may help them to return to sport will make them *easier* to reach. According to Sanderson (2002) the learning potential of theory-based evaluations cannot be underestimated. Particularly in sport where attracting new participants



and understanding how to keep them underpins the definitions of sport development offered in earlier chapters.

## **The Strategy aims and outcomes**

From the consultation and in response to the political context of the Strategy, three aims (and several strategic outcomes) upon which the aims would be delivered were identified:

### **1. Increase participation in sport and active recreation**

Increasing participation is the core function of sport development activity and underpins most of the five aims of the Strategy but addressed the health and wellbeing theme most prominently. Participation is the key expression used by those who have tried to capture sport development as a term or concept (see Chapter 3) and has been the cornerstone of public intervention for sport since the Wolfenden report over half a century ago (Central Council for Physical Recreation, 1960) and even as far back as the welfare agenda for physical activity in the 1930's (Ravenscroft, 2005). Current trends in sport participation are defined through a variety of variables including the frequency, mode, intensity and duration of the activity (Department of Health 2011; Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2012). The Government at the time of the CSN Strategy publication targeted 70% of the population to be 'reasonably active' (defined as taking moderate exercise for 30-minutes, 5-times per week) by 2020 (Sport England, 2004:10). According to Collins (2010b) it was agreed that sport would account for 3 of the 5 days recommended. This would more than double the rate of participation at the time and would demand a rate of increased participation of 1% per annum; a rate only matched in the prosperous times of the 1970's (Collins, 2010b). For the CSN group it meant engaging over 300 new participants from the Borough during the first two years of the Strategy.

### **2. Improving levels of performance**

Improving performance levels refers to the Strategy and its commitment to the local sporting structures and personnel. This aim relates to the outcomes of enhancing

sporting infrastructure and developing education and skills. The Strategy outlined two key areas for development:

- I. Facility Development – including reference to improved indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities such as local swimming pools, BMX tracks and public parks.
- II. Sports Club Development – the introduction of minimum standards for sport clubs and the development of a social enterprise network as a vehicle for professional development.

This agenda is founded on the Government's need to modernise the sports sector (DCMS, 2002) not only on a physical level in terms of leisure centres, clubs and administration but on a professional level by investing in the people that deliver sport to the communities or who represent these communities such as coaches, leaders and development officers. This personifies the community sport development concept by identifying inner-city issues such as high unemployment, poverty and industrial decline and using sport to enhance the skills and competencies of those who find themselves associated with these issues (Coalter, 2007; Collins, 2010a)

Further, the consultation process highlighted that facilities in the area were in poor condition, required greater access for the disabled and were not being used as frequently as expected (CNBC, 2005). Facility provision and enhancement had not been a major policy agenda since the 1970s when the Sports Council referred to it as the '...greatest single need for sport in this country' (Sports Council, 1972, as cited in Houlihan and White, 2002:33). Local Authority provision increased from four leisure centres nationwide in 1970 to over a thousand by the close of the decade (Hylton and Bramham, 2008).

The borough involved in this research offered an extensive range of places to participate or spectate in most sports. Places range from nationally recognised, professional sports clubs to community grass roots centres. There are seven sports facilities operated by the local authority. The Council also provides outdoor sports, playing pitches, supported by a further facilities provided by the education, private and voluntary organisations. Private and voluntary sector provision covers an

additional 12 venues ranging from multi-sport clubs to exclusive health and fitness facilities.

According to the local sports directory (CSN, 2005), there were 93 registered sports clubs representing some 33 recognised sports ranging from mainstream activities such as rugby, tennis cricket and athletics to specialists sports like sailing, scuba diving and archery. Football is the most popular sports club in the borough with 18 clubs. Beyond football, most sports had one or two clubs with the exception of Cricket ( $n=8$ ), Martial arts ( $n=7$ ), Badminton ( $n=6$ ). Swimming and athletics have four clubs and there were three table tennis clubs (CSN, 2005).

### **3. Widening access (incorporating the excluded groups)**

Of the core aims for the Strategy, this is the most overarching. Widening access had implications for health, education, sports infrastructure, benefiting the economy and strengthening communities. In policy terms, the Strategy is directed by a need for a 'mass participation culture' (DCMS, 2002:15) an ideal continued from the Government's previous sport policy: 'A Sporting Future for All' (DCMS, 2000). Practitioners in sport and recreation may interpret this as '...facilitating access to otherwise unaffordable leisure provision or providing sporting activities for groups likely to be excluded from mainstream services' (Kelly, 2011:132). The term *sport for all* was coined in the 1960s by the Council of Europe (Marchand, 1990, as cited in Kelly, 2011) and remained a prominent feature of European sports policy during the years prior to the CSN Strategy where member states take the steps necessary to '...enable every individual to take part in sport' (Council of Europe, 2001:1). Politically this helped secure any facility development for local authorities and would remain an extremely flexible policy in that it would absorb the needs of elite sport development work and show directions to solve social problems with sport (Houlihan and White, 2002). In reality, Collins and Kay (2003: 36) explain that 'sport for all' risks becoming a 'sport for the disadvantaged'. In the current Strategy (CSN, 2007), there was a clear mandate to consider priority groups and focus intervention to include the previously excluded. This would, according to Hylton and Bramham (2008) change the patterns of participation and therefore aim to decrease inequality in community sport.

The aforementioned aims were placed against the following four outcomes (CSN, 2007:14):

1. Improving health and wellbeing,
2. enhancing the sporting infrastructure ‘
3. developing education and skills, and
4. creating safer and stronger communities .

Overarching all aims and strategic outcomes of the CSN group was a shared vision agreed by all stakeholders and cited as a term of reference in December 2006:

To create a district where everyone has the opportunity to participate in and benefit from sport, physical activity and active recreation whether it is for fun, for health, to learn, to enjoy the natural environment, or to excel (CSN, 2007:24).

The CSN group noted that the aforementioned outcomes were not mutually exclusive and considered overlap within and between them. The vision for sport was aligned with a larger vision for the Borough and as such, the broader application of sport and physical activity was inevitable. Sport would serve education, health, community infrastructure and would support economic growth. Such aims and outcomes for sport are not new and can be traced – in policy terms – back to the early 1980s when the Sports Council established the Action Sport programme in 1982 in response to the inner city riots of 1981 (Bloyce and Smith, 2009). The broader agenda theme for sport received renewed interests and perhaps the single largest investment (£2b over a 3 year period) when the New Labour Government sought to deliver its ‘third way politics’ and use sport as a vehicle for addressing social and economic problems. This discourse is dominated by the concept of ‘...development through sport’ (Houlihan and White, 2002:4) or as the Sports Minister at the time, Richard Caborn, referred to as ‘*sport for good*’.

In relation to the current Strategy, the broader goals are a direct result of the publication of Game Plan (Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2002) which claimed that sport and physical activity:

...have a major part to play in promoting health, and as part of a basket of measures can contribute to improved educational outcomes, reduced crime and greater social inclusion (DCMS/ Strategy Unit, 2002:14).

Further, Game Plan (DCMS, 2002) placed a focus on local level outcomes and modernising the structure and delivery of sport both nationally and locally. Central to the modernisation process was the emergence of evidence-based policy as a key policy theme and an issue discussed later in the chapter. Consequently, local sports delivery networks, normally led or 'enabled' (Sport England 2004:24) by the Local Authority are expected to develop data to demonstrate the impact of strategies in achieving the desired local social outcomes which were linked with Public Service Agreements (PSAs) (DCSM, 2002). Of the range of policies and agendas offered, the benefits of sport are most strongly associated with aspects of health improvement – particularly in relation to disease prevention where according to Khan et al. (2012:58) '...sport is one sector that can improve the health of a nation through increased physical activity'. Therefore, it should be no surprise that Game Plan (DCMS, 2002) gives such impetus to health goals and use of PSAs as a direct way to measure health impact locally.

### **Developing programme theory and 'logic'**

Having considered the setting for the Strategy and its political and stakeholder sensitivities, it is essential to understand how the Strategy's activities contribute to achieving intended aims and outcomes. This provided a level of readiness for the evaluation and helped the evaluator build a framework for the programmes of the CSN strategy and their theory. In this research, programme *theory* is the term used to describe the construction of a plausible and sensible model of how a programme is supposed to work or how '...the components of a programme (or intervention) intended to mitigate or solve the problem'. (Davidoff et al. 2015:3). According to Clarke and Dawson (1999: 31) programme theory '...is generally made up of a combination of hunches, beliefs, intuitive assumptions and knowledge founded on practical experience'. This is significant for the research design as the proposed approach uses programme logic model approach to realise the journey from identifying problems, providing solutions and documenting how the solutions may

remedy (or not) the initial problems and inform future practice. For this reason, evaluators need to think systematically about sports programmes or sports strategies. Moreover, according to Rossi et al (2004), the evaluator must, in the early stages of the research process, attempt to identify the beliefs and underlying assumptions of programme logic that underpin a planned intervention.

Consequently, evaluators must identify, for the purpose of acknowledging important research questions, what changes programmes are trying to make and how this change may take place. This practice of delineating programme theory is well used amongst evaluation researchers (Weiss, 1997; Antikainen and Ellis, 2011, Deane et al. 2014) and more recently, has been considered in the evaluation of sports programmes (Bullough et al. 2014; Griffiths and Armour, 2012; Riley and Anderson-Bucher, 2012). A common depiction of programme theory is in the form of a 'logic model'.

A logic model presents a plausible illustration of how a programme or strategy, or in this case a series of sports programmes, work under certain conditions to solve identified problems (Bickman, 1987; Rossi et al. 2004). The implications of the logic model approach for this research is the potential to document the progress toward meeting Strategy goals and to detect the cumulative impact of programming (Medeiros et al. 2005). Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the logic models developed by the CSN for the two "hubs" of the Strategy, which are:

- Sport for All (Hard to reach) Hub
- Coaching and Volunteering Hub

McLaughlin and Jordan (2004) have noted that the typical elements of a logic model are: resources, activities, outputs, customers reached, short, intermediate and longer term outcomes, and the relevant external influences (Wholey, 1983, 1987). Bickman (1987) further noted that logic models are typically developed for a particular programme policy and do not represent *off-the shelf* use of a single established social science theory.

Several designs for the logic models were considered in this research. The system offered by McLaughlin and Jordan (2004) was presented to the CSN. Consultation

with the CSN determined the following attributes of this model of relevance to the Strategy and its evaluation:

- **Statement of problem** – outlined the gap in provision that sport could remedy. This was founded on the outcomes of the consultation process.
- **Inputs** – acknowledges the stakeholder’s interest and participation in the delivery and evaluation of the hub.
- **Activities** – represented the programmes or interventions within the hub with outputs acknowledging the specific activities within each of the activities
- **Initial outcomes** – identified the short term outcomes of the hub (first six months).
- **Intermediate outcomes** – outlined the agreed medium term outcomes for the hub (six months to 2 years).
- **Long term outcomes** – represented the outcomes said to be achievable beyond the two year funding period.

The logic model design also considered the political agenda by outlining the wider strategic “goals” of the Borough and the needs of the funders in satisfying PSA targets through agreed key performance indicators (KPIs). Both logic models build a common understanding of the two sports hubs and the expectations for resources. Further, there is a set of performance measurement points for the evaluation which will improve the usefulness of the data gathered (McCloughlin and Jordan (2004). This first logic model (Figure 2) describes the theoretical association between the Sport for All activities and the intended outcomes. In essence, the model explains that the hard to reach groups such as young people (Crabbe, 2006; 2009), women (Rutten, 2009) will feel safer and part of a stronger community, become more active and improve their health. This will happen if specific groups such as families, specialist coaches and facilities come together and become more accessible because of a series of specifically targeted, sport and exercise activities delivered through the Strategy.

The second logic model (Figure 3) describes the coaching and volunteering hub. While participation in sport is important, this hub of programmes focussed on improving the sporting infrastructure and providing a platform for professional and personal development. The overlapping outcome between the two hubs is

acknowledged in that both aimed to 'create safer and stronger communities'. Thus, the logic models recognised the wider aims of the local authority to which the CSN's Strategy could contribute. Further, the model suggests that the aims will be realised through the delivery of professional development activity and the recruitment of volunteers, and representatives of local sports clubs such as athletes and coaches.



Women and girls, people with a disability and the elderly have the lowest sports participation rates in the Borough. Little is known of the participation rates in rural communities.

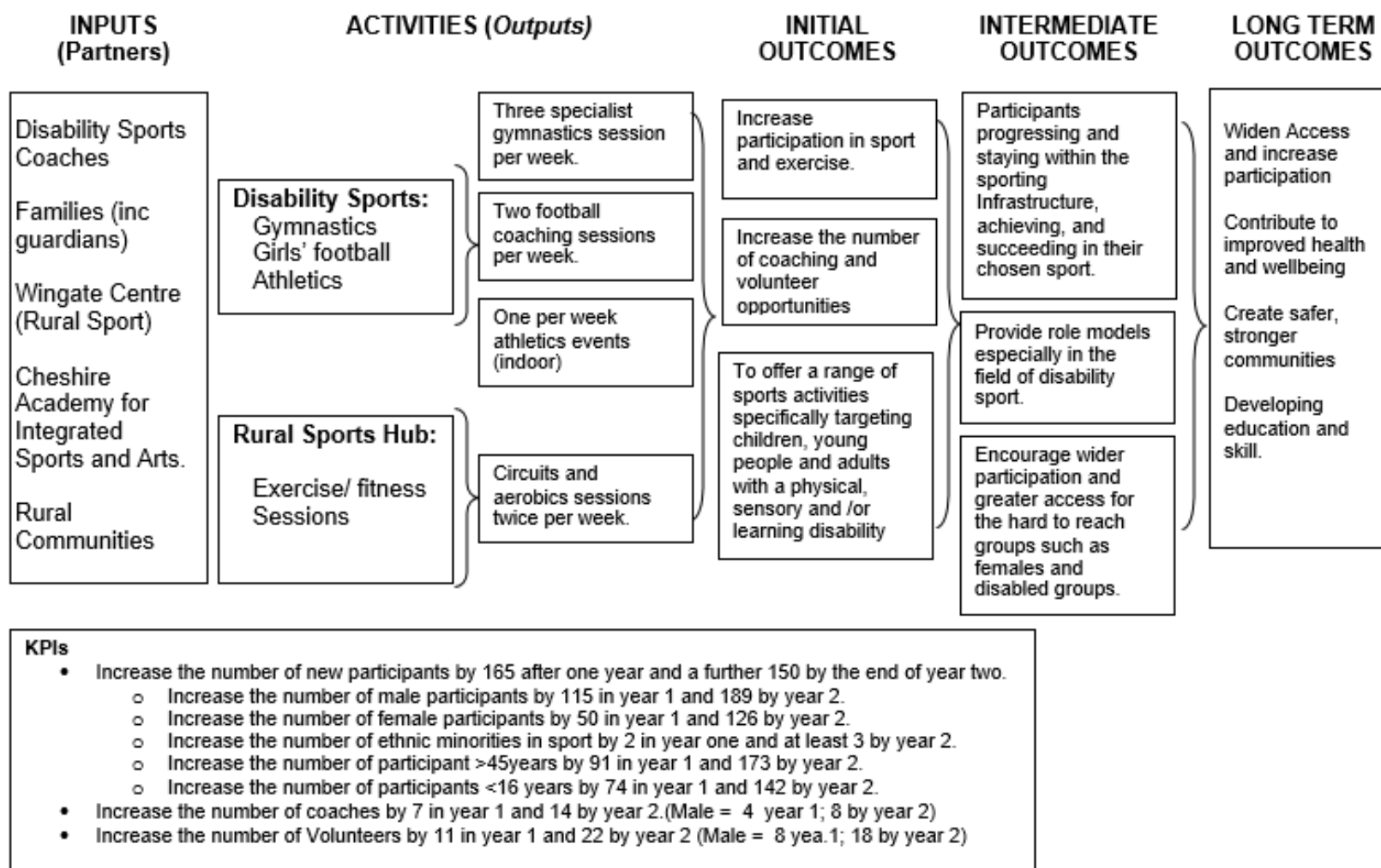


Figure 2 Logic model for the 'Sport for All Hub' and related programmes.

**Statement of Problem:**

Only 7.1% of local people currently contribute to sport in a voluntary capacity. A further 40% say they would like to in the future. The borough lacks an extensive infrastructure for volunteering in sport. The proportion of young people dropping out of sport between 16 and 19 years is high, particularly among girls.

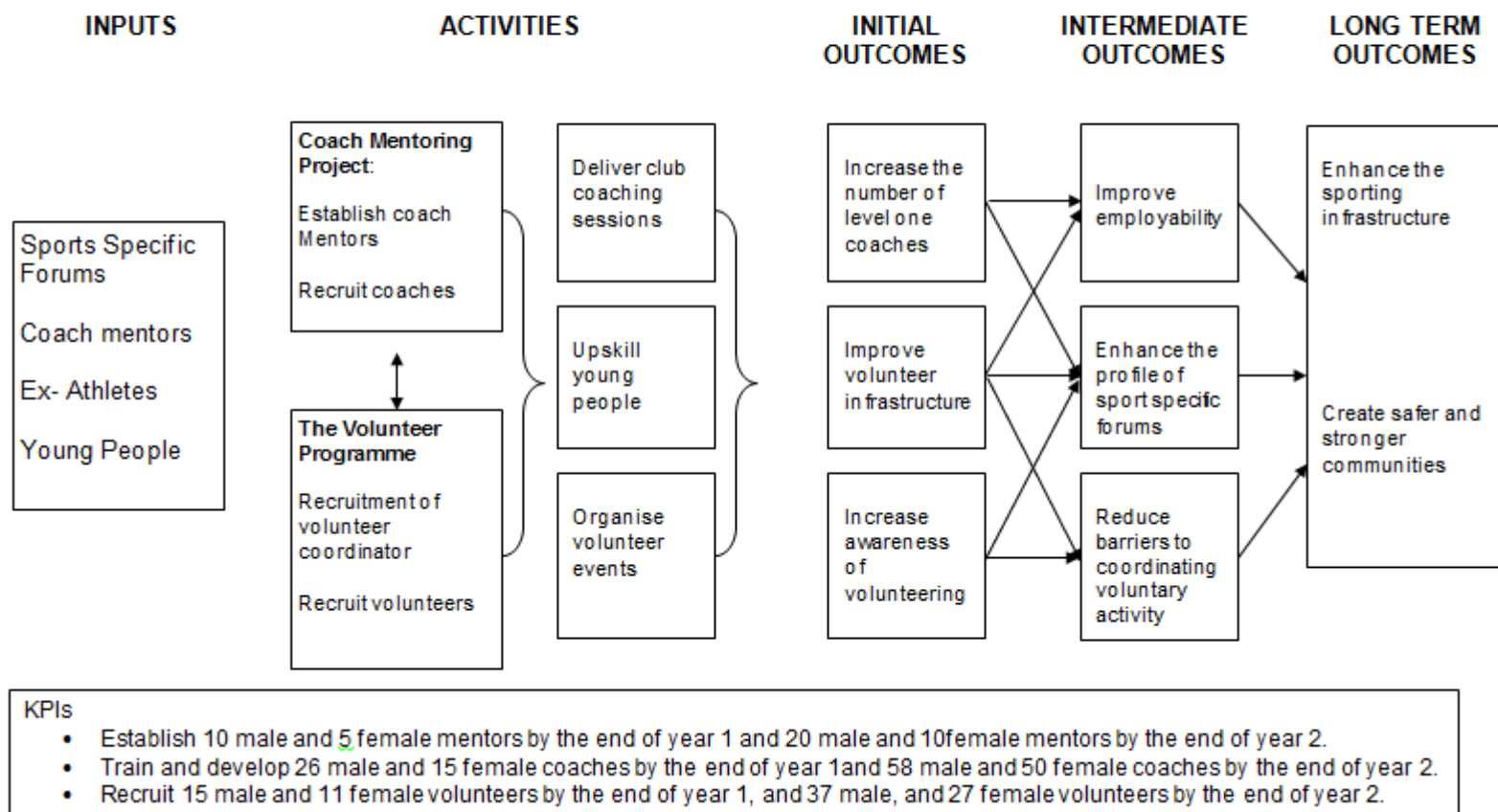


Figure 3 Logic model for the 'Coaching and Volunteering Hub' and related programmes

## **Models and ‘reality’**

Despite the benefits of using logic models in evaluation research, there are significant limitations. The models illustrate programmes in detail but in a ‘...linear and mechanistic fashion’ (Miller, 2013:79). Earlier, it was discussed that community sport development is situated in a dynamic and shifting policy environment and deals with the complexities and contexts of hard to reach communities. This is hardly the place for a *one size fits all* logic model where such complexities, vital to the improvement of community sports programmes, may be lost. Programme models and their significance in the development of programme theory are not a new concept in evaluation research. Weiss (1972) was one of the first evaluation theorists to propose ‘theory-focussed’ evaluation and the ‘logical reasoning’ that underpinned explanations of how a programme or intervention works.

More recently, *theory-driven* evaluation was given impetus by the introduction of Pawson and Tilley’s (1997) ‘Realistic Evaluation’. They advocated that ‘...programme theory is a prerequisite to sound evaluation’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:56-57). However, Realistic Evaluation acknowledges that there is more to evaluation than simply monitoring the pattern of inputs against the outputs and outcomes offered in logic models. Realistic Evaluation provides a framework for the underpinning programme theory of social programmes, such as those included in this chapter, based on a configuration of mechanisms, contexts and outcomes. This configuration allows the evaluation to state ‘...what it is about a programme that works, for whom and under what circumstances’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:217). Ultimately, programme models and the theories developed from them provide the guidelines for establishing the key issues in evaluation and determine what the most appropriate research design and methods are for addressing those issues. With the programme models or ‘logic’ established, the subject of appropriate research design and methods can be considered in detail and is discussed and rationalised in the next chapter.

# Chapter 6

## Towards a methodological approach

### Introduction

This aim of this chapter is to orient the reader towards an understanding of the methodological approach and data collection techniques employed within the research. Firstly, an account of how the research design was developed is presented. This will provide an insight into the complex nature of evaluation research in a dynamic public policy area and how this has, in part, influenced the development of the design. Further, the design will build on the theories and perspectives offered in the previous chapters. A rationale for a 'pragmatist' perspective of evaluation research will enable the utilisation of a mixed method approach and, according to Demant and Frank (2011:5) encourage evaluation research '...to break with mono-methodological perspectives' to social research. Finally, this chapter will outline the chosen methods and techniques employed for data collection.

### Contextualising the research methodology

To date, few evaluations in sport have been performed at a local and strategic level. For example, Bradbury (2011) measured the impact of a community football strategy using a qualitative design. The London Borough of Newham (2007) evaluated a cluster of sports programmes for their Culture and Sport Strategy. Interestingly, The London Borough (2007:17) used a theory-driven approach in an attempt to '...explore how and why a programme is contributing to overall change in the area'. However, this study only looked at the programmes over a 12-month period limiting the measureable impact of the programmes.

Instead, in sport, evaluations have been conducted on individual programmes at local (Snape, 2005; Taylor et al. 2013; Bean et al. 2015) regional (Rigg, 1986; Armour et al. 2013) and national level (Crabbe, 2007; Eley and Kirk, 2002; Bailey et al. 2011; Pringle et al. 2013; Evans and Sleaf, 2013; Taks et al. 2014; Bell, 2004). While such evaluation research will contribute to specific programmes, how derived

shared learning diffuses to larger communities and informs policy, particularly at local levels, remains uncertain.

Evidence-based policy is a broad term and is discussed in more detail in previous chapters, suffice to say that research forms only a part of the evidence base for policy which may draw upon public opinion, practitioner experience and cost (Bochel and Duncan, 2007). Evaluation research is well founded in other service sectors such as Health Promotion (Nutbeam, 1998; Whitehead et al. 2003) and Education (National Foundation for Educational Research, 2009). Indeed, evaluation is an increasing area of scrutiny within sport valued by Howe (1993) and more recently by Coalter (2007; 2013), Mackintosh et al. (2014a) and Long, (2008; 2013). Despite acknowledgement of the need for evaluation over the past 15 years, only recently have policy makers for sport published any guidance (Sport England, 2008) for local sport development groups. Whilst welcomed, Robson et al. (2013) suggest few agencies are engaging with evaluation in their everyday administration of sport.

Sport and physical activity strategy are complex and designed with several overriding aims in mind such as improvements in infrastructure (Coaffee, 2008), wellbeing (Steptoe and Butler, 1996; Bean et al. 2015) and social mobility (Spaaij, 2009; Parnel et al. 2015). As previously mentioned, this was in response to New Labour's sports policy (DCMS, 2002) that recognised sport's broader appeal regardless of the absence of the evidence base. Such policies guide sport and physical activity strategy that target individuals, families, communities, organisations or a combination and often relate to national and regional targets for policy teams or other environmental components. In acknowledging these wider contextual factors, the following chapter will outline and rationalise a methodological approach and offer a reflexive design that ensures a greater understanding of developing sport at a local and strategic level. The data collection and analysis methods will be outlined that compliment both the approach and setting but also capture rich, relevant and reliable data that will inform practice and future evaluation research in line with the academic aims of the research.

### **The 'evaluation research' approach**

To satisfy the research aims, the approach fulfilled a number of criteria that normally acknowledge a divide in evaluation disciplines. While such challenges for evaluation

have been considered in previous chapters, it is appropriate that some of the specific challenges for this research are revisited here in order that the research position is sufficiently rationalised. On the one hand an approach was required that challenged evaluation on a scientific level so that we may better understand which scientific principles are best applied in this research setting. According to Rossi et al. (2004), this is referred to as *evaluation research* and is according to some theorists a method driven approach (Patton, 2002; Rogers and Weiss, 2007) where there is less impetus on evaluative intent or utility and more focus on causality, application of methods and research credibility. On the other hand, this research was guided by the principles of evaluation upon which most authors agree, that evaluation must determine the merit of a programme or intervention and inform those who have a vested interest in that intervention. To some evaluation theorists, this is simply recognised as *evaluation*. Cordray and Lipsey (1987) describe utility and practice as drivers of such evaluations.

Rather than acknowledge a dichotomy, this research recognised that there is overlap between method driven and utilisation focussed evaluations. Thus, there is greater alignment with Rossi et al's. (2004) pragmatic stance in realising that the terms described above can be used together. This admission of overlap is nothing new. Evaluation scholars have long recognised the 'elasticity' of the term evaluation (Weiss, 1972, Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Clarke and Dawson, 1999). This research will rationalise overlap on a logistical level in that the research aims and questions demand scientific rigour in the methodological approach and administratively as the study will serve the purpose of informing decisions within communities it will serve. This research took an *evaluation research approach* and this term covered evaluation as an academic and political activity.

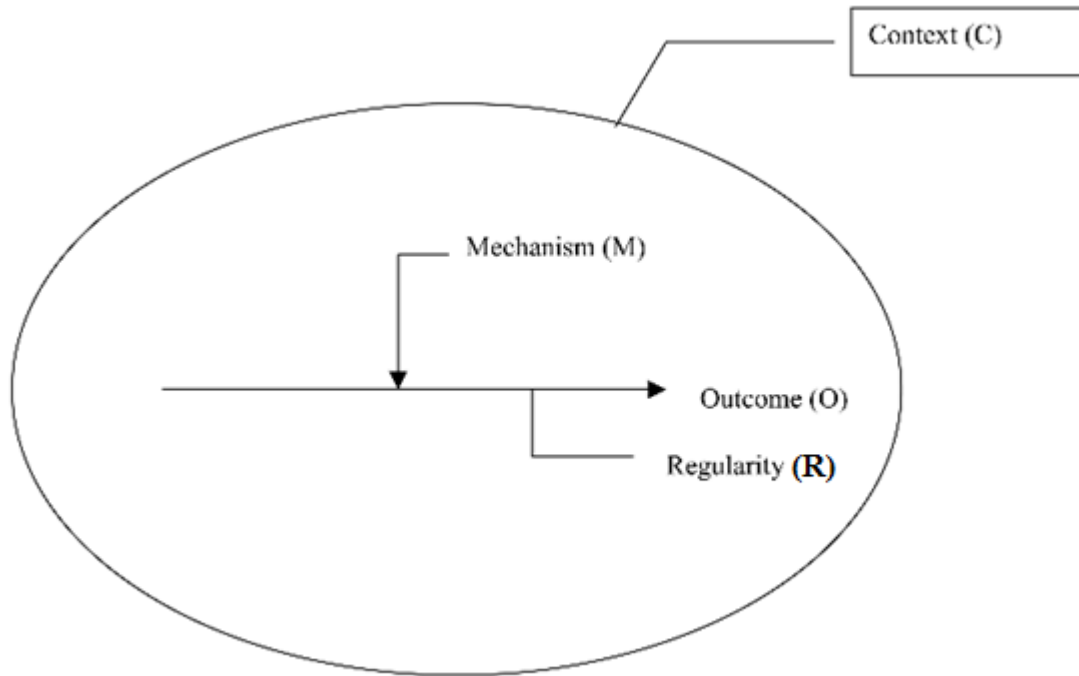
Post-modern evaluation theorists have acknowledged paradigmatic issues in research methodology (Pawson, 2000, Pawson and Bellamy, 2006; Smith, 2006; McEvoy and Richards 2006). Thus, evaluation researchers are pluralistic and reflexive in their methodological choices as they acknowledge that the overall approach should be chosen based on the '...nature and context of the evaluation situation' (Clarke and Dawson, 1999:62). A pluralistic approach was adopted in this study as the setting demanded reflexivity due to the Strategy's social setting and the

influences of a dynamic policy area (Houlihan and White, 2002). Thus, the research moved between the differing paradigms when appropriate.

### **Embracing ‘Realistic Evaluation’**

As previously mentioned, a ‘Realistic Evaluation’ approach (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) was used in this research. Pawson and Tilley’s epistemological position is that ‘...it is not programmes that ‘work’, but the generative mechanisms that they release by way of providing reasons and resources to change behaviour’ (1997:79). This process is termed *generative causality*. Rather than a programme having an impact on a person, Realistic Evaluation tries to understand the relationship between the participant and the programme (or between structure and agency). The ontological positions of Realistic Evaluation is based on Bhaskar’s (1975) critical realism philosophy. That is, the world has to be understood at different *human* levels of nature that look beyond biology or physics and focus on human activity. Pawson and Tilley (1997) explain that social reality is stratified and different social actors will perceive their own situations and circumstances differently. Consequently, Realistic Evaluation challenges the evaluator to understand the social world as perceived by the programme participants. This will include their view of the programme, which is embedded in their individual level of social reality.

The ingredients of a Realistic Evaluation are illustrated in Figure 4. Rather than offer definitions for each component, the following explanation will describe the key characteristics of each ingredient using examples from the setting of this research. The logic behind realistic thinking is that social enquiry should act to explain significant *regularities* (R) or *outcomes* (O) such as changes in participation for sport in deprived, urban areas. Explanation may take the form of proposing some underlying *mechanisms* (M). For example, a ‘door-step’ sport intervention may reduce barriers to sport by providing free and local access to sport activities. The *outcome* (O) may take the form of observable increases in participation and improved wellbeing and community cohesion.



**Figure 4** The ‘ingredients’ of a realistic evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 72).

Pawson and Tilley (1997) suggested that the evaluation should delineate theories. For example, new participants have exposure to a greater network to improve social capital through sport and have adopted a more active lifestyle with measurable effects on health indicators. These explanations generated the new *regularity* (R) or *outcome* (O) and explained the relationship between how the structure and agency constituted the regularity. Importantly, the oval in the illustration acknowledged the conditions or *contexts* for the regularity (C). Contexts describe the circumstances that trigger the mechanism and outcomes. For example, increases in participation and social cohesion may only be observable if the community themselves take greater control of the doorstep sport programmes and are supported by enthusiastic and well-qualified sport development officers. So the relationship between sport and wellbeing can be explained but only in specific populations or communities. The idea is to determine:

...which individuals, subgroups and locations might benefit most readily from the programme, and which social and cultural resources are necessary to sustain the changes (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:85).

This explanation, through theory, is significant in evaluation research as it allows for the identification of relevant questions and appropriate methodological choices. As



context shifts or changes so too will the relevant theories, and so the questions can be adapted in terms of their appropriateness at a given point in time. Method driven evaluations would not accommodate for changes in context that are so apparent in the lifespan of a 5-year sport and physical activity strategy.

A realistic evaluation perspective treats programmes not as targeted social systems but as an embedded and integrated social construct where the interplay of stakeholders, location, history and future prospects are key to explaining less about *if* the programme worked but *what it was about the programme* that may best explain *why it worked*. Indeed, central to Realistic Evaluation is its ability to acknowledge the context within which methodological decisions are made or as Pawson and Tilley (1997:159) noted ‘...only when we know what precisely it is we are studying can we reach into the toolkit for the appropriate instrument’. Consequently, Realistic Evaluation can be ‘exploratory’ (Pommier et al. 2010:3) in that ‘...the results of the first method (qualitative) help to develop and inform the basis of the second method (quantitative)’.

The latter perspective is important in a study of this nature where study design will change and the change is brought about by the evaluation itself. Strategies are guides towards an agreed vision or set of goals. As with all good plans, those with the ability to adapt to new environments and cope with change may be more successful. Rather than be treated as a set of instructions, they are delivered dynamically, and are responsive to a change in direction when there is evidence that change is required.

### **Ontological and epistemological considerations**

While ontological and epistemological positions have been mentioned, it is appropriate to present the ontological and epistemological positions of this thesis in more detail and as a rationale for the research design. Briefly, ontology is the ‘reality’ that the researcher investigates (Healy and Perry, 2000). It is the study of ‘being’ (Crotty, 1998). VandenBose (2007:645) philosophically claimed that ontology asks ‘...what does it mean to ‘be’ at all?’ In this research, the ontological positions that would rationalise the research design included:

- other people will experience sport and physical activity differently from each other and so multiple perspectives are important to the research,
- the world [of community sport development] exist beyond the researchers own knowledge and experiences,
- our experiences [in sport and physical activity] change the way the world is viewed thus a design that will capture this change is important in the research design and,
- no single reality would underpin a research question immersed in a community or 'real-world' setting.

Having a subjective and pragmatic view of the world allowed the researcher to go beyond their own understanding of the nature of the world and how it should be studied (Moses and Knutson, 2007). This gave an appreciation that individuals react to the world differently. This, from an ontological perspective, helped determine 'value' from the multiple perspectives and realities of those involved in the Strategy activities. Further, this position recognised that these realities would change because of that involvement. However, Bhaskar (1975) suggests that this position will not allow us to know everything as our knowledge will always have unexplored depths. However, according to Nichols (2005) it allows the researcher to approach the realities of programme experiences because of the systematic approach to knowledge generation.

The relationship between ontology and the research design (epistemology) is an important part of the research process. Carter and Little (2007) explain that how we 'know' about these realities or what we learn about them inevitably affects the methods chosen to study social phenomena and justifies the knowledge produced. Evaluation research allows for a number of epistemological paradigms to be considered depending on the context and setting for the research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The Strategy and its associated sports programmes were delivered in a 'real world', community setting with broader social goals such as health and wellbeing. Thus, the epistemological approach taken in this study was influenced by the work of Bhaskar (1975). Unlike positivism which separates itself from the real world and constructivism which is based on realities built on beliefs and ideals (Perry, 1997); this approach recognises that all observation is fallible and has error (Trochim, 2006) and accepts reality is 'real' but only imperfectly (the findings are

probably true) and probabilistically apprehensible (Healy and Perry, 2000). This supports evaluation theory which is also less concerned with truth, certainty, and more with determining the realities of delivering a series of complex social programmes in order to determine their worth (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). In taking a *realistic* epistemology, this research developed a 'family of answers' based on the 'CMO' model offered by Pawson and Tilley (1997) and consequently covered several contingent contexts and different reflective participants, albeit imperfectly (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). These answers, later described as outcome patterns, described the broad, generative mechanisms that operate in the real world and helped chart the journey from programme implementation to the extent to which the programmes contributed to the Strategy outcomes.

## **The research setting**

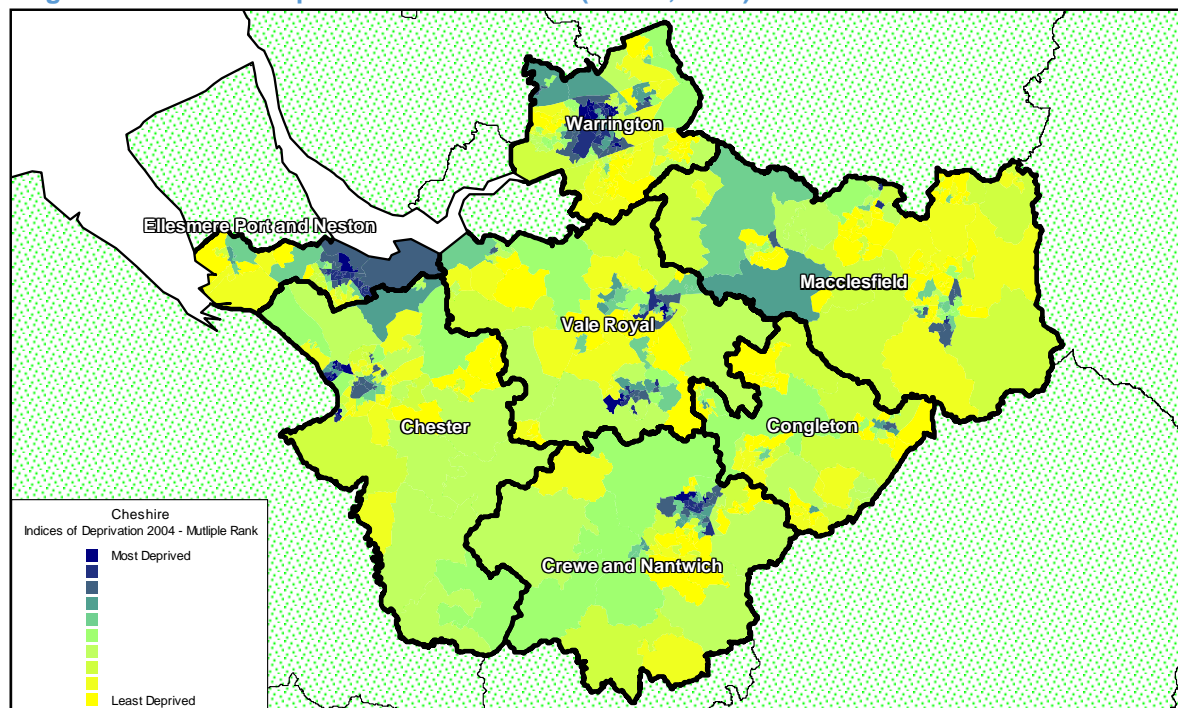
### **Demographic profile**

This research was situated in the county of Cheshire and focused on activity in the most southerly Council of the North West of England. Within the Borough, there are two jurisdictions with a combined population of 111,007 residents (Office for National Statistics, 2001). One area is a post-industrial 'new-town' developed in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century reflecting its strategic importance as a rail centre. Much of its industrial history was based on the manufacture and repair of locomotives and rolling stock. Such character is typical of an industrial town, although the economic base had diversified greatly in the last twenty years or so. For example, the sale of a major engineering company allowed the expansion of the a luxury car manufacturer to expand and establish itself as a major employer of the town (Drummond, 1995).

The other area is a historic market town and is an important service centre to an attractive rural area where the dairy industry and tourism are particularly important (Cheshire East Borough Council, 2010). This growth brings challenges as well as opportunities in making sure the local infrastructure and local facilities keep pace with expansion. Overall, the Borough is a prosperous one. It has the second fastest changing economy in the region (CNBC, 2008). In recent years, despite an economic downturn, there have been major developments for new homes and a rapid increase in jobs and investment. Despite this, there are areas where residents'

quality of life is lower than for residents elsewhere in the Borough. Figure 5 illustrates the ranking of super output areas in Cheshire including the Borough within which this research would take place.

**Figure 5 Indices of deprivation for Cheshire (ODPM, 2007).**



This illustration is based on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM's) 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004' (ODPM, 2004). The figure demonstrates that certain areas, particularly in the north-eastern part of the Borough, can be considered to be relatively deprived. The latest indices of deprivation are based upon 32,482 Super Output Areas (SOAs) throughout England that relate to the geography used in the 2001 Census. The manner in which the ranking works is for a rank position of one to indicate the most deprived SOA in the country.

### **Local participation figures**

Just before the Strategy was published, Sport England's 'Active People Survey 1' (2006a) reported that almost one in five (17.2%) of adults in the Borough participated in at least 30 minutes, moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking) on three or more days of the week. This is lower than the average rate reported (Sport England, 2006) for the County (20.1%) and placed the Borough in this research in the lowest 25<sup>th</sup> percentile across all Local Authorities for England. Table 1 compares participation rates between the Borough

and other Local Authorities within the County of Cheshire and demonstrates comparatively low rates of participation of all the districts of Cheshire.

**Table 1. A comparison of Local Authority participation levels in Cheshire (Sport England, 2006).**

<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>PARTICIPATION*</b>
<b>Crewe and Nantwich (CNBC)</b>	<b>17.2%</b>
Vale Royal (VR)	22.7%
Macclesfield (Ma)	29.6%
Ellesmere Port and Neston (EPN)	22.5%

\*The percentage of adults participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking) on 3 or more days a week. Active People Survey 1.

In the same Active People Survey, the majority (49%) of CNBC respondents described their own levels of fitness as ‘moderate’. This compares to 52%, 50% and 50% for the districts of EPN, Ma and VR respectively. Interestingly, more respondents (9%) from CNBC described their fitness level as ‘very fit’ than the other districts. The majority of CNBC respondents (61%) would like to take more exercise than they do currently. This figure is similar across the other Cheshire districts however this percentage is lower than all others reported (EPN = 68%; VR = 69%; Ma = 64%). There is obvious scope to increase physical activity levels among the CNBC population. Whilst moderate level activities should be the area of focus, the need for more strenuous activity should not be ignored.

When asked what was stopping respondents from exercising, the majority of respondents from CNBC cited ‘lack of time’ (52%) and ‘work’ (21%) as the main reasons. A similar pattern occurs for the other districts (Sport England, 2007). Responses for ‘apathy’ and ‘family commitments’ did not compare similarly between districts. There were significantly more responses for ‘laziness’ (17%) from CNBC respondents than the other local authorities and significantly fewer responses for ‘family commitments’.

Adults from the Borough reported that their most popular physical activities were walking (35%), aerobics/ keep fit (24%), swimming (11%) and cycling (11%). This

was supported by the Cheshire Community Survey (Cheshire East Borough Council, 2008) that revealed 27% of adults from CNBC walk for 30-minutes or more on at least one occasion per week.

Market segmentation data published by Sport England (2010) further supports the differences in terms of the population and participation in sport and physical activity. To the south of the region, in more rural areas such as Nantwich, segmentation data suggest a more active population dominated by 'sporty, professional males'. In more urban areas such as Crewe, the population had a greater segment mix with higher proportions of elderly couples, single mothers; young, working class males. It is here where the deprivation index is highest and participation in sport and physical activity is likely to be lowest.

### **The research sample**

Local sport strategies are typically represented by both governmental and non-governmental, non-profit organisations. Consequently, they are considerably diverse in terms of the ideals that guide them, the various interventions they deliver, their staffing base and budget. The current Strategy will represent and serve varied demographics from rural outlying areas to population dense, urban conurbations. According to Robson et al. (2013), strategic plans are sensitive to local community needs and often target the hard-to-reach groups and the most disadvantaged. Resource issues such as staffing and cost offer evaluators limited scope for sampling concerns in the evaluation design. However, if the premise of evaluation is its utilisation, both within and potentially outside the communities it serves and if evaluation designs are to capture both programme process and impact then the evaluator must carefully consider their sampling procedures.

Given the Realistic Evaluation approach used in this research, the sample had to consider Pawson and Tilley's (1997:160) notion of 'who knows what'. Consequently, this research sampled from the two levels (or *divisions of expertise*) offered by Pawson and Tilley's framework. This included the *subjects* (or participants) who would, according to Pawson and Tilley (1997) be far more sensitive to the *mechanisms* and the *context* and *outcome patterns*. The second level included the *practitioners* whose knowledge and experiences would help determine what works (*mechanisms*) and for who (*Contexts*). With appropriate sampling strategies and an

evaluation framework for the research design, evaluation research becomes much more valuable for informing researchers and practitioners as to what works best and under what conditions.

In terms of sampling techniques, the researcher was faced with the choice of using probability or non-probability sampling (Veal and Darcy, 2014; Ritchie et al. 2013; Patton, 2005). Probability sampling normally carries the greatest level of validity and credibility particularly in experimental research studies (Ritchie et al. 2013). However, such sampling is often difficult to construct and presents logistical issues in a community setting. For example, a variant of probability testing – simple random sampling – is founded on the premise that everyone in the given population has an equal and known chance of being selected to represent it. Sport and physical activity strategy serve through a myriad of different interventions, locations and target several different communities. Consequently, not all the participants may be known or available at a given time. Thus, probability sampling was not an appropriate method for this research design. Further, the compositions of the populations changed, rendering a listed population unrepresentative at a given point of time (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). Therefore, this research adopted a non-probability sampling procedure (Rossi et al. 2004; Van Den Berg and Cuskelly, 2014).

Of the non-probability sampling procedures available, purposive sampling offered the most credible option for the evaluation and was employed in this research in terms of its ability to model the population(s) of interest. As Weiss (1998:164) explained:

...purposive sampling is useful in evaluation when the evaluator is interested in data not just on average participants but on participants at the extremes.

This research will have to capture the views of participants whose inactivity may contribute to life threatening disease or reflect the opinions of those already involved in sport, are in good health and wish to improve their sporting performance. Purposively sampling to include the harder-to-reach group and the various sub-groups may provide a greater insight into the intervention effects and improve the understanding of the intervention. Other types of purposive sampling were employed to improve access to the harder to reach groups. Where the Strategy targeted vulnerable, deprived populations, a more participatory form of sampling proved more successful. For example, the researcher's position in the CSN proved

conducive to engaging the various stakeholder groups that would deliver the Strategy. Further, the researcher remained 'on-site' during the administering and completion of the questionnaires. The size of the sample for this research was determined according to the two levels of expertise and their respective level of engagement. Thus, this research used a level of purposive sampling known as *expert sampling* (O'Hagan et al. 2006).

This technique supports Pawson and Tilley's notion of divisions of expertise in that it focusses on participants with a specific expertise and where there is a lack of empirical evidence and a high degree of uncertainty. Consequently, this method is useful in supporting 'generative causation' (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). The levels of expertise and specific criteria were as follows:

**1. Programme Leaders (*Practitioners*)**

Defined as (at least one) individual who is responsible for setting and overseeing the intellectual, logistical, administrative and strategic direction for each of the programmes identified in the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

**2. Participants (*Subjects*)**

Defined as those individuals experiencing the programmes of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. More specifically:

- **for the volunteer programme VIAT questionnaire and volunteer interviews** participants had to have actively volunteered through the Volunteer programme twice in the six months previous to the VIAT survey being administered and were over the age of 18.
- **for the Coach Mentor Programme** this included individual coaches with a minimum NGB Level 2 coaching certificate who had mentored at least one volunteer coach in the six months before the interviews took place.
- **for the Rural Sports Hub** all participants who had attended the Rural Sports Hub exercise class on at least one occasion per month during the 3-month empirical phase of the Quality of Life survey.



## Methods

### Qualitative: the 'realistic' interviews

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the four programme leaders of the sample. The decision to use a semi-structured interview strategy is according to Pawson and Tilley (1997:153) more recognisable in research that prefers to '*...understand process...and remain faithful to practitioners and subjects*' (or structure and agency). This, as opposed to a structured interview strategy that according to Pawson and Tilley (1997:153) may focus on outcomes and so '*...privilege the concerns of programme managers and policy makers*'. Gray (2014) explains that using semi-structured interviews, as the name suggests, allows the interviewer to use a standard set of questions. However, they allow for some freedom to probe views where it is desirable and appropriate for respondents to expand on their answers. According to Pawson and Tilley (1997) this is vital when a Realistic Evaluation approach is being undertaken where the objective is to explore levels of reality and the very particular circumstances of those realities. Moreover, a semi-structured interview is well aligned with Bhaskar's (1975) critical realist thinking as probing may allow for the diversion of the interview into new pathways which, while not originally considered will help improve our understanding about what it was within the Strategy that made it work (Gray, 2014). The questions for the interview schedule were based on two elements:

- I. **Programme Theory** – constructed by programme leaders (using the logic model approach to programme theory development) and a review of academic literature.
- II. **Process** – taken from the 'Measurement and Understanding' portal of the Sport England website (the sample of questions in this portal is a requisite of funding and an integral part of the Strategy delivery).

Thus, in the domain of evaluation research, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to explore structure and process and remain faithful to the participants and programmes. In addition, the two guiding elements for the interviews outlined above recognised the realities and context of community sport development programmes and their obligations to funders as part of a political

process. Interviews were conducted 'on-site'. The researcher conducted all the interviews over three distinct phases from January 2008 to March 2012. The timeline for the main empirical phase of the research is illustrated in Figure 6, which includes all data gathering activity for the evaluation.

### **Phase 1: the Preliminary Interviews (January and September 2008)**

The purpose of the Preliminary Interviews was to learn about the programme leaders' explanations of key achievements and potential problems relating to the early phases of the Strategy delivery such as:

1. the process of developing and delivering the programmes within the Strategy,
2. the awareness of key outcomes of the programmes and their relation to the wider strategy, and
3. the awareness of contextual factors such as wider local and national policy goals/ agenda.

According to Coalter (2013:37) this allowed for a focus on '...understanding the social processes and mechanisms that might lead to desired impacts for some participants or organisations in *certain circumstances*'. As detailed in a previous chapter (Chapter 2) this data was concerned with programme processes (Clarke and Dawson, 1999) and documented '...what was done' and the function of the coalition (Community Sports Network [CSN]) with regards to its intentions (Butterfloss and Francisco, 2004:110). Such processes are often overlooked in sport (Coalter, 2013). Thus, having distinct phases of data collection to record process and function is a relatively novel approach to systematically evaluating sport development activity. Moreover, a novel approach was helpful in answering research questions associated with how established models of evaluation can be applied in a sport development setting (see research question 1). This phase of data collection allowed the researcher to ascertain the extent to which evaluation research may affect the delivery of the Strategy – as the evaluation was a function and process of the delivery and development of the Strategy activities (see research question 2).

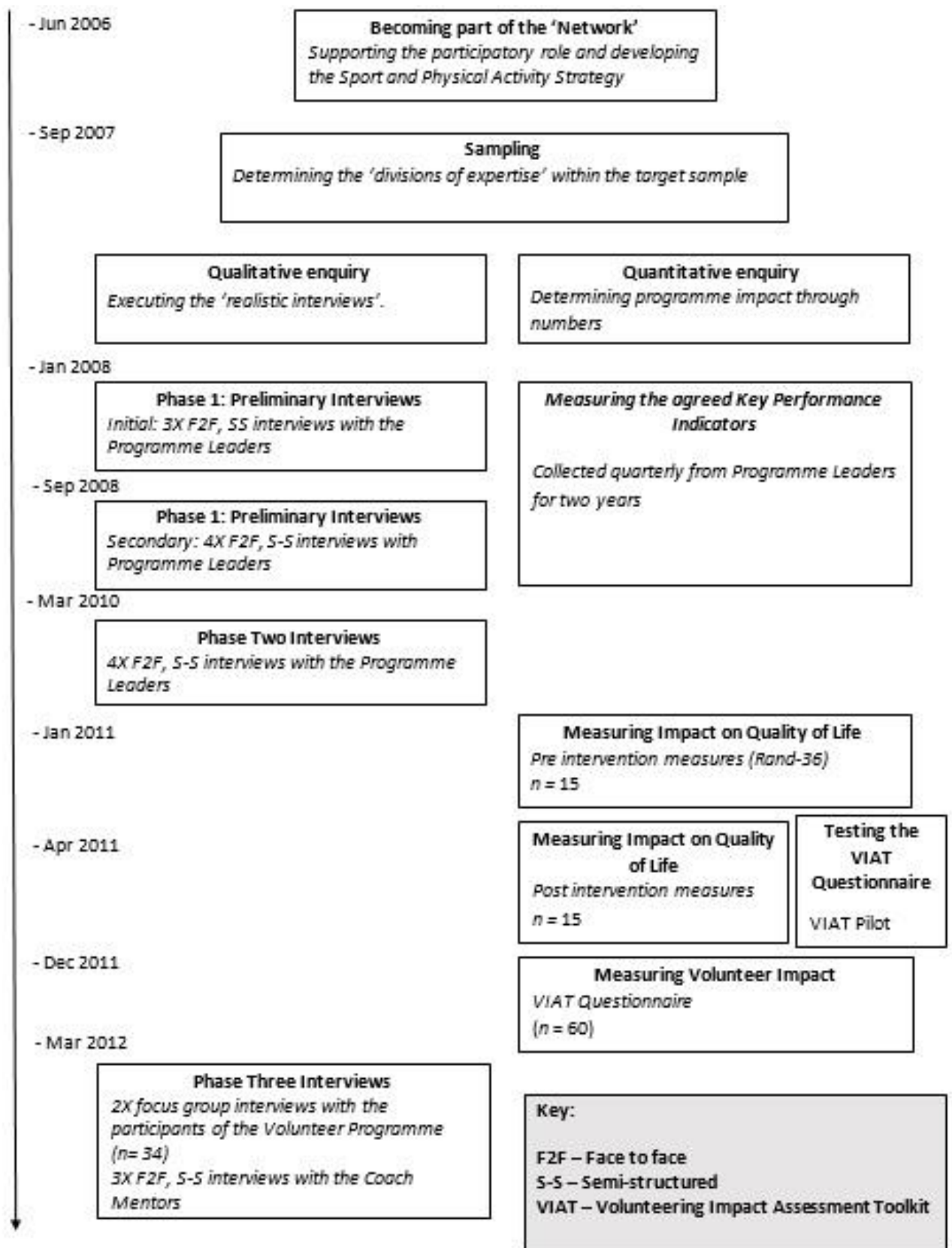


Figure 6 The timeline and activities for the main empirical phases of the research.

The Preliminary Interviews were conducted in two stages: one interview with each of the programme leaders before the commencement of the sport and physical activity strategy. The 'terms of reference' for the Strategy had already been agreed and programme proposals accepted (by both the funding agencies and the Community Sport Network) but the activity or delivering of the programmes had not yet begun. The interviews were repeated with the programme leaders after three months of Strategy delivery. This approach increased responsiveness to changes in Strategy context, particularly in its early stages of delivery and allowed for frequent dissemination of results to inform decisions at the strategic level (Research question 3).

### **Phase 2: the 'process' interviews (March 2010)**

The Phase 2 interviews were conducted with the four programme leaders in March 2010. The purpose of the Phase 2 interviews was to provide a detailed understanding of how a programme changes and develops following initial implementation (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). This helped provide the context within which to interpret outcome measures. Explaining how outcomes are actually produced is often referred to as process evaluation (Patton, 1986; Weiss 1997; Clarke and Dawson, 1999; Moore et al. 2014, Saunders et al. 2005). At this stage, the interviews focussed the condition of 'programme operations, activities, functions, performance and component parts' (Rossi, et al. 2004:171).

As with the Preliminary Interviews, this research phase remained focussed on the programme leaders' perspectives. Programme leaders understand the programme in its historical setting, its management, the political climate and the options available. They are more informed as to the changes that may need to be made (Weiss, 1997). Further, the programme leaders have some idea of what their respective programmes may achieve and some notion of how they expect the programme to achieve its desired outcomes (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). Thus, the study remained aligned with the Realistic Evaluation approach.

### **Phase 3: 'outcome' interviews (March, 2012)**

The purpose of these interviews was to explore the extent to which outcomes were realised and importantly, explain how they came about. Outcomes form the basis for modifying, launching or stopping a programme. According to Pawson and Tilley

(1997:217) Realistic Evaluation should approach outcomes as a process of identifying patterns in a '...theory testing role'. Consequently, impetus was given to confirming the mechanism and context relationships in this final phase of interviews. During this phase, the interviews included the participants of the programmes, namely:

- two focus group interviews of volunteers from the Volunteer Programme ( $n = 18$  and  $16$  respectively),
- face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 3 coaches from the Coach Mentoring Programme and the Rural Sports Hub programme leader and,
- a face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interview with the disability sport programme leader.

Of note is the exclusion of participants involved with the disability sports (Sport for All) programmes. This decision was based on the Programme Leader's concern about the very limited capacity of the participants to effectively communicate their thoughts about the respective programmes. Further, the programme leader was concerned about child protection issues and only two of the parents or guardians consented to give their perspectives on the workings of the disability sports programmes such were the vulnerabilities of this group. Instead, the programme leader, who was both an administrator and deliverer of the disability sports projects and its related coaching sessions, gave their explanations of programme outcome patterns.

The focus group interviews were undertaken with the participants of the Volunteer Programme. The interviews (See appendix 2 for the interview schedule) were conducted during a volunteer meeting event held in March 2012. From an evaluation perspective, the focus groups enabled the researcher to gather valuable insights into the social processes and dynamics of group interaction (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). This provided some useful contexts for the Realistic Evaluation design. Moreover, a semi-structured focus group interview allowed the participants the freedom to express issues and good practice that are important to them as opposed to answering a specific set of questions (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). This allowed the researcher to record the multiple realities of participant programme experiences

(Gray, 2014). Additionally, it was possible to develop conversations about process issues such as programme leadership and delivery. This provided some utility for the data and provided an understanding into how the evaluation impacted on the delivery of the Strategy.

Using multiple levels of participants gave greater freedom of perspective in order that the realistic evaluator might learn the type of theories operating at practitioner, participant and programme level (Clarke and Dawson, 1999; Gray, 2014; Coalter, 2007). Additionally, valuable insights were gained into how evaluation principles used in this research would be applied in a sport development setting. For example, the challenge of conducting research with vulnerable groups as alluded to earlier. The Phase Three interviews chapter (see Chapter 9) is structured so that the perspectives of the participants outlined above are interpreted for their respective programmes. This way, outcomes are explained for each programme. This better aligns the research with the strategy under evaluation with outcomes for each area of work. The interview schedule used for all three phases of interview is appended (See appendix 1).

## **Quantitative: explaining outcomes using numbers**

### **Measuring the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

The Community Sport Network agreed a range of participation targets. These targets were driven by a New Labour Government and supported through Sport England's Community Investment Fund (Sport England, 2006b). The funding stream was part of a broader government agenda and aligned to a Public Service Agreement - PSA3 (DCMS, 2005), which challenged sport to:

- increase individuals participating in sport 12 or more times per year by 1% per annum and,
- increase participation from priority groups who engage in 30-minutes of moderate intensity sport at least 3 times per week by 1% per annum.

The Strategy measured its performance against the "12 or more times per annum" target. According to Houlihan and Green (2009) the targets were further developed by Sport England and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) establishment to increase participation in community sport amongst priority groups

such as women, the disabled and lower socio-economic groups. Such use of “multiple indicators” or sub indicators is welcomed in terms of performance management (Perrin, 1998; Kloot and Martin, 2000) as they are more aligned with programme goals and the contexts with which the programmes operated (Lawther, 2014). They can also inform programme process as well as programme outcomes (De Vries, 2002). Thus, this approach could be better aligned with the aims of the research insofar as an understanding of how evidence-based practice can inform local sports policy (see chapter 1, research question 3). Additionally, if the quantitative data could remain sensitive to local participation contexts for sport, then the Realistic Evaluation design remains intact and the circumstances (context) for the mechanisms that lead to outcomes can be explained.

As previously mentioned (see Chapter 5) and, in line with the government targets, Sport England’s Community Investment Fund encouraged sport and physical activity strategies to increase participation in sport by at least 1% per annum for 6 years. At the launch of the Strategy in 2007, the Borough had a total population of 111,007 (Office for National Statistics, 2001) of which, approximately 20901 (19%) were active (Sport England, 2007). For the Borough, it was agreed by the Community Sport Network (CSN) that this equated to an extra 315 people that took part in sport and physical activity at least once per month across all the Strategy programmes over a two-year period. This figure is lower than the 1% per annum target set by Sport England. However, the CSN noted that this figure was offset by other related areas of development work such as the Physical Activity and Health Development section of the Local Authority. The (0.75% per annum) increase was measured through a series of key performance indicators (KPIs) each relating to specific programmes within the Strategy.

A KPI data sheet, constructed on the KPIs acknowledged in the Strategy logic models (see Chapter 5) was completed by the programme leaders of the research sample on a quarterly basis. The data sheet recorded participant characteristics as required by Sport England’s Community Investment Fund (Sport England, 2006b). These included:

- Gender
- Ethnicity

- Age
  - Specifically those underrepresented in sport (>45 years) and
  - those at risk of 'dropping out' of sport. (<16 years)
- Disability Status

The forms were sent out to each programme leader via email. All data was entered by the programme leaders and returned by email to the researcher. The data was validated by the researcher who checked the completed datasheets against the respective programme leader databases for each programme at six-month intervals.

### **Measuring impact: the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT)**

The questionnaire used for this research was the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) (Institute for Volunteer Research [IVR], 2010). According to Doyle et al. (2009) the VIAT was designed to enable the assessment of the impact of volunteering on organisations, service users, the wider community and the volunteers themselves. The 107 closed-ended and one, open-ended item survey asked volunteers about the impact of the programme around five forms of capital, which were defined in the VIAT as:

- **Social capital:** Cooperative relationships between people.
- **Physical capital:** goods and services received.
- **Human capital:** knowledge, skills and health of people.
- **Cultural Capital:** religious identity and/ or its understanding.
- **Economic Capital:** any financial or monetary effects of volunteering

While all forms of capital were measured, those forms most closely associated with the outcomes of the Volunteer Programme were presented in this thesis. This included social, physical and human capital respectively. This notion of sport contributing or developing forms of capital has long been the belief of practitioners, academics and more recently policy makers. The VIAT questionnaire first considers social capital and is aligned with Putnam's (1995: 67) definition that describes social capital as '...features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit'. This, compared



to Bourdieu's (1986: 248) view of social capital as '...the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network.' If, according to Houlihan and Groeneveld (2011: 2), Bourdieu's concept of social capital is '...a resource to be utilised in the pursuit of economic advantage' then the VIAT questionnaire captures this elsewhere under the guise of physical, human and economic capital. These differences in conceptualising social capital are significant in the context of this study. According to Houlihan and Groeneveld (2011: 2) Putnam's (1995) perspective of developing social capital relies on the '...development of shared norms, values and trust' this is aligned with the outcomes of the Volunteer Programme and the wider aims of the Strategy (for example – building safer stronger communities) and underpins the logic model of the programme. According to Nicholson and Hoye (2008), Bourdieu's interpretation of social capital may limit the measure of capital in sport volunteering, particularly as it relies on the *pooling of resources* from institutionalised groups. In sport, particularly in the context of this research, sports strategies often target a very small number of local volunteers.

Further, the notion of Bourdieu's (1986: 248) mutual acquaintances in social capital suggests that wealth and status will impact on the measure of social capital. Given Coalter's (2007) recognition that sport is a site of significant inequality, social capital – viewed from Bourdieu's perspective - will recognise the varied backgrounds of the sports volunteers. Finally, Bourdieu acknowledges that developing networks of people takes time and significant investment. Given the dynamic nature of local sport provision and policy (Skille, 2011, Harris et al. 2009, Houlihan, 2002) and sports limited investment (Collins, 2010a), Bourdieu's (1986) notion of social capital may have a limited reach. Hence, Putnam's focus on social capital as relationships and trust is more applicable in this research context.

Like social capital, other forms of capital, recognised in the VIAT questionnaire, are significant in addressing broader social outcomes. Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1995) recognised that the magnitude of the network connections will impact on the scope for developing the different forms of capital. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1986) acknowledges the importance of various types of capital (economic, personal or cultural) as pivotal to improving and explaining increases in social capital. Thus, in acknowledging a number of forms of capital the

VIAT questionnaire identifies what the individual can gain from the Volunteer Programme. Consequently, the research is better able to explain the relationships between programme activities and personal impacts and is therefore consistent with the scientific realism employed in the research design.

The IVR (2010) encourage that users of the VIAT adapt the tools and methods provided to suite their particular needs. For this research, the survey questions were altered slightly to focus on the impact of the Volunteer Programme on the volunteers. To improve internal validity, the survey was reviewed by the research team and members of the CSN to determine content face validity and construct validity. The survey was modified according to their suggestions. A pilot of the study was undertaken with a group of student volunteers in April 2011 to review it for content understanding, readability, suitability and reliability. After the pilot, the panel agreed that the constructs were satisfactorily measured. The capital constructs consisted of statements to which the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert scale (See appendix 3). Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the construct validity of the instrument. The coefficients for each construct are reported later in Chapter 10.

### **Administering the VIAT survey**

As previously mentioned, and given the idiographic nature of the evaluation research the samples for this survey were purposefully selected. The volunteer programme leader was able to identify volunteers based on their 'activity level' via a volunteering database. The evaluation sought to sample all volunteers who had actively volunteered through the programme at least twice in the 6-months prior to the survey being administered and who were over the age of 18 years. From a database of 315 volunteers, this meant 124 volunteers were invited to complete the VIAT survey. Participation in the survey was voluntary (Doucet and Mauthner, 2002). Delegation of sampling to a third party (the programme leader) meant the researcher was not gatekeeper to the research sample. However, being purposive, it was accepted that the sample of participants for the survey may not, or could not, be accurately generalised to the wider population. This is immaterial as the findings of the survey relate only to those who participated on the Volunteer Programme and would not generalise beyond the programme under evaluation.

All eligible Volunteer Programme participants ( $n = 124$ ) were emailed the invitation to complete the survey and were reminded, via email, at two-week intervals over a 3-month period. In addition to measuring the levels of capital, the survey also gathered information on the volunteer's overall satisfaction with the programme; the programme activities and programme leader's performance. Demographic indices such as ethnicity, age, gender, postcode, disability, time volunteering on the programme were also gathered on the survey. The survey was published as an electronic version (FreeOnline Survey, 2011) from December 2011 to March 2012 and did not contain any identifying information.

### **Measuring impact: perceived changes to quality of life**

As previously mentioned, one of the overarching 'themes' of the Strategy was to '...improve health and wellbeing' (CSN, 2007:14). Indeed, the Strategy refers to wider local strategic goals and a Local Authority that aspires to create '...a Borough where we promote our cultural and sporting assets as central to our quality of life' (CSN, 2007:16). As previously mentioned, the Strategy also used the Council of Europe's, European Sports Charter (2001:1) definition for sport which aimed to '...[express] or [improve] fitness and mental wellbeing and [form] social relationships'. Thus, preserving and improving quality of life through sport and physical activity is the central tenet of the Strategy. The qualitative data also explored the *mechanisms* and *contexts* for health outcomes, however an appropriate tool measuring quality of life from a quantitative perspective helped to triangulate the responses in the interviews and provided important contextual information with regards to the sample and extent of the impact on specific areas of wellbeing such as physical and social health. Such factors were important in attempting to determine the particular circumstances and 'what worked for whom'. This supported the Realistic Evaluation framework and combined with the qualitative data, a clearer picture of why the programmes worked (or not) could be generated.

Several health-related, non-disease specific tools for measuring quality of life were considered (Sintonen, 2001; Hawthorn et al. 1999; WHOQOL, 1994) before the Rand-36-Item health survey was chosen (see appendix 7). The RAND 36-Item Health Survey (1.0) is a validated, profile-based health related quality of life measure (Hays et al. 1993) based on the Medical Outcomes Study 36-Item short form health

survey (Ware et al. 1993). The questionnaire consists of 36 questions each scored on a Likert scale from 0 (lowest) to 100 (best value) using a recoded scoring system (Rand Health, 2001). The questions are grouped into eight domains: physical functioning, physical role limitations, social functioning, emotional role limitations, painlessness, mental health, vitality and general health. The reliability and construct validity of the RAND-36, as a measurement of the health related quality of life in the general population have been established (Aalto et al. 1999). Significantly, the survey is sensitive to changes during lifestyle intervention (Danielsen et al. 2014; Karlsen et al. 2013).

The survey was conducted under the Realistic Evaluation framework and so rejected the constraints of attempting to control for the influence of extraneous factors by random assignment and a control group. Pawson and Tilley (1993:8) explain that while experimental methods are technically sound they are not suitable for universal applications ‘...since social programmes never work in this manner’. For example, Nichols (2005) explains that in attempting to evaluate their *social* programmes, academics and practitioners have struggled to achieve a control group and a large enough sample size to attribute statistical significance. Instead, the repeated measures design focussed on the realities of the people taking part in the activities. In the absence of randomisation and strict controls, participant characteristics were preserved so that change was explained through developing an understanding of the relationship between structure and agency (or programme and participant). Pawson and Tilley described this learning as ‘generative causation’ (1997:71). Thus, outcomes or regularities could be explained by the participants being placed in the right or ‘real’ conditions that are favourable to the success of the programme; or as Wong et al. (2012: 89) noted ‘...what works, for whom and under what circumstances?’ Combined with the interviews, the survey provided helpful explanations for programme outcomes related to mental, physical and social wellbeing.

### **Administering the RAND-36 ‘Quality of Life’ questionnaire**

As with the VIAT questionnaire, the sample was purposefully selected by the programme leader for the Rural Sports Hub. The sample was accessed through the programme leader’s database for registered participants of the programme.

Inclusion was based on the participants having recorded attendance at the activity sessions on at least one occasion per month for the three months and were inactive in the 6-months prior to commencing the Rural Sports Hub activities. This fell in line with government sport participation objectives at the time of the survey (Sport England, 2008b). However, the target fell short of the minimum physical activity levels required for health enhancement (Department of Health, 2011). Consequently, if all subjects were only attending once per month for three months, there may be no health benefits measured in the questionnaire. However, recent research (Wen et al. 2011) is challenging current health guidelines, particularly in populations that are inactive (Rosenkilde et al. 2012; Gram et al. 2013) and suggests there are health benefits from less than the current recommendations of 150 minutes per week of moderate activity.

The Rand-36 surveys were completed by the participants of the Rural Sports Hub between January and February, 2011 (baseline) and repeated with the same participants between April and May, 2011. This allowed 12-weeks between baseline and follow-up measures. This length of exposure is typical in recent quality of life intervention studies (Tomas-Carcus et al. 2015; Bisht et al. 2015; Liu et al. 2013). All participants registering for the Rural Sports Hub activities were invited to complete the questionnaire during their registration for the exercise session. To improve the response rate and ensure the questionnaires were completed correctly the researcher was present (Boynton, 2004; Ainsworth et al. 2012) at the beginning of each Rural Sport Hub exercise session for a period of 6-weeks from January to mid-February, 2011 and again during a similar period for the follow-up measures. Questionnaires were completed in the venue where the exercise session took place and immediately before the exercise session started.

## **Making sense of the data**

### **Qualitative data**

The interviews were subject to a thematic analysis (Braun et al. 2014; King and Horrocks, 2010). Descriptive codes were illustrated and sequenced in summary tables. An extract of the descriptive coding is illustrated in Figure 7. An extract of an interview is appended (Appendix 6) for information. Guiding the coding and analysis of the interview transcripts was the broader methodological design and the research

questions outlined earlier in the thesis (King and Horrocks, 2010). This was acknowledged in the “context” statement above each summary table. In order to effectively map the coded interviews to the CMO framework, extracts of the interview transcript were colour coded so that any contexts, mechanisms and outcomes could easily be identified at the descriptive level of the coding process. This mapping of codes to the CMO framework was reviewed by the supervisory team to improve the dependability of the data and avoid the interpretational issues such as those identified by Rycroft-Malone et al. (2010), who suggest that making a distinction between context and mechanism is difficult. An example of the coding and mapping process is appended ([see appendix 8](#)).

Interviews from both the initial and secondary phases were coded at two levels. Initial or descriptive coding highlighted areas of the interview transcript relevant to the research questions. At this stage, comments are made to provide context rather than meaning (King and Horrocks, 2010). The descriptive codes were then grouped together where a common meaning was apparent and a secondary level or interpretive code was applied that would capture that meaning.

**Date:** 7/6/2014

**Coding Level:** 1 (Description)

**Interview Details:** Stage 1, preliminary interview coding for the coaching and volunteering programmes.

**Context:** *The preliminary interview for the Coaching and Volunteering projects. The 1to1 interview was designed to explore the understanding of the project leader of the workings of a coach mentoring and volunteer development intervention. Perception of the quality of experience are of particular interest and also the mechanisms (of potential outcomes) and context that explain/ allowed for those experiences (Pawson and Tilley, 1999). Thematic system based on guidance from King and Horrocks (2010).*

Ref	Extract	Comments	Descriptive Codes
P1:L21	I think I'm looking after the Coach Mentoring project, which comes into the Coaching Volunteering overall heading on the project, if you want to say that...	Some initial uncertainties as to their role.	Low confidence levels
P1:L24	And the Coach Mentoring project specifically looks at how we, as a local area, can improve sort of the quality of coaches in our area.	Aware of project aims. Still evidence in language of uncertainty.	Strategic thinking Community sense

**Figure 7 Extract of descriptive coding summary table.**

Realistic Evaluation relies heavily on ‘generative causes’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:57) to explain programme success. That is, programmes release generative and circumstantial mechanisms through logical reasoning and resource to create change (Nichols, 2001). Consequently, the data from the interviews were

thematically abducted (Levin-Rozalis, 2000). This as opposed to induction, which, according to Åsvoll (2014) was designed to check pre-determined hypothesis, and deduction, which acts to check theories. According to Levin-Rozalis (2000), deductive and inductive logic run contrary to the logic of evaluation research in that evaluation generates hypotheses along the way. Even, as is the case in this research, when the evaluand stems from a theory. There are so many influences and variables in the realities of programme delivery, thus the need for data abduction which acts to draw conclusions from data which can according to Peirce (1955, as cited in Levin-Rozalis, 2000:418)

...explain facts when there is no basis in previous knowledge that could justify this preference or any checking done after the hypothesis was subject to a trial period.

Finally, overarching themes were constructed that drew directly from the theoretical ideals associated with Pawson and Tilley's (1997, 2009) Realistic Evaluation framework and concerns of the issues raised in the research questions.

### **Choosing the appropriate statistical tests for the VIAT and Rand-36 questionnaires**

Data from both surveys were subjected to statistical analysis using a statistical software package (IBM-SPSS: V21). The data were examined to check if they were normally distributed, that is there was some symmetry about the mean. The first stage of the analysis was to decide what scale of measurement the data used. Both the VIAT and Rand-36 surveys used 'nominal scale' (data is categorical but has no order) and 'ordinal scale' (categorical and ordered but the difference between the values is not necessarily the same) (McCrum-Gardner, 2008).

Next, the type of analysis required was considered. The VIAT survey compared independent groups and the RAND-36 survey compared paired (baseline and follow-up) groups. Next, assumptions about the data required testing to determine whether appropriate parametric and non-parametric tests should be used. Bryman and Cramer (2011) explain that parametric tests are generally more powerful than non-parametric tests, however they are based on the assumption that the data are normally distributed (Jackson, 2015) and that variables have interval/ ratio level

data. Normal distribution of data can be completed visually through the observation of histograms (Bryman and Cramer, 2007). However, given the small sample sizes for both the VIAT and Rand-36 surveys, greater sensitivity to the distribution of the data was required and a Shapiro-Wilk test was performed on the grouping variables for both surveys.

The level of data (ordinal/nominal) and its distribution about the mean determined that this research used non-parametric test. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U-test was the most appropriate test to on the data from the VIAT. The Mann-Whitney U-test is used to compare the differences between two independent groups. This would be used to explore the differences for the independent variables such as gender, age and length of time on the programme on the VIAT survey. In the case of age and length of time, the variables would need collapsing into two groups or categories.

For the Rand-36 survey, the paired samples (baseline/ follow-up) of the data needed to be compared. Again, given the small sample size, the normal distribution of the data about the mean was measured using the Shapiro-Wilk Test and the level of the data (ordinal and nominal) determined that a non-parametric test be used on this survey. Consequently, the data and purpose of the test satisfied the assumptions for the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (Jackson, 2015; McCrum-Gardner, 2008).

## **Ethical considerations**

An important consideration at this stage is the identification and negotiation of ethical issues for both the investigator and the participants. The Manchester Metropolitan University aims to ‘...behave professionally and ethically in all [its] activities’ and therefore requires staff and students engaged in scholarly activity, including research, are aware of the ethical implications of these activities. Paramount among the ethical principles of the Manchester Metropolitan University (2007:online) were:

- acting with propriety and care for the welfare of staff, students and the wider public,
- being disciplined and acting and protecting others within the constraints of the law



The University ethical framework was recognised and fully accepted in guiding the obligations of this research. The research related to the perceptions of professionals within the profession of Sport Development and the wider public the group served. As such, ethical permission was requested and granted by the Manchester Metropolitan University Faculty of Health and Social Care on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2007.

In upholding the principles of the University's Ethical Framework, this research sought to ensure the protection of the all parties by providing fully informed consent, a commitment to protecting participant identity and safeguarding the participant welfare. Prior to each phase of data collection, ethical implications, inherent in the research design were considered. Each phase would ask participants to divulge personal and professional opinion information about community sport development programmes and their participants. Further, the participants of the programmes would give their opinions about the programmes they would take part in and the personal impacts the programmes may have on them. Hence, informed consent was required. Indeed, it is widely accepted that in most social research, there is a need for ethical issues to be considered which aim to protect the interests of those who take part in the study (Flick, 2006). Such acceptance has led to the formation of ethical codes and frameworks, for example, the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Code of Conduct (2007; 2009) and the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research. This guidance is designed to regulate the relations of researchers to the people and fields they intend to study. Thus, ethics is more than a 'means to an end' to conduct research as it enables the participants perspectives to be considered and allows negotiated steps to provide protective and respectful relationships whilst conducting research.

To allow participants to provide informed consent for the interviews and questionnaires, a consent form and participant information form (see appendix 4 and 5) were developed. The purpose of such forms is to allow study participants to make knowledgeable and voluntary decisions about whether or not to participate (Peled and Leichtentritt, 2002). The form outlined the aims of the research, why the participants had been invited to contribute, what the research involved and what would happen to the information on completion of the research (Kirby et al. 2011). All programme leaders were given a copy of their participant information form in the initial CSN meetings in order that the points of the form could be discussed and the

role of the lead researcher could be established. Establishing the role of the lead researcher was a key ethical consideration. The researcher was a member of the CSN and so had insider knowledge of the group and its membership. Thus, it was essential that anonymity and impartiality was assured so that views of all research participants including programme leaders and participants remained confidential.

In considering the participants' perceptions of the research setting, a further participant information form was considered (see appendix 5) by the programme leads during the same CSN meetings. This form also indicated the aims of the research, the nature of participation in the research process and what would happen to the data collected. However, considerable thought was given as to when and how the information sheet would be administered to the participants of the Strategy programmes. It was agreed that the Programme Leaders would pass on the information sheet when participants registered with their respective programme. This raised ethical concerns about the research being seen as a mandatory element of becoming involved with the Strategy programmes and that participants may feel coerced into taking part in the research. Consequently, all participants were told both verbally and in writing (as part of the informed consent form), that their participation was voluntary and that there would be no impact upon their engagement with the Strategy programmes in any way.

The second ethical issue was more complex and required significant negotiations with the research participants. Usual practice in seeking to protect participant's identities is to ascribe each participant a pseudonym (Grinyer, 2009). Such practice is usually effective in protecting identity in research with a wide field of participants. However, in this research, ethical issues were raised about protecting anonymity among a small group of selected participants whose roles made them highly visible within the CSN. Thus, a pseudonym might make them anonymous to those outside the CSN but it was unlikely to protect their identity amongst those working towards the Strategy within the CSN (Odendahl and Shaw, 2002). It was decided that to resolve this issue, the most appropriate way to accommodate this ethical issue was to inform these participants prior to the interview that the researcher would attempt to protect their identity through ascription of an pseudonym but that this may not protect their identity (Grinyer, 2009). This way, the participants could make informed

choices about being involved in the research and consider the implication before committing to the interview.

In addition, where possible, at the transcribing stage of the interview, identifying information was removed from the transcript. Any further identifying information such as organisation names and other service professionals was also removed. Finally, participants were informed that all electronic data including transcripts and digital recordings would be password protected and remain stored on a password protected PC at the Manchester Metropolitan University. Further, the participants were informed that any hard copies of transcripts or questionnaires were kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office.

# Chapter 7

## The Preliminary Interviews: beginning with the end in mind

### Introduction

The purpose of the Preliminary Interviews was to learn about the programme leaders' explanations of key achievements and potential problems relating to the early phases of the Strategy delivery such as:

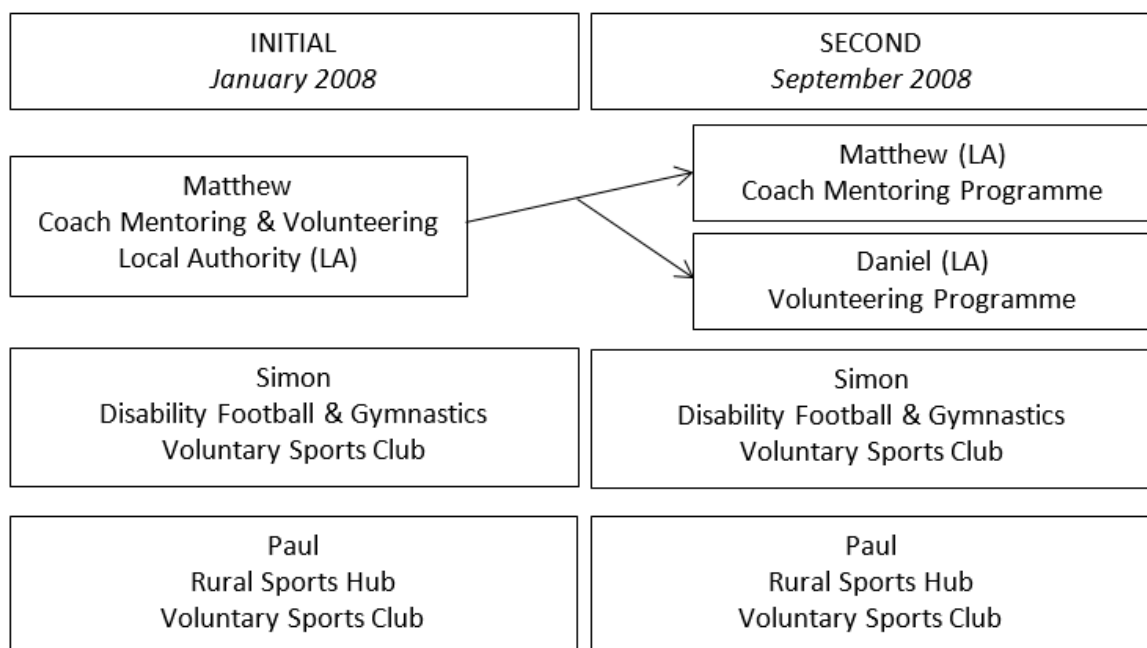
- the process of developing and delivering the programmes within the Strategy,
- having an awareness of key outcomes of the programmes and their relation to the wider strategic outcomes, and
- being aware of contextual factors such as wider local and national policy goals/ agenda.

This satisfied key research questions that challenged how established models of evaluation can be applied in a sport development setting at a strategic level (research question 1). As detailed in Chapter 2, these data were concerned with programme processes (Clarke and Dawson, 1999) and documented '...what was done' and the function of the coalition (Community Sports Network) with regards to its intentions (Butterfoss and Francisco, 2004:110). This chapter will discuss and explain the themes of the Preliminary Interviews and then use Pawson and Tilley's (1997) *context-mechanism-outcome* (CMO) configuration in order to interpret their meaning using the Realistic Evaluation approach.

This phase also allowed the researcher to ascertain the extent to which evaluation research affected the delivery of the Strategy – as the evaluation was a function of the delivery and development of the Strategy activities (research question 2). As previously mentioned (Chapter 6), the Preliminary Interviews were conducted in two stages: an *initial* interview with three of the programme leaders before the commencement of the Strategy programmes and a *second* interview stage that took place eight months later when all the programmes were *live*.

## About the four Preliminary Interview participants

As described in Chapter 6, all participants were given pseudonyms to protect anonymity. Seven interviews were conducted involving four participants. Two of the participants, Matthew and Daniel had represented the Local Authority sport development team for five and three years respectively. Matthew was initially responsible for all activities relating to coach mentoring and volunteering. During the second interview stage, responsibilities for coaching and volunteering activity were divided. Matthew continued to lead the Coach Mentoring Programme activities and Daniel took lead on the Volunteering Programme activities. An illustration of the interviewees and their representation is outlined in Figure 8.



**Figure 8** The participants for the two stages of Preliminary Interviews.

Simon represented a voluntary sports club that specialised in gymnastics programmes for profoundly disabled children. In this case, Simon led a women and girls disability football programme. Simon had managed the club for over 10 years at the time of the interviews. Finally, Paul represented another voluntary sports club in a rural setting that normally specialised in disability sport but attempted to expand their provision to give the local, rural population greater access to the facility. Paul had been manager of the club for 6 years at the time of the Preliminary Interviews. All participants had worked together before on other joint projects strategically led

by the Local Authority. The Preliminary Interviews captured the differing contexts (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) and nature (Clarke and Dawson, 1999) of the representatives of the Community Sport Network. Further, there were only *practitioners* available to interview at these formative stages of the strategy. No 'participants' had been recruited onto the programmes. According to Pawson and Tilley (1997) this constrains the data to issues concerned with context and outcome patterns. A greater sensitivity of the mechanisms associated with programmes will come later in data gathered from the participants. Consequently, the interviews were purposefully sampled from the CSN delivery group in order that all programmes within the Strategy were represented. This ensured that different realities and perspectives were drawn from the data and that any generalisations were avoided.

The overarching themes from the interviews are illustrated in thematic maps as ellipses and related subthemes are contained within the boxes.

The initial and secondary interviews established three overarching themes:

1. talking about delivery,
2. the bigger picture, and
3. theory building.

Each theme will be isolated and illustrated through the chapter so that variations between the initial and secondary interviews are observable and considered in the interpretation and analysis. In the initial Preliminary Interviews, all participants acknowledged the tentative steps taken at the point of starting to deliver their respective programmes. Talking about delivery was a central tenet of the interview at this early stage.

### **Talking about delivery: cautiously persevering in the formative stages of delivery**

The term '*cautiously persevering*' was developed in response to the participants' experiences of delivering something new and their capacity to deliver despite some profound setbacks experienced in the early stages of the implementation of the Strategy activities. Perseverance was a key element of discussing delivery issues and it demonstrated a range of contexts associated with sport development work.

In the initial interviews, one area of significant discussion, captured in the thematic map (Figure 8) was the programme leaders' confidence in their capacity to deliver.

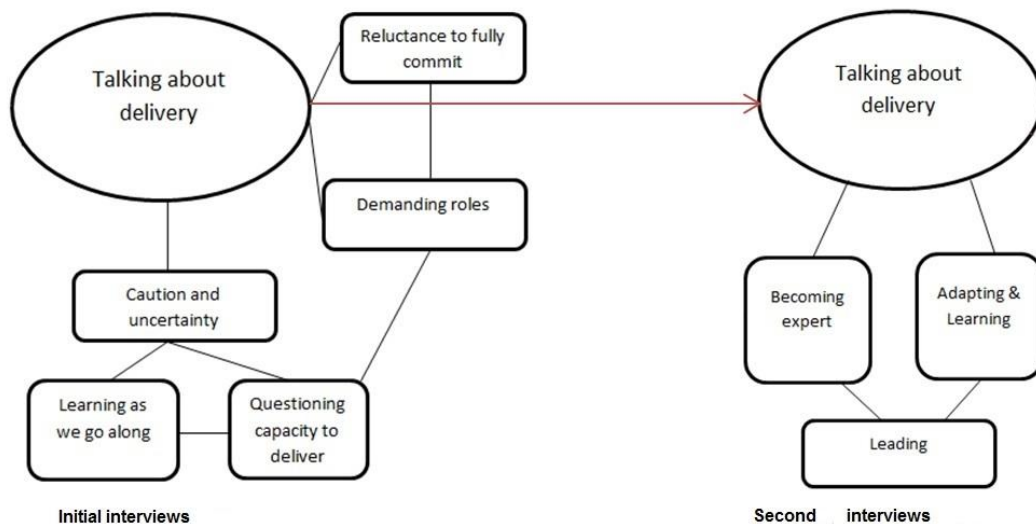


Figure 9 Thematic map for 'talking about delivery' in the Preliminary Interviews

Those representing larger organisations, such as local authorities, expressed concerns of being spread too thinly as more programmes *went live* on top of an already busy profile:

*Things I could see as being a problem is just capacity to deliver...But from a capacity point of view, and we're leading on it, it's a new project to us, so it's something we've got to do on top of our normal workload. So it's just making sure that it fits into obviously our workload and we can achieve what we're setting out to do (Matthew).*

This provided important contextual information about the programme. We are reminded of Houlihan's (2000:171) rhetoric regarding sport development and the issues of '...crowded policy spaces' and the reference to '...initiative overload' in sport development (Robson and Partington, 2013, as cited in Hylton, 2013). While mindful of the goals ahead, there was an underlying uncertainty of their realisation. There is also some acknowledgement of accountability and responsibility when Matthew suggests his organisation's leading role in delivering the programme. Such anxieties may have been confounded by an organisational restructure. The same

respondent acknowledged an uncertain and vulnerable future for local authority sport provision at the time of the interviews:

*Without going into too much detail, we're in quite a political change in terms of going into local government review, so there's a few things going on internally, where we're going from a district council, through to a unitary council... so we don't necessarily know where we're going to be this time next year (Matthew).*

Despite this, there was – at least from a local authority perspective – a sense of continuation. Further, there was a sense that the local authority would position themselves as project lead for an interim period and that the wider sporting community (voluntary sports clubs) would eventually develop and lead the programmes:

*Although we are pretty sure that the funding for this project and the networks that we've set up, hence why the forums are so influential on this, are still going to be around, so the project will still continue (Matthew).*

Empowering communities is a significant agenda for community sport development (Lawson, 2005; Schulenkorf, 2012, Hylton, 2013), particularly for those representing larger organisations such as local authorities. Here, the concept of community development is evident in that there is community consultation and involvement in sustainable, transformative change (Hylton and Totten, 2013). Partnership theories acknowledge that such positions are where community sport development should aspire to be (Hylton and Totten, 2013). Traditionally, local authorities would locate themselves as the dominant power over sport provision with a reluctance to let go of programmes completely and allowance of some deeper public involvement (Hylton, 2013). This was referred to as 'tokenism' in Gates and Stouts' (1996) *Ladder of Participation* (as cited in Hylton, 2013:86). However, the interviews suggested that the local authority is more willing to let go (or not fully commit) when there is a degree of uncertainty regarding the future of local authority sport development provision and is distraction was caused by other important work such as a review or audit.

Matthew focused on more public engagement and demonstrated aspirations for a more *bottom-up* strategy where there is a genuine partnership and attempts to



properly delegate and give full citizen control. There is a risk that such interim positioning from Matthew could challenge the level of commitment to programmes already suffering from logistical setbacks. We could interpret this as allowing room for the wider communities to take greater control of the projects or, at least at this early stage, seeing the new activities as *in the way* of more 'important' sport development work.

### **Caution and uncertainty**

The smaller, voluntary sport club representatives were more damning about the setbacks and focussed their narrative towards the community and the people they serve. One participant described the whole process of getting started as '...torturous' (Simon) and demonstrated a greater degree of empathy towards those who the project would target:

*... it's actually put us back and it's dashed people's hopes. And I think in future, hopefully with future bids, the process will be more set in concrete, so we'll know where we're at. It's the uncertainty that's really been the problem (Simon).*

While optimistic about the future and without any background noise such as the local authority reorganisation, there was a more emotional response from the voluntary sector. Clearly, Matthew and Simon see uncertainty from very different perspectives. Matthew was more passive about the issues; almost expectant of them, even offering a constructive explanation for them:

*I got the impression that it was obviously a new process for Sport England, and I think it was more a case of let's get it going and kind of deciding how it was working as applications were going in. So as our application, I think, was probably...I think it was one of the top five of first applications in the northwest, they were almost like guinea pigs. So Sport England in the northwest were not quite sure how to deal with them initially -- this is my interpretation of things (Matthew).*

The empathy here is at a strategic level. There was some inclination that the funders were also contributing to the issue of uncertainty. We see the tensions of a community driven sport and physical activity strategy controlled by national, quasi-

autonomous organisation. Goodwin and Grix (2011:537) refer to a 'new governance' narrative in sport policy communities. This may reduce community autonomy and make actors, such as those in the Community Sport Network, more dependent on those with a more executive role in community sports policy (in this case the funding agency and Local Authority). In contrast, the language of one voluntary sports club manager was more targeted. Praise was given to members of the Community Sports Network (including those involved with the evaluation) and a more determined effort to place blame elsewhere was apparent:

*I think the work [the CSN] has done and some of you guys has been fantastic. It must be extremely frustrating. And we're forever coming to an agreement on certain things, and then the next meeting that's all changed, they [Funders] want more information. So that's been very difficult (Simon).*

Either the Community Sports Network failed to interpret the funding criteria properly or as Matthew and Simon both suggest, the funders were shifting the criteria. Either way, the context for a smooth inauguration of local sports projects was absent and project delivery became reactive as opposed to stemming from a careful planning process. Houlihan (2000:179) acknowledged similar vulnerabilities in school sport communities whose '...role is reactive rather than proactive, buffeted by policy currents rather than steering a course through them'. Similarly, Nichols (2013) acknowledges the challenges for the voluntary sector when involved in an environment where there are policy changes, priority conflicts and shifts in legislation. Nichols places impetus on adaptability of voluntary sports clubs in order that they survive and serve their communities; particularly in the "semi-formal" clubs that Simon represents. These smaller clubs are less likely to be committed to government aspirations than their more formal counterparts (larger clubs with registration/ charitable status and some form of accreditation) (Nichols, 2013).

Sport development seems to be a very dynamic service area where partnerships (both regionally and locally), at least in this research might initially constrain development work. Perhaps this personifies *development*. Taking risks, surviving and persevering being key attributes of the day to day workings of delivering sport and physical activity strategy during its early stages. King (2013) poses critical issues here, particularly relevant to this research; those of accountability and

sustainability. At the time of the interviews, there was a *rolling back of the state* and an increasing local diversity of provision of local sport. With local authorities delegating their responsibility to the voluntary sector, they inevitably lost their capacity to align their work with local, strategic objectives.

This '*context*' provides an important background for the research design and may provide some insight as to the conditions that allow projects to develop in a community sport development setting. Further, we begin to appreciate the originality of the work being developed. Several references were made to '*learning as we go along*'. In the first stage of the Preliminary Interviews, there was an air of expectancy that this would happen. In the second stage of Preliminary Interviews, such practice was clearly evident. Perhaps then, the different responses are an accumulation of strategic and contextual factors.

### **Demanding roles**

In terms of context, the voluntary and public sectors sometime work from very different positions. Nichols et al. (2005) explain that if the voluntary sector sees itself as purely a service provider, then value is placed in their capacity to deliver those services. If the voluntary organisations are tasked with delivering more of the government's objectives with delivery sustained on the basis of satisfying key performance indicators then this creates positional tensions. Colyer (2000) referred to this as cultural incompatibility and acknowledged its limiting effect of pursuing shared goals through the overlapping roles between voluntary and staff lead organisations in sport.

The more negative responses aired by the voluntary sports clubs particularly those with very specialists remits such as disability sport, may be explained by their perception of having a more isolated role from more mainstream community organisations and greater collaborative working as so apparent in local governments. There was admission from Paul that, despite the delays, there was an opportunity to gain '*...a perspective from other providers in the community*'. According to Paul, working within such complex partner dynamics...

*...certainly improved an empathy, you know, within the community [sports Network].... Yeah, because working in a standalone environment, as we do, as a specific service provider, we don't always have that appreciation of what*

*else is going on out there in the local community...and, you know, it certainly broadens my understanding of other activities (Paul).*

Perhaps a tolerance of the complex delivery issues was found in bringing together those from the voluntary and public sector sport development agencies. The fortitude of the local authority programme leaders and a stronger narrative to carry on regardless, while seemingly an easier problem for them to absorb, may have influenced some of the other partners. Additionally, this may be a positive spin on the dependence and reliance of smaller, voluntary sports clubs on those with a more superior role. One such participant, Simon, went as far to suggest that the delays and uncertainties might have influenced the size, nature and scope of the Community Sport Network:

*I think, from a democratic point of view, it's only meant that certain well organised groups like the Academy and others have managed to get in. Yet there's other groups, clubs...(Simon).*

This suggested that only a steadfast and resilient group of the broader sport development community were willing to manage or tolerate the difficulties and contribute to the Community Sport Network and deliver its strategy. This important contextual factor can be interpreted as the result of existing in a dynamic policy area that limited the reach of the Community Sports Network but preserved the Strategy and its outcomes to a more focussed effort, delivered by a more adaptable group of participants.

Partnership theory suggests concepts of '...routinisation inertia' (Slack and Parent, 2006: 138). Previous alliances continue, strengthen and dominate at the expense of other, equally appropriate actors and earlier references of "tokenism" and community sport development delivery (See Chapter 7). Here, there is consultation and pooling of resources but limited to those capable and willing to tolerate the policy shift and the reluctance of major stakeholders to let go and allow for a much deeper public involvement.

A more constructive perspective on these findings is that an effective partnership requires good leadership (Shaw and Allen, 2006; Frisby et al. 2004) and that the complex and dynamic tasks required of the partners requires the possession of a 'collaborative capacity' (Lindsey, 2009:85). This, where those skilled in negotiation

and who have the capacity to compromise for a common goal, will better contribute to the overall effort.

### **Questioning the capacity to deliver**

The capacity to deliver was also acknowledged in the initial interviews with the voluntary sports clubs. However, capacity here was less about concerns of being overstretched and more about having the personnel, skills and expertise to deliver. This is consistent with similar studies (Misener and Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006). We could postulate that Matthew's project involved some aspects of professional development and so there would be less concern about skills and development as they are integral elements of the project he leads. Again, this is where context is key. The voluntary sports clubs involved in the Preliminary Interviews operated through very specialist areas of disability sport. Professional development in this domain is a far more complex process. Or as Simon put it:

*What I've found, because I've been involved in the football for over 10 years, [is] that you can have the best coach to anybody, even an England coach, but if they don't understand how a person with a learning disability learns, it's not transferable (Simon).*

We start to appreciate the levels of uncertainty and differing realities of sport development delivery at this stage. Matthew may refer to capacity on a personal level owing to the restructuring of the organisation at which he is employed and his already busy portfolio of work. Simon has placed uncertainty at a logistical or strategic level. Other references were made to 'capacity'. At this stage, there seemed to be an underlying lack of confidence in the capacity of the group to deliver the projects. Whether the participants were too busy or concerned about their inexperience, new projects were seen as a significant challenge with this local Community Sport Network.

In the second stage Preliminary Interviews, talking about delivery remained an area of significant discussion for the participants. However, impetus shifted from concerns about what lay head to a more constructive appraisal of delivery issues. In the eight months between the first and second stage Preliminary Interviews, project funding had been granted and there was a greater sense the projects were *live*.

All participants expressed a stronger sense of confidence in what they were delivering. We compare the responses of the programme leaders for the coach mentoring and volunteering programme when asked about their respective roles in delivering the programmes:

*I think I'm looking after the Coach Mentoring project, which comes into the Coaching Volunteering overall heading on the project, if you want to say that... (Matthew, stage 1 Preliminary Interview).*

*...is for the day to day sort of admin and co-ordination of the volunteer programme and sort of meeting them, reviews with them, checking their progress, you know, being the point of contact for them, if they've got any problems sort of thing (Daniel, stage 2 Preliminary Interview).*

### **Learning as we go along to a developing expertise**

Interestingly, one of the goals of the volunteer programme was to employ a 'coordinator'. Daniel was successful in attaining this post. Daniel had three years of experience working in sport development but was new to this role and the volunteering project. His assured responses in the programme leadership role seemed to come at the expense of his understanding of the wider Strategy themes. For the latter, Daniel's response was more tentative:

*I've not...with only just coming into post, I've not seen what the action...you know, the overall action plan. I was going to say we are starting to get more people coming to us, and we're obviously now offering a more professional service and making sure, you know, more...meeting the volunteers' needs more, you know, giving them, you know, reviews and checks, and things like that. But with only just being involved...you know, coming into post, I can't give an exact how and why it's progressing (Daniel).*

This provides an important context for the delivery of new programmes and projects. The realities of programme delivery include new roles and people to fulfil them, sport development is no different. A greater appreciation of the Community Sports Network's wider remit may take time to realise but the programme itself benefits from a more committed leadership. At the programme level the language has changed from speculative and assumptive to definite and assured. There is a shift

from talking about programme delivery and actually delivering the programme that involves participants, administration and coordination. While this is to be expected, this narrative starts to introduce key mechanisms for expected outcomes of the programme. At a very basic level, explanations were made that underpin why programmes may work. Programme leaders are more aware of operations and roles. In the secondary interviews there is a sense of developing expertise and learning. One participant gave a more critical appreciation of what he was dealing with:

*...people think oh they're going to volunteer and then they think oh that will automatically give...you know, lead them to, say, a job on Street Sports or a job on something else, they think they'll get paid, you know. That's one sort of aspect you've come across by certain elements of, you know, some volunteers (Daniel).*

Daniel is learning about his participants on the Volunteer Programme. He is more aware of their attitudes and perceptions towards becoming involved in volunteering. Such awareness is key to volunteers sustaining their voluntary activity (Schlesinger et al. 2013). This posed a significant challenge for Daniel. We acknowledge the development of expertise and the potential for theory building later in the chapter. Daniel is aware that this will challenge his role as leader of the programme and that he will have to manage expectations if the programme outcomes are to be met:

*And also, like I say, the time is changing people's perceptions of volunteering, you know, that they think oh it's volunteering, it's free, you're going to get stuck with, you know, the naff jobs or, you know, they're not quite...it takes time to alert them and change their thinking towards the benefits that it'll bring (Daniel).*

The programme leaders feel less vulnerable to change and delays. One participant talked about further developments of the programme:

*I feel more secure now I know that I've got some funding behind it, rather than me speculatively entering into agreements, which effectively if they fail, will cost the centre money, and I can't afford to...no we're certainly not on schedule, but I can certainly start to look at expanding. I mean the target was something like seven hours a week. So I've done three. If I can secure*

*another one, you know, one evening one for four, I think that would probably be the maximum I could [deliver] (Paul).*

With improved confidence and now that resources are accessible, the long-term prospect of the projects are considered for the first time. Further, with live projects and real experiences to reflect on, there is more thought given to explaining how outcomes might be met. One project leader acknowledged the impact of the work being realised:

*Seeing the children being able to appreciate the other children and I mean and they're not all autistic but actually getting the idea that this is a team game...because that's been the biggest thing (Simon).*

The interaction of the children in the disability sport programmes acknowledge an important outcome. Interaction between the participants and learning to play with others are social outcomes aligned with the 'building stronger communities' arm of the Strategy.

### **The 'bigger picture' and thinking strategically**

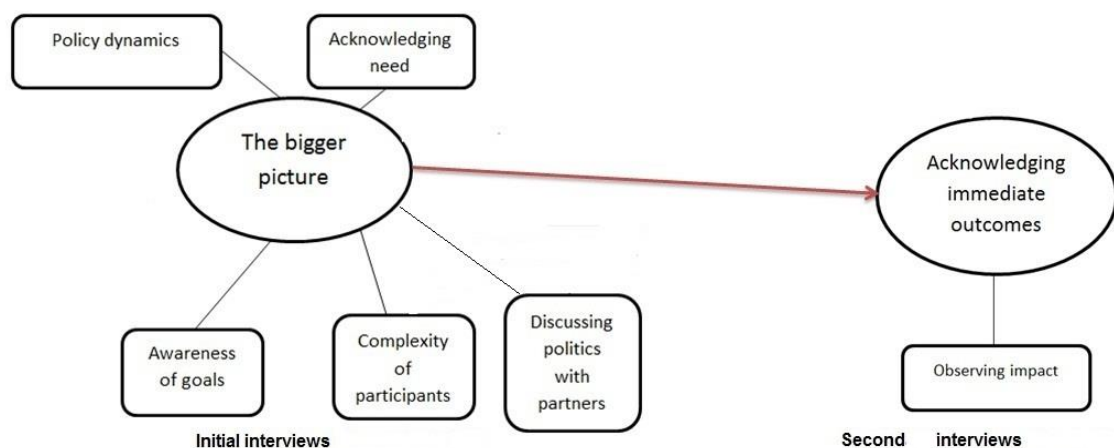
In the initial interviews, all participants talked about issues beyond the day to day delivery of the programmes. At this early stage, there was time and space to comprehend what the programmes were part of. Initial coding described these discussions as 'strategic thinking'. Here, the wider contextual matters effecting broader policy perspectives were captured. If the previous theme captured context at the micro level or the point of delivery, this theme moved beyond to the meso (organisational) level and acknowledge the Strategy and its wider political environment. This provided insights as to the circumstances under which the projects would attempt to deliver on their initial outcomes. Again, there was a greater appreciation of the bigger picture from the local authority representative when asked to describe their programme. The main theme of 'bigger picture' and its related subthemes are illustrated in Figure 10. Matthew attempted to rationalise the coaching and volunteering projects and was the only one to specifically acknowledge measurable indicators of success:

*And the Coach Mentoring project specifically looks at how we, as a local area, can improve sort of the quality of coaches in our area....so that that can then*



*support the development of future coaches; as well as bringing in higher qualified coaches, if we need to, to support the improvement and mentoring of those coaches themselves. So we'd want it to achieve sort of the KPIs or the objectives of that strategy (Matthew).*

Local strategies normally acknowledge shortfalls in local provision (Robson et al. 2013). A key discussion in the initial Preliminary Interviews was the extent to which the Strategy activities were needed. At this stage there does seem to be a vague notion of the aims of the Strategy and why it is being put into place. Improving the sporting infrastructure was one of the initial outcomes of the Coaching and Volunteering activities of the Strategy.



**Figure 10** Thematic map illustrating initial and secondary interviews from ‘the bigger picture’ to ‘Acknowledging immediate outcomes’.

Earlier, it was noted that Matthew seemed aware of the bigger picture but maybe lacks total confidence or certainty of his programme’s contribution to wider strategic aims. A greater appreciation of strategic goals and programme rational was expected in the follow-up interviews but the interview content suggested otherwise. According to Bloyce and Green (2013:482) this is typical of those working in sport who perceive their job as involving ‘fact finding, paper work and procedure’ as opposed to ‘bigger picture’ issues such as wider strategic goals.

Perhaps this is the reality of delivering programmes; particularly those programmes that are new or have new staff leading them. Daniel, who took over the volunteering aspects of the Coaching Mentoring and Volunteering programmes was an outcome

in his own right. Establishing a coordinator for all volunteering activity was a significant contribution to improving the sporting infrastructure and a key objective of the volunteering programme. Once in place, Daniel unsurprisingly seemed to focus his responses towards the delivery of the volunteering programme. Not being involved in the development of the Strategy or the supporting Community Sports Network until relatively recently isolated him from broader political and strategic issues. Robson et al. (2013:204) explain that ‘...getting people onside with the strategy will be much easier...if [practitioners] have the opportunity to input into the strategic process’.

### **Acknowledging need**

For those involved in such processes in this research, there was significant discussion about strategic or ‘bigger picture’ issues. For example, the disability sports programme leader acknowledged a need for the project. The programme is targeted and there is an attempt to move away from more traditional forms of funding to reach their participants:

*One of the things was, although there's provision for football, we felt that provision for female football in the field of disability, there was nothing at all there. And although we have a good structure for male football, we needed quality female coaches, we needed a structure which women and girls could feel comfortable and training in. So it needed a separate funding stream, to set this sort of thing up, in order that the club can reach their participants (Simon).*

Targeting the hard to reach was a key theme of the Strategy. Increasing female participation in sport and widening access were key priorities of sports policy at the time (Sport England, 2008b). Talking about structure also aligns itself with the same ‘infrastructure’ related outcomes discussed earlier by Matthew. Talking about a ‘*separate*’ funding stream suggests that the programme leader has looked for appropriate criteria in order that the gaps in provision could be filled. Later, Simon recognised the Strategy’s alliance with broader social goals:

*So there's a whole group of profoundly disabled children, who don't have that...who need, in terms of health, in terms of the obesity problem amongst these children...(Simon).*

Improving health is a key aim of the Strategy. Interestingly, we see need defined in two ways:

1. need based on the wants of the funders that was more apparent from the perspectives of the local authority participants and,
2. need based on expanding provision and filling gaps in local services – as was more apparent in the interviews with the voluntary sports club managers.

It would have been wrong to ask the participants to quote verbatim the principle aims and objectives of the Strategy and have them interrogated under interview case by case. According to Pawson and Tilley (1997) this would deliver a very limited reflection of reality and would be more appropriate for experimental designs where outcomes become variables and interests are focused purely on the practitioner or policy maker. Similarly, we could not expect practitioners to systematically chart a *context – mechanism – outcome* configuration of their programme. Constructing realist data at the level of the practitioner requires the interview to allow the practitioner to give 'working' explanations where a deeply personal narrative is given and an appreciation of the people, places and personalities of programmes is acknowledged (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). A more idiomatic approach allowed for a circumstantial appreciation of programme reasoning.

It should be no surprise then that there are only tenuous attempts to talk about the Strategy goals, aims and objectives; particularly at the early stages where it seems delivery takes priority over long-term outcomes (Clarke and Dawson, 1999; Rossi et al. 2004). These subtle references suggested that there was an awareness of strategic goals as they were acknowledged without probing or direct questioning. This is significant as all participants at this level should be delivering with the end in mind. All too often, particularly in community sport, this does not seem to be the case (Coalter, 2007). The local authority may have demonstrated a more obvious appreciation of the bigger picture as they were the strategic lead for the Community Sport Network and therefore more sensitive to the needs of the funders. Others, such as the voluntary sports club, might be less explicit owing to their assumed subordinate role. According to Mackintosh (2011) such hierarchical attributes are often the case in communities of sport.

Paul also demonstrated an understanding of how his Rural Sports programme contributed to wider strategic goals but only in the in the first stage of the Preliminary Interviews:

*...what we were actually looking to do was build upon our integration in the rural community, where we have a specialism for gymnastics and trampolining, but trying to expand that particular sport facility and non-gymnastics sports facilities, offering it to the 16-plus population, to improve their healthy lifestyle, to use us as a hub, as I say, because of our general rural location. And so the sort of local population don't always find it easy or convenient to actually move into Nantwich or Crewe to enjoy the sport recreation facilities there. So it's looking to offer them an option closer to home (Paul).*

Here expansion of provision is founded on “widening access” and “improving health”. Further, the specific reference to age fits the funding criteria age banding. Need is based on the local populations limited capacity to access a centre with a specialism for disability sport. The sense of community is apparent in that the centre could better integrate with its local population. In the secondary stage of the Preliminary Interviews, there was an absence of strategic thinking from Paul. The other participants discussed the observation of initial outcomes being met. For example:

*The parents now are beginning to gel together a bit, same as when we went to competition not all the parents came because not all are able to er erm but a few did come because I've not got enough room on the mini bus and that was nice (Simon).*

*...but I think there are some early signs of, you know, some good partnership working (Daniel).*

Once again, we can align such responses to the strategic goals of the Community Sport Network’s Strategy. Simon has recognised initial outcomes relating to the ‘building safer and stronger communities’ arm of the strategy. Daniel is aware that goals relating to ‘improving the sporting infrastructure’ are being realised.

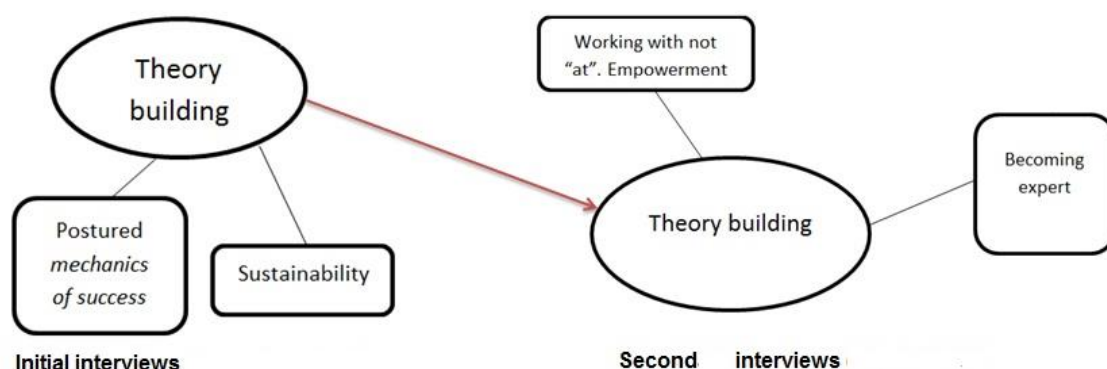
It would seem that Paul was still struggling to develop and deliver the programme. At the time of the second stage Preliminary Interviews, Paul's discussions were still very much about '*cautiously persevering*':

*...just doing that one [session] at the moment, and then see what the response is to that. And then possibly explore, you know, other avenues, if there's a...need for it (Paul).*

Here Paul is discussing his intentions to deliver an early evening exercise class with the funding he has obtained through Sport England. There remains a very reactive position to planning and developing activities in the rural, voluntary sports club.

### **Theory building: postulating the mechanics of success**

One of the intentions of the Preliminary Interviews was to allow the programme leaders to explore the potential mechanism or explanations as to how programme aims and objectives were met. Most of the participants would generate some theories as to why activities worked. The responses were fairly limited owing to the formative stages of the programme delivery. An illustration of the subthemes for theory building over the two stages of the Preliminary Interviews is presented in Figure 11.



**Figure 11 Thematic map illustrating initial and second variations for 'theory building'.**

An example is the response from the leader of the disability sports projects:

*Now if you could then take a child with a disability and make that child succeed, and to interact with other children, the sense of self-worth and confidence can really take itself through to the whole of the family. So it isn't*

*just a bit of a gym class or a bit of football, this is giving self...this is giving a confidence to children and families. And we feel that it can make a really lasting impact (Simon).*

Sport's capacity to instil confidence has been recognised by academics for several years (Collins and Kay, 2003; Coalter et al. 2000; Nichols, 1997; Crabbe, 2007) and has been recognised in other areas of the voluntary sports club's activities during the Preliminary Interviews. There is a clear acceptance that this will transfer into the new programmes and will demonstrate an impact beyond the participants of the disability sports programme and resonate with the participants' families. Parents with disabled children involved in sports programmes have acknowledged that '...sport is important to them as a family' (Carter et al. 2014: 944) and that sports clubs give [parents] a chance to '...watch the children enjoy themselves whilst having a break' (Carter et al. 2014: 948). However, Paul errs on the side of caution and earlier in the same interview demonstrated the importance of context the confidence boosting effects of participating in sport:

*But gymnastics, if you asked...if you talked gymnastics about movement to parents of children with disabilities, they don't see it as being very relevant, because they think it's an impossible thing for the child to do (Simon).*

### **Becoming an expert**

For the first time in this research, we can see very clearly that that Realistic Evaluation is helping generate theories. There is explanation of how things may work (mechanisms) and under what conditions (context) (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). From Simon's initial response, we can generate a theory - albeit putatively at this stage – that participating in gymnastics improves the self-worth and confidence of the participants. This could transfer to the whole family but only if the family embrace the benefits of gymnastics rather than see the activities as 'an impossible thing to do' for their disabled children.

When discussing the Rural Sports Hub's activities, the programme leader theorised about the nature of the activities leading to a successful outcome of widening access:

*...but then you have got 16 to 25 year olds, who might want something a bit more risky and dynamic (Paul).*

Paul poses the potential mechanics of success for his programme. At this stage there is going to be some uncertainty. Indeed, there is almost a sense of naivety about this statement. We know Paul's programme is a new concept to the other programmes within the sports club he manages. Having dynamic activity is a must if health benefits are to be accrued. Paul could have been alluding to variety in the activities. In following up with 'risky' it is easier to think Paul is referring to the activity (as opposed to activities). A previous study targeting young people could demonstrate that Paul is oversimplifying the matter. Tannehill et al. (2015) demonstrated being with friends, variety of activity content and experiencing fun were important to alluring young people into sport. These assumptions are important and demonstrated a learning curve as the programme leaders develop their experience and expertise in delivering the nuanced activities.

When asked to explain how the coach mentoring activities might work there were similar theoretical insights:

*...not just qualifications on pieces of paper, but their expertise to deliver in the local areas, so that they can then pass on or mentor other individuals, but also the participants within their sessions will improve (Matthew).*

The mechanics of mentoring transferring to improved coaching sessions and participant experience was an interesting perspective. Significantly, Matthew also acknowledged context as key to this transfer being realised:

*We do a lot of stuff in sports development that's just about number crunching and quantity all the time. We really feel that, if we're going to get some sustainability out of this, it needs to be about quality. So if we can...you know, obviously we're confined by the amount of money that's coming towards us, but if we can...say, for example, instead of picking 30 people, we pick five people, you make sure that those individuals are fully trained up, get the qualifications, but also are confident in their delivery, and we believe that those five people will then be able to maybe go and target within their sort of club structure zone, environments, another five or 10 people that will provide a legacy in the future (Matthew).*

There seems to be a resistance to quality indicators in sport development; that the greater the number the greater the impact sport is having. Matthew challenges this notion. In the context of the Coach Mentoring Programme he appears to explain that more focus should be given to higher standards as opposed to higher numbers *per se*.

Evaluation at the formative stages of programme inauguration should form debates around the contextual constraints and postured outcome patterns of programme development and delivery. It is this data that helps to develop and improve programmes from an early stage ‘...when opportunities for influence are likely to be greatest’ (Dehar et al. 1993:204). It is here that the realities of programme plans and actual operation can be recognised. Further, there is recognition of potential for an evaluation to influence and assist in the development of programmes. Hence the notion of *beginning with the end in mind*, a phrase founded on the capacity of practitioners to stand back from their programmes and think carefully about decisions on a day to day basis while mindful that they must achieve something at an agreed point in time.

The Preliminary Interviews personified the purpose of formative evaluation and proved invaluable in demonstrating the ‘messiness’ of programme inauguration. At this stage, how the programme changed and developed was explored, thus providing the context within which to interpret outcome patterns. Before any participants were recruited, there was space for the partners within the Community Sport Network to establish their position. Firstly, within the network itself, in terms of dominance and perspective. Secondly, in developing their respective programmes with an uncertainty of how programmes may actually progress. For the former, programmes sustainability and development was reliant on the perseverance (through key stakeholders and their capacity to adapt to complex, internal political dynamics); for the latter, a high threshold for uncertainty was required with a reliance on learning as the programme evolved.

The dominance of contextual constraints was particularly powerful in the preliminary data. This is partly explained by the data being obtained from *practitioners* (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Practitioners are acutely aware of their obligation to funders and the Strategy leading to discussion of the bigger picture. The timing of this phase of



data collection inevitably lead to uncertainties in programme delivery and a working account of the day-to-day running of the programmes. However, the research design allowed for context to stretch beyond the level of the participant and the timing of the research phase to give a critical appreciation of delivering sport in the community.

Policy change is not a new phenomenon and has already had its fair share of scrutiny where sport is concerned (Green and Houlihan, 2004; Collins, 2010a; Hylton, 2013; Grix, 2009). The data gave a refreshing insight into how such change is dealt with within what turned out to be a tight-knit network of partners who took punches differently but fought on regardless. Uncertainties in delivery were not measured with any lack in confidence but with an air of expectancy. Uncertainties are nothing new to recently developed community programmes. Perhaps because community sport has to target them towards those in the communities that are *hardest to reach* (Crabbe, 2007; Mutrie et al. 2010), or, because, willing or not, networks such as the one in this research are at the *beck and call* of those in more executive positions. Thus, a willingness to learn and a persevering attitude may, in some part, stem from the lack of a viable alternative. This in turn would make a programme easier to lead and the network of partners or stakeholders more accepting of the uncertainties that lie ahead. The Preliminary Interviews demonstrated a willingness to learn and an air of experience and leadership opposed to total conformity and a rigid remit for the funders needs. This may have caused problems getting the initial funding but the inevitable compromises allowed the network to better serve their communities.

Finally, there was a very limited acknowledgement of the mechanisms accounted for why the programmes might work. Practitioners may not be as sensitive as the actual participants to the mechanisms of programme outcomes (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). However, all the interviewees attempted to postulate why their programmes may work without any direct questioning. Clarke and Dawson (1999:31) suggest an early task facing the evaluator is to determine ‘...the beliefs and assumptions underlying planned intervention’. This allowed for a ‘...more full causal explanation’ of how programmes may work (Clarke and Dawson, 1999; Pawson and Tilley, 1997). In the aforementioned interviews, attempts to theorise were clouded by attempts to contextualise. With over 30 years of experience between them in serving

their communities with sport, these subtle inferences to programme theory cannot be ignored. Weiss (1997:53) is an advocate of practitioner wisdom and says their 'logical reasoning' should be tested in the wider evaluation under 'realistic operating conditions'.

### **Context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) configurations from the Preliminary Interviews**

Understanding the realities of implementing a series of sports programmes with complex social outcomes was an essential building block for the development of local integrated partners working across sectors to tackle sport participation issues. Despite being established in a less than conducive policy context, the learning derived from the implementation of the Strategy programmes is highly relevant and provided some important insights into the management of activities for increasing participation in sport and physical activity. A number of regularities or *outcomes* were identified regarding the way in which operational *mechanisms* worked in the *context* of a dynamic policy area with a diverse range of partners and sports programmes. These 'CMO' configurations are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 CMO configurations for the Preliminary Interviews

Programme	Contexts	Mechanisms	Outcome patterns
	<b>LA Leading Community Sports Network</b>		
Coach Mentoring and Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'Additional' interventions for the LA representatives to cope with.</i></li> <li>• <i>Changing boundaries and organisational restructure of the Local Authority</i></li> <li>• <i>Delays in funding</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>LA's leads 'letting go' of programmes and empowering partners to support and take more responsibility for programme development</i></li> <li>• <i>Seeing the delays as space created for reflection</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Shared responsibility and contribution of group</i></li> </ul>
	<b>New partners working together</b>		
Disability Sports Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Delays in funding</i></li> <li>• <i>Specialist nature of programmes</i></li> <li>• <i>Positions and perspectives of the different sectors (voluntary and public)</i></li> <li>• <i>Funding process seen as a slow and bureaucratic process</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Strong leadership and committed personnel</i></li> <li>• <i>A willingness to persevere and reflect on programme development</i></li> <li>• <i>Tolerance for delays and slow progress.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>More focussed efforts of a dedicated group of partners</i></li> <li>• <i>Becoming programme experts and learning – improved confidence</i></li> <li>• <i>Realising programmes' contribution to wider strategic goals of the Strategy</i></li> </ul>
Rural Sports Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mixed confidence of delivering new programmes</i></li> <li>• <i>Differing positions and perspectives of the different sectors involved in the CSN (voluntary and public)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reactive planning process</i></li> <li>• <i>Using time – with other partners – to focus efforts</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Broadening understanding of the network and its role.</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing an 'empathy' for the network</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Discussing Programme Theory</b>		
Disability Sports Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>New and varied programmes</i></li> <li>• <i>Differing backgrounds and experiences of the programme leaders</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Using past experience and established practitioner knowledge</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Learning and developing as practitioners (implications for improving sporting infrastructure)</i></li> </ul>
Coach Mentoring & Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Politics between funders and programme leads</b></li> <li>• <i>Quality over quantity</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reflecting on current practice with programmes</i></li> <li>• <i>Being 'evaluative'</i></li> <li>• <i>Revising approach to deliver on quality as opposed to quantity of developing coaches</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fewer coach mentees recruited than targeted.</i></li> <li>• <i>Belief that quality of provision is far more important.</i></li> </ul>

Overall, the programmes struggled to create consistently favourable conditions for programme implementation. However, a combination of certain circumstances was sufficient for some successes to be achieved. At this stage or phase of the research, these outcomes were closely associated with the short-term outcomes acknowledged in the logic models. This said, they would play their part in contributing to the longer term, strategic outcomes such as improving the sporting infrastructure. Programmes with a strong and committed leadership whose empathy with the Community Sports Network (and balanced this with the needs of the funders), showed a capacity for learning and were able to connect strategically were more likely to make progress. The early realisation of a shared strategic vision was critical in diffusing the complexities of delivering the Strategy programmes. The absence or partial acceptance of a shared strategic vision hampered efforts to implement programmes.

Furthermore, the perseverance and determination of the programme leaders was a powerful mechanism for change; particularly for the voluntary sector organisations represented by the Disability Sports Programmes and the Rural Sports Hub. The organisational readiness of partners to engage in inter-agency work varied between the different programme leaders and was influential in determining the rate of programme progress. Interestingly, for the larger, public organisation, it was a timely 'letting go' of projects and a notion of shared or community ownership that allowed improved progress.

One other notable mechanism shared by all practitioners was their capacity to reflect and be evaluative. While the funding for the Strategy programmes was delayed, the research design (with two Preliminary Interview stages) continued Bloyce and Green (2013) noted that those working in sport development often see their role as fact-finding and paperwork. In this instance, the evaluation process seems to have made room for reflection and a time to focus efforts, a space to step back from the paperwork and process to look at their programmes and consider issues more carefully using their experiences and established practitioner knowledge. The degree to which community orientated 'networks' and programmes are fully integrated and enabled within these processes will be a critical test of their potential to improve participation in sport and address the broader outcomes acknowledged in the Strategy document.

# Chapter 8

## The Phase Two interviews and the importance of context

### Introduction

Conducted in March 2010, three years into the delivery of the Strategy activities, the purpose of the Phase Two interviews was to provide a detailed understanding of how programmes change and develop following initial implementation (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). This provided an understanding of the context within which outcome measures may be interpreted. Explaining how outcomes are actually produced is often referred to as process evaluation (Patton, 1986; Weiss 1997; Clarke and Dawson, 1999; Moore et al. 2014, Saunders et al. 2005). At this stage, the interviews explored and interpreted the perceived condition of ‘...programme operations, activities, functions, performance and component parts’ (Rossi, et al. 2004:171). The purpose of this chapter is to examine operation and function and then demonstrate the relationship of the *context-mechanism-outcome* configurations as perceived by those involved with delivering the programmes

Thus, as with the Preliminary Interviews (see Chapter 7), this research phase remained focussed on the programme leaders’ perspectives. According to Rossi et al. (2004), programme leaders understand the programme in its historical setting, its management, the political climate and the options available. Moreover, Weiss (1997) explains that programme leaders are more informed as to the changes that may need to be made. Further, the programme leaders have some idea of what their respective programmes may achieve and some notion of how they expect the programme to achieve its desired outcomes (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). Thus, the study remains aligned with the Realistic Evaluation approach.

More impetus was given to the perspectives of the actual participants of the programmes in the Phase Three interviews (see Chapter 9) where a greater discussion of the strategic outcomes takes place. This allowed more time for the outcomes to be realised and will help determine how the outcomes may be

interpreted (Mair 1991, in Clarke and Dawson, 1999). Contained in ellipses, the two overarching themes of the interviews are illustrated in the thematic maps (Figure 11 and 12). Related subthemes are captured in the boxes.

### **Working with others: partnership complexities**

Throughout the Phase Two interviews, there was widespread discussion of partnerships and alliances with other organisations. The key themes acknowledging this issue are shown in Figure 12. Much of this discussion revolved around the programmes leaders' perspectives of what they felt was in the best interests of the participants on their respective programmes. Consequently, the discussions around the complexities of partnerships were far more critical and constructive relative to the Preliminary Interview conversations. This recognition that the participants were a key influence in the development of the programmes was critical to developing an understanding of the context for creating conditions for change. In Realistic Evaluation terms, explaining the conditions that trigger mechanisms to produce outcomes. In the Preliminary Interviews, there was a very personal relationship between the programme leader and the programme. This sometimes led to a defensive and negative perspective of partnership work.

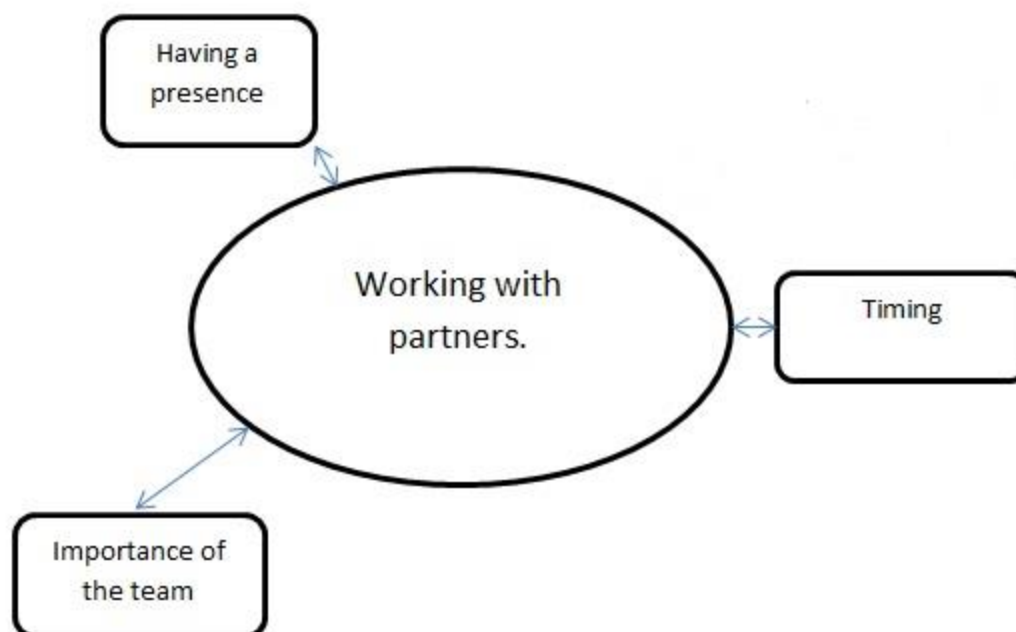


Figure 12 Working with partners theme and related subthemes.

In the Phase Two interviews, there was still evidence of programme personalisation but a greater capacity for negotiation and compromise was apparent as programme leaders became more aware of the needs, character and experiences of the participants and partners they were involved with.

### **Timing is everything**

Those programmes with a wider remit for community sport development, such as the Coach Mentoring and Rural Sports programmes, acknowledged the necessity of partnership work for programme function but may have underestimated the complex conditions for working together given the nature and character of their participants and the setting within which the programmes existed. For example, in the Preliminary Interviews, the Coach Mentoring programme leader acknowledged the importance of timing in terms of allowing participants access to their respective programmes and making sure they were active within the programme almost immediately.

The issue of timing was still very prominent for this programme. However, as more external partners such as National Governing Bodies (NGBs) became involved with the programme, there was less the leader could do to control the timings of volunteer training and development, threatening the sustainability of the programme:

*...athletics changed their structure of coaching delivery, so they have changed it so we had to wait for them courses to run (Matthew).*

Sport's NGBs survive and operate in the same dynamic policy field (Houlihan, 2000) acknowledged in the Preliminary Interviews. In this case, the Coach Mentoring Programme required the support of the governing body for athletics. The NGB provided the training for the coach mentors and the volunteer coaches. In the Preliminary Interviews, it was noted that any lag between participants offering their support and becoming actively involved in the programme would challenge the sustainability of the programme. The governing body for athletics was making structural changes and so delays in working together or trying to find a more synchronised way of working were inevitable.

Interestingly, timing was a concern for the Rural Sports Hub programme leader. However, there was a very different context and any mention of working with others was entirely absent:

*But nevertheless, I mean we'll be revisiting the whole question and re-marketing all the classes in January, you know, once the holiday impact has finished, because that does have an impact. (Paul).*

The Rural Sports Hub programme was put in place to diversify activity away from its traditional base of working with disabled children and help more of the local community access the centre in order to improve health and wellbeing. Paul was very aware that early in the calendar year is a crucial time for marketing such activity. As noted earlier, Paul was the only interviewee who delivered his programmes in total isolation. In terms of logistics, training and delivery the Rural Sports Hub did not attempt to work with any strategic partners other than the members of the Community Sport Network. Thus 'timing' of programme activity, including its marketing, was dictated by perceived seasonal trends; in this case the influx of interest in becoming physically active in the New Year.

Paul was the only leader that managed a programme but did not actually deliver any of the activities. His role was a facility manager. This should not have made partnership work an issue as specialist facilities require multiple agencies to operate. However, not having the programme delivery experience may have divorced Paul from a clearer understanding of market trends and participant needs of sport development work. According to Bloyce and Green (2013), those working in sport development tend to have philosophies about their work based on practical and personal experience in sport. Not having this could limit the capacity to develop sport or appreciate the complexities of the value of sport in communities.

Further, when probed as to what he meant by *revisiting the whole question*, Paul talked about the perceived limitations of his centre and focussed on what he would not do in order to develop the programme:

*I would probably make an assessment that the gym itself probably lends itself, you know, to the impression that it's more female orientated with gymnastics, even though we're offering a wider spectrum of activities other than trampolining or gymnastics. And possibly, the element that men who*



*want to do that will either want the full range of body building exercise equipment, the weights or a team sport. Well, there's no element that I would be able to go along those lines. I think they'd be too far adrift and we certainly couldn't cater for that type of activity (Paul).*

These are two programme leaders with very different programmes in very different settings. One programme leader embraced partnership work and the complexity of working from differing schedules to develop his activities even if it makes the delivery of the programme more difficult and challenges its long term sustainability. And another programme leader, who, without any consultation, accepts the limitations of the perceived barriers to accessing his centre and contradicts himself by offering a review of the problems but only offers subtle changes to his marketing strategy.

In Matthew's case, we see the programme leader relinquishing some responsibility and being higher expectations of the participants on his programme. His solution to the issue of timing and working with partners was significant. Synchronising his programme activities with those of the National Governing Bodies was not considered:

*I'd say it was more down to the coaches and the mentors to do, to see how they were progressing once they had been on the course, so it was a little bit out of my hands (Matthew).*

Matthew is very matter of fact that there is little he can do to control this logistical problem. Instead of altering the programme schedule to suit the needs of his partners, impetus is placed with the participant to manage the timing and progression of their activity. Bloyce et al. (2008) suggest where control is lost (in this case with the timing of activity) even temporarily, the programme leader must not place an overemphasis on adapting activity to meet programme goals and resolve the logistical issues of all concerned as this could limit the impact of the programme. Matthew then, did not appear to make any structural or physical changes to the programme. Instead, he appeared to devolve control of the timing of activity to the partners. Consequently, the programme design and associated outcomes remained in place and the potential impact of the programme was unlikely to change. These issues reflected the realities of the CSN's activity. Matthew was clearly becoming

familiar with his partners and getting to know them with his participants in mind. There is recognition of the complexities of forging relationships within a community sports programme. The Coach Mentoring Programme needed to create a more synergistic environment between its participants and the NGBs who would deliver the education programmes. Complex partnerships in sport development work have been highlighted in previous research (Lindsey, 2006; Frisby et al. 2004; Knight Kavanagh and Page, 2005). Such studies are critical of the lack of partnership agreements or understanding (Frisby et al. 2004). However, Lindsey (2006) warns that a more formal setting for partnerships may restrict relationships and increase the chance of partnership conflict.

According to Robson and Partington (2013) the conditions for working in complex and dynamic alliances requires a skilled communicator and acceptance that complex relationships are to be expected. Instead of trying to cure this problem quickly, it has been suggested that the conditions for change will improve should the partnership be allowed to evolve over time (Alexander et al. 2008; Robson et al. 2013). This way a greater understanding between all stakeholders of how community sports programmes function could be realised and the *timely* interaction required for joint working will be an easier issue to resolve.

### **Partnerships: having a presence and partner 'buy-in'**

For the more specialised programmes such as the Disability Gymnastics Programme, discussions about partnership work focussed less on logistical issues and alluded to a more natural interchange of partnership involvement. There was also an acceptance that working with such participants requires multiple levels of expertise and support:

*I think working in partnership is, I don't think working in isolation, with that sort of group, children with that sort of multiple disability...I think working with a team is very important (Wendy).*

In terms of partnership work the existing provision and the established partners would easily transfer into the relatively new programme. Wendy reported the following observation:

*And a health visitor came to look at, and a speech therapist, because some of the children were already having such therapy, and they've asked could they refer anybody and funnily enough I have had a referral of little autistic boy who will be with the gymnastics group after Easter (Wendy).*

In this case, the partnership was distinct not because it was new and a direct result of the programme. Instead, for this programme to have any long-term impact, the health specialist must see the new programme as a viable activity that would complement their own service provision. Such synergy has been recognised in a previous study by Lindsey (2009). In Wendy's case, working with others provided a more proficient means of caring for young people with a disability. Lindsey (2009) found that beyond efficiency, partnerships are a mechanism through which the relative skills and resources of the different organisations could be combined to enhance service provision in sport and physical activity. However, Houlihan and Lindsey (2008) warn that integration only occurs when all actors or partners have the same desired outcome. Health outcomes were important in the delivery of the disability sports programme and were clearly aligned with the 'therapeutic' services offered by the health specialist. Further, there was no evidence of a formal partnership or any overly complex process in working together. Babiak and Thibault (2008) report this to be a high risk strategy where the partnership is reliant on the relationships between individuals whose affiliation with the organisation may challenge the long term sustainability of the partnership and the related programmes.

In terms of context having the right conditions to realise outcomes may require programme to be exposed to other agencies with a '...mutual understanding of desired outcomes' (Lindsey, 2009:522) and establish a presence within them. In this research, this was conducive for allowing the activities to trigger mechanisms and achieve the relevant outcomes of the Strategy, particularly those associated with improving the sport and physical activity infrastructure (Community Sport Network, 2009).

This strength of presence in supporting partnership work was also a significant issue in the discussions with the Volunteer Programme leader. In the Preliminary Interviews there was a very specific geographic reach for this programme. However,

in the Phase Two interviews it was apparent that the leader of the Volunteer Programme was realising the potential of working beyond the boundaries of his local authority:

*We've had loads of people helping out at external events, and now external organisations are coming to us and saying well, have you got any volunteers that can help. So like we had...I think we had four at the BMX event in September, we had 16 on Saturday at the Partnership Youth Games; we had six at Cheshire Triathlon, we've had Town Sports with Nantwich Football Festival. So the recognition now that people are getting to be able to go into external organisations, rather than doing just council things (Daniel).*

Once again, the good work by the programme leaders and their respective teams is being recognised and this provides a catalyst for joint working. That sports programmes can attract partners is not surprising. In the last two decades sport has infiltrated many organisations in all sectors of industry thanks to a New Labour ideal that promoted sport and physical activity with a broader social agenda (Collins, 2010a). Kihl et al. (2014:37) recognised the attraction of sport to non-profit and commercial organisations as a way of '...gaining access to complementary competencies'. The examples offered by Daniel such as football, triathlon and the Youth Games reflect this. However, Daniel was more critical and cautious about the interplay of partnerships when working with volunteers:

*External organisations, they want something for nothing. So they want free labour but they don't understand what they want, what goes with it, the paperwork and the process. And it's trying to get them to understand the ethos of the programme and trying to get their buy-in for it (Daniel).*

This notion of volunteers as 'free labour' or a cheaper alternative is recognised in the academic literature for sport and leisure (Stebbings, 2013; Morgan, 2013; Parker, 1997) and provides significant contextual issues for sports programmes. Stebbings (2013) explains that this labour must not be undervalued as this will limit the personal and social rewards that volunteering gives the volunteer. Partner organisations must value volunteers beyond people *giving their time*. The Volunteer Programme leader was aware of this and attempted to explain the value of volunteers in the Phase Two interviews by recognising the formalities of screening

volunteers and meeting their individual needs. Further, Daniel recognised the importance placed on the partner organisations to fully understand the volunteer workforce.

In Canada, there is a code of practice for volunteering (Volunteer Canada, 2012). This code also makes the expectations of volunteers and the organisations they work with very clear and that the partnership is reciprocal with shared values such as the provision of safe and supportive environments for working. Programme leaders must balance volunteer and organisation values with a flexible approach that, According to Taylor (2003:42) permits a 'mucking in' culture that exists in volunteers and volunteer organisations.

Lindsey (2009) explains that programme leaders can and should expose their activities to a number of supporting organisations but outcomes may only be realised if those supporting agencies fully embrace the programme and its activities. This may be a more significant context for sports programmes with complex processes involving the professional and experiential development of people and within public sector sport development work (Ackermann and Eden, 2011). However, even the more specialist programmes must do more than share their good practice and ensure that their activities are seen by partners as a viable activity that compliments or even enhances existing services. (Lindsey, 2009).

### **Communicating, reflecting and the importance of 'team'**

The Phase Two interviews provided an opportunity for the programme leaders to explain why programmes were functioning as they were (see appendix 1). The interviews would firstly ascertain the successes and failures of the programmes through the eyes of the respective programme leaders. Further probing developed explanations or some 'logical reasoning' (Weiss, 1997:508) as to how such success or failure emerged. In one programme, there were immediate references to creating a space for the programme team to think and talk about what they had done. There were reflections concerning delivering activities differently based on their previous experiences and observations of their participants:

*What we've also done is that we've made sure that after sessions, we've all [staff] sat together and discussed with each other more than we normally would...I think I've learnt that having the right amount of staff but firstly having*

*more liaison with the staff... I think talking and being more proactive with your staff so we really know what it is we are doing with these children, with each child. (Wendy)*

Wendy also justified such practice on the basis that she had observed the participants on the programme progressing and learning which meant the team had to think about adapting the activity to keep up and differentiating activities to better serve the individuals. This is an important ethos for the context of specialised sport and physical activity programmes. Here, outcomes relating to health and wellbeing can be met. However, this is more likely if the team delivering the programmes can quickly adapt and change the activities in order that they progress and evolve alongside the changing needs of the participants that would benefit from them. This way of working is consistent with the notion of 'thoughtful action' proposed by Ledwith (2011). There is clearly some reflective thought between the staff supporting the disability sports programmes. This approach to their delivery is less concerned with the numbers of participants and more focussed on the participant experience. Such reflective practice may provide a better context for the development of projects, particularly in more specialised sport development settings.

In the Volunteer Programme, this reflection in practice involved the participants themselves. The profound and mixed disabilities of the participants in Wendy's programme would have made participant involvement in programme reflections very difficult. Those programmes where communication with the participants was possible provided useful explanations of some significant contexts for sustaining the Volunteer Programme:

*One thing we've just got to learn with it is we need to...with our volunteers, whatever they decide, we've got to...you know, we need to make sure that we have regular communication with the volunteers. Having progress reviews with them on a regular basis helps to establish how they're going on and what they need. And then it's just making sure that we need to make sure that whatever they do, the volunteers are recognised and they're rewarded, so it helps maintain their enthusiasm and they carry on wanting to volunteer. (Daniel)*

The Rural Sports Hub programme leader offered insights into the internal dynamics of the team delivering the programme activities:

*What we're looking at is revamping the sort of Wednesday evening session, which sort of covered some general keep fit, probably catering for the slightly younger market (Paul)*

The term 'revamp' suggests an overhaul of activity. There was reference to re-marketing but the consultation seemed limited. Even when probed as to who he meant by 'we're', Paul failed to acknowledge a subgroup or other member of staff that the consultation may have included. In this case, the programme leader had reached a point in his programme leadership where his core values and sphere of experience are sufficiently reasoned to run the Rural Sports programme. Such practice can be seen as a key weakness in community sport development work (Coalter, 2007; Robson et al. 2013). It is spontaneous rather than carefully planned. Decisions are made in isolation rather than through a rigorous consultation (Robson et al. 2013). Consequently, there are no details of actual adaptation or change, just rhetoric about what should be done; a theme discussed in more detail below.

### **Becoming familiar with the participants: a mechanisms for change**

One of the overarching themes of the Phase Two interviews came from the programme leaders' acknowledgement of developing an affinity with their participants. In the Preliminary Interviews, there was little opportunity to discuss participants because very few had been recruited onto the programmes. Consequently, discussions remained at the level of the programme and its supporting partners. In the Phase Two interviews, the programme leaders were equally as keen to talk about their relationships with the people who would access their programmes. The thematic map illustrated in Figure 13 demonstrates the acknowledgement of interaction with participants. These relationships provided important mechanisms for programme outcomes.

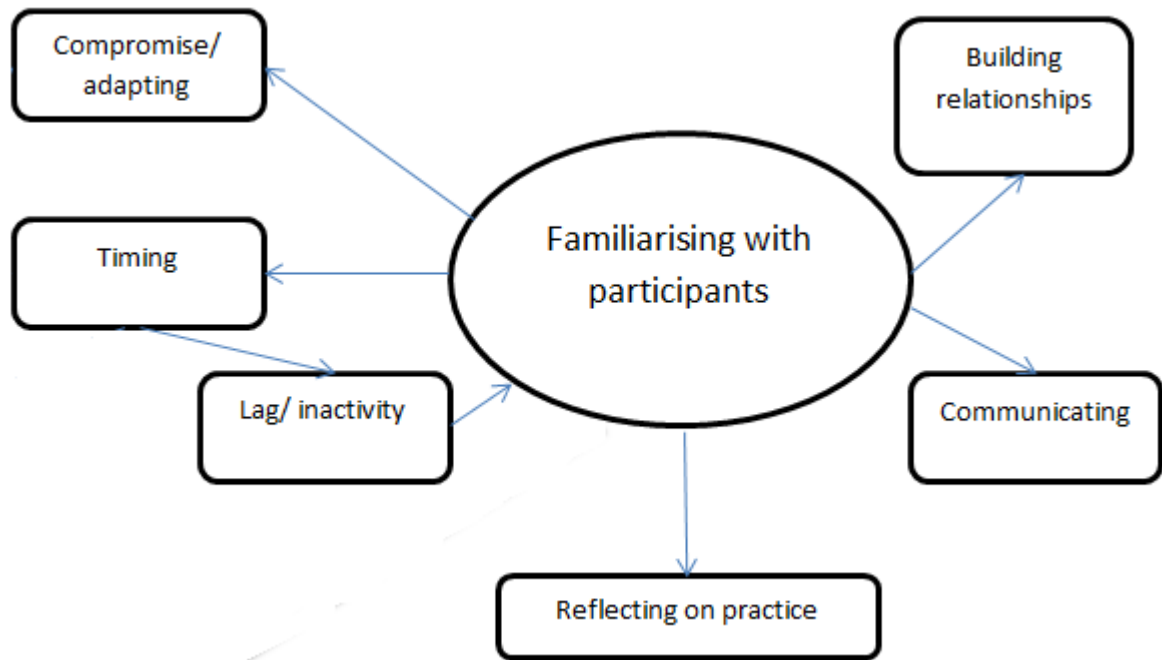


Figure 13 Familiarising with participants theme and related subthemes.

### Building relationships

For the Rural Sports programme, there was an attempt to explain the drop out of certain individuals from the activities. While the programme leader was aware of his rural setting it was clear he was becoming more familiar with his local community:

*I mean I've had one who stopped because the farmer's a...her husband's a farmer, so of course, the late summer nights she's busy, and oh I'll come back in September/October when, you know, the work's finished on the farm earlier on (Paul).*

The Coach Mentoring programme leader was becoming acutely aware of having to balance the pressures of trying to increase participation in his programme without placing too much pressure on the participants themselves:

*...the idea was to keep things as flexible as possible because mentors already have so many other commitments and if you give them more stuff and make it more structured then they won't take part (Matthew).*

Interestingly, the Coach Mentoring programme leader talked at length about the intricacies of working with his participants and managing the complexities of



developing people from a volunteer basis to something more formal through a serious training programme:

*As volunteers could they get the time off if it was in the week, or had they already got other commitments that weekend that they couldn't justify 5 weekends of doing stuff. Some dropped out because they couldn't commit. The other thing was that even though you tried to make it as simple as possible, they just didn't want to do the paperwork and so never bothered (Matthew).*

There was an overwhelming sense that the participants on the Coach Mentoring programme showed good will, but despite the best efforts of the programme leader they were a group that was unlikely to turn good will into sustainable action if the programme was perceived to be overly time consuming or too formal a process.

Sport development officers involved in the professional development of volunteers often emphasise the importance of providing participants with information. Cuskelly (2004:62) demonstrated that informing volunteers should be a very careful process. Too much structure to the flow of information can '...disempower or disenfranchise volunteers'. In this research, the ways in which the programme fostered change were not didactic or overly structured but related to social factors and meeting people. There seemed to be a greater buy-in from the volunteer coaches when the paperwork was put to one side and the participants and the programme leader spoke to each other or met face to face or as Matthew reported:

*I spoke to them on the phone or when they contacted me or at sports forums. It was initially verbal communication. Then we had a meeting, we would try to establish what course it was they wanted to do. Then we would try and get them a mentor and get the mentor to sit down with the coach to make an agreement of what level of support they wanted. That way they can see whether the coach needed a lot of support or if it could be done casually by the end of the phone (Matthew).*

The Disability Sports programme leader gave the following account in trying to explain why there had been success in the programme:

*Each parent or carer has had a designated person who has stayed with them. Even though we are working as a group so they have been able to make a nice relationship now I think that has been the key (Wendy).*

Many of the other services that this disability sports facility offer are so specialised that they have to be delivered without parental involvement. The new programmes differed in that parents and/ or guardians could support the activity. This was a direct response to the theory testing role of the interview regarding Strategy outcomes; particularly those associated with the creation of safe and enjoyable environments and improvement in health and wellbeing (Community Sport Network, 2009). Further, there was importance placed on the relationship between the participants and their parent or guardians and Wendy made the following observation:

*How significantly better the parents interact with their little ones erm from what they did when they first came. They are more confident er. They're also doing [the activities] themselves. The parents are more involved (Wendy).*

Several arms of literature have explored family and its association with sport participation. Sociological accounts normally find a positive association between a child's participation and that of their parents (Scheerder, et al. 2007; Taks and Scheerder, 2006). This association is explained as parents informing their children of the benefits of taking part such as health and fitness (Downward et al. 2013) or, indirectly with parents seen as positive role models because they participate in sport (Coleman, 2008; Brustad et al. 2005). Such social and psychological factors are also recorded in studies exploring barriers and facilitators for families with disabled children (Shields et al. 2012). In this programme, *building relationships* extended beyond the programme leader and participant connection. Instead, the developing relationships within and between the participants and their parents was explained as a key mechanism for creating a safer and stronger community and improving health and wellbeing.

### **Compromising and adapting**

The realities of programme delivery and maturity can be disordered. Sometimes programme leaders may actually know best because of their relationship with the people involved with the activities. With a greater appreciation his experience of working with volunteers, the Volunteer Programme leader had to make changes:

*We've been able to get a couple of coaches that have started off as a coach (on the programme) and have now become mentors, and so they have been able to help a couple of people to come through on the programme. We've now been able to get a couple of mentors to become trained up as tutors (Matthew).*

This diversification (the training of local tutors) was a high risk strategy because it is spontaneous rather than carefully planned (Robson et al. 2013). Moreover, such decisions demonstrated that the programme leader was well aware of the fragility of his situation. He was becoming more familiar with his participants and was aware that they may leave or not become involved if the process became too difficult or formal. Matthew has also reached a point in his programme management where he is confident that his core values and sphere of experience are reasoned to be sufficient to run the Coach Mentoring programme. Furthermore, Matthew is demonstrating good leadership of the programme. Kotter (1999:11) explains '...the fundamental purpose of management is to keep the current system functioning' and leadership acts '...to produce change'. From this, we can see the differing skills and attributes required of a programme leader. Having such skills provides the circumstances necessary to trigger mechanisms (in this case allowing mentees to become mentors) that would support Strategy outcomes such as improving the sporting infrastructure.

Taking greater control and making changes was recognised as both a reflective and reactive process. Decisions were being made at a very personal and individual level and some were made using a greater interaction with participants and key partners. The variety of client groups, delivery mechanisms and diversity of representation make sport development an impossible area to impose an archetypal approach to its core activities. 'Working with partners' and 'familiarising with participants' reflected a theoretical context often undervalued in sport development – the values and skills and enthusiasm that the programme leaders themselves bring to their work; as Nesti (2008:Online) postulated:

Fortunately, within sports development it has been impossible to act as a post-modernist! Because this is a vocation rather than a career, sports development persons have had to do the right thing, not just follow their

feelings. They have been engaged in making judgements, throwing their whole selves into their work and standing by their decisions. To do this they have been relying more on their personalities, who they are and what they stand for, and less on the skills and techniques they possess.

Rather than portraying the realities of sport development actions as ‘thoughtless’, Nesti (2008) suggests that the context for taking control and making change is reliant on personality, individual beliefs and sheer hard work. With such ideals, strategic outcomes may be put to one side for a while. However, this does not mean they will not be realised. Sport development officers value outcomes and are aware of them (Coalter, 2011 cited in Houlihan and Green, 2011). Indeed, in this research, the experienced programme leaders had a close eye on the impact of the changes their programmes contributed to and were keen to explain them.

### **Context-mechanism-outcome configurations for the Phase Two interviews**

This chapter explored two overarching themes from the Phase Two interviews (‘working with partners’ and ‘familiarising with participants’). From this data, a number of mechanisms were identified which facilitated a series of outcome patterns. Some of these outcomes would contribute to those outlined in the Strategy. Others were newly identified, intermediate outcomes that related to the sustainability of the programmes. The *context-mechanism-outcome* configurations for the Phase Two interviews are illustrated in Table 3. They demonstrate the complexities of partnership work in a policy area that is forever forging links with central government issues such as health, and citizenship (DCMS, 2005). Moreover, the configurations suggest that where organisations are reliant on partners and joint working, a flexible and informal approach is more likely to associate with positive outcomes. Furthermore, when projects are new or not within the normal remit of the lead organisation, working with partners is essential. Additionally, partners are more likely to buy-in when they are more informed about the programme and its activity.

Table 3 CMO configurations for the Phase Two interviews

Programme	Contexts	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Coach Mentoring	<p><b>Difficulty in timing of activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulties in synchronising activity within and between various programme partners (including participants)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular forums for the participants and programme partners to manage the timing of the activity</li> <li>Accepting the complexities of partnership work.</li> <li>Working in isolation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved synergy of partnership work</li> <li>Greater partner 'buy-in'</li> </ul>
Rural Sports Hub	<p><b>Timing complexities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of delivery and market expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not establishing a need for programmes</li> <li>Speculating about the perceptions of the facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under-recruitment of participants</li> </ul>
Disability Sports	<p><b>New and varied partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing new and evolving existing partnerships</li> <li>Complexities of working with 'several other' organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposing the new programme to established partners</li> <li>Ensuring an air of informality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners approaching the programme to refer more participants</li> <li>Programme seen as complimentary to other health related services</li> </ul>
Volunteer Programme	<p><b>Partner 'buy-in'</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Something for nothing attitude of partners when working with volunteers (free labour)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infiltrating organisations beyond the Council</li> <li>Ensuring the organisations are aware of volunteer needs and motivations</li> <li>Educating organisations about the programme and programme processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing activity beyond the bounds of the Council leisure services</li> <li>External organisation approach the Volunteer Programme for volunteers</li> </ul>
Disability Sports	<p><b>'Teamwork' and reflection on practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working in a very specialised sport development programme</li> <li>Coping with participant progression in activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coaches meeting after sessions to discuss activities, successes and failures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants progressing rapidly in gymnastics and football (Rewarding experience)</li> </ul>
Volunteering Programme	<p><b>Relationship between programme and participants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers all have differing needs and backgrounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular and formal progress reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased motivation of volunteers</li> <li>More likely to volunteer in the future (Sustainability)</li> </ul>
Coach Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognising the 'other commitments' of the participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A flexible and more informal approach to coach development and mentoring</li> <li>Greater 'human interaction' and less paperwork.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater 'buy-in' from the coach mentees</li> <li>Improved sensitivity to coach mentees needs</li> </ul>
Disability Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support mechanisms for specialised programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A designated coach per child and their parents/ guardian/ involving the parents in the activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and guardians are more confident with each other</li> </ul>
Coach Mentoring	<p><b>Changing and adapting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differing values, beliefs, skills and enthusiasm of programme leaders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing mentees to become mentors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased capacity of mentors to recruit mentees.</li> </ul>

For example, the Volunteer Programme struggled to attract partners because the partner organisations sometimes undermined the volunteers of the programme (*context*). *Mechanisms* to establish volunteer characteristics through formal reviews and educate partners about volunteer needs were triggered. This resulted partners seeing the Volunteer Programme as a more attractive service (*outcome*). This contributed to strategic outcomes regarding safer and stronger communities.

## Chapter 9

### Phase Three interviews: realising and explaining outcomes

#### Introduction

The Phase Three Interviews were conducted in March 2012. The purpose of these interviews was to explore the extent to which outcomes were realised and importantly, explain how they came about. Outcomes form the basis for modifying, launching or stopping a programme. According to Pawson and Tilley (1997:217) Realistic Evaluation should approach outcomes as a process of identifying patterns in a '...theory testing role'. Consequently, impetus was given to confirming the relationships of the contexts and mechanisms with the outcomes patterns aligned with the Strategy outcomes. The following serves as a short reminder of the important interaction of this configuration.

According to Nichols (2005) the mechanism of a programme (the way in which a sports programme affects health and wellbeing or sporting infrastructure) is contingent on a particular context or circumstance. For example, some elements of a programme will work for some participants but not for others. The combination of mechanism and context tell us why a particular programme achieved a certain outcome. Mechanisms were referred to as what it was about a programme that would bring about any effects. They are the way in which the participants in an intervention interpret and act as they participate. For example, a volunteer programme is a popular mechanism used to improve sporting infrastructure (outcome) locally. This programme may work in a variety of ways (or trigger different mechanisms). For example, the recruitment process acts as a form of socialisation that prepares them for successful and positive interaction with others involved in the programme; or the programme may act as a 'base' for volunteering, somewhere that perspective volunteers can go to for more information and opportunity.

Context was described by Pawson and Tilley (1997) as circumstance. Some circumstances will support the programme and others will not. In a community sport

programme, there may be mechanisms that act to increase confidence to exercise or be more active. These mechanism may only be triggered if certain circumstances are apparent such as the perception of the programme leader as being highly knowledgeable and experienced, or the perception of an exercise facility not being full of young, athletic and otherwise healthy participants.

Rossi et al. (2004:204) conceptualise programme outcomes as ‘...the state of the target population or the social conditions that a programme is expected to have changed’. Rossi et al. (2004) support that outcomes are observed characteristics of the target population, not of the programme. Pawson and Tilley (1997:8) refer to ‘...outcome patterns’ that may be intended and unintended consequences of programmes. Thus, in a Realistic Evaluation, there should be no direct inference to programme actions causing the outcomes (Coalter, 2007b). Instead, realist synthesis assumes a generative approach to causation. That is, outcomes are to be understood through the ‘...Interaction between the programme and the participant; that is, between structure and agency’ (Nichols, 2005:24).

According to Coalter (2007b) sport has a range of impacts that are difficult to identify in relation to causal relationships. For example, even the most robust outcome-based evaluations would be unable to explain the specific impact of a local sport intervention on reducing crime (Nichols, 2001; 2010). Outcomes are multifaceted and it was suggested that programmes should be understood against a range of outcome measures (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Coalter, 2007b) to give a more comprehensive view of the workings of programmes. The mixed method design of this research (rationalised and acknowledged in Chapter 7) allowed outcomes to be measured from different perspectives. Consequently, the Phase Three interviews were one part of several measures to understand outcomes. Interviews were theory driven (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Weiss, 1997). That is to say, the researcher asked questions about individual programme theories, guided by the *context, mechanism, outcome (CMO)* framework that attempts to explain why a programme could work and under what conditions.

The interviewee could then confirm, refute or refine this theory. The interviews included the participants of the programmes, namely:



- 2 focus group interviews (n= 18 and 16 respectively) of volunteers from the Volunteer Programme,
- face to face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 3 coaches from the Coach Mentoring Programme, and
- a face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interview with the disability sports Programme Leader.

As stated previously (Chapter 6), the exclusion of participants involved with the disability sports (Sport for All) programmes is noted. Instead, the programme leader, who was an administrator and deliverer of the disability sports projects and its related coaching sessions, gave their account of programme outcome patterns. In addition, the Rural Sports programme was excluded from the Phase Three Interviews. Outcomes for this programme focussed on improved health and wellbeing. (Community Sport Network, 2007). Consequently, such outcomes were further explored using a validated quality of life survey and detailed in the next chapter.

Using multiple levels of participants gave greater freedom of perspective in order that the researcher could learn the type of theories operating at practitioner, participant and programme level (Clarke and Dawson, 1999). Further, valuable insights were gained into how evaluation principles used in this research could be applied in a sport development setting (see research question 1). The chapter is structured so that the perspectives of the participants, outlined above, are interpreted for their respective programmes. As in the previous chapters, *context-mechanism-outcome* configurations will be illustrated and explained at the programme level. Later, in the final chapter of this thesis, their strategic significance will be explored.

### **Collecting the participants' perspectives of the Volunteer Programme**

The main themes and subthemes of the interviews with the Volunteer Programme participants are illustrated in Figure 14. For this programme, the overarching themes, referred to as *motivations to get involved* and *volunteers and their individual needs* provided the context for the theories that would best explain the outcomes. Theories emerging within the interpretation of the interviews revolved around the

development of capital according to Putnam's (1995:17) definition as 'networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together for effectively to pursue shared objectives'. The forms of capital, used in the VIAT questionnaire, can be found in Table 4. Further, these forms of capital were integral to a volunteer survey (Smith et al. 2004). The results of this survey will be detailed in the next chapter of this thesis.

**Table 4 Forms of capital (Smith et al. 2004).**

	Capital	Definition
I.	Physical	Goods and services received
II.	Human	Knowledge skills and health of people.
III.	Social	Cooperative relationships between people.
IV.	Cultural	Sense of one's own identity and understanding of others' identities.

Unlike the other programmes of the Strategy, the Volunteer programme leader developed a modified set of outcomes. While closely associated with the wider Strategy objectives, they were more programme specific. The development of more specific objectives is supported by earlier rhetoric (see Chapter 5) from Robson et al. (2013) that suggested reflexive strategies are generally more successful. In this case, the new programme leader realigned the Volunteer Programme outcomes to represent more closely, the current status of the programme. These revised outcomes were noted and agreed by the Community Sport Network. This acknowledged that while there were revisions, the updated outcomes still contributed to the overarching outcome themes of the Strategy outlined in Chapter 5. The outcomes proposed that the Volunteer Programme would provide:

- volunteers who will bring new skills and perspectives to the services, provided by the sport development team,
- a programme that will support the needs of the volunteers
- safe, enjoyable and rewarding opportunities within sport leisure, play and physical activity,
- a sustainable project, and
- a vehicle for personal and professional development.

These outcomes will be discussed and illustrated in the *context-mechanism-outcome* configurations later in this chapter. The focus group interviews with the Volunteer Programme participants considered these outcomes in a theory-testing role (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). This allowed the research to explore to what extent the above outcomes were met, how they were achieved and under what circumstances.

### Important contexts: motivations of the volunteers

During the initial stages of both focus group interviews, there was significant discussion about becoming a participant on the Volunteer Programme and the varied motivations for doing so. The overarching themes of the focus group interview are illustrated in Figure 14.

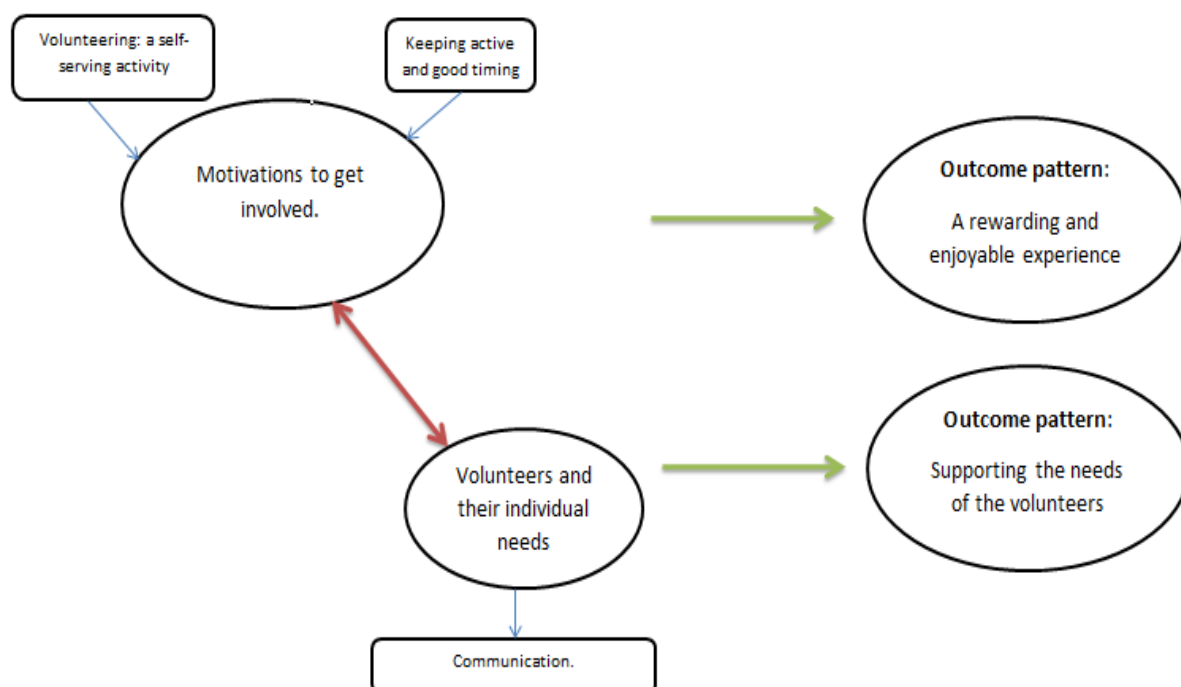


Figure 14 Thematic map for the Volunteer Programme focus group interviews.

The interviews provided important information about the long-term connection of the programme with its participants. For many of the volunteers becoming involved in the Volunteer Programme was a self-serving activity as the programme was a prerequisite to accessing the London 2012, Olympic and Paralympic Games inspired events. For example, Gary explains:

*Well, to be honest, the actual involvement in the programme was more requirement; because I wanted to do the Torch Relay, I had to do that (Gary).*

The pull of the Olympic Games torch relay was significant as several volunteers, particularly the retirees or older volunteers, were anxious about becoming involved. Howlett and Lukka (2000) acknowledged that, at least for the older volunteers, people of retirement age were less likely to be involved in volunteering activities in a sport or health related field. The most commonly cited reason from this demographic, and in particular the older females, was about their perception of being different to others that may also volunteer:

*I joined the Olympic Torch relay, so I've done that. And I did...I'm obviously on the other end of the demographic to the people here...you've got to cater for different needs. Not everyone is like me (Olivia).*

*Well, I mean, I wouldn't have thought I was the right...you know, the profile that particularly would be drafted in for volunteering (Ruby).*

Several theories attempt to explain why older people may feel different in the context of being active citizens. Cavan et al. (1949, cited in Utz et al. 2002: 523) explain that older people may pursue social activity as a way to 'preserve their self-identity' by replacing lost social roles with new activities, in the face of age related declines in health or social mobility. In the context of this research, Olivia is well aware of the demographic she represents relative to the others in the focus group. Further, Olivia expresses her individual concerns so as to preserve her identity and contribution to volunteering in the group. Ruby's uncertainty as to her profile being 'right' for volunteering is suggestive that volunteering is something that is new to her and an activity she is not sure about.

Another explanation offered by Atchley (1989, cited in Utz et al. 2002) assumes that older people will attempt to continue and maintain their role, despite the limitations of ageing, based on previous and similar experiences. Known as continuity theory, the assumption is that people will attempt to preserve their attitudes and social roles but in a way that will embrace their age as opposed to allowing it to limit them. For example, a volunteer may have been a keen sports participant earlier in their life. Age may limit their capacity to still actively participate in sport. However, the

volunteer may take up a more supportive role in sport thanks to the rewards it gave them in their youth. Research shows that women participate in sport less than men throughout their lifespan (Sport England, 2006c; Pfister, 2010). This may explain why both Ruby and Olivia felt uncertainties as to their profile for a sport volunteering programme. The programme itself is a community sport volunteering programme. Both Olivia and Ruby are less likely to have had a history of sustained and rewarding sports participation. Consequently, both would have uncertainties as to volunteering on a community sports volunteer programme. Thus, their motivations to become volunteers are more likely to have stemmed from a compensatory perspective which would align more with Cavan and colleagues 'activity theory' and would better explain concerns of not being 'the right profile'. Interestingly, Olivia differentiated herself from a younger volunteer in the focus group by making assumptions about the younger volunteer's reasons for volunteering:

*...whereas Ella, a university student, she is also you know, got to try and get some sort of employment from it (Olivia).*

This inference by the older volunteers, to an 'us and them' mentality in terms of age or life stage is significant to volunteer programme leaders. Older volunteers comparing themselves to the younger volunteers could lead to feelings of isolation rather than a harmonious group all working to similar goals. It should be noted that the focus group setting allowed for such responses as the group included an age range between 19 and 72. Interviewed individually, such issues may have been ignored or overlooked. This issue of segregation can apparently be minimised with sensitive training and induction activities that allow people to work successfully with all kinds of volunteers regardless of age or background (Midwinter, 1992).

Further, Giannoulakis et al. (2007) suggested that volunteers are motivated by having a connection with the Olympic movement or with the athletes involved in the Olympics. Another suggestion by Minnaert (2012) proposes that volunteers embrace the values of the mega event. In her research, the Olympics inspired a pride in your country or a desire to feel needed and valued by society. Clearly, an enriching experience is required regardless of the motive to volunteer in the first place. The Olympics seemed to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for the focus group participants. This suggests a programme making substantial progress

to the intended outcomes acknowledged earlier in this chapter. Where enjoyment of the Olympic Torch relay event was referred to, there was a clear intention to continue volunteering:

*I think the Olympic Torch was a one-off. And I was surprised and I enjoyed it, and I've got a little bit of time (Ruby).*

*I enjoyed it and thought I would like to, you know, do something else and become a volunteer. I don't know what to volunteer for and am still looking to see if there is something appropriate for me to do (Olivia).*

This pattern is consistent with Alexander et al. (2015) who reported that those volunteers who were highly motivated to be involved in the Olympic Games events were more likely to report an intention to continue to volunteer. However, the same study demonstrated that such levels of enthusiasm were limited to the younger age groups, particularly young females. The present research contrasts this view as both Ruby and Olivia were both mature, older women.

Clearly, there were different motivations to volunteer offered by the focus group participants. For Gary, the volunteer programme was simply a means to an end. Signing up to the programme allowed him access to the Torch Relay event. Wakelin (2013:64) refers to '...process theory'. This theory suggests that a volunteer is motivated to begin volunteering so long as there is tangible benefit to themselves. Process theory can explain Gary's motives to participate. Thus a volunteer programme that aspires to 'provide safe and rewarding opportunities' such as the one in this research, can help motivate volunteers who wish to have a more reciprocal relationship with the programme. Gratton et al. (2005) explains that participation and involvement in such events can happen on a more emotional level and that people feel a greater sense of pride and local identification. Similarly, Monga (2006) explains this as an affiliation or attachment to the event and describes the event as the trigger for people to begin volunteering. This was more likely the case for both Olivia and Ruby.

The varied motivations for volunteering provide important contexts for Volunteer Programmes. Moreover, significant sporting events seemed to impact positively on volunteer recruitment. According to the participants, the mechanisms of the

Volunteer programme were contingent on these contexts and it was recognised that the Olympic Torch Relay event was used as a hook for volunteering through the programme.

### **Volunteering: a self-serving activity?**

It is claimed that where the event has intrinsic links to an area or particular community of people, as is the case with the torch relay event in this research, the volunteer is more altruistic in their approach to actively participate in volunteering programmes or activities (Karkatsoulis et al. 2005; Ralston et al. 2005). Stebbins (2005) and more recently Wakelin (2013) challenge the true meaning of altruism in volunteering. Based on the responses above, it could be argued that Ruby and Olivia are seeking some form of personal satisfaction. Perhaps this notion of a self-serving activity is personified by Oscar:

*Well it just makes me feel good, on a selfish sort of level, that you are doing something...that you are giving your time up and not getting paid for it...and it helps the community.*

This could be interpreted as a symbiotic relationship with the programme as opposed to a volunteer who simply wants to *give back*. Stebbins (2011) identified several benefits to 'self' from those participating in leisure activities such as volunteering in community sport programmes. Self-gratification was amongst the highest ranked personal rewards cited. Defined as a combination of superficial enjoyment and deep fulfilment, Stebbins (2011) explained that only those with a sufficient skills, knowledge and experience would realise this level of self-gratification. Thus for older volunteers such as Oscar, there is a sense that the volunteer programme is giving back to the volunteer. This is a significant finding as those motivated by a moral obligation or wanting to feel useful are more likely to volunteer more frequently (Okun, 1994). Moreover, we appreciate how the mechanisms of the Volunteer Programme will work in different ways with different people (Nichols, 2005).

Another layer of important contextual information was revealed in the responses from younger volunteers. This group were aware of the Olympic events and were equally as enthusiastic about becoming involved. However, the younger volunteers also reported more instrumental (Chapman and McGuinness, 2013) reasons for

becoming involved in the programme. The most common response was to be able to apply and develop their knowledge and skills:

*I'm saying it gives you the opportunity to put theory into practice. So what I mean is, if you learn something in theory, say in coaching or something, open coaching methods, different coaching styles, is that always the best way to coach and teach. And you can see that, you can implement that and it gives you that opportunity. Which I think, from a university point of view, you know, for a student who's learning, who's taking on new stuff, that's a great opportunity to apply them skills (Vinnie).*

*It's also helped me, you know, in the future, when I put that say on my CV, or I've been to job interviews, or coaching with other companies (Ella).*

For Vinnie, the Volunteer Programme provided a platform upon which he can hone his skills and develop his experience. This explanation of reflective practice is also significant as it implies that Vinnie is wanting to better his skills to improve their impact. Stebbings (2011) explains that this can be seen both as a need to self-express and also as an opportunity to improve what you give back to the community. While the interview gave greater credence to the reciprocal relationship, the latter, more altruistic behaviour is worthy of note. This debate between altruistic and reciprocal relationships between volunteers and their respective programmes is well cited in the literature (Monga, 2006; Elstad, 2003; Hoye et al. 2008). Wakelin (2013:73) refers to a '...middle-category, or semi-altruism'. This is when volunteers expect nothing from the programme other than some personal satisfaction, through making friends or having a new experience or simply enjoying themselves.

Programme leaders should take these 'levels' of altruism into account in developing community volunteer programmes. In this research, understanding such motives will help develop programmes that are sensitive to individual volunteer needs and their circumstances. The notion of 'giving back' is complex and not simply an unselfish exercise based on the motives of the volunteer. Instead, this research suggests a *mechanism* that allows for a reciprocal relationship where the programme and the volunteer should continually evaluate what they can do for each other. This provides for more positive programme outcomes, particularly those that refer to allowing



volunteers to *bring new skills and perspectives* to the services provided by the sport development team and *providing volunteers with a programme that serves volunteer needs*.

### **Mechanisms for keeping volunteers active (and at just the right time)**

The Volunteer Programme was delivered through a series of activities or mechanisms. These included: setting up equipment for local volunteer events; running local sport sessions and tournaments and learning how to coach sport and design youth-led activities. In the first focus group, there were several references made to the activities, their timing and variety. Poor experiences were reported when there was significant delay between actively volunteering and enrolling on the volunteering programme. For example, one volunteer was very aware of how demotivating this delay can be:

*... when I first started, it took a few months for it to get going and me to start volunteering. It has taken a while, it did take a while. And that was when I started like three years ago... It could miff people, you know, people could get fed up and lose them. And it's a shame (Ruby).*

Such experiences could threaten several intended objectives of the programme outlined in the Strategy; particularly those outcomes relating to *providing enjoyable and rewarding opportunities* and *ensuring the sustainability of the project*. (Community Sport Network, 2007). This acknowledgement of lack of activity gave rise to conversations within the group about the variety of activities being a potential issue. Immediately after Ruby's comment, the following conversation ensued:

*I don't know if they'd just like start...because they've done the same programmes for a while now, haven't they? (Olivia)*

*Yeah, maybe introduce a few more different initiatives and different programmes (Ruby).*

*Yeah, more variety I think could possibly help (Ella).*

*Yeah, it's doing the same thing over again, and like there's only a few though in each area where we all live, I suppose... Yeah, it is quite big. So I think they cover the whole area, don't they, so (Olivia).*

This conversation suggests that the expansion of the programme to a larger demographic area may have influenced the rate and nature of the programme activities. There was difficulty in reaching a wider audience according to Ella. Further, the more established volunteers in the group acknowledged a repetition of activities and an enthusiasm for new ideas and activities. One *mechanism* that was perceived to improve motivation was simply keeping the volunteers together regularly as opposed to engaging in just volunteering activities:

*Yeah, these workshops, trying to bring people together, trying to bring in new initiatives and even development opportunities. And that's key because I think as soon as that motivation goes, and that sort of enthusiasm, and if it goes by any of the time, then that'll just kill it....But I think they do well at that, you know, from the time I've been on, that's always kept going and they're always trying to bring things through (Vinnie).*

Keeping volunteers motivated is complex. In this study, the volunteers acknowledged that, despite the best efforts of the programme leader, the success of the programme and its expansion over a wider geographic area may cause a lag in volunteer activity. Given the previously mentioned issues (see Chapter 8) such as travel concerns and time, some volunteers were more active than others depending on where they lived in relation to the programme activities. Such delays placed pressure on programmes to retain their volunteer base.

According to Sellon (2014) retention of volunteers is greatest when there is support from programme staff, recognition of volunteer contribution and when volunteers experience self-gratification, or the enjoyment of meeting new people. This is recognised as *intrinsic motivation* where the activity is done for its own sake because it is interesting and enjoyable (Allen and Bartle, 2014). A lag in activity affected all of these factors consequently, motivations to continue volunteering were compromised. Vinnie's contribution to the conversation was supportive of the programme and its capacity to motivate. This and his constructive approach to resolving the issue was met with a sense of agreement from other members of the

group. Thus, the volunteers remained motivated; however, they were mindful of what is required to volunteer long term in a rewarding and enjoyable environment. In the second of the focus group interviews, only one volunteer made any comment on the issue of keeping active and timing activity. When asked to explain an issue with a volunteer programme event, the following response was given:

*Not as rewarding because, there wasn't that much for me to do really, because there was enough people being paid to do their jobs. The volunteers...there were a few volunteers that were already busy doing, and then it was all done, do you know what I mean, there wasn't actually that much spread out (Pippa).*

In this case, there was clearly an issue with the number of volunteers in attendance at an event and the actual number required to support the activity. While possibly a planning and logistical issue, this does relate to the theme of motivation through keeping active. Further, the notion of volunteering being a self-serving activity is also challenged here. Volunteers who do not feel they are able to contribute will not experience the self-gratification required to keep them motivated. Volunteer programmes can have variety and can time activities appropriately but if volunteers are surplus to requirements, this can be demotivating and will compromise long-term volunteer engagement and commitment with the programme. In terms of a realist synthesis of volunteer programme impact, this programme, with its increasing number of volunteers and widening geographic boundary (*context*) needs to keep bringing the volunteers together (*mechanism*). In addition volunteer activities need to be planned carefully (*mechanism*) if volunteers are to have safe and rewarding opportunities (*outcome*) the project is to be sustainable (*outcome*).

### **Volunteers and their individual needs**

A key theme of the focus group interviews was discussion surrounding the needs of the volunteers. There were frequent references to 'appropriate activities'. The main reason reported for the programme not being able to meet the needs of the individual volunteers was management and communication of programme activities. Poor experiences, particularly from the older volunteers, when communication had either broken down or was not sufficient to reach all the volunteers, was noted:

*It's all very well putting things on Facebook, but some people don't use social networking sites (Ben).*

*Well, I think my point of view is if...I mean, I think sometimes it could be a bit disappointing if some of them [programme leaders], say, haven't got their phones on (Oscar).*

Volunteers were more likely to report positively about their individual needs when they had interacted with the programme leader or with other volunteers on the programme more directly. There was a sense of empowerment and ownership with more direct consultation. This is supported by Dingle (2001) who suggested an 'open door' support policy for volunteers, particularly older volunteers who may not feel as supported through other means such as social media. Similarly, Smith and Gay (2005) suggested that retention and recruitment of older volunteers was improved with a more proactive approach in the form of outreach work and direct mailing. In this research, it seems that greater interaction between the programme and its participants is an important mechanism in circumstances (contexts) where volunteers require more information and improved communication.

For several in the focus groups, there was a feeling that they were being left to their own devices, which led to feelings of uncertainty. When uncertainty was reported, there was a greater reliance and pressure on the volunteer programme leader and the programme team to give direction:

*I enjoyed it...I would like to do something else.....but I'm waiting for [the programme] to give that direction...I don't know what to volunteer for (Jayne).*

*What other opportunities are out there besides those that are organised by [The Sport Development Team]? I don't know. I don't feel as if I know enough. And it does rely on me trawling round for opportunities (Ruby).*

Further, the volunteers acknowledged barriers such as work commitments and having to travel to programme activities when they felt that they were not being provided for or made fully aware of the programme activities and its intentions.

Some of the group, particularly the older volunteers simply wanted some thanks. They could tolerate the lack of awareness so long as they felt their contribution was being recognised:

*...communicating sort of thanks and gratitude, at the beginning of the year for what we achieved last year. I think it just reminds people that the volunteer programme is still there. Because sometimes you can say well, I've done that and you forget about it for a few months, but then you get an email and think, oh yeah, maybe I could do something like this. So I think it sort of triggers things in people's minds and it gives...you think well, I was appreciated. (Ruby)*

If volunteer programmes are to achieve their outcomes then programme leaders need to be very aware of individual needs of their volunteers. In this research, this is particularly problematic in terms of the channels of communication. Providing for individual needs is one of the key outcomes of the volunteer programme referred to earlier in this chapter. There seems to be a disconnect between what the programme could offer and how these offerings were communicated and targeted to the volunteers. Almost all of the aforementioned issues were acknowledged by the older volunteers suggesting that the younger volunteers were satisfied with the activities and how they were communicated.

The *context-mechanism-outcome* framework suggests that, in this research, different generations have very different expectations and programmes must be sensitive to this through appropriate programme activities or mechanisms. For example, the older population must either be educated in the more modern communication methods as part of their programme induction or, the volunteer programme staff must allow time and personnel for more face-to-face communication. Further, there needs to be greater recognition of volunteer contribution by improving and increasing the opportunity for rewards. This would allow a more conducive environment for programme outcomes, particularly those associated with providing safe and rewarding opportunities and sustaining the programme.

### **Outcome patterns for the Volunteer Programme**

In this research, the effectiveness of a community sports volunteer programme was explained through the views and experiences of the volunteers that contributed to it. The positive outcomes of the programme were attributed to increased social confidence and the ability to find programme activities that allowed volunteers to

use their key skills and experiences. A sense of belonging and ensuring that the programme could cater for individual needs, particularly with communication, provided the conditions for longer term volunteering. This improved programme outcomes relating to sustainability. The nature and implications of the *context-mechanism-outcome* configurations for this programme are further illustrated in Table 5 and are now discussed in more detail.

During the interviews, the notion of social capital according to Putnam (1995, 2000) was offered to the group. Questions regarding trusting each other, improving networks and working together towards the same goals were offered to the group in relation to the activities they were involved with through the Volunteer Programme. There was significant conversation within each focus group about the social experiences of the volunteers. There were positive responses about the impact of the programme when the volunteers spoke of other participants they worked with:

*I mean, my first one was an inclusion event, and I can say it's a very rewarding session to be at. And just the people that are involved in those sessions and the way it's done is a very positive one (Olivia).*

*Because I thought on the day [of the torch relay], there was, again, a great atmosphere, met people that I thought...well, they were just the same as me, and this is a good thing to do, and I've got time and I think I'm quite resourceful. And I thought, yes, people should do this (Ella).*

*In terms of being involved with the team, they sort of give me those responsibilities, and now to be a part of that team has, again, boosted that confidence factor for me (Martin).*

The above responses convey, for some participants, that the Volunteer Programme was seen to be a foundation for good experiences with like-minded people as a condition for long term volunteering. The sessions and activities were found to be rewarding and this improved the confidence of volunteers. This made longer-term commitment to the programme more feasible. Being with other volunteers was referred to as a social value by Gallarza et al. (2013).

Table 5 CMO configurations for the Volunteer Programme.

<b>Contexts</b>	<b>Mechanisms</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<p><b>Varied motives for being involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence of a mega-sporting event</li> <li>• Varied backgrounds of volunteers in terms of age, gender, motivation and readiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay events as an emotive and gratifying hook for volunteering.</li> <li>• Allowing volunteers to use their individual skills and perspectives through a review process on enrolling to the programme</li> <li>• Giving volunteers responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided safe and rewarding opportunities for volunteering</li> <li>• Increased enthusiasm from the volunteers to do more volunteering</li> <li>• Bringing new skills and perspectives</li> <li>• Improved confidence of volunteers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Timing and variety of activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complexities of keeping volunteers active</li> <li>• Diverse range of volunteering activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lag between enrolling on the volunteering programme and being involved in volunteering activity</li> <li>• Ensuring more workshops and social events to encourage 'togetherness' of volunteers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demotivating, risk of losing volunteers</li> <li>• Keeping volunteers motivated and rewarded.</li> </ul>

However, it was also noted that these motives were difficult to manage and maintain because of the expectations of social relationships in volunteering. However, Rehberg (2005:116) warned that being with other volunteers could be '...enriching and inspiring but also potentially strenuous and exhausting'.

The use of sport programmes such as the Volunteer Programme to improve people's lives is based on the broad belief that sport may be of some social benefit (Kay and Bradbury, 2009). Despite the lack of evidence of a causal relationship (Coalter, 2007b) previous governments (DCMS, 2002; DCMS, 2012) have directed significant elements of their policy towards these social goals and invested billions of pounds (Bardens et al. 2012) on such assumptions and ideals. In this research, volunteers explained how supporting sport enriched lives as it offers rewarding and positive experiences, improves confidence and brings like-minded people together. Thus, this programme is delivering on its strategic promise to:

- provide safe and rewarding opportunities in sport, play and physical activity and,
- provide a vehicle for personal and professional development.

However, the discussions in the interviews have highlighted that context is important. For example, in this research, volunteer programme leaders must try and place likeminded people together. They must also support the volunteers on individual terms and, at the right time, demonstrate good programme leadership by giving more responsibility to volunteers to boost their confidence. This goes some way to supporting the theories that sport programmes can provide social benefits. Further, a realist framework can help explain the desired contexts for fulfilling outcomes. Consequently, programme leaders can consider the benefits in relation to individuals involved, the contexts within which they operate, and the scale of the effects across the range of volunteers that support a programme.

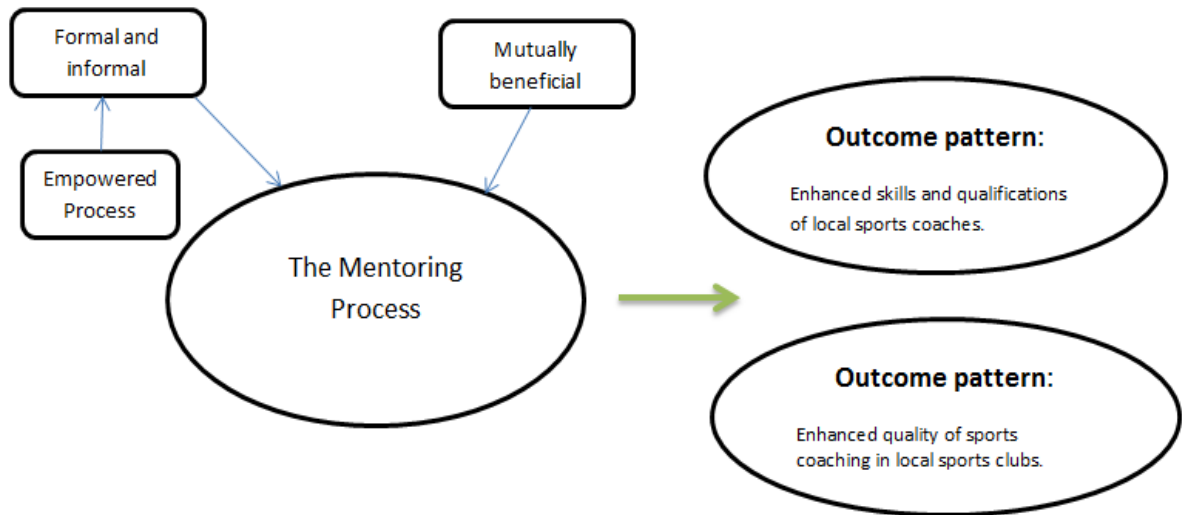
### **Perspectives of the Coach Mentors**

For the Coach Mentoring Programme, interviews were conducted with three Coach Mentors. The thematic map illustrated in Figure 15 outlines the main themes and associated subthemes from the analysis of the interviews with those participants involved with the Coach Mentoring Programme. The *mentoring process* theme and related subthemes represent discussions of the key mechanisms associated with participating in the Coach Mentoring Programme. Finally, on the right of the illustration outcome patterns are identified. Throughout this part of the chapter, two levels of participant are referred to:

1. **Coach Mentors** – Experienced and qualified (minimum National Governing Body Level 2) coaches put in place to support less experienced and less qualified coaches.
2. **Coach** – Volunteers in sports clubs who participated in the Coach Mentoring Programme to further their experience and qualifications to coach in their chosen sport.

The Coach Mentoring Programme was developed to improve the sporting infrastructure in the region. Sports coaches are characterised as significant enablers of sports participation (Griffiths and Armour, 2012; Santi et al. 2014). Several activities or mechanisms were put in place to fulfil a set of discrete outcomes.





**Figure 15 Thematic map for the Coach Mentoring Programme.**

These activities included a mentoring system where, according to Bloom (2013), highly experienced and qualified coaches would work with and support less experienced and qualified coaches. Further, this programme provided a direct route to improving coaching qualifications through investment in National Governing Body Awards and access to volunteer opportunities such as coaching youth groups in sports clubs through sports club forum meetings. The intended outcomes of the Coach Mentoring Programme were to:

- I. Enhance the skills and qualifications of local sports coaches, and
- II. Enhance the quality of sports coaching in local sports clubs.

(Community Sport Network, 2007)

During the interviews, initial discussions allowed the Coach Mentors to consider their role and the process of becoming involved in the Coach Mentoring Programme. Further, theories were offered about what it was that made coach mentoring programmes work. This allowed the participants to reflect on such theories and confirm, refine or refute them based on their experiences. Thus, a realist synthesis of the data ensued and the *context-mechanism-outcome* configurations could be developed (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). For one Coach Mentor, the reason for becoming involved was profoundly personal and selfless:

*I want to inspire the next generation to enjoy football as much as I enjoy it, so if, through my coaching, I can encourage them to play and enjoy every aspect, that what will give me gratification (Simon).*

Despite such a response, all the Coach Mentors were in agreement that the programme itself was a means to improving the *local sporting infrastructure and sports performances*. Alan acknowledged this most succinctly:

*Ultimately, that helps us (the sports club) produce better players and teams, which is actually the end goal (Paul).*

Discussion of the 'end goals' at the start of the interview was important. This helped the participants build theories about how the Coach Mentoring programme would achieve goals and under what circumstances.

### **Coach mentoring: an informal but empowered process**

There was significant discussion about the mentoring process when Coach Mentors were asked about what makes a coach mentoring programme work. There are a variety of theories as to why sports coach mentoring would improve sporting infrastructure. Among the perspectives offered in the literature are improvements in coach confidence (Bertz and Purdy, 2010); competence (Bloom, 2013, Demers et al. 2006; Koh et al. 2014) and increased identity by expanding networks (Koh et al. 2014). There was a general agreement among the mentors that these theories had some credence. However, when asked how such benefits may occur, one mentor commented that mentoring is an empowered process that is driven by the coaches themselves:

*I think mentoring is actually not necessarily about showing people, telling them what to do, it's actually just being there if they have any questions, so you know a bit of guided discovery for them if they are feeling a bit unsure (Dave).*

There was clear recognition from the coach mentors that the coaches (not the mentors) were to drive the mentoring process and that it was not up to the mentors to 'chase things up'. There was a similar finding in the Phase Two Interviews (see Chapter 8), where the programme leader described *development* as a process that

was ‘...more down to the coaches than the mentors to do’. Abell et al. (1995) reported that because mentors have a mentoring role as opposed to an evaluative one, mentoring effectiveness was enhanced. Cushion (2006:131) has highlighted the importance of a more formal process to mentoring programmes as the current ‘informal’ practices are ‘...uneven in terms of quality and outcome, uncritical in style, and, from the evidence...serve to reproduce power relations and practices’. In this research, the Coach Mentoring Programme’s primary focus, in terms of process, was to enhance accessibility and improve impact without increasing the existing obligations of the Coach Mentors on the programme. One Coach Mentor described the meetings with his coaches as follows:

*...initially, it was just a case of the coach and mentor would arrange between themselves after originally meeting. Then we left it to them and they would individually contact me if they were not happy with anything or they needed some additional help (Dave).*

The mentors were supportive of the degree of autonomy placed with the coach. However, one mentor expressed the belief that the impact of the mentoring process would only be felt:

*...as long as the coaches are receptive to us and they want to listen and they want to learn, then, I think it works. Some coaches that I have actually given some feedback to in a previous experience have not really welcomed that advice, and have not taken it on board. Because many coaches think they are better than they really are, but they are not. When I tell them something, it is important that they listen to what you have got to tell them (Simon).*

When challenged about a more formal role, the Mentors were more defensive in their position. The Coach Mentors suggested that a more autonomous and empowered approach would be better and that limiting a coach to a single Mentor may result in the coach mirroring an experienced Coach Mentor’s session. This, as opposed to developing their own sessions and adopting styles they were more comfortable with. As one coach mentor put it:

*I actually think, a really interesting paradox here, I really believe by getting these, er... coaches, to actually watch different coaches themselves, they will*

*actually begin to realise what is good coaching, and also begin to recognise what bad coaching is (Dave).*

*The more hours she can do the better she will become. And also, working with different players and coaches, including different abilities and different ages, I believe, makes you a better coach. But you also get that experience, you become more rounded as an individual (Paul).*

This may contradict the criticisms of Cushion (2006). In this research, informality may work so long as the responsibility was placed with the coach to individualise their style and delivery of coaching sessions. Further, there is the suggestion in the interviews that the coaches should not be limited to just one mentor and that a varied range of practices should be observed. Previously, Jones et al. (2004) explained that overly formal coach mentoring process can reduce the coaches' observations and experiences rather than diversify and increase them.

Clearly, the process of mentoring is complex. While the benefits and limitations of the process have been established in previous research (Bertz and Purdy, 2011; Bloom, 2013; Cushion, 2006; Koh et al. 2014), in this research, we see important *context-mechanism-outcome* patterns in the data. The Coach Mentors believed that the Coach Mentoring Programme 'enhanced the skills and qualifications of local sports coaches' (outcome) but only if the coaches are exposed to a number of mentors and coaching practices (mechanism). Further, if the coach is proactive and seeks guidance from the Mentor *if and when needed*, then there is an increased opportunity for coaching practice to be *original* and *distinct*. The participants in this research felt that a combination of individuality and having a variety of experiences would 'improve the quality of coaching in local sports clubs'. Thus, in terms of context, there are varied interpretations of the roles for Coach Mentors and Coaches (mentees). The expectations of both mentor and mentee need to be clear from the start of the mentoring process.

### **A mutually beneficial process?**

While coaching styles and personalities are not the focus of this thesis, there are some interesting comparisons noted in the responses above. Of note is the more autocratic response offered by Simon. The notion of mentoring being a one-way process is very apparent. An opposing view is taken (Abell et al. 1995; Tong and

Kram, 2013; Bowers and Eberhart, 1988) and suggests that mentoring is not just of benefit to the inexperienced and developing coach but also to the Coach Mentors who are able to expand and diversify their own practices when working with mentees. Cushion et al. (2006) are also supportive of a more reflective coach as a catalyst for positive change. Such change underpins the outcomes of community sports programmes, including the Coach Mentoring Programme evaluated in this research. Dave takes a more egalitarian perspective where the coach is exposed to a variety of coaching settings and decides for themselves what is observed as good practice. Another Coach Mentor also recognised the potential benefit of the programme to himself:

*This is the first time anyone has took an interest in my coaching, so any help I get is more than I had (Paul).*

The notion of 'development' in this programme is recognised beyond the inexperienced coaches and supports the literature regarding mentoring as a two way process. Traditional notions of mentoring programmes were job related and hierarchical in structure. According to Higgins (2000) they were focussed on the relationship between a single mentor and coach and that only the mentee would *learn*. This research suggests that mentoring is something more. The relationships extend beyond the bounds of the organisation and looks to operate at a community or professional level.

Two of the three Coach Mentors in the Phase Three interviews agreed that this reciprocal process suited them and that a more formal, systematic approach to mentoring would have been difficult to engage with and limit the shared benefits of such practices:

*I think so; I think in all honesty we all have enough meetings...if you wanted to do it in a structured fashion with more contact then you are asking a lot of the mentor. Whereas the mentees are getting the benefit, there is nothing there for the mentor (Simon).*

Simon was another Coach Mentor who referred to some form of mutual benefit from the Coach Mentoring Programme. This acknowledgement of a reciprocal relationship proves a useful insight to the *mechanisms* of the Coach Mentoring Programme. A flexible format was agreed to suite all the participants. Consequently,

any time that coaches and their mentors did spend together was precious. Further, the mentoring element of coach development was seen as a part of a parcel of measures such as studying the game and observing other coaches (including themselves). When asked about how the programme helped with these processes, one Coach Mentor explained that this was made easier on two levels:

*Well the financial support is a big help, especially as we have such a wide area to cover. Also, it has helped me structure what I do better, you know, in terms of planning my sessions and structuring them (Simon).*

Here we realise an interesting paradox between the informality of mentoring and the formality of doing so in a community sports programme. The earlier requires informality and, when possible, should be mutually beneficial. The latter offers a formal setting and reduces barriers such as finance in order that Coach and Coach Mentor can work together. Such circumstances are significant indicators for realising outcomes in the coach mentoring programme in this research.

### **Outcome patterns for the Coach Mentoring Programme**

Later in the interviews, the mentors were asked about observed impacts of the programme on the sporting infrastructure (the number of qualified coaches, their development and quality of coaching). All the coach mentors agreed that the programme had enhanced the local coaching provision. One coach mentor talked about benefits on a strategic level and the value of the programme as partner to their club:

*That we know we're supported... and that we can go to somebody if there are any problems. It just makes us feel part of a bigger community rather than just a little gym club doing our own thing (Paul).*

This suggests that the Coach Mentors recognised the benefits of a programme that allowed clubs to work with others and not in isolation. The concept of learning communities is recognised in sports coaching (Gilbert et al. 2009) as a means of continuous professional development. However, Culver and Trudel (2006) explain such communities may only be effective if elements of the programme setting are specifically designed to nurture and sustain the community. The potential of the Coach Mentoring Programme as a mechanism to share learning in communities is

clearly recognised by Paul. For the other Coach Mentors, the programme impact was more objective and personal. There was also a greater appreciation of the programme outcomes:

*Our cricket club, it's only a small club, so now there are three coaches in there and they are qualified. It's achieved that (Dave).*

*The [disability sports] club has two or three qualified coaches for the girls' football programme now, one of whom became a mentor for the level 2 [coach] so that's happened (Simon).*

Further assessment of the outcomes of the scheme will be reported in the next chapter where a critical appraisal of the extent to which key performance indicators have been met, will take place. In the interviews, the outcomes were being realised and the impact of the programme mechanisms was acknowledged. Table 6 further illustrates the *context-mechanism-outcome* relationships for the Coach Mentoring Programme.

**Table 6 CMO configurations for the Coach Mentoring Programme.**

<b>Contexts</b>	<b>Mechanisms</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<p><b>The mentoring process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied interpretations of what mentoring is and how it may happen</li> <li>• Differing styles and approaches of mentoring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using more than one mentor per mentee</li> <li>• Empowering the mentee to have a greater degree of control over mentoring activity and frequency (informal process).</li> <li>• An understanding between the Coach Mentor and the Coach that the mentoring process was mutually beneficial.</li> <li>• Participants having financial support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved coaches</li> <li>• A more distinct and individual style of coaching</li> <li>• Benefit/ rewarding for the mentor as well as the mentee. Mutual benefits.</li> <li>• Greater number of better coaches.</li> </ul>

For example, the Coach Mentoring Programme is enhancing the skills and qualifications of the local community (outcome) by providing more qualified and experienced coaches. However, the Coach Mentors indicated that *context* was important. In this case, such a mechanism will only trigger the positive outcomes acknowledged above if the Coach Mentors embrace a notion of mentoring that is flexible and driven by the mentee (Coach). Moreover, the process has to be seen to

be mutually beneficial and a process where inexperienced coaches are challenged to develop on their own terms (but with guidance).

### **Perspectives of the ‘Sport for All’ disability sports coach**

One face to face interview was conducted with the coach involved in the Sport for All Hub, Disability Sport Programme. The programme was, at the time, a positive and proactive response to government policy that was to make sport more accessible to communities deemed ‘...hard to reach’ (Sport England, 2004:24). The logic model for the ‘sport for all’ projects is illustrated in Chapter 5 and provides a more detailed account of the short medium and long term outcomes for these programmes. People with a disability, including children, face significant physical and social barriers to participating in sport and physical activity (Maher et al. 2007; Misener and Darcy, 2014) which this programme aimed to address.

As in all the interviews for this empirical phase of the research, initial discussions evolved around the theories of promoting sport in hard to reach communities and what it was that may make such sport programmes work. Figure 16 illustrates the two overarching themes and the related subthemes from the interview with the sports coach responsible for delivering the Disability Sport Programme. Using the Realistic Evaluation framework, these themes, represented in the ellipses, illustrated the discussion of contexts within which the mechanisms could trigger outcome patterns. The mechanisms are represented in the boxes on the map.

These configurations are discussed in relation to key outcomes of the programme. which included:

- I. Widening access and increasing participation,
- II. creating safer and stronger communities
- III. providing opportunities for all to participate and develop skills, and
- IV. contributing to improving health and wellbeing, and developing education and skill (CSN, 2007).



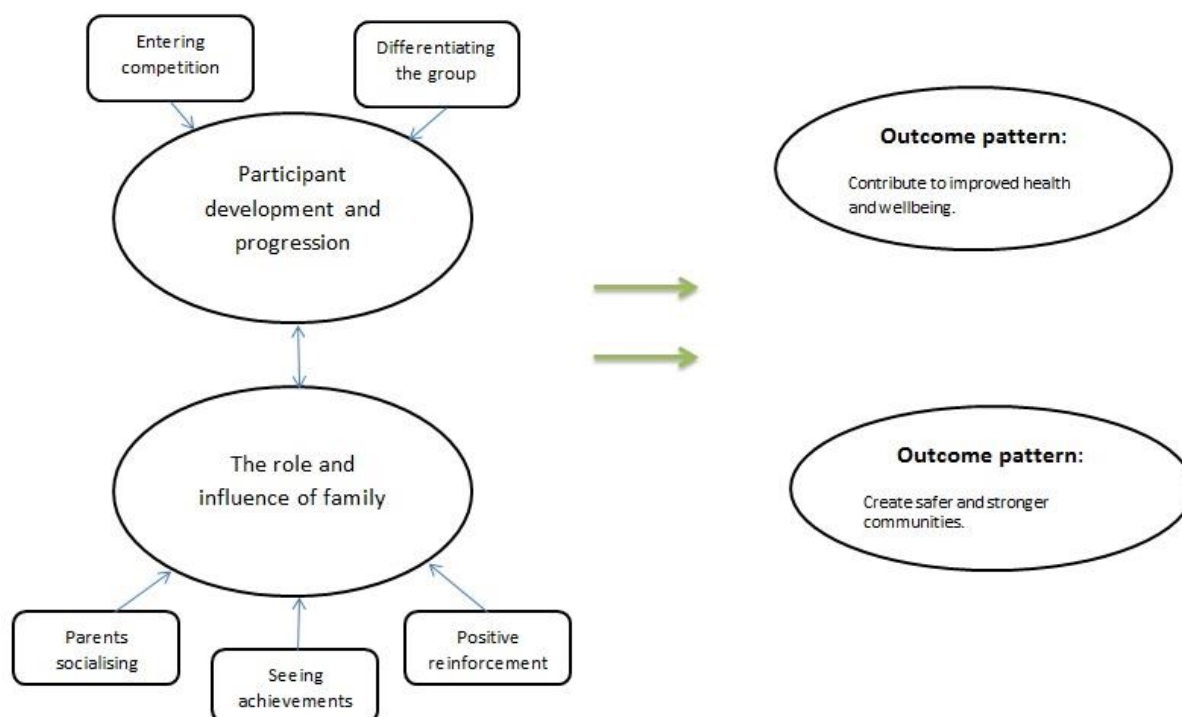


Figure 16 Thematic map for the interviews with the disability sports coach.

The literature is replete with reference to disability sport improving indices of physical health and fitness (Novac et al. 2006; Anttila et al. 2008; Kotte et al. 2014). This literature is often limited to improving mobility or components of physical fitness such as strength, speed and flexibility and rarely considers wider health outcomes such as social health, relationships with others and being able to adapt comfortably to different social settings. However, such findings are important, as reduced fitness is an indicator for reduced participation in sport (Tsang et al. 2013) and further isolation from mainstream activity for the disabled participant.

### Participant development and progression

During the interview, the coach was asked what impact the programme had on the participants involved. Initial responses and discussion were limited to the impact on the coach herself but are included here as they help develop an understanding of the impact on the disabled children involved in the gymnastics sessions:

*Some children have progressed so much that we've had to create a separate session, had to change sessions quite drastically to suit the needs of the children...because in the smallest group, that's the really young children, the*

*under fours, they had come on so well, we felt that that now needed to be split into two classes...and we've done it on ability (Wendy).*

This progression of the participants involved in the Disability Sport Programme was acknowledged by the same interviewee in the Phase Two interviews (see Chapter 8). However, the physical developments observed by the coach of the participants are more powerfully realised here as they have had a profound effect on the way the coach has had to deliver the programme sessions.

There were specific references made to age and physical development in the interview. Younger participants seemed to gain more, in terms of physical ability than the older children involved in the programme. Further, the coach suggested that she wasn't quite prepared for the extent of development observed with the younger children. This suggested both a lack of experience with this age group and affirmed the distinctiveness of the programme and its attempts to widen access. According to Laskowski and Lexell (2012), very little is known about the rate of physical development in disabled children of pre-school age.

Active participation has previously been shown to enhance motor development in children with intellectual disabilities (ID). For example, Westendorp et al. (2014) compared the gross motor skills of children with ID with that of typically developing children all aged between 7-12 years. Across all groups, the study found that those participating in more organised sport had higher levels of locomotor skills. Similarly, Fotiadou et al. (2009) demonstrated improved dynamic balance ability in children with ID who followed a 12-week programme of rhythmic gymnastics.

More recently, Bianca (2013) demonstrated that a "Gymnastics for All" programme measured new motor abilities specific to artistic gymnastics in a group of children with both intellectual and physical disability. The study concluded that these new skills could help them access competitive gymnastics thus sustaining their participation in sport. However, little is known about the way in which such impacts were measured for this study other than observations by the researcher. Further, Macphail et al. (2003) explained that competition should be approached with caution, particularly with very young children and that emphasis should be placed on encouraging the children to try a variety of activities as this was found to be more enjoyable.

Kotte et al. (2014) demonstrated the benefits of a 'Fitkids' therapy programme on health related fitness and quality of life for disabled children. The study measured health related fitness and quality of life improvements to the Fitkids participants after six months of a graded physical training programme. Shamshiri et al. (2013) demonstrated the effects of gymnastics activities on social and behavioural difficulty in pre-school children. Behaviour and social skills improved for all the children participating in the gymnastics groups relative to controls. Although limited to parent reports through a questionnaire, such findings have demonstrated some benefits of sport, in particular gymnastics, for the physical and social development of children with a disability. Nevertheless, how do these positive outcomes develop? What mechanisms are at play? In this research, the leader for the Disability Sports Programme offered the following explanation:

*It's quite surprised us with the tiny ones, the children, you know, age about 2, really surprised us. But I think it was that they all had one to one support at the beginning (Wendy).*

Of interest is the coach's realisation of context. In this case, the rate of physical development of the younger children was faster than initially expected. The important mechanism was explained as the individual support given to the children when they started the programme. This one to one support allowed the coaches to tailor activity to the individual participants' needs. According to the literature (Michaud, 2004; Rubin et al. 2014; Tuffrey, 2013) individual levels of support are important if programmes are to improve outcomes for this group of participants.

The coach stated that the one to one support remained in place but the activities for the group in the additional session had changed to reflect their ability:

*All but two of the group, they've now moved to a class on Saturday. But they've still got one to one, but we've moved the skill level...higher. You know, we've upped what we are doing and we've really changed what we are doing with that group (Wendy).*

There was further recognition of the physical development of the group through their involvement in sport beyond its health benefits and as a structured form of physical activity:

*We are actually going to be holding a competition for the Saturday group and they are going to do floor and vault. The parents are so excited. (Wendy)*

This transcends the notion of simply participating in sport and suggests that the programme is moving towards its longer term outcomes were participants can progress to a performance level of participation with the opportunity to be successful in their chosen sport.

### **The role and influence of family**

When asked about the impact the programme had at the level of the community there was significant discussion about the children and their families. Several theories of parental involvement and influence are offered in the literature. The most frequently cited are those that reflect on parental role modelling and beliefs (King et al. 2006; Anderson, 2009); particularly parental perceptions of children's competence (Murphy and Carbone, 2008). Bandura (1986) proposed parental influence based on children reproducing the behaviours of their parents based on observational and social learning processes. However, attempts to strengthen such theory have produced mixed results. Some experimental studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between parental influence and physical activity levels of children (Fuemmeler et al. 2011; Oliver et al. 2010) while other studies have shown little or very weak association (Jago et al. 2010; Cleland et al. 2011). Qualitative studies have acknowledged the importance family place on engagement in physical activity and sport as a mechanism for increased parent-child communication, spending time together and enjoyment (Thompson et al. 2010). These theories were discussed in the interview with the programme leader who supported the theories and made some additional refinements based on her experiences with the participants of the programme:

*I think it's been very successful for the families. Especially the tiny children erm, under four and for the most profoundly disabled children. Because the families have seen their children achieve things and it surprised us all... It's made the children bonding with those parents nice to see (Wendy).*

Again, the coach places emphasis on the extremities of the group in terms of age and this time, on the level of disability. Further, there is the suggestion that the

activities help build relationships between the parent and child. This sense of achievement from others, including parents has been acknowledged as a significant outcome in the literature (Hodge, 2014; Taylor and Collins, 2015;). McElroy (2002) emphasises the important role of family in sport participation. Underpinning this role is Elkands (1994, cited in McElroy, 2002) *vital family* theory. This recognises that family members undergo continuous social and physical change. Families with disabled children are not immune to this change. One could argue that change is greater in families with a disabled child; family members must rely on each other for support. This includes healthy behaviours such as participation in sport and physical activity (McElroy, 2002).

KristÈn et al. (2003) add further support to the significance of family. Their findings demonstrated that parents regarded sport as a form of health education and as a means for their children to achieve participation in society. Moreover, their findings suggested that this developmental or changing process was important for empowering the children to influence their life situation and that parental support was important to this outcome.

The coach observed that parents became enthused by the sense of achievement and that there was a significant positive response. These important social and individual constructs have been noted previously (Trost et al. 2003; Ornelas et al. 2007) and relate to direct influence through verbal encouragement and positive reinforcement and watching the activities (Voorhees et al. 2005). In the interview, it was suggested that this helped develop the parent and sibling relationship and beyond this, it was suggested that parental involvement may help sustain participation:

*And then when the children have moved on and they are not with the parents like in the higher level session. They [parents] are very, very excited to make sure that the children get here. So there hasn't been the drop off rate. Whereas with other classes we've run it has not been quite like that (Wendy).*

The parents' belief in their child's competence is important and a useful motivator for both parent and sibling sustaining their participation in sport and physical activity (Yao and Rhodes, 2015). However Buffart et al. (2009) suggest that this belief and encouragement will only be realised if the parent is satisfied that the coach is

knowledgeable and experienced; the facilities and sessions are perceived as safe and the parents being well informed of the activities and goals of the sessions.

Such theory was confirmed when the programme leader for the Disability Sports Programme was probed as to how this outcome occurred. The coach discussed the importance of parent involvement in the programme in its initial stages and despite the coach being uncertain about parent involvement when planning the programme:

*The parents were so excited to see them learn something, however simple it is, erm and we, I think what was good was, I think the tiny class, we did things where the parent did it, with our assistance, with their child (Wendy).*

Family involvement and interest in leisure activities such as sport is an important indicator in the child's participation in sport (King et al. 2006; 2009). The coach was asked about the parents that were no longer involved in the activities. Earlier, it was suggested that when the child's ability progresses, more advanced activities exclude the parents from physical involvement in the programme activities. The coach had observed that the parents would socialise:

*The nice thing is now that in the corridor they all chat with each other. And what's funny is, they now go over to McDonalds' next door and have a coffee and a chat and come back. That's very, very nice. So the whole of the, every one of those parents go together. So they're using it as a social thing (Wendy).*

Parents of children with disabilities are often overlooked by peripheral intervention such as community sports programmes. Relative to parents in typically developing children, they are in poorer emotional and physical health (Murphy et al. 2007). Such issues are according to Murphy and Carbone (2011:795) '...best addressed through strong partnerships among parents, providers and communities'. The coach's observation suggests a strong companionship between people who share their complex medical, developmental and habilitative needs.

## Outcome patterns for the Disability Sports Programme

The theories put forward and discussed in the interview with the disability sports coach allowed for some useful discussions about the observed impact on the programme participants. Moreover, the programme was observed to have had a significant impact on the parents and carers of the children. The coach provided some useful insights as to how and why these effects happened. The coach's logical reasoning has highlighted that the programme can contribute to improving health directly and physically in the case of the participants; and indirectly in the case of the parents and their emotional wellbeing through social interactions with other parents and engagement in initial learning experiences. These outcomes are dependent on particular circumstances or contexts which help trigger specific mechanisms. For example, for this programme, mechanisms such as the one-to-one support and the inclusion of parents in the activities were dependant on an adaptable and experienced coach who could 'keep-up' with the children's development. Further *context-mechanism-outcome* relationships will now be discussed for the Disability Sports Programme and are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7 CMO configurations for the Disability Sports Programme

<b>Contexts</b>	<b>Mechanisms</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<p><b>Participant development and progression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Coping with the impact of the programme on the participants</i></li> <li>• <i>Ability and development related to age</i></li> <li>• <i>Coaches' inexperience with younger age groups</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Differentiating participant groups based on ability with (with younger participants)</i></li> <li>• <i>One to one coach support with younger age groups.</i></li> <li>• <i>Mini competitions introduced with increased ability.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Observation of improved physical/ motor abilities of participants</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Role and influence of family</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Taking on the family and involving them in the programme</i></li> <li>• <i>Age and levels of disability important</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Allowing parents to be involved with the initial sessions with coach assistance</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Parents enthused by child's sense of achievement</i></li> <li>• <i>Improved parent/ sibling relationship</i></li> <li>• <i>Longer term engagement of children with the programme</i></li> <li>• <i>Parents socialise with and support other parents</i></li> </ul>

This programme extended the coaches remit to children under four years of age. Very few specialist centres in the area do this. While this presented some challenges to the coaches, having never delivered sessions to such young children, it also provided an opportunity for an overlooked group of young disabled children who clearly have the potential to develop through structured sport programmes. Increases in participation are acknowledged further in the quantitative findings chapter (see chapter 10).

The parents of the children became a close group according to the observations of the coach. This has implications for communities normally isolated by the demands of caring for a disabled child (Waldman et al. 2010). The programme provided a mechanism for both parents and siblings to get together and socialise with each other. However, important contexts such as the rate of the child's development within the programme activities limited the time this group of parents would have been involved in the sessions alongside their child. As the children's physical development progressed, the programme excluded the parents from this active involvement. Instead, there was a more passive role and the parents could observe their child's development. These levels of parental involvement were perceived to be important mechanism for the sustainability of the programme and the participants' long term-involvement.

The interaction of the parents with the activities provided a *mechanism* for reassurance that the children were in safe hands, the activities were suitable and the facilities appropriate and safe. Such mechanisms are essential in such programmes as parents can isolate and overprotect children with a disability (Verhoof et al. 2012). In this research, there was initial involvement by the parents. Over time, the parents were happy to leave their children suggesting they did not want to overprotect or isolate them after seeing the progress that they had made. Another important *mechanism* was having the support of other parents in similar positions and the guidance from the coaches involved in the programme activities. This helped explain strategic outcomes related to building safer and stronger communities and providing opportunities for all to participate and develop skills.



# Chapter 10

## Quantitative analysis: strength in numbers?

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the outcomes of the Strategy through quantitative data analysis. The analysis helped to strengthen and validate the theories identified in the qualitative chapters in order to 'triangulate the position' of the participants by using '...measures from multiple viewpoints' (Clarke and Dawson, 1999:86). Consequently, the quantitative data analysis gave the evaluation greater utility to those stakeholders who are accountable to funders requiring 'harder' or more objective indicators of impact or outcome (Grix and Phillpots, 2011). This had implications for research questions relating to the diffusion of evidence to inform and develop practice. This is not suggesting that the quantitative data is in any way superior, but more a recognition that sports funding streams are driven by key performance indicators and more objective views of reality.

The quantitative measures were chosen with Smith's (1986) and Clarke and Dawson's (1999) philosophy in mind as opposed to their level of standing or importance. Thus, the analysis of quantitative data was not limited to key performance indicators and Strategy targets. It also included further critical appraisal of the impact of the Strategy on the participants. The data will focus on the outcomes of the Strategy. However, elements of the data will be useful at the process level and will help explain some of the issues identified in the qualitative data.

Initially, this chapter will explore the extent to which the key performance indicators (agreed between the CSN and Sport England) were satisfied. Later, the chapter will acknowledge the results of the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT). Finally, the results of the quality of life survey are presented. For each data set, the analysis will, where applicable, relate to programme outcomes and where appropriate will follow with references to process evaluation issues. In terms of validating the findings, empirical data presented in this chapter are cross-referenced with the

relevant literature to provide a more theory driven interpretation of performance measures.

### **Community sport development: national performance measures and their local interpretation**

The Community Sport Network agreed a range of participation targets. These targets were driven by a New Labour Government and supported through Sport England's Community Investment Fund (Sport England, 2006b). The funding stream was part of a broader government agenda and aligned to a Public Service Agreement - PSA3 (DCMS, 2005), which challenged sport to:

- increase individuals participating in sport 12 or more times per year by 1% per annum,
- increase participation from priority groups who engage in 30-minutes of moderate intensity sport at least 3 times per week by 1% per annum.

The Strategy measured its performance against the 12 or more times per annum target. Collins (2010b) was critical of this measure as it was set against the significantly higher participation figures of Finland who had carefully and strategically planned to tackle lack of participation for over three decades. Further, Collins (2010b: 369) acknowledged the ambition of the targets, which inferred a rate of increase:

...only achieved at a time of public prosperity in the late 1970s, a huge challenge in a sedentary society for a discretionary, minor policy and department.

These targets, were further developed by Sport England and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) establishment to increase participation in community sport amongst priority groups such as women, the disabled and lower socio-economic groups (Houlihan and Green, 2009). Such use of *multiple indicators* or sub indicators is welcomed in terms of performance management (Perrin, 1998; Kloot and Martin, 2000) as they are more aligned with programme goals and the contexts with which the programmes operated (Lawther and Martin, 2014). They can also inform programme process as well as programme outcomes (de Bruijn, 2002). However, more is not necessarily better and indicators should be

underpinned by scientific rigour and valid underlying assumptions (Hák et al. 2012). In evaluation research, this is referred to as programme theory or programme logic (Weiss, 1997; Pawson, 2003; Coalter, 2007; Nichols, 2005).

In line with the government targets, Sport England's Community Investment Fund encouraged sport and physical activity strategies to increase participation in sport by at least 1% per annum for 6 years. As noted in Chapter 5, it was agreed by the Community Sport Network that this equated to an extra 315 people taking part in sport and physical activity at least once per month across all the Strategy programmes over a two-year period. This figure was lower than the 1% per annum target set by Sport England. However, the Network noted that this figure was offset by other related areas of development work such as the Physical Activity and Health Development section of the Local Authority (CSN, 2007). This (0.75% per annum) increase was measured through a series of key performance indicators (KPIs) each relating to specific programmes within the Strategy. The KPI targets and measures for each of the programme areas are detailed in Table 8 and Table 9. The Community Investment Fund required a detailed breakdown of participants by specific categories or subthemes. These subthemes included:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Age
  - specifically those underrepresented in sport (>45 years), and
  - those at risk of 'dropping out' of sport. (<16 years).
- Disability Status

As detailed in previously in the logic models (see Chapter 5) each programme of the Strategy was classified into one of two 'hubs'. The Sport for All Hub included the following projects:

- Disability Sports (Gymnastics, Athletics and Girls Football)
- Rural Sports Programme (Exercise and fitness sessions for rural communities)

The Coaching and Volunteering Hub included:

- The Coach Mentoring Project
- Volunteer Programme

All the programmes within the hubs were new and created for the Strategy. The targets for each year were cumulative. This meant that the target of 315 for year two of the Sport for All Hub represented an additional 150 participants on year 1 targets. Key performance indicators were collected on a quarterly basis from the programme leaders.

The indicators were collected for the first 2 years of the delivery of the Strategy as a requirement for the funding and in line with the empirical phase of the research. Beyond this, the programme leaders determined indicators based on the minimum required number for a cost effective intervention.

### **Sport for All (Hard to Reach)**

The Sport for All Hub was challenged with demonstrating the greatest gains in participation relative to the Coaching and Volunteering Programmes. Table 8 indicates that a total of 72 participants were recruited to the Sport for All programmes in the first year. This is well short of the targeted 165. However, of the 75 participants, 63 (84%) were new to sport (had not participated in any sport in the last six months). The remaining 12 participants were all under the age of 16 and already involved in other disability sports programmes.

No participants were recruited in the first three months of any programmes. The second quarter of the first year was the busiest period for recruitment of participants, coaches and volunteers respectively. While the number of participants was short of the agreed targets, the number of females relative to males was significant. Almost as many females took part in the sports for all programmes as males in Year 1.

Further, there were encouraging signs that the programmes were recruiting participants with a disability and with mixed ethnic backgrounds with the number of ethnic minority, and disabled participants exceeding the targets in both years. This pattern of recruitment may be explained through the improved infrastructure supporting the programmes. All but one of the coaches and volunteers recruited in this Hub supported the disability sports programmes.

Table 8 Cumulative key performance indicators for the first two years of the Sport for All hub (Frequencies).

<b>SPORT FOR ALL (HARD TO REACH)</b>								
		<b>Year 1</b>			<b>Year 2</b>			
		<b>Achieved</b>			<b>Achieved</b>			
	<b>Year 1</b>	<i>(Variance against</i>			<b>Year 2</b>	<i>(Variance against</i>		
	<b>Target</b>	<i>target)</i>			<b>Target</b>	<i>target)</i>		
<b>Participants</b>								
Total	165	72	(<93)	315	216	(<99)		
Male	115	35	(<80)	189	109	(<70)		
Female	50	37	(<13)	126	107	(<19)		
BME	2	6	(>4)	3	14	(>11)		
>45 Years	91	4	(<87)	173	8	(<165)		
< 16 Years	74	62	(<12)	142	205	(>63)		
Disabled	16	62	(>46)	50	177	(>127)		
<b>Coaches</b>								
Total	7	23	(>17)	14	34	(>20)		
Male	4	9	(>5)	8	13	(>5)		
Female	3	14	(>11)	6	21	(>15)		
<b>Volunteers</b>								
Total	11	13	(>2)	22	26	(>4)		
Male	8	6	(<2)	18	12	(<6)		
Female	3	7	(>4)	4	14	(>10)		

At the end of the two-year period, the coach to disabled participant ratio was 1:5. If the volunteers are included in this calculation then a ratio of close to one coach for every three participants is possible. This is a much higher ratio than the 1-10 suggested by various governing bodies for able bodied participants (British Gymnastics, 2013; The Football Association, 2013) and aligned with recent survey data for disability sport coaching ratios (Sport and Recreation Alliance, 2013). Consequently, the disability sports programmes could contribute significantly to the participation numbers as there were enough staff to support a greater number of participants. Coaching recruitment was treble the expected number for year one and the total target over the two-year period was doubled for the Sport for All hub.

## **Improving access for the 'hard to reach'**

The Active People Survey (Sport England, 2006a) participation figures during the first two years of the programmes suggested that males outnumber their female participants by as many as four males for every three females. Therefore, though the numbers were low, the Sport for All Hub of programmes made significant progress with women and girls' participation in sport.

Further, the data indicates that the majority of the participants were disabled and under the age of 16. Three of the four programmes in the Sport for All Hub were disability sports programmes, which explained this pattern. All three of these programmes were located in specialist gymnastics centres. This implies that in order to reach those least likely to participate in sport, sport development teams must very carefully consider the nature and type of sporting activity to be promoted and developed. For example, female participants outnumber males in gymnastics. Thus there are sports that are more successful than others at trying to encourage the hard to reach (such as women) to participate. Further, there is variation for people from ethnic minority groups in terms of the preferred sports. Activities such as 'keep-fit/aerobics/ yoga' feature as the second most popular activity for minority ethnic groups (Sport England, 2000). The vast majority of the participants in this research were new to sport and the disability sports figures exceeded their participation targets. This demonstrates that under the Community Investment Fund, the disability sports projects were a relative success in terms of participation, particularly for the hard to reach groups such as women and those with a physical impairment.

As previously mentioned, there were positive changes for the Sport for All programmes and their capacity to recruit the 'hard to reach' in terms of the sporting infrastructure. In the disability programmes, the KPIs demonstrated successful recruitment of female coaches. Female coaches represent the minority in almost all sports at all levels (Acosta and Carpenter, 2012; Robertson, 2010). In the UK, less than a quarter of all coaches are female (Sports Coach UK, 2011; Norman, 2008). Thus, disability sports programmes are a significant mechanism in recruiting female coaches.

There are several explanations in the literature for the relative absence of female coaches in sport. Norman (2008) made reference to how female coaches perceive

themselves in a male dominated practice. Norman (2008) explained that women feel they have to work twice as hard to prove themselves amongst male coaches. This challenged the relationships and coexistence of male and female coaches in sport and gave the impression that female coaches doubted themselves when amongst their male counterparts.

Beyond the relational issues were problems associated with structure and organisation. Where men dominate in powerful positions, as is the case with sport coaching, they are more likely to recruit as a result of informal invitation (Lyle, 2013). Consequently, they will invite people more like themselves, which may exclude women (Acosta and Carpenter, 2012). Similarly, this can work both ways. In sports where women are more likely to attain dominant positions, such as in gymnastics, the recruitment of female coaches may be positively influenced by a predominantly female lead coaching infrastructure.

It is argued that a dearth in female role models can lead to negative outcomes in terms of girls' experiences and participation in sport (Lockwood, 2006). There is an important contextual factor here as the most senior coach for the disability sports programmes was female. In a male dominated area such as sports coaching, women often '...feel like intruders' (Messner, 2009:71). Where the most senior coach is female, such a barrier may be less of a concern to those women trying to develop as a sports coach. This could, in part, explain the higher recruitment of women coaches in this area.

There was a similar pattern of recruitment of volunteer support for the Sport for All Hub. Targets for women volunteers were exceeded while the recruitment of male volunteers fell short of its target. Later in the chapter, this is explained as volunteering being more attractive to females when volunteering activity is not limited to a sporting context (Locke, 2008). Overall, volunteer recruitment exceeded the target over the two year period. The disability sports programmes were developed in a specialist centre that had a high standing locally and regionally for its services to disability sport. All the participants were disabled and over 85% were female which satisfied the funding criteria in terms of reach as the disability sports programmes improved access and participation to under-represented groups.

## **Rural Sport Hub: the challenge of change**

The activities within the Rural Sports Programme were an attempt to diversify from being a specialist centre for gymnastics in order to engage the rural community within which the centre was located. The plan was to offer exercise classes for the local community with a focus on the older population (>45 years). Over the two-year period, the Rural Sports hub recruited 39 participants. Of these, just 1 in 5 were over the age of 45 and all participants were female.

Research by Sport England suggests that rural populations are less likely to meet the recommendations for physical activity and sport than their urban counterparts (Sport England, 2007; Martin et al. 2005). However, rural communities are more likely to participate in sport and physical activity if they have access to an indoor gym (Parks et al. 2003). A significant barrier, particularly for women in rural areas, is being too far away from indoor facilities. The Rural Sports Programme is located in the heart of a rural community. It has indoor facilities including a gym and exercise studio so such barriers should not be as apparent for this programme. However, there is no public transport access to the facility, the access road is not well lit and has no pedestrianized pathways or pavements. Solomon et al (2013) explain that transport and access are key facilitators of physical activity in rural communities.

Other contextual factors that may explain the apparent failure of the Rural Sports Hub satisfying its KPIs are more circumstantial. The programme is situated in a specialists gymnastics centre. Gymnastics is widely considered to be a feminine sport (Klomsten et al. 2004; Koivula, 2001; Sport England, 2010a). However, the overriding factor for the lack of male participants may be the nature of the activities. Exercise classes are also perceived as feminine (Klomsten et al. 2004) with men preferring resistance exercise or view involvement in team sports (Sport England, 2010) more appealing.

Despite the low numbers and missing targets in the KPIs, the programme did recruit the targeted participants and an exercise professional to deliver the sessions. All but two of the participants were 'new to sport' and all were women. This therefore represents a significant achievement in a rural setting and for an underrepresented group in sport. Greater consultation with the community may have identified these participants as a viable target for health related physical activity sessions. Later in



this chapter, the implications of the programmes on ‘quality of life’ and wellbeing are discussed as measurable impacts of the Rural Sports Hub activities on the participants. Further, the qualitative data, in a realist perspective adds to the understanding of how and why these achievements were significant.

## Coaching and Volunteering Hub

The Coaching and Volunteering Hub represented the key performance indicators for two programmes; namely, the Coach Mentoring Programme and the Volunteer Programme. Combined, these programmes attempted to improve the sporting infrastructure through developing education and skills (CSN, 2007) and increase the number of local sports coaches and volunteers. The programmes supported coaching activity in local sports clubs and community sports events activities. Table 9 illustrates the targets and measured performance indicators for these programmes. The results demonstrate that the Coach Mentoring Programme did not achieve its targets for Year 1 and Year 2.

**Table 9 Cumulative key performance indicators for the Coaching and Volunteering Hub (frequencies).**

		<b>Year 1 Target</b>	<b>Year 1 Achieved</b> <i>(Variance against target)</i>	<b>Year 2 Target</b>	<b>Year 2 Achieved</b> <i>(Variance against target)</i>
<b>Mentors</b>					
	Total	15	11 (<4)	30	17 (<13)
	Male	10	8 (<2)	20	14 (>6)
	Female	5	3 (<2)	10	6 (<4)
<b>Coaches</b>					
	Total	41	18 (<23)	108	33 (<75)
	Male	26	14 (<12)	58	23 (<35)
	Female	15	4 (<11)	50	10 (<40)
<b>Volunteers</b>					
	Total	26	44 (>18)	64	90 (>26)
	Male	15	29 (>14)	37	43 (>6)
	Female	11	15 (>4)	27	47 (>20)

Less than half the number of coaches targeted were successfully recruited to the Coach Mentoring programme in its first year. The lack of mentors limited the number of coaches that could be recruited. The total number of coach mentors (by gender)

and the sports they represent are shown in Table 10. The Volunteer Programme exceeded its targets in the two years the KPIs were recorded.

### **Coaching: where are all the women?**

Over the first two years of the Coach Mentoring Programme, 6 (30%) of the mentors recruited were female. This is similar to the national patterns for coaching and gender highlighted by national research, where 69% of coaches were male (Sports Coach UK, 2011).

**Table 10. The number of coach mentors and coaches from each sport.**

<b>Sport</b>	<b>No. of mentors</b>		<b>No. of coaches</b>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Rugby Union	3	0	4	0
Athletics	2	1	4	1
Gymnastics	0	5	6	7
Cricket	3	0	4	0
BMX	1	0	1	0
Football	5	0	4	2
<b>Total</b>	14	6	23	10

As previously mentioned, participation by males is higher in all aspects of sport, including coaching (Robertson, 2010; Norman, 2008). This presents a challenge for community coach mentoring programmes that will have to focus on such gender inequalities and plan to address the balance beyond a simple key performance indicator. Or as Norman (2008:460) suggests:

...merely increasing women’s statistical representation is too simplistic and idealistic as it is not certain there are pathways to the most powerful levels for them to undertake.

For example, there were no specific aims or mechanisms to increase female coaches or coach mentors in this programme which could indicate that valid assumptions about women in coaching, mentioned previously, were ignored (Hák, et al. 2012). Perhaps, as Norman (2008) indicates, this programme’s attempt to increase the number of female coaches and mentors was challenging because of

wider, national level, infrastructure issues such as lack of pathways and a general underdevelopment of women coaches. This limited the number of female role models in coaching. The significance of having females represented in key positions in sport, including coaching, has been recognised in previous literature (Acosta and Carpenter, 2012; Marshall 2001; LaVoi, 2009). In short, same sex role models inspire others to follow and equal similar achievements.

During the inauguration of the Strategy (CSN, 2007) Sport England published figures from their Active People Survey 7 (Sport England, 2013). The participation figures for each of the sports involved in the Coach Mentoring Programme are shown in Table 11.

**Table 11 National participation figures by gender for the sport involved in the Coach Mentoring programme (Sport England, 2007).**

Sport	No. of participants	
	Males	Females
Rugby Union	207,500	10,000
Athletics	1,045,100	694,600
Gymnastics	14,000	34,300
Cricket	191,600	15,000
Cycling (Includes BMX)*	1,379,200	500,800
Football	1,966,400	156,300

Figures are taken from Sport England's Active People Survey 3. They represent the number of participants (at least once per week) for each sport. \*Cycling: includes recreational and competitive cycling but excludes any cycling which is exclusively for travel purposes only. Also includes BMX, cyclo-cross and mountain biking.

They demonstrate that, with the exception of gymnastics, the sports involved with the Coach Mentoring Programme have more male participants than female participants. Football and Rugby Union measured the largest difference with football recording just one female participant for every twelve male participants. This suggests that the recruitment of sports for this hub was sampled as a matter of convenience as opposed to a more purposeful and targeted recruitment strategy that should have been more sensitive to sports that attract female coaches.

The participation figures outlined in Table 11 clearly demonstrate differences in participation for gender. Several theories may explain this pattern. Among them is social cognitive career theory, (Lent et al. 1994 cited in Moran-Miller and Flores, 2011). Individuals are more likely to choose a career path in which they view themselves competent. Thus it should be no surprise that female coaches do not view themselves as 'competent' as the vast majority of women coach with irregular time commitments (i.e – part-time or volunteer) (LaVoi and Dutove (2012) which is very different from approaching coaching as a 'career path'.

Clearly, there are exceptions, for example, gymnastics is dominated by female coaches. This presents an important contextual issue; that the lack of female coach recruitment may be explained by the sports involved in the project and their capacity to represent females on a participation level. Therefore, if coach mentoring projects aim to recruit more female coaches, then they have to be more focussed on those sports where there is a greater affinity for female participants. In the interview chapters, difficulties in engaging certain sports are acknowledged. Consequently, sport development officers have an increasingly complex task of carefully selecting the most appropriate sport coupled with securing their 'buy-in' to the programme.

On their own, the key performance indicators might consider the Coach Mentoring programme as a failure. However, if the context of the apparent 'failure' can be identified and the mechanisms have sound explanations for meeting other outcomes then there will be a much richer form of evidence upon which success and failure can be measured. In the previous findings chapters for example, the Coach Mentoring Programme experienced significant logistical issues, limiting its reach to a few sports. However, there were useful theories from the interview data that ensured key strategic themes were satisfied. Moreover, mechanisms were identified that could help develop the programme to reach further and involve more sports. This could improve performance indicators for participation in the long term.

### **The Volunteer Programme: safer, stronger communities and a vehicle for developing skills?**

The one programme that did establish a market need was the Volunteer Programme. In January 2006, a locally conducted survey (CNBC, 2005) involving

the responses of over 300 people living in the Borough revealed that just over 7% of people currently contributed to sport in a voluntary capacity (see programme logic model in Chapter 5). A further 40% said they would like to volunteer in sport in the future. This disparity implied the potential for a development programme for volunteering in the Crewe and Nantwich area. Thus, the Volunteering Programme was put into place. This programme was aligned with outcomes that:

- supported the development of skills,
- improved the sporting infrastructure, and
- created safer and stronger communities (CSN, 2007).

The programme's initial task was to employ a programme leader or coordinator. This person was responsible for the recruitment and development of volunteers through a variety of events and training workshops. While the majority of these events and activities had a sporting context, sport was not a limiting factor and the programme would overlap with other development areas requiring volunteers such as working in schools, community clubs and other volunteer associations within the area.

Of all the programmes born from the Strategy, the volunteer programme was the most successful in satisfying the key performance indicators. The data (Table 9) demonstrated that, in its first year, the Volunteer Programme recruited almost double its intended targets. Interestingly, more males than females were recruited in the first year. This supports the hypothesis of sport being a more attractive proposition for males than females (Davis, 1998; Attwood et al. 2003; Taylor, 2003). In the second year, slightly more females were recruited than males. This pattern continued and although KPIs were not formally recorded, the survey detailed later in Chapter 10, revealed that the majority of the volunteers were female. This demonstrated that key mechanisms such as broadening the volunteering activity beyond sport positively influenced the reach of the programme.

In line with some of the other programmes of the Strategy, the Volunteer Programme recruited more strongly in its second year. At the end of the second year, this programme had recruited 30% more volunteers than originally targeted. The implications and a more critical appraisal of the impact of this recruitment of volunteers to the programme are now discussed in the data from the VIAT questionnaire.

## **The Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) results**

This section of the findings chapter presents the results of the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) conducted with the participants of the Volunteering Programme from December 2011 to March 2012 (year 2/3 of the Strategy delivery). The first part of the results discusses the descriptive data collected including the length of time volunteers have been on the Volunteer Programme, the ways in which they became involved, age, gender, frequency of volunteering, ethnicity and disability status. The final parts of this section describe the outcomes of the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit according to several forms of capital that the survey was designed to measure. Grouping variables for the analysis included gender, age and length of time on the Volunteer Programme.

### **Descriptive statistics**

#### **About the survey participants**

One hundred and twenty four survey invitations were emailed and within six weeks, 60 responses were received. This represents a response rate of 48%. Total mean scores (SD) for each capital construct were calculated for all respondents. These data are illustrated in Table 13. To help provide more detail and highlight contextual patterns in the data. Grouping variables for gender, age and length of time on the volunteer programme were also included.

The majority of the respondents were female (72%) and were recruited onto the Volunteer Programme having seen an advert placed on a poster or newspaper (30%) and 20% of volunteers were recruited through information being sent to their email. A significant proportion (25%) were recruited through a visit from the Volunteer Programme Leader. Interestingly, only 10% of the volunteers were recruited through the Olympic Torch Relay events. Eighty per cent of volunteers taking part in the survey had been volunteering for less than one year, and 13% and 7% had volunteered for between 1-2 years and 2-4 years respectively. See Table 12 for descriptive information.

In terms of gender, the response rate is not consistent with research conducted in a sport setting, particularly in sports clubs, where the majority of volunteers are male (Nichols and Padmore, 2005, cited in Schlesinger et al. 2013; Attwood et al. 2003).

However, beyond the bounds of sport, the gender balance in this study is more comparable to national and regional volunteer surveys (Locke, 2008; Low et al. 2007) and importantly, is representative of the proportion of females involved with the Volunteer Programme (68%). As previously mentioned, this may be explained by the volunteering activities, particularly in the second year of its delivery, when sport was not the main driver of volunteer activity. The age of the respondents was between 16 and 74. The highest number of responses came from the 45-54 years category (58%). Just 3% reported that they were disabled and 42% were in full time employment.

Due to the relatively small numbers over several age categories, the categories were collapsed into two namely, 'younger' ( $n= 28$ ) and 'older' ( $n=32$ ) based on the median score for age. This satisfied the assumptions required for the Mann Whitney U-test (see chapter 6) where the independent variable must consist of two dichotomous groups (McCrum-Gardner, 2008).

### **Social Capital**

Social Capital, in this study, was defined as the development of cooperative relationships between people (Institute for Volunteering research [IVR], 2010). Social capital was measured with a mean total score of 16 items on a 5-point Likert scale from 5 'increased greatly' to 1 'decreased greatly'. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .89 indicating high internal consistency coefficient. The total mean social capital score was 3.53 (0.25), the highest total mean score relative to the other forms of capital measured in the survey, indicating a perceived increase in social capital after volunteering on the Volunteer Programme. The construct for social capital relating to 'increased participation in local activities' scored highest.

Table 12 Descriptive information of volunteer respondents

Descriptive Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	17	28.3
Female	43	71.7
<b>How did you become involved with the Volunteer Programme</b>		
Information through email	12	20.0
Advert (poster, newspaper article)	18	30.0
Searching the internet	5	8.3
Through a friend who volunteers	4	6.7
Through the 2012 torch relay activities	6	10.0
Volunteer Programme team visit.	15	25.0
<b>Length of time on the Volunteer Programme</b>		
< 1 year	48	80
1-2 years	8	13.3
2-4 years	4	6.7
<b>Rate of volunteering on the Programme</b>		
One or more days per week	8	13.3
One or two days per month	2	3.3
A couple of times per year	11	18.3
Very occasionally	8	13.3
Only Once	31	51.7
<b>Age</b>		
16-18	4	6.7
19-24	10	16.7
25-34	4	6.7
35-44	10	16.7
45-54	21	35
55-64	5	8.3
65-74	6	10
<b>Occupation</b>		
Full-time employment	32	53.4
Part-time employment	12	20.0
Unemployed and not in education	6	10.0
Retired	3	5.0
Student	7	11.7
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White British	57	95
White Irish	1	1.7
Other	2	3.3
<b>Disabled</b>		
Yes	3	5
No	57	95



There were significant differences for gender with males indicating a greater impact on social capital ( $U = 50, p = .003, r = .38$ ). There were also significant differences for age. Younger volunteers scored higher for social capital than the older volunteers ( $U = 67, p = .02, r = .40$ ). There were also significant differences for length of time on the programme. Volunteers involved in the programme for more than 2 years scored higher than those who had been involved for less than 2 years ( $U = 45, p = 0.01, r = .34$ ).

### **Social capital and programme outcomes**

The social capital elements of the survey helped to explain and contextualise programme outcomes such as ensuring the sustainability of the project and 'providing safe, rewarding and enjoyable opportunities'. For the former, explaining the volunteers' perceptions of their participation in local activities, their sense of community involvement and willingness to become more involved were important. For the latter, contextualising items on the survey that explored sense of trust and support from others provided useful perspectives.

Social capital has previously been cited as a positive outcome of volunteering (Wilkinson and Bittman, 2002; Peachey et al. 2015; Kay and Bradbury, 2009). The perception of the volunteers for increased social capital was strongest for measures of local participation; that is, the volunteers felt they were more willing to take part in more local activities and were more interested in volunteering as a result of their participation on the Volunteer Programme. For example, items such as 'my interest in doing more volunteering' and 'taking part in more political activities' measured the highest mean scores in the social capital elements of the survey.

Table 13 Total mean scores for each capital construct and for all grouping variables.

	Gender		Age		Length of time		
	Overall	Male	Female	16-44	45-74	< 2 years	> 2 years
<b>Social capital total mean score</b>	3.53 (0.25)	3.75 (0.47)	3.44 (0.07)	3.65 (0.20)	3.44 (0.30)	3.51 (0.26)	3.81 (0.14)
<i>Friendships contacts and networks</i>	3.33 (0.17)	3.59 (0.21)	3.21 (0.14)	3.54 (0.22)	3.14 (0.11)	3.29 (0.15)	3.75 (0.20)
<i>Sense of trust</i>	3.44 (0.11)	3.71 (0.12)	3.35 (0.12)	3.58 (0.12)	3.35 (0.11)	3.29 (0.15)	3.75 (0.00)
<i>Participation in local activities</i>	3.71 (0.25)	3.88 (0.12)	3.63 (0.31)	3.76 (0.20)	3.66 (0.30)	3.70 (0.13)	3.89 (0.13)
<b>Physical capital total mean score</b>	3.49 (0.48)	3.59 (0.48)	3.45 (0.47)	3.60 (0.54)	3.18 (0.46)	3.52 (0.27)	3.79 (0.16)
<i>Access to training courses and/ or certificates</i>	3.67 (0.06)	3.81 (0.06)	3.62 (0.07)	3.85 (0.08)	3.51 (0.15)	3.65 (0.05)	4.00 (0.00)
<i>Access to social events</i>	3.20 (0.33)	3.36 (0.30)	3.13 (0.27)	3.37 (0.36)	3.05 (0.21)	3.22 (0.24)	3.29 (0.57)
<i>Volunteer programme management</i>	3.57 (0.61)	3.62 (0.63)	3.56 (0.58)	3.62 (0.71)	3.55 (0.56)	3.59 (0.57)	3.50 (0.95)
<b>Human capital total mean score</b>	3.42 (0.40)	3.68 (0.32)	3.31 (0.44)	3.61 (0.32)	3.24 (0.49)	3.40 (0.41)	3.75 (0.32)
<i>Personal development</i>	3.79 (0.21)	3.91 (0.12)	3.75 (0.28)	3.85 (0.19)	3.77 (0.25)	3.81 (0.22)	3.83 (0.30)
<i>Skills development</i>	3.26 (0.36)	3.61 (0.36)	3.11 (0.34)	3.54 (0.33)	3.02 (0.35)	3.23 (0.35)	3.78 (0.31)
<i>Health and wellbeing</i>	3.07 (0.06)	3.32 (0.11)	2.90 (0.06)	3.33 (0.10)	2.75 (0.07)	3.02 (0.08)	3.36 (0.12)

Data are presented as means (standard deviation).

Therefore, this research supports the proposition that programme leaders should realise the potential of local volunteering programmes to stimulate further interest in volunteering activity in order that programmes can retain volunteers and sustain programme activities (Finklestein, 2007). Thus, social capital, at least from Putnam's perspective, becomes self-perpetuating in volunteer programmes. People volunteer and become better connected with others. This allows volunteers to express their identity and a desire to strengthen those relationships (Musick et al. 2000).

If 'sense of trust' implies a measure of 'feeling safe', the responses of the survey would suggest that the majority of the respondents' levels of trust had stayed the same regardless of the Volunteer Programme activities they were involved in. A similar pattern was noted by Hooge, (2003: 91) who stated that '...volunteering does not have much effect on trust even of one's fellow group members'. Further, Musick and Wilson (2007) found volunteers to be more trusting than non-volunteers suggesting that the participants on this programme may have been more trusting in the first place rather than because of the Volunteer Programme. From a theoretical perspective, this is significant as Putnam (1995) placed value on 'trust' as a catalyst for generating social capital. Despite the volunteers not attributing change in levels of trust to the volunteer programme, average scores overall were high for this element of the questionnaire and so outcomes such as creating safer stronger communities were more likely to be achieved.

### **Physical Capital**

Physical capital was measured through 14 items and defined as 'goods and services received' (IVR, 2010: 8). These may include physical goods such as certificates or awards for volunteering, or services such as how volunteers feel they were organised, and how they were placed into volunteering positions. Scores ranged from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .78 was calculated demonstrating an acceptable level of internal consistency. The total mean score for physical capital was 3.49 (0.48). Thus, there was a perception by the respondents that the Volunteer Programme had increased their physical capital. Interestingly, access to courses and/or certificates achieved the highest means score as a construct of physical capital indicating the respondents valued

training and professional development above the socialisation and managements constructs for this form of capital. There were no significant differences for gender or age in scores for physical capital. There were also no significant differences for physical capital and length of time on the programme.

### **Physical capital and the Volunteer Programme outcomes**

Physical capital measures were used to explain outcomes related to 'bringing new skills', 'supporting the needs of the volunteers' and 'providing safe and rewarding opportunities'. The survey items that specifically address these areas indicated positive responses. Generally, volunteers were satisfied with the Volunteer Programme (92%). For example, more respondents disagreed than agreed that the Volunteer Programme did not make best use of their skills. Further, younger volunteers were more likely to disagree than the older volunteers; thus indicating that volunteers perceived the programme to be using the specific skills they had to offer but more could be done to improve the mean score for older volunteers. This provides important contextual information to support the *context-mechanism-outcome* configurations from the Phase Three interviews (see Chapter 9). Clearly, the age of the volunteers is highlighting the need for mechanisms to differentiate between age groups insofar as bringing new skills to the programme. Older volunteers may already have key skills and knowledge.

Almost three in four of the respondents agreed that the Volunteer Programme supported them when needed. This is significant as evidence from the interviews suggested that when support was generally absent or as Musick and Marc (2007) explain, unequal, volunteers become disaffected. Additionally, mean scores were higher for volunteers who had been involved in the programme for a longer period. However, the older volunteers scored significantly lower in this item suggesting that mechanisms to support older volunteers could be improved.

### **Human Capital**

Human capital was defined as the development of knowledge, skills and health of people (IVR, 2010). Human capital was measured with a mean total score of 19 items. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .96 was calculated demonstrating a high internal consistency for items of human capital. The scale ranged from 5 (increased

greatly) to 1 (decreased greatly). The total mean score for human capital was 3.42 (0.40). This indicates that there was a perceived small increase in human capital from being involved in the Volunteer Programme. Human capital scored the lowest total mean score relative to the other forms of capital. The female respondent scores were particularly low for skills development and health and wellbeing suggesting that such constructs were of little value and may not have been the main driver for their volunteering activity.

There were significant differences for gender ( $U = 99, p = .006, r = .43$ ). Human capital recorded the highest mean score for males (mean score = 3.68) indicating that the Volunteer Programme was perceived as a impactful programme for the development of knowledge, skills and health among male volunteers. There were significant differences in human capital for age. Younger volunteers scored significantly higher ( $U = 108, p = .013, r = .36$ ) than the older volunteers. Further, younger volunteers scored significantly higher than the older volunteers for all three items relating to health and wellbeing. There were also significant differences in total mean score for human capital over time. Those volunteers who had been involved in the Volunteer Programme for more than two years scored significantly higher ( $U = 113, p = .018, r = .38$ ) than those who had been involved for less than one year. This indicates that the impact of the Volunteer Programme on the knowledge, confidence and skills of the volunteers is greatest with those who have been a part of the programme for longer.

### **Human Capital and Volunteer Programme outcomes**

In terms of satisfying programme outcomes, the human capital elements of the survey helped explain the context for the programme's capacity to 'develop new skills and perspectives' and the 'personal and professional development' of its volunteers (CSN, 2007). Human capital is positively associated with employability (Smith, 2010) and the maintenance and development of *soft skills* such as team work and communication (Newton et al. 2011). The results in this research demonstrated that younger volunteers are more likely to report skills-related gains. This is supported by the evidence for the Phase Three interviews (see Chapter 9) where the younger volunteers explained that the Volunteer Programme was a mechanism to put 'theory into practice' and 'apply skills'.

Previous research on volunteers also demonstrates this trend (Low et al. 2007) and has been attributed to development of *work* attitudes and behaviours (Krahn et al. 2002) and improvements in self-esteem and confidence (Low et al. 2007, Newton et al 2011). Two-thirds of respondents in this research agreed that their confidence in their abilities had increased as a result of the Volunteer Programme and three in five volunteers reported increases for self-esteem. However, there is recognition that most of this evidence is reliant of self-reported measures without a baseline and small sample sizes. Consequently, it is difficult to determine the strength of the links between volunteering and personal and/ or professional development on statistical evidence alone (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2010). In the latter chapters of this research, using the combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence, such links have been strengthened and generative theories are better explaining the relationships between a volunteering intervention and the impact it has on its volunteers and the various factors (or contexts) that influence the degree to which outcomes are achieved.

An important contextual factor from the survey indicates that impetus on skills development should be placed on younger volunteers and male volunteers. It has been suggested by Wilson and Musick (1997) that women score higher on measures of altruism and empathy, attached more value to helping others and feel they are expected to care for the emotional and personal needs of others (Daniels, 1988, cited in Wilson, 2000) whereas young males place importance on extrinsic motives such as being ready for ‘...future work’ (Donnelly and Harvey, 2011, cited in Houlihan and Green, 2011: 61).

While such outcomes were not recognised in this research, they demonstrate that targeting of specific mechanisms of the programme and differentiation among volunteers by volunteer programme coordinators can arguably improve the overall satisfaction of these volunteers of the programme. According to Finklestein (2007) this leads to greater long-term commitment to the programme. In this research, those who had committed to volunteering in the programme for longer (> 2 years) were more likely to report increases in skill development. Interestingly, the highest mean scores for human capital were measured in personal development. Thus, the potential of small, community volunteer programmes for personal development is significant and should be acknowledged by programme leaders in programme goals

and objectives, especially in programmes whose volunteer base is predominantly female as is the case in this research.

### **Rural Sports Hub: improving general health and physical capacity**

This element of the quantitative findings details the results of a small community exercise programme based in a rural setting in the south of Cheshire. As previously mentioned (see Chapter 6) the quality of life questionnaire was conducted between January and mid-February 2011 (for baseline measures) and repeated between April and May, 2011 (for follow up measures). The questionnaire was conducted in order to gain an insight into the programme's capacity to satisfy outcomes such as 'improved wellbeing' (CSN, 2007). Quality of life was measured using the standard RAND-36 questionnaire (Hays et al. 1993).

#### **About the survey participants**

All the quality-of-life (QoL) survey respondents were female and predominantly of white British ethnicity (Table 14). With the exception of one respondent, all others attended the Rural Sport Hub exercise sessions at least once per week. The survey sample represents 38% of the total number of recruited participants over the two years of the evaluation period ( $n = 39$ ), all of who were female. Six of the respondents (40%) were over the age of 45 years. This was double the representation of the age group recruited over the 2-year period. However, this was the target age group for the programme and would provide meaningful data in terms of the Sport For All hub outcomes to which the Rural Sports programme sample was aligned. Two exercise classes per week were offered by the Rural Sports Programme. This allowed participants to attend a maximum of 16 sessions over the 12-week empirical phase of the Quality of Life survey. The average number of session attended by the 15 respondents was 11 (2.50). Only two of the respondents had participated in sport in the last 6-months. Both of these respondents were from the youngest age category (19-24).

In this cohort of respondents ( $n = 15$ ) for the Rural Sport Hub activities, a 12-week, exercise-based intervention significantly improved QoL measurements, resulting in higher, short-term satisfaction of physical activity guideline compliance and better quality of life.

**Table 14 Characteristics of RAND 36-Item quality-of-life survey respondents**

<b>Descriptive Variable</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	15	100
<b>Rate of attendance on the programme</b>		
One or more days per week	14	93.3
One or two days per month	1	6.7
<b>Age</b>		
19-24	2	13.3
25-34	2	13.3
35-44	5	33.3
45-54	1	6.7
55-64	5	33.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White British	14	93.3
White Polish	1	6.7
<b>Disabled</b>		
Yes	3	20
No	12	80
<b>New to sport</b>		
(Had not participated in any sport in the last 6-months)	13	87
<b>Self-rated general health</b>		
Excellent	2	13.3
Very good	2	13.3
Good	8	53.3
Fair	3	20.0
Poor	0	0

Favourable changes in distribution of QoL construct measures were found in the respondents from registration to completion of 12-weeks of Rural Sports Hub exercise sessions as did median composite scores for QoL (Table 15). Median



composite scores for items relating to physical functioning increased during the intervention period ( $p < .05$ ).

The only items that did not show a significant increase for this element of the survey were:

- ‘climbing one flight of stairs’
- ‘walking through a single street’ and
- ‘bathing yourself’

These items had relatively high baseline scores which would explain this pattern. All other items for physical function showed significant increases. The greatest increases were recorded for:

- ‘climbing several flights of stairs’ and,
- ‘walking through several streets’

**Table 15 Composite scores for the RAND 36-item quality-of-life survey.**

	Baseline	At 12- weeks	Wilcoxon Signed Rank test	
			Z	p
Physical functioning	67 (46-81)	88 (76-94)	-2.805	.005
Role limitations due to physical health problems	42 (28-67)	87 (75-93)	-1.826	.068
Role limitations due to emotional problems	60 (47-73)	87 (80-93)	-1.633	.102
Energy/ fatigue	41 (36-48)	64 (58-64)	-1.826	.068
Emotional well-being	77 (68-89)	80 (73-97)	-2.032	.042
Social functioning	83 (60-83)	92 (66-91)	-1.342	.180
Pain	72 (51-75)	82 (60-83)	-1.342	.180
General health	55 (47-58)	67 (63-73)	-2.02	.043

Values are based on median (interquartile range). All measurements are based on the RAND 36-item Quality of Life Survey and scored on a scale from 0-100, where higher values are optimal.

There was a near significant difference ( $p=.07$ ) in composite score for role limitations due to health problems. All items for this scale showed significant differences between baseline and after 12-weeks with the exception of 'physical health limiting the kind of work or other daily activity'. Further, the 12-weeks exercise period did not have a significant impact on composite scores for 'role limitations due to emotional problems ( $p> .05$ ). Only one of the three items for this scale showed a significant difference. The survey indicated that respondents perceived that their emotional problems had less of an impact on how much daily activity they could accomplish relative to baseline measures. There was a near significant ( $p= .07$ ) difference for the composite scores for 'energy and fatigue'. The greatest increase in score was for 'do you have a lot of energy'. Respondents scored significantly higher ( $p= .002$ ) at the 12-week stage relative to baseline measures for this item.

Significant differences between baseline and 12-weeks of intervention were recorded in the composite scores for emotional wellbeing ( $p < .05$ ). Scores for:

- 'felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up' and,
- 'feeling downhearted and blue'

recorded the greatest differences. This finding is interesting as mental wellbeing is normally better in rural communities than urban areas (De Vries et al. 2003). There were no significant differences recorded in composite scores for 'social functioning' and 'pain' with both scales recording high scores at baseline. However, at the item level, respondents scored higher relative to baseline for pain 'interfering with normal daily activity/work'.

There were significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) in the scores between baseline and after 12-weeks for 'general health'. The greatest differences in score were recorded for the items:

- 'in general would you say your health is' (rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 'excellent' to 'poor') and,
- 'my health is excellent' (rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 'mostly true' to 'definitely false').

Several studies, most of which focus on improving quality of life by relieving symptoms of chronic diseases such as cancer (Mock et al. 2001) asthma (Lucas

and Platts-Mills, 2005) and diabetes (Snel et al. 2012) have reported improvements in quality of life due to increased physical activity among rural residents. However, the intention of the present research was to provide evidence that measured the extent to which a small community sports programme is working towards its goals. Further, an attempt to explain these measures provided the basis for progression and development of a rural sports programme.

### **Quality-of-life and Rural Sports Hub outcomes**

The QoL survey was used to indicate if the Rural Sports Hub activities had any measurable impact on the Strategy's capacity to improve the health and wellbeing of the community it served. Further, the survey would help validate the findings of the Phase Three interviews (Chapter 9) which would also give an insight into outcomes such as improved health and well-being.

The results of this QoL survey support previous demonstrations of effective sport and physical activity interventions limited to female participants in a local setting (Karinkanta et al. 2012) and for women who take up exercise (Choi et al. 2013). Physical activity has long been associated with improvements in generic health indicators. Recent research in women has suggested that moderate activity can improve vascular health (Armstrong et al. 2015) cardiac metabolism and capacity to exercise (Jakovljevic et al. 2015) and mental health (Griffiths et al. 2014). While there were increases in score for all items of the RAND-36 item survey, some differences were more profound than others. In terms of improved health and wellbeing, the greatest impact of the Rural Sports Hub on the participants was measured in 'physical functioning', 'emotional wellbeing' and 'general health'.

Elements that recorded smaller differences such as physical and emotional issues limiting everyday activity may have been limited by the sample, which was composed of relatively young and middle aged women who may have recorded high scores at baseline for such items as they were generally in good health (and capable of normal daily activity) despite being inactive or new to sport. According to Van Tuyckom and Sheerder (2010) women in rural areas compensate for their 'non-sporty' behaviour by being more physically active in other domains such as household activity (gardening and household chores) which could explain this pattern. However, there are encouraging signs that the participants of the Rural

Sports Hub exercise sessions perceived positive benefits from their more active lifestyle, particularly where more physical aspects of health are recorded. This is significant for rural communities where there is a lack of opportunities for sport and physical generally (Solomon et al. 2013).

In summary, the evidence from the surveys suggests that you can increase participation when there is a parallel improvement in infrastructure. Further, the infrastructure needs to be more sensitive to hard to reach groups in order to engage them. Programmes should not be recorded as failing simply because the target KPIs are not being met, especially if the programme is 'reaching' the right people. For example, in this research, a more targeted approach to engaging sports that are more attractive to females may have improved the number of females coaching and mentoring in the region. Similarly, volunteer activities needed to keep sport at its heart but reach beyond the bounds of sport if a more balanced and equitable programme was to be delivered.

In the Rural Sports Hub, the attempt to diversify must be well founded and researched. Extending beyond the 'traditional' remit of services needs to be bound to the area demographics, the context of the facility used and the strategy supporting it. The aforementioned 'conclusive statements' are not pure conjecture. The surveys were useful on one level in that they helped determine patterns of data that are useful for informing decisions upon which programme decisions can be made. However, if a Realistic Evaluation framework is to be realised, then the survey data on its own is limiting. The survey data must be considered with the qualitative data in order that these patterns can be fully explained through the context, mechanism outcome construct offered by Pawson and Tilley (1997). The earlier conclusions offered an indication of these explanations. This matter, of synthesising all the data under a Realistic Evaluation framework, forms the central tenet of the final chapter of this thesis.

# Chapter 11

## Bringing it all together: Realistic Evaluation and its place in community sport development

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to ‘tie together’ and make sense of the various issues raised in the empirical phases of the thesis as presented in the preceding chapters. To this end, this chapter starts by determining the key concerns from a methodological perspective and includes a discussion of the complexities of evaluation as a practical activity by reflecting on the achievement of the research aims. The chapter explores the implications of the Realistic Evaluation findings as an evidence base at a strategic level for community sport development. This is important, as the research demanded both scientific rigour and utility insofar as informing decisions within local community sport. Finally, the chapter will reflect on the entire research process, acknowledge limitations and make suggestions and forecasts for future evaluation research in the development of community sport.

### **Realistic Evaluation and outcomes: did the Strategy work and if it did, for whom and under what circumstances?**

Over the three empirical phases of this research, different *contexts* (C) which were considered with key mechanisms (*M*) to trigger a range of *outcomes* (O) across 4 community sport programmes that were part of a sport and physical activity strategy were recorded. At this stage, it is worth revisiting the Strategy outcomes. In short, the Strategy, its network of stakeholders and its collection of programmes were set in place to:

1. improve health and wellbeing,
2. enhance the sporting infrastructure,
3. develop education and skills, and
4. create safer and stronger communities.

Earlier (see chapter 5), it was noted by the Community Sport Network that these four strategic outcomes were not attached to any specific programme of the Strategy. Instead, the four aims would overarch all the programmes though some programmes would satisfy some of the outcomes more than others. Thus, it was agreed that the analysis would focus on ‘...outcome patterns’ (Pawson and Manzano-Santella, 2012: 18) rather than specific outcomes for individual programmes. The following discussion considers each of the four Strategy outcomes and rather than repeating the main findings of the research considered in the previous chapters, emphasis is placed on linking the findings together and acknowledging any overlap between and within programmes with reference to satisfying the strategic aims.

### **Improving health and wellbeing**

This outcome has been the bedrock of sports policy for over a decade (DCMS, 2002, 2012) and will continue to be associated with sport development activity in the future (DCMS, 2013). This research considered health and wellbeing from several perspectives and recognised the capacity of each programme’s contribution. This study developed theories of how improvements in health and wellbeing were facilitated. For example, volunteers demonstrated a sense of fulfilment and enjoyment as a marker of wellbeing (O) when taking part in volunteering activity (M) but only if individual needs are met, the staff are highly organised and the activities well timed and conveniently located (C). This sense of fulfilment was explained through increased confidence and competence of volunteers and a sense of belonging. Thus, the interviews indicated, in part, the contribution of the volunteer programme to improved wellbeing but on an emotional or psychological level as opposed to a physical one.

A more objective assessment of improved health and wellbeing at the individual level was ascertained through the quality of life questionnaire. The results demonstrated that the participants of the Rural Sports Programme improved their general, physical and emotional health. The disability sports coach observed improvements in social and physical health of the disability sports programme participants. For the disability sports programmes, these benefits were explained

through increases in confidence, self-worth and the timely interaction of family support within the disability sports programme.

Further, the KPI data demonstrated the Strategy's capacity to bring new participants into sport. While short of the agreed targets (CSN, 2007), these participants possibly contributed to the general increase in participation over the research period measured by Sports England's Active People Survey (Sport England, 2013) for the region.

The literature is full of references to participation in sport having a health benefit (Downward and Rascuite, 2015; Silva et al. 2013) particularly for social aspects health and wellbeing such as having fun, and social interaction (Downward and Dawson, 2015; Brown et al. 2015). Consequently, improvements in health and wellbeing could be explained through three different measures strengthening the evidence that the Strategy contributed to improvement on several levels and consolidating the need for multiple method evaluations.

### **Enhancing the sporting infrastructure**

In contrast to improvements in health and wellbeing, which took time to observe and measure, improvements in sporting infrastructure were more immediate. The impact of the Strategy was recorded in all three phases of the interviews. Infrastructure was improved from the publication of the Strategy which gave specific roles and guidance to the Community Sports Network put in place to deliver it. From a strategic perspective, infrastructure was measured through the increased number of coaches and volunteers and further, through sports club involvement. Much of this was recorded in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (see Chapter 10). Additionally, infrastructure was explained developmentally through the actions and behaviours of the practitioners and participants of the sports programmes. In the former, the results were more tangible: a volunteer leader for the Borough; more coaches for disability sport and for the mainstream sports clubs. For the latter, the interviews explained how coaches were enhancing their practice (O) through a mentoring process (M) and becoming more experienced and skilled (O) in specialist sports coaching roles. This was more apparent when the developing coach was empowered to take charge of their professional development (C).

This research acknowledged that the reach of programmes to improve infrastructure was limited and fell short of the suggested Strategy targets. However, those who became involved in the programmes spoke clearly about the impact the programmes had had on them. Nevertheless, circumstances were crucial. Improvements to infrastructure were more tangible but they were perhaps the most difficult outcome of the Strategy to progress. A clearer acknowledgement of Bourdieu's (1986) perspective of social capital in the VIAT questionnaire would better explain improvements in infrastructure. Bourdieu's (1986) perspectives have a greater sensitivity to the results of pooling of resources and recognising the total stock of a network. This would, in part, help explain any changes in sporting infrastructure, at least from the volunteers' perspectives.

In line with Collins et al. (1999) thinking, development of infrastructure was highly dependent on the personalities and motivation of the practitioners (or sport development officers). The CMO configurations referred to perseverance, capacity to learn and reflect, to compromise and work harmoniously with others. A previous chapter (see Chapter 8) referred to Nesti's (2008: online) position on the reliance of Sport Development on the characters and personalities of those delivering it. This research provided a useful insight into such practitioner traits, especially in the initial interview phases. Future strategy would benefit from more 'human' input here.

The Community Sports Network did very well with what they had but was over reliant on too few practitioners. For example, in the Coach Mentoring Programme, developing new and enhancing established partnerships was problematic. There was nothing *physical* to invest in unlike the other programmes. Instead, improvements in sporting infrastructure were considered through more subjective means such as negotiation and communication. The capacity of the Strategy to support such issues was not fully considered for this outcome. Consequently, the potential to build capacity further than was measured was never realised. Future strategic groups should consider outcomes related to individual skills and personalities when trying to improve infrastructure more widely.

### **Develop education and skills**

This research demonstrated that a series of sports programmes can develop the education and skills of those communities it targets. In the Volunteer Programme



this was measured and evidenced in the positive scores for both physical (goods and services received) and human capital (knowledge, skills and health of people) on the questionnaire. The interviews helped generate logical reasons that explained the mechanisms that would trigger the outcomes and, in combination with the focus groups, the questionnaire helped ascertain in what ways skills and education befitted different people. For example, improved skill and education (O) was more apparent for male volunteers and the younger volunteers of the programme. Further, more sustained volunteering activity (M) increased human capital scores (O). The interviews alone explained that such improvements would only become apparent if there was some mutual and individual benefit from volunteering and if the experience of volunteering was rewarding (C). In this way, confidence improved (O) and the programme would contribute towards education and skill development (O).

The Coach Mentoring programme also contributed to the education and skills of its participants. The interviews acknowledged the higher qualifications of the coaches (O) and the improved confidence and self-efficacy of the coach mentees (O). These *outcomes* explained through *mechanisms* suggesting that an informal and pragmatic approach and an 'empowering' process was required. Similarly, the disability sports programmes improved the physical skills of the participants. This was enhanced with the timely interaction of the children's parents and guardians and limiting the class size (M).

### **Creating safer and stronger communities**

Finally, perhaps the most profound outcome of the Strategy was its capacity to bring people together at all levels of programme delivery. Implicit in the disability sport programmes was the creation of a safer and stronger community for the disabled children. One of the unexpected outcomes of this activity was that the parents became a tight-knit group. This was because of *mechanisms* that allowed for a timely interaction of the parents with the programme and their children and contextual challenges such as the rapid progress made by the programme participants.

This research also demonstrated that the Volunteer Programme was a vehicle for the development of social capital (cooperative relationships between people). The evidence for this emerged in both the interviews and in the VIAT questionnaire (IVR,

2010) which has implications for friendships, contacts and the networks of those involved. In particular, male volunteers and those in the younger age categories were more likely to report improvements in social capital. Once again, for this strategy, such *outcomes* were only achievable if the *contexts*, such as the differing volunteer needs, were acknowledged and supported by specific programme activities or *mechanisms*. These were acknowledged in Chapter 8 as the regular and formal volunteer reviews.

Similarly, the Strategy's Coach Mentoring Programme required activity or *mechanisms* that were sensitive to the differing sports club's needs (*context*) in order that *outcomes patterns* such working in partnership with the programme was effective. Further, for both the Volunteer Programme and Coach Mentoring Programme, the relationship had to be seen to be mutually beneficial and in both cases significant compromise was required of all stakeholders to run the programmes with the creation of safer and stronger communities in mind.

### **Revisiting the aims of the research**

The research aims, established in Chapter 1, are now revisited in order that a useful and meaningful appraisal can be made of their satisfaction.

### **Applying and appraising established principles of Realistic Evaluation within the context of a community sport and physical activity strategy**

The first research aim was methodological and challenged the research to try and apply novel and dependable ways of improving the ways a collection of community sports programmes could be evaluated. Important to all the reported outcome patterns, noted earlier in this chapter, is the recognition that the aims of the Strategy were not mutually exclusive. Instead, there is considerable overlap. Methodological unorthodoxy allowed an inventive way of ascribing different tools for different programmes dependant on programme size, nature and scope. The CMO formula has allowed the research to draw links between the programmes and their respective data sets and ascertain the impact of the Strategy on the context element of the *context-mechanism-outcome* framework.

A Realistic Evaluation seems straightforward in its logic, captured in the context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) arrangement proposed by Pawson and Tilley (1997). The authors claimed this would ‘...give us an initial explanatory fix on any social programme’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: XV). The challenge in this research was to apply the realistic approach on not *one*, but several different programmes of a local strategy for sport and physical activity. This application of Realistic Evaluation was set against a backdrop of criticisms that suggest Realistic Evaluation is insufficiently operationalised and unable to deal with complex systems (Hansen, 2005). More recently, Rycroft-Malone et al. (2010) found making the distinction between *context* and *mechanism* difficult and Barnes et al. (2003) suggested the CMO configuration was unidirectional and unable to capture changes in context because of the programme itself.

However, in this research, *context-mechanism-outcome* configurations were developed and acknowledged theories that were useful for that particular stage of the evaluation. For example, in the formative stages of the research, there was significant discussion of process or implementation issues. These issues later gave way to CMO configurations, which, while process and implementation oriented, provided explanations for short-term, logistical outcome patterns. These outcome patterns were still useful at the strategic level as they would help explain (and contribute to) the progress towards the overarching outcome themes of the Strategy. For example, the Preliminary Interview CMO configurations told of the personalities required of the programme leaders, their perseverance, developing expertise and determination. Such traits were acknowledged in Collins et al’s. (1999:26) report to Department for Culture Media and Sport. The report suggested that ‘...good projects need an entrepreneur/animatuer/fixer/change maker’. This suggests that early mechanisms were generated by the people implementing the programmes as opposed to the programmes themselves. The infancy of the programmes meant that programme mechanisms would take time to observe. The attributes of the programme leaders were important mechanisms in the implementation stages of the programmes but limited the development of *programme* logic. Nevertheless, such qualities or mechanisms were required throughout the delivery of the programmes and were arguably contributory to the participants’ perceptions that they felt safe and part of a community as acknowledged in the later interviews.

In later CMO configurations, the mechanisms were more closely associated with the activities within the programmes. These mechanisms were still based on the characteristics of those working in sport development. The decisions made within the programme and its activities came from the programme leaders. However, in the latter empirical stages, the participants' perspectives were made at the level of the programme and not those delivering the activities. This is aligned with Pawson and Tilley's (1997) notion of *generative causation*. In current research, programme theory is being developed (or generated) and is understood through the interaction between the programme and the participant (structure and agency). Earlier phases of data gave '...initial explanatory fix[es]' (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:XV) through the eyes of the programme leaders. Hence, they were the personalised views of administrating and implementing a new programme. Later, and supporting the critical realist ontological position that the social world has to be understood at different levels, the participants' *view* of the programme is given. Consequently, the different generative mechanisms of the programmes emerged due to the interaction between the different levels of involvement with the programme and at distinct stages of programme delivery. Viewed in this way, we learn not only what has happened as a result of the programme but also why the programme had this effect.

As previously noted, community sports programmes are very rarely delivered in isolation (Perkins and Noam, 2007; Robson et al. 2013) and are normally contingent on the efforts of several stakeholders that may represent more than one organisation or group including healthcare specialists, volunteers, facility managers and the participants. It would have been *easier* to single out a programme and *determine its worth*. However, this would not be representative of the realities of delivering sport and physical activity to a community. Scriven (1981) suggested that evaluation is less about the object or evaluand and more about what the evaluator observes the stakeholders say. From an ontological perspective, this research has therefore recognised Scriven's (1981) thinking and embraced the totality of the participants' accounts over the 'singling out' of specific programmes. Thus, the ontological position was realised in that a realist school of thinking requires the evaluator to accept that both stakeholders and programmes are rooted in a stratified social reality, independent of the researcher, which results in an interplay between

individuals and institutions each with their own objectives and interests (Marchal et al. 2012).

The three interview phases of this research combined the data from all the sports programmes in order to explain the *contexts* and *mechanisms* that (eventually) triggered the Strategy *outcomes*. Sometimes it was useful to see the programmes in isolation in order to consolidate their particular contributions and give a clearer presentation of the satisfaction of specific intended outcomes. However, the overriding findings, summarised in the CMO configuration tables in the preceding chapters, were based on the empirical phases of the research. This said, the CMO configurations were marked or filtered at the level of the programmes making programme specific changes easier to acknowledge and the contribution of specific programmes to specific Strategy outcome identifiable. Arguably, the configurations acknowledged throughout this research could be summarised into a holistic configuration for community sport to highlight what it was that made community sport activity work.

### **How to capture change as a result of the Strategy activities**

Barnes' and colleagues (2003) claim of the CMO configuration being unidirectional is correct and it may be that this limits Realistic Evaluation's capacity to acknowledge changes in context impacting on the Strategy. However, multiple phases of data collection help capture changes in context, as the researcher was able to observe the impact of the Strategy on the circumstances of the programmes. For example, the Phase 2 interviews (see Chapter 8) acknowledged the contexts of working with other partners for the Coach Mentoring Programme. The differing competitive seasons for different sports created logistical issues.

These contexts, absent in the Preliminary Interviews, were as a result of the programme being put into place. This created circumstances that influenced the conditions for programme outcomes. Similarly, the Volunteer Programme implementation created context patterns as a result of the Strategy implementation. A new programme leader (Daniel), by his own admission (See Chapter 8) created some uncertainty about how the Volunteer Programme was progressing and how it fitted into the wider strategic aims. The previous programme leader was an established and long serving member of the CSN and was confident in the delivery

and development of the Volunteer Programme according to the Preliminary Interviews (see Chapter 7). These contextual or circumstantial factors were also influenced by the implementation of the Strategy programmes. Significantly, they were captured thanks to the phased design of the research and were important in explaining the changing *contexts* for the delivery of the programmes.

### **Administering a Realistic Evaluation in community sport: is smaller better?**

In this research, the programmes were associated with local health, education and social policy objectives captured in the ‘...development through sport’ rhetoric of Houlihan and White (2002:4) and represented the sports policy at the time (Sport England, 2008). In the first chapter of this thesis, it was recognised that this broader social appeal of sport would increase the complexity and challenge of evaluating sports programmes (see Chapter 3). Herein lies the problem acknowledged in the first research aim and the thesis of this research. Community sport, in taking on *new* social responsibilities, had to find *new* methods for evaluation in the same way as Health Promotion, Nursing and various arms of the medical profession (Bauman et al. 2014; Baum et al. 2014). In this research, Realistic Evaluation was demonstrated to be a suitable candidate for the task; it captured *context* or circumstance which according to Coalter (2007:128) is ‘...largely ignored’ in our quest to understand sports programmes. The testing of programme theory through explanation ascertained what it was about the programmes that made them work or not. This is explained through Coalter’s (2008:36) thinking that ‘...it’s not what you do; it’s the way that you do it’. Coalter applied this logic to *how* we deliver programmes. However, the same logic can be applied to *how* we apply Realistic Evaluation and it is here that vital lessons have been learned.

Pawson and Tilley (1997) were resolute in the suggestion that their formula could be applied to any social programme. They were equally steadfast, and rightly so, in not prescribing its use; instead acknowledging that there was no ‘...one standard formula’ and that ‘...design is the great act of imagination in methodology’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:XV). Their thinking is significant and suggests that evaluators should consider other settings for Realistic Evaluation and ‘imagine’ ways to best apply their realist framework. In this research, the Realistic Evaluation design was presented to the CSN in September 2007; three months before the Preliminary

Interviews, this, following extensive contact with the CSN during the initial 18-months of the group's development. Consequently, the evaluation was seen as both a necessary function of the CSN and something the CSN could be involved in developing *alongside* delivering their five-year strategy.

If a participatory evaluation approach was a prerequisite to facilitating realist epistemology then it was helped by the limited size of the Community Sport Network. Initially, over 30 stakeholders were invited to the Network. A core group of just 12 people remained throughout the research period. The lesson learned here is that this approach worked well because of the small size of the Community Sport Network and the focus of their efforts. Thus, there is some acknowledgement of Hansen's (2005) concern that Realistic Evaluation could not manage more complex systems. A broader range of stakeholders would have increased the number of programmes adding to the evaluation's complexity and potentially challenging any participatory approach. If this research, with its small number of stakeholders, struggled to make clear the relative contribution of each programme towards the Strategy outcomes then a larger strategic group may potentially constrain the use of Realistic Evaluation even further. It remains to be seen how this participatory evaluation research approach would work with larger networks such as those in major cities where sport's broader social benefits would be felt the most (Collins, 2009; Pye et al. 2015).

The 12 'regular members' of the network were instrumental in developing the method for the evaluation and were involved in all design decisions. The key messages to the CSN in this process were that the evaluation provided a *room for improvement* rather than proof and that the evaluation was both an academic exercise as well as useful at the practitioner level. Thus, methodological pragmatism ensued. For example, initial proposals included a single round of interviews at the preliminary stages of the empirical phase. In the end, there were two stages of interviews (see chapter 7). In a large part, this was a consequence of the funding delays recorded at this stage. A pragmatic and flexible stance was useful in capturing the 'messiness' of the initial stages of the programmes and allowed for greater reflection when it was needed most. Again, managing such a complex setting amongst a larger group, each member having their own objectives and position, would have had implications for the research design. Moreover, a larger

group would have stretched resources including the time required for additional interviewing and analysis. According to Blamey and McKenzie (2007), realistic evaluations in more complex settings, such as the one ascribed to this research, can be resource and time intensive; a significant issue noted in Nichols' (2004) Realistic Evaluation research especially for a minor and discretionary policy area (Collins, 2010a) with very limited resources.

### **Capturing the realities of programme delivery: systematic 'messiness'?**

Delaying the interviews until the funding was received would have been rational in that it would have saved time and put less pressure on research resources. However, vital clues as to the adaptability of the programmes and their personnel would have been missed and the realities of delivering and embedding a series of new sport and physical activity programmes into hard to reach communities overlooked. Comparisons between the different programmes allowed exploration of how multiple programmes adapted and coped with such delays. This was significant if the evaluation was to inform at a strategic level. Thus, the two stages of Preliminary Interviews were helpful in recording important *mechanisms* to initial programme delivery such as the 'cautious perseverance' (See chapter 7) of the programme leaders and their capacity to adapt and remain reflective despite the difficult circumstances (or contexts) such as the constraints of the funding body. Such mechanism served them well in the later stages of the programmes – particularly in the mentoring and disability sports programmes where logistical contexts, acknowledged in the Phase Two interviews, had to be overcome in order that programme participants could identify outcomes patterns such as having a positive experience.

These lessons, as hard as they were, prepared the leadership and preserved the sustainability of the programmes and the integrity of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. The lessons certainly served to strengthen the demand for an idiosyncratic approach for the evaluation; that is to say, an adaptive approach that recognises the individuality of the Strategy and its setting. This last point, according to Weiss (1993), politicises evaluation and demands a skilled researcher so as not to render the evaluation '...too crude to measure the important changes that took place' (Weiss, 1993: 101). It was important that the CSN and the programme leaders were



involved in the decisions made about the research methods and design. However, the contributions had to be carefully considered and measured in order that the design remained useful both at an academic and practitioner level. Thus, the researcher's capacity to negotiate and recognise the strength of the contribution from the various CSN members to the overall research design were paramount to the political and methodological issues that this uniquely placed research approach raised. This gives credence to Clarke and Dawson's (1999: 21) suggestions that evaluation is not merely the practical application of methods but also '...a political and managerial activity'. Further, this highlights the 'facilitatory role' (Ensminger et al. 2015; Clarke and Dawson, 1999) required of the evaluator; a matter considered in more detail in the next part of this chapter.

### **Informing practitioners of good practice for evaluation at a strategic level**

If the first research aim was methodological, the second aim challenged the research on a practical level. More specifically, the influence of and the developing relationship between the evaluator and the Strategy stakeholders. Embedding a Realistic Evaluation philosophy during the initial stages of developing the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy was essential. Programme leaders were aware of the evaluator's intentions to map strategic *outcomes* to *mechanisms* and *context*. The programme leaders were also very much aware of the researcher's 'facilitatory role' outlined in Chapter 4. This 'participatory' effort, in part, allowed the evaluation to transcend from its more traditional programme level application to a higher, strategic level. Thus, each programme leader was made fully aware of their input and the Strategy outcomes their respective programmes were aligned to. This shared learning and interaction between the researcher and the stakeholder groups happened both as a consequence of the research process and as a result of the embedded role of the researcher in the CSN. As mentioned previously, the evaluation was part of the CSN's meeting agenda. This meant that the research took such opportunities to disseminate information and allow the various stakeholders to learn from each other.

Theory-based evaluations, such as the one conducted in this research, are concerned with determining logical steps between elements of an intervention and

its impact on the participating populations (Weiss, 1997; Funnell and Rogers, 2011; Jacobs et al. 2012). The premise of this research was to accrete knowledge slowly through a dialogue with programme implementers or leaders and programme participants. This allowed the evaluation to look within and across the programmes as opposed to arriving at theories of strategy effectiveness. Hence, a number of phases of data collection were employed. This phased design worked well in a community sport network setting. Initially, the evaluation provided a marker from which all the research participants could mentally observe their respective programmes. Moreover, the initial interviews were a reminder of how their programmes contributed to the overall aims of the Strategy as programme theories were examined and discussed in relation to Strategy outcomes.

Later phases recognised the processes and refined the theory of the immediate outcomes of the Strategy. This suggests levels of programme theory in line with Blamey and Mackenzie (2007) which are temporal (implementation theory) as well as descriptive (programme theory). These levels were apparent in the different phases of the interviews in this research. They demonstrated a developing relationship between the practitioner and the programme and acknowledged practitioner and participant learning. Further, a Realistic Evaluation framework with distinct empirical phases captured the dynamics of the community sport development setting over time. This was significant for the impact and development of the programmes within the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and, according to Pawson and Tilley (1997) may be lost in more traditional research designs. This gives strength to Realistic Evaluation of community sports strategy so long as the key stakeholders accept the unique and resource intensive nature of its execution and its capacity explain how and why programmes work (or not) as opposed to simply *if* they work.

Initial interviews captured detailed accounts of circumstances and process, not surprisingly, because they were limited to the programme leaders and were conducted at the early stages of the programmes' implementation. Later interviews, recorded in-depth exploration of how a programme works and under what circumstances (and for whom) thanks to the combined dialogue of the programme leaders and the programme participants. Thus, Realistic Evaluation relies on a limited but purposeful sample of stakeholders that personify Pawson and Tilley's

'...division of expertise' (1997:163). This supports Blamey and Mackenzie's (2007) theory that Realistic Evaluation is best served to smaller networks or alliances as opposed to larger groups where the luxury of several phases of data collection may be more difficult.

### **Informing sports policy locally: the impact of expertise**

The final research aim focussed on the utility of the evidence collected from the qualitative and quantitative methods. In this research, all of the programme leaders were members of the Community Sport Network and contributed to the development and delivery of a local Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. With the exception of one, the programme leaders also had the role of delivering activities and interacting with the programme participants. Combining a leader and practitioner role was significant because it allowed for the discussion and exploration of theory with the overall strategic goals in mind. Further, each leader was aware of all the other programmes and their respective activities and so had a much wider appreciation of the work being done. The evaluation helped this process of understanding and sharing information in two ways. The regular meetings of the CSN acted as a space for the outcome patterns to be disseminated to the group. Additionally, the evaluation provided a means for all the programme leaders to step back and reflect on the work they were involved with. Consequently, the evaluation could help inform the group at regular intervals and contribute to progressing towards the Strategy objectives.

Furthermore, interviewing the programme leaders individually and *in situ* would, according to Gray (2014) preserve the identities of the interviewees when in the role of a programme leader. According to Elwood and Martin (2000) this would lead to the generation of contextualised knowledge about which specific research questions have been raised. Ontologically, this is important as the *in situ* interview better reflected the realities of people's experiences and how the various programmes of the Strategy influenced their views.

Where there was practitioner experience by the programme leaders the theories generated were logical and intelligent. In the one instance where the interviewee did not deliver the programme activities (Rural Sports Hub), the dialogue was limited and the programme informed by conjecture as opposed to carefully considered

assumptions based on live observations and experiences with the programme. Despite this, there was progress both in terms of participation and in reaching those least likely to involve themselves in sport and physical activity. The theories about the Rural Sports Programme made sense and the discussions in the interview were critical, providing the backdrop for some significant circumstantial, logical reasoning for the lack of participants and delivering a good programme with the participants they had.

While not a practitioner, the programme leader had significant experience in managing and developing sport and physical activity programmes. Consequently there were insightful and informative perspectives on explaining the difficulties of delivering his contribution to the Strategy and sustaining the programme he led. However, too much impetus was placed on circumstantial or contextual issues at the expense of explaining key mechanism and their relationship with outcome patterns, even when explicitly referred to by the researcher. This highlights the importance of determining *who knows what* in order to generate plausible theories for a Realistic Evaluation framework and help inform local sports policy. Pawson and Tilley (1997:160) allude to ‘...divisions of expertise’ between programme participants, practitioners and the researcher. Each acknowledged as having very different ‘positional’ knowledge about a programme. The realistic evaluator must balance the contribution of each or, as Pawson and Tilley (1997:161) suggest ‘...cross-fertilise’ between these different positions in order to give practitioners a useable level of evidence and inform programme changes.

For the Rural Sports Programme in this research, the absence of participants and a practitioner, particularly in the initial stages of the research, left the evaluator with restricted divisions of expertise and limited evidence. Consequently, this research demonstrated that in generating theory, benefitting from the full force of the *CMO* formula is an evolving process and the relationships between the programmes and the participants need to mature so that a more informed refinement of programme theory can take place. This notion of programme maturity is not new. In their PAT10 report for sport and social exclusion, Collins et al. (1999:25) suggested that programmes that target social change, such as the programmes of the current evaluation, may need ‘...at least 5 years’ for changes to take place. Only then can

the outcomes be observed and help explain and inform local sport development activity.

In the early phases of the research, the focus was on implementation theory and the wider implications of *context*. This generated a pool of important contextual information into which the Strategy would settle. Thus, the Realistic Evaluation helped determine the realities of delivering a strategy as opposed to understanding the logical constructs of a *plan*. Or, as stated earlier in the thesis ‘...a more idiosyncratic approach allowed for circumstantial appreciation of programme reasoning’.

This meant the programme leaders in this research could reflect on their good ideas and carefully consider if the theory behind their respective programmes held strong in what were difficult initial stages of delivery. However, significant patience was required by both the researcher and the participants to allow the observation of theory in practice so that the logic behind the programme models could be refined or refuted. Then the researcher was reliant on the capacity of the interviewee to acknowledge the *mechanisms* and observe their impact with an expert eye and articulate the CMO relationship with appropriate detail towards the researcher. In this CSN, the importance of being a practitioner in this process was significant to the level of expertise and improved refinement of programme logic.

According to Pawson and Tilley (1997:161) the practitioner is the great ‘...utility player in the information game’. They have specific ideas about what it is about their programme that will work (*mechanisms*). Moreover, they will have previous experiences of programme success and failure (*outcomes*). Practitioners will also have the means to implement changes based on their theories (Brousselle and Champagne, 2011). However, they remain detached from the programme’s intended and unintended impact and their relationship with the people delivering and engaging with the programme is a *working one*. Consequently, some of the programme leaders in this research may have been unable to *fully* realise what works for whom and under what circumstances, limiting the capacity to inform change. This particular issue was identified with the programme leader of the Rural Sports Hub. The issue was partly resolved by using a questionnaire to measure improvement in the participants’ quality of life. This helped confirm the practitioner’s

theories about outcomes and also gave descriptive information about *for who* the programme worked. However, in this case the particular *contexts* or circumstances may have been limited to the programme leader perspectives. Thus, while still informative and able to produce useable and useful information, programmes such as the Rural Sports Hub, failed to harness Pawson and Tilley's CMO configuration. While interviewing the participants of these programmes would have been ideal, it was beyond the resources and scope of the current evaluation. Moreover, in the early stages of programme delivery, participant knowledge about the programme and the mechanisms that would help determine outcomes patterns may have been limited. Consequently, theories regarding programme process and outcome would have been difficult to identify.

### **Realistic Evaluation and a mixed method approach: what worked?**

In order to satisfy the aims of this research, a pragmatic methodological approach was undertaken. This approach embraced the practicality of drawing on multiple perspectives in order to fully explain and understand the logic behind, and the extent to which, programmes were working. Previous chapters acknowledged research limited to simplistic outcome evaluation (see Chapter 2 and 3). Consequently, this research employed a mixed method design within the Realistic Evaluation framework in order to enable the research to develop theoretically. It has already been noted that methodological pluralism has been effective in enabling a deeper understanding of social programmes (Larkin et al. 2012; Shlonsky and Mildon, 2014). Thus, the shift away from single method research approaches allowed for a design that has, in this instance, successfully provided further contextual layers to understanding more fully, the delivery of a sport and physical activity strategy from its development, to its implementation and capacity to create changes to the communities it served.

While this research provides legitimacy for employing mixed method research, this approach was not considered as simply the use of differing methods in order to triangulate data *per se*. Instead, this research draws on the potential of mixed method to present the multiple realities of delivering a sport and physical activity strategy. In this way, the previous chapters of this thesis considered mixed method and the context-mechanism-outcome configurations because of their capacity to

evaluate and offer an *improved view* of the evaluand (see Chapter 7). Thus, the mixed method design contributed to developing useful insights into not only '*what worked*', but '*why it worked*', '*for whom*' and '*under what circumstances*' (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 161).

The interviews were very useful in terms of generating programme theory insofar as describing what worked and why in programme specific circumstances. However, the quantitative data provided further illumination in terms of *what worked for whom*. For example, the Volunteer Programme focus group interviews described improvements in social connectedness and 'working with likeminded people' (see Chapter 9). The Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) questionnaire revealed that this connectedness was measured greatest in older male volunteers. This between methods triangulation of data provided validation for some of the findings and so the mixed method design helped strengthen data for programmes.

This methodological pragmatism was significant. For example, in the disability sports programmes, improvements in health and wellbeing were explained through the views and experiences of the lead practitioner of the programmes. This resulted from the limited ability of the participants to communicate and the reluctance of parents and guardians to give ethical assent to discuss their child or sibling's health and well-being. Interestingly, the practitioner described improvements in health and wellbeing beyond the participants and suggested there was improved (social) health of the parents/ guardians. This may not have been recorded had the parents been asked to discuss only their own children.

In another programmes such as the Rural Sports Hub, the participants (all adults) could communicate the impact of the programme on health and wellbeing and so a validated questionnaire was administered to measure such changes. The mixed method design employed in this research proved fruitful for validating and providing greater demographic sensitivity of the outcomes. Further, the mixed method design helped the evaluation view outcomes from several perspectives. This is significant for evaluation research and is aligned with historical aspirations for the field. In his typology for evaluation, MacDonald (1974, cited in Torrance, 2012:12) suggested a democratic type of evaluation that '*...recognises value pluralism and seeks to represent a range of interests*'. Such democracy is recognised in this research.

However, the range of interests had to be carefully measured against the resource implications (Gray, 2014). Additionally, the epistemological position would dictate the extent to which the different methods would contribute to the evaluation. In this research, such an issue, previously acknowledged by Bryman (2007) would place the three phases of interview data at the forefront of theory development.

According to Blamey and McKenzie (2007) the realist evaluator articulates theory ‘...through generative conversations and interviews with a limited and purposive selection of stakeholders’. As previously mentioned, this is not suggesting that the qualitative data is in any way superior to other forms of evaluation data (Darlington and Scott, 2003). Instead, the *qualitative then quantitative* design used in this research was a developmental application of mixed method research. Such application according to Gray (2014) is necessary where little is known about the research setting. Also, it would have been impractical to measure quantitatively from the beginning of the evaluation process as the constructs being measured were not sufficiently understood. Moreover, the programmes were not sufficiently operationalised and so objective measures could not have been applied across all participants. It was only when theoretical notions of outcomes had been generated that more careful considerations of questionnaire selection could be made. Thus, although one method may be more prominent than the other, both methods had specific purpose and therefore value.

### **Reflections on the research process**

No research follows a straight line and from its conception to writing the final chapter, this research was no different. The pragmatic design and idiosyncratic nature of the research setting was a challenge but, in the end, it was the only approach I could take if the account of delivering a sport and physical activity strategy was to remain ‘real’. From sampling and recruiting participants to choosing the tools with which I would gather useful information for the evaluation, every turn was taken with a degree of uncertainty, helped along by the participatory role taken with the CSN and the research supervisory team.

Earlier it was acknowledged that the implementation of new sport development activity was messy and fraught with uncertainty. Houlihan (2005) used the same vernacular in the development of sport policy. Similarly, those describing the



realities of community intervention acknowledged the complexities of doing so (Trickett et al. 2011; Hill, 2004). Coalter (2007: 537) referred to some sport development interventions as ‘...ill-defined with hard to follow outcomes’. Thus, it is hardly surprising that a community sport development evaluation should be any different if we are to capture this reality. This final section of the thesis presents a personal view on limitations of the study and a critical reflection of the experience of developing as a researcher. Additionally, the contribution of the thesis to the field of community sport development is posited and will include recommendations for future practice and further research.

If, according to Pawson and Manzano-Santaella (2012: 183) current Realistic Evaluation research works by attempting to explain outcomes patterns that ‘...cannot be determined through anecdotal remarks (on the part of the subjects) then outcomes need to be carefully considered and conceptualised’. The same authors recommend that baselines should be established and ‘...before and after measures should be plotted’ and complete sets of intervention cohorts be followed. This advice was not followed for all datasets in this research. For example, there were no baseline measures for the VIAT questionnaire. Instead, the questionnaire was administered towards the end of the empirical period of the research and targeted to those volunteers who had *served a minimum time* on the Volunteer Programme. This single-group, post-test design meant that the researcher could not make any causal inferences between the Volunteer Programme and the Volunteers. However, Howlett (2009:43) supports a similar use of this survey as it can ‘...provide useful data for funders, volunteers and service users... that can inform and improve management practices’. Further, Clarke and Dawson (1999:55) challenge the ‘...before-and-after’ design in evaluation; questioning the complexities of ensuring the integrity of such designs throughout the course of an evaluation and challenging its propensity to ‘...prevent a programme from adapting to changing circumstances’.

Such circumstantial change was very apparent in this research. Thus, while the data remained descriptive it is, according to Langbein and Felbinger (2012), still useful at the practitioner level and informed decisions about the future of the programme. Further, the questions on the survey were modified so that they related directly to experiences on the Volunteer Programme (see appendix 3). While this would help the participants be mindful of their involvement in the Volunteer Programme when

responding to the questions, the impact of other extraneous variables could not be ruled out and so direct associations between the programme and its impact on participants could not be made.

The intention was not to seek causation but to use 'methods triangulation' (Ammenwerth et al. 2003) to help validate the outcomes recorded in the interviews. Further, there was no intention to generalise the findings of the questionnaire to other similar populations as this study was focussed on the very particular setting of 'this' local community. The issue of validity is a common problem in programme evaluation. Rossi et al. (2004) suggests that validity is very dependent on whether the measure is accepted as such by the stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement gave some assurance that it did provide validity for the purpose of the evaluation. That was certainly the case in this research. Indeed the VIAT was suggested by the Volunteer Programme leader who had found the questionnaire very useful in a previous volunteer programme position. In this research, a *method-triangulation* provided some protection against the possibility that any single measure may not fully tap into the outcome of interest (Rossi et al. 2004).

This said, it should be acknowledged here that better administration of the VIAT questionnaire to allow for a pre-post-test design would have given greater support to measuring change in the volunteers as a results of their involvement in the Volunteer Programme. This repeated design was applied in the Quality of Life questionnaire to help determine the outcomes of the Rural Sports Club and while there was an attempt to use a control group here, the response rate from the controls was not large enough to make any meaningful comparisons and so the control data was not used. This weakens the case for a causal relationship between the programme and its participants but did not render the data *useless*. When supported by the interview, the combination of data allowed the research to help develop the context for the outcomes on a descriptive level. For example, the motives for volunteering were different for males and females in the interviews. The same differences for motivation between the sexes were apparent in the VIAT questionnaire. Therefore this research has enabled insights into not only 'what works' but also 'why it works' and 'for whom' (Pawson and Manzano-Santaella, 2012). Rossi et al. (2004) propose that diversifying measures in this way can

safeguard against poorly performing measures that may under-represent outcomes, as is the case with the VIAT questionnaire.

One additional issue with the questionnaire data was the reliance on self-reporting from the participants. Self-reported questionnaire data is open to a number of well-recognised biases (Choi and Pak, 2005). Technically (length and complexity of questions, jargon, sufficient and appropriate categories) the questionnaires in this research were well developed in that they had a history of use and had been validated and thus subject to rigorous development and testing. However, there were sensitive questions relating to age and emotional wellbeing that participants may have felt uncomfortable answering. There was evidence of 'end aversion' or 'central tendency' with the VIAT questionnaire with very few responses at the extremes of the scale and more towards the middle. This is common, especially in questionnaires using a Likert Scale (Bertram, 2007). Further, when there are questions related to improvements in health or social connectedness in self-reported questionnaires, respondents may have portrayed themselves in a more socially favourable light which would portray the programme in a more positive position than was actually realised (Brenner and DeLamater, 2014; Podsakoff et al. 2012).

The implications of this for the Realistic Evaluation design are that it weakened the strength of the outcome measure. While there were instances in the questionnaires that validated the findings of the interviews, the central tendency issue will have made triangulation more difficult to make definitive explanations about which mechanisms triggered which outcomes in which circumstances and for whom. This made the researcher place greater value on what the interview participants had said. However, Pawson and Manzano-Santaella (2012: 181) suggest that a realist analyst should avoid cataloguing discrete outcomes and instead account for '...networks of outcomes' (or outcome patterns) and pursue a theory through '...cross item corroboration'. Rossi et al (2004:214) add further support to this theory and suggest that outcomes are '...multidimensional' and that it would '...obscure important distinctions to lump all [types] together'. The method- triangulation adopted in this research was useful for creating outcome patterns and helped validate findings. However, this was limited to a factual or descriptive level when theories about age, length of time in the intervention and gender became significant factors in the theory development and were considered useful at practitioner level.

## **Interview biases and developing the realist(ic) technique**

In using semi-structured interviews, I recognised my beliefs and experiences (worldview) and their interaction with those realities laid out by the interviewees. This interpretational level of interaction means that I in some way transformed the data when analysing the interview transcripts and thus, was involved in the production of knowledge. According to Pawson and Tilley (1997) this interviewer/interviewee knowledge and influence is a key ingredient of the realistic interview.

The researcher is seen as having a particular expertise and offers their own theories. The interviewee is there to ‘...confirm, falsify and above all refine that theory (Pawson, 1997: 299). Thus, researcher influence occurs during the interview itself where the interviewer decides which lines of enquiry to pursue or disregard based on a negotiation and dialogue with the interviewee. Pawson and Tilley (1997) assert that the researcher’s influence is key. However, influence should be limited to posing the key areas to discuss or in Pawson and Tilley’s (1997:168) words ‘...mark out the area in which the subjects will make decisions’. Moreover, that the interviewer then allows clear space for the interviewee to offer a formal description of their own thinking and an opportunity to refine or clarify that thinking. King and Horrocks (2010:20) acknowledge this notion of the realist interviewer remaining somewhat ‘...objective and detached’ in order to better reflect people’s actual experiences in the world.

Context was part of the realist framework used in this research and demonstrates the subtle overlaps of epistemological positions when evaluating complex social programmes. King and Horrocks (2010) explain that a contextual position allows the researcher to interpret and understand situated perspectives and produce knowledge. With a contextualist perspective the interviewer’s influence is not seen as a source of bias, instead the researcher is the ‘co-producer’ of knowledge (King and Horrocks, 2010:21). In this research, attempts to remain in the realist domain and represent the experiences of a population were strengthened (but by no means absolute) by the systematic approach to collecting and coding data. For example, the interview schedule remained unchanged throughout the empirical period of the research. From a realist perspective, King and Horrocks (2010) encourage the use

of asking questions in the same format and with a similar level of interpersonal engagement each time in order that subjective researcher bias can be limited but will not completely rule out interviewer 'bias'. Furthermore, the significance of context in the realist framework used for this research allowed the evaluation to record realist and contextualised viewpoints.

However, Stenner (1993) argues that the researcher cannot possibly capture the range of meanings that the interviewee could have had. This was probably less apparent with the programme leaders and members of the Community Sport Network as I had spent several months with them prior to the Strategy and its programmes going live. Thus, I had a sufficient understanding of the context, which enabled me to interpret the interview transcripts with a degree of sensitivity to the possible meanings the interviewee may have had. Further, interpretations were checked at all interview stages to allow the interviewees to corroborate my understanding of what was said. One further reflection of the interviews conducted in this research is the possibility that the interviewees could have shared with me what they thought I should hear. Consequently, in building a relationship with the interviewees – particularly the programme leaders - the lack of anonymity, at that time, could have led to the interviewees being somewhat cautious with their responses and an altered view of reality may have been given. However, this is something that most social research involving qualitative interviews must accept.

Additionally, I decided not to seek inter-rater reliability with this research design because of my developing knowledge of the context in which the research took place and my theoretical sensitivity to relevant themes and programmes. Perhaps this research would have benefited from a larger research team, resource issues aside, who would each have a participatory role in the Strategy and its programmes, and then would therefore be able to inter rate each other's interpretations and collaboratively develop programme theory objectively.

Finally, King and Horrocks (2010:20) suggest, the realist perspective seeks to produce knowledge through the production of '...objective data which is reliable and representative of the wider population from which [the sample] is drawn'. It is worth noting the issues of representing populations and sampling for this research. Arguably, programmes such as the Rural Sports Hub were underrepresented. A

'voice' for this programme was limited to the programme leader. The quality of life survey helped to explain changes in general health however, real world experiences could not be captured from the participants of this programme. In the same way that the disability sports programme leader was adamant that I could not interview the parents and guardians of the disability sports programmes (see chapter 6), the Rural Sports Hub programme leader was equally steadfast in not allowing me to speak to the participants of the exercise class.

The programme leader explained that he was struggling to retain participants on his programme and did not want to 'frighten them off' with an 'overbearing' research presence. The difficulties of encouraging people from rural communities has been noted previously (see chapter 10). However, the programme leader's seemingly over-protective stance is significant in terms of trying to gather a realist perspective with a very limited sample. This challenges the notion of division of expertise if the experts are not willing to fully embrace evaluation research or allow full access to those that are experiencing the programme. This said, valuable lessons have been learned about the complexity of stakeholder perspectives and levels of engagement with the evaluation process. More work should have been done to remove perceptions of an overbearing research process. Despite this, there was sufficient data to make informed changes to the programme, facilitate learning and generate knowledge for the Rural Sports Hub even if this meant abolishing the Rural Sports Hub project for a more worthwhile and impactful exercise. This, above all, personifies evaluation.

### **Implications and future research**

Three years have passed since the expiration of Crewe and Nantwich's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. In this time, participation in sport remains an issue. Nationally, the number of people taking part in moderate intensity sport for at least 30 minutes a week has reduced from 36% in 2012 to 35% in 2013 (Sport England, 2013). Regionally, participation remains comparatively high with Cheshire East Unitary Authority measuring 39% participation in sport. This is the highest recorded participation figure for the region since the first Active People Survey conducted on 2005/06. However, with further public spending cuts, including £30m from the Department of Culture Media and Sport over the next 12-months (BBC, 2015)

community sport will have to work harder than ever to survive. Participation will remain a significant issue for local authorities trying to improve health, wellbeing and safer, stronger communities. This research has highlighted important issues that have implications for both community sport development and the research community in terms of addressing an evidence base for community sport.

Firstly, it is evident that sport and physical activity strategy are significant in guiding community sports programmes towards some agreed outcomes and reflect local needs and aspiration. Additionally, it has demonstrated the importance of having a small and dedicated, local group responsible for facilitating the delivery of a local sport and physical activity strategy. Pivotal to bringing about positive changes was the dialogue between the programme leaders and their participants. In this research, the more *physical connections* these two groups had, the more sustainable the projects became – particularly for volunteering and programmes for disability sport. The evaluation helped encourage this dialogue and gave room for significant reflection on practices. Thus, the research itself may have contributed to some of the Strategy's success in terms of growing and sustaining participation in the programmes. This latter note is certainly worthy of future study. Relatively little has been written about the influence of evaluation itself (Mark and Henry, 2004; Herbert, 2014). This is significant in a service sector such as sport development where successive governments have tasked sport to modernise their practices.

During the time of this research, there was a Labour government who based their concept of *modernisation* on joined-up, strategic thinking with greater accountability (DCMS, 2002); and more recently a Coalition who decentralised sport and gave greater powers and responsibility to citizens (Cameron, 2009). This has added to the complexity of delivery networks for sport which according to Bloyce et al. (2008) could harm rather than harness attempts to achieve government goals and targets for sport. It would be interesting to determine if evaluation would help or hinder this process.

This research was very reliant on the coming together of an academic institution and a series of local sports development groups. Given the unique features of this evaluation, it would seem prudent to explore, in detail, the nature, power and influence of such groups working together in sport in the context of creating a

useable evidence base. The characteristics of community sport development have recently come under much scrutiny (Harris, 2013; Harris and Houlihan, 2015; Misener and Doherty, 2014; Mackintosh and Harris, 2014; Mackintosh, 2011) however, more needs to be known about the role of evaluation and the contribution of academia in this process.

The greatest challenge for the design used in this research is its application beyond small community sport development networks. Alongside the practical issues of a realistic framework for evaluation into larger sport development groups are the resource issues. Given the spending cuts already mentioned, future research should primarily look at the feasibility of extending the Realistic Evaluation principles into larger, national and regional environments. In this research, the evaluator was considered as a single person. Perhaps there is a need for a team of evaluators. How such teams may work, for whom and under what circumstances would need careful consideration and should be another avenue for future research in to the application of Realistic Evaluation in sport development.

This research gave a wealth of information about the adaptability and survivability of sport development teams and programmes. This interplay between programmes and people in community sport deserves more attention than this evaluation could give it. Initially, Eady (1993) and more recently Hylton (2013) and Mackintosh (2011) have given some thought as to what typifies current sport development practice from a theoretical perspective. However, to better understand relationships with this practice further socio-psychological perspectives may illuminate the varied interpretation and realities of community sport at the level of delivery. This would provide important theories to test in future Realistic Evaluations.

Finally, the political value and impact of this research needs to be acknowledged. If the purpose of evaluation is to improve, and the ways in which improvement is sought are both varied and multifaceted it is in the best interest of evaluation research to consider how well accepted the evidence base will be. Funders, sponsors, policy makers will all have their axe to grind when attempting to determine what evidence best suites them. This research dared to try something new. Indeed, during the research period the funders and policy makers challenged sport development to *find a way* to evaluate its work. Given the economic threats and the



probable policy shifts over the coming decade, sport will have to survive by developing ‘...a better mechanism for an improved evidence base’ (DCMS, 2008:16). If, as Cameron (2009) alluded to, our sport development *citizens* are now in control of local sport development activity, then there needs to be further explorations of the sector’s capacity to conduct useful evaluations. Additionally, this would require a dialogue with higher echelons of policy making and funding to resource evaluation and accept the varied forms in which evidence can present itself. This will be a difficult task and an enormous challenge when outside the remit of more centralised government department activity and in a time of economic uncertainty.

## References

- Aalto, A., Aro, A. and Teperi, J. (1999) 'RAND-36 as a measure of Health-Related Quality of Life.' *Reliability, construct validity, and reference values in the Finnish general population. Helsinki: Stakes, Research Reports*, 101
- Abell, S. K., Dillon, D. R., Hopkins, C. J., McInerney, W. D. and O'Brien, D. G. (1995) "Somebody to count on": mentor/intern relationships in a beginning teacher internship program.' *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 11(2) pp. 173-188.
- Abma, T. A. and Widdershoven, G. A. M. (2008) 'Evaluation and/as social relation.' *Evaluation*, 14(2) pp. 209-225.
- Ackermann, F. and Eden, C. (2011) 'Strategic management of stakeholders: theory and practice.' *Long Range Planning*, 44(3) pp. 179-196.
- Acosta, R. V. and Carpenter, L. J. (2012) *Women in intercollegiate sport: a longitudinal, national study: thirty-five year update, 1977-2012*. New York: Brooklyn College.
- Ainsworth, B. E., Caspersen, C. J., Matthews, C. E., Mâsse, L. C., Baranowski, T. and Zhu, W. (2012) 'Recommendations to improve the accuracy of estimates of physical activity derived from self report.' *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 9(1) pp. 76-84.
- Alexander, A., Kim, S.-B. and Kim, D.-Y. (2015) 'Segmenting volunteers by motivation in the 2012 London Olympic Games.' *Tourism Management*, 47 pp. 1-10.
- Alkin, M. C. (2012) *Evaluation roots: a wider perspective of theorists? Views and influences*. London: SAGE.
- Alkin, M. C., Vo, A. T. and Christie, C. A. (2012) 'The evaluator's role in valuing: who and with whom?' *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2012(133) pp. 29-41.
- Allen, J. B. and Bartle, M. (2014) 'Sport event volunteers' engagement: management matters.' *Managing Leisure*, 19(1) pp. 36-50.
- Ammenwerth, E., Iller, C. and Mansmann, U. (2003) 'Can evaluation studies benefit from triangulation? A case study.' *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, 70(2) pp. 237-248.
- Anderson, D. (2009) 'Adolescent girls' involvement in disability sport: Implications for identity development.' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 33(4) pp. 427-449.
- Antikainen, I. and Ellis, R. (2011) 'A RE-AIM evaluation of theory-based physical activity interventions.' *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 33(2) pp. 198-214.
- Anttila, H., Autti-Rämö, I., Suoranta, J., Mäkelä, M. and Malmivaara, A. (2008)

'Effectiveness of physical therapy interventions for children with cerebral palsy: a systematic review.' *BMC Pediatrics*, 8(14) pp. 1-10.

Aragon, C., Aranguren, M. J., Diez, M.-A., Iturrioz, C. and Wilson, J. R. (2014) 'Participatory evaluation: a useful tool for contextualising cluster policy?' *Policy Studies*, 35(1) pp. 1-21.

Armour, K., Sandford, R. and Duncombe, R. (2013) 'Positive youth development and physical activity/sport interventions: mechanisms leading to sustained impact.' *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 18(3) pp. 256-281.

Armstrong, M. E., Green, J., Reeves, G. K., Beral, V. and Cairns, B. J. (2015) 'Frequent physical activity may not reduce vascular disease risk as much as moderate activity: large prospective study of UK women.' *Circulation*, 131(8) pp. 692-694.

Ashley, A. and Bartlett, H. (2001) 'An evaluation of a walking scheme based in primary care: the participants' perspective.' *Primary Health Care Research and Development*, 2(2) pp. 98-106.

Åsvoll, H. (2014) 'Abduction, deduction and induction: can these concepts be used for an understanding of methodological processes in interpretative case studies?' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 27(3) pp. 289-307.

Attwood, C., Singh, G., Prime, D. and Creasey, R. (2003) *2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey: people, families and communities*. London: Home Office. [Online] [Accessed on 27th January 2015] [http://www.tariqmodood.com/uploads/1/2/3/9/12392325/citizenship\\_survey.pdf](http://www.tariqmodood.com/uploads/1/2/3/9/12392325/citizenship_survey.pdf)

Audit Commission. (2002) *Sport and recreation: learning from audit, inspection and research*. London: Audit Commission.

Bailey, R., Leigh, J., Pearce, G., Sharrock, R., Reeves, M., Cope, E., Dismore, H., Quarmby, T., Doughty, L. and Peacock, S. (2011) *National impact evaluation of the gifted and talented physical education and sport programme*. Canterbury: Youth Sport Trust.

Bandura, A. (1986) *Social foundations of thought and action*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Bardens, J., Long, R. and Gillie, C. (2012) *School Sport*. London: Social Policy Section.

Barnes, M., Matka, E. and Sullivan, H. (2003) 'Evidence, understanding and complexity evaluation in non-linear systems.' *Evaluation*, 9(3) pp. 265-284.

- Baum, F., Lawless, A., Delany, T., Macdougall, C., Williams, C., Broderick, D., Wildgoose, D., Harris, E., Mcdermott, D. and Kickbusch, I. (2014) 'Evaluation of health in all policies: concept, theory and application.' *Health Promotion International*, 29(1) pp. 130-142.
- Bauman, A. E., King, L. and Nutbeam, D. (2014) 'Rethinking the evaluation and measurement of health in all policies.' *Health Promotion International*, 29(1) pp. 143-151.
- Baur, V. E., Van Elteren, A. H., Nierse, C. J. and Abma, T. A. (2010) 'Dealing with distrust and power dynamics: asymmetric relations among stakeholders in responsive evaluation.' *Evaluation*, 16(3) pp. 233-248.
- Bean, C. N., Kendellen, K., Halsall, T. and Forneris, T. (2015) 'Putting program evaluation into practice: enhancing the Girls Just Wanna Have Fun program.' *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 49 pp. 31-40.
- Belfiore, E. and Bennett, O. (2010) 'Beyond the "toolkit approach": arts impact evaluation research and the realities of cultural policy-making.' *Journal for Cultural Research*, 14(2) pp. 121-142.
- Bell, B. (2004) *An evaluation of the impacts of the Champion Coaching Scheme on youth sport and coaching*. Ph.D. Loughborough University.
- Berk, R. A. (1995) 'Publishing evaluation research.' *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*, 24(1) pp. 9-12.
- Berk, R. A. and Rossi, P. H. (1990) *Thinking about program evaluation*. Thousand Oakes: Sage Publications.
- Bertram, D. (2007) 'Likert scales.' *Topic Report*. [Accessed on 20th June 2015] <http://my.ilstu.edu/~eostewa/497/Likert%20topic-dane-likert.pdf>
- Bertz, S. and Purdy, L. (2010) 'Coach Education in Ireland: Observations and Considerations for High Performance.' *Journal of Coaching Education*, 4(3) pp. 29-43.
- Bezzi, C. (2006) 'Evaluation pragmatics.' *Evaluation*, 12(1) pp. 56-76.
- Bhaskar, R. (1975) 'Forms of realism.' *Philosophica*, 15.
- Bhaskar, R. (2008) *A realist theory of science*. London: Routledge.
- Bhaskar, R. (2010) *Reclaiming reality: a critical introduction to contemporary philosophy*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Bianca, C.-F. (2013) 'Means of improving motor control in children with disabilities.' *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 76 pp. 169-174.

- Bickman, L. (1987) 'The functions of program theory.' *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 1987(33) pp. 5-18.
- Billington, P. (2005, March). Has the Government got it right? *Recreation*, 24-28.
- Bisht, B., Darling, W., Shivapour, E., Lutgendorf, S., Snetselaar, L., Chenard, C., Wahls, T., Darling, W. G. and Shivapour, E. T. (2015) 'Multimodal intervention improves fatigue and quality of life in subjects with progressive multiple sclerosis: a pilot study.' *Clinico Economics and Outcomes Research*, 5 pp. 145-152.
- Blamey, A. and Mackenzie, M. (2007) 'Theories of change and realistic evaluation peas in a pod or apples and oranges?' *Evaluation*, 13(4) pp. 439-455.
- Bloom, G. A. (2013) In Potrac, P., Gilbert, W. and Denison, J. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of sports coaching*. London: Routledge, pp. 476-485.
- Bloyce, D. and Smith, A. (2009) *Sport, policy, and development: an introduction*. Oxon: Taylor & Francis.
- Bloyce, D. and Green, K. (2013) 'Sports development officers on sports development.' In Houlihan, B. and Green, M. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of sports development*. London: Routledge, pp. 477-487.
- Bloyce, D., Smith, A., Mead, R. and Morris, J. (2008) "Playing the game (plan)": a figurational analysis of organizational change in sports development in England.' *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 8(4) pp. 359-378.
- Bochel, H. and Duncan, S. (2007) *Making policy in theory and practice*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986) 'The forms of capital'. In Richardson, J. (eds.) *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. New York:Greenwood, pp. 241-258.
- Bowers, G. R. and Eberhart, N. A. (1988) 'Mentors and the entry year program.' *Theory into Practice*, 27(3) pp. 226-230.
- Boynton, P. M. (2004) 'Hands-on guide to questionnaire research: administering, analysing, and reporting your questionnaire.' *British Medical Journal*, 328(7452) pp. 1372.-1375.
- Bradbury, S. (2011) *Football Foundation Community Programme Strategy: case study evaluation*. Loughborough: Institute of Youth Sport.
- Braithwaite, R. L., McKenzie, R. D., Pruitt, V., Holden, K. B., Aaron, K. and Hollimon, C. (2013) 'Community-based participatory evaluation: the Healthy Start approach.' *Health Promotion Practice*, 14(2) pp. 213-219.

- Braun, V., Clarke, V. and Rance, N. (2014) 'How to use thematic analysis with interview data (process research).' In Vossler, A. and Moller, N. (eds.) *The counselling and psychotherapy research handbook*. London: Sage, pp. 183-198.
- Brenner, P. S. and DeLamater, J. D. (2014) 'Social desirability bias in self-reports of physical activity: is an exercise identity the culprit?' *Social Indicators Research*, 117(2) pp. 489-504.
- British Gymnastics. (2013) *Gymnastics coach/ teacher ratios*. Newport: British Gymnastics. [Online] [Accessed on 27th January 2015]
- British Broadcasting Cooperation. (2015) *Spending cuts department by department*. [Online] [Accessed on 12th June 2015] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-33013567>
- Brousselle, A. and Champagne, F. (2011) 'Program theory evaluation: logic analysis.' *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 34(1) pp. 69-78.
- Brown, J. L., MacDonald, R. and Mitchell, R. (2015) 'Are people who participate in cultural activities more satisfied with life?' *Social Indicators Research*, 122(1) pp. 135-146.
- Bryman, A. (2007) 'Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research.' *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1) pp. 8-22.
- Bryman, A. and Cramer, D. (2011) *Quantitative data analysis with IBM SPSS 17, 18 and 19: a guide for social scientists*. London: Routledge.
- Buffart, L. M., Westendorp, T., van den Berg-Emons, R. J., Stam, H. J. and Roebroeck, M. E. (2009) 'Perceived barriers to and facilitators of physical activity in young adults with childhood-onset physical disabilities.' *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*, 41(11) pp. 881-885.
- Bullough, S., Davies, L. E. and Barrett, D. (2014) 'The impact of a community free swimming programme for young people (under 19) in England.' *Sport Management Review*, 18(1) pp. 32-44.
- Butterfoss, F. D. and Francisco, V. T. (2004) 'Evaluating community partnerships and coalitions with practitioners in mind.' *Health Promotion Practice*, 5(2) pp. 108-114.
- Cameron, D. (2009) *Hugo Young lecture: the big society*. Kings Place: London, 10th November 2009.
- Campbell, D. T. (1984) 'Can we be scientific in applied social science?' *Evaluation Studies Review Annual*, 9 pp. 26-48.
- Carter, J. (2008) 'Implications for evidence-based practice when the evidence is lacking.' *Nutrition & Dietetics*, 65(1) pp. 2-3.

- Carter, B., Grey, J., McWilliams, E., Clair, Z., Blake, K. and Byatt, R. (2014) 'Just kids playing sport (in a chair)': experiences of children, families and stakeholders attending a wheelchair sports club.' *Disability & Society*, 29(6) pp. 938-952.
- Carter, S. M. and Little, M. (2007) 'Justifying knowledge, justifying method, taking action: epistemologies, methodologies, and methods in qualitative research.' *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10) pp. 1316-1328.
- Central Council for Physical Recreation. (1960) *Sport and the community: the report of the Wolfenden committee on sport 1960*. London: Central Council for Physical Recreation.
- Chapman, T. and McGuinness, B. (2013) 'Consuming values in a social market: making choices about volunteering and non-volunteering.' *Social and Public Policy Review*, 6(1) pp. 1-17.
- Chatterji, M. (2004) 'Evidence on "what works": An argument for extended-term mixed-method (ETMM) evaluation designs.' *Educational Researcher*, 33(9) pp. 3-13.
- Chelimsky, E. (2006) *The purposes of evaluation in a democratic society*. London: Sage.
- Chelimsky, E. and Shadish, W. R. (1997) *Evaluation for the 21st century: a handbook*. London: Sage Publications.
- Chen, H. T. (1997) *Theory-driven evaluations*. London: Sage Publications.
- Cheshire East Borough Council. (2008) *The Cheshire Community Survey 2008*. Sandbach: Cheshire East Borough Council.
- Cheshire East Borough Council. (2010) *Town Information*. Sandbach: Cheshire East Council. [Online] [Accessed on 28th November 2011] [http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council\\_and\\_democracy/your\\_council/about\\_cheshire\\_east/town\\_information.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/about_cheshire_east/town_information.aspx)
- Choi, B. C. and Pak, A. W. (2005) 'A catalog of biases in questionnaires.' *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 2(1) pp. 1-13.
- Choi, M., Prieto-Merino, D., Dale, C., Nüesch, E., Amuzu, A., Bowling, A., Ebrahim, S. and Casas, J. P. (2013) 'Effect of changes in moderate or vigorous physical activity on changes in health-related quality of life of elderly British women over seven years.' *Quality of Life Research*, 22(8) pp. 2011-2020.
- Clark, A. M., Whelan, H. K., Barbour, R. and MacIntyre, P. D. (2005) 'A realist study of the mechanisms of cardiac rehabilitation.' *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 52(4) pp. 362-371.
- Clarke, A. and Dawson, R. (1999) *Evaluation research: an introduction to principles, methods, and practice*. London: Sage Publications.

- Cleland, V., Timperio, A., Salmon, J., Hume, C., Telford, A. and Crawford, D. (2011) 'A longitudinal study of the family physical activity environment and physical activity among youth.' *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 25(3) pp. 159-167.
- Coaffee, J. (2008) 'Sport, culture and the modern state: emerging themes in stimulating urban regeneration in the UK.' *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 14(4) pp. 377-397.
- Coaffee, J. and Shaw, T. (2005) 'Viewpoint: the liveability agenda: new regionalism, liveability and the untapped potential of sport and recreation.' *Town Planning Review*, 76(2) pp. i-v.
- Coakley, J. and Dunning, E. (2000) *Handbook of sports studies*. London: Sage.
- Coalter, F. (2007a) 'Sports Clubs, Social Capital and Social Regeneration: 'ill-defined interventions with hard to follow outcomes''? *Sport in Society*, 10(4) pp. 537-559.
- Coalter, F. (2007b) *A wider social role for sport: who's keeping the score?*, London: Taylor & Francis.
- Coalter, F. (2011) 'Sports development's contribution to social policy objectives. The difficult relationship between politics and evidence.' In Houlihan, B. and Green, M. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of sports development*. London: Routledge, pp. 561-578.
- Coalter, F. (2010) 'The politics of sport-for-development: limited focus programmes and broad gauge problems?' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(3) pp. 295-314.
- Coalter, F. (2013) *Sport for development: what game are we playing?*, London: Routledge.
- Coalter, F., Allison, M. and Taylor, J. (2000) *The role of sport in regenerating deprived urban areas*. Edinburgh: Scottish Office Central Research Unit.
- Coalter, F., Long, J. and Duffield, B. (1986) *Rationale for public sector investment in leisure*. London: Sports Council and Economic & Social Research Council.
- Collins, M. (1995) *Sport development regionally and locally*. Reading: Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management
- Collins, M., Henry, I., Houlihan, B. and Buller, J. (1999) *Sport and social Inclusion: a report to the Department of Culture Media and Sport*. Loughborough: Loughborough University.
- Collins, M. (2010a) *Examining sports development*. London: Routledge.



Collins, M. (2010b) 'From 'sport for good' to 'sport for sport's sake'—not a good move for sports development in England?' *International Journal of Sport Policy*, 2(3) pp. 367-379.

Collins, M. and Kay, T. (2014) *Sport and social exclusion*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., London: Routledge.

Collins, M. F. and Kay, T. (2003) *Sport and social exclusion*. London: Routledge.

Colyer, S. (2000) 'Organizational culture in selected Western Australian sport organizations.' *Journal of Sport Management*, 14(4) pp. 321-341.

Community Sport Network. (2005) *Sports directory*. Crewe: CNBC.

Community Sport Network. (2007) *Strategy for sport and physical activity*. Crewe: Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council.

Conlin, S. and Stirrat, R. L. (2008) 'Current challenges in development evaluation.' *Evaluation*, 14(2) pp. 193-208.

Council of Europe. (1992) *The European sport charter*. Paris: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe. (2001) *The European Sports Charter (Revised)*. Brussels: Council of Europe.

Cordray, D. S. and Lipsey, M. W. (1987) 'Evaluation studies for 1986: Program evaluation and program research.' *Evaluation Studies Review Annual*, 1 pp. 17-44.

Crabbe, T. (2006) 'Reaching the 'hard to reach': engagement, relationship building and social control in sport based social inclusion work.' *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 2(1-2) pp. 27-40.

Crabbe, T. (2007) *Positive Futures: putting the pieces together. The 2007 Annual Positive Futures monitoring and evaluation report*. Manchester: Substance.

Crabbe, T. (2009) 'Getting to know you: using sport to engage and build relationships with socially marginalised young people.' In Levermore, R. and Beacom, A. (eds.) *Sport and international development*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp. 176-197.

Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council (CNBC). (2005) *A needs analysis for sport and physical activity*. Crewe: Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council (Daniels, J. Report).

Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council (CNBC). (2008) *Local development framework annual monitoring report 2008*. Crewe: CNBC.

Cronbach, L. J., Ambron, S. R., Dombusch, S. M., Hess, R. D., Hornik, R. C., Phillips, D. C., Walker, D. F., & Weiner, S. S (1980) *Toward reform of program evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

- Crotty, M. (1998) *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage.
- Culver, D. and Trudel, P. (2006) 'Cultivating coaches' communities of practice: Developing the potential for learning through interactions.' In Jones, R. L. (ed.) *The sports coach as educator: Re-conceptualising sports coaching*. London: Routledge, pp. 97-112.
- Curry, W. B., Dagkas, S. and Wilson, M. (2014) 'Evaluation of a School-Based Intervention to Promote Physical Activity and Sport among Young People Aged 11-13 in East London, UK.' *Journal of Sports Science*, 2 pp. 181-188.
- Cushion, C. (2006) 'Mentoring: harnessing the power of experience.' In Jones, R. L. (ed.) *The sports coach as an educator*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 128-145.
- Cushion, C. J., Armour, K. M. and Jones, R. L. (2006) 'Locating the coaching process in practice: models 'for' and 'of' coaching.' *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 11(01) pp. 83-99.
- Cuskelly, G. (2004) 'Volunteer retention in community sport organisations.' *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 4(2) pp. 59-76.
- Daniels, A. K. (1988) *Invisible careers: Women civic leaders from the volunteer world*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Danielsen, K. K., Sundgot-Borgen, J., Mæhlum, S. and Svendsen, M. (2014) 'Beyond weight reduction: improvements in quality of life after an intensive lifestyle intervention in subjects with severe obesity.' *Annals of Medicine*, 46(5) pp. 273-282.
- Darlington, Y. and Scott, D. (2003) *Qualitative research in practice: stories from the field*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Davidoff, F., Dixon-Woods, M., Leviton, L. and Michie, S. (2015) 'Demystifying theory and its use in improvement.' *BMJ Quality & Safety*, pp. 1-11.
- Davies, S. (1998) *The 1997 National survey of volunteering*. London: National Centre for Volunteering.
- Davis, P. (2005) 'The limits of realist evaluation.' *Evaluation*, 11(3) pp. 275-295.
- de Bruijn, H. (2002) 'Performance measurement in the public sector: strategies to cope with the risks of performance measurement.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 15(7) pp. 578-594.
- De Vries, S., Verheij, R. A., Groenewegen, P. P. and Spreeuwenberg, P. (2003) 'Natural environments-healthy environments? An exploratory analysis of the relationship between greenspace and health.' *Environment and Planning* 35(10) pp. 1717-1732.

Deane, K. L. and Harré, N. (2014) 'Program theory-driven evaluation science in a youth development context.' *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 45 pp. 61-70.

Dehar, M., Casswell, S. and Duignan, P. (1993) 'Formative and process evaluation of health promotion and disease prevention programs.' *Evaluation Review*, 17(2) pp. 204-220.

Demant, J., and Frank, V. (2011) The promise of mixed methods for Nordic alcohol and drug research. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 28(5-6), pp.411-414.

Demers, G., Woodburn, A. J. and Savard, C. (2006) 'The development of an undergraduate competency-based coach education program.' *Sport Psychologist*, 20(2) pp. 162 - 173.

Denzin, N. K. and Giardina, M. D. (2008) *Qualitative inquiry and the politics of evidence*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2000) *A sporting future for all*. London.

Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2005) *DCMS Autumn performance report. Achievement against 2002 and 2004 Public Service Agreement targets and the Efficiency Review target*. London: DCMS.

Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2006) *Technical report: Taking Part survey, 2005 to 2006 (year 1)*. London: BMRB Social Research.

Department for Culture Media and Sport. a. (2008) *A Passion for Excellence: An Improvement Strategy for Culture and Sport*. London: LGA.

Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2010) *2010 to 2015 government policy: 2012 Olympic and Paralympic legacy*. London: Cabinet Office.

Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2012) *Sport participation measurement: background paper on taking part and active people survey integration*. London: DCMS.

Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2013) *2010 to 2015 government policy: sports participation*. London: DCMS.

Department for Culture Media and Sport (2002) *Game Plan: A strategy for the government's sport and physical activity objectives*. London: Strategy Unit.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport. (2012) *Creating a sporting habit for life*. London: DCMS.

Department for Education and Skills. (2005) *Youth matters*. London: The Strategy Unit.

Department of Health. (2005) *Choosing activity: a physical activity action plan*. London: Department of Health.

- Department of Health. (2011) *UK physical activity guidelines*. London: [Online] [Accessed on 2nd January 2014] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-physical-activity-guidelines>
- Dingle, A. (2001) *Measuring volunteering: a practical Toolkit*. Washington: Independent Sector and United Nations Volunteers. (0929556097)
- Donovan, C. (2011) 'State of the art in assessing research impact: introduction to a special issue.' *Research Evaluation*, 20(3), pp. 175-179.
- Drummond, D. K. (1995). *Crewe: railway town, company and people, 1840-1914*. London: Ashgate.
- Doucet, A. and Mauthner, N. (2002). Knowing responsibly: Linking ethics, research practice and epistemology. In Mauthner, N., Birch, M., Jessop, J. and Miller, T. (Eds.), *Ethics in Qualitative Research* (pp. 123-145). London: Sage.
- Downward, P. and Rasciute, S. (2015) 'Exploring the covariates of sport participation for health: an analysis of males and females in England.' *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 33(1) pp. 67-76.
- Downward, P. and Dawson, P. (2015) 'Is it Pleasure or Health from Leisure that We Benefit from Most? An Analysis of Well-Being Alternatives and Implications for Policy.' *Social Indicators Research*. pp. 1-23.
- Doyle, D., Scott, R. and Howlett, S. (2009) *Volunteers in hospice and palliative care. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dubois, N., Lloyd, S., Houle, J., Mercier, C., Brousselle, A. and Rey, L. (2011) 'Discussion: practice-based evaluation as a response to address intervention complexity.' *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 26(3) pp. 105-113.
- Dugdill, L., Stratton, G. (2007) *Evaluating sport and physical activity interventions: a guide for practitioners*. London: Sport England.
- Eady, J. (1993) *Practical sports development*. London: Longman Group.
- Edwards, M. B. (2015) 'The role of sport in community capacity building: An examination of sport for development research and practice.' *Sport Management Review*, 18(1) pp. 6-19.
- Eley, D. and Kirk, D. (2002) 'Developing citizenship through sport: The impact of a sport-based volunteer programme on young sport leaders.' *Sport, Education and Society*, 7(2) pp. 151-166.
- Elstad, B. (2003) 'Continuance commitment and reasons to quit: a study of volunteers at a jazz festival.' *Event Management*, 8(2) pp. 99-108.

- Elwood, S. A. and Martin, D. G. (2000) "Placing" interviews: location and scales of power in qualitative research.' *The Professional Geographer*, 52(4) pp. 649-657.
- Evans, A. B. and Sleaf, M. (2013) "Swim for Health": program evaluation of a multi-agency aquatic activity intervention in the United Kingdom.' *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, 7(1) pp. 24-38.
- Evans, R., Scourfield, J. and Murphy, S. (2014) 'Pragmatic, formative process evaluations of complex interventions and why we need more of them.' *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, doi:10.1136/jech-2014-204806.
- Fetterman, D., Rodríguez-Campos, L., Wandersman, A. and O'Sullivan, R. G. (2014) 'Collaborative, participatory, and empowerment evaluation building a strong conceptual foundation for stakeholder Involvement approaches to evaluation (A response to Cousins, Whitmore, and Shulha, 2013).' *American Journal of Evaluation*, 35(1) pp. 144-148.
- Fink, A. (2014) *Evaluation fundamentals: insights Into program effectiveness, quality, and value*. London:Sage Publications.
- Finkelstein, M. A. (2007) 'Correlates of satisfaction in older volunteers: a motivational perspective.' *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration*, 24(5) pp. 6-12.
- Fishman, D. B. (1991) 'An introduction to the experimental versus the pragmatic paradigm in evaluation.' *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 14(4) pp. 353-363.
- Fotiadou, E. G., Neofotistou, K. H., Sidiropoulou, M. P., Tsimaras, V. K., Mandroukas, A. K. and Angelopoulou, N. A. (2009) 'The effect of a rhythmic gymnastics program on the dynamic balance ability of individuals with intellectual disability.' *The Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research*, 23(7) pp. 2102-2106.
- Fournier, D. (2005) 'Logic of evaluation—Working logic.' In Mathison, S. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of evaluation*. London: Sage, pp. 238-242.
- Freeonlinesurvey. (2011) *Create free online surveys, forms and polls*. [Online] [Accessed on 16th January 2011] <https://freeonlinesurveys.com/#/>
- Frew, E. J., Bhatti, M., Win, K., Sitch, A., Lyon, A., Pallan, M. and Adab, P. (2014) 'Cost-effectiveness of a community-based physical activity programme for adults (Be Active) in the UK: an economic analysis within a natural experiment.' *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 48(3) pp. 207-212.
- Frey, B. S., Homberg, F. and Osterloh, M. (2013) 'Organizational control systems and pay-for-performance in the public service.' *Organization Studies*, 0(0) pp. 1-24.
- Frisby, W., Thibault, L. and Kikulis, L. (2004) 'The organizational dynamics of under-managed partnerships in leisure service departments.' *Leisure Studies*, 23(2) pp. 109-126.

- Fuemmeler, B. F., Anderson, C. B. and Mâsse, L. C. (2011) 'Parent-child relationship of directly measured physical activity.' *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 8(1) pp. 1-9.
- Funnell, S. C. and Rogers, P. J. (2011) *Purposeful program theory: effective use of theories of change and logic models*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gallarza, M. G., Arteaga, F. and Gil-Saura, I. (2013) 'The value of volunteering in special events: a longitudinal study.' *Annals of Tourism Research*, 40 pp. 105-131.
- Gargani, J. and Donaldson, S. I. (2011) 'What works for whom, where, why, for what, and when? Using evaluation evidence to take action in local contexts.' *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2011(130) pp. 17-30.
- Giannoulakis, C., Wang, C.-H. and Gray, D. (2007) 'Measuring volunteer motivation in mega-sporting events.' *Event Management*, 11(4) pp. 191-200.
- Gilbert, W., Gallimore, R. and Trudel, P. (2009) 'A learning community approach to coach development in youth sport.' *Journal of Coaching Education*, 2(2) pp. 1-21.
- Goodwin, M. and Grix, J. (2011) 'Bringing structures back in: the 'governance narrative', the 'decentred approach' and 'asymmetrical network governance' in the education and sport policy communities.' *Public Administration*, 89(2) pp. 537-556.
- Gram, A. S., Bønnelycke, J., Rosenkilde, M., Reichkender, M., Auerbach, P., Sjødin, A., Ploug, T., Jespersen, A. and Stallknecht, B. (2013) 'Compliance with physical exercise: Using a multidisciplinary approach within a dose-dependent exercise study of moderately overweight men.' *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 0 pp. 1-7.
- Gratton, C. and Henry, I. (2002) *Sport in the city: the role of sport in economic and social regeneration*. London: Routledge.
- Gratton, C. and Jones, I. (2004) *Research methods for sport studies*. London: Routledge.
- Gratton, C., Shibli, S. and Coleman, R. (2005) 'Sport and economic regeneration in cities.' *Urban studies*, 42(5-6) p. 985.
- Gray, D. E. (2014) *Doing research in the real world*. London: Sage.
- Green, K. (2000) 'Exploring the everyday' philosophies' of physical education teachers from a sociological perspective.' *Sport, Education and Society*, 5(2) pp. 109-129.
- Green, M. and Houlihan, B. (2004) 'Advocacy coalitions and elite sport policy change in Canada and the United Kingdom.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 39(4) pp. 387-403.

Green, M. and Houlihan, B. (2005) *Elite sport development: policy learning and political priorities*. London: Routledge.

Griffiths, M. and Armour, K. (2012) 'Mentoring as a formalized learning strategy with community sports volunteers.' *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 20(1) pp. 151-173.

Griffiths, A., Kouvonon, A., Pentti, J., Oksanen, T., Virtanen, M., Salo, P., Väänänen, A., Kivimäki, M. and Vahtera, J. (2014) 'Association of physical activity with future mental health in older, mid-life and younger women.' *European Journal of Public Health*, 24(5) pp. 813-818.

Grinyer, A. (2009) 'The anonymity of research participants: assumptions, ethics, and practicalities.' *Social Research*, 12(1) pp. 49-58.

Grix, J. (2009) 'The impact of UK sport policy on the governance of athletics.' *International Journal of Sport Policy*, 1(1) pp. 31-49.

Grix, J. and Phillpots, L. (2011) 'Revisiting the 'governance narrative' asymmetrical network governance' and the deviant case of the sports policy sector.' *Public Policy and Administration*, 26(1) pp. 3-19.

Grix, J. and Carmichael, F. (2012) 'Why do governments invest in elite sport? A polemic.' *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 4(1) pp. 73-90.

Guba, E. G. (1978) *Toward a methodology of naturalistic inquiry in educational evaluation*. Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Evaluation.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1989) *Fourth generation evaluation*. California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Hák, T., Moldan, B. and Dahl, A. L. (2012) *Sustainability indicators: a scientific assessment*. Chicago: Island Press.

Hall, J., Freeman, M. and Roulston, K. (2014) 'Right timing in formative program evaluation.' *Evaluation in Program Planning*, 45 pp. 151-156.

Hansen, H. F. (2005) 'Choosing evaluation models: a discussion on evaluation design.' *Evaluation*, 11(4) pp. 447-462.

Harris, S. (2013) *An analysis of the significance of sub-regional partnerships in the community sport policy process*. Ph.D. Loughborough University.

Harris, S. and Houlihan, B. (2014) 'Delivery networks and community sport in England.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 27(2) pp. 2-2.

Harris, S. and Houlihan, B. (2015) 'Competition or coalition? Evaluating the attitudes of National Governing Bodies of sport and County Sport Partnerships towards School Sport Partnerships.' *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, (ahead-of-print) pp. 1-21.

- Harris, K. and Adams, A. (2015) 'Power and discourse in the politics of evidence in sport for development.' *Sport Management Review*, In press
- Harris, S., Bell, B., Adams, A. and Mackintosh, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Sport for sport? Theoretical and practical insights into sports development*. Brighton: Leisure Studies Association.
- Hart, D., Diercks-O'Brien, G. and Powell, A. (2009) 'Exploring stakeholder engagement in impact evaluation planning in educational development work.' *Evaluation*, 15(3) pp. 285-306.
- Harvey, L. and Newton, J. (2004) 'Transforming quality evaluation.' *Quality in Higher Education*, 10(2) pp. 149-165.
- Hawthorne, G., Richardson, J. and Osborne, R. (1999) 'The assessment of quality of life (AQoL) instrument: a psychometric measure of health-related quality of life.' *Quality of Life Research*, 8(3) pp. 209-224.
- Hays, R. D., Sherbourne, C. D. and Mazel, R. M. (1993) 'The rand 36-item health survey 1.0.' *Health Economics*, 2(3) pp. 217-227.
- Healy, M. and Perry, C. (2000) 'Comprehensive criteria to judge validity and reliability of qualitative research within the realism paradigm.' *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 3(3) pp. 118-126.
- Heckathorn, D. D. (1997) 'Respondent-driven sampling: a new approach to the study of hidden populations.' *Social Problems*, 44(2) pp. 174-199.
- Herbert, J. L. (2014) 'Researching evaluation influence: a review of the literature.' *Evaluation Review*, 38(5) pp. 388-419.
- Hesse, M. B. (1974) *The structure of scientific inference*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Higgins, M. C. (2000) 'The more, the merrier? Multiple developmental relationships and work satisfaction.' *Journal of Management Development*, 19(4) pp. 277-296.
- Hill, D. (2004) *Evaluation of community-level interventions for health improvement: a review of experience in the UK*. London: Health Development Agency.
- Hills, L. and Maitland, A. (2014) 'Research-based knowledge utilization in a community sport evaluation: a case study.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 27(2) pp. 165-172.
- Hisschemöller, M. (2005) 'Participation as knowledge production and the limits of democracy.' In Maasen, S. and Weingart, P. (eds.) *Democratization of Expertise?* Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 189-208.



Hodge, C. J. (2014) *"Oh Brother Where Art Thou?" An Examination of Family Leisure, Sibling Relationships, and Physical Health*. Ph.D. North Carolina State University.

Holdsworth, C. and Quinn, J. (2010) 'Student volunteering in English higher education.' *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(1) pp. 113-127.

Holt, N. L., McHugh, T.-L. F., Tink, L. N., Kingsley, B. C., Coppola, A. M., Neely, K. C. and McDonald, R. (2013) 'Developing sport-based after-school programmes using a participatory action research approach.' *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 5(3) pp. 332-355.

Hooghe, M. (2003) 'Voluntary associations and democratic attitudes: Value congruence as a causal mechanism.' In Hooghe, M. and Stolle, D. (eds.) *Generating social capital: civil society and institutions in comparative perspective*. pp. 89-111.

Houlihan, B. (2000) 'Sporting excellence, schools and sports development: The politics of crowded policy spaces.' *European Physical Education Review*, 6(2) pp. 171 - 193.

Houlihan, B. (2005) 'Public sector sport policy developing a framework for analysis.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 40(2) pp. 163-185.

Houlihan, B. (2011) *Defining Sport Development*. [Online] [Accessed on 6th July 2015] <http://www.sportdevelopment.info/index.php/rgsd/265-definition>

Houlihan, B. and White, A. (2002) *The politics of sports development: development of sport or development through sport?*, London: Routledge.

Houlihan, B. and Lindsey, I. (2008) 'Networks and partnerships in sports development.' In Girginov, V. (ed.) *Management of sports development*. London: Elsevier, pp. 225-242.

Houlihan, B. and Green, M. (2009) 'Modernization and sport: the reform of Sport England and UK Sport.' *Public Administration*, 87(3) pp. 678-698.

Houlihan, B. (2011) Introduction.' In Houlihan, B. and Green, M. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of sports development*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-4.

Howe, C. Z. (1993) 'The evaluation of leisure programs: applying qualitative methods.' *The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 64(8) pp. 43-47.

Howlett, S. (2009) 'Considering quality and measuring impact.' In Scott, R., Howlett, S. and Doyle, D. (eds.) *Volunteers in hospice and palliative care: a resource for voluntary service managers*. 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 33-44.

- Howlett, S. and Lukka, P. (2000) *Recruiting and retaining volunteer health walkers. An evaluation of the Walking for Health programme.*, London: Institute for Volunteering Research.
- Hoye, R., Cuskelly, G., Taylor, T. and Darcy, S. (2008) 'Volunteer motives and retention in community sport: a study of Australian rugby clubs.' *Australian Journal on Volunteering*, 13(2) p. 40.
- Hunt. (2012) *Press release: four thousand community sports clubs to be created to drive a sporting habit for life.* [Online] [Accessed on 4th November 2012] [www.culture.gov.uk/news/media\\_releases/8762.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/media_releases/8762.aspx)
- Hylton, K. (2013) *Sports Development: policy, process and practice.* 3rd ed., London: Routledge.
- Hylton, K. and Bramham, P. (2008) *Sports development: Policy, process and practice.* 2nd ed., Abingdon: Taylor & Francis.
- Hylton, K. and Totten, M. (2013) 'Community sport development.' In Hylton, K. (ed.) *Sport development policy process and practice.* 3rd ed., London: Routledge,
- Hylton, K., Long, R. and Flintoff, A. (2005) *Evaluating sport and active leisure for young people.* Brighton: Leisure Studies Association.
- Iachini, A. L., Beets, M. W., Ball, A. and Lohman, M. (2014) 'Process evaluation of "Girls on the Run": exploring implementation in a physical activity-based positive youth development program.' *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 46 pp. 1-9.
- Institute for Volunteering Research. (2010) *Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit (Second Edition).* London: Volunteering England.
- Jackson, S. (2015) *Research methods and statistics: a critical thinking approach.* 5th ed., Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Jacobs, W. J., Sisco, M., Hill, D., Malter, F. and Figueredo, A. J. (2012) 'Evaluating theory-based evaluation: information, norms, and adherence.' *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 35(3) pp. 354-369.
- Jago, R., Fox, K. R., Page, A. S., Brockman, R. and Thompson, J. L. (2010) 'Parent and child physical activity and sedentary time: do active parents foster active children?' *BMC Public Health*, 10(1) p. 194.
- Jakovljevic, D. G., Papakonstantinou, L., Blamire, A. M., MacGowan, G. A., Taylor, R., Hollingsworth, K. G. and Trenell, M. I. (2015) 'Effect of physical activity on age-related changes in cardiac function and performance in women.' *Circulation: Cardiovascular Imaging*, 8(1) p. e002086.
- Johnson, G., Scholes, K. and Whittington, R. (2008) *Exploring corporate strategy: Text and cases.* Pearson Education.

- Johnson, I. M., Williams, D. A., Wavell, C. and Baxter, G. (2004) 'Impact evaluation, professional practice, and policy making.' *New Library World*, 105(1/2) pp. 33-46.
- Jones, R. L. (Ed.). (2006). *The sports coach as educator: Reconceptualising sports coaching*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Jones, R. L., Armour, K. M. and Potrac, P. (2004) *Sports coaching cultures: from practice to theory*. London: Psychology Press.
- Karinkanta, S., Nupponen, R., Heinonen, A., Pasanen, M., Sievänen, H., Uusi-Rasi, K., Fogelholm, M. and Kannus, P. (2012) 'Effects of exercise on health-related quality of life and fear of falling in home-dwelling older women.' *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, 20 pp. 198-214.
- Karkatsoulis, P., Michalopoulos, N. and Moustakatou, V. (2005) 'The national identity as a motivational factor for better performance in the public sector: the case of the volunteers of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games.' *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 54(7) pp. 579-594.
- Karlsen, T. I., Lund, R. S., Roislien, J., Tonstad, S., Natvig, G. K., Sandbu, R. and Hjeltnes, J. (2013) 'Health related quality of life after gastric bypass or intensive lifestyle intervention: a controlled clinical study.' *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 11(1) pp. 1-10.
- Kay, T. (2009) 'Developing through sport: evidencing sport impacts on young people.' *Sport in Society*, 12(9) pp. 1177-1191.
- Kay, T. and Bradbury, S. (2009) 'Youth sport volunteering: developing social capital?' *Sport, Education and Society*, 14(1) pp. 121-140.
- Kelly, L. (2011) 'Social inclusion' through sports-based interventions?' *Critical Social Policy*, 31(1) pp. 126-150.
- Khan, K. M., Thompson, A. M., Blair, S. N., Sallis, J. F., Powell, K. E., Bull, F. C. and Bauman, A. E. (2012) 'Sport and exercise as contributors to the health of nations.' *The Lancet*, 380(9836) pp. 59-64.
- Kihl, L. A., Tainsky, S., Babiak, K. and Bang, H. (2014) 'Evaluation of a cross-sector community initiative partnership: delivering a local sport program.' *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 44 pp. 36-47.
- King, N. (2013) "'Sport for All" in a financial crisis: survival and adaptation in competing organisational models of local authority sport services.' *World Leisure Journal*, 55(3) pp. 215-228.
- King, N. and Horrocks, C. (2010) *Interviews in qualitative research*. London: Sage.

- King, G., Lawm, M., King, S., Rosenbaum, P., Kertoy, M. K. and Young, N. L. (2003) 'A conceptual model of the factors affecting the recreation and leisure participation of children with disabilities.' *Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics*, 23(1) pp. 63-90.
- King, G., McDougall, J., DeWit, D., Petrenchik, T., Hurley, P. and Law, M. (2009) 'Predictors of change over time in the activity participation of children and youth with physical disabilities.' *Children's Health Care*, 38(4) pp. 321-351.
- King, G., Law, M., Hanna, S., King, S., Hurley, P., Rosenbaum, P., Kertoy, M. and Petrenchik, T. (2006) 'Predictors of the leisure and recreation participation of children with physical disabilities: a structural equation modelling analysis.' *Children's Health Care*, 35(3) pp. 209-234.
- Kirkby, H., Calvert, M., Draper, H., Keeley, T. and Wilson, S. (2011) 'What potential research participants want to know about research: a systematic review.' *British Medical Journal*, 2(3) pp. 1-15.
- Klomsten, A. T., Skaalvik, E. M. and Espnes, G. A. (2004) 'Physical self-concept and sports: do gender differences still exist?' *Sex Roles*, 50(1-2) pp. 119-127.
- Kloot, L. and Martin, J. (2000) 'Strategic performance management: A balanced approach to performance management issues in local government.' *Management Accounting Research*, 11(2) pp. 231-251.
- Knight, Kavanagh and Page. (2005) *Active sports/CSP impact study year 3: Final report*. Bury: Knight, Kavanagh and Page.
- Koh, K. T., Bloom, G. A., Fairhurst, K. E., Paiement, D. M. and KEF, Y. H. (2014) 'An investigation of a formalized mentoring program for novice basketball coaches.' *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 45(1) pp. 11-32.
- Koivula, N. (2001) 'Perceived characteristics of sports categorized as gender-neutral, feminine and masculine.' *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, 24(4) pp. 377-393.
- Kotte, E. M., de Groot, J. F., Winkler, A. M., Huijgen, B. C. and Takken, T. (2014) 'Effects of the Fitkids exercise therapy program on health-related fitness, walking capacity, and health-related quality of life.' *Physical Therapy*, 94(9) pp. 1306-1318.
- Kotter, J. P. (1999) *John P. Kotter on what leaders really do*. Boulder: Harvard Business Press.
- Krahn, H., Lowe, G. S. and Lehmann, W. (2002) 'Acquisition of employability skills by high school students.' *Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de Politiques*, 28(2) pp. 275-296.
- KristËn, L., Patriksson, G. and Fridlund, B. (2003) 'Parents' conceptions of the Influences of Participation in a sports programme on their children and adolescents with physical disabilities.' *European Physical Education Review*, 9(1) pp. 23-41.

Lakatos, I. and Musgrave, A. (1970) *Criticism and the growth of knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Langbein, L. I. and Felbinger, C. (2012) *Public program evaluation: a statistical guide*. London: Routledge.

Larkin, H., Beckos, B. and Martin, E. (2012) 'Applied integral methodological pluralism: Designing comprehensive social services program evaluation.' In Esbjörn-Hargens, S. (ed.) *Enacting an integral future: New horizons for integral theory*. Albany: Sunny Press, pp. 1-27.

Laskowski, E. R. and Lexell, J. (2012) 'Exercise and sports for health promotion, disease, and disability.' *The Journal of Injury, Function, and Rehabilitation*, 4(11) pp. 795-796.

LaVoi, N. M. (2009) 'Occupational sex segregation in a youth soccer organization: females in positions of power.' *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal*, 18(2) pp. 25-37.

LaVoi, N. M. and Dutove, J. K. (2012) 'Barriers and supports for female coaches: an ecological model.' *Sports Coaching Review*, 1(1) pp. 17-37.

Lawson, H. A. (2005) 'Empowering people, facilitating community development, and contributing to sustainable development: the social work of sport, exercise, and physical education programs.' *Sport, Education and Society*, 10(1) pp. 135-160.

Lawther, W. C. and Martin, L. (2014) 'Availability payments and key performance indicators challenges for effective implementation of performance management systems in transportation public-private partnerships.' *Public Works Management & Policy*, 19(3) pp. 219-234.

Lechner, M. (2009) 'Long-run labour market and health effects of individual sports activities.' *Journal of Health Economics*, 28(4) pp. 839-854.

Ledwith, M. (2011) *Community development: a critical approach*. 2nd ed., Bristol: Policy Press.

Levin-Rozalis, M. (2000) 'Abduction: A logical criterion for programme and project evaluation.' *Evaluation*, 6(4) pp. 415-432.

Lindsey, I. (2006) 'Local partnerships in the United Kingdom for the new opportunities for PE and sport programme: a policy network analysis.' *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 6(2) pp. 167-184.

Lindsey, I. (2009) 'Collaboration in local sport services in England: issues emerging from case studies of two local authority areas.' *International Journal of Sport Policy*, 1(1) pp. 71-88.

Liu, X., Miller, Y. D., Burton, N. W., Chang, J.-H. and Brown, W. J. (2013) 'The effect of Tai Chi on health-related quality of life in people with elevated blood glucose or diabetes: a randomized controlled trial.' *Quality of Life Research*, 22(7) pp. 1783-1786.

Locke, M. (2008) *Who gives time now? Patterns of participation in volunteering*. London: Institute for Volunteering Research.

Lockwood, P. (2006) "Someone like me can be successful": do college students need same-gender role models?' *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30(1) pp. 36-46.

London Borough of Newham Council. (2007) *Shaping sustainable communities through vulture and sport: an evaluation of the London Borough of Newham's cultural and sporting programmes 2006-2007*. London: Newham Borough Council.

Long, J. (2008) 'Researching and evaluating sports development.' In Hylton, K. and Bramham, P. (eds.) *Sports development: policy process and practice*. 2nd ed., London: Routledge, pp. 236-257.

Long, J. and Dart, J. (2001) 'Opening-up: engaging people in evaluation.' *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 4(1) pp. 71-78.

Long, J. and Bramham, P. (2006) 'Joining up policy discourses and fragmented practices: the precarious contribution of cultural projects to social inclusion?' *Policy & Politics*, 34(1) pp. 133-151.

Long, J., Hylton, K., Spracklen, K., Ratna, A. and Bailey, S. (2009) *Systematic review of the literature on black and minority ethnic communities in sport and physical recreation*. Leeds: Carnegie Research Institute.

Long, J. (2013) 'Researching and evaluating in sport development.' In Hylton, K. (ed.) *Sport development policy, planning and practice*. 3rd ed., London: Routledge, pp. 272-297.

Low, N., Butt, S., Paine, A. and Smith, J. (2007) *Helping Out - A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving*. London: Institute of Volunteer Research/ Cabinet Office.

Lucas, S. R. and Platts-Mills, T. A. (2005) 'Physical activity and exercise in asthma: relevance to etiology and treatment.' *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, 115(5) pp. 928-934.

Luo, H. (2010) 'The role for an evaluator: a fundamental issue for evaluation of education and social programs.' *International Education Studies*, 3(2) pp. 42-50.

Lyle, J. (2013) 'Role models, sporting success and participation: a review of sports coaching's ancillary roles.' *International Journal of Coaching Science*, 7(2) pp. 25-40.

Mackintosh, C. (2011) 'An analysis of County Sports Partnerships in England: the fragility, challenges and complexity of partnership working in sports development.' *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 3(1) pp. 45-64.

Mackintosh, C. (2012) 'The shifting dynamics of local government sports development officer practice in England: new identities and hazy professional boundaries.' In Harris, S. Bell, B; Adams, Andrew; Mackintosh, Chris (ed.) *Sport for sport: theoretical and practical insights into sports development*. London: LSA, pp. 113-130.

Mackintosh, C. (2014) 'The public realm of community sports development evaluation, policy and practice: innovation, evidence and the paradox of an evolving agenda.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 27(2), No page numbers.

Mackintosh, C., Harris, S. and Houlihan, B. (2014b) 'Delivery networks and community sport in England.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 27(2) pp. 113-127.

Mackintosh, C., Adams, A. and Harris, K. (2014a) 'Making sense of the lack of evidence discourse, power and knowledge in the field of sport for development.' *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 27(2) pp. 140-151.

Macmillan, H. and Tampoe, M. (2000) *Strategic management: process, content and implementation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MacPhail, A., Kirk, D. and Eley, D. (2003) 'Listening to Young people's voices: youth sports leaders' advice on facilitating participation in sport.' *European Physical Education Review*, 9(1) pp. 57-73.

Maher, C. A., Williams, M. T., Olds, T. and Lane, A. E. (2007) 'Physical and sedentary activity in adolescents with cerebral palsy.' *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*, 49(6) pp. 450-457.

Mannion, R. and Braithwaite, J. (2012) 'Unintended consequences of performance measurement in healthcare: 20 salutary lessons from the English National Health Service.' *Internal Medicine Journal*, 42(5) pp. 569-574.

Marchal, B., van Belle, S., van Olmen, J., Hoérée, T. and Kegels, G. (2012) 'Is realist evaluation keeping its promise? A review of published empirical studies in the field of health systems research.' *Evaluation*, 18(2) pp. 192-212.

Mark, M. M. and Henry, G. T. (2004) 'The mechanisms and outcomes of evaluation influence.' *Evaluation*, 10(1) pp. 35-57.

Marra, M. (2000) 'How much does evaluation matter? Some examples of utilization of the evaluation of World Bank's anticorruption activities.' *Evaluation*, 6(1) pp. 22-39.

- Marshall, D. (2001) 'Mentoring as a development tool for women coaches.' *Canadian Journal for Women in Coaching*, 2(2) pp. 1496-1539.
- Martin, S. L., Kirkner, G. J., Mayo, K., Matthews, C. E., Larry, J. and Hebert, J. R. (2005) 'Urban, rural, and regional variations in physical activity.' *The Journal of Rural Health*, 21(3) pp. 239-244.
- McCoy, M. and Hargie, O. D. W. (2001) 'Evaluating evaluation: implications for assessing quality.' *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 14(7) pp. 317-327.
- McCrum-Gardner, E. (2008) 'Which is the correct statistical test to use?' *British Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*, 46(1) pp. 38-41.
- McElroy, M. (2002) *Resistance to exercise: a social analysis of inactivity*. London: Human Kinetics.
- McEvoy, P. and Richards, D. (2006) 'A critical realist rationale for using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.' *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 11(1) pp. 66-78.
- McLaughlin, J. A. and Jordan, G. B. (2004) 'Using logic models.' In Wholey, J. S., Hatry, H. and Newcomer, K. E. (eds.) *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. 2nd ed., San Francisco: Jossey Bass, pp. 7-32.
- Medeiros, L. C., Butkus, S. N., Chipman, H., Cox, R. H., Jones, L. and Little, D. (2005) 'A logic model framework for community nutrition education.' *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 37(4) pp. 197-202.
- Mercier, C. (1997) 'Participation in stakeholder-based evaluation: a case study.' *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 20(4) pp. 467-475.
- Messner, M. A. (2009) *It's all for the kids: gender, families, and youth sports*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Michaud, L. J. (2004) 'Prescribing therapy services for children with motor disabilities.' *Pediatrics*, 113(6) pp. 1836-1838.
- Midwinter, E. (1992) *Leisure: new opportunities in the third age*. Dumfermlin: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust.
- Miller, R. L. (2013) 'Logic models: A useful way to study theories of evaluation practice?' *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 38 pp. 77-80.
- Minkler, M. (2004) 'Ethical challenges for the "outside" researcher in community-based participatory research.' *Health Education & Behavior*, 31(6) pp. 684-697.
- Minnaert, L. (2012) 'An Olympic legacy for all? The non-infrastructure outcomes of the Olympic Games for socially excluded groups (Atlanta 1996–Beijing 2008).' *Tourism Management*, 33(2) pp. 361-370.



- Mintzberg, H. and Waters, J. (1998) 'Of strategies, deliberate and emergent.' In Segal-Horne, S. (ed.) *The strategy reader*. Oxford: Blackwell,
- Misener, K. and Doherty, A. (2009) 'A case study of organizational capacity in non-profit community sport.' *Journal of Sport Management*, 23(4) pp. 457-482.
- Misener, L. and Darcy, S. (2014) 'Managing disability sport: from athletes with disabilities to inclusive organisational perspectives.' *Sport Management Review*, 17(1) pp. 1-7.
- Misener, K. and Doherty, A. (2014) 'In support of sport: examining the relationship between community sport organizations and sponsors.' *Sport Management Review*, 17(4) pp. 493-506.
- Mock, V., Pickett, M., Ropka, M. E., Lin, E. M., Stewart, K. J., Rhodes, V. A., McDaniel, R., Grimm, P. M., Krumm, S. and McCorkle, R. (2001) 'Fatigue and quality of life outcomes of exercise during cancer treatment.' *Cancer Practice*, 9(3) pp. 119-127.
- Monga, M. (2006) 'Measuring motivation to volunteer for special events.' *Event Management*, 10(1) pp. 47-61.
- Moore, M. H. (2000) 'Managing for value: organizational strategy in for-profit, non-profit, and governmental organizations.' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 29(1) pp. 183-208.
- Moore, G., Audrey, S., Barker, M., Bond, L., Bonell, C., Cooper, C., Hardeman, W., Moore, L., O'Cathain, A. and Tinati, T. (2014) 'Process evaluation in complex public health intervention studies: the need for guidance.' *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 68(2) pp. 101-102.
- Morabito, S. M. (2002) 'Evaluator roles and strategies for expanding evaluation process influence.' *American Journal of Evaluation*, 23(3) pp. 321-330.
- Moran-Miller, K. and Flores, L. Y. (2011) 'Where are the women in women's sports? Predictors of female athletes' interest in a coaching career.' *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 82(1) pp. 109-117.
- Morgan, H. (2013) 'Sport volunteering, active citizenship and social capital enhancement: what role in the 'Big Society'?' *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 5(3) pp. 381-395.
- Mowles, C. (2014) 'Complex, but not quite complex enough: the turn to the complexity sciences in evaluation scholarship.' *Evaluation*, 20(2) pp. 160-175.
- Müller-Merbach, H. (2004) 'Creative conflict.' *Knowledge Management Research and Practice*, 2(2) pp. 129-130.

- Murphy, N. A. and Carbone, P. S. (2008) 'Promoting the participation of children with disabilities in sports, recreation, and physical activities.' *Pediatrics*, 121(5) pp. 1057-1061.
- Murphy, N. A. and Carbone, P. S. (2011) 'Parent-provider-community partnerships: optimizing outcomes for children with disabilities.' *Pediatrics*, 128(4) pp. 795-802.
- Murphy, N. A., Christian, B., Caplin, D. A. and Young, P. C. (2007) 'The health of caregivers for children with disabilities: caregiver perspectives.' *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 33(2) pp. 180-187.
- Musick, M. A. and Wilson, J. (2007) *Volunteers: a social profile*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Musick, M. A., Wilson, J. and Bynum, W. B. (2000) 'Race and formal volunteering: the differential effects of class and religion.' *Social Forces*, 78(4) pp. 1539-1570.
- Mutrie, N., Foster, C., Estabrooks, P., Burton, N. W. and Baker, G. (2010) 'Recruiting hard-to-reach populations to physical activity studies: evidence and experiences.' *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 7(Supple) pp. 329-331.
- National Careers Services. (2012) *Job profiles: sports development officer*. [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2013] <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/SportsDevelopmentOfficer.aspx>
- National Foundation for Educational Research (2009) *Research*. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research. [Online] [Accessed on 12 September 2013] <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/>
- Nesti, M. (2008) *Challenging yourself to challenge others*. [Online] [Accessed on 20th November 2012] <http://www.theleisurereview.co.uk/articles08/nesti.html>
- Nevo, D. (1983) 'The conceptualization of educational evaluation: an analytical review of the literature.' *Review of Educational Research*, 53(1) p. 117-128.
- Newton, B., Oakley, J. and Pollard, E. (2011) *Volunteering: supporting transitions*. London: The National Volunteering Service.
- Nicholls, S., Giles, A. R. and Sethna, C. (2010) 'Perpetuating the 'lack of evidence' discourse in sport for development: privileged voices, unheard stories and subjugated knowledge.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 46(3) pp. 249-254.
- Nichols, G. (1997) 'A consideration of why active participation in sport and leisure might reduce criminal behaviour.' *Sport, Education and Society*, 2(2) pp. 181-190.

- Nichols, G. (2001) 'A realist approach to evaluating the impact of sports programmes on crime reduction.' In McPherson, G. and Reid, G. (eds.) *Leisure and social inclusion: new challenges for policy and provision (LSA Publication No.73)*. Eastbourne: LSA, pp. 71-80.
- Nichols, G. (2004) 'Crime and punishment and sports development.' *Leisure Studies*, 23(2) pp. 177-194.
- Nichols, G. (2005) 'Reflections on researching the ability of sports interventions to reduce youth crime: the hope of scientific realism.' In Hylton, K., Long, J. and Flintoff, A. (eds.) *Evaluating sport and active leisure for young people*. Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association, pp. 23-44.
- Nichols, G. (2010) *Sport and crime reduction: The role of sports in tackling youth crime*. London: Routledge.
- Nichols, G. (2013) 'Voluntary sport clubs and sport development.' In Hylton, K. (ed.) *Sport development policy process and practice*. 3rd ed., London: Routledge,
- Nichols, G., Taylor, P., James, M., Holmes, K., King, L. and Garrett, R. (2005) 'Pressures on the UK voluntary sport sector.' *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 16(1) pp. 33-50.
- Nichols, G. and Crow, I. (2004) 'Measuring the impact of crime reduction interventions involving sports activities for young people.' *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(3) pp. 267-283.
- Nicholson, M., and Hoye, R. (Eds.) (2008) *Sport and social capital*. London: Routledge.
- Norman, L. (2008) 'The UK coaching system is failing women coaches.' *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, 3(4) pp. 447-476.
- Nutbeam, D. (1998) 'Evaluating health promotion—progress, problems and solutions.' *Health Promotion International*, 13(1) pp. 27-44.
- O'Hagan, A., Buck, C. E., Daneshkhah, A., Eiser, J. R., Garthwaite, P. H., Jenkinson, D. J. and Rakow, T. (2006) *Uncertain judgements: eliciting experts' probabilities*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Oakley, B. and Green, M. (2001) 'Still playing the game at arm's length? The selective re-investment in British sport, 1995 - 2000.' *Managing Leisure*, 6(2) pp. 74-94.
- Odendahl, T. and Shaw, A. M. (2002) 'Interviewing elites.' In Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (eds.) *Handbook of interview research: context and method*. Thousand Oaks: Sage,

- Office of National Statistics. (2002) *Sport & Leisure: results from the sport and leisure module of the 2002 General Household Survey*. Cmnd. London: Office for National Statistics (Fox, K., & Rickards, L. Report).
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. (2004) *The English indices of deprivation 2004 (revised)*. London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- Okun, M. A. (1994) 'The relation between motives for organizational volunteering and frequency of volunteering by elders.' *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 13(2) pp. 115-126.
- Oliver, M., Schofield, G. M. and Schluter, P. J. (2010) 'Parent influences on preschoolers' objectively assessed physical activity.' *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 13(4) pp. 403-409.
- Ornelas, I. J., Perreira, K. M. and Ayala, G. X. (2007) 'Parental influences on adolescent physical activity: a longitudinal study.' *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 4(1) pp 1-10.
- O'Sullivan, R. G. and D'Agostino, A. (2002) 'Promoting evaluation through collaboration.' *Evaluation*, 8(3) pp. 372-387.
- Parker, S. R. (1997) 'Volunteering—altruism, markets, causes and leisure.' *World Leisure & Recreation*, 39(3) pp. 4-5.
- Parks, S., Housemann, R. and Brownson, R. (2003) 'Differential correlates of physical activity in urban and rural adults of various socioeconomic backgrounds in the United States.' *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 57(1) pp. 29-35.
- Parmenter, D. (2010) *Key performance indicators (KPI): developing, implementing, and using winning KPIs*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.
- Parnell, D., Pringle, A., Widdop, P. and Zwolinsky, S. (2015) 'Understanding football as a vehicle for enhancing social inclusion: using an intervention mapping framework.' *Social Inclusion*, 3, In press.
- Patton, M. Q. (1982) *Practical evaluation*. London: Sage
- Patton, M.Q. (1986) *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications
- Patton, M.Q. (2002) *Qualitative research and evaluation models*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (2005) *Qualitative research*. Wiley Online Library.
- Patton, M. Q. (2008) *Utilization-focused evaluation*. London: Sage

- Pawson, R. (1996) 'Theorizing the interview.' *British Journal of Sociology*, 47(2) pp. 295-314.
- Pawson, R. (2000) 'Middle-range realism.' *European Journal of Sociology*, 41(02) pp. 283-325.
- Pawson, R. (2003) 'Nothing as practical as a good theory.' *Evaluation*, 9(4) pp. 471-490.
- Pawson, R. and Bellamy, J. L. (2006) 'Realist synthesis: an explanatory focus for systematic review.' In Popey, J. (ed.) *Moving beyond effectiveness in evidence synthesis of evidence from diverse study designs*. London: Health Development Agency, pp. 83-94.
- Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1994) 'What works in evaluation research?' *British Journal of Criminology*, 34(3) pp. 291-306.
- Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1993) 'OXO, tide, brand X and new improved evaluation". In *British Sociological Association Annual Conference*. Colchester: University of Essex, pp. 1-11.
- Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) *Realistic evaluation*. London: Sage Publications
- Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (2009) *Realist evaluation*. London: British Cabinet Office.
- Pawson, R. and Manzano-Santaella, A. (2012) 'A realist diagnostic workshop.' *Evaluation*, 18(2) pp. 176-191.
- Peachey, J. W., Lyras, A., Cohen, A., Bruening, J. E. and Cunningham, G. B. (2013) 'Exploring the Motives and Retention Factors of Sport-For-Development Volunteers.' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, pp. 1-8.
- Peachey, J. W., Bruening, J., Lyras, A., Cohen, A. and Cunningham, G. B. (2015) 'Examining social capital development among volunteers of a multinational sport-for-development event.' *Journal of Sport Management*, 29(1) pp. 27-41.
- Pedersen, L. H. and Rieper, O. (2008) 'Is Realist Evaluation a realistic approach for complex reforms?' *Evaluation*, 14(3) pp. 271-293.
- Peled, E. and Leichtentritt, R. (2002) 'The ethics of qualitative social work research.' *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(2) pp. 145-169.
- Perkins, D. F. and Noam, G. G. (2007) 'Characteristics of sports-based youth development programs.' *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2007(115) pp. 75-84.
- Perrin, B. (1998) 'Effective use and misuse of performance management.' *American Journal of Evaluation*, 19(13) pp. 367-379.

Pfister, G. (2010) 'Women in sport—gender relations and future perspectives 1.' *Sport in Society*, 13(2) pp. 234-248.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B. and Podsakoff, N. P. (2012) 'Sources of method bias in social science research and recommendations on how to control it.' *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63 pp. 539-569.

Policy Action Team 10. (1999) *Arts and sport. A report to the Social Exclusion Unit. London: Department of Culture Media and Sport.*

Pommier, J., Guével, M.-R. and Jourdan, D. (2010) 'Evaluation of health promotion in schools: a realistic evaluation approach using mixed methods.' *BMC Public Health*, 10(1) pp. 1-12.

Pringle, A., Zwolinsky, S., McKenna, J., Daly-Smith, A., Robertson, S. and White, A. (2013) 'Effect of a national programme of men's health delivered in English Premier League football clubs.' *Public Health*, 127(1) pp. 18-26.

Prospects. (2012) *Sport development officer: job description*. [Online] [Accessed on 27th June 2011] [http://www.prospects.ac.uk/sports\\_development\\_officer\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/sports_development_officer_job_description.htm)

Putnam, R. D. (1995) 'Bowling alone: America's declining social capital.' *Journal of Democracy*, 6 pp. 65-78.

Putnam, R. D. (2000) *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community* New York: Simon and Schuster/ Touchstone.

Pye, P. N., Toohey, K. and Cuskelly, G. (2015) 'The social benefits in sport city planning: a conceptual framework.' *Sport in Society*, (ahead-of-print) pp. 1-23.

Ralston, R., Lumsdon, L. and Downward, P. (2005) 'The third force in events tourism: volunteers at the XVII Commonwealth Games.' *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 13(5) pp. 504-519.

Ravenscroft, N. (2005, July). Sport and local delivery. *Recreation*, 22-27.

Rehberg, W. (2005) 'Altruistic individualists: motivations for international volunteering among young adults in Switzerland.' *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 16(2) pp. 109-122.

Richard, P. J., Devinney, T. M., Yip, G. S. and Johnson, G. (2009) 'Measuring organizational performance: towards methodological best practice.' *Journal of Management*, 35 pp. 718-804.

Rigg, M. (1986) *Action sport. An evaluation*. London: Sports Council.

Riley, A. and Anderson-Butcher, D. (2012) 'Participation in a summer sport-based youth development program for disadvantaged youth: Getting the parent perspective.' *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(7) pp. 1367-1377.

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M. and Ormston, R. (2013) *Qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage.

Robertson, S. (Ed.). (2010) *The perils and pleasures of coaching and motherhood*. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press.

Robinson, L. (2004) *Managing public sport and leisure services*. London: Routledge.

Robson, S. and Partington, J. (2013) 'Partnerships in Sport.' In Hylton, K. (ed.) *Sport development policy, process and practice*. 3rd ed., London: Routledge, pp.127-148.

Robson, S., Simpson, K. and Tucker, L. (2013) *Strategic sport development*. London: Routledge.

Rosenkilde, M., Auerbach, P., Reichkender, M. H., Ploug, T., Stallknecht, B. M. and Sjødin, A. (2012) 'Body fat loss and compensatory mechanisms in response to different doses of aerobic exercise—a randomized controlled trial in overweight sedentary males.' *American Journal of Physiology-Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology*, 303(6) pp. 571-579.

Rossi, P. H. and Freeman, H. E. (1989) *Evaluation: a systematic approach*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., London: Sage.

Rossi, P. H. and Freeman, H. E. (1993) *Evaluation: a Systematic approach*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed., London: Sage.

Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W. and Freeman, H. E. (2004) *Evaluation: a systematic approach*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed., London: Sage Publications.

Rowland, B., Allen, F. and Toumbourou, J. W. (2012) 'Impact of alcohol harm reduction strategies in community sports clubs: pilot evaluation of the Good Sports program.' *Health psychology*, 31(3) pp. 323-333.

Royse, D., Thyer, B. and Padgett, D. (2015) *Program Evaluation: An Introduction to an Evidence-Based Approach*. Boston: Cengage Learning.

Rubin, D. A., Wilson, K. S., Wiersma, L. D., Weiss, J. W. and Rose, D. J. (2014) 'Rationale and design of Active Play@ Home: a parent-led physical activity program for children with and without disability.' *BMC Pediatrics*, 14(41) pp. 1-11.

Rycroft-Malone, J., Fontenla, M., Bick, D. and Seers, K. (2010) 'A realistic evaluation: the case of protocol-based care.' *Implementation Science*, 5(1) p. 38.

Sanderson, I. (2002) 'Evaluation, policy learning and evidence-based policy making.' *Public Administration*, 80(1) pp. 1-22.

Santi, G., Bruton, A., Pietrantonio, L. and Mellalieu, S. (2014) 'Sport commitment and participation in masters swimmers: The influence of coach and teammates.' *European Journal of Sport Science*, 14(8) pp. 852-860.

- Saunders, R. P., Evans, M. H. and Joshi, P. (2005) 'Developing a process-evaluation plan for assessing health promotion program implementation: a how-to guide.' *Health Promotion Practice*, 6(2) pp. 134-147.
- Scheerder, J., Taks, M. and Lagae, W. (2007) 'Teenage girls' participation in sports. An intergenerational analysis of socio-cultural predictor variables.' *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 4(2) pp. 133-150.
- Schlesinger, T., Egli, B. and Nagel, S. (2013) "Continue or terminate?' Determinants of long-term volunteering in sports clubs.' *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 13(1) pp. 32-53.
- Schulenkorf, N. (2012) 'Sustainable community development through sport and events: A conceptual framework for Sport-for-Development projects.' *Sport Management Review*, 15(1) pp. 1-12.
- Scriven, M. (1967) *The methodology of evaluation (AERA Monograph series on curriculum evaluation, No. 1)*. New York: Rand McNally.
- Scriven, M. (1981) *The logic of evaluation*. Inverness: Edgepress.
- Scriven, M. (1996) 'Types of evaluation and types of evaluator.' *American Journal of Evaluation*, 17(2) pp. 151-161.
- Sellon, A. M. (2014) 'Recruiting and retaining older adults in volunteer programs: best practices and next steps.' *Ageing International*, 39(4) pp. 421-437.
- Shamshiri, S., Bagheri, S., Hashemy, M., Doostan, M. and Yazdani, S. (2013) 'The effect of gymnastic activities on social skills and behavior problems among 3-6 years old children.' *Applied Science Reports*, 3(1) pp. 95-99.
- Sharkey, S. and Sharples, A. (2008) 'From the beginning negotiation in community evaluation.' *Evaluation*, 14(3) pp. 363-380.
- Sharpe, E. K. (2006) 'Resources at the grassroots of recreation: Organizational capacity and quality of experience in a community sport organization.' *Leisure Sciences*, 28(4) pp. 385-401.
- Shaw, S. and Allen, J. B. (2006) "It basically is a fairly loose arrangement... and that works out fine, really." Analysing the dynamics of an inter-organisational partnership.' *Sport Management Review*, 9(3) pp. 203-228.
- Shields, N., Synnot, A. J. and Barr, M. (2012) 'Perceived barriers and facilitators to physical activity for children with disability: a systematic review.' *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 46(14) pp. 989-997.
- Shlonsky, A. and Mildon, R. (2014) 'Methodological pluralism in the age of evidence-informed practice and policy.' *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 42(13) pp. 18-27.



Silva, G., Andersen, L. B., Aires, L., Mota, J., Oliveira, J. and Ribeiro, J. C. (2013) 'Associations between sports participation, levels of moderate to vigorous physical activity and cardiorespiratory fitness in children and adolescents.' *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 31(12) pp. 1359-1367.

Sintonen, H. (2001) 'The 15D instrument of health-related quality of life: properties and applications.' *Annals of Medicine*, 33(5) pp. 328-336.

Sixsmith, J. and Daniels, J. (2011) 'Action research.' In Banister, P. (ed.) *Qualitative methods In psychology: a research guide: a research guide*. 2nd ed., Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill International, pp. 22-37.

Skille, E. Å. (2011) The conventions of sport clubs: enabling and constraining the implementation of social goods through sport. *Sport, Education and Society*, 16(2), pp. 241-253.

Skolits, G. J., Morrow, J. A. and Burr, E. M. (2009) 'Reconceptualizing evaluator roles.' *American journal of evaluation*, 30(3) pp. 275-295.

Slack, T. and Parent, M. M. (2006) *Understanding sport organizations: The application of organization theory*. London: Human Kinetics.

Smith, M. L. (1986) 'The whole is greater: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches in evaluation studies.' *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 1986(30) pp. 37-54.

Smith, M. J. (2006) *Realism*. London: Sage Publications.

Smith, V. (2010) 'Review article: Enhancing employability: Human, cultural, and social capital in an era of turbulent unpredictability.' *Human Relations*, January, pp. 1-22.

Smith, M. L. and Glass, G. V. (1987) *Research and evaluation in education and the social sciences*. Harlow: Prentice-Hall.

Smith, A. and Waddington, I. (2004) 'Using 'sport in the community schemes' to tackle crime and drug use among young people: some policy issues and problems.' *European Physical Education Review*, 10(3) pp. 279-298.

Smith, J. D. and Gay, P. (2005) *Active ageing in active communities: Volunteering and the transition to retirement*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Smith, J. D., Gaskin, K., Ellis, A. and Howlett, S. (2004) *Volunteering impact assessment toolkit. A practical guide for measuring volunteering*. London: Institute for Volunteering Research.

Snape, R. (2005) 'Steps to health: An evaluation of a project to promote exercise and physical activity amongst Asian women in a post-industrial town in England.' *Managing Leisure*, 10(3) pp. 145-155.

Snel, M., Sleddering, M. A., vd Peijl, I. D., Romijn, J. A., Pijl, H., Meinders, A. E. and Jazet, I. M. (2012) 'Quality of life in type 2 diabetes mellitus after a very low calorie diet and exercise.' *European Journal of Internal Medicine*, 23(2) pp. 143-149.

Solomon, E., Rees, T., Ukoumunne, O. C., Metcalf, B. and Hillsdon, M. (2013) 'Personal, social, and environmental correlates of physical activity in adults living in rural south-west England: a cross-sectional analysis.' *International Journal of Behaviour Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 10 pp. 129-144.

Spaaij, R. (2009) 'Sport as a vehicle for social mobility and regulation of disadvantaged urban youth.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 44(2-3) pp. 247-264.

Sport and Recreation Alliance. (2013) *Sport club survey*. London: Sport and Recreation Alliance. [Online] [Accessed on 14th January 2015] <http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/policy/SSC>

Sports Coach UK. (2011) *Sport coaching in the UK III. A statistical analysis of coaches and coaching in the UK*. London: Sports Coach UK. [Online] [Accessed on 10th January 2015]

Sport Development. (2009) *Sports Development Officer*. [Online] [Accessed on 20th September 2010] <http://www.sportdevelopment.info/index.php/component/content/article/67-i-want-to-be-a/269-sports-development-officer>

Sport England. (2000) *Sport participation and ethnicity in England. National survey: 1999/2000: headline findings*. London: Sport England.

Sport England. (2004a) *The framework for sport in England*. London: Sport England.

Sport England. (2004b) *North West on the move: the North West plan for sport and physical activity 2004 - 2008*. Manchester: Sport England.

Sport England. (2006a) *Active people survey*. [Online] [Accessed on 19th June 2007] [http://www.sportengland.org/research/active\\_people\\_survey.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey.aspx)

Sport England. (2006b) *About the community investment fund*. London: Sport England. [Online] [Accessed on 27th March 2007] [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080609152647/http://www.sportengland.org/text/index/get\\_funding/how\\_funding\\_works/about\\_the\\_community\\_investment\\_fund.htm](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080609152647/http://www.sportengland.org/text/index/get_funding/how_funding_works/about_the_community_investment_fund.htm)

Sport England. (2007b) *Community Sports Networks: implementation and investment guidance*. London: Sport England.

- Sport England. (2007) *Active people survey 3*. London: Sport England. [Online] [Accessed on 19th January 2015] [http://archive.sportengland.org/research/active\\_people\\_survey/active\\_people\\_survey\\_2.aspx](http://archive.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey/active_people_survey_2.aspx)
- Sport England. (2008) 'Sport England Toolkit.' [Accessed on 28 June 2009] [http://www.sportengland.org/me\\_toolkit\\_final\\_040805.doc](http://www.sportengland.org/me_toolkit_final_040805.doc)
- Sport England. (2008b) *Sport England Strategy 2008-2011*. London: Sport England.
- Sport England. (2010a) *Market Segmentation*. London: Sport England. [Online] [Accessed on 28th November 2012] <http://segments.sportengland.org/querySegments.aspx>
- Sport England. (2010) *Active people survey (APS) results for gymnastics*. London: Sport England. [Online] [Accessed [http://archive.sportengland.org/research/active\\_people\\_survey/active\\_people\\_survey\\_3/detailed\\_sport\\_results.aspx?sortBy=alpha&pageNum=2](http://archive.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey/active_people_survey_3/detailed_sport_results.aspx?sortBy=alpha&pageNum=2)]
- Sport England. (2013) *Active People Survey 7*. Sport England. [Online] [Accessed on 7th January 2015] <http://activepeople.sportengland.org/>
- Sport England. (2006c) *Understanding participation in sport: What determines sports participation among 15-19 year old women?* London: Sport England.
- Sport England. (2013b) *Value of Sport monitor: criteria for inclusion of entries*. London: Sport England.
- Sport England. (2014) *The Value of Sport monitor*. [Online] [Accessed on 25th November] <https://www.sportengland.org/research/benefits-of-sport/the-value-of-sport-monitor/>
- Sport England. (2015) *Equality and Diversity*. London: [Online] [Accessed on 30th January 2015] <http://www.sportengland.org/our-work/equality-diversity/>
- Stake, R.E. (1983) 'Program evaluation, particularly responsive evaluation.' In Stufflebeam, D.L., Madaus, G.F. and Kelleghan, T. (eds) *Viewpoints on educational and human services evaluation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., London: Kluwer Academic Services, pp.287-310.
- Stebbins, R. A. (2005) 'Project-based leisure: theoretical neglect of a common use of free time.' *Leisure Studies*, 24(1) pp. 1-11.
- Stebbins, R. A. (2011) 'The semiotic self and serious leisure.' *The American Sociologist*, 42(2-3) pp. 238-248.
- Stebbins, R. (2013) 'Unpaid work of love: defining the work–leisure axis of volunteering.' *Leisure Studies*, 32(3) pp. 339-345.

- Stenner, P. (1993) 'Discoursing jealousy.' *In* Burman, E. and Parker, I. (eds.) *Discourse analytic research*. London: Routledge, pp. 114-134.
- Stephoe, A. and Butler, N. (1996) 'Sports participation and emotional wellbeing in adolescents.' *The Lancet*, 347(9018) pp. 1789-1792.
- Strategy Unit. (2004) *Strategy survival guide overview*. London: Strategy Unit.
- Stufflebeam, D. L. and Shinkfield, A. J. (1985) *Systematic Evaluation*. Boston: Nijhoff Publishing.
- Stufflebeam, D. L. and Shinkfield, A. J. (2007) *Evaluation theory, models, and applications*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc
- Suarez-Balcazar, Y. and Harper, G. (2014) *Empowerment and participatory evaluation of community interventions: Multiple benefits*. London: Routledge.
- Suárez-Herrera, J. C., Springett, J. and Kagan, C. (2009) 'Critical connections between participatory evaluation, organizational learning and intentional change in pluralistic organizations.' *Evaluation*, 15(3) pp. 321-342.
- Tacon, R. (2007) 'Football and social inclusion: evaluating social policy.' *Managing Leisure*, 12(1) pp. 1-23.
- Taks, M., Green, B. C., Misener, L. and Chalip, L. (2014) 'Evaluating sport development outcomes: the case of a medium-sized international sport event.' *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 14(3) pp. 213-237.
- Taks, M. and Scheerder, J. (2006) 'Youth sports participation styles and market segmentation profiles: evidence and applications.' *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 6(2) pp. 85-121.
- Tannehill, D., MacPhail, A., Walsh, J. and Woods, C. (2015) 'What young people say about physical activity: the Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity (CSPPA) study.' *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(4) pp. 442-462.
- Taut, S. and Brauns, D. (2003) 'Resistance to evaluation.' *Evaluation*, 9(3) pp. 247-264.
- Taylor, P. (2003) *Sports volunteering in England 2002: A report for Sport England*. Sheffield: Leisure Industries Research Centre.
- Taylor, R. D., & Collins, D. (2015) Reviewing the family unit as a stakeholder in talent development: is it undervalued? *Quest*, 67(3), pp. 330-343.
- Taylor, J., Hughes, A. and Koufaki, P. (2013) 'The impact of community-based physical activity projects on girls' and young women's engagement in physical activity: findings from an evaluation of the 'Girls on the Move' programme.' *Managing Leisure*, 18(1) pp. 46-60.

The Football Association. (2013) *Safeguarding children and young people in football*. London: The F.A. [Online] [Accessed on 27th January 2015] [www.thefa.com/~media/.../025\\_safeguarding-children-policy.ashx](http://www.thefa.com/~media/.../025_safeguarding-children-policy.ashx)

The Manchester Metropolitan University. (2007) *Ethics*. [Online] [Accessed on 24th March 2007] <https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/research/ethics>

Thompson, J., Jago, R., Brockman, R., Cartwright, K., Page, A. and Fox, K. (2010) 'Physically active families—de-bunking the myth? A qualitative study of family participation in physical activity.' *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 36(2) pp. 265-274.

Tomas-Carus, P., Ortega-Alonso, A., Pietiläinen, K., Santos, V., Gonçalves, G., Ramos, J. and Raimundo, A. (2015) 'A randomized controlled trial on the effects of combined aerobic-resistance exercise on muscle strength and fatigue, glycemic control and health-related quality of life of type 2 diabetes patients.' *The Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*, pp. 1-21.

Tong, C. and Kram, K. E. (2013) 'The efficacy of mentoring—the benefits for mentees, mentors, and organizations.' In Passmore, J., Peterson, D. and Frieire, T. (eds.) *The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of the psychology of coaching and mentoring*. New York: Wiley & Sons, pp. 217-242.

Torrance, H. (2012) 'Triangulation, respondent validation, and democratic participation in mixed methods research.' *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(2) pp. 111-123.

Trickett, E. J., Espino, S. R. and Hawe, P. (2011) 'How are community interventions conceptualized and conducted? An analysis of published accounts.' *Journal of Community Psychology*, 39(5) pp. 576-591.

Trost, S. G., Sallis, J. F., Pate, R. R., Freedson, P. S., Taylor, W. C. and Dowda, M. (2003) 'Evaluating a model of parental influence on youth physical activity.' *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 25(4) pp. 277-282.

Tsang, T. W., Kohn, M. R., Chow, C. M. and Singh, M. F. (2013) 'Self-perception and attitude toward physical activity in overweight/obese adolescents: the “martial fitness” study.' *Research in Sports Medicine*, 21(1) pp. 37-51.

Tuffrey, C. (2013) 'Adolescents with physical disability: seeing the individual in context.' *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 98(5) pp. 373-377.

Tyler, R. W. (1942) 'General statement on evaluation.' *The Journal of Educational Research*, 35 pp. 492-501.

Utz, R. L., Carr, D., Nesse, R. and Wortman, C. B. (2002) 'The effect of widowhood on older adults' social participation an evaluation of activity, disengagement, and continuity theories.' *The Gerontologist*, 42(4) pp. 522-533.

- Van Bussel, M. and Doherty, A. (2015) 'An examination of the conflict process in nonprofit community sport boards.' *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 15(2) pp. 176-194.
- Van Den Berg, L. and Cuskelly, G. (2014) 'Motives and constraints influencing volunteerism amongst university sport students: sport education and community involvement.' *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance: Health, Physical Activity and Sport in South Africa: Issues and Challenges: Supplement 2*, 20 pp. 448-462.
- Van Tuyckom, C. and Scheerder, J. (2010) 'Sport for All? Insight into stratification and compensation mechanisms of sporting activity in the 27 European Union member states.' *Sport, Education and Society*, 15(4) pp. 495-512.
- VandenBos, G. R. (2007) *APA dictionary of psychology*. Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Veal, A. J. and Darcy, S. (2014) *Research methods in sport studies and sport management: a practical guide*. London: Routledge.
- Verhoof, E., Maurice-Stam, H., Heymans, H. and Grootenhuis, M. (2012) 'Growing into disability benefits? Psychosocial course of life of young adults with a chronic somatic disease or disability.' *Acta Paediatrica*, 101(1) pp. 19-26.
- Volunteer Canada. (2012) *The Canadian code for volunteer involvement: values, guiding principles and standards of practice*. Volunteer Canada. [Online] [Accessed on 24th August 2013] <https://volunteer.ca/content/canadian-code-volunteer-involvement-2012-edition>
- Voorhees, C. C., Murray, D., Welk, G., Birnbaum, A., Ribisl, K. M., Johnson, C. C., Pfeiffer, K. A., Saksvig, B. and Jobe, J. B. (2005) 'The role of peer social network factors and physical activity in adolescent girls.' *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 29(2) p. 183.
- Wakelin, D. (2013) 'What motivates students to volunteer at events?' *Event Management*, 17(1) pp. 63-75.
- Waldman, H. B., Perlman, S. P. and Rader, R. (2010) 'Hardships of raising children with special health care needs (a commentary).' *Social Work in Health Care*, 49(7) pp. 618-629.
- Watty, K. (2003) 'When will academics learn about quality?' *Quality in Higher Education*, 9(3) pp. 213-221.
- Weiss, C. H. (1972) *Evaluation research*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall
- Weiss, C. H. (1993) 'Where politics and evaluation research meet.' *American Journal of Evaluation*, 14(1) pp. 93-106.

Weiss, C. H. (1997) 'Theory-based evaluation: Past, present, and future.' *New Directions for Evaluation*, 76 pp. 41-55.

Weiss, C. H. (1997) 'How can theory-based evaluation make greater headway?' *Evaluation Review*, 21(4) pp. 501-524.

Weiss, C. H. (1998) *Evaluation: Methods for studying programs and policies*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Wen, C. P., Wai, J. P. M., Tsai, M. K., Yang, Y. C., Cheng, T. Y. D., Lee, M.-C., Chan, H. T., Tsao, C. K., Tsai, S. P. and Wu, X. (2011) 'Minimum amount of physical activity for reduced mortality and extended life expectancy: a prospective cohort study.' *The Lancet*, 378(9798) pp. 1244-1253.

Westendorp, M., Hartman, E., Houwen, S., Huijgen, B. C., Smith, J. and Visscher, C. (2014) 'A longitudinal study on gross motor development in children with learning disorders.' *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 35(2) pp. 357-363.

Whitehead, D., Taket, A. and Smith, P. (2003) 'Action research in health promotion.' *Health Education Journal*, 62(1) p. 5.

Wholey, J. S., Hatry, H. P. and Newcomer, K. E. (2010) *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

WHOQoL. (1994) 'The development of the World Health Organization quality of life assessment instrument (the WHOQOL).' In Olrey, J. and Kuyken, W. (eds.) *Quality of life assessment: international perspectives*. Paris: Springer, pp. 41-57.

Wilkinson, J. and Bittman, M. (2002) *Volunteering: the human face of democracy*. Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales Sydney.

Wilson, J. and Musick, M. A. (1997) 'Work and volunteering: The long arm of the job.' *Social Forces*, 76(1) pp. 251-272.

Winter, R., Munn-Giddings, C., Weaver, Y., Nicholls, V., Kennedy, N., Searson, F., Kemp, P., Childs, V., Dennett, B. and Aymer, C. (2001) *A handbook for action research in health and social care*. London: Routledge.

Wise, R. I. (1980) 'The evaluator as educator.' *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 1980(5) pp. 11-18.

Wong, G., Greenhalgh, T., Westhorp, G. and Pawson, R. (2012) 'Realist methods in medical education research: what are they and what can they contribute?' *Medical Education*, 46(1) pp. 89-96.

Yao, C. A. and Rhodes, R. E. (2015) 'Parental correlates in child and adolescent physical activity: a meta-analysis.' *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 12(1) p. 10.

# Appendix

## Appendix 1 Interview Schedule (Programme Leader)

### PREAMBLE

- I. Permission to record
- II. Objectives/ topic of interview
- III. Reason for interview
- IV. Expected length

### SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

- I. What is your name?
- II. What position do you hold?
- III. How long have you been in this position?
- IV. What are your main responsibilities?
- V. Give a brief synopsis of the *project hub* under evaluation.

### SECTION 2. PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

#### 2.1 Project Delivery

- I. What would you like this programme to accomplish?
  - a. How would this be achieved
  - b. Propose theory (and test)
- II. How is your project progressing against your Action Plan?
- III. Do you feel you are on schedule with time and resources?
- IV. Are partners working effectively? Why or why not?

#### 2.2 Achievements & Outcomes:

- I. What have been the main achievements and outcomes of designing/ developing your project during the reporting period?
- II. What are the main reasons behind these successes?
  - a. Probe – greater impact on some than others?

#### 2.3 Problems:

- I. What have been the main problems in the development of your project (if any)?
- II. What are the reasons behind these problems and how have you tried to overcome them?  
Has this worked?
- III. Do you foresee any problems during the planning and implementation phase of the project?  
(Internal/ external).

#### 2.4 Good & Bad Practice/Lessons Learnt:

- I. What lessons have you learnt in the development of your project?
- II. What might you do differently if you were starting your project again?
- III. Should we be doing anything differently from now on?

#### 2.5 Future Plans:

- What plans do you have for the ongoing development of your project during the next reporting period?

**Other Comments:** Do you have any further comments about any aspect of your project or the programme in general?

Are there any particular aspect(s) of your project's progress you would like to make comment about?

Can I contact you should I have any other questions that may arise?

**INTERVIEW ENDS**



## Appendix 2 Interview Schedule (Focus Group – Volunteer Programme).

### Focus Group Interview Schedule: Semi-Structured

#### Volunteer Programme

##### 1) Statement of Confidentiality

Opinions expressed will be treated in confidence among project staff for the purpose of evaluating the long-term impact of IT-based services, and in the production of the project report. All responses will remain anonymous.

- a. **Check for objections to the interview being recorded.**
- b. We are very grateful to you all for sparing time to talk about the **Volunteer Programme** this morning/afternoon/**evening**. Tonight I want to concentrate on discussing the Volunteer Programme activities and I'd particularly like to hear from you what difference it has made to you. There are no right or wrong opinions, I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you really think and how you really feel. We hope to use this information to help develop the Volunteer Programme based on what you think and feel ultimately leading to improvements for all the volunteers and the people running the programme.

##### 2) Transition to questions (ice-breakers)

- a. The interview will take approximately 20 minutes. Let me start by asking about your volunteer experiences.
  - i. Which of you are volunteering now?
  - ii. Do you volunteer in a specific sport or is your volunteering activity broader than that?
  - iii. How long have you been part of the programme?

##### 3) Transition to topic/ theme – *impact on participants*

- a. **So what impact has the volunteering programme had on you?**
  - i. Probe on impacts identified (why, how) *What are the main reasons behind these effects?*
- b. **What have been the main problems with the scheme?**
  - i. Probe on problems identified (why, how). *What are the main reasons behind these effects?*

##### 4) Transition to topic/ theme – *Survey exploration*.

- a. Many of the volunteers said they are more willing to volunteer. Are any of you? If so why.
- b. What may have stopped you volunteering before getting involved with the project?
- c. How might the programme better transfer 'one-off volunteering to more serious volunteering?
- d. How can the VP better improve your skills (target younger people in group)?
- e. Interestingly, the VP improved your trust in voluntary organisations. Why might this be the case.
- f. Has the VP improved your participation in sport or physical activity.

##### 5) **Other Comments:** Do you have any further comments about any aspect of your project or the programme in general?

- 6) Are there any particular aspect(s) of your volunteering you would like to make comment about?

INTERVIEW ENDS

## Appendix 3 Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) questionnaire

### Volunteer Programme Evaluation Survey

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. This survey should take around 10 minutes of your time. Please read each question carefully and be aware that the response options (eg agree, disagree) may change from question to question. Be completely honest and remember **your responses are made anonymously.**

#### Introduction

**1 ) What activities do you carry out as a volunteer on the Volunteer Programme? Please tick the box to the right that applies to you.**

Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaching sport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering training sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please Specify):	

**2) How did you become involved with the Volunteer Programme? Please tick the box to the right that applies to you.**

Via information through email	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through contacts at a sports club	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through a Volunteer Programme advert such as a poster, newspaper article or flyer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through searching on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through a friend who volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through participating in the London 2012 Torch Relay	<input type="checkbox"/>
A visit from the Volunteer Programme Team to my school/ college	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please Specify):	

**3) How long have you been volunteering through the Volunteer Programme? Please tick the box to the right that applies to you.**

Less than one year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1-2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4) How often do you volunteer through the Volunteer Programme? Please tick the box to the right that applies to you.**

One day per week or more	
One or two days per month	
A couple of times per year	
Very occasionally	
Once only	

**5) Overall how satisfied are you with the Volunteer Programme?**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied

**6) Access to training courses and/or certificates via the Volunteer Programme.**

Below are listed some of the things that people have access to through the Volunteer Programme. How satisfied are you with your access to the following things? Please tick the box that applies to you.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not relevant
The Volunteer Programme gives me access to courses that are of direct relevance to my volunteering						
It is more important to me that I can obtain accreditation or qualifications through my volunteering now I am involved with the Volunteer Programme						
I can access good quality training courses through the Volunteer Programme						

**7) The Volunteer Programme and access to social events**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not relevant
There have been a good number of social events organised through the Volunteer Programme						
The social events for the Volunteer Programme are not well attended						

The social events organised through the Volunteer Programme are enjoyable and useful						
The Volunteer Programme social events are held at convenient times and locations						

### 8) Volunteer Programme support (through good management).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not relevant
I am satisfied with the awards/ certificates I have received through the Volunteering Programme						
The Volunteer Programme does not make best use of my skills						
I am aware of what the Volunteer Programme expects of me most of the time						
I am aware of what I can expect from the Volunteer Programme leaders most of the time						
The Volunteer Programme supports me whenever I need it to						
I would like the volunteering to be better organised						
The Volunteer Programme Leaders value the contribution I make to the organisation						

### 9) Personal development from the Volunteer Programme.

Listed below are some of the ways that people gain personally from being a volunteer. How much do you agree with the following statements? Please tick the box that applies to you.

The Volunteer Programme has improved...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not relevant
my confidence in my own abilities						
my sense of self-esteem						
my sense that I am making a useful contribution						
my awareness of the effects of my action on others						
my sense of motivation						

my willingness to try new things						
the sense that I have things to look forward in my life						

### 10) Skill development

The Volunteer Programme has improved...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not relevant
my ability to communicate with other people						
my social and communication skills						
my ability to work as part of a team						
my ability to make decisions						
my ability to lead or encourage others						
my ability to organise my time						
my vocational or job-related skills, such as childcare or conservation skills						
my literacy and numeracy skills						
my technical skills, such as office work or I.T. skills						

### 11) Health and well-being

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not relevant
The Volunteering Programme has helped improve my physical health and well-being						
The Volunteering Programme has helped improve my mental health and well-being						
The Volunteering Programme has helped improve my fitness levels						

### 12) Friendships, contacts and networks

Below are a list of ways in which people gain through the social links they develop by volunteering. Please tick the box that summarises how much the following have increased or decreased for you.

Because of the Volunteer Programme I feel...

	Increased greatly	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Decreased greatly	Not relevant
my range of friendships has...						
the number of contacts that I can call on has...						
my participation in social gatherings has...						
my support and information networks have						

### 13) Sense of trust in others

Because of the Volunteer Programme I feel...

	Increased greatly	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Decreased greatly	Not relevant
my trust in other people has						
my trust in voluntary organisations has						
my trust in organisation in general has						
my social and community inclusion has						
my willingness to look out for other people has						

### 14) Participation in local activities

Because of the Volunteer Programme I feel...

	Increased greatly	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Decreased greatly	Not relevant
my sense of being part of this community has						
my willingness to get involved in local activities has						
my interest in doing more volunteering has						
my taking part in political activities has						
my environmental awareness and action have						
my interest in joining local groups, projects or clubs has						
my sense of having a say in local matters has						

### 15) Culture, leisure and environment

Volunteering can impact on a sense of cultural identity in a number of ways. Please tick the box that summarises how much of the following have increased or decreased for you.

Because of the Volunteer Programme I feel that...

	Increased greatly	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Decreased greatly	Not relevant
my opportunities to engage in cultural activities such as art, theatre and dance have						
my opportunities to take part in leisure activities like hobbies/sports have						
the quality of the local environment has						

## 16) Programme Activities

Below are a number of statements about the activities organised for volunteers under the Cheshire East Volunteer Programme. Select the box that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not relevant
The activities run by the Volunteer Programme were interesting and kept my attention for most of the time						
The workshops were of an appropriate level (not too easy and not too hard)						
Workshops were of an appropriate size (number of people attending)						
Activity (workshops, newsletters, awards, motoring) was delivered frequently enough						
Mentors created a positive environment that felt welcoming and motivated me to participate						
Mentor instructions and advice was sufficient						
Mentors had the appropriate level of knowledge and expertise						
Mentors and programme leaders were responsive to my enquiries and suggestions						

## 17) Issues

Is there anything else that you would like to say about the Volunteer Programme or the effects volunteering has had on you? Please write below:

--

**18) About you** - Please fill in the following details about you - they will be kept completely private but will help us build up a profile of our volunteers. **Are you:**

Male	
Female	

**19) How old are you?**

14-18	
19-24	
25-34	
35-44	
45-54	
55-64	
65-74	
75 and over	

**20) How would you describe your ethnicity?**

White		Asian/ Asian British		Dual Heritage		Black or Black British		Chinese or other Ethnic	
British		Indian		White & Black Caribbean		Caribbean		Chinese	
Irish		Pakistani		White & African		African		Gypsy	
Polish		Bangladeshi		White & Asian		Other		Traveller	
Other		Other		Other Mixed				Romani	
								Other	
Other (Please specify):									

**21) Do you consider yourself to be disabled?**

Yes	
No	

**22) What is your postcode?** This information will be used to measure the reach of the Volunteer Project. It will not be used for marketing purposes and will not be shared with any other organisations.




**23) What is your occupation?**

Full time employment	
Part time employment	
Unemployed ( and not attending any formal training or education)	
Student	
Retired	
Other:	

--

24) Can we contact you in the future to invite you to a focus group interview? If so, please provide a contact telephone number. If not please leave blank.

--

## Appendix 4 Participant information sheet (Interview)

**Manchester Metropolitan University**  
**Research Institute for Performance Research (IPR)**



### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM – Interviews**

#### **Research Title**

Evidence based practice: *a research based evaluation of a sport and physical activity strategy.*

#### **Members of the Research Team**

The lead researcher for this study will be John Daniels who will be directed and supervised by senior academics at the Manchester Metropolitan University, Professor Judith Sixsmith, Dr. Barbara Bell.

#### **What is the purpose of the research?**

In this research, we want to find out how best to evaluate the impact and delivery of a series of community sports programmes that are important to the delivery of a local community sport and physical activity plan. In particular, we are interested in how the sports programmes will be delivered to participants and we would like to get an idea of the programmes all work together towards a set of common goals such as improving health, increasing the quality of the local sport services and building safer and stronger communities. In order to do this we would like to capture the working of the programmes over a sufficient period of time.

There are two main reasons why it is important that this research is carried out:

- Local sports plans are important in the delivery of community sport programmes but very few are evaluated and so little is known about how a series of programmes delivered within a local network combine to satisfy the goals of a wider strategic plan for sport and physical activity.
- The plan is the first of its kind to use a Community Sport Network – a number of organisations from across the Borough that will help deliver sport in the community – and so it is important that the research records insights into this new system of community sport development work.

#### **Why Am I Being Asked to Take Part?**

You have been chosen because you are involved in the programme activities either as an administrator or as a programme participant. You have been invited because you have been identified in the course of the research as someone who may be able to shed useful light on the impact and processes of delivering the local plan for sport and physical activity.

#### **Do I Have to Take Part?**

You are under no obligation to take part in this study. If, after reading this information sheet and asking any additional questions, you do not feel comfortable taking part in the study you do not have to. If you do decide to take part you are free to withdraw from the study at any point, without having to give a reason and you are free to take any personal data with you and this will not be included when the research is reported.

#### **What will happen if I do agree to take part?**

If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign an informed consent form stating your agreement to take part and you will be given a copy together with this information sheet to keep. There will be no payment for taking part in the study which will take place over a period of two years and you may also be contacted further (with your permission) over the telephone.

Once consent has been granted, you will then be contacted by the researcher and invited to an interview. Only the researcher, John Daniels, will record and take notes during the interview. Digital data such as interview recordings and transcriptions will be on a central password protected, University PC that is only accessible to the researcher. Hard copies of such information will be within a locked storage unit within the researcher's locked office at the Crewe Campus of the Manchester Metropolitan University. All digital files are password protected and your name or address will not be used in any published material.

**Are there any advantages/disadvantages or risks in taking part?**

There are no disadvantages or risks involved with the participation of this study, only a small proportion of your time may be taken up during the day to conduct the interview. There are no benefits involved with the participation of this study however; as a result, you may acknowledge an understanding of the processes for delivering participation based programmes for sport and physical activity.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have any questions at all, please ask them now. If you would like to participate, please ask the researcher for a consent form.

John Daniels

Email: [j.e.daniels@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:j.e.daniels@mmu.ac.uk)

Tel: 0161 247 5467

## Appendix 5 Participant information sheet – Questionnaire

**Manchester Metropolitan University**

**Research Institute for Performance Research (IPR)**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM – Questionnaires**



### **Research Title**

Evidence based practice: *a research based evaluation of a sport and physical activity strategy.*

### **Members of the Research Team**

The lead researcher for this study will be John Daniels who will be directed and supervised by senior academics at the Manchester Metropolitan University, Professor Judith Sixsmith, Dr. Barbara Bell.

### **What is the purpose of the research?**

In this research, we want to find out how best to evaluate the impact and delivery of a series of community sports programmes that are important to the delivery of a local community sport and physical activity plan. In particular, we are interested in how the sports programmes will be delivered to participants and we would like to get an idea of the programmes all work together towards a set of common goals such as improving health, increasing the quality of the local sport services and building safer and stronger communities. In order to do this we would like to capture the working of the programmes over a sufficient period of time.

There are two main reasons why it is important that this research is carried out:

- Local sports plans are important in the delivery of community sport programmes but very few are evaluated and so little is known about how a series of programmes delivered within a local network combine to satisfy the goals of a wider strategic plan for sport and physical activity.
- The plan is the first of its kind to use a Community Sport Network – a number of organisations from across the Borough that will help deliver sport in the community – and so it is important that the research record insights into this new system of community sport development work.

### **Why Am I Being Asked to Take Part?**

You have been chosen because you are involved in the programme activities either as an administrator or as a programme participant. You have been invited because you have been identified in the course of the research as someone who may be able to shed useful light on the impact and processes of delivering the local plan for sport and physical activity.

### **Do I Have to Take Part?**

You are under no obligation to take part in this study. If, after reading this information sheet and asking any additional questions, you do not feel comfortable taking part in the study

you do not have to. If you do decide to take part you are free to withdraw from the study at any point, without having to give a reason and you are free to take any personal data with you and this will not be included when the research is reported.

#### **What will happen if I do agree to take part?**

If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign an informed consent form stating your agreement to take part and you will be given a copy together with this information sheet to keep. There will be no payment for taking part in the study which will take place over a period of two years and you may also be contacted further (with your permission) over the telephone.

Once consent has been granted, you will then be contacted by the researcher and invited complete a short questionnaire about the impact of the programme on yourself. If your questionnaire was completed online, the data is only accessible by the researcher, John Daniels, who has the passwords to the online survey account. If your questionnaire was completed on a hard copy, as interview recordings and transcriptions will be on a central password protected. Hard copies of such information will be within a locked storage unit within the researcher's locked office at the Crewe Campus of the Manchester Metropolitan University. Your name or address will not be used in any published material.

#### **Are there any advantages/disadvantages or risks in taking part?**

There are no disadvantages or risks involved with the participation of this study, only a small proportion of your time may be taken up during the day to conduct the interview. There are no benefits involved with the participation of this study however; as a result, you may acknowledge an understanding of the processes for delivering participation based programmes for sport and physical activity.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have any questions at all, please ask them now. If you would like to participate, please ask the researcher for a consent form.

John Daniels

Email: [j.e.daniels@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:j.e.daniels@mmu.ac.uk)

Tel: 0161 247 5467

## Appendix 6 Extract of an interview

### MMU Cheshire John Daniels

DIS Jan 2008 'Simon'

---

Q Okay. [REDACTED] just quickly just tell me what position you hold within the Community Sports Network?

A1 Hi, I'm [REDACTED] [inaudible 00.13 Officer for] child development.

Q Are you alright, [REDACTED]. That's okay, I'll just pause that a second. Sorry, so go on, what was your role, your position?

A2 Sorry, what was the initial question?

Q Yeah, what is your role within the Community Sports Network?

A2 [REDACTED], I'm one of the directors of the Cheshire Academy. And we've put forward a number of projects for funding, so I'm sort of responsible for overseeing the Cheshire Academy. Our expertise is in the field of disability sport, and that was our bid initially in the field of disability. And it's been myself that's been attending the meetings for the last 18 months.

Q Okay. Just give me a brief kind of synopsis, off the top of your head, of this Sport For All hub, hard to reach, what do you think it is required to do?

A2 Well, the problem with disability is, they can't access many types of sports locally because, although many sports are meant to be integrated, in reality, you need specialist coaches to do that. And this is what's unusual about the Academy, that we have very qualified and specialist coaches. And we're the biggest provider of disability sport within the borough. So I saw the sports hub as a way of trying to consolidate many of the sports that we do, to try to raise the profile of disability sport, and to focus on a number of key things. One of the things was, although there's provision for football, we felt that provision for female football in the field of disability, there was nothing at all there.

Q Locally, within the borough?

A2 Within the borough. Even outside the borough, it's very under used. And we were forever getting asked by girls with disabilities, because their heroes were Beckham and all these sporting heroes, and why can't we do disability football. And part of the trouble is, they either build it from the top down, from a county structure, or do it from the club up, it's got to be two-way thing. And because, you know, you want female coaches trained to be football referees or football coaches, we needed the funds to do this. And although we have a good structure for male football, we needed quality female coaches, we needed a structure which women and girls could feel comfortable and training in. So it needed a separate funding stream, to set this sort of thing up.

A1 And those coaches need to learn alongside disability football coaches that have already been doing it for a long time. What I've found, because I've been involved in the football for over 10 years, that you can have the best coach to anybody, even an England coach, but if they don't understand how a person with a learning disability learns, it's not transferable.

Q They can't be a coach.

A1 No. And what...and it isn't that they're not a good coach, it is something that's quite different. And every child will be very different to the next child, even if they've got the same disability, their learning will not be the same. So they need to come along initially alongside, so that they're learning as they're actually coaching, so they're being mentored, and also they're getting good results from their coaching because they're being mentored. And it makes it easy then for coaches to coach disability.

Q But that's useful to understand that there was...you definitely identified a niche here that you felt you could provide for.

A2 But also, the other one we made the bid for was the disability gymnastics. Again, gymnastics is seen a very elite sport and you have a number of clubs locally that provide elite mainstream gymnastics. But gymnastics, if you asked...if you talked gymnastics about movement to parents of children with disabilities, they don't see it as being very relevant, because they think it's an impossible thing for the child to do. And so what we do is, we provide a class, where no matter how profound the child is, in terms of behaviour or physical or sensory disabilities, we're able to adapt that class so that child can be fully integrated and take part. So our bid is to try to encourage children with more profound disabilities to come to a class, to convince their parents that this...that it is a class for them, even though they may have cerebral palsy, with very little movement, they can take part in

a gym class because it's really about interacting with the children. And there's a whole group of children who they may be picked up on a bus to go to school, they do school activities, they're taken home, but they do nothing apart from that, because they are deemed to be...

A1 Not able.

A2 Not able to do it, and this is nonsense. And we have experience of working with these children. So there's a whole group of profoundly disabled children, who don't have that...who need, in terms of health, in terms of the obesity problem amongst these children...

Q It's interesting about the interaction side of it though, develop the skills and...

A1 It's behaviour as well.

A2 And also, so one other thing is, the effect of disability within the family. And this covers everything. If you have a disabled child, the divorce rate within families is enormous.

A1 Oh it's colossal.

A2 And the pressures within family are huge. Now if you could then take a child with a disability and make that child succeed, and to interact with other children, the sense of self-worth and confidence can really take itself through to the whole of the family. So it isn't just a bit of a gym class or a bit of football, this is giving self...this is giving a confidence to children and families. And we feel that it can make a really lasting impact.

Q Well, that's interesting because my next question was, you know, if we think about the hub, the Sports for All hub, what would it accomplish? I think you've answered that fairly comprehensibly there in terms of that, the societal benefit.

A2 I think that's the fundamental thing.



## Appendix 7 RAND-36 Quality of Life Questionnaire

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

1. In general, would you say your health is:
  - Excellent ..... 1
  - Very Good ..... 2
  - Good .....3
  - Fair ..... 4
  - Poor ..... 5
  
2. **Compared to 1 year ago**, how would you rate your health in general **now**?
  - Much better now than 1 year ago ..... 1
  - Somewhat better now than 1 year ago ..... 2
  - About the same ..... 3
  - Somewhat worse now than 1 year ago ..... 4
  - Much worse now than 1 year ago ..... 5

The following items are about activities you might do during a typical day. Does your health now limit you in these activities? If so, how much?

### CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE

	Yes Limited a lot	Yes limited a little	No not limited at all
3. <b>Vigorous activities</b> , such as running, lifting heavy objects, participating in strenuous sports	1	2	3
4. <b>Moderate activities</b> , such as moving a table, pushing a vacuum cleaner, bowling or playing golf	1	2	3
5. Lifting or carrying groceries	1	2	3
6. Climbing <b>several</b> flights of stairs	1	2	3
7. Climbing <b>one</b> flight of stairs	1	2	3
8. Bending, kneeling or stooping	1	2	3
9. Walking <b>more than a mile</b>	1	2	3
10. Walking <b>several blocks</b>	1	2	3
11. Walking <b>one block</b>	1	2	3

- |                                  |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 12. Bathing or dressing yourself | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|

During the **past 4 weeks**, have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities **as a result of your physical health**?

**CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE**

- |  | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--|------------|-----------|
| 13. Cut down the <b>amount of time</b> you spend on work or other activities                         | 1          | 2         |
| 14. <b>Accomplished less</b> than you would like   | 1          | 2         |
| 15. Were limited in the <b>kind</b> of work or other activities                                      | 1          | 2         |
| 16. Had <b>difficulty</b> performing the work or other activities (for example it took extra effort) | 1          | 2         |

During the **past 4 weeks**, have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities **as a result of any emotional problems** (such as feeling depressed or anxious)?

**CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE**

- |  | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--|------------|-----------|
| 17. Cut down the <b>amount of time</b> you spend on work or other activities   | 1          | 2         |
| 18. <b>Accomplished less</b> than you would like   | 1          | 2         |
| 19. Didn't do work or other activities as <b>carefully</b> as usual  | 1          | 2         |
| 20. During the <b>past 4 weeks</b> , to what extent has your physical health or emotional problem interfered with your normal social activities with family, friends, neighbors or groups? |            |           |
| Not at all .....   | 1          |           |
| Slightly .....   | 2          |           |
| Moderately .....   | 3          |           |
| Quite a bit .....  | 4          |           |
| Extremely .....  | 5          |           |
| 21. How much <b>bodily</b> pain have you had in the <b>past 4 weeks</b> ?  |            |           |
| None .....   | 1          |           |
| Very mild .....  | 2          |           |
| Mild .....   | 3          |           |

- Moderate ..... 4
- Severe ..... 5
- Very severe ..... 6

22. During the **past 4 weeks**, how much did **pain** interfere with your normal work (Including work outside the house **and** housework)

- Not at all ..... 1
- Slightly ..... 2
- Moderately ..... 3
- Quite a bit ..... 4
- Extremely ..... 5

These questions are about how you feel and how things have been with you **during the last 4 weeks**. For each question, please give the 1 answer that comes closest to the way you have been feeling. **How much of the time during the last 4 weeks...**

**CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE**

	All of the time	Most of the time	A good bit of the time	Some of the time	A little of the time	None of the time
23. Did you feel full of pep?	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Have you been a very nervous person?	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. Have you felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up?	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Have you felt calm and peaceful?	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Did you have a lot of energy?	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Have you felt downhearted and blue?	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Did you feel worn out?	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Have you been a happy person?	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. Did you feel tired?	1	2	3	4	5	6

32. During the **past 4 weeks**, how much of the time has your **physical health or emotional problems** interfered with your social activities (like visiting with friends, relatives, etc.) ?

- All of the time ..... 1
- Most of the time ..... 2
- Some of the time ..... 3
- A little of the time ..... 4
- None of the time ..... 5

How TRUE or FALSE is each of the following statements for you?

**CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE**

Definitely true	Mostly true	Don't know	Mostly false	Definitely false
-----------------	-------------	------------	--------------	------------------

- |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33. | I seem to get sick a lot easier than other people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. | I am as healthy as anybody I know                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. | I expect my health to get worse.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. | My health is excellent                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Appendix 8 – Example of final coding and CMO mapping for one of the themes from the Preliminary Interviews

